

The process of humanization: The role of in-group and out-group members

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Abstract

Several studies have explored the process of dehumanization. Some of them understand it as the denial of secondary emotions to the out-group. However, other authors consider this is only one kind of dehumanization, animalistic dehumanization, but humans could also be denied their human nature characteristics, making a mechanistic dehumanization. Notwithstanding, there is scarce information about the humanization process in the literature, and given the negative consequences of dehumanization, it is extremely important to broaden the knowledge in this area. For that reason, two experimental studies were conducted with the aim of determining whether the expression of empathy by a member of a dehumanized out-group towards the suffering of the in-group, or by a member of the in-group towards the suffering of the out-group makes the out-group be perceived as more humane. The results obtained in both studies suggest it is possible to reduce dehumanization with this method, but depending on the characteristics of the in-group and out-group members. For the in-group member to reduce the dehumanization of the out-group, the person has to identify with him or her. On the other hand, for the out-group member to reduce the dehumanization of the out-group, he or she has to be found representative of their in-group. Therefore, interventions aimed at reducing dehumanization must consider these findings.

Keywords: humanization, dehumanization, empathy, representativeness, identification

2- Background

Humanness is a very difficult to define concept (Haslam, 2006). Some researchers have theorized about the essence of human nature (Demoulin et al., 2004), understanding this essence as the underlying properties that make humans the thing they are (Medin, 1989). Even though there is no unique and clear definition of what being human is, some authors such as Leyens et al. (2000) have tried empirically to find out what the human essence is. They did so by asking participants to rank the order of features they thought would best define human nature. The most cited features were intelligence, feelings and language, in this order. Given that the term *emotion* was rarely mentioned, the authors focused on the distinction between feelings, which they considered a subcategory of emotions, referring to the emotions that can only be experienced by humans, and emotions, which can be experienced by humans and other animals equally. The first ones have been called secondary emotions, whereas the second type are primary emotions. Thus, the authors considered that when secondary emotions were denied to a group, their humanness was denied (Demoulin et al., 2004).

However, Haslam (2006) proposed a new theoretical model that affirms the existence of two senses of humanness: human uniqueness (HU) and human nature (HN). The first one refers to the distinction between humans and the rest of animals, and is similar to the Leyens' model. When a person is attributed HU, they are seen as civilized, refined, rational, mature, etc. Nevertheless, this is only one type of humanness; the second one refers to the distinction between humans and inanimate objects such as robots or automaton. When individuals are ascribed HN, they are perceived as emotional, warm, deep, etc. Across three studies, Haslam and his colleagues found evidence to support this model by asking participants to rate the extent to which a number of personality traits were exclusively or uniquely human or an aspect of human nature. In every study, the mean ratings on these items failed to correlate or correlated negatively, consistent with the two senses of humanness (Haslam, Bain, Douge, Lee & Bastian, 2005).

2.1- Dehumanization

There are only a few theoretical approaches that have specified a model of humanness in order to create a model of dehumanization (Haslam, 2006). The first social psychologists systematically studying the phenomenon of dehumanization were Kelman (1976) and Staub (1989). These authors conceptualized dehumanization as the denial of identity, referring to the person's individuality, and community, referring to their belonging to a network of caring relationships. When this happens, individuals become a deindividuated mass, and lack the capacity to evoke compassion. On the other hand, other researchers have conceptualized dehumanization not as the denial of specific attributes, but as an act of exclusion from a moral community. By doing this, people are placed outside the boundaries in which moral values and rules apply, making people indifferent to the suffering and injustice of others (Opatow, 1990). Moreover, dehumanization produces a disengagement of the aggressor's moral self-sanctions, according to Bandura (1999), making the other seem less morally worthy and facilitating aggressive behavior towards them. Schwartz and Struch (1989) proposed a different model in which dehumanization occurred when people are seen as lacking prosocial values or when their values are perceived as incongruent with those of the in-group. These authors found that the Israeli's perceptions of Germans as not attributing high importance to prosocial values were related to the perceptions of their motives as more antagonistic (Schwartz & Struch, 1989).

Similarly, Greenhalgh and Watt (2015) showed that the perception of differences in prosocial and antisocial values led to the dehumanization of asylum seekers in Australia.

Nevertheless, these theories understand dehumanization as phenomenon that happens in conflict situations and is primarily useful to explain acts of violence. This is why a major breakthrough was made when Leyens et al. (2001) established that people tend to perceive out-group members as less human than in-group members, even in the absence of intergroup conflict. They coined the term *infracumanization* to refer to this subtler form of dehumanization. Following research has demonstrated the robustness of this theory using different methods. For instance, with the Implicit Association Task (IAT), they showed that participants associated the in-group more strongly with secondary emotions and the out-group with primary emotions than the reverse (Paladino et al., 2002). In the same way, when using questionnaires asking participants to select the characteristics more typical of the in-group and the out-group, they attributed more secondary emotions to the in-group than the out-group, and there was no difference between groups in the attribution of primary emotions (Leyens et al., 2001). Although research demonstrates this tendency to *infracumanize* the out-group, it does not always occur. Other variables such as ideology might moderate this effect. In a study with white conservative and liberal North-Americans, conservative participants attributed less secondary emotions to the victims of a hurricane when they had a Hispanic name compared to a Caucasian one. While, this difference was not found among liberal participants (DeLuca-McLean & Castano, 2009).

In addition to this theory, Haslam's model of dehumanization, based on his theory of humanness, includes *infracumanization*, the denial of the characteristics that are uniquely human, and the denial of human nature characteristics, the ones that distinguish humans from robots and inanimate objects. A person or group can be dehumanized in any of this two ways, the first one, perceiving them as unintelligent, amoral, irrational, wild, etc., thus as animal-like, was called *animalistic dehumanization*. In the second one, people are perceived as lacking emotion, warmth, vitality, etc., they are seen as object-like, which was called *mechanistic dehumanization* (Haslam, 2006). Plenty of evidence supports this theory, for example: Anglo-Australians denied Chinese people their HN, dehumanizing them in a mechanistic way, whereas Chinese people denied Australians their HU, dehumanizing them in an animalistic manner (Bain, Park, Kwok & Haslam, 2009). Similarly, the distinction between the two forms of dehumanization was demonstrated at an implicit level using the Go/No go Association Task (GNAT). They found that artists, who are judged to be high in HN, were more associated with HN traits and with animals, whilst, business people, who are perceived to be high in HU, were more associated with HU traits and automata (Loughnan & Haslam, 2007).

Dehumanization has very serious consequences ranging from reducing the aid participants are willing to give to the victims of the hurricane when they are *infracumanized* if they have Hispanic names (DeLuca-McLean & Castano, 2009), to the endorsement of violence against black suspects when black people are associated with apes (Goff, Eberhardt, Williams & Jackson, 2008), or men's willingness to rape and sexually harass women when they associate them with either animals or objects (Rudman & Mescher, 2012). Given the negative consequences of dehumanization, finding the process by which dehumanized targets are perceived as equally human has become an essential research issue.

2.2- Humanization

The process of humanization has not been conceptualized explicitly in the literature, however, some researchers have tried to increase the perceptions of humanity in dehumanized groups. In fact, in many studies humanization was operationalized as the reduction of dehumanization. For instance, Costello and Hodson (2010) emphasized the similarity between animals and humans to reduce immigrant dehumanization. As a result there was a re-categorization of immigrants, including them in the same category with Canadians, who were the participants of the study. There was also an increment of empathy towards immigrants, and a reduction of the prejudicial attitudes towards them. Gubler, Halperin and Hirschberger (2015), on the other hand, successfully used the expression of empathy by an out-group member to the suffering of the in-group to reduce the dehumanization of the out-group, in a context of intergroup conflict. Nevertheless, the study conducted by McDonald et al. (2017) operationalized humanization as attributing the “human” quality to the out-group, and they promoted the humanization of the out-group by emphasizing shared emotional experiences between members of both groups. They theorized that the out-group would be perceived as more human-like because it is viewed as more similar to oneself.

2.3- The role of empathy

Empathy is a psychological process in which people are motivated to understand and engage with the feelings and emotions of others (Kerem, Fishman & Josselson, 2001). However, when this term has been applied in research, it was done by referring to four different psychological states. Two of them focus on perspective taking: imagining how one would think and feel in an out-group member’s situation (imagine-self perspective), or imagining how an out-group member thinks and feels in that situation (imagine-other perspective). The other two refer to the emotional response: feeling as an out-group member feels (emotion matching), or feeling for an out-group member (empathic concern). All of them have showed positive effects in intergroup relations, from reducing stereotyping of the out-group to improving the attitudes and feelings towards the out-group, and increasing the readiness to help the out-group (Batson & Ahmad, 2009). In contexts of intergroup conflict, the expression of empathy for the in-group’s suffering by an out-group member was found to increase in-group members’ willingness for reconciliation (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006). In relation to dehumanization, as mentioned before, Gubler et al. (2015) found that the expression of empathy by an out-group member increased the feelings of empathy in the participants, making them humanize the out-group. Similarly, in the study conducted by Capozza, Falvo, Favara and Trifiletti (2013), empathy was one of the elements mediating the relationship between direct and indirect cross-group friendship and a greater attribution of HU to the out-group.

2.4- Current research

Several studies have showed that the boundaries of the moral circle in which people include the entities deemed worthy of their moral concern, is moveable, and its size can contract or dilate as a result of large-scale factors such as war and more subtle influences such as variations in task framing in lab settings (Laham, 2009; Loughnan, Haslam & Bastian, 2010). Considering the moral status is associated with different dimensions of humanness (Bastian, Laham, Wilson, Haslam & Koval, 2011), the possibility of widening the size of the moral circle means it is possible to include dehumanized targets into the human category. Given the negative

consequences of dehumanization and the scarce information about the humanization process found in the literature, it is extremely important to broaden the knowledge in this area.

Therefore, two experimental studies were conducted in order to determine whether the expression of empathy by a member of a dehumanized out-group towards the suffering of the in-group, or by a member of the in-group towards the suffering of the out-group makes the out-group be perceived as more humane. In both studies, the way the person expressing empathy influences the humanization of the out-group is analyzed. The experimental manipulation consisted on a piece of news based on a real story that appeared on the papers after Barcelona's terrorist attack. The real story portrayed a father of one of the victims hugging an imam and sending a message of tolerance. In the first investigation, that story was adapted for the purpose of the study, adapting the statement of the father to express empathy towards Muslims, in one of the experimental conditions. For the second experimental condition, an equivalent statement from the perspective of the imam expressing empathy towards the victims was created. Finally, in the second study, those pieces of news were adapted to the student population, making a student (Muslim or non-Muslim) the protagonist of the story. In this case, the statement was adjusted to make it about a student showing empathy towards the out-group.

3- Study 1

In the first study, three experimental conditions were employed, using a different piece of news in each one. The first experimental condition showed an in-group member expressing empathy for the out-group suffering, the second one showed an out-group member expressing empathy for the in-group suffering, and the control condition was an objective description of a terrorist attack without any characters; these pieces of news can be found in Appendix A, B and C respectively. Two hypotheses were advanced: first, it was hypothesized that the levels of dehumanization would be significantly lower in the two experimental conditions compared to the control condition. Moreover, the second hypothesis was that the level the protagonist of the story is found to be representative of his in-group would be related to the dehumanization of the out-group.

3.1- Method

3.1.1- Participants

The sample consisted in 102 people from different regions of Spain. This was a convenience sample from provinces with a reduced number of Muslims living in them, less than 20.000, according to a report carried out by the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain (Observatorio Andalusi, 2017). This was done in order to have a more homogeneous sample, because Muslim people are the group used as the out-group in this study, and living in a place with more Muslims could act as a strange variable. Participants were 81 women and 21 men, with ages ranging between 16 and 72 ($M = 32.34$, $SD = 14.01$). 66% of the participants' ideology were between the center and the extreme left. Regarding their religious beliefs, 60% were non-believers, 34% Christians and 6% had other religions.

3.1.2- Measures

Attitudes towards Muslims. The attitudes of the participants towards Muslim people were measured with the attitude thermometer in order to test the similarity across experimental groups before the manipulation. The attitude thermometer is a scale ranging from 1 to 9 in which

participants have to rate their feelings towards Muslims, the lower the number, the colder and less favorable the feeling, and the higher the number, the warmer and more favorable the feeling (Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997).

Representativeness. Participants were asked how much each of the characters of the story was representative of their corresponding in-group. They had to answer on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

Empathy towards the protagonists. Batson and colleagues' (2002) scale was used to measure empathy towards each of the characters of the story. Participants answered the following question: "On a scale from 1 = not at all to 7= very much, please indicate how much you felt each of the following emotions towards (name of the person): *sympathetic, compassionate, warm and tender*".

Intergroup empathy. Two items from the Basic Empathy Scale, adapted to refer to Muslims, were used to measure intergroup empathy. Participants had to answer in 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree) to the following sentences: "*I don't care about the feelings of Muslim people, I am indifferent to the tragedies of Muslim people*".

Dehumanization. Levels of dehumanization were analyzed on a 7-point scale asking participants whether a series of traits were more characteristic of Muslim people (-3), more characteristic of people from here (+3), or equally characteristic of both groups (0). Eight items were selected based on prior research suggesting their relevance to perceptions of HU (*Compassionate, Sophisticated, Open-minded*) and HN (*Savage, Irrational, Insensitive, Aggressive, Lacking self-control*) (Haslam, 2006).

Infrahumanization. In order to measure infrahumanization, participants had to rate on a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 = not at all to 7 = very much) how much they thought Muslims experienced various secondary emotions (*Tenderness, Hope, Shame, Love, Guilt, Bitterness*) extracted from Demoulin et al. (2004).

3.1.3- Procedure

Participants were sent an online questionnaire asking them to participate on a research project that was studying people's general knowledge about different cultures. To conceal the purpose of the study, instructions indicated that participants were being asked about many cultural groups, but each participant would be asked about only one culture to reduce their workload. In order to, randomly, select a culture, they had to choose a color, and then they were told the Muslim culture had been selected. Then they had to answer the attitude thermometer, as a pre-test measure, and a few questions about the Muslim culture that were used to deceive people about the purpose of the study. After that, they had to read a piece of news, containing images and text, related to the terrorist attack in Barcelona last August. All of the pieces of news were based on a real event, which was manipulated for the purpose of the study. In the Condition 1, called "father condition", the piece of news showed Javier Martinez, the father of three-year-old Xavi who died in the Barcelona attack, hugging Imam Driss Salym of Rubí and a statement expressing empathy towards Muslims suffering from islamophobia, with sentences such as "*I put myself in the position of the families harassed for being Muslim, and I feel pain for their suffering too. For that reason, I need to hug a Muslim*", where the protagonists showed emotional matching. In his other statement: "*I want that the people who are afraid of being victims of islamophobia know they are not alone, we support them*", the father was expressing empathic

concern. The second condition or “imam condition” was written from the perspective of the imam, who hugged the father of a victim and expressed empathy towards the victims of the terrorist attack, with statements such as: *“I put myself in the families’ position, I think about the suffering they are going through, and I can do nothing but cry”* (emotional matching) and *“I need that the people who are feeling fear and pain know that we share those feelings”* (empathic concern). The control condition, on the other hand, consisted in a report that objectively described the terrorist attack. After reading the text in the experimental conditions, participants had to answer how representative of their in-group each character was, and the Batson and colleagues’ (2002) scale to measure their empathy towards each of the characters. Then, participants in all the conditions had to fulfill the dehumanization, intergroup empathy and inhumanization scales, and a few distracting questions about the number of existing Muslims, in the middle of the questionnaire. Finally, they answered some socio-demographical questions.

3.2- Results

3.2.1- Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the description of the scales. Regarding the correlation coefficients between the study variables indicated in table 2, in the “father condition”, the representativeness of the father positively correlated with the one of the imam, and the empathy towards each of the protagonists was positively related to each other and to humanization. However, in the “imam condition”, the representativeness of the imam was positively related to the empathy towards the imam.

3.2.2- Comparison between the Groups

The ANOVA test indicated there were no significant differences between groups in the attitudes of the participants before the experiment, $F(2,99) = 1.425, p = .24$.

On the other hand, there was a significant difference between the experimental groups in the inhumanization measure, $F(2,99) = 4.487, p = .014$, as it can be appreciated in figure 1. This difference was significant between the imam and control conditions, being the imam group the one that inhumanized less. In addition, T-test indicated the imam group inhumanized Muslims significantly less than the control group, $t(64.7) = 2.9, p = .005$ and the father condition, $t(65) = 2.11, p = .038$.

Moreover, there was a significant difference in the intergroup empathy between groups, $F(2,99) = 4.093, p = .02$, more specifically between the imam, which empathized more, and the control group. However, T-test showed a significant difference between the imam and the control group, $t(56.5) = 2.5, p = .014$, and between the father and the control group, $t(64) = -2, p = .049$, being the imam and father groups the ones that empathized more with Muslims.

Finally, the character of the father was considered significantly more representative of his in-group in the imam condition compared to the father condition, $t(65) = -3.7, p < .001$.

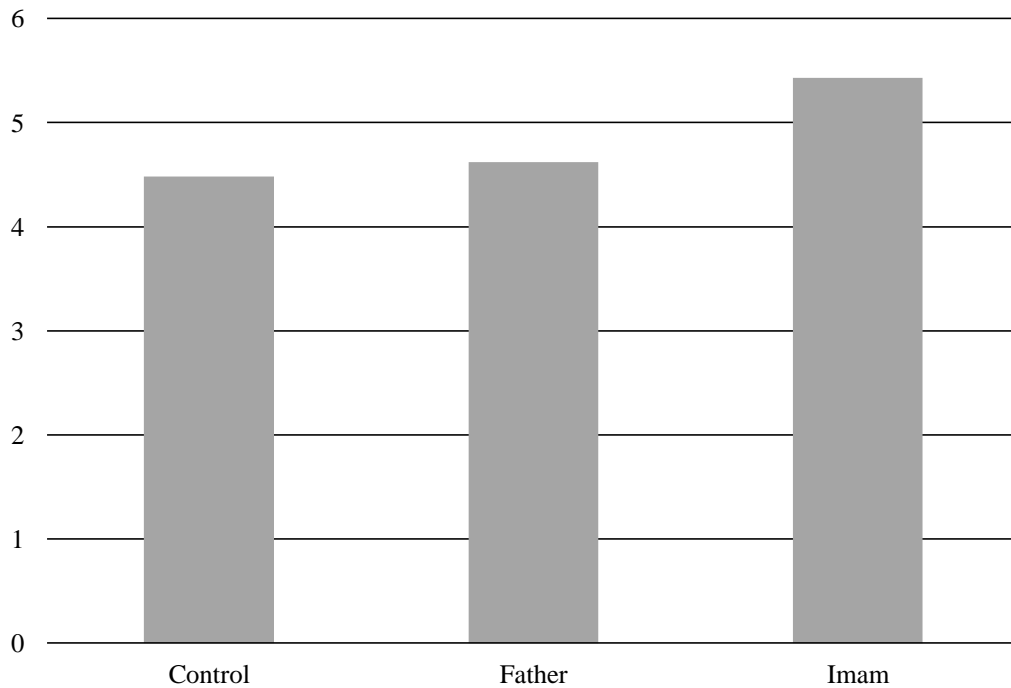


Figure 1. The means in humanization across groups, Study 1

3.3- Discussion

The results showed that the participants in the “imam group” humanized Muslims more than participants in the other conditions did. These findings are in line with the results obtained by Gubler et al. (2015), which demonstrate that the expression of empathy by an out-group member towards the suffering of the in-group decreases out-group dehumanization. This partially confirms the first hypothesis; however, the father condition did not show a significant difference with the control condition in dehumanization. This could be due to the father not being considered very representative of his in-group (Spaniards). He was considered significantly less representative of his in-group in the condition where he expressed empathy towards the out-group, perhaps because hugging a Muslim was not considered a typical behavior of the in-group.

Regarding the second hypothesis, the representativeness of the character is related to dehumanization precisely in the father condition. This could explain why participants in that condition did not dehumanize less the out-group; it was because the member of the in-group expressing empathy towards the out-group was not representative of the in-group. It could be because the action of hugging an imam was considered too far from normal behavior, and that resulted in the father not being found representative of his in-group. In order to test this hypothesis a second experimental study was conducted. Furthermore, second hypothesis was not confirmed completely, because the representativeness of the imam was not related to dehumanization in the imam condition. This could occur due to other variables influencing whether a member of the out-group expressing empathy towards the in-group increases the humanization of the out-group. Study 2 was conducted to attain a better understanding of these results.

4- Study 2

The aim of this study is to find out how the typicality of the in-group member expressing empathy influences the dehumanization of the out-group. Due to the results obtained in Study 1 about the representativeness of the father, in this study, there were two experimental conditions with the member of the in-group as the protagonist in order to test the hypothesis that hugging someone of the out-group is not considered representative of the in-group. For this reason, four experimental conditions were used. In the first one, a typical non-Muslim student expressed empathy towards the out-group, in the second one, an atypical non-Muslim student expressed empathy towards the out-group, and the third one was a Muslim student expressing empathy towards the in-group; these can be found in Appendix D, E and F respectively. The fourth one was the control condition, similar to the one in Study 1. The first hypothesis was that the typical student would be considered more representative of his in-group than the atypical student. Moreover, the second hypothesis was that the representativeness of the character and the identification with him would be related to more humanization of the out-group.

4.1- Method

4.1.1- Participants

The sample consisted in 144 students from the Complutense University of Madrid. Participants were 65% women and 35% men, with ages ranging between 19 and 54 ($M = 22.73$, $SD = 4.8$). 47% of the participants' ideology is between the center and the extreme left. Regarding their religious beliefs, 57% were non-believers, 36% Christians and 7% had other religions. 85% of the participants were Spanish, and the other 15% had been in Spain for more than 5 years.

4.1.2- Measures

Attitudes towards Muslims. Similar to Study 1.

Representative of their in-group. Participants answered the same question as in Study 1 about the only character of the story. In addition, they answered how much this character was similar to the rest of the students, using the same 5-point Likert scale.

Identification with the character. Participants were asked how much similar to the character of the story they were, and they answered using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

Empathy. Batson and colleagues' (2002) question was used to measure empathy towards the student of the story and towards Muslims in general. The two items from the Basic Empathy Scale were also used.

Dehumanization. Animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization were measured with the same items as in Study 1, but in this case the question was how characteristic are those traits among Muslim people, using a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 = not at all to 7 = very much).

Infrahumanization. Similar to Study 1.

4.1.3- Procedure

In this study, participants completed a very similar questionnaire as reported in Study 1, but in this case, they completed the questionnaire in class, using paper and pencil method. The only difference with the one used in first study was piece of news used and the questions related to the similarity of the character with their in-group and the participant. In addition, after reading the piece of news, participants answered about the empathy they had felt towards the only character and towards Muslims in general. In the first experimental condition called “typical student condition”, a non-Muslim student expressed empathy towards Muslims suffering using the following statements: *“I put myself in the position of the people harassed for being Muslim, and I am in pain for their suffering (expressing emotional matching). Because, like many of us, I know what is like to be harassed and I can imagine the pain they feel. I think it is important to do everything so that those people do not have fear”*, in this section, the protagonist was showing the type of cognitive empathy called imagine self-perspective. In another statement *“I want the people who are afraid of suffering islamophobic attacks know that they are not alone, we support them”*, the student expressed empathic concern. In the second condition called “atypical student condition”, a non-Muslim student expressed empathy and the desire to hug a Muslim. In this case, the student declared: *“I put myself in the position of the people harassed for being Muslim, and I am in pain for their suffering. That is why I want to hug a Muslim and tell him not to be afraid”*, here the student was showing emotional matching. The third condition called “Muslim student condition” showed a Muslim student expressing empathy towards the victims of the terrorist attack using the same sentences as the ones of the imam in Study 1. The control condition was the same as in Study 1.

4.2- Results

First of all, in order to carry out the analyses of this study, the outliers were eliminated using the method described by Leys, Ley, Klein, Bernard and Licata (2013), which implicates the absolute deviation from the median. In this case, 2.5 deviations from the media were used to detect the outliers. Consequently, 11 individuals were considered outliers, leaving a sample of 133 participants.

4.2.1- Descriptive Statistics

The characteristics of the scales are indicated on table 3. Table 4 shows all the correlation coefficients, being the most noteworthy the fact that in the two experimental conditions with a non-Muslim student, the identification with the character was related to empathy towards Muslims and less dehumanization. Nonetheless, in the Muslim student condition, the representativeness of the character was associated with more empathy towards Muslims and less dehumanization. More importantly, the regression analyses showed that in the typical as well as the atypical student conditions the identification with the character predicted more empathy towards Muslims and less dehumanization. Meanwhile, in the Muslim student condition the representativeness of the character predicted more empathy and less dehumanization.

4.2.2- Comparison between the Groups

The ANOVA test indicates there were no significant differences between groups in the attitudes of the participants before the experiment, $F(3,116) = .466, p = .707$.

Regarding the differences in dehumanization showed in figure 2, it was found that in the condition of the atypical student the participants dehumanized the out-group significantly less than in the control, $t(63) = 2.53, p = .014$. Thus, the participants in the atypical student condition punctuated significantly less in animalistic [$t(63) = 2.5, p = .016$], as well as mechanistic [$t(63) = 2.08, p = .041$] dehumanization.

Finally, the Muslim student was considered significantly more representative of his in-group than the typical [$t(66) = -4.31, p < .000$] and atypical [$t(62) = -6.29, p < .000$] students. Similarly, the typical student was considered significantly more representative than the atypical student, $t(60) = 2.06, p = .044$.

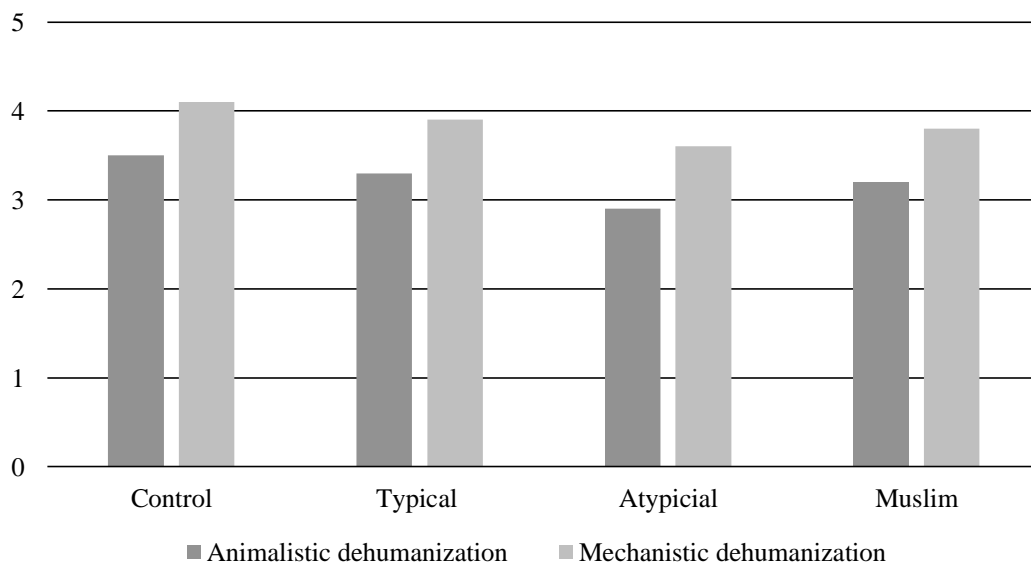


Figure 2. The means in dehumanization across groups, Study 2

4.3- Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the first hypothesis is confirmed. The typical student was considered more representative of his in-group than the atypical student. This could explain why in the previous study the father was not considered representative of his in-group. However, there were no significant differences between the typical student and the control condition in dehumanization, the atypical student condition was the only one with significant differences. One possible reason for this result could be the fact that in this study the typical student used cognitive empathy as well as affective empathy, whereas the atypical only showed affective empathy. Perhaps the exclusive use of affective empathy is more effective to reduce dehumanization.

Regarding the second hypothesis, the results demonstrate the representativeness of the character predicts the humanization of the out-group, when the character expressing empathy belongs to the out-group, but not when it belongs to the in-group. It was also found that when a member of the in-group expresses empathy towards the out-group, it is the identification with this member what predicts humanization of the out-group. This suggests that different mechanisms

are activated depending on whether the person expressing empathy is a member of the in-group or the out-group.

5- General Discussion

The main purpose of this investigation was to test if a dehumanized out-group could be humanized by an in-group member showing empathy towards the out-group's suffering, and by an out-group member showing empathy towards the in-group's suffering. The findings of both studies indicate this is possible, but depending on the characteristics of the in-group and out-group member who is expressing empathy.

It was found that an in-group member expressing empathy towards the out-group makes people humanize more the out-group. This is in line with the study of Capozza et al. (2013), in which extended contact between in-group and out-group individuals increased the humanization of the out-group. Nevertheless, this only happens when people identify themselves with that in-group member. This might be explained by recent findings demonstrating that the identification with characters is one of the most critical components of narrative persuasion (Tukachinsky & Tokunaga, 2013). As Cohen (2006) posited, identification is an opportunity to try on other identities and adopt the feelings and thoughts of others. Several studies have showed that identification with the character leads people to change their attitudes making them more similar to those of that character (Igartua & Vega Casanova, 2016).

Furthermore, an out-group member showing empathy towards the in-group can also increase the humanization of the out-group. In this case, our results suggest that the protagonist has to be considered representative of their in-group. As Richards and Hewstone (2001) explained, with an outgroup member who is typical and representative of their own group, the risk of subtyping is lower. Hence, the positive characteristics of this out-group member are not considered an exception, leaving the evaluation of the whole group unaltered. Other studies have also demonstrated the role of the representativeness of the out-group member in promoting generalization effects to the whole out-group (Visintin, Birtel & Crisp, 2017).

Nonetheless, both studies present some limitations. For instance, both studies have small samples, which can affect the results obtained. Moreover, the second study was conducted among university students, which limits the generalization of the results. For these reasons, future investigations should use larger samples and carry out the experiments across different populations. Another limitation is that all the variables were measured using self-reports, meaning the answers might be biased. Hence, future studies could utilize other type of instruments such as IATs to avoid social desirability effects.

Despite its limitations, these findings have significant implications in the reduction of dehumanization. It demonstrates the way the media portrays people from the out-group and the in-group influences how humane the out-group is perceived. Nonetheless, to know the exact mechanisms underlying the process of humanization, future research should investigate how the variables of these studies or other variables mediate this process.

In conclusion, this study broadens our knowledge about the factors that lead to the humanization of the out-group, which is extremely important in order to develop the most effective interventions for each population.

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Table 1

Description of scales in Study 1

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Items	α
Attitudes towards Muslims	5.93	1.84	1	
Representative father	3.09	1.05	1	
Representative imam	3.73	.94	1	
Empathy towards father	4.08	1.78	4	.96
Empathy towards imam	3.74	1.87	4	.96
Intergroup empathy	4.27	.92	2	.58
Infrahumanization	4.86	1.49	6	.92

Table 2

Correlation coefficients between the variables of the Study 1

	1	2	3	4	5	6
F 1. Representative father	1					
A 2. Representative imam	.37*	1				
T 3. Empathy towards father	-.03	.18	1			
H 4. Empathy towards imam	.06	.26	.94**	1		
E 5. Intergroup empathy	-.08	.25	.14	.23	1	
R 6. Infrahumanization	-.10	-.05	.35*	.41*	.19	1
I 1. Representative father	1					
M 2. Representative imam	.18	1				
A 3. Empathy towards father	.12	.31	1			
M 4. Empathy towards imam	.06	.40*	.90**	1		
M 5. Intergroup empathy	.10	.24	.20	.14	1	
6. Infrahumanization	-.10	.22	.27	.16	.10	1

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3

Description of scales in Study 2

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Items	α
Attitudes towards Muslims	5.88	1.74	1	
Representative in-group	3.09	1.13	1	
Identification with the character	4.11	.84	1	
Empathy towards student	4.81	1.1	4	.73
Empathy towards Muslims	4.69	1.14	4	.82
Animalistic dehumanization	3.29	1.07	5	.88
Mechanistic dehumanization	3.89	.9	3	.64

Table 4

Correlation coefficients between the variables of the Study 2

T		1	2	3	4	5	6
Y	1. Representative in-group	1					
P	2. Identification character	.24	1				
I	3. Empathy towards student	.09	.47**	1			
C	4. Empathy towards Muslims	.22	.62**	.57**	1		
A	5. Animalistic dehumanization	.08	-.39*	-.28	-.36	1	
L	6. Mechanistic dehumanization	.00	-.52**	-.21	-.55**	.58**	1
A							
T	1. Representative in-group	1					
Y	2. Identification character	.26	1				
P	3. Empathy towards student	.40*	.19	1			
I	4. Empathy towards Muslims	.31	.63**	.55**	1		
C	5. Animalistic dehumanization	-.06	-.60**	-.31	-.64**	1	
A	6. Mechanistic dehumanization	-.24	-.51**	-.35	-.65**	.65**	1
L							
M	1. Representative in-group	1					
U	2. Identification character	.43**	1				
S	3. Empathy towards student	.17	.35	1			
L	4. Empathy towards Muslims	.29	.34	.71**	1		
I	5. Animalistic dehumanization	-.19	-.11	-.26	-.37	1	
M	6. Mechanistic dehumanization	-.36*	-.12	-.41*	-.43*	.72**	1

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Appendix A

El padre de una de las víctimas del atentado de Barcelona abraza al imam de Rubí



Cerca de 700 personas se concentraron este jueves en la plaza del ayuntamiento de Rubí en una nueva concentración contra el terrorismo y en recuerdo de los dos vecinos del municipio, un niño de 3 años y a su tío-abuelo, que murieron en el atentado de La Rambla de Barcelona hace una semana.

Javier Martínez, el padre de Xavi, el niño de tres años fallecido en este atentado terrorista, ha abrazado al imam de Rubí, Dris Salym, en un gesto de compasión y solidaridad.

En sus primeras declaraciones tras este acto, Javier comenta: **“Me pongo en el lugar de las familias acosadas por ser musulmanas y me siento también dolido por su sufrimiento. Por eso, necesito darle un abrazo a un musulmán. Que esa gente no tenga miedo. Necesito hacerlo”**.

Con este acto quiere mostrar el carácter acogedor y compasivo de la comunidad catalana y su rechazo a la violencia y al odio. **“Quiero que las personas que temen sufrir ataques islamófobos sepan que no están solos, nosotros les apoyamos”**.

El acto, que ha llevado como lema 'Rubí no té por', ha acabado con un minuto de silencio, acompañado de la pieza musical del 'Cant dels ocells' de Pau Casals.

Appendix B

El imam de Rubí abraza al padre de una de las víctimas del atentado de Barcelona



Cerca de 700 personas se concentraron este jueves en la plaza del ayuntamiento de Rubí en una nueva concentración contra el terrorismo y en recuerdo de los dos vecinos del municipio, un niño de 3 años y a su tío-abuelo, que murieron en el atentado de La Rambla de Barcelona hace una semana.

El imam de Rubí, Dris Salym, ha abrazado a Javier Martínez, el padre de Xavi, el niño de tres años fallecido en este atentado terrorista, en un gesto de compasión y solidaridad.

En sus primeras declaraciones tras este acto, el imam comenta: **“Me pongo en el lugar de las familias, pienso en el sufrimiento por el que están pasando y sólo puedo llorar”**.

Con este acto quiere mostrar, que a pesar de los ataques islamófobos, la comunidad musulmana mantiene su carácter acogedor y compasivo y su rechazo a la violencia y el odio. **“Necesito que las personas que ahora sienten miedo y dolor, sepan que compartimos esos sentimientos”**.

El acto, que ha llevado como lema 'Rubí no té por', ha acabado con un minuto de silencio, acompañado de la pieza musical del 'Cant dels ocells' de Pau Casals.

Appendix C

Un atentado terrorista en Barcelona provoca al menos 13 muertos



El Estado Islámico golpeó ayer el corazón de **Barcelona** y dejó al menos 13 muertos y más de 100 heridos en el **atentado** más grave que sufre España desde el 11-M. A las 16.50 horas, una furgoneta se lanzó contra los centenares de personas que se encontraban en La Rambla. Los Mossos confirmaron que se trata de un atentado coordinado. El autor material del atropello masivo se dio a la fuga y sigue en paradero desconocido.

El ataque dejó decenas de cuerpos inertes en La Rambla y provocó escenas de pánico. “Caminábamos hacia allí cuando hemos visto cómo una furgoneta blanca empezaba a atropellar a gente. Hemos visto ciclistas saltando por los aires, gente saltando por los aires... Ha sido horrible”, explicaba Ellen Vercamm, una turista belga que fue testigo directa del atropello.

El último balance, según la Generalitat, era de 13 muertos y más de 100 heridos. Los heridos, de múltiples nacionalidades, fueron repartidos por hospitales de la ciudad. El consejero de Interior, Joaquim Forn, anoche no descartó que la cifra de heridos pueda aumentar. Tampoco la de fallecidos, puesto que muchos de ellos estaban hospitalizados graves. Tras el atentado, los mensajes y rumores de carácter islamóforo y racista inundaron las redes. Hoy mismo, varias formaciones de ultraderecha han intentado manifestarse en La Rambla de Barcelona, reivindicando la expulsión de los musulmanes, de España.

Appendix D

Estudiantes de la UCM manifiestan su rechazo a los ataques islamófobos surgidos tras el atentado de Barcelona

Varias asociaciones estudiantiles de la UCM han firmado un manifiesto expresando su rechazo a todas las reacciones xenófobas e islamófobas, así como a las agresiones ejercidas contra personas musulmanas, tras el atentado de La Rambla de Barcelona, el pasado 17 de agosto.

Un estudiante de la universidad de 20 años, miembro de una de estas asociaciones, ha hecho las siguientes declaraciones con respecto a este manifiesto:

“Me pongo en el lugar de las personas acosadas por ser musulmanas y me siento dolido por su sufrimiento. Porque yo, igual que muchos de nosotros, sé lo que es ser acosado y no me cuesta imaginar el dolor que sienten. Creo que es importante hacer todo lo necesario para que esa gente no tenga miedo”.

Con este manifiesto se pretende mostrar el carácter acogedor y compasivo de los estudiantes de esta universidad y su rechazo a la violencia y al odio. Como él mismo ha expresado:

“Quiero que las personas que temen sufrir ataques islamófobos sepan que no están solos, nosotros les apoyamos”.

Appendix E

Estudiantes de la UCM manifiestan su rechazo a los ataques islamófobos surgidos tras el atentado de Barcelona

Varias asociaciones estudiantiles de la UCM han firmado un manifiesto expresando su rechazo a todas las reacciones xenófobas e islamófobas, así como a las agresiones ejercidas contra personas musulmanas, tras el atentado de La Rambla de Barcelona, el pasado 17 de agosto.

Un estudiante de la universidad de 20 años, miembro de una de estas asociaciones, ha hecho las siguientes declaraciones con respecto a este manifiesto:

“Me pongo en el lugar de las personas acosadas por ser musulmanas y me siento dolido por su sufrimiento. Por eso, quiero darle un abrazo a un musulmán y decirle que no tenga miedo”.

Con este manifiesto se pretende mostrar el carácter acogedor y compasivo de los estudiantes de esta universidad y su rechazo a la violencia y al odio. Como él mismo ha expresado:

“Quiero que las personas que temen sufrir ataques islamófobos sepan que no están solos, nosotros les apoyamos”.

Appendix F

Estudiantes de la UCM se manifiestan contra el terrorismo y en favor de una convivencia pacífica

Una asociación de estudiantes musulmanes de la UCM ha organizado una concentración contra el terrorismo y todo tipo de violencia y en recuerdo de las víctimas del atentado de La Rambla de Barcelona, del pasado 17 de agosto.

Un estudiante musulmán de la universidad de 20 años, miembro de una de estas asociaciones, ha hecho las siguientes declaraciones con respecto a esta concentración:

“Me pongo en el lugar de las familias de las víctimas, pienso en el sufrimiento por el que están pasando y sólo puedo llorar”.

Con esta concentración se pretende mostrar el carácter acogedor y compasivo de la comunidad musulmana y su rechazo a la violencia y al odio. Como él mismo ha expresado:

“Necesito que las personas que ahora sienten dolor, sepan que nosotros, los musulmanes compartimos ese sentimiento”.