

Choosing a Group Representative: The Impact of Perceived Organizational Support on the Preferences for Deviant Representatives in Work Negotiations

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Abstract

Group representative selection in negotiation is a topic that has only recently attracted researchers' attention. This article focuses on workplace negotiations and examines how employees' selection of representatives depends on their level of perceived organizational support (POS). We predict and show that employees who experience high levels of POS send to the negotiation table ingroup representatives who are perceived as close to (rather than distant from) the management team. The first study establishes the effect. The second study replicates the findings and investigates the underlying mechanisms. Results show that POS impacts endorsement of pro-management representatives through an increased perception that these deviant members are typical of the employee's group. Change in perceived typicality is triggered by POS directly and via an increase in employees' organizational identification. We discuss of the positive and negative consequences for groups who send to the negotiation representatives who are close to the opposing group.

Negotiations between employers (or management teams) and employees are not only common but an essential part of the everyday organizational life. Because of the frequently large number of people concerned, negotiations at the workplace often rely on representatives (Teixeira, Demoulin, & Yzerbyt, 2011). A representative is an agent that is selected by a group of people (i.e., the constituencies) to represent them at the negotiation table. Worker representation is most evident in unionized environments but it is by no means the only type of representation instance that can occur in the organizational life. More often than not, informal representations occur in which a team of workers delegates one of their colleagues to, for example, discuss and negotiate problems or conflicts with their managers. Thus, although employment and labor relationships might differ across nations and cultures, worker representation, at least in informal settings, is a constant across organizational environments.

Research in the negotiation literature has shown that depending on who happens to be representing the constituencies at the negotiation table, different kinds of negotiation outcomes might arise (e.g., Steinel et al., 2010). In particular, studies have shown that representative members of the constituency group who are similar rather than different from the opponent negotiation party group tend to be more attentive and responsive to the information sent by their constituencies (Van Kleef, Steinel, & Homan, 2013).

In addition, the similarity-breeds-attraction hypothesis (Byrne, 1997) suggests that similarity with the opponent negotiation party could foster the establishment of a positive, cooperative atmosphere which would, in turn, lead to the development of successful win-win, integrative agreement in negotiations (Butler, 1999).

Despite of representative selection being of crucial importance for future negotiations' development, no research, to our knowledge, has so far investigated how organizational variables influence workers' selection of their representative. Understanding the organizational variables that are likely to influence workers' choice of representatives in worker-management negotiations might eventually allow organizations to identify the levers that will set the stage for the development of mutually successful and satisfying agreements. The studies presented in this article offer a first step in this direction as they focus on perceived organization support as a predictor of representative selection among employees.

We first review the recent literature on representatives' selection in negotiations before examining the impact of perceived organizational support on the preferences of workers regarding the representative who would best defend their interests at the negotiation table. Finally, we present two studies that test our hypotheses. While the first study assesses the basic predicted effect, Study 2 replicates findings of Study 1 and extends them by examining underlying mechanisms.

Intragroup Status as Determinant of Representative Endorsement

In the complex reality of the workplace, the groups that represented at a given negotiation table will vary as a function of the issue under discussion. In this article, we specifically focused on negotiations that involve diverging issues between a group of workers and their managerial team. Although workers and managers need not to be considered as opposing groups all the time and although they might sometimes even perceive themselves as part of a common superordinate group (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kafati, 2000), when their interests diverge on specific issues, subordinate identities are likely to become salient and dictate the negotiation parties' behavior (Turner, 1987). As abundantly shown by research on the self-categorization domain, the extent to which individuals act as a function of their personal preferences or group memberships will be a function of the salience of specific group memberships at a given moment (Turner, 1987). For example, the same individual might feel closer to a same gender person if gender issues are being discussed, whereas, at another moment she or he might find him or herself in the opposite side of this same person if the context puts forward distinctions based on age or tenure. Even if the organizational world is highly complex at this level, there are specific moments in which the issues under discussion might create clear intergroup situations. This is the case, for example, in negotiations in which structural features of the workplace that affect all employees in a given organization are discussed between the managerial team and representatives of the employees. In these contexts of divergence, where workers and management team are considered as two groups with diverging interests, intergroup (rather than interpersonal) processes will operate.

The higher the salience of the intergroup context, the more the intragroup status of a given individual will dictate not only his or her individual's behavior (Jetten, 2006) but also the way other ingroup members react to him or her (Hogg, 2001). In this respect, one differentiate between normative and pro-outgroup deviant members.¹ Normative members are the ones closer to the ingroup's prototype and best aligned with the group's norms. Because of their ability to minimize intragroup differences while

¹Although the literature distinguishes between pro-ingroup and pro-outgroup deviant members (e.g., Teixeira et al., 2011), we chose to restrict our analysis to pro-outgroup deviants. Indeed, pro-outgroup deviants, because they put intergroup differentiation at risk, trigger stronger and qualitatively different group reactions compared to pro-ingroup ones. Of special relevance for the present research, previous research has shown that group goals (Teixeira et al., 2011) and audiences (Teixeira, Demoulin, & Yzerbyt, 2015) impact preferences for pro-ingroup deviants *and* normative members in a similar manner, whereas pro-outgroup deviants are the exception to this rule.

maximizing intergroup ones (e.g., Haslam, Oakes, McGarty, & Turner, 1995; Turner, 1987), normative members usually benefit from a high status and from positive evaluations within the group. They are also more likely than other members to be endorsed as leaders (Hogg, 2001).

In contrast, pro-outgroup deviants deviate from the group's norm or prototype in the direction of the outgroup. Because of their deviant status and their borderline position between the ingroup and the outgroup, pro-outgroup deviants are believed to endanger the ingroup's positive distinctiveness (Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Martinez-Taboada, 1998). They are negatively evaluated by their fellow ingroup members (Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988) and unlikely to be appointed as group leaders (Hogg, 2001). In sum, people generally prefer normative members over pro-outgroup deviant ones and are more likely to appoint normative members as leaders and representatives. Exceptions to this rule, however, can be found in settings in which ingroup and outgroup are interdependent.

Research on intergroup interdependence contexts has shown that the appointment of pro-outgroup deviants to the role of representatives is perceived as a successful way to obtain the outgroup's support. For instance, Morton, Postmes, and Jetten (2007) showed that in political contexts in which the public opinion is not in line with a party's ideology, highly identified partisans prefer to vote for pro-outgroup deviant representatives relative to normative ones, because they perceive the former as more likely than the latter to please the audience of voters. Similarly, findings by Teixeira et al. (2011) indicate that intergroup negotiation contexts lead to heightened preferences for pro-outgroup deviant representatives. In these situations, that is, when the ingroup's goal is to convince the outgroup counterpart to make concessions, pro-outgroup deviants' proximity to the outgroup is considered an asset.

Furthermore, recent work (Teixeira, Demoulin, & Yzerbyt, 2013) has also suggested that the default preference for pro-outgroup deviants in intergroup negotiation contexts is accompanied by a change in the perceived typicality of deviant (but not normative) targets. Not only pro-outgroup deviant targets are endorsed as ingroup representatives in negotiations but they are also perceived as equally typical of the ingroup as their normative counterparts.

Most of the literature on representative endorsement in intergroup negotiations has, so far, been based on laboratory studies. Although necessary, such experimental studies are less suitable to explore and account for the influence of important variables that often taint real intergroup negotiation contexts. As mentioned above, the present article explores more ecological contexts, that is, organizational environments. We thought to examine the influence of an important determinant of multiple outcomes in organizational settings, that is, perceived organizational support, on representative selection in work negotiations between employees and representatives of their organization (i.e., the managerial team). In organizational contexts, pro-outgroup deviant members of the worker group are those employees who diverge in their profile in the direction of the managerial team. In contrast, normative members are those who best correspond to the worker profile. For the sake of clarity, we use the term "pro-management representatives" when referring to pro-outgroup deviants. We first briefly review the literature on perceived organizational support before further outlining our hypotheses.

Perceived Organizational Support

Employees' view of their organization is far from being disincarnated. To the contrary, employees have the tendency to assign humanlike characteristics to their organization and assume that it, with its goals, values, and abilities, holds benevolent or malevolent intentions toward them (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). When benevolence is assumed, workers experience high levels of perceived organizational support (POS). POS is defined as employees' perception that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Antecedents of POS include favorable job conditions and rewards (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), procedural fairness (Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001), perceived supervisor support (Eisenberger,

Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; Ng & Sorensen, 2008), as well as characteristics of the employee him or herself (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Organizational support theory takes its roots in the social exchange perspective that states that employment is the trade-off of effort and loyalty for material and socio-emotional rewards (Blau, 1964). On the one hand, POS benefits employees by increasing their general subjective well-being (e.g., increased mood, self-esteem and job satisfaction, and reduced stress; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). On the other hand, employees who feel supported are more likely to develop attitudes and behaviors that are beneficial to the organization (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). High levels of POS not only enhance the positive orientation of employees toward their organization and their work (e.g., organizational commitment; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003) but it also lead to valuable behavioral outcomes (e.g., job performance and reduced withdrawal behaviors; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) that should ultimately prove profitable for the efficiency of the organization as a whole. POS thus profoundly affects organizational life by modifying employees' attitudes and behaviors at work. Hereafter, we propose that such behavioral changes can also be observed on employees' preference and endorsement of pro-management representatives for an upcoming negotiation.

Perceived Organizational Support and Representative Endorsement

In the section on representative endorsement, we have seen that normative members, because they are perceived as typical members, are generally preferred as representatives of a group (Hogg, 2001). When pro-outgroup deviants are endorsed, this endorsement is accompanied by an increase in their perceived level of ingroup typicality (Teixeira et al., 2013). In the present article, we postulate that POS should increase employee's endorsement of pro-management representatives (Hypothesis 1) because POS will positively affect those deviants' perceived level of typicality (Hypothesis 2), either directly (Hypothesis 2a) or indirectly (Hypothesis 2b).

There are two major theoretical reasons suggesting that POS positively relates to pro-management targets' level of perceived typicality of the employee group and, hence, to their endorsement as representatives. First, it has been argued that derogation of ingroup deviant members relative to normative ones serves a strategy of intergroup differentiation (Marques et al., 1998). In contrast, when group members' motivation is to *approach* the outgroup, they tend to downplay specific aspects of their identity (Reicher & Levine, 1994) and shape ingroup representations in a way that secures outgroup's approval (Klein & Licata, 2003). Such motivations have been shown to lead group members to increase pro-outgroup deviants' typicality assessments (Teixeira et al., 2013). In line with this, the positive orientation of employees toward their organization created by POS (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011) should produce increased perceptions that pro-management group members are, in fact, typical of the employee group. By contrast, when employees have developed the impression that their organization does *not* care for their contributions and well-being (i.e., low POS), they should want to distance themselves of their organization. This motivation should then reduce perceived typicality of pro-management representatives (who are closer to the management group) and, by consequence, the endorsement of these members as representatives (Hypothesis 2a).

Second, POS should increase the perceived level of typicality of pro-management representatives because employees who feel supported by their organization are also more likely to identify with it at the superordinate level (e.g., Edwards & Peccei, 2010; Marique, Stinglhamber, Desmette, Caesens, & De Zanet, 2013). Superordinate organizational identification (OI) refers to the incorporation of the organizational membership into one's self-concept, that is, the perception of oneness with the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). OI means that the employee is thinking in terms of "we" rather than "I." Superordinate identification has been shown to change the meaning of the intergroup situation itself by attenuating intergroup boundaries (see research on the Common Ingroup Identification Model,

Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). In particular, superordinate identification impacts the perceptions of who is to be included in the ingroup and who is to be relegated to the position of outgroup (Turner, 1987). For instance, the cognitive changes triggered by superordinate categorization are reflected in increased typicality perceptions of outgroup members (Haslam et al., 1995). Given that previous longitudinal research has provided support for the causal role of POS in determining OI (Marique et al., 2013; Stinglhamber et al., 2015), we predict that POS should increase the perceived level of pro-management typicality indirectly through the increase of OI (Hypothesis 2b).

To summarize the theoretical argument presented above, we postulate that POS will increase the endorsement of pro-management representative through direct and indirect changes in perceived typicality of these members. Importantly, we do not expect perceived typicality of normative group members, and hence their endorsement, to vary as a function of perceived organizational support. Indeed, previous studies on representative selection and perceived typicality in intergroup negotiations have suggested that changes in representative endorsement and typicality levels are restricted to pro-outgroup deviant targets while normative group members' evaluations are relatively constant (Teixeira et al., 2013). We thus specifically predicted that the effect of POS on representatives' endorsement should only occur for those ingroup members who deviate from the norm in the first place (i.e., pro-management representatives), leaving unchanged the extent to which employees are likely to endorse normative members. Put differently, we postulate that the effect of POS on our dependent variables will be moderated by the intragroup status of the representative such that POS should only affect perceived typicality and endorsement of pro-management (and not normative) group members (Hypothesis 3). Figure 1A displays the theoretical model that will be tested in the present research.

Overview of the Studies

In two studies, we explore the impact of employees' perceived organizational support on their endorsement of normative and pro-management representatives. Study 1 aims at testing the general hypothesis that high levels of POS among employees would be related to higher endorsement of pro-management representatives (Hypothesis 1). Study 2 was designed to generalize our findings to a different organizational context and using an alternative dependent measure that allows us to disentangle preferences for normative and pro-management representatives (Hypothesis 3). In addition, Study 2 also explores the underlying mechanisms responsible for the observed effect (Hypotheses 2a and 2b).

Study 1

Sample

Data were collected among 259 graduate students (147 women) working at a large Belgian university ($M_{age} = 29.51$; $SD = 6.82$). Average organizational tenure was 4.04 years ($SD = 4.08$). The study focused on graduate students with a temporary work contract as those are the ones directly concerned by the negotiation scenario at hand in the study. The majority of our graduate student participants were teaching assistants (30.2%) followed by researchers on scholarships (25%), research assistants (19%), and researchers funded by the Belgian National Science Foundation (15.3%). The other 10.6% of our sample was composed by people working on other types of funding (e.g., funding from international institutions).

Procedure

At the moment the experiment took place, graduate student workers were involved in tense discussions over pay discrepancies among researchers within the university. Discrepancies were due to the

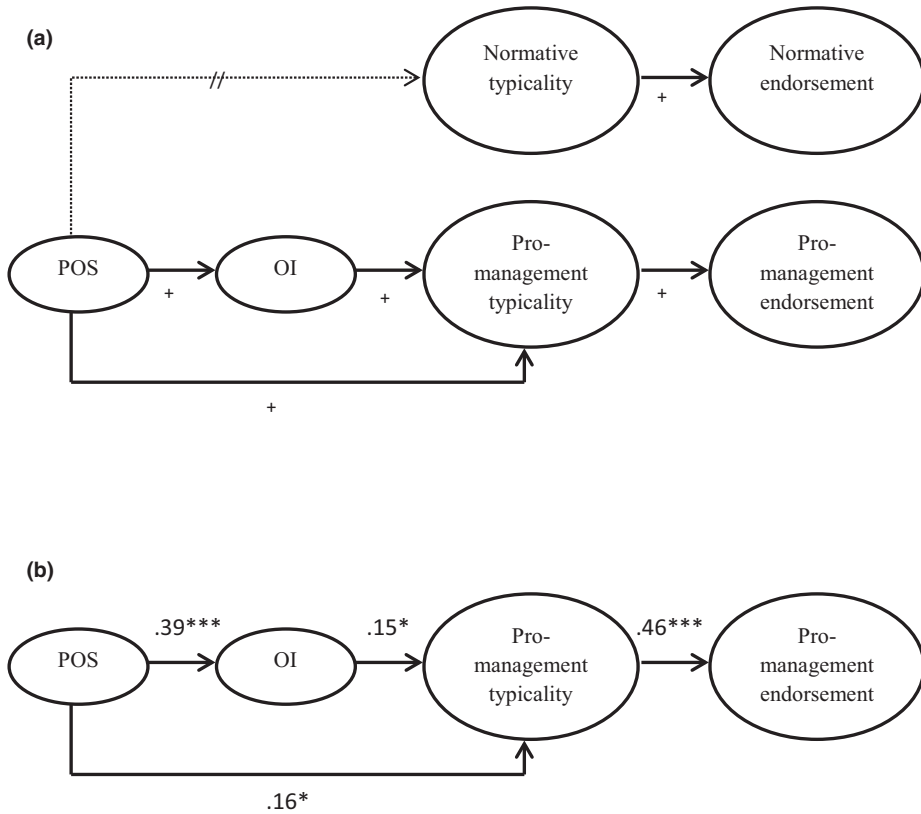


Figure 1. (A) Theoretical model. (B) Completely standardized path coefficients for the retained model (pro-management representatives, Study 2). For the sake of clarity, only structural relationships are shown. POS, perceived organizational support; OI, organizational identification. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

implementation of the Bologna Treaty in Belgium through which Master degrees replaced so-called License degrees. The problematic situation concerned the fact that the implementation of the new rules led to lower salaries for holders of a License degree relative to holders of a Master degree, despite of the fact that both perform the exact same job.

An email was sent to a mailing list containing all graduate student workers at the university. Participants were contacted by email to take part in an online survey. They were reminded of the pay discrepancies and were asked to imagine a negotiation between their representatives and the university authorities. The representatives were presented as members of the graduate student union. The alleged aim of the negotiation was to harmonize salaries within the university. Participants first completed a scale designed to measure their perceived organizational support. They were then asked to imagine that they had to select a representative to take part in the negotiation and to indicate which representative they would be likely to choose. Importantly, although the situation was not directly presented as conflictual between the two parties, employees and employers had a divergent position on the matter at hand as employees were arguing for an increase in salary which would inevitably impact the university's finances.

In the very particular context of this first study, the conflict of interest between the employees and their organization (i.e., the implementation of the Bologna Accords) had in fact been created by a third party. Indeed, given that salaries in Belgium's public service are determined by national barometers this

problem was indeed created by the national public administration and not the directly by the participants' university. However, other university had decided to take matters into their own hands and reestablish equality in pay for their employees, independently of national barometers. Given this particular context, some participants might have inferred that their organization had no direct responsibility in the conflict at stake whereas others might perceive the organization as being able but not willing to change the situation. Because we were interested in taking advantage of a real conflictual context, we had to make a trade-off between the ecological value of the context and its situational constraints. We did so by controlling for perceptions of responsibility of participants' university concerning pay discrepancies between the researchers. Indeed, organizational literature has shown that relationships between various organizational variables are most evident or especially strong when employees perceive their situation as being the result of internal forces rather than external constraints (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2004). Accordingly, POS should only be related to pro-management representative endorsement to the extent that participants appraised the conflict at hand as the result of internal forces within their organization.

Measures

Perceived Organizational Support

We measured employees' perception of the extent to which their organization cares about their well-being and values their contributions using the shorter 8-item version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (e.g., "The organization really cares about my well-being") (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Respondents rated their agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

Preference for a Representative

This variable was assessed by means of two pictorial items adapted from the pictorial measure of Inclusion of Other in the Self (Schubert & Otten, 2002). Pictorial items were preferred over other measures of representative preference because they allowed testing preference for normative and pro-outgroup deviant representatives without associating any specific content to the representatives' profiles. The first item represented the two groups (i.e., the authorities, named "the university" or UCL in the scale, and the researchers, named "temporary scientific personnel" or PST in the scale; see Appendix) by two overlapping circles. Inside the researchers circle, 7 aligned points were drawn and presented as potential researchers' representatives. Point 1 represented the researcher member who was the closest to the university authorities as it appeared inside the overlapping zone; subsequent members were presented at equidistance from one another and gradually further away from the university authorities with point 7 representing the most extreme graduate student member. The second item presented 3 circles: two big ones, representing the two negotiation parties (i.e., researchers and authorities), and one small circle within the researcher group, representing the researchers' representative. These circles were presented 7 times varying the position of the potential representative from very far away from (1) to very close to (7) the authority group. For both items, participants were instructed to choose one representative. After reverse coding of the first item, we computed an index of preference for representative with higher scores indicating greater willingness to choose a pro-management representative, that is, a representative who is close to the authorities ($r = .53, p < .001$).

Perceived Responsibility

Six items measured the extent to which the university authorities were perceived as having some responsibility in the existing pay discrepancy. Participants answered the items using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (e.g., "Actions undertaken by the university authorities caused the current pay discrepancies").

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Coefficients, and Intercorrelations among Variables (Study 1)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
POS	2.97	.62	(.82)		
Preference for representative	4.42	1.08	.09	(.86)	
Perceived responsibility	3.33	.76	-.31***	-.19**	(.86)

Note. *N* = 259. α coefficients are reported on the diagonal. POS, perceived organizational support.

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

Results

The data of 3 outliers were discarded. Two participants were more than three standard deviations above or below the means on the IVs. One participant had a studentized residual larger than three standard deviations on the regression analyses.

Descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and intercorrelations for POS, representative's preference, and perceived responsibility are presented in Table 1. Hierarchical regression analyses were performed to assess the interactive impact of POS and responsibility on representative preferences. POS (centered) and responsibility (centered) were entered as predictors at Step 1, while their interaction was added at Step 2, overall $F(3,252) = 4.93, p = .002$. Regarding the final model, the main effect of POS did not reach significance, $\beta = .005, t < 1, ns$, while perceived responsibility had a negative impact, $\beta = -.15, t(252) = -2.28, p = .02$, indicating that the more responsibility participants perceived the organization had in triggering the problem under negotiation, the less they were willing to approach the organization through the endorsement of a pro-management representative. Importantly, the interaction between the two predictors was significant, $\beta = .15, t(252) = 2.29, p = .02$. Simple-slopes analyses ($-1 SD$ for low Responsibility; $+1 SD$ for high Responsibility) revealed that when participants assumed that the organization had some responsibility in the pay discrepancies, POS increased preferences for the selection of a representative who is close to the authorities, that is, a pro-management member, $\beta = .14, t(252) = 1.73, p = .08$. In contrast, when perceived responsibility was low, the relationship between POS and representative preferences was not significant, $\beta = -.13, t(252) = -1.33, p = .18$.

Discussion

Study 1 provides support for the hypothesis that employees' POS increases the preference for a representative who is close to rather than far from the organization's managerial team (Hypothesis 1). In the particular context of the present study, where the conflict at hand had been created by a third party, our general hypothesis held only for those participants who perceived that the organization had some responsibility in creating the problem under discussion. Our findings are particularly innovative as they show that strategic considerations (see for instance, Morton et al., 2007; Teixeira et al., 2011) are not the sole determinants of pro-outgroup deviant endorsement. As suggested by the present findings, the relationships between the parties (in our case, the support employees perceive that they receive from their organization) might also play a role.

In a second study, we aimed at replicating these findings and exploring the underlying mediating mechanism through which POS influences pro-management representative endorsement. In line with our theoretical introduction, we explore two possible paths: a path in which POS would affect pro-management endorsement via a direct change in pro-management targets' perceived level of typicality (Hypothesis 2a) and a more indirect path in which the effect of POS on pro-management targets' perceived level of typicality is the result of a change in employees' organizational identification (Hypothesis 2b).

Study 2

In the current study, we measured POS and manipulated the intragroup status of potential representatives (normative vs. pro-management deviant). The later manipulation of intragroup status was aimed at testing the hypothesis that POS affects representative endorsement of the pro-management target but not the normative one (Hypothesis 3). In other words, we expected the intragroup status of the target to interact with perceived organizational support in determining preferences for a representative. To increase generalizability of our findings, we tested our hypotheses in a different organizational context and using a different dependent measure. Finally, given the results of Study 1, the scenario in Study 2 was created to describe a situation in which perceived responsibility would be high, that is, a situation in which the conflict of interest was solely dependent on internal forces.²

Sample

Data were collected via an electronic survey on a sample of employees from a Belgian public sector agency that works actively in “Public Health, Welfare, and Family” policies. This agency focuses on child protection and welfare by (a) promoting the medical and social well-being of children and families, (b) supporting parents-to-be and parents with young children, and (c) being responsible for registration of high-quality childcare. Among the 343 completed questionnaires (response rate = 26.38%), 262 were usable. Of this final sample, 81.7% were female, average age was 42.43 years ($SD = 10.57$), and average organizational tenure was 14.04 years ($SD = 11.45$). Correlations of these demographic variables with our dependent variable are presented in Table 3. At the time the study was conducted, labor relationships were stable in that specific company. The union membership’s rate in the sample was 56.8%. This percentage is in accordance with (a) the average union density rate in Belgium (52% when the data were collected; Visser, Martin, & Tergeist, 2011), and (b) the fact that higher union density in the public compared to the private sector is a common factor across European countries (Fulton, 2009).

Procedure

Participants rated their perceived organizational support as well as their organizational identification before being presented with a fictitious negotiation scenario. The negotiation was presented as a discussion over work time adjustment that would take place between the workers’ representatives and the managerial team. The chosen scenario did not mirror any actual negotiation underway in the company. The study used a fictitious scenario and was presented as such to limit the impact of our study on the organization’s functioning.

Participants were presented with two potential representatives for the upcoming negotiation. The representatives’ profiles were created to reflect a normative and a pro-management member in that particular organization. Pilot pretesting of perceived typicality (4 items, 9-point scale; Teixeira et al., 2011) of the two profiles with a different sample of employees from the same organization ($N = 18$) revealed that, as expected, employees perceived the normative representative as more typical of the employees ($M = 6.03$, $SD = 1.26$) than the pro-management one ($M = 5.24$, $SD = 1.08$; $t(18) = 2.142$, $p < .05$). Importantly, the two profiles were perceived as equally positive in valence (3 items, 9-point scale, $t < 1$). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which each profile was typical of the employees in that organization before being asked to evaluate the extent to which they would like each of these representatives to represent them at the negotiation table.

²We did not include perceived responsibility in Study 2 as we did it in Study 1 as we deliberately chose to focus on a situation in which no third party was involved. We therefore did not deem necessary to include the responsibility measure (as we expected to obtain ceiling effects) and are thus unable to compute a complete moderated mediation model.

Measures

A 5-point Likert-type scale was used to assess respondents' level of agreement with each item. The scales were anchored at each point and ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Perceived Organizational Support

We used the same 8-item scale as in Study 1 to assess POS.

Organizational Identification

We used the 6-item scale developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992) (e.g., "This organization's successes are my successes").

Perceived Target Typicality

Four items from Teixeira et al. (2011) measured perceived typicality of each of the two targets (e.g., "To what extent do you think that [Name of the target] is typical of the employee in this organization?").

Preference for Each Representative

Four items were developed to measure endorsement of the normative and the pro-management potential representatives separately (e.g., "Would you be susceptible to choose [Name of the target] as your representative?").

Control Variables

Participants were asked to report organizational tenure (in years) as well as their age. These variables were used in the subsequent analysis for control purposes.

Results

Discriminant Validity

Using LISREL 8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993), we conducted confirmatory factor analyses to examine the distinctiveness of the six constructs included in the study (i.e., POS, OI, normative's and pro-management's typicality and preference as representatives). Precisely, we compared the fit of nine nested models, ranging from the hypothesized six-factor model to a one-factor model. Details on how the variables that were distinguished in the six-factor model were combined to obtain the more constrained measurement models are provided in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, the six-factor model had the most acceptable values for the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), the nonnormed fit index (NNFI), and the comparative fit index (CFI) (Medsker, Williams, & Holahan, 1994). Moreover, the chi-square difference tests (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1982) indicated that all of the more constrained models displayed significant decrements in fit as compared with the six-factor model. Finally, all the indicators loaded reliably on their predicted factors. Consequently, we treated the six constructs separately in subsequent statistical analyses to test our hypotheses.

Relationships Among Variables

Descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and intercorrelations among all variables are displayed in Table 3. Of importance for our hypotheses, POS, OI, pro-management target typicality, and pro-management target preference correlated significantly with each other. In contrast, and as predicted, POS was not significantly related to normative typicality and normative preference, and OI displayed no significant

Table 2
Fit Indices for Nested Measurement Models (Study 2)

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA	NNFI	CFI	$\Delta\chi^2$
Six-factor model	912.48***	390	.07	.91	.92	–
Five-factor model: Equate Normative and Deviant typicality	1750.75***	395	.12	.81	.83	838.27***
Five-factor model: Equate Normative typicality and Normative preference	1281.05***	395	.09	.86	.87	368.57***
Five-factor model: Equate Deviant typicality and Deviant preference	1575.61***	365	.11	.82	.84	663.13***
Five-factor model: Equate Normative and Deviant preference	1672.10***	395	.11	.80	.82	759.62***
Five-factor model: Equate POS and OI	1615.95***	395	.11	.84	.86	703.47***
Three-factor model: Equate POS and OI; Normative and Deviant typicality; Normative and Deviant preference	3377.98***	402	.17	.64	.67	2465.5***
Three-factor model: Equate POS and OI; Normative typicality and preference; Deviant typicality and preference	2659.59***	402	.15	.71	.74	1747.11***
One-factor model	5058.35***	405	.21	.48	.52	4145.87***

Note. *N* = 262. POS, perceived organizational support; OI, organizational identification; *df*, degrees of freedom; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI, comparative fit index; NNFI, nonnormed fit index; $\Delta\chi^2$, chi-square difference tests between the best fitting model (six-factor model) and alternative measurement models. ****p* < .001.

relationship with normative typicality. Therefore, normative target’s typicality and endorsement were not considered in subsequent analyses.

Concerning our two control variables, organizational tenure was significantly related to pro-management target’s endorsement, whereas age was correlated with both pro-management target’s perceived typicality and preference. Following Becker’s (2005) recommendation, we controlled for the effects of these demographic variables when they were significantly related to our dependent variables and omitted them when they were uncorrelated with them.

Differential Effects of POS on Pro-Management and Normative Targets’ Endorsement

We computed a repeated-measure ANOVA with POS as a covariate and the intragroup status of the target (normative vs. pro-management) as a within-participants variable. Results showed that POS

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Coefficients, and Intercorrelations among Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
POS	3.13	.75	(.88)							
OI	3.51	.74	.33***	(.83)						
Normative typicality	3.47	.75	-.00	.02	(.85)					
Normative choice	3.88	.78	-.06	-.13*	.46***	(.89)				
Deviant typicality	2.84	.80	.23***	.18**	.02	-.14*	(.89)			
Deviant choice	3.02	.79	.20***	-.13*	-.06	-.20***	.44***	(.90)		
Organizational tenure	14.04	11.45	-.12	-.02	-.03	.12*	-.07	-.16**	–	
Age	42.43	10.57	-.10	.07	.03	.13*	-.20***	-.18**	.75***	–

Note. *N* = 262. α coefficients are reported on the diagonal. **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001.

interacted with target’s intragroup status, $F(1,260) = 7.51, p = .007$. Consistent with our Hypothesis 1, the simple-effects analyses revealed a positive effect of POS on endorsement of the pro-management representative, $\beta = .20, t(261) = 3.26, p = .001$. In contrast, and in line with Hypothesis 3, no relation between POS and endorsement was obtained regarding the normative target, $\beta = -.06, t < 1$.

SEM Analyses

Fit indices for the hypothesized structural model along with those for three alternative models are presented in Table 4. The hypothesized model accurately explained the data with a chi-square of 513.05 ($p < .001$) for 244 degrees of freedom, a RMSEA of .07, a NNFI of .94, and a CFI of .94. To assess whether the hypothesized model offered the best description of the data, we compared its fit to that of two other alternative models containing additional paths that were theoretically plausible. These models included (a) a direct path between POS and pro-management endorsement (Alternative 1) and (b) a path between OI and pro-management endorsement (Alternative 2). As can be seen in Table 4, the chi-square difference tests showed that neither of these alternative models offered significantly improved fit over the hypothesized model. We thus retained the hypothesized model as the best fitting model.

Standardized parameter estimates for the hypothesized model are shown in Figure 1B. For ease of presentation, we show the structural model rather than the full measurement model, and we describe the effects of the two control variables in the text. Age was significantly related to pro-management typicality ($\gamma = -.21, p < .001$) but not to pro-management endorsement ($\gamma = .02, p > .05$). Moreover, organizational tenure was not significantly related to pro-management endorsement ($\gamma = -.13, p > .05$). Controlling for these variables, the results showed that POS was significantly related to OI which, in turn, had an impact on pro-management typicality. Furthermore, pro-management typicality was significantly related to pro-management preference.

Finally, the results also showed that POS had a direct impact on pro-management typicality. These direct effects were confirmed by the results of bootstrapping analysis following the procedures outlined by Preacher and Hayes (2008). More importantly, given the purpose of this study, this method allows us to test each mediator’s unique ability to mediate, beyond the other mediators in the model. This was done by testing the significance of each indirect effect, conditional on the inclusion of the other mediators in the model. All results were based on 5,000 bootstrap samples. We report data parameters and bias-corrected and accelerated 95% confidence intervals (BCa CIs). The analyses showed that the total indirect effect was significant, with a point estimate of .10 and a 95% BCa CI of [.04–.18]. The fact that the confidence intervals excluded zero indicates a statistically significant indirect effect. A closer look at

Table 4
Fit Indices for Nested Structural Models (Study 2)

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	RMSEA	NNFI	CFI	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	Model comparison
Hypothesized model	513.05***	244	.07	.94	.94	–	–
Alternative 1 (path added between POS and deviant preference)	512.16***	243	.07	.94	.94	0.89 (1)	Hypothesized versus Alternative 1
Alternative 2 (path added between OI and deviant preference)	511.88***	243	.07	.94	.94	1.17 (1)	Hypothesized versus Alternative 2

Note. POS, perceived organizational support; OI, organizational identification; *df*, degrees of freedom; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; NNFI, nonnormed fit index; CFI, comparative fit index; $\Delta\chi^2$, chi-square differences tests between the best fitting model (i.e., the hypothesized model) and alternative structural models.

*** $p < .001$.

the specific indirect effects indicates that in line with Hypothesis 2a, this total indirect effect of POS on pro-management preference goes through pro-management typicality (i.e., the second mediator) (point estimate of .07 and a 95% BCa CI of [.02–.14]), and both OI and pro-management typicality (i.e., the two mediators) (point estimate of .02 and a 95% BCa CI of [.004 to .05]). In contrast, the indirect effect via OI only is not statistically significant (point estimate of .01 and a 95% BCa CI of [–.03–.06]). This latter finding is in line with the retained structural model which shows no direct path between OI and pro-management preference (see Figure 1B). As a whole, these results confirm the sequential mediation via OI and pro-management typicality in the relationship between POS and pro-management preference (Hypothesis 2b).

Discussion

In addition to replicating the findings of Study 1 (Hypothesis 1) in a context in which the organization is directly responsible for the negotiation issue, our second study explores the mechanisms underlying the positive effect of POS on preferences for a representative who is close to the managerial team. Study 2 provides support for the hypothesis that POS impacts deviant representatives' endorsement via an increase in pro-management's perceived typicality (Hypothesis 2a). In addition, results revealed that the increment of perceived typicality of the pro-management target is partly explained by an indirect effect of POS via participants' increase in organizational identification (Hypothesis 2b) (replicating previous findings in the literature; e.g., Edwards & Peccei, 2010; Marique et al., 2013) but that part of the variance in perceived typicality is also derived from POS directly. Finally, and as predicted, POS only affected assessments of the deviant pro-management target and had no impact on perceptions of the normative one (Hypothesis 3).

General discussion

In two studies, we showed that the more employees perceive that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, the more they are willing to send to the negotiation table a representative who is close to or shares some similarity with the management team. Whereas Study 1 focused on the direct effect of POS on representative endorsement, Study 2 explored the mechanisms underlying this effect. Consistent with our hypotheses, POS impacted the endorsement of pro-management representatives through an increase in typicality of these targets. Such increase in perceptions of typicality was triggered both by POS directly and indirectly *via* POS' positive impact on organizational identification. Interestingly, data from Study 2 also revealed that tenure tended to decrease the support one is willing to give to representatives who are too similar to the managerial team. Clearly, the latter findings would benefit from further investigation.

This research makes interesting contributions to the larger literature in multiple domains and sets the stage for future lines of inquiring. First, our results are likely to nuance the literature on intragroup dynamics. The fact that POS only had an impact on perceptions and endorsement of the pro-management target, and not of the normative one, suggests that deviant and normative members might have qualitatively different roles within a group. The existing literature on deviance has implicitly assumed that preferences for the two types of ingroup members are negatively correlated, often referring to these processes as intragroup differentiation (e.g., Marques et al., 1998). The current findings point to the possibility that (at least in certain situations) different processes may determine endorsement of one or the other target.

Second, our studies are unique in that, to the best of our knowledge, they are the first to explore endorsement of representatives in the organizational field and to place a specific focus on work negotiations. As such they speak to the organizational psychology literature and to the field of conflict management in the workplace by showing that perceived organizational support is an important determinant of who managers are likely to face in (conflictual) work negotiations. Our research nicely complements

literature on intergroup negotiations that has looked at negotiation behavior of different types of representatives (Van Kleef, Steinel, van Knippenberg, Hogg, & Svensson, 2007; Van Kleef et al., 2013; Steinel et al., 2010). Globally, this work has shown that representatives behave more or less competitively at the negotiation table as a function of their intragroup status and that this behavior is likely to lead to more or less integrative agreements. In light of these findings, it seems therefore important to get a better understanding of who is more likely to be selected as representative as this decision is not without consequences.

Third, the present findings also extend previous research on the selection of representatives in intergroup contexts. Previous work on this issue has focused on endorsement of pro-outgroup deviants as the results of ingroup self-presentational strategies aimed at influencing the other party (Morton et al., 2007; Teixeira et al., 2011). Our results suggest that this might not be the only motivation for this decision. Indeed, our results suggest that pro-outgroup deviant representatives are also endorsed as the result of an “authentic” perceptual rapprochement of negotiation parties prompted by increased perceptions of positivity of the intergroup relations (high POS).

Finally, previous research has highlighted the numerous positive consequences of POS for organizational life (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). We add to this literature by showing that when it comes to solving a divergence of interests between employees and their management, POS has the potential to increase similarity between the negotiating parties. Literature on conflict management shows that concern for the other is a key factor for conflict de-escalation as it triggers more cooperative and less competitive negotiation behaviors (Janssen & van de Vliert, 1996). Our findings extend these results by showing that perceptions of concern *unrelated* to the negotiation situation but rather focusing on the relation between the negotiating parties (i.e., POS) might also induce approach toward the counterpart even and this even before the negotiation begins.

Strengths and Limitations

An important strength of our studies is the fact that we employed different measures to assess normative and pro-outgroup deviant endorsement. This speaks to the generalizability of our findings. Given that a simple procedure as changing scale anchors can dramatically change results (Schwarz, Knäuper, Hippler, Noelle-Neumann, & Clark, 1991), replication of our findings in such different contexts can only be seen as a good thing as it means that the phenomenon is stable and relatively strong.

As suggested in the introduction, we were interested in extending emerging literature on representative endorsement in negotiation to ecological contexts. The present studies focused on the employee–employer relationship (i.e., POS). Although our model is designed to apply to all intergroup situations, we do not have at this point the necessary elements to draw such a strong conclusion. This drawback is however also a strength as it is, to the best of our knowledge, the first time that representative selection has been studied in an applied context. Second, it also puts forward the importance of taking into account the traditional intergroup relations literature when examining the employer–employee relationship in organizational settings.

Another potential limitation of our studies is the use of self-report measures, which may have resulted in some degree of common method bias. However, the use of self-report measures seems to be the most proximal way to address our central research question, which concerns employees’ perceptions. Additionally, we were able to partially address the concern over method bias by assuring participants of the anonymity of their responses (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Moreover, as showed by Siemsen, Roth, and Oliveira (2010), common method variance might lead to an attenuation of interactive effects. Therefore, the fact that we found significant interactions effects in both studies pleads in favor of our effects. Finally, the problem of common method variance was partially addressed in Study 2, since results of confirmatory factor analyses revealed that a single-factor model showed a poor fit to the data (i.e., Harman’s single-factor test; Podsakoff et al., 2003). As a whole, this evidence suggests that

common method variance is not a pervasive problem in the current research (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Spector, 2006).

Future Directions

One important question raised by the current results is whether or not it is a good thing for managers to be facing representatives who resemble them. Available empirical studies provide mixed evidence in this regard.

At first sight, the answer to this question is positive. Indeed, research has shown that trust is an important antecedent of the development of successful win-win integrative agreements in negotiations (e.g., Butler, 1999) and one efficient psychological strategy to build trust is to rely on perceived or real similarity between the parties involved in the negotiation (Thompson, 2009). In addition, the similarity-breeds-attraction hypothesis has long stated the effect of similarity on interpersonal liking (Byrne, 1997). It could thus be the case that management-like worker representatives foster the establishment of a positive, cooperative atmosphere that would then set the stage for the development of mutually successful agreements.

A second line of reasoning also suggests that sending deviant representatives to the negotiation table results in positive outcomes. Specifically, recent research has shown that prototypical, normative members feel secure about their membership in the group, while peripheral, deviant members face membership uncertainty and are therefore more motivated to improve their intragroup status than their normative fellows (e.g., Jetten, Branscombe, Spears, & McKimmie, 2003; Jetten, Hornsey, & Adarves-Yorno, 2006). On the basis of these findings, Van Kleef and colleagues (Van Kleef et al., 2013) hypothesized and found that intragroup status uncertainty leads accountable deviant members to be more attentive and more responsive to information than normative ones. This increased attention of deviant members led to the attainment of more integrative agreements between the parties.

However, these potential positive consequences aside, the endorsement of pro-outgroup deviant members might also entail some risks. First, the trust engendered by perceived similarity puts negotiators at risk of manipulation and exploitation by the opposing party (Oldmeadow, Platow, Foddy, & Anderson, 2003; Woodside & Davenport, 1974; ???). For instance, research has shown that people are more likely to comply with requests from individuals who resemble them (Burger, Messian, Patel, del Prado, & Anderson, 2004; Kelley & Woodruff, 1956; Silvia, 2005). Second, and more specific to the organizational context, although cooperative partnership between employers and worker representatives is sometimes presented as beneficial and leading to mutual gain (Geary, 2008; but see Roche, 2009), some researchers have suggested that parties who are too committed to each other do not achieve the highest joint-outcome solution or the most satisfactory one (Fry, Firestone, & Williams, 1979, *in* Lewicki, Saunders, & Barry, 2006), while at the same time perceiving their outcome as optimal (Rubin & Brown, 1975). In addition, research shows that too much similarity with the top management becomes controversial among employees when representatives start behaving like the managers (Rolfsen, 2011). It is thus plausible to assume that representatives with a pro-management profile would trigger more controversy from their constituencies than would more normative members. This is an aspect that would be interesting to consider, especially as work negotiations normally occur in the context of long-term work relations.

Third, the above-mentioned increased sensitivity of deviant members to their ingroup expectations (e.g., Jetten et al., 2003, 2006; Noel, Wann, & Branscombe, 1995) pushes them to display group-pleasing behaviors, which, in negotiation settings often translate in competitive actions (Steinel et al., 2010; Van Kleef et al., 2007). Indeed, in intergroup negotiations, competition is perceived as the norm (Benton & Druckman, 1974; Steinel et al., 2010). In times of crisis, and when the representative's efficacy is questioned by fellow ingroupers, the latter tendency should even be further increased as negotiators try to display more loyalty, commitment, and dedication to the group (Wall, 1975).

Coda

Our research points to the importance of a better understanding of the psychological variables that determine representative selection. More generally, it also pleads for considering the study of intergroup and intragroup dynamics simultaneously (Dovidio, 2013). Too often, researchers have concentrated their research efforts on one of the two processes without any consideration of the other. In the domain of intergroup negotiations, where interdependence is omnipresent, simultaneously focusing on what happens between the negotiation parties and within the groups present at the negotiation table is of prime importance.

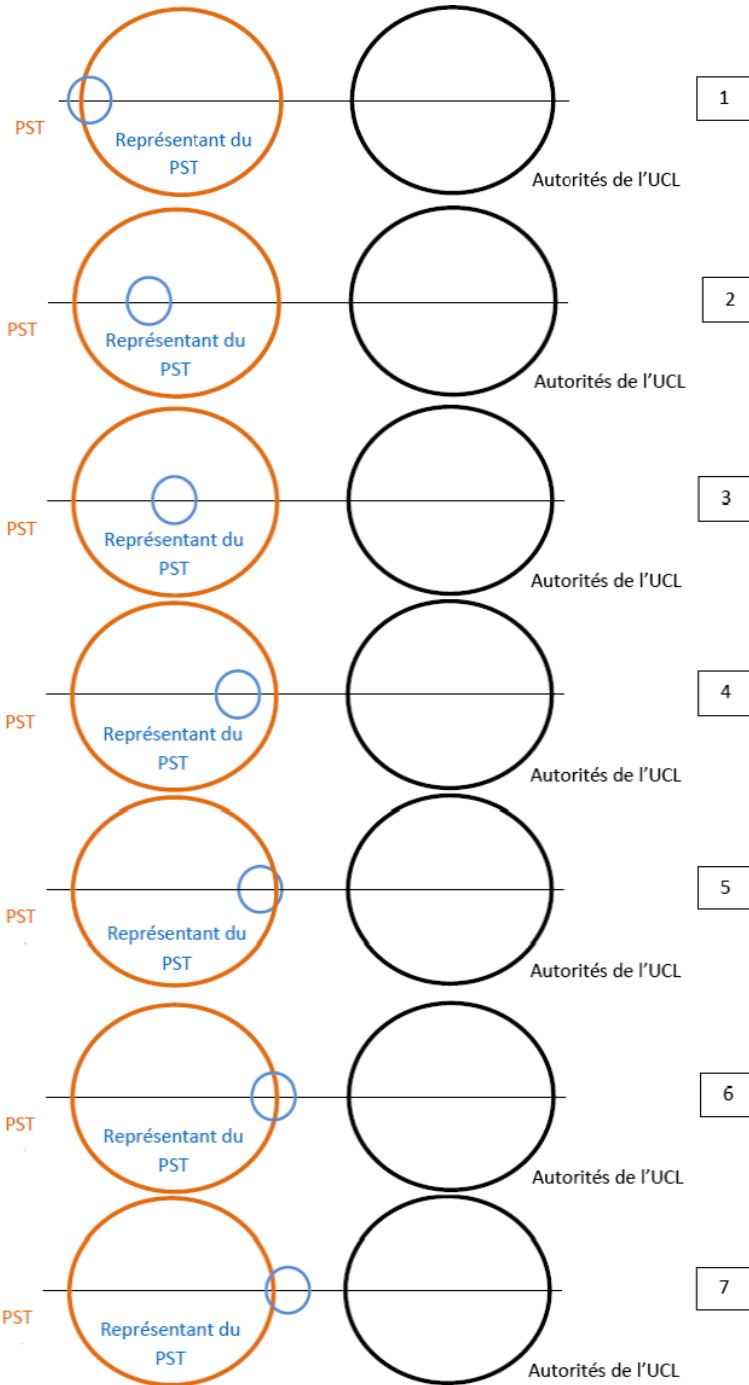
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Appendix: Preference for representative's scale (Study 1)



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