

## **Leadership and the management of conflicts in diverse groups: Why acknowledging versus neglecting subgroup identity matters**

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### *Abstract*

*Past research suggests that reactions to an authority's decision are most influenced by treatment quality when individuals value their relationship with the authority and the group s/he represents. The present experiments examine how institutional recognition of self-relevant identities (implicit in Study 1 and explicit in Study 2) affects the relationship between treatment quality and reactions to the delivery of a negative outcome by an outgroup authority. The overall pattern of results suggests that treatment quality affects reactions to the decision only when the common identity shared with the authority and a subgroup identity that distinguishes one from the authority are both recognized. Possible mechanisms for the observed effect are discussed along with implications for the dual identity approach to conflict resolution. Copyright © 2004 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

In the US and other diverse societies, communities and work organizations are faced with the challenge of finding ways to maintain harmonious social relations as members of subgroups with differing interests and values come together. While proponents of assimilation argue that the best way to promote social cohesion is to encourage the development of a shared identity, those in the multicultural camp believe that there are benefits to recognizing and respecting subgroup identities (Fredrickson, 1999; Schlesinger, 1992). The two perspectives converge in recognizing the importance of emphasizing a common identity, but they diverge on the importance of whether subgroup identities are acknowledged or neglected. Recent social psychological research has empirically addressed this debate by examining the consequences of the two approaches in a number of domains including prejudice reduction (Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989; Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, & Anastasio, 1994; Gonzalez & Brown, 2003; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000), cooperation in social dilemmas (Wit & Kerr, 2002), and acceptance of organizational mergers (Eggins, Haslam, & Reynolds, 2002; Jetten, O'Brien, & Trindall, 2002; van Leeuwen, van Knippenberg, & Ellemers, 2003). A yet unexamined issue has to do with how a shared versus a dual identity approach to diversity affects group members' reactions to leaders. This is an important question because leaders play a key role in

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managing and resolving internal conflicts by offering solutions, mediating disputes between parties, and enforcing rules and regulations. Our goal in the current research is to examine how acknowledging versus neglecting subgroup identities affects reactions to the exercise of authority. As such, this research adds an important dimension to the growing body of work evaluating the consequences of a dual identity approach to conflict resolution (see Haslam, 2001 for an overview).

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF AUTHORITY RELATIONS

In order to examine how diversity strategies affect authorities' ability to achieve social harmony, we first need to understand the psychological dynamics underlying responses to authorities and their decisions. Prior research indicates that such responses are primarily influenced by two factors—the outcome received (positive or negative) and how individuals are treated by authorities in the process (fair or unfair) (Tyler & Huo, 2002 for a review). The latter factor is referred to as the 'fair process effect', and the general finding is that individuals react more positively to authorities' decisions to the extent they feel fairly treated, independent of the outcome. To the extent that individuals are influenced by the favourability of the outcome they receive, authorities' ability to motivate cooperation is limited by external constraints such as resource limitations (e.g. availability of funds for work bonuses) and their obligation to enforce group rules (e.g. issuing citations for legal violations). However, to the extent that individuals are influenced by issues of treatment quality, authorities are empowered to motivate cooperation through their own actions (making decisions in a fair or unfair way). Thus, a focus on treatment quality may be an important alternative avenue through which authorities can maintain support for their efforts to reconcile disagreements and other conflicts.

The group-value model of procedural justice (GVM) (Lind & Tyler, 1988) offers one explanation for why treatment quality matters to people. Building on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the GVM suggests that people derive their sense of self-worth not only from their group memberships but also from information about their standing *within* groups they identify with. According to the GVM, fair (i.e. unbiased, polite, and benevolent) treatment by someone who represents a self-relevant group communicates the group's respect and regard for the individual. In contrast, unfair (i.e. biased, rude, and untrustworthy) treatment communicates to individuals their devalued status within the group. This status information, in turn, affects judgment of self-worth (Koper, van Knippenberg, Bouhuijs, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1993; Smith, Tyler, Huo, Ortiz, & Lind, 1998).

Empirical evidence supports the notion that group identification moderates the relationship between perceived treatment quality and reactions to authorities' decision. For example, survey data of workers' responses to decisions made by their supervisors indicate that the relationship between judgments of treatment quality and acceptance of authorities' decisions is stronger when the decision comes from an ingroup authority (i.e. supervisor is ethnic ingroup member) versus an outgroup authority (i.e. supervisor is part of an ethnic outgroup) (Huo & Tyler, 2001; Tyler, Lind, Ohbuchi, Sugawara, & Huo, 1998). Interestingly, subsequent research found that this ingroup-outgroup effect is attenuated among those who identify with a more inclusive social category that includes the authority. Two surveys—one of workers and their supervisors and one of individuals with the police and other legal authorities—found that when individuals interacted with an ethnic outgroup authority, they assigned greater weight to treatment quality to the extent they strongly identified with a common category they shared with the authority (e.g. the organization) (Huo, 2003; Huo, Smith, Tyler, & Lind, 1996). Interestingly, the studies also measured subgroup identification (i.e. ethnicity) and found that it did not affect how authorities' decisions are received (Huo, 2003; Huo et al., 1996).

Together, these previous findings suggest that a sense of shared identity moderates the relationship between treatment quality and evaluations of authorities' decisions (see also Smith & Tyler, 1996). The reverse effect is found for outcomes such that outcome considerations better predict reactions to decisions in cross-group interactions than in same group interactions and when people are weakly versus strongly identified with the shared category. This effect is also evident in research by Platow and van Knippenberg (2001) who found that low group identifiers are more likely to focus on outcomes when evaluating group authorities. According to these findings, the primary requirement for facilitating concerns about treatment quality appears to be a sense of shared identity at an inclusive level.

### CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING VERSUS ACKNOWLEDGING SUBGROUP IDENTITIES

The GVM's emphasis on drawing attention to a shared identity as a mechanism for allowing authorities to effectively resolve conflicts (and its correspondent lack of attention to the role of subgroup identities) reflects its origins as a theory of *intragroup* processes. The possible tension and interplay between different levels of self-categories is overlooked in a theory whose focus is on relationships within a single group. Nonetheless, the GVM premise that drawing attention to a shared category should heighten interest in treatment quality is not without support in the literature on *intergroup* relations. According to the Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM) (Gaertner et al., 1989), drawing attention to a shared category can induce members of different subgroups to conceive of themselves as a single, inclusive group and attitudes toward former outgroup members should thereby become more positive. Applying the logic of CIIM to the context of authority relations, we should expect a similar effect. That is, drawing attention to a shared category should motivate individuals to conceive of themselves and the relevant authority as members of the same inclusive social category and therefore shift their focus toward concerns about the identity-relevant information contained in assessments of treatment quality.

But before we accept that a shared identity approach can effectively motivate individuals to focus on issues of treatment quality, we need to consider additional evidence that may further illuminate the nature of cross-group interactions. Like the GVM, the CIIM (at least its original conceptualization) does not directly take into account the possibility that individuals with strong subgroup attachments may resist efforts at recategorization. After all, the CIIM and much of the clearest evidence in support of it are based on minimal groups with which people may not have strong attachments compared with naturalistic groups such as gender or ethnicity (see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000 for a review). In fact, CIIM theorists, based on field study data of individuals with attachments to real world groups, have acknowledged the potential benefits of a dual identity strategy (Gaertner et al., 1994).

A number of additional studies have also raised questions about whether a shared identity approach alone can be effective in efforts at recategorization in situations where individuals have strong subgroup attachments. One experiment found that failure to respect a self-selected identity led individuals to distance themselves from and to become less committed to the imposed category (Barreto & Ellemers, 2002). Similarly, a set of studies examining the effects of categorization strategies on ingroup bias found that, ironically, when individuals are forced to focus exclusively on a category they share with members of different subgroups, they respond by becoming more rather than less identified with their subgroup (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Interestingly, data from these studies also show that these apparently defensive reactions are attenuated when *both* the shared identity *and* the distinct subgroup identity are acknowledged. What these findings suggest is that although the GVM

appears to call out for a shared identity approach to motivate concerns about treatment quality, such an approach may actually backfire because people who value their subgroup identity may resist such efforts at recategorization. They further suggest that in these situations a more effective way to generate interest in treatment quality is to rely on a dual identity strategy that simultaneously draws attention to the category one shares with an authority as well as give due recognition to a valued subgroup identity.

Complementing the work on categorization strategies and prejudice reduction are insights from research on minorities' reactions to institutional devaluation of their identity. According to theorizing on the effects of identity devaluation, when an institution intentionally neglects a self-relevant identity, members of the devalued group respond by disengaging their self-concept from further attacks by the institution (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). Following this logic, when institutions impose a shared identity while neglecting a valued subgroup identity, members of subgroups may interpret this action as devaluation of the subgroup. It has been argued that it is exactly these circumstances that lead individuals to question whether institutions and their representatives have their interest at heart and will treat them in a fair and respectful manner (Cohen & Steele, 2002). In other words, institutional respect for and recognition of a valued subgroup identity would create an environment in which individuals would feel safe in opening themselves to legitimate feedback from authorities about their value to the group. In contrast, when individuals perceive institutional disregard for an important aspect of their social identity, they may disengage their self-concept from potentially threatening feedback. Along these lines, Smith, Tyler, and Huo (2003) speculate that, in addition to building a sense of shared identity, an additional precursor to engender a focus on treatment quality is for authorities to demonstrate respect and regard not only for the individual but also for the subgroup s/he lays claim to. Like the work on categorization strategies, insights from the identity devaluation literature lends further credence to the notion that when valued subgroup identities are involved, a dual identity strategy, rather than a shared identity strategy, may be the most effective mechanism for generating interest in treatment quality.

## OVERVIEW OF EXPERIMENTS

Two experiments were designed to examine how institutional neglect versus acknowledgment of valued identities affect reactions to the way in which outgroup authorities deliver negative outcomes. We focus on examining the psychological basis of reactions to the delivery of negative outcomes because it is in exactly this situation that a focus on treatment quality offers the most utility (and potential risk) in helping authorities to resolve difficult conflicts. Because we are interested in how identity messages affect authority relations among individuals with strong affiliations with established groups, we focus on existing social categories that are meaningful and relevant to our sample (i.e. university affiliation, gender).

Our main prediction is motivated by research on categorization approaches to prejudice reduction and work on identity devaluation. The categorization literature suggests that imposing a shared identity will prompt reactions to defend against threats to the integrity of a neglected subgroup identity. The identity devaluation research reasons that if an important aspect of the self is neglected by an institution, then individuals may be motivated to protect themselves against further attacks on their identity by closing themselves off from the identity relevant information contained in the actions of institutional authorities. Both lines of work suggest that a shared identity strategy and its correspondent neglect of valued subgroup identities will shift evaluations of authorities' decisions away from concerns about treatment quality (a factor they have control over versus outcomes, a factor over which

they have some control but is inherently constrained by structural limitations). Specifically, we test the hypothesis that acknowledging only the identity an individual shares with an authority while neglecting a valued identity that distinguishes him or her from the authority will not adequately motivate concerns about treatment quality in cross-group interactions. And that in fact, treatment concerns will be relevant only when the identity an individual shares with an authority and a valued subgroup identity that distinguishes her from the authority are *both* acknowledged.

## STUDY 1

For our first study, we adapted a category salience paradigm that has been effectively used in research on the effects of identity acknowledgment (versus neglect) on ingroup bias (Gonzalez & Brown, 2003; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). The experiment consists of a 3 (subgroup salience, shared category salience or dual category salience)  $\times$  2 (high/low treatment quality) between-subject design. The outcome of the decision (negative) was held constant across conditions. Participants were led to believe that they would interact in a small mixed gender group and with an opposite sex authority who was depicted as a representative of the research team (i.e. the institution). Thus, when participants were informed that the researchers cared about particular group differences, a message about institutional acknowledgment of relevant social identities would be conveyed through the category salience manipulation. The three salience conditions allowed us to test the hypothesis that when a shared category is emphasized, treatment concerns will be evident only in the dual category condition (where the subgroup identity is acknowledged) and not in the shared category only condition (where the subgroup identity is neglected). The subgroup only condition in which group differences between participant and authority were reinforced gave us an opportunity to replicate previous findings on categorization effects in authority relations (Huo & Tyler, 2001; Tyler et al., 1998).

### Method

#### *Participants*

Students ( $N = 161$ ) from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) participated in the study in partial fulfilment of course requirements in an introductory psychology course. Participants' age ranged between 18 and 26. The sample represented diverse ethnic backgrounds (41% Whites, 29% Asian Americans, 11% Latino/as, 3% African Americans, 16% 'other'). Approximately equal numbers of men and women were assigned to each condition.

#### *Procedures*

Upon arrival to the experiment room, participants were escorted to private rooms where they received pre-scripted information transmitted by a computer terminal. The experimental procedures were designed to persuade participants that they were ostensibly working with a group of five other people (a total of three women and three men) who were located at computer stations in different rooms. Individuals were introduced to other participants through digital photos and brief introductory messages. They were introduced in a similar way to the session supervisor who was responsible for

guiding the group and evaluating individual performance. The supervisor was represented as a UCLA student (and of the opposite sex as the participant).

*Manipulation of Category Salience.* Participants were told that the study goal was to investigate group differences in skills necessary for successful on-line work performance. In the shared category salience condition, participants were informed that the investigators were interested in studying differences in on-line work performance between students at a public university (UCLA) and students at a private university (University of Southern California (USC)). In the subgroup salience condition, participants were informed that the investigators were interested in studying gender differences in performance in on-line work environments. In the dual category salience condition, participants were informed that the investigators were interested in studying both types of group differences among men and women at UCLA and USC. Category salience was reinforced in two additional ways: 1) a thought-list exercise in which participants listed characteristics that distinguished the relevant group from other groups; and 2) a group exercise on solving personnel problems (for details, see Ellemers, Wilke, & Van Knippenberg, 1993).

Following these tasks, participants were given instructions for completing a timed word recognition task. The purpose of this task was to introduce the treatment manipulation. Each participant's goal was to correctly identify words that flashed for only several milliseconds on the screen. They were given a practice trial followed by 10 real trials. The same words kept reappearing for 5 min until the participant was able to identify them. Participants were informed before the task began that the session supervisor would be scoring their performance relative to the performances of other students. They were given an incentive to try their best on this difficult task with the possibility of being entered into a \$100 lottery. A minimum score of 50 points out of 100 was required to receive a lottery ticket.

*Outcome Feedback.* All participants were awarded a score of 47 points and informed by the supervisor they did not qualify for lottery tickets. Individuals generally experience the word recognition task to be challenging. This made it seem plausible when participants were told that they did not perform well on the task and would not be issued a lottery ticket.

*Manipulation of Treatment.* Treatment quality was manipulated in an e-mail message sent from the supervisor to the participant at the end of the word recognition task. Following prior conceptualization (Huo et al., 1996; Lind & Tyler, 1988), we operationalized high (fair) treatment quality as a message that conveyed the procedural fairness standards of politeness, trustworthiness, and benevolence: 'Here's the deal—I followed the rules and scored you against other students. This gives you 47 points for performance. I decided not to give you any bonus points. I only give bonus points when there's a HUGE improvement. I'm really sorry, I know this must be a let down, but it was a very hard task. If you have problems with how I scored you we can talk about it on your way out.' In the poor quality (unfair) treatment condition, participants received a similar message but in a tone that violates procedural fairness standards: 'Here's the deal—I decided to score you against experts instead of students like we told you. This gives you 47 points for performance. I decided not to give you any bonus points. No lottery ticket for you. Tough luck. This is the final decision and there's nothing you can do to change it!' After the computer segment, participants were asked to fill out a research evaluation questionnaire. After completion of the study, all participants were fully debriefed and entered into a \$100 lottery.

The questionnaire included the manipulation checks and dependent variables as described below. Multiple item measures were collapsed to form an index and their scale reliabilities are presented.



*Dependent Measures.* The main dependent variable of decision satisfaction was designed to capture participants' psychological response to the decision ('Overall, how satisfied are you with your supervisor's decision'; 1 = not at all satisfied, 9 = very satisfied). A second measure was included to assess behavioural intention that follows from the initial attitude ('How willing are you to voluntarily accept the supervisor's decision about how many tickets to give you?'; 1 = not at all willing, 9 = very willing). Although these two items were designed to represent two psychologically distinct experiences—*affective evaluation* and *behavioural intention*—they were highly correlated,  $r=0.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Thus, they were combined to form an averaged index of reaction to the negative outcome with higher means indicating more positive reactions.

*Manipulation Checks.* Two parallel questions adapted from Hornsey and Hogg (2000) assessed the salience of the shared category of UCLA and of the subgroup of gender: 'While you were working as part of the on-line group, how often were your thoughts drawn to your university affiliation (or gender)?'; and 'While you were working as part of the on-line group to what extent were you responding in terms of your university affiliation (or gender)?' (1 = not at all, 9 = very much). The items assessing salience of the shared category of university affiliation were highly correlated ( $r=0.76$ ) as were the items assessing the salience of the subgroup of gender ( $r=0.67$ ). At the end, participants' recall of the experiment's purpose was assessed. We also checked whether the participant noticed that they received a negative outcome by asking them how many lottery tickets they received. Six questions tapped into how the participant felt about how they were treated: 'To what extent do you feel that your supervisor treated you in a fair way?'; 'How hard did your supervisor try to follow the rules for determining how many lottery tickets to give you?'; 'How considerate was your supervisor of your concerns and needs?'; 'How polite was your supervisor?'; 'How fair were the procedures used by your supervisor to award lottery tickets?'; and 'To what extent do you feel that your supervisor showed respect for you?'. All six questions were measured on a 9-point scale with '9' indicating perceptions consistent with higher quality treatment ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ).

## Results

Participants were individually debriefed to assess whether they had any suspicions about the cover story. Based on the debriefing, data from four participants were excluded from further analyses.<sup>1</sup>

### *Manipulation Checks*

As a cursory check on the group salience manipulation, we looked at whether participants correctly recalled the purpose of the study (i.e. comparing differences between students at different universities, students of different gender, or both). A small number of participants (16) failed to identify the purpose of the study corresponding to their assigned condition.<sup>2</sup> Exclusion of these participants did not alter the study findings. Thus, they were included in the subsequent analyses. Perceived category

<sup>1</sup>One participant was unable to complete the post-experiment questionnaire. A second participant recognized one of the people whose picture was used as stimulus. A third was unusually knowledgeable about computer technology and expressed doubt about the veracity of the on-line communication aspect of the cover story. A fourth came in with prior knowledge of the study from a roommate. We were very careful to convey to participants the importance of the study and of not revealing study details prior to the completion of the research. We believe that this participant was the exception and that in general, our participants were cooperative in not revealing details of the study.

<sup>2</sup>Nine were from the shared category condition, five from the subgroup condition, and two from the dual category condition.

salience was subjected to a group salience by treatment by gender analysis of variance (ANOVA). The salience manipulation had a significant effect on both the salience of the shared category,  $F(2, 145) = 3.86, p < 0.05$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.05$ ), and of the subgroup,  $F(2, 145) = 11.52, p < 0.01$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.14$ ). There were no effects for gender or for treatment. Follow-up analyses indicate that those in the shared category condition and the dual category condition did not differ in their reported salience of the shared category ( $M = 2.67$  vs.  $M = 2.94$ ),  $F(1, 151) = 0.40, n.s.$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.00$ ).<sup>3</sup> However, those in these two conditions did indicate perceiving greater salience of the shared category compared to those in the subgroup condition ( $M = 2.81$  vs.  $M = 1.92$ ),  $F(1, 151) = 7.39, p < 0.01$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.05$ ). Those in the subgroup and dual category conditions did not differ in their perceived subgroup salience ( $M = 3.45$  vs.  $M = 2.93$ ),  $F(1, 151) = 2.31, n.s.$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ). However, those in these two conditions did indicate perceiving greater subgroup salience compared to those in the shared category group ( $M = 3.20$  vs.  $M = 1.83$ ),  $F(1, 151) = 20.91, p < 0.01$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.12$ ). Together these results indicated that our manipulation of category salience was successful.

When asked about the number of lottery tickets they received, all participants recognized the negative outcome by noting that they did not receive any tickets. We checked for the effectiveness of the treatment manipulation by subjecting the treatment measure to a treatment by group salience by gender ANOVA. The treatment manipulation had a significant effect on perceptions of quality of treatment:  $F(1, 145) = 108.57, p < 0.01$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.43$ ). Those in the high treatment quality condition reported greater agreement with items assessing whether the supervisor acted in a fair, unbiased, and respectful manner than those assigned to the low treatment condition ( $M = 6.54$  vs.  $M = 3.85$ ). No other significant effects were found. Because there were no gender effects on the manipulation checks and because preliminary analysis of the primary hypotheses did not show any gender effects, this factor will be excluded from subsequent analyses.

### *Hypothesis Testing*

Based on our theoretical analysis, we predicted that participants will be concerned about treatment quality only when the importance of a relevant subgroup identity is communicated *in conjunction* with reminders of the importance of a shared identity. Treatment quality should not affect reactions to the decision in either of the conditions that recognize only one of the two identities. To test our predictions, we conducted a series of planned comparisons. Because our predictions were well specified and theoretically motivated, we felt it was reasonable to rely on a planned comparison approach that involved evaluating simple effects for treatment quality within each salience condition (see Abelson, 1995; Keppel, 1991; Rosenthal, Rosnow, & Rubin, 2000; and Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996 for discussions of the appropriateness of planned comparison vs. the omnibus ANOVA decomposition; the results of the omnibus ANOVA are presented in the footnote following the description of the planned comparisons).

Figure 1 shows the results of the experimental manipulations on reactions to the negative decision. Although the pattern of findings seems to suggest that high treatment quality led to more positive reactions than low treatment quality in each of the salience conditions, the results of the planned comparisons show that this difference was significant only in the dual category condition, ( $M = 6.63, SD = 1.40$  vs.  $M = 4.92, SD = 2.13$ ),  $F(1, 151) = 11.54, p < 0.01$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.07$ ). In contrast, the mean difference in reaction between those who received high treatment quality versus those who received poor treatment quality was not significant in the shared category condition ( $M = 6.10, SD = 1.33$  vs.  $M = 5.52, SD = 2.05$ ),  $F(1, 151) = 1.35, n.s.$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.01$ ). And, in line with past findings, there was no

<sup>3</sup>Gender was included in the initial analysis as a precaution. Because there was no effect for gender, it was excluded in the follow-up analyses. Differences in the degrees of freedom reflect this adjustment.



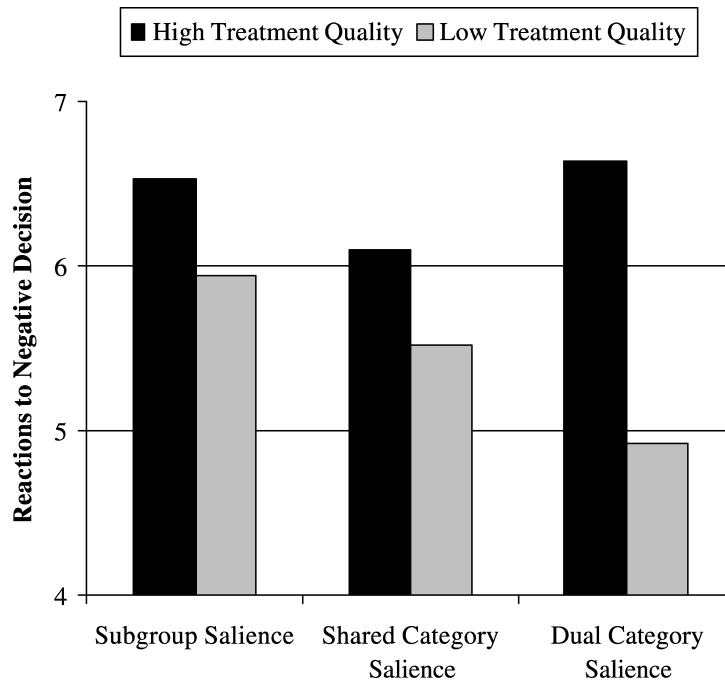


Figure 1. Reactions to negative decision as a function of treatment quality and category saliency (Study 1).  $N = 157$ . Higher numbers represent more positive reactions to the decision (measured on a 9-point scale)

effect for treatment quality in the condition emphasizing the subgroup boundaries between the authority and the individual ( $M = 6.52$ ,  $SD = 1.52$  vs.  $M = 5.94$ ,  $SD = 2.22$ ),  $F(1, 151) = 1.34$ , *n.s.* ( $\eta^2 = 0.01$ ).<sup>4</sup>

#### Exploratory Data Analysis

Further examination of Figure 1 reveals an interesting but unexpected pattern of findings. The effect for treatment quality in the dual category condition seems to be accounted for more by a decrease in support in response to poor treatment than to an increase in support in response to high quality of treatment ( $-0.81$  net loss over the average mean of the other identity conditions versus  $+0.31$  net gain). Although we do not specify a priori hypotheses about the effect of category saliency within each level of treatment (GVM predicts only the total magnitude of treatment effect and does not specify magnitude of effect as a function of treatment valence), this finding may be of interest to justice researchers. Thus, we examined the cell means across the three identity conditions within each level of treatment. Of the six possible pair-wise comparisons, the only significant difference was between the

<sup>4</sup>Results from the omnibus ANOVA indicate a significant effect for treatment quality,  $F(1, 151) = 10.89$ ,  $p < 0.01$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.07$ ) with participants in the high treatment quality condition reporting more positive reactions to the negative outcome than those in the low treatment quality condition ( $M = 6.43$ ,  $SD = 1.43$  vs.  $M = 5.46$ ,  $SD = 2.15$ ). The main effect for identity condition was not significant,  $F(2, 151) = 1.00$ , *n.s.* ( $\eta^2 = 0.01$ ). Finally, the interaction effect, which was implicitly supported in the more sensitive planned comparison analysis, did not reach conventional significance in the omnibus ANOVA,  $F(2, 151) = 1.68$ ,  $p < 0.19$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ).

subgroup salience and dual category conditions at a low level of treatment quality,  $F(1, 151) = 3.99$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , ( $\eta^2 = 0.03$ ). Trend analysis indicated the presence of a weak linear trend in the low quality of treatment conditions,  $F(1, 76) = 2.90$ ,  $p = 0.09$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.04$ ), but not in the high quality of treatment conditions. Taken together, these results suggest that the effect of treatment quality in the dual category condition can be accounted for more by a loss of support in reaction to unfair treatment rather than by an increase in support in response to fair treatment.

## Discussion

The data generated by this first experiment offer evidence in support of our hypothesis that only in the condition where *both* a shared identity and a valued subgroup identity are emphasized did treatment quality affect reactions to the delivery of a negative outcome by a decision-maker. Treatment quality did not affect reactions to the delivery of a negative outcome in either the shared category condition (where the subgroup identity is implicitly overlooked) or in the subgroup condition where group differences were emphasized. Although encouraging, the study is not without its limitations. Below we describe these limitations and propose modifications for a follow-up study. A second study is important not only because it gives us an opportunity to rule out alternative explanations but because it allows us to evaluate the robustness of Study 1's findings. Given that the effect sizes for treatment quality are modest and that we relied on a more powerful data analysis approach, it is important to evaluate whether the findings can be replicated.

First, we address aspects of Study 1's methodology that leave the findings open to some alternative interpretations. One weakness of the design is that participants believed that the supervisor had seen a photograph of them. One could argue that participants may not be responding to social identity neglect but to personal rejection by an opposite sex member. The personal rejection explanation seems unlikely to us because it should be associated with similar effects for treatment within all of the identity conditions. Instead, we observe an effect for treatment only in the dual category condition—a pattern that is more consistent with a social identity interpretation. If personal rejection came into play at all, it should only introduce noise and attenuate the social identity effect. To reduce the possibility of error introduced by the display of photographs, Study 2 was modified to exclude transmission of personal photos.

A second, perhaps more serious, weakness in the design is that because participants in the dual category condition were led to believe they were working with a mixed gender group to achieve a shared goal (in the group exercise), it is possible that the observed effect could be accounted for by mutual interdependence (see Gonzalez & Brown, 2003 for a detailed discussion). Specifically, the treatment effect, which we argue is a response to the simultaneous recognition of two self-relevant identities, may instead be the result of successful cooperation with members of the other subgroup. In order to rule out this alternative explanation in the second study, we eliminated the group aspect of the tasks. Instead, participants worked on tasks individually and interacted only with the supervisor.

Lastly, we modified the experimental paradigm to more directly test the dual identity hypothesis. Part of the problem is that when relying on a salience paradigm, we worked under the assumption that participants cared about their gender identity and that instructions to think only about their university identity while in the presence of a mixed-gender work group would effectively deliver a message that a valued identity had been ignored. Although the category salience approach has been demonstrated to be effective in other studies (e.g. Gonzalez & Brown, 2003; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000), it does not allow us to definitely conclude that identity neglect accounts for the observed pattern of effects. A more conceptually appropriate approach, which we adopt in Study 2, would be to remind participants of the importance of their gender identity and then explicitly ignore it.

## STUDY 2

In Study 2, acknowledgment of the shared identity of university affiliation is held constant across the conditions. What is manipulated is whether the valued subgroup identity is recognized or neglected. We focus on these two conditions because they are of most theoretical relevance and directly allow us to test whether *explicit* neglect versus acknowledgment of a valued subgroup identity (in conjunction with reminders of the shared identity) has the predicted effect on reactions to variations in treatment. This manipulation is a more direct test of the dual identity hypothesis' assumption that the observed effects can be attributed to reactions in defence of a valued identity. Moreover, by equalizing the amount of information presented in the two identity conditions, we rule out the, albeit, remote possibility that differences in cognitive load (higher in the dual identity condition than in the two other identity conditions) could have accounted for the pattern of findings observed in Study 1. For this study, we recruited female participants only. Although we did not observe any gender effects in the prior study, we hoped to simulate gender relations in real life where it is more often than not women who must deal with challenges to their gender identity.

### Method

#### *Participants*

Female students ( $N=78$ , age range from 18–25 years) from UCLA participated in exchange for partial fulfilment of a course requirement. As in Study 1, the sample represented was ethnically diverse (36% Asian Americans, 26% Whites, 10% African Americans, 9% Latino/as, 13% who checked 'other', 6% multi-ethnic).

#### *Study Design and Procedures*

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four cells of a 2 (neglect/recognize subgroup identity)  $\times$  2 (high/low treatment quality) between-subject design. All aspects of the procedure remained the same as in Study 1 with the following changes. Rather than being run individually, participants were run in groups ranging from one to three people although dividers separated each computer station. In addition, participants were led to believe that they were engaged in on-line interactions only with a session supervisor and no other participants.

Participants were provided with pre-scripted feedback about their gender identification score, which was assessed prior to the study during mass pre-testing. Participants received feedback indicating they scored above average meaning that they valued their gender identity. This feedback was not unreasonable given that pre-testing data indicated that the population of students from which the sample was drawn (i.e. the research participant pool) was on average highly identified with their gender ( $M=6.77$  on a 9-point scale). The false feedback was used to reinforce existing subgroup attachments. This was further emphasized in the follow-up task in which participants were asked to provide reasons why they valued their gender identity.

In the neglect condition, instructions explicitly emphasized the value of the shared identity while challenging the value of gender. Participants were told the researchers were interested in examining differences between students at private and public universities because these group differences are important and worthy of attention. They were also told that despite some researchers emphasizing the

importance of gender differences, the researchers of the present study felt that they should instead look at other differences that were more important and ignore gender. In the recognize condition, participants received a message that affirmed both the shared and the subgroup identity. Individuals were told the researchers were interested in examining differences between students at private and public universities because this group difference is important and worthy of attention. In addition, participants were told the researchers were interested in differences between men and women because this group difference is also important and worthy of attention. Like Study 1, the identity conditions were further emphasized through a thought-list task and the personnel problems. While the word recognition task loaded, a 'mission statement' appeared, re-emphasizing the different identity conditions. The word recognition task instructions and goals were exactly the same as in Study 1. Again, participants completed a research evaluation questionnaire. At the completion of the study, participants were fully debriefed individually and entered into a \$100 lottery.

### *Dependent Measures*

Our main dependent variable was reactions to the negative outcome, which included the measures of satisfaction with the decision and voluntary compliance from Study 1. A third item assessing decision fairness, a variable of interest to distributive justice researchers, was included to further increase reliability of our measure of reactions to the outcome: 'How fair do you think the supervisor's decision is?' (1 = not at all fair; 9 = very fair). The three items were highly reliable ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ) and combined with higher means indicating more positive reactions.

### *Manipulation Checks*

To assess perceptions of the identity message, the questionnaire included three parallel items that asked participants about their perceptions of how much the research team values the two relevant identities: 'In this experiment, the researchers acknowledged the value of studying differences between men and women (or private and public university students)'; 'In this experiment, I got the message that the researchers were interested in studying differences between men and women (or private and public university students)'; and 'In this experiment, the researchers did not seem to think it was important to study differences between men and women (or private and public university students)'—reverse worded); 1 = disagree strongly, 9 = agree strongly. The items assessing the researchers' feelings about institutional differences were highly reliable ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ) as were the items assessing the researchers' feelings about gender differences ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ). The salience items used in Study 1 were also included in the present study for comparison purposes. The two items designed to measure salience of university affiliation were highly correlated ( $r = 0.85$ ) as were the measures of gender salience ( $r = 0.65$ ). The same measures used in Study 1 to assess perceptions of treatment quality were included in Study 2 ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ).

## **Results**

### *Manipulation Checks*

We examined whether the identity message was perceived in the intended way by subjecting the variable measuring institutional interest in gender differences to an identity message by treatment

quality ANOVA. There was a significant effect for identity message,  $F(1, 74) = 99.81$ ,  $p < 0.01$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.57$ ) and no other effects. Participants in the recognize condition agreed more strongly that the researchers were interested in gender differences compared to participants in the neglect condition ( $M = 7.12$  vs.  $M = 3.34$ ). A similar analysis was conducted on the variable measuring institutional interest in university differences. As expected, there were no significant effects given that institutional interest in university differences was held constant across conditions:  $M(\text{recognize}) = 7.04$  vs.  $M(\text{neglect}) = 7.50$ ,  $F(1, 74) = 1.99$ , *n.s.* ( $\eta^2 = 0.03$ ).

Following Study 1, we also evaluated the extent to which category salience was affected by the experimental manipulations. The items measuring perceived category salience were subjected to an identity message by treatment quality ANOVA. As expected, participants in the recognize condition reported that gender identity was more salient to them ( $M = 5.10$ ) than participants in the neglect condition ( $M = 3.36$ ),  $F(1, 74) = 14.66$ ,  $p < 0.01$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.17$ ). There were no other significant effects. As expected, the effect for identity message was not significant for university salience,  $M(\text{recognize}) = 4.61$  vs.  $M(\text{neglect}) = 5.17$ ,  $F(1, 74) = 1.09$ , *n.s.* ( $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ). These results indicated that we successfully manipulated identity message.

When asked about the lottery tickets they received, all participants recognized the negative outcome by noting that they did not receive any tickets except for two participants who checked that they received one ticket. Although this mistake raises some concern, one ticket is still a relatively negative outcome. Nonetheless, we ran preliminary analyses that excluded these two participants and the pattern of results was unaffected. Thus, these participants were included in the analyses presented. We also checked for the effectiveness of the treatment manipulation by subjecting the measure of treatment quality to an identity message by treatment quality ANOVA. The treatment manipulation had a significant effect on perceptions of treatment quality:  $F(1, 74) = 41.73$ ,  $p < 0.01$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.36$ ). Those in the high treatment quality condition reported greater agreement with items assessing whether the supervisor acted in a fair, unbiased, and respectful manner than those assigned to the low treatment condition ( $M = 6.52$  vs.  $M = 4.30$ ). No other significant effects were found.

### Hypothesis Testing

The effects of the experimental manipulations on reactions to the negative decision are shown in Figure 2. We subjected reactions to the decision to a similar set of planned comparisons as in Study 1 by evaluating the effect of treatment quality within each identity message condition. Consistent with Study 1, although the pattern of means in Figure 2 was suggestive of an effect for treatment quality in both identity message conditions, the effect was not significant among those whose subgroup identity was neglected,  $M(\text{high treatment}) = 6.17$ ,  $SD = 2.15$  vs.  $M(\text{low treatment}) = 5.70$ ,  $SD = 2.33$ ,  $F(1, 74) = 0.60$ , *n.s.* ( $\eta^2 = 0.01$ ). In contrast, in line with our prediction, there was a significant effect for treatment quality among those whose subgroup identity was recognized such that those in the high quality treatment condition reacted in a significantly more positive manner to the decision than those in the low quality treatment condition ( $M = 6.44$ ,  $SD = 1.42$  vs.  $M = 4.92$ ,  $SD = 1.74$ ),  $F(1, 74) = 5.34$ ,  $p < 0.01$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.07$ ).<sup>5</sup>

We followed up on the asymmetrical effect of identity message within the two treatment conditions first observed in Study 1. There was no reliable effect for identity message within either level of

<sup>5</sup>Results from the omnibus ANOVA indicate a significant effect for treatment quality,  $F(1, 74) = 4.93$ ,  $p < 0.05$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.06$ ) with participants in the high treatment quality condition reporting more positive reactions to the negative outcome than those in the low treatment quality condition ( $M = 6.30$ ,  $SD = 1.82$  vs.  $M = 5.35$ ,  $SD = 2.09$ ). The main effect for identity condition was not significant,  $F(1, 74) = 0.30$ , *n.s.* ( $\eta^2 = 0.00$ ). Finally, the interaction effect, which was implicitly supported in the more sensitive planned comparison analysis, did not reach conventional significance in the omnibus ANOVA,  $F(1, 74) = 1.37$ ,  $p < 0.25$  ( $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ).

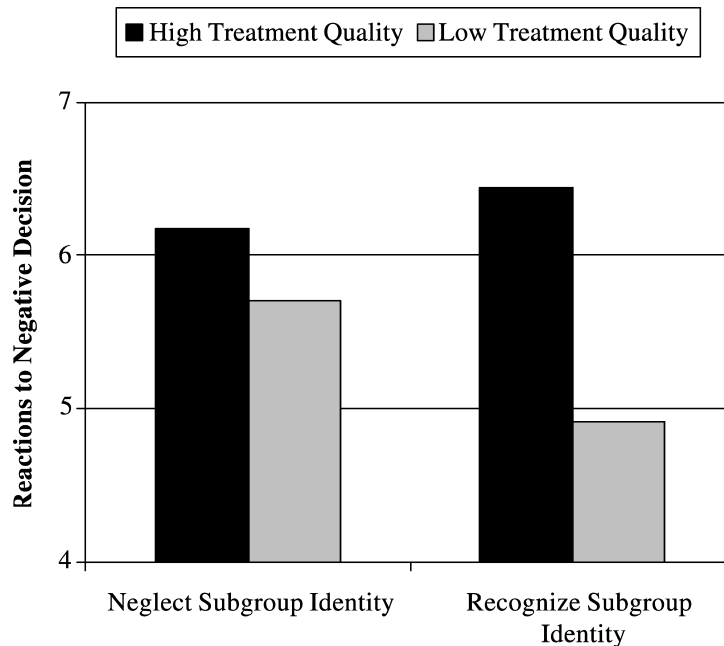


Figure 2. Reactions to negative decision as a function of treatment quality and acknowledgment of subgroup identity (Study 2).  $N = 78$ . Higher numbers represent more positive reactions to the decision (measured on a 9-point scale)

treatment (using both pair-wise comparisons and trend analyses). Interestingly, however, the pattern of mean differences was consistent with the asymmetry observed in Study 1. When evaluating cell means across the identity message conditions, there was a greater decrease in support among those whose identity was recognized versus those whose identity was neglected in the low treatment condition (mean difference =  $-0.78$ ) than there was gain within the high treatment condition (mean difference =  $+0.27$ ). This replication of the apparent asymmetry first documented in Study 1 suggests that this unexpected finding warrants careful investigation in future studies.

## Discussion

Study 2 replicated the findings from Study 1 with a more conceptually appropriate manipulation of identity acknowledgment and neglect. Rather than assuming that individuals naturally value a subgroup and that they perceive neglect of this identity when institutions focus solely on a shared identity, we exposed participants to messages that explicitly acknowledged or neglected a subgroup identity *after* reminding them of the self-relevance of that particular identity. We were also able to capitalize on an improved study design to rule out several alternative explanations for the effects generated by Study 1 including personal rejection, interdependence, and cognitive load. As with Study 1, this study demonstrated that treatment quality affected evaluations of authority decisions *only* when a valued identity is acknowledged and *not* when it is neglected, holding constant attention to a shared identity. Although the sample size was only half of the original study, this effect was replicated with effect sizes comparable to those observed in Study 1. The pair of studies together lends further



credence to the notion that treatment considerations depend on both an emphasis on a shared identity and recognition of a valued subgroup identity.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Previous work on the GVM (Huo, 2003; Huo et al., 1996; Smith & Tyler, 1996) found that the more people identified with a social category shared with an authority, the more they were influenced by how they were treated when evaluating decisions delivered by that authority. Subgroup identity was relegated to the background because the studies did not find evidence that it moderated the relationship between perceived treatment and reactions to the decision. However, these conclusions were based entirely on data generated by correlational designs. The goal of the present study was to evaluate how active efforts to emphasize different social categories may affect concerns about treatment quality.

The current findings revealed that subgroup identity plays a more central role in altering the dynamics of authority evaluations than was previously thought. Consistent with past research comparing within group interactions with cross-group interactions (Huo & Tyler, 2001; Tyler et al., 1998), we found no evidence of concerns about treatment quality in evaluating outgroup authorities when subgroup differences were emphasized (Study 1, subgroup salience condition). Similarly, when the situational cues emphasized a shared identity at the expense of a subgroup identity, treatment effects also failed to emerge. It was *only* when both identities were emphasized that treatment quality affected reactions to the delivery of a negative outcome.

What these findings suggest is that 1) too much emphasis on differences can turn off the motive to seek identity relevant information contained in treatment quality and may potentially shift the basis of evaluation towards the valence of the decision; and 2) yet, the opposite strategy of only emphasizing a common identity can lead to a similar response. Concerns about treatment quality seem to rest on a middle-of-the-road solution that calls out for a balance between reminding members of different subgroups of a group membership they share while respecting that there are legitimate differences that distinguish them.

### Understanding the Dual Identity Effect in Authority Relations

While we have demonstrated the effectiveness of a dual identity strategy in motivating concerns about treatment quality, what needs to be unpacked in future research is the exact pathway through which it exerts its effect on responses to authorities. Existing work on multiple identities and prejudice reduction suggests that imposing a shared identity produces some form of identity threat, which in turn motivates resistance toward recategorization. The threat has been hypothesized to stem from one of three motives: 1) the desire to defend the integrity of a valued subgroup (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000); 2) the desire to maintain balance between membership in an overly inclusive category with membership in a more distinct category (Brewer, 1991); and 3) the desire to reconcile self-image with how one is viewed by others (Barreto & Ellemers, 2002). A dual identity strategy, presumably reduces these threat(s), and as a consequence, resistance towards recategorization.

In addition to these sources of threat and potential indicators of defensive reactions, we would like to suggest a fourth option that is particularly relevant to the context of authority relations. Drawing from the work on identity devaluation, we suggest that a dual identity strategy is effective in motivating concerns about treatment quality because it demonstrates respect for a valued subgroup identity and thus helps to build a bridge of trust between the individual and the institutional authority

(Cohen & Steele, 2002; Huo & Molina, submitted). When a valued identity is acknowledged, individuals may be more likely to view the relevant institution and its representatives as trustworthy and the identity relevant feedback they offer as legitimate and worth considering. When the institution blatantly neglects an important aspect of the self, individuals may respond by shifting their focus away from potential future attacks on the self that may be communicated through the actions of institutional authorities.

We hope that the current research would motivate future efforts to explore and disentangle the two approaches to understanding the dual identity effect in authority relations: recategorization and trust in the legitimacy of feedback from institutional authorities. It is important to note that the two processes need not be at the exclusion of the other. Both processes may be at work. Recent work by Haslam and his colleagues (Haslam, 2001; Haslam, Egghins, & Reynolds, 2003) offers a potential framework for integrating the two processes we have identified. Their notion of an organic identity adds to other related theorizing on multiple identities by outlining a dynamic process through which collectively shared identities are reshaped and redefined by incorporating elements of subgroups. In other words, whereas imposing a shared identity on those who value a subgroup identity creates perceptions that the two identities are oppositional, a dual identity strategy unifies them by incorporating aspects of the subgroups into the shared, organic identity. Thus, when institutions respect and embrace differences and incorporate them into the mutually shared identity, individuals are more likely to view their relationship with the authority as one that occurs within a valued ingroup and to have enough trust in the authority to open themselves to identity-relevant feedback from him/her.

### **Implications for the Management of Diversity**

The two studies here add to a growing number of studies assessing the implications of different diversity strategies. Prior studies converge in concluding that promoting a shared identity is important to maintaining harmonious social relations as indexed by variables as wide ranging as ingroup bias, cooperation in social dilemmas, and acceptance of organizational mergers (for reviews see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; also Haslam, 2001). The caveat, however, is that when subgroups are inherently valued, some recognition must be given to these attachments to defuse reactions to identity threat (Barreto & Ellemers, 2002; Egghins et al., 2002; Gonzalez & Brown, 2003; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; van Leeuwen et al., 2003).

The current work is the first to assess the implications of different diversity strategies for the operation of authority in socio-culturally diverse institutions. Our conclusions are more tentative with regards to whether a dual identity approach helps or hinders authorities' efforts to achieve social harmony. We argue that authorities benefit from a dual identity strategy because it offers them a mechanism for motivating support for their decisions over which they have control—fair treatment. However, it is important to recognize that a focus on treatment quality only offers authorities the *opportunity* to motivate cooperation. It does not guarantee cooperation. This strategy is a double-edged sword. It gives authorities the opportunity to reap the benefits of treatment effects but only when they satisfy concerns about treatment quality. When authorities employ tactics that are perceived to be unfair and disrespectful of group members, they risk escalating conflicts. This warning is all the more important given the hints in the data that the magnitude of effect of treatment quality in the dual identity condition appears to differ as a function of treatment valence suggesting that authorities may have more to lose in exercising unfair treatment than they have to gain in exercising fair treatment.

In summary, the story emerging from this research is one of cautious optimism. Contrary to concerns expressed by critics of multiculturalism, acknowledging valued subgroup identities does not necessarily hamper authorities' efforts to achieve social harmony. Whether or not social harmony can

be achieved, however, rests on authorities who must be vigilant in their actions or risk losing support for their efforts.

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