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VOICELESS: THE EFFECTS OF UNFAIR PROCEDURES ON RECIPIENTS AND OBSERVERS IN SMALL GROUPS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of procedural fairness (fair and unfair) and type of conflict (cognitive conflict vs. conflict of interest) on members' perceptions of group process, performance and group value. Although there was a main effect for fairness, a procedural fairness by conflict type interaction demonstrated fairness was more important when groups were accomplishing a task for which members had conflict of interest. Excluded members and non-excluded members witnessing unfair procedures were less satisfied with the process, performance and group value than were participants in the fair conditions.

INTRODUCTION

Procedures used during conflict resolution can affect individuals' perceptions of fairness associated with (a) courtroom proceedings (Houlden, LaTour, Walker, and Thibaut 1978; LaTour, Houlden, Walker, and Thibaut 1976; Thibaut and Walker 1978), (b) the allocation of

scarce resources (Greenberg, 1987), and (c) prospective and current employers (Folger and Konovsky 1989; Landy, Barnes-Farrell and Cleveland 1980). In general, individuals are more pleased with conflict resolution procedures that allow them to present their side of a dispute in their own terms and this satisfaction is often unrelated to distributive justice (Folger and Konovsky 1989; Lind, Kanfer, and Earley 1990; Thibaut and Walker 1978). According to Thibaut and Walker fair procedures influence satisfaction above and beyond outcome because participants are able to make instrumental contributions to the task at hand. Others (Lind and Tyler 1988; Tyler 1994; Tyler, Degoey, and Smith 1996) suggest a relational approach to procedural justice. They argue that procedural justice is important because it gives participants information about the group or organization to which they belong. According to the group-value model, being allowed voice during a group's discussion increases the group member's perception that (a) he or she is a respected member; and (b) there is pride associated with belonging to that group (Tyler, et al. 1996).

Regardless of which theoretical approach one uses to explain the importance of voice to group members, the effects of voice in the courtroom or the workplace should be applicable to other conflict resolution settings. Although small decision-making groups are one such setting, less work has been done to investigate the effects of procedures that allow or disallow voice within such groups. The goal of this research is to replicate and extend previous studies on procedural fairness in small decision-making groups. Specifically I examined the degree to which (a) small groups of interacting members are affected by fair and unfair procedures, (b) the type of task exacerbates the effects of fair and unfair procedures for those members, and (c) all members of groups using those procedures (not just those directly affected) are influenced.

An Instrumental Model of Procedural Justice

Based on research looking at preferences for disputes and courtroom proceedings, Thibaut and Walker (1978) suggest that disputants' perception of a decision as just increases when they have process control. Process control includes the amount of control a group member has over order in which information is offered, who presents that information, and what kind of information is discussed. Thibaut and Walker also indicate that process control should be less important when parties are involved in cognitive conflicts and more important when parties are involved in conflicts of interest. Cognitive conflict occurs when all parties involved are searching for the same "truth" or a correct answer to a given problem or dilemma, but those same parties differ in their approaches for that answer (Thibaut and Walker 1978). Thibaut and Walker go on to suggest that procedural justice does not seem as important when resolving issues grounded in cognitive conflict because truth is best accomplished when a single person, referred to as a disinterested third party, controls both the presentation of information and the decision-making. Although the use of fair procedures may be less important in resolving disputes grounded in cognitive conflict, it is vital when resolving issues where prospective solutions create conflicts of

interest. When the parties involved have conflict of interest, for one disputant to have a beneficial outcome, another disputant must forfeit his or her own needs or benefits.

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The ability for a disputant to have control over what information represents his or her own side when resolving a conflict became known as voice. Voice has become the most commonly investigated aspect of procedural justice with many researchers replacing manipulations of procedural justice with manipulations of the presence or absence of voice (Van den Bos 2001).

Why is voice such an important part of process control? According to Thibaut and Walker (1978) disputants have a unique perspective on how their inputs are relevant to given outcomes. Also known as perceptual saliency, participants are able to present information that is critical to them but may be overlooked by others. Inherent in this need to present one's side is the perception that greater process control will lead to a greater chance that one will benefit from the outcome in question (Lind and Tyler 1988; Tyler 1994; Van den Bos and Prooijen 2001).

A Non-Instrumental or Relational Model of Procedural Justice

Since the development of the original theory of procedure, researchers have consistently established that aspects in addition to process control are important in understanding the effects of voice. For example, Lind, et al. (1990) demonstrated that participants rated a task procedure as most fair when they provided input or voice prior to a decision being made (instrumental voice) and least fair when they had no voice. Participants who were allowed voice after the decision was made (noninstrumental or relational voice) rated task fairness somewhere in the middle.

By using structural modeling, Tyler (1994) demonstrated procedural justice ratings were strongly affected by issues unrelated to process control. Examples included: (a) perceptions of neutrality or even-handed treatment by the leader; (b) trust in the leader's intentions in making the decision; and (c) the participant's perception of his or her status within the group. Compared to instrumental voice, relational voice was more related to group factors such as commitment to the organization (Lind and Tyler 1988; Robbins, Summers, Miller and Hendrix 2000) and perceptions of long-term goals (Tyler 1994; Tyler et al. 1996). Other researchers have examined conditions in which the presence of voice appears to be more important. Examples include lack of a clear outcome or standard to which the final solution can be compared and questions about

the trustworthiness of the group or leader enacting the decision (Lind and Tyler 1988; Van den Bos, Wilke, and Lind 1998) and overall uncertainty about ones future (Van den Bos and Miedema 2000). In sum, because having voice increases a member's social connections with the group, voice also implies that one is a "valued, full fledged member of the group enacting the procedure" (Lind et al. 1990: 952).

Because voice causes individuals to feel more satisfied with corporate and legal processes in large organizations and institutions, members of decision-making groups should also be more satisfied with a group that enacts a fair procedure. Researchers examining the effects of different decision making procedures within small groups also show that voice relates to members' group evaluations. For example, Peterson (1999) found that individual members valued their group leader more when using a majority rule decision versus a unanimous decision rule, especially when a member of the group deliberately invoked conflict during the discussion process. He concluded that group member and leader evaluations benefit more from a procedure insuring moderate voice rather than procedures encouraging lower or higher levels of voice.

Korsgaard, Schweiger, and Sapienza (1995) have examined other conditions in which voice is more necessary for group members. They hypothesized that procedural fairness is especially important for group members who perceive their inputs as being ignored by the group leader, and when they fail to have influence over the final decision. This is consistent with research by Tyler (1994) and Van den Bos, et al. (1998) suggesting voice is more important when we have questions about our leader's trustworthiness.

Hegtvedt and colleagues (Hegtvedt, Thompson, and Cook 1993; Hegtvedt 1990; Hegtvedt 1988) conducted a series of research studies investigating the effects of procedural fairness on group members' reactions to their own and other members' distributive outcomes. Participants read one of several vignettes describing an interaction between two individuals. One character in the vignette was a typist and the other was a person needing the paper to be typed. Participants assumed the role of typist in the vignette and then answered a series of questions based on his or her role in the story. In general, they found that group members responded most negatively to procedures that violated their expectations of equity, when their personal outcomes were negative. Specifically Hegtvedt (1988) suggested that when participants perceived themselves as underrewarded (ie., compensated for less than what they expected) they "restored psychological equity by …expressing a more unfavorable opinion of their partner" (150). Subsequent research by Hegtvedt (1990) illustrated that of three social relationship factors investigated: fair treatment, relative power position, and status within the group, fair treatment had a stronger influence on the participants' emotional reactions to the scenarios.

One does not have to be directly affected by unfair procedures for them to influence satisfaction and group value. Researchers have examined the differences between group members directly affected by unfair procedures and those organizational members who witnessed them. Lind, Kray and Thompson (1998) investigated participant reactions to leaders who either used mild unfair procedures (voice was denied one time for each member) or harsh unfair procedures (voice was denied for one member three times). They found that groups in which each participant experienced a little unfair treatment evaluated the supervisor significantly more negatively than groups who only had one member treated harshly. They suggested that differences in supervisor ratings were the result of differences in salience between personally experiencing mild injustice and hearing about harsh injustice from someone else. In a subsequent study, Van den Bos and Lind (2000) found that participants rated the fairness of procedures similarly across the self/unfair conditions and other/unfair conditions suggesting that members' ratings of their leaders are in fact affected by other members' unfair treatment. They hypothesized that this study showed a stronger effect of observed maltreatment because a "third-party" experimenter provided information about the other participant's unfair procedure rather than the target person.

The Current Study

Previous researchers have demonstrated the importance of fair procedures in experimental paradigms designed to simulate group interactions. For example, participants are led to believe that their contributions to a task will be combined with other group members or participants are asked to assume the role of an actor in a scenario involving two or more individuals. Although these are valuable ways of creating well controlled group situations, they often fail to create the interactive environment associated with having group members actually solve a task together. Hegtvedt (1990) suggests that compared to role playing, having group members engage in more active participation may actually enhance the effects of social factors on perceptions of equity. Hegtvedt, Thompson and Cook (1993) note that another limitation of the scenario method is the inability for researchers to study the effects of inequity over a series of exchanges. Therefore the first goal for the current study was to use a group paradigm that increased the degree of interactions among group members.

Second, I wanted to incorporate two factors from the instrumental and relational perspectives on voice. The first issue involves the type of conflict and the idea that procedural fairness is more important when groups' tasks involve conflict of interest as compared to cognitive conflict. The

second factor is the idea that perceptions of the group, including social bonds and value are enhanced as a function of having voice. Thibaut and Walker (1978) suggest that instrumental voice is more important in resolving conflicts of interest. What about non-instrumental voice? Consistent with previous research conducted by Hegtvedt (1990; 1988), I expected that all participants in an Unfair Procedural condition would evaluate their groups' process, performance, and value more negatively than would participants in a Fair Procedure condition. Second, I hypothesized that differences in Procedural Fairness would have the most effect on members' ratings of process, performance and group value when participants are involved in tasks that trigger conflict of interest rather than cognitive conflict.

My third goal for this investigation was to determine the effects of receiving versus observing the Unfair Procedure. I hypothesized that group members actually excluded in the Unfair Procedure conditions would evaluate their groups' process, performance, and value more negatively than group members observing the exclusion in the same condition and that these non-excluded members in the Unfair Procedure conditions would evaluate their groups' process, performance and value more negatively than groups members participating in the Fair Procedure Conditions.

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METHOD

Design

The design was a 2 (Procedural Fairness: Fair or Unfair) x 2 Type of Conflict: Conflict of Interest or Cognitive Conflict) factorial. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental groups: (a) Fair Procedure, Cognitive Conflict; (b) Unfair Procedure, Cognitive Conflict; (c) Fair Procedure, Conflict of Interest; (d) Unfair Procedure, Conflict of Interest.

Participants

A total of 120 Caucasian participants (33 men and 87 women) from a Midwestern university participated in the current study. All individuals received extra credit in an introductory

psychology course in return for their participation. Each of the 40 groups included three participants and one male confederate who served as group leader in the study. Although all three confederates were not able to complete a balanced number of groups across all four conditions, there were no differences in participants' ratings of leaders competence, $F(2, 117) = 0.88$, $p > .05$ or leader satisfaction. $F(2, 117) = 2.26$, $p > .05$.

Justice Manipulation

Prior to the experiment, each confederate leader was trained to be consistent in excluding a group member from the discussion process. Leaders were instructed: not listen to the excluded member's suggestions, not be helpful to that person when help was requested, to refuse to answer a specific question or only provide unhelpful responses, to point out how the excluded member's input was only redundant to others and to avoid sustained or meaningful eye contact with the excluded member. After each group was seated, the experimenter appeared to "randomly" select the confederate leader from a list of names provided by that group. The selected leader was then asked if he was comfortable serving as leader. Once he agreed, the experimenter handed him a typed set of instructions.

In all conditions, the experimenter gave the leader a written set of procedural instructions including copies of the task. After all members completed the task individually, the leader read further instructions from the procedural instruction sheet. The leader started on his left and had each group member present his or her solution to the group, one at a time. In the unfair conditions, the leader ignored the person to his immediate right during the group's discussion process. The leader then recorded many of group members' comments on a group response sheet. After the discussion phase was completed, the leader began the decision-making phase by asking group members to indicate which solution or solutions did they believe was most correct for the problem. At this point, regardless of experimental condition, all group members participated in the group's decision. The leader then recorded this decision on a group response sheet.

After the group task was completed, the experimenter reentered the room and asked members to complete questionnaires concerning the group experience. She then debriefed them on the nature of the study, answered questions, and thanked them for their participation.

Task Manipulation

Conflict of interest task. Individuals assigned to the conflict of interest task served as "committee members" who were chosen by their university to develop an affirmative action policy. Participants read an instruction sheet that (a) defined affirmative action, (b) defined technical credentials (i.e., high school grade point average, SAT scores, high school rank, and letters of recommendation) and group membership (i.e., gender) and (c) explained the process of weighting technical credentials and group membership for admissions criteria. This task was based on a series of questions used in affirmative action research by Nacoste (1994, 1996) and was chosen as a conflict of interest task based on previous research and theoretical work. For example Kravitz (1995) found that participants perceived the process of affirmative action as unfair regardless of how they felt about prejudice and racism.

One would expect that non-beneficiaries directly affected by an affirmative action procedure would perceive it as a conflict of interest. We also suggest that other members of the non-beneficiary group (e.g. white males) may perceive the task as a conflict of interest because of their identification with those members of the group directly affected by an implemented policy.

Participants in the current study indicated strong disagreement with the general use of special consideration. The same respondents also suggested that when special consideration was given to some applicants (e.g., women, African-Americans, Hispanics) the selection process is unfair for all applicants. Males and females did not differ significantly in their responses to questions concerning either general or specific attitudes toward affirmative action.

Cognitive conflict task. Individuals assigned to the cognitive conflict condition completed a task in which they considered themselves to be the crew of a space ship that had crashed on the moon (Hall and Watson, 1970). Group members received a list of 15 items available to them for their survival. Sample items include matches, food concentrate, and oxygen. The group then rank ordered those items in degree of importance to their survival on the moon. While the experimenter kept a record of individual perspectives, participants were not aware of which members contributed the most accurate information.

Dependent Measures

Leader evaluation. Participants completed a series of statements that appeared to evaluate leader style and effectiveness. These measures were used to assess the effectiveness of the procedural fairness manipulation as well as measure the effects of the independent variables on ratings of process, performance and group value. The statement "The leader allowed me to speak during the group's discussion," was used to assess whether participants ostracized by the leader perceived the exclusion. Possible responses ranged from 1(Never) to 5(Always).

Group evaluation. There were also survey items for measuring satisfaction with group process and performance. Possible responses to these questions ranged from 1(Disagree) to 5(Agree). To measure overall process satisfaction participants responded to the statement "In general, I am satisfied with the way how the group worked together." Responses to "In general, I was satisfied with the group's performance," served as a measure of performance satisfaction. A third item assessed perceptions of group value. Group members rated the following statement "The way I worked with my leader made me want to stay in the group," on a scale of 1(Never) to 5(Always).

RESULTS

Manipulation Check.

To determine whether excluded group members were aware of their differential treatment and if this awareness differed as a function of task type, I conducted a 2 (Group Member Treatment: Excluded, Non-excluded) by 2 (Conflict Type: Conflict of Interest, Cognitive Conflict) ANOVA on member ratings of allowed contributions. Within the Unfair conditions (n=54), there was a significant main effect of being the excluded group member. Compared to non-excluded members (M = 4.64), excluded members (M = 4.00) indicated that their leaders were less likely to allow them to talk during the group's discussion, $F(1, 50) = 6.26$, $p = .02$. There was no main effect for Conflict Type, $F(1, 50) = 0.04$, $p > .05$, or Group Member Treatment by Conflict Type interaction, $F(1, 50) = .43$, $p > .05$. Means, presented in Table 1 show the hypothesized differences in perceptions of allowed contribution as a function of group member treatment.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for "Allowed Contributions" by Group Member Treatment and Conflict Type

Group Member Treatment	Conflict Type		
	Cognitive Conflict	Conflict of Interest	Overall
Excluded			
Mean	4.09	3.86	4.00
Standard deviation	1.22	1.68	1.37
N	(11)	(7)	(18)
Non-excluded			
Mean	4.59	4.71	4.64
Standard deviation	0.59	0.47	0.54
N	(22)	(14)	(36)
Total			
Mean	4.42	4.43	4.43
Standard deviation	0.87	1.08	0.94
N	(33)	(21)	(54)

Another 2-way ANOVA provides further support for the effects of the fairness manipulation. Excluded members (M = 2.11) were more likely to report that their leader did not consider their ideas when discussing the problem than were non-excluded members (M = 1.56), $F(1, 50) = 4.21$, $p = .05$. Again there was no significant main effect for Conflict Type, $F(1, 50) = 0.08$, $p > .05$, or interaction between Group Member Treatment and Conflict Type, $F(1, 50) = 0.21$, $p > .05$. These results suggest that group members perceived their exclusionary treatment similarly across the Conflict of Interest and Cognitive Conflict conditions (see Table 2 for means and standard deviations).

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Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations for "Consideration of Ideas" by Group Member Treatment and Conflict Type

Group Member Treatment	Conflict Type		
	Cognitive Conflict	Conflict of Interest	Overall
Excluded			
Mean	2.09	2.14	2.11
Standard deviation	1.22	1.46	1.28
N	(11)	(7)	(18)
Non-excluded			
Mean	1.64	1.43	1.56
Standard deviation	0.73	0.76	0.73
N	(22)	(14)	(36)
Total			
Mean	1.79	1.67	1.74
Standard deviation	0.93	0.73	0.97
N	(33)	(21)	(54)

Procedural Fairness

After determining whether excluded members were aware of their unfair treatment, I investigated the effects of procedural fairness on group process, performance and value using the group as the unit of analysis. In order to determine whether procedural fairness was more important for tasks higher in cognitive conflict as compared to conflict of interest, I conducted three 2 (Procedural Fairness: Fair or Unfair) x 2 (Conflict Type: Conflict of Interest or Cognitive Conflict) ANOVAs on the dependent measures of process satisfaction, performance satisfaction, and group value. Although group level analyses were appropriate for most of my tests, I did use individuals as the unit of analysis to make comparisons across group members who were excluded, non-excluded in the unfair conditions, and non-excluded in the fair conditions. For group-level analyses, means were computed for each group. If interactions were significant, post hoc tests using the Tukey's HSD correction were conducted to determine which groups were significantly different from one another. Means and standard deviations for process satisfaction,

performance satisfaction and group value across all conditions are presented in Table 3. A correlation matrix for variables of interest is in Table 3.

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Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations for Variables of Interest Across All Conditions

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Procedural Manipulation	4.65	0.47
Process Satisfaction	4.39	0.62
Performance Satisfaction	4.56	0.44
Group Value	3.73	1.00

N =120.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix for Variables of Interest

	Procedural Manipulation	Process Satisfaction	Performance Satisfaction	Group Value
Procedural Manipulation	1.00			
Process Satisfaction	.36#	1.00		
Performance Satisfaction	.36#	.66#	1.00	
Group Value	.26*	.22**	.36#	1.00

N =120. * = p < .05, ** = p < .01, # = p < .001.

In order to test the hypothesis that unfair procedures negatively affect ratings of process, performance and value, I conducted 3 one-way ANOVAs using group as the unit of analysis (n = 40). The first ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for procedural fairness on overall satisfaction with the group's process, F (1, 38) = 16.30, p < .01. Groups in the Unfair conditions (M = 3.98) were significantly less satisfied with their group's process than were groups in the Fair conditions (M = 4.68).

There was also a main effect for procedural fairness on performance satisfaction, F (1, 38) = 13.46, p < .01. The ANOVA indicated that groups in the Unfair conditions (M = 4.31) were significantly less satisfied with their task performance than were groups in the Fair conditions (M = 4.76).

Finally, there was also a main effect for Procedural Fairness on perceptions of group value, F (1, 38) = 3.97, p = .05. Groups in the Unfair conditions (M = 3.50) were less likely to indicate their leaders "made them want to stay in the group" than were groups in the Fair conditions (M = 3.91). Means for individuals in the Fair and Unfair conditions are located in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively.

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Interactions Between Procedural Fairness and Task Type.

I conducted a 2 (Procedural Fairness) X 2 (Conflict Type) ANOVA to determine whether procedural fairness affects ratings of process, performance and value differently as a function of the different kinds of conflict inherent in the task. The first Procedural Fairness x Conflict Type interaction was marginally significant for process satisfaction, F (1, 36) = 3.65, p < .07. Of the four conditions, groups in Unfair Procedure/Conflict of Interest condition were the least satisfied with their processes (M = 3.91) and groups in the Fair Procedure/Conflict of Interest condition were most satisfied (M = 4.70). Within the Cognitive Conflict conditions, groups in the Unfair and Fair Procedure conditions were similarly satisfied with group process. Their means were 4.36 and 4.44 respectfully. A post hoc analysis indicated that groups in the Unfair Procedure/Conflict of Interest conditions were significantly different from groups in the Fair Procedure/Conflict of Interest conditions, F (1, 36) = 16.05, p < .05.

A significant Procedural Fairness x Conflict Type interaction on group performance, F (1, 36) = 4.41, p < .05, illustrated the continued importance of procedural fairness on mean ratings of satisfaction with the group's decision. Groups in the Fair Procedure /Conflict of Interest, Fair Procedure/Cognitive Conflict, and Unfair Procedure/Cognitive Conflict conditions were similarly satisfied with their performances as indicated by means of 4.78, 4.73, and 4.52 respectively. A post hoc analysis indicated that groups in the Unfair Procedure/Conflict of Interest condition (M=4.00) were significantly less satisfied with their performances than were

groups in the Fair Procedure/Conflict of Interest Conditions, $F (1, 36) = 10.91$, $p < .05$, and groups in the Fair Procedure/ Cognitive Conflict Conditions, $F (1, 36) = 12.45$, $p < .05$.

Although there was a main effect of procedural fairness on group value, the Procedural Fairness x Conflict Type interaction was not significant, $F (1, 36) = 0.08$, $p > .05$. Mean ratings of group value were similar for groups in all four conditions: Fair Procedure/Conflict of Interest ($M = 3.87$); Unfair Procedure/Conflict of Interest ($M = 3.48$); Fair Procedure/Cognitive Conflict ($M = 3.94$); and Unfair Procedure/Cognitive Conflict ($M = 3.52$).

Comparing Observers of Fair and Unfair Procedures

In order to investigate my third hypothesis that non-excluded group members witnessing unfair procedures will rate their group process, performance and value less positively than non-excluded participants in fair groups, I conducted a series of one-way ANOVAs comparing the non-excluded group members from the unfair groups to non-excluded group members from the fair conditions. The unit of analysis is the individual ($n = 80$). Group members who witnessed unfair procedures were less satisfied with their groups' processes, $F (1, 78) = 10.48$, $p < .05$; less pleased with their groups' performances, $F (1, 78) = 9.80$, $p < .01$; and valued their groups less, $F (1, 78) = 4.27$, $p < .05$, than did non-excluded members in the Fair conditions.

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Comparing Observers of Unfair Procedures to Recipients of Unfair Procedures

Compared to those is the fair conditions, non-excluded members in the unfair conditions were significantly less satisfied with group process, performance and value but this still did not answer the question of whether observers of unfair procedures evaluate their groups as negatively as recipients of unfair procedures. Within the unfair conditions, another ANOVA was used to investigate whether excluded members evaluated their groups differently from those group members not excluded ($n = 54$). Excluded members and non-excluded members did not differ significantly on ratings of process, $F (1, 52) = 2.04$, $p > .05$, performance, $F (1, 52) = 2.49$, $p > .05$ and value, $F (1, 52) = 2.11$, $p > .05$.

Participants who were most satisfied with process, performance, and value were those who participated in the fair conditions. Participants who were least satisfied were the excluded group members in the unfair conditions. Although non-excluded participants in the Unfair conditions were significantly different from participants in the Fair conditions on these measures, Non-excluded participants in the Unfair conditions were not significantly different from the excluded participants. This finding suggests that Unfair procedures directed at a fellow group member affect other members' perceptions of group process, performance and value in a way similar to being personally excluded.

DISCUSSION

Procedural justice theory suggests that how we are treated during a dispute is as important to us as the final outcome. In fact, knowing that fair procedures were used when resolving conflicts increases our satisfaction with those outcomes that go against our own self-interests. Therefore, fair procedures should be as important in decision-making groups as they are when deciding cases and distributing resources. My goal was to determine those conditions in which the use of procedural fairness increases member satisfaction with group process, performance, and group value.

A main effect of fairness illustrated that groups exposed to unfair procedures rated their process, performance and value more negatively than did groups in which their leaders implemented fair procedures. These findings are consistent with other researchers who found that when leaders were more considerate of group members' inputs, those members judged the procedure as more fair (Korsgaard et al. 1995). Therefore my first hypothesis is supported.

For my second hypothesis, I had expected fairness would be moderated by conflict type in that fair procedures would have a greater effect on measures of process, performance, and value for tasks high in conflict of interest and less effect for tasks high in cognitive conflict. There was a marginally significant Procedural Fairness x Conflict Type interaction on process and a significant interaction of Procedural Fairness and Conflict Type on performance. Groups completing the Conflict of Interest task within the Unfair Procedure conditions were the least satisfied with their groups' process as compared to all other conditions but they were only significantly different from the Conflict of Interest Groups in the Fair conditions. I found a similar effect for performance. Although there was a significant Procedural Fairness X Conflict Type interaction on group ratings of performance, Conflict of Interest groups in the Unfair condition were significantly different from both the Conflict of Interest and Cognitive Conflict groups in the Fair conditions. The Cognitive Conflict groups in the unfair conditions were not significantly different from the other groups. Procedural Fairness appeared to have a greater

effect on process and performance satisfaction when (a) the group's task was high in conflict of interest and (b) the procedure was unfair. There are several reasons why this may be the case.

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As suggested by Thibaut and Walker (1978), tasks higher in cognitive conflict may be resolved without much emphasis on voice. In fact, having too much process control could interfere with accomplishing a task when there is one best answer. Members who are neutral, or uninterested or see the group goal as consistent with their own individual goals may consider a procedural structure emphasizing equal participation as unnecessary and even an impediment to developing a creative solution (Heuer and Penrod 1986). Also, one or more members of the given group could have specific-status characteristics that entitled them to make greater contributions to the discussion (Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch 1972). These behavioral or interpersonal abilities (i.e., task familiarity, organizational skills or leadership style) may be underutilized as a function of a procedure whose sole purpose is to guarantee equal voice among all involved parties. There is also the concern that the NASA task has a correct answer whereas the Affirmative Action task does not. According to Thibaut and Walker, that is the very nature of the difference between a cognitive conflict and a conflict of interest. Participants were not aware at the time of completing the task whether their group solution was indeed the correct answer to the NASA problem.

There was also a concern that having groups complete an affirmative action task may increase their members' awareness of procedural fairness. If completing an affirmative action task increases the salience of fairness for members, then excluded members in the Unfair Procedure/Conflict of Interest Conditions should report exclusionary behavior at a higher rate than group members in the Unfair Procedure/Cognitive Conflict condition. However, there were no significant differences in reports of exclusion across Conflict Type. Regardless of which task they completed, excluded members were equally likely to report that the leader prevented them from speaking during the discussion and the leader did not consider their ideas when discussing the problem.

Groups exposed to the Unfair Procedure/Conflict of Interest conditions were the only groups significantly different from the others. This suggests that the unfair procedure experienced by group members may have triggered heuristics of fair procedures, which in turn caused those groups to rate their current experience as more unfair. Van den Bos and Van Prooijen (2001) suggested that one way to understand how individuals evaluate procedural fairness is to examine the reference points used for deciding whether procedures are fair. According to referent cognitions theory, participants compare unfair procedures to procedural alternatives they have either experienced or can imagine. They found that unfair procedures were more likely to trigger heuristics of fair procedures than were fair procedures to trigger heuristics of unfair procedures.

This effect was stronger when the reference point (the fair or unfair procedure to which the current procedure was compared) was close than when the reference point was distant. My findings appear to be consistent with the results of their study. Perhaps participants are less likely to expect equal opportunities for presenting solutions when solving a task that has only 1 correct answer.

Referent cognitions theory may also explain why excluded members and non-excluded members in the unfair conditions rated their group experiences similarly. While the manipulation check indicated the excluded member was aware that he or she was kept from the group's discussion, other group members were also affected by the unfair procedures, as indicated by similar low ratings of process, performance and group value. The advantage in having a laboratory paradigm in which group members interact with one another is that participants are equally aware of what constitutes fair and unfair procedures. The excluded member is aware of the procedural unfairness he is experiencing because the member only has to look at the treatment of others within the group to envision how the task should be conducted. In turn, members who are not excluded but who are witnessing their colleagues treatment only have to look at their own treatment to see how the group should be conducted. Because all members in the unfair conditions reported similar ratings of fairness, decision, and group satisfaction, my third hypothesis was supported.

These findings suggest that the dissatisfaction with the group could be less related to the group's outcome or decision rule and more related to the inability for all members to present their own sides in their own words. Unfortunately, in this study, the operational definition of an unfair procedure, in this case not allowing a member to contribute, may in fact be a violation of a previously stated "fair procedure" rather than an unfair procedure itself. Future researchers should separate the fairness of the procedure from the violation of the expectation of fairness. One may be perceived as a more serious infraction to group members than the other.

Relational voice also appears to be more important when participating in a task high in conflict of interest such as creating an affirmative action policy. The way one maintains social bonds and group membership is by first presenting beliefs and feelings to the group which in turn are validated or ignored by other group members. When contributions are validated by other members, one assumes a respected place within the group. When contributions are ignored by other members, one assumes that his or her status within the group is less than other members (Tyler 1994). The current findings are also consistent with the idea that voice is more important when we are concerned about treatment by and trust in our leader and suggest that group members are also affected by the threatened status of other group members. The data illustrating

the significant differences between individuals who were non-excluded in both conditions best illustrated this point. Although they were allowed voice, non-excluded group members in the Unfair Procedure conditions rated group process, performance and value more negatively than did participants in the Fair Procedure conditions.

There are several implications for these findings. First, within small groups, procedural justice, specifically voice is very important to members. As suggested by Korsgaard et al. (1995), procedures for increasing voice can be set up prior to conducting a group meeting and do not need to be specific to a certain leadership style. Rather, group leaders could follow one procedure for solving tasks high in cognitive conflict and another when the task at hand elicits conflict of interest. Second, considering the type of task when implementing a procedure seems especially important when members are required to make a group decision that may negatively affect individual members. Because, many corporate and administrative decisions involve many conflicts of interest, utilizing the fairest procedure possible could assist organizations in maintaining employee satisfaction with their group's decision and the organization as a whole. Third, since individuals do not have to be affected directly by an unfair procedure to see that procedure as unfair, leaders must be consistent about how they apply the procedure.

Future research in the area of procedural justice and decision-making groups should consider the following questions. Were participants in the current study affected primarily by the use of the unfair procedure, or were their negative evaluations of the group process, performance and value the products of a violated expectation? In the current study, leaders told group members that everyone in the group would have an equal opportunity to engage in a group discussion and then proceeded to exclude one member. It would be interesting to examine whether the reason that members rated those groups with unfair procedures more negatively is because they expected to be treated fairly or if these negative ratings were the result of reactance to a leader who broke his or her word. Regardless of the underlying issue, our participants considered the procedure to be unfair. Future research could examine the degree to which different types of infractions occurring within groups elicit different perceptions of unfairness. Perhaps ostracizing a member is considered an unfair procedure but assigning disproportionate workloads (or credits) among members would be perceived as even more unfair. Future researchers should also examine the effects of previous working or personal relationships among group members to perceptions of procedural fairness. In this study, individuals other than the leader were randomly assigned to groups, therefore individual group members had not met prior to participating in this study. What would happen if the excluded group member was a colleague or friend? Would the perception of unfairness be even stronger? In turn, would a member's willingness to continue interacting with a group following an unfair procedure be even more tenuous.

In addition to the procedure, future research may want to consider further the role conflict of interest plays in influencing member perceptions of group process, performance and value. Compared to the cognitive conflict task, the effects of the conflict of interest are less clear for a variety of reasons. The affirmative action task is more representative of the types of decisions made in organizations and institutions. In addition to representing a conflict of interest, group members may have been more affected by unfair procedures because the task was more controversial and more engaging. Future research could continue to tease out the factors associated with the task at hand that mandate the type of procedures which would best facilitate the group's outcome. Procedural justice and more specifically the group value model allows us a new perspective in which to evaluate these and other questions.

[77]
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[78]

APPENDIX 1

Means and Standard Deviations for "Process Satisfaction", "Performance Satisfaction," and "Group Value" by Group Member Treatment and Conflict Type for Individuals in the Fair Conditions

	Conflict Type		
	Cognitive Conflict	Conflict of Interest	Overall
Process Satisfaction			
Mean	4.44	4.70	4.56
Standard deviation	1.16	0.53	0.93
N	(36)	(30)	(66)
Performance Satisfaction			
Mean	4.78	4.73	4.76
Standard deviation	0.42	0.45	0.43
	(36)	(30)	(66)

N			
Group Value			
Mean	3.94	3.87	3.91
Standard deviation	0.83	1.14	0.97
N	(36)	(30)	(66)

[78]
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[79]

APPENDIX 2

Means and Standard Deviations for "Process Satisfaction", "Performance Satisfaction," and "Group Value" by Group Member Treatment and Conflict Type for Individuals in the Unfair Conditions (54)

	Conflict Type				
	Cognitive Conflict		Conflict of Interest		
	Group Member Treatment				
	Excluded	Non-Excluded	Excluded	Non-Excluded	Overall
Process Satisfaction					
Mean	4.36	3.46	3.29	4.21	4.39
Standard deviation	1.03	1.00	1.50	0.97	1.02
N	(11)		(7)		

		(22)		(14)	(54)
Performance Satisfaction					
Mean	4.45	4.55	3.43	4.29	4.31
Standard deviation	0.69	0.67	1.27	0.83	0.86
N	(11)	(22)	(7)	(14)	(54)
Group Value	3.27	3.64	3.14	3.64	3.50
Mean	1.10	0.95	0.69	1.15	1.00
Standard deviation	(11)	(22)	(7)	(14)	(54)
N					

[79]
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[80]

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[83]

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[84]