





# My Perspective: Examining Online Trust through Social Exchange

Human relationships are formed through everyday exchanges of valued resources on social media (information, goods, services). Social exchanges between users on social media shape the development of trust, community, and solidarity.





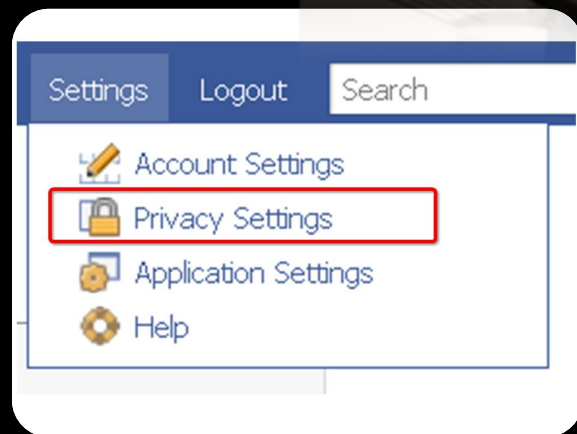
For Example: We examine “Online Social Intelligence”: High Trust (more willing to interact with others) combined with High Caution (healthy skepticism of others)

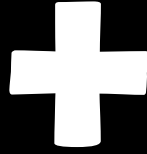


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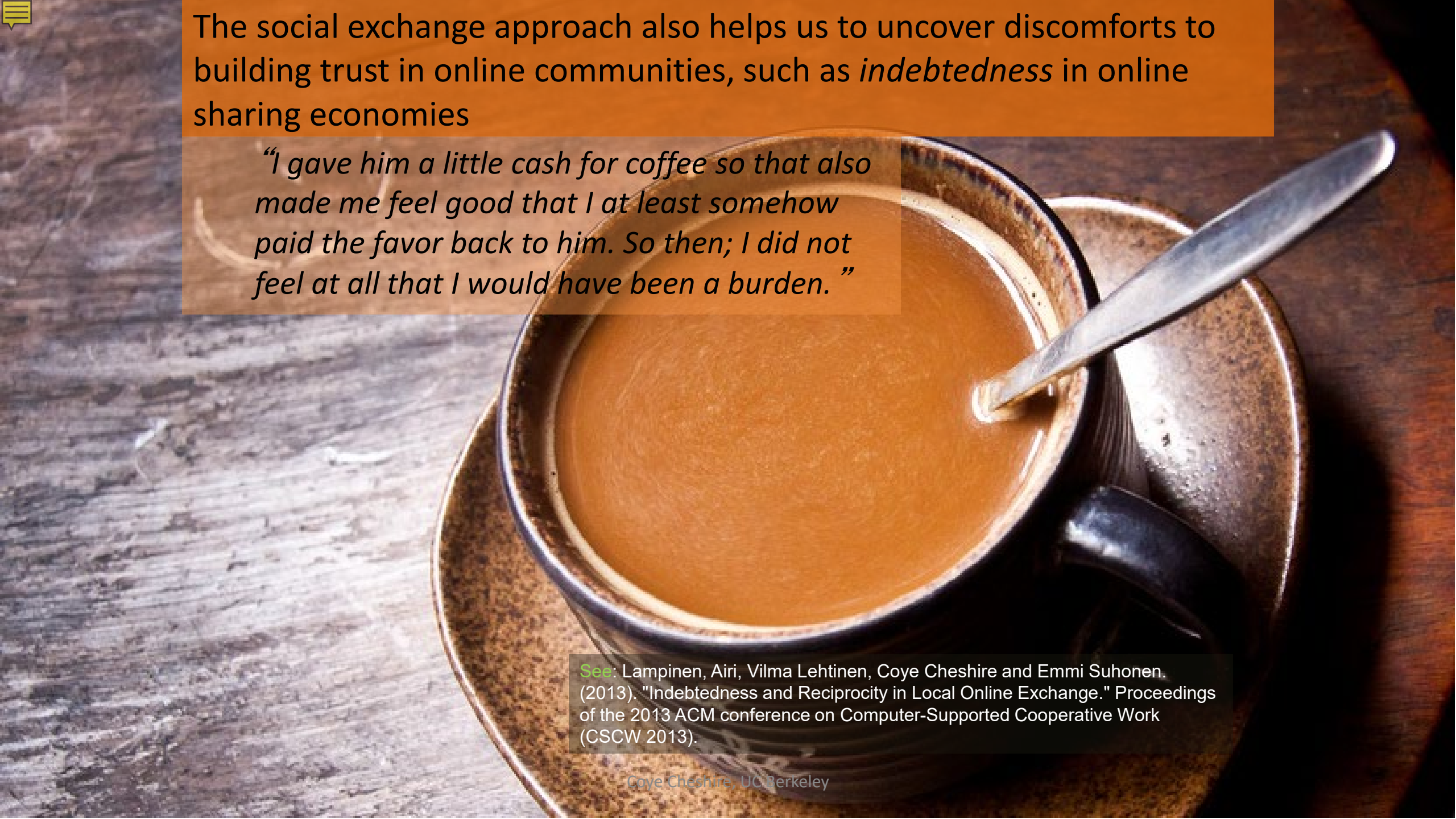


# Who are among the most careful, privacy-aware Internet users?





Higher  
Internet  
Discretion

A top-down view of a dark brown ceramic coffee cup filled with a light brown coffee, resting on a matching saucer. A silver spoon is placed in the coffee. The background is a dark, textured wooden surface.

The social exchange approach also helps us to uncover discomforts to building trust in online communities, such as *indebtedness* in online sharing economies

*“I gave him a little cash for coffee so that also made me feel good that I at least somehow paid the favor back to him. So then; I did not feel at all that I would have been a burden.”*

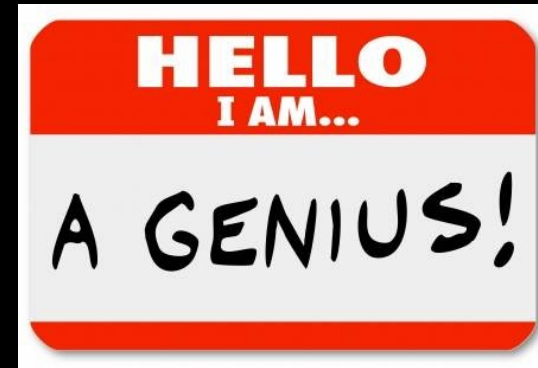
**See:** Lampinen, Airi, Vilma Lehtinen, Coye Cheshire and Emmi Suhonen. (2013). "Indebtedness and Reciprocity in Local Online Exchange." Proceedings of the 2013 ACM conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2013).



# How Do People Signal Trustworthiness in Social Media?

## Symbols

indicators of trust-warranting properties in a person  
(e.g., self-provided badges)



## Symptoms

by-product of actions that are associated with trust  
(e.g., thoughtful comments, response times)

### Is your Email Response Time an indication of you?

I'm going to say something here, and I hope you listen, especially if you use your email address as part of a business or if you represent or are affiliated, in any way, with some group or organization: **Your response time indicates your maturity level.** Standard response time for email is 24 hours. I hate it, too. However, if you are going to be on vacation, or spending a long weekend away from the computer, or just need a "time out", be sure to set up an "auto-responder" to tell people you are away from your computer until X day and that you will attempt to respond upon the day of your return.

# Interpersonal Online Trust Always Involves Risk and Uncertainty

Interpersonal Trust involves **repeated interactions** between parties that involve **risk-taking**, in the presence of **uncertainty**.

Online communities and social media often create assurances that attempt to **reduce risk and uncertainty**.



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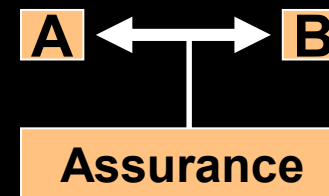
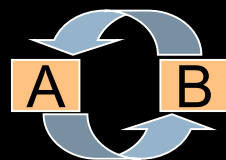
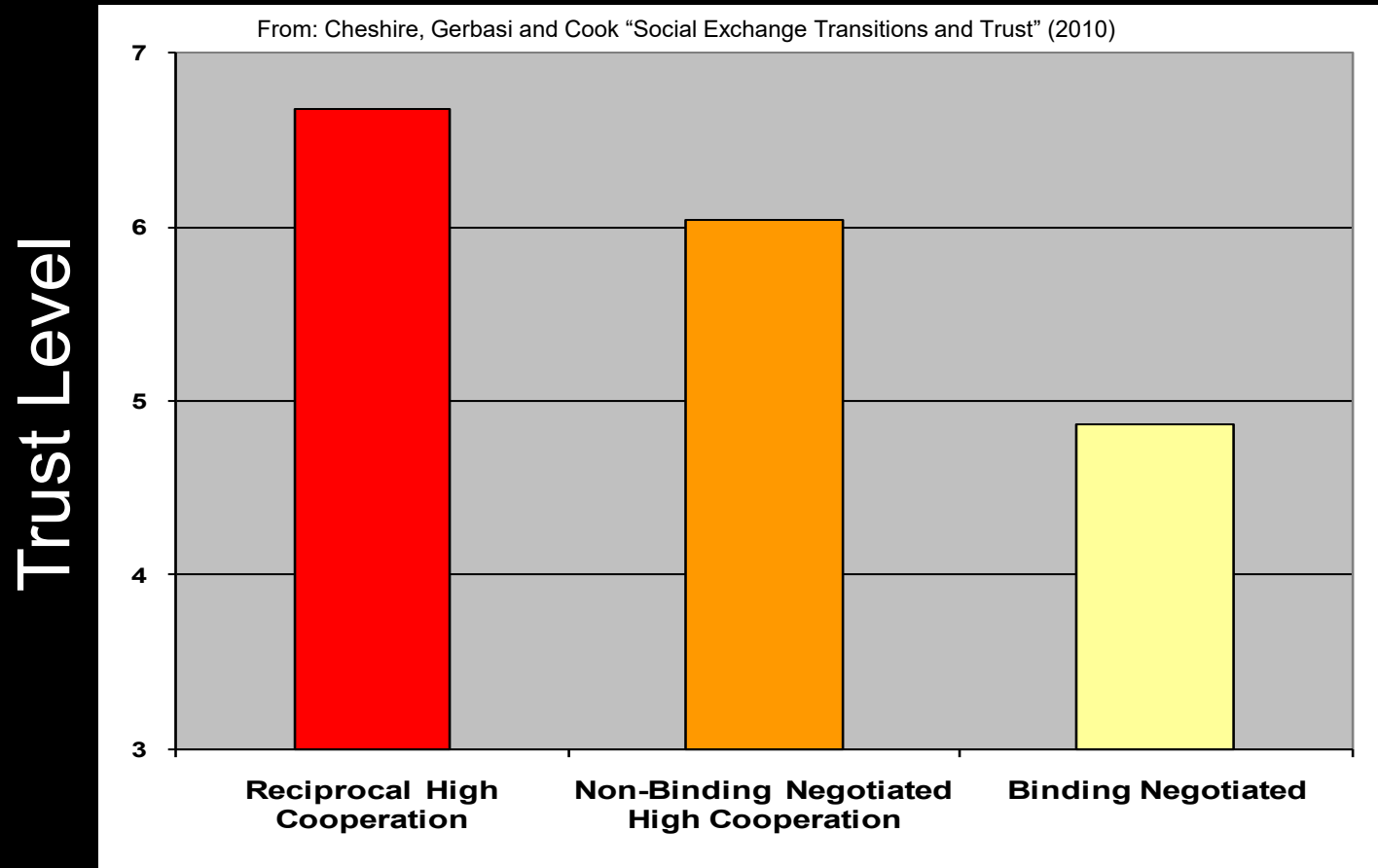


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# Research Shows that Interpersonal Trust Actually *Declines* with Increased Assurances in Technology-Mediated Social Exchange





Core Lesson:

Many social media companies invest in assurances *at the expense of interpersonal trust*

Paradoxically, **assurance structures** (monitoring and sanctioning) can actually reduce the possibility of ongoing trust relations between users. Which is more important to your platform?

User-generated reputation  
systems as another “solution”  
to building online trust



## Two Primary Types of Reputation Systems

**Implicit**

Derived from behavior

**Join Date:** Mar 2004  
**Posts:** 22

**Explicit**

Ratings by others

☆☆☆☆ - 4/5 stars

	positive	284
	neutral	1
	negative	2

# The problem with user-generated reputation ratings (of people, things etc)...

Understanding Online Star Ratings:



<https://www.slideshare.net/ASOBarcamp/asobarcamp-2-ratings-and-reviews-aso-impact-and-leverage-of-review-optimisation-thomas-petit-8fitcom>



Nike Band



Ford Efficiency Monitor

## Core Lesson:

We can help users create personally meaningful evaluations of reputation by leveraging flexibility (and even ambiguity)



Apple Watch Health Info

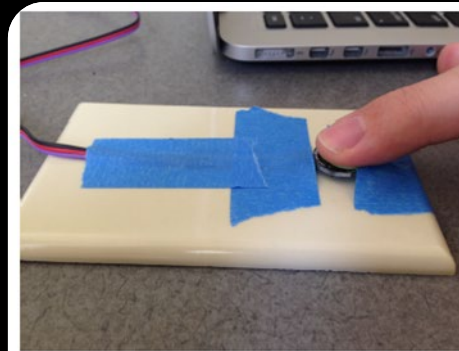


Figure 1. The heartrate monitor. Subjects were told to place their finger on the monitor to take a reading while viewing their partner's decisions during the previous turn.

Your partner's heartrate during the summary:



Your partner's heartrate was normal.

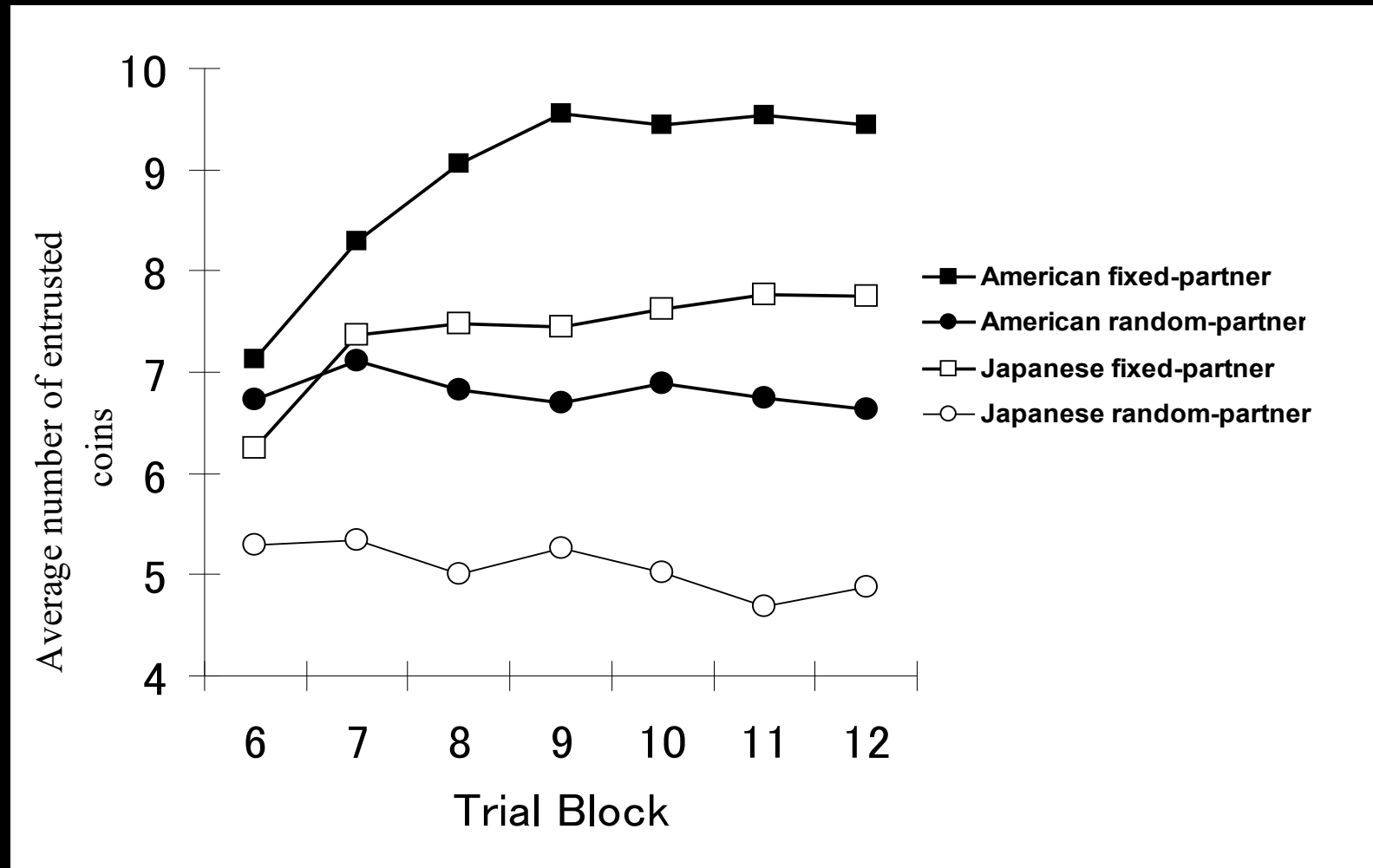
OK

Figure 2. The heartrate visualization. After viewing the results of the previous round, subjects were presented with a graph of what they believed to be their partner's recent heartrate.



# Last But Not Least...Cross-Cultural Differences Matter!

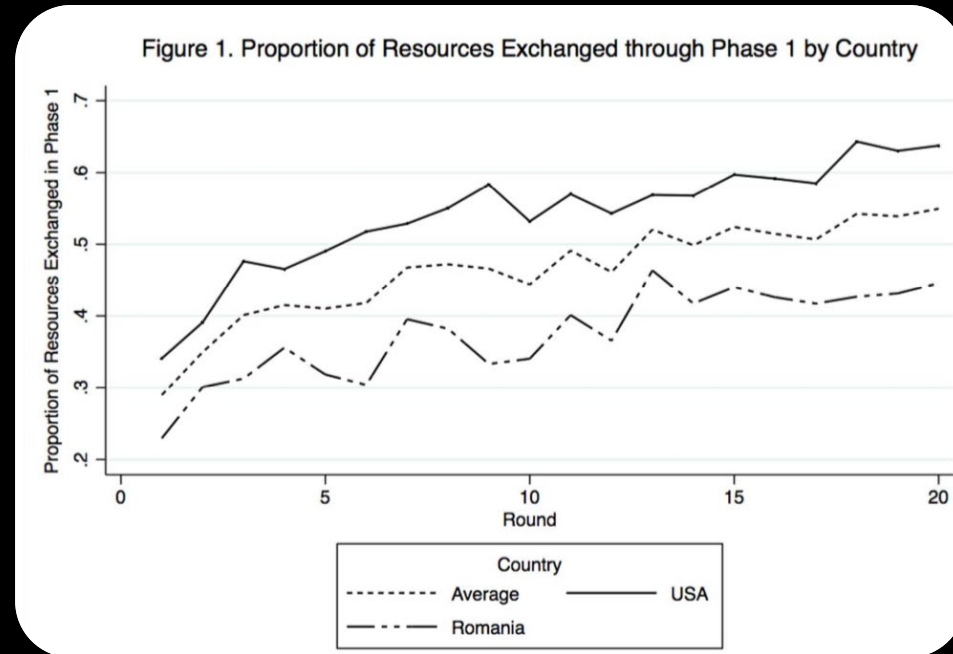
# Some of our early cross-societal work: Trust-Building Processes in US and Japan



From: Cook, Yamagishi, Cheshire et al., "Trust via Risk-Taking" (2005), *Social Psychology Quarterly*

# Current Research Example: Trust-Building in the US and Romania

- **General trust** (disposition to trust) strongly associated with mutually productive social exchanges. Romania is *much lower* in general trust than the US.
- When we let **behavioral trust** develop, the experience of trusting behavior leads to higher productive outcomes (such as resources given) over time, regardless of region.







## Core Lesson:

Regional/societal differences do exist and can be rather large. However, the **experience of building trust with others (online or offline!) can erase pre-existing regional trust differences.**





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