

**Supplementary Online Material for**  
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**“Professional Philosophers’ Susceptibility to Order Effects and Framing Effects in**  
**Evaluating Moral Dilemmas”**

Initial Instructions:

*Non-Reflection Group:*

Thank you for your participation in this study.

You will read about several situations and then be asked a question about it. If the answers seem obvious, that's ok. Just go ahead and give the obvious answer. There are no trick questions and we are looking for whatever you think the simple, clear answer is.

*Reflection Group:*

Thank you for your participation in this study.

You will read about several situations and then be asked a question about it. If the answers seem obvious, that's ok. Just go ahead and give the obvious answer. There are no trick questions and we are looking for whatever you think the simple, clear answer is.

**Over the course of the five questions that follow, we are particularly interested in your reflective, considered responses. After each case, please take some time to consider the different moral dimensions at issue, including potential arguments for and against the position to which you are initially attracted. Also please consider how you might respond to different variants of the scenario or to different ways of describing the case.**

**After you finish reading each of the five cases, there will be a 15-second delay to encourage careful reflection before you are asked a question about the case. You needn't answer immediately after the question appears. Please feel free to take as much time as you like.**

*After each scenario and each principle, participants in the reflection condition also see the following prompt:*

**Please take some time to consider the different moral dimensions of the scenario, including potential arguments both for and against flipping the switch. Please also consider how you might respond to different variants of the scenario or different ways of describing the case. In fifteen seconds, you will be asked a question about the scenario. You needn't answer**

**immediately after the question appears. We want you to reflect carefully about it, so please take as much time as you like.**

When you are ready to BEGIN the reflection period, hit the advance button ( >> ) below. The text of the scenario will remain on the screen. After 15 seconds you will be permitted to make a response, but take as much time as you would like.

### Trolley Scenarios:

#### *Switch:*

Vicki is standing by the railroad tracks when she notices an empty boxcar rolling out of control. It is moving so fast that anyone it hits will die. Ahead on the main track are five people. There is one person standing on a side track that doesn't rejoin the main track. If Vicki does nothing, the boxcar will hit the five people on the main track, but not the one person on the side track. If Vicki flips a switch next to her, it will divert the boxcar to the side track where it will hit the one person, and not hit the five people on the main track.

[In the reflection condition, the prompt “Is flipping the switch morally good or bad?” appears. After the 15-second delay, it is replaced with:]

Flipping the switch is:

[Respondents see seven circles laid out horizontally, labeled as below. The font and background colors were consistent with the font and colors of the scenario questions. The rightmost bubble was coded as “1”, the second from the right “2”, etc. The same response scale was used for all trolley questions.]

Extremely morally good      Neither good nor bad      Extremely morally bad

○      ○      ○      ○      ○      ○      ○

#### *Push:*

Jane is standing on a footbridge over the railroad tracks when she notices an empty boxcar rolling out of control. It is moving so fast that anyone it hits will die. Ahead on the track are five people. There is a person standing near Jane on the footbridge, and he weighs enough that the boxcar would slow down if it hit him. (Jane does not weigh enough to slow down the boxcar.) If Jane does nothing, the boxcar will hit the five people on the track. If Jane pushes the

one person, that one person will fall onto the track, where the boxcar will hit the one person, slow down because of the one person, and not hit the five people farther down the track.

[In the reflection condition, the prompt “Is pushing the stranger on the tracks morally good or bad?” appears. After the 15-second delay, it is replaced with:]

Pushing the stranger on the tracks is:

[Response scale]

*Drop:*

Mary is standing near a footbridge over the railroad tracks when she notices an empty boxcar rolling out of control. It is moving so fast that anyone it hits will die. Ahead on the track are five people. There is a person standing on the footbridge, and he weighs enough that the boxcar would slow down if it hit him. (Mary does not weigh enough to slow down the boxcar.) If Mary does nothing, the boxcar will hit the five people on the track. If Mary pulls a lever it will release the bottom of the footbridge and that one person will fall onto the track, where the boxcar will hit the one person, slow down because of the one person, and not hit the five people farther down the track.

[In the reflection condition, the prompt “Is pulling the lever morally good or bad?” appears. After the 15-second delay, it is replaced with:]

Pulling the lever is:

[Response scale]

Framing Effect Scenarios:

*Die Nuclear:*

Imagine that your country is preparing for a nuclear meltdown, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to deal with the meltdown have been proposed. Assume that the best available expert estimates of the consequences of the programs are as follows:

Program A: If program A is adopted 400 people will die.

Program B: If program B is adopted there is a 1/3 probability that nobody will die, and a 2/3 probability that 600 people will die.

Which program should be adopted?

[Respondents could click on a circle below “Program A” or “Program B”, laid out horizontally. The same response scale was used for all framing effect scenarios.]

*Save Nuclear:*

Imagine that your country is preparing for a nuclear meltdown, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to deal with the meltdown have been proposed. Assume that the best available expert estimates of the consequences of the programs are as follows:

Program A: If program A is adopted 200 people will be saved.

Program B: If program B is adopted there is a 1/3 probability that 600 people will be saved, and a 2/3 probability that no people will be saved.

Which program should be adopted?

[Response scale]

*Die Disease:*

Imagine that your country is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual disease, which is expected to kill 800 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the best available expert estimates of the consequences of the programs are as follows:

Program A: If program A is adopted 600 people will die.

Program B: If program B is adopted there is a 1/4 probability that nobody will die, and a 3/4 probability that 800 people will die.

Which program should be adopted?

[Response scale]

*Save Disease:*

Imagine that your country is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual disease, which is expected to kill 800 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the best available expert estimates of the consequences of the programs are as follows:

Program A: If program A is adopted 200 people will be saved.

Program B: If program B is adopted there is a  $1/4$  probability that 800 people will be saved, and a  $3/4$  probability that no people will be saved.

Which program should be adopted?

[Response scale]

Doctrine of the Double Effect:

Sometimes it is necessary to use one person's death as a means to saving several more people -- killing one helps you accomplish the goal of saving several. Other times one person's death is a side-effect of saving several more people -- the goal of saving several unavoidably ends up killing one as a consequence. Is the first morally better, worse, or the same as the second?

[Response options, laid out horizontally, were “Better”, “Worse”, and “Same”.]

Personal Principle:

Sometimes you might have to harm one person in the course of helping several other people, either as a means of helping those others or as an unavoidable side-effect of helping those others. In such situations, is it generally morally better to harm that one person in a personal, face-to-face way, so that the person vividly knows what you are doing, or is it generally morally better to harm that one person in a less immediately personal way? Or are the two types of actions about morally equal?

- Harming personally, face-to-face, is morally better than harming impersonally
- Harming impersonally is morally better than harming personally, face-to-face
- Both are about the same

Demographic Questions:

Thank you for your responses! We have some final demographic questions that we would like to ask.

What is your age?

- Under 15 years
- 15 to 24 years
- 25 to 34 years
- 35 to 44 years
- 45 to 54 years
- 55 to 64 years
- 65 years and over

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School / GED
- Some College
- 2-year College Degree
- 4-year College Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree (JD, MD)

In which country do you reside?

[Here followed an alphabetized drop-down list of 193 countries.]

Do you have a degree in philosophy?

- No
- Yes - Completed B.A.
- Yes - Completed M.A.
- Yes - Completed Ph.D.

Are you a professor of philosophy?

- No
- Yes, and ethics is my area of primary specialization
- Yes, and ethics is an area of competence for me
- Yes, but not in the area of ethics

Two of the questions that you read involved choices between one person and five people on the train tracks. These often go by the name of the "trolley problem". Were you familiar with the trolley problem before taking this test?

- Yes
- No

Two of the questions that you read involved risky choices about two programs, A and B, that have different likelihoods of killing and saving people. Cases like these have been used by behavioral economists to study so-called "Framing Effects" and "Loss Aversion". Were you familiar with these types of cases before taking the test?

- Yes
- No

At the very end of the test we asked you:

"Sometimes it is necessary to use one person's death as a means to saving several more people -- killing one helps you accomplish the goal of saving several. Other times one person's death is a side-effect of saving several more people -- the goal of saving several unavoidably ends up killing one as a consequence. Is the first morally better, worse, or the same as the second?"

This refers to a philosophical principle called the "Doctrine of Double Effect". Have you ever encountered or considered this doctrine before?

- Yes
- No

Before taking this test were you familiar with empirical studies of professional philosophers' responses to the trolley problem and the Doctrine of the Double Effect?

- Yes
- No

[Respondents who answered "yes" to both the trolley and DDE familiarity questions received the following two questions.]

You indicated familiarity with the trolley problem and the Doctrine of Double Effect. Do you regard yourself as having expertise on these issues?

- Yes
- No

Do you regard yourself as having had a stable opinion about the trolley problem and Doctrine of Double Effect before participating in this experiment?

- Yes
- No

[Respondents who answer "yes" to the framing effect familiarity question received the following two questions.]

You indicated familiarity with framing effects and loss aversion before participating in this experiment. Do you regard yourself as having expertise on these issues?

- Yes
- No



Do you regard yourself as having had a stable opinion about framing effects and loss aversion before participating in this experiment?

Yes

No