

SHARED AND CONFIGURAL JUSTICE: A SOCIAL NETWORK MODEL OF JUSTICE IN TEAMS

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We propose a model of justice in teams that articulates the social influence processes through which shared perceptions of justice emerge and that explores the subsequent effects on team effectiveness outcomes. We also consider barriers to the emergence of shared team justice and introduce configural forms of justice that may result. Theoretical and practical contributions of the model for understanding the meaning and operation of justice at the team level of analysis are discussed.

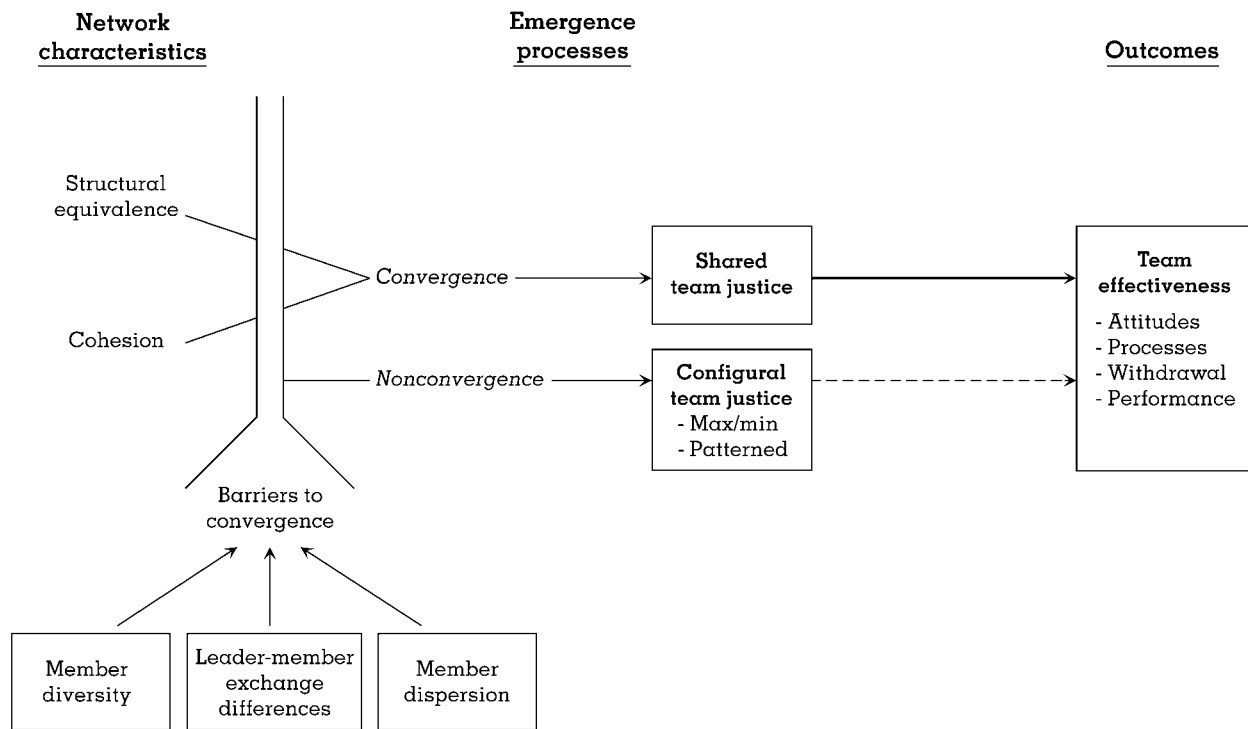
Given recent increases in the use of team-based work structures in organizations (Devine, Clayton, Philips, Dunford, & Melner, 1999), organizational justice researchers have begun to consider the effects of justice in team settings (Colquitt, 2001; Kirkman, Jones, & Shapiro, 2000; Korsgaard, Schweiger, & Sapienza, 1995; Phillips, Douthitt, & Hyland, 2001). While much of this work has linked individual justice perceptions to member attitudes and behaviors, other work has focused on justice "contexts" or "climates" that represent shared perceptions of work unit treatment by authorities (Colquitt, Noe, & Jackson, 2002; Mossholder, Bennett, & Martin, 1998; Naumann & Bennett, 2000). Building on climate research, which suggests that common experiences such as exposure to similar organizational policies and systems may be sufficient for creating similar perceptions of the work environment (Schneider & Reichers, 1983), researchers suggest that justice climates originate in the cognition, affect, and attitudes of unit members and are amplified by their interactions (see Kozlowski & Klein, 2000, for a discussion of such processes). Thus, justice climates are conceptualized to be similar to individual justice perceptions in their content and operation, but with a focus on the unit as a referent.

Although research on justice climates provides evidence of shared perceptions of justice among organizational work units, it does not articulate the processes through which such perceptions develop. Researchers have assumed a certain degree of interdependence and/or communication between unit members such that members' opinions about the fairness of the unit's experiences could be transmitted between one another and maintained within the unit. However, little attention has been given to the role of interaction between team members and the subsequent effects on the formation of collective justice perceptions. Existing work has also failed to explore what occurs when perceptions do not converge—when the kind of shared perceptions that encourage climate formation are not evident.

Our purpose is to develop a model of team justice that articulates the specific processes by which individual justice perceptions converge to form a unit-level construct. We explore this model, shown in Figure 1, in the subsequent sections of this article. First, based on a sociological perspective of teams as entities, we elaborate a functional definition of shared team justice and discuss how it differs from the simple aggregation of individual members' perceptions. Following the findings of research on social contagion (see Burt, 1982, 1987), which suggest that cognitions and attitudes can be communicated from one person to another and can ultimately converge and be maintained by a

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FIGURE 1
A Model of Justice in Teams



network, we use social network theory to explain the roles of structural equivalence and cohesion in the development of shared team justice. Next, we link shared team justice to various categories of team effectiveness outcomes. In addition, we consider several barriers to shared perceptions of justice in teams, and we introduce configural forms of justice that may result. We conclude the article with a discussion of the practical and theoretical contributions of the model.

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THE EMERGENCE OF SHARED TEAM JUSTICE

We define *shared team justice* as the shared perceptions of team members about how the team as a whole is treated. The shared team justice construct is represented by consensus in members' perceptions resulting from the pattern and nature of relationships between members, and it expresses a phenomenon not captured by existing justice constructs or models. One pre-supposition of the conceptual framework developed in this paper is that individual perceptions of justice are subject to social influence through

social comparison and the interpretation of organizational experiences (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978; Turner, 1991). However, team settings can be distinguished from individual work settings by the increased interaction facilitated in interdependent conditions (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Hinsz, Tindale, & Vollrath, 1997). Interdependence, whether based in task inputs and processes or in shared goals and rewards, establishes connections and increases the need for cooperation between team members (Saavedra, Earley, & Van Dyne, 1993; Thompson, 1967). Members must interact to diagnose, analyze, and complete a task, thus providing more opportunities for sensemaking and social influence regarding the team's organizational experiences. Therefore, interdependence intensifies the normative and social comparative processes that occur in departments or organizations.

According to social network theory, a network is a set of social system members connected by links or ties that indicate the relationships (or lack of relationships) between them (Brass, 1995). Social network analysis therefore focuses on the interactions and structure of interactions between network members (Wasserman &

Faust, 1994). Because social network theory focuses on links between network actors rather than on the actors themselves, the network level of analysis is represented by relationships among three or more actors (Brass, 1995). Given that teams are characterized by interdependent relationships between members, we argue that teams represent a type of social network. In this article we focus on the team as the unit of analysis and consider the patterns of interactions between members—and the intensity of those interactions—as potential sources of sensemaking and social influence in the development of team justice perceptions.

Within a network, the effects of interpersonal processes depend on the characteristics of the network—specifically, the features and patterns of the interpersonal relationships (Erickson, 1988). The typical prediction of a network effects model is that individuals in a social network will converge in their attitudes and behaviors to the extent to which they have proximity and exposure to others in the network (Marsden & Friedkin, 1994). Further, such convergence may occur through two primary mechanisms: structural equivalence and cohesion. *Structural equivalence* refers to the extent to which people occupy similar positions in a network and are therefore influenced by those with whom they have similar patterns of interaction (Erickson, 1988). *Cohesion* refers to the extent to which people interact frequently and intensely and are therefore influenced by those with whom they interact directly (Burt, 1987).

Although the structural equivalence and cohesion approaches to network contagion have different operating mechanisms, both forms of interpersonal influence have been shown to lead to convergence in network member perceptions (Burkhardt, 1994; Galaskiewicz & Burt, 1991; Rice & Aydin, 1991). Contagion by structural equivalence focuses on the stratification of actors in a network and the normative standards that influence perceptions and attitudes (Galaskiewicz & Burt, 1991). Individuals are structurally equivalent when they jointly occupy the same position in a network such that they have similar patterns of relationship with actors in the system (Burt, 1987). Given such parallel interaction patterns, structurally equivalent actors tend to be socialized similarly by others in the network (Burt, 1983). In addition, because those occupying similar network positions can put

themselves in one another's roles as they form opinions, they tend to develop cognitions and attitudes considered to be appropriate for that social position in the network (Burt, 1983). Therefore, owing to similar sources of social influence and comparison in a network, structurally equivalent members tend to develop similar attitudes and perceptions.

With respect to justice, similarity in the pattern of relationships between team members may allow each member access to the same sources of social influence when interpreting the team's experiences, and therefore may provide the opportunity for members to gain others' perspectives on the fairness of the team's treatment. Further, by creating multiple redundant channels of information, such network structures may increase the accuracy with which team members perceive each other's justice perceptions (Erickson, 1988). Structural equivalence also may enhance perceptions of similarity among team members and, subsequently, pressures toward uniformity within the team. As a result, shared team justice may develop in structurally equivalent teams.

Whereas contagion by structural equivalence focuses on the pattern of relationships between actors in a network and the normative standards that influence perceptions and attitudes, contagion by cohesion focuses on the intensity of interactions in those patterns of relationships. Specifically, contagion by cohesion operates through communicative influence processes. Following a cohesion model, people will influence and be influenced by those with whom they have direct interaction (Burt, 1987). This social influence is assumed to operate most often and strongly between those who communicate directly, frequently, and intensely with one another (Meyer, 1994). Through such interactions, people form cohesive groups in which members continuously socialize one another and establish group norms (Festinger, 1950). Sensemaking occurs as a result of social interaction with, and direct persuasion by, network members. Consequently, members tend to share their views and opinions and are motivated to agree in their attitudes and behaviors.

Contagion by cohesion should be particularly intense in teams, given that task interdependence requires and results in more cooperative behavior and information sharing than does individual-based work (see Champion, Medsker, &

Higgs, 1993; Campion, Papper, & Medsker, 1996; Janz, Colquitt, & Noe, 1997). Strong ties between members should therefore develop in interdependent work environments (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). This cohesion may facilitate the exchange of justice-relevant information among team members by providing the opportunity for all members to discuss organizational policies and practices and to jointly interpret the team's experiences. Further, through such cohesion, the team will be less susceptible to outside influences. As a result, team members' interpretations and evaluations of the team's experiences may converge, resulting in shared team justice.

EFFECTS OF SHARED TEAM JUSTICE ON TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

Shared Team Justice As a Heuristic

To understand how shared team justice affects team effectiveness, we draw a parallel to fairness heuristic theory, which states that individuals rely on justice to guide their actions in circumstances where the trustworthiness of authorities or other parties is uncertain (for reviews, see Lind, 2001, and Van den Bos, 2001). In particular, individuals form fairness heuristics using whatever justice-relevant information they first encounter or that is interpreted most easily. This process, termed the *judgmental phase*, is followed by the *use phase*, as the heuristic acts as a guide for individual behavior (Lind, 2001). In our model the emergence of shared team justice is functionally similar to an individual's fairness heuristic. The emergence process described in this article is akin to the judgmental phase, since contagion via structural equivalence and cohesion influence the formation of shared team justice perceptions. In addition, the team can use its justice evaluation to guide its behavior with its leader, other organizational agents, and other teams.

Fairness heuristic theory also suggests that, in an attempt to save cognitive effort, individuals are biased against revisiting the heuristic unless critical work events or new information is strongly at odds with the heuristic (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos, 2001). Under such circumstances, a "phase-shifting" effect will cause individuals to revisit the heuristic. Recall that shared team justice results from a convergence process, where the evaluation of justice is consistent

across the members of the team network. Because structural equivalence and cohesion in the network will limit the opportunity for members to encounter inconsistent information, the team should not be tempted to revisit its collective evaluation. In other words, phase-shifting processes should occur less frequently with shared team justice, allowing it to impact team outcomes to a stronger degree than when there is less consensus in members' perceptions. This argument is supported by research on justice climates, which shows stronger effects of procedural justice climates on team outcomes when perceptual convergence is high (Colquitt et al., 2002). This intensified relationship between shared team justice and team effectiveness is indicated by the dark arrow in Figure 1.

Fairness heuristic theory can also provide guidance regarding the relative effects of different types of justice in teams, since the theory states that information that is most easily interpreted will guide the heuristic to the greatest extent (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos, 2001). Inputs into team justice emergence could include the criteria used when making decisions—for example, voice, consistency, bias suppression, correctness (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975); the interpersonal treatment experienced as procedures are enacted by the leader—for example, respect, propriety, truthfulness, justification (Bies & Moag, 1986); or the equity of the actual decision outcome itself (e.g., Adams, 1965). However, the effects of these justice types—procedural, interactional, and distributive justice, respectively—should vary in teams, given the differences in their sources and dimensions.

At the network level of analysis, information is more easily interpreted when members have shared experiences and common sources of information. Procedural justice should therefore be the strongest input to the emergence of shared team justice, because it is based on formal practices and organizational representatives common to all team members. Interactional justice should have somewhat weaker effects, given that it originates in interpersonal exchanges with organizational representatives (Bies & Moag, 1986), which may vary considerably across team members. Finally, because distributive justice is based on principles of equity or proportionality, and because it depends on individual comparisons with varying referents (Adams, 1965), the interpretation of out-

comes at a network level may be difficult. This would make distributive justice the weakest input into the emergence process.

Team Effectiveness Outcomes

Many team-based reorganizations fail to result in expected improvements (Wall, Kemp, Jackson, & Clegg, 1986), since employees may feel a sense of resistance to such changes. Often, that resistance is based on anticipated injustices that will occur after the formation of teams (Kirkman, Shapiro, Novelli, & Brett, 1996; Shapiro & Kirkman, 1999, 2001). Having defined the circumstances under which justice emerges as a team-level construct and the processes that create shared perceptions of justice in teams, we now turn our attention to the effects of shared team justice on key outcomes. Specifically, we discuss four classes of team-level outcomes: attitudes, processes, withdrawal, and performance.

Team attitudes. Most models of team effectiveness include some attitudinal component, including satisfaction with the team, trust, attachment, or cohesion (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Gladstein, 1984; Hackman, 1987; Hackman & Morris, 1975; Sundstrom, De Meuse, & Futrell, 1990). These attitudes capture the long-term viability of the team by assessing the degree to which the team desires to remain together past the completion of its initial task goals. Justice has been linked meta-analytically to satisfaction, trust, and commitment attitudes in individual work settings (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). Extending such results to team settings can be supported by using the relational model of justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992), which suggests that fair treatment is indicative of being valued by an authority, reinforcing feelings of esteem and pride. To the extent that a team is treated fairly, members should feel satisfied belonging to it and should remain attached and committed to it in the future (Korsgaard et al., 1995; Tyler & Degoey, 1995; Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996).

Team processes. Team processes include all observable interpersonal behaviors that occur between two points in time and help explain linkages between team characteristics and team effectiveness (Hackman & Morris, 1975). These interpersonal behaviors include cooperation and helping, conflict management, and task

strategies (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Gladstein, 1984). LePine, Hanson, Borman, and Motowidlo (2000) recently compared these teamwork behaviors to that class of behaviors labeled *citizenship* or *contextual performance*.

Justice has long been a strong predictor of citizenship behaviors (Colquitt et al., 2001), which Organ (1990) explained from the perspective of social exchange theory. Fair treatment encourages a change in the exchange relationship between employee and employer, as the relationship broadens to go beyond the mere exchange of economic inducements for job description contributions. Thus, as teams feel more fairly treated, the domain of their behaviors should expand to include more instances of helping and conflict management behaviors both within and between teams (Colquitt, 2001; Naumann & Bennett, 2000).

Team withdrawal. Hulin (1991) defines withdrawal as a set of behaviors that dissatisfied individuals enact to psychologically or physically avoid the work environment. Ranging from daydreaming to tardiness, or from long breaks to absenteeism, withdrawal behaviors may eventually result in voluntary turnover from an organization (Hulin, 1991). Withdrawal is a key concern in teams because of their high task interdependence, since withdrawn members can harm team functioning, depending on their roles in the team's work flow.

Related to withdrawal in teams, Arrow and McGrath (1995) make the distinction between "standing groups"—all members formally affiliated with a team—and "acting groups"—all members physically present to do a team's work. To the extent that shared team justice strengthens the team's identity and the value of team membership, it should reduce both psychological and physical forms of withdrawal among members. In this way, the acting group should more closely mirror the standing group, which should benefit team functioning. Current research, which shows that favorable justice climates are associated with fewer hours of absenteeism in teams (Colquitt et al., 2001), supports this relationship.

Team performance. Although definitions of team performance vary widely, depending on the type of team and the nature of the task it performs, shared team justice may also influence performance. Based on the instrumental model of justice that posits that people are mo-

tivated by fair treatment, which signifies that long-term outcomes are protected (Lind & Tyler, 1988), fair team treatment may assure members that the team's interests will be protected and advanced. Thus, members may be more likely to fulfill their role requirements and exert effort to benefit the team.

The relationship between shared team justice and performance should be further enhanced if the definition of performance is broadened to include counterproductive behaviors (e.g., theft, sabotage, misuse of information, purposeful breaking of key rules). Past research has repeatedly demonstrated strong negative relationships between justice and such behaviors (e.g., Greenberg, 1990; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Because research also suggests that members of disadvantaged groups are likely to instigate some form of collective action to change their relative situation (Kawakami & Dion, 1995), shared team justice may prevent the kinds of intergroup conflict that further harm organization functioning.

BARRIERS TO SHARED TEAM JUSTICE

We have described conditions that facilitate the creation and maintenance of shared perceptions of justice in teams. Social network characteristics such as structural equivalence and cohesion may intensify social influence processes within the team, thus increasing similarity in members' evaluations of the team's treatment and experiences. Beyond these conditions, there are a number of factors that can either inhibit the development of shared team justice or give rise to a different form of the construct: *configural team justice*. Kozlowski and Klein (2000) define configural constructs as unit-level constructs consisting of a particular configuration of the lower-level components, rather than a consensus or average of those components.

Below we highlight three team characteristics—member diversity, leader-member exchange, and member dispersion—that should alter network relationships, thereby causing team justice to assume a configural rather than shared form. Because configural team justice is characterized by dissimilarities, patterns, or distributions in member perceptions (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000), we would expect it to have weaker effects on team effectiveness relative to shared

team justice. This predicted relationship is indicated in Figure 1 by the dotted arrow.

Member Diversity

The past decade has seen more teams characterized by different types of diversity (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Milliken & Martins, 1996), including demographic (e.g., ethnicity, gender, age), psychological (e.g., personality, knowledge, beliefs) and organizational (e.g., function, level, tenure; Jackson & Ruderman, 1995). Although the effects of member diversity on team processes and outcomes vary according to the type of diversity being studied, some common themes have emerged from past research. One such theme is that workgroup composition—particularly, diversity among members—creates barriers to effective group interaction. For example, demographic diversity creates "faultlines" (Lau & Murnighan, 1998), since demographic characteristics divide the network into subgroups or result in attitudinal diversity within the team (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998). In contrast, similarities among group members tend to cue the formation of interpersonal relations, trust, and cohesiveness within the group (Tsui, Xin, & Egan, 1995). This theme is also present in social network research, which suggests that similarity between members of networks affects the interpersonal ties or relationships in the network, since similarity positively influences interaction and communication between members (see Brass, 1995). Thus, team member diversity may constrain the development of shared team justice.

Past research also suggests that demographic diversity in teams leads to decreased communication between members (O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Studies have shown that demographic heterogeneity weakens work-communication chains (Lincoln & Miller, 1979) and that informal networks are segregated along demographic lines (Brass, 1984). In addition, research suggests that communication between dissimilar actors is likely to be infrequent, not reciprocated, and weak (Brass, 1995). Because such unstable communication between team members leads to message distortion (Triandis, 1960), the level of cohesion within the team may be reduced. Consequently, demographic diversity may limit the development of shared team justice. Since research also indi-

cates that personality orientations and other psychological characteristics are likely to influence people's interactions with others (Tosi, 1992), we would expect psychological diversity to have similar effects.

Organizational diversity may also constrain the development of shared team justice perceptions by altering the structural equivalence of the team. For example, cross-functional teams bring together employees from different functions who have relevant expertise in a particular discipline and who serve as liaisons between the team and their functional areas (Lovelace, Shapiro, & Weingart, 2001). Team members are required to contribute to team output based on their own specialized knowledge. To the extent that different functions take on greater or lesser importance owing to task requirements, members may serve different roles within the team. Such role differences may subsequently give rise to status differences within the team. Accordingly, team members may occupy dissimilar network positions, resulting in less structural equivalence in the network. Cross-functionality also may disrupt the parallel interaction patterns found in functionally homogeneous groups, as members interact more with those of the same function. Fewer links between members of organizationally diverse networks may prevent access to within-team sources of social influence and other members' perspectives on the team's experiences. Thus, organizational diversity may hinder the development of shared team justice.

Overall, the impact of demographic, organizational, and psychological diversity is likely to be multidimensional. Some forms of diversity will create variation in members' positions within the network, whereas other forms will affect the nature of interaction between members. These effects may limit opportunities for sensemaking, social comparison, and social influence. Further, these effects may magnify any preexisting variations in member justice perceptions. Therefore, the net effect of member diversity on team justice will be less convergence in perceptions of the fairness of the practices, decisions, and treatment experienced by the team.

Leader-Member Exchange

In climate theory, leadership has been proposed as a factor that shapes the emergence of

shared perceptions as employee interpretations are filtered and shaped by leaders (Schein, 1985). Although many types of teams have emerged in organizations, including self-managing work teams in which members assume some of the day-to-day responsibilities reserved for managers, most teams have external leaders who have a supervisory role but are not members of the teams they lead (Manz & Sims, 1987). External leaders are typically responsible for the enactment of organizational policies and decisions, such as team performance evaluations or the distribution of team rewards. In addition, leaders are likely to possess, or have access to, accurate information about organizational decisions and the criteria used to make such decisions (Burt, 1992).

Given their role and status as organizational representatives, team leaders bridge the interface between the team and management and provide employees with access to higher levels of the organizational hierarchy. In addition, they represent a dominant coalition consisting of organizational authorities and decision makers (Burt, 2000). Thus, team leaders serve as a powerful source of social influence.

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory asserts that because leaders have limited amounts of personal and organizational resources (e.g., time, power, rewards, etc.), they distribute such resources among their subordinates selectively (Graen & Scandura, 1987). This selective treatment leads to the development of different relationships with different subordinates, resulting in the creation of LMX relationships of varying quality, ranging from high to low (for a review, see Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Subordinates with high-quality exchange relationships tend to fill ingroup member roles, whereas those with low-quality exchange relationships tend to fill outgroup member roles. According to theorizing on LMX, high-quality exchange relationships are characterized by increased levels of attention, information exchange, support, informal influence, and trust from the leader (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

In team contexts, the existence of both high- and low-quality exchange relationships creates a pattern of differentiation in the relationships within the team. For example, interactions in the team may become concentrated around the member or members with high-quality LMX relationships, relegating other members to the per-

riphery. Given this relational inequality among members, the team may be characterized by low structural equivalence and, subsequently, dissimilarity in member perceptions and attitudes. Consequently, variations in the quality of LMX relationships within a team may constrain the development of shared team justice.

The top part of Figure 2 illustrates a team social network characterized by differences in the quality of LMX relationships. Because member A has the only direct link to the team leader, who enacts the organizational policies and practices, he or she may have access to resources and information unavailable to other members of the team. For example, member A may receive higher individual outcomes, be allowed higher levels of voice or process control, be privy to detailed explanations, or be treated with more dignity and respect than other team

members. In addition, member A's high-quality exchange relationship with the leader may result in a relatively higher level of power and/or influence within the team. Member A's relationship with the team leader and the information gained through their interactions may serve as the primary source of social influence for other members of the team as they interpret the team's experiences. Thus, member A may serve as an interpretative filter for the team's collective perceptions of justice.

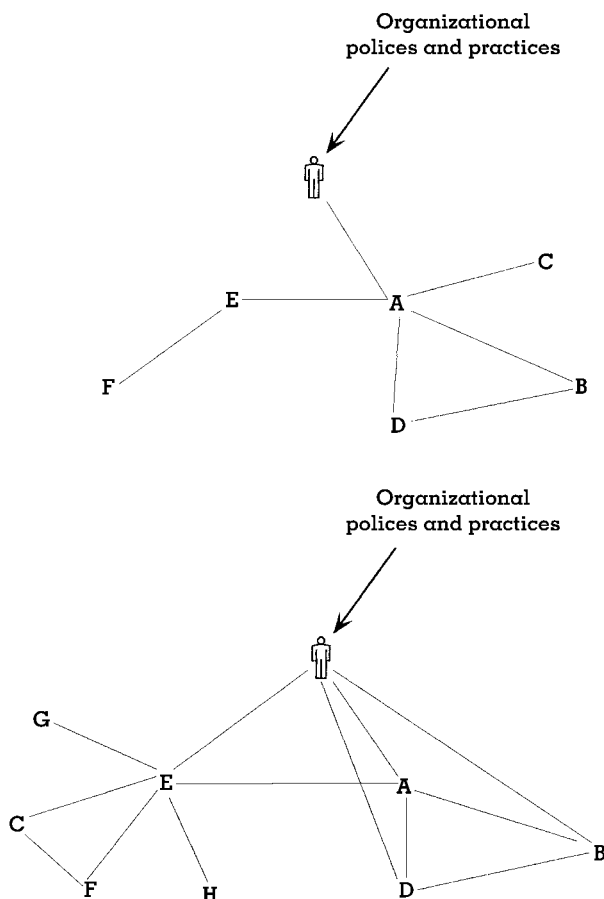
In social networks such as that depicted in the top of Figure 2, team perceptions of justice may develop through *maximum/minimum* emergence processes. Through such forms of emergence, contextual factors and interaction processes constrain the emergence of collective phenomenon such that the standing of one individual on the phenomenon in question determines the standing of the collective (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). Similar to Steiner's (1972) description of disjunctive and conjunctive tasks, in which team performance respectively depends on the contribution of the highest performing member or on high levels of cognitive contribution (e.g., ability, performance, etc.) from all members, team perceptions of justice may be represented by one individual's justice experiences.

Specifically, the LMX relationship quality of the member(s) with a direct link to the team leader will shape the team's perceptions of how it is treated. In the top part of Figure 2, member A's experiences with the team leader will influence the team's perceived standing in the organization. Whether member A has a high-quality or low-quality relationship with the team leader will form the basis of the team's justice perceptions. Thus, teams with high LMX differentiation may develop *maximum/minimum* forms of configural team justice, rather than shared perceptions of justice.

Member Dispersion

Because new technologies have provided the capability for members to structure, process, and distribute work and manage communication activities across a variety of locations (Boudreau, Loch, Robey, & Straub, 1998), team member dispersion might be an important consideration in the development of team justice. As in the case of global and/or virtual teams,

FIGURE 2
Sample Communication Networks That May Result in Configural Team Justice



members are no longer required to be located in the same physical area in order for the team to successfully complete its task. Instead, dispersed teams schedule, synchronize, and allocate resources using alternate coordination and communication mechanisms (McGrath, 1991), such as e-mail and telephone.

Although electronic communication mechanisms allow teams to adequately function across the boundaries of space, low member proximity limits the opportunity for shared experiences between members (Jarvenpaa, Knoll, & Leidner, 1998). Because computerized forms of communication tend to disrupt and suppress the transfer of information (e.g., Hedlund, Ilgen, & Hollenbeck, 1998; Kiesler & Sproull, 1992), information exchange may be more difficult. In addition, the use of traditional social cues and influence mechanisms is limited in dispersed contexts (Jarvenpaa et al., 1998). Thus, member dispersion negatively impacts team communication (McGrath, 1991; Montoya-Weiss, Massey, & Song, 2001).

Rather than being completely dispersed or completely colocated, most teams are composed of a few members who share the same work site, with other members interacting virtually from dispersed locations. In an in-depth study of virtual teams, Armstrong and Cole (1995) reported that members at the same work site had more spontaneous and scheduled interactions, which also triggered more frequent e-mail and verbal communication among colocated team members. Further, proximal members of virtual teams developed a "home" group, which was a more important source of group identity and had a stronger influence on members' views and opinions than did less proximal members. Given these effects of physical proximity on team member interaction, member dispersion may disrupt the cohesion of team networks and, subsequently, facilitate greater dissimilarity in member perceptions and attitudes. Thus, member dispersion may constrain the development of shared team justice.

The bottom part of Figure 2 illustrates a team social network characterized by member dispersion. As shown in the figure, members are distributed such that subgroups based on physical location are created within the team (e.g., A-B-D and E-C-F-G-H). Such member dispersion varies the treatment and experiences of team members, since members working from different

physical locations may experience differences in decision-making processes and the enactment of organizational policies. Member dispersion may also affect the level of interaction between team members, since members working from the same physical location have both the opportunity and ability to synchronously observe, evaluate, and discuss their experiences. Team members may have more direct, frequent, and intense interactions with subgroup members (A-B-D and E-C-F-G-H) than with other members of the team. Therefore, subgroup members may serve as stronger sources of social influence on members' interpretations and evaluations of the team's experiences.

In social networks such as that depicted in the bottom of Figure 2, team perceptions of justice may develop through *patterned* emergence processes. Patterned emergence is demonstrated by strong, nonuniform deviations in member contributions to a given construct—disagreement that is evidence of subgroups or factions within the unit (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). Under patterned emergence processes, subgroup clusters represented by a bimodal or multimodal configuration of team members' perceptions and attitudes may be formed.

In the team illustrated in the bottom of Figure 2, member dispersion may influence subgroup bifurcations in team perceptions of justice. Similarities in perceptions of the team's experiences may develop among subgroup members (A-B-D and E-C-F-G-H), rather than within the team as a whole. As a result, team perceptions of justice may be characterized by a bimodal distribution. Thus, teams marked by dispersed subgroups may develop patterned forms of configural team justice, rather than shared perceptions of justice.

CONCLUSIONS

Our purpose here has been to present a social network model of justice in teams. Unlike previous research, in which scholars have ignored the role of communication and interaction in the formation of collective justice perceptions, we have integrated multiple perspectives in developing a model of team justice. Combining sociological and psychological approaches to the study of team contexts, we have proposed a team justice construct, which accounts for the social processes that lead to the emergence of

justice at the team level of analysis. In addition, we have used social network constructs to articulate the processes that lead to convergence in team member justice perceptions. We have also linked these network constructs to unit characteristics from the teams literature to discuss emergence processes and the configural forms that team justice may take when convergence does not occur. By considering justice at a higher level of analysis, and by exploring the effects of team network patterns on team justice perceptions, our model offers both practical and theoretical improvements over previous understandings of the organizational justice phenomenon. We outline these contributions below.

From a practical perspective, our model indicates the need for viewing network structure and interaction patterns as an additional justice "lever." Although managers often pay attention to the fair treatment of individuals and teams to enhance member perceptions of justice, they also need to focus on the network characteristics and subsequent influence processes discussed in this article. If, as we have argued, team structural equivalence and cohesion influence the nature of team justice, managers will benefit from an analysis of network patterns and interactions so as to be able to understand team boundaries and the development of team-level perceptions of justice. Since structured competition for scarce resources is inherent in most organizations (Wellman, 1988), such an understanding may also assist in the management of conflict between teams.

In addition, the model offers guidance for influencing team justice perceptions in the presence of some of the barriers highlighted here. For example, leaders could be trained on the potentially negative ramifications of LMX differentiation. Past research has shown that managers can be trained in justice principles (Skarlicki & Latham, 1996, 1997), which could help alleviate some of the problems experienced by members in low-quality relationships. Similarly, because patterned forms of justice may emerge in physically dispersed teams, managers may be well served by initiating organizational interventions to increase the consistency of treatment of members across locations or by providing information to all members about decision-making processes and subsequent decisions affecting the team.

From a theoretical perspective, Konovsky (2000) notes the lack of multilevel justice studies and calls for theoretical conceptualizations and empirical investigations of justice at higher levels. Given the proliferation of team-based work arrangements in organizations (Devine et al., 1999), the examination of justice in teams contributes to the evolution of justice theory and provides an opportunity for a more comprehensive knowledge of the meaning and operation of justice. This article answers the call for multilevel examinations by presenting a model of justice in teams where teams are viewed as social networks in organizations. Our model is capable of addressing questions that have been relatively ignored by existing conceptualizations. In particular, the model can make predictions about the specific form team justice will assume based on team characteristics and interactions, as well as how strong the effects of team justice on effectiveness criteria should be. In general, our model provides an important springboard for future research on justice in teams.

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