What do I Care? Perceived Ingroup Responsibility and Dehumanization as Predictors of Empathy Felt for the Victim Group

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What do I Care? Perceived Ingroup Responsibility and Dehumanization as Predictors of Empathy Felt for the Victim Group

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This research examined the effects of reminders of ingroup responsibility for past wrongdoings on perception of ingroup responsibility and victim dehumanization as predictors of empathy. Two experiments set in different intergroup contexts found that reminders of ingroup responsibility generated empathy through perception of ingroup responsibility and deflected empathy through subtle victim dehumanization. In Experiment 1, set in the context of indigenous–non-indigenous relations in Chile ($N = 124$), it was found that reminders of ingroup (vs. individual) responsibility generated empathy by increasing a perception of ingroup responsibility and deflected it through decreased attribution of secondary emotions to the victim group. Experiment 2 replicated the effects in a different context, the recent 1992–1995 war in Bosnia ($N = 158$). Reminders of ingroup responsibility (vs. no reminders) generated empathy by increasing a perception of ingroup responsibility and deflected it through decreased attribution of secondary emotions to the victim group. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

KEYWORDS dehumanization, empathy, ingroup responsibility, intergroup conflict

After grave suffering has been inflicted on others, what is a helpful psychological response that might restore damaged intergroup relations and eventually enable reconciliation? Recent findings suggest that empathy—a capacity to be affected by the emotional experience of the other (Vetlesen, 2005)—constitutes

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an important predictor of forgiveness by the victim group (Čehajić, Brown, & Castano, 2008) and a desire to provide reparations for ingroup misdeeds (Brown & Čehajić, 2008). Both forgiveness and reparation, in turn, enable restoration of conflict relations (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004; Tutu, 1999). So, if empathy is a desired and helpful response since it promotes reconciliatory processes, which socio-psychological conditions could generate or deflect an emotion of being moved by suffering inflicted by the ingroup's harmful actions?

In situations of ingroup immoral behaviour, perceiving the ingroup to be responsible for the harm inflicted on others constitutes a necessary condition for various group-based emotions including empathy (see Branscombe & Doosje, 2004, for a review). If one does not acknowledge ingroup responsibility for past wrongdoings, there is no psychological basis to experience any emotional reaction on the basis of ingroup moral violations (Cohen, 2001). However, when reminded of ingroup responsibility for some grave harm inflicted on others, group members may attempt to defend the self and/or the ingroup from ingroup responsibility using psychological mechanisms. One such mechanism is dehumanization of those who have been victimized (Bandura, 1990; Cohen, 2001; Vetlesen, 2005). Recent findings by Castano and Giner-Sorolla (2006) suggest that awareness of ingroup responsibility for suffering inflicted on others can elicit victim dehumanization—particularly in terms of emotions they are perceived as being capable of feeling. However, there still remains an open empirical question of how victim dehumanization, as a post-violence defensive strategy, is related to the moral emotion of empathy. In this paper, we argue that feelings of empathy felt for the victim group are lessened once members of the victim group are perceived to be less human. We hypothesize that reminders of ingroup responsibility will *generate* empathy by increasing perception of ingroup responsibility and *undermine* it through victim dehumanization. Two experimental studies conducted in different intergroup contexts (Chile and Bosnia-Herzegovina) examined the above hypotheses.

Empathy and intergroup reconciliation

Even though the personal self may not have been involved in perpetration of group crimes, group members can indeed experience various emotional states and act accordingly (Branscombe & Doosje, 2004). One such emotion, important for effective intergroup reconciliation, is empathy.

In intergroup conflict situations, empathy is typically considered as a pro-social emotional response whose aim is the restoration of social relations with an outgroup (Batson et al., 1997). Recent research conducted in a post-conflict context has shown that empathy constitutes an important basis for two important reconciliatory processes: an increased willingness and readiness to forgive the perpetrator group for its past misdeeds (Čehajić et al., 2008), and a desire to provide reparations for the ingroup's negative behaviour (Brown & Čehajić, 2008). Hence, an ability and willingness to try to understand those affected and to be moved by their plight and suffering generate conditions important for sustainable and effective intergroup reconciliation (Batson, 1998; Halpern & Weinstein, 2004; Lederach, 1997; Vetlesen, 2005).

Although research has shown that empathy is implicated in intergroup reconciliation processes, little work has to date examined factors that might promote or undermine it. In the present paper, we seek to examine this important question.

Predictors of empathy

Perception of ingroup responsibility—a positive predictor of empathy In the context of ingroup immoral behaviour, perception of ingroup responsibility for past wrongdoings inflicted on others constitutes an important basis for any emotional and moral response (Branscombe & Doosje, 2004). For example, group members are less likely to be moved by

others' suffering if they do not believe/accept/acknowledge that their ingroup is responsible for the actions that harmed another group. A more likely psychological response is denial of ingroup responsibility (Cohen, 2001) and an inability to take the perspective of those who have been victimized (Čehajić & Brown, 2008; Manzi & González, 2007). Indeed, acknowledgement of ingroup responsibility and corresponding moral emotions are not an automatic response to being reminded of ingroup responsibility for past misdeeds, as people are motivated to perceive their group in a positive light (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and to avoid any self- or ingroup-oriented distress (Bandura, 1999). In conclusion, when reminded of ingroup transgressions, people can respond in different ways: they can either acknowledge ingroup responsibility for harmful actions and eventually experience empathic concern for the victims (*moral engagement path*), or they can defend themselves against a perception of ingroup responsibility and avoid being moved by others' suffering (*moral disengagement path*).

Defences against ingroup responsibility Unfortunately, a more common reaction to reminders of ingroup responsibility is of a defensive nature. People are more likely to refuse incorporation of negative elements into their group's collective identity in order to maintain a positive group (self) image and/or inhibit any potential emotional distress. Consequently, group members might engage in denial of their group's negative behaviour (Cohen, 2001), legitimization of their ingroup's actions (e.g. Branscombe & Miron, 2004; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006), or simply claim that the 'current' ingroup is not *the one* which committed those horrible things (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998). In addition, members of perpetrator groups are also inclined to perceive that they, and not the victim group, have suffered the most (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004; Manzi & González, 2007; Noor, Brown, González, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008). An increased use of such 'competitive victimhood' discourse by perpetrators can serve as a strategy to reduce the sense of culpability and hence relieve them of their moral burden (Ther, 2006).

Finally, and maybe most tragically, dehumanization of those who are victimized can inhibit self or ingroup-oriented distress not only before but also after the misconduct (Bandura, 1999; Kelman, 1973). Recent research by Castano and Giner-Sorolla (2006) investigated the phenomena of dehumanization as an effect of reminders of ingroup responsibility for past atrocities. Across three studies in two different countries (Great Britain and the USA), using different groups (aliens, Aborigines, and American Indians) as victims of atrocities committed by the ingroup, Castano and Giner-Sorolla (2006) found that reminders of ingroup responsibility for past atrocities elicited derogation of the victims in terms of emotions they (the victims) were capable of feeling. For instance, it was found that white Americans, who were presented with accounts of massacres of American Indians by Europeans, as opposed to milder accounts of relations between the two groups, estimated American Indians to be less capable of feelings that are considered uniquely human. In other words, group members who were reminded of atrocities committed by their ingroup perceived the victims as somewhat less-human in an implicit (rather than direct) fashion by attributing to them fewer secondary emotions.

Victim dehumanization—a negative predictor of empathy Theory and evidence on victim dehumanization through attribution of secondary emotions suggests that denying humanness to others is a potential psychological response to being reminded of ingroup responsibility for past wrongdoings (Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006). However, how such victim dehumanization, as a post-violence defensive strategy, is related to moral emotion of empathy remains unexamined.

Building on the theory of moral disengagement strategy (Bandura, 1990, 1999), it could be predicted that once victims are dehumanized, hence stripped of human qualities, participants

who identify with the perpetrator group will be less likely to experience compassion. In other words, feelings of empathy felt for victims can be undermined when the victim group is perceived to be less human. So, recognizing the other as human beings with hopes, concerns, etc. might be a prerequisite for perceiving and being moved by the others' pain and suffering (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004). When the morality of the ingroup is brought into question, group members can protect themselves by dehumanizing those who have been victimized and, as a consequence, feel less empathy.

Measuring victim dehumanization Endorsement of blatant outgroup dehumanization beliefs might not be a socially acceptable response and hence may be unlikely to occur. Therefore, in this research, we decided to focus on a more subtle dehumanization measure: the attribution of certain emotions to the outgroup. The capacity to feel secondary emotions is thought to be one of the characteristics that make us human (Leyens et al., 2000) and is not simply a matter of higher emotional or cognitive capacities (Demoulin et al., 2004). Examples of primary emotions are anger, fear, and pleasure while secondary emotions include pride, love, guilt, and remorse. Both types of emotions can be positive and negative. However, it is the secondary emotions that are considered to be uniquely human (Demoulin et al., 2004). Therefore, secondary emotions define the 'essence' of what it means to be human (Leyens et al., 2000). Numerous studies have demonstrated that secondary emotions (independent of their valence) are typically selected more often for the ingroup than for the outgroup (Leyens et al., 2001). Leyens et al. (2000) call this phenomenon infrahumanization and regard it as a subtle form of dehumanization.

Research on infrahumanization has characteristically focused on the extent to which secondary emotions are *differentially* attributed to the ingroup in comparison to the outgroup. The measure of infrahumanization is typically a relative index of attribution of secondary emotions to the ingroup as compared to the outgroup. However, in this research, we followed the logic suggested by Castano and Giner-Sorolla (2006). They compared how the outgroup is perceived in different conditions, rather than comparing the ingroup to the outgroup. Because of the focus of our hypotheses, we decided to use this outgroup-centred measure—the attribution of secondary emotions to the outgroup.

The above reasoning led to the following hypotheses: participants exposed to reminders of ingroup responsibility will be more likely to perceive the ingroup to be responsible for harmful actions inflicted on others and consequently feel more empathy for the victim group (H1—*moral engagement hypothesis*). However, when reminded of ingroup responsibility, participants would also be more likely to dehumanize the victims through attribution of fewer secondary emotions which, in turn, would undermine empathy felt for the victims (H2—*moral disengagement hypothesis*). In other words, we hypothesize two parallel but conflicting mediating processes intervening between reminders of ingroup responsibility and empathy for victims.

Study 1

Research context

The first study was set in Chile examining psychological reactions by non-indigenous Chileans regarding the mistreatment of the largest and culturally most significant indigenous group (Mapuche) in the 19th century. The Mapuche fought against Spaniards for over 300 hundred years and were finally defeated only in the late 19th century. The immediate impact of their subjugation was starvation and disease (Bengoa, 2000; Bengoa & Coaut, 1997; Cornejo & Morales, 1999; Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2002). In the post-conquest period, the Mapuche have suffered further infringements of their land rights, suppression of their culture, and severe economic and social deprivation. Mapuche herding, trading, and agriculture economies have been destroyed. Recently, there has been an attempt by the Chilean government to redress some of the injustices experienced by the Mapuche in the past. For example, the language spoken by the Mapuche has been validated by including it in the curriculum in the elementary

schools in the Temuco area (Ministerio de Planificación y Cooperación, 2003; Ministerio del Interior, 2008). However, the disputes over land still continue in the present. Mapuche representatives have become active in protests by seeking recognition for their cultural and land rights. Sometimes these protests end in violent clashes with agents of the state or private employers. As a consequence, non-indigenous Chileans have rather ambivalent feelings towards the Mapuche (Saiz, 2002).

The study comprised two conditions in which the level of responsibility was manipulated. In one condition (individual responsibility) only few members of the ingroup (non-indigenous Chileans) were seen to be responsible for the plight inflicted on the Mapuche, while in the other condition (ingroup responsibility) the entire ingroup was made to seem responsible. One commonly used strategy of avoiding a perception of ingroup responsibility for collective crimes is to blame a few heinous individuals by appealing to authority and/or government responsibility (Cohen, 2001). Moreover, perceiving an entire group to be responsible for collective crimes is sometimes considered to be not only inappropriate but also logically unfounded (Lewis, 1948). Therefore, we judged that inclusion of such an individual responsibility condition would be a plausible psychological mechanism for avoiding a perception of ingroup responsibility.

Method

Participants One hundred and twenty-four psychology undergraduate students in Chile took part in the study on a voluntary basis (73 M, 48 F, 3 unspecified). The mean age was 21.26 years ($SD = 2.02$). All participants self-categorized themselves as non-indigenous Chileans.

Procedure Participants were told that they were participating in a study on attitudes of non-indigenous Chileans towards indigenous peoples in Chile, particularly towards the Mapuche. Afterwards they read a short description of Mapuche history and were made aware of the consequences Mapuche people experienced after the arrival of non-indigenous people such that their land has been taken away from them. Depending on the condition, the remaining part of the story varied. In the individual responsibility condition, participants were told that it was few non-indigenous Chileans who were responsible for the things inflicted on Mapuche. In the ingroup responsible condition, participants read that it was the responsibility of all non-indigenous Chileans.

After reading this information, participants responded to a short questionnaire containing the dependent measures. Once finished, participants were thanked and debriefed.

Measures *Perception of ingroup responsibility* was measured with a single question: 'How much do you believe non-indigenous Chileans are responsible for what has happened to Mapuche people in the past?' This question was answered on a 100% scale, ranging in decimals of 10 from 0% to 100%.

Attribution of emotions was measured with 16 emotion words which were derived from Demoulin et al. (2004). The following emotions were used: happiness, euphoria, pleasure, and joy (primary positive emotions); sadness, disgust, anger, and fear (primary negative emotions); tenderness, hope, admiration, and love (secondary positive emotions); and remorse, guilt, shame, and resentment (secondary negative emotions). Participants were asked to indicate 'the extent to which you believe Mapuche people, in general, are likely to feel the given emotion?' on a scale from 1 to 7. Final scales for attribution of primary and secondary emotions were reliable ($\alpha = .86, .85$, respectively).

Empathy was measured with three items aiming to capture emotional empathic experience of being moved by Mapuche suffering: 'I try to imagine what Mapuche people have gone through in their life,' 'I can empathize with what Mapuche people have experienced,' 'I find myself moved by the accounts of suffering by Mapuche people.' Reliability of the final scale was satisfactory ($\alpha = .75$).

All items, except for the ingroup responsibility item, were answered on a 7-point Likert-type

scale ranging from 1—strongly disagree to 7—strongly agree. Finally, students gave some demographic information.

Results

Results will be presented in the following order: a) manipulation effects on perception of ingroup responsibility and on attribution of emotions, and b) SEM analysis of the predictive model on predictors of empathy.

Manipulation effects To test whether the manipulation of the extent to which the ingroup versus few individuals were held responsible for the Mapuche suffering had any significant effect on participants' perception of ingroup responsibility, an ANOVA was carried out. This yielded a significant main effect of the manipulation on perception of group responsibility, $F(1, 121) = 7.17$, $p = .009$, indicating that participants who read an account of the ingroup responsibility for the Mapuche mistreatment agreed that their group was more responsible ($M = 60.48$, $SD = 2.52$) in comparison with participants who read that it was the responsibility of just a few ingroup members ($M = 50.06$, $SD = 2.89$); $t(121) = 2.68$, $p < .005$.

To examine the effects of the manipulation on both attribution and valence of emotions, a 3-factor mixed ANOVA was carried out, with experimental condition as a between subjects' factors. The analysis yielded marginally significant 2-way interaction effect, $F(1, 121) = 3.09$, $p = .08$, indicating that participants attributed fewer secondary emotions to the outgroup once they learned that their entire group had been responsible for their mistreatment ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 1.31$) in comparison to participants in the individual responsibility condition ($M = 5.68$, $SD = 1.08$), $t = 3.25$, $p < .001$. The effect of condition on attribution of primary emotions was not significant, $t = 1.79$, $p < .10$. Thus, the prediction that group members will be more likely to engage in subtle victim dehumanization once they were reminded of ingroup responsibility was supported.

Predictors of empathy To examine the relationships between perception of ingroup responsibility and attribution of secondary emotions with empathy, we tested a structural model using EQS software (see Table 1 for correlations between measured variables). In order to include the manipulation's effects, we created a dummy variable where the individual responsibility condition was coded as 0 and the ingroup responsibility condition as 1. This contrast was specified as an independent variable predicting empathy via perception of ingroup responsibility and attribution of secondary emotions. It was predicted that in the ingroup (vs. individual) responsibility condition, there would be an increase in perception of ingroup responsibility and a decrease in attribution of secondary emotions to the victim group, which then, in turn, would positively predict empathy.

This hypothesized model fitted the data very well, with a small and unreliable chi-square value, $\chi^2(2) = 1.80$, $p = .34$. Moreover, other fit indices also indicated an excellent fit: $CFI = 1.00$, $GFI = .99$, $RMSEA < .001$. All standardized

Table 1. Correlations between measured variables, Study 1

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Experimental condition	—	.26***	–.28***	–.02***
2. Perception of ingroup responsibility		—	.00[n.s.]	.48***
3. Attribution of secondary emotions to the outgroup			—	.29***
4. Empathy				—
M				
SD				

Notes: $N = 124$.
[n.s.] $p > .10$; *** $p < .001$; two-tailed.

residuals were well below .20 and modification indices (Lagrange multiplier tests) indicated that adding any of the remaining paths or dropping any predicted ones would not reliably improve the fit of the model. Standardized parameter estimates are presented in Figure 1. As can be seen, there was a significant main effect of the experimental manipulation on the perception of ingroup responsibility, $\beta = .26$, $p < .05$, and on attribution of secondary emotions to the victim group, $\beta = -.32$, $p < .05$. As expected, both perception of ingroup responsibility and attribution of secondary emotions increased empathy ($\beta = .48$, $p < .05$; $\beta = .25$, $p < .05$, respectively). In order to test whether the effects of experimental manipulation on empathy were significantly mediated by both the perception of ingroup responsibility and attribution of secondary emotions, we performed Sobel tests indicating significant mediations ($z = 2.43$, $p = .01$; $z = -2.32$, $p = .01$).[1]

Discussion

To briefly summarize the main results, both hypotheses were supported: reminders of ingroup (vs. individual) responsibility increased perception of ingroup responsibility and decreased attribution of secondary emotions to the victim group which, in turn, generated empathy. As expected, participants in the ingroup responsibility condition perceived the ingroup to be responsible for past wrongdoings but also attributed fewer secondary emotions to the victim group. Thus, people, when exposed to group identity threatening situations, tended to engage in subtle victim dehumanization through attribution of fewer secondary emotions.

In addition, both perception of ingroup responsibility and attribution of secondary emotions positively predicted empathy felt for the victims. This finding is in line with the prediction that being moved by suffering of others is indeed associated with perceiving the ingroup to be responsible for harmful actions and also with perceiving the victim group as human beings. In other words, decreased perception of ingroup responsibility and attribution of fewer secondary emotions to the outgroup undermine the development of compassion for the plight of others.

These findings provide the first empirical support that subtle victim dehumanization impedes attentiveness to the situation of victims. By viewing the victims as being less capable of experiencing uniquely human emotions—hence by looking at them from a less human

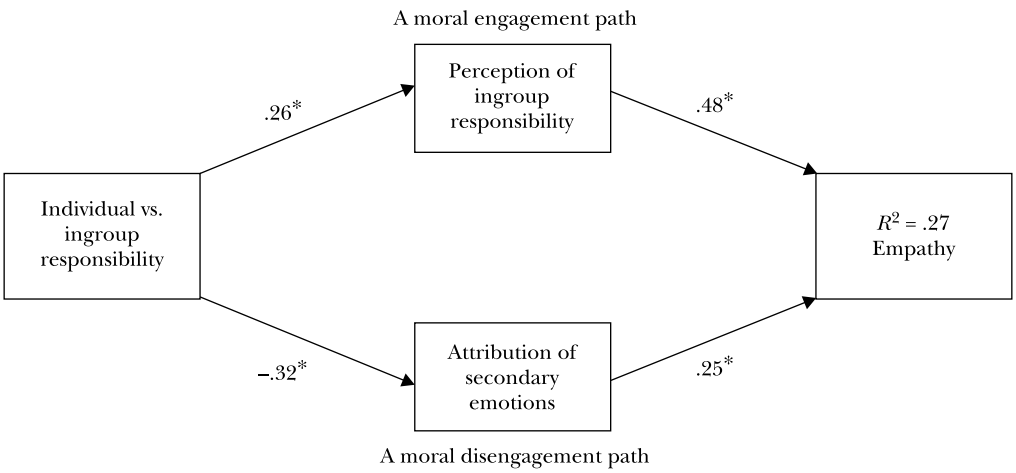

Figure 1. Predictors of empathy: effects of perception of ingroup responsibility and attribution of secondary emotions on empathy felt for the victim group.
Note: * $p < .05$.

perspective—members of the perpetrator group spare the self from being affected by symptoms and results of pain infliction. In doing so, the victims' suffering and pain remain theirs and not ours.

We will now turn to the next study, which used a similar design to further illuminate the impact of reminders of ingroup responsibility on victim dehumanization.

Study 2

Research context

Study 2 was designed in a similar vein to study 1. The purpose of this study was to examine how no reminders versus reminders of ingroup responsibility relate to perception of ingroup responsibility and victim dehumanization as predictors of empathy. The foremost aim of study 2 was to re-test the hypothesis that perception of ingroup responsibility and attribution of secondary emotions to the victim group would predict empathy and hence replicate the findings of study 1 in a different context. This study was conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH) using the recent intergroup conflict as the research setting. It comprised a condition in which participants were not reminded that their ingroup was responsible for the harm inflicted on others but simply asked to fill out the questionnaire (no reminders of ingroup responsibility), and a condition where participants were reminded of ingroup responsibility for past wrongdoings. Given the fact that the conflict in BIH occurred not that long ago (1992–1995) and that the public is continuously presented with issues of collective responsibility, we judged that employment of the same manipulation as in study 1 might not be as successful as in intergroup conflict contexts where people might not have such a precise knowledge about the past. Instead, then, we decided to either remind people of their ingroup responsibility for past wrongdoings or simply not to mention it at all.

The atrocities committed by Serbs on Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) in the period of 1992–1995 were the worst of their kind to have occurred in Europe since the Second World War (Malcolm, 1994). Those years were characterized by mass killings, rapes, deportation, and even genocidal acts, particularly of Bosnian Muslims. The name 'Srebrenica' should suffice as a reminder of what went on at that time. In July 1995, over 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys from the age seven were systematically massacred by Serbian forces, two years after the town had been declared a UN 'safe-zone'. The Srebrenica massacre became a symbol of the Bosnian war. On February 26, 2007 the International Court of Justice confirmed that the Srebrenica massacre was an act of genocide. It was against this backdrop that study 2 was conducted.

Method

Participants One hundred and fifty-eight participants (Male 54, Female 102, 2 missing) from a high school in Nevesinje (a town in Republic of Srpska entity) participated in this study on a voluntary basis. The mean age was 17.04 ($SD = 1.17$). All participants identified themselves as Serbs. All teachers had the authority to act *in loco parentis* to give permission to the students to take part.

Procedure Participants were asked to fill out a series of questions regarding the post-war situation and their attitudes towards other ethnic groups in the country. Before proceeding to the questions, half of the participants read an interview abstract where two young people talked about the past and, in particular, about the group's atrocities while focusing on the perception of ingroup responsibility for the committed wrongdoings. The goal of reading this abstract was to remind participants of ingroup responsibility for the committed atrocities using as realistic an approach as possible. We judged that presenting our participants with a realistic discussion between people their age regarding the ingroup atrocities would evoke a closer psychological identification, in comparison to presenting a usually employed newspaper abstract. The other half of the participant group was not reminded of ingroup responsibility. They were simply asked to answer a series of questions regarding the recent intergroup conflict between 1992 and 1995. Afterwards, participants responded to the questionnaire containing

the dependent measures. Finally, they were thanked and debriefed.

Measures *Perception of ingroup responsibility* was measured with the following three items: 'I consider my group to be responsible for the things that happened during the war,' 'I think that members of my group are also responsible for the misdeeds committed during the war,' and 'My group should also feel responsible for the things that happened during the war.' These three items formed a reliable scale ($\alpha = .84$).

Attribution of emotions was measured using exactly the same approach as in study 1. Participants were asked to indicate for each 16 emotion words the degree to which they believe members of other groups in BIH are capable of feeling them. Again, an outgroup-focused measure was used. The reliability of final scales for attribution of primary and secondary emotions was satisfactory ($\alpha = .83, .85$, respectively).

Empathy was measured with the same three items as in study 1, together with two additional items: 'Sometimes I think of how members of other groups might have felt during the war' and 'I am touched by the loss and suffering experienced by members of other groups in BIH.' These five items formed a reliable scale ($\alpha = .87$).

Results

Results will be presented in the following order: a) effects of the manipulation on perception of ingroup responsibility and attribution of emotions, and b) SEM analysis of predictors of empathy.

Manipulation effects In order to test whether reminding participants of past ingroup atrocities indeed increased participants' perception of ingroup responsibility in comparison to no reminders of ingroup responsibility, ANOVA with condition as a between-subjects factor was conducted. The analysis revealed a significant main effect, $F(1, 154) = 4.32$, $p < .05$. Participants in the reminders condition perceived their ingroup to be more responsible for the atrocities ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.98$) in comparison to participants in the no reminders condition ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.76$).

To examine the manipulation's effects on attribution and valence of emotions, a three-factor mixed ANOVA with experimental condition as a between-subjects factor, type (primary vs. secondary emotions) and valence of emotions as within-subjects factors was carried out. The predicted two-way interaction between condition and type of emotion was not significant, $F(1, 154) = .05$, $p = .83$. However, to provide a more focused examination of the efficacy of the manipulation, we nevertheless looked at the simple effects of experimental condition on attribution of primary and secondary emotions separately. This revealed a significant effect of condition on attribution of secondary emotions, $t = 2.38$, $p < .05$: as predicted, participants in the reminders condition attributed fewer secondary emotions to the outgroup ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.45$) in comparison to participants in the no reminders condition ($M = 5.41$, $SD = 1.32$). The effect of the manipulation was not significant on attribution of primary emotions, $t = 1.57$, $p < .20$ ($M_1 = 5.61$; $M_2 = 5.29$).

Predictors of empathy As in study 1, we wanted to examine the relationships between perception of ingroup responsibility and victim dehumanization with empathy using EQS (see Table 2 for correlations between measured variables). In order to include the manipulation effects, we created a dummy variable where the 'no reminders of ingroup responsibility' condition was coded as 0 and the 'reminders of ingroup responsibility' condition as 1. This contrast was specified as an exogenous variable predicting empathy via perception of ingroup responsibility and attribution of secondary emotions. It was predicted that in the reminders (vs. no reminders) condition, there would be an increase in perception of ingroup responsibility and a decrease in attribution of secondary emotions to the victim group, which then, in turn, would significantly predict empathy.

This hypothesized model fitted the data well, with a marginally significant chi-square value, $\chi^2(2) = 5.92$, $p = .06$. However, Lagrange multiplier tests suggested that adding a path between the experimental manipulation and empathy would significantly improve the fit

of the model ($p = .05$). Such a new modified model fitted the data very well with a small and non-reliable chi-square value, $\chi^2(1) = 2.21$, $p = .14$. In addition, other fit indices indicated a good fit: *CFI* = .973; *GFI* = .993; *RMSEA* = .08. Standardized parameter estimates are presented in Figure 2. As can be seen, there was a significant main effect of the manipulation contrast on the perception of ingroup responsibility, $\beta = .17$, $p < .05$, and on attribution of secondary emotions to the victim group, $\beta = -.19$, $p < .05$. As expected, both factors predicted empathy significantly (perception of ingroup responsibility: $\beta = .17$, $p < .05$; attribution of secondary emotions: $\beta = .26$, $p < .05$). In addition, reminders of ingroup responsibility (vs. no reminders) yielded a significant effect on empathy, $\beta = .16$, $p < .05$. As in study 1, the effect of experimental manipulation on empathy was significantly me-diated by perception of ingroup responsibility ($z = 1.83$, $p = .06$) and attribution of secondary emotions ($z = -1.97$, $p = .04$).[2]

Discussion

The pattern of results emerging from this study provided further support for the prediction that perception of ingroup responsibility and subtle victim dehumanization act as significant predictors of empathy felt for the victim group. In addition, perceiving the ingroup responsible for past wrongdoings and the victim group as

Table 2. Correlations between measured variables, Study 2

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Experimental condition	—	.16*	–.19*	.14†
2. Perception of ingroup responsibility		—	.08$^{n.s.}$	.22***
3. Attribution of secondary emotions to the outgroup			—	.24***
4. Empathy				—
M				
SD				

Notes: $N = 158$.
$^{n.s.}$ $p > .10$; † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$; two-tailed.

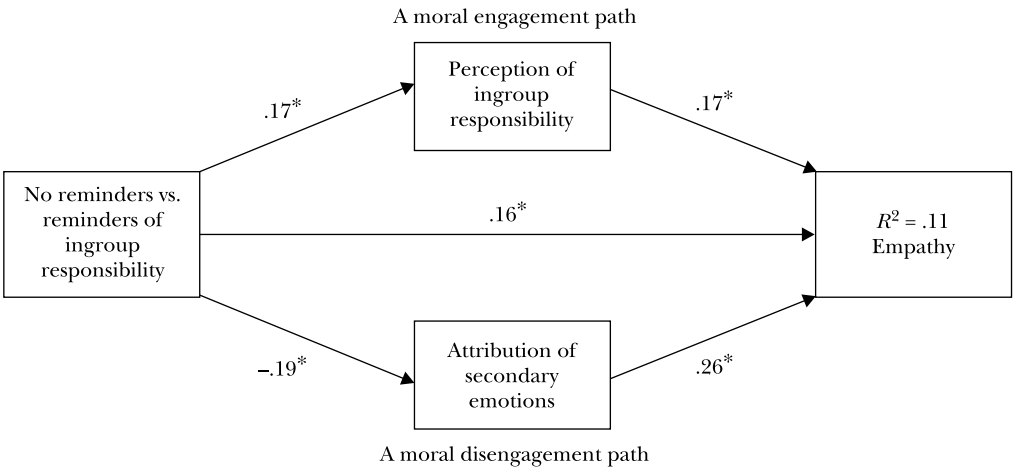

Figure 2. Predictors of empathy: effects of perception of ingroup responsibility and attribution of secondary emotions on empathy felt for the victim group.
Note: * $p < .05$.

lacking secondary emotions is stronger when participants are reminded of ingroup responsibility versus when they are not reminded. In other words, after Serbian adolescents were made aware of their group misdeeds and the issues of ingroup responsibility, they perceived their group to be more responsible and at the same time attributed fewer secondary emotions to the victim group than when they were not presented with a reminder of ingroup responsibility for past atrocities. The relationships with empathy identified by the structural equation analysis largely replicated the findings of study 1. Unlike in study 1, study 2 revealed a direct path between reminders of ingroup responsibility and empathy felt for the victim group. One plausible explanation for such a direct path could be the fact that Bosnian conflict has occurred only recently and that is still fairly vivid in peoples' minds, hence having a greater potential to induce empathic concern for the victims.

General discussion

These two studies tested the hypothesis that reminders of responsibility for atrocities for which the ingroup was responsible would simultaneously lead to enhanced perception of ingroup responsibility and victim dehumanization, both acting as significant predictors of empathy. Two studies in two different contexts (Chile and Bosnia) found evidence for this hypothesis. These findings provide novel evidence on victim dehumanization as a significant predictor of empathy and further experimental evidence that victim dehumanization can indeed be a consequence of being reminded of ingroup responsibility. Here, it must be noted that sole reminders of ingroup responsibility did not have a direct effect on felt empathy but rather exhibited their effect through two parallel and antagonistic processes (to be discussed later).

These results support the idea that denying victims a full human status (even if only subtly) allows people to disengage from the pain and suffering inflicted to others and thus to avoid feeling empathy (Bandura, 1999). These findings suggest that perceiving others in human terms constitutes the basis for empathy—an ability and willingness to understand and look at victims' experiences from their perspective (Batson, 1998; Halpern & Weinstein, 2004). Such an ability and willingness to try to understand those affected by the evil committed by the ingroup is primarily a question of empathy which, on the other hand, constitutes an important basis for sustainable and effective intergroup reconciliation (Brown & Čehajić, 2008; Tutu, 1999). Lack of such empathy was precisely what the perpetrator was lacking during the conduct of aggression and hence reestablishment of this psychological mechanism is an important constituent for restoration of conflict relations. In addition to this, recent findings by Zebel, Zimmerman, Viki, and Doosje (2008) showed that victim dehumanization is negatively related to yet another important reconciliatory process, namely support for reparation policies.

The findings provided by these two studies suggest that individuals presented with reminders of ingroup responsibility can embark on two parallel and somewhat conflicting paths, one being a moral engagement and the other a moral disengagement path. The absence of a significant relationship between perception of ingroup responsibility and victim dehumanization indeed suggest these two processes to be independent of each other (see Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006; Zebel et al., 2008). Presumably, some group members are psychologically ready or willing to perceive the ingroup to be responsible for committed misdeeds which, in turn, facilitates moral responses to group's moral violations such as guilt and empathy (e.g. Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2006; Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006). These moral emotional responses, in turn, can provoke endorsement of reparation behaviour for the victims (e.g. Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Brown & Čehajić, 2008). On the other hand, when faced with reminders of ingroup responsibility, other group members can also decide to morally disengage from the implications of their group's behaviour and hence avoid feeling distressed. Thus, reminders of ingroup responsibility seem to have a capacity to facilitate both a moral engagement and disengagement path.

A focus on ingroup responsibility facilitates both a positive and a negative psychological reaction. So, what does this tell us? Are reminders of ingroup responsibility for atrocities committed in the past then *efficient* for restoration of intergroup relations given that they seem to 'evoke' antagonistic processes? We believe that reminders of ingroup responsibility *are* indeed a way of coming to terms with the past marked by collective violence they facilitate moral responses which, in turn, benefit the victims. However, if we want to minimize the use of defence mechanisms, such as victim derogation, one should try to individualize the suffering of victims. We could imagine that being exposed to *individual* stories of harm and loss while at the same being aware of collective violence perpetrated against a particular group (by one's own group) will not facilitate victim derogation. If reminders of ingroup responsibility are coupled with harm experienced by specific individuals, then perception of ingroup responsibility might only lead to moral responses (e.g. guilt and empathy) and not to victim derogation. However, this assumption needs to be investigated in the future.

In addition to this, we would also like to discuss the question: which socio-psychological conditions might determine (moderate) whether individuals will embark on the moral engagement or disengagement path? It could be hypothesized that low identifiers might be less threatened by their group's moral violations and hence more likely to morally engage with implications of their group's behaviour in comparison with high identifiers (e.g. Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Roccas et al., 2006). In addition, individuals with extensive contact with outgroup members seem to develop more empathy (Čehajić et al., 2008; Ensari & Miller, 2002; Harwood, Hewstone, Paolini, & Voci, 2005) and so might also be less likely to defend the self and/or the ingroup and hence be less likely to employ a use of moral disengagement strategies. Future research should aim to follow up these issues.

Another way of avoiding negative implications of reminders of ingroup responsibility could be by making people aware that they dehumanize others. It could be argued that making people aware of their own tendency to dehumanize others would lead to a need to restore one's own image. Hence, making people aware that they engaged in dehumanization of those who have suffered as a consequence of their group's actions might provoke endorsement for victim compensation in order to repair the distorted self image. If such an endorsement for reparation behaviour is motivated by the need for image restoration, then feelings of shame could potentially underlie this motivation (e.g. Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi & Čehajić, 2008). However, all these hypotheses require further experimental research. Such research might lead to valuable further insights and ultimately result in a useful integration of theories of intergroup emotions and theories of moral disengagement. The continued perpetration of barbaric and inhumane acts in Darfur, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere gives the need for such research with more than usual urgency.

Notes

1. In order to ensure that victim dehumanization in the ingroup responsibility condition was indeed a matter of attribution of fewer secondary emotions and not an attribution of fewer emotions in general, we tested a model in which we replaced attribution of secondary emotions with attribution of primary emotions. In line with our reasoning, such a model did not fit the data well with $\chi^2(2) = 5.01$, $p = .08$; $CFI = .930$; $GFI = .976$; $RMSEA = .12$.
2. As in study 1, we tested a model in which we replaced attribution of secondary emotions with attribution of primary emotions. This time, the model fitted the data well with $\chi^2(2) = 3.56$, $p = .17$; $CFI = .899$; $GFI = .989$; $RMSEA = .07$. However, and in line with our predictions, the effect of the experimental manipulation on empathy was not significantly mediated through attribution of primary emotions (Sobel test: $z = -1.28$; $p = .2$).

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