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The role of group (in)efficacy in controlling deviance on group cohesion and on social identity management strategies: Social control identity motivated model

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Abstract

The social control identity motivated (SCIM) model proposes that perceived failure of group social control mechanisms in punishing deviance increases the threat associated with the emergence of deviance in groups. Based on this assumption, this model explains the psychosocial processes involved in the consequences for social cohesion and social identity management strategies of a match or mismatch between the implemented formal social control and the mechanisms that group members expect to be implemented based on social identity motivation processes. This model explains members' commitment to the reinforcement of ingroup social order and status quo (in case of a match), or a need to cope with perceived inefficacy of ingroup formal social control (in case of mismatch). In response to perceived inefficacy of ingroup formal social control, individuals may engage in various identity-motivated processes, including disinvestment from the ingroup, informal social control responses, or efforts to strengthen the ingroup's normative system through social innovation or social control mechanisms reinforcement. By accounting for the interplay between formal social control mechanisms and identity motivated social control expectations, the SCIM model intends to contribute to the understanding of social identity protective strategies in response to deviance, by highlighting that (in) efficacy of group social control mechanisms shapes this dynamic. This model is justified with both direct and indirect empirical support, and we discuss the potential of the model's applicability, as well as the need for additional research to understand determinants of each type of response, thus leaving this model open to potential refinement.

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Introduction

Anonymous and Wikileaks are collectives whose actions overlap the line that distinguishes criminality and heroism. Indeed, they are ambivalently perceived as criminals since they have violated formal laws, but they are also perceived as heroes by many citizens that believe they were courageous enough to go against the "corrupt and unpunished powerful" and defend core moral values related to citizens' rights.

Anonymous, an international network of activist hackers, acted against various governments and corporations bringing attention to their corruptions and human rights abuses. WikiLeaks became famous by exposing documents to common citizens concerning governmental organizations and powerful leaders' misbehavior and human rights abuses (e.g., the US military in the Iraq war and Guantanamo), and their corruption in the Afghanistan war.

Both collectives gained some criticisms, namely from the legal authorities, who accused them of seriously endangering the nations' security, the social order, and social cohesion. These collectives' drastic actions, in part, came about because of perceived inaction of the formal social control mechanisms to react to offenses that violate core values they perceived should be protected leading to impunity of perpetrators.

We can think of several situations where some powerful offenders faced serious accusations but escaped convictions or received limited punishments, leading to criticism, protests, public outrage and even violence in their respective countries, from those who believed they should be convicted. A relevant example is the case of Lula da Silva, current president of Brazil. Previously convicted for passive corruption and money laundering, Lula appealed the decision. In 2018, he was arrested and convicted, becoming ineligible to run in that year's presidential election. However, in 2021, the Federal Supreme Court annulled the convictions, restoring Lula's political rights and he is currently the President of Brazil. This inconsistency of legal issues involving Lula da Silva sparked intense debates and polarized opinions in Brazil, not only regarding the process of ambivalently labeling him as a deviant member, but also the perception of social control mechanisms' (in)effectiveness, and thus, of the trust these mechanisms raise among common citizens.

We propose a model—the social control identity motivated (SCIM) model – focusing on psychosocial identity-based processes involved in reactions to deviance facing the perception of (in)effective formal social control mechanisms meant to control deviance, and on the consequences of such perception on individuals' commitment to group social cohesion and engagement in social identity management strategies. We start by linking the functionalist perspective of deviance (within the sociological tradition; Durkheim, 1930/1998) and the social identification approach (largely inspired by the theoretical functionalist assumptions of subjective group dynamics theory; Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Hogg, 2001) into an integrative social control model. This model discusses the consequences for social cohesion of a perceived match or mismatch between the implemented formal social control and the mechanisms which group members expected to be implemented based on social identity motivated strategies. This model explains members' commitment to social cohesion and identity management responses, from ingroup disinvestment, through implementation of informal social control or ingroup reinforcement.

This model proposes that the perceived (mis) match between the implemented formal social control mechanism facing deviance and individuals' expectations regarding how the group should deal with such deviance (identity expected social

control mechanisms) determines individuals' responses to deviance and their commitment to the group. That is, it will lead individuals to align reinforcement of the existent ingroup social order and *status quo* maintaining commitment to the group (in case of a match), or a need to cope with inefficacy of ingroup formal social control (mismatch), engage in different strategies and restore their belief in a positive social identity.

We will start with the assumptions of this model, namely by developing arguments about the (in)consistency of the different sociological traditions addressing deviance (that detain the majority of work in social control) and the work developed by the social identification approach to studying deviance. This theoretical discussion will highlight how this model conceives deviance in groups and namely how the functionalist perspective of deviance is a fundamental theoretical ground to frame deviance and reaction to deviance within the social identification approach.

Deviance

Depending on the theoretical framework traditionally developed within sociologic work, deviance assumes different definitions. From the labeling interactionist perspective, a behavior is identified and labeled as deviant by groups' social control mechanisms. Deviance is detected to the extent that moral entrepreneurs (police, judges, etc.) and social control rituals (e.g., trials) identify a behavior as violating a group formal and mandatory norm (law) (Becker, 1963; Erikson, 1964, 1966). Here, deviance is defined as the result of the interaction between the group members and the social control mechanisms that results in the detection of violations of laws and the accusation of the violation's author as being an offender, a deviant member.

The conflicting theoretical approach defines deviance as the breach of norms, particularly legal norms, established by societal dominant groups (Gibbs, 1977, 1992; Meier, 2019). Such acts jeopardize the established hierarchical social order and, thus, deviance often involves individuals from lower status groups aimed at changing groups' relative status. Thus, low status groups who aim to change their relative status are often perceived as deviants.

The functionalist perspective (Ben-Yehuda, 1990; Durkheim, 1930/1998; Erikson, 1966) proposes that deviance occurs when there is a violation of social norms that are crucial for defending the group's ideology. Here, deviance is perceived as a threat to the group's core values. Importantly, it may become functional to the group, in that it increases social cohesion via the punishment of deviant members and an increased commitment of normative members to the violated norms. In this vein, norm violation may lead normative members to increase their awareness of the acceptable limits of behavior, thereby reinforcing their involvement with the group (Ben-Yehuda, 2015, 2019; Erikson, 1966).

The functionalist perspective, contrarily to the previous ones, assumes that deviance is context and group dependent, and that it does not limit social control to formal mechanisms (e.g., law, penal code, institutional rules). This perspective involves all group members in the process and consequences of controlling deviance by assuming that such a transgression of norms is recognized by all members of a group and triggers indignation within all members that expect deviance to be punished. Consequently, deviance is not solely identified by the ability of formal social control mechanisms to spot it, but rather by the members' recognition of a violation to a pertinent group norm, and the expectation that social control mechanisms will be effective in dealing with the deviant member.

According to this perspective, punishment is the core response to deviance that is functional for the group. As highlighted by Durkheim (1930/1998), punishment is not an effective measure to dissuade deviants from repeating their misconduct and thus, punishment's focus is not offenders' rehabilitation. Instead, its true function lies in preserving the cohesion of a society by upholding the collective consciousness at its utmost strength. Erikson (1966) asserts that deviance heightens people's awareness of shared interests and highlights the values forming the

collective consciousness of a community. In brief, by challenging established norms, deviance actually creates an atmosphere of threat and uncertainty within the group. Only punitive reactions can restore the damage caused by the emergence of deviance. These reactions often serve to reinforce symbolic moral boundaries and uphold stability within the prevailing group standards (Ben-Yehuda, 1990, 2015).

This perspective is more relevant than the others to explain the work developed within social psychology regarding reaction to deviance in social groups. We aim to integrate this perspective with the social identification approach (relying on theoretical work already developed within subjective group dynamics theory; Marques & Pinto, 2023; Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Hogg, 2001), and to propose a model that accounts for intra- and intergroup dynamics that result from a dialect process between formal and social identity-based social control mechanisms facing deviance.

Social Control

Societies and social groups develop social control mechanisms to guarantee that members respect core group values. It has long been established that social control corresponds to broad strategies that make members conform to their group's normative expectations and to strategies to restore the value of the violated social norm, when deviance occurs (Gibbs, 1965, 1977; Mead, 1918). Social control, in a wide sense, materializes through two general processes: prevention and retribution.

Social Norms: Preventive Social Control Mechanisms

At the core of any social control system lies a fundamental element: social norms (Gibbs, 1965, 1977, 1992; Morris, 1956). Norms stem from a shared system of values embraced by all members within a group or community (Sherif, 1936). While values offer orientations in general situations (Becker, 1963), they often lack practical guidance for specific actions. Norms, however, step in as the primary tools for guiding individuals in aligning with social values. By defining desirable and acceptable behavior, norms establish order and regulation in similar social situations (Sherif, 1936; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), they reduce potential conflicts or misunderstandings in both interpersonal and intragroup interactions (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), they foster group solidarity and cohesion (Durkheim, 1930/1998; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), serve as effective instruments in achieving collective goals (Merton, 1938), and crucially for our work, norms act as guardians of a group's social values, preserving and upholding them among group members (Durkheim, 1930/1998).

Morality: a key attribute of norms that define deviance. Morality assumes a pivotal role in delineating the core norms deserving of respect as it contributes significantly to safeguarding the group's property and ideology. When a norm is imbued with a moral character, individuals are inclined to perceive behaviors aligned with such norms as inherently "proper" and "correct" (Cialdini et al., 1991; Gibbs, 1965). This moral association endows these norms with a high perceived value, compelling individuals to feel an obligation to adhere to them (Cialdini et al., 1991; Gibbs, 1965). The strength of a norm lies in the moral character attributed to it (Asch, 1987; Erikson, 1964), granting it a prescriptive focus that directs and guides individuals' behavior and is usually associated with a sanction on those who violate it. For instance, a relevant value for many current Western societies is "equal rights and opportunities." Thus, it is not surprising that many institutions develop norms and practices that enforce this value (as in the cases of anti-discrimination norms in job promotions).

Norms embedded in a morality attribute that prescribe individuals' behaviors are important for diagnosing deviance within groups. Behaviors that violate these norms, more than interpreted as different or atypical behaviors (as is the case of behaviors that violate denotative/statistical frequency-based norms—Cialdini et al., 1991), are diagnosed as incorrect, inadequate and/or undesirable. Thus, diagnosing a behavior as being (or

not) deviant, depends on the existence of a moral character associated to the norm that was violated that ascribes that behavior a social meaning of being immoral.

Laws, formal rules or institutional regulations are examples of these types of norm, but they are formally described within groups' social control codes. These social norms operate under the premise that they exist as external entities, separate from individuals' minds (although being able to be learned and internalized by individuals), and assuming their independence from personal influence. They are usually established in intricate formal social structures (as institutions and societies) and are defined to protect these structures' social order, thus assuming a prescriptive character. Individuals also learn that these norms should be respected, frequently endowing them with a morality attribute. Indeed, there are some laws that individuals consensually believe ought to be followed at all cost (e.g., related to protection of human life), but others that gain less consensus and are questioned (e.g., paying taxes). A social identification approach to prescriptive norms offers a different conceptualization.

A Social Identity Approach to Prescriptive Norms

Within the social identity approach, social norms assume a moral attribute and a prescriptive character to the extent they are determinant to maintain or enhance individuals' positive social identity, that is, individuals' perception that their group membership positively contributes to their self-esteem and self-worth (Hogg, 2006). Thus, deviance, within this theoretical approach, corresponds to any opinion or behavior that threatens group members' positive social identity. Traditionally, within the social identification approach, social norms are conceived as group-specific properties linked to the groups' prototypes, playing a crucial role in intergroup differentiation and in clarifying intergroup boundaries (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). According to the referent informational influence theory (Turner, 1981, 1991), individuals, upon defining themselves as members of a particular social group, internalize the ingroup's prototype that defines the group's specific norms (see Anjewierden et al., 2024). Individuals adopt and internalize these ingroup norms, integrating them into their own beliefs, and incorporating them as a component of their social identity. These norms, by contributing to intragroup uniformity (informing who individuals are and who they are not as group members) and by clarifying the distinction between groups—fundamental processes that allow for the intergroup comparison process and, consequently, achievement of a positive social identity—assume a prescriptive function, and members perceive them to be mandatory and thus respect them. The internalization of group prototypical traits as self-definers and the assimilation of group defining norms as their own beliefs guarantee that members perceive these traits as prescriptive. Consequently, individuals who violate these norms are perceived as deviants within the group context, or as marginal (because atypical) members (Hogg, 2005; Hogg et al., 2005).

However, another type of prescriptive norm may be considered as it may also impact on individuals' positive social identity. In intergroup contexts, groups are compared based on dimensions (values) that are often unrelated to group prototypes. Instead, these dimensions revolve around standards valued by many groups, which recognize which group is positive under these dimensions. For instance, groups might be assessed based on their commitment to egalitarian social values, namely regarding their support to anti-discrimination norms against vulnerable groups. A group that shows higher commitment is perceived as more positive than others who are less committed. Groups excelling in meeting these standards garner positive evaluations, serving as sources of positive social identity for their members as a result of the intergroup comparison process. Thus, these evaluative dimensions also function as prescriptive norms (although generic to both groups, functioning at a purely intergroup comparison basis) mandating adherence from group members (Marques, Abrams, & Serodio, 2001). The violation of such generic norms jeopardizes the positive value of one's

group, and the offense is defined as a deviant behavior (the black sheep of a group; Marques et al., 1988). Using the same example, a member displaying discriminatory behavior threatens the positive image of their group in this normative dimension, irrespective of his/her affiliation. Such deviation challenges the group's positive perception, impacting the individual's values and beliefs as a group member, and thereby, their positive social identity (Marques & Paez, 1994; Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Hogg, 2001).

Independently of the type of prescriptive norms we are discussing (generic or group-specific), they become integral to an individual's self-concept, assuming a symbolic identity shared existence. Individuals regulate their behavior based on these internalized norms (Abrams, 1990, 1994), expecting fellow ingroup members to align their behavior, and ultimately, validate them (e.g., Turner, 1991). These norms, thus, intertwined with social identity processes, exhibit fluidity; their nature appears context-dependent, contingent on individuals' self-categorization and not as stable external elements (Terry & Hogg, 1996, 2001; Terry et al., 2000). In brief, they serve an important function: to contribute to sustain a positive ingroup value in a particular intergroup context.

(Mis)match between Formal and Social Identity Norms

Previous literature, thus, seems to offer two distinct categories of prescriptive social norms although they are frequently addressed in a fusion confusing perspective: formal norms and social identity norms. As mentioned before, formal norms represent laws within judicial systems and structures, institutions and social groups, designed to maintain their social order. However, these externally imposed norms may not seamlessly integrate into individuals' internalized social identity norms. When there is a discrepancy between formal norms and social identity norms, it creates a normative conflict within individuals that requires resolution. Packer et al.'s work (Packer, 2008; Packer & Chasteen, 2010) on the normative conflict model illustrates this dynamic well. Individuals deeply connected to their ingroup may feel such a normative conflict: they have to choose between adhering to existing (formal) social norms and adopting those they believe better suit the ingroup's values. This conflict can lead to deviations from or adherence to formal norms despite personal discomfort. One common example that many of us have experienced relates to organizations in which we work. Sometimes, there are norms and policies that members are expected to follow, but they may not believe in their usefulness, effectiveness or fairness. A violation of formal social norms, in such case, is perceived as a deviant conduct in the perspective of these norms, but might also be perceived as a behavior to endorse (and even to associate a normative meaning to such behavior in the near future) because it is positive for the group (positive deviance; Ben-Yehuda, 1990; Heckert & Heckert, 2007), and thus a promoter of ingroup positive value. Such normative conflict can be extended to retribution mechanisms as well.

Formal and Social Identity Motivated Retributive Social Control Mechanisms

We might also expect ambivalence in defining a particular behavior as normative or deviant. At times, formal social control mechanisms fail to detect a particular behavior as deviant, yet individuals perceive them as violating relevant prescriptive group norms. In these cases, understanding how individuals react to such inconsistencies becomes a core focus of SCIM.

Most typically, social control research examines reaction to deviance, namely on retributive social control, referring to the punishment implemented to oppose deviance and encourage conformity to norms (see Meier, 2015). Although there are several types of reaction to deviance reported in the literature, according to a functionalist perspective, punishment seems to be the most prevalent when we consider deviance as an offense to a particular prescriptive norm and the major functional reaction for the achievement of a positive social identity (Marques, Abrams, & Serodio, 2001; Pinto et al., 2010, 2016). In spite of how offenders' resocialization and victims'

repairment seem reasonable and valued goals for enforcement, the fact is that punishment of the deviant is the mechanism through which normative members are able to restate their commitment to the violated norms and to the current group's values, as well as their belief in a positive social identity (Marques & Pinto, 2023, for a review). We distinguish two types of punishment relevant to understand this model: formal and social identity motivated punishment.

Formal punishment. Formal punishment typically involves legal or official procedures, such as trials, aimed at censuring deviant behavior and penalizing the transgressor. Its objective lies in reassigning the transgressor to a social role that mitigates the adverse effects of their actions (Becker, 1963; Erikson, 1964; Levine & Moreland, 1994). This form of punishment operates as a normative or even imperative societal response intended to uphold the respect for the laws and social cohesion (Beccaria, 1996).

Social identity motivated punishment. Hoffman (1983, cited in Manstead, 2000) suggests that as formal norms are owned by individuals their behavior becomes less reliant on established formal punishment in the face of deviance. The violation of these internalized norms sparks feelings of outrage within the group members where the deviant act occurred (Durkheim, 1915) since it jeopardizes the subjective validity of such norms and thus members' beliefs on a positive social identity (Marques & Paez, 1994; Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Hogg, 2001; Pinto, Marques, & Paez, 2016), and individuals feel motivated to exert punishment over deviants.

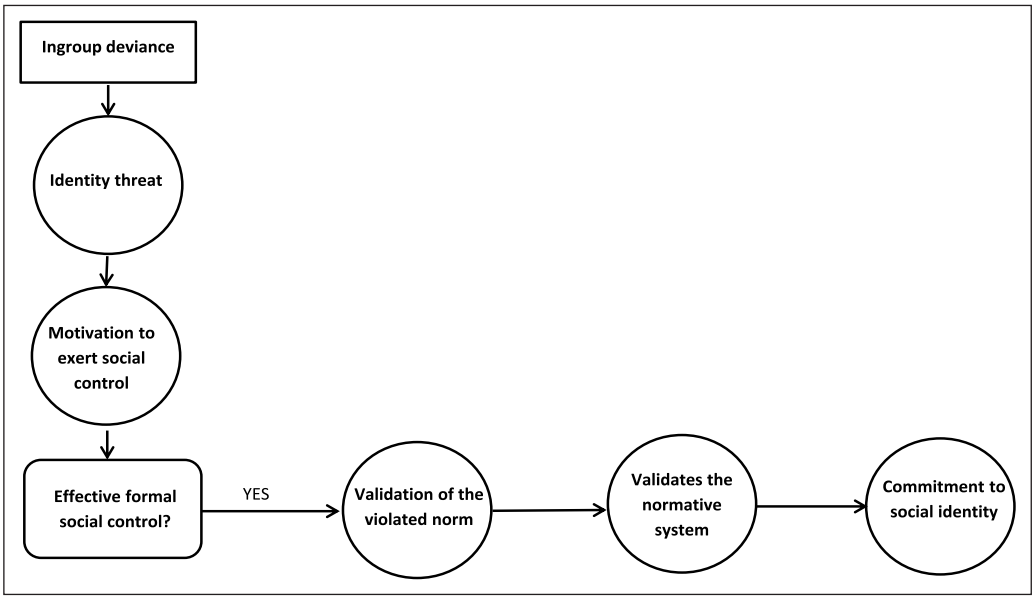
Considering such identity-based motivation, punishment also acquires a prescriptive nature. Much of the literature on reaction to deviance in intergroup settings, spanning theories such as subjective group dynamics (e.g., Marques, Paez, & Abrams, 1998), the intergroup sensitivity model (e.g., Hornsey & Imani, 2004), the transgression credit model (e.g., Abrams et al., 2013; Davies et al., 2024), or the threat-and-control model (Ditrich & Sassenberg, 2024) among others, in spite of analyzing reactions to deviance at different levels and considering deviants with different positions, all tend to measure social identity motivated *punitive* reactions. Indeed, in these models, participants are frequently asked to evaluate a deviant member, being aware that no punishment will actually be administered to the deviant target. Thus, although these studies consistently reveal motivation either to denigrate or tolerate ingroup deviants compared to that of outgroup deviants, authors within these theoretical models consensually recognize the symbolic punitive meaning of the negative evaluations that participants direct to deviant members.

Hence, it seems apt to draw a parallel with the earlier discussion about social norms with respect to punishment. We propose that when individuals encounter deviant behaviour within their groups or societies, they often compare the severity of actual formal punishment against the expected punishment they feel ought to be imposed (social identity motivated punishment). Our model delves into the ramifications of consistency (match) vs. divergence (mismatch) between the formal and identity social control mechanisms, examining how individuals address this consistency vs. divergence and its influence on their commitment to group cohesion and to social identity management responses. That is, sometimes formal control mechanisms are perceived as effective because they match group members' expectations regarding how to respond to deviants, and other times they might be perceived as ineffective to the extent they do not control deviance and fail to meet identity social control mechanisms. We explore how the perception of formal social control mechanisms impact on individuals' positive social identity and how such impact might enact diverse social identity strategies.

When Formal Social Control is Perceived to be (In)effective

In light of the above ideas, we posit that the perception of group inefficacy in managing ingroup offenders heightens the sense of threat already posed by the presence of deviance. This not only

Figure 1. Level 1—Perception of effective social control.



highlights a violation to a relevant norm but also the absence of a consequential social response to such transgression that individuals perceive should be implemented. Consequently, it becomes evident that the group lacks the necessary means to uphold a norm that is core to the group.

According to the functionalist perspective on deviance, we should expect that a group perceived as effective in exerting social control over deviant behavior instills a sense of vibrancy among its normative members, demonstrating its ability to uphold core values and thus validating the positive social identity of its members. Normative members, under such circumstances, are likely to maintain or enhance their commitment to the norm while reinforcing their identification with the group (Pinto, Marques, Levine, and Abrams, 2016); see Figure 1.

However, when a group is perceived as ineffective in reacting to deviant behavior, it inadvertently communicates two implicit messages to its members.

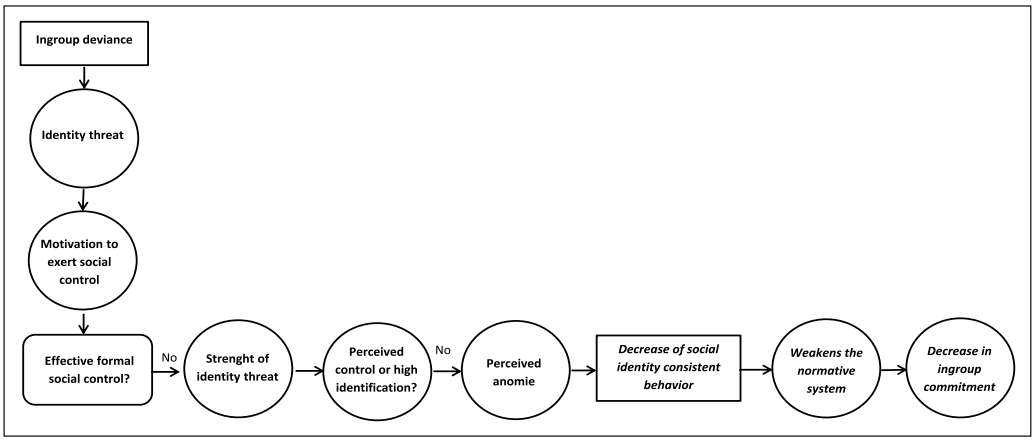
Firstly, a possible tacit acceptance or toleration of deviant behavior due to the lack of punitive consequences. Indeed, this absence of consequences might lead group members to interpret the behaviour as normative, potentially blurring the moral boundaries set by the group.

Secondly, it highlights the inherent weaknesses of the ingroup, particularly in its formal social control mechanisms, to effectively counter the threat posed by deviant behavior. This opens breaches to the maintenance of the current social order. Individuals maintain the expectation of punishment, but observe that the group does not react accordingly. This situation might have several consequences not only related to reactions to deviance, but to the group itself, with potential impact on social cohesion and challenge to the current group's normative system.

Perceived Anomie and Group Disinvestment

A response to the perceived ineffectiveness of social control might be members' disinvestment from the ingroup and a decrease in the identification with the ingroup. Pinto, Marques, Levine, and Abrams (2016) showed that participants' belief in the ingroup's ability to detect and punish deviance predicted commitment to the ingroup. Importantly, trust in the group's social control system emerged

Figure 2. Level 2—Perceived anomie and ingroup disinvestment.



as a relevant mediator of this association. Participants presented with ineffective formal social control perceived higher levels of anomie within the ingroup, and the violated norms lost the prescriptive character leading to a decrease in normative behavior (given room for tolerance or even adherence to deviance; Pinto, Marques, & Paez, 2016). The search for entitative and polarized subgroups that seem able to reduce their uncertainty (Crano & Gaffney, 2021; Gaffney, Hackett, et al., 2018; Gaffney, Rast, & Hogg, 2018; Hogg, 2021) intensified by perceived anomie may also be responses that fit this process. In brief, individuals assume that each is able to decide about their own course of action based on their personal interest. This course of action might be chosen especially by low identifiers (Pinto, Marques, Levine, and Abrams, 2016); see Figure 2.

Ingroup disinvestment is not the only consequence of perceived social control inefficacy. Indeed, literature also shows that individuals may engage in actions aimed at compensating for the group's lack of skills to punish the deviant member. These actions are also theoretically sustained as identity motivated.

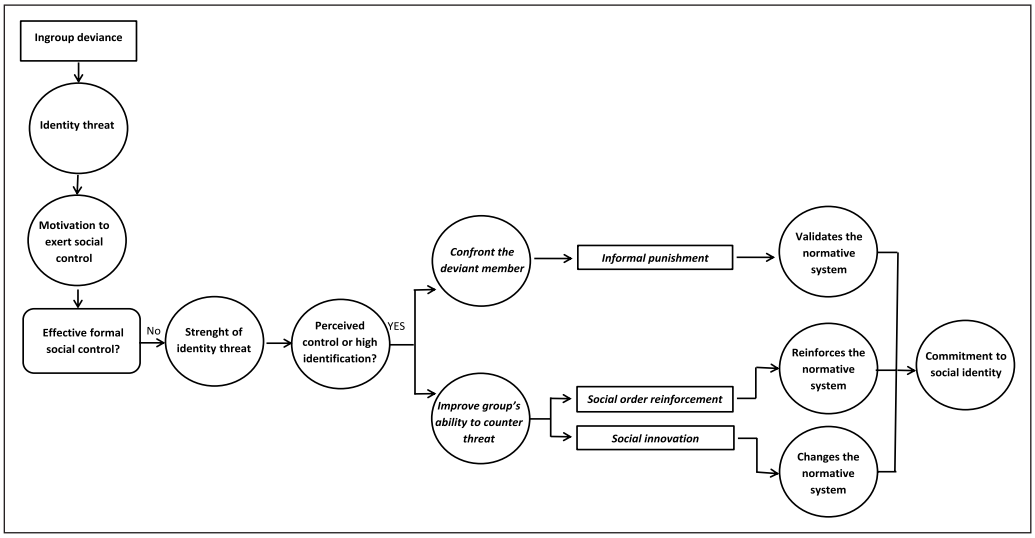
Identity Compensatory Action

Ditrich and Sassenberg (2024) largely inspired our reflection about the relevant predictors (besides high identification) to explain individuals' engagement in any action instead of one involving a group disinvestment path. They propose that confrontation (vs. escape reactions) of the deviant member depends on members' perceived efficacy of self and collective action on changing deviants' future behavior; i.e., they propose confrontation of the deviant member is dependent on how effective they feel they, or the group, are able to address the deviant behavior. Although directed to explain responses to deviance, we believe this process can also account for members' engagement in (in)action addressing the ingroup normative system, that is, aimed at reinforcing or changing the normative system.

We propose three types of compensatory action also based on identity motivated processes: (1) *social innovation* (i.e. change of the normative system); (2) *social order reinforcement* (i.e., namely, demand for improvement of social control mechanisms); (3) *informal punishment* (i.e., punishment of deviance by regular group members). The first two actions are directed to the group's normative system, aimed at improving the ingroup ability to deal with deviance in a more efficient way. The last one corresponds to responses to the offender and aim at exerting social control as a means to sustain the validity of the violated norms (Figure 3).

Social innovation. Members may engage in social innovation—a drastic change in the group's normative system. This reflects members' acceptance of the deviant position as normative.

Figure 3. Level 3—Identity compensatory action.



Efficacy of minority influence depends on factors such as salience of the minority, behavioral consistency, the majority's resistance to efforts of psychologizing toward the deviant position (Mugny & Pérez, 1986; Pérez, Papastamou, & Mugny, 1995), creativity of the deviant perspective (Moscovici, 1976, 1979), the adjustment between the deviant perspective and the majority's value system (Mugny & Pérez, 1986; Pérez, Falomir, & Mugny, 1995; Pérez, Papastamou, & Mugny, 1995). Importantly for this model, literature on social innovation also shows that the role the deviant member assumes in the group, their high identification with the group (Ben-Yehuda, 2015; Mugny & Pérez, 1991; Packer, 2008), a high level of perceived uncertainty in the group (Gaffney, Rast, & Hogg, 2018), or simply the fact that the deviant behavior is perceived as positive for the group (positive deviance; Ben-Yehuda, 1990; Heckert & Heckert, 2007; Köbis et al., 2018; Packer, 2008) stimulate adherence to social innovation by regular members. Members validate the deviant opinion as a normative one and internalize new norms as components of the group's ideology and identity. Although this process is usually not smooth within the groups (it starts with the common diagnosis of the minority response as a deviant—or even illegal—position that enacts punitive motivations to control it), the fact is that the absence of a secure normative support (posing a high level of perceived uncertainty in the group) or the perception that existing formal norms are harmful for the group or prescriptively weak, may lead group members (especially those already highly identified) to engage in the social innovation process within the group (Packer & Chasteen, 2010; Wolf & Zuckerman, 2012). Social innovation, thus, may be a consequence of a mismatch between formal and identity-based social control mechanisms, indicating that a behavior that is diagnosed as deviant by the formal social control mechanisms is expected by group members to be perceived as normative, thus perceiving formal social control mechanisms as barriers to the group's progress. Social innovation commonly also assumes a collective character, such as strikes, collective action aimed at fair, egalitarian, democratic values, or addressing the consideration of new group specific or global challenges.

Social order reinforcement. Carvalho et al. (2021) showed that participants that faced ineffective national formal social control, but who learned

that civic action had impact on government decisions, showed strong intentions to engage in civic action to contribute to society. Civic action and the idea that group members have the potential to improve the group institutions, appear to compensate for an unsatisfactory ingroup social control over deviance, preventing group members from disinvesting from the ingroup. This identity-based response reflects individuals' motivation to engage in action aimed at reinforcing the current group's social order. Other types of action that can be included in this category are support for political parties that advocate reinforcement of the judicial institutions, practices that are explicitly aiming at providing social institutions the means to combat impunity (Bradford et al., 2017; Leman-Langlois, 2019; Savelsberg & Chambers, 2019) or the creation of new organizations that contribute to strengthen the efficacy to combat offenders (as in the case of international criminal justice intervention and other international organizations such as the UN, that are expected to guarantee that powerful countries and leaders are not spared from punishment in case of human-rights offenses; Savelsberg & Chambers, 2019). Anti-elite populist groups are also typical examples that fall in this category; these groups frequently base their propaganda on accusing governments of misbehaving and gaining impunity because of the normative system's failure. These groups, particularly in threatening situations, gain popularity by protesting against the failure of the normative system, and propose to reinforce the repressive dimension of social control mechanisms (e.g., Crano & Gaffney, 2021; Gaffney, Hackett, et al., 2018). When individuals perceive they have the power to compensate for ineffective social control mechanisms, individuals maintain their commitment to the ingroup towards institutions and social order, but with the intention to reinforce it.

Informal punishment. Informal punishment is not governed by established laws or official authorities but are driven by group members' expectations for punitive reactions and frequently proves to be more effective than formal punishment (Rogers & Miller, 2019). Informal punishment assumes a relevant role in dealing with a mismatch between the exertion of formal and the social identity motivated punishment.

Informal punishment can vary extensively and assume several shapes, such as shaming, hostility, boycotts, loss of intragroup prestige, physical punitive sanctions or even psychological or physical exclusion. Normative group members implement informal punishment as an expression of disapproval by group members and a reflection that the group has lost trust in the deviant member (Levine, 1980; Levine et al., 2005), based on the threatening potential to the members' social identity (e.g., Ditrich & Sassenberg, 2024; Marques, Abrams, & Serodio, 2001) and that this member should be punished in order to restore the damage caused to the violated norm (Marques, Abrams, & Serodio, 2001; Pinto, Marques, & Paez, 2016). Interestingly, informal punishment tends to be more stringent compared to formal measures (Rogers & Miller, 2019), and can even assume collective extreme action forms as in the cases of popular justice actions (as in the lynching cases of Mussolini, Ceauşescu or Gaddafi).

Popular justice actions are attempts to compensate for the lack of a perceived effective group social control by reflecting a punitive collective action directed at the offender (cf. Campos et al., 2017; Carlsmith et al., 2007; Pinto et al., 2024; Strelan & van Prooijen, 2013). Popular justice encompasses various forms of collective action outside legal boundaries (Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1974), such as defamation (damaging the good reputation of someone), vigilantism (law enforcement self-appointed by normative group members), and even lynching (killing someone for an alleged offense without a legal trial). As a form of collective action occurring outside and in conflict with the formal institutions of the judicial system, those engaging in popular justice action feel free from the custody of those institutions, being counter-normative in the eyes of formal social control (Jackson et al. 2013; Zizumbo-Colunga, 2010, 2017), but normative regarding their beliefs that punitive reactions should be implemented and the need to restore justice-based values (DeCelles & Aquino,

2020; Favarel-Garrigues et al., 2020; Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1974; Strelan & van Prooijen, 2013). The Capitol attack in January 2021 and the 2023 Brazilian Congress attack by supporters of Trump and Bolsonaro respectively, are examples of violent popular justice against perceived unfair and ineffective institutions that legitimized an election that these supporters perceived as being a fraud.

Another example of extreme informal punishment is exclusion. Exclusive reactions directed to deviant members reflect the attempt to remove deviant members from group life, and are typically implemented when deviant members do not cooperate with group strategies, being implemented when 'all else fails' (Israel, 1956; Orcutt, 1973; Williams, 2007; see Levine, 1980, for a review), as is the case of formal social control mechanisms failure.

Some studies suggest that identity motivated punishment (derogation) of ingroup deviants could be perceived as an intention for exclusion (Fousiani et al., 2019), either physical (expelling the deviant member from the group; see Levine & Moreland, 1994) or psychological exclusion (as is the case of ostracism; Williams, 2007). Ineffective mechanisms to control deviance may trigger these harsher reactions as an adaptive response, namely to guarantee security to the group members (Johnston, 1996), thus, protecting the group from undesirable members, particularly a group that is perceived to have some fragilities regarding their ability to stand for the core values. For instance, Pinto et al. (2024) found that agreement with exclusive formal reactions (incarceration) and informal punishment (vigilantism) are predicted by ingroup protection motives when group members perceive ineffective social control mechanisms towards crime. These results show how group members attempt to guarantee control of deviance by compensating for the inability of the group with extreme punitive and controlling reactions.

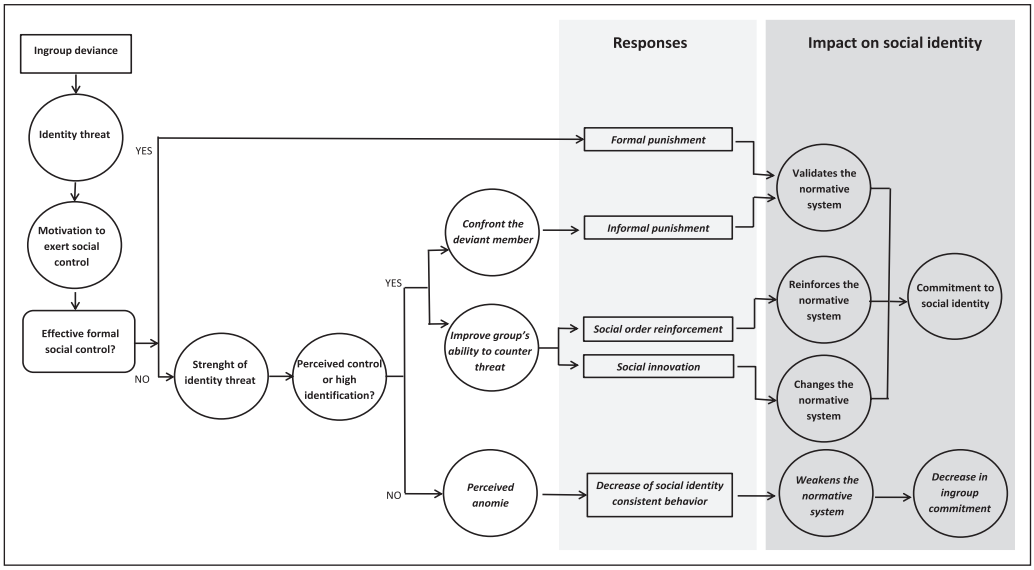
When deviance is highly threatening to the group's norms, incarceration (the most exclusive formal punishment in many societies) gains particular support among citizens. Importantly, such punishment is hardly recognized within the literature as an effective reintegrative measure. On the contrary, it disrupts familial and community bonds (e.g., Goffman, 1968; Kirk & Sampson, 2013; La Vigne et al., 2005) during the incarceration time. Likewise, exclusive reactions may also be implemented by not allowing individuals perceived as potential threats to the group to occupy full member roles within the group, preventing these offenders from having an active life within the group and from being able to achieve full membership, or frequently encouraging their engagement in alternative non-normative paths (DeLamater, 1968).

Consequences for Social Cohesion and Social Identity

We may view social control mechanisms as a set of group resources that contribute to sustain members' belief on the group's rationale and positive value and to resist potential external as well as internal threats to such rationale and value. Beliefs that judicial systems are effective or not in dealing with offenses in general seem to have a strong impact on citizens' commitment to the society and faith in government institutions. When people trust the judicial system, social cohesion seems to be more able to resist external threats by reinforcing individuals' positive social identity (Carvalho et al., 2021; Pinto, Marques, Levine, and Abrams, 2016). Likewise, we may reason that a similar process should occur when individuals engage in informal punitive reactions aimed at compensating for the lack of expected formal punishment. Indeed, evidence shows that through informal punishment (DeCelles & Aquino, 2020; Favarel-Garrigues et al., 2020; Marques, Abrams, et al., 1998; Pinto, Marques, & Paez, 2016; Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1974; Strelan & van Prooijen, 2013), group members are able to restore the prescriptive value of the violated norm and restore the value that was threatened, thus continuing to be committed to the group; see Figure 4 (full model).

However, when individuals perceive the group to be ineffective in implementing the adequate social control mechanisms to deal with

Figure 4. Social control identity motivated model (SCIM).



ingroup deviance, social cohesion is challenged. The most obvious negative outcome of ineffective social control is a weak social cohesion (Ben-Yehuda, 2015, 2019; Erikson, 1966; Pinto, Marques, Levine, and Abrams, 2016). Indeed, the adoption of egotistic behavior and tolerance for deviant behavior (even adherence to deviance), and also adherence to radical anti-system subgroups (that actually turn salient these subgroup memberships, and therefore, other social identities), reflect a decreased commitment to the ingroup with a largely negative impact on individuals' social identity (Pinto, Marques, Levine, and Abrams, 2016). In this context, instead of corresponding to a desirable form of intragroup diversity that we can observe among strongly cohesive and democratic societies (in which tolerance for others' idiosyncrasies are respected and discrimination is unacceptable), tolerance and adherence to deviant behavior, self-cenetred action or adherence to radical opponent entitative subgroups, contributes to the weakening of social ties: the group can no longer function towards promoting members' sense of belongingness and wellbeing, nor sustaining previously respected core values, trust and solidarity among members and between members and institutions (Crano & Gaffney, 2021; Gaffney, Hackett, et al., 2018; Gaffney, Rast, & Hogg, 2018; van Prooijen, 2024).

Action towards the group itself, namely towards the reinforcement of the existing normative system or social innovation, is directly intended to strengthen or to turn more effective the formal preventive and retributive social control mechanisms. Thus, these responses are, by definition, relevant to improve members' commitment to the group, therefore reinforcing social cohesion and enhancing the positive value of members' social identity, associated with the perception that the group has gained new vitality to stand for its core values; see Figure 4.

Future Research and Directions

The social control identity motivated (SCIM) model systematizes the literature by directly addressing the impact of (mis)match between formal and identity-motivated social control on responses both to deviant members, and to the ingroup itself. But some of the evidence argued to be relevant to theoretically justify this model,

although fitting the rationale, does not directly test the processes predicted in the model.

A predictor of the responses to ineffective social control is social identification, predicting either a path towards group disinvestment or confronting the deviant and/or reinforcing group's social system. However, to our knowledge, only Pinto, Marques, Levine, and Abrams (2016) directly showed low ingroup identification as a predictor of ingroup disinvestment facing ineffective social control, and high identification predicting reinforcement of ingroup normative systems. In the same vein, Ditrich and Sassenberg's (2024) model may account for the distinction between engaging in a path consistent with ingroup disinvestment or engaging in confronting the deviant and/or improving the normative system, although developed to account specifically to responses to deviance. Therefore, not only is there a need for more research regarding the actual impact of these predictors, but also other additional predictors need to be found that can contribute to the robustness of the distinction between the two types of path (group [dis] investment).

Moreover, although evidence from social psychology seems relevant to account for the choice to engage in informal punitive social control, the fact is that evidence is scarce in identifying clear-cut determinants of action aimed at reinforcing ingroup normative systems. Packer and colleagues' work (Packer, 2008; Packer & Chasteen, 2010), as well as social innovation tradition (Mugny & Pérez, 1986; Pérez, Falomir, & Mugny, 1995; Pérez, Papastamou, & Mugny, 1995), present some evidence explaining the conditions for social innovation. Literature on reinforcement of the normative system, namely on reinforcement of prescriptive normative systems and formal social control mechanisms is scarce, especially within the domain of social psychology, since they are directed at measuring practices that reinforce formal preventive and retributive social control mechanisms and procedures. Research on agreement with the strength of law enforcement, legal reforms, transparency and accountability practices in institutions, international cooperation, technological surveillance or even the raising of public awareness of the existing normative system (for instance, to encourage reporting behavior facing offenses) are examples of measures addressing the reinforcement of formal normative systems (e.g., Bradford et al., 2017; Leman-Langlois, 2019; Savelsberg & Chambers, 2019) that should be further studied as identity related psychosocial processes.

Conclusion

From a theoretical perspective, the foundations of this model rely on an integration between the traditional sociological functionalist perspective on deviance with social identification approach assumptions to explain how the perceived match between the implemented formal social control mechanisms and identity-motivated social control to deal with deviance in groups account for how individuals respond to deviance, and to the group itself, and are strategic to manage their social identity. This model proposes that when group social control mechanisms fail to punish deviance, this fact increases the threat associated with deviance itself. As a consequence, group members manage such threat by engaging in social identity protection strategies. Such strategies can vary from group disinvestment to compensatory action such as informal punishment, social order reinforcement or even social innovation.

This model is strongly inspired by the literature in social psychology regarding reaction to deviance, and especially on the assumptions of the subjective group dynamics theory regarding the impact of reaction to deviance on sustaining a subjective validation in a positive social identity. Here we extend this literature by acknowledging the need to consider the group's perceived competence (the exercise of formal retributive social control) in dealing with deviance to explain a significant component of individuals' strategies to manage social identity, in relation to their impact on social cohesion and members' social identity. Indeed, this model considers that the motivation to exert social control over a deviant member may not be sufficient to predict the type of

reaction individuals may engage in. The group's efficacy in dealing with deviance seems a relevant dimension to reinforce individuals' commitment to the group, particularly perceived ingroup inefficacy that becomes an additional significant source of threat that also needs to be dealt with by members. In such cases, compensatory action, either directed to the deviant member (informal punishment) or to the group (reinforcement of the group's vitality regarding social control mechanisms) might protect the group from individuals' disinvestment. Interestingly, such compensatory action may even assume a deviant meaning considering the existing formal social control mechanisms (e.g., popular justice), but that assumes an imperative prescriptive normative character when considering the search for a positive social identity (and commitment to the group's social cohesion).

This model also proposes that a weakened social cohesion within a society or social group might occur because the group is perceived to be unable to support the prescriptive norms and core values simply by not exerting punishment towards offenders to these norms. From a group standpoint, members that perceive that the group is ineffective in dealing with deviance and adopt an ingroup disinvestment course of action (thus decreasing their commitment to their identity as group members), have the potential to seriously endanger social cohesion and the strength of the ability of group norms and values to influence members' beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, thus jeopardizing the possibility to validate, reinforce or readapt the group normative system that would protect the core collective values that define the group's identity.

In brief, this model is an integrative model that aspires to contribute to better understand the antecedents and consequences for social groups facing the emergence of deviance, showing the need to consider the interaction between efficacy of group formal social control mechanisms and identity-motivated social control expectations. We hope this work inspires more research that contributes to strength, extend or challenge this model in an attempt to understand processes associated with the emergence of deviance and its impact on groups' social cohesion and on engagement of social identity protection strategies.

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