Do Ethics really matter? Understanding group reactions to unethical leadership

Catarina Morais

School of Psychology, University of Kent

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Abstract

Most research on ethical leadership has disregarded the role of group processes, and particularly of group membership. Using social identity theory of leadership as a framework, this thesis aims to understand the impact of ethical and unethical leaders on group members' perceptions about the leader, as well as to investigate under which circumstances group members may be willing to accept and endorse unethical leaders. To test these ideas, seven experimental studies and one longitudinal study were conducted. Study 1 (N = 90) manipulated whether participants evaluated an ethical or unethical leader, providing empirical support to the idea that unethical leaders have a less positive impact on group members, especially if they belong to the outgroup (N = 129). Study 3 (N = 229) also manipulated target status, showing that unethical behavior displayed by a regular member had a less negative impact when compared to unethical leaders. Study 4 (N = 125) revealed that the intention of behavior is an important factor too, as group members considered the group-promoting leader more prototypical, warmer and competent. Attributions of behavior also changed based on the context (Study 5, N = 226), with leaders' behavior attributed more to internal and stable dispositions in an intragroup (compared to an intergroup) context. Studies 6 and 7 (Ns = 178, 170) extended these findings by showing that attributions were also shaped by the outcome of the behavior to the group. Moreover, leaders who benefited the group (even if they were unethical) were perceived as more competent and more endorsed. Study 8 (N = 260) showed that when the outcome was positive to the group, group members were more willing to accept unethical leadership and to exert less social control. Taken together, the results suggest that leaders play an important role in setting ethical and normative behavior, but also that, under certain circumstances, leaders' ethicality might be overlooked, as long as the behavior is in the group's best interest.

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General Index

Thesis Overview..... 13

Chapter I: Ethical leadership..... 17

1.1 Conceptualizing ethical leadership..... 18

1.1.1 How does ethical leadership differentiate from other leadership styles?..... 22

1.2 Why is it important to study ethical leadership?..... 24

1.3 The unexplored unethical leadership..... 26

1.4 Conclusion..... 28

Chapter II: Leadership as a group process..... 30

2.1 Social identity theory..... 30

2.2 Social identity theory of leadership..... 33

2.3 Reaction to normative deviance..... 37

2.3.1 Leader's special treatment..... 40

2.4 Unethical leadership: fitting the puzzle pieces..... 43

2.5 Conclusion..... 44

Chapter III: Ethical behavior, group membership, and target status..... 45

3.1 Theoretical background..... 45

3.1.1 Ethical leadership..... 46

3.1.2 The social identity theory of leadership..... 47

3.2 Overview of Studies..... 48

3.3 Study 1..... 50

3.3.1 Overview and Hypotheses..... 50

3.3.2 Method..... 51

3.3.3 Results..... 53

3.3.4 Discussion..... 57

3.4 Study 2..... 58

3.4.1 Overview and Hypotheses..... 58

3.4.2 Method..... 60

3.4.3 Results..... 61

3.4.4 Discussion..... 68

3.5 Study 3..... 70

3.5.1 Overview and Hypotheses..... 70

3.5.2 Method..... 71

3.5.3 Results..... 72

3.5.4 Discussion..... 78

3.6 General Discussion and Conclusions..... 79

3.6.1 Limitations and Future Research..... 82

Chapter IV: Behavioral motivation and attributions..... 84

4.1 Theoretical background..... 84

4.1.1 Causal attributions of behavior..... 85

4.1.2 Stereotype content model..... 87

4.2 Study 4..... 88

4.2.1 Overview and Hypotheses..... 88

4.2.2 Method..... 89

4.2.3 Results..... 91

4.2.4 Discussion..... 94

4.3 Study 5..... 96

4.3.1 Overview and Hypotheses..... 96

4.3.2 Method..... 97

4.3.3 Results..... 99

4.3.4 Discussion..... 105

4.4 General Discussion..... 106

4.4.1 Limitations and Future Research..... 108

Chapter V: Profit vs ethics – behavior outcome and leader endorsement..... 110

5.1 Theoretical background..... 110

5.1.1 The impact of behavior outcome..... 111

4.1.2 Chapter Overview and Hypotheses..... 113

5.2 Study 6..... 114

5.2.1 Method..... 114

5.2.2 Results..... 116

5.2.3 Discussion..... 121

5.3 Study 7..... 123

5.3.1 Method..... 123

5.3.2 Results..... 124

5.3.3 Discussion..... 132

5.4 General Discussion..... 132

5.4.1 Limitations and Future Research..... 134

Chapter VI: Unethical leadership, attributions, and success..... 136

6.1 Theoretical background..... 136

6.1.1 Unethical leadership..... 137

6.1.2 Group membership and causal attributions of behavior..... 139

6.2 Chapter Overview and Hypotheses……... 140

6.3 Method..... 141

6.4 Results..... 145

6.5 Discussion..... 157

Chapter VII: Conclusions and Implications..... 159

7.1 Overview of the main findings..... 162

7.2 Main contributions and Practical implications..... 166

7.3 Limitations and Future research..... 170

References..... 175

Appendices..... 201

Appendix A..... 202

Appendix B..... 211

Index of Tables

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Univariate F values, and Partial Eta Squared for Ethical Leadership at Work by Leader (Study 1)..... 54

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, Univariate F values, and Partial Eta Squared for dependent variables (Study 1)..... 55

Table 3. Mediation analysis of the effect of the Leader (IV) on typicality, evaluation, team effectiveness and optimism (DVs) mediated by the perceived ethicality (ELW; Study 1)..... 56

Table 4. Mediation analysis of the effect of the Leader (IV) on typicality, evaluation, team effectiveness, optimism and beliefs (DVs) mediated by the perceived ethicality (ELW), with Group membership (IV) acting as moderator of the relationship between the predictor and the mediator (Study 2)……. 65

Table 5. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation Matrix for Studies 2 and 3…… 77

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations for the Causal attributions (Study 4) … 94

Table 7. Means (Standard Deviations) for Leader endorsement (Study 6) …… 121

Table 8. Means (Standard Deviations) for Causal Attributions (Study 7……... 129

Table 9. Means (Standard Deviations) for Leader endorsement (Study 7) …… 130

Table 10. Means and Standard Deviations for all measures (Study 8)……..…. 147

Index of Figures

Figure 1. Mediation analysis of the effect of the Leader (IV) on the outcomes (DVs) mediated by the perceived ethicality (ELW) (Study 1)..... 57

Figure 2. Group membership x Behavior interaction for Perceived ethicality (Study 2)..... 62

Figure 3. Group membership x Behavior interaction for Team effectiveness (Study 2). 63

Figure 4. Mediation analysis of the effect of the Leader (IV) on the outcomes (DVs) mediated by the perceived ethicality (ELW), with Group membership (IV) acting as moderator of the relationship between the predictor and the mediator (Study 2)..... 67

Figure 5. Behavior x Group membership x Status interaction for Normativeness (Study 3) 74

Figure 6. Behavior x Group membership x Status interaction for Optimism about the future in the organization (Study 3) 76

Figure 7. Behavior x Group Salience interaction for Emotion-based judgements (Study 5)…… 101

Figure 8. Behavior x Motivation interaction for Stability (Study 5)..... 104

Figure 9. Mediated-moderated analysis of the effect of the Outcome (IV) on leader endorsement (DV), moderated by Behavior, and mediated by Competence and Reason-based judgements (Study 6)..... 121

Figure 10. Behavior x Outcome interaction for Prototypicality (Study 7) 126

Figure 11. Behavior x Outcome interaction for Competence (Study 7) 128

Figure 12. Mediated-moderated analysis of the effect of the Outcome (IV) on leader endorsement (DV), moderated by Behavior, and mediated by Competence and Reason-based judgements (Study 7)..... 131

Figure 13. Voters x Wave interaction for Acceptability of unethical leadership (Study 8) 155

Figure 14. Voters x Wave interaction regarding the stricter process dimension of the EPA measure (Study 8) 156

Thesis Overview

The present work is divided into seven chapters. The first two are dedicated to a critical analysis and description of the theories in which the thesis is framed, in which the most relevant theoretical assumptions to the empirical work are discussed. In Chapters III-VI, the main studies are presented and discussed. Finally, Chapter VII is dedicated to the discussion of the main theoretical contributions and practical applications of the work, alongside with its limitations and suggestions for future research.

Chapter I presents the concept of ethical leadership and discusses its main definitions, focusing on the conceptualization proposed by Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005), which highlights the importance of the leader as a role model in setting normative behavior within a group. They argued that individuals learn to behave ethically by observing the leader who, due to the central role that occupies within the group, is perceived as a credible and legitimate role model. Then I move to the main focus of the present thesis: unethical leadership, distinguishing it from other types of leadership such as destructive leadership, and presenting a major gap in the present literature: the lack of consideration for intergroup processes to understand group reactions to unethical leadership.

In Chapter II, a group-based framework to our work is presented. Founded on the social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which suggests that individuals strive to achieve and maintain a positive self-esteem which is, in part, influenced by the evaluations they make of the groups they belong to. Therefore, group

members feel threatened when deviance occurs within the group, as it may jeopardize this positivity, making them react negatively to those who deviate from the norms (Marques, Abrams, Páez & Hogg, 2001). However, previous research on transgression credit (cf. Abrams, Randsley de Moura, & Travaglino, 2013; Randsley de Moura & Abrams, 2013) demonstrated that leaders (because they occupy a central role, opposing to what happens to regular members) are granted some leniency and allowed to deviate without being severely punished. Nevertheless, little is known about how the group reacts to a leader who behaves unethically (whose actions break not only norms, but also moral rules), neither how they are evaluated and perceived, or what consequences their behaviors have to the group. This is what we propose to address in the empirical chapters.

Chapter III addresses the idea that unethical leaders have a negative impact on followers (Study 1), as they act as role models and specially ingroup unethical leaders, given the importance that group membership plays these assumptions (Studies 2 and 3). Study 3 takes a step further and examines whether the impact of unethical behavior on group members differs if displayed by a leader or by a regular member. Taken together, this chapter aims to test the assumption that followers look at leaders to guide their own behaviors within the organization/group and that they are affected by the leaders' (but not regular members') unethical actions because of the representative role the leader plays within the group.

Chapter IV aims to expand previous research showing that group members look not only to the leader's action itself but also judge based on the perceived intention to act. In Chapter IV, the group members' perceptions regarding (un)ethical leaders are

explored, namely how group members attribute causes to the behavior of these leaders. Two "special" circumstances are expected to influence such perceptions: leader's intention to behave and the context in which the behavior occurs. In Study 4, leader's intention to behave (self-promoting *vs* group-promoting) is manipulated. This study aims to expand previous research showing that group members look not only to the leader's action itself but also judge based on the perceived intention to act, testing the idea that less harsh judgements will be given to a leader that is perceived to act on behalf of the group. In Study 5, the context in which the behavior occurs is also manipulated: the unethical behavior was either displayed in an intragroup (more private) or intergroup (more public) context.

Chapter V addressed the idea that the outcome of the behavior to the group shapes these perceptions and attributions. Moreover, we also begun to test the assumption that, under some circumstances, group members might overlook leaders' ethicality and be willing to endorse an unethical leader. In two studies (6 and 7), the outcome (positive *vs* negative *vs* unknown) of the leader's behavior to the group is manipulated. These studies aim to test the assumption that group members make strategic decisions when endorsing the leader and, therefore, based on the result of the leaders' actions they make different attributions and decisions of supporting the leader, ignoring the ethical nature of the behavior when the leaders' actions benefit the group. These processes will be tested through mediation models.

In the final empirical chapter (Chapter VI), a longitudinal study (Study 8) was conducted, using the US 2016 Presidential Election to explore how group members' deal with a situation in which they must choose between two allegedly unethical leaders

and to test how perceptions and attributions about leaders change based on ingroup success and failure. We have also explored the consequences of this success/failure to the group members' willingness to exert social control over the ingroup and outgroup unethical leaders.

The final Chapter (VII) presents an overview of the main findings and the key conclusions of the work, discussing the theoretical and practical implications. Limitations and suggestions of future research are also presented.

Chapter I: Ethical leadership

The need for leaders in different types of teams and groups is already well-established in the literature (e.g. Arnold & Randall, 2010; House et al., 2004; Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996). A different question, raising from the increase attention given to ethics, especially in organizational contexts (Vardi & Weitz, 2004), is why do organizations need ethical leaders? Why is ethical leadership important within groups?

A more philosophical approach is embedded in Aristotle's *Politics* book, in which he emphasized that there is not only a need to provide law and order, but also good law, good order, and noble actions. From a more pragmatic point of view, the reality is that there is an increase in recognition for social responsibility and the importance of the public good, of contributing to the strength, harmony and stability of society (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996), which, according to Berenbeim (1987), is what made large corporations, for example, set an ethics code to regulate the practice of their organizations.

The leader, as a central piece of an organization, or any group, sets the example and inspires others – their role is crucial when communicating the organization's values and mission which, as good as they may look on paper, are quite useless if the leader's behaviors are inconsistent with them (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996). Moreover, a growing awareness of the impact of organizational and business decisions on the society has also helped to shift the attention to ethics (Vardi & Weitz, 2004). For example, it is now more common to see companies considering the environmental impact to the planet when making business transactions. It is undeniable that business must be profitable, but an exclusive concern with profit without a simultaneous concern for high standards in terms of ethical performance is no longer acceptable (Kanungo &

Mendonca, 1996). Consequently, leaders are today more pressured to guide their decisions in an ethical manner. Therefore, and given the importance of ethic boundaries and context, how do groups react to, and psychologically manage, unethical behaviors from their group leaders? And further, what is the impact of unethical leadership to the group?

In this chapter, I describe and explain the two major concepts of ethical leadership, the theories proposed to frame its conceptualization, as well as how ethical leadership is theoretically differentiated from other leadership styles. Particular attention will be given to the unexplored impact and consequences of unethical leadership to groups, as this is the focus of the thesis.

1.1 Conceptualizing ethical leadership

Brown and colleagues (2005) defined ethical leadership "as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (p. 120). This is a complex definition and full of different meanings and assumptions; thus, it is important to dissect it. The first segment of the definition implies that ethical leaders become legitimate and credible role models by behaving in a "normatively appropriate" manner, but they also influence what followers deem to be normatively appropriate (Brown et al., 2005). According to the authors, the vagueness of the term "normatively appropriate" was intentional, as what is considered appropriate behavior is intrinsically connected with the context, depending on it.

The second segment, *the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication*, refers the idea that ethical leaders make ethics socially salient and

draw attention to the topic, not only by talking about it with followers, but also by discussing it, that is, by also providing followers with the opportunity to have a say in what leadership looks and feels like, suggesting a more just process (procedurally and interpersonally) (Brown et al., 2005; Howell & Avolio, 1992). Moreover, the *reinforcement* dimension assumes that besides setting the ethical standards, ethical leaders reward the followers that present an ethical conduct and discipline those who do not (Brown et al., 2005; Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003), also reinforcing the idea that individuals learn by observing others – vicarious experience (Brown et al., 2005). In addition, the *decision-making* component of the definition reflects the idea that all this is deliberate, and that ethical leaders consider the consequences of their decisions, making principled choices that can be observed and replicated by others (Avolio, 1999; Howell & Avolio, 1992).

An important feature of Brown and colleagues' (2005) definition of ethical leadership is related to the theoretical framework they used to integrate this concept: the social learning perspective. This perspective, first proposed by Bandura (1977, 1986), argues that individuals learn from direct experience can also be learnt through vicarious experience, that is, by observing other's behavior and its consequences. Indeed, a strong dimension of the leadership is the ability to influence and the authors propose that, via modelling, ethical conduct of followers is influenced by leaders. Brown and colleagues (2005) argued that by observing the leader, followers can learn what kind of behaviors are expected from them and, consequently, what behaviors are more likely to be punished or rewarded.

Due to both the status within the organization (or group) that leaders acquired and their power affect behaviors and outcomes of others, leaders are likely sources of modelling (Brown et al., 2005). Moreover, the effectiveness of such modelling is also a

result of prestige inherent to the status but also due to the ability of controlling rewards (Bandura, 1986). Another crucial aspect for leaders of becoming a role model in terms of ethics is to be perceived as attractive, credible and legitimate and this can be achieved by engaging in behaviors that are evaluated by others as being normatively appropriate, and that imply an altruistic (opposing to a selfish) motivation (Brown et al., 2005; see also Kanungo, 2001). In other words, leaders' actions need to be perceived as motivated by the groups' best interests.

Drawing on Brown and colleagues' (2005) definition, De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) proposed an alternative, as they argued that the initial conceptualization lacked inclusion of the leader's personal characteristics. Their focus is on individual attributes of leader that they included under the umbrella of "leader social responsibility". Those attributes include concern for others (engage in virtuous acts), self-judgement and concern about consequences (refraining from evil acts), moral-legal standard of conduct, and internal obligation to "do the right thing" (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008).

Nevertheless, the two definitions, proposed by Brown and colleagues (2005) and by De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008), share a significant number of features. For instance, both argue that leaders' fair and moral behavior is a core component – but the former describes it in terms of leader being trustworthy and fair, and the latter in terms of concern for morality and fairness. Also, Brown and colleagues (2005) argued that ethical leaders engage in open communication and promote ethical conduct by rewarding and punishing ethical and unethical behavior (respectively), which shows to followers what sorts of behaviors are expected from them, and which are not tolerated. In the same line of reasoning, De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) proposed this open communication (called role clarification) includes clarifying expectations and

responsibilities and that is what makes followers/ employees clear regarding what is expected from them. Both definitions also encompass some kind of power sharing in decision-making, arguing that ethical leaders listen what employees have to say, what are their concerns, and giving them a voice in the process of decision-making (cf. Brown et al., 2005; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008).

It seems possible that a key *difference* between the two concepts relies on the researchers' varied focus of the leader-follower dynamic, with Brown and colleagues (2005) focusing on the impact of the position that the leader occupies in itself (which allows him/her to become a role model, and group members learn through observation), and De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) highlighting leaders' personal characteristics, arguing that leaders are expected to have a high inner obligation of being morally right.

These two definitions, although sharing several characteristics, rely on different frameworks to explain ethical leadership. In the Brown and colleagues' definition, the leader-follower relationship is outlined in terms of how the former constitutes a role model to the latter, who learns how to behave ethically; whilst Den Hoogh and Den Hartog's definition this relationship is conceptualized as a behavioral transaction between leader and followers. This thesis will use Brown and colleagues (2005) conceptualization of ethical leadership, because (1) it is still the most used definition in the literature to date (see Kaptein, 2017 for an overview), and (2) our approach to ethical leadership is based on social identity theory, taking intra and intergroup processes into account in the relationship between leaders and group members, and this chosen definition, by focusing on the power of leader as a consequence of the role it occupies within the group is aligned with such theory, which will be explored in Chapter II.

1.1.1 How does ethical leadership differentiate from other styles of leadership?

One key concept that appears to be related with ethical behavior from employees is authentic leadership, which is defined as "a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development" (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008, p. 94). Indeed, authentic leadership has been found to be positively related to employees' ethical behavior – however, this mechanism has been mediated by the levels of moral courage of those employees (Hannah, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2011). Interestingly, Cianci, Hannah, Roberts, and Tsakumis (2014) found authentic leadership to inhibit unethical decisions from employees, but only when temptation was absent.

However, whilst Cianci and colleagues (2014) proposed that the positive impact of authentic leadership is due to an activation of followers' moral perspective which, in turn, reduces their tendency to make an unethical decision, emphasizing the importance of self-knowledge (cf. Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011); the ethical leadership definition postulates that this positive impact that ethical leaders have on followers' ethical behavior is because of the example they set and because of the discipline component (by rewarding and punishing ethical/unethical behavior), putting the emphasis on the leader-follower interactive dynamic.

It is also important to distinguish ethical leadership from other types of leadership, especially from transformational leadership, as they can appear to be strongly related (cf. Bass & Avolio, 2000; Brown & Treviño, 2006). Indeed, the definition of transformational leadership proposed by Burns (1978) argues that this type

of leadership is moral, as followers are inspired by (transformational) leaders to work together for a common and collective goal. Therefore, focusing on this superordinate goal, followers would go beyond self-interest. Kanungo and Mendonça (1996) take this idea further and argue that an ethical influence process is involved in transformational leadership. Consistently with this argument, previous literature showed transformational leadership to be positively related to moral reasoning (Turner, Barling, Epitropaki, Butcher, & Milner, 2002) and leader integrity (Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002).

There is, in fact, a clear overlap between the two constructs, as both ethical and transformational leaders act as role models, and definitions of the styles include dimensions such as concern for others, concern to act consistently with moral principles, and deliberate taking of ethical consequences into account (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Moreover, the idealized influence dimension of transformational leadership, which included explicit ethical content, was also found to be weakly correlated with ethical leadership (Brown et al., 2005).

Importantly, there is research that demonstrates that these concepts have distinctive validity. For example, Brown and colleagues (2005), showed that ethical leadership predicts several outcomes that go beyond the effects of this idealized influence alone, which the authors explained as ethical leadership including a "moral management" aspect that is more consistent with the representations of a transactional leadership perspective (vs. transformational) – specifically the use of rewards and discipline when holding subordinates accountable for meeting the ethical standards is more related with a transactional style than with transformational leadership (cf. Treviño et al., 2003). In addition, ethical leadership also extends this transactional process by setting ethical standards to followers (Treviño et al., 2003) and by including principled decision-making (Avolio, 1999). Another difference relates with the

visionary aspect of transformational leadership that it is not included in the ethical leadership concept (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Moreover, transformational leadership appears to be closely related to followership dependence on the leader (cf. Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003), while ethical leadership has been associated more meaningfully with work and stronger sense of duty (cf. Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, & Folger, 2010; Hannah, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2014)

In conclusion, ethical leadership has some overlaps with other leadership styles and characteristics (such as transformational leadership and fair treatment); nonetheless, these concepts are not broad enough to embrace all constructs that have been associated with ethical leadership.

1.2 Why is it important to study ethical leadership?

One of the main reasons is that ethical leadership has very practical consequences, particularly to organizations. Brown and colleagues (2005) stated that different outcomes, such as perceived leader effectiveness, satisfaction with the leader, follower's willingness to report problems to management and job dedication (as the willingness to give an extra effort), are predicted by ethical leadership. Brown and Treviño (2006) also proposed that ethical leadership would result in higher levels of followers' satisfaction, commitment, motivation, ethical decision-making and more prosocial and less counterproductive behaviors.

In line with these predictions, Den Hartog and Belschak (2012) showed, indeed, that ethical leadership reduced counterproductive behavior by increasing work engagement. Ethical leaders promote, via role modelling and among organizational members, altruistic behavior (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). Consequently, these

members are expected to become more committed to the organization (Kanungo & Conger, 1993).

Neves and Story (2015) studied the impact of ethical leadership on affective commitment, that is, the identification and emotional attachment with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). They found a relationship between ethical leadership and affective commitment, stronger when the supervisors had a high reputation for performance. The results of their study also demonstrated that employees presented the lowest levels of affective commitment to the organization when the leaders were not perceived as being ethical, regardless of their personal reputation for performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that ethical leadership appears as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the strongest bond with the emotional organization expressed by employees (Neves & Story, 2015).

Ethical leadership also impacts on more than followers' daily experiences in organizations. De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) interviewed 73 CEO's regarding their role and functioning as managers. They also asked them to distribute a questionnaire regarding outcome ratings to six of their employees (that worked directly with them). The results showed a positive relation between ethical leadership and top management team effectiveness and subordinates' optimism about their future. They also proposed that ethical behaviour by leaders impact positively on how employees feel about the organisation, predicting that, in these cases, they would be more positive and hopeful, as well as more optimistic about the organization and, for that so, more willing to remain and contribute to its success. These results confirm the idea that managers can directly influence both job satisfaction and organizational commitment by displaying ethical leadership (Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009).

Neubert and colleagues (2009) found that ethical leadership is responsible for shape the perceptions of ethical climate which, in turn, maximizes job satisfaction and affective commitment. Aligned with these results, a positive relation between perceived ethical leader behavior and trust, affective commitment and normative commitment was also found by Den Hartog and De Hoogh (2009). Furthermore, Den Hartog and Belschak (2012) concluded that employees tend to state a stronger engagement (measured in terms of feeling more dedication, vigor and absorption at work) when they perceived their leaders as behaving ethically. Moreover, this engagement resulted, simultaneously in more personal initiative and less counterproductive behavior, suggesting that the process of ethical leadership involves a strong identification-related motivational component (Den Hartog & Belschak 2012).

In general, the positive impact of ethical leadership on followers is illustrated by the positive evaluations that these leaders receive from their team members (Brown et al., 2005). Nevertheless, some of these are only theoretical predictions, as suggested by Brown and colleagues (2005), and no empirical studies have been conducted to prove these assumptions – which was the first step of the present work (cf. Chapter III, Study 1).

1.3 The unexplored unethical leadership

The "dark side" of leadership has been mainly study under the umbrella of *destructive leadership*, a wider expression that has been encompassing e wide range of "bad" leader behavior (Thoroughgood, Sawyer, Padilla, & Lunsford, 2016), such as narcissistic, toxic, incompetent, abusive, bullying, or tyrannical behavior (Erickson, Shaw, Murray, & Branch, 2015), which have been associated with negative consequences to both followers and organizations (cf. Krasikova, Green & LeBreton,

2013; Shaw, Erickson, & Harvey, 2011; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). It is important to highlight that for a leader to be considered destructive, the inappropriate behavior must be systematic and repeated over time, not just occasionally (Erickson et al., 2015). However, this definition of destructive leadership, opposed to the concept of unethical leadership, does not encompass a specific moral component, it rather refers to any general bad behavior that a leader displays.

While ethical leadership has becoming a "hot topic" in the recent literature, little is known about what characterizes unethical leadership and what are the implications of it to the organization or group where it occurs. Previous research (e.g. Celik, Dedeoglu,, & Inanir, 2015; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009) has displayed a tendency to draw conclusions from the impact of unethical leadership by contrasting outcomes of ethical leaders – that is, when establishing correlational relationships, it is assumed that if ethical leaders are associated with less followers' deviant behaviors, for example, that also means that unethical leaders are associated with more deviant behaviors from followers.

Although it may seem reasonable to consider that ethical and unethical leadership are two opposite poles of one continuum, Brown and Treviño (2006) reasoned that being low on ethical leadership may not necessarily mean to be high on unethical leadership, and vice-versa. A leader who does not simply exhibit ethical leadership behavior may also not do anything that unethical, but could just not have an ethics-related agenda (e.g. ethically neutral leadership, see Brown & Treviño, 2006).

Moreover, and even though leadership encompasses the ability of influencing others and achieving group goals (cf. Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994), only a smaller body of research has been investigating the phenomenon of (un)ethical leadership in terms of group processes. Equally important, previous research has also failed to

acknowledge the role of intergroup processes, such as group membership, when assessing (un)ethical behavior. In the present work, I propose that social identity theory, and particularly social identity theory of leadership, provides a suitable framework and has the potential to act as a framework to fill this gap in the literature – the overall aim of this thesis.

1.4 Conclusion

Ethical leadership has been widely researched, especially in the context of organizations. However, the main findings have been drawn almost entirely from qualitative and correlational studies, which present several limitations when it comes to establishing causality. As such, little is known about what characterizes unethical leader, and the idea that the components associated with ethical leadership will follow a "mirror pattern" when it comes to unethical leadership remains to be empirically tested. This is what we propose to test in Chapter III. Moreover, the consequences of unethical leadership and how group members judge and perceive unethical leaders remains unexplored – what mechanisms followers use to assess the leaders' behavior? Does the intention of behavior affects such assessments (Chapter IV)? What attributions do followers make about unethical leaders (Chapters IV, V, and VI)? Under which circumstances are unethical leaders endorsed and what mechanisms do group members use to justify such behavior (Chapters V and VI)? These are some of the questions that I address in the present thesis.

However, it is important to note that organizational behavior (and group behavior) occurs within a specific context that encompasses important group dynamics and social identity motives. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that intergroup processes may play an important role when assessing ethical and unethical leaders.

Thus, in the next Chapter, we draw on the social identity theory of leadership (Hogg, 2001) to frame the reactions and evaluations of followers/group members when facing ethical and unethical behavior from their leaders.

Chapter II: Leadership as a group process

In the previous chapter, the importance of ethics on leadership to the group and group members was explored. This importance is exemplified by the numerous practical consequences that ethical leadership has to the group (e.g. decrease counterproductive behavior, more commitment, motivation, among others).

This thesis uses social identity theory as a framework for understanding processes related to the impact of leaders' unethical behavior on followers. Social identity theory is used because of the importance of the social context to understanding group dynamics, and particularly the role of group processes to perceive, understand, and evaluate leaders' behaviors. Specifically, the theoretical background for the original research presented in the thesis, is the literature that describes how group members deal with leaders who do not conform with the group norms or behave in a way that jeopardizes the group, as well as the mechanisms that might explain such reactions.

2.1 Social identity theory

Social identity theory was firstly developed by Henri Tajfel (e.g. 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), who proposed that human behavior is positioned in a continuum that ranges from the interpersonal (e.g. me, I) to the intergroup (e.g. we, us). On one hand, interpersonal behavior results from the interaction among two or more individuals and is characterized and affected by their personal characteristics, experiences, and interpersonal relationships (Tajfel, 1974). These kinds of interactions should be isolated from group memberships but, and as Tajfel (1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) noted, our personal characteristics are influenced by group memberships, so this might not be fully possible – that is to say, our notion of self is affected by groups we belong to (i.e. the

awareness of belonging to a group such as psychologists, or of being Portuguese, may affect my interactions with others).

On the other hand, at the other end of the continuum, intergroup behavior is displayed when two or more individuals' interaction is based on group membership, setting aside their own personal characteristics (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) within that context – for example, close friends might be rivals at a football match. Sherif (1967) defined intergroup behavior as "any behavior displayed by one or more actors toward one or more others that is based on the actors' identification of themselves and the others as belonging to different social categories" (p.40). Therefore, it can be concluded that as social categories (group memberships) become more salient due to the context or level of identification, individuals move from interpersonal to intergroup behavior (cf. Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These constructs are intrinsically related to one's self-concept system, which includes at least two components important to what the present work is addressing: personal identity and social identity, each one related to each extreme of the continuum presented.

Personal identity, strongly related to interpersonal behavior, refers to individual characteristics, personal traits and idiosyncrasies (Turner, 1984). Contrariwise, social identity refers to the part of the self-concept that is derived from group membership and relevant social categorizations (Tajfel, 1978), and consequently, is strongly related with intergroup behavior.

According to the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978), individuals' social identity involves three distinctive components: cognitive, evaluative, and emotional. That is, for a social identity to be formed, individuals need to acknowledge their belonging to the group (cognitive component) and perceive the positive or negative value of the group in

society (evaluative component), which forms individuals' feelings regarding the membership (emotional component) as a result.

The cognitive component was particularly explored by Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell (1987) in the self-categorization theory. Here self-categorization was defined as "cognitive groupings of oneself and some class of stimuli as the same (identical, similar, equivalent, interchangeable, and so on) in contrast to some other class of stimuli" (Turner et al., 1987, p.44). An important feature of this process is prototypicality and depersonalization. The prototype refers to the embodiment of the attribute that simultaneously characterize the group and distinguish it from the other groups, including beliefs, feelings, and behaviors (Hogg & Terry, 2000). By self-categorizing themselves in terms of the social category, individuals compare group members with the prototype of the group and depersonalize themselves in terms of the prototypical characteristics (Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004). By doing so, individuals become interchangeable within the category (Turner, 1984), once all group members share the prototypical characteristics. Thus, the attraction and evaluation of others is based on group membership (instead of personal characteristics), and the closest to the group prototype the more appreciated group members are (Hogg, Hardie, & Reynolds, 1995).

The evaluative component, that is, the group value, results from a process of social comparison between one's group and salient relevant outgroups (Tajfel, 1978), in a simultaneously attempt to also differentiate the ingroup from the outgroups (Tajfel, 1982). The favorable or unfavorable outcome of the social comparison defines the positive or negative value of the group to the individual. Therefore, a positive social identity strongly depends on a favorable social comparison (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Once the value of the group affects individuals' self-esteem (as their social identity is a

part of their self-concept), they have a need to achieve or maintain a positive social identity and, consequently, individuals display a tendency to seek for a positive value and distinctiveness, which leads them incur in biases such as ingroup favoritism (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

2.2 Social identity theory of leadership

Based on the aforementioned theoretical approaches, Hogg (2001) proposed the social identity theory of leadership, in which three processes operate together in order to "make prototypicality an increasingly influential basis of leadership processes as a function of increasing social identity salience" (p. 188). These three processes are prototypicality, social attraction, and attribution and information processing.

The first process, prototypicality, operates when group members are depersonalized in terms of the ingroup prototype as a consequence of group membership being psychologically salient. Hogg (2001) argues that the more salient the group the stronger the effect, as group members conform to the prototype and, consequently, are influenced by it. Therefore, prototypicality becomes the basis of perception and evaluation of both the self and other group members when the ingroup is salient (Hogg, 2001). Nevertheless, the concept of prototypicality is not designed in a dichotomous perspective (prototypical vs non-prototypical) but as a continuum instead.

Therefore, categories possess an internal grade structure, which means that some group members are, within the context of that specific group, more prototypical than others (Haslam, Oakes, McGarty, Turner, & Onorato, 1995; Hogg, 1993), and category membership depends on a certain degree of similarity with the prototype, the best exemplar of the category (Haslam et al., 1995). Thus, more prototypical members (those who occupy the most prototypical position) exert more influence than less prototypical; indeed, the former are perceived as embodying the behaviors and the latter are

conforming to those behaviors (Hogg, 2001). However, this influence is due to the prototype embodied and not the prototypical person itself; nevertheless, the longer the prototype remains unchanged and the longer a person occupies the prototypical position, the stronger is the perception that such member actively influences others (Hogg, 2001).

As mentioned above, the self-categorization theory argues that depersonalization is the basis of attraction within groups (Turner, 1984), which explains the idea that more prototypical members are more liked than less prototypical ones (Hogg, 1992,1993). It is also known that people are more easily influenced by other people that they like (e.g. Berscheid & Reis, 1998; Hogg, 2001). Therefore, those who occupy the most prototypical position are more liked and acquire or possess the ability of actively influencing others, having their ideas more easily accepted and, consequently, more able to exercise leadership (Barreto & Hogg, 2017; van Knippenberg, 2011). This empowers the leader and imbues that person with status and prestige, reinforcing the role of leadership and increasing the differential status between leader and followers (Hogg, 2001). A complementary explanation lays on the fact that more prototypical members have a tendency to strongly identity with the group and thus present group behaviors, being normative and show more pronounced ingroup loyalty (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Consequently, these behaviors will support their prototypicality and increase social attraction; when the leader displays strong ingroup favoritism and intragroup fairness becomes simultaneously more socially attractive and imbued with legitimacy (Hogg, 2001).

The third process of Hogg's theory focuses on attribution and information processing. Attribution processes are used to make sense of behaviors. Thus, people attribute the causes of a particular behavior to internal/ dispositional factors – such as

personality – or to external/ situational factors – like social context (Heider, 1958; cf. chapter IV for more information regarding attribution processes).

In a group context, prototypical members are particular targets of attention as people are more sensitive to differences in prototypicality among members (see Turner, 1991) and, according to social cognition research, distinctive and subjectively important people are disproportionately influential, and have a tendency to see their behavior being attributed to dispositional factors (Hogg, 2001; see Erber & Fiske, 1984). So, highly prototypical members seem to have influence on others because they fit the prototype which, in turn, increases social attraction and, consequently, enables them to exert influence and gain compliance (Hogg, 2001). Taking together, these processes are likely to boost internal attributions, centered on leadership abilities that are intrinsic or charisma (Hogg, 2001).

When observing leaders' behavior, individuals tend to overestimate the amount of control that leaders exert (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985). Thus, and over time, highly prototypical members tend to have their behavior attributed to personal characteristics (e.g. aspects of the personality) instead of to the prototypicality of the position that the person occupies (Hogg, 2001). Once the powerful (like leaders) control the outcomes of other, people pay more attention to those in powerful positions in an attempt of exerting some influence to what is going to happen to them (Fiske, 1993). As a consequence of paying more attention and gather more information about those who occupy a powerful position (Fiske, 1993), people tend to attribute leader's behavior to internal dispositions and, therefore, to create a charismatic leadership personality (Hogg, 2001). Hence, charismatic leadership is a result of a relational and perceptual phenomenon; in other words, charisma is an attributional phenomenon (Conger & Kanungo, 1987, 1988; see also Fiske, Neuberg, Beattie, & Milberg, 1987). Previous

research has tested the relationship between prototypicality and attributions of charisma to leaders, and found that prototypical leaders were perceived as possessing higher levels of charisma and has being more persuasive when compared to ingroup non-prototypical leaders (cf. Platow, van Knippenberg, Haslam, van Knippenberg, & Spears, 2006).

The idea that leaders are attributed personal characteristics (such as charisma) seems to reflect a that prototypicality has passive connotation, in the sense that if the comparative social context remains stable, so does the prototype, meaning that the individual who occupies the most influential (prototypical) position will be the same. However, and as Fielding and Hogg (1997) noted, leadership encompasses more than just being prototypical, as an active exercise of power is needed. In sum, and according to the authors, this type of influence exerted by people who occupy the prototypical position is gained in, at least, two different ways: (1) because they are socially attractive, leaders are liked and other group members are more likely to conform with their requests or suggestions (cf. Hogg, 1993); (2) due to the aforementioned attribution processes that makes members attribute the leaders' apparent influence to the person itself (perceiving leaders as possessing charismatic-leadership personalities) instead of attributing it to the prototypicality associated with the position the leaders occupy (Fielding & Hogg, 1997).

The attribution of leadership characteristics (namely leadership effectiveness) in terms of prototypicality was empirically tested by Hains, Hogg, and Duck (1997), who demonstrated that, indeed, prototypical leaders are considered more effective by group members who strongly identify with the group. Consistent with Hains and colleagues' (1997) findings, Fielding and Hogg (1997) showed that group prototypicality predicted perceived leader effectiveness and this effect was particularly strong for participants

highly identified with their groups. Overall, these studies are consistent with the assumption of interdependence between group identification, prototypicality, and social attraction.

In sum, the social identity theory of leadership, supported by the aforementioned studies, argues that the more individuals identify with their group, the more their leadership perceptions, evaluations and endorsement are influenced by prototypicality; thus, prototypical members are, on one hand, more likely to become leaders and to be perceived as more effective leaders (Giessner & van Knippenberg, 2008; Giessner, van Knippenberg, & Sleebos, 2009; Hogg, 2001; Leicht, Crisp, & Randsley de Moura, 2013; Leicht, Randsley de Moura, & Crisp, 2014; van Knippenberg, 2011). The more prototypical the ingroup leader is, the better he/she represents the group's identity and the more positively evaluated he/she is (e.g., Abrams et al., 2013; Hains et al., 1997; Haslam & Platow, 2001; Haslam et al., 2001; Hogg, Hains, & Mason, 1998; Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003; Hogg, van Knippenberg, & Rast, 2012; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; Platow et al., 2006; Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005; Turner, 1991; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005).

2.3 Reaction to normative deviance

Social identity theory argues that individuals are intrinsically motivated to achieve or maintain a positive social identity. In order to keep this positive sense of group membership, individuals seek from maximizing and maintain a positive intergroup differentiation (McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 2002; Tajfel, 1978) and validate the normative values and standards of the ingroup (Abrams, Randsley de Moura, Hutchinson, & Viki, 2005). By validating these normative standards, individuals reduce their uncertainty about the world; therefore, ingroups are particularly relevant to this

mechanism of reducing uncertainty (Abrams & Hogg, 1988, 1990; Abrams et al., 2005; Hogg, 2001; Hogg & Abrams, 2001; Marques & Paéz, 1994). The perception that the self and the ingroup share the same values and norms reinforces both certainty and intragroup uniformity, as it provides a clear definition of how group members should think, feel, and behave (Abrams et al., 2005). Therefore, when facing a deviant within the group, this may threaten this validation and endanger individuals' positive social identity. Previous research revealed that, in such situations, group members engage simultaneously in two different types of differentiation: intergroup and intragroup (between normative and deviant members; Marques, Abrams, Páez, & Martinez-Taboada, 1998).

By violating the norms, deviant group members threaten the validity of those norms and, simultaneously, increase uncertainty (because intragroup consensus is at risk) and jeopardize the positive image of the group – the image that the group is correct and, therefore, better than relevant outgroups (Abrams et al., 2005; Marques, Abrams, Páez & Hogg, 2001; Marques, Abrams & Serôdio, 2001). Reno, Cialdini, & Kallgreen (1993) differentiated two types of norms: the descriptive norms, which inform individuals about which opinions and behaviors are more frequent in a specific situation; and prescriptive norms, which inform individuals about the opinions and behaviors that are socially approved, regardless of frequency (cf. also Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Depending on which norm (descriptive or prescriptive) was violated, individuals adopt either a descriptive or prescriptive focus, seeking to differentiate the ingroup from the outgroup, or becoming attentive to specific group members (e.g. deviant, leaders) whose opinions legitimize or undermine the belief on ingroup's superiority (Marques & Páez, 2008). Thus, members who conform with the norms contribute to a positive social identity and, therefore, receive approval from the group; and members who diverge

from norms threaten that positivity and trigger negative group reactions (Abrams et al., 2005; Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

According to this theory, deviants are perceived as having a strong threatening potential to affect the subjective validity of ingroup norms (Marques, Abrams, Páez & Hogg, 2001). Due to that threatening potential, ingroup deviant leaders are particularly derogated when norms are highly salient (Marques, Páez & Abrams, 1998) or when they occupy a central status within the group (Pinto, Marques, Levine & Abrams, 2010). When facing deviance within the group, individuals direct their efforts to change the opinions of deviant members towards the group consensus (Kerr & Levine, 2008; Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 2001; Schachter, 1951). When changing the deviant opinions is not possible, the group needs to derogate the deviant members to maintain their positive social identity. This phenomenon is illustrated by the black sheep effect (Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988), which shows that ingroup deviant members are more derogated than normative group members and, simultaneously, less derogated than outgroup deviant members. This differentiation is more acute among ingroup than outgroup members (Abrams et al., 2013).

The subjective group dynamics approach (e.g., Marques & Paez, 1994, 2008) argues that the strong and negative reaction that group members apply to deviant ingroup members are an expression of commitment towards the violated norms and, consequently, towards the ingroup. Therefore, reaction to deviance serves two purposes: (1) reinstates intragroup uniformity (by pressuring the deviant member), and (2) restores the positive value of the threatened norm (Marques, Abrams, Páez, & Martinez-Taboada, 1998).

An alternative explanation for this phenomenon was drawn by Biernat, Vescio, and Billings (1999). The authors argued that the black sheep effect happens as a result

of violated expectancies: ingroup deviants are more derogated than outgroup deviants because the expectancy violation is more noticeable, which would also justify why more central members are more derogated than marginal members of the group.

More important for our work, both explanations of the black sheep effect – subjective group dynamics and expectancy violation – assume that a leader who deviates from the norm should trigger more negative reactions than similar deviant members. Nevertheless, subsequent research has demonstrated that this might not be always the case, and leaders may receive a special treatment.

2.3.1 Leader's special treatment

Leaders enjoy a different status from other group members and if, on one hand, that status comes with more attention and other individuals are particularly sensitive to leaders' behavior; on the other hand, leaders are also given some latitude to define, change and deviate from the group norms.

This idea was initially developed by Hollander (1958), who argue that individuals, and particularly leaders for this matter, accumulate credits, during the course of membership, by displaying behaviors that cause positive impressions on others within the group. This accumulation of credits is denominated by idiosyncrasy credit and, according to the author, is what allows leaders to behave in a different way from the group's expectancies before being sanctioned. Hollander (1958) argued that each member, for each group in which is included, has a credit balance and when this balance reaches zero, the individual's affiliation with the group ceases.

The idiosyncrasy credit model of innovative leadership, as Hollander (1958, 1992) calls it, is, therefore, the latitude that allows leaders to bring change to the group. An important feature that needs to be highlighted is that, according to the author, the

credits given to the leader are intrinsically dependent on followers' perceptions about leader's competence, loyalty, and trust (cf. Hollander, 1992). Thus, leaders' intentions and motivations, and behavior consequences are important for followers to evaluate the leader and, ultimately, attribute or discount credits. In sum, the amount of credits (derived from the group members/followers' perceptions of competence and conformity to group norms as an expression of loyalty) is what allows leaders to display innovative actions and what provides them with latitude to deviate that would otherwise be perceived as unacceptable, or that would be, indeed, unacceptable for those who did not have such credit (Hollander, 1992).

Abrams, Randsley de Moura, Marques, and Hutchison (2008) built on Hollander's ideas and expanded his contributions by demonstration some existing boundaries to innovation credit. The authors showed that the evaluations of group members who display anti-normative opinions depend on the role such member plays (leader vs. member) and on the phase of leadership (past vs. established vs. future). Ingroup leaders who present anti-normative opinions are not necessarily judged less favorably and future leaders who challenge the norms can be given innovation credit (Abrams et al., 2008). Thus, under some circumstances, ingroup leaders can be given more latitude when they express and support anti-normative opinions when compared to other group members (innovation credit; Abrams et al., 2008; Randsley de Moura, Abrams, Marques, & Hutchison, 2011).

So far, the literature outlined shows that leaders whose opinions differ from the norm can be accepted by the group. However, what happen to leaders who display a more severe anti-normative behavior (for example, who transgress and break the law)? By transgressing, ingroup leaders create a strong dilemma to other members: on one hand, individuals know the importance of preserving consensual standards and norms,

but on the other hand, they also want to support their leader and, by doing so, to express loyalty to the group. Following this idea, Abrams and colleagues (2013) suggested that innovation credit might be extended to transgressive leaders, arguing that a double standard would be applied. Indeed, it seems that until the point that leaders' transgressions become public knowledge, they are less severely and/ or immediately punished (and they can even be immune to criticism) when compared to other regular members who commit similar transgressions. That is, leaders receive a transgression credit (Abrams et al., 2013).

This concept differs from the innovation credit to the extent that the later assumes that over time, in their relations with followers, leaders accumulate idiosyncratic credits for their loyalty to the group and, therefore, they are allowed to introduce innovation (cf. Hollander, 1958, Abrams et al., 2008). Hollander (1961) argued that this credit only applies while the leader's actions is consistent with the leadership role and contributes to the group's goals. Nevertheless, this theory does not consider intergroup context, which strongly affects leader's evaluations, neither considers whether the idiosyncrasy credit applies to situations in which leaders transgress, regardless their motivation, and damage the group (Abrams et al., 2013).

Abrams and colleagues (2013) conducted a series of studies to address these limitations and found a double standard when judging transgressive ingroup leaders: ingroup leaders that transgress were more positively evaluated than outgroup transgressive leaders and ingroup transgressive members. Therefore, ingroup transgressive leaders received a transgressive credit, even when their actions damage the group. However, the boundaries for transgressive credit rely on the perceived motivation for the action: when the motivation for transgression is perceived to be group-serving, the leader is granted that credit (regardless of the negative consequences

to the group), but not if the perceived motivation is related with leader's self-interests (cf. Abrams et al., 2013).

2.4 Unethical leadership: fitting the puzzle pieces

Hogg's (2001) social identity theory of leadership argued that a main process for a leader to emerge is prototypicality, that is, leader's ability to embody the characteristics of the group. By being unethical, leaders are not expected to emerge. Moreover, previous research has also shown that deviant leaders are not stereotypical (cf. Hains et al., 1997; Hogg, 2001; Hogg et al., 1998); thus, they are not typical, not what individuals would expect a leader to be. Therefore, theoretically, one would expect unethical leaders to be downgraded, as the literature presented showed that those who violate the norms receive negative reactions. However, recent work focusing on transgressive leaders (cf. transgression credit, Abrams et al., 2013; Randsley de Moura & Abrams, 2013) also showed that such reactions do not necessarily apply to leaders.

Moreover, previous literature focused either on deviant (those who act against the norm, violate descriptive norms) or transgressive (those who act against an accepted rule or norm, violating a prescriptive norm) members or leaders. These definitions, although included in unethical behavior (which might be breaking both descriptive and prescriptive norms), do not necessarily encompass the break of a moral dimension. More importantly, unethical behavior is not necessarily deviant nor transgressive, as acting in an unethical way does not necessarily mean the individual is breaking a rule. Therefore, being a deviant or a transgressive leader is a product of the context (and the contextual rules), whilst being unethical reflects more of a disposition of the leader him or herself (ethics, from the Greek "ethos" means character). This notion of context *vs.* disposition is also key to distinguish ethics (or unethical) from morality (or immoral):

ethics refers to the "moral correctness of a specified conduct", reflecting the "principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity", and morality is a term that reflects concern "with or derived from the code of behavior that is considered right or acceptable in a particular society" (Oxford Dictionary, n. d.). Taken together, unethical leaders constitute a special case that warrant further research.

2.5 Conclusion

In the present chapter, I argued that the social identity theory of leadership provides an important framework for the study of ethical and unethical leaders, explaining some of the mechanisms (such as prototypicality) associated with the perceptions that others have regarding leaders, which is intrinsically connected with leaders' ability to influence others. By occupying a central role within the group, leaders are particularly important. In this Chapter I, I have also described some important consequences that leaders, namely ethical leaders, have on the group and group members. Nevertheless, previous research has not explored the impact of unethical leaders on group members and on their perceptions about the group. Furthermore, little is known about how group members evaluate, perceive, and what attributions they make about unethical leaders' behavior. I will explore which mechanisms group members use to justify unethical leadership, as well as how they deal with a situation in which they have to choose between two unethical leaders.

Chapter III[1]: Ethical behavior, group membership, and target status

Summary

Previous research shows that ingroup leaders are granted transgression credit, an implicit license from their group to break the rules. In this chapter, we aim to extend these findings to organizations and to the wider question of whether and when people will tolerate unethical leadership, and how unethical leadership impacts perceptions of team performance and optimism at work. We conducted three studies, in which we manipulated whether people judged an ethical *vs* unethical leader, and the leader's group membership (ingroup *vs* outgroup; Studies 2 & 3). In Study 3 (N = 229), we also manipulated whether the behavior was displayed by a leader or by a regular member. Ethical leaders were judged more favorably and positively influenced participants' optimism, especially in the outgroup condition. Unethical colleagues impacted less negatively than unethical leaders. However, the negative impact of unethical leaders was reduced in the ingroup condition, showing that attributions for leaders' ethical behavior and its consequences differ depending on group membership.

3.1 Theoretical background

Organizational leadership scandals on malpractice emerge constantly in the media. Recent examples include allegations of corruption in FIFA's Presidency and against the ex-CEO of the VW automobile group, Martin Winterkorn. Therefore, it is unsurprising that institutions such as governments, trade unions, and businesses are

[1] This chapter is part of a manuscript currently under review: Morais, C., Randsley de Moura, G., Leite, A. C., & Abrams, D. (under review). "Ethics in organizational intergroup contexts: Judgments of (un)ethical leaders depend on the group they belong to".

becoming increasingly sensitive to ethical leadership issues, resulting in a progressively more prominent role of ethics in business (Stouten, van Dijke, & De Cremer, 2012). Yet the ethical compliance of organizations is reliant on disparate groups and teams to get things done (Sauer, 2011). Consequently, the role of leaders as ethical beacons is especially salient for organizations and their governance. Despite growing body of literature on ethical and unethical leaders in organizations, surprisingly little considers the fact that organizations are groups and that there are therefore implications of group membership and group processes. The present research examines the role of group membership and social identity in people's reactions to ethical and unethical leaders in organizational contexts (i.e. leader evaluations, perceptions of leader normativeness) as well as related effects they have on important workplace outcomes (i.e. team effectiveness, and optimism about the organization).

3.1.1 Ethical leadership

As mentioned in Chapter I, Brown and colleagues (2005) defined ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (p.120).

Seven components of ethical leadership have been identified in the organizational context: fairness, power sharing, role clarification, people orientation, integrity, ethical guidance, and concern for sustainability (Kalshoven, Hartog, & Hoogh, 2011). However, research has yet to investigate whether all seven are also relevant for characterizing unethical leaders. Although it may seem plausible that ethical and unethical leadership are opposite poles of the same continuum, Brown and Treviño (2006) argued that being low on ethical leadership does not necessarily correspond to

being high on unethical leadership, and vice-versa. For example, a leader may not exhibit ethical leadership but also not do anything that invites the label of unethical. Conversely the absence of ethical leadership does not necessarily imply unethical leadership, but may simply reflect the lack of an ethics-related agenda (e.g. ethically neutral leadership, see Brown & Treviño, 2006).

Because unethical leadership has not received much attention in the literature, relatively little is understood about how it emerges, when and why groups and teams allow it to continue or when they put a stop to it, and what impact it has on group and team well-being and performance. Importantly, unethical leadership, which may increase the chance of a group's material gain, also presents risks to an organization's reputation and may even render it vulnerable to criminal prosecution. Therefore, unethical leadership could have particular implications for concerns or optimism regarding the organization's future prospects.

Relatively recent approaches to understanding reactions to, and evaluations of, leaders have highlighted the importance of group dynamics and social identity motives. Given perception of what does and does not constitute appropriate behavior at work is likely to be subjective and context dependent, therefore seems likely that group processes will play an important role in assessment of ethical or unethical leadership. The social identity approach to leadership (e.g. Hogg, 2001) provides a useful framework for understanding the potential interactive effects of unethical leadership and group membership.

3.1.2 The social identity theory of leadership

The social identity approach to leadership explains that the most representative and normative (prototypical) member of the group will emerge as the group leader,

having the most influence within a group and being perceived as charismatic and authoritative (e.g., Hogg et al., 2012; Platow et al., 2006). Moreover, a central process of leadership refers to the ability of the leader to embody the group prototype in order to represent the group and/or to innovate and change direction (Abrams et al., 2008; Hogg, 2001).

Recent research has shown that groups are particularly lenient towards their own leaders' misbehavior – a so called "transgression credit" (Abrams et al., 2013; Randsley de Moura & Abrams, 2013). Numerous studies show that even though transgressive ingroup leaders are clearly judged of transgressors, they are less immediately and less severely punished compared to equally transgressive outgroup leaders, or towards ingroup and outgroup members who commit the same transgression (Abrams, Travaglino, Marques, Pinto, & Levine, 2017). This suggests that the group context within which unethical behavior occurs moderates perceptions of transgressive leaders.

3.2 Overview of Studies

An important limitation of the work on transgression credit is that it focuses on leader evaluation, and it does not consider what the potential impact might be on variables relevant to organizational well-being or productivity. The present research integrates the previous transgression credit findings with literature on ethical leadership at work, which shows a positive association between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes such as team effectiveness and optimism about the future (e.g. Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012; Neves & Story, 2015). This enhances knowledge of how unethical leadership in organizations is affected by group processes and the social context. The three studies we present test the role of group membership and leadership ethicality in evaluation of leaders, normative boundaries of groups, and

variables that are relevant for organizational behavior and for the relationship that employees establish with the organization, including perceived optimism and team effectiveness.

Additionally, in the third study, we test both (un)ethical leaders ***and*** regular team members (colleagues). This will allow us to (1) study whether and how perceptions of ethicality change according to the target's status and (2) to investigate the differential impact that ethical and unethical behaviors might have on organizational behavior and employees' experiences at the workplace depending on whether they are performed by leaders or colleagues. Investigating these questions can provide insight into the impact of ethical and unethical leaders on organizational outcomes, as well as the role that group membership plays in people's reactions to ethical and unethical leadership.

In the first study, we test (a) the effectiveness of an ethical vs. unethical leadership manipulation, and (b) examine whether ethical leaders are perceived to possess all components of ethical leadership at work more than do unethical leaders (which has not, to our knowledge, been experimentally tested previously). We also test on (c) the assumption that the effect of the condition on the outcome variables (normativeness, leader evaluation, team effectiveness, and optimism about the future) is mediated by perceived leader ethicality.

In Study 2, we manipulate the leader's behavior (ethical *vs*. unethical) and include ingroup/ outgroup membership as a factor, to test the theoretical assumption that group processes will impact judgements of ethical and unethical leaders in organizational contexts. We hypothesize that group membership moderates perceptions of ethicality, leading to different judgements of ethical and unethical leaders. In Study 3, we extend Study 2 by testing differences of ethicality on regular members as well as leaders.

3.3 Study 1[2]

3.3.1 Overview and Hypotheses

The first study tested the assumptions presented in the literature regarding the idea that ethical leaders are perceived to possess all seven components of ethical leadership at work, and whether perceived leader ethicality mediates the effect of the condition on the outcome variables (normativeness, leader evaluation, team effectiveness, and optimism about the future). It was predicted that:

H1. Ethical leaders should be perceived as significantly higher than unethical leaders in all components of ethical leadership;

H2. Ethical leaders should be perceived as more normative and should be more positively evaluated than unethical leaders;

H3. Ethical leadership should yield higher ratings of team effectiveness than unethical leadership;

H4. Participants should feel more optimistic about their future in the organization with ethical as opposed to unethical leadership;

H5. Perceived leader ethicality should mediate the effect of the conditions on the outcome variables (normativeness, leader evaluation, team effectiveness, and optimism about the future).

[2] A pilot was conducted to test whether asking participants to recall a leader from the ingroup or the outgroup would not in and of itself make salient the dimension of ethicality. We asked participants (N = 41) to describe either a leader of the ingroup or outgroup that they recalled (adopted from Shapiro et al., 2011) to check that spontaneously generated recalls of ethicality would not be affected by group membership. Participants were randomly allocated to the condition. There were no differences regarding leader's perceived ethicality [t (39) = 1.30, p = .20; ingroup, M = 5.81, SD = 1.28; outgroup, M = 5.08, SD = 1.20], nor leader's normativeness [t (39) = 0.04, p = .97; ingroup, M = 4.63, SD = 1.93; outgroup, M = 4.60, SD = 1.98]. There was a marginal difference in evaluations [t (39) = 1.95, p = .06; ingroup, M = 5.95, SD = 1.08; outgroup, M = 5.06, SD = 1.84], consistent with the Social Identity Theory's assumption of ingroup bias.

3.3.2 Method

Participants and Design. Ninety participants (51 males, 39 females) were recruited online via Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Participants were allocated randomly to condition (Leadership Behavior: Ethical *vs* Unethical) between-participants design. Participants' age ranged between 20 and 68 years old (M = 31.86, SD = 9.75).

Procedure. Participants completed the online experiment via Qualtrics. Participants were told that the aim of the research was to explore individuals' perceptions regarding behaviors in organizations/companies. Next, participants were asked to think about the organization in which they were employed at that time. We used a simulation method to manipulate ethical vs. unethical leadership, similar to the method used by Shapiro, Salas, Tangirala, & Von Glinow, (2011; cf. Appendix B). Specifically, participants were asked to consider their own organization and to describe either a leader who had done something that they consider ethically appropriate (ethical leader condition; n = 38), or a leader who had done something whose they considered ethically inappropriate (unethical leader condition; n = 52).

After describing the leader, participants completed the Ethical Leadership at Work Questionnaire (Kalshoven et al., 2011), providing their general perception about the leader they had just described. They also rated agreement with statements regarding the normativeness and evaluation of the leader, their perceptions of team effectiveness, and their optimism about their future in the organization.

Measures. *Manipulation check.* Participants answered on a 7-point scale "How ethical do you believe the leader was?" (*1 = Very unethical, 7 = Very ethical*).

Ethical Leadership at Work (ELW). A short version of the ELW questionnaire (Kalshoven et al., 2011) was used[3]. Participants were presented with 23 statements regarding the leader they had described in the beginning and asked to rate their agreement (*1 = I completely disagree, 7 = I completely agree*). The scale includes seven factors: (1) *Fairness* (e.g.: "The leader holds me accountable for problems over which I have no control" – reversed, α = .96); (2) *Power Sharing* (e.g. "The leader allows subordinates to influence critical decisions", α = .85); (3) *Role Clarification* (e.g. "The leader explains what is expected of me and my colleagues", α = .92); (4) *People Orientation* (e.g. "The leader is interested in how I feel and how I am doing, α = .95); (5) *Integrity* (e.g. "The leader keeps his/her promises", α = .97); (6) *Ethical Guidance* (e.g. "The leader ensures that employees follow codes of integrity", α = .97); and (7) *Concern for Sustainability* (e.g. "The leader shows concern for sustainability issues", α = .92).

Normativeness. Participants were asked to consider the behavior of the leader of their organization they described and to rate their agreement (*1 = I completely disagree, 7 = I completely agree*) with the following statements: "Most people in your organization would behave this way" and "Everyone behaves this way". The mean of their responses was computed to form a Normativeness Score, r = .86.

Leader Evaluation. On a 7-point bipolar scale, participants indicated to what extent they believed that the leader they described was "disloyal/loyal", "not a valuable member/a valuable member", "dishonest/honest", "selfish/generous", "not respectable/respectable" (adapted from Pinto, Marques, Levine, & Abrams, 2016). A Leader Evaluation Scale was created based on the mean of their responses, α = .98.

[3] To keep measures short and well-focused we used items from previous research using items with the highest factor loadings for relevant components. For more information about the unused items please contact the author. Please cf. Appendix A for more details regarding the measures.

Organizational Outcomes. We modified the Multi-Culture Leader Behavior Questionnaire (MCLQ; Hanges & Dickson, 2004) to test two important components: team effectiveness and optimism about the future in the organization. *Team Effectiveness* was adapted from "Top Management Team Effectiveness" dimension of the MCLQ. A Team Effectiveness Score was created through the mean of participants' responses (*1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much*) to the extent to which they "Believe that you would work effectively in a team that involved that person [the leader]" and "Perceive that the team has a clear understanding of what this company's goal and mission are", r = .81. In the *Optimism about the future in the organization* dimension, participants rated their agreement with four statements (e.g.: "I expected this organization to have an excellent future") on a 7-point scale (*1 = I completely disagree, 7 = I completely agree*). The mean of the responses was computed to form an Optimism Score, α = .94.

3.3.3 Results

Manipulation check. An independent sample t-test confirmed that the simulation paradigm (adopted from Shapiro et al., 2011) was effective. Participants considered the leader to be more ethical in the ethical condition (M = 5.95, SD = 1.43) than in the unethical condition (M = 2.71, SD = 1.63), t (88) = 9.80, p < .001, g = 2.07, 95% CI [1.58, 2.59]. Perceptions of ethicality also differed in the expected direction from the scale mid-point (4) within both ethical (t (37) = 8.38, p < .001) and unethical (t (51) = -5.72, p < .001) conditions.

Ethical Leadership at Work[4] (Perceived ethicality). A MANOVA revealed the same pattern in all the factors (multivariate F (82) = 6.48, p < .001, ηp^2= .36). We

[4] We differentiated perceived ethicality from the manipulation check as the ELW scale is more about an overall style of leadership, including several distinctive components (e.g. fairness, power sharing, role clarification, people orientation, integrity, ethical guidance, and concern for sustainability) and because

predicted that ethical leaders would score higher in all components of the scale when compared to unethical leaders (H1). Indeed, the described ethical leader were perceived to be higher in *fairness*, higher in *power sharing*, *clarifying* the different *roles* better, providing more *ethical guidance*, more *people oriented*, and more *concerned about sustainability* when compared to unethical leaders (cf. Table 1), supporting our hypothesis.

Table 1.

Means, Standard Deviations, Univariate F values, and Partial Eta Squared for Ethical Leadership at Work by Leader (Study 1).

	Ethical Leader	Unethical Leader	F (1, 88)	ηp^2
	M (SD)	M (SD)		
Fairness	5.06(1.68)	3.74 (1.79)	12.52***	.125
Power Sharing	4.97(1.15)	3.53(1.62)	22.24***	.202
Role Clarification	5.74(0.93)	4.15(1.64)	28.71***	.246
People Orientation	5.10(1.31)	3.25(1.72)	30.71***	.259
Integrity	5.64(1.24)	3.39(1.84)	42.54***	.326
Ethical Guidance	5.32(1.24)	3.51(1.75)	29.54***	.251
Concern for Sustainability	4.82(1.20)	3.33 (1.58)	29.60***	.211

*** $p \leq .001$

Normativeness, Evaluation, Team effectiveness and Optimism about the future in the organization. A MANOVA was conducted on the remaining dependent measures (multivariate F (85) = 16.58, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .44$). The results revealed an underlying difference in perceptions of ethical and unethical leaders. Ethical leaders

we believe that unethical behavior (which was assessed by our manipulation check measure) does not necessarily means that we should expect a low score in all components.

were perceived to be more normative of the organization and more positively evaluated than unethical leaders. Participants also perceived their team to be more effective and were more optimistic about the future in the organization in the ethical leader condition than in the unethical leader condition. Means, Standard deviations, univariate F values and effect sizes can be consulted on Table 2. Hypotheses H2, H3, and H4 were supported.

Table 2.

Means, Standard Deviations, Univariate F values, and Partial Eta Squared for dependent variables (Study 1).

	Ethical Leader	Unethical Leader	*F* (1, 88)	ηp^2
	M (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)		
Normativeness	3.82(1.57)	2.45 (1.46)	17.90***	.17
Evaluation	5.91(1.32)	3.10(1.76)	68.21***	.44
Team effectiveness	5.91(1.15)	3.77(1.73)	43.93***	.33
Optimism about the future	5.40(1.23)	4.29(1.68)	11.84**	.12

*** $p \leq .001$, ** $p = .001$

Mediation Analysis. To test the hypothesis that perceived ethicality (ELW) would mediate the effect of experimental condition on the outcome variables (normativeness, evaluation, team effectiveness and optimism about the future), we conducted a mediation analysis using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro, with the dependent measures as outcomes, the condition (IV) as a predictor (0 = Unethical Leader, 1 = Ethical Leader) and the perceived ethicality as a mediator (Model 4; 5000 bootstraps). The results are presented in the Table 3.

Table 3.

Mediation analysis of the effect of the Leader (IV) on typicality, evaluation, team effectiveness and optimism (DVs) mediated by the perceived ethicality (ELW; Study 1)

						95% CI	
	F (2,87)	*p*	*B*(*SE*)	*t*	*p*	Lower	Upper
Normativeness	14.60	< .001					
Total effect			1.36(0.32)	4.23	.0001	0.72	2.00
Direct effect			0.70(0.38)	1.86	.066	-0.05	1.45
Indirect effect			0.66(0.22)	2.77	.006	0.26	1.14
Mediator effect			0.40(0.13)	3.09	.003	0.14	0.65
Evaluation	100.14	< .001					
Total effect			2.81(0.34)	8.26	< .001	2.13	3.48
Direct effect			1.29(0.31)	4.23	< .001	0.69	1.90
Indirect effect			1.51(0.28)	5.20	< .001	1.01	2.12
Mediator effect			0.90(0.10)	8.65	< .001	0.70	1.11
Team Effectiveness	87.48	< .001					
Total effect			2.14(0.32)	6.23	< .001	1.49	2.78
Direct effect			0.64(0.28)	2.30	.024	0.09	1.20
Indirect effect			1.50(0.24)	5.35	< .001	1.06	2.02
Mediator effect			0.89(0.10)	9.37	< .001	0.70	1.08
Optimism	29.26	< .001					
Total effect			1.11(0.32)	3.44	.001	0.47	1.75
Direct effect			-0.09(0.33)	-0.27	.788	-0.73	0.56
Indirect effect			1.20(0.27)	4.56	< .001	0.69	1.78
Mediator effect			0.71(0.11)	6.42	< .001	0.49	0.93

The effect of the ethical vs. unethical leader condition on normativeness, leader evaluation, team effectiveness, and optimism about the future was mediated by the perceived ethicality (ELW) of the leader, fully supporting H5 (see. Figure 1). Perceptions that the leader was more ethical (predicted by the condition), predicted how

normative the leader was perceived to be, evaluations of the leader, and perceptions of team effectiveness and optimism about participants' future in the organization[5].

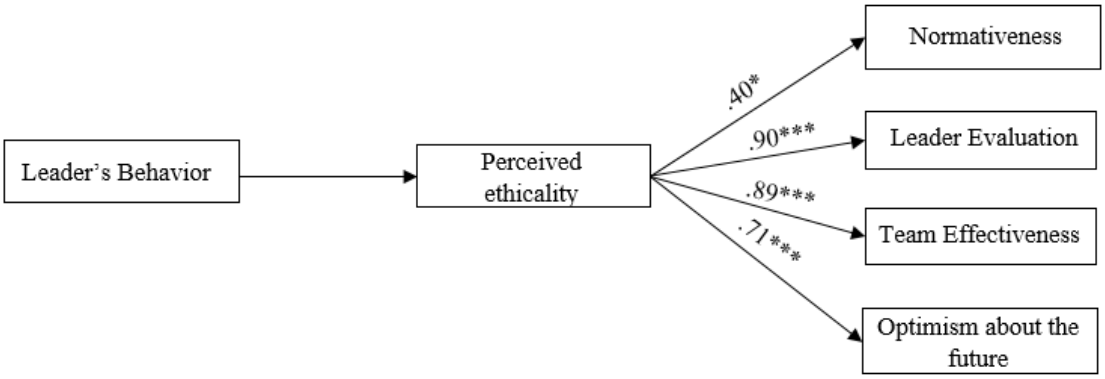

Figure 1. Mediation analysis of the effect of the Leader (IV) on the outcomes (DVs) mediated by the perceived ethicality (ELW) (Study 1).

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

3.3.4 Discussion

As expected, and consistent with Shapiro et al.'s (2011) paradigm, when participants described ethical rather than unethical leaders these leaders were rated more highly on all of the components of the ELW. The ethical leader was subsequently judged to be a more normative member of the organization, consistent with the assumption that ethicality is a component of leadership prototypicality. The ethical leader also received more favorable evaluations from the followers. Moreover, results support our hypothesis that ethical leaders would positively impact followers'

[5] Given the high correlation between leader's evaluation and team effectiveness, the model was retested using these variables averaged into an index. The results remained significant, F (1,88) = 42.86, R^2 = .33, $p < .001$ (total effect: B = 2.47, SE = .31, t = 7.88, $p < .001$, CI [1.85, 3.10]; direct effect: B = 0.97, SE = .26, t = 3.69, $p < .001$, CI [0.45, 1.49]; indirect effect: B = 1.50, SE = .24, CI [1.08, 2.05])

perceptions about the team effectiveness and their optimism about the future of the organization itself.

Study 1 demonstrates how simply recalling an ethical or unethical leader can impact on participants' perceptions of team effectiveness and optimism, as the perceived ethicality of the leader acted as a mediator between the type of leader and perceptions regarding the organization. This is a novel and important finding, with potential consequences for how organizations highlight the visibility of ethical leadership to employees, and the need to be aware of how unethical leadership can negatively impact perceptions of the team and organization.

3.4. Study 2

3.4.1 Overview and Hypotheses

It is well established that the categorization of others as ingroup or outgroup members affects social judgements. Perhaps both ingroup and outgroup leaders can be protected from negative evaluations that would normally follow transgressive or unethical behavior simply because people attribute other valued characteristics to them, based on leadership stereotypes (e.g. Lord, Brown, & Harvey, 2001), or they may heuristically confer prototypicality on the leader regardless of information to hand (Abrams et al., 2008). In either case, an ingroup or outgroup unethical leader would both be judged similarly. However, previous evidence suggests that in order to maintain a positive social identity, individuals may avoid derogating ingroup transgressive leaders whereas they may feel less constraint in the case of similarly transgressive outgroup leaders. Thus, they grant ingroup leaders 'transgression credit' (Abrams et al., 2013).

Given these possibilities, Study 2 examined whether perceptions of ethical and unethical leadership vary depending on the intergroup context. By varying the group membership of the leader, we can test whether judgments of ethical and unethical leaders and perceptions of organizational outcomes are dependent on whether that leadership is psychologically connected to the self via group membership.

The social identity approach to leadership (Hogg, 2001) has highlighted that when group membership is salient or the leader is normative, people make different attributions to ingroup leaders' attitudes or behaviors which, in turn, impacts on the evaluations that the leaders receive (Fielding & Hogg, 1997; Fielding, Hogg, & Annandale, 2006, Randsley de Moura et al., 2011). In the absence of strong cues to justify the behavior, people judge differently what motivated leaders to behave in a certain way – that is, individuals have different beliefs regarding what resulted in leaders displaying a specific behavior. According to Reidenbach and Robbin (1990), the study of beliefs when judging ethical and unethical leaders allows researchers to take a step further by not only understanding *what* individuals believe in but also *why* they do it. In line with the transgression credit effect, we expected:

H6. (a) Ethical leaders will be perceived as possessing all components of ethical leadership at work more than do unethical leaders, **(b)** ethical (vs. unethical) leaders will be perceived as more normative, **(c)** receive more positive evaluations, **(d)** yield higher ratings on team effectiveness, and **(e)** promote more optimism about members' future in the organization;

H7. Ingroup unethical leaders will be evaluated less unfavorably than outgroup unethical leaders;

H8. The ethicality of ingroup leaders will impact more strongly on **(a)** followers' perceptions of team effectiveness and **(b)** optimism about the future than will the ethicality of outgroup leaders;

H9. Considering the literature on transgression credit, we expect ethical and unethical ingroup leaders will be judged differently from the respective outgroup leaders;

H10. The different outcomes associated with leader ethicality (normativeness, leader evaluation, team effectiveness, optimism, and beliefs) will be mediated by perceived ethicality, and this mediation will be moderated by the leader's group membership. Specifically, that the relationships between the variables are stronger when participants judge ingroup rather than outgroup leaders.

3.4.2 Method

Participants, Design, and Procedure. The experiment was a 2 (Behavior: Ethical *vs* Unethical) x 2 (Group Membership: Ingroup *vs* Outgroup) between-participants design, with 129 participants (74 males, 55 females) allocated randomly to condition. Of these, 79.8% were American, 1.6% British, 1.6% from Philippines, 0.8% Italian, 0.8% Irish and 0.8% from Asia. Participants' age ranged between 19 and 66 years old (M = 36.66, SD = 12.77). Participants were recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (as a relevant sample for organizational level variables, e.g. Buhrmester, Kwang & Gosling, 2011). The procedure was similar to Study 1 with one exception: participants thought about and judged a leader either from an ingroup or an outgroup (cf. Appendix B).

Measures. As in Study 1, as well as the manipulation check, we measured ELW (a global score was computed; α = .97), Normativeness (r = .73), Leader Evaluation (α

= .95), Team Effectiveness (r = .73), Optimism (α = .95)[6], and we added a measure of beliefs (cf. Appendix A).

Beliefs. Participants rated their agreement *(1 = I completely disagree, 7 = I completely agree)* with 9 statements adapted from Reidenbach and Robin's (1990) scale (e.g. "The leader's behavior resulted in a positive cost-benefit ratio"), α = .95.

3.4.3 Results

Manipulation check. A Group Membership x Behavior ANOVA showed that participants considered the leader more ethical in the ethical condition (M = 6.22, SD = 1.27) than in the unethical condition (M = 2.05, SD = 1.05), F (1,125) = 411.25, p < .001, ηp^2 = .77. As expected, there was no significant main effect of Group Membership, F (1,125) = 0.49, p = .480, ηp^2 < .01 and no significant interaction, F (1,125) = 0.68, p = .410, ηp^2 < .01.

Perceived Ethicality (ELW). A Group Membership x Behavior MANOVA was conducted for all the dependent measures. As hypothesized (H6a), there was a significant main effect of Behavior, F (1,125) = 158.16, p < .001, ηp^2 = .56, indicating overall preference for the ethical leader. Participants perceived the ethical leader to be fairer, to have more integrity, to share more power, to clarify the roles better, to provide more ethical guidance, to be more people oriented, and concerned for sustainability (M = 5.58, SD = 0.88) than the unethical leader (M = 3.44, SD = 1.09). There was no main effect of Group Membership, F (1,125) < 0.01, p = .99, ηp^2 < .001.

The main effect of Leader was qualified by a significant Group Membership x Behavior interaction, F (1,125) = 7.92, p = .006, ηp^2 = .06. The ingroup unethical

[6] The measures of Normativeness, Team effectiveness and Optimism about the future refer to the organization that the leader belongs to.

leader was perceived as more ethical in terms of general ethical behaviors at work (*M* = 3.67, *SD* = 1.02) than was the outgroup unethical leader (*M* = 3.19, *SD* = 1.13), *t* (62) = -1.79, *p* = .078, *g* = 0.45, 95% CI [-0.06, 0.94]. Unexpectedly, participants also rated the outgroup ethical leader to be more ethical (*M* = 5.82, *SD* = 0.64) than the ingroup ethical leader (*M* = 5.34, *SD* = 1.02), *t* (63) = -2.28, *p* = .026, *g* = 0.55, 95% CI [-1.05, -0.06] (see Figure 2).

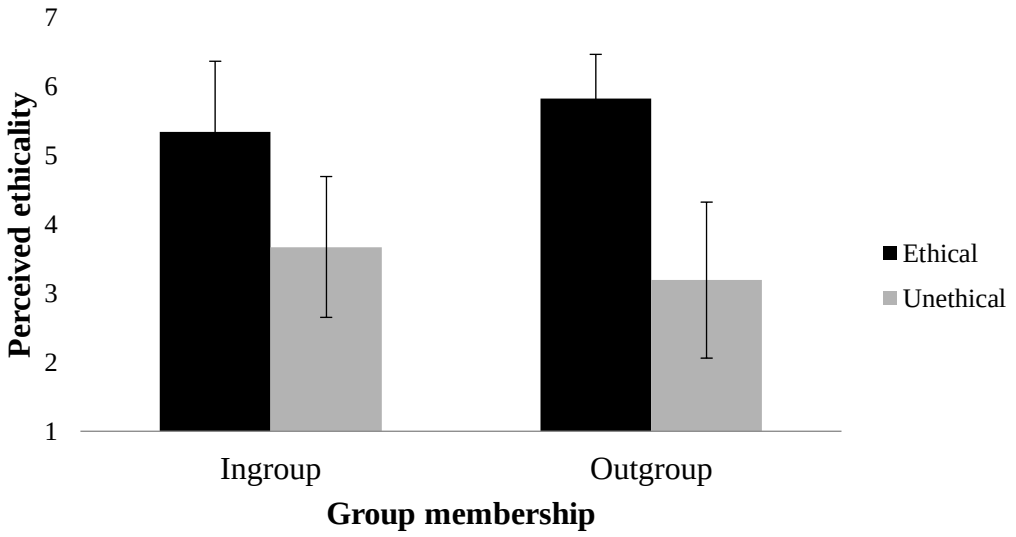

Figure 2. Group membership x Behavior interaction for Perceived ethicality (ELW).

Normativeness and Evaluation. Consistent with the pilot studies, participants considered the ethical leader to be more normative (*M* = 4.10, *SD* = 1.59) than the unethical leader (*M* = 2.31, *SD* = 1.30), *F* (1,125) = 48.99, *p* < .001, ηp^2 = .28 (H6b). They also evaluated the ethical leader more positively (*M* = 5.96, *SD* = 1.10) than the unethical leader (*M* = 2.72, *SD* = 1.45), *F* (1,125) = 206.65, *p* < .001, ηp^2 = .62 (H6c). No other effects or interactions were found, all *F*s < 1.64, *p* ≥ .203, ηp^2 < .02. The absence of an interaction effect means we did not find support for H7.

Team Effectiveness and Optimism about the Future. Participants perceived the team to be more effective in the ethical leader condition (*M* = 6.07, *SD* = 1.10) than

in the unethical leader condition (M = 3.27, SD = 1.50), F (1,125) = 158.92, p < .001, ηp^2 = .56. There was no main effect of Group Membership, F (1,125) = 0.33, p = .568, ηp^2 < .01.

The main effect of Behavior was qualified by a significant Group Membership x Behavior interaction, F (1,125) = 9.75, p = .002, ηp^2 = .07. When the leader was unethical participants perceived the team as more effective in the ingroup condition (M = 3.55, SD = 1.53) than in the outgroup condition (M = 2.83, SD = 1.35), t (62) = 2.28, p = .026, g = 0.57, 95% CI [0.07, 1.08]. The opposite pattern was found in the ethical leader condition, participants perceived the team as more effective in the outgroup condition (M = 6.36, SD = 0.80) than in the ingroup condition (M = 5.79, SD = 1.28), t (63) = 2.17, p = .035, g = 0.53, 95% CI [-1.02, -0.03] (see Figure 2). Regarding team effectiveness, H8a was supported (for unethical leaders), see Figure 3.

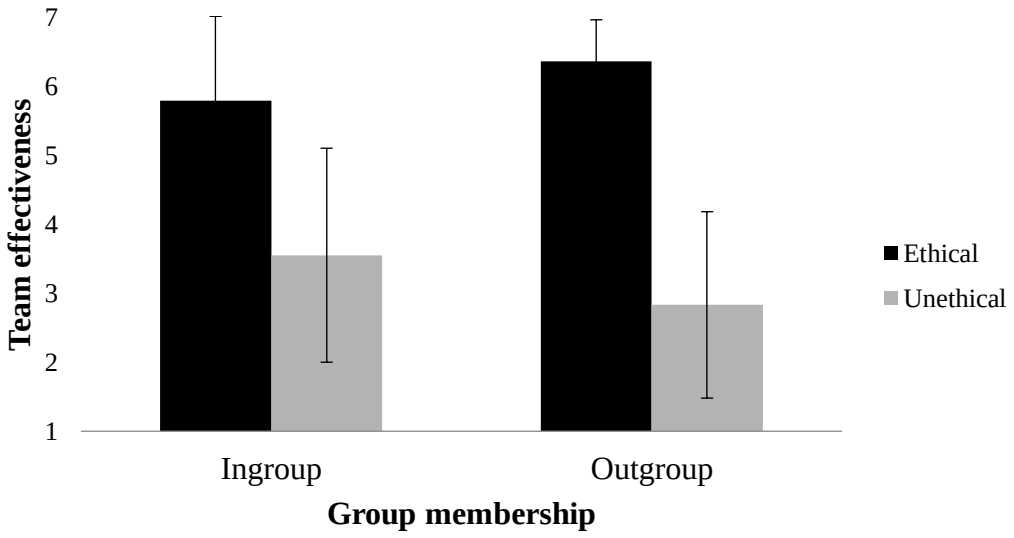

Figure 3. Group membership x Behavior interaction for Team effectiveness.

Regarding optimism, the same pattern of results was found. Participants were more optimistic regarding their future in the organization in the ethical condition (M = 5.74, SD = 1.15) than in the unethical condition (M = 3.72, SD = 2.01), F (1,125) =

52.85, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .30$. The main effect of Group Membership in the ethical leader condition was non-significant, F (1,125) = 2.42, $p = .120$.

This was qualified by a significant Group Membership x Behavior interaction, F (1,125) = 4.75, $p = .03$, $\eta p^2 = .04$. The simple main effects showed a significant effect of Group Membership in the unethical leader condition, t (62) = 2.16, $p = .035$, g = 0.53, 95% CI [0.77, 2.03]. For the unethical leader, participants reported higher levels of optimism in the ingroup condition (M = 4.21, SD = 1.99) than in the outgroup condition (M = 3.16, SD = 1.91). Similarly to team effectiveness, H8b was supported for unethical leaders.

Beliefs. We expected ethical and unethical leaders to be judged differently, according to their group membership (H9). There was a significant and large Behavior effect, F (1,125) = 509.50, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .80$. Judgments about the ethical leaders' behavior were more positive (M = 5.78, SD = 0.84) than for the unethical leader (M = 2.21, SD = 0.94). This was not affected by group membership (no other effects or interactions were found, Fs ≤ 1.82, ps ≤ .977). Thus, H9 was not supported.

Mediation Analysis. To test H10, we conducted a mediation analysis using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro, with the dependent measures as outcomes (normativeness, evaluation, team effectiveness, optimism about the future and beliefs), the condition (IV) as the predictor (0 = Unethical Leader, 1 = Ethical Leader), the perceived ethicality (ELW) as a mediator, and the group membership as a moderator (0 = Outgroup, 1 = Ingroup; Model 7; 5000 bootstraps). We expected the leader condition to predict the different outcomes, mediated by perceived ethicality and moderated by the leader's group membership (H10). The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

Mediation analysis of the effect of the Leader (IV) on typicality, evaluation, team effectiveness, optimism and beliefs (DVs) mediated by the perceived ethicality (ELW), with Group membership (IV) acting as moderator of the relationship between the predictor and the mediator (Study 2).

						95% CI	
	F (2,126)	*p*	*B*(*SE*)	*t*	*p*	Lower	Upper
Normativeness	24.38	< .001					
Direct effect			1.68(0.38)	4.46	< .001	0.94	2.43
Interaction effect			0.48(0.17)	2.81	.006	0.14	0.82
Conditional indirect effect of moderator							
Outgroup			0.08(0.22)			-0.34	0.52
Ingroup			0.13(0.40)			-0.57	0.75
Mediator (index)			0.05(0.13)	0.37	0.71	-0.21	0.31
Evaluation	164.44	< .001					
Direct effect			1.80(0.28)	6.34	< .001	1.24	2.37
Interaction effect			0.48(0.17)	2.81	.006	0.14	0.82
Conditional indirect effect of moderator							
Outgroup			1.13(0.31)			0.73	1.70
Ingroup			1.78(0.31)			1.19	2.40
Mediator (index)			0.67(0.10)	6.88	< .001	0.48	0.87
Team Effectiveness	144.71	< .001					
Direct effect			1.13(0.28)	4.12	.0001	0.59	1.68
Interaction effect			0.48(0.17)	2.81	.006	0.14	0.82
Conditional indirect effect of moderator							
Outgroup			1.30(0.22)			0.92	1.79
Ingroup			2.05(0.33)			1.44	2.73
Mediator (index)			0.78(0.10)	8.18	< .001	0.59	0.97
Optimism	63.28	< .001					

Direct effect		0.07(0.35)	0.20	.84	-0.63	0.77
Interaction effect		0.48(0.17)	2.81	.006	0.14	0.82
Conditional indirect effect of moderator						
Outgroup		1.53(0.29)			1.03	2.18
Ingroup		2.40(0.40)			1.65	3.22
Mediator (index)		0.91(0.12)	7.48	<.001	0.67	1.16
Beliefs	287.14 < .001					
Direct effect		2.98(0.22)	13.43	<.001	2.54	3.42
Interaction effect		0.48(0.17)	2.81	.006	0.14	0.82
Conditional indirect effect of moderator						
Outgroup		0.46(0.18)			0.16	0.86
Ingroup		0.73(0.26)			0.25	1.26
Mediator (index)		0.28(0.08)	3.61	.0004	0.12	0.43

These results mean that higher perceptions of leader ethicality (predicted by the condition) also predicted more positive evaluations and beliefs, and higher levels of team effectiveness and optimism about the future. This was even stronger when the leader belonged to the ingroup, supporting the hypothesis (H10) for all the outcomes except normativeness (cf. Figure 4)[7].

[7] As in Study 1, and due to the high correlation among variables, leader evaluation, team effectiveness and beliefs were averaged into a single index and the model was retested. The results remained unchanged, $F(3,125) = 54.55$, $R^2 = .57$, $p < .001$ (direct effect: $B = 1.97$, $SE = .20$, $t = 9.82$, $p < .001$, CI [1.58, 2.37]; conditional indirect effect: $B = 0.55$, $SE = .22$, CI [0.16, 1.03]; outgroup: $B = 0.96$, $SE = .18$, CI [0.66, 1.38]; ingroup: $B = 1.52$, $SE = .23$, CI [1.11, 2.04]).

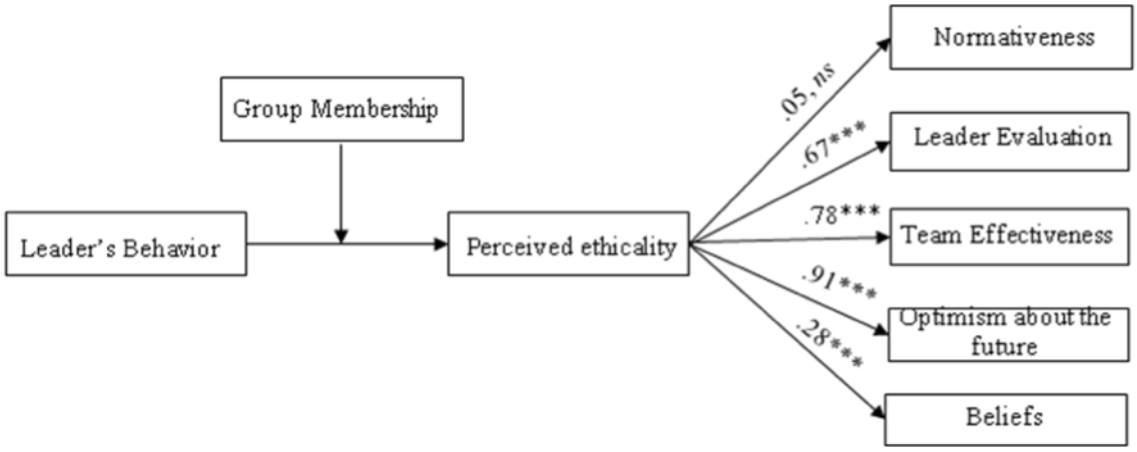

Figure 4. Mediation analysis of the effect of the Leader (IV) on the outcomes (DVs) mediated by the perceived ethicality (ELW), with Group membership (IV) acting as moderator of the relationship between the predictor and the mediator (Study 2).

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Additional Exploratory Analysis. We expected ingroup unethical leaders to be evaluated less unfavorably than outgroup unethical leaders (H7). We reflected that the hypothesis may have not been supported because in our manipulation participants were asked to *recall* specific leader situations. It is possible that the unethical ingroup behaviors were more personally salient than those generated in the outgroup condition. Exploratory follow up analysis was conducted on the descriptions of unethical leaders seems to confirm these assumptions. Illegal behavior (e.g. stealing from the company) was described by 17% of the participants in the ingroup condition and 36% in the outgroup condition. Whereas, inappropriate behavior (e.g. inappropriate relationships), was described by 33% of the participants in the ingroup condition $\chi^2 = 1.33$, $p = .27$, and 7% in the outgroup condition referred to mistreatment of employees (e.g. being disrespectful), $\chi^2 = 10.12$, $p = .002$.

We also anticipated that ethical and unethical ingroup leaders would be judged differently from outgroup leaders (H9). However, the results did not support our predictions. We wondered if this was due to perceptions about leaders' motivation to behave, as previous literature demonstrated that for ingroup deviant leaders to be allowed to transgress, group members need to perceive the behavior to serve the group (cf. Abrams et al, 2013). Thus, we explored responses on the item "The leader's behavior was self-promoting" (reversed), which was part of the "Beliefs scale". For this item, there was a Behavior effect, F (1,125) = 20.34, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .14$. Ethical leaders (M = 4.72, SD = 1.90) were seen as acting in a less self-promoting way than unethical leaders (M = 3.17, SD = 2.13). There was no effect of Group Membership, F (1,125) = 2.73, p = .101. There was a Behavior x Group Membership interaction, F (1,125) = 4.93, p = .028, $\eta p^2 = .04$, and the simple main effect of Group Membership was only significant in the ethical leadership condition. Participants perceived that the ethical leader behavior was less self-promoting in the outgroup condition (M = 5.41, SD = 1.43) than in the ingroup condition (M = 4.06, SD = 2.08), t (63) = -3.05, p = .003, g = 0.75, 95% CI [-1.25, -0.24] (see Figure 4). The simple main effect of Group Membership in the unethical leader condition was non-significant, t (62) = 0.37, p = .71.

3.4.4 Discussion

Study 2 extended previous findings by demonstrating that group membership plays a role when assessing leader's ethicality. Ethical leaders were given higher scores in all components of ethical leadership, were considered more normative, and were more favorably evaluated. Moreover, Study 2 supported the idea that group membership also has an impact when judging ethical and unethical leaders.

The results revealed that group membership is an important boundary condition. Participants rated the ingroup unethical leader to be less unethical than the unethical outgroup leader. The ingroup unethical leader also received higher scores for perceived team effectiveness and optimism about the future in the organization, than did the outgroup unethical leader. These results may suggest a need for participants to protect their ingroup's image when facing an unethical leader, and are consistent with the transgression credit effect (Abrams et al., 2013; Randsley de Moura & Abrams, 2013) demonstrating that this process can also be relevant for organizational leadership.

We expected that unethical ingroup leaders would also be evaluated more favorably than unethical outgroup leaders, but this did not occur. It seems likely that this was because the unethical ingroup behaviors that were recalled were more personally salient (as they were more closely related and affected by it) to participants (and, therefore, more severe) than the outgroup ones – the post-hoc chi-square analysis on participants' descriptions of the leader revealed that mistreatment of employees was significantly more recalled in the unethical ingroup condition than in the outgroup one (while illegal and inappropriate behavior was equally distributed for both conditions). Therefore, it could be argued that mistreatment of employees (in the perspective of those employees) crosses the line of an "acceptable" behavior that allows followers to be more lenient toward the ingroup unethical leader. This seems consistent with the idea that extreme forms of behaviors might withdraw leaders' transgression credit. For example, Abrams and colleagues (2014) showed that transgression credit does not occur if a leader expresses racist sentiments. Another explanation may be that, in the ingroup condition, the situation is more personally relevant to the participants, as they might have experienced it directly, whereas in the outgroup condition they were merely observers. The latter explanation is consistent with the core argument of this Chapter –

that group belonging and social identity is an important driver of followers' judgements of unethical leaders.

The results reinforce the conclusion that ingroup ethical leadership does indeed impact positively on followers' perceptions of team effectiveness and their optimism about the organization. Furthermore, this does appear to be partially dependent on the leader's group membership. The ethical leader was perceived as more ethical in the outgroup condition than in the ingroup condition. This apparent reverse effect of ingroup bias may be explained by the fact that participants also perceived the outgroup ethical leader as less self-promoting than the ingroup one. The reverse pattern was observed regarding the unethical leader.

3.5 Study 3

3.5.1 Overview and Hypotheses

Study 2 showed that group membership plays an important role when facing and judging ethical and unethical leadership in an organizational context. It also showed that leader ethicality might have important consequences for employees' behavior at the workplace. However, in this environment ethical and unethical behaviors can also be displayed by co-workers/ colleagues. Therefore, Study 3 extends Study 2 results to understand whether the same ethical standards are applied to leaders and colleagues and whether group members clearly differentiate the attributions underlying ethical and unethical behavior based on target status – leader vs. regular member.

In sum, Study 3 tests whether the same standards are at stake when employees make judgments of their leaders' or non-leader colleagues' ethical or unethical behaviors, and whether the salience of an outgroup may act as a motivation to derogate unethical leaders. Thus, we expect:

H11. (a) Unethical leaders to be more normative in the ingroup than outgroup, and **(b)** ingroup unethical leaders to be more normative than ingroup unethical regular members;

H12. Ingroup unethical leaders to be evaluated less unfavorably than outgroup unethical leaders;

H13. Unethical leaders to have a more negative impact on **(a)** followers' perceptions of team effectiveness and **(b)** optimism about the future than unethical regular members; **(c)** especially in the ingroup condition.

3.5.2 Method

Participants, Design, and Procedure. Similarly to Study 2, two-hundred and twenty-nine participants were recruited online via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (n = 229, 100 males, 128 females, 1 unknown) [8]. Participants' age ranged between 19 and 77 years old (M = 34.57, SD = 11.36). The majority of participants were North American (82%), with also 3% European, 1% Central American, 1% Asian, and 13% did not report nationality. Only one participant was not employed at the time. The remaining participants were employed and their time in the organization ranged between 0 and 384 months (M = 47.45, SD = 55.61).

Participants were allocated randomly to condition in a 2 (Behavior: Ethical *vs* Unethical) x 2 (Status: Leader *vs* Regular member) x 2 (Group: Ingroup *vs* Outgroup) between-participants design. The procedure was similar to Study 2 with one exception: participants thought about and judged either a regular member (non-leader) or a leader (cf. Appendix B).

[8] An initial sample of 235 participants was recruited. However, six outliers ($SD \geq 3$ on the manipulation checks' *z scores*) were removed from the final sample.

Measures. Similarly to Study 2, the following measures were used: Normativeness (r = .72), Evaluation (α = .98), and Optimism about the future (α = .94). To improve the reliability of the manipulation check, we replaced it by a multi-item scale. We also added an item to the team effectiveness scale, and included a self-promotion measure in order to explore the perceptions of followers about ethical and unethical behavior:

Behavior manipulation check. Participants completed the Ethical Leadership Scale (Brown et al, 2005), by rating their agreement on a 7-point scale (*1 = completely untrue, 7 = completely true*) with ten statements (e.g. "Sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics"). The mean of their responses was computed to form a Perceived ethicality score, α = .98.

Team Effectiveness. The same measure of Study 2 (adapted from Hanges & Dickson, 2004) was used, but to improve reliability of the scale a third item was added ("Perceive that the team works together effectively towards its goals"; α = .91).

Self-promotion. Participants were asked to rate their agreement (*1 = I completely disagree, 7 = I completely agree*) with the following statement: "The leader's [member's] behavior was self-promoting".

3.5.3 Results

Behavior manipulation check. As expected, participants perceived higher overall ethicality in the ethical condition (M = 5.86, SD = 0.83) than in the unethical condition (M = 2.75, SD = 1.16), F (1,227) = 335.63, p < .001, ηp^2 = .597, regardless of the target Status [F (1,227) = 0.60, p = .438] or Group [F (1,227) = 0.09, p = .765]. However, there was a Behavior x Group interaction, F (1,227) = 4.79, p = .030, ηp^2 = .021. In the ethical condition, the target was perceived as more ethical in the outgroup

(*M* = 5.94, *SD* = 0.71) than in the ingroup (*M* = 5.53, *SD* = 1.37), *t* (119) = -2.08, *p* =.040, *g* = 0.37, 95% CI [0.06, 0.73]. There were no differences in the unethical condition, *t* (112) = 1.27, *p* = .205. No other interaction effects were found (all *F*s ≤ 2.32, *p* ≥ .129).

A Behavior x Status x Group MANOVA was conducted for all the remaining dependent measures, *F* (223) = 1148.25, *p* < .001, ηp^2 = .963. Means, standard deviations and correlations can be consulted in Table 5.

Normativeness. As expected, there was a significant Behavior effect, *F* (1,221) = 62.57, *p* < .001, ηp^2 = .221. Targets were perceived as more normative in the ethical condition (*M* = 4.00, *SD* = 1.57) compared to the unethical (*M* = 2.48, *SD* = 1.44). There was also a main effect of Status, *F* (1,221) = 10.44, *p* = .001, ηp^2 = .045. Leaders were perceived as more normative (*M* = 3.50, *SD* = 1.70) than regular members (*M* = 3.03, *SD* = 1.64).

These were qualified by a significant Behavior x Status x Group interaction, *F* (1,221) = 4.01, *p* = .046, ηp^2 = .018. Participants considered the ingroup unethical leader (*M* = 3.11, *SD* = 1.63) more normative than the outgroup unethical leader (*M* = 2.37, *SD* = 1.29, *t* (60) = 1.933, *p* = .059, , *g* = 0.50, 95% CI [-0.01, 1.02]), consistent with H11a. Participants also considered the ingroup unethical leader more normative than the ingroup unethical regular member (*M* = 2.11, *SD* = 1.22), *t* (53) = 2.57, *p* = .013, *g* = 0.69, 95% CI [0.14, 1.23], supporting H11b (see Figure 5). No other significant simple effects were found, all *F*s ≤ 1.41, *p* ≥ .237.

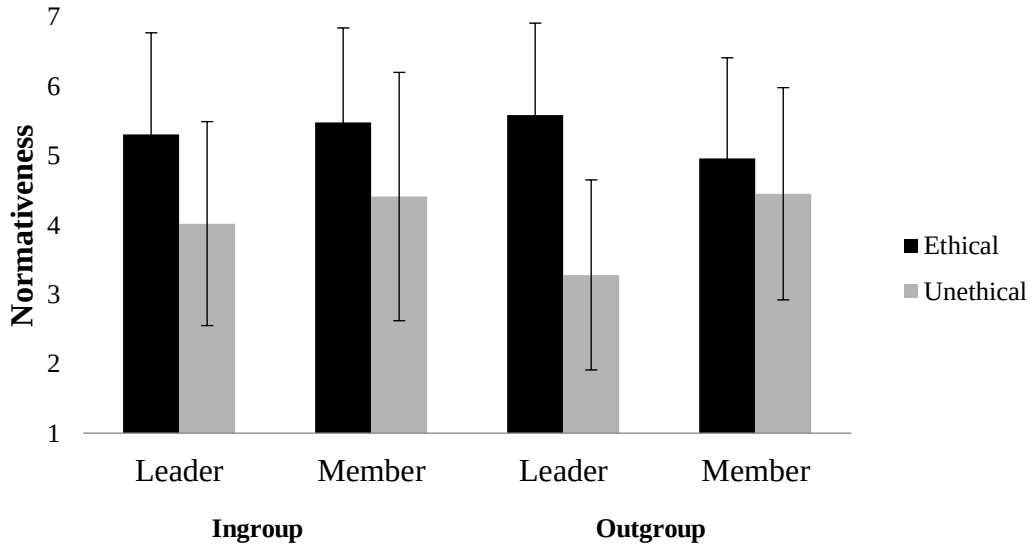

Figure 5. Behavior x Group membership x Status interaction for Normativeness.

Evaluation. As expected, a Behavior effect showed that ethical targets (*M* = 6.28, *SD* = .84) were evaluated more positively than unethical targets (*M* = 2.70, *SD* = 1.46), F (1,221) = 497.35, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .692$. A Status x Group interaction [F (1,221) = 4.68, $p = .032$, $\eta p^2 = .021$] was also found. Ingroup leaders were more positively evaluated than outgroup leaders (*M* = 4.79, *SD* = 2.08; *M* = 3.91, *SD* = 2.17, respectively). No other simple effects or interactions were significant (all Fs ≤ 1.33, $p \geq .250$). Therefore, H12 was not supported.

Team Effectiveness. There was a Behavior main effect, F (1,221) = 182.68, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .453$, whereby participants reported higher perceptions of team effectiveness when the target was ethical (*M* = 5.97, *SD* = .90) rather than unethical (*M* = 3.77, *SD* = 1.45). No other main effects or interactions were found (all Fs ≤ 2.33, $p \geq .128$). Thus, H13a was not supported.

Optimism about the future in the organization. There was a main effect of Behavior, F (1,221) = 54.93, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .199$. As expected, participants reported feeling more optimistic about their future in the organization in the ethical condition (*M*

= 5.38, *SD* = 1.34) compared to the unethical condition (*M* = 3.94, *SD* = 1.58). They were also more optimistic when the target status was a regular member (*M* = 4.92, *SD* = 1.54) compared to a leader (*M* = 4.42, *SD* = 1.69), *F* (1,221) = 3.49, *p* = .001, ηp^2 = .063. These effects were qualified by a significant Behavior x Status interaction, *F* (1,221) = 1.15, *p* = .008, ηp^2 = .031. Supporting H13b, simple effects tests revealed that participants were more optimistic when the unethical target was a regular member (*M* = 4.43, *SD* = 1.63) than a leader (*M* = 3.52, *SD* = 1.38), *t* (110) = -3.17, *p* = .002, *g* = 0.60, 95% CI [0.23, 0.98].

A three-way interaction was also found, *F* (1,221) = 4.08, *p* = .045, ηp^2= .018. This interaction arose because, when judging an unethical target from the outgroup, optimism about the future of the organization was lower when the target was a leader (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = 1.37), than a regular member (*M* = 4.45, *SD* = 1.53), *F* (1,221) = 12.50, *p* < .001, ηp^2= .052. However, when judging ingroup unethical targets, optimism was unaffected by whether the target was a leader or not (*M* = 4.02, *SD* = 1.47; *M* = 4.41, *SD* = 1.47, respectively; *F* (1, 221) = 0.72, *p* = .397). Moreover, when the target was an unethical leader, participants felt greater optimism in the ingroup condition than in the outgroup (*M* = 4.02, *SD* = 1.47; *M* = 3.28, *SD* = 1.37, respectively; *F* (1,221) = 5.93, *p* = .016, ηp^2= .025), whereas this difference was not significant when the target was only member [*F* (1,221) = 0.03, *p* = .856], see Figure 6. Therefore, H13c was not supported.

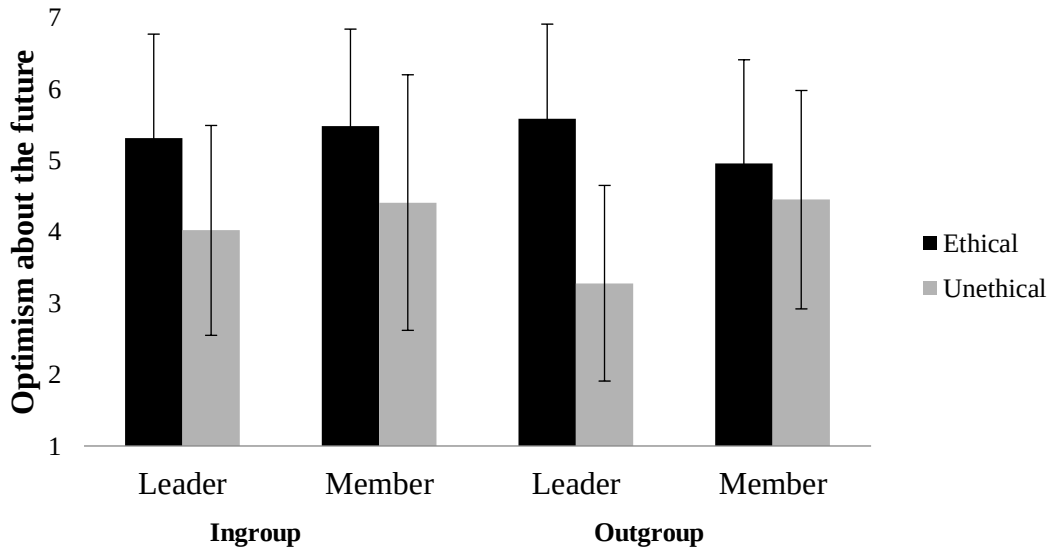

Figure 6. Behavior x Group membership x Status interaction for Optimism about the future in the organization.

Self-promotion. A main effect of Behavior [F (1,221) = 9.91, p = .002, ηp^2 = .043] revealed that participants thought that ethical targets (M = 3.61, SD = 2.07) were less self-promoting than unethical ones (M = 4.55, SD = 2.10), regardless of Status [F (1,221) = .31, p = .581] or Group Membership [F (1,221) = .06, p = .809].

Interestingly, a marginal Behavior x Status interaction was found, F (1,221) = 3.32, p = .070, ηp^2= .015. In the ethical condition, the leader was perceived as more self-promoting (M = 3.98, SD = 2.12) than the regular member [M = 3.34, SD = 2.05, t (119) = 1.68, p =.096, g = 0.31, 95% CI [-0.06, 0.67]; there were no differences in the unethical condition, t (112) = -0.67, p = .507. No other interaction effects were found (all Fs $\leq$ 1.66, $p \geq$ .200).

Table 5.

Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation Matrix for Studies 2 and 3.

	M (*SD*)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Study 2						
1. ELW	4.52(1.46)					
2. Normativeness	3.21(1.70)	.407***				
3. Optimism about the future	4.74(1.92)	.708***	.326***			
4. Evaluation	4.35(2.07)	.797***	.586***	.626***		
5. Team effectiveness	4.68(1.92)	.810***	.496***	.682***	.833***	
6. Beliefs	4.01(2.00)	.750***	.532***	.559***	.817***	.803***
Study 3						
1. Ethical leadership (MC)	4.32(1.87)					
2. Normativeness	3.25(1.68)	.457***				
3. Optimism about the future	4.66(1.64)	.521***	.216**			
4. Evaluation	4.46(2.17)	.898***	.456***	.469***		
5. Team effectiveness	4.87(1.66)	.749***	.288***	.666***	.732***	
6. Self-promotion	4.09(2.15)	-.197**	-.014	-.069	-.261***	-.152*

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

3.5.4 Discussion

Consistent with Study 2, Study 3 showed that when participants judged an ethical rather than unethical target participants considered the target to be more normative, evaluated the target more positively, perceived the team to be more effective, and were more optimistic about the future of the organization. Moreover, we expected ingroup unethical leaders to be evaluated less unfavorably than outgroup unethical leaders (H12). However, participants did not different leader's ethicality when evaluating ingroup and outgroup leaders; that is, ingroup leaders were overall evaluated more positively than outgroup leaders, regardless of how ethical/unethical they behaved. Group membership appeared to have particular influence on the evaluations of leaders, and this disregard for considering ethicality may reflect a need to protect the image of the ingroup (cf. Abrams et al., 2005; Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 2001).

Study 3 also revealed that judgments about leaders differ from judgments about otherwise comparable members. Leaders were perceived as more normative than regular members, even when they were unethical. Given that leaders are often selected based on prototypicality (i.e. the extent to which they typify the group), it is likely that followers perceive them to be better exemplars in terms of normativeness (cf. Kalshoven & Den Hartog, 2009). Interestingly and unexpectedly, participants reported more optimism when they recalled a regular member than a leader, which might be explained by the fact that leaders were overall perceived as more self-promoting than regular members. These perceptions that individuals with higher status within groups/societies are perceived as more concerned regarding themselves than others is consistent with previous studies (cf. Fragale, Rosen, Xu, & Merideth, 2009). Furthermore, when facing unethical behavior, participants' optimism was less negatively affected by the unethical regular member than by the unethical leader. In

sum, this Study shows that the status of the ethical or unethical actor has a differential effect on workplace relevant experiences and perceptions, namely on individuals' perceptions of team effectiveness and their optimism regarding the future in the organization.

3.6 General Discussion and Conclusions

Brown and colleagues (2005) proposed that the role of leaders is enhanced by credibility, legitimacy, and attractiveness when followers perceive that the leaders' behaviors are normatively appropriate and altruistically motivated. Consistent with this, if the leader is considered higher on ethical components, that is, if the leader is perceived as ethical, his/her role is legitimated (Brown et al., 2005; Mayer et al., 2012).

In the present research, we tested the role of leadership ethicality, target's status, and group membership in evaluation of leaders, perceived team effectiveness, and optimism about the future in the organization. Across three studies we found experimental support for the idea that ethical leaders would positively impact followers' perceptions of their team effectiveness and their optimism about their organization. Surprisingly, this belief was even stronger when the ethical leader belonged to the outgroup (Studies 2 and 3). These judgments were accompanied by perceptions that the outgroup ethical leader was less self-promoting than the ingroup ethical leader. Perhaps people initially expect outgroup leaders to have less integrity, and to be more unethical, and therefore, when observing an ethical outgroup leader this unexpected factor may be gained disproportional influence; in other words, participants may have followed the attributional augmenting principle when observing an ethical outgroup leader (see Goethals, 2007).

In contrast, Studies 2 and 3 showed that when considering an unethical leader, participants perceived higher team effectiveness and felt greater optimism when the leader belonged to the ingroup rather than the outgroup. Perhaps in this instance people apply a discounting principle that, because other outgroup leaders are probably unethical, it is necessary for ingroup leader to be unethical too in order to not be at a disadvantage. Or possibly they assumed that an unethical leader might be more unscrupulously strategic in pursuit of ingroup gains. A third alternative explanation might be related with the idea that followers recognize the instrumental value of unethical behavior (ruthless competition). Further research will be required to investigate these hypothesized processes.

Study 3 extends the previous results by showing that when facing unethical behavior, followers were more optimistic if such behavior was displayed by the regular member than by the leader, perhaps because unethical behavior from a leader may be more hazardous for employees and have other negative consequences, because leaders set the normative behavior. Study 3 also showed a causal effect of leader ethicality on optimism about the organization, therefore adding support to the idea that leaders have an impact on employees' experiences in the workplace, and that this impact is different from that to regular members (colleagues) and depends on shared group membership.

These results are consistent with the existing literature, namely that employees' affective commitment with the organization was enhanced by the leader's demonstration of normatively appropriate behavior via his/her personal actions and interpersonal relationships (Brown et al, 2005; Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012; Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2009; Kalshoveen et al, 2011; Neves & Story, 2015). However, this research makes an important new contribution because it qualifies an implicit

assumption in previous literature that perceptions of ethical and unethical leadership are general processes that apply regardless of the leader's group membership.

Given that people want to see their ingroup as moral, it is understandable that ethical ingroup leaders are perceived as typical members that better represent their group. For the same reason, it is understandable that ethical leaders are also evaluated more positively than unethical leaders. By behaving ethically, leaders can act as role models who can reduce workplace deviant behaviors (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012; Mayer et al., 2012; Stouten, van Dijke, Mayer, De Cremer, & Euwema, 2013; van Gils, Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, van Dijke, & De Cremer, 2015).

Mayer and colleagues (2012) argued that people have a moral prototype, that is, a self-schema built on a set of traits (such as honesty, compassion, caring, and hard-work), and that moral identity can be a source of leaders' motivation to behave consistently with such self-schema. Our research suggests that leadership might be a vehicle for normative boundaries in organizations, as ethical leaders are perceived to be more normative (regardless of the group) and to bring more positive benefits to the organization. However, a striking finding was that people appear to be more appreciative of outgroup ethical leaders than ingroup ethical leaders. This suggests that they tend to assume that outgroups may be less ethical than ingroups. When followers discover an unethical leader, they tend to feel retributive toward the organization (Stouten et al., 2012). However, questions remain as to whether that reaction is more extreme when the organization is one's own rather than an outgroup organization and whether the reactions depend on how strongly a person identifies with the organization.

In conclusion, we have extended previous research by showing that perceptions of leadership ethicality are shaped by group membership. Interestingly, people may

overlook ingroup leaders' unethical behavior to some extent, presumably because this is an uncomfortable reality to accept. This provides important clarification of the theoretical understanding of ethical and unethical leadership by showing that the continuum of judgment about ethical versus unethical leadership is not consistent but is affected by other factors including the status of leadership itself and the group membership of the actor.

3.6.1 Limitations and Future Research

We observed that the measures of perceived ethicality, leader evaluation, team effectiveness and beliefs were quite highly correlated across studies (see Table 5). This is to be expected because people tend to make a coherent interpretation of their [working] environment (e.g. Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006). It is important to note that these correlations were not an artefact of floor or ceiling effects (see Table 5; p. 78). Combining the highly-correlated variables to single composites did not change the overall pattern or implications of the findings but we maintained them as distinct measure because previous research has shown that each measure taps a distinct conceptual construct (e.g. Brown et al., 2005; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008).

The measure of optimism about the future refers to the generalized positive expectation that good things will happen in the future (Peterson, 2000). However, higher optimism about having a good future in the organization might imply greater willingness to remain in the organization (thus, less turnover). Although turnover intentions were not measured directly they could be a useful focus in future research as we would expect similar results to those we obtained for optimism.

Our study considered the extent to which participants considered the leader's behavior to be normative within this group, that is, common within the organization.

We did not assess prototypicality, which would be the extent to which it fits in with the expectations for the social category (Hogg, 2001). Future research should consider whether the evaluation of ethical or unethical behavior varies to the extent to which it is also prototypical or non-prototypical.

The use of a recall priming approach means we have a wider and far reaching range of ethical and unethical behaviors that should be more meaningful to participants. This paradigm has been used when considering organizational leadership (e.g. Shapiro et al, 2011). This methodology might raise some potential issues as not all participants are evaluating exactly the same target, but it does mean our research provides externally valid experimental evidence to support the argument that ethical leaders reinforce followers' perceptions of effectiveness and optimism about the organization and, simultaneously, could reduce undesirable behaviors towards it, as followers look at leaders for cues on how to behave.

In sum, the present research provides empirical evidence for some of the theoretical assumptions regarding the effects of ethical and unethical leadership on organizational dynamics. Specifically, this set of studies shows that the impact of a leader on employees' optimism about the future in the organization and their perceptions of team effectiveness are mediated by that leader's perceived ethicality, and that both intergroup context and target's status play an important role when judging ethical and unethical leaders and, therefore, need to be considered.

Chapter IV: Behavioral motivation and attributions

Summary

Previous studies have shown that for a leader to be considered effective, group members need to perceive leader's intentions to serve the group (e.g. Abrams et al., 2013). In the present chapter, we explore the impact of perceived behavior intention of the leader on the attributions that group members make about the leader. Studies 4 and 5 were conducted (*N*s = 125, 226), manipulating whether participants judged either an ethical or unethical leader, whose behavior was self *vs* group-promoting. In Study 5, we also manipulated whether the behavior was displayed in an intragroup or intergroup context. The results showed that ethical and group-promoting leaders receive more positive reactions. Moreover, leaders' behavior was more attributed to internal dispositions and more stable (if group-promoting) when an intragroup context was salient. The present research extended previous findings by showing that attributions made to leadership behavior are affected by the nature of behavior, the intent, and the context in which it is displayed.

4.1 Theoretical Background

Studies 1–3 (Chapter III) showed a positive impact of ethical leaders on group members, and that those perceptions varied based on group membership. The results showed that, when judging leaders' ethicality, group members take into consideration the *intent* of the act. Thus, perceptions of ingroup and outgroup ethical leaders were affected by the judgement that the leader's behavior was more (or less) self-promoting.

Previous research suggested that altruistically-motivated behavior would strengthen leaders' credibility, legitimacy and, consequently, enhance the leaders' role

(e.g. Brown et al., 2005; Mayer et al., 2012). The more positive the group members' view of the leader is, the higher the perceptions of effectiveness (cf. Chapter III). Thus, an important caveat for leaders to be perceived as effective, exert influence and be supported by their group members, is dependent on others' perceptions that the leaders' behavior is championing the group interests. That is, that leaders stand up for the group, even when that means transgressing or behaving unfairly (e.g. Abrams et al., 2013; Haslam & Platow, 2001; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005; cf. Chapter II).

In the present chapter, we further explore how group members' judgments and perceptions regarding leader's behavior change according to the intention underlying that behavior. In other words, we aim to test if the causes attributed by group members to the behaviors of leaders change based on their perception that the behavior was motivated by personal or groups' interests. This will advance our understanding regarding the importance of behavioral intention in the judgement of unethical behavior.

4.1.1 Causal attributions of behavior

Attribution theories suggest that individuals believe that other people behave the way they do because of the kind of people they are and/or due to the kind of situations in which they are inserted when their behaviors are displayed (e.g., Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Heider, 1958). Therefore, by making an attribution about a target's behavior, individuals are deciding whether the person (dispositional) or the context in which the behavior occurs (situational) plays a more significant role to explain the behavior.

Three causal dimensions have been identified: the locus of causality, stability, and control (Weiner, 1985), referring respectively to whether the cause exists within or externally to the actor, whether it is changeable or invariable over time, and whether it

is controllable or uncontrollable (McAuley, Duncan, & Russel, 1992). The law of non-common effects (Jones & Davis, 1965), later extended by the discounting principle (Kelley & Michela, 1980), argued that observers should not attribute the behavior to an internal causal agent (e.g. disposition) when other plausible explanation/ causal agent (e.g. a situational force) is present. Although logical, this is not necessarily what happens in practice, with people resorting to dispositional inferences when the situation could easily explain the behavior. The information that is more salient to the individual making the attribution strongly shapes the perception of causality (e.g. Taylor & Fiske, 1975), which leads to several biases. One of the more common is the fundamental attribution error (or correspondence bias).

The fundamental attribution error is the tendency to ignore or underestimate situational factors and, simultaneously, to overestimate the role of dispositional factors in controlling behavior (Heider, 1958). In other words, the fundamental attribution error is a tendency to make inferences regarding one's unique and enduring dispositions based on behaviors that can be fully explained by the context or situation in which they occur (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). When the fundamental attribution error occurs at the group level, it is called the ultimate attribution error. Thus, the ultimate attribution error occurs when people display a predisposition to attribute ingroup success and outgroup failure to internal dispositions (internal characteristics of the group or their members), and ingroup failure and outgroup success to external factors (characteristics of the situation; Pettigrew, 1979).

However, individuals do not make attributions only in terms of causes of the behavior. They also make attributions about individuals and groups' traits, leading to the development of stereotypes, and these processes form the basis of the stereotype content model.

4.1.2 Stereotype content model

Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Xu (2002) developed the Stereotype Content Model, which proposes that individuals make attributions about others (and about groups) based on two trait dimensions: warmth and competence. These authors argued that individuals strive to know others' intent (warmth), as well as the capability of pursuing that intent (competence). Warmth encompasses traits that reflect sociability and morality, whilst competence is more related to talent, skill, and capability (Durante, Tablante, & Fiske, 2017; Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999; Fiske et al., 2002; Kervyn, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2015).

Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick (2007) argued that warmth is the fundamental aspect of evaluation and it precedes competence judgements as, due to evolutionary reasons, one's intention to do good or to harm is "more important to survival than whether the other person can act on those intentions" (p. 77). Warmth is, therefore, inferred from individuals' perceptions regarding the motives of the other person (cf. Collange, Fiske, & Sanitioso, 2009; Reeder, Kumar, Hesson-McInnis, & Trafimow, 2002) and defines whether the judgement is positive or negative, whilst the predictive value of the competence dimensions refers to the extremity of that judgement, that is, how positive or negative the impression is (Durante, Capozza, & Fiske, 2010; Fiske et al., 2007; Wojciszke, Bazinska, & Jaworski, 1998; see also Burkley, Durante, Fiske, Burkley, & Andrade, 2017).

Therefore, across two studies, we tested whether group members' attributions of leaders' warmth and competence is affected by their intentions (self or group-promoting) to behave.

4.2 Study 4

4.2.1 Overview and Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical literature reviewed, Study 4 tested the impact of behavior motivation of ethical and unethical leaders on the attributions (locus of causality, control, stability, but also warmth and competence) that group members make about the leaders. Following the results presented in Chapter III, we also explored the judgements underlying those attributions, refining the measure of "beliefs" (Studies 2 and 3) – now called "judgements" – to include multiple dimensions (a more utilitarian view of ethicality, based on a pragmatic view of behavior – we called it reason-based judgements; and a dimension more based on the emotions that the behavior triggered on the observer – we called this dimension "emotion-based judgements"), reflecting the different moral strains of philosophy to assess ethicality of a particular behavior (cf. Reidenbach & Robin, 1990). We hypothesized that:

H1. Ethical leaders would be perceived as **(a)** more normative, **(b)** trigger less negative emotion-based judgements, **(c)** more reason-based judgements, **(d)** warmer, and **(e)** more competent than unethical leaders;

H2. Group-promoting leaders would be perceived as **(a)** more normative, **(b)** trigger less negative emotion-based judgements and **(c)** warmer than self-promoting leaders.

H3. Unethical group-promoting leaders to **(a)** trigger less negative emotion-based judgements, **(b)** more positive reason-based judgements, and **(c)** to be perceived as warmer than unethical self-promoting leaders;

H4. Ethical leaders to have behavior more attributed to **(a)** internal dispositions, **(b)** personal control (less external control) and to be perceived as **(c)** more stable than unethical leaders, **(H5)** especially if they were group-promoting.

4.2.2 Method

Participants and design. A sample of 125 university students (68 males, 55 females, 1 did not report) was recruited. Most (62%) belonged to University of Kent, 10% from other Universities in the UK, and 24% from institutions outside the UK (equally distributed per condition, χ^2 (6) = 4.63, p = .590). Participants' age ranged between 17 and 37 years-old (M = 21.58, SD = 3.97).

A 2 (Behavior: Ethical *vs* Unethical) x 2 (Motivation: Self-promoting *vs* Group-Promoting) between-participants design was conducted, with random allocation to condition.

Procedure. Participants were initially recruited via an internal system (Research Participation Scheme; RPS) that allows students to participate in studies in exchange for partial course credits. To expand our sample size, participants were also recruited around the Kent University Campus (they agreed to voluntarily participate in the study; 49% of the sample) and from Prolific Academic (here they were pre-screened so we could guarantee a similar sample; 37% of the sample). Participants recruited from the three different sources were equally distributed across conditions, χ^2 (6) = 7.34, p = .290. Participants recruited via RPS and Prolific Academic answered online, whilst participants recruited on campus responded to the same survey using pen and paper.

Behavior manipulation. Once they agreed to participate in the experiment, participants were asked to imagine themselves in a class for which they had to prepare a group presentation based on a study they conducted. They were told that the results of the study were inconclusive and they had chosen a group leader to represent the group and present the data. They were then informed if the group leader intentionally represented the data accurately or inaccurately (cf. Appendix B1 for full scenario). After reading the scenario, participants completed the behavior manipulation check.

Motivation manipulation. Participants then read a quote from the group leader explaining the behavior, saying that "this was the only way I [the group] would be given a higher mark"[9]. Participants then completed the motivation manipulation check and the remaining dependent variables.

Measures. *Behavior manipulation check.* Participants completed an adapted version of the Ethical Leadership Scale (Brown et al., 2005) by rating their opinion (*1 = completely untrue, 7 = completely true*) regarding the leader's behavior (e.g. "Sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics"; 9 items). A Perceived ethicality score was formed based on the mean of participants' responses, $\alpha = .96$.

Motivation manipulation check. Participants rated their agreement (*0-100*)[10] with two statements: "The team leader behavior during the presentation was self-promoting" and "The team leader behavior during the presentation was group-promoting". A motivation index was computed by subtracting the latter to the former. Therefore, positive scores will indicate group-promoting motivation, and negative scores self-promoting motivation.

As in the previous studies (cf. Chapter III; Appendix A), we measured Normativeness ($r = .22$, $p = .017$). The following measures were also added:

Judgements. Participants indicated to which extent they agreed (*1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree;* adapted from Reidenbach & Robin, 1990) with several statements regarding the leader's behavior. A principal component analysis with

[9] A pilot study was conducted with 17 university students. As expected, the group leader was considered more ethical than the unethical leader ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.38$; $M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.32$), $F(1,15) = 11.03$, $p = .006$, regardless of the motivation, $F(1,15) = 0.003$, $p = .956$. Self-promoting leaders were also considered more self-promoting than group-promoting leaders ($M = -2.75$, $SD = 2.82$; $M = 1.00$, $SD = 3.74$), $F(1,15) = 4.05$, $p = .067$, regardless of ethicality, $F(1,15) = 0.03$, $p = .864$.

[10] For the pen-and-paper version, the scale used ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Therefore, *z* scores were calculated

Promax rotation revealed two factors: (1) Emotion-based judgments (e.g. “I feel ashamed by this behavior”, α = .93, explaining 50% of variance); (2) Reason-based judgments (e.g. “The behavior resulted in a positive cost-benefit ratio”, r = .52, p < .001, explaining 17% of variance). The means were computed to create the two scores.

Stereotypes. Participants evaluated the group leader (*1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree*) according to seven traits (adopted from Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004; Fiske et al., 2002). As in the original scale, two dimensions were calculated based on the mean of their responses: (1) *Warmth* (e.g. “Honest”, 3 items, α = .54), and (2) *Competence* (e.g. “Competent”, 4 items, α = .86).

Causal attributions. Using a 7-point bipolar scale, participants rated their perceptions regarding the causes of the leader’s behavior. The items presented were adapted from The Causal Dimension Scale (McAuley et al., 1992). The mean of participants’ responses was calculated and four scores computed as in the original scale: (1) *Locus of causality* (e.g. “Reflects an aspect of the self – of the situation”, α = .52), (2) *Stability* (e.g.: “Permanent – Temporary”, α = .32), (3) *Personal control* (e.g.: “Over which the leader has power – has no power”, α = .64), and (4) *External control* (e.g.: “Over which others have control – have no control”, α = .55). Lower levels indicated a more internal (vs. external) locus of causality, stronger stability, higher personal and external control.

4.2.3 ResultsBehavior manipulation check. An independent-sample t-test revealed a significant effect of Behavior. As expected, participants perceived the leader as more ethical in the ethical condition (M = 4.91, SD = 1.38) than in the unethical condition (M = 3.44, SD = 1.67), t (116) = -5.21, p < .001, g = 0.96, 95% CI [-2.02, -0.92],

Motivation manipulation check. A Behavior x Motivation ANOVA was conducted. There were significant main effects of both Behavior, F (1,121) = 6.87, p = .010, ηp^2 = .054, and Motivation, F (1,121) = 25.07, p < .001, ηp^2 = .172. Ethical leaders were considered less self-promoting (M = 0.25, SD = 0.89) than unethical leaders (M = -0.31, SD = 1.05). consistent with our manipulation, participants perceived the leader to be less self-promoting in the group-promoting condition (M = 0.53, SD = 0.94) than in the self-promoting condition (M = -0.36, SD = 0.87). As expected, the interaction was not significant, F (1,121) = 0.02, p = .895.

A Behavior x Motivation ANOVA was conducted for the remaining dependent variables.

Normativeness. There was a significant main effect of Behavior, F (1,119) = 9.16, p = .003, ηp^2 = .071, and a marginal main effect of Motivation, F (1,119) = 3.13, p = .079, ηp^2 = .026. Ethical leaders were considered more normative (M = 3.44, SD = 1.47) than unethical leaders (M = 2.70, SD = 1.24), supporting H1a. Contradictory to our hypothesis (H2a), group-promoting leaders were perceived as less normative (M = 2.90, SD = 1.20) than self-promoting leaders (M = 3.26, SD = 1.55). The interaction was not significant, F (1,119) = 0.59, p = .442.

Emotion-based judgments. A significant main effect of Behavior showed that ethical leaders, as expected (H1b), triggered less negative emotion-based judgments (M = 3.30, SD = 1.48) than unethical leaders (M = 5.01, SD = 1.31), F (1,121) = 40.77, p < .001, ηp^2 = .252. Therefore, H1b was supported. A marginal main effect of Motivation revealed that group-promoting leaders also triggered less negative emotion-based judgements (M = 3.63, SD = 1.71) than self-promoting leaders (M = 4.34, SD = 1.53), F (1,121) = 2.88, p = .092, ηp^2 = .023. Although not supported, the results are in the

direction predicted by H2b. The interaction was not significant, F (1,121) = 0.30, p = .585, and, consequently, H3a was not supported.

Reason-based judgments. Regarding reason-based judgements, only the main effect of Behavior was significant, F (1,121) = 18.16, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .130$. Ethical leaders received more positive judgments (M = 4.45, SD = 1.40) than unethical leaders (M = 3.32, SD = 1.29), supporting H1c. The main effect of Motivation, F (1,121) = 2.20, p = .141, and the interaction, F (1,121) = 0.01, p = .934, were not significant. Thus, H3b was not supported.

Warmth. The main effect of Behavior was significant, F (1,120) = 4.81, p = .030, $\eta p^2 = .039$. Ethical leaders were considered warmer (M = 4.14, SD = 1.32) than unethical leaders (M = 3.46, SD = 1.55), supporting H1d. No main effect of motivation nor interaction were significant (all Fs ≤ 2.35, $p \geq .128$). Thus, H2c and H3c were not supported.

Competence. Ethical leaders were considered more competent (M = 4.78, SD = 1.31) than unethical leaders (M = 2.81, SD = 1.02), F (1,120) = 78.63, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .396$, supporting H1d. The main effect of Motivation and the interaction were not significant (all Fs ≤ 0.47, $p \geq .494$).

Causal attributions. Means and standard deviations are displayed in Table 6. No significant main effects of Behavior (all Fs ≤ 3.38, $p \geq .100$) nor Motivation (all Fs ≤ 1.95, $p \geq .166$) were found for any dimension of Causal attributions. The interaction was significant for Stability, F (1,119) = 5.00, p = .027, $\eta p^2 = .040$. The behavior of group-promoting unethical leaders was seen as more stable (M = 4.35, SD = 0.72) than group-promoting ethical leaders (M = 3.72, SD = 0.83), t (48) = 2.70, p = .009, g = 0.89, 95% CI [0.30, 0.96]. No other significant interactions were found, all Fs ≤ 0.46, $p \geq .499$ and, therefore, H4 and H5 were not supported.

Table 6.

Means and Standard Deviations for the Causal attributions.

		Locus of causality	Stability	Personal control	External control
		M (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)
Unethical Leader	Self-promoting	2.89 (1.19)	3.96 (1.02)	3.27 (1.02)	4.59 (1.30)
	Group-promoting	3.04 (0.87)	4.35 (0.72)	3.11 (1.53)	4.80 (1.25)
	Total	2.93 (1.09)	4.09 (0.94)	3.22 (1.20)	4.66 (1.27)
Ethical Leader	Self-promoting	3.37 (1.26)	4.07 (0.83)	3.69 (1.23)	4.50 (1.07)
	Group-promoting	3.25 (0.92)	3.72 (0.83)	3.23 (1.06)	4.47 (1.05)
	Total	3.31 (1.11)	3.90 (0.84)	3.48 (1.17)	4.49 (1.05)
Total	Self-promoting	3.13 (1.24)	4.02 (0.92)	3.48 (1.14)	4.55 (1.18)
	Group-promoting	3.17 (0.90)	3.95 (0.84)	3.19 (1.24)	4.59 (1.12)
	Total	3.15 (1.11)	3.99 (0.89)	3.36 (1.19)	4.56 (1.15)

4.2.4 Discussion

As expected, ethical leaders were perceived as more normative (as in Studies 1, 2, and 3; although the means were quite low), triggered less negative emotion-based judgements, and their behavior was more justified by reason-based judgements. They were also considered more competent.

Consistent with our prediction (H2b), group-promoting leaders triggered less negative emotion-based judgements. However, our hypotheses (H2a & H2c) for normativeness and warmth were not supported. Group-promoting leaders were not perceived as more normative than self-promoting, with participants revealing that they thought self-promoting behavior from leaders would be a "more typical" behavior.

Based on this result, this measure was replaced with prototypicality in Study 5. Regarding warmth, and as this concept is more related to the intention component of the

behavior (Kervyn et al., 2015), we expected group-promoting leaders to be evaluated as warmer. The results of the study showed no differences based on motivation.

No main effects were found for any dimension of causal attributions, contradicting our predictions and previous findings (e.g. Fragale et al., 2009). One reason that might explain these results may be related with the scale itself, which we only realized after the data collection. In fact, the scale is less intuitive to respond when comparing to others (lots of items in a bipolar scale), and some of the items are very difficult to respond if participants did not structure their thoughts and think about particular reasons/ attributions to the leader's behavior. Therefore, in Study 5 we changed the procedure for this scale, asking participants to write down five main reasons that in their opinion justify the leader's behavior and then they were asked to answer the scale (keeping those reasons in mind). The Warmth scale also presented a low internal consistency. In Study 5, we readapted the scale by changing some of the items.

The overall lack of interaction effects (predicted by H3 and H5) may suggest that participants focused particularly on the ethicality of the behavior, not considering the motivation a very important factor when it came to judge these leaders. Therefore, knowing that group membership plays an important role on the way individuals perceive situations (cf. Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), we made the intergroup context salient in Study 5. Moreover, the lack of interaction is also consistent with the idea that leaders' ethicality is a special case that requires further investigation and appears to be linked with more dispositional characteristics than, for example, transgression or deviance (cf. Chapter II). Moreover, previous research has argued that leaders' ethics enhances group members' ethical/unethical cognitions and behaviors (cf. Mayer, Kuenzi & Greenbaum., 2010) and that the role of leader's ethicality on the

group is mediated by the extent to which employees trust the leader (e.g. Mo & Shi, 2017). Therefore, in Study 5 we also tested whether participants were more willing to become representatives of the group or, at least, reported that the group would be better off with them as leaders as a reflection of trust in the leader.

4.3 Study 5

4.3.1 Overview and Hypotheses

Previous research by Allison and Messick (1985) focused on the causal attributions at a group level. They found that dispositional attributions are more likely for outgroup members, and especially for negative behaviors. Interestingly, outgroup members' behavior is attributed more similarly than ingroup members', as outgroups are perceived to be more homogeneous (Quattrone & Jones, 1980). Therefore, group membership also impacts causal attributions. We argue that group categorization may influence individuals' motivation to attribute behavior to different factors and may be relevant to understand individuals' evaluations of group members and groups themselves. Besides the same hypotheses than Study 4, we also tested the following ideas:

H6. (a) Ethical leaders and **(b)** group-promoting leaders to be perceived as more prototypical than unethical and self-promoting leaders, respectively;

H7. Unethical leaders to trigger more reason-based judgements when the outgroup (compared to the ingroup) is salient;

H8. Unethical leaders to have their behavior more attributed to **(a)** situational factors, **(b)** external control (and less internal control), and **(c)** less stable in the outgroup condition (compared to the ingroup), **(H9)** especially if there was a group-promoting motivation.

4.3.2 Method

Participants and design. A final sample of 226 (104 males, 122 females) university students was considered[11], studying at the University of Kent (31%), a different UK university (26%), or in an overseas university (41%). Participants were distributed equally across conditions, χ^2 (14) = 18.64, p = .179. Participants age ranged from 18 to 66 years-old (M = 23.46, SD = 6.24). In terms of nationality, 43% were British, 26% American, 19% European, 8% Asian, 3% African, and 1% Australian.

A 2 (Behavior: Ethical *vs* Unethical) x 2 (Motivation: Self-promoting *vs* Group-Promoting) x 2 (Group Salience: Ingroup *vs* Outgroup) between-participants experimental design was conducted, with random allocation to condition.

Procedure. Participants were recruited as before via RPS in exchange for course credits (31%) or via Prolific Academic (69%). When completing the demographics, participants were information about their University and they were asked to provide the name of a rival institution. If they were assigned to the outgroup condition, the name of the rival institution (using piped text) was included in the scenario. The same scenario as in Study 4 was used.

Group Salience manipulation. Participants were told that their presentation was either for their own class (in their own university; ingroup), or in a class with students from the rival institution (cf. Appendix B2).

Before completing the "causal attributions" measure, and to ensure they were thinking about specific reasons, participants were asked to write down a list of five reasons that they thought lead the leader to behave in that particular way.

[11] Although 258 students agreed to participate in the study, 28 were excluded from the analyses because they failed the attention checks and 4 because they failed to provide an outgroup.

Measures (cf. Appendix A)**.** *Behavior manipulation check.* Participants rated their agreement with nine statements regarding the leader's behavior (e.g. "Sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics"; adapted from Brown et al., 2005). A Perceived ethicality score was computed based on the mean of their responses, α = .96.

Motivation manipulation check. Using a slide scale (*0-100*), participants rated their agreement with two statements: "The team leader behavior during the presentation was self-promoting" and "The team leader behavior during the presentation was group-promoting". A motivation score was computed by subtracting the latter to the former. Therefore, positive scores will indicate group-promoting motivation, and negative scores self-promoting motivation.

Identification. Participants indicated to which extent they agreed (*1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree*) with seven statements (adapted from Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998; Randsley de Moura, Abrams, Retter, Gunnarsdottir, & Ando, 2008) regarding their University (e.g. "I feel proud to be a member of the [University]"). The of their responses was computed to create an Identification score, α = .90.

Prototypicality. Participants indicated their agreement (*1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree*) with three statements (e.g. "The team leader is representative of the students of [their University]"), adapted from Platow and van Knippenberg (2001). The mean of their responses was calculated to create a Prototypicality score, α = .94.

As in Study 4, we measured Emotion-based judgements (α = .91), Reason-based judgements (α = .85), Warmth (α = .89), Competence (α = .92), Locus of causality (α = .74), Personal control (α = .71), External control (α = .71), and Stability (α = .62).

Comparison to self. Participants were asked "Do you think it would have been better for the group if you were the leader"? (*1 = not at all, 7 = very much*).

4.3.3 Results

Controlling measures. *Behavior manipulation check.* A Behavior x Group Salience ANOVA was conducted. Consistent with our manipulation, a main effect of Behavior, F (1,222) = 485.26, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .949$, revealed that ethical leaders were perceived as more ethical (M = 5.53, SD = 0.93) than unethical leaders (M = 2.70, SD = 0.99), regardless of Group salience, F (1,222) = 0.01, p = .930. The interaction was not significant, F (1,222) = 0.36, p = .550.

Motivation manipulation check. A Behavior x Motivation x Group Salience was conducted. The main effect of Behavior was significant, F (1,218) = 30.27, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .127$. Unethical leaders were perceived more self-promoting (M = -29.54, SD = 48.81) than ethical leaders (M = -2.66, SD = 46.86). Consistent with our manipulation, the main effect of motivation was significant, F (1,218) = 92.00, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .307$. Group-promoting leaders were perceived as acting more in the group's best interests (M = 7.32, SD = 43.79) than self-promoting leaders (M = -44.58, SD = 40.69).

The 3-way interaction was significant, F (1,218) = 6.63, p = .011, $\eta p^2 = .031$. In an intragroup context (only ingroup salient), participants perceived the ethical self-promoting leader as acting less for their own interests (M = -35.16, SD = 37.78) than the unethical self-promoting leader (M = -55.96, SD = 35.31; p = .043). Under these circumstances (intragroup context), participants also considered the group-promoting ethical leader as acting more on behalf of the group (M = 27.44, SD = 38.32) than the unethical group-promoting (M = -19.58, SD = 47.43; $p < .001$). Interestingly, in an intergroup context (outgroup salient), participants perceived the self-promoting unethical leader as acting more on behalf of its own interests (M = -65.75, SD = 29.58) than the self-promoting ethical leader (M = -24.32, SD = 46.07; p = .001). In an intergroup context, participants did not differentiate between the ethical and unethical

leader when the behavior was group-promoting (p = .249). No other main effects nor interactions were significant (all Fs ≤0.48, $p \geq .490$).

Identification. Participants are overall identified with their University (M = 5.06, SD = 1.19), regardless of the manipulations (all Fs ≤1.07, $p \geq .303$).

Prototypicality. A Behavior x Motivation x Group Salience ANOVA was conducted. As expected, ethical leaders were perceived as more prototypical (M = 4.25, SD = 1.48) than unethical leaders (M = 2.14, SD = 1.13), F (1, 218) = 147.38, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .403$. Moreover, group-promoting leaders were considered more prototypical (M = 3.38, SD = 1.65) than self-promoting leaders (M = 2.93, SD = 1.70), F (1, 218) = 6.42, $p = .012$, $\eta p^2 = .029$. No other main effects or interactions were significant (all Fs ≤ 2.48, $p \geq .116$). Therefore, H6a and H6b were supported.

A Behavior x Motivation x Group Salience MANOVA was conducted for both dimensions of judgements.

Emotion-based judgements. There was a significant main effect of Behavior, F (1, 218) = 96.35, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .306$, whereby ethical leaders triggered less negative emotion-based judgements (M = 3.16, SD = 1.46) than unethical leaders (M = 5.04, SD = 1.41), supporting H1b. Contrary to H2b, group-promoting leaders (M = 4.14, SD = 1.41) triggered more negative emotion-based judgements than self-promoting leaders (M = 3.63, SD = 1.63), F (1, 218) = 4.25, $p = .041$, $\eta p^2 = .019$.

The Behavior x Group Salience interaction was marginal, F (1, 218) = 3.04, p = .083, $\eta p^2 = .014$. Unethical leaders triggered more negative emotion-based judgements than ethical leaders both in the ingroup (M = 5.22, SD = 1.31; M = 3.33, SD = 1.44, respectively; t (110) = 8.55, $p < .001$, g = 1.36, 95% CI [1.37, 2.41]) and outgroup conditions (M = 4.84, SD = 1.50; M = 2.97, SD = 1.48, respectively; t (112) = 5.51, $p <$

.001, g = 1.25, 95% CI [1.32, 2.42]), see Figure 7. No other main effects or interactions were found significant (all Fs ≤ 1.19, p ≥ .277). Therefore, H3a was not supported.

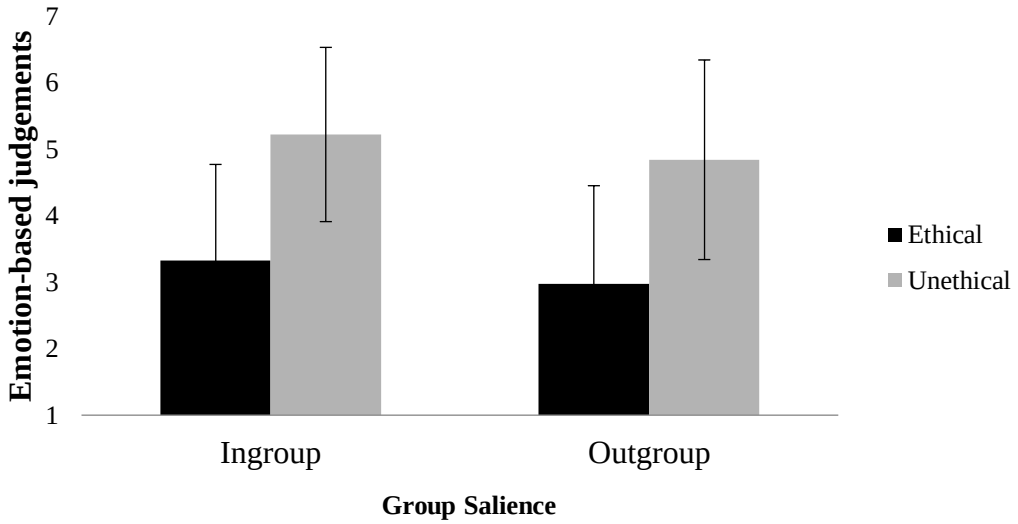

Figure 7. Behavior x Group Salience interaction for Emotion-based judgements.

Reason-based judgments. As expected (H1c), ethical leaders triggered more reason-based judgments (M = 4.75, SD = 1.26) than unethical leaders (M = 3.09, SD = 1.33), F (1, 218) = 93.37, p < .001, ηp^2 = .300. Participants considered the behavior of self-promoting leaders (M = 4.35, SD = 1.69) as more justifiable than group-promoting leaders' (M = 3.92, SD = 1.72), F (1, 218) = 8.39, p = .004, ηp^2 = .037. No other main effects or interactions were significant (all Fs ≤ 1.49, p ≥ .224). Thus, H3b and H7 were not supported.

A Behavior x Motivation x Group Salience MANOVA was conducted for Warmth and Competence.

Warmth. The main effect of Behavior was significant, F (1, 218) = 159.43, p < .001, ηp^2 = .422. Ethical leaders were perceived as warmer (M = 4.53, SD = 1.36) than unethical leaders (M = 2.40, SD = 1.60), supporting H1d. The main effect of Motivation was also significant, F (1, 218) = 6.38, p = .012, ηp^2 = .028. Group-promoting leaders

were seen as warmer (M = 3.65, SD = 1.64) than self-promoting leaders (M = 3.20, SD = 1.64), supporting H2c. No other main effects or interactions were significant (all Fs ≤ 1.05, $p \geq .307$). Therefore, H3c was not supported.

Competence. The main effects of Behavior and Motivation were also significant. Ethical leaders were considered more competent (M = 4.81, SD = 1.22) than unethical leaders (M = 3.08, SD = 1.31), F (1, 218) = 108.25, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .332$; thus, H1e was supported. Group promoting leaders were perceived more competent (M = 4.09, SD = 1.46) than self-promoting leaders (M = 3.73, SD = 1.59; F (1, 218) = 4.23, p = .041, $\eta p^2 = .019$). No other main effects or interactions were found significant (all Fs ≤ 1.36, $p \geq .244$).

A Behavior x Motivation x Group Salience MANOVA was conducted for the four dimensions of causal attributions.

Locus of causality. Contradicting H4a, the behavior of unethical leaders (M = 2.70, SD = 1.19) was perceived as more internal than the behavior of ethical leaders (M = 3.23, SD = 1.19), F (1, 218) = 10.33, p = .002, $\eta p^2 = .045$. Self-promoting leaders also had their behavior more attributed to internal dispositions (M = 2.77, SD = 1.29) than group-promoting leaders (M = 3.12, SD = 1.13), F (1, 218) = 3.81, p = .052, $\eta p^2 = .017$.

The main effect of Group Salience was marginal, F (1, 218) = 3.50, p = .063, $\eta p^2 = .016$. More internal dispositions were attributed when only the ingroup was salient (M = 2.78, SD = 1.19) than in an intergroup context (M = 3.13, SD = 1.23). The interactions were non-significant (all Fs ≤ 1.00, $p \geq .318$). H8a was not supported.

Personal control. Consistent with the locus of causality, participants perceived unethical leaders to have more personal control (M = 2.82, SD = 1.20) over their behavior than ethical leaders (M = 3.01, SD = 1.21), F (1, 218) = 5.53, p = .020, ηp^2 = .025, contrarily to what was predicted by H4b.

The Behavior x Motivation interaction was marginal, F (1, 218) = 3.20, p = .075, ηp^2 = .014. The follow up tests showed that the self-promoting unethical leader (M = 2.62, SD = 1.21) was perceived as having more personal control than the self-promoting ethical leader (M = 3.28, SD = 1.19), t (104) = -2.82, p = .006, g = 0.54, 95% CI [-1.12, -0.20]. No differences were found when the leader behaved ethically, t (108) = 0.64 p = .523, nor when the behavior was group-promoting, t (118) = -0.60, p = .548. No other main effects or interactions were found significant (all Fs ≤ 1.89, p ≥ .171). Thus, H5 was not supported.

External control. Consistent with the results on Personal control, the behavior of ethical leaders was perceived as being more affected by external control (M = 4.30, SD = 1.07) than unethical leaders' behavior (M = 4.63, SD = 1.30), F (1, 218) = 3.45, p = .064, ηp^2 = .016. A significant main effect of Motivation showed that the behavior of group-promoting leaders was more attributed to external control (M = 4.29, SD = 1.14) than the behavior of self-promoting leaders (M = 4.67, SD = 1.23), F (1, 218) = 4.96, p = .027, ηp^2 = .022. No other main effect or interactions were significant (all Fs ≤ 0.99, p ≥ .320). Therefore, H8b was not supported.

Stability. A significant main effect of Behavior showed that participants believed that the behavior of ethical leaders is more stable/permanent (M = 3.79, SD = 1.11) than that unethical leaders (M = 4.29, SD = 1.21), F (1, 218) = 9.76, p = .002, ηp^2 = .043, supporting H4c.

A Behavior x Motivation marginal interaction, F (1, 218) = 2.78, p = .097, ηp^2 = .013, showed that the behavior of group-promoting ethical leaders was considered more stable (M = 3.62, SD = 1.00) than the behavior of group-promoting unethical leaders (M = 4.38, SD = 1.16), t (118) = 3.90, p < .001, g = 0.70, 95% CI [-1.15, -0.37]. Interestingly, participants did not differentiate the stability of self-promoting leaders'

behavior based on ethicality, t (104) = 0.83, p = .406. Therefore, H5 was only partially supported (cf. Figure 8).

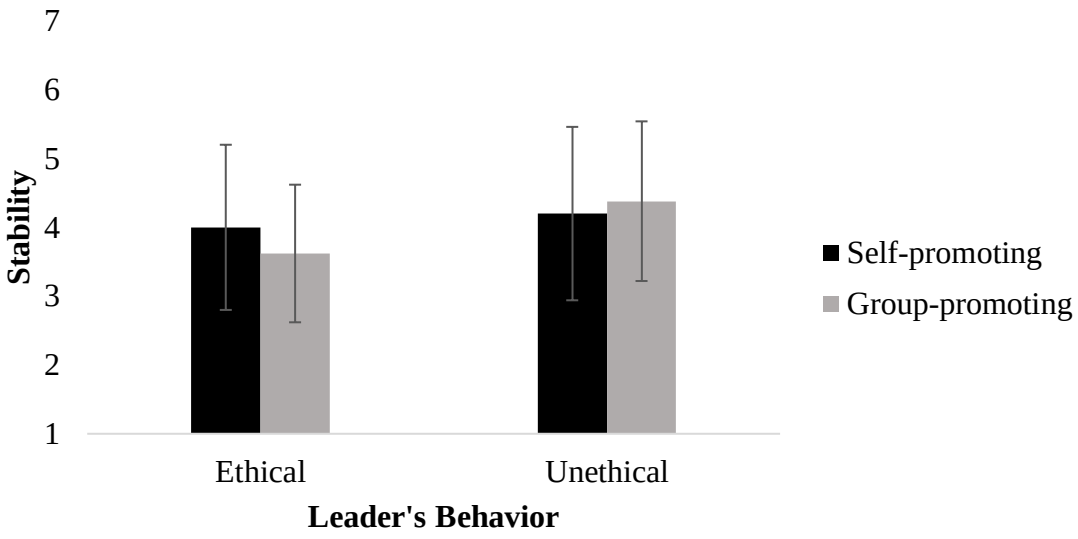

Figure 8. Behavior x Motivation interaction for Stability.

The Motivation x Group Salience interaction was also marginal, F (1, 218) = 2.92, p = .089, ηp^2 = .013. The behavior of group-promoting leaders was perceived as more stable when only the ingroup was salient (M = 3.75, SD = 1.10) than when the outgroup was salient as well (M = 4.21, SD = 1.15), t (118) = 2.19, p = .031, g = 0.40, 95% CI [-0.87, -0.05]. Participants did not differentiate the stability of the behavior of self-promoting leaders based on group salience, t (104) = -0.44, p = .661. No other main effects or interactions were significant (all Fs ≤ 2.05, p ≥ .153). H8c and H9 were not supported.

Comparison to self. Participants believed the group was better served with them as leaders in the unethical condition (M = 4.97, SD = 1.54) compared to the ethical one (M = 4.00, SD = 1.63; main effect of Behavior: F (1, 218) = 21.34, p < .001, ηp^2 = .089).

The Behavior x Motivation interaction was also significant, F (1, 218) = 5.90, p = .016, ηp^2 = .026. When the leader was self-promoting, participants would have preferred more to represent the group in the unethical condition (M = 5.42, SD = 1.56) than in the ethical condition (M = 3.86, SD = 1.77). No significant differences were found when the leader's behavior was group-promoting, t (118) = 1.65, p = .101. No other main effects or interactions were found significant (all Fs $\leq$ 2.89, $p \geq$ .90).

4.3.4 Discussion

Ethical leaders were perceived as more prototypical, warmer, and more competent than unethical leaders, whose behavior was perceived as less justified by reason (and triggered more negative emotion-based judgements). As expected, group-promoting leaders were also considered more prototypical, warmer and more competent than self-promoting leaders. Overall, these results are consistent with the idea, firstly portrayed by Hollander (1961) and extended by Abrams and colleagues (2013) that leaders may receive a special treatment when they behave badly if they are perceived as serving the group. Interestingly, under these circumstances, participants did not prefer to step in as leaders, opposed to when the leader was perceived to behave for his/her own interests.

We expected ingroup leaders who behaved unethically when the outgroup was salient to have their behavior more justified when compared to the same behavior displayed in an intragroup context. This prediction was not backed up by the results and, unexpectedly, participants' considerations regarding the instrumental value of unethical leaders were not influenced by context, as they focused more on *why* leaders behaved unethically then *in what circumstances* they acted that way – therefore, the leader's motivation to behave was more important.

The attribution of causality based on Motivation was consistent with previous studies conducted by Fragale and colleagues (2009), who found that when individuals are perceived as acting more on behalf of themselves (that is, more self-promoting), group members are more likely to attribute their behavior to internal dispositions, when compared to individuals that are perceived to behave on behalf of the group. However, the remaining results regarding causal attributions were the opposite of our predictions: the behavior of unethical leaders was perceived as more internal, under personal control and less affected by external factors than ethical leaders' behavior. However, this is inconsistent with the results for stability – ethical leader's behavior was perceived as more stable. Even contradicting our hypotheses, it would be coherent that if participants think unethical leaders are more in control of their behavior and it reflects internal dispositions, than it should also be perceived as more stable. Nevertheless, two approaches might help to explain these results. On one hand, observers (in this case, participants) weight the amount of information available and tend to adopt the one that is more salient (cf. Kanouse, 1972; Nisbett, 1973; Taylor & Fiske, 1975). Or, alternatively, it might be related with a violation of expectations (what is expected from a leader), which Gilbert and Malone (1995) argued to be a predictor of the fundamental attribution error.

4.4 General Discussion

Consistently across Studies 4 and 5, the behavior of ethical leaders was perceived as more justifiable and triggered less negative emotions. Ethical leaders were also perceived as more prototypical, and considered warmer and more competent than unethical leaders. Similarly, group-promoting leaders were also perceived as more prototypical, warmer and competent than self-promoting leaders, consistently with the

idea that leaders who act on behalf of the group are better representatives of the group (i.e., more prototypical), and more effective leaders (Abrams et al., 2013; Haslam & Platow, 2001; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). When evaluating leaders' behavior, group members take into account their intent to behave (warmth) and their ability to do so (competence; cf. Fiske et al., 2002). Taken together, it seems sensible that group-promoting leaders, acting on behalf of the group, were perceived as having better intentions (and, thus, warmer) and to be able to pursue them more effectively (therefore, more competent).

Regarding causal attributions, the behavior of unethical leaders was perceived as more internal, more controllable and less stable than ethical leaders' behavior. A plausible explanation refers to a violation of expectancies associated with the leadership role. Indeed, group members expect ingroup leaders to behave according to the norms, threatening their social identity when they deviate (Abrams et al., 2005; Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 2001). By behaving unethically, ingroup leaders are, consequently, violating an expectation held by group members. Gilbert and Malone (1995) argued that, during the attributional process, individuals perceive the situation and create a set of beliefs regarding what behavior would be typical under those circumstances, setting a behavioral expectation which might be (or not) conscious. Then, an evaluation of whether the actor's behavior violates or not that expectation is made and, if there is a disruption with the expectancy, individuals are more likely to attribute the behavior to internal dispositions, leading to a fundamental attribution error (cf. Gilbert & Malone, 1995).

Furthermore, shifting from an intragroup (Study 4) to an intergroup (Study 5) produced different results. Leader's behavior was perceived as being more of a consequence of internal dispositions when the ingroup was salient. Moreover, when

leaders' behavior was motivated by group interests, it was perceived as more stable when only the ingroup was salient. These results may suggest that participants perceive leader's behavior more "genuine" in an intragroup context and, consequently, more a result of leaders' internal dispositions rather than situational factors and, therefore, more stable. Indeed, previous research suggest that group members behave differently when group membership/social identity is salient, for example, when the outgroup is salient (cf. Branscombe, Wann, Noel, & Coleman, 1993; Maitner, Mackie, Claypool, & Crisp, 2010; Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 2001).

In sum, Studies 4 and 5 extend existing literature on the impact of leaders' behavior and motivation on the group members' perceptions and judgements, showing that when it comes to evaluate the leader, group members take their ethical/moral component into account, but also judge *why* they behaved in that way, shaping their perceptions according to the *context* in which the behavior occurs – namely, distinguishing between intra and intergroup contexts.

4.4.1 Limitations and Future research

Some methodological issues, which represent barriers to the generalization of the results, were improved from Study 4 to Study 5. The multi-source approach, although beneficial, also raised some obstacles: the questionnaire had to be adapted from an online software to pen & paper surveys, forcing us to transform the values of the scale (see Holmbeck, Li, Schurman, Friedman, & Coakley, 2012 for a review). On the other hand, and due to difficulties in data collection, a convenience sample was selected, resulting in more cautious generalizability of the results (cf. Pruchno, Brill, Shands, Gordon, Genderson, Rose, & Cartwright, 2008).

The psychometric properties of the causal attributions scale, validated by McAuley and colleagues (1992), were considerably low (Cronbach's alpha ranged from .32 to .64) in Study 4, arguably due to the instructions that participants received – participants were asked to think about the causes of leader behavior and complete the scale which may made it difficult for them to disentangle the different causes. Therefore, in Study 5, we changed the procedure to make it less ambiguous by asking participants to write down the reasons they thought lead the leader to behave in that way (based on experimental condition) and making the instructions clearer.

Despite these limitations, the two studies seem to suggest that the way group members perceive leader's behavior is affected not only by the nature of that behavior (ethical or unethical), but also by the intent (motivated by individual or group interests), and the context in which that behavior is displayed (intragroup or intergroup). Taking this into consideration, an important feature remains to be addressed – the outcome of behavior to the group. Indeed, it seems reasonable to expect that the outcome of a particular behavior helps to exacerbate the attributions made by group members, reinforcing the support a leader receives (if that outcome is positive to the group). Future research should look at how this outcome affects, on one hand, the attributions leaders receive and, on the other hand, the leaders' endorsement. More specifically if group members are willing to overlook leader's ethicality based on the outcome of the behavior to the group.

Chapter V: Profit vs. Ethics – behavior outcome and leader endorsement

Summary

Previous research has shown that group members may be willing to support a leader who deviated from the norms if they perceived that will bring a positive outcome to the group. In other words, group members make this decision strategically, supporting even the deviant leader when that will bring a profit to the group. Across two studies (*N*s = 178, 170) leaders' behavior (ethical *vs.* unethical) and behavior outcome to the group (positive *vs*. negative *vs*. unknown) were manipulated. The results extended these findings by showing that ingroup members' willingness to endorse the leader is not only predicted by the positive outcome (even when the leader behaved unethically) but also mediated by the extent to which they consider the leader to be competent (Study 7).

5.1 Theoretical Background

Leaders are often in the spotlight given the position they occupy within their groups (Abrams et al., 2008), and their behavior is particularly important to define ethical conduct (Brown et al., 2005). The previous chapter showed evidence that behavioral attributions change based on leaders' behavior and motivation. Ethical leaders were perceived as warmer and more competent, receiving, overall, more positive reactions from the group. Similarly, leaders perceived as acting on behalf of the groups' interest were considered warmer and more competent. Interestingly, and in an intragroup context, leaders' behavior was more attributed to internal dispositions and more stable, if group-promoting. Therefore, this suggests that behavioral intention may impact the evaluations and attributions that leaders receive.

Following the previous studies, we reason that, if the perceived intent of the leaders' behavior is an important factor when evaluating behavior, so is the impact that such behavior has on the group itself. In the present chapter, we argue that these attributions are not only shaped by leader's ethicality, but also by the outcome (positive or negative) of the behavior to the group. We also expand our findings by exploring the influence of the behavior outcome on group members' willingness to endorse the leader.

5.1.1 The impact of behavior outcome

According to social identity theory, group members who are highly identified with their group, are also extremely motivated to derogate deviant members to preserve the integrity of the norms (e.g. Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 2001). At the same time, these members are also particularly committed with achieving group success (e.g. Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997; de Cremer & van Vugt, 2002; Morton, Postmes, & Jetten, 2007; Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2003; van Vugt & de Cremer, 1999), as their own self-evaluations are closely tied with the fortunes of their group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). For example, Morton and colleagues (2007) showed that highly identified members may not act against deviance when they perceive the group norms as an obstacle to the group's chances of success, proposing that group members will tolerate deviance under such circumstances as a strategy to achieve success. This means that groups may be flexible towards the norm if, strategically, that benefits the ingroup.

Specifically, across two studies Morton and colleagues (2007) demonstrated, in a political context, that group members highly identified with the group only supported the normative candidate when they perceived the public opinion to support the group. On the other hand, when the public opinion was perceived to be against the group,

group members supported the deviant candidate. In these case, participants were strategic and believed that, under these circumstances, the deviant ingroup candidate had more chances of being elected. These results suggest that deviance might be accepted when seen as valuable to the group. According to Morton (2011), groups will accept deviance under these circumstances because the primary concern is the collective welfare of the group.

One criticism that might apply to this research is related with the context, with some researchers arguing that this phenomenon might be specific to the political context (cf. Morton, 2011). However, Leite (2013; Leite, Pinto, Marques, Randsley de Moura, & Abrams, in prep) conducted a series of studies in a University setting that supported previous results. Although normative members were more positively evaluated than deviant members, the latter were upgraded when providing a high contribution to the group, especially when the outgroup was salient (Leite, 2013; Experiments 3 & 4; Leite et al., in prep). These results found for circumstances under which social identity is threatened (uncertainty conditions) group members evaluated the high-contributing deviant member more positively, taking advantage of their potential to help the group to achieve its goals (Leite, 2013, Experiment 5; Leite et al., in prep), which is also consistent with previous studies by Rast, Gaffney, Hogg, and Crisp (2012) who showed that the tendency to support prototypical leaders disappeared under uncertainty. Moreover, if the group values the norm, these results were replicated when comparing high and medium contributions, with high-contributing deviant members also being perceived as more representative (Leite, 2013, Experiment 5; Leite et al., in prep).

Overall, deviant members that contribute highly to the group are judged favorably and opportunistically accepted (Leite, 2013; Leite et al., in prep). Apart from strategic considerations (e.g. what will benefit the group the most), the process by

which group members upgrade and/or support deviants is yet to be explained. We reason that the outcome of the behavior to the group influences the attributions that ethical and unethical leaders receive from group members and, consequently, on group members' leader endorsement. Specifically, we argue that group members might be willing to *overlook* ethicality if the unethical behavior brings a positive outcome to the group. Under these circumstances, unethical leaders would receive stronger competence attributions and group members would be more willing to endorse the leader.

5.1.2 Chapter Overview and Hypotheses

The present research tests the idea that the evaluations ethical and unethical leaders receive, as well as the causes attributed to their behavior, are affected by the outcome of that behavior to the group. That is, group members' perceptions that the ethical or unethical behavior contributed positively or negatively to the group overall affect the way group members evaluate the leader and the perceived causes of the leader's behavior.

We propose that the extent to which people will attribute a leader's behavior to situational or dispositional factors will be determined by whether the leader's behavior is in line (or not) with the ethical standards and also by the outcome of the behavior. Specifically, given that groups can endorse leaders strategically who are unethical when they are group-motivated (as per Chapter IV), it is likely that groups will also attribute leader's behavior to situational factors when the behavior benefits the group – effectively giving them the benefit of the doubt.

Moreover, considering that group members strategically endorse leaders that will bring a benefit to the group, we reason that such decision is based on the perception of the instrumental value of the leader (cf. Kervyn et al., 2015; Reidenbach & Robin,

1990;). In other words, we argue that individuals will endorse a leader who brought a positive outcome to the group (even if s/he behaved unethically) to the extent they are able to justify such behavior and perceive the leader to be competent – to have the skills to lead the group. That is, we expect reason-based judgements and competence to mediate the relationship between the outcome and leader endorsement.

Therefore, across two studies we tested the following predictions:

H1. Ethical leaders will be considered **(a)** more prototypical, **(b)** warmer, **(c)** more competent, and **(d)** will have their behavior more justified than unethical leaders;

H2. Leaders will be perceived as **(a)** more competent, **(b)** to trigger less negative emotional judgments, and **(c)** to have their behavior more rationally justified when the outcome of the behavior has a positive outcome for the group, compared to when the behavior had a negative outcome; **(H3)** even if the leader behaved unethically;

H4. Unethical leaders will have their behavior attributed to **(a)** situational factors, **(b)** less control, and **(c)** perceived as less stable more than ethical leaders, **(H5)** especially if their behavior benefited the group (positive outcome);

H6. Due to the strategic decisions that group members make when endorsing leaders, we expect perceptions of competence and reason-based judgments to mediate the relationship between the condition and leadership endorsement, due to group's tendency to be strategic in who members endorse.

5.2 Study 6

5.2.1 Method

Participants and design. The study was a 2 (Behavior: Ethical vs Unethical) x 3 (Outcome: Positive vs Negative vs Unknown) between-participants design. Participants were assigned randomly to the experimental conditions. Participants were

178 (85% females) university students (83% studying Psychology, 11% other Social Sciences, 2% Sciences, 2% Humanities, 2% did not report), from all stages of undergraduate studies (36% 1st year, 57% 2nd year, 2% 3rd year, 5% did not report), who agreed to participate in exchange for partial course credit. Most participants were from Great Britain (68%, 19% from other European countries, 9% Asian, 2% African, 1% American, 1% did not report their nationality). Participants age ranged from 18 to 43 years old (M = 20.24, SD = 3.90).

Procedure. Participants signed-up for the study on the University online platform and chose a timeslot. Once they arrived at the laboratory, they were placed into individual cubicles, completed the informed consent, and then read a scenario that described a competition between participants' university and a rival university. They were informed the competition included five different challenges, 4 of which were negotiated and decided by an Organizing Committee based on a list of favorite and least favorite challenges provided by the team leader of each university (cf. Appendix B3).

Behavior manipulation. Participants were told that during the negotiation meeting, and "while opening the file that contained all the rules and information regarding the competition", their team leader noticed that the list of favorite and least favorite challenges from the rival university was included mistakenly. This would give them an unfair advantage as the leader would be aware of which challenges the rivals would feel more confident to win or lose. Participants were then told whether the leader decided to inform (ethical condition, n = 93) or decided not to inform (unethical condition, n = 85) the committee of the mistake. After reading the scenario, participants completed a perceived ethicality manipulation check.

Outcome manipulation. Afterwards, participants were informed if their university lost the competition (negative outcome condition), won the competition

(positive outcome condition), or if the procedure of choosing the challenges was repeated (unknown contribution condition). As in Study 5, and to ensure participants were thinking about the situation, they were asked to provide a list of 5 reasons why they thought the leader behaved in that way. Subsequently, participants completed the remaining dependent measures, described below.

Measures. As in Studies 4 and 5 (cf. Chapter IV; cf. Appendix A), the following measures were used: Behavior manipulation check (α = .94), Social identity (α = .91), Prototypicality (α = .92), Warmth (α = .95), Competence (α = .84), Emotion-based judgements (α = .93) and Reason-based judgements (α = .57), Locus of causality (α = .69), Stability (α = .66), Personal control (α = .66), and External control (α = .61). A measure of leader endorsement was added:

Leader endorsement. Participants were asked **"**How likely would it be for you to choose the same leader" (0-100%).

5.2.2 Results

Behavior manipulation check. An independent-sample t-test showed that the manipulation was effective, as participants perceived the leader to be more ethical in the ethical condition (M = 5.49, SD = 0.80) than in the unethical (M = 2.81, SD = 1.20), t (176) = 17.32, $p < .001$, g = 2.64, CI [0.52, 1.48].

Social Identity. A Behavior x Outcome ANOVA was conducted. Participants were highly identified with the ingroup (M = 5.44, SD = 1.10), regardless of condition (all Fs ≥ 1.08, $p \geq .300$).

Prototypicality. A Behavior x Outcome ANOVA was conducted. The main effect of behavior was significant, F (1,172) = 208.78, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .548$. Supporting H1a, participants considered the ethical leader more prototypical (M = 5.38, SD = 1.06)

than the unethical leader (M = 2.67, SD = 1.41). Neither the main effect of Outcome, F (2,172) = 0.40, p = .670, nor the interaction, F (2,172) = 0.51, p = .599, were significant.

Warmth. A Behavior x Outcome MANOVA was conducted for Warmth and Competence. The main effect of Behavior was significant and showed that participants evaluated the ethical leader as warmer (M = 6.03, SD = 0.92) than the unethical one (M = 2.62, SD = 1.37), F (1,172) = 514.15, p < .001, ηp^2 = .693. Thus, H1b was supported.

The main effect of Outcome was marginal, F (2,172) = 2.345, p = .099, ηp^2 = .027. When the outcome was unknown (M = 4.58, SD = 2.15), the leader was considered warmer than in the positive outcome condition (M = 4.16, SD = 2.07, p = .032). No significant differences were found between the negative outcome condition (M = 4.44, SD = 1.95) and the unknown (p = .239) nor positive outcome conditions (p = .346). The interaction was not significant, F (2,172) = 0.36, p = .696.

Competence. Participants considered the ethical leader more competent (M = 5.39, SD = 0.95) than the unethical leader (M = 3.83, SD = 1.33), F (1,172) = 82.89, p < .001, ηp^2 = .325, supporting H1c.

A significant main effect of Outcome also indicated that leaders were perceived as more competent in the positive outcome condition (M = 4.85, SD = 1.24) compared to negative outcome condition (M = 4.38, SD = 1.40; p = .019), also supporting H2a. In the unknown condition, the leader was considered more competent (M = 4.70, SD = 1.47) than in the negative outcome condition (p = .070). No significant differences between the unknown and the positive outcome condition (p = .521). No interaction was also found, F (2,172) = 0.07, p = .931 – thus, no support for H3 was found.

Emotion-Based Judgments. A Behavior x Outcome MANOVA was conducted for emotion and reason-based judgements. As expected, a significant main effect of

Behavior, F (1,172) = 323.65, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .653$, showed that unethical leaders trigged more negative emotion-based judgments (M = 4.65, SD = 1.28) than ethical leaders (M = 1.70, SD = 0.788). Neither the main effect of Outcome, F (1,172) = 0.17, p = .844, $\eta p^2 = .002$, nor the interaction, F (2,172) = 2.15, p = .120, $\eta p^2 = .024$, were significant. Therefore, no support for H2b and H3 was found.

Reason-Based Judgments. Supporting H1d, the main effect of Behavior was significant, F (1,172) = 35.96, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .173$. More positive reason-based judgements were given to ethical leaders than (M = 4.35, SD = 1.07) than to unethical leaders (M = 3.36, SD = 1.15).

The main effect of Outcome was also significant: F (1,172) = 3.07, p = .049, ηp^2 = .034. Leaders whose behavior resulted in a positive outcome received more positive judgments (M = 4.17, SD = 1.21) than in the negative outcome condition (M = 3.71, SD = 1.20, p = .020) or than in the unknown condition (M = 3.78, SD = 1.20, p = .059), supporting H2c. There was no significant difference between the two latter conditions (p = .597). The interaction was also non-significant, F (2,172) = 0.06, p = .946. Thus, H3 was not supported for this variable.

Locus of causality. A Behavior x Outcome MANOVA was conducted for the four dimensions of causal attributions (locus of causality, personal and external control, and stability).

A significant main effect of Behavior indicated that the locus of causality of unethical leaders was perceived as more external (M = 2.97, SD = 1.24) than the behavior of ethical leaders (M = 2.63, SD = 1.08), F (1,172) = 3.86, p = .051, ηp^2 = .022, in align with H4a.

The main effect of Outcome was marginal, F (2, 172) = 2.40, p = .093, ηp^2 = .027, as there was only a difference between the negative outcome and unknown

conditions –the behavior was perceived as more external in the negative outcome condition (M = 3.04, SD = 1.20; M = 2.58, SD = 1.17; p = .030). No significant differences between the negative and positive outcome conditions (M = 3.04, SD = 1.20, p = .247), nor between the positive and unknown conditions (p = .327). The interaction was also non-significant, F (2, 172) = 0.737, p = .480, ηp^2 = .008. Thus, H5 was not supported.

Personal control. There was no difference on personal control based on Behavior (main effect non-significant: F (1, 172) = 0.12, p = .727), not supporting H4b. However, the results showed a marginal main effect of Outcome, F (2, 172) = 2.45, p = .089, ηp^2 = .028. Leaders' behavior that resulted in a positive outcome was perceived as having more personal control (M = 2.69, SD = 1.00) than when the behavior resulted in a negative outcome (M = 3.08, SD = 1.08; p = .045). The leader's behavior was also perceived as having more personal control in the unknown condition (M = 2.74, SD = 1.15) than in the negative outcome one (p = .070). There was no significant difference between the positive and unknown conditions (p = .788). The interaction was not significant, F (2, 172) = 1.18, p = .309.

External control. The significant main effect of Behavior, F (1, 172) = 5.08, p = .025, ηp^2 = .029, showed that ethical leaders' behavior was perceived as having more external control (M = 4.17, SD = 1.16) than the unethical leader (M = 4.56, SD = 1.27), contradicting H4b. Neither the main effect of Outcome, F (2, 172) = 1.55, p = .216, nor the interaction, F (2, 172) = 2.04, p = .134, were significant.

Stability. The behavior of ethical leaders was seen as more permanent (M = 3.36, SD = 1.11) than unethical leader's behavior (M = 4.42, SD = 1.21), F (1, 172) = 36.83, p < .001, ηp^2 = .176, supporting H4c. Neither the main effect of Outcome, F (2,

172) = 2.19, p = .115, nor the interaction, F (2, 172) = 1.46, p = .235, were significant. Therefore, the results did not support H5.

Leader endorsement. To test the prediction that competence and reason-based judgements would mediate the effect of the experimental condition on leader endorsement (H6), a mediation analysis using Hayes (2013) PROCESS macro was conducted. The independent variable was the Outcome (0 = negative, 1 = positive), Behavior was included as moderator (0 = unethical, 1 = ethical), competence and reason-based judgments as mediators, and leader endorsement as outcome (Model 7, 5000 bootstraps; n = 113[12]).

The results showed that the *indirect effect* of Outcome on Leader endorsement via competence were not significant, regardless of leader's ethicality ($b_{unethical}$ = 9.36, *SE* = 5.57, 95% CI [-1.37, 20.14]; $b_{ethical}$ = 6.81, *SE* = 4.03, 95% CI [-0.57, 15.27]). The *indirect effect* of Outcome on Leader endorsement via reason-based judgements was only significant when the leader was ethical ($b_{unethical}$ = 3.22, *SE* = 2.61, 95% CI [-1.20, 9.29]; $b_{ethical}$ = 4.17, *SE* = 2.18, 95% CI [0.64, 9.24]). Moreover, the effect of the interaction between Behavior x Outcome on leader endorsement was not significant for neither competence (b = -2.55, *SE* = 6.54, 95% CI [-15.34, 10.05]) nor reason-based judgements (b = 0.95, *SE* = 3.17, 95% CI [-5.06, 7.49]) and, therefore, H6 was not supported (see Figure 9). Means and Standard deviations can be consulted in Table 7.

[12] The "unknown outcome" condition was removed for this analysis.

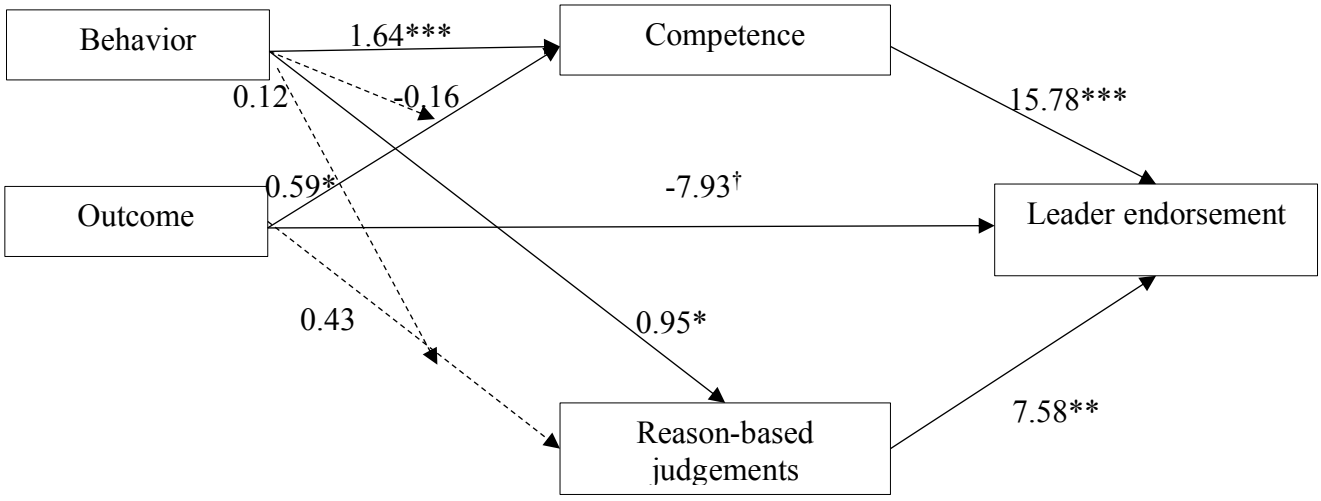

Figure 9. Mediated-moderated analysis of the effect of the Outcome (IV) on leader endorsement (DV), moderated by Behavior, and mediated by Competence and Reason-based judgements.

*$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$, † $p < .10$

Table 7.

Means (Standard Deviations) for Leader endorsement (Study 6).

Behavior	Outcome	Mean	Standard Deviation
Unethical	Negative	11.81	12.32
	Unknown	21.66	24.42
	Positive	19.78	20.25
Ethical	Negative	68.58	20.21
	Unknown	74.21	20.47
	Positive	69.72	23.33
Total	Negative	42.68	33.17
	Unknown	48.34	34.63
	Positive	45.64	35.52

5.2.3 Discussion

The results showed that, as expected, ethical leaders are considered more prototypical, warm and competent than unethical leaders. The behavior of ethical leaders is also more justified by reason and triggers less negative emotions than unethical leaders' behavior. Unethical behavior displayed by leaders is perceived as

being less permanent and to have a locus of causality more external than ethical behavior.

The behavior's outcome to the group also affected the evaluations that leaders received. Leaders whose behavior resulted in a positive outcome to the group were considered more competent and their behavior was more justified by reason than low-contributing members. However, they were also perceived as less warm, which is consistent with the idea that, in a competition setting, individuals are perceived as less warm (cf. Kervyn et al., 2015; Claussell & Fiske, 2005; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007). Nevertheless, this effect was only marginal and, therefore, further research is necessary to test this explanation. Regarding causal attributions, differences were found on locus of causality and personal control. Leaders in the negative outcome condition had their behavior more attributed to external (situational) factors than leaders whose contribution was unknown, and their behavior was less under personal control than leaders in the positive outcome condition.

Hypotheses H3 and H5, reflecting the idea that leaders who bring positive outcomes to the group would be more positively evaluated even if they behaved unethically, and that unethical leaders who benefit the group would have their behavior more attributed to external dispositions, were not supported. One possible explanation might be related with the content of the scenario – by using a competition setting with a rival institution (outgroup salience), it might have made the contribution of the leader especially important, making participants disregard whether it was ethical or unethical behavior. This limitation is addressed in Study 7.

Although not completely in line with the predictions, this study provides very preliminary results to the idea that both outcome and ethicality are important to explain the process by which individuals endorse leaders, showing this process is partially

mediated by the extent to which participants are able to justify the behavior of the leader.

5.3 Study 7

5.3.1 Method

Participants and design. A final sample of 170[13] participants was considered. Participants (94 females, 75 males) were aged between 18 and 66 years-old (M = 35.12, SD = 10.11). Their ethnic origin was mainly White (72%), Asian (11%), African American (7%), Hispanic (5%), and other (5%). 90% of the sample was employed at the time they completed the questionnaire, and 52% of participants occupied a leadership role (either at the moment or in the past). As in Study 6, the design was a 2 (Behavior: Ethical vs Unethical) x 3 (Outcome: Positive vs Negative vs Unknown), all between-participants factors. Participants were randomly allocated to the condition.

Procedure. Participants were recruited using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and asked to complete a questionnaire on Qualtrics. After reading the scenario about the leader's behavior (behavior manipulation), participants completed the perceived ethicality manipulation check, and then they read the outcome of the leader's behavior (contribution manipulation) and completed the dependent measures.

Behavior manipulation. Participants were asked to imagine themselves in an important group presentation in the company in which they were employed at the time. They were told their department was required to present data related to customers' satisfaction with the services provided by the department and that the whole team had

[13] 196 completed the survey, but 26 participants were excluded from the analyses: 14 because they failed the attention checks, and 12 because they failed the manipulation check. 32 participants initiated the survey but did not complete it. The attrition rate differs according to condition, χ^2 (5) = 14.17, p = .015. Participants in the ethical condition quitted significantly more [χ^2 (1) = 17.34, p < .001], there were no differences based on the outcome condition [χ^2 (2) = 0.77, p = .962].

been working intensively on the presentation for weeks. The data was inconclusive and the head of department (manager) was responsible for speaking for the team and presenting it. Then they were told that the manager intentionally represented the data accurately to show [or inaccurately to hide] its inconclusive nature.

Outcome manipulation. Participants were then informed that "as a consequence of the manager's behavior, the whole department received [did not receive] a salary bonus" or that "the salary bonus of the whole department is being reviewed" (unknown condition; cf. Appendix B4).

Similar to Studies 5 and 6, participants wrote down up to five reasons they perceived to be the cause of behavior and completed the remaining dependent variables.

Measures. As in Study 6, participants completed the following measures: Behavior manipulation check (α = .98), Prototypicality (α = .95), Warmth (3 items; α = .94), Competence (5 items; α = .97), Emotion-based judgments **(**α = .95), Reason-based judgments (α = .79), Locus of causality (α = .86), Stability (α = .75), Personal control (α = .87), External control (α = .74), and Leader endorsement.

5.3.2 Results

A Behavior x Outcome ANOVA was conducted for all measures, unless reported otherwise.

Behavior manipulation check. An independent sample t-test showed that the manipulation check was effective, and participants in the ethical condition considered the leader more ethical (M = 5.93, SD = 0.89) than in the unethical condition (M = 2.47, SD = 0.96), t (168) = -24.14, p < .001, g = -3.71, 95% CI [-3.74, -3.17].

Prototypicality. A significant main effect of Behavior, F (1, 164) = 324.01, p < .001, ηp^2 = .664, showed that ethical leaders were considered more prototypical than

unethical leaders (*M* = 5.80, *SD* = 1.13; *M* = 2.55, *SD* = 1.28, respectively), supporting H1a.

A significant main effect of Outcome, *F* (2, 164) = 6.68, *p* = .002, ηp^2 = .075. showed that leaders were considered more prototypical in the positive outcome condition (*M* = 4.46, *SD* = 1.90) than in the negative one (*M* = 3.56, *SD* = 1.84, *p* = .003) or even when the outcome was unknown (*M* = 3.94, *SD* = 2.24**,** *p* = .015**)**. There were no significant differences between the latter conditions (*p* = 1.00).

The interaction was also significant, *F* (2, 164) = 4.54, *p* = .012, ηp^2 = .052. When the leader behaved unethically, participants perceived leaders to be less non-prototypical when the behavior resulted in a positive outcome (*M* = 3.07, *SD* = 1.31) than in the negative condition (*M* = 2.52, *SD* = 1.26**,** *p* = .066) and to when the outcome was unknown (*M* = 1.99, *SD* = 1.03, *p* = .001). The difference between the negative and unknown conditions was marginal (*p* = .095). Leaders whose behavior resulted in a positive outcome were also considered more prototypical (*M* = 6.11, *SD* = 0.92) than leaders in the negative outcome condition (*M* = 5.19, *SD* = 1.34, *p* = .004). Participants also considered the ethical leader more prototypical in the unknown condition (*M* = 5.96, *SD* = 1.00) than in the negative outcome condition, *p* = .016. No significant differences were found between the positive outcome and unknown outcomes (*p* = .622; cf. Figure 10).

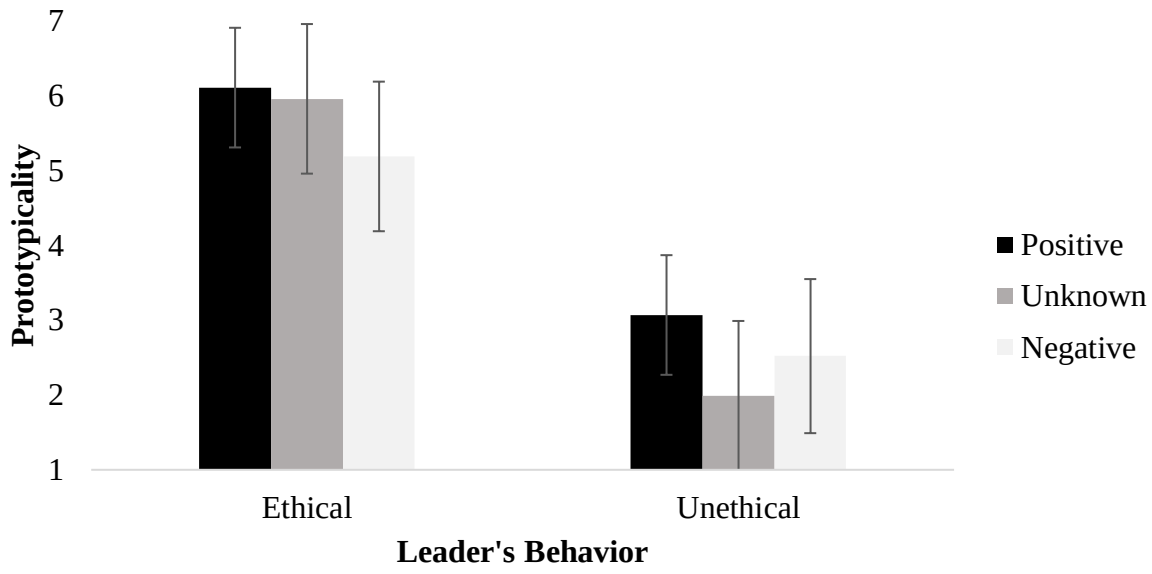

Figure 10. Behavior x Outcome interaction for Prototypicality.

Warmth. Ethical leaders were perceived as warmer than unethical leaders (*M* = 6.00, *SD* = 1.12; *M* = 2.18, *SD* = 1.11, respectively), *F* (1, 164) = 498.96, *p* < .001, ηp^2 = .753. Thus, H1b was supported.

The main effect of Outcome was also significant, *F* (2, 164) = 3.95, *p* = .021, ηp^2 = .046, showing that when the outcome to the group is positive, leaders were perceived as warmer (*M* = 4.22, *SD* = 2.19) than in the negative outcome condition (*M* = 3.41, *SD* = 2.07**,** *p* < .001**)**. There were no significant differences when comparing the positive and the unknown outcomes (*M* = 3.98, *SD* = 2.31**,** *p* = .444). However, leaders in the negative condition were perceived as significantly less warm than the leaders in the unknown condition (*p* = .022). The interaction was not significant, *F* (2, 164) = 0.61, *p* = .547.

Competence. A similar pattern was found for competence, supporting H1c. Ethical leaders were considered more competent (*M* = 5.84, *SD* = 1.18) than unethical leaders (*M* = 2.73, *SD* = 1.30)**,** *F* (1, 164) = 315.72, *p* < .001, ηp^2 = .658. The Outcome also significantly affected perceptions of competence, *F* (2, 164) = 18.30, *p* **<** .001, ηp^2

= .182. Leaders whose behavior resulted in a positive outcome were considered more competent (M = 4.81, SD = 1.70) than the leaders in the unknown (M = 4.12, SD = 2.15, p = .003) and negative outcome conditions (M = 3.34, SD = 1.85, p < .001), also supporting H2a. The difference between the negative outcome and unknown conditions was also significant (p < .001).

More interestingly, the Behavior x Outcome interaction was also significant, F (2, 164) = 4.28, p = .015, ηp^2 = .050**,** showing that ethical leaders whose behavior was positive to the group were considered more competent (M = 6.23, SD = 0.85) than ethical leaders in the negative outcome condition (M = 5.07, SD = 1.53, p < .001). In the unknown condition (M = 6.04, SD = 0.87), the ethical leader was also considered more competent when compared to the ethical leader whose actions harmed the group (negative outcome), p = .003. No significant differences were found when comparing competence of the ethical leader in the positive and unknown conditions (p = .515).

When the leader behaved unethically, participants perceived higher competence if the outcome was positive (M = 3.61, SD = 1.25) than when it was negative (M = 2.25, SD = 1.02, p < .001) or unknown (M = 2.26, SD = 1.12, p < .001), cf. Figure 11. No significant differences between the latter conditions (p = .957). Thus, H3 for competence was supported.

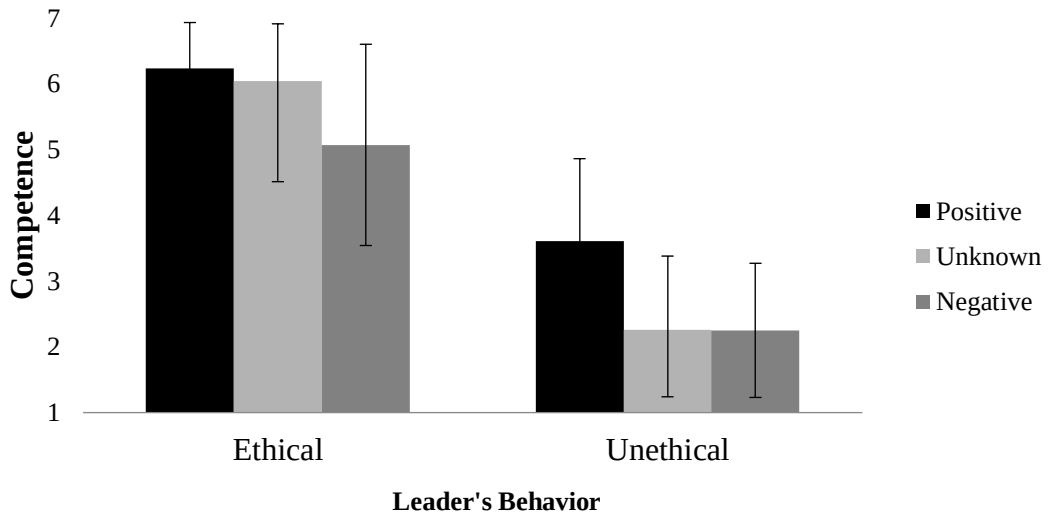

Figure 11. Behavior x Outcome interaction for Competence.

Emotional-based judgments. The main effect of Behavior was significant, F (1, 164) = 223.21, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .576$. Ethical leaders (M = 2.13, SD = 1.46) triggered less emotional-based judgements than unethical leaders (M = 5.33, SD = 1.42).

The main effect of Outcome was also significant, F (2, 164) = 8.22, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .091$. Leaders whose behavior resulted in a negative outcome to the group triggered as much emotional-based judgements (M = 4.30, SD = 2.06) than leaders in the unknown condition (M = 4.17, SD = 2.25**,** p = .887), and more than leaders in the positive outcome condition (M = 3.30, SD = 2.03**,** $p < .001$), supporting H2b. The difference between the positive and unknown conditions was also significant **(**p = .002). The Behavior x Outcome interaction was not significant, F (2, 164) = 0.73, p = .484. Thus, H3 was not supported for emotional-based judgements.

Reason-based judgements. The main effects of Behavior and Outcome were significant, F (1, 164) = 89.74, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .354$, F (2, 164) = 9.38, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .103$, respectively. Ethical leaders' behavior was more rationally justified (M = 4.55, SD = 1.44) than unethical leaders' (M = 2.54, SD = 1.45), supporting H1d. Stronger reason-

based judgments were triggered for the positive outcome condition (M = 4.05, SD = 1.70**)** when compared to the unknown (M = 3.42, SD = 1.75**,** p = .036) and the negative conditions (M = 2.76, SD = 1.60, p < .001), supporting H2c. The difference between the latter conditions was also significant (p = .031).

The Behavior x Outcome interaction was marginal, F (2, 164) = 2.88, p = .059, ηp^2 = .034. When the leader behaved unethical, stronger reason-based judgements were triggered when the behavior benefited the group (M = 3.45, SD = 1.69), when compared to the negative outcome (M = 1.89, SD = 0.95**,** p < .001) or to the unknown condition (M = 2.23, SD = 1.09, p < .001), supporting H3 for this variable. There were no differences between the latter conditions (p = .313). There were also no differences on reason-based judgments among the different outcomes when the leader behaved ethically.

Causal attributions. No main effects or interactions were found significant for locus of causality (all Fs < 0.63, p > .535), nor personal control (all Fs < 0.57, p > .451) and external control (all Fs < 2.60, p > .109). Means and Standard deviations can be found in Table 8.

Table 8.

Means (Standard Deviations) for Causal Attributions, Study 7.

Behavior	Outcome	Locus of causality	Personal control	External control	Stability
Ethical	Positive	2.95(1.72)	2.87(1.62)	4.70(1.64)	3.51(1.45)
	Negative	2.30(1.26)	2.70(1.37)	4.56(1.68)	3.56(1.60)
	Unknown	2.68(1.48)	3.02(1.50)	4.58(1.13)	3.16(1.32)
Unethical	Positive	2.60(1.40)	2.82(1.55)	4.90(1.32)	4.27(1.19)
	Negative	2.66(1.11)	2.68(1.29)	4.81(1.19)	4.34(1.03)
	Unknown	2.68(1.39)	2.58(1.39)	5.15(1.33)	4.19(1.22)

Stability. The results revealed a significant main effect of Behavior, F (1, 164) = 18.52, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .101$. Participants considered the ethical behavior more stable (M = 3.40, SD = 1.44) than the unethical (M = 4.27, SD = 1.32). No other main effects or interactions were found, all Fs < 0.69, $p > .506$. Therefore, H4 and H5 were not supported.

Leader endorsement. To test the idea that competence and reason-based judgements would mediate the effect of the experimental condition on leader endorsement, we conducted a mediation analysis using Hayes (2013) PROCESS macro (model 7; 5000 bootstraps, $n = 115$[14]). The same procedure as for the previous study was conducted: Outcome was included as the independent variable (0 = negative, 1 = positive), Behavior as moderator (0 = unethical, 1 = ethical), competence and reason-based judgments as mediators, and leader endorsement as outcome.

The effect of the interaction between Behavior x Outcome on leader endorsement was not significant for neither competence (b = -3.33, SE = 7.89, 95% CI [-18.60, 12.60]) nor reason-based judgements (b = -2.40, SE = 2.17, 95% CI [-8.57, 0.43]). Means and Standard deviations can be consulted in Table 9.

Table 9.

Means (Standard Deviations) for Leader endorsement, Study 7.

Behavior	Outcome	Mean	Standard Deviation
Unethical	Negative	13.45	19.32
	Unknown	9.29	14.34
	Positive	22.85	24.31
Ethical	Negative	70.76	29.57
	Unknown	77.00	22.22
	Positive	84.71	18.59
Total	Negative	35.74	36.75
	Unknown	42.52	38.83

[14] The "unknown outcome" condition was removed for this analysis.

	Positive	51.25	37.91

However, the results showed a significant *indirect effect* of Outcome on leader endorsement via competence, both when leader was ethical and unethical ($b_{unethical}$ = 23.13, *SE* = 5.24, 95% CI [13.22, 33.57]; $b_{ethical}$ = 19.80, *SE* = 6.62, 95% CI [7.92, 34.23]), suggesting that when the leader's behavior brought a positive outcome to the group, the leader was perceived as more competent and, therefore, more endorsed, regardless of their ethicality, partially supporting H6 (cf. Figure 12). The *indirect effect* of Outcome on Leader endorsement via reason-based judgements was not significant, regardless of leader's ethicality ($b_{unethical}$ = 4.04, *SE* = 2.74, 95% CI [-0.76, 10.11]; $b_{ethical}$ = 1.64, *SE* = 1.83, 95% CI [-0.36, 7.44]).

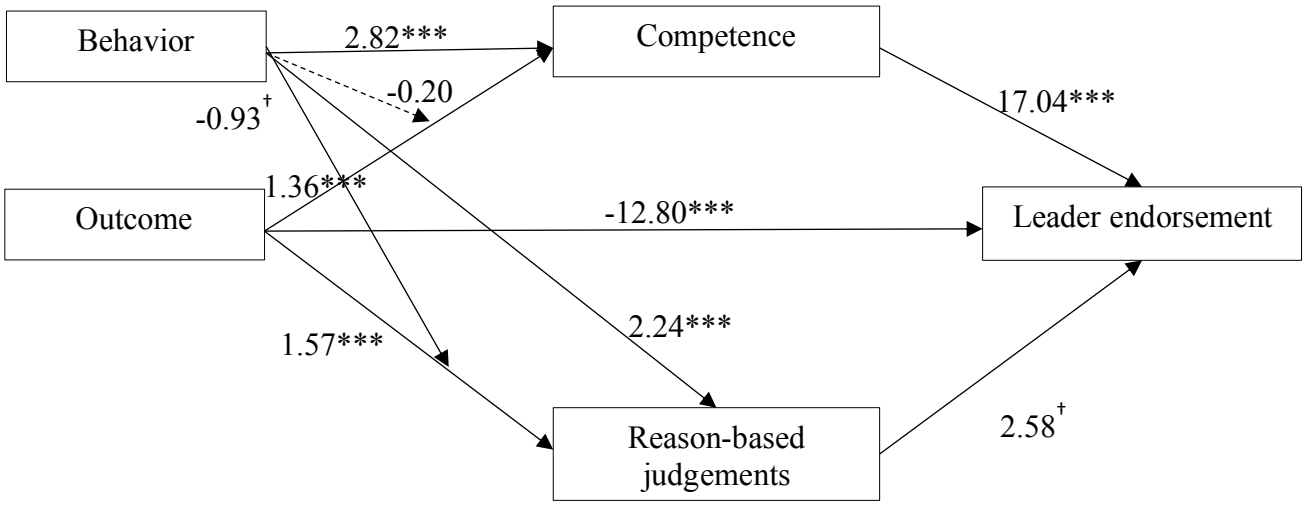

Figure 12. Mediated-moderated analysis of the effect of the Outcome (IV) on leader endorsement (DV), moderated by Behavior, and mediated by Competence and Reason-based judgements (Study 7).

*$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$, † $p < .10$

5.3.3 Discussion

Consistent with the previous study, ethical leaders were perceived as more prototypical, warmer, and more competent than unethical leaders. Their behavior was also seen as more stable (permanent), more rationally justified and triggered less negative emotions than unethical behavior. The comparison based on the outcome followed a similar pattern: consistent with Study 6, leaders who benefited the group (positive outcome) had their behavior more justified and were considered more competent than leaders whose behavior harmed the group (negative outcome). They were also perceived as more prototypical, more warmth (opposing to the previous study), and triggered less negative emotions when compared to leaders in the negative outcome condition.

Interestingly, leaders who benefited the group were considered less non-prototypical and more competent than those who harmed the group even when their behavior was unethical. The unethical behavior that resulted in a positive outcome was also more justifiable. No differences based on the outcome were found when the behavior was ethical. Leaders whose behavior resulted in a positive outcome to the group were more endorsed, even if they behaved unethically. The results expand Morton and colleagues (2007) research by showing this effect is mediated by competence – that is, when the outcome of leaders' behavior is beneficial to the group, the leader is perceived as more competent and, therefore, more endorsed, regardless of leader's ethicality.

5.4 General Discussion

Contradicting evidence from Study 5 (Chapter IV), Study 6 supported our predictions, showing that leaders' unethical behavior was perceived as being more

external and changeable over time when compared to ethical behavior. This result is consistent with the idea that because individuals feel threatened by deviant behavior from leaders and, simultaneously, strive to protect their social identity (Abrams et al., 2005; Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 2001), attributing leaders' unethical behavior to the situation instead of internal dispositions, may be a protective strategy. Congruently with this hypothesis, leaders who harmed the group also had their behavior more attributed to situational factors (under less personal control), showing that the impact of the behavior outcome to the group also affected ingroup members' attributions. However, these effects were not replicated on Study 7.

Taken together, Studies 6 and 7 support the assumption that the outcome of behavior affects how group members perceive and justify the leaders' behavior, regardless of the behavior's ethicality: across both studies, leaders whose behavior benefited the group were perceived as more competent, more prototypical, triggered less negative emotions and their behavior was more rationally justified than those whose behavior harmed the group.

More interestingly, Study 7 extended the results by showing that group members did not give different evaluations based on the contribution when the leader was ethical, but they did differentiate such evaluations for unethical leaders based on the outcome. The upgrade in terms of evaluation of members who behave unethically for strategic reasons is consistent with previous findings conducted with deviant members (e.g. Leite, 2013; Leite et al., in prep). Our studies demonstrate that a similar pattern also happens with unethical leaders.

Morton and colleagues' (2007) research showed that individuals might prefer to support left norms aside as a strategy to benefit the group. Our research extends these findings beyond a political context and by showing that the process of leadership

endorsement is partly explained by perceptions of competence (study 7). The Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al., 2002) argued that attributions to groups and members are based on two dimensions: warmth, more related with morality (cf. Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007; Kervyn et al., 2015), whilst competence is associated with skills. Therefore, it makes sense that outcome to the group shapes perceptions of competence, but has less impact on perceptions of warmth. One can argue that group members endorse even unethical behavior if that benefits the group because they perceive that member to be more competent (study 7) and also because the behavior that benefits the group might be more easily justifiable (study 6).

In conclusion, group members' perceptions of leadership ethicality fluctuate considering the impact of leaders' behavior to the group, as they "rationally" justify the behavior of an unethical leader, and are more willing to endorse him/her, if the outcome benefits the group. Thus, the present research shows that ingroup members might be willing to sacrifice ethicality for ingroup profit. It extends on previous findings by showing that this process is mediated by competence: unethical leaders whose behavior benefits the group are perceived as having more competence and, therefore, are endorsed.

5.4.1 Limitations and Future Research

In order to exert more control over the circumstances under which participants take the study, Study 6 was conducted in a laboratory setting, which also meant that an university sample had to be selected. To ensure a meaningful context, the scenario described a competition which, although focused on the ingroup leader, might have made the outcome too salient. Therefore, in Study 7 a similar scenario to the one described in the previous chapter was used, focusing on an intragroup context. The

results were somewhat different and some interactions become significant in align with our predictions. Further research needs to be conducted in order to establish whether the differences were generated by the context in which the ethical and unethical behavior was described.

In the questionnaires, participants were only asked about their willingness to endorse the leader which we know, by previous research, that intention to behave does not necessarily leads to an according act (cf. Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Therefore, it would be interesting to add a behavioral component to measure if their willingness to endorse does translate in an objective support.

In conclusion, previous literature (cf. Morton et al., 2007) suggested that group members make strategic decisions by endorsing deviant leaders if they perceive that would bring a positive outcome to the ingroup. The present chapter extends these findings beyond a political context and, more importantly, by showing that this process is mediated by competence. That is, to endorse unethical leaders, ingroup members need not only to perceive that it will bring a positive outcome to the group, but also that the leader has the skills needed to achieve the group goal.

Although very important, these comparisons between ethical and unethical leaders do not provide a full understanding of the attributional process and of leadership endorsement, as, often, individuals face a situation in which the alternative to an unethical leader is another unethical leader. In a political context, for example, citizens are often "forced" to elect one of a range of unethical leaders. Thus, it would be interesting to explore how they deal with those choices and if leadership endorsement is affected by attributions under these circumstances.

Chapter VI[15]: Unethical leadership, attributions, and success

Summary

Focusing on the 2016 US Presidential Election, this research examined group members' attributions about behavior of ingroup and outgroup leaders whose ethicality has been publicly questioned. American voters (N = 268) evaluated Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton before and after the election. Participants attributed dispositional factors significantly more to the outgroup unethical leader than to the ingroup unethical leader. Moreover, the election outcome affected the acceptability of unethical leadership and participants' support for tightening electoral procedures. When the ingroup candidate won the election (i.e. for Trump voters), unethical leadership in general became more acceptable and there was less desire to tighten the election process when dealing with unethical candidates. The opposite pattern was found among voters whose ingroup candidate lost the election (i.e. Clinton voters).

6.1 Theoretical Background

Individuals have a basic need to understand others to ensure efficient social interaction and exchange. This social understanding is achieved by knowing *why* people do what they do: causal knowledge. When searching for causes, people generally resort to processes that require the least cognitive effort, such as reliance on heuristics and stereotypes, to judge and categorize others' behaviors (Kahneman, 2003). As such, individuals spontaneously infer the causal locus of individuals' behaviors based on categorization, stereotypes and automatic processing, with causes and consequences of

[15] This chapter is part of a manuscript currently under review: Morais, C., Abrams, D., & Randsley de Moura, G. (under review). **"**Exchanging Ethics for Success": Why Electors Accept or Reject Unethical Leadership".

behavior grounded on quickly accessible schemas. A primary question is whether someone's behavior is the result of their disposition to behave in that particular way or a response to situational constraints (e.g. Kelley & Michela, 1980). It is known that distinctive and consistent behaviors are likely to be attributed to dispositions more than to situations.

Relevant for political campaigns and the present research is the fact that individuals are particularly sensitive to group leaders' behavior because leaders are distinctive but also central representatives of the group (e.g. Abrams, Randsley de Moura, Marques, & Hutchison, 2008; Haslam et al., 2001; Hogg, 2001; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). Furthermore, during political campaigns group identity and leadership are generally very salient, and candidates' behaviors are scrutinized closely. The 2016 US Presidential Election was no exception. The main candidates, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, were both systematically presented in the media as unethical leaders (e.g. The New York Times, 2015, 2016a, 2016b; The Telegraph, 2017). The present research examines voters' attributions for leadership candidates' behavior when both ingroup and outgroup leaders have been portrayed and described as unethical, and how perceptions of the leaders may depend on perceivers' group affiliation/ membership (Democrat, Republican).

6.1.1 Unethical leadership

As mentioned previously and discussed in Chapter I, the definition of ethical leadership encompasses different and important features of ethical leadership, including being a credible role model and taking ethical issues into consideration when making a decision (Neves & Story, 2015). The ethical leadership framework holds that leaders are frequently perceived as legitimate role models for normative behavior because of their

position within an organization or group (e.g. Mayer et al., 2012). Perceived legitimacy likely enables ethical leaders to influence followers' ethical conduct. Such legitimacy is achieved as a consequence of followers' perceptions that the leader behaves in a normatively appropriate manner, is honest, and has altruistic rather than selfish motivation (cf. Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008).

The ethical leadership framework is consistent with the social identity theory of leadership (Hogg, 2001), which argues that the fundamental mechanism of leadership is the leader's ability to embody the normative prototype. That is, the cognitive representation of the characteristics of the group, becoming the best exemplar of that specific group (e.g. Abrams et al., 2008; Hogg, 2001; Rast, 2015). Therefore, the more prototypical an individual group member is, the more likely they will emerge as the group leader because they are viewed by members as best representing the identity of the group (Hogg, 2001; Hogg et al., 2012). One reason why ingroup and outgroup unethical leaders receive different reactions to their behaviors is because evaluating the leader (central member) of one's own group negatively conflicts with the need to maintain a positive social identity (Abrams et al., 2013; Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 2001; Pinto et al., 2010; Randsley de Moura et al., 2011).

Moreover, previous research also showed that the outcome of the unethical act may impact group members' willingness to exert social control and even accept the leaders' transgression. Morton and colleagues (2007) showed that ingroup success may be also a boundary condition for deviance acceptance from group members. In fact, and using a political context, ingroup members supported a deviant candidate when they perceived that public opinion was against the group – therefore, deviance acceptance was used as a strategy to achieve group success because group members perceived the

deviant candidate as having a better chance of being elected and, consequently, the ingroup would benefit.

Although any form of showing disapproval to an unethical leader would be an attempt to exert social control over that deviant (cf. Brauer & Chekroun, 2005; Chekroun, 2008), previous research found that ingroup leaders who commit unethical actions can be less immediately and less severely punished than outgroup leaders who commit the same transgressive actions; ingroup leaders benefit from 'transgression credit' (Abrams et al., 2013; Randsley de Moura & Abrams, 2013). One explanation for this phenomenon is that derogating the leader can also be perceived as an action against the group. Group members' motivation to preserve the value of the leader and show respect and loyalty for the group therefore inhibits their critical response to their leader's transgressions (Abrams et al., 2013; see also Zdaniuk & Levine, 2001). It is also important to note that transgression credit is only granted under certain conditions, particularly when the transgression is perceived to be for the benefit of the group and not for leaders' personal interest (Abrams et al., 2013, 2014).

6.1.2 Group membership and causal attributions of behavior

Attribution theories emphasize people's tendency to identify dispositional and situational causes for others' behavior (Gilbert & Malone, 1995), affecting one's perception of the amount of control that a certain individual has within a specific situation. The attribution of behavior to dispositional factors reflects the attribution of personal control (rather than external control) to the actor of the specific behavior (cf. Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Nisbett, 1973).

Perceptions of causality in social situations are strongly reliant on perceptual salience, which leads to different biases (Taylor & Fiske, 1975). One of best established

biases in attribution is the tendency to ignore or underestimate the role of situational factors relative to dispositional factors in controlling behavior. This is known as the fundamental attribution error (Heider, 1958), and it is a tendency to make inferences regarding someone's unique and enduring dispositions based on behaviors that can be fully explained by the context or situation in which they occur (Gilbert & Malone, 1995).

This is mirrored at the group level with the ultimate attribution error – the tendency to attribute ingroup success and outgroup failure to internal dispositions (internal characteristics of the group or their members), and ingroup failure and outgroup success to external factors (characteristics of the situation; Pettigrew, 1979). Allison and Messick (1985) found that people also tend to assume that a group's decision-making is influenced by the attitudes of group members, while ignoring the impact of decision-making rules and group norms. This effect was particularly stronger for outgroups and, more specifically, for negative behaviors (Allison & Messick, 1985). In sum, these findings suggest that dispositional attributions are more likely for outgroup members' negative behavior.

6.2 Chapter Overview and Hypotheses

In the present research, we test how group membership affects evaluations and causal attributions when members face the situation of choosing between two reportedly unethical leaders. The US Presidential Election of 2016 provided an opportune moment to pursue this research question because the two main candidates had been perceived to be, and widely reported as, unethical (e.g., The New York Times, 2015, 2016a, 2016b; The Telegraph, 2017). The preceding review led us to propose several hypotheses:

H1. We expect participants to perceive the ingroup unethical leader as **(a)** more prototypical and **(b)** to grant more confidence that s/he will be a good president than the outgroup unethical leader. Moreover, **(c)** there would be a transgression credit effect such that participants will *evaluate* the ingroup unethical leader more positively and as less *self-promoting* than the outgroup unethical leader, and **(d)** this effect is likely to be strengthened post-election

H2. (a) Outgroup unethical leaders' unethical behavior will be attributed more to *dispositional* and *stable* factors than will that of ingroup unethical leaders. We also expect this relationship **(b)** to be stronger for the candidate that loses the election and weaker for the candidate that wins the election.

H3. We expect participants to attribute **(a)** higher *personal control* and lower *external control* to the outgroup unethical leader than to the ingroup unethical leader**; (b)** this relationship would be stronger if the outgroup unethical leader wins the election, and weaker if the ingroup leader wins the election, because of the outcome of the election to the group.

H4. (a) We expect unethical leadership to be less *acceptable* and participants to support more measures of *social control* if the ingroup unethical leader loses the election, and **(b)** the opposite pattern if the ingroup unethical leader wins the election.

6.3 Method

Participants and Design

Participants were recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). 395 participants completed the survey in Wave 1 (pre-election)[16]. Wave 2 (post-election)

[16] 770 participants started the survey (Wave 1), but only 549 met the inclusion criteria and, therefore, were eligible and allowed to proceed. Out of the 549, 154 participants were excluded because they failed

was completed by 268 participants (68%), with 8 participants were removed because they reported that they did not vote. Thus, our final sample constituted 260 participants who completed both Waves 1 and 2 (pre and post-election).

Before the election, 61% of participants said that they would vote for Hillary Clinton and 39% for Donald Trump, but 6% changed their mind between waves. Specifically, in Wave 2, 56% of our sample reported voting for Hillary Clinton (n = 146), 39% for Donald Trump (n = 100), and 5% for a different candidate (n = 14).

Participants (122 males, 138 females) were aged between 19 and 75 years old (M = 43.91, SD = 13.46). Participant gender was not significantly related to candidate voted for (χ^2 = 4.66, p = .097), and as such was not considered further as a factor. Participants all reported being American, and 79% as employed at the time. The majority of participants indicated they were White (85%), followed by Asian (5%), Hispanic (5%), African American (2%), other race (2%), and Mixed race (1%).

The study employed a 2 (Voters: Donald Trump vs Hillary Clinton) x 2 (Candidate: Donald Trump vs Hillary Clinton) x 2 (Wave: Pre-election vs Post-election) mixed design, with Voters as a between-participants factor, and Candidate and Wave as within-participants factors. We will refer to *ingroup condition* when Clinton Voters were evaluating Hillary Clinton and Trump Voters evaluation Donald Trump, and *outgroup condition* when participants responded about the candidate they did not support (Clinton Voters-Donald Trump; Trump Voters-Hillary Clinton).

attention checks. Participants excluded due to failing the attention checks (Wave 1) were equally distributed according to which candidate they supported, χ^2 (1) = 2.18, p = .140.

Procedure

In order to achieve a demographically diverse and geographically dispersed sample and to collect data in a short period of time (cf. Kees, Berry, Burton, & Sheehan, 2017), and also to avoid an effect of major events in the campaign, participants were recruited via Amazon's MTurk a week either side of the election. One week before the election (Wave 1, pre-election), participants were asked to complete an online study on Qualtrics about their perceptions regarding the 2016 USA Presidential Election. Before starting the questionnaire, participants answered four pre-screening questions/ inclusion criteria. The survey only continued if participants indicated they were (1) eligible voters, (2) Americans, (3) had an intention to vote in the election (participants who did not intend to vote or who had voted absentee were excluded), and (4) intended to vote either for Donald Trump or for Hillary Clinton – the two target candidates for this study.

Using the software TurkPrime, those who participated in W1 (Pre-election) were contacted via email and asked to complete the W2 (Post-election), a week after the election.

Measures

Control Measures (cf. Appendix A)**.** We included the following measures to control for differences between Trump and Clinton supporters' preconceptions about their preferred candidates' ethicality, national identification, and interest in the election.

Perceived ethicality. To adjust for general preconceptions about the two candidates we adapted the Ethical Leadership Scale (Brown et al., 2005), by asking participants to imagine their preferred candidate as President of the United States and to rate their agreement (*1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree*) with ten statements

concerning the imagined conduct of that candidate in the White House with other employees (e.g.: "Sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics"). This scale was computed using the man of responses to create a global score of perceived ethicality for pre-election (W1, α = .98) and post-election (W2, α = .99).

National identification. Participants rated their agreement with six statements (e.g.: "I am proud to be an American"; *1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree*), adapted from Duriez, Reijerse, Luyckx, Vanbeselaere, and Meeus (2013). A national identification score was computed for both waves (α = .96, α = .95, respectively) based on the mean of responses.

Electoral interest. At Wave 1, participants were asked nine questions regarding their level of interest in the election (e.g. "How interested are you in the Presidential Election"; *1 = not at all, 7 = very interested*), and their voting habits (e.g. "Do you usually vote on Presidential elections?"; *1 = never, 7 = always*), adapted from Bølstad, Dinas, and Riera (2013). A single score of was computed by using the mean of participants' responses (α = .88).

Dependent variables. As in previous studies (cf. Chapters IV and V; Appendix A), the following measures were used: Prototypicality (W1, α = .97; W2, α = .98), Evaluation (W1, α = .98; W2, α = .99)[17], Locus of causality (W1, α = .85; W2, α = .85), Personal control (W1, α = .84; W2, α = .88), External control (W1, α = .79; W2, α = .83), Stability (W1, α = .59; W2, α = .69). The following measures were added:

Confidence in the candidate. At Wave 1, participants were asked "How confident are you that Donald Trump [Hillary Clinton] will be a good President?" (*0-100*).

[17] To the previous measure of Stereotypes, several traits of the original scale were added (cf. Cuddy et al., 2004; Fiske et al., 2002). A principal component analysis with Promax rotation revealed one factor (explaining 82% of variance; cf. Appendix A7)

Self-promoting motivation. Participants classified to what extent they believed Donald Trump [Hillary Clinton] ran for Presidency thinking about "the best interests of Americans as a whole" and "his [her] own best interests" (*0-100*). A Motivation Score was created by subtracting item 1 to item 2, so positive scores refer to group-serving motivation, and negative scores to self-serving motivation.

Acceptability of unethical leadership. Participants rated on a 7-point scale (*1 = not at all, 7 = extremely*) how "acceptable", "good", "adequate", "justifiable" and "tolerable" it is to elect an unethical leader [in general, not specific to their candidate]. A principal component analysis with Promax rotation revealed one factor (explaining 83% of variance). A single mean score of acceptability of unethical leadership was computed (W1, $\alpha = .95$; W2, $\alpha = .97$)

Election process adjustment (EPA). Participants rated their agreement (*1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree*) with seven statements regarding hypothetical group actions to exert more social control. A principal component analysis with Promax rotation revealed two factors: (1) *Stricter process* (e.g. "The election process should make it more difficult for someone to become a presidential candidate"; W1, $\alpha = .77$; W2, $\alpha = .85$, explaining 35% of variance); and (2) *Tolerance of criminality* (e.g. "The election process should allow people with criminal records to be candidates"; W1, $r = .50$, $p < .001$; W2, $r = .57$, $p < .001$, explaining 18% of variance).

6.4 Results

Means and standard deviations within conditions and across the design are shown in Table 10.

Table 10.

Means and Standard Deviations for all measures.

Variable	Voters	Candidate: Donald Trump			Candidate: Hillary Clinton			Total	
		W1, *M* (*SD*)	W2, *M* (*SD*)	Total, *M* (*SD*)	W1, *M* (*SD*)	W2, *M* (*SD*)	Total, *M* (*SD*)	W1, *M* (*SD*)	W2, *M* (*SD*)
Perceived ethicality	Trump	4.90 (1.45)	5.22 (1.28)	5.06 (1.32)	1.78 (0.92)	1.98 (1.07)	1.87 (0.91)	3.34 (0.73)	3.60 (0.74)
	Clinton	1.66 (0.91)	1.77 (1.02)	1.71 (1.00)	5.08 (1.33)	5.21 (1.36)	5.11 (1.29)	3.37 (0.74)	3.49 (0.75)
	Total	3.03 (1.99)	3.23 (2.05)	3.39 (1.12)	3.68 (2.01)	3.85 (2.03)	3.51 (1.17)	3.55 (0.75)	3.35 (0.77)
National identification	Trump							5.95 (1.26)	6.13 (1.04)
	Clinton							5.16 (1.25)	4.66 (1.47)
	Total							5.49 (1.31)	5.28 (1.49)
Confidence in the candidate	Trump			72.02 (25.31)			10.52 (14.74)		
	Clinton			7.30 (13.78)			77.88 (21.44)		
	Total			32.90 (37.04)			49.84 (37.52)		
Prototypica-lity	Trump	4.83 (1.56)	5.12 (1.43)	4.97 (1.17)	1.65 (1.02)	1.77 (0.99)	1.71 (1.20)	3.24 (0.81)	3.45 (0.88)
	Clinton	1.69 (0.88)	1.93 (1.25)	1.81 (1.17)	4.78 (1.41)	4.77 (1.55)	4.78 (1.19)	3.23 (0.81)	3.35 (0.88)
	Total	3.01 (1.97)	3.28 (2.06)	3.39 (1.19)	3.46 (2.00)	3.51 (2.00)	3.24 (1.22)	3.24 (0.82)	3.40 (0.89)
Evaluation	Trump	4.90 (1.45)	5.22 (1.28)	5.06 (1.11)	1.78 (0.92)	1.98 (1.07)	1.88 (1.15)	3.34 (0.74)	3.60 (0.75)
	Clinton	1.66 (0.91)	1.77 (1.02)	1.71 (1.11)	5.08 (1.33)	5.21 (1.36)	5.14 (1.15)	3.37 (0.74)	3.49 (0.75)
	Total	3.03 (1.99)	3.23 (2.05)	3.39 (1.12)	3.68 (2.01)	3.85 (2.03)	3.51 (1.17)	3.35 (0.74)	3.55 (0.75)
Motivation	Trump	25.63 (48.66)	41.41 (44.69)	33.52 (38.12)	-73.65 (34.56)	-71.98 (33.39)	-72.82 (40.03)	-24.01 (28.89)	-15.29 (25.97)
	Clinton	-75.08 (36.65)	-73.76 (38.76)	-74.42 (38.12)	24.91 (49.90)	27.06 (46.83)	25.99 (40.03)	-25.08 (28.89)	-23.35 (25.97)

	Total	-32.59 (65.21)	-25.16 (70.37)	-20.45 (38.64)	-16.68 (65.69)	-14.73 (64.29)	-23.42 (40.49)	-24.55 (29.25)	-19.32 (26.33)
Locus of causality	Trump	3.21 (1.96)	2.98 (1.85)	3.10 (1.34)	2.22 (1.56)	2.51 (2.00)	2.36 (1.47)	2.71 (1.34)	2.75 (1.35)
	Clinton	2.08 (1.48)	1.91 (1.42)	1.99 (1.77)	3.35 (1.78)	3.02 (1.59)	3.18 (1.92)	2.72 (1.33)	2.46 (1.35)
	Total	2.56 (1.78)	2.36 (1.70)	2.55 (1.35)	2.87 (1.78)	2.80 (1.79)	2.77 (1.49)	2.71 (1.35)	2.60 (1.37)
Personal control	Trump	2.78 (1.48)	2.56 (1.61)	2.67 (1.97)	3.39 (2.34)	3.18 (2.34)	3.29 (1.66)	3.08 (1.54)	2.87 (1.67)
	Clinton	4.03 (2.61)	3.65 (2.66)	3.84 (1.98)	2.97 (1.75)	2.69 (1.53)	2.83 (1.66)	3.50 (1.53)	3.17 (1.67)
	Total	3.50 (2.28)	3.19 (2.34)	3.26 (2.00)	3.14 (2.03)	2.90 (1.93)	3.06 (1.68)	3.29 (1.55)	3.02 (1.69)
External control	Trump	6.37 (1.91)	6.80 (1.89)	6.59 (1.58)	6.56 (2.35)	6.10 (2.52)	6.33 (1.79)	6.89 (1.25)	7.12 (1.27)
	Clinton	7.41 (1.89)	7.44 (1.95)	7.42 (1.58)	6.16 (1.89)	6.25 (1.97)	6.20 (1.79)	6.36 (1.62)	6.18 (1.71)
	Total	6.97 (1.96)	7.17 (1.95)	7.01 (1.60)	6.32 (2.10)	6.19 (2.21)	6.27 (1.82)	6.62 (1.59)	6.65 (1.54)
Stability	Trump	4.50 (1.87)	4.30 (1.91)	4.40 (1.69)	3.37 (1.67)	3.89 (2.03)	3.63 (1.55)	3.94 (1.48)	4.10 (1.53)
	Clinton	3.66 (1.97)	4.19 (2.26	3.93 (1.70)	4.20 (1.86)	3.97 (1.80)	4.09 (1.55)	3.93 (1.47)	4.08 (1.53)
	Total	4.01 (1.97)	4.24 (2.12)	4.16 (1.71)	3.85 (1.83)	3.94 (1.89)	3.86 (1.57)	3.93 (1.49)	4.09 (1.55)
Acceptability of unethical leadership	Trump							2.04 (1.41)	2.63 (1.67)
	Clinton							1.77 (1.11)	1.47 (0.92)
	Total							1.88 (1.25)	1.97 (1.41)
EPA: Stricter process	Trump							4.75 (1.43)	4.13 (1.57)
	Clinton							4.55 (1.27)	5.11 (1.24)
	Total							4.62 (1.34)	4.70 (1.47)
	Trump							2.08 (1.51)	2.29 (1.60)
	Clinton							2.96 (1.63)	2.64 (1.59)

EPA: Tolerance of criminality	Total	2.58 (1.64)	2.49 (1.60)

Control Measures

Perceived ethicality. A Voters x Candidate x Wave mixed ANOVA revealed non- significant main effects of Voters, F (1, 235) = 0.20, p = .655, and Candidate, F (1, 235) = 1.09, p = .298. Both candidates were perceived as unethical (Donald Trump, M = 3.13, SD = 1.99; Hillary Clinton, M = 3.77, SD = 1.99)[18]. A significant main effect of Wave showed that candidates were considered to be less unethical after the election than before, F (1, 235) = 34.12, p < .001, ηp^2 = .127. A significant Voters x Candidate interaction, F (1, 235) = 805.47, p < .001, ηp^2 = .774, showed that Trump voters evaluated him as more ethical than Hillary Clinton (t (99) = 18.42, p < .001, g = 2.80, CI [2.41, 3.19]) whereas Clinton voters evaluated her as more ethical than Donald Trump, t (145) = 21.93, p < .001, g = -2.87, CI [-3.21, -2.53]. No other interactions were significant (all Fs ≤ 1.07, p ≥ .302).

National identification. A Voters x Wave mixed ANOVA revealed significant main effects of Voters, F (1, 233) = 52.13, p < .001, ηp^2 = .183, and Wave, F (1, 233) = 6.28, p = .013, ηp^2 = .026. Trump voters reported higher identification with being an American (M = 6.04, SD = 1.18) than Clinton voters (M = 4.91, SD = 1.23); and, overall, participants were more identified with their country before the election (M = 5.49, SD = 1.31) than after (M = 5.28, SD = 1.49). There was a significant Voters x Wave interaction, F (1, 233) = 27.39, p < .001, ηp^2 = .105. Simple effects tests showed that Trump Voters' identification increased from pre-election (M = 5.95, SD = 1.26) to post-election (M = 6.13, SD = 1.04), t (99) = 2.02, p = .047, g = -0.16, CI [-0.43, 0.12]; and the opposite pattern was revealed for Clinton Voters (M = 5.16, SD = 1.25; M = 4.66, SD = 1.47, respectively), t (134) = 5.53, p < .001, g = 0.37, CI [0.13, 0.60].

[18] Perceived ethicality of both candidates was tested against the scale midpoint (4). Donald Trump was perceived as unethical: t(259) = 12.87, p < .001, CI [-1.00, -0.74], whilst this different was only marginal significant for Hillary Clinton: t(259) = 1.86, p = .064, CI [-0.47, 0.01]

Electoral interest. No factors significantly affected electoral interest. A one-sample t-test comparing with the scale midpoint revealed that overall participants were interested in the election (M = 5.69, SD = 1.09) regardless of whom they voted for, t (244) = -1.27, p = .204.

Dependent variables

A Voters x Candidate x Wave mixed ANCOVA was conducted for the dependent variables, with Voters as the between-participants factor, Candidate and Wave as within-participants, and perceived ethicality (for each candidate and wave) and national identification as covariates[19].

Evaluations: H1 (a) Participants will perceive the ingroup unethical leader as prototypical and (b) grant him/her more confidence. They will also (c) evaluate the ingroup unethical leader more positively and as less self-promoting than the outgroup unethical leader, and (d) especially post-election.

Regarding *prototypicality*, a significant Voters x Candidate interaction, F (1, 225) = 7.15, p = .008, ηp^2 = .031, revealed that prototypicality was perceived to be higher for the candidate that participants supported. Therefore, the ingroup unethical leader was perceived as more group prototypical than the outgroup unethical leader, supporting H1a. No other main effects or interactions were significant (all Fs $\leq$ 3.27, p $\geq$ .072).

[19] Previous research has shown that participants' identification is an important factor when evaluating group members (e.g. Hutchison & Abrams, 2003). Therefore, participants' identification with the country was included as a co-variate. Moreover, we also wanted to ensure that any differences on candidates' perceived ethicality were not driving the effects. Thus, candidates' ethicality was controlled for and included as a co-variate. Electoral interest was not included as covariate because the analysis did not yield any significant differences.

The results for *confidence in the candidate* followed a similar pattern. The Voters x Candidate interaction was significant, F (1, 266) = 1184.48, $p < .001$, ηp^2 = .817, showing that participants believed that the ingroup leader would be a better president than the outgroup leader. That is, Trump Voters were more confident in their candidate (ingroup condition) than in Hillary Clinton (outgroup condition), and the same happened for Clinton Voters, who were more confident in Hilary Clinton (ingroup condition) than in Donald Trump (outgroup condition), supporting H1b. The main effects were not significant (all Fs $\leq$ 3.23, $p \geq .073$).

Regarding *evaluation*, a significant main effect of Candidate showed that overall Donald Trump was evaluated more negatively (M = 3.42, SD = 0.51) than Hillary Clinton (M = 4.15, SD = 0.55), F (1, 225) = 3.61, p = .059, ηp^2 = .016. There was also a significant Voters x Candidate interaction, F (1, 225) = 23.84, $p < .001$, ηp^2 = .096. Participants evaluated the ingroup leader more positively than the outgroup leader, supporting H1c.

The Voters x Wave interaction was also significant, F (1, 225) = 5.83, p = .017, ηp^2 = .025, revealing that Trump voters gave less negative evaluations in the post-election than in the pre-election (M = 3.60, SD = 0.75; M = 3.34, SD = 0.74, respectively; t (99) = 3.92, $p < .001$, g = -0.29, CI [-0.57, -0.01]), regardless of the candidate being evaluated. The pre-post difference was not significant for Clinton Voters, t (145) = 1.316, p = .137. No other main effects or interactions were significant (all Fs $\leq$ 2.03, $p \geq .156$) regarding the evaluation of the candidates[20].

[20] The Principal Component Analysis on the Evaluation scale revealed only one factor (cf. Measures section). However, the original scale comprises two dimensions: Warmth and Competence (cf. Cuddy et al., 2004; Fiske et al., 2002). A Voters x Candidate x Wave mixed ANCOVA on these dimensions reveals a different pattern.
Warmth: Only a Voters x Candidate effect was found, F (1, 229) = 9.62, p = .002, ηp2 = .040. Both Trump, t (97) = 19.74, $p < .001$, and Clinton Voters, t (145) = -21.76, $p < .001$, considered the ingroup leader as possessing more warmth (M = 5.01, SD = 1.32; M = 4.89, SD = 1.38) than the outgroup leader (M = 1.75, SD = 0.79; M = 1.67, SD = 0.92). No other main effects or interactions were significant (all Fs

The same pattern arose on the measure of *self-promoting motivation*. The significant Voters x Candidate interaction, F (1,225) = 8.16, p = .005, ηp^2 = .035, indicated that participants perceived the outgroup unethical leader to be more self-serving than the ingroup unethical leader (cf. Table 8, p. 149). Therefore, H1c was fully supported.

No other main effects or interactions were significant (all Fs ≤ 3.35, p ≥ .068). No 3-way interaction was found. Therefore, H1d was not supported.

Attributions: H2 (a) Behavior of outgroup unethical leaders will be attributed more to dispositional and stable factors than that of ingroup unethical leaders; (b) this relationship will be stronger for the candidate that loses the election and weaker for the candidate that wins the election.

Locus of causality. A significant Voters x Candidate interaction, F (1, 225) = 7.61, p = .006, ηp^2 = .033, showed participants perceived the behavior of the outgroup unethical leader as more dispositional than the behavior of the ingroup unethical leader. Therefore, H2a was supported for locus of causality. No other main effects or interactions were found for this variable (all Fs ≤ 2.01, p ≥ .158), thus, H2b was not supported.

≤ 2.65, p ≥ .105). *Competence*: The significant main effect of Voters, F (1, 229) = 4.34, p = .038, ηp2 = .019, showed that Clinton Voters attributed more competence (M = 4.49, SD = 0.98) than Trump Voters (M = 4.12, SD = 1.10). The significant main effect of Candidate, F (1, 229) = 6.34, p = .012, ηp2 = .027, showed that participants perceived Hillary Clinton to be more competent (M = 4.75, SD = 0.67) than Donald Trump (M = 3.85, SD = 0.53). There was a significant Voters x Candidate interaction, F (1, 229) = 17.25, p < .001, ηp2 = .070. Trump supporters regarded Trump to be more competent than Clinton, (Trump M = 5.85, SD = 1.02, Clinton M = 2.97, SD = 1.30), t (97) = 16.62, p < .001. Clinton Voters considered Clinton to be more competent than Trump (Clinton M = 6.11, SD = 0.85, Trump M = 2.45, SD = 1.29), t (145) = -25.14, p < .001. A significant Voters x Wave interaction, F (1, 229) = 5.02, p = .026, ηp2 = .021, showed a larger increase in perceived competence amongst Trump supporters (post$M$ = 4.56, SD = 0.91; pre$M$ = 4.27, SD = 0.83), t (97) = -4.01, p < .001, than amongst Clinton Voters, (post$M$ = 4.35, SD = 0.73, pre$M$ = 4.20, SD = 0.69), t (145) = -2.67, p = .009. No other main effects or interactions were significant (all Fs ≤ 1.21, p ≥ .273).

Stability. H2a and H2b were not supported for stability, because no main effects nor interactions were significant (all Fs ≤ 2.02, $p \geq .156$).

Perceived control: H3 We expected participants to attribute (a) higher personal control and lower external control to the outgroup unethical leader than to the ingroup unethical leader; (b) and this relationship will be stronger if the outgroup unethical leader wins the election, and weaker if the ingroup leader wins the election.

Personal control. A significant main effect of Wave, F (1, 225) = 5.41, p = .021, ηp^2 = .023, revealed that participants perceive candidates to have more control over their behaviors after the election (M = 3.04, SD = 1.79) than before (M = 3.31, SD = 1.62). However, these perceptions did not differ per Candidate; thus, H3b was not supported. No other main effects or interactions were found (all Fs ≤ 0.26, $p \geq .609$). Therefore, H3a was not supported for this variable.

External control. A marginal Voters x Candidate interaction, F (1, 225) = 3.85, p = .051, ηp^2 = .017, revealed that the ingroup leader was perceived as having more external control (M = 6.13, SD = 1.63) than the outgroup leader (M = 7.37, SD = 1.54). This pattern was significant for Clinton Voters (ingroup M = 6.20, SD = 1.79; outgroup M = 7.42, SD = 1.58, t (145) = 8.34, p < .001, g = 0.78, CI [0.54, 1.02], but not for Trump Voters (ingroup M = 6.59, SD = 1.58; outgroup M = 6.33, SD = 1.79), t (97) = 1.09, p = .277. Therefore, H3a was partially supported. No other main effects or interactions were significant (all Fs ≤ 2.88, $p \geq .091$).

Acceptability of unethical leadership: H4 (a) Unethical leadership to be more unacceptable and participants to support more measures of social control if

the ingroup unethical leader loses the election, and (b) the opposite pattern if the ingroup unethical leader wins the election.

Regarding *acceptability of unethical leadership,* a significant main effect of Voters, F (1, 225) = 7.59, p = .006, ηp^2 = .033, indicated Trump voters found unethical leadership to be less unacceptable (M = 2.34, SD = 1.11) than did Clinton voters (M = 1.62, SD = 1.12). The main effect of Wave was not significant, F (1, 225) = 0.06, p = .813.

Consistent with our hypothesis, a significant Voters x Wave interaction, F (1, 225) = 8.61, p = .004, ηp^2 = .037, showed that when the ingroup unethical leader won the election (Trump voters), unethical leadership became more acceptable after the election (M = 2.63, SD = 1.67) than before (M = 2.04, SD = 1.41), t (99) = 3.90, p < .001, g = -0.38, CI [-0.66, -0.10]. The opposite pattern was found amongst the group that lost the election (Clinton Voters). For them, unethical leadership became even more unacceptable after the election (M = 1.47, SD = 0.92) than before (M = 1.77, SD = 1.11), t (134) = 3.62, p < .001, g = 0.29, CI [0.05, 0.53]. Thus, H4a and H4b were supported for this variable (cf. Figure 13).

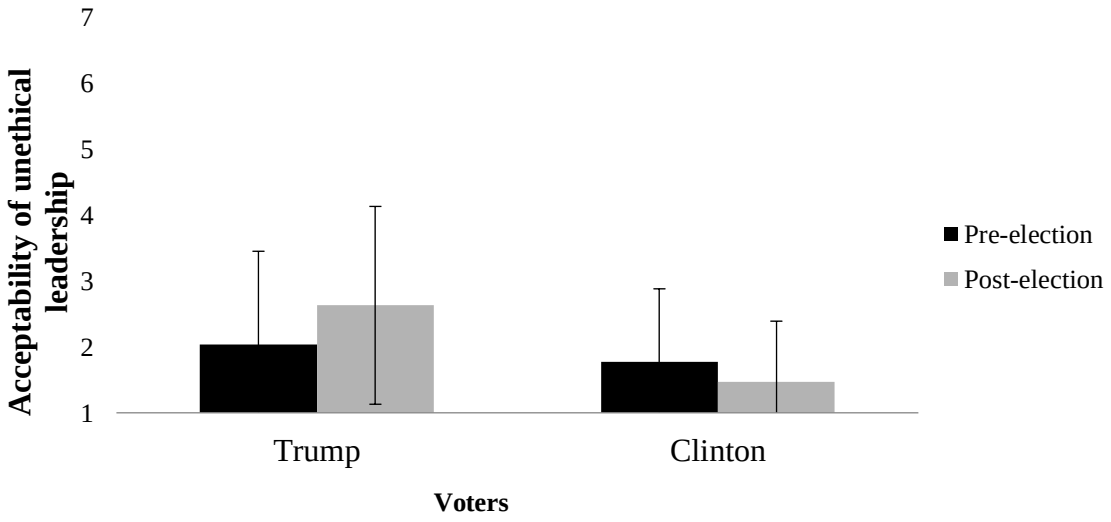

Figure 13. Voter x Wave interaction for Acceptability of unethical leadership.

The election process adjustment (EPA) measure encompassed two dimensions: stricter process and tolerance of criminality. Regarding the *stricter* process dimension, the main effects were not significant (all *F*s ≤ 1.54, $p \geq .215$), but a significant Voters x Wave interaction was found significant, F (1, 225) = 10.25, $p = .002$, $\eta p^2 = .044$. It showed that Trump voters became less approving of a strict process following the election (pre$M$ = 4.75, SD = 1.43; post$M$ = 4.13, SD = 1.57), t (99) = 4.38, $p < .001$, g = 0.41, CI [0.13, 0.69]. In contrast, Clinton voters believed that the process should be made stricter even more strict post-election (pre$M$ = 4.55, SD = 1.27; post$M$ = 5.11, SD = 1.24), t (134) = 5.52, $p < .001$, g = -0.44, CI [-0.69, -0.20]. Therefore, H4a and H4b were fully supported (cf. Figure 14).

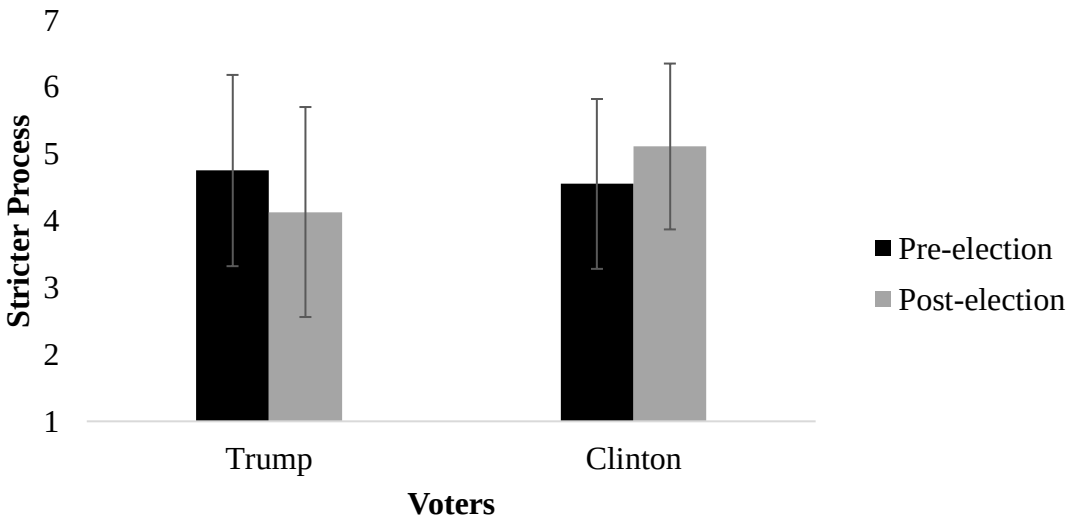

Figure 14. Voters x Wave interaction regarding the stricter process dimension of the EPA measure.

The main effects of Voters and Wave were not significant on the *tolerance of criminality* dimension (all *F*s ≤ 1.16, $p \geq .283$), but the Voters x Wave interaction was significant, F (1, 225) = 4.51, $p = .035$, $\eta p^2 = .020$. Clinton voters were more tolerant of a leader's criminal past pre-election than post-election (pre$M$ = 2.96, SD = 1.63; post$M$

= 2.64, *SD* = 1.59; *t* (134) = 2.40, *p* = .018, *g* = 0.20, CI [-0.04, 0.44]. Trump voters were more tolerant of leader criminality post-election than before (pre*M* = 2.08, *SD* = 1.51; post*M* = 2.29, *SD* = 1.60), *t* (99) = 1.67, *p* = .098, *g* = -0.13, CI [-0.41, 0.14].

6.5 Discussion

When facing the situation of choosing or electing major leaders, particularly in the political realm, it is rare that any candidate has an unquestionable record. The question of how people select leaders when the choices are reportedly unethical (and perceived as unethical) has not been addressed by previous research. The present research sheds light on some of the group-related psychological processes that occur when people must choose between two reportedly unethical leaders. Although our sample of voters considered both candidates overall as being low in ethicality and as non-prototypical, they evaluated their ingroup leader more positively, as more ethical, as more prototypical, and as less self-promoting than the outgroup leader. The behavior of the ingroup leader was also perceived as affected more by external/situational (rather than internal/dispositional) factors than was the outgroup leader's behavior. Moreover, the election result impacted on voters' acceptance of unethical leadership. When the ingroup leader lost the election, unethical leadership became less acceptable and strengthened the desire for a stricter election process. However, when the ingroup leader won the election, unethical leadership became more acceptable and group members were content to relax the election process. This demonstrates that perception of the acceptability of unethical leadership is dynamic, and not stable over time or context.

Overall, the more positive evaluations given to the ingroup leader, when compared to the outgroup leader, are consistent with social identity theory's assumption that individuals strive to achieve and maintain a positive social identity and, therefore,

when engaging in social comparison, they tend to display an ingroup bias (cf. Marques et al., 2001). Similarly, the fact that the ingroup leader was perceived as being less self-promoting is also consistent with previous findings (e.g. van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005; Abrams et al., 2013) which suggest that a leader who displays self-sacrifice communicates the message of being pro-group oriented which, in turn, shows commitment to the collective and attracts stronger support.

In terms of causal attributions, participants perceived the behavior of the outgroup leader to be less affected by external factors and more by the leaders' internal dispositions, when compared to the behavior of ingroup leaders. This is consistent with Allison and Messick's (1985) finding that people make stronger dispositional attributions for behaviors by outgroup members than by ingroup members. However, these results did not change according to the election outcome, as we would expect, and an ultimate attribution error did not occur. One possible explanation may be related to the impact of perceptions of ethicality when making attributions, as the Wave effect disappeared when controlling for this measure. Moreover, as leaders occupy a central role within the group, it makes sense that their overall behavior is perceived as stable and as being under high personal and low external control (cf. Hogg et al, 2012). Nevertheless, we expected these perceptions to be affected by participants' group membership and to depend on the results of the election. Indeed, participants attributed lower external control to the outgroup leader than to ingroup leader, but this result was only verified for Clinton Voters, and did not extend to attributions of stability or personal control.

Based on the present evidence, the 2016 US election results may have had a discernable impact on individuals' willingness to accept unethical leadership. The generality of the finding that unethical leadership was more acceptable when the

election was won by the ingroup leader and more unacceptable when won by the outgroup leader is informed by consistency with evidence from Morton and colleagues' (2007) experiments. They found that participants were more tolerant of an ingroup deviant political candidate when they perceived the public opinion to be against their group, considering it to be more important that the group achieved its goals (electing their candidate). The present research shows that acceptance of *unethical leadership* in general is also manifested in varying levels of demand for social control. Voters for the winning candidate subsequently advocated a more relaxed electoral process whereas voters for the losing candidate endorsed a stricter election process. Thus, the ingroup benefit of any unethical leader behavior affects not only group members' endorsement of their leader, but also their willingness to tolerate unethical leadership in future. This has implications for our understanding of system justification or procedural justice processes (cf. Azzi & Jost, 1997; Blasi & Jost, 2006; Tyler, 1987), which could be pursued in future research.

In conclusion, and taking the US Presidential Election as framework, the present research shows that group members' perceptions of leadership ethicality affect behavioral attributions about their leaders and the acceptability and endorsement of future unethical leadership. This potential for leader-driven ethical slippage underlines how important it is that organizations should institute and maintain procedures to hold their leaders to account and to ensure that they uphold scrupulous ethical standards.

Chapter VII: Conclusions and Implications

The analysis and original research reported in this thesis have been designed to enhance our understanding of ethical leadership, and particularly how groups respond to unethical leaders within a broader social context. This work builds on a large existing body of research of ethical leadership, largely framed within industrial and organizational psychology (e.g. Brown et al., 2005, De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Vardi & Weitz, 2004) and integrates this literature with recent developments of our understanding of leadership as a group process (cf. Thomas, Martin, & Riggio, 2013), particularly the relatively new social identity approach to leadership (e.g. Haslam, 2001; Hogg, 2001).

As detailed in Chapter I, Brown and colleagues' (2005) definition of ethical leadership, based on the social learning theory (cf. Bandura, 1977; 1986), states that leaders act as role models and that followers (group members) learn what kind of behaviors are expected from them in terms of ethical conduct by observing their leader's actions. In order to become a role model in terms of ethics, leaders must be perceived as socially attractive, credible and legitimate, and they do so by engaging in normative and altruistically motivated (rather than selfish) behavior (Brown et al., 2005).

This approach to ethical leadership dovetails with the social identity theory of leadership more broadly (see Chapter II). For example, Hogg (2001) posits that the extent to which a group member embodies the prototype (i.e. group characteristics, normative behavior) is an important determinant of whether that member will rise to the leadership role, and also impact the leader's ability to influence others when in post – similar to social learning. Indeed, prototypical members are evaluated more positively

and, consequently, have their ideas more effortlessly accepted and, therefore, are able to influence others more easily (e.g., Berscheid & Reis, 1998; Hogg, 1992, 1993, 2001; Rast et al., 2012). Hence, Hogg (2001) argued that when making sense of leaders' behavior, group members will normally tend to attribute their own leader's behavior to internal dispositions (e.g., personality) rather than situational (e.g., context) factors (cf. Erber & Fiske, 1984; Heider, 1958).

Research has also established that when group members do not conform to group norms (i.e. counter-normative, deviant, transgressive), this creates uncertainty by threatening individuals' social identity (cf. Abrams et al., 2005; Marques, Páez & Abrams, 1998). In such situations groups become motivated to restore the positive social identity, which is often operationalized by negative attitudes or behaviors towards the deviant member (Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 2001), as an attempt from the group to exert social control (Chekroun, 2008). Moreover, due to the important role leaders occupy within the group, group members are particularly sensitive to their attitudes and behaviors (cf. Turner, 1991). This theoretical analysis suggests that it would be plausible to expect that leaders would be even more punished than regular members would in instances in which they acted counter normatively.

Understanding how group members respond to leaders – especially unethical leaders – is complex. Group members are evaluating leaders on the basis of their standing in the group (e.g. how prototypical they are) but also in terms of their status and role as the leader. Specifically, acting against or reacting negatively towards the leader could also be perceived as an act against the group itself – as disloyal (Abrams et al., 2014). Consequently, ingroup leaders who commit unethical actions can be less immediately and severely punished when compared to outgroup leaders – they are granted a *transgression credit* (Abrams et al., 2013; Randsley de Moura & Abrams,

2013), if the behavior is perceived to be in the group's interests (cf. Abrams et al., 2013, 2014).

My theoretical analysis, outlined in Chapters I and II, and embedded in the empirical chapters of this thesis highlights that group members pay special attention to the behavior of leaders, especially in intergroup contexts, and that, simultaneously, individuals are increasingly more sensitive to ethical issues (e.g., Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 2001; Vardi & Weitz, 2004). I have shown that less is known about unethical leadership, and in particular how groups react to unethical leaders. The existent literature is not clear as to whether the processes underlying reactions to unethical leaders are comparable (i.e. opposite) to those underlying reactions to ethical leaders although this might sometimes be assumed. Moreover, to my knowledge, no research on ethical leadership has considered intergroup context in explaining the psychological processes by which individuals deal with unethical leaders. Therefore, the way group members perceive and attribute leaders' unethical behavior, the impact it has on group members (e.g. their optimism), and to which extent they may be willing to endorse unethical leadership remains unanswered, especially in what it concerns situations in which the group is faced with an intergroup context.

In summary, taking the novel approach of considering the dynamic of the intergroup context and applying it to the study of unethical leadership, the present thesis set out to (1) understand the impact that unethical leaders have on group members' optimism about the group, perceptions and attributions, as well as (2) explore the boundary conditions under which unethical leadership may be accepted, justified and even endorsed.

7.1 Overview of the main findings

The first set of studies (Chapter III, Studies 1–3) empirically tested the assumptions that ethical leaders have a positive impact on followers (assuming the inverse pattern for unethical leaders) and to establish the premises that group membership plays an important role in the assessment of ethical behavior. Building on these results, Chapter IV developed the idea that based on the leader's intention to behave, group members attribute different causes to the behavior (Chapter IV, Study 4) and that those perceptions also vary according to the context in which the behavior occurred (Chapter IV, Study 5). Studies 6 and 7 (Chapter V) explored whether the outcome of the behavior to the group was more important than leaders' ethicality, as well as the process that leads group members to endorse unethical leaders who benefit the group. Following this idea, the final empirical chapter (VI, study 8) tested how attributions about unethical leaders changed before and after ingroup success, as well as group members' willingness to exert social control over those leaders, considering group membership.

Study 1 tested Shapiro and colleagues (2011) priming paradigm, providing some experimental support for its effectiveness. It also provided empirical evidence for the assumption that ethical leaders have a positive impact on followers. Specifically, ethical leaders were perceived as more normative, received more positive evaluations, and impacted more positively on followers' perceptions about the team effectiveness and their optimism about the future of the organization itself.

Study 2 provided support for our hypothesis that group membership plays an important role when judging leaders' ethicality. Ingroup unethical leaders were perceived as less unethical, and had a more positive impact on team effectiveness and on followers' optimism about the future in the organization, than did outgroup unethical

leaders. Study 3 extended these findings, showing that the impact of unethical behavior on workplace perceptions was less negative if displayed by a regular member (i.e. colleague, co-worker) than by a leader. Taken together, these two studies support the idea that individuals are particularly concerned about their own group (ingroup) and about their own leader (more than when compared to other regular members; i.e. non-leaders). The next step was to explore the role of perceived behavior intention (attribution) on these leader evaluations.

Studies 4 and 5 revealed that besides the nature of the behavior (ethical/unethical), both behavioral intention (self/group-promoting) and the context in which the behavior is displayed (intra/intergroup) are important factors that group members consider when evaluating and attributing causes to the leader's behavior. Leaders whose behavior was presented as being for the group's best interests (group-promoting behavior) were considered more prototypical, warmer, competent, and triggered less negative emotion-based judgements than self-promoting leaders. An important feature of attributing causes of leaders' behavior was the audience in front of whom that behavior was displayed. The findings showed that in an intragroup context (ingroup only audience), leader's behavior was attributed more to internal dispositions than when the behavior was displayed in front of the outgroup, regardless of ethicality. Similarly, the behavior motivated by group interests was perceived as more stable in an intragroup context as well compared with an intergroup context.

Studies 6 and 7 focused on the outcome of the leader's behavior to the group. Attributions of competence, internal dispositions and control were stronger for leaders whose behavior positively affected the group. Unethical leaders who benefited the group also had their behavior more justified by group members. The results also showed that group members were more willing to endorse the leader whose behavior resulted in

a positive outcome to the group, even if the leader behaved unethically. This relationship was mediated by the extent group members perceived the leader to be competent. In other words, the more ethical and the more positive the outcome to the group is, the more the leader was perceived as competent and had his/her behavior justified, and the more the leader was endorsed.

In Study 8 (Chapter VI), we took a different more applied approach. Specifically, I considered a scenario when group members might not be facing the choice between an unethical vs ethical leader but rather the choice between two leaders who are presented or perceived as unethical. Elections can be a good example of this kind of situation, as sometimes it all comes down to choosing amongst a selection of unethical leaders. Therefore, in Study 8, the 2016 US Presidential Election was used as context to illustrate this situation, with participants rating their opinions about the ingroup and outgroup candidate (the candidate they supported and did not support, respectively). The ingroup (unethical) leader was evaluated more positively, as less self-promoting, and his/her behavior more affected by situational factors than the outgroup unethical leader. Interestingly, the outcome of behavior (in this case, of the election, reflecting ingroup's success or failure) impacted on voters' acceptance of unethical leadership. When the outcome was negative (the ingroup leader lost the election), unethical leadership became less acceptable and group members expressed a desire for a stricter election process. On the other hand, when the outcome was positive to the group, they were more willing to accept unethical leadership and endorsed a more relaxed election process.

Across the different studies, different interactions between leader's ethicality and other factors (e.g. Status, study 3; Motivation, studies 4 & 5) were predicted but not corroborated by the data. The lack of interactions suggests that how ethical group

members perceive the leader to be is the most predominant aspect of judging leaders, which provides support to the argument that being (un)ethical may reflect a more dispositional characteristic than other forms of deviance (e.g. transgressive leaders; cf. Chapter II). However, future research is needed to specifically test the difference between ethics (disposition) and norm transgression. Nevertheless, the empirical work presented in this thesis provides support to my general argument that group membership and the intergroup contexts are important to understand how group members assess and perceive leader ethicality and the impact this has on group and team outcomes (e.g. team effectiveness, optimism about the future in the organization) and that, under some circumstances, group members may be willing to overlook their leader's ethicality.

7.2 Main contributions and Practical implications

One of the main contributions of our work is its potential for application to organizational literature and contexts. Previous research (e.g., Celik et al., 2015; Mayer et al., 2009; Neves & Story, 2015) established a connection between leaders' ethicality and organizational outcomes (such as team effectiveness and optimism about the future in organization) without establishing causality. The present research provides experimental evidence to test the assumption that ethical leaders have a positive impact on followers' perceptions regarding their team effectiveness and on their optimism about the organization (Studies 1-3). This is particularly relevant in an era in which company's records, information, public messages are easily accessed, making any ethically-related scandal potentially harmful for a long time and an ethical conduct more recognized and publicized (e.g. Forbes, 2017). When organizations have ethical leaders, they are not only enhancing a more positive public image, but also positively impacting on their employees, who become more optimism about the organization.

Another contribution of the present work is related to the idea that ethical and unethical behavior do not constitute two poles of the same continuum. This has been a theoretical assumption (cf. Brown et al., 2005; see also Chapter I). Indeed, judging ethical and unethical leaders did not follow a consistent continuum, with group members' judgements being affected by group membership, target status, behavior intention, and contribution to the group – not only the leader being ethical or unethical per se. This result suggests important implications to businesses, potentially helping to explain why some unethical behavior, particularly leader behavior, takes some time to become public – factors such as group membership and behavioral intention attenuate employees' reactions and produce a less negative impact.

Indeed, group membership affected group members' perceptions of ethicality and its consequences, with individuals differentiating ingroup and outgroup ethical and unethical leaders in terms of evaluations, team effectiveness and optimism about the future in the organization. Thus, strengthening feelings of belongingness to the organization (i.e. employees more identified with the group) can result in performance improvements to the organization, softening employees' reactions towards unethical behavior in the workplace. Moreover, previous research found that employees more identified with the organization are also less likely to leave (e.g. turnover intentions; cf. Randsley de Moura et al., 2008).

Status also affected the impact of ethical and unethical behavior in this research (see Study 3). Our research showed that although unethical behavior was overall hazardous for employees, it had more negative consequences for employees (group members) if displayed by a leader (compared to a colleague; cf. Chapter III). One can argue that this might be due to the role that leaders occupy on setting the normative behavior. Thus, by behaving in a normatively appropriate way, ethical leaders act as

role models who can even reduce deviant behaviors in the workplace (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012; Mayer et al., 2012; Stouten et al., 2013; van Gils et al., 2015). Considering that people want to see their ingroup as moral, it is understandable that ingroup ethical leaders are perceived as more normative and prototypical members (cf. Chapters III, IV, V, and VI); that is, as member who best represent the group, and, therefore, receive more positive evaluations. Thus, our research suggests that leaders can be a vehicle for normative boundaries within organizations.

The present thesis also provides support to the argument then, when it comes to evaluate and judge ethical and unethical leaders, group members take into account the leader's motivation (self-promoting *vs* group-promoting; cf. Chapter IV). Leaders who are perceived to act on behalf of the group were perceived as warmer and more competent. The behavior of group-promoting leaders was also perceived as more stable over time, but only when the behavior took place in an intragroup context. One can argue that when only the ingroup is salient (intragroup context) group members may be more willing to hold the leader accountable for their actions, and, in contrast, to de-accountable the leader when the unethical behavior took place in front of the outgroup (intergroup context). This explanation is consistent with previous research showing that group members act strategically to protect the ingroup's image (e.g., Abrams et al., 2014; Hogg et al., 2012) and that socially identity salience makes individuals process group-relevant information in different ways, changing which information they consider relevant (cf. Maitner et al., 2010).

Another important caveat to assess (un)ethical leaders refers to the contribution they bring to the group, namely the impact of their behavior to the group. Previous research (e.g. Leite, 2013; Morton et al., 2007) argued that group members make

strategic decision-making when it comes to endorsing a deviant leader. Specifically, they showed the deviant leaders might be endorsed if group members perceive that would benefit the group– however, in these studies, group members decided to endorse or not the deviant leader (who violated a norm) based on the prospections. Our research (cf. Chapter V) focused instead on unethical behavior and informed participants of the actual outcome of the unethical behavior. Our results provided support to the idea that group members' may overlook leader's ethicality and support an unethical leader when the behavior produced a positive outcome to the group. It also extended this research by showing that this process is mediated by the extent to which group members perceive the leader as competent and the behavior can be "rationally" justified. In other words, group members assess the outcome of the behavior to the group and, the more positive the outcome is, the more the behavior is justifiable and the leader perceived as competent, and the more willing they are to endorse that leader. These findings have practical consequences, namely to understand which circumstances might lead individuals to endorse an unethical leader (e.g. a team manager in an organization, or a political candidate).

These results show that group members may be willing to sacrifice ethicality for ingroup success. Chapter VI took a step further by showing that ingroup success makes unethical leadership more acceptable. Applied to a political context, Study 8 showed that voters were more willing to accept unethical behavior and to endorse a more relaxed electoral process (i.e. exert less social control) when the group benefited from the result of the election. The opposite pattern was found when the ingroup leader lost the election. Under these circumstances, group members supported measures to make the electoral process stricter and considered unethical leadership more unacceptable. Taken together, this research supports the idea that group members make strategic

decisions when it comes to supporting a leader and that, under certain circumstances, they may even disregard the moral component of the behavior. These results are particularly important to understand voting behavior, with the electorate focusing more on the how they benefited from the election. Therefore, voters seem to be more willing to accept an unethical leader (whose behavior may have important consequences to a larger group of people) and endorse more flexible laws to allow unethical people to become leaders if that means their (sub)group would benefit from it. Indeed, despite the potential long term negative effects for the larger group, people's own (subjective) point of view seems to prevail. Considering these results, one cannot help to wonder on how much the broader (and expected) factors such as values, ideologies, ethics and morals wager in people's intentions to vote.

7.3 Limitations and Future Research

Despite the growing body of literature in ethical leadership, a lot of work is yet to be done, namely to address the impact of unethical leadership on groups and their members. The present thesis constitutes an important contribution to this line of research through experimental and survey work to understand how groups respond to unethical leaders, considering also boundary conditions derived from theory and research rooted in social psychology. The findings spark more questions and more work is needed to further explore the impact of unethical leadership on groups and their members.

Indeed, the use of experimental vignette methodology (EVM) is crucial to improve knowledge regarding causal attributions, particularly in fields such as organizational psychology and management, in which only a small number of articles published used this methodology (cf. Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Allen, Hancock,

Vardaman, & McKee, 2014; Scandura & Williams, 2000). Therefore, the use of EVM to study a phenomenon such as unethical leadership is an important contribution to the field. However, the methodology used is not immune to criticism, namely concerning external validity (cf. Aguinis & Bradley, 2014 for a review; Chandler, Mueller, & Paolacci, 2014; Hauser & Schwarz, 2015) and might help to explain some of the issues related to the scales' psychometric properties (e.g. low internal reliability and highly inter-correlated measures) and contradictory results (cf. Chapter V). Moreover, some of the approaches taken to test our aims also raised some issues. For example, in Chapter III we used a priming approach (based on the paradigm previously used in organizational psychology research; e.g. Shapiro et al., 2011), which makes it more difficult to establish comparisons, as different participants are assessing and considering different behaviors. We addressed these issues by varying the sources (e.g. Prolific Academic, MTurk, RPS – school's internal recruiting system) and samples (e.g. students, Americans, employed adults), and the methodological approaches (experimental and longitudinal designs; online samples, pen-and-paper studies, studies conducted in the laboratory). Nevertheless, and to enhance the confidence in the findings, it would be important to replicate these studies in different contexts and to strengthened them resorting to other advanced methodology (e.g. virtual reality technology).

Our research showed that group membership impacts on assessment of ethical and unethical behavior, showing not only differences in evaluations of ingroup and outgroup unethical leaders, with more positive evaluations being given to ingroup unethical leaders, but also a different impact in terms of group outcomes, such as higher perceptions of team effectiveness and stronger optimism about the future in the organization when lead by an ethical leader. The research findings offer some

preliminary insights into the processes at play, however future research is needed to better understand these processes. It might be indeed related to the perception that outgroup unethical leaders are less self-promoting than ingroup unethical leaders (cf. Chapter III), or that ingroup unethical behavior is closely related to participants themselves and, therefore, they might be less tolerant. Or, alternatively, these reactions might be explained by how strongly (or weakly) group members identify with the group (or organization), or how engaged they are with the organization and/or the leadership.

Consistently across all studies, ethical leaders were considered more normative, more prototypical, and triggered more positive evaluations and judgements. Our research has focused mainly on unethical leaders (and under which circumstances their impact might be attenuated). An interesting line of research would extend the work of Stouten and colleagues (2013) and taking the opposite approach: under which circumstances is a leader too ethical? Would group members stand up for a leader whose extreme ethicality harms the group? Based on the results of the present thesis, perhaps one can argue that even extremely ethical leaders can be downgraded if their actions produce a negative outcome to the group, as group members seem to focus particularly on the outcome of the leader's behavior to the group, especially when it comes to deciding who to endorse.

Although our studies included both intra and intergroup contexts and dynamics, some important follow-ups should be considered in future studies. Previous research has shown that employees were less punitive towards low-status transgressors when they imitated a transgression displayed by a high-status member (cf. Bauman, Tost, & Ong, 2016). And, on the other hand, that individuals who hold a high-rank position within the organization are less likely to engage in actions that stop unethical behavior, as they are more identified with the group and, therefore, fail to see the unethicality (Kennedy &

Anderson, 2017). These findings provide some grounds to expect group members to react differently to unethical leadership that occurs within an organization that reinforces unethicality as its norm or modus operandi. It remains unanswered, however, what is the impact of an explicitly (or implicitly) unethical climate on group members' reactions to unethical leadership, as well as whether unethical leadership would be even more acceptable under these circumstances, regardless of group affiliation or outcome.

Moreover, the impact of dynamics and structure of the group itself on acceptability of unethical leadership remains unanswered. Study 3 showed a different impact of unethical behavior displayed by regular members and leaders (higher status). However, this study did not explore *why* group members reacted differently. Power relationships between members and within the organization itself (e.g. vertical *vs* horizontal structures) may influence this process, as this organization structure differences exacerbate the power imbalance between employees (members) and managers (leaders) (cf. Ayree, Sun, Chen, & Debrah, 2008). Therefore, it seems reasonable to expect organizational structure to help to explain different reactions to unethical behavior, and employees to be more acceptable of such behavior in vertical organizations, where more power distance is expected (e.g., Moon, Morais, Uskul, & Randsley de Moura, in prep.).

In sum, ethics is an increasingly important issue in groups and organizations, but little research resorted to intergroup processes to explain the impact of ethical and unethical leaders on the group. The present research contributes to the filling of this important gap. Specifically, it empirically showed that ethical leaders have a positive impact on members' perceptions regarding the group, which is particularly important when we consider an organizational context, for example. Indeed, employees' perceptions of team effectiveness and their optimism regarding the organization was

enhanced by ethical leaders. Important implications can be drawn from these findings to organizations, as the role of leaders in setting normative boundaries is especially significant, and their behavior has an important impact on employees' performance and well-being.

Moreover, the results also showed that group members pay attention to several factors such as group membership, status, behavior intention, context (and identity salience), and behavior outcome which can work as attenuating circumstances when judging unethical leaders. In fact, unethical leaders can even be endorsed and unethical leadership more accepted when their behavior has a positive outcome to the group, for example. In a situation in which unethical behavior benefited the group, group members were also less willing to exert social control. The overall group members' willingness to overlook ethicality when the unethical behavior benefited the group has important applications to understand how group members make important decisions, such as electing a leader. This might help to explain why unethical behavior of leaders often takes time to become public and why, for example, political leaders keep being endorsed even when they repeatedly behaved unethically, suggesting that individuals are strategic when it comes to endorse a leader, and that group profit might be more important than ethicality, suggesting that individuals may be motivated to act according to what is in their ingroup (and, consequently, their own) best interests, regardless of morality.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Measures

A1. Normativeness

In which extent do you believe that…

1. [The leader] is a typical leader (pilot study)
2. Most people in your organization would behave this way (Studies 1-4)
3. Everyone behaves this way (Studies 1-4)

A2. Leader Evaluation (adapted from Pinto et al., 2016)

In which extent do you believe that the leader is...

1. Disloyal – Loyal (pilot study; Studies 1-3)
2. Not a valuable member – A valuable member (pilot study; Studies 1-3)
3. Dishonest – Honest (pilot study; chapter III; Studies 1-3)
4. Selfish – Generous (pilot study; chapter III; Studies 1-3)
5. Not respectable – Respectable (pilot study; chapter III; Studies 1-3)

A3. Ethical Leadership at Work (adapted from Kalshoven et al., 2011)

In which extent do you believe that the leader…

Fairness (Studies 1-2)

1. Holds me accountable for problems over which I have no control
2. Holds me responsible for work that I gave no control over
3. Holds me responsible for things that are not my fault

Power Sharing (Studies 1-2)

4. Does not allow others to participate in decision making

5. Seeks advice from subordinates concerning organizational strategy
6. Allows subordinates to influence critical decisions

Role Clarification (Studies 1-2)

7. Indicates what the performance expectations of each group member are
8. Explains what is expected of me and my colleagues

People Orientation (Studies 1-2)

9. Is interested in how I feel and how I am doing
10. Takes time to talk about work-related emotions
11. Takes time for personal contact
12. Pays attention to my personal needs

Integrity (Studies 1-2)

13. Can be trusted to do the things he/she says
14. Can be relied on to hon our his/her commitments
15. Keeps his/her promises

Ethical Guidance (Studies 1-2)

16. Clarifies integrity guidelines
17. Ensures that employees follow codes of integrity
18. Clarifies the likely consequences of possible unethical behavior by myself and my colleagues
19. Clearly explains integrity related codes of conduct
20. Explains what is expected from employees in terms of behaving with integrity

Concern for Sustainability (Studies 1-2)

21. Would like to work in an environmentally friendly manner

22. Shows concern for sustainability issues

23. Stimulates recycling of items and materials in our department

A3. Team Effectiveness (adapted from Hanges & Dickson, 2004)

In which extent do you…

1. Believe that you would work effectively in a team that involved that person (Studies 1-3)
2. Perceive that the team has a clear understanding of what this company's goal and mission are (Studies 1-3)
3. Perceive that the team works together effectively towards its goals (Study 3)

A4. Optimism about the future in the organization (adapted from Hanges & Dickson, 2004)

Please rate your agreement with the following statements:

1. I am optimistic about my future with this organization (Studies 1-3)
2. I expect this organization to have an excellent future (Studies 1-3)
3. I expect to be with this organization three years from now (Studies 1-3)
4. I can see myself having a good future in this organization (Studies 1-3)

A5. Judgements (adapted from Reidenbach & Robin, 1990)[21]

[21] For Study 2, the items were diferente from the ones used in Studies 4-7 (although the original scale from which the items were retrieved was the same). Therefore, the measure in Study 2 was labelled as "Beliefs".

The leader's behavior…

1. Was self-promoting
2. Was morally right (Study 2)
3. Was acceptable (Study 2)
4. Was justifiable (Study 2)
5. Showed respect for the company's co-workers (Study 2)
6. Showed respect for the organization's values (Study 2)

Emotion-based judgements

7. Embarrassed the organization (Studies 2; 4-7)
8. I feel betrayed by this behavior (Studies 4-7)
9. I feel ashamed by this behavior (Studies 4-7)
10. This behavior was disrespectful (Studies 4-7)

Reason-based judgements

11. Resulted in a positive cost-benefit ratio (Studies 2; 4-7)
12. The end justifies the means (Studies 4-7)
13. This was in the best interest of the group [organization] (Studies 2; 5-7)

A6. Behavior manipulation check[22] (adapted from Brown et al., 2005)

Please consider the person you described. In which extent that person...

1. Conducts h/h personal life in an ethical manner (Studies 3-7; 8)
2. Defines success not just by results but also the way that they are obtained (Studies 3-7; 8)

[22] This scale was labelled as "Perceived ethicality" in Study 8.

3. Listens to what employees have to say (Studies 3-7; 8)
4. Disciplines employees who violate ethical standards (Study 3; 8)
5. Makes fair and balanced decisions (Studies 3-7; 8)
6. Can be trusted (Studies 3-7; 8)
7. Discusses business ethics or values with employees (Studies 3-7; 8)
8. Sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics (Studies 3-7; 8)
9. Has the best interests of employees in mind (Studies 3-7; 8)
10. When making decisions, asks "what is the right thing to do"? (Studies 3-7; 8)

A7. Stereotypes (adapted from Cuddy et al., 2004; Fiske et al., 2002)

To which extent do you perceive the leader to be…

Warmth

1. Trustworthy (Studies 4-7; 8)
2. Honest (Studies 4-7; 8)
3. Selfish (Studies 4-7)
4. Respectable (Studies 5-6; 8)

Competence

5. Effective (Studies 4-7)
6. Competent (Studies 4-7; 8)
7. Useful to the team [group/ organization] (Studies 4-7; 8)
8. Loyal (Studies 4-7; 8)

9. Efficient (Study 8)
10. Capable (Study 8)

11. Organized (Study 8)

12. Skillful (Study 8)

13. Good-natured (Study 8)

14. Sincere (Study 8)

15. Warm (Study 8)

16. A valuable politician (Study 8)

17. Ethical (Study 8)

A8. Causal attributions (adapted from McAuley et al., 1992)

The items below concern your impressions or opinions regarding the causes of the team leader's behavior. Is this cause(s) something:

Locus of causality (Studies 4-7; 8)[23]

1. That reflects an aspect of the self – of the situation
2. Inside of the team leader – outside of the team leader
3. Something about the leader – about others

Stability (Studies 4-7; 8)

4. Permanent – Temporary
5. Stable – Variable
6. Unchangeable – Changeable

Personal control (Studies 4-7; 8)

7. Manageable by the team leader – not manageable by the team leader

[23] Lower levels of the scale indicate a more internal locus of causality, more stability, more personal control and more external control.

8. The team leader can regulate – cannot regulate
9. Over which the leader has power – has no power

External control (Studies 4-7; 8)

10. Over which others have control – have no control
11. Under the power of others – Not under the power of others
12. Other people can regulate – cannot regulate

A9. Social Identity (adapted from Abrams et al., 1998; Randsley de Moura et al., 2008)

Please rate your agreement with the following statements

1. I feel strong ties with the University/School/Department (Studies 5-6)
2. The University/School/Department is important to me (Studies 5-6)
3. I feel proud to be a member of the University/School/Department (Studies 5-6)
4. I feel a strong sense of belonging to the University/School/Department (Studies 5-6)
5. Belonging to the University/School/Department is an important part of my self-image (Studies 5-6)
6. I often regret that I belong to this University/School/Department (Studies 5-6)
7. I am glad to be a member of this University/School/Department (Studies 5-6)

A10. Prototypicality (adapted from Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001)

The team leader is…

1. A good example of the kind of people who study/work at [organization] (Studies 5-7; 8)
2. Stands for what people who study/work [organization] at the have in common (Studies 5-7; 8)

3. Is representative of the [organization] ((Studies 5-7; 8)

A11. National Identification (adapted from Duriez et al., 2013; Study 8)

Please rate your agreement with the following statements:

1. I feel American
2. Being American is important to me
3. I am proud to be American
4. I feel a bond with American people
5. In many ways, I resemble other American people
6. I consider myself a typical American

A12. Electoral interest (adapted from Bølstad et al., 2013; Study 8)

1. How interested are you in the Presidential election?
2. How closely did you follow the election broadcasts that were shown on television during the election campaign?
3. How closely did you follow the news released during the campaign about the election process?
4. How closely did you follow the news released during the campaign about the candidates?
5. How closely did you follow the debates that were shown on television during the election campaign?
6. Do you usually vote on Presidential elections?
7. Do you usually vote on the elections to choose your Mayor?
8. Do you consider yourself informed about the candidates' positions on the different issues (e.g. financial, environmental, etc)?

9. Do you consider yourself informed about the candidates' program for this election?

A13. Acceptability of unethical leadership (Study 8)

Please answer the following questions:

1. How acceptable is it for an unethical leader to be President of the US?
2. How good for the image of the US is that an unethical leader is elected?
3. How adequate is it for an unethical leader to be President of the US?
4. How justifiable is it for an unethical leader to be President of the US?
5. How tolerable is it for an unethical leader to be President of the US?

A14. Election Process Adjustment (EPA; Study 8)

Stricter process

1. Should make it more difficult for an unethical candidate to be elected\
2. Should be more strict in monitoring the elected president
3. Candidates should have their lives more strictly scrutinized
4. Everything in candidates' lives should be public
5. Should make it more difficult for someone to become a presidential candidate

Tolerance of criminality

6. Should allow people that are facing criminal investigations to be candidates
7. Should allow people with criminal records to be candidates

Appendix B

Scenarios

B1. Studies 1-3

Behavior manipulation

"Please consider the organization where you are employed.

Taking that into account, think about a leader in that organization **who has done something that you consider ethically appropriate** and that made you feel proud of him/her due to those actions [**whose appropriateness was ethically questionable** and that made you feel disappointed at him/her due to those actions].

Please describe the leader's behavior in that particular situation."

Group membership manipulation

"Please consider the organization **where you are employed [an organization to which you have never worked for**]."

Status manipulation

"Think about **a leader [a co-worker]** in that organization who has done something that you consider ethically appropriate and that made you feel proud of him/her due to those actions [whose appropriateness was ethically questionable and that made you feel disappointed at him/her due to those actions].

B2. Study 4

Behavior manipulation

"Imagine that you are doing an important group presentation in a class and your team is required to present the data related to a psychology study you ran. You all had

been working intensively on this presentation for weeks. The results of the study were inconclusive and you chose a team leader that was given the job of speaking for the team in that presentation. The team leader stood up for the presentation and **intentionally represented the data [in]accurately**."

Motivation manipulation

"When asked later about the behaviour, the team leader said '**this was the only way I [the whole group] would be given a higher mark'**".

B3. Study 5

Behavior and Group Salience manipulations

"Imagine that you are doing an important group presentation **in a class in front of other (course**; e.g. Psychology**) students from the (ingroup;** e.g. University of Kent**) [in a class, in front of other (same course;** e.g. Psychology**) students from (outgroup**; e.g. Canterbury Christ Church University**]** and your group is required to present the data related to a psychology study you ran as part of your course. Everyone in your group had been working intensively on this presentation for weeks. The results of the study were inconclusive and you chose a team leader that was given the job of speaking for the team in that presentation. The team leader stood up for the presentation and **intentionally represented the data [in]accurately to [hid] show its inconclusive nature".**

Motivation manipulation

Same as in Study 4.

B4. Study 6

Behavior manipulation

"Every 2 years, University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University [CCCU] enter into a competition. This competition consists in 5 different challenges, 4 of which are negotiated and decided in the Organisation Committee meeting, according to the universities suggestions and list of favourite and least favourite challenges.

Prior to the meeting, each representative sent to the committee a list of the favourite and least favourite challenges, which was kept secret from the opponents. The 5th challenge is decided by the University that wins the lottery. Last year, University of Kent won the lottery, thus we had the advantage to choose the 5th challenge.

During the meeting, while opening the file that contained all the rules and information regarding the competition, the Kent Leader noticed that the list of favourite and least favourite challenges from CCCU was mistakenly included. Thus, the Kent Leader was aware of which challenges CCCU feels more confident to win or lose. Then Kent Leader **decided not to inform** the committee and chose the CCCU least favourite challenge [The Kent Leader **decided to inform** the committee of the mistake]."

Outcome manipulation

"The University of Kent **won [lost]** the competition [The whole **procedure was repeated]"**

B5. Study 7

Behavior manipulation

Imagine that you are doing an important group presentation in the company where you work and your department is required to present the data related to customers' satisfaction with the services provided by your department. Everyone in your department had been working intensively on this presentation for weeks. The results of the data were inconclusive and the Head of the Department (manager) was given the job of speaking for the team in that presentation. The manager stood up for the presentation and **intentionally represented the data accurately to show its inconclusive nature [inaccurately to hide its inconclusive nature]**.

Outcome manipulation

As a consequence of the manager's behavior, the whole department **received [did not receive] a salary bonus** [the salary bonus of the whole department **is being reviewed**].