Special Issue: Application of justice theory to addressing social issues

Organizational Psychology Review

Organizational Psychology Review
2024, Vol. 14(2) 288–306

DOI: 10.1177/20413866241232139
journals.sagepub.com/home/opr
Sage

How Justice Theory and Research Can Help Address Organizational *and* Societal Problems

Joel Brockner
Columbia Business School, Columbia University, New York, USA

D. Ramona Bobocel
Department of Psychology, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Canada

Abstract
Organizational justice scholars have examined the consequences and causes of employees' fairness perceptions. Given the reliability of what is known about how, when, and why fairness perceptions matter, we can and should contribute to addressing the pressing problems of our times, regardless of whether they primarily reside within organizations (e.g., diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)) or outside of organizations (e.g., climate change, political extremism). Our focus aligns with more general calls for *responsible* management research (Tsui, 2022). Accordingly, we illustrate the implications of organizational justice scholarship for addressing three issues: DEI, climate change, and political extremism. We also consider some of the barriers associated with translating organizational justice theory and research to practice, offer some recommendations on how to overcome those barriers, and delineate some of the unintended consequences of our best efforts. Finally, we describe ways in which organizational justice scholars can make our knowledge more accessible in public domains.

Plain Language Summary Title: Application of Justice Theory and Research to Help Address Organizational *and* Societal Problems: Plain Language Summary: Given the reliability of what is known about how, when, and why fairness perceptions matter, we suggest that it is time for organizational justice scholars to use our knowledge to help address the pressing problems of our times, regardless of whether they primarily reside within organizations. Our focus aligns with more general calls for responsible management research (Tsui, 2022). Accordingly, we illustrate the implications of organizational justice scholarship for addressing three issues:

Paper received 26 December 2023. Received revised December 26, 2023

Corresponding author:
Joel Brockner, Columbia Business School, Columbia University, New York, NY, USA.
Email: jb54@gsb.columbia.edu

diversity equity and inclusivity, climate change, and political extremism. We also consider some of the barriers associated with translating organizational justice theory and research to practice, offer some recommendations on how to overcome those barriers, and delineate some of the unintended consequences of our best efforts. Finally, we describe ways in which organizational justice scholars can make our knowledge more accessible in public domains.

Keywords
organizational justice, responsible research, science-practice gap

An age-old purpose of social scientists is to apply our conceptual frameworks and empirical findings to address the pressing problems of our times. This laudatory goal has recently received renewed interest among management scholars, who have emphasized the need for our research to be more *responsible* (Tsui, 2022). The main ingredients of responsible research in management consist of findings that are *rigorous* and *relevant*. The following quotation from the website of RRBM (*Responsible Research in Business and Management*) put things quite succinctly: we should be in the business of producing "credible knowledge that is ultimately useful for addressing problems important to business and society." In this special issue of *Organizational Psychology Review,* we consider how theory and research in organizational justice may contribute to the "responsible research" conversation.

Why organizational justice? For one thing, work in this area meets the rigor and relevance criteria. Justice scholars have produced a highly reliable body of knowledge that already has been (and can be further) used to reduce or manage problems residing within and external to organizational settings. Furthermore, we are living in times in which the extent to which people are treated fairly versus unfairly has been shown to be particularly influential: when people's uncertainty about themselves and/or their environments is high (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002), when resources are scarce and people have conflicting interests (Deutsch, 1975), and when people are on the receiving end of outcomes that they would have preferred to avoid (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). Thus, our knowledge is highly relevant.

In short, our central premise is that justice scholars can and should contribute more to addressing important problems including but not limited to: (1) diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), (2) climate change, and (3) political extremism. Some of these problems primarily reside within organizations (e.g., DEI initiatives), but others do not. Whereas it was useful at an earlier point in time for Greenberg (1987) to coin the term "*organizational* justice (our emphasis added)," for present purposes that term may have the unnecessary consequence of narrowing our focus on problems and questions residing primarily within organizational settings. We think it is time for organizational justice scholars to set their sights beyond the boundaries of organizational contexts *in addition to* (not instead of) working on intra-organizational problems.

In suggesting that organizational justice scholars can and should contribute to addressing important problems internal and external to organizations, we are not at all implying that justice theory and research is the only relevant body of knowledge; indeed, we and other contributors to this volume draw on other relevant bodies of knowledge. Rather, we focus on the justice literature not only because conditions are such that people's fairness perceptions are quite consequential, but also to keep the scope of our article manageable. Moreover, in focusing on DEI, climate change, and political extremism, we do not mean to suggest that these are the only social problems about which justice research has something to contribute. Rather, we view these as particularly important problems that need to be addressed within organizations (DEI) and within society more broadly (e.g., climate change).

All contributors to this special issue were asked to take the ideas presented in the current article as their point of departure and to write in ways that meaningfully connect with our analysis. We deliberately sought two broad categories of contributors: (1) those who are primarily justice scholars, and (2) those who have written about the conduct of responsible research, whether their conceptual home base resides in the justice literature or elsewhere.

Our Roadmap

We illustrate our thinking in the next three sections, pertaining to DEI, climate change, and political extremism, respectively.[1] Following these illustrations, we offer a Discussion section which: (1) considers some of the barriers that might arise when putting justice theory and research into action (which includes unintended consequences), (2) offers some recommendations on how to overcome these barriers, (3) speaks to the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice, and (4) describes ways in which organizational justice scholars can make our knowledge more accessible and user-friendly outside of academia.

Illustration #1: Facilitating Constructive Dialogue Surrounding DEI

It is very difficult to engage in constructive dialogue about how to foster greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in our society. One reason for this is that advocates and critics of DEI define fairness in different ways, as noted in a blog post by sociology professors at Penn State University, Silver and Iceland (2021). For advocates of DEI, fairness should be reflected in *evenly distributed outcomes*, in which valued resources are distributed proportionally among different groups. For example, as Silver and Iceland suggest, "a fair process for promoting managers should, over time, result in the promotion of managers whose group characteristics—such as race, gender, or sexual orientation—match the distribution of these characteristics in the general population."

Critics of DEI initiatives, however, find the "evenly distributed outcomes" approach dissatisfying, arguing that it simply replaces one form of discrimination with another (reverse discrimination). Instead, critics of DEI initiatives posit that fairness should be reflected in *evenly applied processes*. As Silver and Iceland (2021) put it, "As long as a selection process uses performance-based criteria and is evenly applied, fairness is achieved, regardless of the outcome. From this perspective, a fair selection process may result in a talented or qualified manager receiving several promotions in a single year, while other managers receive none." There are at least two reasons why advocates of DEI find the "evenly applied processes" approach to be dissatisfying. First, it is likely to perpetuate the status quo to the extent that marginalized groups do not fare as well on the criteria used to evaluate performance, which is particularly frustrating to DEI advocates who believe that negative discrepancies emanate from longstanding systemic forces. Second, advocates may not agree with the criteria used to evaluate performance, analogous to the notion that intelligence tests may be culturally biased.

What to Do?

How, then, can advocates and critics of DEI engage in constructive discussions when they have fundamentally different perspectives on fairness? Imagine that the two sides were brought together in a task force, in which they were charged with developing a DEI strategy for the larger entity to which both sides belonged. Whereas the following is not derived from justice theory per se, a good start would be for the two sides to agree that it is not that their own perspective is right, and that the other's is wrong but rather that the two perspectives are *different*. Furthermore, in coming together as a task force, the two sides have much to learn from theory and research on organizational justice. Specifically, the two sides need to ensure that the specific elements of process fairness identified in prior theory and research (and italicized below) are put into practice. Consider the following six recommendations.

First, the two sides need to believe that the task force is doing its work in a *neutral* context (Tyler, 1989), that is, not favoring the interests of one side rather than the other. Perceptions of neutrality may depend on where the discussions take place and who the mediating party, if any, may be. Second, there is a need to ensure that the task force consists of members with diverse perspectives, including but not limited to their viewpoints on fairness as evenly distributed outcomes versus evenly distributed processes. For example, within each of these two perspectives the constitution of the task force should reflect the various constituencies likely to be affected; this is reminiscent of Leventhal's (1980) *representativeness* rule. Third, once the task force begins its deliberations it needs to establish ground rules for creating a safe climate in which divergent perspectives can be offered (e.g., treating people in a dignified and respectful way, in accordance with *interpersonal justice*; Bies, 1987). Fourth, there needs to be space for all group members to present their ideas, and to know that those ideas were seriously considered, consistent with Thibaut and Walker's (1975) notion of *process control*. Fifth, it is important for group members to have some say in the actual rendering of the decision, either by voting or by being able to influence by legitimate means those who will be deciding, also known as giving people *decision control* (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Sixth, if group members were regularly given clear and adequate explanations of why certain decisions were made or why particular viewpoints were being expressed, then they are likely to experience *informational fairness* (Greenberg, 1993).

Yet another important element of process fairness is *consistency* (Leventhal, 1980). According to this principle, decision-making procedures need to be consistent across persons and over time (i.e., a "level playing field" needs to be present). Thus, when doling out benefits and burdens, decision-makers should use the same methods for all potential recipients and give special advantage to none. Indeed, part of the opposition to affirmative action (AA) policies —likely to be exhibited by those who favor equally applied processes rather than equally applied outcomes—is based on the view that proponents of AA, in trying to bring about more fair outcomes, are using unfair (consistency-violating) procedures (Bobocel et al., 1998). As Bobocel et al. (1998) state, "it could be argued that AA treats target group and non-target group members inconsistently in that group status is an advantage for some and a disadvantage for others." (p. 655).

In considering the process fairness element of consistency, we seek to extend our previous discussion in two noteworthy respects. Rather than suggesting that the italicized elements of fairness such as neutrality, process control, and so on need to be present, we delineate *the conditions under which* the elicitor of unfairness (in this instance, *in*consistency) is: (1) less likely to be deemed as present (i.e., the perception of unfairness is reduced) and/or (2) less likely to be seen as problematic (e.g., unfair) even if it is deemed to be present (i.e., the perception of unfairness is manageable). Accordingly, Hideg and Ferris (2017) showed that AA policies are likely to be judged as less inconsistent and more procedurally fair when people engage in dialectical thinking. To quote Hideg and Ferris (2017), "higher dialectical thinkers view objects and events in life as being inherently interrelated …. As the nature of the relationships between objects are frequently in motion, reality is similarly viewed as fluctuating…. As change is viewed as the natural state of being, so too is contradiction viewed as the natural state of affairs for higher dialectical thinkers…. Consequently, higher dialectical thinkers are less likely to perceive the simultaneous existence of seemingly incompatible ideas as being inconsistent or unexpected…. The existence of such incompatibilities is simply part of an ever-changing world" (p. 784).

In other words, when people see inconsistency more as part of the natural world order, they are less likely to perceive inconsistency, and/or to be bothered by it (e.g., experience unfairness) even when they do perceive it. Such conclusions may be drawn not only from Hideg and Ferris' (2017) findings that those who are more inclined towards dialectical thinking perceive AA as less inconsistent and more procedurally fair, but also from these same authors' results showing that they exhibit greater attitudinal and behavioral support for AA policies.

Moreover, these results emerged regardless of whether dialectical thinking was operationalized as a dispositional or situational variable. In one study Hideg and Ferris (2017) asked participants to imagine that they were members of an organization which elicited dialectical thinking. Specifically, they were told that the organization operates "in a business environment that is in constant flux that gives rise to inconsistencies and contradictions but which always has one constant: change. Reflecting this, our work practices and policies are similarly evolving and adapting to the changing environment we are functioning in" (p. 801). Relative to those in a control condition, these participants perceived the AA program in their organization as less inconsistent and more procedurally fair, which, in turn led them to be more supportive of the AA program.

The fact that dialectical thinking can be situationally induced also has practical implications in instances in which violations of the process fairness principle of consistency has the potential to elicit adverse reactions. Hideg and Ferris (2017) found this to be the case in people's perceptions of and reactions to AA programs. Pending further research, this also may apply to how people experience DEI initiatives more generally. In short, normalizing dialectical thinking may help to "bring down the temperature" in what might otherwise be a rather heated exchange between parties with inconsistent (or at least divergent) views on the guiding principles that should be used to formulate DEI strategy. To the extent that normalizing dialectical thinking brings down the temperature, it may do so via two not mutually exclusive processes: (1) by *reducing* the sense of unfairness (akin to the primary appraisal in models of stress and appraisal, e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and (2) by making the sense of unfairness feel *more manageable* (akin to the secondary appraisal in models of stress and appraisal).

More generally, organizational justice theory offers much useful advice on how to maximize the perceived fairness of *many* decision-making processes. We have sought to illustrate the applicability of justice principles to fostering constructive exchange around DEI, *but the principles are by no means restricted to the DEI context; they may have utility whenever groups with disparate views are brought together to solve conflictual problems.* One of the most important and reliable findings in the literature on organizational justice is that people are likely to accept or support whatever decision was reached provided that the process associated with it was perceived to be fair (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988). Moreover, the perceived fairness of the process is especially likely to influence people's acceptance or support for decisions when the substance of the decision is not exactly what people would have preferred (e.g., Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996), which is quite likely whenever the decision-making body is comprised of members with highly diverse views.

Illustration #2: Fostering Constructive Exchange When Opposing Views are Strongly Held: The Case of Climate Change

Whereas there is much evidence that high process fairness makes people more accepting of unfavorable decision outcomes, there are boundary conditions for this effect. If two or more parties have divergent views that also are strongly held, then even an objectively fair process may have little or no effect on perceptions of fairness and acceptance of/support for the decision (e.g., Mayer et al., 2009). There are at least three bases for strongly held views: economic, social/psychological, and moral. Economically, people may adhere strongly to a point of view for materially instrumental reasons. For example, in the case of climate change employers and employees in fossil fuel industries have tangible reasons to feel threatened by the movement towards reliance on alternative sources of energy. To illustrate, consider the dilemma facing the state of West Virginia, which is heavily dependent on the coal industry. In the shorter term, residents risk losing their livelihoods if alternative sources of energy gain traction in the state. Over the longer haul, however, evidence suggests that the state's continued reliance on coal makes more dramatic climate events (e.g., frequent flooding) even more likely to occur. According to Flavelle (2021), "Forced to choose between burning less coal or suffering through worsening floods," … a relative of Senator Joe Manchin from West Virginia, said, "the floods were the lesser danger. 'You can replace a house,' the relative said. 'That's the risk we're willing to take' (*The New York Times,* October 18, 2021)."

At a social/psychological level, when a belief is central to people's personal or social identity, decisions that fly in the face of it are unlikely to be accepted. One of us has taken part in an executive training program at a major oil company for those aspiring to higher levels of management; almost all participants in the program have been with the firm for at least 20 years. During their lengthy tenure it is likely that their work as oil company executives has become an important part of their personal identity, and that their employment in the organization has become an important part of their social identity. Thus, over and above the potential adverse financial impact as movement towards alternative sources of energy grows, they are likely to experience a significant threat to their sense of self, which could make them less open to change.

This possibility is suggested by the results of research by Mayer et al. (2009), which showed that outcomes that more strongly violated people's sense of personal identity and social identity were perceived to be more distributively and procedurally unfair. Of greater relevance to the present analysis, the tendency to perceive less fairness in response to outcomes that more strongly violated people's identity was not moderated (lessened) by an orthogonal induction of high process fairness. In other words, in this situation, high process fairness failed to increase people's acceptance of the outcomes.

A third basis for maintaining deeply held beliefs is morality, which may be an aspect of personal identity. Even beliefs without any inherent moral underpinning may come to be viewed as correct from a moral point of view when they have been deeply held for a long period of time. For example, events that violate people's expectations are judged as more unfair than expectancy-confirming events (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Thus, events that violate expectations not only generate sense-making (e.g., Jones & Skarlicki, 2013) but also may be judged as wrong from a moral perspective. Research on the moral mandate effect (e.g., Skitka & Houston, 2001) has shown that when events violate people's beliefs of what is moral, they are likely to be perceived as unfair. Moreover, analogous to what Mayer et al. (2009) found when outcomes violated people's personal and social identity, the perceived fairness of outcomes that violate strongly held moral beliefs were impervious to the fairness of the process that led to such outcomes. Thus, yet another possible basis of resistance by members of fossil fuel organizations to the introduction of alternative sources of energy is that they are experiencing a violation of what *they* believe to be morally correct.[2]

What to Do?

What advice may organizational justice scholars offer when beliefs are held strongly (such as the case with climate change), in which acceptance of outcomes that violate those beliefs is unlikely to be enhanced even when they are delivered with high process fairness? We draw on theory and research on self-affirmation processes (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1988) to shed light on this question, particularly when the strongly held beliefs are rooted in people's sense of the self. Self-affirmation theory posits that people seek global self-integrity, that is, to see themselves as "good, competent, unitary, stable, coherent, capable of free choice, and capable of controlling important outcomes" (p. 262). When they experience outcomes or information that threatens their global self-integrity, they often respond rigidly or defensively. Studies have shown, for instance, that when people are exposed to threatening health information (e.g., coffee drinkers who were told that drinking coffee makes them more likely to develop cancer) they protect themselves by disparaging the message or the messenger. However, these same individuals were more accepting of the self-threatening message (a potentially more constructive response) when they engaged in self-affirmation (Sherman et al., 2000).

Such findings suggest several routes through which people may become more open to policies, outcomes, and information that is self-threatening, which are likely to go against deeply held beliefs (e.g., employers and employees whose sense of identity is based on their commitment to the fossil fuel industry). One is for them to engage in self-affirmation, which may take numerous forms. As Brockner (2015) suggested, certain self-affirmation activities are initiated by employees whereas others may be initiated by employers. For example, engaging in volunteer activity may be self-affirming, regardless of whether individuals or organizations provide the impetus (Brockner et al., 2014). Moreover, the self-affirming activity may transpire in the workplace, such as job crafting in which people introduce aspects of who they are into how they do their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), or it can also occur outside of the work setting (e.g., engaging in an identity-relevant hobby or activity).

A second route consists of leveraging aspects of organizational justice that are relevant to people's global self-integrity. More specifically, relational models of procedural justice (Blader & Tyler, 2015) provide an important reason why employees' work attitudes and behaviors are enhanced when they are treated with high process fairness. According to the relational models, high process fairness elicits positive reactions because it conveys to people that they are valued, respected, and included, all of which are related to aspects of global self-integrity. Whereas self-affirmation has been conceptualized and operationalized in a variety of ways (e.g., McQueen & Klein, 2006), prior research has not considered the possibility that being on the receiving end of high process fairness *also* may be self-affirming. As Blader and Tyler have suggested, this is particularly likely to be true under the conditions in which the relational aspects of high process fairness are salient, such as when employees define themselves based on their membership in their organizations.[3]

For example, studies have shown that the extent to which people feel valued and respected as a function of the process fairness with which they were treated is more pronounced when the source of the treatment is an ingroup rather than outgroup member (Smith et al., 1998). Relatedly, the same authors reported that when people were more highly identified with the agent enacting the (un)fair treatment (such as a specific authority figure or the organization as a whole), process fairness was more positively related to the favorability of their response. The emerging theme from these studies is that under those conditions in which the relationship with the enacting party is relevant to people's sense of self-identity, process fairness will have more of an influence on how much people feel valued, respected, and included. In other words, under high identity-relevant conditions, being treated with high process fairness may be experienced as self-affirming. It therefore stands to reason that under those very same conditions, high process fairness (much like other sources of self-affirmation) may induce people to be more open to information that may have otherwise been experienced as a threat to their global self-integrity, and therefore responded to defensively.

There may be other ways in which being treated fairly is experienced as self-affirming, and thereby elicits greater openness. Certain aspects of fairness seem especially likely to elicit a sense of being valued, respected, and included, such as the two components of interactional justice: informational and interpersonal. An important element of informational justice is the provision of clear and adequate explanations of why certain decisions were made. Whereas the information inherent to the explanation may be self-affirming (e.g., if people were told in credible ways that a certain decision was made because it in their best interests), there may be a powerful symbolic message that is also self-affirming: the provider of the explanation thinks highly enough of recipients to provide them with a clear and adequate explanation. Interpersonal justice, which refers to how much people are treated with dignity and respect, may be a rather straightforward induction of self-affirmation. That is, in the act of treating others with dignity and respect, the provider affirms the recipient's worth as an individual.

Whereas informational and interpersonal justice would appear to be financially inexpensive ways to elicit self-affirmation, they may require a non-trivial degree of effort. For one thing, clear and adequate explanations need to be part of an ongoing communication plan in which employees are regularly informed not only about why decisions are being made and implemented but also other details, such as when, how, and by whom (Bies, 2013). Moreover, expressions of high interpersonal justice must be perceived as authentic rather than hollow, which may not be easy, particularly if perceivers' extant levels of trust in the communicators is relatively low.

We recognize that inducing people to be more open to information and outcomes that violate their deeply held beliefs, such as their attitudes towards climate change, is quite a complex matter. For one thing, it is necessary to diagnose the basis of the deeply held beliefs (economic, social/psychological, and moral; moreover, these are not mutually exclusive categories). What we have provided here is an evidence-based method to elicit greater receptivity *when* the deeply held beliefs emanate from people's sense of global self-integrity to a significant degree.[4]

All this said, we do not mean to suggest that self-affirmation *always* will make people more open to self-threatening information. It may depend on the value that people self-affirm. For instance, if the value that people affirm pertains to morality, they may become even less open to change upon encountering a decision, policy, or information violating a value that they reiterated to be important when engaging in the self-affirmation exercise. For example, if people are opposed to the introduction of alternative sources of energy on moral grounds, then self-affirming the value of morality may make them less (rather than more) open to information extolling the virtues of alternative sources of energy.

Finally, just as we mentioned in the preceding section on DEI that the applicability of organizational justice principles is not limited to fostering constructive exchange when the source of the conflict pertains to DEI, *the ideas mentioned in this section certainly are not limited to instances when the deeply-held beliefs pertain to climate change. In principle, whenever beliefs are deeply held (be they about climate change, abortion, gun control, and so on) the suggestions offered in this section may be applicable.*

Illustration #3: The Case of Political Extremism

Several scholars have made considerable headway in applying justice theory and research to address societal challenges (e.g., Tyler, 2017). A particularly compelling example is the work of Kees van den Bos, who sheds light on political extremism in his book, *Why People Radicalize* (2018); see also Van den Bos (2020). In our previous two examples pertaining to DEI and climate change, we emphasized how justice theory and research offer ways in which the problems may be *counteracted*. In the case of political extremism, our focus is on how justice theory and research also help us understand the *onset or genesis* of the problem itself. Van den Bos' core idea is that the perception of being treated unfairly potentiates the development of radical attitudes which may ultimately lead to extreme anger as well as violent and antisocial behaviors. Whereas Van den Bos acknowledges that (un)fairness judgments are multiply determined, some pertaining to outcomes and some pertaining to process, it is worth mentioning that multiply-determined sources of unfairness are a particularly combustible mix. For instance, unfairness in outcome and in process have been shown to combine interactively rather than additively (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). For example, if people perceive three units of pain from an unfair (or unfavorable) outcome and three units of pain from an unfair process accompanying that outcome, the net effect is to experience nine units of pain; the insult is not merely *added to* the injury, but rather is *multiplied* by it.

As negative as the combined effect of unfair outcomes and unfair processes may be to perceivers, however, by itself it typically does not give rise to a radicalized worldview. Rather, Van den Bos (2018) suggests that a radicalized belief system is more likely to occur when two other factors are present: (1) the experience of personal uncertainty, in which people feel "a subjective sense of doubt or instability in self-views, worldviews, or the interrelation between the two" (Van den Bos, 2018, pp. 116–117), and (2) the lack of sufficient self-corrections, in which people do not have the motivation and/or the ability to control the strong impulse they experience to behave destructively when, in the face of personal uncertainty, they are on the receiving end of unfair treatment.

When experiencing personal uncertainty, people need reassurance that their world has not been turned upside down, that is, that their environment is still predictable, that they are still socially connected (they feel included), and that they are worthy as individuals. Fairness information is crucial in these regards, for better or worse. When people are treated fairly under conditions of high personal uncertainty, their needs for predictability, connectedness, and worth are apt to be satisfied, in which case they are likely to show relatively favorable attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, being treated unfairly under the very same conditions of high personal uncertainty thwarts people's needs for predictability, connectedness, and worth, giving rise to high levels of anger and discontent (see also Tripp & Bies, 2009).

Nevertheless, most people do not behave in a destructive or antisocial manner when they experience unfair outcomes and processes even under conditions of high personal uncertainty. The final element that may push them over the edge is what Van den Bos (2018) called a low level of self-correction. When people lack the ability and motivation to self-correct, the likelihood of unfairness perceptions to engender radicalized attitudes and behaviors rises considerably. One factor that could adversely influence people's *ability* to self-correct is operating in an environment of information overload. For example, if recipients of unfair treatment have many other demands in their life that require attention (e.g., having to take care of young children and aging parents simultaneously), they may not have the personal resources to refrain from thinking and behaving in ways that lead to radicalized beliefs and accompanying antisocial behaviors. One factor that could negatively affect people's *motivation* to self-correct is experiencing other significant sources of threat to their well-being over and above being treated unfairly. For example, if they believe that economic circumstances are such that they will not be able to support themselves and their families, their response to other forms of unfair treatment may be one in which pro-self rather than prosocial motivation dominates.

What to Do?

Van den Bos (2018) also provides guidance on the kinds of interventions that may counter radicalization, either proactively or reactively. He draws on theory and research on how to offset implicit bias, which may be relevant to the present analysis: "Implicit bias is like a habit that can be reduced through a combination of awareness of implicit bias, concern about the effects of that bias, and the application of strategies to reduce bias" (p. 158). In like fashion, we suggest that the motivation and ability to minimize radicalization may be heightened by: (1) making people aware that they have started to descend into a radicalized worldview, (2) making salient the negative consequences of adopting such a worldview, and (3) offering concrete behavioral and/or cognitive strategies that may counteract the adoption of a radicalized worldview.

Awareness. Whereas it may seem obvious that those who have adopted radicalized beliefs are aware that they have done so, this may not always be the case. Tenbrunsel and Messick's (2004) notion of ethical fading delineates various behavioral and cognitive tendencies that enable people to deceive themselves into thinking that their beliefs and behaviors are not immoral. For example, in a "slippery slope" of unethical decision-making, Tenbrunsel and Messick suggested that when relatively minor acts of immorality are done repetitively, they may accumulate to produce a belief system that is quite immoral. Each infraction on its own may be inconsequential enough to fly below the radar of perceived immorality. Taken together, however, the set of behaviors may constitute a significant breach of ethics of which the actor may have been relatively unaware during its build-up.

Negative Consequences. Whereas being aware of having adopted an immoral belief system underlying radicalization is a useful start, people also must be convinced that their immoral belief system is problematic. Unfortunately, the notion that a radical worldview is problematic may encounter countervailing forces that may be equally if not more powerful. For example, when people are confronted with the possibility that they have adopted an immoral worldview, they may seek to defend or justify their views, rather than move in a more moral direction. Relatedly, they may selectively expose themselves to information that (and people who) reinforce their extant viewpoint, solidifying it even further. How to counteract this tendency? Exposure to highly credible role models advocating against radicalization and for pro-social behavior may be effective. Moreover, as we saw in the previous section on climate change, creating conditions for people to engage in self-affirmation may serve as an antidote to the defensiveness that could arise when people contemplate the negative (i.e., self-threatening) consequences of their beliefs or behaviors.

Enabling Strategies. Drawing on the age-old adage that behavior is a function of motivation and ability, we suggest that it may not be enough to make people aware of and inclined to change an immoral belief system such as a radicalized worldview. What is also needed are strategies that enable people to translate what they are motivated to do into concrete action. For example, Devine et al. (2012) showed that it was possible to bring about a relatively long-term reduction in racial bias by arming people who were aware of and concerned about the adverse influence of their racial bias with various enabling strategies. These included counter-stereotypic imaging (in which perceivers call to mind positive exemplars of people from a group that would otherwise be negatively stereotyped), individuation (in which perceivers focus on specific information about members of negatively stereotyped groups), and perspective taking (in which perceivers try to see the world from the vantage point of members of negatively stereotyped groups). In like fashion, it may be possible for those who are at risk of developing a radicalized worldview (which typically includes antipathy towards those considered to be outgroup members) to draw on one or more of these enabling strategies as antidotes.

Discussion

Understanding the Bases of Barriers

Whereas the literature on justice offers insights directly relevant to understanding and addressing pressing organizational and societal problems, we also need to mention that the application of theory/research to practice is easier said than done. To be sure, the implementation of many elements of fairness (e.g., voice, explanations, and interpersonal fairness) is not financially prohibitive. However, it does require other resources such as time and emotional presence. For instance, it takes time to enact voice, one of the main aspects of process fairness. To implement voice properly, decision-making authorities need to seek input and then provide evidence that the input was seriously considered, either by implementing the voiced ideas or by providing reasonable explanations of why the voiced ideas are not being implemented. Moreover, it takes even more time to implement voice or other elements of process fairness *well*, in that it may require multiple iterations with accompanying feedback to "do things right." Given constraints on their time, authorities may perceive that they must make tradeoffs between accomplishing their tasks and enacting fair processes (or enacting them well). Moreover, as Sherf et al. (2019) demonstrated, when forced to choose between the two, authorities often give priority to task accomplishment. They may reason that if they must "get stuff done" it is legitimate to do so via processes that are less than fair, perhaps while rationalizing to themselves that the ends justify the means.

Moreover, decision makers may adhere to lay beliefs about certain aspects of fairness that reduces their appeal. For example, allowing others to have voice may be perceived to be giving them greater influence at the expense of decision-makers' own sense of power or control. Furthermore, whereas Francis Bacon may have had something else in mind when he proclaimed that "knowledge is power," the same words may be used to justify the failure to provide explanations of why certain decisions were made. For instance, the legal position is to provide those affected by decisions on a "need to know" basis, consistent with the portion of the Miranda rights which posits that "anything you say can and will be held against you in a court of law."

Furthermore, whereas we justice scholars tend to focus on specific elements of fairness (e.g., voice, accuracy, accounts, and interpersonal fairness), many of the elements are simultaneously relevant in the real world of decision-making. This puts the additional burden on authorities to exhibit fairness in multiple respects. Previously, we suggested that many elements of fairness may be used to bring those with differing views on DEI into a constructive exchange. However, a possible downside inherent to this assertion is that it may be necessary for many if not most of those elements to be handled well. Given the pervasiveness of the negativity bias (Rozin & Royzman, 2001) in which negative information outweighs positive information (e.g., Kahneman & Tversky's (1979) famous assertion that losses loom larger than gains), it is plausible for the elements of fairness that are not handled well to have an outsize influence on people's reactions. For example, if seven elements of process fairness were equally relevant in a certain situation, our hunch is that the two elements that were handled poorly would have a disproportionately negative influence on people's perceptions of and reactions to justice relative to the other five elements that were handled well.

Also relevant to the discussion of how people respond when multiple elements of fairness are relevant is the extant level of trust between parties. It is reasonable to assume that for many social problems in which multiple parties have a stake, the extant level of trust between parties is relatively low. In relationships characterized by low levels of trust, Bianchi et al. (2015) showed that when people were exposed to multiple aspects of fairness information from the other party (outcome and process), the only instance in which people responded positively to their counterpart was when the latter exhibited high outcome fairness *and* high process fairness. Thus, if the counterpart exhibited fairness on one dimension but not on the other, perceivers responded unfavorably, in fact, nearly as unfavorably as when unfairness was exhibited on both dimensions. These findings, consistent with the notion that the "chain is only as strong as its weakest link," identify another obstacle when trying to move untrusting relationships in a more positive direction.

Unintended Consequences

Yet another challenge to applying organizational justice theory and research is that doing so may have negative side effects, a.k.a. unintended consequences. To be sure, this concern is by no means unique to the application of justice principles. Watts et al. (2022) recently described how a wide range of negative side effects may be engendered by psychology-based organizational interventions such as forced ranking of employees, goal setting, and team building. They offer a variety of explanations of why unintended consequences have not been given ample scholarly attention. Moreover, they also suggest ways to increase the study of unintended consequences, so that practitioners can make more informed decisions about the consequences of interventions they may be planning.

Whereas process fairness overwhelmingly has positive effects on people's organizationally- and personally-relevant beliefs and behaviors, this is not always the case. For example, at the organizational level, Sheldon et al. (2023) found that being treated fairly is positively related to employees' tendencies to engage in unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB; Umphress & Bingham, 2011). UPB refers to "employee acts intended to benefit an organization, yet which simultaneously violate core societal values, morals, laws, or standards of proper conduct, such as honesty, integrity and fairness…. In contrast to the prototype of rogue employees lying, cheating, and stealing to benefit *themselves* while harming the organization (Treviño et al., 2014), UPBs combine desirable pro-organizational motives with undesirable unethical actions" (Sheldon et al., 2023, p. 6). Some compelling recent examples of UPB include the scandals that rocked Wells Fargo, Volkswagen, and Boeing. Social exchange theory (e.g., Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976) offers one explanation of the positive relationship between fairness and UPB. As Sheldon et al., put it, "to the extent that employees believe that they have been treated well (i.e., fairly) by their employers, they may be motivated to return the favor in the form of behaving in ways that they believe to be advancing organizational interests, even if doing so involves violating moral and ethical standards."

In other research, Nishioka et al. (2023) found a negative relationship between employees' perceptions of their organization as generally fair (overall justice perceptions) and their perceptions of the credibility of another person's claim of unfair treatment by the organization. Thus, the fairer that employees perceive their organization, the less credible they perceived another individual's claim of unfair treatment, which in turn predicted less support for the claimant and less negative reactions toward the organization. One implication of these findings is that overall justice may lead to unwarranted complacency in how members of the organization make sense of, and respond to, instances of unfair treatment experienced by coworkers.

At a more personal level, when people are on the receiving end of unfavorable or unfair outcomes, greater process fairness may make people feel *worse* about themselves (Brockner, 2010). This is because being treated with greater process fairness induces people to see themselves as more personally responsible for their outcomes (Van den Bos et al., 1999). Outcomes for which people see themselves as more personally responsible elicit more favorable self-evaluations when outcomes are positive; however, perceptions of greater personal responsibility may engender lower self-evaluations when outcomes are negative.

Hence, as Watts et al. (2022) suggested, practitioners need to be mindful about the side effects of any organizational intervention, including those elicited by the application of justice principles, and to take steps to address them. For example, Sheldon et al. (2023) found that heightening the importance of morality eliminated the positive relationship between how fairly people were treated and their tendencies to engage in UPB. Nishioka et al. (2023) found that reducing uncertainty about the incident of unfair treatment eliminated the negative relationship between overall justice perceptions and the perceived credibility of a claim of unfair treatment. Holmvall and Bobocel (2008) showed that priming people's interdependent self-construal eliminated the inverse relationship between process fairness and self-evaluations when they were on the receiving end of unfavorable outcomes.

Overcoming the Barriers

Whereas the various barriers to effectively applying justice theory and research are significant, they may not be insurmountable. For example, Sherf et al. (2019) discovered that time-crunched managers default to prioritizing task accomplishment over fairness when forced to choose between the two. However, when the organization's reward system assigned greater importance to behaving fairly the tendency to prioritize task accomplishment over being fair was reduced. In other words, when managers know that they are being evaluated not only on their results but also on the process associated with their results, they make the time to enact a better (fairer) process. Whereas formal reward systems are one vehicle through which organizations may emphasize the importance of the process fairness with which decisions are planned and implemented, they are not the only ways to do so. After-action reviews or 360-degree feedback exercises provide additional opportunities to reflect on the quality of decision-making processes (including but not limited to matters of fairness). Organizations that take such activities seriously are conveying to their constituents that decisions need to be evaluated on two criteria: outcomes, of course, but also the process.

Those seeking to apply organizational justice theory and research also may benefit from the emerging body of work on wise interventions (Walton & Wilson, 2018). Wise interventions refer to "theory-based alterations that are attuned to the ways that people construe themselves and the world around them. Whereas they are objectively small in certain ways, they can change the subjective meaning that people assign to themselves, to other people, and to situations, and in so doing can engender more constructive ways for people to function" (Brockner & Sherman, 2019). For example, giving first-generation college students a brief intervention in their freshman year that addressed their need to belong brought about long-lasting improvement (months and even years) in their academic performance (Walton & Cohen, 2011).

How may interventions, brief or otherwise, overcome barriers and thereby bring about enduring change? There are two ways to answer this question. First, enduring change is likely to occur if the intervention instantiates self-reinforcing processes (e.g., virtuous cycles). For instance, first-generation college students may be temporarily emboldened by feeling like they belong, causing them to perform better. Performing better, in turn, may reinforce their feelings of belongingness. Feeling like they belong, in turn, may lead to continued success. And so on. In the justice context, allowing people to have a greater voice, for example, may elicit a variety of positive outcomes for employees and employers alike (e.g., more useful ways to solve problems; greater commitment of those given voice to implement whatever was decided upon). Such positive outcomes, in turn, increase the likelihood that people will be given a voice in the future, yet another instance of a virtuous cycle.

Second, enduring change is more likely to come about if elements in the broader environment in which the intervention transpires align with the purpose of the intervention. In other words, there is no quick fix; interventions typically require a systemic approach. For example, in the justice context, those in authority positions must not only exhibit behaviors that elicit fairness (e.g., serve as a role model), but also create conditions (e.g., reward systems that motivate people to behave fairly) that do likewise.

Several recent articles in the *Harvard Business Review* provide compelling examples of systemic approaches to redress certain fairness violations, such as the pervasive gender gap that still exists in many organizations (Ammerman & Groysberg, 2021) as well as the more general problem of ethics violations (Gino & Coffman, 2021). Our view is that a systemic approach is necessary to bring about change whenever perceptions of unfairness play a central role, be they as antecedent, mediator, or outcome. *The common theme underlying systemic approaches is that action is required on multiple fronts to bring about meaningful change.* For example, Ammerman and Groysberg took an employee life cycle approach to fostering greater gender parity, starting with steps organizations can take prior to people's entry through and including their time as full-fledged organization members. Change needs to occur when it comes to "attracting candidates, hiring employees, integrating them into the organization, developing them, assessing performance, managing compensation and promotion, and retaining good performers" (p. 128).

Consider the following example of steps that organizations can take as employees traverse various stages of their tenure with their employers: First, to generate a greater number of qualified women applicants, managers in recruiting organizations cannot simply rely on their personal networks to identify prospects. This is because personal networks are likely to consist of people like oneself. Second, to develop talent, it is critical for organizations to ensure that men are not disproportionately favored over women and under-represented minorities when being assigned enhancing stretch assignments. Third, at later stages, and as Ammerman and Groysberg noted, "The women who move up into senior management tend to be those who have had mentors and sponsors earlier in their careers. They had allies in leadership positions who played a defining role, steering key assignments to them, including them in high-level meetings and keeping their names in the mix for promotions" (p. 131).

In their article entitled, "Unconscious Bias Training that Works," Gino and Coffman (2021) suggest that it is not enough to rely primarily on a traditional training approach. The faulty assumption underlying such an approach is that once people are more aware of their biases they will begin to self-correct. Whereas awareness of bias may be necessary for behavioral change, it is not sufficient, as noted in the previous section on political extremism. Equally important is to provide employees with ways to manage or regulate their biases, to try on new behaviors, and to assess their progress. Thus, training is not a one-time event, but rather *a series of interrelated events.*

The Reciprocal Relationship Between Theory and Practice

Whereas our central premise is that organizational justice theory may be used to address important social problems, we would be remiss to not mention that the causal arrow also can go in the opposite direction. In applying justice principles and observing their effects, we may be able to deepen our understanding of the principles themselves. For example, are certain elements of process fairness (e.g., giving people a voice, making decisions based on accurate information, providing explanations, and treating people with dignity and respect) more impactful than others? And if so, when and why is that the case? Under what conditions is being on the receiving end of fair treatment more versus less likely to be experienced as self-affirming? Are there limits to applying justice principles, that is, might certain social problems be relatively immune to influence by fairness considerations? What unintended negative consequences can arise from applying justice principles and how can those be mitigated? In short, scholars with an applied orientation should not overlook opportunities to deepen our understanding of the very factors and processes that they are putting to applied use.

Getting Our Insights Out There

Finally, as is the case in many if not all areas of organizational psychology, a significant obstacle is to transmit the practical insights spawned by knowledge producers into the hands of knowledge users. Rogelberg et al. (2022) recently suggested a host of viable ways to make theory and research more accessible to the general public, including "writing a trade book, writing for trade magazines … and online blogs, leveraging social media, submitting op-eds, (producing) podcasts, and joining a speakers bureau." Another vehicle includes partaking in executive education or other types of training programs (Skarlicki & Latham, 2005) in which there is direct communication between those on the cutting edge of theory and research and those in positions to put the knowledge to practical use. Of course, we are not naïve to think that simply conveying what we know will "change the world." More realistically, however, we can at least contribute to such conversations. The literature on wise interventions (Brockner & Sherman, 2019; Walton & Wilson, 2018) provides reason to be hopeful that we can serve as an impetus for new ways of thinking or behaving that engender meaningful change. After all, if even brief interventions can do so, then more substantial ones should as well, when they are accompanied by other forms of systemic change that facilitate the self-reinforcing, virtuous cycles alluded to above.

Conclusion

After 75 years of studying justice, scholars know a great deal about how people form judgments of fairness and unfairness, and why and how people are so deeply affected by justice and injustice in the workplace. In the present article, we suggest that it is time for organizational justice scholars also to foray beyond the boundaries of organizational contexts and contribute to the conversations about the pressing societal problems of our times. We have primarily focused our analysis on the three challenges of attaining DEI, combatting climate change, and reducing the threat of domestic and international terrorism, but these are by no means the only domains in which we justice scholars have the knowledge to contribute. For example, during his inaugural address in January 2020, President Joe Biden alluded to the "uncivil war" that threatens US society and indeed democracy itself. Incivility is commensurate with low interpersonal justice. We need to understand the conditions that contribute to low interpersonal justice in civil discourse. After all, as Ruth Bader Ginsburg famously put it, we can disagree without being disagreeable. In closing, we believe that justice scholarship yields many practical recommendations for addressing significant social problems. It is up to us to contribute to the conversations on these issues and continue to put justice theory and research into action … before it is too late.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. This work was supported in part by a research grant from the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada awarded to D. R. Bobocel.

Notes

1. Whereas some have distinguished between the concepts of fairness and justice (e.g., Goldman & Cropanzano, 2015), fairness and justice also overlap to a considerable extent. As such, we are using them interchangeably. Moreover, organizational justice refers to the field of study whereas process fairness refers to the amalgam of various determinants of fairness associated with *how* outcomes are arrived at or implemented.
2. In suggesting that members of fossil fuel organizations may object to the introduction of

alternative sources of energy on moral grounds, we are not saying that we agree with their moral justification. Rather, we are suggesting that even views without any apparent moral or ethical component to them may come to be seen by those who hold them as morally correct (e.g., Bandura, 1999), especially when such views have been held for prolonged periods.
3. It is important to emphasize that high process fairness may enhance employees' reactions to decisions and decision makers for self-relevant or self-affirming reasons *under certain conditions*. After all, high process fairness can elicit positive reactions for reasons other than inducing people to feel valued, respected, and included, such as by leading people to believe that they will be on the receiving end of coveted economic outcomes (originally known as the "instrumental" explanation; Thibaut & Walker, 1975).
4. Mayer et al. (2009) found that when outcomes violated people's sense of personal and social identity, the presence or absence of voice had no effect on their fairness judgments. One implication of our reasoning is that the presence or absence of process fairness may have been more apt to engender perceptions of fairness and acceptance of the decision in the Mayer et al. studies if high process fairness had even more of a self-affirming quality to it.

ORCID iD

D. Ramona Bobocel https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8721-8114

References

Ammerman, C. & Groysberg, B. (2021). How to close the gender gap. *Harvard Business Review*, *99*(3), 124–133. https://hbr.org/2021/05/how-to-close-the-gender-gap

Bandura, A. (1999). Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *3*(3), 193–209. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0303_3

Bianchi, E. C., Brockner, J., Van den Bos, K., Seifert, M., Moon, H., van Dijke, M. & De Cremer, D. (2015). Trust in decision-making authorities dictates the form of the interactive relationship between outcome fairness and procedural fairness. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *41*(1), 19–34. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167214556237

Bies, R. J. (1987). The predicament of injustice: The management of moral outrage. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *9*, 289–319.

Bies, R. J. (2013). The delivery of bad news in organizations: A framework for analysis. *Journal of Management*, *39*(1), 136–162. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206312461053

Blader, S. L. & Tyler, T. R. (2015). Relational models of procedural justice. In Cropanzano, R. S. & Ambrose, M. L. (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of justice in the workplace* (pp. 351–369). Oxford University Press.

Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. Wiley.

Bobocel, D. R., Son Hing, L. S., Davey, L. M., Stanley, D. J. & Zanna, M. P. (1998). Justice-based opposition to social policies: Is it genuine? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *75*(3), 653–669. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.75.3.653

Brockner, J. (2010). *A contemporary look at organizational justice: Multiplying insult times injury*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Brockner, J. (2015). *The process matters: Engaging and equipping people for success*. Princeton University Press.

Brockner, J., Senior, D. & Welch, W. (2014). Corporate volunteerism, the experience of self-integrity, and organizational commitment: Evidence from the field. *Social Justice Research*, *27*(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-014-0204-8

Brockner, J. & Sherman, D. K. (2019). Wise interventions in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *39*, 100125. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2020.100125

Brockner, J. & Wiesenfeld, B. M. (1996). An integrative framework for explaining reactions to decisions: Interactive effects of outcomes and procedures. *Psychological Bulletin*, *120*(2), 189–208. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.120.2.189

Deutsch, M. (1975). Equity, equality, and need: What determines which value will be used as the basis of distributive justice? *Journal of Social Issues*, *31*(3), 137–149. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1975.tb01000

Devine, P. G., Forscher, P. S., Austin, A. J. & Cox, W. T. L. (2012). Long-term reduction in implicit race bias: A prejudice habit-breaking intervention. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *48*(6), 1267–1278. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.06.003

Emerson, R. M. (1976). Social exchange theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *2*, 335–362. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.02.080176.002003

Flavelle, C. (2021). *Blocking climate plan with hometown at risk*. The New York Times, October 18.

Folger, R. & Cropanzano, R. (2001). Fairness theory: Justice as accountability. In Greenberg, J. & Cropanzano, R. (Eds.), *Advances in organization justice* (pp. 1–55). Stanford University Press.

Gino, F. & Coffman, K. (2021). Unconscious bias training that works. *Harvard Business Review*, *99*(5), 114–123. https://hbr.org/2021/09/unconscious-bias-training-that-works

Goldman, B. & Cropanzano, R. (2015). "Justice" and "fairness" are not the same thing. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *36*(2), 313–318. https://doi-org.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/10.1002/job.1956. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1956

Greenberg, J. (1987). A taxonomy of organizational justice theories. *Academy of Management Review*, *12*(1), 9–22. https://doi.org/10.2307/257990

Greenberg, J. (1993). *The social side of fairness: Interpersonal and informational classes of organizational justice* In R. Cropanzano (Ed.), *Justice in the workplace: Approaching fairness in human resource management* (pp. 79–103). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hideg, I. & Ferris, D. L. (2017). Dialectical thinking and fairness-based perspectives of affirmative action. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *102*(5), 782–801. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000207

Holmvall, C. M. & Bobocel, D. R. (2008). What fair procedures say about me: Self-construals and reactions to procedural fairness. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *105*(2), 147–168. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2007.09.001

Jones, D. A. & Skarlicki, D. P. (2013). How perceptions of fairness can change: A dynamic model of organizational justice. *Organizational Psychology Review*, *3*(2), 138–160. https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386612461665

Kahneman, D. & Tversky, A. (1979). On the interpretation of intuitive probability: A reply to Jonathan Cohen. *Cognition*, *7*(4), 409–411. https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277(79)90024-6

Lazarus, R. S. & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer.

Leventhal, G. S. (1980). What should be done with equity theory? New approaches to the study of fairness in social relationships. In Gergen, K., Greenberg, M. & Willis, R. (Eds.), *Social exchange: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 27–55). Plenum Press.

Lind, E. A. & Tyler, T. R. (1988). *The social psychology of procedural justice*. Plenum Press.

Mayer, D. M., Greenbaum, R. L., Kuenzi, M. & Shteynberg, G. (2009). When do fair procedures not matter? A test of the identity violation effect. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *94*(1), 142–161. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013108

McQueen, A. & Klein, W. M. P. (2006). Experimental manipulations of self-affirmation: A systematic review. *Self and Identity*, *5*(4), 289–354. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860600805325

Nishioka, M., Bobocel, D. R. & Beck, J. W. (2023). *Making sense of claims of unfairness: Third-party overall fairness perceptions negatively affect claim credibility*. Manuscript under editorial review.

Rogelberg, S. G., King, E. B. & Alonso, A. (2022). How can we bring I-O psychology science and evidence-based practices to the public *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, *15*(2), 259–272. https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2021.142

Rozin, P. & Royzman, E. B. (2001). Negativity bias, negativity dominance, and contagion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *5*(4), 296–320. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0504_2

Sheldon, O., Wiesenfeld, B. M. & Brockner, J. (2023). *Exploring when and why being treated fairly makes employees more likely to engage in unethical pro-organizational behavior*. Manuscript under editorial review.

Sherf, E. N., Venkataramani, V. & Gajendran, R. S. (2019). Too busy to be fair? The effect of workload and rewards on managers' justice rule adherence. *Academy of Management Journal*, *62*(2), 469–502. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2016.1061

Sherman, D. K. & Cohen, G. L. (2006). The psychology of self-defense: Self-affirmation theory. In Zanna, M. P. (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 38, pp. 183–242).

Elsevier Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(06)38004-5

Sherman, D. K., Nelson, L. D. & Steele, C. M. (2000). Do messages about health risks threaten the self? Increasing the acceptance of threatening health messages via self-affirmation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*(9), 1046–1058. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672002611003

Silver, E. & Iceland, J. (2021, June 29). Disputes over DEI depend on how you define fairness. *Ethical Systems Blog*. https://www.ethicalsystems.org/disputes-over-dei-depend-on-how-you-define-fairness/

Skarlicki, D. P. & Latham, G. P. (2005). How can training be used to foster organizational justice? In Greenberg, J. & Colquitt, J. A. (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational justice* (pp. 499–522). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Skitka, L. J. & Houston, D. A. (2001). When due process is of no consequence: Moral mandates and presumed defendant guilt or innocence. *Social Justice Research*, *14*(3), 305–326. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014372008257

Smith, H. J., Tyler, T. R., Huo, Y. J., Ortiz, D. J. & Lind, E. A. (1998). The self-relevant implications of the group-value model: Group membership, self-worth, and treatment quality. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *34*(5), 470–493. https://doi.org/10.1006/jesp.1998.1360

Steele, C. M. (1988). The psychology of self-affirmation: Sustaining the integrity of the self. In Berkowitz, L. (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology, Vol. 21. Social psychological studies of the self: Perspectives and programs* (pp. 261–302). Academic Press.

Stouffer, S. A., Suchman, E. A., Devinney, L. C., Star, S. A. & Williams Jr., R. M. (1949). *The American soldier: Adjustment during army life. (Studies in social psychology in World War II), Vol. 1*. Princeton University Press.

Tenbrunsel, A. E. & Messick, D. M. (2004). Ethical fading: The role of self-deception in unethical behavior. *Social Justice Research*, *17*(2), 223–236. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:SORE.0000027411.35832.53

Thibaut, J. & Walker, L. (1975). *Procedural justice: A psychological analysis*. Erlbaum.

Treviño, L. K., den Nieuwenboer, N. A., & Kish-Gephart, J. J. (2014). (Un)ethical behavior in organizations. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65 635–660. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-113011-143745

Tripp, T. M. & Bies, R. J. (2009). *Getting even: The truth about workplace revenge – And how to stop it*. Jossey-Bass.

Tsui, A. S. (2022). From traditional research to responsible research: The necessity of scientific freedom and scientific responsibility for better societies. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *9*, 1–32. https://doi.org/https://doi/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-062021-021303

Tyler, T. R. (1989). The psychology of procedural justice: A test of the group-value model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *57*(5), 830–838. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.5.830

Tyler, T. R. (2017). Procedural justice and policing: A rush to judgment? *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, *13*, 29–53. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-110316-113318

Umphress, E. E. & Bingham, J. B. (2011). When employees do bad things for good reasons: Examining unethical proorganizational behaviors. *Organization Science*, *22*(3), 621–640. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0559

Van den Bos, K. (2018). *Why people radicalize: How unfairness judgments are used to fuel radical beliefs, extremist behaviors, and terrorism*. Oxford University Press.

Van den Bos, K. (2020). Unfairness and radicalization. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *71*, 563–588. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010419-050953

Van den Bos, K., Bruins, J., Wilke, H. A. M., & Dronkert, E. (1999). Sometimes unfair procedures have nice aspects: On the psychology of the fair process effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *77*(2), 324–336. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.77.2.324

Van den Bos, K. & Lind, E. A. (2002). Uncertainty management by means of fairness judgments. In Zanna, M. P. (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 34, pp. 1–60). Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(02)80003-X

Walton, G. M. & Cohen, G. L. (2011). A brief social-belonging intervention improves academic and health outcomes of minority students. *Science*, *331*(6023), 1447–1451. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1198364

Walton, G. M. & Wilson, T. D. (2018). Wise interventions: Psychological remedies for social and personal problems. *Psychological Review*, *125*(5), 617–655. https://doi.org/https://doi-org.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/10.1037/rev0000115

Watts, L. L., Gray, B. E. & Medeiros, K. E. (2022). Side effects associated with organizational interventions: A perspective. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, *15*(1), 76–94. https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2021.93

Wrzesniewski, A. & Dutton, J. E. (2001). Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work. *Academy of Management Review*, *26*(2), 179–201. https://doi.org/10.1037/14183-005

Author biographies

Joel Brockner is the Phillip Hettleman Professor of Business at Columbia Business School. He is a recent recipient of lifetime achievement awards from the Academy of Management and the American Psychological Association for his research on the escalation of commitment, self-processes in work organizations, the effects of layoffs on the productivity and morale of those who remain, and the consequences and causes of organizational justice, among other topics.

Ramona Bobocel is a professor of Industrial and Organizational Psychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Waterloo. Her program of research focuses on the study of fairness in the workplace, aiming to understand factors that explain why unfairness persists, and how to promote the fair treatment and well-being of employees. Her research has been published in top-tier psychology and management journals, and she is a Fellow of the Association for Psychological Sciences, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and the Canadian Psychological Association.