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Vicarious Retribution: The Role of Collective Blame in Intergroup Aggression

Brian Lickel
Norman Miller
Douglas M. Stenstrom
Thomas F. Denson
Department of Psychology
University of Southern California

Toni Schmader
Department of Psychology
University of Arizona

We provide a new framework for understanding 1 aspect of aggressive conflict between groups, which we refer to as vicarious retribution. *Vicarious retribution occurs when a member of a group commits an act of aggression toward the members of an outgroup for an assault or provocation that had no personal consequences for him or her but which did harm a fellow ingroup member. Furthermore, retribution is often directed at outgroup members who, themselves, were not the direct causal agents in the original attack against the person's ingroup. Thus, retribution is vicarious in that neither the agent of retaliation nor the target of retribution were directly involved in the original event that precipitated the intergroup conflict. We describe how ingroup identification, outgroup entitativity, and other variables, such as group power, influence vicarious retribution. We conclude by considering a variety of conflict reduction strategies in light of this new theoretical framework.*

Early perspectives on intergroup relations stressed the antagonistic nature of intergroup relations. In the words of sociologist William Sumner (1906), in intergroup contexts "loyalty to the [in]group, sacrifice for it, hatred and contempt for outsiders, brotherhood within, warlikeness without—all grow together, common products of the same situation" (p. 12). The century following Sumner's grim but provocative depiction has been marked by the development of several major approaches to intergroup relations, including realistic conflict theory (e.g., Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961), social identity theory (e.g., Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971), and the advance of social cognition approaches to the study of stereotyping and social judgments related to groups (e.g., Hamilton, 1981). With each new turn of research and theory, greater understanding has emerged about the ways in which humans treat their ingroups differently from outgroups.

One aspect of the development of these different theoretical perspectives is that we have learned that Sumner's early depiction of intergroup relations is somewhat simplistic. The psychological processes underlying favoring ingroups versus harming outgroups appear to be somewhat distinct, rather than both inexorably flowing together from an intergroup distinction (Brewer, 1999; Mummendey, Bernd, Carsten, & Grunert, 1992). This insight has been valuable. However, much of the research on stereotyping and intergroup relations has focused on those factors that affect the cognitive differentiation of ingroup from outgroup, or the factors that affect how favorably people treat their ingroups. Surprisingly little research examines pivotal psychological factors that contribute directly to the "warlikeness" that characterizes human treatment of outgroups under many circumstances. In particular, psychologists understand relatively little about the processes that guide the motivation for revenge of group-members who become entwined in an intergroup conflict.

The goal of this article is therefore to develop a theoretical model of one major aspect of intergroup aggression—*vicarious retribution*. Vicarious retribution occurs when a member of a group commits an act of aggression toward members of an outgroup for an as-

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Correspondence should be sent to Brian Lickel, Department of Psychology, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089. E-mail: lickel@usc.edu

sault or provocation that had no personal consequences for him or her, but did harm a fellow ingroup member. In these situations the retaliatory aggression is often directed at outgroup members who themselves were not the direct causal agents in the original attack against the person's ingroup. Thus, retribution is vicarious in the sense that neither the agent of retaliation nor the target of retribution were directly involved in the original event that precipitated the intergroup conflict.

For example, in U. S. history, White violence toward Blacks often occurred as a result of a provocation (often itself imagined rather than real) from one Black person toward a White individual. In many instances, Whites within the community sought revenge not only against the Black person who was perceived as the instigator, but often attacked other Blacks who may have had only a tenuous link to the Black person whose real or imagined actions sparked the violence (Boskin, 1976; Myrdal, 1944). As a more recent example of vicarious retribution, consider the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland. In this conflict, bombings and shootings by Catholic and Protestant partisans often occurred in cycles of retributive killings. The victims of the killings were rarely partisans themselves, but instead were often nonpartisans who were considered appropriate targets for retaliation because of their religious identity. In each instance, whether people were engaged in acts of aggression directly (as in the U. S. race violence) or indirectly (as supporters of Catholic and Protestant sides in the conflict in Northern Ireland), people's behavior was motivated in part by a desire for revenge for a perceived harm from an outgroup.

When viewed by social psychologists or any outsider, such violent aggression between groups is generally considered deplorable. However, for people within an intergroup conflict, aggression often seems legitimate and just. In interpersonal interactions, unprovoked offensive force is generally viewed as unjustified but aggression emitted for the purpose of personal defense or retaliation is often viewed as normative and justified (e.g., Brown & Tedeschi, 1976; Kane, Joseph, & Tedeschi, 1976; Stapleton, Joseph, & Tedeschi, 1978). In fact, individuals will even expend their own personal resources to gain a sense of "justice being served" by meting out punishment to those who have wronged them even when that punishment can have no deterrent effect (Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002). Similarly, we argue that under certain circumstances individuals are often motivated by a need to punish an offending outgroup who has harmed a member of one's ingroup. In these instances, we hypothesize that vicarious retribution is also likely to be perceived as morally justified. Our goal is to understand the social, cognitive, and emotional processes that guide such retributive behavior in intergroup conflicts. Although acts of vicarious retribution can be carried out for purely utilitarian and political purposes (e.g., to deter future attacks or incapacitate one's opponent), the focus of our analysis is on instances in which such acts of aggression are motivated by people's desire for revenge. Across many different types of conflicts, we believe that vicarious retribution can play an important role in escalating and maintaining intergroup conflicts.

In developing our model of the psychology of vicarious retribution, we first discuss background research on aggression and intergroup conflict to place our model in the context of past work. We then describe the basic elements of our model, namely the roles of *event construal*, *ingroup identification*, and *perceived outgroup entitativity* on vicarious retribution responses. Following this, we discuss four important moderating variables that we propose also influence vicarious retribution. Finally, we discuss various conflict reduction strategies in light of our proposed model.

Background and Motivation for the Proposed Model

Our approach in developing a framework for understanding vicarious retribution draws from more general theoretical models of aggression and also an extensive literature within the intergroup relations and social cognition domains. With regard to the aggression literature, there are several models that describe general mechanisms and processes underlying aggressive acts. The majority of this literature focuses on interpersonal aggression, but many of the concepts are relevant for vicarious retribution as well. More specifically, current models like the general aggression model (GAM; Anderson & Bushman, 2002) and Huesmann's (1998) social information processing model seek to understand aggressive behavior as occurring in the context of a social encounter. For example, in the GAM, this social encounter then drives inputs that influence cognitive and affective "routes," which determine higher order cognition and behavior. Inputs can be either personality variables or situational variables. These inputs affect the degree of negative affect, aggressive cognition, and physiological arousal that the individuals involved may experience. In turn, these internal states mediate the effect of the inputs on higher-order appraisal and decision-making processes such that higher levels of aggression-related affect, cognition, and arousal affect the likelihood of aggressive behavior. These outcomes are evaluated such that over time aggressive behavior may become a learned response to particular social encounters. This general framework for understanding acts of aggression helps to deconstruct an interrelated set of processes that underlie an aggressive response.

In this same vein, our model also seeks to identify a set of cognitive and affective variables that more specifically apply to cases of vicarious retribution. Many of the factors that have been shown to increase interpersonal aggression (e.g., temperature, frustration, etc.; cf. Berkowitz, 1993; Geen, 1990) probably influence intergroup aggression as well. However, in the situations that concern us there are additional variables unique to intergroup conflict that we consider in greater detail. For example, we discuss how in cases of intergroup conflict, group identification becomes a critical factor to consider as an input to the process by which vicarious retribution takes place. Furthermore, as we also discuss when we consider conflict reduction strategies, existing models of aggression place an important role on learned scripts and schemas for aggressive behavior. We believe that this is an insight that has been somewhat lacking in work on intergroup conflict, and we discuss the implications of this insight when we turn to conflict reduction strategies at the close of the article.

In addition to drawing from these general frameworks for understanding aggression, we also acknowledge several other existing literatures relevant to our discussion. First, our model also draws on the previous literature on displaced aggression, because the situations that concern us involve directing one's aggressive impulse to a person other than the individual who was the original source of provocation. Whereas research on displaced aggression is largely concerned with instances of interpersonal aggression (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939; Marcus-Newhall, Pedersen, Carlson, & Miller, 2000; N. Miller, Pederson, Earleywine, & Pollack, 2003; Pederson, Gonzales, & Miller, 2000), our model moves the analysis of displaced aggression from the interpersonal level to the intergroup level.

Although previous theory has not examined displaced aggression specifically in an intergroup framework, it is important to acknowledge that previous research has sought to investigate intergroup aggression in general. For example, some research has examined interpersonal aggression between individuals of different ethnic groups and shown evidence of ingroup bias (e.g., Baron, 1979; Donnerstein & Donnerstein, 1973, 1975; Donnerstein, Donnerstein, Simon, & Ditrichs, 1972; Rogers & Prentice-Dunn, 1981). Other research has demonstrated a heightened aggressiveness of groups (compared to individuals) toward individual targets (Jaffe, Shapir, & Yinon, 1981; Jaffe & Yinon, 1979) and other work has shown that intergroup interactions are prone to more aggressiveness than interpersonal interactions (Hoyle, Pinkley, & Insko, 1989; Mikolic, Parker, & Pruitt, 1997). Thus, some scholars have empirically examined aggression in intergroup contexts. However, there is not currently a framework for examining the cognitive and motivation processes underlying people's behavior in cycles of retributive violence between groups.

Finally, another literature that we draw on is recent theoretical work by Smith, Mackie, Yzerbyt, and others (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Smith, 1993, 1999; Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus, & Gordijn, 2003; see also Stephan & Stephan, 1985) on group-based emotions. This work has offered suggestions for how and why people may become motivationally invested in their group memberships and come to feel anger and fear in response to threatening outgroups. Work on group-based emotions has been valuable in moving beyond assumptions about ingroup bias being the simple cause of intergroup conflict (see Brewer, 1999 for the distinction between "ingroup love" and "outgroup hate"). Some of the key findings from this research (e.g., Mackie et al., 2000; Yzerbyt et al., 2003) are integrated into our model. However, this research still does not portray intergroup conflict primarily in terms of aggression, nor is *retribution* studied as the possible linchpin for understanding cycles of intergroup aggression.

We believe that the investigation of vicarious retribution is important because of its potential to significantly advance our understanding of intergroup relations, particularly because the "spreading" of aggression caused by vicarious retribution may be one reason why intergroup conflicts are hard to resolve. For example, "intractable conflicts" are particularly likely to be marked by consequences of vicarious retribution processes, namely a motivation to harm the outgroup, desire for revenge, and intergenerational transfer of conflict (Coleman, 2000). In such cases, people see the conflict in terms of a threat to their group identity and their responses become very affectively charged (Kelman, 1999). Because of this, Coleman suggests that the methods developed to resolve resource-based conflicts may be of little use in intractable identity-based conflicts. We believe that until scholars understand the psychology of group-based retribution, efforts to solve violent intractable conflicts will be hampered.

We should note several important ways in which we are limiting the scope of our analysis in the present article. Traditionally, aggression theorists have made the distinction between "affective" aggression and "instrumental" aggression. Affective aggression is usually defined as being impulsive, immediate, driven by anger, in which the goal is to harm. Instrumental aggression, on the other hand, is usually defined as nonemotional, carefully planned, in which aggression is used only as a means to a more distal goal. Recently, the usefulness of this distinction has been called into question. Specifically, Bushman and Anderson (2001) have argued that common, seemingly affective instances of aggression may be motivated by multiple goals such as restoring justice or reestablishing one's image. We agree that there is not an absolute distinction between expressive and instrumental motives for retaliation. Nonetheless, we should be clear that our current model is not intended to describe the decision-making schemas of elite decision-makers (e.g., military planners), nor is it intended as a normative model of how elite decision-makers should approach intergroup conflicts. Instead, we are interested in understanding the affective and cognitive mechanisms that (a) motivate the lay person's urge to seek out revenge and punish the attacker's outgroup and (b) enable lay perceivers to justify targeting this aggressive impulse toward those who are not directly responsible for the initial attack. In some instances, these process may happen directly (e.g., a person who takes part in a race riot), whereas in other instances, the process may be more indirect (e.g., people supporting their government's attack against another country that is perceived to have harmed the ingroup). In either case, we are interested in charting the cognitive and motivational processes that give rise to support for retaliation against the outgroup.

The Cognitive and Motivational Roots of Vicarious Retribution

We propose that a specific set of cognitive and motivational variables play a role in instances of vicarious retribution. In what follows, we present a theoretical model that articulates the step-by-step process whereby an individual not directly affected by a prior provocation might come to carry out an act of vicarious retribution against an individual who was not the original provocateur (see Figure 1). By way of summary, we assume that when an act of aggression has occurred, other individuals who were not directly involved in the provocation first construe the event with regard to possible ingroup-outgroup distinctions that might help them make sense of it. When no relevant ingroup-outgroup distinction is salient, people will either be indifferent to the event or will view it in interpersonal terms that do not motivate vicarious retribution. If an ingroup-outgroup distinction is salient, people are likely to make sense of the event in ways that favor the ingroup and motivate retaliation. Those who are more highly identified with their ingroup will experience a stronger motivation to retaliate on behalf of the ingroup. As we discuss, group identification may increase vicarious retribution for several reasons including a perceived threat to group pride, empathy for harmed group members (either of which might lead to strong feelings of anger at the outgroup), or normative pressures to avenge the ingroup.

In addition, the motivation to retaliate on behalf of the ingroup can be directed either at the outgroup member(s) who actually carried out the attack, or against other outgroup members who were not directly involved in the precipitating event. Because this spreading of conflict to other outgroup members is a hallmark of intergroup conflicts, we are particularly interested in these types of situations. We hypothesize that the spread of retribution to others within the outgroup is greatest when the outgroup is perceived to be high in *entitativity.*

In what follows, we discuss the details of these hypotheses about event construal, ingroup identification, and perceived outgroup entitativity. Following this, we discuss a set of factors that further moderate the degree of vicarious retribution after harm from an outgroup.

Event Categorization and Act Construal

The first step in the process is an appraisal of how relevant the act of aggression is to intergroup distinctions. Like many social cognition processes, it is likely that this process occurs fairly rapidly and implicitly, though under some circumstances the individual may consciously deliberate on how to construe the event. Two important things are occurring at this initial stage of the process: event categorization and act construal. Event categorization refers to the possible ingroup-outgroup relationships that might be applied to the event. After categorizing the event, the person

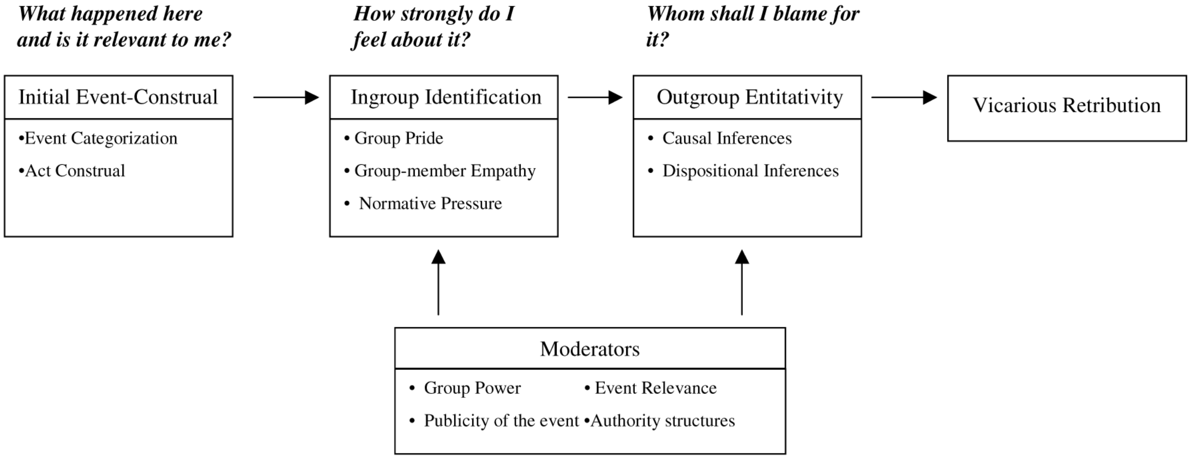

Figure 1. A framework for understanding acts of vicarious retribution.

then engages in "act construal" whereby he or she must identify who caused the event, the malevolence of their intentions, and how much harm the wrongdoer(s) inflicted.

Event categorization. Depending on the types of individuals involved, one can imagine several different outcomes of this categorization process. We begin by addressing the situation where perceivers categorize an act of aggression as occurring between members of two outgroups. In this case, the person will generally have scant interest in it. Although some would argue that it is possible to feel a sense of moral outrage and motivation to intervene in situations where one does not have a salient ingroup membership (e.g., Montada & Schneider, 1998), examination of even a short span of human history indicates that this motivation is relatively limited.

For example, in Rwanda in April of 1994, members of one ethnic group (the Hutu) began to slaughter another (the Tutsi). Although European troops under the aegis of the United Nations were in place, they did little to intervene. In the space of approximately 90 days, at least 500,000 people were killed (Human Rights Watch, 1999). Although the unfolding genocide was certainly the source of "news" outside of Africa, with graphic reports by Western reporters of dead bodies floating down the Kagera River (Lorch, 1994), little action was taken to intervene. European soldiers left Rwanda as the genocide unfolded, and in one instance Belgian troops literally marched away from a group of about-to-be-murdered Tutsis who had obtained shelter under the Belgians' protection (Human Rights Watch, 1999). It is difficult to imagine that the soldiers would have left had it been Belgians who were to be slaughtered. Thus, although we may treat members of an outgroup with considerable "warlikeness" when they attack our ingroup, we generally are indifferent when outgroups attack one another (Gordijn, Wigboldus, & Yzerbyt, 2001).

At another extreme, sometimes a person will see the event as harming an ingroup member, but the provocateur will also be perceived to have been from the same ingroup, allowing no relevant ingroup-outgroup categorization to be readily applied to the event. Thus, for example, parents may view a conflict between two of their children with a relatively even-handed concern. There would be little chance, for example, that parents would retaliate against all of their children when one child harmed another. Instead, parents likely view the conflict as being a purely interpersonal one between two individual group members. Similarly, conflict between two members of any highly cohesive group may not result in the activation of the processes that we describe in the remainder of the article because the event is categorized by other group members as occurring between members of their ingroup.

In the case that is of greatest relevance to our model, people perceive that a member of an outgroup has carried out an act of aggression against a member of their ingroup and begin to frame the meaning of the act in intergroup terms (for recent research showing the important role of categorization in people's reactions to group harm or provocation, see Dumont, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus, & Gordijn, 2003; Gordijn et al., 2001; Yzerbyt et al., 2003). The particular ingroup-outgroup relation that is salient can be influenced by a number of factors. These factors include, first, the chronic salience of particular intergroup distinctions. As we write this article, for example, it is likely that Palestinians and Israelis view almost all provocations between members of their groups in these intergroup terms, even when other group categorizations could be applied. At other times, the context and nature of the initial event will make different kinds of ingroup-outgroup distinctions salient. For example, an act of violence between a White person and a Black person might be readily perceived in racial terms. However, if these two people were members of opposing sports teams, the team identities might be the salient ingroup-outgroup distinction, thereby directing vicarious retaliation along team rather than race lines. Sometimes, the nature of the act of provocation will evoke specific intergroup distinctions. The use of racial slurs, for example, would evoke racial categories. Likewise, if a person or object that is iconic of a particular ingroup identity is harmed, this will activate that particular ingroup identity. For example, an attack against the White House will activate U. S. citizens' national identities because the White House is a symbol of American identity. Finally, we should note that in many instances social influence and propaganda from other ingroup members may exert an important influence upon an individual's interpretation of the event.

Act construal. As we have suggested, people first begin to understand the event by evaluating possible intergroup distinctions that might help make sense of the event. However, while an individual is evaluating ingroup-outgroup relations that might be applied to the event, he or she is also attempting to make sense of other aspects of the event, in particular, who is to blame for the event, the intentions and mental states of the people involved in the event, and how much different actors were harmed by the event. Thus, in general terms, we are arguing that people are engaging in basic processes of act identification and attributional reasoning (Gilbert, 1998). However, because act identification is occurring in an intergroup context, it is subject to particular biases. As people settle onto particular ingroup-outgroup categorizations for understanding the event, people will begin to construe the intentions and actions of the individuals in the event in ways that cast ingroup members in a favorable light and outgroup members in an unfavorable light. Ross and Ward (1995) refer to this intergroup bias as "divergent construal" of events. Unfortunately, divergent construal means that in many instances of conflict, both sides will view their ingroup as the victim, and the outgroup as the perpetrator (for the classic example of divergent construal, see Hastorf & Cantril, 1954). Insofar as both sides view themselves as being victimized after an intergroup encounter, both sides may feel motivation for revenge.

Ingroup Identification and Vicarious Retribution

Once a person has categorized an event as relevant to a particular intergroup relationship, we hypothesize that an individual's motivation to retaliate against the outgroup will be predicted by that individual's degree of ingroup identification. In fact, Yzerbyt and colleagues (2003) have shown that ingroup identification is linked to anger and aggressive intentions after members of an ingroup were harmed by an outgroup. We agree that anger is often an important emotion that motivates the desire for vicarious retribution, but this past research does not identify the processes by which this effect occurs. We assert that identification increases a sense of anger and influences the motivation for vicarious retribution because of its links to *group pride* and *empathy for harmed ingroup members*. In addition, however, even in the absence of anger, identification could motivate vicarious retribution through the operation of *norms of retaliation*. Thus, identification is an important input variable because of its connection to diverse motivational routes to retribution.

Group pride. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) states that people derive a sense of self-worth and self-esteem not just from their identity as a unique individual, but also from their memberships in social groups (see also Brewer & Silver, 2000; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Furthermore, group identities become part of a person's self-concept (Smith & Henry, 1996) and the qualities of the ingroup can come to define a person's belief about their individual qualities (Schmader & Major, 1999).

Just as people are motivated to protect and enhance their personal identity, social identity theory maintains that people are also motivated to protect and enhance their group identities. Because group identities are tied to one's sense of self-esteem, threats to group identity are also perceived as threats to one's self. Furthermore, those who are highly identified are more likely to favor the ingroup and react negatively to acts that threaten group status (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). Because other group members embody the qualities of the ingroup, an attack on a fellow ingroup member may be perceived as an attack on the group as a whole. Even when group members are not harmed, an attack on an object or symbol of the group (e.g., a nation's flag) may be viewed as an attack on one's social identity. In both circumstances, we expect that those who are highly group identified would feel more motivated to retaliate in response to these perceived threats to their group pride. Such threats to group pride might even be expected to elicit a strong sense of anger or indignation that propels an individual to lash out at the outgroup in retaliation.

Group-member empathy. Empathy provides a second reason why identification with a group can motivate vicarious retaliation against outgroup members. Empathy has been defined as one's ability to cognitively understand another's internal state (e.g., Hogan, 1969; Underwood & Moore, 1982) or experience an emotion similar to that felt by another person (e.g., Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Stotland, 1969) or congruent with his or her welfare (e.g., Batson et al., 1988; Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972). Although the conceptual distinctions between these different types of empathy are important for some research arenas, what is important for our model is that empathy is a vicarious reaction that occurs from witnessing another person's distressed condition or emotional state. Thus, witnessing harm to fellow group members is likely to lead to sympathy for them as well as feelings of empathic anger and indignation (Davis, 1994). We argue that such an empathic response is intensified when one has a close connection with (Smith, Murphy, & Coats, 1999) or identifies with the person who has experienced the harm (Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neuberg, 1997).

Another key assumption we make is that empathy will influence helping behavior toward ingroup members. This assumption is backed by substantial research demonstrating robust connections between empathy and helping (e.g., Aronfreed, 1970; Batson, 1991; Carlson & Miller, 1987; Dovidio, Allen, & Schroeder, 1990; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Staub, 1978). Our assertion is that one way of helping an injured ingroup member is to retaliate against the outgroup from whom the harm arose. In other words, when a member of a group to which one feels a close attachment is harmed by an outgroup member, the resulting feelings of sympathy and empathic anger motivate one to retaliate against the outgroup that caused the harm.

Normative influences. A third way in which group identification might lead to a stronger motivation for vicarious retribution is through the influence of social norms. Norms are important because they not only define what is morally appropriate; but may also represent an expected standard of behavior (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). Thus, norms of vicarious retribution may in some instances compel aggressive behavior in intergroup settings, even in the absence of group-based anger stemming from the attack on one's group. We hypothesize that these normative influences may be greatest in groups in which people are highly identified. For example, research on attitude-behavior consistency has shown that individuals who are highly group identified are more likely to exhibit behavior that is influenced by the normative standards of their ingroup (Terry & Hogg, 1996).

There are several aspects of this normative influence. First, it seems likely that those who do retaliate against an outgroup on behalf of a harmed ingroup member will often go unpunished by other ingroup members. In fact, such retaliatory actions might confer advantages in the form of increased respect and status within the group. We further hypothesize that, when retaliation is normatively perceived as appropriate, group members who *fail* to retaliate on behalf of a fellow group member who has been harmed will be viewed as deviants and as having insufficient commitment to the group. As a result, their status within the group will fall. Thus, to avoid ostracism, people may retaliate on behalf of their group even when they do not want to.

We should note though, that in some the instances in which norms influence aggressive behavior in intergroup settings, the observed normative influence may reflect pluralistic ignorance. Pluralistic ignorance occurs when one misperceives the extent to which others share one's views by falsely assuming that one's own view is in the minority. Thus, sometimes norms are sufficiently powerful to induce people to act in ways that are inconsistent with their private thoughts and feelings. Individuals may note this discrepancy but assume that it does not exist in others (D. T. Miller & McFarland, 1991; Prentice & Miller, 1993). In the case of vicarious retribution, people may privately not favor retaliating against an outgroup, but may believe that other group members are in favor of retaliation. Hence an individual may publicly support retaliation to be in line with the (mis)perceived views of others. Gathering accurate information about the extent of support for retaliation may itself be difficult, because even broaching the possibility of not retaliating can be viewed by the most partisan of ingroup members as a failure of nerve. If this is true, pluralistic ignorance may be particularly prevalent in intergroup conflict situations.

As we conclude our discussion of norms of retaliation, we note that there is likely to be significant variation in the extent to which people believe in and are influenced by the norm of vicarious retaliation. Although all societies might generally see vicarious retribution as normative, we do not wish to claim that every culture has the same implicit rules for exactly when, how, and to what degree it is appropriate to engage in vicarious retribution. Just as research on the "culture of honor" (Cohen, 1998; Nisbett, 1993) has shown cultural variation in the extent to which people respond to insults with aggression, there is likely to be substantial variation in norms for vicarious retribution as well. Ethnographic research has documented variation in norms of "blood revenge," but unfortunately much of this research has focused upon hunter-gatherer and nonindustrialized agricultural cultures (Daly & Wilson, 1988). More research is needed about cross-cultural and individual variation in norms of vicarious retribution in industrialized, as well as hunter-gather and agricultural, societies.

Perceived Outgroup Entitativity and Vicarious Retribution

Thus far, we have suggested that for reasons of group pride or empathy for fellow group-members, or from normative pressures, people who are identified with the harmed ingroup are motivated to take revenge when a member of the group is harmed. From our point of view, factors related to ingroup identification provide the motivational force for retaliation.

However, ingroup identification does not itself explain why people would be motivated to take revenge against someone other than the perpetrator. Intergroup conflicts are often characterized by a tendency to depersonalize the outgroup, to see individual group members as being interchangeable and therefore equally deserving of retaliation. To fully explain the revenge based vicarious retribution process, we need to understand why there is often this spread of retribution to target persons beyond the actual perpetrator. In some instances, the original provocateur is not available for retribution. In such an instance perceivers may be particularly likely to target other group members to psychologically even the score. However, regardless of whether the perpetrator is present or absent, the spread of retribution beyond this person entails thinking about the groups to which this provocateur belongs. As we discussed earlier, the initial categorization processes to some extent define the most likely group to which retribution will be targeted. However, we argue that people also attend to the cohesiveness or entitativity of the outgroup to which the perpetrator belongs.

Entitativity (Campbell, 1958) is the perception that a group is a unified and coherent whole in which the members are perceived to be bonded together in some way (e.g., Brewer & Harasty, 1996; L. Gaertner & Schopler, 1998; Hamilton & Sherman, 1996; Lickel et al., 2000; Lickel, Rutchick, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2006; Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001). When people are motivated to engage in retaliation against an outgroup for a hostile act against an ingroup member, we hypothesize that the degree of vicarious retaliation against members of the group other than the perpetrator is influenced by the perceived entitativity of the outgroup. If the outgroup is perceived to be highly unified, then other members of that group are more likely to be blamed and targeted for retribution for the provocative acts of an individual group member. If the outgroup is not perceived to be highly unified, then the other outgroup members are less likely to be targeted for collective retribution because they are less likely to be viewed as blameworthy for their fellow group member's actions.

In considering the role of entitativity and people's folk notions of what makes a group a meaningful target for collective blame, we must consider what features of groups lead to perceptions of entitativity. Past work on entitativity has stressed somewhat different sets of variables. Lickel et al. (2000) found that perceptions of group-member interaction, common goals, shared outcomes, importance of the group to group-members, and similarity of the group members are all highly correlated with one another and are strongly correlated with the entitativity ascribed to the group. Perceivers' beliefs about group entitativity were predicted primarily by perceptions of interpersonal interdependence (in the form of interaction, joint goals, etc.) in each group (Lickel et al., 2000; Lickel, Rutchick, et al., 2006). Other research on entitativity has stressed the importance of perceptions of a deep underlying quality (or "essence") that creates similarity among group members and allows prediction of their behavior (e.g., Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2000; Yzerbyt et al., 2001). Recent work on the perception of entitativity has continued to highlight that there may be some differences in perceptions of entitativity based on social interdependence versus similarity. For example, Ip, Chiu, and Wan (2006) identified meaningful differences in perceiving shared movement versus shared skin tone in the perception of the entitativity of artificial groups. Shared movement reliably led to perceiving the group as sharing common goals and being cohesive. Shared skin tone, though, had stronger effects on perception of shared traits (at least when skin tone was diagnostic of distinct group memberships). Ip et al. (2006) argue that perceptions of entitativity can arise from either seeing the group as interpersonally cohesive or homogenous with regard to their traits.

Thus, it may be the case that both entitativity based on cohesiveness or based on homogeneity may form the basis for vicarious retribution. From the point of view of existing general models of aggression (e.g., Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Huesmann; 1998) outgroup entitativity is an initial input variable to the process of retribution after an intergroup provocation. However, like those models, we consider the effect of entitativity on retribution to often be mediated through different higher order cognitive routes to behavior. In the following sections, based on a review of research on blame/responsibility, we offer two possible explanations for why perceptions of entitativity would influence vicarious retribution through different cognitive appraisals of the outgroup.

Causal inferences about outgroup members. One reason why people may blame other outgroup members for harms enacted by one outgroup individual is that they perceive all of the members of the outgroup as having an indirect causal role in the individual outgroup member's actions. As we made clear earlier, our focus is on situations in which an individual member (or small numbers) of an outgroup is the causal agent of harm. Thus, it might seem odd that we hypothesize that people view other members of the outgroup as having a causal role in what were quite visibly the actions of a single person. However, past research on third-party judgments of collective blame indicates that perceivers often apply intuitive ideas of indirect causality that justify holding all the members of a group responsible when one member of the group commits a wrongdoing (e.g., Lickel, Schmader, & Hamilton, 2003). In making these intuitive inferences, lay perceivers not only echo what social psychologists have learned about social influence in groups (Latane, 1981; McGrath, 1984) but also parallel the arguments made by philosophers (e.g., Feinberg, 1970; May, 1987) about the conditions under which it is appropriate to apply collective blame to groups.

We (e.g., Lickel et al., 2003) have found that perceivers' judgments of collective responsibility are often accompanied either by inferences of indirect commission in the act (i.e., people believe that other members of the group either encouraged or facilitated the act) or by inferences of omission (i.e., people infer that members of the group should be blamed for failing to prevent the act). For example, if one individual in a group of friends begins a fight at a bar, people may hold the other group members responsible either because they believe that the friends encouraged the fight (an inference of commission) or that the friends failed in their duty to restrain the actor (an inference of omission). Furthermore, inferences of both omission and commission are heightened in high entitativity groups (Denson, Lickel, Curtis, Stenstrom, & Ames, 2006). Although this past research has not examined collective responsibility in intergroup settings, we hypothesize that inferences of commission and omission often play a role in justifying vicarious retribution. It is worth noting that in this work (Denson et al., 2006; Lickel et al., 2003), entitativity is defined in terms of shared goals and mutual social influence, a definition of entitativity closest to what Ip et al. (2006) refer to as cohesiveness.

Dispositional inferences about outgroup members. However, beyond causal inferences of commission and omission, we assert that dispositional inferences about the outgroup may also form a basis for blame judgments and influence vicarious retribution. Although classic treatments of blame judgments (e.g., Heider, 1958) focus on perceivers' causal inferences about blameworthy events, recent research and theorizing (e.g., Alicke, 2000; Gervey, Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1999) indicates that perceivers may often make use of dispositional information when making judgments about blame. In other words, perceptions of "bad character"—as well as a person's (or group's) causal role in an event—influence how people assign blame. We hypothesize that if one outgroup member attacks an ingroup member, people may perceive that other outgroup members share the same blameworthy qualities that define the provocateur. Thus, people may make a negative dispositional inference about the outgroup as a whole, which in turn may promote and justify collective retaliation against any outgroup individual.

Although no research has examined this specific question, we do know that entitativity influences dispositional inferences. Crawford, Sherman, and Hamilton (2002) demonstrated that entitativity influenced the extent to which perceivers made spontaneous trait inferences about a group based on a group member's behavior, and Johnson and Queller (2003) found that people develop abstractions about the traits of a group more quickly for a high entitativity group than a low entitativity group (see also, McConnell, Sherman, & Hamilton, 1997). This research shows that perceived entitativity influences dispositional inferences, but the link to vicarious retribution is yet to be established. It is worth again recalling Ip et al.'s (2006) research showing that perceiving a group to share common traits may be another route to entitativity (other than perceived cohesiveness). It may be that it is particularly this factor of perceived homogeneity that affects dispositional inferences about groups. Therefore, different facets of group entitativity (cohesiveness vs. homogeneity) and inferences (commission and omission vs. bad character) may play distinct (though perhaps mutually supportive) roles in determining people's cognitions when they are considering the extent to which an outgroup is an appropriate target for collective retribution.

As we close our discussion of how perceptions of entitativity may influence vicarious retribution, we think it worth broaching the topic of the accuracy of people's perceptions of entitativity in intergroup contexts. Although discussions of accuracy in social judgment are fraught with some difficulty, we think it is important for scholars to consider the extent to which perceptions of entitativity may be biased or inaccurate. It is certainly worth considering how difficult it is for people in an intergroup context to assess the extent to which there truly is interdependence of action or homogeneity of values among the members of an outgroup. Indeed, it seems likely that the perceived entitativity of an outgroup increases the moment one has categorized them as a group that has harmed one's ingroup. Leaders and other group members may also often use propaganda to manipulate the extent to which ingroup members perceive the members of the outgroup to be "in cahoots" and "all alike" to justify an attack on the outgroup. Furthermore, we think it may be the case that the intense emotions that often drive the motivation for retribution may interfere with the quality of the reasoning about the entitativity of the targeted outgroup. For example, we (Stenstrom, Lickel, Denson, & Miller, 2006) have found that people's perceptions of the entitativity of an outgroup that has harmed their ingroup are predicted by the person's own level of identification and their anger over the attack. Highly identified group members saw the outgroup as more cohesive than group members who were less strongly identified. Thus, although people do engage in reasoning about the entitativity of the outgroup to make decisions about collective retaliation, it is also likely that this reasoning is strongly colored by the intergroup context in which the reasoning occurs.

Summary

Thus far, we have presented the basic working elements of our model of vicarious retribution (see Figure 1). We hypothesize that the degree of intergroup retribution is influenced by the connection between the group members—both the connection between ingroup members (ingroup identification) and the perceived connection between outgroup members (outgroup entitativity). According to this model, the harm inflicted on ingroup members provokes feelings of anger, sadness, and outrage in other group members that motivate retaliation against members of the outgroup. Thus, ingroup identification is primarily an affective or motivational component of the model of vicarious retribution because emotional reactions are the impetus for the subsequent actions against the outgroup. Whereas ingroup identification is affective or motivational, perceptions of the outgroup's entitativity is a more cognitive component of the vicarious retribution model. Serving as a type of "targeting system," people's perceptions of the outgroup's entitativity influence the extent to which outgroup members other than the perpetrator are considered appropriate targets of retaliation. Perceived outgroup entitativity can influence retaliation through either dispositional inferences ("these are bad people, deserving bad things") and/or causal inferences ("they aided/benefited from the provocation or they failed to prevent it, and are therefore blameworthy") that justify group-based retribution.

Moderators of Vicarious Retribution

There are four variables that we believe moderate the degree of vicarious retaliation that is delivered after an intergroup provocation. These four variables are not an exhaustive list of potential moderators, but we believe that they may be of particular importance. We first describe two variables related to the nature of the ingroup-outgroup relationship, namely the relative power of the two groups and the extent to which the initial provocation threatens features that define the ingroup identity. Next, we discuss the social context in which provocation and retaliation occur and hypothesize that vicarious retribution will be higher in public contexts. Finally, we turn to an intragroup variable, namely the authority structure within the ingroup and outgroup. We argue that group leaders have a special role in the vicarious retribution process, both as instigators and as targets of intergroup aggression.

Group Power

We hypothesize that when there is a perceived power difference between the groups engaged in conflict there is likely to be an asymmetry in vicarious retribution whereby members of the high power group in an intergroup setting are more likely to engage in retribution than are members of the lower power group. At least two lines of research point to this hypothesis. First, research by Mackie et al. (2000) indicates that groups with greater power in an intergroup conflict are likely to react with anger to the outgroup, whereas groups with less power may be more likely to react with fear. Thus, insofar as groups differ in power, there is likely to be a difference in the affective reactions that an intergroup provocation creates. Members of a low power group may be upset by the attack from the powerful group, but may stifle retributive responses because of fear of an overwhelming counterattack by the outgroup.

Our hypothesis can also be supported by social dominance (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and system justification theories (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Together, these theories propose that all societies develop status hierarchies in which powerful groups oppress and extract resources from weaker groups, and that even those in oppressed groups often view status-based systems as just and legitimate (e.g., Jost, 1995; Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003; Major et al., 2002). Low power groups often have a long history of compliance with the high power groups, and the high power groups have an expectation of compliance. Sidanius and Pratto (1999) further argue that retributive justice systems are designed to keep lower status groups in check. A key element, they argue, is the "out of place" principle, by which members of low status groups are particularly likely to be punished if they aggress in some way against a member of the high status group. They offer criminal justice evidence, such as death penalty statistics, to support the idea that transgressions by low status group members against high status group members (e.g., Blacks aggressing against Whites) are particularly likely to result in severe punishment. By extension, we argue that a status asymmetry may be at play in vicarious retribution as well. If status and power differences are viewed as legitimate, aggression from the high status group may evoke sadness, or even blame of the ingroup, in members of the subjugated group. In contrast, if the status difference is viewed as illegitimate, anger may be the more prominent emotion (though—apropos Mackie et al., 2000—anger may also be tempered with fear).

Relevance of the Provocation to the Ingroup's Defining Qualities

We suggested earlier that an initial step in the vicarious retribution process is categorizing the event in terms of an intergroup distinction. However, the relevance of the event to intergroup distinctions also plays a later role in determining the degree of motivation for engaging in intergroup retribution. Research has shown that groups are particularly likely to show ingroup bias on dimensions that define the nature of the group (Mummendey & Simon, 1989; van Knippenberg & van Oers, 1984). By extension, we hypothesize that individuals will experience stronger motivation for retaliation to the degree that the provocation is viewed as threatening a valued characteristic of the ingroup, particularly a characteristic that defines the intergroup comparison. Although acts of physical violence against members of the ingroup may always evoke a desire for retaliation, some acts of aggression are more symbolic in nature. Interestingly, it may be that when engaging in retaliatory aggression, groups may choose to target symbols (e.g., flags, monuments) or people (e.g., leaders) that have particular relevance to the defining nature of the outgroup. Thus, sadly, the things (icons and leaders) that seem most attractive targets for retribution are the very things that will stir outrage in the opposing group and spur yet another round in the cycle of retribution and violence.

Public Versus Private Context

Provocations and retaliation between members of groups can occur in a variety of contexts that differ in the degree to which they are "public." For example, overhearing ethnic outgroup members making derogatory remarks about one's own ethnicity while walking behind them on campus may be considered a more private context than if such statements occurred in a classroom discussion with a diverse mix of students. We hypothesize that the publicity of the event should increase retaliation for two reasons. First, research indicates that the presence of an audience increases the salience of social identities and magnifies the humiliation associated with affronts (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). This line of reasoning suggests that a public context should promote stronger retaliation because it poses a stronger threat to group pride (Berkowitz, 1993). However, we believe retribution might also be greater in public contexts because of the norm of vicarious retribution discussed earlier. Behavior that is emitted in public settings is more likely to be moderated by and made consonant with normative prescriptions (Froming, Walker, & Lopyan, 1982; Latane, 1981). Therefore, in addition to the added sting to group pride, the increased salience of norms might also lead to greater retaliation when the provocation is public.

The Role of the Authority Structure in Ingroup and Outgroup: Authority of the Victim, the Retaliation Target, and the Agent of the Retaliation

Although some real-world groups (and most laboratory created groups) do not possess leaders, many human groups have a formal or informal leadership structure of some kind. For example, even a social category such as “African-American” has members who are (e.g., Jesse Jackson) or were (e.g., Martin Luther King) considered leaders by many ingroup members and outgroup members alike. We hypothesize that those in leadership positions play a special role in the vicarious retribution process. First, leaders are special because they embody the identity of the group and are frequently seen as the most prototypical member of the group (Fielding & Hogg, 1997; Hogg, 2001; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001). Therefore, an attack against a group leader is likely to be viewed as an attack against the entire group to a greater extent than an attack against a rank-and-file member. As such, an attack on a leader will often provoke a particularly strong desire for revenge from other group members.

It is ironic then, that leaders make especially attractive targets of vicarious retribution for the very reason that they embody the identity of the targeted outgroup. Because leaders are the most prototypical and valued members of the group, attacking the leader of an outgroup may be viewed as the best way to gain revenge. Assassinations of civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King are a testament to how individuals who embody the identity of their group are a focus of attacks during intergroup conflicts. More recently, this point is emphatically made by the symbolic focus of the 9-11 attacks on the World Trade Center (business leaders), Pentagon (military leaders), and the possible failed attempt at striking the White House (government leaders).

Of course, leaders are also attractive targets of retribution because they are perceived to exercise social influence over followers. Because distinctive individuals are perceived as inordinately influential (Taylor & Fiske, 1975), the leader’s prototypicality and singular role within the group may lead him or her to be perceived as the motivator behind the group-member’s behavior and therefore especially worthy of blame and retribution. In fact, studies examining third-party assessments of collective responsibility (e.g., Lickel et al., 2003) have found that perceivers are likely to hold leaders of groups more responsible than rank-and-file members when one member of the group commits a wrongdoing. Thus, leaders may be targeted for vicarious retribution because they are viewed as responsible for the actions of the group’s members.

Leaders are important in the vicarious retribution process for a third reason, namely, in leading retaliation against outgroups. We hypothesize that leaders (compared to rank-and-file members) are particularly motivated to engage in retaliation against outgroups. Several lines of reasoning lead to this hypothesis. First, there is evidence that suggests that when leaders are threatened, they frequently advocate intergroup conflict or competition (Bekkers, 1976; Rabbie & Bekkers, 1978). Evidence from field settings (Sherif et al., 1961) and the laboratory (Lundgren, 1998) indicates that as groups become involved in intergroup conflicts, leaders who promote retaliation against the outgroup are favorably evaluated by followers. Similarly, a leader whose rank is precarious will often engage in ingroup favoring behavior to gain endorsement from followers (Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; Rabbie & Bekkers, 1978). Furthermore, because norms of authority include protection of those in subordinate positions in the group (Fiske, 1991), leaders might feel the norm of vicarious retribution more strongly. For all of these reasons, leaders relative to their followers should more strongly advocate retaliating against outgroup members when an ingroup member is harmed.

Varieties of Groups and the General Scope of the Norm of Vicarious Retribution

In concluding our discussion of moderators of vicarious retribution processes, we note that our model is intended to highlight core elements in the psychology of vicarious retribution. We believe this model can be fruitfully applied to an array of intergroup settings that are marked by conflict and animosity, such as rival gangs, verbal attacks and counterattacks of opposing political parties, the sometimes violent behavior of competing sport teams, as well as large scale conflicts such as in Northern Ireland or Rwanda. We believe that a motivation of “justified” (to the perpetrators) retaliation and revenge can play a strong role in fueling ongoing aggression between these varied types of groups. However, we wish to be clear that we are not arguing that all group conflicts (and resulting vicarious retribution processes)—such as between two families, two competing companies, two nations, or two ethnic groups—are equivalent. Such equivalence is implausible.

Some likely differences in conflict between different types of groups are specified in our model. Past research (e.g., Lickel et al., 2000) has shown that people generally value and identify with some types of groups more than others (in general, intimacy groups are valued more than social categories or task groups, which are in turn valued more than loose associations). Perceptions of group entitativity also mirror the social identity value placed on different group memberships. Thus, because of their high entitativity and social identity value, we might expect that intimacy groups would be the most susceptible to vicarious retribution. Likewise, as we indicated earlier, we clearly believe that the presence or absence of a leadership structure in a group has an important effect on vicarious retribution processes. One should expect differences in conflicts between groups with a formal structure compared to those without such structure.

However, there are likely to be many other factors (as of yet to be examined empirically) that moderate the extent of vicarious retribution and the process by which conflict unfolds between groups. For example, one issue concerns the extent to which there is a controlling superordinate identity and social structure that can regulate the behavior of subgroups. Thus, in many societies, conflict between intimacy groups (e.g., families, fraternities, friendship groups) will occur within a community and nation that can regulate the conflict or enforce legal sanctions if either side "takes the law into its own hands." Conflict between social categories, on the other hand, may more often occur in a context in which there is not a strong superordinate identity or social structure that can function to control the conflict. Furthermore, because of their size, conflicts between social categories have the potential to spread much further than conflict between relatively small groups. Thus, the core psychological mechanisms underlying vicarious retribution are probably evoked for all kinds of group memberships, but there are also likely to be important differences in how vicarious retribution processes unfold in different types of groups. We believe that identifying how vicarious retribution processes differ across different kinds of group memberships is an important topic for future research.

Conflict Resolution and Vicarious Retribution

The preceding sections have outlined the basic framework for our model of vicarious retribution and how various cognitive and affective aspects of intergroup situations influence the likelihood that individuals engage in vicarious retaliation. In the final sections of the article, we discuss conflict reduction mechanisms that are designed to diminish or eliminate intergroup conflict and consider them within the framework of the vicarious retribution model.

The Contact Hypothesis Revisited

Perhaps the most prominent model of prejudice and conflict reduction is the contact hypothesis. Originally proposed by Allport (1954), the contact hypothesis proposes that bringing conflicting groups into face-to-face interactions can alleviate intergroup hostilities. Importantly, simple contact is not alone sufficient to reduce discrimination (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000) and can sometimes be a catalyst for escalating conflict (Hewstone & Greenland, 2000). Pettigrew's (1998) reformulation of the contact hypothesis incorporates various forms of intergroup categorization that play a role in guiding people's perceptions in contact situations. By integrating theoretical aspects of social categorization with research on intergroup contact, three different categorization approaches have been proposed that identify the optimal conditions for reducing conflict by affecting the salience of existing group boundaries. Although other theorists have debated the intrinsic value of each type of categorization mechanism, Pettigrew asserts that these might be most effective when implemented in sequence. Our model of vicarious retribution offers new insights into how these categorization processes may work most optimally, especially in contact situations in which there has been a history of retributive aggression.

The first process that should be initiated (according to Pettigrew, 1998) is decategorization. This approach involves reducing or eliminating social categorization by increasing differentiation and personalization between group members (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Ensari & Miller, 2001; N. Miller, 2002). From our perspective, decategorization (particularly if it is in the form of personalization) is indeed an important first step in breaking the cycle of vicarious retribution. Our model assumes that feelings of identification with the ingroup trigger the motivation to retaliate when another ingroup member has been harmed and perceptions of entitativity of the outgroup expand the target of retaliation to include any identifiable outgroup member. By encouraging members of both groups to see each other as a collection of individuals rather than as two distinct groups, both ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity are likely to be diminished (and therefore reduce vicarious retribution).

The goal of decategorizataion when groups have been in long-standing conflict is to create situations in which contact between people from the different groups results in positive exchanges between those individuals, in the hopes that eventually these positive feelings will generalize to the group level. However, when groups have been in conflict for long periods of time, it is a great challenge to create contact situations in which memories of intergroup hostilities in the past are not salient. Models of interpersonal aggression stress that when aggression (either as a general interpersonal strategy or in a specific context) becomes a well-learned response, behavior can be driven somewhat automatically by scripts and schemas for aggressive behavior (e.g., Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Huesmann, 1998). This is likely to be true in intergroup contexts as well, and must necessarily complicate decategorization approaches to conflict reduction. Something is therefore required to change the social context in which people are interacting to reduce the salience of scripts and schemas for intergroup aggression.

We suggest that for decategorization to be most successful, an acknowledgement of past conflict may be required. Consider post-Apartheid South Africa, in which laws that were designed to limit and control contact between racial groups were dismantled but in which the increased racial contact threatened to boil into uncontrolled interracial violence. In this unsettled situation, South Africans created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The charter of the commission (called the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, 1995) stated in part that for national unity, "there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for ubuntu ["humanness"] but not for victimization" (Prologue, Para. 5). Thus, acknowledgement of the immorality of acts committed in support of Apartheid (but that also stressed the shared humanity of Whites and Blacks) eliminated the psychological need for revenge to "even the scales of justice" and provided a basis for Whites and Blacks to interact in a setting in which they, as individuals, could put the past at least partially to rest. The idea of shared humanity has been shown empirically to be strongly related to forgiveness of harmed groups toward the outgroups that harmed them. Wohl and Branscombe (2005) showed that manipulations that stressed the common humanity of the two groups reduced the extent to which the harmed group (e.g., Jews, Native Canadians) blamed current generations of the outgroup (i.e., Germans, European-Canadians) for the historical actions of their group and increased their feelings of forgiveness toward the outgroup.

The process of decategorization may take a somewhat different form in defusing a conflict in its early stages than when conflict is long-standing. In this instance, it might be possible to defuse the cycle of intergroup retribution before well-learned aggression related scripts and schemas are developed. For example, the week after the 9-11 attacks, in response to concern about the possible rise of hate crimes against Muslims, President Bush (2001) gave a widely publicized address in which the major thrust was for Americans to make a clear distinction between the 9-11 hijackers and Muslim-Americans. In the speech, for example, he stated

> The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That's not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace … America counts millions of Muslims amongst our citizens, and Muslims make an incredibly valuable contribution to our country. Muslims are doctors, lawyers, law professors, members of the military, entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, moms and dads. And they need to be treated with respect. In our anger and emotion, our fellow Americans must treat each other with respect. (Para. 6)

Bush's speech had several elements, one of which was stressing the contribution of Muslims as Americans, but a key element also stressed that the Islamic faith was not complicit in the attacks. In essence, Bush was saying that not all Muslims are like the 9-11 hijackers and are therefore not to be blamed or harmed in revenge. Thus, one of the critical features of decategorization in the early stages of a conflict is that it may counteract the aggression-producing effects that can arise from perceiving the outgroup as unified and undifferentiated (Messick & Mackie, 1989; Tajfel, 1982).

According to Pettigrew (1998), optimally, the second stage of categorization is to make salient again the mutual category distinctions between the groups (Brewer & Brown, 1998; Hewstone & Brown, 1986). In theory, by reemphasizing group categories, the individual is more likely to generalize any positive beliefs and attitudes formed about individual outgroup members. Although research has shown the positive benefits of contact involving mutual differentiation, this approach might be less effective when considering groups with a history of retributive violence. Maintaining or reinstigating salient ingroup-outgroup identities seems likely to highlight the intergroup nature of the conflict and remind people of the violence committed by "them" against "us." Perhaps once peace is firmly established, mutual differentiation can play an important role in increasing warm relations between the groups by providing each group with a valued identity. Thus, at least within conflicts marked by retributive violence, our perspective suggests that mutual differentiation should be the final, rather than second stage in the categorization process.

In this, we are somewhat at odds with Pettigrew (1998), who argued that the final stage of categorization should be to recategorize the existing social categorizations into a higher level of category inclusiveness (Brewer & Brown, 1998; S. L. Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002). By superimposing a new superordinate group membership, recategorization can reduce bias by not only reducing the salience of the original ingroup-outgroup distinction but also by increasing the new shared social identity that unites the formerly opposing groups. Recategorizing social categories may reduce aggressive retaliation by reducing one's identification with the (original) ingroup. The same social identity mechanism that initially drove vicarious retaliation through identification with the harmed ingroup member is now operating to counteract the anger and aggression through identification (and therefore empathy, cf. Galinsky, 2002) with members on the other side of the conflict. We suggest that imposing or inducing such a superordinate category on groups in conflict settings is extremely difficult. However, we suggest that there is another categorization scheme in which members of both groups who view themselves as "victims of conflict" each categorize themselves as a subgroup, thereby differentiating themselves from the "perpetrators of conflict." These people from both groups can then push their respective ingroups for peace, and their identity as agents of change can then form the basis for a new superordinate identity encompassing both sides in the conflict.

Conflict-Management Strategies and Ingroup-Directed Emotions

The preceding discussions regarding contact and categorization processes are to some degree best described as strategies that outsiders can impose upon feuding groups to reduce conflict between the groups. Although intergroup conflicts are prone to escalate to such a point that an outside party is required to mediate peace, people in an intergroup conflict are not powerless to prevent the conflict from spiraling out of control. Thus far, we have focused on emotional reactions that dictate how members of a harmed group react to the perpetrator group. However, we believe that emotion also plays a role in how members of the perpetrator group react to the ingroup member who instigated the attack. In fact, it is our contention that certain emotions that individuals might experience in response to an ingroup member's attack on an outgroup serve a broader social function of helping to regulate group behavior in such a way to deflect or diffuse intergroup conflict and vicarious retribution. These emotional responses are also relevant for considering when and why people within an intergroup conflict setting would be motivated to initiate the interventions advocated by scholars studying contact and categorization approaches to ameliorating intergroup conflicts. We discuss four such emotions (ingroup-directed anger, shame, guilt, and sympathy) and their relationship to specific conflict-management strategies (see also Lickel, Schmader, & Barquissau, 2004; Lickel, Schmader, et al., in press).

First, group members who fear that they may be targeted for vicarious retribution by a harmed outgroup may have an angry response to an ingroup member who provokes intergroup conflict. In the intergroup emotion literature, anger has typically been examined as a response to a despised outgroup (Mackie et al., 2000; Yzerbyt et al., 2003). However, anger is also an emotion that likely regulates responses to the misdeeds of other ingroup members by motivating efforts to punish those group members who are not seen as promoting the interests of the group. For example, work on the black sheep effect has found that individuals tend to derogate ingroup members particularly harshly when they break the norms of the group (e.g., Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988). Interestingly, this response is strongest among those who are most highly identified with the group (Branscombe, Wann, & Noel, 1993).

In the black sheep literature, it has been argued that this derogation allows group members to disassociate the offending individual from the group as a means of maintaining a positive social identity (e.g., Marques & Paez, 1994). In the context of our model of vicarious retribution, we assert that managing one's social identity is not the only concern, however. If there is also a goal of avoiding vicarious retribution, then individuals might also want their punishment of the offending ingroup member to be communicated to the harmed outgroup. We believe that ingroup directed anger is an important impetus for confronting and punishing ingroup members who are perceived to have unjustly harmed an outgroup. In a recent study of British college students' emotional reactions to their country's involvement in the Iraq war, ingroup directed anger was distinct from group-based shame and group-based guilt, and anger was found to be strongly linked to any form of protest that would communicate one's disagreement with the actions of the government. The link between anger and a motivation to confront those responsible for the post-war chaos in Iraq was particularly strong (Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2006).

Presumably such acts of protest are done not only as a form of cathartic release, but also ultimately serve a communicative function. By communicating one's anger and disapproval of the perpetrating ingroup member, individuals can decrease the extent to which they are judged to share the goals and values of their fellow ingroup member who harmed the outgroup. This should reduce the degree to which people in the harmed group make causal and dispositional judgments about the other group and short-circuit some of the justification for retribution against the inculpable group members. For example, it is likely that the publicity of punishment of the U. S. prison guards who committed abuse at Abu Ghraib in Iraq was motivated at least in part by a desire to deter retaliation from Iraqis or other partisans who are outraged by the actions of these Americans. In addition to narrowing the focus of attack, observing punishment being doled out to the perpetrator might also reduce the motivation for retaliation felt by other outgroup members. It is an interesting question, however, if seeing the perpetrator being punished relieves the retaliation drive to the same degree as enacting that punishment oneself. Of course, there is a limiting factor of whether ingroup members will even have an angry emotional response to the perpetrator. Doing so requires that they have a clear perception that the group member has overstepped the desired norms of the group. Given the issue of divergent construal (Ross & Ward, 1995), members of the perpetrator's group may not feel there is any act worthy of punishment and may instead back the perpetrator.

In addition to ingroup directed anger, shame is a second emotional response that ingroup members could have to an intergroup attack made by another group member. Shame is an emotion that individuals feel when they believe that an event has tarnished their core sense of identity (Tangney & Fischer, 1995). To the degree that people define themselves partly by their affiliation in social groups, the misdeeds enacted by members of those groups have the potential to bring disgrace and dishonor on the identities of other group members. The resulting feelings of shame have been found to motivate efforts to distance oneself from the offending group member (Johns, Schmader, & Lickel, 2005; Lickel et al., 2004; Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarnier, & Ames, 2005; Schmader & Lickel, 2006). As we suggested with anger and punishment, such distancing efforts might partly reflect an effort to demonstrate that the provocateur's actions are not representative of the sentiment of the rest of the group. In terms of our model, distancing from the perpetrator may deflect vicarious retribution because it reduces the extent to which the group is viewed as high in entitativity and/or because it deflects the causal and dispositional inferences that underlie collective blame. By disassociating from the wrongdoer, group members may hope to disassociate themselves from blame and retribution as well. Members of the harmed outgroup might still feel motivated to seek revenge, but presumably they would be forced to narrow their focus on the perpetrator or those who appear to be close associates. Again, we saw evidence of the distancing strategy used in response to the prison abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib. More specifically, President Bush of the United States (2004), speaking to Al Arabiya Television about the Abu Ghraib abuse, said, "I want to tell the people of the Middle East that the practices that took place in that prison are abhorrent and they don't represent America. They represent the actions of a few people" (Para. 1). This interview came after repeated calls for the President to speak to the Iraqi people to quell their growing outrage over the abuse at the prison.

The third emotional response that might serve the function of defusing vicarious retribution is guilt. To the degree that members of the perpetrator group view their ingroup member's behavior as unjustifiably wrong and feel a sense of collective guilt for the attack, they might feel some motivation to apologize and provide restitution for harm that has been done. Guilt has been described as an emotion that signals when damage has been done to an important social relationship (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994), and as such, motivates a desire to repair harm that has been done to others. Although traditionally guilt has been studied as an individual response to one's own misdeeds, researchers have begun to examine guilt felt for the actions of others (e.g., Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Lickel et al., 2005; McGarty et al., in press). For example, when one's ingroup is seen as having some collective responsibility for harm done to others, the resulting feelings of guilt have been shown to predict a desire to make reparations or apology to the harmed party (Doosje et al., 1998; Lickel et al., 2005). Apology and restitution have been shown to be important in cases of individual conflict (e.g., Scher & Darley, 1997), and they may have an impact on instances of intergroup conflict as well. Although no experimental research has examined the effect of apology on intergroup retribution, ethnographic research in cultures where group-based retribution is prevalent indicates that members of groups do sometimes attempt to atone for the actions of ingroup members and that these actions appear to reduce the likelihood of retribution (Boehm, 1987).

The final emotion that may be relevant for defusing cycles of retributive aggression is sympathy. Some research suggests that focusing on the harm that has befallen the outgroup (rather than the bad acts of one's ingroup) elicits feelings of sympathy rather than guilt and that sympathy has a stronger relationship with changing the system of intergroup relations to avoid against future conflict than does guilt (Iyer et al., 2003). When considering how these emotional reactions might interrupt a cycle of vicarious retribution, it seems clear that feeling sympathy for the harm done to the outgroup is likely to have longer term benefits than merely feeling guilt for the group member's wrongdoing and trying only to repair whatever damage has already been done. Particularly when conflict has been long-standing, sympathy for the other side may be a key emotion for ameliorating conflict. Of course, feeling sympathy with the outgroup requires a certain willingness to take the perspective of those from the other side, something that ingroup biases often prevent people from being able to do. As we discussed when describing recategorization approaches to conflict reduction, a superordinate categorization among members of both groups as "victims of conflict" may assist in the process of taking the perspective of at least some members of the outgroup and to feel sympathy for their plight in the conflict.

The model of vicarious retribution processes that we have outlined in this article can be integrated into classic perspectives on conflict reduction as well as more recent work on group-based sympathy, guilt, shame, and ingroup directed anger. Clearly, the processes that lead to escalation of conflict between groups and those processes that attenuate conflict are interconnected. Although our model is focused primarily on those factors that amplify conflict and that underlie retaliatory aggression, it may also provide a structure with which to understand the effects of contact, or conflict-reducing emotional reactions, in the attenuation of conflict.

Conclusions

Aggression and violence between groups in conflict situations is one of the most important and noticeable aspects of intergroup conflicts. One troubling aspect of such conflicts is that violence has the propensity to rapidly spread beyond the individuals who initially came into conflict with one another. Cycles of retribution often take hold in which each side is motivated to gain revenge for acts committed by members of the outgroup against members of the ingroup. Relatively little theory and research has specifically addressed how such cycles of retributive aggression unfold between groups. Our model stresses the important role that vicarious retribution may play in fueling intergroup conflicts and provides an initial framework of variables for understanding how people think about vicarious retribution. Although psychologists may view such retribution as deplorable, people in the midst of such conflicts often find it morally compelling. Until psychologists understand the lay person's motivation for vicarious retribution, our efforts to reduce violent intergroup conflicts will be limited.

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