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Introducing a new scale for the measurement of moral disengagement in peace and conflict research

Kurzfassung: Als Teil seiner "Social Cognitive Theory" führt Albert Bandura (z.B. 1986) einen Prozess ein, den er moralische Ablösung (moral disengagement) nennt. Er beschreibt acht verschiedene Mechanismen, durch welche Verhalten von der moralischen Selbstkontrolle des Individuums abgelöst werden kann und es so möglich wird, schädigendes Verhalten auszuüben, ohne dass das Selbst der Person negative Konsequenzen dadurch erleidet. Der vorliegende Aufsatz dient der Beschreibung der Neuentwicklung einer Messung von Moral Disengagement und erster Resultate. Damit folgt sie dem Beispiel von Studien von Grussendorf et al. (2002) und McAlister (2000, 2001), welche eine erste Skala zur Messung von Moral Disengagement berichten. Nach einer kurzen Beschreibung der acht Mechanismen des Moral Disengagement wird diese bereits bestehende Skala eingeführt und kritisiert. Die Notwendigkeit der Konstruktion einer neuen Skala, ihre Entwicklung, psychometrischen Eigenschaften und möglichen Schwächen werden diskutiert. Als ein verwandtes, aber konzeptuell verschiedenes Konzept wird die Einstellungsdimension Militarismus-Pazifismus erläutert und erste Ergebnisse bezüglich der Beziehung zwischen der neu entwickelten Skala und der Militarismus-Pazifismus-Skala von Cohrs et al. (2002) werden berichtet. Erste Anwendungen der neuen Moral Disengagement Skala werden vor allem in Hinsicht auf deren Eigenschaften dargestellt. Es folgt eine Diskussion der wesentlichen Ergebnisse und kritischer Fragen bezüglich des Konstruktes. Vorschläge für weitere Forschung werden gemacht.

Abstract: As part of his Social Cognitive Theory, Albert Bandura (e.g. 1986) introduces a process called moral disengagement. Eight different mechanisms are described through which behavior can be disengaged from moral self-control, thus enabling inhumane conduct without negative consequences for the person's self. These mechanisms will be briefly reviewed and the development of a new scale for measuring moral disengagement will be described. An existing measurement of moral disengagement developed by Grussendorf et al. (2002) and McAlister (2000, 2001) will be introduced and criticized. The necessity for the construction of a new scale, its development, psychometric properties and possible weaknesses will be discussed. As a related but conceptually different construct militarism-pacifism is introduced and first results regarding the relationship between the newly developed scale and the militarism-pacifism scale from Cohrs et al. (2002) are reported. First applications of the scale in two different studies will be outlined mainly in reference to properties of the new scale. Finally, critical questions about the construct will be raised and proposals for further research will be given.

Introduction

In the year 2003 a total of 29 armed conflicts were active in 22 countries around the world, five of which were wars, meaning more than 1000 people lost their lives in battle, and three new armed conflicts broke out (Eriksson & Wallensteen, 2004). If one considers not only escalated conflicts, wars, or greater armed conflicts, when talking about the perpetration of inhumanities, but also other forms of harmful, destructive and violent behavior (like mobbing, stealing or bullying, for example) harmful behavior can be seen as an almost ubiquitous phenomenon occurring at all levels of social interaction (Gabor, 1994). One is thus faced with the question whether humanity is cruel and immoral by nature, or whether specific factors can lead anyone to inflict crimes and inhumanities on one another. As part of his social cognitive theory, Bandura (1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1999) has proposed a theoretical framework for the explanation of inhumane conduct committed without negative results for the selves of the perpetrators. According to his theory, violent actions are made easier by a number of situational factors, which result in different cognitive mechanisms that allow the restructuring of malign behavior into benign behavior. To describe this process Bandura coined the term "moral disengagement" (Bandura, 1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1999).

Moral Disengagement

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) understands humans as proactively and intentionally acting, self-reflective and self-regulating individuals. Imbedded in this broader theory is the concept of the so-called moral-self. For a theory of morality, Bandura takes an agentic perspective (Bandura, 1999), meaning he specifies the mechanisms that help people live in accordance with their moral standards. Moral standards are adopted in the course of socialization and act as guidelines for behavior. In social cognitive theory, moral agency is exercised through self-sanctions, which, again, are based on an individual's moral standards. In a self-regulatory process, people observe their behavior and its underlying conditions and judge it in reference to their personal moral standards. Conduct is then regulated by the consequences people expect from their behavior. In that way it is to be expected that, through self-sanctions, people refrain from acting in ways that violate their moral standards and therefore have negative consequences for the self. Or, as Bandura (1999, p.194) puts it: "Self sanctions mark the presence of moral ought". In other words: According to social cognitive theory, people have the ability to constantly exert self-influence on their behavior. They can *choose* whether to behave other than in inhumane ways. Such self-regulatory processes can operate inhibitably or proactively. According to Bandura (1999), refraining from inhumane behavior represents the inhibitive form of moral agency, whereas the proactive form is reflected by behaving humanely. Humane behavior in that way, however, is more than the mere absence or inhibition of inhumane conduct. It incorporates feelings of social obligations so strongly that even high personal costs are accepted for acting against what is seen as "wrong" or immoral. A strong sense of self-worth is therefore attached to humane actions. Not doing what is seen as morally right would therefore result in self-condemnation. Bandura (1999) calls this form of morality where positive things are done and negative actions are avoided, higher order morality.

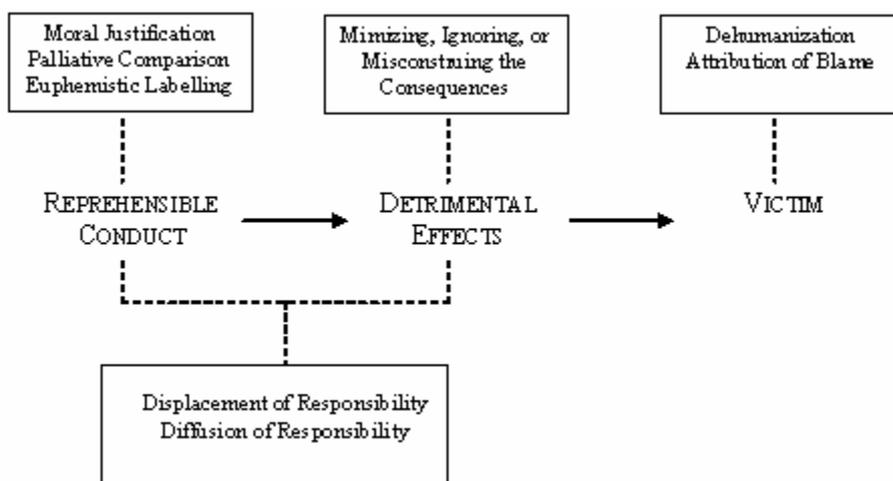


Figure 1. Mechanisms through which moral self-sanctions are selectively activated and disengaged from detrimental behavior at different points in the self-regulatory process. From: Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* (p.376). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. Electronically reproduced by permission of Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

One important factor in the effect of self-regulation, however, is the need for activation. Self-sanctions do not come into play if they are not triggered. If self-sanctions are only partly triggered or fail to be activated completely, and thus become disengaged from inhumane conduct, detrimental behavior can be shown without the negative consequences on one's self.

Self-regulation is a process and selective activation as well as disengagement of self-sanctions from reprehensible conduct can occur at different stages throughout this process. Figure 1 shows the different forms of moral disengagement and where in the self-regulatory process these can take place.

The Processes of Moral Disengagement

As figure 1 shows, the disengagement of self-sanctions from inhumane behavior can focus (1) on the conduct itself, (2) on the action, (3) on the consequences of the action, and (4) on the victim(s) of the action.

Conduct as the focus of moral disengagement

Negative and immoral actions cannot simply be conducted without negative consequences for the self. Therefore, the behavior itself needs to be reconstructed. If the actually harmful behavior seems to serve acceptable purposes, is contrasted against severe wrong-doings or is simply given a different, more sanitized name, less or no negative consequences for the person's self may result.

Moral Justification. Moral justification describes how harmful behavior is depicted as serving morally right, acceptable or even desirable outcomes and purposes. Violent behavior is redefined for the persecutor as an act of righteousness, or even a necessity for reaching desirable goals. In that way, people can inflict harm on others and yet justify that behavior to themselves as they believe they are acting in line with their moral standards: Wars are fought to reach peace and liberation or to defend freedom and ethnic and religious groups are prosecuted in the name of certain ideologies or religious principles, to name just a few examples.

Euphemistic Labeling. The label given to a certain action plays an important part in the evaluation of that action. By "cleaning" language, the way to harmful or unpleasant behavior can be made much smoother and easier. Words with negative connotations are avoided or replaced by paraphrases, images with positive implications or long, difficult scientific descriptions. Acid rain, known to destroy the environment, turns into "atmospheric deposition of anthropogenically derived substances" (Bandura, 1999). Passively phrased passages also serve the purpose of sanitizing language by suggesting an action is agentless – not people, but "forces" are responsible for the action (Bandura, 1999, Bolinger, 1980). Especially in the language of warfare euphemisms are quite popular. Bomb attacks are "precision attacks", "surgical strikes" or "air support" (Bolinger, 1980); the victims of bomb and gunfire attacks become "collateral damage".

Advantageous Comparison. Palliative comparison as the third disengagement mechanism on the conduct-level describes the tendency to contrast negative, or harmful, behavior against even greater atrocities or wrongdoings. In that way yet again reprehensible conduct can be turned into acceptable, righteous behavior. Taking the war on Iraq, probably the most controversially discussed war at the time of this study, as an example, one would contrast the military intervention against oppression, terrorism, dictatorship and the threat of weapons of mass destruction. In other words: The idea is evoked that more suffering will be prevented than caused. From a utilitarian point of view, the occurrence of this mechanism is promoted by judging non-violent conflict resolution strategies as ineffective and therefore unworthy of further discussion.

The agentic role of action as the focus of moral disengagement

A necessity for moral control is the acknowledgement of one's own wrongdoing. If, however, the responsibility for the harm one causes is reduced or obscured, the possibility of acknowledgement of responsibility and self-control, respectively self-sanctions, is lessened drastically.

Displacement of Responsibility. Not long after World War II, Milgram was able to demonstrate in an experiment using electric shocks that ordinary people did not resist actions they found repulsive when dictated by an authority (cf. Milgram, 1974). In fact, 68% of participants delivered electric shocks up to 450 volts, although the "victims" (who in reality were confederates of the researcher and only acted as if they received actual shocks) showed signs of severe pain and distress (Milgram, 1974; Smith & Mackie, 2000, pp. 394-397). Milgram's famous experiment on obedience has been replicated many times since then and showed similar results for different countries, situations, women and men alike and even children (Smith & Mackie, 2000; p. 397). To relate to Bandura's framework of moral disengagement, displacement of responsibility allows reprehensible conduct as one's behavior is merely seen as simply following orders. People do not feel personally responsible for their actions - in Bandura's terms they are not the agents of their actions and thus free from self-sanctioning consequences.

Diffusion of Responsibility. Diffusion of responsibility is a well-known phenomenon in psychological research, e.g. in labor-division, group-decision making, collective action or helping behavior. Famous became the case of Kitty Genovese, a young woman who was stabbed to death at night in front of her house in 1964 while 38 people in her block were listening and watching the incident, as was found out later (Smith & Mackie, 2000, p. 553). Latané and Darley (1970) concluded from their research about the "bystander-effect", or why people did not help, that the inhibiting threshold for acting was the fact

that everybody knew many others were watching the act, as well. In other words: Knowing that more people were present, the perception of a divided, diffused, responsibility resulted.

The disengaging influence of others not only holds true for collective *inaction*, but also for collective action. Zimbardo (e.g. 2004) proposes a process model of deindividuation to explain especially negative collective action. In his model he assumes that besides anonymity, large group size, arousal and other situational factors shared and diffused responsibility is a crucial factor that can help create deindividuation, a state in which individual group members are more easily able to behave in normally restrained ways.

Diffusion of Responsibility can be explained simply in these words: "When everybody is responsible, nobody feels responsible" (Bandura, 1999, p.198).

The effects of action as the focus of moral disengagement

For self-censure and self-sanctions to take place, not only the action itself and responsibility for the action have to be accepted, but also the (negative) effects of detrimental behavior have to be acknowledged, and therefore, perceived as such. Consequently, a third category of disengagement mechanisms as formulated by Bandura (1999) focuses on the consequences of harmful behavior.

Minimizing, Ignoring or Misconstruing the Consequence. Harming others when the effects are immediately visible and audible is much more difficult than when the effects of one's harmful behavior are not visible, audible or when they are remote in time and space. Bandura (1999, p.199) states "the farther removed individuals are from the destructive end results, the weaker is the restraining power of injurious effects". Modern warfare has fallen prey to this principle in shocking ways: Bombs and missiles are launched from remote, often safe, places, in addition oftentimes by computers or other modern technology. Modern warfare has become faceless warfare and not only more lethal, but also more dangerous in the way that actions can be easily disengaged from self-control and moral self-sanctions.

The victim as the focus of moral disengagement

The degree to which self-censure takes place also depends on the way the perpetrators view the people they mistreat. A last set of disengagement practices therefore focuses on the victims of harmful action.

Dehumanization. According to Kelman (1973) dehumanization means a loss of all human features, i.e. feelings, hopes, wishes, concerns, and therefore degradation to an inhumane "object". Human labeling does not apply anymore, much rather are dehumanized individuals attributed subhuman features and depicted as "beasts", "worms", "pest" or similar animalistic vocabulary. When this happens, it becomes possible to mistreat or harm other humans, reaching from discrimination against them, deprivation of basic rights and opportunities, exploitation to violence and extreme violence like torture or mass killing (Staub, 1990).

Attribution of Blame. Similar to the mechanisms of displacement and diffusion of responsibility, the consequences of a person's wrongdoings can only be dealt with if the person accepts responsibility for his or her engagement in destructive behavior. Apart from sharing one's own accountability with other perpetrators or handing it on to officials, offenders can also blame the victim for the disparaging demeanor. Therefore, one's behavior is merely seen as a reaction to provocation through others or circumstances. The result is a feeling of self-righteousness and justification on the side of the perpetrator.

Moral Disengagement in Peace and Conflict Research

For the attempt to find an answer to the question whether human beings are malicious by nature, or randomly capable of repulsive treatments of others, Albert Bandura (1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1999) offers a framework that suggests certain psychosocial circumstances can facilitate destructive conduct by disengaging moral self-sanctions from reprehensible acts: "It requires conducive social conditions rather than monstrous people to produce atrocious deeds. Given appropriate social conditions, decent, ordinary people can be led to do extraordinarily cruel things" (Bandura, 1999, p. 200). At this point it needs to be mentioned that the mechanisms of moral disengagement described above are not to be understood in the way of transforming respectable, honest people into brutal perpetrators over night. Rather, a gradualistic detachment from self-censure is to be expected, starting with smaller acts of aggression leading to more ruthless measures through repetition without negative consequences for one's self (Bandura, 1999).

Despite its appealing plausibility for explaining little resistance to inhumane conduct, Bandura's concept of moral disengagement has been the topic of research in the Psychology of Peace and Conflict in relatively few cases. Research on the issue at hand seems to be more widely spread in adjacent fields (i.e. Health Studies, Developmental Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Personnel Psychology). Furthermore, moral disengagement has mostly been studied in the scope of individual violence. We argue that the importance of Bandura's framework with its emphasis on the individual can be extended to the

fields of Media Research as well as Peace and Conflict Studies, for numerous reasons: The significance of the situational conditions possibly leading to moral disengagement seems rather obvious for parties involved in a conflict directly. However, we believe those mechanisms can also be at work while not directly being involved in the conflict. Social conditions are reflected and influenced, for example, by the media (c.f. McQuail, 2000). Through the use of propaganda, the media serve to unify society and mobilize support (ASPR, 2003, Herman & Chomsky, 1994). Luostarinen (2002) goes even further and defines the aim of propaganda as motivating people to personally identify with the goals of a war. Jackson (2005) argues that propaganda may be used to address the mechanisms of moral disengagement in a way that is aimed to increase the moral disengagement necessary for the support of war without negative consequences for the self. Therefore, through different styles of coverage, especially conflict coverage, the media have the power either to facilitate moral disengagement regarding to war cruelties or to facilitate resistance against moral disengagement. If one considers supporting a war to be harmful conduct in the way that it encourages inflicting loss, pain and suffering on others, not only the media, but also moral disengagement becomes of great importance for the study of peace and conflict. Thus, it is important to identify the conditions which facilitate moral disengagement and, possibly, harmful conduct. Furthermore, to prevent moral disengagement it is necessary to make people aware of and sensitive to the mechanisms involved. This might help to activate the self-regulatory mechanisms necessary for resistance against moral disengagement. The goal of this paper, however, is to introduce a new instrument for the measurement of the extent of moral disengagement in a person. The interested reader is referred to e.g. Jackson (2005) to learn more about moral disengagement in the context of constructive conflict coverage and media use.

As mentioned earlier, little research has been conducted on moral disengagement and the individual resistance to collective violence. Two researchers especially have published influential pieces of work in the field of Health Studies to illuminate this "research gap": Grussendorf et al. (2002) and McAlister (2000, 2001) made important contributions to measuring moral disengagement and relating it to public opinion and the support of war as the most pressing example of collective violence. The scale introduced by them, called The Peace Test Scale, will be introduced and discussed shortly.

Militarism-Pacifism and Moral Disengagement

Militarism-pacifism is defined as a dimension to describe attitudes towards the use of military force (Cohrs, 2004; Nelson & Milburn, 1999). As reported by Cohrs (2004), attitudes on the militarism-pacifism dimension refer to three core points: security-related preferences, personal theories about the use and effect of military force and the moral assessment of the use of armed forces. A connection between the two concepts appears plausible if a positive attitude towards war, respectively the support of war, is seen as harmful behavior (which has to be justified) in the way that it enables inflicting loss, suffering and pain on others and perceives it as inevitable consequences of military action. Both are related to the justification, tolerance and approval of war and if one assumes that the result of the moral disengagement mechanisms in a person are attitudes, both concepts might reflect war-related attitudes. Cohrs et al. (2002) found direct influences of militarism-pacifism on ignoring negative consequences, refusing responsibility and believing in humanitarian motives in case of the Kosovo War, all of which belong to Bandura's moral disengagement model. Also, in a second model tested, militarism-pacifism was directly associated with the overall evaluation of the war. This speaks for the proposed connectedness of the two concepts. For that reason, another goal of this study is to find out more about the two concepts and their measurement using a new moral disengagement scale, trying to provide a contribution to the question whether moral disengagement in the support of war is different from militarism-pacifism, respectively if and how the two concepts are related.

Considerations on the Measurement of Moral Disengagement

First and foremost, the general question of the adequacy of attitudinal statements or questionnaires regarding the proposed nature of moral disengagement stands out. Following Bandura's writing (1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1999), moral disengagement must be understood as a process consisting of eight mechanisms that can be clustered into four groups. Those clusters of moral disengagement "components" relate to different stages in the processes of making inhumane behavior (more) acceptable and less consequential for the self. That considered, it seems inevitable to ask whether attitudinal statements do justice to the process character of moral disengagement. This indeed poses a serious dilemma for any researcher interested in moral disengagement, as grasping a process per se creates quite a challenge for psychological research. However, if one makes the auxiliary assumption that the *results* of a process are attitudes; the somewhat convenient way of questionnaire-measurement is accessible. As will be shown later on, this way has been chosen by all researchers interested in moral disengagement (i.e. Grussendorf et al., 2002, McAlister, 2000, 2001, Cohrs & Moschner, 2002). In conclusion, we *assume* that the moral disengagement which takes place in a person over time, manifests itself in an attitude, which in turn can be "measured" by strength of agreement with a statement. For instance, repeated exposition or engagement in moral justification should lead to accepting and agreeing with arguments reflecting this mechanism more often. Taken all together, the aim is to measure the extent of moral disengagement in people through the help of attitude statements.

The Peace Test Scale (McAlister, 2001; Grussendorf et al., 2002): Introduction and Criticism

Both, McAlister (2000, 2001) and Grussendorf et al. (2002) advocate a measurement of moral disengagement in the form of attitude statements. McAlister (2001) introduced a 15-item scale for measuring moral disengagement in support for military actions, called "Peace Test Scale" (abbreviated PTS). In another publication this scale was used in a shortened version, containing ten items (Grussendorf et al., 2002). In all studies reported, high Cronbach's Alphas were found for the Peace Test Scale (between .85 and .88), along with a one-factor solution explaining half of the inter-item variance in factor analysis by McAlister (2000). Furthermore, the scale has been shown to predict the support of war and military action (Grussendorf et al., 2002; McAlister, 2001). Another very interesting and prominent finding among those studies is a gender difference in moral disengagement towards higher moral disengagement in men.

Despite those promising findings, the PTS as published and applied by McAlister (2001) and Grussendorf et al. (2002) contains a few problematic features, we believe. Mainly the hypothetical introductory phrasing identical for all items in the form of "When do you believe our nation should use military force? Should we use military force when..." (followed by the items, e.g. "...killing of innocent people is avoided") can be seen as difficult. This is especially true if it is assumed that supporting *hypothetic* military action still differs from approving of *real* military action. Also, subjects may find the hypothetic phrasing confusing in the way that they feel they are lacking important information to make an educated decision. The second most prominent predicament of the published scales is the imbalanced representation of moral disengagement processes by items. Whereas McAlister (2001) addresses every process with at least one item, and up to three in the cases of minimizing consequences and diffusing responsibility, Grussendorf et al. (2002) is lacking a representation of the mechanisms "attribution of blame" and "euphemistic labeling" completely. In addition, the scale contains an "entry-item" to the scale called "War is necessary to settle conflict between nations" (Grussendorf et al., 2002). This might be problematic in the way that it could have a priming-effect for the following items and thus support yes-no-answering tendencies. A negative answer on the first question could increase the tendency to answer all following questions also with "no", in accordance with the anti-war-attitude possibly activated by the first item. Last but not least, it can be argued that equally polarized items as in the case of the "Peace Test Scale" support answering tendencies, as well, which could further obscure a true representation of the subject's attitudes.

Thus, the authors came to the conclusion that a development of a new "Peace Test Scale" would be advisable to avoid the methodological limitations referred to.

In conclusion, the aim of this article is to introduce a new scale for the measurement of moral disengagement that was called "Terrorism-Questionnaire"¹. This scale was developed to measure moral disengagement as a variable in research of constructive conflict coverage. Additionally, first applications of the scale in two separate research projects (which shared the development of the "Terrorism-Questionnaire" as a first step) will be depicted and discussed.

Development of the New Scale for Measuring Moral Disengagement

One of the criticisms about the PTS referred to the imbalanced representation of moral disengagement processes in the PTS. Hence, we engaged in thoroughly studying the mechanisms explicated by Bandura (1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1999) and as a consequence generated multiple statements resembling each of the eight processes independently from one another. The items were not focusing on a specific war and their contents were inspired by public statements made by politicians such as George W. Bush or Vladimir Putin, as well as explanations and examples of moral disengagement given by Albert Bandura (e.g. 1999) and the Peace Test Website www.peacetest.org. Special attention was paid to finding independently stated items and to altering the polarization of the items to undermine answering tendencies. The authors then pooled and discussed all possible items to exclude repetitions and unintelligible wording. As a result, 27 new items were found of which seven were stated in a way that agreeing would indicate resistance to moral disengagement. Each mechanism was represented by at least two items.

All of those eight mechanisms are expected to have the same result – the person progresses in disengaging from an internal standard. Therefore, we expected the scale to result in a one-factor solution, indicating that one construct has been measured. This expectation is supported by one-factor solutions shown for the PTS (McAlister, 2001; Grussendorf et al., 2002).

1. The name of the questionnaire might be misleading, as two anonymous reviewers remarked. According to the content of its items, the new item collection was named "Terrorism-Questionnaire", mainly to distinguish it from the already existing Peace Test Scale. Yet, the questionnaire's title was also chosen to indicate its possible application in the measurement of the extent of moral disengagement in the support of the "war against terrorism" debate which was taking place at the time of this study, heavily influenced by the attacks on New York City and Washington, DC on September 11, 2001 as well as the attacks on Madrid on March 11th, 2004.
We agree with the reviewers that another, more suitable and neutral name should be used in future research.

Method

To find out about the statistical qualities of the 27 items and to further limit the number of items for a final version, a pre-test was conducted. The procedure of this pre-test will be briefly depicted now.

Setting. The pre-test was conducted in February and March 2004 for the time span of approximately three weeks. It was designed as an online-survey to get as many answers as possible in a short amount of time. Since it was not possible for the authors to make the survey publicly accessible on a website, it was sent out via email as an attachment, explaining the reason for the survey and asking the recipients to send answers back to the authors as soon as possible. Emails were sent out to friends of the authors and students of a seminar tutored by one of the authors at the University of Constance. In total, the questionnaire was sent out to approximately 200 people, who were mostly students. Anonymity was granted by asking participants to mark their questionnaire with a code made up of the letters of their, their mother's and their father's first names plus the number of their street address. Also, subjects were given the chance to send their answer to either of the authors' email addresses, therefore enabling anonymity for those who knew one of the authors. Students enrolled at the University of Constance were able to get credit for participating as subjects in a research project. Other incentives were not given. A debriefing and introduction to the theory was offered and sent out after the data analysis to those who signaled interest for that in their answer.

Sample. Of the approximately 200 questionnaires that were sent out, 69 came back, which equals a return-rate of 34.5 %. The sample consisted of 29 males and 38 females, 2 answers did not contain information about the sex. The mean age was 26.97 years ($s = 8,26$). 80% of the participants indicated that they were students, 43% of which were enrolled at a Psychology program in universities throughout Germany.

Instruments. The 27 developed items were randomly assigned to a questionnaire to avoid showing of a pattern of the mechanisms by grouping items of the same process. The scale used for answering the items was a rating scale for the appraisal of statements as suggested by Rohrmann (1978), who conducted empirical research on the development of equidistant scale labels with the goal of providing scales (almost) at interval level. Following Rohrmann's (1978) suggestions we used a 5-point-scale with the labels "not true" (1) – "a little true" (2) – "middling true" (3) – "quite true" (4) – "very true" (5).

Besides the 27 items intended to measure moral disengagement, a militarism-pacifism-scale (Cohrs et al., 2002) consisting of 10 items was included in the survey to look at the properties of both scales together to receive first information as to if and how the two concepts might be related. For a description of the sample, basic biographic information such as gender, age and profession/ field of study were enquired.

At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to take the time to share comments about anything they felt was specifically positive or negative about the questions and the survey in total.

Results

To find out about the properties of the 27 moral disengagement items as a basis for item selection, descriptive statistics and item statistics such as difficulty and item-total-correlation were performed. In addition, reliability analyses and principal component analyses were calculated for the 27 moral disengagement and 10 militarism-pacifism-items separately as well as for all items combined.

Item difficulties (means) range between 1.73 and 3.68, standard deviations of the 27 items range between 0.76 and 1.27. The corrected correlations between items and scale range between 0.07 and 0.69. Cronbach's Alpha as a measure for internal consistency is 0.88. The last result indicates that we succeeded in developing a homogeneous scale. Also, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the newly developed moral disengagement items in combination with the militarism-pacifism items from Cohrs et al. (2002), which resulted in $\alpha = .91$. This result indicates that the two constructs (resp. the two measurements) are related. This will be discussed later on in more detail. An analysis of principal components of the moral disengagement items identifies one or two principal components according to the scree-plot (for further information to the statistical procedure and the decision-criteria see e.g. Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001, p. 620f.) with 27.11% or 37.33% explained variance. This somewhat ambiguous result can be blamed on several weak items. Therefore we kept only the items with the highest item-scale-correlations for the final questionnaire we used in our research. We chose a final item number of eight items (see Table 1), each of them representing one of the eight moral disengagement mechanisms described above. We calculated Cronbach's Alpha for the eight selected items and found a very good Alpha of 0.83. In the following, a principal component analysis for these eight items was conducted and resulted in an unambiguous one-component structure which explained 47.3% of variance. Unfortunately, by choosing this way, all items where agreement indicted resistance to moral disengagement were excluded.

	Moral disengagement process	Final item representing the possibly resulting attitude
1	Euphemistic labeling	"In fast and clean military actions central bases of hostile movements can be neutralized and collateral damage can be minimized."
2	Moral justification	"It is irresponsible to renounce the use of military force if a contribution to world-peace can be made by it."
3	Dehumanization	"Terrorists are like pests in cornfields – one has to approach them relentlessly."
4	Diffusion of responsibility	"If the NATO asks us for military help to end a conflict in a foreign country, I support the use of armed forces in the crisis region."
5	Minimizing, ignoring, or misconstruing the consequences	"In the struggle for peace I find the use of military force justified if death of innocent people is avoided."
6	Displacement of responsibility	"If a soldier kills someone while on duty, he acts on behalf of military orders and thus carries no personal responsibility for his action."
7	Palliative comparison	"If peaceful means cannot resolve a conflict effectively, I support the use of military interventions."
8	Attribution of blame	"If extreme political groups are guilty of cruel crimes against humanity and serious human rights violations, they have not deserved to be treated sparsely."

Note. The original questionnaire is in German (see Appendix A, table A.2). The Items presented here have been translated by the authors.

Table 1. Items of the final "Terrorism-Questionnaire" measuring moral disengagement in the support of war and military intervention.

First Applications of the "Terrorism-Questionnaire"

Study A: Moral disengagement in the context of constructive conflict coverage (Sparr, 2004)

Introduction

This study was conducted in order to find out more about the reception of constructive conflict coverage in newspaper-articles (Sparr, 2004). Following the suggestions for constructive conflict coverage by Kempf (ASPR, 2003), original newspaper-articles about three aspects of the Yugoslavian conflict (articles were from 2000 and 2001) were rewritten in one constructive (de-escalation oriented) form and two escalation-oriented versions. Subjects were asked to read one set of three articles (all possible combinations of the original and rewritten texts were realized, for example original text for article 1, constructive version for article 2 and second escalation-oriented version for article 3) and judge them regarding to several questions about their constructiveness. The "Terrorism-Questionnaire" was the last part of the following questionnaire, which was designed to collect several data about the subjects.

Method

Setting. Data collection for this study was done from May to September 2004 in Austria (mainly in Bludenz/Vorarlberg). Subjects were recruited mainly by friends and relatives of the author. They were told that the aim of the study was to find out if concerning oneself with war and terrorism has an effect on the "momentary well-being". To support this cover-story subjects were asked to rate their feelings on the Self-Assessment-Manikins (SAM; Bradley & Lang, 1994) after reading each article. All participants worked on three articles about half of a page in length and answered a set of questions for each article. Afterwards, data about the person were collected, including age, sex, education, consumption of media, political interest. As mentioned before, the last part of the questionnaire contained the "Terrorism-Questionnaire".

Sample. 121 of 130 questionnaires could be entered in the analysis for the "Terrorism-Questionnaire", the others contained missing data. The mean age of the subjects was 38.25 years ($s = 15.95$) with a minimum of 16 years and a maximum of 84 years. Therefore, the sample was more heterogeneous than the pre-test sample. There was also a satisfactory variability in the educational level of the participants. 52% of the subjects were male.

Instruments. The materials used in the study consisted of three short newspaper articles about one aspect of the Yugoslavian conflict each, and evaluative questions regarding these articles (e.g. How interesting, boring, exciting, informative did you find this article? Did you know about the incidents covered? Is the covered incident depicted in a neutral manner?). After this reading and evaluating section participants were asked to provide information about their person, their media habits, political interest and orientation. Political conservatism was assessed with the item "How conservative would you judge your political orientation?" with answers ranging from "very" to "not" on a 5-point likert-type scale with a sixth anchor indicating "abstention". Participants were asked five questions about their attitude to specific aspects of Austrian military activities. Questions were "Do you consider the participation of the Austrian Armed Forces on peace-keeping interventions

(e.g. UN-blue beret missions) as desirable?" "Do you consider the participation of the Austrian Armed Forces on peace-making interventions (military interventions) as desirable?" "Do you consider the participation of Austria and the Austrian Armed Forces in the European security politics as desirable?" "Do you consider the entry of Austria to the NATO as desirable?" "Do you consider the Austrian neutrality as an important value?" Answer format of these question was yes, no, or abstention.

Results

Only the results for the moral disengagement scale are reported here. Cronbach’s Alpha for the eight items of the moral disengagement scale was 0.86. The principal component analysis confirmed the one-factor structure of the questionnaire (scree-plot and Kaiser-criterion), which explained 51.3% of the variance. Table 2 shows the loadings of the items on the extracted component, Table 3 and 4 show the statistical properties of the items and the scale.

Item	Loadings on the 1. factor	Mean of scale, without item	Variance of scale, without item	Corrected item-scale-correlation	Cronbach’s Alpha, without item
"In fast and clean military actions central bases of hostile movements can be neutralized and collateral damage can be minimized."	.68	21.85	43.294	.566	.849
"It is irresponsible to renounce the use of military force if a contribution to world-peace can be made by it."	.80	21.92	40.910	.711	.833
"Terrorists are like pests in cornfields – one has to approach them relentlessly."	.81	22.52	39.235	.726	.830
"If the NATO asks us for military help to end a conflict in a foreign country, I support the use of armed forces in the crisis region."	.53	21.06	46.222	.426	.863
"In the struggle for peace I find the use of military force justified if death of innocent people is avoided."	.78	22.37	40.786	.684	.836
"If a soldier kills someone while on duty, he acts on behalf of military orders and thus carries no personal responsibility for his action."	.72	21.88	40.487	.607	.846
"If peaceful means cannot resolve a conflict effectively, I support the use of military interventions."	.73	21.90	42.623	.624	.843
"If extreme political groups are guilty of cruel crimes against humanity and serious human rights violations, they have not deserved to be treated sparely."	.64	22.54	42.251	.532	.854

Note. For the wording of the items see Table 1. A low score indicates high moral disengagement (1 = very true; 5 = not true).

Table 2. Statistical properties of the items and the scale with loadings on the first factor

The mean scores of men and women do not differ significantly ($F[1, 121] = 3.44, p = 0.07$). The correlation between age and score is also not significant ($r = 0.12, p = 0.21$). There are significant differences between the educational levels ($F[4, 118] = 3.86; n = 121; p = .006; \eta^2 = 0.12$) insofar as a higher educational level is associated with higher resistance to moral disengagement.

The item on political conservatisms correlates significantly with the moral disengagement score (*Spearman’s rho* = 0.44; $n = 102; p < .001$). People who report to be very conservative have higher moral disengagement scores than people who report to be less conservative, resp. more liberal. Participants agreeing with the items about the participation of the Austrian Armed Forces in peace-making interventions ($F = 7.45; df = 2, 118; n = 120; p = .001$), the participation in the European security politics ($F = 6.26; df = 2, 119; n = 122; p = .003$), and the entry of Austria to the NATO ($F = 4.47; df = 2, 119; n = 122; p = .013$) are significantly more morally disengaged than people who do not agree or do not indicate a preference.

Study B: Moral disengagement and media use in the support of war (Jackson, 2005)

Introduction.

This study aimed at a deeper understanding of moral disengagement in the context of supporting war, especially focusing on the effects of media use. Based on media research (e.g. Herman & Chomsky, 1994; ASPR, 2003; Luostarinen, 2002), the concept of reaching consensus and support (e.g. for war) in people through propaganda was paid special attention to. As mentioned earlier, the author of this study argued that propaganda techniques can be understood as tools to reach high levels of moral disengagement in readers, thus making the support of war as an inhumane action possible without negative consequences for the self, as proposed by Bandura (1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1999) in his concept of moral disengagement. The study looked at the possibility of influencing moral disengagement experimentally through newspaper-like texts and at what means of media and their parts (apart from the internet) may influence the moral disengagement score of a person.

Additionally, a first step in analyzing the similarities, respectively differences, of moral disengagement and militarism-pacifism (e.g. Cohrs, 2004), was taken.

The study will be depicted briefly to provide a context for the use of the new moral disengagement scale and the results. However, the present paper intends to introduce the Terrorism Questionnaire as a new measurement of moral disengagement. Thus, results reported here will focus on the scale properties found in this study only. Readers interested in the whole study, are referred to Jackson (2005).

Method

Setting. Data for this study were collected at the University of Applied Sciences for Economy and Technology in Berlin, Germany, in April/ May 2004. Participants were students signed up for the obligatory "Introduction to Statistics" lecture. The data were collected on two subsequent Mondays.

Design. For the experimental part, a pre-post-design was chosen. The materials for all other research questions were embedded in the pre-test part (t_1) of this design.

Sample. The sample consisted of 132 students, of which 64 were women, 68 men. The average age of the participants was 24.53 years ($s=2.98$).

Instruments and Material. The overall material consisted of two questionnaires: A pre-test-questionnaire and a post-test-questionnaire. The first one was designed to get socioeconomic and media-use information as well as militarism-pacifism and baseline moral disengagement scores. All but the militarism-pacifism scale (Cohrs et al., 2002) were developed by the author. For the moral disengagement and militarism-pacifism items a rating scale consisting of equidistant labels, as suggested by Rohrmann (1978), was used. The media use part consisted of multiple-choice item blocks for newspapers, radio, television and magazines, asking for the frequency, type/ stations as well as the parts/ programs of their use. The post-test-questionnaire consisted of a text on the Russian-Chechnyan conflict, aimed at not changing, increasing or decreasing the moral disengagement of a person. For that, the author wrote a neutral base text, which was altered to increase, respectively decrease moral disengagement, following the description of the single moral disengagement mechanisms by Bandura (1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1999). Every subject received one text only and separation into groups was pursued randomly. The text was followed by three manipulation checks, a version of the Terrorism Questionnaire specifically worded to fit the Russian-Chechnyan conflict (see Appendix A), and the general version introduced in this paper.

Results. Reliability and factor analyses as well as descriptive statistics were calculated for all scales. Reliability analyses of the Terrorism-Questionnaire resulted in very high Cronbach's alphas in all three cases ($N=130$ for all): α (Terrorism-Questionnaire, general version, pre-test) = .80, α (Terrorism-Questionnaire, general version, post-test) = .88 and α (Terrorism-Questionnaire, specific version) = .82.

Before conducting factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was calculated for each set of variables to learn about the factorability of a given correlation matrix (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001, p. 589). For all cases reported in the following, this measurement exceeded values of .6, which is thought of as being required for a good factor analysis (cf. Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001, p. 589). Principal axis extraction method was used. Factor Analysis of the general scale in the pre-test (t_1) showed that the first three eigenvalues were 3.44, 1.04 and .90. The first factor accounted for 43 % of the variance. Although according to the Kaiser criterion two factors can be extracted, Bortz (1999, p.528) notes that the Kaiser-Guttman-Rule tends to overestimate the number of relevant factors. That considered, a one factor solution seemed to explain the data best, which was supported by the screeplot.

For the same scale in the post-test (t_2), very clearly one factor was extracted (the first three eigenvalues being 4.33, .86 and .74). The results of reliability analysis and factor analysis taken together supported the homogeneity and uni-dimensionality of the items that was found in the pre-test. Thus, the authors' decision for calculating a total moral disengagement scale score in their further analyses was confirmed.

Similar to the general version, factor analysis of the specific version of the Terrorism-Questionnaire showed that one factor explained 45.4% of the variance. According to the Kaiser criterion of eigenvalues greater than one as indicators for factors, two factors can be found, the second factor explaining 13 % of the variance. However, analogous to the general version of the scale, a one factor solution was supported by the screeplot.

For the militarism-pacifism-scale (Cohrs et al., 2002), reliability analysis of the ten items contained in the scale resulted in $\alpha = .77$ (N= 131). Cronbach`s alpha would not have been increased by deleting any of the ten items. Similar to what Cohrs et al. (2002) report, factor analysis suggest the existence of a general factor. The eigenvalues of the first four factors extracted are 3.36, 1.32, 1.07, .89. The existence of a general factor is supported by the screeplot. The first factor explains 33.6 % of variance.

Item	Factor	
	1	2
1. "In fast and clean military actions central bases of hostile movements can be neutralized and collateral damage can be minimized."	.302	.266
2. "It is irresponsible to renounce the use of military force if a contribution to world-peace can be made by it."	.354	.387
3. "Terrorists are like pests in cornfields – one has to approach them relentlessly."	.569	-.011
4. "If the NATO asks us for military help to end a conflict in a foreign country, I support the use of armed forces in the crisis region."	.546	.152
5. "In the struggle for peace I find the use of military force justified if death of innocent people is avoided."	.644	.200
6. "If a soldier kills someone while on duty, he acts on behalf of military orders and thus carries no personal responsibility for his action."	.600	-.143
7. "If peaceful means cannot resolve a conflict effectively, I support the use of military interventions."	.829	-.217
8. "If extreme political groups are guilty of cruel crimes against humanity and serious human rights violations, they have not deserved to be treated sparingly."	.489	.046
1. People on this planet can live without arms and war. (-)	-.040	.488
2. Our country should spend much less money on armament. (-)	.112	.323
3. One should seriously consider, also using the military in inner-political conflicts.	.261	.094
4. War is a means of solving international conflicts one cannot do without.	.030	.548
5. War is a crime against life and thus morally abject. (-)	.352	.230
6. Under certain circumstances, war can be necessary to protect justice.	.427	.400
7. Due to humanity's nature, war is unfortunately inevitable.	-.192	.734
8. War is never justified. (-)	.254	.413
9. The threat of military force is often the best possibility to keep aggressive states in check.	.055	.461
10. Only he who has military power at his disposal can negotiate successfully in international conflicts.	.011	.596

Note. Items 1-8 belong to the Terrorism-Questionnaire for measuring moral disengagement. Items 1-10 belong to the Militarism-Pacifism Scale by Cohrs et al. (2002). All items are shown in the order of their appearance in the questionnaires used for data collection.

Table 3. Factor loadings for each item on the two factors extracted after oblique rotation.

In order to analyze the conceptual relationship between moral disengagement and militarism-pacifism, factor analysis was calculated for all items of the militarism-pacifism scale (Cohrs et al., 2002) and the Terrorism Questionnaire, general version combined. Correlating the scale scores of moral disengagement and militarism-pacifism, which resulted in $r = .54$ ($p < .01$). Oblique rotation resulted in a four factor solution, following the Kaiser criterion, with the first four eigenvalues being 5.30, 1.89, 1.47 and 1.13, accounting for 29.44 %, 10.50%, 8.14% and 6.27% of the variance respectively. However, since a four factor solution seemed hard to be explained and founded theoretically, a two factor solution was forced, as well. Here, it was expected that moral disengagement items would show high loadings on one factor, whereas militarism-pacifism items would load higher on the second factor. The first two factors had eigenvalues of 5.30 and 1.89 and explained 40% of the overall variance together. The pattern matrix of the two factor solution is shown in table 3. As can be seen in the matrix, not all items can distinctly be assigned to one of the two factors. Nevertheless, the majority of the items of the moral disengagement scale more strongly load on factor one, whereas militarism-pacifism items tend to load more on the second factor. Thus, the theoretical difference between the two concepts seems to be somewhat supported by the data.

Although associated, moral disengagement (i.e. the first factor) appears to resemble moral and justice related aspects of supporting, respectively rejecting, war whereas militarism-pacifism (i.e. the second factor) possibly stands for a more general concept (cf. Cohrs, 2004).

Properties of the Terrorism Questionnaire in combined-data-analysis

To perform additional analysis the authors joined their data from the two different studies. A combined sample of 258 subjects resulted. The mean age was 31,17 years ($s = 13,21$), 48% were female.

Analysis and results. Items were coded differently in the study of Jackson (2005) and Sparr (2004) so that the data of Sparr were recoded to the same direction as Jackson’s. Cronbach’s Alpha was 0.81. Table 4 shows the statistical properties of the items and the scale.

Items	Loadings on factor 1	Loadings on factor 2	Mean of scale, without item	Variance of scale, without item	Corrected item-scale-correlation	Cronbach’s Alpha, without item
“In fast and clean military actions central bases of hostile movements can be neutralized and collateral damage can be minimized.”	.623	.115	20.19	34.987	.492	.795
“It is irresponsible to renounce the use of military force if a contribution to world-peace can be made by it.”	.740	.120	20.15	33.606	.621	.778
“Terrorists are like pests in cornfields – one has to approach them relentlessly.”	.728	-.435	20.08	32.294	.591	.780
“If the NATO asks us for military help to end a conflict in a foreign country, I support the use of armed forces in the crisis region.”	.484	.703	20.41	35.483	.361	.815
“In the struggle for peace I find the use of military force justified if death of innocent people is avoided.”	.739	-.225	20.22	32.890	.608	.778
“If a soldier kills someone while on duty, he acts on behalf of military orders and thus carries no personal responsibility for his action.”	.631	.292	20.00	33.304	.507	.793
“If peaceful means cannot resolve a conflict effectively, I support the use of military interventions.”	.718	.188	20.15	34.041	.606	.780
“If extreme political groups are guilty of cruel crimes against humanity and serious human rights violations, they have not deserved to be treated sparely.”	.615	-.549	19.98	34.415	.467	.799

Table 4. Statistical properties of the items and the scale in the pooled sample with the item-loadings on the two components

A principal component analysis prefers a two-factor solution following the Kaiser-criterion (Eigenvalues greater than 1). The first component explains 44.22% of variance, additional 14.79% of variance can be explained by the second factor. Loadings are displayed in Table 4.

Discussion

Summary of results. This paper served the purpose of introducing a new scale for the measurement of moral disengagement, a concept first introduced by Albert Bandura in 1986 to explain how people can engage in inhumane conduct without consequences for the self. Two research-teams (Grussendorf et al., 2002; McAlister, 2000, 2001) introduced the Peace Test Scale for the measurement of moral disengagement in a conflict-related setting. The authors of the present study developed a new scale for measuring the degree of moral disengagement in a person with the goal of improving the measurements propensities, such as representing every moral disengagement process with at least one item. This newly developed scale consists of eight items. Generally, the scale shows high reliability measures, especially considering its length. Furthermore, a one factor solution seems to explain the data best, providing a hint that the eight moral disengagement mecha-

nisms result in one overlapping attitude. Results of study A and B confirm those properties of the scale found in the pretest with good Cronbach's Alpha and a one factor structure. The properties of the scale being the focal point of this paper, both studies were explained in regards to this goal. Both studies found that moral disengagement, as measured by the new scale, were associated with the support of military intervention. This holds true for the case of Austrian sample (Sparr, 2004) specifically as well as for the attitude of militarism generally. These results can be taken as very first indicators for the external validity of the new developed moral disengagement scale. In addition to that, study B found a meaningful correlation of militarism-pacifism and moral disengagement scores. All further analyses clearly show that similarities between the two concepts exist, albeit not entirely. The concepts are similar, but not indistinguishable. Possible explanations are discussed later on. Gender differences in moral disengagement as previously reported in literature could not be found in either of the studies. Contrary to the results of McAlister (2001), age also did not have significant effects on moral disengagement. Rather, as reported in study A, it was found that education and political conservatism were positively associated with moral disengagement. Higher levels of education were associated with higher resistance to moral disengagement. It seems as if less educated people are more vulnerable to the moral disengagement mechanisms, possibly because they lack the possibilities of deeper reasoning on the statements and detecting the underlying mechanisms. This result strengthens the argument for educational interventions against moral disengagement, such as inoculation as introduced by McGuire in 1964 (Smith & Mackie, 2000, p. 281) to name just one possibility.

General Considerations. The question of the adequacy of attitude statements to reflect on moral disengagement was raised earlier in this paper. The auxiliary assumption of attitudes as results of the process of moral disengagement made in all previous and this present research was explained. Taking that into consideration, and reflecting on the features of the newly developed scale, it seems to be a viable option to the already existing Peace Test Scale (Grussendorf et al., 2002; McAlister, 2000, 2001) in the attempt to measure moral disengagement, or its results. However, with the current scale, only a punctual assessment is possible. To learn more about the development, or change, of moral disengagement in humans, studies are needed which take into account the process nature of moral disengagement, e.g. by long-term or repeated measurement.

Militarism-Pacifism and Moral Disengagement. The link between moral disengagement and militarism-pacifism has been mentioned numerous times. Hence, one needs to ask how do the concepts differ, and how are they related? Looking at the items that load on the two factors, it appears conceivable to interpret moral disengagement as a more moral and justice related concept in comparison to militarism-pacifism. The latter seems to address more general tendencies of supporting, respectively objecting, war and military action, possibly more influenced by economical and political considerations. Another explanation is plausible, as well: Moral disengagement could be assumed to be a process necessary to develop and maintain militaristic attitudes, especially those that are more justice and ethics related. In this case, moral disengagement would be a predecessor of the attitude militarism, respectively resistance to moral disengagement an antecedent of the attitude pacifism. Militarism-pacifism is thought of consisting of three core dimensions, one of which is the moral assessment of war (cf. Cohrs, 2004). Quite plausibly, it is this moral dimension of the attitude militarism-pacifism which the process of moral disengagement helps maintain. Further research is needed to go beyond hypothesizing such a link between the two concepts and to unravel more details about the nature of the two concepts' bonds.

Different samples. Taking a closer look at the data pooled across the studies of Jackson (2005) and Sparr (2004) especially the forth item has the worst fit to the scale (corrected item-scale correlation is .36). In the study of Jackson (2005) the corrected item-scale correlation is .54 and in the study of Sparr (2004) it is .43. The wording of the item is: "If the NATO asks us for military help to end a conflict in a foreign country, I support the use of armed forces in the crisis region." Especially in the sample of Sparr (2004) this item is very bad compared to the other items (see Table 2). There are several possible explanations to this, which, however, cannot be proven with the data. The most interesting and compelling explanation perhaps is the different nationalities of the samples. Austria is a neutral country and Austrians are rather critical about the actions of the NATO and Austrian involvement in foreign conflicts. This might be interpreted as a hint that one has to be careful using the "Terrorism-Questionnaire" in populations with different nationalities. Perhaps it could be advisable to drop this item and replace it with an item, which does not tap the attitude to an organization like the NATO.

Student Populations. It needs to be pointed out that any scale used for the measurement of moral disengagement published so far was developed and used on university, respectively college level student populations mainly, as was done in the majority of the studies presented here. This should be kept in mind when using the Terrorism Questionnaire, or the Peace Test Scale. However, Sparr (2004) offers an important study as an extension to other than student populations. Further application of the Terrorism Questionnaire to other populations and samples are highly desirable and suggest an opportunity for future research.

Weaknesses of the new scale. Albeit the satisfying statistical properties the new scale shows, two main weaknesses remain: All items turn out to be worded in one direction, meaning agreement is always an indicator of moral disengagement. The authors were aware of this problem and included many items in which agreement would signal moral engagement in the

pre-test. However, item selection strongly based on statistical properties resulted in the final item pool with all items worded in the same direction. This needs to be considered in the results as answering tendencies could have been supported by this and thus effected the results.

A second point of criticism refers to the wording of the items. It was mentioned in the criticism of the Peace Test Scale that all items were worded hypothetically which could have undermined serious answering. Although this problem may remain in the current scale for some items, much effort was put into trying to avoid conditional, hypothetical items and into using statements or consciously avoiding hypothetical vocabulary, such as would, could, or should. Item 4 is one example of this ("If the NATO asks us for military help to end a conflict in a foreign country, I support the use of armed forces in the crisis region." As opposed to "If the NATO asked us for military help [...], I would support the use of armed forces [...]).

In conclusion, a new scale for measuring moral disengagement (including one item for each of the eight moral disengagement mechanisms) with satisfying psychometric properties has been introduced. Measuring moral disengagement with this scale in some cases resulted in diverging outcomes to those published in earlier research (e.g. sex differences in moral disengagement). Further research is needed to explore the concept of moral disengagement more thoroughly and to learn more about its validity in Peace Psychology (e.g. in the field of constructive conflict coverage). Also, research with larger, more diverse samples is needed to extend the knowledge of the applicability of the new developed moral disengagement scale.

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Appendix A

Moral disengagement process	Item representing the possibly resulting attitude
Moral justification	"It is irresponsible to renounce the use of military force in Chechnya if a contribution to peace in Russia can be made by it."
Palliative comparison	"As peaceful means could not resolve the Chechnya conflict effectively, I support the use of military interventions."
Euphemistic labelling	"In fast and clean military actions of the Russian army central bases of hostile movements in Chechnya could be neutralised and collateral damage could be minimized."
Displacement of responsibility	"If a Russian soldier kills someone in Chechnya while on duty, he acts on behalf of military orders and thus carries no personal responsibility for his action."
Diffusion of responsibility	"If Russia asks us for military help to end the Chechnya conflict, I will support the use of armed forces in the crisis region."
Minimizing, ignoring, or misconstruing the consequences	"In the struggle for peace in Russia and Chechnya I find the use of military force justified if death of innocent people is avoided."
Dehumanization	"Chechnyan Terrorists are like pests in cornfields – Russia has to approach them relentlessly."
Attribution of blame	"If extreme islamistic groups in Chechnya have become guilty of cruel crimes against humanity and serious human rights violations, they have not deserved to be treated sparely."

Table A.1. Items of the specific version of the "Terrorism-Questionnaire"

Moral disengagement process	Item representing the possibly resulting attitude
Moral justification	"Es ist unverantwortlich auf den Einsatz militärischer Mittel zu verzichten, wenn dadurch ein Beitrag zum Frieden auf der Welt geleistet werden kann."
Palliative comparison	"Wenn friedliche Mittel einen Konflikt nicht effektiv zu lösen vermögen, halte ich den Einsatz militärischer Interventionskräfte für gerechtfertigt."
Euphemistic labelling	"In schnellen und sauberen militärischen Aktionen können heutzutage zentrale Stützpunkte feindlicher Bewegungen neutralisiert und Kollateralschäden minimiert werden."
Displacement of responsibility	"Wenn ein Soldat im Krieg jemanden tötet, handelt er im Auftrag von militärischen Befehlen und trägt folglich keinerlei persönliche moralische Verantwortung für sein Tun."
Diffusion of responsibility	"Wenn die Nato uns um militärische Hilfe bittet, um einen Konflikt im Ausland zu beenden, bin ich für den Einsatz bewaffneter Truppen im Krisengebiet."
Minimizing, ignoring, or misconstruing the consequences	"Im Kampf für den Frieden halte ich den Einsatz bewaffneter Truppen für gerechtfertigt, wenn der Tod unschuldiger Menschen vermieden wird."
Dehumanization	"Terroristen sind wie Schädlinge im Kornfeld – man muss ihnen schonungslos begegnen."
Attribution of blame	"Wenn sich extreme politische Gruppierungen grausamer Verbrechen gegen die Menschheit und schwerer Verletzungen der Menschenrechte schuldig gemacht haben, haben sie keine militärische Schonung verdient."

Table A.2. The "Terrorism-Questionnaire" in its original German version

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