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# According to a study, when we have a low opinion of someone, we tend to reject their money

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Research done in the Universities of Granada (Spain), Freiburg (Germany) and University College London (UK) has demonstrated that when we have a low opinion of somebody, we are more likely to reject their money, even though the offer is attractive, because the social information we have on that person influences our decision. Furthermore, people are prepared to even lose money rather than accept it from those they do not hold in high consideration.

The article has been published in the journal *Frontiers in Decision Neuroscience*, based on a study in which the researchers worked with two groups of 36 individuals, made up of 18-27 year-old University of Granada students.

To carry out the work, the authors used an economics-based game called 'The Ultimatum Game', in which participants receive offers on divisions of sums of money from a partner. These offers may be fair (for example, splitting 10 euros into 5 each) or unfair (splitting 10 euros into 9 for me and 1 for you). According to the researchers, the rational decision would be to accept all offers, "since, although 1 euro out of 10 is unfair, it is still money", in the words of Maria Ruz from the Mind, Brain and Behaviour Research Centre (CIMCYC) of the UGR.

## Negative emotional response to injustice

The researchers found – replicating previous studies – that most participants tended to reject offers of an unfair nature, a reaction that seems to be affected by a negative emotional response to injustice. Maria Ruz believes that this study shows that "the opinion we have on moral aspects of the people we interact with also affects whether we accept or reject the financial offers they make". Thus, if we have a high opinion of the other person, we accept their money more often than if not. The author also highlights that, "on the other hand, if we have low opinion of someone, we are more likely to reject their money. Both things occur as much in fair offers as in unfair ones".

In addition, during the study, "the people were playing with real money (the more offers they accepted, the more money they were paid)". The results, therefore, are counter-intuitive, "but that is what we found: we are prepared to lose money rather than accept it from those we have a low opinion of", the authors conclude.

## More information:

Social Information and Economic Decision-Making in The Ultimatum Game Celia Gaertig, Anna Moser, Sonia Alguacil and María Ruz *Front. Neurosci.*, 06 July 2012. doi: 10.3389/fnins.2012.00103

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