Caring or not caring for coworkers? An empirical study of the ethical unawareness to the issue of care

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Abstract:

Understanding how to foster care in organizations has important societal implications. While researchers have praised the virtue of care ethic at work, empirical investigations on how to enact an ethic of care in work organizations have been scarce. We contribute to address this question through the case of coworker relationships morality. We draw on research on an ethic of care in organizations and on the construction of morality at work. Through in-depth qualitative studies of two organizations we highlight the role of rationalization of beliefs to resolve the moral tension that arise between responsibility for the work (work ethic) and responsibility for coworkers (care ethic). In this article we contribute understanding how care is hindered in coworkers relationships. Thus we also reflect on how care can be fostered in organizations. Moreover, these empirical investigations contribute to research on organizational morality as well by unpacking how the phenomenon of ethical unawareness unfolds in the construction of organizational morality.

Keywords: Care ethic, coworker relationships, organizational morality

Résumé:

Comprendre comment promouvoir le 'care' dans les organisations a d'importantes implications sociétales. Si les chercheurs ont précédemment insisté sur les vertus de l'éthique du care au travail, on dénombre peu d'investigations empiriques sur la manière de mettre en œuvre l'éthique du care dans les organisations de travail. Nous contribuons à adresser ce problème à travers le cas de la moralité des relations entre collègues. Nous nous appuyons sur les recherches sur l'éthique du care dans les organisations et sur la construction de la moralité au travail. A travers les études qualitatives approfondies de deux organisations, nous mettons en lumière le rôle de la rationalisation pour résoudre la tension morale qui émerge entre la responsabilité pour son travail (éthique professionnelle) et la responsabilité pour ses collègues (éthique du care). Dans cet article nous contribuons à comprendre comment le care est empêché dans les relations de travail et apportons ainsi une réflexion sur le développement du care dans les organisations. De plus, nous contribuons également par ces investigations empiriques aux recherches sur la moralité dans les organisations en exposant le déroulement du phénomène d'inconscientisation éthique dans la construction de la moralité organisationnelle.

Mots-clés: éthique du care, relations entre collègues, moralité dans les organisations

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INTRODUCTION

"We are not here to build friendships, we are here to
serve a common goal" (Fanny, COMMS)

"My feeling is that even if one has a position of responsibility that
does not prevent from having some... interest for the person and
not only for the work produced" (Marie-Claire, SERV)

Caring for coworkers is not a self-evident positioning in the workplace. Should we care about our coworkers as much as our work? In the quote above Fanny, one of the participants of our study, echoes the 'work ethic' view (Moberg & Meyer, 1990) and stresses that the primary purpose of work organizations is to further the objectives of the organization, not to take care of its members. On the contrary, Marie-Claire echoes the 'care ethic' view (Liedtka, 1996) and stresses the need to focus on coworkers' needs. The relevance of care ethic as an alternative ethical framework in organizations has been stressed by management and organization researchers (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012; Liedtka, 1996). However, how the care ethic come to existence in practice has left many questions open (Liedtka, 1996; Tronto, 1993). In this inductive study on the case of coworker relationships, we unveil how a care ethic rises and is contested in work organizations.

Care ethic scholars have emphasized the problem of the boundary of care (Liedtka, 1996; Tronto, 1993), which is the issue of to which individuals or communities does the care responsibility extend, given that resources are limited. Should customers, competitors, shareholders, families of employees, suppliers all be considered within the boundary of responsibilities of a caring organization? While answers to these questions differ (Liedtka, 1996), on the contrary, the responsibility towards employees is asserted or assumed in the literature on care in organizations (Gittell & Douglass, 2012; Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012; Rynes, Bartunek, Dutton, & Margolis, 2012). Hence, the case of coworkers relationships is revelatory to understand how care ethic can be enacted in practice. In practice, we observe that workplaces can be dreadful, setting the scene for uncaring treatment of employees between themselves as well (Contu, 2008; Jackall, 1988; Simpson, Cunha, & Rego, 2015).

Neoliberal capitalism has been pointed out as a context hindering care and compassion (Fotaki & Prasad, 2015; George, 2014). In modern workplaces where people care wholeheartedly about the fruit of their labor, is there space for caring about coworkers? At the same time, no relationship is livable without a minimum level of care for the other person (Kanov et al., 2004). Hence, this research aims at understanding how care for coworkers can be sustained in organizations.

Moreover, this article also aims at understanding how awareness to ethical issues emerges in organizations. In the quotes above we see that Marie-Claire, from SERV, underlines the existence of an opposition between responsibility for the work produced and responsibility for the coworker, whereas Fanny, from COMMS, does not echo any ambivalence or conflict between these two responsibilities. In this article, we unveil how individuals come to perceive an ethical dilemma between work ethic and care ethic. Understanding how morality is constructed in the workplace has become a critical issue in multiple ethical business scandals (Palazzo, Krings, & Hoffrage, 2012). Focusing on coworker relationships morality might allow us to extend knowledge on how ethical awareness emerges in organizations (Palazzo et al., 2012; Parmar, 2014; Sonenshein, 2007). Previous research has shown that the morality in the workplace is different from the morality in other areas of life (Belmi & Pfeffer, 2015; Jackall, 1988; Molinsky, Grant, & Margolis, 2012). A middle manager quoted by Jackall (1988, p.109) illustrates how corporate ideology often supplants for ethical principles: "What is right in the corporation is not what is right in a man's home or in his church. What is right in the corporation is what the guy above wants from you. That's what morality is in the corporation." Yet, the relative paucity of an up to date organizational research in this area obstructs our understanding how such phenomena might have developed. We aim to address this gap by focusing on the emergence of care ethics in coworkers' relationships. Specifically, this article aims to enhance our understanding how morality might influence the good ways of relating to each other at work, and how this might be traded off against the work ethics driving organizational performance.

We examined these questions through conducting in-depth inductive, qualitative case studies of two organizations (Lamont & Swidler, 2014; Yin, 2014), COMMS and SERV. We draw on 45 interviews and 280 hours of observations to theorize the process of the construction of the morality of the good way to relate with each other in the workplace. While we find work ethic and care ethic coexisting in both organizations, a moral tension between two different ethical stances is only experienced at SERV. This contrast allows us to unveil

how such moral tension is being rationalized and offer theoretical contributions regarding how care ethic is hindered in the workplace.

This study contributes to research on care in organization in two substantive ways. First, this paper contributes to theoretical developments on the possibility for an ethic of care in work organizations. The question of how care can prevail in work organizations has already been asked by Liedtka (1996), drawing on the work of ethicists of care (eg. Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 2003; Tronto, 1993). Lawrence and Maitlis (2012) have proposed an intriguing argument for the enactment of an ethic of care through narrative practices in work teams. They propose that care be asserted through discourses of organizational development and growth instead of current discourse of problem-solving. However, their conceptual work does not allow to deal with the complexities of real work life in practice. Our contribution is to provide an empirical investigation how care is actually enacted in the workplace. Through our empirical investigations, we show that previous conceptual research tended to underestimate the competition between caring for people and performing work objectives (Gittell & Douglass, 2012; Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012; Liedtka, 1996). We find that this competition creates anxiety and that employees collectively defend themselves against this anxiety through processes of rationalization (Fotaki & Hyde, 2015; Menzies, 1960) we have proposed.

Second, while Kantian ethics and other ethical theories have been applied normatively to explain peer relationships at work (Moberg, 1997; Moberg & Meyer, 1990; Schonsheck, 2000), there has been much less research on how moral standards (Sonenshein, 2005) emerge regarding the way we relate to each other at work in the workplace. This research shows how the morality of coworker relationships is framed in practice. In particular we stress the role of framing workers as whole persons for developing care in coworker relationships.

Moreover, this research also contributes to understanding how ethical awareness emerges in organizations. While previous models of ethical behaviors adopt a view of ethics as pre-existing ethical judgment and behaviors (Sonenshein, 2007; Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008; Treviño, den Nieuwenboer, & Kish-Gephart, 2014), this research focuses on what allows flagging the ethicality of an issue in the first place. Concepts describing the distancing of individuals from the ethical dimensions of an organizational decision have been captured under different terms such as moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999), ethical fading (Tenbrunsel, Diekmann, Wade-Benzoni, & Bazerman, 2010), moral blindness (Palazzo et al., 2012), or moral rationalization (de Klerk, 2017). However, most of the research effort devoted to developing and refining our understanding of this phenomenon of ethical detachment has

been either conceptual or based on experimental methods (Bartels, Bauman, Cushman, Pizarro, & McGraw, 2015; Treviño et al., 2014). On the contrary, this research adopts a holistic naturalistic method that allows for 'uncovering the subtlety and complexity of our everyday moral psychology' (Bartels et al., 2015, p.25). We uncover psychodynamic and intersubjective mechanisms such as not considering the worker as a whole person but as a worker only. Showing that these mechanisms hinder the emergence of ethical awareness, we contribute to explain the phenomenon of ethical unawareness in organizations.

In the following sections, we review existing research on morality construction and on the enactment of care in organizations. Then we describe the methodology of our qualitative empirical investigation before presenting our findings on the emergence of the ethical issue of care in coworker relationships. Finally, we discuss the implications of this research for theory and practice.

THEORETICAL MOTIVATIONS

Work ethic, care ethic, and morality of coworker relationships

The 'work ethic' represents a belief that work is a moral good (Porter, 2010; Sanchez-Burks, 2002; Weber, 1930). In this view, relationships with coworkers aim at serving work purposes. On the contrary, the 'care ethic' represents the concern for a person's needs and growth. A care ethic perspective focuses on the relationship between the self and a particular other, in a specific context, as a means to attend to the needs of this particular other (Held, 2006; Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012; Liedtka, 1996; Tronto, 1993).

Care ethic

A care ethic has been developed in opposition to the Kantian view of ethics that positions morality within the realm of reason and as an abstracted and universal exercise (Tronto, 1993). On the contrary, a care ethic insists on the role of emotion and feelings and concentrates on the application of morality within situated circumstances (eg. Ferguson, 1984; Gilligan, 1982; Sevenhuijsen, 2000; Tronto, 1993). In this perspective, the higher level of morality is not the blind application of universal moral rules but the practice of morality based on personal relationships with particular others in particular situations (Gilligan, 1982). An ethic of care emphasizes interconnectedness, relationships, nurturance and responsibility towards others (Gilligan, 1982). From this viewpoint, ethics is "not a system of principles, but a mode of responsiveness" to relationships and the obligations and responsibilities that they

entail for particular others (Cole & Coultrap-McQuin, 1992, p.40; Fisher & Tronto, 1990). The feminist ethics of care recognizes that 'care work' is often precisely the type of work that the market does not value, such as privacy, emotion and attending to 'need' rather than 'demand.' While it began as a critique of society's exploitative neglect or lack of recognition of women's caregiving (Noddings, 2003), feminist scholars have, more recently, expanded the domain of the ethics of care to include broader problems of social organization and practice (Gabriel, 2009; Held, 2006; Liedtka, 1996; Sevenhuijsen, 2003; Waerness, 1996).

The tension between work ethic and care ethic

"Caring organizations will need to be as tough-minded and result-oriented as any other organization. It will be their methods and aspirations that distinguish them, not their lack of attention to outcomes. The values of mutual respect, honesty, and patience will be its foundation" (Liedtka, p.194)

Liedtka's (1996) influential article aimed at studying how an ethic of care could be implemented in the organization. She underlines the distinction between caring and performing. However, her statement above represents an optimistic view of the compatibility between care ethic and work ethic. She starts to elaborate on this compatibility but calls for further research on the topic. Later work on the enactment of an ethics of care in organizations stays in line with this optimism and assumes issues of compatibility to be only marginal (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012). However, from an ethics of care perspective caring for somebody implies positioning her and our relationship to her in the center of focus, as the end of the process. So we wonder whether the focus on work that underlies the workplace is compatible with the attentiveness to the needs of others that underlies care.

Care, compassion, and the personal-professional divide

From a care ethic perspective women's experiences from the private sphere are taken as a "normative model for behavior" in the public sphere, where women's "capacities for love and care for others come to be seen as a model to be emulated by others, and as a potential basis for public morality" (Mottier, 2004, p.330). Caring involves "feeling with" the other (Liedtka, 1996) and being responsive to their needs, feelings and desires. The epitomic mother-child relationship illustrates interpersonal emotional responsiveness, sympathy, responsibility and care. A care ethic perspective thereby challenges the conventional distinction between the public and the private, non-work space which is associated with emotion, care and welfare to inform the morals of interpersonal relationships (Brown & Staeheli, 2003).

Moreover, research on compassion at work has stressed the role of emotion in the practice of compassion as a process including "noticing" the suffering of others, "feeling" this suffering and "responding" to the pain (Kanov et al., 2004). Compassion is both the sensitivity to the pain of others and the will to alleviate it (Fotaki, 2015). Hence compassion can be described as "a necessary basis for the ethical foundation of care" (Fotaki, 2015, p.200).

On the contrary, acting "professional" means focusing on the task and putting aside personal issues, limiting the degree of affects at work (Sanchez-Burks, 2002, p.927). This personal-professional divide that pervades the workplace seems then in contradiction with the enactment of care for people. If one puts aside the personal side of people, then how is it possible to care for them? In this research we aim at examining how a care ethic can be sustain in coworker relationships.

Ethical awareness and intersubjective construction of ethical issues in organizations

Business ethicists have been criticized for proposing a normative view of ethics that fails to explain recurring ethical scandals in business contexts (Palazzo et al., 2012). Research on the role of decision frames show that ethicality is dependent on the way the context is understood. It appears that the way people frame an issue, especially as ethical as opposed to as business-like, will determine their behavior (Tenbrunsel and Messick, 1999; Gino, et al., 2009; Reynolds, et al., 2010; Molinsky, et al., 2012; Kouchaki, et al., 2013). Hence, if people identify the issue they are facing as a business problem, they will not see the ethical issue in it, and they are unlikely to take morality into account to determine appropriate behaviors.

Moreover, to understand morality within the organization, scholars need to emphasize the interaction between cognitions and social context. (Sonenshein, 2005, 2007). Taking stock from critics of cognitivism, Sonenshein (2007) stresses: "it is important that scholars study the interpretive processes that construct ethical issues out of social stimuli in the environment" (p.1026). In this research, we adopt a socially constructed view of morality and consider that 'Moralities emerge as large numbers of people interact with each other, constrained and enabled by culturally and historically specific sets of institutions and technologies.' (Graham, et al., 2011, p.368). The classic ethnography of Jackall (1988) for instance unveils how the structure and culture of the workplace creates a particular path for morality. Others have since endeavored to unveil how morality is constructed through discourse (Ailon, 2013; Whittle & Mueller, 2012), ethical framing (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015), values work (Gehman, Trevino, & Garud, 2013), power relations (Gordon, Clegg, & Kornberger, 2009). These empirical

investigations emphasize a view of morality as emerging in interaction (Anteby, 2010; Linehan & O'Brien, 2017). Hence we focus on morality as an intersubjective phenomenon. We define intersubjectivity as "the processes by which we relate to, and are affected, by others in organizations" (Fotaki & Harding, 2017, p.2).

In particular, this research aims at understanding how ethical awareness emerges intersubjectively. Ethical awareness characterizes a situation when a person considers morality is at stake in her decision or her behavior (Treviño et al., 2014). Palazzo and colleagues have pointed out that blindness to moral issues explains better the phenomenon of organizational deviance than a conscious decision to undertake unethical actions. Depending on the intersubjective perspective, the ethicality of an issue can fade away (Tenbrunsel et al., 2010). The ethical unawareness has also been stressed as an organizational phenomenon, when organizational blind spots emerge as a defense against anxiety (Fotaki & Hyde, 2015). Given the importance of ethical awareness in understanding the ethicality in organizations, this article aims at unveiling how ethical awareness emerges and disappears in organizations.

RESEARCH SETTING AND METHOD

We conducted two in-depth inductive case studies of work organizations. To understand how the morality of coworker relationships is constructed in the workplace we chose an interpretive approach following grounded theory techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). We chose two, contrasting case studies of work organizations in order to compare and develop richer insights about how the phenomenon plays out in two different empirical contexts; a municipal child protection agency in rural France and a communications agency in Paris. We selected the child protection agency as an archetypal case of an organization where "care" is at the forefront of work; and the communications agency as an example of an instrumentally-oriented organization driven by hyper-competitiveness and performance pressures. Combining insights from these two contrasting cases allows addressing with more confidence the question of 'what is this a case of' while still providing the depth of analysis to describe 'what is going on here' (Tsoukas, 2009, p.286).

Research settings

Case 1: COMMS

COMMS is a communication agency encompassing different units, all related to communication and advertising. The communication sector was going through a transformation due to the threat on the traditional business model of advertising. The different units kept moving out regularly inside the building according to their extension or downsizing while COMMS was looking for relevant strategic moves. Inside of COMMS, three units were studied: Consulting, Public Relations and Advertising. Consulting was a small unit (5 to 7 people at the time of observation) that proposed to advise clients on their branding and communicating strategy. In practice their activity consisted of looking for new contracts and conducting consulting missions that could be limited like running a few workshops with a board of directors on the communication strategy, or much larger projects like co-designing the communication strategy of multinational groups. Consulting had been created two years before and while it was on the rise, it was still considered as being on trial: serious economic setbacks could threaten its existence. Public Relation was a slightly bigger unit with 10 persons or more. Their job was to help clients manage their public image. This required connecting with journalists, almost exclusively on the phone, and writing contents of media releases for which they could then be assisted by a dedicated team of writers. While the unit was well established (had been acquired by COMMS ten years before), it was going through an identity crisis as the management was looking for ways to provide a service with higher value to the clients (i.e. more profitable). Finally, the Advertising department was the place where advertising ideas were elaborated and sold to the clients for their communication campaigns. The Advertising Department was COMMS figurehead for creativity, and represented a symbolic value for which communication agencies compete fiercely.

Case 2: SERV

SERV is an entity of the child protection service ("Aide sociale à l'enfance") organized by local authorities (French "départements"). Children are taken into care by SERV based on the judge's decision. The team is responsible for organizing foster and care plans following the judge's order and working with the different partners (foster families, hosting venues, parents, police, health services, etc.) for the good of the child. SERV's offices were situated in the first floor of a small administrative building in a small town in a rural area. They worked in closed offices shared with three persons, except for the head of service and the psychologist who had their own office. They could use meeting rooms belonging to the

other social service but their own meeting and parental visits room was situated in another building five minutes' walk away. The unit counted 10 people including the head of service. People were usually there for years (between 3 and 30 years), except for an intern that spent 6 months. Also during the time of observation two people left on maternity leave and were then replaced by two short-term contracts. SERV was one of the protection services of a local authority that organized the service by areas. It was allegedly the smallest entity in the local authority, and had also the largest geographic area to cover. Then the social workers had to travel regularly to visit children, foster families and hosting venues.

Commonalities and differences

Like in many organizations, employees in both SERV and COMMS felt a high work performance pressure, though this was expressed differently in both settings. Commonalities and differences are presented in Table 1 below. Both organizations underwent important pressure for economic performance, i.e. being profitable for shareholders in the case of COMMS and saving the taxpayers money in the case of SERV. Moreover, in both organizations, employees were strongly committed to deliver quality work, either to impress the clients (in the case of the communication agency) or to foster development of children in care (in the case of social services). Finally both organizations represent traditional office work. They worked during week days, in a fixed office location, with specific office hours and individually assigned desks. The differences between the two organizations that matter for the study of coworker relationships morality were their different temporal perspective and their awareness of wellbeing issues. For instance, COMMS was a business-as-usual organization and focused on short term outcomes. COMMS employees were well-educated people with good social skills but they did not have particular knowledge about care and wellbeing; they did not seem concerned with the relevance of these issues in the workplace either. On the contrary, SERV's mission was social care, which included knowledge and practice of what determines a child's wellbeing. Employees were concerned with the social and psychological development of children over years.

	COMMS	SERV
Commonalities		
Pressure on performance	Pressure for providing good work	Pressure for providing good work
	Competitive market with clients satisfaction as definitive assessment	Children and families wellbeing depends on their ability to understand the situation and take the appropriate measures
Economic constraints	Tight budget	Tight budget
	Limited recruitment possibilities and immediate lay-offs according to contracts failures	Strict ratio of number of children in foster care per staff
Work configuration	Traditional office work	Traditional office work
	Day work with flexible hours	Day work with flexible hours
	Some appointments outside but mostly in-office work	Regular appointments outside but anchor point in office
	Work organised in project teams	Individual responsiblities but pervasive team work
Differences		
Temporal perspective	Short term	Long term
	Responsiveness within a week is the general rule.	While emergencies happen, overall the work is planned over several months
	Rare long term commitment from clients	Improving developmental perspectives of children over years
	High employees turnover	Mostly permanent staff with low turnover
Awareness to wellbeing issues	Lay-person knowledge	Professional knowledge
	Well-educated people but no specific knowledge about well-being for the job	Tackling mental health issues as part of the job

Table 1: Commonalities and differences between COMMS and SERV relevant for the construction of coworker relationships morality

Data collection

The data collection aimed at observing what was going on from the researcher's point of view through ethnographic observation and at observing what participants thought was going on, through interviews. A broad range of situations were covered (working at one's desk, internal meetings, external meetings, lunch, coffee, etc.). A synthesis of data collected is provided in Table 2.

Method	Sample	Data collected	Analysis
Interviews	Serv: 13 interviews (average duration: 52mn) Comms: 33 interviews (average duration: 52mn)	Full transcripts	Coding in Nvivo (grounded theory techniques)
Ethnographic observations	Serv: 118 hours over 20 months, pictures taken of the offices, institutional documents Comms: 210 hours over 20 months, pictures taken of the offices, work documents, emails	Serv: 73 pages field notes single-spaced, docs stored in Nvivo Comms: 98 pages field notes single-spaced; docs stored in Nvivo	Coding in Nvivo (grounded theory techniques)

Table 2: Data collected

The ethnographic observations took place in both settings over several months. At COMMS, observations took place from the end of July 2014 until mid-November 2014 (190 hours) with several follow-ups with the gatekeeper by phone. The researcher spent time in different units, observed meetings, office work, spontaneous work interactions, morning

greetings, lunchtime get-together, etc. Observations were recorded in a field diary, yielding more than 80 pages of single space field notes. Also, dozens of documents were collected, including emails, internal documents, clients presentations and so on. At SERV observations took place between end of August 2014 until mid-March 2015 (95 hours), yielding more than 60 pages of single-space field notes. The researcher attended team meetings, project meetings, meetings with partners and users of social services, spent time in shared offices, and participated in lunchtime get-together. A few documents were also collected relating to human resources management and their activity.

Formal, open-ended interviews were conducted to better understand the perspective of coworkers regarding everyday practices, norms and beliefs about relating to each other at work. Appointments were taken while encountering people during the observation. At SERV all 13 employees were interviewed. At COMMS, 33 people were interviewed (but one interview was excluded from the corpus because the recording was not audible): 8 (out of 8) at Consulting, 8 (out of 11) at Public Relation, 6 (out of over 100) at Advertising, and 10 respondents from other entities working directly with one of the 3 entities. Attention was given to interviewing people of different gender, age, years of work experience (relatively to employees of COMMS), and different levels of responsibility (managers, top managers, seniors, juniors, interns).

The interviews were all conducted following a similar structure (see interview guide in Appendix A). They started with a short introduction of the subject matter: the appropriate way of behaving towards each other at work. Then the conversation expanded in an open manner. At some point, the interviewee was repeatedly asked the question "According to you, what do you think is the appropriate way to behave with each other at work?" Another common point of the conduction of the interviews was asking about the educational and professional background of interviewees so as to give them anchor points to reflect about the way things are in their current organization. But beyond adopting a common structure, the interviews were open-ended so as to allow the interviewee to naturally explore topics that appeared relevant to her. Interviews were also informed by the observations: either interviewee brought up examples from situations where they knew the researcher was there or the researcher mentioned situations involving the interviewee for him or her to comment.

Data analysis

Following a grounded theory approach (Birks, Fernandez, Levina, & Nasirin, 2013; Holton, 2007) the data were first coded (open coding) by the first author. Specifically, this first level of coding implied re-reading the material and systematically labelling chunks of text (or images) according to the content of the material. For instance, codes included "attention-availability", "fairness", "relational endeavor", "respect", "helping", "self-interest", "having fun", "being well", "Arrival-adapting", "food sharing", "work skills", "personal issues at work", "sharing personal life", "information exchange", "conflict", "role clients", "comparing workplaces", "performing-producing". After coding around 30% of the material, a review of the codes was performed to check for overlaps and merge codes or on the contrary to add more nuances then develop new codes. In the end, this process had yielded 92 codes of the observation data and 88 for the interview data. Memos were written systematically to keep track of the meaning of each code to ensure consistency. An example of for the code "personal issues at work" is available in Appendix B.

Then iteration between data and literature, enriched by discussions between the authors, led to the emergence of the themes of care ethic (Gilligan, 1982; Liedtka, 1996; Tronto, 1993), work ethic (Porter, 2010; Sanchez-Burks, 2002), and moral tension as they seemed to represent the qualitatively different kinds of morality of coworker relationships that was observed (Parmar, 2014; Sonenshein, 2007, 2009). Then we searched in the data the explanation of how these different kinds of morality emerged. We found the themes of the need for performance, wholeness of the person and happy-productive worker thesis (Wright & Staw, 1999). These themes emerged from the data but we related these back to the existing literature, to deepen interpretations. They explain how ethical awareness from conflicting responsibilities emerged in the organization and, as a result, how care for coworkers could be asserted.

We worked in iteration between the analyses of the two organizations. When we thought we had found a pattern leading to care ethic or work ethic we checked whether the insights held across both organizations. When this was not the case, we searched again for a pattern that was intelligible and applicable for both settings. This does not mean that the theorization that we present in this paper is 'generalizable' to all types of work organizations but the contrasting empirical contexts allowed for theoretical replication (Yin, 2014).

FINDINGS

Both at SERV and at COMMS, we find that two views of morality are competing against each other: the work ethic that focuses on one's responsibility for the work, and the care ethic that focuses on one's responsibility for coworkers. We find that the work ethic framing is the main framing of the good way to handle coworker relationships. It is enhanced by the need for performance. However, a care ethic emerges as a competing framing, enhanced by framing the coworker as a whole person as opposed to as a worker only. In practice, we observe that responsibility for the work and responsibility for the coworker are conflicting. Trying to sustain both these responsibilities leads individuals to awareness of the ethical issue of care. However, as they do not manage to resolve the ethical issue in practice, they experience uneasiness and even anxiety. While at SERV, the moral tension is sustained, unresolved, at COMMS, the tension is resolved by denying the conflict and believing that happier people make more productive employees. Thus, COMMS employees engage in instrumental care that consists in caring for coworkers only to the extent that it makes them more efficient at work. In this section, we develop how this process unfolds from the in-depth case studies of SERV and COMMS. First, we unveil how the ethical awareness emerges and second, how it comes to be resolved through rationalization processes, leading to what we term 'instrumental care'.

Work ethic and care ethic: competing framings for coworker relationships

Enforcing the need for performance

The pressures for work performances were similarly high in both organizations, leading to high attentiveness to work. At COMMS, people are buzzing around, creating spontaneous meetings at any hour, forgetting about the time, focusing on tasks that are due the next day and sometimes the next hour. They all do that seamlessly. Their energy seemed guided hugely by the pleasure to work. They enjoyed discussing the topics, they were passionate about their ideas. The need for performance was expressed especially through the pressure to satisfy clients as Pierre (COMMS) explains:

> "It is the client's pressure, […] because we are…we are still service providers and we… our mission is to provide something of good quality on time. It brings… it brings pressure. Now, in general we manage, if the brief is very clear, if the expectations of the client are very well understood, in general already it… it allows to limit the pressure and if we have enough time to do it, it allows to limit pressure" (Pierre, COMMS).

At SERV, the work day seems more quiet and there is less obsession with achieving tasks on the short run. However, employees also refer to the intense pressure of the job: "Well, SERV's culture I would say it is a lot of work" (Maelle, SERV); "emails are crazy things, it is sort of a dictatorship" (Gilles, SERV). Overall, performance pressure was expressed in terms of the employees' having responsibility toward the children they cared for. Maelle (SERV) articulates this responsibility when comparing with former employment as a social worker:

> "It is not a pressure from the Management, it is not a pressure from the Judge, it is a pressure that I put on myself because I work with children and also because their life is at stake, it is about their future" (Maelle, SERV).

The urgency that people feel to perform work can be seen in the seriousness with which they take each child's case. Vignette 1 below illustrates one of these struggles.

Vignette 1

Excerpt from the field notes. 'Struggle to make sense'

Marie-Claire expects guidance from Gilles: 'And so, what can we do?'. Gilles offers a solution but is not very convinced. People go blank. Then Nathalie adds something. When they don't know what to do, they look a bit scared. And the guilt from not doing the right thing, Nathalie: 'as a result we contribute to denial'. Sometimes things don't make sense: 'Yeah I tell myself that it is complicated…uh… I don't know' (Marie-Claire).

As a result of the urgency to perform the work, the employees' attention is drawn to the work, and the morality of coworker relationships is inscribed into the moral duty to perform work.

Framing coworker relationships within work ethic

We find that the issue of treating each other well in the workplace is primarily framed by the purpose of performing work. When asked about the good way to behave towards the coworkers, individuals position their answer in terms of the work objectives. It seems that they focus on 'how to function well at work'. Participants evoke elements such as respect, politeness, trust, empathy, positivity, cheerfulness. They link these elements with functions such as feeling at ease to work with each other, making people feel they are part of the team, and they can contribute, allowing information to circulate, collaborating efficiently, being available to work with others. The quotes from interviews below illustrate the connections made between the quality of the relationship and its function. Pierre explains that the good attitude is to be available and in a good mood and he supports his answer by the productivity rationale ('to work well'):

"Otherwise the good attitude I think is to appear available, in a good mood...then after if one can be proactive it's good but it's not always easy because we are... our time is in general already sold at 150% it is not always easy on top of that to be proactive but we should, in theory we should be. Well… what else? I don't know, it is talking to each other, communicating, I think that… Yeah availability and good mood, that's… that's super important to work well" (Pierre, COMMS).

Sometimes, individuals directly answer that the appropriate way to behave with each other is to be collaborative, helping, efficient, available, in other words, to be functional. When Odile explains the kind of relationships that are suitable in the workplace, she emphasizes that relationships should not be personal otherwise people lose the objectivity that is necessary to accomplish quality work:

"And in addition when one enters into a very personal relationship with people I find that after that then it distorts a little bit the relationship ... It can distort a little bit the relationships, the work relationships. So there are people we're going to be ... So, we're going to be more involved emotionally, closer, more ... there it is, there are others where it will not be this way and as a result, we don't have necessarily the same objectivity about people" (Odile, COMMS).

Framing coworker relationships within care ethic

While the attention is primarily drawn toward work objectives, the other person raises rival attention. This rival attention evidences in expressions of interest in the wellbeing of coworkers, and the moral responsibility towards them. Alexia states that colleagues are part of her life hence it is important to check how they are doing:

"I think that we actually spend a lot of time at work, the hours we do at SERV take a good part of our lives. That's huge, we're there all the time and I think it's important. I think it's important anyhow to see how the colleagues are doing." (Alexia, SERV).

Maelle expresses the duty she feels to check on her colleagues and provide help if needed. She implies that this duty comes merely from being human.

"I do feel the duty to ask the other what is going on. . .and then well to see how I can help her and so, I think we are not… we are not robots" (Maelle, SERV).

Wholeness of the person as a trigger for care ethic

We find that care ethic framing is enhanced by considering coworkers in their entirety, as whole human beings, and not as workers only. Marie-Claire emphasizes that she is a whole person at work:

> *"I am a person and I can't split myself…well when I am at work I carry who I am and with my story" (Marie-Claire, SERV).*

The weaknesses of our humanity, if acknowledged, allows for triggering a need for care. From a distressing experience at work, Natacha recognizes that she would have liked support from colleagues and conclude that they have to acknowledge the 'human' side at work:

> *"After that, there's one thing in between … In fact it's not … It's not necessarily every time asking … Enquire about somebody's health and so on is above all … As I was saying spotting weak signals, you must … you should not forget to look at the people with whom you work with then. Because … Even though there are … Actually personal problems can come from … from the professional sphere. When things are not going well because a client told us off, it happens very often, to me it happened once to end up in the toilet crying, well I'm sorry then but I would have liked it that some colleagues realise it and … You see, cheer me up and so on. We cannot disconnect the human from the professional sphere. There it is" (Natacha, COMMS)*

Framing coworkers as whole persons and not as workers only leads individuals to recast their view of relationships under the light of care ethic and not only under the light of work ethic. Responsibilities for the coworkers and for the work are found conflicting by the participants of this research who come to be aware of this ethical dilemma.

Ethical awareness: moral tension from competing responsibilities

Participants stress that caring for coworkers requires resources and can clash with work objectives. Marie-Claire opening quotes represent this competition of attention between "the person" and "the work produced." Work and supporting co-workers compete in resources such as time and personal energy. Alexia expresses that she cannot spend too much time taking care of colleagues:

> *"We have our children monitoring, we have our situations and effectively one can be overwhelmed and as a result it is not easy to hold out a hand to the other colleague" (Alexia, SERV).*

Taking care of people is in competition with taking care of the work also because taking care of colleagues is not necessarily in line with work objectives or even appropriate in the work context. Natacha talks about the role of the conscience when she explains how to behave with each other at work:

> *"Somebody who asks herself the question, after some time she will do it [volunteer to assist a colleague who is distressed] because she…she has a conscience well, she has not yet been… perverted by the system, completely [laughing], she has a conscience" (Natacha, COMMS).*

Natacha stresses that the 'system' causes people to only care about the work but there is a need to care about the workers as well. All participants at SERV and some participants at COMMS see a moral tension between responsibility for the work and responsibility for the coworker. Sixtine (COMMS) expresses well when she claims that they perceive it is impossible to do both:

> *"But I think that those who are … those who are high in the organization, they don't have so much … so much of a choice. […] And then… Yes, personally I think these are things to rather regret in the company you see, then I think you can't fight against everything either." (Sixtine, COMMS)*

Sixtine perceives a moral tension between her responsibility for her work and organization and her responsibility for her coworkers. However, she does not feel that she has the resources to tackle this challenge:

> *"I think even that it is a survival reflex then, you can't encumber yourself with problems of the others otherwise you… you can't cope then. I think you can't cope emotionally and you can't cope… you can't cope because it will take on your working time then it is going to affect you twice actually" (Sixtine, COMMS)*

When conflicting responsibilities are recognised, an efficient way to dissipate the tension is to see them as compatible, or even as coexisting in a symbiotic relationship. The symbiotic relationship between the needs of the persons and the needs of the work to produce is accomplished through the construction of the happy-productive worker thesis.

Rationalizing the tension: instrumental care

We found that to respond to the tension between work ethic and care ethic, participants subjected care to work ethic. Subjecting care to work ethic meant caring for coworkers' wellbeing as a means to fulfill one's duty towards work ethic. We call this form of care

'instrumental care'.

The happy-productive worker thesis

From a work ethic perspective, individuals identify the problems of not being well as a potential disruption of their capacity to fulfill work duty. This is exemplified by Aurélie (COMMS):

> *"I think if you are not well at work, the effects will be felt on the productivity at work".*

This line of reasoning was commonly referred to by our respondents when legitimizing their imperative to care for coworkers. The examples are numerous: being well so as to learn faster, people in the team get along well so that they can be more efficient, and so on:

> *"Not having employees frustrated is super important. Well for me it's a productivity factor, just like someone's skills, someone who is happy in his work, and who manages to talk well with his colleagues, to show that he can do things without feeling threatened and everything, therefore he can learn faster, it's very important." (Anne, COMMS)*

We call a 'happy-productive worker thesis' (Wright & Staw, 1999) this belief that happier people make more productive workers. We were surprised to see how this belief was pervasive amongst participants, especially at COMMS, where the moral tension between work ethic and care ethic was much rarer. We find that people at COMMS rationalized away (Festinger, 1957) any possibility of moral discomfort that could arise from not caring about people at work. Individuals seek cognitive representations that are consistent with their actions. Hence, they may rationalize the meaning that they attribute to their actions so as to be consistent with their mental model. The happy-productive worker thesis therefore plays an important role in rationalizing the moral tension between work ethic and care ethic.

This form of reasoning was also found at SERV, however it triggered more questioning. For instance, Christine justifies helping somebody who is not well so as to get the job done. However, she also distances herself (through laughter) from framing it "a pretty good investment", which suggests it might be a pretty odd rationale for supporting somebody.

> *"If in a team at some time there is one person that works less, that works less well, at last we come back down to the situation where she is overwhelmed by personal issues that make her less efficient, then we have to accept, knowing that she is not like that all the time and that… the quicker we will be holding her, supporting her,*

maybe the better she will get. [...] Then as a result it seems to me... [laugh] that it is
a pretty good investment!" (Christine, SERV).

Instrumental care as a result of rationalization: an impotent form of care

The rationalization of the moral tension between work ethic and care ethic did not only emerge from the interviews material but also from the direct observations of the day to day relationships at work. Observations at COMMS show that the work is positioned before the relationships with people. That can be seen in the trivial example of letting somebody go because she is deemed not good enough, or choosing people for a project according to what they can bring to the project rather than what the project can bring to them. Michel uses the same reason of material constraints to justify for letting people go that underperformed because of health conditions:

> *"And when the person comes back then... her position is not available anymore, then*
> *she comes back well it is complicated to take the same thing back and all, and also at*
> *that level it is complicated afterwards for us to find a position and so. And it is also*
> *complicated to... well, what we could allow ourselves to do with Kim [who had*
> *multiple sclerosis] for example well we can't do with everybody, that is to say having*
> *somebody that you accompany again so that she really takes back her confidence in*
> *herself, her job and all at a high level, well we can't afford it then...then in the end we*
> *...we let her go". (Michel, COMMS)*

Observations showed that the instrumental care did not lead to an actual process of caring for coworkers, but only for the work. To illustrate this process of rationalising as a defence against anxiety I offer to draw on typical situation observed at COMMS: the departure story of Joséphine (see Vignette 2).

Vignette 2

Excerpt from the field notes. 'Why is she leaving again?'

Joséphine is in her late twenties. She has been hired as a communication consultant on a six months contract to cope with the current projects as well as to develop the consulting activity. She joined the Consulting team in March along with Paul who has a similar profile: high education and a few years of experience in other jobs. After a few months Natacha, the manager is very happy with Paul performance but much more sceptical of Joséphine's performance. She has evaluated that Joséphine was very committed to her job but she judged her too serious and is annoyed by her inability to take any initiatives. And the worse being that she tends to panic in the presence of clients, leading her to awkward relations with them. Then it seems obvious to Natacha that Joséphine is not fit for this job

and she won't have her employment contract renewed. In an official evaluation meeting in July she warned her of her inabilities, so that she can improve (despite Natacha doubted of her capacity to do so). And in early September they have another meeting where they discuss the evolution perspectives for Joséphine. They agree on a few jobs that could fit her profile in other departments in COMMS but they also know that chances are very slim that any openings would happen so they decide that Joséphine start actively looking for another job elsewhere. Natacha is happy to recommend her.

When asked about why Joséphine is leaving, people in the team (including Natacha and Joséphine herself) explain that she really has more a profile of a planner than of a consultant, implicitly she is better off. But actually Joséphine won't be able to find a job before the end of her contract. However, the line stays on the job not being good for her, and the closer the actual date of her departure the more people tend to think that Joséphine was the one initiating the departure. So that on the day of her actual departure there is no expression of sadness or regret among the members of the team. The following week Paul is confirmed in his job with a permanent position, while François, newly hired, replaces Joséphine on a nine months contract. Later on François will appear to be a problem to Natacha, performing even less well than Joséphine did.

This story evidences the process of rationalizing. The decision that Josephine has to leave the company, is clearly due to work-related reasons, namely Joséphine is not performing as well as expected. However, another story is constructed based on the happy-productive worker thesis: Joséphine does not fit to the job, consequently it is better for her to find a new job. The first premise –Joséphine does not fit to the job- is triggered by the manager's attentiveness to the quality of the work. Concerned about the work, the manager notices that she does not provide the expected quality of work. The manager finds a solution to this issue in not renewing Josephine's employment contract. The happy-productive worker thesis allows changing the meaning of the story. Since being well and working well is aligned, and since Joséphine is not working well, she cannot be well. This leads to the second premise: it is better for Joséphine to find a new job. The story rationalizes the negative personal consequences for Joséphine such as the loss of her salary and her ostracization by the team she has been working with for the past six months by finding a solution that should be mutually beneficial. Joséphine's wellbeing is restored by her finding a more suitable job without the comaony suffering the consequences of her sub-standard work quality. As a result, no conflict between caring for the work and caring for the worker is raised.

This instrumental notion of care cannot be compared to care ethic as defined by Gilligan (1982), Noddings (2003) or Tronto (1993). For these authors, a care ethic implies an

emphasis on the relationships in itself and on the interest of a particular other. The instrumental care emphasizes the work ethic.

Avoiding the moral tension through the partial constructing of the person

We discussed how the wholeness of the person cast coworker relationships under the light of care ethic, but in turn we could observe how the coworker was constructed as a worker only so as to avoid any moral dilemma. The intersubjective construction of the worker as a whole person stands as a striking difference between COMMS and SERV. At SERV, the personal life of people was yet discreet, but recognized. Personal constraints were taken into account in the organization in terms of working hours, for example, or in terms of allocation of appointments at distant locations. On the contrary, at COMMS, anything that did not directly contribute to the work task was considered irrelevant. This can be observed in Joséphine's departure story (see Vignette 2). Another striking example was the pregnancy situation that was neither discussed nor implicitly acknowledged. A manager was pregnant during the observation and nobody (including herself) was talking about it. Everybody in her team was interviewed, but nobody ever mentioned her pregnancy. Her maternity leave was not discussed either and ten days before her actual leaving, people were visibly anxious about but they still would not talk about it. Since coworkers were focusing on work outcomes, they only paid attention to those aspects of social life that were of direct relevance to their work. This absence of the personal life from discussions allowed for seeing coworkers as workers only. Hence the intersubjective construction of the worker as a worker only and not as a whole person was found critical for the triggering of an alternative care ethic framing as opposed to the main work ethic framing.

A process of rationalizing the moral tension between work ethic and care ethic

While caring for the other person at work could conflict in practice with performing work, this contradiction does not necessarily raise an ethical awareness. We find that the moral tension between work ethic and care ethic emerges through the combined framing elements which serve the need for performance and the wholeness of the person at work. On the one hand, the need for performance enhances responsibility for the work (Arrow 1). The need to perform one's work becomes the primary function of the work relationship. On the other hand, considering the worker as a whole person, as opposed to as a worker only, enhances the responsibility for the coworker (Arrow 2) and leads to focusing on the relationship in itself. Both responsibilities, for the work and for the coworker, raise ethical awareness because of the moral dilemma that arise in practice between these two

responsibilities (Arrows 3 and 3'). The moral tension felt by the individuals between work ethic and care ethic might create uneasiness or even anxiety. However, a powerful way to release the moral tension is to rationalize the compatibility between work ethic and care ethic into the happy-productive worker thesis (Arrow 4). The idea that happier people make more productive workers allows for aligning these two competing, and potentially irreconcilable goals as we will argue. As they feel there is no way out of prioritizing work over people, employees call this belief so as to dissipate the moral tension (Arrow 5), and, as a result, enact what we term instrumental care (Arrow 6). The motive to avoid the moral tension thus leads employees to enhance the main framing, work ethic, thus fostering the need for performance and undermining the view of the worker as a whole person (Arrow 7). The rationalization intervenes at a non-reflexive level so it is possible that when the organisation promotes individual reflexivity over one's job, as it is the case at SERV, individuals are less likely to rationalize the tension and might stay ethically aware.
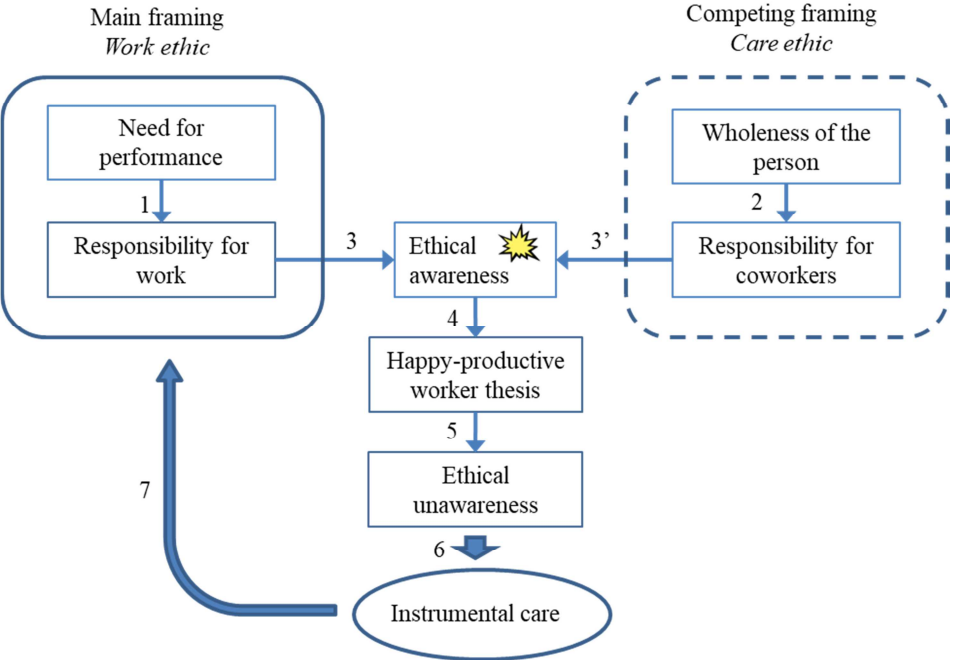

Figure 1: Process of rationalization of the moral tension between work ethic and care ethic

Our findings have important implications for two areas of research: the enactment of care and compassion in coworker relationships and the emergence of ethical awareness in organizations. We now turn on discussing the implications of these findings for research and practice.

DISCUSSION

These two case studies allow us to discover how care for coworkers is devalued and dismissed in work organizations. We find that the responsibility for the work trumps the responsibility for the coworkers. Coworkers relationships is primarily framed through work ethic, and care ethic only emerges as a contesting framework. In the case of SERV, an archetypal case where "care" is at the forefront, these conflicting responsibilities caused ethical awareness, leaving employees with unresolved tensions as they struggled to resolve the conflict in practice. In the case of COMMS, a prototypical 'business-as-usual' company, employees managed to rationalize away the tension through the belief that responsibilities for the work and for the worker are aligned. This rationalization triggered 'instrumental care' for coworkers, an impotent version of care where the focus is on work purposes and the interest in the coworker only extends within this framework.

The possibilities for care and compassion in coworker relationships

Wholeness of the person

While previous research has applied a normative ethical lens on coworker relationships (Moberg, 1997; Moberg & Meyer, 1990), we look at how the ethical issue emerges in practice. Our findings suggest that only when the other person emerges intersubjectively as a whole human being - and not only as a worker - can a caring perspective materialize and thrive. When the humanity of the worker is obscured, then it allows for totally subjecting her to the performance imperative through what we called the instrumental care.

Hence, we suggest that the question of the wholeness of the person is then critical for the possibility for caring relations in organizations. This had already been outlined from empirical work on compassionate organizing. In their inductive in-depth case study Dutton et al (2006) identify the "holistic personhood" as a condition for "compassion activation" (pp.74-75). For instance, Lilius et al (2011) identify the boundary permeability between work and personal life as one of the practice enabling compassion capability. In our study we find that displaying elements of one's personal life at work is not necessarily a manifestation of caring relationships because it can be totally artificial. For example at COMMS people displayed some elements of their lives, but only the ones that were directly relevant to the work tasks. And conversely, at SERV people did not need to disclose their personal life for it to be taken into account in the everyday organizing of the work tasks.

The problem of noticing the need for care

Moreover, we enquired especially about the first step of compassion, the noticing (Kanov et al., 2004), which is close to the concept of attentiveness highlighted as a main challenge for the enactment of an ethic of care (Tronto, 1993). We find empirically that noticing, or of caring about, is a key determinant in opening up possibilities for care. However, the noticing is only possible when a meaning of the person as a whole, and not only as a worker, preexists in the symbolic collective landscape. This can be illustrated by the open plan office configuration. Kanov et al. (2004) suggested that open plan offices would be a good example of a feature of the organization that could enhance noticing pain as in this setting people can see what is going on with others. But we find that this could also become a mere artefact of transparency which does not allow for seeing something that is not constructed collectively to be seen. If people do not allow themselves to disclose their nonwork selves then the materiality of transparency is insignificant. Hence, we find that the symbolic meaning attributed to the person at work determines her presence as a whole human being as opposed to as a worker only, and then is not a direct effect of material permeability of the work-nonwork boundary.

Professionality, affects, and care

The professionality has been associated with the capacity to look at things with distance and without being biased by affects (Sanchez-Burks, 2002). Our study puts into question the compatibility of this view of professionality with the possibility for caring for people at work. It has been argued that bodily affects and emotions such as compassion and sympathy condition the enactment of care ethic in the workplace (Fotaki, 2015). So the professionality seen as cold reasoning as opposed to emotionality would then hinder the possibility for care. As care requires the arising of emotions, the professional downplaying of emotions would result in the impossibility to care. This understanding of ethics ultimately undermines therefore the Kantian approach to ethics where morality can only stems from reason (Kant, 1949), as opposed to emotions (Tronto, 1993).

The emergence of ethical awareness in organizations

Ethical unawareness

Corporate scandals befuddle the general public because of the discrepancy between the morality outside the organization and the morality inside the organization. This discrepancy can be understood through the concepts of ethical fading (Tenbrunsel et al., 2010), moral

blindness (Palazzo et al., 2012), or moral rationalization (de Klerk, 2017). These different conceptualizations all refer to the phenomenon of ethical unawareness, i.e. the surprising absence of recognition of an ethical issue otherwise widely acknowledged by others. Thus, management and organizations scholars have called for understanding what creates awareness to an ethical issue in the first place (Palazzo et al., 2012; Treviño et al., 2014). Our focus on the question of what constitutes the good way of relating to each other at work, allowed us to unveil the processes of the rationalization of the ethical issue. We found that when the ethical issue of conflicting responsibilities for the work and for coworkers arise, members of the two organizations collectively deployed beliefs that allowed to rationalize away the tension.

Business framing and work ethic

Researchers have identified that framing an issue as a business one leads to overlooking the moral character of the very issue (Kouchaki, Smith-Crowe, Brief, & Sousa, 2013; Palazzo et al., 2012; Tenbrunsel & Messick, 1999). Our research allowed us to unpack how this effect of business framing unfolds. We found that the work ethic framing had primacy in the organizational setting but it could be contested by a care ethic framing. However, our analysis showed that the more salient the need for performance was, the stronger was the rationalization of the moral tension between work ethic and care ethic. To avoid the anxiety related to the moral tension, employees filtered elements in their environment that were not compatible with the primary morality dominating the organization, i.e. the work ethic. As a result, the wellbeing of coworkers mattered only to the extent that it is useful to achieve organizational goals. Little cognitive and affective space was left in employees' minds and feelings for matters other than work and organizational objectives. In his classic ethnography Jackall (1988) demonstrated how managers systematically shut out the elements of work that they feel they could not do anything about. Here we go one step further and show how individuals in the organization create blind spots for themselves (Fotaki & Hyde, 2015). We show that the business framing represents the obscuring of the actor's reflexivity.

Implication for practice: Recognizing the ethical dilemma of care allocation

While Lawrence and Maitlis (2012) propose a way to enact an ethic of care through narrative practices they foresee the conflict between caring for coworkers and caring for the work as marginal. They concede in their discussion that "many organizations adopt strategies that explicitly or implicitly depend on the sacrifices made by organizational members with respect to their well-being, happiness, health, or family life." and as a result "in such cases

adopting an ethic of care may offer a great deal to organizational members but might also hinder the achievement of certain organizational objectives." (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012, p.657). Findings from our empirical research suggest that the competition between responsibility for the work and for coworkers is not marginal but pervasive: it underlies the logic of organizations and organizing in capitalism.

In our empirical study, we find that employees experience a moral tension between caring for workers and fulfilling one's duty to work. Caring for the other is found to be in conflict with the performance imperative. This raises tensions for the individual between the moral imperatives she feels to care for people and for the work. The need for productivity, for performance, for individual and collective success, competes in attentiveness with the care for people's needs. This leads to a dilemma of responsibilities. This resonates with the ethical issue identified by Tronto (1993) in the practical implementation of an ethics of care: the question of the allocation of care. She states that "in general, caring will always create moral dilemmas because the needs for care are infinite." (p.137). Employees are struggling to reconcile their responsibilities towards their work and towards their coworkers.

In particular, the problem we want to highlight here is not about how to resolve this dilemma per se but how to be able to recognize this dilemma. We can draw on Kant's ideas to inspire a way to progress, as he proposed the way of enlightenment: "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity" (Kant & Reiss, 1991, p.54). In this view it is the multiplicity of individual progresses that can lead the way to achieve a general change. However, this endeavour to enlightenment does not suggest that we inscribe in the individual reductionism that has tainted researches on ethical behaviors (Parmar, 2014). This enlightenment should on the contrary allow realizing the collective responsibility to care, whereas the legitimation for not caring for the other person at work is vaguely attributed to the market and the economic constraints that the organization is dealing with, implicitly putting the blame on a higher authority (Fotaki & Hyde, 2015). It has been argued that "an ethic of care relies upon a political commitment to value care and to reshape institutions to reflect that changed value" (Tronto, 1993, p.178). We hope that our investigations contribute towards laying the ground for further reflections on the responsibilities for care in work organizations.

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APPENDIX A

Interview guide

1. General introduction through the examples of taking time for morning greetings and helping a colleague who does not cope with his/her work. **"What do you think people should do in these situations?"**
2. General understanding of the purpose of work relationships. **"According to you, what do you think is the appropriate way to behave with each other at work?"** (characteristics of relationships with coworkers, and role of the situation, the hierarchy, the pressure, on the appropriateness of these characteristics)

Expansion of the conversation from there, including:

- Exploring the interviewees' background and how it shaped his/her views. "**What did you do before you joined COMMS/SERV?"** (job, same or different sectors, number of years of experience, educational background). **"How well did you adapt when you first arrived?"** (difference in the way of working, particular difficulties, helped received)
- Exploring the interviewee's current job and his/her relationships with his/her coworkers. **"I understand that you are doing…"** (tasks, collaborative/individual work, criteria for work quality assessment, social climate, culture at COMMS/SERV and in your department, difficulties and pleasures, working hours)

Code memo: "Personal life at work"

These nodes have been created during the first re-coding phase (after the coding of 15 interviews, first 10 from SERV and second 5 from COMMS) to account for people talking about how personal issues affect work. These chunks had first been allocated to the 'personal life' category but then the latter was deemed inconsistent and so the creation of this new category.

As opposed to 'personal life', code here deals with specifically when problems at home affect work, or how to make sure they won't affect work. Whereas the former was rather about knowing each other in general, bonding by exchanging on personal life. But very often they overlap. In particular when participants begin to say that it is nice to get interest in each other, often they need to justify saying that problems at home will affect work. Or (people at SERV especially) when they talk about people having personal issues, they talk about the fact that they talk about it or not at work, or also they recall talking themselves with people who are not well because of personal issues.

So at that point (08/06/15), this is really a subcategory of 'personal life'.