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# First Show Me the Money: Moral Wiggle Room Reverted

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## Abstract

We study the dictator game with hidden payoffs that can be voluntarily revealed at zero cost, as in Dana et al. (2007), and vary the type of hidden information and the timing of revelation. In all treatments the dictator makes a choice between two options: a more selfish option and a more pro-social option. The distribution of payoffs for these options is known, but the actual payoffs can be hidden and then revealed by dictators at zero cost at a particular time depending on the treatment. In the *moral wiggle room* treatment, as in Dana et al. (2007), the dictator observes her actual payoff before deciding whether to reveal the receiver's payoff. In the *reversed order treatment*, the dictator observes her own actual payoff after deciding whether to reveal the receiver's payoff. We find that among dictators, 58% choose the selfish option in the moral wiggle room treatment while in the reversed order treatment only 25% do so. In the *self-revelation treatment*, the dictator first observes the receiver's payoff before she can reveal her own payoff. We observe that 34% of dictators choose not to reveal their own payoff, among them 85% choose the pro-social option. These results contradict the explanation in Dana et al. (2007): the observed discrepancies cannot be explained by image concerns. We conjecture that these results can be explained by the fact that the dictators are primed by the information they observe first and, independently, in that the dictators seek to avoid the painful decision between the two options and prefer to remain partly ignorant. A simple dual self model explains the result.

**Keywords:** Motivated Beliefs, Priming, Fairness, Experiments, Dictator games.

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