Smartphone Use Decreases Trustworthiness
Sandy Campbell and Uri Gneezy
UC Berkeley Haas School of Business
UC San Diego Rady School of Management

SUMMARY
Trust is crucial for social, economic, and political relationships. We study how smartphone use affects interactions with and trust in strangers. We find that limiting phone access increased the proportion sent back in the trust game. We explore interaction among participants during the waiting period as a potential mechanism.

METHOD
Participants:
- Were randomly assigned in groups of six to two treatments: Phone Access vs. No Phone Access
- Waited in their groups for 20 minutes and were allowed to interact as they wished
- Randomly paired to play the trust game

RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Sent Amount</th>
<th>Sent Back Amount</th>
<th>Sent Back Proportion</th>
<th># of Pairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Phone Access</td>
<td>$3.46</td>
<td>$4.10</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Access</td>
<td>$3.48</td>
<td>$3.50</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MECHANISM
Proportion of Subjects Who Interacted by Treatment

CONTRIBUTIONS
- Studies the economic consequences of phone use with respect to social interactions, with a focus on trust behavior.
- Phone access impacts trustworthiness, such that participants without access to their phones sent a higher proportion back than those with.
- Please scan the QR code for study details, references, and pre-registration.