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# PREFACE

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There is a growing realization among managers and scholars that effective management requires attention to social issues that are broader than financial and other typical business concerns. For example, from the literature on justice in organizations, we know that fair treatment relates to a host of variables, including job satisfaction, satisfaction with management's decisions, organizational commitment, acceptance of company policies and supervisor directives, positive affect, and organizational citizenship behaviors. On the other hand, unfair treatment can lead to reduction in all of these desirable reactions and can promote such things as employee theft, litigation against former employers, turnover, and work stress, and overt and covert disobedience. Over the past 2 decades, numerous review articles and books have been published that, among other things, describe these kinds of findings (see, e.g., Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005; Lind & Van den Bos, 2002), showing that justice in organizations is a crucial social issue that plays a pivotal role in management and organizations.

In this book, we argue that the time is ripe to move beyond exploring whether fair events will have positive effects and unfair events have negative effects in organizations, because we clearly know the answer to this

question is *yes*. We propose that a more timely issue may be to examine carefully what motivates fairness in organizations.

To this end, we will do three things in this volume: In its first part, some new attempts to develop theories of what motivates justice and fairness in organizations are presented. The second part consists of chapters that successfully apply theories about social justice and fairness to issues of how managers make decisions and how scientists and practitioners can improve managerial decision-making related to fair treatment in the workplace. The third and final part of the volume sets out to provide a critical review of what we do and do not know about fairness and justice in organizations. In doing so, the authors in this part scrutinize some important assumptions in the organizational justice field, put forward crucial issues regarding conceptual insights into the subject of justice in organizations, and make some clear statements regarding the current state of the field. Our goal is to coax the field into new areas of study and new decades of both research and practice.

## **PART I: DEVELOPING THEORIES OF FAIRNESS MOTIVATION**

In the first chapter, Steven Blader and Ramona Bobocel note that while existing theories of what motivates fairness in organizations have uncovered a variety of mechanisms regarding justice-related processes, there has been relatively little research targeted at empirically integrating or comparing the theories. As a result, the various theories that have been proposed to explain psychological processes in justice are not particularly unified, and researchers have tested their theories using widely different samples and methodologies. Blader and Bobocel argue that this makes it difficult to compare the theories, and in particular that this poses a challenge for determining the relative utility of the individual theories for explaining justice phenomena. What is needed, therefore, is a common framework that can be used to directly test and empirically compare the validity of the various theories and the circumstances under which each may be most relevant. Blader and Bobocel further propose that such a framework can be developed by systematically examining the factors that influence whether, and how, employees construe perceptions and evaluations of justice. To this end, these authors carefully examine people's subjective evaluations of justice and their reactions to perceived justice and injustice. Blader and Bobocel argue that studying the subjectivity of justice judgments may reveal more in-depth knowledge of how people's motivations influence justice judgments. This may yield an innovative approach to testing the validity of various justice theories and the circum-

stances under which the theories are most likely to operate in organizations.

In the second chapter, Eric van Dijk and Ann Tenbrunsel investigate how fairness and justice play a role in bargaining processes in organizations and management. These authors note that the question of what motivates bargainers has been the subject of an ongoing debate between social psychologists and economists. Van Dijk and Tenbrunsel argue that this debate has concentrated on the issue of whether bargainers are mainly driven by self-interest, or whether they are driven by fairness concerns, and that opposing findings have been obtained and reported in the research literature. In the Van Dijk and Tenbrunsel chapter, the authors seek to integrate these findings by examining the role that information asymmetry, power differences, and social value orientation play in ultimatum bargaining situations. The authors also expand the current debate by exploring the role of ethics, in particular the role that deception plays in resolving the tension between self-interest and fairness.

In the third chapter, Stephen Gilliland and Layne Paddock argue that traditional theories of organizational justice, such as fairness heuristic theory and fairness theory, have limited utility for understanding fairness perception processes because each theory discusses somewhat different portions of the process. By integrating thus far largely isolated justice theories with recent work on how people make decisions in naturalistic contexts, these authors address aspects of the fairness perception process that until now had been missing in existing models of organizational justice. Building on image theory, Gilliland and Paddock scrutinize how people actually form justice perceptions, studying thus far unexamined aspects of this process and integrating several existing justice theories. The resulting model that these authors put forward, justice integration theory, focuses on the concept of framing evaluations, the interrelatedness of images of fair treatment and outcomes, the emphasis on violations as a basis for fairness reactions, and the distinction between automatic versus more controlled evaluations of fairness. The authors conclude their chapter by putting forward propositions and ideas for future research related to each of the elements of justice integration theory, and discuss important themes that emerge from this theory.

In the fourth chapter, Suzanne Masterson, Zinta Byrne, and Hua Mao focus on the distinction between interpersonal and informational fairness. Despite empirical support demonstrating the distinctiveness of employees' perceptions of these two interactional justice dimensions, the authors argue that further conceptual development is needed to fully understand the nature of managers' behaviors leading to such perceptions. Interpersonal justice behaviors include treating others with respect, dignity, and politeness, showing concern and kindness, and considering others' view-

points. In contrast, informational justice behaviors are identified as providing reasonable explanations for decisions, being candid in communication, and providing timely communication. Masterson et al. propose that interpersonal and informational justice behaviors have different antecedents, and thus are driven by different underlying mechanisms. More specifically, these authors argue that the extent to which managers engage in interpersonal justice behaviors is dependent on stable individual differences including personality and values. In contrast, these authors note, the extent to which managers engage in informational justice behaviors is more dependent on the situational context. Masterson and associates then develop research propositions identifying representative antecedents of each of these dimensions of interactional justice, and conclude with suggestions for future research.

## **PART II: APPLYING THEORIES TO MANAGERIAL DECISIONS**

In the fifth chapter of the volume, and the first chapter of the second part which focuses on applying theories to managerial decision-making, Linda Skitka and Jesus Bravo extend their accessible identity model (AIM) to improve our understanding of what motivates fairness in organizations. After introducing AIM, these authors set out to apply their theory to the controversy of whether family-friendly policies in the workplace are fair or not. Building on the two core propositions of AIM (that people are most likely to think about justice and fairness when self-relevant values and goals are highly accessible or activated; and that how people define fairness depends on which aspect of the self dominates the salient self-concept), Skitka and Bravo put forward hypotheses about who might spontaneously think about the fairness of family-friendly policies and why. In doing so, these authors explain and predict why proponents and opponents of these policies have such different claims about whether family-friendly policies are fair or unfair. Finally, Skitka and Bravo formulate how AIM can be applied in work settings and, in doing so, put forward novel predictions about how to resolve organizational conflicts, especially conflicts that focus on different claims as to what is fair or unfair.

In chapter six, Karl Aquino, Americus Reed, Marcus Stewart, and Debra Shapiro apply insights from self-regulatory identity theory to explain and predict reactions toward organizational policies that aim to enhance fairness in organizations. These authors explain how dual attitudes towards target members of out-groups influence fairness judgments of social policies designed to assist members of these groups. Their model emphasizes the role of identity-driven processes that either neutralize or reinforce the link between negative implicit attitudes and fairness judg-

ments by influencing the expansiveness of a person's scope of justice. They subsequently apply their model to examples of how different identities play an important role in organizational life. The authors conclude with an extensive discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of their model and the application of the theory in organizations.

In chapter seven, David Patient and Daniel Skarlicki apply insights from the organizational justice literature to examine interactional justice as a dependent variable (as opposed to an independent variable). These authors present psychological factors that encourage or impede the communication of bad news to those directly impacted by this news. Their model proposes that the communication of bad news is influenced by communicator empathy (in terms of other-oriented empathic concern and self-oriented personal distress), feelings of self-worth, and moral maturity. Taken together, these characteristics predict why managers do not always employ fair treatment when delivering bad news. The model also suggests which factors are important for motivating managers to do the right thing when communicating with their employees. Finally, Patient and Skarlicki apply these insights to managerial practice and discuss how the issues revealed in this chapter can be studied carefully among people working in organizations.

In chapter eight, Carol Kulik applies insights from the organizational justice literature to explain an individual's proactive behaviors to defend an organization against outside threats. In doing this, Kulik's chapter examines the issue of "corporate championship," defined as the issue of when people will stand up to defend organizations that are criticized or accused of wrongdoing. Kulik is careful to note why corporate championship should be distinguished from organizational citizenship. Furthermore, building on the literatures on organizational identification and organizational justice, she develops a model of corporate championship, and suggests important factors that may explain when an individual will defend an organization as opposed to protect his or her self-identity by disassociating from the organization.

### **PART III: COMMENTARY**

We thought it important to close this book with a commentary on the state of the science of organizational justice, hence ending the volume with an overview of what the justice field does and does not know when studying justice in organizations, the caveats of which researchers in our domain should be aware, and the implicit or explicit assumptions we have correctly or incorrectly put forward in the last 2 decades or so. We were fortunate that Gerold Mikula, a well-respected and highly-esteemed colleague,

accepted our invitation to review the organizational justice field as critically as he could. In his commentary, Mikula discusses the subjectivity of evaluations of justice and problems that may follow from its disregard; the measurement of justice judgments and problems with indirect justice judgment measures; the distinction between instrumental and noninstrumental accounts of why people care about justice and the lack of theories considering other concerns about justice; the question of whether the notion of justice is actually needed as an explanatory concept in some of our theories; and the meaningfulness of the term organizational justice.

By examining what motivates fairness and justice in organizations, by reviewing recent theories related to this important element of social issues in management, by noting some important applications of the scientific literature, and by putting forward some critical comments, we believe that the current volume might further scientists' attempts to better understand social issues in management, and may motivate managers to take appropriate actions to ensure fairness in organizations.

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