Individualistic and Social Motives for Justice

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(In)justice inspires people
What we talk about when we talk about the *psychology* of justice

• The *subjective experience* of finding social situations fair or unfair

• Examples of research questions:
  – When do people feel fairly or unfairly treated by others?
  – What are the consequences of such unfair treatment?
  – How do we respond to injustice when we are independent observers (e.g., desire punishment of offenders?)
The double face of lady justice

• Individualistic
  – “I want justice for me”
  – Justice to serve own interests
  – People interpret justice in a self-serving way

• Social
  – “Justice for all”
  – Justice is good for the group
    • Social harmony, group protection
1. Justice can be individualistic

Some evidence:

• Justice judgments are biased towards overpaying the self (Messick & Sentis, 1979)
• People generally believe to be fairer than others (Messick et al., 1985)
• A minor injustice that happens to the self is considered worse than a major injustice that happens to someone else (Lind et al., 1998)
• A biased authority only shapes judgments of injustice if the bias is unfavorable to the self, and not if it is favorable to the self (van Prooijen et al., 2006)
• Justice knowledge is stronger automatically activated following self-related descriptions than other-related descriptions (Ham & Van den Bos, 2007)
2. Justice can be social

Some evidence:

• People prefer equity over unfairly receiving more than others (Adams, 1965)
• People are willing to pay in order to punish offenders (Fehr & Gächter, 2002; Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1986)
• People are frequently concerned that victims receive compensation (Schroeder et al., 2003)
• People are sometimes willing to suffer to ease the suffering of others (Batson et al., 1981)
• Perceived societal injustice can motivate collective action (Van Zomeren et al., 2008)
This presentation:
The double face of lady justice

• Motives for justice are mostly *individualistic* when people themselves experience fair or unfair treatment
  – Target’s perspective: Procedural justice

• But motives for justice are mostly *social* when people are observers of events that threaten justice for others.
  – Observer’s perspective: Reactions to criminal offenders and crime victims
Target’s perspective

• Procedural justice:
  – How fair are the procedures used to arrive at someone’s outcomes?

  • e.g., a trial before a verdict; an election; decision-making processes in organizations

  • Did decision-makers listen to my opinion? Were procedures accurate?
Individualism in procedural justice

• To what extent do decision-makers provide me with fair or unfair decision-making procedures?
  – E.g., opportunities to voice an opinion

• People care about Procedural Justice.....
  – Instrumentally
    • Fair procedures lead to fair or favorable outcomes for ME
  – Noninstrumentally
    • Fair procedures mean that I am taken seriously and that others respect ME
Justice and self-orientation

→ Does increased individualism make people more concerned that they are treated fairly?
  • cf. “sue”-culture in the USA
Self-construal levels

- Individual self – focus on differentiation
  - what makes me unique from others?
- Social self – focus on assimilation
  - what makes me similar to others?

  - Can be made accessible by means of contextual factors (Brewer & Gardner, 1996)
  - Closely mirror cultural dimensions of individualism vs. collectivism (Trafimow et al., 1991)
Study 1: Self-construal and Procedural justice

• Self-construal activation
  – individual self vs. social self vs. control

• Decision-making procedure:
  – Participants were granted versus denied an opportunity to voice an opinion about a distribution decision.

• Treatment evaluations
  – E.g., “How respectful were you treated by the experimenter?”
Individual self prime

• I love this city. To me, this city is a place to enjoy. My heart starts beating faster whenever I walk through the historical centre......
Social self prime

• *We* love this city. To *us*, this city is a place to enjoy. *Our* hearts start beating faster whenever *we* walk through the historical centre.......
Control condition

• *ABC* loves this city. To *XYZ*, this city is a place to enjoy. *ABC*’s hearts start beating faster whenever *XYZ* walks through the historical centre.......
Study 1--results

Van Prooijen & Zwenk (2009; *JESP*)
Study 2 – personality

• Some individuals are more self-oriented than others during social decision-making

• Social Value orientation:
  – Proselfs: Egocentrically pursue maximization of own outcomes.
  – Prosocials: Seek equality between own and other’s outcomes.
**Measurement of SVO**

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<tr>
<td>Other gets</td>
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<td>280</td>
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**Note:** Other is “hypothetical”
Points are valuable to self and other
SVO is a strong predictor of.....

• Cooperation vs. selfishness when there is a conflict between personal vs. collective interest (Parks, 1994)
  – E.g., environment-friendly behavior; donating to charity

• Affect and cognition
  – Is selfish behavior immoral or smart? (Van Lange & Kuhlman, 1994)
Van Prooijen, De Cremer, Van Beest, Ståhl, Van Dijke, & Van Lange (2008; JESP)
Study 3: Implications for organizations

We measured among a random sample of the Dutch working population:

• Social Value orientation
• Perceived procedural justice within their organization
  – E.g., do you receive voice when decisions are made? Are decisions made in an ethical way?
• Organizational citizenship behaviors
  – Extrarole effort on behalf of the organization
Organizational citizenship behaviors

Van Prooijen, De Cremer, Van Beest, Ståhl, Van Dijke, & Van Lange (2008; JESP)
What about the social face of lady justice?

• Motives for justice are mostly *individualistic* when people themselves experience fair or unfair treatment
  – Procedural justice

• But motives for justice are mostly *social* when people are observers of events that threaten justice for others.
  – Reactions to criminal offenders and crime victims
Observer’s perspective: Punishment of offenders

• When people are *independent observers* justice judgments originate from a concern for the group—such as group protection

  – *Social* self-construal increases punishment recommendations of criminals (Gollwitzer & Bucklein, 2007)

  – How do people respond to ingroup vs. outgroup offenders?
Do group concerns influence punishment of offenders?
Black sheep effect vs. ingroup favoritism

- **Black sheep effect**: We desire more severe punishment for offenders from our own group
- **Ingroup favoritism**: We desire more severe punishment for offenders from different groups

→ Do we do this out of a concern to protect, and think favorably of, our group?

- Black sheep effect when guilt is certain
  - “We do not accept this from our member” → Symbolic exclusion

- Ingroup favorability when guilt is uncertain
  - “One of ours would not do such a thing” → Protection of the group image
Study 4

- VU-students read a newspaper article about how bicycles are being stolen
- The police arrests a suspect:
  - A Vu-student
  - A Leiden University student
- Manipulation of guilt probability:
  - A lot of evidence indicates that it is 100% certain that this suspect is guilty.
  - The evidence is suggestive but somewhat mixed; the chance that this suspect is guilty is about 50%
- How severely should this person be punished?
  - 1 = Not at all severely, 7 = very severely
Study 4

Van Prooijen (2006; PSPB)
Study 5

• Same newspaper article as Study 7, but a more mundane guilt probability manipulation:

  – *Certain:* On video surveillance camera recordings it was clearly visible how the suspect was stealing bicycles.

  – *Uncertain:* On video surveillance camera recordings it was unclear to see whether it was the suspect or someone else who was stealing bicycles.
Study 5

Van Prooijen (2006; *PSPB*)
Observer’s perspective: Victims

• One of the most ironic manifestations of justice: Victim blaming

• “Just world beliefs”: People generally get what they deserve
  – And thus deserve what they get!

• People particularly blame victims that are threatening to this belief to maintain a belief in justice
  – E.g., when the offender does not get caught, or when the victim continues to suffer
Observer’s perspective: Victim blaming

• Social self-construal makes observers more concerned about justice
  – Thus more punishment of offenders (Gollwitzer and Bucklein, 2007)
  – But if the offender escapes punishment: More victim blaming!!
    • Social motivations promotes a concern for justice in observers—that does not mean that this has prosocial or desirable consequences!
Study 6

• Self-construal activation:
  • Individual self vs. social self vs. control

• Scenario about how Jeanette is knocked unconscious and robbed from her purse

• The offender is caught vs. escapes

• Victim blaming
  – E.g., “I think that Jeanette has been very careless”
Study 6

Van Prooijen & van den Bos (2009; PSPB)
To conclude:
The double face of Lady justice

• Individualistic?

• Or social?
What face she shows depends on the perspective of the evaluator

- She is mostly *Individualistic* when people *experience* justice or injustice
  - Procedural justice

- She is mostly *social* when people *witness* injustice
  - Observer’s reactions to criminals and victims
Thank you!