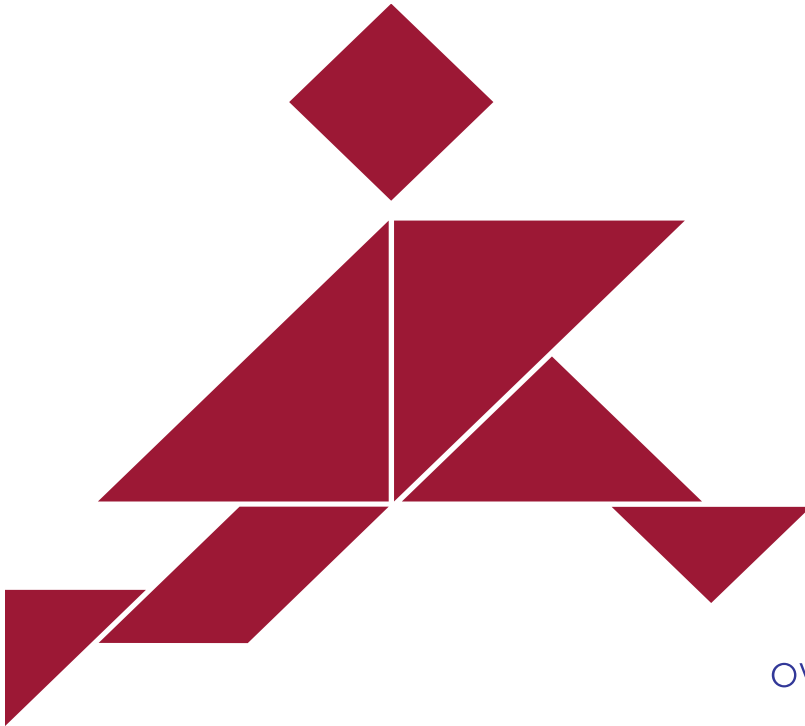

DISCRIMINATION & BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD: THE ROLE OF REGULATION STRATEGIES

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OVERCOMING VULNERABILITY: LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVES

GOALS OF PROJECT

- Investigate the relationship between discrimination and the belief in a just world
- Investigate potential moderators of this relationship

JUST WORLD HYPOTHESIS

- Just world hypothesis (Lerner, 1965; Lerner & Miller, 1978)
 - “Individuals have a need to believe that they live in a world where people generally get what they deserve [...] Without such a belief it would be difficult for the individual to commit himself to the pursuit of long range goals.” (Lerner & Miller, 1978, p. 1030)
 - “[People] are threatened by instances of injustice and motivated to reduce this threat to maintain the appearance that the world metes out resources and ill fate as deserved.” (Hafer & Begue, 2005, p. 130)
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BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD (BJW)

- Inherent in all people (Lerner & Miller, 1978; Hafer & Begue, 2005)
 - Associated with life satisfaction (Lipkus, Dalbert, & Siegler, 1996)
 - Mostly stable (e.g., Otto, Boos, Dalbert, Schöps, & Hoyer, 2006)
 - May be influenced
 - Mobbing → lower BJW (Cubela Adoric & Kvartuc, 2007)
 - War victimization → lower BJW (Fasel & Spini, 2010)
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DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCES

■ Discrimination

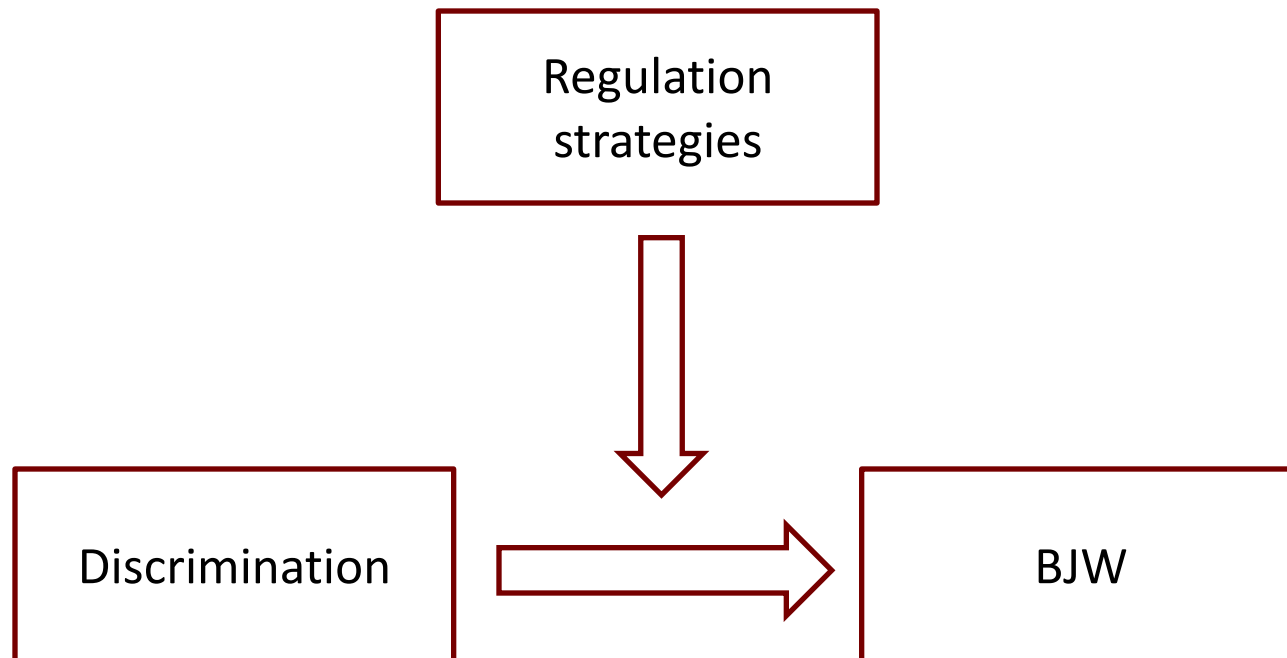
- person is treated less favorable than others on the basis of his/her membership to a group
- inherently unjust experience

■ How do people maintain BJW?

- BJW → less reports of discrimination (Lipkus & Siegler, 1993)

REGULATION STRATEGIES AS MODERATORS

- Discrimination → lower BJW
- Need to restore BJW through regulation



BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD (BJW)

- How do people maintain BJW in the face of injustice? (Lerner, 1980)
 - victim blame
 - victim derogation
 - prevention of injustice
 - restoration after injustice
 - justice as ultimate outcome
 - separating injustice from one's own world
 - pretending not to believe in a just world
 - refusal to perceive injustice
 - re-interpretation of outcome
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COGNITIVE REGULATION STRATEGIES

- Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven (2001)
 - Positive reappraisal
 - attaching a positive meaning to the event in terms of personal growth
 - related to optimism & self-esteem (Carver et al., 1989)
 - Putting into perspective
 - playing down the seriousness of the event or emphasizing its relativity compared to other events
 - Other-blame
 - putting the blame of what you have experienced on others
 - related to poorer emotional well-being (Tennen & Affleck, 1990)
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HYPOTHESES

1. High discrimination → low BJW
 2. High positive reappraisal → high BJW
 3. High putting into perspective → high BJW
 4. High other-blame → low BJW
 5. Positive reappraisal buffers negative association between discrimination & BJW
 6. Putting into perspective buffers negative association between discrimination & BJW
 7. Other-blame reinforces negative association between discrimination & BJW
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METHOD - PARTICIPANTS

- **Students from a Swiss university**
 - Sample size: $N = 271$
 - Gender: 200 women (75%)
 - Swiss nationality: 231 (87%)
 - Age: 20.7 (3.8)

METHOD - MEASURES

- **Discrimination (Taylor & Turner, 2002)**
 - Did you – on the basis of your group membership – experience one of the following situations?
 - List of 8 situations (e.g., landlord refused to rent to you) → yes/no
 - Sumscore: 0 to 8
 - $\alpha = .74$

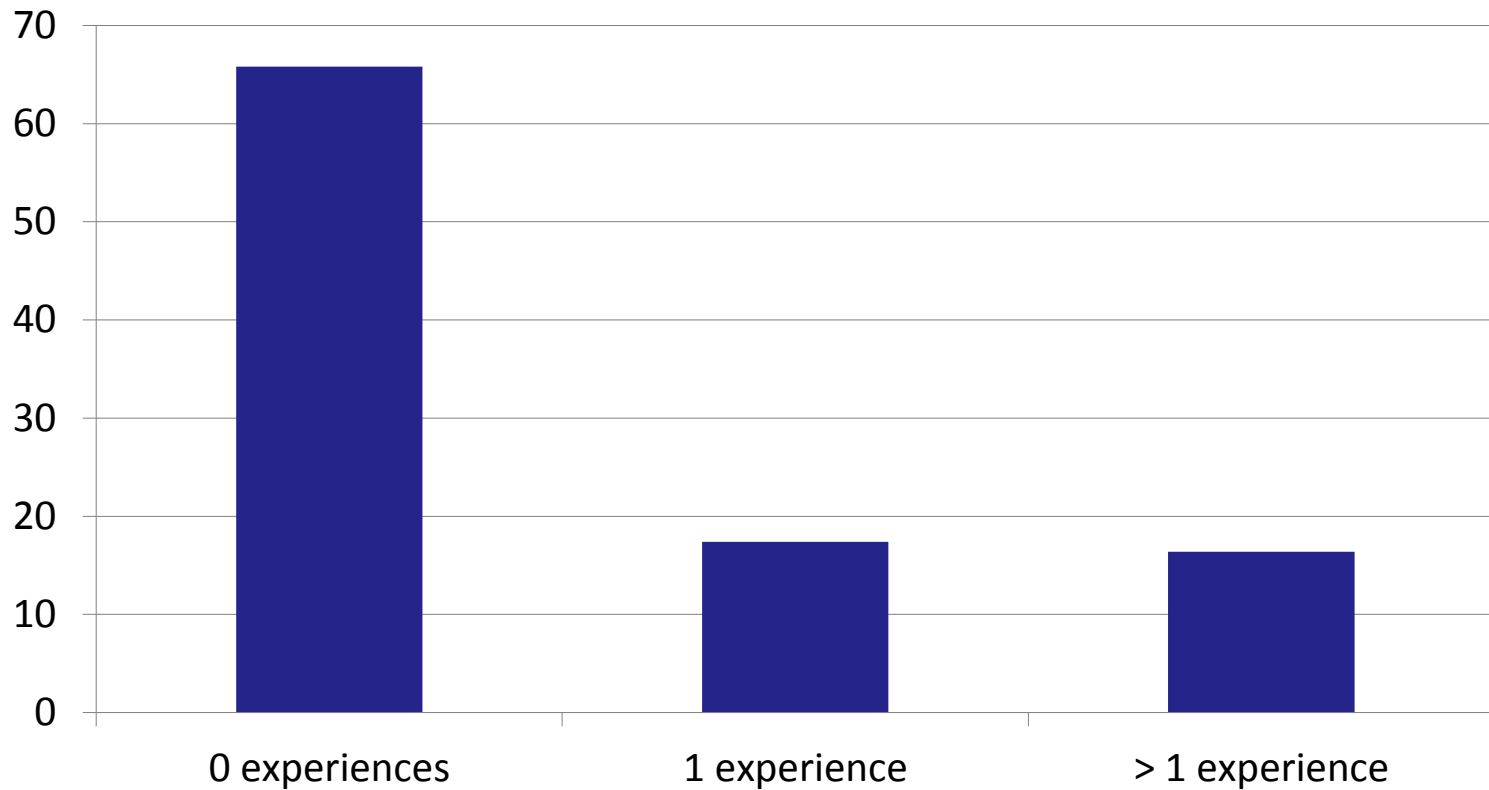
 - **Belief in a just world (Dalbert, 1999)**
 - Subscale: Personal
 - 7 items (e.g., I feel that the world treats me fairly)
 - $\alpha = .92$
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METHOD - MEASURES

- **Regulation strategies** (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2006)
 - Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ)
 - positive reappraisal (e.g., I think I can learn something from the situation): $\alpha = .71$
 - putting into perspective (e.g., think that it hasn't been too bad compared to other things): $\alpha = .68$
 - other-blame (e.g., I feel that others are responsible for what has happened): $\alpha = .80$

RESULTS - DESCRIPTIVES

Discrimination



REGRESSION: OUTCOME IS BJW

	Variable	β	sig.
Model 1	Age	.05	.479
$R^2 = .06$ (.001)	Gender	.02	.776
	Swiss nationality	.14	.029
	Discrimination	-.23	.000

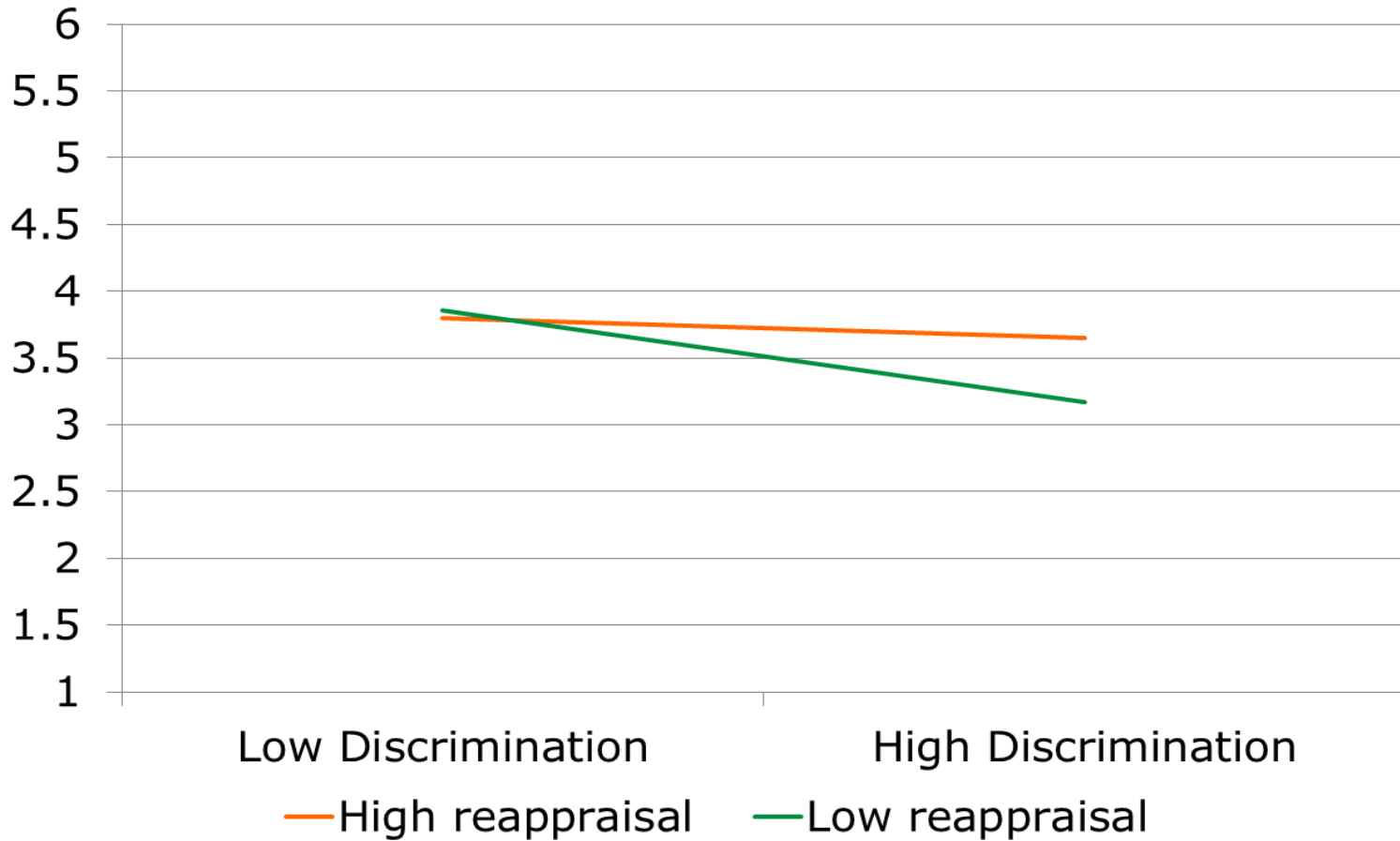
REGRESSION: OUTCOME IS BJW

	Variable	β	sig.
Model 1	Age	.05	.479
$R^2 = .06$ (.001)	Gender	.02	.776
	Swiss nationality	.14	.029
	Discrimination	-.23	.000
Model 2	Age	.06	.331
$R^2 = .14$ (.000)	Gender	.00	.999
	Swiss nationality	.14	.018
	Discrimination	-.21	.001
	Positive reappraisal	.12	.051
	Putting into perspective	.22	.000
	Other-blame	-.11	.088

REGRESSION: OUTCOME IS BJW

	Variable	β	sig.
Model 3	Age	.07	.262
$R^2 = .17 (.008)$	Gender	.04	.542
	Swiss nationality	.14	.023
	Discrimination	-.24	.000
	Positive reappraisal	.12	.045
	Putting into perspective	.20	.001
	Other-blame	-.09	.154
	Discrimination X reappraisal	.16	.008

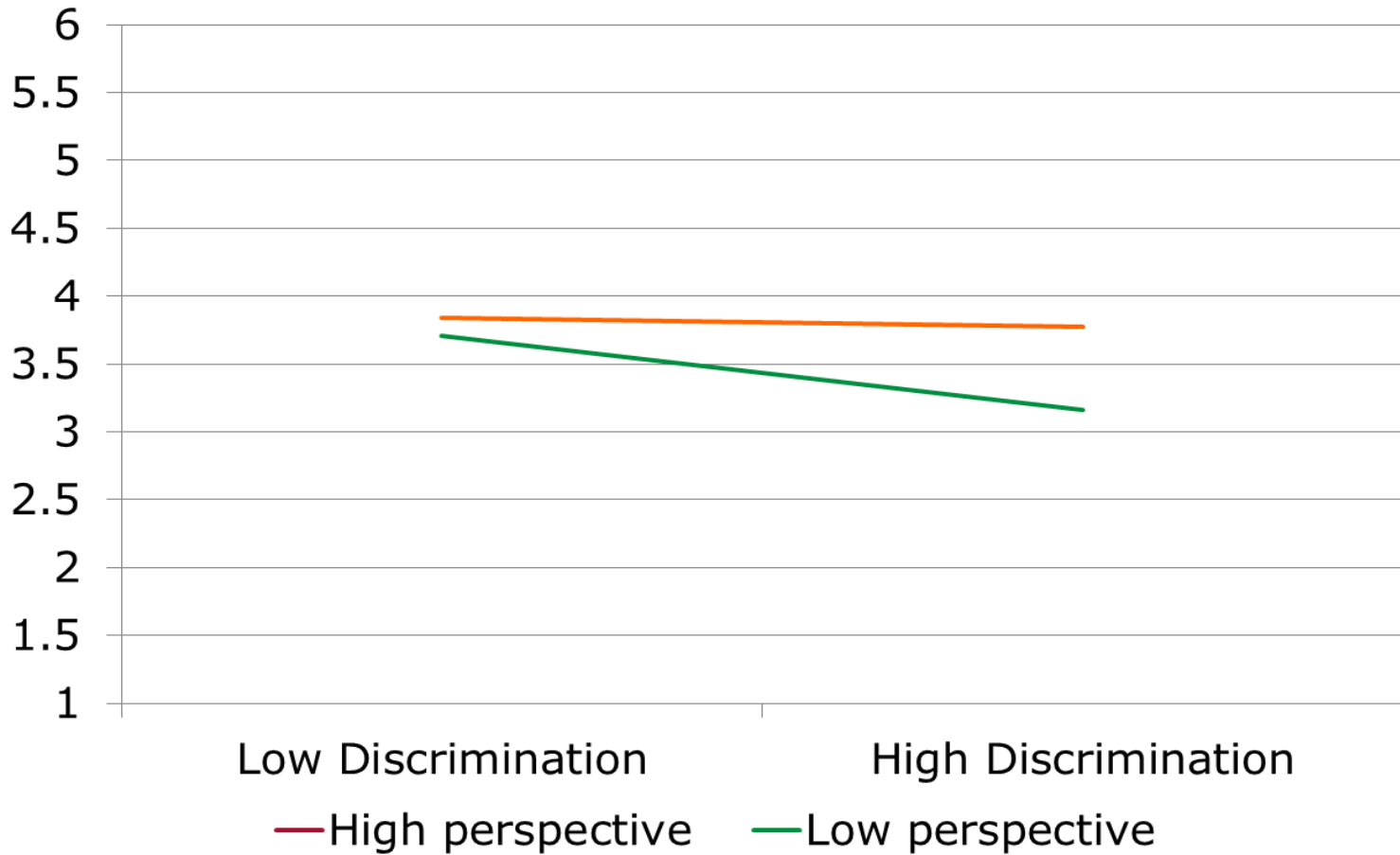
DISCRIMINATION X REAPPRAISAL



REGRESSION: OUTCOME IS BJW

	Variable	β	sig.
Model 3	Age	.06	.297
$R^2 = .16$ (.012)	Gender	.01	.829
	Swiss nationality	.14	.016
	Discrimination	-.18	.006
	Positive reappraisal	.11	.084
	Putting into perspective	.22	.000
	Other-blame	-.12	.057
	Discrimination X perspective	.15	.012

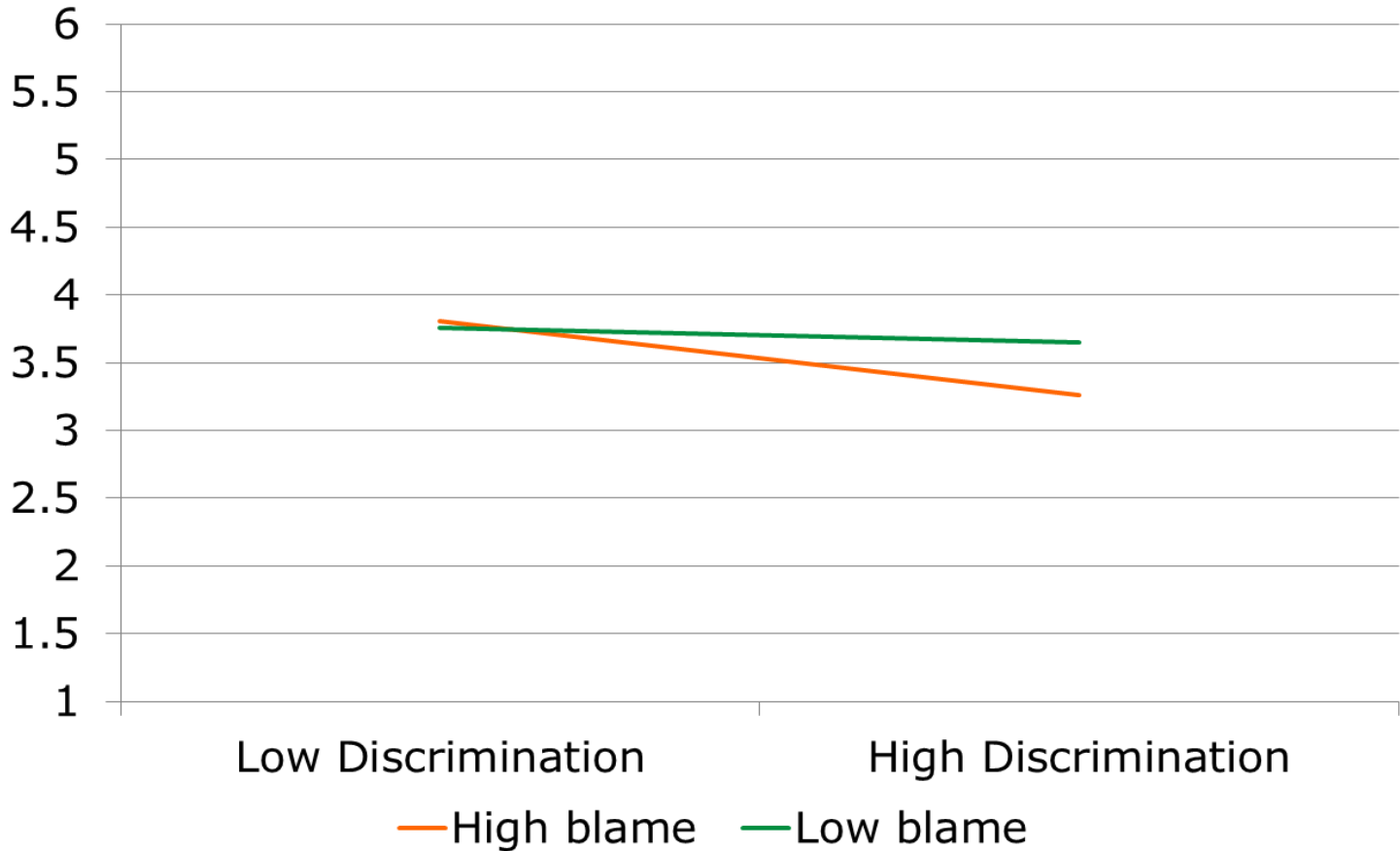
DISCRIMINATION X PERSPECTIVE



REGRESSION: OUTCOME IS BJW

	Variable	β	sig.
Model 3	Age	.06	.300
$R^2 = .16$ (.033)	Gender	.04	.507
	Swiss nationality	.15	.012
	Discrimination	-.19	.003
	Positive reappraisal	.11	.083
	Putting into perspective	.22	.000
	Other-blame	-.10	.114
	Discrimination X blame	-.14	.033

DISCRIMINATION X BLAME



SUMMARY

- ✓ Confirmed negative association between discrimination and BJW
 - ✓ Positive impact of “positive reappraisal” and “putting into perspective” on BJW
 - ✓ Buffering effect of these strategies on relation between discrimination and BJW
→ adequate regulation strategies
 - ✗ No strong negative impact of “other-blame”
 - ✓ Reinforcing effect of this strategy on relation between discrimination and BJW
→ inadequate regulation strategy
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DISCUSSION

- BJW can be restored
 - re-interpretation of the outcome
 - relativizing the event
 - Good !?
 - BJW is associated with well-being
 - Bad !?
 - Seriousness of discrimination is down-played
 - May prevent acting against discrimination
 - Further longitudinal studies needed
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Thank you for your attention.

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