

Cheating

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Dan Ariely TED Talk Our buggy moral code

- Dishonesty is not a cost-benefit calculation
 - Gain of cheating > $p(\text{get caught}) \times u(\text{punishment})$
- Instead moral self concept / social norms
 - Want to maintain an honest self concept
 - So cheat a little, but not enough to jeopardize self concept.
 - Personal fudge factor

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Find 2 numbers that add to 10

1.69	1.82	2.91
4.67	4.81	3.05
5.82	5.06	4.28
6.36	5.19	4.57

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Number of Correct Answers Reported

		Scoring	
		Recycle	Control
Reminder	10 Commandments	2.8	3.1
	10 Books	4.2	3.1

This result does not replicate:
Verschuere, B., Meijer, E. H., Jim, A., Hoogesteyn, K., Orthey, R., McCarthy, R. J., ... & Barbosa, F. (2018). Registered replication report on Mazar, Amir, and Ariely (2008). *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*, 1(3), 299-317.

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Shu, Mazar, Gino, Ariely, & Bazerman (2012)

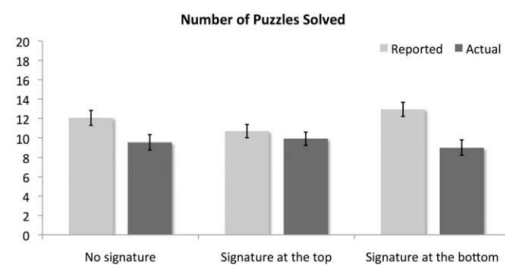


Fig. 1. Reported and actual number of math puzzles solved by condition, experiment 1 ($n = 101$). Error bars represent SEM.

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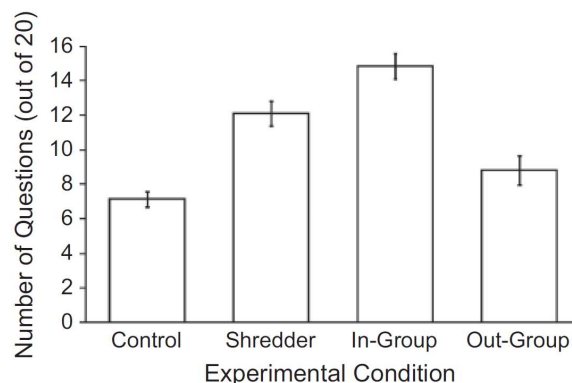
Social Norms

Gino, Ayal, & Ariely (2009)

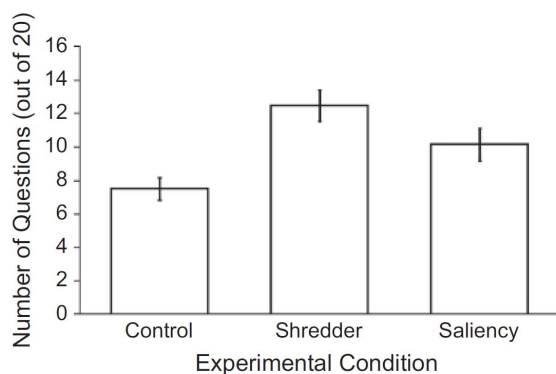
- Confederate finishes task impossibly quickly (presumably cheated)
 - This increased cheating if confederate was in the in group (plain T-shirt)
 - Decreased cheating if out group (Pitt T-shirt)
- Confederate increases salience of possibility to cheat
 - Says, "So, is it OK to cheat?"
 - This decreases cheating



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Self-Serving Justifications: Doing Wrong and Feeling Moral

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Current Directions in Psychological Science
2015, Vol. 24(2) 125–130

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Costs & Benefits of Cheating

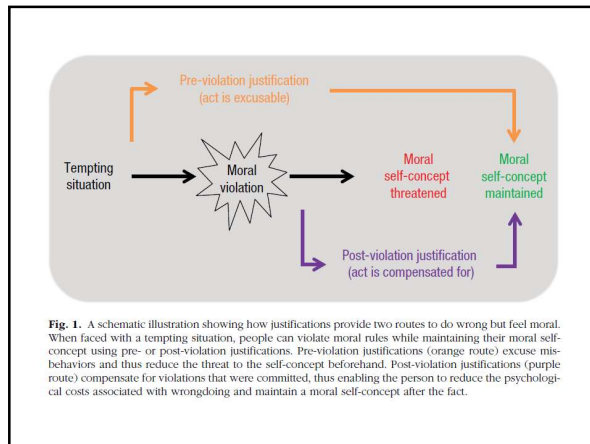
- Economic view:
 - Compare costs and benefits
 - Cheat if benefits outweigh the costs
- Data:
 - People cheat & lie only a little even when no chance of getting caught
- Psychological view:
 - Psychological costs of cheating
 - Threats to self image

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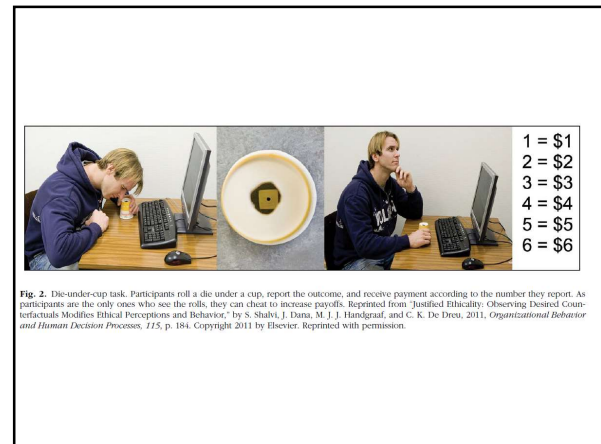
Why good people do bad things

- Want to preserve moral self image
- Also want benefits from unethical behavior
- Self-serving justifications license unethical behavior
 - Pre-violation justifications
 - lessen *anticipated* threat to moral self
 - Redefine questionable behaviors as excusable
 - Post-violation justifications
 - alleviate *experienced* threat to moral self
 - Compensate to balance or lessen violations"

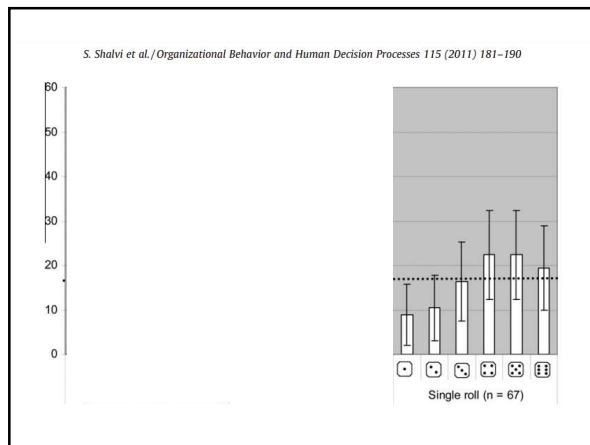
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Pre-violation justifications

- Ambiguity – this is a gray area
 - Roll die 1 vs. 3 times
- Self-serving altruism
 - Lie benefits both me and another person
- Moral licensing
 - I did some good things; now I'm entitled to lie.

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Post-violation justifications

- Cleansing
 - E.g., use hand sanitizer or take on painful act
- Confessing
 - Fresh start → more ethical behavior later
 - A partial confession is sufficient
- Distancing
 - It wasn't that bad
 - Other people have done much worse

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