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One of Us? Political Leader Prototypicality, Legitimacy, and Intergroup Relations

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Resumo

A prototipicalidade do líder pode refletir expectativas descritivas sobre quem integra o grupo e prescritivas sobre como os seus membros devem pensar e agir, aqui operacionalizadas por características demográficas e alinhamento comportamental, respetivamente. À luz da abordagem da identidade social da liderança, examinou-se a sua influência na avaliação do líder político do endogrupo e nas atitudes face ao exogrupo, bem como o papel moderador da identificação com o endogrupo. Participantes portugueses (N = 95) leram textos pró-UE e eurocéticos com líderes que variavam nestes aspetos num desenho intersujeitos 2 × 2 e avaliaram o líder da posição com que mais concordavam. Os líderes comportamentalmente prototípicos foram considerados mais representativos e suscitaram reações mais positivas e menos negativas, mas não maior legitimidade. Uma associação indireta serial com a legitimidade, via representatividade percebida e reações positivas, foi significativa em níveis médios e elevados de identificação, embora uma associação direta ajustada favorecesse líderes comportamentalmente atípicos. Não houve suporte para as vias indiretas da prototipicalidade demográfica; a atipicidade demográfica associou-se inesperadamente a maior legitimidade e, separadamente, a menor empatia ajustada face ao exogrupo. A atipicidade comportamental associou-se ainda indiretamente a menor empatia para com o exogrupo, via reações negativas e polarização afetiva, em níveis médios e elevados de identificação, embora a interação com a identificação na predição das reações negativas não fosse significativa. Globalmente, os resultados sugerem que a prototipicalidade do líder é multidimensional e que os indícios demográficos e comportamentais se relacionam diferentemente com a avaliação do líder e as atitudes intergrupais.

Palavras-chave: prototipicalidade do líder, liderança política, legitimidade do líder, identificação com o endogrupo, relações intergrupais

Abstract

Political leaders are expected to represent their groups, but prototypicality may involve descriptive expectations about who group members are and prescriptive expectations about how they should think and behave. In this study, these dimensions were operationalized through leaders' demographic characteristics and behavioral alignment, respectively. Drawing on the social identity approach to leadership, this study examined how they shaped evaluations of an ingroup political leader and attitudes towards the outgroup, and whether ingroup identification moderated these processes. Portuguese participants (N = 95) read pro-EU and EU-sceptic texts accompanied by leaders whose demographic characteristics and behavioral alignment varied in a 2 × 2 between-participants design. Participants evaluated the leader associated with their more strongly endorsed position as the ingroup leader. Behaviorally prototypical leaders were perceived as more representative and elicited more positive and fewer negative emotional reactions, but not greater legitimacy. The serial indirect association with legitimacy through perceived representativeness and positive emotional reactions was significant at medium and high identification, despite a positive adjusted association favoring behaviorally atypical leaders. The proposed indirect pathways were not supported for demographic prototypicality; demographic atypicality was unexpectedly associated with higher legitimacy and separately with lower adjusted outgroup empathy. Behavioral atypicality was also indirectly associated with lower outgroup empathy through negative emotional reactions and affective polarization at medium and high identification, although its interaction with identification in predicting negative emotional reactions was non-significant. Overall, the findings suggest that leader prototypicality is multidimensional and that demographic and behavioral cues relate differently to leader evaluation and intergroup attitudes.

Keywords: leader prototypicality, political leadership, leader legitimacy, ingroup identification, intergroup relations

Index

Introduction 9
1. Social Identity and Leadership Prototypicality 9
2. Multidimensional Nature of Prototypicality 10
3. Perceived Representativeness, Positive Emotional Reactions, and Leader Legitimacy 11
4. Negative Emotional Reactions, Affective Polarization, and Empathy 12
5. The Moderating Role of Ingroup Identification 15
6. The Present Study 16
Method 18
1. Participants and Experimental Design 18
2. Procedure 19
3. Measures 21
3.1. Identification with the Presented Position 21
3.2. Leader Prototypicality 21
3.3. Perceived Representativeness 22
3.4. Emotional Reactions Towards the Ingroup Leader 22
3.5. Leader Legitimacy 23
3.6. Affective Polarization 23
3.7. Empathy Towards the Outgroup 24
Results 24
1. Effects of Leader Prototypicality 24
2. Correlational Analyses 25
3. Moderated Serial Mediation Analyses 26
3.1. Leader Prototypicality and Legitimacy 27
3.2. Leader Prototypicality, Affective Polarization, and Empathy 29
General Discussion 31
1. Behavioral (Prescriptive) Prototypicality and Ingroup Leader Evaluations 32
2. Behavioral (Prescriptive) Prototypicality and Outgroup Responses 34
3. Demographic (Descriptive) Prototypicality 36
4. Limitations and Future Studies 38
Conclusion 41
References 42
Appendix A- Survey 48

Introduction

Political leaders are expected to represent the groups they lead, yet what makes a leader representative of a group is not always straightforward. A leader may resemble the typical members of a group in demographic terms, reflecting more descriptive aspects of the group prototype, while diverging from the group's prescriptive values and positions, or may display the opposite pattern. This distinction may be particularly relevant in political contexts, where leaders are publicly associated with collective positions and identities and are expected to act on behalf of the groups they represent. Research within the social identity approach to leadership has shown that leader group prototypicality is consequential for how leaders are evaluated and supported by group members (Hogg, 2001; Steffens et al., 2021). However, treating prototypicality as a single, general characteristic may obscure the different ways in which a leader can correspond to, or deviate from, the group they represent.

Importantly, the consequences of leader prototypicality may extend beyond evaluations of the leader itself. How prototypical a leader is perceived to be may influence not only how that leader is evaluated and granted legitimacy, but also the emotional and motivational identity responses they elicit and, through these responses, attitudes towards political outgroups. The importance of these processes may also depend on how strongly individuals define themselves in terms of the group. When group membership is more central to the individual, whether a leader reflects or departs from the characteristics, values, and expectations associated with that group may become more consequential (Hogg, 2001; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001). Ingroup identification may therefore help explain for whom leader prototypicality matters most. Examining demographic and behavioral prototypicality together with ingroup identification may thus provide a more nuanced understanding of how political leaders are evaluated and how these evaluations may extend into broader intergroup relations.

1. Social Identity and Leadership Prototypicality

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) proposes that individuals define themselves, in part, through their group memberships, which carry emotional and evaluative significance and shape preferences and behaviors in accordance with the norms and values associated with these social identities. When a particular group

membership becomes salient, individuals may perceive themselves and others as members of a shared social category.

Self-Categorization Theory (Turner et al., 1987) further explains this process by proposing that social categories are cognitively represented through group prototypes. These prototypes include the characteristics, attitudes, values, and behaviors that characterize the group and distinguish it from relevant outgroups (Hogg, 2001). Group prototypes are therefore inherently comparative and context dependent. According to the meta-contrast principle, group members are perceived as more prototypical to the extent that they are more similar to other ingroup members while being distinct from members of a relevant outgroup (Turner et al., 1987). In this sense, prototypicality reflects how well a person embodies the characteristics that define the ingroup in relation to other groups, that is, what distinguishes "us" from "them".

This process is particularly relevant to leadership. From the social identity approach to leadership, leaders are evaluated not only on the basis of personal characteristics or formal authority, but also in terms of how well they embody the group to which they belong (Hogg, 2001). Leaders who are perceived as closer to the group prototype can more clearly express the shared identity of the group and what it means to be "one of us". Their capacity to influence group members and to be evaluated more favorably may therefore depend, at least in part, on the extent to which they are perceived as prototypical of the group (Hogg, 2001; Hogg et al., 2012).

2. Multidimensional Nature of Prototypicality

Although prototypicality has often been treated as a general characteristic of group members, group prototypes are not fixed or necessarily defined by a single attribute. Rather, they can be understood as flexible, context-sensitive clusters of characteristics, or "fuzzy sets", that define what it means to be a member of a particular group (Hogg, 2001; Steffens et al., 2014). The prototypical position within a group may therefore shift depending on the characteristics that become relevant in a given context (Steffens et al., 2014). These characteristics may reflect both descriptive aspects of group membership, concerning what group members are typically like, and prescriptive aspects, concerning the values, attitudes, and behaviors expected from group members (Hogg & Reid, 2006).

Building on this perspective, the present study distinguishes between two dimensions of leader prototypicality: demographic prototypicality, referring to the leader's demographic characteristics, and behavioral prototypicality, referring to the extent to which the leader's discourse, behavior, and expressed values reflect those relevant (core) to the group's identity distinctiveness. In the present study, these dimensions broadly reflect more descriptive and more prescriptive aspects of the group prototype, respectively.

Demographic prototypical characteristics can become relevant when particular attributes are associated with what a typical group member is expected to be. Hogg and Terry (2000), for instance, note that in some contexts prototypicality may be linked to demographic characteristics such as gender or ethnicity, making leadership more difficult to achieve or maintain for group members who are perceived as less prototypical on these dimensions. In the present study, demographic prototypicality therefore refers to the extent to which a leader's demographic characteristics correspond to those descriptive traits associated with a typical representative of the group.

The *behavioral dimension of prototypicality* reflects a different aspect of group representation. Definitions of prototypical leadership frequently emphasize the leader's embodiment of shared group values, norms, and behavioral expectations (Hogg, 2001; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; Steffens et al., 2014). Behavioral prototypicality can therefore be understood as the extent to which a leader expresses, through their discourse, behavior, and ideological positions, the values, norms, and attitudes that are central to the group's identity and are expected to be respected by group members.

3. Perceived Representativeness, Positive Emotional Reactions, and Leader Legitimacy

Although leader prototypicality may be expressed through different group-defining characteristics, its importance for leadership may depend on whether those characteristics lead the leader to be perceived as representative of the group. Platow and van Knippenberg (2001) state that "prototypical group members represent what the members of the groups have in common" (p. 1510). Perceived representativeness may therefore constitute an important psychological mechanism linking leader prototypicality to subsequent evaluations of leadership. When a leader is perceived as

representative of the group, embodying its goals, norms, and values, group members are more likely to accept and endorse that leader (Hogg et al., 2012). Perceived representativeness may therefore help explain why more prototypical leaders are granted greater legitimacy.

Perceiving a leader as representative of the ingroup may also shape the emotional responses elicited by that leader. Research on the social identity approach to leadership consistently shows that group-prototypical leaders are evaluated more favorably, receive greater support, and are trusted more than less prototypical leaders (Barreto & Hogg, 2017; Steffens et al., 2021). Prototypical leadership has also been associated with greater satisfaction among followers (Cicero et al., 2007; Pierro et al., 2009), while broader identity leadership processes have been linked to positive group-based emotions such as pride (Hou et al., 2021). A leader who is perceived as embodying the group and its defining characteristics may therefore elicit more positive emotional reactions, including respect, satisfaction, pride, and security. These reactions may, in turn, contribute to greater acceptance and endorsement of the leader and strengthen perceptions of legitimacy.

Positive emotional reactions may therefore constitute an additional mechanism through which perceived representativeness translates into leader legitimacy, suggesting a sequential relationship between leader prototypicality, perceived representativeness, positive emotional reactions, and legitimacy.

4. Negative Emotional Reactions, Affective Polarization, and Empathy

Leader prototypicality may also shape negative emotional responses. When an ingroup leader fails to reflect the characteristics and values associated with the group, this deviation may undermine their perceived ability to represent the ingroup and elicit negative emotional reactions. Research on the black sheep effect shows that deviant ingroup members can be evaluated particularly negatively when they depart from relevant group norms (Marques et al., 1988) and especially when they are ingroup representative members (Pinto et al., 2010). Research focusing specifically on leadership further shows that transgressions by ingroup leaders can elicit perceptions of group threat and negative emotional responses, particularly when those leaders are perceived as lacking legitimacy (Marques et al., 2021). From a social identity perspective, such reactions should be particularly relevant when group membership is

important to the individual, as the leader functions as a symbolic representative of the group (Hogg, 2001).

However, ingroup leaders are not invariably penalized for violating norms. Research on transgression credit shows that group members may judge these leaders more favorably than other transgressive targets when the leader is perceived as acting in the group's interests (Abrams et al., 2013). Departures from normative standards may therefore be tolerated when they appear compatible with protecting or advancing the interests of the ingroup.

Such tolerance may be withdrawn, however, when a leader's conduct threatens the group's moral reputation. Abrams et al. (2014) examined racism as a boundary condition of transgression credit because racist expressions violate widely endorsed societal norms and may discredit the group represented by the leader. Across two studies, ingroup leaders lost their transgression credit when their misconduct included a racist element. In these circumstances, distancing the group from its leader may become a way of protecting the group's social standing. These findings highlight the importance of considering what a leader's deviations mean for the ingroup. Departures that appear compatible with collective interests may be tolerated, whereas departures that challenge the values through which the ingroup defines itself may elicit stronger negative reactions.

Negative reactions towards a non-prototypical ingroup leader may, therefore, have implications beyond the evaluation of the leader itself. According to the subjective group dynamics perspective, differentiating between normative and deviant ingroup members can contribute to maintaining the validity of the group's norms and its positive distinctiveness from relevant outgroups (Pinto et al., 2010). A leader who departs from characteristics or positions relevant for ingroup distinctiveness may therefore challenge not only expectations regarding the leader, but also the boundaries that distinguish the ingroup from the outgroup. Negative reactions towards such a leader may therefore be connected to efforts to maintain a favorable distinction between the ingroup and the outgroup.

In political contexts, stronger differentiation between political groups may be reflected in affective polarization, understood as increasingly negative evaluations and social distance towards members of the political outgroup, rather than simply

disagreement over political issues (Iyengar et al., 2012). Accordingly, negative emotional reactions towards a non-prototypical ingroup leader may be associated with greater affective polarization towards the opposing group, as these reactions may contribute to reinforcing the distinction between “us” and “them”.

Beyond the negative evaluations and social distance captured by affective polarization, political intergroup relations may also differ in how individuals respond to members of the opposing group. Empathy is particularly relevant in this context because it captures an additional dimension of intergroup relations, concerning individuals’ capacity to understand and respond to the experiences and perspectives of outgroup members (Vanman, 2016). These empathic responses are sensitive to group boundaries, with individuals generally showing greater empathy towards ingroup than outgroup members (Vanman, 2016) and with research further showing that stronger intergroup opposition can intensify this empathy bias, particularly when relations between groups are characterized by competition and outgroup antipathy (Cikara et al., 2014).

Thus, it is possible that, if negative reactions towards a non-prototypical ingroup leader contribute to reaffirming the distinction between the ingroup and the outgroup and are reflected in greater affective polarization, this increased intergroup distance may also be accompanied by a lower willingness to understand and respond empathically to outgroup members. Consistent with this reasoning, political opponents have been shown to elicit less empathy than political allies or politically neutral targets (Casey et al., 2025). Empathy towards the political outgroup may therefore constitute a relevant expression of these intergroup dynamics, reflecting whether stronger differentiation from the outgroup is accompanied by a lower willingness to understand its members and recognize their good intentions.

Importantly, responses towards the political outgroup may also depend on the extent to which individuals identify with that group. Although the outgroup in the present study corresponds to the political position with which participants agreed less, individuals may still vary in the extent to which they identify with that position. Political identity and greater similarity in beliefs with outgroup members have been associated with more favorable evaluations of those groups and lower affective polarization (Turner-Zwinkels et al., 2025). Such variation in outgroup identification

may therefore be relevant when examining affective polarization and empathy towards outgroup members.

5. The Moderating Role of Ingroup Identification

The influence of leader prototypicality is unlikely to be uniform across group members. According to the social identity approach to leadership, the extent to which individuals identify with a group determines how strongly group-based characteristics influence their perceptions and evaluations of leaders (Hogg, 2001). Individuals who identify more strongly with an ingroup should therefore be particularly attentive to whether a leader reflects the characteristics, values, and norms that define that group.

Previous research supports this proposition. Fielding and Hogg (1997) found that the relationship between leader group prototypicality and perceived leadership effectiveness was stronger among participants who identified more strongly with the group. Platow and van Knippenberg (2001) further showed that leader ingroup prototypicality played a particularly important role in leadership endorsement among high identifiers. More broadly, research on the black sheep effect indicates that evaluations of ingroup members become particularly consequential when their behavior is relevant to individuals' social identity, with normative ingroup members being evaluated more positively and deviant ingroup members more negatively (Marques et al., 1988). These findings suggest that leader prototypicality becomes a more relevant basis for evaluating leaders as identification with the group increases.

Importantly, stronger ingroup identification does not necessarily imply more positive or more negative evaluations of leaders in general. Rather, it may increase individuals' sensitivity to whether a leader conforms to or deviates from the ingroup prototype. Prototypical leaders may therefore receive more favorable evaluations among stronger identifiers, whereas deviations from group-defining characteristics, values, and norms may become more consequential for these individuals (Hogg, 2001; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001).

This heightened sensitivity may be reflected in both cognitive and emotional responses to the leader. When leaders correspond more closely to the ingroup prototype, individuals who identify more strongly with the group may be particularly likely to perceive them as representative of the ingroup. Conversely, because the leader acts as

a symbolic representative of the group, deviations from the ingroup prototype may elicit stronger negative emotional reactions among stronger identifiers. Ingroup identification may therefore shape the extent to which conformity to, or deviation from, the group prototype influences both perceived representativeness and emotional responses to the leader.

Importantly, this reasoning may apply to both demographic (descriptive) and behavioral (prescriptive) dimensions of prototypicality. Although these dimensions capture different aspects of the group prototype, both can contribute to defining the ingroup and distinguishing it from relevant outgroups. Stronger identifiers may therefore be particularly sensitive to conformity or deviation in either dimension. Accordingly, ingroup identification is expected to moderate the relationships between both forms of leader prototypicality and perceived representativeness, as well as between both forms of leader prototypicality and negative emotional reactions.

6. The Present Study

The present study investigates how different dimensions of ingroup leader prototypicality influence evaluations of political leadership and intergroup attitudes. Specifically, it distinguishes between demographic (descriptive) prototypicality, reflecting expectations concerning characteristics that are typical of group members, and behavioral (prescriptive) prototypicality, reflecting expectations concerning the behaviors, values, and positions associated with group membership. Although these dimensions capture different aspects of the group prototype, both may contribute to defining the ingroup and distinguishing it from relevant outgroups.

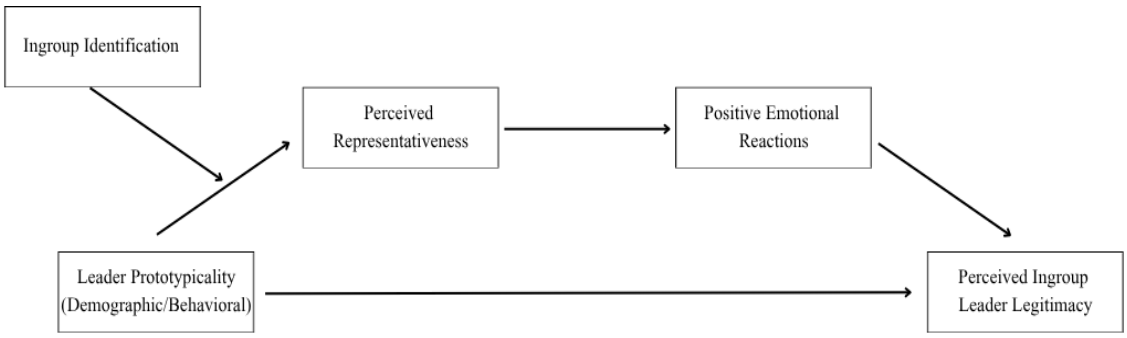
At a first level, the study examines whether experimentally manipulating these two dimensions of leader prototypicality produces differences in evaluations of the ingroup leader. It is hypothesized that ingroup leaders presented as more prototypical, whether demographically or behaviorally, will be perceived as more representative of the ingroup, elicit more positive and fewer negative emotional reactions, and be perceived as more legitimate than less prototypical ingroup leaders (H1).

Beyond these mean differences, we also intend to test two psychosocial models. The first model (Figure 1) examines the process through which leader prototypicality may relate to perceived leader legitimacy. Greater ingroup leader prototypicality, both

demographic (descriptive) and behavioral (prescriptive), is expected to be associated with greater perceived representativeness, which, in turn, is expected to be associated with more positive emotional reactions towards the leader and, subsequently, greater perceived legitimacy (H2). Furthermore, ingroup identification is expected to moderate the relationship between leader prototypicality and perceived representativeness, such that this association will be stronger among individuals who identify more strongly with the ingroup (H3). Based on the reasoning developed above, this moderating effect is expected for both demographic and behavioral prototypicality.

Figure 1

Moderated Serial Mediation Model Representing the Effect of Ingroup Leader Prototypicality (Demographic/Behavioral) on Perceived Ingroup Leader Legitimacy, Mediated by Perceived Representativeness and Positive Emotional Reactions, and Moderated by Ingroup Identification.

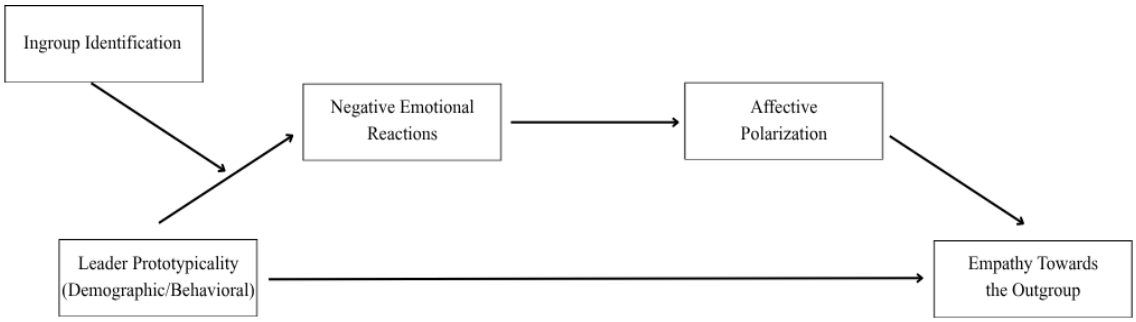


The second model (Figure 2) examines whether evaluations of the ingroup leader may also be associated with attitudes towards the political outgroup. Lower ingroup leader prototypicality, both demographic (descriptive) and behavioral (prescriptive), is expected to be associated with stronger negative emotional reactions towards this leader, which, in turn, are expected to be associated with greater affective polarization and, subsequently, lower empathy towards the outgroup (H4). However, these reactions may be particularly pronounced for behavioral deviations, because they concern the political position defining the ingroup, whereas demographic atypicality does not necessarily contradict its shared commitments. Ingroup identification is again expected to moderate the first association in this process. Specifically, the relationship between leader prototypicality and negative emotional reactions is expected to be stronger among individuals who identify more strongly with the ingroup (H5). As in

the first model, this moderating effect is expected for both demographic and behavioral prototypicality.

Figure 2

Moderated Serial Mediation Model Representing the Effect of Ingroup Leader Prototypicality (Demographic/Behavioral) on Empathy Towards the Outgroup, Mediated by Negative Emotional Reactions and Affective Polarization, and Moderated by Ingroup Identification.



Finally, because evaluations of the political outgroup may also vary according to participants' identification with that group, the second model was additionally examined while controlling for outgroup identification. This allowed the proposed conditional indirect pathway to be examined while accounting for participants' identification with the opposing political position.

Method

1. Participants and Experimental Design

We collected a sample of 95 Portuguese participants (93 residing in Portugal and 2 residing abroad), aged between 18 and 61 years old (M = 29.24, SD = 12.52). The sample was composed of 37 male (39%), 55 female (58%), and 3 participants (3%) who identified with another gender. Concerning education, 64% had a college degree, 35% had a high school diploma and 1% had basic education. Regarding socioeconomic status, participants placed themselves around the middle of the scale (M = 4.17, SD = 1.10). Their political orientation tended to be more left-wing (M = 2.91, SD = 1.49).

This study followed a 2 (demographic prototypicality: prototypical vs. atypical) × 2 (behavioral prototypicality: prototypical vs. atypical) between-participants factorial design. Participants were distributed across four ingroup leader conditions: prototypical on both dimensions (n = 21), demographically prototypical and behaviorally atypical (n = 22), demographically atypical and behaviorally prototypical (n = 21), and atypical on both dimensions (n = 31).

Comparisons across the four experimental conditions detected no statistically significant differences in the participant characteristics examined. Welch's ANOVA was used for age because Levene's test indicated unequal variances, yielding a non-significant result, $F(3, 48.67) = 1.36$, $p = .266$. One-way ANOVAs also detected no significant differences in socioeconomic status, $F(3, 91) = 0.12$, $p = .948$, or political orientation, $F(3, 91) = 0.22$, $p = .880$. Chi-square tests with Monte Carlo estimation indicated no statistically significant differences between conditions in gender, $\chi^2(6, N = 95) = 9.88$, $p = .114$, or educational level, $\chi^2(6, N = 95) = 2.61$, $p = .976$.

2. Procedure

The experimental texts, leader profiles, and questionnaire items relevant to the present dissertation are provided in the Appendix.

The study was conducted online using Qualtrics. After giving informed consent, participants provided demographic information and reported their political orientation and perceived socioeconomic status.

Participants were then presented with two texts describing different perspectives regarding the role of the European Union in Portugal. One text presented a pro-EU perspective, focused on inclusion, equality, diversity and European cooperation. The other presented an EU-sceptic perspective, focused on national sovereignty, cultural identity and greater national autonomy. The order in which the two texts were presented, as well as the leader profile assigned within each text, was randomized. Each text also introduced a Portuguese working group or expert panel created to address issues related to the respective position. The person presented as the leader was explicitly described as the coordinator elected by the members of that group, thereby establishing their leadership role.

For each text, the leader varied in demographic (descriptive) prototypicality (prototypical vs. non-prototypical) and behavioral (prescriptive) prototypicality (prototypical vs. non-prototypical), resulting in four possible leader profiles. Demographic prototypicality was manipulated through the leader's name and national background. In the demographically prototypical conditions, the leaders were presented as João Pereira or Tiago Carvalho, whereas in the non-prototypical conditions they were presented as Gerson Djaló, a Portuguese citizen with Angolan nationality, or Edson Tembe, a Portuguese citizen with Mozambican nationality. Behavioral prototypicality was manipulated through the congruence between the leader's discourse and the position defended by the group. Behaviorally prototypical leaders expressed views consistent with the group's central position, whereas behaviorally non-prototypical leaders explicitly expressed reservations about or opposition to those priorities.

After each text, participants answered two manipulation-check questions and completed measures of identification with the position and perceived prototypicality of the respective leader. After reading both texts, participants were presented with brief summaries of the two positions and indicated which position they agreed with more. This position was subsequently treated as their ingroup, while the position with which they agreed less was treated as their outgroup.[1]

Participants were then instructed to think about the position with which they had agreed more and evaluated the corresponding ingroup leader in terms of perceived representativeness, emotional reactions, and legitimacy. Finally, they were asked to consider the position with which they had agreed less and evaluated people who supported that position in terms of affective polarization and empathy. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were debriefed about the fictitious nature of the scenarios and the purpose of the study.

[1] Because the groups were defined by their political positions, greater agreement with a position was taken as an indication of identification with the corresponding group. This interpretation was supported by participants' high identification with the selected position (M = 6.19, SD = 0.89, on a 7-point scale).

3. Measures

The questionnaire began with demographic questions, including age, gender, nationality, residence and education level. Political orientation was measured using a 7-point scale (1 = *Left-wing*, 7 = *Right-wing*) and perceived socioeconomic status was also assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *Very low*, 7 = *Very high*).

3.1. Identification with the Presented Position

Identification with each political position was assessed using a 4-item measure developed for the present study (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). Parallel versions were created for the pro-EU and EU-sceptic positions, with the wording adapted to the values expressed in each text. For example, participants in the pro-EU version responded to "Being someone who supports policies of inclusion, equality, and respect for differences is an important part of who I am", whereas the corresponding EU-sceptic item stated "Being someone who values national sovereignty and the preservation of cultural identity is an important part of who I am". The remaining items assessed participants' sense of connection with people who shared those values, satisfaction with holding those views, and perceived similarity to people who supported the respective position.

The four items were averaged to create a mean identification score for each political position. Internal consistency was high for both the pro-EU (α = .939) and EU-sceptic (α = .900) measures, with higher scores indicating stronger identification with the respective position. For subsequent analyses, the scores were reorganized according to participants' ingroup and outgroup identification. The identification score corresponding to the position with which participants agreed more was used as Ingroup Identification, whereas the score corresponding to the position with which they agreed less was used as Outgroup Identification.

3.2. Leader Prototypicality

Participants completed a 6-item scale developed for the present study to assess the perceived prototypicality of each leader (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). Three items referred to the leader's demographic characteristics, for example, *"The leader's personal characteristics (e.g., age, gender, origin) accurately reflect typical representatives of our country."* The other three focused on the leader's discourse and

behavior, such as *"The leader's discourse reflects the core values defended by the group he represents."*

Principal components analyses extracted two factors representing both expected dimensions. For the EU-sceptic leader, the two factors accounted for 47.79% and 32.59% of the variance, respectively, explaining 80.37% of the total variance. For the pro-EU leader, the two factors accounted for 47.55% and 31.40% of the variance, respectively, explaining 78.95% of the total variance. The first three items were averaged into a demographic prototypicality measure (Cronbach's α = .823 for the pro-EU leader and α = .889 for the EU-sceptic leader), while the remaining three were averaged into a behavioral prototypicality measure (Cronbach's α = .890 and α = .857, respectively). Higher scores indicated greater perceived prototypicality in each dimension.

3.3. Perceived Representativeness

Perceived representativeness of the ingroup leader was assessed using the 4-item *Being Representative of the Group* subscale of the Identity Leadership Inventory (Steffens et al., 2014), translated into Portuguese for the present study (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). An example item is *"This leader is representative of members of the team they coordinate."*

A principal components analysis extracted one factor, accounting for 81.69% of the total variance. A single-factor variable was composed by averaging the four items into a perceived representativeness measure (Cronbach's α = .925), with higher scores indicating greater perceived representativeness of the ingroup leader.

3.4. Emotional Reactions Towards the Ingroup Leader

Emotional reactions towards the ingroup leader were assessed using a 10-item measure inspired by Cottrell and Neuberg (2005) (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). Participants reported the extent to which they felt anger, disgust, fear, pity, envy, guilt, respect, satisfaction, pride and security towards the leader. An example item is *"I feel anger towards this leader."*

The envy item was excluded due to its low communality (.453). A principal components analysis conducted on the remaining nine items extracted two factors,

accounting for 56.43% and 22.66% of the variance, respectively, explaining 79.09% of the total variance. We averaged anger, disgust, fear, pity, and guilt into a negative emotional reactions measure (Cronbach's α = .888). Respect, satisfaction, pride and security loaded on a second factor and were averaged into a positive emotional reactions measure (Cronbach's α = .952). Higher scores indicated stronger negative or positive emotional reactions towards the ingroup leader, respectively.

3.5. Leader Legitimacy

Perceived legitimacy of the ingroup leader was assessed using a 6-item measure inspired by Tyler (2006) (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). The scale assessed participants' acceptance of the leader's authority and the extent to which they considered it appropriate and legitimate. Items included *"The actions of this leader are legitimate"* and *"This leader has the right to make decisions on behalf of our country."*

A principal components analysis extracted one factor, accounting for 73.55% of the total variance. We averaged the six items into a leader legitimacy measure (Cronbach's α = .927), with higher scores indicating higher perceived legitimacy.

3.6. Affective Polarization

Affective polarization towards the outgroup was assessed using a Portuguese translation of the 15-item Affective Polarization Scale (McMurtrie et al., 2024) (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). The original scale comprises three dimensions: Social Distance, Aversion and Incivility. Items include *"I would be upset if a close family member married someone who identifies with that position"* and *"People who identify with that position are immoral."*

Despite the three-factor composition of the original scale, a principal components analysis conducted on the 15 items extracted one factor, accounting for 68.49% of the total variance. As no separate effects were hypothesized for the three dimensions, this empirical one-factor solution was used to guide the construction of the final score. A single-factor variable was therefore composed by averaging all items into an affective polarization measure (Cronbach's α = .966), with higher scores indicating greater affective polarization towards the outgroup.

3.7. Empathy Towards the Outgroup

Participants completed a 5-item scale developed for the present study to measure empathy towards people who supported the outgroup position (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). The items focused on respect, understanding, and willingness to interact and the recognition of good intentions in people holding a different political position. Examples include *"I can understand why some people identify with that position"* and *"I can recognize good intentions in people who defend that position."*

The item *"I think it is important that positions different from my own are expressed"* was removed due to its low communality (.442). A principal components analysis conducted on the remaining four items extracted one factor, accounting for 66.80% of the total variance. The four items were averaged into an empathy measure (Cronbach's α = .832), with higher scores indicating greater empathy towards the outgroup.

Results

Of the 95 participants, 81 (85.3%) selected the pro-EU position as their ingroup, whereas 14 (14.7%) selected the EU-sceptic position. Identification with the selected ingroup was generally high (M = 6.19, SD = 0.89, on a 7-point scale).

1. Effects of Leader Prototypicality

To test H1, separate 2 (Demographic Prototypicality: prototypical vs. non-prototypical) × 2 (Behavioral Prototypicality: prototypical vs. non-prototypical) analyses of variance were conducted on perceived representativeness, positive and negative emotional reactions, and perceived leader legitimacy.[2]

[2] Manipulation checks indicated that demographic prototypicality significantly affected perceived demographic prototypicality for both the pro-EU leader, $F(1, 91) = 9.93$, $p = .002$, $\eta p^2 = .098$, and the EU-sceptic leader, $F(1, 91) = 26.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .224$. Behavioral prototypicality significantly affected perceived behavioral prototypicality for the pro-EU leader, $F(1, 91) = 16.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .151$, but not for the EU-sceptic leader, $F(1, 91) = 1.77$, $p = .186$, $\eta p^2 = .019$.

Regarding the ingroup leader, behavioral prototypicality significantly affected perceived representativeness, $F(1, 91) = 8.50$, $p = .004$, $\eta p^2 = .085$. Behaviorally prototypical leaders were perceived as more representative ($M = 5.08$, $SD = 1.11$) than non-prototypical leaders ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.34$). A significant effect was also found for negative emotional reactions, $F(1, 91) = 7.05$, $p = .009$, $\eta p^2 = .072$, with fewer negative reactions towards prototypical ($M = 1.50$, $SD = .86$) than non-prototypical leaders ($M = 2.07$, $SD = 1.24$). Similarly, positive emotional reactions were higher towards behaviorally prototypical leaders ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 1.37$) than towards non-prototypical leaders ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.70$), $F(1, 91) = 13.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .131$.

Behavioral prototypicality did not significantly affect leader legitimacy, $F(1, 91) = 1.53$, $p = .219$, $\eta p^2 = .017$. Demographic prototypicality had a significant effect on leader legitimacy, $F(1, 91) = 5.27$, $p = .024$, $\eta p^2 = .055$. Contrary to what could be expected, demographically non-prototypical leaders received higher legitimacy ratings ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.43$) than demographically prototypical leaders ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.36$). Demographic prototypicality did not significantly affect perceived representativeness or positive or negative emotional reactions. No significant interactions between demographic and behavioral prototypicality were found for these ingroup outcomes.

Thus, H1 was partially supported: behavioral prototypicality affected perceived representativeness and positive and negative emotional reactions in the expected direction but did not significantly affect leader legitimacy. Demographic prototypicality did not affect perceived representativeness or emotional reactions, and its effect on legitimacy was in the opposite direction to that hypothesized.

2. Correlational Analyses

We started by analyzing Pearson Moment-Product Correlations for main variables, to understand the consistency between the patterns of associations and the expected remaining hypotheses. Descriptive statistics and correlations for the main variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Moment-Product Correlations between Variables

	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Ingroup Identification	6.19	0.89	-							
2	Outgroup Identification	3.62	1.45	-.18	-						
3	Perceived Representativeness	4.68	1.29	.17	.15	-					
4	Negative Emotional Reactions	1.81	1.11	.10	.01	-.27**	-				
5	Positive Emotional Reactions	4.35	1.66	.16	.05	.65***	-.44***	-			
6	Perceived Leader Legitimacy	4.16	1.43	.26*	-.08	.52***	-.26*	.69***	-		
7	Affective Polarization	3.04	1.52	.20	-.32**	.10	.38***	.11	.19	-	
8	Empathy	4.56	1.24	-.26*	.22*	.06	-.12	.17	.06	-.48***	-

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

Consistent with the associations proposed in the first model (H2), perceived representativeness was positively associated with positive emotional reactions, $r = .65$, $p < .001$, which were, in turn, positively associated with perceived leader legitimacy, $r = .69$, $p < .001$. Perceived representativeness was also positively associated with leader legitimacy, $r = .52$, $p < .001$.

Regarding the second model (H4), negative emotional reactions towards the ingroup leader were positively associated with affective polarization, $r = .38$, $p < .001$, which was, in turn, negatively associated with empathy towards the outgroup, $r = -.48$, $p < .001$. Outgroup identification was also negatively associated with affective polarization, $r = -.32$, $p = .002$, and positively associated with empathy, $r = .22$, $p = .029$.

3. Moderated Serial Mediation Analyses

The hypothesized models were tested using PROCESS Model 83 with 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals (Hayes, 2022). In both models, ingroup identification was examined as a moderator of the association between leader

prototypicality and the first mediator. Separate models were estimated for demographic (descriptive) and behavioral (prescriptive) prototypicality.

3.1. Leader Prototypicality and Legitimacy

The first model examined whether ingroup leader prototypicality was indirectly associated with leader legitimacy through perceived representativeness and positive emotional reactions, and whether the first path of this process was moderated by ingroup identification. The model was tested separately for behavioral (prescriptive) and demographic (descriptive) prototypicality.

For behavioral (prescriptive) prototypicality, the regression model predicting leader legitimacy was significant, $R^2 = .51$, $F(3, 91) = 31.92$, $p < .001$ (Figure 3). The interaction between behavioral prototypicality and ingroup identification significantly predicted perceived representativeness, $b = -.57$, $SE = .28$, $p = .047$, $\Delta R^2 = .04$. The effect of behavioral prototypicality on perceived representativeness was not significant at lower levels of ingroup identification (5.09), $b = -.09$, $p = .832$, but was significant at the median (6.50), $b = -.89$, $p = .001$, and at higher levels of identification (7.00), $b = -1.17$, $p < .001$. Thus, behaviorally prototypical leaders were perceived as more representative than behaviorally non-prototypical leaders among participants with median and higher levels of ingroup identification.

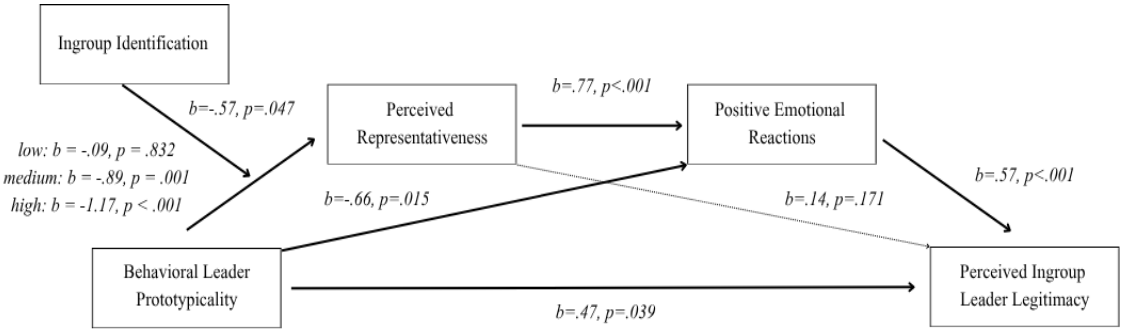
Perceived representativeness significantly predicted positive emotional reactions towards the leader, $b = .77$, $SE = .10$, $p < .001$, which, in turn, were positively associated with leader legitimacy, $b = .57$, $SE = .09$, $p < .001$.

Unexpectedly, behavioral prototypicality showed a positive direct association with leader legitimacy after controlling for perceived representativeness and positive emotional reactions, $b = .47$, $p = .039$, indicating higher adjusted legitimacy in the behaviorally atypical condition.

Importantly, the index of moderated mediation for the serial indirect effect was significant (index = -.25, Boot*SE* = .14, 95% CI [-.57, -.02]), especially at the median level of identification, $b = -.39$, 95% CI [-.69, -.16], and at higher levels, $b = -.52$, 95% CI [-.94, -.20]. At lower levels of ingroup identification, the serial indirect effect was not significant, $b = -.04$, 95% CI [-.30, .28].

Figure 3

Moderated Serial Mediation Model of the Effect of Behavioral Prototypicality on Leader Legitimacy Through Perceived Representativeness and Positive Emotional Reactions.



Note: Conditional effects are reported at low (5.09), median (6.50), and high (7.00) levels of ingroup identification.

Overall, high levels of perceived representativeness were linked to behaviorally prototypical ingroup leaders, particularly among participants with stronger ingroup identification. Greater perceived representativeness was associated with more positive emotional reactions towards the leader, which, in turn, were associated with greater perceived legitimacy.

The corresponding model was also tested using demographic (descriptive) prototypicality as the independent variable. The regression model predicting leader legitimacy was also significant, $R^2 = .52$, $F(3, 91) = 32.56$, $p < .001$. However, the interaction between demographic prototypicality and ingroup identification did not significantly predict perceived representativeness, $b = .07$, $SE = .30$, $p = .816$. The index of moderated mediation for the serial indirect effect was also not significant (index = .03, Boot*SE* = .13, 95% CI [-.27, .25]), and none of the conditional serial indirect effects reached significance. Nevertheless, demographic prototypicality showed a significant direct association with leader legitimacy, $b = .49$, $SE = .21$, $p = .023$. Thus, the association between demographic prototypicality and legitimacy was not explained by the proposed representativeness and positive emotional reactions pathway.

Overall, H2 was partially supported, as the proposed serial indirect pathway was supported for behavioral but not demographic prototypicality. H3 was also partially supported, as ingroup identification moderated the association between behavioral

prototypicality and perceived representativeness, but not the corresponding association for demographic prototypicality.

3.2. Leader Prototypicality, Affective Polarization, and Empathy

The second hypothesized model examined whether ingroup leader prototypicality was indirectly associated with empathy towards the outgroup through negative emotional reactions towards the ingroup leader and affective polarization, with ingroup identification moderating the first path of the model. As in the previous analysis, the model was tested separately for behavioral (prescriptive) and demographic (descriptive) prototypicality.

For behavioral prototypicality, the regression model predicting empathy towards the outgroup was significant, $R^2 = .23$, $F(3, 91) = 9.22$, $p < .001$. The interaction between behavioral prototypicality and ingroup identification did not significantly predict negative emotional reactions, $b = .37$, $SE = .25$, $p = .144$. Negative emotional reactions were, however, positively associated with affective polarization, $b = .55$, $SE = .14$, $p < .001$, which, in turn, was negatively associated with empathy towards the outgroup, $b = -.41$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$.

Despite the non-significant interaction in the first path, the index of moderated mediation for the complete serial indirect effect did not include zero (index = -.08, Boot*SE* = .05, 95% CI [-.21, -.004]). At lower levels of ingroup identification (5.09), the serial indirect effect was not significant, $b = -.04$, 95% CI [-.16, .09]. In contrast, the indirect effect was significant at the median level of identification (6.50), $b = -.16$, 95% CI [-.33, -.04], and at higher levels (7.00), $b = -.20$, 95% CI [-.42, -.06].

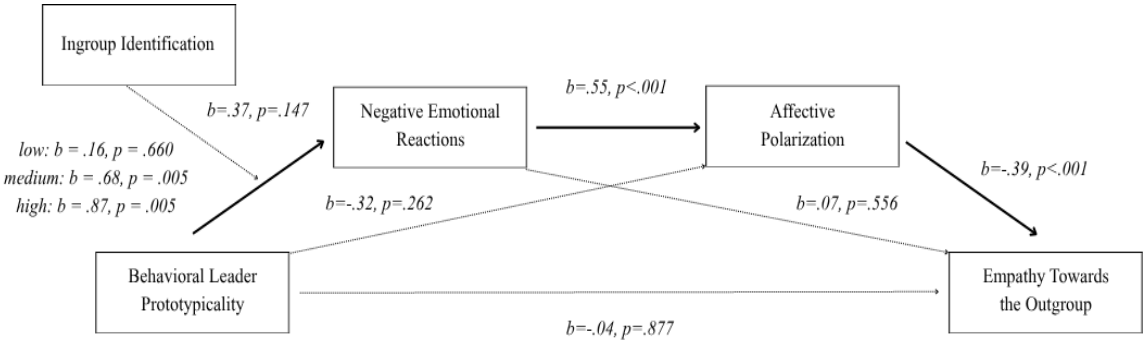
Thus, the conditional serial indirect effect of behavioral prototypicality on empathy through negative emotional reactions and affective polarization was observed at median and higher levels of ingroup identification, but not at lower levels. Nevertheless, given that the interaction on the first path did not reach statistical significance and that the confidence interval of the index of moderated mediation was close to zero, this conditional effect should be interpreted cautiously.

To examine whether this pattern could be accounted for by participants' identification with the outgroup, the model was repeated controlling for outgroup identification (Figure 4). The regression model predicting empathy remained

significant, R^2 = .24, $F(4, 90) = 7.02$, $p < .001$. The index of moderated mediation remained significant (index = -.08, Boot*SE* = .05, 95% CI [-.19, -.001]). The conditional serial indirect effect remained non-significant at lower levels of ingroup identification, b = -.03, 95% CI [-.15, .09], and significant at the median, b = -.15, 95% CI [-.30, -.04], and higher levels, b = -.19, 95% CI [-.38, -.05]. Thus, the conditional indirect pathway remained after accounting for participants' identification with the outgroup.

Figure 4

Moderated Serial Mediation Model of the Effect of Behavioral Prototypicality on Empathy Through Negative Emotional Reactions and Affective Polarization, Controlling for Outgroup Identification.



Note: Conditional effects are reported at low (5.09), median (6.50), and high (7.00) levels of ingroup identification.

Finally, the corresponding moderated serial mediation model was tested using demographic prototypicality as the independent variable. The regression model predicting empathy towards the outgroup was significant, R^2 = .30, $F(3, 91) = 12.70$, $p < .001$. However, neither the interaction between demographic prototypicality and ingroup identification, b = .05, SE = .26, p = .839, nor the index of moderated mediation was significant (index = -.01, Boot*SE* = .04, 95% CI [-.10, .07]). None of the conditional serial indirect effects reached significance. Demographic prototypicality did, however, show a significant direct association with empathy, b = -.63, SE = .22, p = .006, indicating lower adjusted empathy in the demographically atypical condition after controlling for negative emotional reactions and affective polarization.

When the demographic prototypicality model was repeated controlling for outgroup identification, the regression model predicting empathy remained significant,

R^2 = .30, $F(4, 90) = 9.53$, $p < .001$. The index of moderated mediation remained non-significant, index = -.01, Boot*SE* = .04, 95% CI [-.11, .07], while the direct association between demographic prototypicality and empathy remained significant, $b = -.62$, $SE = .22$, $p = .007$.

Overall, H4 was partially supported, as the proposed serial indirect pathway was observed for behavioral prototypicality at median and higher levels of ingroup identification, but not for demographic prototypicality. H5 was not supported, as ingroup identification did not significantly moderate the association between prototypicality and negative emotional reactions for either behavioral or demographic prototypicality.

General Discussion

The present study examined how different dimensions of ingroup leader prototypicality, namely demographic (descriptive) and behavioral (prescriptive) prototypicality, shape evaluations of political ingroup leaders and responses towards political outgroups. More specifically, the study examined whether prototypicality was associated with leader legitimacy through perceived representativeness and positive emotional reactions, and whether it was indirectly associated with empathy towards the outgroup through negative emotional reactions and affective polarization. In both processes, ingroup identification was expected to shape the extent to which individuals responded to differences in leader prototypicality.

Overall, the findings suggest that the two dimensions of prototypicality do not operate in exactly the same way. Behavioral prototypicality showed a more consistent pattern of associations with perceived representativeness, emotional reactions, and the subsequent evaluation of the ingroup leader, whereas demographic prototypicality did not show the same pattern of associations. These findings provide support for understanding political leader prototypicality as a multidimensional construct whose different dimensions may become relevant through distinct psychological processes.

1. Behavioral (Prescriptive) Prototypicality and Ingroup Leader Evaluations

The findings for behavioral (prescriptive) prototypicality suggest that the relevance of a prototypicality cue may depend on the type of information it provides about a leader's relationship with the group. Because the behavioral manipulation concerned alignment with the position defining the ingroup, it may have made prescriptive aspects of prototypicality particularly informative. It indicated not simply whether the leader resembled group members, but whether the leader endorsed the position through which participants had defined their political ingroup. This distinction may be particularly relevant for political identities, whose meaning can encompass subjective values, behaviors, norms, and attitudes (Conover & Feldman, 1984) beyond demographic characteristics or policy preferences alone.

This may help explain why behavioral prototypicality was associated with several aspects of leader evaluation in the present study. Political leaders publicly express positions on behalf of the groups they represent (Monzani et al., 2024), making the correspondence between what a leader advocates and what the group stands for especially relevant to judgments of whether that leader genuinely represents the group (Steffens et al., 2021). In the present context, the leader's expressed position may therefore have provided a direct cue about whether the leader embodied the political identity of the ingroup. This interpretation is consistent with the social identity approach to leadership, in which prototypicality concerns the extent to which leaders embody and represent the shared identity of the group (Hogg et al., 2012; Steffens et al., 2021). In the present study, the opposition between pro-EU and EU-sceptic positions made support for the ingroup’s position a prescriptive expectation: members of each group, including the leader, were expected to uphold that position. Behavioral prototypicality therefore reflected conformity to the political stance that defined the ingroup, making homogeneity on this dimension particularly relevant. The same expectation of homogeneity did not apply to demographic characteristics. Thus, the informational value of a prototypicality cue may depend on how closely the characteristic being assessed is connected to the role that the leader occupies within the group.

The absence of a clear legitimacy advantage for behaviorally prototypical leaders may reflect a distinction between agreeing with a leader and recognizing the leader's right to exercise authority. All leaders were described as coordinators elected

by their group, providing a common basis on which their authority could be accepted despite differences in political alignment. Marques et al. (2021) showed that granted legitimacy can shape responses to transgressive leaders, suggesting that disapproval of a leader's conduct need not automatically entail rejection of their authority. Although political disagreement differs from the moral transgressions examined in that research, participants may similarly have disapproved of an atypical leader's position while continuing to recognize the authority given by the group. This could help explain why behavioral alignment was more clearly reflected in representativeness and emotional reactions than in legitimacy.

The recognition of formally granted authority may help explain why disagreement with a leader did not necessarily translate into lower legitimacy. However, this account does not explain the adjusted legitimacy advantage observed for behaviorally atypical leaders. The opposing direct and serial indirect associations indicate that the proposed representativeness and emotional pathway does not provide a complete account of legitimacy judgments. Behavioral alignment therefore cannot be assumed to relate to legitimacy through a single, uniform process. Because alternative bases of these judgments were not assessed, the present study cannot identify the process underlying the residual direct association, which warrants replication and further investigation.

The role of ingroup identification provides further support for this interpretation. When the political ingroup is more central to the individual's self-definition, information about whether a leader embodies that group should become more relevant to judgments of the leader as a representative of the group (Hogg, 2001). The association between behavioral prototypicality and perceived representativeness emerged among participants with medium and high levels of ingroup identification, but not at the lower level. This is consistent with the proposition that group identification increases the extent to which individuals rely on group-based information when evaluating leaders, and previous research has found that the relationship between leader prototypicality and leader evaluations is stronger among stronger group identifiers (Fielding & Hogg, 1997; Steffens et al., 2021). In the present study, stronger identification may therefore have increased the relevance of the leader's correspondence with the ingroup-defining position when participants judged whether that leader represented their group. However, this interpretation needs to be considered

alongside the overall level of identification in the sample. The mean level of ingroup identification was 6.19 on a 7-point scale (*SD* = 0.89), and even the lower conditional value used in the analysis was 5.09. Thus, the moderation reflects differences within a sample that was generally highly identified with the ingroup, rather than a comparison between clearly low and high identifiers.

2. Behavioral (Prescriptive) Prototypicality and Outgroup Responses

The findings from the second model suggest that the implications of behavioral prototypicality may extend beyond evaluations of the ingroup leader itself, being associated with broader intergroup responses. While the first model indicated that prescriptive aspects of prototypicality were relevant for perceiving a leader as representative of the ingroup, the present findings suggest that the absence of such alignment may also have consequences for how individuals relate to a political outgroup. Specifically, behavioral prototypicality was indirectly associated with empathy towards the outgroup through negative emotional reactions and affective polarization, suggesting that perceptions of an ingroup leader may become connected to wider intergroup attitudes.

One possible interpretation is that, because leaders occupy a symbolic position within the group (Hogg, 2001; Hogg et al., 2012; Steffens et al., 2021), their perceived alignment with the ingroup may contribute to how the boundaries between groups are understood (Turner et al., 1987). As political identities are often structured around shared positions, values, and meanings (Conover & Feldman, 1984), a leader who fails to embody what distinguishes the ingroup from the outgroup may be perceived as undermining an important aspect of group identity (Turner et al., 1987). This may have implications not only for judgments of the leader, but also for the emotional significance attached to the distinction between groups. Rather than being perceived merely as a person who differs from group expectations or reflecting only dissatisfaction with an individual leader, negative reactions towards a non-prototypical leader may represent a challenge to the symbolic expression of group identity by disrupting the boundaries that organize intergroup perceptions.

This interpretation is also compatible with research on ingroup deviance, which suggests that group members who violate relevant norms may elicit particularly negative reactions because they threaten the coherence and distinctiveness of the group

(Marques et al., 1988; Pinto et al., 2010). Importantly, the present findings extend this reasoning by suggesting that, when the deviant group member occupies a leadership position, these reactions may have consequences beyond the evaluation of the individual leader. Because leaders occupy a particularly visible representative role (Hogg et al., 2012; Steffens et al., 2021), perceptions that they fail to embody the ingroup may become associated with broader patterns of intergroup evaluation.

The association between negative reactions towards the ingroup leader and empathy towards the outgroup may be understood through the role of affective polarization. When an ingroup leader is perceived as failing to embody the characteristics that distinguish the ingroup from relevant outgroups, this may create uncertainty about the meaning and boundaries of the group identity (Hogg, 2000). In such contexts, individuals may respond by reinforcing the distinction between their own group and the outgroup, which may be reflected in stronger affective polarization and reduced empathy towards outgroup members. Thus, the relevant process may not be that leader prototypicality directly changes attitudes towards the outgroup, but rather that reactions to perceived ingroup misrepresentation may become embedded within broader patterns of intergroup evaluation.

The role of ingroup identification provides an important contribution to this interpretation. If leader prototypicality is relevant because it concerns the representation of a group identity, its consequences should theoretically depend, at least to some extent, on the importance of that identity for the individual (Hogg, 2001; Steffens et al., 2021). However, unlike the first model, where ingroup identification moderated the association between behavioral prototypicality and perceived representativeness, the role of identification in the present model was less straightforward. Although the conditional indirect effect emerged at medium and higher levels of identification, the interaction between behavioral prototypicality and ingroup identification did not significantly predict negative emotional reactions.

One possible explanation for the absence of a significant moderation effect in the second model is that ingroup identification may play a more central role in shaping perceptions of whether a leader represents the ingroup than in determining the broader consequences that follow from these perceptions. In the first model, identification moderated the relationship between behavioral prototypicality and perceived

representativeness, suggesting that stronger identifiers may have been more sensitive to information about whether the leader embodied the ingroup. Nevertheless, the conditional indirect effects at medium and high levels of identification suggest that negative emotional reactions and affective polarization may connect leader prototypicality to empathy towards the outgroup at these levels. These findings provide support for the proposed indirect pathway, even though the interaction predicting negative emotional reactions was non-significant.

Additionally, the generally high levels of ingroup identification observed in the present sample may have limited the variability required to detect stronger conditional effects. Because participants were, overall, strongly identified with their ingroup, the comparison between lower and higher identifiers may not represent a distinction between genuinely weak and strong group identification. Therefore, the absence of a significant moderation effect should be interpreted cautiously and the role of identification in linking leader prototypicality to intergroup responses remains an open question requiring further investigation.

The use of separate mediation models for demographic and behavioral prototypicality should also be considered when interpreting these findings. Leaders who were prototypical on one dimension could still be atypical on the other, and responses to these mixed profiles may differ from responses to leaders who were prototypical on both dimensions. Similarly, atypicality on both dimensions may represent a more pronounced departure from the ingroup prototype. A model considering all four combinations could therefore examine whether the contrast between the least and most prototypical profiles reveals stronger associations along the proposed indirect pathway than either dimension considered separately. This would help clarify whether emotional reactions and subsequent outgroup responses depend on the combined contribution of demographic and behavioral prototypicality, allowing a more direct examination of the multidimensional nature of leader prototypicality.

3. Demographic (Descriptive) Prototypicality

The findings concerning demographic (descriptive) prototypicality revealed a different pattern from that observed for behavioral prototypicality. While behavioral prototypicality was consistently associated with perceived representativeness, emotional reactions, and subsequent evaluations of the ingroup leader, demographic

prototypicality was not associated with the hypothesized indirect pathways through which leaders were expected to gain legitimacy or influence intergroup responses. Instead, demographic prototypicality showed direct associations with leader legitimacy and empathy towards the outgroup, suggesting that descriptive cues may have operated through processes not captured by the proposed models.

The different pattern observed for demographic prototypicality in the moderated serial mediation models may reflect the fact that descriptive and prescriptive cues provide different types of information about a leader's relationship with the group. While behavioral prototypicality directly communicated alignment with the position that defined the political ingroup in the present study, demographic prototypicality provided information about resemblance to typical group members without necessarily indicating whether the leader embodied the values, attitudes, and positions associated with the group. Therefore, in a political context where group membership was primarily established through ideological agreement, behavioral cues may have been more diagnostic of whether a leader represented the ingroup than demographic characteristics.

Nevertheless, the absence of an association between demographic prototypicality and perceived representativeness does not necessarily imply that demographic characteristics were irrelevant for leader evaluation. Instead, demographic cues may have carried alternative meanings that influenced how leaders were evaluated. One possible explanation for the unexpected association between demographic non-prototypicality and higher leader legitimacy is that demographic atypicality acquired prescriptive meaning within the political context presented. Most participants selected the pro-EU position, whose description explicitly emphasized inclusion, equality, and respect for diversity, and the sample generally leaned towards the political left. In this context, a leader's different national background may have been interpreted as expressing values endorsed by the ingroup. Granting legitimacy to this leader could therefore have served as an affirmation of the group's inclusive identity. This possibility suggests that descriptive and prescriptive dimensions may become psychologically connected when demographic characteristics acquire meaning through the values emphasized in a particular context.

The same interpretation may help explain why greater legitimacy for demographically atypical leaders coexisted with lower empathy towards political opponents. If participants perceived the opposing group as less committed to inclusion, endorsing a demographically atypical ingroup leader could affirm a favorable image of the ingroup while reinforcing its perceived moral distinction from the outgroup. Acceptance of diversity within the ingroup could thus coexist with a reduced willingness to understand people perceived as opposing its defining values.

4. Limitations and Future Studies

A first limitation concerns the practical implementation of the study. Given the number of experimental conditions and measures included, the length of the questionnaire may have increased participant fatigue and reduced attention throughout the task. Although manipulation checks were included, it is possible that prolonged exposure to multiple stimuli influenced participants' responses, particularly in later stages of the questionnaire.

The behavioral manipulation check did not reveal a significant difference between conditions for the EU-sceptic leader, raising uncertainty about whether participants perceived the intended contrast in behavioral prototypicality for this leader. This may reflect ambiguity in how the descriptions conveyed alignment with an EU-sceptic position, although the present data do not establish the reason for this result. Consequently, caution is needed when interpreting the behavioral findings, as the manipulation may not have operated equally clearly across the two political positions. Future research should pretest the behavioral descriptions for each group under study and refine any ambiguous cues to make the intended contrast in prototypicality clear across groups.

Another limitation concerns the artificial nature of the experimental setting. The use of experimentally constructed leader profiles allowed for the controlled manipulation of specific prototypicality cues but necessarily simplified the process through which political leaders are evaluated in real-world contexts. In everyday political environments, leaders are interpreted based on multiple sources of information, including perceptions of their characteristics, previous actions, and political positioning (Sullivan et al., 1990), rather than isolated cues presented in experimental settings. Therefore, the responses observed in the present study may not

fully capture how citizens evaluate real political leaders whose identities are shaped by accumulated experiences, public exposure, and contextual information over time. Future research should examine whether the observed patterns generalize to real political figures or more ecologically valid contexts, and whether similar patterns emerge when combinations of descriptive and prescriptive aspects of prototypicality are considered jointly.

Another limitation concerns the restricted variability in ingroup identification. Participants generally reported high levels of identification with their political ingroup, meaning that even individuals with comparatively lower identification scores remained relatively strongly identified. This pattern may partly reflect how the ingroup was defined. Participants were asked to select the political position with which they agreed more, and this position was subsequently treated as their ingroup. Consequently, the ingroup was defined through relative agreement rather than through an independent criterion of strong identification. Even participants who did not identify strongly with either position had to select one of them as their ingroup, namely the position that was comparatively closer to their views. This procedure may therefore have reduced the representation of genuinely low identifiers and restricted variability at the lower end of the identification measure. Consequently, moderation effects should be interpreted cautiously, as they reflect differences within a highly identified sample. Future studies should examine the role of ingroup identification using samples with greater variability in identification levels, including individuals for whom the political group is less central to their self-definition.

Future research should further investigate the positive adjusted association between behavioral atypicality and leader legitimacy. This association was not explained by the proposed pathway through perceived representativeness and emotional reactions, and the present study did not assess alternative bases for legitimacy judgments. Future studies could therefore examine whether the way leadership authority is granted, or the extent to which that authority is considered valid independently of agreement with the leader, helps account for this association.

Future research could also examine whether uncertainty about the meaning and boundaries of the ingroup represents an additional process in the proposed pathway from leader prototypicality to outgroup responses. Social identity and uncertainty-

management perspectives suggest that uncertainty can shape the importance attached to group membership, group norms, and reactions to socially deviating people (Hogg, 2000; Van den Bos et al., 2007). It is therefore possible that uncertainty about what the ingroup represents and where its boundaries lie contributes to negative emotional reactions towards a non-prototypical ingroup leader. These reactions may then be associated with stronger affective polarization and lower empathy towards outgroup members. Future studies could test this possibility by assessing perceived group identity uncertainty as an additional mediator preceding negative emotional reactions and examining whether it helps explain subsequent outgroup responses.

The findings concerning demographic prototypicality also suggest directions for future research. Although demographic characteristics were not associated with the hypothesized pathways, they were related to leader legitimacy and empathy towards the outgroup through mechanisms that remain unclear. Future studies could examine whether demographic atypicality is interpreted as consistent with values that are central to the ingroup. One potential mediator is the perception that the leader embodies the ingroup's commitment to such values; in the present study, these may have included inclusion and respect for diversity. If so, endorsing this leader may affirm a positive moral image of the ingroup. For outgroup empathy, future studies could examine perceived moral distance and the belief that political opponents reject values attributed to the ingroup. Assessing these processes would help determine whether the legitimacy and empathy findings reflect a shared identity-based interpretation of demographic characteristics or distinct mechanisms. It would also clarify whether the meaning attached to demographic atypicality depends on which values are salient in a given group context.

Finally, the present findings should be considered within the specific political context examined. The ingroup in this study was defined around a position concerning European integration, meaning that behavioral prototypicality reflected alignment with a political stance. However, political identities may be organized around different dimensions, such as national identity, cultural values, or social issues. Therefore, the relative importance of behavioral and demographic prototypicality may vary depending on what defines a particular group identity. Future research should investigate whether the same patterns emerge across different political contexts and group identities.

Conclusion

Groups are not merely collections of individuals who share a common label. They are meaningful social realities, built around shared understandings of what defines membership, what that membership demands, and what distinguishes one group from another. These understandings shape not only how individuals perceive themselves, but also whom they recognize as entitled to speak and act in the group's name.

From this perspective, prototypicality may not be a fixed property carried by a leader. Rather, it may be a judgment through which group members decide which forms of resemblance matter, which differences can be incorporated, and which departures alter the meaning of the collective identity. Some characteristics describe who a leader appears to be, whereas others communicate what the group is understood to stand for. Their significance emerges from the relationship between the leader, the group identity being represented, and the outgroups against which that identity is defined.

Political leadership therefore becomes part of the ongoing negotiation of who belongs to "us" and what that belonging means. To accept a leader as a representative is to recognize a particular interpretation of the group and to grant that interpretation authority in the public sphere. To question the leader is, at times, also to question the boundaries and values through which the group understands itself. Examining leader prototypicality consequently offers more than an account of leader evaluation: it offers a way of understanding how collective identities are made visible, defended, and transformed through the people who claim to represent them, as well as how relations with relevant outgroups are organized.

Beyond its academic contribution, this perspective also carries broader social relevance. Political leaders often serve as visible symbols through which citizens interpret collective identities, particularly in contexts marked by polarization. Understanding how citizens decide whether a leader represents "us" may therefore help clarify how political judgments extend from individual leaders to the groups and identities they symbolize. In this sense, studying leader prototypicality contributes to a broader understanding of how political identities are negotiated in contemporary democratic societies.

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Appendix A- Survey

Informações sobre o estudo e Consentimento Informado

Introdução e contexto

O presente estudo está a ser desenvolvido no âmbito de uma tese do Mestrado em Psicologia da Faculdade de Psicologia e Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto (FPCEUP). A investigadora responsável é a estudante Rita Vieira, sob orientação da Prof. Isabel R. Pinto.

Objetivos do estudo

Este estudo tem como objetivo recolher a opinião dos cidadãos sobre questões sociais relevantes, incluindo diferentes perfis de liderança.

Procedimentos

A participação neste estudo envolve a resposta a questões sociais relevantes. Ser-lhe-ão também pedidos alguns dados de caracterização sociodemográfica, como idade, género e nacionalidade. Também vamos solicitar informações relativamente a escolaridade, e orientação política. Em nenhum momento lhe será pedido o nome, endereço eletrónico ou outro dado que o/a possa identificar pessoalmente.

Elegibilidade

Poderá participar neste estudo qualquer pessoa com, pelo menos, 18 anos de idade.

Riscos e benefícios

Pode haver riscos menores associados à participação neste estudo. Alguns participantes podem sentir algum desconforto ao responder a certos assuntos. Neste sentido, se desejar terminar a sua participação, reforçamos que o pode fazer a qualquer momento e sem quaisquer consequências.

Embora este estudo não o beneficie pessoalmente, esperamos que os resultados ajudem a conhecer melhor certos processos psicológicos associados a alguns

fenómenos sociais importantes. Esperamos também que a participação neste estudo seja interessante e informativa, e/ou lhe permita refletir sobre questões importantes do dia-a-dia.

Pagamento ou compensação

Não irá receber qualquer tipo de recompensa material pela participação neste estudo.

Participação voluntária

A participação neste estudo é totalmente voluntária. É livre de recusar participar ou de parar de responder a qualquer momento, para isso, basta fechar o *browser*.

Confidencialidade e Proteção de Dados

O questionário encontra-se implementado numa plataforma gerida pela Qualtrics, sujeito às condições da licença subscrita pela FPCEUP. As suas respostas serão descarregadas da plataforma para o computador da investigadora responsável onde serão analisadas de forma agregada, ou seja, em conjunto com as respostas dadas por todas as pessoas que respondem ao estudo. Cada participante apenas será identificado, para a investigadora responsável, com um código alfanumérico atribuído de forma automática e aleatória pela plataforma do questionário. Além disso, a investigadora responsável compromete-se a tratar toda a informação de forma confidencial. Os dados serão armazenados e conservados apenas pelo período necessário para cumprir as finalidades que motivaram a sua recolha e tratamento, ou até cinco anos após a conclusão da recolha de dados.

Finalidade do tratamento de dados e disseminação dos resultados

A recolha e o tratamento de dados são realizados, exclusivamente, para fins de investigação científica. Os resultados finais do estudo poderão ser publicados em revistas científicas e jornais académicos, apresentados em seminários, conferências, aulas ou outras atividades com fins académicos, nos quais serão apenas mencionados os resultados de forma agregada e nunca de forma individual. A investigadora responsável assegura que os seus dados não serão tratados para outras finalidades que não as previamente indicadas.

A base de dados de tratamento estatístico poderá ser eventualmente exigida pela revista científica para publicação dos resultados. Nesses casos, a base de dados de tratamento estatístico terá de ser partilhada com acesso livre, não sendo possível, em caso algum, identificar os participantes.

Contactos

Para esclarecer qualquer questão acerca deste estudo poderá contactar a investigadora responsável Rita Vieira, através do endereço eletrónico up202005386@up.pt, ou a sua orientadora, Prof. Isabel R. Pinto, através do endereço eletrónico ipinto@up.pt. Questões específicas sobre o tratamento dos seus dados poderão também ser endereçadas à Encarregada da Proteção de Dados da Universidade do Porto (dpo@reit.up.pt).

Gostaria de participar neste estudo?

Ao avançar está a indicar que leu e compreendeu as informações fornecidas anteriormente e que pretende participar no estudo.

– Pág. 2 –

Informação demográfica

Idade: _____

Género: Masculino ☐ Feminino ☐ Outro ☐

Nacionalidade: Portuguesa ☐ Outra ☐ Qual?: _____

Residência atual: Em Portugal ☐ No Estrangeiro ☐

Escolaridade:

Ensino Básico
Ensino Secundário

Ensino Superior

Como se posiciona politicamente?

Mais à Esquerda	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mais à Direita

Em comparação com os restantes cidadãos do seu país, qual a sua perceção em relação ao seu estatuto socioeconómico?

Muito baixo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Muito alto

– Pág. 3 –

Em Portugal, tal como noutros países europeus, existem diferentes perspetivas sobre o papel da União Europeia no país. Para compreender melhor estas posições, o governo iniciou um processo de recolha de opiniões sobre este tema. No âmbito desse processo, irão ser apresentados dois breves textos que ilustram duas das perspetivas mais comuns na opinião pública. Estas perspetivas refletem formas distintas de pensar questões sociais, culturais e políticas. Os textos incluem, ainda, um excerto informativo sobre um grupo de trabalho criado pelo governo para aconselhar políticas nessas áreas. Pedimos-lhe que leia ambos os textos com atenção.

Pró-UE

A União Europeia tem reforçado o seu compromisso com políticas que promovem sociedades mais abertas e solidárias. A aposta na igualdade de tratamento, no respeito pela diversidade e na valorização das diferentes formas de vida é vista como essencial para o futuro da Europa. Estas iniciativas procuram reduzir desigualdades e garantir que todos participem plenamente na sociedade. Para Portugal, a participação neste projeto tem trazido cooperação científica, mobilidade para jovens e reforço da proteção social. Numa época de desafios globais, muitos veem numa Europa inclusiva a melhor forma de assegurar prosperidade, segurança e democracia.

Prototípico Demográfico e Comportamental (Condição 1A)

Para avançar com estas prioridades, o governo nomeou um grupo de trabalho português sobre políticas sociais, composto por representantes de várias instituições relevantes. O grupo elegeu como coordenador João Pereira, diplomata especializado em assuntos europeus. Nas suas intervenções, João defende que a inclusão é central para o futuro europeu e que Portugal deve assumir esse compromisso. Destaca a importância de respeitar diferentes formas de vida, garantir igualdade de oportunidades e valorizar a diversidade, combatendo qualquer forma de exclusão.

Atípico Demográfico e Prototípico Comportamental (Condição 2A)

Para avançar com estas prioridades, foi nomeado pelo governo um grupo de trabalho português sobre políticas sociais, composto por representantes de várias instituições relevantes. O grupo elegeu como coordenador Gerson Djaló, um cidadão português com nacionalidade angolana, diplomata especializado em assuntos europeus. Nas suas intervenções, Gerson defende que a inclusão é central para o futuro europeu e que Portugal deve assumir esse compromisso. Destaca a importância de respeitar diferentes formas de vida, garantir igualdade de oportunidades e valorizar a diversidade, combatendo qualquer forma de exclusão.

Prototípico Demográfico e Atípico Comportamental (Condição 3A)

Para avançar com estas prioridades, foi nomeado pelo governo um grupo de trabalho português sobre políticas sociais, composto por representantes de várias instituições relevantes. O grupo elegeu como coordenador João Pereira, diplomata especializado em assuntos europeus. Ao contrário da linha geral do grupo, João tem mostrado reservas em relação às prioridades da União Europeia. Considera que algumas políticas de diversidade são excessivas e desviam recursos de questões económicas urgentes, defendendo que Portugal deve adotar uma posição mais cautelosa sobre programas de inclusão social.

Atípico Demográfico e Comportamental (Condição 4A)

Para avançar com estas prioridades, foi nomeado pelo governo um grupo de trabalho português sobre políticas sociais, composto por representantes de várias instituições relevantes. O grupo elegeu como coordenador Gerson Djaló, um cidadão português com nacionalidade angolana, diplomata especializado em assuntos europeus. Ao contrário da linha geral do grupo, Gerson tem mostrado reservas em relação às prioridades da União Europeia. Considera que algumas políticas de diversidade são excessivas e desviam recursos de questões económicas urgentes, defendendo que Portugal deve adotar uma posição mais cautelosa sobre programas de inclusão social.

– Pág. 4 –

De seguida, iremos apresentar algumas perguntas para garantir que a informação apresentada foi transmitida de forma clara.

Manipulation Check

O coordenador defende principalmente:

Uma posição favorável às políticas europeias de inclusão ☐

Uma posição neutra ☐

Uma posição de cautela face às políticas europeias de inclusão ☐

Não ficou claro ☐

Qual foi o tema principal do grupo de trabalho descrito no texto?

Políticas culturais ☐

Políticas Sociais ☐

Coesão grupal ☐

Economia digital ☐

– Pág. 5 –

De seguida, pedimos-lhe que indique a sua opinião sobre o conteúdo do texto e sobre o líder mencionado. Não existem respostas certas ou erradas; queremos apenas conhecer a sua opinião.

Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo totalmente) a 7 (Concordo totalmente):

a) Ser alguém que apoia políticas de inclusão, igualdade e respeito pelas diferenças é uma parte importante de quem sou.

b) Sinto uma forte ligação com as pessoas que defendem valores como a inclusão, igualdade e respeito pelas diferenças.

c) Sinto-me satisfeito(a) por ter opiniões que valorizam a inclusão, igualdade e respeito pelas diferenças.

d) Descrever-me-ia como semelhante ao tipo de pessoa que apoia a promoção de sociedades mais inclusivas, igualitárias e que respeitam as diferenças.

Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo totalmente) a 7 (Concordo totalmente):

a) O perfil do/a líder corresponde ao tipo de pessoa que normalmente representa Portugal nestes contextos.

b) As características pessoais do/a líder (ex.: idade, género, origem) refletem bem os representantes típicos do nosso país.

c) Este/a líder parece semelhante à maioria dos representantes portugueses que conheço.

d) O discurso do/a líder reflete os valores centrais defendidos pelo grupo que representa.

e) As ideias e o estilo de comunicação do/a líder alinham-se claramente com os da maioria dos membros do grupo.

f) Este/a líder expressa de forma clara os princípios que definem o grupo que representa.

– Pág. 6 –

De seguida iremos apresentar um texto sobre uma outra perspetiva comum na opinião pública. Para além disso, será apresentado um excerto informativo sobre um outro grupo de trabalho português no âmbito da União Europeia. Leia com atenção o texto apresentado.

Eurocético

A União Europeia tem alargado o alcance das suas políticas, o que para muitos críticos retira autonomia aos Estados-Membros e desvaloriza as particularidades de cada país. A uniformização de regras em áreas sociais e culturais é vista como inadequada, por ignorar tradições e prioridades nacionais. Estas políticas podem ser percecionadas como um risco para a identidade cultural e para a capacidade de o país decidir segundo as suas necessidades. Embora a cooperação económica e em matéria de segurança seja valorizada, muitos defendem que questões sociais e culturais devem permanecer sob controlo nacional, garantindo que o futuro do país respeita a sua história e modo de vida.

Prototípico Demográfico e Comportamental (Condição 1B)

Para dar resposta a estas preocupações, foi constituído um painel de especialistas para avaliar o impacto das políticas culturais europeias na autonomia nacional. Este grupo elegeu como coordenador Tiago Carvalho, advogado especializado em direito da cultura e património cultural. Nas reuniões, Tiago defende que é essencial proteger a identidade portuguesa e evitar políticas que uniformizem sociedades distintas. Considera que decisões sociais e culturais devem ser tomadas em Lisboa, e não em Bruxelas, e que reforçar a soberania nacional garante a coesão do país. Para ele, a UE deve limitar-se à cooperação económica.

Atípico Demográfico e Prototípico Comportamental (Condição 2B)

Para dar resposta a estas preocupações, foi constituído um painel de especialistas para avaliar o impacto das políticas culturais europeias na autonomia nacional. Este grupo elegeu como coordenador Edson Tembe, um cidadão português com nacionalidade moçambicana, advogado especializado em direito da cultura e património cultural. Nas reuniões, Edson defende que é essencial proteger a identidade portuguesa e evitar políticas que uniformizem sociedades distintas. Considera que decisões sociais e culturais devem ser tomadas em Lisboa, e não em Bruxelas, e que reforçar a soberania nacional garante a coesão do país. Para ele, a UE deve limitar-se à cooperação económica.

Prototípico Demográfico e Atípico Comportamental (Condição 3B)

Para dar resposta a estas preocupações, foi constituído um painel de especialistas para avaliar o impacto das políticas culturais europeias na autonomia nacional. Este grupo elegeu como coordenador Tiago Carvalho, advogado especializado em direito da cultura e património cultural. Ao contrário da maioria dos membros, que defendem maior soberania, Tiago afirma que as políticas culturais europeias trazem benefícios importantes. Defende que alinhar Portugal com estas orientações promove inclusão, garante estabilidade no setor e amplia oportunidades. Considera que insistir numa maior independência cultural criaria divisões desnecessárias e enfraqueceria a posição do país na Europa.

Atípico Demográfico e Comportamental (Condição 4B)

Para dar resposta a estas preocupações, foi constituído um painel de especialistas para avaliar o impacto das políticas culturais europeias na autonomia nacional. Este grupo elegeu como coordenador Edson Tembe, um cidadão português com nacionalidade moçambicana, advogado especializado em direito da cultura e património cultural. Ao contrário da maioria dos membros, que defendem maior soberania, Edson afirma que as políticas culturais europeias trazem benefícios importantes. Defende que alinhar Portugal com estas orientações promove inclusão, garante estabilidade no setor e amplia oportunidades. Considera que insistir numa maior independência cultural criaria divisões desnecessárias e enfraqueceria a posição do país na Europa.

– Pág. 7 –

De seguida, iremos apresentar algumas perguntas para garantir que a informação apresentada foi transmitida de forma clara.

Manipulation Check

O coordenador defende principalmente:

Uma posição favorável às políticas europeias de inclusão ☐

Uma posição neutra ☐

Uma posição de cautela face às políticas europeias de inclusão ☐

Não ficou claro ☐

Qual foi o tema principal do grupo de trabalho descrito no texto?

Políticas culturais ☐

Políticas Sociais ☐

Coesão grupal ☐

Economia digital ☐

– Pág. 8 –

De seguida, pedimos-lhe que indique a sua perceção sobre o conteúdo do texto e sobre o líder mencionado. Não existem respostas certas ou erradas; queremos apenas conhecer a sua opinião.

Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo totalmente) a 7 (Concordo totalmente):

a) Ser alguém que valoriza a soberania nacional e a preservação da identidade cultural é uma parte importante de quem sou.

b) Sinto uma forte ligação com pessoas que acreditam que as tradições e valores portugueses devem ser protegidos de influências externas excessivas.

c) Sinto-me satisfeito(a) por ter opiniões que priorizam a autonomia nacional e a proteção da identidade portuguesa.

d) Descrever-me-ia como semelhante a pessoas que defendem maior controlo nacional sobre estas áreas.

Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo totalmente) a 7 (Concordo totalmente):

a) O perfil do/a líder corresponde ao tipo de pessoa que normalmente representa Portugal nestes contextos.

b) As características pessoais do/a líder (ex.: idade, género, origem) refletem bem os representantes típicos do nosso país.

c) Este/a líder parece semelhante à maioria dos representantes portugueses que conheço.

d) O discurso do/a líder reflete os valores centrais defendidos pelo grupo que representa.

e) As ideias e o estilo de comunicação do/a líder alinham-se claramente com os da maioria dos membros do grupo.

f) Este/a líder expressa de forma clara os princípios que definem o grupo que representa.

– Pág. 9 –

De seguida, iremos apresentar uma breve descrição de cada um dos textos que leu anteriormente. Pedimos-lhe que escolha aquele com o qual concordou mais.

Texto A

A inclusão, a igualdade de oportunidades e o respeito pelas diferenças são apresentados como essenciais para o futuro da Europa e de Portugal.

Texto B

A preservação da identidade cultural portuguesa e a defesa da soberania nacional são apresentadas como fundamentais para proteger o país de políticas europeias uniformizadoras

Com qual dos textos sentiu mais concordância?

Texto A ☐ Texto B ☐

– Pág. 10 –

Pedimos agora que mantenha em mente o texto que assinalou na questão anterior, com o qual concordou mais. Gostaríamos de conhecer a sua opinião sobre o líder apresentado nesse texto. Lembre-se, não existem respostas certas ou erradas; apenas queremos conhecer a sua opinião.

Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo totalmente) a 7 (Concordo totalmente):

a) Este líder incorpora os valores e prioridades que a equipa que coordena defende.

b) Este líder é representativo dos membros da equipa que coordena.

c) Este líder é um membro exemplar da equipa que coordena.

d) Este líder exemplifica o que significa ser membro da equipa que coordena.

Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo totalmente) a 7 (Concordo totalmente):

a) Sinto raiva em relação a este líder.

b) Sinto nojo em relação a este líder.

c) Sinto medo deste líder.

d) Sinto pena deste líder.

e) Sinto inveja deste líder.

f) Sinto culpa em relação a este líder.

g) Sinto respeito por este líder.

h) Sinto satisfação em relação a este líder.

i) Sinto orgulho em relação a este líder.

j) Sinto segurança em relação a este líder.

– Pág. 11 –

Pense outra vez no texto com o qual concordou mais.

Agora pedimos que avalie até que ponto considera legítima a autoridade do líder descrito no texto.

Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo totalmente) a 7 (Concordo totalmente):

a) Este líder tem o direito de tomar decisões em nome do nosso país.

b) Em geral, as pessoas devem aceitar a autoridade deste líder.

c) As ações deste líder são legítimas.

d) Eu aceitaria decisões tomadas por este líder mesmo que não estivesse de acordo com elas.

e) Este líder merece o apoio dos cidadãos portugueses.

f) A autoridade deste líder é apropriada e justificada.

– Pág. 12 –

Para terminar, por favor agora pense no texto com o qual menos concordou.

Gostaríamos de conhecer a sua opinião sobre as pessoas que concordam mais com esse texto.

Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo totalmente) a 7 (Concordo totalmente):

a) Ficaria incomodado(a) se um amigo se casasse com alguém que se identifica com aquela posição.

b) Ficaria incomodado(a) se um familiar próximo se casasse com alguém que se identifica com aquela posição.

c) Não gostaria que uma pessoa que defende aquela perspetiva se mudasse para a casa ao lado.

d) Evito criar amizades com pessoas que partilham aquela visão.

e) Tento evitar socializar com pessoas que partilham aquela visão.

f) As pessoas que se identificam com aquela posição são hipócritas.

g) As pessoas que se identificam com aquela posição são imorais.

h) As pessoas que se identificam com aquela posição são antipáticas.

i) As pessoas que se identificam com aquela posição são perigosas.

j) As pessoas que se identificam com aquela posição são cruéis.

k) Fico satisfeito(a) quando coisas negativas acontecem a pessoas que se identificam com aquela posição.

l) Fico satisfeito(a) quando pessoas que se identificam com aquela posição ficam mal vistas.

m) Gosto de irritar pessoas que se identificam com aquela posição.

n) Gosto de ver pessoas que se identificam com aquela posição serem colocadas no seu lugar.

o) É apropriado ridicularizar pessoas que se identificam com aquela posição.

Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo totalmente) a 7 (Concordo totalmente):

a) Sinto respeito pelas pessoas que defendem aquela posição, mesmo quando discordo.

b) Consigo compreender porque é que algumas pessoas se identificam com aquela posição.

c) Sinto-me confortável em interagir com pessoas que se identificam com aquela posição.

d) Acho importante que posições diferentes da minha sejam expressas.

e) Consigo reconhecer boas intenções nas pessoas que defendem aquela posição.

– Pág. 13 –

Agradecimento e Debriefing

Em primeiro lugar, agradecemos a sua participação e o tempo que disponibilizou para o preenchimento deste questionário. O seu contributo é extremamente importante para a nossa investigação.

Em Psicologia Social, para podermos estudar determinados fenómenos e observar os processos cognitivos a eles associados, temos, muitas vezes, de recorrer à construção de cenários, para permitir que os nossos participantes sejam colocados em situações semelhantes às que queremos estudar. A construção de cenários resulta de 2 necessidades:

1. Conhecer as causas de determinados fenómenos. Ao construirmos estes cenários, estamos a controlar, dentro dos possíveis, as condições em que os nossos participantes se encontram. Assim, podemos conhecer que alterações das situações em que se encontram causam diferenças nos comportamentos das pessoas;

2. Proteger os nossos participantes enquanto estudamos temas delicados. Por exemplo, se queremos estudar a discriminação não devemos provocá-la de forma a vê-la acontecer realmente, porque haverá sempre alguém que poderá ser vítima deste fenómeno. Assim, ao construirmos estes cenários protegemos potenciais vítimas.

No estudo em que participou foi utilizada esta metodologia. Foram apresentados dois textos sobre um grupo de trabalho da UE, em que os líderes dessas comissões podiam diferir quanto a questões demográficas (português ou estrangeiro) e questões ideológicas (pró-UE e Eurocético).

O nosso objetivo foi testar a ideia de que a perceção de legitimidade de um líder e a polarização em relação a outro grupo vão depender das diferenças demográficas e ideológicas dos líderes de ambos os grupos.

Este objetivo não pôde ser mencionado no início porque, caso contrário, os nossos participantes não responderiam de forma espontânea perante a situação que expusemos.

FACULDADE DE **PSICOLOGIA E DE CIÊNCIAS DA EDUCAÇÃO**