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Can You Have Too Much of a Good Thing?
The Limits of Voice for Improving
Satisfaction With Leaders

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Research on procedural justice has consistently found that increases in voice are associated with enhanced ratings of procedural fairness, satisfaction with leaders, and acceptance of decisions made by authorities. This research extends those findings in two ways by (a) replicating the voice effect in small group decision making with a low status leader and (b) illustrating the limit of voice in improving support for leaders under conditions of persistent conflict. Results from Study 1 suggest that people care about their treatment by leaders because it provides them with information about their value within the group rather than because the leader controls important resources. Study 2 demonstrates that very high levels of voice can be associated with reduced leader support and lower levels of decision satisfaction under conditions of persistent conflict. These results suggest that extensive use of voice by leaders has limited advantages when people fundamentally disagree.

$\mathbf{O}$ne of the most significant findings of the procedural justice literature is the importance of voice in leader endorsement and acceptance of authority (see Hirschman, 1970, for an early analysis of the idea of voice). Since the pioneering work of Thibaut and Walker (1975), procedural justice researchers have consistently found that the opportunity to express opinions (voice) is associated with perceptions of procedural fairness and support for decisions made by leaders or authorities. This procedural justice effect has been replicated even in circumstances in which the decisions of the authority violate personal self-interest or opinion (see Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler 1990; Vidmar, 1992, for reviews). Recent theories of procedural justice argue that people care a great deal about voice because treatment by an authority communicates information about their own personal worth and status in the group (Tyler & Lind, 1992). Voice is critical

to developing a sense of self-worth because having the opportunity to tell one's side of the story implies that one's opinion is worthy of being considered by someone important.

Beyond its role in developing personal self-esteem, voice has been found to predict a number of significant attitudes and behaviors. First, increased voice has been found to be associated with endorsement of leaders or authorities. Tyler and Caine (1981), for example, found that procedures and outcomes made relatively independent contributions to leader evaluations in the classroom and for city council members. Receiving a favorable outcome and the use of a fair procedure both enhanced leader evaluations. Moreover, fair procedure was a better predictor of leader endorsement than were the outcomes received (i.e., student grades or passing of a local ordinance that was favorable or unfavorable). Tyler, Rasinski, and Spodick (1985) replicated those findings by demonstrating that perceptions of process control led to endorsement of judges in traffic and misdemeanor court (Study 1), undergraduate students' evaluations of teachers (Study 2), and evaluations of a hypothetical dormitory and city council (Study 3). People endorsed authorities in each of these studies when they believed the process that the decision maker was us-

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ing was fair—in particular, as voice or process control increased.

Not only does increased process control and voice lead to endorsement of authorities, but it has also been shown to increase compliance with the decisions of those authorities. Tyler (1990) found that citizens of Chicago voluntarily obey the law when they believe that legal and political authorities have legitimacy. Perceptions of legitimacy were based, in part, on an opportunity for voice or participation. In an evaluation of court-annexed arbitration hearings, Lind (1990) found that litigants wanted an opportunity to have their cases heard. Moreover, when their point of view was heard, they were more willing to comply with decisions made in arbitration. In corporate disputes, Lind, Kulik, Ambrose, and deVera Park (1993) found that perceptions of procedural fairness led to greater acceptance of arbitration awards regardless of the size of those awards. This finding held even when the decisions went against the litigants. In sum, voice not only enhances support for an authority but also increases compliance with the directives of that authority.

Beyond increasing obedience to the edicts of authorities and bosses, procedural fairness has also been found to increase worker motivation and possibly productivity (see Kanfer, 1990, for a review). Folger (1977, 1986) and his colleagues (Cropanzano & Folger, 1991; Folger & Greenberg, 1985) found that participation in decision making increased acceptance of work goals by employees and resolution of disputes in the workplace. And Lind and Earley (Earley & Lind, 1987; Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990) found that voice predicted perceptions of procedural fairness in goal setting situations, even after controlling for feelings of control over the process. In the few studies that have not supported the relationship between voice and productivity (i.e., Cropanzano & Randall, 1995; Kanfer, Sawyer, Earley, & Lind, 1987), voice was nevertheless related to increases in satisfaction with the leader, acceptance of decisions by authorities, and worker morale.

The logical extension of this stream of research is that more voice is always better for enhancing leader-follower relations; increases in voice will always lead to increases in leader support. There is one exception, however, to the general finding that increases in voice produce direct, monotonic increases in perceptions of fairness. Sheppard (1985) found that participants sometimes prefer a procedure with less voice. This study was designed to better understand why people across cultures generally prefer adversarial dispute resolution procedures (i.e., the English tradition, in which each party to the dispute presents his or her own case) more than inquisitorial procedures (i.e., the continental European tradition, in which a third party controls presentation of

evidence) (e.g., Houlden, LaTour, Walker, & Thibaut, 1978; LaTour, 1978; Lind, Erickson, Friedland, & Dickenberger, 1978; Lind, Kurtz, Musante, Walker, & Thibaut, 1980; Walker, LaTour, Lind, & Thibaut, 1974). Sheppard (1985) wanted to know if opportunity for voice was the exclusive reason why people prefer adversarial over inquisitorial procedures. Four dispute resolution procedures were created to address this question. The first was a purely inquisitorial procedure in which the judge controlled all aspects of the presentation of evidence. In the second procedure, the judge also controlled all aspects of the presentation of evidence, but each disputant was able to select a representative who prepared a written summary of the person's case and was present at the hearing. The third procedure again gave complete control over process to the judge but allowed each party to the dispute to present his or her case to the judge uninterrupted at the outset of the hearing. The fourth procedure was purely adversarial, with each side making a presentation of his or her case and the judge then rendering a decision.

As Sheppard (1985) and the procedural justice literature would predict, introductory psychology students (Study 1) and passengers at a large Midwestern airport (Study 2) preferred descriptions of the two procedures with more voice (Procedures 3 and 4) more than the two with less voice (Procedures 1 and 2). Unexpectedly, however, people preferred the third procedure over the purely adversarial fourth one. In other words, subjects preferred a procedure in which they had less voice. Sheppard concluded from these results that voice is not the only consideration when the fairness of a procedure is evaluated. He speculated three possible decision rules for determining fairness. The first is an efficacy principle, which states that the person most capable of doing something should be doing it (e.g., a disputant cannot mediate his or her own case because he or she is incapable of being neutral). The second is a check and balance rule suggesting that potential abuses of power by one party over the other should be stopped, even when that reduces the opportunity for voice. The third alternative is a have your say and no more rule—anyone should be allowed to present his or her case, no more and no less. In short, the relationship between voice and procedural fairness may not be direct and monotonic because people consider things other than voice when deciding the fairness of a procedure.

More recently, Folger, Cropanzano, Timmerman, Howes, and Mitchell (1996) argued that Sheppard's (1985) findings were a result of confounding the role of the third party with the voice of the disputants. The purely adversarial fourth procedure gave voice to the disputants but not to the judge (i.e., the judge could not ask questions of the disputants). The third procedure, how-

ever, gave voice to the judge but not to the disputants (i.e., disputants presented their case but could not ask questions of the opposing side or witnesses). Folger et al. (1996) hypothesized that if this confound were removed, then the direct relationship between voice and procedural fairness would reemerge. This notion was tested by asking undergraduate students to rate the fairness of an inquisitorial procedure, an adversarial procedure, the preferred third procedure, and a new procedure that allowed representatives of the disputants to question the opposing side and witnesses during the proceeding. The results revealed both a replication of Sheppard's (1985) finding that participants prefer the third procedure over the arbitration procedure and a new finding, namely that participants preferred the new procedure over the third, which was originally preferred. Thus, the notion of a direct relationship between voice, perceived fairness, and procedural preference was restored.

This research revisits the question that Sheppard (1985) asked: Is the relationship between voice and procedural fairness direct and monotonic? Folger et al. (1996) notwithstanding, there are at least two interrelated reasons why voice may not be directly related to procedural fairness. The first reason is that increases in voice usually come at the expense of time. Although the social psychology of time and the trade-off between time and satisfaction are not well studied, an inverted U shape relationship is generally hypothesized (McGrath, 1988). When time is short, people are frustrated by lack of opportunity for voice, whereas boredom and low arousal are the result of too much time. In other words, people want to complete their work in a reasonable amount of time. Research on procedural justice has not recognized this potential trade-off between time and satisfaction.

The second closely related reason why voice and procedural fairness may not be directly related is that procedures that allow voice for one person usually include an opportunity for voice for all concerned in the process. This means that each person has to listen as others express their point(s) of view. To the extent that those points of view differ, then the people involved are prone to dislike each other and the process that generated their discussion (see Levine, 1989, for a review). People may want their day in court, but they are unlikely to want to hear an extended rebuttal and case by the opposing side. The most common method of managing this mutual voice problem is through the use of third parties. Indeed, one of the primary functions a judge or a mediator serves in a dispute resolution setting is to manage the opportunities for voice. In a group decision-making setting, however, that trade-off is usually managed by an officially designated leader. If the leader does not manage the expression of voice well, group members will be dis-

satisfied with the final decision or the group, the leader, and possibly other group members. One circumstance in which a leader's opportunity to manage the expression of voice is severely limited is when a group makes a decision by consensus (i.e., everyone must agree no matter how reasonable or unreasonable they may be). Consensus decision making increases voice for everyone but can lead to long meetings, frustration, and interpersonal rancor if a leader allows someone to dominate the group discussion (see Rawlins, 1984, and Miller, 1989, on consensus decision making in groups). This study used the literature on consensus decision making in small groups to develop hypotheses about the relationship between voice, procedural fairness, and decision satisfaction.

A Small Groups Perspective on Procedural Justice and Voice

Although researchers in small groups and procedural justice have largely ignored each other,[1] communication between them could potentially address theoretical questions about the nature of the relationship between voice and procedural fairness. Past research on procedural justice has focused on (a) the relationship between people of unequal status (i.e., judge-disputant, teacher-student, or supervisor-subordinate relationships), (b) support for authorities with whom people have little interpersonal contact (i.e., elite political decisions made by the Supreme Court, Congress, or Parliament), or (c) making judgments about procedures in the absence of knowledge about who created them. A small groups context in which the leader does not have significantly higher status than the other group members or the power of reward is a potentially important extension of the group value model of procedural justice. The group value model of procedural justice (Tyler & Lind, 1992) hypothesizes that people care about decision-making procedures because those procedures embody important information about their worth as a person and a group member. If leaders give followers the opportunity to express their thoughts, then that implies that followers' thoughts are worthy of being considered and that the followers are important individuals. Extension of the procedural justice effect to a small group setting in which the leader does not control significantly different resources would provide evidence that people care primarily about their value within the group. In other words, this extension of the model would eliminate the alternative explanation that people respond to their treatment by leaders because the leaders control significant financial and social resources (e.g., money, work hours, social status, etc.). Hence, a group with equal status members (i.e., the leader does not have powers of reward) provides a strong test of the group value model of procedural justice.

Small group researchers could also benefit from exploring procedural justice effects in group decision making. For example, group researchers have long been concerned with the acceptance of group decisions by people who did not get their way (e.g., Kerr et al., 1976; Nemeth, 1977). A losing minority can undermine the implementation of a group decision or threaten the acceptance of that decision by people outside of the group. Procedural justice researchers have learned a great deal about the usefulness of voice for keeping group members satisfied with leaders, even when they experience negative outcomes.[2]

One way of exploring the relationship between voice and procedural fairness in small group decision making is by looking at the literature comparing different decision-making rules. In particular, the differences between majority and consensus decision rules is intriguing. A consensus decision rule in groups strongly encourages voice in group decision making, because the prevailing majority cannot silence or ignore the minority by out-voting them. When everyone must agree with the group decision, all objections must be seriously considered and discussed (Nemeth, 1977). Indeed, consensus has been the recommended decision rule in most small group texts (e.g., Forsyth, 1990) expressly because it increases voice (Rawlins, 1984). The increased voice under a consensus rule has at least two beneficial effects. First, consensus requirements tend to increase group members' satisfaction and commitment to implementation of the decision (see Miller, 1989, and Wood, 1984, for reviews). People prefer decisions in which all group members agree at the end of discussion. Second, consensus decision making often results in better quality decisions (Bower, 1965a, 1965b; Gouran, 1982; Hirokawa, 1984; Holloman & Hendrick, 1972; Nemiroff & King, 1975). This position is supported by minority influence research in which subjects exposed to minority dissent have detected more correct novel solutions to problems (Nemeth & Wachtler, 1983), given more original associations to words (Nemeth & Kwan, 1987), recalled more information accurately (Nemeth, Mayseless, Sherman, & Brown, 1990), formulated more original alternative proposals (Mucchi-Faina, Maass, & Volpato, 1991), and held multiple ideas in mind simultaneously (Peterson & Nemeth, 1996). Moreover, research on group leadership and minority dissent suggests that leaders who encourage dissent are more likely to be seen as effective and lead their groups to better decisions (Herek, Janis, & Huth, 1987; Maier, 1950; Maier & Solem, 1952; Peterson, 1997; Peterson, Owens, Tetlock, Fan, & Martorana, 1998).

One problem with consensus in group decision making, however, is that groups using unanimous decision rules are generally less likely to reach a decision (Miller, 1989). The reason for this is that consensus decision making requires a shared set of underlying values or understandings about the issue being discussed (Wood, 1984). In the absence of some shared understanding, group members rarely reach consensus, and high levels of frustration are often the result. To avoid this frustration, groups need to resort to majority rule in making their decisions. Hence, I hypothesize that group members will be more satisfied on the whole with majority rule than with consensus decision making when there is a persistent difference of opinion. This key theoretical point, in the language of procedural justice researchers, is that group members can be more satisfied with less voice when there is persistent conflict and/or fundamental disagreement among them (an inverted U is hypothesized).

Summary of the Current Research

The purpose of this research is twofold. The first purpose is to test the voice effect in a small group decision-making context in which the leader does not have elevated status. Does the effect hold in a situation where leaders do not have high status or control important resources? The second purpose of this research is to explore the limits of voice for enhancing leader endorsement. More specifically, do increases in voice always lead to direct increases in perceptions of procedural fairness and leader support? Can voice bridge underlying differences in perspectives? Existing research on the effects of consensus and majority rule in group decision making suggests that additional voice might lead to reduced leader support and perceptions of procedural fairness under conditions of persistent conflict among members.

STUDY 1

Method

The participants were 122 undergraduate students at Northwestern University who participated in the study as a classroom exercise. The students were randomly divided into 30 mixed-sex groups of four or five persons during the first session of three different classes on group dynamics. One member of each group was randomly assigned to be its leader. Results reported are based on the 92 students who were not assigned to be leaders.

The group activity was a desert survival task that involved ranking 15 items salvaged from a plane crash in the Mojave desert (Human Synergistics, 1987). Participants had to first establish a strategy (e.g., staying near the wreckage and signaling a search plane versus attempting to walk to a known camp 50 miles away) and then rank the usefulness of the 15 items based on that strategy. Participants were shown a 4-minute videotape

TABLE 1:   Item Listing For Scales

		Study 1		Study 2	
Scale	Items	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Voice		8.0	.98	5.6	2.6
	To what extent did your group leader try to consider each person's point of view?	8.2	1.1	5.9	3.3
	To what extent did the leader seem to react favorable to you?	7.6	1.4	5.1	2.6
	How fair were the procedures used by your group leader?	8.4	0.9	5.9	2.8
	How much respect did the group leader show you?	8.0	1.2	5.6	2.8
	How much respect do you have for the group leader?	7.7	1.2	5.4	2.6
Satisfaction		7.6	1.1	5.1	2.4
	How effective did you think your group leader was?	7.7	1.2	5.1	2.7
	How satisfied were you with the final group decision?	7.6	1.2	5.1	2.4
	Agreement with group decision (post–group discussion)	39.0	10.6	50.4	15.6
Outcome control					
	Agreement with final group decision (pre–group discussion)	52.2	18.0	57.6	14.4

NOTE: The five voice and two outcome satisfaction questions were measured with 1 to 9 rating scales. The agreement with group decision variables reflect differences between where the group placed each item and where each individual in the group placed each item. See results section for details.

introduction to the task before ranking the items individually. Once everyone had ranked the items, group discussion began. Groups were told to come to a consensus decision about how to rank the items but that any dispute in the group could be resolved unilaterally by the group's leader (this occurred in only one group). After the group ranking was complete, both the individual and group rankings were collected. This was followed by a short questionnaire measuring three constructs. The first measure was perceived voice, which included assessments of the extent to which the leader reacted favorably, the fairness of the procedures used by the group leader, and the respect followers had for the leader (cf. the voice questions used by Kanfer et al., 1987). The second measure involved satisfaction with the group decision, which was measured by ratings of the effectiveness of the leader and satisfaction with the final group decision. These questionnaire items are listed in the top of Table 1. The third measure in the questionnaire was the level of agreement with the final group decision, assessed by asking the participants to rank the items as individuals again without either their original ranking or the ranking of the group in front of them. The participants received no performance feedback before completing the questionnaire. They were then debriefed and given performance feedback. No one was able to guess the purpose of the study.

Results

All analyses are presented at the group level to reflect the interdependence among people from the same groups. There were no effects for sex of leader, sex of subject, or class, so those variables were dropped from further analyses.

Voice was measured with a scale (Cronbach's alpha = .81) using the five items shown at the top of Table 1. Outcome control for each participant was measured by subtracting an individual's ranking of each item from that of the group and then summing the absolute value of the differences. This yielded a score measuring the extent to which an individual's rankings were reflected in the group ranking. A lower score indicates that someone's individual rankings were closer to the final group ranking. The dependent measure of satisfaction was assessed in two ways. The first method used the same formula described for outcome control on each individual's post-discussion item ranking. This score reflected the extent to which the individual's rankings followed from the group's ranking. The second component of the satisfaction measure used the two-item scale ($r = .61$) described previously. The two measures of decision satisfaction were significantly correlated ($r = -.66$). Descriptive statistics for all of these measures are shown in Table 1.

The role of outcome control and voice in predicting the questionnaire satisfaction items with the group outcome was assessed using a regression analysis. The results revealed that voice was a significant predictor of satisfaction, whereas outcome control was not, $R^2 = .22$, $F(2, 27) = 5.1$, $p < .05$, β for voice = .48, $p < .01$; β for outcome control = –.16, *ns.* The correlation between voice and outcome control in this study was nonsignificant ($r = .11$). The results are almost identical when the measure of satisfaction consists of the scale items, the formula scores of agreement in item ranking, or any combination of the two.

Discussion

The results of Study 1 replicate the procedural justice effects documented in authority relationships using a small group decision-making task in which the leader's status and reward power was minimally different from that of the other group members. This is a significant

confirmation of the group value model of procedural justice because it suggests that the group itself is a reference point for gaining information about one's status in the group. In other words, reactions to a leader matter because that person is a group member and not because the person has special status or controls significant resources.

There are at least two concerns about interpreting these results, however. The first concern revolves around the relative status of the appointed group leaders. Some evidence suggests that the status of a person in a group can be changed simply by virtue of occupying a specified leadership role (Humphrey, 1985). To the extent that the group leaders in this study were accorded status by virtue of being in the role of appointed leader, then the strength of the test of the group value model of procedural justice is in question. Although there is no way to completely dismiss this concern, two aspects of this study diminish the credibility of this critique. First, participants were told that their leaders were appointed at random, and indeed, that was the case. Second, group leaders were not given any special powers of reward or punishment to reinforce their status or power. It seems unlikely, therefore, that the leaders in this study accumulated any significant level of status. Certainly, their powers and status were nowhere near the type that other procedural justice studies have investigated (e.g., managers, justices, legislators, etc.).

The second concern about interpreting these results revolves around the research method used. This study was conducted as the opening training exercise in group dynamics classes and not as a controlled laboratory experiment. This is a strength because the study occurred in a relatively natural setting where group members expected to interact with one another in future activities over some length of time (at least 10 weeks). This is also a potential weakness, however, because the data were correlational in nature. This study was not an experiment with manipulated independent variables. It could be, for example, that satisfaction with the group decision led participants to believe that they had more voice in the decision. Nevertheless, Study 1 accomplished two things. In addition to providing support for the group value model, it also established the small group working on a desert survival task as a legitimate paradigm for studying the limits of voice and procedural justice effects (see Study 2).

STUDY 2

Study 2 was designed to answer two questions. The first involved the issue of causality just noted in Study 1. Study 2 was an experiment that included manipulation of low, moderate, and high voice by an equal status leader. Study 2 also explored the limits of voice for en-

hancing leader endorsement. Specifically, it used the paradigm of Study 1 and small group theory about majority rule versus consensus decision making to address the issue of whether too much voice is possible under conditions of chronic conflict among group members.

Method

Study 2 is a three-cell between-subjects experiment in which leader behavior is manipulated. One of three female research assistants played the role of leader and created low, moderate, or high levels of voice in each group by manipulating the procedures used to make group decisions. A low level of voice was created by using a consultative decision rule (the leader made the decision after consulting with group members); a moderate level of voice was created by using a majority decision rule; and a high level of voice was created by using a consensus decision rule. Participants were 118 Northwestern undergraduates (54 groups) who participated in exchange for extra credit in an interpersonal relationships course. Students participated in groups of 4 or 5 (two of whom were confederates). The task was the same desert survival task used in Study 1. Participants were again shown the 4-minute introductory videotape and asked to rank individually the items salvaged from the plane crash. The group leader (a confederate) was then appointed by the experimenter, apparently at random. Each group was then given 15 minutes to make group rankings of the items after the experimenter left the room. If the group did not come to agreement in 15 minutes, the experimenter returned and asked the group to complete the task as quickly as possible. All groups completed the task within 20 minutes. Following group discussion, participants were given a questionnaire with the same questions used in Study 1 plus questions assessing the degree of respect and liking for each individual group member. Participants were debriefed and thanked for their time after they completed the questionnaire. One participant expressed suspicion about the leader (in the low voice condition), and two expressed suspicion about the confederate group member (in the high voice condition). Data from these three participants were omitted from further analysis.

In the low voice (consultative) condition, the leader began by stating, "I am interested in what we all put down, not in why we did it. Let's just average our individual rankings and call that our decision." Group members were then asked to state their rankings. The second confederate group member was always asked first for her ranking. That confederate stated her rankings along with explanations for them. She was then reprimanded by the leader, who said, "I only want rankings now." After averaging the individual rankings, the leader declared that the group had made its decision and ended the dis-

cussion.[3] The leader did not offer her own reasons or personal ranking of the items here or in any of the three conditions.

In the moderate voice (majority rule) condition, the leader began by stating, "I am interested in what we all put down and why we did it. Let's start by averaging our individual rankings." Group members were asked to state their rankings and allowed to explain them if they chose. Discussion continued after the items were averaged until there was agreement by the actual participants in the study. There was a confederate member in each group who was instructed not to adjust her rankings as a result of group discussion in any way (remember also that the leader did not offer reasons or personal ranking). A complete consensus was not required before the group leader recorded the group ranking.

In the high voice condition (consensus), the leader began by stating, "I am interested in what we all put down and why we did it. Your perceptions are important to me. Let's start by averaging our individual ranking." The group leader then asked each group member to list and explain his or her individual rankings. The group leader avoided recording any group ranking until there was verbal agreement from all group members (including the confederate group member).

In addition to the leader, who manipulated the group's decision rule, there was also a confederate group member in this condition who insisted on a particular ranking of the items. This person created the persistent conflict necessary to create the hypothesized inverted U-shape relationship between voice and satisfaction with the leader. This second confederate was instructed to list the items in exactly the same order as the expert who wrote the exercise or in the exact reverse order. The orders were counterbalanced within each condition. The expert explanation of rankings was used to develop reasons given by the confederate for both rankings—this was possible because the expert reasons included both positive and negative uses for each item. The confederate, therefore, gave the positive uses for each of the first five items on her ranking in either order (e.g., one of the low ranking items on the expert list was vodka that could be used as a skin coolant but could also cause serious dehydration if consumed). It is important to note here that coming to a group decision was quite difficult in the moderate voice (majority rule) condition and, strictly speaking, impossible in the high voice (consensus) condition unless the group members complied with the confederate (none did). The confederate was, therefore, instructed to compromise after the 15-minute warning given by the experimenter if the group had not yet come to a decision. Participants were generally willing to have the confederate out-voted when it became apparent that she was unwilling to compromise in the

moderate voice (majority rule) condition but not generally before the 15-minute warning was issued by the experimenter (cf. Schachter, 1951, on the rejection of deviants, but also see Levine, 1989, for a thorough review of the issue).

Results

Results for this study are again reported at the group level. First, a check of the manipulation suggests that the leaders correctly enacted their assigned roles. The check was conducted by observing videotapes made of the groups. Two raters, blind to both the hypothesis and the condition, were asked to view all of the tapes and decide whether each group made its decisions by consultation with the leader, by majority rule, or by consensus. The raters were 99% accurate (i.e., one rater missed one group). Also, there were no effects or interactions found for confederate leader, sex of participants in the group, or order of items given by the second confederate, so those variables were dropped from further analyses.

Voice was measured with the same five items used in Study 1 and listed in Table 1 (Cronbach's alpha = .96). Outcome control was again measured for each participant by subtracting the individual rank of each item from that of the group and then summing the absolute values of each difference. The dependent measures of satisfaction were again assessed in the same two ways—first by the two-item scale ($r = .76$) and also by the postdiscussion measure of similarity to the group decision. The two measures of decision satisfaction were correlated at the same strength as is Study 1 ($r = -.66$). Descriptive statistics for all of these measures are listed in Table 1. Figure 1 shows the mean satisfaction level broken down by leader behavior condition. This figure shows the hypothesized inverted U relationship between voice and satisfaction.

The role of outcome control and voice in predicting satisfaction with the group outcome was assessed with both regression analysis and two-tailed ANOVAs. First, an ANOVA of the dependent measure of satisfaction was significant, $F(2, 51) = 22.9$, $p < .01$, $\omega^2 = .45$. As expected, a follow-up ANOVA revealed that participants were significantly more satisfied in the moderate versus low voice condition, $M = 6.9$ versus 2.8, $F(1, 51) = 37.8$, $p < .01$, $\omega^2 = .57$, and the moderate versus high voice condition, $M = 6.9$ versus 5.3, $F(1, 51) = 10.4$, $p < .01$, $\omega^2 = .16$.[4] The inverted U was not perfect, because participants were significantly more satisfied in the high voice condition than in the low voice condition, $M = 5.3$ versus 2.8, $F(1, 51) = 13.7$, $p < .01$, $\omega^2 = .31$. These results were consistent for both decision satisfaction measures. An ANOVA of the means for outcome control revealed no significant differences, $F(2, 51) = .97$, *ns*, $M = 54.8$, 61.1, and 56.4 for low, moderate, and high voice conditions, respectively.
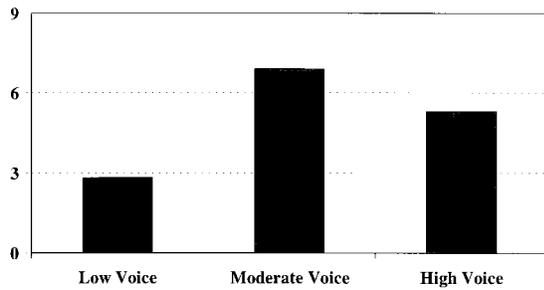
Figure 1   Satisfaction in group decision making.

Regression analysis revealed that voice was a significant predictor of satisfaction, whereas outcome control was not, $R^2 = .83$, $F(2, 51) = 88.0$, $p < .01$; β for voice = .99, $p < .01$; β for outcome control = –.14, *ns*). The correlation between voice and outcome control was nonsignificant ($r = -.04$).

A two-way ANOVA of the question about respect for the leader was significant, $F(2, 51) = 15.9$, $p < .01$, $\omega^2 = .39$. Follow-up tests revealed that participants had greater respect for their leader in the moderate than in the low voice condition, $M = 6.9$ versus 3.2, $F(1, 35) = 27.8$, $p < .01$, $\omega^2 = .45$, marginally more respect for the leader in the moderate than the high voice condition, $M = 6.9$ versus 6.0, $F(1, 35) = 3.4$, $p < .07$, $\omega^2 = .19$, and more respect for the leader in the high voice condition than in the low voice condition, $M = 6.0$ versus 3.2, $F(1, 32) = 11.3$, $p < .05$, $\omega^2 = .37$. The leader garnered the most respect in the moderate (majority rule) condition with somewhat less respect in the high voice (consensus) condition and significantly reduced respect in the low voice condition.

Two sets of analyses were conducted to test alternative hypotheses about the cause of the reduced satisfaction in the high voice (consensus) condition compared with the moderate voice (majority rule) condition. The first explanation tested was that the confederate was particularly annoying in the high voice (consensus) condition. The results of a two-tailed ANOVA of participants' ratings of respect for the confederate were not significant, $F(2, 51) = 2.4$, *ns*. A two-way ANOVA for respect for the other genuine participant in the study was also not affected by treatment conditions, $F(2, 51) = .27$, *ns*. A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted using respect ratings for the confederate group member versus the other genuine participants (averaged) as the repeated measure and treatment condition as the between-subjects variable. This test was done to test whether participants reacted differently to the group member who was the confederate versus other the other genuine par-

ticipants in the study. The analysis revealed that subjects respected the confederate less than the other participants in the experiment across all three conditions, $M = 5.5$ versus 6.7, $F(1, 51) = 15.4$, $p < .01$, $\omega^2 = .21$. Neither the between-subjects effect between conditions, $F(2, 51) = 2.3$, *ns*, nor the interaction, $F(2, 51) = 2.5$, *ns*, were significant in the repeated measures analysis. Thus, differential lack of respect for the confederate in the high voice condition does not explain the reduced level of satisfaction found there. The difficult group member was disrespected uniformly across conditions (cf. Schachter, 1951, on dislike of deviants).

The second alternative explanation explored was that the amount of time it took for groups to come to a decision could explain the difference. A two-tailed ANOVA yielded a significant difference, $F(2, 51) = 45.7$, $p < .01$, $\omega^2 = .58$. Follow-up tests revealed, however, that the difference between the low and moderate voice condition was significant, $M = 9.9$ versus 17.1, $F(1, 51) = 51.2$, $p < .01$, $\omega^2 = .63$, whereas the difference between the moderate and high voice condition was not, $M = 17.1$ versus 17.6, $F(1, 51) = 1.0$, *ns*. Thus, time to decision was ruled out as the cause of reduced satisfaction in the high voice condition.

Discussion

Results of Study 2 support the hypothesis that voice is related to satisfaction with leaders and group process in an inverted U under conditions of persistent conflict. The general hypothesis that subjects would be more satisfied with a decision-making rule that incorporated less voice was confirmed. Satisfaction dropped significantly in the high voice condition, whereas time to decision, disrespect for the difficult group member, and whether the group made a decision remained unchanged.

Results further suggest that the drop in satisfaction in the high voice condition was directed at the leader rather than the confederate group member. The results revealed that participants had less respect for the leader in the consensus condition than in the majority rule condition. This was not the case for the confederate group member because levels of (dis)respect for her were the same across all three conditions. In addition, a number of participants explicitly said during the debriefing session that they had expected their leader to intervene to stop the confederate from dominating the discussion (i.e. the confederate was holding the group hostage). Moreover, time to decision or whether the group made a decision are not plausible explanations here because groups in the moderate and high voice conditions were not significantly different on either of these dimensions. There are at least four possible explanations for the finding that participants were more satisfied with less voice. The first three are Sheppard's (1985) hypothesized decision rules: (a) efficacy principle—perhaps participants

thought that the leader was not doing what was expected of her, (b) check and balance decision rule—perhaps participants thought that the leader allowed the confederate to have too much power by dominating the discussion to the point that their own voices were not being heard, and (c) have your say and no more rule—perhaps participants simply thought that the leader allowed the confederate group member too much voice. This last explanation raises an interesting point that most research in procedural justice ignores: How much voice should others be allowed if I am party to it? Results here indicate that there is a limit. Oftentimes, our interactions with authorities and leaders involve the voice of others as well as ourselves (e.g., court proceedings, committee meetings, multiparty negotiations, etc.). Certainly, this is an area in need of further research.

The fourth and final alternative explanation I suggest here is that the leader in the high voice condition may have been perceived as trying to integrate the unintegrateable. Sometimes in life, of course, there is no common ground. For example, either the government allows abortion or it does not, and there will always be extremists on either side who see the issue as black and white rather than shades of gray. Leaders who try to integrate fundamentally opposed perspectives will be seen by moderates as thoughtful and creative but by extremists as weak, unprincipled, and ineffective (Tetlock, 1992; Tetlock, Armor, & Peterson, 1994; Tetlock, Peterson, & Berry, 1993). Leaders in the high voice (consensus) condition insisted that group members work out their differences and come to an agreement by talking—perhaps they were seen as less effective because they were tying to integrate opposing positions. It is left for future research to distinguish among these four explanations or to suggest an alternative explanation for the effect shown in Study 2.

As always, there are reasons to urge caution in generalizing from one study. There are at least two interrelated problems with this study. The first involves the manipulation of voice, which included both the decision rule the leader employed (consultation, majority rule, or consensus) and the discussion instructions of the leader (the rankings only, discussion allowed, versus discussion required, respectively). To some extent, this was unavoidable because consensus decision making does require full discussion. This does, however, leave open the possibility that either the decision rule or the discussion instructions alone were responsible for the effects observed. The second problem with this study involves the measurement of voice. The measure reported here is really a measure of perceived voice, as in most studies of procedural justice, rather than observed voice. What is noteworthy about these results, however, is that participants were able to distinguish between their level of experienced voice by treatment condition and their level of personal satisfaction with the group. Moreover, the participants' dissatisfaction in the high versus moderate voice conditions could only have been caused by the process that the group used to come to a decision. Remember that neither the amount of time to decision nor whether the groups reached decisions (all groups completed the task) were significantly different in the high and moderate voice conditions.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Combined, these studies both broaden the scope of the procedural justice literature into small group decision-making research and suggest that there may be a limit to the beneficial effects of voice. For groups researchers, these studies offer a new way of thinking about satisfaction in group decision making. People are generally more satisfied with consensus decision making because it requires the group to take each person seriously rather than because they believe that it will improve the group decision. According to the group value model, the decision by a group and/or its leader to employ a consensus decision rule indicates that every member in the group is a highly valued member.

This research also suggests to group researchers that there are boundary conditions on the general preference for consensus decision making. When a group is seriously divided, majority rule may be better than consensus for garnering satisfaction with the decision. This suggests a trade-off between allowing everyone in the group to be heard and needing the group to reach a decision. What is left for future research is to determine implications of this trade-off for decision quality. When groups are fundamentally divided about an issue, is it better to hold the group back by enforcing consensus or to move forward once a majority has formed (cf. Nemeth, 1977)? Or is a super majority of two thirds or three fourths a better choice? Of course, this will likely depend on the group's task. Some tasks require all group members to be on board with a decision, whereas other tasks can be handled without complete satisfaction. These are all issues for further research.

For procedural justice researchers, this research provides a strong confirmation of the group value model of procedural justice in a setting where the leader does not have high status and does not control significant resources (i.e., is not a judge awarding damages, a police officer issuing citations, or a manager making pay raises). These studies confirm that people care about their treatment by leaders because it conveys information about their worth in the group.

These studies also issue a challenge to procedural justice scholars by raising a series of interrelated questions. What are the boundary conditions on voice in engender-

ing support for leaders? Can large differences in perspective be bridged by the extensive use of voice by a leader? Or will extensive use of voice under persistent conflict lead to dissatisfaction and frustration by the majority? These studies suggest that the effects of voice may be limited in situations in which the players do not share a common perspective on core issues being discussed. In the absence of any common ground, discussion beyond the simple airing of views results in reduced satisfaction, frustration, and lack of support for any group decision that might be made. A contingent relationship between voice and conflict level is proposed, whereby greater voice is always useful with common understanding and of limited use where such understanding is absent. Negotiating this trade-off may be one of the key artistic dimensions of leadership. The ability to recognize when further discussion will lead to a decision everyone can support and when it will result in greater frustration is not an easily learned skill.

This research is also one of a number of several recent articles questioning whether greater voice is always useful in leader-follower relations. Two recent studies suggest similar boundary conditions on procedural justice effects. The first is a study by Huo, Smith, Tyler, and Lind (1996) investigating conflicts with work supervisors across racial lines. Results revealed that conflicts among coworkers who identify with the same racial group as their supervisor evaluate their supervisor primarily on the basis of the process used to resolve the dispute. Voice is a critical aspect of such an evaluation. In contrast, people who have conflicts with a supervisor of a different race tend to evaluate their interaction on the basis of whether the decisions of the supervisor are favorable to them (i.e., instrumentally), unless they share a superordinate identification (e.g., as Americans). In other words, people must share a common understanding before the procedures used by supervisors can temper negative outcomes. In the absence of this shared understanding or identification, disputants focus almost exclusively on outcomes. The second study, by Skitka and Houston (1996), found that people's preconceived ideas about what constitutes a fair outcome color their evaluation of the process. Skitka and Houston suggest that past research on procedural justice has focused on situations in which there is normative ambiguity about what the appropriate outcome of a procedure should be. In their study, the expected outcome of a guilty or innocent verdict was manipulated by giving subjects privileged information. The results demonstrate that when there is a strong preconceived idea of what is right in a particular situation and the process does not yield that outcome, then people perceive the process as unfair.

Taken together, these three articles all suggest that voice is not always directly related to satisfaction in leader-follower relations. It is important to note that this is not a criticism of the existing literature in procedural justice. Indeed, it is the sign of a dynamic area of study when scholars begin to reveal boundary conditions on important past discoveries. These studies do, however, warn that voice does not have unlimited use for bridging fundamental differences among people. It is of limited use in circumstances in which conflict is chronic. In such a situation, increases in voice beyond the airing of opinions may even have detrimental effects. Thus the proverb, "You can have too much of a good thing."

NOTES

1. The one exception to this general conclusion is a study by Korsgaard, Schweiger, and Sapienza (1995), who investigated procedural justice effects in management teams where the leader clearly outranked other team members. Although this is a small group study, it is in the same vein as other procedural justice research investigating reactions to high-status authorities.

2. Peterson (1997) indirectly tested procedural justice effects and found that leaders who focus on process in group decision making are rated as more effective than leaders who do not. The specific role of voice was not explored in that study, however.

3. It is worthwhile to note that this outcome could be seen as a favorable one in that it ends the study early. Several participants thought this was indeed desirable and gave the leader favorable effectiveness ratings. Most groups, however, objected verbally to this behavior, and angry shouts were often the result.

4. An ANOVA of each of the individual items in the satisfaction scale produced identical results, with highest satisfaction in the moderate voice condition.

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