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## THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS ON CHILDREN'S COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOUR.

A vital pillar of societal functioning and, indeed, a fundamental human desire is justice (Fetchenhauer, Goldschmidt, Hradil, & Liebig, 2010). Conventions and social norms are an important safeguard of justice and are promoted by institutions as well as third parties, even at individual costs. For example, people are typically willing to engage in costly punishment of moral perpetrators (Fowler, 2005) or to invest resources in order to lessen the burden of victims (FeldmanHall, Sokol-Hessner, Van Bavel, & Phelps, 2014). As this kind of behaviour – and, more generally, cooperation (e.g. Rand & Nowak, 2013) – is irrational in terms of classic economic theory, it has received substantial attention in both psychological research and behavioural economics (e.g. Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002; Fehr, Fischbacher, & Gächter, 2002; FeldmanHall et al., 2014; Hilbig, Glöckner, & Zettler, 2014).

One important and largely understudied perspective considers the corresponding interindividual development of cooperative behaviour. Although some differences between adults and children have been documented (e.g. Sheskin, Bloom, & Wynn, 2014), the current state of knowledge is far from complete. An important task for future research is thus to identify the factors that determine and/or influence the development of cooperative behaviour.

Research on such factors is vital since recent work has shown that decision-making behaviour learned in certain settings generalizes to other situations (Rand & Nowak, 2013), and that contextual influences are important moderators of individual differences (e.g. Glöckner & Hilbig, 2012; Hilbig, Zettler, & Heydasch, 2012; Zettler, Hilbig, Heydasch, 2013). Rand and colleagues (2013; 2014) have shown in several studies that people from Western societies lean towards spontaneous cooperation, which is attributed to a social heuristics hypothesis (Rand et al., 2014). In everyday interactions, people are assumed to learn that cooperation pays off. Due to this learning mechanism, cooperation is encoded and stored as an intuitive standard reaction (a default) – leading to generally cooperative behaviour, even in situations in which this may be irrational in strict economic terms.

Given that justice also plays a vital role in educational settings (fairness of tests and assessments, transparency in grades, equal treatment of learners, fair treatment among learners), the working hypothesis of the current project is that that everyday experiences in school influence decision making in justice-related situations more generally (e.g. in terms of punishment or cooperative behaviour). On the one hand, the atmosphere within a class is likely to influence cooperativeness indirectly (via implicit learning). On the other hand, explicit learning can be expected as justice-related issues are part of the contents taught. Based on the social heuristics hypothesis (Rand et al., 2014), it can be expected that pupils from classes in which cooperation tends to pay off (e.g. due to a cooperative rather than competitive group atmosphere) will be more likely to develop a default behaviour characterized by spontaneous, intuitive cooperation. For example, specific factors might be whether pupils often work individually (vs. in groups) or whether individual performance (vs.

group performance) is publicly visible and incentivized. Indeed, such aspects have already been established as important determinants of children's behaviour in educational settings (Crockenberg, Bryant, & Wilce, 1976).

The influence of contextual variables (especially more or less cooperative atmospheres) in classes and schools as well as specific interventions (e.g. actual lessons on justice and cooperation) will be tested. To comply with the relatively strict methodological standards of behavioural economics and cognitive decision-making research, the project will adopt a longitudinal and experimental approach based on game-theoretic paradigms (e.g. Rand & Nowak, 2013). This will involve exposing participants to real decision-making situations that allow for the observation of actual behaviour – with age-appropriate adaptations.

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