# Lecture 03 : Moral Psychology

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# Contents

# 1.    Moral Dumbfounding

Moral dumbfounding is 'the stubborn and puzzled maintenance of an [ethical] judgment without supporting reasons' (Haidt et al. 2000, p. 1). By the end of this section you should know what moral dumbfounding is and be familiar with some of the scientific research taken to establish that, and question whether, it occurs.

Moral dumbfounding is 'the stubborn and puzzled maintenance of a judgment without supporting reasons' (Haidt et al. 2000, p. 1).

The most cited evidence for dumbfounding comes from some unpublished (!) research which is presented in the recording (Haidt et al. 2000). This research hinges on two contrasts:

1. morally provocative but harmless events vs nonmorally provocative but harmless events; and
2. morally provocative events that are harmless vs morally provocative scenarios involving harm

Examples of morally provocative but harmless events:

> '(Incest) depicts consensual incest between two adult siblings, and [...] (Cannibal) depicts a woman cooking and eating a piece of flesh from a human cadaver donated for research to the medical school pathology lab at which she works. These stories were ... were carefully written to be harmless' (Haidt et al. 2000).

## 1.1.    An Effect of Cognitive Load?

'In Study 2 [which is not reported in the draft] we repeated the basic design while exposing half of the subjects to a cognitive load—an attention task that took up some of their conscious mental work space—and found that this load increased the level of moral dumbfounding without changing subjects' judgments or their level of persuadability' (Haidt & Bjorklund 2008, p. 198).

## 1.2.    An Attempted Replication

Royzman et al. (2015) claim to have unsuccessfully replicated the unpublished research on moral dumbfounding:

> '3 of [...] 14 individuals [without supporting reasons] disapproved of the siblings having sex and only 1 of 3 (1.9%) maintained his disapproval in the "stubborn and puzzled" manner' (Royzman et al. 2015, p. 309).

They conclude that

> 'a definitionally pristine bout of MD is likely to be a extraordinarily rare find, one featuring a person who doggedly and decisively condemns the very same act that she has no prior normative reasons to dislike' (Royzman et al. 2015, p. 311).

But your lecturer is unconvinced by this. Haidt et al. (2000)'s method is to compare morally provocative events that are harmless with morally provocative scenarios involving harm.[1] Their prediction is that their should be *significantly more* dumbfounding in the former. Royzman et al. (2015) have not designed an experiment which tests this prediction.

Further, it seems quite easy to elicit moral dumbfounding in everyday life. This is something you should try for yourself.

### 1.3.  An Exercise (Probably the Most Fun You Will Have on This Course)

Review the recording above, which includes Isabel's moral dumbfounding. Pick a morally provocative but harmless event. Find a friend or family member[2] who agrees to be interviewed (over zoom or whatever). Ask them to record the interview and post it online (e.g. on youtube).[3] Let me have the link. I'll share the results with the course.

## 2.  Why Is Moral Dumbfounding Significant?

I introduce and refute Dwyer (2009)'s argument that moral dumbfounding provides evidence for what she calls 'The Linguistic Analogy'.

In its place, I defend a different view. The existence of moral dumbfounding shows that *some* moral intuitions are not consequences of reasoning from known principles.

### 2.1.  What Does Moral Dumbfounding Show? A Misconstrual

Dwyer (2009, p. 294) takes the evidence for moral dumbfounding to show that

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[1]  Compare Haidt et al. (2000): 'They made the fewest such declarations in Heinz, and they made significantly more such declarations in the Incest story.'

[2]  Be careful if you're approaching a stranger; it turns out that some people get upset if you ask them about incest and eating their pets.

[3]  Whatever you do, don't post a video of someone without written permission from them to do so. It's probably best to ask them to post the video themselves to avoid any confusion.

moral 'judgments are [not] the conclusions of explicitly represented syllogisms, one or more premises of which are moral principles, that ordinary folk can articulate.'

This is a mistake. The abstract for Haidt et al. (2000) states:

'It was hypothesized that participants' judgments would be highly consistent with their reasoning on the moral reasoning dilemma' [ie. reasoning concerning the morally provocative and harmfull events].

And this is what those researchers found.

## 2.2.   What Does Moral Dumbfounding Truly Show?

The existence of moral dumbfounding shows that *some* moral intuitions are not consequences of reasoning from known principles.

It also appears to support the view that, in some cases of moral intution, the moral attributes being tracked are inaccessible. Which is significant because we had difficultly finding evidence for this earlier (in *Moral Attributes Are Inaccessible* in Lecture 02).

It does not show that *no* ethical judgements are consequences of reasoning from known principles. Indeed, reflection on moral disengagement suggests that this is false.

## 3.   Reason and Atrocity: Hindriks' Observation

Moral reasoning appears to enable humans to condone and commit atrocities. Yet it is quite widely held that reasoning is 'usually engaged in after a moral judgment is made' (Haidt & Bjorklund 2008, p. 189). Hindriks observes (in effect) that it is hard to see how both views could be correct (Hindriks 2014; Hindriks 2015).

One compelling reason for studying moral psychology is that ethical abilities appear to play a central role in atrocities:

'The massive threats to human welfare stem mainly from deliberate acts of principle, rather than from unrestrained acts of impulse' (Bandura 2002, p. 116).

Further, the principles that underpin humans' capacities to perform inhumane acts are often appear to be manufactured and maintained through reasoning to fit a particular situation.[4]

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[4]   To take just one example, Osofsky et al. (2005) investigated prison workers who were

This observation appears to be in tension with views on which reason can play only an indirect role in motivating morally-relevant actions (for example, harming or helping another person).

As one example of a view on the li mits of reason, consider Prinz. Commenting on moral dumbfounding, Prinz (2007, p. 29) writes:

> 'If we ask people why they hold a particular moral view, they may offer some reasons, but those reasons are often superficial and post hoc. If the reasons are successfully challenged, the moral judgment often remains. When pressed, people's deepest moral values are based not on decisive arguments that they discovered while pondering moral questions, but on deeply inculcated sentiments.'

From this Prinz draws a bold conclusion:

> 'basic values are implemented in our psychology in a way that puts them outside certain practices of justification. Basic values provide reasons, but they are not based on reasons. … basic values seem to be implemented in an emotional way' (Prinz 2007, p. 32).

Prinz appears to be ignoring a key feature of the experiment he is discussing: it is structured as a comparison between harmless and harm-involving cases where subjects' level of dumbfounding differs between these (see *Moral Dumbfounding* (section §1)). The evidence he is (misre)presenting in favour of it actually challenges his view.

Haidt & Bjorklund articulate a slightly less radical view:

> 'moral reasoning is an effortful process (as opposed to an automatic process), usually engaged in after a moral judgment is made, in which a person searches for arguments that will support an already-made judgment' (Haidt & Bjorklund 2008, p. 189).[5]

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tasked with work related to executions. They observe

> 'The executioners, who face the most daunting moral dilemma, made the heaviest use of all of the mechanisms for disengaging moral self-sanctions. They adopted moral, economic, and societal security justifications for the death penalty, ascribed subhuman qualities to condemned inmates, and disavowed a sense of personal agency in the taking of life' (Osofsky et al. 2005, p. 387).

[5] This is only half of those authors' view about reasoning. They also claim that 'Moral discussion is a kind of distributed reasoning, and moral claims and justifications have important effects on individuals and societies' (Haidt & Bjorklund 2008, p. 181). Their

Hindriks observes (in effect) that even this less radical view appears to conflict with the idea that moral reasoning often appears to be necessary for condoning and performing inhumane acts (Hindriks 2014; Hindriks 2015). Affective support for judgements about not harming can be overcome with reason. Affective obstacles to deliberately harming other people can be overcome with reason. This should not be possible if reason usually occurs after a moral judgement is made and enables people only to provide post hoc justification for it.[6]

So is moral reasoning 'usually engaged in after a moral judgment is made'? Or is it essential for overcoming affective support for judgements about not harming? This discussion can be sharpened by considering moral disengagement.

## 4.    Moral Disengagement: The Theory

Moral disengagement occurs when self-sanctions are disengaged from inhumane conduct. It enables people to do wrong and feel good.

To understand moral disengagement, we need to consider the theory, the evidence which supports it and its significance for understanding humans' ethical abilities. Start with the theory.

Bandura, who is responsible for introducing the notion of moral disengagement, offers a conjecture about self-regulation:

> 'individuals adopt standards of right and wrong [and they] monitor their conduct and the conditions under which it occurs, judge it in relation to their moral standards and perceived circumstances, and regulate their actions by the consequences they apply to themselves' (Bandura 2002, p. 102).

The upshot of self-regulation is that people constrain themselves not to violate their own moral standards. (As Bandura puts it, 'It is through the ongoing exercise of evaluative self-influence that moral conduct is motivated and regulated' (Bandura 2002, p. 102).)

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idea, very roughly, is that moral discussion can have a long-term effect on affect which can in turn modulate individuals' judgements and actions.

[6]    Hindriks focuses on a normative question about justification for moral judgements. The fact that Bandura and other social scientists tend to study abysmal bits of moral reasoning (e.g. 'Kids who get mistreated usually do things that deserve it' (Bandura et al. 1996)) is therefore a potential problem he needs to resolve (Hindriks 2014, p. 205). We need not consider this problem because our primary concern is to only understand the causal role of reason in how moral judgements are acquired.
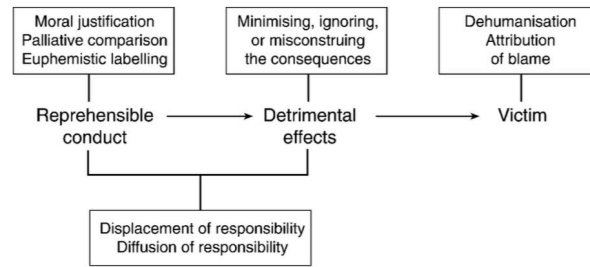
Figure 1:    A model of eight mechanisms of moral disengagement
*Source*:Bandura (2002, figure 1)

This self-regulation will sometimes prevent people from getting things they want. But people can anticipate the effects of self-regulation and work around them:

> 'In the face of situational inducements to behave in inhumane ways, people can choose to behave otherwise by exerting self-influence' (Bandura 2002, p. 102).

This 'self-influence' amounts to construing actions which would otherwise be incompatible with an individual's standards of right and wrong in ways that avoid the incompatibility. In effect, self-regulation is anticipatorily derailed.

This is *moral disengagement*: the derailing of self-regulation to allow actions which would violate one's own standards of right and wrong.

Bandura postulates eight processes by which moral disengagement can occur:

> 'The disengagement may centre on redefining harmful conduct as honourable by moral justification, exonerating social comparison and sanitising language. It may focus on agency of action so that perpetrators can minimise their role in causing harm by diffusion and displacement of responsibility. It may involve minimising or distorting the harm that follows from detrimental actions; and the disengagement may include dehumanising and blaming the victims of the maltreatment' Bandura (2002, p. 103).

Their operation is depicted in the figure:

Reason plays a role in most, if not all, of these processes. It is central to Moral Justification, Displacement of Responsibility and Attribution of Blame. So if moral disengagement is responsible for a moral judgement or action, it is likely that reasoning will have played a causal role in arriving at the judgement or action.

What evidence motivates accepting Bandura's theory?

# 5.    Moral Disengagement: The Evidence

A variety of evidence indicates that moral disengagement is a valid and useful construct.

Having understood the theory, we now need to ask, What evidence supports the view that moral disengagement occurs? And is there evidence that it can explain morally-relevant judgements and actions?

Bandura et al. (1996) constructed a questionnaire with four items for each of the eight postulated mechanisms. To illustrate with just one of the four items (the questionnaire was used to study bullying in 10–15 year old children ):

1. Moral justification - 'It is alright to lie to keep your friends out of trouble.'

2. Euphemistic language - 'Slapping and shoving someone is just a way of joking.'

3. Advantageous comparison - 'It is okay to insult a classmate because beating him/her is worse.'

4. Displacement of responsibility - 'If kids are living under bad conditions they cannot be blamed for behaving aggressively.'

5. Diffusion of responsibility - 'If a group decides together to do something harmful it is unfair to blame any kid in the group for it.'

6. Distorting consequences - 'Children do not mind being teased because it shows interest in them.'

7. Attribution of blame - 'If people are careless where they leave their things it is their own fault if they get stolen.'

8. Dehumani zation - 'Some people have to be treated roughly because they lack feelings that can be hurt.'

The results indicates that a single factor could be regarded as responsible for subjects' responses on all items.[7] This factor correlated significantly with antisocial behaviour, among other things. Those who scored highly on this factor

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[7]   See Bandura et al. (1996, p. 367): 'A principal-components factor analysis with varimax orthogonal rotation revealed a single factor structure.'

'tend to be more irascible, ruminate about perceived grievances, and are neither much troubled by guilt nor feel the need to make amends for harmful conduct. They also engage in a higher level of interpersonal aggression and delinquent behavior' (Bandura et al. 1996, p. 368).

This indicates that the theory of moral disengagement may be correct (or at least useful), and that the questionnaire measures moral disengagement.

Further support for these conclusions is provided by a study using the questionnaire with a demographically different population (single-parent African Americans, vs Italians), which replicated key findings (e.g. the single factor) and generated broadly congruent results overall (Pelton et al. 2004).

The measure of moral disengagement did not correlate with socioeconomic factors in either study (Bandura et al. 1996, p. 371; Pelton et al. 2004, p. 38).[8] This is important because any such correlation would not be explained by the theory of moral disengagement and could indicate that the questionnaire fails to capture a useful construct.

Variants of scale have also been developed and found useful. For example, Boardley & Kavussanu (2007) provide evidence that antisocial behaviours in sport are linked to moral disengagement. Osofsky et al. (2005) found that moral disengagement plays a role in enabling prison workers to perform tasks essential for executing prisoners. And McAlister et al. (2006) compared moral disengagement in the United States before and after the September 11th terrorist strike, finding a significant increase in moral disengagement which was correlated with a significant increase in support for the use of military force. Strikingly, these authors found that the terrorist strike itself appeared to have no effect on support for the use of military force other than through increased moral disengagement (p. 156).

Overall, we have sufficient grounds to accept that moral disengagement occurs, and that it can explain some morally-relevant judgements and actions.

But why is moral disengagement relevant to our concerns with moral psychology?

## 6.   Moral Disengagement: Significance

The existence of moral disengagement shows that some moral intuitions are, at least in part, consequences of reasoning from known principles. It also

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[8]   McAlister et al. (2006, pp. 151–2, 160), who used an 11-item questionnaire with a U.S. adult population do report effects on moral disengagement of education, ethnicity, age and location.

appears to be a source of objections to each of the theories of moral intuitions we have so far considered, as well as (to anticipate) to Greene's dual-process theory.

We have understood the theory of moral disengagement and seen evidence that it occurs and can explain an interesting range of morally-relevant judgements and actions. No doubt, then, that it is interesting for its own sake. But why are we focussing on it at this point in the course on moral psychology?

The existence of moral disengagement shows that some moral intuitions are, at least in part, consequences of reasoning from known principles.[9]

UPDATE 2: This is incorrect. Many or all of the principles typically used in moral disengagement are false. (Thank you Isabel!) For instance, it is untrue that 'Some people have to be treated roughly because they lack feelings that can be hurt' (Bandura et al. 1996). They cannot therefore be know. What I should have written is this:

> The existence of moral disengagement shows that some moral intuitions are, at least in part, consequences of reasoning from *principles which the reasoner can articulate*.[10]

UPDATE 1: This claim does not imply that moral intuitions are ever conclusions of reasoning from known principles (thank you Emily H). Since we defined moral intuitions as *unreflective*, this would be a contradiction. The claim, rather, is that moral intuitions are consequences of reasoning in this sense: People sometimes anticipate that they will have certain moral intuitions and reason from known principles in order to avoid having them. (This is illustrated with the Tale of the Great and Glorious Leader near the start of *Question Session 03* (section §8).)

Because moral disengagement is implicated in a wide range of inhumane actions, from small-scale bullying (Pelton et al. 2004) through executions of individuals (Osofsky et al. 2005) to the use of military force where civilian casualties are expected (McAlister et al. 2006), its effects cannot be dismissed as marginal. Invoking moral disengagement is unlike observing that philosophers sometimes reason about ethical dilemmas.

The role of reason in moral disengagement—and therefore in moral

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[9] Royzman et al. (2014) provide an independent source of evidence for this conclusion. (Why not use this as a shortcut rather than discussing the more complicated research on moral disengagement? Because, as noted below, there are some further conclusions that we can draw by from the existence of moral disengagement.)

[10] Royzman et al. (2014) provide an independent source of evidence for this conclusion. (Why not use this as a shortcut rather than discussing the more complicated research on moral disengagement? Because, as noted below, there are some further conclusions that we can draw by from the existence of moral disengagement.)

intuition—is incompatible with views on which 'basic values are implemented in our psychology in a way that puts them outside certain practices of justification' (Prinz 2007, p. 32). It is also incompatible with the view that 'moral reasoning is [...] usually engaged in after a moral judgment is made, in which a person searches for arguments that will support an already-made judgment' (Haidt & Bjorklund 2008, p. 189).[11],[12]

Moral disengagement indicates that reasoning often functions to support moral intuitions in ways that do not provide justification (because the reasoning is so bad; e.g. 'Kids who get mistreated usually do things that deserve it' (Bandura et al. 1996, p. 374)).[13] Although not directly our concern in moral psychology, this may be a source of objections to theories of moral intuitions based on analogies with language (for example, Mikhail 2007).

In short, moral disengagement appears to be a source of objections to each of the theories of moral intuitions we have so far considered.

## 7.   Conclusion: Yet Another Puzzle

The research on dumbfounding and disengagement confronts us with a third puzzle which any acceptable theory of moral intution and action should solve.

Our overall question is, What do humans compute that enables them to track moral attributes?

From the two bodies of research on moral dumbfounding and moral disengagement, we can conclude that any answer to this question must be consistent the discovery that moral intuitions are sometimes, but not always, a

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[11]   Dahl & Waltzer (2018, p. 241) offer a conflicting interpretation: according to them, the findings about moral disengagement are 'consistent with recent proposals that decisions about moral issues do not typically follow from reasoning about moral principles [...] Instead, decisions are said to happen before moral reasoning in most situations. [...] moral reasoning happens primarily when people later seek to justify their decisions to themselves or others.' I reject their interpretation because do not know how to reconcile it with Bandura (2002, p. 102)'s point that moral disengagement requires *anticipating* the effects self-regulation; this appears to require reasoning in order to make or sustain a moral judgement.

[12]   Much of research on moral disengagement does appear to support these authors' claims about the social role of reason. But note that these are independent claims. We can consistently hold that moral reasoning influences moral judgements both intra- and inter-individually.

[13]   Hindriks (2014, pp. 206–7) attempts to argue that individual differences in propensity to morally disenga ge do suggest there is a role for reason in justifying moral judgements. I think Royzman et al. (2014)'s findings would provide a more direct route to this conclusion.

consequence of reasoning from known principles.

Further, this appears to include cases in which both characteristically deontological and characteristically consequentialist moral intuitions are consequences of reasoning.

As we have seen (in *Moral Disengagement: Significance* (section §6)), this is a problem for any of the theories we have so far encountered. It is also perhaps a problem for to Greene's dual-process theory, which we have yet to encounter (Greene et al. 2008; Greene 2014).

## 7.1.   One Last Puzzle

In addition to the three puzzles we have already seen ...

> [emotion] Why do feelings of disgust (and perhaps other emotions) influence moral intuitions? And why do we feel disgust in response to moral transgressions? (see *Moral Intuitions and Emotions: Evaluating the Evidence* in Lecture 02)

> [structure] Why do patterns in moral intuitions reflect legal principles humans are typically unaware of? (see *Moral Attributes Are Accessible* in Lecture 02)

> [dumbfounding-disengagement] Why are moral intuitions sometimes, but not always, a consequence of reasoning from known principles?

... we are also confronted by a fourth:

> [order-effects] Why are people's moral intuitions about Switch and Drop subject to order-of-presentation effects (Petrinovich & O'Neill 1996, Study 2; Wiegmann et al. 2012; Schwitzgebel & Cushman 2015)?

## 7.2.   Why The Four Puzzles Matter

To understand the roles of feeling and reasoning in moral intuitions, we must identify or create a theory that can solve the puzzles, is theoretically coherent and empirically motivated, and generates novel testable predictions.

# 8.   Question Session 03

These are the recordings of the live online whole-class question session. They are usually available on the day after the session. (You may need to refresh this page to make them appear.)

## 8.1.   How to Write the Essay

Answer the question. Your answer may be nuanced. And feel free to focus on any aspect of it.

The question is not about you. Do not give an opinion. Support your conclusion with evidence or argument.

You can use any reasonable claim from another area of philosophy or another discipline as a premise in your essay, but you must clearly state any premises you use (thank you Louis!). For example, you may take as a premise that actions are distinct from judgements and other mental events.

How can I avoid being too descriptive?

> Matt's tip: Why does each of the views pose a puzzle for the other size?

> Diogo's tip: Don't try to explain everything. If you find something fishy, focus on that.

Does I need to be original? Not in 500 words.

How much should I read?

- first draft: as little as possible (yyrama essential readings only)
- second draft: as much as possible

## 8.2.   Moral Intuitions and the Dumbfounding-Disengagement Puzzle

In *Conclusion: Yet Another Puzzle* (section §7) I phrased the Dumbfounding-Disengagement Puzzle like this:

> Why are moral intuitions sometimes, but not always, a consequence of reasoning from known principles?

Emily H, Anna R, and Svenja offer a series of objections (thank you!). This motivated the following clarification:

> Reasoning from known principles cannot directly influence moral intuitions.

> Reasoning from known principles can modify how events are interpreted, which aspects are attended to, and how actions are categorised, and so indirectly influence moral intuitions.

I take moral disengagement to show that moral intuitions are consequences of reasoning in this sense:
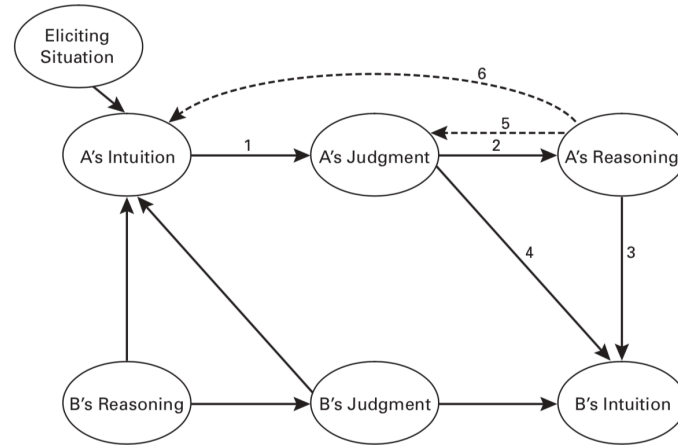
Figure 2: The Social Intuitionist Model of Moral Judgement *Source*:Haidt & Bjorklund (2008, figure 4.1)

> People sometimes anticipate that they will have certain moral intuitions and reason from known principles in order to avoid having them.

## 8.3.   What Are Moral Intuitions?

Svenja made an objection about moral intuitions and the Social Intuitionist Model of Moral Judgement presented in Haidt & Bjorklund (2008) (see figure below;[14] this was discussed in *Moral Disengagement: Significance* (section §6)).

On this model, moral intuitions cannot be unreflective judgements (because on that definition, intuitions are judgements; it would make little sense to depict them as causes of judgements).

Nor, on this model can moral intuitions be 'strong, stable, immediate moral beliefs' (Sinnott-Armstrong et al. 2010, p. 256). For then it would make sense to regard them as causes of judgements, but probably only through processes of reasoning. Further, Haidt & Bjorklund (2008, p. 181) assert that

> 'moral judgment is a product of quick and automatic intuitions.'

Since a belief cannot be quick (nor slow), Haidt & Bjorklund cannot be thinking of moral intuitions as Sinnott-Armstrong et al. do.

Conclusion: Different researchers use the term 'moral intuition' for different things. It is not always easy to work out which things they are using it for.

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[14]  I updated this figure to the version in Paxton & Greene (2010) since the recording; the previous version reproduced from Haidt & Bjorklund (2008) had some arrows pointing in the wrong direction.

## 8.4.    Additional Sources on Huebner et al.

Emilie requested additional sources which oppose the arguments offered in Huebner et al. (2009) (discussed in *PS: Does emotion influence moral judgment or merely motivate morally relevant action?* in Lecture 02).

Ollie suggested Ugazio et al. (2012). They aim to 'uncover the mechanisms by which emotions exert their influence on moral judgments' (p. 587) by comparing the effects of different emotions—anger and disgust—on responses to four scenarios involving moral violations.

Decety & Cacioppo (2012) explicitly targets Huebner et al. (2009). They conclude that 'moral reasoning involves a complex integration between emotion and cognition that gradually changes with age.'

Piazza et al. (2018) conclude from a review of evidence that there is at best weak evidence for effects of feelings of moral judgement. Although Huebner et al. (2009) would probably welcome this conclusion, Piazza et al.'s approach is different from Huebner et al.'s.

# Glossary

**characteristically consequentialist** According to Greene, a judgement is *characteristically consequentialist* (or *characteristically utilitarian*) if it is one that in 'favor of characteristically consequentialist conclusions (eg, "Better to save more lives")' (Greene 2007, p. 39). According to Gawronski et al. (2017, p. 365), 'a given judgment cannot be categorized as [consequentialist] without confirming its property of being sensitive to consequences.' 12

**characteristically deontological** According to Greene, a judgement is *characteristically deontological* if it is one that in 'favor of characteristically deontological conclusions (eg, "It's wrong despite the benefits")' (Greene 2007, p. 39). According to Gawronski et al. (2017, p. 365), 'a given judgment cannot be categorized as deontological without confirming its property of being sensitive to moral norms.' 12

**construct** A factor postulated by a theory with the aim of explaining patterns of behaviour. Examples of constructs include moral conviction, moral disengagement and the moral foundations from Moral Foundations Theory. 8, 9

**Drop** A dilemma; also known as *Footbridge*. A runaway trolley is about to run over and kill five people. You can hit a switch that will release the bottom of a footbridge and one person will fall onto the track. The

trolley will hit this person, slow down, and not hit the five people further down the track. Is it okay to hit the switch? 12

**dual-process theory**  Any theory concerning abilities in a particular domain on which those abilities involve two or more processes which are distinct in this sense: the conditions which influence whether one mindreading process occurs differ from the conditions which influence whether another occurs. 10

**inaccessible**  An attribute is *inaccessible* in a context just if it is difficult or impossible, in that context, to discern substantive truths about that attribute. For example, in ordinary life and for most people the attribute *being further from Kilmery (in Wales) than Steve's brother Matt is* would be inaccessible.

See Kahneman & Frederick (2005, p. 271): 'We adopt the term accessibility to refer to the ease (or effort) with which particular mental contents come to mind.' 4

**moral disengagement**  Moral disengagement occurs when self-sanctions are disengaged from inhumane conduct.  Bandura (2002, p. 103) identifies several mechanisms of moral disengagement: 'The disengagement may centre on redefining harmful conduct as honourable by moral justification, exonerating social comparison and sanitising language.  It may focus on agency of action so that perpetrators can minimise their role in causing harm by diffusion and displacement of responsibility. It may involve minimising or distorting the harm that follows from detrimental actions; and the disengagement may include dehumanising and blaming the victims of the maltreatment.' 4, 6, 8–11, 13

**moral dumbfounding**  'the stubborn and puzzled maintenance of an [ethical] judgment without supporting reasons' (Haidt et al. 2000, p. 1). 2, 3, 5, 11, 13

**moral intuition**  According to this lecturer, moral intuitions are unreflective ethical judgements.

According to Sinnott-Armstrong et al. (2010, p. 256), moral intuitions are 'strong, stable, immediate moral beliefs.' 3, 4, 9–13

**Social Intuitionist Model of Moral Judgement**  A model on which intuitive processes are directly responsible for moral judgements (Haidt & Bjorklund 2008). One's own reasoning does not typically affect one's own moral judgements, but (outside philosophy, perhaps) is typically used only to provide post-hoc justification after moral judgements are

made. Reasoning does affect others' moral intuitions, and so provides a mechanism for cultural learning. 14

**track**  For a process to *track* an attribute is for the presence or absence of the attribute to make a difference to how the process unfolds, where this is not an accident. (And for a system or device to track an attribute is for some process in that system or device to track it.)

Tracking an attribute is contrasted with *computing* it. Unlike tracking, computing typically requires that the attribute be represented. (The distinction between tracking and computing is a topic of **??**.) 11

**Trolley**  A dilemma; also known as *Switch*. A runaway trolley is about to run over and kill five people. You can hit a switch that will divert the trolley onto a different set of tracks where it will kill only one. Is it okay to hit the switch? 12

**useful construct**  A *useful* construct is one that can explain an interesting range of target phenomena. 8

**valid construct**  For the purposes of this course, a *valid* construct is one that can be measured using a tool (often a questionnaire) where there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the tool measures the construct. When used for cross-cultural comparisons, the tool should exhibit metric and scalar invariance (i.e. it should measure the same construct in the same way irrespective of which the culture participant belongs to).

Note that the term 'construct validity' is used in many different ways. It is probably best to try to understand it case-by-case—each time the term occurs, ask yourself what the researchers are claiming to have shown. If you do want an overview, Drost (2011) is one source. 8

# References

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