

Advances in Justice Conflict Conceptualization: A New Integrative Framework

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Abstract A thorough understanding of conflicts is crucial as conflicts may be destructive to the welfare of individuals, groups, and societies. Conflicts are closely related to justice concerns in that perceived injustices give rise to conflicts and destructive conflicts give rise to injustices. However, the notion of conflict is rather underdeveloped and the definition of it often taken for granted in justice theory and research. In this chapter we propose a useful conceptualization and classification of justice conflicts. Specifically, five types of conceptual distributive justice conflicts, five types of social distributive justice conflicts, and three types of a mixture of both are defined and described. Some of these basic types, in turn, encompass two or more subtypes of conflict. These result in different dilemmas and processes, the natures of which are likely to have important implications for conflict resolution. The present chapter highlights several shortcomings of current conceptualizations of justice conflict, and provides a new integrated framework for a more systematic approach.

Introduction

Almost every academic discipline has its theoretical approach of understanding conflicts – economists are focused on game-theory and decision-making, psychologists explore interpersonal conflicts, sociologists take status and class conflicts as the focal point, while political science is centered on intra-national and international conflicts. Therefore to review the conflict literature as a whole is an almost impossible task. (Axt, Milososki, & Schwarz, 2006, p. 2).

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The definition of conflict is often taken for granted or ignored in justice research. However, conflict is a very complex concept with lots of implied meanings. This chapter presents an attempt to construct a framework within which different types of distributive justice conflicts are distinguished and conceptualized. Five types of *conceptual* (or potential) distributive justice conflicts, five types of *social* distributive justice conflicts, and three types of a mixture of both types are described. Some of these encompass two or more ‘subtypes.’ We show, for a few of the basic conflict types, how the component subtypes may be rank ordered in terms of magnitude of injustice and conflict intensity. Several testable hypotheses are thereby offered.

The framework proposed in this chapter may shed new light on previous research by relating and integrating individual and seemingly unconnected studies. It may also serve as a useful basis on which future studies of justice conflict may be designed, thereby making them comparable, cumulative, and theoretically meaningful, facilitating more precise predictions. Although no new data will be presented here, the proposed framework facilitates the generation of a multitude of inter-related studies.

Conflict

Conceptual Confusion

Conflict is a concept that is used and misused in many disciplines. Comparisons between existing studies of social conflict are difficult due to conceptual confusion and the multitude of existing definitions of conflict. Dirks and McLean Parks (2003, pp. 283–284) report that ‘A recent search on only the electronic database, PsychINFO, produced over 30,000 references to conflict.’ The concept is frequently used in different ways (it designates different phenomena), and the same phenomenon (conflict) is named by several terms: e.g., incompatibility, inconsistency, contradiction, discord, disjunction, divergence, disagreement, incongruence, or discrepancy. Indeed, ‘...the disagreement over the exact notion of conflict as a term dominates until today’ (Axt et al., 2006, p. 2).

Examples of common definitions of conflict are listed in Box 1. Thus, ‘*Conflict is . . . a rubber concept being stretched and molded for the purposes at hand*’ (Mack & Snyder, 1957, p. xx). And this is true even for specific ‘subtypes’ of conflict. ‘Role conflict,’ for instance, has ‘...almost as many definitions as there were investigators’ (Biddle, 1979, p. 161). This situation hinders cumulative knowledge and makes theoretically interrelated and systematic predictions difficult.

Box 1: Some Common Definitions of Conflict

- ‘Conflict means perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties’ current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously’ (Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994, p. 5)
- ‘Conflict is a situation in which interdependent people express (manifest or latent) differences in satisfying their individual needs and interests, and they experience interference from each other in accomplishing these goals’ (Donohue & Kolt, 1992, p. 3).
- Conflict occurs ‘...when two or more interdependent actors have incompatible preferences and perceive or anticipate resistance from each other’ (Lawler & Ford, 1995, p. 236).
- Conflict (Kampf) is ‘...a social relationship within which action...is oriented intentionally to carrying out the actor’s own will against the resistance of the other party or parties’ (Weber, 1947, p. 132).
- ‘Conflict is social interaction in which the actors oppose one another in some manner’ (Olsen, 1978, p. 308).
- Conflict is ‘...an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals’ (Wilmot & Hocker, 1998, p. 41).
- Social conflict is ‘...a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals’ (Coser, 1956, p. 8).
- Conflict is ‘...the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups’ (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2005, p. 27).
- Conflict is ‘...a situation in which oppositely directed forces of about equal strength play upon the person simultaneously’ (Lewin, 1948).
- Conflict exists ‘...whenever incompatible activities occur ... an action which prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures, or in some way makes (resolution) less likely or less effective’ (Deutsch, 1973, p. 156).

Typological Confusion

A typology of conflicts is essential for the systematic analysis of conflict. A good typology should be exhaustive, contain mutually exclusive categories, and be operationally explicit. Unfortunately, current conflict research is in a state of (not only conceptual but also) typological confusion, with as many typologies as analysts, some of which contain two types and others more than 20 (Ramsbotham et al., 2005). Deutsch’s (1973) basic distinction between destructive and constructive types of conflict is well known as is his typology (Deutsch, 1973) which includes six types of conflict: vertical, contingent, displaced, misattributed, latent, and false conflict. Moore (1996) distinguishes among five types of conflict as seen

by mediators: data, interest, value, relationship, and structural conflict. Diez, Stetter, and Albert (2004) proposed a four-level typology: conflict episodes, issue conflicts, identity conflicts, and power conflicts. Pfetsch (1994) lists five types: latent conflict, manifest conflict, crisis, severe crisis, and war. The criteria according to which the typologies are generated differ from one to the other.

Social and Conceptual Conflicts

Among the sources of social conflict that Olsen (1978, p. 149) lists (under the category of ‘Disjunction between culture and social order’) are (1) ‘incongruences between basic values and norms and rules,’ (2) ‘inconsistencies among norms and rules,’ and (3) ‘discrepancies between cultural ideals and actual social practices.’ These subcategories hint at a distinction between ‘social’ conflicts and what we might call ‘conceptual’ conflicts – *social conflict*, referring to *discord between actors* (as defined by most of the theorists cited in Box 1), while *conceptual conflict*, refers to ‘discord,’ ‘incongruence,’ ‘inconsistency,’ ‘incompatibility,’ ‘divergence,’ ‘discrepancy,’ etc. (a) between concepts/phenomena such as values, norms, and rules, and (b) between concepts like these and behavior (e.g., non-conformity and anti-conformity, when defined as a discrepancy between a norm and behavior).

It is obvious that social conflict and what we have termed ‘conceptual’ conflict are not identical phenomena, particularly if we take seriously Mack and Snyder’s (1957) six propositions about the essential nature of social conflict:

1. Conflict requires at least two actors (individuals or organizations), since it is by definition an interaction relationship.
2. Conflict arises from some kind of ‘scarcity,’ or desired but limited resources, activities, positions, or goals.
3. Conflict actions are designed to limit, thwart, destroy, control, or otherwise influence another actor.
4. A conflict relationship is one in which the actors can gain only at each other’s relative expense.
5. Conflict requires interaction among actors in which their actions and counteractions are mutually opposed.
6. Conflict relations always involve attempts to acquire or exercise social power.

According to this characterization of social conflict, phenomena such as the following are not classifiable as a social conflict: Role conflict, norm conflict, value conflict, justice principle conflict, conflicting expectations, attitudinal conflict, ideological conflict, and intra-psycho conflict. These phenomena represent various kinds of incompatibility, inconsistency, mismatch or similar states of affairs (see above). Lacking a better label, we use ‘conceptual conflict’ as an umbrella term for these varieties, even though ‘conflict’ may be a misnomer, considering the ways in which (social) conflict is commonly defined. However, as perceived incompatible goals, values, norms, etc. are central to most social conflicts, what we call

‘conceptual conflict’ may more properly be viewed as *potential* or *latent* conflicts. That is, discrepancies between concepts like values, norms, and attitudes are objects or sources of social conflict but not social conflict, per se, as conceived by Mack and Snyder (1957). Conflict is latent until action occurs. As Montada argues in his chapter (see his Thesis 6), while there are several reasons why incompatibilities will not cause conflict, ‘...conflicts arise when at least one party perceives own subjectively legitimate normative expectations violated or threatened by illegitimate actions or omissions of another party.’ Moreover, in Montada’s view, as other’s actions need to be perceived as illegitimate and unjust for conflict to emerge, all of the ten cited definitions of conflict in Box 1 are inadequate.

Thus, we define conceptual (or potential, latent) conflict as when two or more ideas, beliefs, opinions, preferences, pieces of advice, or demands, etc., are incomparable or contradictory and cannot both be conformed to. Examples of conceptual conflict are situations in which new evidence conflicts with previous findings, in which two opposite norms both require conformity, and/or in which two or more justice principles are incompatible (e.g., when equity and equality are viewed as equally legitimate guides for resource allocation). Conceptual conflict may also occur between different ‘cognitive entities,’ e.g. between a preference and a norm (I like the idea that enemy soldiers should be killed, but I also endorse the 6th commandment ‘Thou Shalt Not Kill’).

Distributive Justice Conflict

Like other types of conflict concerning various substantive or focal issues (i.e., what the conflict is all about, the objects of conflict – resources like power, land, oil, etc.), conflicts concerning how resources should be justly distributed may be of both the social and the conceptual type. A *social distributive justice conflict* is a situation in which two or more parties struggle against each other for (scarce) resources that each party feel entitled to, each party defining just entitlement in terms of *the same allocation principle*. For instance, both P and O may consider their respective contribution to be the largest, and will therefore feel justly entitled to more outcomes than the other. A *conceptual distributive justice conflict* is a situation in which *different and incompatible allocation principles* or ‘subprinciples’ are perceived as equally just and legitimate for a particular resource allocation event. Distributive justice conflicts may also consist of *a mixture of both kinds, i.e. a conceptual-social distributive justice conflict*. An example would be two or more parties who struggle against each other for resources that each party feel entitled to, each party defining just entitlement in terms of *different and incompatible allocation principles*.

Research that specifically deals with how (in)justice relates to conflict and conflict resolution is relatively scarce: ‘Despite the potential for conflict whenever individuals or groups disagree over processes or distributions, and despite the plethora of actual conflicts . . . , until recently justice researchers had hardly studied conflict’ (Hegtvedt, 2005, p. 38). An impressive amount of research certainly exists on various aspects of

‘conflict,’ but most of this work is not explicitly related to distributive or procedural justice – even though ‘Conflicts are unavoidable because the justice motive is universal but the views of what is just and what is unjust are not all universally shared’ (Montada, 2007, p. 255). Thus, conflict emerges from injustice which in turn affects the way conflicts are resolved (e.g., Kazemi, 2007). In addition, it is frequently true that ‘Justice emerges from conflict. . .’ (Deutsch, 1985, p. 100). In other words, injustice may result in conflict, and conflict often calls for its just and fair resolution. Certainly, as Mikula and Wenzel (2000, p. 127) point out, injustice does not have to be involved for conflicts to occur, but ‘. . .social conflicts frequently follow from perceptions of injustice, and pertinent divergent views of the existence of an injustice.’ Montada (2007, p. 256) makes a stronger case for a necessary connection between injustice and conflict: ‘All social conflicts may be interpreted as justice conflicts.’ If this statement is taken seriously, it seems that one of our duties as justice researchers is to clean up this rather chaotic research domain.

The various ways in which conflict (social as well as conceptual) may be conceived in the context of justice seem almost endless. As an illustration of some of the ways, consider the ‘justice tree’ shown in Fig. 1 (please note that our focus is on *distributive* justice, not on procedural or interactional justice). The most

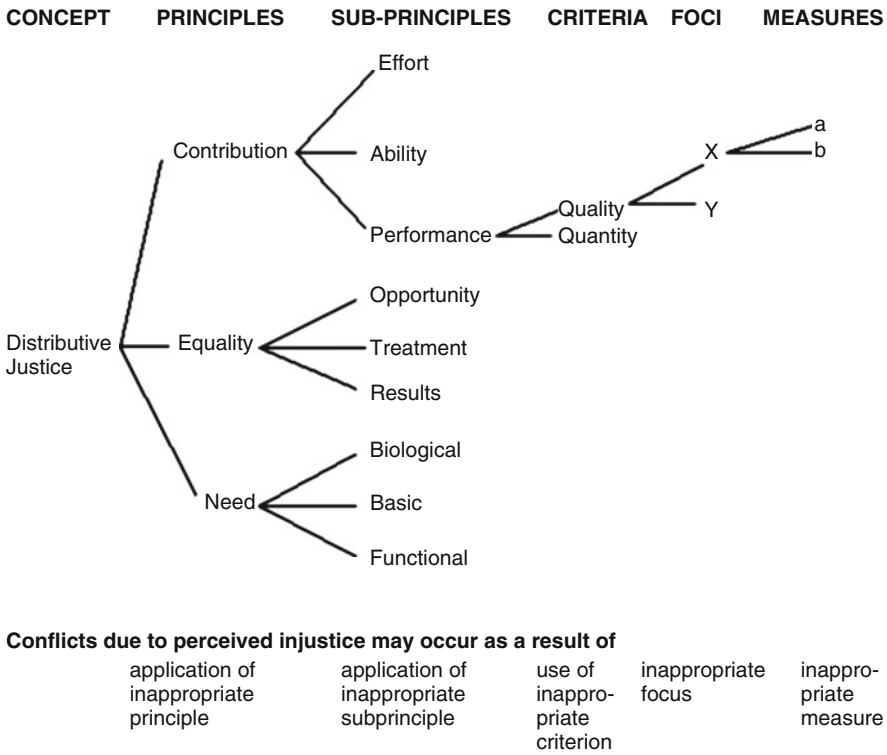


Fig. 1 The distributive justice tree

commonly discussed and researched justice principles are the contribution (equity), equality, and need principles – although several others have been distinguished by different theorists (see Törnblom, 1992, for an overview of several of these sources). Furthermore, some of these that we may term ‘major’ principles may be understood in more than one way.

Messick and Sentis (1983), for example, distinguished among six different types of equality principles, and Benn and Peters (1959) discuss three types of need principles. Other theorists who have noted that some of the principles are multi-faceted include Deutsch (1985), Reis (1984), and Rescher (1966). An experimental study conducted by Törnblom and Jonsson (1985) suggested that analytical distinctions between different kinds of one particular major principle, termed ‘subprinciples,’ are empirically significant: Participants’ justice evaluations of the contribution and equality principles, respectively, varied with the subprinciples in terms of which they were represented (see Törnblom, 1992, for a discussion of additional studies focusing on subprinciples). In addition to distinctions among subprinciples of a particular major justice principle, it is also important to recognize its different *subtypes*. A typology developed by Törnblom (1977a) presented a large number of contribution (equity) principle (in)justice situations on the basis of the relative inputs and outcomes of two persons, when both local and referential comparisons are made. These different types of (in)justice were then rank ordered in terms of perceived intensity of injustice (for empirical verifications, see Törnblom, 1977b, 1982).

We have included the *contribution*, *equality*, and *need* as major principles in the ‘justice tree’ illustration (Fig. 1). (1) Each one of these major principles may represent the very general notion of *distributive justice* in a particular situation. (2) Further, each major principle subsumes at least three subprinciples. Allocation of benefits on the basis of *contributions* to a group task may be assessed in terms of a person’s *effort* expended, the *ability* she brings to the task accomplishment situation, or her actual *performance* on the task. *Equality* may be conceived in terms of the same *opportunity* for all to receive some resource, the same *treatment* (share, allotment for) of all at every distribution occasion, or the same *results* for all involved recipients in terms of the goods or bads they receive over time. And allocation according to *need* may be determined on the basis of recipients’ *biological* needs (i.e., those relevant to survival), their basic needs (i.e., the bare minimum for a decent life where they live), or their functional needs (i.e., facilities required for fulfilling the requirements of one’s tasks). (3) Further, receipt according to a particular subprinciple can usually be calculated in more than one way. For example, *performance* may be assessed according to several *criteria*, say, its *quality* and/or its *quantity*. (4) In addition, one may *focus* different aspects of the chosen criterion. The quality of a scientist’s work may, for instance, be evaluated by the number of citations from the scientific community, or by how successful practical applications turned out to be, while quantity may be assessed by counting the number of published articles or doctoral students supervised. (5) Finally, the various aspects focused may be *measured* in more than one way. For example, the success of practical applications may be measured from the perspective of profit making or natural resource preservation.

These (actually incomplete) conceptual distinctions should make it very obvious, that the number of ways in which distributive justice conflicts may occur is staggering. Thus, even though people in general normally use the umbrella term 'justice' in their daily encounters with others, they most likely have a specific major principle implicitly in mind that for them represent what they mean by justice. (1) If a person erroneously assumes that the term justice has the same meaning for another person with whom she interacts, miscommunication will ensue, and the stage is set for disagreements and conflict. Thus, even though both agree to divide a resource in a just manner, if one of them equates justice with the contribution principle and the other with the need principle, conflict is likely to erupt. (2) Even if both persons may define justice in terms of an identical major principle, a second type of conflict may still occur on the subprinciple level. Even though both may agree that some resources should be distributed equally, if one person has in mind an equal number of resource units to both (i.e., equality-of-treatment), while the other takes for granted that they would flip a coin to determine their shares (i.e., equality-of-opportunity), their preferences would be incompatible and in conflict. (3) Third, even if both persons agree that resources should be justly distributed, that the contribution principle should represent justice, that performance is what should count as a relevant and legitimate contribution, one person may consider quality to be the most just criterion for evaluations of performance while the other is set on quantity. Ironically, even though the two persons may have agreed this far into the decision process and avoided conflict, they are still at risk at this level. Finally, and if successfully reaching this point in the sequence without getting into conflict is not complicated enough, conflicts may still erupt due to (4) disagreements over which aspect of a criterion (by which a subprinciple should be evaluated) is the most just one to use, and due to (5) different opinions about the most just measure of an agreed-upon aspect.

Towards a Classification of Distributive Justice Conflicts

Some basic questions regarding the connection between conflict and distributive justice may be stated as: (1) 'What type and magnitude of distributive injustice is likely to result in what type and intensity of conflict?', (2) 'What type and intensity of conflict is likely to result in what kind and intensity of reactions to the conflict?', and (3) 'What type and intensity of conflict and reactions to the conflict is likely to result in what type of conflict resolution strategies.' As a first step several types of social, conceptual, and social-conceptual distributive justice conflicts may be distinguished. These result in different dilemmas and processes, the nature, ramifications, and resolutions of which are likely to have important implications for justice related conceptions and behavior. Of course, for concrete analyses of justice conflicts we also need to take into account important moderators such as outcome valence, resource valence, resource type, and social context/setting/relationship.

In the following we propose a tentative conceptualization and classification of 13 major types of distributive justice conflicts; five conceptual, five social, and three

conceptual-social justice conflicts (see Box 2). The interested reader may consult Törnblom (1988) for an integrative framework delineating several types of social-conceptual conflict and propositions regarding influence attempts and their likely success. After brief descriptions of these types of distributive justice conflicts we will, due to space limitations, discuss only the five types marked with an asterisk (*), some in more detail than others. As we will see, some of the conflict types listed below may be further specified into subtypes. Thus, one may perhaps view the following as a ‘typology of typologies’ (i.e., a meta typology).

Box 2: Conceptual, Social, and Conceptual-Social Justice Conflicts

Conceptual/Potential Distributive Justice Conflict

1. *Justice Principle Determinant Conflict
Two or more simultaneously salient determinants prescribe incompatible justice principles.
2. Justice Principle Conflict
Two or more ‘major’ justice principles are equally relevant in a situation, and the choice of one excludes the others.
3. *Justice Subprinciple Conflict
 - (a) Two or more justice subprinciples of *one* particular major justice principle are equally relevant in a situation, and the choice of one excludes the others (*‘intra-major – subprinciple conflict’*).
 - (b) Two or more justice subprinciples of *two or more* particular major justice principles are equally relevant in a situation, and the choice of one excludes the others (*‘inter-major – subprinciple conflict’*).
4. *Violation of a Justice (Sub)Principle by Means of (an)other Conflicting Justice (Sub)Principle(s)
 - (a) Inter-major inter-subprinciple violation.
 - (b) Intra-major inter-subprinciple violation.
5. Conflict between Justice and other Goals/Considerations, e.g.,
 - (a) Justice – self-interest conflict
 - (b) Self-justice – other-justice conflict
 - (c) Justice – empathy conflict
 - (d) Justice – efficiency conflict
 - (e) Justice – outcome favorability conflict, etc.
 - Favorable outcome vs. unjust outcome (i.e., advantageous injustice)
 - Unfavorable outcome vs. unjust outcome (i.e., disadvantageous injustice)
 - Unfavorable outcome vs. just outcome (i.e., disadvantageous justice)

(continued)

Social Distributive Justice Conflict

6. *Perspective Conflict

- (a) Recipient – recipient conflict (inter-recipient conflict) – the resource allocator is a non-recipient third party.
- (b) Non-recipient allocator – recipient conflict.
- (c) Recipient allocator – recipient conflict.
- (d) Non-recipient allocator – non-recipient allocator conflict (inter-allocator conflict).

7. Interpersonal Justice Conflict

The allocation principle considered just for one individual is viewed as unjust for other individuals.

8. Individual-Group Justice Conflict

The allocation principle considered just for the individual is viewed as unjust for the group, or vice versa.

9. Intergroup Justice Conflict

The allocation principle considered just for one group is viewed as unjust for other groups.

10. *Individual/Group-Intergroup Justice Conflict

The states of (in)justice for two or more groups at both the individual and collective levels are taken into account.

Social-Conceptual Distributive Justice Conflict

11. Interpersonal Justice Conflict [cf. type 7]

Two or more individuals endorse *different* justice principles for the same allocation event.

12. Individual-Group Justice Conflict [cf. type 8]

The individual and the group endorse *different* justice principles for the same allocation event.

13. Intergroup Justice Conflict [cf. type 9]

Two or more groups endorse *different* justice principles for the same allocation event.

Conceptual Distributive Justice Conflicts

Recall that a conceptual/potential distributive justice conflict was previously defined as a situation in which *different and incompatible allocation principles* or ‘subprinciples’ are perceived as equally just and legitimate for a particular resource allocation event. As a special case of this type of conflict we also include situations in which the goal of justice collides with other goals like efficiency, individual freedom, outcome favorability, etc. (see type 5 below).

1. Justice Principle *Determinant* Conflict occurs when two or more simultaneously salient determinants prescribe incompatible justice principles. It is reasonable to assume that the justice conceptions of most people are formed on the basis of individual as well as situational factors, and that the thrust of a given factor may frequently conflict with that of another factor within the same category or with that of a factor belonging to the other category. There is a scarcity of research identifying and analyzing (intrapersonal, interpersonal, or intergroup) conflict situations that may occur when two or more simultaneously relevant and salient, but incompatible, justice principle determinants are considered (juxtaposed). For instance, an allocation principle (e.g., equity) deemed just according to an ‘individual-motive’ determinant (e.g., self-interest) may be incompatible with a principle perceived just according to a ‘situational’ determinant (e.g., a caring-oriented group climate). Most studies focus on one determinant at a time, even though more complex situations are likely to be the rule rather than the exception in everyday life.

Rather than attending to conflicts among two or more equally legitimate allocation principle determinants, most researchers appear to assume that one particular determinant is more powerful than others, in which case the choice of a justice principle is rendered less problematic. Lerner and Whitehead (1980, p. 232), for example, argued that ‘Although virtually all interactions involve the integration of both [the perceived] Relation [to the other] and [the task-relevant acquisition] Process, in any given encounter one or the other may predominate.’ But a more intriguing focus is on those instances when one or the other does not predominate. And what goes on before one determinant has assumed dominance over another. Surely, a more common situation is one of conflict and negotiations among competing requirements or claims, rather than one in which a single determinant is unequivocally predominant.

Failing to account for simultaneously salient and relevant allocation-principle determinants, however, will result in missed opportunities to examine interesting issues pertaining to this kind of conflict. Existing research appears to have been guided by questions on a different and perhaps less complex level, e.g., ‘Under what conditions will a given principle be chosen over others?’ or, ‘What principle will be adopted, considered just, etc., when determinant X is predominant?’ Thus, questions like ‘Under what conditions will the influence of determinant X overpower others?’, and ‘How will conflict be resolved, if a compromise is not possible among opposing determinants?’ will not appear and will therefore remain irrelevant and unexplored. See Törnblom (1988) for predictions based on an integrative model.

2. Justice Principle Conflict occurs when two or more ‘major’ justice principles are equally relevant in a situation, and the choice of one excludes the others. A fair amount of theoretical and empirical research has been conducted concerning this type of distributive justice conflict (see Törnblom, Mühlhausen, & Jonsson, 1991, for reviews).

3. Justice Subprinciple Conflict occurs (a) when two or more justice subprinciples of one particular major justice principle are equally relevant in a situation, and the choice of one excludes the others (*‘intra-major – subprinciple conflict’*).

To illustrate this type of conflict, imagine a situation in which people view the allocation of some kind of resource, say respect, on the basis of the effort expended and on the basis of ability as equally just, and that they want both options to be available. These two subprinciples are, however, likely to be incompatible and viewed as just or unjust, depending on the recipient perspective. Which one of two persons is worthy of respect, if one is a highly able person expending low effort and the other put in a great amount of effort despite being on the low end of ability? Applying the contribution-of-effort principle will be seen as just and the contribution-of-ability as unjust by the person high on effort, and vice versa by the person high on ability. As another example, although people may agree that equality is synonymous with justice, the application of one equality subprinciple, say equality-of-results, will violate other equality subprinciples, e.g. the equality-of-opportunity subprinciple. And vice versa, an outcome allocation based on equality-of-opportunity will result in *inequality-of-results* and *inequality-of-treatment* (see Törnblom, 1992, for some political implications of the ‘clash’ between these two subprinciples). Given the various possible ‘collisions’ between two subprinciples, we may be interested in knowing which is likely to be perceived as the most and the least adverse situation. It seems reasonable to suggest the use of ‘similarity’ as a criterion, on the basis of which a construction of rank orders among pairs of incompatible subprinciples may be established.

We may characterize the above mentioned three *contribution* subprinciples on the basis of their *similarity* in terms of the *achieved* versus *ascribed* nature of the contribution (input) involved. The *contribution-of-effort* (Ce) and *contribution-of-performance* (Cp) subprinciples are similar in that both call for *achieved* types of input, while the *contribution-of-ability* (Ca) subprinciple concern *ascribed* inputs and is, thus, dissimilar to the other two.¹ Thus, on the basis of this distinction, and on the assumption that the more dissimilar or incompatible two relevant and competing subprinciples to guide resource allocation are, the more severe will a resulting conflict be. Thus, a situation in which the choice stands between Cp and Ca will be more conflictual than another, where either Cp or Ce is an alternative. In the first case the choice is between two very different subprinciples, one of which is achievement based and the other ascriptively based, while in the second situation the choice is between two achievement based subprinciples. Thus, we propose the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: A conflict between the contribution-of-performance (Cp) and the contribution-of-ability (Ca) subprinciples will be perceived as more severe than a conflict between the contribution-of-performance (Cp) and the contribution-of-effort (Ce) subprinciples.

$$[Cp - Ca \text{ conflict}] > [Cp - Ce \text{ conflict}]$$

¹ Ability is here conceived as a natural or innate talent or capacity beyond the individual’s control, thus an ascribed input. However, abilities such as writing skills, horseback riding and skating skills are acquired via training, practice, education, etc., and are therefore achieved.

Hypothesis 2: A conflict between the contribution-of-effort (Ce) and the contribution-of-ability (Ca) subprinciples will be perceived as more severe than a conflict between the contribution-of-effort (Ce) and the contribution-of-performance (Cp) subprinciples.

$$[Ce - Ca \text{ conflict} > Ce - Cp \text{ conflict}]$$

A different criterion for *similarity* has to be used to distinguish between the equality subprinciples, equality-of-opportunity (Eo), equality-of-treatment (Et), and equality-of-results (Er), namely similarity of '*end result*'. The Et and Er subprinciples are more similar to each other with regard to their likely end result than they are to the Eo subprinciple (the latter of which is random in character as no one can be sure of receiving outcomes at all). Again, on the basis of this distinction, and on the assumption that the more dissimilar or incompatible two relevant and competing subprinciples to guide resource allocation are, the more severe will a resulting conflict be. The following two hypotheses seem reasonable:

Hypothesis 3: A conflict between the equality-of-treatment (Et) and the equality-of-opportunity (Eo) subprinciples will be perceived as more severe than a conflict between the equality-of-treatment (Et) and the equality-of-results (Er) subprinciples.

$$[Et - Eo \text{ conflict} > Et - Er \text{ conflict}]$$

Hypothesis 4: A conflict between the equality-of-results (Er) and the equality-of-opportunity (Eo) subprinciples will be perceived as more severe than a conflict between the equality-of-results (Er) and the equality-of-treatment (Et) subprinciples.

$$[Er - Eo \text{ conflict} > Er - Et \text{ conflict}]$$

Justice subprinciple conflict may also occur **(b)** when two or more justice subprinciples of different major justice principles are equally relevant in a situation, and the choice of one excludes the other ('*inter-major - subprinciple conflict*'). Thus, this type of conflict situation is more complex than the one we just discussed, as both the major principles and the subprinciples differ between the two situations of each pair. For example, consider a conceptual justice conflict between Ca-Eo, between Cp-Et, and between Ce-Eo. The magnitudes of conflict resulting from the second and third conflicting pairs of contribution-equality subprinciples are likely to be perceived and experienced as considerably greater as compared to the first pair. The clash between the contribution and equality subprinciples in the second pair and in the third pair is more severe, at least intuitively, than the clash in first pair. The choice between receiving benefits (or burdens) according to one's performance (Cp), or in an amount equal to all (Et) regardless of one's performance or any other input criterion, may require a decision regarding internal or external locus of control as a cause of one's reward – or punishment-relevant behavior. The same

holds true with regard to the choice between one's effort and mere chance (e.g., a lottery). However, whether or not the contribution-of-ability (Ca) or the equality-of-opportunity (Eo) will be the guiding principle matters less, as the allocation outcome is likely to be relatively uncertain in both cases; both are pretty much beyond one's control and likely to be viewed as about equally unjust.

We now proceed to a discussion about what may happen when an 'operating' subprinciple is violated because another conflicting subprinciple is adopted in its place.

4. Violation of a Justice (Sub)Principle by Means of (an)other Conflicting Justice (Sub)Principle(s).

(a) Inter-major inter-subprinciple violation. Perceived injustice may occur in several ways one of which is when, for some reason, an operating consensually agreed-upon justice principle is deliberately violated. Such a violation may be exemplified by organizational re-organizations. An industrial authority figure may be convinced that low productivity results from the existing egalitarian salary structure and decide to switch to an incentive system where wages are determined on the basis of a contribution principle, e.g. performance. As both allocation principles may be legitimized in terms of fairness, this situation may be conceived as one in which one operating justice principle is violated, the violation of which is justified via the application of another justice principle which replaces, conflicts with, and excludes the hitherto prevailing principle. Justice principle violation (or 'change,' to use a less provoking term) is indeed a common real life issue. When countries in the East (Baltic countries behind the iron curtain) changed their economic system from planned economy to market economy, from socialism to capitalism, during the 1990s, they changed the resource allocation principles to which people were accustomed. The communist system endorsed and championed a justice conception based on the slogan 'from each according to ability, to each according to need,' whereas a capitalist economic system tends to favor resource allocations according to the contributions (or, at best, according to some combination of two or more principles, e.g., equality of basic need fulfillment and on the basis of contributions above that level).

(b) Intra-major inter-subprinciple violation. Equally likely is 'intra-major justice principle violation, as exemplified by a change of what inputs are required to obtain outcomes according to a *contribution subprinciple*, i.e. intra-major inter-subprinciple violation. Thus, this is a conflict where a subprinciple of a particular justice principle is violated by means of another subprinciple of that justice principle. It seems likely that certain intra-major principle violations would be perceived as less unjust than others. An *intra-contribution-principle* (i.e., *contribution inter-subprinciple*) violation is accomplished by changing the *type* (as opposed to the amount) of input required to obtain the outcome. For example, recipients who were used or promised to receive outcomes according to their efforts now receive them on the basis of their performances or abilities.

Although some studies have examined the effect of justice principle violation upon justice perceptions, it seems none of them focused on other principles than equity. In addition, all of them were concerned with violation in the sense of

a change of the *amount* (rather than the kind) of input meriting a given outcome (Crosby & Franco, 2003; Folger, Rosenfield, & Robinson, 1983; Ployhart & Ryan, 1998; Vermunt, Wit, Van den Bos, & Lind, 1996). The changes made in those studies were not rule changes in the sense of a change from one distribution subprinciple to another, as the required *type* of input (i.e., performance) was not replaced by another type. Instead changes were made regarding the *amount* of input that merited a certain outcome.

In order to generate hypotheses about *intra-contribution-subprinciple violation* (contribution inter-subprinciple violation), we assume (1) that people prefer *similarity* over dissimilarity, and (2) that, as previously mentioned, similarity between contribution subprinciples may be determined on the basis of the *achieved* versus *ascribed* nature of the input. Again, the achievement/ascription distinction between types of input allows a differentiation between the contribution subprinciples: *effort* (Ce) and *performance* (Cp) are similar in that both involve *achieved* input characteristics, while at least *certain kinds of ability* (Ca) are *ascribed* and, thus, dissimilar to effort and performance. Thus, the Ce and Cp subprinciples are more compatible with each other (and less conflicting) than Ce and Ca or Cp and Ca, respectively.

Based on our earlier reasoning, it seems likely (3) that the violation of an achievement based subprinciple via another achievement based subprinciple will be more preferred, perceived as less unjust, and be less likely to result in conflict than a violation via an ascriptively based subprinciple, and vice versa. Further, assume (4) that injustice and intensity of conflict are positively related (see Box 3). Subsequently, the following hypotheses regarding (a) level of injustice and (b) conflict intensity may be generated:

Hypothesis 5: Violation of the contribution-of-*effort* subprinciple via the contribution-of-*ability* subprinciple will (a) be perceived as *more* unjust and (b) result in more intense conflict than violation via the contribution-of-*performance* subprinciple.

$$[(Ce \rightarrow Ca) > (Ce \rightarrow Cp)]$$

Hypothesis 6: A violation of the contribution-of-*performance* subprinciple via the contribution-of-*ability* subprinciple will (a) be perceived as *more* unjust and (b) result in more intense conflict than violation via the contribution-of-*effort* subprinciple.

$$[(Cp \rightarrow Ca) > (Cp \rightarrow Ce)]$$

Hypothesis 7: A violation of the contribution-of-*ability* subprinciple via the contribution-of-*effort* subprinciple or via the contribution-of-*performance* subprinciple will (a) be perceived as *equally* unjust and (b) result in equally intense conflict.

$$[(Ca \rightarrow Ce) = (Ca \rightarrow Cp)]$$

Box 3: Violation of Contribution and Equality Subprinciples	
Contribution-of-effort (Ce)	Equality-of-opportunity (Eo)
Contribution-of-performance (Cp)	Equality-of-treatment (Et)
Contributions-of-ability (Ca)	Equality-of-results (Er)
Assumptions:	
(1) People prefer <i>similarity</i> over dissimilarity.	
(2) Similarity between contribution subprinciples may be determined on the basis of the <i>achieved</i> versus <i>ascribed</i> nature of the input. The Ce and Cp subprinciples are similar in that both concern achieved characteristics, while at least certain kinds of Ca are ascribed and, thus, dissimilar.	(2) Similarity between equality subprinciples may be determined on the basis of their ‘ <i>end result</i> ’. The Et and Er subprinciples are more similar to each other with regard to their likely end result than they are to the Eo subprinciple (the latter of which is random in character, so nobody can be sure of receiving any outcomes at all).
(3) Thus, the violation of an achievement based subprinciple via another achievement based subprinciple will be more preferred and perceived as less unjust than a violation via an ascription based subprinciple, and vice versa.	(3) Thus, a violation of a subprinciple that results in a minor change of the total amount of outcomes will be more preferred and perceived as less unjust than a violation that causes major changes in end results, i.e., very dissimilar end results.
(4) The degree of injustice and intensity of conflict is positively related.	

Hypotheses may also be derived, in a similar manner as above, about *intra-equality-subprinciple violation* (equality inter-subprinciple violation). Since contributions or inputs are irrelevant when resources are allocated according to the equality principle, the reader may recall that we used ‘end result’ as a criterion to determine *similarity* between the equality subprinciples. On that basis Et and Er subprinciples are more similar to each other than they are to the Eo subprinciple. Again assuming (1) that people prefer similarity over dissimilarity, (2) that similarity among the equality subprinciples may be determined on the basis of the end result of their application, and (3) that a violation of a subprinciple that results in a minor change in total amount of outcomes will be perceived as less just than a violation that causes major changes in end result, i.e. a very dissimilar end result. Adding the assumption (4) that injustice and intensity of conflict is positively related, the following hypotheses regarding (a) level of injustice and (b) conflict intensity seem reasonable:

Hypothesis 8: A violation of the equality-of-*opportunity* subprinciple via the equality-of-*treatment* or via the equality-of-*results* subprinciple will (a) be perceived as *equally* unjust and (b) result in equally intense conflict.

$$[(Eo \rightarrow Et) = (Eo \rightarrow Er)]$$

Hypothesis 9: A violation of the equality-of-*treatment* subprinciple via the equality-of-*opportunity* subprinciple will (a) be perceived as *more* unjust and (b) result in more intense conflict than a violation via the equality-of-*results* subprinciple.

$$[(Et \rightarrow Eo) > (Et \rightarrow Er)]$$

Hypothesis 10: A violation of the equality-of-*results* subprinciple via the equality-of-*opportunity* subprinciple will (a) be perceived as *more* unjust and (b) result in more intense conflict than a violation via the equality-of-*treatment* subprinciple.

$$[(Er \rightarrow Eo) > (Er \rightarrow Et)]$$

These hypotheses are, of course, likely to be moderated by several factors, e.g. social relationship, institutional context, resource type, and resource scarcity. Thus, while the above hypotheses may have to be modified, a large number of additional hypotheses can be generated. For example, contrary to its great importance in a business context, performance is likely considered least important among the three contribution subprinciples within a family context. In a family, who you are (i.e., an ascribed characteristic) is usually more important than how you perform. Also, in a family it is likely that effort (often interpreted as a sign of good intentions) is more important than performance, i.e. the actual results (despite a poor outcome, s/he at least worked as hard as s/he could). If this is true, and as an example of how moderators may modify hypotheses, a violation of the contribution-of-effort subprinciple via the contribution-of-performance subprinciple will be perceived as more unjust in a family than in a business context.

What about conflict between justice and other ‘goals’ or considerations? In addition to conflicts and incompatibilities among justice subprinciples, justice conflicts may also include conflicts and incompatibilities between justice and other considerations or goals. In some situations the accomplishment of justice makes the fulfillment of other goals impossible. Below follow some examples of this type of justice conflict.

5. Conflict Between Justice and Other Goals/Considerations

- (a) Justice – self-interest conflict
- (b) Self-justice – other-justice conflict
- (c) Justice – empathy conflict
- (d) Justice – efficiency conflict
- (e) Justice – outcome favorability conflict.
 - (i) Unjust vs. favorable outcome (i.e., advantageous injustice)
 - (ii) Unjust vs. unfavorable outcome (i.e., disadvantageous injustice)
 - (iii) Just vs. unfavorable outcome (i.e., disadvantageous justice)
 - (iv) Just vs. favorable outcome (i.e., advantageous justice)

Thus, the dual goal of accomplishing outcomes that are both just and favorable is only realized in (iv) but may fail in three ways (i–iii).

Social Distributive Justice Conflicts

A social distributive justice conflict was previously defined as a situation in which two or more parties struggle against each other for (scarce) resources that each party feel entitled to, each party defining just entitlement in terms of the *same* allocation principle.

6. Perspective conflict may occur in the form of a (a) recipient – recipient conflict (inter-recipient conflict) when the resource allocator is a non-recipient. Cook and Hegtvedt (1983, p. 227) identified an important shortcoming with research on distributive justice: ‘... rule appropriateness is typically assessed only from the allocator’s viewpoint and not from the recipients’ perspective’. Whether or not this statement is still true, we would add that it is also necessary to make distinctions among different types *within* a specific perspective category, in this case the recipient category. One may, for example, distinguish between two types of *recipients*, those who are *responsible* and those who are *non-responsible* for praiseworthy or blameful conduct.

Imagine that subsequent positive or negative outcomes (in the form of reward or punishment, respectively) are provided or imposed in *equal* amounts or kind on both recipients by a third party. From an equity theory point of view, for instance, a responsible and a non-responsible recipient are likely to view the situation very differently, and the reactions of the two recipients will vary with the valence of the outcome. Although only the responsible recipient has ‘earned’ the positive or negative outcomes, she still receives the same as the non-responsible recipient who, in turn, is provided undeserved outcomes. The responsible recipient is likely to feel unjustly treated, robbed of half of her rightfully deserved reward (unless the relationship between her and the other recipient is such that her welfare is of great concern). Being relieved of half of one’s punishment is favorably unjust and might be less upsetting (depending, again, on the nature of her relationship to the non-responsible recipient). Considering the non-responsible recipient is ‘innocent,’ she is likely to resent being imposed unjust punishment. And she may react with embarrassment (or even satisfaction, if she is able and willing to redefine her lack of entitlement) concerning the inequitably advantageous reward.

Now, consider two allocation principles, *equality* (E) and *contribution* (C), outcomes of *positive* (+) and *negative* (–) valence, and situations in which outcomes of both valences are allocated according to the two principles. This yields four possible combinations or patterns (see Box 4). Two pairs are *consistent* and denoted [E+ E–] and [C+ C–], the former meaning that the equality principle is applied for the allocation of both positive and negative outcomes (e.g., rewards and punishments), and that the contribution (equity) principle is applied for both. The other two patterns, [E+ C–] and [C+ E–], imply inconsistency in that different principles are applied for positively and negatively valent outcomes.

Box 4: Perspective Conflict

	Consistency				Inconsistency			
	E+	E−	C+	C−	E+	C−	C+	E−
Non-responsible	a	d	d	a	a	a	d	d
Actor	i	i	j	j	i	j	j	i
Responsible	d	a	a	d	d	d	a	a
Actor	i	i	j	j	i	j	j	i

E, Equality principle
C, Contribution principle
+, Positive outcomes (goods)
−, Negative outcomes (bads)
a, Advantage (favorable)
d, Disadvantage (unfavorable)
j, Justice
i, Injustice

The *consistent* application of the *equality* principle for both positive and negative outcomes [E+ E−] is both advantageous (favorable) and disadvantageous for a *non-responsible* recipient, *advantageous* (but unjust) in that s/he receives ‘undeserved’ positive outcomes, and *disadvantageous* (and unjust) in that s/he shares undeserved negative outcomes equally with the responsible recipient. A *consistent* application of the *contribution* principle [C+ C−] is advantageous and disadvantageous in a directly opposite manner – disadvantageous (but just) because s/he does not receive undeserved positive outcomes, and *advantageous* (and just) in that s/he does not receive undeserved negative outcomes. *Inconsistent* applications of the two principles for positive and negative outcomes, i.e. [E+ C−] and [C+ E−], are maximally advantageous and maximally disadvantageous, respectively, for a non-responsible individual. Sharing undeserved positive outcomes [E+] is *advantageous* (but unjust) and not receiving undeserved negative outcomes [C−] is also *advantageous* (and just) for the non-responsible recipient. Missing out on undeserved positive outcomes is disadvantageous (but just), and sharing undeserved negative outcomes is also disadvantageous (and unjust). It is not difficult to see that the four patterns are advantageous and disadvantageous in directly opposite ways for the recipient who is *responsible* for the praiseworthy and blameful conduct (subsequent to which positive and negative outcomes are allocated). However, unless they define justice and injustice according to different principles, we assume (*ceteris paribus*) that the responsible and non-responsible recipients concur regarding their assessments of how (un)just each situation is.

Some observations that can be made from Box 4 are worthy of special emphasis, as they may have important implications for the design of empirical research with a focus on the connection between recipient perspective and reactions to (in)justice and self-(dis)advantage [(un)favorability]:

1. Conflict between the non-responsible and responsible recipients *always* occurs with regard to their position on self-*advantage*.
2. Providing both recipients agree that the contribution principle represents justice, conflict *never* occurs with regard to their *justice* evaluation of the applied allocation principle.
3. Matching a recipient's positive states of self-advantage and justice (i.e., a and j) appear in only four out of the eight situations. These are unlikely to result in intra-person conflict.
4. Matching a recipient's negative states of self-advantage and justice (i.e., d and i) appear in only four out of the eight situations. These are also unlikely to result in intra-person conflict.
5. *Intra-person conflict* is likely to occur when the positions on self-advantage and justice do not match. This occurs in four situations for each recipient. The recipient will be motivated to change the negative component to a positive position (see the literature on status inconsistency and status crystallization for propositions and empirical research, e.g., Berger, Blackwell, Norman, & Smith, 1992; Geschwender, 1967; Lenski, 1954, 1956 – space does not allow elaboration here).
6. *Interpersonal* and *intergroup conflicts* are likely to occur in *all* situations, but only due to the two recipients' opposite positions on self-advantage, as their positions on justice always match. Thus, care should be taken to make sure, in empirical studies, that the observed or manipulated conflict is not erroneously attributed to injustice when, in fact, other non-controlled factors (like self-advantage, favorability) are the real causes.
7. Thus, if actors focus and compare themselves on the basis of *both* self-advantage and justice, conflict will always emerge, which is also likely if they only focus on self-advantage. However, no conflict is likely to occur on the basis of the described scenario if only justice is made salient.

Clearly, the meaning and consequences of a particular application pattern may vary significantly as a function of the *perspective* from which it is viewed. Thus, the stage is set for conflicts between recipient categories, the intensity, consequences, and resolution of which will vary with the particular combination of principles that is applied for the allocation of positive and negative outcomes. Thus, not only should a distinction be made *among* perspective categories (e.g., allocator, recipient, observer), it is equally important to make distinctions *within* perspective categories, as we have just argued with regard to the recipient perspective category. Please note that the above scenarios are based on the premise that justice and self-advantage (or favorability) are equally weighty factors affecting recipients' perceptions of the various situations as conflicting as well as their subsequent reactions to consistency and inconsistency between the justice principles that are applied for positive and negative outcome allocations.

Another type of perspective conflict is **(b)** the *non-recipient allocator – recipient conflict*. This type of conflict has been the topic of a number of studies. Elliott and Meeker (1986) conducted a vignette study of non-recipient allocators' preferences for outcome allocation to five group members subsequent to their contributions to

a joint effort. And Mikula and Korytko (1990) studied allocators' responses when their recipients' views of which principle represents distributive justice differed from their own. Mikula tested the general proposition that the resolution of conflicting views between a non-recipient allocator and the recipient will vary with the relevance and salience of recipient expectations for the application of the principle s/he considers appropriate or just – thus creating various levels of pressure on the allocator to deviate from his/her own preferred justice principle (in this case equality).

(c) A third theoretically and empirically important type of conflict is when the allocator is also a recipient, i.e. *recipient allocator – recipient conflict*. Again, this type concerns the opposing interaction between two recipients, but in this case one of the recipients is also an allocator who decides what and how much of social resources she and the other recipient will be provided. It is a more complex kind of conflict as compared to the previously discussed recipient-recipient conflict (i). In this instance, the recipient-allocator will have to apply restraint to counteract her possible and biasing self-interest in addition to considering the relative and just levels of rewards and punishments for herself and the other recipient. The other recipient, in turn, will likely be less tolerant of an unfavorably unjust position, knowing that her contender (rather than a third party) is the cause.

Finally, an interesting type of perspective conflict that is not uncommon in real-life situations is (d) the *non-recipient allocator – non-recipient allocator conflict* (inter-allocator conflict). We don't know, at the present stage of our literature review, whether or not studies about this type of conflict have been conducted and framed as justice conflicts. This type of conflict is probably not unusual in families, for instance, where the parents (as two resource allocators) may disagree about the severity of punishment for a child's disobedience, or about the size of their teenage daughter's monthly allowance in comparison to what is reasonable for their pre-teenage son. Another example that easily comes to mind is in the context of salary determination in organizations. Within an academic setting the departmental Chair and the Dean might disagree about the salary they think is necessary in order to recruit a highly merited scientist.

7. Interpersonal justice conflict may occur when the allocation principle considered just for one individual is viewed as unjust for other individuals. It is not possible to go into detail on this topic as a considerable part of the research on distributive justice has been concerned with this type of distributive justice conflict. A meaningful review would require more space than allowed for this chapter. Fortunately several extensive reviews are available (Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983; Hegtvedt, 2005, 2006; Hegtvedt & Cook, 2001; Hegtvedt & Markovsky, 1995; Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008; Törnblom, 1992; Tyler & Smith, 1998).

8. Individual-group justice conflict may occur when the allocation principle considered just for the individual is viewed as unjust for the group, or vice versa. This situation is typical for social dilemmas where individual interests are at odds with the welfare of a larger collective to which the individual belongs. An example from a real-life social dilemma may illustrate this type of conflict, namely income tax payment. Willingness to pay taxes is a distributive justice issue, as it concerns

how social resources like subsidies, education, Medicare, child care, etc. are allocated among citizens who have contributed unequal amounts of income tax to the system. Thus, the more you earn, the higher is your income tax. The individual-group justice conflict may arise when taxpayers demand that services that are financed by tax revenues should be allocated in proportion to their tax payments (i.e., equitably), while the stipulations of the system are formulated in such a way that equity is not applied for all services that are provided by the government via tax revenues (Kazemi, 2009). For instance, from the individual taxpayer's point of view, the length of the waiting lines for health care services should be proportional to their contributions (i.e., their tax burden), while the system is opposed to the contribution principle and consider it as unjust in this case.

9. Intergroup justice conflict may occur when the allocation principle considered just for one group is viewed as unjust for other groups. We may again use social dilemmas as an example of this kind of social justice conflict. Public goods are, per definition, 'public' in that nobody can be excluded from utilizing the good (e.g., Medicare). However, as Foddy (2005) argues, excluding or restricting people's access to scarce public goods is very common practice. In other words, public goods are provided only for some 'publics' or 'groups' (usually one's ingroup) that somehow qualify for benefiting from the public good. Thus, the ingroup may be granted equal access to the public good for its members, while outgroup members are required to fulfill certain conditions before they are allowed to share the public good. Thus, conflict may occur due to the incompatibility between two justice principles that both are considered applicable for shares of the same resource pool, equality for the ingroup and the contribution (equity) principle for the outgroup. For instance, native citizens may argue that all their compatriots should be provided with health care based on equality, while demanding additional qualifying criteria for foreign citizens over and above group membership (citizenship). The conflict arises when the foreign citizens demand the same rights as the native inhabitants to equal access to health care.

We now turn to an attempt at combining types 8 and 9 into a typology that contain novel distinctions among group conflict situations.

10. Individual/group – intergroup justice conflict. When the state of justice is taken into account simultaneously on both the individual and the collective levels for each of two (or more) groups, a typology of intergroup conflict may be generated, hypotheses about conflict propensity and intensity may be advanced, and a new approach to research on intergroup conflict may emerge. The classic problem encountered when (scarce) resources are to be justly divided among members of a social system is threefold: how can a distribution be accomplished that (a) does not unjustly favor one particular group of people over other groups, (b) does not result in an unjust distribution within the group as a whole (across its members), and (c) does not treat each single individual unjustly? Failure to establish justice on any of the three levels may bring serious consequences for the individual, the relationship among group members, and the relationship between different groups. Unfortunately, justice is frequently absent on more than one level. It is not uncommon that *in*justice is inadvertently created on one level when justice

is established on another. Attempts to establish justice for the individual frequently runs into conflict with the struggle for collective justice, and vice versa. Justice on both levels is frequently experienced as incompatible, due to a presumed inherent conflict between the values of 'individual liberty' and 'equality.' Too much emphasis on one may restrict the other (Barker, 1951). 'Just as principles of macro-justice place limits on what is under individual control . . . , principles of micro-justice place limits on what is under collective control' (Brickman et al., 1981, p. 183). Although justice on one level must not be favored at the cost of the other (if a social system is to function satisfactorily) the balance between the individual and collective levels is frequently very unstable.

There is a good amount of research concerning the *consequences* of inequity on the *individual* level, and the *intragroup* level. Early social psychological studies of injustice by Stacy Adams (1965), the father of equity theory, focused on reactions by (unfavorably or favorably) inequitably treated individuals in a work context. Existing research on reactions to inequity (i.e., violations of the contribution principle) usually did not focus interest on other justice principles like equality or need. Another research focus is concerned with the consequences of injustice on the *intergroup* level, i.e., how groups react when they are unfairly treated, or how individuals react when they are unfairly treated because of his/her membership of a particular group. Many of those studies are concerned with prejudice and discrimination and resulting types of violent behavior (e.g., riots, revolutions, and civil strife). This work, however, is usually not explicit about which justice principles were violated (see Davies, 1962; Gurr, 1970; Runciman, 1966).

Injustice and conflict may occur on both the individual and collective levels, each of which may affect interpersonal relations within and between collectives (i.e., intra- and inter-collective relations).

Thus, inquiry may be directed at six general relationships concerning how, why, where, and when

1. *Individual* injustice affects *intra*-collective interaction and conflict
2. *Individual* injustice affects *inter*-collective interaction and conflict
3. *Intra*-collective injustice affects *intra*-collective interaction and conflict
4. *Intra*-collective injustice affects *inter*-collective interaction and conflict
5. *Collective* injustice affects *intra*-collective interaction and conflict, and
6. *Collective* injustice affects *inter*-collective interaction and conflict

On a more complex level, there is a paucity of theory and research that combines information about justice on both the individual and collective levels simultaneously, and how the resulting situations may affect intra- and inter-collective interaction. Therefore, we now focus attention on a combination between (2) and (6) into a seventh category that allows consideration of the combined and simultaneous effects of justice and/or injustice for the individual and the collective on inter-collective interaction and conflict, i.e.,

7. How the combined effect of *individual* and *collective* injustice affects *inter*-collective interaction and conflict

	Individual	Aggregate	Category	Group
Individual	Individual-Individual, interpersonal, intergroup*	Individual-Aggregate	Individual-Category	Individual-Group
Aggregate		Aggregate-Aggregate	Aggregate-Category	Aggregate-Group
Category			Category-Category	Category-Group
Group				Group-Group Intergroup

Fig. 2 Types of collectives.

*What appears to be interpersonal (individual–individual) interaction may instead turn out to be intergroup (or inter-category) interaction. This is true when the individuals act in their capacity as representatives of their respective group (or category – as when a person act as a representative of their gender or ethnic belongingness)

A collective may be a group, an aggregate, a category, or any other type of collectivity, each of which may display different responses to injustice. Further, the nature and process of intra- and inter-collective conflicts is partly contingent on the nature of the interacting collectives (Fig. 2). Unfortunately, the term ‘group’ is often used indiscriminately by researchers and theorists to denote a variety of collectives. As ‘group’ is just one of several kinds of collectives, rather than the other way around, care should be taken to use appropriate terms (see Griffith et al., 1993), otherwise cumulative research will be difficult. Definitions of *group* usually include criteria like shared identity, goals, and norms, interrelated positions and roles, and a status structure. Most empirical studies have used other, less ‘developed,’ entities like aggregates or categories that lack several of those group characteristics. Thus, it makes little sense trying to integrate findings from studies of intergroup (i.e., group-group) conflict with results from group-aggregate conflict or aggregate-category conflict under the same headline of ‘intergroup conflict.’

We now describe two groups A and B as well their group members in terms of their just or unjust treatment and restrict our focus to disadvantageous (rather than advantageous) injustice, whether or not this results from the receipt of a too small (rather than a too large) amount of resources, from the use of an inappropriate allocation principle, or for any other reason. Considering justice (j) and injustice (i) on the individual and collective levels simultaneously, each group may be characterized in four ways – jj, ji, ij, and ii. A group described as ‘ji’ informs about *justice* on the *individual* level and (disadvantageous) *injustice* on the *collective* level. Thus, the two groups may be denoted ‘ji-ii’ which stands for *justice* on the *individual* level and *injustice* on the *collective* level for Group A, while *both levels* for Group B are characterized by *injustice*. Group B is, in other words, worse off than Group A due to its situation of injustice at both levels. As each group may

		OUTGROUP			
		jj	ji	ij	ii
INGROUP	jj	jj-jj [= =]	jj-ji [= >]	jj-ij [> =]	jj-ii [> >]
	ji	ji-jj [= <]	ji-ji [= =]	ji-ij [> <]	ji-ii [> =]
	ij	ij-jj [< =]	ij-ji [< >]	ij-ij [= =]	ij-ii [= >]
	ii	ii-jj [< <]	ii-ji [< =]	ii-ij [= <]	ii-ii [= =]

Fig. 3 Types of intergroup conflict. (Category notations within brackets indicate the similarity between the ingroup and the outgroup with regard to state of (in)justice. The *left* part of the notation denotes (dis)similarity on the *individual* level and the *right* part on the *group* level. For example, the (= <) category means that the two groups share the same state of (in)justice on the individual level, but that the ingroup is worse off (i.e., suffer injustice) on the group level)

be described in four ways, a combined simultaneous description of both groups yields a matrix of the $4 \times 4 = 16$ intergroup situations shown in Fig. 3. However, as six situations are mirror images of six on the other side of the diagonal in the matrix, we end up with ten different types.

From an intergroup perspective ii-jj, for example, is likely to result in more intense intergroup conflict than ii-ij. A rank order among the ten situations can be established on the basis of four assumptions (see Törnblom, 1995): (1) A situation in which P is exposed to unfavorable injustice while O is treated justly is likely to be more aversive to P than the opposite situation which, in turn, is more aversive to P than a situation in which both P and O are treated equally (whether justly or unjustly); (2) Injustice on the collective level is likely to be more aversive to a group than injustice on the individual level; (3) A situation in which group A is exposed to injustice on more levels than group B is likely to be more aversive to group A than the opposite situation or than one in which both groups are exposed to injustice on the same number of levels; and (4) The likelihood and intensity of intergroup conflict is greater the more levels at which groups A and B combined are exposed to injustice. These assumptions generate the following rank order among the ten types of intergroup conflict:

$$(ii - jj) > (ji - ij) > (ii - ij) > (ji - jj) > (ii - ji) > (ij - jj) > (ii - ii) > (ji - ji) > (ij - ij) > (jj - jj).$$

While this is a rather simplified and speculative model of ‘real life’ in need of empirical test and verification, it may provide a beginning for a deeper understanding of the nature of intergroup interaction and conflict and of how violations of justice expectations are likely to trigger intergroup conflict and affect conflict intensity. For instance, the case which may be the most likely to trigger intergroup conflict is when one group perceives injustice at both the individual and the group levels, while the second group experiences justice at both levels (because members of the first group get no satisfaction regarding justice at either of the two levels while observing the second group enjoying justice at both levels). Further, the nature of justice conflict will likely be affected by the particular justice (sub) principle and the type of resource in terms of which individuals and collectives are unjustly treated, as well as within which social context and relationship the conflict occurs. A deeper understanding of intergroup justice conflict also requires systematic research on the consequences of the various types of conflict distinguished by this model. Theoretically and practically interesting consequences include, for instance, those discussed by Reitz (1981) that concern: group cohesiveness, task orientation, leadership, organizational structure, unity, perceptions of opposing groups, selective perceptions, hostility and aggression.

Social-Conceptual Distributive Justice Conflict

Recall that we defined a mixture of the above two types of conflict, a conceptual-social distributive justice conflict, as two or more parties who struggle against each other for resources that each party feel entitled to, each party defining just entitlement in terms of *different and incompatible allocation principles*. Let us just mention three basic types which are slightly different from the social distributive justice conflict types 7, 8, and 9. The difference lies in the emphasis on the *same* principle for types 7–9 and *different* principles for types 11–13. We will not elaborate on these three in the following.

11. Interpersonal justice conflict [cf. type 7]

Two or more individuals endorse *different* justice principles for the same allocation event.

12. Individual-group justice conflict [cf. type 8]

The individual and the group endorse *different* justice principles for the same allocation event (see Törnblom, 1988, for reviews and a model encompassing different varieties of this type of conflict). An example from social dilemma research may serve as an illustration. One line of research in this field shows that the choice of allocation principle when a public good is to be divided is affected by the type of goal pursued by the actors. If the group’s primary interest is the welfare of the whole group, for instance, it is more likely to make an egalitarian or a need-based division. However, individual members (especially those who have made a greater than average effort) may be task orientated and focus on productivity according to which they want merit to be assessed, thus endorsing contribution-based (equitable) allocations (e.g., Kazemi & Eek, 2007, 2008).

13. Intergroup justice conflict [cf. type 9]

Two or more groups endorse *different* justice principles for the same allocation event.

Some Concluding Remarks

The exact meaning of ‘conflict’ is often taken more or less for granted in justice research. However, conflict is obviously a very complex concept with a multitude of meanings, some of which were made explicit here in this chapter. The lack of a clear conceptualization of the conflict construct makes theoretical developments difficult and renders comparisons of the results of different studies a risky business, thereby making accumulation of knowledge a cumbersome task. In our attempt to contribute to a remedy of this situation, we noted the conceptual and typological confusion existing in the conflict literature and offered a conceptual framework containing distinctions among various types of distributive justice conflicts. More specifically, five types of ‘conceptual,’ five types of ‘social,’ and three types of ‘conceptual-social’ distributive justice conflicts were delineated, several of them encompassing subtypes. In addition, these types of conflict involve different levels of analysis – intrapersonal, interpersonal, intra-group, and intergroup justice conflict.

The theoretical implications of this chapter are hopefully quite evident. However, the practical implications of the proposed framework for the purpose of conflict resolution may be less obvious. Social actors enter into conflict resolution processes, each with his or her own interpretation of the problem, including what issues are in dispute, why the problem has arisen, and how best to resolve the conflict. The way in which a party to the conflict describes or defines a conflict is known as *framing* (Levin, Schneider, & Gaeth, 1998; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981; see also Gamliel & Peer, 2006, for a study on the effects of positive and negative framing on justice judgments). As the notion of justice is highly complex, whether or not a situation is just is not always self-evident, as the ‘justice tree’ (in Fig. 1) convincingly illustrates. Equity, equality and need principles can all be seen as just, not to mention that each may be interpreted and materialized in at least three ways. This complexity opens the door to several specific types of conflict, as we showed in some detail in previous sections. These different types of conflict will most likely require different conflict resolution strategies. Thus, efforts to resolve justice conflicts are likely to miss the target and be fruitless, unless the chosen strategies are carefully matched to the specific types of conflict at hand.

The framework presented here coupled with the notion of framing may also make us more alert to the fact that, for instance, an intergroup distributive justice conflict may, at closer scrutiny, turn out to be an interpersonal conflict. Mistakenly perceiving an interpersonal justice conflict as an intergroup justice conflict may significantly worsen the situation and require very different strategies to accomplish successful resolution. Disagreements and hostility between a man and a woman is

often framed as a gender (inter)group conflict (or more correctly, an inter-category conflict, i.e., men vs. women). Similarly, conflicts between individuals of different color may too easily be framed as an inter-racial conflict (again, an inter-category conflict).

Issues in connection with conflict resolution and framing bring our minds to the notion of perspective as a central aspect of justice conceptions, given that they are highly subjective in nature. A study by Törnblom et al. (1991), for example, explored the differences between recipient categories concerning their endorsement of the equality-of-treatment subprinciple for the allocation of positive and negative outcomes. Role-playing subjects were asked to make evaluations of how just, desirable, effective, and acceptable it is to be rewarded or punished according to the equality-of-treatment principle for positive and negative conduct that they or others were responsible for. Among the findings could be mentioned that 42% of the subjects who took the perspective of a responsible recipient, but only 25% of those who viewed the situation from a non-responsible recipient's perspective, believed s/he would view equality-of-treatment as a just way of allocating both rewards and punishments. Without going into detail about the plausible reasons for this seemingly counter-intuitive finding or about other findings, the general outcome of this study underscore the importance of taking different actor perspectives into account. We are again reminded of the well-known but still in practice frequently neglected adage that 'Justice is in the eye of the beholder'.

In this chapter we have developed the concept of justice conflict with a sole focus on the *distributive* aspect of an allocation event. In addition to this aspect, allocation events also encompass other facets that are evaluated in terms of justice, i.e. procedural (the formal aspects of how allocation decisions are arrived at), interactional (the interpersonal aspect of the event), and informational justice (how outcome decisions are communicated, and how procedures are explained; see Greenberg, 1993). However, analyses of justice conflicts pertaining to those aspects will have to await future efforts. We believe that the present framework sheds new light on previous research, facilitates more precise and testable predictions for future research, provide practical implications for resolving conflicts, and may serve as a beginning of a proposal for a research program in this area. In conclusion, this chapter highlights several shortcomings of current conceptualizations and operationalizations of justice conflict, and provides some suggestions via the proposed framework for a more systematic approach.

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