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Valuing myself over others: The Dark Triad traits and moral and social values ☆

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ABSTRACT

In samples from America and Germany (N = 1353), we examined how the Dark Triad traits related to different value systems as measured by Moral Foundations and Social Values. Psychopathy was linked to diminished concerns for all Moral Foundations, Machiavellianism was linked to a moral flexibility, and narcissism was linked to a socially desirable form of morality. Machiavellianism and psychopathy scores were associated with a devaluing of collective interests, whereas narcissism was associated with a valuing of individual interests through the value of Self-Enhancement. Individual differences in a variety of values mediated part of the sex differences in the Dark Triad traits. We contend that what makes the Dark Triad traits unique and interesting is that they share a unique complex of values that might run counter to societal expectations for selflessness.

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1. Introduction

The Dark Triad traits are characterized by vanity and self-centeredness (i.e., narcissism), manipulation and cynicism (i.e., Machiavellianism), callous social attitudes and impulsivity (i.e., psychopathy). The traits have implications for counterproductive work behavior (Spain, Harms, & Leberton, 2014), vocational interests (Jonason, Wee, Li, & Jackson, 2014), racism (Jonason, 2015; Jones, 2013), self-control/impulsivity (Jonason & Tost, 2010; Jones & Paulhus, 2011), empathy (Jonason, Lyons, Bethell, & Ross, 2013), and mating (Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009). One area that has been neglected, that may bear on all these question is that of values. As values may inform much of the things people do, understanding the value system (or systems) associated with the Dark Triad traits might provide unique insight to not only each trait but also to better understand what informs the attitudes and behaviors of those characterized by these traits. In this study, we examine how the Dark Triad traits relate to moral (Study 1–3) and Social Values (Study 3).

The Dark Triad traits are often attributed with a "compromised" or "dysfunctional" morality (Campbell et al., 2009; Glenn, Iyer, Graham, Koleva, & Haidt, 2009). This may be because they value "self" over "other" in a way that violates implicit communal sentiments in people (Jonason & Webster, 2012). The Dark Triad traits may be high in agency but low on communalism (Jonason, Li, & Teicher, 2010) which may result in more harm to others than to oneself (Trapnell & Paulhus, 2012). That is, these traits may be interpersonally aversive but personally useful (Kurt & Paulhus, 2008), characterized by values systems that serve the interest of the individual over the group. Our larger goal in this study is to assess the value systems linked to the Dark Triad traits.

In this study we examine values in two ways. First, we examine five moral values (Graham et al., 2011). *Harm* is related to virtues of kindness, gentleness, and nurturance. *Fairness* is related to ideas of justice, rights, and autonomy. *Ingroup* reflects individual differences in loyalty, patriotism, and self-sacrifice towards one's group members. *Authority* includes deference to legitimate authority and respect for traditions. *Purity* is related to the psychology of disgust and contamination. Second, we examine two higher-order values and four more specific values (Schwartz, 2003a, 2003b). The former taps the distinction between individual v. collective interests. Those are broken up further in four mid-level values. *Self-transcendence* is a value system related to spirituality. *Conservation* is a value system that is akin to political conservatism and is related

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to conformity and security. *Self-enhancement* is a value concerned with personal enjoyment, hedonism, and power. And, *openness to change* is a value systems concerned with social justice and equality.

While a number of attempts have been made to show how the Dark Triad traits can be represented as a single complex (Jonason, Kavanagh, Webster, & Fitzgerald, 2011; Kavanagh, Signal, & Taylor, 2013), the examination of each trait on its own is essential as each trait has unique social perceptions. Examining the Dark Triad composite assumes the traits have the same antecedents and consequents, but generally speaking this is not the case. For instance, Machiavellianism and psychopathy, in particular, are perceived to be socially undesirable, whereas, narcissism is perceived as relatively more socially acceptable (Rauthmann & Kolar, 2012). As such, we make predictions related to the value systems linked to each trait independently. In terms of moral values, we predict psychopathy to have the most "compromised" morality (Glenn et al., 2009), Machiavellianism to embody a degree of moral flexibility as per its particular strategic social style (Jonason & Webster, 2012), and narcissism to be associated with being relatively moral (Campbell et al., 2009) because being as such may lead to the social approval narcissists so strongly desire (Raskin & Terry, 1988). In terms of social values, we expect psychopathy and Machiavellianism to be associated with valuing collective interests little whereas narcissism may be related to valuing individual interests. The former may be "darker" aspects of human nature (Rauthmann & Kolar, 2012); darkness that might be related to their value system running counter to the groups' interests. Narcissism, instead, may push people to merely care about themselves, not necessarily to disregard others interests/needs and this may be seen through the value of Self-Enhancement. Theoretically speaking, these links may be manifestations of the particular approaches to dealing with social and adaptive problems faced by those characterized by these traits.

There are pervasive sex differences in the Dark Triad traits (Jonason, Li, & Czarna, 2013; Jonason et al., 2009) and accounting for them is important because it allows for better understanding of the mechanisms and proximal mediators that make the sexes different, psychologically speaking. What informs these sex differences may be individual differences in values. For instance, as men tend to be less empathetic than women are (Jonason et al., 2013), values related to others suffering (i.e., Harm and Fairness) might facilitate the Dark Triad traits in men. Alternatively, as racism is a function of an ingroup bias and the Dark Triad are related to racism (Jonason, 2015; Jones, 2013), valuing one's ingroup may also facilitate these traits in men. And more generally, in as much as the Dark Triad traits are related to a selfish orientation to the world and social interactions (Jonason et al., 2010), individualistic values may facilitate sex differences in the Dark Triad traits. Together, this would mean that it is not that men and women differ on the Dark Triad traits per se but, instead, that they have different value systems.

In the present studies, we provide new details about the Dark Triad traits as they relate to two system of values: moral and social. We show how underlying sex differences in the traits are sex-differentiated value systems. We contend that what makes the Dark Triad traits so interesting to researchers, the media, and lay-people alike is the value systems collected to them. These values may reflect an orientation to life that does not line up with implicit collectivistic sentiments people have.

2. Study 1

In Study 1, we begin to assess the value systems associated with the Dark Triad traits. In this case, we examine how the traits are related to moral values in a sample of MTurk participants. We ensure these relationships are robust to the partialing of the variance associated with the Big Five. And last, we test whether sex differences in the Dark Triad are informed (i.e., mediated) by individual differences in morality to show that what makes men score higher than women is having a different value system than women have.

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants and procedure

The sample was composed of 585 American participants (46% male), aged 18–76 years old ($M = 33.36$, $SD = 11.58$), who were paid US$2 for their completion of a series of measures on MTurk. The majority of the sample was European American (78%).

2.1.2. Measures

To measure the Dark Triad traits, the Dark Triad Dirty Dozen (Jonason & Webster, 2010) was used. Participants were asked how much they agreed (1 = *not at all*; 5 = *extremely*) with statements such as: "I tend to want others to admire me" (i.e., narcissism), "I tend to lack remorse" (i.e., psychopathy), and "I have used deceit or lied to get my way" (i.e., Machiavellianism). Items were averaged together to create an index of narcissism (Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$), Machiavellianism ($\alpha = .81$), and psychopathy ($\alpha = .73$).[1]

The Big Five personality traits were measured with the 20-item IPIP (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006). Each of the five factors is composed of four items asking participants how much (1 = *not at all*; 5 = *very much*) each item describes them. The corresponding items were averaged to create indices of extraversion ($\alpha = .84$), neuroticism ($\alpha = .72$), agreeableness ($\alpha = .74$), conscientiousness ($\alpha = .67$), and openness ($\alpha = .71$).

Individual differences in morality were measured with the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (Graham et al., 2011). It assessed the degree to which participants felt different considerations were relevant (0 = *not at all relevant*; 5 = *extremely relevant*) when making moral decisions and their agreement (1 = *disagree strongly*; 7 = *agree strongly*) with various moral statements. Because items were on different scales, the items were standardized (z-scored) before they were averaged to create indices of Harm ($\alpha = .70$), Fairness ($\alpha = .64$), Ingroup ($\alpha = .68$), Purity ($\alpha = .69$), and Authority ($\alpha = .69$).

2.2. Results and discussion

As expected, men scored higher than women did on all the Dark Triad traits (t's = −4.78 to −5.80, p's < .01, Cohen's d's = −0.40 to −0.48) and the moral foundation of Ingroup ($t(583) = -3.02$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.25$). Women scored higher than men did on the moral matrices of Harm and Fairness (t's = 3.09–6.02, p's < .01, d's = 0.26–0.51).

Correlational and multiple regression (controlling for shared variance) results are reported in Table 1 (top panel). Machiavellianism was not uniquely linked to any of the moral matrices, suggesting a moral flexibility. Positive correlations in Fairness, Ingroup, Authority, and Purity with narcissism were met with negative correlations on those same matrices in psychopathy (when considering the regression coefficients). This might reveal the socially sensitive nature of narcissism relative to the socially insensitive nature of psychopathy. Results were generally robust to the

[1] Machiavellianism was correlated with psychopathy ($r(583) = .60$, $p < .01$) and narcissism ($r(583) = .34$, $p < .01$), and narcissism was correlated with psychopathy ($r(583) = .55$, $p < .01$).

Table 1
Associations between the Dark Triad traits and Moral Foundations across three studies, two countries, and various measures of the both.

	r (β)		
	Machiavellianism	Narcissism	Psychopathy
Study 1 (*N* = 585)			
Harm	−.10* (−.04)	.05 (.16**)	−.21** (−.24**)
Fairness	−.06 (−.05)	.02 (.08)	−.09* (−.08)
Ingroup	.06 (.08)	.19** (.23**)	−.12** (−.24**)
Authority	.05 (.10)	.12** (.13**)	−.10* (−.20**)
Purity	−.03 (−.02)	.11* (.19**)	−.14** (−.19**)
Study 2 (*N* = 252)			
Harm	−.33** (−.24**)	−.17** (−.09)	−.30** (−.14*)
Fairness	−.37** (−.25**)	−.16* (−.05)	−.36** (−.21**)
Ingroup	−.37** (−.33**)	−.13* (−.06)	−.26** (−.07)
Authority	−.34** (−.22**)	−.15* (−.05)	−.34** (−.21**)
Purity	−.13* (−.08)	−.13* (−.09)	−.15* (−.09)
Study 3 (*N* = 516)			
Harm	−.23** (−.12*)	−.07 (.01)	−.32** (−.27**)
Fairness	−.12** (−.06)	−.04 (−.00)	−.16** (−.14**)
Ingroup	−.05 (−.09)	.04 (.09)	−.03 (−.01)
Authority	.03 (.03)	.09* (.09)	−.09* (−.11*)
Purity	.01 (.07)	.06 (.06)	−.18** (−.21**)

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

removal of variance associated with the Big Five and did not differ as a function of participant's sex.[2]

Next we tested whether sex differences in the Dark Triad traits were mediated by individual differences in values. To test this we ran hierarchical multiple regressions with the sex of the participant at Step 1 and the moral matrixes in Step 2, to predict the Dark Triad traits (1000 bootstrapped samples). Sex differences in psychopathy were partially mediated ($\Delta R^2 = .04$, $F(2,581) = 13.36$, $p < .01$) by individual differences in Harm and Ingroup such that the direct effect of sex ($B = .34$; 95%CI .22, .46) shrank but remained significant ($B = .31$; 95%CI .19, .44). Sex differences in narcissism were partially accelerated ($\Delta R^2 = .04$, $F(2,581) = 11.50$, $p < .01$) by individual differences in Harm and Ingroup such that the direct effect of sex ($B = .34$; 95%CI .21, .48) became larger ($B = .36$; 95%CI .20, .49).

3. Study 2

In Study 2, we conceptually replicate results from Study 1. We examine the links between the Dark Triad and Moral Foundations using a "token-system" that acts as a decision-making paradigm to understand people's moral values (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). We also adopt an alternative and lengthier measure of the Dark Triad traits. We do this in a sample of American students, in contrast to the MTurk sample from Study 1.

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants and procedure

A total of 252 American students (38% male) aged 18–51 ($M = 20.67$, $SD = 4.21$) received course credit for their participation in an online study at a university in western United States. The majority of participants identified as European American (87%).

3.1.2. Measures

The Dark Triad traits were assessed using a 27-item measure (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). Participants indicated their agreement with (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *agree strongly*) items such as: "It's not wise to tell your secrets" (i.e., Machiavellianism), "People see me as a natural leader" (i.e., narcissism), and "I like to get revenge on Authority" (i.e., psychopathy). The relevant items were averaged to create indexes of narcissism (Cronbach's $\alpha = .62$), Machiavellianism ($\alpha = .73$), and psychopathy ($\alpha = .79$).[3]

We assessed individual differences in the five moral intuitions through 26 taboo trade-off items (Graham et al., 2009) presented in random order. Each item asked the participant to identify the amount of money it would take in order for them to engage in various taboo behaviors such as: "Kick a dog in the head, hard" (i.e., Harm). Participants could choose one of eight monetary amounts: *$0* (*I'd do it for free.*), *$10*, *$100*, *$1,000*, *$10,000*, *$100,000*, *a million dollar*, and *never for any amount* (each assigned a value ranging from 1 to 8). Items were averaged to form indices for Harm ($\alpha = .70$), Fairness ($\alpha = .69$), Ingroup ($\alpha = .66$), Authority ($\alpha = .76$), and Purity ($\alpha = .57$).

3.2. Results and discussion

Men scored higher than women did in psychopathy and Machiavellianism (t's = −2.98 to −4.01, p's < .01, Cohen's d's = −0.39 to −0.52). Women scored higher than men did on the taboo trade-off matrices related to the Moral Foundations of Harm, Fairness, Ingroup, and Purity (t's = 2.07–3.80, $p < .05$, $d = 0.28$–0.51).

Table 1 (middle panel) contains correlations between the Dark Triad traits and Moral Foundations. Regression analyses revealed that narcissism dropped out as a significant predictor for each of the five moral values when all three Dark Triad traits were included as predictors. Machiavellianism remained as a significant, negatively correlated predictor for Harm, Fairness, Ingroup, and Authority whereas psychopathy remained as a significant, negatively correlated predictor for Harm, Fairness, and Authority.

Again we tested for mediation of sex differences in the Dark Triad traits with individual differences in moral values (1000 bootstrapped samples). We found full mediation ($\Delta R^2 = .13$, $F(2,248) = 19.34$, $p < .01$) by individual differences in Ingroup and Purity of the sex difference in Machiavellianism where the regression coefficient for participants sex became non-significant in Step 2 ($B = -.11$; 95%CI −.24, .01). When we examined mediation in psychopathy by individual differences in Fairness, we found partial mediation ($\Delta R^2 = .10$, $F(1,249) = 30.36$, $p < .01$) whereby the sex difference shrank from −.31 (95%CI −.47, −.16) to −.22 (95%CI −.37, −.07).

4. Study 3

Study 1 and 2 focused on moral values only. However, social values may be equally useful at understanding the Dark Triad traits. Therefore, in Study 3, we replicate our results from Study 1 and extend them to include social values as well. By so doing, we hope to conceptually resolve some of the inconsistencies from Study 1 and Study 2. Importantly, in contrast to Study 1 and 2, we do so in a German sample to extend the generalizability of our findings.

4.1. Method

4.1.1. Participants and procedure

Five hundred sixteen (35% male) Germans (99.2%), aged 17–48 years old ($M = 23.99$; $SD = 3.82$) participated in an online study hosted through *unipark.de* in exchange for different incentives.[4]

[2] More detail available upon request.

[3] Machiavellianism correlated with psychopathy ($r(250) = .52$, $p < .01$) and narcissism ($r(250) = .14$, $p < .05$), whereas narcissism correlated with psychopathy ($r(250) = .31$, $p < .01$).

[4] Results were robust across incentive-type.

Participants were solicited via email or via social networking websites.

4.1.2. Measures

To measure the Dark Triad traits, the German translation (Küfner, Dufner, & Back, 2014) of the Dark Triad Dirty Dozen (Jonason & Webster, 2010) was used. Items were averaged together to create an index of narcissism (Cronbach's $\alpha = .74$), Machiavellianism ($\alpha = .74$), and psychopathy ($\alpha = .56$).[5]

Moral Foundations (Graham et al., 2011) were measured in German (Jockel, Dogruel, Arendt , Stahl, & Bowman, 2010). Corresponding items for each were averaged to create measures of Harm ($\alpha = .53$), Fairness ($\alpha = .62$), Ingroup ($\alpha = .37$),[6] Authority ($\alpha = .63$), and Purity ($\alpha = .67$).

Values were assessed by the German version (Schmidt, Bamberg, Davidov, Herrmann, & Schwartz, 2007) of the 21-item-scale of the Portrait Values Questionnaire (Schwartz, 2003a, 2003b). For 21 short implicit-value-portraits, describing a fictitious person's motivational goals (e.g., "Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him/her. He/she likes to do things in her own original way."), respondents answered the simple question "How much like you is this person?" (1 = *not like me at all*; 6 = *very much like me*). We focused our results on two levels of analysis. The highest order structure (Schwartz, 2003b) reflects two higher-order factors: Individual Interests ($\alpha = .67$) and Collective Interests ($\alpha = .56$). The next structure (Schwartz, 2003b) identifies four categories of values: Self-Transcendence ($\alpha = .64$), Conservation ($\alpha = .67$), Self-Enhancement ($\alpha = .69$), and Openness to Change ($\alpha = .72$).[7]

4.2. Results

Men scored higher than women did in Machiavellianism and psychopathy (t's = 2.09–5.59, p's < .05, Cohen's d's = 0.19–0.51). Women scored higher than men did on the moral matrixes of Fairness, Harm, Authority, and Purity (t's = −3.06 to −7.06, p's < .05, d's = −0.28 to −0.70). Men scored higher than women did on the higher-order value of individual interests ($t(514) = 2.18$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.20$) whereas women scored higher than men did on self-transcendence ($t(514) = -3.14$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.29$).

In Table 1 (bottom panel) and Table 2 we report the correlations between the Dark Triad traits and moral and social values. Psychopathy was positively correlated with Individual Interests, in particular Self-Enhancement, but these correlations disappeared in regression analyses. Psychopathy was negatively associated with Collective Interests, Self-Transcendence, and Conservation. Narcissism was positively linked to Individual Interests, in particular Self-Enhancement, but negatively correlated with Self-Transcendence, which disappeared when shared variance among the Dark Triad traits was accounted for. Machiavellianism was positively linked to Individual Interests, in particular Self-Enhancement. Machiavellianism was negatively associated with Collective Interests, in particular Conservation, and Self-Transcendence, but the latter disappeared when shared variance was accounted for.

For a third time, we assessed whether individual differences in values—moral and social in this case—could account for sex differences in the Dark Triad traits (1000 bootstrapped samples). We found full mediation ($\Delta R^2 = .04$, $F(1,513) = 23.84$, $p < .01$) by individual differences in Harm of the sex difference in Machiavellianism where the regression coefficient for participants' sex became non-significant in Step 2 ($B = -.03$; 95%CI −.18, .10). We found partial mediation ($\Delta R^2 = .07$, $F(1,513) = 37.96$, $p < .01$) by individual differences in Harm, whereby the sex difference in psychopathy shrank from −.35 (95%CI −.49, −.21) to −.23 (95%CI −.35, −.15). We found full mediation of sex differences in Machiavellianism ($\Delta R^2 = .04$, $F(1,513) = 22.96$, $p < .01$) by Individualistic Values such that sex became non-significant in Step 2 ($B = -.12$; 95%CI −.26, .01). The same effect for psychopathy approached significance ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $F(1,513) = 3.58$, $p < .06$). Sex differences in psychopathy shrunk ($\Delta R^2 = .10$, $F(1,513) = 59.47$, $p < .01$) when including Self-Transcendence at Step 2, suggesting partial mediation ($B = -.29$; 95%CI −.42, −.16), whereas sex differences in Machiavellianism ($\Delta R^2 = .05$, $F(1,513) = 28.07$, $p < .01$) were fully mediated ($B = -.10$; 95%CI −.24, .04) by individual differences in the same value.

Table 2
Associations between the Dark Triad traits and two conceptualizations of Social Values (Study 3).

Values	r (β)		
	Machiavellianism	Narcissism	Psychopathy
Two highest-order factors			
Individual interests	.21** (.05)	.33** (.30**)	.10* (.05)
Collective interests	−.23** (−.15**)	−.08 (.02)	−.26** (−.20**)
Four higher-order factors			
Self-Transcendence	−.24** (−.09)	−.12** (−.04)	−.34** (−.30**)
Conservation	−.13** (−.13*)	.02 (.09)	−.15** (−.10*)
Self-Enhancement	.33** (.05)	.61** (.59**)	.12** (.04)
Openness to change	.03 (.04)	−.03 (−.05)	.04 (.03)

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

5. General discussion

The Dark Triad traits have implications for various socially undesirable behaviors (Spain et al., 2014) and attitudes (Jones, 2013). In this study, we explored the possibility that this might be a function of the value systems associated with the traits. In this study, we documented the value systems associated with each of the Dark Triad traits. Machiavellianism was associated with a moral flexibility as seen in few correlations in Study 1 and 3 and negative correlations in Study 2 (which reveal a willingness to compromise various moral virtues for less money) and limited Collective Interests and Conservation. Psychopathy revealed the most consistent evidence across the studies placing little value on all the Moral Foundations, Collective Interests, Conservation, and Self-Transcendence. And last, narcissism revealed no associations in Study 2 and 3 but did reveal a socially desirable moral value systems with high scores in Harm, Ingroup, Authority, and Purity, all of which may be part of the narcissist's social strategy—a la acting "right"—of gaining social approval (Raskin & Terry, 1988). Narcissism was also associated with more of an individualistic value system through Self-Enhancement unlike the other traits. These results are consistent with the distinction between communalism and agency (Kurt & Paulhus, 2008; Trapnell & Paulhus, 2012). We contend that valuing oneself over others might be why people often (implicitly) vilify these traits.

We also attempted to ascertain if differences in value systems between the sexes might account for sex differences in the Dark Triad traits. Across the three studies, a variety of mediation effects emerged suggesting that moral and social values may play a role in

[5] Consistent with prior research, psychopathy was correlated with Machiavellianism ($r(514) = .42$, $p < .01$) and narcissism ($r(514) = .12$, $p < .05$) which was correlated with Machiavellianism ($r(514) = .46$, $p < .01$).

[6] The Ingroup factor is problematic in German samples (Jockel et al., 2010), which might be function of post-war shame (Dresler-Hawke & Liu, 2006).

[7] Although there are a number of potential factor structures that can be used with this scale (Schwartz, 2003b), we attempted to maximize internal consistency. Given this was a brief measure, the internal consistencies of the most heterogeneous conceptualization (i.e., 10-factor) suffered from unacceptably low rates of internal consistency (*Mean* $\alpha = .57$, $SD = 0.15$).

explaining why men and women differ on the Dark Triad traits. Overall, scores on psychopathy and Machiavellianism were facilitated in men by having low scores on socially sensitive values (i.e., Harm, Ingroup, and Fairness) and an individualistic orientation. This suggests these traits may operate in men in a way that supports the related socially undesirable behavior like short-term mating (Jonason et al., 2009) and social manipulation (Jonason & Webster, 2012); value systems that may themselves be facilitated by limited empathy (Jonason et al., 2013). Again, this may be consistent with the idea that these traits are interpersonally problematic but not personally so (Allport, 1924; Kurt & Paulhus, 2008). In contrast, sex differences in narcissism were accelerated by individual differences in concern for the Harm and Ingroup moral values. It suggests that men who are high in these two moral values may have heightened concern for the harm of others and protecting ones ingroup. If we assume that the narcissist derives her/his ego-satisfaction from her/his group, this is a precious source of ego "food" that should be protected. Therefore, it is not that those high in narcissism are necessarily nicer than those high on psychopathy and Machiavellianism, but merely those high in narcissism "need" the social group in a way those characterized by the other traits do not.

6. Limitations and conclusions

Despite a number of strengths, our study was still limited. First, we did not always have ideal rates of internal consistency. Second, we relied on WEIRD samples throughout. Third, in attempting to bolster our claims we adopted different measures of individual differences in morality and the Dark Triad, but this provided somewhat inconsistent evidence. Unfortunately it is hard to pin down just why there are such discrepancies; it might relate to psychometric, validity, or translational concerns. Nevertheless, we have provided unique information about the values systems that may inform the Dark Triad traits.

In conclusion, we have provided new details about the Dark Triad traits by examining moral and social values. In so doing, we have further demonstrated how each trait differs, how individual differences in value systems may act as proximal factors that account for sex differences in the Dark Triad traits, and what might be behind the popularity/revulsion for those characterized by these traits is that they have a unique complex of values that differ from the (implicitly) preferred system in civilized society. Unlike most people, those characterized by these traits may overtly value themselves over others and this value system may be in part responsible for various interesting effects that have been uncovered across various domains of personality research.

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