
The Roles of Ingroup Identification and Outgroup Entitativity in Intergroup Retribution

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A new aspect of intergroup conflict was investigated—vicarious retribution—in which neither the agent of retribution nor the target of retribution are directly involved in the initial intergroup provocation. The underlying processes involved in vicarious intergroup retribution were tested correlationally (Study 1) and experimentally (Study 2). Both ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity predict the degree of vicarious retribution. In both studies, there was evidence of motivated cognition, specifically that highly identified individuals perceived the outgroup as higher in entitativity than individuals low in identification. Structural equation modeling demonstrated that part of the effect of identification on retribution against the outgroup was mediated through perceptions of entitativity.

Keywords: *aggression; identification; entitativity; retribution; motivated cognition*

One of the hallmarks of relations between members of different groups is the propensity for conflict between those individuals to spread to other persons within the two groups to which those individuals belong. Furthermore, many intergroup conflicts and cycles of retributive violence may be perpetuated over long spans of time, even beyond the lifetimes of individuals who were involved in the initial events sparking the intergroup conflict (Coleman, 2000). In this article, we are particularly interested in those psychological mechanisms that might affect the propensity of conflicts to spread beyond the individuals who are the source of an

initial conflict between different groups. This aspect of intergroup conflicts—which we call vicarious retribution—involves instances in which a person not directly harmed by the outgroup nonetheless seeks retribution against members of the outgroup who were not the original perpetrators of the initial attack on the ingroup.

According to our model of the underlying processes behind vicarious retribution (Lickel, Miller, Stenstrom, Denson, & Schmader, 2006), ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity are important elements in the process by which initial provocations between particular members of two groups spread into generalized conflict between the groups. The harm inflicted on ingroup members provokes feelings of anger because of the group-based attachment or identification with the ingroup victim of the attack. This anger in turn motivates retaliation against the specific perpetrator of the initial provocation. However, retaliation can also be directed at others within the outgroup. We hypothesize that the propensity to spread retaliation beyond the initial provocateur is greatest when the outgroup is perceived to be high in entitativity. By focusing on basic psychological mechanisms—ingroup identification and perceived outgroup entitativity—the model of vicarious

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retribution is relevant to an array of intergroup settings that are marked by conflict and animosity, such as rival gangs, feuding sport teams, and warring tribes or clans (Boehm, 1987) as well as large-scale conflicts such as those in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, and Rwanda (Coleman, 2000).

In the following sections, we discuss in detail how identification with victimized ingroup member(s) and perceptions of the entitativity of the outgroup can lead to retribution between groups. We then present two studies that investigated the basic elements of the vicarious retribution model correlationally (Study 1) and experimentally (Study 2).

INGROUP IDENTIFICATION

Why do individuals not directly harmed by an attack seek revenge? We suggest that experiencing the harm inflicted on fellow ingroup members provokes intense emotional reactions, particularly anger, that motivate retaliation toward the outgroup. These emotional reactions occur because of a group-based connection to the victims of the attack. According to social identity theory, individuals seek to achieve a positive social identity through positively evaluating the social groups that define the individual's self-concept (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1982; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). The individual's self-concept and self-esteem are tied to the group identity through identification with the ingroup, so the individual attempts to create a positive group identity to maintain a positive self-concept (Brewer, 1991; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). The more strongly the ingroup has been incorporated into the sense of self, the more strongly group members will display ingroup favoritism (Brewer, 2001; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997). Thus, threats to the ingroup can be perceived as personal threats to the individual because a group's welfare is strongly tied to the individual's sense of well-being. Furthermore, beyond pride in one's group and the significance of one's group identity in one's self concept, it is also likely that there will be increased empathic anger (Davis, 1994) when specific ingroup members are harmed by members of an outgroup, particularly for ingroups with which one is highly identified.

Thus, in groups in which one is highly identified and attached to other group members, there is likely to be a high level of anger and motivation for revenge when members of an outgroup commit a provocation. In fact, drawing on work by Smith and Mackie (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Smith, 1993, 1999) on the appraisal theory of group-based emotions, Yzerbyt and colleagues (Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus, & Gordijn,

2003) have shown that ingroup identification can influence the level of anger and offensive action intentions following a potentially harmful behavior from an outgroup. This prior research does not directly investigate actual aggression or vicarious retribution but it does show how ingroup identification can lead to both emotional and behavioral responding consistent with our hypothesis about the likely effect of identification on vicarious retribution.

PERCEIVED OUTGROUP ENTITATIVITY

Although identification with an ingroup may be a major reason why one would be motivated to engage in retribution after a provocation, it does not fully explain why people seek revenge against someone other than the actual perpetrator. According to our reasoning, there must be some further mechanism(s) that defines which individuals (beyond the perpetrator) are appropriate targets for retribution. Thus, something beyond ingroup identification is required to explain why retribution tends to spread beyond the individual who was the initial provocateur. We argue that perceived outgroup entitativity is a key factor in determining the extent to which the motivation to retaliate is extended beyond the perpetrator to other individuals who share a group membership with the perpetrator. D. T. Campbell (1958) created the term "entitativity" to refer to the perception that group members are bonded together into a unified coherent unit (e.g., Brewer & Harasty, 1996; Gaertner & Schopler, 1998; Lickel et al., 2000; Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001). Research has shown that people's intuitive ideas of social interdependence (such as group members having common goals, common outcomes, and high levels of social interaction; see Gaertner & Schopler, 1998; Lickel et al., 2000; Welbourne, 1999) are key predictors of the perceived entitativity of a group.

Moreover, these same characteristics of entitativity have been shown to influence how individuals perceive the blameworthiness of a group for the actions of one of its members. For example, research concerning the 1999 Columbine High School shootings (Lickel, Schmader, & Hamilton, 2003) found that perceptions of entitativity predicted the degree of responsibility assigned to 14 groups to which the Columbine killers belonged. The higher the degree of entitativity within the group to which the killers belonged, the stronger the inference that those outgroup members failed to prevent the bad act (e.g., omission) or indirectly encouraged or facilitated the bad act (e.g., commission) and were, therefore, collectively responsible for the killings. Consistent with research by Gaertner and Iuzzini (2005) into how social rejection by a member of a high-entitativity group leads

to aggression against the group as a whole, another pair of studies (Denson, Lickel, Curtis, Stenstrom, & Ames, 2006) confirmed that even when there is no direct causal role of the group as a whole in an event, perceivers apply collective blame to a group for an individual group member's actions when the group is high in entitativity.

We argue that entitativity can similarly affect the level of vicarious retaliation because group members who are perceived to be highly cohesive with the initial perpetrator will be blamed and, therefore, perceived as suitable targets of retribution. Thus, just as research has shown that perceivers blame group members based on the degree of group entitativity, we argue that in intergroup settings those group members will receive the consequences of that blame in a heated intergroup conflict—namely, retribution. Thus, retaliatory aggression toward other group members of a highly cohesive outgroup is justified because these other group members are perceived to possess an indirect role in encouraging or facilitating the initial attack. The absence of outgroup entitativity, on the other hand, provides information about the lack of a connection or responsibility of outgroup members for the negative actions committed by another and would limit the spread of retribution beyond the actual provocateur.

ARE PERCEPTIONS OF ENTITATIVITY BIASED IN INTERGROUP CONFLICTS?

In the preceding discussion, we argued that outgroup entitativity influences the propensity of retribution to be spread to others within the perpetrator's group. However, we also believe that in real-world conflict settings the perceived entitativity of the outgroup may be strongly colored by the presence of the conflict itself. We might expect, for example, that people who are highly identified with a harmed ingroup may be motivated to see the outgroup as high in entitativity to justify strong retribution against the outgroup as a whole. Thus, we argue that a form of motivated cognition (e.g., Doosje, Spears, & Koomen, 1995; Kunda, 1990; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979) may be evoked in intergroup conflicts, such that the perceived entitativity of an outgroup is increased after a member of that outgroup harms the ingroup. Because of their motivational investment in the ingroup, we argue that insofar as such an effect occurs it should be particularly pronounced for individuals who are highly identified with the ingroup. When presenting Study 2 later in this article, we discuss other alternative hypotheses such as self-categorization theory and unique facets of group-based conflicts that may account for the biased perceptions of entitativity.

SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

In summary, we argue that perceived outgroup entitativity and ingroup identification play distinct roles in the vicarious retribution process. Rather than an interaction between identification and entitativity, we predict that ingroup identification acts as an affective or motivational component that generates the intense emotions (particularly of anger) that motivate retaliation, and outgroup entitativity primarily influences whether other outgroup members are considered appropriate targets of vicarious retaliation by virtue of their connection with the wrongdoer.¹ In this article, we investigate this model of vicarious retribution and test the roles of both ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity in producing intergroup retribution. Examining both identification and entitativity in the same study will also allow a test of whether identification distorts perceptions of outgroup entitativity. No prior studies that we are aware of have tested the possibility that ingroup identification biases perceived outgroup entitativity during an intergroup conflict and then shown the consequences of this on vicarious retribution. In the following two studies, we examine these unresolved questions using an experience sampling technique (Study 1) and an experimental paradigm (Study 2) to examine real-world instances of vicarious retribution.

STUDY 1

Study 1 used a correlational approach in which participants are instructed to recall a particular kind of event from their personal experiences and then rate that experience on theoretically relevant measures. Participants were instructed to describe instances in which their group or group members were harmed by negative actions from member(s) of another group but in which they were not personally harmed. The advantage of a paradigm involving experience sampling is its ability to establish the real-world prevalence of the phenomenon under investigation. Because the paradigm also has the unique advantage of being able to tap into fairly strong real-world emotional experiences that participants have no difficulty remembering or reporting, it has been successfully used in research examining behavioral, cognitive, and emotional experiences (see Reis & Gable, 2000, for a review).

Method

Participants

Participants were 142 University of Southern California (USC) undergraduates (104 women, 36 men,

2 nonreported). All participants were members of the psychology department subject pool and volunteered for extra course credit. The data from 42 participants were excluded because they failed to follow the instructions—thus, events in which participants were personally harmed by the initial attack (23 participants), which involved only an interpersonal conflict that lacked any salient group memberships (16 participants), or which involved no negative actions from the outgroup (3 participants) were excluded from analysis because these participants did not report a personal experience that matched the type of events we sought to investigate.

Procedures

Participants were first instructed to write about a personal experience in which members of an outgroup harmed members of their ingroup (but in which the participant himself or herself was not harmed) and to describe the specific events and people involved in the conflict, including their own feelings and behavior during the event. Participants then completed a questionnaire packet that used closed-ended questions to assess level of retribution, degree of ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity, and overall emotional reactions to the event.

Materials

Emotional reactions. Participants completed a 14-item questionnaire that asked their emotional reactions to the event. Specifically, participants rated how humiliated, hurt, disgraced, nervous, depressed, ashamed, angry, anxious, sad, offended, upset, disappointed, and disgusted they felt in response to the event. One additional item asked the participants to indicate their overall emotional reaction to the situation (“Overall, how intense was your emotional reaction to the situation?”). All items were rated on 9-point scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 9 = *strongly agree*).

Measure of retribution. Two items assessed the level of behavioral intention to seek retribution against either the specific perpetrator from the initial event (“After the event, I wanted to retaliate against the specific person(s) in the other group for what they did”) and fellow group members of the perpetrator (“After the event, I wanted to retaliate against all of the people in the other group for what happened”). These items were rated on 9-point scales with labeled anchors (1 = *strongly disagree*, 9 = *strongly agree*).

Ingroup identification. Participants indicated their level of identification with the ingroup on three items that assessed the level of importance and self-identity with the ingroup (“The group is an important part of

my self-identity, it defines who I am”; “This is a group I take large amounts of pride in”; and “The group is important to me because I care about the people in the group”). All items were rated on 9-point scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 9 = *strongly agree*).

Outgroup entitativity. Participants also indicated the perceived level of outgroup entitativity on three items (“That group has high levels of interaction and communication among members of the group”; “That group has many goals in common among members of the group”; and “That group has high levels of similarity among members of the group, they are alike in many ways”). All items were rated on 9-point scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 9 = *strongly agree*).

Results

Measure of Retribution

The mean level of retaliation against the initial perpetrator ($M = 4.9$) was higher than the mean level of retribution against the outgroup members ($M = 3.4$), $t(99) = 6.3$, $p < .001$. Of the 100 participants, 80% stated some desire to retaliate against other outgroup members beyond the individual who actually caused the harm. In 37% of cases, the motivation to retaliate against the outgroup as a whole was equal to or higher than the motivation to retaliate against the specific outgroup member who caused the harm.

Ingroup Identification

The three items measuring ingroup identification formed a reliable composite ($\alpha = .73$). As predicted, identification with the ingroup was correlated with the level of retribution against both the initial perpetrator ($r = .21$, $p = .04$) and the other outgroup members ($r = .20$, $p = .05$). See Table 1 for a complete list of correlations between study variables.

Outgroup Entitativity

The three items measuring outgroup entitativity formed a fairly reliable composite ($\alpha = .61$). As predicted, the perceived level of outgroup entitativity was correlated with the level of retribution against the outgroup ($r = .24$, $p = .02$). Interestingly, there was also a significant correlation with the level of retribution against the primary perpetrator ($r = .21$, $p = .04$).

Emotional Reactions

To examine the role of discrete emotions in producing vicarious retribution against the outgroup, a Maximum Likelihood factor analysis using Direct

TABLE 1: Correlations Between Measures, Study 1

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Retaliation—direct									
2. Retaliation—vicarious	.64***								
3. Ingroup identification	.21*	.20*							
4. Outgroup entitativity	.21*	.24*	.23*						
5. Overall emotion composite	.50***	.36***	.28**	.09					
6. Degree of emotional reaction	.39***	.25*	.33***	.14	.62***				
7. Anger subcomposite	.48***	.34***	.26**	.12	.79***	.66***			
8. Sadness subcomposite	.37***	.28**	.32***	.15	.85***	.54***	.59***		
9. Humiliation subcomposite	.28**	.17	.06	-.02	.58**	.25**	.34***	.26**	
10. Anxious subcomposite	.36***	.29**	.14	-.03	.77***	.37***	.45***	.51***	.36***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Oblimin rotation identified four subcomposites: angry (angry, upset, offended, disgusted), sad (sad, disappointed, depressed, hurt), humiliated (humiliated, disgraced, ashamed), and anxious (anxious, nervous), each with fairly high reliability ($\alpha = .74, .83, .74, .77$, respectively). Only two of the subcomposites were significantly related to the level of ingroup identification: anger ($r = .26, p = .01$) and sadness ($r = .32, p < .01$), whereas none of the composites were related to entitativity.

To understand the mediational relationship of emotion between identification and vicarious retribution, anger and sadness were entered into mediational analysis. Comparisons of different mediational methods (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2007) found that the Sobel test using a bootstrapped sample is superior in terms of power, vulnerability to violations of normality, and the ability to detect true relationships amongst variables. Mediational analysis was conducted using a macro for SPSS created by Preacher and Hayes (2007). There was a significant initial relationship between identification and retribution against the outgroup ($\beta = 0.27, p = .05$) that was nonsignificant after controlling for both mediators ($\beta = 0.14, p = .31$) which indicates that anger and sadness taken together do mediate the relationship between identification and vicarious retribution. An examination of specific indirect effects found that only anger was a significant mediator ($\beta = 0.09, 95\%$ confidence interval [CI] = .01, .22) whereas sadness was nonsignificant ($\beta = 0.04, 95\%$ CI = -.06, .16). In other words, it was specifically the anger-related outward directed emotional reactions that predicted retribution, not negative affect in general.

However, it is still possible that anger appears as a mediator because it is the best index of the intensity of emotional responding. To test whether it was specifically the qualitative nature of the emotional reaction (i.e., anger) that instigates the aggressive response, or simply the intensity of emotional reaction after witnessing the intergroup conflict, both the anger composite and the

question measuring degree of emotional response were entered as mediators. The initial total effect was significant ($\beta = 0.28, p = .04$) whereas the indirect effect was nonsignificant after controlling for both mediators ($\beta = 0.17, p = .21$). Once again, when looking at specific indirect effects, anger was a significant mediator ($\beta = 0.11, 95\%$ CI = .01, .27) whereas the intensity measure was nonsignificant ($\beta = -0.01, 95\%$ CI = -.13, .10). Thus, it appears it is truly the anger produced by the intergroup conflict, and not the overall intensity of the emotional response, that increased the motivation to retaliate against the outgroup.

Structural Equation Modeling

In the next set of analyses, we used structural equation modeling (SEM) to further test our framework. The prior regression analyses indicate the general relationship among the variables, namely, the association between outgroup entitativity and retribution, ingroup identification and retribution, and the mediating role of anger in the vicarious retribution process. Nonetheless, the intercorrelation between these variables precludes a fully clear picture through the use of regression techniques alone. SEM allows us to simultaneously test the interrelationships between the study variables and identify which of the possible multiple competing models best accounts for the relationships between the study variables. SEM also allows us to specifically test the relationship between identification and entitativity to assess the possibility of effects of identification on perceived entitativity within vicarious retribution.

Our path model (see Figure 1) had several hypothesized components based on our theoretical model and the initial regression results. We hypothesized that the link between identification and retribution were mediated through anger, and entitativity had a direct path to retribution against the group and (because of our initial regression analyses) also to the perpetrator. Finally, we

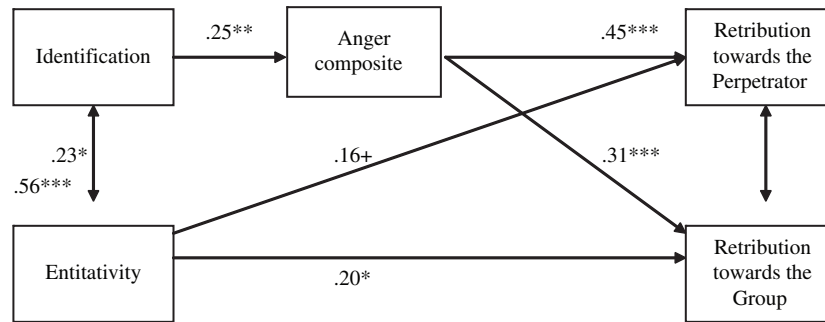


Figure 1 Structural equation model of Study 1 variables including ingroup identification, outgroup entitativity, anger, retribution toward initial perpetrator, and retribution toward the entire outgroup. Paths with single-headed arrows represent directional effects and paths with double-headed arrows represent nondirectional covariances. Path coefficients are standardized. Overall model fit: $\chi^2(3) = 1.03$, $p = .794$, $\chi^2/df = 0.34$, standardized root mean square residual = .03, comparative fit index = 1.00. $+p < .10$. $*p < .05$. $**p < .01$. $***p < .001$.

also included a path between identification and entitativity to test the possibility that identification might predict perceptions of entitativity. We used path modeling using EQS (Bentler, 2005) to test these structural relationships. The ratio of participants to estimated parameters exceeded the minimum requirement of 10:1.

Goodness-of-fit of the model was assessed using four distinct fit indexes. Evaluating multiple fit indexes simultaneously is recommended (Hu & Bentler, 1995; Ullman, 2001) because different indexes assess different aspects of goodness-of-fit and there is not always agreement on what constitutes good fit. Satisfactory models should show consistently good-fitting results on many different indexes. Thus, we assessed goodness-of-fit as indicated by a chi-square value that is nonsignificant, a $\chi^2/df \leq 3$, a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) $\leq .08$, and a comparative fit index (CFI) $\geq .95$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Ullman, 2001).

Figure 1 represents our hypothesized model. The overall fit of the model was strong: $\chi^2(3) = 1.03$, $p = .794$, $\chi^2/df = 0.34$, SRMR = .03, CFI = 1.00. As shown in Figure 1, analysis confirmed that ingroup identification influenced retribution against the initial perpetrator and the other outgroup members. As predicted, anger was a mediating variable between retribution and ingroup identification but was not influenced by entitativity. Indirect effects decomposition analysis confirmed that anger mediated the relationship between ingroup identification and retribution toward the perpetrator (standardized coefficient for indirect effect = .11, $p = .02$) and toward the entire outgroup (standardized coefficient for indirect effect = .08, $p = .05$). In other words, identification with the ingroup produced angry emotional reactions after witnessing harm to the ingroup member, which then influenced the

desire to respond not only to the initial perpetrator but also to other outgroup members.

Also in line with our predictions, entitativity significantly predicted retribution toward the entire outgroup, but the link to retribution against the initial perpetrator was weaker (and marginally significant). Interestingly, there was also a significant relationship between identification and entitativity, such that those higher in identification rated the outgroup as higher in entitativity. In fact, mediational analysis confirmed that entitativity acted as a mediator of the association between identification and retribution toward the outgroup as a whole. Because EQS does not provide indirect effects for independent variables, the macro for SPSS created by Preacher and Hayes (2007) was used to test mediation and showed that the significant total effect ($\beta = 0.26$, $p = .06$) became a nonsignificant direct effect ($\beta = 0.19$, $p = .16$) and the specific indirect effect for entitativity was significant ($\beta = 0.06$, 95% CI = .00, .20). As we discuss, there are several alternative explanations of this finding (explanations that we rule out in Study 2). However, it is consistent with a motivated cognition hypothesis that ingroup identification influences perceptions of outgroup entitativity. It is important to point out that mediational analysis also confirmed that identification did not act as a mediator between entitativity and retribution toward the outgroup (i.e., direct effect on the dependent variable was significant after controlling for the mediator, $\beta = 0.24$, $p = .05$, and the specific indirect effect was nonsignificant, $\beta = 0.04$, 95% CI = $-.01$, .12), which further bolsters the mediational role of entitativity in vicarious retribution. It is also important to point out that there was no interaction between identification and entitativity in influencing retribution ($\beta = 0.08$, $p = .87$).

Other alternative models were also tested and achieved less satisfactory fit. A reverse model from Figure 1, for example, achieved acceptable fit: $\chi^2(3) = 1.5$, $p = .69$, $\chi^2/df = 0.48$, SRMR = .04, CFI = 1.00, but it resulted in less statistical fitness (i.e., Akaike Information Criteria value that was higher than the Akaike Information Criteria for Figure 1, -4.55 and -4.97 , respectively) and theoretically questionable outcomes (i.e., nonsignificant relationships in three of the seven paths). More importantly, we also tested a model in which there was not a path between perceived entitativity and retribution against the perpetrator. The marginal relationship between outgroup entitativity and retribution toward the initial perpetrator suggested that freeing this path in the model might increase the overall goodness of fit. However, although this alternative model produced an acceptable fit: $\chi^2(4) = 4.17$, $p = .38$, $\chi^2/df = 1.04$, SRMR = .07, CFI = .99, it was not superior to the original model (a chi-square difference test actually indicated that the model was marginally worse without the inclusion of this path, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 3.1$, $p = .076$), and this path also appeared to be required to correctly partial the variance between retribution towards the perpetrator versus retribution towards the group as a whole. In other words, the model that best accounts for the relationships among the study variables is Figure 1.

Discussion

Study 1 provided the first evidence for our model of vicarious retribution. In addition, the ecological validity of the model was supported by the wide variety of encounters reported by the participants, such as deeply seated conflicts between national, religious, or ethnic groups as well as smaller scale conflicts between school-based cliques, rival sport teams, and neighborhood disputes. Moreover, Study 1 provided important initial evidence about our framework for understanding vicarious retribution processes. First, Study 1 showed that identification predicts retribution against both the perpetrator and the other members of the perpetrator's group and that this is mediated in part through feelings of anger. This finding is consistent with past work on the roles of identification and anger in intergroup conflict (e.g., Mackie et al., 2000; Maitner, Mackie, & Smith, 2006; Yzerbyt et al., 2003) but more fully draws out the connections between identification, anger, and retribution intentions. Second, Study 1 demonstrates that entitativity significantly predicts retribution against the outgroup to which a perpetrator belongs. Prior work on collective responsibility (e.g., Denson et al., 2006; Lickel et al., 2003) indicated a link between entitativity and collective blame, but no prior work has shown the link to collective retribution in an intergroup setting. Finally,

Study 1 also provided intriguing evidence that ingroup identification may be linked to biased perceptions of outgroup entitativity in intergroup conflict settings.

However, there are several possible different explanations of the relationship between ingroup identification and perceived outgroup entitativity in Study 1. The first possibility, which we raised in the introduction, is that people who are highly identified with their ingroup are particularly motivated to see members of a provoking outgroup as high in entitativity to justify retaliation against them (a motivated cognition explanation). However, there are several alternative explanations that could apply in Study 1. First, because of the retrospective nature of the paradigm used in Study 1, it is possible that the link between identification and entitativity is a product of reconstructive memory biases, and it would not be present if people's perceptions were assessed in the midst of the conflict. Second, it is possible that there is an actual, unbiased correlation between the identification participants have with their ingroup in Study 1 and the relative entitativity of the outgroup with which there is conflict. Past research indicates that the types of groups that are highest in entitativity are also the types of groups that people rate as having the most social identity value (Lickel et al., 2000). Insofar as there is often a match between the types of groups that come into conflict with one another (e.g., fraternities coming into conflict with other fraternities, nations coming into conflict with other nations), there may thus be a natural "unbiased" correlation between ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity in Study 1. Finally, the distorted perceptions of entitativity may be explained by self-categorization theory (Turner, 1982; Turner et al., 1987). Self-categorization theory describes the process by which social categorization into a group can influence the perception of others and one's self, including depersonalization and increased perceptions of homogeneity. Thus, the association between identification and entitativity may exist for reasons other than motivated cognition.

The purpose of Study 2 was to replicate and extend key findings of Study 1 using a very different paradigm to rule out alternative explanations for our findings. First, Study 2 used a single ingroup-outgroup distinction (Democrats and Republicans in the week before the 2004 presidential election) to hold constant the type of group and to provide a consistent and explicit ingroup-outgroup categorization to frame participants' reaction to an event. Furthermore, Study 2 provided clearer evidence about the causal roles of identification and entitativity by measuring identification before any intergroup provocation and by experimentally manipulating outgroup entitativity. Study 2 also assessed perceived outgroup entitativity after the measurement of identification and manipulation of outgroup entitativity

in order to provide a clearer test of the biasing effect of ingroup identification on perceived entitativity.

STUDY 2

In Study 2, the political struggle between Republicans and Democrats during the 2004 U.S. presidential election served as the intergroup conflict. Participants read an ostensibly real news story taken from an online news Web site about a recent event in which a political analyst verbally assaults one of the presidential candidates. This verbal assault on the participant's political ingroup presidential candidate served as the initial provocation for which the participant was given an opportunity to respond with retaliation against the opposing political party. The participant's political ingroup membership was assessed prior to reading the news story and the level of outgroup entitativity was manipulated to be either low or high.

Study 2 also expanded on understanding of retribution processes by employing new measures. First, Study 2 employed a new measure of retribution. Participants were led to believe that they had the opportunity to seek revenge in a way that had real-life negative consequences for the provoking outgroup. We predicted that both ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity would predict the degree of actual vicarious retribution against the outgroup similarly to the behavioral intentions measured in Study 1. Second, Study 2 further investigated the role of emotion in vicarious retribution by asking participants about their emotional reactions toward the primary perpetrator separately from their emotional reaction against the entire outgroup. More specifically, the anger-related emotions were separated into three categories: anger toward the primary perpetrator, anger toward the entire outgroup, and the overall intensity or degree of emotional response. We predicted that perceptions of outgroup entitativity would have a link to emotion when those ratings were specifically about anger directed at the outgroup but not for other emotion constructs. We also predicted that only anger toward the outgroup would mediate the relationship between identification and retribution toward the outgroup, not anger toward the perpetrator or the degree of emotional response.

Method

Participants and Design

Data were collected from 102 participants (71 women, 31 men) 1 week prior to the 2004 U.S. presidential election between October 25th and November 1st 2004. Participants were randomly assigned to experimental conditions in a 2 (entitativity: low, high) \times 2 (group

membership: Republican attacking Democrat, Democrat attacking Republican) between-subjects design. The variable group membership allows for counter-balancing of political group membership so that both groups within the intergroup conflict are equally represented and to control for possible differences between Democratic and Republican participants in their reactions. Thus, participants learned about an event in which a member of the outgroup harmed the participant's ingroup, but we controlled for participants' political party membership (i.e., Democrat versus Republican) in our analyses. Ingroup identification was also measured for each participant before the intergroup provocation occurred. Thus, our analyses focus on the consequences of entitativity (manipulated) and identification (measured) while controlling for party membership (participant being Democrat versus Republican).

The ages of the participants ranged between 18 and 66, with a mean age of 40 years. The ethnicity of the participants was 86.3% Caucasian, 4.9% African American, 3.9% Latino or Hispanic, 2.0% Asian American, and 2.9% reported as Other. Participants began the study by reading the online consent form, clicking a button to indicate they agreed to participate in the study, and providing their e-mail address so that we could ensure we could deliver a follow-up e-mail debriefing.

Procedures

After first reporting their political ingroup membership and their identification with it, participants read a news story ostensibly taken from a news Web site in which a political analyst verbally assaults one of the presidential candidates on air during a live political program. The insults ostensibly came during a wrap-up of the day's top political events with a roundtable of pundits when the host of the program asked the panel about their thoughts on the effectiveness of each party's campaign strategies.

The political group membership of the victim/perpetrator was manipulated such that Democratic participants read a news story in which "Robert Caldfield" was a political analyst associated with the George W. Bush presidential campaign who insulted John Kerry, and the Republican participants read a new story in which Robert Caldfield was a political analyst associated with the John Kerry presidential campaign who insulted President Bush. The insults were created to be generic enough to apply equally to both political parties: "It's just like a Republican/Democrat to use misrepresentation, oversimplification, and flat-out lies because it shows their ignorance of the issues and the ignorance of the American public." Robert Caldfield went on to say that "this is a perfect example of Republican/Democratic character—because only lazy and insecure cowards

would resort to ‘puke politics’ and at the same time give off a self-righteous air of superiority.” Later in the program, Robert Caldfield attacked Bush/Kerry even further by stating that “the right/left has been wrong about so many issues over the years that its no surprise their reckless agenda is still failing the American people, I mean, all the Republican/Democratic party has to do to win this election is stay on message because its their stance on the issues that will ensure the promise and prosperity of America.”

Entitativity was also manipulated such that half of the participants read a news story in which Robert Caldfield was described as a “Republican/Democratic political strategist tightly affiliated with the Bush/Kerry campaign” and that “independent investigations by MSNBC and ABC News have confirmed that Robert Caldfield, a long-time Republican/Democrat with strong right-/left-wing leanings, works together with the Bush/Kerry campaign, interacting often with them and communicating with the Campaign on a daily basis,” whereas the other half of the participants read a news story in which Robert Caldfield was described as an “independent political strategist only loosely associated with the Bush/Kerry campaign” and that “independent investigations by MSNBC and ABC News have confirmed that Robert Caldfield, a long-time Independent with weak ties to the Republican/Democratic party, works independently from the Bush/Kerry campaign, interacting only occasionally with them and communicating with the campaign very rarely.” As entitativity is the perception that group members are bonded together into a coherent unit, we directly manipulated the bond between the perpetrator and the outgroup because our investigation of vicarious retribution entails how conflict generalizes from the perpetrator to the other outgroup members.

After reading the news story, participants then completed measures that assessed different aspects of the vicarious retribution model including retribution, perceived entitativity, and emotional reactions. The last question of the study probed for possible suspicion by asking participants to indicate in an open-ended text box, “What do you think is the purpose(s) or research hypotheses of this study?” The final Web page of the study was a full debriefing that explained the purpose of the study and included the author’s e-mail address if the participants had any further questions or comments about the study. All participants who logged on to participate in the study were sent a follow-up e-mail debriefing in which we reiterated that the event in the study was fictitious rather than real.

Materials

Ingroup identification. Participants indicated their level of identification with the ingroup using the Party Identification Scale (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954;

Weisberg, 1999), which is the established measure of political party identification. Participants first indicated their category of political membership in Question 1 of the scale (e.g., “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?”), and then they indicated the level of group identification for that category in Question 2 of the scale (e.g., “If you indicated that you were either a Republican or Democrat, would you call yourself a strong Republican/Democrat or a not very strong Republican/Democrat?”). The second question was rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *not very strong*, 7 = *strong*).

Measure of retribution. Because *aggression* is defined as intent to harm another person, it was necessary to create a situation in which participants believed their responses to the survey would have real-life consequences for the people involved in the event. Within the online news story was a statement that the political party harmed by the event was “calling for an independent investigation into the ethical and legal consequences of the perpetrator’s actions, stating that all those responsible should be held accountable.” Within the body of the questionnaire, participants were told that three questions from the survey would be sent to this investigatory panel so that the panel could get a better understanding of the public’s opinion about whether the political campaign should be held accountable for the actions of the perpetrator. Participants were ostensibly told that only a summary of this information would be sent (e.g., means and totals) to prevent the disclosure of any identifying information from the participants. The three questions were “To what extent do you think that the Campaign should be sanctioned or fined?” “What do you think is the appropriate level of sanctioning?” and “What do you think is the appropriate level of fines?” All items were rated on a 9-point scale with labeled anchors (1 = *not at all*, 9 = *very much*).

Emotional reactions. To assess the level of affect, participants answered questions about anger toward the perpetrator (e.g., “To what extent do you feel angry toward Robert Caldfield for making those statements?”), anger toward the group (“To what extent did you feel angry at the campaign because of Robert’s statements?”), and the degree of emotional reaction (e.g., “Overall, how intense was your emotional reaction to the situation?”). All items were rated on a 9-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 9 = *very intensely*).

Perceived outgroup entitativity. Participants indicated the perceived level of outgroup entitativity using items based in research on entitativity and collective responsibility (Lickel et al., 2000; Lickel et al., 2003), which should be affected by the manipulation of entitativity in

which participants are asked to what degree they think that the perpetrator is cohesive with the campaign on three items (i.e., interacts, communicates, works independently [reverse scored]). All items were rated on a 9-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 9 = *very much*). The Cronbach's alpha for the composite was .82.

Results and Discussion

All participants who reported in Question 1 of the Party Identification Scale that they belonged to one of the two groups that formed the intergroup conflict in the study (i.e., Republican or Democrat) were suitable for inclusion in data analysis. The self-reported level of identification from these participants assessed by Question 2 of the Party Identification Scale was used as the indicator of identification with the ingroup. As expected, party membership (i.e., Republican or Democrat) had no effect on any variable in the study and was removed from the reported data analysis. The manipulation check of entitativity showed that the measure of perceived outgroup entitativity was higher in the high entitativity condition than the low entitativity condition, $M_s = 6.97$ and 5.53 , respectively; $t(95) = 3.76$, $p < .001$.

Retaliation

The three items measuring retribution toward the outgroup formed a reliable composite ($\alpha = .96$). Of the participants, 83% (84 of 101 participants) stated some desire to retaliate against the outgroup.

Emotional Reaction

We hypothesized that identification with the ingroup influences emotional reactions in general and, therefore, increases the anger-related emotional response on all three emotion items: toward the primary perpetrator, toward the campaign, and overall degree of emotional reaction. Entitativity was hypothesized to influence only the emotional reactions specifically directed at the entire group. Following the procedures outlined by Aiken and West (1991) for testing the effect of both categorical and continuous independent variables, a regression analysis confirmed predictions that identification predicted anger toward the primary perpetrator ($\beta = 0.33$, $p = .001$), anger toward the campaign ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < .001$), and degree of emotional responding ($\beta = 0.25$, $p = .01$), whereas entitativity only predicted anger toward the Campaign ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < .001$) but not anger toward the primary perpetrator ($\beta = 0.16$, *ns*) or the overall degree of emotional responding ($\beta = 0.34$, *ns*). Also as predicted, there was no interaction between identification and entitativity for any of the dependent measures. In sum, the data support the hypotheses about the distinct

roles of identification and entitativity in different emotional responses to the intergroup provocation.

We expected the emotional reactions to mediate the effects of ingroup identification on the motivation to seek revenge against the outgroup. A mediational analysis was conducted using the macro for SPSS created by Preacher and Hayes (2007) using all three emotion questions as mediators: anger toward the campaign, anger toward the perpetrator, and degree of emotional reaction. The significant initial total effect ($\beta = 0.45$, $p = .02$) but nonsignificant direct effect when controlling for the mediators ($\beta = -0.09$, $p = .43$) indicates that taken together the three variable mediate the relationship between ingroup identification and vicarious retribution. Specific indirect effects analysis shows that only anger toward the campaign is a significant mediator ($\beta = .58$, 95% CI = .25, .90) while anger toward the perpetrator was not a mediator ($\beta = 0.07$, 95% CI = -0.04 , .23) and degree of emotional reaction inversely predicted retribution ($\beta = -0.10$, 95% CI = -0.28 , -0.01).

Structural Equation Modeling

As in Study 1, we used structural equation modeling to assess the full interrelationships of variables in the study. We hypothesized that ingroup identification and the manipulation of outgroup entitativity would predict retribution toward the outgroup and that this would be mediated by perceived outgroup entitativity and anger toward the outgroup. Figure 2 shows the corresponding path model. The ratio of participants to estimated parameters exceeded the minimum requirement of 10:1. Overall goodness of fit was indicated by a nonsignificant chi-square, a $\chi^2/df \leq 3$, a SRMR $\leq .08$, and a CFI $\geq .95$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Ullman, 2001).

The overall fit of the model was strong: $\chi^2(3) = 1.96$, $p = .580$, $\chi^2/df = 0.65$, SRMR = .02, CFI = 1.00, and confirmed our hypotheses about the roles of ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity in vicarious retribution toward the outgroup. The model demonstrated that the manipulation of entitativity had effects both on perceived entitativity and anger directed at the outgroup. Also as predicted, identification predicted perceptions of outgroup entitativity. Consistent with our hypotheses and the results from Study 1, there was no interaction between identification and entitativity in influencing retribution ($\beta = 0.08$, $p = .40$). Instead, indirect effects decomposition analysis confirmed that identification (standardized coefficient for indirect effect = .30, $p < .001$) and manipulated entitativity (standardized coefficient for indirect effect = .33, $p < .001$) predicted retribution through both mediators.

There was also strong evidence about the mediating roles of perceived entitativity and outgroup directed

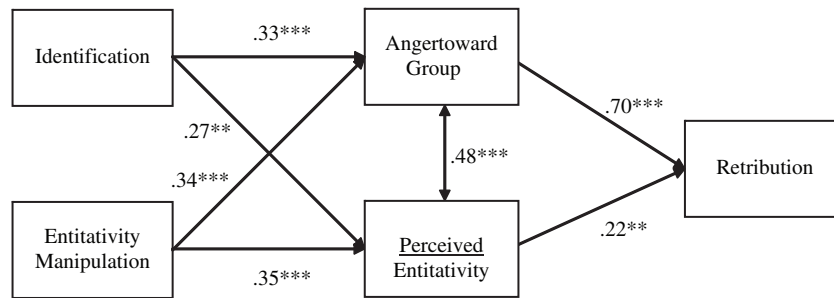


Figure 2 Structural equation model of Study 2 variables including ingroup identification, outgroup entitativity, anger toward outgroup, perceived entitativity, and retribution toward entire outgroup. Paths with single-headed arrows represent directional effects and paths with double-headed arrows represent nondirectional covariances. Path coefficients are standardized. Overall model fit: $\chi^2(3) = 1.96$, $p = .580$, $\chi^2/df = 0.65$, SRMR = .02, CFI = 1.00.
 $*p < .05$. $**p < .01$. $***p < .001$.

anger. The macro for SPSS created by Preacher and Hayes (2007) was used to test mediation because EQS does not provide specific indirect effects for each mediator. Both perceived entitativity and outgroup-directed anger mediated the relationship between identification and vicarious retribution. There was a significant initial relationship between identification and retribution against the outgroup ($\beta = 0.47$, $p = .02$) that was nonsignificant after controlling for both mediators ($\beta = -0.12$, $p = .29$), and an examination of specific indirect effects revealed that anger ($\beta = 0.47$, 95% CI = .20, .75) and perceived entitativity ($\beta = 0.12$, 95% CI = .04, .29) were both mediators. Anger and perceived entitativity also mediated the relationship between manipulated entitativity and vicarious retribution. A significant total effect ($\beta = 1.7$, $p = .01$) became a nonsignificant direct effect ($\beta = -0.20$, $p = .57$), and an examination of specific indirect effects showed that anger ($\beta = 1.47$, 95% CI = .68, 2.45) and perceived entitativity ($\beta = 0.47$, 95% CI = .15, 1.01) were both mediators.

Alternative models from Figure 2 were tested but achieved unsatisfactory fit. The reverse model in which the main dependent measure of retribution predicts anger towards the outgroup and perceived entitativity resulted in unacceptable fit on most fit indexes: $\chi^2(5) = 21.4$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 4.28$, SRMR = .08, CFI = .91. Using all possible combinations of the relationships between the three dependent measures (e.g., retribution, anger, and perceived entitativity) to test for alternative models resulted in similarly unacceptable fits, including testing single straight line relationships (e.g., anger predicts perceived entitativity which then predicts retribution) and testing joint relationships (e.g., anger and retribution jointly predict perceived entitativity). Identification and manipulated entitativity were always considered independent variables within the possible models because

entitativity was manipulated and identification was measured before participants had read the news story. The only model to achieve satisfactory fit is shown in Figure 2.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to provide evidence for a model of vicarious retribution (Lickel et al., 2006). Taken together, the results of Studies 1 and 2 provide converging evidence about important factors underlying vicarious retribution processes. In terms of ingroup identification, this work replicates findings by others in the intergroup emotions literature (e.g., Mackie et al., 2000; Yzerbyt et al., 2003) showing a link between identification, anger, and offensive action tendencies in intergroup conflicts; it then provides additional value by making a link specifically to retribution intentions and actions. This work also shows the important role of perceptions of outgroup entitativity in the vicarious retribution process and how the motivation to retaliate extends beyond the perpetrator based on the degree of outgroup entitativity. By simultaneously examining ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity, this research has also provided initial evidence about the distinct roles of ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity in vicarious retribution and that ingroup identification biases perceived outgroup entitativity in intergroup conflict situations. By using a single ingroup–outgroup distinction to hold constant the type of group, Study 2 showed evidence of the motivated cognition hypothesis that ingroup identification may distort perceptions of entitativity. Although Study 2 was not designed to completely rule out self-categorization theory as explaining the biased perceptions of entitativity, it is interesting to note that anger also influenced

perceptions of entitativity, so motivations (e.g., emotional states like anger) played a role in influencing perceptions of entitativity above and beyond the self-categorization into a group membership. As we discuss, this finding about biased perceptions of outgroup entitativity has important implications for research on intergroup relations and group-based conflicts.

The use of different methods in Studies 1 and 2 provides converging evidence for our conclusions. The retrospective, correlational design of Study 1 prohibited causal inferences we could make from that study alone. However, the great breadth of the kinds of group conflicts and events that were sampled in Study 1 provides confidence about the generalizability of the model to diverse kinds of conflict situations. Study 2 was limited in that we must exercise some caution about drawing general conclusions based on participants' behavior in the context of a single kind of intergroup conflict (namely, political partisanship and conflict during an election). It should also be noted that although we assessed identification before introducing the intergroup provocation, identification is—strictly speaking—a measured rather than manipulated variable and we must, therefore, exercise some caution when making causal inferences. Nonetheless, the experimental and procedural controls of Study 2 allow us to make fairly strong conclusions about the underlying processes involved in vicarious retribution.

Study 2 was also limited by the restricted measure of entitativity. There is an ongoing discussion in the literature about the appropriate conceptualization of entitativity. Although the manipulation of entitativity employed facets consistent with prior research, the measure of perceived entitativity assessed only interdependence, unlike Study 1, which assessed multiple facets of entitativity. Further research will be required to replicate and extend our findings to other settings to more fully understand the processes underlying vicarious retribution.

Taken together, our findings help describe and explain how real-world cycles of intergroup aggression can be initiated and maintained. One of the consequences of identification with victims of an attack is likely to be a distorted perception of higher outgroup cohesiveness and an increased motivation to seek revenge beyond the initial perpetrator. From the outgroup's point of view, however, this retributive attack against their fellow members may be perceived as unwarranted. Consistent with prior work on divergent construal of events (Kennedy & Pronin, 2008; Ross & Ward, 1995), each side of the dispute is likely to construe the same event differently and view itself as the victim of an inappropriate attack. After the retaliation from the first group, the other group's members then engage in the same basic underlying processes of our model—increased anger from identification

with their ingroup victim, increased perceptions of outgroup cohesiveness, and motivation to spread the retaliation beyond the perpetrator to others within the outgroup. In this way, vicarious retribution can be a starting point for a continuing cycle of violence with both sides feeling ever more anger and revenge at each successive revolution of the cycle in which aggression is directed against their fellow ingroup members.

This research also provides insight into how to reduce such conflicts. The key implication of the findings that ingroup identification and perceived outgroup entitativity have a positive relationship to vicarious retribution is that decreasing these variables may consequently also decrease intergroup conflict. Reducing the affective or motivational component of ingroup identification, for example, may reduce the emotion that drives the retaliatory behavior against the outgroup and, thus, inhibit the inaccurate distortions in perceptions of entitativity. Although reducing an individual's ingroup identification may sometimes be difficult, our results suggest that altering the perceptions of the outgroup's entitativity can by itself reduce retribution. It is worth reiterating that in Study 2, although highly identified partisans saw the outgroup as more entitative than did those who were weakly identified, there was not an interaction between identification and the manipulation of entitativity such that highly identified individuals ignored the manipulation. Instead, the evidence suggested that the entitativity manipulation had largely the same effect on both high and low identifiers. Thus, Study 2 indicates that it may be possible to reduce the motivation for retaliation amongst even highly identified partisans by providing credible information that the outgroup is low in entitativity (disturbingly, it also indicates that even weakly identified group members may support retaliation if they can be convinced the outgroup is highly entitative with the perpetrators). Of course, though plausible, these ideas require testing.

By investigating the variables that produce vicarious retribution, this article takes the first steps toward developing a model of vicarious retribution and the underlying mechanisms that identify why aggression can spread beyond the individuals involved in the initial conflict. Through future research into the causes and consequences of vicarious retribution, we can gain a better insight into the nature of intergroup conflict and ways in which it can be alleviated.

NOTE

1. As we discuss in more detail elsewhere (Lickel, Miller, Stenstrom, Denson, & Schmader, 2006), once the intergroup distinction is set along an ingroup–outgroup dimension, the prediction is additive main effects of ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity.

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