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Equity Theory

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100 Word Synopsis

Equity theory posits that in relationships, two concerns stand out: firstly, how rewarding are people's social, family, and work relationships? Secondly, how fair, just, and equitable are those relationships? According to Equity theory people perceive a relationship to be fair and equitable when the rewards they reap are commensurate with their contributions to that relationship. In this entry, we will discuss the logic on which

Equity theory is based, discuss techniques for assessing how equitable a relationship is, and discuss the consequences of fairness (or unfairness) in both personal and work relationships.

5-10 Glossary Entries

Cross-cultural psychology: The scientific study of culture's impact on human cognition, language and meaning, affect, and behavior. Cultural themes—such as the theories of mind, psychological constructs and explanatory models employed in various cultures—are investigated in order to determine the universality of various concepts.

Equity theory: A theory that proposes that people are concerned about both profit and fairness in all of their relationships—from the most intimate to the most casual of interactions.

Ethnology: The comparative study of the behavior of animals and humankind, typically in their natural habitats but sometimes involving experiments in both the field and in captivity.

Evolutionary psychology: The field wherein human cognition, emotion, and behavior are studied in a Darwinian context. Evolutionary psychologists attempt to explain psychological traits—such as perception, memory, or language—as the consequence of natural selection or sexual selection.

Neuroscience: The scientific study of the brain and the central nervous system. This includes disciplines concerned with the structure, function, chemistry, pharmacology, and development of various attitudinal and emotional behaviors.

Primatology: The branch of psychology and zoology that examines primate behavior. Generally, research involves the study of monkeys, apes, and other non-human primates, but sometimes non-human primate behavior is compared to that of humans.

Socialpsychophysiology: That branch of social psychology which looks at the way that personality and situation interact in shaping physiological processes. Many scholars study the way various cognitive and emotional reactions are reflected in the subtle activity of the facial muscles.

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I. The Nature of Equity

Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109 A.D.) argued that the will is influenced by two competing inclinations: an affection for what works to a person's own advantage and an affection for justice. The first inclination is more powerful, but the second matters, too. Equity Theory, too, posits that in relationships, two concerns stand out: Firstly, how rewarding are people's social, family, and work relationships? Second, how fair, just, and equitable are those relationships? According to Equity Theory, people perceive a relationship to be fair and equitable when the rewards they reap from a relationship are commensurate with their contributions to that relationship. (In contrasting profit versus equity, profit [i.e., rewards minus costs] is generally found to be a more important determinant of satisfaction than is equity.) According to the theory, people feel most comfortable when their relationships are maximally profitable and they are getting exactly what they deserve from those relationships—no more but certainly no less. In this entry, we will discuss the logic on which Equity Theory is based, discuss techniques for assessing how equitable a relationship is, and discuss the consequences of fairness (or unfairness) in both personal and work relationships.

In the past 25 years or so, social psychologists have become interested in the cognitive and emotional underpinnings of humanity's concern with social justice, fairness, and equity. Evolutionary theorists, for example, argue that for several million years, our ancestors engaged in complex social exchanges. They contend that a concern with both reward and fairness are ancient and universal concerns—wired in as part of the architecture of the human mind. Currently, most cross-cultural investigators, neuroscientists, primatologists, ethologists, and evolutionary psychologists agree that although social definitions of equity may vary, a concern with profit, fairness and equity may, indeed, be common throughout the animal kingdom.

II. Equity Theory

Equity Theory consists of four propositions: *Proposition I:* Men and women are wired up to try to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. (It is no surprise, then, that people are concerned with the rewards and punishments they receive in their close relationships.) *Proposition II:* Society, however, has a vested interest in persuading people to behave fairly and equitably. Groups will generally reward members who treat others equitably and punish those who treat others inequitably. *Proposition III:* Given societal pressures, people are most comfortable when they perceive that they are receiving roughly what they deserve from life, love, and work. If people feel over-benefited, they tend to experience pity, guilt, and shame; if under-benefited, they tend to experience anger, sadness, and resentment.

< Illustration 1 near here >

Proposition IV: People in inequitable relationships will attempt to reduce their distress via a variety of techniques—namely, by restoring psychological equity (convincing

themselves that an inequitable relationship is indeed fair), by restoring actual equity, or by abandoning the relationship. A corrupt stock broker, who feels guilty about cheating his clients, may restore psychological equity by convincing himself that in business it's survival of the fittest. A woman who feels guilty about the fact that convention dictates that her poverty-stricken date ought to pay for dinner, concerts, and transportation may attempt to set things right by inviting him to dinner or pretending someone has given her free tickets to a play—thus restoring actual equity. Finally, a philanthropist who decides his charity cases are ingrates may elect to discontinue his generous gifts (and thus terminate the frustrating relationship).

Historically, different cultures and societies have possessed very different visions as to what constitutes social justice. Equity it seems resides in the eye of the beholder. Participants themselves may disagree about the equitability of their relationships; outsider observers might have yet a third view as to what is fair or unfair. In defining equity, people may focus on a wide variety of decision rules and a plethora of inputs and outcomes. Some dominant views: “All men are created equal” (Equality). “The more people invest in a project, the more profit they deserve to reap” (Capitalism). “To each according to his need” (Communism). “Winner take all” (Dog-eat-dog capitalism). “It's a man's world” (Traditional social hierarchy). Nonetheless—whatever the cultural rules—social justice, fairness, and equity are deemed important in all cultures.

Social psychologists have developed a variety of scales designed to assess people's perceptions of equity. In practice, however, people's perceptions are often measured by asking: “Considering what you put into your (dating, marital, or work) relationship (compared to what you get out of it) and what your partner puts in (compared to what he

or she gets out of it), how does your relationship ‘stack up’”? On the basis of their answers, persons are classified as perceiving themselves to be over-benefited (receiving more than they deserve), equitably treated (receiving exactly what they deserve), or under-benefited (receiving less than they deserve) from a given relationship. Naturally, other scales designed to assess perceived equity exist, as well. In one detailed measure, for example, researchers asked men and women who were dating, living together, or married to indicate (via a 22-item scale) how fair and equitable they considered their relationships to be. The areas of interest included such personal qualities as appearance, intelligence, and social grace; emotional concerns, such as physical affection and understanding and concern, and day-to-day concerns, such as contributing to household expenses and helping around the house. Other scholars have developed measures to assess how fair employers/employees consider their relationships to be.

Other researchers have created “Exchange Orientation” scales, designed to assess the concern of individuals with justice, fairness, and equity. They argue that some people are especially concerned about giving their partners and associates all that they deserve, whereas other people are primarily concerned with “Am I getting my fair share?” Depending on their different personalities, people are predicted to respond with varying degrees of upset to injustice.

Regardless of societal definitions or one’s own concern with fairness, considerations of equity have been found to be important in a wide variety of cultures and relationship types—social relationships, romantic and family relationships, friendships, helping relationships, and work relationships.

III. Current Research: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach

At the current time, some of the most interesting research into the nature of social justice emanates from scholars of three different intellectual traditions: (1) primatologists and evolutionary psychologists, who argue that a concern for justice arose early in humankind's evolutionary history, and who speculate about how this ancient wiring affects visions of social justice of contemporary men and women; (2) cultural researchers interested in different societal definitions as to what is fair and equitable; and (3) social psychologists, who have explored people's definitions of fairness and justice and have studied the impact of perceived fairness and equity on people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

A. Equity: The Evolution of a Cultural Universal

In the past 25 years or so, social psychologists have become interested in the evolutionary underpinnings of a societal desire for social justice. As Cosmides and Tooby (1992) observed:

It is likely that our ancestors have engaged in social exchange for at least several million years. . . . Social exchange behavior is both universal and highly elaborated across all human cultures—including hunter-gatherer cultures . . . as would be expected if it were an ancient and central part of human life (p. 164).

Today, paleoanthropological evidence supports the view that notions of social justice and equity are extremely ancient. Ravens, for example, have been observed to attack those who violate social norms. Dogs get jealous if their playmates get treats and they do not. Wolves who don't play fair are often ostracized—a penalty that may well to lead to the wolf's death.

Primatologists have also amassed considerable evidence that primates and other animals do care about fairness. In a study with brown *Cebus Apella* monkeys, researchers rewarded female monkeys with tokens after completing tasks. These tokens

could be exchanged for grapes, a desired treat. However, some monkeys were given cucumbers, a nondesired food, instead. Female monkeys who were denied the grapes, i.e. the rewards they deserved, became furious. They refused to “play the game” (refused to exchange tokens for a cucumber) and disdained to eat their “prize”—holding out for the grapes they thought they deserved. If severely provoked (the other monkeys did nothing and still got the highly prized grapes instead of the cucumber) capuchins grew so angry that they began to scream, beat their breasts, and hurl food at the experimenter. Interestingly, in a later study, the authors found that chimpanzees (*Pan Troglodytes*) were most upset by injustice in casual relationships. In *chimps*’ close, intimate relationships, injustice caused barely a ripple. We see, then, that different species, in different settings, may respond differently to injustice.

Potentially, this fascinating animal research may provide some insights into three questions that have intrigued equity researchers: (1) when, in primates’ long pre-history, did animals begin to feel guilty about receiving too much, as well as begin to feel outraged when they were ripped off?; (2) are animals more (or less) concerned about fairness in despotic, hierarchical societies than in relatively egalitarian ones; (3) are primates and other animals more (or less) concerned about inequities in close kin relationships than in more distant encounters?

B. Equity: Cultural Considerations

Cross-cultural theorists have long been interested in the impact of culture on perceptions of social justice. They contend that culture exerts a profound impact on how fairness is defined, how concerned men and women are with fairness, and how fair and equitable various types of relationships are judged to be.

Cultural critics point out that until very recently, social psychology was primarily “Made in America”. Theories conceived by Western psychologists were tested in the West with Western participants and disseminated in Western scientific publications. Such ethnocentrism is a mistake, culture theorists argue, as culture exerts a profound impact on the ways in which people conceptualize the world around them, the meaning they ascribe to common life events, and the manner in which they react to those events.

Not surprisingly then, cross-cultural researchers ask: “Is equity theory applicable to all people in all cultures and in all historical eras?” Many would say “No.” Any number of researchers have studied cultural differences in perceptions of who ought to get what, where, when, and how . . . and how in fact valuable resources are distributed within and between various societies. Some researchers argue that in individualistic cultures (such as the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada, and the countries of northern and western Europe) people tend to focus on personal goals. No surprise, then, that in such societies, people are primarily concerned with how rewarding (or punishing) their relationships are and how fairly (unfairly) they are treated. Collectivist cultures (such as China, many African and Latin American nations, Greece, southern Italy, and the Pacific Islands), on the other hand, insist that their members subordinate personal goals to those of the group: be that the family, the clan, or the tribe. It is tradition, duty, and deference to elders that matters. Along similar lines, other researchers claim that equity is of more importance in individualistic than in collectivist societies and there is some evidence that this is so.

IV. Equity in Love Relationships

Scholars have discovered that the degree to which couples are concerned with reward and equity depends on relationship stage. When couples are first dating, they participate in a kind of dating and marriage marketplace, in which considerations of reward, fairness, and equity loom large. Once they are deeply committed to one another, however, they become less concerned about day-to-day reward and equity. Should a relationship deteriorate, however, couples—knowing (perhaps) that they will soon be back on the market—may begin to worry about “What’s in it for me?” and to ask: “Do I deserve better?”

A. Mate Selection

In fairy tales, Prince Charming often falls in love with the scullery maid. In real life, however, men and women generally seek out partners who are deemed to be suitable. There is considerable evidence that when young people are attempting to decide whether or not to date or mate with someone (whether it is an arranged marriage or a love match), potential reward and equity matter. Specifically, researchers find: (1) the more socially desirable men and women are—be they gay, lesbian, or heterosexual—the more social assets they will demand in a “suitable” potential date or mate; (2) men and women tend to fall in love with partners who possess similar assets and liabilities. Dating couples generally end up with partners similar to themselves in self-esteem, attractiveness, intelligence, education, and mental and physical health (or disability), among other things; (3) market considerations have been found to affect men and women’s romantic and sexual choices; (4) profitable and equitable dating relationships are satisfying and comfortable relationships. Inequity is associated with

distress, guilt, anger, and anxiety; (5) profitable and equitable dating relationships appear to be more stable (and more likely to lead to more serious relationships) than are inequitable relationships.

In conclusion: Research indicates that in the early stages of a dating relationship, considerations of the marketplace prevail. Men and women will attempt to attract a socially attractive partner and they are profoundly concerned with how rewarding and how equitable their budding relationships appear to be.

B. Close, Intimate Relationships

Theorists agree that casual and intimate relationships are very different from one another. Casual relationships differ in a number of ways from intimate connections. In close, intimate relationships, for example, couples feel more intensely about one another, share more of their lives, have (and expect to have) a longer time to spend together than do couples in fleeting affairs. Married and other committed couples, who assume that they will be together for a lifetime, are likely to be sanguine about momentary injustices, confident that it will all work out in the end. Then too, it may be difficult for married couples to calculate whether or not relationships are fair and rewarding. (They may settle for a rough and ready definition of fair outcomes.) Only the most egregious injustices will be noticed.

Researchers argue that people participate in two kinds of relationships—exchange relationships and communal relationships—and that social norms differ markedly in these relationships. In casual acquaintances or business relationships, exchange norms prevail. People need not feel special responsibility for others' welfare. They may invest ideas, time, and money, but it is with the expectation of receiving their fair share in

return. In close, committed, intimate relationships, on the other hand, communal norms prevail. Ideally, men and women are committed to the other's welfare. They wish to please their partners, to care for and nurture them, and to reject such crass considerations as score-keeping or a concern with quid pro quo. Such differences suggest that couples in close, intimate relationships will be less concerned about day-to-day rewards, costs, and equity than they would be in more casual friendships and work relationships.

Yet, in the end, reward (and costs) and equity do seem to matter in even the closest of relationships. This is the case for most couples—be they casually dating, living together, or married; affluent or poor; married for a few weeks or for a half-century or more. As we have said, people are generally far more concerned with how rewarding their relationships are than with how fair and equitable they are. Yet, in all of these groups, the degree of reward, fairness, and equity have been found to be linked to marital happiness, contentment, satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, and marital stability. Couples in fair and equitable relationships are also less likely to risk extramarital affairs than are their under-benefited peers. They are also more confident that their marriages will last, and (in fact) their relationships are longer lasting than are those of couples who feel less fairly treated.

In recent years, social scientists have begun to explore the perceptions of women and men concerning who does the most household work (such as preparing meals, shopping for groceries, cleaning the house, caring for children, and caring for needy or elderly relatives). They have also investigated the impact of fair or unfair divisions of labor on marital satisfaction and stability. Scholars find that for many couples, perceived fairness (in the division of housework) has a positive impact on psychological well-being

and relationship happiness and stability. When there is perceived unfairness, the opposite is of course true.

C. Endings

Scholars agree that perceived unfairness and misery are linked. They disagree, however, as to the nature of the causal relationship: Does perceived injustice cause dissatisfaction or is the causal order reversed? Equity theorists point out that men and women who are unfairly treated for a prolonged period will begin to wonder: “Does my partner love me? If so, why would he (she) treat me so unfairly?” They begin to ask: “What’s in it for me?” and “Am I getting all I deserve in this relationship?” Other researchers take the opposite view: she argues that in communal relationships, couples do not keep score; they simply do not think in terms of reward and justice. Thus, if couples are concerned with such issues, it is a sure sign that their marriages are in trouble. Misery, then, is the cause, not the consequence of perceived injustice. Regardless of the causal direction of the relationship, all researchers would agree that when men and women are at the point of separation or divorce, they sometimes become consumed with issues of fairness and equity.

A year-long longitudinal study set out to answer this question. Researchers interviewed Dutch couples who had been married for various lengths of time. At Time 1, those who rated their marriages as inequitable were more dissatisfied than their peers. By Time 2 (a year later), these inequitable relationships were often faltering. Thus they concluded that inequity leads to relationship dissatisfaction and dissolution—and not the reverse. It is possible, of course, that in failing marriages, appraisal might lead to loss of commitment, separation, and then reappraisal . . . the two spiraling down together.

In sum: In recent times, scientists have continued to explore the impact of perceived equity on men and women's marital happiness and stability. It appears that although the concern with fairness may wax and wane during the course of a marriage, such concerns always remain there, sometimes just beneath the surface, guiding people's perceptions, happiness, and marital choices.

V. Equity in Work Settings

Industrial/organizational psychologists have investigated the applicability of Equity Theory to a wide variety of organizational and work settings and in a wide array of supervisor, worker, and customer relationships.

A. Differences in Sensitivity to Justice in Work Settings

Scholars contend that in the world of work, people differ in their "Equity Sensitivity." They classify people into three groups: the Benevolents (who are more concerned with what they contribute to an enterprise than with the rewards they reap), the Equity Sensitives (who are sensitive to issues of fairness, justice, and equity), and the Entitleds (who insist on extravagant rewards, regardless of their own contributions.)

B. The Neuroscience of a Concern with Fairness

Recently, neuroscientists have begun to explore the way that people's brains and central nervous systems respond when they confront unfairness and inequity in a work setting, in other words, how individuals make moral judgments. Neuroscientists have studied moral decision making, specifically moral sensitivity—the ability to detect and evaluate moral issues—major components of morality. Using fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imagery) techniques, the scientists demonstrated that sensitivity to

moral issues is associated with activation of the polar medial prefrontal cortex, dorsal posterior cingulated cortex, and posterior superior temporal sulcus (STS).

In one experiment, researchers set out to investigate whether people are more motivated by self-interest or a desire for fairness when confronted with inequity in the workplace. The authors asked: Are people primarily motivated by the assumption that they'll "do well (for themselves) by doing good" or by a real, unselfish desire to "Do unto others?" To test this notion that people are motivated by both desires, the scholars placed participants in an fMRI scanner. This high-tech scanner constructs an image of the brain in which changes in blood flow (induced by brain activity) are represented as color-coded pixels. The authors then asked participants to play a series of games with real monetary stakes. How much of their own economic payoff were players willing to sacrifice to increase the payoffs of others? To find out, the authors digitally compared the scans taken while the participants decided whether or not to act altruistically, trust others, treat others fairly or unfairly, and/or punish partners who betrayed them (by cheating them out of the outcomes they deserved from the games.) They found that people's brains were activated by the anticipation of reward, by a desire to behave fairly, and by a strong negative reaction to partners who betrayed them. (They found revenge is sweet.) Other neuroscientists and socialpsychophysicologists have attempted to link self-reports of reactions to: (1) various kinds of justice or injustice; (2) various kinds of justice restoration (say, restorative justice, retributive justice [revenge]), or no justice restoration); and (3) to forgiveness or a refusal to forgive, a desire for revenge, and a willingness to forgive exploiters.

C. Equity in Organizational and Work Settings

Scholars agree that a concern with fairness is a cultural universal and in all of the social sciences—anthropology, psychology, sociology, politics, history, or economics—scholars are primarily concerned with matters of who gets what, when, where, and how. Equity theorists, too, have focused on what participants in social exchanges perceive to be a just distribution of status and privilege, social costs and benefits, and material rewards and costs in organizational or work settings. Scholars find that in all cultures, people do possess a sense of justice. They do care about how rewarding and how fair, just, and equitable their treatment is in organizational and work settings—be they hunting and gathering societies or modern day industrial organizations.

Researchers have addressed a series of questions. Among the most important are: (1) do employers and employees care about fairness and equity? (2) what do individuals and collectivities consider to be just and why? (3) is procedural justice as important as actual justice? (Does it matter if the procedure for allocating reward is fair?) (4) what are considered to be valuable inputs and outcomes in work settings? (5) what are the social and behavioral consequences of perceived injustice in work settings?

1. There is considerable evidence that both employers and employees care deeply about equity

Researchers find that most business owners and managers are motivated to behave in an equitable way. A few follow equity rules because they are committed to abstract ideas of justice. More however find that they reap several pay-offs from equitable behavior. In other words, it is profitable for them to conform to business world norms. Fairness allows them to attract superior workers and weed out inferior ones. They wish to motivate workers to produce, and to avoid conflict.

A more interesting question is how workers themselves feel about inequitable treatment. It is understandable that those who feel cheated would be angry and resentful about the injustice of their situation, but what about those who are paid too much? Is it possible that those discovering they are over-benefitted could really be unhappy with their good fortune? The evidence suggests they might be. Researchers find that underpaid workers show an active sense of grievance, complaints, or the desire to complain, and an active desire to change jobs. But, more interestingly, they also find that overpaid workers are distressed too; they show a strong awareness of preferential treatment with underlying feelings of unease. More recent research has documented that justice is associated with well-being, work satisfaction, positive interpersonal and inter-group relationships, and decision acceptance. The experience of injustice, on the other hand, may have serious negative consequences on the individual, group, organizational, and societal levels. When faced with injustice, even the over-benefitted generally feel such a sense of disquiet.

Of course, this only holds true if workers perceive they are over-benefitted. Humans are a creative lot and research documents that although the over-benefitted might feel uneasy about their good fortune at first, it doesn't take long before they come up with rationalizations to justify their privileged state.

2. Procedural versus distributive justice

There are two general types of justice—procedural justice (i.e., the perceived fairness of the decision making process) and distributive *justice* (i.e., the perceived fairness of final outcomes). Researchers point out that people care about the fairness of the procedures used in allocating rewards, as well as the fairness of the rewards

themselves. If the system for allocating rewards is corrupt or unjust, people feel uncomfortable, even if the actual rewards they receive are just what they deserve. In addition, the knowledge that others are receiving too much or too little is in itself unsettling.

3. Valuable inputs and outcomes in work settings

When considering how equitable or fair a workplace is, men and women consider a number of factors to be valuable inputs in work settings. These include demographic characteristics (such as gender, age, and race), loyalty, commitment, intelligence, skill, seniority, degree of responsibility, hard work, support of colleagues, personal sacrifice, and the like. They consider a wide variety of outcomes as relevant as well. These include such things as praise, recognition, a sense of achievement, respectful supervisors, friendly co-workers, opportunities for promotion, financial rewards (high pay, perks, valuable benefits), flexible scheduling, health insurance, appealing work environment, a retirement program, and the like.

4. Responses to perceived injustice in work settings

When faced with inequity, people try a number of techniques to set things right. These include complaining to the management, asking for a raise, and attempting to do a better (or worse) job. If all else fails, they may become absentee workers, try to sabotage production, search for a better job, or quit their jobs.

In one classic experiment, researchers proposed the (then) unthinkable: that capitalistic American workers would be uncomfortable earning too much (as well as too little) and would actively seek to set things right. To test this notion, the researchers conducted an ingenious experiment. Logically, employees who are paid on a salary (or

hourly basis) versus piece-rate basis must utilize very different strategies if they are to restore actual equity. The overpaid worker who is paid on an hourly basis, for example can restore equity by increasing his or her inputs; he or she can produce more work and higher quality work. An underpaid worker can restore equity by doing exactly the opposite; he or she must produce less and lower quality work. Workers who are paid on a piece-rate basis, however, must follow the opposite strategy if they are to set things right. An overpaid piece-rate worker can only restore equity if he or she produces less work of a higher quality. An underpaid piece-rate worker can restore equity by doing just the opposite; he or she can produce more work of a lower quality. The researchers tested this notion in a real life work setting and found that they were right. Workers did indeed vary their production as the researchers suggested they would.

Of course, as we observed earlier, individuals may respond to inequitable payment not by actually working to make things fairer but by a mental sleight of hand: they can distort reality and convince themselves that they deserve what they are getting. There is considerable evidence that, given adequate time, workers do tend to convince themselves that what is, is right.

Finally, people who are offered a wage that is inappropriate can “leave the field.” Applicants can refuse to accept a job that they think is providing inappropriate rewards. Employees who feel unfairly treated can leave for a job that pays more fairly. Naturally, this strategy is preferred by those who are cheated rather than those who are offered a windfall. As we observed earlier, given time, it is usually fairly easy for the over-benefitted to alter reality and convince themselves that they deserve to make far more than their peers, given their intelligence, productivity, or charm.

VI. Conclusions

It appears that people in all cultures, settings, and relationships are concerned with being treated fairly. However what is considered equitable, how considerations are made, and how individuals attempt to restore equity does vary by location, setting and relationship type. Even across these different situations four trends emerge. First, people everywhere are concerned with the punishments and rewards they receive. Second, societies use punishments and rewards to encourage people to behave equitably. Third, people feel uncomfortable when they receive more or less than they deserve, and feel best when they receive no more and no less than they deserve; and fourth, individuals who over-benefit or under-benefit will to restore the balance somehow. As such, equity remains an interesting and important research topic.

Further Readings

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Suggestions for Cross-References

Exchange Processes, Communal Relationships, Fairness in Relationships, Exchange Orientation, Social Justice

Brief Author Biographies

Lisamarie Bensman, M.A., is one of Dr. Hatfield's Ph.D. students at the University of Hawai'i. Her master's is in forensic psychology and her research interests include sexual homicides and human sexuality, particularly orgasms and male sexual fantasies.

Dr. Elaine Hatfield is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Hawai'i and past-president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex. Her honors include Distinguished Scientist Awards (for a lifetime of scientific achievement) from the Society of Experimental Social Psychology (SESP) and the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex (SSSS), and the Alfred Kinsey Award from the Midwest Region of SSSS.

Dr. Richard L. Rapson is Professor of History at the University of Hawai'i. He came to Hawai'i in 1966 after teaching at Amherst College and Stanford University. He has written more than a dozen books, most of which focus on the psychological side of American life, past and present. His most recent books are *Amazed by Life: Confessions of a Non-religious Believer* (2004) and *Magical Thinking and the Decline of America* (2007).

Recently, Drs. Hatfield and Rapson (who are husband and wife) collaborated on three scholarly books: *Love, Sex, and Intimacy: Their Psychology, Biology, and History* (HarperCollins,) *Emotional Contagion* (Cambridge University Press,) and *Love and Sex: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (University Press of America.)