

Corrigendum to: Fehr, Ernst, and Gary Charness. 2025. "Social Preferences: Fundamental Characteristic and Economic Consequences." *Journal of Economic Literature* 63 (2): 440–514

December 17, 2025

By Ernst Fehr

In our review paper, we also dealt with the role of self-image concerns for prosocial behaviors. In this context, we discussed the seminal paper by Grossman and van der Weele (2017). The paper provides a clean and convincing explanation of why weakly altruistic individuals may deliberately remain uninformed about the consequences of their behavior on other individuals' payoffs. The theory explains why willful ignorance enables these individuals to maintain a reasonably prosocial self-image despite behaving selfishly. The theory is based on a dual-self approach in which a decision-maker (DM), who knows the individual's true altruism, chooses whether to act altruistically, and an "observer," who does not know this true altruism, infers it from the individual's information acquisition and (non)altruistic acts. In our description of this paper, we made an unintentional error by writing, "that the *observer does not infer something negative* about the DM's altruism from the mere fact that *the DM decides to remain ignorant*." This statement is not correct. According to the theory, remaining willfully ignorant about the payoff consequences of one's actions for others is interpreted by the observer as a negative signal about the individual's altruism. However, ignorance still has some exculpatory value, as it is not (nearly) as bad as being selfish with full knowledge of the consequences.

References

Grossman, Zachary, and Joël J. van der Weele. 2017. "Self-Image and Willful Ignorance in Social Decisions." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 15 (1): 173–217.