

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fy\\_FFa9a3N0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fy_FFa9a3N0)



## Bandura: Not Enough Morality

- Doing (agentic) rather than knowing (cognitive)
  - Being able to act morally, not just knowing what it is moral to do; moral conduct, not just moral judgment
- Evading moral obligation
  - Selective activation and disengagement of moral self-sanctions

## Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement

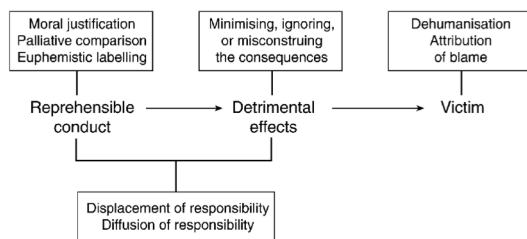


FIG. 1. Mechanism through which moral self-sanctions are selectively activated and disengaged from detrimental behaviour at different points in the self-regulatory process (Bandura, 1986).

## Reprehensible Conduct

- Moral Justification
  - Justify harmful act as morally or socially worthy
    - National, religious, ideological war
  - Mackie, not that simple:
    - pacifism can be destructive, there is just war theory (moral limits of warfare)
- Euphemistic Labelling
  - Make harmful conduct respectable, reduce personal responsibility
    - Sanitizing
      - U.K.: War Office, Imperial War Museum vs.
      - U.S.: Department of Defense, National Museum of the Army, etc.
    - Agentless, passive voice
      - “Kinetic military action”

## Reprehensible, continued

- Exonerating Comparisons
  - Other people do worse than what I did
  - Shoplifting from Von's is alright because they buy produce from oppressive agribusiness employers
  - Cheating on federal taxes is OK because the government spends too much money on welfare for lazy people
  - Two wrongs make a right

## Displacement of Responsibility

- Obscure or minimize responsibility
  - Just following orders
  - Henry II against Thomas Becket
    - "Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?"
  - We were drunk
- Diffusion of responsibility
  - Someone else will take care of it
  - My contribution to global warming is tiny compared to all sources
  - I blamelessly bought the slave on the free market, but did not wrongfully capture and enslave him

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSsPfbup0ac>



## Detrimental Effects

- Disregard or distortion of consequences
  - Avoid or minimize the harm that was done to others
- Nonsmokers aren't really harmed by second-hand smoke
- Wife-beating is permitted only to the extent that it is done for the good of the wife, family, and community
- Darley and Batson Good Samaritan study



## Victim

- Dehumanization
  - Subhuman, inhuman, animalistic, disgusting
- Attribution of blame
  - Folk “just world theory”
    - We live in a just world, a just society,
      - those who do good are rewarded, those who do bad are punished
    - There must be a heaven and hell, or must be transmigration of souls, so that divine justice is realized
  - If people are are suffering, it is their fault
    - They moved into an earthquake zone
    - They failed to get an education
    - They chose the wrong parents!

## Moral Disengagements Can Feed One Another

- Cumulative disengagements from moral responsibility
  - Brutalization, e.g., Europe after World War One
- Conjoint operation of disengagement mechanisms
  - Tobacco companies support health education campaigns
    - (knowing that they don’t work)
  - The Big Three pharmaceutical wholesalers have deployed lobbyists and campaign contributions to discourage regulation of the opioid epidemic

## What is to be done?

- Most people want others to treat them morally
- Most people acknowledge moral obligation,
  - Many know they are tempted to evade it
    - Self-serving bias
    - Moral disengagements
- Recall: accountability is essential to morality, public exchange of reasons and impartial decision
- Next week: institutions that incentivize moral actions