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Procedural Justice: A Historical Review and Critical Analysis

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Abstract and Keywords

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Keywords: procedural justice, fair process, procedural fairness, organizational justice, justice in the workplace

People are fundamentally concerned with *fair process* in many social contexts. The work organization has offered fertile ground for the study of procedural justice. In this chapter, we provide readers with a broad foundation for understanding the literature on procedural justice in the workplace. We first review the origins of the concept in psychology in the 1970s and the early theoretical accounts. Next we discuss and critique research that has examined the effects of procedural justice perceptions in the workplace. In the third part, we build on our discussion of the early theories by reviewing contemporary revisions, and we present newer theoretical models that have emerged to explain why people care about process fairness. In the final section, we review recent research that challenges a fundamental assumption in the study of procedural justice—that procedural justice is always beneficial.

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procedural justice
fair process
procedural fairness
organizational justice
justice in the workplace

The study of social justice has been a central theme in psychology for over half a century. As with other social scientists and philosophers, psychologists have long recognized that, to function effectively, all social systems must deal with the problem of how to distribute or allocate resources fairly. As reviewed in Chapter 2 of this volume, the earliest psychological research on justice took a *distributive justice* orientation. Inspired originally by the work of social exchange theorists (e.g., Blau, 1964; Homans, 1974; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), research on distributive justice focused on the question of how people judge the fairness of the outcomes of a social exchange. In the 1970s, it was becoming evident to many social scientists that people were concerned not only with the outcomes of a social exchange but also with the fairness of the procedures by which allocation decisions are made. The concept of procedural justice was born. Initially investigated within the context of legal dispute resolution, researchers soon saw its relevance to the workplace (e.g., Lind & Lissak, 1985; Sheppard & Lewicki, 1987).

In the 1980s, the concept of procedural justice was formally introduced to the organizational sciences in two book chapters by Jerald Greenberg and Robert Folger (Folger & Greenberg, 1985; Greenberg & Folger, 1983) and in a chapter by Allan Lind and Tom Tyler (Lind & Tyler, 1988) in their book on the social psychology of procedural justice. These scholars reviewed what was known about procedural justice in other social domains and argued for the relevance of the concept to understanding many important workplace phenomena. As they pointed out, many organizational practices—such as performance evaluation and compensation—implicitly recognized employees' procedural concerns. Moreover, at that time, there was a growing trend in organizations toward participatory work practices such as participative management and flexible work schedules, which were based on the premise that employees respond better (p. 52) when they are involved in decision-making procedures than when they are left out.

As these founders forecasted, the study of procedural justice in the workplace would prove to be highly productive in two ways. First, it would advance researchers' understanding of many organizational phenomena. Over the past decades, investigators have demonstrated the relevance of procedural justice for almost every organizational procedure, such as performance appraisal (Greenberg, 1986; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995), employee selection and hiring (Gilliland, 1993, 1994), layoffs and terminations (Brockner et al., 1994), affirmative action (Bobocel, Son Hing, Davey, Stanley, & Zanna, 1998; Cropanzano, Slaughter, & Bachiochi, 2005), conflict resolution (Shapiro & Brett, 1995; Sheppard, 1984), drug testing (e.g., Cropanzano & Konovsky, 1995), and grievance systems (Gordon & Fryxell, 1993).

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Moreover, procedural justice predicts many employee reactions, including emotions (Barclay, Skarlicki, & Pugh, 2005), self-evaluations (Gilliland, 1994; Ployhart, Ryan, & Bennett, 1999; Schroth & Shah, 2000), stress (Vermunt & Steensma, 2005), work attitudes such as organizational commitment (Korsgaard, Schweiger, & Sapienza, 1995), trust (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002; Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Kernan & Hanges, 2002), leader-member exchange and perceived organizational support (Tekleab, Takeuchi, & Taylor, 2005).

Finally, it is associated with, and work behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior (Moorman, 1991, Konovsky & Pugh, 1994), job performance (Aryee, Chen, & Budhwar, 2004; Williams, 1999; Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott, & Livingston, 2009), cooperation (Tyler, DeGoey & Smith, 1996; Tyler & Blader, 2000), forgiveness, revenge, and retaliation (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006; Bies & Tripp, 2001; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), turnover (Posthuma, Maertz, & Dworkin, 2007), theft (Greenberg, 1993a), sabotage (Ambrose, Seabright, & Schminke, 2002) counterproductive work behavior (Dalal, 2005; Hershcovis et al., 2007), and legal claiming (Goldman, 2003; Lind, Greenberg, Scott, & Whelchans, 2000). In fact, only a few years after the concept of procedural justice was introduced to organizational scholars, Sheppard, Lewicki, and Minton (1992) published a book on the topic of justice in work organizations in which they reviewed what was an already large literature.

The founders' second prediction was that the workplace context would provide fertile ground to better understand the procedural justice concept itself. As we aim to illustrate in the present chapter, it is clear that collectively we now have a far greater understanding of what procedural justice is and why it matters, deriving from the decades of research examining procedural justice as it pertains to work-related phenomena. Given the vast size of the research literature on procedural justice, it is beyond the scope of the present chapter to review the research findings comprehensively. Instead, our goal is to provide a broad historical review of the procedural justice literature, which will serve as a foundation on which the subsequent chapters will build.

This chapter comprises four main parts. In the first part, we discuss the emergence of the construct in psychology and early ideas about the theoretical underpinnings of procedural justice. In this part, we also examine the breadth of the procedural justice construct, an issue that was brought to the fore with the introduction of the concept of interactional justice. In the second part of the chapter, we focus on how researchers have traditionally examined procedural justice effects in the workplace. We first review "differential effects" models in which researchers sought to demonstrate the relevance of the concept by examining attitudes and behaviors that are uniquely associated with procedural justice perceptions, rather than with other justice perceptions. Although the differential effects paradigm has been useful, we also highlight several limitations. We then review "interaction effects" models in which the goal was to examine the joint effects of procedural justice and other justice constructs. As research proliferated, justice scholars elaborated on early theories and developed new models. Thus, in the third part of the chapter, we provide an overview of the main theoretical accounts offered to explain why

people care about procedural justice. Finally, in the fourth part, we highlight recent research that questions a fundamental assumption in the procedural justice literature—that procedural justice is always beneficial.

What Is Procedural Justice?

Origins of the Concept and Early Theoretical Accounts

Although several researchers contributed to the emergence of the procedural justice construct in the psychological literature, three lines of research are considered especially groundbreaking. In this (p. 53) section, we highlight these contributions, with an emphasis on how each group of researchers defined and conceptualized procedural justice.

Thibaut and Walker's (1975, 1978) Theory of Procedure

Social psychologist, John Thibaut, and law professor, Laurens Walker, and their colleagues typically are credited with providing the earliest systematic study of procedural justice in their program of research on legal dispute resolution in the early 1970s. In addition to publishing numerous empirical articles (e.g., LaTour, 1978; Thibaut, Walker, LaTour, & Holden, 1974; Walker, LaTour, Lind, & Thibaut, 1974), they summarized their program of research in a monograph entitled *Procedural Justice: A Psychological Analysis* (Thibaut & Walker, 1975), and presented a more extensive account of their theoretical work in an article (Thibaut & Walker, 1978) entitled “*A Theory of Procedure.*”

For our purpose, the key contribution of their empirical work was the demonstration in experimental simulations that variation in dispute resolution *procedures* affected disputants' subjective perceptions of the fairness of those procedures, as well as their satisfaction with the resulting verdicts. Thibaut and Walker (1978) distinguished legal dispute resolution procedures in terms of the degree to which they vested control in disputants versus in a third party (e.g., a judge). Control could be distributed between disputants and a third party in two key phases of the resolution: a process phase during which evidence is presented, and an outcome phase during which a verdict is rendered. One of their most significant findings as it pertains to this chapter was that disputants *preferred procedures that allowed them to present evidence for their case*—thereby retaining control over the process (process control)—even when they did not retain control over the final verdict (outcome control).

Critically, Thibaut and Walker demonstrated that disputant preference for *process control* was due to perceived *procedural fairness*. That is, resolution procedures that afforded disputants process control were perceived as more fair than were procedures that did not, and this was true even when outcome control was vested in the third party (e.g., Lind, Kurtz, Musante, Walker, & Thibaut, 1980; Walker, Lind, & Thibaut, 1979). Thus, for example, the researchers found that disputants prefer the adversary courtroom procedure of the American legal system to the inquisitorial procedure of the European legal system because disputants perceive the adversary procedure as more fair. Both procedures vest outcome control in the third party, but disputants retain process control in the adversary procedure. From this perspective, then, having input into decisions was a cornerstone of procedural justice perceptions.

Over the next decade (and still to the present day), researchers repeatedly replicated the finding that allowing people to provide input into decisions that affect them enhances their perceptions of procedural fairness and increases outcome acceptance, even when the outcomes are undesirable. Folger (1977) labeled process control as “voice” in his formative research on reward allocation, and later he and colleagues coined the term the “*fair process effect*” to refer to “cases in which greater satisfaction results from giving people a voice in decisions” (Folger, Rosenfield, Grove, & Corkran, 1979, p. 2254).¹ Although the voice effect would prove to be very robust, there would be considerable

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debate among scholars over the years about why the effect occurs (see Chapter 19; for other reviews, see Shapiro & Brett, 2005; Van den Bos, 2005).

Thibaut and Walker's conceptualization of procedural justice drew on existing theories of justice such as equity theory (Adams, 1965), which emanated from broader theories of social exchange (Blau, 1964; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Fundamentally, these theories claimed that outcomes are the major determinant of people's satisfaction and perceived fairness. Accordingly, Thibaut and Walker argued that disputants want process control as a means by which they may achieve equitable outcomes; in other words, process control is desired because it gives disputants indirect control over the outcome.

Leventhal's (1980) Justice Judgment Model

Around the same time that Thibaut and Walker were studying procedural justice in the context of legal dispute resolution, there was a growing recognition among social psychologists who were studying resource allocation that people's experience of fairness derives not solely from consideration of the distribution of outcomes. Although several scholars were recognizing the importance of procedural justice (e.g., Deutsch, 1975; Folger, 1977; Lerner & Whitehead, 1980), social psychologist Gerald Leventhal published several book chapters that highlighted in detail the concept of procedural justice in resource allocation (Leventhal, 1976, 1980; Leventhal, Karuza, & Fry, 1980). Like (p. 54) Thibaut and Walker's research, these chapters had a lasting impact on theory and research on procedural justice in the workplace. In his 1980 chapter, Leventhal presented what he labeled a "justice judgment model"—his conceptualization of the cognitive process by which people form justice judgments. Although included in his analysis were his ideas about how people form distributive justice judgments, Leventhal paid particular attention to the more novel question of how people might form procedural justice judgments. Given that there was little prior systematic study of procedural justice in reward allocation, most of Leventhal's ideas were speculative rather than empirically grounded, but they were nonetheless influential.

One aspect of the justice judgment model that has had lasting impact on procedural justice research is Leventhal's (1980) specification of the procedural rules, or "criteria," by which he thought people may evaluate whether an allocation procedure is fair or unfair. In short, he speculated that allocation procedures will be perceived as more fair if they (a) are applied consistently across people and over time (consistency rule), (b) prevent personal self-interest and "blind allegiance to narrow preconceptions" (bias suppression rule), (c) ensure that decisions are based on as much good information and informed opinion as possible (accuracy rule), (d) provide opportunities to modify and reverse incorrect decisions (correctability rule), (e) reflect the concerns of all subgroups and individuals who may be affected (representativeness rule), and (f) are "compatible with prevailing moral and ethical values accepted by the individual" (ethicality rule) (see pp. 41–46). It is noteworthy that Leventhal also outlined different phases of the allocation sequence at which these criteria might be applied. Similarly, he argued that the

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procedural rules are not necessarily weighted equally in people's assessments but will vary as a function of the context.

Over the years, evidence has accrued that supports the validity of Leventhal's procedural justice criteria in resource allocation decisions in general (e.g., Barrett-Howard & Tyler, 1986), and in decision-making in the workplace (e.g., Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Greenberg, 1986; Sheppard & Lewicki, 1987). For example, Greenberg (1986) conducted a qualitative study of managers who described the determinants of what they perceived were fair and unfair performance evaluations that they had received. He found evidence for both distributive and procedural determinants. Several of the latter concurred with Leventhal's criteria (e.g., ability to appeal evaluations, consistent application of standards), but others were identified (e.g., two-way communication). It is interesting to note that an early study by Barrett-Howard and Tyler (1986) confirmed Leventhal's idea that the relevance of the criteria will depend on the nature of the interpersonal relationship involved in the allocation, although this theme has not been picked up to a great extent in contemporary research. Support for the validity of Leventhal's criteria has also been demonstrated in experimental studies in which the manipulation of procedural justice is operationalized as one of Leventhal's criteria, and the manipulation is shown to affect procedural justice perceptions. As noted earlier, although the vast majority of experimental studies have operationalized procedural justice by manipulating voice (which most researchers consider to be subsumed by Leventhal's representativeness criteria), other criteria such as accuracy and consistency have been manipulated as well (e.g., Van den Bos, 2001).

Leventhal's analysis of procedural justice was similar to Thibaut and Walker's approach in two key ways. First, Thibaut and Walker (1975) and Leventhal (1976, 1980; Leventhal et al., 1980) agreed on the important role of process control in people's evaluations of outcomes. Second, both frameworks assumed that people care about fair procedures because they increase the likelihood of receiving fair outcomes. The models differed somewhat on specifying the elements of procedures that give people process control, which may be attributable to the contexts (legal dispute resolution versus resource allocation) in which they were studying procedural justice. As noted earlier, Thibaut and Walker's model conceptualized process control as having the opportunity to present evidence relevant to one's case; Leventhal's work expanded the criteria by which people can gain control over decision procedures.

It is noteworthy that the models also differed in how they conceptualized the relation between procedural justice perceptions and distributive justice perceptions. Leventhal (1976, 1980) argued that the two perceptions are related; in fact, he argued that perceptions of distributive justice depend on perceived procedural justice. In contrast, Thibaut and Walker (1975, 1978) argued that procedural justice and distributive justice are objectively independent, likely because this is possible in the context of the courtroom (i.e., a guilty person can be found guilty even if the procedures are flawed). Nevertheless, although they argued for objective (p. 55) independence, Thibaut and Walker (1975) recognized that the concepts may overlap perceptually, as borne out in their findings that

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disputants perceived verdicts to be more fair when they arose from procedures that were perceived to be more fair (for more details, see Folger & Greenberg, 1985; Lind & Tyler, 1988).

Group-Value Model of Procedural Justice (1988) and Relational Model of Authority (1992)

In 1988, social psychologists Allan Lind and Tom Tyler published a book entitled, *The Social Psychology of Procedural Justice*. Their book was a vast undertaking and one of the most influential early contributions to the field. In addition to providing a thorough review and analysis of Thibaut and Walker's research program, Lind and Tyler presented an in-depth review of the empirical literature on procedural justice from the early 1970s, which had quickly expanded from the context of legal-dispute resolution, to dispute resolution in nonlegal contexts, to resource allocation more generally, to the political arena, and to the context of the work organization.

In one chapter, devoted to a conceptual synthesis of the research findings and theory to date, Lind and Tyler introduced their group-value model of procedural justice. They argued that the previous models of procedural justice (e.g., Leventhal, 1976, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975) were rooted in a view of the person as "self-interested"—that is, as primarily concerned with maximizing the material outcomes that they receive in their interactions with others (p. 222). Under this view, people are concerned with procedures because of their *instrumental value* in obtaining beneficial outcomes. Lind and Tyler argued that such instrumental motivation could not adequately capture the range of procedural justice findings.

Instead, they argued that decision-making procedures convey information to people about their standing (status) within social groups, and, therefore, that procedural justice has implications for people's social identity, and ultimately their sense of self-worth. The group-value model was rooted in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), which argued that people's views of themselves are shaped by their experiences in the groups to which they belong. Thus, for Lind and Tyler, rather than functioning as a means to a particular end (e.g., winning a dispute or obtaining a favorable outcome), decision-making procedures carry symbolic meaning, and can themselves serve as an end.

Lind and Tyler's (1988) group-value model was highly influential in procedural justice research, expanding the existing conceptualizations in several important ways. First, as noted earlier, the group-value model argued that fair procedures (e.g., those that offer voice) have instrumental value to recipients, as well as noninstrumental value in that they convey identity-related information to people. They rejected the traditional outcome-oriented conceptualization of procedural justice in which the person is viewed as primarily motivated by immediate self-interest. Rather, they argued that people want something different from their membership in groups: Namely, people gain identity from their associations with others. Of note, Lind and Tyler recognized that neither the outcome-oriented (self-interest) nor the group-value (identity) models of procedural

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justice alone can explain all the prior research findings. Thus, they suggested that both processes likely operate simultaneously or “side-by-side” in the same situations (Lind & Tyler, 1988, p. 241).

Following from their reasoning about the psychological function of fair procedures, Lind and Tyler (1988) argued that procedural justice perceptions should be most relevant in the formation of people’s general attitudes toward the groups or relationships to which they belong, whereas distributive justice judgments should be more relevant predictors of people’s reactions to a specific outcome. They stated that “when people are evaluating the extent to which they will be loyal to a group or relationship, people focus on the manner in which group decisions are made. If they believe that such decisions are made fairly, then group members are more inclined to accept a long-term commitment to the group” (pp. 225–226). Thus, Lind and Tyler predicted that, “In making leadership or institutional evaluations people are taking a long-term perspective on membership within a group. With personal satisfaction, they are reacting to a single decision” (p. 224). These ideas were supported by early research outside the workplace context, which demonstrated that people’s procedural justice perceptions contributed unique variance to their endorsement of police, government leaders, and teachers more strongly than did factors related to the outcome (e.g., outcome level, outcome satisfaction, distributive justice) (e.g., Tyler & Caine, 1981; Tyler & Folger, 1980; Tyler, Rasinski, & Spodick, 1985). Moreover, in other research, distributive justice perceptions were found to predict outcome satisfaction more strongly than did (p. 56) procedural justice perceptions (e.g., Tyler, Rasinski, & McGraw, 1985).

Tyler and Lind (1992) elaborated on the group-value model in a chapter in which they articulated their relational model of authority. Whereas the group-value model focused primarily on demonstrating the role of noninstrumental factors involved in procedural justice judgments, the relational model built on the earlier work in an effort to understand how authorities gain legitimacy in hierarchical groups. As with the group-value model, the relational model argues that procedures in organizations or other institutions are interpreted as reflecting basic values of the group; thus procedures convey information to people regarding their relationship with the group and the authority enacting the procedure, which fosters authority legitimacy. The theoretical core of the relational and group-value models is the same (in fact the labels are often used interchangeably); in short, both models argue that people are concerned with *relational* aspects of procedures, which are different from—and indeed often more important than—their concerns with short-term material resources (Tyler, 1994).

Given the premise that people gain identity from their association with others, the group-value and relational models also diverged from the previous procedural justice models in terms of the criteria by which people evaluate procedural fairness. These newer models argued that people evaluate procedural fairness by the presence or absence of relational criteria, whereas the older models focused more on how procedures should be structured (although this is not entirely true in Leventhal’s model). For example, in early research, Tyler and Folger (1980) demonstrated that a key predictor of citizens’ satisfaction with

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their encounters with police was the recognition of their “rights to call upon the police and to be taken seriously in that request” (p. 292) regardless of the outcome of the encounter, such as whether they received a citation for violating the law. Later research defined three relational criteria (e.g., Tyler, 1989, 1994), namely the neutrality of the decision-making procedure (operationalized as lack of bias, propriety of behavior, quality of questions), trust in (or benevolence of) the authorities’ intentions, and standing/status recognition, an index of quality of treatment (operationalized as polite treatment and respect for one’s rights). Several studies have demonstrated the contribution of such relational concerns to procedural justice perceptions and evaluations of authorities (police, political leaders) over and above effects of perceived distributive justice, process control, and outcome control (see Tyler, 1991; Tyler & Caine, 1981).

How Broad Is the Procedural Justice Concept?

In the mid-1980s, Bies and Moag (1986) published a chapter in which they coined a new justice concept: interactional justice. Bies and Moag argued that resource allocation decisions comprise a “sequence of events in which a procedure generates a process of interaction and decision making through which an outcome is allocated to someone” (p. 45). Accordingly, they suggested that the *structure* of decision procedures, the *enactment* of those procedures, and the *outcomes* can each be conceptualized as separate aspects of an allocation sequence and, therefore, that all three are potentially subject to fairness considerations. Bies and Moag argued that much of the prior procedural justice research either had neglected the interpersonal element or had confounded the two elements of process.

Bies and Moag (1986) conceived the concept of interactional justice to encompass people’s concerns about the “quality of interpersonal treatment exhibited by leaders during the enactment or implementation of decision procedures” (p. 44). Initially derived from content analyses of MBA students’ job search experiences, Bies and Moag focused on the fairness of the communication aspect of interpersonal treatment, and identified four criteria that people use to evaluate fairness: truthfulness, respect, propriety of questions, and justification. In the early research, the four criteria set out by Bies and Moag were typically summarized into two broader classes that appear to cover the initial content domain. In brief, interactional justice was conceptualized as deriving from (a) clear and adequate explanations of, or justifications for, allocation decisions, and (b) treatment of recipients with dignity and respect during the implementation of procedures (e.g., Tyler & Bies, 1990; also see Bies, 2005, Chapter 4).

The idea that authorities’ behavior during the enactment of decision procedures could influence employees’ fairness perceptions was supported in early studies conducted by Bies and his colleagues on managerial justifications (e.g., Bies & Shapiro, 1987, 1988; Bies, Shapiro, & Cummings, 1988). These studies demonstrated that justifications offered by managers for unfavorable decisions had (p. 57) the effect of enhancing recipients’ perceptions of fairness and their outcome acceptance. For example, Bies and Shapiro

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(1987) asked MBA students to evaluate several cases describing a manager's questionable conduct. Half the participants were provided with an excuse for the manager's conduct; the other half received no such information. Participants perceived the manager as more fair and endorsed him more strongly in the presence of the excuse than in its absence. In a follow-up study, Bies and Shapiro asked MBA students to recount a time when a request was denied by their boss and to respond to a set of questions with the event in mind. Again, participants perceived their boss as more fair, and reported less anger and resentment, the more they rated their boss's explanation for the refusal to be adequate (for reviews, see Bobocel & Zdaniuk, 2005; Shaw, Wild, & Colquitt, 2003).

Not surprisingly, debate soon emerged in the literature about whether interactional justice is distinguishable from procedural justice. Much of the conceptual confusion in the literature arose because many procedural justice studies had operationalized the concept in ways that included the enactment of procedures. In other words, many of the interactional justice criteria were being examined under the rubric of the procedural justice construct. For example, in experimental research to examine the conditions that arouse resentment, Folger and his colleagues demonstrated that participants were less angry about receiving a negative outcome in the presence of procedural justification, that is, when the experimenter provided a credible justification for the decision procedures that led to the outcome (e.g., Folger & Martin, 1986; Folger, Rosenfield, & Robinson, 1983).

Similarly, research leading to the group-value model had adopted a broader definition of procedural justice. For example, in the study by Tyler and Folger (1980) discussed earlier, procedural justice was operationalized by relational criteria, the core of which involved judgments regarding the respectful treatment that people received from the police. In their review, Lind and Tyler (1988) stated that "procedural justice involves more than questions of how decisions are made. It also involves questions of how people are treated by authorities and other parties" (p. 214). Thus, Lind and Tyler (1988) suggested that both the structure of decision procedures and their enactment are integral "process fairness" considerations (also see Folger & Bies, 1989; Tyler & Bies, 1990).

In contrast, Bies and Moag (1986) suggested that the concept of procedural justice should be defined as people's perceptions of the fairness of the formal structure of decision procedures, which they suggested was in line with early conceptions of procedural justice (e.g., Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975), and that interactional justice should be defined in terms of the "propriety of the decision maker's behavior during the enactment of procedures" (Bies & Shapiro, 1988, p. 201). Thus, Bies and Moag (1986) acknowledged that it might be best to consider interactional justice as part of a broader conceptualization of procedural justice because people may only come to know procedures through their enactment; therefore the two elements will be highly interrelated perceptually (also see Tyler & Bies, 1990). But they maintained that "interactional fairness will generalize to the procedure itself only when a person attributes responsibility for the action to the organization, a systemic attribution, rather

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than the decision maker. On the other hand, if a person attributes the deception and rudeness solely to the decision maker and not the organization, then there should be less implications for the procedure itself" (p. 52).

Following Bies and Moag's (1986) analysis, Greenberg (1993b) offered another model. Greenberg argued that the differentiation between social and nonsocial elements of the procedures can also apply to the outcomes of decisions. That is, he contended that people are concerned about fair interpersonal treatment not only during the implementation of decision procedures but also during the distribution phase of an allocation sequence. Thus, Greenberg suggested that we may conceptualize social and nonsocial elements of both procedures and distributions, resulting in a four-component model of fairness perceptions. He used the labels *procedural and distributive justice* to refer to the nonsocial *mechanisms* by which decisions are made and outcomes are allocated. He used the labels *informational and interpersonal justice* to refer to the *interpersonal behaviors* of those implementing procedures and outcome distributions, or in other words to the *social enactment* of the rules of procedures and outcome allocations.

The issue of whether procedural justice should be conceptualized broadly or more narrowly became a topic of much discussion in the literature over the next 15 years (e.g., see Bies, 2001, 2005; Bobocel & Holmvall, 2001; Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Folger & Bies, 1989; Greenberg, 1990; Tyler & (p. 58) Bies, 1990), and captured considerable research attention, as we will review in the next part of the chapter. Despite the debate over construct labels, the research on interactional justice would serve to highlight the central role of how authorities implement decision procedures in determining employees' experience of fairness and their downstream reactions.

It is important to note that researchers have highlighted other procedural justice criteria that are pertinent in specific organizational contexts. For example, in the context of performance evaluation, several researchers remarked on the importance of adequate notice, fair hearing, and judgments based on evidence (e.g., Folger, Konovsky, & Cropanzano, 1992; Greenberg, 1986; Taylor, Tracy, Renard, Harrison, & Carroll, 1995). In the context of personnel selection, Gilliland (1993) identified 10 procedural rules that should improve applicant reactions to employment selection systems, including job relatedness, the opportunity to perform, propriety of questions, honesty, and feedback. Interestingly, Gilliland also identified rules that may be important within this context, but which have not previously been considered explicitly, such as the ease of faking answers and the invasiveness of questions. In most cases, however, the criteria that researchers have identified within a particular organizational context have turned out to be consistent with those identified by the early theorists. Thus, there appear to be some general considerations that people take into account when evaluating procedural justice that are relatively universal (see Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997).

Summary

It is clear that the organizational context has provided a fertile ground in which researchers have been able to deepen their understanding of the criteria by which people evaluate procedural justice. Researchers have learned a tremendous amount about what comprises people's evaluations of "fair process." Moreover, as researchers came to further understand the criteria that influence procedural justice perceptions, they illuminated the motives underlying people's concerns with procedures. In the early history of the literature, the group-value/ relational models were especially influential in this regard, as they highlighted the notion that people's desire for procedural justice derives from more than their concern with the fair distribution of outcomes, which was the dominant perspective of the day. Instead, it became evident that people use procedural justice to gauge their social identity, and ultimately their sense of self-worth.

Examining the Effects of Procedural Justice in the Workplace

As we noted at the outset of this chapter, it was not long after the concept of procedural justice first emerged in the psychological literature that researchers began to study procedural justice in the workplace (e.g., Folger & Greenberg, 1985; Greenberg & Folger, 1983; Lind & Lissak, 1985; see for review, Lind & Tyler, 1988). Although early research had a number of goals, an obvious agenda was to demonstrate that procedural justice perceptions in fact matter in the workplace. Thus, much research examined the role of procedural justice perceptions in predicting employee attitudes and behaviors. In this section, we provide an overview of the research paradigms used to examine the effects of procedural justice in the workplace.

Differential Effects Models

One way that researchers attempted to demonstrate that procedural justice is relevant in the workplace was to examine attitudes and behaviors that might be uniquely associated with employees' perceptions of procedural justice, initially in relation to distributive justice and later in relation to interactional justice. Researchers have referred to this approach as the "differential effects" framework because the goal was to demonstrate, for example, that procedural justice and distributive justice predict different employee attitudes and behaviors.

Procedural Versus Distributive Justice: The Two-Factor Model

In an early study, Alexander and Ruderman (1987) examined the relative contributions of procedural and distributive justice perceptions for predicting employee evaluations of their supervisors and their trust in management. This study drew on previous research conducted by Tyler and Caine (1981), which demonstrated across four studies in two contexts (student evaluations of teachers in a laboratory context and citizen evaluations of political leaders in natural settings) that people's endorsement of leaders is influenced by their assessment of the leaders' procedural fairness, over and above any effects of outcome fairness or the level of outcomes received. From these findings, Alexander and Ruderman predicted that procedural justice should have a stronger effect than distributive (p. 59) justice on employees' evaluations of their supervisor and on their trust in management. Using an existing large-scale survey of US federal government employees, the researchers created predictor measures to represent the procedural and distributive justice constructs and demonstrated that procedural justice perceptions indeed accounted for significantly greater variance in the criteria than did distributive justice perceptions.

These results were soon clarified and extended in a landmark study conducted by Folger and Konovsky (1989) in which they examined employee reactions to a recent pay raise. Drawing on Lind and Tyler's (1988) group-value model, Folger and Konovsky argued that procedural and distributive justice should have *differential* effects on employee reactions. As discussed earlier, Lind and Tyler suggested that people attend to procedural fairness when taking a long-term perspective on their membership in groups, and they focus on distributive fairness when responding to a single decision. Thus, Folger and Konovsky (1989) predicted that employees' satisfaction with the pay raise should be more strongly predicted by their perceptions of distributive justice relative to procedural justice. In contrast, employees' commitment to the organization and its authorities should be more strongly predicted by their perceptions of procedural justice relative to distributive justice. In line with these hypotheses, Folger and Konovsky (1989) found that distributive justice accounted for more unique variance in employees' satisfaction with their pay raise, whereas procedural justice accounted for more unique variance in employees' trust in supervisor and organizational commitment. These findings were important because they demonstrated the generalizability of earlier research findings on procedural justice which had been seen outside of the workplace context, and they further supported the predictions of the group-value model.

Subsequent research replicated the dissociation observed by Folger and Konovsky (1989). For example, several researchers found that employees' distributive justice perceptions were strongly associated with pay satisfaction (e.g., Harder, 1992; Summers & Hendrix, 1991), whereas procedural justice perceptions were strongly associated with trust in management and institutional commitment (e.g., Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Korsgaard, Schweiger, & Sapienza, 1995; Tyler & DeGoey, 1995). Similarly, McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) found that distributive justice was a stronger predictor of pay satisfaction and job

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satisfaction, whereas procedural justice was a stronger predictor of organizational commitment and employees' evaluations of their supervisors.

In another article, Sweeney and McFarlin (1993) put forth the two-factor model of justice, which specified that distributive justice perceptions are expected to have stronger effects than procedural justice perceptions on *person-referenced* variables, such as pay satisfaction and job satisfaction. In contrast, procedural justice perceptions are expected to have stronger effects than distributive justice perceptions on *system-referenced* variables, such as organizational commitment, trust in management, and subordinates' evaluations of organizational agents. In their study, Sweeney and McFarlin (1993) compared the validity of the two-factor model against three alternative models (procedural primacy model, distributive halo model, additive model) and concluded that the two-factor model received the most support.

This dissociation paradigm was highly influential because it provided researchers with a useful framework for examining the differential effects of procedural and distributive justice perceptions. This line of research not only confirmed the idea that employees form both distributive and procedural justice judgments, but also established that both justice judgments are important in the workplace. Moreover, to many, the research suggested that procedural justice perceptions were comparatively more important than distributive justice perceptions given the wider range and nature of organizational variables associated with the former than with the latter. Procedural justice was said to be more important than distributive justice for fostering variables reflecting long-term commitment and loyalty to the system and its authorities, variables that are critical for the survival of organizations (e.g., for reviews, see Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Tyler & Lind, 1992). This view has been echoed more recently in a meta-analytic study of the relations between procedural and distributive justice and work attitudes (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2002). Later in this part of the chapter, however, we will discuss research that challenges the validity of the two-factor model.

Procedural Versus Interactional Justice: The Agent-System Model

Following the introduction of the concept of interactional justice, the 1990s also saw a marked increase in studies that attempted to distinguish the effects of the structure of decision procedures (p. 60) from the social enactment of procedures. In an initial study, Moorman (1991) used causal modeling techniques to assess the associations between employees' perceptions of fairness and their tendency to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) as rated by their supervisor. Moorman created measures to assess perceptions of procedural justice (operationalized as employee ratings of their organizations' adherence to the criteria specified by Leventhal) and interactional justice (operationalized as employee ratings of their supervisors' adherence to the criteria specified by Bies & Moag, 1986). He assessed distributive justice perceptions using a scale previously developed by Price and Mueller (1986). In brief, Moorman found that employees' perceptions of interactional justice, but not of procedural or distributive justice, were significantly associated with supervisor-rated citizenship behaviors.

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Moorman's findings were consistent with the idea that the role of decision-maker conduct may have been underemphasized in prior research on procedural justice (but see Lind & Tyler, 1988).

As with the two-factor model, researchers soon assessed the distinction between social (decision-maker conduct) and structural aspects of procedures by examining differential effects on attitudes and behaviors. In their original analysis, Bies and Moag (1986) argued that people may draw on their procedural justice perceptions (defined in terms of the structural elements of procedures) when deciding how to react to the overall organization, whereas they use interactional justice perception (defined in terms of the enactment of procedures) when deciding how to react to the agents who are enacting the procedures, such as supervisors. This theme became known as the "agent-system model," which proposed that interactional justice elements are stronger predictors than structural elements of agent-referenced outcomes—such as supervisor trust, and supervisor-directed deviance—because the source of justice is presumed to be the agent. In contrast, perceptions that the organization adheres to procedural rules of fairness are a stronger predictor than social enactment of system-referenced outcomes—such as organizational affective commitment and organization-directed deviance—because adherence to procedural rules is attributed to the organization.

Malatesta and Byrne (1997) used structural equation modeling to test this idea in a survey of employee-supervisor dyads. They found that employees' perceptions of procedural justice related to their level of affective organizational commitment. In contrast, employees' perceptions of interactional justice influenced their self-reported supervisory commitment and supervisor-reported organizational citizenship behavior. Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Tayler (2000) replicated and extended these findings by examining the mediating mechanism through which the justice concepts could relate to different organizational variables. Consistent with the notion that a social exchange process develops between employees and the source to which they attribute justice (i.e., the organization or the supervisor), the researchers found that the relations between procedural justice and organization-directed outcomes were mediated by perceived organizational support. In contrast, the relations between interactional justice perceptions and supervisor-directed outcomes were mediated by the quality of leader-member exchange. If people's concerns about the structure of procedures and about interpersonal treatment do represent separate constructs, then one might expect this disjunctive pattern of results. In contrast, job satisfaction was predicted similarly by the two justice perceptions, presumably because it is influenced by justice perceptions derived from both sources (also see Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002; Cropanzano, Rupp, Mohler, & Schminke, 2001).

Two influential events that occurred around this time reinforced the distinction between procedural and interactional justice. In an effort to bring consensus and clarification regarding construct definitions and, therefore, regarding the measurement of justice perceptions in field research, Colquitt (2001) developed and validated the first standardized measure in which the structural and enactment components of procedures

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were conceptualized as distinct dimensions. To index procedural justice perceptions, respondents indicate the degree to which the criteria identified by Thibaut and Walker and by Leventhal are upheld. The enactment of procedures (interactional justice) is further distinguished into the two components discussed by Bies and Moag (1986): (1) the criteria of truthfulness and justification, and (2) the criteria of respect and propriety of questions. Colquitt labeled the former informational justice, and the latter interpersonal justice, drawing on Greenberg (1993b), noted earlier. Of note, Colquitt suggested that the relational criteria identified by the group-value and relational models of procedural justice (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992) are subsumed either under (p. 61) items that index procedural justice (e.g., neutrality is indexed by bias suppression) or under those that index interpersonal justice (e.g., standing, status recognition are indexed by respect). Finally, distributive justice perceptions are indexed by adherence to the norm of equity (e.g., Leventhal, 1976; Deutsch, 1975). As noted earlier, the measure assesses justice perceptions indirectly rather than directly (see Lind & Tyler, 1988) by assessing the degree to which respondents perceive that specific justice rules (e.g., consistency in procedures, respectful treatment) are upheld. Importantly, the measure can be tailored to specific contexts (for discussion of measurement issues, see Chapter 8; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005).

As more researchers used Colquitt's measure after its publication, the majority of contemporary studies that measure justice perceptions in the workplace have come to separate the structural and enactment components. Clearly, this must be recognized when comparing findings from more recent research on procedural justice in which the construct is assessed more narrowly to earlier procedural justice research in which the concept was assessed more broadly. For example, given the central role of respectful treatment in the group-value/relational models of procedural justice, it should not be surprising to find stronger effects for interactional justice than for procedural justice in contemporary research in which procedural justice is defined more narrowly than in earlier research where it was defined more broadly.

The second influential event that reinforced the distinction between procedural and interactional justice occurred in the same year as Colquitt's measure appeared: Two meta-analytic studies involving the three justice concepts were published (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; a third meta-analysis appeared in the same year on the relation between procedural and distributive justice, see Hauenstein, McGonigle, & Flinder, 2001). Although the structure of the meta-analyses differed somewhat, both bolstered the distinctions among the three (or four) justice constructs. For example, Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) meta-analyzed the results of 190 study samples and concluded that the three constructs are related yet distinct, and are associated with different organizational outcomes. In particular, procedural justice was more strongly related than distributive justice or interactional justice to job performance and counterproductive work behavior. Other dissociations were not as clear; for example, procedural justice was primarily related to organizational

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commitment and trust, although distributive and interactional justice were also substantially related to these variables. Both procedural and distributive justice predicted organizational citizenship behavior, and all three constructs were related to satisfaction measures.

Colquitt and his colleagues (2001) meta-analyzed 183 studies and examined the distinction between distributive and procedural justice, and the two social enactment components of interactional justice. Although the constructs were moderately to highly related, Colquitt et al. demonstrated that they contribute unique variance explained in fairness perceptions. Moreover, their analysis demonstrated support for differential relations among the constructs and several organizational variables. To guide their predictions, the researchers drew on the two-factor and agent-system models. As discussed earlier, according to the two-factor model, procedural justice is expected to have stronger effects than distributive justice on system-referenced variables, but weaker effects than distributive justice on person-referenced variables. The results revealed some support for the two-factor model for attitudinal variables (organizational commitment, system-referenced evaluation of authority vs outcome satisfaction and job satisfaction, respectively) but not for most of the behavioral variables examined (organizational citizenship behavior, withdrawal, and negative reactions). Job performance was an exception, if it is conceptualized as a system-referenced variable.

From the agent-system model, the researchers expected informational or interpersonal justice to have stronger effects than procedural justice on agent-referenced variables but weaker effects than procedural justice on system-referenced variables. The results again revealed some support for the model (OCB-toward supervisor, evaluation of the authority vs job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance). However, some results were contrary to the agent-system model in that stronger relations than expected were found between informational or interpersonal justice and OCB-toward organization, withdrawal, and negative reactions. Colquitt et al. suggested that the agent-system model may underestimate the importance of the social enactment of justice for predicting behavioral variables, a point (p. 62) echoed subsequently (e.g., Ambrose, Seabright, & Schminke, 2002; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002).

Like the justice measure, the meta-analytic studies had substantial impact on the literature. The majority of studies assessing procedural justice in the workplace over the next 15 years would adopt the distinction between procedural and interactional justice, and often use the two-factor and agent-system models to guide predictions. Indeed, from this period right up to the present day, justice researchers have heavily emphasized examination of differential effects of the three (or four) justice components and their mediation (see for review, Colquitt et al., 2013).

Some Limitations of the Differential Effects Paradigm

Although the two-factor framework was especially prominent in early years, it continues to guide justice research to the present day (e.g., Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Reithel, Baltes, & Buddhavarapu, 2007; Pillai, Williams, & Tan, 2001; Viswesvaran &

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Ones, 2002). Nevertheless, researchers have highlighted several limitations of the model. For example, Skitka, Winkler, and Hutchinson (2003) pointed out that in early procedural justice studies, researchers often treated outcome valence/favorability and outcome fairness (distributive justice) interchangeably, or they confounded these constructs. Although related, these constructs are not identical. An outcome is unfavorable to the extent that it does not benefit the recipient, whereas an outcome is unfair to the extent that it violates a referent normative standard (Skitka et al., 2003, also see Kulik & Ambrose, 1992). Skitka and her colleagues thus questioned whether previous research demonstrating the relative effects of procedures and outcomes (and their interactive effects, to follow) in fact informs us about the relative power of procedural justice and *outcome favorability*, rather than of procedural justice and *distributive justice*. If so, then conclusions regarding the relative effects of procedural and distributive justice may be misleading, and indeed researchers may have tended to underestimate the importance of distributive justice relative to procedural justice.

To examine this question, Skitka and her colleagues (2003) conducted a meta-analytic review of 89 independent samples, teasing apart the outcome favorability and outcome fairness constructs. Importantly, they found that procedural justice perceptions have *less* impact when the criterion is outcome fairness as opposed to outcome favorability. In addition, the researchers demonstrated that the effects of outcome fairness on system-referenced variables were stronger than the effects of outcome favorability, and outcome fairness effects were as strong as, or stronger than, the effects of procedural fairness perceptions. Together, these findings question the validity of the two-factor framework in which procedural justice is said to relate to system-referenced outcomes and distributive justice is said to relate to person-referenced outcomes.

Skitka et al.'s (2003) findings also revealed that experimental manipulations of outcome fairness and outcome favorability have *stronger* effects on procedural fairness perceptions than the converse. This finding is important because it runs in opposition to the dominant view that procedures shape outcome judgments, rather than the reverse (e.g., Greenberg, 1987; Leventhal, 1980; Lind & Tyler, 1988). It is interesting to note a related finding in the meta-analysis of the effects of procedural and distributive justice mentioned earlier. Viswevaran and Ones (2002) found that the relations between distributive justice and work attitudes were in most cases mediated by procedural justice perceptions.

Other research findings suggest that the two-factor model is likely to be an oversimplification of the interplay between procedural and distributive justice perceptions. Although the model has been supported in some research, other research has failed to support its predictions (e.g., Clemmer, 1993; Smith, Bolton, & Wagner, 1999; for review see Conlon, Meyer, & Nowakowski, 2005). In addition, researchers have demonstrated support for alternative hypotheses. For example, in one of the first longitudinal investigations, Ambrose and Cropanzano (2003) examined the relations between faculty members' perceptions of procedural and distributive justice and their reactions to promotion and tenure decisions. The researchers argued that, due to

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changes in information acquired over the course of time, perceptions of procedural and distributive justice may be differentially influential as predictors of attitudes *over time*. As expected, they demonstrated that faculty member's perceptions of procedural justice were more influential prior to and soon after the decisions were made, but that distributive justice perceptions were more important one year later. These results imply that procedural and distributive justice may relate to similar attitudes, but that their influence may be more potent at different points in time (also (p. 63) see Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2001). Fortunately, over the last decade, more researchers have examined justice processes longitudinally (e.g., Holtz & Harold, 2009), and the study of time in justice processes has drawn greater systematic attention (see Chapter 14).

In the late 1990s, researchers similarly noted difficulties in drawing clear conclusions from research examining the agent-system model. For one, the early research generally confounded the *source* of the justice (organization vs agent) with the "*content*" of justice (procedural vs interactional). Within the agent-system model, procedural justice was assumed to emanate from the organization, and interactional justice (informational, interpersonal) was assumed to emanate from the supervisor. Thus, as noted earlier, procedural justice was assumed to predict system-referenced variables (e.g., organizational commitment) through a social exchange process that develops between employees and the organization as a whole. Correspondingly, interactional justice was assumed to predict agent-referenced variables (e.g., supervisor legitimacy) through a social exchange process that develops between employees and the agents of decisions. Researchers wondered whether the more fundamental distinction between measures of procedural and interactional justice was one of source (organization, supervisor) rather than of justice content.

To examine this possible problem, Byrne (1999) suggested that "justice source" and "justice content" can be fully crossed such that employees can experience several sources of justice or injustice, two of the most obvious being their immediate supervisors or managers and their employing organizations as a whole. Thus, Byrne argued that both procedural and interactional justice can emanate from both sources (organization and supervisor). She further suggested that employees' responses could be source-directed due to the formation of social exchange relationships that develop between employees and the sources of justice.

Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) examined a social exchange model of these hypothesized "multifoci justice effects" in a survey of employee-supervisor dyads. As predicted, they found that organization-emanating justice (procedural justice and interactional) was significantly related to organization-relevant variables (e.g., job performance, organizational citizenship behavior directed toward organization). In contrast, supervisor-emanating justice (procedural and interactional) was significantly related to supervisory-relevant variables (organizational citizenship behavior directed toward supervisor). Moreover, the researchers demonstrated that these effects were mediated, respectively, by organizationally focused relational exchange and supervisory-focused relational exchange. Of note, Rupp and Cropanzano argued for (and observed) an interesting

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“cross-foci” effect, in which supervisory-emanating justice would impact organizational-focused variables as well as supervisory-focused variables (also see Ambrose, Seabright, & Schminke, 2002), a finding similar to that noted earlier in the meta-analysis by Colquitt et al. (2001). In general, the data supported the researchers’ model, although the results were not as strong for procedural justice as for interactional justice.

In an independent line of research, Blader and Tyler (2003a, 2003b) similarly argued that both the quality of decision procedures (captured by the procedural justice construct in the preceding research) and their enactment (captured by the interactional justice construct earlier) can emanate both from formal rules of the group, such as the organization, and informally through actions of individual agents, such as one’s supervisor (also see Tyler & Blader, 2000). Thus, Blader and Tyler argued for a broader conceptualization of procedural justice that derives from fully crossing people’s concerns regarding the structure and social enactment of decisions with the formal or informal source of justice. The results of a workplace survey and laboratory experiment (Blader & Tyler, 2003a) demonstrated support for their idea that all four procedural components contribute to people’s overall evaluation of the fairness of group procedures.

Both sets of preceding studies question the validity of the traditional agent-system model in which procedural justice is said to be more strongly associated with system-referenced reactions than is interactional justice, whereas the converse should hold for agent-referenced reactions. It is worth noting that, since these initial studies, researchers have continued to demonstrate the existence of additional sources of justice (beyond the organization and supervisors), such as co-workers (e.g., Donovan, Drasgow, & Munson, 1998), customers (e.g., Wang, Liao, Zhan, & Shi, 2011), and one’s workgroup (Lavelle et al., 2009). Moreover, researchers have demonstrated “target similarity” effects (Lavelle, Rupp, & Brockner, 2007) in which justice source is aligned with response target (e.g., Horvath & Andrews, 2007; Karriker, & Williams, 2009; Lavelle et al., 2009; Liao & Rupp, 2005). Indeed, the results of a recent meta-analysis of multifoci justice effects revealed that *source-based* justice perceptions have greater predictive validity than *type-based* justice perceptions (Rupp, Shao, Jones, & Liao, 2014; also see Chapter 7; cf. Colquitt et al., 2013).

Ambrose and Arnaud (2005) pointed out another important limitation of the differential effects paradigms, which is that they fail to recognize the relationships among criterion variables. Thus, the differential effects frameworks do not allow for the possibility of indirect effects of the justice components on attitudes and behaviors. Ambrose, Hess, and Ganesan (2007) discuss this issue in greater detail, and examine the possibility that, for example, distributive justice can affect system-level attitudes indirectly via reactions to events (Cropanzano et al., 2001). Consistent with their reasoning, Ambrose and her colleagues found that all three components of justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) relate to overall attitudes toward the organization indirectly through their direct relation to attitudes about specific events.

Interaction Effect Models

Another way that researchers have historically attempted to demonstrate the importance of procedural justice in the workplace has been to examine how people combine information about the process and the outcomes. Thus, rather than examining the separate effects (i.e., statistical main effects) of procedural justice and distributive justice perceptions, researchers have examined their joint effects (i.e., statistical interactions). We will first review the early research examining the question of how people combine information about process fairness (structural elements and social enactment elements) with information about outcomes. Then we will review more recent research that separates the two elements of process fairness. Therefore, for the early research, we are discussing the two-way statistical interaction effect, and for the more recent research, the three-way interaction.

Outcome x Process Interaction Effects

As noted earlier, many researchers have examined the differential effects of procedural and distributive justice perceptions, an approach that grew out of the instrumental and group-value/relational models of procedural justice. Those models were initially derived to explain the overall beneficial effects of people's preference for procedural justice, independent of distributive justice perceptions. To complement these approaches, justice scholars called for research and theory that *integrated* people's concerns about outcomes and procedures (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; Greenberg, 1990). It is important to realize that, over the years, researchers have come to refer to this interaction as one between *outcome favorability* and procedural justice (or process fairness). This is because, as noted earlier (e.g., Skitka et al., 2003), researchers often measured or manipulated outcome valence rather than outcome fairness in early research to examine the statistical interaction effect.²

In the mid-1980s, Folger had developed a justice framework in his research on reward allocation that he labelled referent cognitions theory (RCT). This explanation explicitly considered how people combine information about outcomes and procedures (Folger, 1986, 1987). As originally specified, Folger sought to explain the conditions that created negative reactions, such as resentment, moral outrage, and perceived injustice, in response to negative outcomes. Drawing on social cognitive research in psychology (e.g., Kahneman & Tversky, 1982), Folger argued that when people are faced with negative events, they engage in "referent cognitions"—that is, they think about "what if" or "what might have been." Thus, in the context of resource allocation decisions, Folger predicted that people would experience the most resentment under two conditions: when they can easily imagine that they *would* have received a better outcome (high versus low referent outcome conditions) had a different allocation procedure been used, and when they believe that the alternative procedure *could* have been used (low versus high procedural justification conditions).

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From this logic, Folger predicted a two-way interaction between procedural and distributive aspects of an exchange, such that the most negative reactions to a resource allocation decision that recipients can easily imagine having been better will occur when people perceive the procedures associated with the decision to be unfair (e.g., unjustified). Stated differently, when decisions are procedurally fair (for example, recipients have input into the decision, or an adequate justification is provided) rather than unfair, procedural information should mitigate negative reactions to high referent outcomes (those one can easily imagine being better). Several early studies by (p. 65) Folger and his colleagues confirmed the predicted outcome x procedure interaction in the context of reward allocation in the laboratory (Folger, 1977; Folger, Rosenfield, Rheume, & Martin 1983; Folger, Rosenfield, Hayes, & Grove, 1978; Folger, Rosenfield, & Robinson, 1983). As we will see next, the outcome x procedure interaction has also been demonstrated repeatedly in the organizational context.

To better integrate research findings on interactional justice, Folger (1993) explicitly defined the “procedure” component of RCT theory more broadly to encompass both structural and enactment elements of procedures. He suggested that decision makers have moral obligations to recipients not only to structure procedures fairly, but also to treat recipients respectfully when implementing procedures (see p. 174). Thus, he suggested that resentment to high referent outcomes can occur as a function of two elements of decision-maker conduct: the implementation of unfair procedures (attributes of process which may have a causal influence on outcome) and inappropriate treatment when implementing the decision (attributes of process that are not necessarily causally related to the outcome, but which may signal disrespect). According to the revised theory, then, in the case of high referent outcomes, decision-maker conduct can be exonerated by behaviors that have no causal association with outcome (e.g., apologies, polite treatment) in addition to behaviors that are causally associated (e.g., unbiased procedures).

Note that RCT differed from the instrumental and relational models of procedural justice in two ways. First, as noted earlier, RCT was designed to explicitly consider how people integrate their concerns with both outcomes and procedures, whereas the instrumental and group-value models were initially postulated to account for the overall beneficial effects of procedures (although they too can account for the interaction, see Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). Second, RCT was concerned with predicting *how* people form judgments of injustice by integrating information about outcomes and procedures, whereas the instrumental and group-value models are fundamentally concerned with explaining *why* procedural justice influences people’s assessments of outcomes, and other attitudes and behaviors.

Following from Folger’s early work on RCT, many researchers examined the joint effects of procedures and outcomes in laboratory simulations (e.g., Cropanzano & Folger, 1989), as well as within the organizational context. In the organizational context, researchers have examined joint effects on employees’ reactions to a wide variety of workplace decisions, including layoffs (e.g., Brockner, DeWitt, Grover, & Reed, 1990), pay freezes (Schaubroeck, May, & Brown, 1994), institution of a smoking ban (Greenberg, 1994), and

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implementation of drug-testing policies (Cropanzano & Konovsky, 1995). For example, Brockner and colleagues (1994) demonstrated across three studies that when procedural justice in the context of layoffs was perceived to be low, employees were less trusting and supportive of the organization than when the layoff outcomes were perceived to be negative (e.g., low severance pay). In contrast, when individuals perceived procedural justice to be high, perceived layoff negativity was unrelated to employees' reactions. Thus, perceptions of procedural justice mitigated the effects of outcome negativity on employees' reactions to the layoff. Put differently, the interaction effect suggested that procedural justice perceptions have particularly strong beneficial effects on employees' evaluations of the organization when outcomes are unfavorable. The results were the same whether for layoff victims (Study 1), layoff survivors (Study 2), and employees soon to be laid off (Study 3). These results are in line with RCT predictions.

In an influential review, Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1996) meta-analyzed the outcome x process interaction across 45 independent samples and demonstrated its robust nature. In general, the pattern of the interaction was the same across a number of settings (legal arena, work organizations, laboratory), across a number of contexts within the organizational setting as noted earlier, across a number of operationalizations of the procedure and outcome, and across a number of dependent/criterion work-related reactions (e.g., organizational commitment, trust, turnover intentions, job performance, fairness perceptions, theft, task performance).

In keeping with their broad approach, Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1996) did not distinguish between the structural and enactment elements of process fairness. Although they recognized these aspects as conceptually different, Brockner and Wiesenfeld suggested that they should (and do) have similar patterns in moderating the effects of outcome favorability on work-related reactions (e.g., see Greenberg, 1990, 1993a, 1994). Similarly, the researchers combined studies that assessed or manipulated outcome fairness and those that (p. 66) assessed or manipulated outcome valence on the argument that outcome fairness and outcome favorability are conceptually related and typically highly empirically related.

In addition to demonstrating the robust nature of the outcome x process interaction on a variety of work-related reactions, Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1996) provided a detailed theoretical account for *why* it occurs. In particular, they set out an integrative explanation by drawing on common elements of prior theories. Brockner and Wiesenfeld suggested that the interaction between procedures and outcomes can be understood as the product of a broader behavioral self-regulation process, which is threatened by events that are experienced as unexpected, negative, or both. They suggested that such events initiate information search, and that this serves to increase peoples' sensitivity to salient external cues. Thus, they argued that unfavorable outcomes, which are generally perceived as both negative and unexpected, serve to heighten people's sensitivity to procedural information. Similarly, they argued that unfair procedures and disrespectful treatment (process elements) are experienced negatively, and they are also unexpected, in that they violate normative standards regarding how decisions should be made and how people

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should be treated. As a consequence, the authors argued that unfair procedure serves to heighten people's sensitivity to outcome information. Under this *sense-making* account, procedures can heighten people's concerns with outcomes, and outcomes can heighten their concerns with procedures.

The Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1996) review contributed to the literature in another important way. Whereas they found that the outcome x process interaction was robust across many criterion variables that gauge work-related reactions, a different pattern emerged in four independent samples from two studies in which self-evaluations were the criteria (Gilliland, 1994; Schroth & Shah, 1993/2000).³ People had more favorable self-evaluations, such as higher state self-esteem, when they received positive feedback about their performance relative to negative feedback, but this effect was more pronounced when procedural fairness was relatively high. In other words, on self-evaluations, procedural fairness was found to *heighten* (rather than reduce) the adverse effects of negative outcome feedback. Thus, in the context of receiving an unfavorable outcome, fairer procedures can have a negative impact on recipients. This observation has been replicated and followed up in more recent research, and has led to important insights regarding procedural justice, as we will discuss in the fourth part of the chapter. In general, research on the outcome x process interaction has remained popular over the years (e.g., Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 2005; De Cremer & Sedikides, 2005; De Cremer & Van Knippenberg, 2003; Hakonen & Lipponen, 2008). In a recent book, Joel Brockner (2010) provides a comprehensive and engaging review of this vast body of research and suggests new lines of research on procedural justice.

Outcome x Procedures x Enactment Interaction Effects

Relatively less research has examined the joint effects of procedures, enactment, and outcomes compared to differential (main) effects of each construct on organizational variables, but several studies have examined this possibility (also see for review, Brockner, 2010). In the first study of this kind, Skarlicki and Folger (1997) examined how employees' perceptions of interactional, procedural, and distributive justice combine to predict their retaliation behaviors (as rated by coworkers). To formulate their hypotheses, the researchers drew on RCT (Folger, 1986, 1993). As noted earlier, employees should be more likely to retaliate following the receipt of unfair outcomes, when the conduct of decision-making agents is judged to be inappropriate. Inappropriate conduct can be determined by perceptions of procedural and interactional justice. If recipients believe that conduct was inappropriate (e.g., different procedures "could" and "should" have been used), then they are more likely to blame the agent for the outcomes.

Given this, Skarlicki and Folger (1997) predicted that either fair decision procedures or fair interpersonal conduct may mitigate the negative impact of receiving less than is expected, because both minimize the agent's accountability (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Put another way, both procedures and interactions convey information about intentionality, and as such both should mitigate the otherwise negative effect of unfair outcomes on retaliatory behavior. This theorizing would suggest that procedural justice

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and interactional justice perceptions will separately interact with distributive justice perceptions (two 2-way interactions) in predicting retaliation.

In addition, Skarlicki and Folger (1997) predicted that the two-way interactions should be qualified by a higher-order, three-way interaction (p. 67) among the justice constructs, on the theory that procedural and interactional justice are “substitutable.” If it is true that procedural justice and interactional justice perceptions are substitutable, then the relation between outcome fairness and retaliation (such that increasing outcome fairness is associated with greater retaliation) should be most pronounced when a low amount of one construct is not “offset” by a high amount of the other. Thus, the effect of low interactional justice should be offset by high procedural justice, and vice versa. In contrast, when either procedural justice is high, or interactional justice is high, then the effect of outcome unfairness on retaliation will be mitigated. From this logic, Skarlicki and Folger predicted a three-way interaction in which the effect of distributive justice on retaliation (such that increasing outcome unfairness is associated with greater retaliation) should be strongest when procedural justice is relatively low and interactional justice is relatively low.

As predicted, Skarlicki and Folger observed a three-way interaction among the justice measures, such that procedural and interactional justice perceptions had substitutable effects, in which either was sufficient to mitigate the effect of low distributive justice perceptions on retaliation behavior. That is, when employees perceived poor interpersonal treatment, the relation between distributive unfairness and retaliation was mitigated by procedural justice. Similarly, when procedural justice was low, the relation between distributive injustice and retaliation was mitigated by interactional justice. These results are consistent with the idea that procedural and interactional justice perceptions are substitutable (also see Folger & Skarlicki, 1999; Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluk, 1999).

These findings have been replicated and extended in several later studies. For example, Goldman (2003) examined the interaction among distributive, procedural, and interactional justice in predicting discrimination legal claims filed by terminated workers. Consistent with Skarlicki and Folger’s findings and predictions from RCT, Goldman demonstrated that the effect of distributive justice on legal claiming (such that unfair termination predicted greater legal claiming) was significant only when both procedural justice and interactional justice were low. Again, procedural justice and interactional justice served as substitutes for each other, in that each mitigated the effect of distributive justice on legal claiming when the other was low. Goldman also demonstrated that state anger partially mediates the interaction effect, and that trait anger moderates the relation between the three-way justice interaction and legal claiming.

Cropanzano, Slaughter, and Bachiochi (2005) examined the three-way interaction among distributive, procedural, and interactional justice from the same theoretical framework but in yet another context. They explored the effect of a variety of affirmative action programs on Black respondents’ perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional

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justice, and predicted a three-way interaction on attractiveness of organizations using affirmative action and intentions to apply for a job with the organization. Consistent with the other studies, respondents perceived the organization as least attractive when all three justice perceptions were low. Moreover, again, the relation between distributive justice and organization attractiveness was mitigated by procedural justice (when interactional justice was low) and by interactional justice (when procedural justice was low). The findings on intentions to apply were generally similar. This study is important not only for replicating the earlier findings in a new context, but also because it sought to rule out the possible confounding role of outcome favorability in analyses involving distributive justice (following Skikta et al., 2003). Cropanzano et al. demonstrated that the three-way interaction was significant beyond any confounding effects of outcome favorability (also see Bauer, Maetz, Dolen, & Campion, 1998).

Two other studies in this vein are worthy of consideration for different reasons. Barclay, Skarlicki, and Pugh (2005) conducted a study of layoff victims to examine the role of emotions in injustice perceptions and retaliation. Although they did not examine the three-way interaction, they predicted and found that outcome favorability interacted separately with both procedural justice and interactional justice on emotions categorized as inward focused (such as guilt) and outward focused (such as anger). For example, participants experienced greater anger (outward focused emotion) the less favorable the outcomes of the layoff were perceived, and this effect was attenuated by either fair procedures or fair interactional justice. Similarly, participants experienced greater guilt (inward focused emotion) the less favorable the outcomes of the layoff, and this effect was exacerbated by either fair procedures or fair interactional justice.

Barclay et al.'s findings can be related to Brockner and Wiesenfeld's (1996) meta-analytic findings in two ways. One, as noted earlier, (p. 68) Brockner and Wiesenfeld examined the interactive effects of outcome favorability and process fairness, but they did not distinguish the operationalization of process fairness in terms of the structural and enactment components because they suggested that the two process fairness components should have similar interactive effects. The Barclay et al. findings support this view. Second, the Barclay et al. findings support Brockner and Weisenfeld's observation that the pattern of interaction between outcome favorability and process-related judgments will differ depending on whether the dependent variable gauges other-focused reactions or self-focused reactions. In particular, high process fairness appears to *attenuate* the relation between outcome favorability and reactions toward others (anger in this case); in contrast, high process fairness appears to *intensify* the relation between outcome favorability and self-focused reactions (guilt in this case).

Finally, at least one study of which we are aware has failed to find support for the predicted three-way interaction effect. Rahim, Magner, and Shapiro (2000) examined the joint effects of the three justice perceptions on conflict resolution styles used by student employees when managing conflict with their supervisors. Although the predicted three-way interaction was not evident, the researchers found a two-way interaction between interactional and distributive justice on students' use of an integrating (cooperative)

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style, in line with RCT. Contrary to RCT predictions, however, they found an interaction between procedural and interactional justice suggesting that interactional justice predicted greater integrating style but only when procedural justice was also high.

Despite the latter study, the weight of the evidence thus far suggests that the interaction among the three justice constructs may be quite robust, particularly given the different contexts in which the research has been conducted. It appears that both the structure of procedures and their social implementation can moderate the effects of distributive justice perceptions, and that the two elements of process are substitutable.

Summary

Undoubtedly, procedural justice matters in the workplace. Employee perceptions of procedural justice are associated with many important work attitudes and behaviors, and this is true across many decision contexts. The two-factor and agent-system frameworks have been useful in guiding predictions about the differential effects of procedural justice relative to distributive justice and interactional justice, although limitations to the differential effects paradigm should be kept in mind. Another approach has been to examine how people combine information about procedures and outcomes by testing statistical interaction effects. As much of the research demonstrates, the beneficial effects of procedural justice on work-related variables are often most pronounced in the context of receiving outcomes that are less than expected. These findings in the workplace context are, of course, consistent with the early research findings in research on legal dispute resolution in the context of the courtroom, in field research on citizen reactions to police and political leaders, and in research on resource allocation more generally, all of which attests to the generalizability of procedural justice phenomena.

Why Do People Care About Procedural Justice?

In the preceding sections, we described several of the early theoretical accounts offered to explain why people attend to and care about procedural justice. As researchers continued to investigate the conceptual and empirical distinctions between distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, they expanded early theories, or offered new accounts to integrate new research findings. In this section, we highlight the dominant explanations that have been developed over the ensuing years to account for why procedural justice matters.

Given that many of these theories are discussed in detail in other chapters in this volume, our coverage here will be brief and more focused. In particular, we will review the main theories in the context of one guiding question: Why do people attend to the fairness of procedures and why are they affected by procedural justice? Asked another way, what is

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the psychological function of procedural justice? As we will see, different theories offer different answers to this question.

Instrumental/Control Models

As described in the first part of the chapter, Thibaut and Walker (1975, 1978) argued that disputants want process control in legal conflict resolution procedures as a way to indirectly influence the outcome of the conflict. To these theorists, the paramount goal for disputants was to achieve distributive justice. They argued that disputants are (p. 69) the people who know best their own inputs and contributions, thus the most equitable outcome would be achieved when individuals are allowed to participate and to present evidence on their own behalf (Thibaut & Walker, 1978). Leventhal had a similar view of the function of procedures, and thus conceptualized procedural justice as an instrument for achieving fair outcomes. Both models, therefore, viewed procedures as means to an end, with the end being the fair distribution of outcomes. Of note, in these models, outcomes typically referred to material or economic outcomes, which may not be surprising given the legal dispute resolution and reward allocation contexts in which the models were developed.

Given these features, these models are referred to interchangeably by contemporary justice researchers as “control” or “instrumental” models of procedural justice. Implicit in these labels is the recognition that (a) people care about procedures because of their causal connection to the resulting outcomes, and, therefore, that (b) people are ultimately motivated by the outcomes of an allocation sequence. As we will discuss more, researchers have long debated the degree to which procedural-justice phenomena can be explained by people’s instrumental concerns (or by other outcome-related considerations) as opposed to by noninstrumental information (e.g., respect) conveyed by the procedures (e.g., Giacobbe-Miller, 1995; Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990; Shapiro & Brett, 2005; Tyler, 1989, 1994). At this point in the development of the field, it seems clear that people’s concerns for procedural justice can at times be motivated by their desire to influence their material outcomes, but this is equally clearly not the only reason why people attend to and care about procedural justice, as we will see next.

Identity/Relational Value Models

As discussed earlier, another explanation for why people care about procedural justice was brought to light by the group-value and relational models of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992). These researchers argued that people care about their long-term relationships with groups that employ procedures, and this is one reason why they react so strongly to procedural fairness. Procedural treatment conveys to people how they are viewed by the group—when an authority uses fair procedures and treats a recipient respectfully, this sends the message that recipients are valued by the group that the authority represents. This, in turn, enhances people’s feelings of belonging

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and self-worth. Thus, rather than functioning as a means to a particular end, such as winning a dispute or obtaining a desired reward, Lind and Tyler suggested that decision-making procedures carry symbolic meaning regarding people's social identity and self-worth. In essence, they claimed that fair procedures have both instrumental and non-instrumental value to recipients. Much early evidence was generated in support of the predictions emanating from these relational models (e.g., Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990; Smith, Tyler, Huo, Ortiz, & Lind, 1998; Tyler, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1997; Tyler, DeGoey, & Smith, 1996; also see Chapter 16 in this volume).

Tests of the relational models have continued at a steady pace over the years. Whereas many of the early studies examined noninstrumental main effects of procedural justice, contemporary research often provides evidence for the relational models by testing theoretically derived moderation effects (e.g., Brockner, De Cremer, Van den Bos, & Chen, 2005; De Cremer & Blader, 2006; Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, & Wilke, 2005; Van Prooijen & Zwenk, 2009). So, for example, De Cremer and Blader (2006) demonstrated that voice effects were more pronounced for individuals with high belongingness needs than for those with low belongingness needs, a prediction that follows from the relational models. Similarly, Brockner et al. (2005) found that the effects of procedural justice on cooperation and positive affect were strengthened among people with stronger interdependent self-construals.

As noted earlier, the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992) built on the group-value model in an effort to explain how authorities gain legitimacy in hierarchical groups. Contemporary justice researchers typically refer to both the group-value model and the relational model of authority as "relational models" of procedural justice. In more recent years, Tyler and Blader advanced another relational framework, the group-engagement model, in a monograph on cooperation in groups (Tyler & Blader, 2000; also see Tyler & Blader, 2003). This model differs from the earlier models in scope and thus offers a more general account of the relationship between people and groups.

The core idea is that procedural justice of a group shapes people's identity judgments, and identity judgments are the primary determinant of people's engagement and cooperation with the (p. 70) group. There are some key differences between the group-engagement model and previous relational models; in particular, the group-engagement model predicts that social identity judgments mediate the relation between procedural justice judgments and cooperation. Furthermore, resource judgments (e.g., outcome favorability, distributive justice) are predicted to exert an indirect rather than a direct influence on cooperative behavior through their influence on social identity judgments (see Chapter 16 for more details on the roles of pride, respect, and identification in the formation of social-identity judgments). Although there are important differences between the group engagement model and previous relational models, a core similarity lies in the fundamental assumptions concerning people's essential motivation for involving themselves in groups.

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Following initial evidence to support the group engagement model (e.g., Blader & Tyler, 2003b; Tyler & Blader, 2000), researchers have continued to examine the role of social identity in mediating procedural justice effects on group-oriented behaviors. For example, research has demonstrated that employees' social identity mediated the relations between procedural justice and support for union formation (Blader, 2007) and between procedural justice and citizenship behavior (Blader & Tyler, 2009). The findings are consistent with the idea that people use procedural justice information to evaluate their standing within the group, which ultimately affects the strength of their social identity. This, in turn, drives cooperative behavior. In another set of studies, De Cremer, Tyler, and den Ouden (2005) proposed that respectful treatment should increase "self-other" merging (in which people define themselves in terms of their group), which in turn should increase group-oriented behaviours. The findings supported these propositions.

It is important to note that relational model theorists recognize that the structure of procedures and the interpersonal enactment of procedures are distinct elements, but they do not treat these elements as fundamentally different justice *constructs* (e.g., procedural versus interactional justice). Instead, within the framework of relational models, procedural justice refers to both how procedures are structured and how they are enacted or implemented by decision makers (e.g., see Blader & Tyler, 2003a, 2003b). Thus, in research deriving predictions from relational models, procedural justice is typically operationalized broadly, involving structural aspects of procedures (e.g., voice, consistency) and aspects of interpersonal treatment (e.g., respect).

Fairness Heuristic Theory/Uncertainty Management Model

Another account of why people are concerned with procedural justice appeared in the 1990s by Lind and Van den Bos (e.g., Lind, Kulik, Ambrose, & de Vera Park, 1993; Van den Bos, Lind, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1997) and was further developed around the new millennium. In brief, Lind and Van den Bos proposed that procedural justice has such pervasive influence because it helps people to reduce uncertainty. In an initial theory, which they labeled fairness heuristic theory, these theorists maintained that people are motivated to form fairness judgments quickly in social interactions to reduce uncertainty about whether their interacting party can be trusted not to exploit or exclude them (for reviews, see Lind, 2001, 2002; Van den Bos, 2001).

For example, Lind and Van den Bos argued that very often in social situations people do not have the information to determine whether their outcomes are fair (e.g., the social comparison information needed to judge whether their outcomes are equitable is lacking). As a consequence, people use procedural fairness as a heuristic substitute to assess outcome fairness (e.g., Van den Bos et al., 1997; Van den Bos, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1997). Similarly, when people are uncertain about whether they can trust authorities, they are most strongly affected by procedural justice (Van den Bos, Wilke, & Lind, 1998; Van den Bos, Van Schie, & Colenberg, 2002). Importantly, in line with fairness heuristic theory, the evidence also demonstrates that people are more strongly influenced by

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distributive justice information in the absence (vs. presence) of procedural justice information (Van den Bos, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1997). These studies indicate that (a) people will use whatever fairness information is available to determine whether they are being treated fairly, and (b) they do so in an effort to reduce uncertainty regarding whether they can trust their interaction partner (also see Jones & Skarlicki, 2005; Lind, Kray, & Thompson, 2001).

Around the millennium, Van den Bos and Lind expanded fairness heuristic theory to a broader theory, which they labeled uncertainty management theory (e.g., Lind & Van den Bos, 2002; Van den Bos, 2001; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). Under this account, people use fairness information to (p. 71) resolve uncertainty more generally, not only with respect to reducing uncertainty pertaining to trust in authorities. An impressive body of research has supported this idea, demonstrating that procedural justice effects are strongest when people are reminded about aspects of their lives that make them feel uncertain (e.g., Van den Bos, 2001), or when general self-uncertainty is salient (Van den Bos & Miedema, 2000).

Since 2001, numerous studies have examined the implications of both uncertainty management theory and fairness heuristic theory for understanding a range of organizational phenomena. For example, researchers have found that cognitive-based trust (Colquitt, LePine, Piccolo, Zapata, & Rich, 2012) mediates the relation between procedural justice and job performance. Specifically, greater procedural justice was associated with increased cognitive-based trust and reduced uncertainty, which, in turn, improved job performance. Other research has examined contextual factors that raise uncertainty in a situation, and which therefore should moderate procedural justice effects. For example, Hakonen and Lipponen (2008) argued that lack of face-to-face contact and greater geographical dispersion among virtual work teams creates higher uncertainty and ambiguity. Thus, they reasoned that these factors should moderate procedural justice effects. As predicted, they found that people rely more strongly on procedural justice information in developing their team identity when teams have little face-to-face contact due to geographical dispersion.

Common to these variables is that they arouse uncertainty. This line of this research thus not only supports the theory, but the findings also elucidate the conditions under which procedural justice is most beneficial. Although many of the studies have examined the interaction between uncertainty-arousing variables and procedural justice, the predictions from the theories should not be specific to procedural justice per se. Theoretically, similar effects should be found for any experience of justice (whether interpersonal or distributive) because under this theoretical account people are said to consider justice holistically rather than making distinctions between the fairness of procedures, treatment, and outcomes (in a way, taking the field full circle to early theorizing about justice; see Chapter 5).

Fairness Theory

In 1998, Robert Folger and Russell Cropanzano published a book summarizing the organizational justice literature and its application to human resource management. In the last two chapters, they present fairness theory, with the goal of integrating earlier theoretical frameworks (in particular, control theories, group-value/relational models, and referent cognitions theory). The main goal of fairness theory was to explain how people judge an agent's accountability for events that harm one's material or psychological well-being (also see Folger & Cropanzano, 2001).

Like RCT, fairness theory argued that when people experience a negative event, this gives rise to counterfactual thinking about three issues: (1) alternate states of well-being, that is, what they "would" have experienced had the event been different, (2) considerations of causal responsibility for the event, that is whether the event "could" have been different, and (3) considerations of the moral obligation of those involved, that is whether the event "should" have been different. However, there are several differences between fairness theory and RCT. For example, whereas RCT argued that less than expected outcomes serve to elicit "would" thinking, fairness theory holds that considerations about the structure of procedures or interpersonal treatment can also generate such counterfactual thinking. Thus, within fairness theory, outcomes, procedures, and interactions each can serve as the "negative event impact" variable which generates "would" thinking. If the recipient then determines that the event could have been different and should have been different, then they will judge the agent involved as accountable for the harm.

Accordingly, Folger and Cropanzano reconceptualized the statistical interaction effect between outcomes and procedures, which we discussed earlier (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996), in more fundamental terms. In other words, the original interaction, which stated that procedural justice mitigates the adverse effect of unfavorable outcomes on work-related variables, is recast as a negative impact x accountability interaction. Related to this, whereas RCT originally assumed a particular order among the counterfactuals ("would" counterfactuals precede "could" and "should" counterfactuals), fairness theory posited no such causal ordering. Finally, fairness theory explicitly recognized that counterfactual thinking does not necessarily involve conscious deliberation but instead can occur at an automatic cognitive level. Predictions from fairness theory have been well supported in research, as illustrated in the previous section on interaction effects (p. 72) (e.g., Cropanzano et al., 2005; Goldman, 2003; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; also see Gilliland, Groth et al., 2001).

As noted earlier, according to fairness theory, either fair decision procedures or fair interpersonal treatment can mitigate the negative impact of receiving less than is expected, because both minimize the agent's accountability. Interestingly, Folger and Cropanzano (1998) suggest that poor enactment of procedures (interactional injustice) may have more impact on accountability judgments than do the structural elements of

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procedures because the former are likely to be seen as more discretionary. According to fairness theory then, both structural and enactment components of process fairness can inform recipients about an agent's accountability, but the enactment component may be especially potent in this regard. What is critical to fairness theory in terms of predicting reactions is the *attribution of responsibility* for the negative impact, rather than the particular normative rules that are violated (e.g., procedural versus enactment).

There is an interesting possible extension of fairness theory. If recipients determine that the agent is *not* accountable for a negative event, then recipients may be more likely to judge *themselves* as responsible for it. This could explain why, as noted earlier, the pattern of the outcome x process interaction on self-evaluations is reversed. We will return to research on self-evaluations in the fourth part of the chapter, but it is worth noting here that contemporary justice researchers recognize both that (a) recipients use procedural fairness information to judge an *agent's accountability* for negative events, and (b) recipients use procedural fairness information to determine *personal responsibility* for their outcomes (Brockner, 2002, 2010). Typically, this latter function of procedural justice is interpreted with the framework of attribution theory (Weiner, 1985; see Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Brockner, 2002). In summary, although fairness theory was not originally designed to explain the joint effects of procedures, interactions, and outcomes on *self-evaluations*, it may be possible to understand these effects using the framework of fairness theory.

Moral Virtues Model

Folger (1994, 1998, 2001) offered another account for why people care about and attend to matters of justice, which Cropanzano et al. (2001) referred to as the moral virtues model and Folger (2001) referred to as deontic justice (see also Cropanzano, Goldman, & Folger, 2003). Folger suggested that both the instrumental and relational models of procedural justice are fundamentally "self-interest" models because they argue that people care about procedural justice for reasons that pertain to personal gain, whether the gain is material (instrumental models) or socio-emotional (relational models) (e.g., Turrillo, Folger, Lavelle, Umphress, & Gee, 2002). Thus, Folger argued that the existing models do not take into account the possibility that people care about justice even when it has no implications for material outcomes or relational value (cf. Gillespie & Greenberg, 2005).

Instead, Folger argued that people care about justice because of a basic human drive to respect human dignity and worth. This, he maintained, helps to understand why individuals who are not directly affected by injustice can nevertheless experience strong negative emotions and retributive motivations when they observe injustice (for reviews of third-party reactions to injustice, see Chapter 10; also Skarlicki & Kulik, 2005). The deontic model proposes that such reactions are a result of a collection of evolutionarily

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based reactions to violations of normative standards of moral and social conduct that are automatic and visceral (see Folger & Skarlicki, 2008).

As noted in the previous section, fairness theory predicts that, in general, interactional justice may be viewed as especially discretionary given that the source of the injustice is quite clear; thus, all else being equal, deontic reactions may be elicited especially strongly by perceived violations of interactional justice. Consistent with these ideas, in research that examines the predictions of the deontic model, researchers often manipulate or measure aspects of interactional injustice (e.g., Skarlicki & Rupp, 2010; Skarlicki, Ellard, & Kelln, 1998; Turillo et al., 2002; Umphress, Simmons, Folger, Ren, & Bobocel, 2013). Deontic reactions can also be triggered, however, by agents' use of unfair procedures (e.g., Skarlicki et al., 1998) and by unfair outcome distributions (Turillo et al., 2002).

In whatever way that deontic emotions and reactions are aroused, the central point for present purposes is that the deontic model suggests that people can react to injustice because of a commitment to ethical and moral standards of social conduct, rather than because of the loss of control over material outcomes, or the loss of identity. Also as with fairness theory, under the deontic model, the critical driver of individuals' reactions is not (p. 73) the particular normative standard that is violated; rather, it is individuals' judgments of the agent's moral accountability.

Summary

Over the years since the concept of procedural justice was introduced, researchers have articulated several answers to the question of why people attend to procedural justice. Many of the theories are, of course, broader than this, attempting to explain how people integrate information about distributions, procedures, and interpersonal treatment. Given the volume of research that supports each of the theoretical perspectives, it seems reasonable to think of the theories as complementary rather than as strictly competing explanations. Moreover, given that many of the models have grown out of previous versions, they are inherently related to each other. Overall, it appears that there are multiple reasons why people are concerned with how decision-making procedures are structured and implemented. Thus, it is most likely that procedural justice has multiple, albeit possibly related, psychological functions, which may be differentially relevant depending on the circumstances. For example, in some situations, people may be especially concerned with the outcome of a procedure, in which case they may be instrumentally motivated; in other situations, they may be more concerned about their sense of belonging, in which case relational motivation may be salient. Of course, it is also likely that several processes operate simultaneously in a particular situation, with the context determining the weighting of each process.

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One other point is important. One way that researchers have distinguished between the concepts of procedural and interactional justice is to recognize that decision procedures and outcomes are causally connected; whereas interactional justice *accompanies* the distribution of outcomes (see Bies & Moag, 1986; Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). In view of this, researchers who assess procedural justice and interactional justice with Colquitt's (2001) measure often assume that observed effects of procedural justice perceptions on work-related variables are due to instrumental motivation, whereas observed effects of interactional justice perceptions are due to relational (or noninstrumental) motivation.

This logic is, however, problematic because there is not a 1:1 correspondence between construct and mechanism. As research has demonstrated, people value voice—which is considered to be an indicator of procedural justice perceptions in Colquitt's 2001 measure—for both instrumental and noninstrumental reasons. Similarly, receiving a complete and adequate explanation for a decision—which is considered to be an indicator of interactional justice perceptions in the 2001 measure—can conceivably be valued for both instrumental and noninstrumental reasons. This is because, although objectively there is no causal connection between explanation and outcome, it is very likely that people infer a fair decision structure from fair interpersonal treatment. As noted earlier, research on fairness heuristic theory has demonstrated that people substitute information from one domain (procedural justice) to make inferences in another domain (distributive justice) when direct information is lacking (e.g., Van den Bos et al., 1997). Similarly, people are likely to make inferences about the decision structure from the quality of interpersonal conduct received when direct information about the structure is lacking. This latter proposition is indeed borne out in correlational and experimental research that has demonstrated an effect of criteria subsumed under the interactional justice construct in the 2001 measure (e.g., justification) on procedural justice perceptions (e.g., Bies & Shapiro, 1987, Study 3; Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Bies, Shapiro, & Cummings, 1988; Blader & Tyler, 2003a; Bobocel, Agar, Meyer, & Irving, 1998; Heuer, Blumenthal, Douglas, & Weinblatt, 1999). In light of evidence for the substitutability of justice information from different domains (e.g., procedures, interactions), several of the justice theories described in this section emphasize *conceptual similarities* among the justice constructs rather than distinctions.

Is Procedural Justice Always Beneficial?

As illustrated in the preceding sections of this chapter, decades of research have demonstrated positive effects of procedural justice on a host of work attitudes and behaviors, effects which are especially strong when outcome distributions are unfavorable. Thus, a central tenet in the justice literature has rightly been that procedural justice is beneficial and desired by employees. Despite this large body of research findings, researchers have also begun to investigate when, and for whom, fair procedures might fail to elicit the “typical” benefits. In one of the earliest studies on

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procedural justice in the context of resource allocation, Folger (1977) demonstrated that under certain conditions the manipulation of voice (process control) had a (p. 74) negative effect on outcome satisfaction, which he referred to as a “frustration effect” (Folger et al., 1979). Similarly, in their review of the literature on the interaction between outcomes and process, Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1996) noted the likelihood of boundary conditions of their interactive effect. Only more recently, however, have investigators begun to examine more systematically when and why the usual beneficial effects of procedural justice might be attenuated, eliminated, or reversed (see Brockner, 2010; Brockner, Wiesenfeld, & Diekmann, 2009). By investigating conditions under which procedural justice *fails* to have the usual beneficial effects, researchers are at once uncovering boundary conditions on the role of procedural justice and advancing theory regarding its psychological functions. Thus, research in this vein promises to move the literature on procedural justice forward considerably.

It should be noted that many studies have been conducted to identify variables that *strengthen* the usual beneficial effects of procedural justice. In fact, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to review the numerous studies of this type. We noted some of these studies in the previous third part of the chapter because often the goal of this research is to test the validity of a particular theoretical framework. For example, early research on the relational models demonstrated that the effects of procedural justice on endorsement of authorities are stronger among people who are more highly identified with the group compared to those who are less highly identified (e.g., Tyler & DeGoey, 1995). By definition in this line of research, procedural justice has weaker effects in some conditions (e.g., among people who are less identified) but the latter effects are not of primary interest. In this final section, we focus on research that explicitly seeks to understand factors that weaken, eliminate, or reverse the usual beneficial effects of procedural justice.

Outcome x Process Interaction on Self-Evaluations

In the second part of the chapter, we noted that Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1996) observed in their meta-analysis a “contrary” pattern of interaction between outcome and process on recipient self-evaluations in two separate studies (Gilliland, 1994; Schroth & Shah, 1993/2000). When decision procedures lead to an unfavorable rather than favorable outcome, there is a negative association between procedural justice and self-evaluations. Stated differently, procedural justice *heightens* the relation between outcome favorability and self-evaluations (in which less favorable outcomes lead to lower self-evaluations). As noted earlier, this finding demonstrated that, in the context of receiving an unfavorable outcome, fairer procedures can have a negative impact on recipients. Moreover, it ran against most of the theoretical frameworks outlined earlier. For example, relational models suggest that fair procedures are beneficial because they lead people to feel valued and respected by others, which in turn bolsters their feelings of positive self-regard. These models leave no room for a negative influence of fair procedure.

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By and large, researchers turned to attribution theory (e.g., Weiner, 1985) to explain the *reversal* of the usual effect of procedural justice on self-evaluations. For example, Brockner and Weisenfeld (1996) speculated that unfavorable outcomes received via fair procedures (relative to unfair procedures) may be threatening to the self because procedural justice affects the *internality* of individuals' outcome attributions. That is, when people receive outcomes via what they perceive to be fair procedures, they may be more likely to judge *themselves to be responsible* (e.g., their ability or effort) for the outcome. When the outcome for which they feel responsible is negative, this diminishes positive self-regard, whereas when the outcome is positive, self-regard is enhanced. In contrast, when people receive outcomes via what they perceive to be *unfair* procedures, they are less likely to judge themselves as responsible for the outcomes. Thus, when people receive negative outcomes via unfair procedures, they are less likely to blame themselves relative to when the procedures are fair. As a consequence of these processes, procedural fairness *heightens* the adverse effect of receiving unfavorable outcomes on self-evaluations.

Following the initial demonstrations (e.g., Gilliland, 1994; Schroth & Shah, 1993/2000) researchers have replicated the reverse effect of procedural fairness on self-evaluations. For example, Ployhart, Ryan, and Bennett (1999) conducted two studies to examine student applicants' reactions to informational and sensitivity features of explanations on rejected and selected applicants. They examined how these process features influenced ratings of the system (process fairness, evaluations of the organization) and self-evaluations (self-efficacy). Importantly, they demonstrated that procedural explanations had the predicted trade-offs among rejected applicants. Informational (p. 75) and sensitivity features enhanced perceived process fairness and organizational perceptions. However, these features diminished applicants' sense of self-efficacy.

In another series of studies, Van den Bos, Bruins, Wilke, and Dronker (1999) demonstrated initial support for the attribution interpretation. In particular, Van den Bos et al. found that, relative to fair procedures, unfair procedures allowed recipients to make external attributions for unfavorable events (e.g., improper procedures), which protect feelings of positive self-regard (also see Brockner, 2002).⁴ Brockner et al. (2003) replicated and extended these earlier findings to the workplace context. In addition, in a more direct test of the attributional mechanism, they demonstrated that it is people's tendency to consider themselves responsible for the outcome when procedures are fair and the outcome is unfavorable that accounts for the reverse effect of procedural fairness on self-evaluations. Importantly, they also demonstrated that both forms of the outcome x process interaction—the usual interaction on appraisals of the system and the contrary interaction on self-evaluations—can occur simultaneously (also see Ployhart et al., 1999).

Thus, Brockner et al.'s findings support the idea that procedural fairness can have a "dual function" via attribution processes. The fairer the procedures, the less likely people are to see the other party as responsible for the outcomes received, which *reduces* negative reactions toward the system in the face of unfavorable outcomes. At the same time, the

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fairer the procedures, the more likely people are to see themselves as responsible for the outcomes received, which *heightens* negative self-evaluations in the face of unfavorable outcomes (also see Brockner, 2002; Brockner & Weisenfeld, 2005).

More recently, Brockner and colleagues (2008) noted that research on self-evaluations reveals an inconsistency. In some studies, researchers have demonstrated an *inverse* relation between procedural fairness and self-evaluations in the context of receiving unfavorable outcomes; in other studies, researchers have found that the usual beneficial effect of procedural fairness (on work-related reactions) is *attenuated* on self-evaluations. In an effort to understand these inconsistencies, the researchers proposed that the psychological relevance of the outcome may moderate this relation, such that when the outcome carries greater psychological relevance, the inverse relation between procedural fairness and self-evaluations will be more likely to occur.

To investigate this idea, Brockner and colleagues (2008) examined prevention focus as a moderator of the relation between procedural fairness and self-evaluations. According to theory and research on regulatory focus (e.g., Idson, Liberman, & Higgins, 2004), individuals who are more prevention focused tend to place greater psychological significance on unfavorable outcomes, whereas those who are more promotion focused place greater significance on positive outcomes. Following this logic, Brockner and colleagues predicted that the inverse relation sometimes demonstrated between procedural fairness and self-evaluations in the case of unfavorable outcomes will be more likely to occur in individuals who are higher in prevention focus. Across a series of three studies, they found support for their hypothesis, providing further evidence of boundary conditions of procedural justice effects.

Taken together, the research on people's self-evaluations following the receipt of unfavorable outcomes highlights one condition in which the usual beneficial effect of fairer procedures may be attenuated or even reversed. It is interesting to note that, whereas most of the research in this vein has operationalized procedural justice in terms of what would be labeled a structural feature (e.g., voice), similar effects on self-evaluations have been observed in studies that have varied social enactment features. Namely, in addition to the research by Ployhart et al. (1999) reviewed earlier, Leung, Su, and Morris (2001) found similar effects on self-evaluations when participants were given negative performance feedback in an interpersonally respectful manner (versus disrespectfully). These findings are important because, as we noted in the preceding third part of the chapter, they suggest that, all else equal, people infer that decision structure is fair when they are treated fairly interpersonally. Thus, criteria often subsumed under the interactional justice construct can be perceived as having a causal connection to outcomes, even though objectively they do not. These findings are consistent with research on fairness heuristic theory discussed earlier, in which people use fairness information from one domain (procedures) to infer fairness in another domain (outcomes) (e.g., see Van den Bos, Vermunt, et al., 1997; Van den Bos, Lind, et al., 1997). We will revisit this point later in this part of the chapter.

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The body of research on the two forms of the outcome x process interaction has highlighted serious potential trade-off effects of procedural (p. 76) justice. When delivering unfavorable outcomes, managers who use fairer decision procedures can improve recipient reactions toward the organization and enhance outcome acceptance. However, they do so at the risk of diminishing employees' feelings of positive self-regard. Clearly, research is needed to determine how managers can avoid these detrimental effects on employees' self-evaluations. Moreover, these findings should remind investigators more generally that there may be situations in which employee attitudes and behaviors that benefit the organization (e.g., commitment, trust, authority legitimacy), may not necessarily benefit employees themselves. For example, in some cases, it may not be in employees' best interests to remain committed to an organization or leader, despite procedural justice (Cohen, 1985).

Brockner and colleagues have highlighted the need to examine dependent variables other than self-evaluations to more fully explore the conditions under which the usual beneficial effects of procedural justice are altered, whether attenuated, eliminated, or reversed (e.g., Brockner, 2010; Brockner et al., 2009). Fortunately, as we will illustrate next, as researchers have continued to explore boundary conditions of procedural justice effects, they have examined additional dependent variables.

Identity Processes that Alter the Fair Process Effect

In a different line of research in the early 2000s, Skitka and her colleagues argued that there will be times when the nature of the outcomes in question will render procedural fairness ineffective in shaping people's perceptions of distributive justice perceptions. In what they labeled the moral mandate effect (MME), Skitka and her colleagues demonstrated that when people have a strong *a priori* conviction that a given outcome is right or wrong—when they have a strong moral mandate—people are less sensitive to procedural justice compared to when they do not have strong moral convictions about the outcome (see Skitka, 2002; Skitka & Houston, 2001; Skitka & Mullen, 2002). In other words, contrary to conventional wisdom that “the means justify the ends,” Skitka and colleagues found that when people have strong moral convictions about the outcome, evaluations of outcome fairness will be influenced less by the fairness of the procedures or the interpersonal treatment that one receives, and more by whether the procedures yield an outcome that affirms or threatens their moral mandate.

In two later laboratory studies, Mullen and Skitka (2006) replicated the moral mandate effect and tested three explanations for why people are less sensitive to procedural information when they have strong moral conviction regarding an outcome (motivated reasoning, in-group biases, moral outrage/anger). Mullen and Skitka asked participants to read a newspaper article about a defendant's trial. The researchers varied the outcome such that it supported, opposed, or was unrelated to participants' moral mandate. Their results demonstrated that when people had moral mandates regarding the outcome, they suspended their judgments of fairness until they were made aware of the outcome. When

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the outcome supported their moral mandates, people judged both the procedure and outcome to be fairer. However, when the outcome went against their moral mandates, they judged the procedures and outcomes to be less fair. Furthermore, the researchers demonstrated that this effect was mediated by anger that occurs as a result of receiving an outcome that is against one's moral mandate.

In an important extension, Mayer, Greenbaum, Kuenzi, and Shteynberg (2009) examined whether the effect demonstrated by Skitka and her colleagues would generalize to outcomes that violate identity more generally, rather than moral mandates in particular. Mayer et al. argued that moral mandates may be too narrow a test of the effect and, based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), one could argue that an outcome that violates an individual's identity will render procedural fairness ineffective in shaping outcome evaluations. Building on the accessible identity model (Skitka, 2003) and the writings of James (1890/1950), Mayer et al. reasoned that both personal and social identities are important and can lead to effects similar to those of moral mandates. Although one's personal identity relates to morality, and morality can, in turn, influence justice judgments, as demonstrated by Mullen and Skitka, Mayer et al. argued that people also value their social identity. They suggested that, through the process of depersonalization, an outcome that violates one's social identity can also wipe out the usual effect of fair procedures on outcome evaluations.

Similar to Mullen and Skitka, Mayer and colleagues (2009) proposed that the effect of an identity violation on distributive justice judgments will occur via motivated reasoning processes, which would cause participants to cognitively re-evaluate the fairness of the procedures post hoc. In other (p. 77) words, Mayer et al. predicted that when an outcome violates people's personal or social identity, people will be motivated to find flaws in the procedures after the fact. For example, one way in which employees might easily do this in the workplace context is to question whether management actually considered their input, after an identity-violating decision has been made via procedures that had solicited employee voice.

In two laboratory studies, participants read a letter regarding an issue they held strong opinions about (Study 1) or recalled a decision at work that impacted them strongly (Study 2). In both cases, the fairness of procedures and the outcome favourability were manipulated (information in the letter in Study 1, and recalling different events in Study 2), and personal and social identification were measured. Further, Mayer et al. (2009) asked participants the extent to which they thought their opinions were considered by management (Study 2) as a test of the mediator (i.e., participant's tendency to find a procedural flaw). Results of the two studies supported the authors' predictions, demonstrating that the manipulation of procedures had nonsignificant effects on both procedural and distributive judgments when the outcomes violated participants' personal or social identities. Mayer et al. also demonstrated that the interactive effects of voice and identity violation on distributive and procedural justice perceptions were fully mediated by participants' doubts that their opinions were considered by management.

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These findings suggest that participants evaluated the procedures in light of the outcomes, providing good support for the motivated reasoning hypothesis.

The findings of Mayer et al. converge on those of Skitka and colleagues. It is interesting to note, however, that these two groups of researchers revealed different mediators of the effects, namely motivated re-evaluation of the procedure and anger, respectively. It is possible that this is due to methodological differences between the studies (e.g., vignettes used by Mayer et al. may not elicit anger to the same degree as outcomes that violate moral mandates). However, it is also possible that outcomes that are related to people's morals elicit anger, whereas those that violate people's identity do not. This implies that multiple mediators may be at play, and suggests an area for future research.

At a broader level, the findings of Skitka and colleagues and those of Mayer et al. are consistent with research noted earlier on fairness heuristic theory, in which Van den Bos and colleagues demonstrated other conditions that lead to nonsignificant effects of procedural justice on outcome fairness. For example, when people have information by which to judge outcome fairness directly (e.g., social comparison information), procedural justice has little impact on outcome fairness ratings (e.g., Van den Bos, Vermunt, et al. 1997). Different psychological processes drive these different lines of research, but they converge on their demonstration of conditions that attenuate or eliminate the usual effects of procedural justice on outcome judgments.

In other research drawing on the accessible identity model (Skitka, 2003), Holmvall and Bobocel (2008) argued that it may help to understand how people will respond to unfavorable outcomes received via fair procedures—that is, positively or negatively—by considering the aspects of people's identity that are activated in a particular situation. Building on the research of Brockner and others reported earlier in this section, Holmvall and Bobocel noted that in the context of receiving unfavorable outcomes via fair decision-making procedures, people can exhibit at least two reactions. They may react positively because procedural fairness communicates to them that they are valued and respected by their interaction partner (in line with relational models). Alternatively, they may react negatively because procedural fairness implies that they are personally responsible for the unfavorable outcomes, which diminishes feelings of positive self-regard (in line with attribution models).

Holmvall and Bobocel (2008) argued that people's self-identity should moderate the psychological function of procedural fairness. When *interdependent* or social aspects of the self are activated, then people should focus on the relational information conveyed by fair procedures, and thus procedural fairness should enhance outcome acceptance. In contrast, when *independent* or achievement-related aspects of the self are activated, people should focus on the attribution information conveyed by fair procedures, and therefore they should experience greater self-esteem threat. To protect the self, these latter individuals should be more likely to reject the outcome and to view it as unfair when it follows from fair rather than unfair procedures. In a series of three laboratory studies, the researchers found support for their predictions. Moreover, in one study they

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demonstrated evidence for the attribution framework used to explain the reverse effect of fair procedures: Self-esteem was lower among participants whose independent self-identity was salient when they received the unfavorable (p. 78) outcome via fair procedures, compared to unfair procedures.

These findings are important because they demonstrate that people can interpret procedural fairness information differently as a function of other factors (in this case, self-identity), and this can explain why fair procedures sometimes can have a beneficial effect but other times can have the reverse effect. Moreover, the findings reveal the relevance of the attribution framework for explaining the reverse effects of procedural justice on reactions other than self-evaluations (also see Jones & Skarlicki, 2003; Van den Bos et al., 1999). Finally, it is worth noting that Holmvall and Bobocel (2008) operationalized procedures by varying the interpersonal sensitivity by which the unfavorable outcome was delivered (high vs. low), which they presumed would lead participants to perceive the decision-making procedures as structurally fair versus unfair, respectively. Thus, like the other findings noted earlier in this section (e.g., Ployhart et al., 1999; Leung et al., 2001; Van den Bos, Lind, et al., 1997), the Holmvall and Bobocel findings suggest that people may infer a causal connection between treatment and outcomes when information about the decision structure is lacking.

As a whole, each of the sets of studies reviewed in this section speaks to the important role of *identity* in altering the usual manner in which procedural justice affects outcome evaluations. When outcomes violate a moral mandate, or when outcomes violate one's personal or social identity, procedures fail to influence outcome fairness. Put differently, in these cases, the means do not justify the ends. The studies by Holmvall and Bobocel demonstrate a different function of identity in the context of unfavorable outcomes: When people's social identity is salient, procedural fairness leads to outcome acceptance, but it has the reverse effect when personal identity is salient.

Paradoxical Effects on Work Attitudes and Behaviors

We began this fourth part of the chapter by discussing variables that reverse the pattern of interaction between procedures and outcomes on self-evaluations. Then we discussed the role of identity in attenuating, eliminating, or reversing the effect of procedural justice on outcome fairness. In both cases, we thus considered the interplay between procedures and outcomes. Researchers have also begun to examine variables that attenuate, eliminate, or reverse the typical overall (i.e., main) beneficial effects of procedural justice on work attitudes and behavior.

For example, Desai, Sondak, and Diekmann (2011) examined the effects of procedural justice on job performance and satisfaction, moderated by risk aversion. Whereas uncertainty management theory argues that procedural justice relates positively to work attitudes because it reduces employees' uncertainty, Desai et al. challenged the view that *certainty* is necessarily desirable. The authors suggested that for some employees, such

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as those high in risk-seeking, uncertainty may be desirable. Theoretically, individuals who are higher risk-seekers might prefer the lack of predictability offered by unfair procedures relative to fair procedures, and therefore prefer the latter over the former (Desai et al., 2011). In this case, the researchers suggested that procedural fairness would be inversely related to work attitudes. In two field studies and one laboratory study, Desai and colleagues tested their reasoning, and demonstrated that risk seeking moderated the relation between procedural fairness and job satisfaction and performance, such that high risk-seeking individuals revealed decreased job satisfaction and performance in response to fairer procedures. Desai and colleagues further demonstrated that this interaction was due to the greater perceived certainty elicited by fair procedures relative to unfair procedures.

In another series of field and laboratory studies, Wiesenfeld, Swann, Brockner, and Bartel (2007) examined the role of self-esteem in moderating the relation between procedural justice and organizational commitment. According to Wiesenfeld and colleagues, self-verification theory specifies that individuals who suffer from low self-regard may become uncomfortable if they learn that others view them positively. Moreover, under certain circumstances, the need to be viewed accurately is more important than the need to be viewed positively. Taken together, these tenets of self-verification theory would predict that individuals with low self-esteem, who doubt that they are worthy of fair treatment, will be ambivalent to the positive message that fair treatment gives about themselves, and may be more comfortable with unfair procedures because they verify people's self-views. This should be true in particular where self-verification strivings are made salient. Importantly, the researchers pointed out that the predictions from self-verification theory are opposite to those from the dominant justice theories which we discussed in the third part of the chapter. (p. 79) As predicted, the results demonstrated that the positive effect of procedural justice on organizational commitment was eliminated for individuals with low self-esteem, compared to individuals with high self-esteem. Furthermore, this interaction between procedural justice and self-esteem was found only when self-verification goals were made salient (Wiesenfeld et al., 2007).

Summary

The research reviewed in this part of the chapter challenges a central assumption in the literature, which is that procedural justice is necessarily beneficial to employees, and therefore always desired by them. Although decades of research have demonstrated that procedural justice has many beneficial effects, the research described in this section indicates that there are boundary conditions. Procedural justice effects can indeed be attenuated, eliminated, and even reversed (Brockner, 2010; Brockner, et al., 2009). Research in this vein has elucidated a number of novel findings, and as a result has provided a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying procedural justice phenomena. Importantly, this research often draws on broader theories and novel literatures (e.g., self-verification theory), and as such provides key bridges between

procedural justice and other literatures. Therefore, future research on the boundary conditions of procedural justice promises to advance the literature considerably.

Summary and Conclusion

From the early 1970s to the present day, procedural justice has remained a topic of great interest in psychology and the organizational sciences. As predicted in the 1980s, the work organization has proved to be a rich social context for the study of procedural justice. As in other social contexts, in the workplace people attend to how decisions are made and implemented by organizational leaders. Overall, this body of research has helped investigators and practitioners better understand an array of organizational practices and employee attitudes and behaviors. It has also contributed greatly to our collective understanding of what procedural justice is, why it matters, and how it affects members of work organizations. In fact, we wonder if the scholars who argued early on for the relevance of procedural justice in the workplace could have anticipated just how productive research on this topic would be.

Our goal in this chapter has been to provide a broad historical overview of the study of procedural justice in the workplace. We discussed the origins of the concept and early theoretical accounts of procedural justice. Beginning with the notion that having input into decisions alters people's subjective perceptions of the fairness of procedures, researchers have uncovered a broad array of additional criteria by which people evaluate procedural justice. People evaluate two components of process—the procedural mechanisms by which decisions are made and the quality of treatment during the implementation of procedures (interactional justice).

We next reviewed the primary paradigms that researchers have used to study the effects of procedural justice in the workplace. The differential effects paradigm attempted to demonstrate dissociations, initially between procedural and distributive justice perceptions, and later between procedural and interactional justice perceptions. The interaction effects paradigm examined the joint effects of these justice perceptions. Research from both paradigms has uncovered myriad ways in which organizational members are affected by the structure of decision procedures and their implementation, well beyond the initial demonstrations of outcome acceptance.

Important for both theory and practice, over the last four decades investigators have learned a great deal about the psychological processes underlying people's concerns with procedural justice. Thus, in the third part of the chapter, we built on our discussion of the early theories of procedural justice by reviewing more contemporary revisions and new models that have emerged. Initially viewed as an instrument for obtaining fair outcomes, researchers have demonstrated that people are affected by procedural justice for a number of other reasons. Decision-making procedures communicate information about whether people are valued by the organization and its authorities and whether they can

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trust these social entities. Procedures help to reduce uncertainty. They help people to judge accountability for harm, and to gauge one's personal responsibility for outcomes. People also use the quality of decision procedures and their implementation to make inferences regarding whether the organization and its leaders are committed to upholding normative standards of moral conduct.

Finally, in the fourth part of the chapter, we reviewed research that has challenged the most fundamental assumption in the study of procedural (p. 80) justice—that procedural justice is always beneficial and desired. Research in this vein has demonstrated several boundary conditions of procedural justice, as well as factors that may lead to paradoxical effects. This newest domain of research not only has uncovered novel findings but also provided a deeper theoretical understanding of procedural justice phenomena.

Clearly, procedural justice research has come a long way from the early years. The concept is being continually enriched. No review could cover every branch of research on procedural justice in the workplace or cite every relevant study, but we have aimed to provide readers with a foundation for understanding where the literature started and where it has been since then. We look forward to witnessing the development of procedural justice research in the future, confident that there is much valuable knowledge yet to be gleaned, at both the practical and the theoretical levels.

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Notes:

(1.) Note that researchers often define the fair process effect as the effect of procedural justice *perceptions* on recipient reactions, but we use the original definition here (cf. Van den Bos, 2005).

(2.) In contemporary research, there continues to be inconsistency in whether people measure/manipulate outcome fairness or outcome valence.

(3.) The Schroth & Shah 1993 paper was published in 2000; both references are provided to avoid confusion.

(4.) Although few studies report an effect of procedural justice when procedures lead to *favorable* outcomes, it is interesting to note that in an earlier study of applicant reactions, Ployhart and Ryan (1997) demonstrated that being selected (favorable outcome) under unfair procedures damaged participants' self-evaluations relative to fair procedures. This finding is consistent with the idea that, under unfair procedures, recipients cannot make an internal attribution for the outcome (being selected, in this case), and thus they feel less deserving of the positive outcome.

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