COOPERATION IN GROUPS
Essays in Social Psychology
General Editors: MAHZARIN BANAJI, Yale University, and MILES HEWSTONE, University of Cardiff

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COOPERATION IN GROUPS: Procedural Justice, Social Identity, and Behavioral Engagement

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Introduction

People vary in how much effort they exert on behalf of the groups to which they belong. It probably is easy for most of us to think of people who always are ready to step up and help their group (i.e., to volunteer and to take on responsibility for meeting the group’s needs). It may be even easier to think of those who never voluntarily take on any added obligations, and who are generally uninvolved in their groups.

What predicts these differences in people’s behavior in groups? Why do some people engage more in the groups to which they belong than do others? In this book, we present and test a psychological model for understanding why people cooperate with the groups, organizations, or societies to which they belong. In other words, we are concerned about exploring the factors that shape cooperative behavior within groups. While many factors may be important in shaping people’s behavior, we focus specifically on people’s motivations.

Individuals usually have considerable latitude to determine the extent and nature of their behavioral engagement with the groups to which they belong. They may choose to expend a great deal of effort on promoting the goals and functioning of the group, they may take a passive role, or they may engage in behaviors targeted toward harming the group and its goals. The choices people make regarding their behavioral engagement with the group have important implications for the group’s functioning and viability. Our goal is to understand the factors that influence these choices.

In order to understand the phenomena we are concerned with, consider an example from a type of group with which we are familiar: an academic department within a university. There is tremendous variation in the way that employees can act within such a work setting. Many faculty and staff take a generally passive stance toward their work. They do their jobs—no more and no less. Others put in extra energy by coming in on weekends, staying late at night, helping other people’s students and, in many other ways, doing things that help the university to function more effectively. Most of us can think of the one or two people within any office or department who generally are viewed as making the group operate
smoothly because of their exceptional willingness to go beyond the formal requirements of their jobs. Likewise, many of us may be familiar with workplaces where the overall level of cooperative behaviors is higher than it is elsewhere. The forces that drive these differences in motivation between individuals and social settings are the phenomena we seek to understand in this book.

We recently experienced this distinction ourselves when our computer malfunctioned while we were trying to complete a talk for an upcoming conference. One computer technician began to help fix the problem, but then noticed that it was approaching 5 p.m.—time to quit! He expressed sadness, but told us we would have to wait for repairs. As it turned out, this was not a problem. Another technician stepped forward and volunteered to stay late. In fact, he called a friend and postponed a dinner engagement until our problem was solved. This behavior was not a required part of the technician’s job, but illustrates the willingness of one person to cooperate to promote the overall success of the group.

Such cooperative efforts on the part of individual group members not only are important in work groups; they matter in a wide variety of types of groups. Consider the example of communities. Neighborhoods and cities depend heavily on the willingness of some citizens to take on civic responsibilities, ranging from participation in neighborhood watches and charity drives to involvement in government committees. Most of these activities involve issues or problems that interest the citizens involved, but their participation aids the general community more broadly. Hence, while this discussion will focus on cooperation in work settings, we mean to be making a more general argument about the benefits of cooperation within all types of groups.

Cooperative behavior can take many forms, all of which help to make groups more effective and viable. Groups simply function better when the people within them engage in prosocial acts of cooperative behavior that help the group. These prosocial behaviors help the group irrespective of why people engage in them. We do not know why the technician in the example above was willing to stay late and help us. He may have been motivated by his loyalty to the department, by his personal liking of us, or by the hope that we would recommend him for a promotion. Regardless of his motivation, the group benefited from this behavior, since we moved forward and prepared our paper in a timely fashion.

Although cooperative behavior of the type we have outlined is valuable irrespective of why people choose to engage in it, our goal here is to explore the reasons that people have for helping or not helping the groups to which they belong. In other words, our concern here is with understanding the motivations that underlie the willingness to cooperate. Through such an understanding, we can better explain: (a) why it is that people value group membership and (b) what groups mean to individuals. Based on this information, groups may be able to promote initiatives that foster greater engagement by people in their groups. Furthermore, considering these underlying motivations is valuable because it facilitates our comprehension of human behavior more generally.

Before launching into our analysis of cooperation with groups, it is important to clarify what we mean by the term cooperation. The term cooperation is used in various research areas of psychology. In the negotiation and decision-making lit-
eratures, for example, the term cooperation is opposed to the idea of competition. Negotiations are viewed as mixed motive situations in which both cooperative and competitive motivations are involved. Cooperation develops from similarity of preferences while competition develops from divergent preferences. This conceptualization of cooperation refers to behavior that jointly benefits both parties (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). So, if a person feels that there is an agreement in which both he or she and the other party will gain something at the same time, he or she will cooperate in the sense of taking actions designed to make that agreement happen. These might involve making concessions to the other person or trying to problem solve.

The relationship between a person and a group to which he or she belongs does not involve cooperation versus competition. Instead, people have to make a decision about how actively to engage themselves in the group by taking actions that will help the group to be effective and successful. This type of cooperation is similar to what social psychologists refer to as helping behavior or proactive social behavior (Derlega & Grzelak, 1982). These literatures focus on the degree to which people within groups, organizations, and societies engage in such beneficial behaviors.

In other words, we define cooperation in a different sense than do those concerned with mixed motive games. In our terms, cooperation refers to whether or not people act to promote the goals of the group. We do not expect the alternative to this form of cooperation to be competition with the group but, rather, a lack of cooperation. By not cooperating, people are acting on their own and without regard to the group as an entity. When cooperating, however, they are acting to help promote the group and its goals. So, in our sense of the word, cooperation primarily refers to people’s behavior vis-à-vis the group.

In both senses of cooperation, there are some potential costs to the individual, be it in terms of the potential resources forsaken or in terms of the costs of working on behalf of the group. But the focus of these two senses of cooperation is different, as are the literatures from which they originate. We want to emphasize the point that we are using the word cooperation only as it relates to group members’ behavioral decisions about whether or not to act in the interests of the group.

Our concept of cooperation is similar to that in the literature on social dilemmas, which recognizes that there is a conflict between individuals’ immediate personal or selfish interests and the actions that maximize the interests of the group (Komorita & Parks, 1994). Put differently,

social dilemmas can be defined as situations in which the reward or payoff to each individual for a selfish choice is higher than that for a cooperative one, regardless of what other people do; yet all individuals in the group receive a lower payoff if all defect than if all cooperate. (Smithson & Foddy, 1999, pp. 1–2)

Hence, the group urges the person to put aside his or her immediate concerns and to act on behalf of the group by cooperating. The key issue, as in our study, is with the degree to which people engage in cooperative behavior on behalf of their group.
The paradox that underlies the social dilemma literature is that, in the long term, people have an interest in the well-being of the group. Hence, short-term self-interest, if widely acted on, hurts group members. This situation exists in many groups. People's true interests lie in maintaining groups over the long term. For this reason, we would not want to treat self-interest in an oversimplified way. People have both a short-term and a long-term self-interest. The advancement of long-term self-interest may require efforts to limit the pursuit of short-term self-interest, even by self-interested actors.

### Types of Cooperation in Groups

Ultimately, our analysis is based on judgments about the type of cooperative behaviors that are wanted from the members of groups. To address this question, we first make a basic distinction between two forms of cooperation.

#### Two Forms of Cooperative Behavior

We differentiate between discretionary cooperative behavior and mandatory cooperative behavior. Both forms of cooperative behavior involve acts of cooperation, but these two forms of cooperation describe different classes of cooperative behavior. Mandated cooperation occurs when people engage in behavior that is dictated or required by group rules or norms. Some rule or policy of the group prescribes the terms and guidelines of the behavior.

In contrast, discretionary behavior occurs when people engage in behavior that is not directly required by the rules or norms of group membership. Thus, our first distinction between types of cooperative behavior involves the source of the behavior. Mandatory behaviors originate from external sources (group rules), while discretionary behaviors originate within the group members themselves. For example, carrying out the duties prescribed in one's job description is mandated behavior. In contrast, picking up trash on the office floor or fixing paper jams in the photocopier is something that people may or may not do (unless they are employees for whom these tasks are mandatory).

It is worth taking a moment to explain our view that the performance of mandated behaviors can be cooperative in nature, since this notion may not seem intuitive. What is cooperative about doing what one is required to do? As we discussed earlier, group members usually have considerable latitude in how they carry out their group-related tasks. This latitude includes some freedom in the energy that they put into doing what is required and in the quality with which they carry out those tasks. So, for instance, employees can do their jobs in an adequate manner, carrying out their duties as specified without much emphasis on the quality of their work or the nature of the tasks specified in their job descriptions.

Alternatively, employees can perform the same mandated behaviors with an emphasis on high performance and with a concern that the tasks be completed in the best manner possible. Since people have the option of performing mandated behaviors in either of these ways, we believe that cooperation with the group is
a relevant concept to consider when examining mandated behaviors. People are cooperating with the groups to which they belong when they perform mandated behaviors with vigor and zeal, rather than with a focus on what is sufficient.

The enthusiasm with which people engage in their jobs has been recognized to be important across a wide variety of settings, even for individuals that work at low level jobs. Consider, for example, recent studies of the work engaged in by the working poor, many of whom have marginal jobs. Newman (1999) noted that, within menial jobs such as being a hotel maid, a central dimension differentiating employees was the degree to which they did or did not “invest themselves in [their] job any more than was necessary to get by” (p. 151).

This observation led Newman to study fast food employees (Newman, 1999). Even in these jobs, in which tasks generally are routinized and spelled out by training manuals, managers “cannot run a smooth operation if they have to micromanage every detail of the organization’s operation” (p. 176). In this setting, “ninety percent of [a manager’s] job involves coaxing his workforce to abide by the dozens of rules the firm imposes over the preparation of food. There are regulations covering virtually every move a worker makes in the production process” (p. 176). One manager interviewed indicated that,

while he has the authority to discipline workers who fail to cooperate, [he] has discovered what most managers come to know in time: a willing workforce is much easier to supervise. And as [he] points out, you cannot keep a constant watch on everyone. (p. 179)

So, managers look for employees who are “willing to go the extra mile … who can be instructed in the general goal—customer satisfaction—and let loose to achieve it” (Newman, 1999, p. 176). As one manager put it:

If they develop [properly], it’s not less work for you, but the things you cannot see they will do. You forget something, they will try to work on it. They will let you know … “Why don’t you do it this way? Because I think it is better,” so you will always get input from them. (p. 176)

These valuable employees were contrasted to those who “had no intention of doing more than was necessary to get by” (p. 177).

As these anecdotes suggest, even jobs that seem defined largely by rules and procedures depend heavily for their success on the motivation of employees. Managers cannot effectively supervise all aspects of job performance, or can do so only by investing large amounts of their time and effort in surveillance and instruction. As a consequence, it is important that the employees be motivated to do their jobs.

The distinction between two types of cooperative behavior—mandated and discretionary—is important to us because we expect to find that mandated behavior is motivated to a greater extent by instrumental judgments and concerns. Instrumental judgments involve people’s assessments of the likelihood that engaging in cooperative behavior will be rewarded or that failing to engage in cooperative behavior will be punished. In contrast, we believe that discretionary behavior is motivated primarily by people’s attitudes and internal values. That
is, we think that discretionary behavior is influenced by a person’s sense of what is desirable or right and appropriate to do.

One reason we predict that mandated behaviors will be instrumentally motivated is that rewards and punishments most typically are linked to the degree to which people engage in the behaviors that are required by their group. For example, salaries of employees are based on whether and how well they do their jobs. The group monitors how well people perform their required tasks because those are the criteria that define the behaviors which the group expects from the individual. Further, expectations are developed by the group member that doing one’s job well will lead to rewards.

In contrast, discretionary behaviors are not specified by the group and, hence, typically are not rewarded or punished by the group. The degree to which they are enacted is therefore likely to be more strongly dependent on whether people feel some internal motivation to engage in such discretionary behaviors. These internal motivations develop from attitudes and values, such as feelings about the legitimacy of group authorities or about commitment to the group. These attitudes and values provide people with personal reasons for acting cooperatively, as opposed to extrinsic reasons like the possibility of gaining rewards or the risk of being punished.

The Two Functions of Cooperative Behavior

A second dimension along which we distinguish behaviors is between two different functions of cooperative behavior. These involve the role that the behavior plays in the group’s functioning. Some cooperative behavior involves the performance of desired behaviors by group members. For example, job specifications and descriptions tell people what they should do on their jobs to facilitate the goals of their work groups. This class of cooperative behaviors, if performed, advances the group toward achieving its goals.

Another way in which people cooperate with groups involves limiting the extent to which they engage in undesirable behaviors. In other words, groups often have rules that restrict or regulate member behavior to ensure that people do not act in ways that hinder the functioning of the group. For example, people need to refrain from stealing from the group or destroying group property.

In sum, the second distinction we draw between two functions of cooperative behavior differentiates between those that proactively advance the group’s goals and those that limit behaviors which are obstacles to achieving the group’s goals. What this suggests is that people cooperate with groups both by doing things that help the group in a proactive manner and by refraining from doing things that hurt the group. We refer to both of these types of behavior (or nonbehavior) as cooperation, since people make choices along each of these dimensions as to whether they are going to do things that help (or do not hurt, as the case may be) the group.

The combination of these two dimensions of cooperative behavior leads to the classification shown in Table 1-1. Our goal will be to examine the factors that motivate group members to engage in each of these four types of cooperative behavior.
TABLE 1-1. Types of cooperative behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function of the behavior</th>
<th>Forms of cooperative behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting the group's goals</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limiting behaviors that harm the group</td>
<td>Discretionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extra-role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two Types of Motivation for Behavior

There are two basic reasons that people might engage in cooperative behaviors. These reasons are defined within the basic model of human motivation articulated by Lewin in his writings on field theory (Gold, 1999). One source of motivation is the basic human desire to maximize gain and minimize loss in interactions with others (i.e., people's "instrumental" or "self-interested" motivation). This motivation leads people to shape their actions to be consistent with the environmental contingencies within a particular situation.

The assumption underlying instrumental models is that the structure of the group, and of situations within the group, affects the behavior of group members by shaping the contingencies associated with various types of behavior. This assumption about the nature of human motivation leads to management strategies that seek to change behavior within the group by altering the contingencies within particular situations.

Reward-driven incentive systems encourage desired behaviors by rewarding those behaviors. Such strategies focus on the social facilitation of behavior that benefits the group, but may not benefit the individual. Punishment-driven sanctioning systems discourage undesired behavior by punishing those behaviors. They focus on the social regulation of behavior that is beneficial individually, but that hurts the group.

The roots of these approaches in management theory lie in the work of F. W. Taylor (1911), who argued for the need for clearly specified job tasks managed by highly structured lines of command and motivated by clear and specific systems of incentives and sanctioning. These models continue to dominate thinking within industrial settings (Braverman, 1974; Haslam, in press; Kanigel, 1997; Locke, 1982; Merkle, 1980; Thompson & Warhurst, 1998; Waring, 1991). They are found widely in discussions of "pay for performance," "reinforcement-based leadership," and many other instrumental management models.

Increasingly, however, social scientists have recognized the limits of these command-and-control approaches to managing conflict. This is true of organizational theories concerned with the management of employees (Pfeffer, 1994). It also is true of political and legal authorities interested in social regulation (Tyler, 1990) and in the encouragement of voluntary civic behavior (Green & Shapiro, 1994).
All of these researchers suggest that it is difficult to manage groups which rely only on the ability to reward or punish group members.

The second type of motivation, originally outlined by Lewin in his discussion of "field theory," is internal motivation (Gold, 1999). Internal motivations develop from within the individual. They reflect the desire of people to behave in particular ways. Such individual predispositions are long term and are seen as a tendency for a person to behave in particular ways across situations and over time. This tendency is distinct from the particular external reward-cost contingencies found in specific situations.

Two types of internal motivation will be considered in this analysis. The first are attitudes. Attitudes reflect people's feelings and desires—the things that they want to do. It is expected that these motivational forces will influence the willingness of group members to act out of their own volition in ways that help the group. That is, these motivational forces are voluntary and encourage self-facilitation.

The second type of internal motivational force is a person's values—the things that they feel that they ought to do. People learn values and feelings of obligation, which discourage them from engaging in actions that might be personally beneficial or desirable but that violate group rules. So, a person’s moral values or feelings of obligation to the group and its rules tell him or her not to cheat or steal. These forces lead to self-regulatory behavior.

In both the case of attitudes and of values, the key difference with internally motivated behavior is that the behavior involved is distinct from environmental contingencies. Instead, it is shaped by internal motivational forces. In that sense, it is voluntary or self-regulating. People help their group because they feel personally committed to group success, and they follow group rules because they feel a responsibility to do so. In either case, the group does not need to shape behavior by creating environmental contingencies which create incentives or risks that impact on people's expected gains and losses.

Our argument is that cooperative behavior of each of the four types outlined potentially can be influenced by four motivational factors: attitudes, values, incentives, and sanctions. Although each of these four factors potentially can influence any of the four cooperative behaviors outlined, we expect that the relationship between attitudes, values, and cooperative behavior will be especially strong for discretionary behaviors. Since discretionary behaviors are not linked directly to incentives and sanctions, the extent to which they occur is most likely to be related to the degree to which there are internal motivational reasons for engaging in these cooperative behaviors.

Although this study explores the role of these motivations on people's connections to group authorities and institutions, these same two types of motivation also can be seen in other settings. Consider the case of the informal social groups that exist within formal groups. People also may be motivated by their friends and coworkers. Informal social groups can motivate individuals by using incentives or sanctions. For example, people that work harder than is dictated by informal group norms may be informally sanctioned by their group, while those who follow those norms may receive the help of others when they encounter
problems. In addition, informal groups can motivate individuals by encouraging the development of internal values linked to the standards of the group. In this case, people do not break informal group rules because they have come to agree with the underlying reasons for those rules; that is, they may have internalized the importance of the rules. Further, when people break social rules, they may feel shame that is linked to their internalized sense that other people will disapprove of their actions and think that those actions reflect badly on their character (Scheff, 1988, 1995, 1997). These feelings of shame can serve as a motivation for generating and maintaining voluntary adherence to informal group norms (Braithwaite, 1989).

The first goal of our study is to directly examine the influence of attitudes, values, incentives, and sanctions on each of the four types of cooperative behavior that have been outlined.

Justice and Cooperation

Our second goal is to examine the influence of judgments about the nature of the group on the behavior of group members. Here, our interest is in the dynamics of authority frameworks within groups. In particular, we will examine the role of justice motivations in shaping people's reactions to groups. This issue is theoretically important because it allows us to explore the degree to which people's sense of justice or injustice shapes what they think, feel, and do in groups. If justice motivates thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, then this indicates one important way in which the structure of a group influences the behavior of the people within that group. It does so by shaping their views about the fairness of the group. These findings also point to policy implications. They suggest that we can encourage desirable behavior from the people in groups by creating group frameworks that are experienced as fair.

When people are making a decision about how much and in what way they will invest themselves in the group, they make evaluations of group characteristics. We will compare the role of three such judgments in encouraging supportive attitudes and values and in stimulating cooperative behaviors. Those three judgments are: (a) the degree to which the decisions made in the group lead to favorable outcomes for the person, (b) the degree to which the decisions made in the group lead to fair outcomes for the person, and (c) the degree to which decisions in the group are made through fair processes.

One common image of people in groups is that their behavior is motivated primarily by the outcomes they receive from those groups. This image (which we will refer to as the self-interest perspective) develops from the assumption, rooted in social exchange theory, that people interact with others as part of an exchange of resources. In that exchange process, people are viewed as being motivated to maximize their gain in resources for themselves or, at least, to ensure that they will receive a fair number of resources relative to others (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). This perspective argues that people will be sensitive to the personal resources they receive during their interactions with the group. From a social exchange
perspective, the extent to which people will cooperate with other people or within groups is a reflection of the degree to which they view cooperating as a way to facilitate the acquisition of personally desired resources.

We will compare this image to a procedural justice perspective that suggests people are influenced by their judgments about the fairness or unfairness of the procedures used to make decisions in their group. A core finding in the prior procedural justice literature is that people are motivated by their concerns about the justice or injustice of group decision-making procedures in ways that are distinct from their judgments about their personal self-interest. In fact, prior research has suggested that procedural justice judgments often have more influence on people’s attitudes and behaviors than do their assessments of their personal self-interest (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997; Tyler & Smith, 1997).

We will test this procedural justice argument by examining the degree to which engagement in one’s group, as indexed by the willingness to cooperate, is linked to judgments about the justice of group procedures. Further, we will compare the role of procedural justice to the influence of personal gain judgments as predictors of the willingness to cooperate.

While our focus will be on the fairness of procedures, there is another aspect of the justice perspective that we also will consider. That is the argument that people are concerned not about maximizing personal gain, but about the fairness of the outcomes that they receive (i.e., a distributive justice perspective). As we have noted, this perspective is suggested by Thibaut and Walker (1975), who viewed distributive justice as the goal people seek in social interactions. It also is central to discussions of equity theory (Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). To test this perspective, we will evaluate the degree to which people react to outcome fairness, as opposed to outcome favorability and to procedural fairness.

Each of these three perspectives (personal gain, procedural justice, and distributive justice) presents a plausible basis for people’s evaluations of their groups. Beyond determining the criteria by which people may evaluate their groups, each of these perspectives suggests a plausible set of predictors concerning what motivates people to act cooperatively. Based on our prior research, we predict that procedural justice judgments will dominate people’s relationships with their groups. As will be seen in our review of the procedural justice literature, a wide variety of studies have demonstrated that people’s associations with groups, organizations, and societies are strongly linked to their judgments about the fairness of group procedures. These associations include people’s internalization of the group’s goals, evaluations of group authorities and institutions, willingness to defer to those authorities, and willingness to engage in voluntary cooperative behaviors that aid their group. In other words, we predict that procedural justice judgments will be the primary determinants of group members’ attitudes, values, and cooperative behaviors.

While prior research findings have linked procedural justice to a variety of attitudes and behaviors, there has been no effort to fully articulate and test an integrated model of the behavioral effects of procedural justice judgments. We
articulate and test just such a model here. One aspect of our model specifies that the attitudes that are predicted by procedural justice account for some of the observed relationship that exists between procedural justice and cooperative behavior. Further, as we test our model, we will include the possible alternative underpinnings of cooperative behavior described above (distributive justice and personal gain) in order to compare their effects with those of procedural justice. Consistent with our earlier discussion about rewards and mandated behavior, we expect that these outcome-focused constructs may primarily predict mandated cooperative behavior, while discretionary behavior will find its origins in procedural evaluations.

The Meaning of Procedural Justice

In addition to examining the importance of procedural justice, we also will be concerned with understanding its meaning. In other words, what do people mean when they indicate that an organization’s procedures are fair? We will distinguish among three models that potentially might define the meaning of procedural justice. First, people might define the fairness of procedures in terms of the favorability of their outcomes from the procedure. In this case, fair procedures would be those that lead to outcomes people desire. Second, people might define the fairness of procedures in terms of the fairness of their outcomes from the procedure. In these terms, fair procedures would be those that lead to fair outcomes. These factors already are familiar, since we outlined their potential importance in the Justice and Cooperation section.

The third set of elements involves aspects of the way that decisions are made. They define the fairness of procedures through elements of procedures that communicate process-based information. These elements provide information about the procedures of the group. In other words, procedures are evaluated not by the outcomes to which they lead but by the relational information that they convey. We have argued that “relational” criteria include assessments of neutrality, the trustworthiness of the authorities, and the degree to which people are treated with dignity. We will collectively refer to these as the relational elements of procedures (Tyler & Lind, 1992).

In this analysis, we will draw on the relational framework of Tyler and Lind (1992) and examine the impact of their three relational constructs. We expect this analysis to replicate prior findings that it is these relational issues which are key to defining the meaning of procedural justice, over and above the influence of either of the outcome assessments described above.

Second, we will discuss a new conceptual framework for understanding the meaning of procedural justice that we have outlined in detail elsewhere (Blader & Tyler, 1999a). This new framework is the four-component model of procedural justice shown in Table 1-2. In this new framework, we will distinguish between two aspects of processes: procedural criteria that are related to the quality of decision-making processes and procedural criteria that reflect the quality of the treatment people experience.
TABLE 1-2. The four-component model of procedural justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedural element</th>
<th>Rule of the group (Formal)</th>
<th>Actions of supervisor (Informal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of decision-making processes</td>
<td>Formal quality of decision making</td>
<td>Informal quality of decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of treatment</td>
<td>Formal quality of treatment</td>
<td>Informal quality of treatment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our goal in introducing this new framework is to change the level on which we understand the meaning of procedural justice. The relational model links fairness to particular procedural elements, such as neutrality, but does not organize the elements in terms of an overall conceptual framework. In our new model, we link people's concerns to two core conceptual issues: how decisions are made and how people are treated.

By creating basic conceptual categories, we are separating the components of procedural justice from the particular elements of the relational model. We expect that, in all situations, people will have basic concerns about: (a) the quality of the decision-making processes that occur and (b) the quality of the treatment that they receive. Some criteria, such as neutrality and consistency, are particularly linked to how decisions are made. Other criteria, such as respect for rights, are particularly linked to how people are treated. However, these specific elements may be organized in people's minds in different ways within different types of situations. Irrespective of these particular elements, however, we expect that there always will be a factor reflecting quality of decision-making concerns and a factor reflecting quality of treatment concerns.

Other elements plausibly might be found to be linked to either type of concern or to both. One example is trustworthiness, which may be linked to the judgment that high-quality decision-making procedures are being used, that people are receiving high-quality treatment during the decision-making process, or both. The degree to which each possibility is true will depend on the situation in which trust is being studied.

These models assume that people make distinct judgments about outcome favorability; outcome fairness; and quality of decision-making procedures, and treatment. We will test this assumption. We then will examine the impact of each of these judgments on people's evaluations of the fairness of group procedures, in order to best understand the meaning of procedural justice. We also will compare the utility of our current conceptualization to that of past procedural justice research.

In elaborating our model of procedural justice, we will make a further distinction between two sources of experience with procedures. The first source is
the formal rules of the group. The second is the particular authority to which a
member is responsible or with whom the group member interacts. We ex­
pect that people distinguish between these different sources of their experiences.
Specifically, we predict that people will respond to agents of the organization in
more personal terms than they respond to group rules.

These two sources of experience also may differ in other ways, such as their
relative influence on different behaviors and attitudes. For instance, since group
authorities may be more proximal determinants of group members' experience,
they may predict reactions that are based on the immediate environment. At the
same time, more formal influences, which tend to be more stable, may predict
reactions that are based on views of the group structure.

These two dimensions can be considered together in a table of the possible
antecedents of procedural fairness (Table 1-2). From our perspective, the key
contribution of this model is its creation of a conceptual framework within which
procedural elements, such as those identified by the relational model, can be
placed. We would expect some elements to be more closely linked to one category,
while other elements may be organized differently, depending on the situation.
However, in any situation, we would expect people to be concerned about both
of these basic categories of concern.

The Reasons for Cooperation: Resource Versus
Identity Concerns

We also will consider why people cooperate with groups and why people are
concerned about issues of procedural justice and injustice from the broader per­
spective of the images that social psychology has about why people interact with
others in groups.* Toward this end, we will consider two possible images regard­
ing the motivations that underlie both concerns about justice and cooperative
behavior.

The two images we will compare are linked to two basic psychological models
that provide distinct images of the motivations which lead people to interact with
others and that shape their behavior during such interactions. The first image
connects people's justice judgments and cooperative behaviors to their concerns
about the favorability or the fairness of the outcomes that they receive from their
group. These images are social exchange perspectives on the motives underlying
cooperation. They are based on the argument that cooperation develops from the
exchange of resources within groups.

As we have noted above, social exchange theory argues that people interact
with others to exchange resources. If so, then their judgments about their rela­
tionship to other people in the group and to the group itself should be dominated
by their assessments of the resources gained and lost through participation in a

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*Our concern is particularly about procedural justice. We have noted elsewhere that the
reasons people have for being concerned about procedural and distributive justice are not
identical (Tyler, 1994).
group. People ought to define justice through the lens of gains and losses. The exact nature of these outcome-based judgments either can focus exclusively on whether those outcomes maximize an individual's gains or on whether the outcomes themselves are perceived as fair. In either case, the individual is focused on outcomes, and should view all aspects of his or her group membership, including the fairness of procedures, from this vantage point.

A variation of this model is rooted in the conception of procedural justice articulated by Thibaut and Walker (1975, 1978)—procedural justice as a mechanism for delivering just outcomes. In an extended discussion about the purpose of focusing on procedural justice, these authors argued that people view the use of fair procedures as the most effective possible way to ensure the attainment of just outcomes. This conceptual viewpoint emphasizes the notion that people define procedural justice according to their evaluation of the control that procedures allow them over evidence presentation and, through that control, over outcomes. By attaining high levels of control, people are able to ensure for themselves the attainment of outcomes with which they are happy. Like the outcome favorability and distributive justice models, this model assumes that people's ultimate concern is with the nature of the outcomes they obtain from others. In this case, it is suggested that people are concerned about the fairness of the outcomes they obtain from their group.

The models of procedural justice that are based on outcome favorability and outcome fairness both view people's concerns about procedural justice, as well as their cooperative behaviors, as linked to their interest in the outcomes they obtain from groups. People cooperate with groups, according to these models, to secure desired outcomes; their focus on procedural justice is a way of ensuring that the distribution of those outcomes is reasonable and fair.

This view can be contrasted to the model based on social identity theory which argues that people interact with others to develop and maintain a group-based social identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Unlike the outcome-oriented models outlined above, this model has a fundamentally different perspective on the goals of social interaction. It does not view people as being primarily motivated by the desire to exchange resources. Instead, people are viewed as being motivated to create and maintain a favorable identity. They are aided in that effort by positive information about their relationship with the groups to which they belong.

In our prior work, we have used identity-based models as a basis for understanding why people use procedural justice as their central cue in evaluating their relationship to a group, organization, or society (Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996). This approach to understanding why people care about procedural justice is articulated in both our group-value model of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988) and our relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992). It can be extended to address the question of why people cooperate in groups (Tyler, 1999a). In either case, the core argument is that people cooperate with groups because those groups perform an important role in sustaining a favorable social identity.

The resource-based and identity-based perspectives lead to very different predictions about the factors underlying individuals' cooperative behaviors and
justice-based judgments. Our prior work leads us to predict that people will care about procedural justice because procedural justice provides information that they view as relevant to their identities, and that these concerns will outpace the influence of resource-based antecedents of procedural justice. If people are focused on identity concerns, we predict that cooperative behavior will flow from status judgments, and procedural justice will be used as an index through which people evaluate their status.

Two status judgments are of concern in this study: pride and respect. Pride indicates people’s feelings about the status of their group. Respect indicates people’s feelings about their status within their group. Both judgments reflect status evaluations that are linked to group membership. As such, they reflect the role of group membership in defining the “social” self—the aspect of the self and self-identity that is linked to the groups to which a person is a member (Tyler, Kramer, & John, 1999). We predict that people will cooperate with groups if they feel proud of group membership and respected by their group. The influence of status judgments will be compared to people’s assessments concerning the level of resources they receive from their group. It is a central premise of the identity argument that status judgments impact attitudes, values, and behaviors.

In addition, to examine the role of pride and respect in encouraging cooperation, we will explore the role of identification with the group in shaping the same behaviors. Identification with a group reflects psychological engagement with that group—the merger of self and group. People who identify with a group think of themselves in terms of group membership—(e.g., “I am a Harvard professor,” “I am a woman”). We will examine the degree to which such identity-based engagement leads to behavioral engagement in the group.

We also expect people’s justice judgments to be associated with status assessments. From our perspective, the central role that procedural justice plays in shaping values, attitudes, and behaviors reflects the fact that people use procedural justice as a cue to evaluate their status. They use it to evaluate both the status of their group and their status within the group. When group processes are seen as fair, people perceive both the group’s status and their relative status within the group to be positive. Consequently, we predict that justice judgments will be linked to direct indicators of status.

We also expect to find evidence that procedural justice directly influences people’s identities. In other words, we predict not only that procedural justice is used as a measure of status, but that it also has a direct impact on the content of one’s identity. To test this argument, we will examine the degree to which fair treatment leads to greater identification with the group. Our concern here is with the degree to which people draw their sense of self from their membership within a particular group (i.e., from their “social identity”).

The Overall Model

Our overall framework is presented in Figure 1-1. In that conceptual figure, we show how each of the constructs and questions we have presented in this
THE MEANING OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

Quality of decision-making process

Quality of treatment

Outcome fairness

Outcome favorability

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE AND COOPERATION

Procedural justice

Connections to the group

Pride, respect

Attitudes, values

Motivations for cooperation

Incentives, sanctions

Resources received from the group

Forms of cooperative behavior

TYPES OF COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR

FIGURE 1-1. The group engagement model.

chapter relate to one another and how we propose they will come together to determine individual behavior in groups. Although many of the issues we address have been examined in prior research, our goal is to provide a framework that integrates all of these issues within a common conceptual model. We call it the group engagement model because it provides a framework for understanding why people engage in the groups to which they belong. We will explore this question throughout this book and will provide support for the views we have outlined in this introduction.
References

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