Governing amid Diversity: The Effect of Fair Decisionmaking Procedures on the Legitimacy of Government

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The research reported tests the influence of judgments about the fairness of government lawmaking procedures on evaluations of the legitimacy of a national-level governmental authority through studies—two experiments and a survey-examining judgments about Congress. The influence of procedural justice on legitimacy is contrasted with the effects of self-interested judgments indexing agreement with congressional decisions. Although a sizable empirical literature already suggests the importance of procedural justice in shaping reactions to personal experiences with legal, political, and managerial authorities, recent studies have been inconsistent about the degree to which procedural justice findings generalize to national-level institutions. The findings of the studies reported here strongly support the argument that procedural justice judgments influence evaluations of the legitimacy of a national-level political institution. A further exploration seeking to find an influence of ethnicity, gender, education, age, income and/or ideology on the psychology of legitimacy suggests that demographic differences do not influence the criteria respondents use to assess the fairness of decisionmaking procedures. The findings suggest that procedures provide a viable basis for maintaining public support in the face of differences in individuals' policy positions and background characteristics.

dentifying the popular beliefs that help democratic societies to function effectively is an ongoing goal of legal scholars and social scientists. The key issue is which public beliefs have an important influence on government effectiveness and which do not (Almond & Verba 1963, 1980; Dahl 1971, 1989; Huntington 1984; Inglehart 1990). For example, Dahl (1971) noted five public beliefs that he argued facilitate the development of democracy: (1) belief in the legitimacy of the institutions of government; (2) beliefs about the nature of the authority relationships between governors and governed; (3) confidence in the ability of government to deal with problems effectively; (4) political and interpersonal trust; and (5) belief in the possibility and desirabil-

I thank Yuen J. Huo and E. Allan Lind for helpful comments on earlier drafts. The data were collected with support from the American Bar Foundation. I thank William L. F. Felstiner and Bryant Garth of the Foundation for supporting this research. Address correspondence to Tom R. Tyler, Department of Psychology, 3210 Tolman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-1650.

ity of political cooperation. The analysis here focuses on the first of these beliefs—judgments about the legitimacy of government authorities. Such beliefs have already been demonstrated to facilitate the effectiveness of government authorities (see Tyler 1990; Tyler & Mitchell 1994). I examine here how public beliefs about legitimacy are affected by those authorities's actions.

Several types of judgments about the actions of authorities potentially underlie public judgments about their legitimacy, including (1) agreement with policies and decisions and (2) judgments about the fairness of decisionmaking procedures. The influence of these beliefs has been examined in a growing empirical literature on national-level legitimacy (Gibson 1989, 1991; Mondak 1993; Tyler & Rasinski 1991). However, studies in that literature disagree about which beliefs are important in producing and maintaining legitimacy, with both models receiving support in some studies.

Fairness and Legitimacy of Government

I report here the results of three studies that explore the relative importance of beliefs about the outcome and procedural justice of lawmaking on the legitimacy of political/legal authorities. The studies include two experiments and a survey. Each explores the impact of judgments about policies and policymaking on the legitimacy of a national-level institution. The policy issues examined include government financial aid to hospitals that perform abortions, government financing for policies providing additional training/education to minority workers, and general evaluations of congressional rules and the congressional rulemaking process. In each study the national-level institution is the United States Congress, chosen because it directly confronts conflicts of interest. Prior studies have been conducted using the Supreme Court, which focuses on conflicts over rights, and this report seeks to broaden the scope of the test of procedural justice influence. The studies also offer a methodological advance by addressing the concerns about causal order raised in earlier discussions of the procedural justice hypothesis. Finally, this research moves beyond prior research by explore the degree to which there are common criteria for judging the justice of deci-

¹ There is also a growing philosophical literature on this topic. John Rawls (1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1993) speculates that public views about the morality and justice of government institutions are central to their legitimacy, a notion consistent with a number of recent studies of legitimacy (see Tyler 1990; Tyler & Lind 1992). However, Rawls's analysis has been criticized for ignoring what is now known about public beliefs about America's "democratic" society (Klosko 1993). Klosko argues that studies of public opinion show that the basis for the legitimacy of government is "far removed from justice and fairness" and is instead based on "utilitarian principles" (p. 348). Klosko's arguments are based on theories of rational action that link legitimacy to making decisions with which the public agrees (Laver 1981; Mueller 1979).

sionmaking procedures among people who differ in ethnicity, gender, education, age, income, and ideology.

The primary purpose of the research is to test empirically the effectiveness of public beliefs about the justice of government in enhancing the legitimacy of government. The hypothesis tested is that people are influenced by their judgments about the fairness of government decisionmaking procedures. This procedural justice argument is developed from the studies of Thibaut and Walker (1975) and has been widely confirmed in studies since 1975 of personal experiences with government and other types of authorities (for reviews, see Lind & Tyler 1988; Tyler & Lind 1992). Research suggests that procedural influences are especially strong on evaluations of third-party authorities and of the institutions they represent (Tyler & Lind 1992). Studies suggest that evaluations of political authorities (Tyler & Caine 1981; Tyler, Rasinski, & McGraw 1985), legal authorities (Tyler 1984, 1990; Tyler, Casper, & Fisher 1989), and managerial authorities (Alexander & Ruderman 1987; Brockner, Tyler, & Cooper-Schneider 1992; Folger & Konovsky 1989) are shaped by judgments about the fairness of their decisionmaking procedures. Further, procedural influences affect the willingness to voluntarily accept third-party decisions (Lind et al. 1993) and voluntarily follow organizational rules (Tyler 1990).

While the procedural justice literature provides a number of studies supporting the procedural justice hypothesis, those studies have almost all been conducted using local-level authorities with whom those interviewed have personal experience. Can these arguments be generalized to the legitimacy of nationallevel policymaking institutions? National-level institutions differ from those usually studied in the procedural justice literature in their remoteness from citizens and in the more abstract nature of their decisionmaking. Citizens typically have infrequent and indirect contact with the Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Presidency. Further, the decisions of these institutions are not, as is the decision of a police officer or an employer, directed at particular citizens. Instead, they articulate general policy principles, which may have an impact on any particular citizen. This research examines whether procedural justice judgments about the fairness of the process used in formulating national policies shape the legitimacy of such governmental authorities.²

Several recent studies have tested the procedural justice argument using national-level legal authorities. Gibson (1989) examined the ability of the Supreme Court to increase tolerance for people's most disliked political outgroups (e.g., Nazis, the KKK, etc.). More recently Gibson and Caldeira (1993) replicated

² Interestingly, the U.S. Supreme Court has itself bought the idea that the integrity of the decision processes of the Court is important in creating support for its decisions (see Tyler & Mitchell 1994).

the study in Europe, using tolerance for a hypothetical decision made by the European Court of Justice. In both cases, the analysis suggested that the influence of the Court is not linked to procedural justice judgments. However, in a reanalysis of Gibson's 1989 data, Tyler and Rasinski (1991) disputed Gibson's conclusions. They argued that the data are consistent with a model in which procedural justice judgments shape Court legitimacy, and it is legitimacy that determines whether people empower the Court. Tyler and Mitchell (1994) test this model of legitimacy using survey data on public views about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court. Their findings support the argument that procedural justice shapes legitimacy. Empowerment of the Court to resolve the controversial issue of abortion, in turn, is shaped by legitimacy. Further, in contrast to Gibson's findings, their data suggest that procedural justice directly influences empowerment.

Both Gibson (1989, 1991; Gibson & Caldeira 1993) and Tyler and Rasinski (1991) agree that the effects found in Gibson's datasets are weak in the sense that very little of the variance in legitimacy is explained by any of the factors considered. This may be due to the hypothetical nature of the problems presented to respondents. In Gibson's (1989) study, respondents were first asked whether they would try to prevent a march by a disliked group in their community. They were then told that the Court has authorized such a march and asked again whether they would act to prevent it. Hence, they were asked to engage in a double hypothetical judgment. Since people have difficulty making even single hypothetical judgments about situations they have not experienced, double hypothetical judgments may have been especially difficult.

Gibson has also criticized the datasets he developed for being correlational. As he (1991) argued, the datasets do not allow for certainty about whether procedural evaluations are antecedent to judgments about institutional legitimacy. It is equally possible that people who regard government as legitimate view the government procedures they subsequently encounter as fair. Mondak (1993) supported this suggestion through an experiment in which he manipulated evaluations of the procedural justice of the Court in vignettes presented to the respondents to a telephone survey. He did not find that this manipulation influences evaluations of the Court's institutional legitimacy. Hence, a strong test of the procedural justice hypothesis at the national level requires addressing two questions: (1) the value of hypothetical scenarios and (2) the internal validity of nonexperimental data (in particular, the validity of the causal order presumed in such studies).

The Legitimacy of Congressional Authority

The focus of all three studies presented here is the legitimacy of congressional authority. Several aspects of legitimacy are potentially important (Tyler 1990). One aspect of legitimacy is reflected in people's behavioral intentions toward authorities and rules. One element of behavioral intentions is people's willingness to voluntarily accept the decisions made by authorities (Tyler & Lind 1992); another is feelings of obligation to follow the rules and laws enacted by authorities (Tyler 1990). Finally, behavioral intentions are reflected in willingness to act on behalf of authorities, for example, by voting for them (Kelley & Mirer 1974). Studies 1 and 2 examine willingness to act on behalf of authorities; study 3 examines feelings of obligation to follow rules.

A second aspect of legitimacy is attitudinal support for authorities, often labeled "trust." Support is assessed through judgments about whether group authorities are viewed as competent and honest (Tyler 1990). A second type of attitudinal support for authorities is the belief that an authority's institutional role is appropriate and should be deferred to (Caldeira & Gibson 1992), or "institutional legitimacy." Study 3 examines supportive attitudes toward congressional authorities. For an examination of the effects of judgments about institutional legitimacy, see Tyler and Mitchell (1994).

The final aspect of legitimacy, not examined here, is actual behavior: whether people pay judgments and obey laws. Previous studies have suggested, however, that both attitudes about legitimacy and behavioral intentions toward law and authorities influence actual behavior (see Tyler 1990).

Bridging Differences in Ethnicity, Gender, Income, and Ideology

American society is composed of people with diverse values and interests and is rapidly increasing in its multiethnic, multicultural composition. Further, both the size of the population and its economic and social polarization are increasing. For these reasons, "[o]ne prediction that can be advanced with sure confidence is that human life on this planet faces a steady increase in the potential for interpersonal and intergroup conflict" (Thibaut & Walker 1975:1). A utilitarian model of governmental legitimacy suggests a discouraging conclusion about the ability of American political and legal authorities to bridge competing values and interests, creating policies that will be viewed as legitimate and be commonly accepted by people and groups differing in their values and self-interests. The procedural justice hypothesis, in contrast, is more optimistic. It suggests that there are ways

for authorities to bridge differences by using conflict resolution procedures that all the parties will view as fair.

The success of a procedural justice strategy requires that people who differ in background characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, and income agree on the characteristics of a fair dispute resolution procedure—that there will not be demographic differences in the criteria used to evaluate the justice of procedures. Tyler (1988) examined the influence of demographic differences on the psychology of procedural justice among a sample of citizens, evaluating their personal experiences with police officers and judges. He found no differences due to ethnicity, gender, income, or other personal characteristics.³ The research reported here extends this analysis to ethnicity, gender, education, income, age, and ideological differences in the evaluation of national-level policy institutions.

Design of the Research

There were three studies. Study 1 is an experiment whose purpose is to test the independent influence of evaluations of procedure on judgments about the legitimacy of authorities. Policy agreement and procedural justice were directly varied using vignettes administered during a telephone survey interview. The vignettes were presented to respondents after they (1) evaluated Congress and (2) indicated their opinions on the issue discussed in the vignette, which asked respondents to evaluate a hypothetical decisionmaking procedure involving congressional consideration of federal funding for abortions. The study tests the hypothesis that people will be more willing to vote for members of Congress who support a policy decision they disagree with if that policy is determined through the use of a fair procedure. This study has high internal validity but relies on a scenario approach, which may limit its realism. Study 1 also examines the influence of demographic characteristics on respondents' reactions to the vignette. Ethnicity, gender, and income are relevant to the issue and might influence reactions on the issue.

The sample for study 1 was generated using standard sampling techniques. The first stage of sampling identified a random set of telephone numbers. The goal was to maximize access to all English-speaking adults (age 18 or over) in the San Francisco Bay area. The sample was generated using a stratified, two-phase procedure. The target area was the five-county San Francisco Bay

³ More recently Lind, Huo, & Tyler (1994) explored ethnicity and gender differences in preferences for and reactions to various procedures for resolving interpersonal disputes. Their study was based on a diverse sample of undergraduates who were asked about interpersonal disputes. The findings suggest similar preferences for the use of differing dispute resolution procedures across ethnicity and gender. Also, procedural fairness predicted preference and postexperience affect among all groups. Only minor differences linked to ethnicity and gender were identified.

area (all telephone prefixes within the 415 and 510 area codes), plus Santa Clara County (most prefixes in the 408 area code). To generate complete telephone numbers for the sample, four-digit random numbers were appended to each area code and prefix combination corresponding to the target area.

The second stage of the sampling process involved the selection of a respondent from among the residents of households contacted by telephone. One adult was selected at random from each chosen household and designated as the respondent. No substitutions were allowed. Each home was called at least 18 times in an effort to reach that person. Of those eligible for interviews, a completed interview was obtained with 74%. There were 502 respondents with a mean age of 42 (S.D.=15.95).⁴ Table 1 presents the other characteristics of the respondents, as well as those of the respondents for studies 2 and 3.

Table 1.	Demographic	Composition	of	Respondents
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	Study 1 Sample %	Studies 2 & 3 Sample %
Male	47	47
White	67	70
High school graduates or less	26	20
Some college	34	37
College graduates	19	22
Some postcollege education	20	16
Household income	a	a
\$20,000 or less	18	17
\$20,001-\$40,000	25	24
\$40,001-\$60,000	19	29
Over \$60,000	35	26

^a A few (4% in each sample) declined to answer the question about income or did not know their income.

Study 2 replicated the design of study 1 but used an independent sample collected at the same time as the study 1 sample. The primary differences between the two samples are that study 2 (1) screened respondents for ethnicity and only interviewed people who are white or African American and (2) used a statistical procedure that oversampled African Americans by overrepresenting telephone numbers in census tracts known to have greater numbers of African American respondents.⁵ The resulting sample is 30% African American. The sample size was

⁴ It is possible to statistically adjust the weight given to the interviews to reflect the telephone listing chosen, the number of adults in the household, and the number of telephones in the household. This statistical weighting procedure produces more precise estimates of the population parameters in the Bay area. Statistical adjustment was not used in the analysis reported here. Hence, the percentages reported do not reflect those of a "true" random sample of the Bay area.

⁵ As with study 1, the findings of study 2 could be statistically adjusted to generate population parameters for the Bay area, but such a statistical adjustment is not used in the analysis reported here. Hence, the percentages reported do not reflect those of a "true" random sample of the Bay area.

502, with a mean age of 43 (S.D.=15.60). For other characteristics, see Table 1.

Study 2 used the same survey procedures as study 1. Vignettes were administered to the sample after respondents evaluated Congress and expressed their views on the policy issue presented in the vignette—a decisionmaking procedure involving congressional consideration of programs providing special job training for disadvantaged African Americans. Like study 1, this study has high internal validity but relies on a scenario approach, which may limit its realism. It also examines demographic influences on respondent reactions. As in study 1, ethnicity, gender, and income are especially relevant to the issue and might influence reactions on the issue.

Study 3 is based on a correlational analysis of data collected in the survey described in study 2. In study 3, respondents evaluated the general decisionmaking characteristics of Congress: whether it makes decisions which favor them and whether it makes decisions using fair procedures. These judgments are used to predict two aspects of legitimacy: (1) attitudinal support for Congress ("trust) and (2) feelings of obligation to obey federal laws.⁶

Study 1

In study 1, agreement with policy decisions and evaluations of the justice of congressional decisionmaking were directly varied using vignettes administered during a telephone survey. Respondents were asked to evaluate a decisionmaking procedure involving congressional consideration of federal funding of abortions.

The Vignette

All respondents were first asked to consider an hypothetical situation: "Suppose that Congress took up the question of whether the government should give federal aid to hospitals that allow abortions to be performed."

In the description of the setting, Congress has set up a committee. The experiment is a $2\times2\times2$ factorial design. The independent variables are lack of bias in the committee; voice in committee proceedings; and the decision of the committee. The first procedural element is the neutrality of the committee: The committee is made up of people (1) representing all points of view (fair procedure) or (2) mostly on one side of the issue (un-

⁶ Study 3 utilizes a correlational dataset, which has lower internal validity than the experimental approaches used in studies 1 and 2, but does not focus on hypothetical scenarios—avoiding the problems of realism raised by scenarios. Instead, people were asked about their reactions to actual public policies that affect their lives.

fair procedure). The second procedural element is voice: The committee is described as holding hearings (1) where everyone could present their views (fair procedure) or (2) behind closed doors (unfair procedure). The final manipulation is the outcome: The committee is presented as recommending that Congress should (1) end or (2) allow federal aid to hospitals that allow abortions. To create the outcome variable used in study 1, the experimental variations in the experiment were combined with respondent answers to "Suppose a law were passed ending federal aid to hospitals that allowed abortions to be performed. How would you feel about this law? (favor/oppose)." On the basis of answers to this question, respondents were divided into groups reflecting whether the experimental vignette agreed with or differed from their own policy preferences.

Dependent Variables

The first dependent variable involves an evaluation of the fairness of the procedure "the committee used to decide on its recommendation" (very fair, somewhat fair, somewhat unfair, very unfair). This first dependent variable is a manipulation check, designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the two manipulations of procedural justice. The second dependent variable concerns satisfaction with the job the committee did (very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied). The final dependent variable is concerned with support for members of Congress. Respondents are asked whether they would vote for a congressional candidate who supported the committee's decision (very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, not at all likely).

Results

To examine the influence of procedures, outcome agreement and procedure are independently manipulated, using a 2×2×2 factorial design. The results of a factorial analysis of variance are shown in Table 2. The first issue is whether the variations in the objective nature of the procedure described influenced judgments of procedural justice. The results indicate that both procedural manipulations (e.g., voice and neutrality) influenced judgments of procedural justice.

Procedure also independently influenced satisfaction with the process and willingness to vote for the members of Congress on the committee making the decision. The findings suggest that both outcome agreement and procedural evaluations shape legitimacy.

Seven factors are included as covariates in the analysis of variance: prior views about Congress; prior views about the policy

Variable/d.f.	Procedure Fair?			ction with	Willingness To Vote for U.S. Representative	
	Mean Square	F	Mean Square	F	Mean Square	F
Outcome (A)/1	126.59	36.43***	281.35	84.26***	302.70	79.78***
Neutrality (B)/1	143.46	41.31***	58.92	20.64***	25.18	6.64**
Voice (C)/1	181.26	52.20***	102.53	30.71***	35.97	9.48**
$A \times B/1$	2.77	0.80	1.40	0.42	1.08	0.29
A×C/1	2.68	0.77	12.02	3.61	5.13	1.35
B×C/1	1.02	0.30	1.52	0.45	9.80	2.58
$A \times B \times C/1$	1.71	0.49	6.83	2.05	0.11	0.03
Evaluation of						
Congress/1	13.78	3.97*	7.53	2.56	18.37	4.84*
Views on issue/1	1.98	0.57	1.39	0.42	2.29	0.60
Age/l	0.56	0.16	2.34	0.70	4.07	1.07
Gender/1	3.77	1.09	17.76	5.32*	1.13	0.30
Race/1	1.20	0.35	0.15	0.04	0.03	0.01
Income/1	0.18	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.42	0.11
Education/1	0.61	0.17	0.41	0.12	0.51	0.13
Residual/432	3.47		3.34		3.79	
Total/446	4.42		4.37		4.63	

Table 2. Study 1: Support for Federally Funded Abortions

Note: Entries are the result of a factorial analysis of variance. *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

issue; and age, gender, race, income, and education. Several of these nonexperimental factors have a significant effect on one or more of the dependent variables. First, prior evaluations of Congress influence both judgments about procedural fairness and willingness to vote for a member of Congress. Second, gender independently influences satisfaction with the committee's procedure.

The findings of study 1 strongly support the procedural justice model. The most direct test focuses on evaluations of the legitimacy of the member of Congress involved in the decision-making process described in the vignette. For that case, I found clear influences of both neutrality and voice. Hence, people are evaluating the member of Congress involved not simply on the basis of their agreement with the decisions that authority makes. They are independently evaluating procedural fairness. Of course, this influence should not be exaggerated; the primary direct influence on legitimacy (as indexed by willingness to vote) is agreement with the outcome. Nonetheless, clear direct procedural effects emerge.⁷

Study 1 focuses on one aspect of legitimacy: the willingness to vote for a member of Congress. If people are, in fact, willing to vote for a member of Congress who is involved with a fairly made

⁷ The findings also indicate that the dependent variables are not independent. Procedural justice judgments are linked to both satisfaction (r=.77) and to willingness to vote for a member of Congress (r=.62).

policy with which they disagree, then fair decisionmaking procedures provide one mechanism through which value differences can be bridged. Politicians can be less concerned with the potential negative effects of making unpopular policy decisions, recognizing that making those decisions fairly would provide a cushion of support against negative public reactions. However, it must be noted that willingness to vote for a particular member of Congress is only one aspect of the overall legitimacy of Congress as a national policymaking institution.

Also note that general evaluations of Congress influence both judgments about procedural fairness and intention to vote for particular congressional authorities. Finding these influences is consistent with Gibson's (1991) suggestion that prior beliefs about the legitimacy of an institution shape judgments about the fairness of particular decisions it makes. The finding that prior views matter indicates the importance of an experimental approach to procedural justice. However, Gibson's model of causal influence can be rejected as an explanation for the procedural findings of this study. When the influence of prior general views about Congress is controlled, strong independent procedural influences continue to emerge.

As indicated earlier, the ability of procedures to bridge differences in interests and values depends on common agreement about the criteria for evaluating the fairness of procedures. Given the issue addressed in study 1—federal funding for abortions—race, gender, age, education, or income each might potentially influence whether people view the procedure presented in the vignette as fair. The results indicate that none of these factors shapes either procedural justice evaluations or judgments of legitimacy. Of 15 possible effects, only one occurs—gender influences procedural satisfaction. Hence, people's reactions to the fairness of the procedures presented are a reflection of commonly held beliefs, not beliefs that differ among demographic subgroups.

Study 2

The goal of study 2 was to replicate the experimental approach outlined in study 1, using an independent sample and a new issue: federal funding for programs that provide blacks/African Americans with additional training and education so that they can compete for jobs. Like study 1, study 2 relies on a unique sample of respondents from the San Francisco Bay area (n=502). The response rate was 66%.

In study 2, policy agreement and procedural justice were directly varied using vignettes in which respondents evaluated a decisionmaking procedure involving funding of programs providing special job training for African Americans.

The Vignette

Respondents were asked to consider a hypothetical scenario: "Suppose that Congress considered a program of federal aid for special training programs for Blacks who need additional training so they can compete for jobs." Like study 1, study 2 is a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial design varying the neutrality in the committee; voice in committee proceedings; and agreement with the decision of the committee. The dependent variables are identical to those in study 1: procedural fairness, procedural satisfaction, and willingness to vote for a member of Congress involved in making the decision presented in the vignette.

Results

As was true in study 1, study 2 independently varied outcome agreement and procedural fairness using a 2×2×2 factorial design. Table 3 shows the results of an analysis of variance for study 2, which indicate that procedure influences all three dependent variables. As in study 1, procedural fairness evaluations are influenced by objective variations in the procedure. Further, satisfaction and legitimacy (willingness to vote for a member of Congress involved in the decision) are independently affected by procedural variations.

As in study 1, prior evaluations of Congress influenced reactions to the vignette. In study 2 all three dependent variables were affected by prior evaluations. In addition, legitimacy was affected by prior views on the issue. However, the dependent variables were not generally influenced by race, gender, or income. Of 15 possible interactions, only 2 were significant. Hence respondents, irrespective of their demographic characteristics, evaluated the hypothetical procedures presented as equally fair or unfair (depending on the condition).

The findings of study 2 replicate those of study 1 and strongly support the procedural justice model. The most direct test focuses on legitimacy (indexed by willingness to vote for the authority involved in decisionmaking). In that instance, clear influences of both neutrality and voice are found. Hence, people are evaluating the political authority involved not simply on the basis of their agreement with the decisions they make. They are independently evaluating procedural fairness. Of course, this influ-

⁸ The agreement variable was created as in study 1. Respondents were told that the committee recommended that Congress should (1) end or (2) allow federal aid for training programs. To create the outcome variable, the experimental variations in the experiment were combined with respondent answers to "How do you feel about federal government programs to provide Blacks/African Americans with additional training and education so they can compete for jobs?" On the basis of answers to this question, respondents were divided into groups reflecting whether the experimental vignette reflected or differed from their own policy preferences.

	Procedure Fair?			ction with	Willingness To Vote for U.S. Representative	
Variable/d.f.	Mean Square	F	Mean Square	F	Mean Square	F
Outcome (A)/1	55.25	16.35***	121.13	40.14***	159.90	50.24***
Neutrality (B)/1	63.80	18.88***	17.60	5.83***	27.97	8.79**
Voice (C)/1	158.18	46.80***	66.92	22.18***	45.05	14.16**
$A \times B/1$	0.09	0.03	1.05	0.35	1.26	0.40
A×C/1	8.28	2.45	1.79	0.60	2.52	0.80
B×C/1	34.72	10.27***	9.00	2.98	3.67	1.15
$A \times B \times C/1$	7.83	2.32	0.44	0.48	4.69	1.47
Evaluation of						
Congress/1	12.97	3.84*	23.90	7.92**	24.62	7.74**
Views on issue	2.32	0.69	3.45	1.14	16.11	5.06*
Age/1	10.21	3.02	0.13	0.04	12.71	3.99*
Gender/1	0.07	0.02	0.30	0.10	0.35	0.11
Race/1	1.68	0.50	0.84	0.28	0.89	0.28
Income/1	0.93	0.28	1.66	0.55	4.77	1.49
Education/1	3.76	4.07*	8.93	2.96	7.42	2.33
Residual/432	3.38		3.02		3.18	
Total/446	4.11		3.52		3.79	

Table 3. Study 2: Support for Federal Training Programs for Disadvantaged Minorities

Note: Entries are the result of a factorial analysis of variance. *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

ence should not be exaggerated; the primary direct influence on legitimacy is agreement with the outcome.⁹

Note also that prior general evaluations of Congress influence judgments about procedural fairness, procedural satisfaction, and the legitimacy of particular congressional authorities. These influences are consistent with Gibson's (1991) suggestion that prior views about an institution shape subsequent views about the fairness of its procedures. As in study 1, the finding that prior views matter indicates that it is important to use an experimental approach when studying procedural justice. However, the results again demonstrate that when such an experimental approach is used, independent procedural effects emerge.

Since study 2 examines reactions to support for federal funding for disadvantaged minorities, income and race might be particularly likely to influence reactions to the procedures presented in the vignettes. However, in this study neither has any influence on either assessments of procedural justice or evaluations of the legitimacy of the authorities involved in making the policy. As in study 1, the findings of study 2 support the suggestion of broad agreement about the criteria for defining procedural justice.

⁹ The dependent variables are not independent. Procedural justice judgments are correlated to willingness to vote for a member of Congress (r=.57) and to satisfaction (r=.71). Hence, procedural judgments and evaluations of legitimacy are, to some extent, different aspects of a general evaluation of authorities.

Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 looked at the influence of experimental variations of the procedural justice (1) of a decisionmaking procedure (neutrality, voice) and (2) of its outcome favorability on the legitimacy of the authorities who enacted the procedure. Study 3 is similar in conception but used a nonexperimental design. It examined the influence of variations in judgments about a decisionmaking procedure on the legitimacy of the decisionmaking authorities. In study 3 a broader range of procedural elements was considered, including judgments about the favorability of the outcome; the degree of voice allowed; the neutrality of the decisionmakers and their trustworthiness; and their respect for the public (standing).

Both studies 1 and 2 were based on vignettes presented to respondents during telephone interviews. One advantage of that design is that it allows the impact of procedures and outcomes to be independently established. Further, the impact of particular decisionmaking procedures on judgments about authorities can be distinguished from the influence of prior views about those authorities. In other words, issues of internal validity can be most effectively addressed in an experiment. The key issue is causal order. The experimental design yielded findings that demonstrate (1) that procedural variations influence the dependent variables and (2) that the correlation is not spurious—it is the result of the influence of general views about the decisionmaking authority on both procedural justice and other measures of legitimacy.

Study 3 extends the analysis reported in studies 1 and 2 to naturally occurring evaluations of Congress. It examines the effects of respondent views about five aspects of congressional decisionmaking: the favorability of congressional decisions to the respondent, voice, neutrality, trustworthiness, and standing. Examining the influence of outcome favorability, voice, and neutrality replicates the analysis of studies 1 and 2. The inclusion of trustworthiness and standing expands the scope of study 3 by adding other elements suggested to be important in the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind 1992). The analysis examined the influence of these judgments on procedural justice judgments and on two dependent variables reflecting two aspects of legitimacy: attitudinal support for Congress and feelings of obligation to obey government rules. The underlying issue is whether Congress can gain legitimacy through the use of fair decisionmaking procedures.

The ability of fair procedures to maintain the legitimacy of authorities was examined across six background characteristics:

race (African American, white),¹⁰ education, age, income, gender, and ideology (liberal, conservative). This examination explored the role of different aspects of procedures in shaping judgments of procedural fairness. This analysis is important because the ability of procedures to function effectively in a diverse society depends on all groups defining the fairness of procedures in similar ways.

Focusing on the dependent variables of attitudinal support for Congress and the perceived obligation to obey federal rules (reactive variables) is also valuable because it extends the range of the dependent variables beyond the willingness to vote for leaders (a proactive behavior) examined in studies 1 and 2.

Dependent Variables

Procedural Justice. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with: "The way Congress makes decisions is fair" and "The way Congress decides who will benefit from government policies is fair."

Feelings of obligation. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with four items: "I feel that I should accept the decisions made by government leaders in Washington even when I disagree with them," "People should obey the laws made by Congress even if they go against what they think is right," "There are times when it is all right for people to disobey the government," and "I can think of situations in which I would stop supporting the policies of our government."

Support for Congress. Attitudes about support were assessed via a six-item scale: "Feelings about Congress (cold to warm)," "How much respect do you have for Congress as an institution of government?" "Congress can usually be trusted to do what is right," "Most of the representatives to Congress do a good job," "Many of the people in Congress are basically dishonest," and "The decisions made by Congress are usually fair."

Independent Variables

Background

Ideology. Respondents were asked to indicate whether "when it comes to politics" they think of themselves as liberal or conservative. Responses were arranged on a seven-point scale.

Demographics. Respondents' race, gender, age, education, and income were measured by self-report.

¹⁰ In the initial screening of the sample, potential respondents were asked about their ethnic background; only white and African American respondents were selected.

Antecedents of Procedural Justice

Finally, respondents were asked to evaluate the characteristics of congressional decisionmaking. Outcome judgments involve evaluations of the favorability of congressional decisions. Procedural judgments include assessments of voice, neutrality trustworthiness, and standing.

Outcome favorability. Respondents were asked whether the decisions made by Congress "generally favor people like" themselves and whether "Most of the men and women in Congress try to be fair to people in their district—not just to special interest groups."

Voice. Respondents were asked whether there are ways for average citizens to present their views to Congress before policy decisions are made and whether the views of the average citizen influence the decisions made by Congress. (Thibaut & Walker 1975 refer to these elements of control as process control and decision control, respectively.) The responses were combined into a single index in this analysis.

Neutrality. Respondents were asked whether "Congress is generally honest in the way it goes about making decisions," whether "Congress gives equal consideration to the views of all the different groups in America," and whether "Congress gets the kind of information it needs to make informed decisions."

Trustworthiness. Respondents were asked whether "Congress tries to be fair when making its decisions."

Standing. Respondents were asked whether "Congress is concerned about protecting the average citizen's rights."

Results

The analyses in study 3 parallel those of studies 1 and 2. Again the concern is with the effects of procedural qualities on procedural justice evaluations and on the legitimacy of the authorities involved. In the analysis two aspects of legitimacy are considered as dependent variables: attitudinal support and feelings of obligation to obey. Procedural qualities are indexed through an assessment of different procedural elements. In studies 1 and 2 the procedural elements were neutrality and voice. This analysis considers these two elements and adds the additional elements of trustworthiness and standing, which are drawn from the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind 1992).

The first question considered is the influence of procedural elements on procedural justice, attitudinal support, and perceived obligation to obey. The analysis is conducted twice, first using only the procedural elements used in studies 1 and 2 and then using an expanded set of procedural elements. The results of the analyses, shown in Table 4, are the same. Procedural ele-

ments influence overall procedural justice judgments, attitudinal support, and perceived obligation to obey. This is true across a variety of procedural elements.¹¹

Table 4.	The	Antecedents	of	Procedural	Justice	and	Legitimacy
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	Procedur	al Justice	Attitudina	l Support	Obligation	
Outcome favorability	.20***	.10*	.33***	.23***	.08	.04
Voice	.07	.03	.03	02	07	10*
Neutrality	.47***	.31***	.40***	.24***	.33***	.26***
Trust	_	.25***	_	.17***		.06
Standing	_	.14**		.21***		.11*
Age	.00	.01	09*	08	13**	13**
Race	04	06	.06	.05	.12**	.12**
Sex	.05	.05	.01	.01	06	05
Education	05	04	04	03	.08	.09
Income	.04	.03	05	05	.00	.00
Ideology	.04	.02	.01	.00	19***	20***
R^2	38%	44%	41%	45%	20%	21%

Note: Entries are beta weights, which indicate the independent influence of each variable, and adjusted multiple correlation coefficients (R^2) , reflecting the percentage of variance explained by all independent variables.

The finding that procedural elements of decisionmaking shaped legitimacy would be of less value if respondents of varying ethnicity, income, gender, or ideology differed in the way that they evaluated the fairness of decisionmaking procedures. In such a situation, respondents would not be able to agree about a common procedure that everyone would regard as just.

To test the degree of common agreement across varying types of respondents, an interaction analysis was performed. That analysis explored the extent to which people with differing demographic characteristics placed a greater or lesser weight on particular issues when defining whether a procedure was fair. For example, women might place greater weight on voice than would men. To test this possibility, an interaction term representing differential influence of voice on procedural justice for men and women was included in a regression equation. A complete test of potential gender influences utilized a regression equation with five main effects for outcome favorability, voice, neutrality, trust, and standing; a main effect to represent the direct influence of gender; and five interaction terms to test the possibility that men and women placed differential weight on each of the five procedural characteristics. A similar regression equation was created for each of the six demographic characteristics: race, gender, education, income, age, and ideology.

^{*}p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

¹¹ As in studies 1 and 2, the three dependent variables considered are not independent. Procedural justice judgments are related to attitudinal support (r=.57, p<.001) and perceived obligation to obey (r=.24, p<.001). Hence, procedural justice judgments and legitimacy are intertwined.

Table 5 presents the results of the analysis exploring the antecedents of procedural justice judgments among respondents varying in race, gender, education, income, age, and ideology. Consider race. The interaction analysis indicates that procedural justice is influenced by outcome favorability (beta=.15, p<.05) but not by voice (beta=.02, n.s.) and standing (beta=.08, n.s.). In addition, there is no direct effect of respondent race, gender, education, income, age, or ideology on procedural justice judgments (beta=.06, n.s.). Further, these background characteristics do not affect the weight respondents place on outcome favorability (beta=-.07, n.s.), voice (beta=.01, n.s.), neutrality (beta=-.10, n.s.), trustworthiness (beta=.07, n.s.), or standing (beta=.07, n.s.).

Table 5. Demographic Influences on Procedural Justice

	Race	Gender	Education	Income	Age	Ideology
Outcome favorability	.15*	.16**	.04	.03	.05	.12*
Voice	.02	.00	.06	.09	.00	.08
Neutrality	.39***	.25***	.36***	.38***	.32***	.28***
Trust	.18*	.31***	.19***	.22***	.23**	.38***
Standing	.08	.13*	.18**	.10	.17**	.12
Main effect of interaction term	06	06	04	03	01	.01
Interaction with outcome						
favorability	07	07	.10	.10	.08	03
Interaction with voice	.01	.03	05	07	.05	07
Interaction with neutrality	10	.06	09	10	03	.03
Interaction with trust	.07	10	.09	.02	.01	08
Interaction with standing	.07	.03	07	.07	03	.03
R^2	44%	44%	44%	44%	43%	43%

Note: Entries are beta weights, which indicate the independent influence of each variable, and adjusted multiple correlation coefficients (R^2), reflecting the percentage of variance explained by all independent variables.

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

The procedural elements studied did not interact significantly with any of the background variables. The results suggest that the same issues are central to procedural justice judgments for all groups: neutrality, trustworthiness, standing, and outcome favorability. Hence, there is general agreement about how fair decisionmaking procedures should be defined. This finding accords with Tyler's (1988) earlier conclusion based on the examination of people's personal experiences with legal authorities.¹²

A separate issue, equally important to the success of a procedural justice strategy, is whether the members of various groups put equal weight on issues of procedural justice, in comparison with outcome favorability, when reacting to policy decisions. An analysis of the influence of demographic variations on the importance people placed on procedural justice when reacting to Congress suggests that demographic group membership did not generally influence the importance of procedural justice concerns. All respondents placed a similar weight on issues of procedural justice.

Tyler

Discussion

What can hold a society together in the face of conflicts over appropriate social policies? The procedural justice literature suggests that agreements about fair ways of decisionmaking can be an effective means for a society to survive differences in values and interests. The studies presented here test this hypothesis using one type of justice judgments—evaluations of the fairness of government decisionmaking procedures. The argument tested is that fair decisionmaking procedures (procedural justice) can legitimize government authorities.¹³

The procedural justice hypothesis builds on a large empirical literature on procedural justice which suggests that fair decision-making procedures can legitimize authorities (Lind & Tyler 1988; Tyler 1990; Tyler & Lind 1992). However, the findings of recent studies of procedural influences on the legitimacy of national authority have been inconsistent, with some studies suggesting minimal influence (Gibson 1989, 1991; Gibson & Caldeira 1993; Mondak 1993) and others suggesting that procedural effects are more substantial (Tyler & Rasinski 1991; Tyler & Mitchell 1994).

The results of the research reported here suggest that the use of fair decisionmaking procedures does enhance the legitimacy of national-level governmental authorities, in this case Congress and its members. To an important extent, it is because Congress makes decisions in fair ways that people regard it as a legitimate political entity. Alternatively, if Congress uses unfair procedures, it will lose its legitimacy. Further, the results of study 3 indicate that these effects occur both with attitudinal support and with feelings of obligation to obey the government.

The findings outlined are especially noteworthy in that they emerge from both experimental and nonexperimental studies. This suggests that the findings are robust across methodologies. For example, criticisms of the correlational analysis of survey data suggest that the causal link between procedures and legitimacy judgments is unproven, since both may be linked to an overall evaluative feeling about government. In both studies 1 and 2, specific procedural manipulations shaped subsequent evaluation of the legitimacy of particular government authorities. This influence was independent of the impact of prior feelings about the general government authority being examined (Congress). There have also been criticisms of experimental analyses

¹³ Because of the American context of this study, the issue addressed is framed in terms of the maintenance of an existing government structure. However, similar issues are raised when people are seeking to create a common governmental framework that will be accepted by the citizens of a society. For an example of an effort to explore the public beliefs needed to create a democratic society, see Gibson, Duch, & Tedin's (1992) recent study of the former Soviet Union.

that focus on their use of hypothetical issues. In study 3 the issues involved were not hypothetical. Nonetheless, procedural influences on legitimacy were found.

The finding of procedural influence is also robust across a range of dependent variables: proactive willingness to vote for political leaders in studies 1 and 2 and attitudinal support of authorities as well as reactive feelings of obligation to obey them in study 3. They also occur across a variety of policy issues, including federal funding for abortions and support for affirmative action policies.

These findings supporting the procedural justice hypothesis on the national level are consistent with other recent survey support for the procedural justice hypothesis. Using a sample of adults in the San Francisco Bay area, Tyler and Mitchell (1994) examined the basis of public willingness to empower the Supreme Court to make abortion decisions. They found an important role of procedural justice underlying the legitimacy of the Court and the willingness to empower it to resolve controversial issues. Together with the findings outlined here, the procedural justice model on the national level receives strong support (see also Tyler 1993a, 1993b).

America is, by design, a pluralistic society, which tolerates a diversity of political, social, and religious attitudes. Further, the diversity is increasing as the United States becomes a more multiethnic, multicultural society. This diversity of interests and values poses problems for governmental authorities, who must accommodate various interests and create common public policies that will be broadly acceptable to Americans. The findings of these studies suggest an optimistic conclusion about the ability of government to do so. They support the suggestion that government authorities can create common policies across differences in interests if they are viewed as making their decisions in fair ways.

The success of a procedural justice strategy depends on having common agreement regarding the meaning of fair procedures.¹⁴ It has been suggested that such common agreement may be threatened by the increasingly diverse nature of American society. For example, the recent report of the California Commission on the Future of the California Courts (1994:78) suggests that there may be differences in the "appropriate choice of [dispute] resolution process" when trying to match the preferences

¹⁴ The findings of this research are both similar to and different from those of Rasinski (1987). Rasinski studied judgments of fairness among people differing in their social values. Like my research, he found that all respondents were concerned that social policies be fair. However, unlike my research, Rasinski found that liberals and conservatives defined fairness in differing terms. Conservatives regarded merit as central to fairness and, hence, viewed the policies of Reagan as fair. Liberals regarded equality as central to fairness and, hence, viewed the policies of Mondale as fair. However, Rasinski divided respondents in terms of their ideology, not their ethnicity or gender.

of people who vary in their cultural backgrounds.¹⁵ The findings of the research reported here are consistent with my earlier findings (Tyler 1988), which also suggested that ethnicity, gender, income, and ideology have little influence on definitions of the meaning of procedural justice. While the earlier study examined reactions to personal experiences with authorities, the research reported here concerns evaluations of a national policymaking agency—Congress. These findings also accord with that of Lind, Huo, and Tyler (1994), who found similar procedural preferences among the members of varying ethnic groups.

Overall, an analysis of the determinants of procedural justice judgments across ethnicity, gender, education, income, age, and ideology boundaries suggests that there is substantial agreement in the weight given to elements of fair procedure across groups. For all groups, neutrality, trustworthiness, and standing have an important influence on whether procedures are judged to be fair. Hence, we may infer that to a striking degree there is a common agreement about the definition of procedural fairness. Again, this is a hopeful conclusion. It suggests that the actions of government authorities who employ these procedures will be viewed as fair by all.

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¹⁵ Interestingly, the commission recommends accommodating such differences in procedural preferences but is "adamant that different legal standards and different legal norms for different cultures are unacceptable" (p. 78).

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