

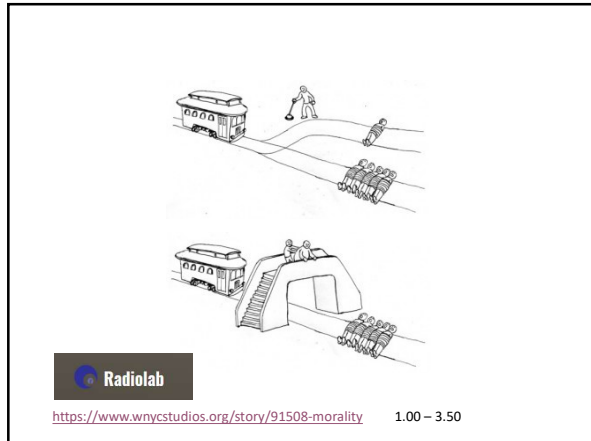
Moral Decision Making

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What is moral decision making?

- What is the normative theory of moral decision making?
- Consequentialism
 - Utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham, 1748-1832)
- Deontology (Immanuel Kant, 1724 - 1804)

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Trolley & Footbridge Problems

- Trolley problem – throw a switch to divert the trolley to kill 1 person and thereby save 5 people
- Footbridge problem – throw 1 person off the footbridge to divert trolley and save 5 people.

Principle of Double Effect

- Main effect vs. side effect

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Moral Self Licensing

- Do a good deed → now licensed to do a bad deed
 - Without worrying about feeling like or being seen as a bad person.
- Moral cleansing effect
 - After doing something bad, more likely to do something good
 - Compared to a control group who did not do something bad

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How licensing works

- Moral Credit
 - Good deeds build up credit that you can draw down with bad deeds
- Moral Credentials
 - Good deed establish my moral credentials
 - So bad deed is not actually viewed as bad

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Molly Crockett TED talk



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Moral Values vs. Tastes vs. Facts

- Feelings about blue cheese (taste)
- vs. feelings about abortion (moral values)
- Moral values seem like facts
- Facts are fixed
- So if you disagree about these facts then...

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Does this statement have a correct answer?

facts: Boston, MA is further north than Los Angeles, CA

ethics: Opening gunfire on a crowded city street is wrong

norms: Wearing pajamas to a seminar meeting is wrong

tastes: Classical music is better than rock music

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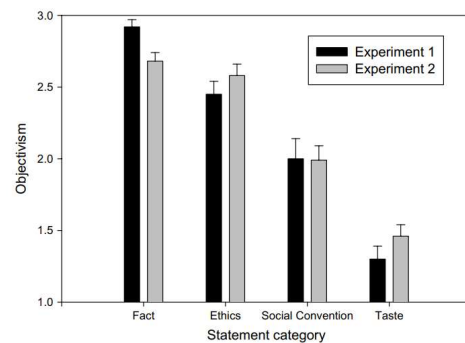


Fig. 1. The level of objectivism shown for the four types of statement in Experiments 1 and 2.

Goodwin, 2008, Cognition

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Moral Scenarios

- Neutral (non-moral)
- Impersonal: flip switch to kill 1, save 5
- Personal: push person tracks to kill 1, save 5

Serotonin selectively influences moral judgment and behavior through effects on harm aversion

Molly J. Crockett^{a,1}, Luke Clark^a, Marc D. Hauser^b, and Trevor W. Robbins^a

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Serotonin makes people less utilitarian

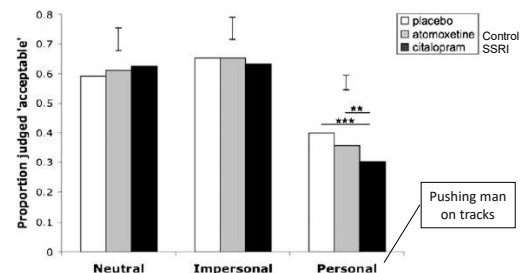
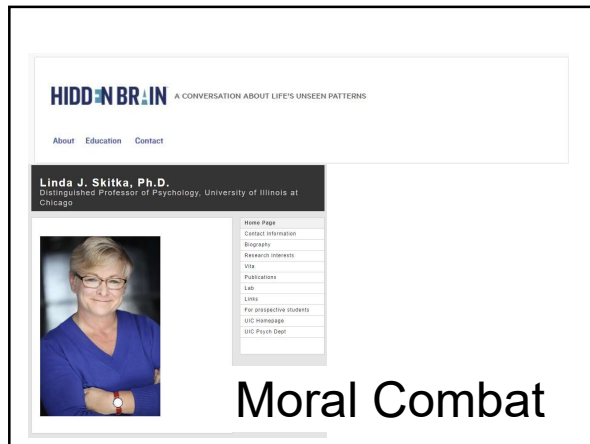


Fig. 1. Effects of drug and scenario type on moral judgment. Citalopram reduced the acceptability of harms in emotionally salient personal scenarios, relative to both placebo and atomoxetine. $**P \leq 0.05$; $***P \leq 0.01$. Error bars represent twice the SE of the difference of means Crockett et al 2009 PNAS

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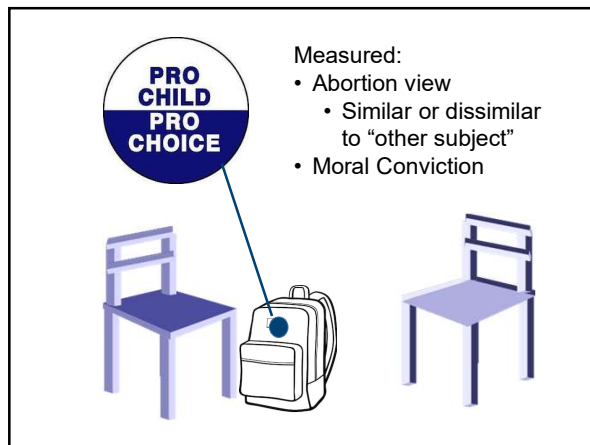
Moral Convictions

Sacred Values

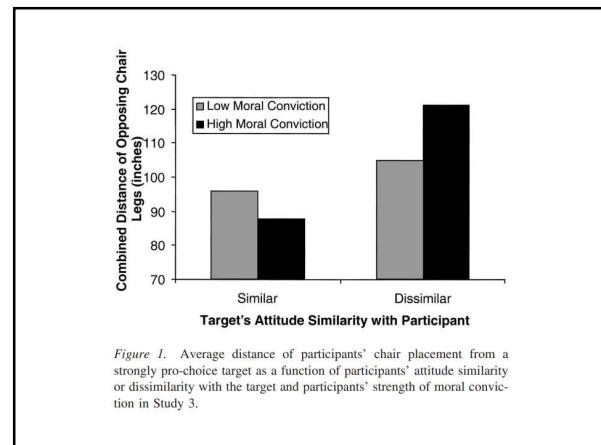
- Political views are tests of moral character
- Convictions viewed as objective facts
 - Universally true (all times, places, people)
- Don't need scientific evidence or experts
 - "Evidence" against my view just shows how evil you are
- Convictions should be achieved by any means
 - The outcome is so important
 - That any process is legitimate if it yields that outcome

Motivated Reasoning

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Political Implications

- Compromise is a mark of moral lacking
- Attitudes can be
 - Preferences/tastes
 - Conventions
 - Ethics ← can't compromise here
- Groups with or without similar moral views discuss the right procedure to resolve the issue
 - Common moral conviction → find a procedure that yields the desired outcome

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