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Asymmetrical Effects of Justice Sensitivity Perspectives on Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior

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Three studies explore the effects of perspective-specific justice sensitivity on indicators of both prosocial behavior (i.e., existential guilt, solidarity, and responsibility ascriptions towards the disadvantaged) and antisocial behavior (i.e., the willingness to transgress a norm in a moral temptation dilemma). On the basis of theoretical considerations and earlier findings it is expected that being sensitive towards injustice from a beneficiary's perspective is associated positively with prosocial and negatively with antisocial behavior, whereas the opposite should be true for being sensitive towards injustice from a victim's perspective. The results from all three studies support these hypotheses. It is argued that JS-beneficiary indicates a genuine, "other-oriented" concern for justice and social responsibility, whereas JS-victim indicates a mixture of "self-related" and justice-related concerns.

KEY WORDS: justice sensitivity; prosocial behavior; antisocial behavior; moral concerns.

Research on moral behavior has identified several situation and personality factors that contribute uniquely or in interaction to the explanation of moral, prosocial, and norm-compliant versus deceitful, antisocial, and delinquent behavior. Among the most powerful situation factors are behavioral costs and benefits and the presence of others who act as models, exert social control, or contribute to the diffusion of responsibility (Piliavin and Piliavin, 1972; Piliavin *et al*., 1981; Schwartz, 1977). Studies on deceit (Batson *et al*., 1997, 1999; Hartshorne and May, 1928) and bystander intervention (Clarkson, 1996) demonstrate how strongly moral behavior depends on the situational context.

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Personality factors predicting pro- and antisocial behavior, on the other hand, can be broadly classified into two groups. One group contains variables that are inductively derived from consistent and stable individual differences in moral behavior. Hartshorne and May's (1928) early research on deceit provides a good example of this type of personality variables. These authors investigated the transsituational consistency of honesty. The second group of variables contains personality constructs such as impulsivity (White *et al*., 1994), self-control (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990), delay of gratification (Riddle and Roberts 1977), empathy (Davis, 1983), social responsibility (Berkowitz and Daniels, 1964), denial of responsibility (Schwartz, 1977), neutralization techniques (Sykes and Matza, 1957), belief in a just world (Rubin and Peplau, 1973), moral mandates (Skitka, 2002), social value orientation (DeCremer and van Lange, 2001), and level of moral judgment (Kohlberg, 1981). This second group of personality variables differs from the first group in that they are deduced from theory and are embedded in action and decision models (Bierhoff and Rohrmann, 2004; Blasi, 1980; DeCremer and van Lange, 2001; Montada *et al*., 1986; Schmitt *et al*., 2000; Schwartz and Howard, 1980). The present paper addresses the role of a variable from this second group, justice sensitivity (JS). Although justice sensitivity can be linked theoretically with pro- and antisocial behavior, these links have hardly been investigated empirically so far.

Results from several studies suggest that JS is a trait (Dar and Resh, 2001, 2003; Huseman *et al*., 1985, 1987; Lovas, 1995; Lovas and Pirhacova, 1996; Lovas and Wolt, 2002; Schmitt, 1996; Van den Bos *et al*., 2003). Schmitt *et al*. (1995) demonstrated the convergent validity of four JS indicators (frequency, anger, intrusiveness, punitiveness) and the discriminant validity of these indicators vis-à-vis measures of theoretically distinct constructs such as frustration tolerance. Schmitt and Mohiyeddini (1996) found that persons with high scores on JS reacted with stronger resentment to a real life disadvantage than persons with low scores on JS. Mohiyeddini and Schmitt (1997) replicated this result for individuals who were treated unfairly in an achievement context. In a field study by Schmitt and Dörfel (1999), justice sensitivity amplified the effect of procedural fairness at work on job satisfaction and psychosomatic well-being. Finally, longitudinal studies by Mohiyeddini (1998) and Schmitt *et al*. (in press) found that JS is no less stable than are personality traits.

Mohiyeddini and Schmitt (1997) proposed to differentiate the justice sensitivity construct according to a person's role in an unfair episode: A person can either be the victim, the beneficiary, or a neutral observer of unfairness. Schmitt *et al*. (in press) found that JS is partly, but not entirely, perspective-specific. Whereas the observer's and the beneficiary's perspectives converge to a substantial degree, both correlate only moderately with the victim's perspective. More importantly, the pattern of correlations with external variables suggests that the effects of the two JS perspectives on justice- and morality-related perceptions,

attitudes, and behavior are asymmetrical: Whereas JS-beneficiary was highly correlated with "other-related" concerns, JS-victim was more closely associated with "self-related" concerns and neuroticism. The entire correlational pattern suggests that JS-beneficiary and JS-observer reflect justice concerns more purely than does JS-victim, which rather seems to be a *mixture* of moral concerns and self-protective or even egoistic motivation.

Experimental support for this interpretation comes from a study by Fetchenhauer and Huang (2003). These authors investigated how the different perspectives of JS affect strategic decisions in experimental games. They found that participants high in JS-beneficiary made more egalitarian offers to their co-players and rejected unfair offers by their co-players more often (even at the cost of getting nothing) than participants low in JS-beneficiary. By contrast, players high in JS-victim tended to behave in a selfish manner compared to individuals low in this trait.

Both the Schmitt *et al.* (in press) and the Fetchenhauer and Huang (2003) studies suggest that the beneficiary perspective and the victim perspective have asymmetrical effects on fairness-related behavior. The present paper seeks to explore the nature of these asymmetric effects in more detail, focusing on prosocial emotions such as existential guilt (Study 1), on prosocial behavioral intentions such as willingness to engage in solidary behavior in order to reduce objective inequalities (Study 2), and on antisocial behavioral intentions such as committing unlawful deeds when the situation is enticing (Study 3).

The Prosocial Effects of JS-Beneficiary

Being sensitive toward injustice from a beneficiary's perspective appears to signify an intrinsic concern for justice, fairness, and "other-related" concerns. The present paper focuses on the psychological and behavioral implications of such concerns. One of these implications is that the two JS perspectives should predict different reactions towards perceiving oneself in a privileged position, that is, being the beneficiary of unfairness. The moral emotion closely associated with this perception is guilt.

In this regard, it is important to distinguish two qualities of guilt: First, guilt can result from immoral thoughts or actions (e.g., Tetlock *et al.*, 2000; see also Gollwitzer, 2004). This form of guilt may be called "actional guilt" (Hoffman, 1984). It is evoked by actions which one ought not to have committed, or thoughts which one ought not to have thought. In other words: It is the perception of a moral counterfactual that evokes feelings of guilt. Individuals are motivated to reduce feelings of guilt by subsequent prosocial acts (e.g., Carlsmith and Gross, 1969; Freedman *et al.*, 1967; Konecni, 1972; Konoske *et al.*, 1979), by penance, or by "moral cleansing" strategies (Tetlock *et al.*, 2000).

But guilt can also be experienced without any relation to personal thoughts or actions; this second type of guilt results from being the beneficiary of objective inequalities such as living in a "first world" country, belonging to a relatively high-status group, being physically attractive, etc. Although these inequalities stem from factors beyond the person's control, they can be interpreted in terms of (in)justice, and therefore, lead to justice-related emotions. This form of guilt has been labeled "existential guilt" in earlier studies (Montada *et al*., 1986; Montada and Schneider, 1989; Schmitt *et al*., 2000).

Existential guilt and actional guilt are genuinely fairness- and moral-related emotions; they refer to one's moral and social responsibilities, standards, and obligations (which is why we propose to use the term "other-related" concerns). If JS-beneficiary is, as we assume, associated with such "other-related" concerns, then it should be positively correlated with both forms of guilt. That is, JS-beneficiary should be positively correlated with existential guilt in situations in which one's objective privileges are contrasted against the bad fate of others. Furthermore, persons high on JS-beneficiary should be motivated to avoid actional guilt; thus, JS-beneficiary is expected to be negatively correlated with immoral thoughts and actions because persons high on JS-beneficiary cannot justify or legitimize immoral desires and immoral actions to themselves.

The Antisocial Effects of JS-Victim

Recent studies suggest that JS-victim does not promote prosocial and normative, but rather selfish and non-normative behavior. Fetchenhauer and Huang (2003) found that JS-victim correlates positively with proposing unequal distributions in ultimatum games. In the Schmitt *et al*. (in press) study, JS-victim is correlated positively with Macchiavelliansm, belief in an unjust world, paranoia, neuroticism, and jealousy. This pattern supports the interpretation that people high in JS-victim tend to view the world as an unjust place and cast a suspicious eye on others who might exploit them.

The functionality of suspiciousness has been set forth by Axelrod (1984), who has argued that the "tit-for-tat" rule of social exchange can warrant long-term balance and stability only if *all* participants involved in an exchange situation have developed a warning system for being exploited, i.e., the capacity to identify those who attempt to violate the "tit-for-tat" rule. Fear of being exploited may be an adaptive mechanism that safeguards against the unfair behavior of some group-members. Some studies even suggest a hard-wired cheater detection module (Cosmides and Tooby, 1992).

If individuals high in JS-victim act on the assumption that others try to exploit them and sometimes do so, they will take tempting situations as opportunities to balance their account and get even with the world. Although they know and will admit that their behavior *appears* to be at odds with moral principles, they

will argue that it was justified and therefore not really immoral. It follows that in contrast to people high on JS-beneficiary, it should be easier for people high on JS-victim to generate arguments that legitimize their own immoral thoughts and actions. Such arguments have been labeled palliative comparison, euphemistic labeling, misconstruing the consequences, and diffusion and denial of responsibility (Bandura, 1990; Bandura *et al*., 1996; Batson *et al*., 1999; Bersoff, 1999; Sykes and Matza, 1957).

This line of argumentation refers to actional guilt, but it can be extended to existential guilt as well. As mentioned earlier, existential guilt refers to the uneasiness of being the beneficiary of privileges and advantages beyond one's personal responsibility. Individuals high in JS-beneficiary should interpret such privileges as unjust or undeserved, and feel obliged to reduce these inequalities if possible, for example, by expressing solidarity with the disadvantaged, by donating money and goods, and by engaging in public actions such as political appeals. If JS-victim, on the other hand, is a mixture of self-related concerns and genuine justice concerns, individuals high in JS-victim should perceive objective advantages as a case of injustice, but they should not experience any responsibility to reduce such inequalities. Therefore, JS-victim should be either uncorrelated, or even negatively correlated with existential guilt towards the disadvantaged, with responsibility to reduce the inequality, and with the willingness to engage in solidary behavior towards the disadvantaged.

To sum up, we expect that JS is related to several important justice- and morality-related variables such as existential guilt, responsibility ascriptions, willingness to engage in solidary behavior, but also immoral thoughts and actions, and the justifiability of such immoral actions. Study 1 focuses on the relation between the two JS perspectives and feelings of existential guilt towards objectively deprived, i.e., physically unattractive individuals. Study 2 investigates the willingness to engage in solidary actions in order to reduce objective status inequalities between one's privileged ingroup (i.e. West Germans) and a lower-status outgroup (i.e., East Germans). Study 3 focuses on the willingness to commit wrongful acts in situations in which an immoral behavioral option is extremely enticing. The hypotheses concerning the asymmetrical effects of JS-beneficiary and JS-victim on pro- and antisocial behavior are formulated for each of these three studies, separately.

STUDY 1

Beauty is a privilege. Numerous studies have shown that physical attractiveness is related to various indicators of life success (Adams, 1977; Dion *et al*., 1972). Unattractive people have a higher risk of being rejected and denied access to desirable resources (Allon, 1982; Landy and Sigall, 1974). Although physical attractiveness can be influenced to some extent by diet, exercising, and other

controllable factors, a large proportion of attractiveness variance is inherited, a matter of good or bad luck, and thus arbitrary. Arbitrary inequality raises the justice question. The justice issue is probably most relevant for those who were deprived from beauty by nature. However, differences in attractiveness also seem to be a justice issue for observers. Dion and Dion (1987) found that observers ascribed more positive character attributes and more life success to attractive targets than to unattractive targets. The strength of the attractiveness effect depended on the justice motive as measured by the belief in a just world. It seems that observers who believe in a just world have a stronger need to assume that beauty is deserved. If inequality in attractiveness is a matter of justice for the disadvantaged and for observers, it might also be an issue for those who are privileged and who benefit from their superior attractiveness.

Study 1 is built on this assumption. We expect that individuals high in JS-beneficiary react with feelings of existential guilt when confronted with the disadvantageous situation of those who suffer from their physical unattractiveness. No such effect was expected for persons high in JS-victim.

Method

Procedure, Design, and Material

Participants were shown photographs of six targets who were objectively very unattractive according to ratings obtained in a pretest. Gender of participant and gender of target were identical. That is, female participants were shown pictures of female targets, and male participants were shown pictures of male targets. The average degree of unattractiveness did not differ between male or female targets. Targets were either extremely obese, had ugly facial scars resulting from accidents or surgery, or suffered from an unpleasant dermatological disease. Each photograph was accompanied by a short story in which the target described the negative consequences of being unattractive. Photographs, stories, and questionnaires were composed into a booklet. The first part of the booklet contained the six photographs, the short stories, and the items for measuring the dependent variables (see below). The second part of the booklet contained the JS items.

Sample

The booklet was distributed among a sample of 400 persons. Of those, 178 completed and returned the booklet. Of those, 91 were male and 87 female. The sample was heterogeneous with regard to education, occupation, and socioeconomic status. Age ranged from 16 to 62 years ($M = 27$). Participants' own attractiveness (objective or subjective) was not controlled for. Given the random

distribution strategy used here, it is assumed that participants' range of attractiveness was average.

Justice Sensitivity Items

JS-victim and JS-beneficiary were measured with two 10-item scales described in Schmitt *et al*. (in press). Perspectives were separated from each other by short instructions. The instruction for the victim perspective was: "People react differently to unfair situations. How about you? First, we will consider cases where you are disadvantaged." Item examples for the JS-victim scale are "It makes me angry when I am treated worse than others," or "It burdens me to be criticized for things that are being overlooked with others." The instruction for the beneficiary scale was: "Finally, consider situations in which you are advantaged and someone else is disadvantaged." Item examples for the JS-beneficiary scale are "I feel guilty when I receive better treatment than others," and "It bothers me when someone tolerates things with me that other people are being criticized for." Items had to be answered on six-point rating scales ranging from 0 (not at all true) to 5 (absolutely true). The JS-victim scale had an internal consistency of $\alpha = .82$, the JS-beneficiary scale had an internal consistency of $\alpha = .90$. The intercorrelation between the two scales was $r = .28$.

Dependent Variables

Dependent variables were adopted from previous existential guilt studies (Montada *et al*., 1986; Montada and Schneider, 1989; Schmitt *et al*., 2000). After each of the six target persons were presented, three emotions were measured with a single item each: (1) existential guilt, (2) sympathetic compassion, and (3) anger at the disadvantaged. Furthermore, eight judgments were assessed with a single item each: (1) justification of own privilege, (2) justification of disadvantage as self-inflicted, (3) controllability of attractiveness, (4) denial of disadvantage, (5) injustice of disadvantage, (6) causal relation between own advantage and disadvantage of others, (7) centrality of issue (e.g., "It is important to properly address the problems of unattractive men and women."), (8) denial of responsibility for reducing inequality. Scores were aggregated across the six target persons to obtain reliable scales for each of these emotions and judgments. Cronbach's alphas ranged from .67 (denial of disadvantage) to .87 (denial of responsibility) (mean $\alpha = .80$).

Results

A path model was specified with the three emotions as final criteria, the seven judgments as intervening variables, and the JS dimensions as independent variables. We decided to pursue a path analytic approach instead of an ordinary

regression model because our theory assumes a specific psychological process (cf. Schmitt *et al*., 2000). In line with prominent action theories and cognitive emotion theories, we argue that emotions (existential guilt) are shaped by cognitions (justice judgments), which in turn depend on personality variables (JS). Although technically cognitions and emotions are both dependent variables, they differ theoretically in their psychological distance to JS, i.e., whether they are considered immediate (cognitions) or indirect (emotions) consequences of JS.

In line with our conjecture, JS-beneficiary had a unique positive effect on existential guilt ($\beta = .37$, $t = 4.08$; $p < .005$). In contrast to previous studies (Schmitt *et al*., 2000), this effect was direct, i.e., it was not mediated by cognition. JS-victim had neither a direct nor an indirect effect on either existential guilt or compassion. Its only unique regression effect was directed at denial of responsibility ($\beta = .39$; $t = 3.99$; $p < .005$). No other effects of JS-beneficiary or JS-victim were significant.

STUDY 2

Even 15 years after the reunification of the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and the former Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), the standard of living continues to be considerably lower in East Germany than in West Germany. This is true despite enormous amounts of money that have been (and still are being) transferred from West Germany to East Germany. Not surprisingly, the deservedness of these financial transfers has become a matter of public controversy. A considerable proportion of West Germans feel that East Germans do not deserve as much support as they receive. Some West Germans even maintain that the German unification has created a reverse deprivation with East Germans now being privileged and West Germans disadvantaged. We used this natural inter-group context for testing our hypotheses. The West German participants of our survey were asked about their willingness to contribute to improving the living conditions in East Germany. A positive longitudinal effect on solidarity was predicted for JS-beneficiary. By contrast, West Germans high in JS-victim were expected to be primarily concerned with preserving their *own* standard of living, and be reluctant to approve of political measures aimed at improving the situation in East Germany at the likely cost of West Germans.

Method

Design, Procedure, and Sample

Data were collected on two occasions of measurement in Spring 1996 and in Spring 1998. Questionnaires were sent out by mail and answered anonymously. A total of 3170 German citizens drawn by registration offices of 18 German cities and

from the electronic telephone register participated in the study. The present analysis is based on a sub-sample of participants who had lived only in West Germany after World War II. Of those, 920 and 398 participants provided complete data for the constructs of the present analysis at the first and second occasions, respectively. At the first occasion, age of this sub-sample ranged from 14 to 86 years with $M = 45$ and $SD = 16$ years. The proportion of males was 58%. The sample was representative according to many, but not all demographic variables. Men and participants with higher education were slightly overrepresented.

Variables

A large number of constructs were assessed (Schmitt and Maes, 1998, 2002; Maes and Schmitt, 1999). The present analysis is focused on the cross-sectional and longitudinal links among the three constructs of primary interest here, JS-victim, JS-beneficiary, and solidarity. The two JS perspectives were measured, as in Study 1, with the two 10-item scales described in Schmitt *et al.* (in press). Cronbach's alpha of the JS-victim scale was $\alpha = .89$ for Time 1, and $\alpha = .91$ for Time 2, respectively. Cronbach's alpha of the JS-beneficiary scale was $\alpha = .92$ for Time 1, and $\alpha = .93$ for Time 2, respectively.

For measuring solidarity, an index was devised by aggregating across a list of 52 items. These items represented means to reduce the East–West-gap, which included political and institutional directions as well as the participant's intention to approve of and support these directions. Among those items were affirmative action strategies such as preferring East German applicants on the job market, setting an upper limit to salaries of West Germans, accepting a salary deduction in West Germany that would be used for creating jobs in East Germany, and granting special tax deductions for East Germans. Alpha of this index was .79.

Results

Table I contains the correlations among JS-victim, JS-beneficiary, and solidarity at the two occasions. As expected, JS-beneficiary correlates positively with solidarity, whereas JS-victim is not reliably correlated with solidarity.

In order to reveal the longitudinal causal effect structure, solidarity 2 was regressed on solidarity 1, JS-beneficiary 1 and JS-victim 1. Controlling for solidarity 1 is necessary to avoid spurious longitudinal effects of JS that are due to the cross-sectional correlations among the constructs and their stability. Controlling for the stability of solidarity makes it possible to determine how much differential *change* in solidarity from Time 1 to Time 2 can be attributed to individual differences in JS at Time 1.

Figure 1 displays the results of this analysis. The signs of the parameter estimates are consistent with our predictions. JS-beneficiary at Time 1 has the

Table I. Correlations Among JS-Beneficiary, JS-Victim, and Solidarity at Two Occasions of Measurement

	JS-Vic_1	JS-Vic_2	JS-Ben_1	JS-Ben_2	Solidar_1
JS-Vic_2	.62*				
JS-Ben_1	.31*	.12*			
JS-Ben_2	.16*	.24*	.66*		
Solidar_1	−.01	.07	.20*	.25*	
Solidar_2	−.01	.09	.26*	.30*	.66*

Note. JS-Vic, JS-victim; JS-Ben, JS-beneficiary. Numbers after underscores signify occasion of measurement.
*$p < .05$.

effect of increasing solidarity from Time 1 to Time 2 ($p = .007$), whereas JS-victim has the opposite effect. However, this effect is small and slightly above the significance threshold ($p = .063$).

DISCUSSION OF STUDIES 1 AND 2

The results of Studies 1 and 2 are consistent with our predictions. The results agree well with our speculation that JS-victim is a mixture of genuine justice (or "other-related") concerns and "self-related" concerns. This speculation is supported by a pattern of results that consists of three elements. First, JS-victim and JS-beneficiary correlate positively. Second, when linked with prosocial behavior, JS-victim yields a small or insignificant correlation, whereas JS-beneficiary yields a more substantial positive correlation. Third, as soon as both JS perspectives are combined as predictors of prosocial criteria in multiple regression analyses, the unique regression effect of JS-victim turns negative whereas the unique regression

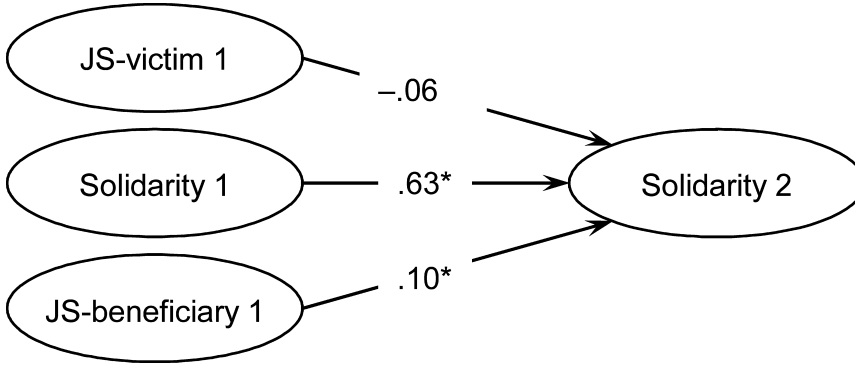

Fig. 1. Effects of JS-beneficiary and JS-victim on change in solidarity (Study 2). *Note*. Entries are standardized regression coefficients.

effect of JS-beneficiary remains positive. A plausible interpretation of this pattern that JS-victim contains two components with opposite motivational implications: (1) a genuine moral concern component that motivates a person to help others who are in need and (2) a self-defensive component. These two components counteract with the net result that the person's open reaction to disadvantaged others may appear indifferent. Probably, this indifference reflects a conflict between justice for others and justice for oneself.

STUDY 3

In contrast to Studies 1 and 2, Study 3 focuses on antisocial rather than on prosocial behavior. More specifically, we investigated whether the two JS perspectives are related to immoral thoughts and actions in a moral temptation dilemma (cf. Gollwitzer, 2004).[4] Everyday life usually contains an immeasurable number of such temptation situations. By definition, they imply a decision conflict between a moral and an immoral behavioral option. Choosing the immoral option implies not only the breach of formal norms (such as laws) or social norms (such as informal rules of conduct or implicit behavioral expectations), but also of personal standards: Based on the premise that the majority of people acknowledges the moral implications of their actions, immoral decisions should evoke dissonance and self-discrepancy to varying degrees (Steele, 1988). Given the findings from the Schmitt *et al*. (in press) and the Fetchenhauer and Huang (2003) studies, JS-beneficiary should be correlated negatively with willingness to engage in immoral behavior. On the other hand, JS-victim should be correlated positively with willingness to engage in immoral behavior.

We furthermore expect that this asymmetric effect is *not* due to a difference in the personal conceptualization of moral *wrongfulness*, but rather to a difference in the *justifiability* of an immoral act.

Method

A written description of three tempting situations, followed by two behavioral options, was presented to each participant. The immoral option was enticing because it offered an easy way to obtain an attractive outcome. In the moral option, the desirable result was associated with costs. The immoral option was always a clear violation of a social, moral, and legal norm. At the same time, types of norm violations were chosen that are known to occur frequently in everyday life.

In order to increase the generalizability of results and decrease consistency concerns, two sets of situations were chosen, each containing three situations.

[4]Parts of the data described in Study 3 have been published in Gollwitzer (2004).

Participants were randomly assigned to either Set A or Set B. The transgressions of Set A were: (A1) stealing a shirt from a store, (A2) free-riding the subway, and (A3) deceiving an insurance company by falsely reporting a stolen bicycle. The immoral options of Set B were: (B1) employing a moonlighter for renovating one's house, (B2) purchasing a stolen TV set, and (B3) deceiving a school teacher with plagiarized homework. The three situations in each set were combined in a way that should make the two sets equivalent.

After each situation, participants were first asked to indicate (a) whether or not they would choose the enticing but immoral option (vignette transgression), and (b) whether they had ever committed this or a similar unlawful behavior in reality (real transgression). Afterwards, the personal justifiability and the moral wrongfulness of the immoral behavioral option were assessed with single items. If the participant chose the immoral option, the justifiability item read "I could justify this deed to myself," the wrongfulness item read "This act did not seem wrong or criminal to me." If the participant refrained from the immoral option, the justifiability item read "I could not justify this deed to myself," the wrongfulness item read "This act did seem wrong or criminal to me." Participants were asked to indicate their amount of agreement with these statements on a six-point rating scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely).

JS was measured with the Schmitt *et al.* (in press) scales (see Study 1). The internal consistency was $\alpha = .85$ for the JS-victim scale, and $\alpha = .89$ for the JS-beneficiary scale. The scale scores were positively correlated ($r = .11$; $p = .06$).

Sample

Four-hundred booklets were randomly distributed at the University of Trier, in local schools and in homes for the elderly. Within four weeks, 305 booklets (72.5%) were returned. After eliminating participants whose native language was not German or who had too many missing values, a sample of $N = 291$ participants remained. Of those, 148 received Set A of the dilemmas and 143 Set B. The sample was demographically heterogeneous and contained individuals from a broad range of professions. Thirty percent of the participants were students from public schools; 24% of the participants were university students; 41.6% of the participants were male. Age ranged from 17 to 88 years ($M = 32.5$, SD $= 16.8$).

Results

First, the two sets of vignettes were checked for equivalence concerning their severity. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to rate the moral severity of each of the three criminal deeds presented on a 0–5 scale. It turned

out that the mean severity across the three vignettes did not significantly differ between the two sets of A and B (t[df = 289] = 1.05; $p = .30$).

Next, in order to obtain an aggregate index of immoral behavior, the number of transgressions was counted for each participant, separately for "vignette transgressions" and "real transgressions." These variables can range from 0 (always moral option) to 3 (always immoral option). The vignette transgression index had a mean of $M = 1.30$ (SD = 0.89), the real transgression index had a mean of $M = 1.06$ (SD = 0.82). The correlation between both indices was $r = .45$ ($p < .05$).

Justice Sensitivity and Choice of Option

Using multiple regression analysis, both indicators of immoral behavior were predicted from the two JS-scales. As expected, JS-beneficiary had a negative regression effect on the number of vignette transgressions ($\beta = -.24$; $t = 4.23$; $p < .001$), and on the number of real transgressions ($\beta = -.20$; $t = 3.44$; $p = .001$). Also in line with our expectations, JS-victim had a positive regression effect on the number of vignette transgressions ($\beta = .21$; $t = 3.67$; $p < .001$), and a positive, albeit not significant, effect on the number of real transgressions ($\beta = .09$; $t = 1.59$; $p = .11$).

Additionally, the effects of the two JS-scales on vignette and real transgression were estimated separately for each scenario via logistic regressions. Results are presented in Table II. In every scenario except insurance fraud, JS-victim is associated with transgression, whereas JS-beneficiary is associated with norm-compliance. The effect of JS-victim was highest in the moonlighter scenario (vignette transgression). As a general pattern, slightly higher effects were obtained for vignette transgressions (average $R^2 = 11.3\%$) than for real transgressions (average $R^2 = 8.8\%$).

Justice Sensitivity and Moral Concerns

The two items assessing the justifiability and the moral wrongfulness of the deed were aggregated across dilemmas. The scenario-unspecific index for justifiability correlated $r = -.27$ ($p < .001$) with JS-beneficiary and $r = .11$ ($p = .11$) with JS-victim. The scenario-unspecific index for wrongfulness correlated $r = -.18$ ($p = .01$) with JS-beneficiary and $r = -.27$ ($p < .001$) with JS-victim. This means that individuals high in JS-beneficiary tended to consider transgressions as less justifiable and more morally wrongful than did individuals low in JS-beneficiary. In contrast, the correlation between JS-victim and justifiability signifies that individuals high in JS-victim tended to consider transgressions

Table II. Logistic Regression Analyses of Case-Specific Transgression Decisions on JS Perspectives

Scenario	Logistic regression weight (*b*)		R^{2a}	χ^2
	JS-Ben	JS-Vic		
Shoplifting				
Vignette	−.74*	.23	.10	6.74*
Real	−.87*	.33	.19	19.58*
Free-riding				
Vignette	−.43*	.30	.07	7.29*
Real	−.44*	.41	.08	6.67*
Insurance fraud				
Vignette	−.41*	.45	.07	6.82*
Real	.14	−.80*	.11	8.69*
Moonlighter				
Vignette	−.27	1.58*	.25	16.86*
Real	−.21	.17	.02	2.11
Stolen goods				
Vignette	−.67*	.44	.15	14.55*
Real	−.40	.18	.04	2.62
Homework fraud				
Vignette	−.20	.33	.04	3.89
Real	−.07	.68*	.09	7.81*

Note. JS-Vic, JS-victim; JS-Ben, JS-beneficiary. Decisions were coded 0 (non-transgressors) and 1 (transgressors). $119 \leq N \leq 148$.
[a]Nagelkerke's R^2.
*$p < .05$.

as more morally wrongful than did individuals low in JS-victim, but they were more able to justify their wrongful behavior to themselves.

DISCUSSION OF STUDY 3

Consistent with our expectations, we found that individuals high in JS-victim tended to choose the immoral option, whereas individuals high in JS-beneficiary tended to resist the temptation and refrained from breaking the norm when confronted with an immoral temptation dilemma. This pattern was not only found for vignette transgressions, but also for self-reported real transgressions. The only exception to this pattern of results was observed for the insurance fraud scenario (real transgressions): Having committed insurance fraud before was significantly negatively related to JS-victim. One very speculative explanation could be that insurance fraud is the only case among the six criminal deeds in which behaving immorally has a negative effect for oneself in the long run, since high insurance payments in a damage event will cause an increase of insurance rates for each insurant. People high in JS-victim might be aware of these indirectly negative consequences for themselves. However, one should be cautious with such

interpretations, as this was the only case in which the signs of logistic beta coefficients were not as expected: All other eleven tests, including the vignette transgression case of the insurance fraud scenario, yielded results that corroborate our hypothesis. Therefore, we consider this one contradictory finding a negligible one.

More importantly, JS-victim is positively related to judging these consequences as morally wrong. At the same time, individuals high in JS-victim seem to have no difficulties in justifying the transgressions they commit. Many justifications are special cases of motivated reasoning (Kunda, 1990), aimed at relieving the person from guilt and shame. Literally taken, justifications are aimed at finding a just cause for breaking a moral norm. We suggest that for individuals high in JS-victim, justifications are more chronically accessible. Although these individuals are aware of the moral wrongfulness of transgressions and the risk of negative consequences, they can more easily justify their behavior than can individuals low in JS-victim or high in JS-beneficiary.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Taken together, our results suggest that justice sensitivity belongs to the group of personality traits that co-determine moral behavior. In addition, the results of our studies replicate previous research on perspective effects in justice behavior (Mikula, 1994). Looking at an unfair event from the perspective of a victim, the perspective of a beneficiary, and the perspective of a neutral observer usually results in quite different judgments, emotions, and behavioral reactions. Accordingly, being justice sensitive from the perspective of a victim does not imply being justice sensitive from the perspective of a beneficiary. As shown also by the Fetchenhauer and Huang (2003) study as well as the Schmitt *et al*. (in press) study, the three studies reported in the present paper consistently demonstrate that both types of justice sensitivity affect moral behavior differently and have different locations in the personality space.

More specifically, JS-beneficiary is associated with prosocial, "other-oriented" tendencies such as social responsibility (cf. Schmitt *et al*., in press), existential guilt and solidarity towards the disadvantaged (cf. Studies 1 and 2), whereas JS-victim is associated with "self-related" concerns such as denial of responsibility for altering the disadvantages of others (Study 1), unwillingness to engage in means to improve the conditions of disadvantaged others (Study 2), and even the willingness to transgress norms when the situation is enticing (Study 3). However, the two JS perspectives are positively correlated with each other, signifying a partial redundancy in the constructs being measured. We propose that this redundancy captures the justice-related concerns of the JS-victim perspective. This redundancy was found not only in the cross-sectional analyses (Studies 1 and 3), but also longitudinally (Study 2). The longitudinal design in Study 2 furthermore

allows for a *causal* interpretation of the correlation between the JS perspectives and the solidarity measure.

We believe that the pattern of results reported in the three studies here suggest an interesting account of antisocial and immoral behavioral tendencies from a justice-based perspective: From this perspective, the antisocial behavior displayed by individuals high in JS-victim are not rooted in primitive egoism and do not simply reflect attempts to maximize one's profit. Rather, this behavior can be understood as a psychological implication of the misanthropic world view held by persons high in JS-victim, i.e., a view that makes the world appear as an unjust place in which nobody can be trusted and in which one has to protect against being exploited or unfairly disadvantaged. Therefore, the immoral behavior displayed by persons high in JS-victim does not reflect disrespect for social norms, but rather justice concerns of a certain kind. Individuals high in JS-victim are more concerned with "justice for themselves" than with "justice for all." Thus, JS-victim seems to be a mixture of moral rigor and selfishness; findings from the Schmitt *et al*. (in press) study that support this notion include positive correlations between JS-victim and belief in an unjust world, paranoia, and suspiciousness, as well as a negative correlation with interpersonal trust. A theoretical framework that accounts for the hypothesized link between justice concerns and self-related concerns can be derived from the notion that interpersonal suspiciousness might be the psychological manifestation of a "cheater detection" module that can be seen as an evolutionarily stable strategy aimed at keeping a social "tit-for-tat" strategy in balance (Axelrod, 1984; Cosmides and Tooby, 1992).

Of course, this interpretation requires further conceptual and empirical attention. One hypothesis implied by the foregoing considerations is that individuals high in JS-victim, when confronted with a moral temptation dilemma, should be confident that the majority of others in the same situation would behave immorally, which, in turn, should provide a legitimization for their own immoral behavior. However, the experimental setting in which this hypothesis is tested would need to make sure that it is not simply a "false consensus" attribution that accounts for the effect, but rather has to do with the individual's anxiety concerning being exploited or disadvantaged by the (assumed) unethical behavior of others.

Considering the JS-beneficiary perspective, a closer look needs to be taken with regard to the factors and processes that come into play when individuals are confronted with injustice, moral dilemmas, and the unfair disadvantage of others. The results reported in Study 3 suggest that individuals who are high in JS-beneficiary would have more problems legitimizing immoral behavior. Further research is needed to elucidate whether JS-beneficiary reflects a genuine intrinsic concern and respect for moral norms, a higher level of conventionalism, or both.

In the present article, we have not paid attention to the third JS perspective that has been proposed by Schmitt *et al*. (in press; see also Schmitt *et al*., 1995), that is, the observer's perspective. We have focused on the beneficiary's and the victim's

perspective simply because earlier studies have demonstrated considerable redundancy between JS-beneficiary and JS-observer. Thus, we would expect that the pattern of results obtained for JS-observer would be similar to those we found for JS-beneficiary. However, in spite of that redundancy, the two JS perspectives are not at all identical. For example, JS-observer, but not JS-beneficiary, correlates significantly with openness to experience (as measured in terms of the five factor model) whereas JS-beneficiary, but not JS-observer, correlates significantly with agreeableness (Schmitt *et al*., in press).

The focus of our current research is on the cognitive mechanisms that transform JS-observer into situation-specific justice judgments, moral emotions, and justice behavior. First results from ongoing studies suggest that priming individuals high in JS-observer with an unfair episode makes them vigilant for negative information. Furthermore, it seems that individuals high in JS-observer have a need to examine a suspected injustice more carefully. They request more information, and the kind of information they request is more relevant for testing whether or not the suspected injustice indeed occurred compared to those who score low in JS-observer.

Taken together, the results that were obtained in previous studies and in the three studies reported in the present paper make us confident that the construct of justice sensitivity provides a valuable contribution to the research literatures on social justice and moral behavior.

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