Me, Myself, Fairness, and I

On the Self-Related Aspects of Fairness Reactions

Annemarie Loseman

**Me, Myself, Fairness, and I**

**On the Self-Related Aspects of Fairness Reactions**


Mij, mezelf, rechtvaardigheid en ik

Over de zelfgerelateerde aspecten van rechtvaardigheidsreacties


(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)


PROEFSCHRIFT


ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor

aan de Universiteit Utrecht,

op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof. dr. G. J. van der Zwaan, ingevolge het besluit van het

college voor promoties in het openbaar te verdedigen op maandag 24 oktober 2011

des middags te 12.45 uur


door


Annemarie Loseman


geboren op 13 mei 1979 te Meppel

Promotor:     Prof. dr. K. van den Bos

# Contents

**Chapter 1**

**General Introduction**

"Justice has been done."

- Barack Obama,

in announcing the death of Osama bin Laden, Washington, May 2$^{nd}$ 2011

When pondering about fairness and justice in their lives and in the world around them, most people seem to have a clear understanding of what these concepts really stand for. Related to this, people tend to perceive their feelings and judgments about fair and unfair occasions as legitimate and objective truths. One might say that fairness is perceived as a clear concept on which all people agree. And perhaps, at an abstract level, people do. It is about equality and equity, about sincerity and respect (Adams, 1965; Deutsch, 1975, 1985; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992). However, it is also about revenge and defending one's interests (Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997). Actually, fairness is often or typically not more than a subjectively perceived reality. This subjectivity is demonstrated, for example, by the perceived justice of murdering Osama Bin Laden by most people in the West ("justice has been done!") and the perceived injustice of the same murder by most people in Arabic regions ("this is an outrageous injustice!").

Taking this example and other examples in everyday life seriously, it may be argued that justice is a social construct (Shotter, 1989). A construct that is used in communications, to smoothen social interactions and to solve conflicts (Wijn, 2010). Fairness confers meaning and structure to people's rather chaotic and unpredictable world (e.g., Lerner & Simmons, 1966; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). This is important as people have an essential need for

structure, a need to predict their environment and control their lives, willing to jump at any means to raise the illusion that they can (e.g., Langer, 1975; Taylor & Brown, 1988; Wegner & Bargh, 1998). Fairness seems to be created and used to guide society and to have people behave according to its clear principles. It is therefore a socially shared reality, with societies—but also subcultures and groups based on categories like gender, religion or ethnicity—defining their own specific ideas of what is fair and what is not (Leung & Lind, 1986; Lind & Earley, 1992; Lissak & Sheppard, 1983; Runciman, 1966). However, just like groups can differ in their ideas on what constitute fair and unfair situations, so can individuals. And in the end, it is these individuals that constitute a group, with each individual basically having his or her unique thoughts and needs. This suggests that fairness involves some important individualistic aspects as well.

In the current thesis, I will present a self-related perspective on people's reactions to fairness-related situations. This perspective extends on and partly contrasts with earlier theorizing and research on fairness as a mainly social or group phenomenon (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988; Shotter, 1989). The current focus is on the underlying, fundamental processes of fairness reactions. The research will show that these reactions are driven by individualistic aspects of people's lives and their individual needs. I will present three empirical lines of research that demonstrate processes of fairness reactions as self-related processes, being related to the individual self (Chapter 2), influenced by self-related concerns (Chapter 3), and guided by processes of self-regulation (Chapter 4). Thus, I will argue that people may be social beings, and have social concerns (see, e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992), but in the end their own self is the core engine of the machine. I will first introduce the theoretical framework of the current research and present an overview of the current dissertation at the end of this introduction.

**Theoretical Framework**

Fairness and justice are prevalent in this world. On every street corner people may be forming justice judgments about some conflict situation, whether it is the biker who neglects the red traffic light and crashes into a car, the pedestrian who annoyingly takes all the space

of the footpath, or the unfortunate woman sitting on the street begging for money. In the past decades, fairness research has demonstrated the major influence that perceived fairness has on people's thinking, feelings, and behaviors in a whole range of different settings (for overviews, see, e.g., Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; Tyler et al., 1997; Lind &Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992).

Witnessing an unfair situation makes people uncomfortable and triggers a tendency to contribute blame to the innocent victim (e.g., Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Experiencing unfair treatment by one's boss, spurs the employee to take office equipment with him or her. Thus, unfairness creates stealing and other forms of anti-normative behavior (e.g., Greenberg, 1990, 1993). The experience of powerlessness when being treated unfairly can raise feelings of despair and acts of aggression (e.g., Homans, 1974; Runciman, 1966). Conversely, we also know of the beneficial influence of experiencing fairness on many different positive outcomes, like loyalty, increased self-worth, and well-being (Chebat &Slusarczyk, 2005; Koper, Van Knippenberg, Bouhuijs, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1993). The significant influence of fair and unfair treatment on the welfare of individuals and on the expression of positive and negative behaviors illustrates the relevance of a psychological approach to the study of fairness and people's reactions to events they perceive to be fair or unfair.

The social psychology of fairness started as the study of tension between fairness principles and self-interest concerns (e.g., Adams, 1965) and developed into a broader approach viewing fairness as related to regular psychological processes (e.g., Van den Bos, 2007). Several fairness domains have been identified, like the fairness of outcome distributions (distributive fairness; e.g., Adams. 1965), the fairness of procedures and interactions (procedural fairness; e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988; Van den Bos, 2005), and the fairness of people's world (Belief in a Just World; e.g., Lerner, 1980, 1981). Recently, process-oriented research provided insights in the factors involved in fairness experiences and the formation of justice judgments (e.g., Ham & Van den Bos, 2008). As a result of these kinds of studies, it has become clear in recent years that fairness-related phenomena are driven by psychological processes that are comparable to many other psychological

phenomena (see, e.g., Van den Bos, Ham, Lind, Simonis, Van Essen, & Rijpkema, 2008; Van Prooijen, Karremans, & Van Beest, 2006).

However, fairness serves more than one function and may be related to many different relevant concepts. This constitutes a great challenge in taking fairness apart from the different psychological components that are out there and that constitute the wealth of insight we currently have in various psychological and social psychological phenomena. In short, conceptual and empirical progress has to be made toward the comprehension of the psychological lay-out of fairness. In this dissertation my goal is to do precisely this. In particular, I will propose a self-related perspective on fairness and aim to discover the role fairness plays at the individual level. In the following section, I will first elaborate on this self-related perspective on fairness. Next, I will go further into the self-related processes I assume to be involved in fairness reactions.

*Is Fairness a Social or an Individualistic Affair?*

Because fairness is a typical feature of societal affairs, it is important to note that modern society is a rather individualistic society. Welfare brought people freedom of choice and plenty of opportunities to fill in their lives just the way that feels good for them. People have become less dependent upon others, feel less restricted by family obligations and by the public interest (Berting, 2006; Schnabel, 2004). Furthermore, people may be social beings, but personal freedom triggers individualistic choices. That seems to be quite normal when considering the concern for one's own survival as the essential mechanism of life. After all, the increase of independence, reduces the necessity of being social (Schnabel, 2004).

The group-value model (Lind & Tyler, 1988), the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992), and the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003) provide some theoretical frameworks to understand how people react to fair and unfair issues in group situations or in relations with authorities they depend on. These frameworks have greatly stimulated research on the social processes of fairness and accumulated many insights into when and why people care about fairness and why perceived fairness may trigger social behavior. For example, in an organizational context, fairness provides a powerful instrument

to optimize cooperation, labor performance, and the smooth merging of different companies (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005).

Recently, a more self-related approach has been proposed in fairness research (Ham & Van den Bos, 2008; Skitka, 2003; Van den Bos, Miedema, Vermunt, & Zwenk, 2011; Van Prooijen et al., 2006; Van Prooijen& Zwenk, 2009). This perspective deepens the insights into the underlying processes of several fairness phenomena. Furthermore, such a self-related perspective fits observed processes of individualization in society, and extends the hitherto emphasis on social affairs in fairness research. Taken together, this raises the intriguing question: Are fairness processes fundamentally social processes or do they constitute basic individualistic processes?

An important observation in this analysis is that social motives are not social per se (Van Prooijen, De Cremer, Van Beest, Stahl, & Van Lange, 2008). Or, to use the words of Aronson, Wilson, and Akert (2005): "Other people are extraordinarily important to our sense of well-being" (p. 251). There seem to be some individual needs to be fulfilled for which people need others, which means that needs that appear to be social may essentially be individualistic. People are social beings by nature which makes living without any form of social contact to be extremely stressful (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Individuals are therefore motivated to be accepted by others. When scrutinizing social tendencies like the need to belong, it actually appears as an individual need, not driven by groups, but by individuals. Protecting one's in-group is actually quite relevant for the individual as it serves one's own self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Fein & Spencer, 1997). Moreover, attending groups seems to reduce personal uncertainty and may therefore be strongly driven by individual motivation (Hogg & Mullin, 1999). Importantly, being deviant in a group may also have many severe consequences, like being ridiculed, punished, or rejected (Kruglanski & Webster, 1991; Miller & Anderson, 1979). When studying group phenomena like this, many tendencies at this level appear to be driven by the needs of individuals (see also, e.g., Heine & Lehman, 1997). Therefore, it seems to be clear that individuals are fundamentally driven by their individual needs.

However, some phenomena seem to provide exceptions to this rule. Research on the process of deindividuation in groups shows that individuals in groups may lose their sense of being an individual and, instead, tend to experience and express the group's cognitions, feelings, and behaviors (e.g., Postmes & Spears, 1998). Radical groups and sects are some real-life exemplars of this phenomenon, with deindividuation being an essential characteristic of these groups. Thus, individualistic needs may lead individuals to become member of these high entitative groups (Hogg, Sherman, Dierselhuis, Maitner, Moffitt, 2007), which may lead to a minimization of their experienced individual needs. Radical groups and deindividuation concern fascinating phenomena that need to be studied. However, although their appearance is more frequent than preferable, these extreme exemplars of losing oneself completely are relatively uncommon. Most individuals in most situations are likely to fundamentally maintain at least some of their individual characteristics.

Although individuals generally do take the social aspects of their social environments into account, it is unlikely that individual aspects of their inner world will ever be completely vaporized (even deindividuation in radical groups is unlikely to be as rigorously as described in George Orwell's *1984*; Orwell, 1974/1949). This is because people tend to perceive and experience the world around them in egocentrically biased ways (e.g., Ham & Van den Bos, 2008). This may be obvious because people are only able to use their own senses to perceive the outer world and are only able to process these individual perceptions in their own inner world, full of their own expectations, own beliefs, and individual needs (e.g., Vonk, 1999). Thinking for another person can only be done by use of imagination which may be fundamentally based on one's own perceptions (Epley & Caruso, 2004) and needs more cognitive elaboration than may be available (Van den Bos et al., 2006). In contrast, one's own experiences relate directly to privately held beliefs and needs and may therefore result in the clearest and strongest feelings. These feelings and preferences may be more primary than are thoughts and inferences (e.g., Bargh, Litt, Pratto, & Spielman, 1989; De Houwer, Thomas, & Bayens, 2001; Messick & Sentis, 1983; Stapel, Koomen, & Ruys, 2002; Zajonc, 1980, 1984).

In line with this general pattern, there may be some egocentric bias in fairness experiences as well (Van Prooijen et al., 2008). For example, research has shown that justice

information is activated fastest when self-related fairness descriptions (instead of other-related fairness descriptions) are presented to participants (Ham & Van den Bos, 2008). In addition, more attention is being paid to procedural fairness for oneself than for other persons (Lind, Kray, & Thompson, 1998). In line with the general idea that feelings and preferences may be more primary than are thoughts and inferences (e.g., Bargh et al., 1989; De Houwer et al., 2001; Messick & Sentis, 1983; Stapel et al., 2002; Zajonc, 1980, 1984), justice judgments also seem to be based on initial, preliminary reactions to situations, similar to the experience of affect (Haidt, 2001; Mullen, 2007). Because it may be argued, in line with the foregoing reasoning, that this affective basis is most likely the result of the individual experience of one's own individual perceptions, I argue here that it may well be that the processes underlying fairness reactions do involve individual aspects.

At this point, I would like to emphasize that I do not mean that people's fairness reactions are completely egocentric or even egoistic. Thus, I argue that although egocentric preferences may be more immediate than fairness considerations, I also note explicitly that both egocentric preferences and fairness concerns drive people's reactions (see also Van den Bos et al., 2006).

Thus, my line of reasoning does not imply that egocentric preferences lead to selfish behavior, as, for example, people sometimes may prefer or be pleased to see that other persons than themselves (such as their children or persons in need) receive more of a valued resource than they themselves receive. Rather, my current argument is that fairness may be especially important to people, because of the individual needs it may serve. This does not mean that I am suggesting that fairness concerns are a myth, as I am not. Quite the contrary, I work from the assumption that fairness is frequently a very real concern to people (Miller, 1999; Miller & Ratner, 1998; Van den Bos, Peters, Bobocel, & Ybema, 2006). That said, I also think that it is important to study the processes which drive people's fairness concerns. Because reactions to fair and unfair situations may essentially be individual reactions which most plausibly stem from individual perceptions and experiences, it is important to investigate the individual interests that fairness may serve. It is my hope that the current thesis will contribute a bit to what I see as the process-oriented future of the social

psychology of preferences and doing the right thing, in general, and self-related fairness reactions, in particular.

*Self-Related Processes of Fairness Reactions*

Research on the self is as old as psychological science is. William James (1890/1983) actually developed the psychological discipline by studying the self (Scheibe, 1985). Throughout the last centuries, lots of theorizing and research has been done and while researchers gathered many insights about the self, the I, the ego, personal identity, and other self-related concepts, there is still no closure on what the self really is. According to Baumeister (1998), one of the leading researchers on the self, the great number of scientific articles lead to a comprehension of the self that is elusive rather than clear. Therefore, it is important to delineate what part of the self needs to be studied in order to come to real understandings of self-related fairness reactions.

I propose the experience of fairness to be a self-related process, even when it is experienced in social settings (which may be the most regular settings for fairness experiences). This approach stems from the self-concept as presented by Cooley (1902). He proposed the self to be formed by how the person imagines oneself to be observed and understood by others. Cooley named this effect "the looking-glass self" to illustrate the way in which the self is reflected in the other, that is, how the self-concept is influenced by how people think that others judge them. For example, the way one experiences how one is treated by others or the comparisons one makes with others provide information about the self (Festinger, 1957). This information may actually be more valuable than asking others in a straightforward, explicit way how they judge the person in question, as these judgments may be strongly biased by factors like social desirability.

By means of being treated in fair or unfair manners by other persons, people come to know whether they are respected individuals and, essentially, whether they are a person worthy of being respected. Fairness and related concepts like respect, are highly suited sources of self-relevant information. Indeed, fairness information seems to be used for, among others, self-enhancement (Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997) and may influence

people's state self-esteem (Koper et al., 1993). This suggests that fairness information may be highly relevant for self-related motives as it may be an important source of feedback on the self.

The fact that people have a strong interest in self-relevant information may be demonstrated by the finding that this kind of information chronically attracts attention and interferes with other processes. A famous example of this phenomenon is the "cocktail party effect" (Cherry, 1953). I think most people are familiar with the experience of hearing their own name at a party as if they were completely focused on hearing their name—except, they were not. The shift in attention to self-relevant information goes quite naturally. People are not only more sensitive to hearing their names, but also to information related to their self-concepts. (Bargh, 1982; Wegner & Bargh, 1998). I argue here that this may imply that people automatically pay attention to fairness information as a source of self-relevant information.

The self-concept contains too much information to be all available at the same time. Self-knowledge can be categorized in knowledge about social aspects of oneself (e.g., as a group member or interdependent person; the social self) and knowledge about individual aspects of oneself (as an independent individual; the individual self). This distinction between the social self and the individual self is being made regularly in research on the self (see Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991; Brewer, 1991; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991; Triandis, 1989; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). In line with the idea that fairness is a social phenomenon, providing people with, for example, feedback on their group membership, researchers assumed the social self to be involved in fairness experiences (e.g., De Cremer & Tyler, 2005). However, in these kinds of studies the activation of the social self has never been measured nor has it been manipulated in a straightforward fashion. It remains unclear, therefore, whether it is really the social self that plays a main role in these fairness processes. Moreover, there is empirical support for a fundamental concern for the individual self (Gaertner, Sedikides, & Graetz, 1999; Gaertner, Sedikides, Vevea, & Luzzini, 2002), which suggests that the individual self will be stronger involved in processes of fairness reactions than the social self. This is in accordance with my argument that fairness experiences are essentially individualistic processes.

When the self-concept is being threatened, such as when people experience negative self-evaluations, people are in need for self-enhancement (e.g., Vohs, Baumeister, Schmeichel, Twenge, Nelson, & Tice, 2008). I presume that especially in these cases, the self-relevant feedback function of fairness will catch attention (consciously or nonconsciously). Indeed, research suggests that people pay more attention to fairness information when they are uncertain about themselves or are undergoing self-threatening events (Miedema, Van den Bos, & Vermunt, 2006; Van den Bos, 2001). Following from my line of reasoning about fairness as a source of self-relevant feedback, it will be interesting to disentangle whether self-threatened people are especially driven by absolute fairness concerns or mostly by their need for self-relevant information available in the specific fairness-related situation. In the current thesis, I reason that people will be interested in fairness information especially because of the self-relevant information it provides. Furthermore, I assume that as long as the specific fairness information coincides with the self-relevant information—with fair treatment implying positive feedback on the self and unfair treatment implying negative feedback on the self—this interest in fairness information will be even stronger for self-threatened people, as their need for positive self-relevant information will be higher. Thus, I think the processes underlying fairness experiences are not only about absolute fairness principles, but may be very much self-related.

Importantly, fairness has more self-related functions than only providing self-relevant information. Another significant function of fairness is the facilitation of long-term planning and investing in modern society (Bal & Van den Bos, 2010; Hafer, 2000b). In these modern times, individuals seem to feel compelled to plan their lives like it consists of several long-term projects. They save money and invest in stocks and shares hoping to make big profits that will enable them to realize great dreams. The common belief that all people get what they deserve prevents individuals from following their immediate impulses and instead follow their long-term dreams as well as make any effort to be a "good" person (Lerner, 1977, 1980). The extreme ways in which people sometimes try to defend this belief of deservingness (e.g., by blaming innocent victims), demonstrate the significance of the need

this belief fulfills (Hafer, 2000b). Therefore, I propose that the self is related to this significant belief, probably because it provides important foundations for people's lives.

This line of reasoning suggests that a threat to the belief that the world is fair may actually come down to a threat to the self. Dealing with these threats may essentially be driven by self-related processes, or more specifically, come down to self-regulation (Van den Bos & Maas, 2009). When threats have been regulated, people do not tend to react defensively (e.g., Sherman, Nelson, & Steele, 2000). I therefore presume that the frustration or the facilitation of processes of self-regulation influences the defense of just world beliefs.

The foregoing theoretical framework suggests that fairness may be important at least at two different individual levels: to provide self-relevant information that people need to construct their (individual) self and to support the self-related illusion of having a useful life in a controllable, predictable and benevolent world. To put it shortly, fairness and justice may fulfill several self-relevant functions, driven by individual needs and self-related processes.

**Overview of the Current Research**

In the current thesis, I study fairness in three distinct fairness domains: procedural fairness, distributive fairness, and in the domain of the Belief in a Just World. In the first domain, I focus on the role of the individual self versus the social self in reactions to fair and unfair procedures. In the second domain, I try to disentangle absolute fairness concerns and the self-relevant feedback function of distributive fairness. In the third domain, I study the self-related processes of coping with threats to the belief that the world is a just place.

I will present the research I conducted on the self-related aspects of fairness reactions in three empirical chapters, equivalent to the three fairness domains I study. These chapters are written as independent articles, which facilitates the reading of each chapter independently. The main findings described in these three chapters will be summarized in the General Discussion. Please note that I use the terms fairness and justice interchangeably.

*Chapter 2: Fairness is in the "I" of the Beholder: On the Individualistic Nature of Procedural Fairness Reactions*

This chapter focuses on procedural fairness and studies fairness reactions to fair and unfair procedures. Previous research has shown the importance of the self in the processes underlying reactions to fairness and unfairness in this domain. These processes predominantly seem to involve the individual self and not the social self. Study 2.1 examined and compared the activations of the individual self and the social self when participants experienced fair, unfair or neutral procedures. Extending on these insights, Study 2.2 focused on the moderating effect of treatment category on the role of self-activation in fairness reactions. Therefore, the fairness reactions were investigated of participants who were being approached as individuals and participants who were being approached as members of a group, while their individual or their social selves are being activated separately.

In Study 2.1 it was found that the individual self was stronger activated than the social self when participants experienced fair or unfair procedures. This effect is not found when participants experienced a neutral procedure. Extending on these insights, Study 2.2 revealed that when people's individual selves had been activated they reacted stronger to fair and unfair procedures than when their social selves had been activated, but only when they were treated as individuals and not when they were treated as members of a group. Furthermore, it was not only a matter of "congruent fit" as the activation of the social self did not lead to stronger reactions to the experience of fair and unfair procedures when participants were treated as members of a group. Taken together, these findings suggest that the individual self plays an unique role in fairness experiences and that the major influence procedural fairness can have on people's lives may be associated in large part by individualistic aspects of the self. In other words, procedural fairness experiences may revolve in the "I" of the beholder.

*Chapter 3: Exploring How Self-Threat Influences the Response to Conflicts Between Self-Interest and Fairness*

This chapter focuses on distributive fairness by studying fairness reactions to fair and unfair outcome distributions. Two studies examine how people deal with conflicts between their need for positive self-information and their striving for fairness. Specifically, both studies examine affective reactions to outcome arrangements in which people receive better outcomes than comparable other persons. These arrangements of advantageous inequity constitute situations in which fairness and need for self-enhancement need are in conflict. I investigate in both a field experiment (Study 3.1) and a lab experiment (Study 3.2) whether it is fairness or the positive self-information that influences fairness reactions in case of self-threat.

In both my field and lab experiments I found that when people experienced a self-threat, they reacted more positively to arrangements of advantageous inequity than when not experiencing this threat. This supports my view that people's need for positive information about their selves is an important factor in the underlying psychological processes of the way people deal with conflicts between their fairness and self-interest concerns. Moreover, the results of Chapter 3 suggest, in line with the results of Chapter 2, that fairness reactions may be driven by self-related processes.

*Chapter 4: A Self-Regulation Hypothesis of Coping With an Unjust World*

This chapter focuses on the Belief in a Just World (BJW) by studying reactions to another person's ill fate. When people are confronted with an event that threatens their BJW (e.g., when they witness a girl falling victim to rape)they often try to maintain their existing beliefs, for example by blaming the innocent victim for her ill fate. In Chapter 4 I suggest that this defensive process of blaming innocent victims may in essence stem from self-regulation failure. Following this line of reasoning, Study 4.1 examines the effect of BJW threat on victim blaming when self-regulation resources are depleted (i.e., in the case of high ego-depletion) prior to BJW threatening information describing an innocent victim of a rape crime. Study 4.2 examines the facilitation of self-regulation by means of self-affirmation after the BJW

threatening information by studying the effect of BJW threat on victim blaming. In this way, I investigate whether the BJW threat has a stronger effect on victim blaming when self-regulation is frustrated, (Study 4.1) and whether the effect of BJW threat on victim blaming vanishes when self-regulation is facilitated (Study 4.2).

In accordance with my line of reasoning, Study 4.1 showed that when self-regulation resources were depleted (i.e., in the case of high ego-depletion) prior to BJW threatening information describing an innocent victim of a rape crime, the effect of BJW threat on victim blaming was larger than in the case of low depletion. Study 4.2 showed that when self-regulation was facilitated by means of self-affirmation after the BJW threatening information, there was no significant effect of the BJW threat manipulation on victim blaming. Taken together, these findings suggest that coping with BJW threats involve self-regulation processes leading to more or less defensive reactions (like blaming innocent victims). When people's self-regulation resources are depleted, they react more negatively to innocent victims when they constitute a stronger threat to the BJW. Facilitating self-regulation, by means of self-affirmation, enables people to cope with BJW threatening information, thereby inhibiting the urge to blame innocent victims.

In conclusion, the research that is described in the following empirical chapters (Chapters 2-4) was set up to test the assumption that fairness reactions are driven by self-related processes. Results of six different experiments in three different fairness domains, consistently support this self-related perspective on fairness.

**Chapter 2**

---

**Fairness is in the "I" of the Beholder:**

**On the Individualistic Nature of Procedural Fairness Reactions**

People encounter many situations in their daily lives that they experience as fair or unfair (Finkel, 2000; Tyler, 2006). Therefore, most people can imagine a situation of being treated in an explicitly fair or unfair way, for example when being provided or denied voice about important decisions to be made. These experiences of fair and unfair treatment have a strong influence on a whole range of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (for overviews, see, e.g., Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992; Tyler & Smith, 1998). It therefore seems legitimate to state that the experience of fairness plays an essential role in people's lives.

It is important in this matter to realize that fairness is in the eye of the beholder. This means that fairness is an idea that exists within the minds of people (Adams, 1965; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Mikula & Wenzel, 2000; Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997; Van den Bos, 2005; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002) and that the focus of psychological research is on the subjective fairness experiences of these people. Subjectivity refers to people's personal perspectives (e.g., Reber, Reber, & Allen, 2009) and it can be assumed that people's selves tend to be closely related to that.

Furthermore, because the self is associated with many major motivations in people's lives (Baumeister, 1998), the tremendous amount of research which has shown that fairness is very important for people (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002) also seems to suggest that the self is involved in experiencing fair and unfair treatment. This self-related perspective on reactions to fair and unfair experiences is

---

This chapter is based on Loseman, Van den Bos, & Ham (2011).

supported by research of Van den Bos, Miedema, Vermunt, and Zwenk (2011) who showed that the self indeed is involved in these fairness experiences.

There have been strong appeals in the procedural fairness literature to devote more attention to the specific nature of the relationship between the self and procedural fairness (e.g., Brockner et al., 1998, 2004; De Cremer, 2003; Gilliland, 1994; Shroth & Shah, 2000; Skitka, 2003). In line with De Cremer and Tyler (2005), we argue that specific psychological mechanisms involved in the construction of the self could play an important role in explaining procedural fairness effects. Therefore, it is necessary to study these basic psychological processes to come to an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the process of experiencing fair and unfair procedures. Research on procedural fairness has only recently adopted a process-oriented focus on understanding fairness experiences (see, e.g. Ham & Van den Bos, 2008; Van den Bos, 2002; Van Prooijen, Karremans, & Van Beest, 2006). By studying the role of the self in fairness experiences, the current research aims to further insights into the processes underlying these experiences.

It is very difficult to give one all-embracing definition of the self, as the psychological literature on this issue is full of many different interpretations and definitions (Baumeister, 1998). Therefore, we focus on "the self-concept" in this paper. With this term we refer to a clearly defined aspect of the self that matches the current purposes and which seems to be the most appropriate definition of the self for our present research. Specifically, we define the self-concept as the way people see and define themselves and we note that the concept consists of an organized body of information that a given person has about him or herself (for more information, please see Baumeister, 1998).

Furthermore, we argue that to gather self-knowledge constituting the general self-concept, people rely heavily on the perceptions they have of how others appraise them (Baumeister, 1998; Mead, 1934; Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979). Being treated in a fair or unfair way reflects the view other people have of them and whether they judge them as valuable persons, which enables people to use fairness information for purposes of self-definition, suggesting the self-concept may be involved in fairness experiences. Indeed, it has been shown that people use procedural fairness information for self-enhancement (Tyler,

Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997). Furthermore, other research has shown that procedural fairness influences people's state self-esteem (Koper, Van Knippenberg, Bouhuijs, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1993).

Moreover, it has been reported that reactions to fair and unfair procedures amplify when the self has been made salient compared to when the self has not been made salient (Van den Bos et al., 2011), demonstrating the essential role of the self in experiencing fair and unfair treatments. Specifically, this self-salience effect can be explained by means of the finding that the need for self-information is likely to be stronger in conditions in which self-related cognitions are especially accessible or salient (Stapel & Koomen, 2001). In situations of experiencing fair and unfair treatment, this would suggest that when the self is salient this instigates more attention to the perceived fairness of treatment as this constitutes a source of self-relevant information (Van den Bos et al., 2011).

*The Current Research*

We argue here that to come to accurate insights into the processes underlying fairness experiences, it is important to not only focus on the self-concept in general, but on the specific parts of the self-concept involved in these processes as well. Because the self-concept contains too much knowledge to be available all at the same time, only a small part can be present in awareness at a given moment. This activated part of the self is called the working self-concept (Markus & Kunda, 1986). A common distinction is the one made between the different working self-concepts "the individual self" and "the social self" (see Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991; Brewer, 1991; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991; Triandis, 1989; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987).

The social self is that part of the self-concept that reflects integration and inclusion of the self in the social world. The individual self reflects the more unique aspects of the self and differentiates the self from others. The individual self can be chronically stronger activated than the social self or vice versa, but both parts of the self-concept are also available to be activated at different times or in different contexts (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Stapel & Koomen, 2001). In the current chapter we focus on the individual self and the social

self as two different forms of the working self-concept and we examine which aspect is more relevant when people react to fair and unfair treatment.

Based on the group-value model (Lind & Tyler, 1988) and the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992), we note that many studies have shown influences of social aspects of people's lives on fair process effects. For example, De Cremer and colleagues (De Cremer, Van Knippenberg, & Van Dijke, 2004) report that fair and unfair treatments most strongly influence organizational commitment in people with low instead of high social self-esteem. Recently, a more individualistic perspective on procedural fairness received empirical support as well (see, e.g., Van den Bos et al., 2011; Van Prooijen & Zwenk, 2009). This line of research suggests that procedures are so important for people because at a fundamental level they affect how people see and feel about themselves as unique individuals.

This perspective receives empirical support from comparative studies on the social and individual self (Gaertner, Sedikides, & Graetz, 1999; Gaertner, Sedikides, Vevea, & Luzzini, 2002) which consistently show that the individual self is the most fundamental basis for self-definition. When people are being treated in a fair or unfair way, they will mainly infer information about their individual selves, as this is the most important part of their self-concept. In the current chapter, we argue that although social aspects of people's lives do matter in these interactions, it is the individual self that matters most at a fundamental level.

That is, we propose an individual self-related perspective on procedural fairness in which fairness is mainly important to people because it provides them with information about unique aspects of their selves, and about how they should see and define themselves as individuals. In accordance with the line of reasoning we present here, we propose that the working self-concept at the moment that people experience fair or unfair treatments is the individual self. Study 2.1 investigates activation of the individual self and activation of the social self as influenced by the experience of fair and unfair procedures. We hypothesize that these fair and unfair experiences will cause a stronger activation of the individual and not of the social self, suggesting that procedural fairness is important to people because of individual self concerns. Study 2.2 will investigate the role of the individual self and the social

self in fairness experiences the other way round by focusing on the activation of the individual self and the social self as a moderator of fair process effects.

## Study 2.1

### Method

*Participants and Design.* One-hundred-and-twenty students (35 men and 85 women) at Utrecht University participated in our study. They were between 16 and 48 years of age, with a mean age of somewhat older than 21 years (*SD* = 4 years). They were randomly assigned to a voice procedure, a no-voice procedure, or a neutral procedure. For their participation they received course credit or 4 Euros.

*Experimental Procedure.* The experiment was conducted on a separate computer for each participant. All participants read a scenario about the application for a study grant to study in California (based on Van den Bos, Wilke, & Lind, 1998, Experiment 1). Participants were asked to imagine the following situation:

> You would like to spend 6 months in California to conduct research for your Master's thesis. The university you would like to attend comes highly recommended. You will work together with highly esteemed professors. All of this offers you good career opportunities. Furthermore, California has some other advantages as well: for example, sun, sea, beach, and studying under palm trees. To pay for your stay and research in California, you apply for a grant at "Students Around the World" (SAW). To decide whether they will award you the grant, you need to appear before the grant committee of SAW.

In the next part of the stimulus materials, the procedure manipulation was induced. The participants in the voice procedure condition read the following sentences:

> The committee gives you voice. You can give your opinion about the amount of money you think is needed for your stay and study in California.

Participants in the no-voice procedure condition read the following sentences:

The committee does not give you voice: You are not allowed to express your opinion about the amount of money you think is needed for your stay and study in California.

The participants in the neutral procedure condition read the following sentences:

The committee explains the procedure to you. You will hear after one week from the jury if you will receive a grant which you can use for your stay and study in California.

To check whether the manipulation of the voice-procedure and the no-voice procedure was successful, participants were asked whether they received an opportunity to voice their opinion about the amount of money they thought was needed for their stay and study in California (1 = *yes*, 2 = *no*). In the neutral procedure participants were asked whether the procedure had been explained to them (1 = *yes*, 2 = *no*). Participants who did not give the right answer to this question (N = 7) were left out the analyses.[1] We made sure that in all three procedure conditions and both practice questions the same frequency of personal pronouns were used. Thus, possible differences in self-activation caused by the reading of personal pronouns in the three experimental conditions were prevented.

After the procedure manipulation, level of self-activation was measured with a task which was based on the personal pronouns task of Dijksterhuis and Van Knippenberg (2000). That is, participants read a text which ostensibly was written in Weswe, an unknown language of a Polynesian island. In the text 20 words were left out. The instruction stated that people are often able to estimate the meaning of words in an unknown language very well and that the participants had to fill in the words that were left out of the text with the Dutch translation. It was only possible to fill in personal pronouns. These personal pronouns were used as a measure for the relative activation of the individual and the social self. For this, the frequency of the filled in I-related words ("I", "me" and "mine") and the frequency of the filled in we-related words ("we", "us" and "our") were calculated and divided by the total number of words filled in. Thus, we calculated activation of the individual self by dividing the number of I-related words by the total number of words filled in and we

---

[1] Leaving these participants in the data set yielded similar results and did not alter the conclusions from Study 2.1.

calculated activation of the social self by dividing the number of we-related words by the total number of words filled in the text.

After measuring self-activation, procedural affect and procedural fairness judgments were assessed. Procedural affect was measured by means of 7 items that asked how disappointed, sad, annoyed, angry, furious, happy, and satisfied (first five items were reverse scored) a participant was with the procedure used in the decision-making process (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). These scores were averaged to serve as a measure of procedural affect (alpha = .96). Furthermore, the procedure manipulation was checked by asking participants how fair, just, right, and justified they considered the procedure used in the decision-making process (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). The mean score on these items served as a measure of procedural fairness judgment and to check the procedure manipulation (alpha = .95). Finally, demographic variables were measured, after which participants were thanked, paid for their participation, and debriefed.

## Results

*Procedural Fairness Judgments*. An analysis of variance with procedure as independent variable and the fairness judgment scale as dependent variable showed a main effect of procedure, $F(2, 117) = 7.29$, $p < .001$. As expected, the voice procedure was judged to be more fair ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.26$) than the no-voice procedure ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.77$), $F(1, 118) = 11.58$, $p < .001$. The neutral procedure was judged as more fair ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.57$) than the no-voice procedure, $F(1, 118) = 9.88$, $p < .01$, and somewhat less fair than the voice procedure, although this latter difference was not statistically different, $F < 1$.

We conclude that our manipulation was successful in influencing participants' fairness judgments regarding the voice and no-voice procedures. The neutral procedure was judged as more fair than the no-voice procedure. The neutral procedure did not differ significantly from the voice procedure. Perhaps this suggests that neutral procedures are interpreted to be rather fair. Another possibility may be that dependent variables that may be more susceptible to tap possible differences between voice and neutral procedures are better

suited to show that voice procedures are judged to be different from neutral procedures. To this end, we also measured participants' affective reactions to our procedure manipulation.

*Procedural Affect.* An analysis of variance on procedural affect showed a significant effect of the procedure manipulation, $F(2, 117) = 10.59$, $p < .001$. The voice procedure was experienced as more positive ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.36$) than the no-voice procedure ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.92$), $F(1, 118) = 21.02$, $p < .001$. The neutral procedure was experienced as less positive ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.33$) than the voice procedure, $F(1, 118) = 4.39$, $p < .05$, and more positive than the no-voice procedure, $F(1, 118) = 4.52$, $p < .05$. Thus, as intended, the voice procedure instigated more positive affect than the neutral procedure and the neutral procedure triggered more positive affect than the no-voice procedure. This suggests that the participants of Study 2.1 interpreted the three procedure conditions to be different from each other, at least in terms of procedural affect.

*Self-Activation*. For means and standard deviations see Table 2.1. In accordance with our prediction that the individual self is more involved in fairness experiences (compared to the social self) we predicted in the voice procedure and in the no-voice procedure the individual self to be more strongly activated than the social self. We contrasted these predicted effects with activation of the individual and social selves in the neutral procedure condition, in which we did not expect a reliable difference in the activation of the individual and social selves. Thus, we predicted an interaction effect between our procedure manipulation and the within-subject factor which compared the activation of the individual self with the activation of the social self.

As hypothesized, an analysis of variance with procedure as between-subjects factor and activation of the individual and the social selves as within-subject factor, showed a significant interaction between procedure and self-activation, $F(2, 117) = 4.57$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. There was a stronger activation of the individual self than of the social self in the voice condition, $F(1, 117) = 8.67$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$, and in the no-voice condition, $F(1, 117) = 17.92$,

$p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. There was no difference between activation of the individual self and activation of the social self in the neutral procedure conditions, $F < 1$.

To study the specific influence of procedure on the activation of the individual self and the social self as independent consequences of the different procedures on the different aspects of the self, we also analyzed the influence of procedure on the activations of individual self and social self separately. There was a simple main effect of procedure on the activation of the individual self, $F(2, 117) = 3.10$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. The individual self was more strongly activated in the no-voice condition compared to the neutral procedure condition, $F(1, 117) = 6.13$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. The individual self was also more strongly activated in the voice procedure compared to the neutral procedure, $F(1, 117) = 2.83$, $p = .095$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$ although this difference was marginally significant. Activation of the individual self did not differ between the voice condition and the no-voice condition, $F < 1$. These results show that the individual self was strongest activated in the voice and no-voice conditions compared to the neutral procedure condition.

Table 2.1

*Means and Standard Deviations of Relative Individual and Social Self Activation as a Function of Procedure*

| | Individual Self-Activation | | Social Self-Activation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Voice Procedure | 0.29$_{ac}$ | 0.13 | 0.20$_{bd}$ | 0.12 |
| No-Voice Procedure | 0.31$_a$ | 0.12 | 0.17$_b$ | 0.11 |
| Neutral Procedure | 0.24$_{cd}$ | 0.11 | 0.25$_{cd}$ | 0.13 |

*Note.* Means are relative scores from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating higher levels of self-activation. Means with no subscripts in common differ significantly ($p < .05$), as indicated by a least significant difference test for multiple comparisons between means.

There was also a significant effect of procedure on the activation of the social self, $F(2, 117) =$ 3.19, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. The difference between the no-voice procedure and the neutral procedure was significant, $F(1, 117) = 6.32$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. The difference between the voice condition and the neutral procedure condition was marginally significant, $F(1, 117) =$ 2.80, $p = .097$. There was no difference in the activation of the social self between the voice condition and the no-voice condition, $F(1, 117) = 1.09$, $ns$. These results show that the social self had the least strong activation in the voice and no-voice conditions compared to the neutral procedure condition.

## Discussion

The results of Study 2.1 show that voice and no-voice procedures cause stronger activation of the individual self while the social self is less strongly activated when experiencing these procedures. Note that participants were able to fill in a whole range of other personal pronouns in the "Weswe text", besides the I-related and we-related pronouns we used for our analyses. This means that when more I-related words were filled in the text, this did not force participants to fill in less we-related words. However, in the voice and no-voice procedures, they did. The neutral procedure, without any aspect explicitly referring to fairness or unfairness, did not cause a difference in activation of the individual self and the social self.

The results of this first study support our hypothesis that the working self-concept at the moment of experiencing fair and unfair treatment is the individual self and not the social self. When people were treated in a fair way (by having the opportunity to voice their opinions about an upcoming decision), the individual self was stronger activated than the social self. When this treatment was as unfair (i.e., when voice was denied), the discrepancy between activation of the individual self and activation of the social self even increased. Compared to a procedure unrelated to fairness issues (i.e., a neutral procedure condition), activation of the individual self increased when fair and unfair procedures were experienced while the social self decreased in activation.

These results suggest that people may use the perceived fairness of the way they are treated as a source of self-evaluation. Being respected by others provides information about the way others think about them. At a fundamental level, this information concerns their core self, how they should think about themselves as individuals. Thus, one possible implication of the findings of Study 2.1 might be that fairness may not only be important for people because of social reasons—by influencing people's perceptions of their standing in groups and their relationship with authorities (Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, and Wilke, 2004, 2005; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992)—but perhaps also by having consequences for individual aspects of people's lives.

We hasten to note that in Study 2.1 the voice procedure was not judged as significantly fairer than the neutral procedure. Fairness judgments are not always accurate measures of perceived fairness as these involve cognitively elaborate processing of the procedural information and may even be based on the preliminary affective experience (Mullen, 2007), enhancing the possibility of biased reflections on the original situation. Perhaps, affect may more accurately reflect people's real experiences as this do not need any integration of fairness principles like fairness judgments do. Procedural affect did show in Study 2.1 that participants experienced the voice procedure more positively than the neutral procedure, which suggests that the voice procedure was fairer to participants than the neutral procedure. This is in line with previous research on voice procedures (e.g., Van den Bos, Wilke, & Lind, 1998; Van Prooijen, Karremans, & Van Beest, 2006).

We also note that the procedures used in Study 2.1 were directed at the individual person. This individual level of treatment is most frequently used in procedural fairness research. Van Prooijen and Zwenk (2009) also treated their participants as individuals and showed that when the individual self instead of the social self had been made the working self-concept during these treatments, participants showed the strongest fairness effects. Their results combined with the current results of Study 2.1 suggest that when people are approached as individuals, the individual self seems to play a main role in procedural fairness experiences.

However, in many situations people are not treated as individuals, but as members of a group. Study 2.1 does not reveal whether all these fairness-related situations involve the same processes of fairness experiences. It may be possible that the individual self is only this strongly involved in situations in which people are being treated as individuals, like in Study 2.1. To study whether specific aspects of the self are differently involved in fairness experiences related to individual or group treatments, we conducted a second study in which the effects of an activated individual self and an activated social self are investigated in these different situations.

When people are being treated as members of their group, the situation mainly provides information about this group and is less (or at least less directly) informative about the unique features of the individual. Being treated as a group member will provide more relevant information about the social self, which makes it plausible to expect that the fairness experience will intensify when the social self is the working self-concept. On the other hand, an activated individual self enhances the need for personal relevant information, thereby reasonably increasing the relevance of an individual treatment. Therefore, we think that when the individual self is accessible, fairness effects will be stronger when one is being treated as an individual compared to when one is being treated at a more social level. However, we do not predict a general assimilation effect as the individual self seems to be more important for self-definition than the social self (Gaertner, Sedikides, & Graetz, 1999; Gaertner, Sedikides, Vevea, & Luzzini, 2002). Therefore, we argue that fairness effects will be weaker when the social self is accessible and one is approached as a group member compared to the combination of individual self activation and treatment as an individual.

In Study 2.2 treatment category (are you treated as a group member or as an individual) will be investigated as a possible moderator of self-activation effects. In this way we tested in more detail the hypothesis that individual aspects of the self and not social aspects of the self are mainly involved in fairness experiences, suggesting that the strong activation of the individual self in Study 2.1 was mainly found because participants were treated as individuals and not at a more social (i.e., group) level.

**Study 2.2**

Method

*Participants and Design.* One hundred-and-fifty-four students (34 men and 120 women) at Utrecht University participated in the study. They were between 18 and 31 years of age, with a mean age of almost 21 years (*SD* = 2,3 years). They received one course credit or 3 Euros for their participation and were randomly assigned to one of the eight groups of our 2 (procedure: promise-kept vs. promise-broken) x 2 (self-activation: individual self vs. social self) x 2 (treatment category: individual vs. group member) factorial design.

*Experimental Procedure*. The experiment was run on a computer separately for each participant. The participants in the individual self-activation condition were told that the study was about personal identity, the part of people's lives in which they see themselves as an individual, independent from other persons around them. The participants in the social self-activation condition were told that the study was about social identity, the part of people's lives in which they feel connected to other people around them and groups that they are a member of. After this information several demographic variables were measured, as for example age, sex and at which university a participant studied.

After these questions, the next task started. Ostensibly, this was a study on task performance. Participants were told that, to study task performance, they had to solve a mathematical problem in a limited amount of time while simultaneously remembering a list of (neutral) words. To motivate the participants to put effort in this task, participants were told that they would receive one extra Euro (in addition to the 3 Euro or one course credit normal participation fee) when they succeeded in putting effort in performing the task. Before the actual task started, participants first had to do a practice task. This practice task was comparable to the real task, with the difference that participants were told that their effort on this task was not of any relevance in receiving the bonus money.

After this task self-activation was induced. In the individual self-activation condition, participants were asked two open-ended questions: "Describe the feelings and thoughts you experience when you think of yourself as an independent individual" and "Describe an event

in which you felt like an independent individual." In the social self-activation condition, participants were asked comparable questions: "Describe the feelings and thoughts you experience when you think of yourself as a student at Utrecht University" and "Describe an event in which you felt like a student at Utrecht University." This manipulation of self-activation was based on the manipulation of status salience by Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, and Wilke (2002). In further correspondence with this study and other salience studies (e.g., Van den Bos, 2001; Van den Bos & Miedema, 2000; Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Lyon, 1989), after the self-activation manipulation all participants completed the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). This measure served as a filler task and to assess whether the self-salience manipulation engendered positive or negative affect. The PANAS consists of 20 items on which the participants reported how they felt at the moment and is divided into two subscales: a 10 item-subscale measuring positive affect (PA; alpha = .86) and a 10 item-subscale measuring negative affect (NA; alpha = .88). The descriptions people gave as answers to the self-activation questions were analyzed on individual content by calculating the relative number of individual words ("I", "me", "mine", "self", and "own") by dividing the frequency of these words by the total number of words used in these descriptions. This relative number of individual words served as a manipulation check of the self-activation manipulation. After this part of the experiment, procedural information was presented and several measures were taken as described below.

Next, participants in the promise-broken procedure were told that instead of the effort on the actual task, the effort put in the practice task was used to decide whether they would gain the bonus money. Participants in the promise-kept procedure were told that, as promised, gaining the bonus money or not would be judged on the effort put in the actual task. Treatment category was manipulated by telling the participants in the individual treatment category condition that in their case this procedure was followed. Participants in the group member treatment category were told that for all members of their group this procedure was followed.

After this, procedural affect, procedural fairness judgments, and manipulation checks of the procedure manipulation were measured. Procedural affect was measured by means of the same seven items as in Study 2.1 and averaged into a reliable scale of procedural affect (alpha = .87). To measure procedural fairness judgments, the same four questions were asked as in Study 2.1 and averaged into a reliable procedural fairness judgment scale (alpha = .92). Finally, demographic variables were measured, participants were thanked, paid for their participation, and thoroughly debriefed.

## Results

*Manipulation Checks.* We checked the experimental manipulations with a 2 (procedure: promise-broken vs. promise-kept) x 2 (self-activation: individual self vs. social self) x 2 (treatment category: individual treatment vs. group member treatment) univariate analysis of variance. First, as expected, an analysis of the fairness judgment scale indicated that the procedure in which a promise had been kept was judged to be more fair ($M$ = 3.97, $SD$ = 1.44) than the procedure in which a promise had been broken ($M$ = 3.21, $SD$ = 1.44), $F(1, 146)$ = 10.64, $p < .001$.

Second, as expected, an analysis of the relative number of individual words participants used in their descriptions by responding to the two self-activation questions indicated that these descriptions in the individual self-activation condition contained relatively more individual words ($M$ = 0.13, $SD$ = 0.06) than the descriptions in the social self-activation condition ($M$ = 0.11, $SD$ = 0.05), $F(1, 146)$ = 5.16, $p < .05$. This shows that participants in the individual self-salient condition were more concerned about the individual aspects of their selves compared to the participants in the social self-salient condition.

*PANAS Findings.* As expected, the self-activation manipulation did not have any effect on the PA ($M$ = 4.44, $SD$ = 0.88) or NA ($M$ = 1.99, $SD$ = 0.82) scales, $F$s < 1. This indicates that the effects reported here cannot be attributed to affective reactions following self-activation.

*Procedural Affect.* The relevant means and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.2. We conducted a 2 (procedure: promise-broken vs. promise-kept) x 2 (self-activation: individual self vs. social self) x 2 (treatment category: individual treatment vs. group member treatment) ANOVA on procedural affect. There was a main effect of procedure, $F(1, 146) = 16.13$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. When the promise was kept, people experienced the procedure as more positive ($M = 5.60$, $SD = 0.68$) than when the promise had been broken ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.15$). There was also a self-activation x procedure interaction effect, $F(1, 146) = 6.37$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. These effects were qualified by the predicted significant three-way interaction effect of self-activation x procedure x treatment category, $F(1, 146) = 4.28$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.

Table 2.2

*Means and Standard Deviations of Procedural Affect as a Function of Treatment Category, Self-Activation, and Procedure*

| | Individual Treatment | | | | Group Member Treatment | | | |
| | Individual Self-Activation | | Social Self-Activation | | Individual Self-Activation | | Social Self-Activation | |
| Procedure | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Promise Kept | $5.94_a$ | 0.48 | $5.47_{abd}$ | 0.78 | $5.64_{ab}$ | 0.76 | $5.37_{bd}$ | 0.56 |
| Promise Broken | $4.55_c$ | 1.46 | $5.45_{abd}$ | 0.51 | $5.08_{cd}$ | 1.35 | $4.94_{cd}$ | 0.94 |

*Note*. Means are on 7-point scales, with higher values indicating more positive levels of perceived procedural affect. Means with no subscripts in common differ significantly ($p < .05$), as indicated by a least significant difference test for multiple comparisons between means.

Furthermore, when participants were treated as individuals, we found the expected interaction between our self-activation and procedure manipulations, $F(1, 151) = 10.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. When participants were treated as individuals *and* when their individual self had been made salient, strongest affective reactions were found, with procedural affect being less positive after a promise-broken procedure than after a promise-kept procedure, $F(1, 151) = 22.71$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. This difference between the promise-broken and

promise-kept procedure was only marginally significant when the social self had been made salient, $F(1, 151) = 3.47$, $p = .065$. We did not find an interaction between our self-activation and procedure manipulations in the group member treatment category, $F < 1$.

Moreover, contrasting the simple effect of procedure within the individual treatment condition when the individual self had been made salient with the other three conditions (individual treatment and social self-activation; group member treatment and individual self-activation; group member treatment and social self-activation), showed a significant interaction contrast, $F(1, 150) = 9.66$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. This means that when compared to all participants, the participants who reacted strongest to the promise broken and promise kept procedures were the ones who were treated as individuals and who had their individual selves being made salient.

## Discussion

The results of Study 2.2 demonstrate that in the individual treatment condition, participants showed stronger affective reactions to the fair and unfair procedure when their individual selves had been activated than when their social selves had been activated. Furthermore, when participants were treated as members of their group, their fairness experiences were not intensified by either activation of the individual self or by activation of the social self. These results support our hypothesis that self-activation effects are only present when people are treated as individuals. In line with Van Prooijen and Zwenk (2009, Study 1), even the procedure effect was statistically not significant when participants their social selves had been activated combined with being approached as individuals. This is perhaps an indication of the importance of a fit between self-activation and treatment category for fairness information to become personally relevant. A fit on the individual level (i.e., individual self-activation and individual fairness treatment) determined the strongest reactions to fair and unfair procedures compared to all other combinations of working self-concept and category of treatment. The predicted moderating effect of individual treatment category for self-activation effects on fairness experiences has been found and experiencing fair and unfair treatments seem to involve fundamentally individualistic processes.

General Discussion

In the current research we studied the role of individual and social aspects of the self in the psychological process underlying fairness experiences. In Study 2.1 we measured the working self-concept as influenced by procedural fairness experiences and showed that the individual self and not the social self is involved in these experiences. Participants in this experiment were all treated as individuals and therefore we investigated in Study 2.2 whether treatment category would moderate this role of the individual self. Study 2.2 supported the hypothesis that when participants were treated as individuals, they showed stronger fairness experiences when their individual self had been made salient compared to when their social self had been made salient. When they were treated as members of their group, there were no effects of self-activation. Taken together, these results suggest that fairness experiences are driven by individualistic processes.

As noted in the introduction of the current chapter, these findings seem to contradict at least one prevalent perspective on procedural fairness in the literature, by account of the group-value model (Lind & Tyler, 1988) and the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992). These models support a relational perspective on procedural fairness that emphasizes the role of social factors in procedural fairness effects. Among others, perceptions of intragroup status (Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, & Wilke, 2004, 2005), group belongingness (Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, & Wilke, 2004), and trustworthiness of the authority (Van den Bos, Wilke, & Lind, 1998) all seem to be strongly related to the way people react on fairness aspects in situations. However, within this perspective on procedural fairness the self-related processes underlying fairness experiences have never been the focus of research. By studying the processes involved in experiencing fair and unfair procedures, the current research has been able to show that at a fundamental level the individual self and not the social self is substantially involved in fairness experiences.

In Study 2.1 we measured the working self-concept as a dependent variable, which—to our knowledge—has never been done in procedural fairness research before. This methodological renewal in procedural fairness research makes it possible to address the

processes of fairness experiences more accurately. The design in Study 2.2 in the individual treatment category was comparable to Van Prooijen and Zwenk (2009) in the way that we manipulated self-activation and measured participants' reactions to the fair and unfair procedures. However, not only did we extend the Van Prooijen and Zwenk research by studying these effects also in a group member setting, but we also used a manipulation of self-activation that may be more ecologically valid. Instead of using a word-priming task, we made our participants think of what it means to be an individual or to be a member of their group. In addition, we have replicated the results Van Prooijen and Zwenk obtained on relational treatment evaluations with the current findings on procedural affect. We also developed a procedural fairness manipulation by keeping or breaking the promise to the participants. Although this may be a common fairness situation in daily life, we note that more frequently used manipulations of fair and unfair procedures involve the contrast of voice and no-voice procedures or varying accurate versus inaccurate procedures (see, e.g., Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990; Van den Bos, 2001). We argue that it is important to keep studying different fair and unfair procedures to come to a well-based understanding of fairness experiences.

Research on the psychology of fairness is often driven by the fascination for phenomena that overcome people's mere egocentric and egoistic tendencies, as self-interest is often assumed to be people's major motive (e.g., Batson, 1991; Miller, 1999). Our research does not reveal the tension between egocentric and prosocial mechanisms in human behavior, but does show that in reactive fairness, the individual self seems to play a substantial role. That means that when trying to understand the psychology of fairness, it is relevant to realize that people have a core motivation to perceive information as it was directed to themselves as individuals (Fenigstein, 1984). This egocentric bias may be the core pillar of how people react to many different situations, and the experience of fair and unfair treatments seems not to be essentially different.

## Conclusions

Our research shows that one reason that procedural fairness has such great influences on people's thoughts, feelings and behaviors (e.g., Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992; Tyler & Smith, 1998), is that fairness experiences are related to a central part of people's lives, their core self. The way people see and define themselves as individual beings, is influenced for a great part by the perceived fairness of how others approach them. People are social creatures and sensitive for influences of others. At a fundamental level however, people address this social information at the individual self. People want to feel and think that they are valuable persons and procedural fairness may provide them with such self-relevant feedback, making fairness experiences individualistic, self-related processes. It therefore seems that fairness is not only in the eye, but more specifically in the "I" of the beholder.

**Chapter 3**

**Exploring How Self-Threat Influences the Response to Conflicts Between Self-Interest and Fairness**

"The Master said:

'The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness;

the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain.'"

- Confucius (551 BC – 479 BC)

According to Confucius, fairness is not important for all people. However, decades of social psychological research strongly suggest the contrary. Fairness experiences strongly influence thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of most people in many settings (Tyler & Smith, 1998). The implication of these findings, that people are fairness-driven creatures, often surprises readers of the literature, as there is—in line with Confucius' thoughts—a strong belief that people are mainly concerned with their self-interest (Miller, 1999). This is one of the reasons why it is interesting and important to study the conflicts people may experience between their fairness concerns and their self-interest concerns. In the current chapter, we focus on the possible conflict between their fairness motives and self-interested concerns. In particular, we will study people's reactions to outcome arrangements in which their own outcome is better than the outcome of comparable other persons; arrangements which Jacques (1961) and Adams (1965) labeled advantageous inequity.

---

This chapter is based on Loseman, Miedema, Van den Bos, & Vermunt (2009).

It has been argued convincingly that people's responses to arrangements of advantageous inequity are influenced by two contradictory forces: One source is the self-interested pleasure of receiving a relatively good outcome. Another source is the fairness-based reaction of being inequitably advantaged (Adams, 1965; Jacques, 1961; Peters, Van den Bos, & Bobocel, 2004; Van den Bos, Peters, Bobocel, & Ybema, 2006). Thus, when experiencing advantageous inequity, people are confronted with a conflict between fairness and self-interested concerns (Jacques, 1961). Because of the mixed-motive quality of advantageous inequity arrangements (Jacques, 1961), studying how people respond to these arrangements may shed further light on the social psychology of how people deal with conflicts between fairness and self-interest. In the current chapter, we would like to extend insights into these important issues by building on modern insights into the social psychology of the self.

*Equity, Advantageous Inequity, and Disadvantageous Inequity*

Equity theory states that someone who is faced with inequity will feel distressed and hence usually will respond less positively to inequitable arrangements than to equitable outcome distributions (Adams, 1965). People will respond more positively to equitable than to inequitable arrangements.

Equity theory further proposes that someone who receives a disadvantageous inequitable outcome does not have to deal with conflicting social motives when responding to this particular type of outcome distributions, whereas someone who is advantaged by inequity does. After all, disadvantageous inequity evokes two sources of negative affect: the unfairness of the outcome distribution, and the relative deprivation of not getting the good outcome someone else received (Van den Bos, Lind, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1997). In a situation of advantageous inequity, however, there is one source of negative affect and one source of positive affect. The positive source is based on the self-interested pleasure of receiving a relatively good outcome. The negative source is the fairness-based feeling of being unfairly advantaged. When outcomes are equitable there are mainly sources of positive affect because of the experienced fairness and equity of the situation, and no or very little sources

of negative affect (Van den Bos et al., 2006).

Following this line of reasoning, Peters et al. (2004) reported that persons who experience advantageous inequity show more positive affect than persons who experience disadvantageous inequity. It is usually proposed in equity research that a person who receives an equitable outcome will react more positively than a person who receives an advantageous inequitable outcome, and that the latter individual will experience the outcome as more positive, and will thus show more positive and less negative affect than a person who receives a disadvantageous inequitable outcome (Van den Bos et al., 2006).

*Fairness and Self-Threats*

As fairness has been demonstrated to be psychologically important, it is likely to be important for the self as well (e.g., Tyler & Smith, 1998; Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, & Wilke, 2002). The self is a context-dependent structure (e.g., Onorato & Turner, 2004) and is influenced by self-relevant situations like fair and unfair treatments (Koper, Van Knippenberg, Bouhuijs, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1993). This suggests that the self plays a role in the processes underlying the reactions to fair and unfair treatments. In line with this, Miedema, Van den Bos, & Vermunt (2006) recently reported that self-threatening information provoked stronger reactions to equitable and disadvantageous inequitable outcomes. In their study, participants were (or were not) asked to think of their being judged in a very negative way by others. After this self-threat manipulation, participants received an outcome that was either equal or worse than the outcome of comparable other persons. Results showed that the self-threat condition led to stronger reactions to the equitable and disadvantageous inequitable outcomes than responses in the control group condition. These findings led these authors to conclude that fairness matters more to people under conditions of self-threat.

However, it should be noted here that Miedema et al. (2006) did not include advantageous inequity conditions in their experiments. In the current chapter, we argue that one of the reasons why it is interesting to study how people react to advantageous inequity under self-threatening conditions is because this may qualify the Miedema et al. conclusion

(that fairness matters more under conditions of self-threat) in important ways.

*The Current Research*

We assume that when people try to deal with advantageous inequity, they are confronted with two opposing forces: positive affect, caused by the self-interested pleasure of receiving a relative good outcome and negative affect, based on the unfair outcome distribution (Van den Bos et al., 2006). Van den Bos et al. (2006) described advantageous inequity "as a positive source namely the egoism-based pleasure of receiving a relatively good outcome" (p. 274). We would like to argue in the current chapter that the pleasure people experience by receiving more than others follows from the immediate positive input on people's self-image that this treatment entails.

Interestingly, findings reported on the social psychology of the self show that the need for positive self-affirmation can be triggered by threats to the self (Sherman & Cohen, 2006). When people experience their selves to be threatened, they become more motivated to search for positive self-relevant feedback as they want to feel more positive and certain about who they are (Tesser, 2000). If this line of reasoning is true, then self-threat should influence how people react to arrangements of advantageous inequity. Specifically, following the line of reasoning laid out here, we propose that people will show more positive responses to advantageous inequity under conditions of self-threat than under self-threat absent conditions (*Hypothesis 1*).

Besides the reasons mentioned earlier, we think it is interesting to test this hypothesis because it can be contrasted with an alternative prediction. That is, Miedema et al. (2006) argued that fairness matters more to people under conditions of self-threat than under conditions of no self-threat. This suggests that people should react more negatively (and not more positively) to arrangements of advantageous inequity. Thus, although this line of thought seems inconsistent with self-threats leading people to react more positively to situations of positive self-affirmation (Sherman & Cohen, 2006), it does suggest an alternative prediction, namely that people's responses to advantageous inequity will be more negative under conditions of self-threat than under conditions of no self-threat (*Hypothesis 1*

*alt*).

In the current chapter, we examine these hypotheses in two experiments, one field experiment and one laboratory experiment. Because it is important to measure people's affective reactions to perceived fairness (Tyler & Smith, 1998), measures of people's affective reactions following the reception of their outcomes constituted the main dependent variable in the current experiments. Justice research has frequently demonstrated that people tend to respond with affective reactions to fair and unfair decisions (e.g., Van den Bos & Lind, 2002; Van den Bos, 2005). We also chose to focus on affective reactions because we had reasons to believe that affective reactions may be more susceptible to tapping the effect of the conflict between self-interested and fairness concerns that we are interested in here (Van den Bos et al., 2006). Thus, affective measures appear to be a good dependent variable when studying reactions following advantageous inequity. In addition, we also assessed participants' outcome fairness judgments.

**Study 3.1**

To study the influence of self-threat on the affective reactions to advantageous inequity we conducted a field experiment. In Study 3.1 we manipulated self-threat in citizens of the city of Utrecht by making their personal uncertainties either salient or not salient (Van den Bos, 2001). Experiencing personal uncertainty is generally aversive, and therefore personal uncertainty being made salient can be considered as a mild self-threat (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). After the self-threat manipulation, and some filler tasks, participants received an outcome that was better than, worse than, or equal to the outcome of comparable other persons.

Method

*Participants and Design.* Seventy-three individuals (29 men and 44 women) who were shopping in a big shopping mall in the city center of Utrecht were randomly assigned to one of the conditions of the 2 (salience: uncertainty vs. watching television) x 3 (outcome: equal

vs. advantageous unequal vs. disadvantageous unequal) factorial design. Mean age of the participants was 25 years and 5 months ($SD$ = 8 years and 11 months; range 15-60 years). For their participation, participants received a lollipop and lottery tickets with which they could win 100 Euros.

*Experimental Procedure*. The paper-and-pencil experiment was conducted in a shopping mall in Utrecht (Hoog Catharijne) that attracts customers from different parts of the Netherlands. Participants were asked whether they would like to participate in a study about daily activities. At this moment, the first part of the outcome manipulation was induced. In the equal outcome condition participants were informed that they would receive three lottery tickets for participating in the study. Participants in the disadvantageous outcome condition were told they would receive five lottery tickets. In the advantageous outcome condition participants were told that they would receive one lottery ticket. When they agreed, participants were guided to a nearby restaurant and seated behind a table.

Next, participants were handed an instruction form and an envelope containing a questionnaire. At this point, the experimenter moved to another table to not interfere with the participant completing the questionnaire. Following Van den Bos (2001), uncertainty salience was manipulated in the questionnaire by asking participants to write down their answers to the following two questions: (1) "Please briefly describe the thoughts and feelings that arise in you when you think of you feeling uncertain about yourself" and (2) "Please write down, as specifically as you can, what you think physically will happen to you when you feel uncertain about yourself." In the control condition participants were asked similar questions about their watching television: (1) "Please briefly describe the thoughts and feelings that arise in you when you think of you watching television" and (2) "Please write down, as specifically as you can, what you think physically will happen to you when you are watching television." In correspondence with earlier salience studies, all participants then completed the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) as a filler task. The PANAS consists of two ten-item subsets, one measuring positive

affect (PA) and one measuring negative affect (NA), and both subsets were averaged to form reliable scales (PA alpha = .83; NA alpha = .89).

Participants were then informed that they had come to the end of the study. At this moment, the second part of the outcome manipulation was induced. The experimenter handed them an envelope containing three lottery tickets and a questionnaire which was presented as an evaluation form. All participants were informed they would receive three lottery tickets.

Participants in the advantageous outcome condition were informed that the other participants would receive one lottery ticket. In the disadvantageous outcome condition participants were informed that the other participants would receive five tickets. In the equal outcome condition participants were informed they received as much as all other participants would receive. The experimenter explained to the participants that the evaluation form was unrelated to the contents of the research, but was meant to study how participants feel treated by researchers of Utrecht University.

This evaluation form contained our dependent variables. After handing over the form, the experimenter said she had to leave and asked the participants when they had finished the form, to leave the form on the experimenter's desk, and drop the lottery tickets with their contact information written on it in the lottery box.

Participants then filled out the evaluation form. Included in this form were questions that assessed how just and fair participants thought their outcome was (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). The answers to these two questions were averaged to form a reliable outcome fairness scale (alpha = .75). Following earlier studies (Van den Bos, 2001), participants were also asked to what extent they now, following the outcome that they received, felt happy, glad, angry, and to what extent they were now in a negative mood (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). After recoding participants' answers to the latter two questions, we averaged participants' responses to form a reliable scale of outcome-related affect (alpha = .77).

Finally, demographic variables were measured. When participants had dropped their lottery tickets in the box, they were contacted by the experimenter, thanked for their participation, and thoroughly debriefed.

Results

*PANAS Findings.* A 2 x 3 multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on participants' PANAS scores showed no significant effects at either the multivariate level or the univariate levels. Thus, in correspondence with earlier studies (Van den Bos, 2001), differences in affective states as a result of the salience manipulation cannot explain the findings reported here. Overall means of the positive and negative subsets were 2.96 (*SD* = 0.08) and 1.37 (*SD* = 0.07), respectively.

*Outcome Fairness Judgments.* A 2 x 3 ANOVA on participants' outcome fairness judgments showed a main effect of the outcome manipulation only, $F(2, 67) = 21.18$, $p < .001$. Participants judged the equal outcome to be more fair ($M = 5.03$, $SD = 0.25$) than the advantageous outcome ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.24$), $F(1, 70) = 31.10$, $p < .001$, and the disadvantageous outcome ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.25$), $F(1, 70) = 35.18$, $p < .001$. The disadvantageous outcome was judged as unfair as the advantageous outcome, $F < 1$. The main effect of salience and the interaction effect were not significant, both $F$s < 1.

*Outcome Affect.* A 2 x 3 ANOVA on the outcome affect ratings yielded a main effect of the outcome manipulation, $F(2, 67) = 5.40$, $p < .01$, and the predicted interaction effect, $F(2, 67) = 4.06$, $p < .03$. Table 3.1 reports the means and standard deviations. As predicted by Hypothesis 1, we found that participants reacted more positively to the advantageous outcome when personal uncertainty had (as opposed to had not) been made salient, $F(1, 69) = 4.66$, $p < .04$. We found no significant effects of salience in the equal, $F(1, 69) = 0.20$, $p > .65$, and disadvantageous outcome conditions, $F(1, 69) = 2.04$, $p > .15$.

We also analyzed whether the affect ratings replicated the salience x outcome effects reported by Miedema et al. (2006). Specifically, we expected an interaction between our salience manipulation and a vector that contrasted the outcome conditions present in the Miedema et al. article (the equal and disadvantageous outcome conditions). This analysis indeed yielded the predicted interaction effect, $F(1, 71) = 6.60$, $p < .02$, indicating that we

found a simple main effect of the outcome vector in the uncertainty salience condition, $F(1, 70) = 4.40$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, and not in the television salient condition, $F(1, 70) = 1.39$, p > .24. These results replicate the findings reported by Miedema et al. and show that participants' affective reactions to equal versus disadvantageous unequal outcomes tended to be three times as large when they had to think about uncertainty (as opposed to watching television).

Table 3.1

*Means and Standard Deviations of Outcome Affect as a Function of Uncertainty Salience and Outcome*

|  | Outcome | | | | | |
|  | Advantageous | | Equal | | Disadvantageous | |
| Salience | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Uncertainty | $6.23_b$ | 0.60 | $5.58_{ab}$ | 0.93 | $4.77_c$ | 0.91 |
| Watching Television | $5.40_{ac}$ | 0.83 | $5.77_{ab}$ | 0.75 | $5.31_{ac}$ | 1.12 |

*Note*. Means are on 7-point scales, with higher values indicating more positive levels of perceived outcome affect. Means with no subscripts in common differ significantly ($p < .05$), as indicated by a least significant difference test for multiple comparisons between means.

Finally, we performed a Least-Significant Difference test for multiple comparisons between means ($p < .05$), with the six cells of our design as the independent variable. The subscripts in Table 3.1 show the results of this test. Findings of this test replicate the simple main effect results reported earlier and also show that participants in the uncertainty salience condition showed higher outcome affect with the advantageous outcome than the participants who received this outcome in the television salience condition. Moreover, outcome had an effect only in the uncertainty salience condition. When uncertainty was salient, both advantageous and equal outcomes led to more positive affect than the disadvantageous outcome condition ($p < .001$ and $p < .05$, respectively). Participants in the

uncertainty salient condition were also marginally more positive about the advantageous outcome than about the equal outcome (*p* < .07).

## Discussion

The results show that when participants had thought of they being uncertain, they reacted more positively to being paid more than other participants than when they had thought of they watching television. As personal uncertainty constitutes self-threatening information (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002), this suggests that a threat to the self makes people more positive about the unfair situation of being better off than other people. This supports *Hypothesis 1*.

Similar to prior findings of uncertainty salience effects on reactions to fair and unfair procedures (Van den Bos, 2001), we also expected to find stronger reactions to the equal outcome and to the disadvantageous outcome in the uncertainty salient condition, compared to the control condition. We did not obtain these effects in Study 3.1. This may be caused by the fact that we included an outcome manipulation in this experiment and not a procedural fairness manipulation (Van den Bos, 2001). The undeniable noise present in the field experiment in the middle of a shopping centre also may have contributed to the fact that the results of Study 3.1 did not show effects of the salience manipulation in the equal and the disadvantageous conditions.

Furthermore, personal uncertainty may not be the strongest threat to the self as people encounter many uncertainties in their everyday lives. We argue here that having others think negatively about you may be a stronger self-threat, as people strongly favor to receive positive feedback on the self (Baumeister, 1998). In Study 3.2 we used this latter operationalization of self-threat. Furthermore, we conducted Study 3.2 in a controlled research environment, the laboratory.

## **Study 3.2**

### Method

*Participants and Design.* Ninety-two students (25 men and 67 women) at Leiden University

participated in the experiment. They were between 17 and 27 years of age, with a mean age of almost 20 years (*SD* = 2 years and 1 month). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions of the 2 (self-threat: present vs. absent) x 3 (outcome: equal vs. advantageous unequal vs. disadvantageous unequal) between-subjects design. Participants were paid 4.50 Euros for their participation.

*Experimental Procedure.* On arrival at the laboratory, participants were led to separate cubicles, each of which contained a personal computer. All instructions were given by means of the computer. The experiment was presented as two unrelated studies. In the first study, the self-threat manipulation was induced. Following Miedema et al. (2006), participants in the self-threat conditions were asked to write down on a piece of paper their answers to the questions: (1) "Please briefly describe the thoughts and feelings that arise in you when you think of other people judging you in a very negative way" and (2) "Please briefly describe the thoughts and feelings that arise in you when you think of an actual situation in which you were judged very negatively." In the no-threat condition participants did not read or answer these questions. All participants then completed the PANAS (PA alpha = .82; NA alpha = .82).

After completing the PANAS, the first study ended and the second study started. In this study, participants were asked to imagine the following situation (cf. Van den Bos, Wilke, Lind, & Vermunt, 1998):

> In the near future, you are going to live in a new rental house. The rent of this house is yet to be determined. To decide on the rent, each individual tenant has to appear before a rent tribunal. The rent tribunal will decide on the monthly rent that you will have to pay. To determine his rent, your neighbor who will rent a similar house, also has to appear before the rent tribunal. You appear before the rent tribunal.

This was followed by the manipulation of outcome. Participants read the sentence (manipulated information in italics):

> A week later, you are informed that the rent you will have to pay is 500 Euros. Your neighbor will pay *500 / 750 / 250* Euros.

After this, we asked participants how fair (1 = *very unfair*, 7 = *very fair*) and just (1 = *very*

*unjust*, 7 = *very just*) they thought their rent was. The answers to these two questions formed a reliable outcome fairness scale (alpha = .98). Participants were then asked the same affect items as in Study 3.1 (alpha = .93). After answering these questions, participants were debriefed, paid, and thanked for their participation.

## Results

*PANAS Findings.* A 2 x 3 MANOVA on participants' PANAS scores showed no significant effects at either the multivariate level or the univariate levels. Thus, differences in affective states as a result of the salience manipulation cannot explain the findings reported here. Overall means of the positive and negative subsets were 2.8 ($SD$ = 0.6) and 1.3 ($SD$ = 0.4), respectively.

*Outcome Fairness Judgments.* A 2 x 3 ANOVA on participants' outcome fairness judgments showed a main effect of the outcome manipulation only, $F(2, 86) = 58.45$, $p < .001$. Participants judged the equal outcome to be more fair ($M$ = 5.63, $SD$ = 1.23) than the advantageous outcome ($M$ = 3.45, $SD$ = 1.97), $F(1, 90) = 19.51$, $p < .001$, and the advantageous outcome was judged to be more fair than the disadvantageous outcome ($M$ = 1.61, $SD$ = 1.04), $F(1, 90) = 12.67$, $p < .01$. The main effect of the threat manipulation and the interaction effect were not significant, both $F$s < 1.

*Outcome Affect.* A 2 x 3 ANOVA on the affect ratings yielded a main effect of the outcome manipulation, $F(2, 86) = 112.31$, $p < .001$, and the predicted interaction effect, $F(2, 86) = 12.09$, $p < .001$. Table 3.2 reports the means and standard deviations. As predicted, participants reacted more positively to the advantageous outcome under conditions of self-threat than under non-threatening conditions, $F(1, 86) = 35.23$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, participants reacted more positively to the equal outcome under conditions of self-threat than under non-threatening conditions, $F(1, 86) = 8.02$, $p < .01$. We also obtained a marginally significant effect of the threat manipulation in the disadvantageous outcome condition, suggesting that participants tended to react more negatively to the

disadvantageous outcome under conditions of self-threat than under non-threatening conditions, $F(1, 86) = 3.29$, $p = .07$.

We also analyzed whether the affect ratings replicated the effects reported by Miedema et al. (2006). Specifically, we expected an interaction between our self-threat manipulation (threat vs. no threat) and a vector that contrasted the equal and disadvantageous outcome conditions. This analysis showed a main effect of the outcome vector, $F(1, 88) = 122.44$, $p < .001$, revealing that participants reacted more positively when they received the equal outcome than when they received the disadvantageous unequal outcome. This effect was qualified by the predicted interaction between the threat manipulation and the outcome vector, $F(1, 88) = 4.23$, $p < .05$, showing that the outcome effect was stronger in the self-threat condition, $F(1, 90) = 60.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .40$, than in the no-threat condition, $F(1, 90) = 18.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$. These findings replicate the results reported by Miedema et al. (2006) and show that participants' affective reactions to equal versus disadvantageous unequal outcomes tended to be twice as large when their selves had (as opposed to had not) been threatened.

Table 3.2

*Means and Standard Deviations of Outcome Affect as a Function of Self-Threat and Outcome*

| | Outcome | | | | | |
| | Advantageous | | Equal | | Disadvantageous | |
| Self-threat | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Present | 5.9$_a$ | 0.7 | 5.7$_a$ | 0.8 | 2.2$_b$ | 0.9 |
| Absent | 4.2$_d$ | 0.6 | 5.0$_c$ | 1.0 | 2.6$_b$ | 1.0 |

*Note.* Means are on 7-point scales, with higher values indicating more positive levels of perceived outcome affect. Means with no subscripts in common differ significantly ($p < .05$), as indicated by a least significant difference test for multiple comparisons between means.

Finally, we performed a Least-Significant Difference test for multiple comparisons between means ($p < .05$), with the six cells of our design as the independent variable. The subscripts in Table 3.2 show the results. Findings of this test replicate the simple main effect results reported earlier and also show that within the no-threat condition, ratings of affect were higher in the equal outcome condition than in the advantageous outcome condition, and were higher in the advantageous outcome condition than in the disadvantageous outcome condition. This pattern of means is in accordance with findings obtained in previous equity studies (Van den Bos et al., 2006). In the self-threat conditions, however, ratings of affect were as positive in the advantageous condition as in the equal outcome condition, and both advantageous and equal outcomes led to more positive affective reactions than ratings in the disadvantageous outcome condition.

## General Discussion

In accordance with *Hypothesis 1*, and in contrast with *Hypothesis 1 alt*, the findings of our two studies support the view that people may show more positive affective reactions following arrangements of advantageous inequity under conditions of self-threat than under non-threatening conditions.

Advantageous inequity has received wide attention from social psychologists and fairness researchers (Adams, 1965), but the mixed-motive quality of these kinds of outcome arrangements (Jacques, 1961) has received relatively little empirical attention. Our findings reveal that people may respond more positively, and not more negatively, following advantageous inequity under conditions of self-threat.

Thus, studying reactions to advantageous inequity when people's selves have been threatened suggests that self-threats do not make fairness concerns always more important as, for example, Miedema et al. (2006) argued, but fairness considerations may become subordinate to the inclination to enhance the self. In other words, when reacting to advantageous inequity under conditions of self-threat, the enjoyment that people may derive from adhering to fairness principles may give way to the more immediate positive self-

affirmation that receiving a relatively good outcome entails (Van den Bos et al., 2006). The findings reported in this chapter are in accordance with this line of reasoning.

One noteworthy aspect of our findings is that in both studies a reliable interaction effect of our manipulations was found on affective ratings and not on outcome fairness judgments. One explanation for this consistent finding may be that affective measures may be more susceptible for tapping interaction effects between fairness and salience manipulations (Miedema et al., 2006). Future research may want to investigate the difference and overlap between outcome affect ratings and outcome fairness judgments. For now, we conclude that our results underline that fairness and affect are different concepts. Future research may also examine differences in affective reactions to advantageous inequity. For example, we did not find different responses on our positive and negative affect items and future research may be set up to sort out when differential responses are to be found. Furthermore, it has often been suggested that advantageous inequity yields feelings of guilt among participants. Recent research findings by Peters (2005) indicate, however, that when people are overpaid they may experience feelings of uneasiness, not guilt; a finding that is in line with Jacques' (1961) conceptualization of the psychology of advantageous inequity. More research is needed to examine the differences between different types of affective feelings experienced when being better off than others.

In the current studies we used rather subtle manipulations of self-threat, by having participants think about self-threatening situations. Although this way of inducing self-threat strongly influenced the reactions to the different outcomes participants received, we did not check whether the self-threat manipulations really had the intended effect. Subtle manipulations are difficult to check, as is illustrated by the fact that research most frequently does not report manipulation checks of salience manipulations (e.g., Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, & Wilke, 2002). The difficulty to check whether salience manipulations really induce the obtained effects may also be the reason that these salience manipulations in general also do not show any effects on measures of mood or affect, as demonstrated by research on mortality salience (e.g., Greenberg, Simon, Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Chatel, 1992) as well as the current findings.

The findings of both experiments reported here support our reasoning that self-threats lead people to choose self-interest instead of fairness. We emphasize again that the findings of our field experiment (Study 3.1) were less strong than we had hoped for. As the more realistic outcome manipulation in this field experiment should entail a more arousing situation compared to the scenario used in Study 3.2, it is remarkable that the different affective reactions to the different outcomes in Study 3.1 did not reach significance when self-threat was absent. The findings of Study 3.2 show the pattern generally found in equity research (Peters, 2005). Therefore, we expected to find more positive reactions to the equal outcome than to advantageous inequity, and more positive reactions to the latter outcome than to disadvantageous inequity in the no self-threat condition in Study 3.1. Although the means in Study 3.1 do show the expected pattern, the noise in this field experiment may have had the strongest influence when participants were not occupied with self-threat concerns. This being said, and admitting that several external influences may have been present in the field experiment, the findings of both Studies 3.1 and 3.2 do support our prediction on the effect of focal interest here: People react more positively to advantageous inequity under self-threatening conditions. We argue that testing this effect both in a controlled lab setting and in an involving experiment closer to everyday life enhances the confidence in the current findings.

We would like to argue that the consistent findings in Studies 3.1 and 3.2 are even more interesting. Although the reactions to advantageous inequity were strongly influenced by self-threat, in both experiments self-threat did not influence the reactions to the disadvantageous inequity. This may indicate that self-threat triggers motivational processes focused on positive self-affirmation. Possibly, self-threat does not lead to more sensitivity for self-related information in general, but only for information that provides an opportunity for self-affirmation. Equitable treatment arguably is more self-affirmative than being treated in a disadvantageous way, consistent with the findings of Miedema et al (2006). Another situation of self-affirmation is being treated better than others. Although this treatment is judged as less fair than an equal treatment, people tend to react as positively to advantageous inequity as to an equitable outcome when in need of this self-affirmation (e.g.,

when experiencing self-threat).

As the current findings suggest that threats to the self play an important role in reactions to fair and unfair treatments, it will be highly interesting to focus future research on the precise cognitive and motivational processes underlying self-threat effects. This will also help to come to better insights into the mechanisms underlying these reactions when self-threats are absent. It may, for example, be possible that it is the self-threat that makes people act more egocentrically, but also that the absence of self-threat reduces this egocentricity.

*Conclusions*

We explored the conflict people may experience between self-interest and fairness concerns by studying people's affective reactions to arrangements of advantageous inequity under conditions of self-threat versus no self-threat. Building on the social psychology of the self, we predicted and found that people respond more positively, not more negatively, to arrangements of advantageous inequity under conditions of self-threat than under conditions that are not threatening to people's selves. These findings may advance social psychologists' understanding of the fascinating interplay between self-interest and fairness concerns: When people's selves have been threatened, fairness may not matter more to people, as Miedema et al. (2006) concluded, but people may react more strongly to those aspects of treatment that are favorable or unfavorable for themselves. Our findings thus suggest that Confucius thoughts should be revised as follows:

*The mind of the superior man may be conversant with righteousness;*

*the mind of the threatened man is conversant with gain.*

**Chapter 4**

**A Self-Regulation Hypothesis of Coping With an Unjust World**

The world is full of contradictions and paradoxes. The tendency of people to believe that their world is a just place seems to be contrasting this view, but perhaps entails most of all a good illustration of it. People generally seem to have a need to Belief in a Just World (BJW), in which every person gets what he or she deserves (e.g., Lerner, 1977). BJW is a specific system of beliefs about the world. It satisfies at least two important human needs: the need for a consistent, predictable world and the need for a positive, benevolent world (Park & Folkman, 1997). Perhaps most important is the promise of deservingness in BJW that reflects a fundamental psychological confidence in the ultimate reward of all the investments that people make (Callan, Shead, & Olson, 2008; Hafer, 2000b). It is this confidence that enables people to focus on long term goals instead of immediate gain and to have them behave according to societal norms and values instead of following their impulses, which in essence are the foundations of modern society (Hafer, 2000b).

When new information about the world is incongruent with this worldview, people are thus motivated to perceive this new information in a biased way or to reinterpret this information to decrease the incongruence of this new information with prior beliefs. This biased processing of information to protect people's self-worth–as it shields people from the conclusion that their beliefs or actions were misguided—is referred to as a defensive process (Sherman & Cohen, 2002). Research on BJW has frequently demonstrated that people react in such defensive ways to BJW threatening information. For example, when people see themselves confronted with an unjust situation like the rape of an young girl, people tend to blame the innocent victim for her ill fate. Blaming the victim helps to defend the BJW by

---

This chapter is based on Loseman & Van den Bos (2011).

taking care of the reinterpretation of the cause of the crime, thereby cognitively restoring justice and solving the BJW threat.

Because not all situations are equally incongruent with the BJW, the severity of the BJW threat may differ between situations as a consequence of the perceived level of justice prevalence. For example, in the situation of rape crime, having the perpetrator caught leads to higher perceptions of justice prevalence compared to when the perpetrator has not been caught (Hafer, 2000a). Furthermore, when the perpetrator has been caught, people tend to blame the innocent victim to a lesser extent than when the perpetrator has not been caught (Hafer, 2000a). Thus, varying whether a perpetrator has been caught or not is a good way to induce low versus high threats to people's BJW, and we will use these inductions in the two studies we will report here.

In social justice research, blaming innocent victims is a familiar phenomenon and a remarkable paradox, as it has especially been shown by people who are highly concerned with justice (Montada & Lerner, 1998). From an outsiders perspective, it may be clear that these typical reactions actually contribute to a more unjust world. The secondary victimization of being blamed by others may have many negative consequences for a victim (e.g., Campbell & Raja, 1999; Campbell & Raja, 2005; Campbell et al., 1999; Pollard, 1992). The generally low report level of rape suggests that victims indeed seem to avoid secondary victimization, which indicates that blaming reactions constitute a serious societal problem (e.g., Stahl, Eek, & Kazemi, 2010).

It may be clear that blaming an innocent victim is not a highly social desirable response to a rape crime. In general, people are very motivated to appear like reasonable creatures who behave consistently with social norms and values and blaming innocent victims is not one of them. In correspondence with this view, Lerner (1980) defined blaming as a nonrational strategy—contrasting rational strategies—people use to preserve a BJW. Especially nonrational defense strategies have been the focus of research on BJW (e.g., Hafer & Bègue, 2005) as they are strong examples of how motivated people are to maintain their Just World beliefs. For example, the tendency of people to blame innocent victims seems to illustrate the severity of the threat these people experience. Severe threats like these are

likely to evoke strong aversive thoughts and emotions and therefore to involve processes of thought regulation and emotion regulation (Gailliot, Schmeichel, & Baumeister, 2006). It is likely to assume that a threat to the BJW stands for such a strong aversive experience because it may undermine the confidence in the mere structure of one's life, thereby essentially being a threat to the self (Cohen, Aronson, & Steele, 2000; Gailliot et al., 2006; Hafer, 2000b). Regulating the unwanted thoughts and emotions that are triggered by these significant threats involve processes of self-regulation (Gailliot et al., 2006).

Following the above line of reasoning, we would like to suggest that dealing with threats to the BJW constitutes a self-regulation process. This means that when self-regulation is impaired, the aversive threat experience will continue, making it inevitable to regulate the threat in a more awkward way, by blaming an innocent victim. On the other hand, when self-regulation is facilitated, the threat will be regulated more easily, which removes the urge to blame an innocent victim. To test these presumptions and study the self-regulation involved in the dealing with BJW threats, we will need to study the impairment and facilitation of self-regulation.

Processes of self-regulation need self-regulation resources (Baumeister, Bratlavski, Muraven, & Tice, 1998), which means that shortcomings in the availability of these resources lead to the insufficient functioning of self-regulation processes. The state in which self-regulation resources are depleted, is known as ego-depletion (Baumeister et al., 1998). Research on ego-depletion typically tests the effect of performing one self-regulation task on performance of any subsequent task which involves self-regulation (e.g., Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005). This effect entails that ego-depletion (by means of an earlier self-regulation task) impairs following processes of self-regulation.

It is also important to note that the effect of ego-depletion can be counteracted by so-called intervention strategies (Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009). One such psychological intervention is self-affirmation, basically the enhancement of the perceived integrity of the self (Koole, Smeets, Van Knippenberg, & Dijksterhuis, 1999; Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009; Steele, 1988). Self-affirmation has been shown to facilitate self-regulation in a whole range of different settings, like in cases of rumination (Koole et al., 1999), the challenge of one's

beliefs (Cohen, Aronson, & Steele, 2000), threatening health messages (Sherman, Nelson, & Steele, 2000) and mortality threat (Schmeichel & Martens, 2005). Therefore, both self-affirmation and ego-depletion seem to be appropriate factors to be used in a study on the self-regulation processes of dealing with threats to the BJW.

The current chapter focuses on the blaming of innocent victims following the BJW threatening information of a rape crime. We presume that dealing with BJW threats involves self-regulation processes suggesting that self-regulation failure leads to the blaming of innocent victims. We will study the effect of impairment (by means of ego-depletion; Study 4.1) and facilitation (by means of self-affirmation; Study 4.2) of self-regulation of a BJW threat that is either high (perpetrator not caught) or low (perpetrator caught) on the blaming of an innocent victim. We hypothesize that ego-depletion will lead to the amplification of the blaming of the rape victim: Blaming reactions will be stronger when the threat is high compared to when the threat is low. We also hypothesize that self-affirmation will have a diminishing effect on the blaming of the rape victim: The difference in blaming reactions when the threat is high compared to when the threat is low will attenuate.

In accordance with research on ego-depletion (e.g., Gailliot et al., 2006) and self-affirmation (e.g., Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009), the two studies focus on different parts of the self-regulation process. In Study 4.1, ego-depletion will be induced before the BJW threatening information. In Study 4.2, self-affirmation of the self-regulation process will be induced after the BJW threatening information. In Study 4.2 we will examine our predictions in a student sample and Study 4.1 we will test our the predictions in a non-student population.

**Study 4.1**

Method

*Participants and Design.* One-hundred-and-twelve passers-by (51 men and 61 women, with ages varying between 18 and 57 years and with a mean age of 28 years and 4 months, SD = 9 years and 11 months) in the city centre of Rotterdam participated in the study. They

were randomly assigned to one of the four groups of our 2 (ego-depletion: high vs. low) x 2 (BJW threat: high vs. low) factorial design.

*Experimental Procedure*. Passers-by in the city centre of Rotterdam were asked whether they were willing to participate in two ostensibly unrelated studies. The first study was introduced as a study on language processing. Next, ego-depletion was manipulated using the manipulation developed by Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister (1998) by instructing the participants to cross out all letters "e" in a statistical text. Participants had to do the same in a second statistical text in the low ego-depletion condition. In the high ego-depletion condition, participants were instructed that instead of just crossing out the letters "e" in the second text, they had only to cross out the letters "e" when they did not stand next to another vowel or were separated of another vowel by just one consonant.

Next, the second study started, which was introduced as a study on perceptions of media information. Participants read a newspaper article that ostensibly was published that same day in a local newspaper. Participants who said to know the newspaper article or to be familiar with the news in another way were excluded from the data analyses.[2] The article described an assault of a student named Marieke with an age of 24 years old at the University of Rotterdam and the assault took place in the city centre of Rotterdam. BJW threat was manipulated following Hafer (2000a) by stating that the perpetrator had been arrested (low BJW threat) or not (high BJW threat).

After reading this newspaper article, dependent variables were measured by asking the participants to what extent they thought that what happened to Marieke had been caused by how she behaved (1 = *very weakly*, 7 = *very strongly*), Marieke was to blame to what had happened to her (1 = *very weakly*, 7 = *very strongly*), Marieke had behaved in her

---

[2] Although it was not possible that participants really were familiar with this news report—as it was a fake report—the idea that they knew it and had associations with it, may have affected their responses to the information. Therefore, we decided to exclude these participants from the data-analyses.

situation irresponsibly (1 = *very weakly*, 7 = *very strongly*), Marieke had behaved very carelessly (1 = *very weakly*, 7 = *very strongly*), and to what extent they felt sorry for Marieke (1 = *very weakly*, 7 = *very strongly*). After recoding the answers to the last question, participants' answers to these five questions were averaged to a reliable scale of victim blaming (alpha = .77).

The manipulation of BJW threat was checked by asking the participants to what extent they thought justice had prevailed in the situation described in the newspaper article (1 = *very weakly*, 7 = *very strongly*). Finally, participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

## Results

*Justice Prevalence*. A 2 x 2 analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the manipulation check of BJW threat with ego-depletion and BJW threat as independent variables and the perceived justice prevalence as dependent variable showed a main effect of BJW threat only, $F(1, 108) = 23.26$, $p < .001$. Participants judged the situation in which the perpetrator had been arrested as a situation in which justice had prevailed to a higher extent ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 1.74$) than the situation in which the perpetrator had not been arrested ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.48$). This showed that the manipulation of BJW threat was successful.

*Victim Blaming.* A 2 x 2 ANOVA with ego-depletion and BJW threat as independent variables and victim blaming as dependent variable showed a main effect of BJW threat, $F(1, 108) = 6.44$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. This main effect of BJW threat was qualified by the predicted interaction effect, $F(1, 108) = 8.46$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4.I. As expected, there was a significant effect of BJW threat when participants were in the high ego-depletion condition, $F(1, 109) = 14.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$. Thus, after performing the difficult "e" crossing task, participants blamed the victim more when the perpetrator had not been arrested than when the perpetrator had been arrested. In the low ego-depletion condition there was no significant difference in blaming the victim

between the low threat and the high threat condition, $F < 1$. We will get back to this finding in the Discussion.

There was also a simple main effect of ego-depletion in the high threat condition, $F(1, 109) = 4.83$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Thus, when the perpetrator had not been arrested, participants blamed the victim more when they performed the difficult "e" crossing task than when they performed the more simple "e" crossing task. When the perpetrator had been arrested however, there was only a marginally significant simple main effect of ego-depletion, $F(1, 109) = 3.14$, $p = .079$.

Table 4.I

*Victim Blaming as Influenced by BJW Threat and Ego-Depletion*

|  | Low BJW Threat | | High BJW Threat | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Low Ego-Depletion | 2.07$_a$ | 0.90 | 2.01$_a$ | 1.03 |
| High Ego-Depletion | 1.66$_a$ | 0.65 | 2.62$_b$ | 1.08 |

Note. Means are on 7-point scales, with higher values indicating higher levels of blaming. Means with no subscripts in common differ significantly (p < .05), as indicated by a least significant difference test for multiple comparisons between means.

## Discussion

Our first study shows that when regulation resources were depleted, participants blamed the innocent victim more when the perpetrator had not been arrested than when the perpetrator had been arrested. When the threat to the BJW was higher, they showed stronger defensive reactions to this threat, showing they were less able to regulate this threat. When participants had enough resources left for self-regulation, they did not show these defensive reactions.

These results suggest that dealing with a threat to the BJW is a form of self-regulation which needs regulation resources. The results in the control condition—participants who were not highly depleted did not react more defensively when the BJW threat was higher— suggest that, amongst other explanations, it may very well be possible that the low ego-

depletion task (crossing out all letters "e" in a text) was so easy that participants felt really good about themselves. In this sense, the task may have been self-affirmative and may have facilitated self-regulation (e.g., Gailliot, Baumeister, & Mead, 2008). Perhaps, this self-regulation facilitation enabled participants to regulate the threat to such an extent that it disconnected the severity of the BJW threat with the urge to blame an innocent victim. We will go further into that in the General Discussion of the current chapter. What we would like to do now is to focus in Study 4.2 on the facilitation of the presumed self-regulation process of dealing with BJW threatening information by studying the effect of self-affirmation on blaming an innocent victim when the perpetrator had been arrested versus when he had not been arrested. We will conduct Study 4.2 in a student population to make the BJW threat even more relevant, as we expect students to identify stronger with the victim Maaike.

**Study 4.2**

Method

*Participants and Design*. One-hundred-and-twelve students at Utrecht University (66 men and 46 women) with ages varying between 17 and 27 years, with a mean age of nearly 21 years old (*SD* = 2 years and 1 month) participated in the study. They were randomly assigned to one of the four groups of our 2 (BJW threat: high vs. low) x 2 (self-affirmation: yes vs. control) factorial design.

*Experimental Procedure.* Participants were approached at the university campus and asked whether they would like to participate in a study on the perception of media information. They read a newspaper article that ostensibly was published that same day in a local newspaper. Participants who said to be familiar with the news were excluded from the data analyses.The article was similar to Study 4.1, except that the victim was a student named Maaike who lived in the city centre of Utrecht. BJW threat was again manipulated by stating in the article that the perpetrator had been arrested in the low threat condition and in the high threat condition that he had not been arrested yet.

After reading the newspaper article, participants were told that before answering some questions about this article, they would first do a distraction task. At this moment the manipulation of self-affirmation was induced. In the self-affirmation condition, participants were asked to write down three positive characteristics of themselves. In the control condition, participants were asked to write down three brands of detergent. After this, dependent variables were measured by asking the participants the same questions as in Study 4.1. Participants' answers on these items were again averaged to a reliable scale of victim blaming (alpha = .79). The manipulation of BJW threat was checked in the same way as in Study 4.1, namely by asking the participants to what extent they thought justice had prevailed in the situation described in the newspaper article (1 = *very weakly*, 7 = *very strongly*). Finally, participants were debriefed and thanked for participation.

## Results

*Justice Prevalence*. A 2 x 2 ANOVA on the manipulation check of BJW threat with self-affirmation and BJW threat as independent variables and perceived justice prevalence as dependent variable showed a main effect of BJW threat, $F(1, 108) = 15.09$, $p < .001$. Participants judged the situation in which the perpetrator had been arrested as a situation in which justice had prevailed to a higher extent ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.93$) than the situation in which the perpetrator had not been arrested ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 1.56$).[3] This showed that the manipulation of BJW threat was successful.

*Victim Blaming.* A 2 x2 ANOVA on the reactions on the victim scale revealed the expected interaction effect between BJW threat and self-affirmation, $F(1, 108) = 4.11$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Table 4.2 reports the appropriate means and standard deviations. Participants in the control condition showed the expected simple main effect of BJW threat, $F(1, 109) = 6.01$, $p < .05$,

---

[3] The low means for perceived justice prevalence suggest that we were successful in making the BJW threat more threatening. Fortunately, the coinciding smaller difference in means between the two situations was still significant.

$\eta_p^2$ = .05. When participants had listed three brands of detergent, participants blamed the victim significantly more when the perpetrator had not been arrested than when the perpetrator had been arrested. When participants had the opportunity to affirm themselves, however, this simple main effect of BJW threat on blaming the victim was statistically not significant. Self-affirmation caused no significant differences in victim blaming within the high and the low BJW threat conditions.

Table 4.2
*Victim blaming as influenced by BJW threat and self-affirmation*

|  | Low BJW threat | | High BJW threat | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Self-affirmation | $2.16_{ab}$ | 1.18 | $2.04_{ab}$ | 1.12 |
| No self-affirmation | $1.76_{a}$ | 0.87 | $2.46_{b}$ | 1.06 |

Note. Means are on 7-point scales, with higher values indicating higher levels of blaming. Means with no subscripts in common differ significantly ($p < .05$), as indicated by a least significant difference test for multiple comparisons between means.

## General Discussion

Two studies have been conducted to test the presumption that coping with a threat to the belief that the world is a just place constitutes a self-regulation process. Participants were confronted with a reported event of an innocent young woman who fell victim of a rape crime, which generally entails a threat to the idea that in this world everybody gets what he or she deserves. The results of the current studies demonstrated that when self-regulation resources were depleted, participants tended to blame the innocent victim more for her ill fate when the situation constituted a stronger threat to the BJW (i.e., the perpetrator had not been caught) compared to when this BJW threat was a bit weaker (i.e., the perpetrator had been caught). Self-affirmation—known for facilitating self-regulation—caused the blaming of innocent victims to attenuate, leading participants not to blame the victim more when the BJW threat was higher. These results strongly support the idea of the self-

regulation basis of coping with BJW threats, showing both the impairment of self-regulation caused by ego-depletion as the facilitating role of self-affirmation.

Blaming the innocent victim of a rape crime is an extremely harmful reaction (e.g., Campbell & Raja, 1999, 2005; Campbell et al., 1999; Pollard, 1992) and also hard to understand when considering people's interest in justice (Lerner, 1977, 1980). The current research shows that these blaming reactions are related to self-regulation processes of dealing with threats to the BJW, which means that when people are less able to regulate the BJW threat, they have a stronger urge to blame an innocent victim. The current findings are based on the impairment of the self-regulation process by means of ego-depletion, induced by performance on difficult tasks. This may suggest that irregularly, tired people may also be less able to regulate BJW threats and have stronger tendencies to blame innocent victims when experiencing a BJW threat. The general BJW effect on blaming has been shown in Study 4.2, and suggests that higher BJW threats have a higher risk of failed self-regulation. On the other hand, stronger BJW threats will not lead to more blaming of innocent victims when people are very well able to regulate these threats. Self-regulation processes can be facilitated by self-affirmation, which means that in general, people need a self-boost to prevent them from blaming innocent victims.

As we mentioned in the Discussion of Study 4.1, there was no effect of BJW threat on blaming in the low ego-depletion (i.e., control) condition. This is remarkable, because the blaming of an innocent victim is a frequently used measure of the experienced BJW threat, usually showing stronger blaming reactions when BJW threat is higher. There may be several possible explanations of the current deviation of this regular finding. Most important is the successful induction of BJW threat. We induced BJW threat by means of the manipulation of justice prevalence which is based on previous experimental research on BJW where it is considered to be also an effective manipulation of BJW threat (e.g., Hafer, 2000a). The current manipulation check shows that the manipulation had the intended effect by displaying that participants experienced the high BJW threat situation (perpetrator was not caught) as being less just compared to the low BJW threat situation (perpetrator was caught). Furthermore, Study 4.2 shows the predicted effects of BJW threat on blaming. Taken

together, there are no clear indications of an unsuccessful BJW threat induction. It may therefore be interesting to consider the manipulation of low ego-depletion instead. We could suggest that this task (crossing out all "e's" in a text) can be seen as a relatively easy achievement task, which may implicate that participants used this task for self-affirmation. However, the particular task was not administered after the induction of BJW threat, like the self affirmation manipulation in Study 4.2, but instead before the BJW threat, to enable comparisons with the high ego-depletion condition.

Because research on self-affirmation research is not completely consistent in the sequence of manipulations in the self-regulation process to be studied (e.g., Koole et al., 1999, induced self-affirmation before the self-regulation task), it is possible that our manipulation of low ego-depletion manipulation may have had a self-affirmative effect and facilitated the process of dealing with a threat to the BJW threat. Possibly, this may explain the absence of any effects of BJW effect on blaming reactions in the low ego-depletion condition. Since research on ego-depletion typically compares the means in the low ego-depletion condition with the means in the high ego-depletion condition, the study by Muraven et al. (1998), which originally used the current ego-depletion manipulation, cannot clarify possible self-affirming aspects of the low ego-depletion manipulation task. However, other possible explanations for the current results in the low ego-depletion condition remain, like the possibility that the specific manipulation task may have distracted the participants from the BJW threatening information. Participants in the low ego-depletion condition had to execute the same task twice, which may have felt strange for participants and triggered processes of sense making, distracting participants from the subsequent BJW threatening information. Of course, all of these explanations are highly speculative and future research is needed to come to further insights into the implementation of ego-depletion manipulations in BJW research.

The current research provides first support for the blaming of innocent victims as a consequence of the preceding self-regulation processes of dealing with BJW threat. A next step that future research may take may be to get more detailed insights in what part of the coping process is being measured. For example, it may be possible that self-regulation is

involved mainly in controlling people's reactions to the BJW threatening situation instead of reducing the urge of these reactions by regulating the threat. Social goals like doing well or impression management occupy self-regulation resources (Gailliot et al., 2008; Vohs et al., 2005) and the expression of social undesirable reactions (e.g., the blaming of an innocent victim) only takes place when people do not have access to resources needed to override the tendency to express these reactions. However, people regularly do so, as the blaming of innocent victims have been frequently measured in BJW research (e.g., Hafer & Bègue, 2005). We think this may be explained by the depletion of self-regulation resources as a consequence of the self-regulation process of dealing with threats to the BJW. This means that when people just have dealt with a BJW threat they will be less able to self-control and inhibit possible blaming reactions.

Furthermore, we would like to suggest that the success of self-regulation determines whether there is an urge to blame an innocent victim and whether people will show these blaming reactions. In case of self-regulation failure, for example when no self-regulation resources are available due to ego-depletion or when the threat is too high, people will blame innocent victims. However, when self-regulation is successful, for example when it is facilitated by self-affirmation, there will be no need left for blaming and people will not blame innocent victims. Not only ego-depletion or self-affirmation determine the failure or success of self-regulation. Different kinds of BJW inconsistent information may trigger different levels of BJW threat. These different BJW threats will then lead to different regulation processes and occupy different degrees of self-regulation resources. In short, some BJW threats are strong and will lead to depletion and in case of self-regulation failure to the blaming of innocent victims. Some BJW threats are weaker and will not lead to depletion and will not have innocent victims being blamed for their ill fate. The stronger the BJW threat, the greater the challenge of regulating the threat, the more self-regulation resources are needed and the higher the chance people tend to blame innocent victims. This theorizing needs to be investigated in future research.

The current research used ego-depletion and self-affirmation in rather straightforward ways, as the factors that impair and facilitate self-regulation. However, self-

affirmation seems to have interesting characteristics besides the facilitation of self-regulation. While ego-depletion seems to do what it has been suggested to do, namely the depletion of self-regulation resources, self-affirmation is the counterpart of ego-depletion in facilitating self-regulation, but seems not to be just the replenishment of depleted resources (Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009). One of the effects of self-affirmation that may come closest to the definition of self-affirmation is the presumed enhancement of self-competence that lowers personal threat, supported by findings showing that self-affirmation leads to a more objective—instead of defensive—perception of threatening health messages (Correll, Spencer, & Zanna, 2004). In line with this, self-affirmation also leads to lower worldview defense and even mortality salience (Schmeichel & Martens, 2005), providing support for our idea that, in the current research, self-affirmation is mainly involved in dealing with BJW threatening information and not in simply enhancing self-control over people's blaming reactions. However, most interesting for the current purposes is the idea that self-affirmation promotes higher-level or abstract mental construals that helps to overcome concrete problems by focusing on more abstract and long-term goals (Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009). The BJW seems to resemble such an abstract mental construal as it consists of the beliefs about deservingness and the value of attaining to long-term goals. Schmeichel & Vohs (2009) argue that self-affirmation may help people shift from a focus on a concrete threat triggered by a specific situation (e.g., a rape crime) to a focus on more abstract values and goals in life, and that this shift helps them to overcome the threat. Future research is needed to shed more light on the precise role that self-affirmation may play in dealing with BJW threats and in the blaming of innocent victims.

The self-regulation basis of dealing with BJW threats further illustrate the importance of BJW in people's lives. As Lerner (1980) convincingly argued, people seem to be highly concerned with justice. However, whether this justice refers to objective, non self-related issues or whether it mainly involves issues related to the self, has been an ongoing debate (e.g., Ham & Van den Bos, 2008). The current studies aim to support a self-related standpoint by showing that self-regulation processes are involved in dealing with a threat to the BJW. These findings suggest that situations that confront people with BJW inconsistent

information, reminding them of an unjust world, are experienced as threats and may trigger aversive thoughts and emotions. Furthermore, the need to maintain the BJW seems to be high, just like the urge to get rid of threat related thoughts and emotions may be, which ultimately may override social goals like not blaming innocent victims. In line with this reasoning, and based on the current findings as well as on previous BJW research, it may be a firm conclusion that the BJW is very important to the self.

The tremendous amount of BJW research done for over the last decades may serve as an illustration of people's fascination with justice. However, it is this justice that also seems to facilitate terrible misery, like the blaming of innocent victims (Hafer, 2000a). This triggers the question whether BJW really stems from sincere justice concerns. BJW may be mainly important for people because of self-relevant reasons like the justification for how they organised their lives in modern society (Hafer, 2000b). Indeed, it may be argued that it is desirably for society when people focus on long term goals instead of immediate gain and to behave according to societal norms and values instead of following their impulses. BJW provides people the fundamental confidence that they and others will be rewarded for their investments as all people ultimately get what they deserve (Hafer, 2000b).

Threatening this confidence, for example by BJW inconsistent information, means threatening the arrangement of one's whole life. As this is clearly undesirable, people may be strongly motivated to protect their Just World beliefs. In short, it may be possible that BJW mainly serves as the confidence that people need to focus on long-term goals and that self-regulation processes are the mechanisms by which people may hold on to this confidence as well as by which the long-term goals can be attained (Carver & Scheier, 1981).

## Conclusions

In the current chapter we introduced a self-regulation perspective on dealing with threats to the BJW. We argued that because BJW defensive reactions are regularly shown even when they are social undesirable, BJW must be very important to people. In general, the regulation of significant threats involve self-regulation processes and may be affected by the factors involved in such processes. Two studies have supported the self-regulation basis of dealing

with BJW threats by showing that ego-depletion leads to the amplification of the blaming of an innocent victim of a rape crime while self-affirmation leads to the attenuation of the blaming of this innocent victim. The current findings may help people to deal with BJW threats and to overcome the harmful blaming of innocent victims by making them aware of the process, the impairing role of ego-depletion and the facilitating role of self-affirmation. In the end, this would make the world more just than simply by believing in it.

**Chapter 5**

**General Discussion**

> "Society exists only as a mental concept;
>
> in the real world there are only individuals."

- Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900)

The aim of the current thesis was to provide insights into the self-related aspects involved in reactions to fairness-related situations. To do this, the research focused on the underlying, fundamental processes of fairness reactions. Three empirical lines of research demonstrated that processes of fairness reactions are self-related processes, being related to the individual self (Chapter 2), influenced by self-related concerns (Chapter 3), and guided by self-regulation (Chapter 4). I will first present an overview of the main findings of the three specific lines of research and formulate a self-related perspective on fairness reactions. Then, I will discuss some theoretical implications and directions for future research and discuss my ideas on the societal implications of these findings.

**Overview of the Main Findings**

*The Individualistic Nature of Procedural Fairness Reactions*

In the current study on the self-related processes of fairness reactions, I took a first step by focusing on the involvement of the individual self and the social self in reactions to fair and unfair procedures. I assumed the individual self to be stronger involved than the social self in reactions to fairness-related situations. I grounded this assumption on the ideas that fairness

provides self-relevant information and that people are mainly concerned with their individual selves. Because the need for self-information is likely to be stronger in conditions in which self-related cognitions are especially accessible or salient (Stapel & Koomen, 2001), I hypothesized that in fairness-related situations the individual self would be stronger activated than the social self. In situations of experiencing fair and unfair treatment, this should imply that when the self is salient this instigates more attention to the perceived fairness of treatment as this constitutes a source of self-relevant information (Van den Bos, Miedema, Vermunt, & Zwenk, 2011).

Earlier studies already demonstrated that activation of the individual self may cause an amplification of fairness reactions (Van den Bos, Miedema, Vermunt, & Zwenk, 2011; Van Prooijen & Zwenk, 2009). The results of Study 2.1 demonstrated this involvement of the self in fairness experiences by showing that when people are treated fairly (by having the opportunity to voice their opinions about an upcoming decision), the individual self became stronger activated than the social self. This was also found when the treatment was unfair (i.e., when voice was denied), although the discrepancy between activation of the individual self and activation of the social self seemed to increase. Compared to a procedure unrelated to fairness issues (i.e., a neutral procedure condition), activation of the individual self increased when fair and unfair procedures were experienced while the social self decreased in activation. The results of this first study supported the assumption that the working self-concept in fairness experiences is the individual self and not the social self.

In Study 2.2 I took a next step in studying this role of the individual self in fairness reactions by investigating the boundary conditions of these self-activation effects. It is important in this matter that the procedures used in Study 2.1 were directed at the individual person. Because this individual level of treatment is most frequently used in procedural fairness research (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002; Van Prooijen & Zwenk, 2009) the approach of people as individuals may be a boundary condition for the individual self to play a main role in procedural fairness experiences. Therefore, I treated the participants of Study 2.2 as group members or I treated them as individuals. Independently from this treatment category, I activated participants' social or individual selves. The results of Study 2.2 showed that in the

individual treatment condition, participants showed stronger affective reactions to the fair and unfair procedures when their individual selves had been activated than when their social selves had been activated. Furthermore, when participants were treated as members of their group, their fairness experiences were not affected significantly by either activation of the individual self or by activation of the social self. These results support the hypothesis that the typical self-activation effects are only present when people are treated as individuals.

Taken together, the results of Chapter 2 suggest that fairness experiences are driven by processes related to the individual self. Plausibly, people may use the perceived fairness of the way they are treated as a source of self-evaluation. Being respected by others provides information about the way others think about them. At a fundamental level, this information concerns their core self, and reflects how they should think about themselves as individuals. Thus, one possible implication of the findings of Studies 2.1 and 2.2 may be that fairness is not only important for people because of social reasons—by influencing people's perceptions of their standing in groups and their relationship with authorities (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992; Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, & Wilke, 2004, 2005)—but also by having consequences for individual aspects of people's lives.

*Self-Threat Influences the Response to Conflicts Between Self-Interest and Fairness*
Starting from the findings described in the foregoing line of research on the involvement of the individual self in procedural fairness reactions (Chapter 2), I specified the study of self-related processes and focused on one specific individual matter that is possibly related to fairness reactions. That is, based on the idea that fairness may be a suitable supplier of self-relevant information, as well as the finding that self-threatened people (e.g., in case of personal uncertainty) are more sensitive for fairness issues, the role of self-threat in reactions to being overpaid was investigated. In this way, I wanted to find out whether in this situation fairness reactions are really about abstract fairness values (in the case of Chapter 3, equity concerns) or about the feedback it provides on the self.

Because self-threatened people are more in need of self-enhancement (e.g., Vohs, Baumeister, Schmeichel, Twenge, Nelson, & Tice, 2008), I predicted that they would react

more positively to the unfair overpayment compared with non-self-threatened people. Study 3.1 indeed showed that when participants had thought of they being uncertain about themselves, they reacted more positively to being paid more than other participants than when they had thought of they watching television.

I further argued that people encounter many uncertainties in their everyday lives and that having others think negatively about them may be a stronger self-threat (as opposed to more general reminders of personal uncertainty), because people strongly favor to receive positive feedback on the self (Baumeister, 1998). In Study 3.2, therefore, I used this latter operationalization of self-threat. In accordance with my hypothesis, the findings of Study 3.2 support the view that people may show more positive affective reactions following arrangements of advantageous inequity under conditions of self-threat than under non-threatening conditions.

Thus, studying reactions to advantageous inequity when people's selves have been threatened suggests that self-threats do not make fairness concerns always more important as, for example, Miedema, Van den Bos, and Vermunt (2006) argued. That is, in case of experiencing overpayment, absolute fairness considerations may become subordinate to the inclination to enhance the self. In other words, when reacting to advantageous inequity under conditions of self-threat, the enjoyment that people may derive from adhering to fairness principles may give way to the more immediate positive self-affirmation that receiving a relatively good outcome entails (Van den Bos, Peters, Bobocel, & Ybema, 2006). Combined with earlier studies, and in line with the current findings described in Chapter 2, the results of Chapter 3 suggest that fairness and unfairness may provide self-relevant information, suited for means of self-enhancement, and driven by self-related concerns.

*Self-Regulation Processes of Coping With an Unjust World*

Having studied the self-related aspects of fairness reactions to fairness-related treatment (Chapter 2) and to fairness-related outcome (Chapter 3), it remains interesting whether reactions to the fate of others involve the self as well. The strong, irrational reactions to innocent victims (e.g., blaming them for their ill fate), suggest that threats to the Belief in a

Just World (BJW) have great impact on people and are possibly even experienced as threats to the self. Therefore, I decided to examine the self-regulation processes of coping with threats to the belief that the world is a just place.

Participants in two different studies were confronted with a reported event of an innocent young woman who fell victim of a rape crime, which generally entails a threat to the idea that in this world everybody gets what he or she deserves. In accordance with the idea that self-regulation processes need self-regulation resources, Study 4.1 showed that when these resources were depleted (i.e., ego-depletion), participants blamed an innocent victim more when the perpetrator had not been arrested (i.e., high BJW-threat) than when the perpetrator had been arrested (i.e., low BJW-threat). Thus, when the threat to the BJW was higher, participants showed stronger defensive reactions to this threat, suggesting they were less able to regulate this threat. In contrast, when resources were not depleted, participants did not show these defensive reactions.

In Study 4.2 I examined the facilitation of the presumed self-regulation process of dealing with BJW threatening information. Therefore, I studied the effect of self-affirmation on blaming an innocent victim when the perpetrator had been arrested versus when he had not been arrested. Self-affirmation—known for facilitating self-regulation—indeed caused the blaming of innocent victims to attenuate, leading participants not to blame the victim more when the BJW threat was higher. These results strongly support the idea of the self-regulation basis of coping with BJW threats, showing both the impairment of self-regulation caused by ego-depletion as the facilitating role of self-affirmation. In short, not only the reactions to fairness-related situations people find themselves in, but also the reactions to the fairness of another's fate seem to be driven by self-related processes.

*On the Self-Related Aspects of Fairness Reactions*

The three lines of research I have described in the current thesis consistently show that the self is involved in fairness processes. This involvement of self may display the plausible foundations for the subjective and individualistic character of fairness. It also demonstrates

the importance of fairness for people's lives, since they seem to need self-regulation to cope with injustices and need fairness to fulfill basic self-related needs.

One of the self-related processes that seems to fit the current findings on fairness reactions quite well, is the need for self-relevant information. Approaching fairness as driven by this specific need, stems from a combination of several findings in social psychology. First, people have several basic needs that relate to the self, like the need to know who they are (e.g., Baumeister, 1998; James, 1892/1963) and the need to think positively about themselves (e.g., Steele, 1988; Tesser, 1988, 2000). Next, this information is largely received by interacting or comparing oneself with others (e.g., Cooley, 1902; Festinger, 1954). The influence fairness seems to have on people's self-esteem and the different effects found on specific reactions and behaviors (like anti-normative behaviors), suggest that fairness-aspects of situations that people find themselves in have the impact of self-relevant feedback.

The other self-related process assumed to be involved in the current findings, is the process of self-regulation. Being confronted with unfairness sometimes entail severe threats to oneself. These threats are likely to evoke strong aversive thoughts and emotions and may therefore involve processes of thought regulation and emotion regulation (Gailliot, Schmeichel, & Baumeister, 2006). In the current dissertation I have focused on threats to the BJW as these most likely stand for such strong aversive experiences because they are assumed to undermine the confidence in the mere structure of one's life, and may thereby essentially threaten the self (Cohen, Aronson, & Steele, 2000; Gailliot et al., 2006; Hafer, 2000b). Regulating the unwanted thoughts and emotions that are triggered by these significant threats involve processes of self-regulation (Gailliot et al., 2006). Indeed, the research reported in the current dissertation demonstrated that self-regulation seems to be involved in the way people deal with threats to just world beliefs.

Thus, the current dissertation describes two self-related fairness processes, namely fairness reactions that are driven by the need for self-relevant information in Chapter 2 and 3 and by processes of self-regulation in Chapter 4. I would like to propose that, although I collected the data on different variables and in different fairness domains, these processes

may actually coincide. Figure 5.1 presents a visual representation of the processes studied in the three empirical chapters of this thesis.
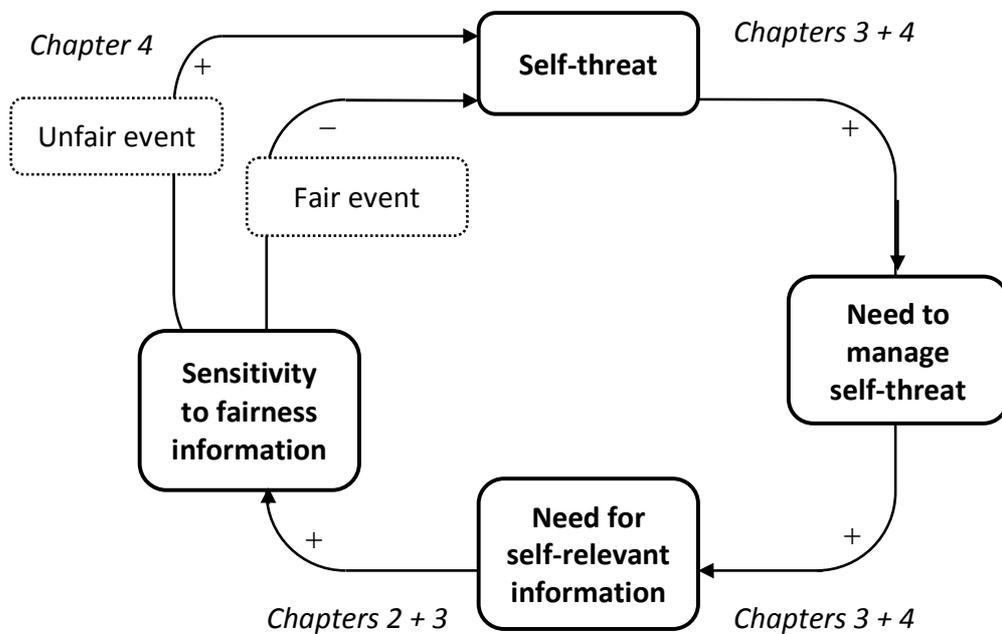


*Figure 5.1.*     Self-related fairness processes studied in the current thesis.

Unfair events may be self-threatening for people, because it threatens their fundamental system of beliefs about the world (Chapter 4) but perhaps also when the event is self-relevant (individual treatment; Chapter 2) and people have a high need for (positive) self-relevant information (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). Fair events have the opposite effect and may facilitate the regulation of self-threat. In Figure 5.1, it can be seen that—according to the model—experienced unfairness may induce or increase self-threat and experienced fairness reduces self-threat. Next, self-threat triggers the need to get rid of the aversive thoughts and feelings that come along with this self-threat experience (Gailliot, Schmeichel, & Baumeister, 2006). One way to manage self-threat is by means of positive self-relevant information (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4), which may be provided by fair events. Also unfair events may sometimes enable self-threat regulation. Advantageous inequity provides self-threatened

individuals the positive self-affirmation they strongly need, having them to overcome fairness concerns (Chapter 3).However, I would like to suggest that in most situations, unfairness provides negative feedback on the self and it is fairness that provides positive feedback on the self. It is this process that is visualized in Figure 5.1.

The model of self-related fairness processes that I currently propose, does not specifically focus on fairness reactions. The fairness reactions reported in the current dissertation have been measured at the different stages of the model, according to the Chapter notifications in Figure 5.1.In Chapter 2, both measured self-activation and affective reactions demonstrated the effect of need for self-relevant information on sensitivity to fairness information. Chapter 3 studied affective reactions and added the role of self-threat to this process, which induced a higher need for self-relevant information and a subsequent higher sensitivity for fairness information. Chapter 4 demonstrated a partly overlapping process by studying blaming reactions and provided the link between the above outlined processes by demonstrating that unfair events may be self-threatening. Thus, according to the model of self-related fairness processes, fairness and unfairness may instigate self-regulation as well as help people to overcome challenges to self-regulation. Perhaps all people prefer to adhere to absolute fairness principles, but they may need to take care of self-related demands first.

This model requires future research to find out more precisely how different self-related processes may interrelate as well as how they relate to other processes within and outside the field of fairness reactions. In the following sections I aim to discuss the theoretical and societal implications of the current findings as well as some possible future directions in the field of fairness reactions.

**A Self-Related Perspective on Fairness Reactions**

Importantly, I do not want to suggest that "all is self and self is all", since such all-embracing definitions depreciate the aimed contribution to current insights into fairness reactions. It is a precondition for self-related fairness research to be valuable in any way that one is being

clear about which aspects of self need to be investigated to make sense and to add to the understanding of the processes involved in fairness reactions. At this moment in time, trying to provide complete clarity about the self may still be a tricky matter (e.g., Baumeister, 1998). Therefore, the best way to study the self in a scientific and sensible way, seems to limit oneself to study specific parts of the self which are particularly relevant for the specific research question (Higgins, 1996). In the current research I followed that strategy. This lead me to study the involvement of individual aspects and social aspects of the self concept as well as threats to the self-concept on fairness reactions. Next, I studied the self as an agent (Baumeister, 1998), investigating the self-regulation process of dealing with threats to the belief that the world is a just place.

I think the current findings on the different ways that the self may be involved in fairness reactions do provide important extensions to current insights into the psychological fairness phenomenon. I realize that social psychology has put forward numerous studies which show that people's selves are their core concern. People's need for high status, self-esteem, personal certainty, social acceptance, and consequential behaviors like impression management, social comparison, competition and enjoying the familiar while detesting the unknown, are just some of the issues which imply an involvement of the self in psychological processes. As may be clear, these self-related processes instigate in many ways how people react in social settings. In this way, fairness basically does not seem to differ from these regular psychological processes. However, fairness may serve many different needs and even seems to determine the structure of societies and interrelationships all over the world. This makes fairness special and social psychology may need to find out which variety of different processes may be involved in the experience and use of fairness. I think it is relevant in this matter that the current findings strongly suggest that fairness concerns are essentially driven by self-related concerns.

The current research on self-related fairness reactions focused on the involvement of the self in the constitution of fairness reactions and may not have clarified the exact workings of the specific self-related processes. An intriguing starting point to gain more in-depth insights may be the suggestion that self-affirmation facilitates self-regulation by triggering a

shift from a concrete to a more abstract focus (Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009). Because threats are mostly quite specific, and because a focus on more abstract values and goals will help to attain to one's beliefs about life and the world they live in, the abstract BJW may be an important element in the self-regulation process itself. Future research is needed to come to a more extensive comprehension of the assumed self-regulation process involved in dealing with BJW threats and I would also welcome the study of these processes related to other fairness-violating situations.

Although I investigated fairness processes as if people were all the same, I would like to emphasize that they are not. There are many individual differences, like people may differ in the level of justice sensitivity (Schmitt, Neumann, & Montada, 1995), their sensitivity for uncertainty (Greco & Roger, 2001), affect intensity (Maas & Van den Bos, 2009) and many other preferences and allergies. The interplay between one's genetic outlay and external factors like the way one is being raised, educated, the environments in which one's life takes place and the life events one encounters, influence the way one thinks, feels and reacts to social situations. These individual differences are found in fairness reactions as well (e.g., Schmitt, Neumann, & Montada, 1995; Maas & Van den Bos, 2009). The influence of individual differences on fairness reactions may support the current self-related perspective, as individual differences are most plausibly founded by the self, being the core part of the individual. Actually the self-concept may be nothing more than a collection of individual preferences, constructed during one's life (McAdams, 1994). As a result, people also tend to differ strongly in the attitudes they possess, with the attitudes most strongly influencing behavior being related most strongly to people's self-concept (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993). Taken together, these findings demonstrate the earlier mentioned notion that fairness is in the eye of the beholder, with perceptions of fairness being subjective and individually different.

When studying the processes of reactions to fair and unfair events and to the ill fate of others, it is important to note that norm violations and justice threats can be experienced to many different levels. Not only are these fairness experiences determined by specific individual conditions, the fair and unfair situations are different as well. Research on BJW has

already shown that people do not always react equally strong to injustices they encounter. For example, reading about some particular person losing his job in a very unfair way, most frequently does not trigger any blaming reactions or other effort put in restoring the belief that the world is a just place. Lerner (2003) noted that the BJW threat must in some way be emotionally involving in order to be able to have reliable effects on people's reactions (Hafer & Bègue, 2005). I would like to suggest that this emotional involvement is related to the involvement of the self. When a threat to the BJW is less emotionally involving, this may be because it is less personally relevant to people. People will then show less engagement and seem to be well able to cope with the specific threat to their just world beliefs, perhaps by making extra cognitive distinctions between the unfortunate's world and their own world. Since people are even able to deny they are being disadvantaged when they are part of a discriminated group (Crosby, 1982, 1984), they may be very skilled to cognitively distinct themselves from others. Perhaps, not only may people not always experience BJW threats because of low personal relevance, it may also be the case that people are defending their selves against BJW threats more frequently than we notice. Less emotionally evolving justice violations may trigger more subtle coping processes that are not expressed on the outside. Of course, the stronger the threat being experienced, the greater the challenge of regulating the threat and the more people tend to blame innocent victims. Self-regulation resources will be especially vital in these situations to help people overcome their antinormative defensive behaviors.

Reactions to advantageous inequity have been explained earlier by the concept of cognitive busyness (Van den Bos, Peters, Bobocel, & Ybema, 2006). This means that people are concerned about fairness, but need their cognitive abilities to overcome primary self-interest reactions and to take into consideration fairness principles like equity in their reactions to outcome distributions. This finding shares some important similarities with self-control, which requires self-regulation resources. Without these resources (e.g., in case of ego-depletion), people are less capable of adjusting their behaviors to, for example, the demands of specific (social) situations (e.g., Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004; Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005). Because self-

threat may be depleting (Baumeister, Heatherton,& Tice, 1993), it may limit cognitive capacities just like cognitive load seems to do. This possibly depleting effect of self-threat may be an alternative explanation for the assumed process. However, this alternative explanation seems to suggest that the processes involved are content-free, without involving a motivation for self-enhancement. Both current findings and the findings of earlier research (Van den Bos, Peters, Bobocel, & Ybema, 2006) showed more positive reactions to advantageous inequity but no stronger negative reactions to inadvantageous inequity. This may suggest that the process is at least not completely content-free, but driven by a specific attention for positive self-relevant information. Because the need to think positively about oneself seems to be a general need (e.g., Campbell & Sedikides, 1999), this may be expressed more when correction processes are limited (i.e., by cognitive busyness; Van den Bos, Peters, Bobocel, & Ybema, 2006) as well as when this need is enhanced (i.e., by self-threats). Whether the underlying processes are one and the same, whether they are driven by the effects of self-serving biases (Campbell & Sedikides, 1999), or just being the result of lower adjustment to the (fairness) demands of the specific situations, are remaining issues for future investigation.

By trying to disentangle self-interest concerns and fairness principles, I did not specify whether the individual aspects of the self (i.e., the individual self) or the social aspects of the self (i.e., the social self) are involved in the specific fairness processes following self-threat. In Chapter 3 I used two ways to induce self-threat, namely the thinking of oneself being personally uncertain and the thinking of oneself as being judged negatively by others. Both self-threat inductions may lead to experiencing a threat to one's individual self as well as to experiencing a threat to one's social self. I think there are two main reasons to assume the individual self has been threatened, leading to the current effects on fairness reactions. One of these reasons is provided by the finding that people are mainly concerned with their individual self (Gaertner, Sedikides, & Graetz, 1999; Gaertner, Sedikides, Vevea, & Luzzini, 2002). Another reason is that the more positive reactions to advantageous inequity also suggest a main concern with the individual self. When mainly concerned about how one relates to others, it would be more reasonable to expect people to acknowledge the

concerns of others, leading them to react more negatively towards the situation in which others receive less than oneself. Although these are mainly speculations which are only indirectly supported by the current findings, I think it is plausible that, in line with the self-salience studies, the individual self is most strongly involved in these fairness processes instigated by self-threat. Future research is needed to clarify these issues.

Furthermore, I think it is important to emphasize that self-related processes do not mean that people generally behave in egoistic ways (as they do not). People seem to internalize the value of fairness to different degrees, as a result of their individual development. Central values like fairness will be expressed equivalently to the level of internalization and intensified by the activation of self (Van den Bos, Miedema, Vermunt, & Zwenk, 2011; Verplanken & Holland, 2002; Wicklund & Duval, 1971). Therefore, self-related reactions do not need to be egoistic, but may be reasonably fair. Furthermore, people generally tend to adjust their initial egocentric reactions according to principles of fairness (e.g., Van den Bos, Peters, Bobocel, & Ybema, 2006).

Future research is needed to deepen the current insights, to define boundary conditions and perhaps even to understand the workings of fairness in society. I will go further into the specifics of fairness and the societal implications of the current findings in the following sections.

**What About Fairness?**

When studying such a broad concept like fairness, it is important to know it is really fairness that is being studied. One way to find out is asking participants to give their fairness judgments. This is a generally used method in justice research (Skitka, 2009). However, in many studies on fairness these judgments may be biased by the public settings in which the study finds place (e.g., Rivera & Tedeschi, 1976). Also, main dependent variables are often measured immediately after the main inductions which causes smoothened fairness judgments which are being asked later. It has been suggested that fairness judgments need cognitive elaboration and involve the incorporation of justice principles into people's first,

87

mostly affective, experiences (Mullen, 2007; Van den Bos, Peters, Bobocel, & Ybema, 2006). This may suggest that fairness judgments are not very reliable instruments for measuring the experienced fairness. The fairness judgments measured in the current research partly support this view, because they were, as expected, not always highly consistent. However, affective reactions did quite consistently demonstrate the predicted differences between situations (more positive and less negative affect when experiencing fairness and more negative and less positive affect when experiencing unfairness). I would like to suggest that justice judgments and affective fairness reactions may both be an integral part of measuring fairness experiences. I also used typical fair and unfair situations that have been defined in the fairness literature (see, e.g., Adams, 1965; Lerner, 1980; Leventhal, 1980) and that have frequently been studied in fairness research (e.g., Van den Bos, Wilke, & Lind, 1998; Van Prooijen, Karremans, & Van Beest, 2006) together with fairness situations with high face validity (i.e., keeping a promise is fair, breaking a promise is unfair). Therefore, I think it is legitimate to conclude that the studies reported in the current thesis are indeed about fairness.

Not only affective reactions were used as measure of fairness reactions, but also the blaming of innocent victims. It may be important to pay attention to these different fairness reactions when studying processes of fairness to understand what these entail. For example, when responding to advantageous inequity, people do not seem to differ in negative affect and positive affect. How this stands in relation with the findings by Peters (2005) that indicate that feelings of uneasiness seem to be strongly felt by people who are overpaid, needs to be investigated. Also, there seem to be many ways in which people react defensively when facing a threat to this belief. The whole range of reactions that people may use to react on fair and unfair situations may contribute to the idea that fairness is everywhere and soaked in people's lives. The innumerable variety of psychological instruments that people possess to defend themselves against harming situations, are also used in fairness reactions. Fairness and the self seem to be intertwined.

The current research showed that people who are concerned with their selves, react more positively towards overpayment than people who do not have this concern (or to a

lesser extent). In addition to this, recent research has shown that prosocial people tend to reject overpayments (Van den Bos, Van Lange, Lind, Venhoeven, Beudeker, Cramwinckel, Smulders, & Van der Laan, in press). Perhaps, this indicates that the extent to which fairness concerns are internalized, determines the extent that fairness concerns are expressed in behavior. This is not in conflict with the current research as the processes underlying the fairness reactions of prosocial people are assumed to be the same self-related processes like in other people. The difference here, is that prosocials have stronger self-related fairness-concerns and these concerns are expressed in observed reactions. Or, like I noted before, self-related and individualistic reactions do not imply that people are not social beings.

There is empirical support for a two-phase model in which people impulsively follow their self-concerns and correct their reactions by fairness concerns when they feel a need to do that (in case of public reactions; e.g., Rivera & Tedeschi, 1976) and when they have the capacities to do that (when they are not cognitively busy; Van den Bos, Peters, Bobocel, & Ybema, 2006). People are social because they need to, as they need to belong and feel accepted by one's group. This need may sometimes be stronger than individual self-concerns, sometimes they are not. At the moments when people do not agree, when people's own convictions lead them to despise other people or when they even start a fight, it becomes clear that it is also essential to acknowledge people's individualistic needs.

Reactions to the fate of others also seem to be driven by self-related processes. There are at least two ways to judge these findings: people are concerned about others or people are concerned about themselves. Actually, I think that both are true. Others need to be treated fairly in order for people to feel safe, certain and happy themselves. An important question to be asked is whether this refers back to the meaning system that people need in order to function well (Park & Folkman, 1997) or whether they merely do not want injustices to happen because of the specific personal dangers involved. It seems to be hard to disentangle these possible motives, because BJW research does generally not rule out one of these.

This noted, it may be reasonable to suggest that BJW is about fairness. The need for fairness is intertwined with many societal affairs, like the preference for the status quo (e.g.,

Kay & Jost, 2003), the beliefs about deservingness (e.g., Lerner & Simmons, 1966), the generally shared ideas on correct procedures (e.g., Leventhal, 1980), and on the respect people ought to receive (e.g., De Cremer & Schouten, 2008; Miller, 2001). Therefore, it may be most plausible that the strong reactions triggered when being confronted with situations in which one or several norms, beliefs, or expectations are being violated, are due to the violation of fairness beliefs.

When studying fairness from a social psychological perspective, many phenomena seem to share the same functions and are driven by fundamentally comparable needs and processes. The current thesis described the omnipresence of self in people's lives and the self-related fairness reactions to own and others' treatments. For example, by studying self-regulation, it was possible to shed some light on the involvement of self in coping with threats to people's mere justice beliefs. Self-regulation may be approached by facilitation of this process by self-affirmation and by frustration of this process by ego-depletion. There are many studies in social psychology which investigated self-affirmation and ego-depletion as influencing certain phenomena. Recent research (Rutjens & Loseman, 2010) investigated the differences between the search for meaning and the search for control. It was found that while need for meaning was caused by mortality salience (leading people to boost one's own cultural worldview) need for control was specifically triggered by ego-depletion (leading people to stronger justify the existing societal system). Since Belief in a Just World can be thought of as a meaning system (Park & Folkman, 1997) and also entails a strong set of beliefs about the arrangement of society, it may be interesting to find out whether both need for control and need for meaning are involved in the preference for justice. System justification and boosting one's worldview may appear as different phenomena, but BJW may satisfy both underlying needs. Future research is needed to find out and this research may further take fairness-related aspects apart from the different psychological components.

**Societal Implications**

The current research has made a serious approach towards understanding the processes underlying fairness experiences. I decided to focus on the self-related aspects in trying to extend the common social perspective on fairness phenomena. When studying underlying psychological processes, it is important to emphasize that these processes do not necessarily mean that factors involved at these fundament levels, are expressed at levels that can be observed.

Understanding the self-relatedness of fairness may lead to understanding the subjectivity of fairness. People have the tendency to perceive the world in egocentric ways, as they were the centre of it. That is not inherently good, nor is it bad. It is mostly helpful to maintain the illusion that one has an unique, valuable and meaningful life, which determines whether someone has a happy life. Next, people are social beings with sincere fairness concerns. It has been stated that "selves are handles and tools for relating to other people" (Baumeister, 1998, p. 680). Individuals want to be "good" persons and are sensitive for the social desirability of helping others. Actually, one could say it is a good thing that fairness is intertwined with self-related concerns this way. This may facilitate the attention for fairness-related situations and makes it easier to use fairness principles in daily lives.

Fairness often seems to be wrapped into a veil of perfection. This means that people frequently have the illusion that fairness is an objectively, definable quality (Mikula & Wenzel, 2000). For example, when we use fairness-related words in our communications, we do that to emphasize the objective and sincere nature of our opinions (Wijn, 2010). Sometimes, this leads people to be absolutely convinced of their justice judgments, even going to extremes to defend their justice beliefs. This fanaticism occurs mostly on topics that strongly relate to one's identity, also known as moral convictions or moral mandates (Skitka, 2010). When being confronted with more different ideas on what is just and what is not, people become more aware of their own specific beliefs, because deviances have the tendency to get more salient (Flagg, 1997). People may react defensively to such situations and this may lead them to become more convinced about their own beliefs.

In modern, multicultural society, with ongoing processes of globalization, people see themselves more and more confronted with different opinions, values, norms and other beliefs. Concrete ideas of what fair is and what not, will differ to greater extents than people were used to in their homelands. When taking notice of the processes that may be triggered in this situation, it may be especially important to understand the subjective character of many of these beliefs. To facilitate living together with others who think differently in many ways, people need an open mind and understandings of the psychological side of why people think, feel and behave in certain ways. Psychology is a popular topic in society (take, for example, the attention paid to psychology in magazines like Psychology Today[4], television shows like Dr. Phil[5], popular books like Social Influence of Cialdini (2008), or even more popular columns by Roos Vonk[6]) and it is certainly not impossible to contribute these relevant insights to society.

In societal affairs, the common social approach to fairness may remain highly relevant. This is, because of the enormousness of society, individualistic processes are hard to be measured. Although still relevant, it may be also important to understand the phenomena on a social level, acknowledge different groups, social interactions and other social encounters. It has been argued that groups may function quite the same as individuals do (Campbell, 1958) and perhaps that is true. So, the motivations of a group to behave in certain ways, may drive comparable processes as been found at individual levels. For example, in studying radicalization processes, I found that both right-wing youth and muslim youth in The Netherlands compare themselves at group levels (Van den Bos, Loseman, & Doosje, 2009). This suggests that in some societal processes group-based fairness may be highly important and possibly, more important than individualistically based fairness processes. At the same time, individual uncertainty seems to be involved in developing extremism as well (Van den Bos & Loseman, 2011) and has also been found to influence

---

[4] See www.psychologytoday.com
[5] See http://www.drphil.com
[6] See http://www.roosvonk.nl/columns

fairness reactions. Plausibly, both group-based and individual processes may interact and have their societal consequences.

In the end, understanding fairness is relevant for everyone committed to society. People do not want to defend their ideas about the injustices caused by terrorists. What they really want is to prevent terrorism. And perhaps it may help when trying to understand the way individuals think, feel, and behave. What we know is that radicals, extremists, and terrorists are not driven by psychologically deviant processes, but that they actually seem to be psychologically quite the same as 'normal' people (e.g., Meertens, Prins, & Doosje, 2006; Van den Bos & Loseman, 2011; Van den Bos, Loseman, & Doosje, 2009). And what we know of 'normal' people is that 'all' that they may need is some help from others to feel good about themselves.


**Concluding Remarks**

The current research proposed a self-related perspective on fairness reactions. The reported studies do not reveal the tension between egocentric and prosocial mechanisms in human behavior, but most essentially show that in reactive fairness, the self seems to play a substantial role. This suggests that when trying to understand the psychology of fairness, it is relevant to realize that people have a core motivation to perceive information as it was directed to themselves as individuals (Fenigstein, 1984). This also suggests that justice may be highly important for people because of self-relevant reasons like the justification for how they organized their lives in modern society (Hafer, 2000b). Indeed, it may be argued that it is desirably for society when people focus on long term goals instead of immediate gain and to behave according to societal norms and values instead of following their impulses. Believing that the world is a just place, provides people the fundamental confidence that they and others will be rewarded for their investments as all people ultimately get what they deserve (Hafer, 2000b). The current self-related perspective on fairness helps to understand several previous fairness observations, but may also help to get to better future understandings of

fairness. To conclude, fairness is in the eye of the beholder, perhaps even in the "I" of the beholder, or, to put it differently: "Me, Myself, Fairness, and I".

**Samenvatting**

*Summary in Dutch*

Rechtvaardigheid is een intrigerend fenomeen, wellicht met name omdat het een universele waarde betreft waarover mensen dezelfde ideeën lijken te hebben, terwijl zij op individueel niveau juist sterk kunnen verschillen in hun opvattingen wat rechtvaardig is en wat niet. Zo wordt ook wel gezegd dat rechtvaardigheid in het hoofd van mensen zit oftewel "justice is in the eye of the beholder". Veelal zijn situaties niet eenduidig en bevatten ze verschillende aspecten waarop mensen hun rechtvaardigheidsoordeel kunnen baseren. Zo ontstaat er ruimte voor verschillende rechtvaardigheidsoordelen. Deze kunnen worden ingekleurd door persoonlijke opvattingen en voorkeuren die automatisch de individuele percepties en ervaringen vertekenen (bv. Van Prooijen, 2008). Dergelijk egocentrisme, in de zin dat een persoon zijn omgeving waarneemt, ervaart en beoordeelt vanuit zichzelf en dat het 'zelf' hierdoor ook betrokken is bij reacties op rechtvaardigheid, staat in het huidige proefschrift centraal.

Dit proefschrift beschrijft de psychologie van rechtvaardigheid als een zelfgerelateerd proces. Dat betekent dat het zelf betrokken is bij de totstandkoming van reacties op rechtvaardige en onrechtvaardige situaties. Al is de psychologie ooit ontstaan met de studie van het zelf, het is nog immer onduidelijk wat het 'zelf' precies is en zo worden in onderzoek talloze verschillende definities van het 'zelf' gebruikt (zie bv. Baumeister, 1998). Om de rol van het zelf in rechtvaardigheidsprocessen zinvol te bestuderen, heb ik me gericht op specifieke aspecten van het zelf.

Zo veronderstel ik dat de constructie van het beeld dat iemand van zichzelf heeft, ook wel het zelfconcept, betrokken is in de ervaring van het rechtvaardig en onrechtvaardig behandeld worden door anderen. Immers, hoe anderen zich gedragen in relatie tot een persoon, verschaft informatie over hoe zij oordelen over deze persoon en ook hoe deze persoon over zichzelf zou 'moeten' denken (bv. Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). Een respectvolle bejegening betekent dat de ander de persoon respecteert en dat de persoon iemand is die gerespecteerd zou moeten worden. De aandacht die mensen hebben voor rechtvaardigheid

in hun omgeving zou dus kunnen worden gedreven door een motivatie om meer over zichzelf te weten te komen (bv. Van Prooijen & Zwenk, 2009).

In Hoofdstuk 2 toon ik aan dat dit met name betrekking heeft op de individuele aspecten van het zelfbeeld, dus hoe mensen denken over zichzelf als individu, onafhankelijk van anderen. In Studie 2.1 blijkt dit door een hogere activatie van het individuele zelf dan het sociale zelf in rechtvaardige en onrechtvaardige situaties. In Studie 2.2 blijkt vervolgens dat rechtvaardigheidsreacties het sterkst zijn wanneer personen als individu worden benaderd en ook hun individuele zelf wordt geactiveerd.

In Hoofdstuk 3 laat ik vervolgens zien dat wanneer mensen worden bedreigd in het positieve beeld dat zij van zichzelf (willen) hebben, zij niet alleen meer aandacht aan rechtvaardigheidsaspecten in hun omgeving lijken te besteden, maar met name op zoek zijn naar positieve zelfbevestiging. Zo reageren zij niet alleen positiever op een rechtvaardige uitkomst (wanneer zij evenveel krijgen als een ander), maar ook op een overbetaling. Zo een voordelige ongelijkheid wordt in het algemeen als negatiever ervaren dan een gelijke betaling, waarschijnlijk omdat mensen goed weten dat dit onrechtvaardig is en zij zich hier ongemakkelijk bij voelen (Peters, 2005). Wanneer mensen meer dan anders positieve zelfbevestiging nodig hebben, blijken ze het onrechtvaardige aspect van de overbetaling minder sterk te laten meewegen in hun reactie op de uitkomstenverdeling dan het positieve zelfgerelateerde aspect. Deze bevindingen werden verkregen in een veldexperiment (Studie 3.1) en in een laboratoriumexperiment (Studie 3.2).

De waarde die mensen hechten aan rechtvaardigheid heeft waarschijnlijk niet alleen te maken met de informatie die het verschaft over henzelf. De gehele samenleving lijkt ingericht volgens opvattingen van wat rechtvaardig is en wat niet. Zo lijkt het idee dat eenieder uiteindelijk krijgt wat hij of zij verdient, een grote rol te spelen in hoe mensen hun leven inrichten. Het wordt bijvoorbeeld van mensen verwacht om te investeren in een soms verre toekomst in plaats van direct behoeften te bevredigen. Het leven lijkt soms uit verschillende langetermijn projecten te bestaan, waarin mensen geld opzij leggen en via sparen en beleggen hopen op nóg meer geld en waarin mensen al rekening houden met een verre toekomst wanneer zij nu keuzes moeten maken. Dit volgt niet uit genetisch aangelegde

patronen, maar lijkt als kind in de opvoeding aangeleerd (Lerner, 1977). Het fundament onder dit systeem is een immens vertrouwen dat iedereen uiteindelijk krijgt wat hij of zij verdient. Alleen dan heeft het immers zin om korte termijn behoeften op te offeren voor grotere geneugten op een later moment. Dit 'deservingness' principe staat centraal in het concept van 'Belief in a Just World', het geloof in een rechtvaardige wereld, waarvan verondersteld wordt dat iedereen dit in een meer of mindere mate aanhangt (bv. Lerner, 1980).

De immense impact die dit wereldbeeld heeft, blijkt niet alleen uit hoe de samenleving zich heeft kunnen organiseren. Ook blijken mensen sterk geneigd dit geloof te verdedigen wanneer zij geconfronteerd worden met een realiteit die anders uitwijst. Zo is het een intrigerend fenomeen dat mensen in sommige gevallen schuld toekennen aan een onschuldig slachtoffer, waarschijnlijk om daarmee het idee van 'deservingness' te herstellen (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Aangezien dergelijke irrationele en zelfs antinormatieve reacties lijken te tonen dat dit geloof erg belangrijk is voor mensen, veronderstel ik dat ook het zelf hier een rol in speelt. Niet alleen willen mensen vooral bevestigd worden in het idee dat zij hun leven op de juiste manier hebben ingericht, ook willen ze een beeld handhaven van zichzelf als iemand die de wereld juist inschat en daarmee een—voor mensen erg belangrijke—illusie van controle in stand houden. In Hoofdstuk 4 heb ik onderzocht of het omgaan met een bedreiging van een rechtvaardig wereldbeeld zelfregulatie vereist. Daartoe heb ik de rol onderzocht van mentale uitputting (Studie 4.1) en van positieve zelfbevestiging (Studie 4.2) op de mate waarin een (onschuldig) slachtoffer van een verkrachting schuld werd toegekend. Het bleek inderdaad dat mentale uitputting—dat zelfregulatie beperkt—zorgt voor een grotere toekenning van schuld aan het slachtoffer, terwijl positieve zelfbevestiging—dat zelfregulatie faciliteert—zorgt voor het verdwijnen van deze defensieve reactie.

Concluderend kan gesteld worden dat reacties op rechtvaardigheid worden gedreven door zelfgerelateerde processen. Het zelf blijkt op verschillende manieren betrokken in de totstandkoming van reacties op rechtvaardige en onrechtvaardige situaties. Zo blijkt het niet alleen een rol te spelen in situaties waarin een persoon zelf rechtvaardig of onrechtvaardig

behandeld wordt, maar ook wanneer een persoon wordt geconfronteerd met een sterke onrechtvaardigheid met betrekking tot een ander. Waar in het ene proces het zelf de aandacht voor rechtvaardigheidsaspecten lijkt te sturen, kan zelfbedreiging in sommige gevallen ook leiden tot het prefereren van positieve zelfbevestiging boven het volgen van rechtvaardigheidsprincipes. Uiteindelijk lijkt rechtvaardigheid zo een belangrijk aspect van het menselijk wereldbeeld, dat confrontaties met sterk onrechtvaardige situaties zelfregulatie behoeven.

Al is procesmatig onderzoek soms lastig te vertalen naar de maatschappelijke praktijk, toch zijn er mogelijk relevante zaken te noemen die uit het huidige onderzoek lijken te kunnen afgeleid. Ten eerste is het goed te benadrukken dat de helft van de beschreven onderzoeken niet in het psychologisch laboratorium zijn afgenomen, maar 'op straat'. Hierdoor was het mogelijk ook niet-studenten in het onderzoek te betrekken en hebben de bevindingen dus ook een duidelijke betrekking op populaties buiten de universiteit. Rechtvaardigheid is gerelateerd aan veel maatschappelijke zaken, zoals bijvoorbeeld het samenleven met anderen (bv. Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997), het gehoorzamen aan regels en wetten (Tyler, 2006), maar ook in de radicalisering van Nederlandse jongeren blijkt rechtvaardigheid een belangrijke rol te spelen (Van den Bos, Loseman, & Doosje, 2009). Hoewel veel van deze zaken sociaal van aard zijn, geeft het huidige proefschrift een kijkje in de individualistische processen die hieraan ten grondslag lijken te liggen. Deze fundamentele, zelfgerelateerde psychologie van rechtvaardigheid biedt wellicht inzicht in de subjectiviteit van rechtvaardigheidsreacties, de vele individuele verschillen in wat precies rechtvaardig wordt gevonden en wat niet, maar bovenal ook waarom rechtvaardigheid zo belangrijk is voor mensen.

## References

Adams, J. S. (1965). Inequity in social exchange. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 267-299). New York: Academic Press.

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., Tudor, M., & Nelson, G. (1991). Close relationships as including other in the self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60*, 241-253.

Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Akert, R. M. (2005). *Social psychology: International edition* (5th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson.

Bal, M. & Van den Bos, K. (2010). The role of perpetrator similarity in reactions toward innocent victims. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 40*, 957-969.

Bargh. J. A. (1982). Attention and automaticity in the processing of self-relevant information. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *43*, 425-436

Bargh, J. A., Litt, J., Pratto, F., & Spielman, L. A. (1989). On the preconscious evaluation of social stimuli. In A. F. Bennett & J. M. McConkey (Eds.), *Cognition in individual and social contexts: Proceedings of the XXV International Congress of Psychology*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Batson, C.D. (1991). *The Altruism Question: Toward a Social-Psychological Answer*, Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Baumeister, R. F. (1998). The self. In D. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (4th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 680-740). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Baumeister, R. F., Bratlavsky, E., Muraven, M., & Tice, D. M. (1998). Ego-depletion. Is the active self a limited resource? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, *5*, 1252-1265.

Baumeister, R.F., Heatherton, T.F., & Tice, D.M. (1993). When ego threats lead to self-regulation failure: Negative consequences of high self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64,* 141-156.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin, 117*, 497-529.

Berting, J. (2006). *De versplinterde samenleving: De gevolgen van moderniteit en modernisering in de 21$^e$ eeuw*. Delft: Eburon.

Brewer, M. B. (1991). The social self: On being the same and different at the same time. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *17*, 475-482.

Brewer, M. B., & Gardner, W. L. (1996). Who is this "we"? Levels of collective identity and self representations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *71*, 83-93.

Brockner, J. & Wiesenfeld, B. M. (1996). An integrative framework for explaining reactions to decisions: Interactive effects of outcomes and procedures.*Psychological Bulletin*. *120*, 189-208.

Brockner, J., Heuer, L., Siegel, P.A., Wiesenfeld, B., Martin, C., Grover, S., Reed, T., & Bjogvinsson, S. (1998). The moderating effect of self-esteem in reaction to voice: converging evidence from five studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*, 394-407.

Brockner, J., Spreitzer, G., Mishra, A., Hochwarter, W., Pepper, L., & Weinberg, J. (2004). Perceived control as an antidote to the negative effects of layoffs on survivors' organizational commitment and job performance*. Administrative Science Quarterly*, *49*, 76-100.

Callan, M. J., Shead, N. W., & Olson, J. M. (2008). Foregoing the labor for the fruits: The effect of just world threat on the desire for immediate monetary rewards. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *45*, 246-249.

Campbell, D. T. (1958). Common fate, similarity, and other indices of the status of aggregates of persons as social entities. Behavioral Science, 3, 14-25.

Campbell, R., & Raja, S. (1999). Secondary victimization of rape victims: insights from mental health professionals who treat survivors of violence. *Violence Victomology*, *14*, 261-275.

Campbell, R., & Raja, S. (2005). The sexual assault and secondary victimization of female veterans: Help-seeking experiences with military and civilian social systems. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *29,* 97-106.

Campbell, K. W., & Sedikides, C. (1999). Self-threat magnifies the self-serving bias: A metaanalytic integration. *Review of General* Psychology, *3,* 23-43.

Campbell, R., Sefl, T., Barnes, H. E., Ahrens, C. E., Wasco, S. M., & Zaracgoza-Diesfeld, Y. (1999). Community services for rape survivors: Enhancing psychological well-being or increasing trauma? *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *67*, 847–858.

Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (1981). *Attention and self-regulation: A control theory approach to human behavior*. New-York: Springer-Verlag.

Chebat, J.-C., & Slusarczyk, W. (2005). How emotions mediate the effects of perceived justice on loyalty in service recovery situations: An empirical study. *Journal of Business Research*, *58*, 664-673.

Cherry, E. C. (1953). Some experiments on the recognition of speech, with one and with two ears. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, *25*, 975-979.

Cialdini, R B. (2008). *Influence: Science and practice*. (5th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Cohen, G. L., Aronson, J., & Steele, C. M. (2000). When beliefs yield to evidence: Reducing biased evaluation by affirming the self. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*, 1151-1164.

Confucius (551 BC – 479 BC). "The Master said: 'The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain.'" http://nothingistic.org/library/confucius/analects/details.html

Cooley, C. H. (1902). *Human nature and the social order*. New York: Scribners. In D. P. McAdams (1994). The person: An introduction to personality psychology. Orlando, Fl.: Hartcourt Brace.

Correll, J., Spencer, S. J., & Zanna, M .P. (2004). An affirmed self and an open mind: Self-affirmation and sensitivity to argument strength. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *40*, 350-356.

Crosby, F. (1982). *Relative deprivation and working women*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Crosby, F. (1984). The denial of personal discrimination. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *27*, 371-386.

De Cremer, D. (2003). Why inconsistent leadership is regarded as procedurally unfair: The importance of social self-esteem concerns. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *33*, 535-550.

De Cremer, D., & Schouten, B. C. (2008). When apologies for injustice matter: The role of respect. *European Psychologist*, *13*, 239-247.

De Cremer, D. & Tyler, T. R. (2005). Managing group behaviour: the interplay between fairness, self, and cooperation. In M. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol 37, pp. 151-218). New York: Academic Press.

De Cremer, D., Van Knippenberg, D., & Van Dijke, M. H. (2004). How self-relevant is fair treatment? Social self-esteem moderating the effect of interactional justice. *Social Justice Research*, *17*, 407-419.

De Houwer, J., Thomas, S., & Bayens, F. (2001). Associative learning of likes and dislikes: A review of 25 years of research on human evaluative conditioning. *Psychological Bulletin*, *127*, 853-869.

Deutsch, M. (1975). Equity, equality, or need? What determines which value will be used as the basis of distributive justice? *Journal of Social Issues*, *31*, 137-149.

Deutsch, M. (1985). *Distributive justice: A social psychological perspective*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Dijksterhuis, A., & Van Knippenberg, A. (2000). Behavioral indecision: Effects of self-focus on automatic behavior. *Social Cognition*, *18*, 55-74.

Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Epley, N., & Caruso, E. M. (2004). Egocentric ethics. *Social Justice Research*, *17*, 171-188.

Fein, S. & Spencer, S. J. (1997). Prejudice as self-image maintenance: Affirming the self through negative evaluations of others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*, 31-44.

Fenigstein, A., (1984). Self-consciousness and the overperception of self as a target. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *47*, 860-870.

Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, *7*, 117-140.

Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Finkel, N. J. (2000). But it's not fair! Commonsense notions of unfairness. *Psychology*, *Public Policy*, *and Law*, *7*, 898-952.

Flagg, B. J. (1997). The transparency phenomenon, race-neutral decision making, and discriminatory intent. In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic. *Critical white studies: Looking behind the mirror*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Folger, R., & Cropanzano, R. (1998). *Organizational justice and human resource management*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gaertner, L., Sedikides, C., & Graetz, K. (1999). In search of self-definition: Motivational primacy of the individual self, motivational primacy of the collective self, or contextual primacy? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76,* 5-18.

Gaertner, L., Sedikides, C., Vevea, J. L., and Luzzini, J. (2002). The "I", the "We", and the "When": A meta-analysis of motivational primacy in self-definition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *83*, 574-591.

Gailliot, M. T., Baumeister, R. F., & Mead, N. (2008). Self-regulation. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (3rd Edition, pp. 472-491). New York: Guilford.

Gailliot, M. T., Schmeichel, B. J., & Baumeister, R. F. (2006). Self-regulation processes defend against the threat of death: Effects of self-control depletion and trait self-control on thoughts and fears of dying. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *91*, 49-62.

Gilliland, S. W. (1994). Effects of procedural and distributive justice on reactions selection system. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 79*, 691-701.

Greco, V., & Roger, D. (2001). Coping with uncertainty: The construction and validation of a new measure. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *31*, 519-534.

Greenberg, J. (1990). Employee theft as a reaction to underpayment inequity: The hidden cost of pay cuts. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75, 561-568.

Greenberg, J. (1993). The intellectual adolescence of organizational justice: You've come a long way, maybe. *Social Justice Research, 6*, 135-148.

Greenberg, J., & Colquitt, J. A. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of organizational justice: Fundamental questions about fairness in the workplace*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Greenberg, J., Simon, L., Pyszczynski, T., Solomon, S., & Chatel, D. (1992). Terror management and tolerance: Does mortality salience always intensify negative reactions to others who threaten one's worldview? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *63,* 212-220*.*

Hafer, C. L. (2000a). Do innocent victims threaten the Belief in a Just World? Evidence from a modified Stroop task. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *79*, 165-173.

Hafer, C. L. (2000b). Investment in long-term goals and commitment to just means drive the need to believe in a just world. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*, 1059-1073.

Hafer, C. L., & Bègue, L. (2005). Experimental research on just-world theory. Problems, developments, and future challenges. *Psychological Bulletin*, *131*, 128-167.

Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review*, *108*, 814-834.

Ham, J., & Van den Bos, K. (2008). Not fair for me! The influence of personal relevance on social justice inferences. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *44*, 699-705.

Heine, S. J., & Lehman, D. R. (1997). The cultural construction of self-enhancement: An examination of group-serving biases. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *72*, 1268-1283.

Higgins, E. T. (1996). The "self-digest": Self-knowledge serving self-regulatory functions. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *71*, 1062-1083.

Hogg, M. A., & Mullin, B.-A. (1999). Joining groups to reduce uncertainty: Subjective uncertainty reduction and group identification. In D. Abrams & M. A. Hogg (Eds.), *Social identity and social cognition* (pp. 249-279). Oxford: Blackwell.

Hogg, M. A., Sherman, D. K., Dierselhuis, J., Maitner, A. T., & Moffitt, G. (2007). Uncertainty, entitativity, and group identification. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 43*, 135-142.

Homans, G. C. (1974). *Social behavior: Its elementary forms*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Jovanovich.

Jacques, E. (1961). *Equitable payment*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

James, W. (1890/1983). *The principles of psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

James, W. (1892/1963). *Psychology*. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett.

Kay, A. C., & Jost, J. T. (2003). Complementary justice: Effects of "poor but happy" and "poor but honest" sterotype exemplars on system justification and implicit activation of the justice motive. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *85*, 823-837.

Koole, S. L., Smeets, K., Van Knippenberg, A., & Dijksterhuis, A. (1999). The cessation of rumination through self-affirmation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *77*, 111-125.

Koper, G., Van Knippenberg, D., Bouhuijs, F., Vermunt, R., & Wilke, H. (1993). Procedural fairness and self-esteem. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *23*, 313-325.

Kruglanski, A. W. & Webster, D. M. (1991). Group members' reactions to opinion deviates and conformists at varying degrees of proximity to decision deadline and of environmental noise. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *61*, 212-225.

Langer, E. J. (1975). The illusion of control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *32*, 311-328.

Lerner, M. J. (1977). The justice motive: Some hypotheses as to its origins and forms. *Journal of Personality*, *45*, 1-52.

Lerner, M. J. (1980). *The belief in a just world: A fundamental delusion*. New York: Plenum Press.

Lerner, M. J. (1981). The justice motive in human relations: Some thoughts on what we know and need to know about justice. In M. J. Lerner & S. C. Lerner (Eds.), *The justice motive in social behavior: Adapting to times of scarcity and change* (pp. 11-38). New York: Plenum.

Lerner, M. J. (2003). The justice motive: Where social psychologists found it, how they lost it, and why they may not find it again. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *7*, 388-399.

Lerner, M. J., & Simmons, C. H. (1966). Observer's reaction to the "innocent victim": Compassion or rejection? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 4*, 203-210.

Leung, K., & Lind, E. A. (1986). Procedural justice and culture: Effects of culture, gender, and investigator status on procedural preferences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *50*, 1134-1140.

Leventhal, G. S. (1980). What should be done with equity theory? New approaches to the study of fairness in social relationships. In K. J. Gergen, M. S. Greenberg, & R. H. Willis (Eds.), *Social exchange: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 27-54). New York: Plenum.

Lind, E. A., & Earley, P. C. (1992). Procedural justice and culture. *International Journal of Psychology*, *27*, 227-242.

Lind, E. A., Kanfer, R., & Earley, P. C. (1990). Voice, control, and procedural justice: Instrumental and noninstrumental concerns in fairness judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59,* 952-959.

Lind, E. A., Kray, L., & Thompson, L. (1998). The social construction of injustice: Fairness judgments in response to own and others' unfair treatment by authorities. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *75*, 1-22.

Lind, E. A., & Tyler, T. R. (1988). *The social psychology of procedural justice*. New York: Plenum.

Lissak, R. I., & Sheppard, B. H. (1983). Beyond fairness: The criterion problem in research on dispute intervention. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *13*, 45-65.

Loseman, A., Miedema, J., Van den Bos, K., & Vermunt, R. (2009). Exploring how people respond to conflicts between self-interest and fairness: Influence of threats to the self on affective reactions to advantageous inequity. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *61*, 13–21.

Loseman, A. & Van den Bos, K. (2011). *A self-regulation hypothesis of coping with an unjust world: Ego-depletion and self-affirmation as underlying aspects of innocent victim blaming*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Loseman, A. & Van den Bos, K., &Ham, J. (2011). *Fairness is in the "I" of the beholder: On the individualistic nature of procedural fairness reactions.* Manuscript submitted for publication.

Maas, M. & Van den Bos, K. (2009). An affective-experiential perspective on reactions to fair and unfair events: Individual differences in affect intensity moderated by experiential mindsets. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 45*, 667-675.

Markus, H. R., & Kunda, Z. (1986). Stability and malleability in the self-concept in the perception of others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51*, 858-866.

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, *98*, 224-253.

McAdams, D. P. (1994). *The person: An introduction to personality psychology*. (2nd ed.). Orlando, Fl: Hartcourt Brace College Publishers.

Mead, G. H. (1934). Mind, self and society. *Chicago*: *University of Chicago Press*.

Meertens, R. W., Prins, Y. R. A., & Doosje, B. (2006). *In iedereen schuilt een terrorist: Een sociaal-psychologische analyse van terroristische sektes en aanslagen.* Schiedam: Scriptum.

Messick, D. M., & Sentis, K. (1983). Fairness, preference, and fairness biases. In D. M. Messick & K. S. Cook (Eds.), *Equity theory: Psychological and sociological perspectives* (pp. 61-94). New York: Praeger.

Miedema, J., Van den Bos, K., & Vermunt, R. (2006). The influence of self-threats on fairness judgments and affective measures. *Social Justice Research*, *19*, 228-253.

Mikula, G., & Wenzel, M. (2000). Justice and social conflict. *International Journal of Psychology, 35,* 126–135.

Miller, D. T. (1999). The norm of self-interest.*American Psychologist*, *54*, 1053-1060.

Miller, D. T. (2001). Disrespect and the experience of injustice. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*, 527-553.

Miller, C. E. & Anderson, P. D. (1979). Group decision rules and the rejection of deviates. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 42, 354-363.

Miller, D. T., & Ratner, R. K. (1998). The disparity between the actual and assumed power of self-interest. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *74*, 53-62.

Mullen, E. (2007). The reciprocal relationship between affect and perceptions of fairness. In K. Törnblom & R. Vermunt (Eds.), *Distributive and procedural justice: Research and social implications* (pp. 15-37). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Montada, L., & Lerner, M. J. (1998) (Eds.). *Responses to victimizations and Belief in a Just World*. New York: Plenum Press.

Muraven, M., Tice, D.M., & Baumeister, R.F. (1998). Self-control as limited resource: Regulation depletion patterns. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74,* 774-789.

Obama, B. H. (2011, May). Speech on Death of Osama bin Laden. *New York Times*. Retrieved May 2nd 2011 from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/02/world/middleeast/02obama-text.html?_r=1&pagewanted=2

Onorato, R. S. & Turner, J. C. (2004). Fluidity in the self-concept: The shift from personal to social identity. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *34*, 257-278.

Orwell, G. A. (1974/1949). *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers.

Park, C. L., & Folkman, S. (1997). Meaning in the context of stress and coping. *Review of General Psychology*, *1*, 115-144.

Peters, S. (2005). *The social psychology of being better off than others*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Utrecht University, the Netherlands

Peters, S. L., Van den Bos, K., & Bobocel, D. R. (2004). The moral superiority effect: Self versus other differences in satisfaction with being overpaid. *Social Justice Research*, *17*, 257-273.

Pollard, P. (1992). Judgements about victims and attackers in depicted rapes: A review. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *31*, 307–326.

Postmes, T. & Spears, R. (1998). Deindividuation and antinormative behavior: a meta-analysis Psychological Bulletin, 123, 238-259.

Reber, A. S., Reber, E., & Allen, R. (2009). The penguin dictionary of psychology (4th Ed.). New York: Penguin.

Rivera, A. N., & Tedeschi, J. T. (1976). Public versus private reactions to positive inequity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *34*, 895-900.

Rosenblatt, A., Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., Pyszczynski, T., & Lyon, D. (1989). Evidence for terror management theory I: The effects of mortality salience on reactions to those who violate or uphold cultural values. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *57*, 681-690.

Runciman, W. G. (1966). *Relative deprivation and social justice: A study of attitudes to social inequality in twentieth-century England*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Rutjens, B. T., & Loseman, A. (2010). The society-supporting self: System justification and cultural worldview defense as different forms of self-regulation. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations,* 13, *241–250.*

Scheibe, K. E. (1985). Historical perspectives on the presented self. In B. R. Schlenker (Ed.), The self and social life (pp. 33-64). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Schmeichel, B. J., & Martens, A. (2005). Self-affirmation and mortality salience: Affirming values reduces worldview defense and death-thought accessibility. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *31*, 658-667.

Schmeichel, B. J., & Vohs, K. (2009). Self-affirmation and self-control: Affirming core values counteracts ego depletion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *96*, 770-782.

Schmitt, M. J., Neumann, R., & Montada, L. (1995). Dispositional sensitivity to befallen injustice. *Social Justice Research*, *8*, 385-407.

Schnabel, P. (Ed.). (2004). *Individualisering en sociale integratie* [Individualization and social integration]. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau

Sherman, D. K., & Cohen, G. L. (2002). Accepting threatening information: Self-affirmation and the reduction of defensive biases. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *11*, 119–123.

Sherman, D. K., & Cohen, G. L. (2006). The psychology of self-defense: Self-affirmation theory. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 38, pp. 183-242). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Sherman, D. K., Nelson, L. D., & Steele, C. M. (2000). Do messages about health risks threaten the self? Increasing the acceptance of threatening health messages via self-affirmation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 26*, 1046-1058.

Shotter, J. (1989). Rhetoric and the recovery of civil society. *Economy and Society*, *18*, 149-166.

Schroth, H. A., & Shah, P. P. (2000). Procedures, do we really want to know them? The effects of procedural justice on performance self-esteem. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *85*, 462-471.

Shrauger, J. S., & Schoeneman, T. J. (1979). Symbolic interactionist view of self-concept: Through the glass darkly. *Psychological Bulletin*, *86*, 549-573.

Skitka, L. J. (2003). Of different minds: An accessible identity model of justice reasoning. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *7*, 286-297.

Skitka, L. (2009). Exploring the "lost and found" of justice theory and research. *Social Justice Research*, *22*, 98-116

Skitka, L. J. (2010). The psychology of moral conviction. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 4,* 267 - 281.

Ståhl, T., Eek, D., & Kazemi, A. (2010). Rape victim blaming as system justification: The role of gender and activation of complementary stereotypes. *Social Justice Research*, *23*, 239–258.

Stapel, D. A., & Koomen, W. (2001). I, we, and the effects of others on me: How self-construal level moderates social comparison effects. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *80*, 766–781.

Stapel, D. A., Koomen, W., & Ruys, K. (2002). The effects of diffuse and distinct affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *83*, 60-74.

Steele, C. M. (1988). The psychology of self-affirmation: Sustaining the integrity of the self. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.) *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 21, pp. 261-302). New York: Academic Press.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Tangney, J. P., Baumeister, R. F., & Boone, A. L. (2004). Less pathology, better grades, and interpersonal success. *Journal of Personality*, *72*, 271-324.

Taylor, S. E., & Brown, J. (1988). Illusion and well-being: A social psychological perspective on mental health. *Psychological Bulletin*, *103*, 193-210.

Tesser, A. (1988). Toward a self-evaluation maintenance model of social behavior. In L. Berkowitz (Ed), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 21, pp 181-227). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Tesser, A. (2000). On the confluence of self-esteem maintenance mechanisms. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 4*, 290-299.

Trafimow, D., Triandis, H. C., & Goto, S. G. (1991). Some tests of the distinction between the private self and the collective self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *60*, 649-655.

Triandis, H. C. (1989). The self and social behavior in differing cultural contexts. *Psychological Review*, *96*, 506-520.

Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell.

Tyler, T. R. (2006). *Why people obey the law*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Tyler, T. R., & Blader, S. L. (2003). The group engagement model: Procedural justice, social identity, and cooperative behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *7*, 349-361.

Tyler, T. R., Boeckmann, R. J., Smith, H. J., & Huo, Y. J. (1997). *Social justice in a diverse society*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Tyler, T. R., & Lind, E. A. (1992). A relational model of authority in groups. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 25, pp. 115-191). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Tyler, T. R., & Smith, H. J. (1998). Social justice and social movements. In D. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (4th ed., Vol. 2, pp. 595-629). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Van den Bos, K. (2001). Uncertainty management: The influence of uncertainty salience on reactions to perceived procedural fairness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *80*, 931-941.

Van den Bos, K. (2002). Assimilation and contrast in organizational justice: The role of primed mindsets in the psychology of the fair process effect. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *89*, 866-880.

Van den Bos, K.(2005). What is responsible for the fair process effect? In J. Greenberg & J. A. Colquitt (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational justice: Fundamental questions about fairness in the workplace* (pp. 273-300). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Van den Bos, K. (2007). Rechtvaardigheid in alarmerende omstandigheden [Justice in alarming situations]. *Gedrag en Organisatie*, *20*, 327-341.

Van den Bos, K., Ham, J., Lind, E. A., Simonis, M., Van Essen, W. J., & Rijpkema, M. (2008). Justice and the human alarm system: The impact of exclamation points and flashing lights on the justice judgment process. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *44*, 201-219.

Van den Bos, K., & Lind, E. A. (2002). Uncertainty management by means of fairness judgments. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 34, pp. 1-60). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Van den Bos, K., Lind, E. A., Vermunt, R., & Wilke, H. A. M. (1997). How do I judge my outcome when I do not know the outcome of others? The psychology of the fair process effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *72*, 1034-1046.

Van den Bos, K., & Loseman, A. (2011). Radical worldview defense in reaction to personal uncertainty. In M. A. Hogg & D. L. Blaylock (Eds.), *Extremism and the psychology of uncertainty* (pp. 71-89). Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Van den Bos, K., Loseman, A., & Doosje, E.J. (2009). Waarom *jongeren radicaliseren en sympathie krijgen voor groepen: Onrechtvaardigheid, onzekerheid en bedreigde groepen* [Why youth radicalize and sympathize with groups: Injustice, uncertainty and group-threat]. Universiteit Utrecht/Universiteit Amsterdam.

Van den Bos, K., & Maas, M. (2009). On the psychology of the belief in a just world: Exploring experiential and rationalistic paths to victim blaming. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *35*, 1567-1578.

Van den Bos, K., & Miedema, J. (2000). Toward understanding why fairness matters: The influence of mortality salience on reactions to procedural fairness. J*ournal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *79*, 355-366.

Van den Bos, K., Miedema, J., Vermunt, R., & Zwenk, F. (2011). A self-activation hypothesis of affective reactions to fair and unfair events: Evidence for supraliminal and subliminal processes. *Social Justice Research*, *24*, 6-24.

Van den Bos, K., Peters, S. L., Bobocel, D. R., & Ybema, J. F. (2006). On preferences and doing the right thing: Satisfaction with advantageous inequity when cognitive processing is limited. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *42*, 273-289.

Van den Bos, K., Van Lange, P. A. M., Lind, E. A., Venhoeven, L. A., Beudeker, D. A., Cramwinckel, F. M., Smulders, L., & Van der Laan, J. (in press). On the benign qualities of behavioral disinhibition: Because of the prosocial nature of people behavioral disinhibition can weaken pleasure with getting more than you deserve. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

Van den Bos, K. Wilke, H. A. M.,& Lind, E. A. (1998). When do we need procedural fairness? The role of trust in authority. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *75*, 1449-1458.

Van den Bos, K., Wilke, H. A. M., Lind, E. A., & Vermunt, R. (1998). Evaluating outcomes by means of the fair process effect: Evidence for different processes in fairness and satisfaction judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *74*, 1493-1503.

Van Prooijen, J. –W. (2008). Egocentrism in procedural justice effects. In S.R. Thye and E. Lawler (Eds.), *Justice* (*Advances in Group Processes*; Vol. 25, pp. 29-54). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Van Prooijen, J. -W., De Cremer, D., Van Beest, I., Ståhl, T., & Van Lange, P.A.M. (2008). The egocentric nature of procedural justice: Social value orientation as moderator of reactions to decision-making procedures. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *44*, 1303-1315.

Van Prooijen, J. -W., Karremans, J. C., & Van Beest, I. (2006). Procedural justice and the hedonic principle: How approach versus avoidance motivation influences the psychology of voice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *91*, 686-697.

Van Prooijen, J. -W., Van den Bos, K., & Wilke, H. A. M. (2002). Procedural justice and status: Status salience as antecedent of the fair process effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *83*, 1353-1361.

Van Prooijen, J. -W., Van den Bos, K., & Wilke, H. A. M. (2004). Group belongingness and procedural justice: social inclusion and exclusion by peers affects the psychology of voice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *87,* 66-79*.*

Van Prooijen, J.-W., Van den Bos, K., & Wilke, H. A. M. (2005). Procedural justice and intragroup status: Knowing where we stand in a group enhances reactions to procedures. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *41*, 664–676.

Van Prooijen, J. -W., & Zwenk, F. (2009). Self-construal level and voice procedures: The individual self as psychological basis for procedural fairness effects. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 45*, 392-397.

Verplanken, B., & Holland, R. (2002). Motivated decision-making: Effects of activation and self-centrality of values on choices and behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,82*, 434-447.

Vohs, K. D., Baumeister, R. F., Ciarocco, N. J. (2005). Self-regulation and self-presentation. Regulation resource depletion impairs impression management and effortful self-presentation depletes regulation resources. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *88*, 632-657.

Vohs, K. D., Baumeister, R. F., Schmeichel, B. J., Twenge, J. M., Nelson, N. M., & Tice, D. M. (2008). Making choices impairs subsequent self-control: A limited-resource account of decision making, self-regulation, and active initiative. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *94*, 883-898.

Vonk, R. (Ed.). (1999). *Cognitieve sociale psychologie: Psychologie van het dagelijks denken en doen* [Cognitive social psychology: Psychology of daily thinking and doing]. Utrecht: Lemma.

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *54*, 1063-1070.

Wegner, D. M. & Bargh, J. A. (1998). Control and automaticity in social life. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (4th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 446-498). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Wicklund, R. & Duval, S. (1971).Opinion change and performance facilitation as a result of objective self-awareness. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *7*, 319-342.

Wijn, R. (2010). *A functional perspective on the justice judgment process and its consequences*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Utrecht University.

Wilde, O. F. O'F. W. (1854-1900). "Society exists only as a mental concept; in the real world there are only individuals." http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/o/oscarwilde385557.html

Zajonc, R. B. (1980). Feeling and thinking: Preferences need no inferences. *American Psychologist*, *35*, 151-175.

Zajonc, R. B. (1984). On the primacy of affect. *American Psychologist*, *39*, 117-123.

**Dankwoord**

*Acknowledgements*

Met speciale dank aan
Jeanet, Hedwig, Venu, Jan, Frank, Nicole, Gaudia, Joanne, Annette, Heinz en Susanne.

Promoveren is een proces van het voortdurend bijstellen van eigen verwachtingen. Als aio leer je niet alleen de wetenschappelijke praktijk goed kennen, maar ook jezelf. Beiden leveren obstakels op. Promoveren komt in essentie neer op het overwinnen van die obstakels en het voorliggende boekje is het bewijs dat ik heb overwonnen. Er hebben verscheidene mensen een rol gespeeld in deze overwinning en die wil ik hier graag bedanken.

In het bijzonder betreft dit natuurlijk Kees. De laatste ronde woog het zwaarst en je hebt behoorlijk wat helpen tillen. Ik wil je enorm bedanken voor het vele vertrouwen dat je in me had en dat je mij kon geven op die cruciale momenten. Daarnaast heb je me de kans gegeven om naast mijn promotieproject onderzoek naar radicalisering te doen. Een onvergetelijke ervaring en ik ben je daar erg dankbaar voor. Ik heb bovendien je snelle feedback zeer gewaardeerd. Ieder uur van dag én nacht kon ik feedback, tips, ideeën en nieuwe plannen verwachten. Er is een tijd geweest dat ik vrijwel ieder mailtje direct van antwoord kon voorzien, maar het lijkt me goed dat ik deze uitdaging nu achter me kan laten. ☺

Jaap, al ben je mijn naam waarschijnlijk alweer vergeten, ik wil je bedanken voor je creatieve oplossingen, het relativeren, je geweldig droge humor en de rust, de rust! Jammer dat je je in die uithoek van Nederland hebt genesteld! Patrick, ik heb volop genoten van jouw enthousiasme voor Duits eten en drinken én voor sociaalpsychologisch onderzoek. En Mark, zonder jou was ik natuurlijk helemaal geen aio geworden. Het werd geen Groningen en geen TMT, maar ik ben je dankbaar dat je me af en toe weer eens op sleeptouw nam, door Washington, Den Haag en op het vlak van de grote onderwerpen in deze wereld. Onvergetelijk is mijn samenwerking met Bertjan en wat was het een bijzonder project! En Jos, jij natuurlijk bedankt voor al je regelwerk, altijd en overal. Soms zag ik je zo hard rennen en zweten en puzzelen en bellen, dat ik bang was dat je het niet lang zou volhouden. Gelukkig heb je mijn tijd uitgediend!

Ik wil het KLI bedanken voor het uitgebreide onderwijscurriculum, de vele mogelijkheden om mijn onderzoek te presenteren en te bediscussiëren, de geboden kans om toonaangevende onderzoekers te spreken en natuurlijk het mooie congres in de bossen van Zeist. Ik heb vaak gehoord dat ik trots mag zijn op het KLI lidmaatschap en zo heb ik dat zelf ook echt ervaren. Ook was het leerzaam en bovendien heel leuk om deel uit te maken van de ASPO dissertatieprijs commissie. Ik vind het geweldig dat het ASPO deze verantwoordelijkheid aan aio's geeft. Natuurlijk was er buiten de uitreiking van de dissertatieprijs ook het steeds weer het herfstsymposium en het legendarische congres waardoor het ASPO zich absoluut onmisbaar heeft gemaakt.

Alle mensen die mij nadrukkelijk vroegen om een plekje in mijn dankwoord: bedankt!

Natuurlijk wil ik mijn vele collega's bedanken, van SOP, het KLI, de ASPO en daarbuiten. Ik heb in meer en mindere mate waardevolle en onvergetelijke herinneringen aan hen met wie ik heb samengewerkt, met wie ik heb gefilosofeerd over verschillende facetten van onderzoek, de wetenschap en het leven, met wie ik de noodzakelijke koffie's heb gedaan, verre en minder verre congressen heb bezocht, mooie reizen heb gemaakt, heb geborreld en gefeest. Ik heb tijdens mijn promotietraject een hele reeks originele individuen en fijne collega's om me heen gehad. Bedankt voor de mooie tijd die ik met jullie heb mogen beleven en voor jullie hulp en steun op moeilijker momenten. Wido, naast een enorme doorzetter was je een bijzonder fijne kamer- en buurtgenoot. Ik heb zoveel aan jou gehad! Susanne, met jou startte ik het aio-schap en in die tijd heb ik veel geleerd over horoscopen, mannen, het leven en andere ingewikkelde kwesties. Je gaf een verfrissende draai aan mijn aiobestaan! En natuurlijk was het allemaal zoveel minder leuk geweest zonder de VICI-boys Ron & Remco. Hoe fijn was het dat er twee rechtvaardige mannen waren waar ik op kon leunen en mee kon lachen—of het nu in Utrecht, Memphis of Albuquerque was: het was altijd feest! Esther, ik wil jou graag speciaal bedanken omdat je op wonderlijke wijze altijd voor me klaar staat: geen idee hoe je dat doet, maar het doet me goed. Bastiaan, onze samenwerking was geweldig en jouw gedrevenheid heeft ons een supercool artikel opgeleverd! Ik ben zo trots op ons! Het werd mij als aio ook bijzonder veel aangenamer gemaakt door fijne collega's als Lotte, Marieke de V, Mariëlle, Raymond en Frederike! Bovendien wil ik Esther, Guido, Daniël, Ron, Remco en Lotte enorm bedanken dat ze als proefpromotiecommissie de moeite willen nemen mijn proefschrift te lezen en hier zelfs over na te denken. Al mijn lieve collega's—en natuurlijk ook degenen die ik hier eigenlijk expliciet had moeten noemen, maar om verschillende redenen (zoals ruimtegebrek) niet heb gedaan—erg bedankt voor jullie betrokkenheid, steun en vrolijkheid. Ik geloof dat ik nooit meer zoveel alcohol zal consumeren als tijdens de vele momenten met jullie en dat is denk ik maar goed ook.

Ook mijn nieuwe collega's van het CIZ wil ik bedanken. Ik heb me niet eerder zo snel ergens thuis gevoeld. Het is heel fijn dat ik de laatste stress rond het promoveren nog bij jullie heb mogen spuien. En Lisa, nu staat het zwart op wit: je bent een geweldige buddy!

Er zijn veel vrienden en vriendinnen die ik wil bedanken, omdat het zonder hun aanwezigheid onmogelijk was geweest en zeker véél minder leuk om dit proefschrift te schrijven. De absolute top: Marieke F., jij bent een belangrijke constante in mijn leven! Het voelt alsof jij en Maarten er altijd zijn en dat voelt heel erg goed. Aefke, jij bent mijn trouwste wandelmaatje en liefste lotgenoot. Het is zo ontzettend fijn om jou in mijn buurt te hebben. Saskia H., een mens leert zijn beste vrienden kennen in de meest vreemde situaties. Ik had je niet willen missen. En ook Froukje, David, Wendy, Diane, Annelinde, Franca, Sanne, Nicole, Tim en Mariska: erg bedankt voor jullie interesse, steun, afleiding, advies en andere bijzonder prettige zaken die jullie wisten aan te brengen in mijn aio-bestaan.

Saskia D., enorm bedankt voor je hulp bij het ontwerpen van de omslag van dit proefschrift. Je bent de beste grafisch vormgeefster en illustratrice die ik ken en bovendien een geweldige vriendin!

Annousch, je ongeremde Amerikaanse optimisme en je heerlijke Drentse nuchterheid hebben me af en toe behoorlijk de goede kant op geduwd. Daarom en om nog meer redenen, ben ik heel blij dat je mijn paranimf wilt zijn.

Trijnie, Jaap, Daan, Josje, Maria en Chris, met jullie heb ik er een hele fijne familie bij gekregen. Altijd leuk als je vriendje niet alleen een mooi huis met een lieve Poekie met zich meebrengt, maar ook zo'n geweldige familie. Ik heb het erg met jullie getroffen.

Mijn grote familie wil ik bedanken voor hun betrokkenheid bij mijn wel en wee en bij mijn proefschrift. Natuurlijk bedank ik Nelien, omdat zij—zonder ook maar iets van mijn proefschrift te hebben gelezen—het eerste citaat van dit proefschrift naar mij toe slingerde! Tera en Gert, het is heel belangrijk voor me dat ik niet alleen sta. Speciaal wil ik mijn oma bedanken, mijn belangrijkste voorbeeld. Oma bedankt dat u er bent, met uw originele humor, tijdloze wijsheden en dat u ondanks de vele, vele kleinkinderen een nooit aflatende interesse heeft in waar ik mee bezig ben en hoe het met me gaat.

Mam, pap en Nelleke, jullie zullen altijd de mensen zijn die mij het meest hebben gevormd. Bedankt dat ik er ben en dat ik mag zijn. Jullie betrokkenheid bij mijn leven en jullie wens dat het me goed gaat is essentieel. Mijn proefschrift is maar een klein onderdeel, maar ik waardeer het dat jullie het belang hiervan voor mij op waarde wisten te schatten.

Reinier, je moet weten dat de beste dingen in het leven blijvend zijn. Daarnaast is er ook nog zoveel in ontwikkeling. Als eigenzinnig individu werd jij uiteindelijk toch meegetrokken in mijn promotieperikelen. Ik kan je niet voldoende bedanken voor je geweldige ondersteuning en al je inspanningen om me met beide benen op de grond te houden. Alles wordt alleen maar beter! Je bent voor mij net als rechtvaardigheid: ik zal je nooit helemaal doorgronden, maar je impact op mijn leven is enorm. Ik schijn het eens in mijn slaap te hebben gezegd, maar ik zeg het nu met minstens zoveel overtuiging:

Je bent zo ontzettend héél erg significant!


Annemarie,
1 augustus 2011

Annemarie was born on Mother's day, May 13th 1979. She grew up on a farmhouse in Drenthe surrounded by sheep, cows, chickens, ducks and cats.

Because of the rural surroundings, predators regularly caught 'her' animals. She thought that this was unfair and did not understand why her parents disagreed. At that moment, she decided to study the underlying processes of fairness reactions.

Annemarie graduated from Atheneum in 1998 and started to study psychology at the University of Nijmegen. She developed a broad interest in the absurdities of human behavior and studied both social psychology and the psychology of culture and religion.

For her masters' thesis she conducted research in Northern Ireland on the subtle denominators of psychological warfare, for which she received a research grant of the British Council. Back home, she conducted research in Meppel and Steenwijk on the psychology of shock, wrote her thesis on this topic and graduated.

Finally, she started her PhD-project at the University of Utrecht in 2004, resulting in the current dissertation. Now she knows that fairness reactions are driven by self-related processes which may lead to the expression of a whole range of different fairness reactions on objectively comparable situations.

In the course of her PhD-project, she also obtained a grant of the Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum (WODC) of the Ministry of Justice for a research-project on radicalization of dutch youth, which she conducted together with Kees van den Bos and Bertjan Doosje.

Currently, she has left the investigation of justice issues and aims to apply justice in working as a scientific researcher at the Centrum Indicatiestelling Zorg (CIZ).

The "Kurt Lewin Institute Dissertation Series" started in 1997.
Since 2009 the following dissertations have been published:

2009-1:   Marijke Leliveld: *Ethics in Economic Decision-Making*
2009-2:   Monique Pollmann: *Accuracy and Bias in Person Perception*
2009-3:   Krispijn Faddegon: *Regulatory Focus in Group Contexts*
2009-4:   Lieven Brebels: *Mirror, mirror on the wall… Procedural fairness as an evaluative and regulatory looking-glass self*
2009-5:   Daphne Wiersema: *Taking it personally: Self-esteem and the protection of self-related attitudes*
2009-6:   Judith D.M. Grob *Dial E for Emotion: Context and Consequences of Emotion Regulation*
2009-7:   Katherine Stroebe: *Is this about me? Responding to subtle discrimination - beyond an individual versus group perspective*
2009-8:   Menno Vos: *Identity patterns in diverse work groups: Improving social integration outcomes through relational identities*
2009-9:   Lennart Renkema: *Facing Death Together: Understanding The Consequences of Mortality Threats*
2009-10: Michael Vliek: *Group-based social comparison processes: An intragroup level of analysis*
2009-11: Karlijn Massar: *Unconscious rivals: The automatic evaluation of rivals in jealousy-evoking situations*
2009-12: Bart Terwel: *Origins and consequences of public trust: Towards an understanding of public acceptance of carbon dioxide capture and storage*
2009-13: Emma ter Mors: *Dealing with information about complex issues: The role of source perceptions*
2009-14: Martijn Veltkamp: *On the Instigation of Implicit Motivation: How Deprivation and Positive Affect Cause Motivated Behavior*
2009-15: Marret K. Noordewier: *Consistency and the unexpected*
2009-16: Sytske van der Velde: *Imitation of Emotion: How meaning affects the link between imitation and liking*
2009-17: Jacomijn Hofstra: *Attaching Cultures: The role of attachment styles in explaining majority members' acculturation attitudes*
2009-18: Jacqueline Tanghe: *Affect in Groups: Convergence, Conditions and Consequences*
2009-19: Anne Marike Lokhorst: *Using Commitment to Improve Environmental Quality*

2009-20: Jonathan van 't Riet: *Framing Health Communication Messages*

2009-21: Suzanne Pietersma: *Persuasive Health Communication: A Self-Perspective*

2009-22: Remco Wijn: *A functional perspective on the justice judgment process and its consequences*

2009-23: Niels van de Ven: *The bright side of a deadly sin: The psychology of envy*

2009-24: Anthon Klapwijk: *The Power of Interpersonal Generosity*

2010-1: Maarten Wubben: *Social Functions of Emotions in Social Dilemmas*

2010-2: Joyce Rupert: *Diversity faultlines and team learning*

2010-3: Daniel Lakens: *Abstract Concepts in Grounded Cognition*

2010-4: Luuk Albers: *Double You? Function and Form of Implicit and Explicit Self-Esteem*

2010-5: Matthijs Baas: *The Psychology of Creativity: Moods, Minds, and Motives*

2010-6: Elanor Kamans: *When the Weak Hit back: Studies on the Role of Power in Intergroup Conflict*

2010-7: Skyler Hawk: *Changing Channels: Flexibility in Empathic Emotion Processes*

2010-8: Nailah Ayub: *National Diversity and Conflict: The Role of Social Attitudes and Beliefs*

2010-9: Job van der Schalk: *Echoing Emotions: Reactions to Emotional Displays in Intergroup Context*

2010-10: Nevra Cem: *Organizational citizenship behavior and counterproductive work behavior: Cross-cultural comparisons between Turkey and the Netherlands*

2010-11: Ron Broeders: *On Situated and Embodied Knowledge Regarding Moral Issues*

2010-12: Margriet Braun: *Dealing with a deviant group member*

2010-13: Dennis Bleeker: *Representing or defecting? The pursuit of individual upward mobility in low status groups*

2010-14: Petra Hopman: *Group Members Reflecting on Intergroup Relations*

2010-15: Janneke Oostrom: *New Technology in Personnel Selection: The Validity and Acceptability of Multimedia Tests*

2010-16: Annefloor Klep: *The Sharing of Affect: Pathways, Processes, and Performance*

2010-17: Geertje Schuitema: *Priceless policies. Factors influencing the acceptability of transport pricing policies*

2010-18: Femke van Horen: *Breaking the mould on copycats: What makes product imitation strategies successful?*

2010-19: Niek van Ulzen: *Exploring affective perception and social action*

2010-20: Simon Dalley: *Women's body dissatisfaction and restrictive eating behaviour: A tyranny of a thin-ideal or a fear of fat?*

2010-21: Paul Preenen: *Challenge at Work: A matter of give and take*

2010-22: Katarzyna Ewa Kubacka: *The Rules of Attraction: Trust, Anxiety and Gratitude*

2010-23: Loes Kessels: *May I have your attention please? A neuroscientific study into message attention for health information*

2011-1: Elze Ufkes: *Neighbor-to-neighbor conflicts in multicultural neighborhoods*

2011-2: Kim van Erp: *When worlds collide. The role of justice, conflict and personality for expatriate couples' adjustment*

2011-3: Yana Avramova: *How the mind moods*

2011-4: Jan Willem Bolderdijk: *Buying people: The persuasive power of money*

2011-5: Nina Regenberg: *Sensible Moves*

2011-6: Sonja Schinkel: *Applicant reactions to selection events: Interactive effects of fairness, feedback and attributions*

2011-7: Suzanne Oosterwijk: *Moving the Mind: Embodied Emotion Concepts and their Consequences*

2011-8: Ilona McNeill: *Why We Choose, How We Choose, What We Choose: The Influence of Decision Initiation Motives on Decision Making*

2011-9: Shaul Shalvi: *Ethical Decision Making: On Balancing Right and Wrong*

2011-10: Joel Vuolevi: *Incomplete Information in Social Interactions*

2011-11: Lukas Koning: *An instrumental approach to deception in bargaining*

2011-12: Petra Tenbült: *Understanding consumers' attitudes toward novel food technologies*

2011-13: Ashley Hoben: *An Evolutionary Investigation of Consanguineous Marriages*

2011-14: Barbora Nevicka: *Narcissistic Leaders: The Appearance of Success*

2011-15: Annemarie Loseman: *Me, Myself, Fairness, and I: On the Self-Related Processes of Fairness Reactions*