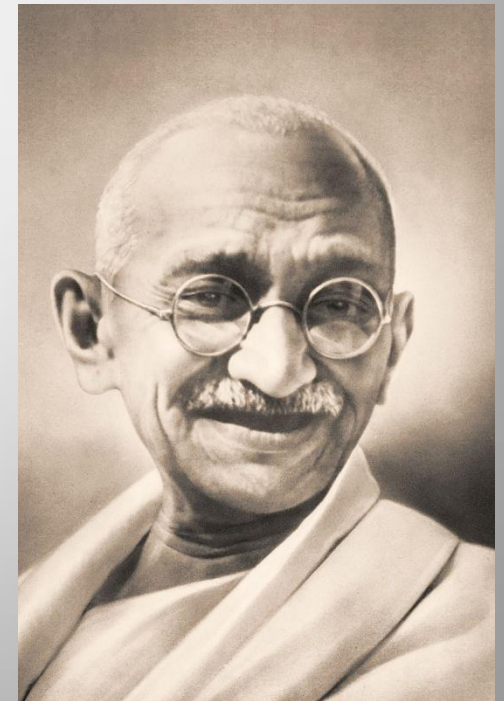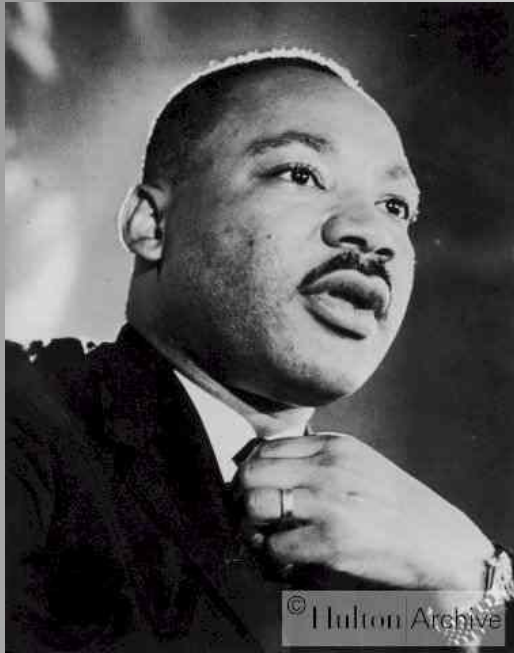# Individualistic and Social Motives for Justice

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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 in 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.......
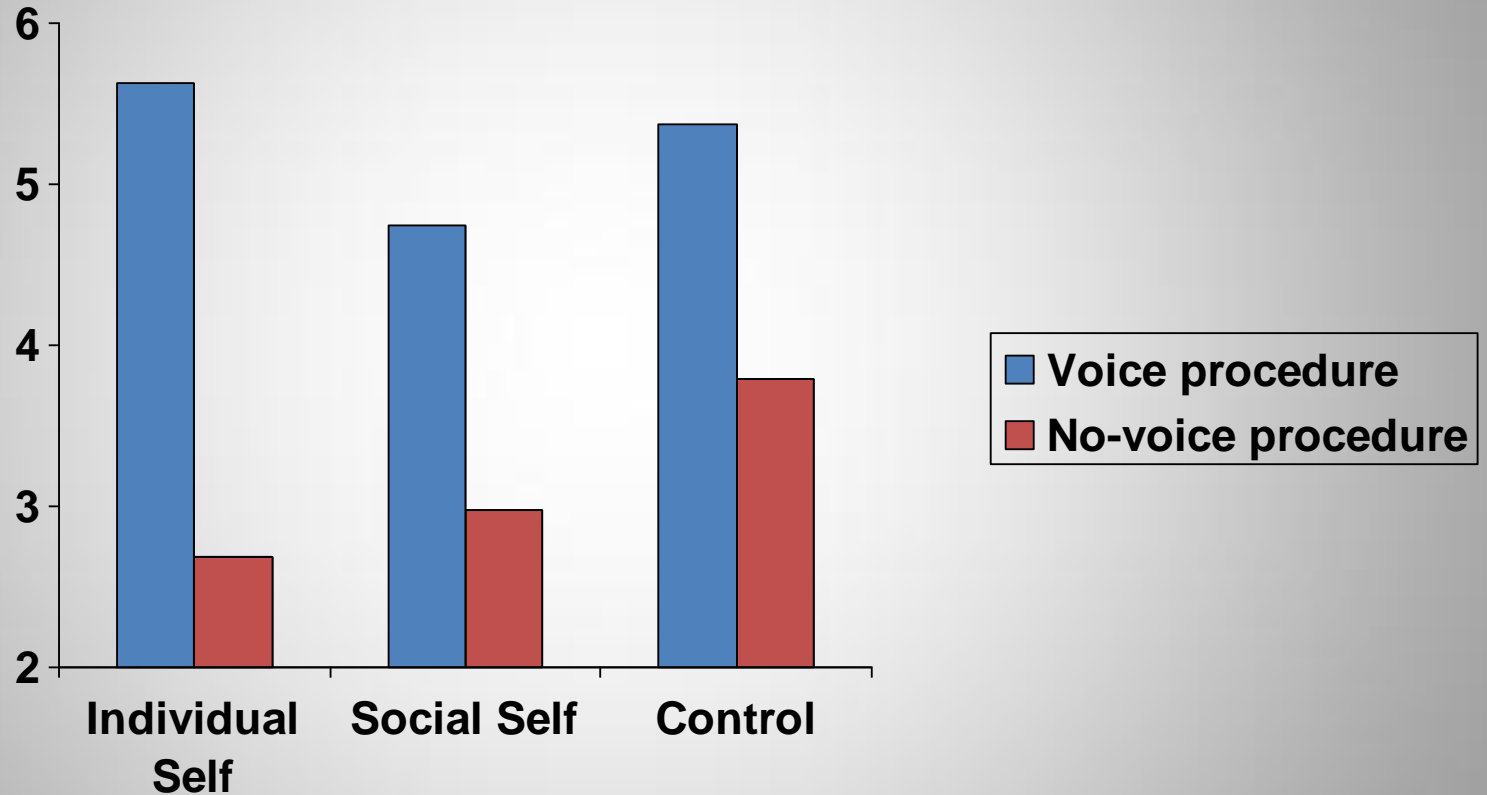
Social self prime

- *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

|	A	B	C
You get	480	540	480
Other gets	80	280	480

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)

Study 2

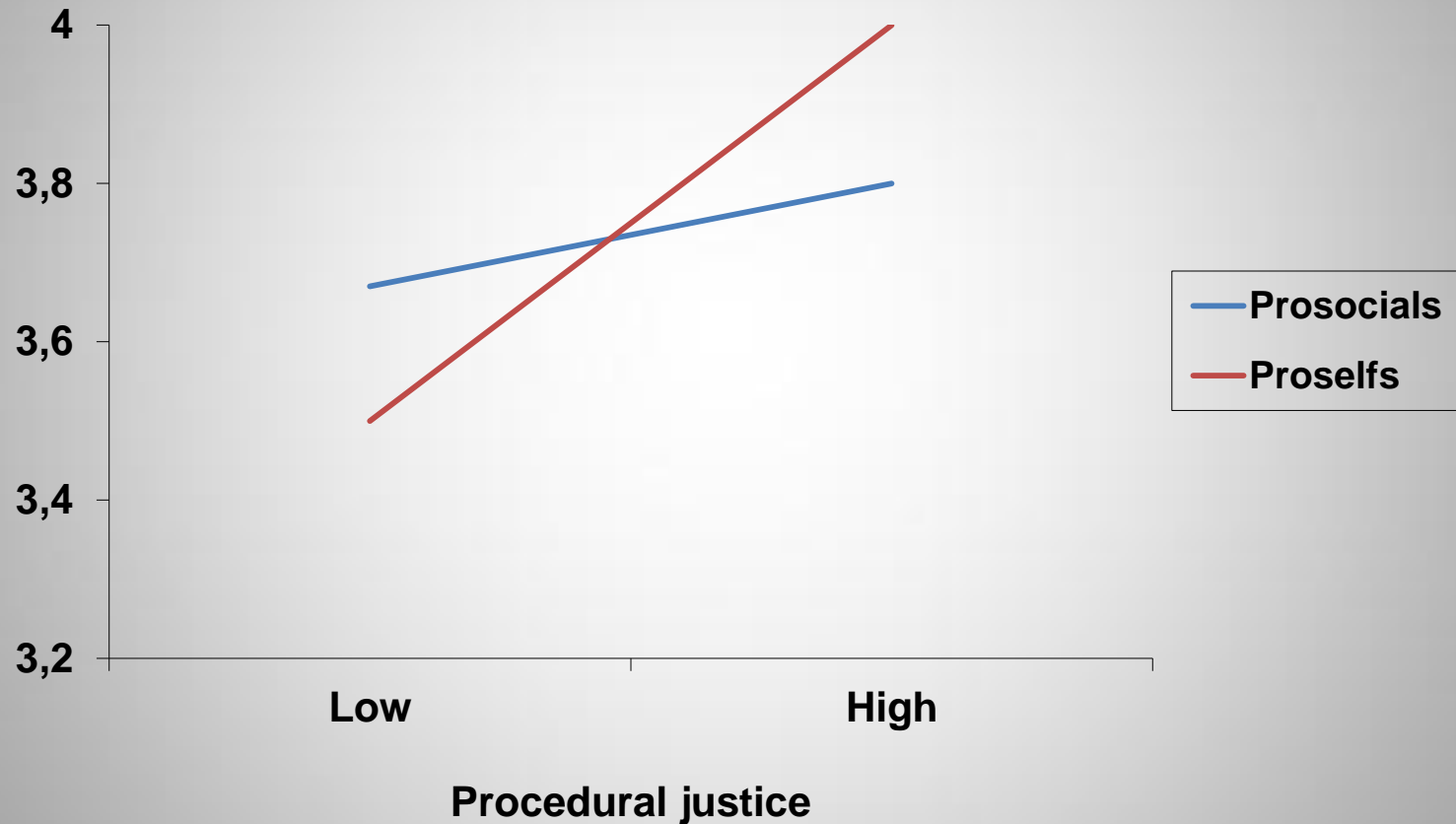Van Prooijen, De Cremer, Van Beest, Ståhl, Van Dijke, & Van Lange (2008; *JESP*)
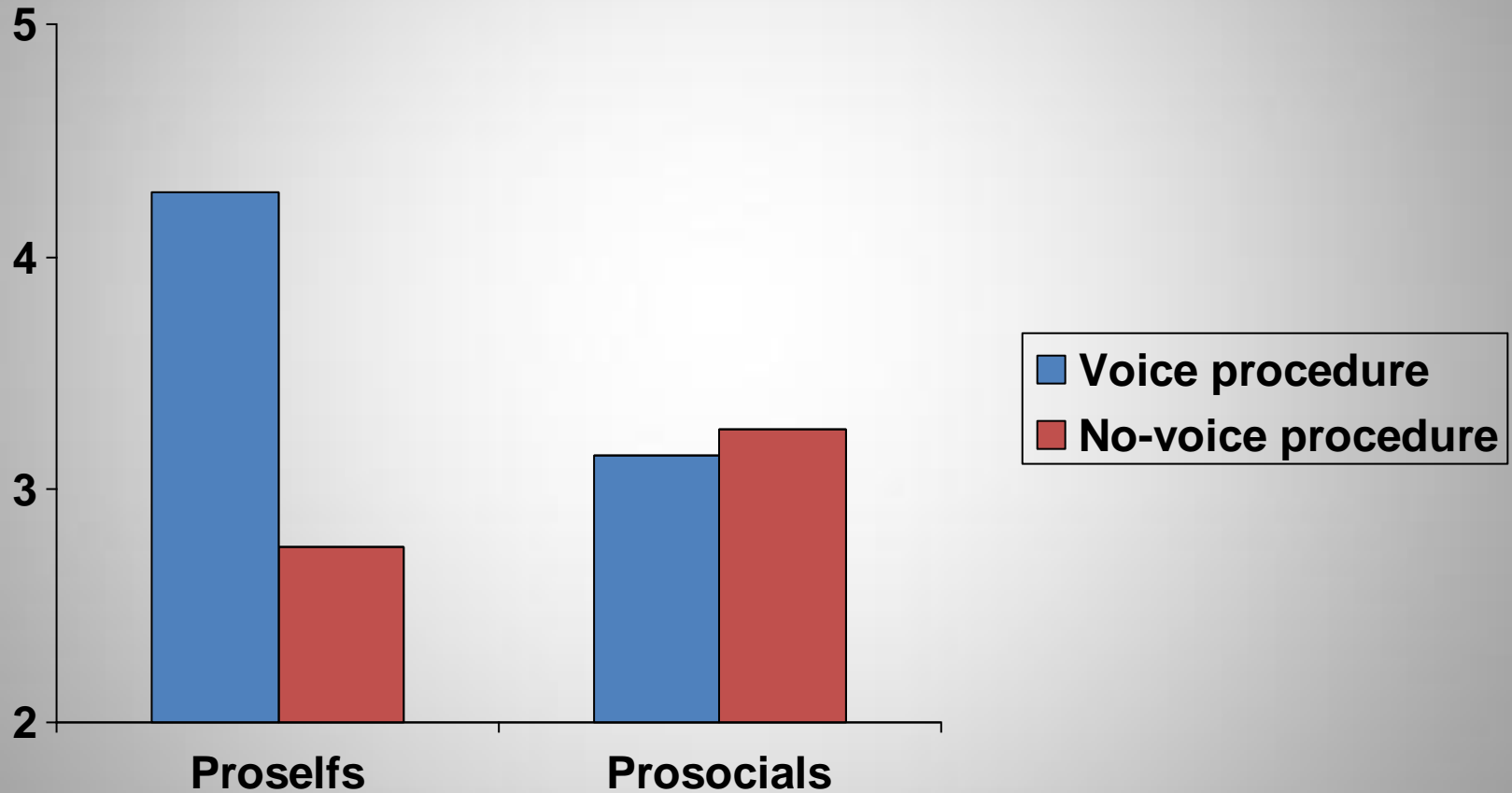
Study 3: Implications for organizations

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?
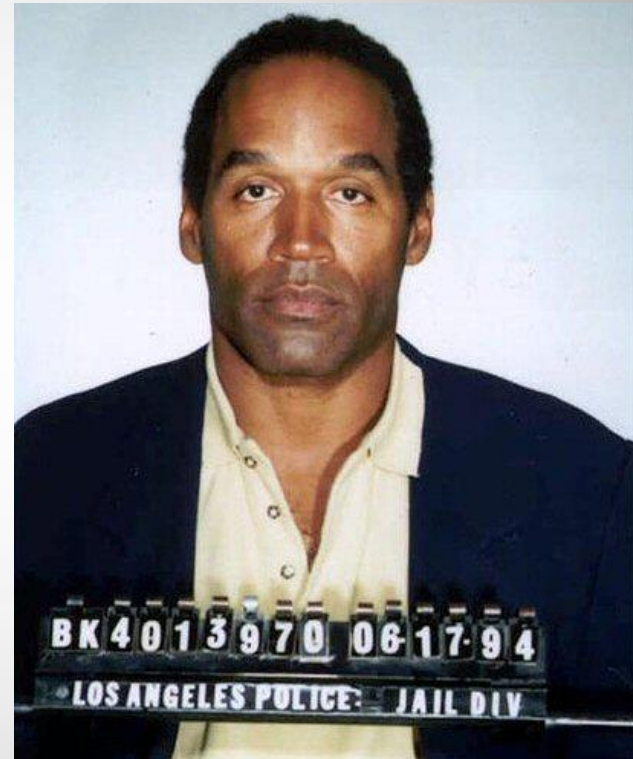
Black sheep effect vs. ingroup favoritism

- *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 probablity:
  - A lot of evidence indicates that it is 100% certain that this supect 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
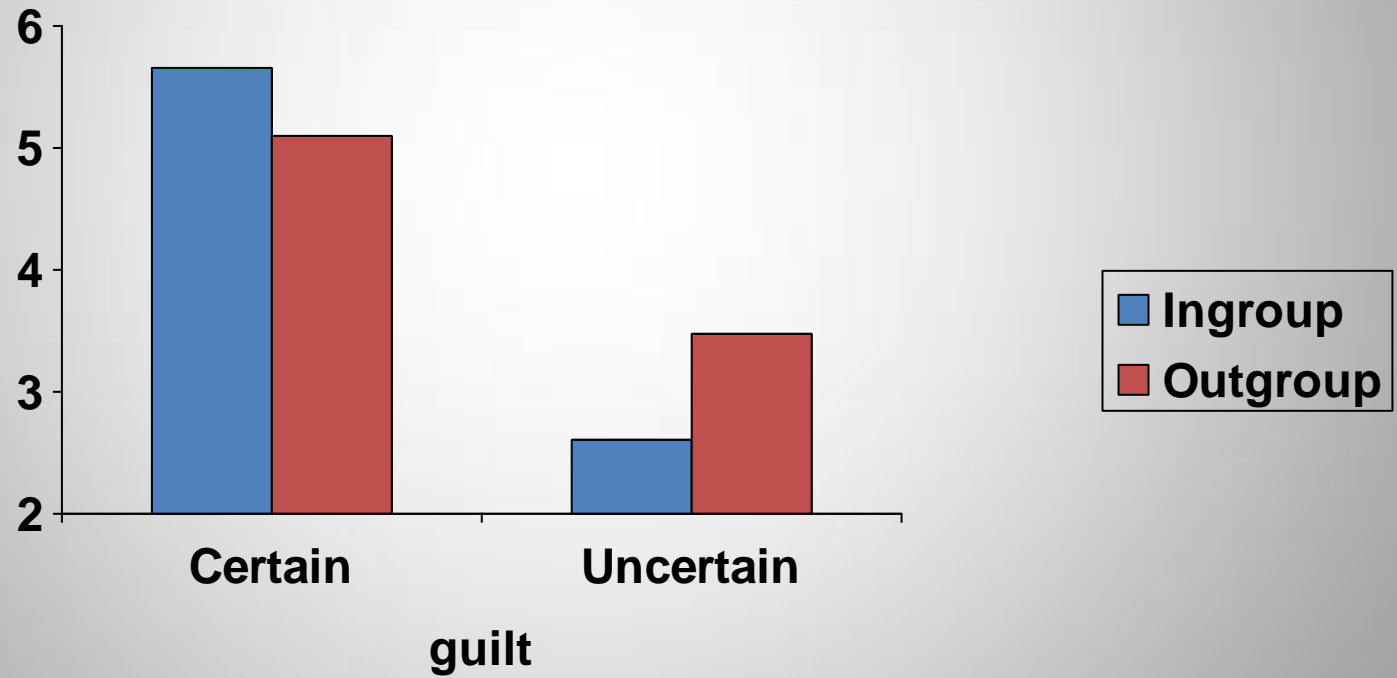
Van Prooijen (2006; *PSPB*)

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
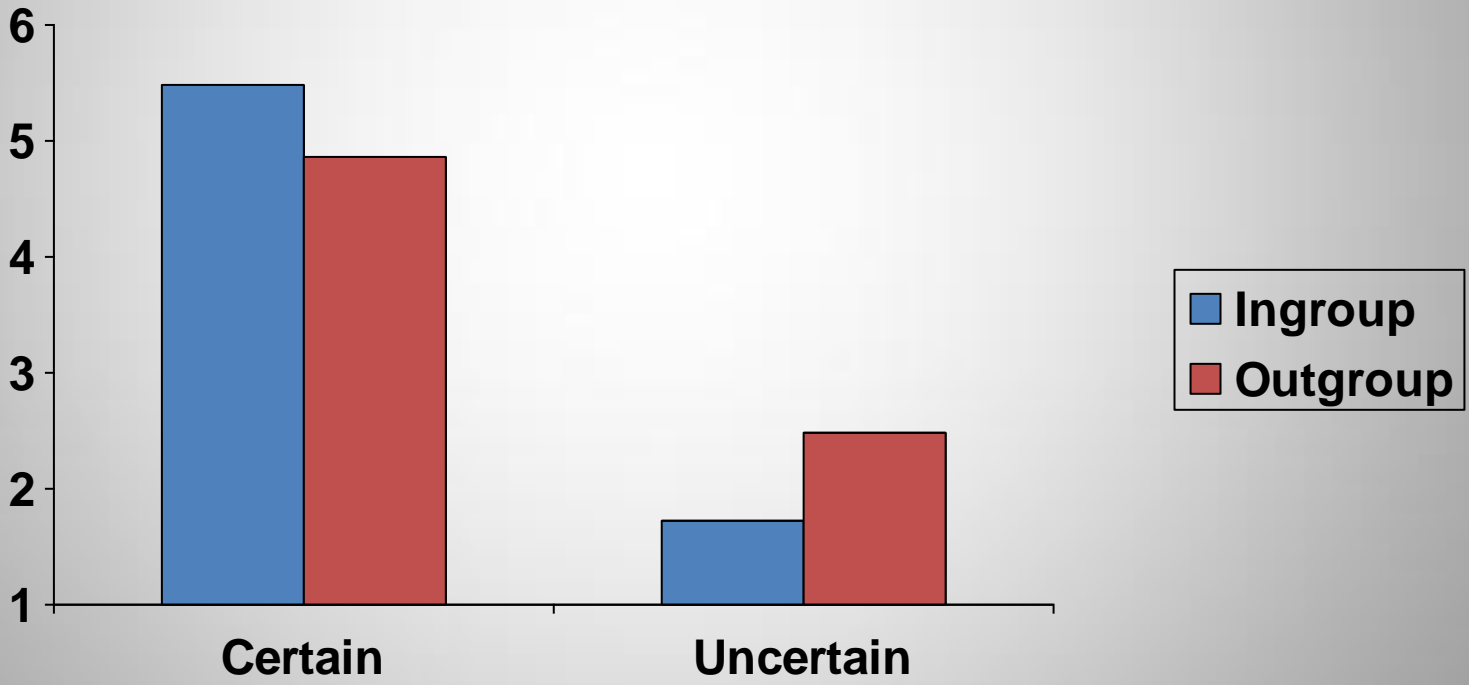
Van Prooijen (2006; *PSPB*)

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 unconsious 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*)
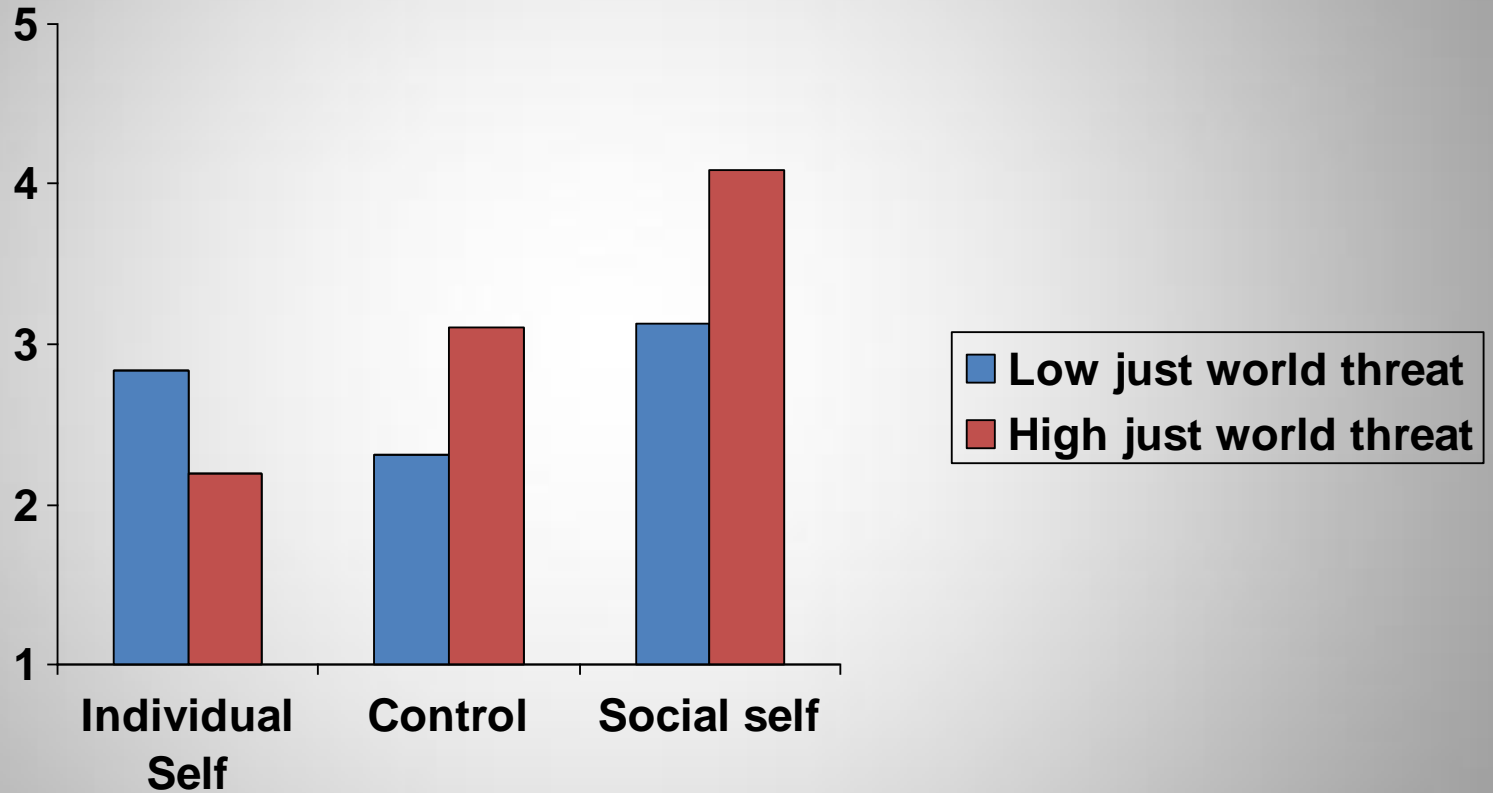
To conclude:
The double face of Lady justice

- 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!