



Grievance Procedure Research: A Review and Theoretical Recommendations

Brian Bemmels
Janice R. Foley
University of British Columbia

This review focuses on the grievance procedure research published in the past decade with specific attention on the application (or lack thereof) of social science theory to grievance research. The review concludes that the theoretical grounding of recent grievance research has improved over the earlier research, but remains quite inadequate. Recommendations on the direction that grievance research should take in the future to further improve on the theoretical content of grievance research are provided. It is argued that theory in grievance research should advance at two levels: the comprehensive systems approach, and the application of specific social science theories to narrower aspects of the grievance process.

A common criticism of grievance procedure research is the lack of theoretical grounding for much of the research done prior to 1985. Several earlier reviews of the grievance literature raised the challenge of improving on the theoretical aspects of grievance research. This review focuses on the grievance procedure research published in the past decade with specific attention on the application (or lack thereof) of social science theory to grievance research. We also make recommendations on the direction that we feel grievance research should take in the future to further improve on the theoretical content of grievance research.

The focus of this review is limited to the usage and operation of grievance procedures, and excludes the subsequent impact of grievances on organizational performance and the behavior of individuals. We also exclude nonunion grievance procedures which have been recently reviewed elsewhere (Peterson, 1992; Feuille & Delaney, 1992), and alternative procedures, such as peer review systems.

We considered many alternatives, but decided to organize our review of grievance procedure research in chronological order following the "life" of a grievance. The first two sections of the paper briefly review past reviews and

Direct all correspondence to: Brian Bemmels, University of British Columbia, Faculty of Commerce, 2053 Main Mall, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z2. E-mail: brian.bemmels@commerce.ubc.ca

make several general observations about the role of theory in grievance procedure research. Then we proceed through the grievance process, starting with grievable events and grievance initiation, and ending with post settlement experiences. We conclude with a summary of social science theories which have been applied to grievance research or which we believe could be useful for future research.

Review of Past Reviews

Several reviews of grievance procedure research were published in the mid to late 1980s (Gordon & Miller, 1984; Labig & Greer, 1988; and Lewin & Peterson, 1988, chap. 2). This review article will focus on grievance research published over the decade since, but several of the main points and recommendations from these previous reviews will be discussed in this section.

First, the authors of the previous reviews noted the relative scarcity of grievance procedure research. Given the importance of grievance procedures for facilitating justice in the workplace, Gordon and Miller (1984, p. 118) note that this neglect is "disturbing." Furthermore, most research focuses on grievance arbitration, rather than the steps of the grievance procedure leading up to arbitration. This seems out of balance, since a very small portion of all grievances are resolved at arbitration. Most grievances are settled at earlier steps in the procedure.

Second, the grievance research up to the mid-80s was criticized for being largely descriptive and atheoretical. Most of the early studies on grievance procedures were case studies of procedures in selected organizations, utilizing an historical and institutional approach. There were virtually no attempts to develop theoretical frameworks to guide the research, no hypotheses were proposed or tested, and very little quantitative data were collected and analyzed. Behavioral research grounded in social science theories was lacking. Lewin and Peterson (1988) noted a shift from the case study and single research site approach toward quantitative studies and larger data bases. This trend has continued, and most of the research published over the last decade has been quantitative. Some of the recent research, however, remains mostly atheoretical with ad hoc or no hypotheses.

Third, a related criticism is the lack of common foci. For example, studies of grievance initiation may approach the decision to file a grievance as if it were entirely an employee decision, or grievances may be viewed as organizational phenomena. Even among studies using the same approach there was little consistency across studies in how dependent variables were measured or what independent variables were included in statistical models. This inconsistency in methodology produced many "stand alone" studies that can not be easily compared with other studies. Consequently, generalizable conclusions based on consistent findings across independent studies failed to emerge from this research. These problems are all related to, or symptoms of, the lack of a conceptual system for operationalizing variables (see Gordon & Miller, 1984) and the lack of a theoretical basis for this research.

The scarcity of quantitative research and focus on single sites in the early grievance research was likely due to the difficulty in obtaining grievance procedure data. Government statistical agencies, employers, and even labor unions do not

routinely collect data on the operation of grievance procedures. Scholars undertaking quantitative grievance procedure research have essentially two choices. One approach is to go through union or employer archives and code data from grievance procedure records. When this is done, it is generally limited to one organization, but this approach is conducive to longitudinal studies. The second approach is to survey union or management officials, or employees to obtain information about grievance filing behavior or the operation of the grievance procedure. This approach is more easily applied to large samples across many organizations, but raises concerns about nonresponse bias and the reliability and validity of the data. Both of these approaches have been used in the recent quantitative studies.

A “Theory” of the Grievance Process

To date, a complete theory of the grievance process with testable hypotheses has not been developed. Several studies have proposed or utilized very general research frameworks or systems models of the grievance process (e.g., Knight, 1985 and Lewin & Peterson, 1988), but these are very descriptive in nature and do not generate testable hypotheses. The advantage of systems models is that they examine broadly defined sets of variables and focus on the interrelationships among these sets of variables. These descriptive models are very important for understanding the “big picture” including the broader environment and context within which a system operates. A common criticism of systems models, however, is that the specific nature of linkages among components and variables is left unspecified. Testable hypotheses are lacking. As Heneman (1969) noted however, every system is embedded in a larger system, and every system includes partial or sub-systems. It is the duty of researchers to identify the appropriate level of analysis for specific parts of a broader system, and develop the relevant theoretical propositions. It is the common variables across the parts of a system (or sub-systems) that will integrate the varied research efforts done within a broader systems framework.

Therefore, we note the absence of a “complete theory” of the grievance processes, not as a criticism, but as an observation on the nature of grievance procedure research. In fact, it is our view that further attempts to develop such a “theory” may be misguided. Grievance procedures are very complex. Any theory that would begin to capture all this complexity beyond a superficial level would be incomprehensible. The research frameworks and systems models that have been developed are very useful to organize and guide research programs, but to expand upon these models to the point where testable hypotheses are generated for each aspect of the grievance procedure would go far beyond the normal bounds of rationality.

There are several reasons for this. First, many individuals are involved in the grievance procedure for even a single grievance. This could include the employee(s) filing the grievance, shop stewards, first line supervisors, various other people at different levels of both the union and employer organizations, lawyers, and arbitrators. Second, the individuals involved will generally change at each step of the procedure. For example, shop stewards generally have a critical

role at grievance initiation, but may have little involvement beyond the first step of the procedure (see Catlett & Brown, 1990). Third, the individuals involved from the union or management side may vary for different grievance issues, and under many collective agreements even the structure of the grievance procedures varies by issue (e.g., expedited procedures for discipline grievances). Fourth, even at one step in the procedure, because the roles of the various actors in the grievance procedure are quite different, the appropriate theoretical approach may vary for each actor. Fifth, and perhaps most important, the relevant issues and research questions vary across different steps of the procedure. Consequently, the appropriate level of analysis, theoretical approach, and research methodology may vary across stages of the grievance process.

As will be discussed further throughout this review, various social science theories have been applied, or could be applied to specific issues or aspects of the grievance procedure. A key recommendation of our review, is that future research should focus on one aspect of the grievance procedure and concentrate on developing or utilizing a social science theory (or theories) appropriate for the research questions relevant for that aspect of the procedure. This approach will, we believe, lead to research solidly grounded in social science theory and focusing on the empirical evaluation of testable hypotheses. General frameworks and systems models that attempt to capture the entire grievance procedure are useful as guides for long-term research programs, but cannot incorporate sufficient detail and theoretical rigor to generate testable hypotheses for all aspects of the grievance procedure.

Grievable Events

Grievance activity starts with the occurrence of a grievable event(s). Legally, in unionized organizations a grievable event is an alleged violation of the collective agreement. A specific clause (or clauses) from the collective agreement must be identified as having been violated, or legally there is no grievance. But "complaints" that are not contract violations may find their way into the grievance procedure as well. While no studies have focused primarily on modeling or explaining the occurrence of grievable events, controlling for the occurrence of grievable events is important for studies of grievance initiation. Without controlling for the occurrence of grievable events, studies of grievance filing by individuals are implicitly assuming that all sampled individuals experience grievable events of the same seriousness and at the same frequency, and studies of grievance rates implicitly assume that all sampled organizational units are experiencing the same rates of grievable events. These assumptions may be incorrect, and the omission of grievable events from empirical models could bias other parameter estimates.

Lewin and Peterson (1988) discuss the results of a survey about grievance activity conducted by one of the organizations included in their study. Based on data reported by Lewin and Peterson (1988, p. 175), 16 percent of employees said they had no issues that warranted filing a grievance over the past year and another 12 percent said they only had questions of clarification about policies but appar-

ently no grievable issue. Thus, in this organization, 28 percent of employees would effectively be eliminated as potential grievants because they had experienced no grievable events.

Only Lewin and Boroff (1994) explicitly control for grievable events in a study of grievance initiation. In their analysis of individuals' probability of exercising voice and exit behaviors, they censored their sample to include only those employees who indicated that they perceived themselves to have experienced unfair treatment. Other studies have attempted to control for grievable events indirectly. Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine (1991) and Bemmels (1994a) included measures of supervisors' behaviors and the stewards' assessment of the supervisors' knowledge of the collective agreement. The rationale for their inclusion is that the occurrence of grievable events will be related to the behavior patterns of the supervisors and their knowledge of the collective agreement. Allen and Keaveny (1985) also included respondents' "attitudes toward their supervisors" and "feelings of pay inequity" which will likely reflect the occurrence of grievable events.

All of these indirect measures of grievable events were statistically related to grievance filing or grievance rates in the studies noted above. Clearly, the importance of controlling for grievable events is empirically supported. For studies of grievance filing by individuals, a perceptual measure, such as that used by Lewin and Boroff (1994), seems appropriate. An individual's perception of whether they have experienced a grievable event may be more important for explaining grievance filing than if they have actually experienced a grievable event. For studies of grievance rates across organizational units, however, this is not feasible. No one individual could accurately assess the occurrence of grievable events across an entire organizational unit. Future studies of grievance rates should continue the refinement and improvement of indirect measures of the occurrence of grievable events and incorporate these into empirical models.

Research on the occurrence of grievable events as well as grievance initiation would benefit from further theoretical development to explain variation in grievable events. Measures of supervisory behaviors and supervisors' knowledge of the collective agreement should, intuitively, be related to the occurrence of grievable events, but there has been no theory advanced to explain grievable events. Kleiner, Nickelsburg and Pilarski (1995) implicitly assume that supervisor monitoring of employees will increase the number of grievable events, but a theoretical basis or rationale for this assumed relationship is not discussed. Similarly, Klaas's (1989a) elaborate model of employee decision-making regarding grievance filing begins by assuming that employees perceive grievance opportunities. Focusing on management behaviors to explain grievable events is consistent with the grievance procedure dictum that "management acts, the union reacts," but other factors such as the scope and complexity of the collective agreement may be important also. Since the occurrence of grievable events will play a very significant role in explaining grievance filing behavior, and currently a few studies only begin to inquire into this aspect of the grievance process, this is an area in need of much further research.

Grievance Initiation

Studies of grievance initiation are of two general types corresponding to the level of analysis. One is individual level studies of grievance filers vs. nonfilers, the other is studies of grievance filing rates across organizational units. While studies differentiating between grievance filers and nonfilers were common in the early grievance research, we know of only three empirical studies of this type published since 1985. Most of the recent research on grievance initiation has focused on explaining grievance rates for groups of employees. This may be a consequence of the criticisms and ethical concerns about individual level studies raised by Gordon and Miller (1984), although they specifically targeted their harshest criticism at studies focusing on demographic characteristics, and not studies focusing on attitudinal variables as explanatory variables.

Individual Level Studies

Allen and Keaveny (1985) noted the inconsistent results and low explanatory power of studies focusing on demographic and job related variables to differentiate between grievants and nongrievants. They focused on several attitudinal variables in their study of grievants and nongrievants from the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey. They found several statistically significant differences in attitudinal measures between grievants and nongrievants. Grievants were less satisfied with their jobs, had poorer attitudes toward their line supervisors, had greater feelings of pay inequity, had stronger beliefs that workers should participate in decision-making, were less satisfied with their unions, and more active in their unions. The lower satisfaction with the union among grievants may be due to dissatisfaction with the processing of their grievances. As Allen and Keaveny note, a limitation of this study is that the attitudinal measures were obtained after the grievants had initiated their grievances.

Lewin and Peterson (1988, chap. 6) investigated differences in the personal characteristics of grievants and nongrievants in four organizations. They found consistent results across all four organizations for three variables. Grievants were younger and had less education than nongrievants, and blacks were more likely to grieve than nonblacks. In three of the organizations, males were more likely to file a grievance than females, but gender was insignificant in the fourth organization.

Gordon and Bowlby (1989) conducted the only experimental study of grievance initiation that we know of. They provided subjects with a series of disciplinary vignettes and asked their intent to seek redress for the discipline in each vignette. The vignettes varied to test several propositions derived from reactance theory and attribution theory. They found that a greater perceived threat to the worker's freedom and actions motivated by a dispositional rather than environmental attribution provoked a stronger intent to file a grievance. While experimental studies have limitations since they study intentions rather than actual grievance behaviors, they are very valuable for research on grievance initiation since they permit the testing of propositions that cannot be tested with archival data. More emphasis on experimental studies in future research will, therefore,

facilitate our stated objective of incorporating more social science theories into grievance research.

As part of their study of exit-voice behaviors, Lewin and Boroff's (1994) analysis of their unionized sample of employees differentiates between employees who perceived that they experienced unfair treatment and filed a grievance and employees who perceived unfair treatment but did not file a grievance. They found that employees with higher loyalty to the employer were less likely to have filed a grievance. This is contrary to the predictions of Hirschman's (1970) exit-voice model. They conclude that employees who perceive that they experienced unfair treatment and with high loyalty to the employer are more likely to suffer in silence rather than file a grievance.

Gordon and Miller (1984), Allen and Keaveny (1985) and Klaas (1989a) note the important role that expectancy theory could play in differentiating grievants and nongrievants. Although not a complete test of expectancy theory, Lewin and Boroff (1994) did include the employees' perceived effectiveness of the grievance procedure as an explanatory variable. Surprisingly, this was not significantly related to grievance filing. Further research focusing on expectancy theory and grievance filing that more fully develops testable hypotheses derived directly from expectancy theory seems appropriate.

Organizational Unit Level Studies

At least seven studies published over the past decade have focused on explaining grievance filing rates across organizational units. The unit of analysis in these studies varies from small work groups to entire plants. Labig and Greer (1988) grouped the factors affecting grievance rates into five categories, and we will follow that same scheme in our review of this research. The five categories of determinants of grievance rates are: (1) environmental factors; (2) management factors; (3) employee factors; (4) union factors; and (5) union-management relations factors.

Environmental Factors in grievance initiation. One component of environmental factors is labor market conditions. Cappelli and Chauvin (1991) developed an efficiency model of grievance activity drawing from Hirschman's (1970) exit-voice framework. This model could also be considered a partial test of expectancy theory applied to grievance filing. The central argument is that employees who feel unfairly treated will compare the cost and effectiveness of filing a grievance with other response options (such as exit or "silence") in deciding whether to file a grievance. The costs of exit will depend upon the labor market conditions. Specifically, they argue that higher wage premiums in the plant relative to the local labor market will increase the costs of exit, and consequently lead to more frequent grievance filing. Also, the unemployment rate in the area will reflect the availability of alternative employment, and a higher unemployment rate will increase the costs of exit and lead to a higher grievance rate. Their analysis of plant level data from 86 plants in a large manufacturing company supported both propositions. A unique aspect of this study is the focus on labor market conditions as explanatory variables for grievance filing.

Several of the early studies of grievance initiation focus on the impact of technology on grievance filing (Sayles, 1958; Kuhn, 1961; and Peach & Livernash, 1974). Although these early studies did not include quantitative analysis, the authors concluded that various aspects of technology were related to grievance filing rates. Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine (1991) included six measures of technology based on the results of these early studies. They found, however, little empirical support for the notion that differences in technology would explain variation in grievance rates across work groups. Only one variable, the extent to which technology "requires following strict schedules and procedures," had a negative relationship with grievance rates, but this contradicts the results of the early studies. The other five technology measures were not related to grievance rates, and the combined effect of all six variables was not statistically significant. Although not reported, the same variables were collected for the analysis reported in Bemmels (1994a) and none of the six technology variables was significantly related to grievance rates in that sample.

Thus, the more recent quantitative studies contradict the earlier studies that concluded technology influences grievance filing behaviors. This is an area that warrants further research. First, a theoretical framework providing hypothesized relationships between technology and grievance filing is necessary. The earlier studies provided post hoc rationales for the relationships they found, but these studies were not grounded in a theoretical model that predicted technology should affect grievance rates. A theoretical framework will also provide guidelines on how technology should be measured in future studies of grievance initiation. The recent quantitative studies are limited by the six technology measures utilized. Although the measures are based on the results of the earlier studies, the lack of significant results in these studies may be due to technology measures that do not adequately capture the relevant aspects of technology.

Management Factors in Grievance Initiation. Several studies investigated the influence of management factors on grievance rates, two focusing on management's labor relations policies, and three focusing on supervisor behaviors. Labig and Helburn (1986) found that the strictness of management's performance and disciplinary standards was positively related to grievance rates. Lewin and Peterson (1988) found that a policy of "committing grievances to writing" was associated with higher grievance rates in their aggregate analysis and for each of the four industry groups in their disaggregate analysis. A policy of "taking certain grievances through the procedure" was positively related to grievance rates in nonprofit hospitals, but not related in the other three industries.

Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine (1991) and Bemmels (1994a) included Fleishman's (1957) measures of supervisor behaviors "consideration" and "structure" in their studies of grievance initiation. Consideration measures the supervisor's consideration of the employees in the work group, and structure measures the supervisor's emphasis on production and achieving the organization's goals. As expected, consideration had a negative relationship with grievance rates in both studies. Duane (1991) also found a negative relationship between grievance rates and shop steward's perception that management counterparts are accommodative in bargaining relationships. Structure had a positive rela-

tionship with grievance rates in Bemmels (1994a), but no significant relationship with grievance rates in Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine (1991). These results for consideration are consistent with earlier studies (see Labig & Greer, 1988). The results for the effect of structure on grievance rates from earlier studies were also mixed, and the mixed results from these two recent studies do not clarify what, if any, relationship exists between structure and grievance rates.

Kleiner, Nickelsburg and Pilarski (1995) propose that management monitoring of employees will be positively related to grievance filing. Unfortunately, this is merely assumed as part of their model of the impact of grievances on productivity and this relationship is not empirically tested. They provide no theoretical rationale for why monitoring should produce more grievable events or increase the number of grievances. They do provide anecdotal evidence from discussions with managers at the plant that managerial monitoring did vary considerably during the time of their analysis, but they have no direct measure of monitoring. They do not provide a definition for monitoring, but refer to it as "managerial direction, guidance, and oversight" (p. 170), and note that monitoring "comes from the application of supervisory services to the production process, and is not just the mere presence of a supervisor" (p. 173). This seems very similar to the Fleishman (1957) concept of structure. For example, items from the Fleishman structure scale included "he emphasizes meeting of deadlines," and "he decides in detail what shall be done and how it shall be done." Given the mixed results for the effect of structure on grievance filing noted above, the validity of the assumption that managerial monitoring will increase grievances seems doubtful. Since this assumption is crucial to their model, it seems crucial that a direct measure of managerial monitoring be developed and its relationship to grievance filing be empirically established.

Kleiner, Nickelsburg and Pilarski (1995) also reported estimates of grievance rate regressions that include two measures of the production rate imposed by management: the planned rate of output per month and the change in the planned time span for the completion of one unit of output. Predicted relationships are not specified, but intuitively one might expect a higher planned production rate to increase grievances, and an increase in the time scheduled to complete one unit of output to decrease grievances. Both of these variables were significantly related to grievance rates, but with the opposite signs. The planned production rate had a negative relationship with grievance rates, and the change in the planned time span to complete one unit of output had a positive relationship with grievance rates.

Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine (1991) and Bemmels (1994a) also included a measure of the shop steward's assessment of the supervisor's knowledge of the collective agreement, and this had a negative relationship with grievance rates. This result is consistent with a common complaint from shop stewards in interviews conducted as part of these studies that supervisors often violate the collective agreement because they do not know what the agreement says on certain issues.

Employee Factors in Grievance Initiation. Most studies focusing on employee factors in grievance initiation are individual level studies which were reviewed above. Two studies of grievance rates included employee factors,

however. Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine (1991) and Bemmels (1994a) included the shop stewards' assessment of how frequently employees approach them with complaints. Although most grievances are formally filed by employees, the initiation of a grievance can come from employees or shop stewards. Complaining to shop stewards is the employee's role in the grievance initiation process. Both of these studies found that work groups with employees who complained to the stewards more frequently had higher grievance rates. Since employees' complaining to their steward is a precursor to grievance filing, the management factors discussed in the previous section should also be related to the frequency of employee complaints. This was supported also. The measures of consideration and structure were significantly related to frequency of employee complaints in Bemmels (1994a), and the steward's assessment of the supervisor's knowledge of the collective agreement was negatively related to complaints in both studies.

Both of these studies also included the percentage of the work group that was female, and this was negatively related to grievance rates. In Bemmels (1994a), however, the percent female variable was not statistically significant in regressions that included industry dummy variables. Most of the variation in the gender composition of the work groups in this sample was across industries rather than within industries. Consequently, the industry dummy variables, when included, would control for most of the variation in the gender composition of the work groups. As with previous studies that focus on employee demographic characteristics, there is no theoretical rationale for why women should file fewer grievances than men. The percentage female variable may be acting as a proxy variable for some other factors affecting grievance rates.

Klaas (1989a) presents the most elaborate theoretical framework depicting the employee's role in deciding to file a grievance. Much of this framework is grounded in expectancy theory, and procedural and distributive justice theory. With the possible exception of Proposition 3b, however, the testable hypotheses derived by Klaas have not been subjected to empirical inquiry. Proposition 3b relates to the employees evaluating the relative costs and benefits of grievance filing and alternative options before deciding to file a grievance. This is similar to the hypotheses tested by Cappelli and Chauvin (1991). The other propositions derived by Klaas remain for future research.

Union factors in grievance initiation. As with the management factors, studies of union factors in grievance initiation focus on either general union policies toward the grievance procedure or the behaviors of union officials (usually shop stewards) in grievance initiation. Labig and Helburn (1986) constructed a measure of "union encouragement of grievances" from five items on their questionnaire. These items focused on the extent of grievance screening (reverse coded) and behaviors to seek out contract violations, encourage employees to file, and union filing of grievances. As expected, they found that union policies to encourage grievances were related to higher grievance rates. Lewin and Peterson (1988) found that union policies of "committing grievances to writing" and "taking certain grievances through the procedure" were positively related to grievance rates.

Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine (1991) and Bemmels (1994a) included two measures of shop stewards' behaviors in the grievance procedure. These measures were based on research by Dalton and Todor (1979, 1981, 1982a, 1982b) who modeled the role and behavior patterns of stewards in grievance procedures. The frequency with which stewards attempted to resolve disputes informally was associated with lower grievance rates, and steward initiation behaviors (trying to convince employees to file or filing union grievances) were associated with higher grievance rates. Duane (1991) also found the frequency of informal discussions was associated with lower grievance rates.

Duane (1991) measured shop stewards' perceptions of how they felt their constituents wanted them to behave in the grievance procedure. Stewards who perceived that their constituents wanted them to be more competitive when interacting with management on grievances had higher grievance rates than those who perceived less desired competition. Interpreting this result is difficult, since it may reflect employees who are more aggressive grievance filers, or it may reflect stewards who behave more aggressively to comply with the perceived desires of their constituents.

Union-management relations factors in grievance initiation. It was common in early studies to focus on the relationship between the perceived quality of the union-management relationship (generally measured on a scale ranging from cooperation to conflict) and grievance rates. Not surprisingly, many studies found that perceptions of conflict in bargaining relationships were associated with higher grievance rates. This is, however, somewhat tautological. Although grievances are filed for many reasons, grievance rates can be considered an objective measure of conflict in a bargaining relationship. A grievance is an allegation by employees or the union that management's interpretation and application of the collective agreement is incorrect. Consequently, grievance rates should be highly correlated with subjective evaluations of the level of conflict in a bargaining relationship. Essentially, this is the correlation between two alternative measures (one objective and one subjective) of the same construct. Significant correlations are evidence of the construct validity of the measures, but do not help us understand why some bargaining relationships have higher levels of conflict (and grievance rates) than others. Labig and Greer (1988) also note the difficulty in interpreting causality in these relationships. Does the perception of conflict lead to more grievance filing, or do more grievances lead to the perception of conflict? The latter seems equally, if not more, plausible. While controlling for perceptions of conflict in regression models explaining grievance rates drastically improves the explanatory power of the models, this will make the interpretation of results on other explanatory variables very difficult. Much of what one is attempting to explain with the other explanatory variables (that is, variation in grievance rates) will already be controlled for by the perceptual measure of conflict.

Consequently, we feel that perceptual measures of the nature of the bargaining relationship are not appropriate explanatory variables for studies of grievance rates. It is much more interesting to determine the impact of environmental factors, management and union policies or the attitudes and behaviors of the actors in the grievance procedure on grievance rates (or assessments of the level

of conflict if you prefer perceptual measures) than to focus on the relationship between two alternative dependent measures.

Several studies focused on the relationships between characteristics of the bargaining relationship or the grievance procedure and grievance rates. As with studies focusing on the personal characteristics of employees and grievance filing, there is generally little or no theoretical rationale for including these variables in the analysis, but they are often included as control variables. The number of employees in the bargaining unit and/or the size of the work group (or other unit of analysis) were included in Lewin and Peterson (1988), Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine (1991), Bemmels (1994a), and Stewart and Davy (1992) and the results are mixed. Lewin and Peterson (1988) included the occupational diversity of the bargaining unit, and Cappelli and Chauvin (1991) included the percentage of employees who were in craft occupations, but neither were related to grievance rates. Lewin and Peterson (1988) also included the length of the bargaining relationship, but this was not related to grievance rates.

Several studies included characteristics of the grievance procedure as explanatory variables. Lewin and Peterson (1988) found a positive relationship with "grievance procedure structure" and grievance rates, although it is not clear what this structure variable is measuring. They also found higher grievance rates under procedures that include provisions for expedited grievance handling. Bemmels (1994a) included four grievance procedure characteristics. Contract provisions allowing oral presentation of grievances was related to lower rates of written grievances, and screening of potential grievances by a committee or other union officials was associated with lower grievance rates. The number of steps in the grievance procedure and the length of time allowed for filing a grievance were not related to grievance rates.

Summary of Grievance Initiation Research

There has been a clear shift in grievance initiation research over the last decade away from individual level studies toward studies focusing on the determinants of grievance rates across organizational units. Also, consistent with Gordon and Miller's (1984) criticism of the earlier research, much less attention has been focused on the demographic characteristics of employees as determinants of grievance activity. Rather, the focus has been on the impact of environmental factors, the behaviors of supervisors, employees and stewards, and union and management policies on grievance activity. There has been much improvement in developing theoretical models and propositions to guide the research, but many studies still include explanatory variables with ad hoc or no hypothesized relationship with grievance activity. As with grievance research in general, grievance initiation research remains in desperate need of further theoretical development.

Grievance Issues and Variation across Industries

Gordon and Miller (1984) noted that studies of grievance issues tended to use different categorization schemes that made it difficult to integrate the findings. Unfortunately, this is true of the three recent studies that focused on grievance

ance issues as well. Lewin and Peterson (1988) used a very detailed scheme with 25 issue categories, while Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine (1991) and Bemmels (1994a) used seven grievance issue categories.

One observation from these studies relates to the proportion of all grievances that involve discipline. Both Lewin and Peterson (1988) and Bemmels (1994a) found just over 10 percent of all grievances concerned discipline, while 17.7 percent of all grievances were discipline in Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine (1991). These proportions are quite low relative to the proportions of all arbitration cases that involve discipline. Lewin and Peterson (1988) reported 26.3 percent of all arbitrations involved discipline for their sample. These discrepancies between proportions of all grievances and proportions of all arbitrations that involve discipline reflect the much higher proportion of discipline grievances that are appealed to arbitration relative to other issues. This is likely due to union policies concerning discipline grievances. Several stewards interviewed by one of the authors said many, if not all, discipline grievances are appealed to arbitration if they are not resolved in the earlier steps of the grievance procedure. This reflects the view that in disciplinary matters, everyone deserves their "day in court." What remains unknown at this point, is the extent to which there is variation in the proportions of grievances appealed to arbitration across other issue categories. Future researchers may want to address this question and investigate the determinants of discrepancies in arbitration rates across issues, if any exist.

All three of these recent studies focusing on grievance issues also investigated the stability of the determinants of grievance activity across different grievance issues. Lewin and Peterson (1988) did not conduct statistical tests or report separate regressions for each issue, but they did discuss the results of their analysis. All three studies found differences in which explanatory variables were significant predictors of grievance rates. For example, in Bemmels (1994a) the effect of employee and steward behaviors on grievance rates varied significantly across grievance issues. This suggests that there may be significant differences in who (employees or stewards) initiates grievances across issues. An implication of these results for future research is that theoretical and empirical models specific to certain grievance issues would be appropriate. Inconsistent results across studies focusing only on aggregate grievance rates may be due to differences across samples in the issues of grievances.

The samples in Lewin and Peterson (1988), Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine (1991), and Bemmels (1994a) also encompass several industries, and Stewart and Davy (1992) include a public and private sector distinction. All four studies found significant differences in grievance rates across industries. The widest variation in industry average grievance rates is reported in Bemmels (1994a) where 27 industries are included in the sample. The highest grievance rate was 48.2 grievances per 100 employees per year (railway transportation) and the lowest was .6 grievances per 100 employees (education). Bemmels (1994a) also tested for stability of the regression coefficients across five broad industry groups, and found the behavioral predictors of grievance rates to be stable across industry groups. The implication of these results is that with samples encompassing multiple industries, including industry dummy variables will be very important to

control for the wide variation in industry average grievance rates, but that disaggregate analysis by industry may not be necessary.

Bemmels (1994b) uses the same data as Bemmels (1994a) but focuses on explaining average grievance rates across industries rather than work groups. Consistent with Cappelli and Chauvin's (1991) efficiency model, industry average grievance rates were found to be related to industry labor market conditions (that is, the percentage change in employment over the corresponding year). Differences in technology across industries, which have been cited as the source of differences in grievance rates across industries (see Labig & Greer, 1988), were generally insignificant predictors of industry average grievance rates. The research to date indicates quite clearly that average grievance rates vary considerably across industries. But so far, very little can be concluded about what it is that explains these wide variations in grievance activity across industries. This remains an important unresolved issue for future research on grievance initiation.

Grievance Processing

A wide variety of measures has been used to study grievance processing, including the step at which grievances are settled or settlement rates at each step, informal settlement rates, win (or lose) rates for the parties at each step, compromise settlement rates, speed (or delay) of settlement, and arbitration rates. These measures reflect a major change in the relevant research issues from the grievance initiation research, which essentially focuses on how grievances originate, to when, where, and how grievances are resolved.

These grievance processing measures, along with other attitudes about the grievance procedure or subjective evaluations of the grievance procedure, have often been interpreted as measures of grievance procedure effectiveness. However, as with grievance filing rates, it is not clear for any of the measures listed above what magnitudes are optimal or indicative of effectiveness. Are settlements at the first step preferred to the later steps? Are speedy settlements preferred to delayed settlements? These are often assumed, but Gordon and Bowlby's (1988) results (discussed below) suggest otherwise. All of these measures capture aspects of the operation of grievance procedures, but it is not clear how they can be interpreted as measures of effective grievance procedure performance. We review studies of objective measures of grievance processing in this section, and review studies of the participants' subjective evaluations of the grievance procedure in a later section.

As with the early research on grievance initiation, most of the research on grievance processing is atheoretical. Many of the researchers seem motivated to simply describe what is happening in grievance procedures, and little attempt is made to develop testable hypotheses and explanations for why this is happening.

Several studies focus on structural characteristics or the formalization of grievance procedures and grievance processing. Lewin and Peterson (1988) found that provisions for expedited grievance handling were related to higher settlement levels and arbitration rates, and consistent with the intended purpose of expedited procedures, they were related to quicker settlements. Davy, Stewart and Anderson

(1992) found that procedures requiring that grievances be written at the first step (as opposed to being presented orally) were related to high rates of resolution at the first step. They rationalize this result as indicating that writing grievances down may help clarify the issues and thereby facilitate early settlement. Stewart and Davy (1992) found that the number of steps in the procedure was related to fewer grievances being resolved in the first two steps of the procedure.

Lewin and Peterson (1988) also found that union policies of committing grievances to writing, and both union and management policies of taking certain grievances through the procedure were related to settlement and higher steps in the procedure, longer time to reach settlements, and higher arbitration rates. Knight (1986a) focused on the characteristics and behaviors of supervisors related to informal grievance resolution. Supervisors who attended more arbitration hearings and had more frequent consultations with union stewards, but attended grievance meetings less frequently, had higher proportions of grievances resolved informally.

Knight (1986b) found that there is substantial variation among union and management officials' self assessments of their use of feedback about prior grievance settlements and arbitration decisions in grievance processing. More frequent use of feedback from prior grievance settlements was related to higher rates of grievance resolution. Chaykowski, Stotsve and Butler (1992) found mixed results for the impact of prior grievances granted on the same issue on the likelihood of resolving a grievance. At the first step of the procedure, they found evidence that prior grievances granted on the same issue decreased the likelihood of settlement at that step, but at the second step of the procedure prior grievances granted on the same issue increased the chances of settlement. At the second step, multiple grievants (suggesting a policy issue) were also related to lower chances of settlement. An important result of their study is that the determinants of settlement varied across steps of the procedure. This could reflect changes in how the union and/or management officials handle grievances from one step to the next.

Mesch and Dalton (1992) studied the effect of a union-management cooperative effort to introduce a fact-finding program into the grievance procedure at a utility company. The union and management each assigned representatives to a fact-finding team to investigate newly filed grievances. This program was discontinued by the parties after 24 months. The program had several positive effects, including more frequent settlement of grievances at lower levels and more frequent compromise settlements. The win rates of the parties were not affected. One unexpected outcome, however, is that the grievance rate increased dramatically. The grievance rate had doubled by the second year of the fact-finding program, and this apparently led to the discontinuation of the program.

Ponak and Olson (1992) reviewed studies of delay in arbitrated grievances. While most of these studies focus on the delay at arbitration, many do report delay times in the grievance procedure prior to arbitration. The studies reviewed were published over approximately 20 years, and indicate that average delay time is increasing, and that current delays from the time a grievance is filed until an arbitration decision is received average close to one year. This is often cited as a serious problem with grievance procedures, and the development of expedited

grievance procedures is a response to this problem. Only Lewin and Peterson (1988) focus specifically on explaining the time to grievance settlements, and as already noted they found several grievance procedure characteristics and union and management policies related to time to achieve settlement. Bohlander (1992) surveyed public sector employers and they reported that scheduling conflicts and the requirement of additional investigation were given as the most common reasons for extensions on time limits in grievance procedures. It seems only appropriate that further research should focus on explaining the sources of delay and the reasons for the increasing delay over time. This may lead to other solutions to the delay problem, if in fact it is a problem.

Ng and Dastmalchian (1989) and Dastmalchian and Ng (1990) found that the perception of a more favorable industrial relations climate by managers was related to higher grievance settlement rates and settlement at lower levels of the grievance procedure. As with studies correlating climate measures with grievance rates, however, the interpretation of this result is difficult. The timing of the survey of the managers is not clear from the study, and it is not clear whether this relationship indicates that a more favorable climate will lead to more grievance settlements, or if more frequent grievance settlements lead to perceptions of a more favorable climate.

Gordon and Fryxell (1993) note that several studies of grievance processing suggest that grievance settlement decisions may be based on criteria other than the merits of the grievance. Many of these could be interpreted as inappropriate criteria for deciding the outcome of a grievance. Although the results are mixed, studies have found that the gender of the grievant and/or the gender of the decision maker are related to grievance outcomes (Dalton & Todor, 1985a, 1985b; and Dalton, Todor & Owen, 1987). The results from studies of gender effects in grievance arbitration are also mixed, but several studies have found the grievant's gender to be related to arbitration outcomes (for a review of these studies, see Bemmels, 1991).

Klaas (1989b) found that grievance outcomes were related to the grievant's work history (such as job performance, tenure, disciplinary record, and prior grievances filed), even when that history is not relevant to evaluating the merits of the grievance. Meyer and Cooke (1988) found that various economic and political factors were related to grievance outcomes, and that these factors were more important determinants of outcomes for grievances where the contractual basis and facts of the case were unclear. Knight (1987a, 1987b) reports evidence that some grievants abuse the duty of fair representation complaint procedure by filing complaints for tactical purposes to gain bargaining power in the grievance process, and that this exploitation of the duty of fair representation complaint process caused union officials to process unmeritorious grievances.

While these studies provide a theoretical explanation or post hoc rationalization for why these factors are related to grievance outcomes, they are not factors that reflect the merits of the grievances. Gordon and Fryxell (1993) raise questions about what impact this has on the justice delivered by the grievance procedure. One could argue that in an ideal world each grievance should be decided on

its own merits, but it seems clear from these studies that many other factors that could be considered contaminants enter into the decision-making process.

Several studies have focused on explaining arbitration rates, but important questions about the decision to take a grievance to arbitration have been ignored in the research. How do union officials decide whether a grievance will be appealed to arbitration? This is a very important decision, since if the union does not appeal to arbitration they have effectively accepted management's final position on the matter. This decision involves substantially higher costs than decisions to appeal at earlier steps in the procedure. Yet both management and unions sometimes pursue unmeritorious grievances through the system to arbitration. What are the reasons for this? Another phenomenon that has not been investigated is the fairly common practice of arranging to take a grievance to arbitration, but settling the dispute before the scheduled hearing, often just hours before the hearing. The parties still incur substantial cancellation costs for these last-minute settlements. To an outside observer, this behavior may appear quite irrational. Are the parties merely buying extra time to work out their differences? If so, could other less costly arrangements be devised? The nature and causes of this common practice have also never been studied.

The descriptive nature of most of the research on grievance processing could be improved upon in future research. Several theories would appear to be relevant to grievance processing research, especially settlement levels, arbitration rates, and the decision-making process regarding appeals to higher levels of the procedure. For example, escalation of commitment (Brockner, 1992; Whyte, 1986), prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, 1984), decision dilemma theory (Bowen, 1987), or expectancy theory could be utilized to investigate the decision to appeal a grievance to arbitration. Research in this area should move beyond describing grievance processing to utilizing or developing theoretical explanations for the observed phenomena.

Subjective Evaluations of Grievance Procedures

Lewin and Peterson (1988) argue that evaluations of grievance procedure effectiveness should include subjective evaluations by the participants as well as objective measures reflecting the operation of the grievance procedure. We would argue further that subjective evaluations are the preferred method for evaluating grievance procedure effectiveness. As already noted above, effectiveness is difficult to interpret from measures reflecting the operation of grievance procedures (such as grievance rates, settlement levels and arbitration rates) since it is not clear what the optimal magnitudes might be for these measures (see Kleiner, Nickelsburg & Pilarski, 1988). Furthermore, the purpose of grievance procedures is to resolve disputes about the interpretation and application of collective agreements (and perhaps other noncontractual disputes as well). Grievance procedures exist for the benefit of the employees, employers and unions. If these parties are satisfied with the operation of their grievance procedure, this seems more important than attaining some predetermined "optimal" magnitude on measures of grievance filing or when, where, and how grievances are being resolved.

Gordon and Bowlby (1988) studied grievants' perceptual evaluations of the grievance procedure. Their questionnaire measured perceptions of distributive justice, procedural justice, and an overall evaluation of the grievance procedure. Contrary to the industrial relations dictum that grievances should be settled at the lowest step in the procedure, they found that the level of settlement was not related to the grievants' evaluations of the procedure. The results suggest that other things, such as the nature of the settlement, are far more important to grievants than the level or speed of settlement.

Clark (1986) developed a series of measures of union members' attitudes toward the grievance procedure, and results using these measures were published in Clark and Gallagher (1988a, 1988b). These include four dimensions: perceptions of the effect of the grievance procedure on workplace equity and dignity; the fairness of the grievance process; the extent to which it represents workers' interests; and the importance of having a grievance procedure. Demographic characteristics were generally unrelated to the workers' attitudes toward the grievance procedure, but job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisors, and workers' perceptions of the shop stewards' skill and availability were all related to more favorable attitudes toward the grievance procedure. Grievance filers perceived the grievance procedure to have less effect on the workplace than nonfilers, but filers perceived the procedure to be more representative of their interests and more important.

Lewin and Peterson (1988) measured union and management officials' perceptions of the importance of grievance issues and the equity of past settlements. They found few of their explanatory variables related to these perceptual measures, but their model is oriented more toward explaining the objective measures of grievance procedure performance than perceptual evaluations. Management policy of taking certain grievances through the procedure and the length of the bargaining relationship were related to higher levels of perceived importance of grievance issues and the perceived equity of settlements.

Shop stewards' satisfaction with grievance procedures was studied within an agency theory framework by Bemmels (1995b). Several characteristics of the grievance procedure and objective performance measures were related to stewards' satisfaction. Stewards were more satisfied with their grievance procedure if the procedure allowed oral presentation of grievances at the first step, had time limits for filing a grievance of 14 days or less, and grievances were screened by a committee or other union officials. The proportion of grievances resolved over the past year and the union success rate were also associated with higher satisfaction with the grievance procedure. The size of the steward's work group and the grievance rate were associated with lower satisfaction, suggesting that stewards with overloaded grievance procedures are less satisfied with the procedures.

Boroff (1991) did a very comprehensive study of managers' and employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of a company complaint procedure at a nonunion company. She found that the determinants of perceived effectiveness were quite different for managers and employees, and there were also significant differences among employee complaint filers and nonfilers and managers against whom a complaint was filed and those without complaints filed against them. These results have important implications for future studies of subjective evaluations of

grievance procedures. The results suggest that model specification may need to be specific to the participants in the procedure that are the subjects of the study and control for whether the subjects have been actively involved with the grievance procedure.

Several studies have found that subjective evaluations of the grievance procedures are related to other attitudinal measures and the behaviors of shop stewards in the grievance procedure (Bemmels, 1995a). Fryxell and Gordon (1989) and Eaton, Gordon and Keefe (1992) found that perceptions of grievance procedure effectiveness were related to union members' overall satisfaction with the union. Fryxell (1992) found perceptions of distributive and procedural justice afforded by the grievance procedure were related to a more general belief in a just workplace. Subjective evaluations of the grievance procedure have been found to be related to union commitment (Clark, Gallagher & Pavlak, 1989, 1990; and Bemmels, 1995a), employer commitment (Clark, Gallagher & Pavlak, 1989; and Bemmels, 1995a) and dual commitment (Bemmels, 1995a). The relationship between subjective evaluations of grievance procedures and measures of commitment is important since commitment has been found to be related to numerous measures of grievance procedure behaviors and outcomes. Employer commitment has been found to be negatively related to absenteeism and turnover (Mowday et al., 1982; Reichers, 1985), and union commitment has been found to have a positive relationship with union participation (McShane, 1986; Fulagar & Barling, 1989; Thacker, Fields & Barclay, 1990) and with shop steward behaviors in the grievance procedure (Bemmels, Reshef & Stratton-Devine, 1991; Bemmels, 1994a, 1995a).

Given the importance of the subjective evaluations of grievance procedures for establishing the effectiveness of procedures and determining how to improve the effectiveness of grievance procedures, there is surprisingly little research in this area. Compare, for example, the few studies on satisfaction with grievance procedures to the vast literature on subjective measures of job satisfaction.

Management Retaliation for Grievance Filing

There is a scant literature on management retaliation for grievance filing. There is an indication in the reinstatement literature, based on reinstatees' low rates of actual return to work and low retention rates subsequently, that discharged employees may find it difficult to reintegrate into the workplace. Apart from the earlier studies that utilized interview data, however, little data have been collected that would explain the factors that contribute to their difficulties. Management retaliation is only one of a number of plausible alternative explanations.

Lewin and Peterson (1988) compared grievors' pre-grievance filing and post-grievance filing performance ratings, absenteeism, quit rates and promotion rates with those of nongrievors, and found some evidence of management retaliation. Grievors and nongrievors differed significantly in terms of promotion ratings and turnover rates prior to grievance filing, with the grievors being the more upwardly mobile. One year after filing, however, the situation was reversed on all dimensions.

Furthermore, settlement of the grievance at the first step was associated with higher performance ratings, less voluntary turnover, and higher incidences of promotion, compared with settlement at higher levels. Also, employees who had lost their grievances fared better than those who won in terms of performance ratings and promotion rates. Interestingly, there was evidence as well that supervisors and managers who were involved in grievances subsequently encountered workplace difficulties. They were more likely to quit or be dismissed and less likely to be promoted than were those who had not been involved in grievances.

Klaas and DeNisi (1989) also provided evidence that employees who file grievances against their supervisors, especially when they win, get poorer performance ratings from those supervisors than is the case when the grievances filed are policy grievances. This effect disappeared when the supervisor doing the performance rating was not the one present at the time the grievance was filed. They convincingly showed that changes in the grievors' behavior could not account for the more negative ratings received after grievance filing.

Post Reinstatement Experiences

Several studies have been done since the early 1980s of arbitrator reinstatement decisions regarding employees discharged from their jobs. These studies have been undertaken in various jurisdictions in Canada (Adams, 1979; Barnacle, 1991; Brody, 1987; Ponak, 1987; Shantz & Rogow, 1984), the U.S. (Labig, Helburn & Rodgers, 1985; Lewin & Peterson, 1988; Malinowski, 1981), Britain (Williams & Lewis, 1982) and Italy (Rocella, 1989). The number of arbitration awards considered in each study has ranged from under 50 to over 1000, covering periods of two to five years.

Research data has typically been collected from the awards themselves and from questionnaires distributed to one or more of the parties to the dispute. However, the study by Lewin and Peterson (1988) utilized personnel records of grievors, nongrievors, supervisors and managers to examine the ramifications of grievance filing. Two other exceptions were the British (Williams & Lewis, 1982) and Italian studies (Rocella, 1989), which included interviews with the reinstated employees. Interviews with reinstated employees were more common in earlier research (Aspin, 1970; Chaney, 1981; Gold, Dennis & Graham, 1978; McDermot & Newhams, 1971; Stephens & Chaney, 1974).

In general, the studies have been concerned with the proportion of reinstates who have actually returned to work, their future retention and disciplinary rates, and how employers and unions assess the impact of reinstatement on labor-management relations. Less frequently, they have asked reinstates to assess its effectiveness as a remedy for unfair dismissal (Rocella, 1989; Williams & Lewis, 1982). The bulk of the studies have been descriptive and have attempted to explain under what conditions will discharge decisions be upheld, under what conditions will reinstated employees be successfully reintegrated into the company, and what will be the impact of reinstatement on the workplace and the parties affected. The variables that have been considered include: grievor characteristics such as age, sex, seniority with the company, gender, employment record,

type of offense; type of reinstatement order, such as with full or partial backpay and exoneration; process characteristics such as arbitral forum, use of legal counsel, length of delay from offense to arbitration hearing, considerations entering into the arbitrators' decision making; and employer or workplace characteristics such as bargaining unit size, workplace morale, relationships between employer, supervisors, reinstated employees and other employees, and employer post-reinstatement experience.

The few statistical studies that have been done have shown that gender significantly affects the reinstatement decision, with women being reinstated more frequently. However, process variables such as size of arbitration board, time lapse from incident, arbitrator's experience, and the parties' use of legal counsel were found to have no significant impact on percentage of discharges upheld (Ponak, 1987). One study found that reinstatement without backpay accounted for a significant proportion of post-reinstatement failure (mentioned in Brody, 1987, see footnote 3). Another study found that employment record, but not employee seniority or reason for discharge, was predictive of post-reinstatement job performance (Labig et al., 1985).

More generally, the studies are in agreement that arbitrators' decisions to reinstate rest on their assessments of whether the punishment is merited by the offense. More than 50% of the time, a lesser punishment is substituted. Full backpay is most likely to be awarded where the employer has failed to follow proper procedures or has not supplied adequate proof to back up the discharge. Also, the longer the time lapse between offense and hearing, the less likely is the arbitrator to order reinstatement.

The studies have fairly consistently shown that employees reinstated with lesser penalties are reluctant to return to work, with the proportion who actually return varying between 46% (Malinowski, 1981) and 88% (Barnacle, 1991). Seniority is associated with return to work.

Post-reinstatement experience with recidivism indicates that reinstating first offenders is usually well-advised except with respect to alcohol-related offenses. Adams' (1979) study indicated that only 13% of the group of employees reinstated with lesser penalties were subsequently discharged. Subsequent disciplinary offenses are related most consistently to previous employment record rather than to age, seniority, marital status, or bargaining unit size.

Employers are generally satisfied with post-reinstatement performance. Employer estimates of the proportion of employees reinstated with lesser penalties who perform satisfactorily upon returning to work range from 53% (Shantz & Rogow, 1984) to 85% (Williams & Lewis, 1982). Employers believe that 50% (Ponak, 1987) to 67% (Barnacle, 1991) of these reinstatees progress normally after reinstatement. In addition, the incidence of post-reinstatement discipline problems is acceptable, and reinstatement is not felt to have a severe negative impact on work group performance, supervisory relations or employer authority. However, the proportion of employers who feel that morale suffers ranges from 43% (Barnacle, 1991) to 55% (Ponak, 1987), and between 40% (Williams & Lewis, 1982) and 55% (Barnacle, 1991) of employers feel that the relationship between the reinstatee and the other employees is negatively affected.

Turnover rates also suggest that reinstatement is not completely satisfactory from the perspective of those reinstated. Retention rates at the end of two years due to voluntary or involuntary turnover vary between 42% (Shantz & Rogow, 1981) and 72% (Rocella, 1989). There is little speculation in the recent studies as to why that is the case, but the older studies revealed that fear of employer retaliation is the major reason why reinstates choose not to return to work, and that unfair treatment is the primary motivation for voluntary turnover after reinstatement (Aspin, 1970; Chaney, 1981; McDermott & Newhams, 1971; Stephens & Chaney, 1974).

Furthermore, fully exonerated employees appear to have a more difficult time after reinstatement than do the partially exonerated employees. Adams' (1979) study indicated that the comparable quit rates for the lesser penalty and fully exonerated groups were 13% and 31% respectively. Employers also assess the results of reinstatement for the latter group less positively, especially with respect to subsequent workplace and supervisory relations and overall workplace morale, despite the fact that post-reinstatement disciplinary misconduct rates for this group were lower. This might be explained by a common finding of most of the reinstatement studies: that despite the majority of employers' favorable experience with reinstatement, only about one-third of employers feel that the arbitrator made the correct decision in reinstating the discharged employees.

There are some indications in this literature of areas where additional research would be desirable. These include explanations for gender differences in reinstatement rates, the role of legal counsel, why reinstatement is frequently unsuccessful, why future disciplinary action against some reinstates but not others becomes necessary, circumstances under which reinstatement is the best solution, and circumstances under which retaliation against reinstates is most likely. The exploration of many of these areas will require greater use of interview formats, large-scale, field-based studies, and longitudinal data collection.

Conclusion

Gordon and Miller (1984, p. 141) concluded that "theory is almost entirely absent in the diverse literature on grievances." We cannot say the same for the research on grievances published in the past decade. Elaborate theories have been developed (e.g., Klaas, 1989a) and many empirical studies have been grounded in either a unique theoretical framework developed to fit the specific issues being addressed (e.g., Bemmels, Reshef & Stratton-Devine, 1991) or have applied existing social science theories to grievance research (Cappelli and Chauvin, 1991, for example, use an exit-voice, expectancy theory model). Although significant improvements have been made on the theoretical front in grievance research over the past decade, we conclude that the theory in grievance research remains quite inadequate. Many studies still report empirical analysis with no theoretical grounding, or only intuitive and ad hoc hypotheses.

In Table 1, we summarize the various social science theories that either have been applied to grievance procedure research or which we believe could be easily adapted to grievance research. These are only intended as examples, and certainly

there are many more social science theories relevant to grievance research. It is our conclusion that focusing on specific aspects of the grievance procedure and utilizing or developing theories applicable to that specific aspect will best advance the theoretical grounding of grievance research. This is not intended to denigrate the systems models of grievance procedures. These are vital to providing the comprehensive framework necessary to guide longer term research efforts conducted by various scholars. Because of the complexity of grievance procedures, however, the comprehensive systems models cannot include sufficient theoretical detail to generate theoretically driven, testable hypotheses. Consequently, theory in grievance research must progress at two levels: the comprehensive systems approach, and the more specific application and development of theory to specific aspects of the grievance process.

Table 1. Examples of Social Science Theories
Applicable to Grievance Procedure Research

<i>Grievance Research Topics</i>	<i>Applicable Theories</i>
Grievable Events	Management Style/Behaviors Contract Complexity
Grievance Initiation	Expectancy Theory Exit-Voice Theory Reactance Theory Attribution Theory Procedural/Distributive Justice
Grievance Processing	Expectancy Theory Attribution Theory Escalating Commitment Prospect Theory Decision Dilemma Theory
Subjective Evaluations of Grievance Procedures	Agency Theory Procedural/Distributive Justice Equity Theory

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