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Intergroup Processes: Revenge among Youth Living Amid Protracted Conflict

Dean O'Driscoll, Angelica Restrepo, & Laura K. Taylor

Traumatic life events and adversity brought about by intergroup conflict may impact developing children and adolescents (Cummings, Merrilees, Taylor, & Mondri, 2017). A majority of research has focused on the impact of conflict on child and adolescent mental health (Betancourt, McBain, Newnham, & Brennan, 2014; Cummings, Goeke-Morey, Merrilees, Taylor, & Shirlow, 2014; Sagi-Schwartz, 2008). In addition to post-traumatic stress and internalizing problems, sustained exposure to political violence may negatively affect young people's externalizing difficulties, such as aggression (Barber, 2008; Macksoud & Aber, 1996; Kithakye, Morris, Terranova, & Myers, 2010). For example, exposure and victimization to intergroup violence among Palestinian youth related to greater aggressive tendencies using both self and parental reports (Quota, Punamäki, & El Sarraj, 2008). Similarly, Israeli and Palestinian children and adolescents were more likely to engage in aggressive acts toward peers after experiencing intergroup conflict (Boxer et al., 2013; Huesmann et al., 2017). In Northern Ireland, young people's exposure to political violence also has been associated with aggression and antisocial behavior (Cummings et al., 2010; Merrilees et al., 2013; Taylor, Merrilees, Goeke-Morey, Shirlow, & Cummings, 2016). This body of work suggests that personal experiences with intergroup violence may orientate young people to exhibit more aggressive behaviors, in general. However, this chapter focuses specifically on how children and adolescents use outgroup-directed aggression as a form of revenge and retaliation.

Intergroup conflict may influence young people's understandings of themselves, others and their social world (Bar-Tal, Diamond, & Nasie, 2017). Findings from multiple conflict settings, including Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland and the Balkans, indicate that

the signing of a peace agreement does not suddenly make a society more peaceful, stable or functional (MacGinty, Muldoon, & Ferguson, 2007). The process of building peace may be fragile if the younger generation continue to develop attitudes and behaviours that preserve intergroup divisions (Cairns & Roe, 2003), such as engaging in retaliatory acts across group lines.

Relatedly, growing up in an environment characterized by conflict may impact children's understanding of revenge and retaliation. For example, exposure to violence increased the likelihood of displaced children in Colombia perceiving antisocial behavior (e.g., theft and physical harm) as a legitimate response to others' harmful behavior (Ardila-Rey, Killen, & Brenick, 2009). Similarly, displaced youth in Colombia expected others to steal or inflict physical harm in the context of revenge (Posada & Wainryb, 2008). These findings suggest that children and adolescents may reason about harm and conflict resolution in ways that serve to justify the use of revenge as a problem-solving strategy. Moreover, children and adolescents may frame hostilities directed against outgroup members (e.g., aggression and discrimination) as retribution for previous conflict-related offences. As such, revenge may display further complexities and unique features in contexts of intergroup conflict. For example, youth may seek revenge against outgroup members who may have not been involved in violence or retaliate for a previous harm that did not specifically affect them. These acts of vicarious retribution are justified through the development of group-based norms that an assault on one member is perceived to be an attack on the collective (Leonard, 2010). That is, young people may retaliate to settle the score in the aftermath of harm against either themselves or their social group. In contexts of social division, these retaliatory actions may foster further desires for revenge. There is therefore a need to explore the development of revenge and retribution among children and adolescents living amid intergroup conflict.

A number of factors related to individual differences may impact revenge among youth (MacDonald, this volume). Youth engagement in harmful behaviours toward others such as retaliation may be associated with short- and long-term consequences at an individual level. That is, children and adolescents engaging in aggressive behaviours may be at an increased risk of experiencing negative outcomes, including peer problems, poor academic attainment and engagement in criminal behavior in adulthood (Salzinger, Feldman, Stockhammer, & Hood, 2002).

Children, however, have a natural tendency to want to fit in with social groups (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and this sense of belonging can bring benefits, including improved self-esteem (Verkuyten, 2007). During the transition into adolescence, an even greater emphasis may be placed on group membership as young people gain a more nuanced understanding of group dynamics and consolidate identities (Erikson, 1968). It is therefore important to also consider the influence of group-based processes on young people's retaliatory motives and behaviours. For example, Sheckman and Basheer (2005) found that children growing up amid the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were more likely to support beliefs around aggression against members from the opposing outgroup over those with whom they shared a salient group identity.

Acts of revenge may have broader societal implications, whether intended or not, by sustaining and perpetuating the cycle of violence (de Rivera, 2003; Jarman & O'Halloran, 2001; Taylor et al., 2016). Engaging in retaliatory behaviours toward the outgroup may freeze traditional conflict dynamics and offer little room for the thawing of tensions (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2009; Taylor et al., 2014). That is, experiencing tit-for-tat acts of revenge across group lines reinforces long-standing perceptions of intergroup relations. Children and adolescents lack alternative information to view the other group in a new light other than the enemy. The maintenance of intergroup hostilities across generations may have implications

for the consolidation of peace, reconciliation and social reconstruction (Taylor, Štambuk, Čorkalo Biruški, & O'Driscoll, 2020b).

The current chapter explores the development of revenge and retaliation behaviors among youth within three contexts of protracted intergroup conflict: Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland and Croatia. Within these contexts protracted conflict refers to a struggle between social groups over a range of existential and violent goals, which are viewed as zero-sum and unable to be solved using peaceful means. These conflicts are protracted in nature as they have lasted more than 25 years, impact the daily lives of citizens and consume large amounts of physical and psychological resources (Bar-Tal, 2013).

Across contexts, young people may differ in their degree and intensity of exposure to political violence. This variation may arise as a result of conflict dynamics (e.g., Palestinian youth tend to be at a greater risk of being exposed to conflict in comparison to their Israeli counterparts [Dubow et al., 2012]), the stage of the cycle of conflict (e.g., the conflict in Israel-Palestine remains ongoing, while Northern Ireland and Croatia are considered to be post-accord settings) and individual experiences (e.g., Northern Irish youth living in areas that experienced higher or lower death rates during the conflict [Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006]) Revenge behaviours may assume varied intensities, ranging from engaging in discrimination to participating in violence targeted toward the other community.

Not all young people may have been directly exposed to the height of violence during the conflict, by being born after the signing of peace accords. However, their parents and family members may have experienced and witnessed pervasive violence. As a result, a majority of children and adolescents display some level of understanding around how their communities and families were caught in the crossfire (Kosić & Livi, 2012; Reidy et al., 2015). Through continued exposure to the narratives and stories of collective victimhood, young people may also feel like victims of the outgroup's actions (Lickel, Miller, Stenstrom,

Denson, & Schmader, 2006; Taylor et al., 2020b). That is, in intergroup conflicts, decisions and reasoning about revenge and retaliation may be based on historic or intergenerational harm, rather than in response to a personal threat. This chapter first outlines a theoretical framework to understand youths' revenge and retaliation in settings of protracted conflict, and then explores the empirical evidence in each setting. The conclusion offers a cross-cutting analysis that integrates learnings from the three cases and puts forward recommendations for peacebuilding interventions.

Theoretical framework

To explore revenge and retribution among children and adolescents within conflict-affected societies, it is important to consider the underlying developmental and social psychological mechanisms (Bar-Tal et al., 2017). Children and adolescents take an active role in observing and attempting to understand the social world, while also incorporating these observations into their own patterns of behavior (Abrams & Rutland, 2008). As such, critical interdependence exists between children and their social environment. Young people's perception of their social context may differ from adults'. During childhood and adolescence, social-cognitive abilities including empathy, perspective taking, and moral awareness are emerging in conjunction with increased knowledge and awareness of group processes (Rutland, Killen, & Abrams, 2010). Developing group identities and dynamics may affect children's understanding of intergroup relations and day-to-day interactions with others. Developmental theories have tended to overlook the role of intra- and intergroup processes in influencing the attitudes and behaviors of children and adolescents (Bennett & Sani, 2004). For instance, socio-cognitive theory (Aboud, 2008; Aboud & Amato, 2001) places emphasis on within-child factors (e.g., maturational processes) on the development of negative intergroup attitudes and behaviors, while often neglecting the influence of the surrounding environmental context. In comparison, Social Identity Development Theory (SIDT; Nesdale

2004) contends that children do not develop within a vacuum and highlights the need to consider the effect of social factors on children's intergroup relations.

SIDT incorporates developmental, cognitive, emotional, and group-based elements to suggest that children's system of beliefs and behavioral repertoire are shaped by their social environment. SIDT proposes that children will only display negative outgroup attitudes and behaviors after they have progressed through four (potential) stages (Nesdale, 2007):

undifferentiated, ethnic awareness, ethnic preference and ethnic prejudice.

During the *undifferentiated* stage, children often do not possess knowledge of social categories. Children then proceed to the *ethnic awareness* stage, as they become more conscious of the various ethnic groups living within their environment and self-identify as a member of a particular group. This self-identification facilitates entry into the *ethnic preference* stage. Ethnic preference is part of a normative process that reflects children's natural tendency to categorize their social world, as they begin to focus on and show a preference for their ingroup. Children may view themselves as similar to ingroup members and try to gain positive distinctiveness of their own group compared to other groups (Nesdale & Flessner, 2001). Toward this end, they may display intergroup biases in favor of their social ingroup, such as liking their own group more than other groups (Bigler, Jones, & Lobliner, 1997). However, SIDT points out that this developing ingroup preference does not equate to outgroup antagonism (Nesdale, 2004), as children may simply hold fewer positive attitudes toward other groups. The theory notes that not all children will progress to the *ethnic prejudice* stage. In other words, the development of prejudice is not inevitable. The transition from *ethnic preference* to *ethnic prejudice* is dependent on a range of developmental and social factors, including those in their social environments.

SIDT tends to focus on child and adolescent responses toward ethnic groups that have clear physical cues (e.g., race); however, it can be regarded as a universal theory for the

development of biases towards salient social groups (Tomovska Misoska, Taylor, Dautel, & Rylander, 2020). As such, the theory can provide a valuable theoretical lens across multiple conflict settings, even when there is an absence of physical cues serving as markers of group membership.

A number of studies have begun to apply SIDT to contexts of intergroup conflict (e.g., Merrilees et al., 2018; O'Driscoll, Taylor, & Dautel, 2018; Tomovska Misoska et al., 2020). SIDT proposes that the presence of conflict may impact children's understanding of intergroup relations (Nesdale, 2004). Protracted conflict may increase the salience of social categories (Dautel, 2012; Smyth, Feeney, Eidson, & Coley, 2017) and directly shape young people's intergroup attitudes and behaviors (Merrilees et al., 2018). For example, conflict may catalyze the emergence of prejudice (Nasie, Diamond, & Bar-Tal, 2016), as children living in these settings may display negative attitudes toward the perceived rival group from as early as 2 to 3 years of age (e.g., for Israel-Palestine see Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; for Northern Ireland see Connolly, Kelly, & Smith, 2009).

Growing up in a conflict-ridden environment may also affect the development, span and trajectory of young people's behavioral responses toward outgroup members (Taylor et al., 2017), including increasing tendencies toward aggression (Taylor et al., 2016). For example, exposure to outgroup aggression may boost group cohesion and foster stronger ties with the ingroup (Taylor et al., 2011), which can provide children with a sense of safety, security and belonging in situations of conflict. However, a heightened ingroup identification may, in turn, motivate children to maintain, defend or enhance the status of their own group by engaging in retaliatory acts of violence across group lines (Nesdale, Maas, Duffy, & Griffiths, 2005; Duffy & Nesdale, 2010). At the same time, living in areas characterized by extensive segregation and entrenched intergroup divisions may cultivate exclusionary or aggressive group norms toward the perceived rival (Merrilees et al., 2018). Children may be

more likely to legitimize and look favorably on aggressive behaviors associated with revenge and retaliation if these are normative (Nesdale, Maas, Durkin, & Griffiths, 2005), particularly when paired with the threat of further attacks by the outgroup (Nesdale, Milliner, Duffy, & Griffiths, 2009).

In this chapter, we apply SIDT to the development of retaliatory motives and behaviors across group lines within the context of intergroup conflict. Revenge and retaliation may be explored at multiple levels of the social ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cummings et al., 2014). At a societal or macrosystem level, more *distal* influences, including dealing with the legacy of the conflict and narratives of collective suffering, may shape youths' retaliatory motives and behaviors (Taylor et al., 2020b). This chapter will focus on more *proximal* factors, those around the young person in their microsystem, including how direct exposure to political violence, group norms and the family may influence the development of revenge and retaliation. SIDT also recognizes the agency of children and adolescents in constructing their own systems of beliefs and patterns of behavior rather than passively internalizing long-standing conflict dynamics transmitted by socialization agents (e.g., parents, peers, school and media). The chapter will present scholarship that demonstrates the dynamic relationship between young people and their social contexts around issues of intergroup revenge and retaliation in Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland and Croatia.

Israel-Palestine

The Israel-Palestinian conflict is often used as an example of intergroup violence (Bar-Tal, 2013). The conflict can be conceptualized as a violent struggle between the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Arab communities over a range of contentious issues including land rights, ethnicity, religion and access to resources. Although relations between the two groups had been fraught for decades, armed conflict erupted during a Palestinian uprising or First

Intifada (1987 – 1993) against Israeli occupation of territory (Slone, 2009). The signing of the Oslo Accords officially ended the First Intifada and brought a period of relative peace. However, the outbreak of a Second Intifada (2000 – 2005) re-escalated and intensified intergroup violence (Barber & Olsen, 2009). Since the Second Intifada started, it is estimated that more than 10,000 people, including 2,152 children, have lost their lives due to political violence (Huesmann et al., 2017). Numerous attempts to reach a peace settlement between the opposing ethno-religious groups have failed and the conflict remains unresolved.

The region continues to be deeply divided along ethno-religious lines. Bar-Tal and Halperin (2011) propose that an inability to solve the conflict using peaceful methods has generated additional psychological barriers to conflict resolution, inasmuch as they emphasize differences that exist between the ethno-religious groups. Many children and adolescents live in highly segregated territories. Youth living in these segregated areas are likely to attend segregated schools and be taught in distinct languages by members of their own group (Khattab, 2005).

However, conflict is not unfolding equally across the region. Children and adolescents living in high conflict areas may have more personal experiences with violence, which include destruction of homes, personal injury, wounding or death of family members, hearing the sound of bombs, seeing explosions, and being caught in the crossfire of armed engagements (Slone & Shechner, 2009; Giacaman, Shannon, Saab, Arya, & Boyce, 2010). The conflict can also disrupt other aspects of young people's lives, such as school closures, waiting in bomb shelters, limited travel across military checkpoints, or experiencing prolonged curfews (e.g., Haj-Yahia, 2008). Both Israeli and Palestinian youth may also engage in aggressive intergroup behaviours, such as rioting (e.g., Slone, 2003), which may instigate further violence and animosity across group lines.

Retribution and revenge in Israel-Palestine

Within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from an early age, children may attribute negative traits and intentions toward the other community. For example, 5-to 6-year-old Israeli Jewish children from both secular and religious backgrounds have been shown to hold beliefs that Palestinian Arabs are the enemy and a threat to the safety of their collective ingroup (Bar-Tal, Spivik, & Castel-Bazelet, 2003). Exposure to intergroup conflict may further intensify hostility and negative attitudes toward outgroup members (Dvir Gvirsman et al, 2016; Huesmann, Dubow, Boxer, Souweidane, & Ginges, 2012; Niwa et al., 2016), which may promote aggression (e.g., stone throwing) against the other community (Moore & Guy, 2012; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007) or withholding of resources in revenge and retaliation (Shamoa-Nir, Razpurker-Apfeld, Taylor, & Dautel, under review).

Experiencing intergroup conflict may impact young people's learning around the appropriateness of using aggression, cultivate more aggressive patterns of cognitions and heighten emotional distress (Huesmann et al., 2017). Direct exposure to violence may then foster retaliatory motives and behaviors across group lines. For example, exposure to intergroup conflict among both Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Arab children and adolescents predicted later engagement in violent political demonstrations against the other community (Dubow et al., 2019).

Children and adolescents may be more likely to accept group-held norms of aggression as a response to the perceived hurtful behavior of the outgroup. Niwa and colleagues (2016) found that Palestinian youth with increased aggression and emotional desensitization around the conflict were more likely to have positive beliefs about the acceptability of violent acts towards Jewish Israelis. That is, living in a conflict-ridden environment may impact young people's cognitions around the acceptability of aggression against outgroup members, which has the potential to fuel tit-for-tat acts of violence.

Family processes also may influence revenge and retaliation in this context. Many young people predominantly learn about conflict dynamics between Palestinian Arabs and Jewish Israelis from their parents (Ben Shabat, 2010; Edres, 2006). For example, Israeli Jewish parents with more hawkish perceptions of the conflict tended to pass this hawk-like orientation to their children (Bar-Tal, Reshef, & Blacharovich, 2012; Ben Shabat, 2010). Parents can influence children's understanding of intergroup relations both directly and indirectly (Bar-Tal et al., 2016). Parents may use storytelling and discussions with youth to directly transmit identity markers and narratives of personal or collective suffering (Nasie et al., 2016). Furthermore, young people may indirectly be exposed to ethnic practices and parental language about the conflict, which are laced with emotion and portray the outgroup as a threatening and aggressive force (Bar-Tal et al., 2016). A sense of victimization at the hands of the outgroup can influence young people's perception and interpretation of conflict-related events (Huesmann et al., 2012), which in turn, may influence the extent to which they are motivated to retaliate for past harms committed against their collective group.

Young people may also be socialized about the conflict at a societal level (Nasie et al., 2016). Public events, commemorations, and the media may influence desires for revenge and retaliation. Gor (2005) suggests that stories around national events (e.g., Memorial Day for fallen Israeli soldiers, Independence Day) promote militarism and the notion that problems can be solved by using aggression across group lines. Public events may also transmit a one-sided narrative of collective suffering and support the continuation of conflict (Bar-Tal & Ozer, 2009). Children and adolescents also learn about the conflict through the media (e.g., Warshel, 2007). Indirect exposure to intergroup violence committed by the other community in the media may contribute to young people responding with aggression across group lines (Dubow et al., 2019).

These findings are consistent with SIDT, in that exposure to intergroup violence on an individual or collective basis may heighten perceptions of threat from the other community, which in turn, may foster retaliatory motives and behaviors. Desires for revenge may be further compounded by the endorsement of group-held norms surrounding aggression and the transgenerational transmission of threat-inducing narratives of collective victimhood at the family and societal levels.

Northern Ireland

Conflict between the Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland goes back centuries (Hancock, 1998). The conflict can be viewed as a struggle over contentious issues relating to nationality and the constitutional position of Northern Ireland (MacGinty et al., 2007). For example, Protestants generally identify as British and want Northern Ireland to remain a territory of the United Kingdom (UK), while Catholics generally identify as Irish and wish to unify the region with the Republic of Ireland (Darby, 1983; Moxon-Browne, 1991). That is, although these groups hold religious category labels, they tend to represent wider ethnic and political identities (Cairns, 1996). The conflict is, therefore, not religious *per se*, but rather religion is seen as an indicator of ethnic identity in a political conflict that has adopted a sectarian element (Cairns & Darby, 1998). The most recent outburst of armed conflict, known as The Troubles (1968 – 1998), formally ended with the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. However, the peace process continues to be brittle, as Northern Irish society is fixed in a situation of “no war, no peace” (MacGinty et al., 2007, p. 1).

Today, more than 1.8 million people live in Northern Ireland, of whom 48% are Protestant and 45% are Catholic (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2012). However, the region continues to be fragmented along ethno-political lines (Gillespie, 2010). Identity as Protestant or Catholic remains a key social aspect (Muldoon, Trew, Todd,

Rougier, & McLaughlin, 2007), which encourages everyday events to be observed and interpreted in relation to group membership. These intergroup divisions maintain perceptions of “us” and “them” (McAuley & Ferguson, 2016), which create physical and psychological barriers between the two communities (Taylor & Hanna, 2018).

Enduring intergroup tensions and extensive segregation shape interactions of those growing up as part of a post-accord generation (Cummings, Goeke-Morey, Merrilees, Taylor & Shirlow, 2014) and limit their exposure to alternative viewpoints and interpretations of the conflict (Furey, Donnelly, Hughes, & Blaylock, 2016). For example, more than 90% of children and adolescents in Northern Ireland are taught in segregated schools (Blaylock, Hughes, Wölfer, & Donnelly, 2018). Most youth also live in closely-knit neighborhoods that are almost exclusively Protestant or Catholic (Hughes & Donnelly, 2002); however, this residential segregation tends to occur on a microlevel with ethnically homogenous neighborhoods potentially bordering one another (Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006). In these contexts, young people tend to form friendships with peers from their own community and spend time in segregated social spaces (Connolly, Muldoon, & Kehoe, 2007).

Children and adolescents born after the height of violence continue to be socialized in the legacy of the conflict (Taylor, Dautel, & Rylander, under review). To illustrate this point, 6-year-old children appear to have an awareness of conflict between the two ethno-political groups and can put forward reasons for its causes (Sani, Bennett, Agostini, Malucchi, & Ferguson, 2000). Young people may also have first-hand experience of witnessing and being caught in the middle of episodic outbreaks of political violence (Jarman, 2005). Yet, children and adolescents are not simply helpless victims or bystanders in the conflict. On the contrary, young people can also be perpetrators of violence (Muldoon, 2013). For example, youth may participate in rioting following annual commemorations and marches (McEvoy-Levy, 2006),

which has the potential to foster desires for revenge and retaliation and perpetuate the cycle of violence among the post-accord generation.

Retribution and revenge in Northern Ireland

The development of retaliatory motives and behaviors among children and adolescents may freeze traditional conflict dynamics, which contribute to the maintenance divisions and hostilities between the two communities. Witnessing intergroup conflict may impact young people's perception of stability and security in their own community (Cummings et al., 2010). This lack of security within their environment may facilitate the development of cognitive, emotional and behavioral biases to gain feelings of safety and protection (Cummings, Taylor, Merrilees, Goeke-Morey, & Shirlow, 2016). Children and adolescents may interpret situations as more threatening and give more attention to threat-based stimuli while tending to disregard contraindicating information. For example, children living amid political violence in Belfast were more likely to perceive neutral household items (e.g., milk bottles or parcels) as dangerous (Jahoda & Harrison, 1975). Children and adolescents growing up as part of a post-accord generation may be more likely to make hostile attributions to ambiguous social cues. In this light, young people may interpret the actions of the other community as threatening, which relates to the emergence of aggressive cognitions and behaviors (Taylor et al., 2016). Youth may view engaging in retaliatory acts of violence as a legitimate reaction to threat from the outgroup (Connolly & Healy, 2004).

The desire for revenge and retaliation may be heightened if children and adolescents have direct experience of intergroup conflict. For example, young people may be increasingly likely to engage in aggressive behaviors toward the other community following exposure to political violence (Merrilees et al., 2013). Furthermore, the effect of violence on outgroup-directed aggression may be moderated by intragroup factors, such as children's strength of ingroup identity (Merrilees et al., 2013). That is, young people who highly identify with their

community group may be stirred to defend the group through participating in outgroup-directed aggression after experiencing sectarian antisocial behavior. In a similar manner, these children may engage in behaviors associated with structural violence, whereby finite resources are unevenly distributed to benefit their own group and deprive the opposing group (O'Driscoll et al., 2018), which may be regarded as revenge for the victimization that the ingroup faced during the conflict (Leonard, 2006). Recent research also has found a link between perceived peer norms around intergroup relations and participating sectarian acts against the outgroup in Belfast (McKeown & Taylor, 2018).

The family may also contribute to the socialization of children's intergroup responses. For example, young people's perceptions of the other community tend to be largely commensurate with those of their parents (Stringer et al., 2010). Family processes and dynamics may also shape youth understanding around revenge and retaliation (Taylor et al., 2020b). Children and adolescents may turn to family members amid ongoing political violence to gather information and learn more about intergroup relations between the two communities (Taylor et al., 2019). Taylor and McKeown (2019) found that talking to parents after being directly exposed to political violence bolstered the intergenerational transmission of ethno-political identity markers, values and narratives of collective victimhood. This, ethnic socialization in turn, increased the likelihood of adolescents developing intergroup biases and participating in tit-for-tat acts of aggression against the outgroup (e.g., throwing stones or objects over peace walls or displaying contentious symbols to taunt the other community). At the same time, family cohesion may attenuate the link between experiencing intergroup conflict and engaging in retaliatory acts (Taylor et al., 2016). That is, living in a close-knit and supportive family environment may provide children and adolescents with the cognitive and emotional regulatory skills to cope with conflict-related adversities. The family unit therefore has the potential to either exacerbate or ameliorate intergroup tensions by

filtering the effect of societal factors on children and adolescents (Escuin Checa & Taylor, 2017).

At the societal level, interpreting and dealing with the legacy of the conflict continues to be a key obstacle to the establishment of more peaceful intergroup relations (Noor, James Brown, & Prentice, 2008). Feelings of group victimization may be heightened during annual ceremonies and commemorations (Ferguson & Halliday, 2020). These events provide a one-sided account that emphasize the sacrifice and suffering of ingroup members (Harland, 2011) and depict the rival group as cruel and aggressive (Shirlow, 2003). The construction of a biased narrative of collective victimhood may be used by group members to justify retaliatory actions against the outgroup, including engagement in political violence (Ferguson, Burgess, & Hollywood, 2010). At the same time, the Protestant and Catholic communities have entered into a culture war during the post-accord period (McAuley & Ferguson, 2016), which has cultivated norms of competition to gain superiority and further entrenched intergroup divisions (MacGinty & du Toit, 2007). Toward this end, policy decisions may be viewed as a symbolic threat against the identity of one community and foster desires for retribution and revenge. For example, in 2012, Protestant youth reported engaging in political violence in response to the removal of symbols of their ethnic identity (e.g., flags) from government buildings and the perceived erosion of their culture (Halliday & Ferguson, 2016).

The findings from Northern Ireland are consistent with SIDT. That is, personal and group-based experiences of conflict paired with the transmission of narratives of collective suffering may intensify realistic and symbolic intergroup threat and motivate young people to enact revenge for past harms. For example, children and adolescents may engage in tit-for-tat acts of violence across group lines or withhold resources. Fear of further attacks and socialization processes within the family may also heighten children's strength of ingroup identity, which in turn, may promote desires to defend their collective group and engage in

retaliatory acts toward outgroup members. Revenge and retaliation may be exacerbated by extensive segregation and entrenched intergroup divisions, which cultivate group norms around exclusion and the acceptability of using aggression against the other community.

Vukovar, Croatia

Similar to Northern Ireland, the city of Vukovar in Croatia provides a clear example of how revenge and retaliation may emerge among young people growing up as part of a post-accord generation. During the Croatian War of Independence (1991 – 1995), Vukovar experienced an 87-day siege by Yugoslav military forces and Serbian paramilitary groups. Following the surrender of the defending Croatian army, the city was left almost entirely destroyed, more than 1,500 people had lost their lives, and many Croatian and non-Serb citizens were expelled from the surrounding region (Žunec, 2008). Vukovar was later absorbed into the self-proclaimed Republic of Serbian Krajina and ethnically cleansed of almost all of its non-Serb peoples. The signing of the Erdut Peace Agreement (1995) facilitated the phased and peaceful reintroduction of Vukovar as part of the Republic of Croatia. Although Vukovar no longer experiences active intergroup conflict, ethno-political tensions between Croat and Serb inhabitants remain and the city has experienced limited social reconstruction (Čorkalo Biruški, 2016; Kosic & Tauber, 2010).

The current population of Vukovar is around 27,000 people, of whom a majority (57%) are Croat and a minority (35%) are Serb (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). The city continues to be split between these ethnic identities (Taylor, Merrilees, Čorkalo Biruški, Ajduković, & Cummings, 2017), which serves as a barrier to peacebuilding. Persistent intergroup divisions and a shared lack of trust shape the social interactions of young people born after the peace agreement (Reidy et al., 2015). Children and adolescents are often taught in segregated schools or on separate floors of school buildings using different languages (Ajduković & Čorkalo Biruški, 2008). Youth also tend to form friendships only with peers

from their same ethnic group (Čorkalo Biruški & Ajduković, 2012) and socialize in separate public spaces and venues across the city (Čorkalo et al., 2004). For example, young people may spend time in coffee shops demarcated for either Croats or Serbs (Reidy et al., 2015). Youth growing up in Vukovar may directly experience discrimination on the basis of ethnic group membership. Yet, young people may also engage in discriminatory acts (Ajduković & Čorkalo Biruški, 2008; Reidy et al., 2015), which may sustain intergroup tensions and divisions.

Retribution and revenge in Vukovar, Croatia

Violent altercations between Croat and Serb youth are a rare occurrence in Vukovar (Taylor et al., 2017). Instead, revenge may take the form of discrimination across group lines. Direct exposure to discrimination among children and adolescents may promote desires to engage in similar discriminatory acts (e.g., not helping with tasks or sharing space) against the perceived rival group (Ajduković & Čorkalo Biruški, 2008; Reidy et al., 2015). Young people may also be motivated to use discrimination as retaliation for the collective suffering that their ethnic group experienced during the conflict (Corkalo et al., 2004). Youth may perceive themselves or the collective ingroup as being under threat from the other community, which may foster negative intergroup attitudes, heighten sensitivity to discrimination and increase tendencies to engage in further discriminatory acts in retribution (Štambuk et al., 2020).

The post-accord generation may use collective victimhood to justify engaging in discrimination across group lines. That is, children and adolescents that believe their ethnic group experienced greater suffering in the conflict may not consider discrimination to be an antisocial behavior (Taylor et al., 2020b). Instead, discrimination toward the other community is seen as an acceptable retaliatory response for victims to display (Corkalo et al., 2004). Given the persistent intergroup divisions that exist in the post-accord period, many

young people do not believe that their generation will consolidate peace between the two ethnic groups. The task of improving intergroup relations is therefore delineated to future generations (Jelić, Čorkalo Biruški & Ajduković, 2018).

In addition to perceived individual or collective threat from the other community, the tendencies of Croat and Serb youth to discriminate may be influenced by social norms. For example, adolescents may be more likely to participate in discriminatory acts if those around them (e.g., peers, school and family) promote norms of exclusion and limited intergroup interaction (Pehar, Čorkalo Biruški, & Pavin Ivanec, 2020).

The family may impact the development of revenge and retaliation among both Croat and Serb youth. Many parents do not model constructive intergroup behaviors, which may limit children's observational learning around social integration and cooperation across group lines. Young people may talk to their parents when exposed to novel information relating to the conflict at both proximal (e.g., families and peers) and more distal (e.g., community and media) aspects of the social environment (Reidy et al., 2015). Parents may directly shape their children's outgroup-directed behaviors by passing on their own perceptions of the other community. For example, negative outgroup attitudes among parents have been shown to increase children's tendencies to engage in discrimination against outgroup members (Čorkalo Biruški & Ajduković, 2008).

Families that experienced more conflict-related trauma may also be more likely to shape behavioral responses during childhood and adolescence through greater transmission of markers of ethnic identity and narratives of suffering during the conflict (Štambuk, 2015). This ethnic socialization may directly influence young people's tendencies to discriminate against the outgroup, but it may also do so indirectly, by strengthening their identification with the ingroup (Štambuk et al., 2020). Interestingly, Croat and Serb parents may place different emphasis on the types of suffering experienced during the conflict. For example,

Croat parents often focus on collective victimization within a broader historical context, while their Serb counterparts tend to describe personal accounts of suffering (Taylor et al., 2020b). Serb parents may rely on personal experiences to cultivate a perception of victimhood without highlighting the potential perpetrator role of the ingroup in the conflict. Opposing group narratives and a lack of recognition for the suffering experienced by the outgroup during the conflict may influence and maintain beliefs around competitive collective victimhood by both groups. Parental transfer of competitive beliefs about victimhood may heighten children's perceptions of symbolic threat to the ingroup, which in turn, may promote retaliatory acts of discrimination against the outgroup (Štambuk et al., 2020).

A sense of victimization has been rooted into the identities of both communities (Jelić et al., 2018). A collective memory of victimhood is further reinforced at a societal level by public events, commemorations (e.g., The day of the Fall of Vukovar) and the media (Ajduković & Čorkalo Biruški, 2008; Sekulić, Massey, & Hodson, 2006). Children and adolescents may learn about the conflict from messages transmitted by these socialization agents, which may then be incorporated into their systems of intergroup beliefs and behaviors (Reidy et al., 2015). For example, it is likely that young Croats may utilize information around victimhood to seek revenge by engaging in discrimination across group lines. Yet many Serbs may interpret prevailing societal narratives as biased, as they tend to provide a one-sided account of Croat suffering during the conflict (Taylor et al., 2020b). Serb youth may therefore react against the perceived injustice of a lack of acknowledgement of the adversity that their group faced by engaging in retaliatory behaviors against the outgroup, which has the potential to perpetuate the cycle of conflict across generations. This maintenance of intergroup animosity may limit opportunities for peacebuilding.

The findings from Croatia suggest that within divided societies, children and adolescents may also use discrimination as a vehicle for revenge. In line with SIDT, individual and collective exposure to discrimination may increase a perception of intergroup threat, which may prompt desires for retaliation against the other community. Moreover, group norms of exclusion may heighten youth tendencies to engage in discriminatory acts across group lines. Within the family, ethnic socialization and the transmission of narratives of personal and collective victimization may youth boost perceptions of intergroup threat (i.e., realistic and symbolic) and heighten strength of ingroup identity, which may promote retaliatory motivations for past harms. One-sided interpretations of the conflict at a societal level may either further fuel young people's perceptions of collective victimhood or incite reactions against a perceived lack of recognition around the suffering of their group.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the development of revenge and retaliation among youth growing up in three conflict-affected societies: Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland and Croatia. SIDT highlights the importance of considering the influence of the social environment on young people's patterns of behaviors across group lines. Cross-cutting analysis that integrates learnings from the three cases suggests that exposure to intergroup conflict, group norms as well as familial and societal processes may affect desires for revenge among the younger generation. Yet, there is variation in intensities of revenge and retaliatory behaviors, ranging from withholding resources to engaging in discrimination to participating in acts of political violence against the other community. Thus, meaningful variations, both within and across contexts, such as the stage of the cycle of conflict and youth's level of exposure to violence, may be useful for expansion of theory and practice.

Exposure to intergroup conflict may generate a heightened sensitivity to threat and more aggressive patterns of cognitions and behaviors (Cummings et al., 2016). Aggression

may also be viewed as an acceptable way of dealing with problems (Huesmann et al., 2017). Exposure to political violence may amplify a perception of individual and collective threat from the other community, which may motivate young people engage in tit-for-tat acts of aggression in response (Dubow et al., 2019). Social groups can provide children and adolescents with a sense of safety, security and belongingness within a conflict-ridden environment, which may increase ingroup identification and foster stronger ties with group members (Taylor et al., 2011). Yet the strength of youths' ingroup identity may increase their motivation to maintain, defend or enhance the status of their own group by engaging in retaliatory acts for past harms (Merrilees et al., 2013). Behaviors associated with ethnic preference, such as withholding resources to benefit one's own group, may also not be benign amid intergroup conflict (O'Driscoll et al., 2018; Shamo-Nir et al., under review). That is, these behaviors may be used as revenge for previous victimization and even provoke further acts of retaliation from the other community.

The entrenched intergroup divisions and segregation that permeate almost every aspect of day-to-day life in conflict-affected societies may create exclusionary or aggressive group norms toward the other community (Merrilees et al., 2018). Young people may be increasingly likely to retaliate if these norms are endorsed by ingroup members, such as peers (Pehar et al., 2020). In turn, the family also may engage in ethnic socialization and transmit narratives of personal and collective victimhood. These family processes may heighten young people's identification with their ingroup and perceptions of intergroup threat (real and symbolic). Youth may feel like victims of the outgroup's actions, which in turn, may foster retaliatory motives and behaviors (Štambuk et al., 2020; Taylor & McKeown, 2019; Taylor et al., 2020b). At a societal level, public events, commemorations and the media may present a one-sided interpretation of the conflict. Some youth may be motivated to seek revenge for atrocities committed against the ingroup. However, others may retaliate for a perceived

erosion of their identity and cultural practices or a lack of acknowledgement for the suffering that their group faced during the conflict (Halliday & Ferguson, 2016). Thus, in keeping with SIDT, the findings from multiple settings of intergroup conflict broadly indicate that a perception of intergroup threat, strength of ingroup identity and norms of exclusion or aggression may promote intergroup revenge and retaliation.

We argue that at the group level, young people's involvement in retaliatory acts can perpetuate the cycle of violence across generations (de Rivera, 2003; Jarman & O'Halloran, 2001; Taylor et al., 2016). Revenge may contribute to the freezing of traditional conflict dynamics and provide little scope for the thawing of intergroup tensions (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2009; Taylor et al., 2014). That is, youth may perceive intergroup relations as hostile in response to observing and participating in tit-for-tat acts of violence or discrimination. These children and adolescents may continue to view the other community as the enemy in the absence of any alternative information. Yet peacebuilding initiatives have the potential to modify young people's understanding of their social environment, so that members of the opposing group can be seen as equal partners in creating a shared future.

It is essential for practitioners to develop interventions that inhibit youth engagement in acts of revenge and retaliation. However, there is a need for interventions to be grounded in theory (e.g., SIDT), and future research should explore the effectiveness of these approaches to develop a broader evidence base or highlight areas of best practice across conflict-affected societies. In particular, interventions focusing on fostering constructive youth outcomes, such as prosocial behaviors (O'Driscoll, 2020; Taylor et al., 2014), can be an antecedent of peacebuilding when directed toward the other community (Taylor & McKeown, 2017). Child and adolescent participation in prosocial behaviors across group lines may provide a basis for greater co-operation with the opposing group (Kellman, 2008). Rather than perpetuating the cycle of violence, sharing in collaborative outgroup-directed

behaviors may contribute to the consolidation of more peaceful intergroup relations and facilitate social reconstruction (Lederach, 1997; McEvoy-Levy, 2006).

SIDT also posits that empathy can buffer the development of negative outgroup attitudes and behaviours (Nesdale, Griffiths, Durkin, & Maass, 2005), including aggression (Nesdale et al., 2009). Empathy may reduce perceptions of threat and counteract emerging intergroup divisions within conflict settings. In Northern Ireland, children and adolescents with higher levels of dispositional empathy tended to display more positive attitudes toward the other community, which in turn, fostered more constructive behaviours across group lines (Taylor, O'Driscoll, Dautel, & McKeown, 2020a). Similarly, feeling empathy for outgroup members are related to children holding more positive perceptions of the other community and engaging in outgroup-directed helping (O'Driscoll, Taylor, & Dautel, 2020). That is, empathy may sensitize young people to the welfare of members of the opposing group, which may generalize to more positive attitudes toward the collective outgroup as a whole and trigger a motivation to exhibit prosocial behaviors (Batson, Chang, Orr, & Rowland, 2002; Taylor et al., 2020a).

These findings suggest that interventions fostering dispositional and outgroup-directed empathy have the potential to reduce revenge and retaliation among youth. While recognizing the challenges posed in mutual recognition it may be particularly beneficial to consider approaches related to collective victimhood (Vollhardt, 2020). Rhetorical strategies toward shared suffering during the conflict (McNeill & Vollhardt, 2020), may enable young people to have more inclusive victim identities, which in turn, may cultivate greater empathy and prosociality toward the outgroup (Taylor & Hanna, 2018). Yet, practitioners should be mindful that empathy may also have a 'dark side.' For example, experiencing outgroup-directed empathy can create a perception of the other community as weak or disadvantaged (Batson & Ahmad, 2009), which could give rise to the development of status differences and

feelings of disempowerment (Schnabel & Nadler, 2008). In an even more serious example, empathy-based interventions may provide children and adolescents with the skills to better understand the thoughts and feelings of outgroup members, which could then be used to identify vulnerable areas to exploit when seeking revenge for past harms.

In keeping with SIDT, young people's strength of ingroup identity may propagate desires to engage in retaliatory acts toward the opposing group. However, amid intergroup conflict, identity may also provide a lens for children and adolescents to understand conflict-related events (Punamäki, 1996), and serve as a protective factor against the onset of negative psychosocial outcomes (e.g., emotional difficulties; Merrilees et al., 2014). Given the polarized and entrenched nature of conflict-affected societies, group membership tends to be a key social aspect which influences day-to-day interactions (Muldoon et al., 2007). Young people, therefore, may be reluctant to give up their ingroup identity and adopt a shared identity that is not fully perceived as inclusive (McKeown, 2014). It may be more useful for interventions to work with already existing identities, but in opposition to violence. That is, peacebuilding initiatives could emphasize mutual respect, reconciliation and inclusion to encourage youth to display more constructive behaviors across group lines (Tropp, O'Brien, & Migacheva, 2014).

Consistent with SIDT, contact interventions that aim to challenge the influence of group norms around exclusion or aggression may be effective in reducing revenge and retaliation in conflict-affected societies. For example, norms of exclusion may prevent youth participation in contact interventions due to a fear of receiving backlash from members of their own group (e.g., Hughes, Blaylock, & Donnelly, 2015). That is, group norms may limit opportunities for young people to experience positive exchanges with the other community, which have the potential to reduce anger for past harms and promote forgiveness (Tam et al., 2008). In Northern Ireland, adolescents that perceived peers as disapproving of an

engagement in positive intergroup interactions tended to have worse quality interactions with outgroup members, which in turn predicted engagement in violent behaviors across group lines (McKeown & Taylor, 2018). It may be therefore be beneficial for community leaders to take part in or publicly approve of peacebuilding interventions to generate a perception of ingroup acceptance. Moreover, a sense of ingroup approval may begin to create norms around inclusion and peace.

A number of school- (Chaux, Velasquez, & Bustamante, this volume) and community-based (Guerra, this volume) interventions may be used to minimize young people's retaliatory motives and behaviours, including restorative justice (Gonzales, this volume). In contexts of intergroup conflict, however, it may also be important to consider the influence of the family on the development of revenge and retaliation (e.g., Taylor et al., 2020b). Interventions that address the transmission of ethnic socialization and narratives of collective victimhood may be particularly valuable in breaking of cycle of violence across generations.

The chapter makes a unique and valuable contribution to the literature by providing insight into revenge and retaliation among children and adolescents living amid protracted intergroup conflict using empirical examples from Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland and Croatia. Understanding the social ecological influences that contribute to the development of youth retaliatory motives and actions across group lines may facilitate the creation of tailored peacebuilding interventions to inhibit revenge and promote constructive patterns of engagement within conflict-affected societies.

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