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Nepotism

Omar K. Burhan

Nepotism

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Omar Khalifa Burhan
geboren te Banda Aceh, Indonesia
in 1986

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Foreword

The year was 1998. I was 11 years young when I was first exposed to the word "nepotism." It was a chaotic period for Indonesians. Our country was on the brink of collapse due to a severe economic and political crisis. In some provinces, such as in Aceh, where my family and I resided, a militant separatist group emerged. As civilians, we were confused about whether to fear the separatists or the military. So, we avoided both. Public protests and demonstrations carried out by university students were a common scene throughout the country. In almost all of the protests the students carried a flag, with "anti-KKN" written on it – *Korupsi* (corruption), *Kolusi* (collusion), and *Nepotisme* (nepotism). I did not understand what these three words meant, but from the look of it, I knew that people were disgusted by these words.

Fast forward to 2012, we passed the economic crisis and the political climate was much "cooler". We were in the global top 5 of most corrupted countries in 1998, but this time, our government was much "cleaner" according to Transparency International. However, I developed an impression that nepotism became more apparent than ever, especially when a case of corruption involving the Governor of Banten, Ratu Atut, became public headlines. What got me interested in Ratu Atut was not how much public funds she allegedly took from the people, but how Atut and her family became so powerful that they practically own the whole province of Banten. Initially, I thought about nepotism as a local phenomenon, something common in a developing society, until I read Adam Bellow's book "In praise of nepotism." I was struck by the fact that family ties in business and politics are also pervasive in the U.S.A, a nation I perceived to be so proud of its democracy. The more I read about nepotism, the more I felt a "tingle". How could something that people view in a negative light at the same time appear to be so widespread and accepted? So, my journey to understand nepotism begun. This thesis presents the documentation of my journey. There is still much to learn, but it is a start, and I hope you enjoy the ride.

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1 General Introduction

After attaining a degree from an internationally reputable university in Europe, Budi went to work as a lecturer at a well-known university in Indonesia, his home country. After two years of working as a non-tenured lecturer, he was excited that the university announced a vacancy for a tenured-track lecturer position. Unfortunately, he was called by his manager and was instructed not to apply for the position because the niece of someone higher on the leadership ladder wanted to apply for the position. He was told that since the university is obligated to report to the country's ministry of education about their hiring processes and decisions, it would make it administratively hard for them to hire the niece when there is clearly another candidate with better qualifications and experience, in this case, Budi. Budi's case is a real case demonstrating nepotism in action.

With the rise of the meritocracy ideal, people from Western industrialized societies may probably think of Budi's case as dated, something that was commonly practiced by nobles and kings in the past but no longer part of current practices. But there are reasons to believe that Budi's case may not be isolated, and is in fact more common than expected, not only in Eastern and developing societies as described in the above example, but also in Western industrialized societies. For instance, the prominence of family ties can still be seen in contemporary politics, businesses, and other occupations in various parts of the world (Bellow, 2003). In America, people generally know that George W. Bush's father was a president, his younger brother was governor of Florida, and his grandfather was a senator. In India, people know that Rahul Gandhi is the son of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, grandson of Indira Gandhi who was the nation's first and only female prime minister, and great-grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru who was the nation's first prime minister (Pandey, 2019). In the European Parliament, since 1989 there have been at least 21 politicians who are bound by kinship with other politicians (Cirone, 2018). In Italy, children of public employees had 44 percent probability than non-children to

work within the same sector as their parents (Scoppa, 2009). In Indonesia, people are familiar with the case of the former governor of the province of Banten, Ratu Atut, whose children, brothers, sisters, uncles, and daughters-in-law all occupy various important political and business positions in the province (Iqbal, 2018).

Of course, the success of such families may not necessarily be due to mere kinship. Such success can also be a sign of a talented gene pool or successful human capital transfer among family members. It could also be that such families succeeded in creating a conducive and advantageous social environment to support their members on their career paths. Still, such exceptional familial successes can also be suspicious and *perceived* by people that something less than fair play must have taken place—that they are the result of nepotism. The present thesis provides an analysis of perceived nepotism and its consequences in organizational and political contexts. I focus on perceived nepotism because, as will be further elaborated, it does not take actual nepotism for the problems associated with it to arise. Specifically, I seek to address three general questions:

1. What is nepotism in the eyes of lay-people?
2. What are the consequences of perceived nepotism in organizational and political contexts?
3. Why, despite the negative connotation attached to it, does nepotism persist?

These issues will be addressed using three main perspectives. I use an in-group favoritism perspective to describe what nepotism is, as well as to explain how people infer nepotism from the hiring of kin, without taking competence or qualification for a certain position into account. Then, I use a procedural justice perspective, instead of the more commonly-used meritocracy perspective, to explain why people could still perceive nepotism in the employment of highly qualified family members in organizations. Finally, I take into consideration the paradox of nepotism. That is, whereas in general people dislike nepotism, they often still support it. Specifically, I consult the leader's transference theory to explain why people sometimes support nepotism in leadership (Ritter & Lord, 2007). A brief explanation of these perspectives is provided in this introductory chapter. However, I will first describe how nepotism is conceptualized in the present thesis, and discuss previous studies on this topic.

1.1 What is Nepotism?

What it is that lay-people view as nepotism is a core question being addressed in the present thesis. It might be fruitful, however, to first establish a working definition of nepotism. I then discuss the explanatory factors underlying nepotism (focusing in particular on in-group bias), the difference between nepotism and the related concept cronyism, followed by a distinction between old and modern forms of nepotism. I subsequently ended this section of the chapter by describing two incongruent views concerning the precise definition of nepotism, and a brief description about why it might be more important to examine what it is that lay-people see as nepotism.

A quick look at an online dictionary reveals the negative connotations attached to the word nepotism. The Cambridge Dictionary, for example, describes nepotism as "the act of using your power or influence to get good jobs or unfair advantages for members of your own family" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). While the word nepotism is commonly used in the context of hiring and promotion, from an in-group favoritism perspective, favoring one's own family to get a job is actually just one of many forms of nepotism, as will be described in the following.

In-group favoritism (or in-group bias) refers to the tendency for members of social groups to favor or act altruistically toward members of their own group (Balliet et al., 2014; Scheepers et al., 2006; Stroebe et al., 2005). It can occur based on any kind of group memberships, be it one's ethnicity, fraternity, race, or on the basis of artificial and seemingly meaningless group created in a lab (Tajfel, 1970; Vaughan et al., 1981). A family is a social group in which membership is defined by kinship. As such, like any other social group, it can be expected that members of a family would exhibit a tendency to favor and behave altruistically toward their own members over others who are not part of the family. Although a form of ingroup favoritism, there is an important feature of nepotism that separates it from other forms of in-group favoritism. That is, other forms of group-based favoritism usually involve some kind of transaction and reciprocity (Gaertner & Insko, 2000; Stroebe et al., 2005), whereas according to the "kin altruism" principle, such reciprocity does not seem to be a defining aspect of nepotism.

From an evolutionary point of view, favoritism toward one's own kin is natural and serves an important function not only for the survival of human beings, but also other organisms. This kin favoritism is what evolutionary biologist Hamilton (1964) refers to as nepotism. From this point of view, nepotism happens when $\frac{B}{C} > \frac{1}{2}r$. Here, B stands for the fitness benefit received by a beneficiary of nepotism. More specifically, it refers to the extent to which an altruistic behavior enhances the ability of a beneficiary to reproduce. C stands for the fitness cost for acting altruistically on the part of the benefactor. It refers to the extent that the benefactor lost its ability to reproduce by acting altruistically. r stands for the coefficient of relatedness between the beneficiary and benefactor of nepotism. For example, the coefficient of relatedness of an offspring to a parent is .50 (i.e., one's genetic is derived half from one's mother, half from one's father). For a parent to act altruistically to its offspring (e.g., by sacrificing itself), it 'assumes' that such act would enable the offspring to reproduce at least two descendants. The goal of nepotism is thus to enhance the inclusive fitness of a beneficiary (i.e., the offspring) and not for the sake of some kind of transaction that would benefit the benefactor (i.e., the parent). In layman's terms, parents are motivated to ensure the well-being of their offspring so that their offspring can, in turn, ensure the well-being of their own offspring. This includes behaviors such as childrearing or extreme actions such as when parents sacrifice themselves so that their offspring can survive and pass on their genes to another generation. For the modern human, securing a job for one's kin is thus one of many kinds of altruism aimed at ensuring the well-being of one's family members.

Based on the aforementioned point of view, I believe that it is beneficial to separate nepotism from another related concept, specifically cronyism. Cronyism refers to favoritism based on a shared social network (e.g., friendships, schools, fraternities), and is often assumed to be identical to nepotism (Khatri et al., 2006). An obvious difference between the two concepts lies in the way in which group membership is achieved. Nepotism involves an ascribed membership (e.g., members are born into a family), whereas memberships in cronyism is achieved through social endeavors (e.g., joining a fraternity, developing and investing in a close friendship). In order to benefit from cronyism, people do not invest in a random relationship with a group or person, but in a relationship with a group or person that they believe

would benefit them. In other words, whereas direct reciprocity is not required in nepotism, it is fundamental in cronyism. Whereas nepotism can only benefit particular kinship groups, it is clear that the scope of cronyism is larger and can be strategically used by individuals to climb their career ladder, regardless of kinship ties.

Although I consider nepotism to be a "special form of in-group favoritism", like any other kinds of in-group favoritism, nepotism serves both instrumental and identity functions (Scheepers et al., 2006). Instrumentally, giving jobs or advantaged positions to family members is essentially a way to secure the family's access to resources—in case of leadership, these resources involve power and influence over others who are not part of the family. In terms of identity, like any other kind of social group, questions such as "who are we?", "why are we here?", "what makes us different to other social groups?" are questions that membership of a family addresses. From the social identity perspective (Hornsey, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), such questions are important because people want to belong to a group that provides them with a positive identity, one that positively differentiates them from other social groups, and one that they can be proud of.

Up to this point, I have discussed that nepotism is a natural and important tendency that helps humans as a species to survive. It is a special form of in-group favoritism based on kinship that serves both instrumental as well as identity functions that are important to maintain and promote the well-being of one's family. However, this benevolence toward family members may sometimes come at the expense of others who are not part of the family. Consider for instance, two scenarios of a modified life-boat dilemma. In the first scenario, a father found a lifeboat that can carry one person. He decides to sacrifice himself and puts his child in the boat. In the second scenario, the lifeboat is already occupied by, say, another child. In order to save his child, the father decides to throw the other child out of the boat and put his own child in the boat. Whereas it is likely for people to find the first scenario acceptable—perhaps even encouraged—they may find the second scenario problematic since it involves harming another child.

Perhaps the fact that nepotism may at times be jeopardizing others who are not part of the family is a reason why people often view it in a negative light. In organizations, for instance, powerful individuals who promote their incompetent offspring to a leadership position may ensure

the offspring's access to resources and power, but the offspring's incompetence may jeopardize the well-being of those being led by them. In terms of job hiring, a job is a scarce resource and meritocracy is typically the norm for deciding which person is offered a specific job (Castilla & Benard, 2010; Scully, 1997). For this reason, people may view nepotism as a zero-sum situation, in which a job attained by a beneficiary of nepotism is perceived to be a loss to others who are not part of the family. As such, it seems logical for people to find the act of giving jobs to less competent family–members—instead of to more competent non-family members—undeserving and unfair. The fear of such negative consequences of nepotism is probably an important reason for people to oppose to it (Vinton, 1998). However, as will be discussed next, despite these negative consequences, nepotism still finds its way in contemporary businesses, organizations, and politics partly through what historian Adam Bellow (2003) had called the 'new nepotism'.

The Old and New Nepotism

In his historical account of nepotism, Adam Bellow (2003) defined nepotism generally as any form of favoritism based on kinship. He distinguishes between an "old" and a "new" form of nepotism. As briefly outlined in the previous, the old form of nepotism is explicit and considerations about individual merit are practically irrelevant. This can be seen in medieval times in which a leader such as a king or queen could be coroneted at a very young age, sometimes at birth. Of course, with the rise of the meritocracy ideal, this is now considered unacceptable in most contemporary societies. Since unjustified merit is the core problem with the old form of nepotism, the new form of nepotism involves benefactors of nepotism (e.g., parents) who take the merit of their beneficiaries (e.g., children) seriously. It requires parents to facilitate their children in their education (e.g., signing them up to an ivy league university), extracurricular activities (e.g., encouraging them to join exclusive fraternities), or creating an environment that stimulates their children to develop interests in the parents' occupation. Such an approach could ensure that their children possess the required qualification and competency for a particular targeted job. As such, when the time comes, parents can safely favor their children over other

candidates who do not have kinship ties, since their children are legitimately more qualified for the job than most other candidates.

Jones et al. (2008) further argued that the new form of nepotism is not necessarily evil because it is practically a form of human capital transfer within a family. For instance, children whose parents are bankers may easily pick-up knowledge about the banking industry while their parents talk about work over a family dinner. Repeated exposure to their parents' occupation may lead the children to develop genuine interests toward their parents' occupation. With enough motivation, the children would in turn make a more or less deliberate choice to strive for the same career paths as their parents. In other words, what appears as nepotism may be transformed to a merit-based hiring. This is probably why, for example, children of doctors are more likely to become doctors too, compared to children who do not have parents who are doctors (Lentz & Laband, 1989).

Whether it comes in the new or old form, nepotism is a phenomenon that is hard to examine empirically. The old form of nepotism requires a clear violation of merit and fairness principles. The direct way to detect such violation is by observing whether individuals with kinship ties possess the merit for hiring. Such reasoning led some researchers to regard nepotism exclusively as the hiring of incompetent or unqualified kin (Abramo et al., 2014; Darioly & Riggio, 2014; Mhatre et al., 2012). This definition imply that the new form of nepotism should not be considered as problematic as long as the beneficiaries are competent or qualified individuals (Jones and Stout, 2015). However, the new form of nepotism can co-occur with the old form and influence each other. For instance, in an organizational context, parents may attempt to do their best to ensure their children's merit for hiring or promotion but there will always be a chance that their children would be bested by others. In such a circumstance, the desire to secure a job for their children may motivate parents to resort to the old form of nepotism, such as by deliberately creating a job that specifically matches their children's qualification. This way, benefactors of nepotism could mask their preferential treatment by demonstrating the competency of their nepotism beneficiaries. For this reason, some researchers opted to regard nepotism as any practice of hiring kin (Allesina, 2011; Arasli et al., 2006; Durante et al., 2011), but this approach is problematic too

since it could disadvantage qualified people who by chance happen to have kinship ties within the organization.

While experts may continue to debate about how to define nepotism, what lay people consider nepotism may be even more important. After all, whether the context concerns a governmental or business institution, lay people are the ones who are affected by the practice of nepotism or anti-nepotism policy in their institutions. Despite the debate about how nepotism should be precisely defined, researchers have produced informative research on nepotism. This previous research will be discussed next.

1.2 Previous Research on Nepotism

Researchers have attempted to measure nepotism and its impact using different approaches. Some of the approaches employ a more 'objective' measure of nepotism by using shared last names (Allesina, 2011; Durante et al., 2011), while others employed a 'subjective' approach (e.g., Arasli et al., 2006) by asking participants directly to rate how nepotistic their organizations are. I also noted a research that attempted to combine both objective and subjective approaches in measuring nepotism (Spranger et al., 2012) These approaches are described in the following.

Nepotism and Shared Last Name

In their attempt to measure nepotism in Italian academia, Durante and colleagues created the academic homonymity index (AHI: Durante et al., 2011). AHI is an index of how common a specific last name is within an academic unit (e.g., faculty, department, university) relative to the general geographical population where the university is located. The assumption is that people with the same last name are most likely to have familial ties. The higher the AHI of an academic unit, the stronger the familial connections in that unit are. Using this index, Durante and colleagues concluded that academic units with high AHI tended to have poorer research and student performance than those with lower AHI. Allesina (2011) further modified Durante's et al. approach to identify areas or institutions with a high likelihood of nepotism. He applied his approach to analyze nepotism in Italian academia and found similar results to that of Durante's et al. Moreover, Allesina claims that his

analysis is an intuitive way for policy makers to identify and intervene nepotism.

Although an interesting way to detect the possible practice of nepotism, measuring nepotism through shared last names alone is not without its problems. Abramo et al. (2014) compared the performance of academics who have kinship ties (i.e., having parents who also works within the same university as they do) to academics without such ties in Italian academia. In contrast to Durante's et al. (2011) findings, they found no significant relationship between kin relationship and research performance. In fact, academics with kinship ties who attained career advancement performed superior on average (e.g., better teaching and research performance) than academics without kinship ties who did not attain career advancement. This suggests that the children's career advancement in Italian academia may be due to their own personal merit rather than their kinship ties. Ferlazzo and Sdoia (2012) tested the approach proposed by Allesina (2011) by comparing results from an analysis in Italy and in the United Kingdom. They found that an analysis of shared last names is largely affected by social capital, professional networking, and demographics. Since all these variables can lead to merit-based hiring suggests that an analysis of shared last names alone is not very useful for policy-makers. The last name index is also a very rudimentary measure; it cannot, for example, take into account daughters who married and adopted their spouse's name. Moreover, research using shared last names as an index of nepotism has mainly been conducted in Western cultures, and this index seems less applicable to some non-Western cultures. For example, in Indonesia, one's last name can be an identifier of one's tribe, ethnicity, or religious identity.

Perceptual Assessment of Nepotism

Another approach to measure nepotism is by assessing employees' perception of nepotism in their organizations. A commonly cited study using this approach was conducted by Husein Arasli and colleagues (Arasli et al., 2006; Arasli & Tumer, 2008). By directly asking participants about nepotism in their organization, they found that employees from the tourism and banking industries in North Cyprus who perceived high nepotism in their organization tended to be less satisfied, experienced higher job stress, were more likely to tell negative

stories about their organizations to outsiders, and were more likely to quit their job. Other researchers found that nepotism is also negatively associated with employees' organizational commitment, organizational trust, and positively associated with organizational silence, and feelings of organizational alienation (Büte, 2011; Keles et al., 2011; Pelit et al., 2015).

Measuring the perception of nepotism using a cross-sectional design as Arasli et al. did is informative in showing how nepotism can detriment employees' well-being and organizational effectiveness. However, this methodology can also be criticized for several reasons. First, just because certain employees perceive high levels of nepotism does not necessarily mean that the organization is actually nepotistic. As such, the mere perception of nepotism cannot be a reliable indicator that an organization is actually nepotistic. Second, what it is that participants in these studies perceive as nepotism remains unclear. That is, do they perceive nepotism as the hiring of unqualified family members or do they perceive all employment of family members as nepotism? It should be noted that despite these limitations, the perceptual approach to nepotism provides evidence that it does not take actual nepotism for problems such as reduced justice perception and organizational climate (e.g., trust and commitment toward an organization) to arise in organizations.

Measuring Nepotism through Kin Density

So far, I have described research using either an objective or subjective approach. There is also a research that attempted to combine these approaches. Spranger et al. (2012), proposed the concept of 'kin density' as an objective measure of nepotism. Kin density refers to the proportion and degree of relatedness of family members within an organization. In a nutshell, high kin density means that there are many employees in an organization who are related by kinship to one and another. Examining employees of various family-owned businesses, Spranger et al. found that employees from companies characterized by higher kin density tended to perceive more nepotism (a subjective measure of nepotism) than companies characterized by lower kin density. The effect of kin density on perceived nepotism was particularly observed among those who do not have kinship ties in their organization, but not among those who have such kinship ties. Perceived nepotism subsequently reduced

perceptions of organizational justice among employees who do not have kinship ties in the organization. This research is informative in showing that the more prominent family ties in an organization are, the more likely it becomes for employees of the organization who do not have kinship ties to perceive their organization as nepotistic. The limitation of Spranger's et al. research is that it does not take into account the competence or qualification of family members. Therefore, it is still unclear whether the impact of kin density on perceived nepotism and organizational injustice is due to family members being incompetent, or that the mere prominence of family ties is enough to elicit perceived nepotism and organizational injustice.

Whether using an objective (e.g., shared last name), subjective (perceptual nepotism), or a combined approach (kin density and perceived nepotism), a recurring limitation of these previous work is that they only take account kinship, but neglected competence into consideration. For some researchers this element of competence is thought to be a crucial element that could clearly distinguish between the hiring of kin deemed as nepotism or those that should not be considered as nepotism (Abramo et al., 2014; Darioly & Riggio, 2014; Mhatre et al., 2012). In the next section I discuss some work that has sought the disentangle these two factors.

Disentangling Kinship and Competence

The first studies empirically examining the influence of competence and qualification on perceived nepotism were conducted by Padgett and colleagues (Padgett et al., 2015; Padgett & Morris, 2005). Padgett and Morris (2005) were interested in how people perceive and evaluate individuals presumed to be beneficiaries of nepotism. They found that presumed beneficiaries of nepotism were seen as less competent than non-beneficiaries, even when the beneficiaries were described as having the same qualification as non-beneficiaries. Participants also disliked beneficiaries of nepotism relative to non-beneficiaries, and thought that the beneficiaries should be given a lower starting salary than non-beneficiaries. In their follow-up studies, Padgett et al. (2015) found that participants tended to attribute successful performance of nepotism beneficiaries more to their political skills and relationships to top management, than to their own ability and effort, compared with non-beneficiaries. Using a similar approach, Darioly and Riggio (2014)

further suggests that the hiring of a presumably beneficiary of nepotism was seen as more unfair, regardless of competence or qualifications.

These studies are informative in illustrating the negative evaluations people give to presumed beneficiaries of nepotism. However, these studies were designed to deliberately suggest to participants that the hiring of family members was based on kinship and *not* on competence or qualifications. With this approach, participants essentially evaluated individuals who are already (implicitly) "labeled" as beneficiaries of nepotism. The question what it is that people actually see as nepotism thus remains unclear. Put differently, without clear evidence of bias in favor of relatives, would people still view the hiring of competent and qualified family members as nepotism? Or is mere kinship enough for people to infer nepotism? Clarifying these questions was one of the goals of the research presented in the present thesis.

1.3 Procedural Fairness and Meritocracy Perspectives on Nepotism

Opposition against nepotism is often made based on the fear that it allows incompetent, unqualified, or ill-equipped individuals to be hired or appointed to important leadership positions. In other words, nepotism is opposed to because it is assumed to violate important principles of meritocracy. However, as will be further discussed in the present thesis, I propose that the term "nepotism" may also be applicable to the appointment of the most merited individual, as long as the appointment involves a familial bias in favor of this individual. Thus, in addition to issues concerning meritocracy, I propose that nepotism also involves issues of *procedural* fairness by which an appointment decision is made. These two perspectives of fairness, i.e., distributive vs. procedural fairness, will be described in the following.

Meritocracy Perspective

Most prior research about nepotism has taken a meritocracy approach to consider what is fair. The meritocracy ideal is represented by the idiom "may the best person win." This ideal reflects people's concern for distributive fairness (Son Hing et al., 2011), which refers to the ratio of a person's input (e.g., effort, hard work, qualification, or competence) and outcome (e.g., employment, or promotion) should equate the ratio

of input and outcome for relevant comparison others (Adams, 1965). In other words, those who possess the best qualification should be hired or promoted. From this perspective, opposition against nepotism in organizations and leadership often revolves around the fear that nepotism would result in bad hiring decisions (e.g., incompetent or unqualified individuals) that could eventually lead to reduced organizational or leadership effectiveness and productivity.

The meritocracy perspective makes intuitive sense in explaining why people consider nepotism undesirable, but the emphasis on meritocracy means that nepotism can only be applicable to cases involving incompetent or unqualified family members, that is, the old form nepotism. However, as noted by Bellow (2003) the presence of favoritism toward family members per se is the core feature of nepotism. This means that nepotism may not necessarily be about whether a family member is the most or least competent person for a position, but whether the decision to hire or appoint a family member to an important or advantaged position involved biases in favor of this individual. This form of bias is central to a second perspective on fairness, namely the procedural fairness perspective.

Procedural Fairness Perspective

The present thesis offers a procedural fairness perspective of nepotism. From this point of view, issues about the qualification or competence of a potentially hired person are important, but people can also suspect nepotism even if the hiring involves the most competent and qualified family member. Namely, when the hiring process is perceived to be violating principles of procedural fairness. Two procedural fairness perspectives are relevant for the present thesis: Leventhal's (1980) fairness model and the procedural fairness model proposed by Lind and Tyler and their colleagues (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1989; van den Bos et al., 2001). These two perspectives will be discussed in the following.

Leventhal (1980) proposed seven structural components that people can use to judge the fairness of an allocation process: Selection of agents, setting ground rules, gathering information, decision structure, appeals, safeguard, and change mechanism. These structures are evaluated based on six rules of procedural fairness: Consistency, bias-suppression, accuracy, correctability, representativeness, and ethicality

rule. I will use these structural components, together with the rules, to describe how people can come to conclude that the hiring, promotion, or appointment of kin is procedurally unfair.

In terms of the *selection of agents*, if a decision to hire an offspring of a powerful person in an organization involves the powerful person, people may suspect the decision as violating the *bias suppression rule* of procedural fairness because, as suggested in the in-group favoritism literature (e.g., Everett, Faber, & Crockett, 2015), people usually assume group members (e.g., a family) to be biased in favor of their group. Suppose the offspring indeed turned out to be the most qualified candidate, people can focus their attention to the *setting ground* rules structure, in which they may suspect that the requirement for hire is deliberately set-up to meet the qualification of the offspring—a potential violation of the *consistency* and *ethicality rule* of procedural fairness. In case of the hiring of an unqualified offspring, people in turn focus on information that the selection committee may have neglected during information gathering, which refers to the *accuracy rule* of procedural fairness. In the case that an unqualified child is hired by pure luck (e.g., through blind hiring), the inexistence of a mechanism for appeal and making changes may also lead people to perceive the hiring of the offspring as unfair—a violation of the *correctability rule* of procedural fairness. In short, the procedural fairness perspective provides an explanation about how the hiring of both qualified and unqualified family members may be seen as unfair, whereas the meritocracy perspective can only explain why people perceive nepotism as unfair in the case of unqualified family members.

Moreover, while Leventhal (1980) fairness model explains well why and how people can find nepotism unfair, the model is less informative about how this in turn impacts on the further motivation and behavior of people affected by nepotism. This issue is however well-covered by the group-value perspective (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Lind, 2001; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1989; van den Bos et al., 2001).[1] From this perspective, whether the context is organization-based (e.g., employee of a bank) or society-based (e.g., citizen of a nation), group

[1] We use the term "group-value perspective" entailing the group-value model of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1989), the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992), fairness heuristics theory (Lind, 2001; van den Bos et al., 1997), and the group engagement model of procedural justice (Tyler & Blader, 2003; Blader & Tyler, 2009).

membership is important and people have a need to feel that they belong to groups because it is psychologically rewarding. For instance, group membership and belongingness may provide people with a sense of meaning, connectedness, self-esteem, and certainty (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Heine et al., 2006; Hogg et al., 2008). The extent to which people are being treated in a procedurally-fair (or unfair) way by their group conveys a verification (or a threat) of their belongingness to the group (van den Bos et al., 1997). For example, a group's authorities that provide a neutral or 'leveled playing field' to all the group members conveys the message that they care about each of the members' interests (Tyler, 1989). Such neutrality provides a sense of inclusion among group members, regardless of their status within the group.

An important prediction that can be derived from the group-value perspective is that undermined feelings of belongingness to a group as the result of being treated in a procedurally unfair way, will in turn lead to deleterious behaviors to the group. For instance, when organizational members feel that they are being treated in procedurally unfair ways by their authorities, they are more likely to exhibit counterproductive behaviors as means of protest, are less willing to engage in extra-role behaviors, show increased absenteeism and turnover intentions, reduced physical and psychological well-being, and have low job satisfaction and commitment to their organization (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Elovainio et al., 2004; Lambert et al., 2007; Loi et al., 2006; Tidwell, 2005; Ybema & van den Bos, 2010). From this, we can predict that people's perception of nepotism in their organizations can produce all of these deleterious outcomes (Arasli et al., 2006; Arasli & Tumer, 2008; Büte, 2011; Keles et al., 2011; Pelit et al., 2015). One of the goals of the present analysis is thus to provide empirical ground for the centrality of procedural fairness as a reason for people to reject the practice of nepotism in organizations and politics.

1.4 The Merit of Nepotism

So far, I have mainly discussed the dark side of nepotism, but some have argued that nepotism may not always be negative and that there are also positive sides to nepotism. For instance, nepotism is thought to be a form of human capital transfer through which parents pass down the skills, knowledge, and values regarding their occupation to their

children (Jones & Stout, 2015). As a consequence, it has been suggested that hiring kin results in a shorter learning curve for new employees to adapt to their organization compared to non-kin (Vinton, 1998). Such human capital transfer is also assumed to ensure the continuity of an organization's long-term view and goals (Nicholson, 2008). Nepotism can also be beneficial because some of the key factors for successful organizations, such as generalized social exchange, trust, and reciprocity, are often pre-built among family members (Jaskiewicz et al., 2013). Hiring kin may further facilitate social capital transfer when children inherit their parents' business relations with other organizations (e.g., client or contractor organizations; Popczyk, 2017).

In essence, the potential benefits of nepotism are the result of intergenerational transmission of human (e.g., skills, knowledge) and social (e.g., social network) capital passed down from senior members of a family to their juniors. Whether people are aware of such intergenerational transmission and whether they see this as a reason to support nepotism in leadership is also a theme in the present thesis. As described at the beginning of this chapter, there are many exemplary cases in which politicians in democratic societies around the world are bound by kinship to one and another. Such contemporary prominence of family ties in democratic societies suggest that there may be enough positive elements of nepotism that could make people support it.

In the current thesis I analyze why people sometimes support nepotism, using the leadership transference theory by Ritter and Lord (2007). Whether in business, politics, or non-profit organizations, people want to have a leader who can ensure the prosperity of their institutions as well as their well-being as members. From the leader's transference point of view, an intuitive way for people to assess the quality of a particular leadership candidate is by comparing the candidate to a known previous leader. If a candidate is similar to the known previous leader, people could regard the characteristics, traits, behaviors, and other relevant qualities of the previous leader as if they were the qualities of the candidate. For a leadership candidate (e.g., a child) with kinship ties to a previously known effective leader (e.g., a parent), this can be advantageous because people will see similarities between the child and the parent. As such, people may come to believe and expect the child to become someone who can lead them as effective

as the parent did in the past, which may well provide them with a degree of certainty about the behaviors of their future leader.

1.5 Overview of the Present Thesis

The studies presented in this thesis are aimed at investigating three general questions. The first general question is, "What is nepotism in the eyes of lay-people?" I provide answer to this question by examining three sub-questions: (a) Do people see nepotism as the hiring of kin per se, or specific to the employment of incompetent kin? (b) what type of unfairness do people attach to nepotism? (c) and do people perceive nepotism differently to cronyism? The second general question is, "What are the consequences of perceive nepotism?" I provide the answer to this question by examining how people responded to nepotism in their own group or organization. For the third general question, "Why nepotism remains a common practice despite its negative connotation?" I provide the answer to this question by examining the circumstance in which people would support nepotism in leadership. Eleven studies aimed at answering the three general questions are described in three empirical chapters, Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the results and general discussion of the theoretical implications of this project.

In Chapter 2, entitled "On the hiring of kin in organizations," five studies are described. The first two studies investigate what it is that people view as nepotism and what it is about nepotism that people find unfair. Moreover, the basic idea of whether people primarily view nepotism in terms of procedural fairness is tested in three studies described in this chapter. The third study investigates nepotism in a real-life setting, in which members of real organizations evaluated a co-worker whom they perceive to be a beneficiary of nepotism (or not). The fourth study also involves real life settings to clarify that people perceive hiring kin (i.e., nepotism) as something different than hiring close friends (i.e., cronyism). The final study investigates the behavioral consequences of perceived nepotism, that is, how perceived nepotism reduces job seekers preferences to apply for a job at a presumably nepotistic organization.

In chapter 3, entitled "On the prominence of family ties in politics," four studies are described, investigating how the prominence of family

ties in politics can render people to believe that nepotism is at play. By using the group-value perspective of procedural fairness, I outline the consequences of perceived nepotism in terms of that: (1) it renders people to become politically cynical, (2) it may lead to perceive that their political authorities are treating them in unfair ways, and (3) it may ultimately reduce their preference to participate in politics, but increase their inclination to engage in political protest.

In chapter 4, entitled "Like father like son," I present two studies examining how people may come to support nepotism in leadership. By using the leader's transference theory, I outline how people can use family memberships as a basis to infer the quality of their future leader. I also introduce the "belief in the merit of nepotism" as an individual-difference construct that reflects whether a person would be more or less likely to support nepotism in leadership. The first study focuses on whether people could mistakenly regard the effective quality of a previously known effective leader as if it is also something possessed by the leader's child compared to a stranger to the leader and a friend of the leader. The second study focuses on the interplay of leader's effectiveness (effective leader vs. ineffective leader) and belief in the merit of nepotism in determining people's expectations about the effectiveness of the leader's offspring. These studies may provide insight into when and why people sometimes appear to support nepotism in leadership.

The final chapter will be the general discussion in which important results are summarized, general conclusions will be drawn, and directions for further research will be suggested. It should be noted that each of these chapters was written as an independent research report, so that each can be read independently without any prior knowledge concerning the rest of the chapters. This also means that there may be some overlap between the present introductory chapter and the theoretical aspects of the empirical chapters.

2 On the Hiring of Kin in Organizations[2]

Although the appointment of family members in politics and business is often frowned upon, it is, in fact, a common occurrence. For example, in 2017, U.S. president Trump appointed his daughter and son-in-law as advisors in his administration, which generated considerable media attention (Merica et al., 2017). The appointment of relatives to advantaged positions is commonly referred to as *nepotism*. Although nepotism may have certain benefits to an organization (Jaskiewicz et al., 2013), it is generally viewed as unfair, unethical, and unprofessional (Darioly & Riggio, 2014). Despite a small but growing body of research on nepotism in organizations, some questions still beg clarification. Specifically, what is it that people actually view as nepotism? Do people regard nepotism as the hiring of incompetent and unqualified family members or does kinship alone is enough for people to infer nepotistic hiring? Examining from a procedural justice perspective, we also set out to address what it is that people find upsetting about the hiring of kin. Finally, we address how the perception of nepotism differs from the perception of cronyism (i.e., the favoring of friends), and how perceived nepotism affects potential job applicants' willingness to join an organization.

Nepotism

Despite its negative connotations, nepotism occurs in many forms—some of which are considered perfectly acceptable or are even highly valued in society. Royal families, for example, often enjoy high popularity even though they are the epitome of a structure in which a

[2] Adapted from Burhan, O.K. van Leeuwen, E., Scheepers, D. T. (2020). On the hiring of kin in organizations: Perceived nepotism and its implications for fairness perceptions and the willingness to join an organization. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 161,* 34-48.

position of high power is passed on from one family member to another. Family businesses likewise favor family members over non-kin, and often this is considered appropriate. In this sense, nepotism is quite unique: Although the term itself is often associated with incompetence and unfairness, it would appear that various forms of kin-favoritism are acceptable and common practice. This raises important questions about what it is that people view as nepotism, and at what point it becomes unacceptable or unfair.

Nepotism is defined as favoritism based on kinship (Bellow, 2003). From this definition, it is clear that kinship hiring per se does not constitute nepotism as long as it does not involve the favoring of family members over non-family members. However, favoritism can be an elusive concept to be measured in the context of a hiring process, which led some researchers to consider all employment of relatives within an organization as nepotism, regardless of competence and qualification (Allesina, 2011; Arasli et al., 2006; Sundell, 2014). Other researchers concluded that the hiring of kin only constitutes nepotism when it pertains to incompetent or under-qualified relatives (Abramo et al., 2014; Mhatre et al., 2012). Whereas experts and researchers may disagree on what is and what is not nepotism, what people in general consider as nepotism is important to examine because it is the perception of nepotism, rather than scientists' definition of nepotism, that could affect employees' satisfaction and commitment to their organization, as well as their decision to join or leave an organization.

Many organizations have a form of anti-nepotism policy in place, even if it is not labeled as such (Jones & Stout, 2015). For instance, organizations may forbid any form of family employment (Vinton, 1998), prohibiting family members to work within the same department (Gutman, 2012), or restrict romantic relationships at work (Werbel & Hames, 1996). The aim of these policies is to enforce the belief that employees are treated fairly, and rewards are given based on merit, not kinship (Baskerville, 2006). This assumes that people perceive the practice of hiring relatives within an organization as unfair—but is that assumption accurate? For example, would organizational members consider it nepotism if a manager appointed a relative who is competent for the position? Moreover, if people infer nepotism solely based on

kinship, regardless of competence, then what is it that makes them view the hiring of relatives as unfair?

Investigating perceptions of nepotism and fairness is important for organizations that have or plan to introduce anti-nepotism policies. Anti-nepotism policies are assumed to promote fairness (Mulder, 2012), but are also restrictive in the sense they can prevent an organization to hire qualified personnel. For example, in the United States, academic couples comprise 36 percent of the American professoriate (Schiebinger et al., 2008). For these dual-career couples, organizations with a strict anti-nepotism policy may become less attractive as sources of employment.

Perceptions of nepotism and fairness are also important because they can influence an organization's ability to attract and hire highly qualified job applicants (Gilliland, 1993). Potential job applicants could consider nepotistic organizations as unattractive places of employment. For instance, if potential job applicants think that kinship ties within the organization are an important but obscured requirement, those who do not have kinship ties with people in the organization may refrain from applying for a position even when they do view the organization as attractive.

What do people perceive as nepotism?

From an objective standpoint, nepotism requires observers to identify (1) that a target is related by kinship to a prominent person in an organization and (2) a clear indication that the hiring process is biased in favor of the target (Bellow, 2003). However, by considering nepotism as a form of in-group favoritism, we argue in the following that, people can infer nepotism solely based on perceived kinship.

A family is a primary social group characterized by long-term, close, intimate, and direct face-to-face interactions that define the identity of its members (Lee, 1964). Since a family is a social group, nepotism can be viewed as a specific form of in-group favoritism toward family members. Research on in-group favoritism showed that people behave in favor of members of their own group. For example, people allocate more rewards to in-group than to out-group members (Vaughan et al., 1981). In business, an analysis of Fortune 500 companies showed that board members were more likely to choose a CEO they consider as

in-group (Zajac & Westphal, 1996). In-group favoritism is such a robust phenomenon that people tend to automatically expect and believe that members of a group will behave in a manner that benefits their in-group members (Everett et al., 2015). Thus, from this perspective, observers' sole awareness of kinship between, for example, a worker and their manager may be sufficient for them to believe that bias in favor of this worker must have taken place in the hiring process.

There is, however, an important aspect to nepotism that makes it more than "just another form of in-group favoritism." That is, other forms of group-based favoritism usually involve some kind of transaction and reciprocity (e.g., I help my group members so that they would help me out in the future: Gaertner & Insko, 2000; Stroebe et al., 2005). By contrast, according to the "kin-altruism" principle, such reciprocity does not seem to be a defining aspect of nepotism. Kin altruism refers to an organism's (e.g., parent) altruistic tendency toward own kin (e.g., a child) that occurs when the inclusive fitness benefit of the child outweighs the cost for the parent's own fitness (Hamilton, 1964). This means that nepotism is a form of altruism enacted by parents to ensure the well-being of their offspring so that their offspring can in turn ensure the well-being of their own offspring in the future. It should be noted, however, that the notion of kin altruism in our view is not limited to genealogical kinship, but also to what anthropologist called nurture kinship (Holland, 2012). This makes it possible for genealogical unrelated closed-others (e.g., an adopted child, closed-friends) to be considered as family, and thus enjoy the benefits of nepotistic treatment, just like genetically-related family members would. The important point here is that nepotism can occur in the absence of clear and direct reciprocity, which is seen as a core aspect of most other forms of in-group favoritism.

In the organizational context, some researchers argued that it also takes an element of incompetence to regard the hiring of a relative as nepotism (Abramo et al., 2014; Mhatre et al., 2012). Such perspectives focus on the meritocracy aspect in hiring, in which competence or qualification should be the primary determinant of hiring decisions (Castilla & Benard, 2010; Dobos, 2017). From this perspective, people should only ascribe nepotism in cases involving relatives who do not possess the merit for employment—in other words, incompetent kin.

There are studies that have attempted to disentangle perceptions of nepotism and competence (Darioly & Riggio, 2014; Padgett et al., 2015; Padgett & Morris, 2005). However, these studies used manipulations that suggested that the hiring of kin and nepotism are identical. Thus, whether kinship hiring per se is sufficient for people to infer that nepotism is at play is a question that is yet to be answered.

Nepotism and Fairness

The notion that the employment of relatives is considered unfair may have vast implications for organizations. For example, prior research revealed that perceived organizational unfairness is associated with lower organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Lambert et al., 2007). A lack of fairness is also associated with increased absenteeism and turnover intentions (Loi et al., 2006), and reduced physical and psychological well-being (Ybema & van den Bos, 2010).

Despite its prominence as a reason for rejecting the hiring of kin, few empirical studies have examined the causal link between the hiring of kin and fairness perceptions. In a correlational study, Spranger et al. (2012) found that higher kin-density (i.e., the proportion of genetic overlap among people working in the same organization) was associated with higher perceptions of nepotism. High perceptions of nepotism predicted a decrease in the overall perception of organizational justice among employees who did not have relatives in the organization, but not among those who did have such relatives. These findings provide initial evidence for the existence of a relationship between perceived nepotism and fairness. However, considering the correlational nature of the study, we cannot draw strong conclusions about the causal relationships between the hiring of kin, perceived nepotism and fairness perceptions. Moreover, since they did not take the competency and qualification of family members into account, it is still unclear whether the effect of kin-density on perceived nepotism was due to the family members lack of competence and qualification or that the prominence of family ties alone is sufficient to rise employees' perception of nepotism.

Nepotism and Cronyism

Nepotism is often seen as similar to cronyism, which refers to a reciprocal exchange transaction based on a shared social network (e.g., friendships, schools, fraternities; Khatri et al., 2006). However, the two constructs differ in several important ways. First, as explained above, nepotism involves what evolutionary biologists call kin-altruism (Hamilton, 1964), which means that nepotism can even occur in the absence of a perceived transaction or reciprocity, while these are defining aspects of cronyism. Second, nepotism is group-based by nature (i.e., family as a social group), whereas cronyism may work at the group level (e.g., fraternities) or at the interpersonal level (e.g., among two friends). Third, nepotism refers to groups in which memberships is ascribed (e.g., members are born into a family), whereas cronyism involves a group or interpersonal relationship in which membership is achieved through social endeavors (e.g., joining a fraternity, developing and investing in a close friendship). From these distinctions, it is clear that nepotism in organizations can only benefit particular kinship groups, while the scope of cronyism may be larger and can be strategically used by individuals to climb their career ladder, regardless of their kinship.

Overview of the Present Research

We present five studies in which we investigated what people construe as nepotism and the extent to which they see nepotism as unfair. In Studies 1 and 2, participants evaluated nepotism based on a vignette. We conducted Studies 3 and 4 among employees of various organizations in Indonesia where nepotism is common in business and politics. Study 3 focused on how employees evaluate the employment of relatives in their own organization in terms of distributive and procedural fairness. Study 4 compared perceptions and consequences of nepotism to those of cronyism. Study 5 focused on the harder "outcome" of perceived nepotism by examining how the perception of nepotism among potential job seekers impacts their willingness to join an organization.

2.1 Study 1

In this study, we proposed two alternative hypotheses. In line with previous work (Arasli et al., 2006; Sundell, 2014), it could be argued that observers would expect that people prioritize family members over non-family members. As a consequence, observers would view the decision to hire relatives as one based on family interests rather than based on organizational interests. Thus, regardless of competence, a kin relationship between an employee and an influential person within the organization would be sufficient for observers to believe that nepotism is at play (Hypothesis 1a). However, other work stressed that nepotism involves a violation of the meritocracy principle (Darioly & Riggio, 2014). Based on this work, it could be argued that observers would view the employment of family members as nepotism only if it involves incompetent family members (Hypothesis 1b).

We also examined how people perceive nepotistic employment in terms of deservingness. Referring to Feather (1999), deservingness is a central element of fairness perceptions. People deserve a certain outcome (e.g., obtaining a job) if they achieved the intended outcome by their personal efforts and qualities (e.g., competence). In contrast, people are considered undeserving when the outcome is viewed as resulting from external sources (e.g., kinship). If the perception of nepotism involves kinship regardless of competence (Hypothesis 1a), then the employment of relatives would also be seen as less deserving than the employment of non-relatives, regardless of competence (Hypothesis 2a). However, if the perception of nepotism involves an element of incompetence (Hypothesis 1b), then the employment of relatives would be seen as less deserving than the employment of non-relatives, but only when the relatives are considered incompetent (Hypothesis 2b).

Method

Participants

Participants were 101 Indonesian students (19 men, 82 women, M_{age} = 24.11, SD_{age} = 5.00) who participated on a voluntary basis. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions of a 2 (Kinship: no

kin vs. kin) x 2 (Competence: low vs. high) between-subjects experimental design. The study was an online survey.

Procedure

Whereas an organization's human resources department may have all the accurate information about an employee's competence and qualification for a job, other employees do not. In some cases, people do know exactly which candidates applied for a position (as well as their potential kinship ties to other members in the organization), and who was ultimately offered the position. However, in many cases, especially in large organizations, employees do not know such information. They learn about new employees and may hear rumors about kinship, but often have limited to no information regarding alternative candidates to use as a comparison. As such, employees often rely on limited and generic (e.g., stereotypical) information to judge or evaluate other employees. In line with this, participants in the current study were provided with limited information about a target person. They read a description of a target person (a man named Rahmad) working in the Provincial Tax office. The target's father was an entrepreneur (*no kin*) or head of the tax office (*kin*). The target's mother was the daughter of a professor in the Department of Biology (*no kin*) or Tax and Administration (*kin*) at a local university.[3] The target had earned a bachelor's and master's degree with a grade slightly below average (*low competence*) or cum laude (*high competence*) from a local (*low competence*) or world-class university (*high competence*).

Measures

After reading the description, a brief survey was administered. All answers were provided on 5-points rating scales (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much*). Scales were created by averaging the items. To ensure the effectiveness of the competence manipulation, we measured *perceived competence* by asking participants to what extent do they perceived the

[3] We included this information to simulate a real-life situation in which people tend to 'fill in the blanks' when interpreting social circumstances (Freeman, 1992). Thus, the description of the target's grandfather occupation served to strengthen nepotism perception in the kin condition.

target person as competent, intelligent, confident, competitive, and independent (5 items; $\alpha = .71$, see Fiske et al., 2002). We measured *perceived nepotism* with 2 items (e.g., "Rahmad's parents uses their connections and social status to get him to his job"; $r = .76$). We measured *perceived deservingness* using 2 items (e.g., " I think Rahmad deserve his job "; $r = .67$). Upon finishing, participants were thanked and debriefed.

Results

Unless otherwise indicated, all scales were analyzed in separate ANOVA's, with Kinship and Competence as independent variables. Unless relevant, we reported only significant results. An overview of means and effect sizes is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Overview of means and effects in Study 1

Kinship			Competence		
No kin	Kin	η^2	Low	High	η^2
Perceived nepotism					
2.47	3.03	.059	3.22	2.38	.179
(0.74)	(0.98)		(0.85)	(0.8)	
[2.24, 2.69]	[2.78, 3.29]		[2.98, 3.47]	[2.16, 2.61]	
Perceived competence					
3.53	3.12	.057	2.96	3.62	.233
(0.59)	(0.64)		(0.59)	(0.53)	
[3.35, 3.71]	[2.96, 3.29]		[2.79, 3.12]	[3.47, 3.77]	
Deservingness					
3.65	3.16	.040	2.95	3.77	.177
(0.92)	(0.86)		(0.74)	(0.89)	
[3.37, 3.94]	[2.94, 3.39]		[2.74, 3.16]	[3.52, 4.02]	

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses, 95% confidence intervals in square brackets.

Perceived Competence

Participants in the high competence condition perceived the target as more competent than participants in the low competence condition, $F(1, 97) = 30.80$, $p < .001$, demonstrating that the Competence manipulation was successful. Unexpectedly, Kinship also had a significant effect on perceived competence, $F(1, 97) = 7.85$, $p = .006$. Participants in the kin condition perceived the target as less competent than participants in the no kin condition.

Perceived Nepotism

Supporting Hypothesis 1a, Kinship had a significant effect on perceived nepotism, $F(1, 97) = 7.69$, $p = .007$. Participants in the kin condition

viewed the target's employment as more nepotistic than participants in the no kin condition. In contrast to Hypothesis 1b, Kinship and Competence did not interact, $F(1, 97) = 0.18$, $p = .672$. Unexpectedly, participants in the low competence condition also viewed the target's employment as more nepotistic than participants in the high competence condition, $F(1, 97) = 21.50$, $p < .001$.

Perceived Deservingness

Kinship had a significant effect on perceived deservingness, $F(1, 97) = 4.91$, $p = .029$. Supporting Hypothesis 2a, participants perceived the employment of kin as less deserving than the employment of no kin, regardless of the kin's competence. In contrast to Hypothesis 2b, Kinship and Competence did not interact, $F(1, 97) = 0.01$, $p = .913$. Finally, participants in the high competence condition perceived the employment of the target as more deserving than participants in the low competence condition, $F(1, 97) = 21.49$, $p < .001$.

Discussion

This study showed the unique effects of kinship and competence on perceptions of nepotism and deservingness. If the main concern about nepotism revolves around the lack of competence of kin, the information that kin is competent for a position should ease this concern. However, Study 1 showed that participants construed the employment of kin as nepotism regardless of the kin's competence. Participants also viewed the employment of kin as less deserving than the employment of no kin—again, regardless of competence.

Although the competence manipulation effectively influenced perceptions of the target's competence, participants unexpectedly perceived a target described as kin as less competent than a target described as no kin. They also attributed the hiring of a less competent target to nepotism, even when that person had no family ties to the organization. It is possible that participants attributed the employment success of the less competent person to nepotism (regardless of a lack of kinship) because we did not provide them with alternative options. We examined this possibility in Study 2.

2.2 Study 2

In Study 1, participants viewed the employment of a relative as less deserving than the employment of an unrelated target, regardless of the relative's described competence. This is incongruent with the principle of meritocracy, which is frequently referred to in opposition to nepotism. The meritocracy principle reflects distributive fairness, which revolves around the fairness of outcome distributions (Son Hing et al., 2011). In a distributively fair world, the ratio between a person's input (e.g., competence) and outcome (e.g., employment) should equate the ratio of input and outcome for relevant comparison others (Adams, 1965). Based on this principle of fairness, people should only view the employment of kin as less distributively fair when involving incompetent kin (Hypothesis 3), because competent kin is as deserving as competent people without family ties. However, as shown in Study 1, the fact that people viewed the employment of kin as undeserving regardless of competence suggests that there is more than meritocracy when people evaluate the employment of kin.

From the perspective of the group engagement model of procedural justice (Tyler & Blader, 2003), people would evaluate the employment of kin not only in light of meritocracy but also in terms of the procedure by which such employment decisions are made. Employees need a sense of procedural fairness because it conveys their belongingness to the organization. Belongingness is important because it provides employees with a sense of meaning, connectedness, self-esteem, and certainty (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg et al., 2008). The extent to which organizational members are treated in a procedurally fair way by their organization reflects the degree to which they are valued by the organization (van den Bos et al., 2001). If employees do not feel being valued by—and belong to—the organization they work for, they are more likely to exhibit counterproductive behaviors as means of protest, they are less willing to engage in extra-role behaviors (e.g., help co-workers), and they are likely to show low job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Tidwell, 2005). Such negative consequences make it imperative that we learn more about the impact of nepotism on employees perceived procedural fairness.

The literature on in-group favoritism suggests that people expect and believe that members of a group (including a family) would favor their own members over non-members (Everett et al., 2015). This expectation may lead organizational members to suspect that their authorities who hired kin have misused their power for familial interests (Wated & Sanchez, 2015). Such suspicions are likely to make people view their authorities as untrustworthy and biased, which can have a detrimental impact on organizational members' perceptions of procedural fairness (Tyler, 1989). From this point of view, people would perceive the employment of kin as less procedurally fair than the employment of no kin, irrespective of competence (Hypothesis 4).

Although conceptually distinct, procedural fairness and distributive fairness are clearly linked (Hauenstein et al., 2001). This is because unfair procedures often (but not always) produce unfair outcomes (Tyler, 1987). For example, when people receive a worse outcome than expected, their evaluation of this outcome is affected by the procedure by which the outcome is allocated (van den Bos et al., 1998). Moreover, procedural fairness influences perceptions of distributive fairness if people believe that the application of fair procedures would produce better outcomes (Folger, 1987). As argued in the previous, people may automatically suspect biases in the hiring of kin. This suspicion may lead them to believe that without such biases, their organization might be able to hire more competent individuals than those who seem to have kinship ties. We, therefore, expected that people's perception of distributive fairness concerning nepotism would be affected by their perception of procedural fairness (Hypothesis 5).

To further examine the unexpected main effect of kinship on perceived competence in Study 1, in Study 2 we also measured the likelihood of alternative reasons (besides nepotism) that employment might be attributed to (e.g., luck, racism). If nepotism involves the hiring of family members irrespective of competence (Hypothesis 1a), then people should not attribute the employment of incompetent non-relatives to nepotism when other explanations for this employment are readily available.

Method

Participants

Participants were 200 (110 men, 88 women, 2 other, M_{age} = 34.75, SD_{age} =10.9) Americans who were recruited through the online crowdsourcing program Prolific Academic. We placed them randomly into one of eight conditions of a 2 (Kinship: no kin vs. kin) × 2 (Competence: low vs. high) × 2 (Organization: private vs. governmental) between-subjects experimental design. They participated for a payment of 2 GBP (approximately 2.7 USD).

Procedure

Study 2 was similar to Study 1, with the following exceptions. The target was described as a White American man named James. James worked at the Internal Revenue Services (IRS: government organization) or at JP Morgan (a private organization).[4] James' father was an entrepreneur (*no kin*) or a person working at a leadership level in the IRS or JP Morgan (*kin*). James's grandfather was a professor in the Department of Biology (*no kin*) or Business School (*kin*) at a local university. James attained his degree either from a vocational school (*low competence*) or an ivy league university (*high competence*).

Measures

Unless otherwise indicated, all answers were assessed on 5-points rating scales (*1 = not at all* to *5 = very much*). Scales were made by averaging the items. The complete items are presented in the supplementary materials. Participants responded to *comprehension check* items to ensure that they understood the description correctly (e.g., "What is the name of the character in the description?", 5 items). The comprehension check items were made in a multiple-choice format, with one correct response. Participants were then asked to rate the likelihood of 11 possible causes that may explain James's employment (see Table 2.2

[4] According to the Edelman Trust Barometer (2017), people across the world are more distrustful toward governmental than toward private business institutions. The private vs. government factor was meant to control for the possibility that type of organization might influence the results of the study. Although type of organization (IRS vs. JP Morgan) did have main effects on several of the dependent measures in Study 2 (see supplementary materials), the effects did not interact with other variables.

for a complete list).[5] *Perceived competence* was measured with the same 5 items as in Study 1 (α = .86). *Perceived nepotism* was also measured with the same items in Study 1, with the addition of two new items (4 items; α = .96). We measured *distributive fairness* using 4 items (e.g., "Considering the qualification, it is not fair that James obtained the job"; α = .87). *Procedural fairness* was assessed with 8 items based on Leventhal's (1980) description of the accuracy, consistency, bias-suppression, and ethical rules of procedural justice (e.g., "In the recruitment process, James was treated favorably compared to other applicants"; α = .87). Upon completion of the study, participants were, thanked, debriefed, and paid.

Results

Unless otherwise indicated, the data were analyzed in separate ANOVA's, with Kinship and Competence as independent variables. Unless relevant, only significant effects are reported. Relevant and significant interactions were explored with simple-effects analyses.

Comprehension Check

Thirty-three participants failed to answer all 5 comprehension check items correctly. These participants were removed from further analyses so that the final sample involved 167 participants (89 Male, 77 Female, 1 Other; M_{age} = 34.60, SD_{age} = 10.87).

Attributions

The relevant means and effect sizes are presented Table 2.2. In line with Hypothesis 1a, compared to participants in the no kin condition, participants in the kin condition were more likely to attribute James's employment to family-ties, $F(1, 163) = 91.21$, $p < .001$, nepotism, $F(1, 163) = 15.46$, $p < .001$, and ability $F(1, 163) = 9.05$, $p = .003$, irrespective of the information provided regarding James' competence. In addition, participants in the high competence condition were more likely to attribute James' employment to effort, $F(1, 163) = 39.18$, $p < .001$, and ability, $F(1, 163) = 56.25$, $p < .001$, than participants in the

[5] Participants also ranked-ordered the 11 possible causes, which yielded similar results to their ratings (see supplementary materials).

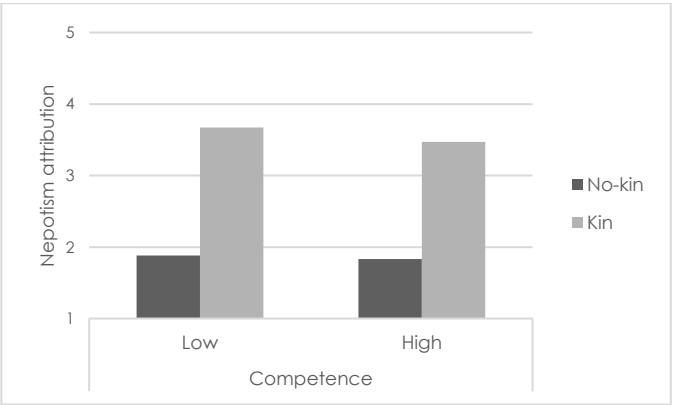

Figure 2.1. Nepotism attribution across condition in Study 2

low competence condition, regardless of James' kinship. All in all, these results provide support for Hypothesis 1a in demonstrating that participants attributed the employment of kin to nepotism, regardless of competence. In contrast to Study 1, but in line with our expectations, when participants were given more options to make their attribution, they ceased to attribute the employment of a low competent non-kin target to nepotism.

Perceived Competence and Nepotism

The means on competence, as a function of condition, are presented in Table 2.3. The effect of Kinship on perceived competence was significant, $F(1, 163) = 12.33$, $p = .001$. James was perceived as less competent in the kin condition than in the no kin condition, regardless of competence. The effect of competence on perceived competence was also significant, $F(1, 163) = 53.05$, $p < .001$. James was perceived as less competent in the low competence condition than in the high competence condition. The interaction of Kinship and Competence was marginally-significant, $F(1, 163) = 3.87$, $p = .051$. The effect of Kinship was significant in the low competence condition ($M_{No\ kin} = 3.37$, $SD_{No\ kin} = 0.75$, $M_{Kin} = 2.79$, $SD_{Kin} = 0.55$), $F(1, 163) = 15.09$, $p < .001$, but not in the high competence condition ($M_{No\ kin} = 3.94$, $SD_{No\ kin} =$

Table 2.2. The effects of Kinship and Competence on the attribution of target's hiring in Study 2

Kinship			Competence		
No kin	Kin	η^2	Low	High	η^2
Nepotism					
1.80	3.58	.360	2.76	2.60	.004
(1.12)	(1.27)		(1.56)	(1.42)	
[1.56, 2.04]	[3.3, 3.86]		[2.42, 3.1]	[2.29, 2.91]	
Family ties					
2.15	3.95	.356	3.15	2.94	.007
(1.24)	(1.20)		(1.51)	(1.52)	
[1.89, 2.42]	[3.69, 4.21]		[2.83, 3.48]	[2.61, 3.27]	
Effort					
3.67	3.07	.071	2.89	3.86	.180
(1.11)	(1.11)		(1.04)	(1.05)	
[3.43, 3.91]	[2.83, 3.32]		[2.67, 3.12]	[3.63, 4.08]	
Ability					
3.52	3.1	.040	2.76	3.87	.246
(1.16)	(1.05)		(0.98)	(0.98)	
[3.27, 3.77]	[2.87, 3.33]		[2.55, 2.97]	[3.65, 4.08]	
Luck					
2.71	2.46	.011	2.71	2.46	.011
(1.14)	(1.23)		(1.15)	(1.22)	
[2.47, 2.96]	[2.19, 2.73]		[2.47, 2.96]	[2.19, 2.72]	
Discrimination based on physical disabilities					
1.42	1.27	.011	1.35	1.34	.000
(0.76)	(0.66)		(0.74)	(0.7)	
[1.25, 1.58]	[1.12, 1.41]		[1.19, 1.51]	[1.18, 1.49]	
Discrimination based on age					
1.46	1.35	.006	1.43	1.39	.001
(0.7)	(0.74)		(0.76)	(0.68)	
[1.31, 1.62]	[1.19, 1.51]		[1.26, 1.59]	[1.24, 1.53]	
Racism					
1.48	1.55	.002	1.55	1.48	.001
(0.83)	(0.98)			(0.8)	
[1.3, 1.66]	[1.34, 1.77]		[1.33, 1.76]	[1.31, 1.66]	
Ethnocentrism					
1.52	1.57	.001	1.56	1.53	.000
(0.88)	(0.89)			(0.75)	
[1.33, 1.72]	[1.37, 1.76]		[1.34, 1.78]	[1.37, 1.69]	
Sexism					
1.62	1.59	.000	1.69	1.52	.007
(0.99)	(1.01)		(1.14)	(0.83)	
[1.4, 1.83]	[1.37, 1.81]		[1.44, 1.94]	[1.34, 1.7]	
Sexual prejudice (e.g., homophobic)					
1.29	1.28	.000	1.30	1.27	.001
(0.70)	(0.63)		(0.74)	(0.59)	
[1.13, 1.44]	[1.14, 1.41]		[1.14, 1.46]	[1.14, 1.39]	

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses, 95% confidence intervals in square brackets.

Table 2.3. Means and effects of Kinship and Competence on perceived competence, nepotism, distributive and procedural fairness in Study 2

Kinship			Competence		
No kin	Kin	η^2	Low	High	η^2
Perceived nepotism					
1.97	3.50	.325	2.99	2.46	.043
(1.13)	(1.1)		(1.41)	(1.24)	
[1.72, 2.22]	[3.26, 3.74]		[2.69, 3.3]	[2.19, 2.74]	
Perceived competence					
3.65	3.29	.053	3.09	3.86	.228
(0.78)	(0.82)		(0.72)	(0.72)	
[3.48, 3.82]	[3.11, 3.47]		[2.93, 3.24]	[3.7, 4.02]	
Distributive fairness					
3.89	3.33	.000	3.14	4.09	.042
(0.90)	(1.07)		(1.01)	(0.79)	
[3.69, 4.08]	[3.1, 3.57]		[2.92, 3.36]	[3.92, 4.26]	
Procedural fairness					
3.56	2.71	.039	2.94	3.34	.006
(0.83)	(0.77)		(0.93)	(0.83)	
[3.38, 3.74]	[2.55, 2.88]		[2.74, 3.14]	[3.16, 3.53]	

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses, 95% confidence intervals in square brackets.

0.70, M_{Kin} = 3.78, SD_{Kin} = 0.74), $F(1, 163) = 1.18$, $p = .278$, meaning that James was viewed less competent by participants in the low competence kin condition than participants in the low competence no kin condition.

Consistent with Study 1, the effect of Kinship on perceived nepotism was significant, $F(1, 163) = 82.06$, $p < .001$. In line with Hypothesis 1a, participants in the kin condition more strongly attributed the hiring of James to nepotism than participants in the no kin condition, regardless of competence (see Table 2.3). The effect of Competence on perceived nepotism was also significant, $F(1, 163) = 10.52$, $p = .001$. Participants in the low competence condition more strongly attributed the hiring of James to nepotism than participants in the high competence condition. The interaction between Kinship and Competence was not significant, showing no support for Hypothesis 1b, $F(1, 163) = 1.02$, $p = .314$. As in Study 1, these results showed that, without the presence of alternative options, participants attributed the employment of a low competent non-kin person to nepotism.

Distributive and Procedural Fairness

The correlation between distributive and procedural fairness was significant ($r = .61$, $p < .001$). According to (Hauenstein et al., 2001), it is important for research concerning different forms of fairness to recognize the possibility of common variance. We, therefore, included procedural fairness as a covariate when analyzing distributive fairness, and distributive fairness as a covariate when analyzing procedural fairness.

Competence had a significant main effect on distributive fairness, $F(1, 162) = 36.61$, $p < .001$. Participants in the high competence condition perceived James's employment as more distributively fair than participants in the low competence condition (see Table 2.3). The effect of Kinship was also significant, $F(1, 162) = 4.34$, $p = .039$. The interaction of Kinship and Competence was not significant, showing no support for Hypothesis 3, $F(1, 162) = 1.20$, $p = .276$.

Regarding procedural fairness, Kinship had a significant main effect, $F(1, 162) = 6.76$, $p = .010$. In line with Hypothesis 4, participants in the kin condition perceived James's employment as procedurally less fair than participants in the no kin condition (see Table 2.3). The effect of Competence was not significant, $F(1, 162) = 0.05$, $p = .828$ (see Table 2.3).

We tested whether procedural fairness would mediate the effect of Kinship on distributive fairness using PROCESS, model 4 (Hayes, 2013). Kinship was entered as an independent variable, Competence and the interaction term (Kinship x Competence) as covariates, procedural fairness as a mediator, and distributive fairness as the outcome variable. The fact that zero was not included in the 95% confidence interval (boot indirect effect -.39; 95%CI: -0.60, -.22) indicates that procedural fairness mediated the effect of Kinship on distributive fairness. This supports the prediction that participants evaluated James' employment as distributively unfair because they viewed his employment as procedurally unfair (Hypothesis 5).

Discussion

In Study 2, we examined how the employment of kin affects people's perceptions of procedural and distributive fairness as well as their

perception of what constitutes nepotism. In line with Hypothesis 4, participants primarily perceived the employment of kin as procedurally unfair, and in turn also distributively unfair. Thus, the issue of whether the employment of family members is considered fair primarily revolves around concerns about the fairness of the *procedure*, and secondarily about the fairness of the *outcome*.

Study 2 strengthened the support for Hypothesis 1a by showing that participants perceived the employment of kin as nepotism, regardless of competence. It also tackled a limitation of Study 1 by showing that, when participants were presented with alternative causes, they no longer attributed the employment of incompetent non-relatives to nepotism. Additionally, we found that participants were less likely to attribute the employment of kin to effort and ability. These first two studies suggest that nepotism is perceived as the employment of kin, regardless of competence.

2.3 Study 3

The vignette approach used in the previous studies is useful for examining topics that are sensitive and difficult to manipulate. However, it is also criticized for its lack of realism (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). We, therefore, opted for a more realistic approach for Studies 3 and 4. In both Studies, participants were organizational employees who were asked to judge the employment of a specific person within their own organization.

Both studies were conducted in Indonesia, which is relevant because it has been suggested that although nepotism is universal, its manifestation is to some extent influenced by cultural values (Wated & Sanchez, 2012). Indeed, collectivism among Ecuadorian managers was found to be associated with their tolerance toward the practice of nepotism (Wated & Sanchez, 2015). Thus, given the greater prevalence (and tolerance) of nepotism in collectivistic cultures the current Indonesian studies may be seen as a conservative test of the current hypotheses.

In Indonesia, nepotism became an important public issue during the Indonesian reformation movement in 1998 (Robertson-Snape, 1999). Since then, nepotism is considered a violation of the Indonesian

constitution (Republic of Indonesia Law Number 28 Year 1999). However, whereas the majority of Indonesians view nepotism as undesirable (Melano, 2017), it remains commonplace in Indonesian politics and businesses. For example, the political reign of the Banten province is firmly in the hands of the Atut family (Ratu Atut is a former Governor), where Atut's relatives (e.g., son, mother, sisters, cousins, etc.) occupy various strategic political and business positions (Shatiri, 2013).

The primary aim of Study 3 was to replicate our previous findings in this more realistic context. Guided by the previous studies, we further hypothesized that participants would primarily view the employment of kin (as compared to non-kin) as more unfair in terms of procedural fairness (Hypothesis 4). The low perception of procedural fairness would lead to the perception that the employment of kin is also unfair in terms of distributive fairness (Hypothesis 5).

Method

Participants

Participants were 228 employees (109 men, 119 women, M_{age} = 27.68, SD_{age} = 8.11) of 10 different organizations in Indonesia. They were assigned to a 2 (Kinship: no kin vs. kin) × 2 (Competence: low vs. high) between-subjects design. They were given a lunch package as compensation for their participation.

Procedure

In general, we approached participants during their lunch-break in their office restaurant. In some cases, participants requested to make an appointment at a restaurant outside of their office. Participants completed the study individually. We asked participants to think about a real person who worked in their organization. The target person had to be someone who did not have (*no kin*) or did have (*kin*) a relative in an executive or influential position in that same organization. The target should also be someone that they view as incompetent or under-qualified (*low competence*) or as competent and qualified, though not overqualified (*high competence*). To ensure that participants followed our instructions, we asked them to write a brief description of the target

person. Inspection of the descriptions showed that all participants had correctly understood and followed the instructions.

Measures

Unless otherwise indicated, all answers were assessed on 6-point scales (*1 = not at all* to *6 = very much).* Scales were made by averaging the items. We measured *perceived competence* the same way as in Studies 1 and 2, but added 5 items (10 items; e.g., "skillful", "incapable" [R]; α = .91).[6] We assessed *distributive fairness* (α = .83) and *procedural fairness* (α = .83) using the same items as in Study 2. Upon finishing, participants were thanked, debriefed, and given a lunch package.

Results

Unless otherwise indicated, all scales were analyzed in separate ANOVA's with Kinship and Competence as independent variables. Unless relevant, only significant effects are reported. Relevant interactions were explored with simple-effects analyses. An overview of means and effect sizes is presented in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4. Overview of means and effects in Study 3

Kinship			Competence		
No kin	Kin	η^2	Low	High	η^2
Perceived competence					
4.27	4.32	.001	3.61	4.95	.513
(0.99)	(0.89)		(0.76)	(0.54)	
[4.09, 4.46]	[4.15, 4.48]		[3.47, 3.75]	[4.85, 5.05]	
Distributive fairness					
4.18	3.88	.002	3.27	4.76	.187
(1.15)	(1.12)		(0.91)	(0.83)	
[3.96, 4.39]	[3.67, 4.09]		[3.09, 3.44]	[4.61, 4.91]	
Procedural fairness					
4.18	3.80	.026	3.59	4.38	.000
(0.84)	(0.90)		(0.84)	(0.76)	
[4.02, 4.34]	[3.63, 3.96]		[3.43, 3.74]	[4.24, 4.51]	

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses, 95% confidence intervals in square brackets.

[6] We added the five additional items to assess whether participants in the kin condition were ambivalent in their rating of the target person's competence. Inspection of the data did not suggest any ambivalence.

Perceived Competence

Confirming the effectiveness of the competence manipulation, the target was perceived as more competent in the high competence condition than in the low competence condition, $F(1, 225) = 239.22$, $p < .001$. Kinship did not affect perceived competence, $F(1, 225) = 0.54$, $p = .462$. The interaction was also non-significant, $F(1, 225) = 1.83$, $p = .177$.

Distributive and Procedural Fairness

As in Study 2, distributive and procedural fairness were highly correlated ($r = .62$, $p < .001$). Therefore, we included procedural fairness as a covariate when analyzing distributive fairness, and distributive fairness as a covariate when analyzing procedural fairness. Consistent with Study 2, participants in the high competence condition viewed the target's employment as more distributively fair than participants in the low competence condition, $F(1, 224) = 91.63$, $p < .001$. Kinship did not affect distributive fairness, $F(1, 224) = 0.52$, $p = .469$. The interaction between Kinship and Competence was marginally-significant, $F(1, 224) = 3.61$, $p = .059$. Further examination revealed that the effect of Kinship was not significant in the low competence condition ($M_{No\ kin} = 3.34$, $SD_{No\ kin} = 0.88$, $M_{Kin} = 3.19$, $SD_{Kin} = 0.94$), $F(1, 224) = 0.63$, $p = .430$, and marginally-significant in the high competence condition ($M_{No\ kin} = 4.95$, $SD_{No\ kin} = 0.77$, $M_{Kin} = 4.56$, $SD_{Kin} = 0.84$), $F(1, 224) = 3.56$, $p = .061$. Thus, in line with Study 2, Hypothesis 3 was not supported: participants did not exclusively view the employment of low competence kin as more distributively unfair than the employment of high competence kin.

Consistent with Study 2, and supporting Hypothesis 4, participants in the no kin condition were more likely to view the procedure by which the target person was employed as fair than participants in the kin condition, $F(1, 224) = 7.81$, $p = .006$. The effect of competence on procedural fairness was not significant, $F(1, 224) = 1.40$, $p = .238$. The interaction between Kinship and Competence on procedural fairness was significant, $F(1, 224) = 4.34$, $p = .038$. Further testing revealed that the effect of Kinship was significant in the low competence condition ($M_{No\ kin} = 3.85$, $SD_{No\ kin} = 0.83$, $M_{Kin} = 3.33$, $SD_{Kin} = 0.76$), $F(1, 224) = 11.79$, $p = .001$, but not in the high competence condition ($M_{No\ kin} = 4.49$, $SD_{No\ kin} = 0.73$, $M_{Kin} = 4.26$, $SD_{Kin} = 0.78$), $F(1, 224) = 0.27$, $p = .602$.

This means that the employment of low competence kin was seen as less procedurally fair than that of a low competence no kin, but the employment of high competence kin was seen as equally fair as the employment of high competence no kin.

Finally, we conducted a mediation analysis the same way as in Study 2. The indirect effect of kinship on distributive fairness via procedural fairness was significant (boot indirect effect -.27; 95%CI: -.466, -.122). Consistent with Study 2, and supporting Hypothesis 5, participants evaluated the employment of kin as less distributively fair than the employment of no kin, because the employment of kin was seen as less procedurally fair than the employment of no kin. We also checked whether distributive fairness mediated the effect of condition on procedural fairness. The results indicated that this was not the case (*boot indirect effect* = -0.07, 95%CI: -0.219, 0.081).

Discussion

Using a realistic setting in which organizational employees responded to nepotism in their own organization, the results from this third study are generally consistent with those from the previous studies. Supporting Hypothesis 4, organizational employees evaluated the employment of kin within their organization primarily in terms of procedural fairness. The employment of kin was seen as less procedurally fair than the employment of no kin. The results also provided support for Hypothesis 5, demonstrating that perceptions of procedural fairness seeped through to perceptions of distributive fairness.

2.4 Study 4

Nepotism is often seen as similar to *cronyism*, which refers to a reciprocal exchange transaction based on a shared social network (e.g., friendships, schools, fraternities; (Khatri et al., 2006). Whereas social networks are considered a form of social capital that could enhance individuals' success in their occupation, the use of social contacts to obtain a job is often viewed as undesirable, both in Western and Eastern societies (Ainley et al., 2012; Flap & Boxman, 2017). The aim of the fourth study in this paper was to disentangle perceptions of nepotism from perceptions of cronyism.

Although both nepotism and cronyism involve the use of social capital for personal advancement (Jones & Stout, 2015), successful inclusion in a network of cronies and the resulting social capital is determined by individuals' effort and social competence (Lans et al., 2015). The involvement of effort and social competence may lead people to believe cronyism is more acceptable than nepotism. Moreover, to benefit from cronyism, people do not invest in a random relationship with a group or person, but in a relationship with a group or person that they believe could benefit them. For example, people may perceive a manager's favoring of friends (i.e., cronyism) as a sign that the manager is a good reciprocator worthy of social investment for a future social exchange. We thus expected people would perceive the hiring of a friend as procedurally fairer than the hiring of kin (Hypothesis 4).

Method

Participants

Participants were 204 (97 men, 107 women, M_{age} = 29.05, SD_{age} = 9.47) employees of 18 different organizations in Indonesia. They were randomly assigned to the six conditions of a 3 (Relationship: kin vs. crony vs. stranger) × 2 (Competence: low vs. high) between-subjects design.

Procedure

The procedure was similar to that of Study 3. To manipulate Relationship, participants in the *kin* condition and those in the *stranger* condition were instructed the same way as those in the kin and no kin conditions of Study 3. Participants in the *crony* condition were instructed to think of a target person in their organization who had a friendship relation with someone in a prominent position, before getting employed in their organization. Competence was manipulated the same way as in Study 3.

Measures

We measured *perceived competence* (α = .92), *distributive fairness* (α = .86) and *procedural fairness* (α = .80) using the same items as in Study 3.

Results

Unless otherwise indicated, all scales were analyzed in separate ANOVA's with Relationship and Competence as independent variables. Unless relevant, we reported only significant effects. Relevant interactions were explored with simple-effects analyses. Relevant means and statistical information are presented in Table 2.5.

Perceived Competence

Confirming the effectiveness of the competence manipulation, participants in the high competence condition perceived the target as

Table 2.5. Overview of means and effects in Study 4

Relationship				Competence		
Stranger	Friend	Family	η^2	Low	High	η^2
Perceived competence						
4.25	4.26	4.31	.003	3.59	4.86	.046
(0.91)	(0.95)	(1.08)		(0.69)	(0.72)	
[4.02, 4.47]	[4.13, 4.4]	[4.04, 4.58]		[3.45, 3.73]	[4.73, 5]	
Distributive fairness						
3.92	3.99	3.92	.003	3.38	4.54	.051
(1.14)	(1.12)	(1.20)		(0.88)	(1.02)	
[3.64, 4.2]	[3.84, 4.14]	[3.61, 4.22]		[3.2, 3.56]	[4.34, 4.73]	
Procedural fairness						
3.95	3.8	3.44	.024	3.54	4.03	.001
(0.95)	(0.84)	(0.77)		(0.79)	(0.83)	
[3.72, 4.18]	[3.68, 3.91]	[3.24, 3.63]		[3.38, 3.69]	[3.87, 4.19]	

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses, 95% confidence intervals in square brackets.

more competent than participants in the low competence condition, $F(1, 198) = 180.14$, $p < .001$. The effect of Relationship on perceived competence was not significant, $F(2, 198) = 0.85$, $p = .431$. As in Study 2, the interaction between Relationship and Competence was significant, $F(2, 198) = 4.17$, $p = .017$. The effect of Relationship on perceived competence was marginal in the low competence condition ($M_{Stranger} = 3.67$, $SD_{Stranger} = 0.85$, $M_{Crony} = 3.61$, $SD_{Crony} = 0.63$, $M_{Kin} = 3.25$, $SD_{Kin} = 0.71$), $F(2, 198) = 2.80$, $p = .063$, and not significant in the high competence condition ($M_{Stranger} = 4.68$, $SD_{Stranger} = 0.81$, $M_{Crony} = 4.95$, $SD_{Crony} = 0.61$, $M_{Kin} = 5.00$, $SD_{Kin} = 0.69$), $F(2, 198) = 2.07$, $p = .129$.

Distributive and Procedural Fairness

As in the previous studies, distributive and procedural fairness were correlated (r = .66, p < .001). We included procedural fairness as a covariate when analyzing distributive fairness, and distributive fairness as a covariate when analyzing procedural fairness. A graphical representation of procedural fairness is presented in Figure 2.2, and distributive fairness in Figure 2.3.

Competence had a significant effect on perceptions of distributive fairness, $F(1, 196) = 51.75$, $p < .001$. Participants in the low competence condition perceived the employment of the target as less distributively fair than participants in the high competence condition. The effect of Relationship was marginally significant, $F(2, 196) = 3.04$, $p = .050$.

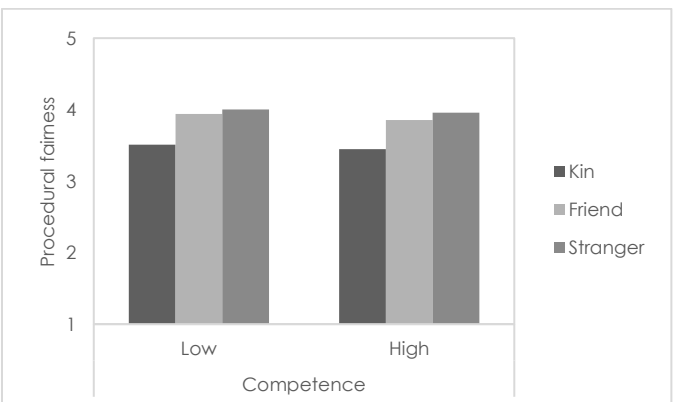

Figure 2.2. Procedural fairness across conditions in Study 4

Multiple comparisons using Sidak posthoc tests showed that the evaluation of distributive fairness did not differ between the kin and crony conditions (p = .923), and the crony and stranger conditions (p = .166). The difference between participants in the kin and stranger conditions was marginal (p = .067). The employment of a stranger was seen as somewhat more unfair than the employment of kin. The

interaction between Relationship and Competence was not significant, again, indicating no support for Hypothesis 3, $F(2, 196) = 1.55$, $p = .215$.

Supporting Hypothesis 4, Relationship had a significant main effect on procedural fairness, $F(2, 196) = 12.26$, $p < .001$. Multiple comparison using Sidak showed that participants in the kin condition evaluated the employment of the target person as less procedurally fair than participants in the crony ($p < .001$) and stranger ($p < .001$) conditions. Participants in the crony and stranger conditions did not differ in their evaluation of procedural fairness ($p = .793$). Competence did not affect procedural fairness, $F(1, 196) = 0.45$, $p = .502$. Relationship and Competence did not interact, $F(2, 196) = 0.01$, $p = .985$.

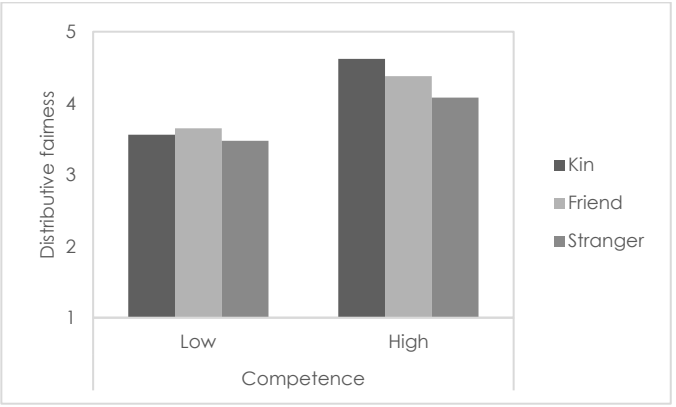

Figure 2.3. Distributive fairness across conditions in Study 4

We tested whether procedural fairness mediated the effect of Relationship on distributive fairness. Since Relationship comprised three categories, we created dummies for the kin and crony conditions, with the stranger condition treated as a point of reference. We then created the interaction terms (Kin × Competence, Crony × Competence). We subsequently conducted the mediation analysis the same way as in the previous studies but adding Crony and the interaction terms as covariates. Supporting Hypothesis 5, participants evaluated the

employment of kin as less distributively fair than the employment of no kin, because the employment of kin was seen as less procedurally fair than the employment of no kin, boot indirect effect -.55, 95%CI = -.910 to -.254. We also tested the indirect effect of Crony on distributive fairness via procedural fairness, substituting 'Kin' with 'Crony' in the previous analysis. The boot indirect effect of Crony to distributive fairness via procedural fairness was not significant, boot indirect effect .03, 95%CI = -.286 to .335. Finally, we tested whether distributive fairness mediated the effect of kinship on procedural fairness. The results showed that this was not the case (*boot indirect effect* -0.03, 95%CI: -0.203, 0.143).

Discussion

In line with Hypothesis 4, participants evaluated nepotism as procedurally more unfair than cronyism and the employment of strangers. Interestingly, whereas cronyism is generally thought of as equally unfair as nepotism, the current results indicate that the employment of cronies was seen as less procedurally unfair than the employment of kin, and equally fair to the employment of strangers. We also found further support for Hypothesis 5 by showing that the reason participants perceived the employment of kin as distributively unfair was because they perceived it as procedurally unfair. All in all, Study 4 demonstrated the unique effect of nepotism on employees' perceptions of fairness.

2.5 Study 5

The aim of the fifth study was to examine the impact of perceived nepotism on a behavioral outcome, namely potential job seekers' preference to join an organization perceived as nepotistic. The study was conducted among master's students from three reputable universities in the same region in the Republic of Indonesia. We refer to these as university A, B, and C. In this region, the general qualification for a teaching position at a university is a master's degree. Since participants (university students) were potential candidates to apply for such positions in the future, we asked them about their preference to apply for teaching positions at university A, B, and C. University A is known as the most prestigious in the region, but it is also regarded as the most

nepotistic compared to the other two universities. Considering (Gilliland, 1993) model of perceived fairness of selection system, perceived nepotism among job applicants may reduce an organization's access to the job seekers pool. This means that participants would have a greater preference to apply for a position at universities B and C compared to university A, despite university A's higher prestige (Hypothesis 6).

We also included additional measures to explore the relationship between perceived nepotism and trust in the organization, as well as perceived organizational citizenship behaviors and counterproductive behaviors. The previous studies already showed that perceived nepotism is detrimental because people assume that the organization violates important principles of procedural fairness, which could negatively impact feelings of trust and perceptions of organizational climate (Wong et al., 2006).

Method

Participants

Participants were 176 master's students from three universities in Medan, North Sumatera, Indonesia. As 13 participants had too many missing or unanswered responses, their data were not included in further analyses. The final sample comprised 163 master's students (112 women, 48 men, 3 did not indicate their gender, M_{Age} = 27.27, SD_{Age} = 6.58). They participated in exchange for a small package containing a pen, notebook, snack, and soft-drink worth appr. 2 Euros. Some participants were approached in their classroom, and some were approached privately by appointments. They all completed the study individually.

Procedure

After obtaining their consent, participants examined three job announcements from three different universities. The three universities are existing universities and each participant was enrolled in one of them. We will refer to the universities as university A, university B, and university C. The job announcements differed in their layout and specific wording to ensure a realistic appearance, but all advertised a teaching position that was open to candidates with a (soon to be

obtained) master's degree, irrespective of their specific subject or area of expertise (a type of advertising common in the region). The link between a specific advertisement and a specific university was randomized. University A is generally considered to be the more nepotistic university, compared to the other two universities.

Measures

After reading the three job-announcements, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire. The degree of *perceived nepotism* of each of the three universities was assessed using five items (e.g., “Family members of prominent officials are top priorities for hire in this university”; $\alpha_{\text{university A}} = .91$, $\alpha_{\text{university B}} = .87$, $\alpha_{\text{university C}} = .85$; 1 = *not at all agree* - 5 = *very much agree*). Participants’ expectation of the three universities degree of *secretiveness* was assessed using 5 items taken from Rawlins (2008: e.g., "Provides information that is intentionally written in a way to make it difficult to understand"; $\alpha_{\text{university A}} = .75$, $\alpha_{\text{university B}} = .75$, $\alpha_{\text{university C}} = .77$; 1 = *not at all agree* - 5 = *very much agree*). Participants’ expected *organizational citizenship behaviors* among employees of the three universities was assessed using 10 items taken from Spector et al. (2010: e.g., "Take time to advise, coach, or mentor a co-worker"; $\alpha_{\text{university A}} = .86$, $\alpha_{\text{university B}} = .86$, $\alpha_{\text{university C}} = .88$; 1 = *never* - 5 = *everyday*). Participants’ expected *counterproductive behaviors* among employees of the three universities were assessed using 10 items taken from Spector et al. (2010: e.g., "Purposely wasted your employer's materials/supplies"; $\alpha_{\text{university A}} = .92$, $\alpha_{\text{university B}} = .90$, $\alpha_{\text{university C}} = .87$; 1 = *never* - 5 = *everyday*). Participants' *trust* in the three universities was assessed using four items adapted from Nyhan and Marlowe (1997: e.g., "My level of confidence that this organization will treat me fairly is..."; $\alpha_{\text{university A}} = .81$, $\alpha_{\text{university B}} = .77$, $\alpha_{\text{university C}} = .81$; 1 = ; *nearly 0* - 5 = *near 100%*). How participants rated their *own competence* to apply for a job at each university was assessed with 3 items (e.g., "Competent for the position?", "Qualified for the position?"; $\alpha_{\text{university A}} = .90$, $\alpha_{\text{university B}} = .90$, $\alpha_{\text{university C}} = .91$; 1 = *not at all* - 5 = *very much*).

Subsequently, participants rank-ordered the three universities in terms of nepotism (*Nepotism ranking*: 1 = *highest importance of kinship*, 2 = *middle importance of kinship*, 3 = *lowest importance of kinship*) and reputation (*Reputation ranking*: 1 = *highest reputation*, 2 =

middle reputation, 3 = *lowest reputation*). Finally, participants' *job-application preference* was assessed with one item ("If these three universities all announce a job opening at the same time and you can only apply for one of them, which organization will you apply for?"; "*university A*", "*university B*", or "*university C*"). On completion, participants were thanked, debriefed, and given their compensation.

Results

Nepotism and Reputation Ranking

In terms of nepotism, Friedman's test showed that participants ranked the three universities in a unique pattern, $\chi^2(2) = 31.67$, $p < .001$. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that participants ranked university A as more nepotistic than both university B ($Z = -3.62$, $p < .001$) and university C ($Z = -5.10$, $p < .001$), and they ranked university B as more nepotistic than university C ($Z = -2.16$, $p = .031$). The median ranking was 1 for university A, 2 for university B, and 3 for university C. These results showed that, in line with general perceptions in the region, participants viewed university A as the most nepotistic university compared to the other two universities.

The next analysis was about whether participants considered university A as the highest in terms of reputation compared to the other two universities. A Friedman test showed that participants ranked the three universities in a unique pattern, $\chi^2(2) = 135.99$, $p < .001$. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that university A was ranked as more prestigious than both university B ($Z = -5.78$, $p < .001$) and that university C ($Z = -7.67$, $p < .001$), and university B was ranked as more prestigious than university C ($Z = -5.45$, $p < .001$). The median ranking was 1 for university A, 2 for university B, and 3 for university C. These results showed that participants considered university A as the most prestigious university compared to the other two universities.

Perceptions and Expectations of the Three Universities

In addition to ranking the universities in terms of nepotism we next analyzed the items assessing in a more continuous manner how nepotistic a university was perceived to be. A repeated-measures ANOVA showed that participants perceived university A as more nepotistic ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.01$) than university B ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.95$)

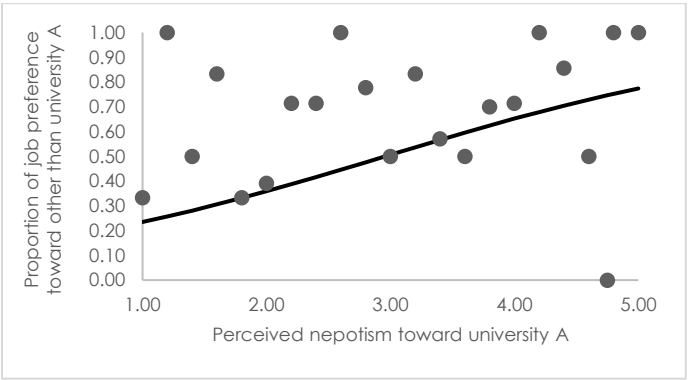

Figure 2.4. Job preference for a university other than university A as a function of perceived nepotism at university A

and university C (M = 2.88, SD = 0.87), although the difference was just marginally significant, $F(1.59, 251.52) = 2.46$, $p = .097$. This means that, although university A was ranked as the most nepotistic university, participants' perceived nepotism at this university was only slightly higher than the other two universities. Participants' expected organizational citizenship behaviors, counterproductive behaviors, trust, and perceived own competence to apply for a job at the three universities were all not significantly different across the three universities (see supplementary materials).

Preference to Apply for a Position at University A

Participants' preference to apply for a job at university A was analyzed through multinomial regression analysis in which perceived nepotism at university A was entered as predictor and preference for applying at university A was treated as the point of reference, while controlling for participants' perceived own competence for a position at university A as well as their current university affiliation (University A as reference point). The final model fitted the data well, *-2 Log likelihood* = 241.36, χ^2 (8) = 79.78, $p < .001$. The effect of perceived nepotism at University A on participants' preference to apply for a job to this university was significant, *-2 log likelihood of reduced model* = 250.39, χ^2 (2) = 9.03,

p = .011. Specifically, higher perceived nepotism at university A was associated with a higher likelihood for participants to prefer applying for a job at university B compared university A, B = 0.55, SE = 2.53, *Wald* = 4.77, *exp(B)* = 1.64, p = .029. Perceived nepotism at university A was also associated with a higher preference to apply for a job at university C than university A, B = 0.64, SE = 0.24, *Wald* = 7.40, *exp(B)* = 1.90, p = .007. A graphical representation of participants' preference for university A is presented in Figure 2.4.

The effect of participants' current university affiliation was also significant, *-2 log likelihood of reduced model* = 307. 61, χ^2 (4) = 66.25, $p < .001$. Specifically, relative to master's students from university A, master's students from university B, B = 4.29, SE = 0.72, *Wald* = 35.27, *exp(B)* = 73.00, $p < .001$, and master's students from university C, B = 2.10, SE = 0.59, *exp(B)* = 8.20, $p < .001$, were more likely to apply for a job at university B than university A. Relative to master's students from university A, master's students from university B, B = 1.50, SE = 0.75, *Wald* = 3.97, *exp(B)* = 4.48, p = .046, and master's students form university C, B = 1.27, SE = 0.49, *Wald* = 6.92, *exp(B)* = 3.62, p = .009, were also more likely to apply for a job at university C than university A. The effect of perceived own competence to apply for a job at university A was not significant, -2 log likelihood of reduced model = 245.57, χ2 (2) = 4.20, p = .123.

All in all, although participants ranked university A as the most prestigious university, perceived nepotism at university A reduced their preference to apply for a job at this university. This effect was significant while controlling for participants' tendency to favor the university they were currently affiliated with, as well as their perceived own qualification for a job at university A.

Preference to Apply for a Job at University B

We repeated the previous analysis, substituting perceived nepotism and perceived own competence with those regarding university B. The final model fitted the data well, *-2 log likelihood* = 235.64, χ^2 (8) = 79.62, $p < .001$. The effect of participants' current university affiliation, *-2 log likelihood of reduced model* = 292.84, χ^2(4) = 57.83, $p < .001$, and perceived own competence to apply for a job at university B, *-2 log likelihood of reduced model* = 247.98, χ^2 (2) = 12.34, p = .002, were

Table 2.6. Within-university correlations in Study 6

		University A					University B					University C				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	Perceived nepotism															
2	Secretive	.35**					.24**					.25**				
3	Organizational citizenship behaviors	-.19*	-.12				-.16*	-.16*				-.17*	-.26**			
4	Counterproductive work behaviors	.24**	.27**	-.07			.26**	.20*	-.03			.30**	0.13	.024		
5	Trust toward organization	-.44**	-.09	.27**	-.29**		-.37**	-.16	.25**	-.36**		-.19*	-.18*	.22**	-.37**	
6	Perceived own-competence	-.25**	-.15	.22**	-.13	.44**	-.31**	-.12	.12	-.09	.42**	-.13	-.02	.18*	-.11	.47**

significant. However, the effect of perceived nepotism at university B was not significant, *-2 log likelihood of reduced model* = 239.96, χ^2 (2) = 4.32, p = .115.

Preference to Apply for a Job at University C

We repeated the previous analysis for university C. The final model fitted the data well, *-2 log likelihood* = 248.29, χ^2 (8) = 67.42, $p < .001$. However, only the effect of participants' current university affiliation was significant, *-2 log likelihood of reduced model* = 313.70, $\chi^2(4) = 65.41$, $p < .001$. The effects of perceived nepotism at university C, *-2 log likelihood of reduced model* = 251.36, $\chi^2(2) = 3.07$, $p = .216$, and perceived own competence to apply for a job at university C, *-2 log likelihood of reduced model* = 249.15, $\chi^2(2) = 0.85$, $p = .653$, were not significant.

Within-University Correlations

As shown in Table 2.6, for each university, there was a consistent pattern showing that the more participants perceived the university to be nepotistic, the more they evaluated that university as secretive, and as having lower levels of organizational citizenship behaviors and higher levels of counterproductive work behaviors among its employees. Higher levels of perceived nepotism at each university was also associated with lower trust in that university.

Discussion

This study showed that the management of perceived nepotism is not only important among current employees of an organization but also among potential job seekers. Specifically, we showed that even though participants considered university A as the most prestigious compared to two other universities, their perception of nepotism at university A made them more inclined to apply for a job at either university B or C. The effect of perceived nepotism at university A on participants' preference for university B or C was significant regardless of their tendency to favor their current university, or their perceived own competence or qualification to be admitted to university A. This means that, although participants considered themselves as qualified at any of the universities and viewed university A as the most prestigious one, participants' perception of nepotism at university A steered their preference to one of the other two universities.

This study also showed that high perceived nepotism was associated with a more negative perception of the organization's climate—specifically the belief that members of the university display low levels of organizational citizenship behaviors and high levels of counterproductive behaviors. Perceived nepotism was also associated with a decrease in trust in the organization, and an increased perception that the organization was secretive. All in all, the findings from this study send a strong signal that perceptions of nepotism at an organization can have detrimental consequences for that organization's ability to attract qualified and motivated personnel.

2.6 General Discussion

Although the employment of family members within an organization is generally viewed as unfair, unethical, and unprofessional, such employment practices are commonplace (Bellow, 2003). The current research addressed what lay people see as nepotism, as well as what it is about nepotism that they consider unfair. Opposition to nepotism is often made based on the meritocracy ideal that a job position should be occupied by the most competent or qualified individual. However, using both WEIRD and non-WEIRD samples (Henrich et al., 2010), different methods and different settings, we consistently observed that, regardless

of competence, participants construed the employment of kin as nepotism. Importantly, nepotism was perceived primarily as *procedurally* unfair, with distributive unfairness as a *consequence* of the unfair procedure. We also found that nepotism was perceived as fundamentally more unfair than cronyism. Finally, we provided clear evidence that perceived nepotism at an organization can impede the organization in attracting highly qualified job applicants.

By assuming that employment procedures are made to ensure that job positions are filled by the most qualified candidates, people may directly suspect that the employment of incompetent kin is a violation of employment procedures. On the surface, it would appear that such suspicions could be put at ease by clearly communicating the kin's relevant qualifications, suggesting that organizations can safely maintain nepotism in their policies as long as the beneficiaries are (seen to be) qualified. However, decision-makers' neutrality and bias suppression are crucial in shaping organizational members' perception of procedural fairness (Leventhal, 1980). In line with the in-group favoritism literature (Everett et al., 2015), participants may remain suspicious even about the employment of competent kin because they believe that the family members of this competent kin were still acting discriminatory way towards other candidates without family ties in the organization.

The fact that our participants viewed nepotism as a procedurally unfair practice of employment has certain implications. Previous correlational research showed that employees who perceived high nepotism at their organization were less likely to be satisfied with their job, less committed to their organization, more likely to quit their job, and more likely to tell negative stories about their organization to outsiders (Arasli et al., 2006). Since these elements of organizational ineffectiveness are all affected by procedural fairness (Lambert et al., 2007; Loi et al., 2006), the present studies provide an explanation about why the perception of nepotism could be harmful to organizations and their members. That is, the employment of kin raises employees' perception that they are being treated in procedurally unfair ways by the authorities of their organizations.

Nepotism is often considered comparable to cronyism (Khatri et al., 2006), but the results of the present research suggest that participants

evaluated the two forms of employment very differently. Study 4 showed that participants viewed the employment of kin as procedurally more unfair than the employment of cronies and strangers, whereas the employment of cronies was rated similar to the employment of strangers. The difference between nepotism and cronyism may appear because the social capital required for cronyism is attained through effort and social competence, whereas in the case of nepotism the social capital is attained by birth. The involvement of social competence in cronyism means that cronyism contains a stronger element of meritocracy than nepotism.

Previous research using hypothetical situations showed that people tend to automatically stigmatize beneficiaries of nepotism as less competent (Darioly & Riggio, 2014; Padgett & Morris, 2005). Although we replicate this effect again here in the case of hypothetical situations (Studies 1 and 2) we did not find it when participants drew from real cases (Studies 3 and 4). A reason for why kin information overshadowed competence information in the hypothetical situations is that in these situations people have limited information about the targets, and may have to come to a judgement on the basis of a heuristic or the value-connotations attached to kin hiring. That is, based on that kin hiring is often seen as nepotism, something that has negative value connotations, this may had led to an overall negative judgement of the target person, including a negative judgement about his or her competence. In real life, however, people can draw from real experiences providing a stronger foundation for a more accurate assessment the competence of workers with relatives in their organization, relatively independent of the stereotypes about nepotism more generally. The fact that kinship primarily influenced participants' perceptions of procedural fairness (but not perceived competence) in Studies 3 and 4 is in line with the idea that people regard the hiring of kin as upsetting not because the relatives would be incompetent, but because of biases in favor of the relatives in the recruitment process.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The current studies are not without limitations. First, studies 1 and 2 assumed that people perceive a generally highly competent individual (e.g., measured with items such as "competitive", "independent") as more qualified for a job than a low competent person. It should be noted

however, that a person who is generally competent does not necessarily qualify for *all* kinds of jobs (e.g., specific skills or qualifications might still be required). We dealt with this limitation in Studies 3 and 4 by asking participants to think about the target's qualification for the job as part of the manipulation. This allowed them to focus on what *they* believed to be relevant characteristics that make a person competent for a job or not. However, it might be fruitful for further research to ensure that the relationship between competence and qualification is clear - for example, by assessing perceived qualification in addition to perceived competence.

Secondly, Studies 1 and 2 involved hypothetical situations which allowed optimal experimental control but may have somewhat gone at the expense of realism. Therefore, in Studies 3 and 4, we asked participants to recall real situations about real coworkers to manipulate competence and kinship. Although more realistic, this may have somewhat gone at the expense of full experimental control, as it implies the possibility that the individuals recalled by participants may represent a potentially biased pool of targets. Thus, the best way to view the results of the present research is by considering them as a package, where the limitation of a certain study in terms of realism or full experimental control is compensated for by another study, and vice versa. Combining the results from both hypothetical and realistic approaches enables us to focus on consistent findings across different settings and approaches. Importantly, the main findings regarding the influence of perceived nepotism on fairness judgements are consistent across the different paradigms.

Thirdly, the present research so far focused only on the negative side of nepotism. Some authors have reasoned that nepotism can provide some benefit for organizations. As pointed out by (Jaskiewicz et al., 2013), generalized social exchange, trust, and reciprocity are key ingredients of successful organizations that tends to be pre-established among family members. Family working hand in hand in organizations may also expedite intergenerational transmission regarding their organizations' long-term view and continuity (Nicholson, 2008). Future empirical research may focus on such positive aspects of nepotism to further find the point in which organizations can reap the benefit of nepotism while keeping its negative effects at bay.

Practical Implications

The present studies highlight the danger of perceived nepotism in organizations. The emphasis on *perceived* nepotism means that, whereas an organization may not actually be nepotistic, it is still prone to the problem associated with nepotism if members of the organizations perceive it in such a way. It is thus imperative for organizations to manage their employees' perception of nepotism. A blunt way to achieve this aim is to fully dismiss the practice of hiring family members. However, such strict policies may end up discriminating people based on their family membership (Jones & Stout, 2015). For example, men are generally expected to be the primary earner for their family (Tinsley et al., 2015). For this reason, generalized anti-nepotism policies have been shown to affect women (spouses of male employees) more often than men (Gutman, 2012), because they are often the ones to leave their job so that their spouses can retain theirs. Dismissing any practice of hiring family members may also limit the organization's access to qualified and motivated personnel.

The present research illustrates the centrality of procedural concerns in refuting hiring of family members within an organization. For this reason, we support the notion that perceived nepotism may be managed by implementing employment procedures that warrant that decisions are free from bias (Riggio & Saggi, 2015). For example, organizations can enforce a clear policy against family members taking any part in—or otherwise influencing—the hiring decisions concerning their relatives. Another approach is by implementing anonymous hiring procedures (Åslund & Skans, 2012). This approach let recruiters make their decisions by focusing on candidates' qualification while being blind to any relevant relationships between the candidates and the organization. Finally, it may also be fruitful to increase the transparency of recruitment processes. A transparent organization provides interested employees with the information needed to understand what is being decided, why, and where (Drew et al., 2004). With such information, interested employees are given the basis to question (or confirm) the legitimacy of hiring decisions. Indeed, organizations that publicize their criteria for hiring and promotions are seen as more transparent, which can result in stronger perceptions of procedural fairness among their employees (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012).

3 On the Prominence of Family Ties in Politics

"The public will never be made to believe that an appointment of a relative is made on the ground of merit alone, uninfluenced by family views"

(Thomas Jefferson, 1801)

The term nepotism has such negative connotations in most societies that it seems unlikely that people would show ubiquitous support for it. And yet, examples of the prominence of families in politics are common in history and across the globe (Bellow, 2003). An example in the U.S.A is the success of the Bush dynasty, which can be traced back to George W. Bush's grandfather's political success in the 1950s. In India, the Nehru-Ghandi political dynasty has occupied a prominent position of political power for decades. Although the prominence of familial relations in politics could be a sign of a talented gene pool or an advantageous social environment, it also may give rise to beliefs that such successes are the result of something less than fair play—i.e., that they are the result of nepotism. Whereas mainstream media often seems to condemn nepotism, we know very little about how nepotism impacts people's political attitudes and behaviors. In the present research, we addressed this issue by examining: (1) How the prominence of family ties in politics impacts people's perception of nepotism, and (2) what the subsequent consequences of nepotism are on political cynicism, perceived procedural fairness, and political participation.

Nepotism

Nepotism is defined as favoritism based on kinship (Bellow, 2003). Although nepotism may be more strongly associated with certain cultures, it is in fact a common and widespread phenomenon, and people in many parts of the world tend to view nepotism in politics and

government institutions negatively. For example, in Indonesia, the use of familial-connections in politics is seen as an unethical and criminal act (Indonesia Corruption Watch, 2017). A study by Ainley and colleagues showed that the majority of students in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea believe that political leaders should not be allowed to give government jobs to their family members (Ainley et al., 2012). Although research that explicitly addresses people's attitudes toward political nepotism in Western societies is scarce, concern over nepotism in these societies is widely expressed in mainstream media. Such media coverages also seem to indicate a concern over, and negative sentiment toward, nepotism in Western politics.

The previous examples suggest that, although a common and global phenomenon, nepotism in politics is considered undesirable by the general public. This makes it imperative that we learn more about how nepotism in the political arena affects people's attitudes and behaviors. There is not much known about the consequences of nepotism in the political context. However, there are studies of nepotism in organizations that might be informative. In organizational contexts, the findings echo the epigraph of Thomas Jefferson presented at the beginning of this paper. More specifically, it has been shown that employees have a stronger belief that nepotism was at play as the density of relatives (i.e., the proportion of genetic overlap among employees) within the same organization increases (Spranger et al., 2012). In addition, a recent study showed that people tend to consider the recruitment of someone who is related to a prominent person in a company as nepotism, regardless of the hired person's competencies or qualifications (see Chapter 2).

Although the studies discussed in the previous suggest that an awareness of family ties among politicians is enough for people to infer nepotism, caution is in order when generalizing organizational findings to the political arena. Business and politics may share some similarities, yet they are not the same. An apparent difference is that politics involve larger groups of people. But more importantly, the aim of most businesses is to make a profit for their owners and shareholders, whereas the aim of politicians is (or should be) to represent citizens. Given the instrumental nature of businesses, it may be more common for business-owners to act in their personal (and family) interest, for example by

prioritizing family members over non-family members in the fulfillment of strategic positions. Family businesses are a good example of this. In contrast, political authorities, whether being congressmen or presidents, are representing their constituency. They are expected to make decisions that are congruent with the citizens' needs, voices and aspirations, and to leave their own interests out of these decisions (Lankester, 2008; Luna & Zechmeister, 2005; Muller, 1970).

Political Cynicism

A particularly useful perspective for understanding the detrimental consequences of nepotism in the political arena is the relational model of authority in groups (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1994; Tyler & Lind, 1992). According to this perspective, effective leadership requires people to voluntarily accept and comply with the decisions made by their authorities. People comply (or not) with their authorities based on their perception of whether (or not) their authorities are acting fairly. Crucial in this assessment of fairness is their evaluation concerning the (un)trustworthiness of the authorities.

We propose that nepotism can be a cue for people to infer the (un)trustworthiness of their political authorities. In the political science literature, the belief that political authorities are untrustworthy is reflected by a concept called *political cynicism*, which refers to a negative attitude stemming from the belief that political authorities are distrustful, immoral, dishonest, incompetent, self-interested and out of touch with citizens (Rijkhoff, 2018). We argue, for three reasons, that perceived nepotism in politics could increase political cynicism. First, people generally view nepotism as a selfish act, motivated by the desire for personal and familial interests at the expense of others who are not family (Bellow, 2003). This way, nepotism among politicians can become a basis for the public to judge the selfishness of politicians. Second, studies have shown that people tend to stigmatize beneficiaries of nepotism as incompetent (Darioly & Riggio, 2014; Padgett et al., 2015). If people believe that politicians attained their position through nepotism, they may doubt the politicians' capabilities to govern them. Third, given that nepotism is globally regarded as unacceptable and unethical, the belief that nepotism is prominent in politics can lead people to conclude that politicians are immoral.

From the perspective of the relational model of authority (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1994; Tyler & Lind, 1992), the link between nepotism and political cynicism is important to be examined because when authorities are deemed untrustworthy, people tend to believe that their authorities are making decisions in procedurally unfair ways. Such lack of perceived procedural fairness can negatively influence people's political attitudes and behaviors.

Procedural Fairness

Procedural fairness concerns the manner in which authorities reach their decisions (Tyler & Blader, 2003). In politics, this often comes in the form of formal rules and policies (Bøggild & Petersen, 2015). Procedural fairness includes (1) the extent to which politicians communicate the reasons behind policies, (2) the degree to which the public feels authorities are hearing their voices and aspirations, and (3) the extent that people think they are being treated respectfully (Tyler & Lind, 1992; van der Toorn et al., 2011).

As outlined above, political cynicism represents people's belief that political authorities are untrustworthy, which, according to the relational model of authority, is crucial in shaping perceptions of procedural fairness (Tyler, 1989; Tyler & Lind, 1992). This means that people who score high on political cynicism are more likely to believe that their political authorities are treating them in procedurally unfair ways. If nepotism can affect political cynicism, it can thus be assumed that nepotism can indirectly reduce people's perception of procedural fairness.

The link between nepotism, political cynicism, and procedural fairness is important to examine because perceptions of procedural fairness shape people's attitudes and behaviors toward their authorities. For instance, in the U.S.A., a higher approval of the Supreme Court was observed among people who believe that the Supreme Court is practicing fair procedures (Ramirez, 2008). During President Reagan's administration, Rasinski (1988) found that people who perceived the government as practicing unfair procedures in allocating governmental benefits and services were more likely to evaluate Reagan as ineffective and incompetent. Moreover, Rasinski also found a relationship between procedural fairness and diverse forms of political participation, such as

contacting political officials, or writing to a newspaper about political issues. This relationship suggest that people are less willing to voice their concerns and aspiration when they view that the government is practicing unfair procedures. If nepotism can affect people's perception of procedural fairness, it becomes important to also examine its consequences for political participation.

Political Participation

Political participation refers to the actions of citizens to influence politics (van Deth, 2016). At its basic, political participation comes in the form of voting in an election, but it can also come in other behaviors such as contacting politicians, attending a political debate, partisanship, or working for a political party. In a democratic world, people have the opportunity to participate in politics, but this opportunity is only meaningful if they choose to use it. By contacting politicians, for example, people can exert their right to voice their concerns and to be heard by their representatives. By using their right to vote, citizens demonstrate their capacity to decide who has the right to lead or represent them. Such actions are an essential means to prevent the state from being controlled by a small number of elites with their own goals and interests (Parvin, 2018).

Although political participation is essential for a healthy democracy, research shows a declining trend of political participation across the globe (Parvin, 2018). The relationship between procedural fairness and political participation suggests that a low perception of procedural fairness may play role in this decline (Rasinski, 1988). For instance, fair procedural treatment entails that political authorities take serious account of people's voices and concerns—after all, when this is not the case, engagement in political participation is futile. Moreover, Miles (2015) argued that political participation such as voting in elections is a tacit endorsement of the legitimacy of an existing system. Since procedural fairness is key to the legitimization of authorities, dissatisfied citizens may deliberately refuse to participate in electoral voting as means to disconfirm the legitimacy of the existing system. If nepotism can increase political cynicism, and political cynicism decreases people's perceptions and beliefs about procedural fairness, it

can thus be expected that nepotism indirectly reduces people's political participation.

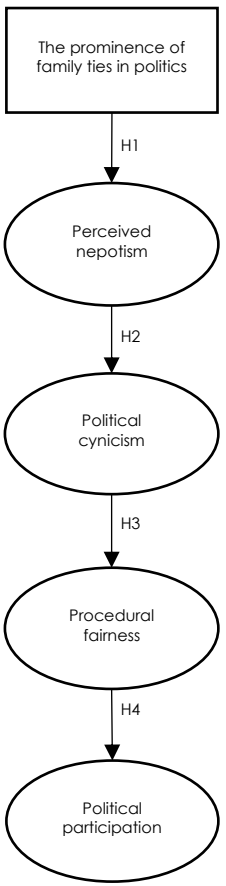

Figure 3.1. The proposed model

Overview of studies and hypotheses

In four studies, we explored how the prominence of family ties in politics shapes citizens' belief that nepotism is at play as well as the impact of this belief on political cynicism, procedural fairness, and political participation. Three studies were conducted among American participants, while the fourth study was conducted in Indonesia. The structure of the model examined in the present research is described in Figure 1. Based on previous research (Spranger et al., 2012), we predicted that the presence of prominent family ties among politicians, compared to the absence of such prominent ties, leads people to infer nepotism in their nation's politics (Hypothesis 1). We further expected that perceived nepotism would be positively associated with political cynicism (Hypothesis 2). Following the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992), we expected political cynicism to be negatively associated with perceived procedural fairness (Hypothesis 3). Finally, based on research demonstrating the link between procedural fairness and political attitudes and participation (Miles, 2015; Rasinski, 1988), we predicted that procedural fairness

would be negatively associated with political participation (Hypothesis 4).

3.1 Study 1 and Study 2

The aim of Studies 1 and 2 was to test the hypotheses described in the introductory section of this paper. Both studies were very similar in terms of methodology and results. For this reason, we report these studies in a single section.

Method

Participants and Design

In both studies, participants were 200 American nationals recruited via Prolific-Academic who participated for a 1.5 GBP (approximately 2 USD) compensation. We excluded four participants in Study 1 and eight participants in Study 2 from further analyses because they completed the study unusually fast.[7] The final sample in Study 1 was 196 participants (89 men, 105 women, and 2 other; M_{age} = 34.83, SD_{age} = 11.65) and in Study 2 192 participants (91 men, 100 women, and 1 other; M_{age} = 34.1, SD_{age} = 11.06). The studies used a two-condition between-subjects experimental design; participants were either assigned into a *prominent family ties* or a *control* condition.

Procedure

In both studies, we asked participants in the *prominent family ties* condition to read a description about the prominence of family ties in the political history of the U.S.A., before completing a questionnaire.[8] The text explicitly described the kinship among various politicians with

[7] College graduates read about 280 to 300 words per minute with 14% changes in speed—depending on the difficulty of the reading material (Carver, 1983; Taylor, 1965). With this in mind, for example in Study 1, we considered participants who completed the study faster than 2 minutes and 51 seconds (977 words / (300 x 0.14 + 300) x 60 = 171.40) as those who completed the study unusually fast.

[8] We explored the notion that people's perception of nepotism due to the prominence of family ties in politics may depend on their level of national identification, but we found no evidence to support this (see supplementary materials).

several examples, like: "... Franklin D. Roosevelt created an Office of Civilian Defense. He put his wife, Eleanor Roosevelt in charge of volunteer participation ... John F. Kennedy chose his younger brother Robert F. Kennedy to be attorney general ... Not only was George W. Bush's father president, but his grandfather was a U.S. senator, and his brother Jeb Bush was the 43rd governor of Florida ..." Participants in the *control condition* completed the questionnaire without reading any description beforehand. On completion, participants were thanked, debriefed, and paid.

Measures

All answers were provided using five-point scales (*1 = not at all* to *5 = very much*). We assessed *perceived nepotism* using two items ("To what extent does nepotism play a role in the politics of the U.S.A?", "How significant is family-membership in the politics of the U.S.A?"; $r_{Study\ 1}$ = .49, $p < .001$; $r_{Study\ 2}$ = .46, $p < .001$). We assessed *political cynicism* using 10 items selected from prior research (Kabashima et al., 2000; Litt, 1963; Olsen, 1969: e.g., "For the most part, the government and politicians serve the interests of a few organized groups, such as business or labor, and aren't very concerned about the needs of people like myself", "Elected politicians stop thinking about the public's interest immediately after taking office"; $\alpha_{Study\ 1}$ = 0.85, $\alpha_{Study\ 2}$ = 0.91). We assessed *procedural fairness* using 14 items adapted from van der Toorn et al. (2011): e.g., "Overall, how fair do you think are the procedures used by politicians to handle problems in this country are?", "Politicians use methods that are equally fair to everyone"; $\alpha_{Study\ 1}$ = .94; α_{Study2} = .95). *Political participation* was measured by assessing people's attitude and intention to participate in politics (8 items taken from Eckstein et al., [2013]: e.g., "We should take the chance to participate in politics", "I would support a political candidate during an election campaign"; $\alpha_{Study\ 1}$ = .86, $\alpha_{Study\ 2}$ = .83).

Results

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.1. To test the hypotheses, we conducted structural equation modelling. To keep the model at a limited complexity, we created three parcels each for the political cynicism and the political participation latent constructs by employing the domain-representative approach described by Coffman and

MacCallum (2005) and the factorial algorithm described by Matsunaga (2008). Because the items of the procedural fairness scale were based on three themes van der Toorn et al. (2011), we used the content-based method to create three parcels measuring procedural fairness (Matsunaga, 2008). The model is depicted in Figure 3.2. The model's fit indices were acceptable in Study 1, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.07, and verging acceptable in Study 2, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.08, SRMR = 0.11 (Schreiber et al., 2006: CFI > .95, RMSEA < .08, SRMR < .08).

Table 3.1 Means, standard deviations, and correlations in Studies 1 and 2

		M	*SD*	1	2	3
1.	Perceived nepotism	3.61[a]	0.88[a]			
		3.72[b]	0.87[b]			
2.	Political cynicism	3.75[a]	0.67[a]	.41**[a]		
		3.78[b]	0.77[b]	.37**[b]		
3.	Procedural fairness	2.35[a]	0.75[a]	-.13[ns a]	-.42**[a]	
		2.31[b]	0.76[b]	.18*[b]	.59**[b]	
4.	Political participation	3.01[a]	0.86[a]	.15*[a]	-.03[ns a]	.23**[a]
		3.45[b]	0.79[b]	.13[ns b]	.09[ns b]	.19*[b]

Note: [a] = Study 1, [b] = Study 2, * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .001$, [ns] = not significant

Perceived Nepotism

We predicted that the prominence of family ties in politics would lead people to believe that nepotism is at play (Hypothesis 1). As shown in Figure 2, Condition (coded 0 = control, 1 = prominent family ties) predicted greater perceived nepotism in Study 1, $B = 0.17$, $SE = 0.08$, $z = 2.17$, $p = .030$, 95%CI: 0.016, 0.318, as well as in Study 2, $B = 0.18$, $SE = 0.07$, $z = 2.43$, $p = .015$, 95%CI: 0.035, 0.323. Participants in the prominent family ties condition (Study 1: $M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.73$; Study 2: $M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.75$) perceived more nepotism than participants in the control condition (Study 1: $M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.97$; Study 2: $M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.93$). Supporting Hypothesis 1, the prominence of family ties in politics made participants more likely to believe that nepotism is at play in their nation's politics.

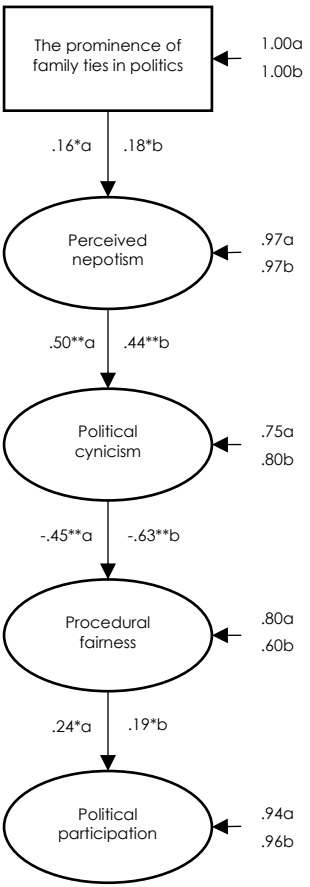

Figure 3.2. Structural equation model in Study 1 and 2.

Note: a = Standardized coefficients in Study 1, b = Standardized coefficients in Study 2, * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$

Political Cynicism

Supporting Hypothesis 2, an increase in perceived nepotism predicted greater political cynicism in Study 1, $B = 0.57$, $SE = 0.11$, $z = 5.26$, $p < .001$, 95%CI: 0.360, 0.787, as well in Study 2, $B = 0.64$, $SE = 0.13$, $z = 4.76$, $p < .001$, 95%CI: 0.377, 0.905. The indirect effect of Condition on political cynicism was significant in Study 1, 0.10, $SE = 0.04$, $z = 2.15$, $p = .032$, 95%CI: 0.008, 0.183, as well in Study 2, $B = 0.08$, $SE = 0.03$, $z = 2.46$, $p = 0.014$, 95%CI: 0.017, 0.146. These indirect effects showed that the prominence of family ties indirectly increases participants' political cynicism via its relationship with perceived nepotism.

Procedural Fairness

Supporting Hypothesis 3, an increase in political cynicism predicted reduced perceptions of procedural fairness in Study 1, $B = -0.50$, $SE = 0.09$, $z = -5.82$, $p < .001$, 95%CI: -0.665, -.330, as well in Study 2, $B = -0.63$, $SE = 0.05$, $z = -12.78$, $p < .001$, 95%CI: -0.832, -0.531. The indirect effect of Condition on procedural fairness was significant in Study 1, $B = -0.05$, $SE = -2.04$, $p = 0.042$, 95%CI: -0.093, -0.002, as well in Study 2, $B = -0.05$, $SE = 0.02$, $z = -2.39$, $p =$

.017, 95%CI: -0.093, -0.009. This means that the prominence of family ties in politics indirectly reduces participants' perception of procedural fairness.

Political Participation

In line with Hypothesis 4, a decrease in procedural fairness was associated with a decrease in political participation in both Study 1, B = 0.26, SE = 0.08, z = 3.08, p = .002, 95%CI: 0.095, 0.425, and Study 2, B = 0.15, SE = 0.06, z = 2.44, p = .030, 95%CI: 0.030, 0.271. However, the indirect effect of Condition on political participation was marginally significant in both Study 1, B = -0.01, SE = 0.01, z = -1.71, p = .087, 95%CI: -0.027, 0.002, and Study 2, B = -0.01, SE = 0.01, z = -1.73, p = .084, 95%CI: -0.021, 0.001. Thus, the prediction that the prominence of family ties in politics indirectly reduces citizens' political participation was only weekly supported.

Discussion

Studies 1 and 2 showed that the prominence of family ties in politics led participants to believe that nepotism plays an important role in their nation's politics. This increase in perceived nepotism was followed by an increase in political cynicism, which signifies participants' belief that political authorities are untrustworthy. An increase in political cynicism reduced participants' perception of procedural fairness, which, in turn, reduced participants' preference for political participation.

Whereas the findings supported our hypotheses, it is important to address two potential limitations. First, the prominence of family ties in these studies was manipulated rather explicitly. For example, the explicit phrase that "John F. Kennedy *chose* his younger brother Robert F. Kennedy to be attorney general" may have inadvertently sent a signal to participants that this situation is reprehensible, thus stimulating them to respond negatively to the suggestion of nepotism. This makes it relevant to examine whether more subtle cues of family ties in politics would produce the same results.

3.2 Study 3

In Study 3, we manipulated the prominence of family ties in politics not only explicitly (as in Studies 1 and 2), but also through a subtler, more

implicit approach. Examining the impact of the prominence of family ties in a more implicit approach is important because mere facts that politicians are tied by kinship do in itself not proof that nepotism is at play. However, the fact that family ties in politics are prominent may lead people to infer a pattern of family-based promotion. It is important to examine this in more detail because cues signaling nepotism often come in a subtle form, not explicitly referring to a kin relationship in conjunction with certain favors to family members as manipulated in the previous studies. Citizens of the U.S.A., for example, generally know that Hillary Clinton is the wife of a former president, that George W. Bush's father once was a president himself, and that Robert Kennedy was the brother of John F. Kennedy. It was the aim with the current study to examine whether people perceive nepotism by a mere collection of such knowledge, without any factual proof or suggestion of nepotism.

Method

Participants

Participants were 200 Americans recruited via Prolific-Academic (79 men, 118 women, and 3 others; M_{age} = 32.56, SD_{age} = 12.45).[9] They participated for 2 GBP (approximately 2.60 USD) compensation. The study used a between-subjects design with three conditions: *control*, *explicit nepotism* and *implicit nepotism*.

Procedures

The prominence of family ties in the *explicit nepotism* condition was manipulated by presenting participants with the same text as in Studies 1 and 2 before completing the questionnaire of the study. In the *implicit nepotism* condition participants read a list of ostensibly random facts about the same politicians mentioned in the explicit condition, without mentioning the family ties of the politicians. For example, "Hillary Clinton was the first female candidate to be nominated for president by a major political party in the U.S.A.", "George W. Bush was both one of the most popular and unpopular presidents in the history of the

[9] As in the previous studies, we assigned a filter for participants who completed the study unusually fast. No participants were omitted based on the filter.

U.S.A.", and "Ivanka Trump's real name is Ivana Marie Trump." Participants in the *control* condition completed the questionnaire of the study without reading a text beforehand. On completion, participants were thanked, debriefed, and paid.

Measures

Unless indicated otherwise, all responses were assessed on five-point scales (*1 = not at all* to *5 = very much*). We used the same items as in the previous studies to measure perceived nepotism but added one new item to meet the suggested minimum number of observed variables for measuring a latent construct (Hair et al., 2014: e.g., Politics in the U.S.A. is often a family affair"; $\alpha = .85$). Political cynicism (10 items: $\alpha = .86$) and procedural fairness (14 items: $\alpha = .95$) were assessed using the same items as in the previous studies. We revised the way we assessed political participation by following (Ajzen, 1991), in which we optimized the correspondence between the measurements of the attitude and the intention to participate in politics in the sense that they referred to the same behavioral objects (8 items: e.g., "How much do you value supporting a political candidate during an election campaign?", "I would support a political candidate during an election", $\alpha = .90$).[10]

Results

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.2. As in the previous studies, we analyzed the data through structural equation modeling. We created parcels to measure political cynicism, procedural fairness, and political participation as latent constructs. Condition was dummied with the control condition treated as a point of reference for the explicit (coded 0 = control, 1 = explicit) and implicit condition (coded 0 = control, 1 = implicit). The proposed model (see Figure 3.3) had acceptable fit indices (CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.04, SRMR = 0.06).

Perceived Nepotism

Consistent with the previous studies, there was support for Hypothesis 1. Participants in the explicit nepotism condition ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.94$)

[10] The response format for the attitude part of the political participation was 1 = *very negative* – 5 = *very positive.*

perceived more nepotism than participants in the control condition (M = 3.01, SD = 0.92), B =0.49, SE = 0.14, z = 3.47, p = .001, 95%CI: 0.215, 0.772. Similarly, participants in the implicit nepotism condition (M = 3.52, SD = 0.94) also perceived higher nepotism than participants in the control condition, B = 0.41, SE = 0.14, z = 2.91, p = .004, 95%CI: 0.134, 0.684. Perceived nepotism in the explicit nepotism condition was not significantly different from perceived nepotism in the implicit nepotism condition, B = 0.08, SE = 0.14, z = 0.61, 95%CI: -0.186, 0.355. This means that a subtler, more implicit cue of the prominence of family ties in politics produces similar results as a more explicit cue.

Table 3.2 Means, standard deviation, and correlations in Studies 3 and 4

		M	*SD*	1	2	3	4
1	Perceived nepotism	3.38 [a]	0.99 [a]				
		3.76 [b]	0.88 [b]				
2	Political cynicism	3.87 [a]	0.66 [a]	.34** [a]			
		3.72 [b]	0.79 [b]	.42** [b]			
3	Procedural fairness	2.43 [a]	0.77 [a]	-.08[ns a]	-.49** [a]		
		2.49 [b]	0.64 [b]	-.15 [b]	-.48** [b]		
4	Political participation	3.11 [a]	0.98 [a]	.07[ns a]	-.08[ns a]	.31** [a]	
		2.76 [b]	0.80 [b]	-.06[ns b]	-.23* [b]	.39** [b]	
5	Political participation	2.43 [b]	1.13 [b]	.03[ns b]	.13[ns b]	-.18* [b]	.20* [b]

Note: [a] = Study 3, [b] = Study 4, * = p < .05, ** = p < .001, [ns] = not significant

Political Cynicism

There was also support for Hypothesis 2. A higher perception of nepotism predicted greater political cynicism, B = 0.30, SE = 0.06, z = 4.67, p < .001, 95%CI: 0.175, 0.429. As in the previous studies, the indirect effect of the explicit nepotism condition on political cynicism via perceived nepotism was significant, B = 0.15, SE = 0.05, z = 2.94, p = .003, 95%CI: 0.050, 0.249. Similarly, the indirect effect of the implicit nepotism condition was also significant, B = 0.12, SE = 0.04, z = 2.58, p = .010, 95%CI: 0.030, 0.218. This means that increased perceptions of nepotism due to the explicit or implicit presentation of the prominence of family ties in politics made participants more politically cynical.

Procedural fairness

A higher political cynicism was associated with lower perceptions of procedural fairness, B = -0.70, SE = 0.10, z = -6.96, p < .001, 95%CI: -0.893, -0.501, supporting Hypothesis 3. The indirect effect of the explicit nepotism condition on procedural fairness via perceived nepotism and political cynicism was significant, B = -0.10, SE = 0.04, z = -2.77, p = .006, 95%CI: -0.178, -0.030. Similarly, the indirect effect of the implicit nepotism condition was also significant, B = -0.09, SE = 0.03, z = -2.46, p = .014, 95%CI: -0.155, -0.017. These results suggest that both the explicit and implicit nepotism condition indirectly reduced participants' perceptions of procedural fairness.

Political participation

Supporting Hypothesis 4, political participation was predicted by the perception of procedural fairness, B = 0.40, SE = 0.09, z = 4.56, p < .001, 95%CI: 0.229, 0.573. The indirect effect of the explicit nepotism condition on political participation was also significant, B = -0.04, SE = 0.02, z = -2.38, p = -0.076, -.007. Similarly, the indirect effect of the implicit nepotism condition on political participation was also significant,

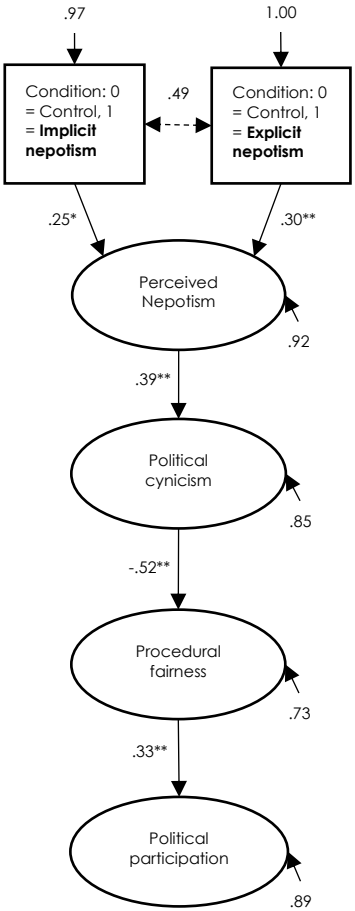

Figure 3.3. Structural equation model in Study 3

Note: Coefficients are standardized. * = p < .05, ** = p < .01

B = -0.03, *SE* = 0.02, *z* = -2.18, *p* = .030, 95%CI: -0.066, -0.003. These results provided support for the notion that the prominence of family ties in politics affected people's political participation via its relationships with perceived nepotism, political cynicism and the perception of procedural fairness.

Discussion

The results of Study 3 replicate those of the previous studies by showing that the prominence of family ties in politics and the subsequent perception of nepotism can have a detrimental impact on participants' political attitudes and behaviors. This study also showed that exposure to random facts about political figures who are known to have family ties to other politicians (i.e., implicit nepotism) has a similar effect as exposure to explicit information about family ties among politicians. Overall, Study 3 provided stronger evidence for the detrimental consequences of the prominence of family ties in politics.

3.3 Study 4

The previous studies showed clear evidence of the negative impact of perceived nepotism on political attitudes and participation. It should be noted, however, that these studies were conducted among a Western sample. Nepotism in Western societies may be less prevalent, and considered less acceptable, than nepotism in some other societies. The aim of the fourth study was to investigate how awareness of the prominence of family ties in politics affects the political attitudes and behaviors of people in a society in which nepotism is so prevalent that it is considered normal. Therefore, Study 4 was conducted in the Republic of Indonesia.

Prioritizing family members, relatives, and friends is a deeply-rooted cultural value in Latin America, the Arab world, and East Asia, including Indonesia (Khatri & Tsang, 2003; Wated & Sanchez, 2015). Family ties in Indonesian politics are so prevalent that it is not uncommon for a single family to occupy various political positions in any political term (Robertson-Snape, 1999; Syatiri, 2013). Moreover, a survey among high-school students showed that more than half of Indonesian students find it acceptable for public officials to give preference to family and friends when hiring people for public office

(Ainley et al., 2012). Although other research among a more general and mature population showed that the majority of Indonesians regarded nepotism as unethical or even criminal, still about 43 percent viewed it normal or necessary in certain circumstances (Indonesia Corruption Watch, 2017). These surveys suggest that Indonesians' attitude toward the prominence of family ties in politics may not be as negative as that of people from Western societies, including the U.S.A. This makes Indonesia a suitable context for a (more conservative) test of the proposition that the prominence of family ties in politics can negatively affect people's political attitudes and behaviors.

A second aim with Study 4 was to examine in more detail how nepotism impacts political protest. In the previous studies, we focused on a general, "supportive" form of political participation (e.g., supporting a political candidate, attending a political debate). However, if nepotism is deemed unethical, morally wrong, and unjust, nepotism in politics may also motivate people to retaliate by engaging in political protest, which is known to be a an effective way to drive changes in politics (Madestam et al., 2013). Research has shown that unfair procedural treatment can increase negative affect (e.g., anger) and the motivation to protest (Vermunt et al., 1996). We thus hypothesized that a perception of low procedural fairness due to the prominence of family ties in politics can lead people to endorse political protest (Hypothesis 5).

Method

Participants

Participants were 200 Indonesians from the city of Medan, in the Indonesian province of Sumatera Utara. They were approached in public places (e.g., main streets, shopping centers, restaurants) and participated for a lunch meal worth approximately 2 Euro as compensation. Thirty-eight participants did not complete the questionnaire, and their data were not included in further analysis. The final sample included in the analysis consisted of 162 participants (80 men, 82 women; M_{age} = 31.98, SD_{age} = 10.44). The study used a between-subjects design in which participants were randomly assigned to either the *control* or *prominent family ties* condition.

Procedure

After obtaining consent, participants in the *prominent family ties* condition read a description before completing the study's questionnaire. The description was ostensibly taken from a reputable national newspaper. The text described the prominence of families in politics throughout Indonesia, mentioning names and kinships between politicians. At the end of the description one of the candidates who was competing for the vice-governor position in the province of Sumatera Utara was mentioned. This person also has kinship ties with influential politicians in the province. Participants in the *control* condition completed the questionnaire without first reading a text. On completion, participants were thanked, debriefed, and given their compensation.

Measures

Unless otherwise indicated, all measures were made using 5-points scales (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very* much). We measured perceived nepotism ($\alpha = .73$), political cynicism ($\alpha = .89$), and procedural fairness ($\alpha = .94$) using the same items as in Study 3. To measure political participation, we used the same items as in Study 3 but added two new items ("How much do you value vote in election?", and "I will vote in the upcoming election"; $\alpha = .88$). We measured political protest with three items that asked participants to indicate the extent to which they were likely to engage in certain actions (e.g., "Sign a petition as means of protest", "Participate in peaceful demonstration"; $\alpha = .84$).

Results

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.2. We analyzed the data through structural equation modeling. We created parcels to measure political cynicism, procedural fairness, and political participation as latent constructs. The model is described in Figure 3.4 and had acceptable fit indices, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .07.

Perceived Nepotism

As shown in Figure 3.4, consistent with the previous studies, Condition (coded 0 = control, 1 = prominent family ties) had a significant effect on perceived nepotism, $B = 0.22$, $SE = 0.11$, $z = 2.08$, $p = .037$, 95%CI: 0.13, 0.427. Supporting Hypothesis 1, participants in the prominent

family ties condition perceived more nepotism (M = 3.92, SD = 0.85) than participants in the control condition (M = 3.60, SD = 0.88).

Political cynicism

Supporting Hypothesis 2, higher perceived nepotism predicted higher political cynicism, B = 0.76, SE = 0.16, z = 4.84, p < .001, 95%CI: 0.452, 1.068. The indirect effect of the Condition on political cynicism was also significant, B = 0.17, SE = 0.08, z = 2.10, p = .036, 95%CI: 0.011, 0.323. Thus, perceived nepotism due to the prominence of family ties in politics indirectly affected political cynicism.

Procedural fairness

Consistent with Hypothesis 3, political cynicism predicted the perception of procedural fairness, B = -0.38, SE = 0.06, z = -6.60, p < .001, 95%CI: -0.487, -0.264. The indirect effect of Condition on perceived procedural fairness was also significant, B = -0.06, SE = 0.03, z = -2.02, p = .044, 95%CI: -0.124, -0.002. This supports the notion that the prominence of family ties in politics can indirectly (via perceived nepotism and political cynicism) reduce people's perception of procedural fairness.

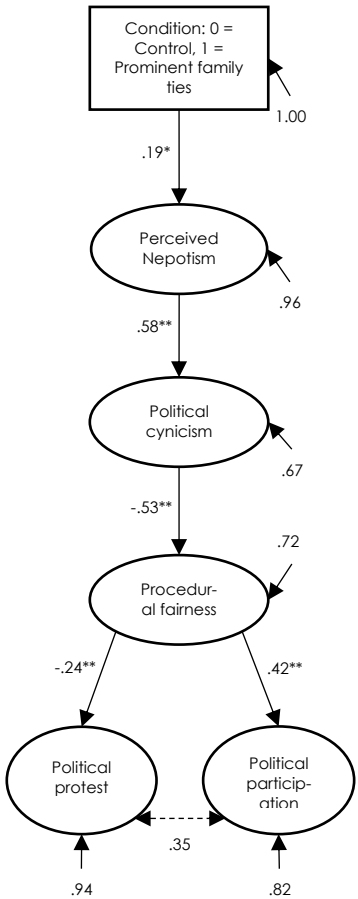

Figure 3.4. Structural equation model in Study 4

Note: Coefficients are standardized. *= p < .05, ** = p < .01

Political Participation and Protest

In line with Hypothesis 4, procedural fairness was associated with the motivation for political participation, $B = 0.64$, $SE = 0.12$, $z = 5.10$, $p < .001$, 95%CI: 0.393, .884. Specifically, lower procedural fairness was associated with more political protest, $B = -0.47$, $SE = 0.18$, $z = -2.72$, $p = .006$, 95%CI: -0.836, -0.136. However, the indirect effect of Condition on political participation was only marginally-significant, $B = -0.04$, $SE = 0.02$, $z = -1.89$, $p = .058$, 95%CI: -0.082, 0.001. The indirect effect of Condition on political protest was not significant, $B = 0.03$, $SE = 0.02$, $z = 1.63$, $p = .102$, 95%CI: -0.006, 0.067. These results provide only weak support for the notion that the prominence of family ties in politics reduces political participation and increases political protest (Hypothesis 5).

Discussion

The salience of family ties in politics led Indonesian participants in Study 4 to have firmer beliefs that nepotism plays an intricate part in their nation's politics. The perception of nepotism increased political cynicism, and political cynicism made participants more likely to think that politicians were treating them in procedurally unjust ways. Finally, procedural fairness affected participants' preferences for political participation and political protest, such that lower levels of procedural fairness were associated with lower levels of political participation and higher levels of political protest. These findings are important because they show that the prominence of family ties in politics can have a detrimental impact on people's political attitudes and behaviors, even in a society where nepotism is considered relatively normal.

3.4 General Discussion

In the current research we examined how the prominence of family ties in politics shapes people's perceptions of nepotism, as well as the impact of these perceptions on political attitudes and behaviors. Four studies consistently showed that: (1) The prominence of family ties in politics increases people's belief that nepotism plays an intricate part in their nation's politics, (2) the perception of nepotism makes people more politically cynical, (3) political cynicism due to nepotism shapes

people's perception that they are being treated in procedurally unfair ways, and (4) a lack of procedural fairness reduces people's preference for political participation but increases their preference for political protest. All in all, the present research suggests that the prominence of family ties and the perception of nepotism associated with it can be detrimental in the political arena.

The findings of the current research are consistent with previous work on nepotism in the context of organizations. For example, research by Burhan and colleagues (see Chapter 2) showed that employees tend to infer nepotism merely on the basis of family ties, without taking competence or qualification into account. Moreover, Spranger and colleagues (2012) found that a higher density of family ties in organizations correlated with a higher perception of nepotism by employees who do not have family ties within the organization. The findings from the current research are important because they show that information about a familial relationship is sufficient to trigger a sequence of inferences and actions (or lack thereof), even in the explicit absence of any evidence supporting the abuse of this familial link in the form of favoritism.

It is important to note that the prominence of family ties in politics does not necessarily mean that nepotism is at play. For instance, it has been argued that children can learn and develop interests in their parents' occupation in early stages of their lives (Jones et al., 2008). This means that children of politicians are sometimes more motivated to pursue and successfully attain political power than others. The problem, however, lies in the fact that observers still infer nepotism in such cases, because observers rely primarily on information about kinship. This makes the management of perceptions of nepotism a challenge. For instance, transparent information about the competence and qualification of politicians with family ties would not be sufficient to reduce suspicions of nepotism. Another plausible approach would be to communicate and explicitly endorse transparent electoral procedures, which is known to promote people's acceptance of an election outcome (Nadeau & Blais, 1993). However, the effectiveness of this approach to alleviate people's suspicion of nepotism in politics is still an empirical question that needs to be tested in future work.

The current research corroborates the relational model of authority which emphasizes the importance of authorities' trustworthiness as a determinant of how people perceive the enforcement of procedural fairness (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1994; Tyler & Lind, 1992). Specifically, political cynicism or the extent to which political authorities are seen as distrustful, immoral, dishonest, incompetent, and self-interested shapes how people evaluate the fairness of the procedures by which their political authorities treat them. The relational model of authority also predicts that the enforcement of procedural fairness determines people's attitudes and behaviors toward their authorities. In line with this notion, we found that participants who felt they were being treated in procedurally unfair ways by their authorities showed less signs of political participation and stronger intentions towards political protest.

There is a general assumption that political cynicism is detrimental to political participation (Erber & Lau, 1990; Fu et al., 2011; Pinkleton & Weintraub Austin, 2004). However, some researchers have found little support for this notion (De Vreese & Semetko, 2002; Leshner & Thorson, 2000; Vreese, 2005). In the present research, political cynicism per se was not enough to make participants more politically apathetic. However, since political cynicism led to the expectation of being treated in procedurally unfair ways, political cynicism indirectly increased political apathy and protest via its relationship with procedural fairness.

Prioritizing the interests of one's family is more common in certain non-Western societies than in Western societies (Trask, 2010). If nepotism is considered a realization of family prioritization, people from non-Western cultures should be more likely to tolerate nepotism (Wated & Sanchez, 2015). Contrary to this reasoning, the results of Study 4 showed that high perceived nepotism was associated with more negative political attitudes among Indonesian participants. This may have happened because prioritizing one's family is a social norm for most non-Westerners. For this reason, it becomes natural for them to think that the prominence of family ties in politics is a result of political elites' prioritization of their familial interests rather than the public's.

Whether they come from an influential family or not, presidents, governors, or parliament members in democratic societies are elected to

their offices. This means that the prominence of family ties in politics can at least partly be attributed to the fact that some voters support politicians who have family ties to other politicians. If people view the prominence of family ties in politics as nepotism, and nepotism is considered undesirable, then what makes people vote for these politicians with family ties? One possibility is that people believe that a family member of a successful politician would most likely make a good politician too. This type of thinking is reflected in expressions such as "like father, like son", or "An apple does not fall far from its tree". Future research should attend to the possible positive associations to nepotism, as they may explain why people sometimes support the appointment of related politicians, despite the negative connotation attached to it.

4 "Like Father Like Son"

"The apple doesn't fall far from the tree"

Nepotism is often viewed negatively because it is considered unfair, unethical, morally wrong and even a criminal act that deserves a formal sanctioning. In the context of the meritocracy ideal, we like to think of nepotism as obsolete, practiced by the monarchs, barons, or nobles in the past. However, the contemporary prominence of family ties in politics, businesses, and other occupations suggests that nepotism may still play an important role in determining individuals' career success (Bellow, 2003; Geys & Smith, 2017; Sundell, 2014). Whereas the success of children in following the footsteps of their parents may not necessarily be attributable to nepotism, research has shown that people tend to infer nepotism on the basis of family ties, regardless of competence and qualification (Chapter 3 and 4). If what is perceived as nepotism is deemed to be undesirable, it makes little sense for people to support individuals with family ties to others in prominent positions. And yet, the success of individuals with family ties in politics, such as Robert Kennedy, George W. Bush, or Hillary Clinton might suggest that what is often viewed as nepotism may be something that some people approve.

The present research examined why people sometimes support nepotism in leaderships, that is, when people prefer an individual for a certain leadership position when this individual has family ties with successful leaders in that particular domain (e.g., business, politics). We propose that people infer certain desirable leadership characteristics on the basis of shared family membership. If a leader is viewed as an effective leader, they would expect family members of the leader to bear similar effective traits. We also proposed *belief in the merit of nepotism* as an individual difference construct that reflects whether a person would be more or less likely to support nepotism. Empirical testing of this construct may help to explain why some people are more likely to support nepotism than others. This can help to explain why it is possible for political

dynasties to persist even in societies where nepotism is publicly condemned.

Leadership Effectiveness and Support for Nepotism

Whether governmental, for-profit, or NGO, people look for an effective leader who can ensure the prosperity of their institution as well as their well-being as members. For this reason, citizens elect politicians whom they think could bring them prosperity and avoid the ones who potentially lead them to a downfall. Likewise, in businesses, board members elect CEO's whom they think could increase their companies' profit and market shares. This bring us to the question: how do people decide whether a specific person would make an effective leader?

According to implicit leadership theory (Lord et al., 1984), people possess a prototype or implicit expectation and assumption about the personal characteristics, traits, and qualities of a good leader. A prototype is an abstract summary of all members of a category known to a person (Hampton, 2016), which means that people form their prototype of an effective leader on their experience with instances or exemplars of effective leaders they have encountered. To the extent that they have a voice in the election of their leader, they use this prototype to guide them in deciding who should lead them (Nye & Forsyth, 1991). In this sense, people infer a candidate's leadership by matching the candidate's characteristics with their prototype of effective leader. If the characteristics of the candidate matches with their prototype, the candidate is then classified into the category of effective leader.

The prototype matching strategy is a heuristic that people use to infer the quality of their future leader. However, this strategy can have some drawbacks. First, choosing a leader is often a case of choosing a stranger, and people need to rely on limited information (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). In a presidential election for example, most people could only infer the characteristic of candidates from what is presented to them in the media. They often have only a rough and uncertain estimate of the fit between the characteristics of a candidate and their prototype. Second, research has shown that object classification based on a prototype (i.e., deciding whether a candidate fits the category of effective leader) can be ineffective when one has insufficient experience with the category (e.g., when one knows only a few relevant leaders). The use of exemplar-based

categorization (i.e., comparing a candidate to a specific known leader) may be a better approach in those situations (Homa et al., 1981).

The use of exemplars (as oppose to prototypes) in inferring leadership quality has been proposed by (Ritter & Lord, 2007) in their leadership transference theory, which is an extension of implicit leadership theory (Lord et al., 1984). According to this theory, people store mental representations (exemplars) of their previous leaders in their minds. The extent to which a candidate is similar to a previously established leader triggers an exemplar-based evaluation, rather than the general prototype-based evaluation, in which the candidate is compared to the previously established leader. If a candidate is similar to a previously established leader, people could mistakenly regard the characteristics, traits, behaviors and other relevant qualities of the previous leader as if they were the qualities of the candidate. For this reason, they may come to believe and expect that the candidate will treat them the same way they were treated by the previous leader. This expectation provides people with a subjective certainty about how they will be treated by their potential future leader.

The leader transference perspective provides a theoretical explanation for people sometimes support nepotism in leadership. Whether because of biological (e.g., parents and children share the same genes) or social reasons (e.g., parents socialize their children), it is natural for people to assume a high degree of similarity between parents and their children. If a person's parent is known to be an effective leader, people would expect the leader's offspring to hold the same effective leadership qualities. However, research has shown that many people tend to view nepotism negatively, regardless of the beneficiaries' competence and qualification (Padgett et al., 2015). This suggests that not all people are inclined to support nepotism. We therefore propose an individual-difference construct called the belief in the merit of nepotism, that reflects individual differences in the belief that nepotism is beneficial to social groups.

Belief in the Merit of Nepotism

Belief in the merit of nepotism involves the belief that kinship or family ties intrinsically determine people's positive and desirable qualities and attributes. This belief is a product of psychological essentialism, which refers to laypeople's beliefs that social categories have an essence or intrinsically defining properties (Medin & Ortoni, 1989). Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst (2000) pointed out two dimensions on which social

categories can be essentialized: As a 'natural kind' (e.g., mammals are biologically different from fish) or through 'reification' (i.e., perceived entitativity: the perception that categories are homogenous). A family is a category that can be essentialized simultaneously through both of these dimensions. In terms of the natural kind, family members are genetically related. As such, they are expected to have natural or biologically defining properties. In terms of reification, parents are expected to pass down their knowledge, beliefs, and ways of life to their children. For this reason, outsiders are more likely to expect a homogenous and unified pattern of attitudes and behaviors among members of a family. In short, essentializing families may lead people to the conclusion that a 'good' person must come from a 'good' family, and that a 'good' family would bring forth 'good' people. Thus, people who strongly believe in the merit of nepotism would be more inclined to believe that a child of an effective leader would make a better leader than other who are not related by kinship to the effective leader.

Overview of Studies

In two studies, we explored the predilection for nepotism in leadership. In Study 1, we examined how people perceive the leadership effectiveness of a child of a previously known effective leader, relative to a friend of the leader and someone who is unrelated to the leader (i.e., a stranger). In Study 2, we further examined how people evaluate the leadership effectiveness of a leader's child (relative to a stranger) when the child is the offspring of an effective leader and when the child is the offspring of an ineffective leader. In general, we expected that because high believers in the merit of nepotism are predilected to view children as similar to their parents, they would be more likely to expect children of effective leaders to become as effective as their parents compare to people with a low belief in the merit of nepotism.

4.1 Study 1

In Study 1, we examined whether people would evaluate a child of an effective leader as more effective than someone unrelated to the leader (i.e., a stranger) or a friend of the leader. Following the leader's transference theory (Ritter & Lord, 2007), by assuming similarity between the child and the leader, people can expect the child to become a more

effective leader than someone who is a stranger to the leader. Although people can infer similarity based on 'actual kinship' (e.g., parents and children), they can also assume similarity based on 'psychological kinship' (Ackerman et al., 2007), such as in the case of close-friendship. Indeed, friendship is often formed on the basis of similarity in attitudes, interests, personality, and social status between two people (Ilmarinen et al., 2016; Nahemow & Lawton, 1975). This means that people can also transfer the leadership quality of a known effective leader to a friend of the leader, which may pave a way for people to accept cronyism (i.e., favoritism based on non-kin reciprocal exchange: (Chen et al., 2004; Khatri & Tsang, 2003). With this in mind, the comparison of a child (nepotism) versus a friend (cronyism) of an effective leader serves as a conservative test of our reasoning that high believers in the merit of nepotism are more inclined than low believers to support nepotism in leadership.

Overall, the following hypotheses were tested in Study 1. First, we expected that people would assume a child of an effective leader to be more similar to the leader than a stranger to the leader or a friend of the leader (Hypothesis 1). Because a child is expected to be seen as more similar to the leader than a stranger or a friend of the leader, people would expect the child to become a more effective leader than the stranger or the friend of the leader (Hypothesis 2). Considering the predisposition for high believers in the merit of nepotism to assume similarity between children and their parents, the extent to which a child is perceived as more similar to the leader (Hypothesis 3) and more effective as leader (Hypothesis 4) than a stranger or a friend of the leader, would depend on their belief in the merit of nepotism. Additionally, if belief in the merit of nepotism is the presumed product of psychological essentialism, participants' belief in the merit of nepotism should positively correlate with their beliefs in biological determinism (i.e., the natural aspect of psychological essentialism: Keller, 2005) and the expected entitativity of a family (i.e., the reification aspect of psychological essentialism: Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2007). We therefore included measures of beliefs in biological determinism and expected entitativity of a family to test this assumption.

Method

Participants

Participants were 200 people recruited via the online research platform Prolific Academic. They participated for a 2 GPB compensation. We assigned a predetermined filter such that participants who completed the study unusually quick were omitted from further analysis.[1] The final sample involved 188 participants. Participants' gender and age was not assessed in this study. The study used a between-subjects design in which participants were assigned to either the child, friend, or stranger condition.

Procedure and Measures

Unless indicated otherwise, all responses were assessed on five-point scales (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much*). After obtaining their consent, participants were asked to answer questions regarding their *belief in the merit of nepotism* (e.g., "A child of an effective leader will most likely become an effective leader too"; 8 items; $\alpha = .91$). Subsequently, we asked participants to examine a personality (based on the Big-Five personality dimensions) and leadership profile of a leader (e.g., persuasion skills, intellectual stimulation, concern toward others). We described the leader as an effective leader in all conditions. The leader was described as either a man or woman with 25 years of professional experience. Participants then answered questions regarding their *liking for the leader* taken from Rubin (1970: e.g., , "I would highly recommend the person for a responsible job"; 11 items; $\alpha = .93$) and expectation concerning the *leader's effectiveness* (adapted from (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg [2005]: e.g., "The person is an excellent leader"; 5 items; $\alpha = .88$).

After evaluating the described leader, participants were asked to rate the *target-leader similarity* in terms of personality and leadership qualities (e.g., "Openness to experience", "Persuasion skills"; 1 = *very different* to 5 = *very similar*; 10 items; $\alpha = .92$). In the *child* condition, the target was the leader's child. In the *friend* condition, the target was the leader's friend. In the stranger condition, the target was a *stranger* to the leader. Note that in the child condition, the child was always described as a son if the leader was initially described as a man, or as a daughter if the leader was initially described as a woman. Subsequently, participants in each respective condition rated the *target's effectiveness* (e.g., "The

child/friend/stranger will be an excellent leader"; 5 items; α = .93). Finally, to check our assumption that belief in the merit of nepotism is a product of psychological essentialism, we measured participants *beliefs in biological determinism* (taken from Keller [2005]: e.g., "I think the chief reason why parents and children are so alike in behavior and character is that they possess a shared genetic inheritance"; 18 items: α = .88) and their expected *entitativity of a family* (adapted from Spencer-Rodgers et al., [2007]: e.g., "How cohesive (i.e., united) do you expect a family would be?"; 14 items; α = .74). On completion, participants were thanked, debriefed, and paid.

Results

We analyzed the data using R (R Core Team, 2019). Means, standard deviations, and correlations are presented in Table 4.1. Unless otherwise indicated, we tested the hypotheses through regression analyses.

Checks

We examined leader's effectiveness across the conditions using ANOVA. Participants in the child (*M* = 4.01, *SD* = 0.73, 95%CI: 3.82, 4.19), stranger (*M* = 3.96, *SD* = 0.59, 95%CI: 3.81, 4.11), and friend condition (*M* = 3.99, *SD* = 0.64, 95%CI: 3.83, 4.15) had equally high expectation of leadership effectiveness toward the described leader, $F(2, 185) = 0.08$, $p = .924$, $\eta^2 = .001$. Participants in the child condition, (*M* = 4.08, *SD* = 0.62, 95%CI: 3.92, 4.23), stranger condition (*M* = 3.97, *SD* = 0.58, 95%CI:

Table 4.1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations in Study 1

	M	*SD*	95%CI LL	95%CI UL	1	2	3	4	5	6
(1) Beliefs in the merit of nepotism	2.92	0.84	2.80	3.04						
(2) Liking for the leader	3.99	0.66	3.89	4.08	.34*					
(3) Leader's effectiveness	4.01	0.61	3.92	4.10	.37*	.84*				
(4) Target-leader similarity	3.40	0.66	3.30	3.49	.50*	.40*	.37*			
(5) Target's effectiveness	3.17	0.82	3.06	3.29	.50*	.48*	.46*	.69*		
(6) Beliefs in biological determinism	2.75	0.68	2.65	2.85	.51*	.11	.15*	.31*	.37*	
(7) Perceived entitativity of family	3.41	0.40	3.35	3.47	.49*	.37*	.33*	.38*	.40*	.22*

Note: * = $p < .05$, ns = not significant

3.82, 4.12), and friend condition (M = 3.98, SD = 0.62, 95%CI: 3.83, 4.13) also had equally high liking toward the described leader, $F(2, 185)$ = 0.58, p = .558, η^2 = .006. As expected, the described leader was perceived as an effective and likeable leader in all three conditions. Moreover, as shown in Table 1, participants' belief in the merit of nepotism correlated significantly with both their beliefs in biological determinism and perceived entitativity of a family. These correlations provide support for the assumption that belief in the merit of nepotism is a product of psychological essentialism.

Target-Leader Similarity

We hypothesized that participants would evaluate a child of a leader as more similar to the leader than a friend and a stranger to the leader (Hypothesis 1). In contrast to Hypothesis 1, one-way ANOVA indicated a no effect of Condition, $F(2, 185) = 1.27$, $p = .283$, $\eta^2 = .014$. Participants in the child condition (M = 3.47, SD = 0.68, 95%CI: 3.30, 3.64), stranger condition (M = 3.29, SD = 0.63, 95%CI: 3.12, 3.45), and friend condition (M = 3.43, SD = 0.66, 95%CI: 3.26, 3.59) had about equal perception concerning the similarity between the target and the described leader.

We further hypothesized that in comparison to a stranger or a friend of the leader, high believers in the merit of nepotism would view a child of an effective leader as more similar to the leader than low believers in the merit of nepotism (Hypothesis 3). To test this moderation hypothesis, we conducted a regression analysis, in which the friend and stranger conditions were dummied with the child condition treated as a point of reference. We entered the friend and stranger conditions, belief in the merit of nepotism (centered), and the interaction terms (friend condition x belief in the merit of nepotism, stranger condition x belief in the merit of nepotism) as predictors of target-leader similarity. Belief in the merit of nepotism was significantly and positively associated with perceived target-leader similarity, B = 0.50, SE = 0.08, t = 6.46, p < .001, 95%CI: 0.34, 0.65. In line with Hypothesis 3, the interaction between the stranger condition and belief in the merit of nepotism was significant, B = -0.22, SE = 0.11, t = -2.09, p = .038, 95%CI: -0.43, -0.01. As shown in Figure 4.1, although the effect of belief in the merit of nepotism was significant in both the child and stranger conditions, its role appeared to be stronger in the child condition, B = 0.41, SE = 0.05, t = 7.50, p < .001, 95%CI: 0.30, 0.52, than in the stranger condition, B = 0.19, SE = 0.08, t =

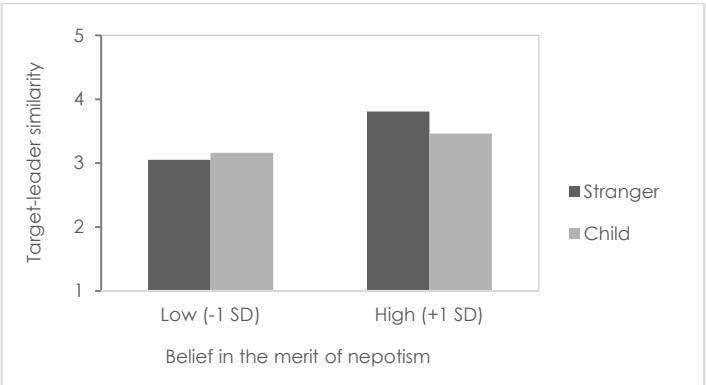

Figure 4.1 The interaction of stranger condition and belief in the merit of nepotism on target-leader similarity belief in the merit of nepotism on target-leader similarity

2.31, p = .022, 95%CI: 0.03, 0.35. Among high believers in the merit of nepotism (+1 SD), participants in the child condition perceived the target as more similar to the leader than participants in the stranger condition, B = -0.34, SE = 0.15, t = -2.35, p = .020, 95%CI: -0.63, -0.06. Among low believers in the merit of nepotism (-1 SD), target-leader similarity between participants in the child and stranger conditions was not significantly different, B = 0.10, SE = 0.15, t = 0.70, p = 0.487, 95%CI: -0.19, 0.4. These results supported Hypothesis 3 in showing that in comparison to a stranger, high believers in the merit of nepotism are more prone to view a child of an effective leader as similar to the leader than low believers in the merit of nepotism.

The interaction between the friend condition and belief in the merit of nepotism was also significant, B = -0.24, SE = 0.10, t = -2.38, p = .018, 95%CI: -0.44, -0.04. As shown in Figure 4.2, although the effect of belief in the merit of nepotism was significant both in the child and friend condition, it appeared to be more important in the child, B = 0.43, SE = 0.06, t = 7.41, p < .001, 95%CI: 0.31, 0.54, than in the friend condition, B = 0.18, SE = 0.07, t = 2.50, p = .013, 95%CI: 0.04, 0.33. Moreover, among low believers in the merit of nepotism (-1 SD), participants in the child condition perceived the target as somewhat less similar to the leader than participants in the friend condition, B = 0.26,

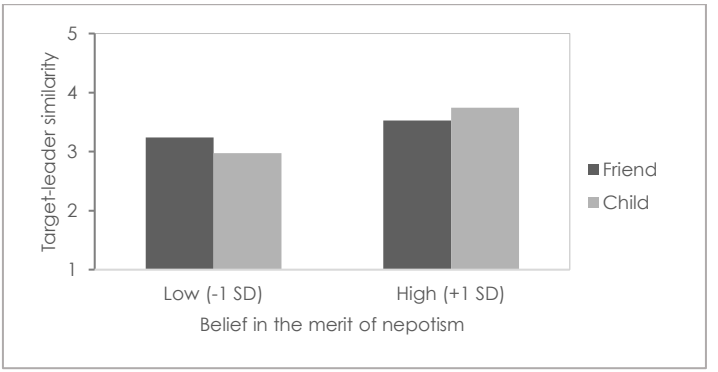

Figure 4.2 The interaction of friend condition and belief in the merit of nepotism on target-leader similarity

SE = 0.14, *t* = 1.82, *p* = .070, 95%CI: -0.02, 0.55. Among high believers in merit of nepotism (-1 SD), target-leader similarity between participants in the child and friend condition appeared to be about equal, *B* = -0.22, *SE* = 0.14, *t* = -1.56, *p* = .121, 95%CI: -0.49, 0.06. These results suggest that a lower belief in the merit of nepotism made participants less inclined to view a child of an effective leader (in comparison to a friend of the leader) as similar to the leader, but a higher belief in the merit of nepotism made a child of an effective leader (in comparison to a friend of the leader) appear more similar to the leader.

Target's Effectiveness

We hypothesized that people would expect a child of an effective leader to be more effective than a friend or a stranger to the leader (Hypothesis 2). One-way ANOVA showed a significant effect of Condition, $F(2,185) = 3.39$, $p = .036$, $\eta^2 = .035$. As expected, participants in the child condition (*M* = 3.24, *SD* = 0.80, 95%CI: 3.03, 3.44) rated the target as more effective than participants in the stranger condition (*M* = 2.95, *SD* = 0.83, 95%CI: 2.74, 3.17). Although the effect appeared in the expected direction of Hypothesis 2, Tukey post-hoc tests showed that this difference was not significant, *p* = .128, 95%CI: -0.63, 0.06. Moreover, target effectiveness in friend condition (*M* = 3.31, *SD* = 0.80, 95%CI: 3.12, 3.51) was virtually the same as the child condition, *p* = .865, 95%CI: -0.26, 0.41. Additionally

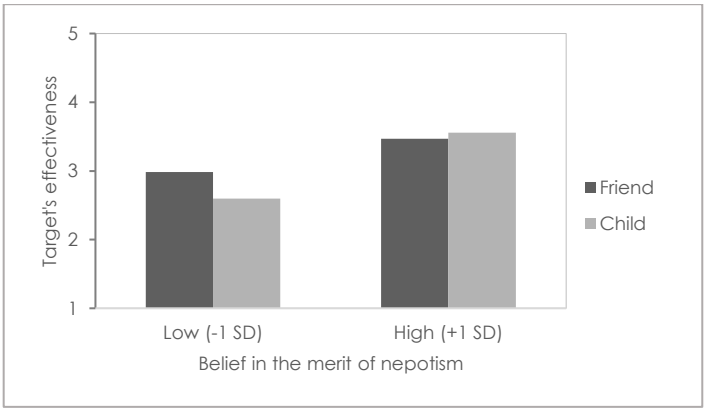

Figure 4.3 The interaction of friend condition and belief in the merit of nepotism on target's effectiveness

participants in the friend condition rated the target as more effective than participants in the stranger condition, p = .037, 95%CI: -0.70, -0.02.

We hypothesized that in comparison to a friend or a stranger to the leader, how people evaluate the leadership effectiveness of a child would depend on their belief in the merit of nepotism (Hypothesis 4). We repeated the previous moderation analysis, substituting the dependent variable with target's effectiveness. Belief in the merit of nepotism was significantly and positively associated with target's effectiveness, B = 0.55, SE = 0.10, t = 5.86, p < .001, 95%CI: 0.37, 0.74. There was meaningful interaction between the friend condition (versus the child condition) and belief in the merit of nepotism, B = -0.24, SE = 0.12, t = -1.92, p = .057, 95%CI: -0.48, 0.01. As shown in Figure 4.3, although the effect of belief in the merit of nepotism was significant in both the child and friend conditions, it appeared to play a stronger role in the child condition, B = 0.51, SE = 0.07, t = 7.18, p < .001, 95%CI: 0.37, 0.65, than in the friend condition, B = 0.27, SE = 0.09, t = 2.96, p = .003, 95%CI: 0.09, 0.45. Moreover, among low believers in the merit of nepotism (-1 SD), participants in the friend condition perceived the target as more effective than participants in the child condition, B = 0.39, SE = 0.18, t = 2.19, p = .030, 95%CI: 0.04, 0.74, while target effectiveness among high believers in the merit of nepotism (+1 SD) in the child and friend condition

did not differ significantly, B = -0.09, SE = 0.17, t = -0.50, p = .615, 95%CI: -0.43, 0.25. These results are in line with Hypothesis 4 in showing that, in comparison to the leadership effectiveness a friend of an effective leader, the leadership effectiveness of an effective leader's offspring depends on observers' beliefs in the merit of nepotism. Unexpectedly, the interaction between the stranger condition (versus the child condition) and belief in the merit of nepotism was not significant, B = -0.15, SE = 0.13, t = -1.13, p = .259, 95%CI: -0.41, 0.11.

Target-Leader Similarity as a Mediator

Our prediction that people would expect a child of an effective leader to become a more effective leader than a stranger and a friend of the leader is based on an assumption that people infer similarity between children and their parents. This means that target-leader similarity should mediate the interaction effect of Condition and belief in the merit of nepotism on target-effectiveness. To test whether this was the case, we conducted a moderated-mediation analysis, simulating PROCESS Model 7 as described by (Hayes, 2013) using the *lavaan* package in R (Rosseel, 2012). The indirect effect of friend condition x beliefs in the merit of nepotism, B = -0.19, SE = 0.08, z = -2.37, p = .018, 95%CI: -0.34, -0.03,, and stranger condition x beliefs in the merit of nepotism, B = -0.17, SE = 0.08, z = -2.09, p = .036, 95%CI: -0.34, -0.01, was significant. This shows that because high believers in the merit of nepotism in the child condition tended to view the target as more similar to the leader than those in the friend and stranger condition, they expected a child of an effective leader to be a more effective leader than a friend or a stranger to the leader.

Discussion

This first study showed that, on the surface, participants appeared to evaluate a child of an effective leader no different from a friend or a stranger to the leader. This suggests that Hypotheses 1 and 2 were not supported. However, a closer look revealed that participants' evaluation of the leader's offspring depended on their belief in the merit of nepotism. In line with Hypothesis 3, low believers in the merit of nepotism were somewhat less inclined to view the leader's child as similar to the leader compared to a friend of the leader, whereas the similarity of the child to the leader was virtually equal to the similarity of the friend of the leader, among high believers in the merit of nepotism. In comparison with the

stranger to the leader, high believers in the merit of nepotism tended to view the child as more similar to the effective leader, whereas the similarity of the child to the leader was about equal to the similarity of the stranger among low believers in the merit of nepotism. These results support the notion that, the extent that a child of an effective leader is viewed as similar to the leader depends on observer's levels of belief in the merit of nepotism.

In line with Hypothesis 4, low believers in the merit of nepotism were more inclined to view the child of an effective leader as less effective than the friend of the leader, whereas the child was viewed just as effective as the friend among high believers in the merit of nepotism. Moreover, moderated-mediation analysis suggests that this perception of leader-child similarity among high believers in the merit of nepotism appeared to be the reason they tended to expect a child to become as effective as a friend of the leader. A moderated-mediation analysis also suggests that, because high believers in the merit of nepotism were more inclined to view the child as more similar to the leader, they became more likely to rate the child as more effective than the stranger.

All in all, Study 1 showed that high believers in the merit of nepotism were inclined to assume a child of an effective leader to be as similar and as effective as the leader. However, this study only looked at a situation involving an effective leader. We argued that high believers in the merit of nepotism support nepotism in leadership because they believe that parents intrinsically bequeath their successful leadership qualities to their offspring. Therefore, if a candidate is a child of an *ineffective* leader, high believers in the merit of nepotism would *not* be expected to support nepotism. This notion was examined in the second study.

4.2 Study 2

The goal of Study 2 was to examine the interplay between a leader's effectiveness and belief in the merit of nepotism in determining people's expectation on the effectiveness of the leader's offspring. Additionally, we examined the interplay of leader's effectiveness and belief in the merit of nepotism on people's liking for the child, as well as their expectation of whether the child would engage in toxic leadership behaviors. To limit the complexity of the study's design, we focused on the comparison between a child of a leader and someone unknown to the leader (i.e., a stranger).

As in Study 1, we expected that people would assume that a child of a leader to be more similar to the leader than a stranger to the leader, regardless of whether the leader is described as effective or ineffective (Hypothesis 1). Following the leader's transference perspective (Ritter & Lord, 2007), people assume similarity between children and their parents. As such, we predicted that people would expect a child of an effective leader to be *more* effective than a stranger to the leader, whereas the child of an ineffective leader was predicted to be seen as *less* effective than a stranger to the leader (Hypothesis 2). Considering the predisposition of high believers in the merit of nepotism to assume similarity between children and their parents, we further predicted that, regardless of the leader's effectiveness (or ineffectiveness), the extent to which people perceive a child as more similar to the leader than a stranger to the leader would depend on their belief in the merit of nepotism (Hypothesis 3). Consequently, high believers in the merit of nepotism would be more inclined than low believers to perceive a child of an *effective leader* as more effective than a stranger to the leader (Hypothesis 4).

So far, we focused on cognitive and instrumental reasons of why people would support nepotism. However, not all leaders are elected based on their leadership qualifications. Indeed, some leadership elections appear to revolve more around a leader's overall popularity than around a careful weighing of the candidate's qualifications. Choosing a leader may involve a strong affective component (Wu & Coleman, 2014), in which an overall liking for the candidate plays a pivotal role. Although previous research on nepotism showed that people tended to dislike beneficiaries of nepotism (Padgett & Morris, 2005), it is actually possible for people to like a beneficiary of nepotism. Based on the leader transference theory (Ritter & Lord, 2007), when a leadership candidate is perceived as similar to a previously known leader, people would transfer not only the characteristics of the previous leader, but also their attitudes toward the previous leader to the candidate. Since people typically like effective leaders (Brown & Keeping, 2005), it can be expected that they would also like a child of an effective leader more than a stranger to the leader (Hypothesis 5). Moreover, considering the predisposition of high believers in the merit of nepotism to assume similarity between children and their parents, it can also be expected that, relative to a stranger to the leader, high believers in the merit of nepotism would be more inclined than low believers to like a child of an effective leader (Hypothesis 6).

The focus of the present paper so far has been on reasons for people to support nepotism in leadership. However, previous studies have identified reasons for people to oppose it. For example, people tend to expect beneficiaries of nepotism to be less competent than non-beneficiaries (Padgett & Morris, 2005). Moreover, employees also expected job candidates for a supervisor level position who are related by kinship to top management to be less capable in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities than those unrelated to top management (Padgett et al., 2015). These findings suggest that people may be reluctant to support nepotism out of fear that beneficiaries of nepotism are ill equipped to lead, and would lead in toxic or dysfunctional ways. We thus examined the interplay of leader's effectiveness and belief in the merit of nepotism in reducing people's expectation of a child to engage in toxic leadership behaviors (e.g., abusive supervision, unpredictability, authoritarian, narcistic; Schmidt, 2008).

Based on the leader transference theory we predicted that, when a child is the offspring of an effective leader, people would expect the child to exhibit *less* toxic leadership behaviors than a stranger to the leader. But when a child is the offspring of an ineffective leader, people would expect the child to exhibit *more* toxic leadership behaviors than a stranger to the leader (Hypothesis 7). Since high believers in the merit of nepotism are predisposed to assume similarity between children and their parents, high believers in the merit of nepotism were predicted to be *less* inclined than low believers to expect a child of an effective leader to engage in toxic leadership relative to a stranger to the leader (Hypothesis 8).

Method

Participants

Participants were 200 Americans recruited via the crowdsource platform Prolific Academic. They participated for a 2 GBP compensation. We used a filter so that participants who completed the questionnaire unusually quick are not included in the proceeding analyses.[11] The final sample

[11] The filter was set based on the fact that people read about 300 words per minutes with 14% more or less speed changes (Carver, 1983; Taylor, 1965). There were 1374 words in the manipulations and questionnaire of Study 1 and 1117 words in Study 2. Participants who completed Study 1 in less than 4 minutes and 11 seconds and those who completed Study 2 in 3 minutes and 15 seconds were omitted from further analysis because it can be assumed that they had paid insufficient attention to the manipulations and questions.

involved 198 participants (100 women, 97 men, 1 other, M_{age} = 34.16, SD_{age} = 12.55). The study used a 2 (Condition: Child vs. stranger) x 2 (Leader's effectiveness: Effective vs. ineffective) between-subjects design.

Procedures and Measures

After obtaining their consent, participants were asked to answer questions regarding their *belief in the merit of nepotism* (same items as in Study 1; α = .91). We subsequently asked participants to examine a personality and leadership profile of a leader with 25 years of professional experience. In the *effective leader* condition, the leader was described as having personality and leadership profiles scores higher than the average leaders. In the *ineffective leader* condition, the leader was described as having personality and leadership profiles scores lower than the average leaders. To address the limitation of Study 1, we included a profile of the average leaders as an anchor for the participants to evaluate the described leader in all conditions. Participants then answered questions regarding their *liking for the leader* (same items as in Study 1; α = .98) and expectation concerning the described *leader's effectiveness* (same items as in Study 1; α = .97). Next, participants were asked to rate the *similarity* between the described leader to a target (target-leader similarity) in terms of personality and leadership (same items as in Study 1; α = .93). In the *child* condition, the target was the described leader's child. In the *stranger* condition, the target was a stranger to the leader. Subsequently, participants in each respective condition rated their *liking for the target* (α = .91) and expected leadership effectiveness of the target (*target's effectiveness*: same items as in Study 1; α = .94). Liking for the target was measured using the same items as liking for the leader, but the subject in the items phrase were substituted to either an unrelated person (i.e., a stranger to the leader) or a child (α = .96). Finally, participants were asked about the likelihood for the target to conduct *toxic leadership* behaviors taken from Schmidt (2008: e.g., "Acts like a bully"; 30 items; α = .99). On completion, participants were thanked, debriefed, and paid.

Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations are presented in Table 4.2. We analyzed the data through regression analyses. Relevant interactions were further analyzed through simple slope analysis.

Table 4.2. Means, standard deviations, and correlations in Study 2

	M	*SD*	95%CI						
			LL	UL	1	2	3	4	5	6
(1) Belief in the merit of nepotism	2.83	0.83	2.71	2.94						
(2) Liking for the leader	3.16	1.26	2.99	3.34	.21*					
(3) Leader's effectiveness	3.13	1.27	2.95	3.31	.21*	.96*				
(4) Target-leader similarity	3.07	0.69	2.97	3.17	.41*	.41*	.36*			
(5) Target's effectiveness	2.96	0.79	2.85	3.07	.44*	.37*	.36*	.56*		
(6) Liking for the target	2.85	0.80	2.74	2.96	.43*	.39*	.37*	.56*	.82*	
(7) Toxic leadership	2.36	0.96	2.22	2.49	.17*	.12ns	.12 ns	.15*	-.06	.07ns

Note: * = $p < .05$, ns = not significant

Leader's Effectiveness

We conducted regression analysis in which Condition (coded 0 = stranger, 1 = child), leader's effectiveness condition (coded 0 = ineffective, 1 = effective), and the Interaction (Condition x leader's effectiveness condition) as predictors of leader's effectiveness. As expected, participants in the effective leader condition (M = 4.09, SD = 0.82, 95%CI: 3.93, 4.25) perceived the leader as more effective than participants in the ineffective leader condition (M = 2.16, SD = 0.82, 95%CI: 1.99, 2.32), B = 2.19, SE = 0.16, t = 13.46, p < .001, 95%CI: 1.87, 2.52. These results support the success of the leader's effectiveness manipulation. The interaction of Condition x leader's effectiveness condition was also significant, B = -0.53, SE = 0.23, t = -2.28, p = .024, 95%CI: -0.99, -0.07. Further analysis showed that the effect of the leader's effectiveness condition was significant in both the stranger condition, B = 2.19, SE = 0.16, t = 13.46, p < .001, 95%CI: 1.87, 2.52, and the child condition, B = 1.67, SE = 0.16, t = 10.11, p < .001, 95%CI: 1.34, 1.99. The effect of Condition was significant among participants in the effective leader condition, B = -0.34, SE = 0.16, t = -2.09, p = .038, 95%CI: -0.66, -0.02, but not among participants in the ineffective leader condition, B = 0.19, SE = 0.16, t = 1.14, p = .256, 95%CI: -0.14, 0.51. Participants in the child and effective leader condition (M = 3.91, SE = 0.12, 95%CI: 3.62, 4.21) rated the described leader as somewhat less effective than participants in the stranger and effective leader condition (M = 4.25, SE = 0.11, 95%CI: 3.97, 4.54). The main effect of

Condition was not significant, participants in the child condition (M = 3.08, SD = 1.25, 95%CI: 2.83, 3.33) perceived the described leader as effective as participants in the stranger condition (M = 3.18, SD = 1.30, 95%CI: 2.92, 3.44), B = 0.19, SE = 0.16, t = 1.14, p = .256, 95%CI: -0.14, 0.51.

Liking for the Leader

We repeated the previous analysis, substituting leader's effectiveness with liking for the leader as the dependent variable. The effect of the leader's effectiveness condition was significant, B = 2.21, SE = 0.15, t = 15, p = 0, 95%CI: 1.92, 2.51. Participants in the effective leader condition (M = 4.17, SD = 0.70, 95%CI: 4.03, 4.31) liked the described leader more than participants in the ineffective leader condition (M = 2.14, SD = 0.78, 95%CI: 1.98, 2.29). The effect of Condition was not significant. B = 0.15, SE = 0.15, t = 0.98, p = .327, 95%CI: -0.15, 0.44. Participants in the child condition (M = 3.13, SD = 1.22, 95%CI: 2.89, 3.37) liked the leader as much as participants in the stranger condition (M = 3.19, SD = 1.30, 95%CI: 2.94, 3.45). The interaction term was marginally significant, B = -0.38, SE = 0.21, t = -1.8, p = .073, 95%CI: -0.79, 0.04. All in all, these results showed that liking toward the leader was largely determined by the leader's effectiveness condition.

Target-Leader Similarity

We conducted regression analysis in which Condition, leader's effectiveness condition, belief in the merit of nepotism (centered), all two-way, and three-way interaction were entered as predictors of target-leader similarity. In Hypothesis 1, we predicted that participants would assume a child of a leader as more similar to the leader than a stranger to the leader, regardless of whether the leader was described as effective or ineffective. Supporting Hypothesis 1, the main effect of Condition was significant, B = 0.28, SE = 0.12, t = 2.39, p = .018, 95%CI: 0.05, 0.52. Participants in the child condition (M = 3.24, SD = 0.69, 95%CI: 3.1, 3.38) perceived the target more similar to the described leader than participants in the stranger condition (M = 2.90, SD = 0.64, 95%CI: 2.77, 3.03). The main effect of the leader's effectiveness condition was also significant, B = 0.33, SE = 0.12, t = 2.82, p = .005, 95%CI: 0.10, 0.56. Participants in the effective leader condition (M = 3.26, SD = 0.69, 95%CI: 3.12, 3.4) perceived the target as more similar to the described leader than participants in the

ineffective leader condition (M = 2.88, SD = 0.64, 95%CI: 2.75, 3.00), regardless of whether the target was a child or a stranger. In Hypothesis 3, we predicted that, regardless of the leader's effectiveness, the extent to which people perceive a child as more similar to the leader than a stranger to the leader would depend on their belief in the merit of nepotism. The interaction effect of Condition x belief in the merit of nepotism was not significant however, B = 0.16, SE = 0.13, t = 1.20, p = .231, 95%CI: -0.1, 0.42. These findings therefore do not support Hypothesis 3.

Target's Effectiveness

We repeated the previous analysis, substituting the dependent variable with target's effectiveness. The effect of belief in the merit of nepotism was significant, B = 0.45, SE = 0.11, t = 4.20, p < .001, 95%CI: 0.24, 0.66. The interaction of Condition x belief in the merit of nepotism was also significant, B = -0.33, SE = 0.16, t = -2.11, p = .036, 95%CI: -0.64, -0.02. Importantly, in line with Hypothesis 4, the three-way interaction of Condition x leader's effectiveness condition x belief in the merit of nepotism was significant, B = 0.57, SE = 0.20, t = 2.83, p = .005, 95%CI: 0.17, 0.97. As predicted in Hypothesis 4 (see Figure 4.4), high believers in the merit of nepotism (+1 SD) in the effective leader condition perceived a child as more effective than a stranger, B = 0.41, SE = 0.18, t = 2.25, p = .026, 95%CI: 0.05, 0.78. Additionally, high believers in the merit of nepotism (+1 SD) in the ineffective leader condition also perceived a child as somewhat less effective than a stranger, B = -0.39, SE = 0.21, t = -1.83, p = .069, 95%CI: -0.82, 0.03. The interaction of Condition x leader's effectiveness was not significant, providing no support for Hypothesis 2, B = 0.24, SE = 0.2, t = 1.19, p = .234, 95%CI: -0.15, 0.62.

Liking for the target

We repeated the previous analysis, substituting target's effectiveness with liking for the target. The effect of belief in the merit of nepotism was significant, B = 0.39, SE = 0.11, t = 3.50, p = .001, 95%CI: 0.17, 0.60. In line with Hypothesis 6 the three-way interaction of Condition x leader's effectiveness condition x belief in the merit of nepotism was also significant, B = 0.43, SE = 0.21, t = 2.06, p = .040, 95%CI: 0.02, 0.84. More specifically (see Figure 4.5), high believers in the merit of nepotism

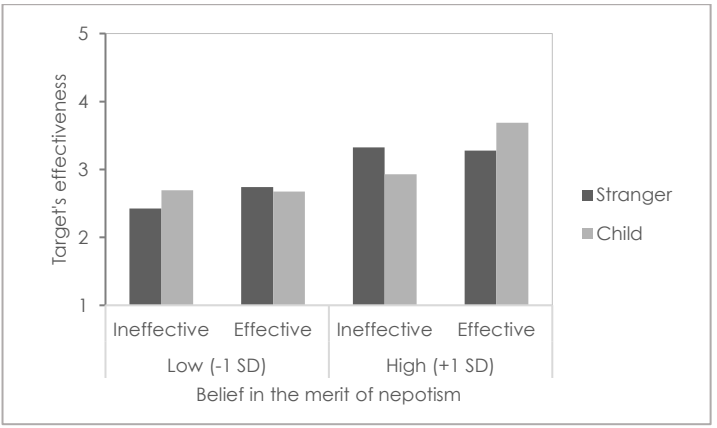

Figure 4.4 The three-way interaction of Condition x leader's effectiveness x belief in the merit of nepotism on target's effectiveness

than a stranger, B = 0.39, SE = 0.19, t = 2.06, p = .040, 95%CI: 0.02, 0.76. High believers in the merit of nepotism (+1 SD) in the ineffective leader condition had about the same level of liking toward a child and a stranger, B = -0.30, SE = 0.22, t = -1.37, p = .174, 95%CI: -0.74, 0.13. The interaction of Condition x leader's effectiveness was not significant, providing no support for Hypothesis 5, B = 0.26, SE = 0.2, t = 1.3, p = .196, 95%CI: -0.14, 0.66.

Toxic leaderships

Finally, we again repeated the previous analysis, entering toxic leadership as the dependent variable. The main effect of Condition was marginally significant, B = 0.35, SE = 0.19, t = 1.83, p = .069, 95%CI: -0.03, 0.73. The main effect of the leader's effectiveness condition was significant, B = 0.40, SE = 0.19, t = 2.09, p = .038, 95%CI: 0.02, 0.77. In line with Hypothesis 7, the interaction of Condition x leader's effectiveness condition was significant, B = -0.62, SE = 0.27, t = -2.31, p = .022, 95%CI: -1.15, -0.09. As shown in Figure 4.6, in the ineffective leader condition, a child was somewhat expected to exhibit more toxic leadership than a stranger, B = 0.35, SE = 0.19, t = 1.83, p = .069, 95%CI: -0.03, 0.73. However, in the effective leader condition, the levels of participants expected toxic leadership were about equal in the child and stranger cond-

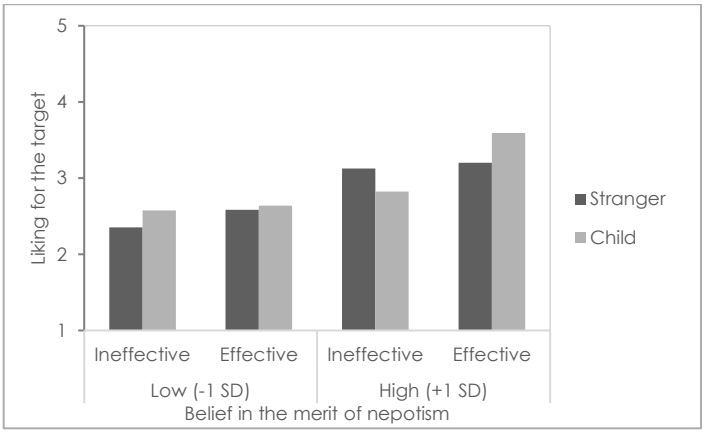

Figure 4.5 The three-way interaction of Condition x leader's effectiveness x belief in the merit of nepotism on liking for the target

itions, B = -0.27, SE = 0.19, t = -1.44, p = .151, 95%CI: -0.64, 0.10. Thus, there was only weak support for Hypothesis 7. Whereas a stranger in the effective leader condition was expected to exhibit more toxic leadership behaviors than a stranger in the ineffective leader condition, B = 0.4, SE = 0.19, t = 2.09, p = .038, 95%CI: 0.02, 0.77, a child in the effective leader condition was expected to show less toxic leadership than a child in the ineffective leader condition, B = -0.23, SE = 0.19, t = -1.19, p = .237, 95%CI: -0.60, 0.15. The three-way interaction of Condition, leader's effectiveness, and belief in the merit of nepotism was not significant, B = -0.34, SE = 0.28, t = -1.23, p = .221, 95%CI: -0.89, 0.21, providing no support for Hypothesis 8.

Discussion

This second study showed that participants assumed the child of a leader as more similar to the leader than a stranger to the leader, regardless of whether the leader was described as effective or ineffective (Hypothesis 1). Consequently, in line with Hypothesis 4, when nepotism involved the child of an *effective leader*, high believers in the merit of nepotism were more inclined than low believers to expect the child to become a more effective leader than someone not-known to the leader (i.e., a stranger).

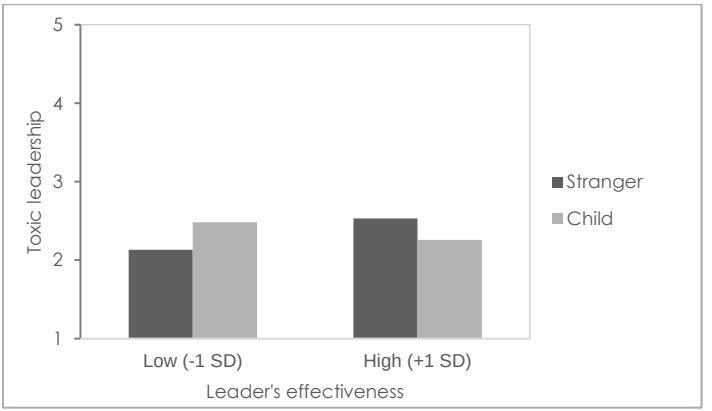

Figure 4.6 The interaction of Condition x leader's effectiveness on toxic leadership

On the other hand, when nepotism involved the child of an *ineffective leader*, high believers in the merit of nepotism were more likely than low believers to expect the child to become a *less* effective leader than a stranger to the leader. This shows that high believers in the merit of nepotism are potentially both prominent supporters and fervent opposers of nepotism. They support nepotism when it involves offspring of effective leaders, but oppose nepotism when it involves offspring of ineffective leaders.

Study 2 also showed evidence that people do not always dislike beneficiaries of nepotism. Specifically, in line with Hypothesis 6, if a leadership candidate was a child of a previously known effective leader, there was a tendency for high believers in the merit of nepotism to like this child more than a stranger to the effective leader. Additionally, although the evidence was quite weak, whereas participants expected the child of an ineffective leader to exhibit more toxic leadership behaviors than a stranger to the leader, they expected the child of an effective leader to exhibit about the same level of toxic leadership behaviors as a stranger to the leader (Hypothesis 7). All in all, these results show that people sometimes do support nepotism, particularly those who strongly believe in the merit of nepotism.

4.3 General Discussion

Nepotism is often frowned upon, because it is considered unfair and unethical. Indeed, much of the previous research on this topic has focused on people's negative attitudes and opposition toward nepotism (Arasli et al., 2006; Padgett & Morris, 2005). However, the fact that many leaders who are tied by kinship to other influential people are thriving throughout the world suggests that there may be enough positive elements to nepotism for people to support it (Geys & Smith, 2017). The present research examined the conditions under which people sometimes support nepotism in leadership, despite the negative connotations attached to it. The results from Study 1 showed that, on the surface, participants did not seem to think that the offspring of an effective leader would make a better leader than a friend of the leader or a stranger to the leader. However, by taking into account individuals' belief in the merit of nepotism, it became clear that those who strongly believe in the merit of nepotism were more inclined to assume similarity between the effective leader and their child. They consequently were more inclined to view the child of an effective leader as more effective than a stranger to the leader or a friend of the leader, which can be a powerful reason to support nepotism in such circumstances.

Study 2 extended these findings by showing that strong believers in the merit of nepotism were not only inclined to view the child of an effective leader as more effective than a stranger to the leader, but they were also inclined to view the child of an *ineffective* leader as less effective than a stranger to the leader. This could make strong believers in the merit of nepotism both prominent supporters of nepotism and fervent opposers of nepotism, depending on the situation. Strong believers in the merit of nepotism also had a tendency to like a child of an effective leader more than a stranger of the effective leader. Finally, Study 2 showed that, whereas participants expected the child of an ineffective leader to become a toxic or dysfunctional leader (relative to a stranger to the leader), such expectations were not expressed with respect to the child of an effective leader. All in all, the findings help shed more light onto the question of why people sometime support nepotism, and sometimes oppose it.

Theoretical Implications

The present research is in line with leadership transference theory (Ritter & Lord, 2007), by showing that people tend to transfer their perception of a leader's qualities, and their affective evaluation of this leader, to someone they assume to be similar to the leader by virtue of a familial relationship or a friendship. The results are also in line with cognitive balance theory (Heider, 1946). According to this theory, people strive to maintain evaluative balance when thinking about the relationships of objects in their minds. In Heider's original formulation, cognitive balance is achieved when $pLo + oUx + pLx$. In plain words, this means that if an observer (*p*) likes (*L*) a particular leader (*o*), the observer has to like (*L*) the leader's child (*x*) because the child is similar (*U*) to the leader. Similar predictions can also be derived from this theory for other variables examined in the present research (i.e., target's effectiveness, toxic leadership). In the present research, the balancing mindset of "I like the child because I like the father" was prominently shown by high believers in the merit of nepotism, but not by low believers in the merit of nepotism. It would be interesting to examine what kind of balance mechanisms took place in the minds of low believers in the merit of nepotism. For instance, did they re-assess their favorableness for the leader (i.e., by disliking the leader) so that they can disfavor the child?

The present research proposed a new construct called the belief in the merit of nepotism. We view this belief as a product of psychological essentialism beliefs (Haslam et al., 2000). While social categories are often essentialized as either a natural kind or through reification, a family can be essentialized simultaneously in both ways. In terms of the natural kind, parents and children share the same gene. In terms of reification, parents are often the ones who raise their children, so people expect the attitudes and behaviors of parents to be present in their offspring. Indeed, as shown in Study 1, belief in the merit of nepotism correlated highly with both beliefs in biological determinism (the 'natural kind' component) and perceived entitativity of a family (the 'reification' component). While the correlation of beliefs in biological determinism and perceived entitativity of a family was significant, the correlation was modest. It is also worth noting that we conceptualized belief in the merit of nepotism such that it concerns successful leadership qualities, but not the opposite, i.e., unsuccessful qualities. The fact that high believers in the merit of nepotism had a tendency to oppose nepotism when it involved a child of an

ineffective leader suggests that our measure may have tapped into both the belief in the *merit* and *demerit* of nepotism.

Limitations

Nepotism is a deeply-rooted cultural value in places such as Latin America, the Arab world, and Asia (Khatri & Tsang, 2003; Wated & Sanchez, 2015), while it is often presumed to be less prevalent in Western societies. One could argue that this limits the generalizability of the present work, which was conducted among samples from Western, industrialized societies. However, a closer look at studies of nepotism suggest that nepotism is in fact also quite common in Western societies. For example, by analyzing shared last-names, Allesina (2011) concluded that nepotism is prominent in Italian academia, particularly in the sectors of industrial engineering, law, and medicine. In Sweden, kinship is common at most workplaces, especially in the rural areas (Holm et al., 2018). In the U.S., Canada, and Denmark, it is also quite common for young men and women to work for the same employers as their parents (Bingley et al., 2011; Stinson & Wignall, 2018). Importantly, research about nepotism involving Americans and Indonesians showed that participants from these culturally different societies responded very similar to nepotism in organizational and political contexts (see Chapter 2 and 3). The fact that nepotism is quite common in Western societies, combined with the notion that Americans and Indonesians exhibited similar responses to nepotism, lends credence to the generalizability of the present research.

Practical Implications

The results of the present study have several practical implications as well. Previous research has shown that people suspect that nepotism is at play when they realize that political leaders are related by kinship ties (see Chapter 3), and that beneficiaries of nepotism are assumed to be incompetent (Darioly & Riggio, 2014). An important reason to oppose nepotism is therefore the fear that leadership positions will be filled by incompetent individuals. However, the current research suggests that perceived kinship ties could also, under the right circumstances, help to reduce the fear for a new, ineffective leader. Aspiring leaders and political campaigners could make good use of this knowledge. Specifically, if a leadership candidate is tied by kinship to a previously known effective and

likeable leader, political campaigners could highlight this information to make the candidate appear more competent and likeable than other candidates who are not tied by kinship to the previously known effective and likeable leader.

5 General Discussion and Conclusions

I started this thesis by describing a case of nepotism, in which a merited individual was denied a job promotion so that another less merited person who is related by kinship to a prominent person in the organization could take up the position (Chapter 1). This example represents a case of nepotism that most people understand, and an example of nepotism as usually described in dictionaries. Although there are several studies on the detrimental impact of nepotism, there is no consensus among researchers about the definition of the concept "nepotism". Some researchers construe all forms of kin favoritism as nepotism (Allesina, 2011; Arasli et al., 2006; Sundell, 2014), while others only regard kin favoritism as nepotism when the merit for reward of the nepotism beneficiary is questionable (e.g., getting promoted without adequate qualification; Darioly & Riggio, 2014).

Such lack of consensus appears to be in line with Bellow's (2003) description of nepotism as an elastic concept. What appears nepotistic to one person may not be nepotistic in the eyes of another person. Instead of continuing the debate about what should or should not be regarded as nepotism, the eleven studies in the present thesis focused on:

1. What is nepotism in the eyes of lay-people?
2. What are the consequences of perceived nepotism in organizational and political contexts?
3. Why, despite the negative connotations attached to it, does nepotism persist?

In this final chapter, I summarize the main results of the studies in a structure that answers these three key questions. I will subsequently end this thesis by providing a general conclusion and discussion of some of the limitations of the current studies, as well as suggestions for further research on nepotism and practical suggestions on managing perceived nepotism.

5.1 Summary of Results

What do People see as Nepotism?

What it is that lay-people regard as nepotism was examined in the second and third chapter of this thesis. This is an important question for two reasons. First, the subjective appraisal of a psychological phenomenon matters for people's feelings and behaviors. Second, lay people are the ones who are implicated by how policymakers decide to regulate nepotism in their institutions.

As described in Chapter 1, in my attempt to answer this question, I defined nepotism as a form of in-group favoritism. As such, nepotism is a natural altruistic tendency towards one's family (Hamilton, 1964), which serves both instrumental and identity functions for the family members (Scheepers et al., 2006), and can be practiced without violating principles of meritocracy. For instance, parents could invest heavily in their children's education to ensure their competitive edge over other people. If these children then become highly qualified individuals, nepotism is perfectly aligned with the meritocracy principle. However, people naturally expect members of a social group (in this case a family) to be biased in favor of their own group (Everett et al., 2015). As such, a mere awareness of a kinship bond between a prominent person (e.g., a father) and an employee (e.g., a son) within an organization is enough for people to suspect a bias in the hiring of the son, even when the son is the most qualified individual for the job. In line with this reasoning, both in business organizations (Chapter 2) and politics (Chapter 3) I found that people construe nepotism as the hiring or promotion of family members to advantaged positions, regardless of competence or qualification.

There are at least two possible reasons for why people do not take competence into consideration when attributing kin-hiring to nepotism. First, from a discounting point of view (Kelley & Michela, 1980), it may be difficult for people to estimate the competence of a potential nepotism beneficiary, unless they already know the person well. Information about kinship is much simpler to process and apply. So, when 'simple' (kinship) and 'difficult' (competence) information are presented simultaneously, the more difficult information simply gets discounted in favor for the simpler explanation.

A second explanation is provided by Studies 3 and 4 in Chapter 2 of the present thesis. These two studies consistently showed a main effect of competence, but not kinship, on participants' perception of distributive fairness. This means that whether a target person had family ties to a prominent person in their organization did not matter. If the target was competent, they evaluated the hiring of the target with kinship ties in the organization to be as distributively fair as the hiring of a competent employee without kinship ties. However, the situation is reversed with respect to judgements of procedural fairness. While the main effect of kinship on procedural fairness was significant, this was not the case for the main effect of competence. This means that whether or not a target was competent did not matter, participants still perceived the hiring of a target as procedurally unfair as long as this person is a family to a prominent person in their organization. This suggests that people *do* take into account information about competence when evaluating a potential case of nepotism, in which they were able to judge the merit (i.e., distributive fairness) on the hiring of kin. However, participants were simultaneously suspicious that such hiring involved a violation of fair hiring procedures. Thus, the reason that people do not take competence into consideration may not be because they discount competence information, but because they view kinship as a more relevant source of information that is in line with their expectation that certain biases take place in the hiring of kin.

Nepotism versus Cronyism

Nepotism is often equated with the related concept of cronyism (Khatri et al., 2006; Khatri & Tsang, 2003). However, I proposed that there are significant differences between the two constructs. Nepotism can be explained by the principle of kin altruism for which direct reciprocity is not required, whereas direct reciprocity is essential to cronyism. To benefit from cronyism, people need to invest in the right social relationships and to mutually give-and-take in those relationships. For beneficiaries, cronyism requires an element of social competence as well, to meet the needs of the benefactors. For benefactors, favoring those who benefit them is a sign that they are good reciprocators worthy of social investment.

As an example of the operation of reciprocity in cronyism, imagine that person A is a professor and person B is a talented master student who is eager to pursue a career in science and is highly interested in A's area of expertise. B also realizes that A's power and influence could be helpful

for obtaining a PhD position, so he voluntarily offers himself to A as research assistant. A is a busy scientist, and having B around enables her to focus on the more important parts of her work. Having seen B's competence, A decides to offer B a PhD position. In this scenario, B made an investment by voluntarily assisting A. A, in turn, reciprocated by offering B a desired position.

As illustrated by this example, people may view cronyism as a form of social capital investment that can be strategically used by individuals to climb the career ladder, regardless of kinship. Cronyism is thus likely something that people view as more controllable, something that can be developed. This might imply that people find cronyism more acceptable than nepotism. In line with this idea, the results of Study 4 of Chapter 2 showed that people find nepotism procedurally more unfair than cronyism. It can thus be concluded that people evaluate cronyism more benignly because it involves a merit component.

Why is the Perception of Nepotism Important?

The examination of perceived nepotism is important for several reasons. First, the hiring of kin may not necessarily be nepotism. For example, a family member may be hired through a blind hiring procedure, which prevented bias. However, since kinship per se is enough to make people infer nepotism, other employees may later still suspect bias in the hiring process. In terms of how employees respond to nepotism, what matters is their *perception* of nepotism, not whether actual discrimination in favor of a family member has taken place.

Previous research has illustrated some of the deleterious psychological outcomes of perceived nepotism among organizational members (Arasli et al., 2006; Büte, 2011; Keles et al., 2011; Pelit et al., 2015). However, these studies have been lacking explanandum concerning *why* perceived nepotism produces such outcomes. The present thesis aimed to fill this gap. It suggests that such deleterious outcomes may arise because nepotism undermines people's belief that they are treated in procedurally fair-ways by their organization. Indeed, according to the group-value model of procedural justice (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Lind, 2001; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1989; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler & Lind, 1992; van den Bos et al., 1997), when people feel that they are being treated in procedurally unfair ways by their organization, they may have lower job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational trust, as well

as increased job stress, organizational silence, and organizational alienation (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Elovainio et al., 2004; Lambert et al., 2007; Loi et al., 2006; Tidwell, 2005; Ybema & van den Bos, 2010). Combining these findings with our work on nepotism explains why perceived nepotism may have such a negative impact on members of organizations, even on those who are not directly affected by nepotism itself.

As shown in the fifth study of Chapter 2, perceived nepotism can also impact potential job seekers' attitudes and behaviors toward organizations. This chapter shows that, among potential job seekers, perceived nepotism at an organization was associated with a negative expectation about the organization's corporate climate, as expressed in a presumed lack of organizational citizenship behaviors, trust, and transparency, and in more counterproductive work behaviors. There was also a tendency among potential job-seekers to refrain from applying for a job at a nepotistic institution, despite the fact that this organization was very prestigious. This tendency was exhibited regardless of job seekers' perceived own qualifications for the position. Thus, in line with Gilliland (1993) model of justice in selection systems, perceived nepotism may prevent an organization from attracting highly qualified job candidates.

The present thesis also shows that the detrimental impact of perceived nepotism is not limited to organizational contexts but also applies to the political arena. Particularly, four studies described in Chapter 3 consistently show that the mere prominence of family ties in politics is enough to make people believe that nepotism plays an intricate part in their nation's politics. Perceived nepotism made people more inclined to question their political authorities' trustworthiness by exhibiting more cynicism toward them. In line with the group value model of procedural justice (Tyler & Lind, 1992), such cynicism (or lack of expected trustworthiness among politicians) consequently led people to believe that they were being treated in procedurally unfair ways by their authorities, which consequently led to a decreased inclination to become politically active and an increased inclination to engage in political protest.

Why does Nepotism Persist?

Nepotism tends to be described in a negative light in many lay-people's eyes, as well as in the scientific literature. This final chapter too, is primarily focused on the negative side of nepotism. However, the

prominence of family ties in contemporary businesses and politics suggests that there may be some positive elements to nepotism that elicits support from people.

On the side of those who engage in nepotism, nepotism is clearly beneficial. Parental nepotism, such as securing a job for one's offspring, is essentially a modern way of enhancing the inclusive fitness of one's offspring (Hamilton, 1964). It also serves instrumental (e.g., provides a family with the resources they need) and identity (e.g., family pride and esteem) functions for one's family (Scheepers et al., 2006). Thus, nepotism may persist because those who practice it gain various benefits from it for their family.

In my examination of the benign side of nepotism in Chapter 4, I departed from previous research that described people's tendency to dislike beneficiaries of nepotism and to see them as incompetent (Darioly & Riggio, 2014; Padgett & Morris, 2005). By using leadership transference theory (Ritter & Lord, 2007), I argued that it is actually possible for people to evaluate beneficiaries of nepotism in a positive light. For example, people expect the offspring of a previously-known effective leader to bear similar effective leadership qualities to that leader. As a consequence, they expect the offspring to become as effective as the effective leader. Moreover, based on psychological essentialism literature (Haslam et al., 2000; Medin & Ortoni, 1989), I proposed the *belief in the merit of nepotism* as an individual differences construct that distinguishes between people who are more or less likely to support nepotism in leadership. Specifically, I argued that, because strong believers in the merit of nepotism are more likely to possess a "like father, like son" mindset, they are more likely to support acts of nepotism by people who they consider to be effective leaders.

In line with this argument, I found evidence that strong believers in the merit of nepotism tended to expect the offspring of a previously known leader to become an ineffective leader only when the leader himself was seen as ineffective (Chapter 4). The case was reversed, however, in the case of an effective leader. In this case, not only was the offspring of an effective leader more liked, but strong believers in the merit of nepotism also expected the offspring to be as effective as the leader. Moreover, whereas people expected the offspring of an ineffective leader to engage in toxic or dysfunctional leadership, such expectations were absent in the case of the offspring of an effective leader. It appears that, although people

tend to view nepotism negatively, those who believe in the merit of nepotism use kinship ties as a heuristic to evaluate and infer the characteristics of potential leaders. Considering that people want to have leaders that are beneficial for their well-being, it makes sense for them to support nepotism if they believe that it is potentially beneficial to them. This finding explains why political dynasties can be common in democratic societies throughout the world.

5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Like any research project, this thesis is not perfect. First, although nepotism is a natural and universal phenomenon, its manifestation may vary across different cultures (Wated & Sanchez, 2012). For instance, the terms *wasta* (Arab) or *guanxi* (Chinese) are often considered comparable to nepotism, but these terms are also used to describe cronyism, ethnocentrism, or a kind of stratified mix of nepotism and cronyism (Chen et al., 2004; Guo, 2001; Kilani et al., 2015; Mohamed & Mohamad, 2011). The present thesis has shown how people perceive nepotism and cronyism differently, but it would be interesting to see if such results replicate in societies that have their own unique terminology. For instance, would Arab participants identify and evaluate kinship-based *wasta* differently to ethnic-based or friendship-based *wasta*? If this is the case, then it might be fruitful for policy makers in these societies to treat and intervene the types of *wasta* or *guanxi* differently, as suggested by the findings of the present thesis.

Second, some of the conclusions in the present thesis are drawn on the basis of vignette designs. The present thesis was able to test some of the proposed hypotheses in realistic settings, such as those concerning what people perceive as nepotism as well as the perceived consequences of nepotism in organizations (Chapter 2) and politics (Chapter 3). However, I have not been able to test the "like father, like son" hypotheses in a more realistic setting. An ideal circumstance to test these hypotheses might be that of an existing leadership succession, for example in family business. They can also be realistically examined during political elections that involve candidates of previously known political leaders.

Third, the present analysis showed what it is that lay people construe as nepotism and also suggests that there are contextual factors that

determine when and why people view nepotism as desirable or undesirable. Whereas the majority of empirical research has been devoted to describing the circumstances under which nepotism is deemed undesirable, this thesis documented one circumstance in which people can find nepotism in leadership as desirable. However, it is very likely that other contextual factors play a role here as well. Nepotism may have some positive consequences which leads people to support it. For instance, it has been argued that nepotistic hiring requires a shorter learning-curve for new recruits to adapt to their new organization (Vinton, 1998). It has also been argued that key ingredients of successful organizations, such as generalized social exchange, trust, and reciprocity, are often pre-built among a family (Jaskiewicz et al., 2013). Moreover, there can be circumstances where kin hiring is hard to avoid. For instance, academic couples comprised 36 percent of the American professoriate in 2008 (Schiebinger et al., 2008). It can be very hard for these academics moving to a new university without taking their spouse with them. Family members working within the same organization is also often unavoidable in sparsely populated places (Holm et al., 2018). Future research should investigate how organizations may benefit from these positive elements or these situations without risking the negative consequences of nepotism.

5.3 Practical Suggestions

As Kurt Lewin once said, "there is nothing so practical as a good theory" (Lewin, 1943, p. 118). Therefore, I would like to end this thesis by providing some practical suggestions before stating the final conclusions of this thesis.

First, the present thesis provides evidence about the primacy of procedural fairness as a reason for people to object to nepotism. An intuitive way for organizations to manage nepotism is thus by endorsing clear and transparent hiring or promotion procedures to ensure fairness to all members of their organizations. Since it does not take an *actual* bias in favor of family members for people to believe that nepotism is taking place, it should be noted that such fair procedures should also be clearly and openly communicated to organizational members.

A fair and transparent hiring or promotion procedure could be developed by referencing to Leventhal (1980) seven structural components and seven principles of procedural justice. For instance, by

clearly communicating a procedure in which the *selection agents* are independent (e.g., through blind hiring), organizational members may see that their organization adheres to the *bias-suppression* rule of procedural justice. Clear communication about a mechanism to *appeal* a potentially nepotistic decision provides organizational members with a sense of ability to rectify the decisions that have been made (*correctability rule* of procedural justice). Organizations, such as family businesses, could also set-up maximum quota to limit the numbers of employees who are bound by kinship, or set a minimum number for non-family members in their executive positions. This may appear discriminatory, but it is in line with the *representativeness rule* of procedural justice, which is also the basis for many affirmative actions (e.g., special university admission for underrepresented groups). Such adherence to the representativeness rules can also alleviate the problem associated with high kin-density and perceived nepotism in organizations (Spranger et al., 2012).

One of the challenges for family owned businesses is to successfully manage the succession from one generation of leaders to the next (Dalpiaz et al., 2014; Vera & Dean, 2005). Employees of a family business may question whether the successor could match the effectiveness of their previous leader. Based on the present thesis, one approach to alleviate doubts about successors' qualifications is by highlighting similarities between the successor and the previous leader. This approach may create a sense of "like father/mother like son/daughter" kind of mindset, which may provide them with a sense of security and positive expectation that they will be treated as well as their previous leader treated them.

5.4 Conclusion

Finally, in closing the thesis, I would like to summarize some key conclusions of the present thesis. First, whether in organizations or politics, people see nepotism as any appointment, promotion, or otherwise favorable treatment of family members, regardless of whether the beneficiaries possess the merit of qualifications for such treatment. Second, people view nepotism as different from cronyism in the sense that cronyism appears to be more benign and more merit-based than nepotism. Third, whether the context is business organizations or the political arena, perceived nepotism can be deleterious for employees or voters. In the context of business organizations, it may lead to a negative organizational

climate. In politics it can lead to increased cynicism among voters and a reduced desire to be politically active. Fourth, people use known traits or qualifications of benefactors to infer the traits or qualifications of beneficiaries, and this may result in support for nepotism, particularly among people who believe in the merit of nepotism.

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Appendix A

Supplementary materials for Chapter 2

Scales' items

Perceived competence

To what extent do you think about X as:

1. Competent
2. Intelligent
3. Confident
4. Competitive
5. Independent

Perceived nepotism

In your opinion, to what extent do these statements apply to X?

1. X parents uses their connections and social status to get X to his job.
2. X got his job through nepotism.
3. X owe his job in part to the influence exerted by his parents.
4. Without his parents' connections, it is unlikely that X would have obtained his current job.

Note: Item 1 and 2 were used in Study 1. All items were used in Study 2.

Deservingness

In your opinion, to what extent do these statements apply to X?

1. I think X deserve his job.
2. I think X attained his job through personal endeavor and hard work.

Check items

1. What is the name of the character in description?
2. What was X grade for his Bachelor?
3. Where does X work?
4. Where does X's father work?

5. What is X's grandfather occupation?

Note: These manipulation check items were only used in Study 2.

Distributive fairness

In your opinion, to what extent do these statements apply to X?

1. I think the recruitment of X is fair, because X deserve the job.
2. I think the employment of X is fair, because X attained the job through personal endeavor.
3. Considering the qualification, it is not fair that X obtained the job.
4. The employment of X is unfair, because X does not possess the right qualification for it.

Note: Items 3 and 4 were reverse-coded so that higher score indicates fairer outcome.

Procedural fairness

1. In terms of recruitment procedure, X was treated equally to other applicants.
2. X benefited with a head start from information regarding the recruitment process.
3. In the recruitment process, X was treated favorably compared to other applicants.
4. It seems that someone who is close to X was exerting influence on the evaluation of X in the recruitment process.
5. The decision to employ someone should be based on as much valuable information as possible (CV, previous job performance, test results, academic attainment) but this premise was not necessary for X.
6. There might be a fabrication concerning the personal data of X in order to make X qualified the job.
7. The recruitment of X followed an ethical procedure.
8. The organization's human resources department showed a real interest in trying to be fair when hiring, including when they decided to hire X.

Note: Item 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were reversed coded so that higher score indicates fairer procedure.

Effects of Company (JP Morgan vs. Internal Revenue Service [IRS]) in Study 2

All scales were analyzed in separate ANOVA's with Kinship, Competence, and Company as independent variables.

JP Morgan	IRS	$F(1,159)$, p, η^2
Nepotism		
2.82	2.55	$F = 4.45$
(1.53)	(1.44)	$p = .036$
[2.48, 3.15]	[2.24, 2.86]	$\eta^2 = .017$
Family ties		
3.22	2.88	$F = 6.15$
(1.54)	(1.48)	$p = .014$
[2.88, 3.56]	[2.56, 3.20]	$\eta^2 = .023$
Effort		
3.22	3.52	$F = 4.38$
(1.14)	(1.14)	$p = .038$
[2.97, 3.47]	[3.27, 3.76]	$\eta^2 = .02$
Ability		
3.17	3.45	$F = 3.87$
(1.11)	(1.13)	$p = .051$
[2.93, 3.41]	[3.20, 3.69]	$\eta^2 = .017$
Luck		
2.72	2.46	$F = 1.54$
(1.21)	(1.16)	$p = .216$
[2.45, 2.99]	[2.21, 2.71]	$\eta^2 = .009$
Discrimination based on physical disabilities		
1.32	1.36	$F = .32$
(0.65)	(0.78)	$p = .571$
[1.18, 1.46]	[1.2, 1.53]	$\eta^2 = .002$
Discrimination based on age		
1.45	1.36	$F = 0.40$
(0.80)	(0.63)	$p = .528$
[1.27, 1.63]	[1.23, 1.5]	$\eta^2 = .002$
Racism		
1.59	1.45	$F = 0.95$
(0.93)	(0.88)	$p = .331$
[1.38, 1.79]	[1.26, 1.64]	$\eta^2 = .006$
Ethnocentrism		
1.59	1.51	$F = .32$
(0.97)	(0.80)	$p = .572$
[1.37, 1.8]	[1.33, 1.68]	$\eta^2 = .002$
Sexism		
1.73	1.48	$F = 2.51$
(1.08)	(0.91)	$p = .115$
[1.49, 1.97]	[1.29, 1.68]	$\eta^2 = .015$
Sexual prejudice (e.g., homophobic)		
1.34	1.22	$F = 1.23$
(0.74)	(0.59)	$p = .269$
[1.18, 1.50]	[1.10, 1.35]	$\eta^2 = .007$

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses, 95% confidence intervals in square brackets. For "attribution based on participants' ranking-order, lower number indicates higher ranking.

Attribution of James' Employment Based on Participants Ranking-order in Study 2

Ranks were analyzed in separate ANOVA's with Kinship and Competence, as independent variables.

Kinship			Competence		
No kin	Kin	$F(1,159)$, p, $\eta 2$	Low	High	$F(1,159)$, p, $\eta 2$
Nepotism					
5.88	2.80	$F = 78.7$	4.08	4.61	$F = 2.83$
(2.6)	(1.87)	$p < .001$	(2.85)	(2.62)	$p = .095$
[5.32, 6.45]	[2.39, 3.2]	$\eta^2 = .320$	[3.47, 4.7]	[4.04, 5.19]	$\eta^2 = .012$
Family ties					
5.64	2.55	$F = 60.34$	3.93	4.29	$F = 1.09$
(3.03)	(2.03)	$p < .001$	(3.15)	(2.86)	$p = .298$
[4.99, 6.3]	[2.11, 3]	$\eta^2 = .267$	[3.25, 4.61]	[3.67, 4.91]	$\eta^2 = .005$
Effort					
2.77	4.24	$F = 14.85$	4.18	2.82	$F = 12.82$
(2.65)	(2.51)	$p < .001$	(2.97)	(2.15)	$p < .001$
[2.2, 3.35]	[3.69, 4.79]	$\eta^2 = .078$	[3.53, 4.82]	[2.35, 3.29]	$\eta^2 = .067$
Ability					
3.00	3.98	$F = 9.07$	4.27	2.69	$F = 56.2$
(2.45)	(2.32)	$p = .003$	(2.59)	(1.97)	$p < .001$
[2.47, 3.53]	[3.47, 4.48]	$\eta^2 = .040$	[3.71, 4.84]	[2.26, 3.12]	$\eta^2 = .246$
Luck					
3.73	5.47	$F = 20.33$	4.04	5.16	$F = 8.12$
(2.16)	(2.86)	$p < .001$	(2.38)	(2.84)	$p = .005$
[3.26, 4.19]	[4.85, 6.09]	$\eta^2 = .105$	[3.52, 4.55]	[4.54, 5.78]	$\eta^2 = .042$
Discrimination based on physical disabilities					
8.76	8.65	$F = 0.16$	8.60	8.82	$F = 0.62$
(1.7)	(1.98)	$p = .688$	(1.79)	(1.89)	$p = .432$
[8.39, 9.13]	[8.22, 9.08]	$\eta^2 = .001$	[8.21, 8.98]	[8.41, 9.23]	$\eta^2 = .004$
Discrimination based on age					
5.95	6.36	$F = 1.91$	6.27	6.04	$F = 0.67$
(1.89)	(1.96)	$p = .169$	(2.04)	(1.82)	$p = .414$
[5.54, 6.36]	[5.93, 6.79]	$\eta^2 = .012$	[5.83, 6.72]	[5.64, 6.43]	$\eta^2 = .004$
Racism					
6.76	7.55	$F = 3.50$	6.96	7.35	$F = 0.78$
(2.86)	(2.59)	$p = .063$	(2.79)	(2.71)	$p = .378$
[6.14, 7.38]	[6.99, 8.12]	$\eta^2 = .021$	[6.36, 7.57]	[6.76, 7.94]	$\eta^2 = .005$
Ethnocentrism					
7.57	7.64	$F = 0.03$	7.38	7.83	$F = 1.6$
(2.4)	(2.2)	$p = .868$	(2.4)	(2.17)	$p = .208$
[7.05, 8.09]	[7.16, 8.12]	$\eta^2 = .000$	[6.86, 7.9]	[7.36, 8.3]	$\eta^2 = .01$
Sexism					
6.43	7.10	$F = 3.43$	6.55	6.98	$F = 1.36$
(2.36)	(2.27)	$p = .066$	(2.52)	(2.11)	$p = .245$
[5.92, 6.94]	[6.6, 7.59]	$\eta^2 = .020$	[6, 7.1]	[6.52, 7.44]	$\eta^2 = .008$
Sexual prejudice (e.g., homophobic)					
9.50	9.66	$F = 0.43$	9.74	9.42	$F = 1.54$
(1.81)	(1.51)	$p = .514$	(1.5)	(1.82)	$p = .217$
[9.11, 9.89]	[9.33, 9.99]	$\eta^2 = .003$	[9.41, 10.06]	[9.03, 9.82]	$\eta^2 = .009$

Note: Lower number indicates higher ranking. Standard deviations in parentheses, 95% confidence intervals in square brackets.

Perception and Expectation toward the Three Universities in Study 5

		M	*SD*	*df*	*F*	*p*
Perceived nepotism	University A	3.00	1.01	1.54, 24.16	2.51	0.097
	University B	2.91	0.95			
	University C	2.88	0.88			
Secretive	University A	2.68	0.69	2, 310	0.80	0.452
	University B	2.65	0.65			
	University C	2.71	0.67			
Organizational citizenship behaviors	University A	2.57	0.81	1.87, 290.06	1.02	0.357
	University B	2.61	0.79			
	University C	2.56	0.81			
Counterproductive work behaviors	University A	1.64	0.66	2, 310	0.85	0.426
	University B	1.64	0.66			
	University C	1.67	0.70			
Trust toward organization	University A	3.35	0.73	1.89, 293.14	1.35	0.259
	University B	3.39	0.67			
	University C	3.32	0.70			
Perceived own competence	University A	3.83	0.81	1.94, 296.72	0.93	0.376
	University B	3.87	0.85			
	University C	3.91	0.83			

Appendix B

Supplementary materials for Chapter 3

Scales' items

Nepotism

1. In your opinion, how significant are family memberships in the U.S. politics?
2. In your opinion, to what extent does nepotism play a role in U.S. politics?
3. "U.S. politics is often a family affair." To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Political cynicism

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. To get nominated, most candidates for political office in the U.S. have to make necessary compromises and undesirable commitments.
2. U.S. politicians spend most of their time getting re-elected or re-appointed
3. These days politicians try to do too many things, including some activities that I do not think they have the right to do.
4. For the most part, politicians serve the interests of a few organized groups, such as business or labor, and aren't very concerned about the needs of people like me.
5. It seems that politicians often fail to take necessary actions on essential matters, even when most people favor such actions.
6. The way the politicians currently operate, I think they are hopelessly incapable of dealing with all the crucial problems facing the country today.
7. Elected politicians stop thinking about the public's interest immediately after taking office.
8. Politics are run to benefit the interests of a few big organizations.

9. Political parties are neglecting the interests of the people because of competition between political coalition and corruption problems.
10. Current U.S. politicians are not thinking about our problems very much.

Procedural fairness

1. Overall, how fair do you think U.S. politicians have treated you?
2. How respectful do you think U.S. politicians have treated you?
3. How much concern do U.S. politicians show for your individual rights?
4. To what extent do U.S. politicians get all the information needed to make right decisions about how to handle issues in this country?
5. How hard do you think U.S. politicians try to bring the problems in this nation into the open so that they could be resolved?
6. How honest are politicians in what they say to the people?
7. How much opportunity do U.S. politicians give to the people to describe relevant issues before any decisions are made about how to handle them?
8. How much consideration do U.S. politicians give to the people when making decisions about how to handle problems faced by this country?
9. Overall, how fair do you think the procedures are that are used by U.S. politicians to handle problems in this country?
10. How hard do U.S. politicians try to do the right thing for the people?
11. How dignified do U.S. politicians treat the people of this country?
12. How hard do U.S. politicians try to explain the reasons behind their decisions to the people?
13. How hard do U.S. politicians try to take account of the people's needs in making political decisions?
14. U.S. Politicians use methods that are equally fair to everyone

Attitudes toward political participation

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. There are too many, but few people politically active in this country
2. Somebody who complains about political parties should join a party to change it
3. We should take the chance to participate in politics
4. We should participate more in politics to influence political decisions.

How much do you value the following?

5. Working for political party.
6. Supporting a political candidate.
7. Visiting political debate or campaign.
8. Contacting politicians (for example, via post-mail, e-mail, or social media).

Note: Item 1 to 5 were used in Studies 1 and 2, but not in Studies 3 and 4. Item 5 to 10 were used in Studies 3 and 4, but not in Studies 1 and 2.

Intention to participate in politics

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. I would work for a political party.
2. I would support a political candidate during an election campaign.
3. I would visit political debates or campaign events.
4. I would contact politicians (for example via post-mail, e-mail, social media).

Political protest

How likely would you engage in the following behaviors?

1. Sign a petition as means of protest
2. Joining in boycott
3. Participate in peaceful demonstration

The interaction of the prominence of family ties and national identification on perceived nepotism in Study 2

We conducted a regression analysis in which Condition (coded 0 = control, 1 = prominent family ties), national identification (mean centered) and the Interaction (Condition x national identification) were entered as predictors of perceived nepotism. The main effect of Condition on perceived nepotism was significant, $B = 0.47$, $SE = 0.09$ $t = 3.86$, $p < .001$, while the main effect of national identification, $B = -0.14$, $SE = 0.12$, $t = -1.51$, $p = .133$, and the Interaction were not significant, $B = -0.02$, $SE = 0.12$, $t = -0.18$, $p = .855$.

Appendix C

Supplementary materials for Chapter 4

Scales' items

Belief in the merit of nepotism

To what extent do you believe in the following?

1. Because "an apple would not fall away from its tree", a son of a good person will become a good person too.
2. A child of an effective leader will most likely become an effective leader too.
3. It makes sense to trust a person who comes from a trustworthy family than to trust a person from an untrustworthy family.
4. Children of people with high integrity will have high integrity too because parents with high integrity will passed down their values and integrity to their children.
5. We should support children of intelligent people to leadership position because Intelligent people are more likely to have intelligent offspring.
6. "Like father, like son", a charismatic father will make a charismatic son.
7. We should support children of effective leaders because they can rely on their parents and family members for trustworthy advises.
8. Children of knowledgeable and competent people are more likely to become knowledgeable and competent too because their parents would ensure to pass down these traits to them.

Liking for the leader (and the target)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. I think that (this person) is very well adjusted.
2. I would highly recommend (this person) for a responsible job.
3. In my opinion, (this person) is an exceptionally mature person.
4. I have great confidence in (this person)'s good judgment.

5. Most people would react very favorably to (this person) after a brief acquaintance.
6. I would vote for (this person) for a leadership position.
7. I think that (this person) is one of those people who quickly wins respect.
8. I feel that (this person) is an extremely intelligent person.
9. (This person) can be a very likeable person.
10. (This person) is the sort of person whom I myself would like to be.
11. It seems to me that it is very easy for (this person) to gain admiration.

Note: In Study 2, the words in brackets were substituted with the child or stranger, depending on the target that participants had to evaluate. Liking for the target was not assessed in Study 1.

Leadership effectiveness

Based on the personality profile, if this person is your leader, to what extent do agree with the following statements?

1. I would trust (this person).
2. (This person) is an excellent leader.
3. (The person) is an enthusing leader.
4. (The person) would awaken my feelings of commitment to do my job well.
5. (The person) would exert himself for the benefit of my organization.

Note: The words in brackets were substituted with the child or stranger, depending on the target that participants had to evaluate.

Target-leader similarity

How similar (or different) would you think about the personality of the child (or stranger, friend) of the person?

1. Openness to experience.
2. Conscientiousness.
3. Extroversion.
4. Agreeableness.
5. Emotional stability.

How similar (or different) would you think about the leadership profile of the son of the person?

1. Persuasion skills
2. Ability to provide intellectual stimulation to others.
3. Concern towards others' well-being.
4. Ability to inspire and motivate others.
5. Ability to become a role model.

Liking for the target

If the child (or stranger) become your leader in the future, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. I would trust the son.
2. The son would make an excellent leader.
3. The son would be enthusing leader.
4. The son would awaken my feelings of commitment to do my job well.
5. The son would exert himself for the benefit of my organization.

Beliefs in biological determinism

To what extent do you believe in the followings?

1. I think the chief reason why parents and children are so alike in behavior and character is that they possess a shared genetic inheritance.
2. In my opinion, alcoholism is caused primarily by genetic factors.
3. I think that differences between men and women in behavior and personality are largely determined by genetic predisposition.
4. I believe that children inherit many of their personal traits from their parents.
5. In my view, the development of homosexuality in a person can be attributed to genetic causes.
6. I am convinced that very few behavioral traits of human can be traced back to their genes.
7. I believe that many talents that individuals possess can be attributed to genetic causes.
8. I think that the upbringing by parents and the social environment have far greater significance for the development of abilities and personal traits than genetic predisposition.

9. I believe that many differences between humans of different skin color can be attributed to differences in genetic predispositions.
10. I think that genetic predispositions have little influence on a person's personality characteristics.
11. In my view, many forms of human behavior are biologically determined and can therefore be seen as instinctual.
12. The fate of each person lies in his or her genes.
13. I am of the opinion that intelligence is a trait that is strongly determined by genetic predispositions.
14. I believe that genetic predispositions have no influence whatsoever on the development of intellectual abilities.
15. I am convinced that the analysis of the genetic predispositions of an embryo allows good predictions as to which characteristic and abilities the child will develop.
16. I think the genetic differences between Asians and Europeans are an important cause for the differences in abilities between individuals form these groups.
17. I think that twins, because of the identical genetic predispositions, will be very similar in their behavior even if they were adopted and raised in different families.
18. I belief that an analysis of my genetic predispositions will allow a trained scientist to predict many of my abilities and traits without having any personal knowledge of me.

Perceived entitativity of a family

Please indicate your opinion concerning the following questions about a family as a social group:

1. How cohesive (i.e., united) do you expect a family would be?
2. How important would a family be for its members?
3. How organized would you expect a family would be?
4. How similar would you expect members of a family to each other (e.g., appearance, intellectual, personality, etc.)?
5. To what extent do you think that members of a family would feel that they are part of their family?
6. Some groups have the characteristics of a "group" more than others do. To what extent would a family qualify as a group?

7. Some groups possess a core personality; although there may be differences and similarities in their behaviors, underneath they are basically the same. To what extent do you expect a family possess a core personality?
8. How variable would you expect the behaviors of a family?
9. Some group possess basic or fundamental qualities that do not seem to change much over time. Other groups possess qualities or characteristics that do change. How *changeable* do you expect the characteristics of a family?
10. Some groups are conflicted; they are uncertain or unsure of their attitudes, values, and goals. Other group's attitudes, values and goals are definite and firm. How conflicted would you expect a family?
11. To what extent would a family be able to achieve its goals and make things happen (e.g., produce specific outcomes)?
12. Some groups are coherent; their attitudes, values, and goals seem to be harmonious and compatible. Other groups' attitudes, values, and goals seem to be incompatible or in disagreement. How coherent would you expect a family be?
13. Some groups' attitude, values, and behaviors depend very much on where they are or who they are with. Other groups' attitudes, values, and behaviors are pretty much the same regardless of where they are or who they are with. How much do the attitudes, values, and behaviors of a family depend on where they are or who they are with?
14. Some groups have the characteristic of being distinctive or unique. That is, they do not share many qualities or characteristics with other groups. How distinctive would a family be compared to other families?

The effect of leader's Gender on Target-leader Similarity in Study 1

We conducted a regression analysis in which we entered stranger condition (0 = Child, 1 = stranger) and friend condition (0 = Child, 1 = stranger), belief in the merit of nepotism (centered), and leader's gender (0 = man, 1 = woman) as predictors of target-leader similarity. The results showed non-significant effect of leader's gender, $B = 0.07$, $SE = 0.08$, $t = 0.85$, $p = .392$.

The Effect of Leader's Gender on Target's Effectiveness in Study 1

We repeated the previous analysis substituting target-leaders similarity with target's effectiveness as the dependent variable. The results showed non-significant effect of leader's gender, $B = 0.09$, $SE = 0.10$, $t = 0.88$, $p = .377$.

Acknowledgement

There is a saying in Indonesia "*Berat sama dipikul, ringan sama dijinjing.*" Loosely translated, it means heavyweight should be shouldered together with others, while lightweight should be held together with others. Although there is only one name on the cover page of this thesis, I would not be able to complete this thesis without the 'shoulder' of others.

I would like to express my gratitude to my mentors. Eleven years have passed since the first time I collaborate with Esther when she was supervising my master's thesis. Since then, she patiently guided me to become a good researcher. I cannot name any other person that has made a more meaningful impact on my development as a researcher than her. Esther was also the bridge that made it possible for me to meet Daan, who also lent me a 'shoulder', that I could never repay. Daan's natural patience, guidance, and encouragement have been a significant 'motor' for me to complete this thesis. I owe this thesis to these two magnificent people.

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I dedicate this thesis to my family. Like parents, like children: I would probably have never thought about taking a career path in academia if they had not introduced me to their 'world'. My deepest gratitude to my wife, Yunita. This thesis could not have been realized without her love, understanding, and support. Finally, when they are old enough to understand this, I would like my two little 'monsters', Raeesa and Chayra, to know that they are the ultimate reason for me to complete this thesis.

Omar

Summary

In this thesis, I describe 11 studies that investigate: (1) What people construe as nepotism, (2) the consequences of perceived nepotism in organizational and political contexts, and (3) why nepotism remains common practice, despite the negative connotations attached to it. Chapter 1 provides a general introduction to these themes and describes various relevant theories and previous research findings. Research on nepotism is often conducted based on the 'meritocracy perspective', that describes how reward (such as job hiring or promotion) should be given to the most merited (e.g., competent or qualified) individuals. This construes nepotism solely as the hiring or promotion of incompetent family members. Such an emphasis on meritocracy gives room to the legitimization of nepotism, as long as the beneficiaries of nepotism appear to be competent. In contrast to the meritocracy perspective, central to this thesis is a 'procedural fairness perspective' on nepotism. This perspective postulates that people care about *how* their authorities (e.g., a job committee) reach the conclusion to hire individuals who are by kinship related to prominent persons in the organization. For example, people may question: (1) Were the prominent persons involved in the decision process? (2) Did kin-related individuals follow the same procedures (recruitment test, interview) as others who are not kin? (3) Did kinship influence other unrelated committee members' decisions (e.g., because they fear the prominent persons)? These are examples of procedural fairness related questions that can lead people to perceive even the hiring of fully competent kin as nepotism. Moreover, I also present several studies that can explain why nepotism remains a common occurrence, despite its bad reputation. Some people support nepotism because they adhere to the belief that positive traits of parents are transferred to their offspring. Thus, effective leaders produce effective offspring.

Chapter 2 describes five experiments about nepotism in organizations. Studies 1 and 2 involved a vignette in which participants evaluated the employment of competent (or incompetent) kin (or no kin). These two studies showed that people construe nepotism as the employment of kin, regardless of the kin's competence. Thus, whether a person is competent

or not does not matter; the employment of a person is still perceived as nepotism as long the person has kinship ties to a prominent person in the organization. In Studies 3 and 4, participants evaluated the fairness of hiring procedures of a colleague they deemed competent (or incompetent) and who had (or did not have) kinship ties to a prominent person in their organization. The results showed that, although people acknowledge the hiring of a competent kin as distributively fair relative to the hiring of a competent non-kin, they still suspect that such hiring must have involved a violation of fair hiring procedures. Moreover, in Study 4, I compared how people perceive nepotism in comparison to cronyism (hiring based on a common social network, such friendship, or group membership). This study showed that people perceive nepotism as fundamentally more unfair in terms of procedural fairness than cronyism, whereas cronyism is perceived as equally fair as the hiring of a stranger (i.e., the hiring of people without relational or group connections). In the fifth study, I asked potential job seekers for their preference to apply for a job at a prestigious but presumably nepotistic organization. Participants were more likely to apply to a less prestigious but also less nepotistic organization than to a more prestigious but also more nepotistic organization.

Chapter 3 describes four experiments about nepotism in politics. I present four studies that investigated how the prominence of family ties in politics can render people to believe that nepotism is at play. The results conform the group-value perspective of procedural fairness in showing that: (1) perceived nepotism renders people politically cynical, (2) political cynicism leads people to believe that their political authorities were treating them in procedurally unfair ways, which (3) ultimately reduced their preference to participate in politics, and increased their inclination to engage in political protest.

Chapter 4 describes two studies in which I investigated the circumstances under which people support nepotism in leadership. I describe how people use family memberships as a basis to infer the quality of their future leader and present the *belief in the merit of nepotism* as an individual difference variable that distinguishes those who support nepotism from those who do not. The results of the two studies presented in this chapter showed that strong believers in the merit of nepotism tended to expect that the offspring of a previously known effective leader to become an effective leader as well. Strong believers in the merit of

nepotism were also more inclined to expect offspring of an ineffective leader to become an ineffective leader as well. Moreover, people expected the offspring of an ineffective leader to engage in toxic or dysfunctional ways, but this expectation was absent in the case of the offspring of an effective leader. These studies suggest that those who strongly believe in the merit of nepotism use kinship ties as a heuristic to evaluate and infer the characteristics of potential leaders.

In Chapter 5, I summarize the main findings in this thesis, discuss them, and draw general conclusions. First, I conclude that, whether in organizations or politics, people view nepotism as the positive treatment of family members (e.g., through hiring or promotion) regardless of the family member's qualification. Second, nepotism can be differentiated from cronyism, and the former is viewed as more procedurally unfair than the latter. Third, perceived nepotism can be deleterious to business organizations or politics. In the context of business organizations, it may lead to a negative organizational climate. In politics it can lead to increased cynicism among voters and a reduced desire to be politically active. Fourth, people use known traits or qualifications of known leaders to infer the traits or qualifications of their offspring, and this may result in support for nepotism, particularly among people who believe in the merit of nepotism. All in all, people view nepotism as a unique positive treatment toward family members that they view negatively most of the time, but also positively under the right circumstances.

Samenvatting

In dit proefschrift beschrijf ik 11 studies waarin is onderzocht: (1) wat mensen opvatten als nepotisme, (2) wat de gevolgen zijn van waargenomen nepotisme in organisaties en politieke contexten, en (3) waarom nepotisme een gangbare praktijk blijft ondanks de negatieve connotaties die eraan verbonden zijn. Hoofdstuk 1 geeft een algemene inleiding op deze thema's en beschrijft verschillende relevante theorieën en eerdere onderzoeksbevindingen. Onderzoek naar nepotisme wordt vaak uitgevoerd vanuit het 'meritocratieperspectief', dat wil zeggen dat de meest verdienstelijke (bijv. competente of gekwalificeerde) personen moeten worden beloond met bijvoorbeeld een baan of promotie. Dit perspectief vat nepotisme uitsluitend op als het aannemen of bevorderen van *on*bekwame familieleden. Een dergelijke nadruk op meritocratie geeft ruimte aan het rechtvaardigen van nepotisme zolang de begunstigden van nepotisme maar competent zijn. In tegenstelling tot dit meritocratieperspectief staat in dit proefschrift een 'procedurele rechtvaardigheidsperspectief' op nepotisme centraal. Dit perspectief stelt dat mensen zich zorgen maken over *de manier waarop* hun autoriteiten (bijvoorbeeld een selectiecommissie) besluiten om personen in dienst te nemen die verwant zijn aan prominente personen in hun organisatie. Mensen kunnen zich bijvoorbeeld afvragen: (1) Waren de prominente personen betrokken bij de besluitvorming over de werving van hun verwanten? (2) Volgden verwanten dezelfde procedures (assessment, sollicitatiegesprek) als anderen die niet verwant zijn aan een autoriteit in de organisatie? (3) Was de verwantschap van invloed op de beslissingen van andere niet-verwante commissieleden (bijvoorbeeld omdat ze bang zijn voor de prominenten)? Dit zijn voorbeelden van vragen over procedurele rechtvaardigheid die ertoe kunnen leiden dat mensen zelfs het aannemen van volledig bekwame verwanten als nepotisme zien. Daarnaast presenteer ik verschillende studies die kunnen verklaren waarom nepotisme ondanks de slechte reputatie nog steeds veel voorkomt. Sommige mensen steunen nepotisme omdat ze geloven dat positieve eigenschappen van ouders worden overgedragen op hun nakomelingen. Ze

gaan er van uit dat effectieve leiders effectieve nakomelingen voortbrengen.

Hoofdstuk 2 beschrijft vijf experimenten over nepotisme in organisaties. In studies 1 en 2 werd een vignet methode gebruikt waarbij de deelnemers de selectie van competente (of incompetente) verwanten (of niet-verwanten) evalueerden. Uit deze twee studies bleek dat mensen nepotisme interpreteren als het aannemen van verwanten, ongeacht hun competentie. Het maakt dus niet uit of iemand competent is of niet; het aannemen van deze persoon wordt nog steeds als nepotisme gezien zolang de persoon verwantschap heeft met een prominent persoon in de organisatie. In studies 3 en 4 beoordeelden de deelnemers de eerlijkheid van het aannemen van een collega die zij competent (of incompetent) achtten en die verwant was (of niet) aan een prominente persoon in hun organisatie. De resultaten toonden aan dat, hoewel mensen het aannemen van een bekwame verwant eerlijker vinden dan het aannemen van een bekwame niet-verwant, ze nog steeds vermoeden dat zelfs bij het aannemen van een bekwame verwant de regels van een eerlijke sollicitatieprocedures zijn geschonden. Daarnaast heb ik in studie 4 vergeleken hoe mensen nepotisme ervaren in vergelijking met ‘vriendjespolitiek’, dat wil zeggen het aannemen van mensen op basis van vriendschap of een gedeeld sociaal netwerk of groepslidmaatschap. Deze studie toonde aan dat mensen nepotisme procedureel onrechtvaardiger vinden dan vriendjespolitiek, terwijl vriendjespolitiek even rechtvaardig wordt ervaren als het inhuren van iemand zonder relationele of groepsverbondenheid met iemand in de organisatie. In het vijfde onderzoek vroeg ik potentiële werkzoekenden naar hun geneigdheid om te solliciteren op een baan bij een prestigieuze maar vermoedelijk nepotistische organisatie. Deelnemers waren eerder geneigd om te solliciteren bij een minder prestigieuze maar ook minder nepotistische organisatie dan bij een meer prestigieuze maar ook meer nepotistische organisatie.

Hoofdstuk 3 beschrijft vier experimenten over nepotisme in een politieke context. Ik presenteer vier studies die onderzoeken hoe de prominente aanwezigheid van familiebanden in de politiek mensen kan doen geloven dat er nepotisme in het spel is. De resultaten komen overeen met het ‘group value model’ van procedurele rechtvaardigheid en tonen aan dat: (1) ervaren nepotisme mensen politiek cynisch maakt, (2) politiek

cynisme mensen geloven dat hun autoriteiten hen procedureel onrechtvaardig behandelen, wat (3) uiteindelijk hun bereidheid om politiek actief te worden vermindert, en hun neiging tot politiek protest juist vergroot.

Hoofdstuk 4 beschrijft twee studies waarin ik de omstandigheden heb onderzocht waaronder mensen nepotisme in leiderschap ondersteunen. Ik beschrijf hoe mensen familielidmaatschap kunnen gebruiken als basis om de kwaliteit van hun toekomstige leider af te leiden. Daarnaast presenteer ik *het geloof in de positieve kant van nepotisme* als een individuele verschil variabele die degenen die nepotisme steunen onderscheidt van degenen die dat niet doen. De resultaten van de twee studies die in dit hoofdstuk worden gepresenteerd toonden aan dat mensen die sterk in de positieve kant van nepotisme geloven verwachtten dat de nakomelingen van een effectieve leider ook effectieve leiders zouden worden. Mensen die sterk in de positieve kant van nepotisme geloven waren ook meer geneigd om de nakomelingen van een ineffectieve leider te beschouwen als een ineffectieve leider. Bovendien verwachtten mensen dat de nakomelingen van een ineffectieve leider meer disfunctioneel leiderschap zouden vertonen, maar deze verwachting was afwezig voor de nakomelingen van een effectieve leider. Deze studies suggereren dat degenen die sterk geloven in de positieve kant van nepotisme verwantschapsbanden ken als een heuristiek om de kenmerken van potentiële leiders af te leiden en te evalueren.

In hoofdstuk 5 vat ik dit de resultaten van proefschrift samen, bediscussieer ik ze en trek ik de belangrijkste conclusies. Ten eerste, of het nu in organisaties of in de politiek is, mensen zien nepotisme als de positieve behandeling van familieleden, ongeacht de kwalificatie van het familielid. Ten tweede kan nepotisme worden onderscheiden van vriendjespolitiek, en wordt het eerste als procedureel onrechtvaardiger gezien dan het tweede. Ten derde kan nepotisme schadelijk zijn voor organisaties of de politiek: In de context van organisaties kan het leiden tot een negatief organisatieklimaat; in de politiek kan het leiden tot meer cynisme bij kiezers en een verminderde wens om politiek actief te zijn. Ten vierde gebruiken mensen eigenschappen en kwalificaties van leiders om de eigenschappen en kwalificaties van de hun nageslacht af te leiden, hetgeen vervolgens kan leiden tot steun voor nepotisme, met name bij mensen die geloven in de positieve kant van nepotisme.

Curriculum Vitae

Omar Khalifa Burhan was born in the Republic of Indonesia, Banda Aceh, on 13 June 1986. He obtained a Bachelor's degree from Universitas Indonesia in 2008. He was then awarded an Aceh Government Scholarship to pursue an MSc (2 years Research Master) at VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands. From 2011 to 2015, he worked at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Sumatera Utara, as teaching staff and as researcher at the Center for Conflict and Radicalism Studies. In 2014, he obtained an Indonesian Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) to pursue a PhD at the Department of Social, Economic and Organizational Psychology at Leiden University, the Netherlands. He started his PhD in September 2015, with Prof. Dr. Daan Scheepers and Dr. Esther van Leeuwen as his supervisors. As of January 2020, he works as a lecturer at the Department of Social Psychology, Universitas Sumatera Utara. In addition to nepotism, Omar is interested in the social psychological aspects of intergroup relations, diversity, cultural psychology, individuals' performance in groups, and road behaviors.