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# Experiencing Dehumanization: Cognitive and Emotional Effects of Everyday Dehumanization

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# Experiencing Dehumanization: Cognitive and Emotional Effects of Everyday Dehumanization

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Research into dehumanization has focused on its perpetrators and neglected the experience of its targets. Across two studies we present evidence that people experience interactions as dehumanizing when other people's behavior undermines basic elements of personhood, such as identity and status. These experiences have cognitive and emotional consequences. Two forms of experienced dehumanization were apparent. In one, a failure to recognize the target's equal status is associated with aversive self-awareness and feelings of shame and guilt. In the other, a failure to recognize the target's basic existence as a person is associated with cognitive deconstructive states and feelings of sadness and anger.

Every day we are subject to any number of relational slights. Our boss may forget our name for the 10th time, apparently get distracted when we pitch a new idea, or talk to us in a condescending manner. Perhaps a friend ruffles our hair and tells us to stop being so oversensitive, or appears embarrassed by us in the presence of others. These subtle forms of interpersonal maltreatment, often evident in looks, gestures, and tones of voice, may appear innocent and innocuous, but for the target their impact can be far from trivial (e.g., Hinton, 2004; Sue et al., 2007). Being treated with subtle disrespect, condescension, neglect, and everyday thoughtlessness can leave us feeling degraded, invalidated, or demoralized, outcomes that we argue have implications for our experience of ourselves as human.

The fact that subtle forms of dehumanization can occur within everyday social interactions has already received support from research on social ostracism (Bastian & Haslam, 2010). However, people may feel dehumanized in response to a broader range of commonplace indignities. Uncovering the varied forms subtle dehumanization takes may provide a number of new insights and research directions. First, previous research has traditionally focused on how perceivers deny humanness to others (e.g., Haslam, Bain, Douge, Lee, & Bastian, 2005; Leyens et al., 2001), largely neglecting the *target*'s perspective. The one exception is the work of Bastian and Haslam (2010), who demonstrated that people view themselves as less human when they have been socially excluded. Second, focusing on the *experience* of dehumanization allows for an investigation of its psychological effects. Although it is not surprising that being dehumanized might affect psychological functioning, there has been no research detailing its effects. Third, previous research has focused on perceptions of the self or perceptions of others as the targets of dehumanization, but none has focused specifically on perceptions of different kinds of *interpersonal behavior* and how this behavior may be viewed as dehumanizing.

Recent work on dehumanization provides a convenient conceptual model for researching the experience of everyday dehumanization. This model proposes that there are two dimensions of humanness that may be denied to others (Haslam, 2006). "Human Uniqueness" refers to attributes that are seen as distinguishing humans from other animals and involves refinement,

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civility, morality, and higher cognition (cf. Leyens et al., 2001). ''Human Nature'' refers to attributes that are seen as shared and fundamental features of humanity, such as emotionality, warmth, and cognitive flexibility. When Human Uniqueness attributes are denied to people, they are explicitly or implicitly likened to animals and seen as childlike, immature, coarse, irrational, or backward. When Human Nature attributes are denied to people, they are explicitly or implicitly likened to objects or machines and seen as cold, rigid, inert, and lacking emotion.

This model of dehumanization is useful for the current research in a number of important ways. First, this model allows us to investigate dehumanization within everyday interpersonal contexts by focusing on its subtle forms. Second, it highlights two different ways people can be dehumanized, allowing for a differentiated approach to the investigation of dehumanizing experiences. Third, it provides an account of the characteristics that compose the two kinds of humanness and the consequences of their denial, highlighting implications not only for person perception but also for associated features such as affective responses, cognition, and empathy.

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## DEHUMANIZING MALTREATMENTS

From the point of view of targets, dehumanization results from behaviors that perpetrators enact toward them and is therefore located within forms of interpersonal treatment (''maltreatments''). Maltreatments may be extreme. A person may be literally treated like an animal, undeserving of moral regard (e.g., Goff, Eberhardt, Williams, & Jackson, 2008; Opotow, 1990). However, as we note, even common forms of maltreatment have the capacity to subtly undermine a victim's sense of his or her own humanity (Bastian & Haslam, 2010). Of importance, this is not to say that all negative interactions are likely to be experienced as dehumanizing. For example, angry conflicts may have negative relational effects without leading participants to feel they have been dehumanized. We argue that people may feel that their personhood has been brought into question when they are treated as unequal, as disrespected, or as if their identity or existence is not socially valuable (Honneth, 1992; Sapontzis, 1981).

By drawing on a model of dehumanization, we endeavor to add to the literature on interpersonal maltreatment in two ways. First, we aim to demonstrate that common forms of maltreatment (e.g., disrespect, relational slights, or patronizing interactions) not only are aversive but also may lead people to feel their humanity has been undermined. There is an extensive literature on interpersonal maltreatments including the adverse affects of being denied autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000), betrayed (Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002), humiliated (Miller, 1993), socially excluded (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Bartels, 2007), or not recognized as a person (Honneth, 1992). Terms such as microaggression, microinvalidation, and microinequity have been used to describe these subtle and sometimes unconsciously perpetuated forms of everyday interpersonal maltreatment (e.g., Hinton, 2004; Sue et al., 2007). Although this literature is explicit in highlighting the significance of each of these maltreatments, no previous work has explicitly examined whether these interactions are understood as dehumanizing. Second, by drawing on a two-dimensional model of dehumanization we aim to provide a conceptual framework for distinguishing between different features of common maltreatment. There is no existing taxonomy of the many forms of interpersonal maltreatment, and the two dimensions of dehumanization may help to integrate the diverse literatures on this topic.

In outlining his two-dimensional model of dehumanization, Haslam (2006) identified a number of maltreatment characteristics that may be especially relevant to each dimension. Being likened to animals (i.e., denied uniquely human attributes) is associated with being viewed by others as lowered or debased and therefore as lacking status (Miller, 1997; Rozin, Haidt, & McCauley, 2000). Maltreatments that lead to a loss of status may include disrespect, condescension, a denial of autonomy, or being treated as hopeless and stupid, whereas being degraded and humiliated are likely to be associated with a sense that one is demeaned, eliciting disgust, revulsion, shame, and contempt from others (Rozin et al., 2000).

On the other hand, being likened to machines (i.e., denied human nature attributes) involves emotional distancing in which the target is seen as cold and emotionally inert. From the target's perspective, being dehumanized in this way is likely to involve a sense that others lack empathy, feel indifference rather than disgust, and have psychologically distanced themselves by excluding the target. Being treated in these ways is therefore likely to elicit a sense that one's existence is unimportant and one's identity as a person has been denied. Indeed, Bastian and Haslam (2010) demonstrated that being socially ostracized is linked to this mechanistic form of dehumanization. Other forms of maltreatment associated with this type of dehumanization may involve the target being treated as an object or as a means to an end, such as in exploitation, betrayal, or conditional regard. Overall, people may perceive themselves as having been dehumanized in a wide variety of everyday interactions and interpersonal contexts.

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## EXPERIENCING DEHUMANIZATION

Previous work (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Finkel et al., 2002; Miller, 1993) has demonstrated the deleterious effects of interpersonal maltreatment. By focusing on a two-dimensional model of dehumanization, we attempt to explore whether these two dimensions could differentiate people's cognitive and emotional responses to maltreatment experiences. In this way we also aim to provide insight into how people respond psychologically to having their humanity subtly undermined.

*Cognitive responses* to interpersonal maltreatment have been investigated within the literature on social exclusion. This work shows that people enter into "cognitive deconstructive" states when excluded (Twenge, Catanese, & Baumeister, 2003). These involve emotional numbing, reduced empathy, cognitive inflexibility, and an absence of meaningful thought. These states represent a defense against the emotional distress and aversive self-awareness that follows social exclusion (Baumeister, 1990) and have also been noted by Williams (2001), who found that people respond to ostracism with numbness and a narrowly concrete focus on the immediate present. With links already established between mechanistic dehumanization and social ostracism (Bastian & Haslam, 2010), we expected that maltreatments in which people feel they have been denied Human Nature will be associated with cognitive deconstructive states. On the other hand, perceived denial of Human Uniqueness is expected to be associated with the sense that one is debased, contaminated, and disgusting (Haslam, 2006). We therefore predict that people's cognitions, rather than shutting down, will be characterized by aversive self-awareness, representing the self as undesirable and unworthy. Loss of status through maltreatment by others is also often a source of self-blame (Vohs, Baumeister, & Chin, 2007). Being debased and losing status are both likely to lead to self-conscious cognition.

*Emotional responses* to the perception of being dehumanized have been theoretically aligned with animalistic dehumanization and involve feelings of shame and guilt (Haslam, 2006) due to the perception that one is the object of contempt and disgust (see also Giner-Sorolla & Espinosa, 2011). These kinds of self-conscious emotional responses would also be expected based on the notion that people feel responsible for allowing themselves to be treated in ways that lower their status or relative outcomes (Vohs et al., 2007). Furthermore, self-conscious cognitions have been directly linked to feelings of shame and guilt (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007; Tracey & Robins, 2006), suggesting an alignment of our cognitive and emotional predictions. On the other hand, rejection has been linked to hostility (Leary, Twenge, & Quinlivan, 2006), and people often feel angry toward nonresponsive or rejecting interaction partners (Butz & Plant, 2006). In addition to anger, Richman and Leary (2009) have suggested that the signature emotion associated with rejection is "hurt" due to the sense that relational partners do not value the relationship as much as the target of rejection would like. On this basis we would expect both anger and sadness to arise when being treated as a nonperson (e.g., mechanistic dehumanization) due to feelings of relational loss.

We investigated the cognitive and emotional aspects of the experience of dehumanization in two studies. In Study 1 we investigated whether the two-dimensional model of dehumanization clarifies the structure of everyday maltreatments, drawing on a large number of everyday negative interpersonal interactions. Just as the two dimensions of dehumanization are evident in people's perceptions of others, we predicted that they would be evident in targets' perceptions of a range of interpersonal maltreatments. In this study we examined whether perceptions of maltreatments as dehumanizing were associated with the proposed experiential (cognitive and emotional) features. In Study 2, we employed an experience-recall design, allowing for an analysis of the implications of the two forms of dehumanization.

## STUDY 1

Study 1 aimed to show that the two dimensions of dehumanization (Haslam, 2006) are evident in a broad range of everyday interactions that involve subtle forms of maltreatment.

We constructed vignettes that described a broad and diverse range of everyday and relatively subtle interpersonal maltreatments. The second aim of the study was to begin uncovering the experiential consequences of each kind of maltreatment by asking participants to rate its cognitive and emotional effects. The design of this study allowed us to explore our basic hypotheses that (a) the two dimensions of dehumanization are evident within social interactions and (b) that each has particular cognitive and emotional implications—specifically, that animalistic dehumanization is associated with self-conscious cognition and emotion and mechanistic dehumanization with cognitive deconstructive states and anger and sadness.

### Method

#### *Participants*

Sixty-nine students (51 female) participated in the research as partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

Their ages ranged from 17 to 37 years ($M = 19.18$, $SD = 2.65$).

### Materials

Participants completed a questionnaire that required them to rate a randomized set of 12 vignettes (taken from a set of 52; see Appendix A) describing different ways of being treated badly by another person (see Appendix B for examples). All forms of maltreatment were identified through a thorough literature search drawing on a broad range of sources. Each of the 26 identified maltreatment types was represented by two vignettes. For each vignette, participants were instructed to "vividly imagine" themselves in each scenario and to try and "picture a time" that this had happened to them. All responses were provided on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much so*).

*Cognition.* Participants rated the extent to which each maltreatment led to cognitive deconstructive states (adapted from Twenge et al., 2003; four items; e.g., "I would find it hard to think clearly"; $\alpha = .95$) and items relating to aversive self-awareness (adapted from Tracey et al., 2006; three items; e.g., "I would feel self-conscious"; $\alpha = .68$).

*Emotion.* Participants rated how they would feel on seven emotions. Items related to anger/sadness (four items; e.g., "I would feel angry/contemptuous/disgusted/sad") and shame/guilt (three items; e.g., "I would feel shameful/embarrassed/guilty").

*Dehumanization.* Finally, we asked participants to rate each vignette on 10 items assessing their experience of dehumanization, drawing on the concepts associated with the denial of each dimension (from Haslam, 2006). These included qualities associated with a denial of Human Uniqueness (five items; e.g., "The other person sees me as immature/unintelligent/unsophisticated/incompetent/is treating me as if I was child") and a denial of Human Nature (five items; e.g., "The other person doesn't see me as an individual/sees me in a superficial way/is treating me as a means to an end/is treating me as if I were an object/sees me as having no feelings").

### Procedure

Participants completed the questionnaire in a laboratory space in groups of 10 to 15 under the supervision of an experimenter. The task took approximately 60 min to complete.

## Results

For all analyses, maltreatment vignettes were the level of analysis ($N = 52$). Analyses were therefore conducted on the mean ratings of each vignette across the random subsample of participants ($Mn = 15.9$) who rated it. First, to determine whether the two dimensions of dehumanization were evident in our sample of everyday maltreatments, we conducted principal components analyses of the 10 perceived dehumanization items. This revealed two factors, one clearly relating to a denial of Human Uniqueness (including all five items) and the other clearly relating to a denial of Human Nature (including all five items), accounting for 67.2% of variance. Each item loaded highly (>.54) and solely onto its proposed factor. Measures of dehumanization were constructed by combining the items relating to each dimension (Human Uniqueness: $\alpha = .89$; Human Nature: $\alpha = .86$; $r = .19$, $p > .05$).[1]

Responses to the emotion items were also factor analyzed revealing two dimensions accounting for 77.4% of variance and relating to anger/sadness (four items; "I would feel angry/contemptuous/disgusted/sad") and shame/guilt (three items; "I would feel shameful/embarrassed/guilty"). These items were combined to form measures of anger/sadness ($\alpha = .90$) and shame/guilt ($\alpha = .75$).

The measures of cognition and emotion were then regressed on the dehumanization dimensions (see Table 1). For the cognitive effects, the overall model for cognitive deconstructive states was significant, $F(2, 49) = 15.48$, $p < .001$, but only denial of Human Nature was a significant predictor. For aversive self-awareness the overall model was again significant, $F(2, 49) = 4.41$, $p < .05$, but only denial of Human Uniqueness was a significant predictor. For the emotion effects, the overall model for anger/sadness was

[1]To link our dehumanization dimensions to theoretically interesting maltreatment characteristics, such as whether the behavior was perceived to affect status or dignity, we also asked participants to rate each maltreatment on two theoretically important dimensions relating to the extent to which they felt they were not treated with dignity, respect, and as equal in status (eight items; e.g., "The other person sees me as inferior," "I would feel I was not treated with respect," "I had lost my dignity"; Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$), and the extent to which they felt others had distanced themselves or failed to value their identity or existence (adapted from Zadro, Williams, & Richardson, 2004; nine items; e.g., "I would feel disconnected," "I would feel like my existence didn't really matter," "I would feel like the other person ignores my interests"; $\alpha = .93$). When we regressed each characteristic of the maltreatment onto the two dehumanization dimensions, this revealed a significant model for denial of identity, $F(2, 49) = 64.50$, $p < .001$, with both Human Uniqueness and Human Nature significant predictors, but Human Nature substantially stronger. The model for denial of status was also significant, $F(2, 49) = 61.88$, $p < .001$, and both Human Uniqueness and Human Nature were significantly and equally associated.

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TABLE 1
Beta Weights for Regressions Predicting Maltreatment Responses With Dimensions of Dehumanization: Human Uniqueness (HU) and Human Nature (HN), Study 1

| *Dependent Variable* | *HU Denial* | *HN Denial* |
|---|---|---|
| Cognitive effects | | |
| Deconstructive states | .23 | .54*** |
| Aversive self-awareness | .39** | −.01 |
| Emotional effects | | |
| Anger/sadness | .17 | .75*** |
| Shame/guilt | .41** | .13 |

**$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

significant, $F(2, 49) = 42.79$, $p < .001$, and only denial of Human Nature was a significant predictor. For shame/guilt emotions the overall model was also significant, $F(2, 49) = 6.35$, $p < .01$, and only denial of Human Uniqueness was a significant predictor.

## Discussion

Study 1 provides promising initial insight into the experience of dehumanization. First, a diverse range of everyday subtle maltreatments can be characterized and differentiated by the two-dimensional model of dehumanization (Haslam, 2006). This demonstrates that experiences of everyday dehumanization from the standpoint of the target can be understood and organized in terms of the same dimensions that illuminate dehumanizing perceptions of others from the standpoint of the perpetrator. Critically, we also found that by organizing a wide range of interpersonal maltreatments in these ways, there was a clear pattern of associated cognitive and emotional effects.

Denials of Human Uniqueness were related to aversive self-awareness involving negative evaluation of the self and feeling responsible for one's reduced status. This is consistent with the notion that animalistic forms of dehumanization are related to debasement (Haslam, 2006) and that losing status is often associated with self-blame (Vohs et al., 2007). Similarly our findings demonstrate that being denied Human Uniqueness is linked to feelings of shame and guilt, supporting the theoretical alignment of animalistic dehumanization with shame and guilt (Haslam, 2006), as well as research that links these emotions with status-reducing forms of maltreatment (Vohs et al., 2007).

Being denied Human Nature was uniquely associated with cognitive deconstructive states, characterized by reduced clarity of thought, and numbing. It was also uniquely associated with feelings of anger and sadness. Our findings support previous work on rejection, a form of maltreatment that has been previously linked to the mechanistic form of dehumanization (Bastian & Haslam, 2010). Both deconstructive states (Twenge et al., 2003) and hostility and sadness (Leary et al., 2006) have been linked to ostracism. These results may be best characterized as reflecting a defensive response to severe forms of maltreatment, where, on one hand, people may experience a reduced ability to make sense of their situation and, on the other hand, they may be overcome by anger and sadness at their mistreatment. This is in contrast to a self-reflective or ruminative response to being denied Human Uniqueness.

Overall, Study 1 demonstrates that the two dimensions of dehumanization can be used to conceptually organize people's experience of, and responses to, a broad range of interpersonal maltreatments. This provides promising initial support for the view that everyday maltreatments are experienced by their targets as subtly dehumanizing. Moreover, we also found evidence for differentiated cognitive and emotional effects associated with each form of dehumanizing treatment.

# STUDY 2

Study 1 demonstrated that the two dimensions of dehumanization are associated with people's perceptions of everyday maltreatments and that each dimension has a distinctive pattern of associations with aspects of the target's experience. However Study 1 relied on hypothetical vignettes rather than actual personal experiences. Study 2 aimed to address this limitation by asking participants to recall autobiographical experiences.

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants were 128 undergraduates (102 women, 26 men) who participated in the study for course credit. Their ages ranged from 17 to 33 years ($M = 19.24$, $SD = 1.98$).

### *Materials*

Participants completed one of two versions of a questionnaire that asked them to recall a specific experience where they were treated badly by another person. Participants were asked to think about maltreatments that reflected the same dehumanization concepts used in Study 1 and were drawn directly from Haslam (2006). In the denial of Human Uniqueness version ($n = 64$), they were asked to think about a situation where they were treated as if they were "incompetent, unintelligent, unsophisticated, and uncivilized." In the denial of Human Nature version ($n = 64$), they were asked to think about a situation where they were treated "as a

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means to an end, as if [they] were an object, and as if [they] had no feelings." Once participants had spent approximately 10 min writing about their experience, they were asked to provide the following ratings.

*Manipulation check.* To ensure that each type of experience reflected treatment characteristics associated with each dimension of dehumanization, participants were asked to rate their recalled maltreatment on the extent to which it undermined their status and identity: denial of status (two items: "I felt inferior to the other person," "I felt like they viewed me as having lower status"; $\alpha = .62$), denial of identity (two items: "I felt like my existence didn't really matter," "At the time I felt like my life was meaningless"; $\alpha = .70$). We also included a three-item measure of treatment severity where participants rated how "severe," "harmful," and "wrong" the experience was from 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*extremely*) ($\alpha = .83$).

*Cognition.* Participants provided ratings for cognitive deconstructive states (three items; "I felt numb," "I felt lethargic," "I found it hard to think clearly"; $\alpha = .74$) and aversive self-awareness (two items; "I felt very self-aware," "I was very self-conscious"; $\alpha = .77$).

*Emotion.* Participants rated the emotions that they experienced during the maltreatment from a list of 10 emotions on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much so*). The same two dimensions used in Study 1 were constructed using additional emotions terms; anger/sadness (six items; "I felt sad/depressed/despair," "I felt angry/contempt/disgusted"; $\alpha = .67$) and shame/guilt (four items; "I felt shameful/embarrassed/self-conscious/guilty"; $\alpha = .77$).

## Results

Inspection of the data revealed that three cases were outliers (more than 2 standard deviations below the mean) for the measure of shame/guilt. These were removed from further analysis, leaving 64 participants in the denial of Human Uniqueness condition and 61 in the denial of Human Nature condition. A series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to determine whether each of the measures differed significantly across conditions (see Table 2). Manipulation checks revealed that in the denial of Human Nature condition, participants reported higher levels of identity denial, $F(1, 123) = 8.96$, $p < .01$, whereas in the denial of Human Uniqueness condition, they reported a greater loss of status, $F(1, 123) = 5.44$, $p < .05$. Episodes in which participants were denied Human Nature were deemed more severe, $F(1, 123) = 5.20$, $p < .05$.

TABLE 2
Mean Ratings for Denial of Human Nature (HN) and Human Uniqueness (HU), Study 2

| *Dependent Variable* | *Denied HU* | *Denied HN* |
|---|---|---|
| Cognitive effects | | |
| Deconstructive states | 2.99 | 3.56* |
| Aversive self-awareness | 5.45* | 4.89 |
| Emotional effects | | |
| Anger/sadness | 4.46 | 5.01** |
| Shame/guilt | 4.60† | 4.18 |

†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Findings for the cognitive effects lend support to the findings of Study 1. Higher levels of cognitive deconstructive states were reported in the denial of Human Nature condition, $F(1, 123) = 5.01$, $p < .05$, whereas greater aversive self-awareness was reported in the denial of Human Uniqueness condition, $F(1, 123) = 5.38$, $p < .05$. Findings for emotional effects lend support to Study 1, showing that people report higher levels of anger and sadness when they are denied Human Nature, $F(1, 123) = 8.46$, $p < .01$, and marginally increased feelings of shame and guilt when they are denied Human Uniqueness, $F(1, 123) = 3.12$, $p = .08$.

## Discussion

The findings of Study 2 support our hypotheses regarding the phenomena associated with different kinds of dehumanizing maltreatment. Consistent with Study 1, participants who recalled experiences where they were denied Human Nature reported more cognitive deconstructive states, whereas participants who recalled an experience of being denied Human Uniqueness reported feeling more self-conscious. As in Study 1, participants reported feeling more sadness and anger when experiencing mechanistic dehumanization, supporting the notion that it is linked to a form of rejection that is associated with hurt feelings and relational loss (Richman & Leary, 2009), as well as aggressive responding (Leary et al., 2006). Although marginal, findings for increased shame and guilt under conditions of animalistic dehumanization also support Study 1.

The findings of Study 2 also highlight that being denied human nature is viewed as a more severe form of interpersonal maltreatment. This is consistent with the notion that being denied identity is more severe than being denied status. This also provides for some reflection on our findings for cognitive and emotional responses. A loss of status (i.e., denial of Human Uniqueness) results in a ruminative response, reflecting on those qualities about the self that may have give rise

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to such maltreatment from others. However, a denial of identity (i.e., denial of Human Nature) is a more severe form of interpersonal abuse, resulting in defensive strategies such as shutting down cognitively and becoming angry at one's perpetrators.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Across two studies we found evidence that targets of a range of everyday interpersonal maltreatments experience some degree of dehumanization when these behaviors undermine fundamental aspects of their personhood. Maltreatments that subtly undermine our status and identity as persons have clear cognitive and emotional implications. Overall the current work provides direct support to the notion that dehumanization can be conceptualized as an everyday phenomenon, rooted in ordinary social-cognitive processes (Haslam, 2006).

Our findings also provide evidence that the two dimensions of dehumanization provide a framework for understanding psychological phenomena associated with the experience of maltreatments. Study 1 demonstrated that these dimensions provide a framework for organizing those phenomena, whereas Study 2 provided more direct evidence that when each kind of dehumanization is experienced those phenomena tend to follow. Denial of Human Uniqueness is related to forms of interpersonal maltreatment that affect our status relative to others. Being treated as incompetent, unintelligent, unsophisticated, and uncivilized results in aversive self-awareness and self-blame, leading to feelings of guilt and shame. On the other hand, denials of Human Nature constitute more severe forms of maltreatment. These kinds of dehumanizing experiences have implications for basic elements of a person's identity, leading to cognitive deconstructive states and feelings of sadness. When people are treated as objects, means to ends, or bereft of the capacity for feeling, they do not feel responsible but deem the perpetrator's actions as worthy of anger and contempt.

Our findings provide insight into the nature and consequences of interpersonal maltreatments. A very large body of literature has documented the broad-ranging psychological effects of interpersonal rejection (Richman & Leary, 2009), but there has been less work on forms of maltreatment that lead to reductions in status, such as degradation and condescension, or being treated as embarrassing and stupid. People can be treated badly not only by excluding them from relationships but also by maintaining relationships that disempower, denigrate, and demean. These kinds of maltreatment may leave people feeling that they are subhuman: bestial, backward, and childlike.

The findings also provide a novel contribution to work on dehumanization. Recent research has begun to explore the effects of dehumanization as extending beyond intergroup contexts and into everyday interpersonal relations (e.g., Haslam et al., 2005). Previous research that has taken the social-interactionist perspective (Bastian & Haslam, 2010) has demonstrated that interpersonal maltreatment results in the dehumanization of both victims and perpetrators. The findings of the current research extend this line of work by showing the relevance of the two-dimensional framework in the interpersonal domain, by demonstrating the richness of the psychological phenomena associated with dehumanization, and by paying thorough attention to the target's experience of dehumanization.

Our work also provides emphasis on the importance of addressing forms of maltreatment that often go unnoticed. As noted by Sue et al. (2007), people are subject to forms of microaggression or microinvalidation on a daily basis. Perhaps the most insidious aspect of these maltreatments is that they are often unseen, even by perpetrators. However their effects are severe. Hinton (2004) noted that such micromaltreatments have the potential to effect large-scale problems within workplaces. Critically, the subtle nature of these maltreatments makes them hard to defend against and may even lead victims to question their own experiences. Suggestive of the frustration of this experience, a website has been developed that is dedicated to the posting of micromaltreatments that are experienced by people in their daily lives (http://microaggressions.tumblr.com). Of course even the prefix *micro* suggests that these experiences are insignificant for the victims. It is important to note that our work highlights that such relational slights may be perceived as undermining a person's humanity, and by linking these apparently innocuous experiences to a body of work that has traditionally been reserved for understating extreme violence and genocide our work draws attention to the importance of addressing these almost invisible forms of maltreatment.

The aim of this work was to provide a framework for understanding the dehumanizing consequences of a variety of subtle but aversive interpersonal interactions. This goal required that we consider both a large number of interactions and a broad range of psychological implications. Although our work was theoretically motivated and our findings consistent with previous research, the ambitious nature of the undertaking meant there are some limitations with our approach. First, our findings are largely correlational, driven by hypothetical vignettes or recollections of past events. Although this allowed us to cover a broad theoretical territory, it does not allow for causal analysis. Second, our self-report measures should in the future be supplemented by

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methodologies assessing our cognitive, emotional, and relational constructs in more direct manners.

In conclusion, this research provides novel insights into the ramifications of everyday dehumanization. It shows that people who experience themselves as having been dehumanized display an assortment of associated cognitions and emotions and that existing models of dehumanization help to structure this complex set of phenomena. Experiencing ourselves as human is fundamentally connected to our interpersonal relationships, and ruptures or insensitivities in those relationships have the potential to undermine fundamental aspects of our personhood. Dehumanization is therefore an interpersonally enacted and experienced phenomenon. Maintaining our humanity is joint project; together it is preserved but between us it can be lost.

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## APPENDIX A
## LIST OF MALTREATMENTS

TABLE A1
List of 26 Maltreatments Represented in the 52 Vignettes, Study 1

| *Type of Maltreatment* | |
|---|---|
| Betrayed | Treated with disgust |
| Denied autonomy | Treated as embarrassing |
| Disrespect for identity | Treated as hopeless/stupid |
| Disrespect for physical space | Treated as immoral |
| Embarrassed | Treated as inconsequential |
| Envied | Treated as peculiar |
| Exploited | Treated as shameful |
| Fearful | Treated cruelly |
| Humiliated | Treated hypocritically |
| Invalidated | Treated instrumentally |
| Ostracized | Treated with condescension |
| Denial of intrinsic motivation | Treated with conditional regard |
| Treated as aversive | Treated with contempt/anger |

## APPENDIX B
## EXAMPLES OF VIGNETTES USED IN STUDY 1

### *Treated Instrumentally*

Imagine a situation where you have tried to befriend someone at work but they have turned down your invitations to spend time together socially. Recently however they have accepted your invitations and appear to be interested in getting to know you. Just as you think you are becoming friends you discover the person has recently learnt you have an uncle who is influential in their field of work. You discover that this person is interested in getting to know you only in order to be closer to your uncle.

### *Condescension*

Imagine a situation where you ask a friend for some assistance with a computer program that you have never used before. You have good computer knowledge but just need a quick tuition on the basics of how to get started on the new program. You feel confident that once you get started you will pick things up pretty quickly. Your friend starts by showing you how to use the mouse to point to the icon on the screen and explains that this is how you can open the program. They then continue to explain things in a loud and very simplistic way. It seems as if they have assumed you have very little knowledge of how to use a computer and are explaining things in an overly condescending way.

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