Uncommitted to the Unfair : The Mediating Role of Work and Organizational Cynicism

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Personnel are considered to be the most critical component to meeting the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) mission, and the costs associated with personnel account for more than 50% of Canada's Defence budget.[1] Although attrition of valued personnel is costly for most organizations, it is even more costly in military organizations than in the general labour force. This is especially true due to the intangible factors related to military service. In particular, the demands of military service require skills and knowledge that can only be acquired through institutionalized military experience. In strong contrast to most other areas of employment in the general labour force, many military skills cannot be learned outside of the military context. In addition, for the most part, military forces do not have lateral entry – instead, personnel must be selected, trained, promoted, and retained from within the organization.[2]

The Canadian Forces Military Personnel Retention Strategy clearly states that "*the retention of highly trained and experienced sailors, soldiers, airmen and airwomen is fundamental to the operational capability, military professionalism, and efficient personnel management*" of the CAF.[3] Unlike previous retention strategies that focused more on monetary and other incentives to reduce attrition, the current Military Personnel Retention Strategy is focused on building a retention culture. Specifically, it aims to reduce attrition mainly through 'relational measures' that emphasize the consideration and respect for members and their families, focus on fairness and recognition, and in general build and sustain a retention culture that "*strengthens members' affective commitment to the organization*".[4]

Given the explicit focus on the development and sustainment of commitment in the Military Personnel Retention Strategy, commitment was the primary outcome of interest in the present study. Further, given the emphasis on fairness, facets of organizational fairness were explored as the primary predictors of organizational commitment in this research. It is imperative to refine our understanding of how factors such as fairness and commitment ultimately affect attrition, and it is through the understanding of such intermediate linkages that employers and organizations can intervene to increase retention.[5]

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[1] Canada First Defence Strategy, 2009.

[2] Popov, 2011.

[3] Chief Military Personnel, 2009, p.1.

[4] *Ibid*., p.3.

[5] Hom & Kinicki, 2001.

Organizational Justice

Perceptions of organizational justice have been defined as the degree to which individuals believe they are treated fairly within their organizations and the degree to which outcomes are allocated in a fair manner.[6] Although there has been debate regarding the structure of justice,[7] it has typically been considered to encompass three elements : *distributive justice* (perceived fairness of the distribution of outcomes and resources), *procedural justice* (perceived fairness of the process used to allocate outcomes and resources) and *interactional justice*, which researchers[8] often further divide into *interpersonal justice* (degree of respect and propriety in interpersonal interactions) and *informational justice* (truthfulness and adequacy of communication regarding workplace issues and decisions).

Research indicates that organizational justice is an important factor affecting employees' actions and reactions within organizations.[9] In particular, it has been shown that higher perceptions of justice are related to higher organizational citizenship behaviour, task performance, job satisfaction, commitment and trust in leaders.[10] By contrast, decreased perceptions of justice are related to higher turnover intentions, organizational deviance, withdrawal, psychological strain and depression.[11]

Although a vast body of research has examined the direct associations between organizational justice and individuals' attitudes and behaviour, a comprehensive understanding of the underlying processes by which perceptions of justice influence these attitudes and behaviours is lacking.[12] Thus, more research is required to understand the mechanisms through which justice perceptions affect these outcomes through the use of mediated and integrative models.[13] In addition, it has been noted that a comprehensive understanding of how organizational justice affects outcomes requires greater examination of the justice types simultaneously, as the current body of research is often based on only a subset of the justice types.[14] Furthermore, it has been argued that the omission of one or more elements of justice may lead to the observation of significant relationships that would not exist if all justice elements were examined together.[15]

The present study extends research on organizational justice through the examination of work and organizational cynicism as mediating factors that may account

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[6] Cropanzano, Bowan & Gilliland, 2007.

[7] Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel & Rupp, 2001.

[8] Greenberg, 1993 ; Colquitt, 2001 ; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter & Ng, 2001.

[9] Masterson, Lewis, Goldman & Taylor, 2000.

[10] Colquitt *et al*., 2001 ; Kim & Leung, 2007 ; Ambrose & Schminke, 2009.

[11] Hulin, 1991 ; Tepper, 2001 ; Francis & Barling, 2005 ; Kim & Leung, 2007 ; Ambrose & Schminke, 2009 ; Suurd, 2009.

[12] Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott & Livingston, 2009 ; Cole, Bernerth, Walter & Holt, 2010.

[13] Ambrose & Schminke, 2003 ; Cole *et al*., 2010 ; Gilliland, 2008.

[14] Masterson *et al*., 2000 ; Cole *et al*., 2010.

[15] Cropanzano, Prehar & Chen, 2002 ; Cole *et al*., 2010.

for the relationship between all four types of organizational justice and organizational commitment. The findings help to elucidate the underlying process by which perceptions of fairness in the workplace affect individuals' attitudes. Further, there is a paucity of research examining the extent to which work and organizational cynicism, arguably particularly proximal effects of injustice perceptions, mediate the effects of justice. One exception is a study examining the role of organizational change cynicism in mediating the effects of justice on commitment to organizational *change*.[16] The present research complements these findings by examining the mediation on organizational commitment, by evaluating work as well as organizational cynicism as mediators, and by assessing all four types of justice.

Cynicism

There is evidence indicating that cynicism has been increasing in recent years and is becoming a widespread phenomenon in our society.[17] Thus, it is not surprising that a growing body of research is focusing on cynicism in organizations.[18] Generally, cynicism can be defined as an attitude "*characterized by frustration and disillusionment as well as negative feelings toward and distrust of a person, group, ideology, social convention, or institution*".[19]

Cynicism has been conceptualized as either dispositional or situational.[20] Individuals high in dispositional cynicism have been described as having a general lack of faith in humanity and a general suspicion of the motives of others.[21] Situational cynicism, on the other hand, entails target-specific negative expectations and suspicion of the motives of particular targets (e.g., people, organizations).[22] Given that situational cynicism is the aspect over which an organization may conceivably have influence,[23] it is situational cynicism that is the focus in the present research.

Conceptualizations of cynicism in organizational contexts are varied and include both work cynicism[24] and organizational cynicism.[25] Work cynicism may be defined as a specific negative attitude towards one's work and work values,[26] and the attitude that work is oppressive, unrewarding, and unworthy of effort.[27] This type of cynicism may develop as a result of repeated negative work experiences, and has been shown to be unrelated to a

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[16] Bernerth, Armenakis, Field & Walker, 2007.

[17] Kanter & Mirvis, 1991 ; Dean, Brandes & Dharwadkar, 1998 ; Cutler, 2000.

[18] Peddie, 2007.

[19] Andersson & Bateman, 1997, p.450.

[20] Wanous, Reichers & Austin, 1994 ; Andersson & Bateman, 1997.

[21] Kanter & Mirvis, 1991 ; Abraham, 2000.

[22] Dean *et al.*, 1998.

[23] Wanous, Reichers & Austin, 2000.

[24] Abraham, 2000.

[25] Wanous *et al.*, 1994 ; Dean *et al.*, 1998.

[26] Guastello, Rieke, Guastello & Billings, 1992.

[27] Stern, Stone, Hopkins & McMillion, 1990.

stable personality characteristic.[28] Organizational cynicism has been defined as a negative attitude toward one's employing organization, including a belief that the organization lacks integrity, and that the principles of fairness, honesty, and sincerity are sacrificed in favour of organizational interests.[29] This type of cynicism is also believed to be developed through repeated exposure to negative organizational experiences and ineffective attempts at organizational change and, further, has been shown to be unrelated to the trait of negative affectivity.[30]

Despite the different conceptualizations of cynicism that have been proposed in recent years, very little research has focused on either the antecedents or effects of cynicism.[31] Therefore, this study examines the extent to which perceptions of organizational justice relate to work and organizational cynicism, and the extent to which cynicism relates to commitment and mediates the effect of justice perceptions on commitment. Indeed, the small body of research that does exist suggests that cynicism is a potentially useful construct in organizational behaviour, and may help to understand the process through which organizational factors affect outcomes such as commitment. For example, research to date indicates that greater cynicism is related to decreased commitment,[32] lower job satisfaction,[33] lower intentions to perform organizational citizenship behaviours and increased intentions to comply with requests to engage in unethical behaviours.[34]

Cynicism as a Mediator of Organizational Justice

Although little research has examined the relation between perceptions of organizational fairness and cynicism, it stands to reason that cynicism can develop if employees feel that the distribution of outcomes and rewards is unfair, that the process used to allocate this distribution is not just, and that they are not treated with respect and provided with honest information. In line with this reasoning, cynicism has been described as having a developmental component, whereby past experience is applied to future interactions in which individuals become cynical towards specific people or entities that are judged as lacking integrity or acting in self-interest with little concern for others.[35]

Andersson (1996) proposed the theory of psychological contract violation in the workplace as a precursor to cynicism. Psychological contracts emerge when an employee perceives that contributions he or she makes to an organization obligate the organization to reciprocate in some manner, or when organizations make implicit or explicit promises to employees about future benefits. When an employee perceives that the organization has

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[28] Guastello *et al*., 1992.

[29] Atwater, Waldman, Atwater & Cartier, 2000.

[30] Wanous *et al*., 1994.

[31] Dean *et al*., 1998.

[32] Abraham, 2000.

[33] *Ibid.* ; Leung, Ip & Leung, 2010.

[34] Andersson & Bateman, 1997.

[35] Kanter & Mirvis, 1991 ; Dean *et al*., 1998.

failed to meet its obligations, the psychological contract is violated. This violation may be experienced as a feeling of inequity or organizational injustice,[36] which may result in cynicism.[37] Based on this proposition that violation of psychological contracts in the workplace is a primary determinant of cynicism, Andersson and Bateman (1997) employed a scenario-based methodology to manipulate contract violation, and found that employee cynicism toward a hypothetical organization was related to high levels of executive compensation, harsh organizational layoffs, and poor organizational performance. Kanter and Mirvis (1991) found that resentment occurs when the organization is perceived as "playing favourites" or disproportionately rewarding senior management instead of recognizing and rewarding merit at all levels. In the same vein, Guastello and colleagues (1992) found that cynical employees are more likely to believe that the average worker is exploited and does not receive a fair share of organizational rewards.

Exploring variables similar to the ones considered in the current study, but with a focus on organizational change, Bernerth *et al*. (2007) reported that change cynicism mediated the effects of distributive change justice and interactional change justice on change commitment and change efforts. However, a limitation they noted in their study was the null finding regarding the hypothesized relationship between procedural change justice and cynicism, and suggested this as a valuable avenue for future research, one which was explored in the present study. Also focusing on cynicism about organizational change, Reichers *et al*. (1997) contend that perceiving less participation in decisions, and perceiving poor information flow (which can be seen as reflective of procedural and informational justice, respectively) are related to organizational change cynicism.

Commitment

Given that organizational commitment is an important intermediary factor affecting a wide range of organizational outcomes,[38] an integrative model examining the effects of justice perceptions and cynicism on this central outcome was tested. In addition, commitment was examined in this sample of CAF members due to the explicit focus on the development and sustainment of organizational commitment in the Military Personnel Retention Strategy.[39]

The three-component model of commitment[40] is the most common model found in organizational commitment research.[41] This model proposes that organizational commitment is comprised of three dimensions. *Affective commitment* reflects perceptions of attachment and emotional ties to one's organization ; *normative commitment* reflects perceptions of obligation to one's organization ; and *continuance commitment* reflects

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[36] Rousseau, 1989.

[37] Andersson, 1996.

[38] Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993.

[39] Chief Military Personnel, 2009.

[40] Meyer *et al*., 1993.

[41] Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnsytsky, 2002 ; Jaros, 2007.

commitment that stems from the perceived costs (economic and social) of leaving the organization.[42] Meyer and colleagues (*ibid.*) posit that common to the three components is the idea that commitment is (a) a psychological state that characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization and (b) has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization. However, the nature of the psychological state for each component is different, and thus Meyer *et al*. (1993) contend that employees with strong affective commitment remain with an organization because they want to, those with a strong sense of continuance commitment remain because they need to, and those with a strong sense of normative commitment remain because they feel they ought to.

A large body of research has investigated relationships between organizational commitment and workplace attitudes and behaviours. Organizational commitment is an important focus for organizations and organizational researchers because committed employees evidence superior performance,[43] increased work effort,[44] increased organizational citizenship behaviour,[45] decreased absenteeism,[46] and increased retention.[47] Thus, understanding the antecedents of organizational commitment, and the processes by which commitment is developed and maintained, is of great import to organizations and employers.

Past research shows that affective and normative types of commitment are related to positive outcomes, whereas continuance commitment is either unrelated, or in some cases, negatively related to these outcomes.[48] Similarly, in their theoretical conceptualization, Meyer and Allen suggested that whereas affective commitment and, to a lesser extent, normative commitment, should be positively related to job performance and organizational citizenship, these relationships are not expected in the case of continuance commitment.[49] Fu and colleagues (2009) demonstrated that affective commitment is more emotionally-based and provides excitement that motivates employees, whereas normative commitment provides a rational basis for employees to remain in the organization, and moreover, those that were committed both emotionally and rationally are more likely to expend effort for their organization. As such, only affective and normative commitment were examined as outcome variables in the present study.

The Present Study

The model hypothesized in the present study (see Figure 1, next page) links facets of organizational justice and organizational commitment both directly and indirectly

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[42] Meyer *et al*., 1993.

[43] Jaros, Jermier, Koehler & Sincich, 1993 ; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007.

[44] Mathieu & Zajac, 1990 ; Fu, Bolander, & Jones, 2009.

[45] Meyer *et al*., 1993.

[46] Mathieu & Zajac, 1990.

[47] Meyer *et al*., 1993; Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000; Bentein, Vandenberg, Vandenberghe & Stinglhamber, 2005 ; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007.

[48] Snape & Redman, 2003 ; Fu *et al*., 2009.

[49] Meyer *et al*., 1993.

through effects on work and organizational cynicism. Perceived organizational justice types were expected to be antecedents of cynicism, such that higher perceptions of justice were hypothesized to lead to lower levels of both work and organizational cynicism. Lower levels of work and organizational cynicism, in turn, were hypothesized to lead to greater affective and normative organizational commitment.

Figure 1 *:* Theorized Mediation Model
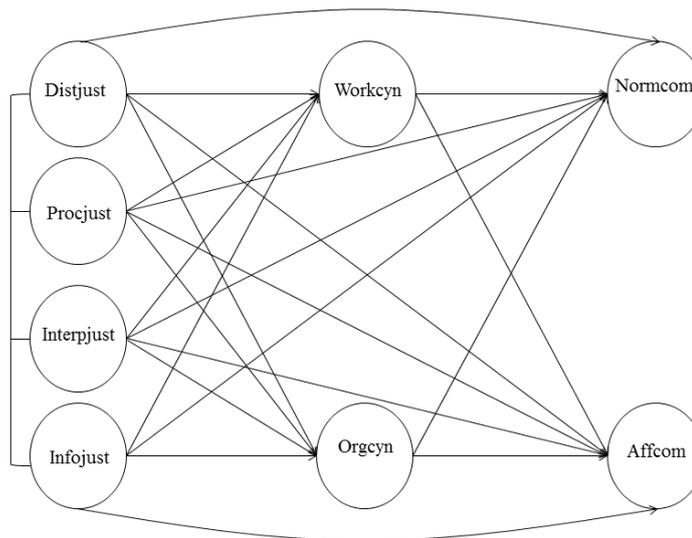
Legend : Distjust = Distributive Justice; Procjust = Procedural Justice; Interpjust = Interpersonal Justice; Infojust = Informational Justice; Wcyn = Work Cynicism; Orgcyn = Organizational Cynicism; Affcom = Affective Commitment; Normcom = Normative Commitment.

Methodology

Participants

The sample was comprised of responses from a total of 5,961 CAF personnel from the Regular Force. As typical of military personnel in the CAF, the majority of respondents were male (78.5%), Junior Non-Commissioned Members (43.9%), and served in the CAF for 15-24 years (37.2%). More than half were in Army occupations (55.9%). Most respondents were either between the ages of 35-44 (39.6%) or over 45 years of age (33.8%). The majority were Anglophone (84.5%), were either married or in a common-law relationship (77.3%), and most (85.5%) had at least a college diploma or university degree.

Measures

Organizational Justice. The components of organizational justice were measured using a set of scales developed by Colquitt (2001). The distributive justice subscale was comprised of 4 items intended to assess perceived fairness of the distribution of outcomes and resources, and included items such as "Do your outcomes reflect the effort you have put into your work ?". The procedural justice subscale was comprised of 7 items intended to assess the perceived fairness of the process used to allocate outcomes and resources, and

included items such as "Are decision-making procedures applied consistently?". The interpersonal justice subscale was comprised of 4 items intended to assess the perceived degree with which employees are treated with respect and dignity, and included items such as "Does your supervisor treat you in a polite manner?" The informational justice subscale was comprised of 5 items intended to assess perceptions of how fairly information is communicated, and included items such as "Does your supervisor communicate details (e.g., about decisions and procedures) in a timely manner?" Participants were asked to rate the extent to which each statement reflects their experiences at work on 5-point scales ranging from 1 (*to a very small extent*) to 5 (*to a very large extent*). Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scales were .94 for distributive justice, .92 for procedural justice, .94 for interpersonal justice, and .94 for informational justice.

Organizational cynicism was measured using three items from the 14-item Organizational Cynicism Scale,[50] two of which were adapted to apply to the CAF (i.e., "The CAF expects one thing of its employees, but it rewards another"; "When I think about how the CAF acts, I feel frustrated"). Two additional cynicism items were created for the purposes of this study (i.e., "I am sceptical about the likelihood of success for any future change efforts"; "When the CAF says it's going to do something, I doubt it will really happen"). Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 6 (*completely agree*). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was .91.

Work Cynicism was assessed with the 4-item cynicism subscale of the 16-item Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey.[51] Example items are "I just want to do my job and not be bothered" and "I doubt the significance of my work". Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 6 (*completely agree*). The original items are scored on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was .88.

Organizational Commitment. Affective and normative organizational commitments were measured using the questionnaire designed by Meyer and colleagues (1993). The items were tailored to the CAF respondents, such that the term 'my organization' was replaced with 'the CAF' in each item. The affective commitment subscale was comprised of 6 items (e.g., "The CAF has a great deal of personal meaning for me"), and the normative commitment subscale was also comprised of 6 items (e.g., "I would feel guilty if I left the CAF right now"). Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 6 (*completely agree*). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .83 and .82, for affective and normative commitment, respectively.

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[50] Brandes, Dharwadkar & Dean, 1999.

[51] MBI-GS – see : Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach & Jackson, 1996.

Procedure

The survey was administered electronically to members from 47 select occupations. It was intended to be administered to "at-risk" military occupations, that is, those below the desired manning level or showing higher than average levels of voluntary attrition. A census methodology was used in that all CAF members in the selected occupations who could be contacted through the CAF's internal email system, and who had access to the network where the survey was hosted, were invited to participate. Members selected to participate in the survey were notified by email and provided a URL link to complete the survey in the official language of their choice (i.e., English or French). Two reminders were sent during the course of survey administration.

Results

Preliminary analyses were conducted to assess the normality of all scale items and to identify any univariately and multivariately outlying cases. Item distributions were normal, and a few outlying cases were found. With such a large data set, outlying cases are expected. A sensitivity analysis was conducted, testing the models with and without outliers. No substantive differences were found and, therefore, results are reported for the full sample. For descriptive purposes, Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations and correlations among the various composite scales (i.e., with scale items averaged). A more detailed matrix of correlations between individual items can be obtained from the first author upon request.

Table 1 : Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Constructs

Variables	M	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Distributive Justice	3.21	1.06	.53	.30	.36	-.42	-.44	.32	.29
2. Procedural Justice	2.98	0.90		.51	.62	-.55	-.61	.46	.36
3. Interpersonal Justice	4.13	0.95			.78	-.38	-.35	.33	.22
4. Informational Justice	3.59	1.05				-.43	-.43	.37	.27
5. Work Cynicism	2.85	1.25					.71	-.59	-.47
6. Organizational Cynicism	3.47	1.20						-.56	-.46
7. Affective Commitment	4.38	0.98							.63
8. Normative Commitment	3.47	1.05							

Notes. Means for organizational justice were based on 5-point scales ; means for cynicism and commitment were based on 6-point scales. All correlations are significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) using Amos 19.0 was used to examine work and organizational cynicism as mediators of the effect of perceived organizational justice

on organizational commitment. Model fit was assessed using the CFI and RMSEA (including its 95% confidence interval) ; CFI values equal to or greater than .95 are indicative of reasonably good fit,[52] whereas RMSEA values equal to or smaller than .05 suggest close approximate fit of the model to the data.[53] Model comparisons were conducted using the *chi* square difference test (for nested models) and the AIC (for non-nested models).

Table 2 : Fit Indices for Alternative Measurement, Structural and Mediation Models

Model	Comparison Model	χ^2	*df*	CFI	RMSEA [95% CI]	AIC	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)
1 – Theorized measurement model	-	12070.16	751	.94	.050 [.049, .05]	12290.16	-
2 – Final measurement model with second order factor and correlated errors	1	9851.15	754	.95	.045 [.044, .046]	10065.15	2219.01 (3) [a]
3 – Final mediation model J→Cy→Co with ns paths removed	2	9857.02	758	.95	.045 [.044, .046]	10063.02	5.86 (4)
Alternative Mediation Models							
4 – J→Co→Cy	3	9859.61	756	.95	.045 [.044, .046]	10069.61	[b]
5 – Cy→J→Co	3	11593.78	761	.94	.049 [.048, .050]	11793.78	[b]
6 – Cy→Co→J	3	11577.35	759	.94	.049 [.048, .050]	11781.35	[b]
7 – Co→Cy→J	3	11575.78	757	.94	.049 [.048, .050]	11.783.80	[b]
8 – Co→J→Cy	3	12568.76	760	.94	.051 [.050, .052]	12770.76	[b]

Notes. Co = the two commitment variables; Cy = the two cynicism variables; J = the three justice variables.
[a]Significant at $p < .001$. [b]Chi square difference tests were not conducted as the compared models were not nested.

A two-step approach was used to assess the hypothesized model. Prior to testing the structural model, a measurement model was tested in which all items were loaded onto their respective factors and all latent variables were correlated. The overall fit was reasonable yet it did not quite reach the pre-established fit criteria (see Table 2 for fit indices and model comparisons). Upon closer examination of model parameters and modification indices, a few changes were needed for improved model representation and fit. First, the correlation between the latent variables interpersonal and informational justice was fairly large ($r = .80$). This correlation was not so high as to suggest redundant factors (in applied research, a cut-off criteria of .85 and above suggests poor discriminant

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[52] Hu & Bentler, 1999.

[53] Browne & Cudeck, 1993.

validity ; Brown, 2006), but was large enough to suggest the presence of a higher order factor. Given that these two facets of justice have been found to be highly related in the literature,[55] a second-order "interactional justice" factor was created to estimate the shared variance between interpersonal and informational justice while retaining them as unique sub-facets of justice. It should be noted that a one factor solution was also tested, whereby interpersonal and informational justice loaded onto a single factor. This solution provided inadequate fit, $\chi^2(758) = 24482.44$, $p < .001$, Cfi = .89, Rmsea = .07, further supporting the hierarchical structure adopted.

Secondly, modification indices suggested the inclusion of correlated errors into the model for two pairs of items, namely between the first two procedural justice and organizational cynicism items, respectively. The addition of both of these parameters is theoretically justified. Both procedural justice items focussed on the active role of the respondent in the decision-making process (e.g., "Do you have influence over the outcomes arrived at by decision-making procedures") as opposed to external factors related to processes (e.g., "Are decision-making procedures free of bias ?"). Both of the organizational cynicism items related to organizational change (e.g., "I am sceptical about the likelihood of success of any future change efforts") as opposed to general feelings of cynicism towards the organization (e.g., "When I think about how the Caf acts, I feel frustrated"). The final measurement model, with two pairs of correlated errors and a second order factor added, resulted in a significantly improved and reasonably good fit (see Table 2 for model comparisons including *chi* square difference tests, where applicable).

Table 3 : Direct and Indirect Effects of the Mediation Model

Outcome/ Mediators	Predictors/ Mediators	Direct Effects	Direct Effects with Mediators	Indirect Effects[a]
Normative commitment	Distributive Justice	**.12 [.08, .16], .02**	**.04 [.01, .08], .02**	**.09 [.08, .11], .01**
	Procedural Justice	**.31 [.26, .36], .03**	.04 [-.01, .09], .03	**.27 [.24, .29], .01**
	Interactional Justice	.04 [.00, .09], .02	.01 [-.03, .05], .02	**.05 [.03, .07], .01**
	Work cynicism			
	Organizational cynicism			
Affective commitment	Distributive justice	**.10 [.06, .13], .02**	-.01 [-.04, .02], .02	**.12 [.10, .14], .01**
	Procedural justice	**.37 [.32, .42], .03**	.03 [-.02, .08], .03	**.32 [.29, .35], .02**
	Interactional justice	**.14 [.10, .19], .02**	**.10 [.06, .13], .02**	**.06 [.04, .09], .01**
	Work cynicism			
	Organizational cynicism			
Work cynicism	Distributive Justice		**-.18 [-.22, -.15], .02**	
	Procedural Justice		**-.41 [-.45, -.37], .02**	
	Interactional Justice		**-.13 [-.17, -.09], .02**	
Organizational cynicism	Distributive Justice		**-.15 [-.18, -.13], .02**	
	Procedural Justice		**-.57 [-.60, -.53], .02**	
	Interactional Justice		**-.05 [-.08, -.01], .02**	

Notes. B [95% CI], *SE*. Regression weights are standardized. Standard errors and confidence limits were produced with 5000 bootstraps. Regression weights in boldface type are significant at *p* < .001. [a]Based on model with *ns* links removed.

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[55] Cropanzano *et al.*, 2007 ; Ambrose & Schminke, 2009.

Structural Model

The mediation model was tested in two stages. First, the direct effects of distributive, procedural, and interactional facets of justice on affective and normative commitment were tested. A total of 5,000 bootstrapped samples were generated to empirically derive an asymptotic sampling distribution in order to produce 95% confidence intervals and standard errors for the direct and indirect effects. All direct paths from the three facets of justice to the two types of commitment were significantly positive, save for the path from interactional justice to normative commitment (see Table 3). Second, a mediation model was tested in which work and organizational cynicism factors were added as mediators of the effects of justice on commitment, and correlated disturbances were added between the two cynicism and the two commitment latent variables. Correlated disturbances were added as it was plausible (and expected) that each pair of latent variables shared at least one common omitted cause, as the proposed model was not intended to be an exhaustive predictive model of cynicism and commitment.

All paths from the three facets of justice to the two types of cynicism were significantly negative. All indirect effects of the justice facets on affective and normative commitment were significantly positive. Moreover, with the two cynicism mediators included in the model, only two significant direct effects remained : the direct paths from distributive justice to normative commitment, and interactional justice to affective commitment. The non-significant links were removed from the model, which did not result in significant loss of fit (Model 3 in Table 2). The final model is presented in Figure 2 :
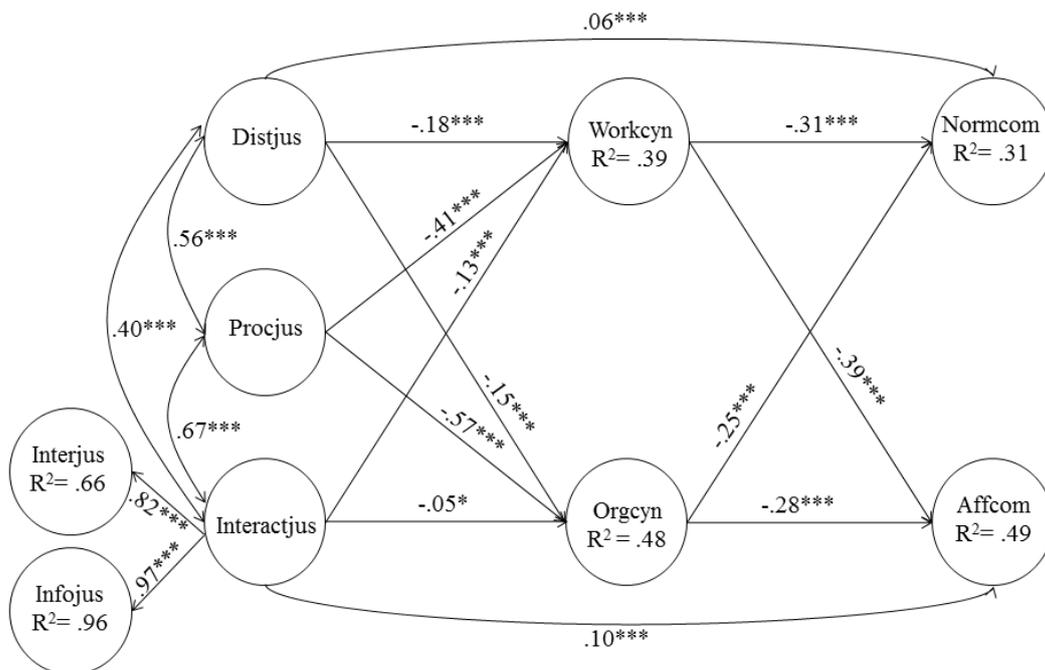

Figure 2 : Final Mediation Model

Note : Regression weights depicted are standardized. *p < .05. ***p < .001.

Path Coefficient Comparisons

Path coefficients were compared to determine which facets of justice were more strongly linked to cynicism and commitment. A series of comparisons was made between the final model with and without pairs of paths constrained to be equal. Equality constraints resulting in significant increases in chi square values indicated a significant difference between paths.

When direct paths from the three justice factors to normative and affective commitment were compared, procedural justice had the strongest direct impact on normative and affective commitment. Procedural justice had a stronger impact on normative commitment than did distributive justice, $\Delta\chi^2 (1) = 52.55$, $p < .001$. Distributive justice, in turn, had a stronger impact on normative commitment than did interactional justice, $\Delta\chi^2 (1) = 91.7$, $p < .001$. Procedural justice had a stronger impact on affective commitment than did interactional justice, $\Delta\chi^2 (1) = 51.8$, $p < .001$. Interactional justice, in turn, had a significantly stronger impact on affective commitment than did distributive justice, $\Delta\chi^2 (1) = 4.3$, $p = .04$.

When the justice factors' links to both work and organizational cynicism were compared, procedural justice emerged as the strongest predictor of both, whereas interactional justice was the weakest. Procedural justice was a significantly stronger predictor of work cynicism than distributive justice, $\Delta\chi^2 (1) = 99.25$, $p < .001$. Distributive justice, in turn, was a significantly stronger predictor of work cynicism than interactional justice $\Delta\chi^2 (1) = 93.45$, $p < .001$. Procedural justice was also a significantly stronger predictor of organizational cynicism than distributive justice, $\Delta\chi^2 (1) = 312.66$, $p < .001$. Distributive justice, in turn, was a significantly stronger predictor of work cynicism than was interactional justice $\Delta\chi^2 (1) = 24.02$, $p < .001$.

Alternative Mediation Models

In order to test and disconfirm competing explanations,[56] five alternative mediation models were tested, changing the order of our final model (Model 3) variables all possible ways. For example, Model 4 tested the competing conceptualization of cynicism as a dispositional factor leading to perceptions of injustice. As shown in Table 2, the Aic values for all of these alternative models were larger than that of our final model, indicating poorer fit; furthermore, the values for the Cfi and Rmsea were inferior to those of the final model. These alternative models were therefore rejected.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the effect of perceived procedural justice on both affective and normative commitment is fully mediated by work and organizational cynicism. Thus, if individuals feel that the processes used to allocate outcomes is unfair,

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[56] Mathieu & Taylor, 2006.

they may develop feelings of cynicism towards their work and their organization which, in turn, will decrease their level of commitment. These results contribute to the growing evidence for the importance of affective responses in the perception of justice.[57]

Procedural justice was found to be the most influential justice type in this study, having the largest direct effect on both normative and affective commitment in the non-mediated model, and the strongest direct effect on work and organizational cynicism in the mediated model. This finding is consistent with previous meta-analytic results demonstrating that procedural justice correlates more strongly with organizational commitment than do distributive and interactional justice.[58] It has also been suggested that fairness concerns in hierarchical organizations such as the Caf examined in this study, are particularly focused on issues related to procedural justice.[59]

Although interpersonal and informational justice types were initially included separately, they were highly related and formed a higher order interactional justice factor, consistent with the way they are often combined theoretically.[60] Fairness in interpersonal interactions may be more associated with cynicism relating to one's work than to perhaps a more general sense of cynicism toward the organization. These results are in line with previous research indicating that individuals respond to perceptions of procedural fairness differently than to perceptions of interpersonal fairness due to their different sources,[61] and that these justice perceptions work through distinct processes thereby affecting different attitudes and behaviours.[62]

Most work on organizational justice has taken a cross-sectional approach to examining the relationships between justice perceptions and individuals' attitudes. Several recent studies, however, have shown that justice perceptions change over time as individuals acquire more information and experience with processes and outcomes.[63] As such, future research on how changes in justice perceptions over time affect cynicism, using a longitudinal approach, would provide additional information on the mediating and moderating role of cynicism on individual attitudes and behaviors. For example, Holtz and Harold (2009) reported that individuals who initially expressed higher trust in their supervisors and in their organizations evidenced less change in justice perceptions of their supervisors and of their organization over time.

Although various facets of cynicism have been proposed in recent years, little research has focused on either the antecedents or outcomes of cynicism.[64] In the only other

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[57] Barsky & Kaplan, 2007 ; Cole *et al.*, 2010.

[58] Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001.

[59] Ambrose & Schminke, 2003.

[60] Cropanzano *et al.*, 2007 ; Ambrose & Shminke, 2009.

[61] Malatesta & Byrne, 1997.

[62] Masterson *et al.*, 2000.

[63] Ambrose & Cropanzano, 2003 ; Holtz & Harold, 2009.

[64] Dean *et al.*, 1998.

study we are aware of examining both work and organizational cynicism,[65] it was found that these two types of cynicism were conceptually distinct in that they were differentially affected by rank and length of service, and that complexity of work, rotational shifts, and command assignments were associated with work cynicism but not organizational cynicism. These findings point to the need for further research to distinguish between the sources of cynicism and to explore how these interact to influence attitudes and behaviours.

The effect of organizational injustice on the development of cynicism may depend on a number of factors, both dispositional and situational. As suggested by Andersson (1996) in discussing the relation between contract violation and cynicism, factors such as self-esteem, locus of control, equity sensitivity, work ethic, a tendency toward negative affectivity, demographic characteristics and group norms may moderate the effects of injustice and influence the extent to which perceptions of injustice result in cynicism. The moderating effect of these factors on the relation between organizational justice and cynicism is an important avenue for future research.

Meyer and colleagues (1993) argued that the components of organizational commitment are differentially linked to both antecedents and consequences. In line with this assertion, although both affective and normative commitment were explained by the model, a much greater proportion of variability in affective commitment was explained. In the same vein, Fu and colleagues (2009) found that although perceived organizational support (Pos) had a strong positive effect on affective commitment, it had no significant effect on normative commitment. They suggested that whereas affective commitment can be motivated by extrinsic factors like Pos (or organizational justice, as in this study), normative commitment may be more intrinsic and stable. They contend that for individuals with high amounts of normative commitment, being loyal to their employer is simply the right thing to do, and that normative commitment is not contingent upon the actions of the organization.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations of the present study that could be addressed in future research. First, because of its cross-sectional correlational design, the proposed relationships between organizational justice, cynicism, and organizational commitment should not be interpreted causally, and alternative models, including reverse causality, are possible.[66] For example, given that cynicism may be described as either dispositional or situational,[67] those high in dispositional cynicism are believed to have a general lack of faith in humanity and a general suspicion of the motives of others.[68] As such, it has been suggested that cynicism is associated with the cognitive process of dysphoric thinking or dysphoric rumination, which involves the negative framing and editing of social

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[65] O'Connell, Holzman & Armandi, 1986.

[66] MacCallum, Wegener, Uchino & Fabrigar, 1993.

[67] Andersson & Bateman, 1997.

[68] Abraham, 2000 ; Kanter & Mirvis, 1991.

information[69] and leads to a pessimistic attributional style.[70] Thus, it may be that dispositionally cynical individuals are more likely than their less cynical counterparts to perceive injustice. This alternative explanation, in which cynicism affects organizational commitment through its mediating effect on justice perceptions, was examined in the present study, and was not found to be more consistent with the data collected than was the hypothesized model. Although the results of this study are consistent with the mediation processes hypothesized, future studies using longitudinal or experimental designs would help to better elucidate the causal order of the model.

Because all data were collected via self-report measures, and collected at the same time, it is possible that common method variance may have inflated the reported relationships. However, some researchers have asserted that no mediation would appear if the relationships observed were based entirely on common method bias.[71] Thus, given that the relations between the justice types and commitment were reduced or were no longer significant when controlling for cynicism, it can be inferred that common method bias is not the only explanation accounting for the relationships in the model. The findings in this study are also strengthened by the use of structural equation modeling, which allowed for the testing of the hypothesized causal model in the absence of measurement error and other extraneous factors via simultaneous estimation of the measurement and theoretical models.[72]

In addition, there may have been selection bias for participating in the survey. It is possible that those individuals who were less cynical and withdrawn, or were more committed to the organization, were more inclined to participate in the study. However, recent research examining the issue of response bias suggests that employees who respond to organizational surveys are attitudinally similar to those who do not.[73] It has nonetheless been suggested that because cynicism is often considered a socially undesirable employee attitude, alternatives to self-report measures of cynicism should be developed.[74]

The current study did not include either self-reported intentions to quit or actual turnover in the model. Based on theory and previous empirical findings, retention intentions and actual retention would be positively related to commitment, particularly affective commitment.[75] Similarly, although commitment has been shown to influence effort and performance,[76] these constructs were not tested in the present study. Future research would benefit from the examination of these outcomes of commitment in order to expand the model beyond attitudes to behavioural intentions and actions. It is of note that in their

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[69] Bies, Tripp & Kramer, 1997, p.25.

[70] Kramer, 1999.

[71] Cole *et al*., 2010 ; Rupp & Spencer, 2006.

[72] Hoyle, 1995.

[73] Rogelberg, Conway, Sederberg, Spitzmüller, Aziz & Knight, 2003.

[74] Andersson, 1996.

[75] Griffeth *et al*., 2000 ; Bentein *et al*., 2005 ; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007.

[76] Jaros *et al*., 1993 ; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007 ; Fu *et al*., 2009.

meta-analysis of predictors of actual turnover behaviour, Griffeth and colleagues (2000) found that organizational commitment was one of the best predictors of actual turnover (ρ = -.23), second only to reported intentions to quit (ρ = .38).

Finally, the present study combined the data for CAF members from all ranks, and combined officers with non-commissioned members. Although the hypothesized model was found to have good fit in general, group differences may exist, and would be an interesting extension in future research. In addition, given that the current sample was comprised of military personnel, future research would benefit from examining the generalizability of the current findings in other (e.g., less hierarchical, less conservative, more gender-balanced) types of organizations.

Practical Implications

As in many organizations, in order to retain valued personnel the CAF must create and sustain a work environment that makes CAF members feel valued and therefore willing and committed to remain part of the organization.[77] Given the potential consequences of perceived injustice on organizational commitment, employers should act to reduce instances of injustice, particularly in light of evidence that justice perceptions can change over time,[78] and can be socially contagious.[79] Further, because procedural justice may have the strongest impact on both affective and normative commitment, employers need to pay particular attention to ensure that the processes used to allocate benefits are fair and equitable, and that any misperceptions related to these processes are clarified. In addition, it has been shown that when individuals contribute or have a voice in the processes related to a decision, they are more likely to view the decision as fair.[80] Thus, when possible, it is beneficial to engage employees in decision-making processes.

This research indicates that one of the mechanisms through which perceived injustice affects commitment is through the development of work and organizational cynicism. Indeed, cynicism has been described as having a developmental component, which implies that it is based on specific organizational experiences, is targeted toward specific people or entities, and can change over time.[81] In addition to its effects on commitment, cynicism is an important outcome in its own right in that cynical employees who do not leave an organization can have a number of deleterious effects on both the organization's and their personal well-being.[82] Research has shown that cynical employees are less satisfied with their jobs,[83] less likely to perform organizational citizenship

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[77] Chief Military Personnel, 2009.

[78] Holtz & Harold, 2009.

[79] Hollensbe, Khazanchi & Masterson, 2008.

[80] Bernerth *et al*., 2007 ; Lind & Tyler, 1988.

[81] Dean *et al*., 1998 ; Kanter & Mirvis, 1991.

[82] Dobreva-Martinova, Villeneuve & Currie, 2004 ; Peddie, 2005*b*.

[83] Abraham, 2000 ; Leung *et al*., 2010.

behaviours, more likely to comply with requests to engage in unethical behaviours,[84] and exhibit lower levels of motivation.[85] At the same time, it has been suggested that cynicism may have some value for organizations in that cynical individuals may be more likely to ask questions, engage others in debate and challenge the status quo, and can be important for getting rid of outdated policies and introducing new ideas and solutions.[86]

Given the potential negative consequences of cynicism, it has been suggested that managers should be aware of employees' expectations regarding psychological contracts in the workplace, should understand that employees' perceptions of these psychological contracts are not always the same as those of the organization, and that once violated, the effects on justice perceptions and cynicism may not be easy to repair.[87] Research suggests that cynicism can be managed,[88] and that efforts at involving people in decisions that affect them, enhancing the credibility of management, admitting when mistakes occur and taking appropriate corrective action are potentially effective strategies to reduce employee cynicism.[89]

As a greater proportion of variance was explained in affective commitment than in normative commitment, the former may be more easily influenced by organizational factors, such as organizational justice. Thus, as suggested by Fu and colleagues (2009), employers may be able to influence affective commitment on an ongoing basis, but ought to try to account for normative commitment upon hiring. Recent research suggests that both types of commitment are important, and a combination of strong affective and normative commitment results in the most desirable 'commitment profile' associated with more positive outcomes (e.g., retention, performance, and well-being) than high affective commitment alone.[90]

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[84] Andersson & Bateman, 1997.

[85] Reichers *et al*., 1997 ; Wanous *et al*., 1994.

[86] Cutler, 2000 ; Peddie, 2005*a*.

[87] Andersson, 1996.

[88] Kanter & Mirvis, 1989.

[89] Reichers *et al*., 1997 ; Wanous *et al*., 2000.

[90] Gellatly, Meyer & Luchak, 2006.

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