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# Deviance, Self-Typicality, and Group Cohesion

## The Corrosive Effects of the Bad Apples on the Barrel

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This study investigated the effect of a single work group deviant on other group members' perceptions of the deviant, and their perceptions of the cohesiveness of the group as a whole. Group members, particularly those high in perceived self-typicality, were expected to downgrade the deviant, and view groups containing a deviant as less cohesive. Undergraduate management students were placed in a simulated organizational context in which deviance was manipulated so that the participant's work group contained either a single negative deviant or no deviant. Results showed that the deviant colleague was judged less favorably than the normative colleague, particularly by those high in perceived self-typicality. Groups that contained a deviant were perceived as having lower levels of task cohesion, but ratings of social cohesion varied depending on perceivers' self-typicality. The findings suggest that as well as attracting negative evaluations, deviant group members can adversely affect group cohesion.

**Keywords:** *workplace deviance; self-typicality; task cohesion; social cohesion*

Research on deviant behavior in work settings has grown substantially in recent years (for recent reviews, see Bennett & Robinson, 2003; Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002). Organizational behavior scholars have shown considerable interest in the negative implications of employee deviance for bottom-line outcomes such as productivity and organizational

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performance (Bensimon, 1994; Buss, 1993; Camara & Schneider, 1994; Wells, 1999). Results typically indicate that deviance has a negative impact on group performance. Few studies, however, have examined the mechanisms by which deviance has this effect. This may be due, at least in part, to an apparent simple association between many deviant behaviors (e.g., theft, sabotage, tardiness) and reduced effectiveness. These same behaviors, however, may also negatively influence social and psychological aspects of the work environment. This research is concerned with how deviant individuals can affect group life and influence the work experiences of all group members. Social psychological literature on group deviance provides a conceptual framework for understanding the way in which deviants can influence the group as a whole. This work has shown that the presence of a deviant group member can influence the way other group members perceive group stereotypes and group cohesion (Kunda & Oleson, 1997; Scheepers, Branscombe, Spears, & Doosje, 2002). In work settings, a less favorable image of the group could negatively affect individual satisfaction and performance, therefore contributing to a reduction in organizational effectiveness.

This study presents a new focus in research on the operation of workplace deviance in groups. Although there has been some recent interest in how work groups influence the deviant behavior of employees (see Bommer, Miles, & Grover, 2003; George, 1990; George & James, 1993; Glomb & Liao, 2003; Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998), few studies have examined how the actions of deviants can also change the group context. Deviant individuals are particularly influential group members because their behavior stands out against a background of ongoing normative behavior (Blanton & Christie, 2003; Fiske, 1980). The atypical behaviors displayed by deviants are therefore likely to be noticed and recalled when group members make judgments about the group as a whole. This research highlights a new challenge for managing deviance in organizations. Although the direct impact of deviant employees on individual and group outcomes is important, it is also important to consider the indirect impact of deviant individuals on other nondeviant employees who work in the same environment. This study tested the assumption that the presence of a single deviant in a group will reduce perceptions of group cohesion. Cohesiveness is important because it has been shown to be positively linked to group effectiveness (Dion & Evans, 1992; Evans & Dion, 1991; Gully, Devine, & Whitney, 1995; Mullen & Cooper, 1994) and may form a critical mediating factor in the link between deviance and overall group or organizational effectiveness. We therefore examined in a controlled environment the relationship between the presence of a single deviant and perceptions of group cohesion.

## Workplace Deviance

Deviance refers to employee behaviors that diverge from work norms in a manner that has negative implications for other individuals or the organization (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). These behaviors may vary in seriousness, ranging from acts such as petty theft, tardiness, and gossip to sabotage and physical assault. Deviance is thus defined in relation to a normative standard for what is considered typical or expected behavior within a particular group (see Warren, 2003). Norms reflect a consensual understanding of the core or prototypical features of a group. They describe patterns of behavior that are regular, stable, and expected by members (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1991; Hackman, 1992). As such, behavior that departs from these norms will be seen as deviant by group members. In the present research, we operationalized deviance as negative work behaviors that violate norms that are formally or informally sanctioned by the work group (Abrams, Marques, Bown, & Dougill, 2002; Blanton & Christie, 2003; Warren, 2003).

## Perceptions of Deviant Group Members

Social psychological research on deviance has shown that people respond unfavorably to group members who breach normative sanctions (Biernat, Vescio, & Billings, 1999; Branscombe, Wann, & Noel, 1993; Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988). For example, deviants are disliked (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988), viewed as less capable (Abrams, Henson, Marques, & Bown, 2000), and are less likely to be selected as group leaders (Scheepers et al., 2002). Marques and colleagues (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques et al., 1988) have referred to the tendency to reject deviant group members as the black sheep effect. According to this perspective, deviant individuals threaten the group's identity and the veracity of group norms because they fail to embody the group prototype. To protect the group's image, group members psychologically fence the deviant off from the rest of the group.

Few studies have investigated how individuals respond to deviant employees in the workplace (exceptions include Abrams et al., 2002; Bown & Abrams, 2003). Abrams et al. (2002, Study 1) presented members of a UK banking organization with a profile of either a normative colleague or a colleague who engaged in positive or negative deviant behaviors. The positive deviant, for example, showed extremely high levels of commitment to the organization and volunteered for extra work, whereas the negative deviant demonstrated low commitment and refused to work overtime. The normative colleague was portrayed as showing conventional levels of commitment and extra-role work behavior. Employees were asked to evaluate the target col-

league on a range of dimensions that included their perceived similarity to the target, the target's personal attractiveness based on individual characteristics (e.g., pleasantness, sociability) and the social attractiveness of the target (i.e., their attractiveness as a prototypical group member). The results showed that compared with the normative target, the deviant targets were viewed as being less similar to the perceiver and were also judged to be less personally and socially attractive. The negative deviant was derogated more strongly than the positive deviant, which supports the notion that negative deviants are rejected because they threaten the favorability of the group's image (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988). Bown and Abrams (2003) extended these findings by showing that group members judged a negative deviant as less favorable on work-related attributes even when the deviant was portrayed as having likable personal characteristics.

These studies, as well as other research on the black sheep effect (Kunda & Oleson, 1995; Johnston & Hewstone, 1992; Weber & Crocker, 1983), show that compared to normative group members, deviant individuals are downgraded in terms of their personal and social attraction. The present research extended this work by investigating the extent to which deviant individuals influenced other group members' perceptions of the cohesiveness of the group as a whole.

### Deviance and Perceptions of Group Cohesion

The term *group cohesion* has been used to describe the overall attraction or bond amongst members of a group (Carron, Windmeyer, & Brawley, 1985; Mullen & Cooper, 1994; Zaccaro, 1991). Researchers have tended to view group cohesion as a multidimensional construct with two underlying components: (a) social cohesion, which describes the attraction amongst group members based on social relations within the group; and (b) task cohesion, viewed as attraction that is based on a shared commitment to achieving group goals (Bettenhausen, 1991; Carless, 2000; Carless & DePaola, 2000; Cota, Longman, Evans, Dion, & Kilik, 1995; Zaccaro, 1991). According to the social attraction model of group cohesion (Hogg, 1992), groups are more cohesive to the extent that members are perceived to embody the core or prototypical features of the group. In support of this perspective, research has shown that prototypical group members are perceived as more attractive (Hogg & Hardie, 1991; Hogg, Hardie, & Reynolds, 1995) and more competent (Scheepers et al., 2002) than atypical group members.

We anticipated that because deviant behaviors are perceptually salient aspects of the work environment (Blanton & Christie, 2003; Fiske, 1980; Pratto & John, 1991), these behaviors will reduce the extent to which people

in the work group are perceived to be conforming to a common prototype. Based on the social attraction model of cohesion (Hogg, 1992), we expected that the presence of a deviant group member would reduce perceptions of the cohesiveness of the group as a whole. Research demonstrates that people's perceptions are strongly influenced by negative and extreme information as this information is highly salient (i.e., prominent in a perceptual sense; Anderson, 1974; Fiske, 1980; Hamilton & Huffman, 1971; Warr & Jackson, 1975). For example, Fiske (1980) found that perceivers spent more time looking at a negative extreme image (i.e., a person deliberately rejecting an anti-child pornography campaign) and weighted this image as more influential than less negative and extreme images. Similarly, Pratto and John (1991) showed that attention is automatically directed toward negatively evaluated stimuli (e.g., undesirable descriptive traits such as sadistic, immature, and hostile) to a greater extent than positively valenced traits (e.g., honest, kind, witty).

Hence, when individuals form opinions about the cohesiveness of their group, their perceptions of group deviants are likely to be particularly influential because deviant behaviors stand out as salient features of the work group context. Indeed, this deviant behavior may even exert a stronger influence on their judgments than normative group behaviors. Because non-prototypical individuals are viewed as less socially attractive, less competent, and not conforming to the norm, the presence of a deviant should negatively influence group members' perceptions of the social and task cohesiveness of the work group as a whole.

There is some empirical support for the notion that the presence of a deviant group member can lead to changes in group-related judgments including, for example, group stereotypes (Hewstone, Johnston, & Aird, 1992; Kunda & Oleson, 1997) and perceptions of group cohesion (Scheepers et al., 2002). Scheepers et al. (2002) exposed members of high and low status groups to a target group member who either challenged or confirmed the legitimacy of these status differentials. The target group members were considered deviant when they challenged the legitimacy of the high status group or supported the legitimacy of the low status group. Although group cohesion was not a primary outcome of interest in this study, Scheepers et al. found that the presence of a deviant was negatively related to the cohesion of the group, particularly for low status groups.

Building on this previous work, we also expected that the impact of deviants on perceptions of cohesion would be more marked for group members who, prior to the introduction of the deviant, perceived themselves as being highly typical of the group. Self-typicality, defined as the perceived similarity between the self and the group (e.g., Hogg & Hains, 1996; Kashima,

Kashima, & Hardie, 2000) has been shown to influence the extent to which people are motivated to protect their group from threats to group identity (Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997). Jetten et al. (1997) found that when individuals were led to believe that they were highly typical of the group, they showed more in-group favoritism and endorsed group stereotypes more when those stereotypes were threatened. Because deviant group members threaten the group's image (see Castano, Paladino, Coull, & Yzerbyt, 2002), individuals who consider themselves more typical of the group should protect the group by viewing the deviant as less prototypical—and therefore as a less competent and attractive group member—than individuals lower in perceived self-typicality. Furthermore, harsher evaluations of the deviant should transfer to the group as a whole, such that highly self-typical group members are likely to view the group as less cohesive than group members with lower levels of perceived self-typicality.

### **The Present Study**

We conducted an experiment to examine the impact of work group deviance and self-typicality on group members' reactions to the deviant and their perceptions of group cohesion. The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, undergraduate students were placed in a simulated work group context using an organizational vignette. The vignette provided general background information about the organization, and more specific information about the work group, including the group's main tasks and the demographic and personal attributes of group members. We measured participants' perceived self-typicality at the conclusion of the first phase of the study. Deviance was manipulated in the second phase of the study 1 week later. Participants were exposed to either a negative group deviant (i.e., a group member portrayed as exhibiting high levels of deviant behavior) or a control condition in which there was no group deviant. Following the deviance manipulation, participants completed a questionnaire measuring perceptions of the deviant colleague and group cohesion.

We expected that the deviant would invoke negative reactions from group members in terms of both the perceived favorability of the deviant individual and the perceived cohesiveness of the group as a whole. Thus, we hypothesized that

H1: The deviant work group colleague will be evaluated less favorably than the nondeviant colleague.

H2: The presence of the deviant will result in a decrease in perceptions of group task and social cohesion, in comparison to the no-deviance condition.

However, on the basis of our assumptions concerning the moderating impact of perceived self-typicality, we expected that

H3: These effects will be more pronounced for participants high in perceived self-typicality than for those low in perceived self-typicality.

## Method

### Participants and Design

Participants for the study were 115 undergraduate management students (49 males and 62 females). Four participants failed to indicate their gender. The average age of participants was 20.5 years, and most were employed in full- or part-time positions (15% full-time, 64% part-time). A quasi-experimental design was used in which participants were randomly assigned to one of the two deviance conditions (no-deviant, deviant), whereas perceptions of self-typicality were allowed to vary naturally.

### Procedure

The experiment was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, participants were asked to adopt the role of a graduate-entry employee in a consulting firm. They were provided with a booklet that described the firm's background (i.e., the history, structure, and size of the organization) and included details about the firm's products and services. We informed participants that staff worked in small, independent work groups containing a senior consultant and three assistant consultants. Participants were provided with detailed information on the staff in their work group, including a transcript from a work group meeting, along with demographic, vocational, and educational data on each colleague. This information was designed to provide participants with a plausible organizational context and group membership. We measured participants' perceived self-typicality at the conclusion of the first session, thereby ensuring that this variable remained independent from the deviance manipulation used in Phase 2. Demographic information concerning participants' gender, age, and years of work experience was also collected during this session.

The second phase of the study took place 1 week later and involved providing participants with another booklet that contained the deviance manipulation and the measures of group cohesion. To manipulate deviance, we provided participants with information concerning the extent to which their work group colleagues engaged in the following forms of workplace devi-



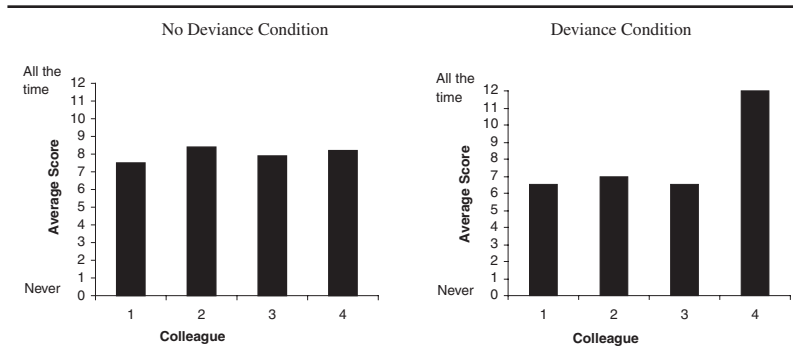
ance: taking a longer than acceptable lunch break, working on personal matters during work time, calling in sick when they were not ill, leaving work early without permission, and leaving their work for a colleague to complete. The deviant behaviors used in the present study were derived from the measures of workplace deviance developed and validated by Robinson and Bennett (1995; see also Robinson & Bennett, 2000). Participants were told that the information was obtained from a recent staff opinion survey and was designed to help new recruits to learn more about their group. The information showed each colleague's self-reported frequency of engaging in the five target behaviors during the past 12 months. The colleagues were identified only by a number (Colleague 1, Colleague 2, etc.). In the deviance condition, Colleague 4 engaged in high levels of the deviant behaviors, whereas the other group members reported low levels of the target behaviors. In the no-deviance condition, all four colleagues were portrayed as engaging in low levels of the deviant behaviors. The data were presented in bar graph form. Two sample graphs, one from the deviance condition and the other from the no-deviance condition, are reproduced in Figure 1.

## Measures

Self-typicality was assessed using a six-item scale developed by Kashima et al. (2000). The self-typicality measures were designed to assess individuals' subjective perceptions of the global similarity between themselves and a particular group (Kashima et al., 2000). Example items include "I am typical of staff in this work group" and "I am like most of the other members of this group in many respects." Participants responded on 7-point Likert-type scales that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The six items were combined to form a composite measure of self-typicality ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

The questionnaire booklet used in the second phase of the study included a section in which participants were asked to rate their perceptions of their work group colleagues. The items were similar to those used by Abrams et al. (2002) to assess the perceived social attractiveness of target group members. Participants indicated their level of agreement with four items that described each work group member (e.g., "This person is a highly valued member of his or her group"). Responses were made on 7-point Likert-type scales that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The focal measures related to participants' perceptions of Colleague 4. Depending on the condition, Colleague 4 was portrayed as either a deviant or a normative group member. The four items relating to Colleague 4 were combined to form a composite measure ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

**Figure 1**  
**Deviance Manipulation Stimulus Materials for the**  
**No-Deviance Condition (Left) and the Deviance Condition (Right)**



Note: Average behavior rates were the same in both deviance conditions.

The booklet also contained measures of group task and social cohesion that were based on scales developed by Careless and DePaola (2000). Task cohesion was assessed using four items. An example item was "This group would be united in trying to reach its goals for performance." Three measures assessed social cohesion, including items such as "Members of the work group would like to spend time together outside of work hours." Participants responded to the task and social cohesion items on 7-point Likert-type scales that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). We combined the four items measuring task cohesion ( $\alpha = .65$ ) and the three items measuring social cohesion ( $\alpha = .71$ ) to form composite measures for each of the constructs.

The efficacy of the deviance manipulation was assessed using a single-item measure included in the questionnaire booklet. The deviance manipulation check item asked participants to report how often Colleague 4, the individual portrayed as either a deviant or normative group member, exhibited the targeted deviant behaviors. Participants responded by selecting one of four possible response options: (a) never, (b) occasionally, (c) frequently, or (d) all of the time. Responses were ranked on a scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*all of the time*).

**Table 1**  
**Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Study Variables<sup>a</sup>**

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Deviance condition <sup>c</sup>	1.31	0.46								
Deviance manipulation check <sup>d</sup>	2.64	0.75	.60*							
Self-typicality <sup>b</sup>	3.42	1.06	-.01	-.05						
Perceptions of target colleague	3.98	1.08	-.55**	-.25**	-.01					
Task cohesion	4.16	1.00	-.25**	-.03	.04	.32**				
Social cohesion	3.56	0.97	.05	.10	.10	.12	.28**			
Age in years	21.48	6.43	.07	.12	.05	.10	-.08	-.07		
Gender <sup>e</sup>	1.59	0.50	-.08	-.07	-.14	-.03	-.17	-.14	.07	
Years work experience	5.30	6.13	-.03	-.21	-.06	.14	-.01	-.03	.91**	.05

a.  $N = 115$ .

b. Unless otherwise specified, measurement scales ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

c. Deviance conditions were coded with 1 representing the no-deviance condition and 2 representing the negative deviance condition.

d. The deviance manipulation check measure ranged from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*all of the time*).

e. Gender was coded with 1 representing males and 2 representing females.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

## Results

### Descriptive Information

The means, standard deviations, and correlations among the demographic, predictor, and outcome variables are displayed in Table 1. Average levels of the three dependent measures (perceptions of the target colleague, task cohesion, and social cohesion) were all above the scale midpoint (3.98, 4.16, and 3.56 respectively on a 7-point Likert-type scale). This indicates that overall, the deviant colleague was evaluated in a slightly favorable manner, and there were moderate levels of task and social cohesion within the group. The average level of self-typicality was slightly lower than the scale midpoint (3.42 on a 7-point Likert-type scale), suggesting that individuals may not have viewed themselves as highly typical or atypical of the group. Despite this, we managed to access meaningful variation around this level, with ratings of self-typicality ranging from 1 to 6 ( $SD = 1.06$ ). Although perceptions of self-typicality in relation to the artificial group used in this study

may be weaker than would be expected for real group memberships, there was sufficient variation in self-typicality for the purposes of the present research.

Inspection of the correlations revealed moderate negative correlations between the deviance variable and two of the outcome measures—perceptions of the target colleague and task cohesion. This suggests that the presence of a work group deviant was generally related to less favorable perceptions of the target individual and lower levels of perceived task cohesion. Perceptions of the target individual and task cohesion were moderately positively correlated, as were the two forms of group cohesion (task and social cohesion). The correlations were low enough, however, to justify separate analyses. The demographic variables were not significantly related to any of the other variables in the study, so they were not included in subsequent analyses.

The data were analyzed using hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Deviance and self-typicality were entered as predictors in Step 1, followed by the interaction between deviance and self-typicality in Step 2. This regression equation was used to examine the direct and interactive effects of the predictors on the deviance manipulation check and the measures of social and task cohesion. In accordance with Aiken and West's (1991) recommendations, the higher order interaction term was calculated using centered scores and significant interactions were graphed and followed up using simple slope analysis.

### **Deviance Manipulation Check**

The manipulation check item asked participants to rate the extent to which Colleague 4 engaged in the targeted forms of deviance. If the deviance manipulation worked, participants in the deviance condition should have perceived that Colleague 4 engaged in a higher frequency of deviant behaviors than participants in the no-deviance control condition. Inspection of the means for the manipulation check revealed that participants in the deviance condition perceived that Colleague 4 engaged in more of the deviant behaviors ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ) than participants in the no deviance condition ( $M = 2.33$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ). The results of the regression analysis conducted on the manipulation check item provided further support for the efficacy of the manipulation. The results are summarized in Table 2. The main effect of deviance in Step 1 accounted for a significant amount of variance in the outcome variable. Participants in the deviance condition perceived that Colleague 4 engaged in the targeted forms of deviance more often compared to

**Table 2**  
**Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses<sup>a</sup>**

Predictors	Dependent Variables			
	Manipulation Check	Perceptions of the Target Colleague	Social Cohesion	Task Cohesion
Step 1				
Negative deviance	.60**	-.55**	.05	-.25**
Self-typicality	-.05	.01	.10	.04
$R^2$	.37**	.30**	.01	.06*
Step 2				
Negative Deviance $\times$ Self-Typicality	-.04	.23*	.34**	.11
$R^2$	.01	.03*	.08**	.01
$R^2$ for equation	.37**	.33**	.09*	.07*

a.  $N = 115$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

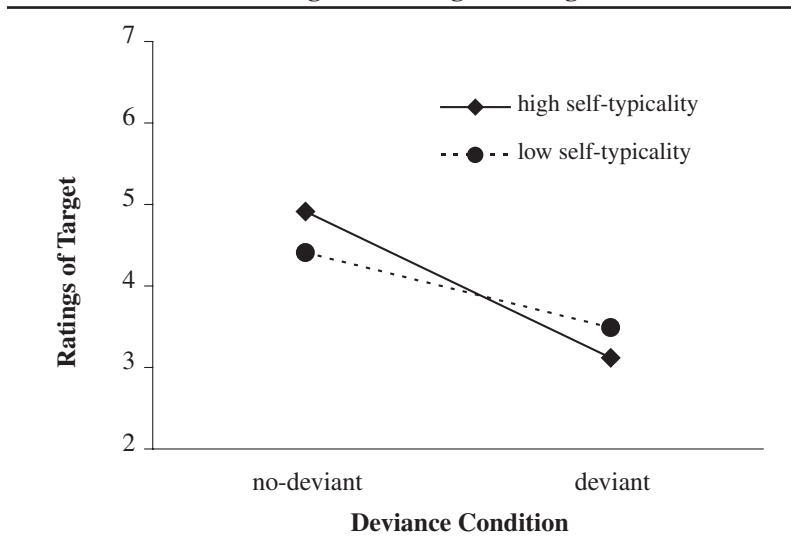
participants in the no-deviance control condition ( $\beta = .97$ ,  $t_{(113)} = 7.95$ ,  $p < .01$ ). There were no other significant main or interactive effects.

### Perceptions of the Target Colleague

The overall regression model predicting participants' perceptions of the target colleague accounted for a significant amount of the total variance (see Table 2). In Step 1 of the regression model, deviance emerged as a significant predictor of perceptions of the target colleague ( $\beta = -.55$ ,  $t_{(105)} = -6.70$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This finding suggests that in general, participants in the deviance condition rated the target colleague as less favorable than participants in the no-deviance control condition. The main effect for self-typicality was not significant.

There was a significant interaction between deviance and perceived self-typicality in Step 2 of the regression model. Follow-up analyses showed that the deviance manipulation had a significant impact on ratings of the target colleague for participants high in perceived self-typicality ( $\beta = -.72$ ,  $t_{(105)} = -6.61$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and for those low in self-typicality ( $\beta = -.36$ ,  $t_{(105)} = -3.12$ ,  $p < .01$ ). As Figure 2 shows, individuals who perceived themselves as highly typical of the group rated the target colleague as less favorable when the target was portrayed as a deviant compared to when the target was a normative group member. The same pattern of results occurred for participants low in perceived self-typicality; however, the effects of the deviance manipulation were stronger for high rather than low typicality participants.

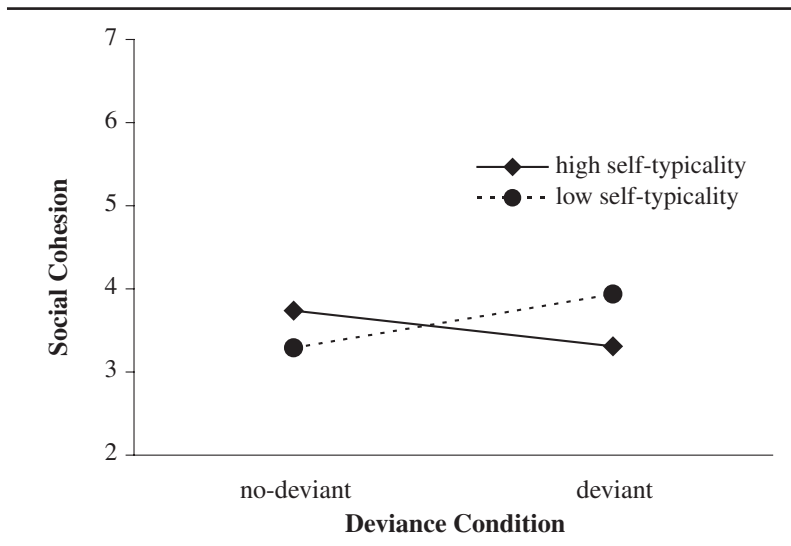
**Figure 2**  
**Interaction of Self-Typicality and Deviance**  
**on Ratings of the Target Colleague**



### Social Cohesion

As Table 2 shows, the regression analysis predicting perceptions of social cohesion accounted for a significant amount of the total variance. There were no significant main effects for deviance or self-typicality in Step 1 of the regression model; however, the interaction between these two variables in the second step of the model accounted for a significant amount of variance in the prediction of social cohesion. Follow-up analyses revealed that the impact of deviance on social cohesion was marginally significant for individuals high in perceived self-typicality ( $\beta = -.42$ ,  $t_{(111)} = -1.68$ ,  $p < .10$ ) and significant for those low in self-typicality ( $\beta = .71$ ,  $t_{(111)} = 2.62$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This interaction is depicted graphically in Figure 3. Amongst group members who perceived themselves as more prototypical of the group, there was a trend suggesting that the group as a whole was viewed as less socially cohesive when the group contained a deviant compared to when there was no deviant. For group members low in self-typicality, this pattern was reversed—social cohesion was perceived as being higher when a deviant group member was present compared to the no-deviance condition.

**Figure 3**  
**Interaction of Self-Typicality and Deviance**  
**on Ratings of Group Social Cohesion**



### Task Cohesion

The regression model predicting perceptions of the group's task cohesion accounted for a significant amount of the total variance (see Table 2). In Step 1 of the regression model, the main effect for deviance made a significant contribution to the prediction of task cohesion ( $\beta = -.25$ ,  $t_{(111)} = -2.73$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Overall, participants in the deviance condition judged the group's task cohesion as being lower than participants in the no-deviance control condition. There were no other significant main or interactive effects in the model predicting task cohesion.

### Discussion

This study investigated the impact of a deviant on group members' perceptions of the deviant and their perceptions of group cohesion. Previous research has shown that deviant group members are perceived as less socially attractive (Hogg & Hardie, 1991; Hogg et al., 1995) and less competent

(Abrams et al., 2000; Scheepers et al., 2002) than normative group members. We therefore expected that participants in the deviance condition would provide less favorable ratings of a deviant group member compared to participants in the no-deviance condition. Furthermore, based on the notion that group cohesion can be represented by multiple dimensions that may include social attraction (Hogg, 1992) and task competency (Carless & DePaola, 2000; Zaccaro, 1991), we expected that the presence of a deviant group member would also negatively affect perceptions of the group's social and task cohesion.

The results were broadly consistent with these expectations. In support of our first hypothesis, the deviance condition directly influenced how group members perceived the target colleague. In general, the deviant colleague was rated less favorably than the normative colleague. The tendency for individuals to downgrade deviant group members has been demonstrated in numerous other studies (Abrams et al., 2002; Hogg et al., 1995; Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques et al., 1988). This effect has been viewed as a group protection mechanism whereby the deviant is derogated as a means of psychologically reducing the impact of the deviant on the group (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques et al., 1988). Our second prediction concerning the main effect of deviance on perceptions of group cohesion was supported in relation to task cohesion, but not for social cohesion. This suggests that whilst groups that contain a deviant are perceived as being less competent at achieving shared goals than groups with no deviants, they are not perceived to be less socially attractive.

A possible explanation for this pattern of findings may be that the deviance manipulation was asymmetrical in the extent to which the stimulus behaviors related to task competencies versus interrelationships amongst group members. Although the stimulus behaviors (e.g., taking a longer than acceptable lunch break, leaving work early without permission) have obvious implications for the ability of the work group to achieve its goals, the consequences for social relations within the group are more obscure. For this reason, participants may have more readily associated the presence of a deviant with reduced task cohesion rather than social cohesion.

Our final prediction concerned the proposed moderating effect of self-typicality on group members' reactions to the deviant, and their ratings of group cohesion. The derogation of the deviant colleague and the destructive influence of the deviant on group cohesion were expected to be stronger to the extent that group members viewed themselves as more typical of the group. In support of this prediction, the decline in ratings of the deviant compared to the normative target colleague was more marked for high self-typicality participants than for those low in perceived self-typicality. Consis-



tent with this finding, previous research has shown that group members high in perceived self-typicality are more fervent in their defence of the group from perceived threats than low typicality group members (Jetten et al., 1997). Therefore, group members who see themselves as highly typical of the group are more critical of the deviant than low typicality group members because they are strongly motivated to protect the group's image.

The predicted interaction between self-typicality and deviance did not emerge in relation to ratings of task cohesion. This finding may also be an artifact of the asymmetrical manipulation of deviance in the present study. The task implications of the deviant behaviors used in the organizational simulation may have been obvious to all participants, regardless of the extent to which they viewed themselves as typical of the group. This explanation could be tested in a study where the type of deviant behavior is manipulated to allow a comparison of the relative impact of task-oriented forms of deviance, such as property deviance and production deviance (e.g., sabotage, taking excessive breaks; see Robinson & Bennett, 1995), and relationship-oriented forms of deviance, such as political deviance and personal aggression (e.g., gossiping about coworkers, verbal abuse; see Robinson & Bennett, 1995), on task and social cohesion.

Although there was a significant interaction between self-typicality and deviance in the prediction of the group's social cohesion, the pattern of results were not entirely consistent with our expectations. A marginally significant trend suggested that, similar to the results for ratings of the target colleague, participants high in self-typicality tended to view the group as less socially cohesive when a deviant was present compared to when there was no deviant. Unexpectedly, however, this pattern was reversed for low typicality participants, such that the group was perceived as more socially cohesive in the presence of a deviant colleague. It is possible that this finding reflects an attempt by participants low in perceived self-typicality to distance themselves from a group that they view as divergent from them. Participants who rate themselves as low in self-typicality may generally be individualists who, regardless of the group membership, place a higher value on distinctiveness rather than belonging. As such, the presence of a deviant might bolster their sense of social attraction for the group because the deviant represents another individual who stands out as different from the group. Indeed, past research has shown that low identifiers respond to group status threats by placing a stronger emphasis on group heterogeneity rather than homogeneity (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995).

Another possible explanation for this unexpected finding could be that the heterogeneity that groups gain from having a nonconforming member could make the group more attractive to some members. Research on team compo-

sition has demonstrated that small amounts of heterogeneity (e.g., one group member who expresses a dissenting opinion) can enhance team functioning (Moscovici, 1985; Nemeth, 1986). Furthermore, several studies on diversity have shown positive associations between diversity on personality dimensions such as extraversion and control and a range of individual and group outcomes, including team cohesion (Glomb & Welsh, 2005; Kristof-Brown, Barrick, & Stevens, 2005). Although group heterogeneity in the present study extended from the presence of an individual who displayed mild forms of negative deviance, certain group members may have viewed the divergent approach to work demonstrated by the deviant as being of some indirect value to the group, therefore increasing the group's attractiveness. This idea is based on the notion of complementary person-team fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987), where the characteristics of an individual complete the group environment by offsetting a weakness or filling a gap. For example, perhaps a deviant group member represents an avenue for "testing the boundaries" in a group where levels of conformity are otherwise high. In the present study, individuals low in self-typicality may have been more open to perceiving any merit associated with the deviant's presence in the group because dissenting views and behavior are less threatening to their social identity (Matheson, Cole, & Majka, 2003).

### **Practical Implications and Conclusions**

The results of the present study suggest that, as well as attracting negative evaluations from other group members, deviants can influence the cohesiveness of the group as a whole. We found that the presence of a single negative deviant resulted in lower levels of perceived task cohesion, suggesting that deviant individuals may threaten the extent to which work groups are collectively committed to achieving group goals. Perceptions of social cohesion varied depending on perceivers' self-typicality. Whereas the presence of a deviant was negatively related to social cohesion for those high in self-typicality, the direction of this relationship was reversed for low self-typicality participants. This finding warrants further investigation, and would benefit from the explicit measurement of the extent to which high and low self-typicality individuals are aware of the group prototype, and the value they place on conforming to this prototype. Another interesting direction for future research would be to examine the impact of positive deviants (i.e., individuals who positively deviate from group norms) on levels of task and social cohesion (see, for example, Abrams et al., 2002; Warren, 2003). Although positive deviants exhibit behaviors that depart from group norms, and are therefore less prototypical than normative members, the favorable

implications of these behaviors for the group may have a positive impact on group cohesion.

Participants in our study responded to relatively mild forms of deviance in a simulated organizational context. Despite the fact that this research used ad hoc groups that were constructed for the purpose of the study, we obtained meaningful variation on the perceived self-typicality measure. This allowed us to explore differences in the way that high and low self-typicality individuals respond to a deviant group member, and generalize the deviant attributes to the group as a whole. It is plausible that these effects would be even stronger in the context of real work groups where members interact on a day-to-day basis. Similarly, we would expect these effects to be stronger when individuals are exposed to more extreme forms of deviance, such as sabotage or workplace violence, because serious acts of deviance pose an even greater threat to the group's image, and the cohesiveness of the group.

Our findings have several important practical implications for the effective functioning of work groups and organizations. First, the extent to which groups share a strong sense of commitment toward achieving common goals can be undermined by the presence of even a single member who deviates destructively from the norm. As well as negatively affecting group performance and productivity (Zaccaro & Lowe, 1988), lower levels of task cohesion have also been linked with role uncertainty (Zaccaro, 1991). This could potentially create a volatile situation in which the destructive influence of deviants becomes even more pronounced because of the high levels of uncertainty surrounding the group's core objectives and the individuals' role requirements. Second, although the presence of a deviant seems to have negative implications for all group members' perceptions of task cohesion, there are variations amongst members in the way that deviants influence perceptions of social cohesion. This study showed that individuals low in perceived self-typicality viewed the group as more socially cohesive when the group contained a deviant. Although previous research has shown that deviants are derogated in terms of their personal attraction (e.g., Abrams et al., 2002), this finding suggests that deviants may gain positive reinforcement from at least some group members who view them as enriching the group's social and interpersonal dynamics.

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