

Experimental Instructions: Focality and Asymmetry in Multi-battle Contests

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1 Experimental Instructions

The instructions below were distributed in the completely symmetric case (IS). Instructions for other treatments are just variations highlighted between brackets in the text.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Thanks for taking part in this experiment.

You are requested not to communicate during the experiment. If you are not sure about what you are being asked to do, raise your hand and the experimenter will come to your desk to help you. You will be paid \$7 for turning up plus whatever you earn in the experiment. You will be presented with 20 decision problems. At the end of the experiment, five of these problems will be randomly picked and you will be paid accordingly. You will be paid at the end of the experiment in private and in cash.

YOUR DECISION

You will be assigned as either participant 1 or participant 2 throughout the experiment. In each decision problem, you will be paired with a randomly selected person whose participant number is different from yours. You will never be told who you have been paired with. Everyone in this room is reading the same set of instructions.

In each decision problem, both participants will receive 200 tokens [**budget asymmetry treatments**: In each decision problem, participant 1 will receive 200 tokens and participant 2 will receive 160 tokens]. Each participant will choose how to allocate their tokens among four boxes. The four boxes are labelled and shown in a row. The position of the boxes is determined randomly and their labels are white circles [**focal treatments**: The position of the boxes is determined randomly and one box is labelled with a black circle and the others with a white circle]. You and the participant you have been paired with in that decision problem see the same display of boxes.

Each participant must allocate every token before proceeding to the next decision problem. You do that by writing the number of tokens you want to allocate to certain box in the slot below. You can use decimal numbers.

YOUR EARNINGS

In every decision problem, each box is worth 15 points [high value asymmetry treatments: In every decision problem, one box is worth 16.5 points and the other three 14.5 points each] [low value asymmetry treatments: In every decision problem, one box is worth 13.5 points and the other three 15.5 points each]. If that decision problem is selected at the end of the experiment, you will earn the points of the boxes you win, which will be converted into cash at a rate of \$1 per 20 points. Your objective is to earn as many points as possible.

How do you win a particular box?

Your chances of winning a particular box are given by the number of tokens that you allocated divided by the total number of tokens allocated by you and the other participant. In case both participants allocate zero to the same box, each participant has 50 *percent* chance of winning that box. After allocating the tokens, these proportions are shown in a roulette below each box and the computer will spin an arrow. You win if the arrow finishes in your part of the roulette.

After every decision problem, you will see the allocation of your tokens, the allocation of the other participant's tokens, which boxes you win and your *possible* earnings in that decision problem.

Before starting the experiment, a questionnaire will check that the instructions were clear. Please complete the questionnaire and raise your hand. The experimenter will come to pick it up and clarify any doubt.