**Replication Project Proposal**

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I would like to replicate the following study:

Critcher, C. R., Inbar, Y., & Pizarro, D. A. (2013). [How quick decisions illuminate moral character.](http://spp.sagepub.com/content/4/3/308.full.pdf+html) *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *4*(3), 308-315.

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Experimental psychologists often measure reaction time (RT) as a dependent variable. Generally, the assumption is that RT is a proxy for speed of cognitive processing or level of decision-conflict. People, as folk psychologists, might share this intuition when making social inferences outside the laboratory – the speed at which someone makes a decision is informative on how he or she made the choice. I hope to develop a line of work studying the social inferences that people draw from observing how quickly (or slowly) someone makes a decision, and how these inferences might influence our own judgment and choice. The proposed paper is one of the few papers that have explored these questions, and did so in a paradigm that I find quite amenable to MTurk.

In two experiments, participants in the lab read vignettes about individuals (henceforth, social targets) who acted morally or immorally, either quickly or slowly. They were then asked how quickly the social targets made a decision (manipulation check), three questions assessing the social targets’ moral character, four questions assessing the perceived decision certainty of the social targets, and two items assessing the social targets’ emotional impulsivity. In experiment 2, participants were also asked two questions about the social target’s perceived motives. All questions were answered on a 1-7 point likert scale. Participants evaluated social targets who made an immoral decision quickly more negatively than social targets who made the same decision slowly, but evaluated social targets who made a moral decision quickly more positively than social targets who made the same decision slowly. The decision X speed interaction on moral evaluation was fully mediated by participants’ estimate of the target’s certainty when making his decision (Experiment 1). The decision X certainty interaction on moral evaluation was in turn partially mediated by the perceived ambiguity in the target’s motives (Experiment 2).

In experiment 1, decision speed (quickly vs. slowly) was a within-subjects factor while morality (moral vs. immoral) was a between-subjects factor. In experiment 2, both factors were between-subjects. I plan to replicate experiment 2 because experiment 2 provides a full replication of experiment 1. Furthermore, I feel that this paradigm is more suited for a between-subjects design. In a within-subjects design, each subject would be exposed to both manipulations of decision speed, and might catch on that speed is the manipulated variable of interest. As such, a between-subjects design would be less susceptible to demand characteristics.

I have not yet run studies on Mechanical Turk, and I have not programmed in javascript before. Replicating this study would be good first foray into the land of online studies. My training during undergraduate was in computational neuroscience, and I am more familiar with building computational models of cognition and analyzing neuroimaging data than I am with ANOVAs and mediation analyses. This project will allow me to become more familiar with the statistical tools in social psychology. These tools will be extremely helpful as I am thinking of conducting several follow-ups to this study. To give an example, I am interested in the effect of decision-speed on moral evaluations in situations where the moral choice is unclear.

In summary, I am interested in the social inferences that we draw by observing the speed at which other people arrive at a decision. This paper studies this phenomenon in a circumscribed domain (moral judgment) with a simple paradigm (presenting vignettes and probing evaluations). I would like to replicate these findings so that I can take baby steps into this body of work. Once I become more familiar with MTurk and running social psychology studies, I hope to both broaden the framework beyond moral judgments, and to use more nuanced paradigms such as having participants observe the actual response time of their social targets.

Appendix:

Vignette for Experiment 1

Justin and Nate independently came upon two separate cash-filled wallets in the parking lot of a local grocery store. Justin was able to decide quickly what to do. Nate was only able to decide after long and careful deliberation.

*Moral Condition*

Both men did not steal the money, but instead left the wallet with customer service

*Immoral* *condition*

Both men pocketed the money and drove off

Vignette for Experiment 2

Pamela struggles to earn enough to provide for her two children. Pamela works for Mr. Muir, a wealthy bachelor who took a special interest in Pamela’s son Alan, taking him on outings and buying him expensive presents. Although Pamela had no direct evidence that Mr. Muir’s intentions were unsavory, his obsession with Alan made Pamela feel suspicious of Muir’s true intentions. One day, Mr. Muir approached Pamela with a proposition. He told Pamela that he cared for Alan very much and would like to adopt him. If Pamela agreed, Muir would triple her salary. Pamela thought about the decision for 3 seconds (*quick*) or 3 days (*slow*). She decided to reject (*immoral)/*accept (*moral*) Mr. Muir’s offer.