

4-2014

The Relation of Social Dominance Orientation to Moral Decision-Making Using a Process Dissociation Approach

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Citation of this paper:

Dryburgh, Nicole SJ, "The Relation of Social Dominance Orientation to Moral Decision-Making Using a Process Dissociation Approach" (2014). *Undergraduate Honors Posters*. 8.
https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/psychd_posters/8

The Relation of Social Dominance Orientation to Moral Decision-Making Using a Process

Dissociation Approach

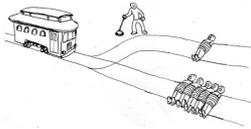
Nicole Dryburgh, Joel Armstrong, James Olson



What is Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)?

- SDO is an individual difference variable that measures one's preference for maintaining group-based hierarchies in society. Sample scale item: "Superior groups should dominate inferior groups."
- Correlates positively with sexism, racism, and support for military programs. Correlates negatively with support for gay rights, women's rights, and social welfare programs.

How do people respond to moral dilemmas?



Utilitarian (U) processing - a cognitive evaluation of outcomes. E.g., killing is moral if it saves more lives overall.

Deontological (D) processing - an affective aversion to harm. E.g., killing is always immoral, regardless of the number of lives saved.

Traditional approach:



Process Dissociation Approach (Conway & Gawronski, 2013):



Relating two lines of research

SDO and fairness: Armstrong (2013) asked people to review mock files from an organ donation waitlist and had them lower an assigned priority rating for both high status and low status targets:

- Low SDO individuals were more favourable towards low status compared to high status targets.
- High SDO individuals assigned equal ratings to both targets.

Why?

- No evidence that empathy was driving the differences.
- Hypothesized that those who prefer group-based hierarchies engage in less deontological, or affectively based, moral processing than those who do not prefer group-based hierarchies.

Study 1 - Purpose and Hypotheses

To determine whether SDO scores are related to responses on moral dilemmas.

- **H1:** Higher SDO will show deontological inclinations to a lesser extent than lower SDO.
- **H2:** High and low SDO will not differ in utilitarian inclinations.

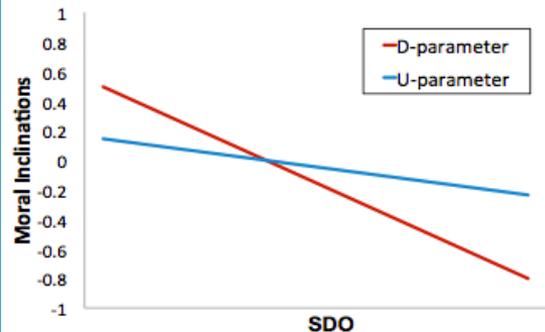
Study 1 - Methodology

Participants: N = 49 undergraduate students (32 females, 17 males), ranging from 17 to 23 years ($M = 18$, $SD = .91$).

Procedure: Completed demographics, battery of moral dilemmas created by Conway and Gawronski (2013), Social Dominance Orientation-6 Scale, and Global Belief in a Just World Scale.

Study 1 - Results

- **H1** ($r = .345$, $p = .013$) supported
- **H2** ($r = -.104$, ns) supported



Study 2 - Purpose and Hypotheses

To determine whether a manipulation of empathy will differentially influence the responses on moral dilemmas of those high and low in SDO.

Hypotheses:

- **H1:** Low SDO individuals will show significantly larger increases in deontological inclinations than high SDO.
- **H2:** Study 1 findings will be replicated - SDO will be negatively related to deontological inclinations and unrelated to utilitarian inclinations.

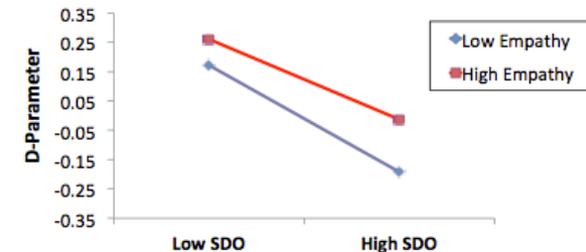
Study 2 - Methodology

Participants: N = 143 participants from MTurk (84 females, 59 males), ranging from 18 to 72 years ($M = 35.39$, $SD = 11.76$).

Procedure: Randomly assigned to salience of harm or control condition. Completed demographics, battery of moral dilemmas (with or without empathy-inducing pictures), SDO-6 Scale, GBJW Scale.

Study 2 - Results

- **H1** ($F(3, 142) = 2.451$, ns) not supported
- **H2** ($r(143) = -.173$, $p = .039$ and $r(143) = -.035$, ns) supported:



General Discussion

- The main hypothesis was supported in two samples. SDO showed a significant, negative correlation with deontological inclinations, and showed no relation to utilitarian inclinations.
- Compatible with the results of Armstrong (2013), in which high SDO individuals were more fair in assigning negative outcomes, regardless of the target, and low SDO individuals violated fairness guidelines to protect low-status targets.
- Suggests that low SDO more readily make allocation and moral decisions based on an affective aversion to harm than high SDO.

References

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