

Young children's selective trust in informants

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Abstract

Young children readily act on information from adults, setting aside their own prior convictions and even continuing to trust informants who make claims that are manifestly false. Such credulity is consistent with a long-standing philosophical and scientific conception of young children as prone to indiscriminate trust. Against this conception, we argue that children trust some informants more than others. In particular, they use two major heuristics. First, they keep track of the epistemic reliability of potential informants. Faced with conflicting claims, they endorse those made by someone who has proven accurate rather than inaccurate in the recent past. Second, they monitor the cultural standing of potential informants. Faced with conflicting claims, children endorse those made by someone who belongs to a consensus and whose behaviour abides by, rather than deviates from, the norms of their group. Taken together, these two heuristics favour the transmission of information that is either true or culturally typical.

Key words: credulity; trust; epistemic reliability; consensus;

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Young children are trusting disciples. They are ready to learn from caregivers (Gergely & Csibra, 2006). They are prone to set aside their own causal understanding so as to more closely imitate the actions of a model (Horner & Whiten, 2005; Lyons, Young & Keil, 2007). They abandon their own category judgments after hearing a different judgment from an adult (Jaswal 2004). Introduced to a new practice, they are likely to regard it as a prescriptive norm, not just a behavioural regularity (Rakoczy, Warneken, & Tomasello, 2008). When informed (via pointing or words) about simple matters of fact – for example, the location of an object – they repeatedly act on that information even in the face of consistent demonstrations of its falsity (Couillard & Woodward, 1999; Jaswal, Croft, Setia & Cole, in press). Finally, children defer to adult informants who provide information about unobservable events and entities in domains such as history, religion and science (Harris & Koenig, 2006).

Taken together, these findings imply that human children are receptive pupils who trust adult models or informants. They rarely express doubt even when the information supplied runs counter to their own understanding or judgment. That conception of early cognition has a distinguished history in philosophy. Thomas Reid, a leading member of the Scottish Enlightenment, argued that an original principle implanted in us: “is a disposition to confide in the veracity of others and to believe what they tell us...It is unlimited in children” (1764, p. 237). Twentieth century philosophers have agreed. Bertrand Russell wrote: “Doubt, suspense of judgment and disbelief all seem later and more complex than a wholly unreflecting assent” (1921, p. 249). Similarly, Wittgenstein claimed that: “A child learns there are reliable and unreliable informants much later than

it learns the facts which are told it” (1969, sec. 143). The same emphasis on early credulity and the absence of doubt can be found among contemporary psychologists and biologists. Dan Gilbert, for example, proposes that: “Children are especially credulous, especially gullible, especially prone toward acceptance and belief” (p.111) and Richard Dawkins calls attention to the alleged biological advantages of such credulity:

“Theoretically, children might learn from personal experience not to go too near a cliff edge, not to eat untried berries, not to swim in crocodile-infested waters. But, to say the least, there will be a selective advantage to child brains that possess the rule of thumb: believe, without question, whatever your grown-ups tell you” (2006, p. 174).

We argue that any implication of early, indiscriminate credulity is implausible, both biologically and psychologically. Children may be trusting disciples but they select whom to approach for information and whom to believe. They monitor potential informants for their epistemic reliability, preferring those who have proven accurate and they also monitor informants for their cultural typicality, preferring those who conform to local norms.

Selective attachment

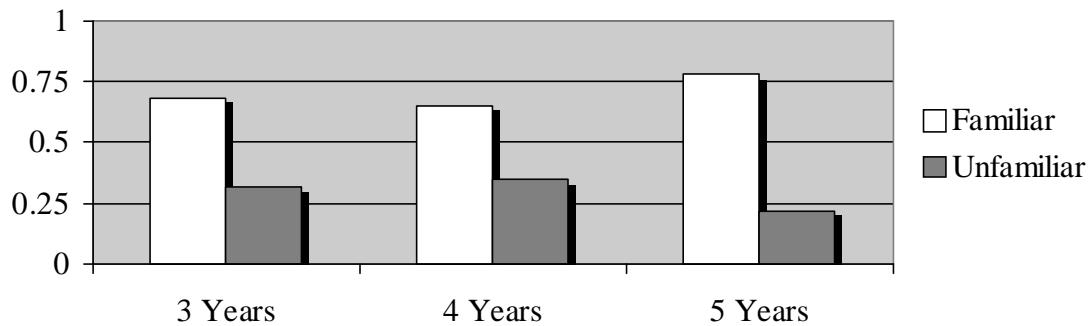
A long history of research on attachment suggests that any assumption of indiscriminate trust in early childhood is likely to be misplaced. Human infants are equipped with a non-verbal repertoire (eye-contact, crying, and facial expressions) which they use to engage potential caregivers. Following an initial period when they indiscriminately ‘court’ all potential caregivers, infants become increasingly selective in whom they trust to supply reassurance and a secure base (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1969; Hrdy, 2000). Such selectivity is more or less universal among

children who grow up under normal rearing conditions. Only after prolonged and severe neglect – of the kind observed in Rumanian orphanages during the Ceausescu regime – do children display signs of indiscriminate trust (so-called disinhibited attachment) toward unfamiliar as well as familiar adults (Rutter et al., 2010).

Granted this near-universal selectivity in the socio-emotional sphere young children might deploy that same selectivity in choosing which informant to trust. More specifically, a straightforward prediction from attachment theory is that young children will be more receptive to information offered by a familiar caregiver as compared to a stranger. With the help of two preschool caregivers, one working in preschool A, the other in preschool B, we obtained support for this prediction (Corriveau & Harris, 2009a).

Children from each preschool watched a film in which the two caregivers proposed conflicting names or functions for novel objects. Children could indicate which caregiver they wanted to ask about the novel objects. In addition, once the two caregivers had proposed conflicting names or functions, children were invited to endorse one or the other. The experimenter said, for example: “C. in the pink shirt said it’s a snegg and S. in the black shirt said it’s a hoon. What do you think it’s called – a snegg or a hoon?” Children who attended preschool A placed more trust – as indexed by their choice of whom to ask and endorse – in the information provided by caregiver A as compared to caregiver B and the reverse was true for children attending preschool B. Figure 1 confirms children’s preference for the familiar caregiver at 3, 4 and 5 years (the data have been averaged across each preschool).

Figure 1: Proportion of choices directed at familiar and unfamiliar caregiver by 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds (averaged across preschools A and B).



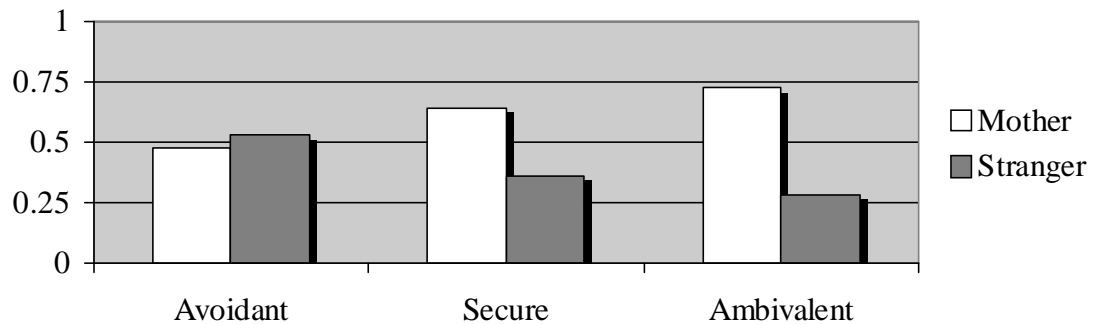
Attachment theory implies that familiarity is not in itself sufficient to evoke trust. A history of responsive caregiving is needed. By implication, children might not invariably prefer information from a familiar informant. Their receptivity should be undermined if the familiar person is consistently unavailable or unresponsive. We tested this prediction in a longitudinal study. Based on the standard Strange Situation procedure, children were identified at 15 months as having either a secure, avoidant, or ambivalent relationship to their mother. We returned approximately 4 years later when children had just turned 5 years of age to assess their trust in their mother as an informant. Children were shown pictures of animal hybrids. Figure 2 illustrates an example. Mothers categorized these hybrids in one way – for example, as a horse – whereas an unfamiliar adult that the child had just met categorized them differently – for example, as a cow. Children were then invited to say which person they wanted to ask for information about the hybrids – and when they offered conflicting information which person they agreed with.

Figure 2. Example of an animal hybrid – a cow-horse



Figure 3 shows how often children with each type of attachment trusted the information supplied by their mother as compared to the stranger. If children invariably preferred information from a familiar caregiver, such as their mother, we should observe that preference in all three attachment groups. However, if children are guided by their prior attachment, we would expect any preference for the mother's claims to be evident in secure and ambivalent children but to be attenuated or even absent among avoidant children. That is, in fact, the pattern that emerged. Children with an avoidant attachment to their mother treated her no differently from a stranger but the other two groups trusted their mother over the stranger.

Figure 3: proportion of choices directed at the mother versus a stranger by attachment classification.



A plausible way to conceptualize the findings presented so far is to propose a theoretical marriage. Children are trusting disciples – in line with the findings on cultural learning reviewed earlier. However, their trust is heightened just as attachment theory would imply. More specifically, children are especially receptive to information provided by a familiar caregiver rather than a stranger, provided they do not have an avoidant relationship with that caregiver. On this analysis, young children select among potential informants but on socio-emotional grounds. A person who has been responsive and reassuring is regarded as trustworthy in the epistemic as well as the emotional domain.

Monitoring for reliability

However, a recent body of findings shows that such an arranged marriage between attachment theory and cultural learning is not likely to work. In the first place, there is evidence that children monitor potential informants for their epistemic history and not just for their caregiving history. Even more problematic, children increasingly weigh an informant's epistemic history more heavily than his or her caregiving history

when selecting whose information to trust. We document these two claims below, starting with evidence for children's attention to an informant's epistemic history.

In an initial study, 3- and 4-year-old children were introduced to two unfamiliar adults (Koenig, Clément & Harris, 2004). In an induction phase, children were given an opportunity to assess the comparative reliability of these two informants by watching them name a series of four familiar objects. One informant named all four objects in the series correctly. For example, presented with a ball, she said: "That's a ball". The other informant, by contrast, named all four objects incorrectly. For example, presented with a ball, she said: "That's a cup". Because children knew the names of these objects, they were in a position to conclude that one informant was an epistemically reliable source of information whereas the other was not. In a subsequent test phase, we checked whether children had, in fact, drawn this conclusion and also whether they used it to guide their subsequent trust in the two informants. We found that children in both age groups appropriately judged one informant to be more accurate than the other. Moreover, their willingness to make that judgment predicted their trust. When unfamiliar objects were presented – whose names were not known to the children – they preferred to ask for information from the accurate as opposed to the inaccurate informant. Moreover, when the two informants supplied conflicting names for any given unfamiliar object, children were likely to endorse the name supplied by the hitherto accurate informant.

Subsequent research has clarified and consolidated several aspects of this basic result (Harris, 2007). First, on the basis of the initial findings, children's sensitivity to informant reliability might operate in only a circumscribed domain, namely the domain of object names. However, Clément, Koenig and Harris (2004), using a similar

procedure, namely an induction phase with two informants followed by a test phase, found that children also selected between accurate and inaccurate informants when the test domain concerned factual information about objects rather than object names. Second, children's selective trust might not reflect a spontaneous tendency to engage in reliability monitoring but a response to leading questions on the part of the experimenter about the reliability of the two informants. On this argument, selective trust should evaporate if children are not prompted by questions about the relative accuracy of the informants. However, in two follow-up studies, conducted in different laboratories, removal or postponement of such questions does not undermine the basic pattern. Children continued to trust the reliable rather than the unreliable informant (Birch, Vauthier & Bloom, 2008; Corriveau & Harris, 2009b). Third, the induction phase involved a somewhat unnatural contrast in informant reliability. One informant named objects correctly and the other named them incorrectly on each of four trials. In subsequent research, that contrast has been attenuated. For example, Pasquini, Corriveau, Koenig and Harris (2007) had children watch one informant who was predominantly correct (75% of trials) and another who was predominantly incorrect (75% of trials) during induction. Even though both informants had been sometimes right and sometimes wrong, children still went on to invest greater trust in the more reliable of the two. Indeed, 4-year-olds monitor apparent differences in reliability even when no obvious errors are involved. Having watched one informant name objects accurately and another informant make non-committal remarks about them (e.g., "Let me look at that") or express ignorance, children subsequently invested more trust in the accurate as opposed to the non-committal informant (Corriveau, Meints & Harris, 2009) or the ignorant

informant (Koenig & Harris, 2005). Fourth, reliability monitoring can reverse the normal pattern of vertical trust. Although preschoolers trust an adult informant over a peer, that preference is reversed if the peer proves more reliable (Jaswal & Neely, 2006). Finally, selective trust is not transient. When a second test phase was administered, either 3-4 days or an entire week after the initial test phase, 3- and 4-year-olds still invested more trust in the previously correct informant (Corriveau & Harris, 2009a).

Summing up, these studies offer persuasive evidence that young children monitor informants for their epistemic reliability. More precisely, children rapidly and spontaneously assess the comparative reliability of two unfamiliar informants and use that assessment over a protracted period to guide their judgments about which informant to ask and endorse. We may now turn to the second claim. Do children weigh an informant's epistemic reliability more heavily than her history of caregiving?

Weighing reliability against familiarity

In all the experiments just reviewed, the two adults who differed in their apparent reliability during the induction phase were unfamiliar. Arguably, in the absence of an established caregiving relationship, children use this brief exposure to their epistemic reliability as a proxy for longer-term indices of trustworthiness. More specifically, it could be argued that children ordinarily accumulate sustained evidence for the trustworthiness of a familiar informant in the context of the child-caregiver relationship. Faced with two unfamiliar informants, their monitoring of epistemic reliability might be a back-up strategy, one used only in the absence of a prior relationship. On this hypothesis, children's sensitivity to informant reliability would be, at most, a supplement to, or substitute for, the trust that is ordinarily grounded in a long-standing attachment. In that

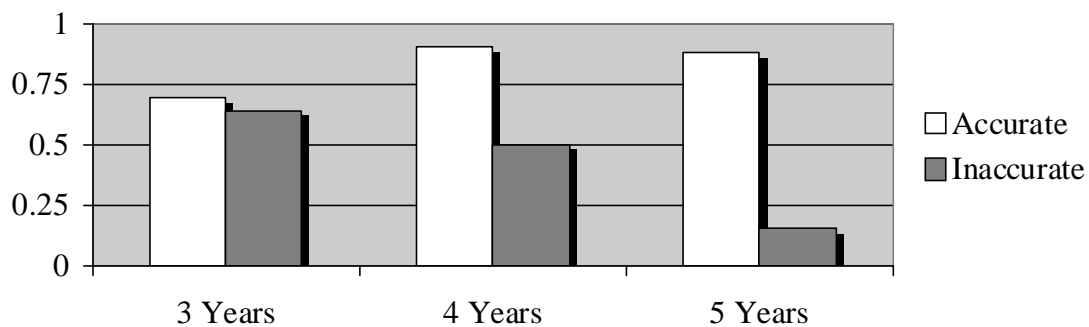
case, we would not expect recent evidence of epistemic unreliability to undermine the cumulative trust that is established on the basis of a long history of caregiving.

However, an alternative hypothesis is that children's sensitivity to reliability is distinct from their sensitivity to the pattern of caregiving they have received. Their monitoring of epistemic reliability is not just a substitute for the safeguards ordinarily provided by a prior history of caregiving. Instead, reliability monitoring is a distinct mode of appraisal, one that is critically important for a species that relies so heavily on cultural learning. If this view is correct, we would expect that even when an informant is a familiar caregiver, children will continue to check on his or her epistemic reliability. In fact, faced with a choice of whom to trust, they might prefer to learn from an evidently reliable but hitherto unfamiliar informant as compared to someone who has cared for them over a long period but has proven unreliable in the recent past.

To assess these competing possibilities, we extended the testing session that was conducted in preschools A and B as described earlier (Corriveau & Harris, 2009a). Recall that 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds first watched as two preschool caregivers proposed conflicting names and functions for unfamiliar objects. During this pre-test, all three age groups displayed a preference for the caregiver with whom they were familiar. In the subsequent induction phase, half the children in each age group saw their familiar caregiver name familiar known objects accurately whereas the unfamiliar caregiver named them inaccurately. The remaining children saw the reverse arrangement: the familiar caregiver named familiar objects inaccurately whereas the unfamiliar caregiver named them accurately. In the succeeding test phase, the two caregivers again supplied conflicting information about novel objects just they had in the pre-test. The key experimental

question was whether the induction phase would lead to a shift in children's pattern of selective trust. Figure 4 shows how much children in each age group continued to prefer the familiar caregiver, as they had done in the pre-test. Inspection of Figure 4 shows that 3-year-olds were unaffected by the induction phase: whether they had witnessed the familiar caregiver being accurate or inaccurate, they continued to favour the information that she provided in the test phase. Thus, their familiarity with one of the two caregivers trumped any evidence of unreliability that children may have registered during the induction phase. By contrast, the two older groups were affected by the induction phase. If the more familiar caregiver had proven to be inaccurate, they abandoned the preference for her that they had show in the initial test. Indeed, 5-year-olds switched to the less familiar caregiver, granted that she had proven accurate during the induction phase.

Figure 4. Proportion of choices directed at the familiar caregiver depending on whether children had observed her being accurate or inaccurate in naming well-known objects during the induction phase.



Why does this pattern not emerge among 3-year-olds? It is worth noting that two initially plausible explanations are inadequate. Arguably, 3-year-olds are unable to notice and remember an informant's errors. Hence, any selection that they make among informants can only be based on familiarity rather than on reliability. However, the solid body of evidence described earlier shows that this explanation is inadequate. When faced with two unfamiliar informants, 3-year-olds can keep track of their relative reliability and distribute their trust accordingly (Corriveau & Harris, 2009b; Corriveau, Meints & Harris, 2009; Koenig et al., 2004). Apparently, it is only when they are confronted with a familiar informant who makes mistakes that they 'forgive' those errors and continue to invest more trust in the familiar informant.

A second, possible explanation is that granted their history of interaction with a familiar caregiver, 3-year-olds set aside or overlook any recent evidence of inaccuracy because it counts for little when set alongside a cumulative history of reliable information from that same caregiver. However, there is a clear objection to this second explanation, also. If anything, 4- and 5-year-olds are likely to have had a longer or more intense interaction with their preschool caregiver than 3-year-olds. Therefore, if children were weighing recent inaccuracy against a cumulative past history of accuracy, we would expect the exact opposite of the pattern of results illustrated in Figure 4. We would expect 3-year-olds to be more troubled by recent accuracy than 4- and 5-year-olds.

Granted these points, the most plausible explanation is that there is a major shift in the weight that children attach to two indices of trustworthiness: a prior history of caregiving and epistemic reliability. Three-year-olds are sensitive to both but they favour prior caregiving even in the face of evidence for unreliability. By contrast, 4-year-olds

and particularly 5-year-olds favour reliability even when this means rejecting information from a familiar caregiver. A key implication of these results is that although attachment theory can help to explain selective trust it cannot explain the overall developmental pattern. Children attend to an informant's epistemic record and in the case of older children that focus is pre-emptive. When the epistemic record proves unsatisfactory, they mistrust the information supplied, even if the person is familiar to them. More broadly, these results imply that in the course of early development, children's selective trust is increasingly guided by epistemic rather than socio-emotional factors. In acquiring new information, they trust reliable informants rather than familiar caregivers.

Group membership

In learning from other people, it is plausible that children seek true information rather than false information. The fact that they monitor informants for the accuracy of their claims is likely to increase the probability that they learn from truthful informants. However, certain cultural practices are not true or false in any straightforward, factual sense. Nevertheless, they are likely to be favoured by members of a given culture. How do children maximize the likelihood that what they learn is representative of the cultural group to which they belong? One strategy that young children might adopt is to trust informants who are culturally prototypical – who act or talk in ways that reflect the surrounding culture. If this hypothesis is correct we can expect children to favour learning from cultural conformists rather than cultural misfits. Several recent findings indicate that children display exactly this strategy. For example, they endorse claims made by informants who respect rather than deviate from the morphological rules of the language. They endorse demonstrations of tool use by models who speak with a native as

opposed to a foreign accent. They endorse claims made by informants who elicit bystander approval rather than disapproval. Finally, they endorse claims made by members of a consensus rather than lone dissenters. We briefly describe these findings and then consider their implications.

In many of the experiments described so far the two informants differed in terms of accuracy. One correctly identified a series of objects whereas the other misidentified those same objects. We have recently found that such errors of fact are not needed to trigger selective trust. Four-year-olds listened to two informants who varied in terms of their morphological production (Corriveau, Pickard & Harris, 2010). In the induction phase, one speaker produced minor morphological errors (e.g., she said ‘a shoes’ or ‘some shoe’) whereas the other speaker produced these morphological forms correctly (e.g., she said ‘a shoe’ or ‘some shoes’). In the subsequent test phase, these two speakers made conflicting claims about the names of unfamiliar objects as well as the past tense forms of unfamiliar verbs. Children preferred to seek and endorse information from the good morphologist in both the semantic domain (i.e., learning new names) and the morphological domain (i.e., learning new past tense forms).

Children are quite sensitive to linguistic markers of group membership, such as accent. Having briefly listened to two speakers similar in age, appearance and gender, but differing in accent infants and young children prefer to interact with the person who has a native rather than a foreign accent (Kinzler, Dupoux & Spelke, 2007). We asked if children also use accent in deciding which speaker to trust for new information (Kinzler, Corriveau & Harris, in press). One group of 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds watched and listened as two speakers narrated a short passage from the story of ‘Curious George.’ One spoke

English with a native (North-American) accent. The other spoke English with a foreign (Spanish) accent. A second group of children of the same age watched and listened as the two speakers narrated a short passage from ‘Jaberwocky’. Although syntactically well-formed, the sentences in this passage were not meaningful so that any differences in trust following this induction could not be attributed to differential comprehension of the two speakers. Following both types of induction, children were given an opportunity to seek and endorse information about the use of four unfamiliar artefacts from the two speakers. They offered conflicting demonstrations of how to use any given artefact. For example, one speaker looked through a plastic sprinkler attachment as if it were a telescope whereas the other speaker held it to her mouth and blew in it.

Children tended to seek and endorse information from the native-accented speaker. This preference was equally strong in all three age groups and equally strong following the meaningful, ‘Curious George’ induction and the meaningless, ‘Jaberwocky’ induction. Note that the induction phase and the test phase of this experiment differed in both modality and domain. The induction phase involved audible differences in language accent. The test phase involved visible differences in tool use. Nevertheless, children used the audible cues of group membership to guide their learning about tool use.

In both of the studies just described – the study of morphology and accent – children could appraise the two speakers in terms of their conformity to practices that they – the children themselves – subscribed to and knew about. After all, the children were native speakers of English. Yet there will often be occasions when children encounter informants who profess beliefs or engage in practices that are quite unfamiliar

to them and which they cannot assess for themselves. In these circumstances, how can young children optimize the likelihood that a potential informant is culturally prototypical rather than marginal or deviant? One strategy they might adopt is to behave like sociologists – to look for signs of assent and dissent among a group of potential informants.

In more concrete terms, suppose that children encounter two informants who make conflicting claims that are novel and therefore impossible for children to adjudicate themselves. However, the claims made by one informant elicit approval from bystanders whereas the claims made by the other elicit disapproval. Do children use such bystander reactions to moderate their trust in the novel claims made each informant? To examine this possibility, we had 4-year-olds watch as two speakers produced conflicting names for a series of unfamiliar objects (Fusaro & Harris, 2008). For example, faced with the sprinkler attachment, one speaker might call it a ‘feppin’ and the other might call it a ‘merval’. The two bystanders reacted differently to the two speakers. Having listened to one, they nodded and smiled. Having listened to the other, they shook their head and frowned. Subsequently, children were asked for their judgment – one speaker had called it a mib and the other had called it a wug – what did they think? Children overwhelmingly endorsed the speaker who had attracted bystander approval rather than disapproval.

In the next stage of the experimenter, we asked if children would continue to regard the speaker who had received bystander approval as more trustworthy even in the absence of any feedback from the bystanders. To check this possibility, the two bystanders left the room and testing continued as before with the two informants making conflicting claims about unfamiliar objects. Children continue to display selective trust in

the two speakers – they were more likely to endorse the names supplied by the speaker who had received bystander approval even though, at this point, in the experiment, the bystanders were no longer present and could supply no cues. By implication, the cultural standing of the two speakers – the extent to which their claims had met with approval versus disapproval – led children to regard one of them as a more trustworthy informant.

However, an alternative interpretation of these results is that children concluded that one of the two speakers was not culturally representative of local norms but simply more likeable. After all, in expressing their approval or disapproval, the bystanders had smiled or frowned. Arguably, children preferred to endorse the speaker whom they inferred to be more likeable.

In a follow-up study, we again had two informants as well as an additional pair of adults who sided with one informant and not the other (Corriveau, Fusaro & Harris, 2009; Study 1). However, we altered the way in which this endorsement was expressed. Several unfamiliar objects were set out on the table and the experimenter asked the adults to say which of them was, for example, ‘a slod’. Three of the adults all pointed to the same object whereas the fourth – the lone dissenter – pointed to a different object. This pattern was repeated for four trials with the same person always in the role of lone dissenter. On each trial, children were also invited to express their view. As in the previous study, children strongly favoured the majority view, effectively endorsed by three of the adults, as opposed to the minority view endorsed by only a single adult.

The next stage of the experiment resembled what had happened in the previously described bystander study. Two of the three adults who had formed a consensus left, leaving only one member of the consensus behind, together with the so-called lone-

dissenter. These two adults now supplied conflicting names for unfamiliar objects, and children were invited to seek and endorse information from either of them. As expected, children displayed greater trust in the informant who had been part of the consensus as opposed to the lone dissenter. Note that in this study, no signs of liking or disliking had been expressed toward either informant. In the initial induction phase, the four adults had simply pointed wordlessly and with a neutral facial expression. Therefore, if the member of the consensus elicited more trust in the second stage of the study, it was because children had noted that her behaviour was more typical.

Two additional studies have lent further support to the hypothesis that children are actively looking for cultural conformists – people who represent the norms of their group. First, we repeated the study just described but with three adults, two who formed a consensus and one who was the lone dissenter (Corriveau, Fusaro & Harris, 2009; Study 2). As before, in the induction phase, children were more likely to endorse information provided by the informants who were in agreement. In addition, when one of the two left, children were more likely to trust the remaining member of the pair than the lone-dissenter. By implication, children's sensitivity to a consensus is acute. Two persons in agreement override a single other.

Finally, we asked whether the composition of the consensus was important to children. We found that in both Boston and Taipei it made a difference (Chen, 2010; Chen, Corriveau & Harris, 2010). When children were faced with a consensus composed of women from their own race (i.e., women with a European American appearance in Boston and an East Asian appearance in Taipei), we replicated previous findings. In the induction phase, children trusted the consensus over the lone dissenter. Subsequently, in

the test phase, they trusted a single member of the consensus over the lone dissenter.

However, when we altered the cultural identity of the consensus – substituting three East Asian women in Boston and three European American women in Taipei, the preference for the consensus over the lone dissenter was attenuated in the induction phase and there was no preference for the consensus member over the lone dissenter in the test phase. By implication, when children meet informants who come from a different group, they are less attentive to any consensus that they form. This makes sense if children look to members of a consensus for guidance about the norms that prevail in their own group.

Conclusion

We have identified two heuristics that young children use in their cultural learning. We know that infants and young children form attachments to particular caregivers, but their pattern of cultural learning cannot be reduced to this form of selectivity. Children seek and endorse information from those who have proven reliable in the epistemic domain and also from informants who appear to be culturally typical. In future research, it will be important to ask when and how children use these two heuristics. The first is likely to promote the transmission of truth but the second is likely to promote the transmission of cultural conformity. Arguably, the first heuristic is employed in domains where truth can be discerned and the second in domains that are conventional. It is also feasible, however, that children often set aside the truth for beliefs that are culturally typical or that they mistake what is culturally typical for the truth.

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Figure captions

Figure 1: Proportion of choices directed at familiar and unfamiliar caregiver by 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds (averaged across preschools A and B).

Figure 2. Example of an animal hybrid – a cow-horse.

Figure 3: proportion of choices directed at the mother versus a stranger by attachment classification.

Figure 4. Proportion of choices directed at the familiar caregiver depending on whether children had observed her being accurate or inaccurate in naming well-known objects during the induction phase.

Short title: Children's selective trust