

Is it all about appearance? Limited cognitive control and asymmetric information reveal self-serving reciprocity



Maayan Katzir*, Shachar Cohen*, Eliran Halali
JESP, 97, 104192

ISF
 grant #
 1699/17



Introduction:

- Social preferences research suggest self-interest (vs. reciprocity) is controlled.
- Bounded ethicality research suggest self-interest (vs. ethicality) is automatic.

Methods:

- **Information advantage manipulation:** Only the participants, who were trust game receivers, knew about a 2:1 payoff advantage in their favor.
- **Limited cognitive control manipulation:**
 - *Ego depletion* (Experiments 1 & 2)
 - *Time constraint* (Experiments 3 & 4)
- **Trusting investment manipulation:** the sender either sent 100% of the endowment (they received 300 chips), or 40% (120 chips)

Results & Discussion:

- We find that people are automatically motivated to appear, rather than to be fair.
- Our findings reconcile social preferences and bounded ethicality research by suggesting an automatic aspect of self-serving reciprocity.

