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### An actor-focused model of justice rule adherence and violation: The role of managerial motives and discretion.

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An Actor-Focused Model of Justice Rule Adherence and Violation:

The Role of Managerial Motives and Discretion

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## Abstract

Research on organizational justice has focused primarily on the receivers of just and unjust treatment. Little is known about why managers adhere to or violate rules of justice in the first place. We introduce a model for understanding justice rule adherence and violation. We identify both cognitive motives and affective motives that explain why managers adhere to and violate justice rules. We also draw distinctions among the justice rules by specifying which rules offer managers more or less discretion in their execution. We then describe how motives and discretion interact to influence justice-relevant actions. Finally, we incorporate managers' emotional reactions to consider how their actions may change over time. Implications of the model for theory, research, and practice are discussed.

An Actor-Focused Model of Justice Rule Adherence and Violation:  
The Role of Managerial Motives and Discretion

A quarter century of research on organizational justice has revealed a great deal about how employees react to justice rule adherence and violation on the part of their managers (for a historical review, see Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005). Research suggests that employees evaluate justice along a number of dimensions. Distributive justice—the perceived fairness of decision outcomes—is judged by gauging whether outcomes are consistent with accepted allocation norms, such as equity (Adams, 1965; Leventhal, 1976). Procedural justice—the perceived fairness of decision-making processes—is judged by gauging whether procedures are consistent, accurate, unbiased, correctable, and provide mechanisms for voice and input (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Informational justice—the perceived adequacy of explanations—is fostered by honest and detailed accounts for key events (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993). Finally, interpersonal justice—the perceived sensitivity of interpersonal communication—is fostered by treating employees respectfully and refraining from improper comments (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993).

Past research has illustrated the importance of the justice rules by showing that managers' adherence to (and violation of) them is associated with important employee attitudes and behaviors. For example, employees may react to justice rule adherence by believing that they are valued by the organization and that their manager is a legitimate authority figure (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992). Employees may react to justice rule violation by doubting whether they are respected by the organization, triggering negative feelings such as hostility, moral outrage, and righteous indignation (Folger, 2001). Such responses explain why distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal justice have been linked to job satisfaction, trust,

organizational commitment, citizenship behavior, and counterproductive behavior (see Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001, for a meta-analytic review).

Although the work described above has resulted in a deeper understanding of how employees react to justice rule adherence and violation on the part of managers, a critical gap exists in the literature. Almost without exception, researchers have adopted a *receiver perspective*—focusing on the beneficiaries of just actions or the victims of unjust actions by examining how they form justice perceptions and how those perceptions alter their attitudes and behaviors (for more discussion of this gap, see, for example, Colquitt & Greenberg, 2003; Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Gilliland & Schepers, 2003). Though a receiver perspective is imperative for understanding justice, scholars have neglected a critical question: “Why do managers adhere to or violate rules of justice?” Examining this question requires moving from a receiver perspective to an *actor perspective*, focusing on predictors of managers’ justice rule adherence and violation.

The predominance of the receiver focus is surprising given that much of the early theorizing in the justice literature was from an actor’s perspective. For example, Leventhal’s (1980) seminal theorizing focused on how actors (i.e., allocators) rely on various allocation rules to foster a sense of distributive and procedural justice. Similarly, Deutsch (1975) (see also Meindl, 1989) examined the conditions under which managers choose among equity, equality, and need allocation strategies to foster distributive justice. In addition, Folger and Bies (1989) described informational and interpersonal justice as “managerial responsibilities,” while Greenberg (1990) and Greenberg, Bies, and Eskew (1991) framed those justice rules as strategies for managing impressions. Returning to an actor perspective could have important theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically speaking, it would provide a more complete picture of justice in organizations by considering the other side of the justice equation: namely, the

manager. Practically speaking, it could help practitioners curtail injustice before it occurs by building an understanding of exactly why managers violate justice rules. Without understanding why managers violate justice rules, it is difficult to create interventions that are targeted at increasing managerial justice rule adherence.

The utility of an actor focus is well-documented in other literatures that share similarities with the justice literature. For example, the social psychological literatures on aggression (e.g., Tedeschi & Felson, 1994) and prejudice and discrimination (e.g., Dion, 2003) have long histories of examining actors. Indeed, research on actors in these literatures has outweighed research on recipients. Presumably, this differential focus stems from the optimistic view that harmful acts such as aggression and discrimination could be reduced if the psychology of the actor was fully understood (Dion, 2003). In the organizational literature, the study of sexual harassment also has been enriched by an actor perspective. O’Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, and Griffin (2000, p. 384) noted, “although an understanding of target perceptions and reactions is important, we believe that sexual harassment cannot be understood or prevented until more is known about the central player in these interactions: the sexual harasser.” We echo this sentiment and propose that to fully understand organizational justice, both recipients (subordinates) and actors (managers) need to be considered.

With that in mind, the purpose of this manuscript is to introduce a model that seeks to explain justice rule adherence and violation on the part of managers. The model is shown in Figure 1. To guide its development, we draw primarily from the literature on aggression in order to identify both cognitive and affective reasons, or *motives*, that may underlie managers’ adherence to and violation of justice rules (e.g., Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Berkowitz, 1993; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). Theories of aggression also recognize the influence of opportunity on

individual actions (Anderson & Bushman, 2002), and thus we also draw from models within the strategic management literature on *managerial discretion* to specify the extent to which managers have latitude over justice-relevant actions. We then integrate these two perspectives and propose that the relationship between managers' motives for the adherence to and violation of justice rules and the actual expression of those motives depends on the amount of discretion afforded by the type of justice action involved. Finally, we take our model one step further by describing not only how managers' may react following justice rule adherence and violation, but also how their reactions may influence subsequent motives. Thus, like theories of aggression (e.g., Anderson & Bushman, 2002), our model acknowledges that justice rule adherence and violation is not only a function of personal and situational factors but also an ongoing process comprised of multiple interactions between managers and subordinates over time. Before describing the model's components in greater detail, we first define our key constructs of justice rule adherence and violation.

#### Defining Justice Rule Adherence and Violation

As noted at the outset, the dimensions of organizational justice are composed of a number of justice rules that serve as the conceptual "building blocks" of the literature. These rules were articulated in the seminal theorizing that gave rise to the justice dimensions (Adams, 1965; Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993; Leventhal, 1976, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975) and are summarized in Table 1. We formally define justice rule adherence as managerial actions that act in accordance with the standards summarized in Table 1. By extension, we define justice rule violation as managerial actions that do not act in accordance with those standards. So, for example, a manager who provides an employee with voice regarding some key decision is engaging in justice rule adherence. Alternatively, a manager who treats an employee

inconsistently during a decision-making process is engaging in justice rule violation. As we detail in the sections to follow, such adherence or violation may be dictated by cognitive motives or may be the product of positive and negative affect at the relevant time period.

We should note that our model uses the terms “justice rule adherence” and “justice rule violation,” rather than “fair treatment” and “unfair treatment,” for two specific reasons. First, we do not believe that managers necessarily set out to be *unfair* at any sort of conscious level. They may, however, set out to be *unreceptive, inconsistent, biased, untruthful, or insincere* at a conscious level. Those actions may be taken in the interest of a number of goals, and often will be justified by the manager because of those goals. Consider, for example, a manager who denies an employee an appeal to a decision because he or she is concerned about a diminished power distance with that employee. That manager would likely acknowledge a lack of “correctability” but fail to define the action as “unfair” per se (after all, it was purportedly performed for reasons that may benefit the functioning of the department). Thus, focusing on reasons for the specific justice-relevant behaviors is likely more consistent with the way these phenomena are experienced by managers.

Second, “justice rule adherence” and “justice rule violation” are likely to be more descriptive perceptions whereas “fairness” and “unfairness” are likely to be more evaluative perceptions. Colquitt and Shaw (2005) noted that the words “fair” and “unfair” are more morally charged than many of the words that reflect the specific justice rules (e.g., equitable, consistent, accurate, correctable, representative, justified, proper), and they may therefore be more contaminated by affective reactions to the target of the perception. Indeed, Colquitt et al. (2001) showed that the justice rules, on a meta-analytic basis, only explain about half of the variance in “fairness perceptions.” That slippage likely conveys that fairness perceptions capture more than



just descriptive evaluations of the rules in Table 1. We would therefore expect actors and receivers to exhibit more interrater agreement regarding justice rule adherence than about fairness or unfairness.

Still, we acknowledge that such agreement will be probabilistic rather than absolute. Although we are not aware of any studies that have measured perceptions of rule adherence from multiple sources, a review of the leader-member exchange (LMX) literature can help shape expectations for agreement levels. Gerstner and Day (1995) showed that subordinate perceptions of LMX quality (a variable that is often highly correlated with interpersonal and informational justice) tended to be moderately correlated with manager perceptions of LMX quality. Our focus in the present manuscript remains on the actor's own perceptions, as those are likely to be the critical driver of the emotional outcomes shown in Figure 1. To the extent that the receiver agrees with those perceptions, the relevant emotional reactions may be stronger because the receiver may express sentiments that have an incremental impact on the actor's emotions—a possibility we further discuss below.

#### Managerial Motives for Justice Rule Adherence and Violation

Having defined justice rule adherence and violation, we turn our attention to the factors that may predict those behaviors. Following Simon (1964), we define a motive simply as a reason or cause for choosing one action over another. The question that follows, then, is: "What motives lead managers to either adhere to or violate justice rules?" Theory and research on aggression distinguishes between "cold" acts that are more controlled, premeditated, and motivated primarily by cognitive judgments of anticipated benefits, and "hot" acts that are more automatic, impulsive, and motivated primarily by affective states (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Berkowitz, 1993; Neuman & Baron, 1997). Organizational scholars have utilized this distinction

to understand the enactment of workplace behaviors such as organizational citizenship and deviance (Lee & Allen, 2002), as well as sexual harassment (O’Leary-Kelly et al., 2000). We extend this duality to the organizational justice literature and propose that managers adhere to and violate justice rules for both “cold,” cognitive reasons and “hot,” affective reasons. In the sections below, we describe each type of motive in detail.

### *Cognitive Motives*

A “cold,” cognitive approach to justice rule adherence and violation views managers as (boundedly) rational decision makers whose actions are guided by the expected probabilities of obtaining desired outcomes, along with their associated costs and benefits (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). From this perspective, managers adhere to and violate justice rules in anticipation of valued outcomes. Although, as we discuss below, justice-relevant actions themselves may serve as proximate outcomes, they may also serve as instrumental means to obtain distal outcomes (Leventhal, 1980). Tedeschi and Felson’s (1994) social interaction theory of aggression provides a useful framework for identifying specific goals that motivate actors’ behaviors. The authors identified three goals that aggressors possess: 1) to effect compliance in others, 2) to create and maintain desired identities, and 3) to maintain a belief in a just world. As we expand on below, each of these goals can be used to explain why managers adhere to or violate rules of organizational justice.

*Effecting compliance.* Managers are motivated to control and influence their environment, as doing so lies at the core of leadership (Mechanic, 1962). They have the capacity to do so as a result of the power they possess over such factors as rewards, punishments, and information (French & Raven, 1959; Yukl & Fable, 1991). We propose that managers adhere to and violate justice rules in an attempt to control their subordinates’ behaviors. More specifically,

we propose that both justice rule adherence and violation may be utilized instrumentally by managers to elicit desired levels of motivation and performance from their subordinates (Leventhal, 1976).

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) provides an explanation for why justice rule adherence would effect compliance in subordinates. Social exchanges refer to “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others” (Blau, 1964, p. 91). Social exchanges are guided by the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), whereby individuals are motivated to repay in kind those who have helped them. Over time, relationships in which both parties adhere to the norm of reciprocity may develop into high-quality social exchange relationships, which are characterized by mutual respect, trust, and expectations for the continued development of the relationship.

From a social exchange perspective, managers who adhere to rules of justice may do so out of an expectation that their subordinates will reciprocate the positive treatment. On this point, Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, and Taylor (2000, p. 740) noted that “employees perceive acts of fairness to be *contributions* that enhance the quality and desirability of their ongoing relationships. These contributions in turn obligate the employees to reciprocate in ways that preserve the social exchange relationships, through voluntary behaviors or attitudes that benefit the parties who treated them fairly.” It follows that managers’ adherence to all four justice dimensions are likely to trigger norms of reciprocity in employees, motivating them to engage in behaviors valued by their managers.

Although some managers may utilize justice rule adherence to effect compliance in their subordinates, others may believe that *violating* justice rules is the most effective way to influence employees. On this point, Tepper (2007, p. 265) noted, “a supervisor may mistreat subordinates

to elicit high performance or to send the message that mistakes will not be tolerated.” For example, a manager could allocate a less-than-equitable bonus to an employee in an effort to keep the employee “hungry for more,” or apply stricter than normal decision-making criteria in an effort to maximize the effort needed to achieve certain incentives. Similarly, a manager might intentionally withhold facts, or distort relevant figures, in an effort to keep employees working hard when goals have already been reached.

*Creating and maintaining desired identities.* The notion that individuals are interested in how others perceive and evaluate them has a long history in the social sciences (e.g., Goffman, 1959; Schlenker, 1980). Impression management is defined as “the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of them” (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 34). We propose that managers adhere to and violate justice rules as a means of impression management, such that justice rule adherence and violation is used instrumentally to create a desired social identity.

Greenberg (1990) argued that many acts by managers are “performed behind a ‘vener of justice’” (p. 119), and that justice rule adherence may be used instrumentally by managers to create a favorable identity. According to Greenberg (1990), “the desire to cultivate an impression of fairness is of great concern to managers” (p. 120), and justice is “used” by managers to attain their impression management goals. Justice rule adherence may be used proactively by managers to build a reputation of being a good boss. Alternatively, it may be a reaction to a situation in which the manager’s moral identity is called into question, prompting the manager to engage in self-protective actions (Greenberg, 1990; see also Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). Importantly, research indicates that managers are aware of the things they can do to cultivate a positive image, including publicly recognizing employee accomplishments, allowing employees to participate in

decision-making, and explaining processes and procedures to employees (Greenberg, 1988).

Although, in many cases, managers may adhere to justice rules in order to create a favorable image of themselves, there likely are times when managers violate justice rules in the pursuit of other desired identities. As Greenberg (1990) stated, “people sometimes seek identities that are not positive” (p. 119). As opposed to obtaining social approval, the goal of such identities is often to build power (Greenberg, 1990; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994), and at the extreme, managers may become “petty tyrants” (Ashforth, 1994). Managers may therefore violate justice rules in order to promote an image of “toughness”—to avoid appearing “soft.” As with rule adherence, such violation may be instigated either proactively (to assertively establish a desired image) or reactively (to protect one’s image following a threat or provocation). The literature on aggression points to several proactive reasons for engaging in negative actions which can be extended to justice rule violations. These include intimidation, demonstrating power, obtaining respect, and enhancing the credibility of future threats (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). For example, a manager may intentionally violate the propriety rule in an effort to intimidate or build one’s credibility.

As a reaction to threats or provocation, justice rule violation may be motivated by protective desires to “save face” (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). The role of threat and provocation as instigators of detrimental actions is an integral component of theories of aggression (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994) as well as prejudice and discrimination (Dion, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the latter of which has shown that threats to one’s self-concept motivate biased behavior and a general negativity toward others (e.g., Crocker, McGraw, Thompson, & Ingerman, 1987). Thus, threats and provocations such as receiving insults, being criticized, and having one’s authority challenged, all may spur a protective reaction by managers in the form of justice rule violation.

Such reactions may serve to “put employees in their place,” demonstrating that the manager cannot be disobeyed or questioned without costs. Thus, justice rule violations such as failing to provide employees with recognition, squelching voice attempts, withholding information, and treating employees disrespectfully all may be used by managers to create and maintain a desired image that reminds employees “who’s boss.”

*Maintaining a just world.* Thus far, we have proposed that managers adhere to and violate rules of organizational justice in order to effect compliance in others and to create and maintain desired identities. With both of these motives, justice rule adherence and violation are means through which more distal goals can be achieved. In some cases, however, managers may fulfill and violate justice rules for more proximate reasons—for reasons unto themselves. Lerner (1980) argued that people possess a justice motive that obligates them not only to observe rules of justice themselves, but also to expect others to do likewise. From this perspective, actors’ behaviors are driven by a concern to keep the “scales of justice” in balance in order to preserve a belief that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980). Ultimately then, justice is viewed as an end in itself. This implies that, in many cases, managers will be motivated to fulfill rules of justice such as allocating rewards equitably, suppressing biases, sharing pertinent information, and treating subordinates respectfully simply because they believe such actions are the right thing to do to maintain a just world.

In other cases, however, managers may be motivated to violate rules of justice in an effort to “balance the scales.” Lerner (1980) argued that the need to believe in a just world motivates individuals to rectify what they perceive to be offensive, norm-violating behavior by others. In their theory of aggression, Tedeschi and Felson (1994) noted that harmful actions are sometimes motivated by a desire for “retributive justice,” which refers to the belief that

antinormative, blameworthy actions should be vindicated. Targets of retributive actions are perceived by actors to deserve their treatment, as those actions are viewed as “just deserts” (Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002). This perspective suggests that managers may violate justice rules as a form of revenge in order to restore a belief in a just world following subordinates’ antinormative behavior.

Subordinates may engage in a number of antinormative actions that prompt managers to engage in retributive justice. Examples include shirking job duties, spreading negative gossip, behaving uncivilly, acting rudely toward others, and lacking punctuality (e.g., Messick, Bloom, Boldizar, & Samuelson, 1985). Whether a given manager who is knowledgeable of such actions violates justice rules in an effort to exact retributive justice will depend on the extent to which the action in question is judged as unjustified and internally-caused by the subordinate (Heider, 1958; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). Of course, retributive actions can be viewed as legitimate, particularly if blame is correctly placed and those actions are symmetric in severity to the precipitating event (Tripp, Bies, & Aquino, 2002). However, perceptual biases suggest that in many cases, managers’ retributive actions toward subordinates may not be warranted and/or may be asymmetrical in severity.

First, managers are likely to commit the “fundamental attribution error,” (Ross, 1977), over-attributing blame to subordinates. Second, individuals tend to weigh negative information more heavily than positive information (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), and so managers are likely to assess a subordinate’s antinormative behavior as overly severe. Such assessments of blame and severity are likely to result in more frequent and more disproportionately severe justice rule violations on the part of managers in the name of retributive justice. Thus, managers may violate justice rules by providing inequitable rewards, denying voice, lying to subordinates, and treating

them disrespectfully, even when subordinates' behaviors do not warrant such retribution. Based on the above, we propose the following:

*Proposition 1: Justice rule adherence and violation can be motivated by a variety of cognitive reasons, including effecting compliance, creating and maintaining desired identities, and maintaining a just world.*

#### *Affective Motives*

It is well known that not only is it what we think that influences our behaviors, but also how we feel. That is, in addition to cognition, affect (an umbrella term encompassing mood and emotion [Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996]) “moves us” (Elfenbein, 2007), energizing and prioritizing our behaviors. Specifically, affective experiences are accompanied by states of *action readiness*, which are impulsive, automatic urges for achieving a particular aim (Frijda, 2007). Theory and research on aggression long ago pointed to the role of negative affect in motivating harmful behaviors (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939; see also Berkowitz, 1993). In the organizational literature, the importance of affect to workplace attitudes and behaviors has been established (for a review, see Elfenbein, 2007). We acknowledge the significance of affect by proposing that in addition to the more “cold,” cognitive reasons described above, managers also fulfill and violate justice rules for “hot,” affective reasons. Traditionally, affect has been broadly distinguished according to its valence; that is, whether it is positive or negative (Watson, 2000), and we follow this distinction in our model.

In general, positive affect motivates individuals to engage in a number of actions that are prosocial in nature. Individuals experiencing positive affect attempt to increase joint benefits during negotiations, see situations from another's perspective more easily, cooperate more, are more open to information, share information more readily, and are kinder to others (Carnevale &



Isen, 1986; Estrada, Isen, & Young, 1997; Isen, 2000). Individuals may engage in such actions because being prosocial is reinforcing and helps to maintain positive affect (Clark & Isen, 1982). Many of these actions constitute behaviors that adhere to justice rules. For example, focusing on joint benefits should facilitate adherence to distributive justice rules, while taking another's perspective, cooperating, being open-minded, sharing information, and being kind fulfill procedural, informational, and interpersonal justice rules.

In contrast, negative affect motivates individuals to engage in actions that are antisocial in nature. Individuals experiencing negative affect are more likely to engage in discrimination by increasing the positive distinctiveness of their in-group (Clark & Isen, 1982). In addition, those experience negative affect are less articulate, more aggressive, and less attentive to norms of politeness (Berkowitz, 1993; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). Many of these actions may be construed as violations of justice rules. Engaging in discrimination violates distributive and procedural justice rules by adversely biasing outcomes and processes, failing to articulate one's position violates informational justice rules, and aggression and impoliteness violate rules of interpersonal justice.

A primary reason for such actions is that negative affective states are aversive, and thus individuals are motivated to behave in ways that they believe will reduce or eliminate the bad feelings (Larsen, 2000). One strategy for doing so is "catharsis" (i.e., the venting or purging of one's emotions), and research has shown that individuals vent their negative affect because they believe it will make them feel better (Bushman, Baumeister, & Phillips, 2001). Given that negative affect reduces inhibitions, interferes with cognitive processes used in moral judgment, and primes aggressive thoughts and scripts (Berkowitz, 2003; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994), harmful actions may be expressed rather than suppressed. This, coupled with the lower status of

subordinates, makes it especially likely that managers will mark them as easy targets on which their frustrations can be vented (Hampton, 1988). Overall then, negative affect provides an explanation for why “people with apparently normal moral standards sometimes behave reprehensively toward others” (Anderson & Bushman, 2002, p. 43).

Although positive and negative affective states felt by managers should influence their justice-relevant actions toward their subordinates in general, managers should be especially likely to target subordinates who elicited their affective states. Indeed, theories of aggression (e.g., Berkowitz, 1993), as well as other harmful behaviors such as counterproductive workplace behavior (e.g., Spector & Fox, 2002), stipulate that individuals responsible for eliciting emotions in others are particularly likely to be the targets of perpetrators’ actions. Thus, managers should adhere to justice rules toward subordinates who triggered positive affect but violate justice rules toward subordinates who triggered negative affect. Over time, repeated experiences of positive affect may develop into liking of a given subordinate, while repeated experiences of negative affect may develop into disliking of a given subordinate (Frijda, 1994). Such sentiments are critical because Scott, Colquitt, and Zapata-Phelan (2007) found that managers violated rules of interpersonal justice more often with subordinates whom they disliked. Based on the above, we propose:

*Proposition 2: Justice rule adherence and violation can be motivated by affective reasons, including maintaining positive affect (motivating justice rule adherence) and reducing negative affect (motivating justice rule violation).*

To summarize, we propose that managers adhere to and violate distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal justice rules for both cognitive and affective reasons. It is important to note that although cognition and affect are distinct mental functions (LeDoux, 1996)

that may independently predict phenomena (e.g., Lee & Allen, 2002), they are interlinked, as cognition can influence affect and vice-versa (Bower, 1981; Schachter & Singer, 1962). Thus, at any given time, a manager's justice-relevant actions may be driven by one of the proposed motives or by a combination of them. For example, feelings of negative affect may not only generate an automatic violation of justice rules, but may also spark a more cognitive motive to create an image of toughness. Likewise, a motive to create an image of toughness may make feelings of negative affect more accessible, leading to more impromptu violations of justice rules. We acknowledge the relationship between cognition and affect via the double-headed arrow in Figure 1.

It also is important to note the role of conscious choice in our model. Though "cold," cognition-driven behaviors typically are thought of as a controlled, conscious process, they may become automatic over time, freeing attentional resources. Actions that are repeated in certain situations become habitual and routine, forming behavioral scripts in memory. When similar situations are encountered, the behavioral scripts are automatically activated and run to completion (Bargh, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, Gollwitzer, & Trotschel, 2001; Wegner & Bargh, 1998). This suggests that, although managers may sometimes consciously choose to adhere to or violate justice rules in the pursuit of some goal, they may also do so automatically. In addition, although affect is largely an automatic process (and therefore not a matter of conscious choice), individuals may attempt to consciously control the impact of affect on their behavior (Wegner & Bargh, 1998). However, chosen control strategies vary drastically in their effectiveness (Klinger, 1993), frequently allowing affect to exert behavioral influence. Thus, whether affect automatically influences justice-relevant actions will depend on whether managers desire to (and are able to) control their affective states.

### Managerial Discretion in Justice Rule Adherence and Violation

Overall, the value in the proposed motives lies in their potential to provide an answer to the question of *why* managers adhere to and violate rules of justice. However, an important question that remains is *when* those motives will have a stronger or weaker effect on managerial behaviors. Addressing this question requires identifying the conditions under which the above motives are more or less likely to be expressed. To do so, we turn our attention to the topic of managerial discretion which, broadly defined, refers to managerial latitude or freedom. The concept of discretion has been discussed in both the economics literature and the strategic management literature, though definitions vary somewhat between the two disciplines. In the economics literature, discretion refers to the freedom managers have in pursuing their own objectives versus the objectives of stakeholders (Williamson, 1963). In the strategic management literature, discretion refers to the freedom managers have over actions required to achieve their objectives (Hambrick & Finkelstein, 1987).

Drawing from these literatures, Shen and Cho (2005) refined the concept of managerial discretion into latitude of objectives and latitude of actions. Latitude of objectives captures the economic notion of discretion and refers to the freedom managers have to pursue personal objectives rather than those desired by stakeholders. Managers with low latitude of objectives face strong performance pressures by their stakeholders and are unable to pursue their own interests. In contrast, latitude of actions captures the strategic management notion of discretion and refers to the capacity of managers to affect organizational outcomes. Managers with low latitude of actions face strong contextual constraints that limit the range of possible behaviors.

Although discussion of managerial discretion typically has been confined to upper management, particularly chief executives (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1990; Hambrick &

Finkelstein, 1987; Shen & Cho, 2005), discretion is relevant to virtually every organizational actor who plays a role in a larger organizational system. Simon (1964, p. 21) noted, “When it comes to organizational decisions, we observe that many, if not most of the constraints that define a satisfactory course of action are associated with an organizational role and hence only indirectly with the personal motives of the individual who assumes that role.” Thus, individuals who fulfill organizational roles, like managers, may be directed away from their personal motives and toward the requirements of the system (Scott, 2003).

We suggest that inherent characteristics of the four justice dimensions (distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal) afford managers differential amounts of discretion in their execution, with some dimensions constrained more by contextual factors than others. That is, managers should tend to have more discretion to adhere to and violate the rules associated with some justice dimensions but less discretion to adhere to and violate the rules associated with other justice dimensions. Figure 2 depicts a continuum that captures our proposed differences in latitude of action across the four types of justice, with managerial discretion over rule adherence and violation increasing as one moves from distributive to procedural to informational to interpersonal actions. Figure 2 is meant to capture *average* levels of discretion for each justice dimension across managers and across organizations. Not all actions within a justice dimension are equal in the discretion they afford (e.g., adhering to distributive justice by providing equitable pay likely affords less discretion than public recognition). We utilize a “box and whisker” plot for each justice dimension to acknowledge this variation. The “box” displays the average level of discretion for a given justice dimension, with the two “whiskers” reflecting the potential variation in discretion within dimensions. Below, we elaborate on the characteristics differentiating the justice dimensions in terms of discretion and

justify the placement of those dimensions in Figure 2.

One characteristic on which the justice dimensions differ that should impact managerial discretion is the degree to which they are constrained by systemic factors (Sheppard, Lewicki, & Minton, 1992). Systemic factors are characteristics of the organization such as formalized practices, protocols, and role requirements to which individuals are required to adhere. Schminke, Ambrose, and Cropanzano (2000) noted that formalized systems remove much of a manager's flexibility in determining how a decision is made or what outcomes are due, with procedures and rewards instead governed by operational requirements. In addition to systemic factors, the justice dimensions differ in whether they are exchange-based or encounter-based (Bies, 2005). Bies (2005) noted that, although justice issues typically are explored in exchange contexts such as specific organizational decisions or resource allocations, some forms of justice are relevant in day-to-day encounters between employees and authorities. Justice dimensions that can be adhered to or violated by managers during frequent, everyday encounters should afford more discretion compared to justice dimensions that can only be adhered to or violated during less frequent resource allocation decisions. A third characteristic on which the justice dimensions differ is collective observability. The experience of justice and injustice is often a collective phenomenon, with individuals seeking to make sense of authority behaviors by comparing and contrasting their experiences with those of their colleagues (Colquitt, Zapata-Phelan, & Roberson, 2005; Degoey, 2000; Lamertz, 2002; Roberson & Colquitt, 2005). Effective managers are likely to be sensitive to this collective sensemaking process, weighing the potential consequences of their actions with those reactions in mind. As a result, justice-relevant behaviors that can be performed on a less conspicuous and collectively obvious basis should afford more discretion than behaviors that are more noticeable and visible. The final characteristic on which

the justice dimensions can be differentiated relative to discretion is cost. Some justice rules are inherently expensive because they require the doling out of costly outcomes or require the creation of exact and time consuming processes, while other justice rules are practically “free.”

As shown in Figure 2, we place actions relevant to distributive justice at the low end of the discretion range. For the most part, distributive justice depends on the adherence to an equity rule when performing resource allocations (Adams, 1965; Leventhal, 1976). The systemic influences on outcome distributions are often strong, with managers choosing from among a limited set of distribution options because of the impact of formalized contracts, collective bargaining agreements, or human resource management systems (Sheppard et al., 1992). The resource allocation context constrains a manager’s opportunity for adhering to the equity rule, as distributions can only be created in exchange contexts. Moreover, many of the outcomes that are allocated (e.g., pay, fringe benefits, perks, status symbols, work assignments) are long-lasting, making them more collectively observable. Even when efforts are made to keep such outcomes secret (Colella, Paetzold, Zardkoohi, & Wesson, 2007), managers may worry that any inequities will eventually be discovered. Finally, the outcomes needed to create equity may be quite costly for the organization, particularly if the unit includes a number of high performers. Of course, distributive actions do vary in their discretion, as indicated by the “whisker” lines. More informal rewards, such as “spot awards” and recognition can be doled out more frequently by managers, with fewer systemic constraints and less collective observability. On average, however, managers should have the lowest amount of discretion over the adherence to or violation of distributive justice compared to the other dimensions of justice.

We place actions relevant to procedural justice ahead of distributive actions, near the middle range of the continuum. With procedural justice, the impact of systemic influences is the

most obvious constraint to managerial discretion. Leventhal (1980) noted that procedures represent a number of elements and steps, including the selection of decision agents, the setting of ground rules, the gathering of information, the outlining of the structure for making the decision, the granting of appeals, the building in of safeguards, and the use of change mechanisms. Many of these elements are dictated by the design of the formalized, standard operating procedures that structure personnel and human resource decisions in organizations. For this reason, many scholars speak of procedural justice as a “structural” phenomenon (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Greenberg & Lind, 2000). Of course, scholars also have recognized that the fulfillment of procedural justice standards is as much a function of managerial behavior as it is the design of organizational systems (Folger & Bies, 1989; Greenberg et al., 1991). This view is currently represented by the “multifoci” perspective on justice, which clarifies that procedural justice may be supervisor-originating (i.e., informal) or organization-originating (i.e., formal) (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002). The “whisker” lines for procedural justice reflect the fact that some rules, such as voice, are more encounter-based whereas other rules, such as accuracy, are more exchange-based. Similarly, some rules, such as correctability and consistency, are more visible and collectively observable whereas other rules, such as bias suppression, are less detectable.

Finally, we place actions relevant to informational and interpersonal justice ahead of distributive and procedural actions, at the high end of the discretion range. Adhering to the informational justice rules of truthfulness and justification requires managers to be open, honest, and candid when explaining procedural details with employees (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993). Such actions are relatively cost-free and are less governed by systemic factors than procedural and distributive rules. However, informational justice requires an exchange-based



context to some degree, as there must be something for the manager to provide information about. That “something” also may be of a sensitive nature, as managers sometimes lack the discretion to fully explain all the reasons behind a layoff or termination decision due to concerns about wrongful termination claims (Gilliland & Schepers, 2003). Such restrictions do not govern interpersonal justice. Managers are free to adhere to or violate the respect and propriety rules at virtually any time, and interpersonal actions may be ephemeral, occurring in the relative secrecy of a boss’s office. Taken together, the above suggests that, on average, managers will have the most discretion over interpersonal actions, followed by informational, procedural, and distributive actions.

*Proposition 3: Justice actions can be arrayed on a continuum of managerial discretion, with managers having (on average) less discretion over distributive rules, moderate discretion over procedural rules, and more discretion over informational and interpersonal rules.*

#### *Interaction of Motives and Discretion*

Having described the differences in managerial discretion afforded by the justice dimensions, we now turn our attention to the interaction of those differences and managerial motives. Finkelstein and Hambrick (1990) noted that, under conditions of restricted discretion, managerial motives become less important and environmental factors become more significant. Extended to our model, a manager’s discretion should moderate the relationship between his or her motives and the actual expression of those motives in the form of justice rule adherence and violation (see Figure 1). Viewing managerial discretion as a moderator of the relationships between motives and justice rule adherence/violation fits well with the situational strength hypothesis (Mischel, 1977), which stipulates that person-based variables (e.g., motives, traits,

affect) have weaker effects on behavior in the presence of environmental constraints. In the terminology of the situational strength hypothesis, high discretion represents a weak situation whereby managers have the freedom to act on their motives. In contrast, low discretion constitutes a strong situation whereby motives are less able to be expressed.

*Proposition 4a: The relationship between motives for justice rule adherence/violation and the actual expression of those motives is moderated by managerial discretion, such that the effects of motives are stronger when discretion is high and weaker when discretion is low.*

Although the proposition above is relevant to virtually any situational factor that serves to expand or constrain managerial discretion, our specific focus is on the relative discretion afforded by the justice dimensions. If discretion does alter the expression of motives, it follows that the relationship between a manager's motives for justice rule adherence/violation and justice-relevant actions will depend on the type of justice involved. For justice dimensions that afford managers a great deal of discretion in their adherence and violation, the relationship between motives and expression should be stronger. For justice dimensions over which managers have less discretion, the relationship between motives and expression should be weaker. Figure 3 displays this proposed interaction, depicting a generally positive relationship between managerial motives and motive expression given that behavioral intentions tend to be significant predictors of actual behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). However, the relationship between motives and motive expression is moderated by the type of justice involved, with an increasingly stronger relationship between managerial motives and motive expression as one moves from distributive to procedural to informational to interpersonal justice.

*Proposition 4b: The relationship between motives for justice rule adherence/violation and the actual expression of those motives depends on the type of justice involved. Specifically, the relationship becomes stronger as one moves from distributive to procedural to informational to interpersonal justice.*

#### Managerial Reactions and Subsequent Action

As stated above, justice rule adherence and violation is not simply a static, one-time event but rather a dynamic, ongoing process comprised of multiple interactions between managers and subordinates. We consider how justice rule adherence and violation unfold over time by accounting for managerial reactions to justice-relevant events (see Figure 1). Specifically, we consider the questions: “How are managers likely to feel after fulfilling or violating justice rules?” and “How might those feelings impact future actions?” Addressing these questions requires identifying the specific emotions that may be experienced by managers following their actions toward a given employee. Though we acknowledge that managers may experience any number of emotions following justice rule adherence and violation (e.g., happiness, sadness), including mixed emotions (Butterfield, Trevino, & Ball, 1996), we focus on two emotions, pride and guilt, because these emotions are self-focused and possess inherent action tendencies that should influence subsequent justice-relevant behavior.

According to Lewis (2000), individuals appraise their specific actions against the standards of society and their own personal goals. Pride is experienced when an individual concludes that he or she has exceeded those standards or goals, while guilt is experienced when an individual concludes that he or she has fallen short of them. Justice represents a prevailing societal standard (Folger, 1998), and thus managers may experience pride or guilt as they evaluate their own behavior against that standard. Indeed, given that pride and guilt are social

emotions, typically arising in interpersonal contexts (Tagney, 1999), these emotions may be especially pertinent to justice exchanges and encounters considering that both are bound in social situations as well (Bies, 2005).

A necessary condition for pride or guilt to occur is that an individual must make an internal attribution for his or her behavior (Lewis, 2000). With pride, the individual takes credit for an esteem-enhancing event; with guilt, the individual takes blame for a moral transgression (Lazarus, 1991). Given that individuals tend to make internal attributions for their successes but external attributions for their failures (Miller & Ross, 1975), and given that individuals are motivated to experience positive states but to avoid negative states (e.g., Clark & Isen, 1982; Larsen, 2000), we suspect that managers will tend to experience pride more often than guilt following a justice-relevant action. For example, a manager who provides equitable rewards in order to effect compliance in a subordinate, who treats an employee respectfully in order to cultivate a favorable image, or who justifies a decision because of an overall pleasant mood will be likely to take credit for his or actions and thus experience pride. However, this is not to say that only justice rule adherence can elicit pride. In some cases, managers may experience pride after *violating* justice rules. For example, a manager who denies an employee voice in order to promote an image of toughness, or a manager who berates an employee in order to exact retributive justice, also may experience pride if such efforts are justified as necessary for attaining the manager's goals. Thus, although managers are likely to feel proud following justice rule adherence, they also may feel proud following justice rule violation.

In contrast, managers should be less likely to experience guilt over their actions. Tedeschi and Felson (1994, p. 228) asserted, "Actors are motivated to avert or mitigate blame and to avoid or limit retribution, and therefore are apt to minimize injustice that they perpetrate." One way to

avoid blame is to make excuses, pointing to an external cause for the behavior (Shaw, Wild, & Colquitt, 2003). According to Molinsky and Margolis's (2005) work on "necessary evils," managers are less likely to take blame for actions in which their involvement is low and that are sanctioned by a higher authority, such as the organization. Under such conditions, excuses are easier to make because external factors, rather than managers themselves, are responsible for the managers' actions. Integrating this notion with our continuum of managerial discretion (see Figure 2) implies that violations of justice rules over which managers have less discretion should be easier to excuse because managers can more readily point to extenuating circumstances for their actions (e.g., a low budget, an organizational policy, etc.). On the contrary, violations of justice rules over which managers have more discretion should be harder to excuse because an external "scapegoat" is more difficult to pinpoint.

Even if a given manager accepts responsibility, guilt may still not be experienced if the manager is able to justify his or her behavior (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005). Justifications acknowledge blame yet deny the inappropriateness of a given act by citing the fulfillment of higher-order goals (Shaw et al., 2003). Lazarus (1999) noted the ease with which individuals can transform a wrong into a right, stating, "humans are superbly talented in justifying their evil doing" (p. 225). According to Molinsky and Margolis (2005), actions are easier to justify when the perceived benefit produced by the act is greater than the perceived harm imposed. Thus, if managers perceive that their actions resulted in more benefit than harm, they may view their actions as justified and not experience guilt. Overall then, although managers cannot excuse or justify all of their actions (as this would imply that they never experience guilt), feelings of guilt following violations of justice rules are likely to be attenuated when such explanations are employed.

It is important to acknowledge the role that subordinates' reactions play in managers' feelings of pride and guilt. As we noted above, the way in which subordinates react following justice rule adherence and violation may influence managers' own emotional reactions. Specifically, managers may feel prouder when they observe subordinates reacting in the way they intended than when subordinates fail to react at all. Likewise, managers may feel guiltier when they observe that they have caused undeserved distress in their subordinates than when subordinates appear to be unaffected. However, strong feelings of guilt are less likely because direct displays of distress by subordinates to their supervisors may be the exception rather than the norm. Fitness (2000) found that a majority of subordinates unfairly treated by their supervisor avoided immediate confrontation because they feared the consequences of doing so. However, some subordinates may be more likely to express their distress than others. For example, Korsgaard, Roberson, and Rymph (1998) found that subordinates who communicate assertively elicited more explanations from their managers during decisions. Such subordinates may be more confident expressing their opinions and feelings to their managers, communicating their distress following justice rule violations and eliciting stronger feelings of guilt in their managers. Overall then, subordinates' reactions likely moderate managers' emotional reactions to justice rule adherence and violation, intensifying or weakening them.

*Proposition 5a: Managers experience pride following justice rule adherence, and they may also experience pride following justice rule violation when they perceive their actions to be justified.*

*Proposition 5b: Managers experience guilt following justice rule violation when they are unable to provide an excuse or justification for their actions.*

*Proposition 5c: Feelings of pride and guilt in managers are intensified (weakened) when subordinates react strongly (weakly) to justice rule adherence and violation.*

Finally, the extent to which managers feel pride or guilt following the adherence to and violation of justice rules should have an impact on future justice-relevant actions. Specifically, the action tendencies accompanying pride and guilt should influence future justice rule adherence and violation. As a positive emotion, pride creates a strong desire in individuals to maintain the emotion or to experience it again in the future (Lewis, 2000). Pride focuses individuals on the specific behavior that elicited the emotion, motivating individuals to reproduce that behavior. In contrast, guilt is a negative emotion, and individuals are motivated to reduce the feeling by changing their behavior. According to Lazarus (1991), with guilt, “the impulse seems to be to expiate, atone, or make reparation for the harm that has been done to another” (p. 243). Thus, we propose that managers will be motivated to continue engaging in justice-relevant actions that elicited pride but to discontinue engaging in justice-relevant actions that elicited guilt. The end result is that pride should persist, while guilt should desist, expression of the motive that triggered the justice-relevant action and subsequent emotion.

*Proposition 5d: Managers who experience pride following the expression of a justice-relevant motive should be motivated to continue the expression of that motive, while managers who experience guilt following the expression of a justice-relevant motive should be motivated to discontinue the expression of that motive.*

#### Theoretical and Practical Implications

The model introduced here contributes to the literature on organizational justice in a number of respects. A quarter century of research on organizational justice has taught scholars a great deal about the relationships between receivers’ perceptions of the justice dimensions and

their attitudes and behaviors. As the field has reached a state of maturity, the attention of justice scholars is now focused primarily on identifying the moderators and mediators of those relationships (Colquitt & Greenberg, 2003). Although these are important research directions, we believe that there are theoretical and practical benefits to be gained by incorporating a vital but underrepresented participant in the justice equation: the manager. In short, the scales of justice have been tipped in favor of recipients for decades, and we believe that the time has come to balance them by focusing on actors.

From a theoretical standpoint, the motives in our model provide a starting point for understanding the various reasons why managers adhere to and violate justice rules. The literatures on aggression (e.g., Tedeschi & Felson, 1994), discrimination (e.g., Dion, 2003), and more recently, sexual harassment (e.g., O'Leary-Kelly et al., 2000), have enlightened the psychology of actors by focusing on their motives for engaging in behavior, and as such have laid a useful foundation for the identification of managerial motives for justice rule adherence and violation. Indeed, there seems to be a natural, theoretical bridge between behaviors such as aggression and justice rule violations, in that both are antinormative and may violate standards of morality (Folger, 1998; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). On this point, some of the motives discussed in the literature on aggression (e.g., effecting compliance, creating and maintaining desired identities) were noted by organizational justice scholars years ago (Greenberg, 1990; Leventhal, 1980). However, our model is, to our knowledge, the first to fully explicate the underlying reasons for justice rule adherence and violation, and as such has the potential to deepen our understanding of justice in the workplace.

The proposed continuum distinguishing the justice dimensions in terms of their inherent levels of discretion also has implications for theory. Many justice studies measure multiple



dimensions of justice yet make the same predictions for those dimensions, with little rationale for explaining why the results of hypothesis testing diverge across dimensions. The differences in discretion depicted in Figure 2 could help explain why interpersonal and informational justice tend to be more predictive of outcomes referenced to decision-making agents whereas procedural and distributive justice tend to be more predictive of outcomes referenced to decision-making systems (Masterson et al., 2000). More germane to our model, the continuum also could help identify when certain managerial predictors should have stronger or weaker effects on justice perceptions. For example, Scott et al. (2007) showed that managers were more likely to adhere to interpersonal and informational justice rules when employees were more charismatic, because those charismatic employees instilled positive affect in the manager. Our discretion continuum could help explain such findings given that managerial affect should be a stronger driver of rule adherence for justice dimensions over which managers have more control.

By integrating managerial motives with managerial discretion, our model acknowledges that managerial behavior is a function of both personal and situational factors (Mischel & Shoda, 1998). Thus, we not only consider the motives underlying managers' adherence to and violation of justice rules but also the conditions under which those motives are more or less likely to be expressed. In this way, we provide theoretical explanations for both "why" and "when" (Whetten, 1989). Finally, the self-focused emotions (pride and guilt) following the expression of managerial motives contribute to theory by illuminating how such motives (and subsequent justice rule adherences/violations) change or remain similar over time. The lower likelihood of feelings of guilt (and potential for feelings of pride) following justice rule violation provide a theoretical mechanism for explaining how injustices by the same manager may perpetuate.

In addition to the above theoretical implications, our actor-focused model offers important practical implications. Existing research shows that managers can be trained in justice rules, with such efforts often resulting in improvements in employee attitudes and behaviors (Skarlicki & Latham, 2005). If the linkages in our model are supported, they could help inform the development of such training programs. For example, trainers could focus part of their training on the motives that may lead managers to violate justice rules. Such content could help explain why managers might violate justice rules and what steps could be taken to prevent such actions. However, preventing justice rule violations that stem rather impulsively from negative affect may prove difficult. Here, trainers may instead focus on effective regulation strategies to control negative affect (Larsen, 2000). Trainers could also focus part of their training on the discretionary differences that separate the justice dimensions. The training content could highlight interpersonal and informational rules first, given that managers have more control over those rules. For procedural and distributive rules, the training might need to include a discussion of the formalized systemic factors that help govern rule adherence.

#### Directions for Future Research

An initial direction for future research is empirical testing of the proposed model in order to determine its predictive validity. Research could first provide evidence for the validity of the proposed motives to determine whether they underlie the adherence to and violation of justice rules. This could be accomplished either by surveying managers with measures reflecting each of the proposed motives or by interviewing them directly. Future research could also explore whether managers' perceptions of their justice-relevant actions possess the same dimensionality as employees' justice judgments. Although this remains an empirical question, recent work hints that managers do perceive the distributive, procedural and interactional distinctions that have

been evident in receiver-focused studies (Heathcote & Meyer, 2006; Long & Mislin, 2006). In addition, future research would need to determine whether managers perceive the proposed differences in discretion afforded by the justice dimensions.

A complete test of the model would require the use of longitudinal data in order to examine the influence of managers' emotional reactions on subsequent justice rule adherence and violation. Given the affective components of the model, a longitudinal design using experience-sampling methodology (e.g., Alliger & Williams, 1991) would perhaps best capture managers' affective motives and emotional reactions (pride guilt) on a more real-time basis. In this type of design, managers could be surveyed repeatedly over specified time intervals (e.g., once a day for a three-week period; multiple times a day for a one-week period). Such a study would add beyond traditional cross-sectional designs by not only providing insight into between-manager differences, but also into within-manager differences over time in their motives, justice-rule fulfillments and violations, and emotional reactions. Such a study would also illuminate the effect of managerial discretion on justice rule adherence and violation, as an examination of day-to-day managerial actions would better reveal discretionary differences arising from exchanges versus encounters and systemic organizational policies.

In terms of model extensions, the proposed motives could be used as mediating mechanisms to explain the effects of the organizational context on justice rule adherence and violation. One potentially important contextual variable is justice climate, defined as shared perceptions of justice that emerge from sensemaking processes and common experiences (Colquitt, Noe, & Jackson, 2002; Naumann & Bennett, 2000). Although justice climate research has tended to focus on climates in departments or work units, Simons and Roberson (2003) showed that justice climates can exist at the organization level as well—a notion that

corresponds well with Sheppard et al.'s (1992) argument that some organizations are systemically just or unjust. It may be that justice climates serve as one contextual driver of managerial motives, with motives for rule adherence becoming more intense in organizations with strong justice climates. It also may be that some organizations develop climates that are more tolerant of justice rule violations.

### Conclusion

To date, little is known about why managers fulfill or violate rules of organizational justice. Acts of injustice are not uncommon in organizations (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001), and so the challenge for scholars is to understand why that is, in the hope that the fulfillment of justice might be enhanced while the violation of justice might be mitigated. To lay a foundation for this understanding, we proposed a model that depicts justice rule adherence and violation as a function of managers' motives, their discretion, and their reactions to prior justice-relevant actions. In doing so, it is our hope that scholars will give managers their deserved attention when examining justice in the workplace.

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Table 1

*Rules Represented in Justice Rule Adherence and Violation*

Justice Dimension	Specific Rules	Description of What It Means to “Adhere” to the Rule
Distributive	Equity	Allocating outcomes (such as pay, benefits, status symbols, punishments, or intrinsic rewards) in accordance with employee inputs
Procedural	Voice	Providing employees with an opportunity to express their views and opinions during decision making
	Consistency	Using procedures that are consistent across employees and across time
	Bias Suppression	Being neutral and unbiased in one’s decision making
	Accuracy	Utilizing accurate facts and information as inputs into decision making procedures
	Correctability	Providing employees with an opportunity to appeal the decisions arrived at by procedures
	Representativeness	Taking into account the concerns of relevant groups in the design and execution of procedures
	Ethicality	Upholding ethical and moral standards in the design and execution of procedures
Informational	Justification	Provide adequate explanations for decision-making outcomes and procedures
	Truthfulness	Be candid and honest in discussions of decision-making outcomes and procedures
Interpersonal	Respect	Treat employees with dignity and sincerity when interacting with them
	Propriety	Refrain from improper or prejudicial statements when interacting with employees

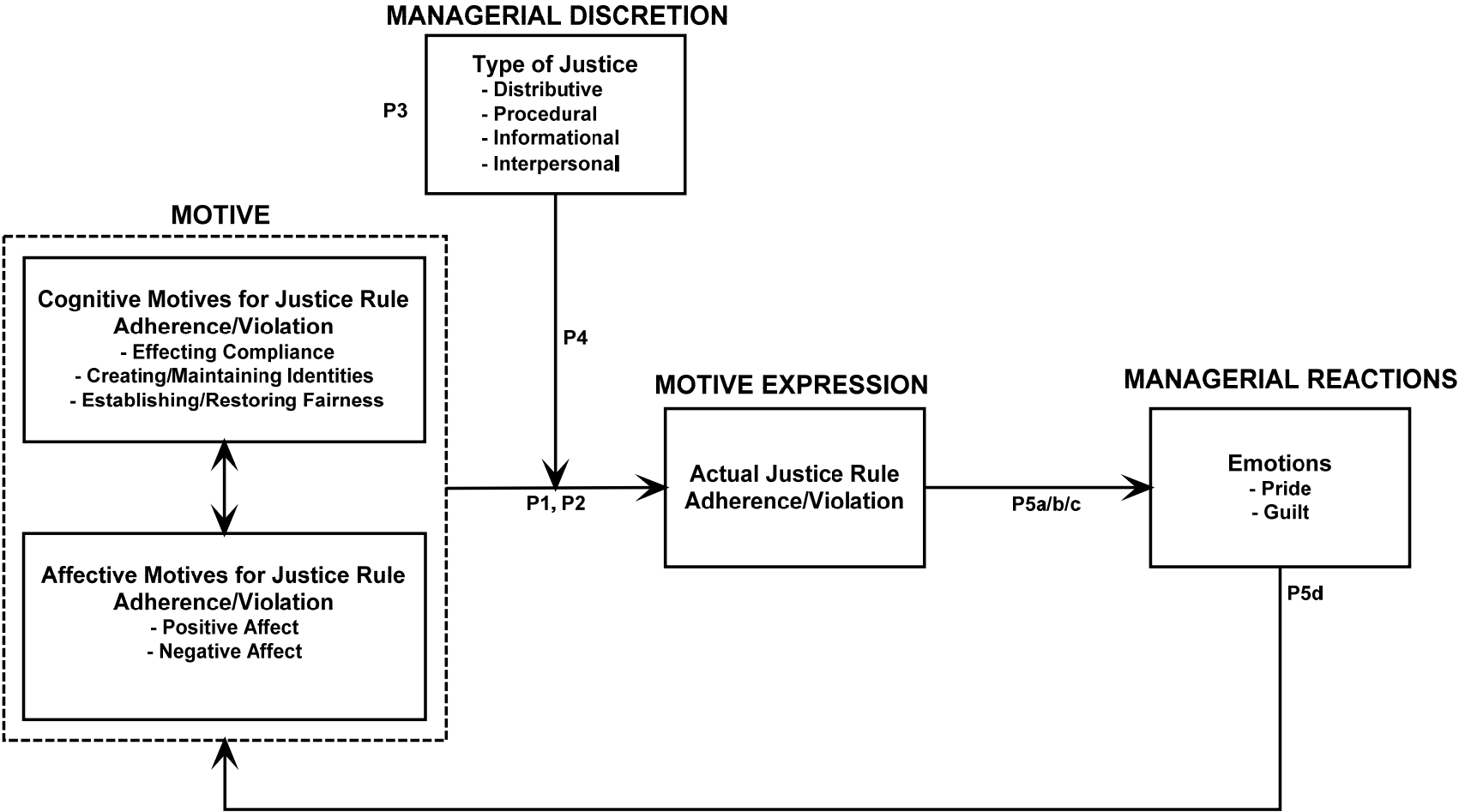
*Note.* Distributive justice rules are based on Adams (1965) and Leventhal (1976). Procedural justice rules are based on Thibaut and Walker (1975) and Leventhal (1980). Informational and interpersonal justice rules are based on Bies and Moag (1986) and Greenberg (1993).

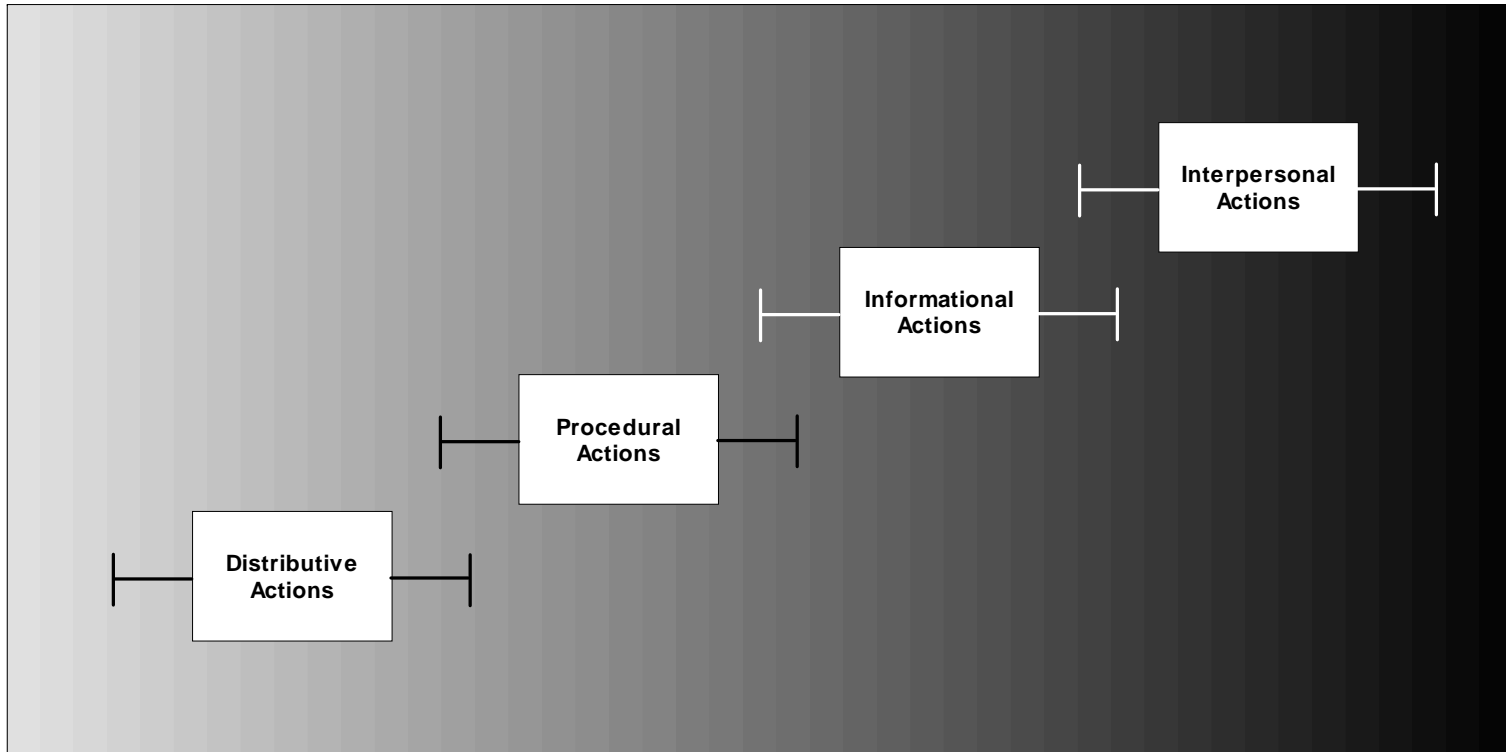
Figure Captions

*Figure 1.* A model of managerial justice rule adherence and violation.

*Figure 2.* A continuum of managerial discretion for justice dimensions.

*Figure 3.* Interaction of motive for justice rule adherence/violation and type of justice in predicting motive expression of justice rule adherence/violation.





**LOW**

- More constrained by systemic factors
- More exchange-based
- More collectively observable
- More costly

**MANAGERIAL DISCRETION**

**HIGH**

- Less constrained by systemic factors
- More encounter-based
- Less collectively observable
- Less costly

