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Authority-Subordinate Disparities in the Meaning and Importance of
Procedural Fairness

A field experiment investigated the influence of procedural and distributive concerns on authorities' and subordinates' perceptions of fairness. Restaurant managers and employees read a fictitious news article that varied the magnitude of a hepatitis threat, as well as the respectfulness and effectiveness of a procedure employed to control it. Respondents' ratings of the fairness of the procedure and their support for it did not support our hypothesis that outcome concerns would matter more for authorities, while procedural concerns would matter more for subordinates. However, the findings point to the importance of responsibility as a mediator of respondents' concern with procedural or outcome variables.