

Presentation title:

## Aggressive behavior and social information processing in adults: driving behavior as an analyzer

**Speaker:** Mariana Sebastião Machado (School of Criminology, Faculty of Law - University of Porto / Doctoral research fellow, FCT [2021.04650.BD], Portugal)

**Co-authors:** Cândido da Agra (University of Porto, Portugal), Carla Sofia Cardoso (University of Porto, Portugal)

Aggression is a complex and multi-determined behavior, influenced by biological and situational factors, and psychological processes. The Social Information Processing Theory (SIP) states that cognitive process (e.g., attribution) can influence if an individual behaves aggressively in a given situation. Previous research has established a strong link between deficits/bias in SIP and aggressive behavior in children and adolescents. However, slight attention has been given to adults. Aggressive driving behavior is understood as a specific manifestation of aggressive behavior, given that the context in which occurs can trigger the “worst in people”, like negative feelings. Driving takes in a dynamic environment, with cognitive processes, such as attribution, playing an important role in the adoption of aggressive responses. In driving context, drivers can perceive situations and other drivers as hostile and threatening and, therefore, act aggressively. The questions that remains are: are these persons aggressive all the time or only while driving? Is the bias in SIP present in both contexts? Using a sample of 562 Portuguese drivers, through a self-reported survey, we examine: i) the link between SIP and aggressive behavior in general as well as within a driving context; ii) differences and associations between aggressive behavior and SIP in these two contexts. Results show that deficits in SIP are positively correlated with aggressive behavior in general and in driving. Secondly, the trait of aggression is positively correlated with aggressive driving behavior. Finally, deficits in SIP in general context are also positively correlated with deficits in SIP in driving context. Nevertheless, significant differences were found between SIP variables in general context and in driving context. Results will be discussed considering the literature of the domain, namely the SIP theory and previous research on aggressive and risk driving.