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Do We Want a Fighter? The Influence of Group Status and the Stability of Intergroup
Relations on Leader Prototypicality and Endorsement

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Abstract

Based on the idea that leadership is a group process, we propose that followers' endorsement of a leader depends on particular leadership strategies being perceived to be best suited for maintaining or advancing group identity in the context of prevailing intergroup relations.

Three experimental studies with different samples aimed to examine how socio-structural variables that define intergroup relations impact on leader–follower relations and on the support that followers give to leaders who adopt different approaches to manage intergroup relations. We demonstrate that after manipulating status and the stability of intergroup relations followers endorse leaders who strategically engage in group-oriented behaviour that maps onto optimal identity-management strategies. These patterns mirrored differences across contexts in the perceived prototypicality. We conclude that intergroup relations influence leaders' strategic behaviour and followers' reaction to them. Findings highlight the importance of understanding leadership as both a within- and between-group process.

Word count: 173

Keywords: leadership support, identity, prototypicality, intergroup relations

Do We Want a Fighter? The Influence of Group Status and the Stability of Intergroup Relations on Leader Prototypicality and Endorsement

“I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation.”

— *Malcolm X*

“A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.”

— *Martin Luther King Jr.*

In the above quotations two influential leaders present very different models for advancing intergroup relations in the context of attempts to promote equality in 1960s USA. On the one hand, Malcolm X advocates a conflictual strategy but, on the other, Martin Luther King Jr. argues for conciliation. In their different ways, each leader was also highly successful and admired. The question that this raises relates to the conditions under which these different models of leadership win support. More specifically, when and why do we endorse a leader who champions conflict over one who champions consensus?

The present article sees leadership and the endorsement of specific leaders as an emergent property of both intra- and intergroup relations and thus moves beyond an individualistic perception of the leader as inherently transformational (e.g., Bass, 1996) or charismatic (e.g., Conger & Kanungo, 1998). It also challenges the view that some leaders simply have an inherent ability to influence followers and motivate them to participate in social change.

In particular, we argue that leaders need to adjust their strategies towards relevant outgroups as a function of the particular circumstances that they and their ingroup confront. In line with this suggestion, early research by Rabbie and Bekkers (1978) found that leaders

who felt threatened in their position were more likely to engage in intergroup competition than those who were not threatened since the former strategy helped them secure support from ingroup members. Similarly, research informed by the biosocial contingency model of leadership (van Vugt & Spisak, 2008; Spisak, Nicholson, & van Vugt, 2011) suggests that different leadership prototypes emerge in cooperative as opposed to competitive intergroup situations. Going further, we argue that depending on the nature of intergroup relations, leaders will generally seek to advance competitive (or collaborative) strategies to attain the best possible outcome for their own group and hence for their leadership.

However, the ultimate proof of leadership is the impact that it has on followers (e.g., Bennis, 1999; Haslam, Reicher & Platow, 2011; Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins, 2005). Accordingly, the present article looks at whether the particular strategies that a leader adopts are perceived to be effective by fellow group members. Our core argument, which builds upon previous intergroup leadership research, is that followers' endorsement of a leader who adopts a particular strategy towards an outgroup — specifically a strategy of competition — will vary as a function of the context of intergroup relations. In this way, effective leadership is understood as involving a complex interplay between specific leadership strategies, prevailing intergroup relations, and follower reactions.

The point of departure for our analysis is an understanding that leadership is a group process (Ellemers, DeGilder & Haslam, 2004; Hogg, 2001; Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003; Turner & Haslam, 2001; Pittinsky, 2009, 2010; see also Alderfer, 1987) and that it is the shared social identity in groups that makes both leadership and followership possible (Haslam & Platow, 2001; Haslam et al., 2011). Based on assumptions from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987) it is suggested that leaders play a key role in developing this shared and consensual identity (Reicher et al., 2005). However, the social realities in which the leader

and followers are embedded are continually renegotiated owing to the fluidity of social relations (Barton & Hamilton, 2005). Thus, social context influences how social identity is perceived and maintained. Consequently, leaders need to consider how to manage social identity when deciding what kind of leadership strategies might be best suited for the group. Followers, by the same token, will be sensitive to these same strategies when deciding whether or not to support a leader in a given intergroup context.

More precisely, we argue that followers' endorsement of a leader is dependent on the extent to which particular leadership strategies are perceived to be best suited for maintaining or advancing group identity in the context of the intergroup relations at hand. In particular, following social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; see also Ellemers, 1993; Ellemers & Haslam, 2011), we expect that socio-structural variables such as group status, together with stability and legitimacy of intergroup relations, will all have a bearing on followers' support for different leadership strategies. More specifically, in the present work we focus on the way in which status, stability, and legitimacy influence followers' endorsement of leaders who pursue intergroup strategies of either competition or cooperation.

The focus on status reflects the fact that within the social identity approach, the relationship between groups is typically discussed in terms of this variable rather than dominance or power. Status is linked to identification processes (Ellemers, 1993) and reflects the social value or worth that others ascribe to a group vis-à-vis another group. Often, status and power (or dominance) are confounded such that groups of higher status tend to be more powerful or dominant. Yet power and status can be distinguished in so far as status is more a property that arises in relation to others (e.g., outgroups) whereas power is a property of the actor that is less reliant on the evaluation of others (Blader & Chen, 2012). In the context of the present work status therefore relates to a comparison between two (or more) groups and status relations are defined by an unequal division of resources — such as political power,

prestige or esteem — in this context (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Leadership and managing identities

The study of group dynamics and intergroup relations, including aspects of leadership, has relatively long tradition in organizational research (Alderfer, 1977; Bass, 2008). For example, Alderfer (1987) describes several characteristics of intergroup research that are pertinent to organizational life. He also notes that the behaviour of a group's leader reflects permeability, power differences and the cognitive formation of an ingroup in relation to an outgroup, noting that leadership can be understood as both cause and effect of the total pattern of intergroup relations within a specific situation (Alderfer, 1987; see also Reicher et al., 2005).

Yet despite the fact that (inter-)group processes are clearly important for organizational behaviour, empirical leadership research has tended largely to overlook questions of intergroup relations and group identities (Steffens, et al., 2014; Dinh et al., 2014), a lacuna that this paper aims to fill. As 'entrepreneurs of identity' (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Reicher et al., 2005) much of leaders' success depends on their ability to define who 'we' are in relation to 'them'. However, social identity is responsive, in both form and content, to the intergroup dimensions of the prevailing comparative context (Doosje, Haslam, Spears, Oakes, & Koomen, 1998; Hogg, Terry & White, 1995; Turner, 1985). Hence, if much of the group's identity depends on the way in which the ingroup ('us') is perceived in relation to other groups ('them'), then much of what constitutes good leadership should also depend on the specifics of the intergroup context that defines both ingroup and outgroup.

In this regard, one of social identity theory's (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) core claims is that when people define themselves in terms of a particular group membership, they are motivated to establish a social identity that is positive and distinct relative to that of other social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). That is, when their behaviour is defined by social

identity, people want ‘us’ to be different to, and better than, ‘them’. Positive social identity of this form can be achieved through favourable intergroup comparisons in which the ingroup is perceived to be of higher status than a relevant outgroup.

Clearly, though, in many contexts, opportunities for such comparisons are limited—most particularly, when one’s ingroup has low status relative to comparison outgroups (Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010). Accordingly, in these situations, the path to positive social identity will be more problematic. Depending on the specific nature of these circumstances, social identity theory proposes that group members will engage in different *identity management strategies* in order to try to regain a positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; see also Bettencourt, Dorr, Charlton, & Hume, 2001; Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, & Klink, 1998; Ellemers, 1993; Haslam & Ellemers, 2005; Mummendey, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel, & Blanz, 1998). Amongst other things, it suggests that if members of low-status groups believe that group boundaries are impermeable (so that they cannot pursue a strategy of *individual mobility*) and that social relations are secure (in the sense of being stable and legitimate) they will tend to pursue a strategy of *social creativity* whereby they strive to improve the group’s standing without challenging higher-status outgroups. On the other hand, if relations are seen to be impermeable but insecure (i.e., unstable and/or illegitimate), then they are more likely to engage in *social competition* with outgroups with a view to achieving social change (Ellemers, Wilke, & van Knippenberg, 1993; Reicher & Haslam, 2006).

In contrast, high-status group members who perceive intergroup relations to be impermeable and stable are more likely to be competitive in their approach to intergroup relations. In this case, the high-status group will be more likely than the low-status group to favour a competitive strategy with a view to maintaining their strong position in a context where they have little fear of losing their standing (Ng, 1980, 1982). In contrast, when status

relations are perceived to be *unstable*, the group's advantage is under threat and here a less competitive, more collaborative identity management strategy will tend to be more functional because it avoids attracting the attention of low-status groups to the possibility of status change (Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2006). This strategy is also similar to one that Dovidio and colleagues refer to as 'unhealthy cooperation', which serves to deny or ignore differences (Dovidio, Saguy, & Schnabel, 2009, p.439). Under these conditions, a less competitive strategy allows the high-status group to maintain their identity without provoking the outgroup (Livingstone, Sweetman, Bratch & Haslam, 2015).

Generally, then, it can be seen that group status and the stability of intergroup relations are predicted to have an important bearing on the kind of identity management strategies that will be seen as the most appropriate means of improving or maintaining a positive ingroup identity in a given context. Consequently, if leadership hinges on a leader's capacity to represent shared social identity (e.g., as argued by Haslam et al., 2011; Hogg, 2001; Turner & Haslam, 2001), then leaders should have a particularly important role to play in advancing particular identity management strategies with a view to affirming their own leadership and meeting the needs and aspirations of their followers. Indeed, this observation is consistent with observations in Sherif's (1966) classic Boys' Camp studies where groups were observed to opt for more confrontational leaders as the context of intergroup relations became more unstable following the increased intergroup hostility that was associated with competition for scarce resources (see Platow & Hunter, 2012).

The present studies

The present study addresses an important aspect of identity leadership in focusing on followers' sensitivity to the identity work of leaders in specific intergroup settings. In line with the foregoing analysis, we test the general proposition that group status and the perceived stability of intergroup relations will partly determine the leadership strategies that

appear to be best suited to the goal of promoting shared social identity (H1). More precisely, we expect that competitive leaders will receive stronger support from members of a high-status group when intergroup relations are perceived to be stable rather than unstable (H1a), and from members of a low-status group when relations are perceived to be unstable rather than stable (H1b).

Study 1

Political parties are prime examples of social groups whose manoeuvrings can be analysed through the lens of a social identity approach (e.g., see Haslam et al., 2011; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996; 2001). In particular, this is because they are routinely in competition with particular outgroups (their political opponents). Accordingly, in order to ensure the support and followership of ingroup members, leaders need to adopt identity-management strategies that followers perceive to be appropriate to the context at hand. Consistent with this idea, evidence suggests that party members are sensitive to the words and actions of political leaders but that the nature of their response to these varies as a function of the social identities that are salient in a given situation (Huddy, 2013).

Accordingly, our first study focuses on a political leadership scenario, as this allowed us to test our hypotheses in a controlled yet realistic context. Participants comprised a sample of British university students who indicated that they were affiliated to a specific political party (the Conservative Party). We asked these politically active students to consider a candidate for the following year's society presidential position. We used a fictitious leader scenario to manipulate the leader's characteristics and behaviour as well as features of the prevailing political context. Specifically, participants read that the Conservatives had either high or low levels of support on campus (status manipulation), that this was likely or unlikely to change (stability manipulation), and that we were interested in how they responded to a leader who advanced a strategy of intergroup conflict in each of these situations. Our general

prediction was that support for a competitive or cooperative leader would vary as a function of ingroup status and the stability of intergroup relations (H1). More particularly, we expected that when the group had high status participants would support a competitive (cooperative) leader more (less) if relations were stable rather than unstable (H1a), but that when the group had low status they would support a competitive (cooperative) leader more (less) if relations were unstable rather than stable (H1b).

Method

Participants

Participants were fifty-five undergraduate members (27 males, 28 female) of the Conservative Future (the Youth Organization of the Conservative Party) society at a British University, aged between 18 and 22 ($M=19.82$; $SD= 2.67$). They were enrolled in a variety of courses at the University and participated in exchange for chocolate.

Design

The study had a 2 (group *status*: high vs. low) X 2 (*stability* of intergroup relations: stable vs. unstable) X 2 (competitive vs. cooperative leader) mixed-design, where the first two factors were manipulated between-group. The key dependent variable in which we were interested was support for a leader who advocated a strategy of conflict or cooperation.

Procedure, Materials and Measures

Independent variables were manipulated via a written scenario, which described the current standing of political societies at the University. Participants read a fictional article from the University newspaper, which implied that either the ingroup (high-status condition) or the outgroup (Labour; low-status condition) had most support from students on campus (see Appendix 1 for full description).

It concluded with a statement suggesting that the status structure was either both stable and unlikely to change in the near future or unstable and likely to change. Participants

then read the candidate proposals for the following year's society presidential position in which a candidate presented a competitive strategy. We also included a corresponding statement for a collaborative leader.

After this, participants completed a questionnaire that assessed *support for candidate* by means of three items on a 7-point Likert scale ("I agree with Candidate A/B"; "Candidate A/B is the right person to lead the campaign"; "I identify with Candidate A/B and what they have to say"). These formed a reliable scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$). We also included four items measuring party identification (e.g., "I see myself as a CF member", "I have strong ties to fellow CF members", Doosje, Ellemers & Spears, 1995; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$). Having completed this, participants were asked for basic demographic information, thanked, and debriefed.

Results

Our main hypothesis was tested by means of a 2 (status: high vs. low) X 2 (stability: stable vs. unstable) x 2 (leader: competitive vs. cooperative) repeated-measures ANOVA. Whereas the main effects for status and stability were not significant, $F(1, 51) = 2.2, p > .12$, the main effect for leadership style was, $F(1, 51) = 19.98, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .28$, indicating that participants favoured the cooperative leader ($M=5.03, SD=1.47$) over the conflictual leader ($M=3.48, SD=1.34$). However, this effect was qualified by the expected interaction between status, stability and type of leader, $F(1, 51) = 7.03, p = .01, \eta^2_p = .12$.¹

We then looked at the competitive and cooperative leader separately. For the competitive leader we found neither a main effect for status, ($F(1, 51) = 2.95, p = .09, \eta^2_p = .05^2, r = .34$) nor a main effect for stability, $F(1, 51) = 3.73, p = .06, \eta^2_p = .07$. However, the expected interaction between status and stability was significant, $F(1, 51) = 7.64, p = .008, \eta^2_p = .13, r = .36$. Participants in the high-status condition supported the competitive leader more when intergroup relations were stable ($M=4.03, SD=1.54$) rather than unstable ($M=3.64,$

$SD=1.71$). However, this difference was non-significant, $M\Delta=-.38$, 95% CI [-1.42, .66] and the effect size was small ($d = .24$; Cohen, 1988). In contrast, in the low-status condition support for a competitive leader was significantly greater when intergroup relations were unstable ($M=3.95$, $SD=1.10$) rather than stable ($M=2.03$, $SD=0.67$; $M\Delta=1.64$, 95% CI [.96, 2.31]). This pattern supports H1b and the effect size here was large ($d = 1.80$).

Results for the cooperative leader mirrored the results for the competitive leader as here too a two-way ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between status and stability $F(1, 51) = 5.21$, $p = .027$, $\eta^2_p = .09$, $r=.30$. However, again, neither the main effect for status ($F(1, 51) = .17$, $p = .67$, $\eta^2_p = .003$) nor for stability ($F(1, 51) = 1.47$, $p = .23$, $\eta^2_p = .03$) were significant. Akin to results for the competitive leader, participants in the high-status condition supported the cooperative leader more ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.35$) when intergroup relations were unstable compared to stable ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 1.61$); although this difference was not significant, $M\Delta = -.38$, 95% CI [-.63, .139] and the effect size was small ($d = .25$). Participants in the low-status condition supported the cooperative leader more when intergroup relations were stable ($M = 5.71$, $SD = .60$) rather than unstable ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.43$, $M\Delta = -1.24$, 95% CI [-2.23-2.24]). This pattern supports H1b and the effect size here was large ($d = 1.13$).

As pointed out earlier, all participants were members of the Conservative Future and identification with the party was relatively high, $M = 5.09$, $SD = 1.27$; however, identification did not vary across conditions, all F 's $< .37$, $p > .54$ and was unrelated to support for the competitive ($r(55) = .19$, $p = .15$) and cooperative ($r(55) = -.19$, $p = .16$) leader.

Discussion

Consistent with our main hypothesis (H1), this study suggests that support for a leader who advocated a strategy of intergroup competition or cooperation varied significantly as an interactive function of the status of the ingroup and the perceived stability of intergroup

relations. As proponents of social identity theory have argued, an unstable status structure implies that there is possibility for movement of groups within the status hierarchy, and this prospect has different implications for high or low-status groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; see also Ellemers, 1993; Harth, Kessler, & Leach, 2008; Reicher & Haslam, 2006). Specifically, while the prospect of change is likely to make low-status groups keener to engage in conflict in order to bring that change about, it is likely to make high-status groups more willing to pursue a cooperative strategy that obviates the perceived need for change (Dovidio et al., 2009; Livingstone et al., 2015; Ng, 1980, 1982). Consistent with this theorizing, in the present study members of a low-status group showed more support for a competitive leader under conditions of instability and more support for a cooperative leader when status relations were stable (H1b). Nevertheless, the interaction effect was driven mainly by a relatively large difference in endorsement of a competitive leader across stable and unstable conditions, whereas endorsement for a cooperative leader did not differ much across conditions and was generally higher than for a conflictual leader. This suggests that competition only emerged as a viable strategy for the low-status group — and that its members only selected a competitive leader who would pursue this strategy — when there was potential for social change,.

There was also some evidence of the opposite pattern in the leader endorsements of members of the high-status group (consistent with H1a) but these effects were small. In summary, then, although we find overall support for H1, the effects of status and stability on leadership endorsement were more pronounced for participants in the low-status condition (H1b) than for those in the high-status condition (H1a). Although not predicted, it is possible that this pattern of support for our hypotheses reflects a meaningful difference, such that sensitivity to intergroup relations and their consequences is more pronounced for members of low-status groups when choosing a leader than it is for their high-status counterparts —

because membership in a low-status group represents a particularly potent identity threat that group members are highly motivated to resolve (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). Indeed, this is one reason why most of the research that has been inspired by social identity theory has focused on low-status rather than high-status groups (Haslam, 2004). Nevertheless, we were keen to conduct further studies with a different sample and in a different leadership domain, in order to see whether these reproduced the same pattern of asymmetrical support for our hypotheses. With this in mind, the following two studies examined the same hypotheses in different settings.

Study 2

As mentioned earlier, within SIT it is assumed that group members' choice of identity management strategies across different social contexts is shaped by their beliefs about characteristics of the prevailing intergroup situation (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; Ellemers, 1993). Our main hypothesis was again that ingroup status and the perceived stability of the intergroup status structure would have an interactive effect on participants' support for a given leader (H1). In the previous study we demonstrated that the effects of stability on leadership support vary across high- and low-status groups. However, the extent to which group members consider their (low) status to be legitimate or illegitimate should determine whether they are motivated to undertake any attempts to change the status quo at all.

More precisely, social identity theory argues that for low-status groups, perceptions of illegitimacy combine with perceived status instability to predict competition by opening up prospects for cognitive alternatives to the status-quo, thus making intergroup equality or status enhancement more likely (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; see also Reicher & Haslam, 2012). This possibly increases attempts to enhance the ingroup's status position and hence makes it likely that they support a competitive leader (e.g., Bettencourt et al., 2001; Mummendey et

al., 1999; Siem, von Oettingen, Mummendey, & Nadler, 2013). In this second study we thus also sought to examine the effect of status legitimacy. Our general hypothesis is that illegitimate status differences will make low-status group members more likely than high-status group members to endorse a competitive leader (H2) — particularly if status differences are also unstable (see also Turner & Brown, 1978). More specifically, for the *low-status group*, the competitive leader should be endorsed more (and a cooperative leader less) under illegitimate status conditions than under conditions where group relations are legitimate (H2a). On the other hand, for the high-status group, illegitimate status differences should tend to signal an unjust advantage of the ingroup over the outgroup. This in turn may result in more support for conciliatory policies that increase equality and reflect an increased need to be accepted by the outgroup (Iyer & Leach, 2010; Siem et al., 2013).

Yet Turner and Brown (1978) have hypothesised that when status differences are legitimate this will tend to increase the desire for competition (especially if relations are also unstable; see also Bettencourt, et al., 2001). Taken together, from this we might expect that followers from the *high-status group* would be more likely to endorse a competitive leader (and less likely to endorse a cooperative leader) in legitimate status conditions than in those where relations are illegitimate (H2b).

To test these hypotheses, the study used a similar procedure to Study 1 and was again conducted with university students who were asked to indicate their support for a student leader.

Method

Participants

A total of 152 students from a variety of departments at a British university (different to the institution from which participants from Study 1 were recruited) participated in this study. The sample consisted of 104 women and 48 men, who were either undergraduate ($n =$

27), postgraduate ($n = 113$) or PhD ($n = 12$) students. Participants' age ranged between 18 and 47 years, with a mean of 25 years ($M = 24.98$, $SD = 4.68$).

Design

The experiment had a 2 (high vs. low status) \times 2 (stable vs. unstable) \times 2 (legitimate vs. illegitimate) between-subjects design. All participants were randomly assigned to receive one of the eight possible version of the questionnaire, which constituted the eight different experimental conditions. There were the same number of respondents in each condition ($n = 19$).

Procedure, Materials and Measures

Independent variables were manipulated via written scenarios. Participants were randomly assigned to read a scenario that formed one of the eight experimental conditions. In these, every participant was presented with one of eight different texts about a university ranking that represented the ingroup either as rated higher (*high-status condition*) or lower (*low-status condition*) in status than a competitor. This ranking was manipulated by presenting either The Guardian university rankings (*The Guardian*, 2012) in which the university ranked higher than the competitor (high-status manipulation) or the Times World University Ranking (*Times Higher Education*, 2012) in which the university was ranked lower (low-status manipulation). Moreover, in each case the ranking was said to be considered by experts to be either justified by the university's performance (*legitimate condition*) or unjustified (*illegitimate condition*). As in Study 1, the scenario concluded with the situation being presented as either likely to change (*unstable condition*) or unlikely to change (*stable condition*) in the near future. The full scenario is presented in Appendix 2.

This information was followed by a fictitious scenario about the university's Academic Registrar Division, which was said to be looking for a campaign leader who would be in charge of recruiting prospective students at events across the country. Participants were

told that they could endorse a preselected candidate, who was briefly introduced. The candidate expressed a desire to pursue a competitive strategy towards competitor universities (as indicated by statements like “I will develop an aggressive strategy to promote [IG]’s interests and present it at its best by outlining [IG]’s advantages in comparison with other universities.”). As before, we also included a statement from a leader who wanted to pursue a more collaborative strategy (as indicated by statements like “I believe that cooperating with our close competitors such as Imperial College London is essential”).

As in Study 1, the key dependent variable was *support for the leader* which was measured with two items on a 7-point Likert scale (“I agree with Candidate A/B”; “Candidate A/B is the right person to lead the campaign”; $r(152) = 0.73$). We also included a measure of identification with the university (Doosje, Ellemers & Spears, 1995).

Results

The overall effect of the social structural variables on leadership support was tested by means of a 2 (status: high vs. low) \times 2 (stability: stable vs. unstable) \times 2 (legitimacy: legitimate vs. illegitimate) \times 2 (leader: conflictual vs. cooperative) ANOVA. We controlled for gender, age, degree, and subject, none of which were associated with significant differences and were subsequently dropped from the analysis

The four-way interaction was not significant ($F(1, 140) = .935, p = .33, \eta^2_p = .006, r = .07$) but the three-way interaction between status and stability and type of leader was significant, $F(1, 140) = 4.77, p = .039, \eta^2_p = .03, r = .17$. No other interactions or main effects were significant (all F s < 2.5 , all p s $> .21$).

We then looked at the competitive and cooperative leader separately. For the competitive leader we found the expected interaction between status and stability, $F(1, 140) = 7.64, p = .008, \eta^2_p = .13, r = .36$; no other effects were significant (all F ’s $< 2, p > .13$). Follow-up analysis of simple effects showed that, as in Study 1, for participants in the high-status

group there was a small difference in their support for a competitive leader as a function of whether status relations were perceived as stable ($M=3.14$, $SD=1.64$) or unstable ($M=2.96$, $SD=1.76$; $M\Delta=.18$, 95% CI [-0.53, 0.93], $d=.10$). However, also mirroring patterns observed in Study 1, participants in the low-status condition preferred the competitive leader when status relations were unstable ($M=3.95$, $SD=1.61$) rather than stable ($M=3.20$, $SD=1.42$; $M\Delta=.75$, 95% CI [-1.51, -0.02]). This difference had a moderate effect size ($d=.49$) and again supports H1b.

For the cooperative leader we found the expected interaction between status and stability, $F(1, 140) = 4.10$, $p = .045$, $\eta^2_p = .02$, $r = .14$. However, the three-way interaction between status, stability, and legitimacy was also significant, $F(1, 140) = 4.69$, $p = .032$, $\eta^2_p = .03$, $r = .17$. To probe this further, we compared the high- and low-status group. For the low-status group there was a main effect for stability such that participants supported the cooperative leader more when intergroup relations were stable ($M=3.94$, $SD=1.42$) rather than unstable ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.60$, $M\Delta = -.73$, 95% CI [-0.17; 1.49]). This supports H1b and the effect was of medium size ($d=.48$). However, for high-status group there was a significant main effect for legitimacy only (all other effects $F_s < .80$, $p_s > .38$). Participants in the high-status condition supported a cooperative leader more when legitimacy of their status position was high ($M=4.31$, $SD=1.42$) rather than low ($M=3.55$, $SD=.1.42$, $M\Delta=-.76$, 95% CI [-1.55; 0.24]). This effect was of medium size ($d=.45$) but it is important to bear in mind that the overall effect of legitimacy was not significant.

Participants' identification with the university did not vary across conditions, all F 's < 2 , $p > .15$, $M=4.30$, $SD=1.23$. However, across the study as a whole, this was related to support for the competitive leader ($r(144)=.25$, $p=.002$) but not for the cooperative leader ($r(144)=-.07$, $p=.36$).

Discussion

Consistent with our main hypothesis (H1) and results from Study 1, this second study suggests that support for a competitive leader varied as an interactive function of ingroup status and the perceived stability of this status. As in the previous study, the effect was stronger for the low-status group than the high-status group. This supports our previous observation that — when it comes to pursuing strategies of conflict or conciliation and, more specifically, when leaders promote these strategies — members of low-status groups may be more sensitive to variation in the stability of status differences than members of high-status groups. This in turn may reflect the fact that the meaning of particular social structural configurations is clearer for members of low-status groups (Dovidio et al., 2009; Haslam, 2004; Livingstone et al., 2012; Ng, 1980, 1982).

In addition, we found some evidence for corresponding effects in responses to the cooperative leader. Consistent with our earlier theorizing and results from Study 1, members of a low-status group showed more support for cooperative leader when status perceptions were stable rather than unstable (H1b). However, over and above the effects of status and stability, it appears that members of the high-status group were more likely to support a cooperative leader when status relations were understood to be legitimate. This was unexpected, but it accords with Turner and Brown's (1978) suggestion that high-status groups are less likely to be confrontational where their status is perceived to be warrant or legitimate.

More generally, we had expected legitimacy to have a moderating impact on the effects of status and instability (Tajfel, 1978). However, there was little support for this hypothesis in so far as the legitimacy of status relations had no impact on students' choice of the leader overall. This may reflect the fact that perceptions of stability and legitimacy are closely related. In particular, Tajfel (1978) noted that “an unstable system of social divisions

between groups is more likely to be perceived as illegitimate than a stable one; and [...] a stable perceived as illegitimate will contain the seeds of instability” (p. 320). Thus, for the high-status group, stable status differences might signal legitimacy. Moreover, Ellemers (1993) noted that for low-status groups unstable status differences are often a precursor to perceptions of illegitimacy. In line with this point, Verkuyten and Reijerse (2008) found that in a community sample of Turkish-Dutch participants, stability and legitimacy variables were highly and positively correlated (see also Mummendey et al., 1999). Accordingly, the inherent interdependence of status, stability and legitimacy might make it difficult to detect any consistent effects of legitimacy over-and-above those of stability and status.

In sum, the findings from our first two experiments corroborate our main hypothesis that group status and the perceived stability of intergroup relations interact to determine support for a leader who wants to fight the outgroup rather than make peace with it (H1). This is especially true for support of a competitive leader for which we find consistent results. One limitation of the studies, however, is that both relied upon student samples. To address this, in our third study we recruited participants from a working population.

Study 3

This third study sought to test our main hypothesis (H1) using a sample comprised of participants from a business environment. Additionally, we sought to expand upon previous work by considering whether, alongside leader endorsement, leaders’ perceived prototypicality is affected by socio-structural variables. This is important because social identity research on leadership has followed Turner (1991) in arguing that the capacity of an individual to represent a category is predictive of their capacity to exert influence over other group members (Turner & Haslam, 2001; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003).

Leader prototypicality refers to the extent to which followers perceive a leader to be ‘one of us’ — thereby representing what group members have in common, and importantly,

what differentiates the ingroup from other salient outgroups (Steffens et al., 2014; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Importantly, being partly determined by meta-contrast (the extent to which a given individual is less different from other ingroup members than from members of a salient outgroup; Turner, 1985), prototypicality is a function of how ‘we’ relate to ‘them’. Moreover, as the nature of ‘them’ changes, so too does the ingroup prototype and the degree to which particular individuals are prototypical of the group (see Haslam et al., 2011, Turner & Haslam, 2001, for demonstrations). This in turn is predicted to affect the degree to which leaders are perceived to be appropriate and effective and hence likely to garner support (Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; Ullrich, Christ, & van Dick, 2009).

It follows from these arguments that leaders’ strategic engagement in group-oriented behaviour (e.g., adopting a cooperative or a competitive strategy towards an outgroup), should serve to define their prototypicality and thereby feed into followers’ perceptions of their effectiveness as well as their willingness to support the leader (Reicher et al., 2011; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). In addition to H1 from Study 1 and 2, we therefore predict that prototypicality will vary systematically as a function of ingroup status and the perceived stability of the status structure (H3). More precisely, we predict that for members of a low-status group a competitive leader will be perceived as more prototypical when intergroup relations are unstable rather than stable (H3a); but that for members of a high-status group a competitive leader will be perceived as more prototypical when intergroup relations are stable rather than unstable (H3b).

Furthermore, in the literature on social identity and leadership it is argued that followers’ support for a given leader depends partly on their perceptions of that leader’s prototypicality (Platow, Hoar, Reid, Harley, & Morrison, 1997; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001). In that sense, followers are predicted to show stronger endorsement of a leader who is more group prototypical (Giessner & van Knippenberg, 2008; van Knippenberg & Hogg,

2003). Accordingly, we predict that prototypicality will mediate the relationship between social structural variables and effectiveness (H4). However, for ease of interpretation, and because previous results were consistent for the competitive leader, in this study we focus only on reactions to a competitive leader.

Method

Participants

We recruited participants who were employees of an electronic retailer ($N = 77$) in three stores in Britain ($n_1 = 23$; $n_2 = 26$, and $n_3 = 28$). Participants were 57 males and 20 females aged between 16-57 ($M = 27.21$, $SD = 9.22$). They had different levels of seniority as either entry-level employees ($n=50$), specialists ($n=10$), experts ($n=10$), or department heads ($n=7$). Fifty-three participants in the sample categorized themselves as White-British (70%), 16 as Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi), 3 as Black, and 2 as of mixed ethnicity.

Participants were recruited via opportunity sampling and given chocolate in exchange for participation. Participants within each shop were randomly assigned to each experimental condition.

Design

The study used a 2 (*status*: high vs low) X 2 (*stability*: stable vs unstable) between-subjects design. The dependent variables were: (a) support for the leader and (b) perceived leader prototypicality.

Procedure, Materials and Measures

The independent variables were manipulated via a written scenario informing participants that they were employees of Primatch PLC (see Appendix 3). Participants were randomly assigned to read a scenario that formed one of the four experimental conditions. In these, Primatch was described either a market leader (high-status) or as a competitor (low-status) of Gadgetron PLC. This was based on data about fictitious net value, number of

employees, and number of stores (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). Along the lines of previous studies, the scenario concluded with a statement from an economist suggesting that Primatech's status was either likely to change (low stability) or unlikely to change (high stability) in the near future. Participants were then told that the current CEO had stepped down and that they were being polled in order to ascertain their views about a new appointment. This was followed immediately by the description of the potential leader (Candidate A) who argued for a competitive strategy in relation to the competitor. As before, we also included a statement from a prospective leader who sought to pursue a rather collaborative strategy. However, we made the a priori decision to address our research question by focusing only on reactions to the former leader.

After reading the scenario, participants answered a questionnaire that included the following outcome variables. *Support for candidate* was measured with three items as in Study 1 ("I agree with Candidate A"; "Candidate A/B is the right person to lead A"; "I identify with Candidate A and what they have to say", Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$). *Prototypicality* was measured with three items (see Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; Ullrich, Christ & van Dick, 2009; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$; "Candidate A represents the views of Primatech PLC employees.", "Candidate A represents what is characteristic about Primatech PLC.", "Candidate A represents what the employees of Primatech PLC have in common."). We also included measures of ingroup identification (Waldzus et al, 2004) and Emotional Competence Inventory (Goleman, 1998), but these were not subjected to analysis.

Results

A 2 (status: high vs. low) X 2 (stability: stable vs. unstable) between-subjects MANCOVA was conducted to examine support for the leader and that leader's perceived prototypicality. Because this study was conducted in a setting with considerable variation in

demographic variables we included store affiliation, position, age, gender and ethnicity as covariates.

Analysis revealed a significant interaction between status and stability, $F(1,67) = 4.003$, $p = .049$, $\eta^2_p = .11$, $r = .33$, consistent with H1. None of the main effects were significant, $F's < 2.29$, $p > .10$. However, store affiliation was a significant covariate $F(2, 66) = 10.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .25$, $r = .50$; such that in one shop endorsement ratings were lower than the other two shops. Beyond this, though, there was no systematic difference between conditions and no other covariates had a significant effect.

Support. Univariate analysis showed that status of the ingroup and the perceived stability of the status structure had an interactive effect on whether participants supported a competitive leader; $F(1, 67) = 4.00$, $p = .049$, $\eta^2_p = .06$, $r = .24^3$. None of the main effects were significant, both $F's < .1$, $p's > .32$. Consistent with H1a, pairwise comparison showed that in the high-status condition participants supported a competitive leader more when intergroup relations were stable ($M = 4.79$, $SD = 1.70$) rather than unstable ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.78$; $M\Delta = .95$, 95% CI [1.98, .07]). This effect was medium in size ($d = .55$). In line with H1b, participants in the low-status condition supported a competitive leader more under unstable intergroup relations ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 1.64$) than under stable conditions ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.70$; $M\Delta = .49$, 95% CI [-.49, 1.49]) but this effect was small ($d = .29$).

Prototypicality. A very similar pattern of results emerged for perceived leader prototypicality. Univariate analysis indicated that the status of the ingroup and the perceived stability of the status structure had an interactive effect on whether participants perceived the competitive leader as prototypical; $F(1, 67) = 8.08$, $p = .006$, $\eta^2_p = .11$, $r = .33$. Again, there were no main effects (both $F's < .1$, $p's > .28$). Consistent with H3a, participants in the high-status condition perceived the competitive leader to be more prototypical ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.39$) when intergroup relations were stable rather than unstable ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.40$; $M\Delta = 1.09$, 95%

CI [.25, 1.93], $d=.78$). In line with H3b, participants in the low-status condition perceived the competitive leader to be more prototypical when intergroup relations were unstable ($M=4.64$, $SD=1.33$) rather than stable ($M=4.04$, $SD=1.34$), but again this difference was relatively small, $M\Delta=.60$, 95% CI [-.21, 1.40], $d=.44$).

Mediated moderation. As in the two previous studies, the above results indicated that followers' support for a competitive leader depends on perceptions of group status and the stability of intergroup relations. Importantly, the results also showed that these same factors had an impact on perceptions of leader prototypicality. This allowed us to conduct a further test to ascertain whether the interactive effect of status and stability on support could be attributed to underlying perceptions of leader prototypicality. This was a possibility that we explored using a strategy of mediated moderation (following procedures outlined by Muller, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2005). However, before conducting this analysis, we tested whether our model could be biased because the mediator and the dependent variable might be endogenous (i.e., there might be unobserved causes of the mediator that are correlated with unobserved causes of the dependent variable).

To avoid a threat to validity due to model misspecifications, we follow Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart and Lalive (2010) and compare an OLS mediation estimator with an instrumental-variable estimator such as two-stage least-squares (TSLS) regression analysis. The analysis revealed that neither the overidentification test (Basmann $\chi^2=.571$, $p=.75$) nor the Hausman endogeneity test $F(1,77)=.867$, $p=.35$, were significant, which suggests that the models are unbiased and that the mediator is not endogenous allowing us to use a OLS for running the predicted moderated mediation model. However, we also needed to establish the strength of our instruments in the first stage analysis of the TSLS. Unfortunately, because the F -statistic for the instrument — $F(3,76)=2.76$ — did not exceed the critical value of 9.08 (for 10% relative bias; see Stock & Yoko, 2005) we cannot reject the null hypothesis that our

instrument is weak. Accordingly, it was inappropriate to test an unbiased mediation model and we were therefore unable to explore support for Hypothesis 4.

Discussion

Study 3 largely replicated the results of Study 1 and Study 2. In particular, consistent with H1, we observed that endorsement of a leader who pursued a strategy of conflict with an outgroup varied interactively as a function of both ingroup status and the perceived stability of intergroup relations. However, this study extended previous findings in demonstrating that status and stability also have a bearing on perceptions of prototypicality. Consistent with H3, and mirroring support for H1, leaders' prototypicality varied such that a competitive leader was seen to be more prototypical for a high-status group when its relations with an outgroup was stable rather than unstable, whereas for a low-status group the leader was relatively more prototypical when relations were unstable rather than stable. Unfortunately, though, we were unable to test the hypothesized moderated mediation due to problems with biased estimates associated with the fact that our proposed mediator was measured and not manipulated (Bullock, Green, & Ha, 2010).

Nevertheless, the effects on prototypicality highlight an important theoretical point about the role of prototypicality in leadership. As several recent reviews (Bartel & Wiesenfeld, 2013; Hogg et al., 2012; van Knippenberg, 2011) have pointed out, leader prototypicality is not simply determined by maximal similarity to other group members. Instead, it is argued to relate to the ideal-type of what it means to be 'one of us' — a property that is predicted to vary depending on features of the context at hand (see also Steffens et al., 2014; Turner & Haslam, 2000). Importantly, this prediction is supported by the present findings where we see that prototypicality varies systematically (and in predicted ways) as a function of the socio-structural context presented in each of the different scenarios. This is theoretically significant because it supports claims that prototypicality is not a specific leader

trait but rather something that varies as a function of the context in which leadership is enacted.

Interestingly, though, while the present findings replicated support for our general hypothesis, in contrast to the results from Study 1 and 2 (where effects were stronger for the low-status group than for the high-status group, such that support for was stronger for H1b than H1a), the present effects were stronger for the high-status group than for the low-status group (i.e., providing stronger support for H1b than H1a). It is possible that this difference is attributable to differences in the study sample and domain (i.e., retail workers in a business context vs. students in a political context). Nevertheless, in order to establish the overall pattern of results relating to H1 across the three studies, we conducted a meta-analysis based on Cohen's d (Cumming, 2012). First we looked at the effects for the competitive leader. For the high-status group this revealed a consistent but small effect across the three studies, $d=.23$, CI: [-.09, .55]; for the low-status group it revealed a consistent and medium-sized effect across the three studies, $d=.77$, CI: [.06, 1.48]. This speaks to the fact that support for our main hypothesis is generally most clear in the case of low-status groups. For the cooperative leader we only have data from two studies. Combining the effect sizes for Study 1 and 2 for the low-status group endorsement of the cooperative leader, the analysis it revealed a consistent and medium-sized effect $d=.73$, CI: [.128, 1.33]. For the high-status group we could not calculate an overall effect size because in study 2, the effect for status and stability was further moderated by legitimacy.

General Discussion

The above studies aimed to explore the way in which socio-structural variables that define intergroup relations impact on leader–follower relations and, more specifically, the support that followers give to leaders who adopt different approaches to the management of intergroup relations. Extending the previous work by Rabbie and Bekker (1978) who found

that threatened leaders are prone to change their approach to outgroups, we observed that followers in turn are responsive to such changes in strategy. That is, followers endorsed leaders who engaged in a particular identity-management strategy (competition with an outgroup) in conditions where social identity theory predicts that this strategy will be the preferred means of advancing ingroup identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this way, it appears that leaders' approach to intergroup relations can be a form of strategic behaviour that is important both in promoting ingroup identity and in securing or maintaining their own leadership (van Kleef, Steinel, van Knippenberg, Hogg, & Svensson, 2007).

Additionally, our findings speak to the fact that members of high- and low-status groups have different motivations with regard to the status quo. More particularly, low-status groups are generally more motivated to change the social structure (Ellemers, 1993; Reicher & Haslam, 2006) and hence when status relations are unstable (rather than stable) they are particularly likely to plump for a competitive leader. In contrast, those in high-status groups tend to be motivated to support the status quo that provides them with a positive social identity, and hence instability should stimulate a desire to support strategies (and leaders) that are less conflictual (Dovidio et al., 2009; Livingstone et al., 2015; Haslam, 2004). However, we also observed that for the high-status group such effects were generally small. This would seem to suggest that these sensitivities are less pronounced (or less clear) in the case of high-status groups.

As pointed out earlier, our results are also generally stronger and more consistent for competitive than for cooperative leaders. The reasons for this are unclear. It seems possible, though, that they relates differences in implicit theories about leadership, as an activity that is inherently more competitive than cooperative — such that there is greater sensitivity to variation in a leader's competitiveness than in his or her competitiveness (Offermann,

Kennedy Jr., & Wirtz, 1994; van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008). Whether or not this is the case clearly needs to be explored in future research.

The present work is nevertheless consistent with general claims that leaders gain support through their ability to define and manage group identity (Haslam et al., 2011; Reicher et al., 2005; Steffens et al., 2014). By displaying group-oriented behaviour that is sensitive to the context in which the group finds itself, leaders come to be seen as the embodiment of the group (and its aspirations), and this has a positive impact on the level of support they receive. This speaks further to the fact that neither social identities nor leadership can be understood independently of the social realities of group life (Haslam et al., 2001; Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994; Turner, 1999). In this way, leadership should be seen as a multifaceted concept that has to take into account the properties of the person (leader), the group (followers), and the social context (intergroup relations, socio-political context) in which leadership plays out.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the present findings also highlight the importance of understanding leadership and leader–follower relations as processes that occur both within and across group and organizational boundaries (Alderfer, 1987; DeCremer & van Vugt, 2002; Hogg, van Knippenberg, & Rast III, 2012; Pittinsky & Simon, 2007). Importantly, the present research also reveals some of the boundary conditions of intergroup leadership that aims to achieve cooperation and collaboration between groups (Hogg et al., 2012; Pittinsky, 2010). Just as other research has shown that social-structural variables influence groups' willingness to cooperate, so too it appears that these same variables will have an impact on followers' support for leaders who pursue competitive strategies. This implies, in turn, that followers' understanding of the social context will have a major bearing on their willingness to support conflictual or co-operative leadership, and that this understanding will thereby constrain leaders' ability to pursue this strategy. Earlier research on intergroup relations and

leadership has focused on the fact that leaders exploit intergroup hostility or conflict to secure their position (Rabbie & Bekker, 1978). However, the present results also speak to the fact that if leaders seek to pursue a particular leadership strategy then they need to make the case for this by first persuading followers that intergroup relations have a particular form. For example, on the basis of the present data (and the theoretical analysis that it supports), it would appear that a leader of a low-status group who wants to make the case for competitive strategy with a given outgroup would do well to characterize relations with that outgroup as unstable (and liable to change in ways that are advantageous to the ingroup) rather than stable.

Importantly, too, we also demonstrated that whether or not particular strategies make sense to followers also depends on the perceived status of their ingroup. Whereas the research on intergroup leadership stresses the importance of creating common goals and promoting positive relations between subgroups (Hogg et al., 2012; Pittinsky & Simon, 2007; Pittinsky, 2010), it seems to imply an equal status between those groups. However, once we deal with groups of unequal status —as often found in the world at large — intergroup cooperation becomes more complicated and cooperation less likely. This notion is in line with recent theorizing on intergroup misunderstandings (Demoulin et al., 2009; Gleibs, Täuber, Viki, & Giessner, 2013) which shows that members of high- and low-status groups endorse different strategies under distinct conditions because these serve their needs (for status-maintenance vs. status-enhancement) in different ways. In addition, it highlights the point that harmony and co-operation are not always in the interests of all groups. This is because in many circumstances harmony can work to undermine change and to stabilize an unequal social system (Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim, 2012; Sanguy, Tausch, Dovidio, Pratto, & Singh, 2010; Wright & Lubensky, 2009). This idea aligns with data from the present studies (in particular, Study 3), which show that high-status groups are less inclined to support a

competitive leader when they feel that change which is disadvantageous to their group is in the wind.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

The studies presented here yielded new and interesting results with practical implications for leadership in context. However, as with all research, they are not without limitations. First, the sample sizes for all three studies were relatively small. Whereas we aimed to have about 20 participants per condition, we acknowledge that this is at the lower end of what is desirable, and that this might mean that our studies are underpowered (Button, Ioannidis, Morysz, Nosek, Flint, Robinson, & Munafò, 2013; Lakens & Evers, 2014). In the present case, though, these concerns are tempered by the fact that we conducted multiple studies thereby allowing us to replicate the main findings of interest. Nevertheless, future research should clearly aim to replicate our results with larger samples.

A further shortcoming is that we relied on scenarios to manipulate key variables. Scenarios have the advantage of increasing mundane realism in experiments while at the same time providing more control than field studies (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). However, one can question whether imagined scenarios evoke attitudes, feelings and behaviors that are as 'real' as those observed in the world at large. In particular, no group interaction took place and participants had to evaluate and endorse potential, fictitious leaders in a context where these evaluations and endorsements had no further consequences. This might be particularly problematic for the evaluation and measure of prototypicality, and, in our case, might also bear upon participants' general preference for a specific identity management strategy. Certainly, too, vignettes present contrived situations which (deliberately) obscure the fact that leadership endorsement involves individual- and group-level processes working in parallel (and possibly interacting). At the same time, though, an obvious advantage of experimental vignette studies is that they allow researchers to manipulate key variables in order to explore

causal relationships between variables of interest in ways that they might not be able to do otherwise. Indeed, it was this feature that allowed us to provide a clear test of our key hypotheses and that leads to them being widely used in organisational research (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014)

Study 1 and Study 2 relied exclusively on student samples. In addition, in Study 1 and 2 we had more female than male participant, whereas in Study 3 we had more male than female participants. Much has been said about the unrepresentativeness of such samples (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010; Sears, 1986; but see Druckman & Kam, 2011), and we therefore aimed to broaden our sample for Study 3 in order to increase external validity. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the possibility that some of these participants were also students (although the mean age in Study 3 was 27 years, much higher than the typical undergraduate student). Accordingly, we see clear value in further research that would employ a range of methods (e.g., longitudinal design, objective or behavioral outcomes, archival data) to study leadership endorsement within a range of contexts and populations in which there is also a balanced gender distribution.

Finally, we should note that whereas Studies 1 and 3 used a three-item measure to measure the key dependent variable, Study 2 used only a two-item measure. Although we demonstrated very similar results for the 2- vs. 3-item measures (see Footnotes 1 and 3), it needs to be acknowledged that a shorter measure can increase the standard error of measurement and hence might compromise the reliability of results (Haslam & McGarty, 2014). We therefore recommend that future studies use only the three-item measure of leader endorsement.

One particularly fruitful area in which to analyse shifting leadership strategies would be in the political arena where work could, for example, examine leaders' distinct rhetorical strategies in the face of changing intergroup relations (e.g., Steffens & Haslam, 2013). As an

illustration of the prospects for such work, it is interesting to reflect on remarks made by Hillary Clinton in the run up to the 2007/2008 primaries for the Democratic Party nomination. In February 2008, at which point she was the lower-status candidate but status relations with the Obama camp were unstable (because the outcome of the nomination was in doubt), her tone was relatively competitive:

“I also want to congratulate Senator Obama for his victories tonight. And I look forward to continuing our campaign and our *debate about how to leave this country better off for the next generation*, because that is the work of my life — that is why I started my career fighting for abused and neglected children [...]” (Remarks Following the "Super Tuesday" Primaries and Caucuses, February 5, 2008; emphasis added).

However, by May 2008 when the prospects of her winning the nomination had diminished (so that relations were now more stable) her tone was noticeable more cooperative:

“We're winning the popular vote and I'm more determined than ever to see that every vote is cast and every ballot counted. I commend Senator Obama and his supporters and while we continue to go toe-to-toe for this nomination, *we do see eye-to-eye when it comes to uniting our party to elect a Democratic president in the fall*. (Remarks Following the Kentucky and Oregon Primaries, May 20, 2008; emphasis added).

In relation to such future explorations, we would argue that the value of the present work lies in its ability to lay out, test and support a set of clearly specified, theory-based hypotheses. Generalization is thus made not on the basis of the data per se, but on basis of the theory that these support (Haslam & McGarty, 2014; Turner, 1981). And here confidence in our conclusions is strengthened by the fact that the present findings are largely consistent with hypotheses derived from a large body of research in the social identity tradition (Haslam et al., 2009).

Conclusion

The present research highlights the point that intergroup phenomena such as conflict and discrimination can derive from struggles for intragroup leadership. Indeed, in the world at large, we see dilemmas associated with competing interests and motivations continually played out as leaders strive to manage inter- and intra-group processes simultaneously (Sherif, 1966). In this context, leadership is best understood as a process that is embedded in the changing relations among interdependent groups and our focus should perhaps be not so much on the fixed characteristics of specific leaders as on the social environment in which leadership occurs. For what we see is that successful leaders need to adjust their strategies towards relevant outgroups as a function of the particular circumstances that they and their ingroup confront. That is, they have to manage inter- and intragroup relations simultaneously to stay in power. Specific leaders and specific strategies are thus not universally successful but have to be attuned the prevailing environment.

In particular, it appears that leaders need to oscillate between conflict and cooperation depending on the social-structural realities that they and their group confronts. This point is highlighted by the response of Steve Biko, leader of South Africa's Black People's Convention, when he was asked whether he was going to continue to lead followers down a path of conflict:

I don't believe for a moment we are going willingly to drop our belief in the non-violent stance — as of now. But I can't predict what will happen in the future, inasmuch as I can't predict what the enemy is going to do in the future. (Biko, 1978/1988, p.168; cited in Haslam et al., 2011)

It was only, then, when intergroup relations had been rendered stable and more legitimate and key status-related differences had been corrected, that conciliation made sense for Black South Africans and for their leaders. In these terms, we need to recognize that the appeal of

particular forms of leadership (e.g., those that are “inclusive” or “ethical”) is not simply a matter of abstracted ideology or theoretical commitment. Rather it is something that is shaped in the hurly-burly of the particular social relations that make different strategies potent and meaningful for different groups in different circumstances. Accordingly, if our quest is for leadership that is less conflictual, then we need to ensure that we create social realities in which conflictual leadership makes less sense for the group members who would be inspired by it.

Footnotes

¹ We conducted the main analysis with the same two item measure for support that we use in Study 2. The results suggest that the effect is similar with the two item measure compared with the three item measure; the three-way interaction for status, stability and type of leader was significant, $F(1, 51) = 6.01, p = .018, \eta^2_p = .10, r = .31$. For the competitive leader we see that the predicted two-way interaction for status and stability was significant, $F(1, 51) = 8.01, p = .007, \eta^2_p = .13, r = .36$. Participants in the high-status condition supported the competitive leader more when intergroup relations were stable ($M = 4.04, SD = 1.61$) rather than unstable ($M = 3.70, SD = 1.85$). However, this difference was non-significant, $M\Delta = -.31, 95\% \text{ CI} [-.72, 1.41]$ and the effect size was small ($d = .19$; Cohen, 1988). In contrast, in the low-status condition support for a competitive leader was significantly greater when intergroup relations were unstable ($M = 4.00, SD = 1.01$) rather than stable ($M = 2.19, SD = 0.58$; $M\Delta = 1.80, 95\% \text{ CI} [.73, 2.88]$), the effect size here was large ($d = 2.19$).

For the cooperative leader, the status x stability interaction was slightly weaker and didn't reach conventional levels of significance; $F(1, 51) = 3.29, p = .07, \eta^2_p = .06, r = .24$. Participants in the high-status condition supported the cooperative leader more ($M = 5.11, SD = 1.59$) when intergroup relations were unstable compared to stable ($M = 4.86, SD = 1.58$); although this difference was not significant, $M\Delta = .53, 95\% \text{ CI} [-.82, 1.32]$ and the effect size was small ($d = .15$). Participants in the low-status condition supported the cooperative leader more when intergroup relations were stable ($M = 5.65, SD = .62$) rather than unstable ($M = 4.53, SD = 1.46, M\Delta = 1.11, 95\% \text{ CI} [.048-2.18]$), the effect size here was large ($d = .99$).

² Eta-square and eta-square partial are measures of effect size that can be interpreted similarly to an r^2 (thus can be interpreted as a percentage of explained variance).

$\eta^2 = SS_{\text{effect}}/SS_{\text{total}}$, where SS_{effect} = sum of squares for effect of interest, SS_{total} = the total sum of squares for all effects and errors in an ANOVA;

$\eta^2_p = SS_{\text{effect}} / SS_{\text{effect}} + SS_{\text{error}}$, where SS_{effect} = sum of squares for effect of interest, SS_{error} = the sum of squares for whatever error term is associated with that effect.

³ For comparison, we conducted the main analysis with the same two item measure for support that we use in Study 2. The results suggest that the effect is similar with the two item measure compared with the three item measure as the predicted two-way interaction for status and stability was significant $F(1, 67) = 4.74, p = .033, \eta^2_p = .066, r = .26$. None of the main effects were significant, both $F_s < .1, p_s > .32$. Consistent with H1a, pairwise comparison showed that in the high-status condition participants supported a competitive leader more when intergroup relations were stable ($M = 5.04, SD = 1.58$) rather than unstable ($M = 3.87, SD = 1.87; MD = 1.16, 95\% CI [2.19, .13]$). This effect was medium in size ($d = .67$). In line with H1b, participants in the low-status condition supported a competitive leader more under unstable intergroup relations ($M = 4.70, SD = 1.64$) than under stable conditions ($M = 4.29, SD = 1.70; MD = .41, 95\% CI [-.58, 1.40]$) but this effect was small ($d = .23$).

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Appendix

Manipulation Study 1**Political societies at our University just “growing and growing”**

Now well into the first term of the year, it is clear to see, with all the society posters and hoodies brandished around campus, that society members are up once again. Gone are the days when Maths Society could barely make up enough numbers for a study group; university statistics show that society numbers grow on average by more than 10% each year. Political societies are some such benefiting from a huge rise in member numbers. Speaking to Chairman of the Guild Societies Association (GSA), Tim Rasborne, it is clear to see that new initiatives and schemes really do make the difference: “Political societies at our University are just growing and growing. However, Conservative Future Society [Labour Students] really have the edge this year - putting on well organised free-for-all debates and socials at the start of term helped them to enlist more new students than Labour Students [Conservative Future Society] managed.” In response to this, it seems Labour Students Society [Conservative Future Society] already have unveiled radical plans to boost new member numbers next year, so it’s anyone’s game.

At the end of this academic year, you as members of Conservative Future society will be asked to vote for a new society committee, including a President. We asked two candidates for the Presidential position what their proposals were as applicants:

Candidate A

“With me as your President, I will ensure that we are the strongest political society on campus, with Conservative Future as the future of X, and Labour Students Society far into the past! I guarantee you new initiatives, recruiting more members than ever before-I will ensure dominance over our competitors (such as Labour Students Society).

With plans in place for more socials, more Conservative party supporters, and more perks for members only! Now is the time to take control of campus politics with the Conservative Future and define ourselves as a society not to be rivalled!”

Candidate B

“Choose me as your President and I will make sure we get the broadest and best political base possible, that leaves behind rivalry with competitors and puts the University into the future. I will get us integrating with other politically minded societies such as the Labour Student Society through heated debates and friendly socials.

With more informed and well-rounded arguments, wider knowledge of our competitors and the bringing together of different-minded people, I promise you our position on campus will go through the roof. Let’s promote X as a strong and politically informed University!”

Appendix 2

Manipulation Study 2*High-Status:*

National and international university rankings are being published every year in order to inform potential applicants and students about the quality of the offered courses and about how universities compare to one another according to different measured criteria.

Four national university rankings in the United Kingdom are being published annually, one of them by *The Guardian*. In their most recent league table for 2013, the *London School of Economics (LSE)* was ranked third with an average teaching score of 93.9. Further behind, on the 13th place, ranks the *Imperial College London (ICL)* with 73.3 points (see excerpt below).

University league table											
More about the university guide											
Ranking 2013	(12) (11)	Institution	Average Teaching Score	NSS Teaching (%)	NSS Overall (%)	Expenditure per student / 10	Student:staff ratio	Career prospects (%)	Value added score/10	Entry Tariff	NSS Feedback (%)
1	(1) (2)	Cambridge	100.0	93	94	9.77	11.8	82	5.7	589	75
2	(2) (1)	Oxford	94.4	93	93	9.81	11.1	73	6.7	572	72
3	(4) (8)	London School of Economics	93.9	82	84	8.62	11.8	82	6.8	526	68
4	(3) (4)	St Andrews	86.1	95	93	7.93	13.6	71	7.3	518	69
5	(6) (3)	Warwick	82.1	89	88	8.56	14.5	73	6.4	496	62
6	(5) (5)	UCL	80.7	87	88	8.63	10.1	77	7.1	495	61
7	(8) (17)	Durham	78.4	89	90	6.24	15.3	74	5.6	500	69
7	(7) (6)	Lancaster	78.4	89	88	7.63	14.8	70	5.3	409	70
9	(14) (13)	Bath	75.8	89	91	5.55	17.1	76	6.8	459	66
10	(11) (14)	Exeter	75.3	91	90	5.53	19.3	69	7.3	455	71
11	(9) (9)	Loughborough	74.6	87	88	6.63	17.0	69	5.3	391	71
12	(19) (20)	Surrey	73.5	87	87	7.46	17.9	69	6.1	394	69
13	(10) (7)	Imperial College	73.3	84	85	8.16	11.6	84	4.5	553	55

Low-Status:

National and international university rankings are being published every year in order to inform potential applicants and students about the quality of the offered courses and about how universities compare to one another according to different measured criteria.

Several world university rankings are being published annually, one of them by *The Times Higher Education*. In their most recent league table for 2012/13, the *Imperial College London (ICL)* was ranked 8th, scoring a total of 90.6 points, whereas the *London School of Economics (LSE)* was only ranked 39th with an overall score of just 73.1. This places *LSE* on the 6th and *Imperial* on the 4th rank amongst all British Universities represented in this league table (see excerpt below).

World University Rankings 2012-2013			
Rank ▼	Institution	Location	Overall score <small>change criteria</small>
2	University of Oxford	United Kingdom	93.7
7	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom	92.6
8	Imperial College London	United Kingdom	90.6
17	University College London	United Kingdom	85.5
32	University of Edinburgh	United Kingdom	76.1
39	London School of Economics and Political Science	United Kingdom	73.1
49	University of Manchester	United Kingdom	70.1
57	King's College London	United Kingdom	66.2

Legitimacy/ Stability:

Compared to *ICL*, *LSE*'s better performance in almost all the criteria validates their higher [lower] ranking, which, according to experts, is thereby indeed justified and adequate.

Moreover, throughout the past couple of years, the *London School of Economics* has continuously ranked in the top ten of *The Guardian* whereas the *Imperial College London* has mostly done worse. Besides, other national rankings, such as *The Guardian* or *The Sunday Times* also placed *LSE* way above *Imperial College*. Therefore it is very likely that *LSE* will continue to outperform *Imperial College* in upcoming rankings.

[Moreover, throughout the past couple of years, the *London School of Economics* has continuously ranked beyond the world's Top 30 in *The Times Higher Education* whereas the *Imperial College London* has always made it under the Top 10. Besides, other international rankings, such as the *QS World University Rankings* or the *Academic Ranking of World Universities* also placed *ICL* way above *LSE*. Therefore it is very likely that *ICL* will continue to outperform *LSE* in upcoming rankings.]

Competitive

I will ensure that the *London School of Economics* will continue to dominate its competitors in university rankings. I will develop an aggressive strategy to promote *LSE*'s interests and present it at its best by outlining *LSE*'s advantages in comparison with other universities such

as the *Imperial College London*. I will focus on promoting our university on as many occasions as possible and thereby attract many suitable new students. The key is making fast decisions so we can get ahead of our competitors and make a better impression.

Cooperative

I will focus on developing the already existing ways of raising awareness of *LSE* to attract new students. I believe that cooperating with our close competitors such as the *Imperial College London* is essential and can make it easier for both universities to organise even more gatherings and social events for current and prospective students. Thereby we can all benefit in many ways, for example by splitting the costs of these events, by interesting yet more students in both universities and by raising our social profile.

Appendix 3

Manipulation Study 3:**High status/ high stability**

You have been an employee of Primatech PLC since 2001. Primatech is an electrical retail business and you work full time as a sales assistant in one of their stores.

Primatech PLC is a very successful retail business with an estimated value of £480m. They operate throughout Europe and South East Asia in 300 stores and have around 5,000 employees.

A recent article written by a leading economist has speculated that Primatech PLC will have another successful year and continue to outperform their closest competitor Gadgetron PLC. Gadgetron PLC currently has an estimated value of £200m and trade throughout Europe. They have 2,000 employees and 100 stores. Primatech PLC has invested heavily in the e-commerce aspect of the business and leading economists believe this will increase their profit.

The Board of Directors inform you that the current CEO has stepped down from his post. You have been asked to help the board select a new leader by reading the description of the two leaders below and then answering a questionnaire.

Low-status/low stability

You have been an employee of Primatech PLC since 2001. Primatech PLC is an electrical retail business and you work full time as a sales assistant in one of their stores.

Primatech PLC is a retail business with an estimated value of £150m. They operate throughout Europe in 100 stores and have around 2,000 employees.

A recent article written by a leading economist has speculated that Primatech PLC will have a successful year and continue to close ground with their closest competitor Gadgetron PLC. Gadgetron PLC currently has an estimated value of £480m and trade throughout Europe and South East Asia. They have 5,000 employees and 300 stores. However, Primatech PLC has invested heavily in the e-commerce aspect of the business and leading economists believe this will increase their profit.

The Board of Directors informs you that the current CEO has stepped down from his post. You have been asked to help the board select a new leader by reading the description of the two leaders below and then answering a questionnaire.

Candidate A

“I will ensure Primatech PLC remain the market leader by dominating our competitors. I will do this by developing an aggressive pricing strategy so we are cheaper and invest heavily in product innovation. I will also continue to open new stores as well as arrange advertisements during prime time TV slots. The key to success is making fast decisions so we can get ahead of our competitors.”