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Social dilemma cooperation (unlike Dictator Game giving) is intuitive for men as well as women

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ABSTRACT

Does intuition favor prosociality, or does prosocial behavior require deliberative self-control? The Social Heuristics Hypothesis (SHH) stipulates that intuition favors *typically* advantageous behavior – but which behavior is typically advantageous depends on both the individual and the context. For example, non-zero-sum cooperation (e.g. in social dilemmas like the Prisoner's Dilemma) typically pays off because of the opportunity for reciprocity. Conversely, reciprocity does not promote zero-sum cash transfers (e.g. in the Dictator Game, DG). Instead, DG giving can be long-run advantageous because of reputation concerns: social norms often require such behavior of women but not men. Thus, the SHH predicts that intuition will favor social dilemma cooperation regardless of gender, but only favor DG giving among women. Here I present meta-analytic evidence in support of this prediction. In 31 studies examining social dilemma cooperation ($N = 13,447$), I find that promoting intuition increases cooperation to a similar extent for both men and women. This stands in contrast to the results from 22 DG studies (analyzed in Rand et al., 2016) where intuition promotes giving among women but not men. Furthermore, I show using meta-regression that the interaction between gender and intuition is significantly larger in the DG compared to the cooperation games. Thus, I find clear evidence that the role of intuition and deliberation varies across both setting and individual as predicted by the SHH.

1. Introduction

Humans regularly help others, even when doing so is personally costly. Such prosocial behavior is central to the success of human societies. Therefore, explaining why people are willing to incur such costs is a central question in social psychology. In recent years, there has been considerable interest in understanding the underpinnings of prosociality from a dual-process perspective (for a review, see Zaki & Mitchell (2013)). Dual-process models conceptualize decisions as arising from the interaction of cognitive processes that are relatively automatic, intuitive, and effortless, and cognitive processes that are relatively controlled, deliberative, and effortful (Gilovich, Griffin, & Kahneman, 2002; Sloman, 1996).

The Social Heuristics Hypothesis (SHH, Rand et al., 2014) has been proposed as a theoretical framework for understanding prosociality from a dual-process perspective. The SHH proposes that (i) intuition favors behaviors which are typically long-run payoff-maximizing, while (ii) deliberation leads to the behavior which is payoff-maximizing in the current situation. Of particular interest is “pure” prosociality in one-shot anonymous interactions (or, more broadly, interactions where future consequences are insufficient to outweigh the costs of being

prosocial). Here, it is always self-interested to act selfishly, and thus deliberation is predicted to favor selfishness in these settings. Generating predictions regarding intuition, on the other hand, requires understanding which behaviors are optimal in more *typical* scenarios that involve future consequences – consequences created by, for example, repeated interactions (Trivers, 1971), reputation effects (Nowak & Sigmund, 2005), or the threat of sanctions (Fehr & Gächter, 2002); for a review see Rand & Nowak (2013).

Which behavior is predicted to be favored by intuition, therefore, may vary across situations and across individuals (based on which behavior is typically advantageous for a given individual in a given situation). Here, we consider the interaction between two forms of such variation. With respect to situational factors, we consider differences in typically advantageous behavior between situations that involve multi-lateral non-zero-sum cooperation (i.e. social dilemmas such as the Prisoner's Dilemma) versus unilateral zero-sum transfers (i.e. giving in the Dictator Game, sometimes referred to as behavioral “altruism” (Rand, Brescoll, Everett, Capraro, & Barcelo, 2016)). With respect to individual differences, we consider differences in typically advantageous behavior between men and women.

Because social dilemma cooperation involves non-zero-sum

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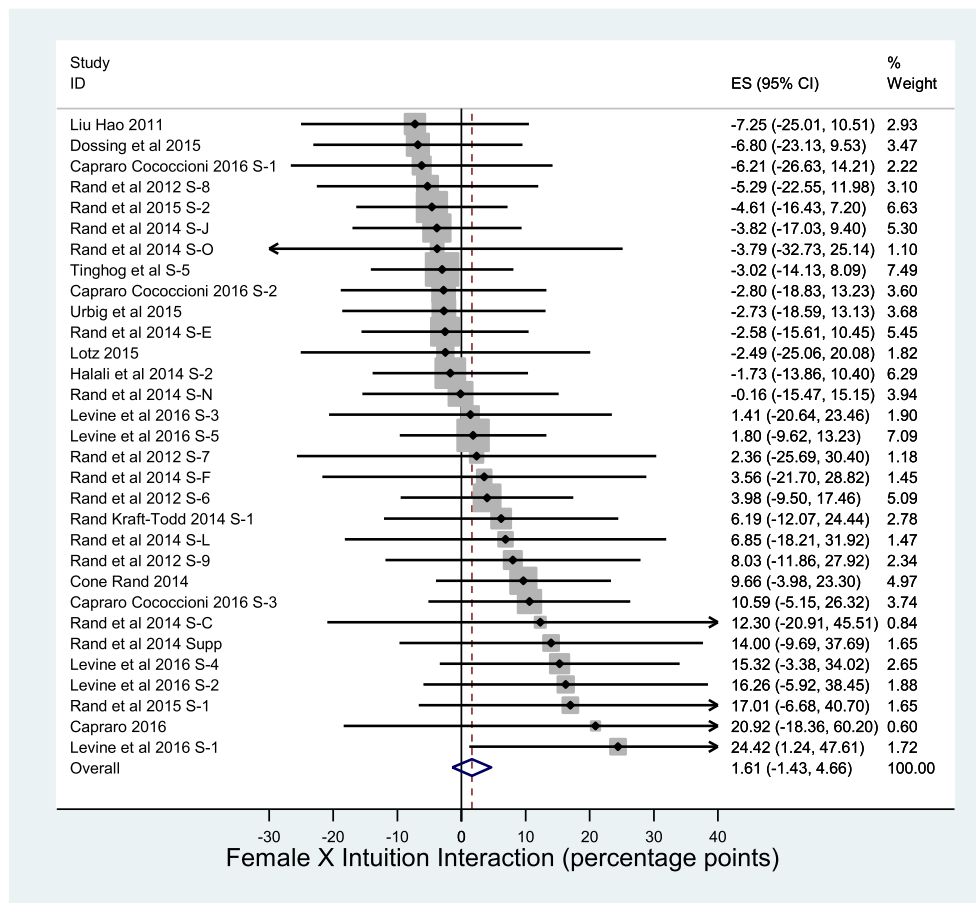


Fig. 1. Effect size (i.e. raw regression coefficient) for interaction between gender (0 = male, 1 = female) and cognitive processing mode (0 = more deliberative, 1 = more intuitive) for each social dilemma cooperation experiment. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Gray squares indicate weight placed on each study by random effects meta-analysis.

interactions, it can be payoff-maximizing to cooperate because of the chance for repeated interactions: If my cooperating with you today makes you more likely to cooperate with me tomorrow, reciprocity can lead long-run self-interest to favor cooperation (Fudenberg & Maskin, 1986). As a result, the SHH predicts that intuition should typically favor cooperation. This prediction is demonstrated formally by a mathematical model showing that, when repeated interactions are sufficiently common, strategies which intuitively cooperate and then use deliberation to switch to defection when in 1-shot anonymous settings are favored by evolution, learning, and strategic reasoning (Bear, Kagan, & Rand, 2017; Bear & Rand, 2016). The power of reciprocity to incentivize cooperation is a basic feature of social interaction, and thus its force does not vary based on gender. As a result, the SHH predicts that gender will *not* moderate the relationship between intuition and cooperation.

The situation is different, however, for Dictator Game giving. Because this form of giving is zero-sum, repetition does not create an incentive to give – giving money to someone and having them give it back to you makes you no better off than if you had just kept all the money in the first place. Thus, the only way that altruistic giving can be long-run payoff-maximizing is inasmuch as giving is perceived positively (and/or not giving is perceived negatively) by others, and thereby influences their actions towards the altruistic giver in future non-zero-sum interactions.

Critically, a large literature on gender norms indicates that women are expected to be (and disproportionately occupy roles that mandate being) communal and unselfish (i.e. altruistic), whereas men are expected to be (and often occupy roles that benefit from being) agentic and independent (Eagly, 1987; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Thus, women experience reputational benefits from unilateral giving (and sanctions for not giving) much more so than men, such that unilateral

giving may typically be long-run payoff maximizing – and thus favored by intuition – for women but not men. As a result, in contrast to social dilemma cooperation, the SHH leads to the prediction that gender is likely to be a moderator of the relationship between intuition and DG giving (see Supplementary materials Section 1 for further discussion of gender and social dilemma cooperation).

Consistent with this prediction regarding DG giving, Study 1 from Rand et al. (Rand et al., 2016) (hereafter RBECB) presented a meta-analysis of 22 experiments which showed that promoting intuition led to more DG giving relative to promoting deliberation among women, but had no significant effect among men. Furthermore, Study 2 showed that this relationship was moderated by self-identification with sex roles, such that women consistently gave more than men when intuition was promoted, but when deliberation was promoted, women who more strongly identified with traditionally masculine attributes (e.g. dominance, independence) reduced their giving (i.e. gave amounts similar to what was given by men).

However, the SHH prediction regarding a lack of interaction between gender and intuition in social dilemma cooperation has yet to be tested. Here, I evaluate this prediction using meta-analysis of 1-shot incentivized economic game experiments involving social dilemma cooperation in which the use of intuition versus deliberation was experimentally manipulated. I then compare the moderating role of gender in these cooperation decisions versus giving decisions in the DG using meta-regression.

2. Method

I take advantage of a dataset collected for a recent meta-analysis of cognitive processing and cooperation (Rand, 2016) which did not explore gender. This dataset included 51 studies involving social dilemma

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