

Respect, Disrespect and Cooperative Attitudes in Foreign Policy

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Abstract:

In our daily lives few things are as important to us as being treated with respect. Yet in International Relations, we regularly assume that actors follow just their material interests or the social norms appropriate for their identity, without caring if the treatment they get matches their own sense of importance and worth. Drawing mostly on insights from moral philosophy and social psychology this article argues that even in international relations social respect can be a significant goal, both for instrumental reasons and as an end in itself. In fact, as long as we ignore this dimension of international politics we will be unable to fully explain major features, specifically the intensity and duration of many cross-border conflicts. To show the perspectives which systematic research on respect may open for IR, this article presents a theoretical overview of the chief factors that shape the reactions to respectful or disrespectful behavior.

*To deserve, to acquire, and to enjoy the respect and admiration of mankind,
are the great objectives of ambition and emulation (Smith, 2004 (1759): I, iii, 3).*

If I've learned one thing covering world affairs, it's this:

*The single most underappreciated force in international relations is humiliation
(Friedman, 2003).*

Not unlike persons or social groups in the domestic arena, decision makers, nations, and religious communities increasingly demand respect from their international peers in the global arena. Recent examples include French President Jacques Chirac complaining about being disrespected by former US President George W. Bush (Woodward, 2004: 312), Iranian President Ahmadinejad insisting on respectful, rather than arrogant treatment from the new Obama Administration (Fathi, 2009), and the Arab public calling upon the West “[to show] greater respect for Islam and [to] stop regarding Muslims as inferior” (World Economic Forum, 2008: 131). It seems that the current US administration intends to heed such calls. During his campaign, candidate Obama envisioned rebuilding transatlantic relations by treating European “allies with respect” (Obama and Biden, 2008b), and in his inaugural address the incoming President offered the Muslim world a new relationship “based on mutual interest and mutual respect”. Only weeks later, Obama publicly expressed his nation’s respect for the accomplishments of Iran’s “great civilization” and offered “engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect” (2009). Finally, the new administration also vowed to “treat [America’s] hemispheric partners and neighbors with dignity and respect” (Obama and Biden, 2008a). It seems as if demonstrating respect for traditional partners

and old opponents has become an essential stratagem for the new American foreign policy (Obama, 2010: 11, 14). Yet, can such a reorientation make a real difference? Or is respectful behavior merely a matter of style with no substantial consequences for international cooperation? Unfortunately, to date, IR scholars have hardly started to ask such questions.

That it might be worthwhile to embark on detailed studies is indicated at least by some bits of anecdotal evidence and opinion surveys which, when taken together, should give reason to pause. For instance, there are strong indications that feelings of disrespect aggravated quite a number of bilateral relations. Recent examples include:

- the counterproductive American isolation of Iran ever since the 1979 hostage crisis (Gause III, 1994; Gerges, 1999: chap. 6; Shirley, 1994);
- the highly emotional escalation of the transatlantic conflicts over the 2003 Iraq invasion (Forsberg, 2005; Gaffney, 2004; Gordon and Shapiro, 2004: chaps. 4-6; Kelley, 2005; Pond, 2003; Szabo, 2004: chaps. 2-3) author 2009);
- Russian self-isolation in the wake of NATO's enlargement and the Kosovo intervention (Ambrosio, 2005: chaps. 4-6; Lucas, 2008: chaps. 5, 8; Mankoff, 2009: chaps. 1, 3; Mendeloff, 2008; Pouliot, 2010: chaps. 4-6; also Prizel, 1998: chap. 7; Simes, 2007; Stent, 2005) and
- India's persistent reluctance to enter cooperative relations which fail to recognize its unique cultural achievements ((Narlikar, 2006; Nayar and Paul, 2004; Sagar, 2004).

Also, one may wonder if the US occupation of Iraq might have been far more successful if, instead of condoning the torture and humiliation of Iraqi prisoners, high ranking administration officials had conspicuously expressed a great admiration for the Iraqi cultural heritage. Furthermore, polling data show that the perception of disrespect

plays a major role in relations between Muslims and Western civilization. Thus, according to a 2005 Gallup poll more than 60% of Iranians, Saudi Arabians, and Turks considered Muslims disrespected by the West. Among Egyptians and Palestinians more than 80% agreed with that perception. When asked what the West could do to improve relations with Islamic countries the most frequent response was “[show] greater respect for Islam and stop regarding Muslims as inferior” (World Economic Forum, 2008: 131). Also, vast majorities of Muslims all over the world (including communities living in Western countries) saw a prime cause of the controversy over the Danish Muhammad cartoons in Western disrespect for Islam (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2006: 59). In a similar vein, feelings of disrespect seem to complicate Western relations with the developing countries (Kelman, 1962: 79). Africans, in particular, express dismay at what they see as condescending and self-gratifying behavior of Northern officials, NGOs, and celebrities engaged in conspicuous efforts to ‘save Africa’ (Iweala, 2007; Lindner, 2006: 83; Tévoédjrè, 2002: 43, 84). In fact, a recent report written by independent African experts on the continent’s priorities was published under the heading ‘Winning the War against Humiliation’ (Tévoédjrè, 2002). Apparently, feelings of disrespect are widely spread in the world beyond the wealthy democracies. Therefore, the latter seem well advised to take those feelings seriously and figure out (a) if they compromise cooperative relations and (b) what could be done to mitigate these negative effects.

To lay the necessary groundwork for systematic research, this article presents an interdisciplinary proto-theory about the international impact of respect and disrespect. It argues that foreign policy decision makers have ample grounds for heeding the intuition that respect facilitates cooperation, while disrespect breeds conflict. To this end, I will derive concepts and hypotheses from insights and findings in other theoretical fields, especially from moral and social philosophy, sociology and social psychology. As will

become clear, the experience of respect and disrespect touches upon many aspects of human interaction beyond cost-benefit calculations which still figure so prominently in mainstream IR. Unlike most IR topics, respect and disrespect cannot be properly understood without focusing simultaneously on an actor's normative expectations, social needs and emotional reactions. The promise and challenge of respect research therefore resides in the requirement to systematically integrate these factors and the insights of related fields of research.

Respect, it will be argued, is particularly important because of the implicit acceptance which it signals for an actor's rank. When the nature of the interaction confirms one's self-ascribed value and importance, it promotes sympathy, trust, mutual identification and open deliberation – all of which increase a cooperative attitude. Disrespect, on the other hand, challenges an actor's self-respect or self-esteem by denying her the degree of esteem or attention she feels entitled to. It is usually experienced as an unacceptable mismatch between the social position one is assigned by the Other and the position one expects to deserve according to prevailing standards or norms. As such, it tends to arouse anger and a self-protective urge to re-establish one's "rightful position." While these effects may be less strong among collective actors interacting in a thinner social environment such as the international system, there are sufficient empirical and theoretical grounds suggesting that they are strong enough to warrant systematic empirical research.

Given the need for conceptual clarification in a neglected field, the article starts with a thorough discussion of "respect" and "disrespect" before comparing them to related concepts, such as "honor," "reputation" and "prestige." In next section I draw upon findings from social and political psychology to explain why respectful treatment increases the chances of cooperative behavior. This will be followed by a section which will present evidence and hypotheses indicating that the experience of disrespect breeds

international conflict. In the conclusion I will discuss why respect has thus far received so little attention in IR, before presenting some methodological suggestions as to how it could be studied.

1. The Meaning of Respect

Most of us use the word “respect” every single day in one of its various meanings: thus we talk about respecting the law, the risks of a polar expedition, the judgment of a colleague, the Catholic church, the achievements of our brothers, the rights of business partners, the presence of a neighbor, the needs of our students, and much more (Darwall, 1977; Dillon, 2007b; Hudson, 1980). In the U.S. inner cities “respect” has achieved special prominence as a signifier of social standing in a hazardous environment (Anderson, 1999; Bourgois, 2003). If there is one common thread in all of these examples, it is a rather thin one: giving due consideration to another object, be it natural, human, or institutional.

In an IR perspective, respect for particular actors seems to be both the most interesting and least researched topic. Problems of compliance, legitimacy, and acceptance have already been addressed by scores of international lawyers and political scientists. The same observation applies to respect for international risks and threats which also has been extensively studied by a great number of security scholars. In contrast, respect for international actors, such as states, international organizations, movements, or individual decision-makers, has been grossly under-researched.¹

¹ Interestingly, the closest exception to this rule is to be found in the work of John Rawls. In § 3.3 of *The Law of Peoples* Rawls (1999) explicitly lists international respect as one of the prime interests of peoples (see also Haacke, 2005: 194). Alexander Wendt and Hans Morgenthau refer to recognition as a major state goal. At the beginning of his chapter on prestige, Morgenthau (1978: 85) actually comes close to declaring social recognition a major goal of international actors. In the rest of the chapter, however, Morgenthau deals exclusively with prestige which he practically equates with reputation for power. According to Alexander Wendt, the structure of international orders to a great extent depends on the degree of mutual recognition (Wendt, 1999: 283-297). Still, his discussion of recognition overly stresses the legal aspects of the concept – above all the mutual recognition of sovereignty and territorial integrity – while neglecting the evaluative dimensions of status (but see Wendt, 1999: 236, 2003). For a broader application of the concept to IR see Ringmar (1996b, 2002) and Honneth (forthcoming) who claim that states fight for the recognition of various aspects of their identity.

Accordingly, for IR the most useful definition of “respect” might be gained from philosophical, sociological, and psychological writings that dwell on the respect that is given or due to other persons.

1.1 Towards a working definition of social respect

Building on Hegel’s early lectures on social philosophy, Axel Honneth has provided what amounts to the most elaborated theory of social recognition to date. Like Kant and Hegel, Honneth puts special emphasis on the importance of acknowledging other people’s *rights*. People cherish their rights not only for the particular opportunities and material benefits that come with them. Even more important is the symbolic significance of these rights as indicators of social standing. According to Honneth (1996: chap. 5), holding equal rights under the law means that we are socially accepted as fully autonomous persons. Conversely, being arbitrarily denied some of these rights can easily harm people’s self-respect as it implies that they are merely second-class citizens. (In the most humiliating cases, people may even be stripped of all capacity for autonomous action, thereby being reduced to mere objects without human dignity.) Being disrespected in these ways causes frustration and anger on the part of the individual. If similarly experienced by a large enough number of citizens, patterns of disrespect bring about collective identities, turning individual victims of discrimination into social movements fighting for the recognition of their equal rights.. Accordingly, such interactions can be seen as instances of antagonistic identity constructions (Wendt, 1999: 328, 333) where disappointed moral expectations result in a form of negative altercasting that enhances conflicting elements of collective identities (which had been constructed in prior interactions with *different* actors).

As Honneth points out, a similar dynamic also operates in the realm of *self-esteem*. Individuals may be particularly interested in being respected as legal equals.

Yet, they also want society to acknowledge their specific efforts for the common good. Being denied this kind of recognition is also a frustrating experience which tends to undermine people's sense of self-worth. Again, groups struggling for general respect of their specific contributions or qualities will set (and keep) in motion a continuous process of evaluative disputes (Honneth, 1996: chap. 5; see also Taylor, 1992). The ensuing "struggles for recognition" may affect the dynamics of social transformation just as profoundly as contests fought solely for material benefits.²

While Honneth's concept of recognition provides a very useful starting point for establishing the contents and dynamics of respect-seeking behavior, it largely ignores the *non-evaluative dimensions* of human existence which people equally want to see respected. Thus, simply being ignored or overlooked, be it on purpose or as a result of mere negligence, is perhaps the most hurtful form of disrespect. Indeed, it may hurt us more than a negative evaluation.³ Failing to catch other people's attention in situations where we can reasonably expect to be noticed implies that we "do not count." When people "look through us," the way colonial officials often did with local servants, they deal with us as mere objects without any social meaning. Implicitly, such officials treated their personnel as utterly unimportant or as mere automatons whose reactions

² Assuming there are such contests at all. As will be pointed out below, the distribution of material benefits often is considered an indicator of relative social evaluation. Hence, groups arguing over the distribution of power and wealth may actually argue over relative group worth as well (also the debate in Fraser and Honneth, 2003; Horowitz, 2000: 134, 187; Ross, 2001: 163). Some IR scholars working in the recognition tradition try to explain such struggles primarily with reference to actors' epistemic needs to get external validation for their subjective identities (Ringmar, 1996a: 78-83). In contrast to those views, I hold that our fights for recognition are not due to an urge to know (a) who we really are and (b) what this implies for our desires. Otherwise, a higher degree of subjective uncertainty should enhance the intensity of our resistance to deviating identity constructions. However, a more insecure identity will not lead to stronger opposition to divergent narratives; it is rather a contested identity which I personally feel confident about that will provoke my strong resistance – and only if the identity that Others try to assign me entails a *lower rank for myself* than I deem appropriate. As will become more clear below, my crucial point here is that humans are emotionally predisposed to protect the status position which they positively think they deserve. Struggles for respect (as I understand the concept) are not so much about soliciting social support for the solid construction of one's identity. Rather we start them to get the treatment that we feel entitled to insist upon. If our interests depended on identities which, in turn, essentially depended on external affirmation – how should we ever *know* that it is in our interest to fight for the recognition of contested identities?

³ For instance, as authors we may be less annoyed by a negative review of our recent book than by waiting in vain for the first review.

were completely predictable, thereby denying their capacity for autonomous action (at least in the presence of their masters). Such behavior compromises core elements of human worth which define the very dignity of persons. It is perhaps the most humiliating denial of respect (Margalit, 1996: chap. 6).

Closely related to disrespect for our presence are the various other forms of hurting our *sense of importance*. Often, people may take notice of our presence but without giving us as much attention as we deem appropriate. They might acknowledge that we take part in a conversation and they might even listen to our contributions. Yet, in their own statements, they may hardly refer to our ideas. By failing to address our statements they indicate that our opinions are unimportant. Again, this kind of aloofness can hurt even more than receiving a lot of *critical* responses to our statements. It seems that people want to feel important, they want to experience themselves as influencing their social or physical environment. They cherish a sense of control even if others dislike their particular actions. Even adults sometimes act as *enfant terribles* when they sense a lack of influence or attention.

Finally, respect can also entail giving adequate consideration to other actors' *needs* (Sennett, 2004: chap. 2). Even when there is no clear obligation to help or support other groups or persons, simply ignoring their basic physical needs not only diminishes their welfare but also hurts their status as valuable actors.

Thus, compared to the prevailing concept of recognition, "respect" is both broader and narrower at the same time: it is broader in as much as it also extends to non-evaluative dimensions of an actor's self-image (or sense of one's place), that is to her needs and social importance – and these dimensions might be of special importance in international society, given its greater diversity of values. It is also narrower as it evidently refers only to acts of recognition which actors deem morally obligatory. Accordingly, it does not include affectionate recognition in intimate relationships which

plays such a crucial role in Honneth's and Taylor's conceptualizations. It seems self-evident that we "owe" respect to other humans, whereas we seem to have greater moral discretion when it comes to recognizing other people. Thus, while the English language has a direct antonym for "respect" with a negative moral denotation ("disrespect"), it lacks an equivalent antonym for "recognition".⁴ Moreover, unlike mutual recognition as understood by authors such as Fraser, Honneth (Fraser and Honneth, 2003), or Taylor (1992), respect also relates to reciprocal attitudes in asymmetric relationships. Mutual respect need not imply equivalence in status, which makes the concept more useful in international relations. Finally (and perhaps most important), an increasing body of research in social psychology also uses the concept of "respect" to analyze the intimate relationship between a person's status perceptions, moral expectations and emotions. Hence, by applying this concept we can more easily link up IR research with systematic empirical findings on the strong links between these crucial human outlooks and experiences – and can still make use of IR studies on those identity relationships where actors sense a clear moral entitlement for social recognition.

For a working definition of social respect, we may thus conclude that respect is an attitude we expect others to show by the way they treat us. Because we cannot read other peoples minds, respect has to manifest itself in behavior towards us. When striving for respect, actors seek adequate consideration of their

- physical presence,
- social importance,
- ideas and values,
- physical needs and interests,

⁴ Lebow's concept of recognition, for instance, merely implies public acceptance as part of a group whose members may compete for honor (Lebow, 2008: 68p.). Of course, some authors, Honneth among them, also see a strong link between some forms of recognition and moral expectations. However, this connotation appears to be weaker in ordinary language. Thus, it is probably no coincidence that the Obama Administration and offended Arab publics talk about "mutual respect" and "Western disrespect" resp. when they refer to the moral dimension of this relationship – rather than about "sufficient" or "insufficient recognition". (Moreover, social "recognition" may easily be confused with diplomatic recognition.)

- achievements, efforts, qualities and virtues, and
- rights.⁵

While giving full respect for the ideas and needs of others does not call for their active endorsement (but only for taking them seriously in debates and decision making), with regard to the last two dimensions “adequate consideration” requires both taking them into account as important “facts” and accepting them as authentic. Thus, even when somebody does not actively support my needs he can still fully respect me in this dimension by taking these needs into account. His attitude amounts to disrespect only if I also feel entitled to his support, that is, if he seems to ignore a relevant right.

1.2 *Identifying respect and disrespect*

As will become clear below, the crucial term in this definition is “adequate,” since those who seek respect and those who are supposed to grant it may profoundly disagree as to the level of adequacy. This gap may result from mere misunderstandings, from lack of information or from open differences of opinion. No matter what the particular cause, a perceived lack of respect can easily thwart cooperation and bring about intense conflict (see below section 3). Therefore, by provoking anger and resistance an act of disrespect is usually much more conspicuous than respectful behavior.

Accordingly, the identification and measurement of (dis)respect cannot be guided by universal and objective criteria alone. Instead they must be tailored to the case at hand, i. e. they have to focus on an actor’s *subjective* expectations and understandings, both of which are strongly affected by cultural settings. While sometimes an objective observer may be able to determine an actor’s specific identity

⁵ For similar definitions see Hill (1998: 283) and Dillon (2007a: 202). Note that, while some of these aspects (e.g. overall importance or physical needs) are not part of individual or collective identities, most of them clearly relate to the social rank or status an actor feels entitled to occupy.

and status needs on the basis of official texts and other forms of self-representation (Abdelal et al., 2009), the degree to which such expectations are met by interaction partners fundamentally depends on that actor's interpretation of its partners' behavior. Therefore, the most conspicuous indications of disrespect would be verbal complaints by decision makers about the way they (or their states and nations) are treated by foreign officials.⁶ To assess the authenticity of such claims and the actual degree of disrespect experienced by executives, researchers can also look at ensuing decision making processes. A strong indicator for anger and other types of emotional arousal would be quick and premature decisions taken with little attention to material risks or consequences, missing information, or contradictory data (Rosen, 2005: 55). The level of perceived disrespect could also be gauged by the extent to which normative claims and rationalizations, such as the categorical insistence on legitimate rights or status claims, marginalize an actor's strategic calculations concerning the possible material consequences of various options. Finally, the specific object of disrespect can provide an important hint: *Ceteris paribus* disregard for an actor's achievements, views, faculties, or merits is to be considered a milder form of disrespect than inadequate consideration for its overall importance, rights, or social rank.

Apparently, this approach to gauge experiences of disrespect is less useful for detecting and measuring the experience of *positive* respect. Of course, public officials may sometimes articulate their agreement with the way their nation and its representatives are treated – especially in more private settings. Or they may point out the absence of status disagreements. In general, however,, actors are less prone to comment on a kind of treatment they feel entitled to. In this case, the experienced behavior is simply seen as “normal”. Accordingly, actors would feel less need to express their satisfaction. In principle, respect might thus be detected by the very absence of both complaints about disrespect and emotional styles of decision making.

⁶ For recent examples see Szabo (2004: 26) and Woodward (2004: 312).

However, this method would be burdened by the well-known problems of proving negatives. A more practical approach to identify the experience of (positive) respect and to assess its level and impact would therefore focus on respectful behavior that corrects previous demonstrations of disrespect – for instance, when state representatives meet foreign demands for repeated and close consultations, for high level meetings, for relinquishing alleged double standards, for more voting rights in international institutions, or for publicly acknowledging a country’s contribution to a common cause. In those instances, it also seems far more likely that respected actors would voice their interpretation of latest *changes* in their interaction partner’s attitude. When doing so, they will often put these changes into a larger symbolic context, thereby providing hints whether they now feel fully respected or still expect some further changes in another dimension of respect. Moreover, to gauge the experienced *increase* of respect resulting from such a change, an analyst could draw upon the previous level of disrespect assessed according to the approach outlined above. This might be particularly useful to investigate the short-term dynamic effects of respectful behavior as opposed to long-term level effects (see section 4 below). In fact, the Obama administration’s widespread efforts to correct America’s image as an arrogant nation oblivious to foreign interests (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2005: 23), could provide useful material for researching such effects in various bilateral relationships.

1.3 “Respect” and related concepts

Obviously, this definition of respect reveals many similarities and conformities with related concepts, such as “esteem”, “prestige”, “status”, “dignity” and “honor”. Given the inherent vagueness of the term “respect” itself, it is essential to discuss these other concepts in order to prevent some unnecessary confusion.

First of all, “respect” needs to be differentiated from various forms of *esteem*, such as love and adoration, which can go far beyond an adequate consideration of some particular qualities based on normative expectations. Hence, most of us accept that it is entirely up to other people if they admire, love, or adore us. By contrast, we feel that others actually “owe” us respect. When we subjectively meet relevant standards of achievements, virtues etc., it *must* be granted to avoid “inadequate consideration” (Dillon, 2007a: 203). Otherwise, we feel discriminated vis-à-vis other similar people who get more positive attention.

This difference between respect and other forms of esteem has two crucial implications: on one hand, it makes clear that, as far as respect is the sole motivation, the subjective aspiration does not exceed the levels we deem appropriate in light of widely accepted standards of estimation. On the other hand, when being denied the level of esteem we think we truly deserve, we feel far more frustrated and annoyed than in cases where we would appreciate some more admiration. This is one of the reasons why we often feel entitled to openly “*demand*” respect, whereas it can easily become self-defeating to frankly ask for a higher level of appreciation. Thus, when actors insist on respectful treatment they can be said to turn the constructivist perspective on the ‘logic of appropriateness’ on its head: Instead of using social norms as sign posts for avoiding acts deemed incompatible with their own identity (March and Olsen, 1989), they apply them to the behavior others show towards them.

In politics, the most important form of esteem is usually called *prestige*. Put very simply, enjoying prestige means being widely accredited with having achieved valuable political ends or with having special abilities for achieving such ends.⁷ Prestigious political actors thus are considered capable, important and valuable (Markey, 2000).

Obviously, this comes close to the common use of the term “respect”, for instance when

⁷ Sometimes prestige is equated with a reputation for power (Gilpin, 1981; Morgenthau, 1978). This neutral definition, however, is not in line with common usage of the term. For instance, few Americans would have credited Hitler’s Germany in 1942 with a high level of prestige.

we say of a legislator that “she enjoys the respect of her colleagues in the senate.” However, this is actually a statement about the senator’s prestige or reputation as a capable politician, for we cannot know if she really deems the consideration of her achievements to be adequate. While she may get a lot of credit for her legislative record, she may think nevertheless that, based on widely applied criteria, she ought to get a lot more.

Honor is another concept which partially overlaps with the meaning of “respect.” Honor refers to an actor’s public reputation based on her public compliance with the code of a particular status group. Typically it entails norms mandating honesty, courage, calm composure, or generosity (Berger, 1970; Lebow, 2008: chap. 2; Offer, 1995). The experience of disrespect, by contrast, largely depends on the relationship between others’ behavior and one’s own subjective expectations, in particular to one’s own standards of social worth and importance. Honor is based on the opinion of the broader social environment; it is not a specific attitude which a particular actor is supposed to display in a specific social encounter. In contrast, the experience of respect and disrespect intrinsically depends on an actor’s subjective sense of her self-worth and -importance. Accordingly, in some instances an actor may not feel disrespected even though somebody has tarnished her honor (or reputation or prestige): for instance, if she is well aware of the fact that the honor she publicly enjoyed was actually based on fraud or cover-up.

Like “respect” the concept of *dignity* appears to be more in line with the social realities of highly individualistic and thus very heterogeneous societies. “Dignity” delineates the core area of human worthiness as inter-subjectively defined by the prevailing culture. Usually, a person’s dignity rests on its recognition as an autonomous agent with a moral worth of its own (Dillon, 2007a: 207, 2007b; Kelman, 1977: 531). As the abstract and universally accepted core of human worth, dignity is not related to

specific individual traits, characteristics, or biographies that actors also want to see recognized. Therefore, it is not really part of a specific identity but rather the foundation for acquiring one. Thus, even though everyone seeks respect for this inner core of self-worth, uncompromised dignity falls short of full respect.⁸ However, its violation is the most hurtful form of disrespect: humiliation (Saurette, 2005: 9). For nation states, this culturally defined core currently consists of their rights to sovereignty, to territorial integrity, and to freedom of development (Kelman, 1997: 187; Simpson, 2004: 54). National dignity thus largely coincides with a nation-state's material interest in security. Yet, as will be shown below, upholding a nation-state's worth as an autonomous actor may at times provide an additional motivation for resistance in hopeless cases where states face an overpowering military opponent.

To sum up, when actors expect respectful behavior they demand the level of consideration they feel entitled to on the basis of prevailing social norms. Being respected, therefore, is experienced as a dutiful social affirmation of one's subjective sense of importance and worth in relation to wider society. Disrespect, on the other hand, is always seen as an unjustifiable denial of social rank, as a symbolic attack on an actor's self-perceived place in and meaning for society. It thus may even be regarded as desecration of a "sacred" self-image that an actor seeks to uphold by playing the role of her own priest (Goffman, 1967: 95). Not surprisingly then, both respect and disrespect can have profound consequences for the way a (dis)respected actor responds to her social environment.

2. Respect and international cooperation

Prior experience of respect increases the chances of cooperative behavior. This causal relation has repeatedly been established by social psychologists for small groups interacting in the workplace. As will be shown below, there are also good reasons for

⁸ See Wendt's (Wendt, 2003: 511p.) very similar distinction between thin and thick recognition.

expecting a positive link between respect and international cooperation. Specifically, the experience of respect should promote mutual trust and should facilitate bargaining over the distribution of common gains. Perhaps most important, mutual respect seems vital for creating the conditions conducive to a deliberative exchange of ideas over the best definition and solution to a shared problem.

Before applying the relevant findings in psychology to IR, however, a general note of caution seems appropriate. Obviously, large groups and institutional actors need not react to respect or disrespect in the same manner as individuals.⁹ While states may often act like persons, they have neither conscience nor feelings (Neumann, 2004; Wendt, 2004; Wight, 2004). True, recent advances in Intergroup Emotions Theory (IET) have convincingly demonstrated that social groups, including large ones such as whole nations, may often experience common moods and emotions: Depending on the salience of group membership and the level of personal identification, physically remote individuals may feel exactly the same emotions as group members personally engaged in cross-group interactions (Mackie et al., 2008; Rydell et al., 2008). Yet, little is known about the impact of individual emotions on group processes (Kelly and Spoor, 2006: 313). Evidently, a lot depends on how influential individuals frame the public interpretation of foreign behavior (Bloom, 1990: chap. 4). On the international level, therefore, reactions to respect or disrespect often will be less direct, spontaneous, and predetermined than in personal interactions (Author, forthcoming). Still, in many situations they may be just as strong or even stronger, depending on the intensity with which people identify with their nations, states and their leaders – and vice versa (Bloom, 1990: 38p., 81.; Horowitz, 2000: 143-147, 181, 226; Johnston, 2008a: 95-99; Stern, 1995). Besides, norms demanding loyalty to the group can gravely inhibit benevolent interpretations of an out-group's acts (Kelman, 2008: 175-177), thereby

⁹ (On the various hazards of naively applying psychological findings to foreign policy analysis see Hymans, 2002; Kelman, 1965; McDermott, 2004b; Stein, 2008: 113)..

making collectives sometimes even more touchy about alleged insults than individuals. The history of nationalism is full of vivid examples. Research on nationalism has repeatedly demonstrated that endangered oligarchies try to steer public emotions towards hatred for foreigners (Kelman, 2008: 176p.; Snyder, 2000: chap. 2; Van Evera, 1994: 30-33). On top of this, international interactions involve many face to face encounters in which many scholarly findings on small groups are directly applicable (Kelman, 1965: 566). Often, political leaders experience hostile foreign moves as if they were meant as personal affronts (Steinberg, 1996) and will be inclined to react accordingly.¹⁰ Consequently, it is for empirical research to decide to what extent and under what circumstances international behavior mirrors findings in psychology.

The focus of this article is on the impact of (dis)respect between small groups of key decision-makers that represent interacting nation states, for it is on this level that all the various effects of (dis)respect should come to the fore. This applies first and foremost to the profound emotional consequences such experiences, particularly disrespect, may have on foreign policy decision-making (for instructive overviews on the essential role of emotions in rational cognition see (Cohen, 2005; McDermott, 2004a; Mercer, 2005). Moreover, unlike ordinary citizens, key decision-makers are exposed to all causal path-ways where (dis)respect can play a role:

1. They can experience personal (dis)respect in direct interactions with foreign leaders,
2. they can feel (dis)respected as official representatives of their states or nations (or both),
3. they can feel disrespected in their roles as (ordinary) citizens or nationals, and

¹⁰ A famous example is Kennedy's angry reaction to news of the deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba: "He [Khrushchev] can't do this to me!" (Rosen, 2005: 63)

4. they may see some political advantages in acting upon (dis)respect experienced by influential domestic groups.

Obviously, these path-ways will often intersect and interconnect. There can be various reinforcing and cross-cutting effects which cannot be detailed here. For the moment, it seems safe to assume (a) that most leaders, in reacting to perceived (dis)respect, will not make a big distinction between the first three causal path-ways and (b) that experiences of (dis)respect will have a greater impact the more widely they are shared (by both leaders and domestic groups), the less formalized foreign policy decision-making is, the weaker the domestic political position of leaders is, and the more attached a nation is to collectivist norms and honor codes (see author, forthcoming).

Research by social psychologists clearly shows that the experience of respect promotes cooperative behavior. Both laboratory experiments and surveys of people's experiences at the workplace demonstrate significant effects of respect on pro-social behavior. When people feel respected by fellow group members for their work and ideas, when they think they are accepted as group members, they demonstrate greater compliance with work norms, meet performance expectations to a greater extent, and show greater willingness to engage in extra work on behalf of the group. Moreover, respected employees also identify more strongly with their work group which further promotes their pro-social activities. In fact, taken together with personal pride in the group, respect by fellow group members has a far greater impact on these kinds of pro-social behaviors than the amount of resources a group provides to its members (also Doosje et al., 1999; Mercer, 2008a: 14p., 2008b; Tyler and Blader, 2000, 2001). In line with expectations derived from procedural justice research, in those studies the subjective feeling of respect was strongly influenced by perceptions of fair and polite treatment which people tend to take as an indication of high personal status within their group. Institutionalized voice opportunities were particularly important in this regard

(Tyler and Blader, 2000: 136, 171, 178). As a result, individuals become significantly more interested in the success of their groups (Tyler and Blader, 2000). These survey results have been confirmed by laboratory experiments that simulated problematic social situations. When confronted with a public goods dilemma, students who felt respected by their group showed greater willingness to forego personal gain in favor of collective interests. This effect was particularly pronounced for marginal, as opposed to core, group members (De Cremer, 2002). Findings in social psychology thus clearly demonstrate that respectful actions and procedures promote cooperative attitudes and activities.

However, before the latter findings are used as predictions for international interactions two caveats should be considered. First of all, most of the research on the effects of respect has largely focused on interactions *within* small groups. So far, there are extremely few psychological studies on the impact of respectful behavior *across* group boundaries, let alone on the effects of interactions between different bureaucratic communities or nations. It stands to reason that, in the latter condition, the experience of respect should be a weaker cause for cooperative behavior. Interacting groups often lack a common identity that serves the self-esteem aspirations of the group's members. Thus, respectful behavior on the part of out-group members might be comparatively less valued for its positive identity implications (Smith et al., 2003: 160p., 170). This "discount effect" presumably is even stronger when groups with very different cultural backgrounds interact (Smith et al., 1998: 471p. with further references). In this case, due to contrasting values and standpoints the experience of respect should be less valued for the information it provides for personal (or group) self-assessment (Johnston, 2008a: 9, 156; Turner et al., 1987: chap. 4). Second, it should be taken into account that the concept of respect as it is widely used in social psychology only partially matches the concept of respect as it was defined above. For instance, the survey questions mostly

used by Tyler and his associates primarily focus on others' appreciation of one's group membership and on their respect for one's ideas and work contributions, while seldom directly addressing respect for one's rights, personal importance, and needs.

Still, there are enough good reasons for following the explicit suggestion of social psychologists (Tyler and Blader, 2000: 198) by making use of these insights and findings in an IR context. First of all, there seems to be sufficient overlap between the respect concept developed by social psychologists and the more encompassing one which (based on the philosophical discussion) I propose here for international interactions. In particular, both of them clearly focus on the self-evaluative and normative implications of others' behavior. Second, research on stereotyping between different groups has also shown that mutual agreement on the nature and valuation of respective group features affects the quality of inter-group relations: "[M]utual respect for the consensually shared stereotypes of each group" promotes intergroup harmony, while a "mismatch between our self-stereotypes and the out-group's stereotypes about our group, or a mismatch in the perceived valence of the groups' attributes can lead to intergroup conflict" (Wright and Taylor, 2003: 439). Third, in addition to the recent advances in IET mentioned above, there are also more specific findings which make it plausible that the pro-social effects of respect shown within groups may also be anticipated for interaction between groups. Thus, research on sub-groups sharing a common, if weaker, superordinate identity indicates that respect for those subgroups can significantly affect their members' affective relation with the more encompassing group (Huo and Molina, 2006: 371; see also Smith et al., 2003: 167-170). What is more, once a weak sense of common identity has evolved, members of this new group become even more sensitive to positive signals by the group. Indeed, respect shown by other group members increases one's sense of belonging (Hogg and Abrams, 2003: 417) which, in turn, should make one yet more receptive to the pro-social effects of further instances of

respectful behavior.¹¹ Therefore, it appears rather plausible that respect can also promote transnational identification and thus may help to alleviate not only local but also international collective action problems (Wendt, 1994). Overall, it seems that self-enhancement effects as confirmed by social psychologists should also operate in various cross-border contexts.

There are also more IR-specific considerations which suggest that different forms of respect can help to overcome the classic problems of international cooperation extensively discussed in the discipline. Respect can mitigate the harmful effects of mistrust, of differences over the distributions of gains, of the quest for autarchy, and of disagreements over the assessment of shared problems. In the first place, respect helps to generate and maintain higher levels of trust (Kelman, 2005). This becomes evident once we think of the implications of comprehensive respect. As defined here, adequate respect for another actor includes proper consideration of the latter's importance, needs, merits, and rights (including privileges due to some special status). Having been respected in all these dimensions provides important information on both the type of the current interaction partner and the social relation that one shares with it (Kelman, 2007: 73-78, 2008: 174). Thus, if an interaction partner has respected one's *rights* over an extended period of time this should decrease the likelihood of its *future* defection, as continued compliance with cooperative norms tends to promote their domestic internalization via bureaucratic habitualization or identity transformation (Checkel, 2005; Johnston, 2008a: 49-51; Keohane, 1984: 111-116). Respect that has been shown for another actor's *needs* also tends to diminish the risk of a collapse of cooperation.

¹¹ Mutual respect, thus, is a precondition rather than a consequence of stronger forms of collective identities associated with reciprocal altruism (Wendt, 1999: 357-363). After all, even rivals or opponents may have considerable respect for each other without sharing many norms, values, and beliefs, let alone a common "we-feeling" (for a related argument see (Greenhill, 2008)). Moreover, I may feel perfectly respected by some people without identifying with their group, for instance, if it holds a lower status position. Still, the prosocial effects of respect apparently require a minimum of shared understanding which provides the basis of meaningful interaction. Even though we sometimes care for the attitude of complete strangers, we are far less concerned about attitudes or judgements passed by people we have nothing in common with (Johnston, 2008b: 9, 156p.).

Past awareness of the partner's interests indicates a thorough knowledge of that actor's stakes in the cooperative endeavor. This should lessen the potential for underestimating the partner's reaction to defective moves and thereby reduce the risk for careless unilateral moves (Kelman, 2005: 649).

Confirming another actor's self-attributed *status, importance, faculties, or merits* also signals important information which tends to further trust on the part of the respected actor. Treating an actor in this way indicates that one basically shares her positive self-concept. Apparently, one esteems this actor almost as much as she does herself. This has two consequences for compliance with cooperative norms: First, it signals that cheating this partner would carry a higher price tag in terms of self-esteem. After all, all kinds of actors tend to especially care for the approval of those they like best (Druckman, 1994: 60-62; Turner et al., 1987: chap. 4). Second, an actor that is highly esteemed by oneself may be assumed to enjoy considerable prestige in the eyes of third actors belonging to a common peer group. In this case, a cooperative association with the highly esteemed actor will also enhance one's prestige among those other actors (Brennan and Pettit, 2004: chap. 3). This should further enhance the interest in continued collaboration. Finally, as trust cannot be reduced to a calculation of one's partner's incentives but also must be seen as "an emotional belief" concerning the nature of a social relationship (Mercer, 2005: 95-97, 2010), a history of respectful interaction will further enhance confidence in the partner's commitment to pro-social behavior. When somebody continually treats us the way we deem appropriate, she also signals her firm understanding of and dedication to pertinent social norms (Kelman, 1996). True, depending on circumstances, each of these mechanisms can be rather weak. Taken together, however, they may well have a significant effect on trust in the cooperative intention of one's partner.¹²

¹² A striking example of the beneficial impact of enhanced respect is the sea-change in Indian-American relations that followed President Clinton's engaging visit in 2000 (Cohen, 2001: chap. 9; Dormandy, 2007; Tellis, 2008).

This greater trust can in turn alleviate two other impediments to collaboration: relative gains concerns and the desire for autarchy. The latter is often due to fears that commercial partners could make political use of one's dependence on some good or commodity. Under anarchy, this concern may sometimes induce even cost-conscious actors to forego the economic advantages of the international division of labor (Carr, 1946: 120-124; Mearsheimer, 2001; Waltz, 1979: 106). Greater trust among partners should thus make them more willing to tolerate vulnerability for the sake of efficiency. Basically, the same reasoning also applies to relative gains concerns which also often result from fears that a partner may exploit its powerful position, in this case by transferring its bigger gains from cooperation into greater power resources which he might then use against his erstwhile partners (Grieco, 1990; Mearsheimer, 2001: 52; Waltz, 1979: 105p.). Again, enhanced confidence in the cooperative intentions of the partner would directly tackle the source of this problem.

Mutual respect should also make partners less concerned about the status effects which might result from a particular distribution of benefits. Often, actors do appreciate material rewards not only for the material benefits that come with them, but also as symbols for their rank. In other words, they consider the distribution of material goods as a "test" of their social standing (Honneth, forthcoming; Ross, 2001: 163). If, however, mutual respect includes mutual acceptance of each others' status, cooperative partners can focus on the material gains for their own sake alone, *i.e.*, on absolute gains. Bargaining should thus become easier, as one motive for insisting on a bigger share of the spoils loses importance. In some cases, a pre-existing consensus on relative status may even suggest an implicit formula for the division of resources or other benefits. For instance, the distribution of votes, high level positions, or other kinds of privileges in

international organizations may be facilitated by mutual acceptance of the states' international status.¹³

Finally, mutual respect is also vital for deliberative problem solving in that it facilitates mutual learning and persuasion and thus tends to make cooperative agreements both more attractive and more legitimate (Kelman, 1996: 106p.; Lalljee et al., 2007: 453, 461). This applies above all to situations where a small number of officials or experts debate the nature of a common problem and the best ways to tackle it. In such settings, successful persuasion by the rational force of the better argument can only work when the persuadee is convinced that (a) he had a proper chance to voice all his needs and arguments and that (b) these points were seriously considered by the persuaders. Otherwise, the persuadee can hardly be assured that the persuader's views really are superior to his own. Moreover, mutual respect for importance, standpoints, values, and achievements is crucial for avoiding status conflicts in deliberative debates. While a mutually accepted status difference facilitates persuasive efforts by the higher ranking actor (Chaiken et al., 1996: 726p.) and while mutually agreed status equality promotes mutual understanding (Hogg and Abrams, 2003: 420), domineering behavior and disagreements on relative status easily poison the open exchange of ideas (see Deitelhoff and Müller, 2005: 169-173; Kelman, 1965: 570p.; Risse, 2000: 10p., 17; also Wright and Taylor, 2003: 438p. 447). In fact, usually "inter-group relations are characterized by a struggle over status and prestige" (Hogg and Abrams, 2003: 422) and actual inter-group encounters, especially inter-group bargaining, further accentuate competitiveness (Hogg, 2001: 193). Hence, it requires a high level of mutual respect to cleanse an exchange from such rivalry. Once respect becomes questionable, competitive group identities readily reassert themselves (Kelman, 2007: 78-80). As a result, factual

¹³ Thus, the mutual recognition of military superpower status paved the way to U.S.-Soviet arms control negotiations based on the principle of parity (Garthoff, 1985: 51-67). Yet, Moscow and Washington did not respect each other in many of the other dimensions, such as standpoints, achievements, and merits (Lebow, 2008: 453-457; Ringmar, 2002; Wohlforth, 2009). Hence, mutual trust remained low.

issues and disagreements will also assume a prestige dimension, so that each “side” is tempted to stick to its points “as a matter of principle” in order to defend the group’s rank and image. Moreover, as the debate (again) becomes a competition over status this will further stimulate group salience and thus will also consolidate group identities. Arrogant or condescending treatment, in particular, tends to undermine personal self-confidence, thereby increasing both one’s attachment to the in-group and one’s dependence on the affirmation it can provide. This, in turn, stimulates stereotyping, polarization, and greater trust in the in-group’s views. As a consequence, confidence in the in-group’s value will rise. Yet, this comes at the price of blocking the unbiased appreciation of out-group arguments. Finally, the experience of arrogance or other forms of disrespect may further inhibit learning by provoking sheer anger which will further compromise rational reflection (Geva and Sirin, 2008; Huddy et al., 2007; McDermott, 2004a: 696). For all these reasons, mutual respect is a *sine qua non* for an open exchange of ideas required for jointly identifying the most efficient solution for a common problem. Therefore, it plays a crucial role in the search for more beneficial, more legitimate, and thus also more durable agreements.

These findings and insights can be summed up by the following propositions on the link between past experiences of respect and future cooperation:

Hypotheses on respect and cooperation:

- H1: The stronger the respect between two actors, especially for their rights and individual needs, the less they will worry about their partners’ possible defection.
- H2: The stronger the respect between two actors, especially for their rights and individual needs, the less they will worry about relative gains or about compromising their autarchy through greater dependence.

H3: The stronger the respect between two actors, especially their respect for each other's status, the easier the parties will agree on the distribution of cooperative gains.

H4: The stronger the respect between two actors, especially their respect for each other's achievements, faculties, and importance, the easier they will arrive at a common definition and solution for a problem at hand.

3. Disrespect, resistance, and conflict

Disrespectful behavior causes resistance and thus tends to intensify conflict.

Forceful reactions to contempt or outright humiliation are the most powerful indicators of the social importance of respect. Just as with oxygen, being denied respect suddenly brings to the fore how vital the "stuff" actually is. Thus, the majority of disrespected people and collective actors almost immediately respond with efforts to redress the situation. Depending on the subjective severity of the transgression those reactions range from verbal protest or defection from ongoing cooperation to violent retribution. At least three intertwined mechanisms contribute to these responses: the need to protect one's public image, the desire to maintain self-esteem and self-respect, and the profound emotional effects of disrespect which exacerbate both negative perceptions and risk-taking.

Concern for one's public image obviously stimulates open resistance against acts of disrespect. Open denial of respect may severely harm an actor's reputation as a resolute defender of its interests. Therefore, condoning an open violation of its rights or needs may compromise an actor's capability to deter or compel in some future crisis (Gould, 2003: chap. 2; Offer, 1995). Hence, it seems rational to forcefully react to such provocations (a) the more obvious they are, (b) the wider the audience is, and (c) the more likely it seems that the offended actor will soon get involved in similar crises

where future opponents could draw analogies from current conflict behavior.¹⁴ A second (and often related) motive for public resistance is the interest in protecting one's status. In contrast to the concern for a tough reputation, this motive can also be affected by disrespect for achievements, standpoints, and faculties. Just as with a disregard for one's rights, having these valued features overlooked or ridiculed can weaken an actor's prestige or lower its social rank to "a second class actor." This, in turn, reduces its "soft power" and thus can diminish its chances for influencing all kinds of debates and negotiations (Johnston, 2008b: 83; Nye, 2004).

Additional motives for such resistance which evade rationalist theories stem from actors' *needs to maintain their self-esteem and self-respect*. Individuals and groups also look to the symbolic value of public recognition (Harré, 1979; Horowitz, 2000: chap. 4-5; Lebow, 2008: chap. 2; Ringmar, 1996a: chap. 3). Being denied social confirmation of one's rights, faculties, or merits usually is seen as an undeserved discrimination vis-à-vis those who are recognized in these respects for reasons which could also be applied to oneself. As such, this kind of disrespect can undermine an actor's self-esteem in at least two ways: on one hand, it can amount to a denial of the social value of some specific feature which is of central importance to a group's identity. For instance, playing down some of its historic achievements or denigrating one of its essential cultural values can put the very foundation of the group's self-esteem into question (Honneth, 1996: chap. 5; Taylor, 1992). As long as the group tolerates this affront it cannot be sure of the specific value it has for its social environment. To reassert the latter, the group must resist this stance by engaging in a redefinition of historic memory or standards of evaluation. For instance, it can apply some broader

¹⁴ Due to its importance for debates on rational deterrence, reputation for resolute behavior has already received wide attention in strategic studies and mainstream IR (see Mercer, 1996). The irony of this attention however resides in the fact that the alleged concern for a tough reputation seems to be largely ungrounded. In fact, crisis opponents rarely study their antagonists' records for clues concerning current resoluteness. Apparently, they are too well alert to the many differences between past and present crisis constellations (Mercer, 1996). Still, governments seem prone to succumb to a "cult of reputation" (Tang, 2005) which makes them overinvest in their images as resolute actors. Presumably, the non-instrumental aspects discussed on the following pages play a large role in these rationalizations.

cultural standards in order to convince the wider audience that an underestimated effort or achievement actually meets the superordinate criteria from which more specific criteria are derived. If it prevails in this dispute it has also succeeded in reassuring itself of the value of its defining characteristics. Yet, even during such struggles for recognition the group can already achieve part of its symbolic aims: the mere fact that the group starts an open fight for the recognition of its special features makes a public point concerning the great value it attaches to those features. Thus, in effect, by the very act of fighting the group partly pre-establishes the very public recognition it is still fighting for (Honneth, 1996: chap. 8). In that sense, the group may value the struggle in its own right.

On the other hand, disrespect can also result from a refusal to acknowledge a group's possession of a feature whose value is commonly accepted. For instance, an actor may fail to acknowledge a group's economic prowess or may deny it the rights usually enjoyed by this type of group. In this case, the sufferance of undeserved discrimination is even more obvious. Accordingly, this form of disrespectful behavior arouses an even stronger sense of injustice. It directly attacks an actor's status as an equal, for it denies this actor the recognition that other actors with the same features routinely receive. Practically, this kind of disrespect amounts to the statement:

“Although you may share the criterion in question with *xyz*, I do not give you the same amount of credit, simply because you are not *xyz* but *abc*.” This is a direct attack on an actor's identity and thus can hardly be condoned without profoundly hurting one's self-respect. Once again, fighting for the equal rights that a group claims may come to be seen as an end in itself, for to some extent the mere act of fighting already establishes equality, as it tends to force the transgressor to take that group seriously as an equal opponent.

Severe instances of humiliation can be considered an extreme variant of this type of arbitrary discrimination and thus tend to evoke the strongest reactions (Saurette, 2006: 507). As outlined above, humiliation is an extreme form of denigration in as much as it strips an actor of its status as an autonomous actor with some intrinsic worth of its own. Often, humiliation is meant to reduce actors to mere objects with little or no control over their own fate. It thus challenges not only some specific rights or merits, but also calls into question an actor's dignity, that is, its very quality as a subject of rights or moral qualities. In effect, humiliation often amounts to a statement that somebody is not worthy of having *any* rights or moral qualities. Accordingly, humiliation is the most blatant attack on an actor's self-respect (Fattah and Fierke, 2009; Lindner, 2006; Margalit, 1996). It leaves little choice between putting up a fight and publicly giving up one's claim for actor status.

However, resistance to open acts of disrespect may also be motivated by the fact that a strong reaction can directly reconfirm the victim's self-esteem and self-respect, that is, *regardless of any observers' perceptions, judgements, or reactions*. This becomes clear by looking at the implicit categorization effects of such interactions.¹⁵ By initiating an open act of disrespect a transgressor signals that he considers its victim as the kind of actor "that can be dealt with in this way." Often, this may be hurtful in itself. Still, the insult becomes even more cutting if the victim fails to respond, for if it does not even try to resist it actually confirms the transgressor's judgment that the victim *really is* the kind of actor that can be dealt with in this way (Miller, 2001: 540-542 with further references). Practically, by not responding the victim leaves the definition of its social type to the perpetrator (Ringmar, 1996a: 80-83). It effectively consents to its classification as a member of a lower status group. Even in situations without any significant audience, not responding to such acts entails considerable psychic discomfort, especially in humiliating encounters. Thus, French President Chirac and

¹⁵ On the importance of self-categorization for moral action see (Monroe, 2001).

German Chancellor Schröder felt they had to directly resist the Bush administration's high-handed approach on Iraq, even though they saw little chance to prevent the invasion itself (Forsberg, 2005; Gaffney, 2004; Kelley, 2005; Szabo, 2004). If, however, the victim responds, the mere act itself implies a successful re-categorization. Once more, resistance seems to be worthwhile just because of its expressive quality. This highlights yet again that actors experience disrespect as a reprehensible instance of altercasting that violates aspects of their self-image they hold as non-negotiable. Often, the firm insistence on these traits is due to a hegemonic domestic discourse concerning a nation's international status. Therefore, research on (dis)respect might also provide important insights concerning the relationship between international and domestic sources of national identities – a subject which so far has received little attention in constructivist research (Legro, 2009; Rittberger, 2001; Steele, 2008).

Finally, the *emotional reaction to disrespect* is likely to further intensify the urge for open resistance. The emotional path to a forceful retribution is perhaps the easiest to understand. Everybody has experienced strong emotional reactions after having been subjected to other peoples' contempt. Anger and a painful sense of frustration seem to be the most natural effects of such encounters (Turner and Stets, 2006: 35).¹⁶ In fact, the link between insult and anger is apparently so strong that people routinely take anger as an indication of insult, even when they try to make sense of their own behavior (Miller, 2001: 533; Solomon, 2006: 18). Outright humiliation often has the same effect. In both cases, "getting even" with the offender may become an instant desire (Lieberman, 2006; Lowenheim and Heimann, 2008).¹⁷ Less offensive demonstrations of disrespect tend to

¹⁶ The pain associated with experiences of social rejection even seems to have a firm biological basis in the human brain. At least, MRI studies have demonstrated that social exclusion activates the same brain regions as physical pain (Eisenberger et al., 2003). For related evidence that moral expectations are "hard-wired" in human brains see (Monroe et al., 2009).

¹⁷ Apparently, human individuals (and their closest biological relatives) are emotionally „hard-wired“ for immediate reactions to status-threatening acts (Brosnan and De Waal, 2003; Frank, 1985: chaps. 1-2; Monroe et al., 2009: 621-623; Rosen, 2005: chap. 3; Wright, 1995: chap. 12). There is even some intriguing evidence that our genetic evolution has emotionally predisposed humans for *collective*

provoke less aggressive emotions (Miller, 2001: 536). For instance, denying proper credit to a group's achievements will rarely incite collective rage. Still, if such inadequate consideration is experienced over a prolonged period of time it is most likely to stimulate intense feelings of frustration and of injustice. All three emotions, but in particular anger, are well known to constrain information processing and to promote strong reactions against the disrespectful actor (Miller, 2001: 532-536; Smith et al., 2003: 171; Tyler and Blader, 2000: 112; Van Kleef et al., 2008). Experiments have demonstrated that anger leads to negatively biased perceptions, reduces the demand for information, shortens decision times, and consequently leads to more risk prone and more aggressive behavior (Geva and Sirin, 2008: 7; Geva and Skorick, 2006: 214-222p.; Huddy et al., 2007; Isbell et al., 2006: 65p.; Lerner and Keltner, 2000, 2001; Van Kleef et al., 2008).). The same effects can also be observed in intergroup relations when people categorize themselves as members of an offended group (Mackie et al., 2008; Rydell et al., 2008). While collective actors often may have institutionalized procedures mitigating these effects, by no means can such precautions fully neutralize their escalatory impact. Again, the transatlantic row over Iraq provides many instructive examples (Gaffney, 2004; Szabo, 2004). Moreover, even fully rational decision makers must respond to the emotional agitation of their constituents.

Both the fact that respect is not only sought for instrumental reasons, and the escalatory effects of emotional arousal, imply that in fighting disrespect international actors may go far beyond the escalation levels rationalist scholars would expect. Thus, the experience of disrespect may induce actors to bear much larger costs and risks in response to transgressions than they would be willing to incur for material considerations alone (Lowenheim and Heimann, 2008: 692p.; Offer, 1995; Varshney, 2003). This, in turn, can have three important consequences which cannot be accounted for by rationalist explanations of conflict behavior. First, the experience of disrespect

responses against status usurpers (Boehm, 2001). Thanks to a reviewerxxxx

can lead to more intense reactions to a given transgression. In fact, it may even instigate a reaction where otherwise none would be anticipated (Larson and Shevchenko, 2010: 94). Second, such an experience can cause an actor to persist in its resistance over a surprisingly long period of time. Finally, and related to the first two effects, the experience of disrespect may bring about violent conflicts in cases where a rational calculation of material risks would rule out mutual escalation (Fearon, 1995). In fact, an act of disrespect could even turn a costly war into a positive-sum game if at least one of the combatants comes to the conclusion that resistance to disrespect in itself is valuable regardless of the military outcome. This may go a long way toward explaining the fact that even very weak states rarely react to aggression with immediate surrender. Instead, the great majority of these victims choose to fight against all odds.¹⁸ A closer look at the respect dimension of social interaction could thus considerably enrich our understanding of military conflict. In fact, it might even help explain the origins and duration of wars which otherwise would remain mysterious (Fukuyama, 1992: 145, 255, 259; see also Lebow, 2008: 515-551; Ringmar, 1996a; Welch, 1995).

Whether evident resistance to disrespectful behavior actually succeeds in (re-) establishing respect in the eyes of others is an open question, the answer to which largely depends on the relation between challenge and response. In some cases of hateful humiliation even the most noble and courageous acts of resistance will not make the transgressor respect its victim. In general, however, the victim stands a good chance of success as long as it can tailor the precise quality of its response to the nature of the challenge. As mentioned, disrespect for an actor's importance may often be easily remedied by a mere act of resistance which by itself forces the transgressor to take its victim seriously. However, even in this case, the victim needs to comply with norms of

¹⁸ Reiter and Stam (1998: 380) consider this a strong indication that many governments operate on the assumption "[that] honor in defeat is intrinsically preferable to ignominious surrender". Since most contemporary governments are no longer guided by a specific code of honor, the defense of national dignity may be a more pertinent classification of this motive. After all, by choosing resistance, governments demonstrate that their nation, even though it may confront certain defeat, still is an important actor that cannot be ignored.

reasonableness as understood by the transgressor and the wider audience. An overly aggressive reaction might re-establish the victim as an important actor, yet, at the same time, such an unrestrained application of violence may earn it new disrespect for its immoral conduct. Gaining due recognition for one's rights, rank, standpoints, special achievements, or faculties usually requires even more circumspect reactions. Such acts must not only stay within the bounds of proportionality, they also need to successfully appeal to normative or evaluative standards held by those whose respect is sought. They must also address the audience in a respectful manner! Otherwise, resistance will not bring the audience to re-evaluate the feature(s) that had been denied proper appreciation. To be effective a struggle for respect depends on careful consideration of prevailing social norms and standards of evaluation.¹⁹

A number of hypotheses follow from the mechanisms just described. All of them presuppose that the (individual or collective) victim has come to the conclusions (a) that the behavior in question must be interpreted as an act of disrespect and (b) that the offending actor anticipated this interpretation. The term “disrespectful behavior”, as it is used below, can relate to both disrespectful acts and passive denials of adequate consideration.

Hypotheses on disrespect and conflict:

- H5: Disrespectful behavior will incite or intensify resistance to the transgressor (ranging from verbal protests to a halt to cooperative efforts to violent forms of retribution).
- H6: The wider the relevant audience that witnessed a provocative act, the less likely the victim is to give in before it has achieved effective rehabilitation.

¹⁹ Perhaps this point is best exemplified by the very ritualistic nature of traditional duels (Frevort, 1995; Lowenheim and Heimann, 2008: 700).

- H7: Disrespectful behavior which apparently was consciously tailored to come across as such will incite more forceful reactions than behavior of actors that apparently did not care about the symbolic connotations of their behavior.
- H8: Disrespect for an actor's achievements, standpoints, faculties, or merits will lead to protest reactions which are less forceful and more norm-governed than reactions to disrespect for an actor's overall importance, rights, or status.
- H9: The stronger the symbolic link between the disrespectful behavior and essential elements of the victim's identity or public image, the more forceful and the more disregarding of material costs the reaction will be.
- H10: The more humiliating the act of disrespect (that is the more directly it is targeted against the victim's quality as an autonomously acting moral entity), the more forceful and reckless of both material costs and social norms the reaction will be.

4. Implications for future research

An analysis of all the likely effects of respect in international relations provokes the obvious question: if respect and disrespect affect interactions in so many ways, why have IR scholars neglected them for so many years? First, it hardly needs elaboration that, most of the time, being respected concerning one's rights, status, social importance, values, faculties, and achievements is also useful in material terms. In this way, self-evaluative motives for respect-seeking behavior may simply "hide" behind conspicuous material interests. Hence, in a given case it may be very hard to distinguish between self-evaluative and material incentives.²⁰ Second, the impressive progress of that other social science, economics, induced political scientists to emulate the methods and ontology of their sister discipline (Brennan and Pettit, 2004; Mercer, 2005), and thus to privilege material incentives and expected utility models over identity needs and social meaning. Thus, in case of doubt, rational-materialist explanations took precedence over accounts focused on symbolic interests and social processes. Contemporary scholars therefore readily attribute an escalation of a conflict to an escalation of risks or to an increased interest in the contested material resources, instead of looking for additional incentives rooted in an actor's identity needs.²¹ In this way, many social scientists almost habitually take it for granted that once they have found a plausible explanation based on material incentives there is no further need to look for other motivational factors that might also be involved.

²⁰ For a similar point on the analytical distinction between identity contests and conflicts over "objective" interests see also (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

²¹ It is thus ironic to note that the father of modern economics, Adam Smith, primarily saw material resources as means for symbolic self-enhancement, rather than the other way round. When considering the question why humans struggle so hard for the betterment of their material situation, Smith came to the following conclusion: "To be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency and approbation, are all the advantages we can propose to derive from it. It is the vanity, not the ease, or the pleasure, which interests us. But vanity is always founded on the belief of our being the object of attention and approbation. The rich man glories in his riches, because he feels they naturally draw upon him the attention of the world, and that mankind are disposed to go along with him in all the agreeable emotions with which the advantages of his situation so readily inspire him" ((Smith, 2004 (1759): Section I, iii, 2).

To be sure, the fact that material gains can also enhance an actor's self-esteem should be no reason for treating symbolic needs as the chief motivation throughout. Instead, we have to look for heuristic tools that can help us determine the relative impact of different, yet related kinds of incentives. Fortunately, there are indeed some scenarios where analytical differentiation is possible (Author 2008). For instance, respect motivations are likely to play a role:

- when groups fight costly wars without any reasonable chance of success,
- when retaliation is directed chiefly against targets of symbolic meaning rather than against objects with some strategic value,
- when resisting actors carefully comply with general standards of acceptable behavior instead of consciously targeting the opponent's weakest spot,
- when actors insist on voice opportunities, although they are fully aware that expressing their concerns will not yield additional influence.

Another analytical tool would be detailed investigations of respect effects on foreign policy decisions. For example, it would be worthwhile to study possible covariations between experiences of (dis)respect and the hardening, respectively softening of bargaining positions. As indicated in section 1 of this article, usually, the experience of disrespect is more apparent than the experience of respect. Thus, efforts to ascertain the influence of this variable should probably start with the potential impact of disrespect by investigating the reactions to conspicuous cases of inadequate consideration. If the above mentioned hypotheses on (dis)respect and conflict behavior are valid, we should observe both synchronic and diachronic covariations: within a group of decision makers the more offended officials should be less accommodating to the offending state than

their colleagues, while in the wake of disdainful treatment, state leaderships as a whole should be less accommodating than before.²²

To determine actual causal links between (dis)respect and policy outputs, such within-case comparisons could be complemented with process tracing. Such studies should focus both on the intra-mural justification of decisions and on the process of collective reasoning. Concerning the former, researchers would try to establish the nature of the arguments which silenced the minority position(s). If disrespect was a decisive factor in the process, we would expect that normative claims and rationalizations, such as the categorical insistence on legitimate rights or status claims, carried the day against strategic calculations that concerned the possible material consequences of different options. Moreover, a researcher could look for circumstantial evidence for the influence of anger on the intricate process of decision making. Strong indicators of anger and other types of emotional arousal would be quick and premature conclusions, especially conclusions that were reached without giving much attention to material risks or consequences, missing information or contradictory data. Further symptoms of the effect of anger would be the selective recall of previous upsetting experiences as well as the biased attention to negative aspects of the opponent's current behavior (Geva and Skorick, 2006: 214p., 224; Rosen, 2005: chap. 2). Distinguishing the impact of respect motivations may thus be a demanding task, but also one that is far from hopeless.

In light of the fact that respect has been thoroughly neglected by past IR scholarship, the immediate research agenda calls for studies that would clarify whether (dis)respect is sufficiently important to warrant both wider and more elaborate research efforts. This should be established by plausibility probes focusing on most likely cases where

²² An alternative research strategy might first look for well-known instances of hopeless resistance to stronger powers and would then search for evidence that an earlier experience of disrespect provided a crucial motive for engaging in a costly struggle that is puzzling for rationalist theories. This strategy would also make use of process tracing techniques (specified in the next paragraph), yet would follow the causal chain from the dependent variable to the independent one, rather than vice versa.

researchers have easy access to internal records. Such studies would have to concentrate on bilateral relationships among autonomous powers characterized by (1) an ambivalent pattern of past interactions (rather than by a long history of friendship or rivalry that could largely attenuate the effect of disrespect) and (2) by a dynamic and ambiguous evolution of power and other potential status markers (which would render decision makers more sensitive to conflicting views on relative status). Within such bilateral relationships analysts would need to focus on the decision making of ascending, nationalistic powers with authoritarian systems, since the political elites of such states would probably be more eager for foreign respect than would be the decision makers of established democratic powers (Rosen, 2005: chap. 5). Suitable case studies might therefore include Imperial Germany's policy towards Britain, Japan's pre-war policy towards the United States, and the Soviet Union's policy during the Cold War, as well as China's current relationship with the United States. If such plausibility probes were to prove a substantial impact of respect on foreign policy decision making, later studies should focus on interaction effects, particularly between states but also between states and other international actors, such as international organizations, NGOs, and even terrorist organizations.²³

Finally, neither scholars nor decision makers should ignore the potential costs and disadvantages of respectful behavior. Given the benefits of mutual respect and the risks inherent in acts of disrespect some might regard respectful conduct not only as a moral duty but also as a political panacea. This, however, would be oblivious to the manifold costs respectful behavior can entail. First of all, as we all know from daily experience, duly appreciating other peoples' achievements, perspectives, or importance consumes time which could be used for other purposes. Fully respecting their rights and needs may also cost money or other material resources. Second, giving others our

²³ On the pervasive impact of disrespect and anger on terrorist motivations see (Fierke, 2009; Moïsi, 2009: chap. 3; Richardson, 2006: chap 4.).

thorough attention definitely means that we have less attention available for third parties or other issues. Third, respecting other actors, even when it just means paying attention to them, further opens us to their influence. Thus, respect can result in a transfer of power or control. Fourth and related, showing great respect for someone else can lead to misunderstandings by inadvertently overinflating an actor's positive self-image. Thereby it can blur status differences and hence complicate negotiations or decision making. Fifth, satisfying another state's respect expectations may run counter to the prestige ambitions or enemy images of domestic groups and consequently compromise the executive's domestic standing (Kelman, 2008: 178). While some of these costs may be avoidable and some of them may be tolerated in exchange for the beneficial effects of mutual respect, they may still be significant. This, of course, should be seen as yet another reason for carefully investigating the relative significance of showing more respect across borders.

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