

## Chapter 27

### *Envoi: Where Do We Stand and Where Do We Need to Go?*

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#### Abstract

In this chapter we will begin by discussing a few of the theories of justice that were prominent from the 1950s to the 1970s. We will focus primarily on Equity theory, Morton Deutsch's commentaries about the diverse views of justice that exist, Uriel and Edna Foa's attempts to devise a taxonomy for the resources involved in social exchanges, and J. Stacy Adams' attempts to predict how perceived injustices will be resolved. We then consider the advances that have occurred in the last 40+ years and speculate as to where we might expect scholarship to go in future years.

#### I. Introduction

Throughout history, scholars have always been interested in the nature of social justice, fairness, and equity. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, for example, St. Anselm of Canterbury (1998) argued that the will possesses two competing inclinations: an affection for what is to a person's own advantage *and* an affection for justice; the first inclination is stronger, but the second matters, too.

Anthropologists such as Lévi-Strauss (1957), Malinowski (1922), and Mauss (1925), were among the first scientists to theorize about the development of societal notions of fairness in social exchanges. In the 1950s, almost all undergraduates read Malinowski's fascinating description of the Trobriand Islanders' Kula Ring, a complex system of reciprocity and exchange. Natives would canoe to nearby islands, gifting those Islanders with powerful and magical gifts—Mwali arm-shells, Bagi necklaces, Amphlett Island pots, and the like. In return, Kula traders coming in the other direction, would gift *them* with an array of other magical trinkets. Sometimes it took 10 years for Islanders to complete a circle. The aim was, of course, to build a cohesive network of allies and trading partners.

It wasn't until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, however, that social psychological research on social justice, fairness, and equity—following a

long trail blazed by towering political philosophers such as Locke, Voltaire, Jefferson, Diderot, J. S. Mill and a host of others—really burst on the scene.

In the West, the 1960s and 1970s were a time of intellectual and social ferment. There was a great concern with social justice and spirited debate as to what was fair in life, law, marriage, and work. In the United States, it was the time of Martin Luther King’s historic 1965 civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery. (On “Bloody Sunday”, March 7, 1965, 600 civil rights marchers were attacked by state and local police with clubs, dogs, and tear gas.) It was the time of Jane Fonda’s 1972 trip to North Vietnam to protest the war.

On the gender front, in that same year, women lobbied, marched, petitioned, picketed, and committed acts of civil disobedience in the hopes of persuading the 92<sup>nd</sup> Congress to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, which guaranteed men and women equal rights under law. (It passed the Senate and the House, but in the end the states failed to ratify it.) It was an era when feminists such as Betty Friedan described the *Feminine Mystique*, Gloria Steinem and her colleagues founded *Ms. Magazine*, and Shulamith Firestone penned *The Dialectic of Sex*. All these feminist leaders argued for women’s rights in education, law, and the workplace. On the comic side, Bobby Riggs spewed out chauvinist insults in challenging tennis star Billie Jean King to the “Battle of the Sexes”. (King won handily.) Valerie Solanas contributed her mad ravings to the *SCUM Manifesto*. (*SCUM = The Society for Cutting Up Men*.) (We assumed Ms. Solanas was a witty satirist until she acted upon her beliefs by shooting her pal Andy Warhol.) It is no surprise then, as issues of race, gender, war and peace ignited passions everywhere, that many social psychologists became interested in devising theories of social justice. Battles over issues of social justice are as old as the human species, but we wish to focus on their more recent manifestations, Homans instead of Yahweh.

## II. Early Social Exchange Theories

The first modern-day scholars to propose models of social justice and social exchange (in the late 1950 and early 1960s) were sociologists George C. Homans (1958) and Peter Blau (1967) and social psychologists John Thibaut and Harold Kelley (1959). They viewed all social life as involving the exchange of goods—such as approval, money, or material goods. All people, they contended, are seeking maximum reward at minimum cost. As a consequence, given market forces, in the long run

social exchanges tend to be balanced. The scholars described the factors that influence the creation, maintenance, and breakdown of exchange relationships.

In the early day, four different interlocking theories attempted to provide a complete model what would cause people to perceive relationships as fair or unfair, and how they would behave when they discovered themselves caught up in patently unfair relationships. These theories were: Equity theory, a general theory (Hatfield [Walster], Walster, & Berscheid, 1978), and three theories that deepened scholars understanding of theories of the social exchange process. These were the models of Foa and Foa (1974), which attempted to categorize the resources (inputs and outcomes) involved in exchanges (Foa & Foa, [1974], that of Deutsch [1975], and that of Lerner [1980]), which pointed out the various types of exchange relationships that may exist, and that of Adams (1965b), which attempted to detail the way people involved in inequitable relationships attempt to set things right. Some of these theorists stressed self-interest in their models, others the desire for procedural and distributive justice.

In Chapter 10, Kjell Törnblom and Riël Vermunt offer a lively account of this era.

Let us now provide a brief review of these theories.

### **A. Classic Equity Theory**

Elaine Hatfield, G. William Walster, and Ellen Berscheid's (1978) Equity theory is a straightforward theory. It consists of four propositions:

PROPOSITION I. Men and women are "hardwired" to try to maximize pleasure and minimize pain.

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 getting roughly what they deserve from life and love. If people feel over-benefited, they may

experience pity, guilt, and shame; if under-benefited, they may experience anger, sadness, resentment, disgust, indignation, or fear.

Insert Figure 1 here

PROPOSITION IV. People in inequitable relationships will attempt to reduce their distress through a variety of techniques—by restoring psychological equity, actual equity, or leaving the relationship.

We would argue that notions of social justice came to be writ in the mind's "architecture" because a concern with social justice possessed survival value (see Tooby & Cosmides, 1996). A concern with social justice, in all its forms, is alive and well today (in all cultures and all social structures) because fairness in love and work remains a wise and profitable strategy. (For a further discussion of these points, see Hatfield, et al., 2008.)

### Assessing Equity

Technically, Equity is defined by a complex formula (Traupmann, Peterson, Utne, & Hatfield, 1981; Walster, 1975). Respondents' perceptions of the equitableness of their relationships are computed by entering their estimates of Inputs and Outcomes of Persons A and B ( $I_A$ ,  $I_B$ ,  $O_A$ , and  $O_B$ ) into the Equity formula:<sup>1</sup>

$$\frac{(O_A - I_A)}{(I_A I_A)^{KA}} = \frac{(O_B - I_B)}{(I_B I_B)^{KB}}$$

Respondents are classified as "over-benefited" if their relative gains exceed those of their partners. They are classified as "equitably treated" if their relative gains equal those of their partners, and as

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<sup>1</sup> The Equity formulas used by previous researchers, from Aristotle to Stacy Adams, only yield meaningful results if A and B's Inputs and Outcomes are entirely positive or entirely negative. In mixed cases the formulas yields extremely peculiar results. This is simply a formula designed to transcend these limitations. See Walster (1975) for a discussion of the problems and the mathematical solutions. The superscript k simply "scales" equity problems (by multiplying all inputs and outcomes by a positive constant) such that the minimum of  $I_A I_A$  and  $I_B I_B$  is greater than or equal to 1.

“under-benefited” if their relative gains fall short of those of their partners.

In practice, however, a relationship’s fairness and equity can be reliably and validly assessed with the use of a simple measure. Specifically, research participants are asked: “Considering what you put into your dating relationship or marriage, compared to what you get out of it . . . and what your partner puts in compared to what (s)he gets out of it, how does your dating relationship or marriage ‘stack up’?” Respondents are given the following response options:

- +3: I am getting a much better deal than my partner.
- +2: I am getting a somewhat better deal.
- +1: I am getting a slightly better deal.
- 0: We are both getting an equally good, or bad, deal.
- 1: My partner is getting a slightly better deal.
- 2: My partner is getting a somewhat better deal.
- 3: My partner is getting a much better deal than I am.

On the basis of their answers, persons can be classified as over-benefited (receiving more than they deserve), equitably treated, or under-benefited (receiving less than they deserve). (For a comprehensive list of the rewards and costs found to be important in dating relationships or marriages, see Hatfield et al., 2008).

The work of a number of other 1960s and 1970s theorists fit together like jigsaw pieces in constructing a picture of social justice. These theorists pointed out that different types of relationships invoke different rules, that we can classify the resources relevant to various kinds of relationships, and when inequity is found to exist, predict how men and women will set about to restore social justice.

## **B. Morton Deutsch’s Commentary**

All people are concerned with social justice. Historically, however, societies have had very different visions as to what constitutes social justice, fairness, and equity. Some dominant views were discussed by Hatfield and her colleagues (1978):

- “All men are created equal.” (Equality).

- “The more you invest in a project, the more profit you deserve to reap. (American capitalism)
- “To each according to his need.” (Communism)
- “Winner take all.” (Dog-eat-dog capitalism.)
- It’s a man’s world. (Patriarchy)

In *Equity: Theory and Research*, the authors proposed that these culturally divergent views as to the nature of justice determined which inputs and outcomes would be considered relevant in a given setting. If justice was conceived as equality, for example, participants’ inputs (as human beings) would be, by definition, identical. If a society was a meritocracy, on the other hand, talent and hard work may be deemed the appropriate inputs in determining fairness.

Deutsch (1975) pointed out that in various societies, at various times, justice has been viewed as consisting in the treatment of all people:

1. as equals;
2. so that they have equal opportunity to compete without external favoritism or discrimination;
3. according to their ability;
4. according to their efforts;
5. according to their accomplishments;
6. according to their needs;
7. according to the supply and demand of the market place;
8. according to the requirements of the common good;
9. according to the principle of reciprocity (p. 21).

He attempted to specify the conditions under which various values would predominate in various types of social exchanges. (For additional information on Deutsch’s views, see the Prologue.) We will discuss Deutsch’s views at greater length in Section III. “Where Do We Stand Today?”

### **C. Uriel and Edna Foa’s Resource Theory**

In Equity theory, respondents’ perceptions of the equitableness of their relationships are computed by comparing their Inputs and Outcomes with those of their partners. Respondents are classified as “over-

benefited” if their relative gains exceed those of their partners. They are classified as “equitably treated” if their relative gains equal those of their partners, and as “under-benefited” if their relative gains fall short of those of their partners.

Generally, a one-item scale (the Global Equity Measure) has been used to calculate how fair various relationships are perceived to be. In calculating the fairness of love relationships, however, a 25-item Multi-Factor Measure of Equity—which asks couples to indicate the fairness of their relationship in 25 diverse areas—is sometimes employed (see Appendix I). Unfortunately, as yet, psychometricians have developed no multi-item scales to allow Equity theorists to calculate the importance of various Inputs and Outcomes in altruistic relationships, philanthropist/recipient relationships, parent-child relationships, business relationships, or exploiter/victim relationships.

In Foa’s (1971) seminal paper and in Foa and Foa (Ch. 1) the authors attempted to specify the inputs and outcomes that would be most relevant in various kinds of relationships. They contended that the resources of interpersonal exchange fall into six classes: love, status, information, money, goods, and services. According to the authors, all resources can be classified according to their “particularism” and “concreteness.” The dimension *particularism* refers to the extent to which the resource’s value is influenced by the person who delivers it. (Since love’s value depends very much on who is doing the loving, it is classified as *particularistic*. Since money is valuable regardless of its source, it is classed as *universalistic*.) The dimension *concreteness* refers to the resource’s characteristic form of expression. (Since services and goods involve the exchange of tangibles—things you can see, smell, and touch—they are classed as *concrete*. Since status and information are usually conveyed verbally, they are classified as *symbolic*.)

This volume is a testament to the fact that the Foas’ classification system as to which resources are most important in various types of relationships has made a signal contribution to the understanding of social justice.

#### D. J. Stacy Adams’ Theory of Social Inequity

In *Equity: Theory and Research*, Hatfield and her colleagues argued:

People in inequitable relationships will attempt to reduce their distress through a variety of techniques—by restoring psychological equity, actual equity, or leaving the relationship (p. 6).

The authors provided a few examples of such equity restoration, but offered no comprehensive theory as to which resources would be used when. Adams, on the other hand, proffered a detailed set of “rules,” designed to predict preferences in equity restoration. Let us review this research.

In the 1960s, Adams and his colleagues (Adams, 1965a and b) in a series of elegantly simple papers excited a revolution in business research. He proposed the unthinkable: that capitalistic American workers would be uncomfortable earning too much, as well as too little, and that their desire for equity would influence both the quantity and the quality of their craftsmanship. Adams (1965a), acknowledging that people who were involved in an inequitable relationship could utilize a variety of techniques to set things right, proposed six general “rules” that would allow scholars to predict which potentially inequity-reducing alternative was likely to be chosen in a given setting.

(a) Person will maximize positively valent outcomes and the valence of outcomes.

(b) He will minimize increasing inputs that are effortful and costly to change.

(c) He will resist real and cognitive changes in inputs that are central to his self-concept and to his self-esteem. To the extent that any of Person’s outcomes are related to his self-concept and to his self-esteem, this proposition is extended to cover his outcomes.

(d) He will be more resistant to changing cognitions about his own outcomes and inputs than to changing his cognitions about Other’s outcomes and inputs.

(e) Leaving the field will be resorted to only when the magnitude of inequity experienced is high and other means of reducing it are unavailable.

(f) Person will be highly resistant to changing the object of his comparisons, Other, once it has stabilized over time and, in effect, has become an anchor (pp. 395-396).

Six theorists, four ways of viewing distributive justice; four interlocking theories. Given these classic models, what have scientists learned in the past 40 to 50 years about the nature of social justice? Where do things stand in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

### III. Where Do we Stand Today?

Kjell Törnblom and Ali Kazemi's *Handbook of Social Resource Theory* provides a comprehensive review of the research questions that have intrigued social justice researchers over the last half century. In this section, we plan to do a sort of "meta analysis" of the four major issues that have intrigued researchers since the 1960s: (A) What is considered fair, in general? (B) What is considered to be fair in general and in various kinds of relationships? (C) Can scholars develop a taxonomy of resources? (D) Can we predict how people caught up in inequitable relationships will go about setting things right? Let us now turn to the current state of knowledge re: these questions.

#### A. What is Considered to be Fair in General?

According to Deutsch (1974) it should come as no surprise that people often disagree about what is fair, since in deciding what they deserve, people may emphasize:

(1) the values underlying the rules governing the distribution (*injustice of values*);

(2) the rules which are employed to represent the values (*injustice of rules*);

(3) the ways that the rules are implemented (*injustice of implementation*); or

(4) the way decisions are made about any of the foregoing (*injustice of decision-making processes*) (p. 19-20.)

Deutsch (1975) focused on three values—equity, equality, and need—that are often used as a basis for distributing outcomes. He argued that:

In cooperative relations in which economic productivity is a primary goal, equity . . . will be the dominant principle of distributive justice.

In cooperative relations in which the fostering or maintenance of enjoyable social relations is the common goal, equality will be the dominant principle of distributive justice.

In cooperative relations in which the fostering of personal development and personal welfare is the common goal, need will be the dominant principle of distributive justice (p. 143).

In this *Handbook*, further building on his work, theorists have discussed an array of other cultural and societal values that may shape perceptions as to the appropriateness of various kinds of allocations (see Törnblom & Kazemi, Ch. 2; Törnblom & Vermunt, Ch. 10).

Törnblom and Kazemi (Ch. 2), for example, point out that people often care about how their supervisor acquired the resources he is so lavishly distributing. (Is he a crook? A drug dealer? Are we profiting from others' misery?) People have also been found to care about whether or not their CEO followed fair procedures in allocating salaries and bonuses. (If favoritism is evident, even a "fair" allocation may be suspect.) Recently, such procedural justice has been the focus of much theorizing and research (see Dorsch & Mistovich, Ch. 19; Leventhal, 1980; and Markovsky & Kazemi, Ch. 4; Ch. 11; for an excellent review of theorizing and research in this area.)

#### B. What is Considered to be Fair in Various Kinds of Relationships?

Equity theory appeared in an era in which traditional views of gender roles, women's liberation, and the rules of love and sex (including

innovations such as marriage contracts) were being hotly debated. Thus, it is not surprising that the contention that couples care about “What’s in it for me?” and “Am I being treated fairly” sparked criticism. In *The Art of Loving*, for example, Erich Fromm (1956) declared that:

[while flawed] human love relationships [may] follow the same pattern of exchange which governs the commodity and labor market, the truest form of love is unconditional love (love given without any thought of return” (p. 3).

Alas, Fromm assumed that altruism came more naturally to women than to men—a proposition not generally accepted today. A variety of social commentators agreed with the contention that people are generally *not* concerned with reward or fairness in their love relationships (see Clark & Mills, 1979; Murstein, et al., 1977). An equally great number of advocates argued that Equity considerations *are* important in the most intimate of relationships. They noted that when mothers recite that old refrain: “After all I’ve done for you,” they are expressing indignation that all their sacrifices have not been reciprocated (at least with appreciation). When old men give a young woman a diamond tiara, they may also be hoping for affection and perhaps a little more (see Hatfield, et al., 1978, for a review of theorists on both sides of The Great Debate).

In the past decades, scholars have gained a far better understanding of when equity matters in love relationships and when a strict accounting can be put off for another day.

In surveying this research, Hatfield, Rapson, and Aumer-Ryan (2008), concluded that: dating *is* a “marriage marketplace,” in which considerations of reward, fairness, and equity loom large. Once couples have committed themselves to a close, intimate relationship, however, they generally become less concerned about immediate rewards and short-term equity than before; they may also find it more difficult to calculate fairness and equity than previously. Once a relationship begins to deteriorate, however, people may once again begin to worry about “What’s in in for me?” and ask: “Do I deserve better?” The degree to which couples worry about reward and fairness and equity, then, will vary during the course of a love relationship.

As we have seen in this *Handbook*, people may be involved in a wide variety of relationships—with romantic partners, mates, children, friends, teachers and students (Vermunt, Kazemi, & Törnblom, Ch. 24; Törnblom & Fredholm, Ch. 6), bosses and work-mates (Mitchell, Cropanzano, & Quisenberry, Ch. 5; Adamopoulos, Ch. 15; Chiaburu, Byrne, & Weidert, Ch. 20; Kraemer & Chen, Ch. 17), strangers, and enemies (Gifford & Cave, Ch. 13). They have greatly added to our understanding as to how people caught up in these diverse relationships perceive fairness and attempt to deal with existing inequities.

Fiske (1991), for example, argued that people possess four types of “relational models” (mental schemas for guiding interactions): *Communal Sharing* is a model of interaction that emphasizes a the common identity of group members—in such groups, resources would be shared according to need. *Authority Ranking* is a model in which participants are hierarchically ordered. There, power and status determine outcomes. *Equality Matching* refers to situations in which reciprocity is the norm. Finally, *Market Pricing* relations specify that goods and services be traded for what the market will bear. Obviously, in these kinds of relations, different allocations of reward are considered to be fair.

### C. Can Scholars Develop a Taxonomy of Resources?

Potentially, since Equity is in the eye of the beholder, almost anything can “count” as an input or an outcome in a relationship. One man may find enduring the fact that his beloved is a little dim witted, another might value his mate’s sparkling intelligence. Not surprisingly, then, in this *Handbook*, theorists have struggled mightily to develop taxonomies that will reduce the potential inputs and outcomes to a manageable number. In their chapter, Foa and Foa (Ch. 1) were among the first to attempt to specify which resources will be most relevant in various kinds of relationships. They argued that the resources of interpersonal exchange can be sorted into six classes: love, status, information, money, goods, and services. They can be further classified according to their “particularism” and “concreteness.”

This text provides an extended commentary on the merits and disadvantages of the Foas’ classification and some suggestions for

alternative taxonomies (see Binning & Huo, Ch. 7; Fiske, 1991; Folger, Ch. 8; and Turner, Ch. 9).

#### **D. Can We Predict How People Will Go About Setting Things Right?**

Adams (1965b) was a pioneer in attempting to develop a theory designed to predict how men and women caught up in inequitable relationships would choose to restore equity. He proposed that people follow six rules when deciding how to restore equity. Essentially, he argued that people would choose the strategy that best protected their own self-esteem, was in accord with their vision of the world, and minimized the costs and maximized the benefits of utilizing a given technique.

An example: Adams and Rosenbaum (1962) pointed out that according to Equity theory: (1) employees who realize they are being overpaid or underpaid should feel distress; (2) overpaid and underpaid workers can potentially reduce their distress in a variety of ways. Workers, for example, could restore actual equity by altering either the quantity of the quality of their work.

In a now classic study, the authors predicted that employees who are paid on a salary or an hourly basis *versus* a piece-rate basis ought to restore actual equity in very different ways. The overpaid worker who is paid on an hourly basis can restore equity by increasing his/her inputs: he can produce more and higher quality work. An underpaid worker can restore equity by doing the opposite: he/she can produce less and lower quality work. The worker who is paid on a piece-rate basis, however, must follow a very different strategy if he/she is to set things right. An overpaid piece-rate worker can only restore equity by producing less work of a higher quality. An underpaid piece-rate worker can restore equity by doing just the opposite: he/she can produce more work of a lower quality. The authors found strong support for these intriguing hypotheses.

Other modern-day theorists have offered still more comprehensive theories focusing on the ways the community, perpetrators, and victims, can best restore justice to problematic relationships (see Baumert &

Schmitt, Ch. 16; Cohen, Ch. 23; and Törnblom & Vermunt, Ch. 10, for excellent reviews of this research).

This *Handbook*, then, has provided a comprehensive guide to the current state of knowledge about social justice.

Yale historian Robin Winks once observed that writing history is “like nailing jelly to the wall.” But, he added, “someone must keep trying.” Trying to describe sweeping historical trends and then to predict future trends is even more difficult. But let us, in a playful and humble spirit, make the effort. Let us examine the scholarly disciplines where the first faint glimmerings of social justice research have appeared, and attempt to identify those that look most promising.

#### **IV. Where Should Things Go in the Future? Where are They Likely to Go?**

##### **A. Multi-Disciplinary Approach**

At the current time, some of the most interesting research into the nature of social justice emanates from scholars of diverse intellectual traditions: cross-cultural and historical theorists, who emphasize the stunning *diversity* of societal definitions of social justice, as well as evolutionary theorists, neuroscientists, and primatologists, who focus on *cultural universals*, arguing that a concern for justice arose early in humankind’s evolutionary history, and who speculate about how this ancient “wiring” affects current visions of social justice. Let us review some of these approaches here:

##### **B. Searching For a “Grand Unified Theory” of Justice**

As in any scientific endeavor, one of social psychology’s most intractable problems is the attempt to develop a “Unified Field Theory” of social justice, one that brings together culture and biology. We all yearn to be a Michael Faraday, Albert Einstein, or a Carlo Rubbia, who brings order out of chaos. It is surely too early in the evolution of our discipline to hope for that, but we see in this *Handbook* that a number of theorists have made a valiant effort to develop comprehensive theories of justice, with a special emphasis, of course, on social

resources and their exchange (see Baumrt & Schmitt, Ch. 16; Gifford & Cave, Ch. 13; Markovsky & Berigan, Ch. 11; Mitchell, Cropanzano, & Quisenberry, Ch. 5; Törnblom & Vermunt, Ch. 10; and Turner, 2007). Surely these efforts will continue to flourish.

### C. Cultural Considerations

Cultural theorists are well aware that culture has a profound impact on people's perceptions as to what is fair and just, which social resources they think "count" and which do not, and the "appropriate" rules for social exchange. Anthropologists like Richard Shweder and his colleagues (1987) and Alan Fiske (2002) surveyed moral concerns around the globe. All people, they concluded, possess an innate sense of fairness. People assume that they should reward benefactors, reciprocate favors, and punish cheaters—and will often go to great lengths to do so. Yet, there are cultural differences in people's sense of justice, the value of various kinds of social resources, and the "appropriateness" of various types of exchange, too. Culture exerts a profound influence on how fairness is defined, how concerned men and women are that their intimate affairs and work relationships be equitable, what social resources they care about, and how rewarding and equitable love and work relationships are likely to be (Amir & Sharon, 1987; Aumer-Ryan, et al., 2006; Murphy-Berman & Berman, 2002).

Triandis and his colleagues (1990), for example, argued that in individualistic cultures (such as the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada, and the countries of northern and western Europe) people generally focus on personal goals. In such societies, citizens are 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: the family, the clan, or the tribe. It is tradition, duty, and deference to elders that matter. Rosenblatt and Cunningham (1976) claimed that equity is of less importance in collectivist societies: "[regardless of] who has the better life, a man or a woman, they [people in collectivist cultures] might argue . . . that the lives of men and women are different and not comparable" (cited in Buunk & VanYperen, 1989, p. 82).

Do cultures differ in how much importance they attach to dating and marital fairness and equity? The evidence is mixed. In a series of studies, Aumer-Ryan and her colleagues (2006) interviewed Japanese-American, West Indian, and multi-cultural internet users, seeking answers to three questions. In different cultures, do men and women: (1) differ in the value they ascribe to equity in dating and marital relationships—some considering it to be crucial, others dismissing “fairness” as of trivial importance? (2) differ in whether they consider their own relationships to be equitable or inequitable? and (3) differ in how satisfied (or upset) they are when they discover their own relationships have turned out to be strikingly equitable/inequitable?

The authors found that in all cultures people considered reward and equity to be the gold standard of a good relationship. Both Westerners and their non-Western counterparts insisted it was “important” to “very important” that a courtship relationship or marriage be equitable.

The authors did find some fascinating cultural differences, however. People around the world may aspire to social justice, but few were lucky enough to achieve that goal. People in the various cultures differed markedly in how fair and equitable they considered their intimate relationships to be. Men and women from the United States claimed to be the most equitably treated. Men and women (especially women) from Jamaica, in the West Indies, felt the least equitably treated. Jamaican women often complained about men treating women as “second class citizens” and about men’s lack of commitment to relationships. In describing men’s attitudes, one woman quoted a classic Calypso song by Lord Kitchener (1963), which contains the repeated lyric: “You can always find another wife/but you can never get another mother in your life.” Such attitudes, the women claimed, make it very difficult for them to find a relationship that is rewarding, fair, and fulfilling.

In all cultures, men and women reacted much the same way when they felt fairly or badly treated. All were most satisfied when receiving exactly what they felt they deserved from their relationships—no more (perhaps) but (just as in the West) certainly no less.

This *Handbook* makes it clear that social justice scholars have begun to conduct studies in America, Australia, Austria, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Turkey, to name just a few (see Baumert & Schmitt, Ch. 16; Lewis & Hauser, Ch. 14; Törnblom & Vermunt Ch. 10; Kazemi, Gholamzadehmir & Törnblom, Ch. 22; Vermunt, Kazemi, &

Törnblom, Ch. 24.) Most of the cross-cultural research was conducted in educational settings (Sabbagh & Malka, Ch. 25) or work settings (Dorsch & Colby, Ch. 19; Kraemer & Chen, Ch. 17). In the future, however, we can be confident that cultural scholars will increasingly begin to investigate questions of social justice and the social resources that are considered of value, worldwide.

#### D. Historical Considerations

Historians have long been interested in the way people throughout the world define social justice (see Davies, 2001; Hobsbawm, 1988; Kershaw, 2001; or Schama, 2002.) Their investigations provide a window on the impact that social change has on societal definitions of fairness and the social resources people care about.

History's subject is time. The study of the past offers perspectives on the present. Put these two together and the possibility of making more informed guesses about the future becomes possible.

What about the future, then? Currently, futurists and historians predict that globalization and pending cultural, economic, and technological advances may well produce profound social changes in the way people view social justice and the social resources they care about—especially in the areas of love, sex, and marriage (Hatfield & Rapson, 2005). Among such anticipated changes are:

##### CULTURAL

- Increasing acceptance of cosmetic surgery.
- Increasing acceptance of multiple definitions of “family.”
- Improved status of women worldwide
- Increasing acceptance of inter-racial relationships.
- Increasing acceptance of homosexuality.
- The norm will be change—probably very rapid change.

##### ECONOMIC/PRACTICAL

- Toward gender/economic equality.
- More consensual unions (fewer marriages).
- Both spouses working.

- More long-distance relationships.
- More cyberspace relationships.

## TECHNOLOGICAL

- Love, sex, and relationships on the Web
- Second Life Avatars
- Sex Dolls: Choosing fantasy mates over real men and women
- Computer Matching
- Increased availability of pornography and technological sex.
- Cures for AIDS, STIs, and impotence.
- Advances in reproductive technology—including boutique babies, birth control, and abortion.
- People living longer. Much, much longer? “The Singularity.”

What impact might these anticipated transformations have on the way men and women define fairness and the social resources they consider to be most valuable? How contented might we expect people confronting such profound changes to be? (Or will they suffer from “future shock?” [Toffler, 1984]) Will men (who will be losing power) tend to cling to the past while women rush into the future? How will all people attempt to deal with the momentous and unsettling new challenges that may lie ahead? In future, we might expect futurists and social historians to provide new insights into the nature of justice and their perceptions of social resources and those that matter and those that do not.

## E. Evolutionary Models

### 1. The Evolution of Darwin’s Evolutionary Theory

Although in the 1970s, when crafting Equity theory, we were hoping to develop a “unified theory”—integrating the insights of Darwinian theory, economic theory, and Hullian and Skinnerian reinforcement theories—in fact (like everyone else) we focused far more on nurture than nature. True, in the 1960s and 1970s, some pioneers like Hamilton (1964), Smith (1974) and Trivers (1972), assumed that altruism, as well as aggression, was embedded in the architecture of the mind. (Theorists talked about the advantages of “group selection,” “kin selection or inclusive fitness” and “reciprocal altruism”—a version of

“blood is thicker than water,” and “If you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours”). Nonetheless, the most influential theorist was Dawkins (1976), who contended in *The Selfish Gene* that, day-to-day, people are programmed for savage competition, ruthless exploitation, and deceit. Admittedly, altruistic acts occur—but alas, such altruism is more apparent than real. Our challenge, then, was to craft a theory that accounted for people’s desire for fairness and justice using primarily social constructionist and reinforcement models. Equity’s propositions I-IV focused on the social forces that prod people to care about social justice and to privilege one type of social resource over another. The evidence for our contentions came, for the most part, from cultural psychology, social psychology, and I/O research.

In the past 25 years or so, social psychologists have begun to explore the evolutionary underpinnings of social justice. (See, for example, the later work of Richard Dawkins [2006], on the probable evolution of reciprocal altruism and social exchange.) As Cosmides and Tooby (1992) observe:

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).

Currently, interesting work on social justice from evolutionary perspective is being conducted by scholars such as Rob Boyd (Boyd, et al., 2003). They provide strong support for the notion that: “Proposition II: Groups will reward those who treat others fairly and punish those who do not”—even at considerable cost to themselves.

In the *Handbook*, theorists provide an excellent summary of this new research (see Folger, Ch. 8; Lewis & Hauser, Ch. 14; Markovsky & Berigan, Ch. 11.)

Additional evidence as to the biological underpinnings of social justice comes from neuroscientists and primatologists.

## 2. fMRI research

In recent years, neuroscientists have begun to investigate the cognitive factors (and brain processes) that are involved when men and women confront moral dilemmas. These concern such things as the nature of social justice and a question of profound concern for Foa and Foa (2001), how a variety of competing moral claims are resolved. For instance: “What’s more important: the claims of friendship or the demands of fairness and equity in a social exchange?” Robertson and her colleagues (2007) presented men and women with several real life moral dilemmas. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) techniques, they studied people’s brain activity as they pondered such dilemmas. The neuroscientists found that sensitivity to moral issues (in general) was associated with activation of the polar medial prefrontal cortex, dorsal posterior cingulate cortex, and posterior superior temporal sulcus (STS). They speculated that moral sensitivity is probably related to one’s ability to retrieve autobiographical memories and to take a social perspective. They also assessed whether sensitivity to social concerns (as distinguished from impartial justice) involved different kinds of neural processing. They found that sensitivity to issues of justice (and social exchange) were associated with greater activation of the left intraparietal sulcus, whereas sensitivity to care issues was associated with greater activation of the ventral posterior cingulate cortex, ventromedial, and dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, and thalamus. These results suggest that different parts of the brain may operate when people ponder their duty to loved ones versus their obligation to be fair and just to all. For additional neurobiological speculations as to the neural circuits involved in the perception of and reaction to social inequality, see Borg, et al. (2006), Raine and Yang (2006), Reis, et al., (2007), Watson and Platt (2006), and Witvliet, et al., (2008).

Neuroscience is still in its infancy, of course. Many social scientists have sharply criticized the widespread use of fMRI techniques to study the nature of social justice, claiming that currently the fMRI studies track only superficial changes and lack reliability and validity (Cacioppo, et al., 2003; Movshon, 2006; Panksepp, 2007; Wade, cited in Wargo, 2005). Nonetheless, this path-breaking research has the potential (as it grows ever more sophisticated) to answer age-old questions as to the nature of culture, perceptions of social justice, and the ways in which people react when faced with equitable or inequitable treatment.

### 3. Animal models

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 lead to the wolf's death (Bekoff, 2004; Brosnan, 2006).

Primatologists have amassed considerable evidence that primates and other animals do care about fairness. In a study with brown capuchin (*Cebus apella*) monkeys, Brosnan and de Waal (2003) found that female monkeys who were denied 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 monkey 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. (Brosnan, Schiff, & de Waal, 2005). 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 feeling outraged when they were "ripped off?" (Brosnan, et al., 2005; Brosnan, 2006); (2) are animals more (or less) concerned about fairness in despotic, hierarchical societies than in those that are relatively egalitarian? (Brosnan, 2006); (3) are primates and other animals more (or less) concerned about inequities in close kin relationships than in more distant encounters? (Brosnan, et al, 2005.)

(For additional information, see Folger, Ch. 8 and Lewis & Hauser, Ch. 14.)

## **F. Why Do Good People Sometimes Behave Cruelly and Unjustly? The Ingroup versus the Outgroup**

In discussing the nature of justice, we talked about what people perceive to be fair, how they calculate fairness and equity, and the techniques they use to set things right. What we have totally neglected to consider is: “If people are so concerned with social justice, how is it that they are often so willing to engage in unjust and cruel behavior?” Turn on TV and watch any news broadcast (from the right wing Fox News to BBC News, from Deutsche Welle to Al Jazeera TV, and, of course, the Web) and you will see horrific war scenes, demonstrating that in trying times, people often seem not to care a whit about justice. People would happily smite their enemies—if only they could. How can it be that sometimes ordinary citizens actually revel in cruelty and brutality?

In one of his early papers, Deutsch (1975) observed that people’s definitions of who is in one’s “moral community” is often severely circumscribed:

. . . one would not feel it to be unjust if one killed an annoying mosquito or caught a fish to eat for dinner. Similarly, “justice” is not involved in relations with others — such as heathens, “inferior races,” heretics, or “perverts”— who are perceived to be outside one’s actual or potential moral community or who are opposed to it (p. 23).

(There is, in fact, some pioneering neuroscience research documenting that social identity shapes neural responses to intergroup competition and harm. Specifically, scholars have found that seeing members of our own group suffer causes pain; seeing competitors suffer brings a smile to our face—or more precisely to our anterior cingulate cortex and insula (Cikara, Botvinick, & Fiske, 2011).

Deutsch (1975) observed that the broader one’s definition of “community,” the more people one will feel compelled to treat with respect and concern. Believers in “the family of man” may have a most generous perspective. Those in tight-knit groups may have a far narrower perspective. (There is some evidence in support of this contention as well. Knafo, Schwartz, & Levine (2009), for example, found that people in embedded cultures generally focus on the welfare of their own in-group, limiting their concern for outsiders’ well being; those in non-embedded cultures invite more people into their “moral community.” In three field experiments in 21 countries, they found

that people in embedded cultures are less likely to help strangers in need than are their peers.)

In subsequent years, we suspect scholars will come to be increasingly interested in—not just the conditions that cause people to be concerned with social justice—but those that allow good people to view injustice with a shrug and to flagrantly violate norms of honor and decency.

## V. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, we have traced the evolution of theories of social justice, focusing particularly on the pioneering work of Foa and Foa (Chapter 1). We began by reviewing early theorists' rather shaky (and narrow) speculations about the nature of social justice, social resources, and the rules for their exchange. We discussed modern-day theory and research, which has added both breadth and depth to our understanding of the attitudes, norms, and rules involved in the exchange of social resources. We ended by observing that social justice research is becoming a multidisciplinary enterprise. This is happening in a variety of ways: with cultural and historical scholars investigating the changes that have occurred (over time) in peoples' attitudes toward various social resources and the "appropriate" rules for their exchange; and with both psychobiologists and evolutionary theorists on the lookout for cultural universals.

Whether we focus on the conditions that motivate people to act with fairness, or to ignore the dictates of conscience, all of us probably harbor the secret desire that our research could help to make the world a better place. If only people around the world cared about not only family, friends, and neighbors, but all of humankind, as well! But how to persuade the world's citizens to care more deeply about social justice? In a famous essay, when discussing the problem of persuading Americans to sacrifice today for a future good, the economic historian Robert Heilbroner (1991) posed an ironic question: "What has Posterity Ever Done for Me?"

Certainly social change is not easy. We are not likely to be able to persuade most Afghanistan Sunnis to care much about their Shia enemies' well-being, Prime Minister David Cameron to worry about the EU, or Newt Gingrich to care overmuch about Mitt Romney's feelings. So

it is naive to believe that even several lifetimes of social justice research can have a major impact on the world. But we need not aim so high. Fernand Braudel, an eminent French historian, once observed that he would happily settle for a world with a bit more justice, a bit more equality, a bit more freedom, less violence, and a good deal less poverty. Those modest achievements would indeed be worthy of celebration.

Braudel's modest goals are not beyond reach (Cameron, et al., 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Paloutzian & Park, 2005). In fact, many social commentators point out that—as surprising as the claim may sound—over time the world has been improving. In his new book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, Steven Pinker (2011) provides compelling documentation that over the last 500 years, the world has grown more peaceful and less violent. People have become less racist, sexist, homophobic, and cruel to animals and children. He also contends that this moral progress has accelerated as we approach our own time. In the Bible, for example, God insisted that his true believers smite those who worshipped false gods, in an orgy of genocide. (“Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth”: Deuteronomy 20:16.) Now we have the Geneva Convention. A study of Native-American skeletons from hunter-gather societies found that 13% of citizens had met a violent death. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Thirty Years' War reduced Germany's population by one-third. Statistically, Pinker (2011) and Goldstein (2001) argue, even accounting for the calamities of World Wars I and II, the proportion of the citizenry killed in battle has declined. We think of the Twin Towers crumbling, but when we step back, the richer historical perspective offers better news than the daily cascade of headlines telling a story of violence, unending.

It is to be hoped that the work of scores of social justice thinkers and texts like the *Handbook* will increase the chances of making the world a *bit* better and a *bit* more concerned with social justice.

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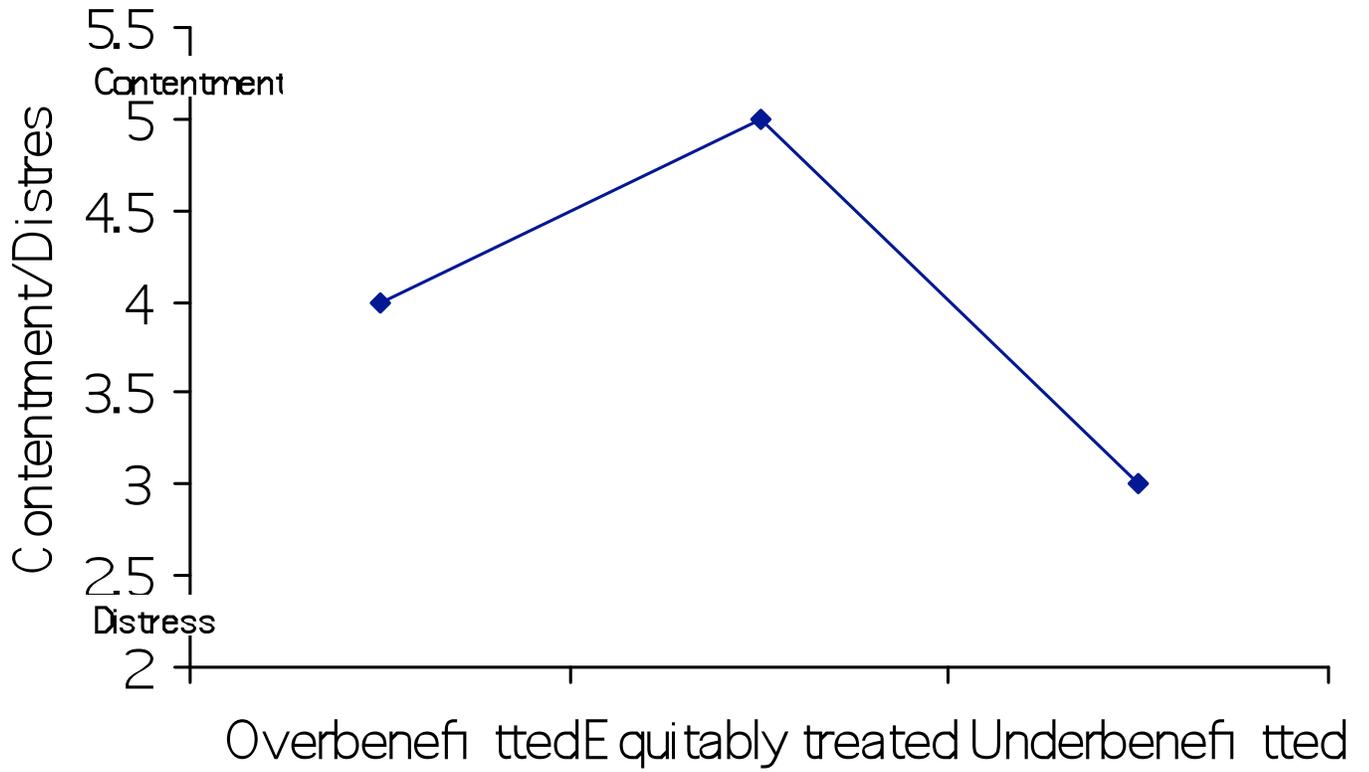
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Figure 1

The relationship between Perceived Equity and Contentment/Distress



## Appendix A

### A Multi-Factor Measure of Equity

#### *Introduction: Explanation of Concepts*

“We’re interested in the give-and-take that goes on in a dating relationship or marriage. We’d like to ask you a few questions about the things you put into your relationship . . . and the kinds of things you get out of it. We know that most people don’t ordinarily keep careful track of exactly what they’re giving and getting from their dating relationships or marriages. They certainly don’t pull their relationship apart and think about the various aspects of their relationship, one by one. But in order for us to get some idea of what goes on in dating and marital relationships, we have to ask you and the other people we’re interviewing to *spell out* some of the give-and-take that naturally occurs.

Let us look at some of the critical areas in any dating relationship or marriage. Look over this list. [Hand respondent list.] We’d like to ask about you and your partner’s Personal Concerns, your Emotional Concerns, your Day-to-Day Concerns, and a little about the things the two of you feel you gain or lose—simply by dating or being married. We’d like you to read each item.

[Each item is read through, aloud if interviewer is used. After reading each item, Respondent is asked]:

Considering what you put into your dating relationship or marriage (in this area), 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 dating relationship/marriage “stack up”?

- +3: I am getting a much better deal than my partner.
- +2: I am getting a somewhat better deal.
- +1: I am getting a slightly better deal.
- 0: We are both getting an equally good or bad deal.
- 1: My partner is getting a slightly better deal.
- 2: My partner is getting a somewhat better deal.
- 3: My partner is getting a much better deal than I am.

#### **Areas Involved in the Dating/Marital Give and Take**

##### **Personal Concerns**

##### *Social Grace*

1. Social Grace: Some people are sociable, friendly, relaxed in social settings. Others are not.

*Intellect*

2. Intelligence: Some people are intelligent and informed.

*Appearance*

3. Physical Attractiveness: Some people are physically attractive.
4. Concern for Physical Appearance and Health: Some people take care of their physical appearance and conditioning, through attention to such things as their clothing, cleanliness, exercise, and good eating habits.

**Emotional Concerns***Liking and Loving*

5. Liking: Some people like their partners and show it. Others do not.
6. Love: Some people feel and express love for their partners.

*Understanding and Concern*

7. Understanding and Concern: Some people know their partner's personal concerns and emotional needs and respond to them.

*Acceptance*

8. Accepting and Encouraging Role Flexibility: Some people let their partners try out different roles occasionally, for example, letting their partner be a "baby" sometimes, a "mother," a colleague or a friend, an aggressive as well as a passive lover, and so on.

*Appreciation*

9. Expressions of Appreciation: Some people openly show appreciation for their partner's contributions to the relationship—they don't take their partner for granted.

*Physical Affection:*

10. Showing Affection: Some people are openly affectionate—touching, hugging, kissing.

*Sex*

11. Sexual Pleasure: Some people participate in the sexual aspect of a relationship, working to make it mutually satisfying and fulfilling.

12. Sexual Fidelity: Some people live up to (are “faithful” to) their agreements about extra-marital relations.

#### *Security/Freedom*

13. Commitment: Some people commit themselves to their partners and to the future of their relationship together.

14. Respecting Partner’s Need to be a Free and Independent Person: Some people allow their partners to develop as an individual in the way that they choose: for example, they allow their partners freedom to go to school or not; to work at the kind of job or career they like; to pursue outside interests; to do things by themselves or with friends; to simply be alone sometimes.

#### *Plans and Goals for the Future*

15. Plans and Goals for the Future: Some people plan for and dream about their future together.

### **Day-to-Day Concerns**

#### *Day-to-Day Maintenance*

16. Day-to-Day Maintenance: Some people contribute time and effort to household responsibilities such as grocery shopping, making dinner, cleaning, and car maintenance. Others do not.

#### *Finances:*

17. Finances: Some people contribute income to the couple’s “joint account.”

#### *Sociability*

18. Easy-to-Live-With: Some people are easy to live with on a day-to-day basis; that is, they have a sense of humor, aren’t too moody, don’t get drunk too often, and so on.

19. Companionship: Some people are good companions, who suggest interesting activities for both of them to do together, as well as going along with their partner’s ideas about what they might do for fun.

20. Conversation: Some people tell partners about their day's events and what's on their mind . . . and are also interested in hearing about their partners' concerns and daily activities.

21. Fitting in: Some people are compatible with their partner's friends and relatives; they like the friends and relatives, and the friends and relatives like them.

*Decision Making:*

22. Decision-Making: Some people take their fair share of the responsibility for making and carrying out of decisions that affect both partners.

*Remembering Special Occasions*

23. Remembering Special Occasions: Some people are thoughtful about sentimental things, such as remembering birthdays, your anniversary, and other special occasions.

**Opportunities Gained and Lost**

*Opportunities Gained*

24. Chance to be Dating or Married: Dating and marriage give many people the opportunity to partake of the many life experiences that depend upon dating or being married; for example, the chance to become a parent and even a grandparent, the chance to be included in "married couple" social events, and finally, having someone to count on in old age.

*Opportunities Foregone*

25. Opportunities Foregone: Dating and marriage necessarily requires people to give up certain opportunities . . . in order to be in this relationship. The opportunities could have been other possible mates, a career, travel, etc.

To calculate a *Total Index*, the experimenter sums the respondents' estimates of how Over-benefited, Equitably treated, or Under-benefited they are in each of the 25 areas and divides by 25.

If Es wish to weight the items by importance, they can simply go through the 25 items, one by one, and ask:

How important is this area to you?

8: Extremely important.

7: Very important

6. Fairly important

5. Slightly important
4. Slightly unimportant
3. Fairly important
2. Very unimportant
1. Extremely unimportant

Then weight item by importance.