Mauro Bianchi - Statement of research interest

My research is broadly situated in basic and applied social psychology, specifically in intergroup relations with an emphasis on the role of social identity in the perception and evaluation of social groups. My current research focuses on intergroup behaviour, both in terms of its more spontaneous (e.g., approach/avoidance motor responses towards ingroup and outgroup members) and more controlled (e.g., helping behaviour) components. In my research I often use both explicit and implicit types of measures. Indeed one of my interests is related to the automatic effects of social knowledge activation. Most recently, I have developed an interest in the mediation role of emotions in discriminatory behaviour. Moreover, I have been collaborating in research on role of language in social perception and stereotype maintenance.

Below you will find brief descriptions of my research interests following a chronological order.

Stereotype activation, application, and maintenance

I have started being passionate about research in social psychology during my undergraduate studies at University of Padova. My first interest was related to the process of stereotyping and self-stereotyping. Specifically, I was fascinated in how being a member of a social group influences the way people "see" and evaluate themselves and others from the same or a different social group. In my undergraduate thesis I have developed this interest investigating the activation and application of stereotypic beliefs between heterosexuals and homosexuals.

In this area I have also worked on role of language in social perception and stereotype maintenance (Carnaghi, Maass, Gresta, Bianchi, Cadinu, &

Arcuri, 2008) and on gender beliefs (Carnaghi, Piccolo, Brambilla, & Bianchi, 2014).

Intergroup relations and social identity

During my PhD training, my interest in intergroup relations grew stronger and stronger. Being an Italian in Germany, I was particularly interested in how being identified with a social group (i.e., Italians) impact our evaluation of another social group (i.e., Germans) in a context of a common inclusive category (i.e., European). Building on the ingroup projection model, I worked on how the ideas people have of the ingroup influence their representation of what is common and, as a consequence, their evaluation of other groups included in the common group (Bianchi, Machunsky, Steffens, & Mummendey, 2009). Moreover, I was particularly interested in whether this process occurs even automatically, that is, outside consciousness (Bianchi, Mummendey, Steffens, & Yzerbyt, 2010). With a group of international colleagues we also investigated whether the process applies to the facial and visual representation of the common group. Indeed our findings point out that individuals' construal of the typical face of the common group "European" is biased toward their own subgroup's typical appearance in both a German and a Portuguese sample (Imhoff, Dotsch, Bianchi, Banse, & Wigboldus, 2012).

Intergroup Behaviour

My most recent interest is related to the consequences of dual identification and the representation of a common group for intergroup behaviour. I am working with both behavioural tendencies and direct behaviour. In particular, I am investigating whether the projection of ingroup (i.e., White Portuguese) instead of outgroup (i.e., Black Portuguese) traits to an inclusive category (i.e., Portuguese) affects intergroup behaviour. Approach and avoidance motor movements and the decision to give money either to an ingroup or to an outgroup member are often use as a proxy for intergroup behaviour in the current research (Bianchi & Waldzus, submitted for publication).