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## **Transgenerational Transmission of Collective Victimhood through a Developmental Intergroup Framework: The Lasting Power of Group Narratives of Suffering**

Laura Taylor, Marina Štambuk, Dinka Čorkalo Biruški & Dean O’Driscoll

When a peace accord is finally signed, one of the long-term challenges to peacebuilding is navigating perceptions of collective victimhood. These perceptions are shaped by group narratives of shared traumas and interpretations of history that are passed down across generations. Using a developmental intergroup framework (Abrams & Killen, 2014), this chapter examines how young people, born after the height of interethnic violence, develop and adhere to the narratives of collective victimhood in divided, post-conflict societies. Focusing on family ethnic socialization (Hughes et al, 2006; Štambuk et al., 2018), we first explore how parents and other family members, both directly and indirectly, transmit narratives of collective suffering at the hands of the outgroup. We also examine developmental provocation, or the ways in which children seek out and reconstruct their own narratives of collective victimhood. Complementing other chapters addressing broader socio-cultural contexts (see Ferguson & Halliday, this volume; Hopkins & Dobai, this volume; Perez & Salter, this volume), we consider the role of the family in shaping perceptions of collective victimhood in a post-accord generation, and the implications that has on their intergroup attitudes and behaviors. Two empirical examples illustrate this theoretical contribution: Vukovar, Croatia, a divided city devastated during the war following the dissolution of the Former Yugoslavia, and Northern Ireland, a setting of protracted intergroup conflict with persistent annual spikes in tension. Both settings had peace accords signed in the mid-1990s, yet continue to be divided along ethno-political lines.

### **Developmental Intergroup Framework and a Post-accord Generation**

The developmental intergroup framework, originally created to explore the origins of social exclusion and prejudice, integrates social and developmental psychology. Toward this end, it recognizes that the intergroup processes driving divisions among adults may not function in the same way across childhood and adolescence. At the same time, it argues that developmental psychology often neglects the role of group identities and dynamics when trying to understand the attitudes and behaviors of young people (Abrams & Killen, 2014). Extending this logic, we argue that the transgenerational transmission of collective victimhood must take both developmental and social psychological perspectives into account. As a fundamentally relational process, the transmission of group narratives of suffering to children born after the height of violence has implications for youth outcomes as well as longer-term peacebuilding. That is, collective victimhood (Vollhardt, this volume) shapes responses to continued intergroup hostility and threat, even after a peace agreement is signed.

Using the developmental intergroup framework to examine collective victimhood shifts the emphasis from understanding the content or *what* it is (see Vollhardt, this volume; Hirschberger & Ein-Dor, this volume; Nair, Okuyan, & Curtin, this volume; Szabo, this volume), to the process or *how* perceptions of collective victimhood are passed on to subsequent generations (Danieli, Norris, & Engdahl, 2016; Klain, 1998). Read through a lens of the social ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), transmission of collective victimhood can be analyzed at each level (Figure 6.1). On the societal level, or the macrosystem, which is more *distal* from the child, factors such as group narratives, shared or chosen traumas, and interpretations of history shape collective victimhood (Bar-Tal, Diamond, & Nasie, 2017; Reidy et al., 2015; see Ferguson & Halliday, this volume). In this chapter, however, we focus on the microsystem, or more *proximal* mechanisms which are closer to the child, such as how a sense of victimhood may be conveyed by family members.

[INSERT FIGURE 6.1 HERE]

In this chapter we outline two types of collective victimhood transmission: direct (specific) and indirect (general) (Felsen, 1998; Schwartz, Dohrenwend & Levav, 1994). For direct transmission, parents explicitly talk about victim narratives (Wohl & van Bavel, 2011) or children mimic their parents' symptoms or patterns of behavior. For indirect transmission, other forms of parenting and family dynamics serve as mediating mechanisms. We focus on ethnic socialization within the family as an indirect mechanism of collective victimhood transmission in divided societies.

### **Family Ethnic Socialization**

In any multi-ethnic or multi-racial setting, parents struggle to help their children navigate issues of ethnicity or race, prejudice, and discrimination. Moreover, a legacy of intergroup conflict further complicates family communication about ethnicity and intergroup relations. In settings that are not characterized by violent conflict, research has shown that the ethnic socialization within family, i.e., the mechanisms through which parents transmit information, values, and perspectives about ethnicity to their children, influences youth's ingroup identity and psychosocial functioning (Hughes et al., 2006). Although the operationalization of this concept has been varied, ethnic socialization processes could entail cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism or silence about race (for review, see Hughes et al., 2006). The majority of this research has been with ethnic and racial minority families and found that family ethnic socialization is a protective developmental factor in the face of prejudice and discrimination (Priest et al., 2014). However, it is less clear how ethnic socialization within the family may function in settings of protracted conflict.

Studying processes of family ethnic socialization to understand collective victimhood is important because there is a strong emphasis on ethnic identity in post-accord contexts

(Reidy et al., 2015). Although at some point groups can experience silencing of their traumatic past within the community (e.g., Danieli et al., 2016; Downes, Harrison, Curran, & Kavanagh, 2013; Vollhardt & Nair, 2018), significant experiences such as suffering during conflict are often strongly woven into collective memory of the group (Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003). Accordingly, narratives of past harm become an important, even vital, element of group identity (Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gundar, 2009).

Parenting within such contexts can be difficult; families must help their children interpret the conflict as well as handle on-going issues related to ethnic divide. Through ethnic socialization and talking about the past, parents influence how children reflect on group identification and victimhood, which in turn, may shape the attitudes and behaviors of the post-accord generation. For example, in a setting of protracted conflict, ethnic socialization has been linked to ethnic prejudice, intergroup biases and mistrust (Nasie et al., 2016). Moreover, following recent periods of violence, parents and grandparents are more likely to have directly experienced the conflict. As such, in families with high levels of actual and perceived victimhood, ingroup identities also tend to be more salient (David & Bar-Tal, 2009). That is, since the belief of one's collective victimhood is associated with increased group identification (David & Bar-Tal, 2009), it is expected that parents with a history of war-victimization are more active in ethnic socialization and in transmitting their beliefs about ingroup suffering. These conversations and exchanges may also highlight the importance of group membership and shed light on how to behave towards the perpetrator and other groups (Vollhardt, 2012).

Although parents are typically the focus when studying family ethnic socialization, it is a dynamic process (Kuczynski, 2003). The model of developmental provocation (McDevitt, 2006) outlines how children may initiate conversations with their families around ethnicity and politically-charged topics, particularly after exposure to these issues through the

media or school. For example, after learning about the war in school, children in Vukovar report turning to their families and asking questions about the siege of the city and past conflict in the region (Reidy et al., 2015). In this way, parents serve as a filter for broader societal influences (Escuin Checa & Taylor, 2017). Developmental provocation further recognizes the increased agency of young people, particularly with age. That is, as adolescents develop views about themselves, others and their future, against the backdrop of past conflict and ongoing division, they may seek out more information from families about group membership (Bar-Tal et al., 2017). These socialization processes may encourage youth to interpret events with reference to ethnicity, including how they understand past conflict and persistent perceptions of collective victimhood. Thus, children also actively engage in and seek out information relevant to collective victimhood through developmental provocation.

To illustrate these processes, the transgenerational transmission of collective victimhood will be explored in two post-accord societies: Vukovar, Croatia and Northern Ireland.

### **Vukovar, Croatia**

The city of Vukovar is a powerful symbol of Croatian national suffering during the 1991-1995 war, called the Homeland War in the national narrative. After the 87-day siege, the Croatian military forces surrendered to the Yugoslav Army and Serbian paramilitaries. During the siege, the city was almost entirely destroyed, over 1,500 people were killed, and at least 20,000 inhabitants, mostly Croats and others of non-Serbian origin, were forced to leave the city and the neighboring areas (Žunec, 2008). In the following years, Vukovar was a part of the self-proclaimed Republic of Serbian Krajina and mostly ethnically cleansed of its non-Serbian population. The peace accord signed in 1995 known as the Erdut Agreement allowed

for a gradual peaceful reintegration of this part of the country to the jurisdiction of the Republic of Croatia.

Today, Vukovar has approximately 27,700 inhabitants, of whom 57% are Croats and 35% are Serbs (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). The urban reconstruction is mostly over, but social reconstruction has been much slower, with only minor improvements (Čorkalo Biruški, 2016). Although before the war Vukovar was economically well-off and a well-integrated multiethnic community, after the war it has become sharply divided along ethnic lines. Being a Croat or a Serb is perceived as a key marker of an individual. Thus, the social division along the ethnic lines has become a profound barrier to cooperation and improvement of social relations.

Research carried out in Vukovar has consistently shown that the major obstacles for peacebuilding and social reconstruction were not cultural differences between Croats and Serbs, but rather war-related events and their interpretations (Čorkalo Biruški & Ajduković, 2009; Jelić, Čorkalo Biruški & Ajduković, 2018). The most important is, as the Croatian community perceived, the lack of acknowledgment from the Serbian community for the Croatian war victimization (see also Twali, Hameiri, Vollhardt, & Nadler, this volume). On the other hand, Serbs complain that their Croatian neighbors fail to acknowledge discrimination and hostilities the Serbs have been experiencing after the war. Additionally, both Croats and Serbs hold a strong belief that a victim cannot be a perpetrator of violence at the same time. Thus, they either do not feel responsibility for the wrongdoings their ingroup committed during or after the war (Jelić et al., 2018) or they justify their ingroup misdeeds (Čorkalo Biruški & Magoč, 2009). These conflicting narratives and failure to acknowledge the outgroup suffering shape and preserve competitive collective victimhood beliefs on both sides (see Szabo, this volume): those of Croats are based on their recent war victimization

and those of Serbs are based on the perceived discrimination they face in contemporary Croatia and historical grievances from World War II (Čorkalo Biruški, 2012).

In social reconstruction processes, there is a complex interplay between these one-sided narratives and ethnic identity, group status, intergroup emotions and cognitions (Jelić et al., 2018). For majority Croats, a narrative is constructed around the war-related trauma and is associated with lack of positive affect toward the outgroup. This association makes renewing interethnic relations for Croats an unlikely option. Whereas for minority Serbs, the narrative considers both groups as being equally victimized during the war, i.e., in a direct contrast to the Croatian group belief. Currently, Serbs are more oriented toward restoration of community relations through instrumental steps to achieve better status and acknowledgement from the majority group, as they face fewer war-trauma related emotions. Consequently, the stronger Serbs believe their ingroup was a war-victim, the less they are ready for improving their relations with the majority group, which blames the Serbs as the only war perpetrators. Jelić and colleagues (2018) concluded that, in both groups, the victimhood narratives are tightly integrated into their group identities and thus leave little space for peacebuilding and social reconstruction.

### **Transgenerational Transmission of Collective Victimhood**

For children and youth born in post-war Vukovar, everyday life and intergroup relations are strongly guided by ethnic divisions and ethnically constructed narratives about past conflict(s). Croat and Serb children predominantly attend separate kindergartens and schools. They usually have friends of the same ethnic background and spend time at places where peers from their ethnic ingroup gather (Čorkalo Biruški & Ajduković, 2007; 2012). Since most of the adults in the community behave similarly, youth do not have many role models for learning how to cross the ethnic lines and practice interethnic cooperation. Besides dealing with interethnic divisions, tensions and discrimination, children and youth



have also another demanding task: to give meaning to the victimization that family members experienced during the war. The importance of the war narratives is evident in the recent study showing that war-related conversations are mostly initiated by the youth themselves (Reidy et al., 2015). Youth's motivation to do so may be encouraged by narratives they are exposed to at a broader societal level (e.g., schools, wider community) and at a proximal level (e.g., in families) (Jelić et al., 2018; Reidy et al., 2015).

At the societal level (see Ferguson & Halliday, this volume), collective victimhood beliefs come alive strongly around commemorations, public events, and memorials (Jelić et al., 2018; Reidy et al., 2015). Their presence and intensity is boosted further by media coverage that mostly gives the one-sided Croatian narrative about their own exclusive suffering during the war. Any attempts to critically examine and debate the dominant narrative, or to portray the Serbian victims as well, are considered as highly controversial. Thus, by endorsing an exclusive victim consciousness, the media directly shapes public opinion and boosts ingroup cohesion. Moreover, media coverage may serve as a trigger for further discussions of war-related narratives within the family.

At the family level, collective victimhood beliefs may also be transmitted directly, by actively talking about the past victimization and grievances (Wohl & van Bavel, 2011), or indirectly, as described by the indirect (general) hypothesis on trauma transmission (Felsen, 1998; Schwartz et al., 1994). First, parents use at least two strategies to *directly* discuss war-related topics with their children (Jelić et al., 2018; Reidy et al., 2015). One strategy is to discuss the broader political context that is relevant for understanding the war-related events and their societal impact. Another strategy is to talk about more personal, family experiences during the war.

Expectedly, different patterns of discussions emerge for Croat and Serb parents. Croat parents emphasize the importance of remembering the collective suffering in the past

conflict. They do this either explicitly by emphasizing the importance of Croatian victimhood or by communicating that their war experiences are too painful to be talked about. Similar mechanisms have been recognized among second generation of Holocaust survivors (Danieli et al., 2016). Hence, the untold stories add to children's constructions of severity of trauma their parents survived.

Conversely, Serb parents mostly avoid discussing general war-related issues, and instead focus on sharing stories about their personal, negative war-related experiences. This approach may be understood through the needs-based model in which victims and perpetrators have different psychological resources and emotional needs after conflict (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). That is, victims desire to be empowered, while perpetrators (including those who were not directly involved but share group membership with those who actively participated) need to be accepted in human (moral) community again (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Thus, to help with anxiety over social exclusion, Serbs may shift discussions from the broader, political context of the war, which would inevitably include their responsibility for conflict, to their personal experiences of suffering which could be shared with the outgroup (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Wotman, 1990). In this context, Serb parents may emphasize shared experiences of misfortune to gain understanding and empathy for the circumstances that drove their ingroup members to commit and/or support persecution of others.

Second, parents also *indirectly* communicate a sense of collective victimhood to their children, as supported by recent findings (Štambuk, 2015). Among Croat and Serb youth (aged 13 to 16) and their parents, there was no significant direct link between family war victimization and children's developmental outcomes. However, in more traumatized Croat families, parents were more oriented toward passing identity markers to their children through ethnic socialization. In other words, in the majority group, who objectively

experienced more war-related traumatic events (Čorkalo Biruški, Ajdukovic, & Löw Stanić, 2014), ethnic socialization can be an indirect way for parents to communicate collective victimhood narratives to their children.

In the process of ethnic socialization, the content of parents' messages additionally illustrates this pattern of victimhood transmission (Jelić et al., 2018; Štambuk, 2015). On the one hand, Croatian parents emphasize it is important to never forget their origin and cultural heritage. Being a victim and insisting on the exclusive victimhood status is an integral part of Croatian identity (Čorkalo Biruški & Magoč, 2009; Jelić et al., 2018). Thus, we could argue that the explicit message "do not forget Croatian ethnic origin/heritage" actually says "do not forget Croatian victimhood." In terms of needs-based model (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), Croatian messages can be interpreted as a mode of empowerment – Croats insist on preserving strong commitment to their heritage, i.e. to their victimhood status, with the purpose of inducing guilt and responsibility among perpetrators. On the other hand, Serbian parents tend to avoid issues related to the war and focus on encouraging their children to have friends regardless of ethnicity. Serbian reluctance to discuss war-related topics should be understood given the prevailing narrative of exclusive Croatian suffering. Serbs are aware that they, as a group, evoke painful memories of the recent war. Thus, ethnic socialization for Serbian parents is challenging because they must coordinate narratives about their ingroup role in the war with messages about their ethnic heritage and pride. Moreover, encouraging children to have friends regardless of their ethnicity can be seen as a mode of gaining acceptance in community and restoring the public, moral image of their ingroup. However, it seems that this parental mechanism backfires for the Serbian youth, because it leaves them without a clear idea of how to receive, question or confront the prevailing narrative of exclusive Croatian suffering (Jelić et al., 2018).

Our other recent analysis gives an additional insight into how competitive beliefs about victimhood remain salient in the second generation and shape current relations among the youth in Vukovar. We have found that parental competitive victimhood beliefs relate to greater ethnic socialization, which in turn predicts symbolic threat to the ingroup, which is finally linked to both greater outgroup discrimination and perceived discrimination against the ingroup (Štambuk et al., 2018). Additionally, we have shown that ethnic socialization has different implications for general developmental outcomes and for interethnic relations of the youth (Štambuk & Čorkalo Biruški, 2017). Regarding externalizing (e.g., conduct problems and hyperactivity) and internalizing (e.g., emotional and peer problems) developmental difficulties, depending on the specific outcome, ethnic socialization was both protective and a risk factor though those effects were weak. However, for interethnic relations, ethnic socialization was clearly a risk factor. More intensive ethnic socialization was directly linked to outgroup discrimination, but also indirectly, through a mediational role of stronger ethnic identity. In sum, ethnic socialization can be a challenging aspect of parenting in a post-conflict context, serving as an indirect mechanism through which collective ingroup victimhood shapes family narratives and has implications for youth's developmental and social outcomes.

Ethnic socialization provides Croatian and Serbian youth with a one-sided narrative about the war and their ingroups' past victimization. As a consequence, the youth, being aware of deep ethnic divisions they had been socialized into, often do not see their generation as the one who could significantly improve intergroup relations. Instead, they hope the next generation will be able to promote social reconstruction and peacebuilding (Jelić et al., 2018). This hope is supported by individual examples of cross-ethnic friendships and other interpersonal connections among the members of different ethnic groups. In this way, children and adolescents who overcome ingroup pressure of not crossing the ethnic lines are

actually challenging the status quo and taking steps toward a more integrated community in the future.

### **Northern Ireland**

In another post-agreement society, Northern Ireland has seen prolonged conflict between the Catholic and Protestant communities (see also Ferguson & Halliday, this volume). This conflict can be viewed as a constitutional dispute between those that want to unify Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland (mostly Catholics), and those that want it to remain part of the United Kingdom (mostly Protestants) (Cairns & Darby, 1998). That is, despite religious labelling, being a member of the Catholic or Protestant community is often regarded as an ethnic or political identity. The most recent period of violence, known as ‘The Troubles’ (1968-1998), officially ended with the signing of the Good Friday/ Belfast Agreement. Despite Northern Ireland’s peace process, the region remains in a state of “no war, no peace” (MacGinty, Muldoon, & Ferguson, 2007, p. 1).

Interpretation of conflict-related events in Northern Ireland has been a significant barrier to peacebuilding (Noor, James Brown, & Prentice, 2008). Competitive victimhood beliefs have been used by both communities to justify ingroup involvement in armed conflict (Ferguson, Burgess, & Hollywood, 2010), and one-sided narratives of ingroup suffering are used to gain leverage over the other community (Ferguson, 2005). Catholic and Protestant communities exploit a sense of victimhood to access resources and garner support from third-parties, while also heightening group cohesion and gaining moral dominance over the other (Hamber, Kulle, & Wilson, 2001). This reflects what MacGinty and du Toit (2007) describe as Northern Ireland’s “intercommunal competitive dynamic” (p. 14), which freezes conflict dynamics, leaving little opportunity for the thawing of tensions (Taylor et al., 2014).

The society continues to be separated along the Catholic/Protestant divide (Gillespie, 2010); day-to-day events tend to be observed and interpreted with reference to ethnic identity

which obstructs cooperation and better intergroup relations. Children develop within a society characterized by segregation (Hughes, Campbell, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2007), which both physically and psychologically divides the two communities (Taylor & Hanna, 2017). Around 93% of primary and post-primary pupils are taught in segregated schools (Northern Ireland Department of Education, 2017). Outside of the classroom, young people tend to have friends with a similar community background and live in tightly-knit neighborhoods that are largely Catholic or Protestant (Hughes, Blaylock, & Donnelly, 2015). Moreover, children and youth may be directly exposed to intergroup tension and sporadic incidents of political violence (Jarman, 2005). It is clear that living in present-day Northern Ireland presents many challenges for those growing up as part of a post-accord generation. However, similar to Vukovar, young people are also expected to make sense of the suffering that family members and the wider community experienced before they were born.

### **Transgenerational Transmission of Collective Victimhood**

In Northern Ireland, at the societal level, collective victimhood is transmitted through the use of commemorations, festivals and literature (see Ferguson & Halliday, this volume). At the family level, past research has found that parents may *directly* talk with their children about the Troubles; for example, to dispel children's fears of violence (Myers-Walls, Myers-Bowman, & Pelo, 1993). This may involve parents passing on their interpretations and evaluations of traumatic events that family members or the collective ingroup experienced (O'Malley, Blankemeyer, Walker, & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2007). Consistent with previous research in other settings, in Northern Ireland, parent-child communication about past trauma was associated with better psychological functioning in children, including improved peer relationships and reduced behavioral difficulties (Fargas-Malet & Dillenburg, 2016).

As a result of such ethnic socialization, a stronger ingroup identity as Catholic or Protestant can allow children to find meaning in the conflict-related events unfolding within

their lives (Muldoon, 2013), and may facilitate coping as it has been linked to fewer emotional problems (Merrilees et al., 2014). Yet, the provision of a one-sided narrative of ingroup suffering may glorify the martyrdom of ingroup members (Harland, 2011), and frame the outgroup as aggressive and irrational (Shirlow, 2003). Previous research in Northern Ireland has shown that 6-year-old children were aware of conflict occurring between the Catholic and Protestant communities and were able to explain its causes (Sani, Bennett, Agostini, Malucchi, & Ferguson, 2000). A perception of continued threat from the other community can encourage children to engage in negative behaviors across group lines, which perpetuates a cycle of violence. In addition, children may participate in acts associated with structural violence, such as unfairly allocating resources to the ingroup at the expense of the outgroup (O'Driscoll, Taylor, & Dautel, 2018). In this light, children may view their behaviors as retribution for the collective suffering that their community experienced throughout the conflict (Leonard, 2010).

Parents may also decide *not* to talk with their children about the suffering that took place during the Troubles. In particular, some report “hiding the truth” (p. 9), in order to end the transgenerational transmission of trauma and sectarianism (Downes et al., 2013). Despite this silence, children may recognize that a traumatic event occurred. A lack of a coherent narrative could leave children feeling worried about what happened and lead to impaired psychological functioning (Hanna, Dempster, Dyer, Lyons, & Devaney, 2012). For example, children had more emotional difficulties when their parents talked about victimization experienced during the Troubles (Fargas-Malet & Dillenburger, 2016).

Parents may also *indirectly* transmit a sense of past group victimization to children through ethnic socialization. In Northern Ireland, research has found that from as young as 3 years old, some children begin to internalize identity markers associated with their community and display negative attitudes towards the outgroup (Connolly, Kelly, & Smith,

2009). Similarly, Oppenheimer (2011) found that children in Northern Ireland had an earlier awareness of both their ingroup and outgroup than children living in settings that had not experienced intergroup conflict.

The family environment continues to influence social development as children transition into adolescence. That is, adolescence is a time of identity exploration and commitment. In comparison to younger children within this context, adolescents are more likely to be exposed to political violence (Byrne, Conway, & Ostermeyer, 2005), as well as carry out these acts. Youth at this age also tend to live at home and have direct interactions with family members on a daily basis. Previous research in Northern Ireland has shown that adolescent's attitudes towards the other community often reflect those of family members, including parents (Stringer et al., 2010). Moreover, Taylor and McKeown (2017b) found that young people who had witnessed political violence often talked to their parents about their experiences. This led to more intensive ethnic socialization, as parents discussed intergroup relations within Northern Ireland, including the history of their community as well as its values and beliefs. These conversations heightened adolescent's identification with their ingroup, which in turn predicted increased participation in sectarian acts. Thus, ethnic socialization in this context can be used to reinforce entrenched group identities and motivate negative outgroup-directed behaviors. Thus, ethnic socialization regarding collective victimhood seems to have buffering effects for young people's mental health, while at the same time potentially exacerbating intergroup tensions.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter illustrates how ethnic socialization within the family can shape the transmission of perceived collective victimhood to a post-accord generation of young people growing up in divided societies (Figure 1). Focusing on these processes in the wake of ethnic conflict in which the two sides remain living side by side, additional research may be needed



to understand how this might work in other settings of collective victimization such as among diaspora groups.

In this chapter, the developmental intergroup framework points to the importance of considering the interplay of social and developmental influences on how narratives of ingroup suffering are passed down across generations. In particular, the focus on the more proximal influences, such as the family, highlights both the direct and indirect ways that families communicate about the past, share personal war experiences, and explain larger political processes and interethnic relations, especially when asked by young people. This process of ethnic socialization within the family is key to understanding the lasting nature of collective victimhood. Moreover, expanding the focus on trauma outcomes (e.g., Danieli et al., 2016; Fargas-Malet & Dillenburger, 2016), this chapter briefly explores some of the social and developmental outcomes of perceived collective victimhood for youth, such as adjustment problems, strength of ingroup identity, outgroup discrimination and antisocial behavior targeting outgroup members.

We argue that an essential aspect of promoting social reconstruction and peacebuilding, particularly among those who are born after the height of intergroup violence, is grappling with the narratives of collective victimhood (McKeown & Taylor, 2017; Taylor & McKeown, 2017a). Across two cases we see how the entrenched perceptions of ingroup suffering often prevents children and adolescents from forming close friendships with youth from the ‘other’ community. Moreover, family ethnic socialization which is fostered by a sense of competitive victimhood, in Vukovar, and by youth’s own exposure to intergroup sectarianism, in Northern Ireland, leads to more negative outgroup behaviors that have the potential to prolong hostilities and tensions. Future research should investigate how to promote constructive ways of coping with the transmission of ethnicity and victimhood (see

Leach, this volume) to help young people respond with constructive forms of engagement (Taylor et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2017), including prosocial behavior (Taylor et al., 2014).

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