

## **Is trusting a norm?**

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In a well-known study, Bicchieri et al. (2011) observed that while people are willing to punish those who do not reciprocate trust in trust games and also believe that most people would punish them as well, this willingness and beliefs do not extend to punishing those who do not trust, and concluded that "trustworthiness is a social norm, but trusting is not". We believe that the conclusion on trust may be too strong. Punishment for non-cooperation can take a form of a fine (usually costly to the punisher), or of ostracism - "a refusal of repeat business with the punished party" (Liddell & Krusche, 2014). Thus, we expected that even though people might not be willing to punish non-trusting behaviour by imposing "fines" – payoff reductions, they would still find distruster's behaviour blameworthy and punish it in a less costly way, by ostracism – avoidance of the distruster in future interactions.

We attempted to check this in two online experiments. In both studies we analysed participants' willingness to employ two types of punishment – payoff reduction and avoidance in future interactions in response to observing distrust, small or medium (half of the endowment) trust. Punishment in the form of payoff reduction was measured in the same way as in Bicchieri et al. (2011) – by indicating the payoff reduction ratio and by predicting most frequent payoff reduction ratio. Willingness to avoid the (dis)truster was measured by participant's choice of the partner in future interactions. Participants had to choose a partner for that interaction (potentially beneficial to both partners): either a person with past record of trusting / not trusting in trust game, or an anonymous person on whom the decision maker had no information at all.

In Study 1 (N = 116) using the within-subject scheme, participants' propensity to choose the partner with the record instead of an unknown person, a numerical variable measured on a continuous scale, was significantly higher for those with the record of having entrusted positive sums than for those with the non-trusting record.

In the second between-subjects experiment (N = 270) each participant just made a choice of the partner for future cooperative task, choosing between an unknown person and the trustor who, depending on the group, entrusted nothing, small or moderate amount. The results of this study are less conclusive. It turns out that effect of the (observed) amount entrusted in the trust game on the

subsequent preference for the trustor is moderated by the participants' gender and their understanding of the trust game. In particular, we observed preference for the unknown person over the distruster only in the group of men with good game understanding.

In both studies we also replicated the results of Bicchieri et al. (2011) on the unwillingness to punish distrusters by reducing their payoffs and on predictions concerning unwillingness of others to punish distrusters.