

Abstract

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Department of Psychology, Göteborg University, Sweden.

Motives such as fairness that strengthen collective goals have been believed to increase cooperation in conflicts between self-interest and the interest of the collective. However, in some instances, such as when sanctioning systems are implemented, fairness may counteract cooperation that would guarantee the preservation of a resource or efficiency. This thesis investigates the effects that fairness (between groups of others), efficiency, and self-interest have on decisions to allocate resources when conflicts exist between the three motives. **Study I** consisted of two experiments where participants allocated a resource between themselves, one privileged group, and one unprivileged group. Conflicts were induced between maximizing self-interest, upholding fairness between the groups, and preserving the resource. In Experiment 1 employing a one-shot decision task with efficiency defined as minimizing resource use and operationalized as the likelihood of that the payoffs were realized, an adverse effect of fairness on efficient resource use was found. In Experiment 2, extending the decision task to a multi-stage format, efficient resource use was found only when both fairness and self-interest were non-salient. The results thus suggested that when in conflict with efficiency, fairness considerations result in poor resource management. In Experiment 1 of **Study II** participants also allocated payoffs to two groups in the multi-stage decision task. Conflicts were induced between fairness for the two groups and preserving a resource. Self-interest was linked to fairness by awarding a high or low bonus dependent on if a majority of group members voted for the bonus. An adverse impact of fairness on efficient resource use was again found but no effect of self-interest. In order to distinguish between effects of difference and sum of group payoffs, fairness and goodness (desirability) of allocations to two groups were assessed in Experiment 2. The results showed that participants based fairness and goodness on group differences although somewhat less when the sum increased. **Study III** examined fairness and goodness of allocations of resources to groups when the number of groups increased beyond two. The results showed that goodness was related to fairness that in turn was negatively related to the average difference between group payoffs. **Study IV** investigated conflicts between greed, efficiency, and fairness in actual political decision making about road-pricing fees. The results showed that for the political majority, the hypothesized goal conflicts existed in that no single goal was optimized. It was concluded that especially fairness may prevent that road pricing will achieve the environmental goal.

Keywords: Social dilemmas, Resource dilemmas, Resource allocations, Goal conflicts, Self-interest, Greed, Efficiency, Fairness, Equality, Third party differences.

Lars-Olof Johansson, Department of Psychology, Göteborg University, P. O. Box 500, SE-40530 Göteborg, Sweden. Ph.: (voice) +46 (0)31 773 4696, (fax) +46 (0)31 773 4264. E-mail: Lars-Olof.Johansson@psy.gu.se