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# The Impact of Respect Versus Neglect of Self-Identities on Identification and Group Loyalty

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*How do targets deal with a discrepancy between their choice of identity and the way they are categorized by others? In this article, the authors demonstrate that participants' reactions to this discrepancy depend on whether the way they are actually treated by others respects their chosen identity. Participants whose choice of identity was neglected expressed low identification and little loyalty to the group to which they had been assigned. By contrast, identification and group loyalty were stronger among participants whose choice of identity was respected and who did not differ from controls on these measures. Of importance, only participants whose self-identity was respected also were willing to self-categorize in and express willingness to cooperate with the ascribed group. The implications of these results for the understanding of identity processes in pluralist societies are discussed.*

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**T**he way a person self-categorizes in a given context does not necessarily coincide with how he or she is categorized by perceivers. For instance, in the work place, women and racial or ethnic minority group members are often categorized on the basis of their minority identity, even if they wish to focus primarily on their professional identity (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Fiske & Glick, 1995; Kanter, 1993; Nkomo & Cox, 1996). Likewise, Van Oudenhoven, Prins, and Buunk (1998) revealed that although Turkish migrants tend to see themselves on the basis of both native and host identities, they are categorized by members of the Dutch host society mainly on the basis of their ethnic identity (see also Horenczyk, 1996). How do targets deal with such discrepancy between their (contextually) chosen identity and the way they are categorized by others? This question is the focus of this article. More specifically, in this article, we examine the conditions under which people accept and accommodate to an externally imposed cate-

gorization or instead resist that external categorization to affirm their own choice of identity.

The conditions under which a discrepancy between a self-identity and an external categorization may be created appear to be clear. This discrepancy may occur because targets and perceivers may have different criteria for category inclusion (e.g., Yzerbyt, Leyens, & Bellour, 1995), such as when targets claim their right to enter a group but are denied entrance by members of that group (e.g., Ellemers, Van Knippenberg, de Vries, & Wilke, 1988; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Often, this discrepancy occurs because those that are in the minority in a given context tend to be seen on the basis of their minority group membership, even if this does not coincide with the identity that they choose to stress in that particular context. In fact, perceivers readily use visible cues, such as gender, race, and age, to categorize targets (Fiske, 1998), whereas targets' subjective identities do not necessarily correspond to their most visible group memberships at all times (Deaux, 1996; Tajfel, 1981). Clearly, ascribed group memberships such as race and gender also can constitute important self-identities in particular contexts and in such cases discrepancies can occur exactly if these identities

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are ignored in the eyes of others (as in a "color-blind" environment).

The impact that this discrepancy may have on its targets has, however, not been directly examined. The only clear finding so far is that a discrepancy between self-identity and external categorization has a negative impact on psychological well-being (Berry, 1990; see also Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997). In fact, this discrepancy has been designated as categorization threat, a term that underlines the negative experience that targets undergo when categorized against their will (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Breakwell, 1986). In this article, our goal is to contribute to the understanding of how people deal with this discrepancy by examining its impact on group identification and group loyalty. The choice to examine these particular outcomes reflects our concern with the consequences of this discrepancy not only for the target (in particular, his or her sense of identity) but also for the groups in which the target can be categorized. We argue that a discrepancy between a self-identity and an external categorization can have important consequences for the groups in which the target is categorized because it may interfere with the targets' willingness to display loyalty to these groups. Specifically, targets may respond to this discrepancy by resisting association with an externally ascribed group as a means to more convincingly demonstrate allegiance to the chosen identity. For instance, a woman faced with gender categorization in the workplace may downplay her gender identity and express little wish to work on the improvement of women's social position because this may further undermine her possibility of being treated as a regular colleague by her coworkers. If so, then the neglect of a (contextual) choice of identity seriously undermines a group's possibility of improving its social position, a problem that is exacerbated when the external categorization refers to a low-status or underperforming group.

The hypothesis then is that when people are treated in ways that neglect their self-identities, they will affirm their self-identity and resist expressing identification with (as well as displaying loyalty to) externally ascribed groups. Although this issue has so far not been directly investigated, a review of adjacent literature suggests that this may be the case. Research on self-verification and behavioral confirmation processes in interpersonal interaction (e.g., Skrypnek & Snyder, 1981; Swann & Ely, 1984) has revealed that targets tend to resist accommodating to the views that others have of them. Deaux and Major (1987) pointed out that the same is likely to occur at the level of social identities. Indeed, it has been shown that targets that do not choose to belong to or do not identify with a given social category attempt to under-

mine the applicability of the external categorization by focusing on the differences within the group (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995; Yzerbyt, Castano, Leyens, & Paladino, 2000) or on differences between the self and the group (Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997) and resist displaying loyalty to that group (Barreto & Ellemers, 2000; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997; Ouwerkerk, de Gilder, & de Vries, 2000; see also Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Turner, Hogg, Turner, & Smith, 1984). A similar pattern of resistance to external categorization has been revealed within research on prejudice reduction. Indeed, although the common ingroup identity model originally proposed that the introduction of a superordinate identity would successfully reduce bias among groups (Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989), this model was more recently revised due to the observation that people often express resistance to externally imposed categories (Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, & Anastasio, 1994; Gonzales & Brown, 2000; Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; see also Haunschild, Moreland, & Murrell, 1994; Terry, Carey, & Callan, 2001, in the context of mergers).

Resistance is, however, not the only possible response to external categorization. Instead, recent research indicates that people may be prepared to endorse external views of themselves as long as other identities that they regard as important also are acknowledged. For instance, Hornsey and Hogg (2000) demonstrated that when people are addressed on the basis of both subordinate and superordinate identities, self-categorization in the superordinate category is facilitated and bias between subgroups decreases (see also Gonzales & Brown, 2000; Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Huo, Smith, Tyler, & Lind, 1996). Nevertheless, exactly why this should be the case is not entirely clear. The psychological process proposed to underlie this effect is vague and at best confounded. For instance, one of the explanations proposed is that the imposition of a superordinate category subsuming the ingroup as well as the outgroup threatens the distinctiveness of the ingroup's identity. This threat disappears when people are addressed on the basis of both subgroup and superordinate identities; as a result, the beneficial effects of a common ingroup identity may be revealed (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). However, imposing a superordinate category not only threatens the distinctiveness of the subgroups but also may constitute a categorization threat. This threat can be eliminated by addressing people on the basis of both subordinate and superordinate identity, which will facilitate acceptance of the superordinate category. Here, the crucial factor facilitating acceptance is not group distinctiveness but respect for one's choice of identity (see also Tyler & Lind, 1992, for a similar argument with regard to

justice-based respect). In sum, although resistance to an externally imposed category may result from a threat to subgroup distinctiveness, the possibility that a similar type of resistance may be elicited merely by the categorization itself cannot be ruled out. The goal of this article, therefore, is to provide a systematic examination of how people respond to the imposition of an external category (categorization threat), irrespective of group distinctiveness (see Van Leeuwen & Van Knippenberg, in press, for a demonstration of the effect of distinctiveness threat in mergers free of this confound).

To our knowledge, so far, only one study has directly contributed to this analysis: In 1986, Finchilescu found that ingroup bias was more strongly expressed by participants who were categorized in the group to which they had chosen to belong than by participants who were categorized in a group different from their choice. Although in this instance distinctiveness and categorization threat are not confounded, this study introduces an additional confound: Participants categorized in a group different from their choice were not only treated differently from their choice but also were faced with inconsistent categorization criteria. However, these two processes are clearly independent; for example, even though a target may accept that her gender is a highly salient categorization cue to others, she may wish that others respect her identity as a member of the staff. The importance of this distinction lies in the fact that perceivers cannot realistically be expected to alter the way they categorize the social world, but they can be expected to respect the targets' choice of how he or she wishes to be treated. The processes involved by these two factors and the consequences that they may entail also are distinct: The way a target is treated may imply categorization threat and elicit affirmation of the chosen identity, along with resistance to the imposed identity. By contrast, a discrepant categorization is likely to undermine group membership salience or elicit uncertainty regarding self-categorization. A more precise analysis of this process thus requires the examination of how people react to being treated on the basis of an external categorization (vs. according to their own choice of identity) while controlling for the inconsistency between categorization criteria.

#### *This Study*

To examine this process, participants in all experimental conditions were categorized in the group to which they had not chosen to belong (discrepant categorization) and their responses were compared to those of participants in control conditions, who were categorized in the group of their choice (nondiscrepant categorization). Moreover, participants in experimental

conditions were either treated as members of the chosen group (chosen identity respected) or treated as members of the group in which they had been categorized (chosen identity neglected). We predicted that participants in the experimental conditions would express weaker identification with the group in which they had been categorized than controls, reflecting the discrepancy between this category and the self-identity (Hypothesis 1a). Moreover, we hypothesized that participants treated according to their choice (control and respected conditions) would identify more strongly with the treatment group than participants treated differently from their choice (neglected condition; Hypothesis 1b). We did not expect participants in the control condition to differ from participants in the respected condition on this measure.

Next, we examined the extent to which people may be willing to exert themselves on behalf of a group in which they are categorized when it appears to need their help. To do so, we provided false feedback establishing the treatment group to have performed poorly on a problem-solving task and provided participants with the opportunity either to improve the group or to improve themselves. By doing so, we are not only able to examine people's willingness to contribute to group improvement but we may also assist in the examination of the conditions that undermine or facilitate social mobilization among low-status or underperforming groups. Prior research indicates that the factors that drive people to exert themselves on behalf of a group are those that narrow the relationship between the individual and the group (Ellemers, 1993; Ouwerkerk, Ellemers, & de Gilder, 1999). The possibility that this relationship may be affected by identity needs raised by alternative group memberships has so far not been examined. We argue that when people's chosen identities are not respected, affirmation of their (contextually) chosen identity will affect the targets' willingness to express allegiance to other groups. In particular, persuading others of one's choice of identity may require distancing the self from other groups that could otherwise be considered important. Hence, participants treated according to their choice are likely to be more willing to display group loyalty than participants whose choice is neglected (Hypothesis 2a).

To examine this issue, we also manipulated which type of strategy the group considered to be best to achieve group excellence (group norm): working individually or working with the group. This procedure takes into account the fact that groups (e.g., multinational organizations) differ in the extent to which they believe that their success relies on collective work or on individual work (or a combination of the two, Barreto &

Ellemers, 2000). This procedure allows us to examine not only whether participants displayed more or less pro-group behavior across conditions but also whether they adapted to the group norm (Jetten et al., 1997). We predicted that participants would follow the group norm (choosing to work with the group when the norm is to work with the group and to work individually when the norm is to work individually) only when treated according to their choice (control and respected conditions) but not when their choice of group membership was neglected. In line with self-categorization theory (Turner, 1991), we predicted that the behavior of participants in the control and respected conditions would be mediated by identification with the treatment group; that is, these participants would follow the group's norm because they identify with the group (Hypothesis 3).

Crucial to our argument is the analysis of how participants related to the other group after having experienced the respect or neglect of a chosen identity. We therefore examined the extent to which participants self-categorized in the group that they were not treated as members and the extent to which they were willing to cooperate with that group after experiencing a treatment that either neglected or respected their choice. Respect for chosen identities was expected to eliminate the threat brought about by the external categorization, whereas neglect of a self-identity was expected to exacerbate that threat. Hence, participants in the respected condition (and for whom this was the externally ascribed group) were expected to self-categorize in this group to a greater extent (Hypothesis 4a) and to be more willing to cooperate with this group (Hypothesis 5a) than participants in the control condition (for whom this was the outgroup). Participants in the neglected condition (for whom this was the chosen group) were expected to affirm their identity by self-categorizing in this group to a greater extent (Hypothesis 4b) and expressing greater willingness to cooperate with this group (Hypothesis 5b) than participants in the control condition. However, we did not advance any predictions as to whether participants in the respected condition would differ from participants in the neglected conditions on these measures.

## METHOD

### *Design and Participants*

The experiment followed a 3 (treatment: respect of chosen identity, neglect of chosen identity, control)  $\times$  2 (group norm: working with the group, working individually) between-participants factorial design. The control condition in the treatment factor corresponds to a condition in which there is no discrepancy between self-chosen and ascribed identities. This condition is compared to the two experimental conditions, in both of

which there is a discrepancy between self-chosen and ascribed group membership but where we varied whether participants' choice of identity was respected or neglected. Group status was kept low in all conditions by means of bogus group performance feedback.

Participants were 146 students at the Free University, Amsterdam (93 women and 53 men, proportionally distributed across conditions), with a mean age of 22. A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 15 participants were present at each session. Because participants were seated in separate cubicles, they were not aware of how many people were present in the laboratory. Each session of the experiment lasted approximately 1.5 hours, after which all participants were fully debriefed and received book tokens in the amount of 15 Dutch guilders (then approximately U.S.\$6.50).

### *Procedure*

*Introduction and choice of group membership.* All participants were seated in separate cubicles and were equipped with personal computers. The experiment was introduced as an investigation of problem solving in groups. Participants were told that they would be divided into groups according to whether they had an inductive or deductive style of problem solving (Doosje, Spears, & Koomen, 1995). It was stated that no differences had been found in the relative prevalence of inductive and deductive thinkers in the population or across gender. In addition, it was stressed that at the individual level both problem-solving styles had been found to be equally effective and that the main purpose of this experiment was to investigate how effective these styles would be at the group level. Short descriptions of the two styles of thinking were provided on the basis of which participants were asked to indicate to which group of thinkers they felt they belonged (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999). A total of 92 participants chose to belong to the group of deductive thinkers and 54 participants chose to belong to the group of inductive thinkers. These participants were equally distributed across conditions because allocation to treatment and group norm conditions was independent of which group participants had chosen to belong.

*Group ascription.* Next, participants performed a (bogus) Associated Thinking Test, which would allegedly indicate whether they held a deductive or an inductive problem-solving style. After this test, bogus feedback assigned two-thirds of the participants to the group to which they had not chosen to belong—external ascription was thus discrepant with the chosen identity for these participants (experimental conditions). The remaining third of the participants was classified as members of the group to which they had themselves chosen to belong, that is, in this condition, there was no

discrepancy between chosen and ascribed identities (control condition).

*Manipulation of treatment.* Participants in the control condition were told that because their choice of group membership and the result of the test coincided, during the experiment they would be included in that group. In the experimental conditions, participants were told that their choice of group was inconsistent with the result of the test. Half of these participants were told that we would rely on their own choice of group membership (respected condition). Therefore, participants in the respected condition were included in their chosen group for the rest of the experiment. The remaining participants were told that we would choose to rely on the result of the test (neglected condition). Thus, participants in the neglected condition were included in the ascribed group for the rest of the experiment.

*Feedback regarding group performance.* From this point on, participants had the opportunity to actually experience being treated in ways that either respected or neglected their chosen identity. First, all participants were asked to perform a task with the treatment group, ostensibly to ascertain which group was better at problem solving. This task (Task 1) consisted of a series of five organizational problems. In each problem, participants were asked to select one of two solutions, after which they received bogus feedback about other group member's answers and subsequently selected their own final answer (Ellemers, Wilke, & Van Knippenberg, 1993). The scoring procedures for this task were deliberately kept ambiguous to ensure credibility of false feedback. After this task had been performed, false feedback was provided. The treatment group was said to have performed poorly (28 points) relatively both to the other group (37 points) and to a previously established norm for the student population (33 points).

*Improvement possibilities.* Next, participants were asked to perform a second task (Task 2). During Task 2, they could choose, in each of seven trials, to contribute to the improvement of either their individual potential to solve problems in groups or the potential of the treatment group (see also Barreto & Ellemers, 2000). It was made clear that each time the participant chose to be tested individually, he or she would allow the experimenters to examine his or her individual potential and how it could best be optimized in group problem solving. In turn, each choice to work with the group would contribute to the investigation of the potential of the group and of how it could best be optimized in group problem solving. In this way, it was stressed that participants could either choose to contribute to their own individual improvement, by choosing to work individually, or to the

improvement of the group, by choosing to work with the group.

*Manipulation of group norm.* Participants were then asked to indicate on 7-point Likert-type scales (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) how much they valued a group member that chose to work individually and a group member that chose to work with the group (own evaluation: "I value a group member that focuses on his/her own potential and therefore chooses to work individually," "I value a group member that focuses on the potential of the group and therefore chooses to work with the group"). Group norm was manipulated by providing false feedback regarding how the ingroup as a whole evaluated these two strategies. Half of the participants were told that the group clearly preferred its members to work with the group (average bogus score for working with the group = 6.1, working individually = 2.4, on 7-point scale). The other half of the participants were told that the group clearly preferred its members to work individually (working with the group = 2.4, working individually = 6.1). This manipulation was reinforced during the actual performance of Task 2 by providing false feedback concerning other ingroup members' choices of working strategy. In all conditions, feedback was mostly consistent with the group norm, but deviant choices were shown after Trials 5 and 7 to ensure credibility of false feedback.

#### *Dependent Measures*

Identification with the ascribed group was measured after group ascription ("At the moment, I feel strong ties with the inductive/deductive thinkers," "At this moment, I identify with the inductive/deductive thinkers," "Being an inductive/deductive thinker is important for me at the moment," explaining 69% of variance,  $\alpha = .77$ , 7-point Likert-type scales, from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*). Identification with the treatment group was measured with the same items (adjusted to refer to the treatment group) after the performance of Task 1 but before group status feedback had been provided (78% of variance,  $\alpha = .86$ ). Choice of improvement strategy was measured during performance of Task 2 ( $\alpha = .69$ ; but see Barreto & Ellemers, 2000, for  $\alpha \geq .75$ ). Each choice to work individually was assigned score 0, whereas each choice to work with the group was given score 1. As a consequence, scores on this measure ranged from 0 (*choice to work individually on all trials*) to 7 (*choice to work with the group on all trials*).

Self-categorization was measured with four items: two items inquired about similarity of self to the treatment group (7-point Likert-type scale from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*; "In general, I am different from other inductive/deductive thinkers" (inverted) and "In general, I am similar to other inductive/deductive thinkers,"  $r = .39$ ,  $p <$

.01), whereas two parallel items asked about perceived similarity of self to the other group ( $r = .42, p < .01$ ). We also examined the extent to which participants were willing to cooperate with the other group by asking participants to indicate on a 7-point scale with which group they would prefer to work on another task and with which group they would prefer to cooperate (higher scores indicate preference to cooperate with the other group than with the treatment group,  $r = .43, p < .01$ ).

Group ascription was checked by asking participants to indicate what the result of the test had been. When incorrect answers were given, the computer automatically repeated the correct information. The manipulation of group performance was checked by asking participants to indicate whether their group had performed worse, equally, or better than the other group. Again, incorrect answers elicited a repetition of the correct information. To assess participants' beliefs regarding the relative performance of the two groups, participants were asked to estimate the score of the other group on Task 1. The manipulation of group norm was checked by asking participants to indicate on a 7-point Likert-type scale what the group thought of each of the two strategies (manipulation check of norm: "The other members of my group value a group member that focuses on his/her own potential and therefore chooses to work individually" and a similar item regarding the choice to work with the group).

## RESULTS

### *Manipulation Checks*

All participants indicated correctly to which group they had been ascribed and correctly reproduced the status of the treatment group. In addition, checks of perceived score of the other group did not reveal any differences across conditions (overall  $M = 32.38, SD = 4.65$ ), and the perceived performance of the other group was not perceived to be reliably different from the performance of the treatment group ( $z = .94, p = .18$ ).

Analyses of the manipulation checks of group norm revealed that participants perceived the group norm according to the manipulations: The choice to work with the group was perceived to be evaluated more positively when the norm was to work with the group ( $M = 6.37, SD = .61$ ) and less positively when the norm was to work individually ( $M = 1.88, SD = .86$ ),  $F(1, 139) = 1327.57, p < .001$ ; the choice to work individually was perceived to be more positively evaluated when then norm was to work individually ( $M = 6.08, SD = .95$ ) than when the norm was to work with the group ( $M = 2.06, SD = .66$ ),  $F(1, 139) = 3.48, p < .05$ ; multivariate main effect of group norm:  $F(2, 138) = 808.18, p < .001$ .

**TABLE 1: Degree of Identification With Ascribed and Treatment Groups as a Function of Treatment**

	Treatment		
	Control	Respected	Neglected
Ascribed group	3.65 <sub>a</sub> (1.24)	2.83 <sub>c</sub> (1.15)	2.52 <sub>c</sub> (1.25)
Treatment group	3.78 <sub>a</sub> (1.41)	3.92 <sub>a</sub> (1.32)	3.03 <sub>b</sub> (1.43)

NOTE: Scores range from 1 to 7. Only differences between means with different subscripts are reliable ( $p < .05$ ). Standard deviations are presented in parentheses.

### *Degree of Identification With Ascribed and Treatment Groups*

Ratings of degree of identification with ascribed and treatment groups were submitted to a 3 (treatment)  $\times$  2 (group norm)  $\times$  2 (target group: ascribed, treatment group) MANOVA with repeated measures on the last factor. This analysis revealed a main effect of target group,  $F(1, 139) = 39.87, p < .001$ , as well as a main effect of treatment,  $F(2, 139) = 7.41, p = .001$ . These effects were qualified by a reliable interaction between treatment and target group,  $F(2, 139) = 9.47, p < .001$  (see Table 1). Consistent with Hypothesis 1a, identification with the ascribed group was stronger in the control condition than in any of the experimental conditions (respected and neglected), which did not reliably differ from each other. This result indicates that identification with the ascribed group was determined by whether (control condition) or not (experimental conditions) it was discrepant with participants' own membership choice. In addition, in support of Hypothesis 1b, identification with the treatment group was stronger when treatment respected participants' choice of identity, that is, in the respected and control conditions than in neglected conditions. Identification with the treatment group was determined by whether treatment respected the self-chosen group membership.

### *Choice of Improvement Strategy*

We expected group norm to affect choice to work with the treatment group only among participants that were being treated according to their own choice (Hypothesis 2). This hypothesis was examined with a 3 (treatment)  $\times$  2 (group norm) ANCOVA, in which we controlled for participant's own evaluation of working strategies prior to the manipulation of group norm (see also Barreto & Ellemers, 2000) (working with group  $\beta = .34$ , working individually  $\beta = -.28$ ),  $F(2, 137) = 14.31, p < .001$ . This analysis revealed a main effect of group norm,  $F(1, 137) = 42.53, p < .001$ , and an interaction between treatment and group norm,  $F(2, 137) = 2.99, p < .05$ . Inspection of means and main effects showed that participants in the control condition followed the group norm, working

**TABLE 2: Choices to Work With the Treatment Group as a Function of Treatment and Group Norm**

	Treatment		
	Control	Respected	Neglected
Group norm			
Work with group	4.68 <sub>a</sub> (1.99)	4.71 <sub>a</sub> (1.76)	3.83 <sub>a, b</sub> (2.20)
Work individually	2.68 <sub>c</sub> (1.49)	2.00 <sub>c</sub> (1.59)	3.00 <sub>b</sub> (1.93)
Normative behavior	4.50 <sub>a, b</sub> (1.75)	4.85 <sub>a</sub> (1.66)	3.91 <sub>b</sub> (2.05)

NOTE: Scores range from 0 to 7. Only differences between means with different subscripts are reliable ( $p < .05$ ). Standard deviations are presented in parentheses.

more with the group when that was the norm and less when the norm was to work individually,  $F(1, 141) = 14.87, p < .001$  (see top panels of Table 2). Participants whose chosen identity was respected behaved in exactly the same manner as participants in the control condition, following the group norm in their choice of working strategy,  $F(1, 141) = 26.18, p < .001$ . By contrast, group norm did not reliably affect the behavior of participants whose membership choice was neglected,  $F(1, 141) = 2.41, p > .15$ .

It is important to note that this interaction between treatment and group norm on choice to work with the group also can be portrayed as a main effect of treatment on normative behavior (i.e., the extent to which response is in line with the group norm) (see Brauer & Judd, 2000). Scores for normative behavior were computed by inverting the scores on choice to work with the group for one of the levels of the group norm factor (when the manipulated norm was to work individually). These scores thus reflect the extent to which participants' responses matched the norm of their group. Next, we submitted these scores to a one-way ANOVA with treatment as an independent variable, where the previous interaction now emerged as a main effect of treatment,  $F(2, 142) = 3.20, p < .05$  (see bottom panel of Table 2). Participants indeed behaved more normatively in the control and respected conditions (which did not differ from each other),  $t(96) = 1.02, ns$ , than in the neglected condition, which differed reliably from the respected condition,  $t(93) = 2.45, p < .05$ , and marginally from the control condition,  $t(95) = 1.51, p = .06$ , one-tailed.

In sum, these results provide support for Hypothesis 2, indicating that the norms of the treatment group are likely to be followed when chosen identities are respected but that they are not likely to be attended to when chosen identities are neglected. In addition, because the respected condition does not differ from the control condition, the results indicate that loyalty to group norms did not vary according to whether there was a discrepancy between chosen and ascribed identi-

ties but rather on whether participants' own identity choice was respected.

### Test of Mediation

Following Baron and Kenny (1986), the test of our prediction that treatment affects identification with the treatment group, and this in turn determines endorsement of group norms, involves demonstrating that (a) the manipulation of treatment reliably affects the extent to which participants endorsed the group's norm, (b) the manipulation of treatment reliably affects degree of identification with the treatment group, and (c) when degree of identification with the treatment group is controlled for, the effect of treatment on endorsement of group norm decreases reliably. Treatment was coded as a dummy variable (with two levels:  $-1$  corresponding to the neglected condition and  $+1$  corresponding to the respected and control conditions) and entered as a predictor in a regression analysis with normative behavior as a dependent variable. Treatment reliably predicted endorsement of group norm ( $\beta = .19$ ),  $F(1, 144) = 5.48, p < .05$ . Similarly, treatment reliably predicted degree of identification with the treatment group ( $\beta = .27$ ),  $F(1, 144) = 11.29, p < .001$ . When degree of identification with the treatment group was controlled for, the effect of treatment on endorsement of group norms was no longer reliable ( $\beta = .13, ns$ ), whereas the effect of degree of identification with the treatment group on endorsement of group norms remained significant ( $\beta = .22, p < .05$ ),  $F(2, 142) = 5.74, p < .005$ . Following the procedure proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), the reduction in the effect of treatment after accounting for mediation is significant ( $z = 2.378$ ). In line with Hypothesis 3, this result indicates that participants endorsed the norms of the treatment group in the control and respected conditions largely because they identified with the treatment group in these conditions.<sup>1</sup>

### Self-Categorization

Self-categorization after the experience of treatment was analyzed with a  $3$  (treatment)  $\times 2$  (group norm)  $\times 2$  (target group: treatment group vs. other group) MANOVA with repeated measures on the last factor. This analysis compares the extent to which people see themselves as similar to each of the two groups formed in the experimental setting. However, note that these two groups did not mean the same thing to participants in all conditions. The "other" group consisted of the outgroup for participants in the control condition, whereas it corresponded to the ascribed group in the respected condition and to the chosen group in the neglected condition. An interaction between target group and treatment was obtained,  $F(2, 139) = 15.92, p < .001$ . Closer inspection of the results revealed main effects of treatment both for

judgments of similarity with treatment group,  $F(2, 139) = 4.57$ ,  $p = .01$ , and for judgments of similarity with the other group,  $F(2, 139) = 14.90$ ,  $p < .001$ , with very different means patterns (see Table 3).

Self-categorization in the treatment group was higher for participants in the control and respected conditions. By contrast, in line with Hypothesis 4b, self-categorization in the other group was clearly higher for participants in the neglected condition (for whom this was the self-chosen group). Of importance, participants in the respected condition self-categorized in the other group to a greater extent than did controls (for whom this was the outgroup). In fact, respected participants self-categorized to a similar extent in the treatment (self-chosen) group and in the other (ascribed) group. By contrast, neglected participants and controls maintained a clear differentiation between the two groups, categorizing themselves only in the self-chosen group. This result suggests that whereas self-categorization in the treatment group depends on whether it respects a prior choice of identity (control and respected conditions), people are willing to categorize themselves in an externally ascribed group as long as their chosen identity is first respected (respected conditions).

#### *Cooperation With the Other Group*

Willingness to cooperate with the other group after the experience of treatment was analyzed with a  $3$  (treatment)  $\times 2$  (group norm) ANOVA. This analysis revealed a main effect of treatment,  $F(2, 139) = 14.28$ ,  $p < .001$ . Participants in the control condition (for whom this was an outgroup) were less willing to cooperate with the other group ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ) than were the remaining participants ( $M$  respected =  $4.27$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ;  $M$  neglected =  $4.63$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ),  $t(92.58) = 1.48$ , *ns*,  $t(90.79) = 3.42$ ,  $p = .001$ ; that is, in line with Hypotheses 5a and 5b, participants were relatively willing to cooperate with the other group when they belonged to it, either by choice (neglected condition) or by ascription (respected condition).

#### DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that identification with a treatment group depends on the degree to which it coincides with a self-identity. Participants only identified with the treatment group when this coincided with their chosen identity, not when their chosen identity was neglected. Of importance, the pattern of responses found for participants in the respected condition was similar to the pattern found for control participants, suggesting that affirmation of one's chosen identity (for a particular context) is not impaired by discrepant categorization criteria. That is, participants treated as they had chosen expressed high identification with the treatment

**TABLE 3: Self-Categorization and Cooperation With the Other Group as a Function of Treatment**

	Treatment		
	Control	Respected	Neglected
Self-categorization			
Treatment group	4.19 <sub>a</sub> (1.03)	3.94 <sub>a,b</sub> (1.00)	3.57 <sub>c</sub> (1.14)
Other group	3.30 <sub>c</sub> (0.92)	3.80 <sub>b</sub> (0.89)	4.25 <sub>a</sub> (0.73)
Cooperation with the other group	3.42 <sub>b</sub> (1.24)	4.27 <sub>a</sub> (1.23)	4.63 <sub>a</sub> (1.48)

NOTE: Scores range from 1 to 7. Only differences between means with different subscripts are reliable ( $p < .05$ ). Standard deviations are presented in parentheses.

group, irrespective of whether the external categorization was discrepant with their self-view. In other words, identification and group loyalty were determined not by whether external categorization was discrepant with self-identity but by whether self-identities were respected. The importance of this finding lies in the fact that targets cannot realistically expect perceivers to alter how they categorize them, especially when categorization cues are highly visible, as in the case of race and gender. However, targets are entitled to expect to be treated in ways that communicate respect for their self-chosen identities, and this seems to be what determines their reaction to the views that others have of them.

The way targets were treated also had consequences for how they responded to performance failure of the treatment group: People were willing to work on group improvement in group normative ways as long as they had chosen to belong to that group, not when their choice of identity was neglected. Participants' estimates of the other group's score indicate that their resistance to follow the norms of the treatment group was not due to greater attractiveness of the other group with regard to its performance. In addition, this behavior was mediated by the degree to which people identified with the treatment group; that is, respecting people's choice of identity led to high identification with the treatment group, which in turn induced normative behavior. By contrast, people responded to a neglect of their chosen identity by psychologically distancing themselves from an externally ascribed group, which in turn inhibited their willingness to behave according to norms of that group. Neglecting people's identity choices may thus prevent them from acting on behalf of other groups that may be important for them but that are not relevant in that context.

Participants' responses after experiencing a treatment that either respected or neglected their self-identity provide further support to the argument that respect for self-identities is crucial for the expression of group loyalty. In particular, the results show that participants'

expressions of allegiance to the other group were determined by the treatment that they received. After undergoing the experience of neglect or respect of their chosen identities, participants in the control and neglected conditions clearly self-categorized in the chosen group. For controls, this meant that they self-categorized in the treatment group but not in the other group (which was for them a clear outgroup). However, for participants in the neglected condition, this meant that they self-categorized in the other group (chosen group) and not in the treatment group (an ascribed, but not chosen, group). Of importance, this latter finding shows that the neglect of a self-identity did not decrease identification with that group (and may even have enhanced it). In turn, those whose identity had been respected identified equally with chosen and ascribed groups. In sum, the experience of respect for a chosen identity not only facilitated expressions of loyalty to the treatment group but also elicited a willingness to self-categorize in an externally ascribed group. This pattern also was reflected in participants' willingness to cooperate with the other group: Participants in the respected as well as in the neglected conditions expressed greater willingness to cooperate with that group than controls.

These results have clear and direct implications for the acceptance of a common identity in a range of social contexts where multiple group memberships play a role, such as multicultural societies or postmerger organizations. As previously suggested in research on prejudice reduction, the acceptance of a common identity in these contexts can be undermined when subgroup identities are neglected (Gaertner et al., 1994; Gonzales & Brown, 2000; Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Huo et al., 1996). As a consequence, the pressure to assimilate and adopt one common identity not only elicits resistance to this common identity but also is accompanied by affirmation of the neglected identity. Our research contributes to the understanding of this phenomenon by providing a direct examination of the psychological processes underlying this effect. By controlling for group distinctiveness and varying the extent to which the external categorization constituted a categorization threat, our results show that categorization threat per se can elicit resistance to an external categorization: Participants did not identify with the treatment group when it did not coincide with their self-identity. Clearly, distinctiveness threat is not a necessary condition for resistance to external categorization (although it may be a sufficient one) (Van Leeuwen & Van Knippenberg, *in press*). In addition, our results demonstrate that respect for a chosen identity can eliminate this threat: Participants did self-categorize in the external category after experiencing respect for their chosen identity. Justice-based respect also is postulated by Tyler and colleagues

as a fundamental concept to understand allegiance to ingroup norms (e.g., Huo et al., 1996; Tyler & Lind, 1992). Our results extend this concept, both by demonstrating that the elimination (or prevention) of categorization threat may communicate the feeling of respect and by demonstrating that respect for chosen identities is fundamental for the development of new group allegiances.

Another contribution of our research is the demonstration that external categories are likely to be rejected in a broader range of contexts than considered so far. First, if categorization threat is sufficient to elicit resistance to external categorizations, this may occur even when there is no subordinate/superordinate relation. Indeed, categorization threat must be understood as resulting from a discrepancy between self-views and external categories, irrespective of how these are positioned in relation to each other. Second, even when resistance is expressed with regard to nested categories, it is not necessarily the superordinate identity that is rejected. That is, although so far resistance has mainly referred to superordinate categories, the opposite may also occur: When an internalized superordinate identity is neglected, this may lead to its affirmation and possibly undermines allegiance to the subordinate minority group. This discussion also raises the need to examine the interplay between categorization threat and distinctiveness threat, because people may choose to stress particular identities irrespective of whether they are distinctive. It is also important to note that categorization threat should not be equated with rejection of a visible identity. Although visible identities (as gender and race) are often ascribed identities, this ascription will only constitute a threat in contexts where they do not coincide with people's own self-definition. For instance, women may experience categorization threat when categorized as women in a professional environment, where they would prefer to be regarded on the basis of their professional role. But the opposite also may occur: If a woman regards her gender as relevant to a professional setting, she may resent working in a gender-blind environment. In sum, whether a given categorization is experienced as threatening cannot be inferred from the social context alone because it results from the relation between subjective self-categorizations and the categorizations employed by others in that context.

A final note on how these findings relate to research on the effects of (im)permeability of group boundaries seems pertinent. Prior research has shown that when group members are refused entrance into another group (i.e., when boundaries between groups are impermeable), they may strengthen identification with the original group (e.g., Ellemers, 1993; Wright et al., 1990). The parallel between this situation and the setting we

examine in this article is that when people are refused entrance to the group they think they should belong to, their chosen identity is being neglected and they are treated on the basis of an ascribed membership. Because what we found was that a neglect of a chosen identity led to weaker identification with the ascribed group, these results may at first sight appear contradictory. However, it is important to note that the parallel between these two contexts is merely apparent. First, the distinction we make here between how people are categorized by others and how they are actually treated begs the question of whether impermeability refers to being refused categorization in a desired group or to being refused treatment as a member of a desired group. Second, chosen identities may be neglected for a variety of reasons, only one of which may be lack of permeability. The particular reason underlying this neglect is likely to shape targets' reactions. For instance, when chosen identities are neglected because boundaries are impermeable, persuading others to respect one's chosen identity is structurally impossible. Therefore, affirmation of the desired identity is bound to be futile. By contrast, when targets do not perceive any structural impossibility to being treated as they wish, as in the setting we studied, asserting their chosen identity may serve as a strategy to persuade others of their chosen group memberships (see also Barreto, Spears, Ellemers, & Shahinper, 2001). Clearly, the interplay between chosen and ascribed identities, and the structural opportunities for their expression, opens broad and exciting avenues for future research. The challenge now is to unveil how targets react to the way they are treated by others while interpreting targets' responses by reference to the constraints and possibilities that characterize the social context (Ellemers, Barreto, & Spears, 1999).

## NOTE

1. Note that the fact that identification was measured before the manipulation of group norm does not interfere with this mediation. The argument here is that identification mediates the effect of treatment on normative behavior; that is, treatment determines degree of identification with the treatment group and that determines the extent to which participants follow group norms. The manipulation of group norm does not alter this process, it only defines the shape that the behavior elicited by identification should take.

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