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**Article Review**

A study conducted in Switzerland in 2011 examined how dehumanizing an outgroup through propaganda influences the ingroup's perception of the outgroup after exposure to positive counter-propaganda. The outgroup, presented as Roma beggars, a generally detested and low-class group. The subjects (the ingroup) were strangers approached in an average-sized city who agreed to complete a written survey. The study had 81 participants, all identified as male, with a mean age of 27.47 years. Subjects were then randomly given one of the three versions of propaganda, which described Roma beggars as negatively animalized, negatively humanized, or positively humanized. The propaganda showed as an alleged newspaper excerpt with alternating keywords depending on what impression was displayed. After reading the first text, the subjects answered a manipulation check, using questions to determine subjects' impressions of how they believed the text displayed Roma beggars. Subjects were then given a counterpropaganda piece displaying the Roma beggars sympathetically, showing them as victims of injustice and discrimination. The subjects were given a second manipulation check with similar questions, but unlike the first, the questions were to examine subjects' personal impressions of Roma beggars. The goal is to prove the effects of the counterpropaganda based on the experiential condition they witnessed in the first text. The study hypothesized that animalization would convey longer-lasting negative connotations that would resist the counterpropaganda attempt, and negative depiction would be more receptive to counterpropaganda. The study's purpose was to discover how psychologization as an attributional strategy relates to resisting influence, specifically exploring the influence of propaganda using dehumanization as a strategy to convince an ingroup to mistreat an outgroup and exploring how this has played a role throughout the history of political propaganda.

Comparing a negative animalistic perception with a negative humanistic perception yielded equally negative responses to the group's image. Negative outlook scores presented lowest in the positive humanized condition, intermediate in the negative humanized condition, and highest in the negative animalized condition. Only the animalized condition maintained a negative perspective throughout the entire experiment. The negative animalized propaganda resisted the effects of the positive counterpropaganda, and the subjects kept their negative personal perceptions; some displayed an increasingly negative outlook after the counterpropaganda. In contrast, the negative humanized propaganda paired with positive counter-propaganda showed subjects reporting positive personal perceptions. The result is congruent with the study's hypothesis, showing that "animalization seems to activate more durable characteristics (probably related to a permanent essence attributed to the group)." (Quiamzade, Lalot, 2023, p. 9) When subjects experience positive humanization messages, they have a positive outlook in the first manipulation check, they then transition to an increasingly negative perception after being shown the counter-propaganda piece, showing that subjects resist two positive displays, finding them unnatural. Negative animalization was the only category that showed a willingness to discriminate against Roma beggars. In the second manipulation check, subjects presented a negative animalized depiction and could not see Roma beggars in higher status or higher salary positions than themselves. They instead favored Roma beggars, who occupied lower-status positions and earned lower salaries than themselves. Subjects display favoritism towards themselves when allocating "positive resources" but are reluctant to treat the outgroup differently when it comes to "negative resources."

As a child, I had little interest in the world around me, ignorant of the idea that anything outside of my sphere was inconsequential. The first time I truly paid attention to politics was when Trump was elected in 2016. Throughout his term, I saw how millions of people were affected by the propaganda and manipulation from the pro-Trump Republican office. I have witnessed family members fall into the manipulation of propaganda. My grandmother, who used to be someone I could admire and look up to, has fallen victim to far-right conservative news in the last few years. I have heard her use certain words and phrases to refer to groups of people in a predatory and dehumanizing way. She specifically spoke about immigrants in a critical, animistic manner, despite her grandmother being an immigrant from Italy. It shocks me to see how much the effects of propaganda, especially dehumanizing messages, can turn people against each other and themselves, all because fear, hatred, and unrest make people easy to control. I also think the wariness of manipulation and being unconsciously influenced is essential. Although I tend to be observant and cautious of truth and fallacy in politics, I occasionally find myself incorporating biases when examining political arguments. I only recognize the negative propaganda and manipulation tactics used by the side I disagree with and ignore any tactics used by politicians or organizations I support or align with. I believe propaganda can positively influence society in certain situations and can be necessary to prevent chaos and anarchy, but that is an experiential and realistic belief. Ideally, I would look to a future where politicians and leaders stop relying on arguments that dehumanize and otherize, eventually pushing people to discriminate against certain "outside" groups. Systemic issues built centuries ago have affected everyone, and the culture I live in. My generation has to work to overcome systemic racism and inequality both mentally and legally. My first step to changing these systems is to practice more controlled processing when faced with the effects of propaganda. I must transition from automatically judging or disliking people who have been altered by negative manipulation. And divert my criticism to the people who create negative propaganda. People fighting based on beliefs formed through propaganda achieve nothing other than keeping the general populous powerless.

Reference Page

Quiamzade, A., & Lalot, F. (2023). Animalistic dehumanisation as a social influence strategy. *Frontiers in Psychology,* *13*. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.999959