



Not Every Flock has its black sheep: the role of Entitativity and Identification on deviants' derogation

Non tutti i greggi hanno una pecora nera: il ruolo dell'entitatività e dell'identificazione nella derogazione dei devianti

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ABSTRACT

Previous research has suggested that the *black sheep effect* (BSE), i.e., harsher ingroup than outgroup deviants' derogation, mainly occurs in members highly identified with groups or belonging to highly entitative groups. Two studies considered the conjoined effect of identification and entitativity on BSE. In particular, in Study 1 we consider the mediating role of identification on entitativity- BSE relationship and in Study 2 we focused on the importance of the group for the self-esteem as mediator of such relationship. Results showed that the BSE emerges strongly in high entitative groups because in such groups there is a stronger attachment to the groups both in terms of social identification (Study 1) and of importance of such identity for self-esteem (Study 2). We discussed our findings in the light of the Subjective Group Dynamics model and provide suggestions for future studies.

Keywords: black sheep effect; social identity; entitativity; intergroup bias; deviance.

RIASSUNTO

Precedenti ricerche hanno mostrato che il black sheep effect (BSE), i.e. una maggiore derogazione dei devianti appartenenti all'in-group rispetto a chi appartiene ad altri gruppi, emerge particolarmente nei gruppi percepiti molto entitativi e tra gli individui particolarmente identificati con il proprio gruppo. Due studi hanno considerato l'effetto combinato di queste variabili, i.e. entitatività percepita e identificazione sociale, nel predire il BSE. In particolare, nello Studio 1 è stato considerato l'effetto dell'identificazione con un gruppo come mediatore della relazione tra entitatività e derogazione di un deviante appartenente all'in-group piuttosto che a un outgroup mentre nello Studio 2 abbiamo preso in considerazione l'aspetto dell'identificazione relativo all'impatto dell'appartenenza sull'autostima dei membri. I risultati hanno mostrato che la maggiore derogazione dei devianti dell'in-group emersa nei gruppi molto entitativi è spiegata dalla più alta identificazione sociale esperita dai membri di questi gruppi. I risultati del presente studio sono stati interpretati alla luce del Subjective Group Dynamics model e in termini di potenziali sviluppi futuri.

Parole chiave: black sheep effect; identificazione sociale; entitatività; bias intergruppi; devianza.

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RdP

Introduction

Although favoritism of ingroup members is a well-documented effect (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel, Billing, Bundy, & Flament, 1971; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), a number of studies have demonstrated that people sometimes tend to favor outgroup members compared to ingroup members by judging an unfavorable ingroup member more harshly than a similarly unfavorable outgroup member (Branscombe, Wann, Noel, & Coleman, 1993; Marques, Abrams, Peaz, & Hogg 2001; Shin, Freda, & Yi, 1999). A negative member could be an incompetent member (Marques & Yzerbit, 1988; Rullo, Livi, Pantaleo, & Viola, 2017) or someone who behaves unpleasantly (Khan & Lambert, 1998; Marques, Yzerbit, & Leyens, 1988; Rullo, Presaghi, Livi, Mazzucca, & Dessi, 2017), unfairly (Branscombe, et al., 1993; Levine & Moreland, 2002; Rullo, Presaghi, & Livi, 2015), who exhibits behaviors far from the values of the group (Abrams, Marques, Bown, & Henson, 2000). This effect is known as the *black sheep effect* (BSE: Marques, et al., 1988) and has been mainly interpreted as a strategy to favor the group because by derogating a negative ingroup member, people take distance from him protecting the groups' positive social identity: in this sense, BSE is defined a sort of "sophisticated form of ingroup favoritism" (Marques et al., 1988, p. 5).

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests that individuals derive part of their self-esteem from the groups to which they belong (Rubin, & Hewstone, 1998). In this sense, individuals are motivated to see their ingroup members in the most favourable light as possible in order to maintain a positive social identity and bolster their self-esteem. Because the positive identity derives largely from favourable comparisons between the ingroup and relevant outgroups (Oakes & Turner, 1980; Turner, Brown, & Tajfel, 1979) members tend to show both an intergroup bias – in particular a positive ingroup bias – and outgroup derogation (Brewer, 1999). One important feature of the Social Identity Theory is the distinction between the social identity, defined in terms of self-concept depending on the group membership, and personal identity, that is the self-concept based on idiosyncrasies and close relationships (Tajfel, 1982); for this reason, some kind of group and intergroup behaviours, such as normative behaviours, discrimination or ingroup bias, only occur when social identity becomes salient for self-conceptualisation. Thus, not only group membership becomes an important component of members' self-concepts but often the individual's view of themselves may also be based on perceptions of their group (Brewer, 1991; Tajfel, & Turner, 1986; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Positive perceptions of the group may improve members' self-concepts while negative perceptions of the group may have the opposite effect. Following this line of reasoning, ingroup members are motivated to selectively seek positive information about their group in order to maintain and/or enhance their positive self-concept (Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002).

Likewise, people tend to avoid negative or unfavourable messages of themselves and of their group that could undermine their self-concept (Crocker & Major, 1989). In the field of the social identity approach, the Subjective Group Dynamics (SGD) model (Abrams, et al., 2000; Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Martinez-Taboada, 1998; Marques, Abrams, & Serodio, 2001; Abrams, Palmer, Rutland, Cameron, & Van de Vyver, 2014) proposes a dynamic relationship between judgements about groups as a whole and judgements about individuals within a group. The term *subjective group dynamics* refers to the set of cognitive-emotional processes involved in the representation of intra-group uniformity and deviance occurring in the larger inter-group context. The model suggests that evaluation of group members in inter-group situations is linked to the motivation to sustain the value and validity of ingroup norms. Deviance from salient ingroup norms will threaten such subjective validity, thus affecting the positive value ascribed to the ingroup – and that is the reason why deviant ingroup members will be strongly derogated (Marques, et al., 2001; Marques & Páez, 1994). The SGD combine the most important arguments of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg, 2001) and Social Categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Presaghi & Rullo, 2018) that represent the basic assumptions of the subjective group dynamics model.

Categorising themselves as group members means adopting the characteristics that define the ingroup prototype (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Hogg, 1992; Turner, et al., 1987); hence, a positive attitude toward the self is equivalent to a positive attitude toward the ingroup and vice-versa (Abrams & Hogg, 1988). The group prototype embraces the normative characteristics that group members are expected to adopt to maintain ingroup distinctiveness (Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Hogg, Cooper-Shaw, &

Holzworth, 1993). Thus, individual's behaviours conform to the dictates of this prototype and to develop and maintain a positive identity in an intergroup situation people have to be positively ingroup biased. The subjective group dynamics model suggests that groups are firstly motivated to achieve a clear distinctiveness in inter-group context, which is necessary to allow individuals promote a sense of positive social identity.

Once this distinctiveness is established, individuals may need to subjectively validate the standards that underlie their beliefs in a positive social identity (Marques et al., 1998; 2001).

Starting from this assumption, the main questions concerning BSE revolve around those factors that increase the impact of a deviant member on group's identity, such as, if the deviant violate crucial group norms (Mummenday & Schreiber, 1984) or if the deviant is a full member rather than a new comer or a marginal member (Pinto, Marques, Levine, & Abrams, 2010), and the degree of member's motivation to preserve the positive social identity of the group (Castano, Yzerbyt, Paladino, & Sacchi, 2002).

Some researchers have suggested that people who feel greater attachment or are highly identified with the group are likely to be more affected by threats to group values and, consequently, are more motivated to restore the image of the group (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995; Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1995; Branscombe et al., 1993; Castano, Paladino, Coull, & Yzerbyt, 2002; Rullo, et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, the characteristics of the group to which people belong may affect the reactions of the members toward deviants too. A recent study by Lewis and Sherman (2010) suggests that *entitativity* is also able to magnify the BSE by virtue of the fact that high entitative group are more central in self- concept than low entitativity group.

Here following, a brief explanation of entitativity and its relation with the importance of group for member's personal identity (Sherman, Hamilton & Lewis, 1999).

Entitativity and its Relationship with Identification

According to Campbell (1958), *entitativity* is defined as the degree to which a group has the nature of an entity in relation to four different factors: (a) common fate, (b) similarity, (c) salience among members, and (d) the boundaries of the group. In addition to these factors, Lickel, Hamilton, Wierzchowska, Lewis, Sherman, and Uhles (2000) argued that the perception of entitativity is also determined by the degree of interaction among group members, the presence of common goals and outcomes, and the importance of the group to its members (see also Lickel, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2001). According to Lewis and Sherman (2010), these characteristics of perceived entitativity represent a particular property of groups that might encourage or inhibit the manifestation of BSE. In the aforementioned study, participants were told that their objective was to look for differences in writing ability and were then confronted with the embarrassingly poor performance of their ingroup members. Highly entitative groups were fraternities and sororities, while low entitative groups were classroom sections of introductory psychology students. They found that ingroup bias (i.e., the black sheep effect or ingroup favoritism) emerged only when the groups were more entitative and central to the participants' self-images.

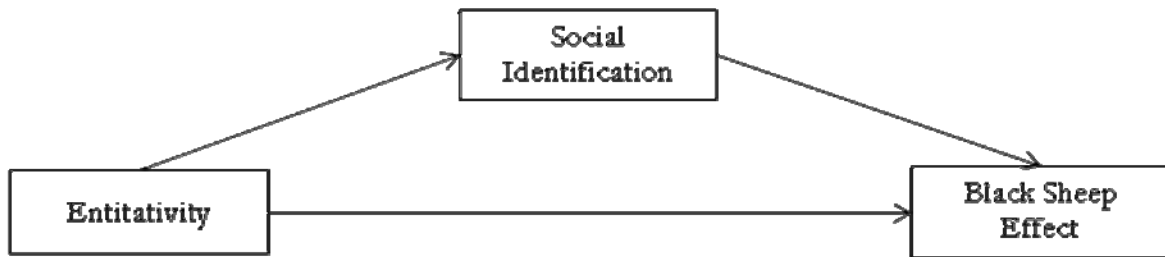
As matter of fact, researchers have found that entitative groups (e.g., intimacy group or task group; for a review, see Lickel et al., 2000) meet members' needs better than simple aggregate or social categories (Johnson, et al., 2006; Crawford & Salaman, 2012) and that people usually identified more in high entitative groups (Castano, Yzerbyt, & Bourguignon, 2003; Lickel et al., 2000). Furthermore, identification has been found to mediate the relationship between entitativity and the perception of needs fulfilment within a group (Crawford & Salaman, 2012).

Since the black sheep effect is a strategy that relies on the motivation to defend social identity, we suggest that this happens especially when the group is entitative because in these groups, members are more identified and more sensitive to social identity threat.

Although past studies have revealed the emergence of the BSE in cases of both high identification (Branscombe et al., 1993; Biernat, Vescio, & Billings, 1999; Castano et al., 2002) and high entitativity, no study has investigated the relation among these variables in predicting black sheep effect.

In two studies we investigate this relation and suggest the role of identification in mediating entitativity-black sheep effect relationship.

Figure 1 –Proposed mediation role of social identification between entitativity and BSE.



Study 1

Study 1 was designed in order to test the following main hypotheses:

- (1) People will derogate in-group deviants more than out-group deviants (BSE).
- (2) High entitative groups would elicit more in-group derogation (than out-group derogation) in virtue of the higher social identification experienced by people in such groups.

Method

Participants and Procedure

For this study, we recruited 169 students (87 males: 51.3%, and 82 females: 48.7%, mean age = 18.3; $SD = 1.24$) who were completing the last two years of senior high school. The study was a 2 (high vs low entitativity) by 2 (ingroup vs outgroup target) mixed method design with entitativity condition as between factor and target as within factor. All participants completed the survey individually in their classrooms and were informed that the survey examined how some students' behaviors were assessed among different groups. Participants were instructed to read a scenario concerning their class (high entitativity condition) or their school (low entitativity condition). In order to verify the entitativity manipulation, we asked participants to evaluate a list of six groups, according to their perceived entitativity level, using a 9-point Likert scale, from 1 (*is not at all a group*) to 9 (*is certainly a group*). The six groups included were: (a) School, (b) group friends, (c) family, (d) citizens, (e) classroom, and (f) music band. In the same questionnaire, participants also reported their level of identification to their school group or to their classroom, according to the condition. Finally, for the entitativity group condition participants were asked to read a scenario about a negative student from their own class/School and from another School/class and then to evaluate him (the order of ingroup-outgroup targets was counterbalanced and no differences were found according to the order of presentation). The scenario described a student who did not share knowledge or raised objections with other students, who refused to help and directed his or her behavior at making a good impression on teachers to detriment of other students. Behaviors described in the scenario were selected after a pre-test of open-ended questions to 40 students in the same school asked which behaviors were perceived as the most disgraceful and depreciable. For the chosen scenarios, the behaviors that were cited most, and thus considered the most deviant and furthest from the students' norms, were individualism, disloyalty, and lack of cooperation. At the end participants were debriefed and asked not to discuss the details of the study with other participants.

Measures

Ingroup Identification. The degree of group identification was obtained by adapting Mael and Ashforth's (1992) 6-item version of an identification scale converted to the scholar context. Examples of items included, "When I talk about my school, I say 'we' rather than 'they.'" Each of the six items was measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The overall

reliability was satisfactory both for school ingroup identification ($\alpha = .86$) and for class ingroup identification ($\alpha = .93$).

Derogation index. Two items were used to assess the target behaviors by asking, “How depreciable is this student?” and “How negatively do you judge this person?” All responses were made on 10-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*completely*). The two items were reversed in order to have negative evaluations (derogation) and combined to form an overall derogation index ($r = .65$, $p < .001$).

Data Analysis

To test the hypothesis that the degree of identification mediates the relationship between entitativity and black sheep effect, we computed a BSE score by subtracting the ingroup deviant derogation from the outgroup deviant derogation and used this score as dependent variable in a mediated regression analysis (PROCESS Model 4, Hayes, 2012).

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations among the main variables.

Table 1 – Descriptive Statistics (Mean, SD) and Pearson Correlations among Identification, Entitativity and Ingroup and Outgroup Derogation

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Entitativity (0 “low”, 1 “high”)	-	-	1			
2. Identification	3.90	1.61	0.280**	1		
3. Ingroup derogation	6.88	2.49	0.186*	0.403**	1	
4. Outgroup derogation	5.90	2.50	0.048	0.211*	0.724**	1

$N = 169$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Manipulation Check.

A t test showed that these two groups were differentiated among all participants, based on their degree of perceived entitativity (for school, $M = 5.37$ $SD = 1.97$ and for classroom, $M = 7.10$, $SD = 1.82$; $\Delta = -1.87$; $t = 69.65$; $p < .001$).

Entitativity and Derogation

A mixed model ANOVA with target as within-factor (ingroup-outgroup) and entitativity as between-factor (high-low entitativity), was conducted to investigate derogation relatively to the entitativity condition. Results indicated that entitativity had no significant main effect ($F(1,165) = .433$, $p = .51$, $\eta^2 = .001$) while the effect of the target ($F(1,165) = 42.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .25$) was significant. However the two-way interaction between target and entitativity condition was significant ($F(1,165) = 3.84$, $p = .052$, $\eta^2 = .09$). As expected the mean comparison had shown that in the high entitativity condition, the derogation of ingroup was higher than the outgroup derogation ($M_{ingroup} = 7.11$, $SD = 1.23$; $M_{outgroup} = 5.95$, $SD = 1.32$) while in the low entitativity condition no differences in derogation was found ($M_{ingroup} = 6.60$, $SD = 1.31$; $M_{outgroup} = 5.95$, $SD = 1.12$).

Entitativity and Identification

A T-test shown that people identified more ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .93$) with high entitative group compare to low entitative group ($M = 3.29$, $SD = .93$) ($t(165) = -2.08$, $p = .04$, $Cohen's d = 0.32$).

Mediation analysis

To test the role of identification in mediating the relation between entitativity and the black sheep effect, we used the differential score obtained by subtracting the ingroup evaluation from the outgroup evaluation as the dependent variable. This measure represents the magnitude of derogation thus the higher the differential score, the greater the derogation. We used the PROCESS macro to test a mediation model (Model 4: Hayes, 2012), where entitativity predicted BSE via the increased social identification.

As predicted, entitativity positively predicted social identification, $b = .93$, $SE = .23$, 95% CI [.46, .14] $p < .001$, and social identification positively predicted BSE, $b = .23$, $SE = .09$, 95% CI [.05, .41], $p = .009$; the indirect effect was significant, $b = .22$, $SE = .10$, 95% CI [.05, .46], $p = .03$. The direct effect of entitativity on BSE was only marginally significant $b = .49$, $SE = .28$, 95% CI [-.07, 1.07], $p = .08$.

In sum, the results were consistent with our predictions. In highly entitative groups participants downgraded the ingroup deviant more than the outgroup deviant in virtue of their higher degree of identification with group. In the second study, our aim was to investigate the mediation role of identification by focusing more on those aspects of social identity related to the importance of the groups to member's identity. In addition, we tried to overcome a limitation regarding the sample population in Study 1. In fact, in the first study one group was nested in the other (classroom and school) and varied in terms of hierarchy; for this reason we investigated a distinct sample of subjects and tried to replicate the results by focus our investigation on ingroup deviants.

Study 2

The aim of Study 2 hence was to replicate and extend Study 1 by examining the relationship between group's entitativity and the importance of group for member's identity in predicting ingroup derogation. Thus, the main hypothesis is that members of highly entitative groups will derogate the ingroup deviant because they considered high entitative groups more important for their self-esteem.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 80 graduate students in psychology at University of Rome "Sapienza" (39 males: 28.7%, mean age = 19.9; $SD = 3.03$). The study was a single factor design with 2 conditions (low vs high entitativity) and considered only ingroup derogation. As in the first study, a measure of perceived entitativity was obtained asking participants to evaluate a list of six groups according to their entitativity level. The only differences from the first study, was the replacement of "school" and "classroom" groups into "citizen" and "classmates." The scenario described a student or a citizen (according to entitativity condition) who harshly criticized government financial support to students and to universities. The target was enrolled in the same psychology class as the respondent or was an Italian citizen. To increase the reality of the scenario, students read the target's deviant opinion on a simulated Facebook post.

After the scenario they were asked about their agreement with the opinion as a manipulation check. Students who reported agreement with the deviant position were excluded from the analysis ($N = 23$).

Measures

Importance to identity: We used 2 out of the four items taken by the Collective self-esteem subscale from Luhtanen & Crocker (1992) that refers to the importance of the group for personal identity. The scale was adapted to the groups according to the entitativity conditions. The two items were "Overall, my group memberships have very little to do with how I feel about myself" and "The group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am." The subscale revealed a good reliability ($r = .77$).

Derogation Index. Five items from Hutchinson and Abrams (2008) were used to assess the target (e.g., “This student is likeable”). All responses were made on 9-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*). The items were reversed in order to have a negative evaluation index (derogation) and combined to form a single derogation score ($r = .46, p < .001$).

Results and Discussion

Table 2 – Descriptive Statistics (Mean, SD) and Pearson Correlations among Entitativity, CSE subscale and Ingroup and Derogation

	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Entitativity (0 “low”, 1 “high”)	-	-	1		
2. CSE subscale	4.48	1.30	0.569**	1	
3. Ingroup derogation	7.01	1.30	0.013	0.216*	1

$N = 80$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Manipulation Check

As in the first study and as expected from the manipulation, results showed that the two groups used for manipulation were perceived differently according to level of entitativity ($M_{class} = 6.16$, $SD = 1.61$, $M_{nation} = 4.81$, $SD = 1.90$; $t(80) = 5.69$; $p < .001$, Cohens’d = 0.62).

Entitativity and Derogation

A T-test shown that people derogation is not significantly different for the two conditions ($M_{highentitativity} = 7.05$, $SD = 1.18$ and $M_{lowentitativity} = 6.95$, $SD = 1.41$)($t(78) = -.38$, $p = .21$, Cohens’d = 0.08)

Entitativity and the importance of the group for self-esteem

A T-test showed that people considered the high entitative group as more important for their self-esteem ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.48$) compared to low entitative group $M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.03$)($t(78) = -1.60$, $p = .05$, Cohens’d = 0.38).

Mediation analysis

Even though the t-test showed that entitativity did not impact directly on derogation, in line with our reasoning and with results emerged in study 1 we tested its indirect effect through the same mediation analysis (PROCESS macro, Model 4: Hayes, 2012), considering the importance of the group for self-esteem (CSE subscale) as mediator between entitativity and the derogation. We used entitativity as predictor of derogation of ingroup deviant and the increased importance of the group for self-esteem as a mediator. As predicted, entitativity positively predicted CSE subscale, $b = 2.06$, $SE = .33$, 95% CI [1.39, 2.73] $p < .001$, and CSE subscale positively predicted ingroup derogation, $b = .41$, $SE = .20$, 95% CI [.00, .82], $p = .05$; the indirect effect was significant, $b = .84$, $SE = .41$, 95% CI [.04, 1.80], $z = 1.87$, $p = .06$. However, the direct effect of entitativity on ingroup derogation $b = -.66$, $SE = .74$, 95% CI [-.21, .82], $p = .35$ was not significant.

The results of Study 2 confirm that evaluations of the negative ingroup target differed as a function of a group’s entitativity and degrees of the importance of groups on people self-esteem, a crucial aspect of identification within groups. In support of Study 1, results of Study 2 confirm that the relation between a group’s entitativity and identification as a predictor of ingroup derogation depends most of all on the importance that the group holds for the identity of its member. This result supports

the hypothesis that group members can derogate an ingroup deviant to protect the overall image of their group and, consequently, their self-esteem.

Conclusion

Lewis and Sherman (2010) found that extreme evaluations of ingroup members (positive and negative) emerged only when the groups were more entitative. On the other hand, previous research (Branscombe et al., 1993; Rullo et al., 2017; Begue, 2001) has demonstrated that ingroup derogation is a strategy used only by members that are highly identified. Our results support and extend such findings by showing that perceived entitativity interacts with social identity in increasing the intensity of the black sheep effect. More specifically, social identification processes mediate the effect of entitativity on harsh ingroup deviant's derogation.

As already discussed, ingroup derogation takes place in the presence of a deviant member who threatens the image of the group (Marques et al., 1998; Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Martinez-Taboada, 1998). However, this threat becomes more salient when members belong to groups for which the impact of deviance on social identity and self-esteem is particularly relevant, like in highly entitative groups. In this sense, derogating a deviant ingroup member or over-appreciating positive ingroup member is a useful strategy to restore the positive perception that members have of their own group, in terms of both entitativity and coherence (Sherman, et al., 1999; Castano et al., 2001; Koscic, Mannetti & Livi, 2014), and to maintain a positive image of the group. This motivational drive is obviously stronger in people who derive most of their self-esteem from group membership and can therefore adopt more sophisticated and complex forms of ingroup favoritism—like the black sheep effect. In contrast, when group values are under threat, less identified members defend their self-esteem by distancing themselves from the group and by modifying the corresponding representation accordingly (Biernat et al., 1999; De Cremer & Vanbeselaere, 1999; Marques & Paez, 1994; Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988).

Coull and colleagues (1999) have shown that identified members invest more cognitive resources than less identified members to exclude the deviant and reclassify him as atypical. This is a normative behavior endorsed to favor the ingroup while ingroup derogation or “outgroup favoritism” is not. Hence, the black sheep effect has a price that increases according to the importance people give to the group and to the features of the group.

The results that emerged from our studies seem to support this point of view. Participants considered the “low-entitativity” ingroup members less important for their identity compared to the “high-entitativity” group. This leads people from low entitative groups to simply care less about deviants than those in the high-entitativity condition. Nonetheless, excluding a deviant member may represent a possible breach in the wall of the group that can lead to a reconsideration of internal dynamics between members. Hence, when the member is actually rejected, the group has to face also the evaluations of external observers in addition to its own evaluation; these observers can less favorably judge a group that acted treacherously against one of its members (Van Leeuwen, Van Den Bosch, Castano, & Hopman, 2009).

In conclusion, other than what has been already reported by the many empirical studies previously discussed, there is still much to discover about the BSE topic. The present studies analyzed the antecedents of the black sheep effects at group and individual levels.

However, the presented studies have some important limitations. For instance, following previous literature, our studies observed only ingroup derogation without providing an empirical evidence of positive ingroup bias. We used negative behavior scenarios to manipulate deviant ingroup members but a measure of positive ingroup bias would be useful so to verify the combined effect of identification and entitativity on ingroup bias in general. Future research should consider this limitation and try to extend our results also in relation to positive deviance, i.e. a behaviour that violates group norms in positive terms. This latter investigation could help disentangle the role of self- threats in eliciting ingroup derogation. Recent findings suggest that people tend to derogate ingroup positive members who threaten the group's reputation by showing an outstanding moral behaviour (Rullo, Monaco, Livi & Presaghi, 2018). More generally, findings on morally motivated deviance (Monin, Sawyer, & Marquez, 2008) suggested that at an interpersonal level, people tend to derogate who shows

an outstanding moral behaviour in virtue of the threat to self-identity. Another related limitation of the present studies is that we did not control for the personal self-esteem of the participants. By considering self-esteem in future research, it will be possible to disentangle the role of threat at a group's identity level from the role of threat at an individual level. Finally, taken together the present studies contribute to the literature on the black sheep effect by clarifying the interaction between group level variables such as group's entitativity and individual variables such as member's social identification showing that the impact of the first on derogation is explained by its power to increase people attachment to their groups.

Author Contributions

MR and SL equally contributed to the studies design. SL conducted the statistical analyses and MR wrote the first draft of the manuscript; SL completed the manuscript; MR and SL contributed to the paper revision and approved the final version.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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Ethical approval

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed Consent

Each participant dealt with the process of informed consent.

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