

## QUIET EGO AND NOISY EGO: A USEFUL DISTINCTION IN THE INVESTIGATION OF INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS

JESSICA BOIN  
ALBERTO VOCI  
UNIVERSITY OF PADOVA

---

The aim of this paper is to assess the relations of quiet ego and noisy ego, measured as psychological entitlement, with individual well-being and intergroup outcomes. After providing an initial validation of the Italian versions of the scales used to assess these ego dispositions (Study 1), we performed regression analyses of quiet ego and psychological entitlement on well-being indicators (Study 2) and on measures of intergroup emotions and evaluations (Study 3). Results showed that quiet ego was positively related to both individual well-being and positive intergroup perceptions and emotions. On the contrary, psychological entitlement showed to be a double-edged sword: it was positively related at the same time with psychological well-being and negative affect; moreover, it was related to a worsening of intergroup outcomes. These findings provide evidence for the benefit of having a quieter rather than a noisier ego for both individual well-being and intergroup relations.

Key words: Quiet ego; Noisy ego; Psychological entitlement; Well-being; Intergroup relations.

*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Alberto Voci, Department FISPPA – Section of Applied Psychology, University of Padova, Via Venezia 14, 35131 Padova (PD), Italia. Email: alberto.voci@unipd.it*

---

Having a solid and stable self-esteem, along with a positive self-image, an accurate sense of one's abilities, and the acknowledgment of one's limitations, is associated with many positive outcomes for individuals' psychological well-being (Chancellor & Lyubomirsky, 2013; Kernis, 2005; Kernis, Cornell, Chien-Ru, Berry, & Harlow, 1993). An unbalanced self-perception, instead, could be quite problematic. On the one hand, when the focus on the self is excessive, some side effects might be expected, such as high levels of negative affect and psychological distress (e.g., Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 1986; Mor & Winquist, 2002; Wood, Saltzberg, Neale, Stone, & Rachmiel, 1990). On the other hand, an excessive focus on others may also present aversive consequences, as it may be associated with depressive symptoms, lower well-being, and lower psychosocial adjustment (Helgeson, 1994).

These findings suggest the importance of reaching a balance between the awareness of the needs of the self and the motivation to care for others, as such a balance is likely to promote individual well-being and more harmonious relations with others. Following this assumption, Bauer and Wayment (2008) proposed the construct of *quiet ego*, conceived as a self-identity that transcends egoism and, at the same time, does not ignore self-interest. As stated by Wayment, Bauer, and Sylaska (2015), a quiet ego is present when “the volume of the ego is turned down so that it might listen to others as well as the self in an effort to approach life more humanely and compassionately” (p. 1000).

A quiet ego is characterized by four interconnected facets: detached awareness, inclusive identity, perspective taking, and personal growth (Wayment & Bauer, 2018). These four characteristics all contribute to a general orientation of balance and growth toward the self and others. Detached awareness allows individuals to be mindful of their surroundings, to focus on the present moment without judgments or preconceived ideas about how people and events should be. An inclusive identity embraces other people and the natural world within a broad self-definition, increasing cooperation and compassion. Through perspective taking, individuals reflect on other people's viewpoints, thus nurturing empathy and altruism. All these qualities are embedded in the perception of, and commitment to, a personal growth, a process of individual development in the long term. The multifaceted nature of quiet ego is reflected also in the instrument developed by Wayment et al. (2015) for its assessment. In particular, the 14 items of the Quiet Ego Scale (QES) were taken from preexisting instruments: the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003), the Allo-Inclusive Identity Scale (Leary, Tipsord, & Tate, 2008), the perspective taking subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1983), and the personal growth subscale of the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB; Ryff, 1989).

Different studies have showed that a quiet ego is associated with values and motives that balance the concerns between the self and others. For instance, a quiet ego has been found to be related to higher levels of self-esteem, life satisfaction, resilience, and, at the same time, to more frequent prosocial attitudes and behaviors, flexible thinking, and open-minded thinking (Wayment & Bauer, 2017; Wayment et al. 2015). Moreover, individuals characterized by a quiet ego showed to be particularly capable of facing stress in adversity and difficult moments of life (Wayment, Huffman, & Irving, 2018), using more frequently compassionate goals — which involve supporting others and contributing to their well-being — than self-image goals (Wayment, West, & Craddock, 2016).

Interestingly, although several studies showed the positive correlates of quiet ego both at the individual and at the interpersonal level, there is no research available showing its association with intergroup outcomes. Indeed, features such as perspective taking and allo-inclusive identity are particularly likely to be related to more positive attitudes toward the outgroups and, thus, to reduced prejudice (see Leary, 2019).

The opposite of a quiet ego is a wild, *noisy ego*. A noisy ego closely resembles narcissism, being characterized by excessive self-focus, an exaggerated self-confidence, and heightened perception of self-importance, often associated with a need for attention, approval, and other validations of one's worth (Campbell & Buffardi, 2008). People with an inflated self-view are often characterized by feelings of entitlement, the belief to deserve special treatments and privileges because they think they are worth it (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004).

Noisy ego individuals have a notion of their self as unique and special and, for that reason, they feel that they are entitled to special goods and treatments, deserving more than others. This might be apparently beneficial for individual well-being, being related to a positive — although exaggerated — self-image and high self-esteem. However, this is just an illusion (Robins & Beer, 2001). The self-image created by individuals with a noisy ego is often distorted and unrealistic and does not reflect the value and skills they truly possess (e.g., Ames & Kammrath, 2004), pushing them to react with threatened egotism when their inflated self-related expectations are not met (e.g., Besser & Priel, 2010). As a consequence, although a noisy ego could be occasionally related to well-being indicators, it is also often associated with negative affective states such as anger and disappointment, in particular when reality clashes with illusory self-images (e.g., Hickman, Watson, & Morris, 1996).

---

The costs and shortcomings of a noisy ego also involve social relations. The basis of self-worth in individuals with a noisy ego is the need for superiority and dominance. As they care about maintaining their grandiose self-views, they tend to respond with aggression, conflict, and hostility against those who threaten it (Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1989; Rhodewalt, Madrian, & Cheney, 1998; Zeigler-Hill, 2006).

A construct closely related to noisy ego is psychological entitlement, defined as an individual trait characterized by pervasive and enduring feelings of deservingness for more goods, services, or special treatment than others, with or without any dutifully earned right to those benefits (Campbell et al., 2004). Individuals characterized by high levels of psychological entitlement, measured by the 9-item Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES; Campbell et al., 2004), present several behaviors and attitudes typical of a noisy ego. In a series of studies, Campbell et al. (2004) showed that these individuals took more candy from a bowl that were destined to children in a developmental laboratory, rated themselves as deserving higher salaries than their coworkers in a hypothetical organization, made competitive choices in a commons dilemma, and reported behaving selfishly in romantic relationships. Moreover, Zitek, Jordan, Monin, and Leach (2010) found that individuals who scored high on PES, compared to low scorers, were more willing to engage in selfish behaviors and less willing to engage in helpful behaviors. Finally, Witte, Callahan, and Perez-Lopez (2002) found that entitlement was particularly associated with measures of anger in response to various threatening or frustrating situations.

Results are available also concerning the association between entitlement and intergroup relations. In particular, Anastasio and Rose (2014) showed that psychological entitlement was associated, in undergraduate students, with negative attitudes toward personally relevant outgroups, such as gay and lesbian people, African Americans, and rival students.

#### AIMS AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDIES

The aim of this paper is to test the simultaneous associations of quiet ego and noisy ego, measured as psychological entitlement, on well-being indicators and, as far as we know for the first time, intergroup outcomes. In Study 1, we propose the Italian versions of the QES and PES, as an Italian version of these instruments is as yet not available. With the aim of assessing the psychometric properties of the scales, we performed confirmatory factor analyses. In Study 2, we tested the associations of quiet ego and psychological entitlement on various well-being indicators, that is, life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, and psychological well-being. To ensure that the effects of the investigated ego dispositions were not affected by other confounding variables, we tested their predictive role while controlling for socio-demographic variables and two facets of socially desirable responding, that is, self-deception and impression management (Pauhlus, 1998). Finally, in Study 3 we assessed the importance of these two ego dispositions in the investigation of intergroup relations, analyzing their associations with intergroup anxiety, empathy for the outgroup, outgroup trust, and outgroup attitudes, considering as the target group immigrant people in Italy. In this case, the effects of quiet ego and psychological entitlement were controlled for sociodemographic variables and for a strong and well-established correlate of intergroup perceptions and prejudice, that is, social dominance orientation (Hodson & Dhont, 2015; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Based on the evidence in the literature we hypothesized that a quiet ego, as it implies concern for both the self and others, should have an overall beneficial effect on both individual well-being and intergroup relations. Conversely, we predicted that a noisy ego should have mixed effects on well-being and pervasively negative effects on intergroup outcomes. On the one hand, inflated self-consideration of enti-

bled individuals should increase the perception of psychological well-being, for instance in relation to higher self-acceptance and increased autonomy, while unrealistic self-image and exaggerated expectations should be related to increased negative emotions. On the other hand, as entitlement entails a focus on one's own needs at the expense of others, it is likely that PES scores would be related to negative intergroup outcomes (i.e., higher intergroup anxiety, lower empathy and trust, and worse attitudes toward the outgroup).

### Samples

The abovementioned hypotheses were tested using two samples: Sample A ( $N = 288$ ) in Study 2 for the investigation of individual well-being and Sample B ( $N = 328$ ) in Study 3 for what concerns intergroup relations. An aggregated sample (Sample A+B;  $N = 616$ ) was used in Study 1 with the aim of testing the psychometric properties of the scales.

Both samples were recruited from the general population (excluding from Sample B the target group, i.e., immigrants) by research assistants through their social network, at university, at work, and in their neighborhood. Participants individually completed an on-line questionnaire in Italian, including the measures of interest.

Sample A consisted of 288 Italian respondents (121 men, 167 women). Age ranged from 18 to 70 years ( $M = 30.24$ ,  $SD = 11.05$ ). Concerning educational level, 0.3% of participants had attended primary or basic school, 4.9% secondary school, 36.5% high school, and 58% had a university degree (1 participant did not indicate the level of education). Regarding occupations, 4.8% were manual workers, 12.8% were retailers, office workers, or teachers in primary schools, 5.5% were professionals, teachers in secondary schools, or academics, while 8.8% were retired, unemployed, or housekeepers; 22.5% were students. The remaining part of the sample did not report any occupation.

Sample B was composed of 328 Italian respondents (149 men, 179 women). Age ranged from 18 to 68 years ( $M = 29.52$ ,  $SD = 13.12$ ). Concerning educational level, 0.3% of participants had attended primary or basic school, 7.9% secondary school, 62.5% high school, and 29.3% had a university degree. Regarding occupations, 6.7% were manual workers, 21.6% were retailers, office workers, or teachers in primary schools, 4.8% were professionals, teachers in secondary schools, or academics, while 3.9% were retired, unemployed, or housekeepers. Finally, 61.3% were students, and the rest did not report any occupation.

### STUDY 1

The aim of this study was to investigate, through confirmatory factor analyses, the factorial structure of the Italian versions of the QES and PES, and to assess their overall reliability. This first step was necessary as, to our knowledge, the Italian adaptation of these scales is not available in the literature. As mentioned above, participants were taken from both Sample A and B, for a total of 616 respondents (mean age = 29.86,  $SD = 12.19$ ; 270 men, 346 women).

### Measures

*Quiet Ego Scale.* We employed an Italian version of the QES, a self-administered questionnaire composed of 14 items (Wayment et al., 2015). The QES includes four subscales, each representing a spe-

cific quiet ego characteristic. Detached awareness was measured by three items retrieved from the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Italian version by Veneziani & Voci, 2015). Perspective taking was assessed using four items from the IRI (Davis, 1983; Italian version by Albiero, Ingoglia, & Lo Coco, 2006). Growth was measured with four items from the PWB (Ryff, 1989; Italian version by Ruini, Ottolini, Rafanelli, Ryff, & Fava, 2003). Finally, inclusive identity was measured by three items from the Allo-Inclusive Identity Scale (Leary et al., 2008; as no Italian version of the scale was available, we translated the items especially for this research). Participants answered the 14 items on a 5-point scale (from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

*Psychological Entitlement Scale.* As no Italian version of the PES (Campbell et al., 2004) was available, first of all we translated the items into Italian, with the support of a native English-speaker social psychologist, who competently speaks Italian, in order to preserve as much as possible the strict meaning of the original items. The scale is composed by nine items, each with a 7-point response scale (from 1 = *strong disagreement* to 7 = *strong agreement*).

## Results and Discussion

We performed confirmatory factor analyses using the Statistical Software Mplus – Version 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). An acceptable fit to the data is indicated by root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) smaller or equal to .08, and comparative fit index (CFI) higher or equal to .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003). A nonsignificant chi-square is conceived as an indicator of a good fit to the data (Hu & Bentler, 1999). However, the chi-square is affected by the sample size. It is therefore common to compute the  $\chi^2/df$  ratio, which indicates an adequate fit when values are lower than 3 (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).

Concerning the QES, as we aimed to preserve as much as possible the structure and psychometric characteristics of the original version of the scale, we tested a second-order factorial structure, in which the 14 items loaded each on their respective first-order latent factor — detached awareness, inclusive identity, perspective taking, and growth. Thus, the four first-order factors were related to a second-order factor, that is, quiet ego. We did not allow cross-loadings of items or correlated errors between items. Robust maximum likelihood (MLR) was used. The fit indexes suggested an adequate fit:  $\chi^2(73) = 187.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 2.57$ ; RMSEA = .050; CFI = .950; SRMR = .056. The standardized factor loadings ranged from .42 to .88 (all significant,  $p < .001$ ), while the relations between first-order factors and second-order factor were .15 for detached awareness ( $p = .011$ ), .52 for inclusive identity ( $p < .001$ ), .93 for perspective taking ( $p < .001$ ), and .51 for growth ( $p < .001$ ). Thus, as for the original version, the confirmatory factor analysis supported a model with four first-order factors and one second-order factor. Cronbach's alpha for the 14-item scale was .78, the same as in the original scale (Wayment et al., 2015).

A confirmatory factor analysis using MLR was applied also to the PES. In this case, replicating the model proposed by the authors (Campbell et al., 2004), all items were treated as measures of a single latent construct, that is, psychological entitlement. The fit indexes were only partly acceptable:  $\chi^2(27) = 159.40$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 5.90$ ; RMSEA = .089; CFI = .904; SRMR = .048. Notably, such a mixed picture emerged also for the original version of the scale, as Campbell et al. (2004), in the validation paper, reported the following indexes:  $\chi^2(27) = 227.26$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 8.41$ ; CFI = .98; SRMR = .13. In our Italian version, the factor loadings yielded from .56 to .74, with the exception of the loading of the fifth item,

which was .31. All loadings were, however, significant at  $p < .001$ . Cronbach's alpha was good ( $\alpha = .84$ ), and congruent with the results of the original version ( $\alpha = .87$ ; Campbell et al., 2004).

To summarize, the findings of Study 1 suggested that the Italian versions of QES and PES preserved the factorial structure of the original scales. Furthermore, both scales showed a good internal consistency. Based on these findings, we tested our hypotheses using these translated instruments.

## STUDY 2

This study aimed to test the simultaneous associations of quiet ego and psychological entitlement with well-being indicators. In the investigation of these relations, we controlled for the effects of sociodemographic variables and two types of socially desirable responding, that is, self-deceptive enhancement and impression management. As mentioned above, respondents were taken from Sample A ( $N = 288$ ) and completed the following scales in an on-line questionnaire.

### Measures

*Quiet Ego (QES) and Psychological Entitlement (PES) scales.* We employed the scales described in Study 1. Cronbach's alpha in this sample was .77 for QES and .86 for PES.

*Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).* To measure global life satisfaction, we used five items of the SWLS (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), in their Italian version.<sup>1</sup> Participants rated each item using a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The scale showed good internal reliability ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

*The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS).* The 20-item version of the PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988; Italian version by Terracciano, McCrae, & Costa, 2003) was employed to measure positive ( $\alpha = .85$ ) and negative affectivity ( $\alpha = .90$ ). Using a 5-point scale, from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*), respondents indicated the extent to which they had experienced each of the 20 affective states during the previous weeks.

*Psychological Well Being (PWB) Scale.* The level of participants' well-being was measured using the 18-item version of the PWB Scale (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Italian version by Ruini et al., 2003). Response scale ranged from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*). Cronbach's alpha was .83.

*Social desirability.* We used the 16-item Italian version by Bobbio and Manganeli (2011) of the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; Paulhus, 1998). The BIDR allows the measurement of two different kinds of social desirability: self-deceptive enhancement — an involuntary description of the self as better than reality — and impression management — related to a conscious and voluntary effort to give a positive image of the self. Participants rated the 16 items on a 6-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The reliability of the self-deceptive enhancement subscale was good ( $\alpha = .73$ ), while that of impression management was acceptable ( $\alpha = .69$ ).

### Results and Discussion

Means and standard deviations of all measures, together with Pearson correlations, are reported in Table 1. Quiet ego and psychological entitlement were negatively and slightly correlated, suggesting that they

TABLE 1  
 Means (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*), and Pearson correlations between Study 2 variables

Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Quiet ego								
2. Psychological entitlement	-.12*							
3. PANAS positive	.32***	.06						
4. PANAS negative	-.15*	.20***	-.09					
5. PWB	.26***	.15*	.18**	-.12*				
6. SWLS	.29***	-.00	.34***	-.36***	.13*			
7. Impression management	.31***	-.14*	.04	-.20***	.13*	.19**		
8. Self-deception	.08	.34***	.17**	-.22***	.14*	.28***	.16**	
<i>M</i>	3.49	3.25	3.44	2.60	3.80	4.20	3.70	3.60
<i>SD</i>	0.52	1.11	0.69	0.90	0.73	1.18	0.90	0.81

Note. PANAS = Positive and Negative Affect Schedule; PWB = Psychological Well-being; SWLS= Satisfaction with Life Scale.  
 \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



represent two distinct constructs. Quiet ego was related to all well-being measures: it was positively correlated with positive affect, PWB, and SWLS, whereas it was negatively correlated with negative affect. Entitlement was positively related to both PWB and negative affect. No significant relation was found between entitlement, positive affect, and life satisfaction, whereas a positive link emerged between entitlement and self-deception. This last association can reflect the illusory self-image of entitled individuals.

For each well-being indicator, we then performed a regression analysis in which the predictors were sociodemographic variables (age, gender, and educational level), social desirability, quiet ego, and psychological entitlement (Table 2). Results showed that quiet ego was positively associated with positive affect ( $\beta = .30, p < .001$ ), life satisfaction ( $\beta = .22, p < .001$ ), and psychological well-being ( $\beta = .24, p < .001$ ). This is consistent with previous findings showing the beneficial role of quiet ego for individual well-being (Wayment & Bauer, 2017, Wayment et al., 2015). On the contrary, psychological entitlement had an ambivalent effect on well-being, showing a positive association with PWB ( $\beta = .17, p = .006$ ) but, at the same time, a positive relation with negative affect ( $\beta = .27, p < .001$ ). These findings support the notion of noisy ego as a double-edged sword, being related at the same time to indicators of well-being and affective uneasiness.

### STUDY 3

The aim of the third study was to extend the analysis of the simultaneous effects of quiet ego and psychological entitlement on intergroup outcomes. With the aim of providing a strict test of the associations between the two ego dispositions and intergroup attitudes and emotions, we considered as a concurrent predictor a strong and reliable antecedent of these criterion variables, that is, social dominance orientation. If quiet ego and/or psychological entitlement showed reliable associations with intergroup variables notwithstanding this control, it would mean that ego dispositions are worth considering not only in the investigation of individual well-being, but also in research on intergroup relations. As mentioned above, respondents were taken from Sample B ( $N = 328$ ) and completed the following scales in an on-line questionnaire.

### Measures

*Quiet Ego (QES) and Psychological Entitlement (PES) scales.* We employed the scales described in Study 1. Cronbach's alpha in this sample was .78 for QES and .84 for PES.

*Intergroup anxiety.* To measure intergroup anxiety we asked participants to imagine being the only Italian, in Italy, among unknown immigrants of their own gender, and to rate on a scale from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very much*) six emotional reactions (e.g., calm [R], embarrassed; Voci & Hewstone, 2003). Items were averaged to form a reliable composite score ( $\alpha = .91$ ).

*Empathy toward the outgroup.* Participants were asked to think about discriminations and difficulties experienced by immigrants living in Italy and to report to what extent they felt 10 emotional reactions (e.g., sorrow, emotional closeness; Pagotto & Voci, 2013) on a scale from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very much*). A reliable composite score was computed by averaging the 10 items ( $\alpha = .95$ ).

*Outgroup trust.* Participants were asked how often they experienced five trust-related emotions (e.g., trust, positive expectations, feeling of trustworthiness) toward immigrants in Italy (Voci, 2006). Responses ranged from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*very often*). Items were averaged to form a reliable composite index ( $\alpha = .83$ ).



TABLE 2  
 Associations of well-being indicators with quiet ego, psychological entitlement, and controls: Regression analyses (Study 2)

	PANAS positive				PANAS negative				PWB				SWLS			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE(b)</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE(b)</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE(b)</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE(b)</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	0.93	0.41		.024	3.87	0.53		< .001	1.48	0.44		< .001	-0.08	0.69		.905
Quiet ego	0.41	0.08	.30	< .001	-0.13	0.10	-.07	.207	0.34	0.09	.24	< .001	0.50	0.13	.22	< .001
Psychological entitlement	0.03	0.04	.05	.411	0.22	0.05	.27	< .001	0.11	0.04	.17	.006	-0.06	0.06	-.06	.349
Impression management	-0.07	0.05	-.08	.178	-0.06	0.06	-.06	.309	0.04	0.05	.05	.418	0.06	0.08	.05	.451
Self-deception	0.14	0.05	.17	.009	-0.27	0.07	-.25	< .001	0.04	0.06	.04	.496	0.41	0.09	.29	< .001
Gender	0.14	0.08	.10	.098	0.13	0.10	.07	.200	0.01	0.09	.01	.916	0.17	0.14	.07	.215
Age	0.00	0.00	.04	.475	-0.01	0.00	-.18	.002	0.01	0.00	.10	.093	0.00	0.01	.04	.458
Education	0.13	0.07	.11	.050	-0.03	0.08	-.02	.737	0.07	0.07	.06	.310	0.18	0.11	.09	.108
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.15***				.18***				.12***				.18***			

Note. PANAS = Positive and Negative Affect Schedule; PWB = Psychological Well-being; SWLS= Satisfaction with Life Scale. For gender: male = 1, female = 2. Significance levels for *R*<sup>2</sup> represent the overall significance of the models assessed with *F*-test. \*\*\* *p* < .001.

*Outgroup attitudes.* We measured attitudes toward immigrants asking participants to evaluate immigrant people on four adjectives (positive, unfavorable[R], friendly, negative[R]), from 0 = *not at all* to 4 = *very much* (Voci & Hewstone, 2003). Higher scores on this measure represented more positive attitudes toward the outgroup ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

*Social dominance orientation (SDO).* We used the 16-item SDO Scale (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) in its Italian version by Aiello, Chirumbolo, Leone, and Pratto (2005). Responses were provided on a 7-point scale (from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .91$ ).

### Results and Discussion

Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations between measures are presented in Table 3. Consistent with results of Study 2, quiet ego and psychological entitlement were negatively and weakly correlated. Quiet ego correlated with all intergroup variables. It was positively correlated with empathy for the outgroup, outgroup trust, and outgroup attitudes, whereas it was negatively correlated with intergroup anxiety. It was also moderately and negatively associated with SDO. Psychological entitlement presented an opposite pattern, being positively correlated with intergroup anxiety and SDO, whereas a negative correlation emerged with empathy for the outgroup, outgroup trust, and outgroup attitudes.

TABLE 3  
 Means (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*), and Pearson correlations between Study 3 variables

Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Quiet ego							
2. Psychological entitlement	-.17**						
3. Intergroup anxiety	-.29***	.23***					
4. Empathy for the outgroup	.37***	-.15**	-.39***				
5. Outgroup trust	.35***	-.31***	-.64***	.61***			
6. Outgroup attitudes	.38***	-.28***	-.53***	.61***	.72***		
7. SDO	-.40***	.32***	.25***	-.51***	-.45***	-.50***	
<i>M</i>	3.67	3.08	1.98	2.11	1.82	2.54	2.60
<i>SD</i>	0.50	1.05	0.92	0.90	0.73	0.73	1.11

Note. SDO = social dominance orientation.

\*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Regression analyses were then performed on intergroup variables, aiming to detect the specific and unique contribution of quiet ego and psychological entitlement while controlling for SDO, as well as for age, gender, and education (Table 4). Consistent with our hypotheses, quiet ego was positively related to empathy ( $\beta = .20, p < .001$ ), trust ( $\beta = .18, p < .001$ ), and outgroup attitudes ( $\beta = .20, p < .001$ ), whereas it was negatively related to intergroup anxiety ( $\beta = -.20, p < .001$ ). On the contrary, psychological entitlement was positively related to intergroup anxiety ( $\beta = .16, p = .003$ ) and negatively associated with outgroup trust ( $\beta = -.18, p < .001$ ) and outgroup attitudes ( $\beta = -.12, p = .016$ ). Furthermore, consistently with previous research, SDO had negative relations with empathy, trust, and attitudes, and a positive association with intergroup anxiety.

TABLE 4  
 Associations of intergroup outcomes with quiet ego, psychological entitlement, and controls: Regression analyses (Study 3)

	Intergroup anxiety				Empathy for the outgroup				Outgroup trust				Outgroup attitudes			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE(b)</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE(b)</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE(b)</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE(b)</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	2.17	0.57		< .001	1.27	0.50		.012	1.83	0.41		< .001	2.36	0.40		< .001
Quiet ego	-0.36	0.10	-.20	< .001	0.35	0.09	.20	< .001	0.26	0.08	.18	< .001	0.29	0.07	.20	< .001
Psychological entitlement	0.14	0.05	.16	.003	0.02	0.04	.02	.687	-0.12	0.03	-.18	< .001	-0.08	0.03	-.12	.016
SDO	0.13	0.05	.16	.008	-0.34	0.04	-.43	< .001	-0.22	0.04	-.35	< .001	-0.25	0.04	-.38	< .001
Gender	0.29	0.10	.16	.004	0.12	0.09	.07	.180	-0.13	0.07	-.09	.068	-0.00	0.07	-.00	.980
Age	-0.00	0.00	-.01	.888	0.00	0.00	.07	.154	0.00	0.00	.05	.353	-0.00	0.00	-.04	.413
Education	-0.03	0.08	-.02	.751	0.03	0.07	.02	.719	0.04	0.06	.03	.510	0.03	0.06	.02	.625
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.15***				.30***				.28***				.30***			

Note. SDO = social dominance orientation. For gender: male = 1, female = 2. Significance levels for *R*<sup>2</sup> represent the overall significance of the models assessed with *F*-test.  
 \*\*\* *p* < .001.

These findings suggest that having an identity that is more compassionate and less egoistic has beneficial effects on intergroup relations, while egotism was related to a worsening of the situation. Notably, these associations are present despite the expected detrimental effects of SDO.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

The aim of this paper was to examine whether quiet ego and noisy ego were associated with differences in individual well-being and intergroup judgments and emotions. We hypothesized that quiet ego would be related to both individual well-being and harmonious intergroup relations. On the contrary, we expected noisy ego, measured as psychological entitlement, to have mixed effects, characterized by ambivalent associations with well-being and a general worsening of intergroup outcomes. Before testing these hypotheses, we provided initial evidence of the psychometric qualities of the Italian versions of the two scales employed to measure quiet ego and psychological entitlement, that is, QES and PES.

The Italian versions of the scales shared many psychometric properties with the original English versions. In particular, the QES presented a second-order factorial structure, with four latent first-order factors — detached awareness, inclusive identity, perspective taking, and growth — that were adequately measured by the respective items and that were related to a second-order latent factor representing quiet ego. The structure of the PES was simpler, with a unique latent factor measured by the nine items of the scale. Notably, the goodness-of-fit indexes for the QES were satisfactory, as in the original version (Wayment et al., 2015). Instead, the fit indexes for the PES were partly problematic, but similar to those reported for the original version of the scale (Campbell et al., 2004). Both scales presented a good level of internal reliability, very close to the original English versions.

We found support for most of our hypotheses. In Study 2, quiet ego was positively associated with all well-being indicators, corroborating the idea that having a balanced self-identity facilitates well-being (Wayment & Bauer, 2017). Psychological entitlement was at the same time related to higher levels of psychological well-being and of negative affect, whereas it was unrelated to positive affect and satisfaction with life. These findings suggest that psychological entitlement is an unreliable ally in the search for well-being, probably due to the intrinsic fragility of an inflated and deceived self-image (Grubbs & Exline, 2016). Notably, these findings were obtained controlling for two types of socially desirable responding — impression management and self-deceptive enhancement — suggesting that ego dispositions had their effects on well-being over and above conscious or unconscious self-presentation strategies.

In Study 3, we found complete support for our hypothesis on the beneficial effects of quiet ego, which was positively associated with empathy, trust, and attitudes toward the outgroup and negatively related to intergroup anxiety. This is consistent with a primary feature of quiet ego, that is interest in the connection with others and the world (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). Psychological entitlement, as expected, was associated with less positive intergroup emotions, in particular lower trust and higher anxiety, as well as with less positive outgroup attitudes. This is consistent with research showing how entitled individuals tend to exhibit more negative evaluations of relevant outgroups (Anastasio & Rose, 2014). The fact that these results were obtained controlling for SDO is particularly important, as it shows that the beneficial effects of quiet ego, as well as the detrimental role of psychological entitlement, go beyond an individual difference that proved to be a strong and reliable antecedent of intergroup prejudice.

Some limitations in our analysis must be acknowledged. First, we employed convenience, nonrepresentative samples of Italian respondents, and thus our findings may not be necessarily generalizable to

the Italian population or other cultural contexts. Second, we employed only self-report measures, which may reflect inaccurate and/or insincere self-perceptions. Third, the correlational nature of our data does not allow us to identify the direction of the effects.

Moreover, we have to underline some limitations in the scales used to assess quiet and noisy ego. As noted above, the QES is composed of items taken from preexisting instruments, some of which are usually employed to assess well-being (i.e., the growth dimension of PWB; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) and the quality of social relations (i.e., the perspective taking dimension of IRI; Davis, 1983). This means that the associations between quiet ego, when measured by the QES, and these positive outcomes risk being inflated by overlaps between measures. To rule out this possibility, we repeated our regression analyses excluding from the QES the items derived from the PWB Scale (in Study 2) and from the IRI (in Study 3). The obtained results were very close to the ones reported above, suggesting that in our data the associations among quiet ego, well-being, and positive intergroup outcomes were not due to methodological artifacts. However, it is quite evident that in specific investigations of the correlates of psychological well-being or of empathy in interpersonal relations, the adoption of the QES could be problematic. The employment of the QES is instead advisable in research involving variables that are not covered by the subdimensions of the scale, such as implicit and explicit measures of intergroup attitudes, or well-being indicators that do not involve eudaimonic motives (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Concerning the PES, a problem that emerged in our data, as well as in the validation study (Campbell et al., 2004), was that some fit indexes were inadequate. Future research should investigate the behavior of the items of the scale, with the attempt to build a reduced scale with fully adequate psychometric properties.

Despite these limitations, our findings suggest that differences in the way to construct one's self-identity might have important consequences on individual well-being and intergroup relations. To sum up, while noisy ego confirmed to be a double-edged sword, quiet ego showed to have exclusively beneficial effects, both for the self and for others.

#### NOTE

1. The Italian version of the SWLS was retrieved from: <http://labs.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/SWLS.html>

#### REFERENCES

- Aiello, A., Chirumbolo, A., Leone, L., & Pratto, F. (2005). Uno studio di adattamento e validazione della scala di orientamento/tendenza alla dominanza sociale [A study for the validation of the social dominance orientation scale]. *Rassegna di Psicologia*, 3, 24-36.  
doi:10.7379/72099
- Albiero, P., Ingoglia, S., & Lo Coco, A. (2006). Contribution to the Italian validation of Interpersonal Reactivity Index. *TPM – Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, 13(2), 107-125.
- Ames, D. R., & Kammrath, L. K. (2004). Mind-reading and metacognition: Narcissism, not actual competence, predicts self-estimated ability. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 28, 187-209.  
doi:10.1023/B:JONB.0000039649.20015.0e
- Anastasio, P. A., & Rose, K. C. (2014). Beyond deserving more: Psychological entitlement also predicts negative attitudes toward personally relevant out-groups. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 5, 593-600.  
doi:10.1177/1948550613519683
- Bauer, J. J., & Wayment, H. A. (2008). The psychology of the quiet ego. In H. A. Wayment & J. J. Bauer (Eds.), *Transcending self-interest: Psychological explorations of the quiet ego* (pp. 7-17). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

- Besser, A., & Priel, B. (2010). Grandiose narcissism versus vulnerable narcissism in threatening situations: Emotional reactions to achievement failure and interpersonal rejection. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 29*, 874-902.  
doi:10.1521/jscp.2010.29.8.874
- Bobbio, A., & Manganello, A. M. (2011). Measuring social desirability responding: A short version of Paulhus' BIDR 6. *TPM – Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology, 18*, 117-135.  
doi:10.4473/TPM.18.2.4
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 822-848.  
doi:10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822
- Campbell, W. K., Bonacci, A. M., Shelton, J., Exline, J. J., & Bushman, B. J. (2004). Psychological entitlement: Interpersonal consequences and validation of a self-report measure. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 83*, 29-45.  
doi:10.1207/s15327752jpa8301\_04
- Campbell, W. K., & Buffardi, L. E. (2008). The lure of the noisy ego: Narcissism as a social trap. In H. A. Wayment & J. J. Bauer (Eds.), *Transcending self-interest: Psychological explorations of the quiet ego* (pp. 23-32). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Chancellor, J., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2013). Humble beginnings: Current trends, state perspectives, and hallmarks of humility. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 7*, 819-833.  
doi:10.1111/spc3.12069
- Davis, M. H. (1983). The effects of dispositional empathy on emotional reactions and helping: A multidimensional approach. *Journal of Personality, 51*, 167-184.  
doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.1983.tb00860.x
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 49*, 71-75.  
doi:10.1207/s15327752jpa4901\_13
- Greenberg, J., & Pyszczynski, T. (1986). Persistent high self-focus after failure and low self-focus after success: The depressive self-focusing style. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50*, 1039-1044.  
doi:10.1037/0022-3514.50.5.1039
- Grubbs, J. B., & Exline, J. J. (2016). Trait entitlement: A cognitive-personality source of vulnerability to psychological distress. *Psychological Bulletin, 142*, 1204-1226.  
doi:10.1037/bul0000063
- Helgeson, V. S. (1994). The effects of self-beliefs and relationship beliefs on adjustment to a relationship stressor. *Personal Relationships, 1*, 241-258.  
doi:10.1111/j.1475-6811.1994.tb00064.x
- Hickman, S. E., Watson, P. J., & Morris, R. J. (1996). Optimism, pessimism, and the complexity of narcissism. *Personality and Individual Differences, 20*, 521-525.  
doi:10.1016/0191-8869(95)00223-5
- Hodson, G., & Dhont, K. (2015). The person-based nature of prejudice: Individual difference predictors of intergroup negativity. *European Review of Social Psychology, 26*, 1-42.  
doi:10.1080/10463283.2015.1070018
- Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling, 6*, 1-55.  
doi:10.1080/10705519909540118
- Kernis, M. H. (2005). Measuring self-esteem in context: The importance of stability of self-esteem in psychological functioning. *Journal of Personality, 73*, 1569-1605.  
doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.2005.00359.x
- Kernis, M. H., Cornell, D., Chien-Ru, S., Berry, A., & Harlow, T. (1993). There's more to self-esteem than whether it is high or low: The importance of stability of self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65*, 1190-1204.  
doi:10.1037//0022-3514.65.6.1190
- Kernis, M. H., Grannemann, B. D., & Barclay, L. C. (1989). Stability and level of self-esteem as predictors of anger arousal and hostility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56*, 1013-1022.  
doi:10.1037/0022-3514.56.6.1013
- Leary, M. R. (2019). Hypo-egoic identity, prejudice, and intergroup relations. *TPM – Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology, 26*, 335-346.  
doi:10.4473/TPM.26.3.1
- Leary, M. R., Tipsord, J. M., & Tate, E. B. (2008). Allo-inclusive identity: Incorporating the social and natural worlds into one's sense of self. In H. A. Wayment & J. J. Bauer (Eds.), *Transcending self-interest: Psychological explorations of the quiet ego* (pp. 137-147). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Mor, N., & Winquist, J. (2002). Self-focused attention and negative affect: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 128*, 638-662.  
doi:10.1037//0033-2909.128.4.638



- Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (2012). *Mplus User's Guide* (7th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Muthén & Muthén.
- Pagotto, L., & Voci, A. (2013). Direct and mass-mediated contact: The role of different intergroup emotions. *TPM – Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, 20, 365-381.  
doi:10.4473/TPM20.4.5
- Paulhus, D. L. (1998). *Manual for the balanced inventory of desirable responding (BIDR-7)*. Toronto, CA: Multi-Health Systems.
- Rhodewalt, F., Madrian, J. C., & Cheney, S. (1998). Narcissism, self-knowledge organization, and emotional reactivity: The effect of daily experiences on self-esteem and affect. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24, 75-87.  
doi:10.1177/0146167298241006
- Robins, R. W., & Beer, J. S. (2001). Positive illusions about the self: Short-term benefits and long-term costs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 340-352.  
doi:10.1037/0022-3514.80.2.340
- Ruini, C., Ottolini, F., Rafanelli, C., Ryff, C. D., & Fava, G. A. (2003). La validazione italiana delle Psychological Well-being Scales (PWB) [Italian validation of Psychological Well-being Scales (PWB)]. *Rivista di Psichiatria*, 38(3), 117-130.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 141-166.  
doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.141
- Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 1069-1081.  
doi:10.1037//0022-3514.57.6.1069
- Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, C. L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 719-727.  
doi:10.1037//0022-3514.69.4.719
- Schermelleh-Engel, K., Moosbrugger, H., & Müller, H. (2003). Evaluating the fit of structural equation models: Tests of significance and descriptive goodness-of-fit measures. *Methods of Psychological Research Online*, 8, 23-74.
- Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (1999). *Social dominance: An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Terracciano, A., McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (2003). Factorial and construct validity of the Italian Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 19, 131-141.  
doi:10.1027//1015-5759.19.2.131
- Veneziani, C. A., & Voci, A. (2015). The Italian adaptation of the Mindful Awareness Attention Scale and its relation with individual differences and quality of life indexes. *Mindfulness*, 6, 373-381.  
doi:10.1007/s12671-013-0270-2
- Voci, A. (2006). The link between identification and in-group favoritism: Effects of threat to social identity and trust-related emotions. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 45, 265-284.  
doi:10.1348/014466605X52245
- Voci, A., & Hewstone, M. (2003). Intergroup contact and prejudice toward immigrants in Italy: The mediational role of anxiety and the moderational role of group salience. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 6, 37-54.  
doi:10.1177%2F1368430203006001011
- Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 1063-1070.  
doi:10.1037//0022-3514.54.6.1063
- Wayment, H. A., & Bauer, J. J. (2017). The quiet ego: Concept, measurement, and well-being. In M. D. Robinson & M. Eid (Eds.), *The Happy Mind: Cognitive contributions to well-being* (pp. 77-94). Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Wayment, H. A., & Bauer, J. J. (2018). The quiet ego: Motives for self-other balance and growth in relation to well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 19, 881-896.  
doi:10.1007/s10902-017-9848-z
- Wayment, H. A., Bauer, J. J., & Sylaska, K. (2015). The quiet ego scale: Measuring the compassionate self-identity. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 16, 999-1033.  
doi:10.1007/s10902-014-9546-z
- Wayment, H. A., Huffman, A. H., & Irving, L. H. (2018). Self-rated health among unemployed adults: The role of quiet ego, self-compassion, and post-traumatic growth. *Occupational Health Science*, 2, 247-267.  
doi:10.1007/s10902-010-9218-6
- Wayment, H. A., West, T. N., & Craddock, E. B. (2016). Compassionate values as a resource during the transition to college: Quiet ego, compassionate goals, and self-compassion. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 28(2), 93-114.
- Witte, T. H., Callahan, K. L., & Perez-Lopez, M. (2002). Narcissism and anger: An exploration of underlying correlates. *Psychological Reports*, 90, 871-875.  
doi:10.2466/pr0.2002.90.3.871



- Wood, J. V., Saltzberg, J. A., Neale, J. M., Stone, A. A., & Rachmiel, T. B. (1990). Self-focused attention, coping responses, and distressed mood in everyday life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58, 1027-1036.  
doi:10.1037/0022-3514.58.6.1027
- Zeigler-Hill, V. (2006). Discrepancies between implicit and explicit self-esteem: Implications for narcissism and self-esteem instability. *Journal of Personality*, 74, 119-144.  
doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.2005.00371.x
- Zitek, E. M., Jordan, A. H., Monin, B., & Leach, F. R. (2010). Victim entitlement to behave selfishly. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98, 245-255.  
doi:10.1037/a0017168