Chapter 5

Attachment Anxiety, Intra-Group (Dis)Respect, Actual Efforts and Group Donation

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Abstract

The current study examines attachment-style differences in responses to inductions of group respect and disrespect. Participants completed a scale assessing attachment anxiety and avoidance, performed group tasks, and received high, average, or low respect feedback from group members. Then we assessed commitment to this group, actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group, and money donation to the group. For highly attachment-anxious participants, high group respect heightened group commitment and effort expenditure on behalf of the group, whereas group disrespect led to lower group commitment but to more money donation to the group and higher effort expenditure. Less attachment-anxious participants were not significantly affected by group respect or disrespect. The implications of attachment theory for group dynamics were discussed.

Introduction

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1973, 1980) to the field of group relationships (Rom & Mikulincer, 2003; Smith, Murphy, & Coats, 1999), while stressing the significance of examining group dynamics from both individual and group levels (Rom & Mikulincer, 2003). Rom and Mikulincer (2003) found that a person’s attachment orientations (anxiety, avoidance) affect cognition, affect, and behavior during group interactions, and Smith et al. (1999) showed that variations along these attachment orientations underlie a person’s identification with, and commitment to social groups. In the current
study, we applied attachment theory to understand individual differences in the way people react to indicators of group respect and disrespect. At the same time we examined the possible role that attachment orientations play in moderating effects of manipulations of group respect and disrespect on individual group commitment, actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group, and money donation to the group.

**Group Respect and Behavior on Behalf of the Group**

The most prominent approach to intragroup respect and group-oriented behavior is the group-value theory (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000; Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996; Tyler & Lind, 1992). According to this theory, group interactions that lead people to feel respected as group members reinforce their commitment to the group and encourage them to spend effort on behalf of the group. Indeed, several studies have consistently documented these positive effects of group members’ appraisals of group respect on their commitment to the group and actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group (Sleebos, Ellemers & de Gilder, 2006a, 2006b; Sleebos, Ellemers, & de Gilder, 2007).

Following the same reasoning, proponents of the group-value theory (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988; Smith & Tyler, 1997) has also predicted that lack of group respect (or group disrespect) undermines psychological and behavioral involvement with a group and thus should result in reduced expenditure of effort on group tasks. However, studies on social exclusion and marginal group membership (e.g., Jetten, Branscombe, & Spears, 2002; Noel, Wann, & Branscombe, 1995) suggest that lack of respect from other group members tends to motivate people to display behaviors that show their loyalty and worth to the group, thereby resulting in increased group commitment, heightened contribution to the achievement of group goals, and
enhanced expenditure of effort in group tasks. In support of this view, Sleebos et al. (2006a) found that experimentally-manipulated signals of high respect from other group members led participants to expend more efforts in group tasks than a control condition in which participants received signals of average group respect. Sleebos et al. (2006a) also found that group disrespect led to higher effort expenditure on behalf of the group. However, at the same time, they found that inductions of group disrespect had an opposite effect on group commitment and intentions to work with the group (more group disrespect, less willingness to work with a group). In fact, Sleebos et al.’s (2006a, 2006b) findings clearly indicated that, although disrespected individuals do not want to remain a member of the group that rejected them, they still expended more actual efforts on behalf of the group than people who received signals of average group respect.

Sleebos et al. (2006b) explained the observed effects of group disrespect in terms of the "carrot" and "stick" implications of group interactions. Beyond the social rewards that people can receive from group respect and acceptance (the carrot), the possibility of social sanctions and rejection implied by signals of disrespect by other group members (the stick) can also operate as a strong motivational force that leads people to expend actual efforts on behalf of the group. According to Sleebos et al. (2006b), the main motive underlying the heightened effort expenditure on behalf of the group of disrespected people is to re-assert their self-worth. In fact, there is consistent evidence that signals of group disrespect are associated with self-esteem damage and even physical pain (e.g., Smith et al., 1998, 2002; Tyler & Blader, 2001). Therefore, although being less committed to the group and less motivated to remain a member of the rejecting group, disrespected group members become concerned with their self-worth and may enhance actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group as a means for repairing the
damaged self-esteem. Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (2002) also suggested that when people experience the threat of becoming a marginal group member (e.g. when they are disrespected), their need for self-affirmation is exacerbated. Enhanced effort expenditure on behalf of a group can then help to re-affirm their self-identity in the eyes of other group members.

In the current study, we want to build on and expand this line of research by examining the effects of individual differences in reactions to signals of group respect and disrespect. Although group disrespect is an aversive experience for every group member, the extent to which self-esteem is damaged by group disrespect and the compensatory expenditure of efforts on behalf of a group might depend on a person’s susceptibility to signals of rejection and the strength and stability of his or her sense of self-worth. In our view, these individual differences can be interpreted in terms of attachment theory and might depend on a person’s attachment insecurities, especially those related to attachment anxiety. These insecurities make a person more susceptible to signals of rejection and undermine the strength and stability of his or her self-esteem (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2005, 2007), which could be highly relevant for explaining reactions to signs of group respect and disrespect.

**Attachment Theory and Research**

One of the basic assumptions of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1973, 1980) is that social interactions with significant others (called “attachment figures” in the theory) are internalized in the form of mental representations of self and relationship partners (“internal working models of self and others”). Such representations can have an impact on close relationships, self-esteem, emotion regulation, and mental health
throughout life (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). To summarize the theory briefly, interactions with relationship partners who are available and supportive in times of need foster the development of both a sense of attachment security ("felt security"; Sroufe & Waters, 1977) and generally positive internal working models of the self and others. In this way, they provide a solid foundation for an authentic sense of self-worth, optimistic and benevolent appraisals of others’ intentions and behaviors, and good mental health (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007). When attachment figures are rejecting or unavailable in times of need, felt security is undermined, negative models of self and others are formed, and the likelihood of self-related doubts and emotional problems increases (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002).

When testing this theory in studies of adults, most researchers have focused on a person’s attachment orientations – the systematic pattern of relational expectations, emotions, and behaviors that results from a particular attachment history (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Research, beginning with Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) and continuing through recent studies by social and personality psychologists (reviewed by Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007), indicates that attachment orientations can be measured in terms of two orthogonal dimensions, attachment-related anxiety and avoidance (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). The first dimension, attachment anxiety, reflects the degree to which a person worries that a partner will not be available or adequately responsive in times of need. The second dimension, avoidance, reflects the extent to which he or she distrusts relationship partners’ goodwill and strives to maintain autonomy and emotional distance from them. People who score low on both dimensions are said to be secure, or securely attached.
According to attachment theory, secure attachment includes positive representations of oneself as worthy and competent (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). During interactions with available, sensitive, and supportive attachment figures, people find it easy to perceive themselves as valuable, lovable, and special, thanks to being valued, loved, and regarded as special by caring attachment figures. Moreover, they learn to view themselves as active, strong, and competent because they can effectively mobilize an attachment figure’s support and restore emotional equanimity thanks to the “secure base” (Bowlby, 1988) provided by this attachment figure. In contrast, lack of attachment figure’s availability, sensitivity, and responsiveness contributes to disorders of the self, characterized by a lack of self-cohesion, doubts about one’s coherence and continuity over time, and vulnerable or unstable self-esteem (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005, 2007). This is the condition of insecurely attached people, whose frustrating and disappointing interactions with unavailable or rejecting attachment figures raise doubts about the degree to which the self is esteemed and loved by others.

Although both anxious and avoidant people have difficulties in constructing an authentic, cohesive, and stable sense of self-worth, attachment theory and research (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Cassidy & Kobak, 1988; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002) suggest that each of these attachment insecurities result in different self-configurations and disorders of the self. Avoidant people attempt to deal with self-doubts by suppressing such doubts while working to convince themselves and other people that they are strong and self-sufficient. In this way, avoidant people tend to maintain a defensive façade of self-worth and to dismiss any signal of interpersonal rejection or disrespect. Attachment-anxious people, in contrast, tend to intensify self-related doubts and to
become particularly susceptible and vulnerable to even minimal signs of rejection, disapproval, or criticism. According to Mikulincer and Shaver (2003), attachment-anxious people, who hope to gain a relationship partner’s love, esteem, and protection, seem to take some of the blame for others’ lack of attention and care and to mentally ruminate about why they are so worthless that others don’t want to provide the love and approval that they so strongly desire. This mental rumination, which heightens the cognitive accessibility of negative self-views and self-related doubts, together with their strong needs for love and acceptance (e.g., Cassidy & Kobak, 1988) might make attachment-anxious people particularly susceptible to signals of respect and disrespect from others and lead them to display pro-social behaviors as a means to be accepted and loved.

Attachment anxiety, Self-Esteem, and Self-Worth Contingencies

There is extensive evidence linking attachment anxiety and negative self-views. Compared to secure persons, anxiously attached persons report lower self-esteem (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991, Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997), hold more negative perceptions of self-competence and more negative expectations of self-efficacy (e.g., Brennan & Morris, 1997; Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998), incidentally recall more negative traits, and exhibit greater discrepancies between actual-self and self-standards (Mikulincer, 1995).

Attachment researchers have also identified that attachment-anxious people tend to base their self-views on unstable sources of worth and that their sense of self-esteem is extremely dependent on others’ acceptance and rejection. For example, there is correlational evidence that attachment-anxious people’s self-worth is especially dependent on others’ approval (Andersson & Perris, 2000; Park, Crocker, & Mickelson, 2004). In contrast,
less attachment-anxious individuals are more likely to base their self-worth on domains that do not require constant external validation, such as long-term family support. In line with their emphasis on self-reliance, avoidant individuals have been found to be less dependent on interpersonal sources of self-esteem (Park et al., 2004).

Attachment-anxious people’s tendency to derive their self-worth from others’ reactions has been further documented in Srivastava and Beer’s (2005) naturalistic study of group interactions. In this study, participants took part in four weekly small-group meetings and, following each group session, rated their own likeability and the extent to which they liked each other person in the group. Findings revealed that participants who were more liked by others following a particular group session had more positive self-evaluations in a later session. However, this dependence on others’ liking was mainly found among participants scoring high on attachment anxiety. For less attachment-anxious group members, overall self-evaluations were quite high and relatively unaffected by what other members of the group thought. These findings were conceptually replicated by Broemer and Blumle (2003) in laboratory experiments examining a person’s reactions to positive and negative self-relevant feedback.

The Current Study

In the current study, we want to examine whether attachment-anxious people’s tendency to derive self-worth from others’ reactions is manifested in the ways they react to signs of group respect and disrespect. Specifically, participants completed a self-report scale tapping attachment anxiety and avoidance, after which they were assigned to a small group and asked to interact with three group members. They were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions according to the level of respect they received
from other group members: high, average, low. Following this experimental manipulation, participants reported on their commitment to the group and group-related worries (worries concerning acceptance and approval by other group members) – which Sleebos et al. (2006a, 2006b) refer to as *acceptance anxiety*. In addition, we assessed actual behaviors on behalf of the group in two different ways. First, we asked participants to decide about the amount of money they would donate to the group. Second, we measured actual, more mandatory effort expenditure in a group task. In this way, we assessed how high and low respect inductions, as compared to the average respect condition, affect participants’ group commitment, group-related worries, money donation to the group, and actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group, and examined whether attachment anxiety moderates these effects.

In applying attachment theory and research to explain the ways people react to inductions of group respect and disrespect, we assume that variations along the attachment anxiety dimension would determine the extent to which these inductions would affect group commitment and actual behavior on behalf of the group. Specifically, attachment-anxious people tend to base their sense of self-worth on others’ love and acceptance, depend on continual validation from others, and display extreme susceptibility to others’ positive and negative reactions. As a result, inductions of group respect can lead attachment-anxious people to feel appreciated and valued, can temporarily pacify their chronic self-doubts, and can then enhance group commitment, actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group, and money donation to the group. Group disrespect can remind attachment-anxious people of their self perceived worthlessness, strengthen self-relevant worries, and then can lead them to react in the way observed by Sleebos et al. (2006a, 2006b): reduced commitment to the rejecting group together with heightened effort.
expenditure on behalf of the group and more money donation to the group. Less attachment-anxious participants would be less influenced by inductions of group respect and disrespect because they hold a more solid, stable, and autonomous sense of self-worth, relatively independently of how they are evaluated by others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

In our view, highly avoidant people's commitment and actual behavior on behalf of the group would not be significantly affected by inductions of group respect or disrespect. These people dismiss others’ feedback, do not derive their self-worth from others’ approval, and tend to suppress distressing thoughts and repress painful emotions (e.g., Fraley & Shaver, 1997). On this basis, we predicted that attachment anxiety but not avoidance would moderate the effects of group respect and disrespect on group commitment, group-related worries, and actual behavior in behalf of the group. Our predictions are:

1. As compared to an average group respect condition, inductions of high group respect would lead to higher group commitment, more money donation to a group, and higher effort expenditure on behalf of the group among participants scoring high on attachment anxiety, but not among less anxious participants.

2. As compared to an average group respect condition, inductions of low group respect would lead to higher levels of group-related worries and lower group commitment but more money donation to a group, and higher effort expenditure on behalf of the group among participants scoring high on attachment anxiety, but not among less anxious participants.
Method

Participants

One hundred ninety eight Dutch students from Leiden University (137 women and 61 men, ranging in age from 18 to 31, median = 21) participated in the experiment. The duration of the experiment was 50 minutes, for which they received €4.5. Participants were randomly assigned to three experimental conditions, with 66 participants in each condition.

Materials and Procedure

Participants were invited to the laboratory to participate in a study on how people work in task-groups. Participants (eight students per session) were seated in separate cubicles, containing a computer with a monitor and a keyboard, and they were told that they could communicate with each other by means of the computer network. Computers were used to provide instructions and collect participants’ responses.

After receiving general instructions, participants completed a Dutch version of the Experiences in Close Relationships scale (ECR; Brennan et al., 1998) in order to assess self-reports of attachment-related anxiety and avoidance. Participants were asked to think about their close relationships, without focusing on a specific partner, and to rate the extent to which each item accurately described their feelings in close relationships, using a 7-point scale ranging from "not at all" (1) to "very much" (7). Eighteen items tapped attachment anxiety (e.g., “I worry about being abandoned,” “I worry a lot about my relationships”) and 18 items tapped avoidance (e.g., “I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down,” “I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close”). The reliability and construct validity of the two subscales have been demonstrated in a wide variety of samples and in different languages (e.g., Brennan et al., 1998; Mikulincer &
Florian, 2000). In our sample, Cronbach alphas were acceptable for the 18 anxiety items (0.85) and the 18 avoidance items (0.90). Two scores were then computed by averaging items on each subscale, with higher scores reflecting higher attachment-related anxiety and avoidance respectively. These two scores were not significantly associated, $r(196) = 0.13$, supporting Brennan et al.’s (1998) claims about the orthogonality of anxiety and avoidance dimensions.

Following the ECR scale, participants were told a cover story, explaining that this was a study of team collaboration in financial organizations. A bogus personality test followed, which allegedly allowed the experimenter to assign the session-participants to two four-person teams according to their problem-solving style (Noel et al., 1995). In reality, all participants were told that they were holistic-focused problem solvers and they received pre-programmed information that simulated the alleged responses of other members of their team.

Next, each participant was asked to provide some personal information by typing brief descriptions on the computer, ostensibly for the purpose of getting to know each other better (Branscombe et al., 2002; Sleebos et al., 2006a). Specifically, participants were asked to recall and describe an experience of personal success in school or work settings that they were proud of and an experience of personal failure in the same settings that they were ashamed of. In a similar vein, they were asked to recall and describe an experience of successful team performance of which they were proud and an experience of unsuccessful team performance of which they were ashamed (Sleebos et al., 2006a; 2006b). Subsequently, participants were asked to rate the respect they felt toward each of the three fellow ingroup members on a 9-point scale ($1 = \text{little respect}$, $9 = \text{great respect}$), based on the experiential descriptions each of them had ostensibly provided.
Actually, all participants received standardized, preprogrammed descriptions, containing behavioral episodes that had been rated equally positive (e.g., “At work, somebody had a stroke and I applied first aid”) or equally negative (e.g., “I failed my driving license test three times in a row”) in a pilot study (Sleebos et al., 2006a). Participants were led to believe that each of the three fellow in-group members was evaluating them based on the experiential descriptions they provided.

Respect feedback from one's team members was manipulated by informing participants about the average respect scores they had supposedly received from the other three fellow in-group members. In the low respect condition, participants were informed that, on average, the other three in-group members had rated them lower (4.3) than the neutral point (6) and that their score was lower than the respect scores that the other three in-group members had received (which were stated to be 6, 5.3, and 6.7, respectively). In the average respect condition, participants were informed that, on average, the other three in-group members had rated them equal (6) to the neutral point (6) and that their respect score was quite similar to the respect scores the other three in-group members had received (which were stated to be 6, 5.3, and 6.7, respectively). In the high respect conditions, participants were informed that their average respect score was higher (7.7) than the neutral point (6) and higher than the respect scores that the other three in-group members had received (which were stated to be 6, 5.3, and 6.7, respectively).

Following this experimental manipulation, participants received a self-report questionnaire and they were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each item. Ratings were given on a 9-point scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 9 (very much). To check the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation, participants received 3 items tapping the extent to which they thought that team members respected them (e.g., "to what extent do you
think your fellow group members respect you for your individual achievements?"). Cronbach's alpha for these items was high (0.95), allowing us to compute a total score of perceived group respect by averaging the 3 items.

The questionnaire also included items tapping group commitment and group-related attachment worries. *Group commitment* (Cronbach's alpha = 0.82) was measured with seven items, adapted from Ellemers et al.'s (1998) scale, focusing on the affective commitment participants felt toward their current team (e.g., “I feel at home among my fellow group members in my task-group.”) *Group-related worries* (Cronbach's alpha = 0.76) was assessed with 4 items, adapted from Smith et al.'s (1999) Social Group Attachment scale, tapping the extent to which participants currently felt that they were unworthy as a group member and experienced worries and concerns regarding acceptance by the other three in-group members (e.g., “I worry that my group does not really accept me”). We computed two total scores for each participant by averaging the relevant items in each subscale. Higher scores reflected higher group commitment and higher group-related worries.

After completing the questionnaire, participants were invited to work on a group task that served to assess participants' actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group. Participants were told that only their collective performance as a team would be scored (e.g., the average time that took for all the four team members to complete the task), and that no information would be provided about their individual performance. Then, they performed a *speed effort task*, which was presented as “a simplified version of the work employees in financial organizations do,” and participants were asked to enter four rounds of thirty numbers, each containing 3-digits at the highest possible *speed*. In this task, for each participant we computed the time they took to complete the task. The less time a participant took to complete the
task (higher performance speed), the greater the effort he or she spent on the task and the greater his or her contribution to team performance.

Upon completion of this task, we collected data on participants' willingness to contribute to their current group. Specifically, participants were given a few options for using a potential sum of money (10 Euros), which they might earn in a lottery between all participants. Participants received the following instructions: "If you win the money, would you (a) keep the money for yourself, (b) share the money with your own task-group, (c) donate the money to Unicef, (d) keep half of the money for yourself and share the other half with your own task-group, or (e) keep half of the money for yourself and donate the other half to Unicef." Participants were asked to decide what they want to do with the 10 Euros by choosing one of the five given options. On this basis, we computed for each participant a group donation score by assigning a score of 2 to participants who chose to share all the money with their group (option b), a score of 1 to participants who chose to share half of the money with their group (option d), and a score of 0 to participants who chose one of the remaining options. Upon choosing an option, participants were told that the experiment had finished and they were paid and debriefed.

**Results**

*Manipulation check*

In order to examine whether the experimental manipulations were effective in producing feelings of respect/disrespect, we performed one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) examining the effects of respect induction (low, average, high) on the manipulation check measure. As expected, a significant main effect for respect manipulation was found on the manipulation check measure, $F(2, 195) = 374.66, p < 0.01, \eta^2 = 0.79$. 
Scheffe post hoc tests ($\alpha = 0.05$) revealed that participants in the high respect condition were more likely to think they were more respected ($M = 5.65, SD = 0.70$) than participants in the average respect condition ($M = 4.60, SD = 0.55$), who, in turn, were more likely to believe in group members’ respect than participants in the low respect condition ($M = 2.66, SD = 0.65$).

**Attachment Orientations and Responses to Group Respect and Disrespect**

In order to examine our predictions concerning the contribution of attachment insecurities (anxiety, avoidance) to a person’s responses to inductions of group respect and disrespect, we conducted a series of hierarchical regressions for the study dependent variables (self-reports of group commitment and group-related worries, donation of money to the group, effort expenditure on behalf of the group). For these regressions, we computed two dummy variables: One contrasting high respect (1) to the average and low conditions (-1) and the other contrasting low respect (1) to the average and high conditions (-1). By introducing these two contrasts simultaneously into a regression model, we compared group respect and group disrespect to the average (control) respect condition. Then, at the first step of these regressions, we included the main effects of group respect, group disrespect, attachment anxiety, and attachment avoidance. Following Aiken and West’s (1991) recommendation, attachment scores were centered in relation to their mean. In the second step, we examined the two-way interactions between each of the two manipulated variables (group respect, group disrespect) and each attachment dimension (a total of 4 interactive terms).

For self-reports of group commitment, the regression revealed significant unique effects for respect induction and attachment anxiety (see Betas in Table 1). As expected, participants in the high respect condition
reported higher commitment to their group than participants in the moderate respect condition. In addition, the higher a participants' attachment anxiety, the lower the reports of group commitment. The main effect for disrespect induction approximated statistical significance. In line with Sleebos et al.'s (2006a, 2006b) findings, participants in the low respect condition reported lower group commitment than participants in the moderate respect condition (see Table 1). However, these effects were qualified by significant interactions for respect induction × attachment anxiety and disrespect induction × attachment anxiety (see Table 1).

Simple Slope Analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) revealed that the inverse association between attachment anxiety and group commitment was significant in the disrespect condition, $b = -0.45, p < 0.01$, but not in the moderate and high respect conditions, $bs$ of -0.04 and -0.07. That is, the receipt of moderate or high respect feedback seemed to buffer the negative impact that attachment anxiety had on group commitment. In addition, when attachment anxiety was relatively high (+1 $SD$), the respect induction (high versus moderate respect conditions) produced a significant increase in group commitment, $b = 0.36, p < 0.01$, whereas the disrespect induction (low versus moderate respect conditions) produced a significant decrease in group commitment, $b = -0.35, p < 0.01$. These effects of respect and disrespect inductions were not significant when attachment anxiety was relatively low (-1 $SD$), $bs$ of 0.02 and 0.07. In line with our predictions, attachment anxiety intensified the effects that inductions of group respect and disrespect had on reports of group commitment.

The regression performed on group-related worries revealed significant unique effects for disrespect induction and attachment anxiety (see Table 1). Participants in the low respect condition reported higher group-related worries than participants in the moderate respect condition. In
addition, the higher a participants' attachment anxiety, the higher the reports of group-related worries. Interestingly, the regression also revealed a significant interaction between disrespect induction and attachment avoidance (see Table 2). Simple Slope Analyses revealed that when attachment avoidance was relatively low (-1 SD), the disrespect induction (low versus moderate respect conditions) produced a significant increase in group-related worries, \( b = .48, p < 0.01 \). This effect of disrespect induction was not significant when attachment avoidance was relatively high (+1 SD), \( b = 0.15 \). That is, attachment avoidance seemed to buffer the increase in group-related worries that the disrespect induction produced.

For effort expenditure in the speed task, the regression revealed a significant unique effect for attachment anxiety (see Table 2): The higher a participants' attachment anxiety, the faster the completion of the task (higher effort expenditure). However, this effect was moderated by two significant interactions: respect induction x attachment anxiety and disrespect induction x attachment anxiety (see Table 2). For the respect x attachment anxiety interaction, Simple Slope analyses revealed that the inverse association between attachment anxiety and the time that it took to complete the task was significant in the high respect condition, \( b = -0.38, p <0.01 \), but not in the moderate respect condition, \( b = -0.02 \). For the disrespect x attachment anxiety interaction, Simple Slope analyses also revealed that the inverse association between attachment anxiety and the time that it took to complete the task was significant in the low respect condition, \( b = -0.45, p < 0.01 \), but not in the moderate respect condition, \( b = 0.05 \). Again, fitting our predictions, as compared to relatively low anxious participants, more attachment-anxious participants reacted with higher effort expenditure on behalf of the group (faster completion of the task) to the receipt of either high or low respect feedback.
Additional Simple Slope effects revealed that when attachment anxiety was relatively low (-1 SD), both respect and disrespect inductions produced a significant increase in the time it took for a participant to complete the task, \( bs \) of 0.21 and 0.28, \( ps < 0.05 \). However, when attachment anxiety was relatively high (+1 SD), both respect and disrespect inductions led to faster completion of the task, \( bs \) of -0.17 and -0.22, \( ps < 0.05 \). As predicted, respect and disrespect inductions increased effort expenditure (faster task completion) among participants who scored relatively high on attachment anxiety. However, these inductions reduced effort expenditure (longer time to complete the task) among participants who were relatively low in attachment anxiety.

The regression performed on money donation to the group revealed a significant unique effect for attachment anxiety (see Table 2): The higher a participants' attachment anxiety, the higher the amount of money donated to the group. However, this effect was moderated by a significant interaction between disrespect induction and attachment anxiety (see Table 2). Simple Slope Analyses revealed that the positive association between attachment anxiety and money donation to the group was significant in the low respect condition, \( b = 0.38, p < 0.01 \), but not in the moderate respect condition, \( b = -0.08 \). In addition, when attachment anxiety was relatively high (+1 SD), the disrespect induction (low versus moderate respect conditions) produced a significant increase in money donation to the group, \( b = 0.29, p < 0.01 \). This effect of disrespect induction was not significant when attachment anxiety was relatively low (-1 SD), \( b = -0.17 \). Fitting our prediction, an induction of group disrespect increased donation of money to a group mainly among highly attachment-anxious participants. All the other effects, including those comparing high versus moderate respect conditions, were not significant.
Discussion

The main goal of the current study was to apply attachment theory to the study of small group dynamics and to provide a better understanding of individual differences in the ways people react to signals of respect and disrespect from other group members. Previous studies have found that attachment theory is a relevant framework for exploring individual differences in the context of group interactions (e.g., Rom & Mikulincer, 2003; Smith et al., 1999). In our study, we used this framework as a prism for inquiring about the effects of perceived group respect on group commitment and pro-group behavior. Overall, the findings clearly indicate that variations along the attachment anxiety dimension are relevant for explaining individual differences in group commitment and expenditure of actual effort on behalf of the group following inductions of group respect and disrespect.

Our findings indicated that highly attachment-anxious participants were more strongly affected by both poles of respect (i.e., high respect and disrespect) than less anxious participants. Specifically, highly attachment-anxious participants, as compared to less anxious participants, reacted to the induction of high group respect with higher reports of group commitment and more effort expenditure on behalf of the group. These findings emphasize attachment-anxious people's hyper-sensitivity to signs of social approval and their over-dependence on external sources of self-worth (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005, 2007). When feeling accepted and loved by their group, attachment-anxious participants strengthen their commitment to the group and displayed more actual behavior on behalf of the group. This suggest that they might feel so grateful to the group for its approval and acceptance that they spend a lot of effort on behalf of the group. However, although such inductions of high group respect can increase highly
attachment-anxious people's group commitment and actual behavior on behalf of the group, one should note that these pro-group responses are driven by strong motives of social approval and strong self-relevant doubts, and thus can disappear as the time elapsed from the high group respect feedback and no further positive feedback is given. In this case, anxious people's chronic self-related doubts might return and interfere with pro-group responses.

The reactions of attachment-anxious participants to the induction of group disrespect were in line with Sleebos et al.'s (2006a, 2006b) findings. As expected, highly attachment-anxious participants, as compared to less anxious participants, reacted to the induction of group disrespect with stronger worries about acceptance and approval from other group members and lower group commitment. Moreover, although being less committed to the rejecting group, they reacted to the induction of group disrespect with more money donation to the group and higher actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group. That is, attachment-anxious participants made a lot of real, concrete effort on behalf of the group after being disrespected and even after reporting low commitment to the group.

It seems that attachment-anxious group members who perceive themselves as disrespected react with strong worries about being accepted and approved by other group members and serious doubts about their commitment to the group. However, their strong need for others' love and self-related worries impel them to increase their contribution to the group (more money donation) and to invest more actual efforts on behalf of the group probably as a means for repairing their damaged sense of self-worth. It seems that attachment-anxious people continue to invest in the rejecting group to feel better about themselves. According to Schroeder, Penner, Dovidio and Piliavin (1995), these affective reactions can lead to helping
and pro-social behavior primarily because the person believe that helping will make him or her feel better by eliminating the negative mood or producing some rewarding outcomes.

These effects of group respect and disrespect inductions were not significant among less anxious participants. These participants showed no significant changes in group commitment or group-related worries following the receipt of high, moderate, or low group respect feedback. Moreover, they showed no increase in money donation to the group or effort expenditure on behalf of the group following inductions of high group respect or group disrespect. In fact, they were less likely to invest in the group following inductions of either respect or disrespect. That is, less attachment-anxious people (i.e., more secure) seemed to be less influenced by group respect feedbacks. Moreover, they are so secure in their autonomous sense of self-worth that they feel that don't need to work hard for a group following a high respect induction or can detach from a group following a disrespect induction.

According to Mikulincer and Shaver (2005, 2007), individuals scoring low on attachment anxiety are likely to base their self-worth on domains that do not require constant external validation and therefore are less affected significantly by signals of group respect or disrespect. More secure individuals can mobilize caring qualities within themselves – qualities modeled on those of their attachment figures – as well as representations of being loved and valued by such figures, and these representations act as authentic and highly stable sources of comfort and self-worth (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2004), and then can buffer the cognitive, emotional, and motivational impact of signals of group respect or disrespect.

With regard to attachment avoidance, findings revealed that this attachment dimension was not significantly associated with reports of group
commitment and actual behaviors on behalf of the group and did not moderate the effects of inductions of group respect or disrespect. Attachment avoidance was only found to weaken the effects of induced group disrespect on group-related worries. Specifically, whereas participants scoring relatively low on attachment avoidance reacted to group disrespect with heightened worries about being accepted and valued by their group, those scoring relatively high on avoidance showed no significant increase in group-related worries following the induction of group disrespect. That is, attachment avoidance seemed to counteract the activation of group-related worries produced by group disrespect.

This finding fits well with the already observed defensive tendency of highly avoidant people to maintain a façade of self-worth and to dismiss any signal of interpersonal rejection (see Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007, for a review). That is, avoidance seems to be an effective strategy to protect the self from others' evaluation. However, one should note that we have assessed explicit manifestations of group-related worries, which can be easily affected by avoidant defenses. Perhaps the assessment of more implicit manifestations of these worries would still reveal the negative emotional and cognitive impact that group disrespect might have even among highly avoidant people. In addition, it is also possible that the distress caused by our induction of group disrespect was not so strong, thereby allowing avoidant people to easily dismiss the worries it can cause. Probably, more personally relevant instances of group disrespect can shatter avoidance people's defensive façade of self-worth and elicit heightened group-related worries.

Beyond the observed effects of attachment orientations, one should note that the current findings can lead to further specification and elaboration of group value theory (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000). Individual differences in attachment anxiety might serve as an important
moderator of the processes advanced by the group value model. Without taking into account individual variations along the attachment anxiety dimension, the induction of high group respect only led to the predicted increase in group commitment, but no increased effort expenditure in a subsequent group task was visible. Likewise, findings concerning the induction of group disrespect can lead to further specification of the group-value theory. We observed that only highly attachment-anxious people reacted according to predictions derived from the group-value theory: Although they were less committed to the group following being disrespected than following receiving signals of high respect to the group, they showed heightened actual effort expenditure on behalf of the group following inductions of either group respect or disrespect.

Before ending this discussion, we want to note some limitations of the current study. Following inductions of group respect or disrespect, we assessed participants' effort expenditure on behalf of the group. However, we did not give participants the opportunity to work "for themselves" or on behalf of another, alternative group. Therefore, we cannot be sure whether the current findings indicate variations in effort expenditure on behalf of a specific group or non-specific investment in task performance. Further research should examine effects of group respect and disrespect on task performance that is irrelevant to the accepting/rejecting group. It is also important to note that our explanation of attachment-anxious people's reactions to inductions of group respect and disrespect involves variations in self-esteem. For example, we suggested that attachment-anxious people work for a rejecting group to increase their damaged self-esteem, even if they dislike this group. However, we did not assess situational self-esteem and then could not examine the mediating role of changes in self-esteem during the experimental session. Further research should systematically
assess variations in participants' self-esteem following inductions of group respect and disrespect and examine whether these variations are related to investment in the group and whether they can explain the observed effects of attachment anxiety.

In addition, previous research on group respect has mainly focused on discretionary forms of efforts, as these efforts were argued to be more influenced by respect (e.g., Tyler & Blader, 2002). In the current study, we assessed performance on a speed task, a more mandatory form of effort (participant had to fulfill the task) that can be less affected by inductions of group respect or disrespect (however, Sleebos et al, 2006b, Study 1, found significant effects of group respect on a speed task). Therefore, it is not surprising that we did not find a main effect for respect inductions on the speed task, and that these inductions affected task performance only under particular circumstances (when people scored high on attachment anxiety). Further research should attempt to replicate our findings while using a less mandatory form of effort expenditure.

Our research has emphasized the importance of attachment theory for exploring individual differences in the context of group behavior. We showed that feelings of belongingness to the group and engagement in group serving efforts following signals of group respect and disrespect are highly dependent on a person's attachment insecurities along the attachment anxiety dimension. Further research should attempt to explore these effects in real-life groups and examine whether more personally relevant feedback concerning group respect and disrespect can override the observed individual differences and lead even more securely attached people to succumb to the pressure exerted by group feedback. Further research should also examine the conditions which might either lead highly attachment-anxious people to
take distance from a rejecting group or make them try to be accepted and valued by such a group.
References


Footnotes

1. We also computed for each participant a UNICEF donation score by assigning a score of 2 to participants who chose to donate all the money to UNICEF, a score of 1 to participants who chose to donate half of the money to UNICEF, and a score of 0 to participants who chose one of the remaining options. Statistical analyses revealed no significant unique and interactive effect of respect inductions, attachment anxiety, and attachment avoidance on the UNICEF donation score.
# Table 1

*Standardized regression coefficients and significance tests of the prediction of self-report measures according to attachment scores and respect manipulations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>Group Commitment</th>
<th>Group-Related Worries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment anxiety</td>
<td>-0.24**</td>
<td>0.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Respect</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Disrespect</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment avoidance</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety x disrespect</td>
<td>-0.22*</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety x respect</td>
<td>0.17*</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance x disrespect</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance x respect</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) (8, 197)</td>
<td>8.26**</td>
<td>8.95**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R^2) (%)</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * \(p < 0.05\); ** \(p < 0.01\)
Table 2

*Standardized regression coefficients for group donation and effort expenditure and persistence in group tasks according to attachment scores and respect manipulations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>Money Donation to the Group</th>
<th>Effort Expenditure and Persistence (Speed Task)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Step 1**

- Attachment anxiety: 0.15* -0.20*
- Group Respect: 0.06 0.02
- Group Disrespect: 0.06 0.03
- Attachment avoidance: -0.04 0.03

**Step 2**

- Anxiety x disrespect: 0.23* -0.25*
- Avoidance x respect: 0.14 0.01
- Avoidance x disrespect: 0.12 -0.00
- Anxiety x respect: -0.09 -0.19*

\( F(8, 197) \) 3.35* 2.43*

\( R^2 \) (%) 12.4 9.3

Notes: * \( p < 0.05 \); ** \( p < 0.01 \)