

Interpersonal interactions in an unequal world

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Impact

In this section, I elaborate on the scientific and societal impact the knowledge generated in this dissertation may have.

1 Scientific impact

During my PhD, I had multiple opportunities to discuss and showcase the results of this dissertation in many different contexts. Keeping true to the interdisciplinary nature of this dissertation, I presented the results of the empirical chapters in conferences in different fields such as Neuroeconomics, Behavioral and Experimental Economics and Social Psychology. I attended conferences and seminars in a wide variety of locations across the globe, such as Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, China and United States. I considered this as an important way of communicating the results of my research to the scientific community and other interested researchers while also keeping check of the quality of the scientific work I produced according to academic standards.

In addition, early on in my PhD, I became aware of the replicability crisis, which called into question the validity of scientific findings produced across many different social sciences. As a researcher, I attempt to attend to the recent changes in academic standards and make efforts to abide by them. In that sense, I tried to follow as much as possible the recent Open Science movement aiming to make scientific research reproducible and accessible to both academics and the lay public. For reasons of good scientific practice and conduct, hypothesis and an analysis plan for chapter 5 were pre-registered and can be found in the database of the Center for Open Science (<https://osf.io/pg7yc>). Moreover, results of chapter 2 were published as a preprint to facilitate timely dissemination among the scientific community. It is my goal to also share the datasets used in the empirical chapters of this dissertation as well as the statistical analysis I conducted in open data repositories, supporting other researchers in using my work to either reproduce it or to conduct further scientific investigations. I also aim to publish my research as much as possible in open access journals, such that it can be accessible to a wider public of researchers and other interested individuals or institutions. Furthermore, during my PhD, I joined the organization *FORRT*, which advocates for the integration of open and reproducible science in high education. This organization aims to support the teaching and mentoring of open science tenets in high education while raising awareness of the pedagogical implications and challenges of teaching open and reproducible science (for more information, see <https://forrt.org/>). The attempt to raise awareness in the scientific community to the

issue of teaching open science led to a working paper which I co-authored (FORRT, 2019).

Finally, all the empirical chapters of this dissertation are being submitted to scientific journals for publication after peer-review scrutiny. I believe these chapters can provide significant contributions to different scientific fields engaged in the exploration of the impact of inequality and unfairness on social and consumer behavior. For example, results of **chapter 2** suggest that there may be some similarities in how individuals perceive inequality in opportunity and outcomes. These results hopefully can inspire further research investigating inequality in opportunity and its potential similarities and differences from how inequality in outcomes is perceived. **Chapter 3** investigates the influence of unequal opportunities on preferences for outcome redistribution. Interestingly, results suggest individuals may not think of outcome redistribution as a legitimate way to compensate inequality in opportunity. These findings contribute to the literature on redistributive behavior and call for further research unraveling what individuals might consider as a fair compensation for unequal opportunities. **Chapter 4** adds to the literature on consumer behavior by showing how individuals' perceptions of society can have detrimental effects on their consumption behaviors. Lastly, **Chapter 5** contributes to the literature on the neuroscience of (un)fairness by providing a systematic and comprehensive investigation of the involvement of two regions of the prefrontal cortex in reciprocating behavior in contexts of (un)fairness. Results challenge some previous interpretations for the role of the right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and medial prefrontal cortex on punishing unfair behavior and reveal interesting similarities and differences in the engagement of the prefrontal cortex in reciprocating fair and unfair behavior.

2 Social impact

In addition to the scientific relevance of this dissertation, I believe some of its findings can also be of relevance to behavioral scientists working on policy-making. For this reason, during my PhD I have participated in conferences and workshops that fostered an exchange between the scientific community and behavioral science practitioners.

Although the empirical chapters of this dissertation are not policy papers, an extrapolation of the results might be insightful for policy-making. For example, results of **chapter 2** could suggest that making the cause of inequality in opportunity salient to individuals may elicit perceptions of how (un)fair that inequality is. Findings of **chapter 3** reveal that redistributing outcomes may not be seen as the optimal strategy in rectifying unequal opportunities. An extrapolation of this result may suggest that policies aimed at redistributing opportunities to offset inequality in opportunity may have more success in galvanizing public support. Lastly, **chapter 4** demonstrates that perceptions of high economic mobility by the poor can encourage conspicuous

consumption. This points to the need of policies aimed at correcting individuals' misperceptions about society which could lead to further poverty and inequality.

More importantly, I hope the empirical chapters of this dissertation can argue for the relevance of studying and understanding how inequality affects behavior and how individuals react in situations of unfairness. In the long-run, comprehending the negative effects of living in an unequal world to human behavior and psychological motivations might steer governments and institutions in their actions to reduce economic inequality and opportunity gaps while trying to better human well-being.