This study is part of a series of experimental studies (Deutsch, 1957, 1958) that have investigated some of the determinants of trusting behavior. In this brief paper, some striking findings relating trusting behavior to scores on the F scale (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950, p. 260) are reported.

Our experimental work has utilized a two-person non-zero-sum game (see Fig. 1) in which the gains or losses incurred by each person are a function of the choices made between two alternatives by one’s partner as well as the choices made by oneself. Person I has to choose between Rows X and Y, Person II has to choose between Columns A and B. The amount of (imaginary) money each person wins or loses is determined by the box they get into as a result of their respective choices. For example, if Person I chooses Row X and Person II chooses Column A, they get into the AX box and they each win $9.

If you examine the possibilities of choice for Person I, you will notice that he can win most and lose least by choosing Y. Similarly, Person II can win most and lose least by choosing B. However, if Person I chooses Y and II chooses B, they both lose $9. Both can win only if they end up in the AX box. If Person I is reasonably sure that Person II is going to choose B, he can win more by choosing Y. Analogously, if Person II is confident that Person I is going to choose X, he can win more by choosing B rather than A.

The essential psychological feature of the game is that there is no possibility for “rational” individual behavior in it unless the conditions for mutual trust exist. If each player chooses to obtain either maximum gain or minimum loss for himself, each will lose. But it makes no sense to choose the other alternative, which could result in maximum loss, unless one can trust the other player.

In the study reported here, Ss were drawn from an introductory psychology course at a local university. Several weeks prior to the experiment, they had filled out the F scale. During the experiment, the instructions to the Ss about the game were such that they fully understood the implications of any combination of choices that they and the other person might make and they knew that the other person had a similar knowledge of the game. Unlike some of our other experiments (in which the Ss were induced to assume a cooperative, individualistic, or competitive orientation), the Ss were given no motivational orientation. They were allowed to assume whatever orientation they wished to assume vis-à-vis the other person, about whom they were given no information. The S did not know the identity of the other person and knew that the other person did not know his identity (except that each S knew that the participants in the experiment were all students in the same psychology course).

Ss played the game twice, each time in a different “position” and each time, presumably, with a different person. In the First Position, S made his choice first and his choice was presumably announced to the other person before the other person made his choice. In fact, the other person was “fictional” and, hence, the S was not informed what the “other person” chose after the S made his choice. In the First Position, the S was faced with the decision of trusting the other person or not. In the Second Position, the S chose second after he knew the choice of the other person. Here, too, the other person was “fictional” and the actual S was always informed that the “other person” had chosen Row X (i.e., had trusted). Hence, in the Second Position, the S was faced with the decision of being trustworthy or not.

Table 1 presents the data concerning the relationship between choices in the two positions. It is clear that the Ss who were “trusting” when they chose first tended to be Trustworthy when they chose last; on the other hand, the Ss who were “suspicious” when they chose first tended to be Untrustworthy when they chose last.

Before the Ss made their choices in the first position they were asked to indicate what they expected the other person to choose. Of the 24 Ss who chose Row X in the first position and Column A in the second position, 21 indicated that they expected the other person to choose Column A; of the 22 persons who chose Row Y in...
TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Position Choice</th>
<th>Second Position Choice</th>
<th>Trustworthiness</th>
<th>Untrustworthiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trusting (X)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious (Y)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game Behavior</th>
<th>Low (1-2.5)</th>
<th>Medium (2.5-3.5)</th>
<th>High (3.5-4.8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrustworthy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


discussion

The data of Table 1 provide a striking demonstration of the symmetry of the Trustworthiness behavior in his two complementing roles a la a la the other person. His behavior toward the other is congruent with what he expects from the other, and also, what he expects from the other is congruent with his behavior toward the other. The Ss tend to be trusting and trustworthy or suspicious and untrustworthy in this essentially ambiguous situation with unknown others. This result suggests that the personality predispositions tapped by the experimental game are not simply one-sided internalized orientations toward another or internalized expectations from another but are instead internalizations of a reciprocal pattern of interrelationships with another. A measure, we believe it makes most sense to consider the individual's score in relationship to the scores of others within his cultural milieu.

In other words, what appears to be internalized is a system of interrelations between oneself and the other, including the values which prescribe both what to expect from the other and how to act toward the other. A similar conception of the nature of personality predispositions is advanced more fully by such authors as Mead (1934) and Parsons (1935).

The F scale data indicate that the game behavior was related to personality predispositions and that it was not determined by "accidental" orientations assumed during the course of the experiment, except in the special sense that vulnerability to "accidentall" factors was itself influenced by the personality predispositions measured by the F scale.

The mass of research on the F scale, surveyed in Christie and Cook (1956), indicates that there are consistent differences between Low and High scorers in their behaviors in social situations and in their responses to various questionnaires. The High as compared with the Low scorers tend to be more authoritarian, less intellectually sophisticated, less liberal in their political views, more cynical concerning human nature, more prejudiced toward minority groups, and to have experienced and to favor stricter social controls. The present results suggest that, in addition, one may say that an ambiguous situation involving the choices of trusting or not and of being trustworthy or not, Low scorers are more likely to be Trusting and Trustworthy while High scorers are more likely to be Suspicious and Untrustworthy (exploitatively oriented). These results are obviously consistent with the description of what the F scale was intended to measure and with the conception of the "antisocial" personality as advanced in The Authoritarian Personality (Adorno et al., 1950).

However, it is not necessary to posit as do the California authors (Adorno et al., 1950) that the characteristics of the authoritarian personality are to be understood as expressions of a particular kind of personality structure within the personality. Many essential features of this structure is ... that the conscience or superego is incompletely integrated with the self or ego. There is more reason to believe that a failure in superego integration is due to weakness in the ego to its inability to perform the necessary synthesis ... (p. 234)

An alternative viewpoint would be that the personality differences between High and Low scorers on the F scale do not necessarily reflect structural differences in personality so much as content differences in the values that have been internalized as a result of the individual's reaction to social interaction experiences in a particular social milieu, characterized by a given value pattern. This latter viewpoint suggests that Highs and Lows, Trusting people and Suspicious people do nor necessarily differ in superego integration or in ego weakness (a common synonym for "psychopathy"). As we have indicated more fully elsewhere (Deutsch, 1957), there are characteristic forms of pathological trust (e.g. "gullibility") as well as pathological suspicion (e.g. "paranoia"). Presumably, the pathologies of trust and suspicion both reflect internal conflict and ego weakness, both of which may be found in individuals who have internalized widely differing values.

Summary

Ss played an interpersonal game which, in one position, required them to choose between trusting or suspicious of another and, in a second position, required them to choose between trusting or suspicious of another and, in a second position, required them to choose between trusting or suspicious of another. There was a striking tendency for Ss who were trusting to be trustworthy and for Ss who were suspicious to be untrustworthy. F scale scores correlated significantly with the trait definitions. Ss with High scores tended to be Trusting and Trustworthy while Ss with Low scores tended to be Suspicious and Untrustworthy in their game choices.

References


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