

THE ROLE OF TRUST IN THE SOCIAL HEURISTIC HYPOTHESIS



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Abstract

According to the **Social Heuristic Hypothesis (SHH)**, the relationship between intuition and cooperation is moderated by trust in daily life interactions and experience with economic games. While various studies have provided support for the SHH there are several open questions. In the present paper we explore the impact of a behavioral manipulation of trust (experiment 1) and explore alternative measures of trust (experiment 2). In addition, we examine an individual difference moderator (Rational-Experiential Inventory). Our findings have important implications for our understanding of the psychology of trust and cooperation.

Introduction

Are we intuitively cooperative or selfish?

This is a question with theoretical -regarding our view of human nature- and practical importance -concerning ways to promote cooperation in the real world.

SHH: the relationship between intuition and cooperation is moderated by (Rand, Greene, & Nowak, 2012; Rand et al., 2014a; Rand & Kraft-Todd, 2014b)

- Trust in daily life interaction
- Experience with economic games.

Several studies support the importance of trust in the SHH (Rand et al., 2012; Rand & Kraft-Todd, 2014b). However, there are several open questions.

We conducted two lab experiments:

Experiment 1: What is the impact of a behavioral manipulation of trust on cooperation?

Experiment 2: How do we adequately measure trust in daily life interactions?

Experiment One

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Participants took part in a public goods game, with a 2 trust manipulation * 2 cognitive process manipulation between-subject design.

Trust Manipulation

High
Low

Cognitive Process Manipulation

Time Pressure
Time Delay

Trust Manipulation:

"Please write a paragraph (8-10 sentences) describing a moment in your life in which trusting other people led you to positive/negative consequences"

Cognitive Process Manipulation:

Time pressure → Intuitive processes

"Please make your decision as quickly as possible. You must make your decision in less than 10 seconds!"

Time delay → Deliberative processes

"Please carefully consider your decision. You must wait and think for at least 10 seconds before making your decision!"

Preference for information processing: Rational-Experiential Inventory (Norris, Pacini, & Epstein, 1998).

The trust manipulation significantly increased cooperation ($F(1, 286) = 4.034, p < .05, R^2 = 0.014$).

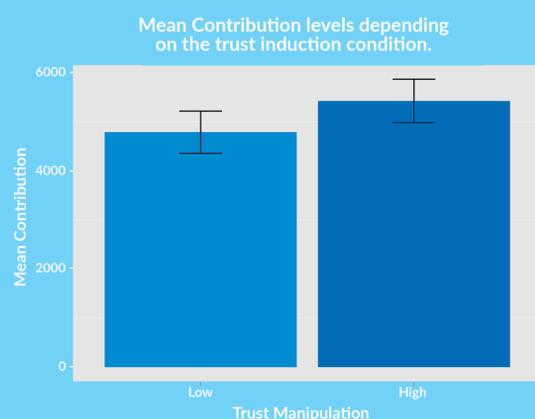


Figure 1: Mean contribution levels depending on the trust induction condition. Participants were assigned either to a low trust (n=146) or high trust induction (n=148). Contribution levels (measured in Colombian pesos: 0-8000, which are equivalent to \$4 dollars) were higher in the high trust than in the low trust condition.

The interaction between preference for an intuitive processing style and the trust manipulation predicted cooperation, ($F(1, 286) = 0.27, p < 0.05, R^2 = 0.016$), with people with a preference for intuitive processing in the high trust condition cooperating more.

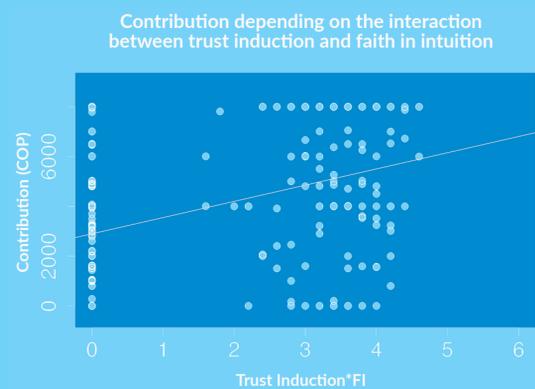


Figure 2: Contribution depending on the interaction between trust induction and faith in intuition. Contribution levels were higher among participants (n=286) with a preference for intuitive processing assigned to the high trust condition (Beta= 0.13).

Experiment Two

80

Participants took part in a public goods game, with a 2 trust measure (within subjects) * 2 cognitive process manipulation (between subjects) design.

Trust Measure

Investment Game

Cognitive Process Manipulation

Propensity to Trust Survey

Time Pressure
Time Delay

Trust Measures:

Investment Game: experimental approach (Berg, Dickhaut, & McCabe, 1995).

Propensity to Trust Survey: individual differences approach (Evans & Revelle, 2008).

The amount of money sent by players 1 in the Investment Game significantly predicted cooperation, ($F(1, 38) = 7.578, p < 0.01, R^2 = 0.17$).

The trust scale of the Propensity to Trust Survey did not predict cooperation, ($F(1, 76) = 1.40, p > 0.05, R^2 = 0.018$) but the self reported trust did significantly predict cooperation, ($F(1, 76) = 4.32, p < 0.05, R^2 = 0.053$).

Discussion

Our findings provide support and extend the Social Heuristic Hypothesis:

A behavioral manipulation of trust increases cooperation.

Robust effect driven by information processing preferences rather than manipulations of cognitive processing.

An experimental measure of trust is a better predictor of cooperation than other measures.

Levels of cooperation are related to self-reported trust but not to the trust scale of the Propensity to Trust Survey.

Future research:

External validity of the SHH:

Lab-field study to examine the relation between subjects' behavior in the lab and in the real world.

Public policy implications:

Field intervention to examine the implications of the SHH for public policy.

Select References

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Questions and feedback welcome!
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