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Justice in Our World and in that of Others: Belief in a Just World and Reactions to Victims

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Abstract Framed by the Belief in a Just World theory (BJW; Lerner, M. J. (1980). *Belief in a just world: A fundamental delusion*. New York: Plenum Publishing Corporation), this article presents two studies that analyze people's reactions to the suffering of victims belonging to an ingroup and an outgroup. In Study 1, participants viewed a videotaped film containing the victimization story. The victim was presented as a non-categorized, ingroup or outgroup (Gypsy) victim. Threat to BJW was measured using the modified Stroop task developed by Hafer (*J Pers Soc Psychol 79*:165–173, 2000). In the second study, a non-victimization story was introduced and a 2 (victim, non-victim) × 2 (ingroup, outgroup) between-subjects design was used. Both studies show that the ingroup victim is more threatening to the BJW than the outgroup victim. The expected secondary victimization of the ingroup victim was only obtained in the second study when a non-obtrusive derogation measure was used.

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There is a wide-spread acceptance of the need to understand factors underlying justice judgments and the consequences of these judgments (Tyler & Smith, 1998). However, as Opotow (1990) pointed out, along with studying the processes linked to and conditions under which certain justice principles apply, we have to pay more attention to what she calls the "who" of inclusion in our justice concerns. Having the Belief in a Just World theory (BJW) as a background (Lerner, 1980; Lerner & Simmons, 1966), the main goal of the present research is to understand if justice concerns are equally activated by ingroup and outgroup victims of undeserved suffering. We then hope to contribute to the understanding of who is included and excluded in our scope of justice (Clayton & Opotow, 2003; Opotow, 1990).

Research carried out in the context of the BJW theory, according to which people generally get what they deserve, shows that this belief or attitudinal orientation is fundamental in maintaining psychological balance and well-being (see Dalbert, 2001 for a review). However, paradoxically, this concern with justice also carries negative consequences. The compromise with this belief often leads people to derogate victims of undeserved fate (Correia & Vala, 2003; Correia, Vala, & Aguiar, 2001). A great number of studies have empirically demonstrated that the stronger the BJW, the more people are inclined to engage in several strategies of secondary victimization, presumably because of the greater threat to their BJW (see Hafer & Bègue, 2005; Montada, 1998).

Lerner's theory has been primarily concerned with unravelling the 'justice motive' and the belief in a just world as a fundamental tool for individual balance and functioning in everyday life, and demonstrating its potentially negative effects on the evaluation of innocent victims in interpersonal contexts. Our main concern in the present research is with what happens in intergroup contexts. Do we believe that the world of outgroups is as just as that of ingroups? The BJW theory states that justice concerns only apply to our world:

> people will be concerned primarily with their own world, that is the environment in which they must live and function. To witness and admit to injustices in other environments does not threaten people very much because these events have little relevance for their own fates. As events become closer to their world, however, the concern with injustices increases greatly, as does the need to explain or make sense of the events (Lerner & Miller, 1978, p. 1031).

However, this hypothesis has not yet received enough empirical support. Our goal, then, is to understand how this belief operates in intergroup contexts. In fact, the study of reactions to victims from different kinds of social groups within the BJW literature can be characterized as being unsystematic and producing results that are far from being unequivocal (see Correia, Vala, & Aguiar, 2007 for a review).

A study by Correia, Vala, and Aguiar (2007, Study 2) was, as far as we know, the first empirical demonstration of the hypothesis formulated by Lerner and Miller

(1978). The results clearly supported the notion that people are more concerned with justice after a confrontation with an ingroup victim than with an outgroup (Gypsy) victim, suggesting that "It is not so frightening when something 'bad' happens to one of 'them'" (Lerner & Goldberg, 1999, p. 628). In this study, participants were confronted with a compelling videotaped story of an accident with a Portuguese (ingroup) versus Gypsy (outgroup) child. Then the threat to the BJW was measured using the emotional Stroop task developed by Hafer (2000), which directly assesses the threat to the participant's BJW by comparing their performance on a task when colored stimuli are preceded by subliminally presented justice-related versus neutral words. Participants confronted with the ingroup victim were slower in identifying the stimulus colors for justice-related words than for neutral words, indicating that their BJW was threatened; no differences were obtained when participants were confronted with the outgroup victim (the Gypsy child). In this paradigm, contrary to most of the research in the BJW, threat to the BJW was directly measured and not inferred from the observed reaction to the victim. These results show that an ingroup victim threatens the participant's BJW more than an outgroup victim.

However, Correia et al. (2007) did not analyze the relationship between threat to the BJW and secondary victimization or victim derogation. In the two studies that will be presented, we will take things a step further by examining the influence of social categorization, not only on the threat to the BJW, but also on the secondary victimization. In keeping with Lerner and Miller's (1978) theorizing, we aimed at testing the following hypotheses. Concerning the threat to the BJW, we predict that the higher the inclusion of the victim in the participant's world, the higher the threat to the BJW. Concerning the secondary victimization, we expect that the ingroup victim will be more victimized than the outgroup victim, a hypothesis that has not yet been analyzed. This hypothesis is routed in the BJW theory which assumes that the secondary victimization stems from a threat to the fundamental need to believe in a just world. Secondly, as Lerner (1980) pointed out, the victims that pose greater threats to the BJW are the ones who are similar to the observer or with whom the observer can relate. Consequently, we predict that they should be more secondarily victimized.

The present research aims, then, to clarify previous research in the analysis of victimization and categorization in the context of the just world literature in three different ways. In the first place, studies dealing, one way or another, with categorization issues have produced puzzling results. While most of the studies that deal with the reactions to similar versus dissimilar victims or victims belonging to different groups (Bloom, Kang, & Romano, 1990; Jones & Aronson, 1973; Novak & Lerner, 1968) find that the higher the inclusion in the observer's world, the greater the secondary victimization stemming from that threat, others have obtained the reverse pattern of results (Anderson, 1992; Braman & Lambert, 2001; Kleinke & Meyer, 1990). However, the analysis of the effects of categorization on victimization was not the main concern of most of these studies. The present research offers a paradigm originally designed to analyze the impact of ingroup and outgroup victims on observers, which might help to disentangle these past results.

Secondly, those studies inferred but did not directly measure the threat to the BJW. The present research includes measures that assess, at an automatic level, both

the threat to the BJW and secondary victimization. Finally, adding to the research of Correia et al. (2007), the development of a paradigm that allows the confrontation with ingroup and outgroup victims and non-victims leads to a clearer analysis of the processes involved in the evaluation of victims belonging to different social groups. This issue will be addressed in more detail in Study 2.

Study 1

The goal of this study was to analyze if justice concerns are differentially activated by ingroup and outgroup members. In order to analyze how people react to the undeserved suffering of victims belonging to different social groups, in terms of threat to the belief in a just world and secondary victimization, an adaptation of the paradigm developed by Hafer (2000) was used.

Hafer's paradigm has contributed to clarifying two important issues related to recent developments in the BJW literature (Lerner, 1998, 2003; Lerner & Goldberg, 1999). The first one concerns the relationship between BJW and secondary victimization. According to the theory, secondary victimization may be considered a response mechanism to threat to the BJW. As mentioned before, threat posed to the individual's BJW is typically inferred from its consequences, usually from secondary victimization imposed on the observed victims. Hafer's experimental paradigm, however, offers a direct way, using implicit measures, to assess the degree to which the participant's BJW is threatened by a victimizing situation presented in a videotaped film.

The second issue that Hafer's paradigm addresses has to do with intervening processes between confrontation with a victim and secondary victimization at an automatic level of analysis. The need to study unconscious or pre-conscious information processing, or at least the need to use unobtrusive measures, has been felt in diverse fields of research in social psychology, namely in studies on racism, intergroup discrimination, and stereotyping (Fazio & Olson, 2003, for a review).

Although the BJW literature has been almost exclusively focused on the conscious dimension of this phenomenon, Lerner (1998) and Lerner and Goldberg (1999) have pointed out the need to study BJW and its consequences at both automatic and conscious levels of analysis. This theoretical concern was empirically answered by Hafer (2000).

In our adaptation of Hafer's paradigm (2000), participants were exposed to a video portraying the truthful story of a severe accident that happened to an 8-year-old boy. The victim was presented as belonging to a Portuguese family (ingroup), a Gypsy family (outgroup), or no information about the victim's social group was given (non-categorized victim). Using Hafer's paradigm to measure the threat to the BJW, we investigated the following hypotheses. In relation to the threat to the participant's BJW, we expected to observe higher levels of threat in the participants confronted with the ingroup victim, followed by the non-categorized victim and lower levels of threat for the outgroup victim (Hypothesis 1). More specifically, we predicted higher interference levels (latencies for color identification of stimulus preceded by justice-related words minus latencies for stimulus' color identification when preceded by

neutral words) in the ingroup condition than in the outgroup condition (Hypothesis 1a), but also significantly higher interference levels in the ingroup compared to the non-categorized condition (Hypothesis 1b) and in the non-categorized than in the outgroup condition (Hypothesis 1c). Concerning secondary victimization, we expected the same pattern of results; i.e., the higher the inclusion in the victim's world, the higher the degree of secondary victimization (Hypothesis 2). More specifically, we expected higher levels of secondary victimization in the ingroup condition than in the non-categorized condition (Hypothesis 2a); higher levels of secondary victimization in the non-categorized condition compared to the outgroup condition (Hypothesis 2b); and higher levels of secondary victimization in the ingroup condition in comparison with the outgroup condition (Hypothesis 2c).

Method

Participants

A total of 60 undergraduate university students participated in this study and were randomly assigned to the experimental conditions, with 20 participants in each condition.

Procedure and Material

The procedure used in the present study was similar to the one used by Correia et al. (2007) and constitutes an adaptation of Hafer's experimental paradigm. Participants were individually invited to collaborate in two supposedly unrelated studies on Social Psychology. They were told that the first study was about "people's reactions to accidents and events that result in dramatic life changes." They were then invited to watch a small documentary film (about 5 min duration) on this issue; and they were told that, at the end, they were going to answer a questionnaire. After the film, the experimenter pretended to have forgotten the questionnaires they had to answer, and asked participants to engage in the next study. This new study was presented as a study of color perception. Then, while waiting for the arrival of another experimenter with the questionnaires, the participants executed a second task, the modified emotional Stroop task. Following this task, participants were invited to answer a short questionnaire (now recovered), concerning the documentary they had seen. This questionnaire contained the secondary victimization measures related to the strategies of victim blaming and victim derogation. At the end, participants were thanked and debriefed.

Description of the Story Presented in the Video In the video, the following truthful story was presented: "Six years ago an eight year-old male child, whom we here designate by Z to preserve his anonymity, lost both arms after a shock from an electric cable. The cable was in a house under construction. When Z was playing ball with some friends, the ball went into the house that was not sufficiently protected. When Z went to get the ball, to avoid falling, he grasped a cable and received a massive electric shock, losing both arms as a result. Therefore, Z cannot

carry out everyday activities alone, such as opening doors, eating or drinking, etc." According to the experimental conditions, Z was presented as belonging to a Portuguese family (ingroup condition), to a Gypsy family (outgroup condition), or no reference was made concerning the victim's social group (non-categorized condition).

Description of the Emotional Modified Stroop Task The presentation of the stimuli and the register of the latency were made through the software TEC (Experimental Psychology Laboratory of the FPCE, 2000) on a portable PC with a 35-cm color monitor. The participants sat down, approximately 70 cm away from the screen and were invited to adjust the monitor according to their best angle of vision.

Participants were confronted with the following emotional modified Stroop task based on Hafer's (2000) experimental paradigm: the words were presented on a black screen for 33 ms (two *frames*), followed by a mask constituted by eight asterisks of the same color as the word; the colors of both the words and the mask could be one among red, blue, yellow, or green. The order of presentation of each word, as well as the color in which it appeared was randomized in each application, with the restriction that each color could not appear in more than two consecutive trials. The same restriction was applied to the type of words, so that in each trial no more than two consecutive words of the same category would appear.

Each trial consisted of a white cross on the centre of the screen for 800 ms (font = system; size = 36), the word was presented for 33 ms (font = arial; size = 72, small caps) and, soon afterwards, a mask of eight asterisks appeared (font = arial; size = 124), of the same color as the word, and it remained on the screen until the participant answered. Previous pre-test studies (Correia et al., 2007) and the studies by Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman, and Tyler (1990) and Wittenbrink, Judd, and Park (1997) strongly suggest that this duration of stimuli presentation is a subliminal one. Participants were asked to indicate the color of the stimulus that appeared on the screen as fast and precisely as they were able to. Participants had a six-trial training phase. The modified emotional Stroop task involved two categories of words, each one with 10 words: words related to justice (example: justice, right, fair) and neutral words (example: telephone, wood, glass). These words were pre-tested for the Portuguese language and population as to length and frequency of usage (Correia et al., 2007).

Summarizing, the Modified Stroop Task consists of the subliminal presentation of justice-related and neutral words and the participant's task is to designate the color of the asterisks that appear immediately after the words using the computer keyboard. The relevant keys for response were colored in order for participants to perform the task. This procedure allows the computation of an interference measurement, which is calculated in the following manner: the latency for justice-related words minus the latency for neutral words. This is interpreted as a measure of the degree of threat to the participant's belief in a just world (Correia et al., 2007; Hafer, 2000).

Design, Independent, and Dependent Variables

In a simple between-subjects design, the victim was presented as a member of a Portuguese family (ingroup condition), or as member of a Gypsy family (outgroup

condition). In the non-categorization condition, no information was given about the social group of the child.

For threat to the BJW, the dependent variable is the interference measure (latencies for justice-related words *minus* latencies for neutral words). For secondary victimization strategies, participants had to answer the following questions: "To what degree is Z guilty of his situation?" for victim blaming (on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = not at all guilty to 7 = completely guilty) and "What is your overall impression of Z?" for victim derogation (on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = extremely negative to 7 = extremely positive). The scores obtained for this last question were reversed in order to compute a derogation measure.

Results and Discussion

As usual with respect to reaction time measures (Ratcliff, 1993; Wittenbrink et al., 1997), latencies for justice-related and neutral words on the emotional modified Stroop task were subject to some initial analyses. First, a total of 21 incorrect answers were eliminated from the 1,200 latencies obtained. Second, latencies up to three standard deviations below or above the participant's mean were excluded from the analysis, resulting in a total of five exclusions. Finally, the remaining latencies were transformed into natural logarithms in order to eliminate the positive asymmetry of the distribution (Ratcliff, 1993). However, to facilitate the understanding of the results, these are presented in milliseconds.

A one-way (victim's group: ingroup, non-categorized, outgroup) ANOVA was conducted on the interference measure (latencies to justice-related words minus neutral words). This analysis revealed a non-significant main effect of the victim's group, $F(1, 57) = 2.11$, *ns*. However, in order to test our hypothesis, planned comparisons between pairs of experimental conditions were performed on the interference measure. These contrasts show a higher interference for the ingroup condition, $M = 55.86$ than for the outgroup condition, $M = 20.23$, $F(1, 57) = 6.45$, $p < .01$ (Hypothesis 1a). Although the differences between ingroup versus non-categorized victim, $M = 22.85$, $F(1, 57) = 1.42$, *ns* (Hypothesis 1b) and non-categorized versus outgroup victim condition, $F(1, 57) = .00$, *ns* (Hypothesis 1c) on the interference measure did not reach statistical significance, as predicted, the overall pattern of results shows that the non-categorized victim occupies a position between the ingroup and the outgroup victim (see Fig. 1).

Results show that participants who were confronted with an ingroup victim were more threatened in their belief in a just world than participants confronted with an outgroup victim. More importantly, *t*-tests show that, in absolute terms, the outgroup victim is the only one who did not threaten the BJW, $t(19) = .53$, *ns*. The interference values for both ingroup $t(19) = 3.17$, $p = .005$, and non-categorized victims, $t(19) = 2.37$, $p < .05$, were different from zero.

Concerning the secondary victimization measures, the results do not follow our hypotheses. In relation to victim derogation, the outgroup victim was more devalued, $M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.14$, than the non-categorized victim, $M = 3.50$, $SD = .95$; $F(1, 57) = 9.70$, $p < .005$, and the non-categorized victim was more

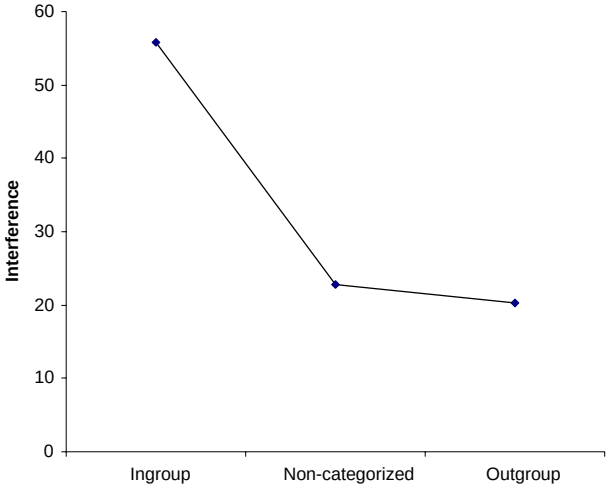

Fig. 1 Interference level as a function of the victim's group: Study 1. *Note:* Interference levels presented as difference in non-log means

derogated than the ingroup victim, $M = 2.90$, $SD = .55$; $F(1, 57) = 4.3$, $p < .05$. As to the measure of victim-blaming, no significant differences were found between the experimental conditions. The ingroup victim was equally blamed, $M = 1.25$, $SD = .55$, as the non-categorized victim, $M = 1.35$, $SD = .50$; $F(1, 57) = 1.76$, *ns*; and the non-categorized victim did not differ from the outgroup victim, $M = 1.30$, $SD = .47$; $F(1, 57) = .01$, *ns*. Moreover, *t*-tests against the mean value of the scale (4) show derogation levels for both the ingroup victim and non-categorized victim were significantly below the mean level, $M = 2.90$, $t(19) = -8.90$, $p < .001$ and $M = 3.5$, $t(19) = -2.36$, $p < .05$, respectively. Only the outgroup victim did not show a significant difference from the mean value of the derogation scale, $M = 4.40$; $t(19) = 1.57$, *ns*. The blaming levels for ingroup victim, $M = 1.25$; $t(19) = -22.36$, $p < .001$, non-categorized victim, $M = 1.35$; $t(19) = -24.22$, $p < .001$, and outgroup victim $M = 1.30$, $t(19) = -25.68$, $p < .001$) were all significantly below the midpoint of the scale.

In order to sum up, the ingroup victim, as expected, threatens the participants' belief in a just world more than the outgroup victim. These results, which replicate those obtained in a previous study by Correia et al. (2007), lend consistency to the general hypothesis formulated by Lerner and Miller (1978) that justice concerns only apply to those we recognize as belonging to our own world. As a consequence, victims that fall outside of this boundary are not threatening to our BJW. This result also follows the theoretical hypothesis proposed by Tajfel (1984), according to which the boundaries of the communities in which justice principles apply, are determined by the boundaries of the ingroup. The results of this study constitute the first answer to Opotow's (1990) concern about who is included and excluded from the "scope of justice" in the BJW body of literature.

However, the ingroup victim was not more secondarily victimized than the outgroup victim. Contrary to what was expected, and to what is generally assumed

or inferred in experimental research in the BJW literature, the victim who posed the greater threat to the participant's BJW was not more secondarily victimized. We can, however, formulate the hypothesis that participants evaluated the ingroup child according to social norms which do not allow blaming children for their own fate. In the following study, we will use a non-obtrusive measure of derogation in order to avoid the interference of social norms against victim's derogation, namely, when they are children. As a consequence, in the following study, an implicit measure of derogation will be used.

The next study will also address another problem. Contrary to our hypothesis, the outgroup victim was no more derogated than the ingroup victim. We propose that this reaction was due to prejudice and not to the threat to the BJW. This hypothesis will be analyzed in the second study.

Study 2

This second study had two goals. The first one was to assess secondary victimization through an implicit measure, in order to eliminate the possible counter-normative effect that is related to the victimization of innocent children. The second goal was to understand the processes underlying the reactions to victims belonging to ingroups and outgroups, distinguishing the effects of prejudice from the effects of justice concerns on secondary victimization, which may have been confused in the previous study.

Concerning the first goal, an implicit measure was introduced in the paradigm used in the previous study. This measure is an adaptation of the implicit prejudice measure based on an impression formation task developed by Vala, Lima, and Pereira (2006). For this measure, participants are asked to form an impression of a target by attributing (or not) positive and negative traits. Instead of measuring the number of positive and negative traits attributed to the target, Vala et al. (2006) proposed the computation of a (de)personalization score: the total time that participants take to form the impression of the target. This score is an indication of the amount of effort or attention participants make to evaluate the target. This is a non-obtrusive measure of the derogation level of the target because participants are concerned with controlling the valence of traits they are attributing to the target, without controlling the time spent on forming the impression. This measure is based on the Continuum Model of impression formation developed by Fiske and Neuberg (1990), according to which forming an impression about someone relies on processes that can range from category-based information processing, usually quick and effortless and leading to the de-personalization of targets, to individuating information processing, in which motivation and attention are involved. These authors experimentally demonstrated that the degree of (de)individuation or (de)personalization, assessed by the amount of time participants take to read a description about the target, are moderated by motivational factors (Neuberg & Fiske, 1987). Based on this theoretical paradigm of Fiske and Neuberg (1990) and Brewer (2001), Vala et al. (2006) showed that these motivational factors may be associated with the target's social categorization. The authors proposed that the time

spent on forming an impression indicates the degree of attention that the target deserves and, consequently, indicates the degree of personalization of the target. The more time spent on forming an impression, the more that target is personalized; the less time spent, the more the target is depersonalized and, consequently, the higher the implicit derogation. A set of four studies developed by those authors showed that, in a racial context, participants take more time to attribute traits, independently of their valence, to white targets than to outgroup black targets, and that this result correlates with traditional measures of implicit prejudice (Study 1) and with discrimination measures (Study 4) (Vala et al., 2006).

As mentioned before, the second goal of this study is to understand the processes that underlie the negative evaluations of outgroup victims. Results from our first study and the study by Correia et al. (2007) are consistent in showing that we are only threatened by ingroup victims. Consequently, in the context of BJW theory, ingroup victims should be more derogated than outgroup victims. Contrary to this hypothesis in the previous study, however, the outgroup victim was more derogated than the ingroup victim. We hypothesized that this reaction to the outgroup victim was not a consequence of threat to the BJW, but a consequence of prejudice. Introducing a non-victimizing situation will allow us to test the hypothesis that outgroup victims and non-victims are equally derogated. However, regarding the outgroup in the same studies, secondary victimization measures did not follow the pattern predicted by the BJW theory, i.e., the more a victim threatens the BJW the higher will secondary victimization fall upon that victim. In fact, in the previous study, the outgroup victim seems to be more negatively evaluated. In order to disentangle the processes underlying reactions to victims belonging to different social groups, this study will analyze the threat to the BJW and the implicit evaluation of targets belonging to the ingroup and outgroup who are either in a victimizing situation or not.

In order to address these issues, in this new research, we introduced a neutral non-victimization condition, which portrayed a small interview with a Portuguese (ingroup) versus Gypsy (outgroup) pre-adolescent on extracurricular activities. This condition allowed us to contrast reactions to targets belonging to the ingroup and outgroup in two kinds of situations: the same victimizing situation presented in the previous study, and the non-victimizing or neutral situation. With this modified paradigm, we aimed to test the following hypotheses. Concerning threat to the BJW, according to our previous studies and BJW theory itself, we expected higher levels of interference in the ingroup victim condition than the ingroup non-victim condition and no significant differences in the interference level between the outgroup victim and outgroup non-victim conditions (Hypothesis 1). Concerning the derogation of targets, our hypotheses were drawn from BJW theory and from intergroup relations effects. Having these two lines of research in mind, we expected the traditional ingroup favoritism effect to occur (see Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002 for a review). More specifically, we expected greater derogation of the outgroup than of the ingroup (Hypothesis 2a); and greater derogation of the outgroup non-victim when compared to the ingroup non-victim (Hypothesis 2b). Moreover, having introduced an implicit measure of derogation in the present study, we expected to obtain the predicted effect of the threat to the participant's BJW on

the evaluation of the ingroup victim child. More precisely, we expected higher derogation levels for the ingroup victim than the ingroup non-victim, expressing the threat to the BJW (Hypothesis 2c). We also expected that the difference in derogation between victim and non-victim would not occur at the outgroup level, showing anti-Gypsy prejudice (Hypothesis 2d).

Method

Participants

A total of 60 undergraduate university students participated in this study (24 women and 36 men) and were randomly assigned to a design with four experimental conditions.

Procedure and Material

As in Study 1, participants were individually invited to collaborate in two supposedly unrelated studies on Social Psychology. Since the current procedure and material is broadly similar to the one used in Study 1, we will focus on the differences between the two studies and on the new non-obtrusive or implicit derogation task. As in the previous study, participants were shown a short documentary, according to the experimental condition. The video used in the victim condition was very similar to the one used in Study 1, but was slightly shorter, in order to increase the drama of the situation. As in Study 1, the video was the same in the ingroup and outgroup conditions. The neutral video used in the non-victim conditions was especially developed for this research and was presented to participants in the ingroup non-victim and outgroup non-victim conditions. After the film, participants performed the modified emotional Stroop task. Following the Stroop task, also on the computer, participants were invited to evaluate the target—the implicit derogation measure. At the end, the participants were thanked and debriefed.

Description of the Non-victim Video The video presented in the non-victim conditions showed a child in a playground and comments on the importance of extra-curricular activities for the development of adolescents. Our main concern in the development of this material was to portray a neutral situation in relation to justice issues, but one that could be comparable in terms of topic relevance to the documentary used in the victim conditions. A last issue on the development of the neutral video concerned the target. As in the victimization video, the boy was presented both as an ingroup (Portuguese) target and as an outgroup (Gypsy) target.

Description of the Impression Formation Task (Implicit Derogation Measure) Participants were invited to form an accurate impression of the child as quickly as possible, using 10 positive traits. The adjectives/traits presented in this task were chosen according to their adequacy in describing children and their valence. Examples of the adjectives used in the task are "smart" and "funny." For each trait

that appeared on the computer screen, they had to decide, as fast as they could, whether it characterized the target or not. Two 10 × 12 cm color photographs of the child to be evaluated (victim versus non-victim) were used. The photograph from the victim was taken from the videotape. The digital photograph of the non-victim, which portrayed the same boy who was presented in the non-victimizing video, was modified in order to be similar in quality to the previous one. For presentation of stimuli and data collection, the E-Prime version 1.1 software package (Schneider, Eschman, & Zuccolotto, 2002) was used.[1]

This task involved only one experimental block, with 10 trials presented in a random order for each participant. Additionally, two practice trials were initially presented, involving neutral traits. In each trial, participants were asked to focus on a fixation point (+), which was shown for 1,000 ms in the center of the computer screen. The fixation point was immediately substituted by a subliminal prime, a word that designated the group to which the target belonged. According to the experimental condition, the word "Portuguese" (ingroup condition) versus "Gypsy" (outgroup condition) was presented for 15 ms. This subliminally presented word was substituted by the photograph of the target to be evaluated (victim versus non-victim) accompanied by one of the 10 traits used. The trait remained on the computer screen until the participant responded. Traits were presented below the photograph and were individually randomized for each participant. The participant's task was to indicate, by pressing the appropriate key on the E-Prime response box—"N" (no) or "S" (yes)—whether each of the traits characterized the target or not. A blank screen was presented for 1,000 ms before the next trial. Both answers and response latencies were registered for each of the trials.

Pre-test of the Material A pre-test conducted with a sample of 19 graduate students showed that the two films (the neutral film and the victimization film) were similar regarding image quality, topic relevance, and perceived length. The same pre-test also showed that participants' levels of anxiety were higher after the presentation of the victimization video, than before the presentation. This difference did not occur for the non-victimization video. Anxiety levels were tested through the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, 1983), which is composed of 20 items. Only the items concerning state anxiety were used; half of the items were answered before the presentation of the victimization versus neutral video; the other half was presented to the participants after they saw the documentary. A second pre-test was conducted in order to guarantee that the two targets used in the procedure were comparable. A total of 22 university students participated in a between-subjects design. Results showed that the victim presented in the victimization video and the child presented in the neutral video were perceived as equally attractive, $F(1, 21) = 1.75$, *ns* and nice $F(1, 21) = .10$, *ns*. Moreover, the two photographs

[1] All stimuli were presented in 18 point Arial font. Participants completed the two tasks on a personal computer (Pentium IV, 2.8 Ghz) equipped with an E-Prime response box and with a 17″ color monitor. The monitor set to a resolution of 1024 × 768 pixels and with a screen-refresh rate of 60 Hz and the cycle duration of 15 ms. Participants were seated at a distance of approximately 50 cm from the computer and they were instructed to maximize the speed and the accuracy of their responses.

were perceived as having similar graphic quality, $F(1, 21) = .06$, *ns*; and the perceived age of the two targets did not differ $F(1, 21) = 1.53$, *ns*. A third pre-test was conducted in order to choose the traits that would integrate the impression formation task. This pre-test, in which 55 undergraduate students collaborated, was carried out in two separate phases. In the first one, the participants had to write five positive and five negative adjectives they thought would be suitable or appropriate to describe children. In the second phase, participants had to judge the valence of the most frequently named adjectives on a 5-point scale raging from 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive). The 10 positive traits that scored highest both in positivity and adequacy for describing a child target were selected.

Design, Independent, and Dependent Variables

The experimental design was a 2 (target's group: ingroup, outgroup) × 2 (target's situation: victim, non-victim) between-subjects factorial. The target was presented as a member of a Portuguese family (ingroup conditions), or as a member of a Gypsy family (outgroup conditions). Threat to the BJW was measured as in Study 1 through the interference measure. Concerning implicit target derogation, this was analyzed through the depersonalization measure already presented. This measure is reversed so that the higher the latencies, the greater the personalization, or the lower the latencies the greater the derogation.

Results and Discussion

The data from the modified Stroop task were subject to some transformations. A total of 16 incorrect answers and outliers (latencies 2 standard deviations above or below the mean) were eliminated from the 600 latencies obtained. The remaining latencies were log transformed. However, as in the previous study, results will be presented in its non-log form.

A 2 (target's group: ingroup, outgroup) × 2 (target's situation: victim, non-victim) between-subjects factor ANOVA was performed on the interference measure. This analysis yielded a significant main effect of the target's group, $F(1, 56) = 27.09$, $p < .001$, and of the target's situation $F(1, 56) = 7.73$, $p < .01$, and also a significant interaction effect between these two variables, $F(1, 59) = 8.75$, $p < .01$. Planned comparisons between pairs of experimental conditions according to our hypotheses were performed on the interference measure. According to our hypothesis, these tests show a significant difference between the ingroup victim, $M = 181.33$, and ingroup non-victim, $M = 43.17$, $F(1, 56) = 10.85$, $p < .01$ (Hypothesis 1), showing more interference in the ingroup victim condition. Also as predicted, this difference did not occur between outgroup victim, $M = -18.77$, and outgroup non-victim, $M = -15.99$, $F(1, 56) = .06$, *ns* (Hypothesis 1b). These tests also show higher interference in the ingroup victim condition than in the outgroup victim condition, $F(1, 56) = 33.49$, $p < .001$. In addition, *t*-tests against zero performed on the interference score for each experimental condition confirm that only the ingroup victim threatens the participant's BJW in absolute terms, $t(14) = 4.92$, $p < .001$. These tests show that the interference scores for ingroup

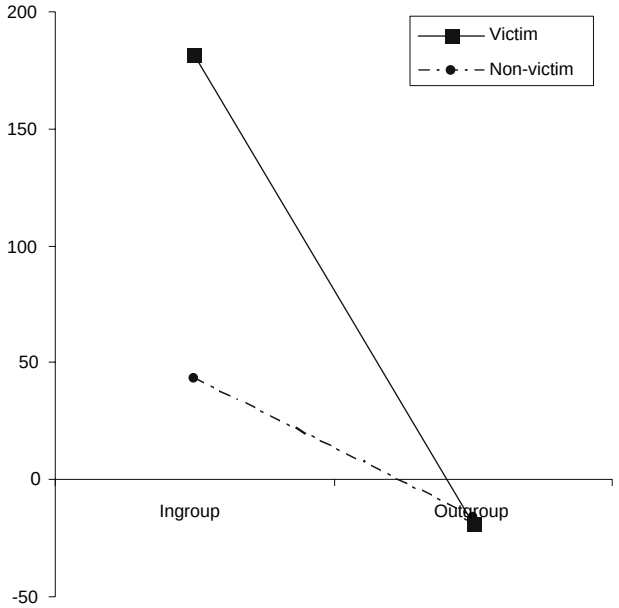

Fig. 2 Interference levels as a function of the target's group and situation: Study 2

non-victim, $t(14) = 1.37$, *ns*, outgroup victim $t(14) = -1.69$, *ns*, and outgroup non-victim $t(14) = -1.28$, *ns* did not differ from zero. Finally, a planned comparison which contrasts the interference score for the ingroup victim against all the other conditions shows that the threat posed by the confrontation with an ingroup victim is higher when compared to the other conditions $F(1, 56) = 40.20$, $p < .001$ (Fig. 2).

Concerning the implicit derogation of targets, as mentioned earlier, we expected: (a) the traditional ingroup favoritism effect, but also that (b) the ingroup victim would be more derogated than the ingroup non-victim, expressing the threat to the BJW; and (c) we also expected that the difference between victim and non-victim would not occur at the outgroup level, showing anti-Gypsy prejudice. A 2 (target's group: ingroup, outgroup) × 2 (target's situation: victim, non-victim) between-subjects ANOVA was performed on the implicit derogation measure. This analysis yielded a significant main effect of the target's group, $F(1, 56) = 27.42$, $p < .001$; and of the target's situation $F(1, 56) = 7.73$, *ns*; and also a marginally significant interaction effect between these two variables, $F(1, 59) = 3.30$, $p = .08$. Although the interaction effect is not significant, contrast tests support all four hypotheses (Fig. 3).

In fact, the outgroup is significantly more derogated than the ingroup, $F(1, 56) = 5.58$, $p < .05$), which suggests the operation of the classical ingroup favoritism effect (Hypothesis 2a). Again, we should keep in mind that the amount of time to form an impression of the target is a reversed measure of derogation. This favoritism also manifests itself when we compare the evaluation of the ingroup, $M = 1713.48$, and outgroup non-victims, $M = 1136.96$, $F(1, 56) = 6.28$, $p < .05$ (Hypothesis 2b). Moreover, as expected, the ingroup victim, $M = 1443.99$, is more derogated than the ingroup non-victim, $M = 1713.48$, $F(1, 36) = 6.13$, $p < .05$

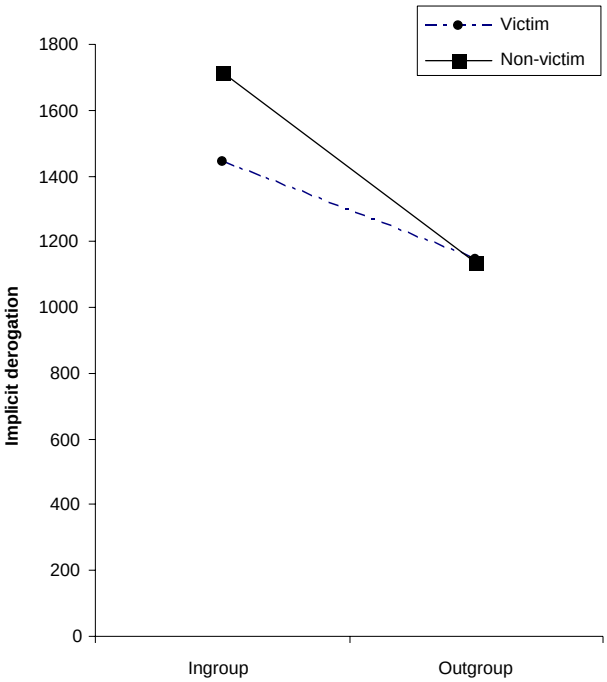

Fig. 3 Implicit derogation as a function of the target's group and situation: Study 2. *Note:* Interference levels as difference in non-log means and implicit derogation presented inversely as personalization (amount of time to form an impression of the target)

(Hypothesis 2c). The Portuguese child who is more derogated and deserves less attention is the child that suffers, which suggests that the ingroup victim is being secondarily victimized at an automatic level. Finally, planned comparisons also show that the outgroup victim, $M = 1148.37$, and non-victim, $M = 1136.96$, are equally derogated. Participants take the same amount of time to evaluate or form an impression of the outgroup victim and non-victim, $F(1, 36) = .65$, *ns*, meaning that the reaction against the Gypsy children reflects prejudice and not justice concerns. Or, in other words, justice concerns do not apply in the worlds of discriminated others (Hypothesis 2d).

In order to analyze the relationship between threat to BJW and derogation of the ingroup child, we calculated the correlation between the interference measure and the depersonalization measure on the ingroup victim condition. Contrary to our predictions, this correlation, although in the expected direction, was not statistically significant.

General Conclusions

The aim of this research was to understand if justice concerns are equally activated by the undeserved suffering of ingroup and outgroup victims, i.e., if justice principles equally apply to "our world" and to "the world of the other".

Traditionally, the BJW literature is more concerned with "when" and "why" certain justice principles apply. We proposed to study the "who" of inclusion in our justice concerns, by clarifying the boundaries of the "scope of justice" (Hafer & Olson, 2003; Opotow, 1990). More specifically, this research aimed to analyze the impact of the social categorization on the threat to the BJW and take it a step further by also examining the consequences of that threat on secondary victimization (Study 1), while understanding the processes that underlie a negative evaluation of the victims (Study 2).

In line with the previous research carried out by Correia et al. (2007), results from the first study show that the ingroup (Portuguese) child victim is more threatening for participant's BJW than an outgroup (Gypsy) victim. Together with those of Correia et al. (2007), these new results constitute a direct empirical test of the hypothesis formulated by Lerner and Miller (1978), according to which justice concerns are not universally and unconditionally activated by the victim's suffering. The suffering of victims falling outside the boundaries of our scope of justice—as in the case of relevant outgroups (Gypsies)—does not seem to activate participant's justice concerns. As events come closer to the participant's own world (as in the case of non-categorized and ingroup victims), the participant's BJW is at risk.

However, the expected greater secondary victimization directed at the most threatening victim did not occur in the first study. In fact, the most threatening victim (the ingroup victim) was not more negatively evaluated in the two strategies of secondary victimization that were under analysis (derogation and blaming). In fact, the reactions to the outgroup victim were severer. The Gypsy child who suffers was more derogated than the ingroup and non-categorized victims. This dissociation between the threat to the BJW and the secondary victimization determined the use of an unobtrusive measure of secondary victimization in Study 2.

Concerning threat to the BJW, results of Study 2 show again that the ingroup victim is more threatening to the participant's BJW than the outgroup victim. Results also show that the ingroup victim is more threatening than the ingroup non-victim, a difference that did not occur in the outgroup condition. The innocent outgroup child that suffers does not activate more mental structures related to justice concerns than the outgroup child in a non-victimizing situation.

In order to understand the mechanisms underlying the evaluation of victims and non-victims from ingroup and outgroup, a non-victimizing condition was introduced to the paradigm in this second study. The overall pattern of results of this study clearly supported our hypotheses, namely that evaluations of victims from ingroups and outgroups reflects the combined effect of the threat to the BJW and prejudice.

In fact, the outgroup target, independently of being victimized or not, is always more derogated than the ingroup target, suggesting the operation of the classical ingroup favoritism effect (Hewstone et al., 2002). This favoritism is also present in the differential evaluation of the ingroup and outgroup non-victim, with the ingroup non-victim being more personalized in our impression formation task.

Moreover, as predicted by just world theory (Lerner, 1980), the ingroup victim was more derogated than the ingroup non-victim. Results, then, suggest that the process leading to the negative evaluation of the ingroup victim is not the same as the one underlying the negative evaluation of the outgroup victim. In the case of the

ingroup victim, he was more derogated than the ingroup non-victim because he threatened the motivation to see the world as just. In the case of the outgroup victim, he was as derogated as the outgroup non-victim as a result of prejudice.

However, the expected correlation between the interference measure and the depersonalization measure in the case of the ingroup victim was not obtained. This lack of a significant correlation was somewhat disappointing, but reflects the problem also felt in other fields when trying to correlate data collected with different implicit or unobtrusive techniques (Bosson, Swan, & Pennebaker, 2000; Fazio & Olson, 2003). In fact, our result may be the consequence of having two measures that are rooted in different psychological processes (Gawronski, Deutsch, & Seidel, 2005). Gawronski et al. (2005) suggest that the Stroop task, used in our research to measure threat to the BJW, is based on implicit response interference processes. In contrast, the impression formation task is an unobtrusive derogation measure based on an evaluative decision task. More compatible measures of derogation and threat to the BJW are needed in future research.

Finally, our results showing that the suffering of an outgroup child is not threatening to our BJW are in accordance with the literature that stands for the de-humanization of relevant outgroups. This de-humanization or infra-humanization has been suggested by studies that show less attribution of secondary emotions to outgroup targets (Leyens et al., 2000), and less attribution of cultural traits and more attribution of natural traits to the outgroup (Moscovici & Pérez, 1999). In this same vein, our results show that in certain circumstances people dehumanize victims of relevant outgroups, not in an overt way but by a process of insensibility, i.e., by becoming indifferent to their suffering and needs. This insensibility facilitates the derogation or even the aggressive behavior toward outgroups, as has already been highlighted by other theories (e.g., Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, & Regalia, 2001; Bar-Tal, 1990; Opotow, 1990; Staub, 1990).

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