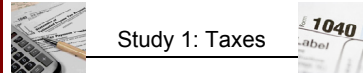


# It's the Thought that Will Count: Future Behavior is Seen as More Intentional than Past Behavior

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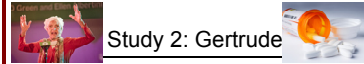
## Future is more Affective than Past

- People tend to experience more intense affect when imagining an event in the future than when reflecting on that very same event in the past (D'Argembeau & Linden, 2004; Van Boven & Ashworth, 2007)
- This difference in affect leads people to value future events more extremely than past ones (Caruso, Gilbert & Wilson, 2008) and to judge future moral violations more negatively than past ones (Caruso, 2009)



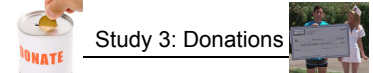
## Study 1: Taxes

- Participants estimated the percentage of tax filers who would intentionally misreport their taxes
  - Ps were asked either one week before or one week after April 15 (U.S. tax day)
  - Also reported how angry they felt about misreporting and what they would think of a friend who misreported



## Study 2: Gertrude

- Participants read a scenario in which Gertrude, an elderly woman, killed her husband by giving him the wrong pills
  - Plausible reasons why it was or was not intentional were provided
- Participants imagined being on the jury for this case at a past trial (last month) or future trial (next month)



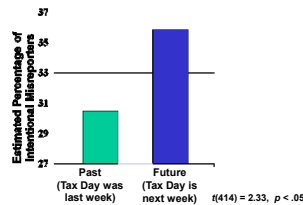
## Study 3: Donations

- Participants read a scenario about David N., a man who either did make (last week) or will make (next week) a donation to a homeless shelter
  - Participants read that, in addition to helping the homeless, this donation could be used as a tax writeoff
  - Participants also rated the emotions they felt when considering this donation

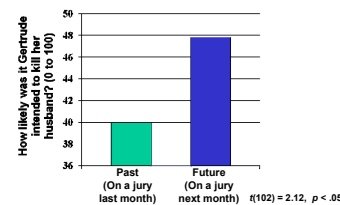
## Affect and Intentionality

- The experience of emotion can increase belief that an actor caused a particular outcome (Alicke, 2000)
- Negative emotion in particular can cause heightened appraisals of intentionality (Malle & Nelson, 2003; Nadelhoffer, 2006; Tiedens, 2001)

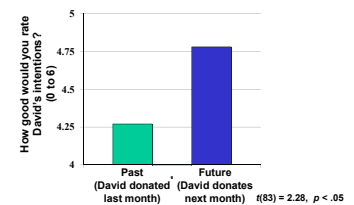
## Study 1: Intentionality Measure



## Study 2: Intentionality Measure

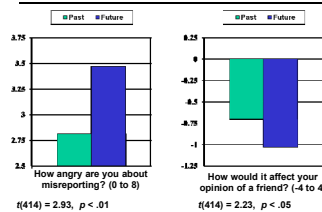


## Study 3: Intentionality Measure



Therefore, we predict that people will judge an act to be more intentional when it will be performed in the future than when it has been performed in the past

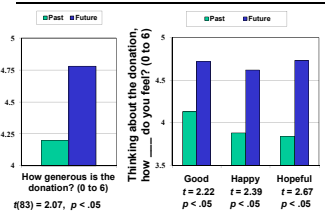
## Study 1: Affect Measures



## Question for Study 3

- Are only negative actions seen as more intentional in the future than the past, or might the same be true for positive actions as well?

## Study 3: Affect Measures



## Conclusions

- Actions performed in the future are seen as more intentional than identical actions performed in the past
- Both positive and negative emotions are more intense for prospective actions than retrospective actions
- This finding has implications for the framing of legal decisions and the assignment of praise or blame

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