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# Moral Identity from Cross- and Bi-cultural Perspectives

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Moral Identity from a Cultural Perspective

Dissertation

By

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## Abstract

Researchers in moral psychology have initiated projects to investigate moral identity; however, they agreed that a precise definition and methodology of moral identity has been lacking in establishing the value of this new area. One of the challenges is that cultural explorations of moral identity are absent. Moral identity may take different forms in different cultures, or play an important role in morality in some cultures but not in others (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). The present dissertation was aimed at investigating how Western Canadian and Eastern Chinese cultural orientations relate to moral identities. Three studies were conducted.

In the first study, I introduced a new empirical approach for assessing moral identity to establish a culturally inclusive list of prototypical conceptions of a highly moral person. It provided a foundation for Studies II and III. The new empirical approach combines several features of moral identity measures that have not been integrated into a coherent approach. The new approach starts from Western individuals' prototypical conceptions of a highly moral person. Because there is no previous Chinese study using this approach to study moral identity, a free listing of the self-importance of moral attributes was used to generate culturally exclusive attributes, which were then combined with the Western moral attributes to create a culturally inclusive list of attributes to describe a highly moral person.

In the second study, I examined similarities and differences in moral identity between Canada and China in the contexts of family, school and community/society. Cultural differences in self-importance of moral identities in each context, cross-context differentiation in moral identity, as well as relative importance of value-domains for defining a person's moral identity were examined. In both cultural groups, Benevolence and Universalism-tolerance were selected and rated as the cores of defining a moral person. In addition to the core of moral

identities, Chinese participants defined a highly moral person more broadly than Canadian participants. With regard to the context, Chinese participants rated the mean level of moral identity more importantly in the context of school and the context of community/society than Canadian participants. Canadian participants' moral identities on average were more differentiated (less interrelated) across the three contexts than Chinese participants.

In the third study, I focused on a sample of bi-cultural Chinese Canadians to extend the investigation of the socio-cultural impact on moral identity. In general, it was found that Chinese-Canadian mean levels of moral identity and value domains were more similar to European Canadians than to Chinese in China. This finding supports the notion of acculturation, with each person's heritage self-concept being shifted a little over time and acculturated to the norms of mainstream culture. In addition, neither length of residency in Canada nor immigration status predicted the mean-level of moral identity. Only mainstream acculturation remained a significant predictor.

Across these studies, a key finding seemed to be the critical role that moral identity has some similarities between Eastern and Western cultures, yet it has a different definition to people and is used in varying levels of degrees from one culture to another. The studies provided invaluable insight into the relative role of identity in the domain of morality across cultures.

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### **General Introduction**

Since Lawrence Kohlberg initially proposed his stage theory of moral development, morality has been heavily investigated in Psychology over the last fifty years. For decades, moral psychology primarily focused on moral reasoning and moral judgment or decision-making through Kohlberg's developmentally defined stages (Hardy & Carlo, 2011). According to Kohlberg (1969), moral behavior results from moral judgments. If one acts without a moral judgment, the resulting action has no particular moral status. However, Blasi (1983) argued that moral judgment might not lead to moral action unless individuals' moral concerns and values are embedded into the person's sense of self and internalized as part of their moral identity. According to Blasi's (1983) self-model of moral functioning, the centrality of morality to one's self-identity might be a major factor bridging the gap between moral judgment and moral action. Therefore, moral psychology has begun to move beyond moral reasoning to pay more attention to the moral self in childhood and moral identity in adolescence.

Researchers (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002; Arnold, 1993; Colby & Damon, 1992; Hardy & Carlo, 2005) in moral psychology have initiated various projects to investigate moral identity; however, they agreed that a precise definition and methodology of moral identity has been lacking in establishing the value of this new area. Those researchers have shown that adding the self-concept to the moral identity model can enrich moral psychology, but the empirical research of moral identity faces challenges on various fronts. Particularly, cultural aspects of moral identity have not been studied so far. According to Schwartz's Value Circumplex (Schwartz, 1992), basic values are organized into a coherent system that can help explain an individual's decision-making, attitudes, and behavior. However, cultural psychologists suggested that people both within and across cultures have different self-concepts, cognitive processes, and value

orientations. Therefore, this research introduces a new culturally inclusive approach that combines assessments of the content of individuals' moral identities.

The present dissertation research aims at dealing with the major limitation of current research on moral identity as identified above. Study I introduced a new empirical approach for assessing moral identity cross-culturally. A culturally inclusive list of moral values in both Western and Chinese cultures was generated. In Study II, similarities and differences in moral identity between Chinese and Canadian cultures endorsing independent versus interdependent self-structures in the three contexts (family, school/work and community/society) were investigated. This cross-cultural study tested a new methodology for moral identity and empirically investigated how cultural orientation shapes individuals' moral identities. In Study III, moral identity in a bicultural group of Chinese-Canadians was studied as an attempt to better understand the moral identities of this increasingly important cultural group in Canada. Study III explored the question of how moral identity interacts with cultural identity in this particular cultural group in Canada.

In the following introduction, in order to address the important relationship between moral identity and cultural processes, three major steps were taken. First, the question of what role culture plays in morality in general was discussed. Second, Erikson's multidimensional model of identity was introduced to the literature of moral identity. Third, research on moral identity was presented and its limitations were discussed.

### **Morality and Culture**

Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) proposed a six-stage theory of moral development. In his original studies, moral dilemmas were presented to children and their responses were analyzed. According to Kohlberg, the six stages of morality are 1) obedience and punishment orientation;

2) self-interest orientation; 3) interpersonal conformity; 4) authority and social-order maintenance; 5) social contract orientation; 6) universal ethical principles.

Much cross-cultural research has explored the applicability of Kohlberg's model. One review explored 45 studies that had been conducted which had investigated the different levels of moral reasoning in 27 different cultural areas around the world (Snarey, 1985). The results indicated some universality in moral reasoning. In all cultural groups there were adults who reasoned at the conventional levels (stages 3 and 4), and in no cultural groups did the average adults reason at the preconventional level (stages 1 and 2). However, evidence of postconventional reasoning (stages 5 and 6) was not universally found. Although every urban Western sample contained at least some individuals who showed reasoning based on justice and individual rights, it does not describe well the moral reasoning of the non-Western world. In a more recent study, Gibbs, Basinger, Grime, and Snarey (2007) revisited Kohlberg's cognitive developmental approach and universality claims by reviewing 75 cross-cultural studies conducted in 23 countries. The results generally validated the cognitive developmental expectation for moral judgment development in childhood and early adolescence. However, some cross-cultural studies yielded a mixed picture concerning areas of moral judgment in late adolescence and adulthood. The researchers suggested that the higher levels (stages 5 and 6) in Kohlberg's model and scoring manual did not capture the moral reasoning of the non-Western world and must be broadened beyond Western traditions.

In the 1980s and 1990s several anthropologists and cultural psychologists objected to Western-centric moral psychology, and explored other moral domains in different cultures. Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, and Park (1997) posited three different ethics found around the world: the ethic of autonomy, in which the autonomous and independent individual is at the core

of moral values; the ethic of community, in which the group and social cohesion are the major concerns; and the ethic of divinity, in which God and a holy life are the fundamental moral concerns.

This way of differentiating types of morality not only shows different domains of morality, but also gives insight into cultural variations (Shweder et al., 1997). Shweder, Mahapatra and Miller (1987) compared the judgments of people from India and the United States. Participants from both countries were presented with many descriptions of actions that could possibly be argued to be moral or social transgressions. Different judgments were found between Indians and Americans. Religious considerations were correlated with the judgments from Indians. For example, in India, a widow does not eat fish, wear jewelry and bright clothing, and a son does not get a haircut or eat chicken immediately after his father's death. Moreover, Indians think that if they violate these practices, they do serious wrong, whereas Americans do not think this way.

In a similar view, Miller (2007) examined cultural differences in interpersonal morality referring to the responsibility of meeting the needs of others. In Miller and Bersoff's (1992) cross-cultural study between Americans and Indians, they found that in both cultures, helping tended to be seen as highly desirable and as a perceived responsibility. However, Americans had the dominant tendency to treat helping as a matter for personal discretion, whereas Indians tended to see helping as amoral obligation. In other words, Americans emphasized personal freedom of choice when considering helping others in need, whereas Indians considered helping more of a moral obligation.

This study was undertaken among middle-class European-American children and adults sampled from New Haven, Connecticut and among middle-class Hindu-Indian children and

adults sampled from Mysore City in Southern India (Bersoff & Miller, 1993). Using standard back translation techniques, Indian researchers conducted data collection in India in the local language of Kannada. Recruited from a setting that emphasizes relatively traditional Hindu-Indian cultural beliefs and practices, the Indian sample represented a cultural group emphasizing what has been characterized as interdependent cultural views of the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Recruited from an urban European-American community, the American sample, by contrast, represented a cultural group that has been characterized as emphasizing more independent cultural values. Participants were compared with regard to hypothetical scenarios, in which agents failed to act prosocially for selfish reasons to someone experiencing high, moderate or minor need. In a between-subjects design, they portrayed the agent's relationship to others as either that of parents, best friends or strangers. Culturally specific versions of the scenarios were used, with interviews among the Indian sample conducted in the local language of Kannada by native researchers. The results indicated cross-cultural differences in the conceptualization of morality. Even though there was no cultural difference between Indians and Americans on high need situations, Indians more frequently viewed responsiveness to another's needs as a moral obligation than did Americans in all relationships that involved minor needs or the moderately serious needs of friends or strangers. Americans' assessments of interpersonal responsibilities were considerably affected by the emotional closeness of the relationship, specifically the parent-child relationship. Reflecting the emphasis on the duty-based nature of interpersonal commitments held in collectivist settings, it was found that the Indians' assessments would remain relatively unaffected by the closeness of the relationship.

Jonathan Haidt (2007) expanded Shweder's theory, resulting in his Moral Foundations Theory. In opposition to rational theories of moral reasoning like Kohlberg's, Haidt argues that

morality is based on quick, automatic processes that were formed over human evolution. According to Haidt (2007), the five moral foundations are harm, fairness, ingroup, authority, and purity. First, the ethic of Harm/Care identifies individuals' tendency to detect and relieve suffering and harm-doing, and to value virtues such as kindness and compassion. Second, the ethic of Fairness/Reciprocity identifies people's desire to punish cheating and injustice in social relationships. Third, the ethic of Ingroup identifies the value individuals place on fidelity to family and the group over other allegiances. Fourth, the ethic of Authority/Hierarchy underscores the belief that groups are legitimately organized into dominance hierarchies, in which dominant or high status individuals receive certain privileges while at the same time being expected to protect and provide for subordinates. Fifth, the ethic of Purity expresses individuals' desire to avoid violating behaviors defined by religious authorities. Disgusting behaviors, such as eating feces and corpses, or expressing profanities in relation to God, are seen as sick and less than human.

The moral foundation model has been tested in a cross-cultural sample (Graham, et al., 2011). Researchers administered an online moral foundations questionnaire and compared participants from Eastern cultures (South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia, n = 2,258) to participants from Western cultures (U.S., U.K., Canada, and Western Europe, n = 104,893) with regard to their moral foundation endorsement. They found Eastern participants showed stronger concerns about Ingroup and Purity compared to Western participants, and were slightly more concerned about Authority. These differences were further explained in light of established cultural differences in collectivism (Triandis, 1995) and the role of purity concerns in daily life and religious practice in south Asia.

In sum, the moral psychology literature together from Kohlberg's moral reasoning to Shweder's moral ethics and Haidt's moral foundations illustrates that morality varies cross-culturally. People may share a similar foundation for their morals around the world, but there are many disagreements about the relative importance of their moralities both between and within cultures. In this dissertation, a cultural psychology approach was applied to study morality by focusing on how cultures instill ways of thinking and foster certain values (Norenzayan & Heine, 2005). This approach recognizes that there may be some basic universal moral concerns, but it argues for powerful influences of culture on various aspects of morality.

### **Concept of Moral Identity**

Moral identity has been defined as the extent at which a person views moral values as central to his or her identity (Blasi, 1983; Colby & Damon, 1992; Erikson, 1968; Hardy & Carlo, 2005, 2011; Hart & Fegley, 1995). In other words, if individuals perceive moral values such as being caring, just, forgiving, and honest as central for defining their sense of self, they have a strong moral identity. Lapsley and Lasky (2001) argued, "The formation of moral identity is the clear goal of both moral and identity development, and these two developmental tracks are ideally conjoined in the moral personality" (p. 358). This intersection of morality and identity within the domain of moral personality renders the moral identity construct an important predictor of moral motivation and sustained moral commitment across the life-span (Blasi, 1983; Colby & Damon, 1992; Hardy & Carlo, 2011).

Blasi (1983) was the first to speculate that moral identity plays an important role in understanding the relationship between cognitive judgment, moral motivation, and moral action. He suggested that moral behavior is influenced by the following three components: a moral self, a sense of personal responsibility for moral action, and a motive for self-consistency. A moral

self is the degree to which morality is central to a person's sense of self and identity. Blasi argues that, for some individuals, moral values are deeply rooted at the very core of who they are. However, for others, these values are not important in their daily lives. He suggested that once moral values are identified as crucial elements of the self and are integrated into a person's identity, the individual is motivated to act according to those values.

The second component is a sense of personal responsibility or obligation to engage in moral rather than immoral behavior. Moral individuals feel compelled to engage in moral action because one's behavior is a measure of their moral worth or virtuousness (Kohlberg & Candee, 1984). Moral emotions of guilt, remorse, or shame are elicited when individuals fail to engage in moral behavior (Blasi, 1983).

The final component is self-consistency and is achieved when moral individuals behave in ways that are congruent with their moral identities. For example, some individuals have a main life goal to care for others to demonstrate compassion. Others may find it most important to remain unbiased and just in all situations. Blasi's (1983) model suggests that when moral values are central to a personal identity, individuals interpret life experiences with a higher degree of moral relevance and meaning than those who view non-moral values as central to who they are.

Recently, Hertz and Krettenauer (2016) conducted a meta-analysis to examine the relationship between moral identity and moral behavior. One hundred eleven articles from a variety of academic journals were included. In general, they found a positive correlation between moral identity and moral behavior. However, effect sizes varied in those studies. The effect size was lower in non-Western cultures than in Western cultures. The authors suggested that the low effect size may be due to the lack of validity of the current moral identity measures in non-Western cultures or due to different conceptualizations of moral identity between cultures.



### **Erikson's Interaction Model of Moral Identity**

Erikson (1968) argued that identity and morality are interconnected and necessary for ethical strength. He stated that “an ethical capacity is the true criterion of identity” (Erikson, 1968, p 39). He also noted that “identity and fidelity are necessary for ethical strength” (p 126). This suggests that a moral identity is the goal of both moral development and identity development. Moral identity, like identity in general, is postulated to develop in adolescence, which is a period when ethical and moral values become salient as identity-relevant concerns (Erikson, 1968). However, Erikson's conception of identity development has been neglected in the literature of moral identity. In his influential work “Identity: Youth and Crisis”, Erikson defined identity both internally and social-contextually: “Ego identity is awareness of self-sameness and continuity and the style of one's individuality which coincides with the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others in the immediate community” (Erikson, 1968, p.50). In other words, identity formation is resolved by reconciling the identities imposed upon oneself by social contexts such as one's family and society. Erikson's multidimensional model of identity should be introduced to the literature of moral identity.

In the book entitled “Identity and The Life Cycle”, Erikson (1980) defined identity in three domains according to the degree of embeddedness of the self in context. The first domain is “ego identity” which includes fundamental beliefs about oneself, and was postulated to be temporally consistent and resistant to change. At the intersection of self and context, Erikson named “personal identity” as the second domain, which is the set of goals, values, and beliefs that distinguish oneself from others. “Personal identity” includes career goals, dating preferences, work choices, and other aspects of self that identify a person as a unique individual. The most contextually-oriented domain is “social identity,” where one's goals, values, and

beliefs have been integrated into one's sense of self from groups to which one belongs. It includes categories such as native language, country of origin, and racial background. Indeed, Erikson's concept of identity was meant to establish a social-developmental approach encompassing all elements of self, from the most internal ego conflicts to the individual's embeddedness in a cultural context (Cote, 1993). However, most research in moral identity so far has only focused on "ego identity".

These three domains of identity were further conceptualized slightly into a hierarchical analysis of organization method from the person outward (e.g., Kurtines & Silverman, 1999) or from society inward (e.g., Cote, 1996) by Neo-Eriksonian theorists. The "ego identity", "personal identity", and "social identity" were identified, in accordance with three levels of analysis: "ego-personal, personal-social, and social-structural" (Cote, 1996). The "ego-personal" level of analysis contains intrapersonal content areas such as personal characteristics and sense of self. The "personal-social" level of analysis contains interpersonal content areas such as family and friendship. The "social-structural" level of analysis contains social and cultural contents such as politics and society. The combinations of Eriksonian levels of analysis do not focus neatly on only one of the levels. Those analyses that focus on the individual level, such as personal identity, tend to incorporate aspects of ego or social identity as well. Moreover, models oriented principally toward the social-structural level often point to structural aspects of society and culture in which social identity is embedded (Schwartz, 2001). This organization reflects Erikson's view of lifespan development as occurring at the interface of self and society. As a result, identity represents a coherent picture that one shows to both oneself and to the outside world. Career, romantic preferences, religious ideology, and political preferences, among other

facets, come together to form the combination that represents who one is (Schwartz, 2001). Moral identity research should not only focus on the individual level.

Neo-Eriksonian alternative identity models have been put forth to examine contextual differences in expanding Erikson's three elements of identity development. For example, Kurtines and Silverman's (1999) "Co-constructivist Perspective" is conceptualized as a shared process between individuals and their social and cultural environments. Kurtines and Silverman maintained that social institutions are responsible for fostering individuals' skills (e.g., schools, family, and religion). In turn, individuals who demonstrate a healthy identity may tend to be more socially responsible and less disruptive within society (Kurtines & Silverman, 1999). As another example, Adams' contextual approach (Adams & Marshall, 1996) also highlighted social context. He assumed that individual identity could be embedded into social contexts (family, school) and structural contexts (society and culture). The effects of the social and cultural contexts are implemented through the individual interactional level, as in cultural norms being taught to children by their parents at home, and peers and teachers at school or community. Thus, Adams' person-in-context viewpoint incorporated both the individual and social elements of identity and the uniqueness in the social and cultural environment. Finally, Cote (1996) constructed a sociological view of identity, called the "Identity Capital Model", which primarily describes the social-structural level of analysis. Cote (1996) addressed the mechanism by which identity is formed through negotiation with family members, peers, and social institutions.

Moreover, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) provided a useful support for organizing the Neo-Eriksonian three levels (ego-personal, personal-social, and social-structural levels) of analyses. In Bronfenbrenner's view, human development is a dynamic, interactive process between individuals and various ecologies that range from

interpersonal relationships to external ideologies of the culture (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). These environments included the *microsystem* (the immediate surroundings such as family, school, and peer group), the *mesosystem* (the linkages between microsystems), the *exosystem* (the content which indirectly affects individuals through elements of society and major societal institutions such as media, neighbors, and social welfare), and the *macrosystem* (culture, religion, society). In Bronfenbrenner's view, these four systems are interrelated, which means that things occurring at the smallest level of context can affect what occurs in the largest context (Hong & Ham, 2001). In other words, individuals' sense of ego identity is a result of interactions with the people in their family, classmates in school, friends and neighbors in the community, and institutions of the country that they were raised in. Therefore, studying moral identity in relation to contexts on multiple levels is the key to understanding the development of the moral identity construct.

Both Erikson's mission in identity research and Bronfenbrenner's ecological system in human development were to establish a social-developmental approach encompassing all levels of self, from the most basic personal characters in ego identity to the individual's uniqueness in a socio-cultural context. However, there is a lack of theoretical and empirical research on contextual differences (e.g., personal-social and social-structural levels of analyses) in moral identity research. To what extent moral identity is a function of interacting in a specific context is a major question that has been only raised recently in moral identity research (Hardy & Carlo, 2011; Krettenauer et al., 2016).

Recent social cognitive approaches to moral identity have sought to address a view of the "personal-social" level of analysis to develop the concept of identity. This line of research may provide some preliminary evidence of context specificity in moral identity. The social cognitive

view of the self-concept as a network of identity schemas recognizes that people have multiple identities and that only a few of these identities can be held in consciousness at any given time (Markus & Kunda, 1986). Consequently, defining oneself as a moral person will only produce moral motivation when moral identity is currently available in a given context and in a relevant situation. Similarly, when a different aspect of moral identity is available in a particular context and situation, people should be more motivated to behave in a manner that is consistent with the values and goals associated with that identity in that specific context (Aquino et al., 2009). For example, in an experimental study, participants were asked to list as many of the 10 commandments as they could in order to activate participants' moral identity. The results indicated that when participants' moral self-schema was activated, the likelihood that they will intend to behave in a prosocial manner increased (Aquino et al., 2009).

Although most accounts of moral identity research assume identity is relatively stable across situations and contexts, like a personality trait, the social cognitive approach of moral identity provides insight on situations that individuals' moral identities can be activated or deactivated in situations (Monin & Jordan, 2009). However, the Eriksonian social-structural level of analysis has not been fully elaborated in a social cognitive approach even though researchers have realized that moral identity can be dependent on a specific situation and context.

### **Challenges in Defining and Investigating Moral Identity**

In order to understand moral identity in regards to the self-concept, multiple studies have investigated the representation of self-schemas in relation to moral identity (Hart & Carlo, 2011). Previous research on moral identity describes a range of differences in the ways in which individuals may decide on courses of action, based on salient personal goals and beliefs (e.g.,

Colby & Damon, 1992; Matsuba & Walker, 2005). Even though moral identity researchers have agreed to study self-concept on moral identity, the empirical research of moral identity faces challenges on various fronts. In the following section, two major challenges are raised in order to conceptually and empirically assess moral identity: narrow range of moral attributes, and context in culture.

#### Challenge #1: Narrow Range of Moral Attributes

Several studies have assessed moral identity indirectly through examining the psychological functioning of people who have been identified as leading morally exemplary lives. Colby and Damon (1992) conducted the initial study of this type. Participants included twenty-three individuals who demonstrated extraordinary commitments to moral ideals over an extended period of time. Commitment to moral values was identified in order to distinguish these participants from the general population. The researchers found that the most distinguishing characteristic of these exemplary individuals was the extent to which they identified themselves as agents of moral goodness and relentlessly pursued these goals. In addition, Hart and Fegley (1995) studied care exemplars among inner-city youth. They found that care exemplars described themselves with more moral traits such as honest, moral, and trustworthy than individuals in a matched comparison group, suggesting that these personality features were a more central part of their identity. Matsuba and Walker (2005) studied 40 young adults who had been nominated by social service agencies because of their moral commitment as volunteers, as well as a comparison group who were matched on demographical factors such as age, gender, level of education, and ethnicity. They found that moral exemplars were more consistent in developing unity between the self and morality in their interviews. For example, moral exemplars had formed relatively deep ideological convictions, and their personal beliefs and values were central

to who they were and had a significant influence on their moral involvements in their community.

A more direct way to investigate the integration of morality in the adolescent identity was developed by Arnold (1993). Arnold (1993) investigated adolescents' conceptions of personal virtue and their interrelations with moral reasoning and behavior. A sample of 80 adolescents were first asked to identify their core qualities from a list of virtues, and then responded to a series of interview questions asking them to explain the personal importance that these qualities had for them as individuals. Arnold (1993) found that participants varied greatly in their virtue choices: some of the adolescents identified exclusively with moral qualities such as being honest, helpful, and fair, whereas others responded that moral qualities were not importance to them. In addition, participants varied in their explanations of the personal importance of these qualities. Some adolescents defined a good person in moral terms, along with personal agency and emotional resonance. Others defined a good person by personal achievement and self-interest alone, with little concern for others (Arnold, 2000).

Barriga, Morrison, Liau, and Gibbs (2001) adapted Arnold's (1993) interview and designed a questionnaire measure named the "Good-Self Assessment" to assess the centrality of moral virtues to the self-concept. Participants were presented with a diagram of three circles, and asked to rate the importance of each moral and non-moral trait to their self-concept. Each trait was described with two synonyms such as "honest or truthful" in order to enhance respondents' understanding of the items. There were eight moral traits (considerate, honest, helpful, sympathetic, generous, sincere, fair, and dependable) and eight non-moral traits (imaginative, industrious, outgoing, athletic, funny, logical, independent, and energetic). The average of the non-moral item scores was subtracted from the average of the moral item scores to generate a

measure of moral self-relevance. Positive scores reflected greater endorsement of moral traits, whereas negative scores reflected greater endorsement of non-moral traits. They found that moral self-relevance negatively predicted externalizing behaviors such as delinquent and aggressive behaviors.

Aquino and Reed (2002) developed a well-known self-report measure of moral identity. They proposed that individuals whose self-schemas were organized around moral traits would describe themselves in a way that reflected moral self-definitions. They asked laypeople to generate an open-ended list of characteristics, traits, or qualities that best represent a highly moral person. They found that the majority of respondents characterized a moral person as possessing the following nine traits: *caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind* which were selected from a total of 376 traits after content analyses and self ratings. These traits also corresponded to the many traits mentioned by moral researchers and educators, showing evidence of construct validity (Lapsley & Lasky, 2001; Walker & Pitts, 1998). Then participants were first asked to envision how a person with these attributes would think, feel, and act. Then those participants responded to ten items about whether it is personally important for the individual to possess a moral quality (internalization), and how much the individual believes that his or her everyday activities communicate morality to others (symbolization).

Even though previous studies have attempted to measure moral identity directly, the number of moral prototypes needs to be broadened in assessing moral identity (Hart & Carlo, 2011). For example, Walker and Pitts (1998) found that the typology of a highly moral person included (a) principled and idealistic, (b) dependable and loyal, (c) integrity, (d) caring-trustworthy, (e) fair, and (f) confident (c.f., Walker & Pitts, 1998, Table 2). Walker and Hennig



(2004) also suggested that there were different types (brave, caring, and just) of moral exemplars. They found that the brave characteristic was primarily related to dominance, the caring characteristic was primarily related to nurturance, whereas the just characteristic was related to conscientiousness and openness. As discussed in the previous section, Haidt (2007) proposed five distinct moral foundations: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation that were differentially salient in different cultures. These results suggest that people may form multiple moral prototypes and call the field's attention to this wider range of moral virtues to be included in moral identity research.

#### Challenge #2: Context, Culture, and Moral Identity

According to Triandis (1995), culture is defined as a set of human-made objective and subjective elements that in the past have (a) increased the probability of survival, (b) resulted in satisfaction for the participants in an ecological niche, and thus (c) become shared among those who communicate with each other because they have a common language and live in the same time and space. The subjective elements include culturally specific beliefs, attitudes, norms and values that are developed through socialization and specific cultural experiences, which in turn influence social behaviors across various social settings (e.g., family, school, and workplace). Therefore, moral identities are likely shaped by the particular values and assumptions shared by people living in specific cultures. In the following sections, three possible explanations for observed cultural differences in moral identity are discussed.

#### *Cultures and Self-Concepts*

One possible explanation of cultural variation in moral identity might involve individuals' cultural objectives regarding self-concept. Self-concept represents central or desirable goals that serve as standards to guide the selection or evaluation of behavior, people,

and events (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). The sense of self and values of the society that children are raised in provides a framework that shapes parental behaviors and interactions with children, as well as the resulting developmental outcomes (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Within all cultures, parents engage in practices aimed at socializing the child to become a responsible adult member of the society (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Yet the patterning of self-concepts varies widely across cultural groups.

There are two different ways people might see themselves: independent versus interdependent. According to Markus and Kitayama's (1991) cross-cultural model of self-concepts, the self can be thought to derive its identity from inner attributes. These attributes are assumed to reflect an essence of the individual in which they are the basis of the individual's identity; they are perceived to be unique; they are self-contained; they are perceived to arise from the individual and not from interactions with others. Markus and Kitayama (1991) referred to this self-contained model of the self as the independent view of self. Another way of considering the self can be viewed as fundamentally connected to, and sustained by, a number of significant relationships. Rather than elaborating on how behavior and thoughts derive from the individual's inner features, viewing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship means that behavior is recognized as contingent upon perceptions of others' thoughts, feelings and actions. With this view, individuals are not perceived as separate and distinct entities but as participants in a larger social unit. Their experience of identity reflects their experiences and their relationships with others. Markus and Kitayama (1991) labelled this second construal of self as the interdependent view of self.

Self-concepts are shaped by the cultural practices that influence what individuals tend to value and believe. At the same time, cultural practices are also shaped by the kinds of self-

concepts a culture's members have. In this way, culture and self can be said to make-up each other (Shweder et al., 1997). One pioneering study exploring self-concept in different cultures was done by Geert Hofstede (1980). He explored the values and concerns of IBM employees around the world. He gave questionnaires including items that explored values purportedly related to individualism and collectivism to 117,000 employees in IBM offices in 40 different countries. He found that people participating in individualist cultures such as the United States, Canada, and Western European nations were more likely to elaborate on independent aspects of themselves, and they came to feel distinct from others and emphasized the importance of self-consistency. People participating in collectivist cultures like Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the South Pacific were more likely to attend to interdependent aspects of their self-concepts (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994).

These cultural differences in the self-concept are not just limited to individuals' self-descriptions. They can be observed in brain activation patterns, as demonstrated in functional magnetic resonance imaging studies. In one experiment, Chinese and Western participants were instructed to consider how well a number of adjectives characterized themselves or characterized their family members such as mothers while they were in a brain scanner (Zhu, Zhang, Fan, & Han, 2007). While doing this task, Westerners showed different regions of brain activation, suggesting that they represented themselves and their mothers in distinct ways. In contrast, when the Chinese were evaluating themselves or their mothers, they showed activation patterns in the same brain regions for these two tasks. This suggests that Chinese representations for themselves and for their family members are not that distinct and both reflect on the self-concept. Thus, close relationships form a core part of the self for those with interdependent selves.

*Cultures and Cognitive Processes*

A second possible explanation of cultural differences in moral identity is based on dynamic relationships between culture and cognitive style, including attentional, perceptual, and attributional processes. That is, people with different cultural backgrounds may attend to different aspects of the same social event, and make different causal attributions, all of which may contribute to cultural differences in moral identity.

Recent evidence from cognition and perception research has shown that relatively collectivistic East Asians view the world holistically, tending to perceive the world as consisting of an interrelated whole. Consistent with this perspective, East Asians assign causality more to situational factors and this should mean that they would be especially good at detecting relations among different events (Ji, Peng, & Nisbett, 2000). In contrast, individualistic Westerners tend to engage in analytic cognition, focusing on and attributing causality to the primary object in the field without much consideration of its context (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001). Socialization processes (e.g., parenting, peer groups, and societies) prepare individuals to master culturally specific attentional and perceptual patterns (Ishii, Reyes, & Kitayama, 2003).

Evidence that Eastern and Western cultures exhibit holistic and analytic thinking tendencies, respectively, comes from a variety of methodologies and has implications for other psychological fields. In one of the early studies, European Americans and Chinese Americans were asked to describe what they saw in Rorschach ink blots (Abel & Hus, 1949). The Rorschach is a projective test in which people report what they see in an ambiguous stimulus. The results revealed that these two groups of Americans apparently saw things quite differently. The European Americans were more likely to describe what they saw based on a single aspect of the card. In contrast, Chinese Americans were more likely to give “whole-card” responses, describing what they saw based on the entire image on the card. In an eye-tracking study

conducted by Chua and colleagues (2005), cultural differences were found in eye movements. Presented with the same picture of a focal object (e.g., a tiger) placed on a background (e.g., the forest), Chinese participants were observed to have rapid eye movements between the background and the focal object whereas American participants detected the focal object sooner and focused on it longer.

Cultural differences in cognitive style have been discovered not only in the domains of attention and perception, but also that of causal attribution. The Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE) is a well-established phenomenon (Ross & Nisbett, 2011). The FAE refers to the tendency of people to overestimate a person's behaviors as produced by his or her dispositions (e.g., personality and attitudes) and underestimate behavior to the social and environmental forces (e.g., social pressure) influencing the person.

The FAE consistently has been shown in various contexts through major studies focusing on North Americans. However, several studies have established an association between culturally divergent lay theories of the FAE, showing that, compared with North Americans, East Asians are more likely to attribute an event to contextual stimuli and less likely to be dispositional in their attributions (Nisbett, et al., 2001). In one study demonstrating this difference, Morris and Peng (1994) analyzed newspaper articles about similar manslaughter cases in America and China. It was shown that American reporters attributed the murder more to dispositions of the murderer (e.g., having an aggressive personality), while Chinese reporters attributed the event more to the situational factors (e.g., poor social relationships and family pressure). In the same study conducted by Morris and Peng (1994), participants were shown a picture of a fish swimming ahead of a group, and were asked to explain why the front fish is swimming ahead of a group. They found that Chinese were more likely to make external

attributions to explain why a single fish is swimming ahead of a group (e.g., the fish is being chased by others), whereas Americans were more likely to explain the fish's behavior in terms of internal attributes (e.g., the fish is leading the others).

The same question was further explored with Americans and Indians in moral domains (Miller, 1984). The participants were asked to describe a situation when someone had behaved in either a prosocial manner or a deviant manner and then to explain why the person had behaved that way. The reasons people gave for the actor's behaviors were examined, whether they made explanations that referred to the actor's general disposition or to the context. The results revealed that Americans showed clear evidence for the fundamental attribution error by explaining people's behaviors as largely due to their personalities. In contrast, Indian adults showed evidence for a reverse FAE because they tended to focus more on the situation than on the disposition.

#### *Cultures and Value Orientation*

A third possible explanation of cultural variation in moral identity might involve individuals' value orientations. Cultural psychologists suggested that people both within and across societies have quite different value orientations that reflect their different heritages, personal experiences, and social locations (Triandis, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Individuals' cultural backgrounds may shape their value priorities. Schwartz (1994a) found that conservation (security, conformity, and tradition) is prioritized in societies based on interdependent social relations. On the other hand, intellectual autonomy (curiosity, open mindedness, creativity) and affective autonomy (pleasure, exciting life) are prioritized in societies based on independent social relations. Another study found that the independence items (personal agency, self-direction, self enhancement, and creativity) are more relevant for persons

who stress independence; whereas the interdependence items, such as communion with others, concern for family and close others, fulfilling duties, conformity and responsibilities to in-groups, and self-effacement are more relevant for individuals who stress interdependence (Kam, Zhou, Zhang, Ho, 2012).

Cultural variations in value orientations may be particularly salient in a context of multiculturalism. Adapting to a new identity and cultural environment are challenges for immigrants. Many immigrants modify their own values to conform more to those that prevail in their new home country. At school, immigrant adolescents and young adults feel pressured to adopt the culture of their new home country. As a result, they may focus on the achievement aspect of identity formation in order to be successful in the new environment. At home, they may encounter a different environment that reflects the values and traditions of their country of origin. Thus, they may maintain their traditional values and identity in family practices (Knafo & Schwartz, 2001). Moreover, immigrant adolescents and young adults may wish to communicate values from their country of origin that resemble values in the new culture. If these value systems differ, they must choose between the two value systems or find a unique way to integrate the two contradictory identities (Berry, 1990).

In sum, examining selves, values and identities in both cross-cultural and within cultural differences in immigrants would provide a synthesizing framework for addressing Eriksonian contextual (personal-social) and cultural (social-structural) levels of analysis in identity development. Immigrants are moved from a familiar environment in which the rules of the government and their communities are well defined. During their migration, their context changes, and all that they are familiar with becomes the unknown. Such changes are inevitable because of the different belief system and cultural norms that exist in their host country.

Thus, this cultural approach should be adopted in studying moral identity to fill in the gap between contextual and cultural aspects.

### **Overview of Studies**

#### *Limitations of Previous Research and Contributions of the Current Studies*

Limitations of previous research make it necessary to further investigate links among culture, context, and moral identity. First, a culturally inclusive measure of moral identity is absent from all of the previously reviewed literatures. Recent research in virtue ethics, character education, and political orientation across different cultures and religious traditions has suggested that the moral domain needs to be broader than the issues of harm and fairness currently represented in moral psychology scales (Haidt, 2007). Values research has much to offer to the empirical study of morality and is too often ignored by moral psychologists (Graham et al, 2011). Clearly, in the moral identity literature, many values are moral values, even if morality is defined only in the narrow terms of benevolence and universalism. However, there is a danger that some other common domains are missed when identifying a list of important moral values in the traditional moral identity literature. For example, intelligence and achievement were also viewed as characteristics of being a good person (Arnold, 1993), yet these traits have not drawn much attention in moral identity research. Thus, similar to the method developed by Aquino and Reed (2002) and Arnold (1993), the new approach of assessing culturally inclusive moral identity should start from individuals' prototypical conceptions of a highly moral person.

Second, few studies have examined moral identity in a specific context. According to Erikson's multidimensional model of identity, identity clearly interacts with contexts. However, moral identity research has not addressed this issue so far. Conceptually, research on moral identity is based either on the personality trait approach (Lapsley & Hill, 2009) or on the socio-



cognitive approach (Monin & Jordan, 2009; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). Trait-based approaches assume cross-context similarities in behavioral dispositions relevant for individuals' moral conduct. Socio-cognitive approaches, by contrast, stress the malleability of situation-specific knowledge structures and schemas that guide moral action (Monin & Jordan, 2009). However, neither trait-based nor socio-cognitive approaches consider cross-context differentiation. Thus, the current studies extended previous literature in moral identity to investigate within- and cross-cultural differences in three contexts (family, school, and community/society), which varied in terms of closeness of interpersonal relationships.

Third, and most importantly, no study has attempted to explore cultural aspects in moral identity, as suggested by the "social-structural" level of analysis in Erikson's theory of identity. Thus, there is a risk of an ethnocentric bias in defining the developmental standard on the basis of moral identity in Western cultures. The description of Western moral identity may fail to generalize to other cultures because it is limited to a Western understanding of morality. It is reasonable to assume that cultural differences in moral identity may be due to either measurement issues of moral identity (e.g., a narrow range of moral value attributes) or different conceptualizations of the moral identity construct (e.g., moral identity research started within a Western ethnocentric view of moral outlook). Thus, a cross-cultural comparison of moral identity demands a carefully designed study. The present research examined the influence of cultural orientation on moral identity, comparing Eastern and Western cultures.

### *Research Plan*

Three studies were conducted to address these limitations described above (a narrow range of moral values, specific contexts, and cultural differences). Erikson's "ego-personal", "personal-social", and "social-structural" levels of analysis were applied in the moral identity

research. Study I introduced a new empirical approach for assessing moral identity to establish a culturally inclusive list of prototypical conceptions of a highly moral person. It provided a foundation for Studies II and III. The new empirical approach combines several features of moral identity measures that have not been integrated into a coherent approach. Similar to the method developed by Aquino and Reed (2002), the new approach starts from Western individuals' prototypical conceptions of a highly moral person (Eriksonian "ego-personal" level of analysis). Because there is no previous Chinese study using this approach to study moral identity, a free listing of the self-importance of moral attributes was used to generate culturally exclusive attributes, which were then combined with the Western moral attributes to create a culturally inclusive list of attributes to describe a highly moral person.

Study II focused on similarities and differences in moral identity between Canada and China, as a study of the "personal-social" and "social-structural" levels of analyses in Erikson's theory of identity. Moral identities in the contexts of family, school and community/society were examined in Western Canadian and Eastern Chinese samples. Cultural differences in self-importance of moral identities in each context, cross-context differentiation in moral identity, as well as relative importance of value-domains for defining a persons' moral identity were examined in the Study II. In addition, a sample of bi-cultural Chinese Canadians was studied to extend the investigation of the socio-cultural impact of culture on moral identity in Study III. A person's cultural identity and sense of belonging to a particular culture may shape his or her moral identity. Conflicts experienced by Chinese immigrants between traditional moral concepts and Western values of independence in the contexts of family, school, and society were explored in the current study.

### *Research Questions*

In the previous section we discussed possible explanations for why research needs to consider context and cultural influences on moral identity as well as limitations in measures and conceptualizations of the moral identity construct. As a potential solution, we suggested (a) including a broader range and cultural inclusion of value domains in measures of moral identity; (b) assessing moral identity in various social contexts with regard to closeness of interpersonal relationships (family, school, community/society); and (c) investigating cultural differences between Western Canadians and Eastern Chinese in moral identity. The current studies were designed to investigate these three factors together. Based on the research discussed above, the general research questions are: Do individuals differ systematically across cultures in how their moral identities are defined in various social contexts? More importantly, how do cultural orientations influence the individual's characteristic level in moral identity?

### **Study I: Creating a culturally inclusive measure for moral identity**

A culturally inclusive measure of moral identity is absent from all of the previously reviewed literatures. Recent research in virtue ethics, character education, and political orientation across different cultures and religious traditions has suggested that the moral domain needs to be broadened and include issues other than harm-avoidance and fairness, which are currently predominant in moral identity measures (Miller, 2007). Values research has much to offer the empirical study of morality and is too often ignored by moral psychologists (Graham et al, 2011). Clearly in the moral identity literature, many values are moral values, even if morality is defined only in narrow terms of welfare and fairness concerns. However, there is a risk that other value domains will be missed when identifying a list of important moral values in the traditional moral identity literature. Thus, similar to the method developed by Aquino and Reed

(2002) and Arnold (1993), a new approach of assessing culturally inclusive moral identity starts with individuals' prototypical conceptions of a highly moral person.

**Study I-a: Identifying value attributes that describe individuals' prototypical conception of a "highly moral person" in a Western cultural context (North America)**

At the time Study I was conducted, four studies were available that had investigated people's prototypical conceptions of a highly moral person using a free listing method. Three out of four studies were based in North-American samples (Hardy, Walker, Olsen, Skalskoi, & Basinger, 2011; Lapsley & Lasky, 2001; Walker & Pitts, 1998), whereas one study was based on a cross-cultural comparison of the Marianna Islands, the Philippines, Taiwan, Turkey, U.S., Venezuela, and Palau (Smith, Smith, & Christopher, 2007). A pool of values that make a highly moral person was generated based on these four studies. This pool provided the stimulus material for all the remaining studies.

In Walker and Pitts' (1998) study, 120 Canadian adults (ages ranged from 17 to 65+) were asked to generate personality characteristics that were seen as descriptive of a highly moral person using a free-listing procedure. The total number of attributes provided by the 120 participants was 1249. Several judgment rules were used to reduce the number of descriptors that participants had listed: any phrases and sentences were divided into single descriptors; adjectives were used instead of nouns; synonymous terms were combined; antonym pairs which were generated less frequently were deleted; idiosyncratic responses were eliminated (Walker & Pitts, 1998). Finally, 92 attributes as descriptive of a highly moral person were included in the study. In addition to the free listing, participants rated each of the 92 attributes with regard to "how characteristic the following descriptors are of a highly moral person" using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (almost never true) to 7 (almost always true). Six out of 92 attributes (*irrational*,

*naïve, eccentric, detached, solitary, and is a leader*) were rated below the neutral point, and thus were considered as rather uncharacteristic of a highly moral person (Descriptors and ratings see Walker & Pitts, 1998, Table 1).

Lapsley and Lasky (2001) extended the previous work by testing 73 American college students' moral prototypes. Participants were given instructions and provided with a maximum of 20 lines to list as many attributes of "good character" as they can think of. Similar judgment rules as in Walker and Pitts (1998) were used to reduce the number of attributes. This yielded a list of 170 trait adjectives. Then, these attributes were rated by 121 American college students in a question of "how characteristic the following descriptors are of a person who has good character?" on a 7 Likert scale, ranging from 1 (almost never true) to 7 (almost always true). Five attributes (*lucky, popular, shy, provocative, and well-noticed*), were rated below the neutral point. (Descriptors and ratings see Lapsley & Lasky, 2001, Table 1).

Hardy et al. (2011) used a similar procedure to study adolescents' conceptions of what it means to be a moral person. Two hundred American adolescents (12-18 years) free listed 1446 descriptors. By using the Walker and Pitts' (1998) procedure, the initial list was reduced to 94 descriptors of highly moral persons. Moreover, 100 early adolescents aged 11-14 years, and 99 late adolescents aged 15-18 rated the 94 attributes with regard to how well they described a highly moral person using from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very well*). Two attributes (*cool and married*) were rated below the neutral point by early adolescents; 24 attributes were rated below the neutral point by late adolescents (Descriptors and ratings, see Hardy & Walker, 2011, Appendix A).

Smith, Smith, and Christopher (2007) provided some cultural evidence of mapping everyday moral prototypes. They recruited college student participants from the Marianna

Islands (n = 152), the Philippines (n = 151), Taiwan (n = 297), Turkey (n = 148), U.S. (n = 202), Venezuela (n = 148), and Palau (n = 255). Participants were asked to freely list all features of the good person that came to mind. The study provided 64 attributes (see Smith et al., 2007 table 1).

In the current study, all attributes from the four previous studies were selected: 92 attributes of describing a highly moral person were generated in Walker and Pitts' study (1998); 170 traits were generated in Lapsley and Lasky's study (2001); 94 traits each for early and late adolescents were generated in Hardy et al.'s study (2011); and 64 traits from Smith et al., (2007). In order to reduce the number of attributes, the following rules were used in the current study:

1. Synonyms across the four studies were merged.
2. Attributes that only appeared once across the four studies were dropped.
3. Negative descriptors that indicated that a particular attribute was considered uncharacteristic of a highly moral person were eliminated.

Following this procedure, a total list of 80 value attributes was generated (see Table 1).

In summary, in this study I-a, a list of values that defines a highly moral person in Western cultures was generated based on these four studies. In a pilot study, participants were encouraged to add additional attributes they felt were missing on the list. Only one out of twenty participants added one attribute that was not included in the list ("forward thinking"). It indicated that the 80 attributes adequately described a moral person at least in the Canadian sample. Moreover, we also included a cross-cultural study done by Smith et al., (2007) because their study mainly focused on universal concepts of a highly moral person.

**Study I-b: Identifying value attributes that describe individuals' prototypical conceptions of a "highly moral person" in an Eastern cultural context (China)**

Since there was no previous study related to value attributes using a Chinese sample, a free listing procedure was used to generate culturally exclusive attributes that describe a highly moral person.

## Method

### *Participants*

One hundred and nine (36 male, 68 female, and 5 participants who did not indicate their gender) university students ( $M_{age} = 19.91$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ) from North-East Normal University in Chang Chun were asked to identify attributes of a highly moral person. All responses were translated into English and back translated into Chinese by two bilingual graduate students at Wilfrid Laurier University.

### *Procedure*

Participants were asked to “write down the characteristics and attributes of a highly moral person”. Participants were told to list at least 10 attributes, but 20 blanks were made available (See Appendix A for the Chinese measure). The moral attributes provided by Chinese participants were compared with the list of attributes used in Study Ia from predominantly Western cultures.

## Results

A total of 1,924 attributes were created by Chinese university students. Similar to Walker and Pitts' (1998) procedure, several steps were used to reduce the number of value attributes that was generated in the Chinese sample. First, attributes which were mentioned only once or twice by participants were dropped. Second, synonyms within the Chinese attributes list were collapsed into one attribute. Third, phrases in the remaining Chinese attributes list were reworded as adjectives. Then, the remaining attributes were compared with the attributes in the

Canadian list from Study Ia. Synonyms between the two lists were excluded from the Chinese list. Based on this procedure, seventeen culturally specific attributes were identified: *peaceful, credible, incorruptible, warm-hearted, motivated, ambitious, diligent, civilized, patriotic, solidaric, careful, prudent, filial piety, dedicated, principled, active, and outgoing*. It turned out that seven value attributes that were on the list generated in Study Ia (*empathic, having integrity, self-assured, nice, cheerful, virtuous, upstanding*) had no specific translation in Mandarin but were synonymous with other Chinese terms found to be descriptive of a highly moral person in the Chinese sample. These attributes do not have a direct Chinese translation so we could not include them. These seven attributes were therefore dropped from the list. In sum, a total of 90 culturally inclusive moral values was generated and used in Studies II and III. Table 2 illustrates all 90 attributes that are grouped into three categories: common attributes that were mentioned in two cultures, unique Chinese attributes, and unique Western attributes (for a translation of these attributes in Mandarin as used in Study II see Appendix B).

In summary, Study Ib created a culturally inclusive list of value attributes defining a highly moral person. In addition to overlapping value attributes cross-culturally, the Chinese list used for defining a moral person was illustrated by specific values that not only reflect upon interpersonal morality such as “*credible and warm-hearted*”, but also imply Chinese socialism (e.g., *patriotic, careful, prudent*). There are certain concepts such as *filial piety* and *solidaric* that have been mentioned in the literature as specific Chinese/Asian values for a long time (Hwang, 1999). Other attributes such as *peaceful, principled, credible, and incorruptible* that are consistent with Confucian values of living in harmony with others and societies. According to Confucianism, only when a person is able to suppress inborn desires and to arrange relationships



with others in accordance with humanity is that person qualified to be called a moral person (Hwang, 1999).

**Study Ic: Identifying value domains of individuals' conception of a highly moral person across cultures**

In order to assess what value domains define a persons' moral identity, Schwartz's circumplex model was employed as an analytical tool. Schwartz's model has been validated in several independent studies with large cross-cultural data sets (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz et al., 2012). In its original version, the model identifies ten domains that constitute the basic structure of human values (Universalism, Benevolence, Conformity, Tradition, Security, Power, Achievement, Stimulation, and Self-direction, see Schwartz, 1992). More recently, Schwartz et al. (2012) provided a refined model that further differentiated the original ten into 19 value domains. However, the differentiated model does not invalidate the original ten value domains (cf. Schwartz et al., 2012).

Based on the theoretical description of the value domains, as well as items that have been used to assess these value domains, all 90 value attributes used in the present study were classified into value domains. The more differentiated 19 values domain model was used whenever possible. However, if a particular value differentiation was not reflected in the list of 90 attributes, the original model was applied (this was the case, for instance, for the distinction between Self-direction thought and Self-direction action). If a value attribute was deemed too ambiguous for classification, it was considered as unclassified.

All 90 attributes were classified by five independent coders (graduate students and a senior researcher) who had familiarized themselves with Schwartz's circumplex model. The intercoder agreement ranged from .82 to .90 with a mean score of .85 for the Western 80 moral

attributes. The codings for Chinese unique moral attributes were discussed and all discrepancies were unanimously resolved. This process yielded 13 value domains that made up the list of 90 value attributes as used in the present study (for a full list of all value attributes and their categorization see Table 3): Benevolence-dependability (12 attributes out of 90), Benevolence-caring (11 attributes), Universalism-tolerance (9 attributes), Universalism-concern (4), Self-direction (5), Conformity-rules (5), Conformity-interpersonal (7), Achievement (9), Face (2), Tradition (2), Hedonism (2), Humble (4), and Security (6). Twelve attributes (out of 90) were not classified (see Figure 1). Even though Universalism and Benevolence were clearly overrepresented as descriptors of a highly moral person, together these domains accounted for just 40% of value attributes.

In summary, we applied the value research approach which has much to offer the empirical study of morality, but is too often ignored by moral psychologists in the study of moral identity. In this approach, the culturally inclusive moral values in both Canadian and Chinese samples were coded into 13 domains. Clearly, our results suggested that in addition to Benevolence and Universalism, the moral domain needs to be broader than the issues of caring and fairness.

### Discussion

The main goal of Study I was to refine the measurement of moral identity. Previous measures of moral identity, such as the well-known self-report measure of moral identity, Aquino and Reed (2002) used a narrowly defined set of values (see Figure 1) that mostly focuses on Benevolence and Universalism-concern (e.g., *caring, compassionate, fair, helpful, and kind*). However, recent research in virtue ethics, character education, and political orientation has suggested that the moral domain needs to be broadened and should include issues other

thancaring and fairness which are currently overrepresented in moral identity research (Haidt, 2007; Miller, 2007). Figure 1 illustrated different moral domains between the current measure and Aquino and Reed's (2007) measure. Our results suggest that people may form multiple moral domains and this should call the field's attention to this wider range of moral virtues to be included in moral identity research.

There is also a risk of an ethnocentric bias in defining the developmental standard on the basis of moral identity in Western cultures. The description of Western moral identity may fail to generalize to other cultures because it is limited to a Western understanding of moral norms. Cross-cultural research on moral judgment in other cultures such as India (Miller, 2007) and Brazil (Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993) has revealed moral considerations beyond the universal morality of care and fairness. Moral identity should also involve values about tradition, hierarchical role fulfillment, and moral expectations of loyalty to the local or national group from non-Westerners. Thus, the present refined measure of moral identity was formed by assessing value-orientations inclusive of people from both cultural backgrounds and their explicit and spontaneous descriptions to define a highly moral person. Our present studies illustrated this breadth in that Chinese participants gave open-ended responses when asked to define a highly moral person in their own words. Parallel to the universal morality position, many made reference to harm, human welfare, and fairness. However, others made reference to moral values in accordance with Confucianism which reflected major dyadic relationships and social identities in Chinese society. From the perspective of Confucianism, morality is to socialize individuals to suppress personal desires in social interactions, and to eliminate "Xiao Wo", personal-centered by emphasizing "Da Wo", societal-centeredness actions (Hwang, 1999). As a consequence of Chinese ideology of being a highly moral person, "I" is transformed into "we" and society with

the group is strengthened. This assumption has been supported in social identity literature. Wang (2004) compared cultural self-constructs between Chinese children and European Americans children. She found that Chinese children often described themselves in terms of social roles and context-specific characteristics which further prepare them to become competent members of their respective societies (Wang, 2004). In the next study, cultural similarities and differences in moral identity between Canada and China were examined.

### **Study II**

Study II was conducted to address the three issues of moral identity simultaneously: (a) culturally inclusive attributes describing a highly moral person from Study I were tested in Canadian and Chinese samples; (b) Specific contexts (family, school, and community/society) were implemented into moral identity research to address the “personal-social” level of analysis; (c) Evidence on how cultural representations (social-structural level of analysis in identity) shape moral identity in these three contexts were provided across cultures.

Researchers (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002; Hardy & Carlo, 2011) in moral psychology have initiated projects to investigate moral identity; however, they agreed that a precise definition and methodology of moral identity has been lacking in establishing the value of this new area. One of the challenges is that cross-cultural explorations of moral identity are absent. Moral identity may take different forms in different cultures, or play an important role in morality in some cultures but not in others (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). The main goal of the present study was to investigate how Western and Eastern cultural orientations relate to moral identities. Previous cross-cultural research on moral development was mostly focused on moral reasoning (Gibbs, Basinger, Grime, & Snarey, 2007), moral emotions (Krettenauer & Jia, 2013) and moral motivation (Miller, 2007). Thus, the present study explored a largely uncharted territory and

could provide invaluable insight into the relative role of identity in the domain of morality across cultures. However, taking a cross-cultural perspective on the moral identity construct involves more than just replicating moral identity research in different cultures. It requires expansions in the conceptualization and measurement of the construct itself.

### **Moral Identity, Self-concept, and Culture**

According to Erikson (1980), moral identity is the goal of both moral and identity development. Moral identity is thus defined as the extent to which a person views moral values as central to his or her identity (Hardy & Carlo, 2011). Some people feel that being honest, compassionate, fair or generous is central for their identity, whereas others consider values such as being independent, successful or outgoing as more important. Moreover, identities are differentiated into multiple facets because they reflect unique relationships and social interactions that characterize an individual's various social roles (Burke & Tully, 1977). Although individuals have numerous social roles (e.g., spouse, student, and worker), they develop role identities only for those roles that they internalized into their self-concepts. However, according to cross-cultural psychological theory, it is possible to arrange diverse cultures along interpretable value dimensions in different social roles. For example, Hofstede (1980) introduced one of the most well-known conceptions, the dimension of "Collectivism vs. Individualism". This has subsequently gained wide acceptance and has been used in many studies in moral psychology (e.g., Bedford & Hwang, 2003; Krettenauer & Jia, 2013; Miller, 2007).

To capture the difference between individualistic, Western cultural orientations and collectivistic, non-Western cultural orientations, Markus and Kitayama (1991) introduced the concept of self-construals. The independent self-construal, which tends to be dominant in

individualistic cultures (e.g., the United States, Canada, Western Europe), emphasizes attributes that make individuals unique. It includes mental representations of individual traits, abilities, motives and values along with the motivation to be independent (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). By contrast, an interdependent self-construal is dominant in collectivistic cultures (e.g., China, Japan, and Korea). In these cultures, individuals tend to define themselves in the context of social relationships and group memberships. This view of the self includes mental representations of social norms and others' opinions. An interdependent self-construal is linked to the motivation to adjust to the demands of others and to maintain harmony within one's group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

These independent and interdependent self-construals may construct two ways of conceptualizing moral identities: one of them having at its center individual rights, and the other having at its center, the social responsibility that arises by valuing sociality (Miller, 2007). In the former type of moral identity, individuals are seen as having interests that need to be defended against others. In communally oriented moral identity, duties arise from the individual's community occupying a central place. For example, Rozin, Lowery, Imada, and Haidt (1999) postulated two different ethics: the ethic of autonomy, in which the autonomous and independent individual is the essence of moral values, and the ethic of community, in which the group and social cohesion are the major concerns. In a similar vein, Schwartz (1994) found that intellectual autonomy (curiosity, open mindedness, creativity) and affective autonomy (pleasure, exciting life) are prioritized in societies based on independent social relations. On the other hand, security, conformity, and tradition are prioritized in societies based on interdependent social relations.

In addition, it has become widely accepted that identity is not a fixed entity, but rather a dynamic structure through interacting with social contexts (Higgins, 1987). In order to interact with social contexts, individuals need to be aware of the different roles and expectations prescribed by each context (e.g., family, school, and community). From this perspective, individuals' moral identities across different contexts can be seen as flexible in how they manage their interpersonal relationships. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), in more collectivist cultures (such as China), value is placed on adjusting behavior to fit the demands of in-group members. In these cultures, relationships may be viewed as more flexible across different social contexts. In particular, Miller and Bersoff (1992) and Shweder et al., (1987) implied that Indians placed more similar moral demands across different social relationships (family members, friends, and ingroup strangers) than Americans. They found that Indians more frequently viewed responsiveness to another's needs as a moral duty that extends across a broader range of social relationships. In contrast, Americans judged that the responsibility to help was weaker when the relationship involved low personal affinity (Miller, 2007). This result provides insight into context-differentiation cross-culturally, suggesting that Indians viewed social relationships as more fluid and interconnected. In turn they were less likely to separate types of social contexts with regard to their moral demands than Americans. This line of research has been supported in the area of interpersonal moral obligation between Indians and Americans; however, no previous studies investigated moral identities in relation to social contexts among other countries. In the current study, it was expected that people in China would demonstrate a less separated morality across different social contexts (less differentiated/more interrelated across contexts). In contrast, Canada places primary importance on forming personal attributes, which leads to an effort to maintain an independent self-concept that reflects independence from different types of

relationships. Thus, their views of moral demands should be more differentiated across social contexts.

### **Measurement of Moral Identity and Culture**

Previous research on moral identity has been mostly based either on trait or social-cognitive approaches (Lapsley & Hill, 2009; Monin & Jordan, 2009). Trait-based approaches assume dispositions as most relevant to individuals' moral conduct. Socio-cognitive approaches, by contrast, emphasize the malleability of situation-specific knowledge structures and schemas that guide self-regulation and action (Krettenauer, Murua, & Jia, 2016). However, neither trait nor social-cognitive approaches consider contextual and especially cultural differences. Given the previous discussion between moral identity and cultural norms, measures of moral identity need to be revised when investigating cultural differences.

The first limitation of moral identity research that needs to be overcome in general relates to the definition of the moral domain (Krettenauer et al., 2016). Previous measures of moral identity used a narrow-ranged set of values that mostly focus on benevolence (e.g., *caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind*). However, recent research in virtue ethics, character education, and political orientation has suggested that the moral domain needs to be broader than the issues of caring and fairness which are currently overrepresented in moral identity (Haidt, 2007). For example, Walker and Pitts (1998) found that the typology of a highly moral person included (a) principled and idealistic, (b) dependable and loyal, (c) has integrity, (d) caring–trustworthy, (e) fair, and (f) confident (c.f., Walker & Pitts, 1998, Table 2). Walker and Hennig (2004) also suggested that there were different sets of moral exemplars (brave, caring, and just). Haidt (2007) proposed five distinct moral foundations: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and



sanctity/degradation. These results suggest that people may form multiple moral domains and call the field's attention to this wider range of moral virtues to be included in moral identity research.

The second limitation of moral identity research in a cross-cultural perspective relates to a risk of an ethnocentric bias in defining moral values in accordance with Western cultures. The description of Western moral values may fail to adequately generalize the values of other non-Western cultures because Western moral values are limited to a Western understanding of morality. Because there is no previous cross-cultural study on moral identity, culturally unique moral values need to be generated through a comprehensive study on the variance of cultural-specific moral identity.

The third limitation of moral identity research in cross-cultural perspective relates to context. Based on an interactional view of identity (Erikson, 1980), identities should emphasize the transaction between certain personal variables and highly specific contextual settings. Personal variables and contextual variables are interactive, and thus descriptions of a highly moral person must be qualified by referring to local settings and contexts (Mischel, 1990). Furthermore, previous discussions have also indicated that individuals who are influenced by independent/interdependent self-construals may have different awareness when they interact with social contexts. In the present study, commonly used procedures in self-concept research (see Baird, Le, & Lucas, 2006; Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993) were applied for assessing context differentiation in individuals' moral identity. Participants were asked to rate the self-importance of moral values independently in three different social contexts (family, school, and community/society). The variability of ratings across contexts was then used as an indicator of cross-context differentiation of individuals' moral identity.

### **Moral Values in Chinese Culture**

China is commonly assumed to reflect a collectivistic culture fostering an interdependent self, even though social change in Chinese society might complicate this picture (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). Confucian values of effortful and respectful learning (Tweed & Lehman, 2002) were employed in Chinese education during a long span of Chinese history. Consequently, for thousands of years, Chinese citizens were accustomed to giving, obeying and following authority in the society. Extended families with hierarchical relationships were also important in traditional Chinese society. Moreover in contemporary Chinese history, the Cultural Revolution in Communism swept the nation in the 1970s, driving Chinese to “nation-oriented” collectivism (Yao, 2000). A very popular Chinese analogy of the national value is “Chinese people are like bricks”, which means all people have the same functions and are willing to be assigned wherever needed by the society (Yao, 2000). Thus, Chinese people should attribute national and societal level meanings to the concept of a highly moral person, based on the moral ideology that the nation is the most basic and important collective.

However, the processes of industrialization and modernization in China have prompted young people to be more mobile and independent, adopting a more individualistic lifestyle with a smaller family size (Chen, Bond, & Tang, 2007). A cross-generational study shows that younger generations in China are more individualistic than older ones: they are more likely to live according to their own lifestyles and less likely to follow the traditional collective ideology (Sun & Wang, 2010). During this period of social change, it has become important for children to acquire the individualistic values of achievement, self-reliance and autonomy (Sun & Wang, 2010). In addition, Helwig, Arnold, Tan, and Boyd (2007) investigated moral judgments and reasoning between Chinese urban, rural adolescents and urban Canadian adolescents. They found

that Chinese adolescents from both urban and rural settings preferred a democratic system such as personal freedom of voice, transparency of political decision making, and concepts of political autonomy, justice and fairness (Helwig, et al., 2007). Educators in China now encourage parents to help children develop individualistic skills that are adaptive in a market-oriented society: self-expression, self-direction, self-confidence (Yu, 2002). The traditionally valued characteristic of shyness is becoming a non-adaptive characteristic for Chinese children, as urbanization encourages people to be outgoing and express themselves (Chen, Wang, & Wang, 2009).

As a consequence of the rapid societal change, Chinese people need to adapt themselves to new ways of living a moral life. During the course of this shift, what happens to their moral values, and identities? Is an individualistic view of moral identity stepping onto the stage? In order to answer this broad question, the present study investigated moral identities in China and their relationship to Western moral identities in Canada.

### **The Present Study**

In the previous sections, we discussed general expectations regarding self-construals related to cultural differences in moral identity, along with modifications in conceptualization and measurement that are required when approaching moral identity from a cross-cultural perspective. As a potential solution, we tested a broader range of culturally inclusive moral values in our Study I. In Study II, we implemented this list of culturally inclusive moral values to demonstrate how cultural orientations influence the individual's conceptualization of moral identity in the following aspects: (1) the value-domains that define individuals' moral identity; (2) the moral identity in each context (family, school, and community/society); and (3) cross-context differentiation.

(1) Based on the well documented finding that the interdependence items, such as communion with others, concern for family and close others, fulfilling duties, conformity and responsibilities to in-groups, are more relevant for individuals who stress interdependence, it is reasonable to assume that collectivist cultures such as China should endorse Tradition, Security, and Conformity domains of moral identities in Schwartz' circumplex model as defining a moral person more strongly than in individualist cultures such as Canada.

(2) Moral identities (regardless of value domains) were also expected to be different across cultures with regard to social contexts. According to the previous discussion on the interdependent self and Chinese Confucianism which concluded that Chinese tend to prioritize social harmony and "nation-oriented" collectivism, in turn, they should view moral identity as more important in the context of community/society than other contexts. In contrast, previous studies on interpersonal responsibility suggested that people from Western cultures viewed moral demands as more affected by personal affinity (Miller & Bersoff, 1998). Therefore, it was expected that Canadians should view moral identity as more important when relationships become more salient to their center of personal affinity. Thus, mean levels of moral identity should be most important in the context of the family, and should be the least important in the context of community/society in Canadian participants.

(3) Cross-context differentiation in moral identity refers to the degree to which an individual's identity is varied across personally important contexts. Some people view social contexts as less separable and independent of whether they are with friends, with colleagues, or with family members. Other people seem to act in a more differentiated way, depending on the context. Based on a cultural analysis of self-construal in interaction with social contexts, it was

expected that Chinese should have less cross-context differentiation (less separable/more interrelated in different contexts) in moral identities than Canadian participants.

## Method

### Participants

The sample included 185 Canadians (63 male) and 148 (69 male) Chinese 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> year university students. The Canadian participants ranged in age from 18.00 to 25.83 years ( $M_{age} = 19.59$ ,  $SD = 1.46$ ). The Chinese participants ranged in age from 17.50 to 24.00 years ( $M_{age} = 20.04$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ). The majority of Canadian participants ( $n = 146$ ; 79%) identified themselves as European Canadian (e.g., Canadian-German, -Serbian, -Scottish), 18.3% identified themselves as Indian and South Asians, and 2.7% identified themselves as African Canadians. The majority of Canadian participants were born in Canada ( $n = 162$ , 87.6%). For people who were born outside of Canada, their average time of living in Canada was 13.34 years (ranged from 4 to 21 years;  $SD = 4.52$ ). Due to their self-identification and length of living in Canada, we included these participants who were not born in Canada in the Canadian sample. All Chinese participants were born in China.

For the Canadian sample, university participants were students of introductory psychology classes who received course credit for their participation. For the Chinese sample, Chinese university participants were recruited from first year Introductory Psychology at Northern-East Normal University in Chang Chun. Northern-East Normal University is an educational and research institution. Students who graduated in psychology from Northern-East Normal University mostly become teachers or researchers. Each Chinese participant received 20 Chinese Yuan (CAN\$ 4) after participating in the survey. After providing informed consent, participants were required to complete a questionnaire.

## Measures and Procedure

**Moral Identity.** Canadian participants were asked to fill out an online questionnaire assessing individuals' moral identity. Chinese participants were asked to fill out a paper-pencil version of the questionnaire in classes. Materials in the questionnaire were based on a modification of an interview version of moral identity (Krettenauer et al., 2016). This questionnaire included (a) moral values which individuals used to define their personal moral identity, and (b) the context-specific assessment of moral identity. In the present study, participants were asked to define their moral identity by choosing from a larger list of values that were generated in the preliminary studies. These values were taken to assess the self-importance of morality separately in three different social contexts: family, school and community/society.

Participants were given a culturally inclusive list of 90 moral values to describe a highly moral person (from Study I). Attributes included in the present study covered a broad range of values, from being dependable (e.g., *sincere, honest, reliable*) and caring (e.g., *generous, helpful, selfless*) to concerns for fairness and tolerance (e.g., *being accepting, open-minded, fair*) and conformity (e.g., *law abiding*). To familiarize participants with all values, they were first asked to rate all 90 values according to how well they describe a highly moral person using a 5-point scale from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely well*. Participants were then asked to select those 12 to 15 values according to their own personal view that defined "the core of a highly moral person". The remainder of the questionnaire was based on those 12-15 values that individuals had selected for themselves to define a highly moral person.

To assess the self-importance of the chosen attributes, participants were asked to create pictorial self-portraits similar to the method developed by Harter and Monsour (1992) when assessing context-specificities in individuals' self-concepts. Participants were given a diagram

that displayed four nested circles representing varying levels of self-importance. Participants were instructed to rate each value according to its level of importance to the self (from 1 = *not important* at the outer periphery to 5 = *extremely important* at the center of the diagram). There were three diagrams with different headings, one representing the social context of family (“How important is it for you to be \_\_\_\_ in the context of your family?”), school (“How important is it for you to be \_\_\_\_ in the context of school?”) and community/the larger society (“How important is it for you to be \_\_\_\_ in the context of your community and the larger society?”). Participants worked on the three diagrams consecutively. Ordering of the diagrams was randomized. Based on this procedure, various statistical indices were calculated. These indices reflect (a) the relative importance of different value domains for defining a person’s moral identity, (b) the mean levels of an individual’s moral identity with regard to context specificity, and (c) cross-context differentiation.

***Value domains defining moral identities.*** Schwartz’s circumplex model was employed as an analytical tool (for details, see Study 1c) to assess what values defined a person’s moral identity. A total of 13 value domains that made up the list of 90 value attributes was used in the present study (for a full list of all value attributes and their categorizations, see Table 2). According to the Krettenauer et al. (2016) procedure to assess individuals’ personal moral identity, I counted how often participants chose a particular value domain as *very important* to the self in the three social contexts. These scores were divided by the total number of attributes that were considered as very important across three contexts by the participants and then multiplied by 100, yielding a percentage score of the relative importance of each value domain for defining a person’s moral identity. The average percentage score in a particular value domain indicated the percentage of values that were considered very important to the self in the domain.

***Mean level of moral identity.*** In order to assess a mean level of an individual's moral identity with regard to context specificity, self-importance ratings of the selected values (1 = *not important* to 5 = *extremely important*) were averaged in each context. Averaged score across the three contexts was also used as an overall moral identity regardless of the context in this study. Internal consistency for this scale was .85. Inter-item correlations among three contexts ranged from .58 to .67 in Canadian culture and from .64 to .82 in Chinese culture.

***Cross-context differentiation of moral identity.*** Cross-context differentiation of moral identity was assessed by calculating standard deviations across social contexts for each value chosen by the participant. According to the procedure proposed by Baird et al. (2006), each item (total 90 value items) standard deviation was regressed on the item mean. In general, when variables are skewed, variability scores and means tend to be highly correlated. In the present study, the correlation between item means and item standard deviation was significant,  $r = -.53$ ,  $p < .01$ . Thus, standardized residuals were computed using linear regression that each item's standard deviation was regressed on each item mean to represent the extent to which a person with a given mean on a given item has a high or low standard deviation relative to other individuals with the same mean on that item (Baird et al., 2006). This score reflects cross-context differentiation in moral identity independent of mean-level.

## Results

Investigating the hypotheses as outlined across culture, we considered (a) the relative importance of value domains that define a person's moral identity, (b) the mean level of moral identity in each social context, and (c) cross-context differentiation were analyzed. We addressed topics (a) to (c) in three separate sets of analyses.

### **Preliminary Analyses: Moral Identity, Age, and Gender**



An overall mean level of moral identity was not correlated with age (in years) in either culture,  $r(182) = -.01, p = .90$  in Canadian participants;  $r(135) = -.14, p = .10$  in Chinese participants. However, there is a low negative correlation between mean levels of moral identity in the community/large society context and age in the Chinese sample  $r(131) = -.18, p = .04$ . Cross-context differentiation of moral identity (controlled for mean level) was not correlated with age in either Canadian or Chinese culture,  $r = .06, p = .38$ , and  $r = .12, p = .15$  respectively.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with culture and gender as predictors was conducted to explore gender differences. There was no main effect of gender,  $F(3, 323) = 2.52, p = .058, \eta^2 = .02$ . There was a significant interaction between culture and gender,  $F(3, 323) = 4.50, p = .004, \eta^2 = .04$ . Chinese male participants scored higher than Canadian male participants on the mean level of moral identity, regardless of contexts (see Table 4). In the context of school, and community/society, Chinese male participants scored significantly higher than Canadian male participants,  $p < .01$ , but not in the context of family ( $p = .08$ ).

### Main Analyses

**Value domains defining moral identities and culture.** Based on the Schwartz et al. (2012) categorizations, the 13 value domains that made up the list of 90 value attributes were classified. How often participants chose a particular value domain as very important to the self in the three social contexts of family, school, or community/society was counted. These scores were divided by the overall number of attributes that were considered as very important across all three contexts and multiplied by 100, yielding a percentage score of the relative importance of each value domain for defining a person's moral identity. In the Canadian sample, on average 30.06% of the value attributes that were considered very important belonged to the domain of Benevolence-dependability (e.g., *genuine, honest, reliable*), followed by Universalism-tolerance

at 24.08% (e.g., *accepting, non-judgmental, understanding*), Benevolence-caring at 9%, (e.g. *generous, helpful, kind*), whereas the percentages of all other value domains were lower than 4%. Unclassified values presented 14.71%.

In the Chinese sample, on average 18.41% of the value attributes that were considered very important belonged to the domain of Benevolence-dependability, followed by Benevolence-caring at 11.92%, and Universalism-tolerance at 10.02%. Moreover, Chinese participants viewed Conformity-interpersonal (9.82%), Security (9%), Self-direction (6.01%), Humble (5.89%), and Tradition (5.45%) as important to define a moral person. The percentages of Universalism-concern, Conformity-rules, Achievement, Hedonism, and Face in the Chinese sample were lower than 5%. Unclassified values presented 8.55%.

Table 5 illustrates the average percent of attributes chosen by participants as very important to define moral identity in the three contexts in each culture. With regard to cultural similarities, the top three value domains defining moral identities in both cultures were Benevolence-dependability, Universalism-tolerance, and Benevolence-caring. This indicated that both Benevolence and Universalism-tolerance value domains were at the core of defining a moral person universally in Chinese and Canadian cultures. With regard to cultural differences, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with culture as a main factor was conducted. There was a significant main effect of culture,  $F(13, 182) = 7.81, p < .01, \eta^2 = .36$ . Table 6 illustrates significant level for each value domain across cultures. Canadian participants scored significantly higher than Chinese participants in the value domains of Benevolence-dependability and Universalism-tolerance. Chinese participants scored significantly higher than Canadian participants consistently in the value domains of Conformity-interpersonal, Security, Self-direction, Hedonism, and Tradition.

Although not anticipated, analyses of these value orientations in moral identity afforded interesting insights by unpacking cultural differences in the value domain of Security. For example, moral values of *patriotic*, *solidaric*, *prudent* and *careful* were frequently mentioned by Chinese participants in addition to the Western understanding of Security as *clean* and *healthy*. In addition to *healthy* and *clean*, four additional Chinese unique attributes (*patriotic*, *solidaric*, *prudent*, and *careful*) were added into the domain in the previous Study I. In the present study, Chinese participants were more likely than Canadian participants to select the attributes of *patriotic* (50 times vs. once) and *solidaric* (21 times vs. once) as very important in defining a highly moral person in three contexts than Canadian participants.

**Mean level of moral identity and culture.** Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with 3 contexts (family, school and community/society) as the within-subject factor, 2 cultures (Chinese and Canadian) and 2 genders as the between subject factors was conducted to test cultural differences in the mean level of moral identity with regard to context specificity. Significant main effects were found for context,  $F(2, 648) = 3.74, p = .024, \eta^2 = .011$ ; and culture  $F(1, 324) = 5.41, p = .012, \eta^2 = .013$ . An independent  $t$  test ( $t = 2.26, p = .02$ ) revealed that Chinese participants ( $M = 4.23, SD = .50$ ) scored higher overall on mean level of moral identity regardless of contexts than Canadian participants ( $M = 4.08, SD = .56$ ). However, this result needs to be considered in the context of the significant interaction between context and culture,  $F(2, 326) = 10.57, p < .01, \eta^2 = .061$ . Post hoc  $t$  tests revealed that there were cultural differences in the context of school ( $t = 2.89, p < .01$ ) and community/society ( $t = 3.52, p < .01$ ), but not in the context of family ( $t = .28, p = .78$ ). Means and standard deviations in each culture and context are presented in Table 7. The results indicated that Chinese persons scored higher on mean levels of moral identity in the context of school and the context of community/society than

Canadian participants. The interactions between context and gender or context, gender and culture were not significant. Within each culture, paired sample *t* tests revealed that Chinese participants scored highest in the context of community/society, following by the context of school and family ( $p < .01$ ); in contrast, Canadian participants scored higher in the context of family than in the context of school ( $p < .01$ ) and the context of community/society ( $p = .046$ ), but there was no significant difference between the context of school and community/society ( $p = .22$ ).

**Cross-context differentiation of moral identity and culture.** According to Baird et al.'s. (2006) statistical procedure, an averaged standardized residual score was generated to reflect the cross-context differentiation in moral identity. Thus, a larger standardized residual score means more variability/differentiation, whereas a smaller standardized residual indicates less context-differentiation. As expected, Chinese participants ( $M = -.25$ ,  $SD = .86$ ) scored significantly lower in cross-context differentiation (standardized residual) than Canadian participants ( $M = .21$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ). Independent *t*-tests indicated that Chinese participants' moral identities on average were less differentiated across the three contexts than Canadian participants,  $t(326) = 4.28$ ,  $p < .01$ , but gender was not a significant factor,  $t(326) = 1.87$ ,  $p = .06$ .

### Discussion

The main goal of the present studies was to refine the theoretical conceptualization and the measurement of moral identity from a cross-cultural perspective. Even though a few studies have examined cultural differences in moral reasoning (Gibbs et al., 2007), moral domains (Shweder et al., 1997), moral foundations (Graham, et al., 2011), and moral emotions (Krettenauer & Jia, 2013), no published research of which we are aware has directly investigated cultural differences in a Western and an Eastern sample in moral identity. In the present research,

moral identity was conceptualized and assessed as a context dependent self-structure which can entail a broad range of value-orientations and is more or less differentiated in both culture groups. Based on this conceptualization, we adopted a new measure of moral identity which included a context specific assessment (Krettenauer et al., 2016) and a culturally inclusive range of value-orientations (Study I).

In the present research, Schwartz's circumplex model was employed as an analytical tool to assess what values defined a person's moral identity. A total of 13 value domains were classified from the list of 90 value attributes: Benevolence-dependability, Benevolence-caring, Universalism-tolerance, Universalism-concern, Self-direction, Conformity-rules, Conformity-interpersonal, Achievement, Face, Tradition, Hedonism, Humble, and Security. Our findings are consistent with previous work that found morality in general is defined in terms of welfare and fairness concerns (Schwartz, 1992). In both cultural groups, Benevolence-dependability, Universalism-tolerance, and Benevolence-caring were selected and rated as the cores of defining a moral person. In addition to the core of moral identities, Chinese participants defined a highly moral person more broadly, including other domains such as Conformity-interpersonal, Security, Self-direction, Humble, and Tradition. Virtue ethics, character education, and ethical codes of non-Western cultures suggest that it is necessary to broaden the moral domain to include issues other than welfare and fairness (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001).

Consistent with our cross-cultural expectations about moral value-orientations, Chinese endorsed more conservation oriented domains of moral identities such as Tradition, Security, and Conformity-interpersonal than Canadians. This result is supported by past self-construal theorists (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991) that found interdependent individuals value higher modesty and more relational identities than independent individuals. In addition, those domains are

regarded as the core moral quality in Confucianism that one should be responsible to one's primary group (e.g., family, political party, and religious party) and one's society and country (Yao, 2000). A highly moral person should stand up to defend the interests of the group when the group is facing crisis or threats at the expense of one's personal interest (Yao, 2000). Moreover, Chinese participants also showed independent aspects of moral identities such as Self-direction with the process of globalization. This result is supported by previous studies that Chinese preferred a democratic political system (Helwig, et al., 2007), and Chinese students were encouraged to develop individualistic skills that are adaptive in a market-oriented society (Yu, 2002).

Previous moral identity research has largely neglected context-specificity and role relations of moral identities. Individuals' moral identities are greatly impacted and influenced by the social context around them (Erikson, 1980). The process of socialization such as norms, customs, and ideologies typically begins within the family and extends to other agents, including education, religion, peer groups and social/cultural norms (Hart & Atkins, 2002). The present study provided cross-cultural evidence that people from different cultures hold unique views of defining their moral identity separately in the contexts of family, school, and community/society. It was found that Chinese participants rated the mean level of moral identity most importantly in the context of community/society; Canadian participants rated the mean level of moral identity most importantly in the context of family. These findings suggested Chinese are more likely to conceptualize moral identity as citizenship, which is related to national identity and national patriotism according to Confucianism. As a socially and civically responsible citizen, a highly moral person should have the obligations to obey the law, and to respect the rights, traditions, and customs of other people in the nation (Yao, 2000). Thus, love of one's country including its

history, culture, tradition and values formed a more important basis of conceptualizing moral identity in China. It is also worth noting that there was no significant cultural difference on the mean level of morality in the context of family. This indicated that both cultures viewed the context of family as a core conceptualization of their moral identity. Thus, family context plays a major role in the structure of moral identity based on their ideal of what qualities should be important for their own lives.

Moreover, the present study found that Chinese male participants scored higher on the mean level of moral identity than Chinese female participants. But there was no gender difference in the Canadian sample. This result may be explained by the only child policy in China. The only child policy is a special phenomenon as a result of the population control in China. Since Chinese families can only have one child, most of them hope to have a boy instead of a girl. Boys are often expected to have higher academic achievement, and receive more emotional, educational, and financial supports from their parents than girls (Deutsch, 2006). Only child sons might be more likely to internalize parental values than daughters and the sons also bear the entire responsibility for their family's welfare (Deutsch, 2006). The one child policy seems to be criticized in terms of gender equality from Western feminists.

In addition, most research on moral identity has conceptualized consistency in terms of stability across contexts, ignoring the possibility that moral identity can exhibit different levels of internalization across contexts and cultures. However, past cross-cultural researchers (e.g., Ji, Peng, & Nisbett, 2000) have postulated that independent individuals tend to engage in an analytic thinking style, focusing on attributes in the field without much consideration of their context or even independently of context. In contrast, interdependent individuals value higher relational identities or view the world holistically. They tend to view different social roles as

interrelated and flexible in relation to each other. Our results cohere with prior research in cultural differences in the degree of malleability in social contexts, but go further by explicitly testing cross-context differentiations of moral identities in each cultural group. Our key finding was that Canadian participants' moral identities on average were more differentiated (less interrelated) across the three contexts than Chinese participants. That is, Canadians' conceptualization of moral identity was more personalized to specific relationship contexts, which reflected individuals' more distinctive moral values dependent on the social context.

The present study had several limitations that should be noted. A major limitation of the study is the two-culture comparison design. As such, it is not possible to examine the extent to which moral identities were conceptualized in other ethnic groups within Canadian and Chinese cultures. Thus, two-culture comparisons can be significantly improved by using individual and subgroup differences to measure moral identity in future research. Moreover, because of the two-culture comparisons, it would be an oversimplification to assume that the independence-interdependence distinction always takes the same form in Chinese and Canadian cultures. Generalization of the findings in the present study should be interpreted with caution. Thirdly, it would also be useful to test our hypotheses using additional contexts, as there may be idiosyncratic differences in the relationship for which people elaborate context specific views of moral identity (English & Chen, 2007). There might not be cultural differences in moral identities across less important relationships such as acquaintances or out-group members. In addition, Canadian data were collected in a web-based setting. Although online research has a number of advantages, including saving time and money, extrapolating to underrepresented samples, and generating creative methods and measurements (Skitka & Sargis, 2005), a number of limitations have been identified. For example, errors may occur due to uncontrolled contextual



features such as a distracting environment with the presence of others (Skitka & Sargis, 2005). Finally, the sample of the present study included only university students and excluded other age groups. With age, people from different cultures diverge in their psychological and social experiences. Developmental patterns of cultural differences should be investigated in future research.

Despite these limitations, the present study provided cross-cultural evidence that moral identity is a context-dependent structure which includes a broad range of value orientations. Moral identity consists of multiple components and individuals differ systematically and cross-culturally in the degree to which their moral identities are defined and differentiated from each other rather than integrated into a unitary identity. Most importantly, the present study illustrated how cultural orientations influence the individual's conceptualization of moral identity.

### **Study III**

In the previous studies, cultural similarities and differences in moral identity between Canada and China were investigated. In Study III, a new cultural group, Chinese Canadians, was added to expand the investigation of how culture orientation impacts moral identities. This study explored the question to what degree and under which circumstances do Chinese Canadians' moral identity patterns become more similar to the moral identity of the majority group of their country. Although there is a large body of research on Chinese immigrants in Canada (e.g., Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000; Jia, Gottardo, Chen, Koh, & Pasquarella, 2016), most of the research has been concerned with language proficiency, health outcomes and acculturation strategies. To date, there has been little focus on the acculturation of moral identity, which just like other types of psychological outcomes, may

consist of changes and eventual outcomes that result from a person's encounters with another culture (Berry & Sam, 1997).

Cultural variations in moral identities may be particularly salient in a context of bicultural society. Adapting to a new identity and cultural environment are challenges for immigrants. Many immigrants modify their own values to conform more to those that prevail in their new home country. At school, immigrant adolescents and young adults feel pressured to adopt the culture of their new home country. As a result, they may focus on the achievement aspect of identity formation in order to be successful in the new environment. At home, they may encounter a different environment that reflects the values and traditions of their country of origin. Thus, they may maintain their traditional values and identity in family practices (Knafo & Schwartz, 2001). Moreover, immigrant adolescents and young adults may wish to communicate values from their country of origin that resemble values in the new culture. If these value systems differ, they must choose between the two value systems or find a unique way to integrate the two contradictory identities (Berry, 1990).

Most cross-cultural studies have contrasted people from two distinct cultures, but some of this research has also included samples of bicultural groups that are intermediate to the two cultures under study. For example, Chinese-Canadians comprise a group that has exposure to both mainstream European American culture and their family's traditional Asian culture. It follows that such individuals should demonstrate ways of thinking intermediate to that of European-Canadian and Chinese samples. In general these studies have investigated these three cultural groups, on a wide variety of measures relevant to the self. The most common pattern of findings is evidence for blending: that is, the bicultural sample shows a pattern somewhere between the two-monoculture samples. For example, Heine and Lehman (2004) investigated

what happens to self-esteem when one moves from a culture that tends to have lower rates of self-esteem to a culture that tends to have higher rates. They measured the self-esteem of Japanese exchange students living in Canada at two time points: a few days after they arrived in Canada, and then 7 months later. The results revealed that Japanese students' self-esteem scores were significantly higher after they had been in Canada for a while than when they had just arrived.

In a follow-up study, Heine and Lehman (2004) also compared the self-esteem of several thousand students in Japan and Canada. This large group of students was divided into subsamples with regard to their exposure to North American culture. In order to investigate increases in exposure to North American culture, these categories were 1) Japanese who had never been outside Japan, 2) Japanese who had spent some time in a Western country, 3) recent Japanese immigrants to Canada (less than 7 years), 4) Japanese who immigrated to Canada more than 7 years previously, 5) second-generation Japanese Canadians, 6) Third-generation Japanese Canadians and finally 7) European Canadians. They found that the longer those of Japanese descent had spent in North American culture, the higher their self-esteem scores. These studies suggest that levels of change in self-concept can be varied from 7 months to a long period of time. For Japanese Canadians, it appears to take them three generations to become fully acculturated with regard to their self-esteem. It remains to be studied; however, whether acculturative changes are as slow for people in other self-related psychological variables such as moral identity.

More recently, a longitudinal study with Chinese immigrants has observed that participants' self-representation changed after exposure to Western culture for six months (Chen, Wagner, Kelley, & Heatherton, 2015). In their experiment, native Chinese recent immigrants

completed a trait-judgment task in which they judged whether a series of psychological traits applied to themselves and separately, whether these traits applied to their mother. Participants were then scanned in fMRI within 2 months of their arrival (Time 1), and 6 months after the initial scans (Time 2). According to self-construal theory, individuals from independent cultures view the self as a unique entity and as being independent from other individuals. Researchers found that for the Chinese immigrants who became more acculturated and less like Easterners, the self vs. mother difference was found; whereas, for participants who were less acculturated and more like Easterners, the self vs. mother difference was not found at in Time 2. The result supported the notion that self-construal changes during the process of acculturation in participants' brain structures.

Cultural psychologists have offered an alternative explanation on how bicultural people change their self-identities. That is rather than each person's sense of self being assimilated over time as new Western cultural experiences were slowly integrated in, it is possible that bicultural people can develop multiple selves, each prepared to deal with a specific cultural environment, without losing his or her heritage cultural identity or having to choose one culture over the other (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). For example, people exposed to Western culture would have a set of values about independence, confidence, freedom, and individual rights. These values are interdependent in the sense that they usually come in clusters. Thus, activating one construct that is part of a network should activate other constructs of the network (LaFromboise et al., 1993). In other words, Chinese Canadians would have an information network regarding Chinese values and ones regarding Canadian values. Hong and colleagues demonstrated Westernized Chinese students in Hong Kong who were exposed to bicultural worlds would have multiple information networks by asking participants to explain the behaviors

when they watched a video clip about “a single fish is swimming ahead of a group” (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000). Then they manipulated the kinds of thoughts the HK Chinese were having by showing them a number of cultural icons (either Chinese pictures such as a dragon, the Great Wall or American pictures such as Mickey Mouse, The Statue of Liberty). They found that when the bicultural participants were primed with icons that reminded them of the different cultures, they could be led to think in ways that were more consistent with the culture (Hong, et al., 2000). Thus, this alternative view maintains that bicultural people develop mastery over both cultural worlds and develop divergent selves that can be selectively activated.

In Study III, I examined cultural differences of moral identities among Chinese Canadians who constituted the bicultural group; European Canadians represented the mainstream standard of comparison; and Chinese in China constituted the heritage comparison. Chinese Canadians were selected because Chinese and Canadians’ moral identities have been shown to differ in the previous study. I adopted a cultural psychological perspective on acculturation in which psychological processes are seen as equally constitutive with cultural meanings and practice (Berry & Sam, 1997). In this view, contact with a new culture may be associated with changes in people’s moral values and identities, and may thus be a function of acculturation. Therefore, I expected that Chinese Canadians’ moral identities were more similar to European Canadians moral identities than the moral identities of Chinese in China. In addition, length of residency, immigrant status, and mainstream acculturation were explored in relation to moral identity.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The study included 427 participants from the three cultural groups: 131 Chinese Canadians (54 male), 146 (51 male) European Canadians, and 148 (69 male) Chinese in China. The sample of Chinese-Canadian was recruited online from Wilfrid Laurier University, University of Waterloo, and University of Toronto. The sample of Chinese in China was from Study II. The sample of European-Canadians was selected from the Canadian participants in Study II if the participants identified themselves as European Canadians. Two steps were taken: All male European-Canadians were selected from Study II; Ninety five female European-Canadians were randomly selected from Study II.

The Chinese-Canadian participants ranged in age from 15.25 to 41.92 ( $M_{age} = 22.14$ ,  $SD = 3.90$ ); the European-Canadian participants ranged in age from 18.00 to 25.83 years ( $M_{age} = 19.73$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ); the Chinese participants ranged in age from 17.50 to 24.00 years ( $M_{age} = 20.04$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ). A large range of lengths of residence for the Chinese Canadians were included to capture variability in the immigration process. A majority of them (80.9%) were born in Mainland China and were presently living in medium-sized to large urban areas in southern Ontario. Their length of residence in Canada ranged from less than one year to 22 years, with an average length of 8.16 ( $SD = 6.45$ ). Seventy-six of them (28 males) were recent short-term immigrants with a mean length of residency of 3.70 years ( $SD = 1.45$ ), while 48 of the Chinese Canadians (22 males) were long-term immigrants with a mean length of residency of 15.25 years ( $SD = 4.78$ ). The majority of European Canadian participants were born in Canada (92.5%). For people who were born outside of Canada, their average time of living in Canada was 14.75 years (ranged from 10 to 21 years;  $SD = 4.17$ ). Due to their self-identification and length of residence in Canada, I included these participants who were not born in Canada in the European Canadian sample. All Chinese participants were born in China.

It is worthwhile to note that the present study intended to recruit Chinese-Canadians who have different immigration status. Chinese-Canadian participants were defined as members of one of two immigrant statuses: recent immigrants who had been in Canada for 6 years or less, and long-term immigrants who had been in Canada for more than 7 years. This classification has been used in the literature of cultural identity and English proficiency (e.g., Jia, Gottardo, Koh, Chen, & Pasquarella, 2014); ethnic identity and health (e.g., Chiu, Austin, Maneul, & Tu, 2012); and bicultural identity (e.g., Chen & Bennet-Martinez, 2008). In addition, the group of long-term Chinese Canadians also included 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants (n = 23 in the present study) whose parents were immigrants but they were born in Canada (e.g., Okazaki & Saw, 2011). Acculturation research typically includes second-generation immigrants because they live at the intersection of two cultures (Berry, 1997).

### **Procedure**

All Chinese-Canadian participants were asked to fill out an online questionnaire assessing these individuals' moral identities. The same procedure as in Study II was followed. In the present study, participants were asked to define their moral identity by choosing from a culturally inclusive list of values that were generated in the previous studies. These values were taken to assess the self-importance of morality separately in three different social contexts: family, school and community/society. Three major outcomes were followed as in Study II: 1) A mean level of each individual's moral identity with regard to the context specificity; 2) A percentage score of the relative importance of each value domain for defining a person's moral identity; 3) Cross-context differentiation of moral identity. In addition, a measure of acculturation was added into the Chinese-Canadian questionnaire.

**Acculturation.** The Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) was used to assess acculturation in the Chinese-Canadian samples only (Ryder et al., 2000). This measure is consistent with a bi-dimensional model of acculturation in which it is possible to maintain ties to one's heritage culture while endorsing the "new" mainstream culture (Ryder et al., 2000). The 20 items in the VIA measured attitudes in the following 10 domains: cultural traditions, marriage/partner, social activities, level of comfort working with people, entertainment, behavior, practices, values, humor, and friends. Participants rated each item on a 9-point Likert scale that ranged from *strongly disagree (1)* to *strongly agree (9)*. Higher scores on the mainstream dimension reflected greater attitudes towards the individual's mainstream cultural setting, and were labeled as Mainstream acculturation. Internal consistency as assessed by Cronbach's alpha was .88 for the mainstream dimension and .90 for the heritage dimension in the present study.

A demographic questionnaire was included to assess age, gender, major in university, parents' educational levels, and ethnicity. For the Chinese-Canadian and European-Canadian samples, two additional questions were asked to assess participants' birth countries and their length of residence in Canada if they were born outside Canada.

## Results

To explore moral identities in a bicultural group, a) mean level of moral identity in each social context, b) value domains defining moral identities across contexts, and c) cross-context differentiation were analyzed by comparing Chinese Canadians, the bicultural group, with European Canadians and Chinese in China as the two monocultural groups.

**Preliminary analyses.** Overall, on the measure of acculturation, the mainstream acculturation subscale had an average score of 5.20 ( $SD = .80$ ) and the heritage enculturation subscale had an average score of 5.54 ( $SD = .84$ ). A paired samples  $t$  - test indicated that



Chinese-Canadian recent immigrants tended to be enculturated in their heritage culture more than acculturating in mainstream culture,  $t(63) = -5.98, p < .01$ . For long-term Chinese-Canadian immigrants, there were no differences in their acculturation patterns,  $t(41) = -.12, p = .91$ . Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 7. There was a positive correlation between heritage enculturation and mainstream acculturation,  $r(112) = .45, p < .01$  which represented a bicultural identity in the Chinese-Canadian sample. A positive correlation between mainstream acculturation and heritage has also been found previously from a sample of Chinese-Canadian adolescents (e.g., Jia et al., 2014). It suggests that getting closer to the dominant society is not necessarily achieved by separating from one's heritage group.

Overall mean level of moral identity was not correlated with age (in years),  $r(127) = -.04, p = .69$ , gender,  $r(129) = .10, p = .28$ , or immigrant status,  $r(129) = -.12, p = .20$ . However, there was a moderate negative correlation between mean level of moral identity in the school context and immigrant status,  $r(119) = -.19, p = .05$ . Recent Chinese-Canadian immigrants scored higher on moral identity than long-term Chinese-Canadian immigrants in the context of school,  $F(1, 117) = 3.86, p = .052$ , but not in the contexts of family,  $F(1, 120) = .01, p = .91$ , or community/society,  $F(1, 121) = 1.40, p = .24$ .

**Mean level of moral identity.** Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with 3 contexts (family, school and community/society) as the within-subject factor, and 3 cultures (European Canadians, Chinese and Chinese Canadians) as the between-subject factor was conducted to test cultural differences in the mean level of moral identity. A significant main effect was found for culture,  $F(2, 411) = 8.11, p < .01, \eta^2 = .038$ ; but not for context,  $F(2, 822) = 2.06, p = .13, \eta^2 = .005$ . Post hoc Bonferroni corrections revealed that Chinese Canadians significantly differed from Chinese in China ( $p < .01$ ) on the mean-level of moral identity but no

differences with European Canadians were found ( $p = .39$ ). There was a significant interaction between context and culture,  $F(4, 822) = 8.97, p < .01, \eta^2 = .042$ .

ANOVA revealed that there were cultural differences in the context of school,  $F(2, 411) = 7.95, p < .01, \eta^2 = .037$ , and community/society,  $F(2, 411) = 16.51, p < .01, \eta^2 = .074$ , but not in the context of family,  $F(2, 411) = .61, p = .54, \eta^2 = .003$ . Means and standard deviations in each culture and context are presented in Table 9. Post hoc Bonferroni corrections revealed that Chinese Canadians significantly differed from Chinese in China in the context of school and the context of community ( $ps < .01$ ) on the mean-level of moral identity, but no difference with European Canadians in the context of school or in the context of community ( $ps > .05$ ). Mean differences in each context are presented in Table 10. The results indicated that Chinese Canadians mean levels of moral identity were more similar to European Canadians than Chinese in China.

**Value domains defining moral identities and culture.** Based on Schwartz's (2012) categorizations, 13 value domains that made up the list of 90 value attributes were classified. The same procedure as in Study II was used to calculate average percent of attributes chosen by participants as very important to defining moral identity.

Table 11 illustrates average percentages of attributes chosen by participants as very important for defining moral identity in the three contexts in each culture. With regard to cultural similarities, the top three value domains defining moral identities in all three cultures were Benevolence-dependability, Universalism-tolerance, and Benevolence-caring. This indicated that both Benevolence and Universalism-tolerance value domains were the cores of defining a moral person in all three cultural groups. The percentages of all other value domains were lower than 5% in the European-Canadian sample. In contrast, Chinese participants viewed Conformity-

interpersonal (9.82%), Security (9%), Self-direction (6.01%), Humble (5.89%), and Tradition (5.45%) as still important to define a moral person. Chinese Canadians selected Conformity-rule (6.29%) and Universalism-concern (5.40%) as still important to define a moral person in addition to the core of moral identities such as Benevolence (43.17%) and Universalism-tolerance (13.51%). The percentages of all other value domains were lower than 5% in the Chinese-Canadian sample. There was a lower percentage of unclassified values in the Chinese sample (8.55%) than the Chinese-Canadian sample (13.33%) and the European-Canadian sample (14.55%).

To investigate if Chinese Canadians' moral identity in each domain was more like the European Canadians than the Chinese in China, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with culture as a predictor was conducted. There was a significant main effect of culture,  $F(26, 418) = 4.21, p < .01, \eta^2 = .21$ . Post hoc tests with Bonferroni corrections revealed that Chinese Canadians' average percentages of values defining a highly moral person were significantly different from Chinese in China in the domains of Benevolence-dependable ( $p = .028$ ), Self-direction ( $p = .022$ ), Security ( $p = .001$ ), and Tradition ( $p = .005$ ). However, there were no significant difference between Chinese Canadians and European Canadians in all domains ( $p > .05$ ). Figure 3 illustrates the pattern in each domain across the three cultural groups.

The impact of immigrant status on average percentages of attributes selected to define a moral person in each domain was explored in the Chinese-Canadian sample. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with immigrant statuses (recent  $N = 76$  or long-term  $N = 48$ ) as a predictor was conducted. There was no significant effect of immigrant status,  $F(12, 34) = 1.16, p = .35$ . Follow-up independent  $t$ -tests indicated that there was a significant difference in the domain of Conformity-rule,  $t(45) = 2.08, p = .045$ , and a moderate difference in the domain of

Universalism-concern,  $t(45) = -1.91, p = .06$ . Recent Chinese-Canadian immigrants selected more attributes in the domain of Conformity-rule than long-term immigrants (9.49% vs. .48%). Long-term immigrants selected more attributes in the domain of Universalism-concern than recent immigrants (11.53% vs. 3.41%). Table 13 illustrates average percentages of attributes chosen by participants as very important for defining moral identity in the three contexts in each immigrant status.

**Acculturation and moral identity among Chinese-Canadian immigrants.** A multiple regression analysis was conducted to further determine whether length of residency, immigrant status, and mainstream and heritage subscales had associations with mean levels of moral identity in each context. The length of residence in Canada and immigrant status were entered as the first step; mainstream and heritage subscales were entered as the second step. Results indicated that mainstream acculturation positively predicted mean level of moral identity in each context. However, length of residence in Canada, immigrant status, or heritage enculturation did not relate to the mean levels of moral identity (Table 12).

**Cross-context differentiation of moral identity and culture.** According to Baird et al's., (2006) statistical procedure, an averaged standardized residual score was generated to reflect the cross-context differentiation in moral identity. Thus, the larger standardized residual score means more variability/differentiation; the smaller standardized residual indicates less context-differentiation. The results indicated that the standardized residual scores of Chinese-Canadian participants ( $M = .018, SD = 1.12$ ) were higher than the scores of Chinese participants ( $M = -.233, SD = .86$ ) but lower than the scores of Canadian participants ( $M = .227, SD = .96$ ). Univariate Analysis of Variance indicated there was a significant difference in the cross-context differentiation cross-culturally,  $F(2, 414) = 7.99, p < .01, \eta^2 = .04$ . However, post-hoc test with

LSD correction revealed that Chinese-Canadian participants significantly differ from Chinese participants ( $p = .035$ ) but do not differ from European-Canadian participants ( $p = .082$ ) in the cross-context differentiation of moral identities. Recent and long-term immigrants did not differ in the cross-context differentiation of moral identities,  $F(1, 127) = .51, p = .48$ .

### Discussion

Moral identity in bicultural Chinese Canadians was studied as an attempt to better understand the moral identities of this increasingly important cultural group in Canada. We explored the question of how moral identity acculturated in this cultural group. Methodologically, in addition to studying two distinct cultures, adding a bicultural group for investigating the role of culture and acculturation on moral identity never has been employed in past research. In many cases of immigration, individuals' culturally constructed selves and identities are different from the cultural meaning system of the new culture to which they have moved (Berry, 1990). The current approach makes it possible to compare differences in the selves and identities that individuals experience when encountering a new culture. Thus, this bicultural approach can provide us with a perspective on cultural influences different from those provided from a simple two cultural comparison in traditional cross-cultural psychology.

In general, it was found that Chinese-Canadian moral identity in mean levels of moral identity, value domains, and cross-context differentiation, were more similar to European Canadians than to Chinese in China. This finding supports the notion of acculturation, with each person's heritage self-concept being shifted a little over time and acculturated to the norms of Canadian culture. These individuals must reconcile the heritage moral values, and must decide where they fit in a society. In addition, there was no cultural difference on the mean-level of

moral identity in the context of family. This suggests moral identity has a similar function in the context of family among the three cultural groups.

In addition to the main hypothesis, it was found that Chinese-Canadian immigrants scored lower in the mean level of moral identity than European Canadians and Chinese in China. This result reflects the experience of a more complex social involvement for minority immigrants in a heterogeneous society. Within each cultural group, mainstream group members live in a relatively homogenous cultural environment, and they share values with their community. Consequently, heterogeneous societies do not easily accept outside groups because of their unified social values, and therefore socialization is difficult for minority immigrant groups (LaFromboise et al., 1993). The difficulty that minority groups (Chinese Canadians) experience in socializing with a dominant culture (European Canadians) may cause them to develop a lessened sense of belonging.

The present findings also provide an insight to an issue of power relations. Studies of moral identity have been conducted primarily with “Western elite” populations (Miller, 2007). Little attention has been directed to examine the perspectives of minority subgroups who have limited power or are affected by oppressive social policies. It was found that recent immigrants assigned greater personal importance to Conformity-rule (e.g., *follows the rules, law abiding*) that they considered essential for defining a highly moral person than long-term immigrants; whereas, Universalism-concern (e.g., *fair, just*) tended to be more important for the long-term immigrants than for the recent immigrants. In this regard, as Shweder, Minow, and Markus (2002) have indicated, Western nations have experienced the arrival of a large number of immigrants from countries with cultural traditions that do not fit easily into the mainstream cultural practices of the host countries. Recent immigrants continue to maintain social ties with

their countries of origin and are not always eager to abandon their traditional values (Shweder, Markus, Minow, & Kessel, 1997). In order to fit in the mainstream social and legal system, compared to long-term immigrants, more recent immigrants must follow the rules of the mainstream society where citizenship has only a weak implication for the way in their lives. On the other hand, long-term immigrants have now become settled in the country. However, previous research has indicated Asian long-term immigrants and Asians born in the host country were more likely to report experiencing discrimination compared to those who were recent immigrants or who were born outside of the host country (Yip, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2008). Thus, in addition to following social orders, long-term immigrants are more aware of equal rights and justice and behave more like the majority citizens in the country than recent immigrants.

Examination of relations between moral identity in each context and acculturation demonstrated that mainstream acculturation to Canadian culture positively contributed to Chinese-Canadian immigrants' mean-level of moral identity. Although heritage enculturation, was related to mainstream acculturation, it was not related to the mean-level of moral identity in each context. These findings correspond with Berry's (1990) model of acculturation, which suggests that getting closer to the dominant society is not necessarily achieved by separating from one's heritage group. In addition, neither length of residency in Canada nor immigration status predicted the mean-level of moral identity. Only mainstream acculturation remained a significant predictor. This result suggests that actively immersing into Canadian society plays a key role in supporting an individual's motivation to seek a high level of moral identity through a high level of interaction with the mainstream society regardless of how long these immigrants have been in the country or their immigration statuses.

The present study is not without limitations. First, it should be noted that this study is correlational in nature. Causal conclusions cannot be drawn. Longitudinal evidence is required to answer the question of the impact of acculturation on moral identity. For example, immigrants' acculturation strategies and moral identities can be followed up in a number of years. It is likely that developing higher levels of acculturation through cultural engagements would provide a pathway for growth in immigrants' moral identity, especially in the context of community and society. Second, the present study only assessed the process of mainstream/heritagedomains of acculturation. However, recent research with Canadian immigrants in Montreal has suggested that immigrants have a variety of orientations to their acculturation process (Berry & Sabatier, 2010). Thus, future studies need to examine different acculturation paths such as assimilation, integration, marginalization and separation. It is likely that immigrants who are separated from the mainstream society would result in a low level of moral identity among other acculturation strategies. Thirdly, the Chinese immigrants in the present study arrived in Canada within a 22-year period. Only 23 participants out of 133 were born in Canada. In addition to the first-generation immigrant, acculturation research typically includes second-generation immigrants (Berry, 1997) because they live at the intersection of two cultures. Future research should investigate the moral identity in the second generation independently.

### **General Discussion and Conclusion**

For centuries, psychologists and philosophers have tried to explain why people act morally. Kohlberg's (1969) stage theory of moral development served this task for decades. However, evidence has suggested that moral reasoning alone is not a strong predictor of moral action (e.g., Blasi, 1983). Therefore, new approaches to moral psychology have sought to find a link between moral judgment and moral actions. One topic that has been discussed is moral



identity, which is defined as “the degree to which being a moral person is important to an individual’s identity” (Hardy & Carlo, 2011, pp.212). Studies have demonstrated that internalizing moral identity can influence one’s moral action (e.g., Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016). While this line of research is promising, it has been questioned whether moral identity actually motivates one to act in a moral fashion in non-Western cultures. In addition, several cultural researchers on moral development have challenged the Western-centric notion of morality and found cross-cultural differences in moral reasoning (e.g., Gibbs et al., 2007), moral emotion (e.g., Krettenauer & Jia, 2013), moral ethics (e.g., Shweder et al., 1997), and interpersonal morality (e.g., Miller, 2007).

The current dissertation sought to address this question by examining cross-cultural similarities and differences in moral identities. Two major research questions were raised: First, do people from other cultures have a similar or different definition of a highly moral person? Second, do context and culture influence moral identity? It has been suggested that identity is differentiated into multiple facets and is reflected by unique social interactions that characterize an individual’s various social and cultural roles (e.g., Burke & Tully, 1997; Erikson, 1980).

Study I first evaluated whether people from China form different moral value attributes that define a highly moral person. Study Ia started to identify value attributes that describe individuals’ prototypical conception of a highly moral person in pre-existing Western cultural literature. Study Ib then asked Chinese participants to list attributes which are prototypical descriptors of a highly moral person. A culturally inclusive list of 90 moral value attributes that included unique values from Chinese culture was generated. Study Ic classified the value attributes into 13 domains by using Schwartz’ value circumplex (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Study II used these moral value attributes and domains to assess how cultural representations shape moral identity in different contexts cross-culturally. Results indicated that there are some basic universal moral values; however, cultural differences in moral identities are marked in different value domains and social contexts. Indeed, people from both cultural groups selected and rated Benevolence and Universalism-tolerance as the cores of defining a moral person. This finding is consistent with previous work that found morality to be defined in terms of care and fairness concerns universally (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). However, results also suggested that people do form distinct representations of moral identities. For example, the Chinese conceptions of moral identity included other domains such as Conformity-interpersonal, Security, Humble, and Tradition which reflected more of an interdependent self-construal of higher modesty and relational identities. With regard to context-specificity of moral identity, cultural differences were more pronounced. As expected, Chinese viewed the context of community/society and the context of school as more important for a highly moral person than Canadians. It suggests that Chinese are more likely to conceptualize moral identity as a part of citizenship related to national identity and national patriotism, while also in accordance with the values of Confucianism. In the Chinese educational system, the Confucian scholars advocate modesty and encourage friendly co-operation, giving priority to people's relationships. The purpose of education is to shape every individual into a harmonious member of the society (Yu, 2002). Finally, results on cross-context differentiation indicate that moral identities are less flexible and more interdependent through different contexts in Chinese culture than Canadian culture, which further suggests cultural orientations shape the conception of moral identity.

Study III extended the cross-cultural investigation of moral identity by adding a bicultural sample of Chinese-Canadian immigrants. Findings of an overall pattern on moral identity (e.g.,

mean level of moral identity, value domains, and cross-context differentiation) in this cultural group suggested that cultural identity and acculturation also interact with moral identity. In the mean-level of moral identity, value domains, and cross-context differentiation, Chinese-Canadian immigrants are similar to European Canadians. It suggests that the Chinese-Canadian immigrants gradually acculturate to the norms of Canadian mainstream culture. In addition, cultural differences in value domains illustrated power relations between recent and long-term immigrants. For example, long-term immigrants valued Universalism-concern as more important to define a moral person than recent immigrants did. This result may imply that long-term immigrants are concerned with values of fairness and justice that these values are most in need in a multicultural society (Miller, 2007).

Overall, these studies provide strong support that moral identity has some basic universal functions, but influences of culture and context indeed impact on various aspects of moral identity. This follows previous work that found morality is not culturally universal and identity needs to be studied in different levels of interaction among persons, context, and culture. The current studies are the first to compare East and West and therefore the first to provide evidence of the influence of cultural orientation on moral identity. Given the novelty of this dissertation, these results may lead to as many questions as they have answers. Some of the implications are presented in order to facilitate research for future studies on this topic.

#### *Cultural Psychology Approach in Investigation of Moral Identity*

Cultural psychology is a sub-discipline that examines the cultural foundations of psychological processes and human behavior. Most research on human behavior reported in mainstream psychology (such as social, development, cognitive and behavioral neuroscience) comes from studies conducted in Western countries, especially from the U.S and Canada.

Considering that Americans and Canadians comprise only a small fraction of the world's population, cultural psychologists have questioned the applicability of findings based on a single demographic to the larger majority of people around the world (Arnett, 2008). In one of the most influential papers in psychology entitled "The neglected 95%: Why American psychology needs to become less American", Jeffrey Arnett (2008) conducted a meta-analysis that examined 4,037 articles from six top APA journals (*Developmental Psychology*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *Journal of Family Psychology*, *Health Psychology*, *Journal of Educational Psychology*) over a 20-year period to demonstrate the narrow focus of research psychology in the United States. Among the 4,037 articles, he found only 3% of the samples were collected in Asia, 1% were in Latin America, and less than 1% were in Africa or the Middle East (Arnett, 2008). Other cultural psychologists have also suggested that most research to date is based on "WEIRD" (western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) cultures which are not representative of everyone as a whole; however, psychologists regularly use them to make broad, and quite likely false claims about human behaviors (Henrich et al., 2010).

In this dissertation, I did not take such an extreme view. I believe that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with such research on moral identity, and the findings obtained from Western countries are valid for those samples at the times and places in which the studies were conducted. Those findings may be replicable across multiple samples in Western societies using different methods such as self-report (Aquino & Reed, 2002) and interview (Arnold, 2000), and those methods can be applicable to non-WEIRD societies; however, the levels and degrees of the accessibility of moral identity across cultures must be investigated (e.g., functional universal view of culture in Henrich et al., 2010). Moral identity does exist in both Eastern and Western

cultures, yet it has a different accessibility to people and is used in varying levels of degrees from one culture to another.

Study I and II found clear support for the cultural notion of moral identity between Chinese and Canadians using the cross-cultural approach. In those studies, I used Chinese in China and Canadians in Canada as comparison groups. Those groups have their own unique sociocultural history, language, government, norms, and economic bases, all of which affect culture which in turn facilitates and shapes the conception of moral identity. Even though there is a large overlap of moral value domains between the two groups, this overlap is not necessarily surprising from a theoretical standpoint of morality. However, specific cultural values in China such as interdependent-self, collectivism, and Confucianism lead to different characterizations of moral identity. For example, Chinese moral identity emphasizes interpersonal relationships as well as community. What makes a highly moral person extends beyond individual moral behavior and instead grounded in social groups such as community or nation. In China, moral understanding relies heavily on considering one's duties, obligations and roles within society (Ma, 1997). Thus, in Chinese culture, people are more likely to base their moral identity on the context of society and community.

Study III addressed the cultural issue of moral identity by examining Chinese-Canadian immigrants using a bicultural approach. This approach is different from the cross-cultural perspective because the bicultural approach is concerned with the psychological reactions of individuals and groups caught up in culturally heterogeneous settings including the values, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes that result from living in such conditions (Bochner, 1999). People from different cultural, ethnic, or linguistic backgrounds come into social contact with each

other. These frequent contacts lead to a change in acculturation process and cultural identity which in turn influences people's moral outlooks (Bochner, 1999).

*Three levels of Interaction in Investigation of Moral Identity*

Erikson (1980) has proposed identity and morality are interconnected. Furthermore, he has theorized a three-level model (ego-personal, personal-social and social-structural) to study identity. His model provides insight used to refine moral identity constructs. This dissertation attempted to establish a social-developmental approach encompassing all levels of self, from the most basic personal characters in ego identity to the individual's uniqueness in a socio-cultural context. Study Ia and Ib started to apply both "personal-ego" (moral attributes) and "social-structural" (culture) levels of moral identity by introducing a new empirical approach for assessing moral identity to establish a culturally inclusive list of prototypical conceptions of a highly moral person in Western and Chinese cultures. Study II investigates the "personal-social" (context) levels in addition to "ego-personal" and "social-structural" levels by investigating cultural similarities and differences in moral identity between Canada and China in the contexts of family, school and community/society. Study III extends all three levels to explore the degree to which there is a match between the sociocultural environments in the immigrants' culture of origin with regard to different value domains, contexts and cultures. Thus, moral identity is better understood in the context of individuals' personal, social, and cultural environment rather than in isolation.

In addition, interactions among personal, social, and cultural contexts serve as a fertile foundation in moral identity in the migration process. Immigrants move from a familiar environment in which moral values in their communities and cultures are well defined to an unfamiliar cultural context. During their migration, their context changes, and all that they are

familiar with becomes the unknown. When their acculturation experiences change within the different layers, such changes affect the formation of moral identity because of the different belief systems and cultural norms that exist in their host country. Additionally, the changes of values come from imposed rules within the host culture and affect rules learned from the country of origin (Berry, 1997). Most minority culture members face a challenge between holding on to their own moral values and adopting the majority cultural and moral values.

*Collectivism vs. Individualism or Uniqueness of Chinese Culture*

Even though most of the cross-cultural research is primarily guided by the dimension between individualism and collectivism or the concept of self-construals, the current dissertation suggests how uniqueness of Chinese society shapes the conception of moral identity in addition to the dimensions of individualism/collectivism and self-construals. Chinese culture is in a large sense a product of its long history. The traditional aspects of Chinese culture are rooted in the pervasive influence of Confucianism which reflects the traditional Chinese outlook on life, ethics and morality (Wang & Mao, 1996). Many of his principles, including respect for authority, patriarchy, and worshipping traditions, are still reflected in the structure of family, education, and the wider society. Confucian educators suggest that respect for authority in China has deep connections with the rigid social and educational systems (Wang & Mao, 1996). Children are expected to obey the requirements of parents without questions. This is closely linked with the concept of filial piety which requires absolute obedience and complete devotion to parents (Yu, 2002). The respect for authority also extends to relationships and power distances between teachers and students in schools. This stance clearly influences classrooms through lectures and demonstrations rather than learning through discussions. In addition, Chinese traditional values emphasize collective benefits as more important than individual needs. Being equal, avoiding

competition or conflict were among the popularly accepted values (Satow & Wang, 1994). Group approaches have been a dominating influence on Chinese social life including teamwork, group decision-making, group reward, and group cohesiveness (Satow & Wang, 1994).

The second aspect of how Chinese culture shapes moral identity is socialism which became influential following the establishment of the People's Republic of China. While Confucius is the dominant figure of the traditional culture in China, the central influence on the socialist culture was its leader, Mao in the Communist party. Bush and Haiyan (2000) claim that communism and Confucianism have much in common. Moral education for example involves a blend of both principles, while socialism also serves to reinforce national identities. Moreover, in the school system, each school is expected to have a department sponsored by the communist party to make sure that educational policy follows the party's direction and provides political education to faculty and students (Bush & Haiyan, 2000). Thus, the socialist values of the Communist party have been integrated with traditional beliefs to create a distinctive Chinese culture.

In addition, in today's global world, increasingly more Western cultural icons and practices have been imported into Chinese society. Those imports of Western culture such as media, ideology, business, and festivals may lead today's Chinese people to hold a balance between Western and Eastern values. Our results provide further evidence that although Chinese individuals were traditionally considered as having an Eastern orientation of moral identities such as Tradition, Security, and Conformity-interpersonal value domains due to the influence of the Chinese traditional culture, they could also show Western aspects of moral identities such as Self-direction and Hedonism with the process of globalization and westernization.

#### *Future Research*



In addition to addressing the implications posed above, future research should build on the current studies. First, further work is needed to examine the mechanism underlying the relationship between moral identity and moral action using the refined moral identity construct in both Western and other societies. Hertz and Krettenauer (2016) found a lower effect size of moral identity as a predictor of moral action in Asian countries. They suggested moral actions in the collectivistic cultures might be reflected by group norms rather than an individual's moral identity. Thus, research is needed to follow up this work by examining the link between moral identity in different contexts and its relation to moral behaviors. One may expect individuals with a stronger moral identity in the context of community and society would have a greater effect on prosocial actions at least in Chinese culture.

Second, it would be interesting to examine the impact of social changes on people's moral identity in China. Unlike other Eastern countries, China has entered a period of institutional shift and rapid social and cultural changes after the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including changes in the economic system, education, health system, mass communication, and globalization. This drastic transition seems to have created a disruption of cultural identities of Chinese youth (Wang, 2006). Different generations could be shaped by different social experiences in their formative years. Thus, different generations might have different values due to both the varied life course and cultural setting of the socialization. Two questions should be studied in this line of research: Is there a difference in moral values between different generations in China? Do younger generations tend to shift from traditional moral values to modern self-direction in a recent social transformational process? Longitudinal research is needed to answer these questions.

Third, the dimensions of individualism/collectivism or independent/interdependent have served as the foundation for the current cross-cultural research; however, it is not the only dimension that we can consider. For example, the dimension of societal tightness, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and social complexity have also been developed, but these new dimensions have not yet received as much attention (Oyserman et al., 2002). Thus, future research should continue to explore these other possible dimensions of cultures in order to have a better system for understanding cultural variation. In addition, the current study only has one country to represent Eastern or Western society. More countries to present each society are needed in future research. It is likely that there should be cultural differences in how people perceive and define moral identity within each society.

Last but not least, there have been increasing calls to consider culture as the context of diversity to study in Moral psychology (Miller, 2007). Future studies should expand the scope of the cultural diversity beyond a single ethnic group in Canada. For example, Asian Canadians represent a fast-growing, extremely diverse population and there is no singular, unified Asian Canadian community but a vast number of ethnic communities that maintain some ties to their Asian cultural roots (Okazaki & Saw, 2010). Thus, future studies should investigate differences of moral beliefs among other ethnic groups such as Indian Canadians, Korean Canadians, Japanese Canadians etc. In addition to deliberate sample selection, cultural priming could be used in future research to test the causal effects of culture on moral identity. Many priming studies in cultural psychology have observed that beliefs, judgments, and behaviors shift towards the norms of the primed culture (Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002).

### *Conclusion*

In summary, the current studies provide the first empirical support to consider context and cultural influences on moral identity as well as limitations in measures and conceptualizations of the moral identity construct. Based on the three studies described above, I conclude that moral identity consists of multiple components and individuals differ systematically and cross-culturally in how their moral identities are defined and differentiated from each other rather than integrated into a unitary identity. This dissertation thus helps to address previous questions and limitations about whether the moral identity construct is contextually and culturally dependent (Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Krettenauer et al., 2016). Given the novelty of these results, they provide several promising directions for future research.

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Table 1. *Eighty Western Attributes Defining Individuals' Conception of a Highly Moral Person*


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dependable, faithful, genuine, honest, loyal, reliable,	accepting, confident, consistent,	friendly, sociable, modest, grateful,
responsible, sincere, trustworthy, truthful, listens,	educated, empathic, follows the rules,	courageous, independent, rational,
open-minded, patient, respectful, tolerant,	fun, good, happy, has high standards,	self-assured, exemplary, honorable,
understanding, wise, altruistic, benevolent, caring,	has integrity, healthy, humble, makes	upstanding, clean, cheerful,
forgiving, generous, helpful, kind, loving, selfless,	the right choices, nice, non-judgmental,	knowledgeable, righteous, knows
sharing, fair, just, compassionate, law abiding, ethical,	obedient, proper, proud, religious,	what is right and wrong, optimistic,
hard-working, perseveres, self-disciplined, intelligent,	virtuous	strong, thrifty
considerate, cooperative, courteous, conscientious,		

---



Table 2. *Cultural Inclusive Attributes Defining Individuals' Conception of a Highly Moral Person*

Culturally Shared Attributes (59 items)	Western Unique Attributes (21)	Chinese Unique Attributes (17 items)
dependable, faithful, genuine, honest, loyal, reliable, responsible, sincere, trustworthy, truthful, listens, open-minded, patient, respectful, tolerant, understanding, wise, altruistic, benevolent, caring, forgiving, generous, helpful, kind, loving, selfless, sharing, fair, just, compassionate, law abiding, ethical, hard-working, perseveres, self-disciplined, intelligent, considerate, cooperative, courteous, conscientious, friendly, sociable, modest, grateful, courageous, independent, rational, self-assured <sup>1</sup> , exemplary, honorable, upstanding <sup>1</sup> , clean, cheerful <sup>1</sup> , knowledgeable, righteous, knows what is right and wrong, optimistic, strong, thrifty	accepting, confident, consistent, educated, empathic <sup>1</sup> , follows the rules, fun, good, happy, has high standards, has integrity <sup>1</sup> , healthy, humble, makes the right choices, nice <sup>1</sup> , non-judgmental, obedient, proper, proud, religious, virtuous <sup>1</sup> .	credible, incorruptible, warm-hearted, peaceful, diligent, motivated, civilized, ambitious, dedicated, patriotic, solidaric, prudent, careful, principled, filial piety, outgoing, active

Note: <sup>1</sup>: The seven attributes were removed from the final lists due to translation issues (see main text for further explanation)

Table 3. *Value Domains and Attributes Defining Individuals' Conception of a Highly Moral Person*

<b>Value Domain</b>
Attributes
<b>Benevolence-dependability: Being a reliable and trustworthy group member</b> Dependable, faithful, genuine, honest, loyal, reliable, responsible, sincere, trustworthy, truthful, credible, incorruptible
<b>Universalism-tolerance: Acceptance of those who are different from oneself</b> Accepting, listens, non-judgmental, open-minded, patient, respectful, tolerant, understanding, wise
<b>Benevolence-caring: Devotion to the welfare of ingroup members</b> Altruistic, benevolent, caring, forgiving, generous, helpful, kind, loving, selfless, sharing, warm-hearted
<b>Universalism-concern: Commitment to equality, justice and protection for all</b> Fair, just, compassionate, peaceful
<b>Conformity-rules: Compliance with rules, laws and formal obligations</b> Follows the rules, law abiding, obedient, ethical, principled
<b>Achievement: Success according to social standard</b> Hard-working, perseveres, proud, self-disciplined, educated, intelligent, diligent, motivated, ambitious
<b>Conformity-interpersonal: Avoidance of upsetting other people</b> Considerate, cooperative, courteous, conscientious, friendly, sociable, civilized
<b>Humble: Recognizing one's insignificance in the larger scheme of things</b> Humble, modest, grateful, dedicated
<b>Self-direction: Cultivate one's own ideas and determine one's own action</b>

Confident, consistent, courageous, independent, rational

**Face: Maintaining once public image and avoiding humiliation**

Exemplary, honorable

**Security: Safety and stability in one's immediate environment and the wider society**

Clean, healthy, patriotic, solidaric, prudent, careful

**Hedonism: Pleasure and sensuous gratification**

fun, happy

**Tradition: Respect of the customs and ideas that traditional culture**

Religious, Filial piety

**Unclassified:**

Good, has high standards, knowledgeable, knows what is right and wrong, makes the right choices, optimistic, proper, righteous, strong, thrifty, outgoing, active

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Table 4: *Gender and Culture Interaction on Moral identity*

	Canadian		Chinese	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Moral Identity Overall	4.05 (.07)	4.11 (.05)	4.39 (.06)	4.08 (.06)
Family Context	4.21 (.08)	4.14 (.06)	4.31 (.08)	4.00 (.05)
School Context	3.92 (.07)	4.08 (.05)	4.39 (.07)	4.07 (.07)
Community/Society Context	4.02 (.08)	4.11 (.06)	4.47 (.07)	4.17 (.07)

Table 5. *Value Domains and Attributes Defining Individuals' Moral Identity, Relative Frequency in Each Culture*

Value Domain/Attributes	<i>Canadians</i> <i>M% (SD)</i>	<i>Chinese</i> <i>M% (SD)</i>
<b>Benevolence-dependability: Being a reliable and trustworthy group member</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependable, faithful, genuine, honest, loyal, reliable, responsible, sincere, trustworthy, truthful, credible, incorruptible</li> </ul>	30.06 (.32)	18.41(.22)
<b>Universalism-tolerance: Acceptance of those who are different from oneself</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepting, listens, non-judgmental, open-minded, patient, respectful, tolerant, understanding, wise</li> </ul>	24.08 (.32)	10.02 (.21)
<b>Benevolence-caring: Devotion to the welfare of ingroup members</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Altruistic, benevolent, caring, forgiving, generous, helpful, kind, loving, selfless, sharing, warm-hearted</li> </ul>	9.00 (.21)	11.92 (.19)
<b>Universalism-concern: Commitment to equality, justice and protection for all</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair, just, compassionate, peaceful</li> </ul>	3.98 (.15)	4.89 (.13)
<b>Conformity-rules: Compliance with rules, laws and formal obligations</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows the rules, law abiding, obedient, ethical, principled</li> </ul>	3.86 (.12)	4.48 (.16)
<b>Achievement: Success according to social standards</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard-working, perseveres, proud, self-disciplined, educated, intelligent, diligent, motivated, ambitious</li> </ul>	3.88 (.15)	3.84 (.14)
<b>Conformity-interpersonal: Avoidance of upsetting other people</b>		
	3.50 (.12)	9.82 (.22)

- Considerate, cooperative, courteous, conscientious, friendly, sociable, civilized

**Humble: Recognizing one's insignificance in the larger scheme of things**

3.12(.12) 5.89 (.12)

- Humble, modest, grateful, dedicated

**Self-direction: Cultivate one's own ideas and determine one's own action**

1.82(.07) 6.01 (.11)

- Confident, consistent, courageous, independent, rational

**Face: Maintaining once public image and avoiding humiliation**

1.32(.05) .10 (.01)

- Exemplary, honorable

**Security: Safety and stability in one's immediate environment and the wider society**

.50(.04) 9.00 (.18)

- Clean, healthy, patriotic, solidaric, prudent, careful

**Hedonism: Pleasure and sensuous gratification**

.10 (.01) 1.63 (.07)

- Fun, happy

**Tradition: Respect of the customs and ideas that traditional culture**

.07 (.00) 5.45 (.13)

- Religious, Filial piety

**Unclassified:**

14.71 (.27) 8.55 (.15)

- Good, has high standards, knowledgeable, knows what is right and wrong, active makes the right choices, optimistic, proper, strong, thrifty, righteous, outgoing
-

Table 6. *Analysis of Variance for Specific Value Domains between Cultures*

Value Domains	F	p	$\eta^2$
Benevolence-dependability	8.84	.003	.044
Universalism-tolerance	13.42	.000	.065
Benevolence-caring	1.05	.306	.005
Universalism-concern	.21	.649	.001
Conformity-rules	.09	.763	.001
Achievement	.00	.985	.000
Conformity-interpersonal	6.54	.012	.032
Humble	2.67	.104	.014
Self-direction	9.59	.002	.047
Face	5.41	.021	.027
Security	21.38	.000	.099
Hedonism	4.06	.045	.021
Tradition	15.74	.000	.075
Unclassified	4.01	.047	.020

Table 7. *Mean Scores of Moral Identity across Contexts and Cultures*

	Family Context	School Context	Community/Society Context
Canadian	4.16 (.66)	4.03 (.63)	4.08 (.67)
Chinese	4.14 (.56)	4.22 (.53)	4.31 (.53)



Table 8. *Mean Scores of Acculturation in Recent and Long-Term Chinese-Canadian Immigrants (Study III)*

	Heritage	Mainstream
Recent	5.74 (.70)	5.15 (.86)
Long-term	5.23 (.96)	5.26 (.74)

Table 9. *Mean Scores of Moral Identity across Contexts and Cultures (Study III)*

	Family Context	School Context	Community/Society Context
Chinese	4.14 (.59)	4.22 (.53)	4.31 (.53)
European Canadian	4.13 (.63)	4.01 (.60)	4.06 (.62)
Chinese Canadian	4.06 (.69)	3.95 (.63)	3.88 (.73)

Table 10. *Mean Differences of Moral Identity across Cultures in Each Context (Study III)*

	Family Context	School Context	Community/Society Context
Chinese Canadian vs. European Canadian	-.07	-.05	-.18
Chinese Canadian vs. Chinese in China	-.08	-.26**	-.44**

\*\*  $p < 0.1$

Table 11. *Value Domains and Attributes Defining Individuals' Moral Identity, Relative Frequency in Each Culture*

<b>Value Domain/Attributes</b>	<i>European Canadians M% (SD)</i>	<i>Chinese Canadians M% (SD)</i>	<i>Chinese M% (SD)</i>
<b>Benevolence-dependability: Being a reliable and trustworthy group member</b>			
• Dependable, faithful, genuine, honest, loyal, reliable, responsible, sincere, trustworthy, truthful, credible, incorruptible	29.34(.34)	30.94 (.30)	18.41 (.22)
<b>Universalism-tolerance: Acceptance of those who are different from oneself</b>			
• Accepting, listens, non-judgmental, open-minded, patient, respectful, tolerant, understanding, wise	24.38 (.35)	13.51(.18)	10.02 (.21)
<b>Benevolence-caring: Devotion to the welfare of ingroup members</b>			
• Altruistic, benevolent, caring, forgiving, generous, helpful, kind, loving, selfless, sharing, warm-hearted	10.55 (.23)	12.23(.19)	11.92 (.19)
<b>Universalism-concern: Commitment to equality, justice and protection for all</b>			
• Fair, just, compassionate, peaceful	4.64 (.17)	5.40(.13)	4.89 (.13)
<b>Conformity-rules: Compliance with rules, laws and formal obligations</b>			
• Follows the rules, law abiding, obedient, ethical, principled	4.41 (.14)	6.29(.20)	4.48 (.16)
<b>Achievement: Success according to social standards</b>			
• Hard-working, perseveres, proud, self-disciplined, educated, intelligent, diligent, motivated, ambitious	2.38(.12)	3.03(.09)	3.84 (.14)
<b>Conformity-interpersonal: Avoidance of upsetting other people</b>			
	3.61 (.13)	4.43(.10)	9.82 (.22)

- Considerate, cooperative, courteous, conscientious, friendly, sociable, civilized

**Humble: Recognizing one's insignificance in the larger scheme of things**

4.22 (.14)      2.37(.07)      5.89 (.12)

- Humble, modest, grateful, dedicated

**Self-direction: Cultivate one's own ideas and determine one's own action**

.03 (.00)      2.25(.05)      6.01 (.11)

- Confident, consistent, courageous, independent, rational

**Face: Maintaining once public image and avoiding humiliation**

1.55 (.06)      1.24(.04)      .10 (.01)

- Exemplary, honorable

**Security: Safety and stability in one's immediate environment and the wider society**

.00(.00)      1.19(.04)      9.00 (.18)

- Clean, healthy, patriotic, solidaric, prudent, careful

**Hedonism: Pleasure and sensuous gratification**

.10 (.01)      3.27(.14)      1.63 (.07)

- Fun, happy

**Tradition: Respect of the customs and ideas that traditional culture**

.00(.00)      .48(.03)      5.45 (.13)

- Religion, Filial piety

**Unclassified:**

- Good, has high standards, knowledgeable, knows what is right and wrong, active, makes the right choices, optimistic, proper, strong, thrifty, righteous, outgoing

14.44(.26)      13.33 (.23)      8.55 (.15)

Table 12: *Hierarchical Regression of Acculturation on Mean Level of Moral Identity in Each Context*

Step and predictors	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$df$	$\Delta R^2$
<b><i>Family Context</i></b>				
First step		.38	2, 103	.01
Length of Residency	-.18			
Immigrant Statuses	.17			
Second Step		17.04**	2, 101	.25**
Length of Residency	.09			
Immigrant Statuses	-.04			
Heritage Enculturation	.19			
Mainstream Acculturation	.40**			
Final model		8.77**	4, 101	.26**
<b><i>School. Context</i></b>				
First step		2.66	2, 103	.05
Length of Residency	-.22			
Immigrant Statuses	-.01			
Second Step		10.79**	2, 101	.17**
Length of Residency	-.05			
Immigrant Statuses	-.16			
Heritage Enculturation	.07			
Mainstream Acculturation	.38**			
Final model		6.98**	4, 101	.22**

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*Community/Society Context*

First step		1.71	2, 103	.03
Length of Residency	-.27			
Immigrant Statuses	.11			
Second Step		10.20**	2, 101	.16**
Length of Residency	-.06			
Immigrant Statuses	-.05			
Heritage Enculturation	.15			
Mainstream Acculturation	.33**			
Final model		6.11**	4, 101	.20**

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 Note: \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 13. *Value Domains and Attributes Defining Individuals' Moral Identity, Relative Frequency in Recent and Long-term Chinese-Canadian Immigrants*

Value Domain/Attributes	<i>Recent</i> <i>M% (SD)</i>	<i>Long-term</i> <i>M% (SD)</i>
<b>Benevolence-dependability: Being a reliable and trustworthy group member</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependable, faithful, genuine, honest, loyal, reliable, responsible, sincere, trustworthy, truthful, credible, incorruptible</li> </ul>	33.59 (.32)	21.71(.21)
<b>Universalism-tolerance: Acceptance of those who are different from oneself</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepting, listens, non-judgmental, open-minded, patient, respectful, tolerant, understanding, wise</li> </ul>	13.49 (.19)	14.80(.15)
<b>Benevolence-caring: Devotion to the welfare of ingroup members</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Altruistic, benevolent, caring, forgiving, generous, helpful, kind, loving, selfless, sharing, warm-hearted</li> </ul>	11.46(.22)	11.02(.15)
<b>Universalism-concern: Commitment to equality, justice and protection for all</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair, just, compassionate, peaceful</li> </ul>	3.41 (.11)	11.53(.18)
<b>Conformity-rules: Compliance with rules, laws and formal obligations</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows the rules, law abiding, obedient, ethical, principled</li> </ul>	9.49 (.25)	.48(.02)
<b>Achievement: Success according to social standards</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard-working, perseveres, proud, self-disciplined, educated, intelligent, diligent, motivated, ambitious</li> </ul>	2.62 (.07)	5.24(.14)



<b>Conformity-interpersonal: Avoidance of upsetting other people</b>	2.80 (.08)	5.25(.14)
• Considerate, cooperative, courteous, conscientious, friendly, sociable, civilized		
<b>Humble: Recognizing one's insignificance in the larger scheme of things</b>	2.98(.08)	1.77(.05)
• Humble, modest, grateful, dedicated		
<b>Self-direction: Cultivate one's own ideas and determine one's own action</b>	1.81(.05)	3.59(.06)
• Confident, consistent, courageous, independent, rational		
<b>Face: Maintaining once public image and avoiding humiliation</b>	1.68(.05)	.65(.01)
• Exemplary, honorable		
<b>Security: Safety and stability in one's immediate environment and the wider society</b>	1.67(.05)	.48(.02)
• Clean, healthy, patriotic, solidaric, prudent, careful		
<b>Hedonism: Pleasure and sensuous gratification</b>	4.95(.18)	.48(.02)
• Fun, happy		
<b>Tradition: Respect of the customs and ideas that traditional culture</b>	.00(.00)	.00(.00)
• Religious, Filial piety		
<b>Unclassified:</b>	10.05 (.21)	23.01 (.28)
• Good, has high standards, knowledgeable, knows what is right and wrong, active makes the right choices, optimistic, proper, strong, thrifty, righteous, outgoing		

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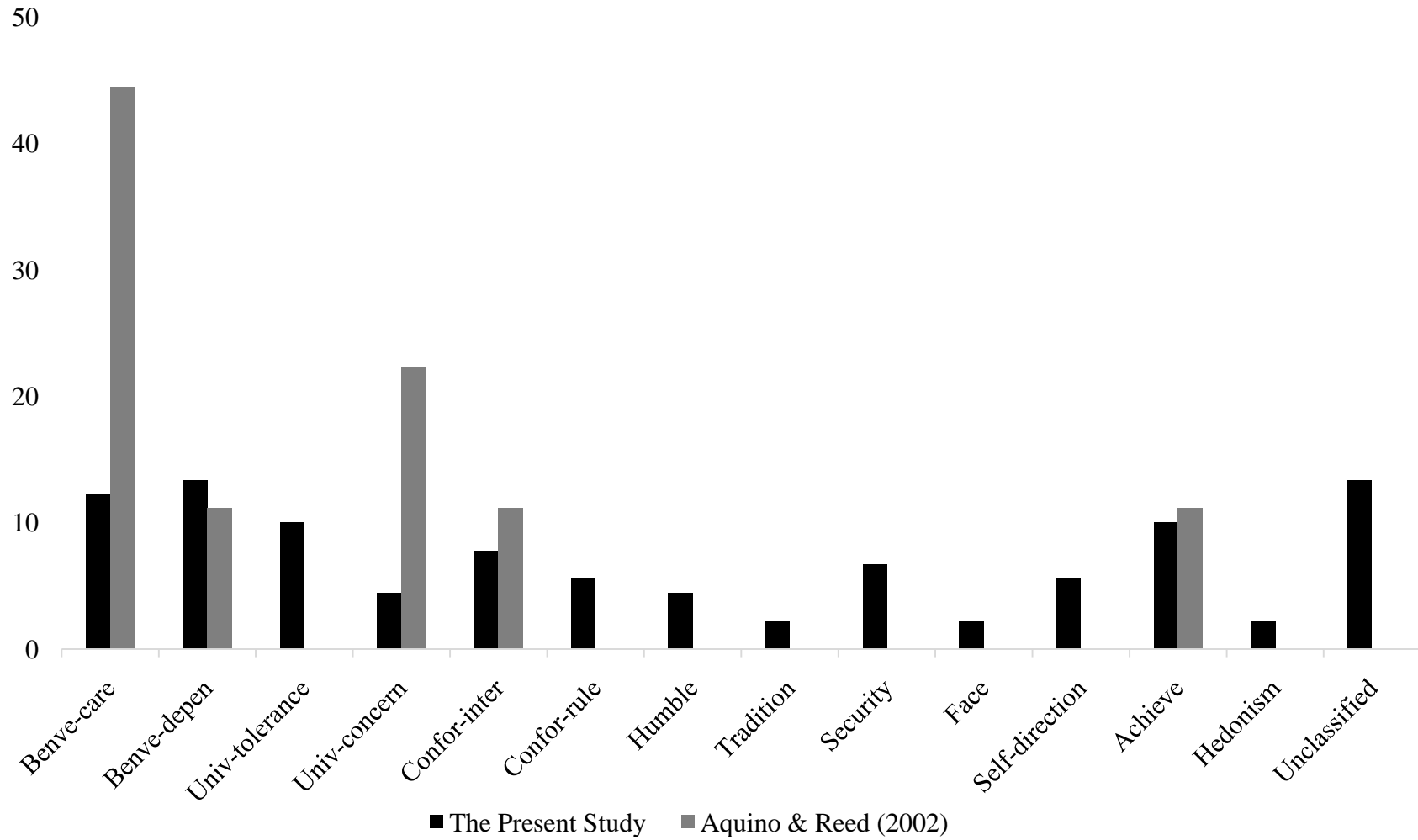


Figure 1. Percentage of attributes in each value domains

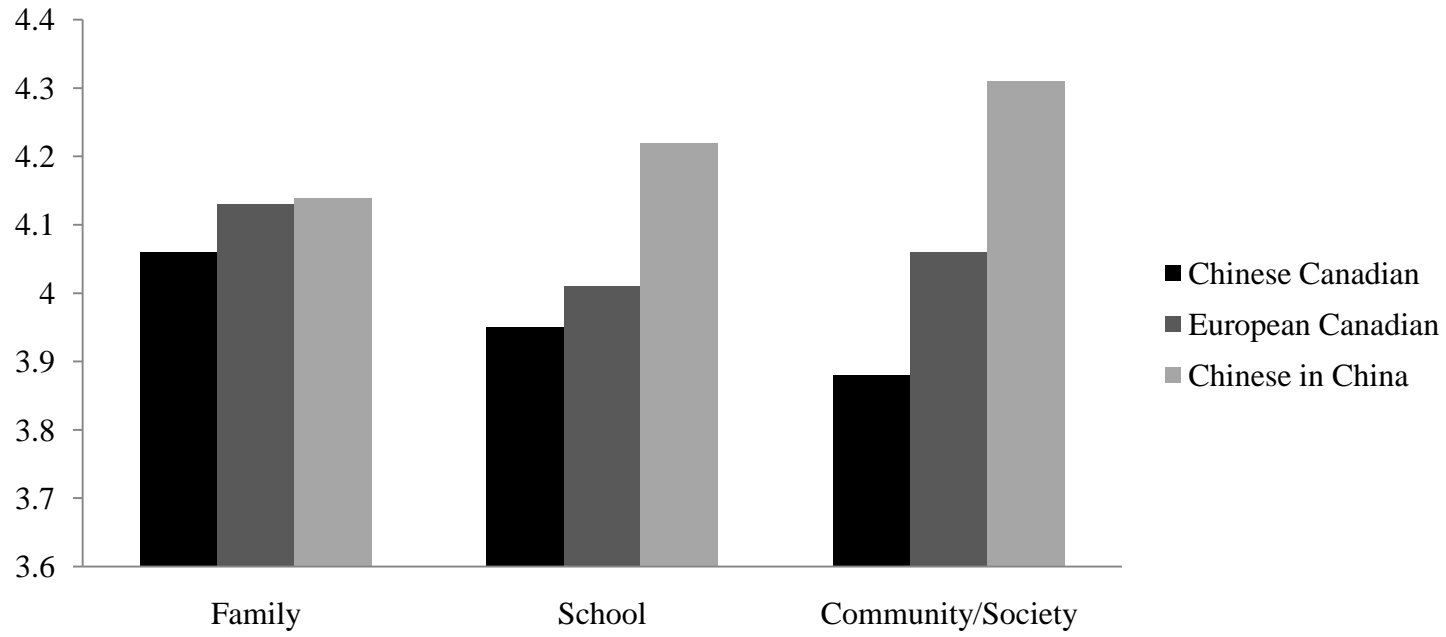


Figure 2: Mean levels of moral identity in three contexts and cultures in Study III

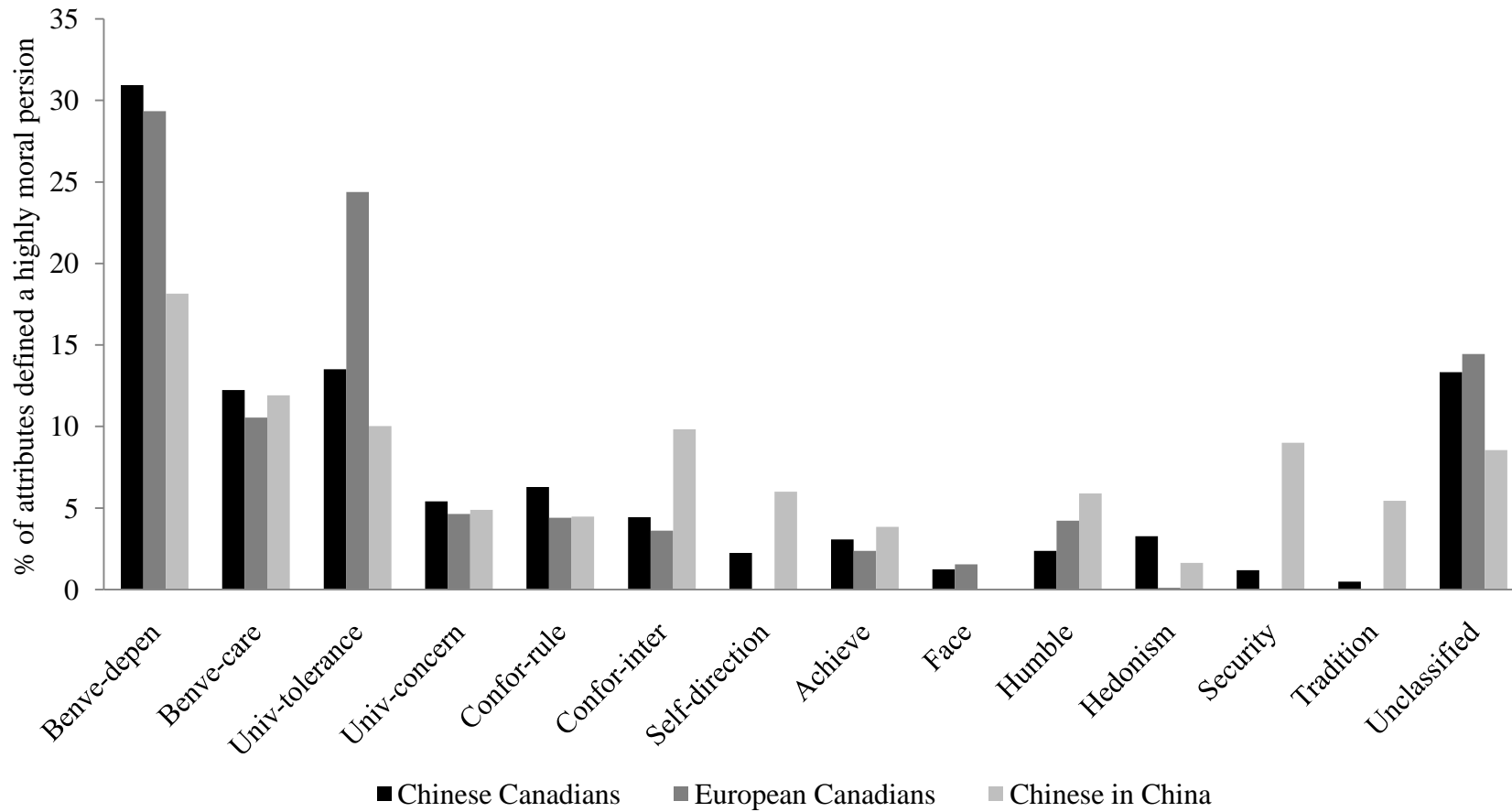


Figure 3: Average percentage of attributes defining a highly moral person in three cultural groups in Study III

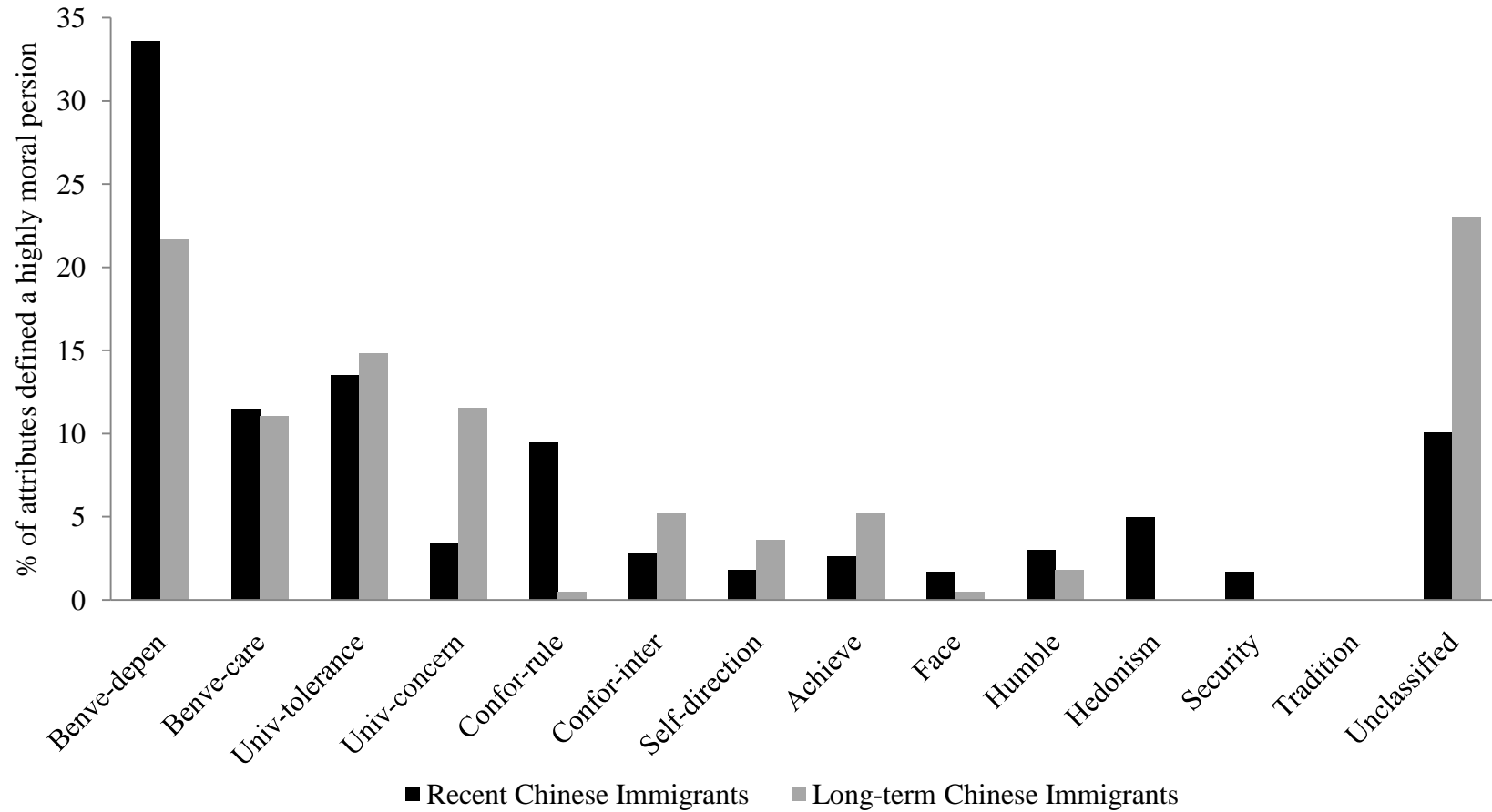


Figure 4: Average percentage of attributes defining a highly moral person between recent and long-term Chinese-Canadian immigrants

**Appendix A: Chinese Measure in Study I-b**个人家庭资料

出生日期: 年月 0 日

1. 性别, 请选择.男 1 女 2

2. 出生城市:

3. 民族 (比如: 汉族, 满族, 回族等等.)

4. 大学第几年? :

学科类型: (比如: 社会科学/ (文科), 自然科学 (理科), 工程 (工科)):

未来专业:

4. 请打 √

教育程度	母亲	父亲
高中以下		
高中毕业		
一些大学		
大学毕业		
职业学院		
研究生(硕士, 博士, 法学, 医学等)		

5. 你父母现在的职业是? (如果父母暂时没有工作, 那上一个工作是什么?)

母亲

父亲



## Appendix B: Chinese-English Translation of Moral Attributes

____ 爱国 patriotic	____ 节俭 thrifty	____ 荣誉的 honourable	____ 有爱 loving
____ 爱好和平 peaceful	____ 可靠 reliable	____ 认真 conscientious	____ 有同情心 compassionate
____ 不盲目批判 non-judgmental	____ 开朗 outgoing	____ 善良 kind	____ 有宗教信仰的 religious
____ 不计前嫌 forgiving	____ 乐于助人 helpful	____ 善解人意 understanding	____ 有教养 educated
____ 包容 tolerant	____ 乐于奉献 dedicated	____ 思想开明 open-minded	____ 有正义感 righteous
____ 表里一致 consistent	____ 乐观 optimistic	____ 是非分明 knows what is right/wrong	____ 有趣 fun
____ 诚信 credible	____ 伦理的 ethical	____ 善于社交 sociable	____ 有爱心, 关心的 caring
____ 诚实 honest	____ 廉洁 incorruptible	____ 团结 solidaric	____ 有理想 ambitious
____ 诚恳 genuine	____ 理性 rational	____ 踏实 dependable	____ 有责任心 responsible
____ 懂得感恩 grateful	____ 礼貌 courteous	____ 利他的, 无私心的 altruistic	____ 值得信赖的 trustworthy
____ 独立 independent	____ 明智的 wise	____ 为他人着想 considerate	____ 尊重人的 respectful
____ 懂得分享 sharing	____ 模范的 exemplary	____ 文明的 civilized	____ 忠诚 loyal
____ 服从的 obedient	____ 努力的 hardworking	____ 无私, 不自私 selfless	____ 整洁 clean
____ 公平 fair	____ 耐心 patient	____ 稳重 prudent	____ 智慧 intelligent
____ 公正 just	____ 能做正确决定的 makes the right choices	____ 孝顺 filial piety	____ 正直 upstanding
____ 高标准 has high standards	____ 善于倾听 listens	____ 幸福的 happy	____ 真诚 sincere
____ 合作的 cooperative	____ 勤奋的 diligent	____ 心胸宽广 generous	____ 知识渊博 knowledgeable
____ 好的 good	____ 谦逊 humble	____ 细心 careful	____ 自信 self-confident
____ 健康 healthy	____ 虔诚 faithful	____ 易接受的/赞同的 accepting	____ 自律 self-disciplined



_____ 坚强 strong	_____ 恰当的 proper	_____ 勇敢 courageous	_____ 自豪的 proud
_____ 坚持不懈的 perseveres	_____ 谦虚 modest	_____ 友好 friendly	_____ 遵守条例 follows the rules
_____ 坦诚 truthful	_____ 仁慈 benevolent	_____ 有上进心 motivated	_____ 遵纪守法 law-abiding
_____ 积极 active	_____ 热心 warm-hearted	_____ 有原则 principled	