Editors' introduction

When group members forgive: Antecedents and Consequences

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Abstract

Whether forgiveness is essential for intergroup reconciliation may be disputable, but its potential ability to repair human relationships following offenses committed based on group membership remains of considerable importance. The primary focus of this Special Issue is on the social-contextual factors that encourage forgiveness of past wrongs and the extent to which forgiveness results in meaningful improvement in intergroup relations. The concept of Intergroup Forgiveness has only appeared on the research agenda of social psychologists over the last decade, so there is still much room for conceptual clarification, empirical validation and applications to understanding intergroup reconciliation. Significant progress has been made by investigating predictors and correlates of intergroup forgiveness, and the research presented in this Special Issue further illuminates the processes involved in Intergroup Forgiveness, as well as important consequences. This collection of empirical articles, based on diverse theoretical perspectives and empirical approaches to studying the phenomenon of intergroup forgiveness inside and outside of the laboratory, advance our understanding of when and how improvement emerges across a wide range of real and enduring conflicts.

Key words: intergroup forgiveness, intergroup relations, conflict, victim, perpetrator

"Nothing is easier than to condemn the evildoer, nothing is harder than to understand him."

Attributed to Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Intergroup conflicts can be difficult to resolve; they often entail long-term physical and emotional damage to those directly involved and their descendants. Although intergroup forgiveness may not to be a prerequisite for reconciliation (see Wohl, Hornsey, & Philpot, 2011), forgiveness is a viable means of achieving reconciliation between conflicting groups. Given the importance of forgiveness for improving intergroup relations, it is with some satisfaction that we mark the substantial progress of research on intergroup forgiveness in this Special Issue.

Indeed it is only a little over a decade since psychologists began to contribute to this critical topic; prior to that, few contributions were offered concerning the fundamental questions of when people do forgive those who perpetrated harm against them or their fellow group members, and what psychological antecedents, processes, and consequences are involved. Yet, as the opening quote makes clear, for all the difficulty entailed in forgiving past wrongs, the ability to forgive is potentially as old as the desire for revenge (see McCullough, Kurzban, & Tabak, 2013).

Although revenge and retaliatory behavior might be seen to have their place and offer some utility in restoring justice, serving as deterrents to more egregious intergroup behavior, they are associated with considerable costs. Imposing punishment ultimately has negative consequences for those who do so, increases the likelihood of rumination about the harm-doers and the harm they perpetrated, and predicts poor health (Carlsmith, Wilson, & Gilbert, 2008; Kira et al., 2009; Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2007). Moreover, it is unlikely to promote restoration of positive intergroup relations, and instead is likely to promote a cycle of revenge. Revenge as a response to injustice is further problematic because, due to the

subjective nature of human perception and cognition, exacting a wrong may not lead to restoration of what was initially harmed and, all too often, results in terrible excesses (Minow, 1998, p. 11). Perhaps among the gravest costs of vengeful behavior is that the initial victims could become potential victimizers, trapped in a never-ending cycle of retributions (Minow, 1998; Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998) that can affect the support former victims are likely to receive from third-parties (Branscombe, Warner, Klar, & Fernández, in press). Considering these costs, forgiveness may not only serve as an attractive alternative strategy for responding to a perpetrator and his/her group, but may also be a viable and effective means to resolve costly intergroup conflicts.

Forgiveness at the interpersonal level has been conceptualized as letting go of resentment toward the harm-doer (Enright, Freedman, & Rique, 1998), reduced motivation for revenge and avoidance, and increased motivation for acting with benevolence toward the perpetrator (McCullough, Worthington, & Rachel, 1997). Closely related to its interpersonal conceptualization, at the intergroup level forgiveness has been characterized in terms of not harboring negative feelings toward the wrongdoer and their group (Tutu, 1999), not assigning guilt to the perpetrator group (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005), and leaving behind past grievances and displaying generosity by absolving the outgroup from total blame (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008). Ultimately, intergroup forgiveness should be considered a rare opportunity for conflicting groups to transform their relationship from enmity to peaceful co-existence (Hewstone et al., 2004; Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, & Niens, 2006; Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008; Staub, 2006).

From Early Days to Recent Development

Naturally, as with any emerging topic, researchers were initially preoccupied with definitions and identifying the major correlates of intergroup forgiveness. In other words,

empirical work began by addressing the question of what enables groups to forgive each other following conflict. To illustrate, it was reported that friendship and general contact between the conflicting communities in Northern Ireland were positively associated with each community's willingness to forgive the other for the harms done in this long, internecine conflict (Hewstone et al., 2004, 2006). Early theoretical developments concerning impediments to intergroup forgiveness led researchers to identify novel concepts in order to understand and do justice to the complexity associated with this nascent research area.

For instance, Noor and colleagues developed the concept of *Intergroup Competitive Victimhood* to address how adversary groups come to perceive their own suffering as a result of a violent conflict as greater than other groups', which in turn predicts their reduced propensity to forgive each other for their past wrongs. Specifically, correlational and experimental research across several conflict settings including Northern Ireland, Chile, and Palestine/Israel demonstrated that when groups engage in competition for the 'crown of victimhood' and make claims that their suffering was worse than the suffering they inflicted upon the other group, attitudes toward forgiving the other group become rather negative (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez et al., 2008; Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008; Noor et al., 2012; Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, 2013). A similar pattern of findings was observed in a set of laboratory-based studies testing intergroup competitive victimhood within settings of structural inequalities between groups (e.g., gender and race conflict) (Sullivan, Landau, Branscombe, & Rothschild, 2012).

Researchers were also quick to show that viewing one's suffering in a competitive manner is not the only way victimized groups can construe their victimhood. That is, collective suffering can also be framed in more inclusive ways (Branscombe, Wohl, & Warner, in press; Noor et al., 2012; Shnabel et al., 2013; Vollhardt, 2009; 2013; Vollhardt & Bilali, in press; Warner, Wohl, & Branscombe, 2014), which has benevolent consequences. It

is also the case that forgiveness requires perceived change in the perpetrator group. Licata and colleagues (2012) showed that victimized group members (Christians in Lebanon) who are able to differentiate those Muslims who committed the historical harm during that Civil War from contemporary Muslims reported increased intergroup forgiveness. Broadly speaking then, when victimized group members can believe the perpetrator group today is different from how it was (or was perceived to be) during the conflict, intergroup trust can emerge and greater forgiveness.

Development of forgiveness research benefited from comparing the application of theoretical concepts across interpersonal and intergroup levels of analysis. For example, at the interpersonal level, researchers typically found that an apology by the perpetrator following an interpersonal transgression generally predicts reduced desire to engage in revenge and thus increases individual victims' willingness to forgive (e.g., McCullough et al., 1997; Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Nariyuki, 1989; see Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010, for a meta-analytic review of the interpersonal apology-forgiveness link). However, this causal relationship was not observed in initial studies of the link between apology and forgiveness at the intergroup level (see Hornsey & Wohl, 2013). For example, in a series of experimental studies, Philpot and Hornsey (2008) presented Australian participants with apologies from different outgroups; although they found that intergroup apologies did affect perceived remorse, they failed to observe any positive effects of such apologies on participants' willingness to forgive.

There are many potential reasons why receipt of an apology from an outgroup might not be effective at promoting forgiveness. For example, victimized group members often do not believe the expressions of remorse made by the offender group, and may lack trust that an "official apology" by a representative of the offender group is sincere or that its offering is even approved by most of the outgroup in question (see contributions by Berndsen, Hornsey,

& Wohl, 2015, this Special Issue; Harth & Shnabel, 2015, this Special Issue; Shnabel, Halabi, & Siman Tov-Nachlieli, 2015, this Special Issue).

There may also be more subtle processes at work. Drawing on the infrahumanization literature (Leyens et al., 2000) – the attribution of more uniquely human emotions (e.g., remorse) to the ingroup than to the outgroup – Wohl, Hornsey and Bennett (2011) showed that one reason why an outgroup apology may fail to prompt forgiveness among victimized group members is due to their tendency to perceive the transgressing outgroup as incapable of experiencing such uniquely human emotions as 'regret'. Consequently, an outgroup apology containing such emotions is often perceived as disingenuous and dismissed (see also Tam, Hewstone, Cairns, and colleagues, 2007).

Yet, there *is* evidence that intergroup apology can increase forgiveness—to the extent that anger at the perpetrator group is reduced (Leonard, Mackie, & Smith, 2011). Clearly, then, the intriguing relationship between apology, forgiveness and other related concepts at the intergroup level awaits further research. Nonetheless, the productive nature of forgiveness research is illustrated in the recent meta-analysis of intergroup forgiveness, which tested a range of distinct predictors of intergroup forgiveness and revealed that strength of identification with the ingroup was among the strongest barriers to forgiveness, and collective guilt and trust were its most robust facilitators (Van Tongeren, Burnette, O'Boyle, Worthington, & Forsyth, 2014).

As research moved from the initial stages of 'definition' and 'correlates,' researchers began, *inter alia*, to identify key moderators of intergroup forgiveness. Wohl and Branscombe (2005), for example, highlighted the importance of social identity salience and how the groups involved are categorized as crucial elements enabling victimized groups to forgive the contemporary members of their historical perpetrator groups. These researchers

found that when grave harm doing such as the Holocaust was framed as pervasive across humanity (most inclusive social category), North American Jewish participants were more willing to forgive today's Germans than when the Holocaust was described as an intergroup event in which Germans behaved aggressively toward Jews (intergroup categorization). Greenaway, Quinn and Louis (2011) subsequently replicated this common humanity categorization effect in the context of the intergroup relations between Australian Aborigines and White Australians, showing increased forgiveness on the part of Aborigines, but also revealed that categorization in terms of common humanity reduced willingness to seek restitution for the past harm done.

Beyond establishing the conditions under which victimized groups are willing to forgive groups who have perpetrated acts of violence against them, research has also investigated the mechanisms underlying the relationships involving forgiveness. A series of studies, for example, explored the psychological processes that mediate the effects of intergroup contact on intergroup forgiveness (including collective guilt, empathy and perspective-taking; see Hewstone et al., 2013). In a different vein, Wohl and Branscombe (2005) reported that the positive effects of human categorization on Canadian Native Peoples' forgiveness toward White Canadians were driven by perceptions of harm doing that they had sustained as pervasive across human history. That is, to the extent that the actions of the perpetrator group were seen as not unique to them, their harmful actions were easier to forgive. Finally, the work by Noor and colleagues on competitive victimhood, found that for both Protestant and Catholic groups in Northern Ireland the association between competitive victimhood and willingness to forgive was mediated by the initial level of trust placed on the other group (Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008).

While the majority of scholars have focused on identifying the predictors of intergroup forgiveness, and their moderators and mediators, researchers have also sought to

identify some of the consequences of forgiveness. For example, Myers, Hewstone and Cairns (2009), in a study conducted among Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, tested the association between personal victimhood (the extent to which the sectarian conflict had affected an individual's life) and mild psychiatric morbidity was mediated by the degree to which participants had forgiven the transgressing group. Although having personally suffered as a result of the conflict was associated with decreased well-being, willingness to forgive the outgroup alleviated this negative effect. Such health benefits of intergroup forgiveness are consistent with the physiological benefits that have been observed following interpersonal forgiveness (Larsen, Darby, Harris et al., 2012; Zheng, Fehr, Tai, Narayanan, & Gelfand, 2015).

In the context of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict, forgiveness has also been found to strengthen the link between socio-emotional factors, such as trust and victimhood perceptions, and Israelis' vision for lasting peace with the Palestinians (see contribution by Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Doosje, 2015, this Special Issue). Indeed, even under the most inauspicious circumstances of an ongoing conflict, Klar and Schori-Eyal (2015, this Special Issue) showed the value of forgiveness for reconciliation.

Recently, researchers have turned their attention to the impact of being forgiven by the victim group—from the historical perpetrator groups' perspective. Noor, Chao, Johnston and Glasford (2015) found that forgiveness messages in which victimized groups (a) referred to their victimhood in a manner that was exclusive of other possible victim groups, and (b) emphasized their generosity in forgiving their historical perpetrator groups backfired. In those cases, the perpetrator group perceived such forgiveness messages as offensive, and reported that their relationship with the victim group was less harmonious. Thus, it appears that there are critical communicative considerations that need to be taken into account before groups can effectively harvest the potential benefits of forgiveness.

Overview of the Current Special Issue

This brief review of intergroup forgiveness research is not intended to be comprehensive (for a detailed review see Van Tongeren and colleagues, 2014) but to set the scene for the advances presented in this Special Issue. Collectively, the papers in this Special Issue demonstrate that research on intergroup forgiveness has the potential to pose challenging questions of high applied value and enables psychology to offer insights into some of the most urgent societal issues of the 21st century. Thus, while forgiveness is no panacea, it can play a key role in interrupting the negative cycle of revenge, in preventing victimized groups from becoming victimizers, and in helping to repair damaged intergroup relations. The contributions presented herein build on the past strengths of intergroup forgiveness research in terms of novelty and analysis, as well as exploring several new frontiers:

1. Voci, Hewstone, Swart, and Veneziani (2015, this Special Issue) report a refined test of whether contact is associated with forgiveness and prejudice reduction in the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland. A notable feature of this research is that it assessed the link between contact and forgiveness under demanding conditions, where identities remain strong and the conflict far from consigned to history. Contact, especially with outgroup friends, was found to be strongly associated with forgiveness, whereas personal experience with the conflict and ingroup identification were found to inhibit forgiveness. More subtle differences emerged in tests of moderation. As predicted, the association between contact with friends and forgiveness was significant for respondents who reported either high *or* low levels of conflict experience; in fact the positive effect of contact with outgroup friends was larger under high than low experience, an effect similar to prior research in the contact literature which has shown a *greater* effect of contact in more prejudiced participants. Generic contact, on the other hand, was associated with increased intergroup forgiveness only when

experience was low, but not when experience was high. This result is consistent with the idea that generic contact is weaker than friendship contact.

2. Regalia, Pelucchi, Paleari, Manzi and Brambilla (2015, this Special Issue) present a unique analysis of intergroup forgiveness in the context of the period of political terrorism in modern Italy known as the 'Years of Lead' (*Anni di Piombo*), which convulsed that country's political and social life from the 1960s to the 1980s. These authors test a model to explain conditions under which forgiveness toward terrorists may be enhanced, and they compare responses among Italian citizens who were adolescents or adults during this period of terrorism, as well as those born after it. The study is amongst the first to examine the role of restorative justice in intergroup forgiveness, and reports evidence consistent with the idea that adopting a restorative justice perspective and building empathy and trust can be fruitful ways to enhance a positive motivational change towards such harm perpetrators.

These authors identify two distinct dimensions of forgiveness – a positive dimension (*benevolence*), and a negative dimension (*avoidance/resentment*), and show that outgroup empathy, outgroup trust, and restorative justice beliefs are positively associated with benevolence, while outgroup trust and restorative justice beliefs, but not outgroup empathy, are negatively associated with avoidance/resentment. The structural paths in the model did not vary as a function of generational cohort.

3. Given the difficulty of conducting research on current conflicts, particularly during periods of high tension, it is not surprising that most studies on intergroup forgiveness are conducted during the *post*-resolution stages of conflict. The research reported by Klar and Schori-Eyal (2015, this Special Issue) is thus notable for the fact that it was conducted in Israel among people currently engaged in a violent conflict (Israeli Jewish adults in the southern town of Sderot, in Study 1, and in towns and communities close to the Gaza border,

in Study 2). In the authors' words, the studies can be viewed as "snapshots" from an ongoing violent conflict – they raise the question of whether any seeds of forgiveness and reconciliation can be found even at such difficult times among those who are adversely affected by the conflict – and if so, what they look like. A further interesting aspect of this research is that forgiveness was conceived, and measured, as *mutual* (intergroup) forgiveness.

Klar and Schori-Eyal (2015, this Special Issue) investigated Jewish respondents' support for apology and reparations, as well as their readiness for mutual forgiveness with their enemies / neighbours in Gaza. They also explored potential predictors of readiness to undertake steps to peace and reconciliation. Mutual forgiveness received considerable support, although apology and reparations did not. Perspective-taking vis-à-vis the Palestinians predicted support for mutual forgiveness in the first study. Acceptance of moral responsibility and dismissal of exonerating cognitions regarding Israel's conduct in Gaza predicted readiness for apology and reparations. This research suggests that a step toward mutual forgiveness with an adversarial outgroup is feasible even in active conflict settings, mainly because it does not involve acceptance of culpability for ingroup past harm doing.

4. The contribution by Noor, Shnabel, Halabi and Doosje (2015, this Special Issue) provides a novel link between forgiveness and what they call '*peace vision'*, conceptualized as the view of peace as desirable, feasible, and requiring substantial concessions by both parties. They examined the social-emotional factors contributing to the endorsement of a peace vision among a sample of Israeli Jews and found that trust in Palestinians and inclusive victim perceptions (the view that *both* conflicting groups have suffered due to the conflict) were significantly and positively associated with peace vision endorsement both directly and indirectly, through forgiveness. These data, obtained from a sample of Israeli Jews with daily experience of the ongoing violent conflict with Palestinians, shed light on some of the social-emotional factors fostering the endorsement of a peace vision. Such affective factors

complement some of the 'cold' cognitive factors proposed by some other researchers and offer insights that may help to guide practitioners actively involved in peacebuilding, not only in the Middle East but also more widely.

5. Given the collective nature of intergroup forgiveness, Wenzel and Okimoto (2015, this Special Issue) consider the restorative consequences of a group's act of forgiveness for its members as well as the offending group. In laboratory settings, the authors report that participants who were encouraged by their ingroup to forgive the transgressing group perceive less injustice than participants who were not encouraged by their ingroup to forgive. Interestingly, participants who were encouraged to forgive, in turn, displayed improved sentiments (e.g., reduced anger, increased sympathy) toward the transgressing group.

Similar to Voci and colleagues' contribution, Wenzel and Okimoto highlight the complex processes involved in intergroup forgiveness. Specifically, the researchers demonstrate that among respondents who identify highly with low status groups, forgiveness reduces perceived injustice by decreasing the threat posed to their group's status. Conversely, among low ingroup identifiers with high status groups, forgiveness decreases perceptions of injustice by reducing the threat perceived to their collectively shared values. The finding that, for members of low status groups, forgiveness can be associated with reduced perceptions of injustice serves as a warning that the consequences of forgiveness may not be uniquely positive (see also Greenaway et al., 2011).

6. As important as it is to study what conflicting groups can do to repair their damaged relationship, the contribution of third parties to this healing process must not be overlooked. Harth and Shnabel (2015, this Special Issue) address the central role of third parties in this process. Using the Needs-Based Model of reconciliation (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), in the context of a university student competition as well as the Israeli and Palestinian

conflict, the authors compared the effectiveness of conciliatory messages delivered by the other conflict party or by a third party who shared (or did not share) a common identity with the other conflict party. The results revealed that conciliatory messages delivered by a third party who shared a common ingroup identity with the other conflict group were as effective as messages delivered by the other conflict group, and both messages led to greater support for intergroup reconciliation than messages conveyed by a third party who did not share a common ingroup identity.

7. Rotella, Richeson and McAdams (2015, this Special Issue) examine the critical issue of how perpetrator groups engage with their prior wrongdoing and what the consequences are for victim group members' forgiveness. By reminding perpetrator group members of historical atrocities (e.g., internment of Japanese in America, atomic bombing of Hiroshima), and prompting them to see their group as having changed from the past—engagement in redemption narratives whereby they come to see growth in their moral character emerging from contemplating the wrong their group had committed—induces collective guilt and willingness to make reparations for their group's harm. Critically, victim group members who were exposed to these perpetrator group redemption narratives (i.e., 'we were wrong and have learned to be more moral') were more willing to reconcile with those who committed harm against their group, although this did not extend to forgiveness. This work suggests that, in contrast to "official government apologies," victims who are made aware of the change in perpetrator group members' character as a result of their engagement in redemption narratives can effectively promote intergroup reconciliation.

8. A variety of social factors can influence victim group members' responses to apologies offered by perpetrator groups. Shnabel, Halabi, and SimanTov-Nachlieli (2015, this Special Issue) investigate this critical issue in the context of an ongoing conflict—that of the Israelis and Palestinians. Although substantial differences in power exist between these

groups, both groups have engaged in harm doing against the other. In their studies, potential change in existing relations between the two groups was addressed in terms of its effect on willingness to forgive. Specifically, an apology that was said to have been offered to Israeli Arabs by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu was perceived as more insincere when offered at a time when the status of Arabs might improve (conditions were unstable due to the Arab Spring) than when status relations were perceived to be stable. Critically, under unstable conditions, the apology was perceived as insincere and manipulative, which undermined Arabs' willingness to forgive Israel for past harm.

9. As we have noted already, apologies have been conceived as conducive to and tested for their effectiveness in promoting forgiveness. In their contribution to this Special Issue, Berndsen, Hornsey and Wohl (2015) suggest that one reason for the discrepancy between the interpersonal and intergroup literatures on apology and forgiveness may be that collective apologies are relatively ingroup focused. They note that the collective apologies used in prior experimental paradigms have concentrated on the *offenders'* feelings about the transgression committed, and the *offenders'* intentions for the future.

In this new work, Berndsen et al. (2015, this Special Issue) propose that collective apologies will be more effective at facilitating trust, remorse, and forgiveness if they focus on the *victimized* group (rather than the offender group)—in particular on victimized group members' feelings (relative to offender group members' feelings). Two experimental studies are reported in which they manipulate the focus of a collective apology. These new studies do indeed provide more persuasive evidence that apology can promote intergroup forgiveness. As predicted, a victim-focused apology (relative to offender-focused apology) heightened perceptions of the offender groups' remorse, which in turn enhanced intergroup forgiveness, both directly and indirectly via trust in the offenders. Perceptions of remorse, empathy, and trust also uniquely increased intergroup forgiveness.

Conclusion

We hope that readers of this Special Issue of *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* will agree with us that though the study of intergroup forgiveness has a short past it should have a long future. Traditionally, the study of intergroup relations in social psychology has prioritized one dependent measure – outgroup attitudes, or prejudice, and much has been learned from this focus. Yet, attitudes might not be the most important outcome for groups that have been locked in conflict and who have engaged in unilateral or bilateral atrocities. Positive attitudes might not even be necessary for future peace, where 'liking' outgroup members might be less important than respecting them, learning to take their perspective, trusting, and ultimately forgiving them.

The papers in this Special Issue help us to look ahead to anticipate what kinds of future research will be most fruitful. First, all the papers in this Special Issue on Intergroup Forgiveness focus on *outgroup forgiveness* (but see the contribution to this Special Issue by Klar and Schori-Eyal (2015) for a novel conception and measurement of *mutual* intergroup forgiveness). Inspired by the contribution by Rotella, Richeson and McAdams (2015, this Special Issue), who examined the consequences of perpetrator groups' engagement with their prior wrongdoing for victim group members' forgiveness, a valuable avenue for future research would be to address factors that might lead young members of historical perpetrator groups to engage in such productive redemption narratives. Specifically, if contemporary Turks, Cambodians, Nigerians and Tutsis are prompted to consider their own lessons and improvement following the genocides and massacres that took place within Armenia, Cambodia, Biafra and Rwanda respectively, would such narratives result in forgiveness of members of their own national *ingroup* for past atrocities? That is, are similar factors involved in forgiving historical ingroup members, compared with forgiveness for harm done by outgroups? What consequences ensue, for example, for national pride and group

identification? Some initial work suggests that forgiving one's own ingroup for its past harm doing entails similar processes to forgiving an outgroup for its harm to the ingroup (Wohl & Branscombe, 2009), but there are likely to be different moderators involved in the two cases.

Second, we should be cautious about accepting forgiveness, notwithstanding that it appears to be an act of strength, as uniformly positive and desirable. Wenzel and Okimoto (2015, this Special Issue) report that, for members of low status groups, forgiveness is associated with reduced perceptions of injustice. A parallel might be drawn with work on intergroup contact and prejudice reduction, where recent research has warned that for members of some subordinate groups positive contact (such as outgroup friendship) with members of the dominant group may have an unwanted 'sedative' effect, dulling minority members' sense of injustice and their willingness to take collective active to challenge inequality (see Dixon, Levine, Reicher & Durrheim, 2012).

To conclude, in focusing this Special Issue on intergroup forgiveness, we do not wish to assert the supremacy of intergroup forgiveness over, for example, trust or other related concepts. We simply sought to bring together a set of papers that illustrate the ferment in the field, the importance of the issues raised for a wide range of conflicts, and how a better understanding of forgiveness between groups may help us, ultimately, to improve intergroup relations and resolve enduring intergroup conflicts. The fresh insights provided by the authors of the contributions in this Special Issue make us confident that there will be a rich body of future research on the antecedents and consequences of intergroup forgiveness, as well as the mediating and moderating processes involved. This new wave of research will ensure that future comprehensive analyses of intergroup conflict, from a range of disciplines including social psychology, will not be possible without referring to a substantial body of theoretical and empirical work on how, when, why, and with what consequences members of different groups do or do not forgive each other for past transgressions.

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