Chapter 4

The Role of Expected Bias

In the literature on procedural justice (for overviews, see Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Smith, 1998) it has frequently been reported that people react differently to decisions depending on their relationship to the decision-maker. For example, when the authority belongs to an ingroup that is an important part of one’s social identity, reactions to decisions are more strongly affected by the fairness of the decision-making procedures used by the authority than when the authority is from a group that is less relevant for one’s social identity (e.g., Huo, Smith, Tyler, & Lind, 1996; Smith, Tyler, Huo, Ortiz, & Lind, 1998; Ståhl, Van Prooijen, & Vermunt, 2004; Ståhl, Vermunt, & Ellemers, in press; Tyler & Degoe, 1995). By contrast, when the authority is from a group that is not an important part of one’s social identity, the favorability of outcomes and procedures more strongly influences reactions to decisions than when the authority is from a more social identity relevant group (e.g., Duck & Fielding, 2003; Huo et al., 1996; Ståhl et al., 2004). In short, the research literature suggests that the relationship people have to an authority moderates the impact of fairness and favorability of treatment on reactions to decisions made by this authority.

Whereas considerable theoretical and empirical effort has been made to explain why the relationship to the authority moderates the influence of procedural fairness (e.g., Huo et al., 1996; Smith et al., 1998; Tyler & Lind, 1992), relatively little attention has been paid by social justice researchers to the question of why outcome favorability exerts such strong influence on reactions to decisions of less social identity relevant authorities (e.g., outgroup authorities; but see Duck & Fielding, 2003; Ståhl, et al., in press). In the present chapter we address this question and also investigate possibilities to alter people’s reactions to decisions made by outgroup authorities. Our theoretical approach to this question is primarily based on research on intergroup perception (e.g., Duck & Fielding, 1999; Horwitz & Robbie, 1989; Kramer, Shah, & Woerner, 1995; Moy & Ng, 1996). Based on this literature we will argue that perceptions and expectations of outgroup members play an important role in explaining reactions to outgroup authorities’ decisions (cf. Duck & Fielding, 1999, 2003). Furthermore, we will argue that, by altering perceptions of the outgroup authority it is possible to redirect people’s concerns away from the favorability of their outcome and towards the fairness of treatment. Finally, we will also explore the mediating processes for these changes. Before we go into the details of the present research, however, we shall start off by reviewing relevant research on procedural justice and intergroup perception.

Reactions to Outgroup Members’ Decisions
There are several studies indicating that the relationship to an authority moderates the influence of outcome favorability on reactions to decisions made by this authority. One pivotal line of research has been carried out by Tyler and Huo and their colleagues (e.g., Huo et al., 1996; Tyler & Degoey, 1995). The typical finding from these correlational studies is that people who identify relatively weakly with the group the authority represents show stronger associations between outcome favorability and subsequent reactions to decisions (e.g., decision acceptance) than people who identify more strongly with the group.

In addition to this, several studies have focused directly on the group membership of the authority rather than on people’s level of identification with the group. For example, Duck and Fielding (2003) found that outcome favorability influenced perceptions of fairness to a larger extent in encounters with an outgroup authority than in encounters with an ingroup authority. Similarly, other researchers have found that people’s evaluations of the way they are treated are more strongly affected by the favorability of treatment when faced with an outgroup authority rather than an ingroup authority (Ståhl et al., 2004, Experiment 2).

But why do people react more strongly to the favorability of decisions when faced with outgroup authorities than when faced with ingroup authorities? The relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992), the procedural justice theory most frequently used to explain the role of the relationship to the authority in reactions to decisions, was originally developed to explain the importance of procedural justice in *intragroup* settings. Due to this focus, this theoretical framework has relatively little to say about the psychology of reactions to outgroup members’ decisions. Connecting the relational model of authority to work on intergroup perception may provide important insights into these processes.

The literature on intergroup perception suggests that people generally perceive outgroup members as less trustworthy, less cooperative and less honest than ingroup members (e.g., Brewer, 1979). Furthermore, these negative biases also generalize to behavioral expectations. Several studies have found that people generally expect outgroup members to demonstrate bias in favor of their own group members in evaluation (Vivian & Berkowitz, 1992) as well as in overt behavior (e.g., Duck & Fielding, 1999; Harinck & Ellemers, submitted; Horwitz & Rabbie, 1989; Kramer et al., 1995; Moy & Ng, 1996). As a result of such expectations, Duck and Fielding (1999, 2003) suggested that people are particularly concerned about outgroup authorities’ allocations in order to find out whether or not their worst expectations are confirmed. From this perspective then, people may react particularly negatively to unfavorable decisions when faced with an outgroup authority at least in part because they suspect that the authority is biased in favor of members of his/her own group. As a consequence, a negative outcome received from an outgroup authority is explained in terms of one’s group membership and is perceived as an example of group-based discrimination.

We recently used a similar line of reasoning to predict differences in reactions to outgroup authorities’ decisions based on people’s level of ingroup identification (Ståhl et al., in press). Because high ingroup identifiers differentiate between the ingroup and outgroup to a larger extent than do low identifiers (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995), it was argued that perceptions and expectations of outgroup members as untrustworthy and
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biased should be particularly strong among high identifiers. As a consequence, to the extent that negative reactions to unfavorable treatment from outgroup authorities are due to perceptions of the authority as being biased, high ingroup identifiers should react particularly negatively to unfavorable treatment from an outgroup authority. The data corroborated this line of reasoning by showing that high ingroup identifiers’ reactions to an outgroup authority’s decision were indeed more strongly influenced by the favorability of treatment than were low ingroup identifiers’ reactions (Ståhl et al., in press).

Related arguments and findings can also be found in the literature on attributions to prejudice. Research in this area has found that members of low-status groups have a tendency to attribute negative outcomes received from members of a high-status outgroup to prejudice (e.g., Crocker & Major, 1989). Once again, however, this tendency is particularly strong among people who identify strongly with the low-status group (Major, Quinton, & Schmader, 2003; Operario & Fiske, 2001).

The research reviewed above suggests that perceptions and expectations that outgroup authorities are biased in favor of members of their own group play a key role in shaping reactions to outgroup members’ decisions, and indeed we think it offers a plausible explanation for the different responses to ingroup versus outgroup authorities observed. However, to the best of our knowledge, no studies to date have directly investigated this possibility. The only relevant evidence that there is indicates that expectations of bias affect allocation behavior towards the outgroup. Duck and Fielding (1999) found that the extent to which people expected an outgroup leader to be biased affected their own bias towards the outgroup. Specifically, the more people expected the outgroup leader to be biased, the more they favored their own ingroup when allocating points in allocation matrices (see also Diehl, 1989, 1990; Ng, 1981). In this way, they compensated for anticipated ingroup disadvantage.

What is yet unknown, however, is whether perceptions and expectations of bias affect the extent to which people let their reactions to an outgroup authority’s decisions depend on the favorability of the outcome. Interestingly, research on evaluations of adversary trial procedures has shown that people’s perceptions of procedural fairness become more strongly influenced by outcome favorability when there is information indicating that the judge might be biased, i.e., because of a personal relationship to the other party’s lawyer (Lind and Lissak, 1985). Such findings suggest that information indicating that an authority may be biased generally enhances the effect of outcome favorability in reactions to decisions. However, it is unclear whether anticipated bias also moderate people’s responses to outgroup authorities, as well as whether these effects generalize to behavioral responses. Based on the research reviewed above, we predict that the effect of outcome favorability on reactions to decisions made by an outgroup authority is enhanced when there is information suggesting that the authority is biased, and that the effect of outcome favorability is attenuated when there is information suggesting that the authority is unbiased (Hypothesis 1).

In addition to examining whether information about bias moderates reactions to outcome favorability in encounters with an outgroup authority, it is also of interest to explore whether information about bias affect reactions to the fairness of decision-making procedures. The literature provides some suggestive evidence that procedural fairness
effects, such as the voice effect (Folger, 1977), might also be moderated by information about bias. Specifically, research on the voice effect indicates that one of the few conditions when positive effects of voice are not found is when people do not trust that the authority considers their views (Tyler, Rasinski, & Spodick, 1985). Because in the absence of explicit information about bias outgroup members tend to be perceived as dishonest and are generally expected to be biased, we suggest that people might typically not trust outgroup authorities to consider their views even when an opportunity to voice is provided. Thus, we propose that voice effects generally should be relatively weak in encounters with outgroup authorities (Ståhl et al., 2004). However, the findings of Tyler et al. (1985) would also suggest that information that the outgroup authority is not biased might make people more inclined to react positively to voice, as an absence of bias might imply that their views will in fact be considered. Based on this line of reasoning we hypothesize that the effect of voice on reactions to decisions made by an outgroup authority should be enhanced when there is information suggesting that the authority is unbiased, and that the effect of voice should be attenuated when there is information suggesting that the authority is biased (Hypothesis 2).

We tested these hypotheses in two studies. In the first study we aimed to obtain preliminary support for the hypotheses by asking people how they would react to an outgroup authority under different circumstances. The second study was intended to replicate and extend the findings in a more self-involving setting where we also examined the mediating processes. Main dependent variables in these studies were people’s behavioral intentions following allocation decisions made by an outgroup authority. In the first study we focused on people’s willingness to accept the decision (Huo et al., 1996; Ståhl et al., 2004), and in the second study we focused on intentions to protest against the decision (Vermunt, Wit, Van den Bos, & Lind, 1996). To see whether the response patterns generalized to how the authority was evaluated, we also measured evaluations of the authority in the first study.

**Experiment 5**

**Method**

**Participants and Design**

One hundred twenty-eight students at the University of Skövde (97 females, 31 males, mean age = 25.69 years) were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (Bias information: bias/no bias) x 2 (Procedure: voice/no voice) x 2 (Outcome: favorable/unfavorable) factorial design.

**Procedure**

The materials were distributed to participants during regular class-room sessions. Participants read the scenario and responded to the questions constituting the dependent variables and manipulation checks. Participants were asked to imagine the following scenario:
“You are working in an organization. The organization consists of two departments, the Blue department and the Red department. You are a member of the Blue department. One day Robin Eriksson, a senior manager of the Red department, announces that the company has signed a contract with a new important client. This contract will yield an approximately equal amount of work for both the Blue department and the Red department. Now, the senior manager of the Red department announces, a person to take responsibility of the whole project needs to be appointed from either the Blue or the Red department. Getting this position would be a great career opportunity, and you would very much like to get the position. Robin Eriksson further suggests that you or Kim Svensson, an employee from the Red department, should get this position. Which one of you will get the position will be decided later on by Robin Eriksson.”

After that, bias information was manipulated. Participants in the bias and no-bias conditions read (manipulated information in italics):

“From other employees at the Blue department, you’ve received information that Robin Eriksson often/never favors members of the Red department over members of the Blue department.”

This was followed by the manipulation of procedure. Participants in the voice and no-voice conditions read (manipulated information in italics):

“Before the final decision is made, you and Kim Svensson are/are not given an opportunity to argue why you should get the position.”

After that, the manipulation of outcome favorability took place. Participants in the favorable and unfavorable conditions read (manipulated information in italics):

“Two weeks later Robin Eriksson, the assistant manager from the Red department announces that you/Kim Svensson will get the position”

After that, all participants filled out the questions pertaining to the dependent variables and manipulation checks. The main dependent variable was participants’ willingness to accept the decision. To explore whether the response patterns generalized to evaluations of the authority, we also measured how the authority was evaluated by asking: “Do you respect the decision maker?" (1 = absolutely not, 7 = absolutely), and “Do you trust the decision maker?" (1 = absolutely not, 7 = absolutely). These two items were averaged to create a reliable authority evaluation scale (α = .91). To measure decision acceptance we asked: “To what extent are you willing to adhere to the decision?” (1 = not at all, 7 = completely). To check the manipulation of bias we asked: “According to other employees at your department, does the senior manager from the Red department favor employees at his own department?” (1 = yes, often, 2 = no, never). In order to check the manipulation of procedure two questions were asked: “To what extent do you agree with the statement that you and Kim Svensson got an opportunity to argue for your cause before the decision was made?” (1 = not at all, 7 = completely), and “To what extent do you agree with the statement that you and Kim Svensson had no chance to argue for your cause before the decision was made?” (1 = not at all, 7 = completely). The second item was reversed after which the responses to the two items were averaged to create a reliable procedure check (α = .90). Finally, to check the manipulation of outcome favorability, two questions were asked: “To what extent do you agree with the statement that you got
the responsibility for the new client?” (1 = not at all, 7 = completely), and “To what extent do you agree with the statement that Kim Svensson got the responsibility for the new client?” (1 = not at all, 7 = completely). The second item was reversed, after which the responses to the two items were averaged to create a reliable outcome check (α = .99).

Results

Bias Information
Within the bias condition, 59 out of 65 participants indicated that, according to other members of their own department, the Red department authority often favored members of his/her own department. Five participants indicated that the authority never favored members of his/her own department and one participant failed to respond to this question. Within the no-bias condition, 58 out of 63 participants indicated that, according to other members of their own department, the Red department authority never favored members of his/her own department. Five participants indicated that the authority often favored members of his/her own department. Thus, a vast majority (117 out of 128, χ²(1) = 87.78, p < .001) of participants correctly responded to the bias information manipulation check.

Because excluding the 11 participants who failed to correctly respond to this question yielded essentially the same results on the dependent variables, we decided to include them in the analyses.

For all subsequent analyses we performed a 2 (Bias information: bias/no bias) x 2 (Procedure: voice/ no voice) x 2 (Outcome: favorable/unfavorable) Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). For hypothesis-testing, ANOVAs were followed-up by planned contrasts (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1985).

Procedure
Only a main effect of procedure was found on the procedure check, F(1, 120) = 352.81, p < .001. Participants in the voice condition agreed more with the statement that they had received an opportunity to argue for their cause (M = 5.94; SD = 1.45), than participants in the no-voice condition (M = 1.55; SD = 1.15).

Outcome
On the outcome check only a main effect of outcome was found, F(1, 120) = 1044.56, p < .001. Participants in the favorable condition agreed more with the statement that they had received the new position (M = 6.59; SD = 1.18), than participants in the unfavorable condition (M = 1.15; SD = 0.59). Thus, we conclude that all manipulations had been perceived as intended.

Authority Evaluations
Analysis of authority evaluations yielded a main effect of outcome, F(1, 120) = 19.99, p < .001. Participants evaluated the authority more positively following a favorable outcome (M = 5.05; SD = 1.68) than following an unfavorable outcome (M = 3.74; SD = 1.75). More importantly, the predicted bias information by outcome interaction also was
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found, $F(1, 120) = 3.71, p = .06$. As expected, the outcome effect was stronger within the bias condition, $t(120) = 4.53, p < .001, r = .39$; than within the no-bias condition, $t(120) = 1.80, p < .05, r = .16$. Participants in the bias condition evaluated the authority more positively following a favorable outcome ($M = 5.13; SD = 1.61$) than following an unfavorable outcome ($M = 3.27; SD = 1.68$). This pattern was attenuated within the no-bias condition ($Favorable, M = 4.97; SD = 1.76; Unfavorable, M = 4.23; SD = 1.71$). As an aside, we note that the effect of bias was significant within the unfavorable condition, $t(120) = 2.36, p < .025$; but not within the favorable condition, $t(120) = -.35, ns$. We will return to this in the discussion.

Finally, a main effect of procedure also was found, $F(1, 120) = 11.05, p < .005$. The authority was evaluated more positively following a voice procedure ($M = 4.89; SD = 1.69$) than following a no-voice procedure ($M = 3.93; SD = 1.85$). The bias information by procedure interaction was far from significant on this measure ($p = .88$). Furthermore, analyses of the specific contrasts relevant for our second hypothesis showed that the effect of procedure was virtually identical in each of the two bias conditions. Thus, no support for hypothesis 2 was found on evaluations of the authority. We will return to this issue in the discussion.

Decision Acceptance

Analysis of the decision acceptance measure yielded a main effect of outcome, $F(1, 120) = 4.47, p < .05$. Although the bias information by outcome interaction was not significant ($p = .57$), the effect of outcome was significant within the bias condition, $t(120) = 1.90, p < .05$; but not within the no-bias condition, $t(120) = 1.08, ns$. As expected, within the bias condition, participants’ willingness to accept the decision was larger following a favorable outcome ($M = 6.50; SD = 1.02$) than following an unfavorable outcome ($M = 5.94; SD = 1.32$). This pattern of results was attenuated within the no-bias condition ($Favorable, M = 6.42; SD = 1.06; Unfavorable, M = 6.10; SD = 1.38$). Thus, although the bias information by outcome interaction was not significant, the fact that the effect of outcome was significant only in the bias condition provided support for our first hypothesis.

Relevant for our second hypothesis, a significant bias information by procedure interaction also was found, $F(1, 120) = 7.12, p < .01$. In line with our prediction, the effect of procedure was significant within the no-bias condition, $t(120) = 2.29, p < .05$; but not within the bias condition, $t(120) = -1.48, p < .10$. Within the no-bias condition, participants’ willingness to accept the decision was larger following a voice procedure ($M = 6.61; SD = 0.67$) than following a no-voice procedure ($M = 5.94; SD = 1.52$). This pattern was slightly reversed in the bias condition (Voice, $M = 6.00; SD = 1.44$; No-voice, $6.44; SD = 0.88$). Thus, the data provided support for our second hypothesis as well.

Discussion

The results of this study offer initial support for our argument that information about whether or not an outgroup authority is biased moderates the influence of outcome
favorability on reactions to decisions made by this authority. Specifically, when information indicated that the authority had previously been biased, the favorability of the outcome affected people’s willingness to accept the decision. This effect was not found when information indicated that the authority had not previously been biased.

A similar pattern was also found on people’s evaluations of the outgroup authority. Participants’ evaluations of the authority were more strongly affected by outcome favorability when the authority had demonstrated biased behavior rather than unbiased behavior in the past. Also worth noting is the fact that bias information significantly affected evaluations of the authority following an unfavorable outcome, and not following a favorable outcome. This is in line with the interpretation that bias moderates reactions to outcome favorability because an unfavorable outcome received from a biased outgroup authority is perceived as an example of group-based discrimination, and hence produces particularly negative reactions (cf. Crocker & Major, 1989; Duck & Fielding, 2003; Ståhl et al., in press). As a caveat, it should be noted that while the specific contrasts most relevant for our hypothesis supported our prediction on both dependent variables (cf. Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1985), the overall two-way interaction effect did not reach conventional levels of significance.

The findings of this study also indicate that bias information moderates procedural fairness effects in encounters with an outgroup authority. Specifically, people’s willingness to accept the decision was positively affected by procedural fairness when the authority had demonstrated unbiased behavior in the past, but not when the authority had demonstrated biased behavior in the past. Thus, also our second hypothesis received some initial support in the present study. However, it should be noted that bias information only moderated the procedure effect on willingness to accept the decision. Evaluations of the authority, on the other hand, were positively affected by a voice (vs. no-voice) procedure irrespective of whether or not information indicated that the authority was biased. Thus, people consistently evaluated the authority more positively when provided an opportunity to voice, but voice only affected their behavioral intentions when information indicated that the authority was not biased. Although this pattern was somewhat unexpected, in retrospect it seems reasonable that people appreciate an opportunity to voice their opinion in a decision-making process irrespective of whether or not the authority is biased. However, the impact of an opportunity to voice on actual acceptance of the decision is dependent on whether or not the authority is expected to consider their opinion or not (cf. Tyler et al., 1985). That is, voice has a positive effect on decision acceptance only if the authority is expected to be unbiased.

The findings of this study are important, as they provide suggestive evidence concerning how reactions to outgroup authorities’ decisions can be altered. However, before strong conclusions can be drawn based on these findings it is important to replicate them. Another reason why replication seems critical here is that the data was obtained by means of a scenario study. Thus, an important question to address is whether similar findings can be obtained when people actually experience the manipulations directly rather than imagine such an experience. Investigating reactions of people who are actually immersed in the decision situation is particularly important here, as ultimately we are interested in people’s behavioral responses to the treatment they receive. In the second
study we address these issues as we try to replicate our findings in a more self-involving setting.

**Experiment 6**

Aside from providing a conceptual replication in an “experiential setting”, we had an additional aim with our second study. In order to more fully understand the psychological processes at work, we wanted to investigate potential mediators for each of the two predicted effects. Previous research has demonstrated that the favorability of the outcome shapes fairness judgments in encounters with an outgroup authority (Duck & Fielding, 2003). Duck and Fielding argued that this effect occurs because negative outcomes confirm negative expectations of bias, and as a result, people perceive the outcome as particularly unfair. To further test this argument, we wanted to investigate in the second study whether this pattern is particularly strong when there is information that the outgroup authority is indeed biased. That is, we wanted to find out whether fairness judgments are driven by the favorability of the outcome particularly when information indicates that the outgroup authority is biased rather than unbiased. Furthermore, we wanted to explore the possibility that perceptions of fairness in turn mediate the moderating role of bias information in effects of outcome favorability on behavioral intentions following the outgroup authority’s decision. This is a particularly interesting possibility, as previous theorizing has conceived of reactions to authorities from groups that are not a part of one’s social identity (e.g., an outgroup) as primarily driven by self-interest rather than by concerns for fairness (e.g., Smith & Tyler, 1996). To the best of our knowledge, however, there is no direct empirical evidence that self-interest is in fact driving the strong influence of outcome favorability in reactions to outgroup authorities’ decisions. Following research on intergroup perception we argue that perceived outcome fairness is at least as good a candidate and try to obtain direct evidence for this interpretation.

In the first study we also established that information about bias can moderate the voice effect on behavioral responses to decisions. An additional aim of the second study was therefore to examine a potential mediator of this effect. Previous procedural justice research has consistently found that effects of procedural fairness on reactions to decisions are stronger in encounters with social identity relevant ingroup authorities rather than less social identity relevant ingroup authorities or outgroup authorities (e.g., Huo et al., 1996; Smith et al., 1998; Ståhl et al., 2004). However, our first study indicated that effects of procedural fairness can be substantial in encounters with an outgroup authority as well, provided that there is information suggesting that the authority is not biased. An interesting possibility is therefore that information about absence of bias in concert with fair procedures might change the perceived relationship to the authority. Specifically, we wanted to explore whether information about bias and procedural fairness interactively affect to what extent the outgroup is perceived as different from the ingroup. This possibility is supported by recent research on intergroup perception, suggesting that perceived differences between the ingroup and an outgroup tend to be smaller when
relations between the groups are characterized by relative harmony rather than conflict (Riketta, 2005). We expect that information that the outgroup authority is unbiased combined with the application of fair allocation procedures should indicate relatively harmonious intergroup relations and hence should attenuate perceived differences between the ingroup and the outgroup. Specifically, when controlling for differences in perceived intergroup similarity, we predict that bias information no longer should moderate the effect of procedural fairness on behavioral intentions following the outgroup authority’s decision.

To investigate these ideas we carried out an additional study in which we once again manipulated information about whether or not the outgroup authority was biased, the fairness of the allocation procedure and the favorability of the outcome. Main dependent variables were participants’ intentions to protest against the decision, as well as the proposed mediators: outcome fairness judgments and perceived intergroup similarity.

Method

Participants and Design

One hundred twenty-eight students at the University of Skövde (97 females, 31 males, mean age = 24.31 years) participated before or after participating in another unrelated study. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (Bias information: bias/ no bias) x 2 (Procedure: voice/no voice) x 2 (Outcome: favorable/unfavorable) factorial design. All participants received a movie-ticket for their time in the laboratory.

Procedure

Upon arrival at the laboratory all participants were led to separate cubicles. In each cubicle participants found a computer with a computer screen, a keyboard and a computer mouse. The computers were used to present the stimulus information as well as to collect the data. The experiment was introduced as a study on how individual cognitive strategies affect task performance. Participants then took part in the experiment and answered the questions constituting the dependent variables and manipulation checks.

In the first part of the instructions participants were informed that because the study focused on effects of individual cognitive strategies, the first aim was to measure these individual characteristics. After that, participants filled out a bogus Mental Association Style Test (e.g., Van Leeuwen, 2001). Then, participants received bogus feedback about their Mental Association Style. Specifically, participants were informed that they had a holistic association style (as opposed to a detail-focused association style). Participants were then informed that the rest of the study focused on performance on specific tasks. Furthermore, participants were informed that, for the rest of the study, they participated along with two other persons. It was further noted that one of these persons would be appointed to the position of supervisor, referred to as position A. The other two persons, it was announced, would be appointed to the positions of work performers, referred to as positions B and C. After that, positions were assigned. Participants were all appointed to
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position B. Participants were informed that the persons appointed to positions B and C were given these positions because they had not had previous experience with similar studies, and because they differed in their mental association styles. It was once again pointed out that B (i.e., the participant) had a holistic association style, whereas C had a detail-focused association style. Finally, participants were informed that the person appointed to position A was given this position because of this person’s previous experience in similar studies (cf. Van den Bos, Wilke, & Lind, 1998).

After that participants were informed that they would work on a certain task, and that at the end of the experiment, a bonus prize would be given to one of the work performers (i.e., B or C). Participants were informed that the person appointed to position A (i.e., the supervisor position) would decide who should get the bonus prize.

After that, the task was explained to the participants. The tasks were the same tasks used in the experimental paradigm developed by Van den Bos and his colleagues (e.g., Van den Bos, Lind, Vermunt & Wilke, 1997). Then it was communicated that, because A would be the supervisor, it might be of interest to know a little bit about A, and how A had been perceived by participants in previous studies. Participants were then informed that A had a detail-focused association style, i.e., similar to person C but different from B (the participant). After that, bias information was manipulated. Participants received bogus results from a survey allegedly filled out by people who had participated with A in a previous study. In the bias condition, participants were informed that A had been rated as biased by participants with a holistic association style (i.e., by participants who belonged to the supervisor’s outgroup). Participants in the no-bias condition were informed that A had been rated as unbiased by participants with a detail-focused association style as well as by participants with a holistic association style.

Following the work round, participants were informed about how many tasks they had completed. After that, all participants were informed that C performed an equivalent number of tasks. Then the procedure manipulation took place. Participants in the voice condition received a message from A informing them that A was interested in the participant’s opinion concerning who should get the bonus prize. Participants in the voice condition then got to indicate their opinion concerning who should get the bonus prize. Participants in the no-voice condition received a message from A informing them that A was not interested in the participant’s opinion concerning who should get the bonus prize. Therefore, it was communicated, the participant would not get an opportunity to voice his/her opinion on this matter (cf. Van den Bos, 1999). After that the favorability of the outcome was manipulated. Participants in the favorable condition were informed that B would receive the bonus prize. Participants in the unfavorable condition were informed that C would receive the bonus prize.

All participants then answered the questions constituting the dependent variables and manipulation checks. All items were measured on 7-point Likert scales (1 = not at all; 7 = very much). The main dependent variable was participants’ intentions to protest. In addition, we also measured outcome fairness judgments and perceived intergroup similarity. To measure protest two questions were asked: “Suppose that you could criticize person A; to what extent would you then do so?” and “Suppose that you could protest against person A; to what extent would you then do so?”. These items were
averaged to create a reliable protest intentions scale ($\alpha = .87$). To measure outcome fairness judgments two questions were asked: “How fair was person A’s decision about who should get the bonus prize?” and “How correct was person A’s decision about who should get the bonus prize?”. These items were averaged to create a reliable outcome fairness judgment scale ($\alpha = .82$). To measure perceived intergroup similarity three questions were asked, e.g., “To what extent do you think that persons with a detail-focused association style vs. a holistic association style are similar to each other?”. The three items were averaged to create a reliable intergroup similarity scale ($\alpha = .82$). To support conceptual differentiation between our three dependent variables, we performed a Principal Components Analysis (with Varimax rotation) on all the items. This analysis supported a three-factor solution, where all items showed high factor loadings only on the relevant factor.

To check the manipulation of bias information we asked: “To what extent do you agree with the statement that person A has shown unbiased behavior in the past?”. Two questions were asked to check the manipulation of procedure: “To what extent do you agree with the statement that you received an opportunity to voice your opinion about who should get the bonus prize?” and “To what extent do you agree with the statement that you did not receive an opportunity to voice your opinion about who should get the bonus prize?”. After reversing the second item, these items were averaged to create a reliable procedure check ($\alpha = .95$). Finally, two questions were asked to check the manipulation of outcome: “To what extent do you agree with the statement that you will get the bonus prize?” and “To what extent do you agree with the statement that person C will get the bonus prize?”. After reversing the second item, these items were averaged to create a reliable outcome check ($\alpha = .92$).

**Results**

All measures were analyzed by means of 2 (Bias information: bias/no-bias) x 2 (Procedure: voice/no voice) x 2 (Outcome: favorable/unfavorable) ANOVAs. For hypothesis-testing, ANOVAs were followed up by planned contrasts.

**Bias Information**

Only a main effect of bias information was found on the bias check, $F(1, 120) = 18.30, p < .001$. As expected, participants in the no-bias condition reported a stronger agreement with the statement that the authority had demonstrated unbiased behavior in the past ($M = 4.47; SD = 1.98$) than participants in the bias condition ($M = 3.03; SD = 1.81$). Thus, we conclude that the bias information manipulation was perceived as intended.

**Procedure**

The expected main effect of procedure was found on the procedure check, $F(1, 120) = 168.65, p < .001$. Participants in the voice condition agreed to a larger extent that they had received voice ($M = 5.63; SD = 1.88$), than participants in the no-voice condition ($M = 1.78; SD = 1.58$).
Outcome

Only the expected main effect of outcome was found, $F(1, 120) = 562.60, p < .001$. Participants in the favorable condition agreed more with the statement that they would get the bonus ($M = 6.05; SD = 1.24$), than participants in the unfavorable condition ($M = 1.40; SD = 0.94$). Thus we conclude that the outcome manipulation was perceived as intended.

Protest Intentions

Relevant for our first hypothesis, a marginally significant bias information by outcome interaction was found, $F(1, 120) = 2.80, p < .10$. As expected, the effect of outcome was only significant within the bias condition, $t(120) = -1.77, p < .05$; but not within the no-bias condition, $t(120) = .60$, ns. An inspection of the means revealed that within the bias condition, participants reported stronger protest intentions when the outcome was unfavorable ($M = 4.09; SD = 1.77$) than when the outcome was favorable ($M = 3.36; SD = 1.71$). This difference was not found within the no-bias condition (Unfavorable, $M = 3.53; SD = 1.78$; Favorable, $M = 3.78; SD = 1.64$). Thus, support was found for our first hypothesis.

In addition, a main effect of procedure was found, $F(1, 120) = 7.50, p < .01$. In line with our second hypothesis, however, this effect was qualified by a significant bias information by procedure interaction, $F(1, 120) = 4.19, p < .05$. As predicted, the effect of procedure was significant within the no-bias condition, $t(120) = -3.38, p < .001$; but not within the bias condition, $t(120) = -.49$, ns. In line with our second hypothesis, within the no-bias condition, participants reported stronger protest intentions when they did not receive voice ($M = 4.36; SD = 1.73$) than when they did receive voice ($M = 2.95; SD = 1.38$). This difference was not found within the bias condition (No voice, $M = 3.83; SD = 1.83$; Voice, $M = 3.63; SD = 1.73$). No other effects were found.

Outcome Fairness Judgments

Only a bias information by outcome interaction was found on this measure, $F(1, 120) = 4.15, p < .05$. As expected, the effect of outcome was significant within the bias condition, $t(120) = 1.77, p < .05$; but not within the no-bias condition, $t(120) = -1.12$, ns. In the bias condition, perceived outcome fairness was higher following a favorable outcome ($M = 4.45; SD = 1.54$) than following an unfavorable outcome ($M = 3.81; SD = 1.09$). This difference was non-significantly reversed in the no-bias condition (Favorable, $M = 3.89; SD = 1.46$; Unfavorable, $M = 4.30; SD = 1.65$).

Intergroup Similarity

Only a significant bias information by procedure interaction was found on this measure, $F(1, 120) = 5.12, p < .05$. The effect of procedure was significant within the no-bias condition, $t(120) = 2.44, p < .01$; but not within the bias condition, $t(120) = -.76$, ns. An inspection of the means showed that within the no-bias condition, participants perceived the outgroup as more similar to the ingroup following a voice procedure ($M = 4.23; SD = 1.21$) than following a no-voice procedure ($M = 3.52; SD = 0.97$). This pattern was not found in the bias condition (Voice, $M = 3.70; SD = 1.16$; No voice, $M = 3.92; SD = 1.30$).
Mediation Analyses

First we wanted to examine whether the bias information by outcome interaction found on participants’ protest intentions was mediated by perceived outcome fairness. To test this we performed a series of regression analyses (Baron & Kenny, 1986). First we regressed the intended mediator (outcome fairness) on the independent variables (dummy-coded) as well as the bias information by outcome and bias information by procedure interaction terms. As expected, the bias information by outcome interaction term significantly predicted outcome fairness, $\beta = -.79, p < .05$. After that we regressed intentions to protest on the independent variables and the two interaction terms. As expected, the bias information by outcome interaction term predicted intentions to protest, $\beta = .62, p < .10$. Finally, we performed a third regression analysis in which the mediator outcome fairness (centered) also was included. This analysis confirmed that the mediator outcome fairness significantly predicted intentions to protest, $\beta = -.33, p < .001$. Furthermore, when outcome fairness was included in the analysis, the bias information by outcome interaction term no longer predicted protest intentions, $\beta = .36, p = .32$. The mediating role of outcome fairness was further supported by a Sobel test, $Z = -1.82, p < .05$, one-tailed. This suggests, in line with our argument, that bias information moderated the effect of outcome favorability on intentions to protest through perceived outcome fairness.

Secondly, we also wanted to test whether the bias information by procedure interaction on participants’ protest intentions was mediated by perceived intergroup similarity. First we regressed the intended mediator perceived intergroup similarity on the independent variables (dummy-coded) as well as the bias information by procedure and bias information by outcome interaction terms. As expected, the bias information by procedure interaction term significantly predicted intergroup similarity, $\beta = .86, p < .05$. After that we regressed intentions to protest on the independent variables and the two interaction terms. This analysis confirmed that the bias information by procedure interaction term predicted intentions to protest, $\beta = .76, p < .05$. Finally, a third regression analysis in which the mediator intergroup similarity (centered) also was included confirmed that the mediator intergroup similarity significantly predicted intentions to protest, $\beta = -.30, p < .005$. Furthermore, when intergroup similarity was included in the analysis, the bias information by procedure interaction term no longer predicted protest intentions, $\beta = .51, p = .16$. The mediating role of intergroup similarity was further supported by a Sobel test, $Z = -1.88, p < .05$, one-tailed. This suggests, once again in line with our argument, that bias information moderated the effect of procedural fairness on intentions to protest through perceived intergroup similarity.

General Discussion

The research reported here was instigated to address an important gap in the social justice literature concerning why outcome favorability exerts such strong influence on reactions to allocation decisions made by members of an outgroup. Based on previous research on intergroup perception, we suggested that an important reason for the strong
influence of outcome favorability is that people tend to perceive outgroup members as relatively untrustworthy, and expect them to be biased in favor of members of their own group. In line with previous theorizing (Duck & Fielding, 1999, 2003) we argued that when people expect the authority to be biased, they are particularly prone to pay attention and react to the favorability of the outcome to find out whether or not their worst expectations are confirmed. The two studies reported here supported this line of reasoning by demonstrating that outcome favorability affects reactions to an outgroup authority’s decision when there is information suggesting that the authority is biased. At the same time, we established that this is not the case when information indicates that the authority is unbiased.

In the first study, outcome favorability affected participants’ evaluations of the authority as well as their willingness to accept the decision only when information indicated that the authority was biased. Importantly, our second study demonstrated that this effect is not restricted to the scenario methodology used in the first study, but in fact generalizes to an actual experience of the manipulations. In line with our first hypothesis, participants’ intentions to protest against the outgroup authority’s decision were affected by the favorability of the outcome, but only when information indicated that the authority was biased. When the authority had been evaluated as biased by members of the participants’ ingroup, intentions to protest against the decision were stronger following an unfavorable outcome than following a favorable outcome. By contrast, when the authority had been evaluated as unbiased by members of the participants’ ingroup, protest intentions were unaffected by the favorability of the outcome.

Furthermore, the second study provided additional insight into the psychological processes driving this effect. Previous research has shown that outcome favorability shapes fairness judgments in encounters with outgroup authorities (Duck & Fielding, 2003), an effect that has been explained as a reaction to perceptions of bias. Adding to this line of reasoning, we proposed and demonstrated that perceptions of outcome fairness mediate the interaction effect between bias information and outcome favorability on behavioral intentions following an outgroup authority’s decision. An interesting implication suggested by these findings is that reactions to outgroup authorities’ decisions, that on the surface appear to be driven solely by self-interest, are in fact largely driven by fairness concerns. Specifically, our findings suggest that protest intentions following an outgroup authority’s decision are guided by fairness concerns. However, unless information clearly indicates that the authority is unbiased, outgroup authorities will be expected to favor their own group members. As a result, fairness judgments as well as protest intentions are heavily influenced by the favorability of the outcome. Expressed differently, our findings suggest that people do pursue favorable outcomes in encounters with outgroup authorities that are expected to be biased, but that they do so in part out of concerns for fairness.

A second question we wanted to address in this chapter was whether it is possible also to enhance the impact of procedural fairness on reactions to an outgroup authority’s decisions by providing information that the authority is unbiased. Inspired by research suggesting that positive effects of voice disappear when people think that the authority will not truly consider their views (Tyler et al., 1985), we suggested that, due to
expectations of bias, this might typically be the case in encounters with outgroup authorities. The results of both our studies supported this idea. In the first study, voice positively affected decision acceptance following an outgroup authority’s decision when there was information indicating that the authority was unbiased, but not when information suggested that the authority was biased. In the second study, a similar pattern was obtained on participants’ intentions to protest, such that protest intentions were stronger following an unfair procedure rather than a fair procedure, but only when information suggested that the authority was unbiased. When information suggested that the authority was biased, protest intentions were unaffected by the fairness of the procedure.

Findings also suggest that this effect was not driven by evaluations of the authority per se, as the voice effect on evaluations of the authority was unaffected by bias information. Rather, additional measures and mediation analyses of the second study indicate that evaluations of the relationship to the authority to a large extent accounted for this effect. Specifically, our second study suggests that information about lack of bias and procedural fairness information interactively shape perceptions of intergroup similarity, such that perceived similarity is highest when an unbiased authority uses fair allocation procedures. This may at least in part be explained by the fact that perceived intergroup differences are reduced when relations between the groups are perceived as relatively harmonious (Riketta, 2005). In turn, our findings suggest that when perceived intergroup similarity is high, people react to decisions made by outgroup authorities in ways similar to how they typically react in encounters with ingroup authorities. That is, protest intentions are strongly influenced by procedural fairness.

Although we think that the findings reported here provide relatively strong evidence for the important role of expectations of bias, the studies also have some limitations that need to be addressed. Whereas bias information as moderator of the voice effect received strong support in both studies, bias information as moderator of the outcome favorability effect consistently received somewhat weaker support. Specifically, this prediction was supported by planned contrasts, but not by a significant interaction effect. Although this is somewhat problematic, we think the fact that planned contrasts consistently supported our prediction over the two studies, and the fact that the interaction was on the verge of significance in the more self-involving second study suggests that the findings are indeed reliable. Furthermore, it should be noted that some researchers argue that planned contrasts are sufficient (and in fact more appropriate) to test this kind of a priori hypothesis (e.g., Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1985).

A second point to address is the fact that in the present research participants were provided explicit information about whether or not the authority was biased. This provided a clear manipulation of expected bias, which fit with our main objective to explore the causal role of expected bias in reactions to outgroup members’ decisions. At the same time, one might wonder about the boundary conditions for expected bias as moderator of fairness and favorability effects. For example, would mere categorization of the authority as an outgroup member, with accompanying implicit expectations of bias (e.g., Duck & Fielding, 1999), be enough to obtain similar effects? Now that the effects of
bias information on reactions to outgroup authorities’ decisions have been demonstrated, we think this would be a fruitful direction for future research.

Finally, the present research focused on relatively minimal groups. In more natural group settings, perceptions and expectations of outgroup members should be more developed, and it may therefore be far more complicated to experimentally manipulate perceptions of bias. Because the primary aim of the present research was to perform a conservative test about the causal role of expected bias in interactions with an outgroup authority, the relatively minimal group setting was highly suitable. However, future research should investigate whether our predictions hold for more natural groups as well.

To conclude, the findings of the present research are important as they provide novel information about the psychological processes involved in reactions to outgroup authorities’ decisions. The main message to social justice scholars conveyed by the present research is that in order to understand reactions to decisions made by an outgroup authority, it is of utmost importance to consider people’s perceptions and expectations of outgroup members. Such perceptions and expectations are important because they affect the influence of outcome favorability as well as procedural fairness on behavioral responses to outgroup authorities’ decisions.

Finally, from a practical perspective, our findings suggest ways to alter reactions to outgroup authorities’ decisions such that the influence of outcome favorability can be reduced. Such information is of great practical value, in particular as many societal resources are expected to become increasingly scarce. The main message to authorities dealing with members from other groups or subgroups then, is that there may be much to be gained in providing clear and truthful information about absence of bias. Such demonstrations have the possibility of paving the way for less outcome oriented reactions to the authority’s decisions, and for a stronger influence of procedural fairness.