

Kusev, P., Alzahrani, S., & van Schaik, P. (2013). Moral Judgments Under Uncertainty. Poster presented at the 54th Annual Meeting of the Psychonomic Society, Canada. Abstracts of the Psychonomic Society.

(3167)

Moral Judgments Under Uncertainty. SHROOQ ALZAHrani, *City University London*, PETKO KUSEV, *Kingston University London*, PAUL VAN SCHAik, *Teesside University*

Research on ‘moral dilemmas’ has shown that respondents judge personal moral actions (“to push” in the footbridge dilemma) as less appropriate than equivalent impersonal moral actions (“to switch” in the trolley dilemma). Furthermore, theorists argued (e.g., Greene et al., 2001) that judgments of appropriateness in personal moral dilemmas are (i) more emotionally salient than impersonal moral dilemmas, and (ii) more cognitively demanding, as respondents spend relatively more time judging the appropriateness of personal moral actions. In contrast, in one experiment, we found that (i) the level of uncertainty regarding moral actions predicted judgments of appropriateness and (ii) participants spent relatively more time judging the appropriateness of actions in moral dilemmas with a high level of uncertainty. These results question existing theoretical accounts based on “cognitive emotional parameters” in processing of morally sensitive information, and offer a simple cognitive explanation, based on learning and elimination of uncertainty.

Email: Shrooq Alzahrani, shrooq.alzahrani.1@city.ac.uk