

Culture and the Contagion of Conflict

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In 1964, Jedu'a Abu-Sulb, a member of a Negev Bedouin tribe, became involved in a dispute during which he killed a man from the Tawara group in self-defense. For several years after this, he lived in fear of revenge from the Tawara group. During this time, he married and had a son, Ayub. When Jedu'a died, the blood dispute between Jedu'a and the Tawara group transferred to his son, who now bears the burden of retaliation from a group harmed by this father.

—GINAT, 1987

The case of Jedu'a Abu-Sulb clearly illustrates the process of conflict contagion wherein conflicts between two disputants rapidly spread across networks and time. In this case, the original dispute between Abu-Sulb and one Tawara member spread to other Tawara members via the effect that the harm had on other individuals in the group. Then, it spread further to involve any member of Abu-Sulb's group, including future generations such as Abu-Sulb's son. Conflict contagion episodes like this can be seen worldwide, from the highly publicized incident that occurred when the Danish daily newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published an article entitled "Muhammeds ansigt," which led to hundreds of protests and an escalation of violence across the Muslim world in 2006, to the spread of conflict that transpired in Rwanda in 1994 wherein 800,000 Rwandans were killed, approximately 20% of the nation's population (Grant, 2010). Understanding the mechanisms that produce these contagion processes is critical for both psychological theory (which tends to look at conflict in isolated episodes; Gelfand et al., 2012), as well as practice, in order to develop interventions to reduce the spread of disputes with such catastrophic consequences.

Toward this end, in this chapter we advance a model of conflict contagion that seeks to explain why and when these processes occur in groups. As detailed later, we theorize that these processes occur most frequently in groups which emphasize the collective self—wherein group members are perceptually undifferentiated from each other and are depersonalized entities—which is found more in vertical collectivistic (VC) cultures than other cultural groups (Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). After differentiating different types of individualism and collectivism, we discuss the implications of VC for entitativity processes both within and across groups, and detail the implications they have for the spread of conflict. We present a model and advance specific propositions describing these effects and discuss some initial qualitative and experimental data that show some support for our suppositions. We conclude with implications for the study of culture and conflict.

INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM

The relationship between the individual and the group has long been of interest to social science theorists. Approaches to study this relationship include such contrasts as *self-emphasis* and *collectivity* (Parsons, 1949), *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* (Toennies, 1957), *individualism* and *collaterality* (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961), *agency* and *communion* (Bakan, 1966), *independence* and *interdependence* (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), among others. Across several disciplines, these theories all explore the extent to which an individual is autonomous or embedded in the group (Schwartz, 1994) or what has been commonly referred to as *individualism* versus *collectivism* (IC) (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989, 1995). Research over the last few decades has shown that IC has important implications for a range of psychological processes, including cognition, motivation, and emotion (see Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007, for a review; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989), as well as for interpersonal-, organizational-, and national-level processes (for reviews, see Gelfand et al., 2007; Gelfand, Bhawuk, Nishii, & Bechtold, 2004).

Generally speaking, individualistic cultures have their historical roots in the Enlightenment and the Kantian notions of individual reason and free will (Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1997). In such cultures, the independent self-construal is highly developed (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989), and the self is defined in terms of specific accomplishments, attitudes, and abilities and is perceived as detached from collectives. The cultural ideal is to be separate from others, to express one's uniqueness, and to feel "good" about oneself (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Shweder & Bourne, 1982). In individualistic cultures, the individual is a being whose actions are self-determined and self-actualizing (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990) and, most of all, reflects the self as a free agent that is entitled to do what it wishes (Landrine, 1995).

By contrast, collectivism has its historical roots in Confucius' moral-political philosophy as well as Buddhist teachings of sacrifice and the submerged self, in

East Asia, and has its historical roots in Islamic traditions and practices in the Middle East (Markus et al., 1997). In such cultures, the self is largely defined in terms of the groups to which one belongs and is conceived of as fundamentally embedded in the larger social context (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). As Markus and Kitayama (1991) explain, “experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one’s behavior is determined, contingent on, and to a large extent, organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings and actions of *others* in the relationship” (p. 226). Consequently, there is a pervasive attentiveness to relevant others in the social environment (i.e., increased social awareness), and meeting social responsibilities and obligations to others in the group is a moral imperative (Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990). An examination of the ecology of collectivism and individualism reveals that collectivistic societies tend to have lower affluence (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995) and lower social mobility (e.g., residential, jobs), making it rather difficult to enter and willingly “exit” one’s group (Oishi, 2010; Schug, Yuki, Horikawa, & Takemura, 2009; Schug, Yuki, & Maddux, 2010; Yamagishi & Suzuki, 2010; see also Yuki & Takemura, Chapter 3, this volume).

Notwithstanding these general differences across individualistic and collectivistic cultures, it is critical to point out that not all individualistic or collectivistic cultures are alike. Research has shown that the individualism-collectivism dimension needs to be further differentiated along both vertical and horizontal dimensions (see Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995; Triandis, Chen, & Chan, 1998; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). In *vertical individualist* (VI) *cultures* people emphasize hierarchical relationships, focusing on their *individual* status, obtained through achievement and competition. In *horizontal individualist* (HI) *cultures* there is a focus on people’s uniqueness and self-reliance and individuals’ status differences are minimized. Similarly, like individualism, the collectivism dimension can be further differentiated into vertical and horizontal varieties. Members of *vertical collectivist* (VC) *cultures* emphasize deference to authority and sacrificing one’s own goals for the group. The advancement of one’s group’s status and reputation, and the protection of the group from other outgroups, are of supreme importance (Ho, 1973; Kim, 1994). Members of *horizontal collectivistic* (HC) *cultures*, by contrast, emphasize sociability and harmony within groups and are less attentive to status differences within or across groups (for a review of the vertical and horizontal dimensions, see Shavitt, Torelli, & Riemer, 2011; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998).

Differentiating vertical and horizontal individualism and collectivism is critical, we believe, for understanding and predicting conflict contagion. As we will expand upon in the next section, the emphasis on prioritizing group goals and group standing in VC cultures is theorized to lead to a focus on one’s collective identity (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Kashima et al., 1995; Triandis, 1989), which results in perceptions that group members are undifferentiated from each other. These processes, we argue, provide greater motivation to seek revenge on behalf of *any* harmed ingroup member against *any* outgroup member. Conversely, given that harmony and sociability are the primary concern in HC cultures, we expect there to be more of a focus on relational identity

(Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Kashima et al., 1995; Yuki, 2003) in such groups, and the motivation to seek revenge on behalf of an ingroup member will depend more on the strength of the specific relationship with the harmed party (as compared to when the ingroup is perceived as an undifferentiated whole). Finally, we expect the least conflict contagion in both vertical and horizontal individualistic cultures wherein the independent self is cultivated and the self is seen as detached from the group. We next discuss these mediating mechanisms—namely different forms of identity and how they relate to group entitativity processes—and their implications for differences in conflict contagion between VC and other cultural groups.

CULTURE, IDENTITY, ENTITATIVITY, AND CONFLICT

A core process that underlies the escalation of conflict is *group entitativity*, or the degree to which groups are perceived to be bonded together in a coherent unit wherein members are thought to be substitutable (Campbell, 1958; Kashima et al., 2005; Lickel, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2001; Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001). Next, we outline the cultural dimensions VC, HC, HI, and VI and their implications for entitativity and conflict contagion.

Vertical Collectivism and the Collective Self

As noted earlier, vertical collectivistic cultures are characterized by deference to authority, sacrificing one's own goals for the group, and the importance of upholding the reputation and status of the group vis-à-vis outgroups. We theorize that in such contexts, the collective self (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Brewer & Yuki, 2007; Kashima et al., 1995; Triandis, 1989) is highly accessible. In the representation of a collective self, the basis for group entitativity is a strong *shared social identity*, and group members are perceptually undifferentiated from each other and constitute depersonalized entities (Kim, 1994; Yuki, 2003). Moreover, when the collective self is defined according to one's group membership, a sharp distinction is made between one's ingroup and all outgroups, thereby directing collective selves toward an intergroup orientation. Indeed, a clear boundary between one's ingroup and the outgroup, or "us" versus "them" mentality, also serves to create the belief that the outgroup is one cohesive entity comprised of undifferentiated members, thereby reinforcing both ingroup and outgroup identity-based entitativity. Furthermore, when people's identities are defined by their group, an intergroup incident implicates a wide range of people and creates the potential for large escalation of conflict. Accordingly, we predict that in contexts or groups in which the *collective self* is activated, there is a greater likelihood of conflict contagion. This is due to the fact that group members are undifferentiated from each other (leading to ingroup entitativity) coupled with the strong ingroup-outgroup distinctions that characterize these groups (leading to an intergroup attentional

outlook wherein outgroup members are also undifferentiated; i.e., outgroup entitativity). Put simply, when the collective self is activated, harm to anyone in one's group is felt as *harm to all* and motivates the defense of the group through harming an (undifferentiated) outgroup member.

Horizontal Collectivism and the Relational Self

As noted, horizontal collectivistic cultures are characterized by an emphasis on sociability and harmony within groups. Thus, while horizontally collectivistic cultures also cultivate a focus on the group, unlike vertical collectivists, they focus on intragroup relations rather than relative group status. Here, each individual is not a representative embodiment of the group as a whole based on a shared group identity, but rather is conceptualized within a network of relations within a group (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Brewer & Yuki, 2007; Yuki, 2003). In this respect, in horizontal collectivistic groups, the *relational self* (i.e., defined by a network of close relationships) is theorized to be more accessible. For example, while Japan has been categorized as a collectivist culture, Brewer and colleagues further clarify that Japanese are focused on relationality within the context of groups, in which people are defined according to their roles and their relationships, and group members are interdependent, yet distinguished from each other (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Brewer & Yuki, 2007; Yuki, 2003). Although we expect that vicarious revenge—and by extension, conflict escalation—can also happen when the relational self is activated, we expect it to be of much lower severity. This is because relational selves make up common bond groups (Prentice, Miller, & Lightdale, 1994), in which members are attached to *specific* members of the group and their source of ingroup loyalty is the maintenance of reciprocal relationships with those individuals. Consequently, the basis for group entitativity among relational selves is the level of organization and structure among the members (Hamilton, Sherman, & Lickel, 1998). Accordingly, to the extent that a relational self is motivated to exact revenge on behalf of a harmed person, we expect conflict escalation to be moderated by the closeness between the two individuals and the importance of the harmed party to overall group functioning. Thus, we would expect vicarious revenge from a relational self only if she or he has a connection to the harmed person, either directly and personally or via a network (e.g., Guanxi). Moreover, because relational selves emphasize the connections between people and are intragroup versus intergroup in their orientation, conflicts are not likely to escalate beyond the original perpetrator as the target of revenge may be limited to only the perpetrator or a few close others (i.e., low outgroup entitativity).

Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and the Independent Self

In contrast to collectivistic cultures, people in vertical and horizontal individualistic cultures experience themselves as free agents who are entitled to do what

they wish (Landrine, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Generally speaking, they are afforded high mobility such that people can enter new groups and choose to exit their groups with relative ease and frequency (Oishi, 2010; Schug et al., 2009, 2010; Yamagishi & Suzuki, 2010). Because the self is an independent self whose outcomes are not dependent on others as compared to the self in vertical or horizontal collectivist cultures, it is not implicated to nearly the same degree when it witnesses an interpersonal conflict between two other individuals. Furthermore, the independent self is represented as its own entity, with little emphasis on its group membership(s) as a defining characteristic of one's identity. These differences in self-representation and motivational concerns make it less likely that people in vertically and horizontally individualistic cultures would engage in vicarious revenge. Importantly, however, we believe that if the collective self is activated even in individualistic cultures, it can produce conflict escalation processes as well, a point to which we will return later in the chapter.

In the next section, we focus our attention on the groups in which we expect the most conflict contagion—vertical collectivistic groups—and present our specific predictions. We then present some initial evidence through an examination of the contagion of harm in an experimental context where we measured vertical collectivism based on qualitative interviews among Middle Eastern cultures.

MODEL OF VERTICAL COLLECTIVISM AND CONFLICT CONTAGION

We theorize that vertical collectivism is a key driver of conflict contagion across social networks and across time due to the activation of the collective self. More specifically, three different types of entitativity are relevant for our theory of conflict contagion: (1) ingroup entitativity, (2) outgroup entitativity, and (3) transgenerational entitativity. When the collective self is activated, it results in higher *ingroup entitativity*, wherein group members are depersonalized undifferentiated entities; higher *outgroup entitativity*, wherein the outgroup is perceived as a unified whole, whose members are perceptually undifferentiated from each other and are depersonalized entities (Kashima et al., 2005); and higher *transgenerational entitativity*, wherein one's ingroup transcends past and future generations. Transgenerational entitativity can be thought of as perceptions of ingroup entitativity or interchangeability *across generations* (Kahn, 2010). Next, we set forth propositions regarding vertical collectivism and these three forms of entitativity and their implications for the contagion of conflict. Figure 11.1 summarizes our discussion.

Propositions

Line 1 first illustrates the implication of vertical collectivism and *ingroup entitativity* for the spread of disputes. An offense against *any* ingroup member is

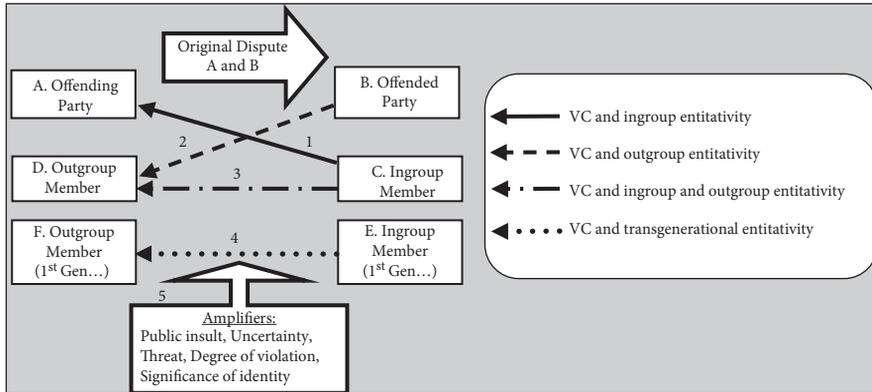


Figure 11.1. Model of vertical collectivism and conflict contagion across groups and generations.

experienced as personally relevant (i.e., as if it had happened to oneself) and emotionally distressing (Lickel, Miller, Stenstrom, Denson, & Schmader, 2006; Stenstrom, Lickel, Denson, & Miller, 2008; Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus, & Gordijn, 2003). Moreover, high ingroup entitativity based on shared identity drives ingroup observers to retaliate (Lickel et al., 2006) and punish an outgroup perpetrator to regain personal and group honor. Such retaliatory behavior is not only a personal desire but also institutionalized as an appropriate response to protect the group (e.g., is endorsed collectively as a descriptive norm; Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, & Wan, 2010; Shteynberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2009; Vandello, Cohen, & Ransom, 2008). Furthermore, due to such strong group norms in vertical collectivistic cultures, altruistic behavior toward ingroup members is particularly critical for maintaining one’s reputation as a good group member and for maintaining the safety of the ingroup and warding off future attacks from other groups (Bernhard, Fischbacher, & Fehr, 2006). Importantly, according to this perspective, an interpersonal offense develops into a system of back-and-forth intergroup revenge because people not only personally believe it is important to vicariously punish but also perceive that others in the group expect them to do so.

Line 2 illustrates the implication of vertical collectivism and *outgroup entitativity* for the spread of disputes. Outgroup entitativity plays a central role in collective blame and responsibility (Denson, Lickel, Curtis, Stenstrom, & Ames, 2006; Lickel et al., 2006; Lickel, Schmader, & Hamilton, 2003). Due to perceptions of outgroup entitativity, the original victim of a conflict in vertical collectivism may render *any* outgroup member (even if he or she did not commit the offense) to be responsible for the offense and, consequently, to become a justifiable target of retaliation.

Moreover, Line 3 illustrates the interactive effects of vertical collectivism and both *ingroup* and *outgroup entitativity* for the spread of disputes and, in particular, how vertical collectivism allows for the continuation of conflict even in cases

in which the revenge-seeking ingroup member and the target outgroup member were not involved in the original conflict. During vicarious retribution (Lickel et al., 2006; Stenstrom et al., 2008), in which neither the person exacting revenge nor the outgroup target of revenge was directly involved in the precipitating dispute, ingroup identification and outgroup entitativity work together in concert to motivate revenge by a previously uninvolved ingroup member against a previously uninvolved outgroup member. Harm caused to one's group becomes one's own (ingroup entitativity) and avenging one's own and group's honor with retaliation against *any* outgroup member (outgroup entitativity) is personally and collectively valued and is a logical part of this cultural system. Importantly, we theorize that such processes occur even if the innocence of bystanders is known (e.g., they were not involved, nor could they have prevented the original act; i.e., sins of omission or commission; Lickel et al., 2003). Put differently, contagion to restore individual and group honor is blind to guilt or innocence of outgroup bystanders in this process.

Line 4 illustrates the dynamics of contagion of conflicts across generations in vertical collectivistic cultures. Due to greater *transgenerational entitativity* (TGE; i.e., the belief that one's ingroup transcends past and future generations) vertical collectivism makes it more likely that future generations of ingroup members, who did not witness the original act, will have biased memories of conflicts that occurred in previous generations and will feel obligated to retaliate on behalf of previous ingroup generations. In addition, because one's ingroup transcends future generations, TGE may relate to self-sacrificial behaviors for the benefit of restoring the group's honor for previous and future group members. We note that such behavior is not only fueled by a personal desire but is also institutionalized as an appropriate response to protect the group (e.g., is endorsed collectively as a descriptive norm).

An interesting potential dynamic that is derived from the model relates to the case when *one's own group member* has committed an offense against an outgroup that is dishonorable to one's group. When witnessing another's wrongdoing, people can feel vicariously guilty or shameful (Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarnier, & Ames, 2005). Given greater social identity-based ingroup entitativity among vertical collectivists, when any ingroup member commits an offense, the threat to the group image may become contagious across the group (e.g., shame will transmit across group members). Accordingly, vertical collectivists may be more likely to exhibit greater *blacksheep effects* by punishing ingroup members who commit an offense that damages their group honor in order to (a) restore group identity and (b) avoid outgroup retribution now and in future generations given that there is an acute awareness that they are also the targets of bystander retribution from the other group.

Finally, it is worth noting that the very processes that account for conflict contagion may also promote the *spread of forgiveness*. In vertical collectivistic cultures, responsibility to apologize reaches a far greater web of actors and includes the collective as a whole (Maddux & Yuki, 2006). Representative group members (e.g., senior leadership) who have no personal guilt, or even involvement, often

apologize on behalf of the group (Greenberg & Elliot, 2009), and these indirect apologies are especially common in collectivistic cultures (Chiu & Hong, 1992; Zemba, Young, & Morris, 2006). There may be a greater expectation, and willingness, to apologize on behalf of ingroup members (i.e., ingroup entitativity, Line 2) to outgroup victims and outgroup bystanders (i.e., outgroup entitativity, Line 3) in vertical collectivistic groups when one's ingroup member has offended the outgroup. Furthermore, there may be a greater willingness to accept apologies that are given by outgroup perpetrators and bystanders who are contemporaneous and distal to the conflict in vertical collectivistic cultures. We expect that acceptance of apologies on behalf of a harmed group member (Brown, Wohl, & Exline, 2008) may be more prevalent among vertical collectivistic group members due to ingroup entitativity.

Moderators That Amplify and Reduce Conflict Contagion

Earlier we discussed general tendencies of vertical collectivism and conflict contagion. However, there are likely numerous situational factors that moderate the extent to which conflict escalates. Put simply, conflict contagion is dynamic and subject to situational effects. Line 5 illustrates several factors that might amplify cultural differences in conflict contagion. First, situations that cause people to engage in automatic processing and rely on well-learned cultural tendencies are theorized to exacerbate conflict contagion in collectivistic groups. For example, situations that increase *the salience of cultural values and norms* may cause conflicts to be more contagious in vertical collectivistic groups. To the extent that cultural values and group norms are reinforced through peer expectations (Chiu et al., 2010; Shteynberg et al., 2009), they are made more salient when conflicts are in public wherein harm to one's ingroup is being observed by others, as compared to when they happen in private. Accordingly, we would expect that conflict contagion processes are exacerbated in contexts where offenses are public and less so when they are private.

Situations in which there is high threat and uncertainty activate strong epistemic needs for individuals to identify with groups as epistemic authorities and conform to group norms (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). Accordingly, we would expect that such factors will amplify cultural differences in these processes. That is, when people face a high degree of threat they strongly hold on to their cultural identities in order to reduce anxiety (Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997). Therefore, we expect that individuals facing uncertainty and group threat—be it situational (Hogg, Meehan, & Farquharson, 2010) or an individual difference (e.g., need for closure, Webster & Kruglanski, 1994; self-concept uncertainty, Mullin & Hogg, 1998)—should show stronger reliance on entitativity and play a more pronounced role in the transmission of conflict across networks and time.

However, other factors may reduce or buffer against conflict contagion by mitigating both outgroup and ingroup revenge. It is important to note that one's perception of a transgression depends largely on how much it violates a

group's cultural values. For example, US Southern institutions (high on "culture of honor") were more forgiving of honor-related violence than were institutions in the North (Cohen & Nisbett, 1997). That is, job application responses and media portrayals of honor violence were more sympathetic in the South, where they are considered more understandable and less egregious, as compared to in the North. In addition, people are likely to be less invested in seeking revenge if the shared group identity with the victim is one of low significance versus of high significance. It is often the case that people go to extreme lengths, often self-sacrificing, to fight on behalf of one's ethnicity, religion, and nationality. In comparison, these behaviors are found to a lesser extent, and to a lesser degree, in intergroup conflict involving group identities of comparably lower significance (e.g., school affiliation or sports rivalries).

Initial Evidence: Experimental and Qualitative Studies of Conflict Contagion

We have theorized that the rate and nature of conflict contagion have potential to be more escalatory and contagious in vertical collectivistic cultures. Although there is no direct evidence for the propositions advanced, there is indirect evidence that lends support for them. For example, several researchers examined this issue in the context of honor, which signifies a person's worth in society that people strive to gain and protect (Abou-Zeid, 1966; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Pitt-Rivers, 1966). The stronger sense of entitativity within ingroups, outgroups, and across generations among vertical collectivists should be related to a stronger interconnection between one's honor and the honor of others and greater contagion from honor loss. Indeed several studies have shown that honor violations provoke psychological and behavioral reactions of retaliation against the transgressor (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996) and that they can spread to uninvolved individuals and across generations (Aase, 2002; Tewfiq, 1977).

Emerging data from our lab provide more direct evidence of conflict contagion among those that emphasize vertical collectivism. Gelfand et al. (2012) used a modified dictator game to investigate how individuals seek revenge and punish others upon observing harm to their ingroup members. In this study, participants believed they were playing with three other players: a proposer, an ingroup member, and a neutral third party. Before the game, participants were asked to select an avatar to represent them during the game. The avatar choices were either significant identities (political party, religious affiliation) or not significant identities (favorite color). After selecting their own avatar, players were shown the avatars of all other players in the game. During the game, participants first observed the proposer take away an endowment from the participant's ingroup member (indicated by a common avatar), and then they had their own turn in which to take away an endowment from any of the other three players. The results showed that when people shared a significant identity with the victim, those who were high on vertical collectivism, measured by the Triandis and

Gelfand (1998) scale, were much more likely to punish the outgroup proposer by taking away his or her tokens. These effects were not found for horizontal collectivism or horizontal or vertical individualism. We are now replicating and expanding these findings.

We have also conducted qualitative interviews across eight nations (Gelfand et al., 2012) to examine whether there is, in fact, evidence for greater contagion of harm in vertical collectivistic groups. In this study, structured interviews were conducted in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. The Pakistani and Middle Eastern samples were of particular interest because they constitute a type of vertical collectivism in which group members are expected to sacrifice self-interests for the group, and there is a sharp demarcation between the ingroup and outgroups. A total of 184 participants—composed of community members varying in age, gender, socioeconomic status, and rural-urban residency—were interviewed across all countries. The researchers asked interviewees to talk about the interrelationship between their honor and honor loss and others' honor and honor loss. These questions included the following: (1) Is your honor (*sharaf*) related to the honor (*sharaf*) of other people, and whom? How does something affecting your *sharaf* affect the *sharaf* of others? (2) Likewise, does the loss of honor of others affect your honor? (3) Whose honor is most important to you? (4) How does it affect you?

We conducted both qualitative and quantitative analyses of responses to these questions. Using analyses of word frequency (LIWC; Pennebaker, Francis, & Booth, 2001), we examined the extent to which people discussed a wide range of social entities that are involved in the contagion of honor loss. An overall *Social Index* was calculated for each interviewee as a percentage of the total word count of the interviewee's responses to all questions. This *Social Index* included family members, with both social entities in the nuclear family (e.g., spouse, parents, children, siblings) and social entities in the extended family (e.g., aunts, uncles, cousins, relatives, ancestors); nonfamily relationships such as friends, coworkers, classmates, neighbors, and groups that comprise an extended network of social ties (e.g., neighborhood, village, tribe, company, and university); and large-scale social identity groups, such as one's nationality, ethnicity, religion, and abstracted groups, including civilization, society, and culture.

Findings from this study illustrated a clear and reoccurring theme of the interchangeability of honor and contagious effect of honor harm across the Middle East and Pakistan as compared to the US Middle Eastern participants as a group mentioned more social entities than did Americans, showing that the "web" of people to whom one's honor is related is much wider in these countries compared to the United States. On average, Americans mentioned social entities in 3.34% of their responses, while the Middle Eastern and Pakistan countries mentioned social entities 7.53%, with interviewees from Jordan and Iraq scoring as high as 11.67% and 10.14%, respectively.

Qualitative examination provided a richer account of cultural differences in the degree to which one's honor gain and loss is interrelated to the gain and loss of others' honor. Responses from US respondents tended to differentiate one

person's honor from another's. Overall, Americans respondents did not think that their honor loss would affect the honor of those around them. One respondent stated: "People might look at my wife a little less friendly. But yet they shouldn't really. I mean, if it's my issue, not hers." Another American interviewee explained "The fact that I know them? Um it shouldn't. I would hope it wouldn't... I believe honor is each person, you gotta look at each person individually." In rare cases where a person's honor was related to another's, American respondents included a small circle of people to whom their honor is related: "My values and honor was probably established by my upbringing with my parents. My mom um, but it's not related to anybody else." Furthermore, American respondents discussed being less impacted personally by others' honor loss, noting in particular that it would not impact their own honor: "it would affect me... but it wouldn't affect my honor, no." Another interviewee stated, "[I would] probably feel bad for them, I would be upset, but I wouldn't lose my mind over that." Others noted that they would want to help others in honor loss situations (e.g., "If they go through a hard time where they don't have honor at school anymore, I'm going to try and fix it"); yet others' honor loss would be much less contagious to one's own sense of honor among American interviewees.

The high entitativity among vertical collectivistic group members would suggest that the honor of an ingroup member is interchangeable with that of another member. As predicted, ME and Pakistani respondents frequently discussed the interchangeability of honor. One UAE interviewee explained, "[Yes], members of my family, my extended family, my people... their honor is related to mine because they are members of my family. What touches me touches them and what touches them touches me." An interviewee from Egypt similarly commented that "Of course my honor is my husband's honor, my children's honor. All of us are one; the honor of any one of us is the honor of the other." A Lebanese interviewee echoed this sentiment by explaining, "The word *honor* in and of itself carries a non-individualist meaning... its effects are interchangeable among family members in what is related to honor." The contagion of honor loss can extend to larger social identity groups, including one's religion, gender, and other generations of one's family. For example, a Jordanian interviewee commented on the different spheres of honor loss: "Firstly his personal honor, then his children's honor and his country's honor." A Turkish interviewee likewise stated that his honor extended beyond the closest circle to "the society in which I belong." One UAE interviewee summed it up, "We all live in one boat and one society; therefore, a drowning person will affect the whole of social ties."

The interchangeability between related others' honor suggests that when a person is harmed, other individuals in the group would be similarly harmed. Indeed, responses from the Middle Eastern region and Pakistan frequently alluded to the ripple effect of honor loss to other group members. Commenting on the contagion of insults, an Egyptian interviewee explained, "I am a Qadwa, from my parents, their name would be shaken, my husband's name as well if something causes my honor to be insulted." Beyond the immediate family, ripple effects from honor loss extend *widely* ("close relatives, brothers and cousins, and

tribe those who relate to his honor then people who live nearby, for example the district where he resides, neighbors, his honor, and his reputation” [Iraq]) and *quickly* (“If [the honor attack] is not confronted, it spreads like an infection and I become ashamed” [Lebanon]). And finally, honor loss is permanent: “Honor is never forgotten and if it is harmed it can never be erased” [Jordan].

Overall, the interview data from Gelfand et al. (2012) revealed that for vertical collectivists, honor is interchangeable, especially among one’s family and extended networks; and it is contagious—when an ingroup member is harmed, people are much more affected by it and such effects spread through a much wider network of people. These findings suggest that group members are more entitative in vertical collectivistic groups as compared to individualistic groups, and entitativity, in turn, affects how people react to instances of a group member being harmed.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Returning to the beginning of this chapter, it is clear that in the situation involving Jedu’a Abu-Sulb, one precipitating event set off a string of retaliations that came to involve originally uninvolved others. The case of Jedu’a is a particularly strong example of various forms of entitativity motivating revenge: The group members of his original victim felt the harm as their own (ingroup entitativity) and targeted him and, later, his son for retaliation (outgroup entitativity, transgenerational entitativity). An examination of the intersection between the group and culture literatures highlights the intricate relationship between vertical collectivism, collective identity, and entitativity based on shared identity that illustrate the underlying mechanisms that drive conflict and facilitate escalation in this situation and others where contagion takes effect.

In support for the theory, our recent experimental evidence has implicated vertical collectivism in the contagion of disputes. Moreover, recent qualitative interview data support the contention that among individuals from the Middle East, ingroup harm is more strongly felt as one’s own and affects a larger web of others. To be sure, much research needs to be done to test the propositions advanced in this chapter on the intersection of vertical collectivism and conflict contagion. And, moreover, looking into the future, research is needed to examine the situational moderators that amplify or reduce conflict contagion, as well as to examine the counterintuitive notion that the very same mechanisms that account for collective blame and revenge might translate into collective responsibility (to apologize) and forgiveness in vertical collectivistic cultures.

While we have focused on vertical collectivism and presented some initial evidence for its involvement in conflict contagion, future research needs to directly examine conflict contagion processes among horizontal collectivists who emphasize the relational self and vertical and horizontal individualists who emphasize the independent self. As noted, we expect that conflict contagion is less likely in HC, VI, and HI. Among horizontal collectivists, group members

are seen as connected via a network, and most important for conflict contagion, differentiated from each other, and varying in degrees of closeness to the self. When an ingroup member is harmed, horizontal collectivists may experience vicarious pain and insult to varying degrees corresponding to the dyadic closeness between the self and the victim. Yet, in horizontal collectivistic cultures, we expect the relational self to be motivated to engage in revenge only if the victim is a close, significant other. That is, ingroup entitativity is determined dyadically, not based on a shared group membership wherein members are undifferentiated. With respect to revenge against outgroups, we expect that the spread of conflict to other outgroup members is similarly moderated by the perceived closeness between the original perpetrator and his or her group members. Thus, conflict contagion in horizontal collectivistic cultures should be dampened as compared to vertical collectivistic cultures given the aforementioned processes.

In vertical and horizontal individualistic cultures, where the self is detached from others, where individuals are responsible for their own actions and not others, and where groups are seen as less entitative, we expect harm to ingroup members to be less likely to be felt personally and to engender revenge among observers on victims' behalf. Given the lower interdependence between group members, defending an ingroup member is not as critical for one's success and standing in the group. Likewise, in these cultural systems, this (lack of) response to act on another's behalf is collectively perceived as appropriate and institutionalized.

Finally, with respect to the contagion of forgiveness, in much the same way as the independent self is detached from the collective and absolved from taking revenge on its behalf, we expect that it is also absolved from seeking resolution and apologizing on its behalf in vertical and horizontal individualistic cultures. In these cultures, guilt and apology are exchanges circumscribed between a specific victim and the offender. We expect rare exceptions to be made when the apologizer is a representative (e.g., parent) of the offender. Likewise, in horizontal collectivistic cultures, vicarious apologies are similarly restricted to close others of the offender.

Future research should use qualitative, survey, archival, and experimental methods to test the suppositions in this chapter. For example, it is possible that even in individualistic cultures, if the collective self is activated (Yuki & Takemura, Chapter 3, this volume), conflict contagion would indeed occur. Particular situations are especially likely to make salient these collective self identities in individualistic cultures. For example, partisan affiliations and sports rivalries are two contexts that often produce an us versus them mentality among strident identifiers, who conceptualize both ingroup and outgroup members not as individual entities but as deindividuated members that subscribe to one side or the other. Even in individualistic cultures such as the United States, ethnic riots provide testament that it is not uncommon to see the effects of an activated collective self on conflict contagion.

In conclusion, this chapter has been devoted to our theorizing about how particular cultural norms and group dynamics may contribute to conflict escalation, but we believe that equally fruitful potential lies in how they may contribute to

vicarious apologies, de-escalation, forgiveness, and resolution. That vertical collectivistic cultures promote conflict is a tempting and easy but misguided take-away. This chapter has outlined the avenues and mechanisms by which disputes escalate in the hopes that they also highlight what may constitute adequate restoration of honor and face loss, and provide commensurate restitution for victims. In this respect, the defining features of a culture are also its best asset: the very word *collectivism* seems to presage the means by which one's group can help heal. The prioritization of group goals can promote a process that emulates escalation, one that elicits a vicarious apology on behalf of a wrong-doing ingroup member, as well as accepting a vicarious apology from a bystander outgroup member, regardless of actual involvement or guilt of the apologizer.

AUTHORS' NOTE

This research reported in this chapter was based on work supported in part by US Air Force grant FA9550-12-1-0021 and the US Army Research Laboratory and the US Army Research Office under grant W911NF-08-1-0144.

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