

# Punishment linked to profits, says study

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Punishment may not be all that bad when it comes to making profits, says a German study.

Using an investment game they created, economists at the University of Erfurt found that groups that permitted punishment were more profitable than those that did not, reports The New York Times.

The participants in the game first chose a group that did not penalize its members but later joined a community that punished members, but gave them a chance to profit personally. The findings were published Friday in the journal *Science*.

The study suggested groups with few rules attracted exploitative people who undermined cooperation, whereas the punitive groups attracted those who were willing to challenge the exploiters, the report said.

"The bottom line of the paper is that when you have people with shared standards, and some who have the moral courage to sanction others, informally, then this kind of society manages very successfully," said the study's senior author, Bettina Rockenbach, The Times reported.

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