



# THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS

William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel

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## *The Role of Aversive Events in the Development of Intergroup Conflict*

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The purpose of this chapter<sup>1</sup> is to examine one set of potential antecedents of intergroup conflict—namely, the variables that can be traced to the aversive events experienced by members of one or both of the groups between which the conflict eventually develops. Before reviewing the literature, it is essential that some definitions and assumptions be outlined, for they reflect both the general theoretical orientation of the chapter and the way in which some specific substantive issues have been approached.

### **SOME DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

#### *Aversive Events*

By an *aversive event*, I refer to a circumstance that most people would avoid, escape from, or otherwise terminate. In placing events into this class, I have been guided by empirical evidence and common sense. Examples of aversive events are: being verbally or physically attacked (or being threatened by such attacks); being slighted or humiliated; losing income or property (through others' actions or natural causes); being obstructed in the gratification of basic needs or in the achievement of important goals (by social or nonsocial agents); observing that any of the above has occurred to others with whom one has a positive social/emotional bond; and so on.

Most, but not necessarily all, aversive events can be expected to lead to an increase in the level of physiological arousal. (I am referring to the fluctuations, especially in the sympathetic system, that can be detected and recorded by the familiar psychophysiological procedures.) However, increases in the level of arousal should not be equated with the phenomenologically distinct and reportable emotional states, such as anger or fear. I consider emotion to be a product of the cognitive labeling processes and the increase in the level of arousal (see Konečni, 1975a, 1975b, 1976–1977; Schachter, 1964).<sup>2</sup> Thus, some aversive events may not result in a distinct negative emotional state, despite the fact that they raise the level of arousal and that people would rather not be exposed to them (see Konečni & Sargent-Pollock, 1977). Prior research has shown that negative emotions, particularly anger, are most likely to occur when the source of the arousal-level increase is *social* in nature—that is, when the source is another human being (see Konečni, 1975a)—and the aversive event is “unjustifiable” or “arbitrary” (Cohen, 1955; Pastore, 1952).

Aversive events not only have an effect on the level of arousal and emotional state, but also represent information that affects thoughts and attitudes, including those concerning the members of groups other

than one's own. The latter effect is particularly likely in situations in which a person perceives an aversive event to be due to the actions of members of another group, however tenuous or imaginary the link. Thus, aversive events—both those that do and those that do not affect arousal level—may contribute to the development of conflict by establishing and maintaining negative attitudes toward other groups (see Berkowitz, 1972). Precisely the fact that aversive events are remembered and incorporated into the attitudinal structure may be responsible for their delayed effects on aggression and conflict. Actually, these delayed effects may also be mediated by the arousal-level fluctuations and emotional states, since thoughts can directly influence arousal level (for example, Bandura, 1973; Blatt, 1961; Konečni, 1975a). As suggested by Buss (1961) and experimentally demonstrated by Konečni (1975a), “after the anger subsides, there remain negative language responses, consisting of resentment [and] belief that others are threatening” (Buss, 1961, p. 13). In the present theoretical model, resentful thoughts and beliefs (hostility), unaccompanied by an arousal-level increase, would not be considered an emotion, by definition (see Konečni & Ebbesen, 1976a). However, the “evaluative bad aftertaste” may easily lead later to anger and aggression through the self-arousal mechanism (Konečni, 1975a, p. 100; see Konečni, 1976–1977, Experiment 5).

From the examples given, it is clear that I consider *frustrating* situations aversive. In fact, a more orthodox title of this chapter would have contained the term *frustration* instead of *aversive events*. I have avoided an emphasis on the concept of frustration for several reasons. First, although I shall examine some implications of the well-known frustration-aggression hypothesis (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939) for intergroup conflict, the chapter is not written from that theoretical perspective. Second, the concept of frustration is too narrow, in that frustration is clearly only one of many antecedents of aggression (which is important to the extent that aggressive actions are a nontrivial ingredient of conflict).<sup>3</sup> Third, I think that the important aspects of frustrating situations, as far as an increase in the probability of aggression is concerned, are those that characterize other aversive events—namely, an increase in the level of

arousal and the adoption of a negative emotional label. In short, by treating frustration as only one of many aversive events that increase the probability of aggression, I am suggesting that a theoretical position that focuses on arousal level and emotional states (such as anger) may provide a more accurate account of interpersonal aggression than does the frustration-aggression hypothesis.<sup>4</sup>

The loss of income and property, a real or imaginary threat of such a loss, and the failure of attempts to satisfy basic economic needs unequivocally qualify for membership in the class of aversive events. There are, in fact, good reasons for accepting the proposition that relative economic deprivation plays a very important role in the development of intergroup conflict. Whether or not the loss of income and property ought to be considered a “frustration,” as some authors have suggested, depends on whether one considers it useful to regard such loss as an instance of “interference” (with responses leading to security, comfort, and the like).<sup>5</sup> Other authors view frustration as resulting from (rather than being equivalent to) resource deprivation (for example, Foa, 1971); whereas still others regard relative deprivation as resulting from the “perception of frustrating circumstances” (Gurr, 1968, p. 255). In the present model, in which both frustration and deprivation are considered aversive events, it is immaterial whether deprivation is considered a precursor of frustration or vice versa, or whether they are considered synonymous.

### Groups

The concept of *group* is notoriously elusive. Shaw's (1971) compilation of definitions reveals a rather bewildering variety of criteria and distinctions proposed by different authors. From the various definitions, Shaw extracts the concept of *interaction* as central (see Manheim, 1960) and considers it isomorphic with the concept of *interpersonal communication* (Homans, 1950): by a *group* is meant a number of interacting and communicating individuals. Similarly, Deutsch (1973, Chapter 4) proposes that interaction is the main distinction between *quasi-groups* and *functioning groups*.

There are several problems with this and other attempts to identify the key feature of groups. First of all, it would seem that at least a few of the authors whose definitions were compiled would quite legitimately disagree with Shaw and consider other criteria more central. Second, Shaw's emphasis on interaction and communication among group members fails to take into account the reality of group research—that is, the way in which experiments on (even small) groups have actually been conducted. In much of this research, “group members” do not know, see, or talk to one another (see Steiner, 1974, p. 100). Third, it is clear that Shaw's criterion could be applicable only to quite small groups. Yet, both Shaw and other scholars have been reluctant to draw a sharp line between “small” and “large” groups, presumably because (a) it is not clear where to draw it, and (b) it is hoped that at least some theoretical abstractions would be valid regardless of group size (and thus regardless of the probability of interaction). With regard to (a), according to Shaw (1971, p. 4), a group with “thirty or more members is definitely a large group”; yet, at least some of the definitions of *small* groups he lists (especially those in terms of “organization” and “interdependency”) could well apply to tribes, races, or nations, as well as to other very large groups. As for (b), a relevant example is Deutsch's (1971) assumption that interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup, and international conflicts have some very similar characteristics (see Kriesberg, 1973).

To summarize, despite the careful definitional attempts by various authors (notably Deutsch, 1973), it is unclear how a *group* should be defined; what the key element of “groupness” is; what are small, as opposed to large, groups; or at what point groups stop being groups and become something else. I suggest that a definitional consensus is neither necessary nor possible, since “groupness” seems to be in the eye of the beholder (whether a “group member” or an outside observer). I shall use the term for anything from a dyad to a nation (see Goldschmidt, 1971, p. 286), guided by experimental and theoretical considerations and convenience, rather than definitional constraints, and implying only that all members of these pseudo-entities possess, or are *believed* to possess, at least one specifiable and relevant attribute in common (a given

spatial position, a common ancestry, a “common fate,” a particular skin color or passport, a membership in “Group A” or in “Rattlers”—to name just a few of the countless possible attributes). The division of people into groups in this sense is essentially a matter of perceptual and cognitive classification, a summary of evidence or belief that certain individuals (including oneself) possess a given set of attributes (see D. Campbell, 1958). Far more essential than what those attributes are and the seemingly futile discussions about whether, for example, a tribe is a group or “merely” an aggregate, a collectivity, or a category (see Deutsch, 1973; Mannheim, 1960) is the issue of how well a given theoretical formulation—for instance, regarding the antecedents of intergroup conflict—applies to “groups” of different sizes and characterized by different attributes.

From the standpoint of the present chapter, then, the division of individuals into groups reflects a process of classification by relevant attributes. Implicit in the previous comments is the assumption that the concept of group is useful mostly as a shorthand label (that indicates a high probability of possession of a given set of attributes by certain individuals) and a disagreement with the claim (as by Durkheim, 1898; Warriner, 1956) that a group is somehow “more” than the sum of the component individuals. The latter position is of long standing in sociology and anthropology (Durkheim, Simmel, Radcliffe-Brown) and it, or versions of it, is implicitly accepted by many of the social psychologists who study group “cohesion” and similar concepts.

F. Allport (1924) was among the first to challenge the Durkheimian view that groups are “real” (“one cannot stumble on a group”), whereas D. Campbell (1958), in a lucid analysis, suggested that groups may be entities *to a degree* and coined the term *entitativity* to express this idea. On the other hand, Slater (1966) pointed out that if one is not fixated on the “physical bodies,” a group is *less* than the sum of the component individuals, and that it is not a “collection of individuals . . . but only pieces of them: What we see of [an individual] in a given group is an arrangement of feelings, needs, and desires which in no respect constitute a representative sample of his personality” (p. 251).

Then there are the important points made by Berkowitz (1962):

Dealings between groups ultimately become problems for the psychology of the individual. Individuals decide to go to war; battles are fought by individuals; and peace is established by individuals . . . . [T]he individual adopts the beliefs prevailing in his society, even though the extent to which these opinions are shared by many people is a factor governing his readiness to adopt them . . . . Ultimately, it is the single person who attacks the feared and disliked ethnic minority group, even though many other people around him share his feelings and are very important in determining his willingness to aggress against this minority [p. 167].

Both Slater and Berkowitz, in quite different ways, hint at what seems a plausible and simple conceptual alternative to the Durkheimian view: a group is no more than the sum of the component individuals who have been changed by the presence or actions of other "group members." Thus, a group's eventual performance may be greater (*or* smaller) than the sum of its future members' individual performances *before* they became exposed to the social stimuli emanating from one another (that is, before they "joined the group"), but neither greater nor smaller than the sum of these persons' individual contributions *after* they have been affected by "group membership" (after they have been exposed to the opinions, expectations, and rewards provided by other individuals possessing the same set of relevant attributes). In short, there are no groups—only individuals exposed to, and continuously changing as a function of, social influence.<sup>6</sup>

The distinction seems important because it reaffirms the individual as the unit of analysis—which, of course, is the actual research practice even of psychologists who seem to think of groups as special entities. (*Measures* of "group cohesion," for example, are obtained from individual members—where else?—and they are often nothing but measures of liking of other members.) Also, whereas there is obviously nothing wrong with abstractions (science abounds in them), a reference to groups (rather than to the mutually influenced individuals) often obscures the psychological processes at work and approaches what Deutsch (1971), among others, has called the "group mind" fallacy (such as Comte's view that

society exists as "consciousness," not as physical individuals, and Durkheim's idea of "collective conscience" as a "social fact"). An example from the substantive domain with which this chapter deals may be useful. While Dollard et al. (1939) emphasized that "frustration . . . can occur only to an individual organism" (p. 13), C. Sherif (1976) interprets in the following way an incident from the famous Robbers Cave project in which the Eagles, after being defeated in a game by the Rattlers, tore the Rattlers' flag:

Isn't that a good example of aggression stemming from frustration? Yes, it is; but it was not individual frustration irrationally responded to. The Rattlers had thwarted the Eagles as a *group*, and as group members the Eagles engaged in aggressive insult [p. 125, italics in the original; see also the notion of "systemic frustration" developed by Feierabend & Feierabend, 1966].

From the present point of view, of course, the Eagles *individually* (but *simultaneously*) experienced an aversive event (see Dollard et al., 1939, p. 13; Stegenga, 1972, p. 32) and individually aggressed. As C. Sherif (1976) describes the incident: "Suddenly, an Eagle pulled the flag down . . . then someone set it afire" (p. 125). The individual aggressive behavior and the individually experienced aversiveness of the defeat were undoubtedly intensified by the presence of others (through modeling and other processes), but there is nothing in the described events that cannot be fully understood in terms of individual motivations and behaviors affected by social influence. Also, it is through analysis at the individual, rather than group, level that one can understand the process whereby being arbitrarily designated a "Rattler" affects a person's future behavior. In simple terms, the classification by arbitrary or nonarbitrary attributes may be considered as a division of each person's social world into people (and their attitudes, behavior, and so on) who generally aid the gratification of the individual's goals, or are likely to do so, and those who generally deter (or at least do not affect) gratification. To such factors may be traced the "group identification" and "categorization" processes, and the "in-group/out-group" and "reference group—membership group—comparison group" distinctions

(for example, Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Blake & Mouton, 1961f; Buss & Portnoy, 1967; Dion, 1973; Doise & Sinclair, 1973; Lambert, Libman, & Poser, 1960; Pollis, 1968; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1954; Tajfel, 1974b). That some of an individual Rattler's goals may have been acquired only after exposure to the attitudes and behavior of other Rattlers is, of course, immaterial to the present argument.

As for the concept of *reference group* (to which I shall return later), it is interesting to note that authors writing from quite different theoretical perspectives (for example, Shibutani, 1955; M. Sherif, 1953; Pollis, 1968) have all emphasized its social-psychological and *intraindividual* importance. As Pollis (1968) put it, the perspective of the members of a reference group determines the "configuration of attitudes within the individual and define[s] the individual's mode of response" (p. 302).

### *Intergroup Conflict*

Most definitions of *conflict* (for example, Coser, 1956; Deutsch, 1973; Kriesberg, 1973) include an emphasis on incompatible goals and some form of antagonism or strife over resources that are perceived to be in limited supply. Thus, Coser (1956) defines conflict as a "struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals" (p. 8). Kriesberg (1973) speaks of conflict as a "relationship between two or more parties who (or whose spokesmen) believe they have incompatible goals" (p. 17). In the conflict and conflict-resolution literature, acts ranging from the delivery of "shocks" in the laboratory to lynchings, ghetto riots, labor/management confrontations, racial prejudice and discrimination, and international war have all been considered indicative of "conflict" by one author or another, with the number of individuals engaged in the various instances of conflict varying from two persons to many million (see Rapoport, 1960; Richardson, 1949). As should be clear from some of the preceding remarks, this diversity in terms of the number of participants and the range of situations and behaviors considered to involve conflict is

not incompatible with the general orientation of this chapter. However, I will typically use the term *conflict* only in reference to overt *behavior* (verbal and nonverbal) that members of a group direct at members of another group and not, for instance, to attitudes (including prejudice).

When is conflict *intergroup* conflict? I shall consider an act—for example, an act of aggression—to be an instance of intergroup conflict when (a) the perpetrator and the target of the act perceive themselves as being different with regard to at least one attribute; (b) the attribute in question is "important" (as judged from other, independent evidence) and typically, but not always, represents a "subidentity" (Deutsch, 1973); (c) there exists at least one other person who possesses the attribute(s) characterizing the perpetrator, and one who possesses the attribute(s) characterizing the target, with both the perpetrator and the target aware of these others' existence; and (d) both the perpetrator and the target are guided in their actions by the knowledge of each other's attribute(s).<sup>7</sup>

Thus, a situation involving only two people could be considered—if the above conditions were met—an instance of conflict that is just as "intergroup" as is a battle involving all the adult members of two tribes. Indeed, at the behavioral level, many cases of intergroup conflict consist *principally* of one-on-one confrontations between members of the groups in question, whether these members be specially designated representatives (such as spokesmen for workers and management, or Secretaries for Foreign Affairs) or "rank and file" (such as a White landlord who rejects a Black tenant). The relevance of the notion of *reference group* in this context is clear. Even though only two individuals may be engaged in conflict at a particular time and place, this may be an instance of intergroup conflict, because the participants' respective attitudes and reactions to the critical attribute(s) are the key antecedents of the conflict. These reactions are presumably influenced not only by the participants' personal experiences, but also by the views and experiences (including aversive events) of the members of their respective reference groups. Of course, in other cases of intergroup conflict, many individuals may be engaged in similar actions at the same time and place (as in a battle involving tribes,

street-corner gangs, or fans of soccer clubs with different religious affiliations); whereas, in still others, involving a sustained effort, a division of labor may be evident (some fight, some spy, some work and pay taxes, and so on). Finally, there may be cases in which the aversive events experienced by only a few people eventually induce a large-scale conflict, involving many individuals. Later on, I shall provide examples of some such cases.

However, a careful examination of the proposed criteria reveals that they exclude many acts of aggression and many conflict situations from being classified as instances of *intergroup* conflict. For example, most of the social-psychological experiments on various aspects of human aggressive behavior lack the necessary components. This is not surprising, given the tendency to study general principles, rather than the effects of the particular attributes (“group membership”) of people engaged in aggressive exchanges and conflict.

## A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the effect of aversive events on intergroup conflict, within the definitional and conceptual boundaries developed so far. I will begin by presenting a selective review of the literature dealing with the effect of economic deprivation, frustrations, insults, and other aversive events on the development of various kinds of conflict between groups of different types and sizes, and then concentrate on some hypothesized mediators of this effect—notably, prejudice, stereotyping, group cohesion, and in-group/out-group differentiation.

### *Deprivation, Frustration, and Insult As Antecedents of Intergroup Conflict*

Suddenly the availability of energy can no longer be taken for granted; [the energy shortage] has become a huge problem, strongly affecting almost every aspect of society . . . . In the last few years, energy supply problems have disrupted daily life . . . triggered an economic depression . . . led to a bitter confrontation between Congress and the President . . . altered the political relations between the industrialized countries and the developing ones . . .

[and] generated lightly disguised threats by the President [Ford] and the Secretary of State [Kissinger] to invade oil-producing countries [Commoner, 1976, pp. 3–4; see also p. 265].

Here we have an example of a country (“the most powerful and technically advanced society in history,” as Commoner put it, p. 1), most of whose citizens and leaders seem to regard themselves as proponents of peace and justice—and, significantly, of policies of noninterference with the free-market processes of supply and demand—threatening to wage war. The targets were to be some small, underdeveloped countries essentially trying to sell the only resource they possess (a nonrenewable one) at a price as high as what the buyers were willing to pay monetarily and politically—in accord, presumably, with one of the basic tenets of the free-enterprise philosophy.

Historical accounts provide countless similar examples of leaders willing to ignore lofty principles, deliver ultimatums, and send masses of their countrymen to war—all as a consequence of real, imagined, or invented economic deprivation and of the veridical or mistaken perception that the citizens of their nations have been prevented from obtaining the “essential” goods at the “right” price and, thus, from pursuing their “normal” life-style.

Thus, economic deprivation and frustrations would seem to be prime examples of aversive events that may lead to intergroup conflict on a very large scale (see Gurr, 1968, 1969). However, it is important to keep in mind that the relative economic deprivation was only one of many kinds of aversive events involved in the energy conflict, and that it probably affected only very *indirectly* one of the conflict’s most dramatic features—that is, this nation’s top leaders’ threats to other nations. It is a truism that during the “gasoline crisis” in 1973/74, the top decision-makers, unlike the average citizens, were *not* exposed to the aversive events directly associated with the apparent lack of gasoline—namely, long lines at gas stations and various discomforts (including fistfights) related to this, disruption of daily activities, loss of wages, behavior of irritated coworkers and family members, and so on (see P. Abelson, 1974; Konečni

& Ebbesen, 1976b). Instead, among the aversive events that presumably affected the top leaders' conflict-related actions were news of a troubled economy (evoking electoral as well as patriotic concerns) and briefings about the angry attacks on their policies in Congress (the Congressmen, in turn, undoubtedly having been briefed about the angry contents of the mail from their constituents).<sup>8</sup>

The purpose of this example is to draw attention to the following general points: (1) An overall, gross antecedent of intergroup conflict (such as economic deprivation/frustration) can be meaningfully broken down into a number of quite different events—all of them aversive—to which the various participants in a conflict situation are exposed. (2) Actions of a great many individuals—as a function of their exposure to a large variety of aversive events—may indirectly determine the form and intensity of conflict. (3) Aversive events that *directly* affect the most visible forms of conflict (such as international threats) may be quite imperfectly related to what are supposedly its principal antecedents (such as economic deprivation). These comments reflect the chapter's emphasis on the analysis of *individual* behavior and on a *class* of events—having aversiveness in common—as a precursor of conflict.

As for groups considerably smaller than nation-states, the anthropological literature is replete with descriptions of the powerful effects of economic deprivation and limited resources on conflicts between tribes, clans, extended families, and so on. I shall concentrate on D. M. Hart's (1954) and W. H. Lewis's (1961) accounts of the feuding among the Berbers in pre-1912 Morocco (that is, before it became a French protectorate), but comparable examples can be found, and similar conclusions reached, for many other conflicts, locations, and periods.

Both Hart's and Lewis's work clearly demonstrates the relationship between land and water scarcity, and the harsh life of rural Morocco, on one hand, and the bloody, brutal feuding, on the other. According to Lewis (1961), "The most common causes for clan feuding involved disputations over water rights in lands parched as a result of inadequate rainfall, [and] soil to be employed for pasturage or trees whose fruit lay in dispute" (p. 44). However, in addition to these

disputes over economic issues that *directly* affected the subsistence of all members of a clan, causes for feuding were also (a) "symbolic" insults (such as a "trespass upon the hallowed ground of a clan *marabout* (holy man)," p. 44) and (b) personal, "individualized" insults that presumably directly affected only a few clan members ("imagined or real slights in market places, and insults or criminal assaults upon the women," p. 44).

A similar picture emerges from Hart's (1954) account of the Aith Wuryāghil tribe. According to Hart, "quarrels over ownership of land or of irrigation water could and did lead to blood feuds of such extraordinary savageness that on some occasions they did not stop until one or the other of the participating families was completely wiped out" (p. 62). And he adds that the "poverty and infertility of the soil was a factor which contributed heavily to an atmosphere of eternal suspicion and mistrust of one's neighbor" (p. 63).<sup>9</sup>

Several conclusions can be drawn from the preceding passages. The effect of economic deprivation on the development of intergroup conflict seems to be quite well documented in the case of these Berber tribes. It also seems clear that this type of aversive event—acute land and water shortages, and disputes concerning them—affected just about all members of the various clans, and that virtually all members participated in one way or another in the ensuing feuds. Hostile actions against a clan "representative" (the holy man) can also be considered as being aversive to most clan members, and these led to similar consequences.

The passages also deal with the effects of other types of aversive events and illustrate some of the points made earlier in my discussion of the definition of intergroup conflict. It seems evident that some instances of conflict (such as insults and rape) had clan membership as the key attribute and thus should properly be considered as manifestations of *intergroup* conflict, even though only a couple of individuals may have been involved. These cases are important because they show how aversive events to which only a few individuals are exposed can lead to aggressive actions not only by these individuals, but by virtually all members of the clans in question.



There is some laboratory evidence to the effect that individuals tend to respond more aggressively to frustrations and other aversive events in the presence of people with whom they share important attributes, or when they know that such people, though absent, would approve and support their actions (see Gurr, 1968, p. 272; Pepitone & Reichling, 1955; Stotland, 1959). Thus, a person's immediate response to an insult from an individual differing in an important attribute (such as clan membership) may be more violent because of the explicit or implicit support and expectations of other clan members.

The possible reasons for the finding that aversive events to which only a few individuals are directly exposed may lead to intergroup conflict of major proportions are of interest. It seems clear that a host of related processes is involved, including the clan members' empathetic and imitative reactions; their long history of being primed and carefully trained to aggress and retaliate against other clans (see Bandura, 1973); attitudes about aggression and the proper course of action in given circumstances that are taught to, and thus shared by, virtually all clan members (see Beals & Siegel, 1966; also see Footnote 6); alarmist rumors (for example, Allport & Postman, 1947); and so on. Concepts like "protecting the clan honor," so often associated with vendettas, can be considered as metaphors for these psychological processes. Lewis (1961) clearly describes the long process of learning to hate, fight, and remember past injuries that, together with other precipitating factors, may have led to large-scale conflict after minor aversive events to which only a few clan members had been exposed: "Training and preparation for feuding commenced at childhood and proceeded through adolescence with heavy emphasis being placed upon: (1) acquisition of requisite skills in negotiation, bargaining, duplicity, and the performance of expected duties in times of danger; (2) storing of knowledge concerning the history of the group's past grievances, enemies, and expected allies" (p. 47). Although the precise form of the conflict and the details of the training procedure may be unique to the Moroccan Berbers, it would seem that Lewis's statements address a far more general phenomenon—namely, the way in which the preparation for intergroup conflict may intensify

the number and magnitude of aggressive responses to aversive events.

A careful consideration of the effects of different types of aversive events (such as economic deprivation or insults) also reveals the important distinction between the factors that *bring* people with different attributes into conflict situations and those that govern their behavior *in* such situations. This rather obvious distinction is habitually obscured in analyses of antecedents of intergroup conflict, primarily because of the emphasis on group-related concepts and the consequent neglect of the simple fact that the individuals' *principal* motivations are different at different times. To give a simple example, economic deprivation (such as prospects of a famine or unemployment) may cause many members of a tribe or of an underprivileged social group to engage in a raid, battle, riot, or barricade-building (see Rostow, 1961, Chapter 5; Rudé, 1954), but the behavior of individual members during the actual physical confrontation may be governed by a host of other factors, including (a) fighting skill, (b) injuries and insults received, (c) specific actions taken by opponents and comrades-in-arms, (d) fluctuations in arousal level induced by the moment-to-moment sequence of actions involved in attack and defense, and (e) emotional labels attached to these arousal-level fluctuations, such as anger and fear (see Berkowitz, 1972, 1974; Konečni, 1975a, 1975b, 1976–1977, Experiments 5 and 6; Konečni & Ebbesen, 1976a). In other words, the variables that govern people's behavior in situations of intense conflict may have nothing to do with the factors that brought them into these conflict situations.

It should be noted that most of the social-psychological laboratory studies that have addressed issues such as facilitation, disinhibition, and modeling of aggression; effects of witnessing violent events; the "cathartic effect"; and the influence of environmental stresses, such as heat and loud auditory stimulation (for example, Bandura, 1965; Baron, *in press*; Berkowitz & Geen, 1966; Donnerstein & Wilson, 1976; Doob & Wood, 1972; Goldstein, Davis, & Herman, 1975; Konečni, 1975a; Konečni & Doob, 1972; Konečni & Ebbesen, 1976a; Rule & Nesdale, 1974, 1976; Zillmann, 1971) contribute to an understanding of people's behavior *in* conflict situations and not of



the reasons that bring people with different attributes into conflict in the first place.<sup>10</sup>

This distinction can also be illustrated by some of the findings of the highly acclaimed work of M. Sherif and his collaborators (for example, Sherif et al., 1954; Sherif & Sherif, 1953; Sherif, White, & Harvey, 1955; also see Chapters 1, 2, 16, and 17). These studies, which are relevant in the present context from several points of view, are widely known and need not be described in detail. The types of groups and conflicts with which Sherif's studies dealt differ in a number of ways from the groups and conflict situations I have been discussing so far. Sherif's groups were relatively small (11 members each in the Robbers Cave study); were created experimentally; and were homogeneous with regard to age, sex, race, socioeconomic status, and religion (White, middle-class, Protestant, 11-year-old boys). Also, instead of "true" economic deprivation being involved, the groups were pitted against each other in a tournament for valued prizes that was organized by the experimenters.

At least two aspects of participation in the various contests (such as tug-of-war) were presumably aversive for the boys: the fear of defeat and the frustration involved in the actual defeat (see Berkowitz, 1962, 1969). However, at first, conflict was involved only insofar as the members of the two groups had incompatible goals (only one group could win the prizes); the boys' actions were innocuous enough (that is, playing games without body contact). Much of this changed as early as the first day of the tournament, following the Eagles' defeat in an important event. The flag-burning episode (described earlier in this chapter) ensued, and this was followed, on subsequent days, by "name-calling, physical encounters, and 'raids'" (Sherif & Sherif, 1956, p. 307). In other words, not only did the boys' behavior change and become aggressive, but their aggressive actions were not primarily instrumental to winning the prizes, but designed to harm and humiliate the opponents. Also, the emotions that the boys experienced in a "skirmish" almost certainly were quite different from those they experienced while participating in a contest.<sup>11</sup>

Overall, the results of Sherif's field experiments

are generally consistent with observations made earlier in this chapter, on the basis of analyses of quite different types of groups, aversive events, and conflict situations: (1) aversive events are powerful determinants of conflict; and (2) factors that bring groups into conflict should be distinguished from those that govern the specific actions of the opponents in full-blown conflict situations.

In all the cases discussed so far (the oil crisis, Berber tribes, Sherif's field experiments), one group's members' aggressive actions were generally aimed at the members of another group who were perceived—correctly or incorrectly—as responsible for the occurrence of an aversive event (such as economic deprivation, defeat, or insult) and/or who obstructed the attainment of an important goal (such as winning a prize).<sup>12</sup> Other well-documented cases could be cited in support of this relationship, including, for instance, large-scale attacks on members of groups (such as the Irish in Boston in the mid-1800s, or the Blacks in Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, and elsewhere, in 1917–1921) that were perceived by their opponents (the non-Irish, the Whites, or others, depending on the case) as having usurped jobs and low-rent housing, or having decreased the value of residential property (for example, Billington, 1938; Chicago Commission on Race Relations, 1922; D. Davis, 1964; Dollard, 1937, 1938; R. Lane, 1976). In the history of this and other nations, there are literally countless similar examples of aggressive behavior aimed *directly* at the members of groups perceived as responsible for the occurrence of aversive events (see Gurr, 1968).

There are indications that exposure to aversive events may cause members of a group to attack people who cannot, by *any* stretch of the imagination, be held responsible for those events. However, at the present time, there is little reliable evidence for such *displaced* aggression, at least (a) as far as *intergroup* relations, as opposed to relations between individuals not belonging to different groups,<sup>13</sup> are concerned, and (b) in terms of aggressive *behavior*, as opposed to hostile attitudes, such as prejudice. One frequently cited finding that seems to satisfy the above constraints is the negative correlation between the price of cotton (low price implying reduced income and, therefore, a variety of aversive events) and the number of lynch-

ings of Blacks in the Southern United States in the period 1882–1930 (Hovland & Sears, 1940).<sup>14</sup> However, not only is this correlation a rather low one (see Mintz, 1946), but there are alternative explanations for the relationship that do not involve displaced aggression.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps the clearest finding of displaced aggressive behavior in intergroup relations was obtained by Thibaut (1950). In this laboratory study, the experimenter systematically favored one group of boys over another in situations that were important to the boys and, thus, was responsible for a series of aversive events experienced by the members of the underprivileged group. Nevertheless, the boys in the latter group performed few, if any, aggressive actions against the experimenter. Instead, they expressed physical and verbal aggression toward the members of the privileged group.

However, even this study does not provide unequivocal evidence for displaced intergroup aggression, because some of the frustrated boys' aggression appears to have been directly caused or intensified by the "prima donna" behavior of the members of the favored group. At the very least, it would seem that, in an ongoing behavioral sequence involving members of two groups, "displaced" aggression may quickly become "direct," in the sense that the displaced-aggression targets tend to respond to the initial aggressive actions and thus supply the provocations that maintain and escalate the conflict. Note that this point is related to the distinction made previously between the factors that lead to, and those that govern behavior in, conflict situations.

#### *Some Mediators of the Effect of Aversive Events on Intergroup Conflict*

In the preceding section, I attempted to demonstrate the role of a variety of aversive events in the development of different types of intergroup conflict. Both natural and artificially created groups, of different sizes, and located in different habitats, were discussed. The importance of distinguishing between factors that govern group members' behavior leading to and operating within conflict situations was stressed, as was the insufficiently investigated possibility that aversive events may lead to attacks on

members of "substitute" groups. In addition, I mentioned briefly that prior training in conflict-related activities may intensify a group members' responses to aversive events. Some attention was also devoted to the role of transient, but highly pronounced, emotional states (such as anger), induced by aversive events, in guiding moment-to-moment behavior in full-blown conflict situations.

To the extent that prior training in conflict-related activities may modify the perception and impact of aversive events, and that acute emotional states may govern, in part, the choice and magnitude of responses to such events, both prior training and emotional states can be viewed as "mediators" of the effect of aversive events on intergroup conflict. This classification may be criticized on the grounds that prior training precedes the occurrence of aversive events, whereas emotional states follow, and are actually induced by, such events. However, close examination shows that such an objection is valid only if the temporal, *historical* dimension in intergroup relations is ignored. Otherwise, it is clear that members of a group may be taught to hate certain groups because of *past* aversive events. Similarly, emotional states may cause a member of a group to insult a member of another group and *therefore* be exposed to aversive retaliatory measures. Unlike most experimental groups, members of many real-life groups interact for long periods of time in complex ways, and it is therefore difficult to establish the existence of causal relationships, the direction of causation, or even the temporal sequence of events.<sup>16</sup>

For these reasons, with regard to the effect of aversive events on intergroup conflict, I have used the term *mediator* both for prior training in conflict-related activities and for emotional states induced by the conflict. The term is simply meant to indicate a high probability that these factors are implicated in the relationship between aversive events and conflict: I am suggesting neither that the effects of these variables are identical, nor that their causal properties and temporal positions in the chain of events are similar. The research to date has not been particularly informative about such issues, in that prolonged interactions between the individual members of groups in conflict have not been carefully studied.

In this section, I will turn to some other pos-

sible mediators of the effect of aversive events on intergroup conflict—namely, (a) prejudice and negative stereotypes (especially with reference to the “scapegoat” theory of prejudice), and (b) a set of variables related to the concepts of *in-group/out-group differentiation* and *group cohesion*. The selection of these particular topics was governed mainly by the prominent place they occupy in the literature on intergroup conflict. As should be clear from the preceding remarks, I am using the term *mediator* loosely. For example, prejudice may, on one hand, modify the degree to which members of a group perceive an event as aversive and link it to a particular other group (thus affecting the probability of intergroup conflict), and, on the other hand, be itself altered (and, in part, generated) by aversive events.<sup>17</sup> Such a two-way relationship, although quite likely, unfortunately has not been, and could not have been, demonstrated by the experimental designs that have predominated in this area of research.

*Prejudice.* Simpson and Yinger (1965) define *prejudice* as an “emotional, rigid attitude (a predisposition to respond to a certain stimulus in a certain way) toward a group of people” (p. 10). This definition states that prejudice involves *attitudes* and thus is, like other attitudes, imperfectly correlated with actions (discriminative, violent) against the members of the target group (see LaPiere, 1934; Wicker, 1969).<sup>18</sup> (I will be concerned only with “negative” prejudice.) The definition also stresses that prejudice involves “emotional” and “rigid” attitudes. The first qualifier implies that prejudiced individuals experience a negative emotional state (such as anger) in response to the physical presence or symbolic representation of members of the target group or of artifacts associated with them; however, such a response should generally occur only when the situation contains (or is perceived as containing) certain key elements relevant to the prejudiced attitudes in question.<sup>19</sup> The second implies that prejudiced individuals hold negative views of the target group for long periods of time; avoid exposure to, and distort, information that contradicts their point of view; and generally do not change their attitudes, regardless of the type of new information they receive (for example, G. Allport, 1954; LaPiere, 1936). Further, I interpret the parenthetical portion of Simpson’s

and Yinger’s definition as suggesting that the same event can be perceived quite differently by prejudiced and unprejudiced individuals and, by implication, that the probability of an event being perceived as aversive *and* linked to members of the target group is higher for prejudiced than unprejudiced individuals. Finally, the definition mentions that prejudice is an attitude toward a “group.” One implication of this statement is that prejudice often involves the process of stereotyping, whereby individuals perceived as sharing a certain “key” attribute (such as skin color) are conceptually lumped together into an amorphous entity and described in terms of that attribute and a small number of additional traits—thus ignoring the large differences among members of the group in question (for example, G. Allport, 1954; Ehrlich, 1962a; Katz & Braly, 1933; McWilliams, 1944, 1948; Merton, 1957; Simpson & Yinger, 1965).

This definitional exercise suggests some of the reasons why prejudice seems a good candidate for a mediator of the effect of aversive events on behaviors that I have subsumed under the term *intergroup conflict*. In particular, since prejudice involves strongly held beliefs that are, when evoked, presumably accompanied by an increase in the level of arousal and by pronounced negative emotional states, it may cause a neutral or mildly aversive event to be interpreted, labeled, and experienced as highly aversive (see Konečni, 1975b). In addition, previous associations of a disliked group with unpleasant experiences may increase the chances that the responsibility for an aversive event will be attributed—even despite evidence to the contrary—to members of that group.

The work on the so-called “scapegoat theory of prejudice,” although somewhat dated, still represents perhaps the largest and most frequently cited body of research concerning the relationship between aversive events (especially frustration) and prejudice. The scapegoat theory is thus quite relevant in the present context, and the remainder of this section will be devoted to it. However, it is important to note that all of the studies in question were concerned with attitudes, rather than behavior, and thus only indirectly pertain to intergroup conflict as I have defined it.

Most of the classic research on prejudice carried out in the United States (for example, Adorno,

Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Allport & Kramer, 1946; Bettelheim & Janowitz, 1950; Hartley, 1946; Prothro, 1952; Rosenblith, 1949) has been concerned with attitudes of the majority (usually defined as Protestants of Anglo-Saxon descent) toward various minorities, notably Blacks and Jews [but also the rarely encountered Turks (Bogardus, 1928) and the nonexistent "Danierians" (Hartley, 1946)].<sup>20</sup> The same has been true of the work within the scapegoat-theory framework, as well as of the more recent research on prejudice (for example, Burnstein & McRae, 1962; Cook, 1972; Genthner & Taylor, 1973; the very recent study by Foley, 1976, is a notable exception). Although the minorities' prejudices toward each other and the majority have by no means been ignored, this issue has received far less attention, presumably because it has not represented much of a social problem: being both small and relatively powerless, the minorities and their prejudices could cause no serious harm. Occasional findings that the degree of prejudice toward a minority was correlated with the majority members' reports of aversive experiences involving the minority members were treated as products of a rationalization process (as in Allport & Kramer, 1946, p. 18), thus strengthening a scapegoat, rather than a direct-aggression, interpretation. The minority members' inability to retaliate made them, according to the scapegoat theory, the targets of displaced aggression perpetrated by the frustrated members of the majority (for example, Zawadzki, 1948). The agent actually responsible for the frustration was usually considered to be either absent, or unidentifiable, or too powerful (such as the "system"). The scapegoat theory thus combined some frustration-aggression propositions (Dollard et al., 1939), especially those concerning displaced aggression, with N. Miller's (1948) conflict model and the general prejudice-research tradition (perhaps commendable in ideological intent, but nevertheless limited in scope).

Unfortunately, the experimental evidence concerning the scapegoat theory is quite inconclusive. A few studies (Cowen, Landes, & Schaet, 1958; Miller & Bugelski, 1948) found that frustration increased the majority members' prejudice toward certain minorities, but Stagner and Congdon (1955) failed to

obtain this result. Weatherley (1961) found that insulted subjects who had scored high on an anti-Semitism scale expressed more prejudice toward fictitious characters with Jewish-sounding names than did subjects in various control groups; but in a study by Berkowitz (1959), a confederate was liked as much when she was named Cohen as when she was named Johnson, whether the subjects were high or low in anti-Semitism, and whether they had or had not been insulted. A finding analogous to Berkowitz's was recently obtained by Genthner and Taylor (1973). In this study, subjects scoring high in anti-Black prejudice delivered, in a competitive game, "shocks" of higher intensity to the confederate than did the low-scoring subjects, but the race of the confederate (Black versus White) had no differential effect. Lindzey (1950) found that in terms of a "general tendency" to displace aggression following frustration, individuals scoring high in prejudice toward minorities did not differ from those scoring low.

Methodological and conceptual problems abound in the majority of cited experiments.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, it is difficult to compare the experiments because of the differences in the operationalization of frustration, the type of dependent measure, the target of prejudice, and the method of classifying subjects into those high and those low in prejudice. For these reasons, unfortunately, the only conclusion that can safely be drawn from this research is that the evidence concerning the scapegoat theory is *ambiguous* with regard to two important claims: (1) that there is an increase in prejudice, following a frustration, toward minority targets not responsible for the frustration, and (2) that individuals scoring high on prejudice scales, in comparison to those scoring low, either displace more verbal aggression in general or become more prejudiced toward specific minority targets.

There is also the unresolved theoretical problem as to why certain minorities, and not others, are selected for scapegoating (for example, Zawadzki, 1948). Berkowitz's and Green's (1962) suggestion that aggression is displaced toward members of the *disliked* minorities is clearly not a solution, in that it does not provide an answer to the obvious next question: why are some minorities disliked more than others? Thus, it does not dispose conclusively of

the much-criticized (for example, Zawadzki, 1948) "well-earned reputation" position that essentially implies a direct, rather than a displaced, relationship. Any future revision of the scapegoat theory would have to provide, among other things, a way of conceptualizing and scaling the perceived characteristics of various minorities in the light of recent findings in the displaced-aggression literature (see Footnote 13) and the main components of Miller's conflict model (Fitz, 1976; N. Miller, 1948).

In conclusion, contrary to expectations, the status of prejudice in general, and of scapegoating in particular, as mediators of the effect of aversive events on (behavioral) intergroup conflict remains uncertain.

*In-group/out-group differentiation and group cohesion.* The notion that aversive events (such as competition, deprivation, threat, or attack), especially those caused by members of an "out-group," increase (in-)group cohesion and in-group/out-group differentiation, and decrease in-group rivalry, is almost a truism in the social sciences (for example, Blake & Mouton, 1961f; also see Chapter 2; Bramel, 1969; D. Campbell, 1965; Fiedler, 1967; Goldman, Stockbauer, & McAuliffe, 1977; J. Holmes, 1974; Sherif et al., 1954).<sup>22</sup> The experimental support for this contention is, on the whole, quite solid. It is true that in some situations, group cohesion or "solidarity" is *not* increased by, say, competition or perceived threat (for example, Rabbie & Wilkens, 1971). Also, historical accounts abound in Quisling-type characters who have betrayed the in-group in time of crisis and sided with the out-group members. However, these seem mainly to be exceptions that confirm the general rule that the overall effect of an aversive event on a group depends, in part, on the individual members' subjective estimates of the more likely source (in-group or out-group) of important rewards (broadly defined) during and after an aversive event. In the majority of cases, the majority of individuals may perceive the in-group as a more probable source of rewards (as a result of socio-emotional bonds, indoctrination, modeling, economic dependence, intimidation, and so on). Another way of putting this is that, in most cases, the membership group and the reference group coincide. Thus, an increase in the attractiveness of

in-group members ("group cohesion")—involving, perhaps, a dissonance-reduction process—may be a more common result of an aversive event than are dissent or treason.

Like prejudice, group cohesion and in-group/out-group differentiation can be conceptualized as mediators of the effect of aversive events on intergroup conflict. All the previous cautionary remarks about the meaning of *mediator*, however, apply here also. In particular, just as an increase in group cohesion (caused, for example, by economic deprivation) may increase the probability of intergroup conflict,<sup>23</sup> so may conflict, in turn, lead to an increase in group cohesion and in-group/out-group differentiation. In fact, in some instances, what I have called an *aversive event* and a "bout" of intergroup conflict may involve highly similar behaviors and situations. Thus, competition for limited resources at time 1 (an aversive event if only because it involves the threat of defeat) may increase group cohesion, which may lead to further competition (at time 2), and so on. Behaviors at times 1 and 2 may be very similar, and yet be considered in cause-effect terms. In this case, an ongoing process (or a sequence that contains mutually causative components) has been somewhat arbitrarily dissected for theoretical convenience. Moreover, the unfolding process may be obscured by the myopic experimental attention to only one of its segments (see Footnote 16). For these reasons, among the highest priorities in the research on intergroup conflict perhaps ought to be the introduction of the "historical" dimension into both experimental and nonexperimental procedures and the use of more sophisticated forms of causal analysis (for example, Blalock, 1971; Heise, 1975; Mayer & Arney, 1974).

The size, membership, and defining attributes of "in-groups" and "out-groups" are, of course, highly relative (see G. Allport, 1954, p. 34) and depend on the purpose of the classification, which, in turn, may be affected by the nature and source of aversive events. These suggestions, as well as the postulated increase in the strength of in-group relations, may be illustrated by some passages taken again from W. H. Lewis (1961):

The Zaer [a tribal confederation in Morocco] were divided

socially and politically into two large groups . . . . While enmity between the two groupings was of a traditional nature, [they] would reconcile their differences when the interests of the tribe dictated it—e.g., in time of attack by surrounding confederations . . . . When [there was] a common danger, the two groups would form an alliance called the *Tata* wherein old animosities would be placed aside for a prescribed period [p. 50].

At the clan level, the threat of interclan conflict and the harsh environment led “men of the same clan [to share] judgments concerning the world around them . . . [and] to tighten the bonds of the group” (W. H. Lewis, 1961, p. 46). Similar examples can be found in countless historical and anthropological accounts, and there is also some laboratory evidence that shared threat may increase group cohesion and at least temporarily decrease prejudice toward certain group members (for example, Burnstein & McRae, 1962).

These examples illustrate the increase in group cohesion and changes in the composition of in-groups and out-groups as a function of aversive events. It would seem that the often-observed rapidly shifting alliances and relatively sudden shifts from one to another target of hatred, suspicion, and prejudice can be traced to the nature of the aversive events a group encounters sequentially. For example, as is well known, the destruction of common enemies and the postwar emergence of the Soviet Union as a major political and military competitor changed within a few years the status of that country in the eyes of most Americans from ally to enemy.<sup>24</sup> New aversive events define new out-groups and produce new targets of hostility. Allport’s 1954 book is full of examples of anti-Semitic and anti-Black prejudice, but there is no mention of the Arabs; it took the recent energy crisis to establish this group as an acceptable target of hostility.

Whereas the nature of aversive events may affect the features of in-group/out-group differentiation, other mediating processes tend to cement the real or imaginary differences and thus influence the course and duration of intergroup conflict. One such mediator is the tendency to emphasize and exaggerate the importance of the differences between groups (as in dialect, language, religion, or customs), even

though they may have nothing to do with the origin of the conflict. Ethologists (for example, Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1976, pp. 92–93) have called such differences “cultural pseudospeciation” (see also Giles, Taylor, Lambert, & Albert, 1976; Taylor, Bassili, & Aboud, 1973; Taylor, Simard, & Aboud, 1972). Also, as pointed out earlier, out-group members are described in terms of a small number of (usually unfavorable) traits. In contrast, the in-group is typically perceived as more diversified and, of course, is far more positively evaluated (for example, Peabody, 1968; Rabbie & Wilkens, 1971).<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, it is not uncommon, especially in intense conflicts, for highly derogatory or emotion-laden terms to be applied to the out-group members (such as “gooks” for the Vietnamese), perhaps in an attempt to dehumanize them and thus justify one’s actions (see Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973). This dehumanization can also take more subtle forms. For example, “human-interest” stories, “good news,” portrayals of events with a positive emotional tone or of situations that people could identify with, are largely absent from the North American media coverage of the Soviet Union; instead, the focus is on defectors, shortages, failures, and variations on the theme of surly and drab people engaged in, or plotting, hostile actions. Finally, analogous to the stereotyping mentioned earlier, there is the tendency to overlook the often considerable differences among *subgroups* of the out-group, thus potentially contributing to an unnecessary escalation of the conflict.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, it would seem that a number of processes that occur *within* groups as a function of aversive events or of the conflict itself may, in turn, influence the intensity and duration of intergroup conflict. In particular, most of the experimental and other evidence suggests that aversive events produce quite pronounced changes in a group members’ perceptions both of themselves and of the members of the out-group.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

An attempt has been made in this chapter to present an integrative conceptualization of some important antecedents of intergroup conflict. Although it

has often been suggested in the past that frustration and relative deprivation are likely to lead to conflict, I think it is advantageous to view these events as members of a broader class of events characterized by aversiveness.

It would seem that there is little doubt about the existence of a close relationship between aversive events and intergroup conflict. Although the relationship has been demonstrated for quite diverse groups, a perhaps even stronger case can be made for it if one accepts the present conceptualization of groups, aversive events, and situations that constitute intergroup conflict, because some previously ignored situations (such as one-on-one encounters between members of different groups) and events (such as verbal insults) emerge as highly relevant for *intergroup* relations. The present conceptualization also facilitates making a distinction—as I have repeatedly suggested—between aversive events that increase the likelihood of conflict and those that govern behavior in conflict situations. However, such a distinction and its implications cannot be explored experimentally unless social psychologists allow the groups they study to acquire a history.

A number of possible mediators of the effect of aversive events were examined. Whereas the mediating functions of in-group/out-group differentiation and group cohesion were found to be reasonably well documented, the status of prejudice remains uncertain, perhaps because of the antiquity and inadequacy of much of the relevant research. The review of the evidence concerning prejudice and scapegoating also made salient the considerable conceptual difficulties one often faces when attempting to distinguish between instances of direct and displaced aggression. This is particularly true in the case of conflict between members of real-life groups engaged in a prolonged sequence of hostilities (Dollard et al., 1939, of course, were aware of this problem). Closely related is the problem of the conceptual status—with regard to the direct/displaced dimension—of instances of gross overretaliation in response to (actual or imaginary) provocations.

One final comment is in order. Although intergroup conflict seems frequently to be caused by aversive events (particularly those that lead to pronounced

negative emotional states), I obviously do not mean to imply that such events are necessary for the occurrence of behaviors that I have considered indicative of conflict. For example, a large number of experiments by Tajfel and others has shown that merely dividing people into arbitrarily designated groups may lead to discriminatory behavior toward out-group members (for example, Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Doise & Sinclair, 1973; Rabbie & Horwitz, 1969; Tajfel, 1970, 1974b). Also, it has been found in a number of studies that the knowledge that a potential target is Black is sufficient to lead White subjects to display more aggression toward that person than they do toward White targets (see Donnerstein & Donnerstein, 1976). Neither of these two lines of research involved any aversive events; the mere fact of belonging to different groups was apparently sufficient to induce discriminatory and aggressive behavior. A further example of aggression despite a complete absence of aversive events is the well-known “swastika epidemic” of 1959/60 (for example, Ehrlich, 1962b): “Following a widely publicized desecration of a synagogue in Cologne, Germany, on Christmas Day, 1959, . . . within a month [incidents of anti-Semitic vandalism] . . . had been reported from 34 countries, including hundreds [in 236 cities] in the United States” (Simpson & Yinger, 1965, p. 217). Mindless imitation of totally unprovoked hostile actions, rather than aversive events, was clearly involved in these incidents.

In conclusion, it should be obvious from the above examples that although aversive events are important causes of intergroup conflict in many situations, this does not in any way challenge the assertion that conflict is multiply determined.

## NOTES

1. The preparation of this chapter was facilitated by Grant GS-42802 from the National Science Foundation to the author.

2. By *cognitive labeling* (Konečni, 1975a, 1975b), I am referring to the set of cognitive operations that are necessary for a person to conclude that he or she is experiencing an emotional state. More specifically, the labeling process refers to the *monitoring*, *interpretation*, and *integration* of information extracted from the external event, the resultant arousal-level fluctuations, the proprio-



ceptive feedback from the facial and other musculature, and other external and internal sources (see Laird, 1974; Mandler, 1975).

3. One of the very early criticisms of the frustration-aggression hypothesis (for example, Menninger, 1942) was that the concept of frustration does not include injury and attack, both important antecedents of aggression (see also Buss, 1961, 1966). Berkowitz (1962) has suggested that an injurious attack can be considered a frustration in that it interferes with a person's "internal responses oriented toward the preservation of security and comfort" (p. 30). Such extensions of the concept led Bandura (1973) to suggest that frustration "no longer has a specific meaning" and to propose that "aversive experiences" are the truly important antecedents of aggression (p. 33). It should be pointed out that if the concept of frustration is considered inadequate because of its "omnibus" nature (Bandura, 1973, p. 33), then the introduction of the term *aversive experiences* is hardly an improvement, for it is even more omnibus. In contrast, from the theoretical perspective of the present chapter, the concept *aversive events* is preferable to *frustration* precisely because it is broader.

4. Almost all of the important original (1939) postulates of the frustration-aggression hypothesis have been shown to be wrong, which in no way denies its tremendous heuristic value. For example, neither is frustration always followed by aggression, nor is aggression always preceded by frustration; whereas the notion of displacement of aggression appears to be correct (see Footnote 13), the idea of the functional equivalence of the various displaced activities has not been supported; the phenomenon of "catharsis" can be better understood in terms of a broader theoretical model that stresses the relationship of bidirectional causation between the level of arousal (labeled *anger*) and the amount of physical aggression expressed by angered people (Konečni, 1975a, 1976-1977). Good summaries of the criticisms of the original frustration-aggression propositions have been provided elsewhere (for example, Bandura, 1973; Berkowitz, 1969).

5. Gurr (1968) has distinguished between "interference with goal-seeking behavior [and] . . . interference with continued enjoyment of an attained condition" (pp. 256-257). This distinction seems necessary for a meaningful social-economic analysis, but both types of interference are considered aversive events from the present point of view.

6. The maintenance of "cultural traditions" presumably occurs in the same way, through specific actions of social influence, persuasion, and modeling. For example, speaking of the cultural tradition in two quite diverse

groups, Beals and Siegel (1966) observe: "The members of Namhalli [a settlement in South India] and Taos [a pueblo in New Mexico] are continually influencing the thought and behavior of their fellow members . . . . [M]embers observe the activity of other members; members tell other members what to do; members indicate disapproval when rules are broken" (p. 7).

7. Of course, the attributes that are, *in fact*, responsible for the conflict may not be those by which the participants in a conflict situation seem to be guided, although the two sets of attributes may be correlated. For example, many participants in the conflict in Northern Ireland appear to be responding in terms of religious attributes, and this is the way in which the conflict is generally portrayed in the North American press. However, the main reason for the conflict may lie in the considerable *economic*, rather than religious, differences. Being a Catholic in Northern Ireland seems to be correlated with being economically oppressed, although the correlation is almost certainly far from perfect. The latter fact illustrates, among other things, the necessity of distinguishing between factors that cause conflict and those that shape its "public image."

8. A point related to the main thrust of the present argument has been made eloquently by Rapoport: "I do not see why I . . . as an individual should identify myself with entities [States] that have these [expansionist] interests; they are not my interests. I do not know anyone whose interests they are. There may be people in positions of power . . . who have . . . identified themselves with these quasi-entities called States . . . [and therefore] see these interests as very real, but there is something mythical about the whole concept of the nation-state with its so-called vital interests" (quoted in de Reuck, 1966, p. 295; see also Rapoport, 1966a). Earlier in the same chapter, J. W. Burton had defined a "vital interest" as the "kind of interest on which a State is prepared to spend lives" (de Reuck, 1966, p. 293).

9. Hart's conclusions are remarkably similar to those that have been drawn by Foster (1965, 1971) for "peasant societies" in general, in the context of his controversial theory of "Limited Good." Whereas, on the one hand, Foster's analysis seems to be concerned with intragroup relations, on the other hand, it essentially deals with inter-familial and, thus, intergroup conflict.

10. It is important to contrast the position adopted here to that of Gurr (1968). Gurr has also stressed the importance of deprivation as an antecedent of intergroup conflict (especially civil strife), but he considers deprivation as a frustrative condition to which the dominant response is anger and quite explicitly views anger as a *long-term* determinant of conflict. In contrast, I consider anger to be an



*acute* state that results from the cognitive labeling of the arousal-level fluctuations. Precisely because of its dependence on the arousal-level increases that are subject to rapid corrective actions by the homeostatic mechanism, the emotion of anger dissipates relatively quickly (Konečni, 1975a, 1975b). Although there is evidence (for example, Bandura, 1973; Konečni, 1975a) that anger can be induced or reinstated by thoughts about aversive events (for example, about the specific effects of economic deprivation), it is nevertheless an off-and-on state, rather than a permanent condition of the underprivileged people, as Gurr implies. Thus, anger is far more likely to influence behavior in arousing conflict situations than in situations that do not involve direct confrontations or other highly arousing events.

11. Sherif's experiments are usually described as involving *competition* (for example, Secord & Backman, 1974; Sherif et al., 1954). Since it has been suggested (for example, Berkowitz, 1962) that competition has frustrative properties, the overall implications are, of course, quite similar to those of the position taken in this chapter. However, many authors who introduce the concept of competition fail to specify precisely which are the relevant and/or frustrative components of a competitive situation (although this is not true of Berkowitz). The problem may not be serious in the case of laboratory experiments, since they are of brief duration and involve relatively straightforward operationalizations of competition. However, in the case of Sherif's experiments and many real-life conflict situations involving relatively long time periods, the term *competition* is less informative and occasionally misleading, because (a) both competitive and noncompetitive activities are often subsumed under it, and (b) the various competitive "bouts" may involve very different motivations and behaviors. In such cases, a detailed analysis of the particular events and states that are aversive, and of the specific actions of individual participants, seems preferable to a global description in terms of competition.

As for the laboratory studies, they have, with rare exceptions (for example, Gaebelein & Taylor, 1971), generally confirmed the notion that competitive encounters increase the probability of aggression. This is true when aggression is instrumental to winning prizes (Rocha & Rogers, 1976); when it is measured after the competitive bout and has no instrumental value as far as *external* reinforcements are concerned (Konečni & Day, 1977); and when it is both noninstrumental to winning and directed at inanimate targets (Christy, Gelfand, & Hartmann, 1971, in the aggressive-model condition only). None of these experiments, however, involved *intergroup* conflict.

12. This relationship, as I have implied elsewhere in

the chapter, is certainly not contradicted by studies that do not involve intergroup relations. Actually, the finding that insults, frustrations, and various other forms of verbal and physical attack produce high levels of physical and verbal aggression, considerable increases in physiological arousal, a great deal of anger, and a strong dislike of the opponent, is almost certainly one of the most robust and frequently demonstrated effects in the social-psychological literature. Since—as a conservative estimate—about 250 experiments could be cited, I shall cite none.

13. A number of laboratory experiments in which the participants did *not* belong to different groups obtained strong displaced-aggression results (for example, Fenigstein & Buss, 1974; Fitz, 1976; Fitz & Stephan, 1976; D. Holmes, 1972; Konečni & Doob, 1972). In fact, in some of these, there was as much aggression against the substitute target as against the direct one (D. Holmes, 1972; Konečni & Doob, 1972), or as much aggression against a "friend" of the instigator as against an unrelated person (Fenigstein & Buss, 1974).

14. In the periods following droughts or tornadoes, Midwestern farmers tend merely to vote their politicians out of office (see Abney & Hill, 1966). However, this hardly qualifies as an example of intergroup conflict and, besides, may reflect people's dissatisfaction with the politicians' ineffectiveness in a time of crisis, and thus be an instance of direct, rather than displaced, aggression.

15. In the years when the price of cotton was low, there may have been less employment, more spare time, an increase in alcohol consumption, and so on, among both Blacks and Whites. Such factors may have led to a greater number of interracial contacts under adverse circumstances and to the various alleged "transgressions" on the part of the Blacks (as defined and perceived by the Whites). Many of the lynchings that resulted might, therefore, be classified as direct, rather than displaced, aggression.

16. Even an experiment designed to investigate the behavior of members of "real" groups may merely demonstrate, for example, that A's insults cause B's aggression, and fail to address—because it is limited to a short and unrepresentative segment of the "event-chain" of A/B interactions—the two key questions: (1) Does B's aggression also cause A's insults? (2) What portion of the variance in B's (real-life) aggression toward A is accounted for by A's insults? In other words, the introduction of the "historical" dimension might well reveal that the simple causal relationship uncovered by an experiment is actually bidirectional or, worse, trivial.

17. The latter point is clearly illustrated, for example, by the research of Sinha and Upadhyaya (1960), which

showed that the Indians' highly positive descriptions of the Chinese changed to highly negative ones in the course of a few months, as a function of the Sino-Indian border conflict in 1959.

18. Some authors (for example, G. Allport, 1954, p. 7; Buss, 1961, p. 245) have included verbal and physical aggression and discriminatory conduct, as well as negative attitudes, in the term *prejudice*. The problem with treating prejudice as a "syndrome" of this sort is that its components are unlikely to be highly correlated. To give an extreme example, some cases of attitudinal prejudice, for instance, against the fictitious "Pireneans" (Hartley, 1946), could never be consummated behaviorally! In a general sense, it is possible that the correspondence between prejudice and violent or discriminatory behavior toward the targets is increased when prejudice is derived in part from direct (negative) prior contacts with the targets, rather than based solely on secondary sources (see Regan & Fazio, 1977, with regard to conditions that increase the consistency between attitudes and behavior).

19. It seems clear that prejudiced thoughts, derogatory descriptions, emotional responses, and abusive or discriminatory behaviors occur far more often in some contexts than in others. It would seem that situations that are particularly likely to lead to the surfacing of prejudice involve competition between a prejudiced individual and a member of the target group, and those in which the latter displays behavior that the former is likely to perceive as counter-normative or "rule-breaking" (see also Footnote 18).

20. I have avoided the term "ethnic" in speaking about minorities. One of its chief meanings is "pertaining to or characteristic of a people" (*Random House Dictionary*, 1969, p. 454) or "pertaining to race; peculiar to a race or nation" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1971, p. 901). Yet, in North America, it is almost never used in reference to people of Anglo-Saxon descent. It follows that the frequently used terms such as *ethnic festival* and *ethnic American* (for example, *The New York Times*, October 8, 1976, p. A18) are used either incorrectly, to mean "minority," or in the uncomplimentary sense of "belonging to . . . [the] traditions of a people or a country, especially a primitive one" (*Random House Dictionary*, 1969, p. 454) or "pertaining to nations not Christian or Jewish; Gentile, heathen, pagan" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1971, p. 901).

21. For example, in virtually all of the studies, the statistical analyses concerning prejudice are based on raw change scores (posttest - pretest)—a procedure that often

leads to erroneous conclusions (Cronbach & Furby, 1970). The results of some frequently cited studies are much weaker than the secondary sources typically conclude. In some cases, the findings on only one of many administered scales were significant (for example, Cowen et al., 1958); in others, the authors' conclusions were based on unacceptable statistical procedures (for example, Weatherley, 1961; see Table 1, p. 455). Many of the studies have used inadequately validated prejudice and "aggressive drive" scales, as well as dubious "fantasy" measures. Finally, as Fitz (1976) has pointed out, most of the studies (for example, Miller & Bugelski, 1948) did not include control, *nonminority* targets (Weatherley's study is an exception in this regard).

22. All of the comments made earlier about the meaning and limitations of concepts such as *group* and *group cohesion* apply here also.

23. However, at least one laboratory study (Dion, 1973) failed to obtain evidence that an increase in group cohesion leads to "discrimination" and negative biases toward out-groups.

24. More precisely, perhaps, the relations *reverted* to hostility, since prewar animosity occasionally reached quite frenzied heights. For example, the "City Council of Cambridge, Massachusetts, unanimously passed a resolution (December, 1939) making it illegal to 'possess, harbor, sequester, introduce or transport, within the city limits, any book, map, magazine, newspaper, pamphlet, handbill or circular containing the words Lenin or Leningrad'" (Hayakawa, 1941, pp. 38-39).

25. In fact, when competition with an out-group is involved, even considerable internal disagreements apparently do not decrease the liking for in-group members (for example, Rabbie & Huygen, 1974), although, at least in laboratory situations, the rating of one's own group tends to drop precipitously following defeat (for example, Bass & Duntzman, 1963).

26. It is interesting to note that whereas President Carter was quick to criticize the "lack of Soviet domination" aspect of then-President Ford's remarks on Eastern Europe in the October 6, 1976, pre-election debate, he failed to point out that there are tremendous social, political, and economic differences between Poland, Rumania, and Yugoslavia (the three countries Ford mentioned, see *The New York Times*, October 7, 1976), and that Ford was, in fact, quite correct in one case (Yugoslavia) and partially correct in another (Rumania).