

THE CONCEPT OF JUSTICE IN STAKEHOLDER THEORY: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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1. Introduction

The Stakeholder Theory gained ground in international literature through the publication of Freeman's *Strategic Management: a stakeholder approach*, in 1984. According to Freeman (1984), stakeholders are groups or individuals that can affect or be affected by the organization. The organization's role should be to strategically manage the company's stakeholders (Frooman, 1999). By doing so, organizations could achieve better results and sustainable competitive advantage (Freeman, 1984; Harrison, Bosse & Phillips, 2010).

In this context, scholars who study the theory offer new models and perspectives on how the organization should manage its stakeholders (e.g. Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997; Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, 2007; Harrison *et al.*, 2010). Thus, we can see the inclusion of new concepts in strategic management, many related to the nature and goals of the relationship between organization and stakeholders, such as reciprocity, equity, fairness, justice, among others (Bosse, Phillips & Harrison, 2009; Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2014).

With respect to justice, this concept has been the focus of many studies from a wide variety of subjects and lenses in the field of management. Although its components have been scrutinized and applied to different degrees in the management literature, such as Human Resources (Bies & Moag, 1986; Tyler & Bies, 1990), Marketing (Laczniak & Murphy, 2007), and Strategic Management (Kim & Mauborgne, 1998; Luo, 2007), the stakeholder management, underpinned by the Stakeholder Theory, distinguish itself as been the one that applies the notion of justice as a key component for its models and a requisite for an effective implementation in the managerial activity (Freeman, 1994; Harrison *et al.*, 2010).

Nonetheless, the concept of justice can be viewed and applied in different manners, and the notion of what is considered to be fair, from a stakeholder standpoint, is not a clear-cut definition (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2016). As a result, it's important to understand how justice has been studied and applied through the lens of the Stakeholder Theory, in order to better understand what aspects are relevant and how can we further advance the theoretical and empirical approach of the subject in the theory.

2. Research problem and objective

The present study aims to attain two goals: first, to provide a theoretical background and framework about justice in the Stakeholder Theory literature and how this concept has been applied on some the most relevant studies in the field; and second, to present new avenues of research regarding the interconnections between the concept of justice and Stakeholder Theory. Therefore, in this paper, we aim to answer the following research question: **How the concept of justice has been addressed in the Stakeholder Theory literature?**

In the following sections, we offer a theoretical background about justice and the Stakeholder Theory, in order to highlight the main concepts about those subjects. After that, we explain the methodology used for data collection and analysis for the study. Finally, we present the results and discussion, including some propositions for new avenues of research.

3. Theoretical Background

3.1 Justice in Management Literature

The literature about justice on management began with a narrower conception of the construct. Organizational justice was characterized by a descriptive approach, in which it sought

to understand the posture and behavior of managers towards their employees. In this way, it followed a straightforward analysis between employee and employer (Cropanzano & Bowen, 2007). In its formation, organizational justice is composed of three main components: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Cropanzano & Bowen, 2007).

Distributive justice, as the first component presented in the management literature, derive much from the works of John Rawls applied to Business Ethics (Cohen, 2010). According to Rawls, justice should only be concerned with the distribution of primary goods - goods necessary to meet human needs. Following this principle, the author suggests social and economic inequalities must be arranged so that both are for the benefit of the less favored (Rawls, 1971). From there, it's understood that distributive justice deals with fairness of outcomes (Folger & Konovsky, 1989). On an organizational level, it concerns with the relationship of the outcomes and the behavior and expectations of the employees (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Folger & Konovsky, 1989).

Procedural justice, on the other hand, consider the process by which the outcomes are achieved. Thus, the outcome is relegated to a less important aspect of the process (Cropanzano & Bowen, 2007; De Cremer & Tyler, 2005). There are six rules that helps guide a fair process of justice in an organization: 1) consistency rule; 2) bias suppression rule, 3) accuracy rule, 4) correctability rule, 5) representativeness rule, 6) ethicality rule (Leventhal, 1980).

Interactional justice concerns with the way the managers behave towards the employees along the process of communication. In this manner, it deals with the communication process and examines the way through which managers address the employees, such as politeness, honesty and respect (Bies & Moag, 1986; Tyler & Bies, 1990).

Although these three types of justice are the most used in management literature, other derivations of the concept of justice are found. Berry (2003) uses the term Environmental Justice to refer to the distribution of environmental impacts, power relations, discourses, policy formulation and mobilization in a local and specific way. More broadly, Brink and Eurich (2006) use the term Social Justice to define the way in which legitimate stakeholder groups are recognized to ensure fair treatment between them.

The study on justice, through its three organizational components (distributive, procedural and interactional justice), has been performed in a variety of subjects within the management literature. For instance, in human resources management, research has been done about organizational justice, mostly concerning an instrumental aspect of justice, such as personnel selection, compensation systems and performance systems, as well as communication and the general well-being of the employee (Ferris, 1999; Folger & Bies, 1989). By the nature of the field, human resources management employs a tridimensional approach to organizational justice, focusing on the distributive (e.g. Ferris, 1999), procedural (e.g. Folger & Bies, 1989) and interactional (e.g. Kuvaas, 2007) aspects of the concept.

In Marketing, starting from a distribute view, justice is seen as the way in which the marketing system, in terms of its structure, policies or practices, fairly distributes the rewards and penalties among the various parties affected by the processes of market exchange (Laczniak & Murphy, 2007). Nonetheless, instead of focus on an employer-employee perspective, there was a concern, among the scholars, to include other stakeholders in the process (Crul & Zinkhan, 2007).

In Strategic Management, the concept of justice has been a component in a few studies. Starting from a procedural justice perspective, conclude that a fair process in the strategic planning and decision-making of an organization lead to an environment of cooperation, trust and commitment from the employees (Kim and Mauborgne, 1998). In International Business Strategy, Taggart (1997) offers a model to evaluate the strategy of subsidiary companies that uses procedural justice as an integrated component. Luo (2007), when examining the effects

of the components of justice in strategic alliances, concluded that those who present high levels of distribute, procedural and interactional justice have a better performance than those whose levels are lower.

Although some of these studies focused on a few aspects of justice in the strategic management of an organization, the stakeholder management extends on this notion by making justice a key component of the strategic management. Through the stakeholder theory, justice not only has to be observed from every stakeholder standpoint, but it became a prerequisite for an effective organizational strategy (Bosse *et al.*, 2009; Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Jones and Wicks, 1999; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Phillips, Freeman, and Wicks, 2003).

3.2 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder is any group or individual that can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives (Freeman, 1984). These stakeholders can be characterized by the degree of their contribution to organizational performance (Ribeiro & Costa, 2017). There are two classes of stakeholders: the primary ones, that are preponderant for the survival of a focal organization; and the secondary ones, with less influence for the survival of the organization (Clarkson, 1995). The primary stakeholders are buyers, suppliers, shareholders, employees and the community. Secondary stakeholders are government, media, competitors, environmentalists, consumer protection agencies and other interest groups. This classification is adaptable to the reality of the company (Freeman, Harrison and Wicks, 2007).

In strategic business formation it is important to align social and ethical issues with the company's traditional view, and that changes in strategic direction should consider the impact on stakeholders, especially on primary stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). Evan and Freeman (1993) propose as the objective function of companies that the true purpose of the company is to serve as a vehicle for coordinating the interests of stakeholders. The proposed objective function contributed to the incorporation of stakeholder theory into the context of the business strategy discipline, contradicting the primacy of shareholders, defended by Firm Theory, which culminated in criticisms and misinterpretations of Stakeholder Theory in the course of its development (Phillips, 2003).

The Stakeholder Theory based on Freeman (1984) permeates conversations in different areas of strategic management, thus, it is understood that is a constantly moving theory (Laplume, Sonpar & Litz, 2008). The Stakeholder Theory is justified due to its descriptive accuracy, instrumental power and normative validity, and models like the stakeholder salience model, have helped to develop the concepts of this theory in the research field of business (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997).

There are some definitions related to the study of stakeholders that can be found in the literature. Some of these may be broader, and others narrower. The narrower visions of the term aim to define relevant groups according to the main economic interests, whereas the broad visions are based on the empirical reality of how organizations can be affected or can affect almost everyone, regarding its stakeholders (Boaventura, Cardoso, Simoni and Silva, 2009).

In a recent research, Freeman (2017) discuss on the idea of “managing for stakeholders” or, in his words, “value creation stakeholder theory”. For him, business is about how customers, suppliers, employees, financiers, communities, and managers interact and create value. In other words, business can be understood as a set of value creating relationships among groups that have a stake in the activities that make up the business. To understand a business is to know how these relationships work (Freeman, 2017) because firms exist through interaction with its stakeholders and business is about creating value with and for stakeholders (Freeman *et al.*, 2010; Kujala, Lehtimäki & Myllykangas, 2017).

3.3 Justice in the Stakeholder Theory Perspective

The Stakeholder theory presents certain problems, such as the prioritization of certain stakeholders to the detriment of others who have less influence in the organization, and the identification of who is or is not a stakeholder (Phillips, 1997). This leads to the use of justice, which is defined as the equality between different stakeholders, in which everyone must be treated without differences (Freeman, 1994). And so, through fairness it is possible to identify who is or is not a stakeholder (Phillips, 1997).

To manage the stakeholders, it is necessary to understand that all the actions of an organization influence different stakeholders and that the needs of each one must be identified (Harrison *et al.*, 2010). Through justice, one of the relevant aspects of management concerns the type of stakeholder involved and their motivations, i.e., to succeed, the stakeholder must value equity, impartiality and morality among all actors (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2014). They must realize that their needs are being met and that everyone is being treated fairly and with respect (Harrison *et al.*, 2010). Behaviors deemed fair are rewarded, while behaviors considered unfair are punished (Phillips, 1997).

Fairness-based obligations arise when actors, whether individual or in groups, engage in voluntary exchanges, which bring benefits to both parties (Phillips, 1997). The perceived fairness of a stakeholder occurs over time and is influenced by the relationship that the organization maintains with other stakeholders, i.e. if the organization is unfair to a stakeholder, it may influence the perception of fairness of other stakeholders (Bosse *et al.*, 2009). That is because stakeholders are aware that it is not possible to meet all stakeholders need at the same time, so the payoff will be only seen in the long run (Harrison *et al.*, 2010).

In stakeholder theory, justice is also discussed in its dimensions of distributive, procedural and interactional justice (Bosse *et al.*, 2009). Distributive justice is present in Stakeholder Theory through active stakeholder participation, such as the active participation of employees in the organization's success; with the community, through the company's commitment to the environment; and with customers, through loyalty (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). The focus on stakeholder theory is primarily on procedural and interactional justice, where the organization interacts with stakeholders by giving voice to them and always presenting their decisions (Harrison *et al.*, 2010). In this way, companies that maintain distributive, procedural and interactional justice manage to create more value over time (Bosse *et al.*, 2009).

For value creation, organizations must establish justice-based contracts with their respective stakeholders according to their interests (Freeman, 1994). However, if certain stakeholders have more value to the organization there may be differences. Overall, justice can contribute to the company's performance, value creation and competitive advantage (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Harrison *et al.*, 2010; Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2014), resulting in more resources, tangible or intangible, to the company and its stakeholders (Bosse *et al.*, 2009).

Below, we present a framework with definitions and concepts used in the Stakeholder Literature regarding the notion of justice. As we can see, the definition of Justice is well established following the classical composition in three dimensions: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice, even though this last concept is less present in the literature. This occurrence, nonetheless, is expected. Earlier considerations about interactional justice argues that it is an extension of procedural justice (e.g. Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Tyler & Bies, 1990). However, more recently, some authors defend that there's a difference between both concepts (Cropanzano, Prehar & Chen, 2002; Bies, 2005), pointing out that there's practical utility in using both separately, since they can predict and generate different results.

Table 1 – Overall definitions and concepts of justice in Stakeholder Literature

Authors	Definitions and concepts
Greenberg, (1990)	Justice theory is composed of two general areas: distributive justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice refers to perceptions regarding the fairness of the actual distribution of outcomes or the ends achieved. Procedural justice, on the other hand, focuses on the fairness of the process used to distribute outcomes or achieve ends.
Phillips (1997)	Whenever persons or groups of persons voluntarily accept the benefits of a mutually beneficial scheme of cooperation requiring sacrifice or contribution on the parts of the participants and there exists the possibility of free riding, obligations of fairness are created among the participants in the cooperative scheme in proportion to the benefits accepted.
Berry (2003)	Environmental justice has traditionally been concerned with the distribution of environmental impacts, power relations, discourses, policy formulation, and mobilizations [...] the environmental justice movement fights specific and local environmental issues but is more generally concerned with social justice and perceived patterns of institutional discrimination.
Brink & Eurich (2006)	Stakeholder management can no longer be based on a distributive justice approach to benefits its stakeholders. It's necessary to adopt a social justice perspective, with the purpose to fairly recognize the legitimate stakeholder groups and ensure fair treatment.
Crul & Zinkhan (2007)	The principle of Distributive Justice is concerned with a fair distribution of outcomes within the economic system. Procedural Justice, on the other hand, deals with fair procedures in making decisions. Those two types of justice are fundamental to avoid conflicts and asses shared benefits among stakeholders.
Bosse <i>et al.</i> (2009)	[...] Distributional Justice refers to the material outcomes of a regime of distribution [...] Procedural Justice refers to the fairness of the rules and procedures that make up that regime [...] Interactional Justice refers to the manner in which actors treat one another. That is, apart from the outcomes or procedures used to derive them, actors may be treated with courtesy, dignity, and respect, or rudely and dismissively.
Goodstein & Butterfield (2010)	Distributive justice pertains to people's reactions to unfair outcome distributions. Procedural justice focuses on the fairness of the procedures used to achieve those outcomes, such as taking affected parties' viewpoints into consideration and making decisions without undue bias. Interactional justice refers to the perceived quality of the interpersonal treatment used by decision makers, including respectful behavior, truthfulness of communication, and showing adequate concern toward affected parties.
Fong (2010)	Organizational justice is composed of distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice. From those, distributive justice is the one that plays a role in the relationship between CEO and the Stakeholder Management of a company. There's a positive correlation between the CEO payment and the increase in Stakeholder Management of a company.
Harrison <i>et al.</i> (2010)	The distributional justice literature suggests stakeholders are fully cooperative only when they perceive the value they get is fair in comparison to the value received by other stakeholders [...] Firms that manage for stakeholders give salience to multiple and often competing stakeholder interests when they make decisions. Procedural justice refers to a stakeholder's perception of how fair a decision-making process is. [...] Interactional justice refers to fairness in the way that stakeholders are treated in transactions with the firm. Together, procedural and interactional justice compensate for the fact that a genuinely fair distribution of tangible value among stakeholders is elusive.
Fassin (2012)	Fairness in business [...] implies honest and correct treatment of all business partners. This means that the terms of agreements between business partners or other stakeholders should be fair [...] Fairness towards all stakeholders will help to build mutual trust. Fairness presupposes equity in transaction.
Pollack & Bosse (2014)	Distributive, procedural and interactional Justice can be seemed as an important way to establish social norms and facilitate the interaction between investors and entrepreneurs. A rupture on those concepts can lead to lack of trust between those two agents.
Hayibor (2015)	Stakeholder fairness is considered through the lens of distributive, procedural and interactional justice. The behavior of stakeholder can be assessed using a fairness-based perspective. Thus, a fair treatment of stakeholders, following the concepts of justice outlined, can lead to a positive reaction from stakeholders. On the other hand, an unfair treatment, or perceived unfair treatment, leads to a negative response from those stakeholders.
Richter & Dow (2017)	Based on a deliberative approach between stakeholders within a company, procedural Justice plays a role in assessing conflict resolution and overcoming governance gaps. The rules, languages and procedures used in the dialogues of the normative propositions are on par with the definition of procedural justice within an organization.

Source: Authors (2019)

Moreover, it's important to note the occurrence of different types of Justice in the Stakeholder Literature, such as Environmental Justice and Social Justice. Those correlates mostly with secondary stakeholders and offer new perspectives on how the managers can applied them in a useful way.

4. Methodology

In the present study, we use a qualitative meta-analysis as a technique of systematic literature review. Cooper and Hedges (2009) define systematic review, analogous to the terms research synthesis and research review, as the application of a set of literature review processes. These processes aim to minimize the research biases and to evaluate the selected studies.

In relation to management studies, Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003) argue that the literature review process is an important tool to manage the plurality of knowledge for a specific academic research. Authors from different areas provide different ways to conduct a systematic literature review (Atallah & Castro, 1998, Khan *et al.*, 2003, Tranfield *et al.*, 2003, Crowther & Crowther, 2010). Among those models, Cooper (2015) was chosen in this research. The author sought to aggregate a series of research activities, structuring them in 7 steps that allow the conduction of a systematic literature review. The steps are shown in table 2.

Table 2 – Seven-stage systematic literature review

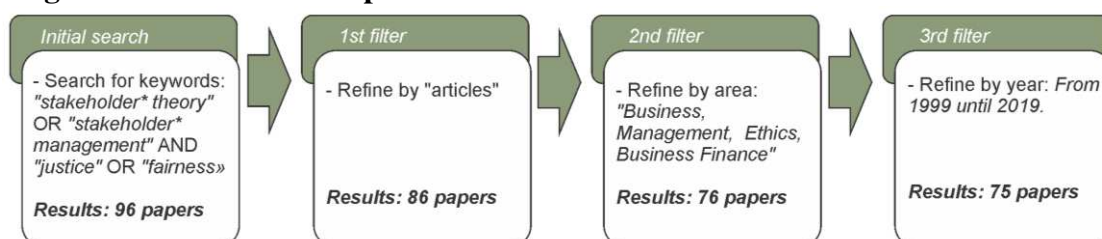
The steps of a systematic literature review – Cooper (2015)	
1	Identification / formulation of the research problem
2	Collection of literature
3	Collection of information from each study
4	Evaluation of study quality
5	Analysis and synthesis of discussions/results of the studies
6	Interpretation of collected data
7	Presentation of search results

Source: Adapted from Cooper (2015)

According to the methodology suggested by Cooper (2015), the first step addresses the formulation of the research problem. Based on the studied framework, the first objective of the research is given through the following question: how is the concept of justice presented in the literature of stakeholder theory? From this definition, the next steps sought to collect data and interpret the results obtained.

In order to define the study sample, the steps described in figure 1 were followed. Initially, a search was made in the Web of Science database, designating the terms “stakeholder * theory” OR “stakeholder * management” AND “justice” OR “fairness”. After applied some filters, the resulting was an extract of 75 papers. From this sample, efforts were made to carry out a descriptive analysis, observing the evolution of the research over the years; the characteristics of the authorship; the journals where they were published; and the authors that published the most relevant works. These steps are described in the following topics.

Figure 1 – Selection of Papers



Source: Authors (2019)

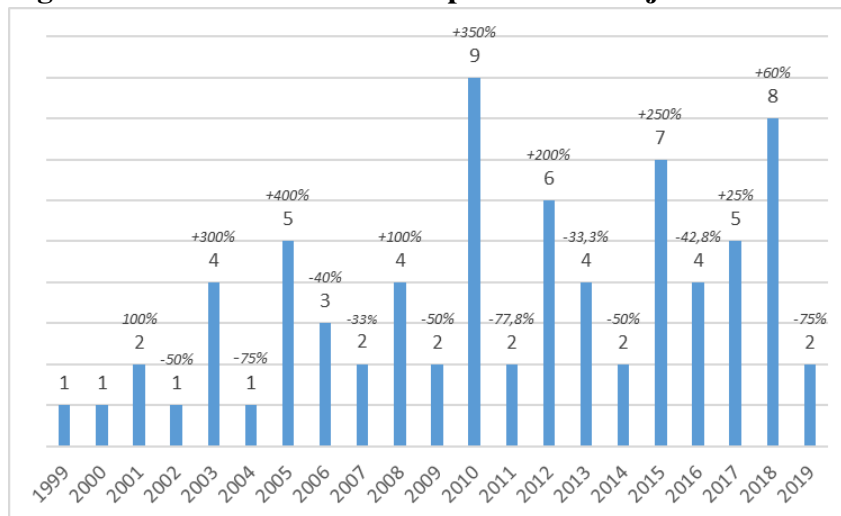
For the literature review, we employ a thorough analysis of each of the 75 selected papers. This review will be based on the literature on stakeholder theory and justice, in order to identify the concepts used in these studies and classify them according to the main aspects of justice pointed out in the theoretical background. Based on the review of these papers, we aim to (1) classify them according to the main notions of justice used; (2) categorize the main concepts associated with each dimension of justice used in the selected papers; and (3) offer and historical evolution and frequency of use of each dimension of justice used in the selected papers.

5. Results and discussion

5.1 Data Description (75 papers)

The results of the sample indicate that the approach of justice aligned to the Stakeholder Theory has a non-linear development in the last 20 years. Figure 2 shows the evolution of the publications that correlate the two subjects over the years. The graph also shows the percentage variation of the number of publications of the year in relation to the previous one. It should be noted that the publications on those subjects gain a higher impulse mainly in the year of 2010, in which a total of 9 publications were observed. The inconsistency in the number of published papers suggests that the issue of justice can still be seen as a superficial and sporadic in the Stakeholder Theory literature, which results in a lack of a research agenda and the paucity of partnerships between authors.

Figure 2: Evolution of scientific production on justice and Stakeholder Theory



Source: Authors (2019)

The 75 papers analyzed are distributed in 35 journals. The most representative journal is *The Journal of Business Ethics* (23 publications) with about 30% of the sample observed, followed by the *Business Ethics Quarterly* (14 publications) and the *Business Society* (3 publications). These are high impact journals, listed in the Journal Citation Reports for the year 2017, with the impact factor of 2,917, 1,735 and 3,214 respectively. The *Journal of Business Research*, *Organization Science*, *Organization Studies* and *Strategic Management Journal* present 2 publications each. The other 27 papers (36% of the sample) are distributed in 27 different journals.

In relation to authorship, it is also observed that there is little representation of authors dedicated to discuss both subjects in analysis. Most of the sample is composed of authors who published only 1 work relating to justice and Stakeholder Theory. The authors with the highest

number of publications are respectively: Robert Phillips (6 publications) and Douglas Bosse (4 publications), followed by Jeffrey Harrison, Sefa Hayibor and Harry Van Buren (3 publications each). Brammer S., Fassin Y., Greenwood M. and Moriaty J. present 2 publications each.

The sample examined indicates that the paper with the highest impact is the one written by Aguilera, Rupp and Williams (2007). The paper has a total of 970 citations and addresses a theoretical model that integrates theories of justice, corporate governance and capitalism variables to understand why business organizations are increasingly involved in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and, from there, show the potential for positive social change. Table 3 lists the 10 most cited papers in the sample.

Table 3 - Papers with the highest impact

Title	Authors	Journal	Publication Year	Total of Citation
<i>Putting the S back in corporate social responsibility: A multilevel theory of social change in organizations</i>	Aguilera, Ruth V.; Rupp, Deborah E.; Williams, Cynthia A.; Ganapathi, Jyoti	<i>Academy Of Management Review</i>	2007	970
<i>What stakeholder theory is not</i>	Phillips, R; Freeman, RE; Wicks, AC	<i>Business Ethics Quarterly International Journal Of Human Resource Management</i>	2003	389
<i>The contribution of corporate social responsibility to organizational commitment</i>	Brammer, Stephen; Millington, Andrew; Rayton, Bruce	<i>Strategic Management Journal</i>	2007	340
<i>Managing for stakeholders, stakeholder utility functions, and competitive advantage</i>	Harrison, Jeffrey S.; Bosse, Douglas A.; Phillips, Robert A.	<i>Business Ethics Quarterly Strategic Management Journal</i>	2010	257
<i>Stakeholder legitimacy</i>	Phillips, R	<i>Business Ethics Quarterly Strategic Management Journal</i>	2003	168
<i>Stakeholders, reciprocity, and firm performance</i>	Bosse, Douglas A.; Phillips, Robert A.; Harrison, Jeffrey S.	<i>Journal Of Business Ethics</i>	2009	147
<i>Balancing ethical responsibility among multiple organizational stakeholders: The Islamic perspective</i>	Beekun, RI; Badawi, JA	<i>Journal Of Business Ethics</i>	2005	115
<i>Ethics and HRM: A review and conceptual analysis</i>	Greenwood, MR	<i>Journal Of Business Ethics</i>	2002	112
<i>Corporate social responsibility as a source of employee satisfaction</i>	Bauman, Christopher W.; Skitka, Linda J.	<i>Research In Organizational Behavior</i>	2012	93
<i>The environment as a stakeholder? A fairness-based approach</i>	Phillips, RA; Reichart, J	<i>Journal Of Business Ethics</i>	2000	81

Source: Authors (2019)

After an initial descriptive analysis of the studies that integrate the concepts of justice and Stakeholder Theory, we continue with a literature analysis of the papers.

5.2 Literature Analysis

On this section, we proceed to the literature review of the selected papers. In total, it was selected 37 papers – 29 theoretical papers and 8 empirical papers, based on the frequency and depth in which the two main concepts are discussed. Those papers were examined according to the theoretical background presented on stakeholder theory and justice. Table 4 presents the results for this analysis. The analysis was made in order to classify them according to the main notions of justice used and to categorize the main concepts associated with each dimension of justice used in the papers.

Table 4 – Analysis of selected papers

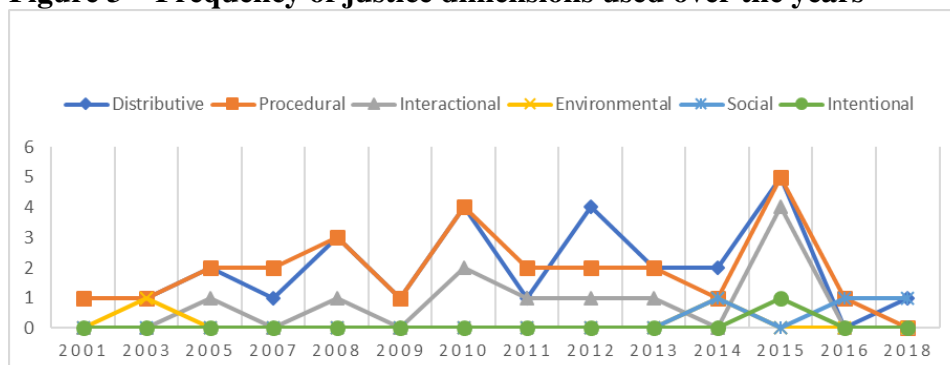
Author	Year	Concepts of justice	Nature of study
Strong, Ringer & Taylor	2001	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of action	Empirical Research
Phillips, Freeman & Wicks	2003	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of process; Participation in the process	Theoretical Research
Berry	2003	Environmental: Fair environment treatment	Empirical Research
Simmons & Lovegrove	2005	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of process/procedures Interactional: Ease of communication; Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Smith	2005	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of process/procedure; Participation in the process	Theoretical Research
Aguilera et al.	2007	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of actions Interactional: Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Brammer, Millington & Rayton	2007	Procedural: Ethical citizenship; Justness of process/procedure	Empirical Research
Van Buren III & Greenwood	2008	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of process/procedure	Theoretical Research
Harrison, Bosse & Phillips	2008	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of action Interactional: Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Crul & Zinkhan	2008	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness; Justness of allocation Procedural: Justness of process/procedure; Justness of action	Theoretical Research
Harrison, Bosse & Phillips	2009	Distributive: Balance of power Procedural: Justness of process/procedure Interactional: Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Greenwood & Van Buren III	2010	Distributive: Justness of allocation Procedural: Justness of actions Interactional: Ease of communication; Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Heath, Moriarty & Norman	2010	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of process/procedures Interactional: Ease of communication; Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Niedermeyer, Jaskiewicz & Klein	2010	Procedural: Justness of process/procedures	Theoretical Research
Goodstein & Butterfield	2010	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of process/procedure Interactional: Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Fong	2010	Distributive: Justness of allocation	Empirical Research
Werder	2011	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of actions	Theoretical Research
Del Bosco & Misani	2011	Procedural: Justness of process/procedures Interactional: Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Bauman & Skitka	2012	Procedural: Justness of process/procedures Interactional: Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Lamin & Zaheer	2012	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness	Empirical Research
Brown & Forster	2012	Distributive: Justness of allocation	Theoretical Research
Hayibor	2012	Distributive: Justness of allocation	Theoretical Research

		Procedural: Participation in the process	
Fassin	2012	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness	Theoretical Research
Harrison & Bosse	2013	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness; Procedural: Justness of actions; Participation in the process	Theoretical Research
Pollack, Bosse	2013	Distributive: Justness of allocation Procedural: Justness of process/procedure Interactional: Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Moriarty	2014	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Participation in the process	Theoretical Research
Beekun & Badawi	2014	Distributive: Justness of allocation Social: Equality of treatment	Theoretical Research
Phillips & Reichart	2014	Environmental: Fair environment treatment	Theoretical Research
Tashman & Raelin	2015	Interactional: Ease of communication; Fair treatment	Theoretical Research
El Akremi et al.	2015	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of actions Interactional: Fair interpersonal treatment	Empirical Research
Feng, Wang & Saini	2015	Distributive: Justness of allocation Procedural: Justness of process/procedures	Empirical Research
Fassin & Drover	2015	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of process/procedures Interactional: Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Hahn	2015	Distributive: Outcome/Output fairness Procedural: Justness of process; Justness of action Intentional: Fair motivation	Theoretical Research
Halybor	2015	Distributive: Justness of allocation Procedural: Justness of process/procedure Interactional: Ease of communication; Fair interpersonal treatment	Theoretical Research
Beckman, Khare & Matear	2016	Procedural: Participation in the process Environmental: Fair environment treatment	Theoretical Research
Manita et al.	2018	Social: Equality of opportunity	Empirical Research
Wiseman & Faqih	2018	Distributive: Justness of allocation	Theoretical Research

Source: Authors (2019)

We draw a graph presenting an historical evolution and frequency of use of each dimension of justice used in the papers previously examined. This summarization can be found in the Figure 3 below:

Figure 3 – Frequency of justice dimensions used over the years



Source: Authors (2009)

The Table 5 presents a synthesis of the main concepts associated to each dimension found in the previous analysis:

Table 5 – Main concepts associated to each type of justice

Type of Justice	Main concepts	Source
Distributive	Outcome/Output fairness	Strong, Ringer & Taylor (2001); Phillips, Freeman & Wicks (2003); Simmons & Lovegrove (2003); Smith (2005); Aguilera et al. (2007); Van Buren III & Greenwood (2008); Harrison, Bosse & Phillips (2008); Crul & Zinkhan (2008); Goodstein & Butterfield (2010); Werder (2011); Lamin & Zaheer (2012); Fassin (2012); Harrison & Bosse (2013); Moriarty (2014); El Akremi et al. (2015); Fassin & Drover (2015); Hahn (2015)
	Justness of allocation	Crul & Zinkhan (2008); Greenwood & Van Buren III (2010); Fong (2010); Brown & Forster (2012); Hayibor (2012); Harrison & Bosse (2013); Pollack & Bosse (2013); Beekun & Badawi (2014); Feng, Wang & Saini (2015); Halybor (2015); Wiseman & Faqihi (2018)
	Balance of power	Harrison, Bosse & Phillips (2009)
Procedural	Justness of process/procedures	Simmons & Lovegrove (2003); Smith (2005); Brammer, Millington & Rayton (2007); Van Buren III & Greenwood (2008); Crul & Zinkhan (2008); Harrison, Bosse & Phillips (2009); Niedermeyer, Jaskiewicz & Klein (2010); Goodstein & Butterfield (2010); Del Bosco & Misani (2011); Bauman & Skitka (2012); Pollack & Bosse (2013); Feng, Wang & Saini (2015); Fassin & Drover (2015); Hahn (2015); Halybor (2015)
	Justness of actions	Strong, Ringer & Taylor (2001); Phillips, Freeman & Wicks (2003); Aguilera et al. (2007); Harrison, Bosse & Phillips (2008); Crul & Zinkhan (2008); Greenwood & Van Buren III (2010); Werder (2011); Harrison & Bosse (2013); El Akremi et al. (2015); Hahn (2015)
	Participation in the process	Phillips, Freeman & Wicks (2003); Smith (2005); Hayibor (2012); Harrison & Bosse (2013); Moriarty (2014); Beckman, Khare & Matear (2016)
	Ethical citizenship	Brammer, Millington & Rayton (2007)
Interactional	Ease of communication	Simmons & Lovegrove (2003); Greenwood & Van Buren III (2010); Tashman & Raelin (2015); Halybor (2015)
	Fair interpersonal treatment	Simmons & Lovegrove (2003); Aguilera et al. (2007); Harrison, Bosse & Phillips (2008); Harrison, Bosse & Phillips (2009); Greenwood & Van Buren III (2010); Goodstein & Butterfield (2010); Del Bosco & Misani (2011); Bauman & Skitka (2012); Pollack & Bosse (2013); Tashman & Raelin (2015); El Akremi et al. (2015); Fassin & Drover (2015); Halybor (2015)
Environmental	Fair environment treatment	Berry (2003); Phillips & Reichart (2014); Beckman, Khare & Matear (2016)
Social	Equality of opportunity	Manita et al. (2018)
	Equality of treatment	Beekun & Badawi (2014)
Intentional	Fair motivation	Hahn (2015)

Source: Authors (2019)

As we can see from those results, distributive, procedural and, on a lesser extent, interactional justice are the main dimensions referenced on papers regarding the stakeholder theory. These finds follow the bulk of the literature on the subject, that points that those are the three main dimensions that comprise the notion of justice in the business literature (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Cropanzano & Bowen, 2007).

“Outcome/Output fairness” and “Justness allocation”, related to distributive justice, and “justness of process/procedures” and “justness of action”, related to procedural justice, represent the majority of the concepts used in the studies. These concepts deal with notions very present in the development of stakeholder theory and its models, such as fair value distribution to stakeholders and fair process of distribution (Bosse et al., 2009; Harrison, Bosse and Phillips, 2008).

We see an increase in concepts related to inclusion of stakeholders in decision-making process through “Participation in the process”, and the fair treatment of stakeholders from an interpersonal level through “Fair interpersonal treatment”. These results further the notion of stakeholder engagement as a way for a firm to manage its stakeholders and increase performance, something pointed out by the literature (e.g. Ayuso et al., 2011; Harrison & Wicks, 2013; Henisz & Dorobantu, 2014).

Moreover, in recent years, we see the increase interest in new forms of justice by the scholar, such as environmental justice, social justice and intentional justice. Those new types of justice come from different fields of knowledge, such as philosophy, environment studies and sociology/feminism studies, and can act as a way to further the potential of stakeholder management in dealing with an increase diverse society and demands.

6. Research agenda

After the systematic review of the data, we propose below a few propositions for future research. These propositions are based on the theoretical background and the framework of the studies gathered and examined in this paper.

Proposition 1: How can justice be applied to secondary stakeholders on an organizational level?

Much of the theoretical and empirical research done on Stakeholder Theory and justice focused on the relationship between managerial justice, applied by the firm, and primary stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Harrison *et al.*, 2010). There is a lack of studies that seek to deepen the theoretical and practical knowledge of distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice among secondary stakeholders.

Most of the stakeholder management models (e.g. Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Harrison *et al.*, 2010; Bridoux, Stoelhorst, 2014) do not take into consideration how concepts of justice, such as distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice can be applied to secondary stakeholders. Considering that Stakeholder Theory praises itself as been a theory that aims to include the needs of all stakeholders (Freeman, 1984), further investigation on secondary stakeholders and how justice can influence their actions is warranted.

Proposition 2: Can others types of justice influence primary stakeholders value creation?

In the Stakeholder Theory Literature, distributive, procedural and, to a lesser degree, interactional justice are important factors in value creation for primary stakeholder. However, we see the growth of other types of justice influencing organizations' strategic decisions, such as environmental justice, social justice and intentional justice. Factors that influence strategic management decisions play a big role on value creation for firms and its stakeholders (Bosse *et al.*, 2009).

Although these types of justice are more associated with secondary stakeholders, there is a need for studies that show whether other kinds of justice, more associated to secondary stakeholders, can influence value creation for primary stakeholders.

Proposition 3: What is the role of interactional justice in firm performance and value creation for primary stakeholders?

Interaction justice has been addressed in the Stakeholder Theory literature largely from a theoretical perspective (Bossen, 2009, Goodstein & Butterfield, 2010; Pollack, 2014). However, there is an absence of empirical studies that verify the influence of interactional justice in value creation for stakeholders and firm performance.

The literature on the subject highlights the practical utility in applying procedural justice and interactional justice separately (Moye, Masterson, & Bartol, 1997; Cropanzano, Prehar & Chen, 2002). Therefore, efforts need to be made in order to examine the role of interactional justice in firm performance and value creation in a separate way from its relation to procedural justice.

Proposition 4: Does one type of justice leads to better firm performance and value creation for stakeholders over another? Is it possible to establish a hierarchical degree with respect to justice and its outcomes for the firm and its stakeholders?

The theoretical approach to justice in the Stakeholder Literature often conveys the importance of organizational justice and its three major components. However, those components were rarely put to test to see which of them could offer a better improvement with regards to firm performance and value creation for stakeholders.

The few empirical studies on those matters rely on the assumption that those aspects of justice exist and are necessary (Greenberg, 1990; Ringer & Taylor, 2001) or that one is prevalent over another for the analysis (Hahn, 2015; Fong, 2010), without any judgment about which one is better. Therefore, empirical research could be done isolating specific aspects of justice, and comparative measures could be made in order to verify which concept of justice leads to greater improvement given similar variables and contexts.

7. Conclusion/ Contributions

Stakeholder Theory employs a myriad of concepts with the goal to verify and broaden its vision and improve the organization-stakeholders relationship. The concept of justice has, in the meantime, been the focus of many studies, being a key component in model development and the improvement of managerial strategies (Freeman, 1994; Harrison *et al.*, 2010). The present study sought to achieve two objectives: to provide a theoretical basis and a panoramic view on the concept of justice in the literature of Stakeholders Theory and how this concept has been applied in some of the most relevant studies in the field; and offer a research agenda for future studies regarding these two subjects. The analysis of 75 papers that deal with the relationship of the two main subjects showed that there are few associations and a low rate of collaboration among authors, which may indicate an irregular and superficial consideration of them in the literature.

Future studies may therefore seek to answer the propositions indicated in this research, which suggests the following questions: (1) How can justice be applied to secondary stakeholders at the organizational level? (2) Can other types of justice, related to secondary stakeholders, influence the creation of value for key stakeholders? (3) What is the role of interactional justice in company performance and value creation for key stakeholders? (4) Does one type of justice lead to better company performance and value creation for stakeholders at the expense of another? Is it possible to establish a hierarchical degree in relation to justice and

its results for the company and its stakeholders? Finally, the use of a relatively small sample and the need to explore the concept of justice in other areas of management can be identified as the limitations of this study.

7. References

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