Preface

Science is a highly specialized enterprise—one that enables areas of enquiry to be minutely pursued, establishes working paradigms and normative standards, and supports rigor in experimental research. All too often, however, "problems" are encountered that fall outside the scope of any one discipline, and to progress, new perspectives are needed to expand conceptualization, increase understanding, and define trajectories for research to pursue.

The Ernst Strüngmann Forum was established in 2006 to address these types of topics. Founded on the tenets of scientific independence and the inquisitive nature of the human mind, we provide a platform for experts to scrutinize topics that require input from multiple areas of expertise. Our gatherings (or Forums) take the form of intellectual retreats: disciplinary idiosyncrasies are put aside, existing perspectives are questioned, and consensus is never the goal. Instead, gaps in knowledge are exposed, questions formulated, and ways to push research forward are collectively sought. The results of the entire process are disseminated through the Strüngmann Forum Report series.

This volume reports on the 29th Ernst Strüngmann Forum. It synthesizes the ideas and perspectives that evolved over a two-year period and highlights questions that remain to be addressed. For those seeking insight into the process, this brief overview is offered.

In 2017, perhaps due to their previous experience with the Ernst Strüngmann Forum (Engel and Singer 2008; Gigerenzer and Gray 2011), Ralph Hertwig and Christoph Engel contacted us to explore the possibility of proposing a theme on deliberate ignorance. Having recently published an article on this topic (Hertwig and Engel 2016), they were eager to explore the phenomenon in greater depth and sought out our help to create the requisite discourse. Their proposal provided a clear starting point, but as anyone who has been involved with our approach will tell you, once initiated, the discourse takes on its own dynamics: at each stage, as perspectives from others become available, ideas are revisited, scrutinized, and examined.

After the proposal was accepted, Gordon Brown, Simon Gächter, and Richard McElreath joined us on the Program Advisory Committee to transform the proposal into a framework that would support an extended, multidisciplinary discussion. The committee worked together to delineate discussion topics, identify potential participants, and formulate overarching goals:

- To examine the epistemic choice of deliberate ignorance using specific cases
- To identify and model the motivational, cognitive, and affective processes that underlie deliberate ignorance
- To explore normative implications and institutional responses to deliberate ignorance

Four thematic areas were created to focus the working groups and questions proposed for each to consider. To maximize interactions, invited "background papers" presented information in advance on specific topics, and from March 17–22, 2019, a diverse group of experts—economists, psychologists, legal scholars, anthropologists, behavioral ecologists, sociologists, ethicists, historians, and computer scientists—gathered in Frankfurt for a most lively discussion.

This volume is organized around these thematic areas. Each section contains the background papers in their finalized form (i.e., after peer review and revision) as well as summary reports of the group discussions (Chapter 5, 10, 14, and 15).

Exploring the Phenomenon of Deliberate Ignorance

The contributions in this first section explore different aspects of deliberate ignorance. To provide direct access to the core topics from Hertwig and Engel's 2016 article, Chapter 1 presents a slightly adapted version. It lays out the rationale for their initial definition. Further, it systematizes different types of deliberate ignorance, describes their functions, discusses normative implications, and considers how to theorizeo the phenomenon. This is then followed by three case studies: In Chapter 2, Dagmar Ellerbrock and Ralph Hertwig examine whether deliberate ignorance is present in societies that undergo transitions, with a focus on twentieth-century Germany. In Chapter 3, Sarah Auster and Jason Dana discuss the strategic use of ignorance in negotiations, analyzing when the deliberate avoidance of information can be advantageous. In Chapter 4, Robert MacCoun looks at how blinding methods can potentially remove bias to improve judgments. Addressing various concerns that can arise (e.g., in blind orchestral auditions), he points to the need for new theory and continued research.

What Constitutes the Deep Structure of Deliberate Ignorance?

In this working group, Barry Schwartz et al. explore the extent to which deliberate ignorance is common across different actors and domains of experience (Chapter 5). They review some of the psychological and cultural mechanisms that may be involved and identify potential variables that could influence deliberate ignorance as well as the consequences that would follow. In Chapter 6, Lael Schooler analyzes how processes critical to encoding, retrieving, and forgetting information in memory help achieve functions ascribed to deliberate ignorance. Thereafter, in Chapter 7, Stephan Lewandowsky looks at the purposefully construction of ignorance using two specific cases: the rationale used to justify the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the persistent use of disinformation by

Donald Trump. Lewandowsky critically discusses the consequences of such willful construction of ignorance on individuals and society at large.

How Can Deliberate Ignorance be Modeled?

To address the types of conceptual frameworks that may be needed to model deliberate ignorance, Gordon Brown and Lukasz Walasek review, in Chapter 8, existing models used in psychology and economics. They argue that both types are useful to understand different aspects of the phenomenon and identify three broad classes of relevant models, highlighting current gaps that research may wish to pursue. In Chapter 9, Christian Hilbe and Laura Schmid look at specific cases where deliberate ignorance evolves during strategic interactions. They propose two basic models to illustrate how ignorance can evolve among self-interested and payoff-maximizing individuals. Chapter 10 summarizes the extensive discussions of this working group. Pete Trimmer et al. begin with a focus on cases where standard assumptions are violated, consider cases from the individual's perspective, and discuss different classes of "not wanting to know" something. In addition, they explore strategic cases of deliberate ignorance, where obtaining information would signal to others that information acquisition has occurred, and discuss whether deliberate ignorance could emerge in population-level models.

Is Deliberate Ignorance Good or Bad and, if so, When?

When is it legitimate to ignore available information? When should the discovery of the truth be traded against anticipated consequences? When does concealing information improve welfare or break through cycles of revenge and retribution? In Chapter 11, Felix Bierbrauer argues that welfare economics should deliberately ignore (certain types of) social preferences to avoid repugnant policy choices. Benjamin Berkman then considers, in Chapter 12, the "right not to know" specific to the ethical debates related to genetic testing and genomic sequencing. Challenging the majority view that there is a nearly absolute right not to know, he suggests a more nuanced approach and offers recommendations on how best to balance individual autonomy and professional advantage in the future. In Chapter 13, Lewis Kornhauser reflects on different interpretations of deliberative ignorance and develops a taxonomy of the phenomenon. He suggests criteria that could be used to select among definitions, and identifies normative questions that arise, ranging from debates over individual rationality to questions in political philosophy. In a summary of their discussions (Chapter 14), Krueger et al. outline steps to enable a normative analysis of deliberate ignorance. From the perspectives of morality and rationality, they hold that deliberate ignorance is neither categorically bad nor

good, and offer a suite of criteria to afford a more nuanced understanding and enable future work.

What Are the Institutional Implications of Deliberate Ignorance?

In Chapter 15, Doron Teichman et al. outline concrete institutional mechanisms (e.g., contracts) that this working group felt could counter or promote deliberate ignorance. They provide an analysis of how organizational structures and mechanisms are used to compartmentalize information and review technology's role. Following on, in Chapter 16, Eyal Zamir and Roi Yair survey ways in which the law overcomes some instances of deliberate ignorance while fostering others. They raise the issue of collective ignorance and provide examples where the law actually encourages deliberate ignorance to facilitate better decision making and promote different values. They examine the issue of system design and constitutional protection of human rights using "veils of ignorance" as well as specific legal topics: inadmissibility and other evidence rules, anonymity and omitted details of candidates to overcome the biases and prejudices of decision makers, expungement of criminal records, and the right to be forgotten.

Closing Remarks

It is important to note that a Forum is not a linear process. The initial framework put into place by the Program Advisory Committee triggered a lively debate between experts with multiple (sometimes divergent) perspectives. Realizing effective discourse, however, required a willingness to reach across the divide between disciplinary traditions, terminology, and concepts—a challenge that may still exist, long past the completion of this book. Yet consensus was never the goal of this exercise. Instead, diverging opinions were needed to uncover true "gaps" in knowledge. Then the challenge became to collectively formulate ways to fill such gaps.

To close out this volume, Engel and Hertwig reflect in Chapter 17 on some of the important conceptual issues that emerged from the Forum. They highlight what they consider to be some of the important insights that were gained as well as some of the open issues that remain to be addressed.

An endeavor of this kind creates unique group dynamics and puts demands on everyone. Throughout, each person who participated played an active role, and for their efforts, I am grateful. A special word of thanks goes to the Program Advisory Committee, to the authors and reviewers of the background papers, as well as to the moderators of the individual working groups (Pete Richerson, Richard McElreath, Ulrike Hahn, and Eric Talley). The rapporteurs of the working groups (Barry Schwartz, Pete Trimmer, Joachim Krueger, and

Doron Teichman) deserve special recognition, for to draft a report during the Forum and finalize it in the months thereafter is no simple matter. Importantly, I extend my appreciation to Ralph Hertwig and Christoph Engel: both contributed equally to this 29th Ernst Strüngmann Forum, lending their expertise and motivational powers to each step as needed.

The Ernst Strüngmann Forum is able to conduct its work because of its stable institutional support. The generous backing of the Ernst Strüngmann Foundation, established by Dr. Andreas and Dr. Thomas Strüngmann in honor of their father, enables us to pursue new knowledge in the service of science and society. In addition, the following valuable partnerships are gratefully acknowledged: the work of our Scientific Advisory Board ensures scientific independence of the Forum; the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft offers supplemental financial support; and the Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies shares its vibrant intellectual setting with us.

Expanding the boundaries to knowledge is never easy, and long-held views are often difficult to put aside. Yet, when the limits to knowledge begin to appear and gaps can be identified, the act of formulating strategies to move past this point becomes a most invigorating activity. On behalf of everyone involved in this 29th Ernst Strüngmann Forum, I hope this volume will motivate further action to address the many issues that require attention to complete our understanding of the phenomenon of deliberate ignorance.

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