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Dark Personality Traits Explain Individual Differences in Organizational Preferences

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Abstract

Research in personality psychology has shown that individuals choose careers led by their personality. More specifically, dark personality traits seem to drive people towards specific environments—with detrimental effects in the workplace. This study investigated whether individuals who selectively choose a job in particular organizations possess dispositions associated with behaving abusively and socially aversive. A mixed online/paper-pencil study prompted 83 Swedish participants engaged in human rights organizations and 99 Swedish military soldiers to assess scales measuring the dark triad traits, the dominance facet of social dominance orientation, and military ethics. To compare the presented groups, t-tests were conducted. As hypothesized and indicated by previous research, military soldiers scored significantly higher on all study variables. As an exception, scores on narcissism might have been influenced by gender as no significant differences were found in a solely male dataset. The study confirmed that dark personality traits are more prevalent in the military than in human rights organizations. A self-selection theory versus socialization processes as possible reasons for the obtained results are discussed, and implications for organizational handling are provided.

Keywords: dark personality traits, dark triad, social dominance orientation, military ethics, human rights, self-selection

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Are individual personality traits responsible for increasing the motivation to work in organizations where personality can flourish? In a replication of the Stanford Prison Experiment recruitment procedure, this issue was highlighted in a prison context. Students voluntarily selected to either be part of a study of prison life or a psychological study without any framing. Results revealed that participants of the prison study had significantly higher mean levels on a range of malevolent personality traits such as Machiavellianism, narcissism, and social dominance (Carnahan & McFarland, 2007). Such results have increased the scientific interest in the relationship between dark personality traits and the choice of vocational preference. Findings suggest that people with dark traits to a higher degree tend to select work in an organization where there is a chance of being abusive towards others, one example being the military. Up to now, a substantial limitation of the field has been that most studies only investigated students instead of real employees in work organizations (e.g., Jonason, Wee, Li, & Jackson, 2014; Kowalski, Vernon, & Schermer, 2017; Vedel & Thomsen, 2017). This study is an attempt to expand this body of research into a non-student context by comparing human rights workers with soldiers on a number of dark personality traits and attitudes related to military ethics/human rights. These organizations are representative of work environments where ethical attitudes and behaviors often is a matter of life and death for the worker in the field. Consequently, the military and human rights organizations are relevant to test the hypothesis that people with dark traits self-select into organizations where they can be abusive.

In the following, current research on dark personality traits is outlined. As the concept of the *Dark Triad of Personality* (Paulhus & Williams, 2002) is central in this research field and also crucial for this study, it is introduced in detail. Its underlying traits—

Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy—are described separately. Taking into account that social dominance orientation (SDO) was found to be equally associated with dark personalities (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), an overview with the focus on the dominance facet of SDO follows. Additionally, empirical studies connected ethical attitudes to these aforementioned dark personality traits (Bartels & Pizarro, 2011). Accordingly, ethical behavior in a military context is dealt with, and its importance in this study is outlined. For all dark personality traits and the ethical attitudes, the practical consequences that were revealed in previous studies are presented. A particular focus is on outcomes that are connected to the workplace. After that, research on the connection between personality traits and organizational choices is covered to explain self-selection processes in this context. To sum up, the present study is outlined, and its contribution to personality research is recapitulated. Finally, hypotheses are drawn from the presented theoretical background.

Dark Personality Traits

In current psychology, the collective term of *dark personality traits* has in most cases been investigated by including the dark triad components, factors of sociopolitical attitudes with its most prominent representative SDO, or unethical attitudes connected to malevolent behavior. According to Paulhus and Williams (2002), a dark personality consists of at least one of the traits Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, a concept that was introduced as the *Dark Triad of Personality* (p. 556). The links between those three traits have been a subject of research for some time (e.g. Hart & Hare, 1998), and measurements of subclinical narcissism and psychopathy helped to transfer this knowledge to the general population. Evidence for the respective overlap of the dark triad traits in subclinical samples was found in separate studies (Fehr, Samsom, & Paulhus, 1992; Gustafson & Ritzer, 1995; McHoskey, 1995). As a possible explanation for this overlap, Paulhus and Jones (2015)

suggested the three traits to be united by a common interpersonal callousness and a malevolent character (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). As callousness is defined by a lack of empathy in combination with the tendency to manipulate others (Jones & Paulhus, 2011; Paulhus, 2014), the similar behavioral components explain why all dark triad traits are known to have a connection to socially aversive behavior (Rauthmann, 2012). Some of the shared features that come along with this hypothetical common core include the likelihood to show self-promoting behavior, emotional coldness, and aggressiveness (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). A review from Muris, Merckelbach, Otgaar, and Meijer (2017) showed considerable intercorrelation between the dark triad traits, a higher prevalence among men than women, the greatest (negative) relation to Big Five-Agreeableness and the HEXACO factor of honesty-humility, and an association with several adverse psychosocial outcomes.

The concept of Machiavellianism was first introduced by Christie and Geis (1970) and influenced by the political strategist Niccolò Machiavelli. Its definition includes a cynical worldview, lack of morality, and manipulativeness. Moreover, Paulhus and Jones (2015) emphasize the strategic nature of Machiavellian manipulation, their callous affect, and alliance building. High scorers are said to be unprincipled and plan ahead while always trying to maintain a positive reputation (Jones & Paulhus, 2009). This vital ability to strategically plan out in advance and avoid impulsive behaviors is used by Machiavellians as a means to achieve higher goals in the long term (Paulhus & Jones, 2015). In the workplace, Machiavellians are said to focus on maintaining power (Kessler et al., 2010) and to have a strong tendency for manipulative behaviors to get ahead (Jonason, Slomski, & Partyka, 2012). Additionally, Machiavellianism was shown to have detrimental effects on employees' objective and subjective career success and well-being (Volmer, Koch, & Göritz, 2016).

Origins of narcissism are anchored in writings from Freud (1914) and were later on incorporated into the theories of Kohut (1971) and Kernberg (1975). Narcissism in its subclinical version became more popular in research when corresponding measures were published (e.g., the Narcissistic Personality Inventory by Raskin & Hall, 1979). The crucial characteristics of subclinical narcissism are a grandiose view of the self, a need for social admiration, a lack of empathy, and a strong sense of entitlement and superiority (Miller et al., 2011). Behaviors include tendencies to act dominantly, impulsively, and aggressively (Campbell & Campbell, 2009; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Vazire & Funder, 2006). Recent studies separated narcissistic grandiosity into two dimensions: admiration and rivalry (Back et al., 2013). Whereas admiration serves as the positive pole of narcissism that is connected with rather bright outcomes for surrounding individuals, rivalry is considered to be more toxic and has stronger connections to Machiavellianism. Subclinical narcissism in the workplace is associated with unethical behavior in management positions (Amernic & Craig, 2010) and a greater need for power (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Since narcissism provides objective and subjective benefits for the employees' career success (Volmer et al., 2016), it can be considered the brightest trait of the dark triad with no serious detrimental effects in the workplace. Considering these manifold definitions and consequences covering both poles of the spectrum makes narcissism the "odd" trait in the dark triad. Several studies support this impression (e.g., Garcia & Rosenberg, 2016; Kowalski et al., 2017), suggesting a *Dark Dyad* that abandons narcissism from the dark triad and consists of Machiavellianism and psychopathy only.

Subclinical psychopathy is characterized by impulsivity, thrill-seeking, low empathy, and little anxiety (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Even on a subclinical level, psychopathy represents the most malevolent trait of the dark triad (Rauthmann, 2012). Typically,

psychopaths have a decreased ability to control emotions and are more likely to show outbursts of rage (Jones & Paulhus, 2011). According to Hare and Neumann (2008), a combination of callous manipulation and impulsivity is the critical factor that creates the origin for criminal behavior in psychopaths. Corporate psychopaths are characterized by reduced levels of workplace responsibility and the tendency to negatively affect productivity (Boddy, 2010). Like Machiavellianism, psychopathy was shown to harm employees' objective and subjective career success and well-being (Volmer et al., 2016). Similarly, Mathieu, Neumann, Hare, and Babiak (2014) revealed that corporate psychopathy is directly and negatively related to employee job satisfaction. Like Machiavellianism and narcissism, psychopathy has associations with influence tactics in the workplace: In line with other typical behaviors, corporate psychopaths were found to use hard influence tactics as means to get ahead (Jonason et al., 2012). Moreover, psychopathy has been associated with unethical behavior in a military context (Holowka et al., 2012).

The Dominance Facet of Social Dominance Orientation

Next to the dark triad, the sociopolitical attitude of SDO appears relevant for research investigating dark personalities and unethical attitudes within organizations. Numerous researchers postulated its importance for explaining socially aversive behavior (e.g. Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). SDO was first defined by Sidanius and Pratto (1999) as part of their social dominance theory (SDT), which postulates that "individuals' attitudes about inequality between social groups in general, or their social dominance orientation, interacts with societal and institutional forces to produce and reproduce systems of social inequality" (Ho et al., 2015, p. 3). By definition, SDO is the extent to which group based-hierarchies are accepted or even promoted. It also defines whether an individual is convinced that some groups are more worthy or superior than others (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Therefore, SDO describes individual differences in the preference for group-based hierachy and inequality, or non-egalitarian and hierarchically structured social orders (Ho et al., 2015). More recently, Ho et al. (2015) divided SDO into two theoretically-grounded subdimensions SDO-Dominance (SDO-D) and SDO-Egalitarianism (SDO-E). With its justifications of group-based dominance, SDO-D has been related to legitimizing hypothetical torture in a military context (Larsson, Björklund, & Bäckström, 2012). Extending these findings, Lindén, Björklund and Bäckström (2016) discovered that dehumanization works as a mediator for this relationship. The authors interpreted the results as an indication of decreased empathy towards dehumanized groups in high SDO-D individuals. Based on these two studies by Larsson et al. (2012) and Lindén et al. (2016), only SDO-D will be subject of this study because of its relation to unethical attitudes in a war context.

Unethical Attitudes and Behaviors in a Military Context

The present study investigates military ethics. These are different from other ethical attitudes that can be measured, as, for example, organizational ethics. Military ethics are concerned with situations that are connected to necessary decisions in a warzone. These include attitudes towards non-combatants and how they should be treated or whether torture is legitimized for the sake of saving the lives of others (Mental Health Advisory Team, 2006). Empirical research investigating the relationship between personality and ethical behavior was, for example, conducted by Bartels and Pizzaro (2011) who correlated moral decisions of participants with measures of dark personality traits. The authors found empirical indication that high scores on scales of Machiavellianism and psychopathy were associated with a utilitarian approach to ethical dilemmas.

Regarding the relationship between dark triad traits and ethical behavior, Harrison, Summers, and Mennecke (2018) demonstrated that Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy seem to affect different parts of the unethical decision-making process. In line with the abovementioned definition, narcissism leads individuals to adjust their ethical behavior in favor of their personal goals. Harrison et al. (2018) also showed the relationship between Machiavellianism and unethical behavior and its effect on an individual's disposition to deceive. The outstanding relation between psychopathy and unethical behavior was its remarkable effect on how individuals rationalize their unethical behaviors. In summary, the reason for including unethical attitudes in this study is their possible association with dark personality traits in a war context. If confirmed, the findings can be used in future considerations to optimize organizational recruitment processes.

Self-Selection Processes Based on Personality Traits

Theories covering the influence of personality on career choice have their origin in the often-cited work of Holland and Holland (1977). They make certain personality variables responsible for career preferences as they believe that the overall goal in the individual career choice is to fulfill emotional needs in the workplace. In developing six personality types—realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional—, Holland (1997) provided reasons for each personality type's career preferences. Following the saying "birds of a feather flock together", individuals belonging to the same personality type tend to search for similar professions or jobs with similar conditions. Indeed, research indicates that individuals working in different professional sectors can be classified into specific personality patterns (Tokar, Fischer, & Mezydlo-Subich, 1998). Empirical support was found by Umphress, Smith-Crowe, Brief, Dietz, and Watkins (2007) whose work demonstrated the attraction between employees who support group-based social hierarchies and demographic

similarity within an organization. Other empirical evidence pointed towards a connection between the dark triad and academic majors: Economics/business students scored significantly higher on all dark triad traits than psychology students (Vedel & Thomsen, 2017). These findings give a first empirical indication for the assumption that self-selection based on (bright and dark) personality traits plays a part in educational choice. Kowalski et al. (2017) further investigated the association between vocational interests and dark personality. They found psychopathy and Machiavellianism to correlate negatively, and narcissism to correlate positively with social interests.

Additionally, Jonason et al. (2014) tried to understand associations between occupational niches and the dark triad traits, focusing on how the traits might be related to the individual career preference. They showed that psychopathy was correlated with "hands-on" or practical work, narcissism was associated with cultured and caring jobs, and Machiavellianism showed negative correlations with jobs that involve caring for others. Moreover, Furnham, Hyde, and Trickey (2014) discovered that dark personality variables partly accounted for individual differences in vocational interest. As mentioned in the beginning, Carnahan and McFarland (2007) gave reason to assume a self-selection process behind the decision to join an organization like the military. Their findings of a revisited Stanford Prison Experiments point towards self-selection mechanisms of individuals with high scores on Machiavellianism, narcissism, and social dominance to situations where they can show abusive behavior.

The Present Study

To sum up, previous studies found that personal vocational or career choices are often matched with personality traits. Therefore, it seems plausible to hypothesize that

organizations are chosen for the sake of matching one's personality with the preferred work environment, meaning that individuals self-select according to personal dispositions. No previous study has investigated whether dark personality traits, namely the dark triad, SDO-D, and attitudes on military ethics, are more prevalent in individuals working in the military organization rather than in human rights organizations. Based on the theoretical background outlined above, it was hypothesized that scores on Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and SDO-D would be higher for individuals working in the military than for those working in human rights organizations. Given the diverse literature on narcissism, this variable was not hypothesized to differ significantly between the two organizations (e.g., Back et al., 2013). Furthermore, the findings outlined above (e.g., Harrison et al., 2018) led to the hypothesis that military soldiers would self-report higher levels of unethical attitudes concerning military ethics than human rights workers. In respect of the findings that men show increased levels of dark triad traits and SDO-D compared to women (dark triad: e.g., Paulhus & Williams, 2002; SDO-D: e.g., Ho et al., 2015), data from male participants was also examined separately. With this, it was hypothesized that differences between organizations remain the same and that hence, significant results are independent of gender. In this sense, the hypothesis was posed that male individuals working in the military organization score higher than male human rights workers on all variables in this study, except narcissism.

Method

General Design

To investigate the research question concerning the prevalence of dark personality traits in the military versus human rights organizations, scores on different dark personality traits were analyzed. Established measures were combined into a questionnaire to clarify

whether the groups significantly differ from each other in terms of their dark dispositions. In this sense, the separate dark personality traits served as the dependent variables, whereas the group (human rights organizations versus military) served as the independent variable. The study was conducted with a paper-and-pencil questionnaire (military) and an online questionnaire (human rights organizations), created with the German platform soSci survey.

The questionnaires were handed out in Swedish language. Already existing versions of scales measuring the dark triad, SDO, and military ethics that will be described below were used (see Appendix A-H for the used scales in both Swedish and English language). Instructions were translated by the author's supervisor. For the analysis, all items were transferred back to their English counterpart.

Participants

The sample recruitment for the military subsample was part of a larger research project by Magnus Lindén, Lund University. Data was collected by handing out paper-and-pencil-questionnaires, and only completed questionnaires were used for data evaluation. For the subsample of individuals in human rights organizations, participants were recruited by approaching contact persons from Swedish human rights organizations across the country and asking them to distribute a questionnaire within their respective organization (Röda Korset, Amnesty International, Läkare Utan Gränser, & Individuell Människohjälp). The majority of human rights workers were employed full-time. In this subsample, an online questionnaire via the German platform soSci survey, an open scientific survey panel for professional research which is free of charge, was used. A total of 112 participants started the questionnaire, but only data from 83 participants could be used for the evaluation. If participants did not continue until the end of the questionnaire, but individual scales were completed, participant

data was used until the point of dropout (see Table 4 for the exact sample size of the respective calculations).

In this study, a total of $N = 182$ participants was recruited. These consisted of 99 Swedish soldiers (6 women, 93 men; $M_{age} = 29.62$, $SD_{age} = 6.50$, age range: 22-50) and 83 participants working for Swedish human rights organizations (63 women, 18 men, 2 did not report gender; $M_{age} = 46.67$, $SD_{age} = 16.95$, age range: 19-82). According to previous studies with comparable research questions, this can be considered a sufficiently large research sample (e.g., Carnahan & McFarland, 2007; Lindén et al., 2016; Umphress et al., 2007).

Materials

Demographics. The demographic data assessed for the participants from Swedish human rights organizations included age, gender, and organization. All items were mandatory, but for gender, there was the possibility to refuse an answer. The demographic data assessed for the Swedish soldiers included age and gender.

The Short Dark Triad (SD3). Scores on the dark triad were measured with a Swedish translation of the Short Dark Triad (SD3, see Appendix A and B) measure developed by Jones and Paulhus (2014). The scale contained nine items for each of the dark triad traits. Examples of Machiavellianism items included in the SD3 are "I like to use clever manipulation to get my way" and "There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation". Examples of narcissism items are "I insist on getting the respect I deserve" and "I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so". Examples of psychopathy items are "People who mess with me always regret it" and "It is true that I can be mean to others". Responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *disagree*

strongly to 5 = *agree strongly*. According to Jones and Paulhus (2014), Cronbach's alpha for the three subscales is .77 (Machiavellianism), .71 (narcissism), and .80 (psychopathy), indicating good reliability. In the present sample, the alpha reliabilities were .82, .49, and .70, respectively.

Social dominance orientation (SD7). The dominance facet of SDO was measured with the 8-item scale developed by Ho et al. (2015, see Appendix C and D). "Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups" and "Group dominance is a poor principle" (reversely coded) are examples items. Responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *very negative* to 7 = *very positive*. According to Ho et al. (2015), Cronbach's alpha for the scale ranged from .82 to .90. In this study, the alpha reliability was .79, indicating good reliability.

Military ethics. Military ethics were assessed by items from the fourth Mental Health Advisory Team's survey (MHAT-IV, Mental Health Advisory Team, 2006, see Appendix E and F). The MHAT-IV is a large health survey issued by the U.S. Army during Operation Iraqi Freedom 2005-07. Only the first five items assessing soldiers' attitudes towards military warzone ethics were used. Those five items were (1) "All non-combatants should be treated with dignity and respect" (reversely coded), (2) "All non-combatants should be treated as insurgents", (3) "Torture should be allowed if it will save the life of a soldier/marine" (in this case changed to "a Swedish soldier"), (4) "Torture should be allowed in order to gather important info about insurgents", and (5) "I would risk my own safety to help a non-combatant in danger" (reversely coded). Responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .62, indicating acceptable reliability.

Procedure

As mentioned before, the study is an extension of a research project conducted by Magnus Lindén, Lund University. Therefore, the questionnaires (and the order of the scales) used in the two groups slightly differ from another. Military data was collected as part of a larger research project. In this part, the author contributed as a research assistant by contacting relevant organizations and designing and evaluating questionnaires. The paper-and-pencil questionnaires set up for the military sample took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Additional data from Swedish human rights organizations was collected by the author only. The questionnaire used for this part was enriched with items from the Mini-International Personality Item Pool (Mini-IPIP, Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006, see Appendix G and H) to not exclusively measure negatively connotated content. Completion took approximately 20 minutes.

Ethical Considerations

Rules and guidelines provided by the Swedish Research Council were applied when designing and conducting the study. No sensitive data subsumed under the Data Protection Act was dealt with, and neither did this study affect participants mentally or physically. To investigate the study's hypotheses, only methods were used that do not involve physical intervention. Moreover, there was no risk that participants were mentally or physically harmed in this study. There were no manipulations within the study design. All data was treated confidentially and anonymously. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained before data collection took place, and participants had the opportunity to stop at any point during the completion of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in R (R Core Team, 2014). Pearson correlations are presented to study the relations between all variables. t-tests were calculated in order to examine differences in the mean values between the military organization and human rights workers. In line with previous research connected to the current subject, an alpha-level of .05 was used to determine the significance of results in the study. Missing values were replaced with their respective means. As these calculations yielded the same results as those where missing values were omitted, all data was used. All calculations were conducted with and without outliers. As results were the same with and without outliers, calculations enclose all data gathered for this study to have as much study material as possible.

Moreover, all variables were checked for normality. Some scales were normally distributed, some were not. Consequently, all calculations were conducted using both parametric and non-parametric tests. As the results were the same in all cases, parametric tests were used to check the differences in the groups. As an exception, non-parametric tests were used for the comparison between male participants only, as not all groups were big enough to allow parametric tests. These calculations were conducted both with a sample of $N = 18$ individuals in human rights organizations (the total male N) and a random sample of $N = 18$ soldiers and with the entire male sample of military soldiers. As the results were the same, all data was used. Additionally, all calculations examining differences within the human rights organization were conducted with non-parametric tests as the sample consisted of only 18 male participants.

Results

General Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of all measures in both groups together and Figure 1 in Appendix I shows boxplots of study variables, split by group. Table 2 presents the correlations between the measures. As shown in the table, military ethics were positively correlated with all individual difference factors except SD3-Narcissism, the highest correlation being with the dominance facet of SDO. These correlations imply that in this sample, high scores on unethical attitudes are associated with high scores on SD3-Machiavellianism, SD3-Psychopathy, and SDO-D. Other than that, SD3-Machiavellianism and SD3-Psychopathy were significantly correlated with all other study variables, whereas SD3-Narcissism was not significantly correlated to any other variable than its fellow dark triad traits. In turn, this indicates that in this sample, high mean values on SD3-Machiavellianism and SD3-Psychopathy go along with high mean values on SD3-Narcissism, SDO-D, and unethical attitudes.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Study Variables for Both Groups Together

	M	*SD*
SD3-Machiavellianism	22.60	6.56
SD3-Narcissism	25.95	4.11
SD3-Psychopathy	17.78	5.17
SDO-D	20.80	8.84
MHAT-IV	9.11	2.94

Note. M = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, SD3 = Short Dark Triad, SDO-D = Social dominance orientation-dominance, MHAT-IV = Mental Health Advisory Team's survey.

Table 2

Pearson Correlations Between All Study Variables

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. SD3-Machiavellianism	—	.16*	.56***	.55***	.36***
2. SD3-Narcissism		—	.26***	.06	-.02
3. SD3-Psychopathy			—	.52***	.41***
4. SDO-Dominance				—	.58***
5. MHAT-IV					—

Note. SD3 = Short Dark Triad, SDO-Dominance = Social dominance orientation-dominance, MHAT-IV = Mental Health Advisory Team's survey.

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed), ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed), *** Correlation is significant at the .001 level (two-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics of Military Ethics

Descriptive statistics and frequencies for each military ethics item were the following: For the item "*All non-combatants should be treated with dignity and respect*" ($M = 1.56$; $SD = 0.91$), 5.05% of military soldiers and 3.95% of human rights workers either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Regarding the item "*All non-combatants should be treated as insurgents*" ($M = 1.56$; $SD = 0.81$), 4.04% of military soldiers and no participant from the human rights organizations either agreed or strongly agreed. The item "*Torture should be allowed if it will save the life of a Swedish soldier*" ($M = 1.89$; $SD = 1.13$) was either agreed or strongly agreed to by 19.19% of soldiers and 2.63% of human rights workers. Moreover, the item "*Torture should be allowed in order to gather important info about insurgents*" ($M = 1.54$; $SD = 0.81$) was accepted by 4.04% of soldiers and none of the human rights workers. Finally, 11.11% of military soldiers and 13.16% of individuals from human rights organizations (strongly) disagreed to the item "*I would risk my own safety to help a non-combatant in danger*" ($M = 2.56$; $SD = 0.91$).

Differences Between Soldiers and Human Rights Workers on the Dark Triad

Table 3 describes separate means and standard deviations of the compared groups. The result of the *t*-test regarding Machiavellianism scores revealed that there was a significant difference between the two groups where the soldiers had a higher mean value on Machiavellianism than the human rights workers (see Table 4; $t(179.29) = -7.97$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.16$.). As Cohen's *d* was larger than 1 (the difference between the two means was greater than one standard deviation), a large effect was found (Cohen, 1988). To examine whether these results are dependent on gender, a Mann-Whitney-U test was conducted, using the male data only. The Mann-Whitney-U test indicated that the mean value of Machiavellianism was higher for male soldiers (*Mdn* = 20) than for male human rights workers (*Mdn* = 26), $U = 417$, $p < .001$, $r = -.32$. As stated in the hypothesis, these results suggest that soldiers score higher on Machiavellianism in comparison to employees in human rights organizations, independent of gender.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Study Variables, Divided by Group

	HRO		Military	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
SD3-Machiavellianism	19.00	4.93	25.63	6.28
SD3-Narcissism	25.13	4.47	26.64	3.68
SD3-Psychopathy	14.72	3.74	20.35	4.82
SDO-D	15.25	5.45	25.22	8.54
MHAT-IV	7.71	2.03	10.19	3.10

Note. HRO = Human Rights Organization, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, SD3 = Short Dark Triad, SDO-D = Social dominance orientation-dominance, MHAT-IV = Mental Health Advisory Team's survey.

The results of the *t*-test comparing scores of both groups on SD3-Narcissism demonstrated a significant difference between the groups. Again, soldiers had a higher mean value compared to human rights workers (see Table 4; $t(158.94) = -2.46$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.37$). Cohen's *d* indicated a medium-sized effect (Cohen, 1988). When focusing on male participants only, the Mann-Whitney-U test revealed that scores on narcissism were not significantly greater for male soldiers (*Mdn* = 26) than for male human rights workers (*Mdn* = 27), $U = 742.5$, $p = 0.45$. The suggestions that can be drawn from these results is that although soldiers scored higher on narcissism in comparison to human rights workers, the differences between the compared groups might have been affected by gender. This is partly in line with the hypothesis, as results were expected to differ from those of the other dark triad traits.

When comparing the groups regarding SD3-Psychopathy, results of the *t*-test revealed a significant difference in the scores with soldiers having a higher mean value in comparison to human rights workers (see Table 4; $t(178.95) = -8.86$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.29$). Once again, Cohen's *d* was larger than 1, indicating a large effect (Cohen, 1988). When conducting a Mann-Whitney-U test in order to examine a possible bias by the gender ratio, similar results as stated above were yielded: The Mann-Whitney-U test indicated that psychopathy was greater for male soldiers (*Mdn* = 20) than for male employees in human rights organizations (*Mdn* = 16.5), $U = 453.5$, $p = < .01$, $r = -0.29$. As hypothesized, these results suggest that similar to Machiavellianism, soldiers score higher on psychopathy in comparison to employees in human rights organizations, independent of gender.

Table 4

t-tests for the Effect of Group on Study Variables

Variable	*df*	*t*	*p*	95% CI LL	UL	*d*
SD3-M (*N* = 182)	179.29	-7.97	< .001***	-8.27	-4.99	1.16
SD3-N (*N* = 182)	158.94	-2.46	< .05*	-2.72	-0.30	0.37
SD3-P (*N* = 182)	178.95	-8.86	< .001***	-6.88	-4.37	1.29
SDO-D (*N* = 178)	168.46	-9.45	< .001***	-12.05	-7.89	1.36
MHAT-IV (*N* = 175)	169	-6.37	< .001***	-3.24	-1.71	0.92

Note. df = degrees of freedom, *t* = t-value, *p* = p value, CI = Confidence Interval, LL = Lower Limit, UL = Upper Limit, *d* = effect size, SD3-M = SD3-Machiavellianism, SD3-N = SD3-Narcissism, SD3-P = SD3-Psychopathy, SDO-D = Social dominance orientation-dominance, MHAT-IV = Mental Health Advisory Team's survey.

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed), ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed), *** Correlation is significant at the .001 level (two-tailed).

Differences Between Soldiers and Human Rights Workers on SDO-Dominance

The result of the *t*-test revealed that there was a significant difference in the scores for the dominance facet of SDO between the two groups where the soldiers had a higher mean value than the human rights workers (see Table 4; $t(168.46) = -9.45$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.36$). Cohen's *d* was larger than 1, and so again, the difference between the two means was more than one standard deviation, and a large effect was found (Cohen, 1988). The calculations were once more conducted with male data only to examine whether these results could be biased by the gender ratio. The Mann-Whitney-U test implied similar results as stated above, meaning that SDO-Dominance was greater for male soldiers (*Mdn* = 26) than for males in human rights organizations (*Mdn* = 16), $U = 304$, $p < .001$, $r = -0.41$. In line with how the results were hypothesized, these findings indicate that soldiers have significantly increased values on SDO-Dominance in comparison to employees in human rights organizations, independent of gender.

Differences Between Soldiers and Human Rights Workers on Military Ethics

When comparing scores on military ethics between soldiers and the human rights group, the *t*-test results indicated significant differences in the scores: soldiers once again had a higher mean value than employees in human rights organizations (see Table 4, $t(169) = -6.37$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.92$). Once more, the size of Cohen's d suggested that a large effect was found (Cohen, 1988). As explained above, an examination using the male participants only was conducted to take a closer look at a possible bias by gender. The Mann-Whitney-U test demonstrated similar results as the *t*-test with scores on military ethics being significantly higher for military soldiers ($Mdn = 10$) in comparison to human rights workers ($Mdn = 7$), $U = 407.5$, $p = < .01$, $r = -0.30$. To sum up, evaluation of the MHAT-IV items indicated that soldiers have significantly increased values on military ethics in comparison to employees in human rights organizations, independent of gender. Consequently, the findings reveal tentative evidence in favor of the posed hypothesis.

Discussion

The present study aimed at investigating whether there are significant differences in the levels of dark personality traits and military ethics between soldiers and human right workers. It was hypothesized that soldiers would self-report higher levels of Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and SDO-D, but would not self-report higher levels of narcissism. Moreover, it was hypothesized that military soldiers would self-report higher levels of unethical attitudes than human rights workers when examining military ethics. The results supported all hypotheses. In the following, several aspects are discussed in an attempt to explain the obtained results.

The Dark Triad in the Military Versus Human Rights Organizations

As hypothesized, scores on Machiavellianism and psychopathy were significantly higher among soldiers in comparison to the human rights group. Taking a closer look at Machiavellianism, Jonason et al. (2014) provided a possible explanation for these results: Typically, Machiavellians avoid careers that involve caring for others. It appears reasonable that consequently, individuals in human rights organizations score lower on Machiavellianism as their core business is strongly linked to empathy and interaction with individuals that involves caring for others. On the other hand, the contents of military work often have a different focus and are more practical in nature, with a decreased level of encouraging empathy. These arguments support that based on the work contents, Machiavellians self-select into organizations that fit their ideal work environment.

In trying to explain the results that were obtained for the groups' scores on psychopathy, recapitulating the characteristics appears helpful. Paulhus and Williams (2002) designated impulsivity, thrill-seeking, low empathy, and little anxiety as typical for high scorers on subclinical psychopathy. It seems possible that exactly these characteristics are present in individuals interested in a military career. As a soldier, it might even be essential to be extroverted, adventurous, and prepared to take risks to be functioning in a unit and to be willing to shoot when it matters. However, even though higher levels on psychopathy might be beneficial in the military, the distinction between subclinical and clinical psychopathy needs to be emphasized. As military units are dependent on high levels of cohesion and mutual trust, soldiers are required to function as a group. With their detrimental effects on social interactions (Cleckley, 1941), clinical psychopaths would probably be easily detected and avoided in such an organization. In that sense, the applied scale for psychopathy might be incapable of measuring predictable adverse outcomes of psychopathy. More likely, high

scores of military soldiers in this study could have their origin in specific requirements for the job that soldiers need to bring along.

Partly in line with the hypotheses, comparisons between the groups on narcissism did not consistently yield significant results. There was a significant difference between the groups using the complete dataset (with a medium effect, according to Cohen, 1988), contrasting the posed hypothesis regarding narcissism. However, when analyzing male data only, no significant difference was found. This result indicates that the significant difference that was found using the complete sample might be due to gender differences.

Research from Jonason et al. (2014) showed that narcissists tend to seek jobs that are artistic, enterprising, and social. A reason might be that these jobs provide them with social recognition, thinking that what they do is something extraordinary and requires a specific talent that deserves admiration from others. Work in both analyzed groups contains aspects of this definition, but also contradictions: Because of its power association, the military profession can be perceived as high-status work by the soldiers themselves. However, as the military is organized in bigger units, standing out as a soldier might be difficult. Building a career and getting acknowledgement for extra work is not guaranteed due to the hierarchical structures (Martins & Lopes, 2012). On the other hand, engagement in human rights organizations is often highly acknowledged by society. This circumstance might be the reason for some employees with a high need for social recognition to choose this type of organization, explaining the higher levels of narcissism in human rights workers. As previously mentioned, Kowalski et al. (2017) suggest a dark dyad instead of a dark triad as narcissism seems to differ from the other two with its positive and prosocial aspects. People in human rights organizations could be seeking this recognition in their work, wanting others

to see their selfless nature. Taking a closer look at the twofold nature of narcissism, it might

be that the applied scale could not make precise distinctions between the positive version,

self-admiration, and the negative version, rivalry (Back et al., 2013). Additionally, it was

outlined in the beginning that Volmer et al. (2016) showed that with its favorable sides,

narcissism is prominent as the brightest dark trait. These arguments might contribute to

explaining similar levels of narcissism in the compared groups.

SDO-Dominance in the Military Versus Human Rights Organizations

In line with the hypothesis, mean values on the dominance facet of SDO were

significantly higher among military soldiers than among individuals in human rights

organizations. Because results for Machiavellianism are significant, it is no surprise that

SDO-D also rendered significant: McFarland (2010) found that people with high SDO long

for high levels of power and score higher on Machiavellianism as well, which is confirmed by

a significant correlation between the scores. Hence, this pair of personality traits might jointly

point towards a self-selection process into specific organizations that match individual

differences on dark personality traits, suggesting that an interaction effect might be present.

Similarly, SDO has been related to narcissism and psychopathy (Hodson, Hogg, & MacInnis,

2009), right-wing authoritarianism (Larsson et al., 2012), and positive attitudes towards

military programs and patriotism (Pratto et al., 1994). As can be seen in Table 2, the

correlation between SDO and Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and military ethics was indeed

significant.

Additional support for this result is given by Sidanius and Pratto (1999), who found

evidence that people scoring high on SDO are attracted to hierarchy-enhancing jobs and

institutions that are themselves hierarchically structured. As the military is an organization

that is outstandingly hierarchically structured, and human rights organizations are, in contrast, usually characterized by more horizontal hierarchies, the results match actual environments in the examined organizations. As a consequence, a self-selection theory is encouraged, describing the desire of individuals to find matching organizations and as a behavioral implication, the adjustment of organizational preference.

Ethical Attitudes in the Military Versus Human Rights Organizations

In line with the hypothesis, scores on attitudes towards military ethics were significantly higher in military soldiers. One possible explanation might be that soldiers can better identify with statements considering situations they might have already experienced and consequently, adjust their ethical attitudes. Similar to the overarching nature versus nurture debate that will follow, one might argue that the higher scores of military soldiers result from an interplay between a disposition to be more morally flexible than other individuals and experienced situations that have shaped their attitudes towards ethically questionable behaviors. Growing together as a group or even culture, ethical relativism (Ladd, 1973) might have caused particular ethical standards. Actions that are perceived as immoral from the general population could be rationalized in retrospective as suggested by Tsang (2002) and hence reinterpreted as moral. Soldiers might find themselves in a constant conflict between motivations and the natural desire to be perceived and perceive themselves as a moral person (Tsang, 2002). This dissonance might be less present in individuals engaged in human rights organizations as the everyday work they do is generally perceived as morally correct by themselves and their environment.

A Dark Core Covering Dark Personality Traits

As all hypotheses were confirmed, the question arises whether possible self-selection processes in respect to work organizations are not only subject to a number of dark personality traits, but a common dark core. Moshagen, Hilbig, and Zettler (2018) describe this hypothetical dark core as the *Dark Factor of Personality* (*D*) (p. 656). The idea of D is similar to the *general intelligence factor* (*g*) that assumes different cognitive ability tests (e.g., logical reasoning, memory, spatial ability) to load on one common factor. These findings were transferred to dark personality research, and in analogy, D is assumed. This core is defined as the tendency of persons to accept or actively cause negative consequences for others for the sake of their personal benefit, accompanied by beliefs to justify this behavior. Moshagen et al. (2018) were able to show correlations of D with almost all dark personality traits (e.g., Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, egoism, sadism) and tendencies to display problems in social behavior. In conclusion, just like intelligence expresses itself in different facets, D describes a tendency that manifests in different ways (like intense narcissism or sadism). Building on this research, the existence of D underlying the variables in this study appears plausible. If this is true, findings from this study could point towards a "darker" core of military soldiers that make them gravitate towards organizations where they can behave according to behaviors connected with D.

A Nature Versus Nurture Debate

In trying to explain the significance of the obtained results, crossing the nature versus nurture debate is inevitable. Is it the personality that drives people to choose specific organizations? Alternatively, is it the organizations that form their members' character, i.e. influence the scores on personality scales over time? Previous research on the development of personality traits showed that most stable personality traits are based on a mixture between

nature and nurture (McCrae et al., 2000)—meaning both the genes and the environment of a

person are responsible for individual differences in personality traits. This should be similar

regarding dark personality traits. Following Costa, Herbst, McCrae, and Siegler (2000),

significant life events like settling down, building a family, unemployment, or the loss of a

close person might be important triggers for a change in (dark) personality traits. Whether this

is also true for a dark core of personality is not known yet. It can, however, be assumed that

subjectively meaningful experiences that facilitate justifications for immoral behavior result

in an increase of dark dispositions.

On the other hand, volunteer work or trust could lessen the dark side of personality—

which would be an explanation for individuals in human rights organizations having

decreased scores on dark personality traits and unethical attitudes. In support, Vernon, Martin,

Schermer, and Mackie (2008) showed that Machiavellianism alone has a shared

environmental component. Findings by Jones and Paulhus (2011) moreover suggest that out

of the three dark triad traits, Machiavellianism is the most likely to be influenced by

experience. In favor of the "nature" argumentation, Furnham, Richards, and Paulhus (2013),

showed that characteristic behaviors among the dark triad are already evident in young adults.

Additional evidence was given by Petrides, Vernon, Schermer, and Veselka (2011), who

found that all three dark triad traits have substantial genetic components. As a valuable

contribution to this research field, Jackson, Thoemmes, Jonkmann, Lüdtke, and Trautwein

(2012) found that the decision to enter the military could be predicted by low scores of Big

Five agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience.

As in most cases, reasons for the present findings are probably a mixture between the

naturally darker personality of applicants and the surroundings that shape their values.

Regarding the scores of the human rights individuals, it is possible that they would have had less bright scores as were present in this study when entering the organizations. They might have been exposed to many situations during their employment that have altered their attitudes and hence, maybe even their personality traits. These situations might have taught them to value human rights that they, over time, internalize and as a consequence, make them identify even more with their organization. On the other hand, soldiers might get "used" to a world of war or violence, which made them believe less in the good in man (and woman). Especially in a male-dominated domain like the military, it might be that soft attitudes are gradually replaced with harder ones, who in the long run might influence dispositions. These arguments are underpinned by the abovementioned research from Jackson et al. (2012) who discovered persistent changes in personality after military training in a German military sample.

The Influence of Age and Gender

The influence of gender on levels of dark personality traits has been shown in several previous studies: Men score higher on all dark triad traits (Paulhus & Williams, 2002), SDO-D (Ho et al., 2015), and scales measuring ethical attitudes (Smith & Oakley, 1997). What is the value of the presented results if the military is a male-dominated organization, but more women are to be found in human rights organizations? First of all, all results were replicated with a male dataset only. Results remained the same, except that differences between the groups on narcissism were not consistent in the sense that the analysis of only the male dataset did not lead to any significance. These results demonstrate a tendency that also in a larger sample, the results would have remained the same.

The age difference between both groups should not be neglected and makes the effect of age on dark personality traits a subject of discussion. Moshagen et al. (2018) determined D with a time difference of 4 years: He found a slight decrease in dark scores so that individual dark personality traits tend to decrease with age. Nevertheless, the order remains the same, meaning that the relation between two people does not change: If an individual scored higher than another one at the first measure point, that individual also had higher levels at the second time. These findings indicate that D might be a rather stable personality trait that decreases with age. In support of this, Kowalski et al. (2017) showed that age correlates negatively with Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Accordingly, it might be that the results can be partly explained by the age difference between the groups. Concretely, differences between the human rights group and a military sample with a higher mean age could have been substantially smaller. As a result, having a balanced age sample should be taken into account in future research.

Implications

Assuming the discussed results to be (partly) generalizable and taking research into account that has demonstrated disproportionately higher crime rates in the military (Greenberg, Rosenheck, & Desai 2007) raises some inevitable questions. What can be done to avoid having so much "dark" potential in organizations that have a great responsibility as they provide the opportunity to behave abusively? Regarding the twofold discussion between nature and nurture, two approaches should be considered: First, when arguing that people with naturally higher dark triad scores self-select into organizations, the selection process in the military should be reconsidered. Without a doubt, some of these dark personality traits have their raison d'être as they probably provide military soldiers with the ability to function in stressful situations—e.g. by having lower levels of empathy (e.g., Jones & Paulhus, 2011).

However, selection processes should facilitate distinguishing between necessary traits and those with a high potential for maladaptive outcomes. Suggestions to achieve this would be to combine multiple measures of personality traits during the selection process. Online assessments, video recruiting, and face-to-face interviews are all opportunities to include questions measuring the integrity of an individual. Interviews of the selection process should be accompanied, assessed and at best be conceptualized by organizational psychologists. Qualified personnel should provide a reliable assessment process to make valid assumptions about a person's personality and its qualification to occupy responsible governmental job positions. Moreover, multiple opinions on applicants should be taken together as the manipulative nature of dark characters tends to lead to deception and requires a careful examination.

When arguing that the employees' environment influences their personality, i.e. has the potential to increase military soldiers' dark personality traits and to decrease those of individuals in human rights organizations, other implications render salient. First and foremost, the threshold to seek and find help in case of ethical dilemmas should be immensely lowered. The concept of toxic masculinity (Kupers, 2005) describes how it is often still perceived as a weakness if men open up and do not repress their emotions. This "man up" mentality is particularly prominent in hierarchically structured organizations like the military, encouraging these traditional cultural masculine norms even more. A shift is needed towards an atmosphere where anger, frustration, or fear are not repressed but openly addressed. In male-dominated domains, this appears a challenging task. Military soldiers might be too closed off to these means of opening up and react reluctantly. Including more psychologists or consultants into the everyday life or introducing mental health or battlefield ethics training as mandatory sessions—not only when problems are already existent, but also as a preventive

tool—seem to be pivotal means to improve the situation. The advancement of mental health awareness in all kinds of organizations nevertheless gives hope that increasing psychological elements in perceived dark organizations will contribute to change attitudes in male-dominated domains and decrease the amount of toxic masculinity. Besides, putting more effort into encouraging women to join perceived dark organizations might over time lower the prevalence of malevolent characters if assuming socialization processes in the development of dark personality traits to be present.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study

A major strength of this study is the inclusion of data from a military institution. Research on personality traits of soldiers is limited, as these institutions rarely allow data collection—especially when it comes to research on dark personality traits. However, this argument can also be applied to human rights organizations: Measuring dark personality traits gives meaningful insights into the labor conditions of all kinds of institutions. As outlined in the beginning, mature ethical attitudes are essential to act according to existing human rights and avoid abusive behavior in any organization, but particularly in the military. For this reason, personality psychology research in this field is of particular value.

Choosing different human rights organizations to find participants for this study increased external validity. However, several aspects lower the extent to which the conclusions of this study can be applied outside the context. First, the study could have been optimized by only including full-time personnel from human rights organizations into data evaluation. Although this study's intention is to investigate self-selection into an organization per se, and regardless of the employment contract, only including full-time workers would have resulted in a better-controlled design. Furthermore, a higher level of generalizability

could have been obtained with a sufficiently large and balanced sample in respect of gender, as previous studies have shown that scores on dark personality traits are influenced by the individual's gender (e.g., Paulhus & Williams, 2002). The author was able to show that when using non-parametric tests to analyze the male data only, the trend of the results is the same. Of course, it would be beneficial to replicate the findings with a more balanced sample, but conclusions from this research can be drawn validly. What adds to this argument is that the focus on this research was on personality per se, making the gender of members of specific organizations less critical. The results might even contribute to the general question of why individuals belonging to a particular gender tend to self-select into specific professions or organizations.

Besides, external validity would have benefited from a balanced age distribution. In this study, the average age of human rights workers was significantly higher than the age of military soldiers. As stated above, dark personality traits tend to decrease with age, so that some variance can probably be explained by this demographic variable. Another contributor to limited generalizability is the collection of data covering one point of time only. Longitudinal measurements with several measurement points can help to reveal the actual reason behind higher scores in specific groups. Therefore, this procedure could create more certainty whether the set of scales used in this study measures what was supposed to be measured.

Some scales that were used in this study showed insufficient alpha values. For MHAT-IV, this should be solved by adding more items to the scale. Regarding other scales like SD3-Narcissism, the issue of internal consistency becomes more crucial, mainly because there is quite a big gap between the theoretical alpha value and the empirical one in this study.

As there were only nine items measuring narcissism, the author refused to increase the alpha value by deleting items that contributed to a lower Cronbach's alpha. With a different scale to measure narcissism, better reliability values could have been obtained. Using longer scales for measuring the dark triad could have contributed to yielding more differentiated results and avoiding loss of validity for each concept. In particular, it could have helped to distinguish between positive (admiration) and negative (rivalry) narcissism (Back et al., 2013). In the specific case of narcissism, it might be possible that results did not turn out significant because the positive aspect of narcissism, admiration, "outperformed" the negative aspect, rivalry, or vice versa. To disentangle these two dimensions, it would be helpful to use separate scales in their measurement.

Partly conducting an online study could have led participants to answer more honestly, benefiting from the anonymity that comes along with filling out a questionnaire unobserved. The general use of self-reports for measuring personality traits has been discussed in great detail previously (e.g., Bäckström & Björklund, 2013). It is always a challenging task to obtain honest answers from people that are asked to describe their personality, in particular when it comes to traits that conflict with social norms. The data could have suffered from socially desirable response behavior so that for example, participants displayed themselves more positively towards the outside than they are. Because the reliability and validity of the applied scales are relatively high, and the anonymity was maintained throughout the whole study, participants' answers should not have suffered too much from socially desirable response behavior. However, it would be beneficial to apply a cross-informant approach and longitudinal research designs to study the predictive value of dark triad traits, as also proposed by Muris et al. (2017). Alternatively, existing scales could be evaluatively

neutralized to minimize their socially desirable content, as shown by Bäckström, Björklund,

and Larsson (2014) for other personality scales.

Using the Wilcoxon test to measure differences between groups that are too small to

fulfill the assumptions of t-tests helped to avoid the assumptions of distribution of the subsets.

Avoiding the normality assumption is helpful to obtain results with the available amount of

data. The drawback of using Wilcoxon tests is, however, that results are usually less powerful

than the t-test (i.e. higher Type II error rate). This issue leads to the overall danger of having

an insufficiently large sample size that increases the risk of getting false-positive results.

Assumptions about the sample could be made that are not true for the general population

(Navarro, 2014).

Future Research

As pointed out above, future research should focus on having a balanced gender ratio.

However, this is a challenging endeavor as usually, as an organization like the military is

dominated by male employees. Nowadays, female soldiers should nevertheless be more

accessible through a combination of large-scale advertisements and campaigns. Women have

been explicitly encouraged to join organizations like the military or the police and the

percentage of female soldiers has increased (Carreiras, 2006). Similarly, future studies should

take the age of participants into account and make sure that the ratio is also balanced in that

sense.

Moreover, future research should tackle the origin behind the presented findings. What

is more likely: The darker the individual, the darker the organization, or the other way

around? To investigate this research question in detail, an experiment is needed to find

empirical evidence for the correctness of a self-selection theory. Although this thesis leaves

room for the hypothesis that people with dark personalities self-select into the military and

less likely into human rights organizations, a different indication that socialization effects

within organizations decrease or increase dark dispositions cannot be ruled out. In an

experiment, it would be crucial to include variables regarding the time already spent in the

organization and assessments during different moments of employment time. Future research

should hence focus on the long-term evaluation of dark personality traits. Measuring the

scores at different points in time (e.g., when employees enter their organizations, when they

have been working there for three years, and when they have been working there for ten

years, or when leaving the organizations) should give essential insights in the development of

dark personality traits over the course of a persons' employment in a specific organization.

Adding up to this, it would be of interest whether and how work experience abroad changes

dark dispositions. Spending time in critical regions like Iraq might have an effect on

personality in human rights workers or military soldiers and should be taken into account in

prospective studies.

        Another impulse for following studies concerned with dark and bright personality

traits in specific work organizations is to include a control group into the data collection. This

study solely consists of data from examples of perceived dark and bright organizations, as

receiving data from the considered groups was demanding. Including a neutral control group

would further enrich the body of research connected to dark personalities in organizations and

contribute to a more detailed differentiation. This approach would require a definition of

neutral organizations which could be realized by including pre-studies into future studies.

Research could also be expanded by not only measuring the dark triad, the dominance facet of

SDO, and military ethics, but to additionally focus on those traits that have been found to

build the dark core of personality, D. Additionally taking sadism, self-interest, spitefulness, egoism, moral disengagement, and psychological entitlement into account when measuring the personality of individuals in specific organizations can contribute to elaborate on the nature of D. Similarly, using scales that differentiate between the two characters of narcissism would add scientific value. Especially when considering the large difference between the groups on MHAT-IV, an extended measure of ethical attitudes would be valuable— particularly as the alpha reliability for this scale was unsatisfactory. When shifting the attention towards bright traits, it would be interesting to take self-directedness, cooperativeness, and self-transcendence (Garcia & Rosenberg, 2016) into account and explore whether these traits are also more or less prevalent in perceived dark versus bright organizations.

Conclusion

This study's empirical evidence is in favor of the hypothesis that Swedish military soldiers score higher on dark triad traits except for narcissism, the dominance facet of SDO, and scales measuring unethical attitudes in a military context than Swedish human rights workers. These findings are in line with earlier studies indicating that individuals scoring high on these traits are more likely to choose study programmes that are related to living out power or providing the opportunity to behave abusively. Although men naturally score higher on all these traits and the two compared groups did not have an equally distributed gender ratio, additional calculations indicated the results' validity.

As this study was the first to analyze dark personality traits in specific organizations, more studies are needed to replicate the findings. These studies should preferably use a

balanced gender and age ratio to create more generalizability. Future research should also try to investigate the reasons for the conclusions of this study: By conducting long-term research, first hypotheses about the causes of having individuals with increased dark personality traits in perceived dark organizations can be tackled. Further investigations should attempt to figure out whether socialization effects take place, the personality of military soldiers is naturally darker than those from individuals engaged in human rights organizations, or a mixture between nature and nurture serves as an explanation. Considering the practical relevance of the study, more research is needed to clarify which actions are vital to avoid the maladaptive consequences of dark personality traits in work organizations with opportunities to behave abusively. Whether it needs better recruitment methods or the organization itself is required to take responsibility by providing adequate workshops and seminars in the course of employment is of interest for prospective studies.

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Appendix A

The Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014)

Instructions: *Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements*

Disagree strongly	*Disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Agree*	*Agree strongly*
1	2	3	4	5

Machiavellianism
1. It's not wise to tell your secrets.
2. I like to use clever manipulation to get my way.
3. Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.
4. Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.
5. It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later.
6. You should wait for the right time to get back at people.
7. There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation.
8. Make sure your plans benefit yourself, not others.
9. Most people can be manipulated.

Narcissism
1. People see me as a natural leader.
2. I hate being the center of attention. (R)
3. Many group activities tend to be dull without me.
4. I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so.
5. I like to get acquainted with important people.
6. I feel embarrassed if someone compliments me. (R)
7. I have been compared to famous people.
8. I am an average person. (R)
9. I insist on getting the respect I deserve.

Psychopathy
1. I like to get revenge on authorities.
2. I avoid dangerous situations. (R)
3. Payback needs to be quick and nasty.
4. People often say I'm out of control.
5. It's true that I can be mean to others.
6. People who mess with me always regret it.
7. I have never gotten into trouble with the law. (R)
8. I enjoy having sex with people I hardly know.

9. I'll say anything to get what I want.

Note. Reversals are indicated with (R).

Appendix B

The Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014)—Swedish version

Instructions: *Nedan finns ett antal påståenden om hur du upplever och ser på dig själv. Din uppgift är att svara på hur väl du instämmer med varje påstående, enligt nedanstående skala.*

Instämmer inte alls	Instämmer inte	Varken instämmer eller inte instämmer	Instämmer	Instämmer helt och hållet
1	2	3	4	5

Machiavellianism

1. Det är inte så smart att berätta sina hemligheter för någon.
2. Jag gillar att använda smarta sätt att manipulera andra för att få som jag vill.
3. Man måste få de viktiga människorna på sin sida, oavsett vad det kostar.
4. Undvik direkta konflikter med andra personer, eftersom de kan vara användbara i framtiden.
5. Det är smart att hålla koll på saker som man senare kan använda mot andra människor.
6. Man bör vänta på rätt tillfälle att ge igen på någon.
7. Det finns saker man bör dölja för andra, eftersom de inte behöver veta.
8. Försäkra dig om att dina planer ger fördelar till just dig och inte någon annan.
9. De flesta människor kan bli manipulerade.

Narcissism

1. Andra ser mig som en naturlig ledare.
2. Jag avskyr att vara den som är i uppmärksamhetens mittpunkt. (R)
3. Många gruppaktiviteter tenderar att bli tråkiga utan mig.
4. Jag vet att jag är speciell, eftersom alla hela tiden talar om det för mig.
5. Jag gillar att lära känna viktiga personer.
6. Jag känner mig bortgjord när någon ger mig en komplimang. (R)
7. Jag har blivit jämförd med kända människor.
8. Jag är en ordinär person. (R)
9. Jag insisterar på att få den respekt jag förtjänar.

Psychopathy

1. Jag gillar att hämnas på auktoriteter.
2. Jag undviker farliga situationer. (R)
3. En hämnd måste ske fort och utföras på ett fult sätt.
4. Andra talar ofta om för mig att jag har tappat kontrollen.
5. Det stämmer att jag kan vara elak mot andra.
6. Människor som bråkar med mig får alltid ångra det.
7. Jag har aldrig kommit i klammeri med rättsväsendet. (R)

8. Jag njuter av att ha sex med personer jag knappt känner.
9. Jag säger vad som helst för att få som jag vill.

Appendix C

Social dominance orientation (SDO7; Ho et al., 2015)—Dominance dimension only

Instructions: *Show how much you favor or oppose each idea below by selecting a number from 1 to 7 on the scale below. You can work quickly; your first feeling is generally best.*

Strongly Oppose						*Strongly Favor*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Protrait dominance:

1. Some groups of people must be kept in their place.
2. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
3. An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.
4. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.

Contrait dominance:

5. Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.
6. No one group should dominate in society.
7. Groups at the bottom should not have to stay in their place.
8. Group dominance is a poor principle.

Appendix D

Social dominance orientation (SDO7; Ho et al., 2015)—Dominance dimension only, Swedish version

Instructions: *Vilket av följande nedanstående påståenden upplever du en positiv eller negativ känsla gentemot? Bredvid varje påstående finns en siffra från 1 till 7 som representerar graden av din positiva eller negativa känsla. Tänk på att inga svar är "rätt" eller "fel". Svara bara så ärligt och uppriktigt som möjligt (ringa in lämplig siffra).*

Mycket negativ						*Mycket positiv*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. Vissa grupper av människor måste hållas på sin plats.
2. Det är förmodligen bra att vissa grupper är på toppen av samhället och att andra grupper är på botten.
3. Ett idealt samhälle förutsätter att vissa grupper är längst upp och att andra är längst ned.
4. Vissa grupper av människor är helt enkelt underlägsna andra grupper.
5. Grupper på botten av samhället är värda lika mycket som grupper på toppen.
6. Ingen grupp borde dominera i samhället.
7. Grupper på botten skall inte behöva stanna på sin plats.
8. Gruppdominans är en dålig princip.

Appendix E

Military ethics (MHAT-IV, Mental Health Advisory Team, 2006)

Instructions:

Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*
1	2	3	4	5

1. All non-combatants should be treated with dignity and respect. (R)

2. All non-combatants should be treated as insurgents.

3. Torture should be allowed if it will save the life of a Swedish soldier.

4. Torture should be allowed to gather important information about insurgents.

5. I would risk my own safety to help a non-combatant in danger. (R)

Appendix F

Military ethics (MHAT-IV, Mental Health Advisory Team, 2006)—Swedish version

Instructions: *Nedan presenteras ett antal påstående som berör militär etik. Din uppgift är att fylla i hur mycket du håller med om dessa.*

Inställmmer inte alls				*Inställmmer helt och hållet*
1	2	3	4	5

1. Alla icke-kombattanter bör behandlas med värdighet och respekt. (R)

2. Alla icke-kombattanter bör behandlas som upprorsmän (insurgenter).

3. Tortyr bör tillåtas om den räddar livet på en svensk soldat.

4. Tortyr borde vara tillåtet för att samla in viktig information om upprorsmän (insurgenter).

5. Jag skulle riskera min egen säkerhet för att hjälpa en icke-kombattant som är i fara. (R)

Appendix G

Mini-International Personality Item Pool (Mini-IPIP; Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006)

Instructions: *Describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of the same sex as you are, and roughly your same age.*

Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*
1	2	3	4	5

1. Am the life of the party.

2. Sympathize with others' feelings.

3. Get chores done right away.

4. Have frequent mood swings.

5. Have a vivid imagination.

6. Don't talk a lot. (R)

7. Am not interested in other people's problems. (R)

8. Often forget to put things back in their proper place. (R)

9. Am relaxed most of the time. (R)

10. Am not interested in abstract ideas. (R)

11. Talk to a lot of different people at parties.

12. Feel others' emotions.

13. Like order.

14. Get upset easily.

15. Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas. (R)

16. Keep in the background. (R)

17. Am not really interested in others. (R)

18. Make a mess of things. (R)

19. Seldom feel blue. (R)

20. Do not have a good imagination. (R)

Note. Reversals are indicated with (R).

Appendix H

Mini-(Mini-IPIP; Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006)—Swedish version

Instructions: *Beskriv dig själv som du generellt är just nu, ej som du önskar att bli i framtiden. Beskriv på ett ärligt sätt hur du uppfattar dig själv i relation till andra av samma kön och med liknande ålder.*

Instämmer inte alls				*Instämmer helt och hållet*
1	2	3	4	5

1. Är den som håller igång på ett party.

2. Sympatiserar med andras känslor.

3. Gör hushållsarbete genast.

4. Har ofta förekommande humörsvängningar.

5. Har en vild fantasi.

6. Pratar inte mycket. (R)

7. Är ointresserad i andra människors problem. (R)

8. Glömmer ofta att lägga tillbaka saker på sin plats. (R)

9. Är avslappnad för det mesta. (R)

10. Är ointresserad av abstrakta idéer. (R)

11. Pratar med en massa olika människor under en fest.

12. Känner andra människors känslor.

13. Tycker om ordning.

14. Blir lätt upprörd.

15. Har svårt att förstå abstrakta idéer. (R)

16. Håller mig i bakgrunden. (R)

17. Är egentligen inte intresserad av andra. (R)

18. Skapar förvirring omkring mig. (R)

19. Känner mig sällan nere. (R)
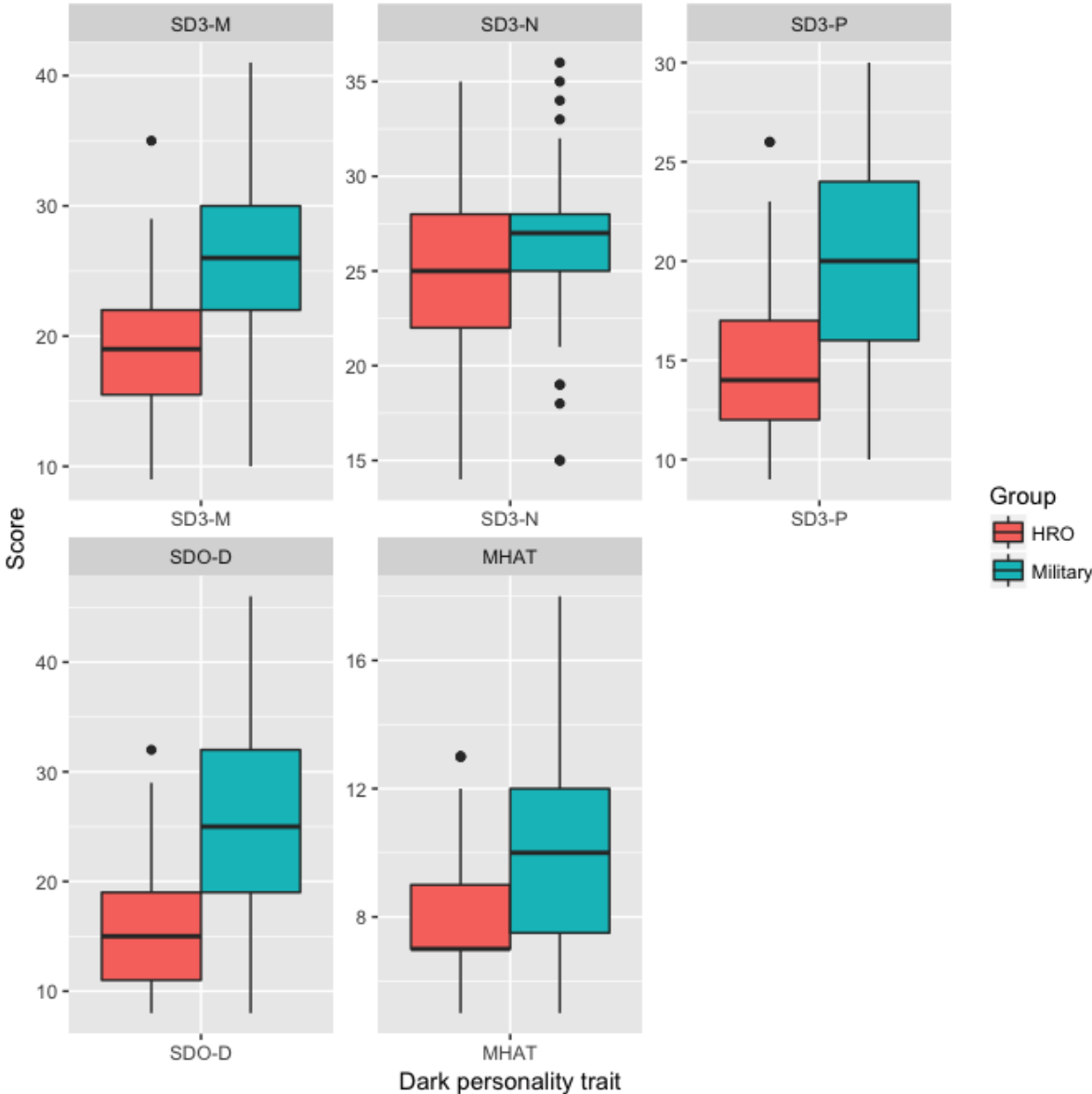
20. Är fantasilös. (R)

Appendix I

Figure 1. Boxplots of Study Variables, Split by Group (HRO/Military) and Including Outliers, HRO = Human Rights Organization, SD3 = Short Dark Triad, SDO-D = Social dominance orientation-dominance, MHAT-IV = Mental Health Advisory Team's survey.