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Abstract

In 3 studies we tested whether concern for personal reputation varies as a function of the entitativity of the community or group to which individuals belong. The first correlational study ($N = 135$) showed that perceived group entitativity was positively correlated with concern for personal reputation expressed by its members. The second 2x2 factorial design experiment ($N = 104$) supported our hypothesis that, regardless of the kind of group, the level of manipulated entitativity enhances individuals' concern for reputation. Finally, the third 2x2 factorial design experiment ($N = 98$) indicated that this link is fully mediated by the fear of social exclusion. Therefore, as expected, results showed that individuals care more about their reputation when they are members of groups perceived as relatively high in entitativity (groups in which they are also concerned about being excluded from social exchange). This research contributes to defining conditions influencing reputation management processes.

Keywords: entitativity, concern for reputation, intragroup processes, fear of social exclusion

Antecedents of Concern for Personal Reputation: The Role of Group Entitativity and Fear of Social Exclusion

“A good name is like precious ointment:

it filleth all round about, and will not easily away”

(Francis Bacon)

Francis Bacon’s aphorism illustrates perfectly how personal reputation is a core aspect of social life: A person living alone does not have, by definition, a reputation. In social groups and communities people interact, form impressions of each other, and compare, exchange and modify these impressions with other members of the community in order to build reliable representations of each other. Reputation is defined as a combination of information, beliefs, evaluations and attitudes that a community shares about one of its members (Bromley, 1993; Craik, 2007; Emler, 1990).

Individuals in groups and communities are motivated to gather and share accurate information about each other, as this facilitates behavioural expectancies, and thus coordination. As a strong intragroup regulation tool, reputation orients people in generating behavioural expectancies about other individuals before interaction, allowing them to avoid potential damaging partners and choose the potential cooperative ones (Baumeister, Zhang, & Vohs, 2004; Dunbar, 2004). This is why reputation is a resource in social life from both the societal and the individual point of view.

Researchers until now have primarily examined the correlates and consequences of a good (vs. bad) reputation within a group – in terms, for instance, of accessibility of resources or opportunities as well as in terms of reciprocal social influence (e.g., Gordon, 1989; Reinstein & Riener, 2012; Semman, Kranbeck, & Milinski, 2005). However, little attention has been devoted, to the best of our knowledge, to understanding whether some features of their social groups, categories and communities may have an impact on individuals’ attention to their reputation, thus making them more (or less) concerned about it. Based on recent insights showing that individuals’ concern for reputation may be less stable than one might imagine (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005; see also

Anderson & Shirako, 2008), in the present paper we investigate whether people's concern for reputation may be influenced by the perception of the group as an entity, including relatively permanent members, strongly interconnected to each other within clear boundaries. In other words, we aim to answer the following questions: does individuals' concern for reputation depend on their perception of group entitativity (Campbell, 1958)? And if so, why?

Reputation and Intragroup Regulation

Individual reputation is built and evolves through communicative exchange and the spread of personal information within social networks. A single target's feature or behaviour, as well as a single impression one observer forms on the basis of that behaviour, does not per se coincide with the target's reputation. A community is required in which the observers communicate their impressions, compare them with those of other observers, and contribute to building a shared representation of that target (Bromley, 1993; Emler, 1990). However, the nature of information flow concerning that person is at least in part the outcome of his/her strategic management of the boundary between hidden and public behaviours; in fact, individuals have opportunities to improve their reputation by controlling how they act when observed by others and which behaviours to leave "backstage", thus managing their impression in the eyes of (relevant) others (Goffman, 1959). This is why, for example, people contribute more to public good and engage more in helping behaviour when they are identifiable than in conditions of anonymity; that is, when their reputation is at stake (*inter alia* Reinstein & Riener, 2012; Van Vugt & Hardy, 2010).

Whether or not a person enjoys a valued reputation within a group is relevant at both individual and societal levels. From the individual's point of view, having a good reputation (vs. a bad one) makes access to social interactions and resources more likely (e.g., more customers as a professional, more job opportunities, more chance of finding a flat to rent, greater probability of being accepted into appealing groups), and grants to the individual a stronger social status and more influence over other people (Engelmann, Over, Hermann, & Tomasello, 2013; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003; Granovetter, 1985; Milinski, Semmann, & Krambeck, 2002; Stiff & Van Vugt, 2008).

From a social exchange perspective (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1951; Thibault & Kelley, 1959), because cooperative behaviours are costly to the individuals, they need to discriminate between potential partners who are likely to reciprocate cooperation and those who are likely to cheat. Reputation is a useful cue to formulate such an expectation. A good reputation is further related to respect and inclusion within a group (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005; see also, Pagliaro, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2011), and can thus contribute to satisfying the fundamental need to belong that characterizes human beings (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Thus, individuals know that engaging in positive reputation building is a worthwhile effort (Krasnow, Cosmides, Pedersen, & Tooby, 2012).

From a societal point of view, the reputational system is a powerful tool of social control (Emler, 1990; Fehr & Gächter, 2002; Granovetter, 1985). The reputational consequences of human behaviour amplify the benefits of prosocial acts and the costs of antisocial ones. The individual advantage of gaining a positive personal reputation discourages people from cheating and deceiving. And concern for reputation incentivizes behaving cooperatively and prosocially, even when instant individual interest conflicts with group interest (Milinski, Semmann, & Krambeck, 2002; Semmann, Krambeck, & Milinski, 2005; Van Vugt & Hardy, 2010).

Are People Always Concerned about Reputation? The Possible Role of Group Entitativity

Starting from James (1890), social researchers have shown that achieving a positive social image is a universalistic worry (Ybarra, Park, Stanik, & Lee, 2012). Individuals strive to make a good impression (e.g., Goffman, 1959), to be considered as good group members (e.g., Ellemers, Pagliaro, & Barreto, 2013; Ellemers, Pagliaro, Barreto, & Leach, 2008; Pagliaro et al., 2011), and to be respected and central within groups (e.g., De Cremer, 2002; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Sleebos, Ellemers, & De Gilder, 2006; Tyler & Blader, 2000). No research has yet explored whether individuals feel different degrees of concern for reputation in relation to some features of their social groups, categories and communities. Indeed, individuals belong to many groups and communities at the same time, and in each of them processes of reputation assessment and

ascription take place relying on specific values and norms. As a consequence, the same individual may enjoy very different reputations as a function of the social context (Bagheri, Zafarani, & Barouni-Ebrahimi, 2009). For example, a woman may be known as a very competent, reliable, and warm person by her colleagues in her work organization, and as a nuisance in her condominium. The difference may be due, at least in part, to the fact that she cares more about having a good reputation in her workplace than in her condominium, so she tries harder to be seen as a good colleague rather than as a good neighbour.

In a set of studies, De Cremer and Tyler (2005) included a scale for measuring concern for reputation in a large battery of tests. Relevant to the present purpose, they found that individuals' concern for reputation is not stable; rather, it varies. However, they did not investigate what the source of this variation was, because concern for reputation was only used as a moderator variable in that research. Another study (Anderson & Shirako, 2008) suggested that concern for reputation might vary as a function of group members' social connectedness, showing that the relation between reputation and behaviour was stronger for individuals who received more social attention and were more well known in the community than for less well-known individuals.

Thus, if reputation is built through communicative exchange among members of the same community, it is reasonable to expect that personal reputation will be particularly important for an individual inserted in social networks that include relatively permanent members, strongly interconnected to each other within clear boundaries of membership. This kind of community makes likely the reciprocal knowledge and visibility of behaviours, inducing the need to manage personal reputation. This means that for concern for reputation to activate, it is not enough to be included in a social aggregate, but it is necessary to be a member of a real group or community.

In fact, it is well known that not all social aggregates are perceived as real groups or communities: To be recognized as a real social group or community, a social aggregate must be perceived to some extent as a coherent entity. Social aggregates including interconnected members directed toward a shared destiny within clear boundaries have been defined as entitative. Hamilton

and Sherman (1996) borrowed and adapted the term “entitativity” from Campbell (1958) in order to indicate that the “groupness” of social aggregates may largely vary and has an impact on several psychosocial phenomena.

Indeed, entitativity may be conceived as a continuum (Hamilton, Sherman, & Maddox, 1999) separating very low entitative social aggregates (e.g., the customers within a shop in a given moment) from very high ones (e.g., the members of an exclusive club). One source of variation concerns group properties such as degree of interaction, common goals, common outcomes and group member similarity, but also group size, its duration, and its permeability (Lickel et al., 2000). Group entitativity has been considered in previous literature as a key variable underlying the perception of groups. First, it affects the cognitive representation of the groups (e.g., expectations of group unity induce dispositional judgments; Hamilton & Sherman, 1996). Second, entitative groups are perceived as possessing more capacity for collective action (Abelson, Dasgupta, Park, & Banaji, 1998). Third, entitativity leads to stereotype development about the group itself (Hamilton, Sherman, Crump, & Spencer-Rodgers, 2009).

Furthermore, entitativity also has important consequences in terms of needs that group membership fulfils. Past research has shown that high entitativity elicits high identification among group members (Castano, Yzerbyt, Paladino, & Sacchi 2002), and identification leads to greater perception of needs fulfilment, so that the degree of entitativity is related to the extent that groups are able to meet the needs of their members (Crawford & Salaman, 2012). Finally, group entitativity plays a role in intergroup behaviour: Perception of entitativity enhances intergroup discrimination (Moscatelli & Rubini, 2011).

Taken together, previous findings undoubtedly showed that high (vs. low) entitative groups play an important role in group members’ social identity. Interestingly for our purposes, a recent study (Lewis & Sherman, 2010) highlighted the finding that the black-sheep effect – that is, the extreme derogation of a negative in-group member (Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988) – is more pronounced in high (vs. low) entitative groups. Lewis and Sherman (2010) showed, in fact, that in

high (vs. low) entitative groups deviants are perceived as more threatening because of the great potential impact on other members' self-concept or social identity. In the same vein, research on collective responsibility suggests that personal reputation has important implications for the whole group's reputation, because external people tend to blame highly entitative groups to which a wrongdoer belongs to for his or her negative acts (Lickel, Schmader, & Hamilton, 2003).

Based on these findings, it seems clear that people are able to detect the risk of social exclusion from their own group or the risk of being labelled as black sheep if they act negatively. Moreover, the interconnectedness, cohesion and collaboration required to reach collective goals in an entitative group should make individual behaviour relatively visible and likely to become a piece of information worth exchanging. This means that highly entitative groups may be considered – and perceived – as highly-demanding in terms of conformity to the group norms and the duty to construct and maintain a positive personal reputation. As a consequence, they may even foster a stronger concern for reputation among group members. In sum, because high entitativity characterizes meaningful social units and distinguishes them from mere contingent social aggregates, individuals should feel particularly concerned about their reputation when they are members of groups of the former rather than of the latter type.

The Present Research

In the present research we tested whether and why concern for personal reputation varies among the different social groups or communities people belong to. In particular, we tested whether it varies as a function of the entitativity they attribute to the different groups they belong to. We anticipated that individuals are more concerned for their reputation as members of communities or groups they perceive as characterized by a high level of entitativity (vs. low entitativity).

We tested our general hypothesis in three studies. In the first correlational study we investigated the relationship between perceived group entitativity and concern for personal reputation relying on two communities selected from a pilot study. We picked out sport groups and

classmates community because they were cited by some participants as examples of groups inducing high concern for reputation and by others as examples of groups inducing low concern.

In Study 2 we went beyond the correlational nature of the relation between entitativity and concern for reputation by manipulating group entitativity. We chose two communities cited by participants in the pilot study exclusively as examples of high or low reputational groups (respectively, a group of close friends and residents of a condominium¹), in order to show that, beyond the general difference in perceived entitativity between these two social categories, when people are induced to think about one of them in terms of high (vs. low) entitativity, the concern for reputation as members of that group rises. Finally, in Study 3 we examined the underlying mechanism of the effect of group entitativity on concern for reputation, by looking at the mediational role of the fear of social exclusion.

Pilot study

For the purposes of the following studies we needed to find out which groups arouse more or less concern for reputation. Thus, a pilot study was carried out in order to select such groups.

Procedure. A brief questionnaire was given to 61 undergraduate students (44 women) from a medium-size Italian university before a class lecture (*mean age* = 23.77 years; *SD* = 1.69). An introduction to the questionnaire reminded them that, beyond family, everyone belongs to different groups or communities (some examples were provided: students, groups of close friends, parish communities, condominiums, sport groups, committees, etc.). We invited participants to write down the first two communities or groups to which they belong and for which they were the most concerned for their reputation. In the same way, participants had to write down the two communities or groups to which they belong but for which they were the least concerned for their reputation. In addition, for each of the communities cited, participants rated entitativity on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *a lot*) by means of three items (“degree of cohesiveness”, “sharing of goals” and “strength of the boundaries”; all Spearman-Brown corrected α s > .73).

Results and discussion

Ten different groups or communities were cited as the two most important regarding concern for personal reputation. The most cited were: group of friends ($n = 57$), classmates ($n = 39$), sport group ($n = 5$) and parish community ($n = 5$). None of the participants failed to indicate the two communities that were important for their reputation.

Nineteen different groups or communities were referred to as the least important social frame of reference for personal reputation. The most cited were: condominium ($n = 37$), sport group ($n = 24$), parish community ($n = 17$) and classmates ($n = 5$). Four participants did not indicate any low reputational community, and 10 of them indicated just one such community.

An index of entitativity was calculated for the high reputational communities and for the low reputational communities. A paired-sample t-test revealed that participants rated the high reputational communities as more entitative ($M = 4.93$; $SD = 0.74$) than the low reputational communities ($M = 3.47$; $SD = 1.21$), $t(56) = 7.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .52$.

Inspecting the four most cited groups, we found that two of them were evoked exclusively as high or low reputational communities (i.e., group of friends and condominium), whereas the other two (i.e., sport group and classmates) were cited in both categories. As far as the first two are concerned, their perceived entitativity was extremely different: Close friends were evaluated as a far more entitative group ($M = 4.84$; $SD = 0.20$) than the condominium ($M = 2.68$; $SD = 1.14$), $t(33) = 7.97$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .66$. As regards sport group and classmates community, even though the latter was evoked mainly among the most important ones and the former mainly among the least important, we compared their perceived entitativity when participants cited them as high vs. low reputational communities. Table 1 shows that the same group tended to be evaluated as more entitative when cited as a high reputational community than when it was taken as an example of a community inducing low concern for reputation.

Study 1

In order to test the hypothesis that concern for personal reputation varies as a function of the perceived entitativity of the various social groups individuals belong to, we first performed a

correlational study involving two groups identified in the pilot study as communities in which members can be either highly or not highly concerned for personal reputation (i.e., sport group and classmates group).

We expected to find that, irrespective of the kind of group, participants would express concern for their personal reputation as a positive function of the perceived group entitativity. Although, to the best of our knowledge, there is no evidence of gender differences in concern for reputation, because sport teams might take on different meanings for men and women (e.g. Klomsten, Marsh, & Skaalvik, 2005) we also controlled for gender as a potential moderator.

Method

Participants. One hundred and thirty-five Italian university students voluntarily filled out a questionnaire distributed before a lecture. They included 75 women and 48 men (12 did not answer the sex question), whose mean age was 20.75 years ($SD = 3.98$).

Procedure and measures. The study was presented as an investigation of concerns and goals young people have in their social lives. Data for the present study were gathered along with data for other research purposes. Two versions of the questionnaire were prepared: One in reference to sport groups ($n = 63$; 27 women) and another in reference to classmates ($n = 72$; 48 women). The two versions were randomly distributed, but if a student declared that he/she did not belong to a sport group, he/she received the “student” version.

Participants were invited to think about the assigned group and to answer the Italian version of the concern for reputation scale (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005). This scale consists of seven items: “I am rarely concerned about my reputation”, “I do not consider what others say about me,” “I wish to have a good reputation,” “If my reputation is not good, I feel very bad,” “I find it important that others consider my reputation as a serious matter,” “I try hard to work on my reputation (in my relationships with others)” and “I find it difficult if others paint an incorrect image of me.” According to conditions, we added the reference to the assigned group (e.g., “In my sport group, I wish to have a good reputation”). Participants expressed their degree of agreement on a five-point

scale, ranging from 1 (= *absolutely disagree*) to 5 (= *absolutely agree*). As one out of the seven items (i.e., “I find it important that others consider my reputation as a serious matter”) was detrimental for the internal reliability of the scale ($\alpha = .62$), we excluded it when averaging the remaining six items to form a “reputational concern” score ($\alpha = .78$). The higher the score the stronger one’s reputational concern.

After the concern for reputation scale, participants filled in the same three items used in the pilot study to measure the assigned group entitativity plus the Gaertner and Schopler’s (1998) group entitativity measure – a graphical item consisting of six diagrams comprising five circles which moved increasingly closer to one another as the diagrams progressed from the first (*lowest interconnection*) to the sixth (*highest interconnection*). Participants were instructed to choose the one that best represented their perception of the assigned group. An overall entitativity index was calculated from the average of the standardized answers to the four items ($\alpha = .73$). The higher the score, the higher the perceived group entitativity.

Results

A one-way ANOVA revealed that the sport groups were perceived by our participants as more entitative ($M = 0.32$; $SD = 0.77$) than the classmates group ($M = -0.28$; $SD = .59$), $F(1, 133) = 26.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$.²

The overall correlation between perceived entitativity and concern for reputation was significant ($r = .34$, $p < .001$). We then controlled for the potential moderators of this correlation—specifically, type of group considered and participants’ gender. To this end, we tested model 3 of PROCESS, the SPSS macro provided by Hayes (2012). The model includes two moderators (groups and gender), and the second- and third-order interactions.

The analysis revealed that the kind of group per se did not influence concern for reputation, nor did it significantly interact with perceived entitativity. In other words, independently from the assigned group, the more people perceived the group they were thinking about as highly entitative, the more they expressed concern for their reputation. As regards the effect of gender, this did not

influence concern for reputation, either in a two- or three-way interaction with perceived entitativity.

A marginally significant two-way interaction effect emerged involving gender and groups, $b = -.54$, $SE = .31$, $t = -1.72$, $p = .09$: Men were more concerned about their reputation in the sport groups ($M = 3.52$, $SD = .54$) than in the classmates community ($M = 2.95$, $SD = .86$), $F(1, 46) = 7.87$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$, whereas women did not express different concern as a function of the reference group, $F(1,73) = .06$, $p = .80$.³

Discussion

Findings of Study 1 supported the hypothesis that concern for reputation is associated with the perception that the referring community is characterized by a high level of entitativity (i.e., cohesiveness, common goals, clear boundaries, and interconnectedness). But the correlational nature of the data prevents us from stating that the perception of entitativity of the group to which the individuals belong induces them to care more about their reputation. From an empirical point of view, the opposite direction of the relationship would be plausible too: that is, one's care for reputation induces one's perception of community entitativity. Thus, in Study 2 we experimentally tested the relation between entitativity and concern for reputation.

Study 2

Relying on our general rationale and on the findings from Study 1, we anticipated that high (vs. low) entitativity would elicit more concern for reputation. In order to have strong evidence of this directional relationship, we chose the groups cited in the pilot study exclusively as examples of communities in which members are highly or lowly concerned for personal reputation (i.e., respectively group of close friends and residents of a condominium).

Method

Participants. One hundred and four Italian university students (76 women and 28 men; $mean\ age = 24.57$; $SD = 5.46$) were approached in different faculties of a medium-size Italian university and voluntarily filled out a questionnaire administered via a personal computer.

Procedure and measures. As in Study 1, the questionnaire was presented as an investigation of concerns and goals young people have in their social lives. We departed from Study 1 by creating a 2 (*group*: close friends vs. condominium) x 2 (*entitativity*: high vs. low) between-participants experimental design. As a consequence of this design, participants were presented with a series of questions related either to their close friends group or to their condominium (only if participants declared that they lived in a condominium). We manipulated the (high vs. low) entitativity of the group by adapting the procedure of Castano, Yzerbyt, and Bourguignon (2003). In the *high entitativity* condition, participants were told that there are features that, more than any other, unite people together (e.g., goals, interests, past experience, and so on). Then they were asked to think carefully about their group (close friends vs. inhabitants of their condominium), and to write down at least five features that its members have in common with each other, in terms of sharing, experience, goals and interests. In the *low entitativity* condition, participants were instead told that there are features that, more than any other, make people different from each other (e.g., goals, interests, past experience, and so on). Then they were asked to think carefully about their group (close friends vs. inhabitants of their condominium), and to write down at least five ways in which its members differ from one another, in terms of sharing, experience, goals and interests. Two participants did not type the requested features of the group, thereby not completing our manipulation; therefore, they were deleted from the subsequent analyses (retained sample: $n = 102$). This manipulation was subsequently checked by measuring the *perceived entitativity of the group*, as assessed in Study 1 ($\alpha = .84$).

Participants then completed the Italian version of the concern for reputation scale used in Study 1 (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005; $\alpha = .84$), so that the higher the score, the stronger one's reputational concern.

Results

Preliminary analyses and manipulation check.

The overall correlation between perceived entitativity and concern for reputation was significant ($r = .44, p < .001$). Moreover, in order to check the effectiveness of our manipulation, we performed a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with manipulated entitativity as a between-participants factor, and perceived entitativity as a dependent variable. This analysis revealed that participants in high entitativity conditions perceived their group as more entitative ($M = 0.21; SD = 0.81$) than participants in low entitativity ($M = -.11; SD = -.72$) conditions, as expected, $F(1, 101) = 4.56, p = .035, \eta_p^2 = .04$.⁴

Concern for reputation

To check our hypothesis, we performed a 2 (*group*: close friends vs. condominium) x 2 (*entitativity*: high vs. low) between-participants ANOVA on the concern for reputation index. The analysis yielded the predicted main effect of manipulated entitativity, $F(1, 98) = 8.24, p = .005, \eta_p^2 = .08$. In line with the prediction, when high entitativity was made salient participants showed higher concern for reputation ($M = 3.32; SD = 0.72$) than when low entitativity was made salient ($M = 2.81; SD = 0.86$).⁵ Moreover, a significant main effect of the group emerged, indicating that close friends fostered higher concern for reputation ($M = 3.49; SD = 0.59$) than inhabitants of a condominium ($M = 2.45; SD = 0.74$), $F(1, 98) = 57.18, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .37$.⁶ Importantly, in line with the prediction, the two-way interaction was not reliable, $F(1, 98) = 0.002, p = .97$. The lack of spillover effect strongly supported the hypothesis that entitativity per se determines an increase in the concern for reputation, regardless of the kind of group people are considering.

Discussion

The findings of Study 2 are supportive of our line of reasoning. Participants in our experiment expressed concern for their reputation as a function of the induced entitativity of the proposed reference group. Even in a group generally considered as not very demanding in terms of personal reputation (i.e., residents of a condominium), the concern emerged when participants were led to think about the commonalities of its members. These results confirm and expand Study 1 as

they showed a causal direction: In line with our expectation, perceived group entitativity raises members' concern for their personal reputation.

Our findings from Studies 1 and 2 supported the hypothesis that being a member of an entitative group entails a relatively high concern for personal reputation. We believe that this is due to the fact that entitative groups (in respect to those less entitative) are more demanding toward their members, thus the risk of failure in satisfying others' expectations and being excluded from social exchanges is at stake. Indeed, human beings tend to avoid potentially poor social exchange partners (Kurzban & Leary, 2001). However, data from Studies 1 and 2 did not provide empirical evidence for such an interpretation. This is why in Study 3 we considered the fear of social exclusion as a potential mediator between perceived group entitativity and concern for reputation.

Study 3

Fear of social exclusion is a well-known motivational force within groups (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Indeed, it is a so strong a motivation that it leads individuals to strive for belongingness in social groups throughout the lifespan (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Conversely, being excluded from one's own group is threatening not only for personal or instrumental concerns involved in the mechanism of reciprocity, but also for more abstract sense seeking and social identity reasons (Ellemers et al., 2013). In fact, whereas being included and respected within the ingroup helps individuals to understand who they are, where they want to belong, how to behave, and how to interpret others' behaviour, ostracism is so damaging for individuals that ostracized people usually report strong, negative physical as well as psychological consequences (Williams, 2009). For example, neuroimaging studies have highlighted how social exclusion activates the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex (dACC), a structure involved in physical pain (Eisenberg, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003). This is why people are motivated, for instance, to adhere to the moral ingroup norm in order to acquire centrality and respect within the group, even when this comes at the expense of personal gain (e.g., Pagliaro et al., 2011). Put differently, the fear of social exclusion may play a fundamental role in the process of reputation building.

Moreover, among entitative groups this fear of social exclusion could play an even more important role in determining group members' feelings, thoughts and behaviour. In fact, the need to belong and be central in a group should be particularly salient in those groups characterized by strong ties, clear and shared goals, and a strong degree of cohesiveness: that is, the entitative groups.

Thus, it is reasonable to advance that the manipulation of entitativity in terms of intragroup communalities and differences we adopted in Study 2 might also have elicited fear of exclusion which, in turn, might have an impact on concern for reputation. In other words, we hypothesized that entitative groups entail concern for personal reputation because their members feel afraid of being marginalized within their own groups and thus excluded from the resources available through social exchanges.

Method

Participants. Ninety-eight Italian university students (71 women and 27 men; *mean age*: 22.91, *SD* = 2.57) were approached in different faculties of a medium-size Italian university and voluntarily filled out a paper and pencil questionnaire.

Procedure and measures. The procedure was similar to that of Study 2, with some relevant exceptions. As in previous studies, the questionnaire was presented as an investigation about concerns and goals young people have in their social lives. We departed from Study 2 by creating a single factor design, in which participants were asked to think about their close friends as the ingroup, described as high vs. low entitative according to the experimental manipulation. As a consequence of this design, participants were presented with a series of questions related to their group of close friends. As in Study 2, we manipulated the (high vs. low) entitativity of the group using Castano et al.'s (2003) procedure, as described above. This manipulation was subsequently checked by measuring the *perceived entitativity of the group*, assessed by the three items used in pilot study and Studies 1 and 2 ($\alpha = .64$).

Participants then completed a series of five items aiming at assessing their *fear of social exclusion* (“I am afraid that my friends can exclude me”; “If my friends do not consider me one of them, I'd be sorry”; “The idea of not being fully included in my group of friends scares me”; “With my friends, I'm glad when they make me feel part of the group”; “I am afraid that my friends will not involve me in their activities;” answer scale from 1= *not at all* to 5 = *very much*; $\alpha = .76$). Finally, they completed the Italian version of the concern for reputation scale as in Studies 1 and 2 (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005), so that the higher the score, the stronger one's reputational concern.

Results

Preliminary analyses and manipulation check

In order to rule out the possibility that fear of exclusion and concern for reputation are slightly different aspects of the same underlying construct, we adopted a two-step modelling approach (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Kline, 2005). First, we submitted the items of the two scales to a confirmatory factorial analysis, including the two latent constructs and the 12 observed variables. The first test of this model revealed an unacceptable fit to the data: $\chi^2 (53, N = 98) = 112.94$; $p < .001$; RMSEA = .11; CFI = .87; RMR = .10. Through the inspection of the item standardized regression weights and the modification indexes, a second model was tested in which the first and the last items were removed from the concern for reputation scale, and the errors of two fear for social exclusion items were allowed to covary.⁷ We obtained in this way an acceptable fit to the data: $\chi^2 (33, N = 98) = 44.46$; $p = .09$; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .97; RMR = .07. All the factor loadings for the indicators on the latent variables were significant at $p < .001$.

Thus, in the present study, the concern for reputation index was computed as the mean of the 5 item scores ($\alpha = .82$).

In order to check the effectiveness of our manipulation, we performed a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with manipulated entitativity as a between-participants factor, and perceived entitativity as a dependent variable. This analysis revealed that participants in high entitativity

conditions perceived their group as more entitative ($M = 3.27$; $SD = 0.65$) than participants in low entitativity ($M = 2.89$; $SD = 0.81$) conditions, as expected, $F(1, 96) = 6.29$, $p = .014$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$.⁸

Fear of Social Exclusion

To check our hypothesis, we performed a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with manipulated entitativity as a between-participants factor and fear of social exclusion as the dependent variable. In line with the prediction, when high entitativity was made salient participants showed higher fear of being excluded by the ingroup ($M = 3.83$; $SD = 0.91$) than when low entitativity was made salient ($M = 3.43$; $SD = 0.96$), $F(1, 96) = 4.59$, $p = .035$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$.⁹

Concern for Reputation

A similar one-way ANOVA was performed on concern for reputation as the dependent variable. Again, making salient the high vs. low entitativity of the ingroup had a significant effect, with participants showing higher concern for reputation when the ingroup was described as high entitative ($M = 3.88$; $SD = 0.71$) than low entitative ($M = 3.54$; $SD = 0.79$), $F(1, 96) = 5.04$, $p = .027$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$.¹⁰

Mediation analysis

To test whether the effects of the manipulated entitativity on participants' concern for reputation are mediated by the fear of social exclusion, we used PROCESS, the SPSS macro developed by Hayes (2012). As depicted in Figure 1, manipulated entitativity reliably predicted both the fear of social exclusion and concern for reputation. Moreover, the fear of social exclusion was a reliable predictor of the concern for reputation. Finally, when controlling for the fear of social exclusion (the proposed mediator), the effect of the manipulated entitativity was no longer reliable (Sobel test: $z = 2.13$, $p = .03$). A bootstrap test with 5,000 resamplings confirmed that the indirect effect through the fear of social exclusion was significant (LL = 0.0079; UL = 0.2018).

Discussion

The findings of Study 3 confirmed that a group's perceived entitativity enhances individuals' concern for reputation in that group. Moreover, and more importantly, we found

evidence that the effect of our manipulation of entitativity on concern for reputation was fully mediated by the degree to which participants feel scared of being excluded by the ingroup.

General Discussion

The main aim of this paper was to investigate whether individuals' concern for reputation depends on the entitativity of the group or community to which they belong. The first study showed that, in reference to sport group and classmates group (both of them seen by some of the participants in our pilot study as being in the high reputational category and by others as being in the low reputational category), a positive correlation between perceived entitativity and concern for reputation emerged. In Study 2, we went beyond correlational evidence: We selected one group cited in the pilot study exclusively as a highly reputational group and one group cited exclusively as a lowly reputational group, and we directly manipulated group entitativity. The manipulation had an impact on participants' concern for reputation as members of that group regardless of the group considered. Finally, in Study 3 we were able to confirm that members of entitative groups are afraid to be excluded and that this is why they are worried by their reputation.

In sum, these three studies, adopting different approaches, converge in showing that even if concern for reputation is a core aspect of our whole social life, the commitment we feel in reaching and maintaining a good reputation varies, not only as a function of individual interests, but also as a function of social context features. These results are informative because even though much is known about individuals' motivation to manage the impressions they make on other people, the concern for reputation is a slightly different task. Indeed, whereas impression formation is an individual process occurring in contingent and specific situations, reputation is a long-term social product built on others' repeated impressions, shared and developed through conversations. Thus both impression management and concern for reputation imply caring for one's social image, but the latter entails a long-term strategy. Therefore, the study of reputation-gaining strategies

contributes to deepening understanding of the long-term perspectives orienting individuals' behaviors in their social worlds.

Entitativity is a critical group feature because in high (vs. low) entitative groups, members are closely linked with each other, within well-marked boundaries defining this membership, and they interact in order to reach shared goals. In these conditions, individuals are quite visible to each other, as are their behaviours and their contributions to common objectives. Thus, information about members is easily available and mutual expectations are needed in order to optimize cooperative interactions. Furthermore, the likelihood of cooperative interactions within a group has also implications for inter-group relations, because individuals prefer to join cooperative groups for purposes of between-group competition and exploitation (Kurzban & Leary, 2001).

The current research also contributes to knowledge about the implications of group entitativity. Thus far, many of the studies considering entitativity have been particularly centred on information processing about in-groups and out-groups and on intergroup behaviour (for a review, see Yzerbyt, Judd, & Corneille, 2004). Our studies provided evidence that group entitativity also affects a further important personal motivation for members—namely, their concern for reputation.

Despite this converging evidence, at least some limitations of the present set of studies need to be acknowledged. First, the observed constructs share a common method of measurement, thus the intervention of a possible confounding influence on our results due to common method variance could not be excluded (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). A worthwhile direction for future studies would be to consider multi-method approaches for studying the relationships we have identified, in order also to gain more information about the robustness of our results.

Second, we did not take into consideration the nature of the situation or context in which the group or community is embedded. In the present study, we examined concern for reputation in social entities in an abstract and unspecified general context. It would be plausible for the same entitative sport team to activate different degrees of individual concern for reputation if it is in a winning or losing position in respect to other teams. Thus, future research in this line should take

into consideration some contextual features that further qualify group life and the intergroup situation as well. Further research should investigate, for instance, whether other group properties, such as group size or its social status (minority vs. majority), beyond its entitativity, may have an impact on concern for personal reputation. It would also be interesting to investigate whether specific personality traits, conceptually related to concern for reputation (e.g., self-monitoring or self-esteem), promote the expression of concern for personal reputation in entitative groups.

Future studies should clarify in depth whether the different components of entitativity – e.g., shared goals, shared destiny, similarity, cooperativeness – play distinct roles on the process highlighted in the present paper. Indeed, we used a general manipulation of entitativity, that entails different aspects of the construct (goals, interests, past experience, and so on). Thus, it would be worthwhile, in future studies, to disentangle the role of these different aspects of entitativity on concern for reputation.

It would also be worth examining whether and how social identification plays a role in the highlighted process. Indeed, Castano and colleagues (2003) showed that perceived entitativity may promote social identification. The level of identification with one's group could also enhance one's concern for reputation, with high identifiers being more sensitive to other group members' evaluations – thus, more concerned about personal reputation – than low identifiers. Again, this effect could be driven by the fear of social exclusion and/or by the need to maintain positive self-esteem. Social identification could also interact with perceived entitativity in affecting concern for reputation in the cases where they are not correlated. Furthermore, Anderson and Shirako (2008) have shown that past behaviour affects reputation especially for well-known members receiving more social attention in the group than other members; thus, the position of the individual in the group could be a moderator of the association between entitativity and concern for reputation. Additional research is needed to investigate these intriguing issues.

Notwithstanding the limitations, these results help us to understand reputation management processes. Though we know that reputation has important consequences and functions for both

individuals and society, to the best of our knowledge, specific empirical evidence about the factors affecting people's concern for reputation was still lacking. The studies presented contribute to this inquiry, showing that individuals' care for their reputation varies as a function of perceived group entitativity.

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Footnote

¹ By condominium we mean an apartment building in which each apartment is individually owned and the common areas are jointly owned.

² Both mean values differed significantly from zero, respectively $t(61) = 3.28, p = .002$ and $t(71) = 4.05, p < .001$.

³ These results might be difficult to interpret due to a partial self-selection into conditions, as participants not belonging to sport groups were placed in the “students” conditions.

⁴ The perceived entitativity was marginally significantly different from zero in the high entitativity condition, $t(47) = 1.81, p = .076$, but this difference was not significant in the low entitativity condition, $t(53) = 1.13, p = .261$.

⁵ Both mean values were significantly lower than the scale midpoint, $t(47) = 6.54, p < .001$ and $t(53) = 10.05, p < .001$, respectively.

⁶ Both mean values were significantly lower than the scale midpoint, $t(58) = 6.57, p < .001$ and $t(42) = 13.64, p < .001$ respectively.

⁷ Excluding the same two items from the concern for reputation index in Study 1 and 2 did not change significantly the pattern of results. Indeed, the overall correlation between perceived group entitativity and concern for reputation (five items) was $.31, p < .001$ in Study 1, and $.49, p < .001$ in Study 2.

⁸ A one-sample t-test showed that, in both conditions, the average values of perceived entitativity were significantly lower than the scale midpoint, $t(46) = 7.74, p < .001$ for high manipulated entitativity and $t(50) = 9.71, p < .001$ for low entitativity.

⁹ Whereas the mean value was not significantly different from the scale midpoint in the high entitativity condition, $t(46) = 1.25, p = .22$, in the low entitativity condition the mean value was significantly lower than the scale midpoint, $t(50) = 4.24, p < .001$.

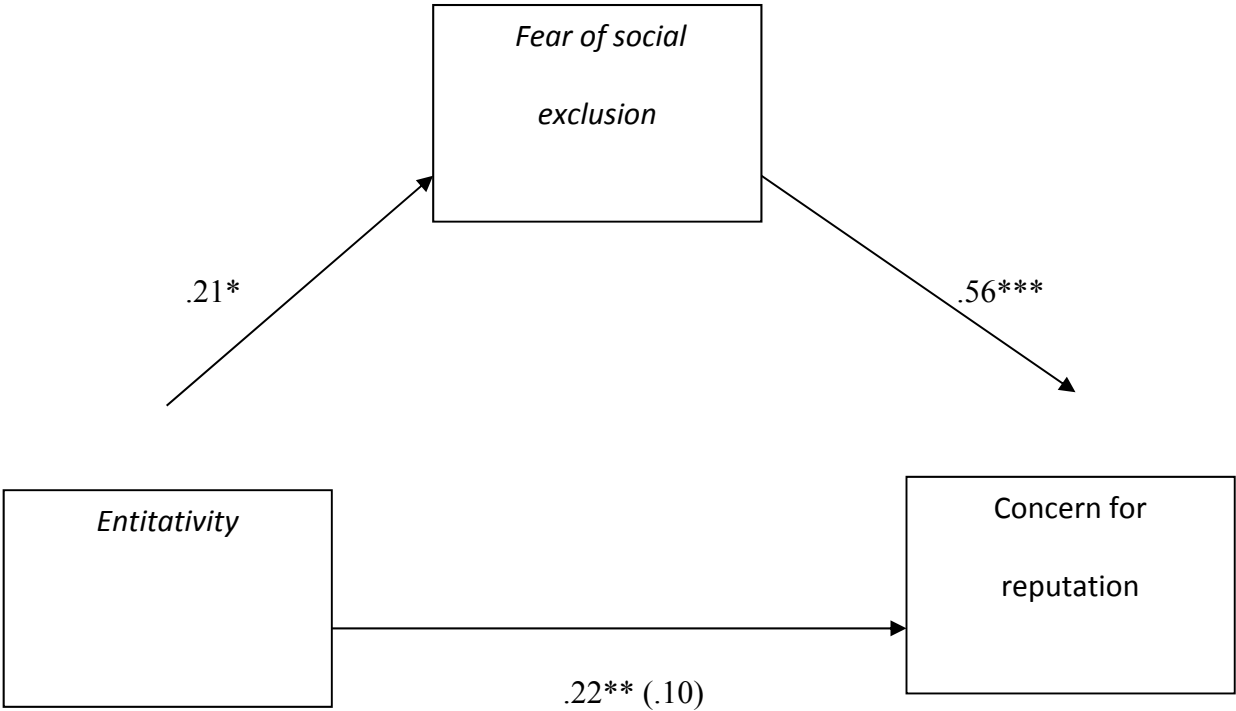
¹⁰ The mean value was not significantly different from the midpoint in the high entitativity condition, $t(46) = 1.14, p = .26$, but it was significantly lower than the scale midpoint in the low entitativity condition, $t(50) = 4.16, p < .001$.

Table 1.

Mean (and standard deviation) perceived entitativity of sport group and classmates community as a function of their categorization among low or high reputational groups (Pilot study).

	Low reputational group	High reputational group	Independent sample t- test
Sport groups	4.44 (1.32, $n = 24$)	5.19 (0.79, $n = 7$)	$t(29) = 1.41$ $p = .17$
Classmates community	3.60 (0.49, $n = 5$)	4.67 (0.98, $n = 39$)	$t(42) = 2.38$ $p = .02$

Figure 1. Study 3, Mediation model.



Note: $*p < .05$; $**p < .01$; $***p < .001$