

Interpreting the perceptions of men and women from 17 nationalities in a Portuguese context: A pretest

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Abstract: Individuals have the propensity to attribute certain characteristics to nations or regions, and those living within, although the accuracy of this is under debate. In this pretest, Portuguese participants were asked to evaluate men and women from 17 nationalities based on dimensions which might be related to individualistic- or collectivistic-oriented nations – namely perceived masculinity, percentage of gays/lesbians in each group (PGL), and economic status. We predicted conceptualizations of nationality to trump gender triggers, resulting in general evaluations of individuals from each nation in this context-absent scenario. Results revealed strong relationships between men and women from the same nationality, and greater variability among nationalities in the evaluations of male targets, supporting the notion national stereotypes may be more representative of the men from each nation (i.e., androcentrism). Additionally, individualist-oriented nations were found to have higher PGL and economic status ratings when compared to collectivist-oriented nations, but both were perceived as equally masculine. Finally, gross domestic product per capita (GDPpc) of each nation appeared to somewhat act as a function of participants' judgements. Findings generalize literature to a Portuguese context, providing insight into the manner in which individuals may categorize those from various nationalities.

Keywords: National stereotypes, Immigration, Masculinity, Femininity, LGBTQIA+.

The conceptualization of nations, and immigrants from those nations, are driven by unique relationships shared between the host and home states, which in turn, perpetuate stereotypes resulting in the overgeneralization and/or personification of nations (Eagly & Kite, 1987; Hřebíčková & Graf, 2014; Lee & Fiske, 2006; Mace, 1943; McCrae et al., 2013). This simplification may be, in part, explained by the stereotype content model (SCM) which argues that the judgements of outgroup members (e.g., foreigners) are defined by the potentiality of causing harm (related to warmth) and the capability of causing harm (related to competence) to the ingroup (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002, 2007). The behaviors from intergroup affect and stereotypes (BIAS) model (Cuddy et al., 2007) expanded the theoretical applications of the SCM to investigate the notion of active and passive behavioral tendencies, where warmth was considered an active variable and competence was considered a passive variable. From this, 4 groupings, which could be combined to make quadrants, were proposed: high and low warmth (e.g., either helping or hurting an individual, respectively), and high or low competence (e.g., either associating with or ignoring an individual, respectively).

For instance, middle-class outgroup members may be considered high in both warmth and competence, eliciting both a desire to facilitate a relationship with and a feeling of admiration toward members of this specific outgroup. On the other hand, immigrants may be perceived low in both warmth and competence, eliciting both an aversion to facilitating a relationship with and

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a feeling of contempt toward members of this outgroup (Cuddy et al., 2007). As such, expats and immigrants are generally conceptualized differently in sociocultural spheres where positive perceptions of foreigners from “expat” or “middle-class” nations (e.g., England and Italy), and negative perceptions of foreigners from “immigrant” or “lower-class” nations (e.g., Angola and Mexico) may be a function of the stereotypical assumptions one has about the foreign individuals’ nationality, rather than the stereotypical assumptions about the foreign individual (Cuddy et al., 2007; Lee & Fiske, 2006; Olier & Spadavecchia, 2022; Ramsay & Pang, 2017).

Of course, this may translate to real-world implications for immigrants of different nations, such as Latino immigrants being regarded as less intelligent (Appel et al., 2015) and less capable (Lee & Fiske, 2006) than immigrants from East Asian countries, which undoubtedly poses disadvantages in the global job market. In the Portuguese context, specifically, Brazilian immigrants are arguably the most stereotyped group, due in part to perpetuated ideations from colonial times which only reinforce Portuguese individuals’ conceptualizations of Brazilians’ behaviors – real or not (Carvalho & Duarte, 2020; Guerra et al., 2015; Santos, 2013). In stark contrast, individuals from Japan and France (both high-income nations) are generally not stereotyped in a negative manner, but may be the target of negative economic sentiments from Portuguese individuals, who earn a lower wage (da Câmara, 2007; Koven, 2004).

There appears to be some consistency in the judgements of immigrants from various nations, even if citizens from the same nations do not agree with the international consensus (Reese et al., 2023; Esses, 2021; Hřebíčková & Graf, 2014; Terracciano et al., 2005). That is, while Canada is typically perceived as a kind nation, and simultaneously, kinder than the United States (Reyna et al., 2013; Sneffjella et al., 2018), Canadians may not self-categorize themselves as being kind. Of course, however, shifts in international migration patterns or worldwide events may cause the perception of specific immigrant groups to change over time (Lee & Fiske, 2006). This consistency of foreign categorization goes beyond national-level ideations, aligning with assumptions from the social dominance theory (e.g., Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999); there exists overlapping perceptions of men and women from the same country (Bem, 1994; Cuddy et al., 2015; Eagly & Kite, 1987; Pratto et al., 2006). Specifically, because of global patriarchy, an androcentric point of view, or simply a lack of cross-cultural knowledge, the stereotypes of men and women from the same nationality might be blurred and national stereotypes more closely relate to the men of a certain nationality (Eagly & Kite, 1987; Pratto et al., 2006; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). In other words, if men from a specific nationality are considered to be intelligent, so too, should the nationality itself (Cuddy et al., 2015). Undoubtedly, this negates the experiences of women from outgroup nationalities, calling for the increased visibility of women on an international scale and rejecting assumptions created from modern androcentrism.

Additionally, nations may be categorized into groups as a function of their cultural proximity to one another, despite vast differences at micro levels of conceptualization (e.g., Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). There have been multiple methods of categorizing the individuals from various regions, all of which have justified criticisms: comparing the Global North with the Global South (e.g., Dados & Connell, 2012), “first world” versus “third world” countries (e.g., Sloan, 1990), and, central to this paper, the individualist- versus collectivist-oriented approach (e.g., Greif, 1994). Broadly speaking, individualist-oriented nations and cultures emphasize individual achievements, prioritizing personal differences over collective similarities, while, contrastingly, collectivist-oriented nations and cultures emphasize group achievements, prioritizing group cohesion over societal deviances (Greif, 1994; Hofstede, 2011; Jetten et al., 2002; Triandis, 1989; van Hoorn, 2014).

Notably, these patterns of group behavior provide unique spaces in which solutions for societal issues may be catalyzed or hindered. For instance, individualism tends to facilitate higher levels of gender and sexuality equality due in part to rising levels of feminism, while collectivism promotes gender and sexuality inequality, partly from the idea of personal honorability as defined by the group

(e.g., Bettinsoli et al., 2019; Cuddy et al., 2015; Davis & Williamson, 2019; Lowe et al., 2021), which in turn, may correlate with greater stereotypical gender differences in Western contexts than elsewhere (Löckenhoff et al., 2014). Moreover, individualistic nationalities appear to correlate with masculinity where increased individualism appears to resonate with increased masculinity (e.g., Barry, 2015; Cuddy et al., 2015; Gelade et al., 2008), although it should be noted that contradicting arguments (i.e., nonsignificance between individualism and masculinity) have been constructed which warrant further empirical research (e.g., Bain & Bongiorno, 2015; Hofstede et al., 2010).

However, that is not to say that all individuals from these classifications behave according to national or cultural stereotypes; in fact, personal differences and various structural proponents may influence or discourage certain behaviors prototypical of each culture, developing societies which value aspects of both individualism and collectivism (e.g., Hofstede, 2011; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Importantly, we do not argue that collectivism is a worse societal system than individualism – although the argument may be ascertained that collectivist-oriented nations have less gender and sexual equality, the argument may also be made that individualist-oriented nations have less strong familial relations, but stronger independence, meaning both culture orientations hold unique strengths and criticisms (e.g., Davis & Williamson, 2019; Hofstede, 2011; Triandis, 1989).

The current study

While some, particularly those from the fields of social sciences, may deem it problematic to categorize individuals on a macro level (i.e., nationality) instead of micro levels (i.e., self-identity) (e.g., Anthias, 1998, 2012; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Schinkel, 2018), it is nonetheless important to categorize nations in psychological research to further understanding intergroup relations, which typically, homogenize outgroup members based on the most prevalent outgroup members and/or stereotypes (Hogg, 2001; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Similar to prior research on the stereotyping or categorization of nationalities (e.g., Eagly & Kite, 1987; Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 2011; Lee & Fiske, 2006), the current pretest explored Portuguese individuals' perceptions of 21 nationalities or groups on the dimensions of masculinity, perceived percentage of gays or lesbians (PGL)¹, and economic status. Specifically, 16 nationalities prevalent in Portuguese society (based on number of immigrants in Portugal (SEF, 2022) and international statuses), 4 neutral groups, and the control group of Portuguese citizens were chosen for analysis.

The three dimensions of categorization were considered based on the potentiality of correlation with aspects of individualist- or collectivist-oriented nations. Specifically, masculinity was chosen to further examine the debate on the relationship between masculinity and individualism; that is, will masculinity be correlated with individualism in a Portuguese context? We explored this in a straightforward manner by asking participants how masculine or feminine individuals from each nationality are, rather than using an open-ended methodology. Next, as individualistic nations tend to have greater acceptance of gay and lesbian members in society (Brewer, 2014; Cuddy et al., 2015; Lowe et al., 2021), the unique PGL dimension was proposed to indirectly test participants' perceptions of social justice in certain nations. If participants assume a nation has better treatment of gay and lesbian people, and this is based on global assumptions, it is plausible they will overestimate the actual percentage of gay or lesbian individuals from said nation based on demographic ignorance stemming from bias (e.g., Landy et al., 2017); for instance, Americans tend to overestimate the actual percentage of gays and lesbian in the United States (Haider-Markel &

¹ Perceived percentage of gay or lesbian individuals in each nationality/group. This measure was created to first identify potential patterns without introducing extra, or confounding, variables. For instance, participants might not have a suitable knowledge to evaluate the percentage of LGBTQIA+ members, as they might not be familiar with the individuals included within this community.

Joslyn, 2018; Newport, 2015), while Colombians tend to underestimate the percentage of gays and lesbian in Colombia (Ham et al., 2024). Finally, individualist- and collectivist-oriented nations may be subject to detrimental stereotypical assumptions of their economic status based on identifiers such as “first world” and “third world” where highly capitalistic nations (typically, individualist nations), and individuals from those nations, are regarded as higher in economic competence or competitiveness than less-capitalistic nations (e.g., Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2011; Tang & Koveos, 2008). Because of this, we predicted participants would transpose objective global rankings [i.e., gross domestic product per capita (GDPpc)] to the perceived economic status of individuals from certain nations, highlighting the stereotypical assumptions of people from low-income countries. Importantly, this measure asked about the individuals from each nation, not the nation itself to strengthen the argument made that international stereotypes may be applied to the individual.

Although the methodological approach was exploratory in nature, might be able to derive theoretical expectancies from similar past literature. First, we expected national perceptions to trump gender stereotypes in this specific context; specifically, we predicted that men and women from the same within-nation grouping would be perceived similar across all dimensions (Hypothesis 1). Next, we expected individualist-oriented nations would be perceived higher in masculinity, PGL ratings, and economic status compared to collectivist-oriented nations (Hypothesis 2a), and that participants’ evaluations may be a function of each nation’s economic growth (Hypothesis 2b).

Method

Participants

Portuguese participants of at least 18 years of age were recruited through Prolific and were rewarded £1 (€1.15) for their effort. Although we did not conduct a priori power analysis before the study, we aimed to recruit as many participants as possible with our limited resources. However, a G*Power sensitivity power analysis (Faul et al., 2009) confirmed our sample size allowed us to detect an effect (η^2p) as small as 0.01 with 80% power when $\alpha=0.05$. Of the 87 total respondents, 59 were men, 25 were women, and 3 did not specify their gender. Ages of participants ranged from 18 to 46 years old ($M=24.93$, $SD=6.22$) and most participants self-reported their sexual orientation as straight ($n=78$). Additionally, participants were asked to self-report their personal economic status on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Extremely low economic status) to 7 (Extremely high economic status); participants were largely from middle-class economic backgrounds ($M=4.19$, $SD=0.81$). All participants gave their informed consent to participate in this study, and this project was approved by the ethics committee of the lead author’s institution. This study was not preregistered.

Procedure

Upon agreement to take part in the study, participants were instructed to provide evaluations of each target group based on Portuguese society’s point of view (rather than their own opinions) in an attempt to alleviate potential issues caused by a small sample size. Participants were then asked to consider each target group (shown in writing) before evaluating them on the scales of masculinity/femininity, PGL, and economic status. Importantly, participants evaluated men and women from all of the 21 groups (42 total targets), and each gender was randomly assigned to appear first.

Masculinity and femininity were presented on a single, bipolar Likert-type scale from 1 (*Extremely feminine*) to 7 (*Extremely masculine*) with the prompt, “How masculine or feminine are [*target group*]?” and to indicate PGL ratings, participants were asked to estimate what

percentage of the target group is gay/lesbian from 0 (*percent*) to 100 (*percent*) with the prompt “What percentage of [*target group*] are likely to be gay/lesbian?” For instance, if a participant believed that half of all gay German men are likely to be gay, they would have marked 50 percent on the slider scale presented. Finally, economic status was evaluated in a separate bipolar, Likert-type scale from 1 (*Extremely low economic status*) to 7 (*Extremely high economic status*) with the prompt “What economic status do people, in general, attribute to [*target group*]?” Importantly, before each of the three questions, participants were reminded that we were interested in obtaining the Portuguese society’s point of view. Following this procedure for all 42 targets, participants reported their demographic information before receiving payment for participation.

Results

Descriptive results

For a rank-ordered list of all target groups, please refer to Tables 1, 2 and 3. In addition to rank-order organization, categorizations for each nation were provided based on their position relative to other targets within the same measure. To do so, each target’s mean was compared against the averaged, overall mean of each measure (separated by gender) in a one sample *t*-test and were examined if they were statistically greater (i.e., high categorization), statistically lower (i.e., low categorization), or not statistically different (i.e., neutral categorization) than the overall mean. Doing so provided us with a descriptive categorization of all targets and their relation to one another; importantly, the nature of this procedure allowed for more, or less, neutral categories to emerge based on the degree of variability. For instance, the evaluations of masculinity and femininity (for both genders) received lower ranges than the evaluations of economic status (for both genders), resulting in fewer neutral categories for the economic status measure.

Table 1
Perceived masculinity or femininity across groups

Target	Perceived masculinity or femininity				Target	Perceived masculinity or femininity			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Categorization</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Categorization</i>
Angolan men	5.55	1.13	0.12	Masculine	Women w/ O+ blood	3.54	0.96	0.10	Masculine
Cape Verdean men	5.37	1.18	0.13	Masculine	Women w/ A+ blood	3.49	1.01	0.11	Masculine
Ukrainian men	5.29	1.13	0.12	Masculine	Left-handed women	3.41	1.05	0.11	Masculine
German men	5.22	1.13	0.12	Masculine	Right-handed women	3.36	1.01	0.11	Masculine
Portuguese men	5.10	1.20	0.13	Masculine	German women	3.32	1.49	0.16	Masculine
Mexican men	5.10	1.19	0.13	Masculine	Angolan women	3.16	1.16	0.12	Masculine
Venezuelan men	5.08	1.08	0.12	Masculine	Mexican women	3.08	1.20	0.13	Neutral
American men	4.92	1.29	0.14	Neutral	Cape Verdean women	3.06	1.10	0.12	Neutral
Indian men	4.79	1.27	0.14	Neutral	British women	2.97	1.27	0.14	Neutral
Dutch men	4.67	1.11	0.12	Neutral	American women	2.94	1.20	0.13	Neutral
British men	4.63	1.08	0.12	Neutral	Venezuelan women	2.85	1.20	0.13	Neutral
Swiss men	4.63	1.04	0.11	Neutral	Dutch women	2.85	1.29	0.14	Neutral
Right-handed men	4.56	1.00	0.11	Neutral	Ukrainian women	2.83	1.46	0.16	Neutral
Italian men	4.40	1.39	0.15	Feminine	Indian women	2.79	1.25	0.13	Neutral
Left-handed men	4.40	1.07	0.12	Feminine	Portuguese women	2.70	1.05	0.11	Feminine
Men w/ O+ blood	4.39	0.98	0.11	Feminine	Chinese women	2.64	1.25	0.13	Feminine
Men w/ A+ blood	4.31	0.93	0.10	Feminine	French women	2.46	1.32	0.14	Feminine
Brazilian men	4.28	1.27	0.14	Feminine	Swiss women	2.46	1.15	0.12	Feminine
Chinese men	4.21	1.22	0.13	Feminine	Brazilian women	2.44	1.24	0.13	Feminine
Japanese men	4.08	1.22	0.13	Feminine	Italian women	2.38	1.15	0.12	Feminine
French men	3.85	1.33	0.14	Feminine	Japanese women	2.35	1.18	0.13	Feminine

Note. All male targets were subject to a one sample *t*-test against the mean for men, overall ($M=4.71$), while all female targets were subject to the same test against the mean for women, overall ($M=2.91$). Evaluations of male targets received greater variability (Range=1.70) than female targets (Range=1.19).

Table 2

Perceived PGL ratings across groups

Target	Perceived percentage of gay men or lesbian women								
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Categorization</i>	Target	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Categorization</i>
Brazilian men	29.76	18.42	1.98	High	American women	27.43	17.85	1.91	High
French men	29.51	17.92	1.92	High	Brazilian women	24.10	20.07	2.15	High
American men	29.45	19.07	2.04	High	French women	23.46	17.68	1.90	High
Italian men	26.31	17.91	1.92	High	Dutch women	23.03	20.03	2.15	High
British men	25.84	18.11	1.94	High	British women	22.46	19.80	2.12	Neutral
dutch men	23.86	18.74	2.01	Neutral	German women	22.15	17.27	1.85	Neutral
Right-handed men	23.37	18.60	1.99	Neutral	Women w/ A+ blood	21.77	19.18	2.06	Neutral
Portuguese men	23.12	17.19	1.84	Neutral	Portuguese women	21.62	17.04	1.83	Neutral
Left-handed men	22.55	18.23	1.95	Neutral	Right-Handed women	21.20	18.45	1.98	Neutral
Swiss men	22.25	15.92	1.71	Neutral	Italian women	20.81	17.92	1.92	Neutral
Men w/ A+ blood	21.82	18.62	2.00	Neutral	Swiss women	20.16	17.09	1.83	Neutral
German men	21.06	14.37	1.54	Neutral	Women w/ O+ blood	20.14	18.72	2.01	Neutral
Men w/ O+ blood	20.77	18.13	1.94	Neutral	Left-handed women	19.82	18.22	1.95	Neutral
Chinese men	19.36	18.76	2.01	Neutral	Ukrainian women	18.58	18.10	1.94	Neutral
Japanese men	18.91	15.69	1.68	Neutral	Mexican women	16.70	13.91	1.49	Low
Mexican men	17.76	13.99	1.50	Low	Japanese women	15.56	14.25	1.53	Low
Venezuelan men	16.49	13.63	1.46	Low	Venezuelan women	14.95	13.37	1.43	Low
Indian men	16.26	13.92	1.49	Low	Cape Verdean women	14.32	14.07	1.51	Low
Ukrainian men	15.78	13.99	1.50	Low	Chinese women	13.44	12.36	1.33	Low
Angolan men	14.10	13.16	1.41	Low	Angolan women	13.36	14.48	1.55	Low
Cape Verdean men	13.47	11.92	1.28	Low	Indian women	13.13	11.74	1.26	Low

Note. All male targets were subject to a one sample *t*-test against the mean for men, overall ($M=21.51$), while all female targets were subject to the same test against the mean for women, overall ($M=19.44$). Evaluations of male targets received greater variability (Range=16.29) than female targets (Range=14.30).

Table 3

Perceived economic status across groups

Target	Perceived economic status								
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Categorization</i>	Target	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Categorization</i>
Swiss men	5.93	1.01	0.11	High	German women	5.68	1.04	0.11	High
German men	5.90	0.98	0.11	High	Swiss women	5.63	1.18	0.13	High
Dutch men	5.66	0.99	0.11	High	Dutch women	5.49	0.94	0.10	High
British men	5.58	0.90	0.10	High	British women	5.48	0.90	0.10	High
American men	5.56	1.16	0.12	High	French women	5.41	0.92	0.10	High
Japanese men	5.36	1.05	0.11	High	American women	5.37	1.17	0.13	High
French men	5.29	0.99	0.11	High	Japanese women	5.12	1.15	0.12	High
Italian men	4.90	0.92	0.10	High	Italian women	4.97	0.83	0.09	High
Chinese men	4.52	1.42	0.15	High	Chinese Women	4.30	1.37	0.15	Neutral
Left-handed men	4.16	0.57	0.06	Neutral	Women w/ O+ blood	4.07	0.33	0.04	Low
Right-handed men	4.14	0.41	0.04	Neutral	Left-handed women	4.03	0.52	0.06	Low
Men w/ A+ blood	4.07	0.43	0.05	Neutral	Right-handed women	4.02	0.48	0.05	Low
Men w/ O+ blood	4.06	0.47	0.05	Neutral	Women w/ A+ blood	4.01	0.29	0.03	Low
Portuguese men	3.61	0.97	0.10	Low	Portuguese women	3.97	0.83	0.09	Low
Ukrainian men	3.10	1.06	0.11	Low	Ukrainian women	3.23	1.21	0.13	Low
Brazilian men	2.71	0.93	0.10	Low	Brazilian women	3.12	1.18	0.13	Low
Indian men	2.66	1.22	0.13	Low	Mexican women	2.82	1.10	0.12	Low
Mexican men	2.62	0.91	0.10	Low	Indian women	2.81	1.25	0.13	Low
Angolan men	2.56	1.33	0.14	Low	Venezuelan women	2.51	1.20	0.13	Low
Venezuelan men	2.43	1.13	0.12	Low	Cape Verdean women	2.48	1.07	0.11	Low
Cape Verdean Men	2.24	0.92	0.10	Low	Angolan Women	2.45	1.13	0.12	Low

Note. All male targets were subject to a one sample *t*-test against the mean for men, overall ($M=4.15$), while all female targets were subject to the same test against the mean for women, overall ($M=4.14$). Evaluations of male targets received greater variability (Range=3.69) than female targets (Range=3.23).

Upon categorization, participants appeared to evaluate the neutral categories (i.e., blood type and handedness) as intended, but in different manners. Specifically, participants evaluated all neutral categories as neutral (compared to all target groups) when considering the PGL and economic status

measures; however, the neutral categories followed a different pattern when considering the masculinity and femininity measure. Instead of being evaluated as neutral (i.e., in the middle of all targets), they were instead positioned closer to the scale's midpoint (4), both suggesting participants viewed them as neither masculine nor feminine and, simultaneously, resulting in lower perceived masculinity for male neutral targets and higher perceived masculinity in female neutral targets. At the same time, it is important to view male and female targets in the masculinity scale together, yet separately, simultaneously due to the nature of perceived masculinity or femininity. As men are generally perceived as stereotypically more masculine than women (Ellemers, 2018), it was expected that men would be evaluated as more masculine than women (as was the case, here). However, this does not mean that male targets cannot be perceived as feminine (when compared to other men; e.g., Brazilian men) or female targets cannot be perceived as masculine (when compared to other women; e.g., Angolan women), and special attention must be paid not only to the between-nation relationships, but also the within-gender relationships.

Testing the hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 examined relationships between genders of the same nationality. Importantly, neutral categories (e.g., left-handed men) were excluded from this analysis to avoid noise. First, masculinity and femininity were compared with correlative tests using Pearson's r ; as t -tests were not appropriate due to the nature of the measure. For instance, while a paired-samples t -test revealed that Angolan men ($M=5.55$, $SD=1.13$) and women ($M=3.16$, $SD=1.16$) differed in perceived masculinity [$t(86)=13.38$, $p<.001$, $d=2.09$], both groups were evaluated as relatively masculine compared to all other groups. First, participants' individual correlations for each target group across all 3 measures were measured, revealing a weak positive correlation between the perceived masculinity of men and women from the same nation [$r(15)=0.17$, $p<.001$], a moderately strong positive correlation between the PGL scores of men and women from the same nation [$r(15)=0.46$, $p<.001$], and a strong positive correlation between the economic scores of men and women from the same nation, $r(15)=0.91$, $p<.001$. However, when examining the averaged means of participant evaluations across each target group, a very strong positive correlation was found between the perceived masculinity of men and women from the same nation, $r(15)=0.81$, $p<.001$. Further correlative tests found very strong positive correlations between the perceived PGL scores of individuals from the same nation separated by gender [$r(15)=0.88$, $p<.001$], and the perceived economic status of men and women from each nation, $r(15)=0.99$, $p<.001$. Individualized and averaged correlations largely supported Hypothesis 1, apart from the discrepancy detected on the masculinity scale; specifically, when examined at the individual level, male and female targets were not as strongly correlated on the scale of masculinity when compared to the group testing, suggesting that individuals may not evaluate men and women from the same nation similar in perceived masculinity, although the group does appear to do so.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b were first examined using regression modeling to identify potential trends in the continuous data before proceeding to the grouped variables. When using participants' individual scores, in line with the approach used to test correlations, a significant regression model was produced [$F(3,2965)=940.40$, $p<.001$], with an adjusted R^2 of 0.49. The regression coefficient for masculinity was -0.19 and the standard error was 0.31, suggesting that masculinity does not predict the individualism score of a country. However, the regression coefficient for economic status (14.46) and PGL (1.92) and their standard errors (0.28 and 0.32, respectively), suggested that both variables predicted the individualism score of a country (with economic status being a stronger predictor).

Participants' individual scores were also used to examine the influence of variables on individualism using GDPpc as a function of participant evaluations. A significant regression model

was again produced [$F(7,2950)=768.80, p<.001$], with an adjusted R^2 of 0.65. Overall, each nation's GDPpc predicted the individualism scores of each nation (regression coefficient=13.34, standard error=0.37). At the same time, the regression coefficient for masculinity (as a function of GDPpc) was -0.01 and the standard error was 0.25, the regression coefficient for PGL (as a function of GDPpc) was -0.99 and the standard error was 0.26, and separately, the regression coefficient for economic status (as a function of GDPpc) was -3.06 and the standard error was 0.30. Results suggest that, again, masculinity did not predict individualism scores, even as a function of GDPpc.

Next, Hypothesis 2a was further examined using a 2 (Orientation: individualist vs collectivist) x 3 (Dimension: masculinity, PGL, and economic status) repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) test aimed at identifying differences in the categorizations of nation groups. Importantly, 9 nationalities were considered more individualist than collectivist², while 7 were considered more collectivist than individualist³ according to Hofstede's dimensions (2023)⁴. Italy was excluded from this analysis as it was neither individualist nor collectivist; please refer to Table 4 for further information. Results indicated, as expected, a significant main effect of orientation [$F(1,86)=115.59, p<.001, \eta^2p=0.57$], dimension [$F(2,172)=125.57, p<.001, \eta^2p=0.59$], and a significant interaction between variables, $F(2,172)=50.19, p<.001, \eta^2p=0.37$, meaning that depending on the nationality type, the differently-evaluated dimensions would behave uniquely. As the interaction was most important, we examined each pairing in a series of post-hoc tests with a Bonferroni comparison. First, a nonsignificant difference in perceived masculinity between individualist ($M=3.74, SD=0.44$) and collectivist nations ($M=3.89, SD=0.46$) was revealed, $p>0.999, d=-0.02$. However, individualist nationalities ($M=22.46, SD=14.63$) had a significantly higher PGL score than collectivist nations ($M=16.94, SD=12.28$), ($p<.001, d=0.71$), and individualist nationalities ($M=5.08, SD=0.58$) had significantly higher perceived economic status than collectivist nationalities ($M=2.87, SD=0.70$), $p<.001, d=0.28$. Results largely supported Hypothesis 2a (see Figure 1).

Table 4
Individualism and GDPpc across nationalities

Nationality	Individualism	Categorization	GDPpc (\$)	Categorization
Angola	18	Collectivist	3,000	Low
Brazil	38	Collectivist	8,917	Low
Cape Verde	20	Collectivist	3,754	Low
China	43	Collectivist	12,720	Low
England	76	Individualist	46,125	High
France	74	Individualist	40,886	High
Germany	79	Individualist	48,718	High
India	24	Collectivist	24,10	Low
Italy	53	Neutral	34,776	High
Japan	62	Individualist	33,823	High
Mexico	34	Collectivist	11,496	Low
Netherlands	100	Individualist	57,025	High
Portugal	59	Individualist	24,515	Low
Switzerland	79	Individualist	93,259	High
Ukraine	55	Individualist	4,534	Low
United States	60	Individualist	76,319	High
Venezuela	26	Collectivist	15,975	Low

Note. According to Hofstede's dimensions (2023), Italy is neither individualist nor collectivist. GDPpc is displayed in thousands (of US Dollars).

² England, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, the United States, and Ukraine.

³ Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, China, India, Mexico, and Venezuela.

⁴ The classifications of nationalities as individualist or collectivist are derived from Hofstede Insights' online tool (2023), which provides information on these cultural dimensions for multiple nationalities. This tool not only quantifies the dimensions from the original scale used by Hofstede, but also provides a detailed interpretation that explicitly defines each nationality's orientation.

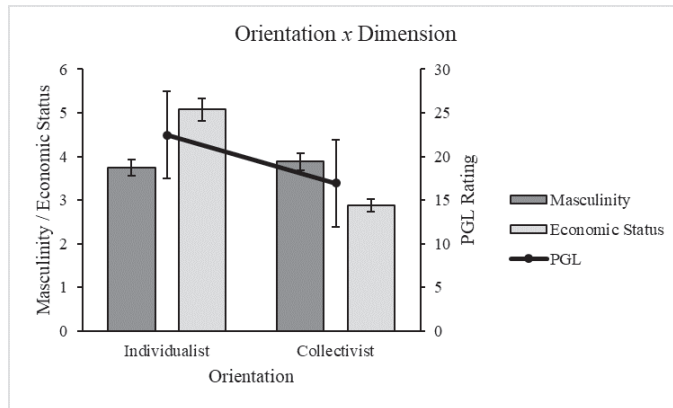


Figure 1. Comparison of nationality type by dimension

Note. Masculinity and economic status are fixed on the primary (left) axis, while PGL ratings are fixed on the secondary (right) axis. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Finally, to test whether or not participants' evaluations were a function of perceived economic growth (Hypothesis 2b), each nationality's GDP per capita⁵ was considered in a 2 (GDPpc: high vs low) x 3 (Dimension: masculinity, PGL, and economic status) repeated measures ANOVA. To reduce data manipulations, nations were classified as either high or low GDPpc nations by sorting all values from the most to least GDPpc and separating the targets in half to achieve 8 high-GDPpc nations⁶ and 9 low-GDPpc nations⁷ (see Table 4). Results revealed a significant main effect of GDPpc [$F(1,86)=116.27, p<.001, \eta^2p=0.58$], dimension [$F(2,172)=137.63, p<.001, \eta^2p=0.39$], and a significant interaction between variables, $F(2,172)=53.87, p<.001, \eta^2p=0.39$. Again, as the interaction between variables was most important, we conducted post-hoc comparisons with a Bonferroni correction to test statistical differences. First, it was revealed that high-GDPpc countries ($M=4.55, SD=0.77$) were *not* perceived as more masculine than low-GDPpc countries ($M=4.97, SD=0.84$), $p>0.999, d=-0.05$. However, further planned contrasts revealed that high-GDPpc nations had higher PGL ratings ($M=24.65, SD=15.08$) and perceived economic statuses ($M=5.52, SD=0.68$) than low-GDPpc countries ($M=18.46, SD=12.53; M=2.94, SD=0.61$), respectively, $p<.001, d=0.77, p<.001, d=0.32$. Results corroborated those of the regressions.

General discussion and conclusion

This pretest successfully examined the manner in which Portuguese individuals may conceptualize individuals from other nations by ascribing to generalized stereotypes. Although similar projects have been produced (e.g., Eagly & Kite, 1987; Hofstede, 1980, 2011; Lee & Fiske, 2006), the current study focuses on the conceptualization of nations, extending prior findings regarding the perceived masculinity and economic status of immigrants while introducing a unique

⁵ GDP per capita was taken from The World Bank (2024); the most recent year available for analysis was 2022 for all nations, apart from Venezuela which was 2014. Additionally, the United Kingdom was analyzed for England.

⁶ England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United States.

⁷ Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, China, India, Mexico, Portugal, Ukraine, and Venezuela.

measure which examined the perceived percentage of gay or lesbian individuals from each target group. Importantly, we wanted to examine whether or not participants' evaluations of individuals from different nationalities might be affected by objective, but not explicitly measured, categorizations of those nations. That is, if asked to estimate the economic status of individuals, would participants use the objective value of GDPpc to anchor their evaluations, although this measure was not presented to them? Results generally supported the main hypotheses, suggesting national conceptualizations may be anchored not only to the men of each nation, but to the objective conceptualizations of each nation (i.e., individualism/collectivism and GDPpc), raising concern for the perpetuation of global stereotyping (e.g., perceiving Indian individuals as poorer than German individuals based on the external knowledge of each nation's GDPpc).

First, minimal differences in the relationships between men and women of the same nationality provided support that national categorizations are highly salient. In line with the social dominance theory (e.g., Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), the lens theory (e.g., Petsko et al., 2022) and exemplifying prior findings (e.g., Eagly & Kite, 1987; Pratto et al., 2006; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), ratings of male targets were slightly more polarized than those of female targets (meaning more distinctions between nations), indicating participants may have blurred their conceptualizations of women across nationalities, suggesting the gender category might have been more salient than nationality for women (e.g., Reese et al., 2023; Bem, 1994). Moreover, the generalization and stereotyping of outgroup members tends to be guided by the most visible examples within each group (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008); as men traditionally hold power in global patriarchal societies (Pratto et al., 2006), it is understandable (yet, dangerous) that the categorizations of immigrants may be stronger for men than it is of women. At the same time, the majority of the sample was male (68%), which might have not only influenced the heterogeneity of female targets, but also affected the low correlation for masculinity scores when considering individual, rather than group, differences (see Lowe et al., 2021). However, these conclusions require further testing to fully identify stereotype saliency. Nonetheless, we argue the current project continues the debate on gender invisibility at an international scale and propose greater gender equality within sociopolitical and academic spheres.

Continuing the theme of individual versus group differences, Hypotheses 2a was first tested using regression modeling when accounting for each individual's scores across all target groups. Results suggested that economic status and PGL scores were likely to predict each nation's individualism score, but masculinity did not. In line with this analysis, it was expected that individualist-oriented nations would be perceived higher in masculinity, PGL ratings, and economic status when compared to collectivist-oriented nations. While the latter two statements were confirmed, both orientations were perceived similarly in masculinity. As Bain and Bongiorno (2015) and Hofstede et al. (2010) found, there was a nonsignificant correlation between masculinity and individualism, in addition to a nonsignificant difference between individualist and collectivist-oriented nations on the dimension of masculinity. Given assumptions of masculinity are similar to positive traits of capitalism, notions of national masculinity or femininity may be inherently flawed; furthermore, if the conceptualizations of nations are anchored to the conceptualizations of men (from those nations), there should be no difference in perceptions of masculinity across individualist or collectivist-oriented cultures (e.g., Eagly & Kite, 1987). However, participants may not have understood what was meant by masculinity and femininity, and instead estimated this measure as a function of gender, rather than nationality.

Participants' individualized scores were also used to examine whether or not GDPpc acted as a function of participant evaluations. Importantly, a regression model found that GDPpc significantly predicted a nation's individualism score, suggesting the two variables are correlated with one another and supporting past literature regarding individualist- and collectivist-oriented nations in regard to economic status (e.g., Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2011; Tang & Koveos, 2008).

Economic status and PGL scores were again significant predictors (as a function of GDPpc), but masculinity was not. Results were further confirmed in the grouped testing, in which repeated measures ANOVAs revealed the men and women from high GDPpc countries were perceived as having higher economic statuses and higher PGL scores than those from low GDPpc countries but were not different in evaluations of masculinity, supporting arguments from past literature (e.g., Brewer, 2014; Cuddy et al., 2015; Greif, 1994; Hofstede, 2011; Jetten et al., 2002; Lowe et al., 2021; Triandis, 1989; van Hoorn, 2014) in which participants might have transposed international standards toward their evaluations (e.g., Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2018; Ham et al., 2024; Landy et al., 2017; Newport, 2015).

Particularly, individualist nationalities appreciate individual differences more than collectivist nationalities which put more emphasis on group cohesion (e.g., Greif, 1994; Hofstede, 2011; Jetten et al., 2002; Triandis, 1989; van Hoorn, 2014). In a world in which gay and lesbian individuals are increasingly visible (and in some instances, politicized), the propensity to keep gay and lesbian identities hidden may be greater in collectivist-oriented nations where social deviation is not accepted (e.g., Brewer, 2014; Lowe et al., 2021). Supporting this statement, 86% of the individualist-oriented nations have national-level marriage equality, while only 36% of the collectivist-oriented nations have protective national laws (HRC, 2023). Interestingly, however, participants' evaluations reflected real-world applications, suggesting international assumptions may have influenced PGL judgements (e.g., Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2018; Ham et al., 2024; Landy et al., 2017; Newport, 2015). Additionally, as individualist-oriented nations value personal achievements, capitalism has taken hold – arguably more here than in other nations (e.g., Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2011; Tang & Koveos, 2008). Moreover, the individualistic nationalities included all hold high global economic power (World Bank, 2024). As such, it is entirely plausible that participants have conflated the ideations of nationalities based on media to the ideations of immigrants from those nationalities.

As with any study, the current one is not without certain methodological limitations which should be mentioned. Specifically, results were bound to one of the three main measures (i.e., masculinity, PGL, and economic status), and the measures alone, particularly the masculinity measure, might have been misinterpreted by participants. For instance, while the concepts of masculinity and femininity are not abstract ideas, they are nonetheless affected by external variables such as the setting, time, and space, in which these ideas are measures. We argue however, that results were not largely affected by this ambiguity as the measure itself was presented in a straightforward manner (i.e., “How masculine or feminine are [*target group*]?”), and strong correlations were found between male and female target groups from the same nationality. Importantly, the main goal of the pretest was to give additional support toward the generalization of individuals from specific nations and nation groupings; a database of the perceptions of men and women across nationalities offers a unique solution to researchers from cultures similar in proximity to Portugal who might not have adequate resources to conduct pretests. However, due to funding limitations, we were unable to capture a large sample size. Given the low participant count (<100), and the fact that the majority of participants were men (68%), results might have been significantly influenced from not only inadvertently obtaining a specific subsection of the Portuguese population, but also from gender differences regarding the perceptions of outgroup members (see Lowe et al., 2021). Of course, this limitation would be solved by obtaining a larger sample size. Moreover, the findings presented in this project are bound by their positioning in both society and time, bringing into question the long-term applicability of participants' evaluations; future studies should capitalize on these limitations, using the current project as a starting point of which additional ideas may be realized and the current data may be updated periodically to account for societal shifts.

Findings from this study provide unique insights into the perceptions of individualist and collectivist-oriented nationalities in a Portuguese context, which generalize prior research and may prove beneficial for future researchers conducting studies in similar cultures. It is important to realize interpersonal differences are abundant, and the generalization of nationalities or cultures may bring inherent overgeneralization; therefore, results should not be regarded as entirely representative of the individuals of the selected nations, but rather, the perception of Portuguese individuals toward these nations. Because we belong in an increasingly globalized world, a fully-realized understanding of inter- and intranationality perceptions is critical to create a society in which prejudice is minimized.

Declaration of conflicting of interests

The authors of this manuscript declare no competing financial or personal interests.

Ethical Approval

All studies in this manuscript were approved by the ethics committee of the lead author's institution and were conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

Availability of data and materials

Data was handled with care in a secure location and remained anonymous. Data and supplemental materials may be found at https://osf.io/vz59d/?view_only=d418344d6be04d5484be0976e3451f07

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Authors contribution

Conceptualization: JR, ASS; Data curation: JR; Formal analysis: JR; Writing – Original draft: JR; Writing – Review and editing: JR, ASS, TAP.

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Interpretar as percepções sobre Homens e Mulheres de 17 nacionalidades obtidas num contexto Português: Um pré-teste

Resumo: Os indivíduos atribuem frequentemente certas características a nações e regiões, e àqueles que nelas vivem, apesar da acuidade com que o fazem ser tema de debate. Neste pré-teste, foi pedido a participantes Portugueses para avaliarem Homens e Mulheres de 17 nacionalidades com base em dimensões que podem estar relacionadas com nações orientadas para o individualismo ou coletivismo – nomeadamente masculinidade percebida, percentagem de gays/lésbicas em cada grupo (PGL), e estatuto económico. Previu-se que as conceptualizações de nacionalidade superassem os factores de género, resultando e avaliações genéricas dos indivíduos de cada nação neste cenário de ausência de contexto.

Os resultados revelaram fortes relações entre homens e mulheres da mesma nacionalidade, e uma maior variabilidade entre nacionalidades nas avaliações dos alvos masculinos, apoiando a noção de que os estereótipos nacionais podem ser mais representativos dos homens de cada nação (i.e., androcentrismo).

Além disso, as nações orientadas para o individualismo apresentaram classificações mais elevadas de PGL e de estatuto económico quando comparadas com as nações orientadas para o coletivismo, mas ambas foram consideradas igualmente masculinas. Por fim, o produto interno bruto per capita (PIBpc) de cada nação pareceu atuar de alguma forma em função dos julgamentos dos participantes. Os resultados generalizam a literatura a um contexto Português, fornecendo uma visão sobre a forma como os indivíduos podem categorizar as pessoas de várias nacionalidades.

Palavras-chave: Estereótipos Nacionais, Imigração, Masculinidade, Feminilidade, LGBTQIA+.