DISRESPECT AND THE EXPERIENCE OF INJUSTICE

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Abstract   This review analyzes research and theory pertaining to the psychology of injustice, using as its
organizing theme the role that the perception of disrespect plays in the experience of injustice. The
analysis focuses primarily on the links between disrespect and anger, disrespect and injustice, and anger
and injustice. Determinants of the intensity of people's reactions to injustices are also reviewed. In
addition, the review examines the goals of retaliation as well as the forms that retaliation can take.
Parallels between justice reactions to those acts of disrespect directed toward the self and those
directed toward others are noted. Finally, the review discusses the implications of justice research for
understanding the specific and general entitlements that people believe are their due.

INTRODUCTION

Of fascination to philosophers since Aristotle, the topic of justice has only recently engaged the interest
of psychologists. The fourth edition of the *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Gilbert et al 1998) devotes a
chapter to justice (Tyler & Smith 1998), but the third edition (Lindzey & Aronson 1985) does not even
have an entry for justice in the subject index. To some extent, this neglect is more apparent than real,
because a number of research traditions with long-standing interest in justice have only recently started
to sail under the flag of "justice research." Research on relative deprivation (Crosby 1976, Merton & Kitt
1950, Olson et al 1986, Stouffer et al 1949) and prosocial behavior (Batson 1998, Krebs & Miller 1985,
Lerner 1980) are two cases in point. Not even these latter research traditions, however, can boast a long
history of direct investigation of justice reactions. Relative deprivation and equity researchers, for
example, traditionally have not asked participants how just their outcomes or circumstances are, but
rather how satisfied the participants are with them (Adams 1965, Crosby 1976). What qualifies such
research as justice research is the assumption that outcome satisfaction is mediated by perceptions of
outcome fairness. The tendency to view perceived justice primarily as a mediating or moderating
variable rather than as a dependent variable continues to the present, although contemporary justice
researchers are much more likely to probe people's perceptions of fairness and justice directly.

Strongly influenced by exchange theorists (e.g. Blau 1964, Homans 1961, Thibaut & Kelley 1959), early justice researchers focused primarily on distributive justice. In particular, they focused on people's relative preference for three different principles of resource distribution: need, equity, and equality. The two most common means of assessing this preference were by examining the rules people followed when allocating resources to others and by examining people's reactions to the resources they received from others (see Adams 1965, Deutsch 1985, Walster et al 1978). Distributive justice as a topic has diminished in popularity in recent years (Tyler & Smith 1998); perhaps more significantly, the topic has been appropriated to a considerable extent by researchers in the judgment- and decision-making tradition (Elster 1992, Mellers & Baron 1993, Mitchell et al 1993). From the decision-analytic perspective (Mellers et al 1998), questions about distributive justice are viewed most appropriately as judgment- and decision-making tasks.

Without question, the most popular topic in justice research over the past 2 decades has been "procedural justice." Procedural justice refers to the fairness of the methods, mechanisms, and processes used to determine outcomes as opposed to the fairness of the outcomes themselves (Lind & Tyler 1988). Initial work on this topic focused on the formal, structural aspects of fair procedure (Leventhal 1976, Thibaut & Walker 1975), whereas more recent work has focused on the less formal, interpersonal aspects of fair procedure (Bies 1987, Greenberg 1990, Folger & Cropanzo 1998, Tyler 1990).

The shift in the focus of procedural justice research is illustrated best by the history of the variable of, "voice" (Folger & Cropanzo 1998, Tyler 1987). Thibaut & Walker (1975) introduced the concept they termed "process control," later renamed voice (Folger 1977), to describe the extent to which the formal structure of a legal proceeding provided the disputants with the opportunity to have a say in how their case was presented. Legal disputants are said to have this type of voice to the extent that the formal structure of the proceedings permits them to convey their interests to the judge or decision maker. Legal disputants, however, also may or may not be afforded a second, more informal type of voice. Specifically, they may or may not be listened to when they choose to exercise the voice option that the formal structure affords them. The presence of both types of voice, sometimes referred to as "instrumental" and "value expressive" voice, respectively (Tyler & Bies 1990), enhances the perception of procedural fairness (Lind et al 1990).

The shift in focus from formal to informal aspects of procedural justice (Tyler et al 1997) reflected a more fundamental transformation in the way justice was perceived, or at least experimentally assessed, by researchers. Early procedural justice theorists (Leventhal 1976, Thibaut & Walker 1975) characterized people's concern with fair procedures as instrumental in nature. Pursuit of principles of procedural justice was assumed to maximize the individual's outcomes in the same way as pursuit of the principles of distributive justice (Homans 1961, Walster et al 1978). From this perspective, the main challenge for researchers was not explanations of why people care about procedural justice (self-interest was the assumed motivation) but identification of the criteria that people use in deciding whether a procedure is just (Leventhal 1976).

By the late 1980s the tenor of procedural justice research had changed. Procedural concerns were no longer viewed as important simply because their effects were independent from those of distributive concerns. Procedural concerns were now seen as important because they revealed the human actor to be less utility-maximizing and more justice-seeking than was assumed by the dominant neoclassical economic model. People care about procedural justice, it was now asserted, not as a means to an end (better outcomes) but as an end in itself. With this assertion, procedural justice researchers joined a growing chorus of social scientists who expressed dissatisfaction with the rational-actor model (Etzioni 1988, Lerner 1977, Mansbridge 1990, Miller 1999).

Procedural justice researchers, turning increasingly from laboratory to field settings, also sought to show that concerns with procedure were often more powerful than—and not simply independent from— concerns with outcomes (Tyler 1990). Furthermore, in light of the mounting evidence that people's concern with fair treatment was independent of its effects on outcomes, theories of procedural justice began to propose noninstrumental accounts of procedural justice motivation. The most influential of these theories was Lind & Tyler's (1988) group value theory. According to this theory, people care whether their treatment (and not simply their outcomes) is fair because fair treatment indicates something critically important to them—their status within their social group.

The Right to Respect

The shift in empirical and theoretical attention from distributive to procedural justice signified a more general shift in justice research from a concern with abstract rules of resource distribution to a concern with interpersonal rules of conduct (Hogan & Emler 1981, Tyler et al 1997, Vidmar 2000). This change paralleled the increasing attention that moral philosophers were devoting to humanitarian standards of justice (Furby 1986, Moore 1978, Rawls 1971). An especially relevant example of the latter is the claim by Rawls (1971) that one of the entitlements that individuals are due by virtue of their humanity is the right to be treated in a way that fosters positive self-regard.

Respect, it should be noted, also can play an important role in the perception of distributive justice. As many have noted, the indignation with which people respond to unfavorable outcomes (e.g. lower than expected salary offers) often reflects the fact that their prestige or status has been threatened more than the fact that their purchasing power has been diminished (Berger et al 1972, Homans 1976). Status and prestige, therefore, are conveyed both by the resources people receive and by the procedures used to determine and administer those resources. The fact that the perception of distributive fairness often has less to do with an outcome's exchange value than with its symbolic or status value is one reason it has proven so difficult to draw a sharp distinction between procedural and distributive injustice (Folger & Cropanzo 1998, Van den Bos et al 1997).

Injustice in Everyday Life

The growing importance that formal justice theories accord to respectful treatment comports with findings from investigations of the layperson's understanding of everyday injustices. The most

commonly reported experiences of everyday injustice involve some form of disrespectful treatment (Lupfer et al 2000, Messick et al 1985, Mikula 1986, Mikula et al 1990). For example, consider the responses Mikula (1986) elicited from college students when he asked them to describe the unjust experiences they experienced in daily life. The three events most frequently mentioned by students were (*a*) unjustified accusation and blaming, (*b*) unfair grading or lack of recognition for performance or effort, and (*c*) violations of promises and agreements. Less frequently mentioned events included failure to admit an error, giving orders in an inappropriate tone, meddling in one's business, and ruthless or illegal misuses of one's status and power. Violations of interpersonal codes of conduct are also a common source of feelings of injustice in organizations. Instances of injustices reported by workers include the violation of codes of conduct (Aram & Salipante 1981), betrayal by coworkers (Bies 1993), and humiliation and wrongful accusation by superiors (Bies & Tripp 1996).

ENTITLEMENTS

In the case of research on retributive and distributive justice, the nature of the offending action traditionally has been some blatant form of physical, economic, or psychological maltreatment and, as such, tends not to be a big part of the study's story. The situation is very different in the case of procedural justice research. Procedural justice researchers typically are as interested in providing demonstrations of what constitutes just procedures as they are in demonstrating that procedural justice matters. For this reason, procedural justice research has contributed greatly to our knowledge of the range and nature of the actions that give offense and arouse feelings of injustice in informal as well as formal relationships.

Specific Entitlements

To ask people what acts they consider disrespectful and unjust is, basically, to ask them what they consider people to be entitled to from others. The entitlement that has received the most attention, as noted earlier, is voice. People believe they are entitled to have their say and to be listened to in their dealings with others, whether these dealings are formal or informal (see Lind & Tyler 1988 for a review). An illustration of the importance of voice is provided by studies of perceptions by fathers of the fairness of custody court cases. Fathers virtually always lose such cases, but if they believe they were permitted to make their case to the judge and that the judge listened to them, they often leave the court thinking they were treated fairly (Emery et al 1994). Tyler (1987, 1990;, Tyler et al 1985) has found that voice considerations similarly affect the perceived fairness of dealings with police officers and other participants in the legal system. In fact, voice has been shown to affect perceptions of fairness even when there is little possibility that it could affect outcomes—for instance, if the opportunity to express oneself comes after the outcome has been decided (Lind et al 1990).

No other entitlement has received the degree of empirical attention that has been accorded voice, but various theorists have sought to identify the different components of the respect people think that they are due from others. Tyler & Lind (1992), for example, have attempted to specify the types of

considerations that people believe they are entitled to from those in positions of authority. Recent work on what has been termed "interactional justice" (Bies & Moag 1986, Cropanzo & Greenberg 1997, Skarlicki & Folger 1997) has shown particular interest in identification of the forms of consideration that people believe they are due from others. On the basis of this work, it appears that people's sense of entitlement comes down to two broad requirements. The first requirement is interpersonal sensitivity (Greenberg 1994). People believe they are entitled to polite and respectful treatment from others (Baron 1993, Bies & Moag 1986). The second requirement is accountability. People think they are entitled to explanations and accounts for any actions that have personal consequences for them (Bies & Shapiro 1987, Bobocel et al 1998, Shapiro et al 1994).

Psychological Contracts

As various researchers have noted (e.g. Folger & Cropanzo 1998), it is often difficult, even for the those involved, to specify precisely what constitutes respectful treatment in a given situation. People may express the belief that they are entitled to respectful treatment from someone (e.g. a romantic partner, a police officer, or a government bureaucrat), but what precisely do they mean? Because of the difficulty in defining what constitutes procedural justice, many justice researchers have concluded that people in relationships do not operate under explicit agreements of entitlement but under something more informal and implicit. The most common term for this type of informal agreement, the content of which will vary from context to context and relationship to relationship, is "psychological contract" (Robinson et al 1994, Rousseau 1995). A psychological contract is an implicit understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship (Robinson 1996, Taylor et al 1995). People may not always be able to articulate what their entitlements are in any particular relationship, but they know when a sense of rightness has been violated (Cropanzo & Byrne 2000) or when someone has "crossed the line" (Folger & Skarlicki 1998). In essence, a psychological contract constitutes a code of conduct or, to use Folger & Skarlicki's (1998) term, a "human covenant." The violation of a psychological contract, like that of any contract, constitutes an injustice in people's eyes. Disrespectful treatment, therefore, can both compound the injustice created by an undeserved outcome and constitute an injustice of its own.

THE EXPERIENCE OF INJUSTICE

To understand better how disrespectful treatment produces feelings of injustice, it is useful to examine the phenomenology of injustice. The experience of injustice can be analyzed from the perspective of three conceptual relationships, that between disrespect and anger, disrespect and injustice, and anger and injustice.

The Link Between Disrespect and Anger

The relationship between disrespect and anger has been theorized about and empirically investigated extensively. Indeed, the perception that one has been treated disrespectfully is widely recognized as a common, perhaps the most common, source of anger. Aristotle emphasized this link in his definition of

anger as "…an impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conscious slight directed without justification towards what concerns oneself…." (1945, p. 173). Bacon (1909, cited in Heider 1958) similarly traced the origin of anger to insult. In his words, "…contempt is that which putteth an edge upon anger, as much or more than the harm itself." Many contemporary authorities are no less insistent on the role of insult in anger. Lazarus (1991), for example, asserts that insult is the primary component in the arousal of anger.

Whether the perception of disrespect is a necessary condition for the arousal of anger is difficult to establish, but a considerable amount of research supports the claim that disrespectful treatment is a common determinant of both anger and aggression (Bettencourt & Miller 1996, Cohen et al 1996). Furthermore, research shows that a common characteristic of those who exhibit especially high levels of anger and aggression is a low threshold for inferring disrespect from the actions of others (Dodge et al 1990, Dodge & Somberg 1987, Graham & Hudley 1994). Disrespectful treatment does not inevitably arouse anger, however. Sometimes people do not think they deserve respect (Heuer et al 1999), and insults that are perceived to be deserved or justified rarely arouse anger, however they may diminish the target of the insult (Donnerstein & Walster 1982).

Additional evidence of the link between insult and anger comes from its prominence in people's naïve theories of interpersonal relations. People routinely assume that the presence of anger in another person indicates that he or she feels insulted and, perhaps because of this, people routinely respond to the anger of another with an apology (Gergen & Gergen 1988, Riordan et al 1983). Anger has a similarly important cue value to the individual who experiences it; it is a powerful signal to a person that he or she has been insulted. As Averill (1983, p. 184) asserts, if you "convince people that they are angry…you have gone a long way toward convincing them, rightfully or wrongfully, that action is appropriate and necessary." This fact is one of the reasons anger has been termed an "empowering emotion" (Ellsworth & Gross 1994).

The Link Between Disrespect and Injustice

Requests to describe unjust events, as noted earlier, generally elicit references to circumstances in which the participants felt that they were insulted or were otherwise treated disrespectfully. That people consider disrespectful treatment unpleasant, even painful, is not surprising, but why do they consider it unjust? Bourdieu's (1965) analysis of insults offers one possible explanation. In his words, "An insult sullies both the picture of himself that the individual intends to project, and that which he imagines to be his" (Bourdieu 1965, p. 211). According to Bourdieu, therefore, an insult, and presumably any disrespectful act, is experienced as unjust because it deprives people of something that they believe is rightfully theirs. When they are denied the respect to which they believe they are entitled, people feel as unjustly treated as when they are denied the material resources to which they believe they are entitled. Miller (1993) offers a somewhat different explanation of why insults give rise to feelings of injustice. He argues that insults produce feelings of injustice because they create a social imbalance. In his words, "insults and injuries are understood as gifts, of negative moral value to be sure, but as gifts nonetheless and as such demand repayment" (p. 16). An act of disrespect, then, is unjust for Bourdieu

because it deprives people of something to which they are entitled and, for Miller, because it subjects people to something they do not deserve.

Additional evidence for the claim that acts of disrespect are viewed as unjust comes from studies of audience reactions to people who retaliate against disrespectful acts. This research shows that people are much less critical of a person's hostile actions against another when they view these actions as retaliation for a previous slight or injury (Carpenter & Darley 1978, Harvey & Enzle 1978, Robinson & Darley 1995). The greater tolerance of retaliatory aggression may derive partially from the belief that this type of aggression is more comprehensible but it probably also derives from the belief that this type of aggression is more justifiable (Tedeschi et al 1974). Retaliation, seen as necessary to preserve one's image and honor, represents a form of self-defense.

The Link Between Anger and Injustice

The perception of injustice is frequently tied to the emotion of anger (Keltner et al 1993, Scher 1997). However, positing an invariant causal relationship between the experience of anger and the perception of injustice is problematic. On the one hand, the perception of injustice can lead to anger. For example, people report that their most common response to injustice is anger (Clayton 1992, Mikula 1986). On the other hand, the arousal of anger can lead to the perception of injustice. One reason for the latter is that people rely on anger to cue them to the occurrence of injustices. As Solomon (1990) notes, anger serves as "an alarm system" that triggers the perception of injustice.

A second reason anger can produce the perception of injustice stems from the fact that it is normatively problematic for people to act upon their anger without the belief that their action is in the service of justice. However angry people are made by the treatment they receive at the hands of another, the likelihood that they will retaliate against the other will be greater if they also perceive this treatment to be unjust (Bies & Tripp 1996, Solomon 1990). In this vein, Lind (2000) contends that strong feelings of injustice are necessary for people to feel justified in taking aggressive action against members of their own group. Similarly, Martin et al (1984) contend that perceiving inequality between their group and another is a necessary condition for people to initiate collective violence. The claim has also been made that labeling a harmful action an injustice is necessary for its recipient to feel comfortable proceeding toward litigation. At least, it is rare that a lawsuit is pursued without the plaintiff thinking that he or she has suffered an injustice (Lind 1997). The dependence of retaliation on the perception of injustice raises the prospect that the perception of injustice is often simply a rationalization. As Nietzsche (1967) observed, often the urge to punish comes first; the reason, later.

Injustices have a transcendent quality, which is one reason that it is more legitimate to respond to an injustice than to that which is merely an insult, even when both offenses provoke equivalent anger. To label an insult an injustice transforms it from a personal matter to an impersonal matter of principle (Frankena 1963, Gamson 1968, Kelsen 1943). Put differently, the cry of injustice transforms the private into the public (Pitkin 1981). It also implies a strategy for action (Capek 1993). In short, a personal insult

that is labeled an injustice becomes a collective injustice, and avenging the injustice becomes a defense of the honor and integrity of the entire moral community.

The power of justice rhetoric extends beyond its capacity to justify retaliatory actions. It also has the capacity to compel support for retaliatory actions. Cries of injustice from one's peers are difficult to resist (Lind et al 2000). At the very least, people perceive a greater obligation to rally around someone who claims to have suffered an injustice than around someone who merely claims to have suffered a deprivation (Steil et al 1978).

Respect For Group Values and Rules

The arousal of moralistic anger is not confined to injustices perpetrated against one's self. Witnessing the harming of a third party can also arouse strong feelings of anger and injustice (Vidmar 2000). Even so-called "victimless" crimes, such as prostitution or pornography, can arouse strong moralistic and punitive impulses (Vidmar & Miller 1980). These "disinterested" feelings of injustice (Ranulf 1964) are not necessarily identical to those that arise in response to a direct offense against one's self, but they also depend greatly on the perception of disrespect. Individuals are committed to the "ought forces" of their moral community, as Heider (1958) termed them, and people believe that these forces deserve respect from all members of the community. The violation of these forces represents an insult to the integrity of the community and provokes both moralistic anger and the urge to punish the offender in its members (Durkheim 1964 Vidmar 2000). Viewed from this perspective, disinterested justice reactions are not disinterested at all, because everyone has a stake in seeing that the rules and values of the authority structure under which they live are respected (Vidmar 2000).

For example, consider a norm violation that provokes considerable moralistic anger—line intrusion or queue jumping—a phenomenon described at some length by Cooley (1902). As Cooley observed, and subsequent research shows (Milgram et al 1986, Schmitt et al 1992), people are much more likely to confront and express indignation toward a line intruder if that person intrudes in front of them rather than behind them. It is also true, however, that people feel indignation even toward those who intrude behind them. Moreover, the indignation aroused in the latter case does not derive solely, or perhaps even primarily, from feelings of empathy with those behind the intruder. Rather, it arises from the perceived disrespect the intruder has shown the system of social rules under which all members of the moral community are expected to live. In fact, however great the empathy is that people have for victims of injustices, their anger toward the perpetrator is generally greater. At least, research shows that people are more strongly motivated to punish perpetrators than to compensate victims (Hogan & Emler 1981, Miller & McCann 1979).

If people believe that an in-group member disrespects the group's values (as opposed to specific laws or rules), these people will also experience moralistic anger (Durkheim 1964). The same is true if they believe that valuable resources were distributed to in-group members in a manner that violates shared conceptions of fairness (Crosby & Gonzalez-Intel 1984;, Feather 1996, 1999;, Skitka & Tetlock 1992). The expression of indignation will often be indirect when the offending action pertains to group values. After

all, it is difficult socially, and often psychologically, to punish someone simply because he or she rejects one's values. It is much less difficult to support policies and political causes that disadvantage or otherwise control those perceived to repudiate the group's values (Gusfield 1963, Herek & Glunt 1988, Sears & Funk 1991, Tyler & Boeckmann 1997).

DETERMINANTS OF THE REACTION TO THE INJUSTICE

Most authorities agree that moralistic anger depends greatly on the degree of disrespect implicit in the offending act. As Greenwell & Dengerink (1973) stated, "While attack is an important instigator of aggressive behavior, it appears that the physical discomfort experienced by a person may be subordinate to the symbolic elements that are incorporated into that attack" (p. 70). Of the factors that affect how disrespectful a harmful act is perceived to be, two of the most important are the perpetrator's responsibility for the act and his or her reaction to it.

The Offender's Responsibility

Foremost among the factors that affect reactions to a harm-doer are the motives, or state of mind, attributed to the offender (Heider 1958). The less responsibility the instigator of a harmful action bears for that action, the less disrespectful it will seem and the less anger it will provoke (Averill 1983, Ferguson & Rule 1981, Zillmann 1979).

Intentionality

A key component of responsibility is intentionality (Heider 1958). People bear more responsibility for those actions and consequences they intended than those that they did not intend. Most of the relevant research on the variable of harm-doer intentionality is found in the literature on aggression (see Geen 1998 for a review). In fact, there may be no more well-established finding in the aggression literature than the finding that unintentional acts of harm provoke less anger and less retaliation than do intentional acts of harm (Dyck & Rule 1978, Epstein & Taylor 1967, Greenwell & Dengerink 1973). The importance of the perpetrator's state of mind is further underscored by the fact that even actions that do not actually produce harm can arouse moralistic anger in their intended victim if he or she believes that harm was the intended goal of the perpetrator's actions (Batson et al 2000, Horai 1977). Research that has focused more directly on justice reactions than does the typical aggression study also indicates that the degree of intentionality attributed to the perpetrator is inversely related to the intensity of the victim's reaction to that harm (Bies & Tripp 1996, Torestad 1990).

The factors that influence the attribution of malevolent intent are less well understood than the consequences of such an attribution. To citizens of ancient Greece there was no such thing as accidental harm (Miller 1993). Any harm received at the hands of another was assumed intentional and hence deserved retaliation. The intentionality of harm is certainly no longer taken for granted, at least in

Western cultures. As Kramer (1994) notes, however, even members of contemporary western cultures exhibit a low threshold for inferring intentionality, a tendency he terms the "sinister attribution error."

Forseeability

When the victim does not think that the perpetrator intended to give offense, he or she may still hold the perpetrator responsible for the offending act. People also bear responsibility for harmful consequences that were foreseeable, whether or not they were intended. A harm-doer's claim, "I meant no disrespect," even if believed, will not exempt the harm-doer from responsibility if the victim believes that the harm was foreseeable. Showing due respect to others requires that a person scrupulously avoid giving even inadvertent offense to others (Goffman 1971). In fact, harm-doers are sometimes blamed more for foreseeable but unintended consequences of actions than for intended consequences of actions made without malevolent intentions (Ferguson & Rule 1980).

The Offender's Reaction
Accounts and Justifications

The reaction of the perpetrator to his or her act and its consequences also affects the victim's response. For one thing, the perpetrator's reaction can provide information about his or her state of mind. In general, harm-doers who communicate to their victims that their actions were inadvertent or uncontrollable, or that they occurred under mitigating circumstances, typically provoke less anger (Folger & Martin 1986, Folger et al 1983, Greenberg 1993, Sitkin & Bies 1993).

However, the perpetrator's reaction does more than neutralize the offense by characterizing it as nonintentional, unforeseeable, or unavoidable. It can also convey respect for the victim and affirm his or her status. The very fact that the perpetrator thinks that the victim is due an explanation signals respect for the victim and tends to diminish the victim's anger (Bies 1987, Bies et al 1988, Greenberg 1990, Johnson & Rule 1986).

Apologies

When the offender's response goes beyond mere explanation and includes an apology, this action is likely to diminish the victim's anger even more (Bobocel & Farrell 1996). As Heider (1958) notes, the expression of remorse takes the sting out of an offense because it affirms the status of the victim and acknowledges that he or she has been treated unjustly. Tedeschi & Nesler (1993) propose that successful apologies contain three components: (*a*) an acceptance of responsibility and blame for the negative event; (*b*) an expression of remorse, indicating an acceptance of the norm that was violated and a promise not to violate the norm again; and (*c*) an expression of unhappiness about the harm that was done and an offer to engage in some form of restitution.

According to Tedeschi & Nesler's analysis, it would seem that a person can learn a considerable amount about his or her status by viewing the way that others react to acts that diminish that status. In fact, in cases where the profuseness of an apology exceeds that expected or deemed necessary by the victim,

he or she might even be left feeling more socially valued than before the injury. Of course, only if the apologies are perceived as sincere will they have the effects just described. When victims perceive apologies to be insincere and designed simply to "cool them out," they often react with more rather than less indignation (Baron 1988, Cohen 1986, Goffman 1952).

Third-Party Reactions

The perpetrator's state of mind and response to the harm that has been caused also influences the reactions of those not directly affected by the perpetrator's actions. For example, unintentional acts that hurt a third party are punished less severely than acts that are intentional (Fincham & Jaspars 1980, Robinson & Darley 1995, Shaw & Reitan 1969). Furthermore, offering a reason for harming a third party reduces the punishment given the harm-doer (Felson & Ribner 1981) and so too does the offering of an apology or an expression of remorse (Ohbuchi et al 1989, Rumsey 1976, Schlenker & Darby 1981). Here also, however, the belief that the expression of remorse is insincere will lead to an increase rather than a decrease in punishment (Pepitone 1975).

Expressions of remorse reduce the punishment that is assigned rule violators because these actions lower people's estimates of likelihood of subsequent violations (Sykes & Matza 1957). This reason is not the only one, however. As many authorities have noted, expressions of contrition by rule violators also reduce the urge to punish because such expressions reaffirm the validity and status of the rule (Erikson 1966, Sykes & Matza 1957, Vidmar 2000). This fact would appear to be the reason that the Japanese legal system actually seeks apologies from lawbreakers (Hamilton & Sanders 1992). In some cases rules are affirmed more strongly by the existence of rule violators who express remorse than when there are only rule followers (Alexander & Staub 1956). As Miller & Vidmar (1981) observed, "Sometimes the act of full contrition may serve to affirm the validity of the rule so completely that punitive reactions against the offender totally dissipate and may even be replaced by positive responses" (p. 162). In contrast, a rule violator who is unapologetic provokes especially severe punishment (Schwartz et al 1978). What invokes such punishment is the idea that a nonpenitant perpetrator seems especially likely to commit further violations and that the perpetrator's apparent challenge to the validity of the rule compounds the offense (Heider 1958, Toch 1969).

Social Factors

The perception of what constitutes disrespectful behavior obviously will depend to some extent on the social context. The two contextual factors in this domain that have been most extensively investigated are the nature of the relationship between the offender and the victim and the public visibility of the offense.

The Relationship Between the Harm-Doer and the Victim

How disrespectful an individual finds another's action depends upon his or her relationship to the offender. One important consideration is whether or not the individuals involved belong to the same group. People typically believe they are entitled to more respect from in-group members than from out-

group members (Tyler 1994). Furthermore, the indignation produced by disrespectful acts by out-group members tends to be different than that aroused by disrespectful acts by in-group members (Bond & Venus 1991). An insult from an out-group member is more likely to be perceived as insolent and to provoke a "How dare they?" response, whereas an insult from an in-group member is more likely to seem like a betrayal and to provoke a "How could they?" response. The action of an out-group member is most likely to seem disrespectful when it violates a norm that pertains to intergroup relations (DeRidder et al 1992). Thus, although an out-group member who rejects the in-group's values will not necessarily seem disrespectful (at least compared with an in-group member who behaves similarly), this is not true of an out-group member who violates the in-group's right to respect its own values and customs.

The power relationship existing between the two parties also affects what will be perceived as an insult (Heider 1958). An insult from a lower-status person will arouse a different form of indignation than an insult from a higher-status person. In the case of a lower-status person, the source of the indignation will generally be the belief that the offender does not know his or her place, whereas in the case of a higher-status person the source of the indignation will generally be the belief that the offender has abused his or her position.

The Public's Knowledge of the Offense

Whether or not an audience is present and who that audience is can powerfully affect the pain of an insult as well as the reaction to it. Generally, insults delivered in front of others produce more anger (Ferguson & Rule 1981). One reason for this reaction is that a public insult seems more unjust. Whereas all insults threaten a person's "face" and status, this is especially true of those insults that are delivered in public (Pitt-Rivers 1965). In some cases, an insult becomes an injustice only because it was delivered in public. For example, criticism that seems legitimate and appropriate when delivered in private can appear offensive and unjust if delivered in public (Bies & Moag 1986).

A second reason public insults produce more moralistic anger is that they hurt more. To be insulted in public compounds the victim's feelings of disrespect with public humiliation. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that evidence from both experimental and natural settings shows that people were more likely to retaliate against an insult when it was delivered in front of an audience (Felson 1982). The nature of the audience who witnesses an insult also affects the intensity of the victim's feelings of injustice. For example, a worker criticized in front of coworkers will experience stronger feelings of injustice than when the worker is criticized either in private or in front of others whose good opinion the worker cares less about.

In addition to affecting the intensity of the moralistic anger that is produced by an insult, the nature of the audience also affects the likelihood and intensity of retaliation. The reason for this reaction is that a person's image in the eyes of others is affected by the manner in which he or she responds to insults. Concern about the good opinion of others often leads to a greater likelihood of retaliation, especially when there is pressure to retaliate from a third party (Kim et al 1998). On the other hand, if the

audience disapproves of retaliation, a strong bond between the target of the insult and the audience may actually reduce the likelihood of retaliation (Borden 1975).

Public vs Private Responses

The matter of audience impact raises a more general question: Namely, to what extent can people's public reactions to acts of disrespect be taken as evidence of their private reactions to it? For instance, is it reasonable to assume that because a person's likelihood of retaliating against an insult is lower when the insult was unintentional that the level of moralistic anger is also lower? The main reason to question the assumption of isomorphism between public and private reactions is that powerful social norms exist that stipulate when retaliation is and is not appropriate. To the extent that the victim has internalized these norms, they can be expected to affect his or her public and private reactions similarly (Miller & Prentice 1996). When these norms have not been internalized, however, the victim's public and private reaction may diverge. Consider the finding that people are less likely to retaliate against unintended harm. One interpretation of this finding is that the level of responsibility that the victim attributes to the harm-doer determines the amount of anger that the victim experiences and, in turn, the likelihood that victim will retaliate. A second possibility is that a social norm exists that proscribes retaliation against unintentional harm-doers, however much anger their harm arouses (Zillmann 1979). In general, then, the existence of retaliation-governing social norms means that people, irrespective of their level of moralistic anger, will be less likely to retaliate under some circumstances than others (e.g. the harm was unintended, an apology was offered). Therefore, caution is in order when drawing inferences about private reactions from public reactions.

GOALS OF RETALIATION

Of the various goals that guide people's responses to acts of disrespect, two are especially powerful. The first is the restoration of the victim's self-esteem; the second, the education of the offender.

Restoring Self-Esteem

Much of the sting of being insulted or exploited derives from the identity implications of the act (Greenberg 1993). To be taken advantage of is resented because it implies to oneself, and others, that one is the sort of person who can be taken advantage of (Lind 2000). Retaliation against the offender, by challenging the threats to identity posed by his or her action, serves to restore the victim's self-image (Westermarck 1932). In fact, the failure to respond to a perceived injustice can actually further diminish the victim, both in the victim's eyes (Vidmar 2000) and the eyes of others (Felson 1982, Pitt-Rivers 1965).

In some cases the mere expression of moralistic anger, unaccompanied by action, can help restore one's private and public image, because anger constitutes not simply a response to demeaning treatment but also a challenge to it (Lazarus 1991). In this way, anger serves a self-presentational function. It

establishes one's identity as a strong and determined person who demands respect and does not tolerate unjust treatment by others (Averill 1983, Novaco 1976, Tedeschi & Nesler 1993).

Educating the Offender

Many commentators on the nature of revenge have noted its educational mission. For example, Heider (1958) regarded one of the primary goals of revenge to be changing the perpetrator's "…ideas about the relative power, importance, and value of the two persons, as well as his ethical evaluation of these relations" (pp. 267–68). Adam Smith (1869) described the goal of revenge similarly: "To bring him back to a more just sense of what he owes us, and of the wrong that he has done to us, is frequently the principal end posed in our revenge, which is always imperfect when it cannot accomplish this" (p. 139). De Waal (1996) reports that even in the animal world there is a tendency "to teach a lesson to those who act negatively" (p. 159). In many cases the lesson that retaliators seek to teach pertains to the relative status or moral worth of the offender. By retaliating, recipients of disrespectful treatment seek to communicate that it is the offender who deserves contempt, not them (Novaco 1976). In other cases, retaliation aims to educate the perpetrator about the more general unacceptability of his or her behavior, not merely its unacceptability vis-a-vis the victim. For example, Folger & Pugh (2001) claim that people often will retaliate against someone behaving rudely simply because they believe the offender needs to be reminded that it costs nothing to be polite.

The fact that the education of the offender is a strong motivation behind retaliation has important implications for whether retaliation will or will not be satisfying. To the extent that (re)education of the perpetrator is its goal, retaliation will be satisfying only to the extent that perpetrator shows evidence of being educated; minimally, this objective will require that the perpetrator knows why he or she is being punished (Durkheim 1964 Vidmar 2000).

Disinterested Reactions

The goals of status affirmation and offender education also guide people's reactions to those who have harmed a third party or violated a group norm or rule. In other words, along with controlling the rule violator's future behavior and punishing his or her past behavior, disinterested punishment reactions seek to reaffirm the group's norms and values and to educate the perpetrator (Vidmar 2000, Vidmar & Miller 1980). Punishment is the principal means by which group members degrade the status of the rule offender and affirm the status of the group's rules and values (Braithwaite 1989, Garfinkel 1956). On the one hand, punishment serves to disavow the disrespectful act as well as the offender. The failure to punish, on the other hand, further diminishes the status of the group and its rules. As the Israeli court stated in sentencing Eichmann, "…punishment is necessary to defend the honor of the authority of him who was hurt by the offense so that the failure to punish may not cause his degradation" (Arendt 1964, p. 287).

TYPES OF JUSTICE REACTIONS

Recent justice research has greatly expanded our knowledge of the forms that reactions to perceived injustices can take. The growing preference of researchers for the field rather than the laboratory is the main reason for this expansion. Early justice researchers, as is often the case when the research venue is the laboratory, appeared more interested in independent variables than dependent measures. That is, they were more interested in identifying the range of variables that affect the perception of injustice than in identifying the ways in which feelings of injustice manifest themselves, with relative deprivation researchers being somewhat, but only somewhat, of an exception (e.g. Hafer & Olson 1993).

By and large, dependent measures in traditional justice research tended to be straightforward questions about the participants' perceptions of the fairness of outcomes—sometimes, only the participant's satisfaction with the outcomes. In some cases, the simplicity and directness of the dependent measure reflected the researcher's desire to approximate a particular real world context. In research that examines justice in the legal system, for example, feelings of injustice were, and continue to be, assessed primarily through questions about recommended criminal sentences or civil awards (Hamilton & Sanders 1992, Robinson & Darley 1995). Even when justice studies (e.g. distributive justice studies) included behavioral measures (e.g. resource allocations), these measures tended to be standard and highly uniform across studies. The same situation is true in research on the causes and consequences of moralistic aggression. Investigations of the insult-aggression relationship, for example, have been primarily laboratory-based and have used a much broader range of insult manipulations than aggression measures.

The situation is very different with more recent justice research, especially that on procedural justice. Whereas early procedural justice research focused primarily on reported satisfaction (Thibaut & Walker 1975), recent work places an increasingly high premium on discovering the range of people's reactions to being treated unfairly (Giacalone & Greenberg 1997, Tyler & Lind 2000). By and large, justice reactions in procedural justice research fall into two broad categories: withdrawal reactions and attack reactions. Reactions of the former type occur when the aggrieved person omits actions that he or she previously performed; reactions of the latter type occur when the aggrieved person commits actions that he or she has not previously performed.

Retaliation by Withdrawal
Voluntary Withdrawal

Much procedural justice research focuses on the effects of disrespectful treatment by authorities (Lind 2000, Tyler & Blader 2001). Two effects have proven especially robust. The first effect pertains to people's willingness to comply with authorities. As has been demonstrated across an impressive array of contexts and research domains, people show a marked disinclination to comply with authorities when they think those authorities have treated them disrespectfully (Huo et al 1996, Lind et al 1993). It is as

though authorities, by their disrespectful treatment, forfeit the right to continued compliance from those under them (Greenberg 1994, Huo et al 1996).

The second robust effect of disrespectful treatment by authorities pertains to the willingness of individuals to subordinate their personal goals and concerns to group goals and concerns. In organizational contexts, for example, retaliation against unjust procedures commonly results in diminished levels of helpfulness, courtesy, and sportsmanship (Jeremier et al 1994, Moorman 1991, Niehoff & Moorman 1993). Reductions in levels of work performance are also common (Lind et al 1990). Although most of the research on retaliation by withdrawal has been conducted in organizational contexts, such reactions are by no means restricted to these contexts. Disrespectful and unjust treatment can lead to withdrawal reactions even in romantic relationships (Reichle & Montada 1994). For example, giving one's partner the "silent treatment" is a common withdrawal reaction to the perception that he or she has been unjust. (Mikula et al 1998, Sommer et al 2000).

Involuntary Withdrawal

In many cases the withdrawal of commitment to an organization, group, or personal relationship will be a voluntary and deliberate response to the indignation aroused by the perception of injustice, but in other cases it will be an involuntary reaction to one or more of the other psychological states that the perception of injustice elicits. In this respect it is important to note that perception of injustice, in addition to moralistic anger, can produce lowered self-esteem (Koper et al 1993, Smith et al 1998), depression (Hafer & Olson 1993, Tennen & Affleck 1991), and self-derogation (Heilman et al 1990). These reactions are all capable of producing an involuntary decrease in commitment to the relationship in which the injustice occurred.

Consider the link between organizational injustice and worker absenteeism, which illustrates the distinction between voluntary and involuntary withdrawal reactions. One means by which the perception of organizational injustice can increase absenteeism is by affecting the conscious decision-making process of workers. They simply may have a lower threshold for deciding to stay home when they feel they have been treated unjustly (Gellatly 1995, Guerts et al 1994). However, the perception of organizational injustice could also increase absenteeism more indirectly, and less consciously, by affecting workers' physical and psychological health (Markovsky 1991).

Retaliation by Attack

Feelings of injustice may also lead the aggrieved person to seek justice through acts of commission. Again, much of the relevant research takes place in organizational contexts where the motive to "even the score" (Greenberg & Scott 1996) following a perceived injustice has been linked to increases in worker protest (Folger 1977, Leung et al 1993, Vermunt et al 1997), theft (Greenberg 1993, Greenberg & Scott 1996), sabotage (Giacalone et al 1997), and violence (Folger & Skarlicki 1998, Neuman & Baron 1997).

Disrespectful treatment can also increase people's willingness to avail themselves of more formal and legitimate avenues of justice restoration. For example, workers who think that organizational procedures are unfair are both more likely to bad-mouth and publicly embarrass their employers (Bies & Tripp 1996) and more likely to sue them (Bies & Tyler 1993) and to pursue wrongful termination claims against them (Lind et al 2000). Similar effects have been observed in non-organizational contexts. For example, research shows that the desire for retribution is a common motivation for lawsuits across a wide range of situations (Keeva 1999, Merry & Silbey 1984, Shuman 2000, Vidmar 2000).

The Dominance of Justice Motivation

The finding that the perception of disrespect motivates people to pursue formal grievance avenues is interesting. More interesting, however, is that the perception of disrespect is often a better predictor of the likelihood of a person pursuing a claim than more objective features of the situation, such as the probability of winning or even the very factors that the procedures were put in place to address, such as the degree of material or physical harm (Lind 1997, Lind et al 1993). The decision to pursue medical malpractice claims, for example, often depends less upon the merits of the claim than the claimant's perception of the degree of respect and caring shown by the medical staff (Imershine & Brents 1992). Ironically, then, procedures that are put in place as instrumental mechanisms to restore distributive injustice tend to be utilized primarily as expressive mechanisms to avenge procedural and interactional injustice.

The fact that people see grievance and compensation mechanisms in expressive terms has another consequence. Namely, it renders people reluctant to avail themselves of these procedures when they think that the agent of harm, despite having legal or technical responsibility for the harm, has basically treated them respectfully (Merry & Silbey 1984). People act as though it would be an injustice to sue someone who has treated them respectfully, however much legal merit their claim might have. More generally, fair procedures serve to mute the impact of unfavorable outcomes (Brockner & Wiesenfeld 1996, Cropanzo & Greenberg 1997). Furthermore, the power of perceived respect to diminish the impact of negative outcomes is not restricted to organizational contexts. For example, one reason women give for tolerating unjust distributions in their relationships—of household responsibilities, for example—is the belief that their partner respects them (Mikula et al 1998, Thompson 1991).

CONCLUSIONS

The pursuit of justice is a fundamental aspect of social life. In explaining why he and other philosophers have devoted so much attention to the normative question of what is just, Rawls (1971) claimed that justice was "the first virtue of social institutions." As this review indicates, justice is also a central concern in people's everyday life (see also Lerner & Lerner 1981, Ross & Miller 2001). For 50 years, psychologists have known that people's satisfaction with their material outcomes depends highly, and often primarily, on their perception of the fairness of those outcomes. For just this reason, social exchange theorists (e.g. Blau 1964, Homans 1961, Walster et al 1978) traditionally have accorded considerations of justice (equity) a prominent place in their theories. Economists, at least those calling

themselves behavioral economists, have also come to acknowledge the importance of perceptions of fairness in economic decision making (Frank 1988, Kahneman et al 1986, Mellers & Baron 1993).

The quest for justice is not confined to the market place, however. As this review indicates, justice pervades virtually all aspects of social and personal life. However, this is not because every interaction represents a social exchange and every form of social behavior represents a resource. Conceptions of justice are important because they are central to defining the way in which people think of themselves (Lerner 1987). The question of what people are entitled to is fundamentally a question about what it means to be a person (Furby 1986). Concern for justice and respect for personhood are powerfully and inseparably linked (Sampson 1983). By discovering what people believe to be the entitlements and responsibilities of the members of a moral community, we glimpse what it means to be a member of that community (Opotow 1990). By discovering how conceptions of justice vary across cultures, we discover how conceptions of the person vary across cultures (Shweder & Bourne 1984). Understanding the psychology of justice is central to understanding both human psychology and social life.

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