

DALBERT, C., SCHMITT, M. & MONTADA, L.

Disdain of the disadvantaged: The role of responsibility denial and belief
in a just world¹

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Zusammenfassung

In der vorliegenden Studie beschäftigen wir uns mit der Frage, was relativ privilegierte Personen motiviert, offensichtlich benachteiligte Menschen abzuwerten. Bezogen auf die Bereiche Menschen in der Dritten Welt, türkische Gastarbeiter und Körperbehinderte in der BRD wurde eine Untersuchung mittels Fragebogen an 340 Personen durchgeführt: Es konnte gezeigt werden, daß die Abwertung der Benachteiligten insbesondere durch die beiden Motive (a) Verantwortlichkeit abzuwehren und (b) an die gerechte Welt zu glauben begünstigt wird. Diese beiden Motive verstärken sich gegenseitig. Ebenso wächst der Effekt der Tendenz zur Verantwortlichkeitsabwehr auf die Abwertung je stärker das Bedürfnisprinzip als gerechtes Verteilungsprinzip präferiert wird. Darüber hinaus ist die Abwertung der Benachteiligten um so stärker ausgeprägt, je mehr das Billigkeitsprinzip als gerechtes Verteilungsprinzip präferiert wird. Allerdings wird der Effekt des Billigkeitsprinzips auf die Abwertung um so schwächer, je stärker die Empathie ausgeprägt ist.

Abstract

Examined what the personality characteristics are that motivate relative privileged people to cope with obvious disadvantages of others by disdaining them. Relative to people in the developing countries, Turkish guest workers, and handicapped people in the Federal Republic of Germany a questionnaire study was carried out (N = 340). It could be shown that disdain of the disadvantaged is especially favored by the two motives (a) responsibility denial and (b) belief in a just world, which strengthen each other. Likewise the effect of responsibility denial on disdain increases with increasing preference for the need principle as a just allocation principle. Furthermore, disdain increases with increasing preference for the equity principle as a just allocation principle; but, the effect of the equity principle on disdain decreases the stronger empathy is.

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1. Introduction

Goods such as wealth, health, security, and so on are "distributed" unequally around the world. While philosophers, scientists, and politicians have often examined how people deal with being disadvantaged, we are interested in how people deal with being relatively advantaged, and how they cope with obvious disadvantages of others. Who will, for example, enjoy being advantaged? Who will fear losing their advantages? Who will justify the own relatively favorable lot? Who will blame the disadvantaged for having caused their fate? Who will blame society or humanity for obvious injustice?

These are some of the questions that may emerge when people are confronted with scenarios like the following one: "Imagine you see a film on TV showing the life in the slums of an Indian metropolitan area like Bombay: People live in extremely narrow quarters crowded together, many of them suffer from starvation and illness, medical care is poor, sanitary conditions are inhumane, drinking water is contaminated, and the shabby dwellings hardly offer enough shelter."

What do people think in this situation? Having focused on the disadvantaged Indians, some people might think that "It is a pity that these people have to bear such a miserable lot." Such an answer might very likely be an indicator of sympathetic distress. Others might think of their own significantly better situation: "Realizing all this, I feel unable to enjoy many things in my life with a good conscience." Such a thought may be an

indicator of what Hoffman (1970) has called existential guilt, a term which means guilt feelings because of undeservedly good luck or privileges. In coping with this situation some might tend to come up with defensive evaluations, e.g., "Maybe, these people are missing many things, but still, it is inconceivable how human beings let themselves go to pot so badly." Such a reaction will be termed disdain of the disadvantaged.

What are the motives, preferences, beliefs, or attitudes causing these different emotional and cognitive responses that can be observed when people are confronted with the disadvantages of others?

Elsewhere, empirical evidence on the personal and situational factors that promote existential guilt and sympathetic distress (Montada, Schmitt & Dalbert, 1986; Montada, Dalbert, Reichle & Schmitt, 1985) has been presented. In this paper, the focus is on coping with such situations by disdaining the underprivileged.

Disdain of a disadvantaged person, blaming the victim, derogation of people with a bad fate are not uncommon. Phenomena like these can be observed in everyday life in the case of catastrophes, accidents, and illnesses, they can also be observed in the laboratory if part of the participants receive an apparently unfavorable experimental treatment. Such devaluations are frequently interpreted as consequences of one of two motives: (1) the motive to control one's own fate and (2) the motive to preserve the belief in a just world (Lerner, 1980; Montada, 1983).

Blaming the victim or attributing responsibility to the victim may have a defensive function (Walster, 1966), corroborating the belief that personally one is able to avoid such bad luck. The worse the harm or the loss (Chaikin & Darley, 1973), and the less clear the objective causation (Lowe & Medway, 1976), the more likely the victim will be blamed.

The second motive offered to explain such phenomena is belief in a just world (Lerner, 1977, 1980). If there are doubts, whether the observed disadvantages or losses are just or not, blaming the victim as responsible for his/her fate is a suitable way to deny any injustice.

Such attempts to explain interindividual differences in the tendency to disdain victims make two basic assumptions: (a) Many people feel challenged when faced with demanding needs of others, and their norms of responsibility are activated. (b) Many people are concerned with the question of whether or not the observed inequalities between themselves and the disadvantaged are just.

Certainly, there are many arguments suitable to reject one's own responsibility for the disadvantaged and there are many arguments suitable to justify the given inequalities as well. Some of the arguments may be rational and more objective, others are of questionable objectivity and without much empirical validity. Disdain of the disadvantaged is often more of the latter kind. In any case, it is functional (a) in reducing felt responsibility for the disadvantaged and (b) in reducing doubts about the justice of inequalities.

Therefore, in the present paper two motives are explored to explain the tendency to derogate victims: responsibility denial and belief in a just world, both conceptualized (and assessed) as generalized dispositions. The criterion variable, disdain of the disadvantaged, was assessed with questions based on scenarios like the one given above as an example. The disadvantaged people described were people in the developing countries, Turkish guest workers in the Federal Republic of Germany, and handicapped people. The subjects were mainly German middle class individuals who objectively live in a much better situation than these disadvantaged people. The study was designed as a questionnaire study.

2. Disdain of the disadvantaged: Some hypotheses concerning predictor and moderator variables

2.1 Responsibility denial as a predictor of disdaining the disadvantaged

The concept of responsibility denial is well known from the work of Schwartz and his colleagues. In several studies, the general tendency to deny responsibility predicted helping and moderated the relationship between personal norms and helping (e.g., Schwartz, 1968; Schwartz & Ben David, 1976; Schwartz & Clausen, 1970; Schwartz & Fleishman, 1982).

Any reaction in a specific situation keeping a person from taking responsibility for the needy can be considered a function of a generalized

tendency to produce or accept arguments for reducing personal responsibility for the consequences of one's own action or non-action (e.g., Schwartz, 1977; Schwartz & Howard, 1981). Disdaining the needy may serve as a reason for denying responsibility for costly acts in a specific situation. Therefore, it is assumed that a general tendency to deny responsibility predicts disdain of the disadvantaged.

Moderators of the effect of responsibility denial on disdain

It is assumed that other personal characteristics act as moderators, i.e., strengthen or weaken the impact of responsibility denial on disdain. These moderator variables are (a) the preferred principle of justice in allocations, and (b) empathy for others. They may ease or hinder the transformation of general responsibility denial into disdain in a specific situation.

(a) Preferred principle of justice in allocations:

The evaluation of the discrepancy between one's fate and the lot of others as just or unjust should depend on individual preferences for principles of distributive justice. Especially, two principles, the equity principle and the need principle (cf. Deutsch, 1975; Schmitt & Montada, 1982; Schwinger, 1980), are to be considered as moderators.

The equity principle: According to the equity principle, inequalities are just if they are proportional to unequal inputs or in an

analogous sense if they are proportional to the merits or the worthiness of the recipients. Consequently, preferences for the equity principle will facilitate justification of existing inequalities as deserved if unequal inputs or, analogously, unequal merits or worthiness can be stated. Disdaining the disadvantaged means pretending less worthiness. Accordingly, the assumption is that preference for the equity principle eases the transformation of responsibility denial into disdain, i.e., the effect of responsibility denial on disdain is expected to increase with increasing preference for the equity principle.

The need principle: The need principle states that a distribution is just, if it is proportional to the neediness of the recipients. Descriptions of neediness like those given in the scenarios imply that the need principle is violated. A person who generally favors the need principle should tend to state that the life circumstances of the disadvantaged are unjust. If, in spite of this, this person would deny responsibility for the needy, his or her self-image of being just would be threatened, unless more arguments were at hand to justify the denial of responsibility. Disdain of the needy is one such suitable argument. If, on the other hand, a person rejects the need principle, the probability is less that he/she will consider the inequalities between him-/herself and the disadvantaged people as unjust. Hence, he/she should not feel urged to find justifications - such as disdain - for denying responsibility.

(b) Empathy:

Empathy is a second variable supposed to moderate the effect of responsibility denial on disdain. The concept of empathy implies a role-taking ability and concern for the problems of other people. There is empirical evidence that empathy inhibits hostility (e.g., Staub, 1971) and enhances prosocial behavior (e.g., Aronfreed, 1970; Krebs, 1975). Since disdain is a coping strategy with a component of hostility, the assumption is that increasing empathy will hamper the transformation of responsibility denial into disdain.

2.2 Belief in a just world as a predictor of disdaining the disadvantaged

According to Lerner (1977, 1980), many people are motivated to hold on to the view that our world is just. Confronted with cases of obvious injustice, they will experience a conflict between reality and their belief. If this conflict cannot be resolved by reestablishing justice, these people tend to reevaluate the facts such that the degree of injustice is lessened. Lerner (1980) summarizes an impressive body of experimental and correlational evidence corroborating the validity of his theory.

If there are doubts whether or not inequalities are just, efforts are to be expected to restore justice. Various strategies may serve as means to this end, e.g., denying the subjective experience of disadvantages, explaining the disadvantage as being self caused, justifying one's own relative advantages as equitable, and so on.

The scenarios used in this study are such that the reestablishment of justice is nearly impossible within a relatively short period of time. However, derogating the victim is one of several strategies that can be used to restore psychological justice at least on the surface. It is assumed that belief in a just world is a major predictor of disdain.

Moderators of the effect of belief in a just world on disdain

It is presumed that the belief in a just world interacts with the following three personality characteristics: (a) empathy, (b) life satisfaction, (c) preference for justice principles.

(a) Empathy:

For the same reasons as stated above, choosing disdain as a strategy to reestablish justice should become more likely if empathy is low. High empathy should function as a barrier for using the strategy of disdain to reestablish psychological justice. The higher empathy is, the less the effect of belief in a just world on disdain should be.

(b) Life satisfaction:

Another variable supposedly interacting with belief in a just world is general life satisfaction. According to research by Izen and

others (e.g., Izen, Clark & Schwartz, 1976), a positive mood in general disposes to more friendliness in judgment and action toward others. Disdain of the disadvantaged has a touch of hostility. Therefore, increasing life satisfaction will weaken the effect of belief in a just world on disdain.

(c) Preferred principle of justice in allocations:

The equity principle: An interaction between belief in a just world and preference for the equity principle is expected, because this principle offers justifications for the discrepancies between the subject and the disadvantaged. People who have strong positive attitudes toward the equity principle should more easily be able to make use of disdain as a means of holding on to their view of a just world than people who reject the equity principle as unjust. For them, disdain would not be an acceptable argument for defending their belief in a just world. Therefore, the effect of belief in a just world on disdain should increase with increasing preference for the equity principle.

The need principle: The moderating effects of the need principle are not directly predictable. People who have positive attitudes toward the need principle should conceive the described inequalities as unjust. The stronger their belief in a just world the more they should experience a conflict between their belief in a just world and the violation of the need principle. Whether this conflict strengthens or weakens the effect of belief in a just world on disdain is open to question. However, if people reject the need

principle as unjust, justification of the observed inequality, e.g., by disdain, should strongly depend on their belief in a just world.

2.3 Interaction of responsibility denial and belief in a just world

Responsibility denial as well as belief in a just world constitute important motives for coping with the fate of the underprivileged by disdaining them. If both motives refer to the same reaction, disdain becomes particularly likely. Therefore, we assume that responsibility denial and belief in a just world not only exert main effects on disdain of the disadvantaged but that they interact with each other: The more responsibility denial is given, the larger the effect of belief in a just world on disdain should be and vice versa.

2.4 Summary of the hypotheses

In summary, the following main effects and interaction effects on disdain (**DI**) are expected: Responsibility denial (**RD**), and belief in a just world (**JW**) should have a positive effect on **DI**. Positive interaction effects of **RD** x preference for the equity principle (**EY**), x preference for the need principle (**NE**), and x **JW** on **DI** are expected, whereas the interactions of **RD** x empathy (**EM**), of **JW** x **EM** and of **JW** x life satisfaction (**LS**) are expected to be negative. The interaction effect of **JW** x **EY** on **DI** should be positive. The interaction effect of **JW** x **NE** on **DI** will be examined exploratorily.

3. Sample and method

3.1 Sample

The sample consists of 340 subjects with a mean age of 36.1, ranging from 16 to 70 years. 62% of the sample were male, 52% of the sample were single. Higher levels of education are somewhat overrepresented. The majority was Roman Catholic (65%). Most subjects (88%) described their income as sufficient or better. About half of the sample were randomly drawn from the list of inhabitants of an urban area (the city of Trier); the remaining subjects were selected systematically from groups and organizations, which on the basis of their programs and/or activities, were likely to have either a low or a high tendency to experience existential guilt.

3.2 Assessment instruments

All variables were assessed by questionnaires, mostly constructed by the authors (cf. Dalbert et al., 1984; Montada et al., 1983).

The criterion variable, disdain of the disadvantaged, was assessed with the "existential guilt inventory". Aside from disdain, six other variables were assessed with this instrument. It consists of nine short stories or scenarios - similar to the one given above as an example - describing disadvantages of (a) people in the developing countries, (b) handicapped people, and (c) Turkish guestworkers in West Germany. The stories suggest

extensive discrepancies in favorableness of living conditions between the disadvantaged, i.e., the characters of the stories, and the subjects. Each story is followed by a list of seven different thoughts representing cognitive/emotional reactions to it. Subjects had to rate on a six-point scale ranging from "very likely" to "very unlikely" the probability that they would have each particular thought as a reaction to the contents of the story. One of these seven reactions is conceived of as an indicator of Disdain of the disadvantaged (**DI**).

All statistical analyses reported below with respect to **DI** are based on individual average scores across the answers to the nine short stories. Intraindividual as well as interindividual differences between the scenarios addressing the three groups of disadvantaged will be neglected in this paper which is focused on general relations between disdain and other variables. Internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of **DI**, comprising nine items, is .84.

The responsibility denial scale (**RD**) consists of three parts constructed with respect to the three groups of disadvantaged considered. Each part consists of twelve items like the following one related to the handicapped: "I can't see why individual citizens should care about the problems of the handicapped; that's the business of the Federal Government." Subjects had to indicate on six-point Likert scales how much they agreed with the statements. Internal consistencies of the three parts of the scale are high, ranging from .85 to .93. Furthermore, they are highly intercorrelated

(all correlations above .63) indicating that the tendency to deny responsibility in this area is a rather general one. Statistical analyses are based on average scores across the three parts of the responsibility denial scale.

Based on results from a study on the rules of distributive justice done by Schmitt & Montada (1982) four short scales were constructed to assess generalized preference for (a) the equity principle, (b) the need principle, (c) the equality principle, and (d) the principle of equal opportunities. In this paper, (a) and (b) are of special interest. The equity scale (**EY**) consists of nine items representing preference for input-output proportionality as a just distribution rule, e.g., "I consider an employer to act just, if during times, when business is slow, he dismisses those employees first whose efficacy is the least." On six-point Likert scales subjects had to indicate how much they agreed with the statements. Considering the number of items, internal consistency as a reliability estimate of the scale is acceptable (Cronbach's alpha = .76).

The need scale (**NE**) consists of six items stating a preference for distributions according to the needs of the recipients, e.g.: "If two friends own a sailboat together, I feel it would be fair, if they paid for all expenses according to their income." Considering the small number of items, reliability of the scale is high (alpha = .79).

In a pilot study done by Dalbert (1982) a German translation of Rubin & Peplau's (1975) scale to measure belief in a just world achieved poor

split-half reliability and internal consistency scores. Therefore, two new scales were developed, one assessing a general belief in a just world and a second assessing specific belief in a just world (**JW**) related to the three groups of underprivileged people under study (e.g., "I believe that in West Germany Turkish employees are not disadvantaged.") (cf. Dalbert, Montada & Schmitt, 1985). **JW** consists of eight items ($\alpha = .82$). Again, subjects had to respond to the items by checking on a six-point Likert scale the extent to which they agreed with the respective statement.

Empathy (**EM**) was measured by an 18-item scale composed of items taken from other questionnaires developed to assess empathy (Hogan, 1969; Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972; Silbereisen & Schulz, 1977; Stotland et al., 1978). The selection of items from these questionnaires was based on their content validity as rated by selected experts (see Schmitt, 1982). Different from the original version, items were provided with six-point Likert scales ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Internal consistency of this newly developed scale is, however, not quite satisfactory ($\alpha = .76$).

The questionnaire for measuring life satisfaction (**LS**) consists of twelve items, four of which are taken from a scale developed by Wiendieck (1970). Some of the items are more generally formulated (e.g., "My life could hardly be better than it is."), some are more specific (e.g., "In general I cannot complain about my financial situation."). As with all instruments described so far, subjects had to answer the items by indicating on a six-

point Likert scale to what extent they agreed with the respective statement (Alpha = .86).

All statistical analyses reported below are based on scale scores (individual means across the items of a questionnaire). Scores can range from 1 to 6. Coding of all variables is such that a low numerical value represents a high substantive value. For example, **DI** = 1 represents the highest amount of disdain of the disadvantaged people possible.

4. Results

4.1 Testing the theoretical hypothesis

The first hypothesis states that responsibility denial (**RD**) has a strong positive effect on disdain (**DI**). As can be seen from table 1, this is the case. **RD** accounts for 52% of the variance of **DI**. There is also a strong positive relation between preference for the equity principle (**EY**) and disdain ($r = .44, p^2 .01$). However, **EY** does not explain much variance of **DI** in addition to **RD** (cf. Table 1).

The first interaction hypothesis predicted a moderating effect of equity on the effect of responsibility denial on disdain. This hypothesis was tested via moderated multiple regression analysis with **RD** and **EY** and their product **RD*EY** as predictors and **DI** as the criterion. The rationale of this procedure is given, for instance, by Cohen (1978). As can be seen from table 1, **EY** indeed acts as a significant moderator variable ($p^2 .05$) affecting the dependency of disdain on responsibility denial.

insert Table 1 about here

The model equation at the bottom of table 1 allows for the computation of the conditional regression effects of **RD** for all values of **EY** (cf., e.g., Dalbert & Schmitt, 1985; Steyer, 1985). Given **EY** scores = 1,2,3,4, 5,6, the respective effects of **RD** on **DI** amount to 1.15, 1.03, .91, .79, .67, .55. These results are in accordance with the theoretical assumption: The more the equity principle is preferred as just, the stronger the positive effect of **RD** on **DI** will be.

Next, a moderating effect of preference for the need principle (**NE**) on the effect of **RD** on **DI** was tested. Again, this was done via multiple regression including **RD*NE** as a predictor term. The results of this analysis are presented in table 2. There is no significant negative relation between need and disdain ($r = -.05$, n.s.). However, there is a significant interaction between **RD** and **NE** ($p^2 .05$).

insert Table 2 about here

The model equation at the bottom of table 2 helps to interpret the interaction of **RD*NE**. Given **NE** = 1, the conditional regression effect of **RD**

is 1.11, whereas it is only .61 if **NE** = 6. This means, the more the need principle is considered a just distribution rule, the greater the positive effect of **RD** on **DI** will be, i.e., the more important the effect of **RD** on **DI** will be.

Table 3 contains the results of the moderated multiple regression analysis testing the interaction hypothesis concerning empathy as a moderator affecting the impact of **RD** on **DI**. The moderating effect of **EM** is significant and in line with the theoretical considerations. With decreasing empathy scores, the positive effect of **RD** on **DI** increases.

insert Table 3 about here

Besides responsibility denial, belief in a just world was expected to be a second powerful predictor of disdain. Indeed, there is a strong correlation between **JW** and **DI** (cf. table 4).

insert Table 4 about here

In addition to this main effect of **JW** on **DI**, two variables were assumed to moderate this effect of **JW** on **DI**: empathy (**EM**) and life satisfaction (LS). As can be seen from tables 4 and 5, the respective interaction effects are

very significant ($p^2 .01$).

The conditional effect of **JW** on **DI** ranges from .21 to 1.31, with empathy being highest (**EM** = 1) versus empathy being lowest (**EM** = 6), respectively (cf. the model equation in table 4). The more empathy is given, the less influential belief in a just world is on disdain.

insert Table 5 about here

Similarly, the conditional effect of **JW** on **DI** depends on life satisfaction (cf. table 5). If life satisfaction is low (**LS** = 6) the conditional regression weight of **JW** equals 1.29. On the other hand, **DI** much less strongly depends on **JW** if life satisfaction is very high (**LS** = 1). In this case, the conditional effect of **JW** on **DI** equals .39.

Furthermore, a moderating effect of preference for the equity principle (**EY**) on the effect of **JW** on **DI** was assumed. The data do not support this hypothesis. The predictor term **JW*EY** is not significant ($F = .46$, n.s.). Also, the interaction effect **JW*NE**, that was examined for exploratory reasons, is not significant ($F = 1.9$, n.s.).

Finally, a mutually enhancing effect of the two main predictors of disdain on each other was hypothesized, i.e., an interaction effect of **RD*JW** on **DI**. The results of the moderated multiple regression analysis on these two

predictors are given in table 6.

insert Table 6 about here

The data accord to the hypothesis: If **JW** = 1 (high belief in a just world), the effect of responsibility denial is strongest and amounts to 1.13, whereas it can be as low as .43 when **JW** takes the value of 6 (low belief in a just world).

4.2 A combined model to predict disdain

So far, several hypotheses deduced from our theoretical model to explain disdain were tested separately. Yet, they should be interpreted with caution as not all the interrelations among the predictor variables contained in the model were taken into account. Consequently, the results cannot be defended against the imputation that they are, at least in part, spurious.

If it could be demonstrated that the reported effects are independent of each other, the theoretical interpretations would be more trustworthy. Therefore, a multiple regression analysis was done including all predictor terms that were significant in the preceding analyses. The results of this combined analysis are presented in table 7.

insert Table 7 about here

Except for **LS**, all predictor variables "survive" this rigorous test. This means that all predictor variables contribute independently to the variance of disdain. Each predictor is part of an interaction effect. Their interpretation requires a careful look at the model equation. In general, complex interaction effects may always be interpreted in as many ways as the model equation can be written. The following perspective seems to be the most meaningful one: The effect of responsibility denial on disdain is moderated by belief in a just world and preference for the need principle. The more someone believes to live in a just world and the more a person prefers the need principle, the stronger the positive effect of responsibility denial on disdain will be. None of the other interaction effects found in the separate analyses remains significant when all predictor variables and their interactions are tested simultaneously.

This exploratory analysis resulted in one interaction effect which was not predicted specifically; it fits, however, into the theoretical considerations outlined above. Empathy significantly moderates the effect of preference for the equity principle on disdain. The less empathy is given, the more disdain depends on equity.

5. Concluding remarks

Being confronted with the obvious bad fate of others can be distressful and thus require coping. Disdain of the disadvantaged is one possible coping strategy among others. Disdaining the poor prevents the observer from feelings of guilt about his relatively privileged situation and protects him/her against costly acts to balance the situation. By disdaining the underprivileged, psychological justice may be reestablished. The more a person tends to deny responsibility for the underprivileged and the more he/she simultaneously believes to live in a just world, the more he/she will tend to disdain the disadvantaged.² This effect will even be stronger if someone also prefers the conflicting need principle. The equity principle may serve as a "storehouse" for arguments justifying observed inequalities. Therefore, it may ease disdaining the underprivileged people. However, the application of the equity principle to the disadvantaged in our scenarios depends on how empathic a person is, i.e., the stronger the tendency to put oneself in the position of the disadvantaged, the less disdain depends on preference for the equity principle.

In summary, some evidence is offered concerning personality characteristics that allow the tendency to disdain disadvantaged people to be predicted, mainly some motivational and attitudinal variables of social responsibility, justice, and empathy. Taken together, these personality

insert footnote 2 here

variables account for an impressive amount (63%) of the variance of disdain. Maybe such evidence will become useful in establishing social justice not just psychological justice. Certainly, more information has to be gathered and integrated, especially in respect to the development of relevant attitudes and motives, in respect to the competencies to influence the poor life conditions of the underprivileged, and concerning the role of cooperation and solidarity versus competition and egoism.

Footnotes

¹ This research was supported by a grant from the Stiftung Volkswagenwerk (VW-Foundation).

² Both major predictors of disdain - **RD** and **JW** - were assessed by items concerning the same disadvantaged people that were addressed in the disdain scale. It is known from research on personality that predictability increases with increasing correspondence in the contents of predictors and criterion (Schmitt, Dalbert & Montada, 1985). Belief in a just world was also assessed in a very general way. The bivariate correlation with disdain is $r = .46$ as compared to $r = .63$ for the specific belief in a just world.

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Table 1: Multiple regression from DI on RD, EY, and their product
(full model; all variables ranging from 1 to 6, N = 286^a)

Predictor term	R	R ²	r	b	$\hat{\sigma}_b$	F	df	p
RD	.72	.52	.72	1.27	.21			
EY	.73	.53	.44	.67	.24			
RD*EY	.74	.54	.63	-.12	.05	5.53	1/282	<.05
intercept				-.98				

Total F = 110.14; df = 3/282; p <.01

Model equation:

$$E(DI|RD, EY) = -.98 + .67 EY + (1.27 -.12 EY)RD$$

a) in this and all subsequent tables, N is reduced due to missing data

Table 2: Multiple regression from DI on RD, NE, and their product
(full model; all variables ranging from 1 to 6, N = 253)

Predictor term	R	R ²	r	b	$\hat{\sigma}_b$	F	df	p
RD	.72	.51	.72	1.21	.15			
NE	.72	.52	-.05	.53	.19			
RD*NE	.73	.54	.26	-.10	.04	5.75	1/249	<.05
intercept				-.59				

Total F = 95.39; df = 3/249; p <.01

Model equation:

$$E(DI|RD, NE) = -.59 + .53 NE + (1.21 -.10 NE)RD$$

Table 3: Multiple regression from DI on RD, EM, and their product
(full model; all variables ranging from 1 to 6, N = 286)

Predictor term	R	R ²	r	b	$\hat{\sigma}_b$	F	df	p
RD	.72	.52	.72	.44	.23			
EM	.72	.52	-.17	-.65	.38			
RD*EM	.73	.53	.38	.17	.08	3.915	1/282	<.05
intercept				2.91				
Total F = 105.84; df = 3/282; p <.01								
Model equation: E(DI RD, EM) = 2.91 - .65 EM + (.44 + .17 EM)RD								

Table 4: Multiple regression from DI on JW, EM, and their product
(full model; all variables ranging from 1 to 6, N = 286)

Predictor term	R	R ²	r	b	$\hat{\sigma}_b$	F	df	p
JW	.63	.40	.63	-.01	.20			
EM	.64	.40	-.17	-1.05	.33			
JW*EM	.65	.42	.39	.22	.07	9.10	1/282	<.01
intercept				5.27				
Total F = 68.43; df = 3/282; p <.01								
Model equation: E(DI JW, EM) = 5.27 - 1.05 EM + (-.01 + .22 EM)JW								

Table 5: Multiple regression from DI on JW, LS, and their product
(full model; all variables ranging from 1 to 6, N = 263)

Predictor term	R	R ²	r	b	$\hat{\sigma}_b$	F	df	p
JW	.67	.44	.67	.21	.14			
LS	.67	.45	.12	-.91	.27			
JW*LS	.68	.47	.41	.18	.06	10.06	1/259	<.01
intercept				4.37				

Total F = 75.74; df = 3/259; p <.01

Model equation:
E(DI|JW, LS) = 4.37 - .91 LS + (.21 + .18 LS)JW

Table 6: Multiple regression from DI on RD, JW, and their product
(full model; all variables ranging from 1 to 6, N = 291)

Predictor term	R	R ²	r	b	$\hat{\sigma}_b$	F	df	p
RD	.72	.52	.72	1.27	.21			
JW	.73	.54	.64	.77	.21			
RD*JW	.74	.55	.69	-.14	.05	8.63	1/287	<.01
intercept				-1.25				

Total F = 116.20; df 3/287; p <.01

Model equation:
E(DI|RD, JW) = -1.25 + .77 JW + (1.27 - .14 JW)RD

Table 7: Multiple regression from DI on RD, JW, EY, NE, EM, IS and their products (accepted model; all variables ranging from 1 to 6, N = 273)

Predictor term	R	R ²	r	b	\hat{G}_b	F	df	p
RD	.74	.55	.74	1.71	.25			
JW	.75	.57	.66	.85	.21			
NE	.76	.58	-.06	.53	.18			
EY	.76	.58	.44	-.31	.18			
EM	.77	.59	-.18	-.55	.25			
RD*JW	.78	.61	.71	-.15	.05	10.64	1/264	<.01
RD*NE	.78	.62	.27	-.10	.04	6.94	1/264	<.01
EY*EM	.79	.63	.24	.16	.06	6.17	1/264	<.05
intercept				-2.36				

Total F = 54.96; df = 8/264; p <.01

Model equation:
 $E(DI|RD, JW, NE, EY, EM) = -2.36 + .85 JW + .53 NE - .55 EM$
 $+ (1.71 - .15 JW - .10 NE)RD + (-.31 + .16 EM)EY$

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