

Reciprocal Concessions Procedure for Inducing Compliance: The Door-in-the-Face Technique

Robert B. Cialdini, Joyce E. Vincent, Stephen K. Lewis, José Catalan,
Diane Wheeler, and Betty Lee Darby
Arizona State University

Three experiments were conducted to test the effectiveness of a rejection-then-moderation procedure for inducing compliance with a request for a favor. All three experiments included a condition in which a requester first asked for an extreme favor (which was refused to him) and then for a smaller favor. In each instance, this procedure produced more compliance with the smaller favor than a procedure in which the requester asked solely for the smaller favor. Additional control conditions in each experiment supported the hypothesis that the effect is mediated by a rule for reciprocation of concessions. Several advantages to the use of the rejection-then-moderation procedure for producing compliance are discussed.

The foot-in-the-door technique has been investigated by Freedman and Fraser (1966) as a procedure for inducing compliance with a request for a favor. They demonstrated that obtaining a person's compliance with a small request substantially increases the likelihood of that person's compliance with a subsequent, larger request. Freedman and Fraser suggest that the mediator of the foot-in-the-door effect is a shift in the self-perception of the benefactor. After performing or agreeing to perform an initial favor, a person "may become, in his own eyes, the kind of person who does this sort of thing, who agrees to requests made by strangers, who takes action on things he believes in, who cooperates with good causes. . . . The basic idea is that the change in attitude need not be toward any particular person or activity, but may be toward activity or compliance in general." Thus, one effective way to obtain a favor is to begin by making a *minimal* first request which is sure to produce *compliance* and then to *advance* to a larger favor (the one which was desired from the outset). It may well be, however, that an equally effective method for getting a favor done involves the exact opposite procedure. What would be the result of making an *extreme* first request which is sure

to be *rejected* and then asking for a more *moderate* second favor (the one which was desired from the outset)? There are two lines of evidence suggesting that such a technique would be efficacious in producing compliance with the second request.

The first sort of evidence comes from work investigating the concept of reciprocation. Gouldner (1960) maintains that a norm of reciprocity exists in all societies. Gouldner states the norm of reciprocity in its simple form as: "You should give benefits to those who give you benefits." (p. 170) There is considerable experimental evidence attesting to the workings of such a rule in our culture (e.g., Brehm & Cole, 1966; Goranson & Berkowitz, 1966; Pruitt, 1968; Regan, 1971; Wilke & Lanzetta, 1970). In each case, receipt of a favor has been shown to increase the likelihood that the favor will be returned, although not necessarily in kind. While Gouldner (1960) speaks of the norm of reciprocity almost exclusively in terms of the reciprocation of benefits and services, it seems likely that a norm for reciprocity governs other types of social exchange also. Specifically, we would like to postulate a reciprocal concessions corollary to the general norm of reciprocity: "You should make concessions to those who make concessions to you." Such a rule can be seen as having an important societal function. Very often in social interaction

Reprint requests should be sent to Robert Cialdini, Department of Psychology, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona 85281.

participants begin with requirements and demands which are unacceptable to one another. In order for the interaction to continue and hence for common goals to be achieved, compromise must be struck. *Mutual* concession is crucial. If there is no implicit prescription that retreat from an initial position by one participant should be reciprocated by the other participant, then it is unlikely that other compromise attempts would be initiated and, consequently, that the interaction would continue. However, given a principle for reciprocation of concessions, an interaction participant could instigate compromise attempts with little fear of exploitation by his partner.

Evidence for the existence of a reciprocal concessions relationship in our society can be seen in numerous terms and phrases of the language: "give and take," "meeting the other fellow halfway," etc. Much more compelling, however, are the data which come from a number of studies of negotiation behavior. An experiment by Chertkoff and Conley (1967) demonstrated that the number of concessions a subject makes in a bargaining situation is significantly affected by the number of his opponent's concessions; more frequent concessions by the opponent elicited more frequent concessions from the subject. In a somewhat similar context, Komorita and Brenner (1968) had subjects bargain as buyers against opponent-sellers. In one condition, the opponent initially proposed what was a perfectly equitable selling price and refused to move from that price throughout the course of the negotiations; in other conditions, the opponent began with an extreme offer and then gradually retreated from that price as bargaining progressed. The consistent result was that the former condition elicited the least amount of yielding on the part of the subjects. Komorita and Brenner conclude that, "in a bargaining situation, if one party wishes to reach an agreement at a 'fair' price, clearly a strategy of making an initial offer at that level and remaining firm thereafter is not an effective means of reaching an agreement." (p. 18) Finally, an experiment by Benton, Kelley, and Liebling (1972) had subjects negotiate the allocation of funds with a pre-programmed opponent in a mixed-motive game. One condition of the experiment saw sub-

jects faced with an opponent who repeatedly made an extreme demand during the first two minutes of the bargaining session and who then reduced this demand during the next two minutes. The number of subjects' own extreme demands was drastically reduced by this strategy. In contrast, another condition, in which the opponent remained intransigently extreme, produced almost no reduction in the number of extreme subject demands during this second two-minute period. In sum, it seems that the likelihood of a concession by one party is positively related to the occurrence of a concession by another party.

Let us now return to the original question, "How might we enhance the probability that another will comply with our request for a favor?" The analysis above suggests that if we were to begin by asking for an extreme favor which was sure to be refused by the other, and then we were to move to a smaller request, the other would feel a normative strain to match our concession with one of his own. Since the situation is such that the other's response to our request involves an essentially dichotomous choice—yes or no—the only available reciprocation route for him would be to move from his position of initial noncompliance to one of compliance. So, by means of an illusory retreat from our initial position, we should be able to obtain another's agreement to the request that we desired from the outset.

In line with the formulation we have proposed, two things are crucial to the success of such a procedure. First, our original request must be rejected by the target person; once this has occurred, the target will have taken a position and an apparent concession on our part will pressure him to meet us halfway and hence to yield to our smaller request. Second, the target must perceive that we have conceded in some way. Thus, the size of our second favor must be unambiguously smaller than that of the first; only then can the action of a reciprocal concessions norm come into play.

EXPERIMENT 1

In order to test the effectiveness of this procedure for inducing compliance, an experiment was conducted. It was expected that a

person who followed a refused initial request with a smaller request would obtain more agreement to the smaller request than a person who made *only* the smaller request. Such a result could be explained, however, in a way quite apart from the theoretical account we have proposed. Rather than through the action of a reciprocal concessions mechanism, the superiority of the technique we have described could be seen as occurring through the action of a contrast effect. Exposure to an initial, large request could cause subjects to perceive a subsequent, smaller request as less demanding than would subjects who had never been exposed to the large request; consequently, the former type of subject might be expected to comply more with the critical request. It was necessary, therefore, to include in our experimental design a condition which differentiated these two theoretical explanations.

One point of departure for the two accounts lies in the requirement of the reciprocal concessions explanation for the target's refusal of and the requester's moderation of the initial, larger favor. The contrast effect explanation does not demand this sequence of refusal and moderation; rather, it requires only that the target person be previously exposed to the larger request. An experiment was performed, then, which included three conditions. In one condition, subjects were asked to perform a favor. In a second condition, subjects were asked to perform the critical favor after they had refused to perform a larger favor. In a final condition, subjects heard the larger favor described to them before they were asked to perform the critical one.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 72 people of both sexes who were moving along university walkways during daylight hours. Only those individuals who were walking alone were selected, and no subjects were selected during the 10-minute break period between classes.

Procedure

A subject meeting the conditions above was approached by a student-experimenter¹ who initiated

¹The experimenters were three college age students, one female and two male. Experimenters approached only subjects of the same sex as themselves.

interaction by introducing him- or herself as being with the County Youth Counseling Program. At this point, the experimenter made (for the Youth Counseling Program) either an extreme request followed by a smaller request or made just the smaller request.

The extreme request asked subjects to perform as counselors to juvenile delinquents for a period of at least two years. Specifically, the experimenter said:

We're currently recruiting university students to work as voluntary, nonpaid counselors at the County Juvenile Detention Center. The position could require two hours of your time per week for a minimum of two years. You would be working more in the line of a Big Brother (Sister) to one of the boys (girls) at the detention home. Would you be interested in being considered for one of these positions?

The smaller request asked subjects to perform as chaperones for a group of juvenile delinquents on a two-hour trip to the zoo. Specifically, the experimenter said:

We're recruiting university students to chaperone a group of boys (girls) from the County Juvenile Detention Center on a trip to the zoo. It would be voluntary, nonpaid, and would require about two hours of one afternoon or evening. Would you be interested in being considered for one of these positions?

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of three conditions.

Rejection-moderation condition. Subjects in this condition heard the experimenter first make the extreme request. After subjects refused the large request, the experimenter said, "Well, we also have another program you might be interested in then." At this point the experimenter made the smaller request.

Smaller request only control. Subjects in this condition were asked by the experimenter only to perform the smaller request.

Exposure control. In this condition the experimenter first described the extreme and then the smaller favor and requested that the subjects perform *either* one. Specifically, subjects in the exposure only control heard the experimenter give the standard introduction and then say:

We're currently recruiting university students for two different programs. In the first, we're looking for voluntary, nonpaid counselors to work at the County Juvenile Detention Center. The position would require two hours of your time per week for a minimum of two years. You would be working more in the line of a Big Brother (Sister) to one of the boys (girls) at the detention center. In the other program, we're looking for university students to chaperone a group of boys (girls) from the detention center on a trip to the zoo. It would also be voluntary, nonpaid, and would require two

hours of one afternoon or evening. Would you be interested in being considered for either of these two programs?

No subject during the course of the experiment ever agreed to perform the initial, large favor. However, when a subject agreed to the smaller request, the experimenter took his or her name and phone number. The experimenter promised to call if the subject was needed but explained that "there is a chance that you won't be called because of the large number of people who have already volunteered to help." At this point, the experimenter thanked the subject and moved on.

Predictions

Two predictions derived from the reciprocal concessions model were made. First, it was expected that the subjects in the rejection-moderation condition would comply with the smaller request more than would subjects in the two control conditions. Second, it was predicted that the amount of compliance with the smaller request would not differ between the two controls.

Results

No subject in the present experiment agreed to perform the extreme favor. The percentage of subjects who complied with the smaller request in each of the treatment conditions can be seen in Table 1.

Planned orthogonal contrasts designed to test the two experimental predictions were performed on the data. The first contrast, comparing the compliance rates of the two control groups, found no difference, $\chi^2 = .50$, *ns*. The second contrast tested the combined control conditions against the rejection-moderation condition; this analysis produced a highly significant difference, $\chi^2 = 6.42$, $p = .011$. All tests in this and subsequent experiments are two-tailed.

Additional analyses investigating the extent to which the pattern of results above was affected by such factors as the sex of the subject and the identity of the experimenter provided no statistic which approached conventional levels of significance; the same pattern obtained for all three experimenters and for male and female subjects. In all, then, it seems that the only factor which enhanced the amount of agreement to the smaller request was the procedure of moving to the smaller request *after* the larger request had been refused.

TABLE 1
PERCENTAGE OF SUBJECTS COMPLYING WITH THE SMALLER REQUEST

Treatment	% Compliance
Rejection-moderation condition	50.0
Exposure control	25.0
Smaller request only control	16.7

Note. The *n* for each condition = 24.

Discussion

It is clear from the findings above that making an extreme initial request which is sure to be rejected and then moving to a smaller request significantly increases the probability of a target person's agreement to the second request. Moreover, this phenomenon does not seem mediated by a perceptual contrast effect; simply exposing the target to the extreme request beforehand does not affect compliance.

While the results of this first experiment lend some support to the reciprocal concessions explanation, they do not, of course, necessarily confirm the validity of the interpretation. If we are to gain confidence in such a model, additional predictions derivable from it must be proposed and demonstrated. To this end, it was decided to replicate and extend our findings in a second experiment.

EXPERIMENT 2

The reciprocal concessions formulation we have described suggests that a target person feels pressure to change from his initial position of noncompliance after it is seen that the requester has changed from his own initial position. It is not enough that the target has been asked to comply with a large then a smaller request, the target must perceive the request for the smaller favor as a concession *by the requester*. If this is in fact the case, a target person who is asked an extreme favor by one individual and a smaller favor by some other individual in a second interaction context should not experience a reciprocation-mediated tendency to agree to the smaller request. The second requester should not be perceived as conceding and thus, according to our model, the target should not be spurred to reciprocate via compliance. On the other hand, if, as in Experiment 1, the requests are

made by the same person, compliance with the smaller request should be enhanced.

To test the importance of the perception of concession, an experiment was conducted which included three conditions. In one condition, subjects were asked to perform a favor by a single requester. In a second condition, subjects were asked by a single requester to perform the critical favor after they had refused to perform a larger favor for that requester. In the third condition, subjects were asked to perform the critical favor by one requester after they had refused to perform a larger favor for a different requester. An additional benefit of this third condition was that it afforded another test of the perceptual contrast explanation for the obtained effect and thus provided a conceptual replication of one aspect of Experiment 1.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 58 males who were selected for participation in a fashion identical to that of Experiment 1.

Procedure

A subject meeting the conditions above was approached by two student-experimenters, one male and one female; we call them Experimenters A and B, respectively. Experimenter A initiated interaction by introducing both himself and Experimenter B to the subject. At this point, a second male experimenter (Experimenter C) who was apparently an acquaintance of Experimenter B, approached the group and engaged Experimenter B in conversation about an upcoming exam they both would be taking. This procedure uniformly distracted the subject's attention for a second, so Experimenter A waited for the subject to turn back to him. Here the three treatment conditions of the study differed.

Rejection-moderation condition. Subjects in this condition next heard Experimenter A ask for the extreme favor. The extreme favor was the same as that used in Experiment 1. After the subject had refused to comply, Experimenter A made the smaller request, which in this experiment asked subjects to chaperone a group of "low-income children" to the zoo. Specifically, he said:

Oh. Well. I'm also with the Campus Volunteer Service Organization in another program that has nothing to do with the Juvenile Detention Center. It involves helping to chaperone a group of low-income children on a trip to the zoo. We can't give you any money for it, but it would only involve about two hours of one afternoon or evening. Would you be willing to help us with this?

Two requester control. The procedures of this condition were similar to those of the rejection-moderation condition except that, upon refusal of the extreme request, Experimenter A thanked the subject and walked away from the group with Experimenter B; this left Experimenter C alone with the subject. At this point, Experimenter C made the smaller request. He prefaced the request by saying,

Excuse me, I couldn't help overhearing you say that you would not be able to be a counselor to juvenile delinquents for two years. [If a subject had given a reason for refusing the extreme request, Experimenter C mentioned that he had overheard the stated reason as well.²] But maybe you can help *me*. My name is —, and I'm with the Campus Volunteer Service Organization in a program that has nothing to do with the Juvenile Detention Center. [The remainder of the request was identical to that made in the rejection-moderation condition.]

Smaller request only control. The procedures of this condition were similar to those of the rejection-moderation condition except that the extreme request was not made. The events in this condition were as follow: Experimenters A and B approached the subject; Experimenter A introduced himself and Experimenter B; Experimenter C joined the group and engaged Experimenter B in conversation; Experimenter A made the smaller request. It should be noted that in this and both other conditions the roles of Experimenter A and Experimenter C were alternated between the two male experimenters of the study.

Predictions

The predictions of the present experiment were similar to those of Experiment 1. It was expected, first, that the two control conditions would not differ from one another in amount of compliance with the smaller request. Second, it was thought that the *rejection-moderation condition* would produce more compliance with the smaller request than would the controls.

The experimenters in this instance were not aware of the nature of these predictions; in fact, they were led by the principal investigator to expect opposite results. As in Experiment 1, the experimenters were undergraduate research assistants. Because of evidence indicating that undergraduate experimenters have in the past produced results consistent with prediction via experimenter expectancy effects (Rosenthal, 1966) or conscious data fixing (Azrin, Holz, Ulrich, & Goldiamond, 1961), a test

² A replication of Experiment 2 was subsequently performed by the authors. The only difference between the original and replicated versions was that in the replication Experimenter C's performance in the two requester control did not include a claim that he had overheard the target's conversation with Experimenter A. The data of the two versions of Experiment 2 were virtually identical.

of such explanations for the obtained effect in Experiment 1 seemed in order. Hence, the experimenters of Experiment 2 were told that the principal investigator was predicting that the smaller request only control would produce the most compliance. This would supposedly be so because of an "irritation or reactance tendency in people who have been asked for favors twice in succession." If the pattern of results nonetheless appeared as predicted by the reciprocal concession formulation, experimenter bias could no longer be offered as a possible explanation for the superiority of the rejection-moderation condition.

Results

Three subjects in Experiment 2 complied with the extreme request, two in the rejection-moderation condition and the other in the two requester control. These subjects were removed from the analysis and replaced by three other subjects.³ The percentage of subjects who complied with the smaller request in each of the treatment conditions of Experiment 2 can be seen in Table 2.

Again, a priori orthogonal contrasts were used to test the experimental predictions. One contrast compared the amounts of compliance with the smaller request within the two control conditions; no conventionally significant difference occurred, $\chi^2 = 2.53$, $p = .111$. The other comparison, which tested the rejection-moderation condition against the combined control conditions, did produce a clearly significant difference at conventional levels, $\chi^2 = 6.85$, $p = .009$.

Discussion

It appears from the results of Experiment 2 that the target's perception of concession by the requester is a crucial factor in producing compliance with the smaller request. Only when the extreme and the smaller favors were asked by the same requester was compliance enhanced. This finding provides further evidence for a reciprocal concessions mediator of the rejection-then-moderation effect. It seems that our subjects increased the frequency of assent to the smaller request only in response to what could be interpreted as concession

³ It was necessary to discard the data of the original three subjects because of the likelihood that their responses to the second request would be mediated by a foot-in-the-door effect rather than a reciprocal concessions effect; thus our results would have been artificially inflated in the direction of prediction.

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE OF SUBJECTS COMPLYING WITH THE SMALLER REQUEST IN EXPERIMENT 2

Treatment	% Compliance
Rejection-moderation condition	55.5
Two requester control	10.5
Smaller request only control	31.5

Note. The *n* for the rejection-moderation condition = 20; the *n* for each of the two control conditions = 19.

behavior on the part of the requester; such assent, then, would seem best viewed as reciprocal concession behavior.

It might be noted that compliance in the two requester control was inhibited relative to that in the small request only control. This finding replicates quite closely a result obtained by Snyder and Cunningham (1975) and fits very well with evidence suggesting that in most cases, people are quite consistent in their responses to requests for favors (Freedman & Fraser, 1966; Snyder & Cunningham, 1975). Unless there was a pressure to reciprocate a concession, 89.5% of the subjects in our experiment who said, "No" to an initial request said, "No" to a subsequent one.

EXPERIMENT 3

While the data of Experiments 1 and 2 are wholly consistent with the reciprocal concessions formulation, an alternative explanation for these results is applicable as well. It may have been that the heightened compliance in our rejection-moderation conditions was due to the fact that only in these conditions did one requester persist in making a second request after his first had been refused. Perhaps subjects in these conditions acquiesced to the critical, zoo trip request not because of pressure to reciprocate a concession but because they were dunned into accession by a tenacious requester or because they wanted to avoid the requester's perception of them as having a generally antisocial or unhelpful nature.

In order to test this type of explanation, a third experiment was performed. Included in Experiment 3 was a procedure in which subjects were asked to perform an initial favor and then were asked by the same requester to perform a second favor (the critical request)

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE OF SUBJECTS COMPLYING WITH THE
SMALLER REQUEST IN EXPERIMENT 3

Treatment	% Compliance
Rejection-moderation condition	54.1
Equivalent request control	33.3
Smaller request only control	33.3

Note. The *n* for each condition = 24.

of *equivalent* size. Since the proposal of an equivalent second favor does not constitute a concession on the part of the requester, the reciprocal concessions model would predict no increased compliance with the critical request from this procedure. However, if the persistence of a single requester is the mediator of enhanced compliance, then such a procedure should produce heightened agreement to perform the critical request. A second function of Experiment 3 was to provide a conceptual replication of Experiment 2. As in Experiment 2, one group of subjects received two requests but should not have construed the second request as a concession on the part of the person who made it. In Experiment 2, the perception of concession was avoided by having a second requester make the smaller, critical request; in Experiment 3, it was done by making the initial request equivalent in size to the critical one. For both procedures, the results should be similar—no enhancement of compliance.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 72 people of both sexes who were selected for participation in a fashion identical to that of Experiments 1 and 2.

Procedure

A subject meeting the conditions above was approached by a student-experimenter in a fashion identical to that of Experiment 1.⁴ Subjects were randomly assigned to one of three conditions.

Rejection-moderation condition. Subjects in this condition were treated identically to subjects in the comparable condition of Experiment 1; that is, after hearing and rejecting an extreme request (to perform as a counselor to a juvenile delinquent for a minimum of two years), a subject heard the same

⁴ In the present experiment there were four experimenters, three female and one male. Experimenters approached only subjects of the same sex as themselves.

requester make a smaller request (to perform as a chaperone for a group of juvenile delinquents on a two-hour trip to the zoo).

Smaller request only control. Subjects in this condition were treated identically to subjects in the comparable condition of Experiment 1; that is, a subject heard the requester make only the smaller request to chaperone a group of juvenile delinquents on a trip to the zoo.

Equivalent request control. Subjects in this condition heard a requester initially request that they perform as chaperones for a group of juvenile delinquents on a two-hour trip to the city museum; after the subjects responded to this first request, the experimenter then requested that they chaperone a group of juvenile delinquents on a two-hour trip to the zoo.

Predictions

As in the previous experiments, it was predicted on the basis of the reciprocal concessions model that, first, the two control conditions would not differ from one another in amount of compliance with the critical request (the zoo trip) and, second, that the rejection-moderation condition would produce more compliance with the critical request than would the controls.

Results

No subject in Experiment 3 complied with the extreme request in the rejection-moderation condition. However, eight subjects complied with the initial request in the equivalent request control. The percentage of subjects who complied with the critical request in each of the treatment conditions of Experiment 3 can be seen in Table 3.

As before, two planned orthogonal comparisons were used to test the predictions. The first contrasted the two control conditions; no significant difference resulted, $\chi^2 = 0.0$, *ns*. The second tested the rejection-moderation condition against the combined controls; a marginally significant difference occurred, $\chi^2 = 2.88$, $p = .091$. Two features of the data from this experiment argue against the interpretation that a requester's persistence in making requests accounts for the superiority of the rejection-moderation condition. First, the equivalent request control, which involved successive requests from the same requester, produced exactly the same amount of compliance as the smaller request only control. Second, of the eight subjects who agreed to perform the critical request in the equivalent request control, only one had refused to perform the similar-sized initial request. Clearly,

then, it is not the case that a persistent requester induces compliance to a second request solely through the act of making a second request. Indeed, in the equivalent request control, subjects were stoutly consistent in the nature of their responses to the two requests. Twenty-two of the 24 subjects in that group responded similarly to both requests.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Taken together, the findings of Experiments 1, 2, and 3 seem to support the reciprocal concessions model. Each experiment indicated that proposing an extreme request which is rejected and then moving to a smaller request increases compliance with the smaller request. The results of Experiment 1 suggested that the target person's rejection of the initial, extreme request is crucial to the effectiveness of this technique. Through his refusal to perform the large favor, the target puts himself in a position from which virtually his only possible retreat is accession to the smaller request. Thus when the requester moves from his extreme proposal to a smaller one, the target must agree to the second proposal in order to relieve any felt pressure for reciprocation of concessions. As was shown in Experiment 1, if movement to a smaller request occurs without the target's initial rejection of the extreme request, compliance with the smaller request will not be significantly enhanced. Experiment 1 demonstrated further, as did Experiment 2, that merely exposing a target person to an extreme request does not increase the likelihood of his compliance with a subsequent smaller request; such results tend to disconfirm a perceptual contrast explanation of the phenomenon. Experiments 2 and 3 demonstrated the importance of concession. Simply presenting a target person with a smaller request after he had rejected a larger one or simply presenting a target person with a second request of equivalent size, does not increase agreement to the second request. Only when the proposal of the second favor can be considered a concession on the part of the requester is compliance increased.

Several aspects of the phenomenon we have investigated suggest that its use would be

highly functional for someone in need of a favor. First, it is clear that the effect is quite a powerful one for inducing compliance. Averaging over all three studies and comparing against the small request only control conditions, we were able to double the likelihood of compliance through the use of the rejection-then-moderation procedure. The strength of this procedure is further evidenced when it is realized that it is working in a direction counter to any tendency for the target to be consistent in his responses to requests for favors. It should be remembered that Freedman and Fraser (1966) found such a tendency for consistency to be a potent one in their foot-in-the-door study, and we found a similar tendency in the two requester control of Experiment 2 and the equivalent request control of Experiment 3. Seemingly, then, the size of the effect is such that it overwhelmed a strong propensity in our subjects for constancy in their reactions to compliance requests.

Second, the technique does not limit a requester to the receipt of small favors. It is only necessary that the critical request be *smaller* than the initial one for a reciprocal concessions mechanism to come into play. Evidence that a requester can use this technique to gain assent to a substantial request can be seen in the data of Experiment 1. The smaller request in that study might well be seen, objectively, as an extreme one in itself; it asked subjects to be responsible for an unspecified number of juvenile delinquents of unspecified age in a public place for a period of two hours outdoors in winter.⁵ Only 16.7% of our population was willing to agree to such a request when it was the only one made. Yet, the proposal of this request after the rejection of a still more extreme favor produced 50% compliance.

Another benefit of the rejection-then-moderation procedure is that its force seems to derive from the existence of a social norm. Thus, a requester wishing to use the procedure need have little reward or coercive

⁵ Only Experiment 1 was conducted in the winter of the year. Experiments 2 and 3 were conducted in the spring or summer which may account for the somewhat higher compliance rates in the small request only controls of these experiments.

power over his target to be effective. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) speak of a norm in any two-person interaction as a third agent exercising power over each member but whose "influence appeal is to a supra-individual value ('Do it for the group' or 'Do it because it's good') rather than to personal interests. . . ." (p. 129) A recognition of this kind of normative influence in concession making may help explain some of the bargaining literature on the subject, in addition to the data of the present study. For instance, Pruitt and Drews (1969) report with some surprise their subjects' failure to try to maximize their outcomes when faced with a bargaining opponent who made a large, constant concession on each game trial. Even though this sort of opponent was perceived as significantly weaker and less demanding than one who made constant but small concessions on each trial, no advantage was taken of the vulnerable opponent. Every-time an opponent made a standard concession, no matter what the size, a subject responded with a standard concession of his own. Pruitt and Drews admit to being mystified by the lack of "rationality" on the part of their subjects and describe "them as 'automatons' tuning out external stimuli and new ideas, and moving mechanically a standard distance from the position adopted on the first trial." (p. 57) Perhaps much of the mystery can be eliminated by assuming that the subjects were reacting to the pressures of a norm requiring that regular concessions be reciprocated.

A final advantage of a compliance induction procedure which uses concessions involves the feelings of the target person toward the outcome of the interaction. Benton, Kelley, and Liebling (1972) present evidence suggesting that not only will someone who applies such a procedure be quite effective in obtaining favorable payoffs for himself but that the person to whom it is applied will feel more responsible for and satisfied with the outcome. In an allocation of resources situation, subjects faced a bargaining opponent who intransigently demanded the maximum payoff for himself, intransigently demanded a moderately favorable payoff for himself, or retreated from the maximum payoff demand to the moderate payoff demand. In each condition, failure to reach an allocation agree-

ment resulted in a loss of all money by both participants. It was found that the retreat strategy produced the highest average earning for the opponent. Moreover, not only did subjects concede the greatest payoffs to an opponent using this tactic, they felt significantly more responsible for and satisfied with the outcome than did subjects faced with an intransigent opponent. The results of this study when coupled with those of our experiments suggest some intriguing implications. One who feels responsible for the terms of an agreement should be more likely to meet his commitments concerning that agreement. Thus, someone who uses concession to produce compliance with a request for a favor is likely to see the favor actually performed. Second, one who feels fairly satisfied with the outcome of an interaction with another person should be willing to enter into interaction with that person again. Thus, the target person of a rejection-then-moderation moderation procedure may well be vulnerable to subsequent requests by the same requester. In all, then, it appears that the rejection-then-moderation procedure can be an extremely valuable technique for the elicitation of compliance.

A note of caution should probably be interjected at this point lest we make too much of the potential implications of the present findings. It is the case that the rejection-then-moderation procedure has been shown to work under a fairly limited set of conditions. The extent to which the effect is generalizable to other contexts and situations remains to be seen. For example, we have tested the effectiveness of the procedure only in situations in which the interaction was face-to-face, the interactants were of the same sex, and the requests were prosocial in nature. Moreover, it would be well to remember that, while the present research appears to support a reciprocal concessions interpretation of the effect, it in no way ultimately confirms that interpretation. Other explanations may exist which account completely for the data of this study; and to the extent that they do exist, they should be tested in subsequent work.

Future research on the reciprocal concessions procedure might also profitably investigate the nature of the concept of concession. In the present studies, a concession by a

requester was operationalized as moderation from a large request to a smaller one. Involved in such moderation, however, are two separate components: the target will no doubt perceive the move from the large to the smaller request as *more* desirable for himself but *less* desirable for the requester and his cause. While these two aspects of concession usually occur together, there is no good reason to assume that both are necessary for the enhancement of compliance. It may be the proposal of a more desirable arrangement for the target—rather than the proposal of a less desirable arrangement for the requester—that is the crucial, compliance-producing aspect of concession; or the opposite may be the case. Stated otherwise, a concession involves two normally correlated but conceptually separate features: the granting of a more favorable situation to one's interaction partner and the surrendering of a more favorable position for oneself. It remains for further investigation to determine whether the aspect of concession which induces compliance involves the granting of something, the surrendering of something, or both.

REFERENCES

- Azrin, N. H., Holz, W., Ulrich, R., & Goldiamond, I. The control of the content of conversation through reinforcement. *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, 1961, 4, 25-30.
- Benton, A. A., Kelley, H. H., & Liebling, B. Effects of extremity of offers and concession rate on the outcomes of bargaining. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1972, 24, 73-83.
- Brehm, J. W., & Cole, A. H. Effect of a favor which reduces freedom. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1966, 3, 420-426.
- Chertkoff, J. M., & Conley, M. Opening offer and frequency of concession as bargaining strategies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1967, 7, 185-193.
- Freedman, J. L., & Fraser, S. Compliance without pressure: The foot-in-the-door technique. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1966, 4, 195-202.
- Goranson, R. E., & Berkowitz, L. Reciprocity and responsibility reactions to prior help. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1966, 3, 227-232.
- Gouldner, A. W. The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review*, 1960, 25, 161-178.
- Komorita, S. S., & Brenner, A. R. Bargaining and concession making under bilateral monopoly. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1968, 9, 15-20.
- Pruitt, D. G. Reciprocity and credit building in a laboratory dyad. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1968, 8, 143-147.
- Pruitt, D. G., & Drews, J. L. The effect of time pressure, time elapsed, and the opponent's concession rate on behavior in negotiation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 1969, 5, 43-60.
- Regan, D. T. Effects of a favor and liking on compliance. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 1971, 1, 627-639.
- Rosenthal, R. *Experimenter effects in behavioral research*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966.
- Snyder, M., & Cunningham, M. R. To comply or not comply: Testing the self-perception explanation of the "foot-in-the-door" phenomenon. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1975, 31, 64-67.
- Thibaut, J. W., & Kelley, H. H. *The social psychology of groups*. New York: Wiley, 1959.
- Wilke, H., & Lanzetta, J. T. The obligation to help: The effects of amount of prior help on subsequent helping behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 1970, 6, 488-493.

(Received July 2, 1973)