

Bleeding-Heart Altruists and Calculating Utilitarians: Applying Process Dissociation to Self-sacrificial Dilemmas

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Abstract : There is considerable evidence linking slow, deliberative reasoning (system 2) with utilitarian judgments in dilemmas involving the sacrificing of another person for the greater good (other-sacrificial dilemmas). Joshua Greene has argued, based on this kind of evidence, that system 2 drives utilitarian judgments. However, the evidence on whether system 2 is associated with utilitarian judgments in self-sacrificial dilemmas is more mixed. We employed process dissociation to measure a self-sacrificial utilitarian (SU) parameter and an other-sacrificial (OU) utilitarian parameter. It was initially predicted that contra Greene, the cognitive reflection test (CRT) would only be positively correlated with the OU parameter and not the SU parameter. However, Greene's hypothesis was corroborated: the CRT positively correlated with both the OU parameter and the SU parameter. By contrast, the CRT did not correlate with the other two moral parameters we extracted (altruism and deontology).

Keywords : dual-process model, utilitarianism, altruism, reason, emotion, process dissociation

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