

# **It's the hegemony, stupid!**

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**Finance, harm and white collar crime: An international workshop**  
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# Morality, Capitalism and the Corporation

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- The difference between what corporations do and what they say they do.
- The former is imbued with amoral motivations, the latter with moral authority
- 'neo-liberalism' as a system of ideas that guide practices
- neo-liberal morality looks like this?...<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1tnBOrCB7I>

# Seeing Morality in Corporate Crime Research

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- All systems of power rely upon moral claims as central to their legitimacy – moral claims seek hegemonic status.
- challenges the mistake of thinking that the ‘bad guys have no morals’...
- In corporate crime research discussions of morality in:
  - variants of CSR
  - Techniques of Neutralisation
- CSR based on a variation of a myth: that *corporations* can have ‘good’ morals (rather than: corporate morality is always connected to amoral ends)
- Some techniques of neutralisation based on moral justifications/some based on

# 10 *Corporate* Techniques of Neutralisation

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- ◉ Denial of responsibility.
- ◉ Condemnation of the condemners
- ◉ Denial of victim
- ◉ Denial of harm or injury
- ◉ Appeal to higher loyalty

+ the following that apply to corporate crime

- ◉ Appeal to harm avoidance
- ◉ Denial of deviance
- ◉ Denial of the norm
- ◉ Denial by silence
- ◉ Denial of crime

# From 'vicarious denial' to 'common sense'

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- Hegemonic(or counter-hegemonic) moral claims always stand somewhere behind techniques of neutralization
- And this common sense is always underpinned by the practices of key institutions (government/legal institutions/criminal justice agencies/academics)
- It is those ideas and practices that give force to techniques of neutralisation

# The Limits of 'Corporate Morality'

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- ◉ The universalising myths of classical liberal theory irrevocably undermined by contemporary capitalism
- ◉ Crisis in corporate hegemony
- ◉ Market patriotism as the new morality?

Merkel on VW: "It is, of course, a dramatic event which is not good," she said. "But I think the reputation of German industry... is not so shaken that we are no longer considered a good place to do business."