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*A behavioral ethics approach*

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**Publication date**
2021

**Document Version**
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**Citation for published version (APA):**
Leib, M. (2021). *(Dis)honesty in individual and collaborative settings: A behavioral ethics approach*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

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# Contribution and financing

## Contribution

Chapter 2 is published as Leib, M., Pittarello, A., Gordon-Hecker, T., Shalvi, S., & Roskes, M. (2019). Loss framing increases self-serving mistakes (but does not alter attention). *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 85,* 103880. M. Leib, A. Pittarello, and Gordon-Hecker, T. programmed the experiments and collected the data. M. Leib and A. Pittarello analyzed the data and wrote the first draft. All authors designed the experiments, wrote the manuscript, and approved the final manuscript for submission.

Chapter 3 is published as Leib, M., Moran, S., & Shalvi, S. (2019). Dishonest helping and harming after (un) fair treatment. *Judgment and Decision Making, 14*(4), 423-439. M. Leib programmed the experiments, collected and analyzed the data, and wrote the first draft. All authors designed the experiments, wrote the manuscript, and approved the final manuscript for submission.

Chapter 4 is published as Gross, J., Leib, M., Offerman, T., & Shalvi, S. (2018). Ethical free riding: When honest people find dishonest partners. *Psychological science*, *29*(12), 1956-1968. J. Gross and M. Leib collected and analyzed the data and contributed equally to this manuscript. J. Gross programmed the experiment. All authors designed the experiment, wrote the manuscript, and approved the final manuscript for submission.

Chapter 5 is based on the working paper Leib, M., Köbis, N.C., Soraperra, I., Weisel, O., & Shalvi, S. (Dis)honesty in Collaborative Settings: A Meta-Study. M. Leib collected the data and analyzed it with the assistance of I. Soraperra and N. C. Köbis. M. Leib wrote the first draft and received valuable feedback from all authors.

## Financing

All the chapters in the dissertation were financed by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement ERC-StG-637915). The work described in chapter 2 was additionally financed by Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (VENI grant 451-15-030). The work described in chapter 3 was also financed by an Israeli Science Foundation grant number 914.14. Lastly, the work described in chapter 4 was further financed by the Behavioral Economics Research Priority Area at the University of Amsterdam.

# Summary

At time, people have to choose between being honest or profitable but dishonest. In such ethically challenging situations, many factors affect peoples' (dis)honesty. This dissertation tests several key factors that shape (dis)honesty. The first two empirical chapters focused on individual settings, where people act alone and affect their own (chapter 2) or others' (chapter 3) financial profits. Chapters 4 and 5 focused on collaborative settings, where people can coordinate on joint dishonest acts and secure mutual pay.

Chapter 2 examined how framing financial incentives as potential gains versus losses affects self-serving mistakes, which is a subtle type of dishonesty. In two experiments, participants made twice as many self-serving mistakes to avoid losses than to secure equal-sized gains. Tracking participants' eye movements provided insights into the attentional process underlying self-serving mistakes. Results revealed that both in gain and loss framing, tempting information attracts more attention than non-tempting information, shaping self-serving mistakes. Tempting information drew attention to the same extent in loss and gain framing. The same attention to tempting information, however, translated to more self-serving mistakes in loss than in gain framing. Results thus suggest the higher use of such tempting information, and not the higher attention to tempting information, leads to more self-serving mistakes when incentives are framed as losses versus gains.

Chapter 3 tested how prior (un)fair treatment affects other-helping and harming lies. Across three experiments, participants were treated unfairly, fairly, or not at all. Participants then could lie to help or harm others. Overall, lies aimed at helping others were common. A rather large proportion of participants lied to help others, when they were treated fairly, unfairly, or not at all. Lies aimed at harming others, however, were much less common. Only a small proportion of participants, after experiencing unfair treatment, lied to harm others. The source of (un)fairness—whether intentional or not—did not affect participants' lies, suggesting the mere (un)fair treatment, and not the motivation to reciprocate (un)fair gestures, drove participants' lies.

Chapters 4 and 5 focused on collaborative settings in which participants could coordinate on mutual lies to secure joint gains. In such settings, two moral obligations—to be honest and collaborative—clash. Chapter 4 tested how people choose their partners in such collaborative settings, and how the ability (vs. inability) to choose partners affects collaborative dishonesty. Both dishonest and honest participants exploited the freedom to choose a partner. Naturally, dishonest participants sought a dishonest partner—a "partner in crime"—that would help them maximize profits. Honest participants engaged in "ethical free

riding": they refrained from lying themselves, but also from leaving dishonest partners. As such, honest participants benefited from both worlds—they maintained their moral self-image, while financially profiting from their partner's lies. Additional results revealed that the ability to select partners (vs. forcing partner switching) increased the contagiousness and efficiency of lies.

Lastly, chapter 5 presented the first meta-study on (dis)honesty in collaborative settings, analyzing 51,640 decisions, made by 3,264 participants across 43 conditions. Results revealed that in collaborative settings, partners' lies are correlated—if one lies, the other is more likely to lie as well. Further, lies increase as the task progresses, and as the financial incentive to lie increases. Finally, compared to equivalent individual settings, people lie more in collaborative setting. Chapter 5 further outlined intriguing directions for future research on collaborative dishonesty.

**Conclusions**

Many factors shape the decision to be honest or lie for profit. This dissertation focuses on several key factors, both in individual and collaborative settings. Further, this dissertation aims to shed light on the social aspect of (dis)honesty and shift attention from (dis)honesty in individual settings toward collaborative settings. With many important decisions made by groups rather than single individuals, understanding how collaboration shapes our honesty is both interesting and important. I hope the insights obtained here will help open many interesting directions for future research, focusing especially on the social elements shaping (dis)honesty and ethical decision-making.

# Dutch summary

Er zijn momenten waarop mensen moeten kiezen tussen eerlijk zijn of profiteren door oneerlijk te zijn. In dit soort ethisch uitdagende situaties spelen veel factoren een rol in de (on)eerlijkheid van mensen. In dit proefschrift worden verscheidene sleutelfactoren die eerlijkheid beïnvloeden, getest. De eerste twee empirische hoofdstukken waren gericht op individuele situaties, waarin mensen in hun eentje beslissingen nemen die hun eigen verdiensten (hoofdstuk 2) of de verdiensten van anderen (hoofdstuk 3) beïnvloeden. De hoofdstukken 4 en 5 waren gericht op een samenwerkingsomgeving, waarin mensen gezamenlijk oneerlijke keuzes kunnen maken en daar samen van profiteren.

In hoofdstuk 2 lag de focus op het 'framen' van financiële prikkels als potentiele winsten of potentiele verliezen en hoe dit het maken van fouten uit eigenbelang, een subtiele vorm van oneerlijkheid, beïnvloed. In twee experimenten maakten deelnemers twee keer zoveel van dit soort fouten om verliezen te voorkomen als voor een winst van dezelfde omvang. Het volgen van de oogbewegingen van de deelnemers gaf inzicht in het aandachtsproces dat ten grondslag ligt aan het maken van fouten uit eigenbelang. Interessante informatie trok evenveel aandacht in verlies- en winstsituaties. Echter, dezelfde aandacht voor interessante informatie vertaalde zich in meer fouten uit eigenbelang in verliessituaties dan in winstsituaties. Deze resultaten suggereren daarom dat meer gebruik van deze informatie, en niet meer aandacht voor deze informatie, tot meer fouten uit eigenbelang leidt wanneer de financiële prikkel als een verlies wordt 'geframed'.

In hoofdstuk 3 werd getest hoe eerdere (on)eerlijke behandeling invloed heeft op leugens die anderen helpen of schaden. In drie experimenten kregen deelnemers van tevoren een eerlijke, oneerlijke, of geen behandeling. Vervolgens konden ze liegen om anderen te helpen of te schaden. Over het geheel genomen kwamen leugens om anderen te helpen veel voor. Een groot deel van de deelnemers loog om anderen te helpen, nadat ze eerlijk, oneerlijk, of helemaal niet waren behandeld. Leugens om anderen te schaden kwamen daarentegen veel minder vaak voor. Slechts een klein deel van de deelnemers loog, na oneerlijk te zijn behandeld, om anderen te schaden. De bron van de (on)eerlijkheid - of deze opzettelijk was of niet - had geen invloed op de leugens van de deelnemers, wat suggereert dat de oneerlijke behandeling zelf, en niet de motivatie om (on)eerlijk gedrag te beantwoorden de deelnemers tot leugens aanzette.

De hoofdstukken 4 en 5 waren gericht op een samenwerkingsomgeving, waarin deelnemers konden coördineren op leugens voor gezamenlijk profijt. In zo'n omgeving komen twee morele verplichtingen - eerlijk zijn en samenwerken - met elkaar in botsing. In hoofdstuk 4 werd getest hoe mensen hun partners kiezen in een dergelijke omgeving, en hoe de mogelijkheid (of onmogelijkheid) om een partner te kiezen gezamenlijke oneerlijkheid beïnvloed. Zowel oneerlijke als eerlijke deelnemers maakten gebruik van de mogelijkheden om een partner te kiezen. Het mag geen verassing zijn dat oneerlijke deelnemers een oneerlijke partner - een "partner in crime" - zochten, die hen zou helpen met zoveel mogelijk geld verdienen. Eerlijke deelnemers maakten gebruik van "ethisch

meeliften": ze logen zelf niet, maar ondernamen ook geen actie om hun oneerlijke partners te verlaten. Op deze manier aten de eerlijke deelnemers van twee walletjes - ze hielden hun morele zelfbeeld in stand, terwijl ze ook financieel profiteerden door de leugens van hun partner. Overige resultaten lieten zien dat de mogelijkheid om een partner te kiezen (t.o.v. gedwongen partnerwissels) de verspreiding en efficiëntie van leugens deed toenemen.

Tot slot werd in een hoofdstuk 5 een meta-studie gepresenteerd over (on)eerlijkheid in samenwerkingsomgevingen, waarin 51640 beslissingen door 3264 deelnemers in 43 verschillende situaties werden geanalyseerd. De resultaten lieten zien dat er in samenwerkingsomgevingen een correlatie bestond tussen de leugens van partners - als de een liegt, is de kans groter dat de ander ook liegt. Daarnaast nam het aantal leugens toe naarmate de taak vorderde, en als de financiële prikkel om te liegen groter werd. Ten slotte, vergeleken met een equivalente individuele omgeving, logen mensen meer in een samenwerkingsomgeving. In hoofdstuk 5 werden ook intrigerende richtingen voor verder onderzoek naar gezamenlijke oneerlijkheid geschetst.

**Conclusie**

Er zijn veel factoren die invloed hebben op de beslissing om eerlijk te zijn of te liegen voor financieel gewin. Dit proefschrift focust op verscheidene sleutelfactoren, zowel in individuele als in samenwerkingsomgevingen. Daarnaast is het doel van dit proefschrift om nieuw licht te werpen op het sociale aspect van (on)eerlijkheid en om de aandacht te verschuiven van (on)eerlijkheid in individuele omgevingen naar samenwerkingsomgevingen. Omdat zoveel belangrijke beslissingen worden genomen door groepen in plaats van individuen, is het zowel interessant als belangrijk om te begrijpen hoe samenwerking eerlijkheid beïnvloed. Ik hoop dat de inzichten die hiermee verkregen worden de deur zullen openen naar veel interessante richtingen voor vervolgonderzoek, met name op het gebied van de invloed van sociale elementen op (on)eerlijkheid en ethische besluitvorming.

# Acknowledgments

Sometimes the smallest decisions can have the biggest impact. This was the case for me when deciding to take a seminar called “Temptation and ethical behavior” during my last year of my bachelors, back in 2013. What followed has been an exciting, challenging, and wonderful journey. There are so many people I wish to thank to for their love, support, encouragement, and inspiration throughout this process.

Shaul, I can fill a whole book on things I am grateful to you for. Thanks for teaching that “Temptation and ethical behavior” seminar – it was truly (and literally) life changing. It made me fall in-love with research and want to pursue it myself. Your ability to ask important and interesting questions, test them in cool ways, and write intriguing papers have taught me so much. Your enthusiasm, open-mindedness, and optimism are contagious. Thanks for not only being a great mentor, but also a friend. Thanks for providing endless support, for putting things in perspective when times were challenging, and for making fun of me at any chance you got. I am super lucky to have you as a mentor, colleague, and a friend.

Theo, thanks for being a supportive, chill, and open minded supervisor. Your door was always open for me to consult and ask questions, and I knew I can count on you for a thoughtful, smart, and helpful answer. You taught me how to think more like an economist, and how to clarify and pinpoint my thoughts and ideas. Thank you for those, as well as for your dry humor and great foosball skills!

To the rest of the CREEDers – thank you for making CREED such a wonderful, fun, and inspiring place to work in. Joep, thanks for setting the tone and for making incredible cakes for our 11AM coffee breaks. Matthijs, thanks for playing the ground-floor piano every time you pass by it, and for going on hilarious rants about things you are truly passionate about. Aljaz, your big heart and crazy stories are two of my favorite things – thanks for those, for many Friday dinners, and for lending me 5 pairs of earbuds. You will never get them back. Giorgia, thanks for being so poetic and thoughtful, and for seeking and finding beauty everywhere. Joel, thanks for constantly having a smile on your face and for seeing value in colorful, mismatched socks.

Thank you to Ailko for hosting awesome movie nights, with the best pizza and (sometimes) the worst movies, and for Silvia for being an integral part of that experience. Asli, Chris, and Kostas, thanks for the coffee and Matcha, and for always welcoming me on the bean-bag in your office. Thanks Alejandro for spending hours taking with me about mundane things, irrational fears, and most importantly, romcoms. Kathi, Andreas, and Davide, thanks for many post-seminar drinks! Jan, I want to thank you for being hilarious in every interaction, but no for intentionally grossing me out during lunch. I would also like to

thank Vadim, Chih-Chung, Mael, and Charlotte for being great office mates throughout the years and Andro, Ben, Simin, Max, Jindi, David, Junze, Stephanie, and Stephan for welcoming me to UvA and showing me the ropes early on.

Andrej, thanks for always making me laugh and for telling me boring gym stories. Thank you Johan for dropping by for random breaks (and especially for translating this dissertation's summary to Dutch), Ayşe for being the perfect height to hug, and Dianna for being a key member of the Zoom breakfast club (and for that amazing pecan pie). Thanks Julia for countless drinks, dinners, and heart to heart conversations and Jeroen for being 99.9% of the reason we won every foosball match we partnered in. Natalie, thanks for introducing me to cool vegan food and the behind the scenes of Instagram fame. Frieder, thanks for being the most American-Italian-German guy I know. Sneha, thank you for being such a great and supportive friend, for always having something positive to say, and for designing the cover of this dissertation.

Nils and Ivan, my academic big brothers. Just being around you and hanging out brings me so much joy. You are great collaborators and even better friends. Nils, I love how imaginative you are, how excited you get by new ideas, and how perceptive and caring you are as a friend. I love that you are always in high spirits and want to hang out, that it's so easy to make you laugh, and that you are so good at asking interesting (also non-academic) questions. Ivan, I learn so much from your calm and taking-things-in-perspective approach (and from your R skills). I love how deeply you delve into things you are passionate about, and that twinkle in your eye just before you are about to tell me some gibberish I don't understand about complex math or computers. Thank you both for all of that and for so much more… even the dad jokes! I love you very much and this whole thing would not have been the same without you two.

A special thanks to Maurice Schweitzer for welcoming me to his lab in Wharton and showing me how things are done on the other side of the world. Your creativity, enthusiasm, and broad interests are truly inspiring. I am grateful for the opportunity to experience it and learn from you. Thanks also to Einav who was a 'home away from home' while I was visiting. I would also like to thank collaborators, colleagues, students, and RAs I had over the years. A special thanks to Marieke, Rainer, and Jörg – I wish all of my future collaborations will be as fun as they are with you.

A huge thank you to Annika – you are an awesome friend and roommate. I am grateful for your never ending excitement, about everything. It is so fun to watch and experience, and it provided me with a much needed moral boost on many occasions. I am very happy we were

randomly matched as roommates! Veronica and Helen, you are two other lucky draws in the roommate department. Veronica, thanks for million brunches and for encouraging me to bike to a bar 5 minutes away from home – you believed in my biking abilities before I did. Helen, thanks for a great first year in Amsterdam and for giving me the important tip of taking that apartment offer. Florian and Simon, you were the first friends I made moving to Amsterdam. With both of you I can spend hours debating a single, sometime meaningful (but often not) topic. I enjoy these conversations a lot and happy that that one meeting turned into two long lasting friendships.

I'd like to also thank my Israel colleagues. A special thank you for Simone for being an incredible mentor during my Masters and for introducing me to JDM. Tom, Andrea, and Sigal, thanks for being great friends, collaborators, and lab members during my time in Israel. Uriel, Amos, Yoella, Ro'i, and Ori thanks for chatting with me about research and non-research, inspiring me early on, and hanging out with me in conferences. Thanks for Shir and Anna for being a very welcome support system and for forming an unexpected, trans-Atlantic, virtual friend bubble during a global pandemic.

Finally, I'd like to thank my friend from Israel and especially my family. Thank you all for your love and support! Thanks for providing a much needed non-work balance to my life. I could not have done this without you, and I love you very much.

The “Kurt Lewin Institute Dissertation Series” started in 1997. Since 2016, the following dissertations have been published in this series:

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