

# Information Avoidance and Image Concerns

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## Abstract

A rich literature finds that individuals avoid information and suggests that avoidance is driven by image concerns. This paper provides the first direct test of whether individuals avoid information *because of* image concerns. We build off of a classic paradigm, introducing control conditions that make minimal changes to eliminate the role of image concerns while keeping other key features of the environment unchanged. Data from 6,421 experimental subjects shows that image concerns play a role in driving information avoidance, but a role that is substantially smaller than one might have expected.

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# 1 Introduction

Why do individuals avoid information that could be instrumental to their decisions? A number of lines of research suggest that individuals avoid information in order to maintain certain beliefs (e.g., about themselves as healthy, financially responsible, politically enlightened, kind) even while taking actions that could suggest the opposite. Such explanations, however, rely on the sophistication of agents to strategically avoid information in order to maintain certain beliefs or in order to construct plausible deniability about their actions. In this paper, we introduce a new experimental approach to directly test whether individuals strategically avoid information *because of image concerns*.

We deploy our new approach in a context that has been the focus of a rich literature building off of [Dana, Weber and Kuang \(2007\)](#). In that seminal paper, a decision maker must choose between two options, A and B. Decision makers know that they earn more from choosing A but do not know whether A or B is better for another participant. They can avoid information and choose A or B directly, or they can learn which is better for the other participant before choosing. A set of results from that paper have proven to be robust and influential. First, individuals frequently avoid information on whether A or B is better for another participant. Second, individuals make substantially more selfish decisions (i.e., choosing A more often) when they can avoid information than in an alternative treatment when they cannot avoid information. Third, the fraction of individuals who avoid information is higher than the fraction of individuals who might be expected to avoid information because they do not value it (i.e., those who behave selfishly when information cannot be avoided). These findings have been replicated many times ([Larson and Capra, 2009](#); [Matthey and Regner, 2011](#); [Feiler, 2014](#); [Grossman, 2014](#); [Exley, 2016](#); [Grossman and van der Weele, 2017](#)) and have raised an important debate about what drives passive information avoidance.<sup>1</sup> A leading explanation in this context is image concerns, in particular a desire to view oneself as more prosocial or less selfish.<sup>2</sup> Individuals might strategically avoid information so they can benefit themselves at lower image costs than they would pay if they acted selfishly after learning that benefiting themselves harmed others.<sup>3</sup>

The main contribution of this paper is our ability to directly test whether individuals strategically avoid information because of such image concerns.<sup>4</sup> We compare the rates of (passive)

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<sup>1</sup>See conceptual replications in different paradigms ([Kajackaite, 2015](#); [Serra-Garcia and Szech, 2021](#)).

<sup>2</sup>For conciseness, we simply refer to “image concerns” throughout our paper, although our design allows us to account for both self-image and social-image concerns (to the extent they are relevant).

<sup>3</sup>For important work on models of image concerns, see [Rabin \(1995\)](#); [Bodner and Prelec \(2003\)](#); [Bénabou and Tirole \(2004, 2006\)](#); [Mijović-Prelec and Prelec \(2010\)](#); [Bénabou and Tirole \(2011\)](#); [Nyborg \(2011\)](#); [Grossman \(2015\)](#); [Grossman and van der Weele \(2017\)](#); [Bénabou, Falk and Tirole \(2018\)](#); [Foerster and van der Weele \(2018\)](#). Significant empirical evidence supports the notion that image costs of acting selfishly are smaller when individuals do not know for certain they are being selfish. For reviews, see [Bénabou and Tirole \(2016\)](#) and [Gino, Norton and Weber \(2016\)](#). For the importance of direct tests to narrow in on underlying mechanisms, see [Bartling, Fehr and Özdemir \(2021\)](#).

<sup>4</sup>An important related literature involves how individuals may strategically process information even when it

information avoidance in the classic [Dana, Weber and Kuang \(2007\)](#) setting to a new setting that makes minimal changes to remove image motives to *avoid* information; our new setting holds constant the structure of the decision, the content of the information, and the timing of information provision.<sup>5</sup> We then attribute to image concerns any difference in information avoidance—by which we mean subjects failing to acquire easily accessible information—across the two settings.

In our new setting—our control condition—every aspect of the decision environment is the same as in the classic setting, except a different participant receives the payoff that would have gone to the decision maker. In this condition, image concerns cannot drive information avoidance. To see this, first note that image concerns about selfishness are clearly not relevant because the opportunity for selfishness is removed. Moreover, even other image concerns (e.g., a desire to appear fair) cannot drive information *avoidance* in our control condition. Individuals with such image concerns should instead *acquire* information and choose the option aligned with those image concerns, which they can do without suffering a financial cost. In our control condition, there is no chance that acquiring information will force a tradeoff between a choice motivated by image concerns and an option that benefits oneself, since no option benefits oneself.<sup>6</sup>

To see why a control condition like ours is necessary to explore whether image concerns drive information avoidance, consider an alternative approach referenced in the prior literature for assessing the role of image concerns. It compares the rate of information avoidance when payoffs are unknown to the rate of *selfishness* when payoffs are known. The latter represents the fraction of subjects who may avoid information because they do not value it (since they will act selfishly regardless). But this difference, the “avoidance-selfishness gap,” does not identify the extent of information avoidance that is due to image concerns. First, selfish subjects could avoid information because they do not value it, or they could avoid information strategically to mitigate the image costs of their selfishness. Second, non-selfish subjects may avoid information for *non-image* reasons—such as laziness, inattention, or confusion—rather than image reasons. This is true even if these subjects end up acting selfishly when uninformed and even if they enjoy the decreased image costs of acting selfishly; they could have avoided information for a non-image reason and then been happily surprised by the opportunity to benefit themselves without knowing for certain they were being selfish.

Our approach—using a control condition to compare information avoidance across a setting where it can be driven by image concerns and a similar setting where it cannot—thus differs

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is not avoided ([Babcock et al., 1995](#); [Gneezy, Saccardo and van Veldhuizen, 2018](#); [Schwardmann, Tripodi and van der Weele, 2019](#); [Gneezy et al., 2020](#); [Saccardo and Serra-Garcia, 2020](#)).

<sup>5</sup>We follow much of the prior literature in using the term “information avoidance,” regardless of whether this avoidance choice was actively made or instead made passively (e.g., because people simply made a payoff choice before acquiring information and did not actively think about whether they did or did not wish to first acquire the information).

<sup>6</sup>See section [2.1](#) for further discussion.

from prior approaches relating to the avoidance-selfishness gap. As further detailed in Section 2.2, our approach also differs from a rich literature that examines how other features of the decision environment influence rates of information avoidance but does not isolate the role of image concerns.<sup>7</sup> Given the prevalence of information avoidance across domains and the many lines of research exploring the motives of information avoidance, we see the use of a control condition like ours as an important methodological advance that could be applied more widely to this literature.<sup>8</sup>

We deploy our control condition across six studies, including 6,421 experimental subjects. In each of these studies, we replicate the results of Dana, Weber and Kuang (2007). In each of these studies, we also find that a subset of subjects indeed avoid information due to image concerns. This evidence bolsters explanations of information avoidance as being due to image concerns in the extant literature, including prior evidence showing that individuals who act selfishly are judged more harshly when they have full information about the impact of their actions than when they avoid such information (Krupka and Weber, 2013; Grossman and van der Weele, 2017).<sup>9</sup>

Across our studies, however, we find that a substantial and significant amount of information avoidance in the classic paradigm cannot be attributed to image concerns. As shown in Section 3.2, our direct test estimates the role of strategic image concerns to be less than half of what the avoidance-selfishness gap would suggest. Our results also prove robust to decisions involving higher stakes and to using an alternative control condition. The high levels of information avoidance that cannot be attributed to image concerns appear to arise for other reasons, potentially including a desire to avoid interpersonal tradeoffs, a desire to avoid learning bad news (e.g., that you cannot achieve your preferred payoffs), laziness, inattention, or confusion. We explore the empirical relevance of these motives in additional treatments, as detailed in Section 4.2.

We build off of the Dana, Weber and Kuang (2007) paradigm, and we replicate its findings and the findings of the literature that follows. That prior literature provides compelling evidence that the ability to act selfishly without knowing that an act was selfish facilitates more selfish behavior. To examine the extent to which the ability to avoid information influences selfish behavior, those prior studies have exactly the right set of treatments: one where information can be avoided and one where information cannot be avoided. We pursue a different identification approach because we are interested in a different question. We study *why* individuals avoid information, rather than the consequences of information avoidance. Better understanding the

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<sup>7</sup>See, for example, Grossman (2014); Grossman and van der Weele (2017); Serra-Garcia and Szech (2021).

<sup>8</sup>This approach is related to the approach developed in Exley (2016), which explored payoff decisions rather than information avoidance.

<sup>9</sup>For related evidence, see also Conrads and Irlenbusch (2013) and Bartling, Engl and Weber (2014). While this prior evidence narrows in on actual image costs (e.g., how third-party observers view the action of a decision-maker), our paper is concerned with the role of image concerns in driving the action of a decision-maker. These two considerations could be different for a number of reasons (e.g., a decision-maker, when making a choice, may not consider image concerns to the same degree as a third-party observer who is explicitly asked to judge the action of a decision-maker).

causes of information avoidance, and recognizing the large role that factors beyond strategic image concerns have in driving information avoidance, can help policymakers develop better methods for encouraging information acquisition when information is instrumental.

## 2 Design

This section describes the design of our main treatment conditions. Additional conditions are introduced later.

A decision maker chooses between two options: Option A and Option B. The two options determine payoffs for two players, Player 1 and Player 2. The conditions under which a subject chooses between Option A and Option B vary according to the experimental treatment. In particular, in Study 1, subjects are randomly assigned to:

1. the *Aligned* or *Unaligned* state,
2. the *Hidden Information* or *Known Information* condition, and
3. the *Self/Other* or *Other/Other* condition.

How choices map to payoffs depends on the random assignment in (1). Table 1 shows payoffs by state. Our main treatments use the payoffs in the top panel, which we call the “Classic Payoffs,” since they have the same structure as in [Dana, Weber and Kuang \(2007\)](#).<sup>10</sup> With the Classic Payoffs, Player 1 always earns more from Option A than from Option B, but Player 2 earns more from Option A in the *Aligned* state and earns more from Option B in the *Unaligned* state. Thus, in the *Unaligned* state (and only the *Unaligned* state), the decision maker faces a tradeoff in terms of benefiting Player 1 or benefiting Player 2.

How information on payoffs is presented depends on the random assignment in (2). In the *Known Information* condition, subjects are directly informed of the state and the associated payoffs and are asked to choose between Option A and Option B directly. In the *Hidden Information* condition, subjects are informed of how the payoffs depend on the state and that there is an equal chance of being assigned to either state. They are then asked whether they would like to: (i) choose Option A, (ii) choose Option B, or (iii) reveal which state they are in before choosing between Option A and Option B. We say subjects avoid information if they choose (i) or (ii) and acquire information if they choose (iii).

Whether the information avoidance in the *Hidden Information* condition may be driven by image concerns depends on the random assignment in (3). In the *Self/Other* condition, subjects know that they earn the Player 1 payoffs and another participant earns the Player 2 payoffs, implying that Option A always benefits themselves. This condition mirrors the classic paradigm

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<sup>10</sup>Given our online subject pool and study length, in most of our online studies, we divide their payoffs by 10. As detailed later, we replicate our results with the payoffs from [Dana, Weber and Kuang \(2007\)](#), both online and in a traditional on-campus experimental lab.

Table 1: Payoffs for (Player 1, Player 2)

<b>Classic Payoffs with Online Participants (used in Studies 1, 2, 3, and 5)</b>		
	<b>Unaligned State</b>	<b>Aligned State</b>
Option A	(\$0.60, \$0.10)	(\$0.60, \$0.50)
Option B	(\$0.50, \$0.50)	(\$0.50, \$0.10)
<b>Classic Payoffs with Penn Undergraduates (used in Study 4) and High Stakes Payoffs with Online Participants (used in Study 6)</b>		
	<b>Unaligned State</b>	<b>Aligned State</b>
Option A	(\$6, \$1)	(\$6, \$5)
Option B	(\$5, \$5)	(\$5, \$1)
<b>New Payoffs with Online Participants (used in Studies 2 and 3)</b>		
	<b>Aligned State 1</b>	<b>Aligned State 2</b>
Option A	(\$0.50, \$0.10)	(\$0.50, \$0.50)
Option B	(\$0.50, \$0.50)	(\$0.50, \$0.10)
<b>High Stakes New Payoffs with Online Participants (used in Study 6)</b>		
	<b>Unaligned State</b>	<b>Aligned State</b>
Option A	(\$5, \$1)	(\$5, \$5)
Option B	(\$5, \$5)	(\$5, \$1)

Each cell denotes the payoffs given to (Player 1, Player 2) according to whether Option A or Option B is chosen by the decision maker and according to the state. In the *Self/Other* condition, Player 1 is the decision maker and Player 2 is another participant. In the *Other/Other* condition, Players 1 and 2 are two other participants. In the *Self/Self* condition, the decision maker receives the sum of payoffs from Player 1 and Player 2.

in Dana, Weber and Kuang (2007); we call it the *Self/Other* condition to emphasize that the decision maker determines the payoff for themselves (i.e., *Self*) and for another participant (i.e., *Other*). In the *Other/Other* condition, subjects know that two other participants earn the Player 1 and Player 2 payoffs, implying that neither option benefits themselves. This is our new control condition in which image concerns can no longer drive information avoidance; we call it the *Other/Other* condition to emphasize that decisions only influence the payoffs of other participants.

## 2.1 Why does the *Other/Other* condition eliminate image concerns to avoid information?

In the *Self/Other* condition, participants may strategically avoid information in order to behave selfishly without knowing for certain that they were selfish and hence in order to incur lower image costs in terms of how selfish they appear to themselves.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, the *Other/Other*

<sup>11</sup>In our version of the game, decision makers never interact with their recipients and only know that their recipients are some other anonymous Amazon Mechanical Turk participants. This means that the image concerns

condition removes selfish motives from the decision environment, which means image concerns about selfishness cannot drive information avoidance. The removal of selfish motives also prevents image concerns unrelated to selfishness, such as a desire to appear fair, from driving information avoidance in the *Other/Other* condition. A participant in the *Self/Other* condition may avoid information to avoid facing a tradeoff between appearing fair and money for themselves. A participant in the *Other/Other* condition who values appearing fair does not face this tradeoff between financial incentives and image concerns. This participant can simply acquire the information and then choose the option aligned with their image concerns. Consequently, while image concerns may cause participants to acquire information and influence whether participants choose Option A or Option B in the *Other/Other* condition, image concerns cannot cause participants to *avoid* information in the *Other/Other* condition.

In addition, an important feature of our approach is that factors known to influence the rates of information avoidance—such as the choice architecture (Grossman, 2014), the content of the information (Serra-Garcia and Szech, 2021), and the timing of information provision (Grossman and van der Weele, 2017)—are all the same across the *Self/Other* and *Other/Other* conditions.

## 2.2 Why is the *Other/Other* condition necessary?

One may wonder whether we could have instead inferred the relevance of image concerns in driving information avoidance using data from the *Hidden Information* and *Known Information* conditions of the *Self/Other* condition only. Indeed, much of the literature that follows Dana, Weber and Kuang (2007)—although not the approach or focus in that seminal paper itself—reports on the “selfishness-avoidance gap,” which compares the rate of information avoidance in the *Hidden Information* condition to the rate of selfishness in the *Unaligned* state in the *Known Information* condition. This approach consistently reveals that information avoidance is more common than selfishness and, importantly, has raised the debate about the motives for information avoidance. However, there are two reasons why this difference does not identify the role of image concerns in driving information avoidance.

The first is that individuals may avoid information because of image concerns even in settings when the information would not affect their choice. For example, an agent who always makes the most selfish choice may avoid information in the *Hidden Information* condition to appear less selfish, even though it does not change her behavior. Assuming that the difference between information avoidance and selfishness is due to image concerns ignores this possibility and could underestimate the extent to which image concerns drive information avoidance.

The second is that individuals who avoid information—and behave more selfishly as a result—in the *Hidden Information* condition could have avoided information for non-image-related rea-

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that might drive information avoidance in our setting are primarily self-image concerns, although social-image concerns where the primary observer is the experimenter are also possible. In Dana, Weber and Kuang (2007), decision makers know their recipients are other participants in the same laboratory study, which may make them more concerned about how they appear to their recipients (even though they are still anonymous).



sons, such as inattention or confusion. Assuming that the difference between information avoidance and selfishness is due to image concerns ignores this possibility and could overestimate the extent to which image concerns drive information avoidance.

## 2.3 Implementation Details

For Studies 1–3 & 5–6, subjects were recruited on Amazon Mechanical Turk.<sup>12</sup> For Study 1, we recruited 800 subjects in July 2019, and approximately 100 were randomly assigned to each of the eight treatment conditions (resulting from the  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  design described above). We directly replicated the results from Study 1 three times by recruiting an additional 807 subjects in September 2019 (as part of Study 2), an additional 796 subjects in February 2020 (as part of Study 3), and an additional 600 subjects in May 2021 (as part of Study 5).<sup>13</sup>

One may wonder whether our results are robust to higher stakes. Thus, we replicated the results in Study 1 by recruiting an additional 605 subjects in May 2021 (as part of Study 6). In Study 6, as shown in the middle panel of Table 1, the stakes involved are 10 times higher than the stakes used in Studies 1–3 and hence match the typical values used in this literature for undergraduate student subjects.<sup>14</sup>

One may also wonder whether our results were driven by our subjects being recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk. Thus, we also replicated the results in Study 1 by recruiting 222 undergraduates to participate in person at the Wharton Behavioral Lab at the University of Pennsylvania in November 2019 (as part of Study 4). There are two main differences with the design of Study 4 relative to the designs for Studies 1–3. First, as shown in the middle panel of Table 1, the stakes involved are 10 times higher than the stakes used in Studies 1–3. Second, given the limited subject pool size, all subjects were assigned to one of the *Hidden Information* conditions (i.e., we excluded the *Known Information* conditions).

Results from Studies 1–6 are detailed in Sections 3.1 and 3.2. In Section 4, we present additional design details and results, including treatment variations from Studies 2–3 & 5–6, involving another 2,597 subjects. These additional treatment variations explore the reasons for information avoidance beyond image concerns.

Prior to making any decision, subjects received detailed instructions and had to correctly answer understanding questions. See Appendix C for full experimental instructions and decision screens.

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<sup>12</sup>Studies 1–3 (5–6) were restricted to subjects with a 95% (99%) or better approval rating from at least 100 (500) HITs and a US IP address.

<sup>13</sup>The slightly smaller sample in Study 5 reflects the fact that—to save on subject recruitment costs—no participants were recruited for the *Known Information* version of the *Other/Other* condition.

<sup>14</sup>Also, like Study 5—to save on subject recruitment costs—no participants were recruited for the *Known Information* version of the *Other/Other* condition.



### 3 Results

In this section, we present results from Study 1 and the conditions of Studies 2–6 that replicate Study 1.

#### 3.1 Replicating the original moral wiggle room findings

Consistent with prior literature, we find that a large fraction of subjects avoid information in the *Self/Other* condition and that this fraction exceeds the rate of selfishness when information is known. In the *Hidden Information* condition, across these studies, 0.67 (Study 1), 0.72 (Study 2), 0.65 (Study 3), 0.62 (Study 4), 0.65 (Study 5), and 0.73 (Study 6) of subjects avoid information. In the *Known Information* condition, across the studies—excluding Study 4 that omits this condition—0.32 (Study 1), 0.33 (Study 2), 0.33 (Study 3), 0.39 (Study 5), and 0.33 (Study 6) of subjects choose Option A—the selfish option—in the *Unaligned* state.

Also replicating prior literature, we find that the ability to avoid information leads to more selfish behavior. As shown in Appendix Table A.1, which focuses on results from the *Unaligned* state, the rates of choosing Option A increase by 23 percentage points (Study 1), 27 percentage points (Study 2), 20 percentage points (Study 3), 7 percentage points (Study 5), and 28 percentage points (Study 6) when information can be avoided. With the exception of Study 5, all of these increases are statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).

#### 3.2 Do individuals avoid information because of image concerns?

The prior section shows that, when information can be avoided, individuals frequently avoid information and that more selfish behavior follows. To what extent can this be explained by subjects in the *Self/Other* condition avoiding information *because of image concerns*?

Table 2 shows results from all of our *Hidden Information* conditions. It presents a linear probability model of whether subjects avoid information on an indicator for whether subjects are randomly assigned to the *Other/Other* condition. The coefficient estimates on the constant show the rates of information avoidance in the *Self/Other* condition. As noted in the prior section, these rates of information avoidance are high.

The significant negative coefficient on the *Other/Other* indicator shows that we document significantly less information avoidance when image concerns cannot drive such avoidance. However, comparing the magnitude of these estimates to the constant implies that the *minority* of information avoidance in the *Self/Other* condition is due to image concerns. The percentage of information avoidance in the *Self/Other* condition that we estimate is due to image concerns is  $\frac{0.13}{0.67} = 19\%$  in Study 1,  $\frac{0.17}{0.72} = 24\%$  in Study 2, and  $\frac{0.14}{0.65} = 22\%$  in Study 3,  $\frac{0.21}{0.62} = 34\%$  in Study 4,  $\frac{0.09}{0.65} = 14\%$  in Study 5, and  $\frac{0.21}{0.73} = 29\%$  in Study 6. Equivalently, we estimate that a large majority of the information avoidance observed in the *Self/Other* condition is *not* due to image concerns:  $\frac{0.54}{0.67} = 81\%$  in Study 1,  $\frac{0.55}{0.72} = 76\%$  in Study 2,  $\frac{0.51}{0.65} = 78\%$  in Study 3,  $\frac{0.41}{0.62} = 66\%$  in

Study 4,  $\frac{0.56}{0.65} = 86\%$  in Study 5, and  $\frac{0.52}{0.73} = 71\%$  in Study 6. In light of this large residual, we consider additional drivers of information avoidance in Section 4.

Table 2: Linear probability model of the likelihood of avoiding information

	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4	Study 5	Study 6
<i>Other/Other</i>	-0.13*** (0.05)	-0.17*** (0.05)	-0.14*** (0.05)	-0.21*** (0.07)	-0.09* (0.05)	-0.21*** (0.05)
Constant	0.67*** (0.03)	0.72*** (0.03)	0.65*** (0.03)	0.62*** (0.05)	0.65*** (0.03)	0.73*** (0.03)
N	397	399	386	222	395	401

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Standard errors are robust and shown in parentheses. The results are from a linear probability model of avoiding information, where *Other/Other* is an indicator for being the *Other/Other* condition. In all columns, the data are restricted to the decisions made in the *Unaligned* or *Aligned* state of the *Hidden Information* condition. In columns 1–6, the data are restricted to the decisions made in Studies 1–6 respectively.

Our identification strategy suggests that a smaller fraction of information avoidance in the *Self/Other* condition is due to image concerns than we would have guessed if we had relied on avoidance-selfishness gap estimates instead. In the *Self/Other* condition, the fraction of participants who avoid information in the *Hidden Information* condition minus the fraction of participants who choose Option A in the *Unaligned* state of the *Known Information* condition is  $0.67 - 0.33 = 0.34$  (Study 1),  $0.72 - 0.32 = 0.40$  (Study 2),  $0.65 - 0.32 = 0.33$  (Study 3),  $0.65 - 0.39 = 0.26$  (Study 5), and  $0.73 - 0.33 = 0.40$  (Study 6). Thus, if we had not run our control condition and had instead used avoidance-selfishness gap estimates, we would have inferred that the role of image concerns in driving information avoidance was about two times larger than what we attribute to image concerns using our control condition. In particular, we would have inferred that the percentage of information avoidance in the *Self/Other* condition due to image concerns was  $\frac{0.34}{0.67} = 51\%$  (rather than 19%) in Study 1,  $\frac{0.40}{0.72} = 56\%$  (rather than 24%) in Study 2,  $\frac{0.33}{0.65} = 51\%$  (rather than 22%) in Study 3,  $\frac{0.26}{0.65} = 40\%$  (rather than 14%) in Study 5, and  $\frac{0.40}{0.73} = 55\%$  (rather than 29%) in Study 6. Thus, not only is our comparison of the *Self/Other* condition to *Other/Other* condition conceptually different than this alternative approach, it is a difference that proves empirically important.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Two-sample tests of proportions reveals that the fraction of selfish participants in the *Self/Other* condition is significantly different than the fraction of participants avoiding information in the *Other/Other* in each of these studies ( $p < 0.01$  for all tests). While we find it useful to report specific numbers in our paper for clarity, we emphasize caution in over-interpreting the precise quantitative estimates reported in a single paper. As discussed in Kessler and Vesterlund (2015), the main focus of many economics experiments—including our experiment here—is on *qualitative effects*. Specifically, our interest is in showing that the amount of information avoidance that we attribute to image concerns when comparing the *Self/Other* and *Other/Other* conditions is: (i) different from zero and (ii) different from what avoidance-selfishness gap estimates would suggest. This point is underscored by the fact that the specific percentages that we calculate fluctuate from study to study across payoff levels, subject populations, and replications of the same treatments. The key insight is that our qualitative findings about the role of image concerns do not change across the studies.

## 4 Additional Results and Discussion

Table 3 summarizes the rates of information avoidance across all of our *Hidden Information* conditions in all of our studies (see Appendix Table A.2 for the rates of choosing Option A). The results shown in the first two columns were discussed in Section 3. In this section, we report on additional treatments from Studies 2, 3, 5, and 6 to examine the robustness of our results to concerns related to attention and to explore what—beyond image concerns—drives information avoidance.

Table 3: Fraction avoiding information in *Hidden Information* conditions

Payoffs:	Classic			New		New Active Choice		Classic Active Choice
	<i>S/O</i>	<i>O/O</i>	<i>S/S</i>	<i>S/O–New</i>	<i>O/O–New</i>	<i>S/O–New, Active</i>	<i>O/O–New, Active</i>	<i>S/O–Active</i>
Study 1	0.67	0.55						
Study 2	0.72	0.55		0.44	0.43			
Study 3	0.65	0.52		0.47	0.45	0.25	0.20	
Study 4	0.62	0.41						
Study 5	0.65	0.56	0.55					0.21
Study 6	0.72	0.51		0.47				
N	1097	1103	192	600	391	199	197	199

The first and fourth set of columns involve the “Classic Payoffs” shown in the top two panels of Table 1. The second and third set of columns involve the “New Payoffs” shown in the bottom two panels of Table 1. The last two sets of columns involve treatments where participants must actively choose whether or not to acquire information before having the ability to choose Option A or Option B. Within each pair of columns, results are split according to whether participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions involving payoffs for themselves and another participant (i.e., the *Self/Other*, *Self/Other–New*, or *Self/Other–Active* condition), one of the conditions involving payoffs for two other participants (i.e., the *Other/Other*, *Other/Other–New*, or *Other/Other–Active* condition), or the condition involving payoffs only for themselves (i.e., the *Self/Self* condition). Note that *S/O*, *O/O*, and *S/S* refer to the *Self/Other*, *Other/Other*, and *Self/Self* conditions, respectively.

### 4.1 Concerns with our identification approach

As detailed in Section 2.1, the only change we make from the *Self/Other* condition to the *Other/Other* condition is switching the Player 1 payoffs from the decision maker to another subject. This change keeps constant the choice architecture, the content of information (i.e., the state-dependent payoffs for Player 2), the timing of information provision, and the possibility of a tradeoff between payoffs for Player 1 and Player 2 (i.e., in the *Unaligned* state). We thus compare information avoidance across these conditions to isolate the role of image concerns.

Nonetheless, one concern may be that—even though the content of the information revealed is always the same across these two conditions—the removal of any payoffs for the decision maker in

the *Other/Other* treatment causes participants to pay less attention to the (same) information or value the (same) information less for non-image-related reasons, perhaps because it causes inattention to the decision environment more generally. To investigate the empirical relevance of this concern, we conducted two additional iterations of our design.

First, we examine whether similar results hold when the stakes involved are 10 times higher, and hence participants face larger financial incentives to pay attention. As already discussed in Section 3.2 and shown in the Study 6 column of Table 2, the answer is clearly yes.

Second, to consider how attention may influence our results, Appendix B presents a simple model of the decision to avoid information. This model shows that, if removing payoffs for the decision maker leads them to pay less attention, then we can bound the extent to which information avoidance occurs for image-related reasons by comparing the rate of information avoidance in the *Self/Other* condition to (i) the rate of information avoidance in the *Other/Other* condition and to (ii) the rate of information avoidance in a new condition called the *Self/Self* condition.

In the *Self/Self* condition, rather than the two payoffs being given to two participants (i.e., Player 1 and Player 2), the two payoffs that result from a given outcome are described as “Amount 1” and “Amount 2” and are always both given to the decision-maker (see Appendix Figure C.62 for details on how this is explained). Thus, in the *Self/Self* condition, image concerns cannot drive information avoidance, but the involved payoffs for the decision maker are now *larger* than they were in the *Self/Other* condition. Attributing image concerns to the difference in information avoidance rates between the *Self/Other* condition and *Self/Self* condition would suggest that the percentage of information avoidance due to image concerns is  $\frac{0.65-0.55}{0.65} = 15\%$  in Study 5, which is nearly identical to the percentage (14% in Study 5) suggested if we instead used the *Other/Other* condition as our control condition. This is not surprising, since the rates of information avoidance in the *Self/Self* and *Other/Other* conditions only differ by one percentage point (0.55 in *Self/Self* and 0.56 in *Other/Other*). The logic of the model and the results from Study 5 thus imply very tight bounds on the role of image concerns driving information avoidance, even accounting for possible differences in attention across treatments. This also implies that there is little empirical evidence for attention-related concerns related to the use of the *Other/Other* condition as a control.<sup>16</sup>

We conclude this discussion of our identification approach by noting that the ideal control condition would change nothing about the decision environment, aside from removing image concerns. Absent a switch to directly turn off such image concerns in participants’ minds,

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<sup>16</sup>Additional results further support this conclusion. For instance, Table 3 reveals that—once image concerns to avoid information are absent—whether the decision maker or another subject receives the Player 1 payoffs has no impact on information avoidance. See the similar rates of information avoidance in the *Self/Other-New* and *Other/Other-New* conditions as well as in the *Self/Other-New, Active* and *Other/Other-New, Active* conditions, conditions that are described in Section 4.2.

however, having such a perfect control treatment is impossible: one has to change something about the decision environment to turn off image concerns. Any such change could, theoretically, have impacts beyond eliminating the role of image concerns.

Our approach in this paper involves using two control conditions, which each turn off image concerns while making minimal changes to the decision environment. The *Other/Other* condition does this by keeping the information and payoff structures the same but by having the two payoffs go to other people. The *Self/Self* condition does this by keeping the information and payoff structures the same but by having the two payoffs go to the self.

Having two control conditions may be particularly valuable in this case, since they complement each other. For example, as discussed above, a possible theoretical concern with the *Other/Other* condition is that individuals might pay less attention since they do not have money at stake. The *Self/Self* condition avoids this concern (it has even more money at stake for the decision-maker and so may cause individuals to pay more attention, which is useful to establish bounds as shown in Appendix B). Relatedly, a possible theoretical concern with the *Self/Self* condition is that it gives two payoffs to a single participant while two payoffs go to different participants in the *Self/Other* condition. The *Other/Other* condition avoids this concern because it preserves giving the two payoffs to different participants. That both control conditions yield very similar predictions about the role of image concerns mitigates these theoretical concerns and gives us more confidence in our results. Of course, the *Self/Self* and *Other/Other* conditions could be different from the *Self/Other* condition in other important ways. We hope future work will continue to investigate other identification approaches, including those that may involve within-subject measures of altruism and attention.

## 4.2 Additional drivers of information avoidance

Image concerns cannot drive information avoidance in the *Other/Other* condition (or the *Self/Self* condition). So what does?

### Aversion to interpersonal tradeoffs or to learning “bad news”

One possibility is that participants do not want to be put into a position (like in the *Unaligned* state) where they have to make a tradeoff between two participants, even if their own payoffs are not affected. Another possibility is that participants favor the payoffs they can achieve in one of the two states and so want to avoid learning for certain the “bad news” that they are in their less-preferred state (Golman, Hagmann and Loewenstein, 2017; Golman and Loewenstein, 2018).

To investigate whether these motives drive any residual information avoidance, we introduced new conditions in Studies 2 and 3. As shown in the third panel of Table 1, the “New Payoffs” are the same as the “Classic Payoffs” except that Option A gives \$0.50, rather than \$0.60, to Player 1. This change means the payoffs for the two players are always (weakly) aligned, eliminating

concerns about aversion to interpersonal tradeoffs, and the two states are identical in what payoffs can be achieved, eliminating concerns that individuals may prefer one state to the other.

Consistent with a small role for aversion to interpersonal tradeoffs or bad news driving avoidance, Table 3 shows that the rates of information avoidance are 7–12 percentage points lower with the new payoffs (compare rates in the *O/O* and *O/O–New* columns). These differences are statistically significant in Study 2 (0.55 vs. 0.43,  $p < 0.01$ ) but only suggestive in Study 3 (0.52 vs. 0.45,  $p = 0.23$ ). Combining data from Studies 2 and 3 yields a significant difference (0.54 vs. 0.44,  $p < 0.01$ ).

These results reinforce the value of replacing a self-other tradeoff with a comparable other-other tradeoff to explore the role of image concerns, rather than eliminating—or substantially changing—the involved tradeoff.

### Choice architecture

Results from the prior section suggest that substantial information avoidance cannot be attributed to image concerns, an aversion to making interpersonal tradeoffs, or the prospect of learning bad news. To explore this remaining information avoidance, we introduced an *Active Choice* version of the *Hidden Information* condition in Study 3. In this version, subjects again face the “New Payoffs,” but prior to choosing Option A or B, subjects first have to actively choose whether to reveal or not reveal the state (see screenshot in Appendix Figure C.37).

As compared to the standard *Hidden Information* condition, the *Active Choice* version may reduce information avoidance for reasons surrounding confusion, inattention, or laziness. The *Active Choice* version makes the information avoidance decision simpler—by separating it from the choice of Option A or B—so confused subjects might better understand the value of revealing information. Inattentive subjects, such as those who choose somewhat randomly, should be less likely to avoid information in the *Active Choice* version where 1 of 2 options reveal information, rather than 1 of 3 in the standard version. Lazy subjects who avoided information in the standard version—by choosing Option A or B directly—to avoid having to click to a new screen and otherwise think more about the decision should be less likely to avoid information in the *Active Choice* version since they cannot skip the subsequent decision screen.

This change in the choice architecture proves powerful. As seen by comparing the “New” and “New, Active Choice” columns of Study 3 in Table 3, information avoidance is substantially lower when an active choice is required (0.25 vs. 0.47,  $p < 0.01$ , in the *Self/Other* condition; and 0.20 vs. 0.45,  $p < 0.01$ , in the *Other/Other* condition). These results echo those in Grossman (2014), which finds a similar effect of choice architecture in the classic paradigm when image concerns may also be relevant.<sup>17</sup> Our results complement the findings in that paper by demonstrating that choice architecture affects behavior, even independently of how it might affect image costs.

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<sup>17</sup>For recent field evidence on how such small changes to the choice architecture can have a large effect on giving consistent with self image concerns, see Adena and Huck (2020).



In addition, in Study 5, we more closely replicate the findings in Grossman (2014) by showing similar results when considering the impact of active choice when image concerns are relevant because the classic payoffs are used. As seen by comparing the *S/O* and *S/O-Active* columns of Study 5 in Table 3, information avoidance is substantially lower when an active choice is required (0.21 vs. 0.65,  $p < 0.01$ ).

The results reinforce the value of holding constant the choice architecture—and the related confusion, inattention, and laziness channels—in our control treatment that replaces a self-other tradeoff with a comparable other-other tradeoff.

## Indifference

While the prior section posits a possible role of inattention, confusion, and laziness in driving information avoidance, results from our *Known Information* conditions suggest a limit to the empirical relevance of such explanations and—more broadly—to subjects being indifferent about others’ payoffs.

As shown in Appendix Table A.2 (top panel, column 4), in the *Aligned* state of the *Known Information* condition, 97% of subjects (across all studies and conditions) choose Option A. That is, nearly all subjects choose the option that delivers higher payoffs to both players when they are directly informed of the payoff information, regardless of whether they are in the *Self/Other* or *Other/Other* condition.

Results with the new payoffs tell a similar story. Appendix Table A.2 (bottom panel, columns 2 and 4) shows that 92% of subjects (pooling across studies and conditions) choose the option that delivers higher payoffs to Player 2 (Option A in *Aligned State 1* or Option B in *Aligned State 2*) in the *Known Information* condition. That is, when asked directly, over 90% of subjects choose the option that benefits other participants.

Thus, while the information avoidance decision may be more cognitively difficult than the choice of Option A or B in the *Known Information* conditions, it is clear from these *Known Information* choices that subjects are indeed paying attention to the payoff consequences of the decisions in both the *Self/Other* and *Other/Other* conditions.

## 5 Conclusion

Our experiment explores the extent to which information avoidance is driven by image concerns. We focus on the classic Dana, Weber and Kuang (2007) paradigm. We provide evidence of more information avoidance when image concerns could motivate information avoidance, highlighting that some subjects indeed avoid information because of image concerns. But, we also show how prior approaches relating to the avoidance-selfishness gap estimates would overestimate the role of image concerns in driving information avoidance. Central to our contribution is our ability—by replacing a self-other tradeoff with a comparable other-other tradeoff—to consider an environment where image concerns cannot drive information avoidance but where other factors



that could drive information avoidance are held constant. Potential concerns about differential attention across our experimental conditions are mitigated by results from our *Self/Self* condition, in which subjects have additional payoffs for themselves at stake and the rate of information avoidance is nearly identical to the rate in the *Other/Other* condition.

Our exploration of information avoidance opens up additional questions for future work, three of which we note here. First, our results highlight the potential insights gleaned by having a comparable “benchmark” level of information avoidance when assessing a particular driver of information avoidance. In the literature related to selfish motives, replacing a self-other tradeoff with a comparable other-other tradeoff allows for such a benchmark. In the broader information avoidance literature, even if a comparable benchmark is not attainable, some benchmark level of information avoidance will likely be informative. We find that significant information avoidance can arise due to choice architecture—perhaps related to inattention, confusion, or laziness—rather than image concerns or payoff preferences.

Second, our results suggest that it might be worthwhile to revisit the relevance of both image-driven and non-image-driven motives in a range of other contexts in which information avoidance is prevalent (see [Golman, Hagmann and Loewenstein \(2017\)](#) for an excellent review of information avoidance across contexts).<sup>18</sup> While we were surprised by the extent of information avoidance that could not be attributed to image concerns in our setting, we suspect there are many contexts where one may be surprised by the extent to which image concerns drive information avoidance, particularly those in which social image concerns (e.g., when behavior is publicly known to others) are relevant.<sup>19</sup> We hope future work jointly considers reasons related to image concerns and not related to image concerns to bolster our understanding of information avoidance and other avoidance decisions.<sup>20</sup> For instance, when individuals put forth effort to avoid being asked to give ([Andreoni, Rao and Trachtman, 2016](#)), how much of this avoidance is because individuals want to avoid social pressure to give and how much of this avoidance is because individuals want to avoid other factors (e.g., thinking costs, time costs, or nuisance costs)?<sup>21</sup> As a thought

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<sup>18</sup>Interesting questions also remain about how individuals *seek* information (see, e.g., [Spiekermann and Weiss \(2016\)](#)) for image and non-image reasons.

<sup>19</sup>An interesting related question is whether the extent to which individuals avoid information because of image concerns aligns with how much they “should” avoid information because of image concerns. That is, when information avoidance proves beneficial to how others view them ([Bartling, Engl and Weber, 2014](#); [Grossman and van der Weele, 2017](#)), do individuals avoid information because of these expected image benefits? One could also ask whether their information avoidance decisions would differ according to the accuracy of their expectations about the associated image benefits of avoiding information.

<sup>20</sup>The usefulness of such control conditions is also apparent in contexts in which individuals may seek out (rather than avoid) information, see, e.g., [Chen and Heese \(2021\)](#). Indeed, like in the paradigms that focus more on how motives influence information avoidance, it is important to construct control conditions that vary the relevance of self-serving motives to avoid information while still holding as many factors constant as possible, such as the existence of tradeoffs between payment options.

<sup>21</sup>For work related to how people avoid opportunities to be generous, see also [Dana, Cain and Dawes \(2006\)](#); [Broberg, Ellingsen and Johannesson \(2007\)](#); [Jacobsen et al. \(2011\)](#); [DellaVigna, List and Malmendier \(2012\)](#); [Lazear, Malmendier and Weber \(2012\)](#); [Trachtman et al. \(2015\)](#); [Lin, Schaumberg and Reich \(2016\)](#).

experiment, to what extent would individuals be similarly reluctant to avoid the ask if they are only asked to give someone else’s money rather than their own money? More generally, may a desire to avoid non-image-related costs—such as a desire to avoid thinking or time costs—prove relevant even to situations where individuals pay to avoid information ([Grossman and van der Weele, 2017](#); [Serra-Garcia and Szech, 2021](#))?

Third, and related, our work suggests gains from further exploring inattention, laziness, and confusion as potentially important drivers of information avoidance across a number of domains. It is possible that people rationally avoid information in response to problem complexity as in models of rational inattention and sparsity ([Sims, 2003](#); [Gabaix, 2014, 2017](#)), that they avoid information because they look at problems the wrong way (see [Handel and Schwartzstein \(2018\)](#) for an excellent review), or even that the ability to avoid information provides individuals with an “excuse” not to fully think through decisions. While we have shown that image concerns can explain part of the information avoidance in a classic paradigm, much information avoidance remains. We see great promise in exploring the other drivers of information avoidance across domains.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Indeed, many interesting questions remain about the conditions under which image concerns prove relevant, particularly given the findings in [van der Weele et al. \(2014\)](#).

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# ONLINE APPENDICES

## A Additional Tables

Table A.1: Linear probability model of the likelihood of choosing Option A

	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 5	Study 6
<i>Hidden Information</i>	0.23*** (0.07)	0.27*** (0.07)	0.20*** (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)	0.28*** (0.07)
Constant	0.33*** (0.05)	0.32*** (0.05)	0.33*** (0.05)	0.39*** (0.05)	0.33*** (0.05)
N	199	200	200	204	200

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Standard errors are robust and shown in parentheses. The results are from a linear probability model of the likelihood of choosing Option A, where *Hidden Information* is an indicator for being the *Hidden Information* condition. In all columns, the data are restricted to the decisions made in the *Unaligned* state of the *Self/Other*, *Hidden Information* condition or the *Unaligned* state of the *Self/Other*, *Known Information* condition.



Table A.2: Fraction choosing Option A

	Unaligned State		Aligned State	
	Hidden Information	Known Information	Hidden Information	Known Information
<b>Classic Payoffs</b>				
Study 1: <i>Self/Other</i>	0.56	0.33	0.87	1.00
Study 1: <i>Other/Other</i>	0.32	0.19	0.71	0.97
Study 2: <i>Self/Other</i>	0.59	0.32	0.84	0.98
Study 2: <i>Other/Other</i>	0.28	0.12	0.69	0.98
Study 3: <i>Self/Other</i>	0.53	0.33	0.78	0.95
Study 3: <i>Other/Other</i>	0.26	0.18	0.70	0.95
Study 4: <i>Self/Other</i>	0.73		0.96	
Study 4: <i>Other/Other</i>	0.34		0.82	
Study 5: <i>Self/Other</i>	0.46	0.39	0.85	0.95
Study 5: <i>Other/Other</i>	0.32		0.71	
Study 5: <i>Self/Self</i>	0.31		0.70	
Study 6: <i>Self/Other</i>	0.61	0.33	0.80	0.96
Study 6: <i>Other/Other</i>	0.30		0.73	
<b>Classic Payoffs with Active Choice</b>				
Study 5: <i>Self/Other</i>	0.40		0.87	
	Aligned State 2		Aligned State 1	
	Hidden Information	Known Information	Hidden Information	Known Information
<b>New Payoffs</b>				
Study 2: <i>Self/Other</i>	0.19	0.07	0.69	0.93
Study 2: <i>Other/Other</i>	0.11	0.15	0.69	0.98
Study 3: <i>Self/Other</i>	0.22	0.08	0.68	0.93
Study 3: <i>Other/Other</i>	0.14	0.11	0.71	0.91
Study 6: <i>Self/Other</i>	0.24		0.72	
<b>New Payoffs with Active Choice</b>				
Study 3: <i>Self/Other</i>	0.25		0.79	
Study 3: <i>Other/Other</i>	0.29		0.86	
N	1296	1018	1295	1019

The above results show the fraction of participants choosing Option A, according to the condition to which they were assigned.

## B Simple Model

A key goal of our paper is to estimate the share of individuals who choose to avoid information due to image concerns: those who are attentive to the information avoidance decision and who strategically choose to avoid information in the presence of image concerns but who would not avoid information absent image concerns. To help clarify our identification approach of comparing the rate of information avoidance in the *Self/Other* condition to the rate in a “control” condition (i.e., the *Other/Other* or *Self/Self* condition), we model the decision to avoid information by building off a simplified version of the model in Grossman and van der Weele (2017).

Specifically, we say that attentive individuals become informed ( $I = 1$ ) rather than remain uninformed ( $I = 0$ ) if their utility from the former is greater (i.e., if  $U(I = 1) - U(I = 0) > 0$ ). Borrowing notation from Grossman and van der Weele (2017), we further assume that

$$U(I = 1) - U(I = 0) = m - k - \mu$$

where  $m$  is the non-image-related benefit of learning information, which can differ across individuals and can involve an individual’s altruism and fairness preferences if the choices impact the payoffs of others;  $k$  is the cost of learning information, which is assumed to be constant across people; and  $\mu$  is the reduced form (self- or social-) signaling value of remaining willfully ignorant, which is only present when there is a self-other tradeoff. Consequently, in the *Self/Other* condition, where there is a self-other tradeoff, attentive individuals remain ignorant whenever  $m < k + \mu$ . By contrast, in the absence of a self-other tradeoff, in the *Other/Other* or *Self/Self* conditions, attentive individuals remain ignorant whenever  $m < k$ .

Given this set-up, if we assume all individuals are attentive and  $m \sim F(m)$  across individuals, then we are interested in identifying the share of individuals who are induced to remain ignorant because of image concerns,  $\mu$ , which is  $F(k + \mu) - F(k)$ .

We denote  $A$  as the fraction of individuals who avoid information and use subscripts  $s/o$  for the *Self/Other* condition,  $o/o$  for the *Other/Other* condition, and  $s/s$  for the *Self/Self* condition. Since, under these assumptions,  $A_{s/o} = F(k + \mu)$  and  $A_{o/o} = A_{s/s} = F(k)$ , it directly follows that:

$$A_{s/o} - A_{o/o} = A_{s/o} - A_{s/s} = F(k + \mu) - F(k) \quad (1)$$

Equation 1 implies that the additional information avoidance in the *Self/Other* condition that is not present in the control conditions comes from subjects who avoid information in the presence of image concerns but who do not avoid information in the absence of image concerns. Put differently, the fraction who choose to remain ignorant because of image concerns can be

identified as the difference in information avoidance between the *Self/Other* condition and either of our two control conditions.

In the above, we assume that all agents are attentive. In what follows, we relax this assumption. First, in Section B.1, we analyze the case where agents are equally likely to be attentive in all conditions. Then, in Section B.2, we allow for the possibility that attention varies across conditions.

We note that the above also assumes that the cost of revealing information,  $k$ , is the same across conditions (i.e., for the *Self/Other*, *Other/Other*, and *Self/Self* conditions). Given that the interface is the same across conditions and revealing information involves clicking a button and going through a new screen in both conditions, the assumption that  $k$  is the same across conditions seems reasonable.

Finally, for simplicity and to communicate the intuition of the model, we further assume that the distribution of non-image-related value of revealing information,  $F(m)$ , is constant across conditions. But, in Section B.3, we allow for the distribution of  $F(m)$  to vary across conditions.

## B.1 Allowing for inattentive subjects when attention does not vary by condition

To allow for the possibility that agents are inattentive in the information acquisition decision, we assume a fraction  $\alpha$  of agents are attentive and make their information revelation decision based on whatever maximizes their utility, as described above. The remaining fraction  $1 - \alpha$  agents are inattentive and make their decision in some other way (e.g., choosing randomly between the three available options on the decisions screen). We say the probability that an inattentive agent avoids information is  $p$ , and we do not consider any inattentive subjects as being inattentive due to image concerns.

Consequently, the share of individuals we want to identify—those who are induced to remain ignorant because of image concerns—is  $\alpha[F(k + \mu) - F(k)]$ , since they must both be attentive and then have image concerns,  $\mu$ , induce information avoidance.

Using the same subscript notation for conditions as above, assuming that the fraction of attentive agents  $\alpha$  is constant across conditions implies that  $\alpha_{s/o} = \alpha_{o/o} = \alpha_{s/s} = \alpha$  and that:

$$\begin{aligned} A_{s/o} &= (1 - \alpha)p + \alpha F(k + \mu) \\ A_{o/o} &= A_{s/s} = (1 - \alpha)p + \alpha F(k) \end{aligned}$$

Thus, when we compare the rates of information avoidance across conditions, we get:

$$A_{s/o} - A_{o/o} = A_{s/o} - A_{s/s} = \alpha[F(k + \mu) - F(k)] \quad (2)$$

Therefore, Equation 2 implies that the additional information avoidance in the *Self/Other*

condition that is not present in the control conditions comes from attentive subjects who avoid information in the presence of image concerns but who do not avoid information in the absence of image concerns, the exact group we are interested in identifying.

## B.2 Allowing for inattentive subjects when attention varies by conditions

An alternative hypothesis to the one used in Section B.1 is that the fraction of attentive agents differs across conditions. In particular, it has been suggested to us that subjects may be more likely to pay attention when there is money for themselves at stake in the decision and hence that  $\alpha_{s/s} \geq \alpha_{s/o} \geq \alpha_{o/o}$ .

We can rewrite the rates of information avoidance as:

$$\begin{aligned} A_{s/s} &= (1 - \alpha_{s/s})p + \alpha_{s/s}F(k) \\ A_{s/o} &= (1 - \alpha_{s/o})p + \alpha_{s/o}F(k + \mu) \\ A_{o/o} &= (1 - \alpha_{o/o})p + \alpha_{o/o}F(k) \end{aligned}$$

In this case, when we compare the rates of information avoidance across the *Self/Other* condition and *Other/Other* condition, we get:

$$\begin{aligned} A_{s/o} - A_{o/o} &= -(\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{o/o})p + \alpha_{s/o}F(k + \mu) - \alpha_{o/o}F(k) \\ &= -(\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{o/o})p + \alpha_{s/o}[F(k + \mu) - F(k) + F(k)] - \alpha_{o/o}F(k) \\ &= -(\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{o/o})p + (\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{o/o})F(k) + \alpha_{s/o}[F(k + \mu) - F(k)] \\ A_{s/o} - A_{o/o} &= \alpha_{s/o}[F(k + \mu) - F(k)] - (\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{o/o})[p - F(k)] \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

Thus, the difference in information avoidance  $A_{s/o} - A_{o/o}$  is the amount of extra information avoidance due to image concerns we are interested in identifying,  $\alpha_{s/o}[F(k + \mu) - F(k)]$ , minus a new term,  $(\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{o/o})[p - F(k)]$ .

Under the assumption that  $\alpha_{s/o} \geq \alpha_{o/o}$ , this implies that  $A_{s/o} - A_{o/o}$  (weakly) underestimates the role of image concerns if  $p \geq F(k)$  or (weakly) overestimates the role of image concerns if  $p < F(k)$ .

Similarly, when we compare the rates of information avoidance across the *Self/Other* condition and the *Self/Self* condition, we get:

$$A_{s/o} - A_{s/s} = \alpha_{s/o}[F(k + \mu) - F(k)] - (\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{s/s})[p - F(k)] \tag{4}$$

Thus, the difference in information avoidance  $A_{s/o} - A_{s/s}$  is the amount of extra information avoidance due to image concerns we are interested in identifying,  $\alpha_{s/o}[F(k + \mu) - F(k)]$ , minus a new term,  $(\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{s/s})[p - F(k)]$ .

Under the assumption that  $\alpha_{s/s} \geq \alpha_{s/o}$ , this implies that  $A_{s/o} - A_{s/s}$  (weakly) overestimates the role of image concerns if  $p \geq F(k)$  or (weakly) underestimates the role of image concerns if  $p < F(k)$ .

Consequently, if  $A_{s/o} - A_{o/o}$  (weakly) underestimates the role of image concerns because of attention differences, then  $A_{s/o} - A_{s/s}$  (weakly) overestimates it for the same reasons and vice versa. Put differently, if  $A_{s/o} - A_{o/o}$  serves as a lower bound for the extent of information avoidance due to image concerns, then  $A_{s/o} - A_{s/s}$  serve as an upper bound, or vice versa.

Empirically, however,  $A_{o/o}$  is approximately equal to  $A_{s/s}$  (in Study 5,  $A_{o/o} = 0.56$  and  $A_{s/s} = 0.55$ ). This means that  $A_{s/o} - A_{o/o}$  is approximately equal to  $A_{s/o} - A_{s/s}$ . Given the tight bounds, this result suggests a limited role of differential inattention confounding our estimate of the share of information avoidance that is due to image concerns.

### B.3 Allowing for the distribution of $F(m)$ to vary by condition

We can relax the assumption that  $F(m)$  is constant across conditions and instead allow it to vary across conditions. Specifically, we do so in two steps. First, we argue that  $p \geq F(k)$ , which implies that  $A_{s/o} - A_{o/o}$  in Equation 3 (weakly) underestimates the role of image concerns and that  $A_{s/o} - A_{s/s}$  in Equation 4 (weakly) overestimates the role of image concerns. Then, we show that allowing  $F(m)$  to vary across conditions only serves to create an additional reason for  $A_{s/o} - A_{o/o}$  and  $A_{s/o} - A_{s/s}$  to provide an underestimate and overestimate, respectively.

#### Step 1: $p \geq F(k)$

To explain why it is likely that  $p \geq F(k)$ , we first consider the value of  $p$  (i.e., the probability that individuals avoid information when inattentive). We note that it is reasonable to assume that  $p \geq 2/3$ . First,  $p = 2/3$  if one assumes that inattentive subjects choose randomly between the three options on our decision screen, two of which avoid information. In addition, if inattentive subjects want to finish the study more quickly, we might think that they pay just enough attention to choose one of the information avoidance options that doesn't require them proceed to an additional decision screen. Doing this would imply that  $p > 2/3$ .

Next, we consider the value of  $F(k)$  (i.e., the fraction who avoid information conditional on being attentive in the absence of image concerns). One natural assumption is that attentive individuals are more likely to acquire information than inattentive individuals, immediately implying  $p \geq 2/3 > F(k)$ . But even without this assumption, we can conclude that  $2/3 > F(k)$  since the empirical rate of information avoidance in the *Other/Other* condition is never more than 56%, which must be a convex combination of  $p \geq 2/3$  and  $F(k)$  (i.e.,  $A_{o/o} = (1 - \alpha_{o/o})p + \alpha_{o/o}F(k)$ ). Or, equivalently, we can conclude that  $2/3 > F(k)$ , since the empirical rate of information avoidance in the *Self/Self* condition is 55%, which must be a convex combination of  $p \geq 2/3$  and  $F(k)$  (i.e.,  $A_{s/s} = (1 - \alpha_{s/s})p + \alpha_{s/s}F(k)$ ).

## Step 2: Impact of allowing $F(m)$ to vary across conditions

Now, given that we have shown  $p \geq F(k)$ , let us turn to showing what happens when we allow  $F(m)$  to vary across conditions. To begin, one might believe that the non-image-related benefit of learning information is higher in the *Self/Self* condition than the *Self/Other* condition, since in the *Self/Self* condition, becoming informed reveals information about the agent's own payoff rather than about the payoff of another subject. This would imply that  $F_{s/o}(k) \geq F_{s/s}(k)$ .<sup>23</sup>

When considering the benefit of learning information in the *Self/Other* condition and *Other/Other* condition, it might be reasonable to assume that the benefit of learning information in these two conditions is the same because the information that is revealed—the payoffs for Player 2—is exactly the same across these two conditions. Alternatively, one might believe that the non-image-related benefit of learning information is higher in the *Self/Other* condition than *Other/Other* condition, because learning information in the *Self/Other* condition reveals information about a decision that affects own payoffs and hence individuals may care more about this information in general. Either way, it follows that  $F_{o/o}(k) \geq F_{s/o}(k)$ .

Then, when we extend the results in Section B.2 to allow for differences in  $F(m)$ , we find:

$$\begin{aligned}
A_{s/o} - A_{o/o} &= -(\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{o/o})p + \alpha_{s/o}[F_{s/o}(k + \mu) - F_{s/o}(k) + F_{s/o}(k)] - \alpha_{o/o}F_{o/o}(k) \\
&= -(\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{o/o})p + \alpha_{s/o}[F_{s/o}(k + \mu) - F_{s/o}(k) + F_{s/o}(k)] - \alpha_{o/o}F_{o/o}(k) \\
&\quad - \alpha_{o/o}F_{s/o}(k) + \alpha_{o/o}F_{s/o}(k) \\
A_{s/o} - A_{o/o} &= \alpha_{s/o}[F_{s/o}(k + \mu) - F_{s/o}(k)] - (\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{o/o})[p - F_{s/o}(k)] - \alpha_{o/o}[F_{o/o}(k) - F_{s/o}(k)]
\end{aligned} \tag{5}$$

Note that Equation 5 is the same as Equation 3 except it includes the additional term  $-\alpha_{o/o}[F_{o/o}(k) - F_{s/o}(k)]$ . Thus, the assumption that  $F_{s/o}(k) \geq F_{s/s}(k)$  only serves to create another reason why  $A_{s/o} - A_{o/o}$  may be an underestimate for the amount of information avoidance that is due to image concerns.

In addition, the same algebra leads to:

$$\begin{aligned}
A_{s/o} - A_{s/s} &= \alpha_{s/o}[F_{s/o}(k + \mu) - F_{s/o}(k)] - (\alpha_{s/o} - \alpha_{s/s})[p - F_{s/o}(k)] - \alpha_{s/s}[F_{s/s}(k) - F_{s/o}(k)]
\end{aligned} \tag{6}$$

Where Equation 6 is the same as Equation 4 except it includes the additional term  $-\alpha_{s/s}[F_{s/s}(k) - F_{s/o}(k)]$ . Thus, the assumption that  $F_{o/o}(k) \geq F_{s/o}(k)$  only serves to create another reason why  $A_{s/o} - A_{s/s}$  may be an overestimate for the amount of information avoidance that is due to image concerns.

Consequently, the Study 5 results in which  $A_{o/o} \approx A_{s/s}$  and the same logic from the prior

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<sup>23</sup>One could also make the stricter assumption that  $F_{s/s}(k)$  first-order stochastically dominates  $F_{s/o}(k)$ .

section suggest a limited role for differences in  $F(m)$  by condition to be confounding our estimates of the role of image concerns driving information avoidance.



## C Experimental Instructions

This paper involved four studies. Section C.1 presents the full instructions for Study 1. Section C.2 presents the full instructions for Study 2. Section C.3 presents the full instructions for Study 3. Section C.4 presents the full instructions for Study 4. We present the details of these studies by showing screenshots of our instructions and decision screens. While not shown in these screenshots—to facilitate readability (i.e., to allow the screenshots to be zoomed-in on the text)—each screen had a red arrow in the bottom right corner that subjects had to actively click to advance to the next page.

### C.1 Experimental Instructions for Study 1

Participants in Study 1 were randomly assigned to 1 of 8 conditions that arise from (*Hidden Information*, *Known Information*)  $\times$  (*Self/Other*, *Other/Other*)  $\times$  (*Unaligned state*, *Aligned state*).

After consenting to participate in the study, subjects are informed of the \$0.50 study completion fee and of the opportunity to earn an additional payment. Figure C.1 shows how this payment information is explained and the corresponding comprehension question that they must correctly answer to proceed (multiple attempts—rather than providing them with the correct answer—are given if needed).

To mitigate the relevance of direct reciprocity concerns, in Study 1 (as well as in Studies 2 and 3), subjects are informed that they are randomly assigned into groups of three participants, that one member of their group will be randomly selected as the decision maker, and that only the choice of the decision maker will determine additional payoffs for the group. That is, the decision maker determines additional payoffs for themselves and another group member in the *Self/Other* condition or for both of their other group members in the *Other/Other* condition. After subjects make their decisions, they fill out a short demographic survey.

### Figure C.1: Payment Information

**Your payment:** To complete this study, you must make one decision in a game and answer a short survey. For completing this study, you are guaranteed to receive 50 cents within 24 hours. Additional payment may also be given to you and/or other MTurk workers.

In particular, *after* all MTurk workers who are recruited for this study complete it, groups of three MTurk workers will be randomly formed. The other two MTurk workers in your group will be called "Player Y" and "Player Z." One member of each group will be randomly selected to be the "decision maker" in the game. Any additional payments that result from the decision made by the decision maker in the game will then be distributed within two weeks.

**Understanding Question:** Which of the following statements is true?

My decision will influence the additional payments from this study.

My decision will NOT influence the additional payments from this study.

My decision will influence the additional payments from this study if I am randomly selected to be the decision maker in my group.

Participants are then provided with instructions about their decisions and asked to answer comprehension questions that they must correctly answer to proceed (multiple attempts—rather than providing them with the correct answer—are given if needed). Figures C.2–C.5 show the instructions and comprehension questions for each of the *Known Information* conditions. Figures C.6–C.7 show the instructions and comprehension questions for the *Hidden Information* conditions.

Figure C.2: Known Information  $\times$  Self/Other  $\times$  Aligned State, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- **You** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Understanding Question:** You will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

Figure C.3: Known Information  $\times$  Self/Other  $\times$  Unaligned State, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- **You** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>60 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>

**Understanding Question:** You will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

Figure C.4: Known Information × Other/Other × Aligned State, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Understanding Question:** Player Y will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

Figure C.5: Known Information × Other/Other × Unaligned State, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

**Understanding Question:** Player Y will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.



Figure C.6: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- You will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

GAME 1			GAME 2		
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive		You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	10 cents	A	60 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents	B	50 cents	10 cents

**Understanding Question:** You will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

Figure C.7: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

	GAME 2	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Understanding Question:** Player Y will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

Participants are then reminded of the instructions and asked to make their decisions. Figures C.8–C.11 show the decision screens for each of the *Known Information* conditions. Figures C.12–C.13 show the decision screens for each of the *Hidden Information* conditions. If participants in those conditions choose to Reveal Player Z’s payoffs, then the state is revealed and they are asked to make their decision on the next page, as shown below in Figures C.14–C.17.

Figure C.8: Known Information × Self/Other × Aligned State, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- You will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>60 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **60 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.9: Known Information  $\times$  Self/Other  $\times$  Unaligned State, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- You will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>60 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **60 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.10: Known Information  $\times$  Other/Other  $\times$  Aligned State, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **60 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.11: Known Information  $\times$  Other/Other  $\times$  Unaligned State, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **60 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.12: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- You will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A** in **GAME 1** or **B** in **GAME 2**.
- Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in **GAME 1** or **A** in **GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

	GAME 2	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) or instead indicate that you would like to make your decision after being informed of which game you are in (by choosing Reveal Player Z's Payoffs) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **60 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **50 cents** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **10 cents** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**, information on the next page will reveal whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and thus will reveal the exact payoffs that Player Z will receive if you choose A or B. After this information is revealed, you will choose between A and B.

A

B

Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

Figure C.13: Hidden Information × Other/Other, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z’s payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A** in **GAME 1** or **B** in **GAME 2**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in **GAME 1** or **A** in **GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

GAME 1		
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

GAME 2		
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) or instead indicate that you would like to make your decision after being informed of which game you are in (by choosing **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**) given that:

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **60 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **50 cents** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **10 cents** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**, information on the next page will reveal whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and thus will reveal the exact payoffs that Player Z will receive if you choose A or B. After this information is revealed, you will choose between A and B.

A

B

Reveal Player Z's Payoffs



Figure C.14: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other  $\times$  Aligned Condition, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 2** and thus:

- **You** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 2, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 2	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **60 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.15: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other  $\times$  Unaligned State, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 1** and thus:

- You will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 1, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>60 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **60 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.16: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other  $\times$  Aligned State, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 2** and thus:

- **Player Y** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 2, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 2	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **60 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.17: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other  $\times$  Unaligned State, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 1** and thus:

- **Player Y** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 1, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	60 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **60 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.

A

B

## C.2 Experimental Instructions for Study 2

Participants in Study 2 were randomly assigned to 1 of 16 conditions. The first set of 8 involved the same conditions as in Study 1, which we call the “Classic Payoffs” conditions that arise from  $(\textit{Hidden Information}, \textit{Known Information}) \times (\textit{Self/Other}, \textit{Other/Other}) \times (\textit{Unaligned state}, \textit{Aligned state})$ . The second set of 8 conditions involved new conditions, which we call “New Payoffs” that arise from  $(\textit{Hidden Information}, \textit{Known Information}) \times (\textit{Self/Other-New}, \textit{Other/Other-New}) \times (\textit{Aligned State 1}, \textit{Aligned State 2})$ . See Section C.1 for the conditions that were also included in Study 1. In what follows, we describe the 8 new conditions.

After consenting to participate in the study, participants are informed of the \$0.50 study completion fee and of the opportunity to earn an additional payment equivalent to Study 1 (as shown in Figure C.1). Participants are then provided with instructions about their decision and asked to answer comprehension questions that they must correctly answer to proceed (multiple attempts—rather than providing them with the correct answer—are given if needed). Figures C.18–C.23 show the instructions and comprehension questions for each of the respective conditions.

Figure C.18: Known Information  $\times$  Self/Other–New  $\times$  Aligned State 1, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Understanding Question:** You will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

None of the above. You will receive the same amount of money regardless of what you choose.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

Figure C.19: Known Information  $\times$  Self/Other–New  $\times$  Aligned State 2, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>

**Understanding Question:** You will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

None of the above. You will receive the same amount of money regardless of what you choose.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

Figure C.20: Known Information  $\times$  Other/Other–New  $\times$  Aligned State 1, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Understanding Question:** Player Y will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

None of the above. Player Y will receive the same amount of money regardless of what you choose.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.



Figure C.21: Known Information  $\times$  Other/Other-New  $\times$  Aligned State 2, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

**Understanding Question:** Player Y will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

None of the above. Player Y will receive the same amount of money regardless of what you choose.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

Figure C.22: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other–New, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

	GAME 2	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Understanding Question:** You will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

None of the above. You will receive the same amount of money regardless of what you choose.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

Figure C.23: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other–New, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

	GAME 2	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Understanding Question:** Player Y will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

None of the above. Player Y will receive the same amount of money regardless of what you choose.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

Participants are then reminded of the instructions and asked to make their decisions. Figures C.24–C.29 show the decision screens for each of the conditions. If participants in those conditions choose to Reveal Player Z’s payoffs, the state is revealed on the next page and they are asked to make their decision, as shown below in Figures C.30–C.33.

Figure C.24: Known Information  $\times$  Self/Other–New  $\times$  Aligned State 1, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
<b>A</b>	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.25: Known Information  $\times$  Self/Other–New  $\times$  Aligned State 2, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.26: Known Information  $\times$  Other/Other-New  $\times$  Aligned State 1, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.27: Known Information  $\times$  Other/Other–New  $\times$  Aligned State 2, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.28: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other-New, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A** in **GAME 1** or **B** in **GAME 2**.
- Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in **GAME 1** or **A** in **GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>

	GAME 2	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) or instead indicate that you would like to make your decision after being informed of which game you are in (by choosing **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**) given that:

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **50 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **50 cents** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **10 cents** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**, information on the next page will reveal whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and thus will reveal the exact payoffs that Player Z will receive if you choose A or B. After this information is revealed, you will choose between A and B.

A

B

Reveal Player Z's Payoffs



Figure C.29: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other–New, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

	GAME 2	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) or instead indicate that you would like to make your decision after being informed of which game you are in (by choosing Reveal Player Z's Payoffs) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **50 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **50 cents** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **10 cents** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**, information on the next page will reveal whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and thus will reveal the exact payoffs that Player Z will receive if you choose A or B. After this information is revealed, you will choose between A and B.

A

B

Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

Figure C.30: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other–New  $\times$  Aligned State 1, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 2** and thus:

- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 2, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 2	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.31: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other–New  $\times$  Aligned State 2, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 1** and thus:

- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 1, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.32: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other–New  $\times$  Aligned State 1, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 2** and thus:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 2, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 2	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.33: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other–New  $\times$  Aligned State 2, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 1** and thus:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 1, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.

A

B

### C.3 Experimental Instructions for Study 3

Participants in Study 3 are randomly assigned to 1 of 20 conditions. The first set of 16 conditions were exactly the same as the 16 conditions in Study 2. The additional 4 conditions are new conditions, which we call “New Payoffs with Active Choice” that arise from  $(\textit{Hidden Information}) \times (\textit{Self/Other-Active}, \textit{Other/Other-Active}) \times (\textit{Aligned State 1}, \textit{Aligned State 2})$ . See Sections C.1 and C.2 to learn more about the first 16 conditions included in Study 3. In what follows, we describe the 4 new conditions.

After consenting to participate in the study, subjects are informed of the \$0.50 study completion fee and of the opportunity to earn an additional payment in the same way as in Study 1 and 2 (as shown in Figure C.1). Participants are then provided with instructions about their decision and asked to answer comprehension questions that they must correctly answer to proceed (multiple attempts—rather than providing them with the correct answer—are given if needed). Figures C.34–C.35 show the instructions and comprehension questions for each of the new conditions.

Figure C.34: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other-Active, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2**.
- Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

GAME 1			GAME 2		
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive		You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents	A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents	B	50 cents	10 cents

**Understanding Question:** You will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

None of the above. You will receive the same amount of money regardless of what you choose.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

Figure C.35: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other-Active, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- Player Y will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- Player Y will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2**.
- Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

GAME 1		
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

GAME 2		
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Understanding Question:** Player Y will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

None of the above. Player Y will receive the same amount of money regardless of what you choose.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.



Participants are then reminded of the instructions and asked to make their decisions. Figures C.36–C.37 show the first decision screen for each of the new conditions. If participants in those conditions choose to Reveal Player Z’s payoffs, the state is revealed on the next page and they are asked to make their decision, as shown below in Figures C.38–C.41. If participants choose not to Reveal Player Z’s payoffs, they are instead asked to make a decision without learning their state, as shown below in Figures C.42–C.43.

Figure C.36: Hidden Information × Self/Other–Active, Revelation Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z’s payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A** in **GAME 1** or **B** in **GAME 2**.
- Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in **GAME 1** or **A** in **GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>

	GAME 2	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>

To help you make your decision in this game on the next screen, would you like to Reveal Player Z’s Payoffs so that information on the next screen reveals whether you are in Game 1 or Game 2?

Yes - Reveal Player Z’s Payoffs

No - DO NOT Reveal Player Z’s Payoffs

Figure C.37: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other-Active, Revelation Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

	GAME 2	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

To help you make your decision in this game on the next screen, would you like to Reveal Player Z's Payoffs so that information on the next screen reveals whether you are in Game 1 or Game 2?

Yes - Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

No - DO NOT Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

Figure C.38: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other-Active  $\times$  Aligned State 1, After Choosing to Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

You chose **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 2** and thus:

- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 2, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 2	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.39: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other-Active  $\times$  Aligned State 2, After Choosing to Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

You chose **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 1** and thus:

- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 1, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.40: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other-Active  $\times$  Aligned State 1, After Choosing to Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

You chose **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 2** and thus:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 2, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 2	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.41: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other-Active  $\times$  Aligned State 2, After Choosing to Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

You chose **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 1** and thus:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 1, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **10 cents**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents**, and Player Z will receive **50 cents**.

A

B

Figure C.42: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other–Active, After Choosing Not to Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

You chose **DO NOT Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Thus, recall the previous information you received about the game:

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A** in **GAME 1** or **B** in **GAME 2**.
- Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in **GAME 1** or **A** in **GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>

	GAME 2	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **50 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **50 cents** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **10 cents** if you are in GAME 2.

A

B

Figure C.43: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other-Active, After Choosing Not to Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

You chose **DO NOT Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Thus, recall the previous information you received about the game:

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- **Player Y** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- **Player Z** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A** in **GAME 1** or **B** in **GAME 2**.
- **Player Z** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in **GAME 1** or **A** in **GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

	GAME 2	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	50 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **50 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **10 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **50 cents** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **50 cents** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **50 cents** if you are in GAME 1 or **10 cents** if you are in GAME 2.

A

B



## C.4 Experimental Instructions for Study 4

Participants in Study 4 are randomly assigned to 1 of 4 conditions that arise from *Hidden Information*  $\times$  (*Self/Other*, *Other/Other*)  $\times$  (*Unaligned* state, *Aligned* state). That is, they are always assigned to a *Hidden Information* condition.

After consenting to participate in the study, participants are informed of the study completion fee and of the opportunity to earn an additional payment, as shown in Figure [C.44](#).

Figure C.44: Study 4 Payment Information

**Your Payment:** This study involves 3 decisions that ask you to choose between different payment options, followed by a short survey. There is 1 in 3 chance (or 33% chance) that one of these decisions will be randomly selected as the decision-that-counts. If one of your decisions is randomly selected as the decision-that-counts, whichever payment option you choose in the decision-that-counts will be distributed as additional payment from this study. More specifically:

If you choose a payment option that benefits you in the decision-that-counts, the corresponding additional payment will be given to you in cash at the end of this study.

If you choose a payment option that benefits some other person in the decision-that-counts, the corresponding additional payment will be given to that other person.

**The other people:** Throughout this study, you will be matched with two other people who will be called "Player Y" and "Player Z." If one of your decisions is selected as a decision-that-counts, the payment option you choose in the decision-that-counts may benefit Player Y, Player Z, both Player Y and Player Z, or neither Player Y nor Player Z.

Player Y and Player Z will be two unique MTurk workers. MTurk workers are individuals who we hire to complete surveys for us via an online platform called Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), which "is a crowdsourcing marketplace that makes it easier for individuals and businesses to outsource their processes and jobs to a distributed workforce who can perform these tasks virtually" (<https://www.mturk.com>).

**Understanding Question:** Which of the following statements is true?

All of my decisions will influence the resulting payments from this study.

None of my decisions will influence the resulting payments from this study.

One of my decisions will influence the resulting payments from this study.

If one of my decisions is randomly selected as a decision-that-counts, that decision will influence the payments from this study.

Participants are then provided with instructions about their decisions and asked comprehension questions that they must correctly answer to proceed (multiple attempts—rather than providing them with the correct answer—are given if needed). Figures [C.45](#)–[C.46](#) show the instructions and comprehension questions for each of the conditions.

Figure C.45: Decision 1: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other, Comprehension Question

**Decision 1 out of 3:**

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- You will receive \$6 if you choose A in either game.
- You will receive \$5 if you choose B in either game.
- Player Z will receive \$1 if you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.
- Player Z will receive \$5 if you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

GAME 1			GAME 2		
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive		You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	\$6	\$1	A	\$6	\$5
B	\$5	\$5	B	\$5	\$1

**Understanding Question:** You will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

Figure C.46: Decision 1: Hidden Information × Other/Other, Comprehension Question

**Decision 1 out of 3:**

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **\$6** if you choose **A** in either game.
- **Player Y** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B** in either game.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$1** if you choose **A** in **GAME 1** or **B** in **GAME 2**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B** in **GAME 1** or **A** in **GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	\$6	\$1
B	\$5	\$5

	GAME 2	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	\$6	\$5
B	\$5	\$1

**Understanding Question:** Player Y will receive more money if. . .

- you choose A in either game.
- you choose B in either game.
- you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.
- you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

- you choose A in either game.
- you choose B in either game.
- you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.
- you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

Participants are then reminded of the instructions and asked to make their first decision. The first decision always involves making a decision in the *Hidden Information* condition, since information avoidance is our main outcome of interest. Figures C.47–C.48 show the decision screens for each of the conditions. If participants in those conditions choose to Reveal Player Z’s payoffs, the state is revealed on the next page, and they are asked to make their decision, as shown below in Figures C.49–C.52.

Figure C.47: Decision 1: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other, Decision

**Decision 1 out of 3:**

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- You will receive \$6 if you choose A in either game.
- You will receive \$5 if you choose B in either game.
- Player Z will receive \$1 if you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.
- Player Z will receive \$5 if you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

GAME 1			GAME 2		
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive		You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	\$6	\$1	A	\$6	\$5
B	\$5	\$5	B	\$5	\$1

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) or instead indicate that you would like to make your decision after being informed of which game you are in (by choosing Reveal Player Z's Payoffs) given that:

- If you choose A, you will receive \$6 regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive \$1 if you are in GAME 1 or \$5 if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose B, you will receive \$5 regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive \$5 if you are in GAME 1 or \$1 if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**, information on the next page will reveal whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and thus will reveal the exact payoffs that Player Z will receive if you choose A or B. After this information is revealed, you will choose between A and B.

A

B

Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

Figure C.48: Decision 1: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other, Decision

**Decision 1 out of 3:**

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that Player Z's payoffs are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **\$6** if you choose **A** in either game.
- **Player Y** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B** in either game.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$1** if you choose **A** in **GAME 1** or **B** in **GAME 2**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B** in **GAME 1** or **A** in **GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	\$6	\$1
B	\$5	\$5

	GAME 2	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	\$6	\$5
B	\$5	\$1

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) or instead indicate that you would like to make your decision after being informed of which game you are in (by choosing Reveal Player Z's Payoffs) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **\$6** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **\$1** if you are in GAME 1 or **\$5** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **\$5** regardless of which game you are in, and Player Z will receive **\$5** if you are in GAME 1 or **\$1** if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**, information on the next page will reveal whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and thus will reveal the exact payoffs that Player Z will receive if you choose A or B. After this information is revealed, you will choose between A and B.

A

B

Reveal Player Z's Payoffs



Figure C.49: Decision 1: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other  $\times$  Aligned State, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 2** and thus:

- You will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- You will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- Player Z will receive **\$5** if you choose **A**.
- Player Z will receive **\$1** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 2, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 2	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>\$6</b>	<b>\$5</b>
B	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$1</b>

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **\$6**, and Player Z will receive **\$5**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **\$5**, and Player Z will receive **\$1**.

A

B

Figure C.50: Decision 1: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other  $\times$  Unaligned State, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 1** and thus:

- You will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- You will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- Player Z will receive **\$1** if you choose **A**.
- Player Z will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 1, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>\$6</b>	<b>\$1</b>
B	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$5</b>

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **\$6**, and Player Z will receive **\$1**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **\$5**, and Player Z will receive **\$5**.

A

B

Figure C.51: Decision 1: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other  $\times$  Aligned State, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's Payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 2** and thus:

- **Player Y** will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$5** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$1** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 2, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 2	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>\$6</b>	<b>\$5</b>
B	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$1</b>

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **\$6**, and Player Z will receive **\$5**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **\$5**, and Player Z will receive **\$1**.

A

B

Figure C.52: Decision 1: Hidden Information  $\times$  Other/Other  $\times$  Unaligned State, After Revealing Player Z's Payoffs

You chose to **Reveal Player Z's payoffs**. Note that you are in **GAME 1** and thus:

- **Player Y** will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$1** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 1, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	\$6	\$1
B	\$5	\$5

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **\$6**, and Player Z will receive **\$1**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **\$5**, and Player Z will receive **\$5**.

A

B

Participants then face two more decisions in a random order. These two decisions may provide some insight related to how participants make decisions in the *Known Information* condition, but participants only ever made these decisions after they make decisions in the *Hidden Information* condition, so these latter two decisions could be influenced by their decisions in the *Hidden Information* condition. As explained in the main text, this design choice reflected our limited subject pool for Study 4 and our desire to focus on information avoidance decisions in the *Hidden Information* condition. Figures C.53–C.60 show the comprehension questions that they must correctly answer to proceed (multiple attempts—rather than providing them with the correct answer—are given if needed) and the subsequent two decisions.

Figure C.53: Decision 2: Self/Other, Comprehension Questions

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- You will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- You will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- Player Z will receive **\$5** if you choose **A**.
- Player Z will receive **\$1** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>\$6</b>	<b>\$5</b>
B	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$1</b>

**Understanding Question:** You will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

Figure C.54: Decision 2: Self/Other, Decision

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- You will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- You will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$5** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$1** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>\$6</b>	<b>\$5</b>
B	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$1</b>

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **\$6**, and Player Z will receive **\$5**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **\$5**, and Player Z will receive **\$1**.

A

B

Figure C.55: Decision 3: Self/Other, Comprehension Question

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- **You** will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$1** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>\$6</b>	<b>\$1</b>
B	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$5</b>

**Understanding Question:** You will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

Figure C.56: Decision 3: Self/Other, Decision

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y.

In particular:

- **You** will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- **You** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$1** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you and Player Z can be described as follows:

	You Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>\$6</b>	<b>\$1</b>
B	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$5</b>

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **\$6**, and Player Z will receive **\$1**.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **\$5**, and Player Z will receive **\$5**.

A	B
---	---



Figure C.57: Decision 2: Other/Other, Comprehension Questions

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$5** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$1** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	\$6	\$5
B	\$5	\$1

**Understanding Question:** Player Y will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

Figure C.58: Decision 2: Other/Other, Decision

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$5** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$1** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>\$6</b>	<b>\$5</b>
B	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$1</b>

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **\$6**, and Player Z will receive **\$5**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **\$5**, and Player Z will receive **\$1**.

A	B
---	---

Figure C.59: Decision 3: Other/Other, Comprehension Questions

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$1** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	\$6	\$1
B	\$5	\$5

**Understanding Question:** Player Y will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

**Understanding Question:** Player Z will receive more money if. . .

you choose A.

you choose B.

Figure C.60: Decision 3: Other/Other, Decision

**Instructions for the game in this decision:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for Player Y and Player Z. Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for you.

In particular:

- **Player Y** will receive **\$6** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Y** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$1** if you choose **A**.
- **Player Z** will receive **\$5** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for Player Y and Player Z can be described as follows:

	Player Y Will Receive	Player Z Will Receive
A	<b>\$6</b>	<b>\$1</b>
B	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$5</b>

**Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:**

- If you choose **A**, Player Y will receive **\$6**, and Player Z will receive **\$1**.
- If you choose **B**, Player Y will receive **\$5**, and Player Z will receive **\$5**.

A	B
---	---

## C.5 Experimental Instructions for Study 5

Participants in Study 5 are randomly assigned to 1 of 8 conditions. Six conditions (see Section C.1 to learn more about them) were also run in Studies 1–3 and include (i) the 4 conditions that arise from (*Hidden Information*)  $\times$  (*Self/Other*, *Other/Other*)  $\times$  (*Unaligned state*, *Aligned state*) and (ii) the 2 conditions that arise from (*Known Information*)  $\times$  (*Self/Other*)  $\times$  (*Unaligned state*, *Aligned state*). Two conditions—that arise from (*Hidden Information*)  $\times$  (*Self/Other-Active*)  $\times$  (*Unaligned state*, *Aligned state*)—are very similar to the active choice conditions discussed in Study 3 but are built off of the *Self/Other* condition with Classic Payoffs rather than the *Self/Other* condition with New Payoffs. Thus, see Section C.3 to learn more about the active choice conditions built off of the *Self/Other* condition with New Payoffs and note that the only difference with the *Self/Other* condition with Classic Payoffs involves Player 1 receiving \$0.60 rather than \$0.50 from Option A. Two conditions—that arise from (*Hidden Information*)  $\times$  (*Self/Self*)  $\times$  (*Unaligned state*, *Aligned state*) are new and hence described below.

After consenting to participate in the study, subjects are informed of the \$0.50 study completion fee and of the opportunity to earn an additional payment in the same way as in Studies 1–3 (as shown in Figure C.1). Participants are then provided with instructions about their decision and asked to answer comprehension questions that they must correctly answer to proceed (multiple attempts—rather than providing them with the correct answer—are given if needed). Figure C.61 show the instructions and comprehension questions for the new conditions.

Figure C.61: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Self, Comprehension Questions

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you (specifically, you will receive the sum of Amount 1 and Amount 2). Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y or Player Z.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that your payoffs in Amount 2 are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- **From Amount 1, you** will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A** in either game.
- **From Amount 1, you** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in either game.
- **From Amount 2, you** will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A** in **GAME 1** or **B** in **GAME 2**.
- **From Amount 2, you** will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B** in **GAME 1** or **A** in **GAME 2**.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you from Amount 1 and Amount 2 can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Amount 1	Amount 2
A	60 cents	10 cents
B	50 cents	50 cents

	GAME 2	
	Amount 1	Amount 2
A	60 cents	50 cents
B	50 cents	10 cents

**Understanding Question:** You will receive more money if. . .

you choose A in either game.

you choose B in either game.

you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.

you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

**Understanding Question:** Your payoffs equal. . .

the amount you receive from Amount 1.

the amount you receive from Amount 2.

the amount you receive from the sum of Amount 1 and Amount 2.

Participants are then reminded of the instructions and asked to make their decisions. Figure C.62 shows the first decision screen, and if participants in those choose to Reveal Player Z's payoffs, the state is revealed on the next page and they are asked to make their decision, as shown below in Figures C.63–C.64.

Figure C.62: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Self, Decision

**The game:** You must choose A or B, which corresponds to payoffs for you (specifically, you will receive the sum of Amount 1 and Amount 2). Thus, the decision you make in this game will *not* influence payoffs for Player Y or Player Z.

There is a 50% chance that you are in GAME 1 and a 50% that you are in GAME 2.

Both games are the same except that your payoffs in Amount 2 are flipped between the two games. In particular:

- From Amount 1, you will receive **60 cents** if you choose A in either game.
- From Amount 1, you will receive **50 cents** if you choose B in either game.
- From Amount 2, you will receive **10 cents** if you choose A in GAME 1 or B in GAME 2.
- From Amount 2, you will receive **50 cents** if you choose B in GAME 1 or A in GAME 2.

Put differently, according to whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you from Amount 1 and Amount 2 can be described as follows:

	GAME 1	
	Amount 1	Amount 2
A	<b>60 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>

	GAME 2	
	Amount 1	Amount 2
A	<b>60 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) or instead indicate that you would like to make your decision after being informed of which game you are in (by choosing Reveal Amount 2) given that:

- If you choose A, you will receive **60 cents** from Amount 1 regardless of which game you are in, and you will receive **10 cents** from Amount 2 if you are in GAME 1 or **50 cents** from Amount 2 if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose B, you will receive **50 cents** from Amount 1 regardless of which game you are in, and you will receive **50 cents** from Amount 2 if you are in GAME 1 or **10 cents** from Amount 2 if you are in GAME 2.
- If you choose **Reveal Amount 2**, information on the next page will reveal whether you are in GAME 1 or GAME 2 and thus will reveal the exact payoffs that you will receive from Amount 2 if you choose A or B. After this information is revealed, you will choose between A and B.

A	B	Reveal Amount 2
---	---	-----------------



Figure C.63: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Self  $\times$  Unaligned State, After Choosing to Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

You chose **Reveal Amount 2**. Note that you are in **GAME 1** and thus:

- From Amount 1, you will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- From Amount 1, you will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- From Amount 2, you will receive **10 cents** if you choose **A**.
- From Amount 2, you will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 1, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you from Amount 1 and Amount 2 can be described as follows:

GAME 1		
	Amount 1	Amount 2
A	<b>60 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **60 cents** from Amount 1, and you will receive **10 cents** from Amount 2.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents** from Amount 1, and you will receive **50 cents** from Amount 2.

A

B

Figure C.64: Hidden Information  $\times$  Self/Other  $\times$  Aligned State, After Choosing to Reveal Player Z's Payoffs

You chose **Reveal Amount 2**. Note that you are in **GAME 2** and thus:

- From Amount 1, You will receive **60 cents** if you choose **A**.
- From Amount 1, You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **B**.
- From Amount 2, You will receive **50 cents** if you choose **A**.
- From Amount 2, You will receive **10 cents** if you choose **B**.

Put differently, since you are in GAME 2, according to whether you choose A or B, the payoffs for you from Amount 1 and Amount 2 can be described as follows:

GAME 2		
	Amount 1	Amount 2
A	<b>60 cents</b>	<b>50 cents</b>
B	<b>50 cents</b>	<b>10 cents</b>

Now, please make your decision in this game (by choosing A or B) given that:

- If you choose **A**, you will receive **60 cents** from Amount 1, and you will receive **50 cents** from Amount 2.
- If you choose **B**, you will receive **50 cents** from Amount 1, and you will receive **10 cents** from Amount 2.

A

B

## C.6 Experimental Instructions for Study 6

Participants in Study 6 are randomly assigned to 1 of 8 conditions. The 8 conditions include (i) the 4 conditions that arise from (*Hidden Information*)  $\times$  (*Self/Other–High Stakes*, *Other/Other–High Stakes*)  $\times$  (*Unaligned state*, *Aligned state*), (ii) the 2 conditions that arise from (*Hidden Information*)  $\times$  (*Self/Other–New Payoffs*, *High Stakes*)  $\times$  (*Unaligned state*, *Aligned state*), and (iii) the 2 conditions that arise from (*Known Information*)  $\times$  (*Self/Other–High Stakes*)  $\times$  (*Unaligned state*, *Aligned state*). The *Self/Other–High Stakes* conditions and the *Other/Other–High Stakes* conditions are identical to the *Self/Other* conditions and the *Other/Other* conditions, respectively, that were run Study 2 with one exception: all payoffs (aside from the completion fee) are multiplied by 10. Thus, see Section C.2 to learn more about these conditions.