HUMANNESS AND DEHUMANIZATION

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9 Cops and Criminals

The Interplay of Mechanistic and Animalistic
Dehumanization in the Criminal Justice System

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Perspectives on Dehumanization

Scholars have defined and studied dehumanization in many different ways. Some humanities scholars, for example, have focused on language as a building block of dehumanization and have identified metaphors in both ancient and modern languages that pejoratively refer to humans as animals (Spence, 2001). Linguists point out that such metaphors, far more than mere rhetorical flourishes, actually shape thought (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Sociologists have focused on the collective dynamics of dehumanization and contend that state sponsored race-based ideologies can lead to dehumanization and ultimately, genocide (Hagan & Rymond-Richmond, 2008). Social psychologists have found that people believe out-group members are less likely than members of their own group to experience uniquely human emotions such as pride, jealousy, passion, and guilt. These researchers refer to the denial of such secondary emotions as infrahumanization and stress its operation in everyday contexts (Leyens, Demoulin, Vaes, Gaunt, & Paladino, 2007; Leyens et al., 2000, 2001).

In an effort to integrate this diffuse literature, Haslam (2006) has outlined two distinct forms of dehumanization: animalistic and mechanistic. In one, humans are reduced to animals, and in the other to machines. In this chapter, we examine both forms of dehumanization in the context of criminal justice. We present research demonstrating how criminals are reduced to animals and police officers to machines. Most importantly, we demonstrate, for the first time, that these two forms of dehumanization may operate in an interdependent fashion, with each facilitating and reinforcing the other.

Animalistic Dehumanization

Thinking of humans as animals dehumanizes them by divesting them of uniquely human characteristics such as rationality, morality, and civility (Haslam, 2006). As Haslam notes, this form of dehumanization is often applied to ethnic and racial out-groups, and has attracted considerable

scholarly attention (e.g., Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006; Goff, Eberhardt, Williams, & Jackson, 2008; Hagan & Rymond-Richmond, 2008; Smith, 2011; Uvin, 1997). For example, Blacks have long been likened to apes (Goff et al., 2008). Mexican immigrants have been referred to as insects, thus rendering their migration a type of infestation (Santa Ana, 2002). During the Shoah, Jews were commonly referred to as rats (Spence, 2001). For instance, in the 1940 Nazi propaganda film *Der ewige Jude* (*The Eternal Jew*; Hippler, 1940), the narrator describes Jews as the vermin of the human race, just as rats are the vermin of the animal kingdom (Smith, 2011).

As these examples suggest, dehumanization may both motivate and justify violence and hostility against a group (Haslam, 2006). People are more likely to commit violence against a group they do not view as fully human (Bandura, Underwood, & Fromson, 1975), and are more likely to view such violence as acceptable because its target, as not fully human, is not deserving of the moral concern that humans owe each other (Opotow, 1990). By thinking of Jews as rats, for example, genocide becomes not only understandable, but also justifiable.

This sort of moral exclusion is not confined to the past. Goff and colleagues (Goff et al., 2008) have demonstrated how the centuries old Black-ape association continues to justify violence against Blacks in the United States. In one study, participants who were subliminally primed with words associated with apes were significantly more likely to condone police violence against a Black suspect than participants who were not primed with such words. Simply activating the concept of apes increased the degree to which participants thought the Black suspect's behavior made the use of force necessary, believed that the Black suspect was deserving of the treatment he got, and felt that the actions of the police were justified. The researchers further demonstrated that such animal imagery can be used to predict sentencing within the criminal justice system in the United States. Goff et al. (2008) examined newspaper coverage of Philadelphia court cases in which Black and White defendants were eligible for the death penalty. They coded the newspaper articles for animal imagery (e.g., for the use of words like *animal*, *beast*, and *predator*) and found significantly more animal-related words in articles describing Black defendants than White defendants. Controlling for a number of relevant variables (e.g., crime severity and the presence of aggravating and mitigating circumstances), Black defendants who were sentenced to death were described with more

animal-related words than Black defendants who did not receive a death sentence.

Even long after violence has occurred, dehumanization may be used to alleviate the guilt that in-group members might otherwise feel. Castano and Giner-Sorolla (2006), for example, showed that when it was made salient to participants that their in-group was responsible for mass killings of a specific out-group in the past, their tendency to derogate and deny uniquely human emotions to that out-group (i.e., infrahumanization) was heightened. This was true across three experiments that used three specific conflicts between different sets of in-groups (British, White Americans, and humans) and out- groups (Australian Aborigines, Native Americans, and aliens). The authors

Cops and Criminals: The Interplay of Dehumanization

describe how, in this way, dehumanization can be used as a strategy to relieve threat and potentially make people feel better and less guilty for atrocities committed in the name of the in-group.

Though much of the work on animalistic dehumanization in social psychology has focused on race and ethnicity, criminals have been historically and routinely dehumanized in this manner as well. In fact, in the late 19th century, Cesare Lombroso, widely considered to be the father of criminology, proposed that criminality was biological and that criminals were atavistic savages—subhumans that resembled apes in both their physical and behavioral characteristics (Lombroso, 1896/2006). The implications for punishment were straightforward. The fact that criminals were atavistic savages, as Lombroso put it, "should not make us more compassionate toward born criminals (as some claim), but rather should shield us from pity, for these beings are members not of our species but the species of bloodthirsty beasts" (p. 348). Though Lombroso's theory of the atavistic criminal was challenged (e.g., see Goring, 1913/2010), and ostensibly rejected decades ago, his ideas were carried forward in later theories of crime and, in fact, still seem to have resonance today (see also Vasiljevic & Viki, this volume [Chapter 8]).

Mechanistic Dehumanization

Viewing people as machines is another way to dehumanize them. Machines lack traits such as emotionality, warmth, cognitive openness, individual agency, and depth. Though these traits are considered essential properties

that are at the core of what it means to be human, animals from other species may nonetheless share them (Haslam, Bain, Douge, Lee, & Bastian, 2005). Thus, divesting people of these traits does not render them more animallike, rather it renders them more machinelike. In comparison to animalistic dehumanization, mechanistic dehumanization has been understudied. Moreover, it is less clear how mechanistic dehumanization may contribute to intergroup conflict.

Mechanistic dehumanization has been most examined in the case of women. Literature on the objectification of women describes how people can be reduced to mere instruments for the use of others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Researchers have documented how television beer commercials, for example, feature significantly more "body-isms" of women than of men (Hall & Crum, 1994). By "body-ism" the researchers refer to camera shots that focus on specific body parts. The fact that women tend to be depicted as mere body parts intended for others' enjoyment, rather than whole persons, is taken as evidence of their dehumanization. Indeed, when study participants are asked to think about a famous woman and are instructed to focus on this "person's appearance" rather than on this "person," both male and female participants were less likely to ascribe to her traits they viewed as essential to human nature and, thus, they dehumanized her (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009). Similarly, when participants were instructed to specifically focus on the physical appearance of females, they rated them as less competent, warm, and moral (Heflick, Goldenberg, Cooper, & Puvia, 2011; see Heflick & Goldenberg, this volume [Chapter 7]). In stark contrast, focusing on male targets' appearance did not change how they were perceived.

Dehumanizing and objectifying women can be motivated, just as dehumanizing ethnic and racial groups by comparing them to animals is motivated. Nussbaum (1999) identified instrumentality as a key component of objectification, or dehumanization. By seeing another human being as a means to an end, the dehumanized person is reduced to a mere tool. Vaes, Paladino, and Puvia (2011) recently showed that when heterosexual men were primed with sex, relative to when they were not, they objectified female targets by pay- ing more attention to the women's physical appearance than their abilities. The men also preferred the more attractive female targets, even though the women's abilities were more relevant to the task at hand (selecting a partner to help complete a math test). Furthermore, in the sex prime condition, male participants also found the female targets more sexually arousing and they dehumanized them more (i.e., associated

them less with words linked to humanness) than those in the control condition. Thus, when men have sex on the mind, they are increasingly interested in how a woman can be instrumental toward helping them achieve their own ends. For more on how sexual objectification is dehumanizing, see Vaes, Loughnan, and Puvia (this volume [Chapter 11]).

By constantly being objectified by others and being socialized to accept their role as sex objects, women can even learn to objectify themselves (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). For example, in one study, merely trying on a swimsuit caused women to objectify themselves—to see their bodies from a third-person perspective rather than from a first-person perspective. These women felt more shame about their bodies, restrained their eating, and performed worse on a math test (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998). As the authors describe, wearing a swimsuit, then, "reduced participants to feeling 'I am my body'—in effect, that swimsuit becomes you" (p. 280).

Here, we argue that other styles of clothing, uniforms in particular, may become the person. A uniform signals that what is important is the role, and not the person wearing it. Moreover, uniforms can promote anonymity and deindividuation (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973). Given that individuality is a key part of human nature (Haslam, 2006), uniforms may be a strong trigger for mechanistic dehumanization. Classic research conducted by Philip Zimbardo demonstrates the power of uniforms to make one's individuality disappear and allow the role to take over. Zimbardo's famous Stanford prison experiment revealed how young men could become abusive simply by donning the uniform of a prison guard and acting out the role of a guard in a simulated prison (Haney et al., 1973). In a 2002 documentary produced by the BBC about the Stanford prison experiment, Zimbardo talked explicitly about the guards' uniforms stripping them of their humanity: "All the guards wore military uniforms and we had them wear these silver reflecting sunglasses. And what it does is you can't see someone's eyes and so that loses some of their humanness—their humanity" (Duke, 2002). The documentary also included excerpts of an interview with one of the prison guards, Dave Eshleman, which was conducted soon after the study ended. Explaining his behavior as a mock guard, Eshleman said, "You really become that person once you put on that khaki uniform, you put on the glasses, you take the nightstick." Thirty years later, in another interview, Eshleman had the chance to reflect on his experiences: "When I look back at it now, I behaved appallingly. You know,

it's just horrid to look at. . . . That was a role I was playing. That's not me at all" (Duke, 2002).

Other researchers have similarly demonstrated the tremendous power of uniforms to cause people to act in line with the roles that they signal. An experiment by Johnson and Downing (1979) showed that when participants were clothed in robes resembling the garb of Ku Klux Klan members, they were more likely to act aggressively and administer more intense electric shocks to others, whereas, when they wore nurses' uniforms, which signal that one is in the role of a caregiver, they administered less intense shocks. Continuing in the tradition of this work, Adam and Galinsky (2012) recently introduced the concept of "enclothed cognition." These researchers argue that clothes not only influence how observers perceive targets as a function of what they are wearing, but also have a systematic influence on the wearers' psychology, which depends on the symbolic meaning of the clothing. As a first empirical investigation of their theory, they explored the influence of white lab coats. As scientists and doctors usually wear white lab coats, the authors hypothesized and found that lab coats were significantly associated with attention-related concepts like attentiveness, carefulness, responsibility, and a scientific focus. Adam and Galinsky (2012) found that wearing a white lab coat caused participants to perform better on a task that required an ability to pay attention to relevant stimuli and ignore irrelevant stimuli. This effect, the researchers found, is dependent on the symbolic meaning of the clothing—there was an increase in attention when participants wore a white lab coat that was described as a doctor's coat but not when they wore the identical coat and it was described as a painter's coat.

Bringing together the literatures on objectification and the power of clothing to deindividuate us and lead us to act in accordance with roles, here we propose that police officers' uniforms may similarly deindividuate and dehumanize them. When police officers get dressed for work, perhaps their individuality falls away. Just as women can become instruments for the use of others, so too can police officers on duty—reduced to acting as agents of the state. Rather than viewing them as individuals, people view them as tools in society's arsenal to fight crime and combat criminals, whom we argue are also dehumanized within the criminal justice system. In fact, mechanistic dehumanization may inspire the public's confidence in police officers' ability to do their jobs and fight crime.

How Might Animalistic and Mechanistic Forms of Dehumanization Work Together?

We aimed to extend previous theorizing on dehumanization and explore how these two forms of dehumanization—animalistic dehumanization and mechanistic dehumanization—can work in concert with one another. More concretely, we were interested in whether denying one group's uniquely human characteristics (i.e., comparing its members to animals) is associated with denying *another* group's human nature (i.e., comparing them to machines).

We chose to focus on the relationship between violent criminals and police officers as an instance where both forms of dehumanization are at play. Indeed, we will argue there is a common sense notion that each of these groups is dehumanized: Violent criminals are often referred to as animals or animallike, while police officers are often referred to as machines or machinelike. More- over, both forms of dehumanization could serve important functions within the criminal justice system.

The Violent Criminal as Animal

"If the District of Columbia hadn't outlawed the death penalty, the *brutish young thugs* who practiced their *outrageous savagery* on [the victim] would be prime candidates for official *extermination*" (printed in *The Washington Post*; Raspberry, 1985, p. A13; emphasis added).

Though Lombroso's theory of the atavistic criminal was abandoned many decades ago, it is relatively common to read headlines and articles in contemporary newspapers that use language likening violent criminals to animals. In an article published in New York City's *Daily News* entitled "'Beast' Laughs and Gets Justice" (Donohue, 1996, p. 2), the reporter described how during the sentencing of a convicted serial killer, the mother of one of his young victims pleaded with the judge to show no mercy. She told the judge that she "intended to live long enough for this encounter in which [she] would face that beast, that animal dressed up in a human suit" who killed her daughter. Articles like these can be found outside of the United States as well. *The Sun,* a newspaper in the United Kingdom, described how a man was "caged for life" for a "mindless and savage" attack (May, 2012, p. 11). A headline in an Australian newspaper, *Herald*

Sun, announced "Brute to Serve More Jail Time for Savage Bashing" (Wilkinson, 2009, p. 11).

Referring to criminals as animals is not just about language and word choice, but rather it may suggest how criminals should be handled by police officers and the criminal justice system more broadly. Violent or wild animals *should* be hunted down, caught, and caged. As such, the association between violent criminals and animals suggests that criminals should be treated in the same way. It is easier to lock up and cage violent criminals when they are compared to animals because that is precisely how out of control animals should be treated. Indeed, the public is attuned to media representations of criminals as animals: In a series of in-depth qualitative interviews and focus groups with 140 women about their views on crime, a common image of criminals as animalistic, savages, or monsters emerged (Madriz, 1997). A number of those interviewed elaborated on how they believe criminals often travel together in packs like animals and how they lack basic human compassion and feelings. The researcher concluded that this type of imagery "becomes part of public consciousness" (p. 347).

These animal comparisons may very well dampen the need for leniency and compassion and increase punitiveness among the public and members of the criminal justice system (see Vasiljevic & Viki in this volume [Chapter 8] for a discussion of how dehumanization of criminals is related to lay beliefs about criminals' inability to be rehabilitated or reintroduced into society). Madriz (1997) as a result of her interviews with women about their views of crime concluded:

A direct consequence of the dehumanized images of criminals is that they restrict any type of public empathy toward those who break the law. This lack of empathy favors a social climate in which more repressive policies directed toward criminals are sanctioned: tougher laws, the use of the death penalty, and opposition to rehabilitation and community programs. (p. 354)

Empirical research has also demonstrated that the way crime is discussed can have very important consequences for crime policy. In a series of experiments, Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011) found that when crime was framed metaphorically as a beast preying on a city, participants were significantly more likely to endorse harsh enforcement strategies than when crime was framed as a virus, in which case participants were more likely to propose investigating the root cause and treating the problem through social reform. We suspect that referring to violent criminals as animals (rather

than crime itself as an animal) may similarly lead members of the general public to focus on enforcement strategies that revolve around the capture and punishment of criminals.

The Police Officer as Machine

The popular 1980s movie *RoboCop* (Davison, 1987) takes place in the city of Detroit, Michigan, in the (then) not-so-distant future as it is being over-run with crime. The city contracts a large corporation to help run its police force. The company starts to develop a series of robots to replace the inadequate human police officers. When a veteran police officer is killed in the line of duty, the corporation takes his body and uses it to create the first RoboCop, who is able to almost single-handedly reduce the city's crime problem. Though *RoboCop* is a work of science fiction, we argue that comparing police officers to machines serves an important function for real-life law enforcement. In fact, the movie was produced at a time when crime was on the rise in major cities all over the United States. *RoboCop* provided the public with an ideal strategy for addressing this growing problem.

Being a police officer is a very demanding, stressful, and dangerous job. As private citizens, we may not feel as bad about putting officers in harm's way for our own safety and protection if we deny that they experience the same emotions we do and rather are cold, rigid, and interchangeable machines. Policies within police forces across the United States explicitly require police officers to wear uniforms and behave in prescribed ways, thus likely reducing their individuality and heightening their fungibility, or the quality of being seen as interchangeable, which Haslam (2006) includes in his description of mechanistic dehumanization. The Seattle Police Department's *Policy and Procedure Manual* (2012), for example, has several entire sections on equipment and uniforms. These sections outline specific guide- lines for officers' appearance, including very detailed illustrations showing how the uniform should be worn and even rules about how long one may keep his or her hair ("Mustaches may extend laterally not more than one- half inch from the corner of the mouth"; section 9.020, p. 1). Researchers have described how the function of the police uniform is to establish conformity within police ranks by suppressing individuality (Joseph & Alex, 1972). Recall the past research we described earlier showing the power of uniforms more generally to shape people's behavior by signaling a particular role and making people more likely to act out that role. Individuality falls away, the wearer is dehumanized, and the role takes precedence. It could also be the case that all of the physical trappings of

being a police officer across much of the United States, like carrying a gun, handcuffs, and so forth, make the police officer himself or herself seem like one more tool or instrument in the arsenal to fight crime.

Some evidence for this dehumanized view of police officers among the public comes from the results of a program Sikes and Cleveland (1968) designed with the goal of improving police-community relations in Houston, Texas (see Bell, Cleveland, Hanson, & O'Connell, 1969, for more information about this program). Community members' attitudes toward the police improved as a result of completing the program. Namely, after the program there was greater respect for the police as individual human beings rather than being classed into one undifferentiated group, the "blue minority." Recognition of the citizen's tendency to dehumanize the police and see them as unfeeling, lacking in sympathy, as being authoritarian robots rather than real people who sometimes make honest mistakes, get angry, or behave unwisely. (p. 768)

The authors go on to quote specific community members. One said, "Before this course I regarded the policeman as a symbol of authority not as a real human being" (p. 768). Another said, "I now recognize that policemen are human beings who may make mistakes instead of machines that should never make a mistake" (p. 768–769).

This perception of the police as machines could serve a beneficial function for members of the community who may feel safer by believing that police officers are uniquely suited to fight crime. Machinelike police officers, by virtue of lacking emotion and warmth are presumably more efficient in dealing with the horrors that they routinely experience. Unburdened by the same emotional depth and complexity that characterize the rest of us, it might be easier for them to cope with the murder scenes, prevalent violence, and tragic accidents that police officers must regularly encounter. Further, the public's expectations that police officers should act as perfect machines make them better able to combat violent criminals. As already described, cultural representations of violent criminals as animals suggest to the public that controlling them is no easy feat. In this way, we propose that these two forms of dehumanization— namely, the comparison of violent criminals to animals and police officers to machines—come together and interact, with each serving its unique function. In the face of brutish, wild, savage criminals, the general public likely *want* detached, unfeeling police officers to steadfastly deal with the ever-present threat. This force of machinelike officers may make the public feel safer and more

protected. The animallike criminals need to be hunted down, captured, and caged by the efficient, cold, interchangeable force of machinelike police officers.

Preliminary Evidence

Across three studies, to be discussed in detail here, we set out to accomplish three specific aims. As a starting point, we wanted to investigate whether it is the case that people are still aware of the centuries-old association of violent criminals with animals and whether or not they personally endorse this association. Further, after having established a violent criminal-as-animal association, we wanted to interrogate what it means to people. We also wanted to explore what it means to associate a police officer with a machine or robot.

Finally, we wanted to conduct an experiment in order to begin to explore what function these specific associations may play within the criminal justice context. When are people prompted to associate violent criminals with animals? Are there specific cues, like an increasing crime rate, that would cause people to seize upon the animalistic dehumanization of criminals? Once we found evidence that such cues exist, we wanted to determine whether the dehumanization of criminals is associated with perceptions and attitudes about how to handle crime. We were specifically interested in how the dehumanization of violent criminals may be linked to the dehumanization of police officers. Is it the case that associating violent criminals with animals is correlated with associating police officers with machines? Does this link serve a function? For example, is it the case that viewing criminals as animals leads people to endorse different crime fighting strategies?

Study 1: Do People Engage in Animalistic Dehumanization of Violent Criminals?

We conducted a correlational study in order to test whether American participants ($N = 133$; Mean age = 33.62 years; 70 females) were aware of a general association between violent criminals and animals and furthermore, whether they would personally endorse this association. For this study, as well as for all of the other studies we present here, participants were recruited using Amazon's Mechanical Turk, an online marketplace in which people can complete various tasks for payment (http://www.MTurk.com). Its use as a high-quality source of data for social science research has been

validated (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Across all three studies, we restricted our samples to U.S. citizens. In order to explore whether participants were aware of a general association between violent criminals and animals, we gave them instructions detailing how the research team was interested in how "Americans in general perceive a number of social groups." We further instructed participants to answer based on how they thought *other* people feel and not based on how they personally feel. We posed the question "To what extent are violent criminals thought of as 'animals'?" Using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*a great deal*), participants rated their agreement with this single item. As we predicted, participants indicated a strong awareness of the violent criminal-as- animal association ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.07$), which was significantly above the midpoint of the scale, $t(132) = 17.30, p < .0005$.

We next turned our attention to whether or not participants would personally endorse this association. Participants read detailed instructions about how the research team was also interested in personal beliefs about social groups. This time, we posed the question "To what extent do *you* think of violent criminals as 'animals'?" Using the same 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*a great deal*), participants rated their personal endorsement of this item. The results revealed that participants personally endorsed the view that violent criminals are animals ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.59$) as their responses were significantly above the midpoint of the scale, $t(132) = 4.16, p < .0005$.

Having established the existence of an association between violent criminals and animals with our American participants, we tested whether cultural and personal beliefs about criminals as animals were related. As predicted, we found that the more our participants perceived Americans in general as thinking of violent criminals as animals, the more they personally dehumanized violent criminals by thinking of them as animals, $r(133) = .31, p < .0005$. Finally, participants were asked to indicate the valence of the violent criminal-as-animal association on a scale ranging from 1 (*very negative*) to 6 (*very positive*). As predicted, they rated the association as highly negative ($M = 1.56$, $SD = 1.07$) and significantly below the midpoint of the scale, $t(132) = 20.90, p < .0005$.

Study 2: What Does It Mean to Compare a Violent Criminal to an Animal and a Police Officer to a Machine?

Having established that violent criminals are associated with animals in the United States, we wanted to further explore what comparing a criminal to an animal really represents. What characteristics or traits do people think criminals and animals have in common? Building on this, we also wanted to explore the other side of the dehumanization equation. Namely, what characteristics or traits do people think police officers and machines have in common? To explore these questions, we conducted an open-ended pilot study in which we asked one group of participants ($N = 24$; Mean age = 29.63 years; 12 females) "What does it mean to describe violent criminals as 'animals'?" and asked a second group of participants ($N = 20$; Mean age = 33.25 years; 11 females) "What does it mean to describe police officers as 'machinelike'?" In all cases, participants were asked to list the first five words that came to mind. Response served as the unit of measure, rather than the participant. We had 24 participants provide five responses each for a total of 120 unique responses about the violent criminal-as-animal association. We had 20 participants provide five responses each and consequently had a total of 100 unique responses about police officers as machinelike. We organized the responses into themes and coded which individual words were most frequently mentioned.

Violent Criminals When asked what it meant to describe violent criminals as animals, the single most frequent response was the word "wild," which was mentioned spontaneously by nearly 40% of our participants. Indeed, the idea that violent criminals are not civilized and rather are governed by instinct was the most common theme and came up in nearly 22% of responses. This was expressed by words like "feral," "uncouth," "undomesticated," "unrefined," "barbaric," "instinctual," "savage," and "primal." The next most common theme, described in nearly 18% of the total responses, was violent criminals' taste for violence. This was expressed with words like "vicious," "violent," "killer," and "dangerous." In another theme (13% of responses), participants detailed how violent criminals lack other uniquely human characteristics, like a sense of morality ("amoral," "unjust") and intelligence and rationality ("unintelligent," "stupid," and "crazy"). Yet another approach to responding (8% of responses) was to directly list types of animals usually associated with aggression (e.g., "lion," "bear," and "wolf").

As we expected, nearly all of these responses neatly fall under Haslam's (2006) description of animalistic dehumanization. Specifically, our participants stripped violent criminals of their civility, refinement, moral sensibility, and rationality or logic, all four of which are described as

uniquely human characteristics. Indeed, a number of our participants used phrases like "less than human" and "subhuman."

Police Officers Turning to the results from our other set of participants, when asked what it meant to describe police officers as machinelike, their responses neatly captured Haslam's sense of mechanistic dehumanization, as we expected (2006). His set of characteristics that constitute human nature (that which is denied to targets of mechanistic dehumanization) easily served as a coding scheme. Approximately 19% of the total responses referred to a lack of cognitive openness or rigidity. Participants used words like "brainless," "inflexible," "routine," and "methodical." Another 13% of responses focused on a lack of emotional responsiveness and included words like "emotionless," "unfeeling," and "stoic." Participants also highlighted a lack of agency and individuality and referred to "automatons" and being "programmed," "identical," and "uniform." Another 9% of responses focused on the lack of interpersonal warmth and included words like "cold" and "uncaring." An additional 11% of responses referenced machines directly (e.g., "RoboCop," "robot," and "robotic"). These results provide us with the first evidence that comparing police officers to machines constitutes a form of mechanistic dehumanization.

Study 3: How Might Mechanistic and Animalistic Dehumanization Function Within the Criminal Justice System?

Armed with a better understanding of what representations of violent criminals as animals and of police officers as machines entail, we set out to shed light on a number of additional research questions. First, can specific cues trigger the dehumanization of violent criminals and, in turn, of police officers? Here, we examined whether fluctuations in crime rate could trigger dehumanization. Perhaps people are more likely to dehumanize criminals and police officers when crime is increasing—when criminals are most dangerous and an effective police response is most needed. Second, is the dehumanization of one group of actors within the criminal justice system associated with the dehumanization of another group? Finally, might the interplay of animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization within the criminal justice system be perceived as serving a useful function?

Method To begin to answer these questions, we designed and conducted an experiment that was modeled after research conducted by Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011). Participants ($N = 174$; Mean age = 31.41 years; 89 females) read a paragraph about crime in the fictional city of Addison

(Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011). In addition to statistics about the annual number of crimes committed, we adapted the paragraph to include descriptions of recent fluctuations in Addison's crime rate over the last 5 years, which served as our critical manipulation. In the increasing crime condition, participants read, for example, that violent criminals "are ravaging the city of Addison" and that "in the past five years the city's defense systems have weakened, and the city is succumbing to crime." In contrast, in the decreasing crime condition, participants read that violent criminals "had been ravaging the city of Addison" and that "in the past five years the city's defense systems have strengthened, and the city is no longer succumbing to crime." Importantly, in both conditions, the annual crime rate was identical ("55,000 criminal incidents a year"). Rather, we manipulated whether this figure had increased or decreased from the previous year.

Our dependent measures focused on participants' views of police officers' role in maintaining order in Addison and what qualities they found desirable in police officers. After reading about crime in Addison, participants were shown eight specific roles and were asked to select the four that they thought police officers in Addison should play in maintaining order. We designed these roles such that half were more mechanistic (*to enforce*, *to monitor*, *to patrol*, and *to apprehend*) and half were less mechanistic (*to serve*, *to protect*, *to counsel*, and *to educate*). Borrowing from an attribution of human nature scale developed by Bastian and Haslam (2010), we confirmed with a separate group of pilot participants (*N* = 39) that these roles were indeed perceived as being more and less mechanistic.

Next, participants read profiles of two police officers side by side and were asked about their impressions of each officer. We used the responses from Study 2 to help us craft the profiles such that one officer was more mechanistic and the other officer was more human. Specifically, the more mechanistic officer was described as "methodical, rational, cool, efficient, decisive, strict, calm, and detached." The more human officer was described as "respectful, trustworthy, friendly, empathetic, confident, assertive, compassionate, and thoughtful." Participants were asked to rate (1) how effective each officer was at maintaining order in Addison on a scale from 1 (*not at all effective*) to 6 (*extremely effective*) and (2) the extent to which they would want more police officers in Addison to be like each officer on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*a great deal*).

Finally, participants were asked to what extent they personally thought of violent criminals as animals. They then completed basic demographic questions and were thanked for their participation.

Results Our first step was to test whether fluctuations in crime rate could in fact serve as a cue that would lead to the animalistic dehumanization of violent criminals. Indeed, as we predicted, our crime rate manipulation significantly affected the degree to which participants personally thought of violent criminals as animals. Relative to participants who read that crime rates had decreased ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.45$), participants who read that crime rates had increased in the city of Addison ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.55$), were significantly more likely to personally think of violent criminals as animals, $F(1, 173) = 3.99$, $p = .047$. These results emerged even though we controlled for participants' political orientation, which was significantly associated with personally thinking of violent criminals as animals (the more politically conservative participants were, the more they personally dehumanized violent criminals; $r(173) = -.22$, $p = .004$).

Knowing that fluctuations in crime rate could in fact influence animalistic dehumanization of violent criminals, we turned our attention to how crime rate would affect perceptions of the other side of our dehumanization equation: police officers. We examined participants' impressions of two different police officers in Addison about whom they read a list of adjectives describing them in side by side profiles. Participants were shown a more mechanistic police officer and a more human officer and were asked how effective they thought each was at maintaining order in Addison and to what extent they would want more police officers like each of them in Addison. Our crime rate manipulation had a significant effect on perceptions of the more human officers' efficacy at maintaining order. When crime rates were decreasing in Addison ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 1.10$) participants found the more human officer significantly more effective than when crime rates were increasing ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.26$), $F(1, 173) = 4.73$, $p = .03$. Perhaps the participants had a sense that a compassionate, thoughtful, and respectful police officer would be too soft on crime when the number of annual criminal incidents was on the rise. In contrast, our crime rate manipulation had no effect on how effective participants perceived the more mechanistic police officer to be at maintaining order. There was something of a ceiling effect by which participants on average and across conditions agreed that the mechanistic officer ($M = 5.09$, $SD = .97$) was highly effective at maintaining order and was significantly more

effective than the human officer ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.20$), $t(173) = 4.82$, $p < .0005$.

We obtained similar results when it came to the degree to which participants wanted more police officers in Addison to be like each of the officers they read about. Controlling for political orientation, crime rate significantly affected the degree to which participants wanted more officers in Addison to be like the mechanistic police officer and like the more human officer. More specifically, when crime rates were increasing in Addison ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 1.31$) participants wanted significantly more police officers to be like the mechanistic police officer than when crime rates were decreasing ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.31$), $F(1, 173) = 3.88$, $p = .05$. Inversely, when crime rates were increasing ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.40$) participants wanted significantly fewer police officers to be like the human officer than when crime rates were decreasing ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.18$), $F(1, 173) = 4.93$, $p = .03$.

Most importantly, initial evidence emerged that supported our hypothesis that the dehumanization of one group could beget the dehumanization of another group. Participants were asked about the degree to which they thought police officers should take on more mechanistic roles to maintain order in Addison. The results revealed a significant association between wanting police officers to play more mechanistic roles and personally thinking about violent criminals as animals, $r(173) = .21$, $p = .007$.

More evidence of the link between dehumanization of violent criminals and dehumanization of police officers emerged. The extent to which participants personally thought of violent criminals as animals was significantly correlated with how effective they thought the mechanistic police officer was at maintaining order, $r(173) = .28$, $p < .0005$. The more participants dehumanized criminals, the more they thought a mechanistic police officer was effective at maintaining order. No such association existed between the dehumanization of criminals and views of the more human officer's efficacy at maintaining order.

Finally, the degree to which participants personally thought of violent criminals as animals significantly predicted the degree to which participants wanted more officers in Addison to be like each of the police officers they read about. Specifically, the more participants dehumanized violent criminals, the more they wanted Addison's police force to resemble the mechanistic officer, $r(173) = .32$, $p < .0005$. Inversely, the more participants

dehumanized violent criminals, the less they wanted Addison's police force to resemble the more human officer, $r(173) = -.21, p = .007$.

Overall, participants felt that a mechanistic police officer was more effective at maintaining order than a more humanized police officer. Further, only when crime rates were decreasing did participants seem to consider that the more human officer might be effective as well. The animalistic dehumanization of violent criminals was associated with the preference for more mechanistic dehumanization among police officers. Further, this association was related to crime fighting policy; thinking about violent criminals as animals was associated with wanting a police force filled with RoboCops and not wanting a force to have more human police officers.

Summary of Findings

Across three studies, we found preliminary evidence for our primary predictions: that violent criminals and police officers are both dehumanized, albeit in two distinct ways, and that these two forms of dehumanization can work in concert. In Study 1, participants reported being aware of the cultural association between violent criminals and animals. They also personally endorsed thinking about violent criminals in this way. In Study 2, through an open ended pilot test, we explored what it means to think of violent criminals as animallike and police officers as machinelike. We found that describing violent criminals as animals, a form of animalistic dehumanization, was understood as denying them civility, refinement, moral sensibility, and rationality or logic. In turn, we found that describing police officers as machinelike, a form of mechanistic dehumanization, was understood as denying them cognitive openness, emotional responsiveness, agency and individuality, and interpersonal warmth. In Study 3, an experiment, we found that crime rate could in fact serve as a cue that would cause people to dehumanize violent criminals as animals. When crime was increasing, participants were more likely to think of violent criminals as animals than when crime was decreasing. Importantly, the dehumanization of criminals was associated with the dehumanization of police officers: The more participants personally thought of violent criminals as animals, the more they wanted police officers to play mechanistic roles. Both crime rate and personal dehumanization of violent criminals were related to how participants perceived two hypothetical police officers, one who was described as being more mechanistic and one who was described as being more human, and whether they wanted a fictional city's police force to be

composed of more mechanistic or more human officers. The more participants personally thought of violent criminals as animals, the more effective they thought the mechanistic officer was at maintaining order and the more they wanted Addison's police force to have more mechanistic officers. In contrast, the less participants personally thought of violent criminals as animals, the more they wanted the police force to resemble the human officer. Participants thought the human officer was more effective at maintaining order and wanted the force to have more warm officers when crime rates were decreasing relative to when they were increasing.

Final Thoughts and Future Directions

Animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization appear to be related. Though mechanistic dehumanization is not discussed in inter-group contexts typically (but see, Bain, Park, Kwok, & Haslam, 2009), here we show that both forms of dehumanization together can be used to support intergroup conflict. Such a framework has the potential to be quite generative. In closing, we briefly highlight just a few potential directions.

Other Triggers

In the preliminary studies presented here, we demonstrate that rising crime rates can trigger the mechanistic dehumanization of police officers. Might other factors trigger this type of dehumanization as well? For example, are police officers who wear uniforms and carry weapons more likely to be dehumanized than those who do not? Just as the swimsuit becomes the woman, perhaps the uniform and weapon become the police officer. Once the uniform is removed and the weapon dropped, police officers may be readily rehumanized.

Physical cues in the environment, as well as on the bodies of police officers, may influence their dehumanization. For example, when crime is isolated such that the majority of crime happens in one neighborhood or district, people may be more likely not only to think of criminals as animals, but also to want police officers to behave more like machines. In other work, we have shown that residential segregation can influence people's conceptions of race (Hetey & Eberhardt, 2013). Here, we suggest that spatial arrangements might influence dehumanization processes as well.

Other Benefits

As discussed, oftentimes people have a desire to see violent criminals treated in a mechanistic manner by the police. So when police officers act mechanistically, to some extent, they are rewarded with public support. Yet behaving more mechanistically may not only satisfy the public, but may also be a more effective strategy for reducing crime and maintaining order than other less mechanistic strategies. In the preliminary data we collected, our study participants seemed to think so. Perhaps law enforcement officials do as well. Indeed, "tough on crime" policies that emphasize detachment and punishment are quite consistent with mechanistic policing. For decades, such strategies have been adopted by major law enforcement agencies across the United States, though their effectiveness has become the subject of debate (e.g., see Greene, 1999).

Moreover, being seen as machinelike by the public may offer police officers a sense of protection—a protection which seems to shield them from the atrocities to which they are called to bear witness. Officers may also want to capitalize on the public's desire to view them as mechanistic if it creates more contrast between how police officers are seen and how violent criminals are seen. More specifically, being seen as machinelike may prevent police officers from becoming animalized. Indeed in one study, we found that participants believed it was significantly more negative for police officers to be thought of as animals than to be thought of as machines.

Other Harms

Although mechanistic dehumanization may offer police officers some degree of protection, like any form of dehumanization, it also comes with costs. For one, this mechanistic dehumanization may motivate people (especially criminals) to commit violence against the police. To the extent that the police are viewed mechanistically, they are not viewed as real human beings. They, instead, become symbols of the state—of unjust laws, of oppression, of domination, and so forth. Thus, police officers become the targets for the expression of displeasure and frustration.

Moreover, although the law-abiding public seems to want police officers to approach violent criminals mechanistically (especially when crime is on the rise and/or when they view violent criminals as animals), the public may not want to be approached by mechanistic police officers themselves. Given

that it is not always clear who is criminal and who is law abiding, police officers often find themselves in an inescapable dilemma: People want the police to behave more mechanistically but complain vehemently when the police treat them more mechanistically.

Finally, not only do criminals and law-abiding citizens have the potential to turn against police officers, police officers may, in fact, turn against themselves. As they are encouraged to behave more mechanistically, over time, they may come to see themselves as others do, as nonhuman machines designed to carry out the wishes of the state—without feeling, without individuality.

Other Contexts

The relationship we observe between animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization in the case of violent criminals and police officers likely also plays out in other contexts, especially in times of war. Wartime enemies are commonly dehumanized and likened to animals (Kelman, 1973; Smith, 2011). And in fact, in many parts of the world, military personnel are trained explicitly to think of war as hunting rather than murder and to think of the enemy as game animals (Roscoe, 2007). Yet, there is a consequence here that frequently goes unacknowledged: The more they dehumanize the enemy, the more they them- selves become dehumanized. Referring to sanctioned mass violence, like the Shoah and the Vietnam War, Kelman (1973) explained how the participation in such violence dehumanizes not only the victim, but also the victimizer. In fact, Kelman describes the victimizer as becoming "increasingly dehumanized through the enactment of his role" (p. 51). Empirically, Bastian, Jetten, and Radke (2012) recently showed that playing violent video games caused participants to not only view their opponents, but also themselves, as less human. Though dehumanization occurs for those on both sides, we would argue that the nature of that dehumanization differs—as the enemy becomes more animalistic, the in-group becomes more mechanistic.

Finally, though we have discussed the role of dehumanization in violent contexts throughout this chapter, animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization may be related in nonviolent contexts as well. Researchers who study infrahumanization recognize all too well that dehumanization need not be extreme, but can occur subtly and frequently in our routine interactions with others (Vaes, Leyens, Paladino, & Miranda, 2012). Just as we dehumanize police officers mechanistically, so too might we

dehumanize those in non- violent contexts—the clerk, the customer service representative, the waiter, the teacher. In fact, anyone playing a predefined role can be mechanistically dehumanized. Based on the work presented here, as we dehumanize others in these ways, perhaps we ourselves, slowly, become animals.

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