Introduction to the Special Issue on Justice, Conflict, and Negotiation

When I was approached about being the special issue editor for this topic in NCMR, I was immediately placed in a dilemma. Truth be told, I am not a fan of special issues—I fear that special issues hijack the prime directive of any journal, which should be to publish the best work it can. To the degree that a special issue limits the playing field to only a subset of topics in a discipline, it keeps out (or at least delays) the publication of more meritorious work that is topically excluded from consideration in a special issue. Given how precious journal space is, it seems highly questionable that special issues should be used at all. My colleagues and I tried to make just this point in an empirical paper examining the citation rates of regular and special issue articles (Conlon, Morgeson, McNamara, Wiseman, & Skilton, 2006). However, a close read of that article shows that while special issue articles are cited less often than regular articles in the most well-known journals in the management field (e.g., *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*), the inverse relationship holds for less impactful or less well-cited journals. In other words, special issues can enhance the visibility of a journal looking to increase its impact. As *NCMR* is still a relatively new journal in the field, I had to admit that the data suggested that special issues were a good idea for this journal.

The topic of justice, conflict, and negotiation was one that I also thought was ripe for exploration and exploitation (March, 1991). Evidence of exploitation is clear, as a variety of tomes exist that effectively summarize the separate literatures on justice (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988; Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005), negotiation (e.g., Neale & Bazerman, 1991; Brett, 2001), and conflict (e.g., Rahim, 2011; De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). In fact, each field has matured in relative independence from the others. This is where I saw opportunity for exploration: While there is the occasional article linking justice and negotiation (e.g., Hollander-Blumoff & Tyler, 2008), or justice and conflict (e.g., Kabanoff, 1991), the level of integration has been low. Therefore, armed with what I naively perceived as impeccable logic, I agreed to manage the special issue and promptly wrote up the call for papers. I then sat back and awaited the onslaught of manuscripts linking organizational justice, conflict, and negotiation.

I am still waiting for that onslaught to occur. Instead, what I received were a variety of manuscripts that had a far less myopic (i.e., better) view of the connections between these constructs than what I had from my training in organizational behavior. Thus, what I have received—and perhaps what some of you will receive as well—is an education on how justice is construed in a variety of settings. The reality is that there is a lot of exploration going on—just not in the organizational behavior realm. Researchers have been linking justice, conflict, and negotiation in a variety of contexts.

The first paper, by Johnson and Johnson, examines the construct of restorative justice. These authors argue for the importance of inculcating children from the beginning of their classroom experience with an understanding of the constructs of cooperation, constructive conflict, and civic values. As the students move from kindergarten through high school, these topics are taught in a more sophisticated fashion. The importance of their work in terms of its potential to mitigate schoolyard conflicts, bullying, and other violence should be obvious to anyone who has experienced these tensions as part of their education, or who knows someone else who has.

The second paper moves from informal resolutions in the schoolyard to more formal resolutions in the dispute resolution context of arbitration. LaVan, Jedel, and Perkovitch tackle the growing concern that arbitrator decisions—supposedly binding on the parties—are being overturned by courts. Their work highlights the problem and determines where it is occurring. In other words, what factors are associated with courts overturning arbitrator decisions? Their research suggests that arbitrators may need to make some trade-offs between procedural efficiency (timeliness) and more fully explaining the rationale behind their decisions, should they want to lessen the chance that their decisions will be overturned.

The third paper raises the level of analysis from the interpersonal or intergroup level to the nation–state level. Druckman and Wagner examine how a variety of justice elements influence characteristics of the outcomes (in terms of the equality) of international agreements and the duration of these agreements. Their work highlights the importance of procedural justice characteristics related to transparency, representation (voice), and treatment (interpersonal justice) in facilitating agreements. Moreover, their work highlights that the timing of these process elements is important (that is, they work best when applied early in a negotiation rather than later).

The final two papers keep us at the nation or state level and examine justice, conflict, and negotiation from the perspective of some recent international conflicts. In the fourth paper, Neu looks in-depth at the role played by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. One of the takeaways from the article is how difficult it is to attempt to pursue justice and conflict resolution while a conflict is still ''in progress.'' Thus, much like one of the takeaways from the Druckman article, the timing of when events occur is an important consideration in many international conflicts. Neu pulls together information from a variety of sources to tell a compelling story of when, how, and why various decisions were made by the Tribunal as it developed cases and pursued war criminals. It makes for gripping historic reading. One of the central figures being pursued by the Tribunal was actually apprehended while this manuscript was under review.

Finally, the paper by Lilja hopes to end the special issue on a hopeful note. Lilja examines two different conflicts, each involving a government entity and a rebel group seeking independence. The authors pose an intriguing question: Why do some rebel groups reach agreements that lead to a peaceful resolution and others do not? The authors argue that one key feature is the extent to which the rebel group is able to develop a strong ''trust network'' that helps the parties—even when separated by large geographic distances, to communicate effectively as a single entity. In the comparative case study, Lilja shows how the structure of the network of the GAM (the Free Aceh Movement) allowed them to reach an accord with the government of Indonesia, whereas the network structure of the LTTE

(often called the Tamil Tigers) impeded the ability of the rebel group to reach an agreement with the government of Sri Lanka. Thus, the article provides some ideas on how to structure a group such that trust can remain high within the group.

The process of reviewing for the special issue was as follows. I served as one of the two reviewers on every submission. I thought it is important that at least one person has a coherent view of what the set of papers included. In addition, another scholar in the area of negotiation, conflict, and justice also served as a reviewer on the papers. I would like to thank these reviewers for their conscientious work on their assigned manuscripts: Jennifer Dunn (Michigan State University), Deborah Kidder (University of Hartford), William Ross (University of Wisconsin at La Crosse), and Dustin Sleesman (Michigan State University).

I hope you find these articles an interesting read, and I hope they enhance your understanding of justice, conflict, and negotiation. Contrary to my initial thought, I now recognize that plenty of exploration of these topics is going on.

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