

## On Racial Diversity and Group Decision Making: Identifying Multiple Effects of Racial Composition on Jury Deliberations

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This research examines the multiple effects of racial diversity on group decision making. Participants deliberated on the trial of a Black defendant as members of racially homogeneous or heterogeneous mock juries. Half of the groups were exposed to pretrial jury selection questions about racism and half were not. Deliberation analyses supported the prediction that diverse groups would exchange a wider range of information than all-White groups. This finding was not wholly attributable to the performance of Black participants, as Whites cited more case facts, made fewer errors, and were more amenable to discussion of racism when in diverse versus all-White groups. Even before discussion, Whites in diverse groups were more lenient toward the Black defendant, demonstrating that the effects of diversity do not occur solely through information exchange. The influence of jury selection questions extended previous findings that blatant racial issues at trial increase leniency toward a Black defendant.

*Keywords:* racial diversity, group composition, decision making, jury deliberations, jury selection

When any large and identifiable segment of the community is excluded from jury service, the effect is to remove from the jury room qualities of human nature and varieties of human experience, the range of which is unknown and perhaps unknowable. It is not necessary to assume that the excluded group will consistently vote as a class in order to conclude, as we do, that its exclusion deprives the jury of a perspective on human events that may have unsuspected importance in any case that may be presented.”

—Justice Thurgood Marshall, *Peters v. Kiff*

The quotation above comes from a ruling in which the U.S. Supreme Court addressed the controversial issue of racial diversity and juries. Even though Thurgood Marshall’s words are over 30 years old, they resonate today in a society that continues to wrestle

with similar issues across a variety of domains. Much contemporary discourse on racial diversity has focused on competing ideologies and value systems (Norton, Sommers, Apfelbaum, Pura, & Ariely, in press; Plaut, 2002; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). In debate over affirmative action, for example, one camp has championed colorblindness as a moral imperative and decries as racism any consideration based on race (Connerly, 2000; *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 2003, petitioners’ arguments). On the other hand, proponents of affirmative action have emphasized the need to remedy historical inequities and suggest that racial representativeness in the classroom and workplace constitutes a compelling societal interest (Crosby, 2004; *University of California Regents v. Bakke*, 1978). Such conflicts in ideology are polarizing and difficult to resolve. As Justice Marshall’s comments imply, a more promising means of evaluating racial diversity is to consider its observable influence on group performance.

The present article heeds this suggestion and examines in a jury context the influence of racial composition on group decision making. The mock jury paradigm provides a realistic and engaging means for examining group decision making, as participants are forced to work together to evaluate ambiguous information and reconcile their interpretations of it. In this setting, a premium is placed on a group’s fact-finding abilities and final decision, not on its morale, rendering the jury an ideal vehicle for examining variables that affect group decision making. An additional benefit of the jury context is the potential of such research to produce findings of practical as well as theoretical importance. Decades after *Peters v. Kiff* (1972), controversy still abounds regarding the role of race in the legal

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system. Among the general public and media, unpopular jury verdicts are frequently attributed to racial composition, and intuitions regarding juror race are often treated as facts needing no corroboration (see Cowan & Fairchild, 1997; Reynolds, 1996). To date, little research has tested these assumptions or examined the more basic psychological processes through which diversity affects group decision making. The present research does just that, and though it examines decision making in the context of a jury evaluating the trial of a Black defendant, this article focuses on the more general relationship between racial diversity and processes of group decision making.

### Effects of Diversity

It is well documented that a group's composition can affect its dynamics and performance, but the exact nature of diversity's impact remains the subject of debate (see Mannix & Neale, 2005). The most frequently mentioned negative outcome of diversity—broadly defined—is interpersonal conflict (see De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). More specifically, various types of heterogeneity can reduce the quantity and quality of group communication (Maznevski, 1994; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989) as well as predict decreases in group cohesion and morale, outcomes that in turn lead members to seek alternative groups or to simply drop out (Jackson, 1992; McCain, O'Reilly, & Pfeifer, 1983; O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989). The potential negative impact of diversity is not limited to morale but can also be seen in a group's actual performance (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; DeBiasio, 1986; Mullen & Copper, 1994). However, as Moreland, Levine, and Wingert (1996) have pointed out, deleterious effects for performance are most likely under certain circumstances, such as on a simple task, when the decision requires convergent thinking or when heterogeneity also leads to variability in group members' abilities.

Other theorists have noted that cohesion and morale do not ensure good group performance (e.g., Janis, 1982; Kameda & Sugimori, 1993), and research demonstrating the advantages of diversity typically has focused on performance benefits. The oft-cited benefits of diversity include increases in group creativity, information sharing, flexibility, and thoughtfulness (Hoffman & Maier, 1961; Nemeth, 1995; Phillips, Mannix, Neale, & Gruenfeld, 2004; Triandis, Hall, & Ewen, 1965). These outcomes are particularly likely when a task is complex, requires divergent thinking, or requires interaction with nongroup members (Levine & Moreland, 1998; Moreland et al., 1996). Research has also suggested that many of the threats to morale posed by diversity weaken or disappear over time as group members learn to work with one another and even become proud of their heterogeneity (Allmendinger & Hackman, 1995; Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993). In other words, to the extent that a group can weather the initial conflict that diversity sometimes creates—or even use that conflict to its advantage—diversity often has observable benefits for group performance and problem solving.

Despite the extensive literature on group composition, very few experiments have examined the specific case of racial diversity by comparing all-White and racially mixed groups. It seems reasonable to predict that as with other forms of diversity, the downsides of racial heterogeneity typically involve interpersonal conflict, whereas its benefits most often relate to performance. Indeed,

regarding this first proposition, Moreland et al. (1996) have suggested that racial diversity may be even more likely than other types of heterogeneity to create interpersonal conflict and threaten morale. Consistent with this conclusion, McLeod, Lobel, and Cox (1996) reported a study in which White participants enjoyed a brainstorming task more when their group was racially homogeneous, even though diverse groups generated more creative and feasible ideas. In another study—the only experiment published to date that directly examines the cognitive processes through which racial diversity influences group discussion—Whites demonstrated more complex thinking when assigned to a diverse group than when assigned to an all-White group (Antonio et al., 2004). Specifically, White participants who discussed a controversial social issue (either international child labor practices or capital punishment) in a group with a Black confederate wrote postdiscussion essays that were coded as higher in integrative complexity than did White participants in homogeneous groups. The conclusion that racial diversity has potential performance benefits is further bolstered by the fact that on more than one occasion, social psychologists have attempted to convince trial courts of the positive relationship between racial heterogeneity and long-term outcomes such as intellectual engagement, academic motivation, and development of social skills (Dovidio, 2002; Gurin, 1999).

### Racial Diversity and Group Decision Making

The objective of the present research is to examine the effects of racial diversity in the specific domain of group decision making. The relationship between group composition and performance in general is clearly complicated, but from a strictly decision-making perspective, both sides of the debate regarding diversity effects are compatible with the hypothesis that groups often benefit from racial heterogeneity. The extent to which racial diversity facilitates information exchange and problem solving certainly indicates advantages for heterogeneous groups, especially for complex decisions. But even interpersonal conflict—often mentioned as the principal negative result of diversity—may be useful when a group's primary goal is not boosting morale but rather good and thorough decision making. Consider, for example, the jury, for which positive affect and group cohesion are less important than fact-finding ability and a willingness to consider the entire range of a community's viewpoints (Ellsworth, 1989; *Johnson v. Louisiana*, 1972, dissenting opinion; Wilkenfeld, 2004). In this setting, as in other contexts in which turnover is not a primary concern (or possibility), racial heterogeneity is likely to have positive effects on decision-making processes and outcomes.

But published comparisons of the decision making of racially homogeneous and heterogeneous groups are scarce, and our understanding of the processes through which racial composition affects decision making is limited. This is the case even in the legal domain, in which these questions carry great practical importance. Recent analyses of actual trials have supported the proposition that decision making varies by jury racial composition, as the greater the proportion of Whites on a jury, the harsher that jury tends to be toward non-White defendants (Bowers, Steiner, & Sandys, 2001; Daudistel, Hosch, Holmes, & Graves, 1999). However, these analyses are correlational and fail to reveal the processes through which group composition is influential. A study by Kerr, Hymes, Anderson, and Weathers (1995) has demonstrated that the mere

expectation of participating in a racially diverse jury can be influential, though this study did not examine actual deliberation effects. In a rare experimental investigation of jury racial composition and deliberations, Bernard (1979) showed 10 college student juries a trial video with either a White or a Black defendant. The only jury to reach a unanimous guilty verdict was also the only all-White jury to view the trial of a Black defendant. Research with Latino and Indian participants has also found all-White juries to be more conviction prone than diverse juries in judging a minority defendant (Chadee, 1996; Perez, Hosch, Ponder, & Trejo, 1993). Again, though, even these laboratory studies shed little light on the processes through which racial composition affects deliberations, relying instead on a demographic argument that composition determines a jury's predeliberation vote split and, thus, its final verdict (see Kalven & Zeisel, 1966).

Whereas few studies have examined the processes through which racial diversity is influential, more general research on group decision making provides theoretical background for the present investigation. In fact, much basic psychological theory on group decision making has been derived from empirical studies set in the jury context (e.g., Davis, Stasser, Spitzer, & Holt, 1976; Stasser, Kerr, & Bray, 1982; Tindale & Davis, 1983; Tindale, Davis, Vollrath, Nagao, & Hinsz, 1990). Most notably, social decision scheme theory (Davis, 1973) quantified the ways in which individuals' preferences are combined and reconciled in the production of a group decision. Subsequent extensions of this theory have considered transitions from one preference configuration to another, as well as changes in individuals' subjective certainty over time (Kerr, 1981; Stasser & Davis, 1981). Models such as these typically do not address the specific effects of racial composition, but they can be extrapolated to predict that to the extent that a group's racial composition affects the distribution of individual members' preferences, so, too, will composition affect the group's ultimate decision.

Indeed, a consistent outcome of these, as well as of less quantitative models of group decision making is that a group's majority tends to carry the day. Moreover, the larger this majority, the greater its impact on the group. The most frequent explanation for this "majority rules" tendency focuses on information exchange: Not only does a sizable majority translate into more votes for one outcome alternative, but it also leads the group to devote more of its discussion to information that favors this outcome. However, in his initial theoretical formulation, Davis (1973) suggested that additional explanations for the majority rules tendency are necessary as well, in that many group decisions—including those made by juries—exhibit "a considerably more complex social process at work. The best-fitting model suggested a mixture of majority, conformity, and other effects to be involved" (p. 123). This proposition is consistent with the conclusions of other psychologists who have also cited both informational and noninformational explanations for the influence of a group's composition (Levine & Moreland, 1998; Moscovici, 1980; Moscovici & Lage, 1976). Therefore, it would seem that despite its intuitive and theoretical appeal, an exclusive focus on information exchange is not sufficient for explaining the influence of a group's composition on its decision making. The present research tests this assertion by identifying multiple effects of racial diversity, thereby expanding our conceptual understanding of the ways in which group composition influences decision making.

Such an analysis also has clear practical implications for the legal system's consideration of jury diversity. The bases for requirements of jury representativeness are not principally performance related; they include Constitutional concerns regarding the rights of defendants and jurors (e.g., *Batson v. Kentucky*, 1986) as well as a desire to maintain the perceived legitimacy of the system (Wilkenfeld, 2004). However, as the opening quotation of this article reveals, another potential justification is that diverse juries are often better decision makers than homogeneous ones. Support for this proposition usually comes in the form of information exchange explanations such as Thurgood Marshall's: Diverse juries enjoy wider ranging discussions because White and Black jurors bring different experiences and perspectives to the jury room (*Peters v. Kiff*, 1972). But what of other performance advantages to jury diversity? Hans and Vidmar (1982) raised one such possibility decades ago, writing that the presence of minority group jurors "may inhibit majority group members from expressing prejudice, especially if the defendant is from the same group as the minority group jurors" (p. 42). In sum, in the legal context and more generally, it is an oversimplification to conclude that the effects of racial composition on decision making can be wholly attributed to differential information conveyed by White and Black group members. This assertion is theoretically and practically important, as well as consistent with seminal models of group decision making and minority influence (Davis, 1973; Moscovici, 1980). However, to date no empirical studies have examined it directly.

### Race and Legal Judgments

When psycholegal researchers have focused on race, they have typically examined its influence on the judgments of individual jurors. A brief review of this literature provides a broader context for the present investigation of race and the decision making of juries. Research examining the influence of a defendant's race on individual juror judgments has produced inconsistent results that are difficult to reconcile, in large part because these studies are idiosyncratic and typically not grounded in any particular theory (for exceptions, see Bodenhausen & Lichtenstein, 1987; Wittenbrink, Gist, & Hilton, 1997). Some studies have found that a defendant's race has no reliable effect (Mazzella & Feingold, 1994; McGuire & Bermant, 1977; Nickerson, Mayo, & Smith, 1986); others have indicated that jurors are harsher in their judgments of out-group defendants (DeSantis & Kayson, 1997; Hymes, Leinart, Rowe, & Rogers, 1993; Klein & Creech, 1982), and still others have suggested that jurors are biased in favor of out-group defendants (McGowen & King, 1982; Poulson, 1990).

In light of these inconsistencies, recent research has attempted to place the literature in a more theoretical framework. In a series of studies, Sommers and Ellsworth (2000, 2001) found support for the hypothesis that a defendant's race is relatively unlikely to influence White jurors when a trial's content is blatantly racial, such as when the crime itself is racially charged or when attorneys inject race-related arguments into the proceedings. Drawing on theories that portray modern racism as aversive and subtle (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Kinder & Sears, 1981), Sommers and Ellsworth suggested that race-relevant trial content makes salient many White jurors' concerns about avoiding prejudice or the appearance thereof. However, absent racially charged trial content,

when they are presumably less concerned about racism, White jurors are harsher in their judgments of a Black than a White defendant (Sommers & Ellsworth, 2000, 2001).

Other studies have provided indirect support for this hypothesis. Fein, Morgan, Norton, and Sommers (1997) found that an inflammatory editorial about a Black defendant led White mock jurors to render harsher verdicts in a subsequent trial, but when it was insinuated that the newspaper's depiction was racially motivated, its biasing effects were eliminated. Pfeifer and Ogloff (1991) found that judicial instructions to reach a verdict "free from sympathy or prejudice" had a similar effect, eliminating Whites' tendency to judge a Black defendant more harshly than a White defendant. Indeed, recent research has begun to reconcile inconsistent findings (see also Johnson, Whitestone, Jackson, & Gatto, 1995; Sweeney & Haney, 1992), converging on the hypothesis that activating White jurors' concerns about prejudice attenuates the influence of a defendant's race on judgments. It is worth noting, however, that the majority of mock juror investigations—like examinations of group decision making more generally—continue to rely on predominantly White college student samples, and the handful of studies that includes between-races comparisons have yielded inconsistent findings (cf. Abwender & Hough, 2001; Foley & Chamblin, 1982; Skolnick & Shaw, 1997; Ugwuegbu, 1979).

### The Present Research

The chief objective of the present research was to utilize a mock jury paradigm to examine the processes through which racial diversity influences group decision making. Participants were shown the trial of a Black defendant, and the decision making of racially heterogeneous and homogeneous 6-person mock juries was compared.<sup>1</sup> Observing groups of a wide variety of racial compositions would have been informative, but in the present study heterogeneity was operationalized as 4 White and 2 Black jurors (with homogeneous groups consisting of 6 White jurors). These operationalizations were chosen for theoretical as well as practical reasons. Most participants were recruited from an actual jury pool in the middle of jury duty. A contingency of this arrangement with the court was that participant recruitment could not affect the demographics of the remaining jury pool. Therefore, the proportion of Black participants used in the study was as high as was permissible. Operationalizing heterogeneity with only one Black juror would have been more practically convenient, yet theoretically problematic. A minority of one has unique psychological properties when it comes to conformity and social influence (Allen, 1975; Asch, 1956); a juror who perceives a lack of social support or potential allies may be particularly likely to remain quiet and succumb to group pressure (Ellsworth & Mauro, 1998). Minorities of one are also less likely to exert the consistent pressure necessary to have an influence on a majority (Maass & Clark, 1984; Moscovici & Lage, 1976). Therefore, creating juries with 4 White and 2 Black jurors held constant the study's definition of heterogeneity and enabled a situation in which a group's composition could conceivably be expected to affect its decision making. That is, the diversity in this study was meaningful and not "token," as a two-person minority would be expected to be able to resist majority pressure and even exert its own influence in some situations. This was chosen as a relatively generalizable definition

of heterogeneity not subject to the idiosyncrasies of the special case of a minority of one.

### *Identifying Multiple Effects of Racial Diversity*

This investigation was expected to identify multiple simultaneous processes through which racial diversity affects group decision making. At the most basic demographic level, racial composition was predicted to influence groups' pre-deliberation vote distribution. Consistent with previous findings that Black jurors are more lenient than White jurors toward Black defendants (Skolnick & Shaw, 1997; Sommers & Ellsworth, 2000; Ugwuegbu, 1979), the presence of Blacks on a jury was expected to translate into fewer guilty votes before deliberations.

Of greater interest were the psychological processes through which diversity exerts its influence. To the extent that researchers have considered the processes through which a group's composition affects its decision making, they have usually focused on the prediction that demographic diversity leads to informational diversity. That is, the traditional information exchange account for diversity effects is that heterogeneity enables a group to consider a wider range of perspectives and information (e.g., Hans & Vidmar, 1982; Hoffman & Maier, 1961; Jehn et al., 1999). With regard to racial diversity in particular, the basis for this prediction is that Black group members will make different contributions to a group than Whites (*Peters v. Kiff*, 1972). An example in the legal context would be the expectation that racially diverse juries will more frequently discuss institutional racism or racial profiling because Black jurors are more likely to have personal experiences with these issues. Despite the appeal of this information exchange prediction, no direct experimental tests of it have been conducted with regard to racial diversity. In fact, many in the legal system regard hypotheses regarding jury composition as untestable (Marder, 2002). In the present study, the informational content of all-White and racially diverse jury deliberations was compared. It was hypothesized that heterogeneous groups would indeed exchange a wider range of experiences, viewpoints, and interpretations than would homogeneous groups.

The present study also considers a less-traditional take on diversity and information exchange, one that includes the possibility that White group members behave differently depending on a group's racial composition. The proposition that the effects of racial heterogeneity are, at least in part, attributable to the performance of Whites is consistent with previous findings that demonstrate the influence of race on motivation, judgment, and cognition. Consider, for example, the conclusions of Sommers and Ellsworth (2000, 2001), which suggest that situational variables that activate

<sup>1</sup> The decision to use 6- rather than 12-person juries was based largely on practical considerations. Most participants in the study were citizens fulfilling their jury duty, and only a limited number of these individuals were available for research purposes. Using 6-person groups also facilitated transcription and coding of the videotaped deliberations. Previous research has identified few process differences between 6- and 12-person juries (Kerr & MacCoun, 1985), and the reduced representativeness of smaller juries was not a concern because group composition was controlled. The present research therefore follows a long line of jury simulations that have used 6-person mock juries (e.g., Davis et al., 1976; Kerr, 1981; Tindale et al., 1990).

Whites' concerns about avoiding prejudice also affect their private judgments about a trial, rendering them more lenient toward a Black defendant. If, as Hans and Vidmar (1982) have suggested, membership in a diverse group reminds Whites of their motivation to avoid prejudice, then White participants in the present study may evaluate and weight the trial evidence differently depending on the composition of their group. Accordingly, Whites' informational contributions to deliberations should vary by group composition.

Previous work on race and attitude change suggests another related prediction, namely that membership in a diverse group affects Whites' information-processing style. Several studies have found that Whites' desire to guard against prejudice—or serve as “watchdogs” for bias—leads them to process information more systematically when it is about a Black target (Sargent & Bradfield, 2004) or conveyed by a Black source (Petty, Fleming, & White, 1999; White & Harkins, 1994). It is not much of a leap to propose that a group's racial composition can have a similar effect on its members (see Antonio et al., 2004). In fact, anticipating a meaningful, potentially race-relevant discussion with a diverse group is likely a very immediate and salient reminder of one's motivation to avoid prejudice (see Vorauer, Hunter, Main, & Roy, 2000). As Sargent and Bradfield (2004) concluded, “Whites' attempts to act as watchdogs may be activated by a variety of situations involving stigmatized group members” (p. 1003). In sum, though most psychologists and legal scholars have assumed that the influence of racial diversity results from the contributions of minority group members, the present study offers the novel hypothesis that Whites also bear responsibility for the informational effects of racial composition. Specifically, White participants were expected to contribute different and potentially more accurate information to deliberations when in racially heterogeneous as opposed to homogeneous groups.

Finally, yet another possibility is that some of the effects of racial diversity occur completely outside the scope of information exchange. This is also a hypothesis that has received scant attention from psychologists and the legal community. One exception is Kerr et al.'s (1995) experiment that demonstrated the influence of perceived group composition on the judgments of its ostensible members. Antonio et al. (2004) reported a comparable, albeit marginally significant finding that membership in a group with a Black confederate led Whites to engage in more complex thinking about a discussion topic even before that discussion began. Results such as these cannot be explained by information exchange, as they emerged in the absence of discussion. In the present study, participants' private trial judgments were assessed before deliberations began (but after they were aware of the composition of their group). To the extent that membership in a racially diverse group affects not only the information White participants convey during the discussion but also how they think about and privately evaluate the case—specifically, rendering them less punitive toward the defendant and more thorough in their information processing—Whites were expected to be less likely to vote to convict the Black defendant when in diverse versus all-White groups, even before deliberations begin.

### *Situational Considerations*

Previous investigations of race and legal decision making have illustrated the importance of situational variables. In particular, the presence of blatantly racial issues at trial has been found to moderate the influence of race on jurors' judgments (Sommers & Ellsworth, 2000, 2001). In terms of the present investigation, a related question is whether the effects of racial diversity vary depending on the racial content of a case. Accordingly, groups were randomly assigned to receive either a race-relevant pretrial jury selection questionnaire—which included questions about institutional racism in the legal system and provided a racially charged context for the subsequent trial—or a race-neutral questionnaire. This manipulation not only served a conceptual purpose but also addressed the important practical consideration of how to address the previous finding that juror racial bias is most likely to occur in run-of-the-mill trials without blatantly racial issues. One possible remedy is to attempt to counteract potential racial bias through jury selection questioning, or *voir dire*.

Though judges and legal professionals view *voir dire* as an opportunity to identify jurors who are likely to demonstrate bias (see Hans & Vidmar, 1982), prospective jurors often conceal socially undesirable tendencies (Seltzer, Venuiti, & Lopes, 1991) and erroneously report that they would not be influenced by potential biases (Kerr, Kramer, Carroll, & Alfini, 1991; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). But even if its potential to diagnose bias is limited, race-related *voir dire* may still be useful. The experience of answering questions about racism or one's own racial attitudes could serve as yet another way in which racial issues and concerns about prejudice are made salient for jurors. This would be consistent with the idea that *voir dire* is more than just a method for identifying unsuitable jurors and is also an opportunity to socialize citizens regarding their new role as officers of the court (Balch, Giffiths, Hall, & Winfree, 1976). As such, the present *voir dire* manipulation assessed the possibility that priming race-related concerns moderates the effects of racial diversity on group decision making and also tested the practical hypothesis that pretrial questions about racism color jurors' subsequent trial judgments. On the basis of previous research, the race-relevant *voir dire* was expected to lead to more lenient judgments of the Black defendant than the race-neutral version.

## Method

### *Design*

This study was designed as an engaging and realistic courtroom simulation, in which a jury-eligible community sample watched a video trial summary and then deliberated as 6-person mock juries. Both independent variables in the  $2 \times 2$  design—jury racial composition and the nature of *voir dire* questions—were manipulated at the group level. Racial composition was varied so that half of the juries were all-White and half were diverse; diverse juries deliberated as groups of 4 White and 2 Black mock jurors. Half of the juries received a race-neutral pretrial *voir dire* questionnaire with items about general legal attitudes and experiences. The other half received a race-relevant version of this questionnaire, including items assessing participants' racial attitudes and their beliefs regarding the influence of race in the criminal justice system.

### Participants

Several steps were taken to ensure that the ecological validity of this simulation exceeded that of most investigations of legal and group decision making, beginning with participant recruitment. A total of 200 participants were recruited in one of two ways. The majority (121, or 60.5%) participated during jury duty at a county courthouse in Washtenaw County, Michigan. Additional participants were recruited through newspaper advertisements in the same area.<sup>2</sup>

Courthouse sessions were run with the cooperation of local judges and jury-pool administrators. Each week during the course of the study, a panel of 25 prospective jurors was randomly selected by computer for possible participation. This occurred at the beginning of jury duty, before individuals experienced voir dire for any of the cases on that week's docket. After moving from the jury assembly room to an empty administrative office in another area of the courthouse, the experimenter described to these individuals their opportunity to earn \$10 per hour in a court-sponsored project on jury decision making. Prospective participants were told that the study entailed viewing the video summary of a sexual assault case and deliberating on it. Over 90% expressed interest in participating, and from this group a smaller subset of participants was selected at random and assigned to mock juries (subject to the constraint that half of the groups were racially homogeneous and half heterogeneous). Remaining individuals were returned to the jury assembly room.

Participants recruited through newspaper advertisements were given the same information about the opportunity to earn \$10 per hour as a volunteer for a court-sponsored project on jury decision making. From this pool of willing participants, mock juries were randomly created, subject to the constraints of racial composition and schedule availability. These experimental sessions were run in a university seminar room selected for its physical similarity to the room used at the courthouse.

Because any juror who decided to withdraw from participation in the middle of the session would have led to the loss of data for an entire jury, efforts were made to select an additional alternate juror whenever possible. Therefore, for 26 of the 29 juries, an additional White participant was included in the group that watched the trial video (i.e., a 5th White juror in heterogeneous groups and a 7th White juror in the homogeneous groups). As no participants ever withdrew from the study, the alternate was always dismissed before deliberations began. The assignment of a White juror to the position of alternate was done at random and was unbeknownst to that participant or the rest of the group. Therefore, alternate jurors are included in pre-deliberation but not deliberation analyses.

All 200 participants were jury-eligible citizens. Comparable demographics were maintained across the courthouse and newspaper samples, with no significant differences in participant gender, age, or education level. Overall, 121 participants were women (60.5%) and 79 participants were men (39.5%); 170 participants were White (85%) and 30 participants were Black (15%). Participant age ranged from 18 to 78 years, with a mean of 39 years. The demographics of the nonalternate sample of 174 participants who deliberated on the trial were comparable, as 106 deliberating participants were women (61%) and 68 (39%) were men, with an average age of 40 years. Removal of 26 White alternates from the sample brought the final racial demographics to 83% White and 17% Black.

### Procedure

Once a mock jury was created, participants were seated at a rectangular table and assigned juror identification numbers. Participants were able to see one another and therefore were aware of the composition of their group from the outset of the session. In initial instructions, the experimenter emphasized that participants should interact and make judgments as if they were jurors judging an actual case. The experimenter outlined the process of voir dire, explaining that before a trial prospective jurors are asked questions about their personal experiences and attitudes to determine their

impartiality. Participants were then given one of the two versions of the voir dire questionnaire.

The first items assessed demographic information. Subsequent questions asked about participants' legal experiences, including whether they had ever testified at trial, retained an attorney, or been the victim of a crime. The race-neutral version finished with four open-ended questions about perceptions of violent crimes. For example, one of these questions read, "Do you have any beliefs or experiences that might prevent you from judging a defendant fairly in a case of violent crime?" These were designed to be comparable to the final items in the race-relevant condition with regard to question length and type of response required, though none of these items referred to race. The final four open-ended items of the race-relevant version were as follows:

"This trial involves an African American defendant and White victims. How might this affect your reactions to the trial?,"

"Do you have any biases or prejudices that might prevent you from judging an African American defendant fairly?,"

"In your opinion, how does the race of a suspect affect the treatment s/he receives from police?,"

"In your opinion, how does the race of a defendant influence the treatment s/he receives in the legal system as a whole?,"

These questions were designed to force participants to think about their own racial attitudes and the general role of race in the criminal justice system.

On completing voir dire, participants were shown a 30-min *Court TV* (Courtroom Television Network, 1995) video summary of the trial of a Black defendant charged with sexual assault. The trial video included highlights from opening arguments, the testimony of seven prosecution and three defense witnesses, and closing arguments. The prosecution presented testimony from the two victims, neither of whom could identify the assailant's face, though one was able to describe a scar similar to one on the defendant's torso. The core of the prosecution's case was forensic analysis of crime scene semen and hair, which were consistent with the defendant's, but not definitive matches. The defense focused on the lack of eyewitness evidence and the idiosyncratic methods used by the laboratory that conducted the DNA analysis.

At the end of the video, the experimenter read aloud jury instructions from the State of Michigan (Michigan Criminal Jury Instructions, 1989, 2001). These instructions included the legal elements of criminal sexual conduct, general guidelines for deliberations, and a vague definition of reasonable doubt. Participants then completed a two-item pre-deliberation questionnaire. First, they were asked to indicate their verdict preference of either guilty or not guilty. Second, they were asked to quantify the likelihood that the defendant committed the crime using a scale of 0%–100%.

After collecting the pre-deliberation questionnaires, the experimenter once again reminded participants of their objective to reach a unanimous verdict. Other than the instruction to begin by electing a foreperson, no specific deliberation procedures were suggested. In most experimental sessions, an alternate White participant was then excused from the remainder of the study. The experimenter turned on a video camera mounted on a tripod, pointed it at the jury table, and left participants to deliberate in private. On occasion, groups sent their foreperson out of the room with questions. In these instances, the experimenter provided no additional information about the case. If the foreperson announced that the group could not reach a unanimous verdict, the experimenter reminded participants of a jury's duty to exhaust all avenues in pursuit of unanimity. If the

<sup>2</sup> As discussed in more detail in the Results section, none of the key findings were moderated by participant recruitment method.

foreperson announced that the group had reached a verdict, the experimenter reentered the room and turned off the camera; otherwise, deliberations were stopped after 60 min had elapsed.

## Results

### Sample Comparison

Potential differences between participants from the courthouse and those recruited via newspaper were examined, and the validity of treating all 29 mock juries as one sample was confirmed. Location did not affect any of the predeliberation measures on its own, nor did it moderate any of the findings reported below. The only location effect to emerge was that courthouse groups mentioned more facts about the defendant's scar during deliberations ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ) than did groups recruited through newspaper advertisement ( $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ),  $t(27) = 2.05$ ,  $p = .05$ . This difference has little implication for the present hypotheses, and given that more than 30 analyses were used to test for potential sample effects and interactions, it may very well reflect a simple Type I error.

### Predeliberation Judgments

Participants' predeliberation ratings were collected privately before they interacted. These data therefore satisfy the independence assumption of standard participant-level analysis. Dichotomous predeliberation verdict preference was analyzed using logistic regression. Across the entire sample, 41.0% of participants voted guilty before deliberations began. Racial composition had a significant effect on verdict preference, as 30.7% of participants in diverse groups voted guilty compared with 50.5% of participants in all-White groups,  $\text{Wald}(1) = 9.50$ ,  $p < .01$ . The effect of voir dire on verdict preference was also consistent with predictions, as only 34.4% of participants who received a race-relevant voir dire voted guilty compared with 47.1% of participants in the race-neutral condition,  $\text{Wald}(1) = 4.07$ ,  $p = .04$ . No significant interaction was found between the independent variables of racial composition and type of voir dire,  $\text{Wald}(1) < 1$ .

Chi-square analyses were used for planned comparisons by participant race. Consistent with previous research, Black participants (23.3%) were less likely to vote guilty than White participants (44.1%),  $\chi^2(1, N = 200) = 4.50$ ,  $p = .03$ . Breaking this result down by jury racial composition, the 23.3% guilty vote rate among Blacks did not differ significantly from the 33.8% rate of Whites in diverse groups,  $\chi^2(1, N = 101) = 1.08$ ,  $p = .30$ . However, the difference between Black participants and Whites in all-White groups (50.5% guilty votes) was significant,  $\chi^2(1, N = 129) = 7.33$ ,  $p < .01$ . Analysis also revealed that Whites in diverse groups were significantly less likely to vote guilty than Whites in all-White groups,  $\chi^2(1, N = 170) = 5.23$ ,  $p = .02$ . This result is particularly noteworthy, as it demonstrates that racial composition affected White participants before any information exchange occurred. No interaction was found between voir dire and participant race,  $\text{Wald}(1) < 1$  (Figure 1 presents descriptives for this variable by racial composition, voir dire condition, and participant race).

Similar patterns were found for the second predeliberation measure, ratings of the likelihood that the defendant committed the crime on a scale of 0%–100%. This continuous variable was analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Overall, the aver-

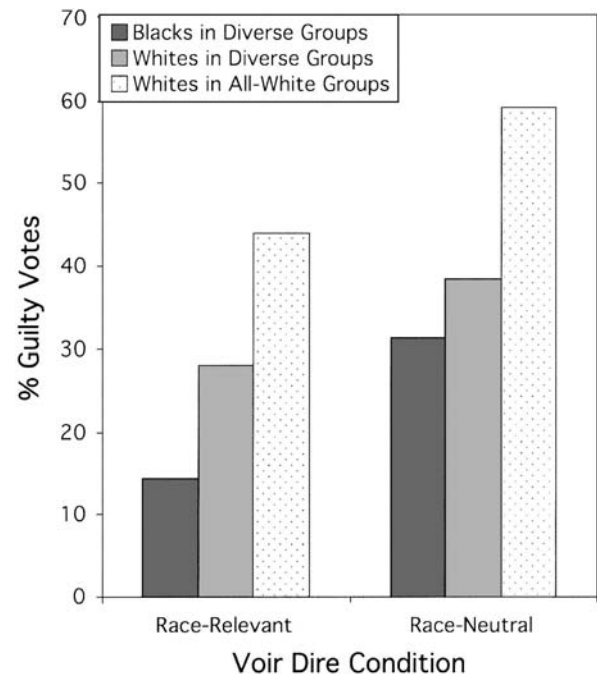


Figure 1. Predeliberation verdict preferences by group racial composition, voir dire condition, and participant race.

age response on this measure was 63.9 ( $SD = 26.8$ ).<sup>3</sup> The main effect for racial composition was significant, as participants in diverse groups gave lower estimates ( $M = 58.5$ ,  $SD = 27.6$ ) than participants in all-White groups ( $M = 69.3$ ,  $SD = 25.0$ ),  $F(1, 196) = 8.57$ ,  $p < .01$ . Consistent with predictions, participants who received a race-relevant voir dire gave lower estimates of guilt ( $M = 60.0$ ,  $SD = 26.2$ ) than did participants in the race-neutral condition ( $M = 67.9$ ,  $SD = 27.0$ ),  $F(1, 196) = 4.52$ ,  $p = .04$ . Once again, no significant interaction emerged,  $F(1, 196) < 1$ .

Participant race was added to the analysis by replacing jury racial composition with a new variable with three levels: Blacks in diverse groups, Whites in diverse groups, and Whites in all-White groups. Planned comparisons were conducted using contrasts with Welch's separate variance  $t$  tests to account for the different size of these three comparison groups; this resulted in noninteger degrees of freedom for most comparisons. Overall, Black participants gave lower guilt estimates ( $M = 53.9$ ,  $SD = 32.4$ ) than did Whites ( $M = 65.9$ ,  $SD = 25.3$ ), though this difference only approached statistical significance,  $t(35.6) = 1.81$ ,  $p = .08$ . The difference between Black participants' responses and those of Whites in diverse groups ( $M = 61.2$ ,  $SD = 25.2$ ) was not significant,  $t(44.5) = 1.09$ ,  $p = .28$ ; the difference between the responses of Black participants and those of Whites in all-White groups ( $M = 69.3$ ,  $SD = 25.0$ ) was significant,  $t(40.0) = 2.39$ ,  $p = .02$ . Consistent with verdict

<sup>3</sup> That fewer than half of participants voted to convict the defendant even though the average probability of commission estimate was greater than 60% suggests that participants took seriously the concept of reasonable doubt. Debriefing conversations after the study, as well as the earnestness of group discussions during deliberations, further confirmed that participants found the experiment to be a realistic and engaging jury simulation.

preference data, Whites in diverse groups gave significantly lower guilt estimates than did Whites in all-White groups,  $t(150.4) = 2.09, p = .04$ . That Whites in diverse groups were once again less convinced of the Black defendant's guilt than Whites in all-White groups supports the conclusion that the influence of racial composition is not limited to processes of information exchange. Type of voir dire did not interact with participant race to affect guilt estimates,  $F(2, 194) < 1$ .

### Deliberation Outcomes

Groups began deliberations by electing a foreperson. This process varied widely: Strategies included looking for someone with jury experience, explicitly choosing the only man in the group, soliciting volunteers, and turning to the person who spoke first. Out of the 15 diverse groups, 5 selected a Black foreperson. This 33% rate was identical to the proportion of Black participants in these groups. The selection process was not as balanced regarding gender. Even though 61% of the sample was female, the majority of forepersons (52%) were male, a difference that was consistent with previous findings (Ellsworth, 1989), though not statistically significant,  $\chi^2(1, N = 29) = 1.97, p = .22$ .

Given that only 40% of predeliberation votes across the sample were for guilty, it was not surprising that only one group—an all-White jury in the race-relevant voir dire condition—ultimately reached a unanimous guilty verdict. This lack of variability in verdicts prevented meaningful statistical comparisons by condition. Out of the 29 groups, 16 (55%) reached a unanimous not guilty verdict and 12 (41%) were not unanimous after 1 hr (see Table 1 for breakdown of group outcomes by condition).

Analysis of deliberation length was more informative. Because the distribution was negatively skewed, data were squared to improve normality and equality of variance. Deliberations of diverse groups (untransformed  $M = 50.7$  min,  $SD = 16.8$ ) were longer than those of all-White groups ( $M = 38.5$  min,  $SD = 19.1$ ), though this difference only approached statistical significance,  $F(1, 25) = 3.67, p = .07$ . However, there was greater variance in predeliberation verdict preferences in all-White groups, as these juries were more evenly divided between guilty and not guilty verdicts than were diverse groups. Ordinarily, this sharper division of preferences would predict longer deliberations and more difficulty reaching unanimity for all-White groups (see Stasser, Kerr, & Davis, 1989). Therefore, each group's distance from a 50/50 predeliberation vote split was calculated by converting vote split to a proportion and taking the positive difference between this proportion and .50. The analysis of deliberation length was then run

controlling for this variable, which, as expected, emerged as a negative predictor of deliberation length ( $\beta = -.32$ ). Consistent with information exchange predictions, this new analysis indicated a significant difference in deliberation length by racial composition,  $F(1, 24) = 5.37, p = .03$ . Closer examination of this effect is detailed below. No difference was found between the deliberation length of groups in the race-relevant voir dire condition (untransformed  $M = 43.5$  min,  $SD = 19.0$ ) and the race-neutral condition ( $M = 45.7$  min,  $SD = 19.0$ ), nor did voir dire condition interact with racial composition to affect deliberation length, both  $F_s(1, 25) < 1$ .

### Deliberation Content

The processes through which the present manipulations affected group decision making were assessed by content coding of the videotaped deliberations. Three coders simultaneously coded five juries, and these overlapping judgments were used to ensure and quantify reliability. Each coder then scored eight juries individually. Coders were blind to voir dire condition, though racial composition was apparent as they watched each tape. Coders were, however, naive to the present hypotheses regarding racial composition. Pairwise kappas for the three coders were computed across all variables reported below. To provide a more rigorous test of reliability, these kappas were based on the coding of each participant, not group-level coding. Pairwise values ranged from .79 to .90, surpassing the conventional cutoff for satisfactory reliability of .70 (Stangor, 1998).

For deliberation content examined at the group level (e.g., number of case facts discussed by each group), standard two-way ANOVA were used. For participant-level analyses (e.g., novel case facts raised by participant race), participants were treated as replicates nested within juries, and planned comparisons were conducted using contrast weights. In other words, for each dependent measure two scores were computed for each diverse group: one for the average response of the 4 White participants and one for the average response of the 2 Black participants. One average score for each dependent measure was also computed for the 6 Whites in each all-White group. Comparisons between the average scores of Whites and Blacks in diverse groups were performed using paired-samples  $t$  tests, whereas comparisons between scores of Whites or Blacks in diverse groups with scores of Whites in all-White groups were calculated using Welch's separate variance independent-sample  $t$  tests. For both group- and participant-level analyses, this yielded a maximum sample size of 29, the total number of groups in the study.

*Breadth of factual content.* No reliable main effects or interactions were found for the influence of voir dire on any measure of deliberation content. However, racial composition had multiple effects on deliberations (see Table 2 for a summary of group-level analyses; see Table 3 for participant-level analyses). First, the breadth of information discussed by each group was examined to determine whether longer deliberations indicated more substantive discussions. Coders used the trial video to create a checklist of 46 major case facts. These facts fell into the more specific categories of assault details, assailant's scar, scientific evidence, and legal

Table 1  
Group Outcomes by Condition

Outcome	Race-relevant voir dire		Race-neutral voir dire	
	Diverse group	All-White group	Diverse group	All-White group
Acquittals	4	5	4	4
Hung juries	3	1	4	3
Convictions	0	1	0	0



Table 2  
Group-Level Analyses of Deliberation Content

Measure	Diverse group	All-White group
Deliberation length, in min	50.67 <sub>a</sub>	38.49 <sub>b</sub>
No. of case facts discussed	30.48 <sub>a</sub>	25.93 <sub>b</sub>
No. of factual inaccuracies	4.14 <sub>a</sub>	7.28 <sub>b</sub>
No. of uncorrected inaccurate statements	1.36 <sub>a</sub>	2.49 <sub>b</sub>
Amount of "missing" evidence cited	1.87	1.07
No. of race-related issues raised	3.79 <sub>a</sub>	2.07 <sub>b</sub>
No. of mentions of racism	1.35	0.93
% of time mention of racism met with objection	22% <sub>a</sub>	100% <sub>b</sub>

Note. Values with different subscript letters differ significantly at  $p \leq .05$ ;  $n = 15$  diverse groups and 14 all-White groups.

issues.<sup>4</sup> Consistent with information exchange predictions, diverse groups discussed more case facts ( $M = 30.5$ ,  $SD = 4.87$ ) than all-White groups ( $M = 25.9$ ,  $SD = 6.08$ ),  $F(1, 25) = 4.68$ ,  $p = .04$ .

Coders recorded who was the first participant in the group to raise each of these facts, and these participant-level data were analyzed as detailed above. Analyses indicated that the effect of racial composition on deliberation breadth was not attributable to the performance of Black participants, who raised only slightly more novel facts on average ( $M = 4.70$ ,  $SD = 1.93$ ) than did Whites in all-White groups ( $M = 4.32$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ),  $t(21.5) < 1$ . Rather, the main effect for racial composition captured differences in White participants' performance across condition. Even without controlling for pre-deliberation verdict preference distribution, the average of 4.32 ( $SD = 1.01$ ) case facts raised by participants in all-White groups was significantly less than the average of 5.27 ( $SD = 1.29$ ) raised by Whites in diverse groups,  $t(26.3) = 2.21$ ,  $p = .04$ .

**Accuracy of factual content.** Breadth of information exchange in a group's decision making is important, but so too is the accuracy of that information. Accordingly, deliberations were coded for inaccurate statements. Coding was confined to inaccuracies related to the case; unrelated factual errors (e.g., "the population of the U.S. is 600 million") were not included. When multiple participants were inaccurate regarding the same fact, all of these errors were counted.<sup>5</sup> However, the same inaccuracy voiced repeatedly by the same participant was only counted once. Analysis indicated that the deliberations of diverse groups included fewer inaccurate statements ( $M = 4.14$ ,  $SD = 2.71$ ) than those of all-White groups ( $M = 7.28$ ,  $SD = 2.64$ ),  $F(1, 24) = 9.66$ ,  $p < .01$ . The magnitude of this effect is even greater when one considers that all-White jury deliberations were, on average, 12 min shorter than those of diverse juries. Analysis by participant race revealed that Whites in all-White groups made more inaccurate statements ( $M = 1.21$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ) than either Blacks ( $M = 0.61$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) or Whites ( $M = 0.73$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ) in diverse groups,  $t(23.3) = 2.97$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $t(25.4) = 2.67$ ,  $p = .01$ .

Of course, when inaccurate statements are corrected by other group members, they become less problematic. Accordingly, the number of uncorrected factual errors per group was considered. Analysis indicated that uncorrected inaccuracies were less frequent in diverse groups ( $M = 1.36$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ) than in all-White groups ( $M = 2.43$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ),  $F(1, 24) = 5.49$ ,  $p = .03$ . Again, this

significant difference emerged in spite of the fact that all-White jury deliberations were shorter and included fewer factual statements to begin with.

**Nonfactual content.** The analyses above examine discussion of factual information. However, information exchange predictions often do not focus on facts but rather on the expectation that diverse groups will be exposed to more opinions and perspectives than homogeneous groups. These nonfactual aspects of deliberations were examined in several ways. First, coders noted participants' statements about evidence they *wished* had been presented at trial. For example, several participants cited the lack of fingerprint evidence as important; others wondered why a child witness to the assault did not testify. Analysis indicated that diverse groups discussed more examples of "missing" evidence ( $M = 1.87$ ,  $SD = 1.46$ ) than did all-White groups ( $M = 1.07$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ), though this effect only approached significance,  $F(1, 25) = 3.78$ ,  $p = .06$ . Once again, at the participant level, this difference was driven by the performance of Whites, who brought up more items of "missing" evidence when in diverse groups ( $M = 0.37$ ,  $SD = 0.35$ ) than in all-White groups ( $M = 0.18$ ,  $SD = 0.08$ ),  $t(20.5) = 2.02$ ,  $p = .05$ . A more intuitive way to interpret these fractional means is that 1 of every 2.7 White participants in diverse groups cited an item of "missing" evidence, a rate twice as frequent as the 1 of 5.6 rate among all-White groups. The average for Black participants ( $M = 0.21$ ,  $SD = 0.25$ ; 1 of every 4.8 participants) did not differ significantly from either group of White participants.

**Mention of race.** Novel statements related to race were also coded. Topics included the relationship between race and eyewitness accuracy, genetic bases of race, and the role of race in police investigations. The use of race as a simple descriptor (e.g., "the African American detective said that") was not included in this analysis, nor were responses to other participants' race-related comments. Diverse groups were found to discuss more race-related topics ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 1.93$ ) than all-White groups ( $M = 2.07$ ,  $SD = 1.86$ ),  $F(1, 25) = 5.52$ ,  $p = .03$ . This effect was largely attributable to Black participants, who raised more novel race-related issues ( $M = 0.80$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ) than Whites in diverse groups ( $M = 0.55$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ) or all-White groups ( $M = 0.35$ ,  $SD = 0.31$ ), though only the comparison with the latter group was significant,  $t(19.9) = 2.35$ ,  $p = .03$ .

Specific mention of racism—related to this case in particular or at a societal level—was less frequent. At a group level, diverse groups mentioned racism on more occasions ( $M = 1.35$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ) than did all-White groups ( $M = 0.93$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ ), but the effect was not significant,  $F(1, 25) < 1$ . Though the difference did not approach statistical significance, it is interesting to note that White participants in diverse groups ( $M = 0.25$ ,  $SD = 0.30$ ) were

<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that with one exception—the victims' assertion that the perpetrator was Black—these case facts were race neutral. Given the nature of this particular trial, factual coding focused principally on items related to scientific evidence and witness testimony. Analyses regarding groups' discussion of race-related issues and concerns are presented separately below.

<sup>5</sup> Only counting an error the first time it was made in a group led to a comparable, though smaller effect, as diverse groups averaged 2.57 unique errors compared with 4.36 among all-White groups,  $F(1, 24) = 4.62$ ,  $p = .04$ .

Table 3  
*Participant-Level Analyses of Deliberation Content*

Measure	Diverse group Black participant	Diverse group White participant	All-White group White participant
No. of novel case facts raised	4.70 <sub>ab</sub>	5.27 <sub>a</sub>	4.32 <sub>b</sub>
No. of factual inaccuracies	0.61 <sub>a</sub>	0.73 <sub>a</sub>	1.21 <sub>b</sub>
Amount of "missing" evidence cited	0.21 <sub>ab</sub>	0.37 <sub>a</sub>	0.18 <sub>b</sub>
No. of race-related issues raised	0.80 <sub>a</sub>	0.55 <sub>ab</sub>	0.35 <sub>b</sub>
No. of mentions of racism	0.17	0.25	0.15

*Note.* Values with different subscript letters differ significantly at  $p \leq .05$ ;  $n_s = 15$  diverse groups and 14 all-White groups, with participants treated as replicates nested within 6-person groups.

most likely to mention racism, followed by Black participants ( $M = 0.17$ ,  $SD = 0.24$ ) and White participants in all-White groups ( $M = 0.15$ ,  $SD = 0.27$ ),  $t_s < 1$ . Statistically significant evidence for the conclusion that Whites in diverse groups were more amenable to discussing racism was provided by participants' reactions to the issue when it was raised. Only five all-White groups mentioned racism, and in all five instances, at least 1 participant objected on the basis that it was not a relevant issue for discussion. Similar resistance to discussing racism occurred in only two of the nine diverse groups that mentioned the topic,  $\chi^2(1, N = 14) = 4.98$ ,  $p = .03$ .

### Discussion

This study takes a rare empirical look at the processes through which racial diversity influences group decision making. Consistent with a traditional information exchange prediction, heterogeneous groups deliberated longer and considered a wider range of information than did homogeneous groups. However, these differences did not simply result from Black participants adding unique perspectives to the discussions. Rather, White participants were largely responsible for the influence of racial composition, as they raised more case facts, made fewer factual errors, and were more amenable to discussion of race-related issues when they were members of a diverse group. Moreover, the influence of racial diversity was not limited to processes of information exchange, as Whites' predeliberation judgments also varied by group composition. This conclusion that there are multiple processes through which racial diversity is influential is a novel contribution to the investigation of group composition and decision making.

These findings join previous studies that have demonstrated potential advantages of diversity for group performance (e.g., Hoffman & Maier, 1961; Jehn et al., 1999; Nemeth, 1995). Admittedly, this is a complex issue, as many studies have identified deleterious effects of diversity as well (e.g., De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Jackson, 1992; Maznevski, 1994; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989). However, the present findings are consistent with the conclusions of Moreland et al. (1996) regarding the particular circumstances in which groups are most likely to benefit from heterogeneity. All participants in the present study were equally qualified to serve as jurors, meaning that heterogeneity was not confounded with differential ability levels between groups. In addition, the group decision task examined was complex, encouraged divergent interpretations and perspectives, and was not threatened by the possibility of dropout or turnover. Theoretically, these should be

prime conditions for racial diversity to have positive effects on performance, and the data supported this prediction. The boundary conditions on the positive effects of diversity identified in this study remain an open empirical question, as discussed below in more detail.

Some degree of generalizability emerges from the finding that the influence of racial composition was comparable across voir dire condition and therefore was not limited to situations in which the trial was framed in overtly racially charged terms. Significant main effects for the voir dire manipulation extended previous findings regarding the influence of race-related trial content on legal judgments and supported the prediction that the nature of jury selection questions can affect jurors' subsequent case judgments. Compared with participants in the race-neutral condition, participants who answered race-relevant jury selection questions were less likely to vote guilty before deliberating and gave lower estimates of the likelihood of the Black defendant's guilt. From a practical standpoint, these findings suggest that even if voir dire is limited in its ability to identify biased individuals, it may influence prospective jurors by reminding them of the importance of rendering judgments free from prejudice.

### *Explaining the Influence of Diversity*

There are multiple processes through which racial composition influenced group decision making in this study. In strictly demographic terms, the presence of Black group members translated into fewer guilty votes before deliberations. As previous researchers have demonstrated (Davis, 1973; Kalven & Zeisel, 1966), such predeliberation preference distributions have a profound influence on a group's decision and the processes through which it is reached. Racial composition also had clear effects on deliberation content, supporting the prediction that diversity would lead to broader information exchange. These effects were partially attributable to the points of view raised by Black participants in diverse groups, especially with regard to discussion of race-related issues. But as described above, the influence of racial composition on White participants was even more consistent across dependent measures. That is, group racial composition influenced information exchange, but White participants were just as, if not more, responsible for these effects as were Black participants. This interesting conclusion merits closer analysis.

One of the ways in which White participants' performance varied by group composition was that they made fewer inaccurate statements when in diverse versus all-White groups, despite the

fact that they actually contributed more information when deliberating in a diverse setting. This result suggests that White jurors processed the trial information more systematically when they expected to deliberate with a heterogeneous group. Such a conclusion is consistent with previous findings that motivations to avoid prejudice lead Whites to a more systematic and thorough processing of information conveyed by or about Black individuals (Petty et al., 1999; Sargent & Bradfield, 2004; White & Harkins, 1994). Just as the race of a message target and/or source activates Whites' motivational concerns about avoiding prejudice and leads to deeper information processing, so too might the racial composition of a group called upon to make a decision about a potentially race-relevant topic. Future research could test this hypothesis directly by assessing the influence of group composition on White individuals' memory for stimulus information or by determining whether Whites are more sensitive to the strength of a persuasive message when in racially diverse versus all-White settings.

White participants' predeliberation judgments also varied by racial composition, as jurors were less likely to believe the defendant was guilty when they were in a diverse group. Therefore, group racial composition not only affected Whites' information-processing style but also led to a significant shift in how they interpreted and weighted the evidence. That these effects emerged before deliberations began lends empirical support to previous assertions that information exchange alone cannot account for the entire influence of group composition (Davis, 1973; Hans & Vidmar, 1982; Levine & Moreland, 1998; Moscovici, 1980). This finding brings to mind previous results regarding race salience and jurors (Sommers & Ellsworth, 2000, 2001) and the conclusions of Kerr et al. (1995) that the mere expectation of deliberating with a racially heterogeneous group is sufficient to influence judgments. These predeliberation findings, too, are consistent with the hypothesis that membership in a racially diverse group can activate Whites' concerns about avoiding prejudice. Knowing that they would have to justify their judgments to a diverse group may very well have increased Whites' sense of accountability, an experience which previous research suggests would lead to more complex thought processes and affect how individuals weighted the trial evidence (Tetlock, 1983; Tetlock, Skitka, & Boettger, 1989).

Of course, although analyses of predeliberation judgments and deliberation content are consistent with the conclusion that diversity activated Whites' concerns about prejudice, the present data do not provide direct evidence of this mechanism. Other explanations for the present effects cannot be ruled out, including the possibility that membership in a diverse group led to a more general interest in conforming to local norms or strengthened White participants' desire for approval in an interpersonal context. This study was unable to assess relevant individual difference measures or potential mediating variables such as thought activation, rendering necessary future analysis of the mechanisms underlying the effects of diversity. If additional data do support the hypothesis that membership in a racially diverse group activates concerns about prejudice, it will also be important to determine whether this process always leads to increased factual accuracy among White decision makers or simply more systematic information processing. Neither the motivation to be thorough nor more general feelings of accountability ensure factual or judgmental accuracy; indeed, both have been found to lead to overcorrection

and other forms of bias in some circumstances (Sommers & Kassin, 2001; Tetlock & Boettger, 1989; Wegener & Petty, 1995).

Though it raises new questions, the present research also makes important theoretical contributions to the study of group composition by demonstrating that the effects of diversity are not wholly attributable to the performance of minority group members, nor are they limited to information exchange processes. These multiple effects of diversity are epitomized nicely by White participants' reactions to the mention of racism during deliberations. When the issue of racism was raised in all-White groups, at least 1 participant always reacted by suggesting it was not an appropriate topic for discussion. Consider, for example, this exchange between 2 men in an all-White group:

*Juror 3:* "Decatur, Georgia [where the trial took place] is a very nice town. But I'm looking at a White judge, two... a White prosecutor, a flag hanging in the corner with a..."

*Juror 6:* "Don't do that. Don't go there."

*Juror 3:* "But I'm telling you, you know? I'm sorry... [the victims] can't tell one Black person from another?"

*Juror 6:* "I don't buy that."

In other instances, participants in all-White groups were obviously surprised by the mention of potential racial bias, as in this exchange among 3 White women in another group:

*Juror 6:* "Well, if you're an innocent man, the first thing... the first thing I would want to do is get on that stand and be like, 'Look, this is why [I am innocent]. This is my alibi. I did nothing wrong. This is ridiculous. You're not going to put me away.'"

*Juror 5:* "What about the fact that he was a Black man?"

*Juror 6:* "What does *that* have to do with it?"

*Juror 4:* "Are you talking about racial profiling? Because we're not..."

*Juror 5:* "But I think... I mean, we know that there are many more Black men in prison than White men."

Whites in racially diverse groups were less frequently caught off guard by the mention of racism and were more receptive to discussing the topic when it was raised. Consider this exchange between a White man and White woman in a diverse group:

*Juror 4:* "And I think that I was swayed by some of the knowledge that I have knowing they [law enforcement] automatically pick up more Black men and they—that they are often accused of crimes that they're not guilty of because of their race. And there are more Black men institutionalized than there are..."

*Juror 1:* "Like the DNA testing [of multiple Black men] that went on after the serial rapist back in the '90s. Was it '95 or so?"

*Juror 4:* "Right. Here in the city."

In other instances, Whites even appealed directly to Blacks in the group to validate concerns about racism, as in the following exchange between a White woman and Black man:

*Juror 6:* “We’re going through that right now with the terrorism. They’re, you know, looking at people of Arab descent pretty cautiously. And, and I think they [law enforcement] do a lot of that, especially with Black males. I don’t know how often you guys (gestures to Jurors 2 and 3) run into this, but. . .”

*Juror 3:* “I, I grew up with it, racial profiling.”

These excerpts capture informational differences in the discussions of racially homogeneous and heterogeneous groups, but they also hint at the divergent expectations and concerns among members of these two group types. Participants in all-White groups seemed surprised at and were made uncomfortable by the mention of racism during deliberations. Perhaps they had given little thought to racial issues to that point in the experiment. True, the defendant was a Black man, but race was not discussed during the trial, nor would a cursory look around the room suggest that such a potentially controversial issue would be brought up during deliberations. Whites in diverse groups, on the other hand, reacted differently. They did not automatically change the topic when racism came up, but rather engaged in substantive conversation about it. Members of diverse groups did disagree while deliberating, at times vociferously, but they devoted time to discussing even polarizing and uncomfortable topics. In sum, these excerpts, combined with the quantitative data, converge on the conclusion that multiple informational and motivational processes must be considered in accounting for the influence of racial composition on decision making.

### *Implications for Juries and Other Groups*

Discourse regarding the importance of jury diversity tends to focus on the rights of all citizens to serve as jurors and the role of jury representativeness in maintaining the perceived legitimacy of the system (*Batson v. Kentucky*, 1986; Hans & Vidmar, 1982). Support for racial diversity in other contexts often takes a similar trajectory; affirmative action policies are driven by a stated desire to foster equal access for members of underrepresented groups, and such programs are often evaluated on the basis of the performance of these minority individuals. Although equal access and the attempt to remedy historical injustices are important, and many would say noble considerations, the present findings provide evidence for another, often overlooked justification for promoting diversity: In many circumstances, racially diverse groups may be more thorough and competent than homogeneous ones.

By every deliberation measure examined in the present research, heterogeneous groups outperformed homogeneous groups. First, diverse groups spent more time deliberating than did all-White groups. Of course, longer decision-making processes are not necessarily better processes, but diverse groups used their extra time productively, discussing a wider range of case facts and personal perspectives. Arguably, the accuracy of the information discussed by a group is even more important than the sheer number of facts, and on this count as well, heterogeneous groups proved superior. Even though they deliberated longer and discussed more information, diverse groups made fewer factual errors than all-White groups. Moreover, inaccuracies were more likely to be corrected in diverse groups. These findings dispel any notion that the longer duration of heterogeneous deliberations was attributable to de-

creases in efficiency. Rather, racially heterogeneous groups had discussions that were more comprehensive and remained truer to the facts of the case. As detailed above, diverse groups were also more open-minded in that they were less resistant to discussions of controversial race-related topics.

To the extent that researchers and scholars have considered advantages of racial diversity for group performance, they typically have placed the onus for initiating these benefits on minority group members. In the legal context, for example, the diversity of perspectives expected in racially heterogeneous deliberations is assumed to derive from the unique contributions of Black or other minority jurors (Marder, 2002; *Peters v. Kiff*, 1972). Assumptions such as this one are problematic. They place a heavy burden upon minority group members, namely the expectation that they will “educate” the rest of the group about minority perspectives and experiences. They sometimes imply that there exists a monolithic “minority experience” to be conveyed. These assumptions can also be unrealistic, as surveys have found that people often feel marginalized or threatened by minority status in a group and are therefore skeptical that their arguments will be taken seriously (Bowers et al., 2001).

In the present study, Black individuals were indeed active participants in the decision-making process. However, the influence of racial composition on Whites was pervasive, suggesting that the benefits of diversity are not always dependent on the contributions of minority individuals. Such a conclusion renders the potential benefits of diversity more widespread and, seemingly, more attainable. In terms of the legal system, these findings emphasize the importance of efforts to ensure racially representative juries (see Wilkenfeld, 2004), including jury pool selection procedures that do not undersample minority citizens (Cohn & Sherwood, 1999) and stricter enforcement of the prohibition against race-based peremptory challenges (Rafael & Ungvarsky, 1993; Sommers & Norton, 2006). That strategies such as these can, in certain circumstances at least, lead to more thorough and factually accurate juries only adds to the justifications more frequently offered for them. Jury representativeness can be more than a moral or Constitutional ideal; it is sometimes an ingredient for superior performance.

More generally, these findings suggest that much contemporary debate regarding racial diversity may be misguided, or at least incomplete, even among those who seek to objectively evaluate its influence on groups. For starters, arguments in favor of diversity need not focus exclusively on righting historical wrongs or providing equal access for members of underrepresented social categories. The present data suggest that racial heterogeneity can have observable decision-making benefits for groups as a whole and can also lead majority individuals to demonstrate improved performance. Admittedly, the group context of the present study was particularly conducive to demonstrating these advantages of diversity. In some settings, conflict or decreases in morale may prove more problematic than in the jury room, where group cohesion is less important than decision-making performance. However, in the present study, a postdeliberation self-report assessment of group conflict did not vary by racial composition ( $p = .70$ ), suggesting that the positive effects of diversity occurred absent a perceptible negative impact on group dynamics.

But even when conflict accompanies the potential benefits of diversity, one wonders whether this is often a risk worth taking.

Threats to morale can be temporary and overcome as a group acclimates to heterogeneity (Jehn et al., 1999; Watson et al., 1993). Furthermore, a little discomfort may be good if, as the present data suggest, groups' natural tendency is to stifle discussion of controversial or unpopular topics. Many a group has goals beyond a harmonious existence, whether the decision making of committees or the performance of students in a classroom. The present findings raise the possibility that dwelling on the negative interpersonal effects of racial diversity can be shortsighted and may prevent realization of long-term performance benefits. This leads to the more general conclusion that too little attention is often paid to the threat posed by group *homogeneity*. Debate regarding diversity usually centers on the costs and benefits of seeking heterogeneity, but what about the alternative status quo? An extreme interpretation of the present data is that compared with racially diverse groups, homogeneous groups were lazy information processors, prone to inaccuracies, unwilling to consider uncomfortable topics, and superficial in their discussions. A kinder conclusion would be that homogeneous groups spent less time on their decisions, made more errors, and considered fewer perspectives. In either case, homogeneity was associated with performance decrements, and this is not the first time such a relationship has been noted (Janis, 1982; Kameda & Sugimori, 1993; Wilkenfeld, 2004). Nonetheless, in both popular discourse and scientific examination, cost-benefit analyses of homogeneity are too often left implied or ignored altogether in efforts to evaluate diversity.

#### *External Validity and Additional Questions*

Experiments such as the present one, run outside the laboratory and with a premium placed on realism, inevitably face certain empirical limitations. One such issue in the present study arises from the operationalization of racial heterogeneity as groups with 4 White and 2 Black participants. As described in the introduction, this decision was made for several reasons, including the composition of the available participant population and a desire to avoid the idiosyncratic experiences faced by a minority of one (Allen, 1975; Asch, 1956). Nonetheless, a group with just one minority individual is still, by definition, heterogeneous, and it is unclear whether the present findings would apply to such groups. A minority is best able to influence the majority when its arguments are consistent and persuasive, and this informational influence is easier to achieve when one has an ally (Maass & Clark, 1984; Moscovici & Lage, 1976). So, too, might be influence outside the realm of information exchange; it remains an open empirical question to determine how large a critical mass of non-White group members is required to influence Whites' private information evaluation and processing. It seems very likely that the effects of racial heterogeneity differ depending on numerical composition, not to mention the specific racial groups in question.

In legal terms, one particularly interesting case is the performance of all-Black juries. Though such juries are rare in many jurisdictions, including the county in which this study was conducted, they are not unusual in urban locales such as Atlanta, Detroit, or Washington, DC. An information exchange perspective suggests that the deliberations of homogeneous Black juries would also be less thorough and wide-ranging than those of their heterogeneous counterparts. Other, noninformational hypotheses are less clear. As Shelton (2000) has pointed out, relatively little is

known about the race-related attitudes and judgments of minority individuals, and it is therefore difficult to predict the effects of homogeneity on Blacks. One possibility is that members of racially homogeneous groups of all types demonstrate the less-systematic processing presently observed in all-White groups. Other research has indicated that White and Black jurors bring to the courtroom different race-related motivations, with Blacks less worried about appearing prejudiced and more concerned with institutional bias (Sommers & Ellsworth, 2000). This suggests an alternative hypothesis: that Black jurors' concerns about system fairness could be heightened and reinforced by the presence of other Blacks on the jury, leading to increased scrutiny of the case when a defendant is Black.

Another question of external validity is whether the present conclusions are limited to situations in which race is potentially a relevant issue. Even though the influence of group composition did not vary by voir dire condition and the trial used in this study was race neutral in its evidentiary content, the case did involve a Black defendant and White victims. Would racial composition affect a jury's deliberations regarding a White defendant? More generally, are the reported benefits of diversity limited to race-related situations, such as a human resources department formulating its affirmative action policy or students in a diverse classroom preparing to discuss a racially charged topic? On the basis of the present data, a possible answer is that diversity's effects on informational exchange occur whenever race covaries with different life experiences, areas of expertise, or ideologies. Conversely, other effects are more likely to depend on the racial context of a situation. For example, it seems unlikely that membership in a racially diverse jury would lead White jurors to be concerned about prejudice when a defendant is White. It is worth noting, however, that many important real-world decisions are similar to the circumstances of the present study in that they do not explicitly focus on race yet are potentially race relevant, including decisions about job hiring, college admissions, health care accessibility, political districting, and education funding.

A related consideration is the extent to which these findings generalize to other populations. The present participant sample is more representative than that of many decision-making experiments, but it was drawn from one community. Would racial diversity lead to similar effects in a courthouse in the southern United States? More generally, to the extent that Whites' concerns about avoiding bias help account for the present results, different patterns might emerge depending on a sample's level of explicit racism or motivation to respond without prejudice. Absent a strong motivation to avoid prejudice, for example, racial diversity may be more likely to engender conflict and poor morale, and many of the benefits observed herein would be more elusive. Additional questions of external validity include whether the benefits of racial diversity are confined to decisions that require unanimity or limited to situations in which members of the racial minority group tend to be in the decision majority, as was the case in this study.

#### Conclusion

This research investigated a premise previously implied but not tested: that a group's racial composition affects its decision making through multiple processes. Through a realistic trial simulation—including a jury-eligible sample, voir dire, video trial pre-

sentation, jury instructions, and deliberations—this study identifies specific advantages of racial heterogeneity for group decision making and demonstrates the influence of race-relevant jury selection questions on subsequent trial judgments. This research suggests particular circumstances under which racial diversity is likely to lead to improved group performance, findings that carry implications for a variety of domains beyond the legal context. Perhaps most important, the present study demonstrates that the influence of racial diversity can be seen in the performance of White as well as Black group members. That the observable benefits of diversity are in no way limited to minority individuals or to processes of information exchange are provocative conclusions deserving of continued conceptual consideration and empirical investigation.

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