#04

RESEARCH DESIGN
APRIL 2020

THE EFFECTS OF BONDING, BRIDGING, CONNECTED AND ISOLATED ASSOCIATIONS ON SOCIAL TRUST

Rua Maurício Caillet, 47 / 80250-110 / Curitiba, PR / +55 (41) 3206 8582 / **www.sivis.org.br**

The effects of bonding, bridging, connected and isolated associations on social trust

Social Capital theory argues that the "features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" are what makes democracies work (Putnam 1993). Social capital thus has two components: a structural component (associational networks) and an attitudinal component (norms and social trust), both of which have been found to be beneficial for societies. Investigations on the origins of social capital have focused on the relationship between the structural and the attitudinal components, but research has yet to establish which of them gives rise to the other. Putnam (2000) suggested that bridging associations – those which bring together members of diverse backgrounds – have the capacity to generate social trust, indicating that social trust is a product and not a source of associational networks. At the same time, some studies have found that the relationship between trust and associational networks varies according to type of association (Stolle 1998; Paxton and Ressler 2018; Pettigrew 1997). The context of how particularized (in-group) and generalized (out-group) trust emerge is influenced by the nature of social interaction within an associational structure, which indicates the need for more research on the development of trust in different scenarios and, more specifically, in different kinds of associations.

This working paper, therefore, aims to explore the effects of different kinds of associations (bridging, bonding, isolated and connected) on social trust levels, in order to better observe how particular kinds of associational networks could have distinct effects on trust.

We have structured this research design into two main parts. Its first part states our hypothesis and cites relevant academic literature with the goal of briefly outlining the relevant theoretical arguments and empirical evidence. The second part of the paper proposes a research design for testing the effects of membership in bridging, bonding, connected and isolated associations on individuals' generalized social trust. Methodological approaches proposed include a combination of surveys and lab-in-the-field strategies for measuring both trust and kind of associational membership at the local level. Finally, we propose specific methods of data analysis.

Hypothesis

Our hypothesis is founded on the premise that associational networks and social interactions can generate both particularized and generalized social trust, as theorized by Paxton and Ressler (2018) and Stolle and Rochon (1998), and evidenced by Glanville and Paxton (2007), Hardin (2002) and Glanville (2001). In short, our hypothesis argues that bridging and connected associations are more likely to produce generalized social trust (as opposed to particularized trust) than are bonding and isolated associations.

Literature review

Past research on trust has demonstrated that trust is adaptive and reacts to contexts. Although one line of analysis argues that trust is a relatively fixed personality trait, resulting from a society's shared morality and culture (Uslaner 2002; 2008; 2018), even morality and culture have been shown to be adaptive to structural factors (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Haidt 2012). On the other hand, proponents of Rational Choice Theory (RCT) argue that interpersonal trust is situation-specific, the product of rational assumptions and cost-benefit analyses regarding the behaviors of others, the perceived risk and benefits of trusting or of being seen as untrustworthy (Cooke and Santana, 2018). As trust game experiments show, some factors render trust more likely, such as: habit and iteration of an interaction, a shared or "encapsulated" interest (Hardin 2002; Sapienza et al 2013), and the adaptation to structural and contextual elements (Putnam 1993; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018; Delhey and Welzel 2012). Trust is, therefore, at least to some degree, learned behavior, which means that it is more likely a dependent rather than independent variable (Delhey and Welzel 2012; Glainville 2001). The distinctions between particularized (extended only to members of a specific group) and generalized (extended to anyone in society, including a stranger) trust, however, still raise questions about whether they originate in the same way. Although some scholars argue that particularized trust and generalized trust are antagonists, Delhey and Welzel's groundbreaking research (2012) found that particularized trust is a necessary, but not sufficient component of generalized trust.

TRUST IS ADAPTIVE AND REACTS TO CONTEXTS

The effects of associations on social trust have been supported largely by Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport 1954; Pettigrew 1997; 1998), which presupposes that social interaction in conditions such as equal status, cooperation and common goals among individuals reduces prejudice and intergroup conflict. Paxton and Ressler (2018) and Delhey and Welzel (2012) apply this theory to studies of trust. Rational Choice experiments have also confirmed its assumption, revealing that iterated interaction is more likely to generate

interpersonal trust and cooperation (Hardin 2002; Kramer 1999; Cooke and Santana 2018). Similarly, experiments which assorted focus groups into teams generated trust among their members, but not among all subjects (Foddy et al 2009). Thus, bonding associations, which tend to be homogeneous, enhance particularized trust among their members, often to the detriment of their levels of generalized trust (Paxton and Ressler 2018). Meanwhile, interaction with socially and ethnically diverse people, as occurs in heterogeneous, "bridging" associations, can extend trust and tolerance to diversity in general, not merely to those specific people (Pettigrew 1997; 1998). Delhey and Welzel hypothesize that generalized trust emerges as socioeconomic development empowers people to rely less on their in-groups for survival, which in turn "opens them to cooperation with outgroups" (2012:65). Paxton and Ressler (2018) propose that associations which are bridging and connected, as opposed to bonding and isolated, are more likely to produce generalized social trust. Our hypothesis combines Delhey and Welzel's theory and Paxton and Ressler's theory to argue that some kinds of associations – specifically, bridging and connected associations – can extend the social trust fostered through contact and interaction within the group to society in general. As Intergroup Contact Theory proposes, this kind of out-group trust emerges through increased and iterated interaction between diversified groups of people in certain conditions of equality, cooperation and common interests. This theory, to our knowledge, has never been tested with regards to different kinds of associations (Paxton and Ressler 2018).

ASSOCIATIONS WHICH ARE BRIDGING AND CONNECTED, AS OPPOSED TO BONDING AND ISOLATED, ARE MORE LIKELY TO PRODUCE GENERALIZED SOCIAL TRUST

Proposed methodology

We propose to test our hypothesis with a combination of surveys and lab-in-the-field experiments to measure both trust and kinds of association memberships. Sapienza et al (2013) demonstrate that this combination is the ideal way to measure trust, in ways that mitigate the issues of self-reporting bias in survey data and decrease the distortion errors in lab experiments. Following a lab-in-the-field strategy, we propose an experiment to measure the effects of kinds of associations on both particularized and generalized social trust. This experiment, potentially Berg et al's (1995) trust game, should be combined with survey questions during and after each party's decision. Some alternatives to operationalize the research are:

Alternative I: Focus group, in which participants are assigned, based on self-reported data on demographic diversity, to bonding associations and then to bridging associations. Then, participants engage in Berg et al's (1995) trust game, firstly with members of their associations (which measures in-group trust), and then with strangers (which measures generalized trust). Survey questions from the World Values Survey on particularized and

generalized social trust are answered before and after the exercise. The advantages of this method is that experimental data can be used to establish causation. However, this design would not be able to account for differences in connected and isolated associations.

Alternative II: Surveys regarding memberships in associations, followed by survey questions on particularized and generalized trust. The subjects would themselves report on the composition of their associations (bridging vs. bonding), according to their estimation of their associations' compositional diversity, and on the number of associations they belong to (isolated vs. connected), before reporting their levels of particularized and generalized trust. This method would account for isolated and connected associations, but would not establish causation by virtue of depending on survey data (Sapienza et al 2013).

Alternative III: Lab-in-the-field strategy (see Enos and Gidron 2018) involving an online trust game against strangers as a measure of generalized trust, followed by survey questions on association memberships accounting for their bridging/bonding and connected/isolated aspects. Survey data will measure associational memberships (independent variable) and experiment data will gauge generalized trust (dependent variable).

Alternative IV: A longitudinal study, selecting a sample of members of classified bridging/bonding and connected/isolated associations and monitoring their trust levels via survey and experiment data measured over a period of three to five years. As Paxton and Ressler argue (2018:164), to truly test for the effects of association membership on generalized trust, even accounting for kind of association, it would be necessary to verify long-term levels of trust – while controlling for other variables, such as socioeconomic factors, which might change and alter trust levels.

The metrics for each of these variables are outlined on Table 1.

Variable	**Survey measure**	**Experimental measure**
Generalized trust	"Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that most people will try to take advantage of you?" cannot be too careful in dealing with people?"[1]	Results of Trust Game when played against strangers.

Particularized trust	"Could you tell me for each whether you trust people from this group completely, somewhat, not very much or not at all: 1) your family; 2) your neighborhood; 3) people you know personally; 4) people you meet for the first time; 5) people of another religion; 6) people of another nationality." The first three are indicators of particularized trust, whereas the last three indicate generalized trust.[2]	Results of Trust Game when played against members of one's group.
Association diversity [bridging vs. bonding]	Self-reported demographic information regarding gender, religion, political views, socioeconomic background and ethnicity, per subject member in a specific sample of an association. The information is aggregated to determine the association's overall diversity.	Not assessed via experimental measures
Association connectedness [connected vs. isolated]	"How many different voluntary associations do you regularly meet with in the period of one month?"	Not assessed via experimental measures

[1] The vast majority of studies on social trust which measure it through survey data base it on the standardized question from the World Values Survey. See Newton, Stolle and Zmerli (2018); Mattes and Moreno (2018); Zmerli & Newton (2008); Sapienza et al (2013). However, Prof. Paxton's suggestion is to amend the question to include the idea of "taking advantage". We have accepted her suggestion.

[2] Delhey & Welzel, 2012, WVR 5(3): 46-69.

Finally, we propose a multilevel analysis for both individual levels of trust and group levels of trust, in order to measure trust more efficiently (Stolle 2003; 1998). Additionally, since we have multiple variables, we suggest a multivariate analysis.

Bibliography

Allport, G.W. (1954). The Nature of Prejudice. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Berg, J., J. Dickhaut, and D. McCabe. 1995. Trust, reciprocity, and social history. Games and Economic Behavior 10(1): 122– 142.

Cook, K.; Santana, J.Trust and Rational Choice. In The Oxford Handbook of Social and Political Trust, 2018, ed. Uslaner, E. M.

Delhey, J.; Welzel, C. Generalizing Trust: How Outgroup-Trust Grows Beyond Ingroup-Trust. SSRN Electronic Journal Volume 5 (3):46-69. October 2012.

Dinesen, P. T.; Sønderskov, K. M.. Cultural Persistence or Experiential Adaptation? A Review of Studies Using Immigrants to Examine the Roots of Trust, In The Oxford Handbook of Social and Political Trust, 2018, ed. Uslaner, E. M.

Enos, R.; Gidron, N. Exclusion and Cooperation in Diverse Societies: Experimental Evidence from Israel. American Political Science Review, Volume 112, Issue 4. November 2018, pp. 742-757

Foddy, M., Platow, M. J., & Yamagishi, T. (2009). Group-Based Trust in Strangers. Psychological Science, 20(4), 419–422.

Foley, M; Edwards, B. The Paradox of Civil Society. In “Journal of Democracy” 7(3):38-52. July
1996

Glanville, J.L. (2001). “Ties and Trust.” Dissertation. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Glanville, J.L. & P. Paxton (2007). “How Do We Learn to Trust?” Social Psychology Quarterly 70: 230–242.

Hardin, R. 2002. Trust and Trustworthiness. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Inglehart, R. & C. Welzel (2005). Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kramer, R. Trust and Distrust in Organizations: Emerging Perspectives, Enduring Questions. Annu. Rev. Psychol. 1999. 50:569–98

Park, C., and Subramanian, S. V. 2012. Voluntary association membership and social cleavages: A micro- macro link in generalized trust. Social Forces 90(4): 1183– 1205.

Paxton, P. 2007. Association memberships and generalized trust: A multilevel model across 31 countries. Social Forces 86(1): 47– 76.

Paxton, P., and J. L. Glanville. 2015. Is trust rigid or malleable? A laboratory experiment. Social Psychology Quarterly 78(2): 194– 204.

Paxton, P.; Ressler, R. Trust and Participation in Associations. In The Oxford Handbook of Social and Political Trust, 2018, ed. Uslaner, E. M.

Pettigrew, T. F. 1997. Generalized intergroup contact effects on prejudice. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 23(2): 173– 185.

Pettigrew, T. F. 1998. Intergroup contact theory. Annual Review of Psychology 49(1): 65– 85.

Pettigrew, T. F., and L. R. Tropp. 2006. A meta- analytic test of intergroup contact theory. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 90(5): 751– 783.

Putnam, R. D. 1993. Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

_____ 2000. Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Sapienza, P.; Toldra-Simats, A.; Zingales, L. Understanding Trust. The Economic Journal, 2013: Royal Economic Society.
Stolle, D. 1998. Bowling together, bowling alone: The development of generalized trust in voluntary associations. Political Psychology 19(3): 497– 525.
Stolle, D., and T. R. Rochon. 1998. Are all associations alike? Member diversity, associational type, and the creation of social capital. American Behavioral Scientist 42(1): 47– 65.
Stolle, D; Hooghe, M. Introduction: Generating Social Capital. 2003. In "Generating Social Capital: civil societies and institutions in comparative perspective". Eds. Hooghe, M. and Stolle, D: Palgrave Macmillan US.
Uslaner, E. M. 2002. The Moral Foundations of Trust. New York: Cambridge University Press.
_____. 2008. The foundations of trust: Macro and micro. Cambridge Journal of Economics 32: 289– 294.
Yamagishi, T., and M. Yamagishi. 1994. Trust and commitment in the United States and Japan. Motivation and Emotion 18(2): 129– 166.