

Perceiving Expatriate Coworkers as Foreigners Encourages Aid:
Social Categorization and Procedural Justice Together Improve Intergroup Cooperation

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Abstract

We propose that social categorization can encourage particular forms of intergroup cooperation because it differentiates a group in need from another that can give aid. Moreover, it is most likely to occur when individuals perceive procedural justice (i.e., fair treatment) from authorities in a superordinate group (a group that includes members of both social categories). Two field studies – investigating relations between local and foreign co-workers – tested this prediction, and also tested whether high categorization and procedural justice would yield a dual identity, where group members simultaneously identify with their social category and the superordinate group. Both studies supported predictions: local employees engaged a dual identity and offered knowledge to aid a foreign co-worker's adjustment most when local-foreign categorization and procedural justice from organizational authorities was high. These discoveries point to controllable mechanisms that enable intergroup cooperation and have important implications for intergroup aid, expatriate adjustment, immigration, and multiculturalism.

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In 2008, China experienced a devastating 7.9-magnitude earthquake. To assist the Chinese public, other countries and non-for-profit agencies offered aid; the British Red Cross (2009) alone raised £4.8 million. It is encouraging seeing such generosity cross intergroup boundaries and tempting to speculate that individuals must leave intergroup differences behind to assist others. However, particular forms of support may require the psychological maintenance of those intergroup boundaries (i.e., “social categorization”; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971), because it can differentiate groups in need of assistance from those who can give aid. Recognizing social categorization is often associated with less cooperation and greater intergroup conflict, this paper sought to achieve two primary goals: (1) to test whether social categorization can be associated with *increased* intergroup cooperation; (2) to test a potential moderator of social categorization’s intergroup effects: procedural justice from authorities.

Social Categorization Can Facilitate Intergroup Cooperation

The intergroup relations literature tends to conclude that social categorization leads to intergroup conflict (for recent reviews, see Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010 and Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2010), but accumulating research points to inconsistencies in that link. Theory and evidence support the notion that social categorization is necessary to generalize positive contact to other moments (see Brown & Hewstone, 2005). A recently edited volume (Stürmer & Snyder, 2010) summarizes research indicating that intergroup competition is not universal.

Our perspective builds on this direction, but offers a new approach. We argue that social categorization can be used to identify the group(s) of people in need of aid and the group(s) of people who can give it, specifically aid that involves a transfer of resources. By resources, we refer to anything that has potential value to members of the recipient group; among others, such resources can be financial (e.g., earthquake relief donations), physical (e.g., housing for

displaced flood victims), or informational (e.g., farming knowledge to developing nations). It is the transfer of resources from one group to another which can benefit from social categorization, where categories can differentiate the group(s) of people in need of a particular aid and the group(s) of people who can give it. By contrast, this rationale should not apply to outcomes typically evaluated in intergroup contact (e.g., cross-category friendships, prejudice reduction, or peaceful co-existence; for a meta-analysis, see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). These often reflect attitudes about the intergroup context rather than a potential transfer of resources.

Of interest is what determines whether social categorization leads to cooperation or competition. One potential moderator is procedural justice.

Procedural Justice as a Moderator

Distinguished from distributive justice (i.e., the fair distribution of outcomes), procedural justice refers to the fair treatment of individuals. Although it can be exhibited by a wide variety of sources (e.g., peers, subordinates), research (e.g., Blader & Tyler, 2009; Tyler & Lind, 1992) reveals that procedural justice by authorities is particularly useful, as it increases members' identification with and cooperation within the group. It does so because it is expected to create identity security and respect (Tyler & Blader, 2003), leading members to be "voluntarily motivated to act in ways that make use of distinctive qualities and abilities" (p. 360).

Procedural justice can improve intergroup relations, when the groups are nested within a more inclusive "superordinate" group and authorities represent the superordinate. Were this so, procedural justice will lead members of the groups to feel secure and respected (Haslam, Eggers, & Reynolds, 2003; Huo & Molina, 2006; Leonardelli & Tormala, 2003), motivating cooperation across group boundaries. Theory and evidence support this notion; White Americans and African-Americans were more likely to support the authorities' efforts to maintain intra-national

justice, including the redistribution of resources between White Americans and African-Americans, when perceiving fair treatment from American authorities (Smith & Tyler, 1996).

As this evidence suggests, fair treatment from authorities may be sufficient to improve intergroup attitudes. However, it should not be sufficient for improving the intergroup transfer of resources because it does not specify the type of help needed by one group or whether the other group is capable of helping. By contrast, social categorization can do so, identifying which group is in need of assistance and which can provide it. Rather, we expect that procedural justice motivates group members to perceive social categorization as a “distinctive quality,” which could facilitate cooperation. Thus, we predict a procedural justice by social categorization interaction: increasing social categorization leads to greater intergroup cooperation at high procedural justice, but less cooperation at low. Too, procedural justice should lead to greater cooperation when social categorization is high not low.

Consequences for Dual Identity

This research also explores the antecedents of a dual identity, where group members simultaneously identify with the more inclusive superordinate group as well as their social category nested within (called a “subgroup”; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009). A dual identity is beneficial to intergroup contact because the superordinate identity builds a basis for shared identity and cooperation within, while preserving identity with the nested category, and evidence supports this prediction (e.g., Crisp, Stone, & Hall, 2006; González & Brown, 2003; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a; Richter, West, van Dick, & Dawson, 2006); with a dual identity in place, conflict may be more persistently reduced.

However, a dual identity can be difficult to establish. Evidence reveals an antagonism between superordinate and subgroup identities (Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997;

Waldzus, Mummendey, Wenzel, & Boettcher, 2004); as subgroup identification increases, superordinate identification decreases. One explanation is that subgroup members are motivated to retain the distinctiveness of smaller or nested groups (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000b; for a review, see Leonardelli, Pickett, & Brewer, 2010), where people reject larger or more inclusive groups in favor of smaller or nested ones. Thus, social categorization was expected to lead to less identification with the superordinate group, preventing a dual identity.

To overcome this antagonism, subgroup identity threats need to be minimized while allowing identification with the superordinate. Fair treatment from authorities might reduce this antagonism, because it leads group members to feel their group is secure and respected, thereby reducing the threat the superordinate poses to the subgroup's distinctiveness. Thus, procedural justice allows for a dual identity by allowing subgroup categorization and superordinate identification to be simultaneously high.

Overview

Based on the above, we generate two hypotheses. First, procedural justice and social categorization interact to predict intergroup cooperation: greater social categorization is associated with *greater* intergroup cooperation at high procedural justice, but not low. Second, procedural justice and social categorization interact to predict a dual identity: social categorization will be negatively related to superordinate identity, but as procedural justice increases, this negative association will be reduced.

The hypotheses were tested by exploring intergroup relations between local and expatriate co-workers. This context is ideal because information from locals is imperative (Toh & DeNisi, 2005): Expatriate co-workers are new to the host country and organization, and often can benefit from the insights of locals who have greater familiarity and knowledge of these

topics to facilitate learning and adjustment. Here, social categorization can be informative, identifying to locals that expatriates are “outsiders” requiring assistance and that they as locals can cooperate by sharing cultural and organizational knowledge to aid the expatriate.

Two studies, each consisting of a procedural justice (continuous) X local-expatriate categorization (continuous) between-participants design, tested both hypotheses with local employees, and did so with different measures of procedural justice and dual identity. Furthermore, Study 2 addressed an alternative explanation. As recipients’ perceptions of justice are thought to matter most (Blader & Bobocel, 2005), these studies collected locals’ spontaneous and naturalistic observations about procedural justice and perceptions of social categorization, identity and information sharing. No research has tested these predictions; these studies represented the first of their kind.

Study 1: A Field Test

Method

Seventy-four local employees (37 women, 36 men, 1 no response), working with an expatriate co-worker, were recruited directly or indirectly via other participants to participate. Participants represented six countries (U.S., Canada, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Japan); age ranged from 20 to 61 (*Mdn* = 31).

Local-expatriate categorization (i.e., the degree to which participants saw themselves - as host country nationals - and expatriates as members of different social groups), was comprised of two items created for this study and items adapted from an existing scale (e.g., “I consider expatriates as ‘one of them’ and host country national employees to be ‘one of us’”; $\alpha = .76$; Greenland & Brown, 1999). Participants’ also completed a 5-item measure of perceived procedural justice in their organization (e.g., “The procedures [used to arrive at my pay package]

have been free of bias”; $\alpha = .84$; Leung, Smith, Wang, & Sun, 1996; Moorman, 1991) and a 5-item organizational identity measure (e.g., “I feel strong ties with my organization”; $\alpha = .92$; Smidts, Pruyn, & Van Riel, 2001). Participants responded with a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Information sharing (i.e., how frequently participants shared adjustment-relevant knowledge with their expatriate co-worker) was rated on a 5-item measure (Morrison, 1993; e.g., “How often do you provide your foreign-national coworker information on the behaviors and attitudes that the organization values and expects”; 1 = *never* to 7 = *always*; $\alpha = .91$). Negatively worded items were reverse-scored and item scores for each measure were averaged together, with higher numbers indicating greater levels of each construct.

Results and Discussion

Organizational identity related positively to procedural justice ($r = .48, p < .05$), replicating past work (e.g., Blader & Tyler, 2009), and negatively to local-expatriate categorization ($r = -.26, p < .05$), demonstrating an antagonism between nested and superordinate identities.

Information sharing scores were submitted to regression analysis. Following standard procedures (Cohen, Cohen, Aiken, & West, 2003), centered local-expatriate categorization and procedural justice scores were submitted first to test for main effects and the product of the two entered next to test for the interaction. Analysis yielded a significant interaction ($b = .44, p < .01, sr = .34$; full analysis in Table S1, left column). Following standard procedures for plotting interactions (Cohen et al., 2003), mean scores were calculated using the regression equation at one standard deviation below and above the means on the social categorization and procedural justice measures (see Figure 1). Simple slope tests (Cohen et al., 2003) indicated a positive relation between local-expatriate categorization and information sharing when procedural justice

was high ($b = .55, p = .007, sr = .30$) not low ($b = -.27, p = .18, sr = -.15$). Only at high procedural justice was social categorization associated with greater information sharing.¹

Consistent with the notion that fair treatment from authorities is not sufficient for encouraging this form of cooperation, additional tests revealed a positive relation between procedural justice and information sharing when social categorization was high ($b = .75, p < .001, sr = .40$) not low ($b = -.20, p = .32, sr = -.11$).

Organizational identity scores were submitted to the same analysis, which revealed effects for procedural justice ($b = .60, p < .001, sr = .56$), local-expatriate categorization ($b = -.45, p < .001, sr = -.38$), and an interaction ($b = .21, p < .05, sr = .19$; analysis in Table S1, right column). Figure 2 describes the interaction plotted as above. Simple slope tests indicated that local-expatriate categorization was associated with lower organizational identity when procedural justice was low ($b = -.64, p < .001, sr = -.41$) not high ($b = -.26, p = .07, sr = -.17$). Consistent with the prediction, procedural justice attenuated the identity antagonism.

The evidence supported both hypotheses, with one exception. At low procedural justice, although social categorization yielded a negative trend on information sharing, it was not significant. This may have been a function of the high overall levels of procedural justice; the sample's mean score ($M = 4.38, SD = 1.15$) was above the measure's midpoint (4), $t(73) = 2.88, p = .002$. Based on the regression equation yielded from analysis, the negative trend should become increasingly negative as procedural justice decreases, consistent with our prediction. Given the novelty of the effects, we thought it important to replicate this interaction in Study 2.

Study 2: A Replication and Testing an Alternative

¹ Responses to two items indexing expatriate co-worker friendship ("I regard him/her as a personal friend"; "We are on friendly terms") were averaged together and submitted to the same analysis, which revealed no interaction ($b = .08, p = .44$), but a negative social categorization effect ($b = -.28, p = .02, sr = -.27$). Consistent with our rationale, the benefit of social categorization – of differentiating a group in need from a group who can give aid – did not apply to cross-group friendship; rather, it was associated with lower friendship.

A sample of local U.S. employees participated in a similar study. To conceptually replicate effects, we adopted a more global procedural justice measure (Blader & Tyler, 2009), which assesses employees' general perceptions of fair treatment from authorities. Whereas Study 1 gave insight into how procedural justice moderated an identity antagonism, this study measured dual identity directly (Beaton, Dovidio, & Léger, 2008). To be consistent with predictions, local employees should exhibit a dual identity most only when local-expatriate categorization and procedural justice are both high; that is, procedural justice and social categorization should interact.

This study also tested an alternative explanation for procedural justice effects: distributive justice (i.e., the degree of fair outcomes for work). Distributive justice has been offered as an explanatory variable for employees' willingness to cooperate with one another (e.g., Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001) and could thus account for our Study 1 effects. Hence, we conducted our interaction analyses including distributive justice scores as a main effect covariate and with a distributive justice and local-expatriate categorization interaction term covariate, given that our prediction entails an interaction with social categorization (see Hull, Tedlie, & Lehn, 1992 for why control interaction terms are advocated as a means of ruling out alternative explanations). This regression model is a stronger test of whether the predicted procedural justice by social categorization interaction is attributable to procedural justice.

Method

Participants were recruited from the StudyResponse Project (Stanton & Weiss, 2002), a service providing access to working adults across occupations and industries. A prescreening survey identified potential recruits: U.S. employees, who are interacting with a foreign co-

worker locally, and were willing to participate. Of the 489 respondents who met these criteria, 145 were contacted, and 83 participated (40 women, 43 men), for a 57% response rate. Age ranged from 21 to 54 ($Mdn = 34$).

Participants completed a 5-item perceived procedural justice measure (e.g., “Is there a general sense among employees that things are handled in fair ways at work?”; $\alpha = .94$, Blader & Tyler, 2009). Item scores were summed together, where higher numbers indicated greater procedural justice. Local-expatriate categorization ($\alpha = .78$) and information sharing ($\alpha = .94$) were measured as in Study 1. Negatively worded items were reverse-scored, and item scores for each measure were averaged together; higher numbers indicated greater levels of each construct.

Participants also completed a 2-item dual identity measure (Beaton et al., 2008; e.g., “Local employees and foreign employees are different groups, but working together to contribute to the organization”; $\alpha = .73$) and a 5-item distributive justice measure (Moorman, 1991; e.g., “I am fairly paid considering my job responsibilities”; $\alpha = .95$). Participants responded using a 7-point agreement response scale. Each measure’s item scores were averaged together; higher numbers indicated higher levels of each variable.

Results and Discussion

Distributive and procedural justice were positively correlated ($r = .69, p < .01$). The correlation’s magnitude is consistent with previous reports of associations in the .60s and .70s (c.f., Colquitt et al., 2001).

Information sharing and dual identity scores were submitted to a regression analysis with centered local-expatriate categorization, procedural justice, and distributive justice scores entered first. The products of local-expatriate categorization and procedural justice, to test the predicted interaction, and local-expatriate categorization and distributive justice were entered next.

The information sharing analysis yielded significant effects for local-expatriate categorization ($b = .51, p < .001, sr = .30$), distributive justice ($b = .51, p < .001, sr = .37$), and more importantly, a local-expatriate categorization X procedural justice interaction ($b = .05, p < .05, sr = .14$). The local-expatriate categorization X distributive justice interaction was not significant ($b = -.22, p > .05$; analysis in Table S2, left column). Figure 3 describes the interaction plotted as in Study 1. Simple slope tests indicated that local-expatriate categorization and information sharing were positively related when procedural justice was high ($b = .88, p < .001, sr = .28$) not low ($b = .06, p = .81, sr = .02$), consistent with Study 1. Additional tests yielded a positive procedural justice and information sharing relation when local-expatriate categorization was high ($b = .08, p < .01, sr = .18$) not low ($b = -.02, p = .53, sr = -.04$), consistent with the notion that procedural justice was not sufficient to encourage this type of intergroup cooperation.

The dual identity analysis revealed main effects for procedural justice ($b = .05, p = .02, sr = .20$), local-expatriate categorization ($b = .40, p < .01, sr = .27$), and distributive justice ($b = .23, p = .02, sr = .19$). More importantly, the local-expatriate categorization X procedural justice interaction was significant ($b = .06, p < .05, sr = .17$), but the local-expatriate categorization X distributive justice interaction was not ($b = -.14, p > .25$; analysis in Table S2, right column). Figure 4 describes the interaction plotted as in Study 1. Simple slope tests indicated a positive relation between local-expatriate categorization and dual identity scores when procedural justice was high ($b = .78, p < .001, sr = .29$) not low ($b = -.07, p = .80, sr = -.02$). Only under high procedural justice and local-expatriate categorization were participants most likely to simultaneously identify with organizational and local-expatriate categories.

The results supported both hypotheses; local employees were most likely to assist their foreign coworkers and have a dual identity only when procedural justice and social categorization were both high. The hypothesized effects held even when distributive justice was included in the regression model. As in Study 1, although this study did not yield a negative association between social categorization and intergroup cooperation at low procedural justice (i.e., -1 SD), it should be noted that the regression equation produced by the analysis reveals that as procedural justice continues to decrease, the relation between social categorization and information sharing should become increasingly negative. As noted earlier, the lack of a negative effect under low procedural justice may be a function of generally high levels of procedural justice, as the sample's mean ($M = 24.76$, $SD = 7.69$) was above the scale midpoint (20.5), $t(82) = 5.05$, $p < .001$.

General Discussion

Two studies supported both predictions. First, neither procedural justice nor social categorization was sufficient to yield greater information sharing; rather, both were needed (Studies 1, 2). Second, locals were less likely to identify with the organization at high levels of local-expatriate categorization except when procedural justice was high (Study 1); also, dual identity was highest when local employees reported high procedural justice and social categorization (Study 2). Procedural justice thus allows organizational and local identities to be distinctive but compatible.

The studies employed two field samples of working adults, with different operations of procedural justice and dual identity, and in Study 2, controlling for an important alternative explanation, distributive justice. These methodological differences created more rigorous tests and provide greater confidence in the conclusions. Nevertheless, the correlational data do not

rule out the possibility of reverse causality or that a third variable could explain the associations. Replicating effects with experiments can help address this limitation.

Overall, these discoveries have implications for intergroup aid, expatriate adjustment, immigration, and multiculturalism. First, whereas intergroup contact research typically investigates contact favorability (such as cross-group friendships; e.g., Mendoza-Denton & Page-Gould, 2008), we investigated a new and important type of contact, one we call *intergroup aid*, where members of one group engage in a voluntary transfer of resources to another group (for similar notions, see Lancaster, 2007). Our findings adds to the growing body of research suggesting that social categorization need not lead to intergroup conflict (Stürmer & Snyder, 2010). It will be beneficial to investigate whether it could facilitate other types of aid in other contexts, such as age-related categories facilitating physical aid (the young assisting the elderly cross a street), and categorizing nations as industrialized or developing facilitating financial aid.

In the present studies, intergroup aid (i.e., adjustment-related knowledge) may have benefited the local employees' workgroup and, thus, their own interests. It would be interesting to test whether the findings hold even when the helper's interests were in conflict with the other group's interests. Recently, Swann, Gómez, Dovidio, Hart, and Jetten (2010) revealed that individuals whose personal and subgroup identities were fused together were more willing to jump to their deaths to save the lives of outgroup members who share a superordinate identity than individuals who belonged to neither the subgroup nor superordinate group. Extrapolating from our theoretical position, it is interesting to consider whether increasing the salience of categorical differences between the helper and the ones in need would affect self-sacrifice.

Second, our research offers insights into improving expatriate adjustment and local-immigrant relations. Research has concluded that a shared superordinate group is sufficient to

produce more favorable reactions by locals to immigrants (Esses, Wagner, Wolf, Preiser, & Wilbur, 2006). Our work contributes to this particular intergroup context in two ways. First, building on work by Esses and colleagues, our findings suggest that increasing perceptions of authorities' fair treatment may be sufficient to encourage favorable reactions to expatriates and immigrants, because it encourages superordinate identification. Second, our work highlights the importance of social categorization in this context to encouraging aid from locals, and we wonder whether it may also be useful in making expatriates and immigrants more *receptive* to aid. Perhaps the information receives greater validity were the source perceived to be a local. Some evidence supports this rationale; Phillips (2003) revealed that decision-making groups were more likely to identify correct solutions when new information originated from members of another group rather than from one's own group.

Finally, our data point to one reason it might be difficult to implement multiculturalism policies: the absence of just procedures by authorities. Dual identities are foundational to the establishment of multiculturalism, where individuals try to balance social cohesion and maintain subgroup differences (Huo & Molina, 2006). However, as we reveal, dual identities are most likely to occur when perceiving fair treatment by authorities. Perceiving favoritism by authorities thus may be one reason why an identity antagonism may remain, manifest, or be exaggerated. It suggests why racial profiling by security officers (e.g., police, customs, Transportation Security Administration) can be detrimental to minority group members' willingness to identify with their nation, as these group members see authorities exhibiting what appears to be unfair treatment. This study points to a way of increasing the success of multiculturalism policies, by having authorities communicate how exactly they are implementing fair treatment and allowing group members voice in the matter so that group members can *perceive* such authorities as fair.

Conclusion

Most striking about this research is that, even in intergroup contexts, social categorization can have a positive effect by facilitating resource transfer. Instead of inhibiting diplomacy, deal-making, and dispute resolution, perhaps – under the right conditions – social categorization could also facilitate them, helping to differentiate the priorities of different groups of people and improve the efficiency of exchange.

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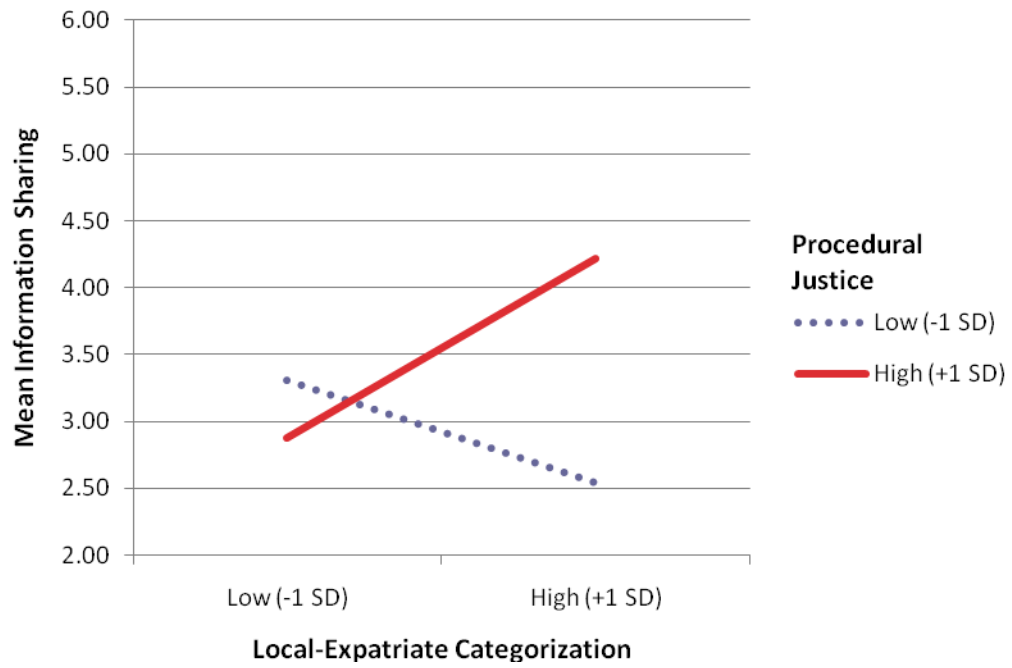


Figure 1. Mean predicted information sharing as a function of participants' degree of local-expatriate categorization (high or low) and procedural justice (high or low): Study

1.

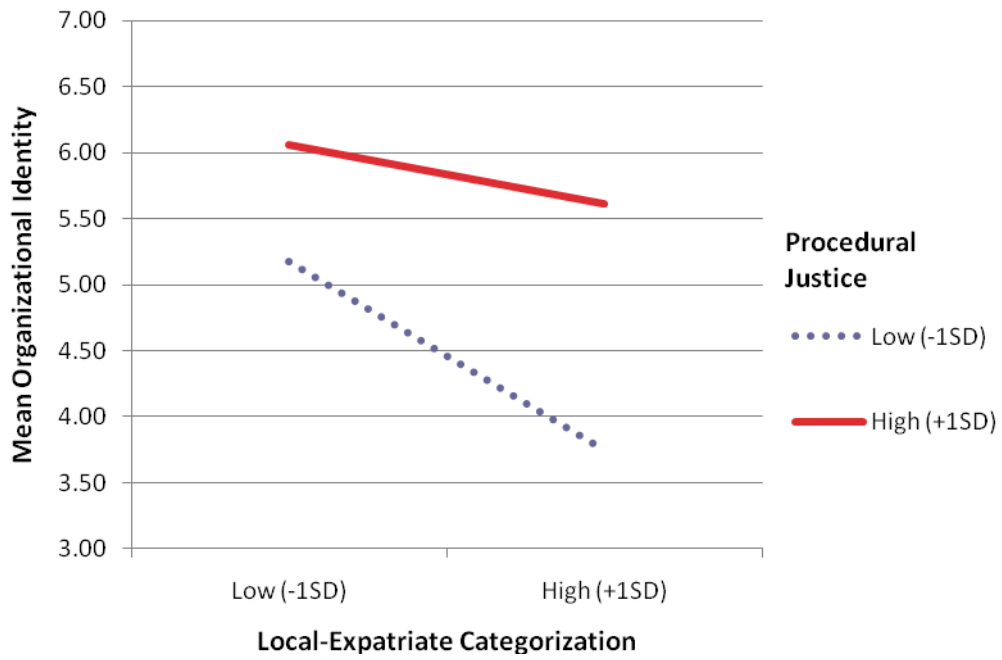


Figure 2. Mean predicted organizational identity as a function of participants' degree of local-expatriate categorization (high or low) and procedural justice (high or low): Study 1.

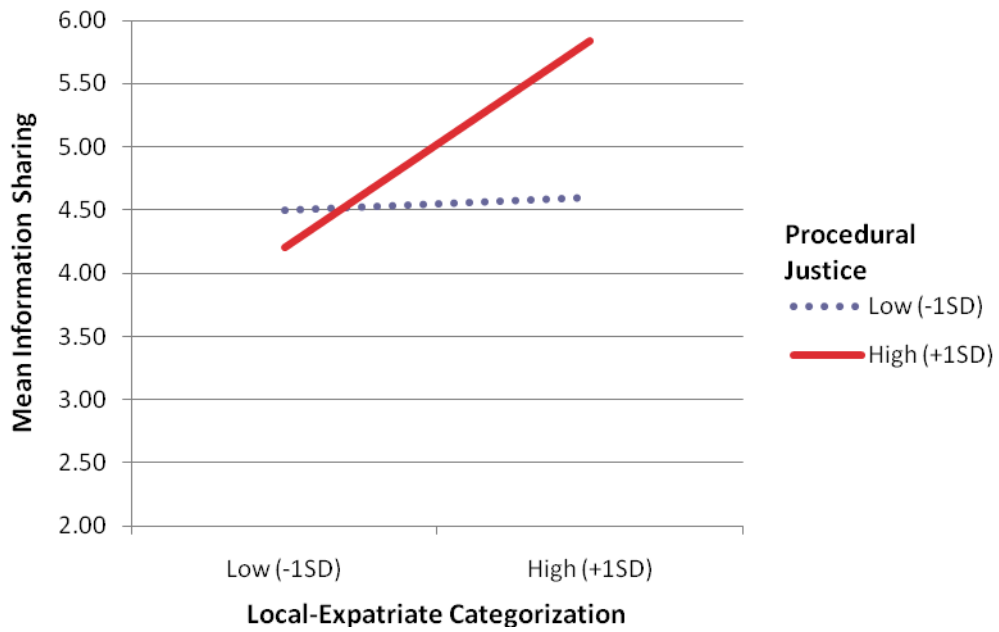


Figure 3. Mean predicted information sharing as a function of participants' degree of local-expatriate categorization (high or low) and procedural justice (high or low): Study 2.

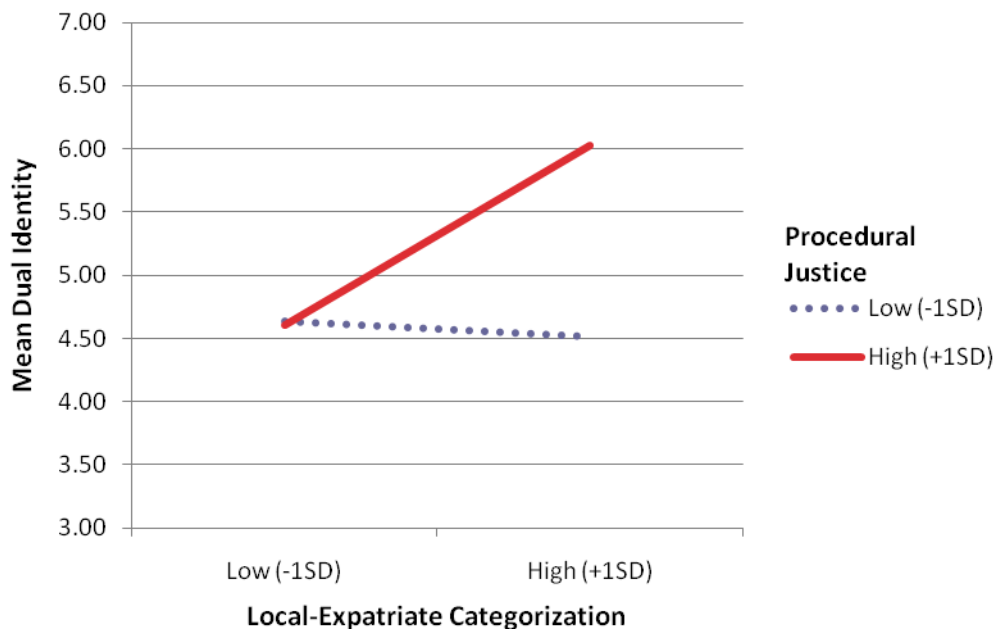


Figure 4. Mean predicted dual identity as a function of participants' degree of local-expatriate categorization (low, high) and procedural justice (low, high): Study 2.

Table S1: Regression Analyses: Study 1

Variable	Information Sharing	Organizational Identity
Step 1:		
Constant	3.36 ^{***}	5.20 ^{***}
Perceived Procedural Justice	.27	.60 ^{***}
Local-Expatriate Categorization	.14	-.45 ^{***}
Contribution to R ²	.07	.38
Step 2:		
Constant	3.24 ^{***}	5.14 ^{***}
Perceived Procedural Justice	.27 [*]	.60 ^{***}
Local-Expatriate Categorization	.14	-.45 ^{***}
Perceived Procedural Justice X Local- Expatriate Categorization	.44 ^{**}	.21 [*]
Contribution to R ²	.12	.04
Total R ²	.19	.41

N = 74; Unstandardized coefficients are shown

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

Table S2: Regression Analyses: Study 2

Variable	Information Sharing	Dual Identity
Step 1:		
Constant	4.77*	4.96*
Perceived Procedural Justice	.03	.05*
Local-Expatriate Categorization	.51***	.40**
Distributive Justice	.51***	.23*
Contribution to R ²	.61	.40
Step 2:		
Constant	4.78*	4.95*
Perceived Procedural Justice	.03	.05*
Local-Expatriate Categorization	.47***	.35**
Distributive Justice	.53***	.23*
Perceived Procedural Justice X Local- Expatriate Categorization	.54*	.06*
Distributive Justice X Local-Expatriate Categorization	-.22	-.14
Contribution to R ²	.03	.04
Total R ²	.64	.44

N = 83; Unstandardized coefficients are shown

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