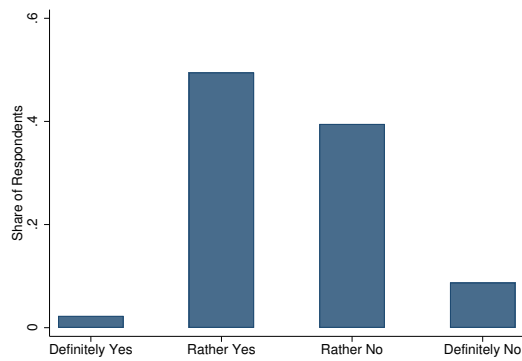


# Sentencing Disparity and Attitude Towards Judicial System: Evidence from a Survey Experiment

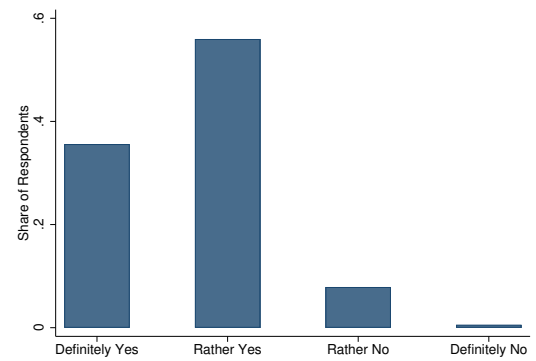
## Appendix

# Appendix

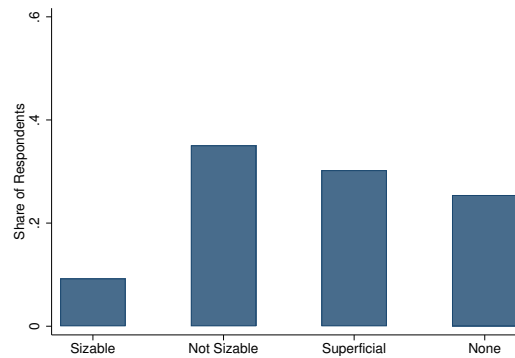
Figure 1: Prior Attitude towards Judicial System



(a) Prior Approval of the JS



(b) Perception of Sentencing Disparity



(c) Prior Experience with the JS

(a) Juridical system works well in the Czech Republic. (b) Depending on judge, similar cases can be sentenced differently. (c) Considering how often you or people you know come into contact with juridical system, what experience you think you have?

Table 1: Mean Characteristics of Treatment and Control Groups

Variable	Mean Control	Mean Treatment	t-test (p-value)
Measures of Prior Attitude			
Approval of Judicial System			
Definitely yes	0.026	0.020	0.340
Rather yes	0.488	0.501	0.567
Rather no	0.392	0.398	0.771
Definitely no	0.094	0.081	0.311
Perception of Sentencing Disparity			
Definitely yes	0.372	0.341	0.138
Rather yes	0.547	0.572	0.261
Rather no	0.075	0.082	0.564
Definitely no	0.006	0.006	0.968
Experience with the Judicial System			
Sizable	0.087	0.098	0.375
Not sizeable	0.354	0.347	0.734
Superficial	0.304	0.301	0.877
None	0.255	0.254	0.956
Demographic Characteristics			
Education			
University	0.249	0.255	0.765
Highschool	0.697	0.692	0.825
Elementary	0.054	0.053	0.901
Marital Status			
Single	0.210	0.187	0.175
Cohabitation	0.171	0.182	0.466
Married	0.442	0.423	0.369
Divorced	0.150	0.167	0.277
Widowed	0.027	0.041	0.087
Male	0.485	0.466	0.400
Age	44.71	44.90	0.760
At least 1 child	0.717	0.722	0.818
Number of children	1.435	1.490	0.295
N	1,036	1,060	

# Online Appendix

## Script

Throughout the experiment, the respondents are shown x or y slides, depending on their choices. Furthermore, at the end of the survey experiment they can choose to go to a website with petition to sign. The survey experiment consists of three blocks prior-treatment questions, treatment slides, post-treatment questions.

### Prior-treatment Questions

Prior the treatment respondents are asked three questions to elicit their prior beliefs regarding the sentencing disparity, their experience with the judicial system, and their approval of the judicial system.

**Slide 1.** *This survey is about how courts work. All information provided are truthful and based on data from the Ministry of Justice.*

**Slide 2.** *We are going to show you two statements and ask you how much you agree with that statements.*

**Slide 3.** *Sentencing decisions depend on the judge assigned. Depending on judge, similar cases can be sentenced differently.*

- *Definitely yes*
- *Rather yes*
- *Rather no*
- *Definitely no*

**Slide 4.** *Judicial system works well in the Czech Republic.*

- *Definitely yes*
- *Rather yes*
- *Rather no*
- *Definitely no*

**Slide 5.** *Considering how often you or people you know well come into contact with judicial system, what experience you think you have?*

- *Sizable*
- *Not sizeable*
- *Superficial*
- *None*

## Treatment

In this section of the survey, I show different information to the control group and to the treatment group. Both the control and the treatment slide consist of a figure of judges and shares of cases sentenced to community services and a brief explanation of what the figure represents. Prior the control and treatment slide, I inform them about what I they are about to see.

**Slide 6.** *One of the most frequent crimes in the Czech republic is failure to pay alimony. In last 3 years, courts in the Czech Republic sentenced more than 13,000 cases. The punishment can be probation period, incarceration, community service, and fine. Now, we will show you sentencing decisions of judges at a regional court in the Czech Republic.*

**Slide (Control Group).** *At this regional court, 16 % of the convicted are sentenced to the community services as their main punishment. Judges sentence very similarly. Regardless what judge is assigned to the case, the offender has very similar probability of being sentenced to community services.*

**Slide (Treatment Group).** *At this regional court, 16 % of the convicted are sentenced to the community services as their main punishment. Judges sentence differently. Judge C sentence to the community service a third of his/her cases Other judges sentence to the community service less than 10 % cases, instead they choose different types of punishments Cases are assigned to judges at random: an offender assigned to the judge C has three time higher probability of being sentenced to community services compared to being assigned to a different judge.*

## Post-treatment Questions

**Slide 7.** *The figure showed the situation from one regional court. Based on your opinion, what is the situation in the Czech republic? In what % of cases is offender sentenced to the community services as the main punishment for failure to pay alimony?*

**Slide 8.** *How much do you trust in the following institutions . . . {judicial system; police; government; public broadcasting }*

- *A great deal*
- *Quite a lot*

- *Not very much*
- *None at all*

**Slide 9.** *Suppose you are the prime minister of the Czech Republic. Rank the following issues according to the priorities you would approach them.*

- *Fair judicial system*
- *Sufficient highway infrastructure*
- *High-quality teachers in education system*
- *Safety situation in the Czech Republic*

**Slide 10.** *In some cases, it is possible to substitute the formal judicial system by alternative dispute resolution (the arbitration) that has several advantages compared to the juridical system.*

- *Want to know more*
- *Not interested*

**Slide** (only if Slide 10: want to know more). *If you interested, we can send you a booklet with information about the arbitration. What is your email address:*

**Slide 11.** *We would like to ask your advice. Your response can be used by NGO (va-sevyzivne.cz), as information for their clients. Please read the following story: Jane has two kids and their father does not pay (alimony/child support). She wonder whether she should apply to the court, because she is not sure whether a court could help or it would be only a waste of time and energy.*

*What would you recommend to her?*

- *She should apply to the court*
- *There is no good reason to apply to the court*

**Slide 12.** *The last question: Would you sign a petition that invites politicians to suggest particularizing sentencing principles? Such principles would assist judges in sentencing decision. (A preview of the petition was shown.)*

- *Want to read it*
- *Not interested at all*

**Slide 13.** *Great! That is the end of the questionnaire (and before the petition promised/and very last thing), how credible, do you think, the information provided here is?*

- *A great deal*
- *Quite a lot*
- *Not very much*
- *Not at all*

## Petition

The aim of the following petition is to prompt political representation to particulates sentencing principles. The petition is addressed to members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic and will be sent once there are at least 1000 signatures.

Should you be interested in signing this petition, leave us with your email address and we will send you the signature sheet.

To members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic

Subject: Invitation to particulate sentencing principles

Sentencing decisions often crucially affect one's life. The difference between being sentenced to imprisonment and being given a suspended sentence has significant consequences for the offender, his family and friends.

The judge assigned to a case has an exclusive right to make the sentencing decision. Making such important decisions, the judge consider many circumstances related to the case and consequences of different types and length of punishments. Given the complexity of the decision, it is natural that the personality and experience of judge affect for what punishment he will decide. It is right that criminal justice is built on an independence of judges and the principle of individualization of sentences.

It has become widespread in the public discussion that more particularized sentencing principles that judges apply in sentencing decisions may limit the role of personality of the judge and thus promote refinement of sentencing. In particular, it may lead to, among others, to establishing a non-binding instructions of how to proceed in sentencing decision that may not only help judges in the sentencing decisions, but also to better understanding of offenders and the general public of what type of punishment and why was imposed.

We, the signatories of this petitions, would like to invite members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic, to support our action.

## Debriefing Letter

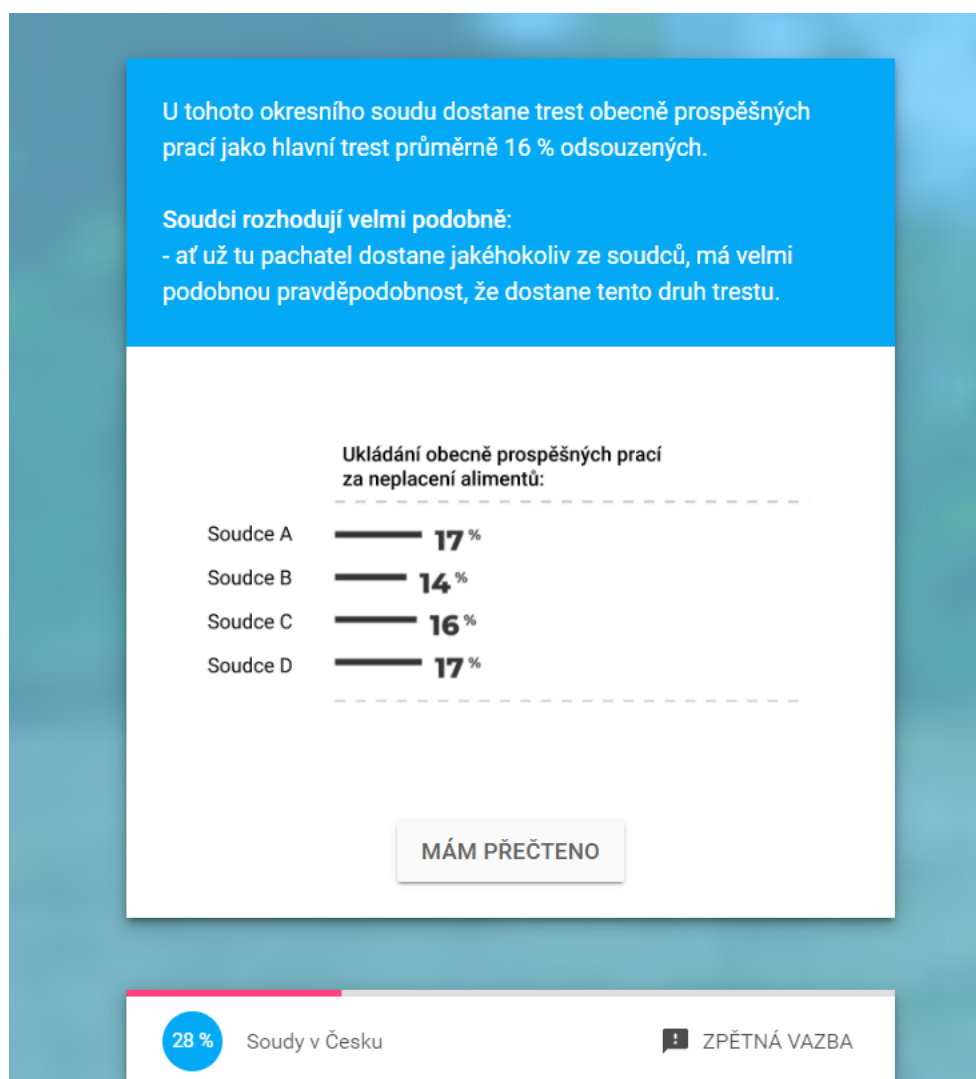
Last week you participated in a survey, in which we – on behalf of our client – informed you about shares of cases in which one of the regional courts in the Czech Republic sentences offenders to community services for a crime of *failure to pay alimony*.

The information that was showed to you is real and describe a situation at one of the regional courts. However, the situation may not correspond to the situation at other regional courts. In the Czech republic, there are several dozens of regional courts that may differ in propensity to sentenced offenders to different types of punishments for different crimes.

Should you be interested in sentencing decision in the Czech Republic, there is a webpage *jaktrestame.cz* devoted to it.



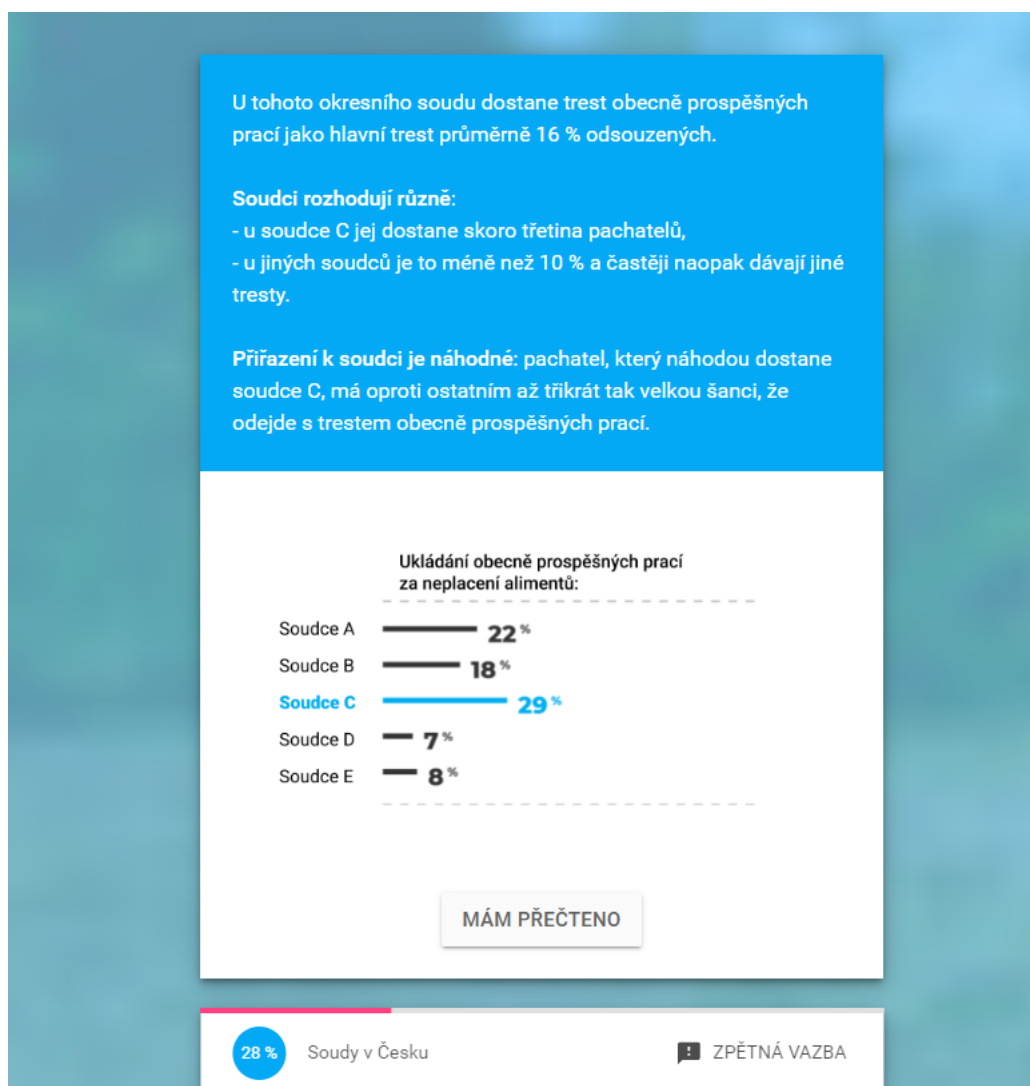
Figure 2: Control Slide



Notes:

Treatment and control slides

Figure 3: Treatment Slide



Notes: