Dissociating reputation management from the ability to apply normative models in decision-making.

Imagine a situation where someone is involved in a team project at work. This person has serious concerns about the direction the team has taken, but fears that challenging the team's decisions might be seen as detrimental to the project. Despite being aware that the current path may not yield the best results, they choose not to voice their concerns to maintain a positive image among colleagues. In this scenario, maintaining a good reputation within the team takes precedence over potentially improving the project's outcomes.

Our research project focuses on examining the role of managing reputation in decision-making processes. We analyze how human choices are shaped by both societal norms and individual beliefs. By employing advanced mathematical techniques, we carefully separate these two forces to better understand how they influence our decisions. We aim to comprehend why some choices may appear irrational but actually stem from an attempt to signal positive traits for long-term reputation.

The initial goal of the project is to create a tool based on different scenarios that will allow us to distinguish the ability to make decisions in line with norms from the influence of managing reputation and societal expectations. These scenarios encompass situations where societal expectations align or diverge from rationality. This approach helps us grasp the significance attached to each of these elements.

In the subsequent part of the project, we plan a series of studies to gain better insights into how people make decisions. We explore how the ability to make rational choices (Parameter N) differs from the need to conform to societal expectations and build one's reputation (Parameter R).

We anticipate that our research will reveal how individuals balance their personal beliefs with societal demands, being guided not only by their values but also by external influences. Ultimately, we aim for our work to aid in understanding decision-making processes and how we can consciously navigate them, considering both our values and societal impacts.