**ERGO II Ethics application form – Psychology Committee**

1. **Applicant Details**

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| **1.1 Applicant name** | Luke Chandaman (lesc1g20@soton.ac.uk) |
| **1.2 Supervisor** | Professor Constantine Sedikides ([c.sedikides@soton.ac.uk](mailto:c.sedikides@soton.ac.uk)), Professor Tim Wildschut ([r.t.wildschut@soton.ac.uk](mailto:r.t.wildschut@soton.ac.uk)) |
| **1.3 Other researchers / collaborators (if applicable):** *Name, address, email* | Isaac Kent (ik1n22@southampton.ac.uk) |

1. **Study Details**

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| **2.1 Title of study** | Do Social Norms Influence the Death Positivity Bias? (Advertised as “Thoughts about Other People”, “Judgements about Other People”, “Evaluations of Other People”, “Evaluations of Other People” or another similar variation.) |
| **2.2 Type of project** (e.g., undergraduate, Masters, Doctorate, staff) | Doctorate |

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| **2.3 Briefly describe the rationale for carrying out this project and its specific aims and objectives.** |
| The death positivity bias (DPB) is a phenomenon that describes the long held cultural tradition of having respect for the dead and not speaking ill of the dead. Despite the pervasiveness of the DPB and its acknowledgement in popular culture, research addressing it is limited.  Initial research has shown that the DPB occurs for evaluations of dead leaders (e.g., CEOs) and celebrities; however, very little research has examined whether the DPB occurs when evaluating ordinary (i.e., non-famous) persons (or targets). This study will test whether the DPB extends to evaluations of ordinary targets. This study will test whether participants feeling they are accountable to a moral authority for their ratings (or not) influences the DPB. |

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| **2.4 Provide a brief outline of the basic study design. Outline what approach is being used and why.** |
| The study will be experimental. We will randomly assign participants to one of four conditions: dead target/accountable, alive target/accountable, dead target/unaccountable, alive target/unaccountable. All participants will read a vignette describing an ostensibly real target.  For participants in the dead/accountable condition, participants will read a vignette describing a fictional target, the vignette will begin by stating the target has passed away. Following this, participants will be asked to consider someone they hold in high regard and look up to as a moral figure. Participants will be asked to write down the name of this moral figure and then asked to try and imagine the following ratings they are about to give will be read by [insert moral figure they listed].  For participants in the alive/accountable condition, participants will read a vignette describing a fictional target, the vignette will begin by stating the target has passed away. Following this, participants will be asked to consider someone they hold in high regard and look up to as a moral figure. Participants will be asked to write down the name of this moral figure and then asked to try and imagine the following ratings they are about to give will be read by [insert moral figure they listed].  For participants in the dead/unaccountable condition, participants will read a vignette describing a fictional target, the vignette will begin by stating the target has passed away.  For participants in the alive/unaccountable condition, participants will read a vignette describing a fictional target.  Additionally, the pronouns of the target will be matched to the participants’ sex. (As a result, participants will need to identify as female or male.)  After reading the vignette, participants will respond to questions evaluating the target on warmth, competence, morality, respect, and overall liking.  All materials are attached. |

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| **2.5 What are the key research question(s)? Specify hypotheses if applicable.** |
| The primary hypothesis is that participants who believe the target to be dead will evaluate them more favourably than those who believe the target is alive. We will explore whether participants feeling they are accountable to a moral authority for their ratings (or not) influences the DPB. |

1. **Sample and Setting**

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| **3.1 Who are the proposed participants and where are they from (e.g. fellow students, club members)? List inclusion / exclusion criteria if applicable.** |
| Members of the platform prolific.co. We will only participants from the UK. |

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| **3.2. How will the participants be identified and approached? Provide an indication of your sample size. If participants are under the responsibility of others (e.g., parents/carers, teachers) state if you have permission or how you will obtain permission from the third party).** |
| The participants will see the studies advertised at the following websites: 1. Prolific.co  For the study we aim to recruit around 150 participants. |

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| **3.3 Describe the relationship between researcher and sample. Describe any relationship e.g., teacher, friend, boss, clinician, etc.** |
| There is no relationship between the researchers and participants. |

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| **3.4 How will you obtain the consent of participants? (***please upload a copy of the consent form if obtaining written consent***) NB. Consent form is not needed for studies collecting data online.** |
| Participants with have the opportunity to give consent on the first page/screen of the study. They can tick a box if they decide to continue with the study or not tick the box if they decide to withdraw from it. The withdrawal option will appear at the bottom of the Participant Information Sheet. |

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| **3.5 Is there any reason to believe participants may not be able to give full informed consent? If yes, what steps do you propose to take to safeguard their interests?** |
| No |

1. **Research procedures, interventions and measurements**

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| **4.1 Give a brief account of the procedure as experienced by the participant. Make it clear who does what, how many times and in what order. Make clear the role of all assistants and collaborators. Make clear the total demands made on participants, including time and travel.** *Upload copies of questionnaires and interview schedules to ERGO.* |
| Participants will complete the study remotely online using their personal computer/device. They will first see the advertisement posted online. If they are interested in taking part, they can read the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form. Those who decide to take part will tick a box to give consent and then be directed to a screen that provides brief instructions.  They will first answer some demographic questions (e.g., age, gender).  Next, they will read a passage that either criticises or enforces the social norm of having respect for the dead. Following this, they will read a vignette describing a target who is either dead or alive. After that, participants will rate the target on warmth, competence, morality, respect, and overall liking. They will then respond to a few follow-up questions about the vignette. Next, they will complete a mood repair task in which they list two positive qualities about themselves and rate several cute/funny pictures. Finally, they will be debriefed.  We estimate that the procedure will last 8 minutes. |

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| **4.2 Will the procedure involve deception of any sort? If yes, what is your justification?** |
| We will tell participants that the vignette they will read is about a real person, but this will not be so. To be able to test the DPB, it is essential that participants think they are reading about and rating a real person. |

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| **4.3. Detail any possible (psychological or physical) discomfort, inconvenience, or distress that participants may experience, including after the study, and what precautions will be taken to minimise these risks.** |
| We do not foresee any reason why participants would experience discomfort during or after the study. It is possible (although not plausible) that participants in the “dead target” condition will experience mild sadness. We will thus include a mood repair task at the end of the study. Participants will list 2 positive qualities about themselves and then rate 5 funny/cute pictures.  Additionally, as with all studies, we will invite participants (before and after the completion of the study) to contact the below resources if any psychological or physical discomfort and/or distress arises.   * Find a counsellor at <https://locator.apa.org> * Worldwide: [www.allaboutcounseling.com](http://www.allaboutcounseling.com) * Get general mental health support at: <https://www.nami.org/Home> * <https://adaa.org/> * ‘What's Up? A Mental Health App’ download from any app store * NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/nhs-talking-therapies/> * MIND <https://www.mind.org.uk/> |

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| **4.4 Detail any possible (psychological or physical) discomfort, inconvenience, or distress that YOU as a researcher may experience, including after the study, and what precautions will be taken to minimise these risks. If the study involves lone working please state the risks and the procedures put in place to minimise these risks (**[**please refer to the lone working policy**](https://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/hr/How%20to/Policy%20-%20Lone%20working.pdf)**).** |
| We cannot foresee experiencing any discomfort ourselves. |

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| **4.5 Explain how you will care for any participants in ‘special groups’ e.g., those in a dependent relationship, are vulnerable or are lacking mental capacity), if applicable:** |
| Not applicable. |

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| **4.6 Please give details of any payments or incentives being used to recruit participants, if applicable:** |
| Participants will be paid £1.2 representing a rate of £9/hour |

**5. Access and storage of data**

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| **5.1 How will participant confidentiality be maintained? Confidentiality is defined as non-disclosure of research information except to another authorised person. Confidential information can be shared with those already party to it and may also be disclosed where the person providing the information provides explicit consent. Consider whether it is truly possible to maintain a participant’s involvement in the study confidential, e.g. can people observe the participant taking part in the study? How will data be anonymised to ensure participants’ confidentiality?** |
| These studies will be completely anonymous. No personally identifying information will be associated with the collected data. |

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| **5.2 How will personal data and study results be stored securely during and after the study. Who will have access to these data?** |
| Raw data will be collected and stored on Qualtrics, which is password protected. The downloaded anonymised data will be stored on the researcher’s computers and may be uploaded to open science data repositories. |

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| **5.3 How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate? Please note that anonymous data (e.g. anonymous questionnaires) cannot be withdrawn after they have been submitted. If there is a point up to which data can be withdrawn/destroyed e.g., up to interview data being transcribed please state this here.** |
| In the information sheet, we instruct participants: “You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Because the data is anonymous, however, we are unable to delete your responses once you have submitted them.” |

**6. Additional Ethical considerations**

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| **6.1 Are there any additional ethical considerations or other information you feel may be relevant to this study?** |
| No |