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The moderating and mediating role of group identification
in observers' reactions to intragroup disrespect

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Abstract

The current research examines observer reactions to disrespectful treatment of another ingroup member by an ingroup authority. In an empirical study which identifies both the moderating and mediating role of group identification in tandem, specifically with regard to observed intragroup disrespect, relational motives appeared to underlie subsequent observer evaluations of the group as a whole. Respondents' pre-transgression identification with the group in which the injustice occurred moderated reactions to intragroup disrespect; only when group members identified strongly with the group did they react to more severe disrespect with worse evaluations. Group identification also mediated the impact of disrespect on subsequent reactions towards the group. Additionally, the relationship between observed disrespect severity and post-transgression identification with the group was further mediated by perceptions of membership value in the group.

Keywords: disrespect, injustice, identification, observer evaluations, relational motives

One of the recent trends in justice research has been a greater emphasis on and acknowledgment of the importance of interpersonal treatment in justice judgments (Bies, 1987; Tyler, 1999; Tyler & Bies, 1990). Issues of interpersonal treatment are indeed the most commonly reported type of everyday injustice (Bies & Moag, 1986; Mikula, 1986; Mikula, Scherer, & Athenstaedt, 1998). Interpersonal treatment violations such as betrayal, humiliation, or undeserved blame are commonly cited examples of injustice (Bies, 1993; Bies & Tripp, 1996), violations that encroach upon procedural entitlements of interpersonal sensitivity and respectful treatment (Mikula, 1986; Miller, 2001; Rawls, 1971). People believe that they are entitled to respectful treatment by others (Baron, 1993; Bies & Moag, 1986) and those responsible for violations of these entitlements should be held accountable for their actions (Bies & Shapiro, 1987; Bobocel, Agar, Meyer, & Irving, 1998). Importantly, the feelings of injustice elicited by poor treatment have the potential to affect subsequent behavior and attitudes in the context (or group) in which the injustice occurred. Numerous empirical investigations linking poor interpersonal treatment to behavioral reactions and attitudes attest to the strength and importance of interpersonal treatment (for a review, see Bies, 2005). Why are attitudes and behaviors so strongly associated with interpersonal treatment? What psychological motives underlie these reactions?

The current investigation attempts to implicate the social identity processes described in the relational models of justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler & Lind, 1992) as partly responsible for negative reactions to poor interpersonal treatment. More specifically, we suggest that poor interpersonal treatment affects attitudes and behaviors because people use information regarding interpersonal treatment to glean the importance of their membership within the group, and that low perceived membership value prompts dis-

identification. The current study explicitly examines these processes as they apply to poor interpersonal treatment. Moreover, while these relational processes have almost exclusively been examined and discussed with respect to first-person experiences, we propose that they are not limited to first-hand accounts and should be apparent in the reactions of observer ingroup observers as well.

In the current study, we attempt to implicate these identity processes by showing that identification with the group in which an injustice occurs both *moderates and mediates* observer reactions to intragroup disrespect – poor treatment of ingroup members, by ingroup authorities. We also suggest that the link between poor interpersonal treatment and subsequent (dis)identification with the group in which the injustice occurred lies in the observer’s beliefs about the value of their own membership within that group. Testing this model (Figure 1) not only provides the first empirical examination of the moderating and mediating role of identity (in tandem), but also tests the group-engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003) as an explanation for *observer reactions to poor interpersonal treatment*, a perspective and context in which relational models of justice have not previously been tested.

Relational Models of Justice

The question of why poor interpersonal treatment affects attitudes and behavior may be clarified by examining research on the social identity processes underlying reactions to procedural justice. Procedural justice refers to “the fairness of different ways of resolving conflicts or making allocations” (p.11, Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997). Relational models of procedural justice suggest that the fairness of the decision-making procedures in a group affect psychological engagement in that group because people use information regarding the fairness of the interactions between individual group members and group

representatives to infer the quality of their social relationships within the group and evaluate their standing and value as group members (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler & Lind, 1992). As a result, failure by group decision-makers to maintain fair procedures may result in a lower perceived value of an individual's group membership (Okimoto, 2007). For example, when group members are denied voice in an important ingroup decision (a common example of unfair decision-making procedures), members may interpret that denial of voice as indicative of the decision-maker's value for individual group members. These reactions have been shown to occur in both first-hand experiences of injustice and ingroup observer reactions (van den Bos & Lind, 2001). The current perspective suggests that an authority figure's lack of concern for an ingroup member diminishes the value of that member *as well as* the perceived value of other group members in a similar role as the injustice victim, accounting for this observer effect. A supervisor's lack of esteem for one particular employee may be indicative of his/her lack of esteem for *other* employees as well.

The diminished membership value implied by unfair procedures is important because people desire secure interpersonal relationships (Leary & Baumeister, 1998) and positive regard from valued others in their attempts to maintain a positive sense of self (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). As such, reactions to unfair procedures should be particularly strong in ingroup contexts, because the implications of those negative ingroup interactions are self-relevant and cue the state of one's inclusiveness and status within valued social groups (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005). For example, a denial of voice may lead victims and observers to view their role in the group as less important than when voice is granted, but only when those victims and observers define themselves through their membership in that particular social group, as the importance placed on that membership make the implications of the injustice

self-relevant. Theoretical and empirical work suggesting that people are most upset about rule-breaking when an important ingroup relationship is threatened corroborate this assertion (see Hogan & Emler, 1981; Wenzel, Okimoto, Feather, & Platow, in press). And when a procedural injustice *is* self-relevant, individuals may react to their diminished membership value by withdrawing from the group (Tyler & Blader, 2003), as withdrawal can be instrumental in maintaining a positive sense of self.

The Role of Identification in Reactions to Disrespect

The current investigation examines the role of identity specifically with regard to observer reactions to *disrespect* (Miller, 2001). Are the processes underlying reactions to disrespect similar to those underlying reactions to unfair decision-making procedures? Relational models of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler & Lind, 1992) suggest that relational concerns are not limited to decision-making processes such as voice because the fairness of *interpersonal treatment* during group interactions also implies within-group respect (Tyler, DeGoey, & Smith, 1996). Thus, relational theorists tend to classify disrespect as one type of unfair procedure (Tyler et al., 1997; Tyler & Lind, 1992). However, many justice researchers *do* distinguish between the concepts of procedural and interactional justice both conceptually (Bies, 2005) and in justice assessments (Colquitt, 2001), where procedural justice deals with the fairness of decision-making processes and interactional justice covers issues specifically surrounding the fairness of interpersonal interactions and treatment (see Colquitt, 2001). Regardless of the perspective one takes on this conceptual debate, the debate itself suggests value in identifying the role of relational motives specifically in reactions to poor interpersonal treatment, instead of confounding or ignoring treatment issues as has been done in measurement and manipulations of procedural

justice in the past (for examples, see Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). Examining reactions to disrespect speaks to recent calls for additional empirical research specifically tapping the underlying processes of this interactional component of justice (Bies, 2005; Reb, Goldman, Kray, & Cropanzano, 2006), while also examining reactions to *injustice* rather than assuming the equivalence of fair versus unfair justice processes (Bies, 2001).

In the current research we attempt to provide evidence that the belongingness and esteem needs (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001) underlying relational models of justice are relevant motives when examining observers' reactions to poor interpersonal treatment within their ingroup. We implicate the importance of these relational concerns in reactions to disrespect by showing that social identification plays a key role in when and how people react to intragroup disrespect – disrespect of an ingroup member by an ingroup authority. To this end, we examine identity processes as they explain the relationship between intragroup disrespect and subsequent evaluations of that group. Drawing from relational models of procedural justice, and specifically the group-engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003), we assert that identity serves both to *moderate and mediate* the relationship between observed disrespect and reactions towards the group.

Identification as a moderator of disrespect. As noted earlier, the fairness of actions taken by ingroup authorities are important in part because of the interpersonal respect they convey and the effect such respect has on our perceived self-worth (Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996). As such, disrespect should elicit relational concerns in observers particularly when those observers identify with the group in which the injustice has occurred (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Consistent with this notion, research has shown that acceptance of authority directives and cooperation are more strongly related to perceptions of fair treatment when the

respondent strongly identifies with the group (e.g., Platow, Wenzel, & Nolan, 2003; Tyler & Blader, 2001; Tyler & Smith, 1999). While observing disrespect may generally elicit a decrease in favorable attitudes towards and disengagement from the group in which disrespect is evident, those reactions should be moderated by the degree to which the respondent identifies with the group in which the incident occurred (Smith, Olson, Agronick, & Tyler, 2007), having a stronger psychological impact when the respondent is strongly identified. Stated more explicitly:

Hypothesis 1: Severe disrespectful treatment of other ingroup members by an ingroup authority should elicit lower observer evaluations of the group than less severe disrespectful treatment, particularly when observers strongly identify with the group in which the incident occurred.

Identification as a mediator of disrespect. Group identification, however, may be examined not only as a moderator of justice reactions, but also as a mediator. The group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003) describes identity judgments as mediating the relationship between procedural justice and psychological engagement with the group. This framework suggests that the quality of treatment also predicts engagement because of the perceptions of self-worth and self-esteem implied by that treatment. Disrespect conveys an authority figure's general lack of concern for individual group members. This perspective is consistent with empirical work specifically examining identification as a mediator between the experience of respectful (or disrespectful) treatment and willingness to engage in group-serving behaviors (Simon & Stürmer, 2003; 2005). Further, Simon and Stürmer (2005) suggest that it is not the desire for acceptance but rather identification which mediates the

relationship between respectful treatment and behavior. We follow this same approach in making our prediction (see Figure 1):

Hypothesis 2: Severe disrespectful treatment of other ingroup members by an ingroup authority should elicit lower observer evaluations of the group than less severe disrespectful treatment (particularly for high identifiers), but this relationship will be mediated by post-transgression group identification.

Concerns with membership value. Implicit in relational models of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992; Tyler & Blader, 2003), and discussions of disrespect more generally (Miller, 2001), is the idea that disrespectful treatment signals people as to their status or standing within the relevant group, and that it is this standing which prompts psychological disengagement. While often implied, direct measures of membership status perceptions are usually absent from empirical examinations of the relationship between procedural justice and identification. Only recently has research explicitly tested membership standing perceptions as mediating the relationship between first-person experiences of poor treatment and subsequent group identification (Okimoto, 2007). Supporting this contention, past research has shown that the relative status of the victim and offender affect reactions to injustice (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001; Kim, Smith, & Brigham, 1998). In these studies, respondents had stronger injustice reactions when the offender's status was lower than their own, suggesting greater concern for or protection of their importance and value as group members. Furthermore, research has shown that making membership standing salient moderates reactions to procedural injustice, suggesting the importance of membership perceptions in justice judgments (van Prooijen, van den Bos, &

Wilke, 2002, 2005). A more in depth examination of the role that identity processes play in reactions interpersonal treatment (Figure 1) should reveal that:

Hypothesis 3: Severe disrespectful treatment of other ingroup members by an ingroup authority should elicit lower group identification (particularly for high identifiers), but this relationship will be mediated by observers' perceptions of their own membership value in the group.

Method

Design and Procedures

Participants consisted of 84 undergraduates (71% female) who participated for partial fulfillment of research participation requirements. The study consisted of a 2-cell (disrespect severity: low or high) between-subjects design; however, we also examined group identity as a continuous moderating variable.

Participants were told that the study investigated responses to transgressions and were instructed to read and respond to one scenario describing a student complaint. Participants were told that this incident actually happened, and that the researchers were given permission to use the case in order to investigate student opinions regarding university policies.

The scenario described a student who performed very poorly on an in-class political negotiation exercise for his international politics course (ostensibly because he was up late studying for an exam for another class). In the scenario, the professor subsequently made inappropriate comments about the student's performance in front of the class. The professor also announced to the class that the exercise was actually a pop-quiz. The student in the scenario was upset because of his poor performance, so he voiced his complaint to the

professor, who was unsympathetic. The student ultimately decided to drop the class so that his GPA would not be affected by the quiz grade.

After reading the scenario, participants were asked to think about how they feel about the incident, and were then prompted to answer a number of questions about the situation. Participants were then asked a number of questions regarding their views about the university in general.

Experimental Manipulation of Disrespect Severity

While the injustice scenario consisted of procedural violations (disrespectful treatment and unfair decision processes) and poor outcomes (low grade on the quiz, ultimately forcing the student to drop the class), only one aspect of the injustice was experimentally manipulated: the severity of the disrespect shown for the student. In order to isolate the affect of disrespectful treatment, only this aspect of the scenario was altered into low or high in severity conditions. In the low severity condition, the professor commented on the student's performance by stating:

“Wow! I don't think I've ever seen anybody do this badly. Obviously some people were not listening at all this past week.”

However, in the high severity condition, the professor also added:

“Don't ever trust THIS person with your political career! You'll be flipping burgers in no time! Moral of the story is that you need to be at least a little intelligent to make the right decisions in a negotiation. No dummies need apply.”

Moderator Variable of Group Identification

The moderating variable of group identification was examined by collecting pre-study measures of university identification approximately two months prior to the experimental

session. At the start of the semester, all students in the pool of available participants completed a battery of questionnaires including a 7-point composite scale measure of university identification adapted from previous research (Tyler & Lind, 1992; Okimoto & Tyler, 2007). The measure asked participants to rate their agreement with the statements: “I talk about the university as a good university to be at,” “The values of the university are similar to mine,” “I am proud to tell people I am a student at this university,” “I would recommend this university to a friend,” “When praises this university, I feel proud,” and “Being student at this university is a large part of who I am.” These six items were combined to form a composite scale of identification ($\alpha = .86$). This continuous scale was utilized as a predictor in the regression analysis, and is referred to in subsequent text as “*pre-test identification*”.

As we know from previous research on trust (see Tyler, 2001), identification is intimately tied to trust in a group or organization. Sharing a common bond with decision-makers increases the importance of their trustworthiness (Tyler & DeGoey, 1995). It is possible that in our measurement of high and low identifying participants we inadvertently captured effects of trust, and we may therefore be examining how a “violation of trust” moderates disrespect, rather than identification. We therefore also collected a 12-item measure of pre-test trust in the university ($\alpha = .91$), allowing for additional analysis examining this potential confound (Organizational Trust Inventory - Short Form; Cummings & Bromiley, 1996; e.g. “I think that people in the university administration tell the truth”, “I think that the university meets its obligations to the students”).

Dependent Measures

After reviewing the transgression scenario, participants were asked to consider what happened after the incident and rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements. These statements consisted of a brief manipulation check, but were mostly comprised of filler questions to mask the true purpose of the study. The manipulation check consisted of a single 7-point scale item asking participants to rate how fairly the target was treated by staff in the interaction (very unfair – very fair). Participants were also specifically asked about the disrespect shown in the situation, however the measure yielded a floor effect and was not useful – participants evaluated the situation as very disrespectful regardless of the severity. We believe, however, that our measure of interactional justice (fairness of treatment) provided adequate evidence that the interactions described varied in disrespect severity.

After providing their thoughts regarding the incident, participants were asked a number of questions regarding their feelings about the university in general. The main dependent measure examined in this study was participants' general evaluations of the university, and was assessed by a composite measure ($r = .86$) consisting of two items: "It would be hard to find a university I like as much as this one," and "I cannot think of another university I would rather go to."

To examine the mediation hypothesized in this study, measures of post-transgression identification was also assessed. The composite measure of identification ($\alpha = .89$) was identical to the continuous moderator variable of pre-test identification described above; for clarity, this measure of identification will be referred to in the text as *post-transgression* identification.

In addition, the mediating variable of perceived membership value was also included (Okimoto, 2007; Okimoto & Tyler, 2007). This measure consisted of six items ($\alpha = .92$) asking participants to indicate their agreement with the statements: “I feel very valued as a member of the university community,” “I think that my concerns are important to the university,” “I think that the people at this university care about my well-being,” “I think that I am important to people at this university”, “I think that the people at this university value me,” and “The people at this university are concerned about me.”

As shown in Table 1, the three primary dependent measures were significantly correlated, raising construct validity concerns. While evaluations of a group, and the perceived status of an individual’s membership in that group, can be conceptualized as specific dimensions of social identity (see Jackson & Smith, 1999), we believe that each of these constructs may play a distinct role in the understanding of reactions to disrespect. While a single transgression may ultimately affect perceived membership status, collective self-definition, and evaluations of the relevant group, we believe that these three identity-related constructs are influenced in a particular order, through the processes described earlier (see Figure 1). In support of this supposition, factor analysis confirmed the distinction between these factors; three distinct components were extracted, with all loadings greater than .68 and no significant cross-loadings (see also mediation analysis results).

Results

Data Analysis

We first examined the manipulation check of fair treatment to verify the effectiveness of the manipulation. An independent *t*-test showed that the high disrespect condition ($M =$

1.69) was indeed evaluated as involving less fair treatment than the low disrespect condition ($M = 2.50$), $t(82) = 2.68$, $p < .01$.

In order to analyze the effects of the independent variable of disrespect severity in tandem with the continuous moderator variable of pre-test identification, we used multiple regression techniques outlined by Aiken and West (1991) for interactions between categorical and continuous variables. Effect coding was used for disrespect severity. Pre-test identification was centered, and a two-way interaction coefficient was calculated. Separate regression analyses were conducted on each of the three post-transgression measures of general group evaluations, post-transgression identification, and perceived membership value. Slope analyses were then conducted on significant interactions.

Statistics presented in text include standardized regression coefficients and t -statistics. Initial analyses investigating participant gender yielded no effects, so male and female participants were combined for all analyses. The descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations among all continuous variables are presented in Table 1.

General Evaluations of the Group

Results showed that disrespect severity did not have a significant main effect on evaluations of the group, $\beta = -.01$, $t(80) = -0.14$, $p = .89$. Pre-test identification did, however, have a significant main effect on evaluations of the group, $\beta = .57$, $t(80) = 6.23$, $p < .001$. In addition, and consistent with Hypothesis 1, a significant negative effect was found for the interaction between pre-test identification and disrespect severity, $\beta = -.22$, $t(80) = -2.43$, $p < .05$. Simple slope analysis (Figure 2) revealed that for those participants who were highly identified with the university, disrespect severity resulted in marginally worse evaluations, β_x

= -.24, $p = .07$. However, for participants who did not identify with the university, disrespect severity did not predict evaluations of the university, $\beta_x = .21, p = .11$.

Examination of Mediating Variables

Post-transgression identification. Results showed that disrespect severity had only a marginal main effect on post-transgression identification, $\beta = -.14, t(80) = -1.67, p = .099$. Pre-test identification did, however, have a significant positive effect on post-transgression identification, $\beta = .59, t(80) = 6.76, p < .001$. And consistent with Hypothesis 1, a significant negative effect was also found for the interaction between pre-test identification and disrespect severity, $\beta = -.23, t(80) = -2.65, p < .01$. Simple slope analysis (Figure 2) revealed that for those participants who were highly identified with the university, disrespect severity resulted in lower post-transgression identification, $\beta_x = -.38, p < .005$. However, for participants who did not identify with the university, disrespect severity did not predict post-transgression identification, $\beta_x = .09, p = .49$.

Perceived membership value. Results indicated that disrespect severity had no significant main effect on perceived membership value, $\beta = -.13, t(80) = -1.27, p = .21$. Pre-test identification did, however, have a significant positive effect on perceived membership value, $\beta = .24, t(80) = 2.30, p < .05$. And consistent with Hypothesis 1, a significant negative effect was found for the interaction between pre-test identification and disrespect severity, $\beta = -.26, t(80) = -2.53, p < .05$. Simple slope analysis (Figure 2) revealed that for those participants who were highly identified with the university, disrespect severity resulted in lower perceived membership value, $\beta_x = -.40, p < .01$. However, for participants who did not identify with the university, disrespect severity did not predict perceived membership value, $\beta_x = .14, p = .37$.

Considering Trust

As Table 1 shows, there was a high correlation between trust and identification. Again using a regression framework, we included the measure of trust as an additional predictor in order to see if trust explained the variance accounted for by pre-test identification or the interaction. Pre-test trust did not significantly predict evaluations of the group, $\beta = -.17$, $p = .09$, and did not reduce the effect of pre-test identification or the interaction. Likewise, pre-test trust did not significantly predict post-transgression identification, $\beta = .01$, $p = .96$, or perceived membership value, $\beta = .20$, $p = .08$. These findings suggest that although pre-test identification and pre-test trust were highly correlated, it was pre-test identification (and its interaction with disrespect) that influenced the subsequent post-transgression identification of respondents and their evaluations of the group, not trust.

Mediational Analyses

Additional mediational analyses were performed to support our theoretical arguments. To test these mediating effects we followed procedures for mediation in hierarchical linear regression as outlined by Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998). We first established that there were significant correlations between the variables of interest (see Table 1). After testing for the direct associations between the predictor variables and the dependent measure, we entered the mediating variable and again tested for the significance of the direct and indirect paths. As stated earlier, we expected post-transgression group identification to mediate the relationship between the interaction and evaluations of the group (Hypothesis 2). Additionally, we predicted that perceived membership value will further mediate the relationship between the interaction and post-transgression identification (Hypothesis 3). Therefore, we tested each hypothesis in turn.

While disrespect severity, pre-test identification, and the interaction were used as predictors in all analyses, only the mediation of the interaction was relevant to our hypotheses, and therefore only statistics relating to the interaction are presented in the text. However, it is important to note that disrespect severity did not yield a significant main effect in any of the analyses, while pre-test identification was a significant predictor of evaluations of the group, post-transgression identification, and perceived membership value in all steps of the analysis (no mediation was apparent). See Table 2 for all regression coefficients.

Post-transgression identification (Hypothesis 2). The direct effect of the interaction on evaluations of the group was significant, $\beta = -.22$, $t = -2.43$, $p < .05$. However, when adding post-transgression identification into the model, the interaction significantly predicted post-transgression identification, $\beta = -.23$, $t = -2.65$, $p = .01$, and post-transgression identification predicted evaluations of the group, $\beta = .44$, $t = 4.13$, $p < .001$. Supporting our mediational hypothesis 2, a Sobel (1983) test indicated a significant indirect effect, $z = 2.23$, $p < .05$, suggesting mediation. And when controlling for post-transgression identification, the direct effect of the interaction on evaluations of the group was no longer significant, $\beta = -.12$, $t = -1.39$, $p = .17$.

Perceived membership value (Hypothesis 3). As mentioned earlier, the interaction significantly predicted post-transgression identification, $\beta = -.23$, $t = -2.65$, $p = .01$. However, when controlling for perceived membership value, the interaction significantly predicted perceived membership value, $\beta = -.26$, $t = -2.53$, $p = .01$, and perceived membership value significantly predicted post-transgression identification, $\beta = .43$, $t = 5.47$, $p < .001$. Supporting our mediational hypothesis 3, a Sobel (1983) test indicated a significant indirect effect, $z = 2.30$, $p < .05$, suggesting mediation. The direct relationship between the

interaction and post-transgression identification was no longer significant after controlling for perceived membership value, $\beta = -.11$, $t = -1.48$, $p = .14$.

Additional analyses. Although not explicitly hypothesized, the current model predicts two-level mediation: the interaction predicts perceived membership value, which predicts post-test identification, which predicts evaluations. Therefore, we also conducted stepwise regression analysis, entering each mediating variable in the order predicted. Findings were consistent with the proposed model (see Table 2 for analyses). Perceived membership value mediated the effect of the interaction on evaluations of the group, an effect which was further mediated by post-test identification (see Figure 3). Further analyses also indicated that altering the order of these variables (e.g., post-test identification predicting membership value, predicting evaluations) did *not* show mediation, supporting the hypothesized order if the variables as shown in Figure 1.

The overall model was also examined using structural equation methods (using AMOS; Arbuckle, 1999), allowing us to examine variables as both predictor and criterion variables, which yielded identical results with very good fit, NFI = .99, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA < .01. To show evidence of mediation, we followed Shrout and Bolger's (2002) suggestions for evaluating mediation using bootstrapping methods in SEM. The standardized indirect effect was significant, $\beta = -.106$, $SE = 0.052$, with a 95% confidence interval range from -.026 to -.189, suggesting mediation, $p < .05$. Further, we estimated the *strength* of the mediation (Shrout & Bolger, 2002) by examining the proportion of the total effect ($\beta = -.218$) accounted for by the indirect effect, $P_M = .49$, showing evidence of partial mediation. While these results are supportive of the model, and consistent with the earlier mediation analyses,

note that the fit indices and indirect effect estimates should be interpreted with caution because of the low sample size.

Discussion

The results of this study confirmed our three primary hypotheses, elucidating how group members might react to observing disrespectful treatment occurring within their own ingroup. In general, findings were supportive of relational models of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler & Lind, 1992). The severity of disrespect had a negative effect, but only when respondents highly identified with the group in which the injustice occurred, which is consistent with the notion that procedural justice is particularly important for high identifying group members (Smith, Olson, Agronick, & Tyler, 2007; Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996). Furthermore, and consistent with assertions outlined in the group-engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003), these effects were explained by the impact that observed disrespect has on participants' post-transgression perceptions of their own membership value, and in turn, their identification with the group. And while identity effects have previously been identified in procedural justice research, identification has rarely been examined as both a mediator and a moderator of reactions to injustice. By identifying both effects in tandem, the current research illustrates a more complete picture of the role of identity in reactions to injustice.

In addition, the findings of this study extend past research by further clarifying the role of identity specifically in reactions to disrespect (as opposed to decision-making processes), suggesting that reactions to poor treatment are also driven by relational motives when they occur in ingroup contexts. This is consistent with other evidence showing that various types of justice overlap with regard to the underlying motives that different justice

violations elicit. A wealth of research has shown that procedural justice may have both material (e.g., Thibaut & Walker, 1978) and relational concerns (e.g., Tyler & Lind, 1992) underlying its importance. Other more recent research has suggested that, consistent with theoretical assertions proposed by the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003), distributive justice is also relevant to both material and relational concerns. Relational concerns may underlie reactions to unfavorable outcomes as well (Okimoto & Tyler, 2007; Wenzel, 2001), and material reparations may even serve to address relational needs in addition to material needs (Okimoto, 2007). These findings are interesting because they suggest that perhaps a justice framework that focuses on multiple needs or motives (e.g., Cropanzano, et al., 2001) would be more parsimonious than one that is tied to the classification of justice types, particularly when examining *injustice* where transgressions elicit concern for particular needs – needs that must be addressed in order to satisfy people’s desire to see justice done.

Finally, the current research suggests that relational models of justice apply to observer reactions as well as first-person reactions to disrespect. Participants reacted to disrespectful treatment of their fellow ingroup members (by an ingroup authority) with concern for their own standing in the group. The finding that disrespect resulted in these reactions only when respondents identified with the group in which the injustice occurred suggests that the resulting negative evaluations were not simply general reactions to poor treatment, but rather resulting from ingroup observers’ subsequent (dis)identification from the group. These findings are important because they suggest that the unjust actions of authorities have the potential to undermine the group engagement of *observers*, not just the

recipients, of unfair treatment (see also van den Bos & Lind, 2001). Further, this extension of relational models into the observer context fills an existing gap in the justice literature.

The findings of the current research may be, however, somewhat limited in scope due to the nature of the experimental procedures. It may be possible that these findings are somewhat dependent on the contextual elements that were held constant as part of the scenario. In particular, disrespect always originated from an authority figure. The relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992) would suggest that disrespect from an authority figure should be more meaningful than disrespect between peers because that authority figure is more likely to speak for the larger group and its value for the role each member plays in the group. The scenarios also included a material loss on the part of the victim, not just disrespect, and therefore may also be dependent on some type of loss in the situation. Research on the procedure by outcome interaction (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996) suggests that the quality of treatment often has *more* impact on justice judgments and subsequent group engagement when outcomes are poor, suggesting that outcome favorability may further moderate the effects of disrespect. In contrast, however, other research shows that the quality of treatment impacts group-related evaluations irrespective of the outcome (Simon & Stürmer, 2003). Lastly, we recognize that other psychological reactions (e.g. emotions, uncertainty, fear of rejection, etc.) may also influence an observer's subsequent relations with and evaluations of the group, and may even play an additional role in the processes described. While the mediation analysis provides evidence suggesting that the current model is valid, further research is necessary to explicitly examine and incorporate these additional process variables.

It should also be noted that, although the current study examines observer reactions as a function of pre-test identification with the group, these moderating effects should generalize beyond this specific operationalization of identity. Just as low identifiers reacted less strongly than high identifiers in the current study, observing poor treatment within outgroups should elicit weaker reactions than poor treatment in ingroup contexts, as outgroup disrespect is less self-relevant. It should also be noted that *intergroup* (as opposed to intragroup) disrespect may not exhibit these types of effects. On the contrary, an outgroup authority's disrespect shown towards members of an observer's ingroup, or conversely an ingroup authority's derogation of an outgroup member, may elicit even stronger identification than when no disrespect has occurred (see Tajfel, 1972). While these identity predictions do not downplay the importance of the current findings, they may have specific implications for applying these results to justice processes and policy, suggesting the need for further research explicitly examining observer reactions to disrespect in intergroup contexts.

Regardless of these potential limitations, this research highlights the importance of considering relational concerns when responding to violations of due respect, not only for the victims of disrespect, but also for ingroup observers. In support of the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003), group identification both mediates and moderates reactions to intragroup disrespect. The extent to which an observer's identity concerns are raised following disrespectful actions perpetrated by ingroup members is not only dependent on the observer's identification with that group, but can also lead to disidentification and psychological disengagement.

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Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Pre-test Identification	5.35	0.99	—			
2. Post-transgression ID	4.49	1.24	.58*	—		
3. Evaluations of the Group	3.93	1.94	.55*	.63*	—	
4. Membership Status	3.21	1.13	.23*	.59*	.38*	—
5. Pre-test Trust	4.60	0.91	.42*	.29*	.14	.31*

* $p < .05$

Table 2.

Mediational Analysis Results

STANDARDISED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS		STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
Severity	→ Evaluations	-.01	.02	.05
Pre-Test ID	→ Evaluations	.57 ^{***}	.51 ^{***}	.31 ^{***}
Interaction	→ Evaluations	-.22 [*]	-.16	-.11
Severity	→ Mem. Status	—	-.13	-.13
Pre-Test ID	→ Mem. Status	—	.24 [*]	.24 [*]
Interaction	→ Mem. Status	—	-.26 ^{**}	-.26 ^{**}
Mem. Status	→ Evaluations	—	.23 ^{**}	.05
Severity	→ Post-trans. ID	—	—	-.09
Pre-Test ID	→ Post-trans. ID	—	—	.48 ^{***}
Interaction	→ Post-trans. ID	—	—	-.12
Mem. Status	→ Post-trans. ID	—	—	.43 ^{***}
Post-trans. ID	→ Evaluations	—	—	.41 ^{***}

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 1.

Current Theoretical Model

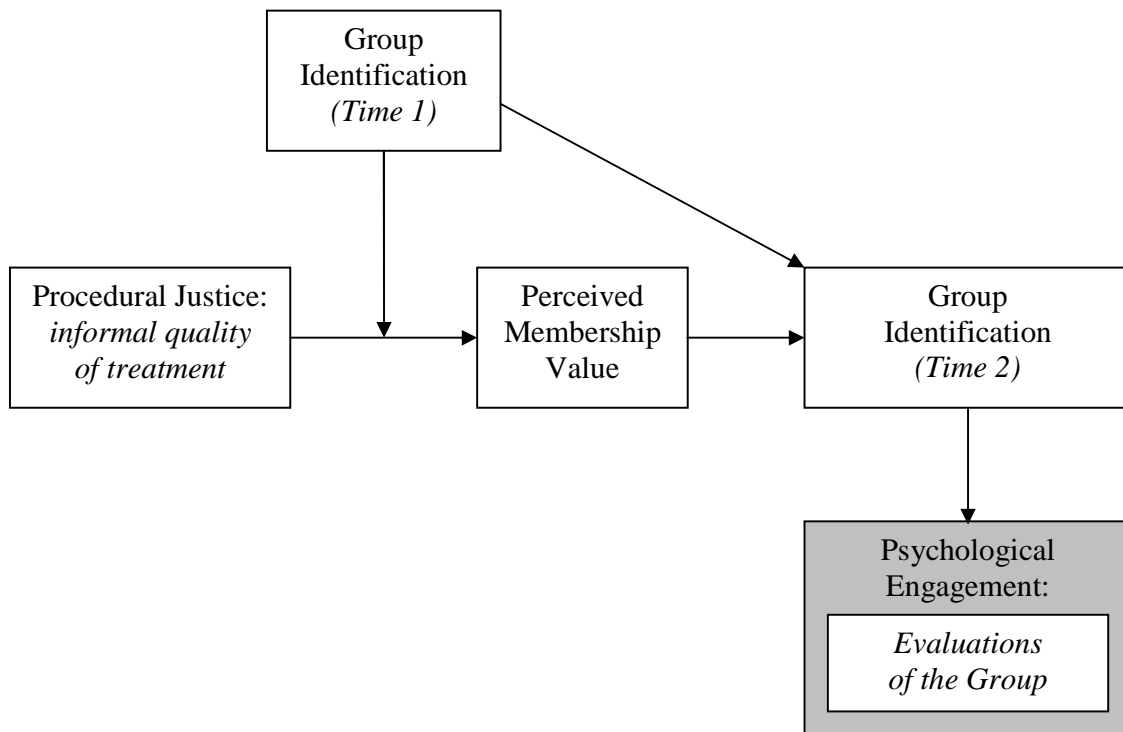
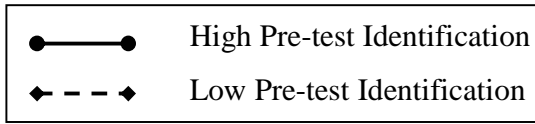
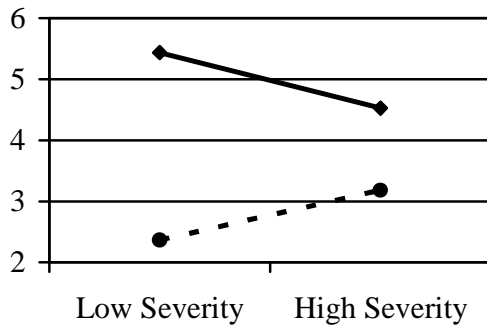


Figure 2.

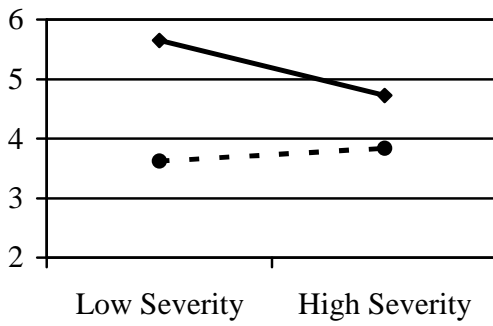
Slope analyses: Pre-test Identification X Disrespect Severity



DV: Evaluations of the Group



DV: Post-Transgression Identity



DV: Membership Value

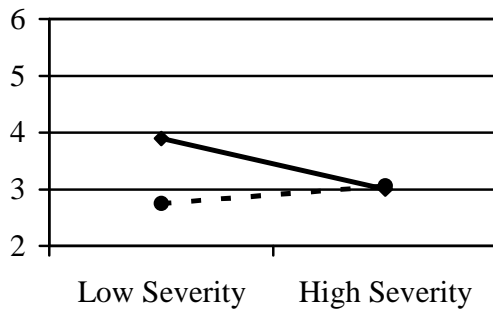
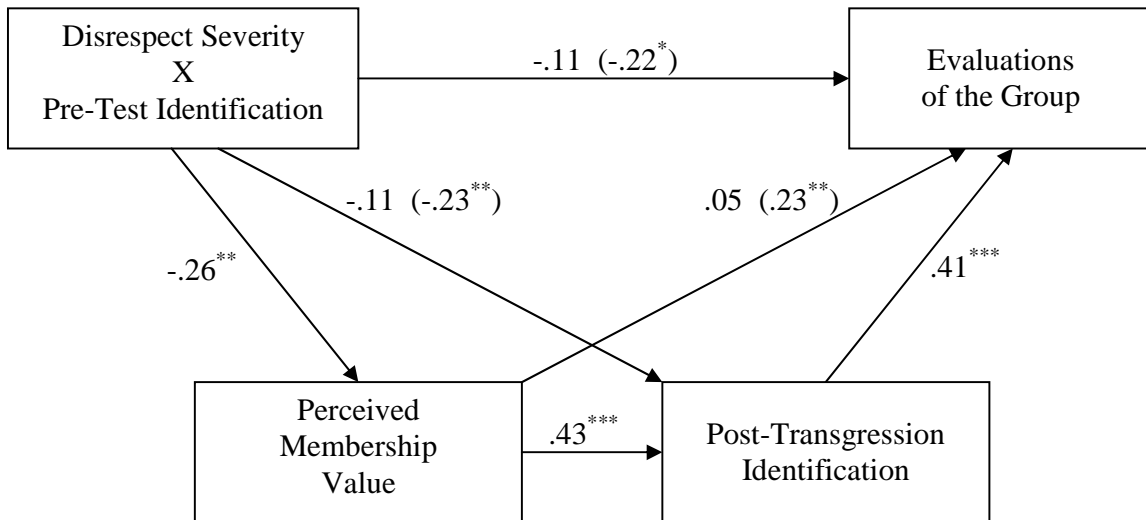


Figure 3.

Mediational analysis: Pre-test Identification X Disrespect Severity



Note: Values are standardised regression coefficients. Values in parentheses indicate the direct relationship prior to entering any mediating variables. While disrespect severity and pre-test identification were also used as predictors in all analyses, only the mediation of the interaction was relevant to our hypotheses, and therefore only those relationships are represented (see Table 2 for complete results). * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.