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 his father (Ginat, 1997).

This case of Jedu’a Abu-Sulb is representative of many conflicts that escalate beyond the original disputants. It illustrates the psychological mechanisms that facilitate such an escalation of conflict. That is, via the effect of harm on other individuals in the group, any one of who can then seek revenge (i.e. ingroup entitativity), and via the generalization of the revenge target to any member of the original perpetrator’s group (i.e. outgroup entitativity)—which can also include future generations of the original disputants (i.e. transgenerational entitativity)—conflict can spread rapidly beyond the original disputants. We argue that these group processes tend to occur most frequently in groups whose members are highly interdependent with one another and for whom the group is their basic unit of identification. In this chapter, we discuss a central dimension of culture—collectivism and individualism (Gelfand, Bhawuk, Nishii, & Bechtold, 2004; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998; Triandis, 1995)—and its implications for group processes such as entitativity and group dynamics, and more broadly, the spread of conflict across networks and time (Gelfand, Shteynberg, Lee, Lun, Lyons et al., 2012).

To that end, this chapter examines individualism and collectivism and its relationship to the exciting landscape of group dynamics and intergroup relations. It will discuss such questions as: How do cultural values and behavioral norms contribute to conflict? How do collectivism and
individualism affect blame and responsibility for harm? What psychological processes motivate uninvolved third party observers to retaliate against other uninvolved observers? And to do so generations after a conflict? What situational factors amplify or reduce the rate conflict escalation? Under which conditions are third party apologies more readily accepted and therefore foster forgiveness?

**Individualism and Collectivism**

Many social science theories—self-emphasis and collectivity (Parsons, 1949), *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* (Toennies, 1957), individualism and collaterality (Kluckhohn & Strodbeck, 1961), agency and community (Bakan, 1966), independence and interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991)—provide a framework for understanding the relationship between the individual and the group. Across several disciplines, these theories all explore the extent to which an individual is autonomous or embedded in the group (Schwartz, 1994), and the ways in which different societies have dealt with a fundamental, pervasive issue of how the individual and the group should best relate to each other, which is the question of *individualism* versus *collectivism* (Gelfand et al., 2004; Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995), a question that affects a range of psychological constructs from cognition, to motivation, to emotion (see Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007 for a review; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989).

Individualistic cultures have their historical roots in the Enlightenment and the Kantian notions of individual reason and free will (Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1997). In these societies, the independent self-construal has become highly developed (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989), wherein 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). Because people in individualistic groups 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, Yuki, Horikawa, & Takemura, 2009; Schug, Yuki, & Maddux, 2010; Yamagishi & Suzuki, 2010), identification with one’s group is not critical to one’s self-concept.

Collectivism and the interdependent self have their historical roots in Confucius' moral-political philosophy as well as Buddhist teachings of sacrifice and the submerged self, while in the Middle East, collectivism has its historical roots in Islamic traditions and practices (Markus et al., 1997). In these 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). An examination of the ecology of collectivism and individualism reveals that collectivistic societies tend to have low social and residential mobility (among others, such as job mobility), making it rather difficult to enter and willingly ‘exit’ one’s group (Oishi, 2010; Schug et al., 2009; Schug et al., 2010; Yamagishi & Suzuki, 2010). Low mobility goes hand in hand with high interdependence among members who must depend on each other for survival. To this end, particular values are emphasized at the group level: conformity, meeting one’s duties and obligations, and collective responsibility (Ho, 1973; Kim, Triandis, Kâğıtçibaşı, Choi, & Yoon,
1994; Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990; Triandis, 1995). Consequently, there is a pervasive attentiveness to relevant others in the social environment (i.e., increased social awareness). Moreover, meeting social responsibilities and obligations in one's social position is a moral imperative (Miller et al., 1990), and one must maintain one's own reputation and the reputation of the group at all costs (Ho, 1973; Kim, 1994) because "role failure or violation is the loss of the self in sociocentric cultures; it is the existential, social, and psychological death of the individual" (Landrine, 1995, p. 755).

Important differences between individualistic and collectivistic societies hold implications for group dynamics and intergroup conflict and conflict resolution. These major differences between collectivistic and individualistic cultures converge on the issue of group entitativity, which is the idea that the group is a coherent unit (Campbell, 1958). Perceptions of group entitativity derive from particular characteristics of collectivism, and in turn, emphasize collective responsibility and motivate protecting and restoring group honor by retaliating when a group member is harmed. First, we know from the group literature that duration of a group influences the degree to which it is seen as an entitative unit (Lickel, Hamilton, Wieczorkowska, Sherman, & Uhles, 2000). The interdependent self that is fundamentally embedded in its group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), together with the low mobility in which group memberships are consequently permanent, cultivate a sense of ingroup entitativity. Furthermore, when mobility is low and group members must then depend on each other for survival, what results is a high level of coordination among group members striving toward a common group goal, with interdependence contributing to the perceived entitativity of the group (Gaertner & Schopler, 1998). In addition, to the extent that groups in a collectivistic society are enduring and permanent, a collectivistic group member cannot easily ‘exit’ the group or renounce his or her
group membership. Clear and impermeable boundaries between one’s ingroup and the outgroup serve to differentiate between groups and keep social distance between them, thereby creating the belief that outgroup is a unified whole, whose members are substitutable or interchangeable (Lickel, Miller, Stenstrom, Denson, & Schmader, 2006; Stenstrom, Lickel, Denson, & Miller, 2008).

These major differences between collectivistic and individualistic cultures converge on the issue of group entitativity. Low mobility, the cohesion and substitutability between ingroup members, and high distinction between ingroup and outgroup, are all characteristics that foster a strong perception of entitativity. Such a perception is centrally important to understanding intergroup conflict and the routes through which certain cultural norms and values perpetuate a cycle of retaliation. In the next section, we present a model that illustrates these mechanisms.

**Groups, Entitativity, and Conflict Processes**

As noted above, collectivism is tied closely to *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, Chiu, Farsides, Gelfand et al., 2005; Lickel, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2001; Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001). Research on perceptions of social groups (Lickel, Hamilton, Wieczorkowska, Sherman, & Uhles, 2000; Hamilton, Sherman, & Lickel, 1998) reveal the properties of groups that underlie perceptions of entitativity, and which intersect with characteristics of collectivism. We know from cultural psychological work that a defining characteristic of collectivistic groups is the high degree of interdependence among group members (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The group literature has shown that interdependence largely influences perceptions of entitativity (Gaertner & Schopler, 1998; Lickel et al., 2000). Most convincingly, Lickel and colleagues (2000) showed that three subcomponents
of interdependence (common goals, common outcomes, and high level of interaction between members) increase perceptions of entitativity. Furthermore, as discussed previously, collectivistic groups display low mobility such that members do not easily exit the group or enter new ones, creating large and distinct boundaries between groups whose memberships are long in duration as compared to those of individualistic groups. Lickel et al. (2000) indeed showed that people associate both duration and boundary strength with the perceived entitativity of those groups.

We theorize that collectivism is a key driver of conflict contagion across social networks and across time due to its impact on entitativity. More specifically, three different types of entitativity are relevant for our theory of culture and the contagion of conflict: (1) ingroup entitativity, (2) outgroup entitativity and (3) transgenerational entitativity. *Ingroup entitativity* is defined as the belief that one’s ingroup is a unified whole, where members of one’s in-group are perceived to be substitutable or interchangeable (Kashima et al., 2005). This comes from the close relationship between entitativity and perceived similarity of group members (Brewer & Harasty, 1996; Campbell, 1958; Crump, Hamilton, Sherman, Lickel, & Thakker, 2010), which suggests that members of a highly entitative group are seen as so similar as to be substitutable for each other. *Outgroup entitativity* is defined as the belief that the out-group is a unified whole, where individuals in the outgroup are perceived to be substitutable or interchangeable (Kashima et al., 2005). Finally, *transgenerational entitativity* is defined as the belief that the entitativity of one’s ingroup transcends past and future generations. Put differently, transgenerational entitativity can be thought of as perceptions of ingroup entitativity or interchangeability of individuals across generations (Kahn, 2010). Below we set forth propositions regarding culture
and these three forms of entitativity and their implications for the contagion of conflict. Figure 1 summarizes our discussion.

*Figure 1. Model of Culture and Conflict Contagion Across Groups and Generations*

*Propositions.* Line 1 first illustrates the implication of cultural differences in ingroup entitativity for the spread of disputes. An offense against ingroup members are experienced as personally relevant (i.e., as if it had happened to oneself) and emotionally distressing (Lickel et al., 2006; Stenstrom et al., 2008; Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus, & Gordijn, 2003), with group identification often driving revenge motives (Brown, Wohl, & Exline, 2008; Lickel et al., 2006). In collectivistic groups, higher ingroup entitativity may drive ingroup observers to retaliate 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). Further, due to such strong group norms, altruistic behavior toward ingroup members is particularly critical for maintaining one’s reputation as a good group member in collectivistic
cultures. The punishing of outgroups on behalf of the group is also critical for maintaining the safety of ingroup members 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 expect them to do so.

By contrast, in 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, harm to ingroup members will be less likely to be felt as personally or engender revenge among observers on victims’ behalf. Likewise, in individualistic cultural systems, this (lack of) response is collectively perceived as appropriate and institutionalized. Therefore, individualistic cultures, altruistic behavior toward others is not as critical for one’s success given there is much less dependence on any particular group members.

Line 2 illustrates the implication of cultural differences in 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). During vicarious retribution (Lickel et al., 2006; Stenstrom et al., 2008), in which neither the person exacting revenge or the outgroup target of revenge were 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. Due to perceptions of outgroup entitativity, collectivism renders an outgroup member who did not commit the offense to be responsible for the offense.
Line 3 illustrates the interactive effects of cultural differences in *ingroup* and *outgroup* entitativity for the spread of disputes, and in particular, how collectivism allows for the continuation of conflict even in cases in which the revenge-seeking ingroup member and the target outgroup member were not originally involved in the original conflict. 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., what is referred to as 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 the outgroup bystanders in collectivistic systems.

Line 4 illustrates the dynamics of contagion of conflicts across generations. Due to greater *transgenerational entitativity* (i.e., the belief that one’s ingroup transcends past and future generations, TGE) collectivism makes it more likely that future generations of ingroup members, who did not even witness the original act, will have greater memory of conflicts that occurred in previous generations, and will feel obligated to retaliate on behalf of the past 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 ingroup entitativity among collectivists, the threat to the group image may become contagious across the group (e.g., shame will transmit across group members). Accordingly, collectivists may be more likely to exhibit a blacksheep effect 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, the very processes that account for conflict contagion may also promote the spread of forgiveness. Perceptions of responsibility to apologize vary considerably across culture such that within individualistic cultures, guilt—and by extension, apology—is an event that is circumscribed between a specific victim and offender, whereas in collectivistic cultures, responsibility to apologize reaches a far greater web of actors and includes the collective. 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 et al., 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 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 collectivistic as compared to individualistic groups. People do accept apologies on
behalf of a harmed group member (Brown et al., 2008), which may be more prevalent among collectivistic group members due to ingroup entitativity.

**Moderators that Amplify and Reduce Conflict Contagion**

Above we discussed general tendencies of collectivism and conflict contagion. However, there are likely numerous situational factors that moderate the extent to which conflict does in fact escalate. 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 which increase *the salience of cultural values and norms* may cause conflicts to be more contagious in collectivistic versus individualistic 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 versus when they are 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 the above 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. For example, if the catalyst conflict event is a mild violation (e.g. being rude as compared to physically attacking the victim), then it should create lower degrees of threat to the group and less motivation for people to seek revenge. It is important to note that the perception of the transgression depends largely on how much it violates a group’s cultural values. For example, US Southern institutions (high on honor) were more forgiving of violence not related to honor transgressions as compared to honor-related violence (Cohen & Nisbett, 1997).

Second, 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. Indeed, preliminary/emerging data from our lab show this. Gelfand, Shteynberg, Lee, Lyons, & Bell (2012) used a modified dictator game to investigate how individuals seek revenge and punish others when observing the harm of 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. They first observed the proposer take away an endowment from only the participant’s ingroup member, and then had their own turn in which to take away an endowment from any of the other three players. Data show that only when the group identity was significant, people high on collectivism were more likely to punish the proposer by taking away his or her tokens when the victim was an ingroup member. We are now replicating and expanding these findings.
Initial Evidence: Qualitative Interviews of Conflict Escalation

As discussed previously, we theorize that the behaviors and norms inherent in collectivist and individualist cultures affect the rate and nature of conflict contagion such that harm has potential to be more contagious in collectivistic as compared to individualistic societies. Although there is no direct evidence for many of 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 the 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 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 et al., 1996) and that they can spread to uninvolved individuals and across generations (Aase, 2002; Tewfiq, 1977).

In recent research conducted across 8 nations, Gelfand et al. (2012) conducted qualitative interviews to examine whether there is, in fact, evidence for greater contagion of harm in groups that are highly collectivistic as compared to those that are individualistic. In this study, structured interviews were conducted in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey, UAE, and US. A total of 184 participants—composed of community samples 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: 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?

Researchers conducted both qualitative and quantitative analyses of responses to these questions. Using analyses of word frequency (LIWC; Pennebaker, Francis, & Booth, 2001), Gelfand et al. (2012) examined the extent to which people discussed a wide range of social entities that are involved in the contagion of honor loss. They calculated an overall Social Index that 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); non-family 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. A Social Index was calculated for each interviewee as a percentage of the total word count of the interviewee’s responses to all questions.

Findings from this study illustrated a clear and re-occurring theme of the interchangeability of honor and contagious effect of honor harm across the Middle East (ME) and Pakistan as compared to the U.S. 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 the collectivistic countries compared to the US. On average, Americans mentioned social entities in their responses 3.34% in their responses, while the ME and Pakistan countries mentioned 7.53% with interviewees from Jordan and Iraq scoring as high as 11.67% and 10.14%, respectively.

Qualitative examination by Gelfand et al. (2012) provided a richer account of the degree
to which one’s honor gain and loss is interrelated to the gain and loss of others’ honor is much stronger in the Middle East and Pakistan as compared to the U.S. Responses from US respondents tended to differentiate between one person’s honor from another’s. American 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 to: “My values and honor was probably established by my upbringing with my parents. My mom um, but it’s not related to anybody else”.

The authors further reported that among Americans, a person’s honor loss is restricted to that individual and very close others. American respondents discussed being less impacted personally by other’s honor loss. As one interviewee noted, “[I would] probably feel bad for them, I would be upset, but I wouldn’t lose my mind over that”. Others likewise stated that while it would be distressing but wouldn’t affect them personally: “it would affect me…but it wouldn’t affect my honor, no”. 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.

According to Gelfand et al. (2012), the high entitativity among 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”. Lebanon interviewee echoed this sentiment by explaining, “The word honor in and of itself carries a non-individualist meaning…it’s effects are interchangeable among family members in what is related to honor”. Gelfand et al. (2012) further found that 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”. Turkish interviewee likewise stated that his honor extended beyond the closest circle to “the society in which I belong”. 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”.

Gelfand et al. (2012) expected that 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 ME region and Pakistan frequently alluded to the ripple effect of harm 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 data from Gelfand et al. (2012) revealed that for 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 collectivistic groups as compared to individualistic groups, and entitativity, in turn, affects how people react to instances of a group member being harmed.

**Conclusion**

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 retaliation that came to involve originally uninvolved others. An examination of the intersection between the group and culture literatures highlights the intricate relationship between entitativity and features of collectivism, such as low mobility, ingroup-outgroup distinctions, and most of all, cohesion of the group and the substitutability between group members. These variables are the underlying mechanisms that drive conflict and facilitate escalation. 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). Recent qualitative interview data support the contention that among collectivists, ingroup harm is more strongly felt as one’s own, and affects a larger web of others. Much research needs to be done to test the propositions advanced in this chapter on the intersection of culture and conflict contagion. And moreover, looking into the future, research is needed to examine the notion that the very same mechanisms that account for collective blame and revenge might translate into collective responsibility (to apologize) and
forgiveness. More generally, cross-cultural research on conflict contagion will add to the exciting and growing field of culture and group dynamics that has been featured in this book.
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