

Call for Papers

“What Drives Second- and Third-Party Punishment? Conceptual Replications of the ‘Intuitive Retributivism’ Hypothesis”

A Topical Issue of the *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*

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Focus of the Topical Issue, Aims, and Scope

Unfair treatment triggers a desire to punish the offender, both among victims (i.e., “second-party punishment”) and among uninvolved observers (i.e., “third-party punishment”). This finding is so universal and so robust that it does not require any more replication studies. However, the question *why* exactly victims and observers punish, that is, which underlying motives punishment aims to satisfy, has not yet been answered conclusively. Social psychologists, behavioral economists, and experimental philosophers are still debating whether punishment reactions are “retributivist” in nature – that is, rooted in a deontological punishment motive (“offenders should be punished because they deserve it”) – or rather driven by other motives. For instance, the “consequentialist” approach assumes that punishment is rooted in an instrumental motive, such as a desire to re-educate the offender, to communicate disapproval, to deter the offender from committing the same or a similar offense in the future, or to reinforce the violated norm and deter the general public from breaking it in the future.

While assessing punishment motives directly via verbal reports (e.g., quantitative endorsements of different punishment goals) cannot explain and predict concrete

punishment behavior (see Carlsmith & Darley, 2008), the state-of-the art is now to assess punishment motives *indirectly*, by (1) looking at whether punitive reactions depend on motive-congruent information about the norm violation or the consequences of the punishment – the “policy-capturing approach” (Cooksey, 1996; for specific studies using this approach to assess punishment motives, see Carlsmith, 2008; Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002; Darley, Carlsmith, & Robinson, 2000), (2) by investigating people’s information-searching behavior – the “behavioral process-tracing” approach (Carlsmith, 2006; Keller, Oswald, Stucki, & Gollwitzer, 2010), or (3) by investigating punishers’ hedonic reactions after punishing the offender (e.g., Funk, McGeer, & Gollwitzer, 2014; Gollwitzer, Meder, & Schmitt, 2011).

Adopting these approaches, many studies have shown that punitive reactions are indeed influenced more strongly by retributivism-related factors than by consequentialism-related ones (e.g., Carlsmith, 2006; Carlsmith et al., 2002) and that punitive desires do not depend on whether the offender learns (vs. does not learn) about the punishment at all (Crockett, Özdemir, & Fehr, 2014; Nadelhoffer, Heshmati, Kaplan, & Nichols, 2013). These findings corroborate the “intuitive retributivism” hypothesis (see also Gollwitzer, Braun, Funk, & Süssenbach, 2016). Other studies, however, suggest that hedonic responses towards punishment are stronger if the punishment has an effect on the

offender (Funk et al., 2014; Gollwitzer et al., 2011), which challenges the “intuitive retributivism” hypothesis or, at least, suggests that it warrants qualification.

The aim of the topical issue is to motivate experts in the field of punishment research to test the “intuitive retributivism” hypothesis more rigorously and more strictly than it has been done so far. In particular, we welcome studies that test this hypothesis directly against competing hypotheses and/or qualify the hypothesis by elucidating boundary conditions under which it is valid (see Twardawski, Hilbig, & Thielmann, 2019). In order to ensure a certain degree of comparability between all studies included in this topical issue, all studies should pursue a “policy-capturing approach” (see above; more information about this approach can be found in Carlsmith & Darley, 2008; Sections 2.3, 2.10, and 2.11). More specifically,

1. the primary *dependent variable* in each study should be participants’ punitive reactions (i.e., the amount of punishment and the degree of inevitability that the offender is punished) toward a norm violation;
2. in each study, specific information about the norm violation and/or about the potential consequences of the punishment should be experimentally varied (e.g., see Carlsmith, 2008; Carlsmith et al., 2002);
3. the extent to which this information is (vs. is not) congruent with a retributivist punishment motive should be experimentally manipulated. Thus, the focal effect in each study should be the extent to which participants’ punitive reactions are influenced by this experimental manipulation (this is important in order to conduct a meta-analysis; see below).

While these design elements should be kept constant across all studies included in the topical issue, contributing authors may feel free to add/vary or differ from each other with regard to other design elements, such as

- the type of norm that is violated (e.g., an informal, a group-specific, a legal norm);
- the amount and kind of background information about the norm violation (e.g., the offender’s motives for violating the norm; the offender’s group membership, i.e., ingroup or outgroup offender; the existence of mitigating circumstances, etc.);
- the context in which the norm violation takes place (e.g., intimate relationship, work context, societal context, etc.);
- sample characteristics (e.g., student sample; demographic features; country/culture in which the data are collected).

In addition, contributing authors may feel free to add more independent variables and/or experimental conditions to the design in order to test the “intuitive retributivism”

hypothesis more strictly or against other hypotheses, or in order to qualify it. For instance, studies may

- test the “intuitive retributivism” hypothesis directly against other hypotheses, such as an “intuitive consequentialist” hypothesis, by testing the effects of retributivism-congruent versus consequentialism-congruent information orthogonally (see Carlsmith et al., 2002);
- test the “intuitive retributivism” hypothesis under different circumstances, such as the kind of norm that is violated (see above), with “violated norm” being an additional independent variable;
- explicitly vary participants’ role in the case, that is, whether they are the immediate victims of the offense (“second-party punishment”) or neutral observers (“third-party punishment”);
- test moderating effects of individual differences by measuring personality traits that may be relevant in that regard;
- test the tenability of the “intuitive retributivism” hypotheses by specifying, measuring, and testing the effects of potential covariates;
- etc.

Consequently, all studies will conceptually replicate the “intuitive retributivism” hypothesis by varying design features to which the hypothesis should be principally insensitive (cf. Nussbaum, 2012). That is, the aim of the topical issue is to determine the degree to which the “intuitive retributivism” hypothesis is valid across different samples, times, or situations. The results of all studies – or, at least, of the focal test (see above) – will be combined in a meta-analysis merging the evidence derived in each project. Furthermore, emphasis will be put on the reproducibility of the research conducted, as suggested by recent developments regarding open science practices (e.g., preregistration, open material, open data, open analyses scripts). In sum, we expect the topical issue to conceptually and methodologically enrich and solidify the field of punishment research.

How to Submit

There is a three-stage submission process. Initially, interested authors are requested to submit extended abstracts of their proposed papers. Authors of the selected abstracts will then be invited to submit a Stage-1 protocol that will undergo blind peer review. Authors of accepted Stage-1 protocols will then be encouraged to conduct the study and to submit a full paper (a so-called Stage-2 manuscript). In detail, the submission process is organized as follows:

Stage 0: Structured Abstract Submission

In a first step (i.e., Stage 0), interested researchers are given the opportunity to submit an extended abstract (1,500 words max.) in which they describe and justify their methodological approach (i.e., given that all studies share a similar theoretical background, emphasis is put on the methodological strength and theoretical justification of the research design). These extended abstracts will be reviewed by the editorial team. Selected papers will then be invited for submission of a “Stage-1 paper.”

The deadline for submitting structured abstracts is December 1, 2019.

Feedback on whether or not the editors encourage authors to submit a full paper will be given by January 15, 2020.

Structured abstracts should be submitted to this e-mail address only:

zfp-replication-on-punishment@leibniz-psychology.org

Stage 1: Pre-Registered Study Protocol Submission

In the next step (i.e., Stage 1), authors submit a study protocol (i.e., Introduction and Methods sections including a detailed analysis plan) including all relevant materials *before* the data are collected. These protocols will be sent out for peer review. Protocols that pass peer review will be *principally accepted*, indicating that the article will be published pending successful completion of the study according to the protocol. Principally accepted protocols will then be pre-registered on a publicly available repository. Subsequently, authors will either collect the data themselves or prepare the study materials (e.g., program the study for online data collection) so that ZPID’s PsychLab online can manage the data collection.

The deadline for submitting Stage-1 protocols is March 31, 2020.

Feedback on whether or not the Stage-1 protocol is accepted will be given by May 31, 2020. If a revision is requested, the deadline for revision will be June 30, 2020, and feedback on revised Stage-1 protocols will be given by July 15, 2020.

Stage 2: Full Paper Submission

In the next step (i.e., Stage 2), once the data are analyzed strictly following the preregistered analyses plan, authors

submit a Stage-2 paper including a Results and Discussion section. These full papers will be reviewed by the editorial team. If the analysis has been conducted as planned and if no other issues have emerged leading to a substantial deviation from the Stage-1 protocol, the paper will be finally accepted for publication.

The deadline for submitting Stage-2 full papers is October 31, 2020.

Feedback on whether or not the Stage-2 full papers is accepted will be given by November 30, 2020.

The topical issue will consist of 5–6 empirical papers, plus an editorial (in which the theoretical basis of the “intuitive retributivism” hypothesis and any alternative models are described) as well as a final paper in which the effects observed across studies are meta-analyzed and comprehensively discussed. Thus, the topical issue will consist of 7–8 articles in total.

Timeline

- September 15, 2019: Call for papers published online
- December 1, 2019: Abstract submissions due
- January 15, 2020: Feedback to authors and invitation to submit Stage-1 protocols
- March 31, 2020: Stage-1 protocols due
- May 31, 2020: Feedback to authors on Stage-1 protocols
- June 30, 2020: Revised Stage-1 protocols due
- July 15, 2020: Feedback to authors on revised Stage-1 protocols
- October 31, 2020: Stage-2 manuscripts due
- November 30, 2020: Feedback to authors on Stage-2 manuscripts due
- March 31, 2021: Submissions of final Stage-2 manuscripts
- Fall 2021: Publication of topical issue (as volume 4, 2021)

About the Journal

The *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, founded in 1890, is the oldest psychology journal in Europe and the second oldest in the world. One of the founding editors was Hermann Ebbinghaus. Since 2007 it is published in English and devoted to publishing topical issues that provide state-of-the-art reviews of current research in psychology.

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