Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology
2012, Vol. 18, No. 1, 21–39

1078-1919/12/$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/a0026671

Attributions of Responsibility and Perceived Harm in the Aftermath of Mass Violence

Rezarta Bilali
University of Massachusetts Boston

Linda R. Tropp and Nilanjana Dasgupta
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Two studies shed light on construals (i.e., attributions of responsibility and perceived severity of harm) of extreme intergroup violence and the relationship between in-group identification and these construals. An investigation of Turkish construals of Armenian massacres at the beginning of the 20th century (Study 1) and Hutus' and Tutsis' construals of the ethnic conflict in Burundi (Study 2) showed that each group attributed less responsibility to the in-group relative to the out-group and third parties. Furthermore, respondents attributed less responsibility to the in-group for the instigation of the conflict than for the consequences of the conflict and viewed respective out-groups and third parties as the instigators of the violent conflict. Stronger Turkish identification was related to (a) attributing more out-group responsibility but less in-group responsibility, and (b) greater perceptions of harm inflicted on the in-group and less harm inflicted on the out-group and third parties. Stronger in-group identification among Hutus and Tutsis also predicted more out-group responsibility for the conflict.

Keywords: attributions of responsibility, in-group identification, mass violence, conflict, Burundi, Turkey

In the aftermath of mass violence, societies face important decisions regarding how to address their violent past. Perceptions of past conflict and violence have an important role in maintaining and exacerbating intergroup conflicts (e.g., Asmal, Asmal, & Roberts, 1996; Devine-Wright, 2003). Each side in a conflict has a different construal of the origins and development of the conflict, which in turn influence group members' current perceptions of the conflict and prospects for its resolution. Consequently, understanding how groups construe the conflictual past is important for understanding the dynamics of an intergroup conflict, and promises to shed light on conditions that may promote deescalation and perhaps even resolution.

REZARTA BILALI has a PhD in Social Psychology with a concentration in the Psychology of Peace and Violence from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Conflict Resolution, Human Security and Global Governance at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Her research focuses on issues of identity, historical memory, and intergroup images in contexts of violent conflict.

LINDA R. TROPP received her PhD in Social Psychology from University of California, Santa Cruz. She is Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of the Psychology of Peace and Violence Program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her research concerns how members of different groups approach and experience contact with each other, and how group differences in power or status affect views of and expectations for cross-group relations.

NILANJANA DASGUPTA received her PhD in Social Psychology from Yale University. She is currently an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Her research focuses on implicit prejudice, stereotyping, and the self-concept, with emphasis on the ways in which societal stereotypes subtly influence people's attitudes and behavior toward others and - in the case of disadvantaged groups - also influence group members' self-concept and life decisions.

THIS RESEARCH WAS SUPPORTED by a Harry Frank Guggenheim dissertation fellowship and grants from the International Peace Research Association Foundation and the Society for Psychological Study of Social Issues to the first author.

CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING THIS ARTICLE should be addressed to Rezarta Bilali, Department of Conflict Resolution, Human Security, and Global Governance, University of Massachusetts Boston, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Wheatley Hall, 4th floor, Boston, MA 02125. E-mail: rezarta.bilali@umb.edu

In recent years, numerous studies (e.g., Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Cehajic, Brown, & González, 2009; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998) have examined people's reactions toward descriptions of in-groups' past harmdoing. This research suggests that group members use various strategies—fabrication or denial of events, minimizing harm, blaming the enemy, blaming the circumstances—to distort violence perpetrated by their group (e.g., Bandura, 1999; Baumeister & Hastings, 1997). Taken together, these strategies vary along two dimensions: attributions of responsibility for the harm inflicted and perceived severity of harm. For example, people often minimize the severity of the harm inflicted (Branscombe & Miron, 2004), blame or make situational attributions (rather than in-group attributions) to explain the negative actions (Doosje & Branscombe, 2003), or place responsibility for the harm done on the victims (Herbert & Dunkel-Schetter, 1992). In the present research, we examine construals of violent conflict along these two dimensions. We use two contexts of severe intergroup conflicts and mass violence (i.e., the massacres of Armenians by Turks at the beginning of 20th century and the ethnic conflict in Burundi) to examine (1) the attributions that group members make for past violence, (2) the harm perceived to be perpetrated versus suffered by their own group, and (3) how varying degrees of in-group identification correspond with construals of the conflict in contexts of mass violence. We will elaborate on each of these points below.

Attributions of Responsibility

The study of attributions of responsibility at the intergroup level has primarily focused on the ultimate attribution error (Pettigrew, 1979), which suggests that group members make situational attributions for negative acts carried out by an in-group member, but they make dispositional attributions if these negative acts are carried out by an out-group member (e.g., Duncan, 1976; Hewstone & Ward, 1985; Rosenberg & Wolfsfeld, 1977; Stephan, 1977). In these studies (for a review see Hewstone, 1990), an in-group or out-group member is generally depicted as responsible for a negative or a positive behavior. Thus, the emphasis is on evaluating the individual who carried out the negative behavior. With few exceptions (e.g., Doosje & Branscombe, 2003; Doosje, Zebel, Scheermeijer, & Mathyi, 2007), studies in this area have examined attributions for a specific behavior of a specific member of the in-group or out-group, rather than assess how people assign responsibilities in an intergroup conflict. We extend the previous literature by identifying and examining two aspects of attributions of responsibility in contexts of intergroup conflict: targets of responsibility and types of responsibility.

Targets of Responsibility

Drawing from the mechanisms identified by Baumeister and Hastings (1997), three targets of responsibility can be readily identified: the in-group, the out-group, and the external factors (e.g., third parties). It is generally acknowledged that each group blames the other for the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007). Whereas the in-group and the out-group have been the focus of prior research in intergroup conflict, attributions of responsibility to third parties (i.e., foreign governments or groups) have received no attention (for an exception see Licata, Klein, Saade, Azzi, & Branscombe, 2011). Third parties play important roles in domestic, ethnic, and international conflicts. Often, they take on positive roles as mediators (for a review see Wall, Stark, & Standifer, 2001), peacekeepers, and peacemakers (Balch-Lindsay & Enterline, 2000; Fisher, 2001; Regan, 2002). However, sometimes they side with one party in conflict (Licata et al., 2011), support one side's violent acts, or even participate in atrocities. For instance, the Rwandan government has accused France for playing an active role in supporting the extremist Hutus in planning and carrying out the genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994 (Kinzer, 2008).

In the current research, we will move beyond the in-group versus out-group paradigm in studying intergroup conflict by assessing attributions of responsibility to third parties. Third-party attributions might serve specific functions for groups and have different implications depending on the nature of third-parties' involvement in the conflict. For instance, if external parties have supported one's adversary or helped foment the conflict, then blaming external parties might serve as a strategy to deny the in-group's responsibility by externalizing

blame. In this case, group members would make fewer in-group attributions, but more out-group and third-party attributions for the conflict. However, blaming external parties might also make salient superordinate identities (see Licata et al., 2011), thus reducing the perceived conflict between the in-group and the out-group.

Types of Responsibility: Instigation Versus Consequences

Intractable intergroup conflicts are generally characterized by cycles of violence in which each group harms the other at different times during the course of the conflict. Threat, fear, and delegitimization of the other in a violent conflict increase perceptions of the adversary as extremely threatening (Bar-Tal, 2007). Groups sometimes engage in defensive violence or preemptive strikes to protect themselves from the out-group (Staub, 1998). These violent actions by the in-group might be perceived merely as a response to the out-group's provocation (Bandura, 1990; Staub, 1989). As a result, each group views their violent actions as legitimate while blaming the other group for provoking the violence. Indeed, research on interpersonal conflict (Brown & Tedeschi, 1976; Kane, Joseph, & Tedeschi, 1976) and intergroup conflict (Dodge & Coie, 1987; Wohl & Reeder, 2004) has demonstrated that a person or a group that is provoked considers retaliation in response to provocation (imagined or real) justifiable. Based on this, we propose a distinction between two types of responsibility in intergroup conflict contexts: assigning responsibility for the instigation versus assigning responsibility for the consequences of conflict. The first refers to responsibility for starting or provoking the events, whereas the latter refers to responsibility for carrying out the harmdoing in the course of the conflict, thus inflicting harm and suffering. Even if the in-group is viewed as responsible for committing violent acts and inflicting harm, in-group's harmdoing could be perceived as justifiable by reducing in-group's responsibility for the instigation of the conflict. Responsibility attributions for the consequences of conflict are limited by social reality constraints; it is difficult to dismiss the harm committed in a context of mass violence. However, identity-serving attributions are more feasible for the instigation of conflict. Therefore, group members will be especially likely to reduce in-group's responsibility for the instigation of conflict. Based on this, we expect group members to perceive the in-group as less responsible for instigating a conflict than for its consequences, while perceiving the out-group and external third parties as the instigators of conflict.

Severity of Harm

In-group suffering and victimization are central to group members' beliefs about conflicts in which their groups are involved (Bar-Tal, 2007). Each group in a conflict typically portrays itself as the victim and focuses on its own suffering (Nadler & Saguy, 2004; Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008). Portraying oneself as a victim might serve to legitimize current negative actions against out-group members (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008) as well as to establish the in-group's morality and legitimacy. At the individual level, group members believe the in-group to have suffered more than the out-group—a phenomenon referred to as competitive victimhood (Noor et al., 2008). At the societal level, groups attempt to diminish the harm done by their in-group by inaccurately counting the number of war victims (Pratto & Glasford, 2008), or by exclusively focusing on the suffering experienced by the in-group while downplaying the suffering experienced by the out-group (Fishman & Marvin, 2003). Judgments of responsibility are dependent on the assessment of harm inflicted by the in-group and the out-group. If group members believe that they are the victims in the conflict, then there is no psychological basis for acknowledging responsibility for the conflict.

Expressions of competitive victimhood by both parties in conflict are prevalent in symmetrical conflicts in which each group has inflicted considerable harm on the other. How do group members perceive harm in asymmetrical conflicts in which one group is the main perpetrator? Do perpetrator groups that have carried out acts of mass violence claim victimhood? Although group members would be motivated to see the in-group as the primary victim and minimize in-group's harmdoing, social reality constraints in contexts of mass violence limit the degree to which such distortions are possible. To investigate these issues, in the present re-

search we investigated the extent to which group members believe each group has suffered (i.e., the severity of harm perceived to be inflicted on the in-group and on the out-group).

How Does In-Group Identification Relate to Construals of Intergroup Violence?

Group members' memory of past events is frequently distorted in ways that portray the in-group positively (Baumeister & Hastings, 1997). Social identity theory maintains that group members strive to maintain a positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and therefore make in-group-serving attributions in recalling the group's past (Doosje & Branscombe, 2003). In addition, individuals who identify more strongly with their group are more motivated to maintain a positive image of their group, which in turn should lead to the endorsement of more in-group favorable construals of the conflict (Sahdra & Ross, 2007). At the same time, research on intractable conflicts (see Bar-Tal, 2000, 2003) and intergroup threat (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2004; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006; Rothgerber, 1997) suggests that the predictive value of individual differences is likely to diminish when threat to the in-group is high (e.g., under conditions of ongoing violence). The strength of the situation moderates the effect of the individual differences on behavior such that this effect is weaker for strong situations (Mischel, 1977). Thus, group members may exhibit similar construals of an intergroup conflict (regardless of individual differences in in-group identification) under conditions of extreme violence. The strength of in-group identification might be an important predictor of construals of past conflict only in contexts where violence has diminished. One aim of the current study was to explore the relationship between in-group identification and construals of conflict in contexts of a historical (Turkish-Armenian conflict) and a more recent conflict (ethnic conflict in Burundi) characterized by severe violence between groups. We expected a stronger relationship between in-group identification and construals of violence in a historical context of conflict, but a weaker or no relationship between in-group identification and construals of violence in a recent conflict characterized by severe violence.

Overview of the Present Research

The present research examined two main dimensions along which construals of intergroup conflict vary: attributions of responsibility and perceived severity of harm. The current research contributes to the intergroup conflict literature in important ways: First, we moved beyond in-group versus out-group distinctions by exploring the perceived role (i.e., responsibility) of third parties in the violent conflict. Second, we identified and made predictions about two types of responsibility in contexts of intergroup conflict: responsibility for instigation versus responsibility for consequences of conflict. Lastly, we replicated previous research on the relation between strength of in-group identification and construals of intergroup conflict in contexts of historical and recent mass violence. We also explored perceptions of severity of harm in contexts of mass violence.

Study 1 investigated Turks' construals of Turkish-Armenian mass violence at the beginning of the 20th century. Armenians refer to the massacres during this period, particularly in 1915, as the first genocide of the century, while Turks refer to the same event as intercommunal warfare (Lewy, 2005, p. ix). Disputes between Turks and Armenians about whether the massacres of Armenians in 1915 amount to genocide still continue. Study 2 extended Study 1 in the context of ethnic conflict in Burundi by comparing both Hutus' and Tutsis' interpretations of their past conflict. Extreme forms of violence between Hutus and Tutsis characterize the conflict in Burundi since the early 1960s, and the conflict is ongoing. Hutus have been the main target of violence during the conflict; however since 1993, the violence has been mutual with massacres carried out by both sides. It was only recently, in March 2009 (after the data collection for this study had ended), that the major Hutu rebel movement (FNL, Forces Nationales de Liberation) started to demobilize combatants. An important commonality of these two contexts is the presence of genocidal violence: against the Armenians of Ottoman Turkey in 1915, and against Hutus in Burundi in 1972.

Study 1

In this study, we investigated Turks' construals of events related to mass killings of Armenians. Between the 1880s and 1920s there were

several massacres of Armenians culminating in the mass killing and deportation of Armenians in 1915. Scholars of Armenian origin (e.g., Dadrian, 2003) and most international sources (e.g., Melson, 1992; Nazer, 1968) claim that more than a million Armenians perished as a result of direct and unprovoked massacres by the Turkish military or during deportations, which intended to exterminate Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. According to the Turkish official narrative, it was the Armenians who had carried out massacres toward Turks, and consequently, the decision of the Young Turk regime to deport Armenians was a necessary measure taken to protect the Ottoman territories and the people of Anatolia (Jorgensen, 2003; see also Uras, 1988, for the Turkish arguments to the "Armenian Question"). According to the Turkish narrative, third parties, particularly Britain and Russia, encouraged Armenians to rebel against the Ottoman Empire and fight on the side of the enemy—Russia—by promising them an independent state (Ulgen, 2010).

Summary of Predictions

Attributions of responsibility. We predicted that Turkish respondents would perceive the in-group (Turks) as less responsible for the violence as compared to the out-group (Armenians) and to third parties (H1).

Turks would also perceive the in-group as less responsible for the instigation of the conflict than for the consequences of the conflict (H2a), and they would perceive the in-group as less responsible than the out-group and the third parties for the instigation of the conflict (H2b).

Severity of harm. We explored Turks' perceptions of severity of harm inflicted on Turks and on Armenians. Considering the mass violence inflicted on Armenians by Ottoman Turks, we expected that Turkish respondents would perceive more harm inflicted on the out-group than on the in-group. However, we also expected Turkish respondents to report considerable harm inflicted on the in-group.

The role of in-group identification. Drawing from research on social identity theory, we postulated that stronger Turkish identification should be associated with attributing more responsibility to the out-group (Armenians) and to third parties, and by comparison, less responsibility to the in-group (Turks) for the violence (H3a). In addition, stronger Turkish identification should be associated with more harm perceived to be inflicted by the out-group on the in-group, and less harm inflicted by the in-group on the out-group (H3b).

Participants

Participants were 113 Turkish students (42 females, 50 males, 21 participants did not report their gender). All participants were Turkish citizens and recruited from the Turkish foreign student population at various universities in the United States. Participants were contacted via email lists of Turkish foreign student associations. Participants' ages ranged from 22 to 49 years old ($M = 29.38$, $SD = 4.93$). All respondents had lived most of their lives in Turkey, but recent years in the U.S. (years lived in the United States: $M = 5.23$, $SD = 5.02$).

Measures and Procedures

All participants completed a survey instrument online. The study was introduced as a survey research conducted by the University of Massachusetts to investigate people's opinions about historical intergroup conflict and violence. Specifically, the aim was to learn their perspectives of a violent event in their group's history: the Turkish-Armenian conflict and violence at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. We intentionally did not mention the word genocide as we were interested in Turks' construals of the events, rather than their reactions to genocide charges against Turkey.

First, participants completed items assessing the strength of Turkish identification. Then, participants were asked to write down a description of the Turkish-Armenian conflict in the period between the 1880s and 1920s. The purpose was to make participants reflect on this period of history prior to responding to subsequent close-ended items. Afterward, a series of close-ended questions assessed attributions of responsibility and perceived severity of harm. Two independent translators translated the survey into Turkish and disagreements in wording were resolved by discussions among the researchers and the translators.

Attribution of responsibility. Two items assessed attributions of responsibility for each

of three target groups: (1) Turks, (2) Armenians, and (3) third parties (e.g., foreign countries). Although the items did not identify specific third parties, in open-ended descriptions of the conflict, in line with the Turkish narrative, participants referred to third parties as the imperialist powers, Britain, Russia, or European countries.

The items assessed the amount of responsibility participants attributed to each target group for *instigating* the violent events (1 item), and for the *consequences* of the events (i.e., damage and suffering caused) (1 item). This section started with a lead question: "How much responsibility does each of the following groups have for inciting the events and for their negative consequences?" Participants responded on 7-point scales (0 = *no responsibility*; 6 = *complete responsibility*).

Severity of harm. Two items asked participants to estimate the extent of economic harm and the total harm that each group experienced during the period between 1880s–1920s (7-point scales: 0 = *no negative consequences*; 6 = *severe negative consequences*). The two in-group harm items ($\alpha = .70$) and the two out-group harm items ($\alpha = .77$) were averaged to form measures of in-group harm and out-group harm.

In-group identification. The strength of Turkish identification was assessed by five items ($\alpha = .93$) adapted from prior research on social identity (e.g., Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Jackson, 2002; Leach et al., 2008; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The items included: (1) Being Turkish is an important part of how I see myself, (2) I am glad to be a Turk, (3) The fact that I am Turkish is an important part of my identity, (4) Being Turkish gives me good feelings, and (5) Being Turkish is an important part of my self-image. Each statement was scored on a six point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 6 = *strongly agree*).

Results

How do Turks Construe the Violence?

Attributions of responsibility. The correlations among attributions of responsibility measures are shown in Table 1: the more responsibility respondents assigned to the out-group and third parties, the less responsibility they assigned to the in-group. Additionally, the amounts of responsibility for the instigation and for the consequences of conflict were positively related for each target group.

To assess Turks' attributions of responsibility, a 3 (Target of attribution: in-group vs. out-group vs. third parties) × 2 (Type of attribution: instigation vs. consequences) repeated measures ANOVA was conducted with target of attribution and type of attribution as within-subject predictors. The dependent variable was the amount of responsibility.

As predicted (H1), the results yielded a significant main effect of target of attribution, $F(2, 216) = 23.26$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$, such that Turks attributed less responsibility to their in-group ($M = 2.86$, $SE = .15$) than to the out-group ($M = 3.95$, $SE = .15$) and to third parties ($M = 4.26$, $SE = .15$) ($ps < .001$). There was no difference between the amount of responsibility attributed to the out-group and to the third parties ($p = .12$).

Table 1
Correlations Among Attributions of Responsibility Measures for Study 1 and Study 2

	Study 1						Study 2					
Amount of responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. In-group instigation	—	.64***	−.43***	−.27**	−.34***	−.17+	—	.34*	.42**	.25+	−.07	−.02
2. In-group consequence		—	−.26**	−.24*	−.24*	−.29**	.52***	—	.36*	.68***	.14	−.02
3. Out-group instigation			—	.75***	.44***	.29**	.44***	.30*	—	.53***	.13	.01
4. Out-group consequence				—	.38***	.48***	.37**	.54***	.59***	—	.07	.07
5. Third-party instigation					—	.70***	.15	.09	.05	−.04	—	.38**
6. Third-party consequence						—	.30*	.02	.20	.21	.41**	—

Note. In Study 2, the correlations among attributions of responsibility for Hutu respondents are shown above the diagonal, whereas the correlations for Tutsi respondents are shown below the diagonal.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The analysis also yielded a significant Target of attribution × Type of responsibility interaction, $F(2, 216) = 55.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .34$ (see Figure 1). To clarify the interaction effect, pairwise t tests were conducted to compare the amount of responsibility for the instigation versus the negative consequences of the events for each target group separately. As expected (H2a), Turks perceived the in-group as less responsible for instigating the events ($M = 2.23$, $SE = .16$) than for its negative consequences ($M = 3.50$, $SE = .16$), $t(109) = -9.17$, $p < .001$. By contrast, the out-group and the third parties were perceived to be more responsible for the instigation ($M = 4.17$, $SE = .15$ and $M = 4.48$, $SE = .15$, respectively) than for the consequences of the conflict and violence ($M = 3.73$, $SE = .18$), $t(110) = 3.65$, $p < .001$, for the out-group target, and ($M = 4.05$, $SE = .17$), $t(109) = 3.40$, $p = .001$, third parties.

To assess whether the in-group was perceived as less responsible for the instigation of conflict than the out-group and the third parties (H2b), univariate ANOVAs were conducted to compare the perceived differences in attributions of responsibility separately for the instigation and the consequences of conflict. Supporting H2b, results yielded significant differences for instigation of events such that participants perceived in-group's responsibility as lower than out-group's responsibility or the third parties' responsibility, $F(2, 216) = 58{,}57$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .35$. However, there were no differences in amount of responsibility attributed to each target for the consequences of events, $F(2, 216) = 2.58$, $p > .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Overall, Turkish respondents' views were that Turks relative to other parties held less responsibility for starting the violence, but all parties in conflict held equal responsibility for inflicting harm.

Severity of harm. To assess Turks' perceptions of severity of harm, paired samples t tests were conducted with amount of harm inflicted on each group as the dependent variable. Participants perceived the harm inflicted on the out-group ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.29$) to be more severe than the harm inflicted on the in-group ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.30$), $t(93) = -2.86$, $p = .005$.

How Does In-Group Identification Influence Turks' Construals of Violence?

Attributions of responsibility. We performed a general linear model (GLM) with in-group identification as the continuous predictor. In-group, out-group, and third-party attributions for instigation and consequences of the violence served as multiple dependent variables. The multivariate effect (Pillais) of in-group identification on attributions of responsibility was significant, $F(6, 102) = 13.31$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .44$. As predicted (H3a), stronger Turkish identification was associated with attributing less responsibility to the in-group (Turks) both for the instigation $F(1, 107) = 40.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .27$, and the consequences of violent conflict, $F(1, 107) = 31.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$. The strength of Turkish identification also predicted more responsibility attributed to the out-group (Armenians) for the instigation, $F(1,$

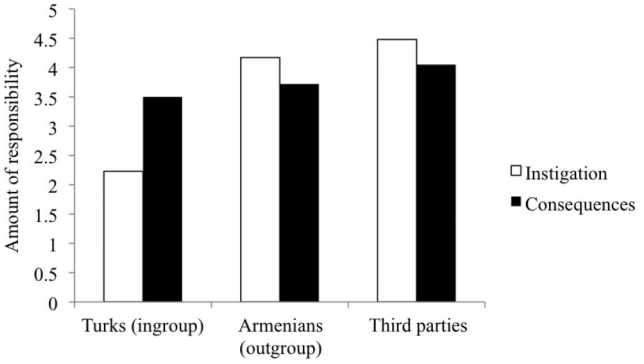

Figure 1. Attribution of responsibility as a function of Target Group (in-group vs. out-group vs. Third parties) and Type of Responsibility (instigation vs. consequences) (Study 1).

107) = 36.12, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .25$ and the consequences of conflict, $F(1, 107) = 14.43$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$, as well as more responsibility attributed to the third parties, $F(1, 107) = 22.87$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$, and $F(1, 107) = 11.42$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, respectively, for the instigation and consequences of conflict.

Severity of harm. Similar to the analyses above, a GLM was conducted with in-group identification as a continuous predictor of the two measures of severity of harm (i.e., in-group and out-group harm). As expected (H3b), the multivariate effect of in-group identification was significant for the amount of harm inflicted, $F(2, 90) = 7.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$. Participants who identified more strongly with their in-group reported more in-group harm, $F(1, 91) = 5.53$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, but less out-group harm, $F(1, 91) = 6.08$, $p = .015$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$.

Discussion

The results of Study 1 indicated that Turks believed all groups (in-group, out-group, and third parties) to be responsible for the violence, and both groups (i.e., Armenians and Turks) to have suffered substantially. However, Turkish respondents attributed less responsibility to the in-group compared to the out-group and to third parties. These results are particularly notable considering the magnitude of the conflict, as Turkey is accused of committing genocide toward Armenians (Lewy, 2005). As expected, Turks attributed less responsibility to the in-group for instigating the violent events than for their consequences, whereas the Armenian out-group and the third parties were viewed as more responsible for the instigation of the events than for its consequences. Although Turks acknowledged some responsibility for the consequences of their in-group's violent acts, they perceived these acts to be provoked by the out-group and the third parties, thus justifying in-group harm-doing and reducing in-group's blame.

Turkish respondents perceived more harm to be inflicted on Armenians than on the in-group. While Turks believed that Armenians suffered considerably, they also perceived the in-group to have been harmed considerably. Perpetrator groups might gain legitimacy by claiming some harm inflicted on the in-group. The perceived provocation by the out-group in combination with some perceived harm inflicted on the in-group might serve to legitimize in-group's violence as a retaliatory act or a self-protection effort.

The findings also demonstrated that an individual level factor—in-group identification—was an important predictor of these construals. Overall, as predicted, stronger in-group identification was associated with more in-group favoritism both in attributions of responsibility and perceived severity of harm. These findings are in line with previous research suggesting that individual level differences in group members' attachment to their in-group have an important influence on their representations of the in-group's past.

Study 2

While the first study examined construals of events that occurred about one century ago, which are predominantly influenced by government-endorsed narratives in historical texts, Study 2 examined construals of a violent conflict that has occurred during participants' lifetime and compared both groups' (Hutus and Tutsis) perspectives of the violent intergroup conflict.

The Context of the Conflict in Burundi

Burundi, a small country in eastern Africa with a population of six million, gained its independence from colonial Belgium in 1962. Since its independence, Burundi has had a turbulent history of violent ethnic conflict. The most cited statistics for Burundi's ethnic composition are 85% Hutus, 14% Tutsis and 1% Twas (Lemarchand, 1994). The inhabitants of Burundi are referred to as Barundi (plural) and as Murundi (singular). The Belgian colonial power and Catholic missionaries in Burundi (and Rwanda) viewed Tutsis as superior to Hutus and used racial ideologies to make changes in political, social, and cultural institutions, thus limiting access to power and wealth only to Tutsis (Makoba & Ndura, 2006; Mamdani, 2001). The Tutsi minority has been mainly in control since the colonial period, whereas Hutus have been systematically excluded from all positions of power and responsibility (Lemarchand, 1994, p. xiv). Burundi has been the scene of violent conflict, including large-scale mass

killings mostly by the Tutsi gendarmerie toward Hutus in 1965, 1972, 1988, and 1991 (Daley, 2006; Lemarchand, 1994; Turner, 2005; Wolpe et al., 2004). In 1993, a civil war began with the assassination of Melchior Ndadaye, the first democratically elected Hutu president. This event led to revenge-oriented mass violence by Hutus on Tutsis, and also by the Tutsi military on Hutu communities (Lemarchand, 1994). After 1993, Burundi was involved in a series of ethnic massacres (Makoba & Ndura, 2006). The ethnic strife in Burundi cannot be thought as separate from that in Rwanda. The situation in Rwanda, where the Hutu majority had targeted the Tutsi minority for several decades culminating in the genocide of 1994, was dreaded by Tutsis in Burundi, who viewed the loss of power in the military as a precursor to their own extermination.

The extent of victimization in Burundi has been enormous. Since the start of a civil war in 1993, it is estimated that about 300,000 people were killed; 800,000 were forced to flee the country; and about 700,000 were internally displaced (Daley, 2006; Wolpe et al., 2004). Burundi has been going through a political transition since the start of the Arusha Accords in 1998. An internationally brokered power-sharing agreement between the Tutsi dominated government and Hutu rebels in 2003 led to democratic elections in 2005 in which Hutus and Tutsis held respectively 60% and 40% of the posts in the government and national assembly (Lemarchand, 2006).

Summary of Predictions

Attributions of responsibility. Similar to Study 1, we expected that both groups (i.e., Hutu and Tutsi respondents) would attribute less responsibility for the violent conflict to their in-group and more responsibility to the out-group and to third parties (in the context of the historical conflict in Burundi, the main third party in the conflict narrative is Belgium, the colonial power) (H1).

Additionally, group members would perceive the in-group as less responsible for the instigation than for the consequences of the violent conflict (H2a), and they would attribute more responsibility for the instigation of the conflict to the out-group and to third parties than to the in-group (H2b).

Severity of harm. We explored the perceived severity of harm inflicted on each group during the ethnic conflict in Burundi. However, considering the recent civil war in Burundi in which there were instances of harm inflicted on each group, we predicted that each group would perceive the in-group to have suffered more than the out-group.

The role of in-group identification. In light of recent extreme violence in Burundi, different from Study 1, we did not expect in-group identification to be related to attributions of responsibility or perceived severity of harm.

Method

Participants

Participants were 121 (40 women, 81 men) students at two universities in Bujumbura. Participants were invited to participate in the survey study by a Murundi research assistant, himself a recent university graduate. The study's goal was introduced as aiming to understand people's opinions about the history of conflict in Burundi from the 1960s to the present. Each respondent completed a pen-and-pencil questionnaire and at the end received a small monetary award for the participation in this research.

Fifty-six participants identified themselves as ethnic Hutus, 58 as ethnic Tutsis, one as Twa, and six participants did not identify their ethnic group membership. Only the data of the participants who identified themselves as either Hutus or Tutsis were included in the analyses. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 36 ($M = 26.3$, $SD = 5.8$). The extent of victimization in the sample was considerably high. Based on self-reports, 38% of Hutus and 13% of Tutsis had personally experienced physical violence, and 65% of Hutus' and 34% of Tutsis' family members had experienced physical violence. Furthermore, 64% of Hutus and 53% of Tutsis had been displaced during the course of the conflict.

Instrument

Similar to the procedure in Study 1, participants first completed in-group (ethnic) identification measures. Afterward, they completed a set of measures assessing their construal of the conflict in Burundi since the 1960s. At the end,

they provided demographic information (age, gender, education, extent of victimization). The questionnaires were administered in French. Two translators equally fluent in English and French translated all items.

Attributions of responsibility. Attributions of responsibility measures were adapted from Study 1. One item each assessed the amount of responsibility attributed to each target group (the Tutsi people, the Hutu people, and foreign groups or countries) separately for the instigation and for the consequences of the violent conflict in Burundi. Similar to Study 1, the items did not specify the third party. However, the colonial power—Belgium—constitutes the main third party in the historical conflict narrative in Burundi (see Lemarchand, 1994). All items were assessed using 6-point scales (1 = *no responsibility*; 6 = *complete responsibility*).

Severity of harm. The same items as in Study 1 were adapted to assess perceived severity of harm (a 6-point scale was used: 1 = *no negative consequences*; 6 = *severe negative consequences*). Participants estimated the extent of total harm and economic harm that each group experienced due to the conflict between Hutus and Tutsis since the 1960s. The first item (perceived total harm) was dropped due to ceiling effects; only the latter item (i.e., perceived economic harm) was retained for further analysis. An additional item asked participants to estimate the percentage of innocent casualties who were of Hutu versus Tutsi origin. The question stated: "Since the start of the violence in 1960s till now, what percentage of the innocent victims in this conflict were of Hutu origin and what percentage were of Tutsi origin?"

In-group identification. The in-group identification scale included the same items as in Study 1, adapted to assess identification with the ethnic group. Participants were asked to complete the measure based on how they feel about being a member of their ethnic group (e.g., Being a member of my ethnic group is an important part of how I see myself) (1 = *strongly disagree*; 6 = *strongly agree*). After responding to the items, participants were asked to specify which ethnic group (i.e., Hutu, Tutsi, Twa, or Other) they had in mind when completing the scale. In-group identification scales revealed acceptable reliabilities ($\alpha = .83$ for Hutus and $\alpha = .67$ for Tutsis).

Results

How Do Hutus and Tutsis Construe the Violent Intergroup Conflict in Burundi?

Attributions of responsibility. Correlations among attributions of responsibility measures are shown in Table 1.

A 3 (Target group: in-group vs. ougroup vs. third parties) × 2 (Type of responsibility: instigation vs. consequences) × 2 (Ethnic group membership: Hutus vs. Tutsis) mixed ANOVA was conducted with Target group and Type of responsibility as within-subject variables, and Ethnic group membership as the between-subject factor.

Supporting H1, the analysis yielded a main effect of Target group, $F(2, 96) = 13.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$, such that respondents of both groups attributed less responsibility to their in-group ($M = 2.19$, $SE = .12$) relative to the out-group ($M = 3.04$, $SE = .16$) and to the third parties ($M = 2.83$, $SE = .14$). There was no difference between the responsibility attributed to the out-group and to third parties.

The results also yielded an interaction effect between Target and Type of attribution, $F(2, 96) = 19.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$. To clarify this interaction effect, we conducted pairwise *t* tests comparing the amount of responsibility attributed for the instigation versus the consequences of conflict. Supporting H2a, the in-group was perceived as less responsible for instigating the events ($M = 1.78$, $SE = .11$) than for their consequences ($M = 2.69$, $SE = .17$), $t(106) = -5.96$, $p < .001$. By contrast, third parties were perceived as more responsible for instigating the violent events ($M = 3.13$, $SE = .17$) than for their consequences ($M = 2.58$, $SE = .15$), $t(102) = 3.07$, $p < .01$, whereas the out-group was perceived as equally responsible for instigating the violent events ($M = 3.00$, $SE = .18$) as for their consequences ($M = 3.12$, $SE = .18$) $t(103) = -.69$, $p = .49$.

Additionally, to assess whether the in-group is perceived as less responsible than the out-group and third parties for the instigation of the conflict (H2b), similar to Study 1, we conducted univariate analyses separately for the responsibility for the instigation and the consequences of conflict. In line with predictions (H2b), the results indicated that respondents of both groups perceived the in-group as less responsi-

ble ($M = 1.76$, $SE = .11$) than the out-group ($M = 2.95$, $SE = .17$) and third parties ($M = 3.14$, $SE = .17$) for the instigation of conflict $F(2, 212) = 28.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$. For the consequences of conflict, Hutus, similar to Turkish respondents in Study 1, attributed the same amount of responsibility to all target groups, $F(2, 100) = .81$, $p = .44$; whereas Tutsis viewed the out-group ($M = 3.19$, $SE = .25$) as more responsible than the in-group ($M = 2.50$, $SE = .23$) and the third parties ($M = 2.59$, $SE = .23$), $F(2, 102) = 3.35$, $p = .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$.

Severity of harm. To assess the perceived severity of harm inflicted on each group, mixed ANOVAs were conducted for each indicator of harm with Target group (in-group vs. out-group) as the within-subject factor and participants' Group membership (Hutus vs. Tutsis) as the between-subjects factor. Casualty estimate measure is an ipsative variable as the percentage of in-group and out-group harm totals a constant of 100. Greer and Dunlap (1997) found that GLM and ANOVAs with ipsative variables are reliable when epsilon correction is applied, therefore in the current analysis, we applied epsilon correction by using Huynh & Feldt estimates for sphericity violation in the ANOVA. The estimates produced are the same as when sphericity is assumed.

Across the two indicators of harm, the results revealed a main effect of Target group such that each group perceived the harm inflicted on themselves as greater than the harm inflicted on the out-group. Specifically, for casualty estimates, the analysis yielded a main effect of Target group, $F(1, 93) = 55.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .37$, such that respondents estimated a higher percentage of the casualties in the conflict to be in-group members ($M = 57.52\%$, $SE = 2.10$) and a lower percentage to be out-group members ($M = 34.60\%$, $SE = 1.87$). The analysis also revealed a marginally significant Target Group × Group membership interaction, $F(1, 93) = 3.80$, $p = .054$, $\eta^2 = .039$. Pairwise comparisons conducted to clarify the interaction effect indicated that both Hutus and Tutsis perceived their in-group to have suffered more than the out-group. However, Hutus perceived that more harm had been inflicted on their in-group relative to the out-group ($M_D = 28.92$, $SE = 3.93$) compared to Tutsis ($M_D = 16.91$, $SE = 4.8$). There was no difference between Hutus' and Tutsis' estimates of in-group casualties and their estimates of out-group casualties.

Likewise, for economic harm, ANOVA revealed a main effect of Target group, $F(1, 110) = 46.37$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .30$, such that respondents perceived the economic harm inflicted on their in-group ($M = 4.18$, $SE = .08$) as more severe than the harm inflicted on the out-group ($M = 3.19$, $SE = .13$). The analysis also yielded a Target Group × Group membership interaction, $F(1. 110) = 9.81$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .082$. All pairwise comparisons conducted to clarify the interaction effect were significant. Hutus perceived more harm inflicted on their in-group ($M = 4.35$, $SE = .09$) than Tutsis ($M = 4.00$, $SE = .13$), whereas Tutsis relative to Hutus perceived the out-group harm to be greater ($M = 3.47$, $SE = .17$ and $M = 2.91$, $SE = .19$ for Tutsis and Hutus, respectively). The difference between the perceived harm inflicted on the in-group relative to the out-group was greater for Hutus ($M_D = 1.44$, $SE = .20$) than for Tutsis ($M_D = .53$, $SE = .21$). This asymmetry in perceived severity of harm in both measures (i.e., casualty estimates and economic harm) is meaningful considering that Hutus have been the main target of the violence between the 1960s to early 1990s.

How Does In-Group Identification Influence Hutus' and Tutsis' Construals of the Conflict?

There was no difference in the degree to which Hutu and Tutsi respondents identified with their ethnic groups (Hutus: $M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.34$; Tutsis: $M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.18$). The same analytical approach as in Study 1 was used to assess the relation between in-group identification and construals of the past.

Attributions of responsibility. A multivariate analysis (GLM) was conducted with group membership, in-group identification, and their interaction as predictors of attributions of responsibility. The six attributions of responsibility measures (3 Targets of responsibility × 2 Types of responsibility) served as dependent variables. The analysis yielded only a multivariate effect (Pillai's) of in-group identification, $F(6, 89) = 3.66$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .20$. Stronger in-group identification was associated with more responsibility attributed to the out-group

for both the instigation, $F(1, 94) = 11.87$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$, and the consequences of violent conflict, $F(1, 94) = 13.30$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$. However, in-group identification was not associated with responsibility attributed to third parties. Unexpectedly, stronger in-group identification was also associated with more responsibility attributed to the in-group for the instigation of the conflict, $F(1, 94) = 8.05$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. While In-group identification $\times$ Group membership interaction was not significant, regression analyses conducted separately with each ethnic group revealed that this effect held only for Hutus, $\beta = .35$, $t(51) = 2.62$, $p = .01$, but not for Tutsis, $\beta = .21$, $t(56) = 1.57$, $p = .12$. This puzzling result suggests that the more Hutus identified with their ethnic group the more responsibility they attributed to the in-group for the instigation of conflict.

Severity of harm. Similar to the previous analysis, a multivariate analysis was conducted with group membership, in-group identification, and their interaction as predictors of the measures of severity of harm. None of the multivariate effects was significant, $F(4, 88) = 1.56$, $p = .19$ for in-group identification, $F(4, 88) = .69$, $p = .62$ for group membership, and $F(4, 88) = .64$, $p = .64$ for the interaction between in-group identification and group membership. Overall, as expected, in-group identification did not have an effect on perceived severity of harm inflicted on the in-group or the out-group.

Discussion

Overall, the results of Study 2 replicated the main findings of Study 1: Each group assigned less responsibility to the in-group than to the out-group or the third parties (supporting H1). Furthermore, as expected (H2), each group perceived itself as less responsible for the instigation than the consequences of conflict. However, the out-group was viewed as equally responsible for the consequences as for the instigation of conflict. Despite the vast differences in the harm inflicted on each group, attributions of responsibility assigned by Hutus and Tutsis mirrored each other. Hutus have been the main target of violence for three decades in Burundi; Hutus' revolts against the Tutsi-led government were met with genocidal violence in 1972 and massacres in 1988 (Lemarchand, 1994). Tutsi minority perceived the potential loss of power as existential threat—the violence against Tutsis in Rwanda further fed these fears. Hence, any action against Hutus was perceived as a response to provocation and as self-protection. However, there was also large-scale violence inflicted by Hutus on Tutsis in 1993 in Burundi. It is possible that the conflict constructions of each group are informed by different events in the history of the conflict. In addition, the way in which last decade's power shifts (e.g., Hutus relative to Tutsis have a higher representation in the government; large-scale violence by Hutus against Tutsis in 1993) have influenced Hutus' and Tutsis' construals of their past conflict is an important question which would shed light on the role of a group's current needs and goals in shaping historical memory.

With regard to severity of harm, as predicted Hutus and Tutsis perceived the respective in-groups to have suffered more during the conflict. Additionally, the mutual perceptions of in-group and out-group harm were asymmetric, such that Tutsis relative to Hutus perceived more harm inflicted on the out-group. This pattern might reflect a reality constraint in the conflict in Burundi in which Hutus were the main target of victimization. The realities of the conflict were also reflected in the composition of the current sample in which a higher percentage of Hutu respondents as compared to Tutsi respondents reported that either themselves or their families had experienced physical violence, abuse, or had been displaced during the course of the conflict.

One goal of this study was to assess whether individual differences in the strength of in-group identification play a role on group members' construals of recent mass violence. Although we didn't expect in-group identification to be associated with conflict construals, the results showed that the strength of Hutus' and Tutsis' in-group identification was associated with out-group responsibility. Surprisingly, for Hutus, stronger in-group identification was also related to more responsibility attributed to their in-group for instigating the conflict. To explain this result it is important to examine the subjective meaning of in-group responsibility in the context of the realities of the conflict in Burundi. Overall, Hutus placed very little responsibility onto their in-group. The positive relation

between in-group identification and in-group responsibility might indicate high identifiers' motivation to perceive the in-group as an active agent in the conflict. In other words, the little responsibility acknowledged by high identifiers might point to Hutus' resistance against perceived Tutsi oppression rather than to in-group blame.

The strength of in-group identification was not associated with perceived severity of harm in either group. As predicted, in light of the extreme violence experienced by respondents in both groups, a psychological individual-difference variable might not be potent enough to influence the perceptions of the severity of harm experienced. Moreover, these predictions are most appropriate when the in-group is considered to be the perpetrator: High identifiers are motivated to minimize the harm inflicted in order to protect the in-group's positive image. It is less clear why the strength of in-group identification among members of victimized groups would show different patterns in perceived amount of harm. For groups who have been victimized (such as Hutus and Tutsis in Burundi), the extent of harm suffered by the in-group is salient regardless of the strength of in-group identification.

General Discussion

How Do People Construe Violent Intergroup Conflicts?

Who do people hold responsible for intergroup conflict? Two findings were notable. First, across the two studies, respondents of each group assigned some responsibility to the in-group for the conflict, suggesting that denial of in-group responsibility might not be contingent upon the overall amount of responsibility assigned to the in-group, but upon a comparison of in-group's responsibility with out-group's and third parties' responsibilities. Second, group members assigned substantial responsibility to third parties for the conflict. For instance, in both studies, respondents from all three ethnic groups attributed equal amounts of responsibility to third parties as to the respective out-groups. Prior literature (e.g., Bandura, 1999) suggests that attributions of responsibility to external factors tone down in-group's responsibility for the conflict. This argument is plausible for a perpetrator group that may need to justify in-group's harmdoing actions or its privileged position. On the other hand, victimized groups might also be inclined to assign responsibility to third parties if the third parties fostered and encouraged violence, or if they did not take action to prevent it or to stop it.

The current research suggests that third parties play an important role in group members' beliefs about the initiation, evolution and consequences of conflict. The psychological study of intergroup conflict focuses on the dynamics between the in-group and the out-group. However, beliefs about the role of third parties in conflict might also exacerbate conflict or provide a potential for resolution. Perpetrator groups might place responsibility on third parties to absolve themselves from their responsibility in conflict. However, attributions of responsibility to third parties might make salient a common in-group identity (between the in-group and the out-group), thus providing opportunities for reconciliation. At the same time, groups might use superordinate identities for their interests. For instance, among Tutsis, the ethnic conflict in Burundi is often viewed as a remnant of the colonial rule which instilled ethnic divisions. According to Tutsi narrative, there is no Hutu-Tutsi conflict, only a "gigantic imperialist plot" (Lemarchand, 1994, p. 28). In turn, this narrative is used to undermine subordinate (ethnic) identities, mask power differences between Hutus and Tutsis, and maintain Tutsis' privilege in society by denying the nature of the conflict (Lemarchand, 1994).

Third parties and other external factors often have a real influence on dynamics and evolution of conflict. For instance, colonialism led to the racialization of political identities of Hutus and Tutsis in Burundi and Rwanda (Mamdani, 2001), which in turn was an important factor in the subsequent violent conflicts among these groups. Do third parties have a moral responsibility to acknowledge their role in conflict? What impact would third parties' acknowledgment of their role in conflict have on conflict resolution? On the positive direction, an understanding of the conditions that give rise to violence (e.g., the role of ideologies, history, economics, and third parties) might lead to making less dispositional attributions to the harmdoer (either the in-group or the adversary) (Staub,

1989). If victim groups consider the societal and situational factors that fostered the conditions for violence to occur, they might endorse a "less evil" image of the perpetrator group. Furthermore, if perpetrator groups are not perceived as inherently evil, then their misdeeds should pose less threat to the in-group's image, thus increasing the likelihood that perpetrator groups would assume responsibility for their actions. On the negative direction, third parties' acknowledgment of their role in conflict might reinforce perpetrators' existing beliefs that responsibility lies on external factors rather than on the in-group, thus eliciting further denial of responsibility.

Responsibility for instigation versus consequences of conflict. We distinguished between two types of responsibility: responsibility for the instigation and responsibility for the consequences of the violent conflict. Both studies indicated that groups engage in a competition over "who started the conflict." Group members attributed less responsibility to the in-group for the instigation than for the consequences of the conflict. These representations of conflict might be either post hoc explanations of events or justifications to carry out an attack on premises that the out-group is dangerous.

Because the in-group's engagement in acts of violence is likely to be perceived as self-defense, acknowledgment of in-group responsibility does not inevitably imply accepting liability for the harm done. In these instances, group members might acknowledge in-group's responsibility, but at the same time legitimize the violence. For example, governments accept responsibility for their military interventions but they also claim that these interventions serve humanitarian purposes, are carried out as a last resort, or because the enemy is dangerous (Cohrs, Maes, Moschner, & Kielmann, 2003). Consistent with this argument, some research suggests that claiming responsibility and blameworthiness are conceptually different processes (Shaver & Drown, 1986). For example, early research on harmdoing at the individual level (e.g., Davis & Jones, 1960; Glass, 1964) demonstrated that although participants who were assigned by experimenters to cause harm to a victim were aware that they did the actual inflicting, they attributed the blame for the injustice either to the experimenter or to the situation. One important strategy that alters one's blameworthiness, but not one's responsibility, is the perceived justification for the harmdoing (e.g., a perpetrator group might argue that although the act was reprehensible, it served a larger social purpose) (Shaver, 1985, p. 163). In the current context, it is plausible that different types of attributions—instigation versus consequences—are differentially related to perceived legitimacy, such that instigation might be seen as legitimate, whereas retaliation as illegitimate violence.

The current findings suggest that each group might focus on different types of attributions when addressing each party's responsibility in the conflict. Research on interpersonal transgressions has demonstrated that cognitive and motivational factors might direct the victim's attention to the consequences of the events, whereas offenders focus more on the factors that led to the events (Baumeister & Catanese, 2001). Similarly, at an intergroup level, to deflect their responsibility, perpetrator groups might be more motivated to focus on the factors that led them to carry out these acts (i.e., the responsibility for the instigation of the acts); whereas victims, being preoccupied with the harm and suffering inflicted upon them, might focus on the responsibility for the consequences of the conflict. If each group emphasizes different aspects of events, any discussion of responsibility of the conflict might be unproductive. Overall, group members' judgments about attributions of responsibility should be investigated more systematically in order to reach a better understanding of the motivational factors that lead to differential attributions of responsibility.

Who do people believe suffered during conflict? Comparisons of the amount of harm inflicted on the in-group and the out-group yielded different results across the two studies. For example, Turkish respondents reported that Armenians have suffered more than Turks; however, Hutus and Tutsis perceived the respective in-groups to have suffered more than the out-group during the conflict. These results should be interpreted by taking into account the social realities of each context under study. Social reality features of contexts of mass violence might constrain the degree to which group members exhibit in-group favoritism (Ellemers, Van Rijswijk, Roefs, & Simons, 1997). Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (2002) claim that different response patterns should be understood by taking into consideration different goals

and motives in combination with different contextual factors.

Each group surveyed in this research expressed a sense of in-group victimization. The current research suggests that psychological victimhood is present in both victim and perpetrator groups. These puzzling results raise questions regarding the differences of psychological victimhood in perpetrator and victim groups. Shnabel, Nadler, Ullrich, Dovidio, and Carmi (2009) suggest that conflicts threaten different types of needs in victim and perpetrator groups. Thus, construals of conflict in perpetrator and victim groups might be driven by different needs: perpetrators' need to restore the positive image of the in-group, and victims' need to restore the lost power. Similarly, different motives might be linked to psychological victimhood in perpetrator groups as compared to victim groups. For instance, in a longitudinal study in the U.S., Thomsen et al. (2010) found that social dominance motive (i.e., a desire to maintain in-group's privileged status) predicted perceived ethnic victimization in the majority group (Whites) but not in the minority group (Latinos). Future research should further investigate the characteristics and determinants of psychological victimhood in perpetrator and victim groups.

Each group recognized some harm inflicted by the in-group on the out-group. Recognition of the harm suffered and the harm committed by each group might serve as a basis for establishing common ground between groups in conflict. The aim is not to equalize the experiences of a perpetrator group and a victim group, but to recognize a common bond between them. Vollhardt (2011) has argued that *inclusive victim consciousness,* defined as "the subjective representation and interpretation of the in-group's collective victimization that includes the perception of similarities between the in-group's and other groups' experiences," produces prosocial outcomes toward out-groups. The perceived commonality and the perceived uniqueness of in-group's victimization are distinct factors (Vollhardt, 2010) that should be recognized simultaneously to achieve positive intergroup outcomes (see Vollhardt, 2011).

How Does In-Group Identification Influence Construals of Past Conflict?

We predicted that in-group identification would be related to construals of a historical instance of mass violence (Study 1), but not to construals of a recent conflict characterized by mass violence (Study 2). The findings partially supported this prediction: In Study 2, the strength of in-group identification was associated with attributions of responsibility, but not perceived severity of harm. The strength of Hutus' and Tutsis' in-group identification was associated more consistently with out-group responsibility. Research on in-group bias suggests that different processes might determine in-group preference versus out-group derogation (Brewer, 1999). Under conditions of extreme threat and violence, the strength of in-group identification might differentially relate to in-group and out-group aspects of in-group bias. For instance, the correlation between in-group identification and out-group prejudice has been shown to be high in the presence of intergroup conflict (Brewer, 1999). Heightened threat might weaken the relationship between the strength of in-group identification and in-group aspects (e.g., in-group preference) of in-group bias, while strengthening its relation with out-group aspects (e.g., out-group derogation) of in-group bias.

With regard to perceived severity of harm, as predicted the strength of in-group identification was associated with Turks' perceived harm, but it was not associated with Hutus' and Tutsis' perceived harm. As suggested, because the harm inflicted to each group is severe and salient to participants (as a large portion of the sample reported victimization experiences), in-group identification might not alter the perceived harm inflicted.

Limitations and Future Directions

This research has several limitations. First, attributions of responsibility were assessed with single-item measures, which raise reliability concerns. At the same time, the consistency of the findings across the two studies also gives us more confidence that the results are reliable. Nevertheless, future studies should develop reliable scales to assess the different types of responsibility. Second, the items assessing third-party attributions did not identify specific third parties. This is particularly a concern in Study 2 where it is impossible to tell whether participants were actually thinking of the colonial powers as the third parties when responding

to these questions. Third, the samples in both studies are not representative of the respective populations (i.e., Turkish and Barundi people). Participants in both studies were highly educated youth—in Study 1, the Turkish sample consisted of Turks living and studying in the United States, whereas in Burundi all participants were either studying at the university level or had recently received a university degree. While Turkish respondents living in the U.S. might have different construals of the Armenian massacres compared to ordinary people living in Turkey, it is not possible to predict the direction of the bias in the current sample. On one hand, it is possible that Turkish respondents living in the United States are encountered with alternative narratives of the Armenian massacres that might have led them to become less attached to the Turkish official narrative of these events. On the other hand, the alternative narratives that construe Armenian mass killings as a genocide might threaten Turkish identity, especially in Turks who live outside the country, away from the support of Turkish communities. Thus, this group could also become more attached to the official Turkish narrative.

Overall, the consistent findings across the two studies point to universal psychological mechanisms underlying perceptions of responsibility and perceived harm in groups that have experienced or have engaged in violent intergroup conflicts. Future research should further examine the mechanisms at play and assess their consequences in the aftermath of mass violence. Additionally, more work should investigate differences in conflict construals among victim and perpetrator groups.

Conclusion

Burundi, Turkey, and other societies that have experienced mass violence face important decisions regarding how to deal with their violent history. For example, an article in the peace agreement signed in Burundi by all parties (Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, 2000), called for clarification of "the entire history of Burundi, going as far back as possible in order to inform Burundi about their past. The purpose of this clarification shall be to rewrite Burundi's history, so that all Burundians can interpret it in the same way" (Protocol 1, Article 8, c). How can accountability for the past be established when groups endorse such stark differences in interpretations of the past? Research and practice fall short in providing successful strategies to deal with divergent construals of past violence. Group members' construals of intergroup conflict and violence (e.g., attributions of responsibility, perceived severity of harm) should be systematically investigated in order to reach a better understanding of the motivational factors that lead to acknowledgment or denial of responsibility. Understanding the factors that lead to different construals and interpretations might be important to inform effective strategies to change them.

References

Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi. (2000). Retrieved from http://www.hdcentre.org/files/Arusah%20peace%20agreement.pdf

Asmal, K., Asmal, L., & Roberts, R. S. (1996). *Reconciliation through truth.* Cape Town, South Africa: David Philip Publishers.

Balch-Lindsay, D., & Enterline, A. (2000). Killing time: The world politics of civil war duration, 1820–1992. *International Studies Quarterly, 44,* 615–642.

Bandura, A. (1990). Mechanisms of moral disengagement. In R. Walter (Ed.), *Origins of terrorism: Psychologies, ideologies, theologies, states of mind* (pp. 161–191). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Bandura, A. (1999). Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 3,* 193–209.

Bar-Tal, D. (2000). *Shared beliefs in a society: Social psychological analysis.* Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bar-Tal, D. (2003). Collective memory of physical violence: Its contribution to the culture of violence. In E. Cairns & M. D. Roe (Eds.), *The role of memory in ethnic conflict* (pp. 75–93). London, U. K.: Palgrave-MacMillian.

Bar-Tal, D. (2004). The necessity of observing real life situations: Palestinian-Israeli violence as a laboratory of learning about social behavior. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 34,* 677–701. doi:10.1002/ejsp.224

Bar-Tal, D. (2007). The sociopsychological foundations of intractable conflicts. *American Behavioral Scientist, 50,* 1430–1453. doi:10.1177/0002764207302462

Baumeister, R. F., & Catanese, K. (2001). Victims and perpetrators provide discrepant accounts: Motivated cognitive distortions about interpersonal transgressions. In J. P. Forgas & K. D. Williams

(Eds.), *The social mind: Cognitive and motivational aspects of interpersonal behavior* (pp. 274–293). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Baumeister, R. F., & Hastings, S. (1997). Distortions of collective memory. How groups flatter and deceive themselves. In J. W. Pennebaker, D. Paez, & B. Rime (Eds.), *Collective memory of political events: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 277–293). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Branscombe, N. R., & Doosje, B. (2004). *Collective guilt: International perspectives.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Branscombe, N. R., & Miron, A. M. (2004). Interpreting the in-group's negative actions toward an out-group: Emotional reactions to appraised harm. In L. Z. Tiedens & C. W. Leach (Eds.), *The social life of emotions* (pp. 314–335). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Brewer, M. (1999). The psychology of prejudice: In-group love or out-group hate? *Journal of Social Issues, 55,* 429–444.

Brown, R. C., & Tedeschi, J. T. (1976). Determinants of perceived aggression. *Journal of Social Psychology, 100,* 77–87.

Cehajic, S., Brown, R. & Gonzalez, R. (2009). What do I care? Perceived in-group responsibility and dehumanization as predictors of empathy felts for the victim group. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 12,* 715–759. doi:10.1177/1368430209347727

Cohrs, C. J., Maes, J., Moschner, B., & Kielmann, S. O. (2003). Patterns of justification of the United States' 'war against terrorism' in Afghanistan. *Psicologia Politica, 27,* 105–117.

Dadrian, V. (Ed.). (2003). *Warrant for genocide*: *Key elements of Turko-Armenian conflict* (3rd ed.). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Daley, P. (2006). Challenges to peace: Conflict resolution in the Great Lakes region of Africa. *Third World Quarterly, 27,* 303–319. doi:10.1080/01436590500432564

Davis, K., & Jones, E. (1960). Changes in interpersonal perception as a means of reducing cognitive dissonance. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 61,* 402–410.

Devine-Wright, P. (2003). A theoretical overview of memory and conflict. In E. Cairns & M. D. (Eds.), *The role of memory in ethnic conflict* (pp. 9–33). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

Dodge, K. A., & Coie, J. D. (1987). Social-information-processing factors in reactive and proactive aggression in children's peer groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53,* 1146–1158.

Doosje, B., & Branscombe, N. R. (2003). Attributions for the negative historical actions of a group. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 33,* 235–248. doi:10.1002/ejsp.142

Doosje, B., Branscombe, N. R., Spears, R., & Masnstead, A. S. R. (1998). Guilty by association: When one's group has a negative history. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 25,* 872–886.

Doosje, B., Zebel, S., Scheermeijer, M., & Mathyi, P. (2007). Attributions of responsibility for terrorist attacks: The role of group membership and identification. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence, 1,* 127–141.

Duncan, B. L. (1976). Differential social perception and attribution of intergroup violence: Testing the lower limits of stereotyping of Blacks. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 34,* 590–598.

Ellemers, N., Kortekaas, P., & Ouwerkerk, J. W. (1999). Self-categorisation, commitment to the group and group self-esteem as related but distinct aspects of social identity. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 29,* 371–389.

Ellemers, N., Spears, R., & Doosje, B. (2002). Self and social identity. *Annual Review of Psychology,* 53, 161–186. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135228

Ellemers, N., Van Rijswijk, W., Roefs, M., & Simons, C. (1997). Bias in intergroup perceptions: Balancing group identity with social reality. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 23,* 186–198. doi:10.1177/0146167297232007

Fisher, R. J. (2001). Methods of third party intervention. In N. Ropers, M. Fischer, & E. Manton (Eds.), *Berghof handbook for conflict transformation* (pp. 1–27). Berlin, Germany: Berghof Center for Constructive Conflict Management.

Fishman, J., & Marvin, C. (2003). Portrayals of violence and group difference in newspaper photographs: Nationalism and media. *Journal of Communication, 53,* 32–44. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2003.tb03003.x

Glass, D. (1964). Changes in liking as a means of reducing cognitive discrepancies between self-esteem and aggression. *Journal of Personality, 32,* 531–549.

Greer, T., & Dunlap, W. (1997). Analysis of variance with ipsative measures. *Psychological Reports, 2,* 200–207.

Herbert, T. L., & Dunkel-Schetter, C. (1992). Negative social reactions to victims. An overview of responses and their determinants. In L. Montada, S. H. Filipp, & M. J. Lerner (Eds.), *Life crises and experiences of loss in adulthood* (pp. 497–518). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hewstone, M. (1990). The "Ultimate Attribution Error"? A review of the literature on intergroup causal attribution. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 20,* 311–336.

Hewstone, M., & Ward, C. (1985). Ethnocentrism and causal attribution in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 48,* 614–623.

Jackson, J. W. (2002). Intergroup attitudes as a function of different dimensions of group identification and perceived intergroup conflict. *Self and Identity, 1,* 11–33. doi:10.1080/152988602317232777

Jorgensen, T. (2003). Turkey, the U.S. and the Armenian genocide. In S. L. B. Jensen (Ed.), *Genocide: Cases, comparisons, and contemporary debate* (pp. 193–224). Copenhagen, Denmark: Werks Offset.

Kane, T. R., Joseph, J. M., & Tedeschi, J. T. (1976). Person perception and Bergowitz paradigm for the study of aggression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 33,* 663–673.

Kinzer, S. (2008, August 14). France's role in the Rwandan genocide. *The Boston Globe.* Retrieved from http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/08/14/frances_role_in_the_rwandan_genocide/

Leach, C. W., van Zomeren, M., Zebel, S., Vliek, M. L. W., Pennekamp, S. F., Doosje, B., . . . Spears, R. (2008). Group-level self-definition and self-investment: A hierarchical (multi-component) model of in-group identification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95,* 144–165. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.95.1.144

Lemarchand, R. (1994). *Burundi. Ethnocide as discourse and practice.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Lemarchand, R. (2006). *Burundi's endangered transition. FAST country risk profile Burundi.* Swisspeace working papers series. Retrieved from www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/FAST/CRPs/2006/FAST_CRP_Burundi_2006.pdf.

Lewy, G. (2005). *The Armenian massacres in Ottoman Turkey. A disputed genocide.* Salt Lake City, UT: The University of Utah Press.

Licata, L., Klein, O., Saade, W., Azzi, A. E., & Branscombe, N. R. (2011). Perceived out-group (dis-)continuity and attribution of responsibility for the Lebanese civil war mediate effects of national and religious subgroup identification on intergroup attitudes. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations.* doi:10.1177/1368430211414445

Luhtanen, R., & Crocker, J. (1992). A collective self-esteem scale: Self-evaluation of one's social identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 18,* 302–318.

Makoba, J. W., & Ndura, E. (2006). The roots of contemporary ethnic conflict and violence in Burundi. In S. C. Saha (Ed.), *Perspectives on contemporary ethnic conflict* (pp. 295–310). New York, NY: Lexington Book.

Mamdani, M. (2001). *When victims become killers. Colonialism, nativism, and the genocide in Rwanda.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Melson, R. (1992). *Revolution and genocide: On the origins of the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Mischel, W. (1977). The interaction of person and situation. In D. Magnusson & N. S. Endler (Eds.), *Personality at the crossroads: Current issues in interactional psychology* (pp. 333–352). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Nadler, A., & Saguy, T. (2004). Reconciliation between nations: Overcoming emotional deterrents to ending conflicts between groups. In H. J. Langholtz & C. E. Westport (Eds.), *The psychology of diplomacy* (pp. 29–46). Westport, CT: Praeger/Greenwood Publishing Group.

Nazer, J. (1968). *The first genocide of the twentieth century: The Armenian massacre.* New York, NY: T and T Publishing.

Noor, M., Brown, R., & Prentice, G. (2008). Precursors and mediators of intergroup reconciliation in Northern Ireland: A new model. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 47,* 481–495. doi:10.1348/014466607X238751

Pettigrew, T. F. (1979). The ultimate attribution error: Extending Allport's cognitive analysis of prejudice". *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 5,* 461–476. doi:10.1177/014616727900500407

Pratto, F., & Glasford, D. (2008). How needs can motivate intergroup reconciliation in the face of intergroup conflict. In A. Nadler, T. E. Malloy, & J. D. Fisher (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup reconciliation* (pp. 117–144). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Regan, P. M. (2002). Third party intervention and the duration of intrastate conflicts. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 46,* 55–73. doi:10.1177/0022002702046001004

Roccas, S., Klar, Y., & Liviatan, I. (2006). The paradox of group-based guilt: Modes of conflict identification, conflict vehemence, and reactions to the in-group's moral violations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91,* 698–711. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.91.4.698

Rosenberg, S. W., & Wolfsfeld, G. (1977). International conflict and the problem of attribution. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 21,* 75–103.

Rothgerber, H. (1997). External intergroup threat as an antecedent to perceptions of in-group and out-group homogeneity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73,* 1206–1212.

Sahdra, B., & Ross, M. (2007). Group identification and historical memory. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 33,* 284–295. doi:10.1177/0146167206296103

Shaver, K. G. (1985). *The attribution of blame. Causality, responsibility and blameworthiness.* New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.

Shaver, K. G., & Drown, D. (1986). On causality, responsibility, and self-blame: A theoretical note. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50,* 697–702.

Shnabel, N., Nadler, A., Ullrich, J., Dovidio, J., & Carmi, D. (2009). Promoting reconciliation through the satisfaction of the emotional needs of victimized and perpetrating group members: The needs-based model of reconciliation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 35,* 1021–1030. doi:10.1177/0146167209336610

Staub, E. (1989). *The roots of evil: The origins of genocide and other group violence.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Staub, E. (1998). Breaking the cycle of genocidal violence: Healing and reconciliation. In J. Harvey (Ed.), *Perspectives on loss.* Washington, DC: Taylor and Francis.

Stephan, W. G. (1977). Stereotyping: Role of in-group-out-group differences in causal attribution of behavior. *Journal of Social Psychology, 101,* 255–266.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7–24). Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall.

Thomsen, L., Green, E. G. T., Ho, A. K., Levin, S., van Laar, C., Sinclair, S., & Sidanius, J. (2010). Wolves in sheep's clothing. SDO asymmetrically predicts perceived ethnic victimization among White and Latino students across three years. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 36,* 225–238. doi:10.1177/0146167209348617

Turner, S. (2005). 'The Tutsi are afraid we will discover their secrets'–On secrecy and sovereign power in Burundi. *Social Identities, 11,* 37–54.

Ulgen, F. (2010). *Sabiha Gokcen's 80-year-old secret. Kemalist nation formation and the Ottoman Armenians* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database. (UMI No. 3402070.)

Uras, E. (1988). *The Armenians in history and the Armenian question.* Istanbul, Turkey: Documentary Publications.

Vollhardt, J. R. (2010). *Victim consciousness and its effects on intergroup relations–A double-edged sword?* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Vollhardt, J. R. (2011). *"Crime against humanity" or "Crime against Jews"? The importance of acknowledgment in construals of the Holocaust for intergroup relations.* Manuscript submitted for publication.

Wall, J. A., Stark, J. B., & Standifer, R. L. (2001). Mediation. A current review and theory development. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 45,* 370–391. doi:10.1177/0022002701045003006

Wohl, M., & Branscombe, N. (2008). Remembering historical victimization: Collective guilt for current in-group transgressions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 94,* 988–1006. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.94.6.988

Wohl, M., & Reeder, G. (2004). When bad deeds are forgiven: Judgments of morality and forgiveness for intergroup aggression. In J. P. Morgan (Ed.), *Focus on aggression research* (pp. 59–74). Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.

Wolpe, H., McDonald, S., Nindorera, E., McClintock, E., Lempereur, A., Nsengimana, F., . . . Blair, A. (2004). Rebuilding peace and state capacity in war-torn Burundi. *The Round Table, 93,* 457–467. doi:10.1080/0035853042000240021