



THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

IS OUR PREFERENCE FOR FAMILIAR SURROUNDINGS A
BIAS?

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HOME SANCTUARY, SHELTER, AND JUSTICE

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“HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS”

– ORNAMENT IN MY PARENTS’ HOUSE

- But what is the heart most fond of?
- People or place?
- We normally think of home as a place, but when the people move, the home moves (and the ornament)
- Or maybe the heart is just irrationally scared of change...

RATIONALE/PLAN

What matters to us most: pleasure, reality, people, or place?

1. Experience machines vs hedonism (internalist mental state accounts)
2. Previous experimental evidence for status quo or “specific losses”
3. New experimental evidence: relationships matter a lot
4. Continuing relationships vs continuing place?
5. Continuing relationships vs reality?

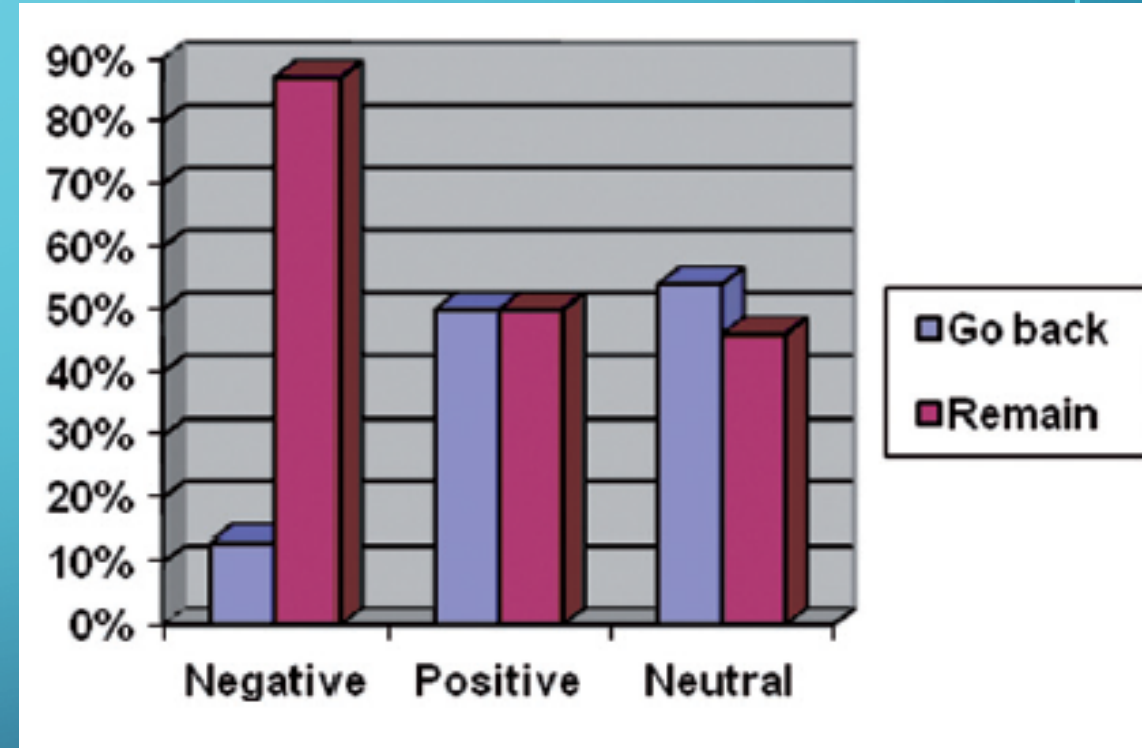
1. A QUICK HISTORY OF... THE EXPERIENCE MACHINE VS HEDONISM

- Hedonism / internalist experiential accounts of prudential value
- Nozick (1974; 1989): experiences vs reality, we do and should choose reality
- Lots: Nozick is right, hedonism fails.
- Several: scenario is misleading
 - See (Weijers & Schouten, 2013)
- De Brigard (2010) + Weijers (2014): status quo
- Basil Smith (2011): specific losses (including relationships and place)



2.1 DE BRIGARD (2010): REVERSED SCENARIOS

- Do you want to unplug?
- !-24 students per condition-!
- Negative: max security prison
- Positive: multimillionaire artist in Monaco
- Neutral: back to reality (no description)

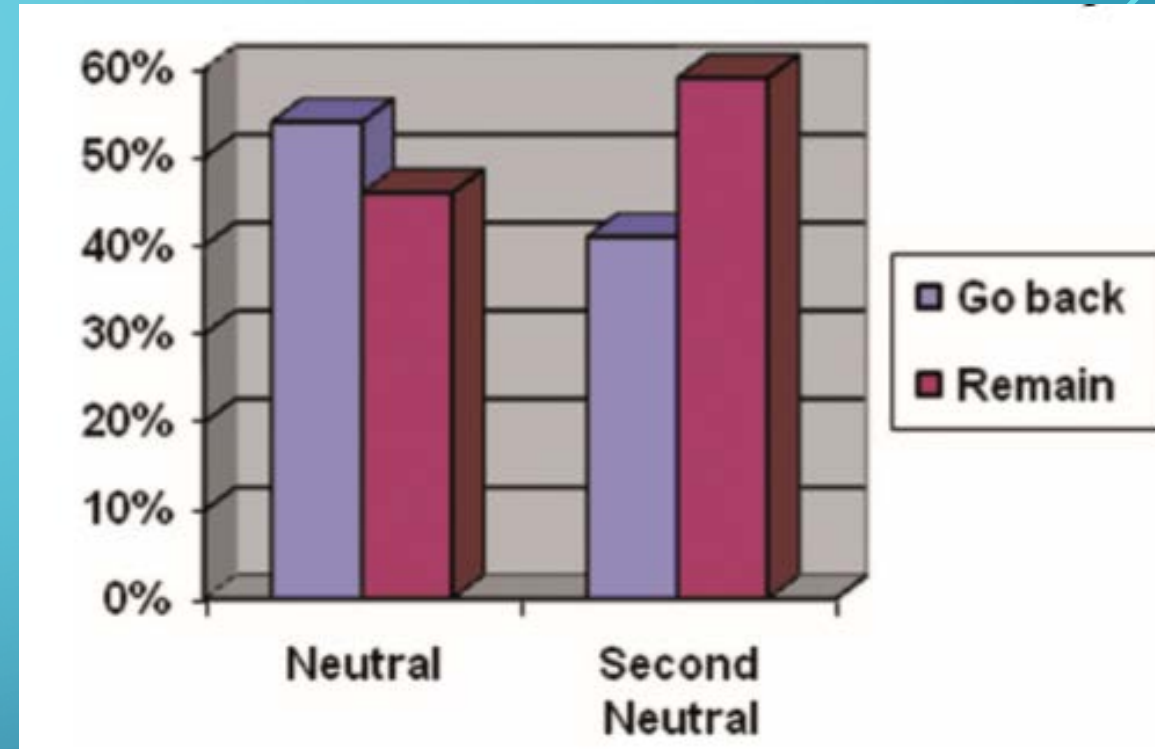


Why might a positive reality be as attractive as a neutral one?
De Brigard: a preference for pleasure and things to remain the same

2.2 COULD PLEASURE + STATUS QUO EXPLAIN THE RESULTS?

Going back to reality would mean...

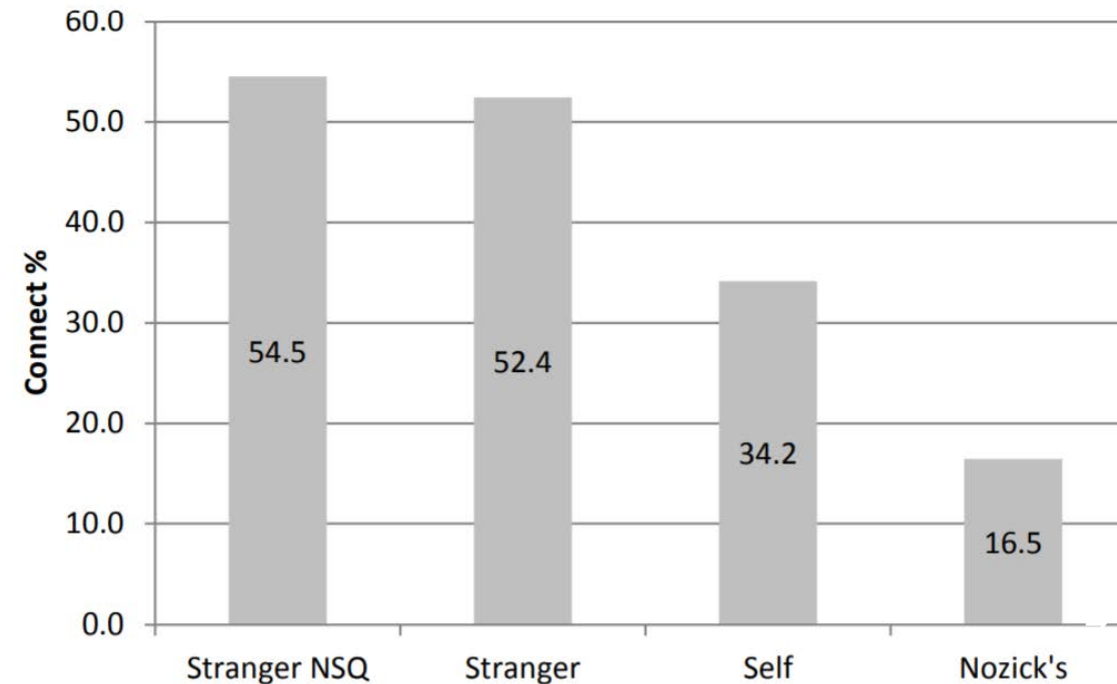
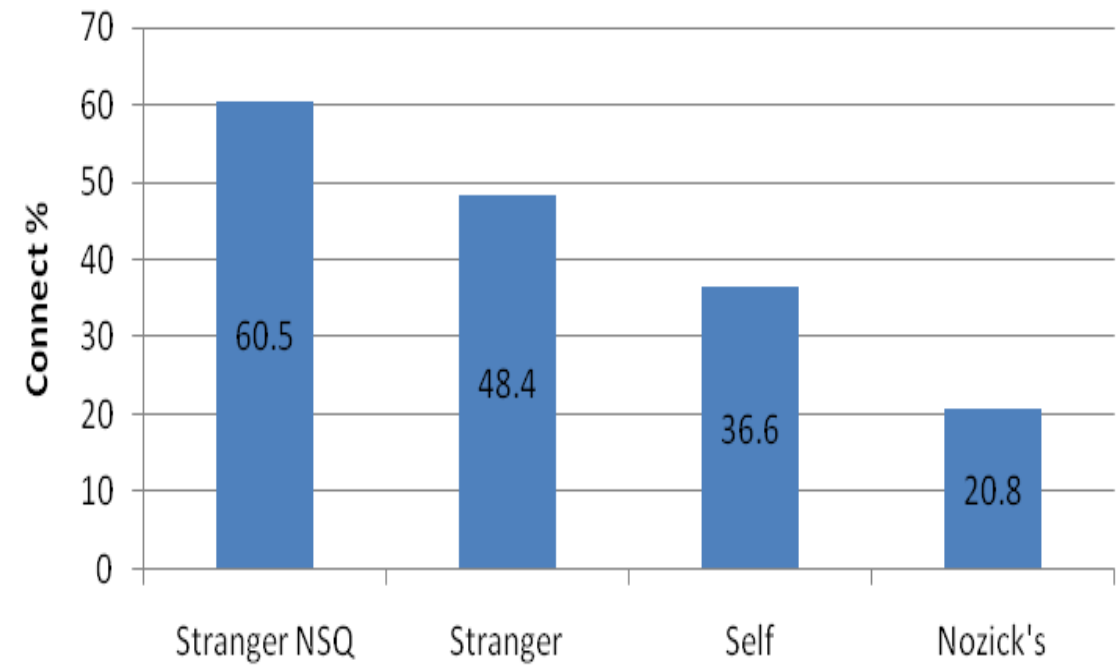
- Negative: less pleasure, SQ changes
- Positive: more pleasure, SQ changes
- Neutral: similar pleasure, **some think SQ changes?**
- 2nd Neutral: + “your life outside is not at all like the life you have experienced so far.”: similar pleasure, **SQ changes**



De Brigard: reality is less appealing if status quo must change. Therefore, SQ

2.3 WEIJERS (2011/2014): TRYING TO REDUCE STATUS QUO BIAS

- Neutralising the status quo = 12% difference (Stranger NSQ vs. Stranger, p-value = 0.025)
- Making the choice on behalf of a stranger = 12% difference (Stranger vs. Self, p-value = 0.035)
- Reducing irrelevant factors = 16% difference (Self vs. Nozick's, p-value = 0.004)
- Stranger NSQ vs. Nozick's = 40% difference (p-value = 0.000)



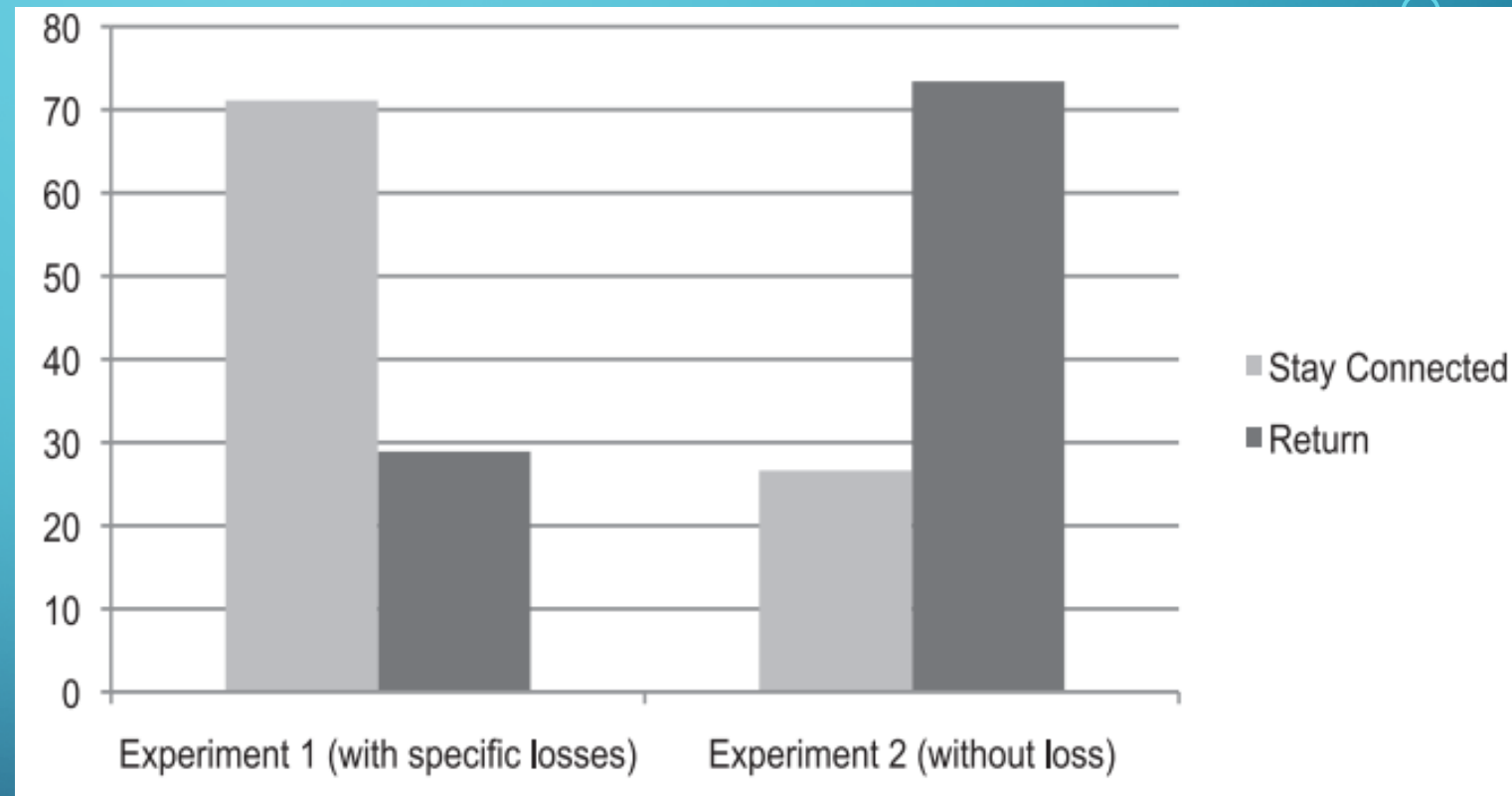
2.4 BASIL SMITH (2011): EQUAL EXPERIENCE REVERSED SCENARIOS

- “Specific losses”:

- Back to reality, start anew (need to forge new relationships and get used to a new place)

- Without loss:

- Back to reality, people etc are recreated for you, so it's the *exactly* the same

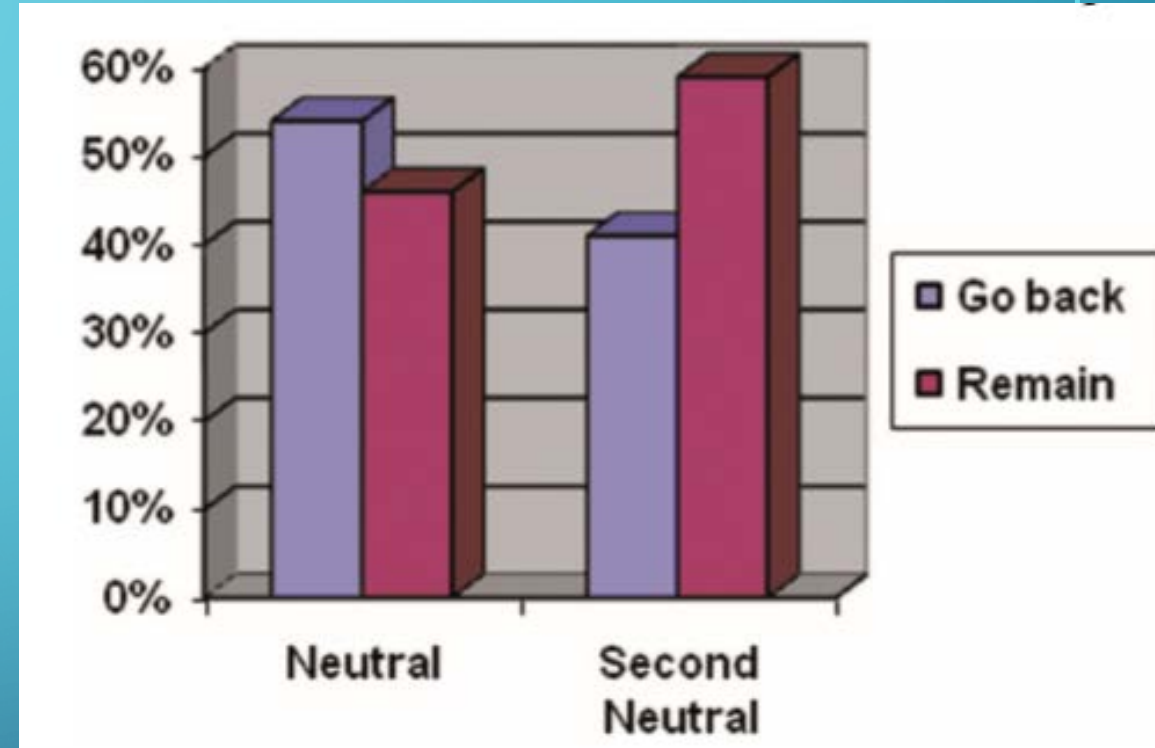


Smith: It's not SQ bias, it's rational preference to hold on to things of value (e.g. people & place)

2.5 COULD CONTINUATION OF RELATIONSHIPS AND PLACE EXPLAIN THE RESULTS?

Going back to reality would mean...

- Negative: less pleasure, losing existing relationships + place
- Positive: more pleasure, losing existing relationships + place
- Neutral: similar pleasure, ?losing existing relationships + place?
- 2nd Neutral: similar pleasure, losing existing relationships + place



The explanation works here and for Weijers' studies. So, SQ bias or rational preference for R + P?

2.7 WHAT MATTERS IN EXPERIENCE MACHINE SCENARIOS?

- Reality seems important (all studies)
- Pleasure seems important (all studies)
- Having certain things remain the same seems important (all studies)
- Relationships and place (home) might be important things to have remain the same
- But must they continue in reality or just in our experience?
- (Because the experience could continue in an experience machine)
- (Whether it's a *bias* may depend on this)

3.1 NEW EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE

- Is it real relationships or the continuation of relationships that matters most?
- EM V1: reality + real *previous* relationships vs simulated continuation of previous relationships + more pleasure
- EM V2: reality + real *new* relationships vs simulated continuation of previous relationships + more pleasure

Indicates baseline reality vs pleasure (and % that aren't worried about *real* relationships)

Comparing 1+2 indicates % of people that don't care much about *real* relationships if they have to be new ₁₁

3.2 EXP MACH V1: PERSONAL MACHINE (1)

It's 2062 and you are riding a hovertube to town. You have been offered a permanent spot in an Experience Machine. You are now trying to decide if you should accept.

You have had a go in an Experience Machine before and know that they provide an unpredictable roller-coaster ride of remarkable experiences. When in the machine, it still felt like you made autonomous decisions and occasionally faced tough situations, such as striving for your goals and feeling grief, although you didn't *really* do these things.

3.3 EXP MACH V1: PERSONAL MACHINE (2)

Your experiences were vastly more enjoyable and varied in the machine, and you didn't experience any of the health or disability issues that plague normal life.

You also recall that, while you were in the Experience Machine, you had no idea that you had gotten into a machine or that your experiences were generated by a machine.

3.4 EXP MACH V1: PERSONAL MACHINE (3)

Experience machines are personal – each Experience Machine services only one person. This means that you don't interact with any real people in an Experience Machine. Of course, you experience interesting, enlightening, and exciting interactions with enhanced versions of all your favorite people and amazing new people.

If you accept the spot, then you will stay in an Experience Machine permanently. If you reject the spot, then you will never be offered a spot again. Your life will be the same length in an Experience Machine as it would otherwise have been.

3.5 EXP MACH V1: PERSONAL MACHINE (4)

- Ignoring how your family, friends, any other dependents, and society in general might be affected, and assuming that Experience Machines always work perfectly, what is the best thing for you to do *for yourself* in this situation?
- You should accept the spot in an Experience Machine 42%
- You should *not* accept the spot in an Experience Machine 58%

This is basically a clean version of Nozick's original, so having nearly 50% want to connect to the machine is pretty impressive (and pretty bad for people who like to use the experience machine against happiness/hedonism)

3.6 EXP MACH V2: PERSONAL MACHINE, F&FS ALL IN (EVEN BFF!) (1)

Added to previous version:

- As it happens, all of your family, friends, and any other dependents you might have, all decided to accept spots in Experience Machines. You will no longer have contact with them in reality or in an Experience Machine. However, if you connect to an Experience Machine, you will experience having contact with enhanced versions of these people.

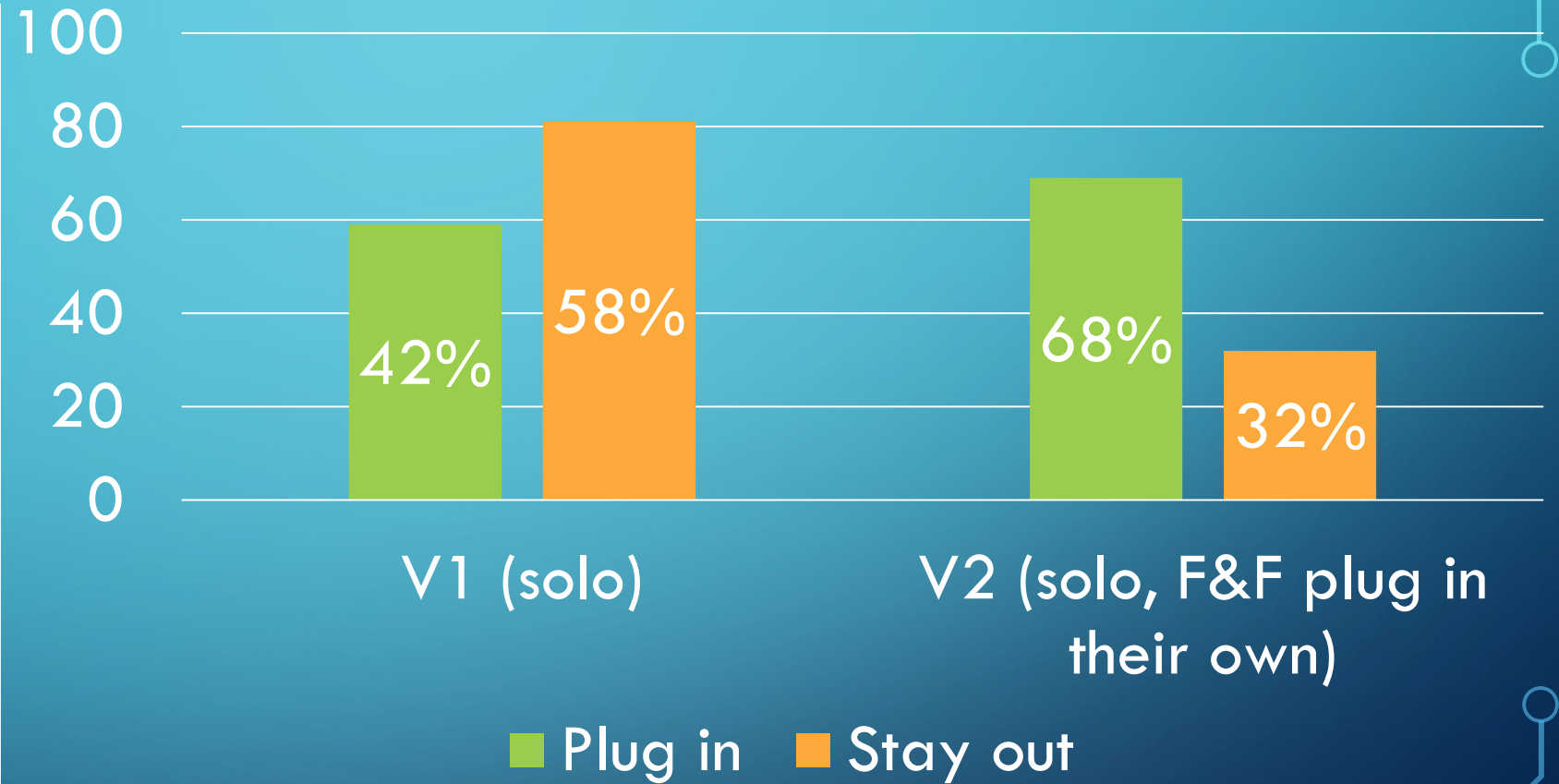
3.7 EXP MACH V2: PERSONAL MACHINE, F&FS ALL IN (EVEN BFF!) (2)

- Ignoring how your family, friends, any other dependents, and society in general might be affected, and assuming that Experience Machines always work perfectly, what is the best thing for you to do *for yourself* in this situation?
- You should accept the spot in an Experience Machine 68%
- You should *not* accept the spot in an Experience Machine 32%

This is like V1, but it puts all of your friends and family into their own experience machines. This starts to get at the perceived value of reality without continuing existing relationships. The results show that reality isn't all that good without family

3.8 COMPARING V1 & V2: LOSING EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS MAKES REALITY ~HALF AS VALUABLE

	In	Out
V1	42%	58%
V2	68%	32%
Diff	26%	



But how much of the 32% is a preference for reality vs real relationships or real place?

4.1 WHAT IS HOME?: CONTINUING RELATIONSHIPS VS CONTINUING PLACE

- Thought experiments only now
- EM V3: hold pleasure and reality constant while comparing continuing relationships and continuing place

Indicates relative preferences between continuing relationships and continuing place

4.2 EXP MACH V3: PERSONAL MACHINE, CONT. RELATIONSHIPS VS CONT. PLACE

- You must get into an experience machine
- You can choose between a program that simulates copies of all the people you like and a program that copies all of the places you like
- Both will provide equal pleasure, etc.
- Once programs start, changes occur as normal

Which would you choose?

Relationships right?

Therefore, people are home!

5.1 WHAT IS HOME?: REALITY + PLACE VS CONTINUING RELATIONSHIPS

- EM V4: hold pleasure constant, then compare reality including all places but no human relationships vs simulated continuation of previous relationships

Indicates relative preferences between reality + place without relationships and continuing relationships

5.2 EXP MACH V3: PERSONAL MACHINE, CONT. RELATIONSHIPS VS CONT. REAL PLACE

- Every other human is gone
- You can choose to stay in reality and familiar surroundings or plug in to an experience machine that can simulate the continuation of your previous relationships
- Both will provide equal pleasure, length of life, etc.

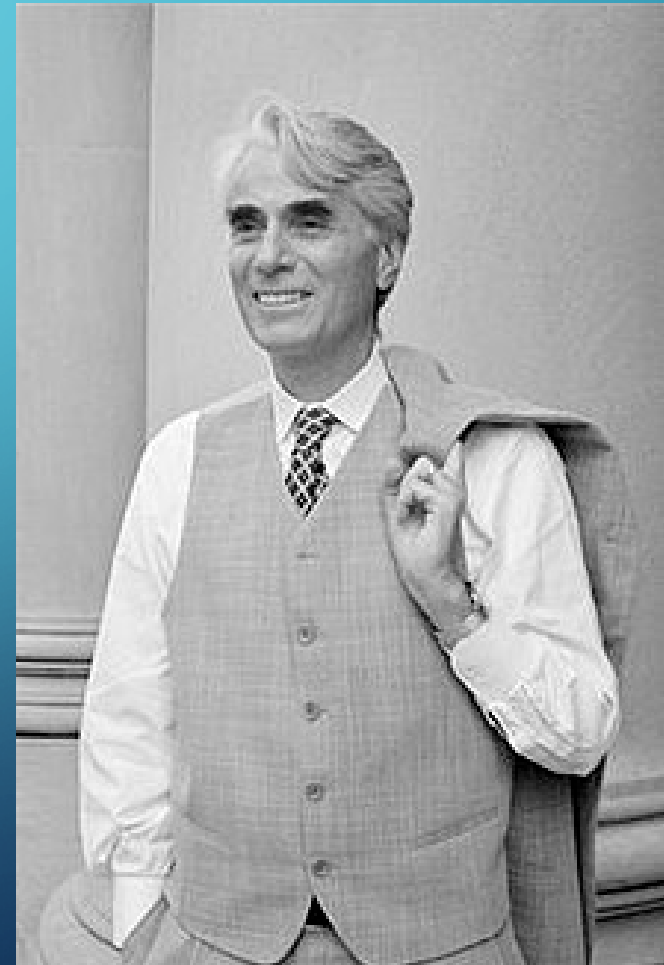
Which would you choose?

Digital relationships right?

Therefore, digital people are more home than real places!

IMPLICATIONS: REALITY DOESN'T MATTER AS MUCH AS PEOPLE

- Nozick was wrong about the supreme importance of reality
- Bias or not, people don't want to lose their *experience* of continuing existing relationships



CONCLUSION: HOME IS (MAINLY) PEOPLE, NOT PLACE

- It makes sense...
- When I go home, I go to people
- When we move house, *our* home moves with *us*
- Perhaps in the absence of people, home attaches more to place



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