



# Group Cooperation and Punishment

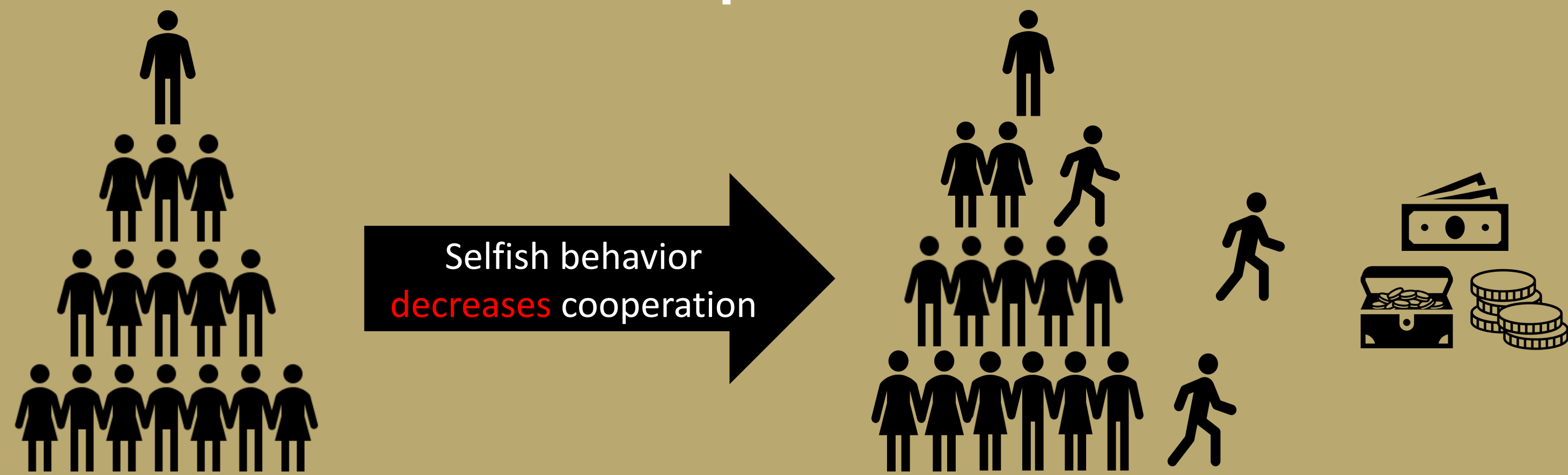
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## INTRODUCTION

All human societies require some level of structure and cooperation

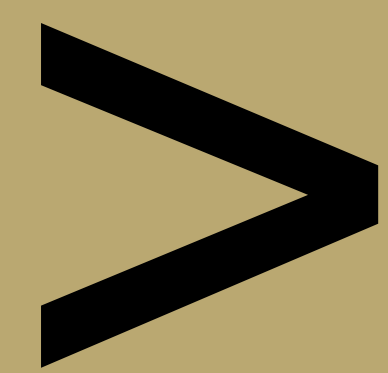


Punishment **increases** the cost of selfish behavior; it encourages people to cooperate and deters free-riding, cheating, unfairness



Literature on punishment (utility of punishment; when punishment is needed; etc)

Literature on psychological and cognitive processes behind punishment behavior



We make and/or witness selfish decisions daily and how it impacts those hurt by greed.

## METHODS

The current research tests **two** competing hypotheses:

1) Relying on relatively **automatic**, "gut-level" processes will result in a higher likelihood to punish



Immediate Punishment



Delayed Punishment



2) Relying on relatively **deliberate** processes will result in a higher likelihood to punish

- To test these hypotheses, participants played the role of punisher in a third-party punishment task
- Participants randomly assigned to a **time pressure** (prime intended to cause relatively more automatic processing) or a **time delay** (prime intended to cause relatively more deliberative processing) experimental condition.

Time Pressure



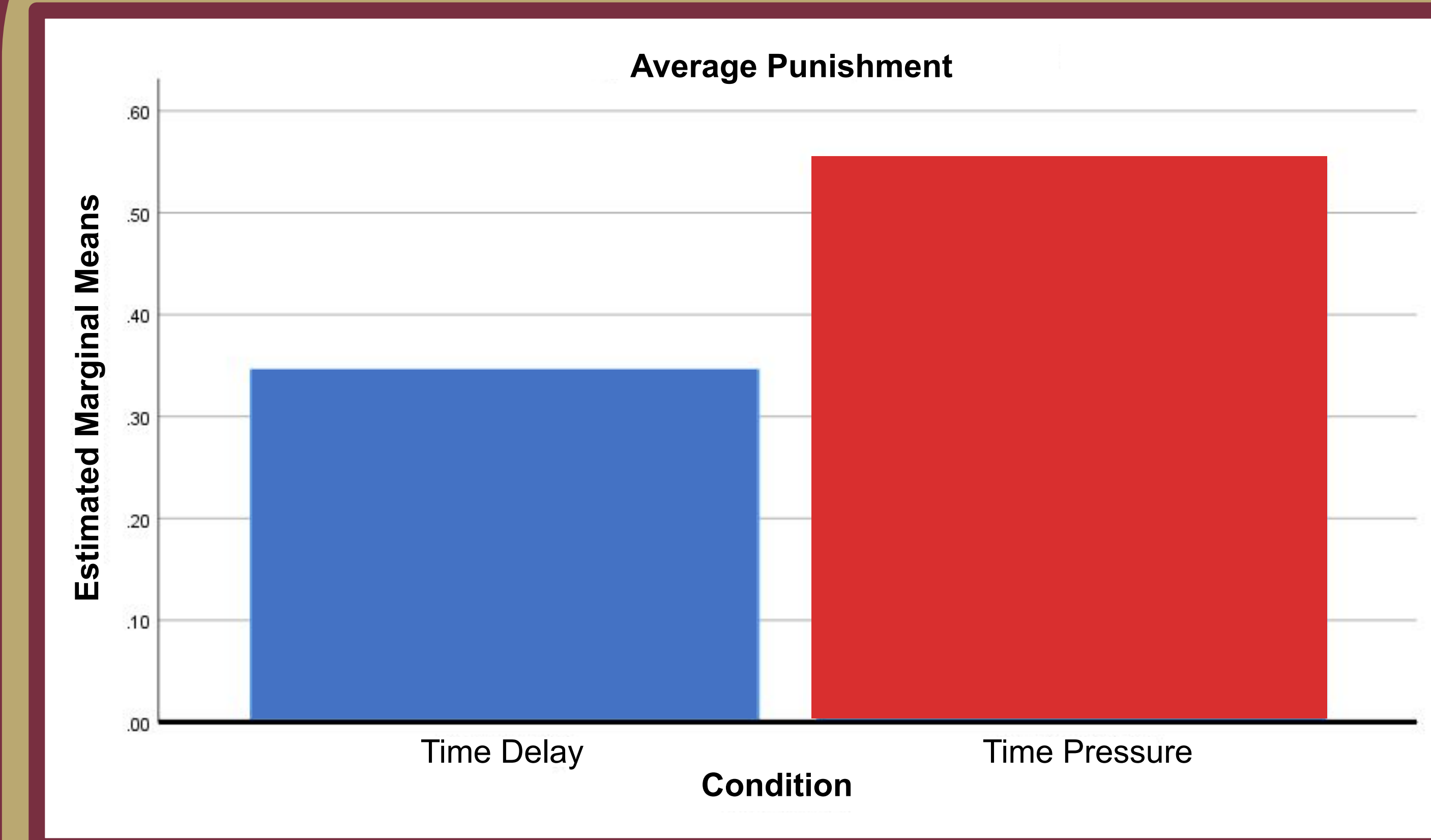
< 4 seconds

Time Delay



> 10 seconds

## RESULTS



Time delay:  $M = .34$ ,  $SD = .60$   
Time pressure:  $M = .57$ ,  $SD = .69$

$t(145) = -1.89$ ,  $p = .06$

## DISCUSSION

Results suggest that, during the first trial, participants placed in the **time pressure** condition punished more than individuals in the **time delay** condition. However, across **all eight trials**, this observed effect was **no longer present**.

We found that the **main effect of dominance** orientation, not prestige orientation, on punishment decision-making was **positive**. Additionally, a **significant interaction between prestige and condition**, not dominance and condition, was recorded. That is, individuals that are higher in dominance orientation tended to punish selfish individuals regardless of what condition they were placed in; prestige-oriented individuals, however, tended to punish selfish individuals when placed in the time delay condition but not in the time pressure condition.

## CONCLUSION

Relying on relatively **more automatic processes** may cause individuals to **punish more** than when relying on relatively more deliberative processes.

**Importance:** Punishment decisions in the real world are often complicated. Some people have the luxury of making them with an abundance of time (e.g., judges and lawyers in the courtroom), while others (e.g., teachers in the classroom, police officers) must make them very quickly, with very little time for deliberation.

## REFERENCES

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