

Justification And Its Societal Consequences

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Abstract: *The research paper examines the causes of justification: cognitive dissonance and rationalisation. In the first cause, to avoid dissonance one resorts to justification. Secondly, because of rationalisation, where the mind overpowers the intellect, one justifies. Examples are drawn from different walks of life like the media and law to highlight its impact in the society. The general effect of justification is that it camouflages the evils of society and gives a false sense of rationality. Based on faulty reasoning, immoral actions are justified as being moral. Further analysis draws out different types of justification prevalent in the society such as market, industrial, civic, inspiration, domestic and fame. The conclusion arrived at points out to the choice available to individuals and provides solutions to avoid falling into the trap of justification.*

I. INTRODUCTION

What drives a person to make a particular choice? Why does one choose to harm and another protect? What motivates one to be ethical and another unethical? The research examines a particular type of choice/ action known as 'justification'. It looks at past research on the subject and recent developments. What motivates one to justify; different ways in which one can justify and what impact justification has on the wider society. What makes a person justify? Is it nature or nurture? Can factors like environment, circumstance, family, and education lead a person to justify? Or is it solely the individual who has the choice to justify or not?

In his three-volume book Gulag Archipelago narrating the horrors of the Soviet forced labour and concentration camp system, Alexander Solzhenitsyn observes, "It is in the nature of the human being to seek a justification for his actions." Some of the greatest conflicts in human history have been caused by justifications. Without any rational basis, Hitler blamed Germany's post-World War One problems on the Jews. This justification and its subsequent actions sowed the seeds for World War II. Ian Kershaw writes in his book, The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich (page 235,

240): "Once more among his Party faithful in Nuremberg in September 1938 his proclamation contained the usual cliché about the infant Nazi Party beginning the fight against the greatest enemy threatening the German people, international Jewry, and a few days later still at the Party rally, he attempted to justify Germany's attempts to rid itself of its Jews". "In his notorious Reichstag speech on 30 January 1939, when in far more menacing fashion than ever before, Hitler made his threatening 'prophecy' that a new war would bring the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe." The research seeks to find the cause of such and other forms of justification.

II. JUSTIFICATION - DEFINITION

Following are some definitions of justification from different sources:

- ✓ the action of showing something to be right or reasonable: *the justification of revolutionary action; he made a speech in justification of his career* (Oxford Dictionary, www.oxforddictionaries.com)

- ✓ something (such as a fact or circumstance) that shows an action to be reasonable or necessary; the act of defending or explaining or making excuses for by reasoning: *the justification of barbarous means by holy ends* - H.J. Muller (elook.org Dictionary)
- ✓ a reason why something is correct and morally right: *he considered misrule a justification for revolution* (www.macmillandictionary.com)
- ✓ to prove or show something to be right, just or reasonable: *the person appointed has fully justified our confidence, all these incidents were used again as a justification for my sacking* (Chambers Dictionary, www.chambersharrap.co.uk)

SPECIAL MEANINGS:

- ✓ *Law*: a plea showing sufficient reason for an action (Chambers Dictionary, www.chambersharrap.co.uk)
- ✓ *Theology*: the action of declaring or making righteous in the sight of God (Oxford Dictionary, www.oxforddictionaries.com)

III. CAUSES OF JUSTIFICATION

- ✓ Cognitive Dissonance
- ✓ Rationalisation

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Leon Festinger originated the theory of cognitive dissonance in 1957. Further research on the subject has been carried out by Brehm, J. W., & Cohen, A. R. (1962), Aronson, E. (1969), Wicklund, R. A., & Brehm, J. W. (1976), Olson, J. M., & Zanna, M. P. (1979) among others.

Festinger proposed that actions are motivated by the need to find harmony when confronted by disharmonious (dissonant) thoughts, attitudes or beliefs. To resolve this dissonance one can resort to justification. The theory also takes into account people's need to preserve a stable, positive self-concept. E. Tory Higgins of the New York University published a psychological review in 1987, *Self-Discrepancy: A Theory Relating Self and Affect*, which substantiates the dissonance theory. It holds that people are motivated to maintain a sense of consistency among their beliefs and perceptions of themselves, and become distressed when there is a discrepancy between the "actual self" and an "ideal" or "ought" self. Further the review explains cognitive dissonance as follows: "Among a wide array of possibilities, three basic types of incompatible self-beliefs can be identified: (a) inconsistencies between one's self-perceived attributes (or self-concept) and external, behavioral feedback related to one's self-perceptions; (b) contradictions among one's self-perceived attributes that impede a coherent and unified self-concept; and (c) discrepancies between one's self-perceived attributes and some standard or self-guide. Aronson's (1969) version of cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), with its

emphasis on self-expectancies, is an example of the former case. The theory proposes that when people behave in a manner that is inconsistent with their self-concept, they experience discomfort (see also Bramel, 1968; Rogers, 1959), as when someone who believes that he or she is decent and truthful persuades another person to perform a task that he or she knows is boring. People will seek out self-consistent social feedback and avoid self-inconsistent feedback in a manner reminiscent of the "selective exposure" hypothesis of cognitive dissonance theory (see Olson & Zanna, 1979; Wicklund & Brehm, 1976)."

Leon Festinger explains that people want balance in their lives and cognitive dissonance was a way to bring back a lost sense of balance. For example, some individuals always sit in the same seat on the train or bus when they commute to work, or always eat lunch in the same restaurant. Cognitive dissonance is a part of this need for consistency. According to Festinger, we hold several cognitions about the world and ourselves; when they clash, a discrepancy is evoked, resulting in a state of tension known as cognitive dissonance. As the experience of dissonance is unpleasant, we are motivated to reduce or eliminate it, and achieve consonance (i.e. agreement). Smoking is often postulated as an example of cognitive dissonance because it is widely accepted that cigarettes cause lung cancer, yet virtually everyone wants to live a long and healthy life. In terms of the theory, the desire to live a long life is dissonant with the activity of doing something that will most likely shorten one's life. The tension produced by these contradictory ideas can be reduced by quitting smoking, denying the evidence of lung cancer, or justifying one's smoking. For example, smokers could justify their behaviour by concluding that only a few smokers become ill, that it only happens to very heavy smokers, or that if smoking does not kill them, something else will. This case of dissonance could also be interpreted in terms of a threat to the self-concept. The thought, "I am increasing my risk of lung cancer" is dissonant with the self-related belief, "I am a smart, reasonable person who makes good decisions." Because it is often easier to make excuses than it is to change behaviour, dissonance theory leads to the conclusion that humans are rationalising and not always rational beings.

Jon Elster in his book: *Explaining Social Behaviour: more nuts and bolts for the social sciences* illustrate cognitive dissonance through further cases (page 19): "A person who has just bought a car avidly looks out for ads for the very same brand of car, to bolster the conviction that he made a good decision. This also explains the surprising strong feelings of loyalty induced by the painful and humiliating initiation rituals of college fraternities and sororities. They justify, "Because I suffered so much to join this group, it must be a good group to belong to". "

Festinger's research resulted in a number of interesting findings. One was that the level of cognitive dissonance would decrease as the incentive to comply with the conflict situation was increased. The reason was simple: where an incentive was involved, people felt less conflict. Festinger and his associates conducted a simple experiment to prove this point. College students were asked to perform a series of repetitive menial tasks for a specified period of time. As they finished, they were instructed that they had to inform the next group of

students that the tasks had been enjoyable and interesting. Later, the subjects were asked to describe their true feelings about the task. Half the group was offered a \$1 bill; the rest were offered a \$20 bill. Subjects were asked afterward whether they really did find the tasks enjoyable. Interestingly, the students who had been paid one dollar stated that they actually did find the tasks enjoyable. There was little or no dissonance among the students who had been paid the \$20, since; after all, they were well rewarded for their participation. The other students, however, had to justify having spent time doing useless tasks and getting only a dollar as a reward. They were the ones who were in a state of cognitive dissonance. By convincing themselves that the tasks they performed were not all that boring, they could justify having gone through what was essentially a waste of their time.

EFFORT JUSTIFICATION

Dissonance is aroused whenever a person engages in an unpleasant activity to obtain some desirable outcome. From the cognition that the activity is unpleasant, it follows that one would not engage in the activity; the cognition that the activity is unpleasant is dissonant with engaging in the activity. Dissonance should be greater, the greater the unpleasant effort required obtaining the outcome. Dissonance can be reduced by exaggerating the desirability of the outcome, which would add consonant cognitions. In the first experiment designed to test these ideas, Aronson and Mills (1959) had women undergo a severe or mild "initiation" to become a member of a group. In the severe initiation condition, the women engaged in an embarrassing activity to join the group, whereas in the mild initiation condition, the women engaged in an activity that was not very embarrassing to join the group. The group turned out to be dull and boring. The women in the severe initiation condition evaluated the group more favourably than the women in the mild initiation condition.

INFERRED JUSTIFICATION

One of the applications of cognitive dissonance in modern society can be seen in the case of inferred justification. Based on an article in the Newsweek magazine 'Lies of Mass Destruction': <http://www.newsweek.com/2009/08/24/lies-of-mass-destruction.html>

After the 2004 US Election, research was done on the methods used to influence the voters. In particular they identified inferred justification as one of the means used. The majority of voters believed there was a link between Saddam Hussein, the then ruler of Iraq and the terrorist attack on US soil during 9/11. Scholars have suggested that this belief was the result of a campaign of false information and innuendo from the George Bush administration. Research found that at least for a subset of voters the main reason to believe in the link was that it made sense of the administration's decision to go to war against Iraq. This was termed as *inferred justification*: for these voters, the fact of the war led to a search for a justification for it, which led them to infer the existence of ties between Iraq and 9/11. The theory of cognitive dissonance further explains the process. When people are presented with information that contradicts pre-

existing beliefs, they try to relieve the cognitive tension one way or another. They process and respond to information defensively, for instance: their belief challenged by fact, they ignore the latter. They also accept and seek out confirming information but ignore, discredit the source of, or argue against contrary information. Sociologist Steven Hoffman, visiting assistant professor at the University of Buffalo reports on the findings of his research: "Rather than search rationally for information that either confirms or disconfirms a particular belief," he says, "people actually seek out information that confirms what they already believe." "For the most part," says Hoffman, "people completely ignore contrary information" and are able to "develop elaborate rationalizations based on faulty information." "We refer to this as 'inferred justification,'" says Hoffman. Inferred justification is a sort of backward chain of reasoning. You start with something you believe strongly (the invasion of Iraq was the right move) and work backward to find support for it (Saddam was behind 9/11). "For these voters," says Hoffman, "the sheer fact that we were engaged in war led to a post-hoc search for a justification for that war."

RATIONALISATION

The need to reduce dissonance and maintain self-esteem produces thinking that is *rationalising* rather than *rational*. It is also known as the 'sour grapes defence' based on a fable from Aesop. The fox wanted some grapes, but could not reach them. This caused him to feel pain, as he could not have what he wanted. He rationalised, "They were probably sour anyway" to turn them into something he didn't really want, and thus couldn't really be upset about not getting. It is a rationalising way to diminish pain or guilt. Jon Elster calls this as 'adaptive defence mechanism'. The old "They're 50% less fat so I can eat twice as many" routine is the same. You make up a "logical" argument to avoid guilt.

Rationalisation is a defence mechanism that involves explaining an unacceptable behaviour or feeling in a rational or logical manner, avoiding the true reasons for the behaviour. For example, a person who is turned down for a date might rationalise the situation by saying they were not attracted to the other person anyway, or a student might blame a poor exam score on the instructor rather than his or her lack of preparation. Rationalisation not only prevents anxiety, it may also protect self-esteem and self-concept. When confronted by success or failure, people tend to attribute achievement to their own qualities and skills while failures are blamed on other people or outside forces. The anxiety that comes with the possibility of having made a bad decision can lead to rationalisation. It creates a tendency to create additional reasons or justifications to support one's choices. A person who just spent too much money on a new car might decide that the new vehicle is much less likely to break down than his or her old car. This belief may or may not be true, but it would reduce dissonance and make the person feel better. Dissonance can also lead to confirmation bias, the denial of disconfirming evidence, and other ego defence mechanisms.

Martin Luther King Jr observes, "It seems to be a fact of life that human beings cannot continue to do wrong without

eventually reaching out for some rationalisation to clothe their act”

IV. APPLICATIONS OF JUSTIFICATION

Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot have drawn a unique, practical model on the application of justification and they present it as ‘six orders of worth’.

SIX ORDERS OF WORTH

Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot discuss six types of justification in their book *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (“De la justification Les économies de la grandeur”) (1991). The authors argue that justifications fall into six main logics. They term it as ‘six orders of worth’ which they seek to explore how, in situation of dispute, people use to justify their actions. The authors illustrate how each of the orders of worth operates in the economy and influence the larger social network. The authors are developing a sociological theory of value. Their first move is to demonstrate that there is not just one way of making value but that modern economies comprise multiple principles of evaluation. A modern economy is not a single social order but contains multiple ‘orders of worth’. Orders of worth are the very fabric of calculation, of rationality, of value. Boltanski and Thévenot’s work refuses a dichotomy of value and values; instead, it fuses them in the concept of worth.

The authors develop their innovative framework at the intersection of social justice theory and pragmatic linguistics. Orders of worth are not strictly linked to a social sphere (school, love, politics) or to the specificity of a scarce good or of a necessary burden (organ for transplant, first rows in battle, etc.). In any situation, they can equally be invoked by anybody in order to criticise, to justify or to reach an agreement with someone else. Hence it is necessary to study the pragmatics of justification, that is, how people do things with words, ideas, and moral arguments. The ‘orders of worth’ has two levels: the polity and the common world. A polity is a ‘legitimate order’, that is the ‘higher common principle’ that will ‘sustain justification’. This principle according to the authors should meet six axioms: common humanity, common dignity, principle of differentiation, an order of different states, an investment formula and a common good. Anyone can be evaluated according to it. Its application produces a motivating hierarchy. It comes along with a principle of redistribution: higher states are granted only if the attribution of this state of worthiness benefits everybody and particularly the lower states.

Boltanski and Thévenot delineate six discrete orders of worth, each epitomised by a particular moral philosopher. Markets are, indeed, one of the organising principles of an economy. But, as they show in their study of the domain of the corporation, in addition to a market rationality (exemplified by the works of Adam Smith), a modern economy also has an industrial or technological rationality (Saint Simon), another organised around a civic logic (Rousseau), and still others arrayed according to principles of loyalty (Bossuet), inspiration (Augustine), and renown or fame (Hobbes).

Boltanski and Thévenot are emphatic that their orders of worth do not map to separate domains. Inspiration, for example, is not the special province of the world of art; nor does a civic rationality correspond to the public sphere; and the market order can operate as well in the domains of academia and religion. As an example that each of the orders of worth is salient in the world of academia, take letters of recommendation for faculty appointments. A given letter might include performance criteria from each of the six orders of worth. For example, a given candidate may be recommended to be “very creative” (the order of inspiration); that she is incredibly “productive” (the industrial); and that she is a “good citizen” (the civic). Moreover, the same letter could note that her work is “frequently cited” (the order of fame or renown) and that she is fiercely “loyal to her graduate students” (the domestic). Finally you might find that the candidate “has a strong record of getting grants” (the market order). As coherent principles of evaluation, each of the orders of worth has distinctive and incommensurable principles of equivalence. Each defines the good, the just, and the fair – but according to different criteria of judgment. Each qualifies persons and objects with a distinctive grammar or logic. As principles of evaluation, the orders involve systematic associations of concepts; but the entities that populate an order of worth are not limited to persons and ideas.

The book tests the six justifications based on a higher common principle. The authors define this as: “the principle of coordination that characterises a polity as a convention for establishing equivalence among beings. This convention stabilises and generalises a form of association. It ensures that beings are qualified. Thus it defines the basis for determining the justification in each category.” A short description of these six types of justification is given and the worlds in which they operate: firstly, the diverse underlying principles of order as extracted from the classical texts; and second, the beings (persons or things) which inhabit these worlds.

	Inspired	Domestic	Civic	Opinion	Market	Industrial
Mode of evaluation (worth)	Grace, nonconformity, creativeness	Esteem, reputation	Collective interest	Renown	Price	Productivity, efficiency
Format of relevant information	Emotional	Oral, exemplary, anecdotal	Formal, official	Semiotic	Monetary	Measurable: criteria, statistics
Elementary relation	Passion	Trust	Solidarity	Recognition	Exchange	Functional link
Human qualification	Creativity, ingenuity	Authority	Equality	Celebrity	Desire, purchasing power	Professional competency, expertise

Table 1: Orders of worth

MARKET JUSTIFICATION

Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* (primarily the first chapters describing how a market works) yields arguments basing a harmonious polity on the market. The market link coordinates individuals through the mediation of scarce goods, the acquisition of which is pursued by everyone. This competition among the individuals’ desires subordinates to the desires of others the price attached to the possession of a commodity. ‘The calm desire for wealth’, as Albert Hirschman writes in *The Passions and the Interest* (1981),

quoting Francis Hutcheson, allows the construction of a harmonious order, which transcends the confusion of individual interests. The market world must not be mixed up with the sphere of economic relations. Economic actions are based on, at least, two main forms of coordination, one by the market, the other by an industrial order, each of them being the support of a different reality test. In a market world, important persons are buyers and sellers. They are worthy when they are rich. Their main qualities are to be opportunistic in spotting and seizing the opportunities of the market, to be unhampered by any personal link and to be emotionally under control. They connect with one another through competitive relationships.

The higher common principle for market justification is competition, and the worthy being is represented by who is desirable, who has value, who is the best, namely the rich persons. Words like "leader", "pioneer", "best in class" are usually used by companies for whom Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is also a tool to make the difference between them and competitors. CSR is also a tool to seduce consumers, shareholders, banks, i.e. the capital in a broad sense. Creating value remains the first objective of the company, and CSR is conceived as a pertinent way to achieve this aim.

There are contrary views to justify the direction markets have to take. Robert Frederick presents one in his book, '*A companion to Business Ethics*' based on Adam Smith's line of thinking: "A long line of economists from Adam Smith to Milton Friedman argue that the best way to organize the exchange of goods is to let people trade freely with whatever resources they possess, because doing so maximizes overall utility. These economists provide a utilitarian justification for the free market. In effect Smith and Friedman make an efficiency claim for the free market: the market is said to be the most efficient means to maximize utility. However the ordinary notion of business efficiency as applied to the individual firm also has utilitarian basis. The efficient firm maximizes outputs in relation to inputs, which squares with the utilitarian's argument that one should act to maximize benefits and minimize costs. Profit, which in one sense is just a measure of efficiency, thereby has a utilitarian justification." Karlson Hargroves & Michael H. Smith cautions against this approach to justify in their book, '*The Natural Advantage of Nations: Business Opportunities, Innovation and Governance in the 21st Century*' They look at the World Bank 1997 report, '*The Role of the State in a Changing World*: "the most economically fundamental justification for the vital role of the government is the fact that if uneven or asymmetrical information in a market economy is not addressed a chain of events will ensue causing market failures and a suboptimal efficiency of distribution of resources."

CIVIC JUSTIFICATION

Civic justification is based on Rousseau's work on *Social Contract*. It depends on the authority of a sovereign whose position, above the selfish desires of individuals, secures the common good. But Rousseau's sovereign is disembodied. In the civic world, a sovereign is formed by the convergence of human wills, as citizens give up their particular interests and

direct themselves exclusively towards the common good. This civic worth counteracts the personal dependencies on which domestic worth is based, as well as the opinions of others that constitute the worth of renown. In the civic world, persons are small if seen as particulars, following the dictates of a selfish will, and, in contrast, relevant and worthy if seen as members of the disembodied sovereign, exclusively concerned with the general interest. The way the labour force is organised in the field of work is regulated by social laws which are themselves the outcome of the nineteenth-century effort to implement a civic principle of equivalence. The peculiarity of the civic world is to lay stress on beings who are not individual beings but collective ones. Individual human beings can be seen as relevant and worthy only as they belong to a group or as they are the representatives of a collective person. In this world, important persons are, therefore, federations, public communities, representatives or delegates. Their qualities are to be official or statutory. The relevant objects are either immaterial as, for example, rules, codes, procedures, or material, as union premises or ballot boxes. Praiseworthy relationships are those, which involve or mobilise people for a collective action.

In this category the higher common principle that is used to justify is the pre-eminence of the collective and the general interest. The masses and the collectives represent the worthy beings, and are opposed to the one being that is divided or isolated. To achieve this, the individual must renounce its immediate interests and act in line with the general interest. It advocates rally for collective action and expresses itself through its commitment to a just cause in a social movement.

Jean Jacques Rousseau –
http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon_01.htm#008_explains in his book *Social Contract*: "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they. How did this change come about? I do not know. What can make it legitimate? That question I think I can answer. If I took into account only force, and the effects derived from it, I should say: "As long as a people is compelled to obey, and obeys, it does well; as soon as it can shake off the yoke, and shakes it off, it does still better; for, regaining its liberty by the same right as took it away, either it is justified in resuming it, or there was no justification for those who took it away." But the social order is a sacred right which is the basis of all other rights. Nevertheless, this right does not come from nature, and must therefore be founded on conventions. Before coming to that, I have to prove what I have just asserted."

He elaborates further in the latter part of the book: "Furthermore, if this form of government carries with it a certain inequality of fortune, this is justifiable in order that as a rule the administration of public affairs may be entrusted to those who are most able to give them their whole time, but not, as Aristotle maintains, in order that the rich may always be put first. On the contrary, it is of importance that an opposite choice should occasionally teach the people that the deserts of men offer claims to pre-eminence more important than those of riches."

INDUSTRIAL JUSTIFICATION

The industrial principle of equivalence was distilled from the work of Henri Saint-Simon, founder of French sociology. In this world, worth is based on efficiency. It can be measured on a scale of professional capabilities. Connected to the production of material goods, industrial worth is upheld by way of organisational devices directed towards future planning and investment. In an industrial world the great persons are the experts. The words used to describe their personal qualities can also be used to qualify things. They are said to be worthy when they are efficient, productive, operational. They implement tools, methods, criteria, plans, figures, graphs, etc. Their relationships can be said to be harmonious when organized, measurable, functional, standardised.

In the "Industrial World", the higher common principle is efficiency or performance. The worthy being is represented by one who is efficient and productive.

Henri Saint-Simon created the word 'industriel' (industrial) as something that expresses a new idea. He discusses the role of the scientists in his journal *Le Catechisme des Industriels* (*Catechism of the Industrialists*): "The scientists render very important services to the industrial class; but they receive from it even more important services; they receive from it their existence. It is the industrial class that satisfies their primary needs, as well as their physical tastes of all kinds, and which provides them with all instruments of use to them in the execution of their work."

INSPIRATION JUSTIFICATION

The construction of this justification is based on St Augustine's *City of God* and on the treatise Augustine devoted to the problem of grace. In this justification, worth is viewed as an immediate relationship to an external source from which all possible worth flows. This worth rests upon the attainment of a state of grace and is, therefore, completely independent of recognition by others. It arises, particularly, in the personal body when prepared by asceticism, and especially through emotions. Its expressions are diverse and many-sided: holiness, creativity, artistic sensibility, imagination, etc. Reference to this world is made, nonetheless, each time people attain worth without bothering about opinions of others. It is, for example, the case of artists. Artists do not necessarily reject public marks of reputation or financial recognition, but they must, in order to be allowed to accept them, make a compromise, which is always difficult to reach, with another kind of worth, say, for example, with that of renown or of the market. Even when they attain recognition, they never see in their success the very bases of their work's value or of their own. In the world of inspiration, the relevant beings are, for example, spirits, crazy people, artists, and children. These beings are worthy and great when they are odd, wonderful, and emotional. Their typical way of acting is to dream, to imagine, to rebel, or to have living experiences

DOMESTIC JUSTIFICATION

Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet's work, *Politiquetirée de l'Écrituresainte* (*Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy*

Scripture) is a commentary on justification in the domestic world. He writes that people's worth depends on a hierarchy of trust based on a chain of personal dependencies. The political link between beings is seen as a generalisation of kinship and is based on face-to-face relationships and on the respect for tradition. The person, cannot, in this world, be separated from his/her belonging to a body, a family, a lineage, an estate. In Bossuet's political construction, the king, who is the greatest being, is comparable with a father, who sacrifices himself for his subjects. In this model one must, to evaluate someone's worth, know his place in the network of dependencies from which this person draws his own authority. In this category, important and worthy persons are chiefs, bosses, or even relatives. Their main qualities are to be distinguished, straightforward, faithful and to have character. The typical objects are, for instance, visiting cards, gifts, estates, houses, titles. Among the relevant ways to make relationships we note the act of recommending somebody giving birth, breeding, reproducing or presenting an invitation.

FAME JUSTIFICATION

Also referred to as the "World of Renown", this category is based on the higher common principle that is the opinion of others, and the worthy being is represented by one who is deemed, known, recognised by others. For example, the companies have to justify that apart from their commitments for just and collective causes, they have to be also recognised, i.e. legitimised in the eyes of others. Firms are asking for public esteem. The best way to achieve this is to be awarded, to receive a certificate or a label from an independent agency or an NGO. Due to the supposed independence of judgement of these bodies, the companies claim a status of "good citizen", "green company", "socially responsible firm", etc. Another way consist in joining existing networks where companies can meet other companies to exchange best practices on CSR, but also NGO's, authorities, think tanks, media's, etc.

The justification of fame was drawn from Hobbes's *Leviathan*, particularly the chapter devoted to honor. If, in a domestic world, worth has value only in a hierarchical chain of beings, worth is nothing but the result of other people's opinion in the world of renown. The measurement of people's worth depends on conventional signs of public esteem. This kind of worth is based on nothing other than the number of individuals who grant their recognition. It is hence entirely unrelated to the realm of personal dependencies and it is not linked to the person's self-esteem. For this reason, disputes may arise when a gap between self-esteem and recognition by others comes to light: in this world, other people's recognition is reality. In this world, relevant persons are well-known personalities, stars, opinion leaders, journalists. They are worthy and great when they are famous, recognized, successful, or convincing. The current objects in this world are trademarks, badges, message transmitters and receivers, press releases and booklets. The right way of making relations is, then, to influence, to identify oneself to somebody, to appeal to or to speak about somebody, or to gossip and spread rumors.

Thomas Hobbes first law is a justification for war: "Every man ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of

obtaining it, and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek and use all helps and advantages of war.” (*Leviathan*, xiv 4) He further elaborates in his book, ‘Leviathan’: “Ignorance of remote causes disposeth men to attribute all events to the causes immediate and instrumental: for these are all the causes they perceive. And hence it comes to pass that in all places men that are grieved with payments to the public discharge their anger upon the publicans, that is to say, farmers, collectors and other officers of the public revenue, and adhere such as to find fault with the public government; and thereby, when they have engaged themselves beyond hope of justification, fall also upon the supreme authority, for fear of punishment or shame of receiving pardon.” “For to the justification of the cause of a conqueror, the reproach of the cause of the conquered is for the most part necessary; but neither of them necessary for the obligation of the conquered.”

Garrath Williams, a lecturer at the Lancaster University, United Kingdom explains Hobbes standpoint <http://www.iep.utm.edu/hobmoral/>: “a world where human authority is something that requires justification, and is automatically accepted by few; a world where social and political inequality also appears questionable; We can put the matter in terms of the concern with equality and rights that Hobbes’s thought heralded: we live in a world where all human beings are supposed to have rights, that is, moral claims that protect their basic interests. But what or who determines what those rights are? And who will enforce them?” “Writing a few years after Hobbes, John Locke had definitely accepted the terms of debate Hobbes had laid down: how can human beings live together, when religious or traditional justifications of authority are no longer effective or persuasive? How is political authority justified and how far does it extend? In particular, are our political rulers properly as unlimited in their powers as Hobbes had suggested? And if they are not, what system of politics will ensure that they do not overstep the mark, do not trespass on the rights of their subjects?”

The ‘six orders of worth’ highlight an important aspect of justification. That justification is not an abstract concept. It is a practical thought process that influences all actions. Boltanski & Thevenot have used historical, political, economic and philosophical examples to prove this. In doing so, they have examined the merit and demerit of such justifications. Society has been shaped by justifications.

SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS OF JUSTIFICATION

The research points out that the words ‘justification’ or ‘justify’ per se have no positive or negative connotation. A terrorist’s actions may be viewed as ‘wrong’ justification however the terrorist feels it is ‘right’. “What our leaders and pundits never let slip is that the terrorists - whatever else they might be - might also be rational human beings; which is to say that in their own minds they have a rational justification for their actions” (William Blum). Society permits justification as long as it is backed by a coherent, rational process. For example Law permits justification under specific circumstances. Known as justifiable homicide, it is defined as: the killing of a person in circumstances, which allow the act to be regarded in law as without criminal guilt. It is committed

with the intention to kill or to do a grievous bodily injury, under circumstances, which the law holds sufficient to exculpate the person who commits it. It is said to be justifiable under the following circumstances: 1. When a judge or other magistrate acts in obedience to the law; 2. When a ministerial officer acts in obedience to a lawful warrant, issued by a competent tribunal; 3. When a subaltern officer or soldier kills in obedience to the lawful commands of his superior; 4. When the party kills in lawful self-defence. The justification for such actions is based on the intention of upholding the law or self-defence and not on the very act itself. This would be a ‘positive’ application of justification universally accepted in societies. Hence it has become all-important to examine the thought process behind decisions. That alone would determine the validity of the decision. Leaders in position of power, wealth & governance have to provide a rational thinking process to back their decisions. They need to be answerable to any questions posed by the society. This would ensure they act in the interests of the society, for the common good. Failing which their personal desires, greed and temptation would take over and justify their actions. John Cassidy quotes Michael Jensen, a professor of business administration at Harvard University, in the *New Yorker* in an article *The Greed Cycle*: “When stock prices are overvalued, managers get into an elaborate game with Wall Street to try and justify them. “But if they are too high you can’t possibly justify them. So you keep struggling for ways to get the earnings up, to generate the reports that the market is expecting to see.” Whenever a company does admit that its earnings aren’t growing as rapidly as investors are expecting, its stock price gets crushed and its management gets pilloried. “Once you train managers by penalizing them for telling the truth and rewarding them for lying, then that kind of unethical behaviour gets extended to all sorts of things,” Jensen said. The human mind laden with desires constantly attempts to fulfil its desires. When there is an ‘obstacle’ posed by the society it resorts to ‘justification’ to overcome that obstacle. Isaac Bashevis Singer points out the absurdity of the mind’s justification to fulfil its desires: “People often say that humans have always eaten animals, as if this is a justification for continuing the practice. According to this logic, we should not try to prevent people from murdering other people, since this has also been done since the earliest of times”. “In *Prosperity of the Soul: The Evolution of Man*, Charles B Murray quotes C.S. Lewis (page 96) “An explanation of cause is not a justification by reason”.

V. MECHANISM OF JUSTIFICATION

A. Parthasarathy introduces the concept of the mind and intellect. “Within the body lie two wondrous equipment known as the *mind* and *intellect*. The mind is composed of feelings, emotions, likes and dislikes. The intellect is that which thinks, comprehends, reasons, judges and decides. It is designed to guide, direct the mind and its emotions, the body and its perceptions and actions.” (*The Fall of the Human Intellect*, Page 12). The mind & intellect represent the internal personality that determines all actions performed. Much like

software that runs the computer, the mind & intellect drive the body into action.

In the case of justification, the reasoning of the intellect is hijacked by the desire of the mind. The intellect is thus held hostage by the mind in an area of a strong desire. This distinction is well brought about in A. Parthasarathy's commentary on Jane Taylor's poem: 'The Pond' in his book, *Select English Poems*. In the poem the chick wants to swim, having watched ducks go in and out of the pond. It is extremely fond of swimming but is told by her mother of the danger. One day when her mother is away the chick driven by this strong desire 'reasons' – my beak is pointed, as their beaks are round, is that any reason for me to be drowned? The answer obviously is not. With this 'sanction' the chick foolishly enters the pond and soon drowns. The poet captures the tragedy that arises from such an absurd reasoning process.

Based on this distinction he explains the reasoning of the chick as justification. He provides an insight into the workings of the inner mind. The mind possessed by a strong desire looks for ways to fulfil it. It captures the only equipment that can prevent it, i.e. the intellect. It then makes the intellect reason in such a way that the desire can be approved. Though the intellect seems to be functioning, i.e. chick's reasoning; it is not doing so independently. It is overpowered by the mind and is forced to reason in that manner. This happens because the mind is extremely strong in that area and the intellect is equally that much weaker. The solution indicated by the poet is to surrender to the 'mother' – indicating a superior intellect. A superior intellect would be able to view the situation objectively, spot the danger ahead and provide strength to the weaker intellect to tide over the situation, which could otherwise prove fatal.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the context of the above analysis, justification is seen to be a human weakness. A means employed to camouflage the facts, the truth. This process of justification is found functioning at individual, community, national and international levels. Its negative effects are seen everywhere – in domestic, professional, corporate and political circles. The solution begins with the individual. The study of the mechanism of justification in the human personality points out that it is an undeveloped intellect that fails to control the vagaries of the mind. Such an uncontrolled mind overpowers the personality leading to justification among other negative actions. The solution would therefore be to strengthen the intellect and use it to control the mind's demands. The intellect is developed through study and reflection on the knowledge of life and living as presented by great thinkers of the past and present. It is the reason & discretion of the intellect that needs to keep the desire & passion of the mind under control. The governments world over would do well to engage effective education systems in the countries focused on the development of the intellect. Failing to do so would affect decisions taken in all walks of life, be it economy, politics, civics or culture. Whatever the case, justification should not be used to 'cover up' realities so that the decision seems to be correct. When the plain, simple facts are presented there is no

need for justification. As Glenn Curtis Maddox points out: "Truth never needs to justify itself".

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