

# Chapter 4

## “Back to the Future:” Ideological Dimensions of Intergroup Relations

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**Abstract** Many phenomena studied by social psychology are based on ideologies. Ideologies are ideas or systems of ideas inspired by values and objectified in social norms about the way societies should be. This chapter guides our attention to the importance of the ideological dimension of intergroup relations. This dimensions had been emphasized already by Tajfel in his latest writings, but has then been largely neglected in intergroup research. This chapter covers research on explicit ideologies such as colorblindness and multiculturalism as well as equalitarianism and meritocracy, but also on rather ideology constituting fundamental beliefs such as belief in a just world, limited scope of justice, and denial of full humanity to outgroup members. The research the authors report demonstrates how ideologies and shared fundamental beliefs have a pervasive influence on people’s construction of reality and can bias their judgment and their moral feelings, often undetected by their consciousness. Importantly, these processes are fundamental for the legitimization of asymmetric status and power relations between members of different social groups.

**Keywords** Ideologies • Intergroup relations • Multiculturalism • Meritocracy • Belief in a just world • Infra-humanization

### Introduction

Many phenomena studied by social psychology are based on ideologies. Ideologies are ideas or systems of ideas inspired by values and objectified in social norms about the way societies should be. These ideologies can influence the way people perceive the world, and impact people’s behaviors within social interactions

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(e.g., Katz and Hass 1988; Lerner 1980; Sidanius and Pratto 1999; Guimond et al. 2014). Adopting an inclusive perspective on the concept of ideology (for a review see Billig 1984), this chapter will be devoted to analyzing the role of some core ideological principles in the dynamic of intergroup relations. That is, we focus on the impact of ideals about social life and specifically about perceived optimal paths toward harmonious intergroup relations on intergroup attitudes and behaviors.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout its history, the study of intergroup relations has been structured by a diversified range of theoretical perspectives, from personality and psychopathological factors (Adorno et al. 1950) to socio-structural variables (Sherif et al. 1961), cognitive structures (Allport 1954; Hamilton and Guifford 1976), and cognitive and motivational mechanisms articulated by the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Despite the fact that ideologies and their underlying psychological processes were initially considered as important factors associated with the triggering, exacerbation, and mitigation of intergroup conflicts, they did not inspire main stream research. For instance, conservatism and authoritarian ideologies are present in the seminal theoretical approach of Adorno et al. (1950) to discrimination against minority groups, and “social myths” concerning social justice were identified by Tajfel (1981) as core organizers of intergroup relations. Despite these contributions, however, the importance of ideologies has either been relatively forgotten or the object of radical criticism (Lichtman 1993). Radical criticism considers ideologies as literary scenarios (Freedman et al. 2013). Ideologies might be considered scenarios but, far from being literary options, they determine people’s thoughts and behaviors.

This chapter follows the forgotten research avenue opened by Tajfel (1981), when he proposed the importance of ideologies or “social myths” to understand intergroup relations. First, we discuss some research results where ideologies are the triggering processes. We will limit ourselves to research we have personally conducted. This constraint leads us to concentrate on *color blindness versus color consciousness* ideologies (e.g. Maquil et al. 2009), belief in a just world (Lerner 1980; Correia et al. 2007), and beliefs underlying infra-humanization (Leyens et al. 2007).<sup>2</sup> Second, we present research that highlights the role of egalitarian and meritocratic ideologies that frame justice norms and mitigate or exacerbate

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<sup>1</sup>There are, in fact, different focuses on the relationship between ideologies and psychological phenomena. For instance, Jost et al. (2003) studied some relevant associations between motivated social cognition and conservative ideologies. Our point of view takes another approach: the study of the impact of some core ideological principles about social life on intergroup relations.

<sup>2</sup>If color blindness and color consciousness are controversial ideological principles applied to “ethnic” relations, the belief in a just world as well as infra-humanization (based on the common sense prominence of secondary emotions in relation to primary ones concerning the definition of humanness) are largely diffused ideological principles that constitute important elements of crucial ideological systems. Indeed, the belief in a just world is part of conservative ideology and is considered a prototype of the ideological level of analysis in social psychology by Doise (1982). Infra-humanization per se is not an ideology but a psychological process associated with the belief that “mine is better than yours,” that is, with the ideological principle that supports *group*-based hierarchies (see Sidanius and Pratto 1999).

intergroup conflicts. Finally, we conclude by insisting on the need for an enlargement of the study of the role of ideologies in the construction of psychosocial dimensions of social reality and specifically on the construction of social categories and the dynamics of intergroup relations.

This chapter is dedicated to Maria Benedicta Monteiro and honors her contribution to the study of violence and intergroup relations. Considering social norms as the objectivation of values and ideological principles, this paper has been inspired by Maria’s contribution to the study of the impact of social norms on the way intergroup attitudes form and develop (e.g. Monteiro et al. 2009; França and Monteiro 2013).

## **Disentangling Racially Prejudiced and Non-racially Prejudiced Aspects of Color Blindness and Color Consciousness**

In 1954, the Supreme Court of the U.S.A. decided that schools should be desegregated (see *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954). This decision was sustained by research published some years before, in 1950, by Kenneth Clark (see Benjamin and Crousse 2002). In his research, Clark concluded that institutional discrimination, and specifically racial segregation in public schools, was harmful to the psychological development of black children. This point of view was later developed by the hypothesis that social categories automatically led to prejudice and that social categories necessarily imply ethnocentric conflicts between groups. The same categories were supposed to nourish the negative stereotypes that support prejudice. Specifically, research accentuated the role of decategorization in the elimination of frontiers (Wilder 1981), and as a path to personalized information (Brewer and Miller 1984). Such a perspective can feed the ideology called *color blindness*, which posits that the best way to curb prejudice is by treating individuals equally and without regard to their color or to their so-called ethnicity. Supporters of decategorization were helped by the fact that this process favored conditions of intergroup contacts (Allport 1954). This chapter is not the place to develop ideas on contact conditions leading to harmonious relations between groups but it is proven that, given the presence of those conditions, contact is the best predictor of prejudice reduction (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). But this line of reasoning is not a path without obstacles. For instance, some authors argue that the practice of forced desegregation does not correspond to appropriate contact conditions (Gerard 1983). The relation between the accentuation of categorization and negative intergroup attitudes was questioned (e.g. Park and Judd 2005), and more complex models of social categorization and intergroup harmony and conflict have been developed both in the USA (Gaertner and Dovidio 2000) and in Europe (Hewstone and Brown 1986).

Adversaries of color blindness in Europe and elsewhere—notably in Canada—support *color consciousness* (or multiculturalism). Such ideology emphasizes that differences between groups should be recognized, respected, and positively evaluated (Berry et al. 2006; Bourhis et al. 1997). In many ways, color consciousness is incongruent with color blindness. Debates over the advantages and disadvantages of both ideologies are not lacking. For instance, in France, color consciousness is condemned because it is often presumed that it will lead at best to communitarianism or a multiplicity of neighboring ghettos, and, at worst, to endemic racism (see Guimond 2010). In fact, the accentuation of cultural differences between majorities and minorities is empirically associated with subtle racial prejudice (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995) or with cultural racism (Vala and Pereira 2012). On the other hand, color blindness is criticized primarily because equality is understood as similarity and the models for this similarity are necessarily members of the dominant majority. Consequently, such similarity means the assimilation of minorities by dominant cultural models (Jones 1998) and, from this perspective, color blindness can promote a society where the majority does not recognize the negative experiences of minorities and minimizes or makes invisible their culture and history. It is in this context that, during the past decade, research has accumulated evidence in favor of color consciousness as an ideology that can diminish racial prejudice (e.g., Apfelbaum et al. 2008; Demoulin et al. 2002; Norton et al. 2006; Richeson and Nussbaum 2004; Wolsko et al. 2000, 2006; Verkuyten 2006).

Leyens and collaborators (Maquil et al. 2009) took a nuanced approach to the two ideologies (Fig. 4.1) and suggested that each ideology comprises a positive and negative aspect (see also Park and Judd 2005). Their reasoning was based on two key factors: the importance (high vs. low) attributed to the diversity that characterizes our social world or the categorical ethnic heterogeneity of a given society, and the salience of an ethnocentric worldview (high vs. low). As illustrated in Fig. 4.1, when associated with low ethnocentrism, that is, recognizing group differences and at same time respecting and positively evaluating these differences, color consciousness ideology could be associated with the strategy of acculturation called integration or multiculturalism in the cultural relations' models proposed by Berry (2001) and by Bourhis et al. (1997). However, if color consciousness is associated with high

		Importance of “ethnic” origins	
		High <i>color consciousness</i>	Low <i>Color blindness</i>
Ethnocentrism	Low	Integration	Individualism
	High	Segregation	Assimilation

**Fig. 4.1** Dimensions of color consciousness and color blindness (majorities' perspective). Based on Maquil et al. (2009)

ethnocentrism, or devaluation of minorities' culture, it can generate the segregation of minorities and express racial prejudice (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995) or promote the essentialization of group differences (Verkuyten 2006).

On the other hand, color blindness ideology associated with low ethnocentrism corresponds to a strategy of acculturation that Berry and Bourhis called individualism, i.e., recognizing the salience of the uniqueness of each human being over and above social categories. In contrast, the combination of color blindness and high ethnocentrism sustains a strategy that produces assimilation, a model of acculturation based on the cultural inferiorization of minorities. In fact, such a strategy requires that minorities conform to the way of life that majorities consider superior, i.e., their own culture. This picture illustrates how effectively color blindness and color consciousness have both a dark and a bright side as ideological principles in relation to cultural relations between asymmetrical groups (Levin et al. 2012).

In the context of this theoretical framework, Maquil et al. (2009) tested whether the degree to which people unconsciously adhere to the different strategies of acculturation (assimilation, individualism, integration-multiculturalism, and segregation) correlates with the performance in an intellectual task carried out in different contexts (with an assimilated or with an integrated partner). Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: in one condition, participants had to solve a problem together with a clearly Moroccan female student, dressed in European style, i.e., completely assimilated; in another condition, participants had to interact with the same student dressed in the identical European clothing but wearing a Muslim veil (integrated). The more the Belgian female participants endorsed color conscious ideology (pro-integration or pro-segregation), the better their performance was. Other researchers have already produced such a result in White–Black interactions (Dovidio 2001), demonstrating that clear racists or non-racists were better in a task with a black person than aversive racists. Moreover, the more students favored assimilation, the better they performed when the Moroccan girl was completely assimilated. This result is not surprising since it corresponds to what assimilation is and wants. More surprising, at first sight, was the result of pro-individualism (pro color blindness and non-ethnocentric) students: they succeeded least when the student wore the Muslim veil. In other words, when Belgian students were in favor of individualism, they did not accept that others displayed belongingness to a group. These findings tend to show that the individualistic strategy, albeit not ethnocentric, is the one that generates most “misunderstandings” in social interaction, specifically more than integration/multiculturalism (the other non-ethnocentric strategy). In a more general context, other research by Maquil et al. (2009) also showed that both among the majorities and minorities integration and individualism correlated negatively and significantly with different measures of prejudice, whereas assimilation and separation correlated positively with prejudice.

Because ideologies are systems of well-entrenched ideas inspired by values, they are often resistant to empirical data. For instance, despite research results, multiculturalism is increasingly criticized in Great Britain, with the argument being that ghettos are replacing integration or that integration is generating segregation. Interestingly, those most opposed to the non-racist aspect of color consciousness

(integration or multiculturalism) are the non-ethnocentric procolor blind persons (individualists). The individualists support the idea that their stance is the only democratic one (Gauchet 2002). They resist the reality that people, willingly or not, are parts of groups and could not survive without group protection. Encounters between two individuals are certainly better than encounters between a Black and a White person. Individualism is, however, impossible on a large scale, whereas integration may attain the aims looked for by individualists: successful integration leads to encounters between individuals who are also members of groups.

Concerning the impact of assimilationist ideology on public policies, French policy toward immigration is clearly shaped by this ideology (Guimond et al. 2014, 2015). France is not alone in this domain. In Flanders, Belgium, language is of paramount importance. People speak different Flemish dialects but the Flemish government wants to make Dutch an official language, even for foreigners who do not plan to stay in Flanders. The paradox in the vicinity between France and Flanders is that if the Belgian government had followed French assimilation during the nineteenth century, Flanders would speak French like the rest of Belgium. These examples show a preference for official assimilationist positions in France<sup>3</sup> and in Flemish Belgium.

Recently in the United Kingdom and Germany, the conservative and center-right have been calling for an end of multiculturalist policies. However, research continues to show that multicultural ideology can overcome the potentially negative aspects of salient categorization, that is, salience of diversity in a given social context. Indeed, following the research by Wolsko et al. (2000, 2006) into the positive impact of multiculturalism salience on judgments about groups, Costa-Lopes et al. (2014) manipulated the salience of ethnic categories in Portugal, as well as the salience of multiculturalism. Results showed that categorization salience led to more ingroup bias unless a multicultural ideology was also made salient. Multiculturalism buffered the negative impact of categorization salience.

Color blindness and color consciousness are the most discussed dimensions of ideological thinking in diverse societies not only by common people but, as illustrated above, by public decision policy makers. The importance of a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of those ideologies is based on the fact that both reflect preoccupations with social harmony and try to solve social problems. The model presented in Fig. 4.1 intends to enlarge the context of the traditional approach to the ideologies about cultural diversity and goes beyond the model of Berry (2001) about acculturation because it integrates acculturation strategies within the context of ideological options.

Like color blindness and color consciousness ideologies, beliefs about social justice are other crucial factors studied in the search for a more harmonious society.

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<sup>3</sup>Guimond et al. (2015) surveyed a representative sample of French people. The results do not correspond to the official policy. Whereas the French think that their compatriots are in favor of assimilation, they are in fact pro-integration. Only the extreme right-wing favors assimilation.

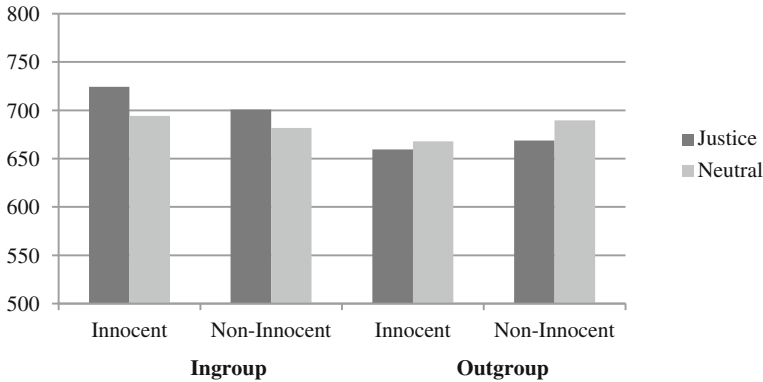
We will focus now on the Just World Theory proposed by Lerner (1980), as it can open stimulating contributions to the understanding of justice ideologies as organizers of intergroup relations.

### ***Belief in a just World, Secondary Victimization, and Intergroup Relations***

According to the just world hypothesis (Lerner 1980), individuals consider, at least implicitly, that the world is just because people get what they deserve and deserve what they get, a key aspect of conservative ideological thinking. In this sense, injustice, particularly the suffering of innocent victims, constitutes a threat to the belief in a just world, leading individuals to engage in different strategies to re-establish the truth of this fundamental belief. A logical and rational strategy to restore justice is to help the victims through emotional or instrumental support, acting for example on the conditions that led to suffering and injustice. However, when people believe that it is impossible or non-normative to help, they engage in strategies of victims' secondary victimization. Secondary victimization can assume different forms, such as devaluing the victims' suffering or implicitly considering that they deserve to suffer. This secondary victimization is mainly applied when victims are perceived as innocent (Correia and Vala 2003).

An overview of Lerner's theory about this belief in the just world shows that it was primarily conceived in order to understand judgments of fairness at the individual or interpersonal level (Lerner and Clayton 2011; Hafer and Bègue 2005; Dalbert 2009). Building on this research, Correia et al. (2007) extended the just world belief to the intergroup level of analysis. They formulated and experimentally analyzed the hypothesis that injustices that occur to innocent victims only threaten our belief in a just world if the victims belong to “our world” (our ingroups) but not when victims are members of outgroups, namely disliked minorities. In other words, they tested the hypothesis that the suffering of an outgroup victim is not evaluated within the framework of justice principles.

In one of the studies carried out to test this hypothesis (Correia et al. 2007), participants were confronted with a five-minute film showing a child experiencing great suffering. The innocence of the victim was manipulated, as well as the victim's group (a child belonging to a typical Portuguese family vs. a child belonging to a Gypsy family). After the film, participants were invited to collaborate in a color perception task. This perceptual task was actually an emotional Stroop task developed by Hafer (2000), through which the threat to the belief in a just world was measured. In the perceptual color task, participants were invited to identify the color of a set of asterisks that appeared on a computer screen. The display of the asterisks was preceded by the subliminal projection of a word related or not with justice on the screen. It was expected that words related to justice would interfere more in the task (higher latencies) in the condition where the victim was presented



**Fig. 4.2** Means of color identification latencies for justice-related words and neutral-related words (Based on study 2, in Correia et al. 2007)

as an innocent ingroup victim. The results following the hypothesis allowed for the interpretation that only the innocent victim of the ingroup threatened the observers' belief in a just world (Fig. 4.2). These results were replicated in other experiments where it was also possible to verify when, in an intergroup context, an innocent victim is more likely to be the target of secondary victimization (Aguiar et al. 2008).

Aguiar et al. (2008) designed their studies based on the scenario used by Correia et al. (2007). One of these studies analyzed the degree of victim discrimination, a form of secondary victimization. As in previous studies, participants were confronted with a film about a child who was presented as an ingroup member (a child belonging to a typical Portuguese family) versus an outgroup member (a gypsy child, as in previous studies). However, in this new research, the authors not only manipulated the group the child belonged to but also contrasted his status (victim vs. non victim). The derogation of the target child was evaluated using an implicit measure, called "intergroup time bias" (ITB) (Vala et al. 2012). The intergroup time bias refers to the time people invest making a judgment about a target (e.g. an ingroup member) compared with the time spent on the same judgment relative to another target (e.g. an outgroup member). To measure ITB, participants were invited to form an accurate impression of targets indicating whether or not traits that appear on a computer screen apply to those targets or not. The time spent on trait attribution (and not their valence) to the targets indicates the interest and attention deserved by targets: the longer the time invested by participants to form an impression, the greater the value of the target under evaluation. In the experiment of Aguiar et al. (2008), participants formed an impression about four targets (ingroup vs. outgroup child; victim vs. non-victim).

As expected, the victim of the ingroup was more derogated (less time invested to form an impression of ingroup victim) than the non-victim of the ingroup. According to our interpretation, this occurred because the ingroup victim threatened



participants’ belief in a just world. Moreover, participants invested the same time judging the victim and non-victim of the outgroup because outgroup members did not threaten their belief in a just world. In sum, together, these studies show that the suffering of ingroup members—but not of disliked outgroup members—is affected by justice concerns. Moreover, this last research also shows that, paradoxically, an ingroup victim is more derogated or the object of more secondary victimization than an outgroup victim.

It was in this research context that Correia et al. (2007) proposed revisiting the concept of scope of justice (Deutsch 1985; Opatow 1990; Staub 1990). This concept proposes that people create ideological frontiers for the application of justice principles and, consequently, that some people are excluded from the “just world.” Indeed Lima-Nunes et al. (2013) found that the relationship between prejudice and discrimination against immigrants is mediated by a restricted scope of justice. This mediation is moderated by people’s belief in a just world. Specifically, the mediation only occurs for high believers. Moreover, the relevance of the phenomena described is stressed by the results of Alves and Correia (2013) demonstrating that the belief in a just world is socially normative. That is, this belief is perceived as a socially valued way of thinking and an acceptable principle of legitimation of social relations (Costa-Lopes et al. 2013).

### ***Graded Humanity Relies on Metaphorical Ideologies About Alterations of Humanness***

Results presented in the previous section suggest that not all human beings, including ingroup members, are included in the scope of justice. This is perhaps because not all human beings are perceived to be part of our moral community and are perceived as not totally human. Indeed, it is not infrequent that some groups label themselves as “people” or, like the Bantus, call themselves “humans” and call neighboring groups derogative names such as “louse’s eggs.” As will be seen later, dehumanization is often linked to human-made disasters such as genocides (Staub 1989). However, this extremity is not necessary and people may unconsciously dehumanize outgroups in everyday life.

The broadest sense of dehumanization is the restriction of humanness. Dehumanized groups are not as human as our group is. Two metaphors are normally used to describe the dehumanized groups (Haslam 2006). Either they are like animals (animalistic dehumanization) or they look like objects or machines (mechanistic dehumanization). These two types of dehumanization correspond to two distinct kinds of humanness. Humanity may be defined in terms of what is uniquely human compared to animals. It is the case of uniquely human or secondary emotions (e.g., love, admiration, contempt, envy) in opposition to non-uniquely human or primary emotions (e.g., happiness, surprise, fear, sadness). It can also be defined by the negative core characteristics that form human nature (e.g., narrow-mindedness,

stubbornness). While the first definition contrasts humans to animals (human uniqueness), the second one opposes humans to robots (human nature). Believing in the humanity of ingroups and perceiving outgroups as less valuable is part of the principle that “mine is better than yours,” and it stems from the ideas that sustain and legitimate *group*-based hierarchies (see Sidanius and Pratto 1999). In this section, we will focus on infra-humanization, that is, the belief that outgroup members are less human than we are, and that they are closer to animals than we are (Leyens et al. 2000, 2007). It is a perception of graded humanity that should not be confused with dehumanization, where the gradient of humanity is reduced to almost nothing (Leyens 2015).

Infra-humanization is particularly important in the understanding of intergroup relations because it does not need conflicting relations between groups. It requires identification of group members with their group, as well as the perception that one’s group is different from outgroups. Another important predictor of infra-humanization has to do with symbolic threat, that is, the threat that customs and values will change due to the action of outgroups. The symbolic threat means that ingroup ideology is at risk. Stated otherwise, because our common ideology is threatened, we react with another ideological principle, the ingroup superiority and related outgroup infra-humanization that restores our group’s perceived high status.

The first studies about this topic appeared at the end of last century, and today an increasing number of them, over 140 publications, show the functions of infra-humanization (Leyens 2009; Haslam and Loughnan 2014). For instance, by infra-humanizing outgroups, people do not feel culpability in harming them. Infra-humanization also alleviates responsibility, and justifies not helping needy persons. Moreover, it explains why discrimination may occur without feelings of guilt. Infra-humanization is also a specific form of derogation of outgroups that are not socially successful. To take an example, a study conducted in Brazil (Lima and Vala 2004) showed how economic success is ideologically linked with skin color. In this investigation, White Brazilian participants were presented with a story about people that succeeded or that failed in their endeavor. The description of people was illustrated with pictures of Black people versus those of White people. Pre-tests indicated that those people were clearly perceived as Black or White people. Independently of color, targets that did not succeed were infra-humanized. Surprisingly, people who succeeded were perceived as whiter than people who did not. By contrast, individuals who failed economically were perceived as darker than people that succeeded. For Black people, the judgment is clear: their color is associated with failure and, as a consequence, with reduced humanity. The situation is ambiguous for Whites. Their color will depend on their success and, if they fail, they will become infra-humanized “Mulattoes.” Thus, “Mulattoes” have the color of successful Blacks and of failing Whites.

Fiske et al. (2002) have built a stereotype content model of groups around two orthogonal dimensions: warmth and competence. Rich people, for instance, will be in the high competence/low warmth quadrant, while a housewife will be in the low competence/high warmth quadrant. Using neurological imaging, Harris and Fiske (2006) showed that the brain activity associated with the low/low quadrant, such as

the homeless and drug addicts was more similar to the brain activity pattern that is usually observed in situations with objects than in situation with people. That is, these results suggest that people in the low/low quadrant are no longer considered human, but disgusting objects. Similarly, Vaes and Paladino (2010) found that the more typical the characteristics of low/low groups are, the less human they are rated (see also Leyens et al. 2012).

Research on dehumanization is still in limbo and care should be taken, as illustrated in the following study. Morera et al. (2014) have shown that the distinction between animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization and the convergence between people low in competence and warmth and non-humanity are not that stable. Participants had to associate human, animal, and machine words with three groups of people: professionals (e.g. radiologists, bankers), evil persons (e.g. a mercenary and a terrorist), and the lowest of the low people, like a homeless person and a drug addict. Professionals were linked to human words; evil persons were associated to animals *and* machines; finally the lowest of the low received animal *and* human words. Evil persons thus mixed the two kinds of dehumanization. Drug addicts and the homeless may have been seen as humans given the Spanish context where many people lost their jobs and homes because of the financial crisis. These findings do not put earlier results at risk but suggest that social context can influence the meaning of social categories and, consequently, the infra-humanization process.

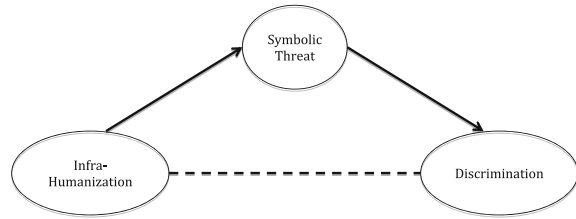
### ***Equalitarianism, Meritocracy, and Intergroup Relations***

We will now discuss our research into the role of equalitarian and meritocratic ideologies that shape justice norms on the expression and consequences of prejudice. We will start by studies on the role of equalitarianism and meritocracy in the effects of infra-humanization and then we will discuss our research on the impact of those ideological principles on racial prejudice.

#### **Egalitarianism, Meritocracy, and Infra-Humanization**

As mentioned above, several studies have shown that infra-humanization is not inevitable and can be moderated by different social factors (Vaes et al. 2012, for a review). Importantly, as reported in a study carried out by Pereira et al. (2009), the impact of infra-humanization on discrimination may be moderated by equalitarian and meritocratic ideologies. In the study, participants first received an article supposedly taken from a prestigious weekly newspaper. In order to manipulate infra-humanization of Turkish people, for a third of the subjects, the article reported a study showing that the ancient Turkish language was comparable to European languages in the frequency of secondary emotions words. For another third, the article stated that ancient Turkish did not have secondary emotions in its

**Fig. 4.3** Effect of infra-humanization on discrimination against Turkey, mediated by symbolic threat after egalitarian norm prime (Based on Pereira et al. 2009)



vocabulary. In the third condition (the control condition), the text dealt with the relationship between age and learning a new language. Symbolic threat and opposition to the entrance of Turkey in the EU were the main dependent variables.

Participants exhibited greater openness to Turkey's joining the European Union and expressed a lesser feeling of threat when Turkish was described as similar to the European languages concerning the frequency of secondary emotions (non-infra-humanization condition) than when it was presented as dissimilar. Interestingly, symbolic threat mediated the link between the differential perception of Turkish (infra-humanization vs. humanization) and the opposition to Turkey's entrance in the European Union. That is, the differential perception of Turkey led to different levels of threat that explained the degree of opposition to Turkey as part of Europe (Fig. 4.3).

In a follow-up study, infra-humanization was manipulated and participants were primed with egalitarian versus meritocratic ideologies. Independently of the ideological manipulation, infra-humanization had an effect on symbolic threat and on the opposition to Turkey's entrance in European Union. The interesting finding deals with the mediation. When meritocracy was salient (primed), there was no mediation. It was not the case when egalitarianism was primed. Participants primed with an egalitarian norm felt the need to explain their discrimination against Turkey through the evocation of the symbolic threat. This justification was unnecessary when the context promoted meritocracy, that is, when it was salient that some groups, due to their characteristics, deserve more and are superior to others. This study illustrated how egalitarianism and meritocracy have different implications for the legitimization of discrimination and the relationship between infra-humanization and discrimination.

### **Egalitarianism, Meritocracy, and Racial Prejudice**

Inspired by Sherif and Sherif's (1953) group norms theory of attitudes, Crandall et al. (2002) developed a normative theory about prejudice. This theory proposes that social norms affect the expression of prejudice, i.e., prejudice decreases when group norms proscribe it and increases when they are permissive. In the same vein, Monteiro and collaborators (Monteiro et al. 2009; França and Monteiro 2013) specifically analyzed the impact of the anti-racism norm salience on the expression

of racial prejudice by children. In a typical study of this research line (see Chap. 10 of this book), the experimenter asked 6–7-year-old children versus 9–10 years old to distribute resources to Black and White children. Two experimental conditions were used: activation of the anti-racist norm (the experimenter is present) versus non-activation (the experimenter is absent). Results showed that 6–7-year-old White children expressed prejudice independently of the norm’s salience, whereas the 9–10-year-old only discriminated against Black children when the anti-racist norm was not activated. These findings suggest that older children are able to monitor their behavior in accordance with group norm salience. Similarly, the theory of aversive racism (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986) stresses the importance of contextual anti-racism norms on the expression of racial prejudice. According to this theory, when the interaction context indicates the socially desirable type of response, or when individuals feel that their self-definition as egalitarian subjects is in question, they are less likely to think and act in a discriminatory way.

Another line of research opened by Katz and Hass (1988) examined the relationship between norms and racial prejudice using a different perspective. This line of research focused on two opposite ideological perspectives about justice: one based on the value of egalitarianism and the other based on the value of meritocracy. According to the authors’ hypotheses, the priming of egalitarianism attenuated racial prejudice, whereas the priming of meritocracy exacerbated it. As proposed by Sidanius and Pratto (1999), meritocracy and egalitarianism correspond to two opposite legitimizing myths regarding social dominance: one, meritocracy, is a hierarchy-enhancing myth according to which groups are unequal; and the other, egalitarianism, is a hierarchy-attenuating myth. Consequently, the salience of hierarchy-enhancing myths, like meritocracy, in contrast to egalitarianism, contributes to greater levels of racial-based inequality as shown in the study of Katz and Hass (1988).

Following this line of research, Pereira and Vala (2014) carried out a series of studies to examine the impact of egalitarianism and meritocracy on the “Intergroup Time Bias” (ITB) in impression formation, that is, pro-ingroup bias manifested in the time invested to make a judgment about an ingroup member relative to an outgroup member. As mentioned above, they proposed that time is an important resource and, consequently, people will invest more time in ingroup than outgroup members, when racialized social relations are at stake (Vala et al. 2012). In this context, less time invested in the outgroup relative to the ingroup means outgroup discrimination. According to Pereira and Vala (2014), the ITB effect can be moderated by the contextual activation of egalitarianism and meritocracy. In their study, participants were randomly assigned to one of the following conditions: a condition where they were primed with the egalitarian norm; another one where the meritocratic norm was primed; and a control (no prime). Results showed that the activation of egalitarianism significantly reduced the ITB effect relative to the control condition. However, meritocracy did not significantly increase ITB. This later result can be discussed in the context of the diverse social meanings of meritocracy. Indeed, Son Hing et al. (2011) showed that meritocracy can mean different things to people: descriptive meritocracy, that is the perception that society

actually rewards effort and merit; or prescriptive meritocracy, that is, an ideal about the functioning of a society, a society where effort and merit should be effectively rewarded. According to Son Hing et al. (2011) the later meaning of meritocracy functions as a principle of justice whereas descriptive meritocracy is associated with the legitimization of social inequalities. Coming back to the results of Pereira and Vala (2014), it seems very likely that the manipulation of meritocracy they used was perceived by participants as a mixture of prescriptive and descriptive meanings of meritocracy and, consequently, only slightly increased outgroup discrimination.

Egalitarianism also has different meanings. A study by Lima et al. (2005) showed that descriptive meritocracy clearly increased the implicit racial prejudice measured by the IAT (Greenwald et al. 1998). However, egalitarianism only reduced implicit prejudice when primed as “solidarity egalitarianism” (i.e. social egalitarianism that involves solidarity between citizens) but no effects were obtained when it was primed as “formal egalitarianism” (in the sense of constitutional equality of rights and duties for all).

Despite the ambiguity of the meanings of egalitarianism and meritocracy, literature is not scarce about the effects of these normative principles on intergroup attitudes. Work by Augoustinos et al. (2005) further illustrates this. They examined anti-affirmative action attitudes in Australia and demonstrated that attitudes correlated to the endorsement of meritocratic orientations. The priming of meritocracy also led members of low status groups to perceive that they were not discriminated against (McCoy and Major 2006). On the contrary, the contextual activation of egalitarianism facilitates individuation in impression formation (Goodwin et al. 2000). In the same vein, Bodenhausen and Macrae (1998) suggest that the egalitarian norm may inhibit the categorization of members of minority groups, and Maio et al. (2001) report effects of the salience of reasons for equality on egalitarian behavior in a minimal group paradigm. Using representative samples of European countries, Vala et al. (2004) and Ramos and Vala (2009) showed that egalitarianism predicts positive attitudes toward immigrants whereas meritocracy predicts negative ones.

## Conclusions

Humans are social beings and, for most aspects of their wellbeing, people need to interact with privileged others and these others are at the origin of groups. Social psychology theorized groups as a result of the social categorization process and, in this sense, groups are like *boundaries*. But history tells us that boundaries always imply more or less cooperative or conflicting *relations* and that boundaries and relations are fed by beliefs and *ideologies*. Most research has been dedicated to the study of boundaries through the process of social categorization and its dynamic that creates groups, superordinate groups, recategorization of groups, or even implosion of groups via decategorization. Less research has been directed to the study of group relations and how the nature of those relations moves from cooperation to conflict and shapes people’s minds and collective action. Even less

research has studied the way ideologies configure categories and intergroup relations. This chapter aims to contribute to underlining and foregrounding the importance of research on ideologies and intergroup creation and relations. Nevertheless, ideologies were present at the beginning of the inquiry about intergroup conflict, as can be illustrated by the research program developed by Adorno et al. (1950) and inspired by the intellectual climate of the Frankfurt School. In addition, the last paper by Tajfel (1984) deals with ideologies, justice, and intergroup relations.

Accordingly, ideologies that trigger intergroup processes are presented and discussed in this chapter: ideologies of color blind/color consciousness about intergroup differences and the construction of juster societies; the belief in a just world, based on the conservative ideology, and its impact on ingroup and outgroup victims' evaluations; the ideas about humanness that structure the infra-humanization of groups in the context of a bounded scope of justice and group-based hierarchy ideologies; and finally meritocratic and egalitarian ideologies objectified in social norms. In other words, we proposed and tried to show how ideologies and their correspondent social norms inspire the efforts to regulate diverse societies, establish the boundaries of humanness, and underlie the meanings of justice and justice principles that justify racial prejudice and discrimination.

This chapter has been mainly structured by our own research and its relation to the research of other authors who share similar perspectives on the role of ideologies in intergroup relations. This option has allowed us to present our approach and research. However, it excludes the discussion of important dimensions of intergroup relations also shaped by ideologies, like the study of extreme forms of conflict, such as nationalism (Staub 1989; Billig 1995), dehumanizing, moral disengagement, and deligitimization (Bandura 1999; Bar-Tal 2004), to give just a few examples. Indeed, the banality of torture after September 11, the current reemergence of nationalism in Europe, the religious neo-extremisms, the banality of submission in the different spheres of society should be the object of urgent research by social psychologists in the context of an inclusive conception of ideologies.

To sum up, group boundaries are sometimes like walls. Because groups and their boundaries are social constructions, ideologies have a role in this landscape too. Ideologies may reinforce the strength of the wall dividing groups, but they may also indicate holes in the concrete, or even produce them. In fact, boundaries are no more than what we make of them and the cement is provided by our ideas about what societies should be.

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