BLAME JUDGEMENTS FOR PAST ACTIONS OF GROUPS

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ABSTRACT

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Historically, groups have committed innumerable atrocities, including genocide and slavery. I tested if people blame current groups for the actions of their past members and what underlies this blame. Current models of blame overlook the dimension of time and therefore have difficulty explaining this phenomenon. I hypothesized that perceiving higher (a) connectedness between past and present perpetrator groups, (b) unfulfilled obligations of perpetrator groups, (c) continued privilege of perpetrator groups, and (d) continued harm of victim groups would facilitate higher blame judgements against current groups for the past. In a survey (N=518) using real events, I find results consistent with all the four hypotheses and some preliminary evidence for group differences in these relationships. I find that factors that link the present group to the past explain why groups are blamed for their past actions. These findings bring to light the deficiencies in existing theories of blame – calling into question its assumptions and incomplete criterion of judgement.

Keywords: collective blame, groups, historical atrocities, obligations

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गुरु गोविन्द दोऊ खड़े, काके लागू पाय|

बलिहारी गुरु आपने, गोविन्द दियो बताय||

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INTRODUCTION

Every generation, by virtue of being born into a historical continuum, is burdened by the sins of the fathers as it is blessed by the deeds of the ancestors.

Hannah Arendt

Groups regularly commit atrocities against other people and groups. The genocide of Uyghur people by the Chinese establishment is a present-day example of a group carrying out systematic persecution of another group of people. Throughout history, groups have carried out genocide, enslaved other people and groups, denied basic rights to entire communities, went to war, massacred, displaced, imprisoned, and tortured other people and groups, and destroyed the culture of indigenous people, amongst many other things. For many historical wrongs, the original wrongdoers, and all the original victims, have passed away. Yet, there are often lingering effects of these historical injustices, wherein the present members of the historical perpetrator group are called upon to share in the moral burden of the actions of their predecessors. This often raises the questions of whether the current generation can and should accept responsibility and blame for the unjust deeds of their forebears, in which they personally played no role.

The question of whether present groups *can* and *should* be held morally responsible for the past actions of their group members is relevant for understanding how people assess historic wrongs (e.g., genocide, slavery). This question has raised philosophical (Lukas, 2020; Smiley, 2017) and practical questions about the nature of collective responsibility, intergenerational justice, and the appropriateness of reparations and intergroup apologies (Barkan, 2000). Some people reject the appropriateness of such intergenerational responsibility. For example, in 2007 John Howard, the

Australian prime minister, refused to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies against Indigenous people, “I do not believe that the current generation of Australians should formally apologize and accept responsibility for the deeds of an earlier generation.”

However, regardless of the normative *should* and *can* questions, we have less knowledge about whether people *do* blame current groups for their past actions, and if they do then *when* do they do it and *what* underlies those judgements of blame. Therefore, in my thesis, I explored these descriptive and psychological questions. Specifically, I explored what contributes to judgements of blame towards contemporary groups for actions of their predecessors by integrating psychological theories of blame with work on the perceptions of groups.

I attempted to address this question by a) first, outlining theories of individual blame, b) second, outlining theories of attributing blame and responsibility to groups c) and, finally highlighting what’s missing from past work and how my study fills this gap.

Individual Blame

Blame is a moral judgement that entails evaluating agents as being involved in moral or social wrongdoing, thereby resulting in being judged as morally responsible or blameworthy (Malle et al., 2014; Alicke, 2000). Psychological theories of blame (Malle et al., 2014; Alicke, 2000; Cushman, 2008) build models of a psychological blame system. While these models differ in details, such as the precise logic or order of information processing they follow, they share many of the same components and inputs. Most psychological models of blame postulate a psychological system which takes as input, information on variables like causality, intentionality, mental states (e.g., belief and desire), and assessments of capacity and obligation. The idea is that people then use these inputs to compute a blame judgement. Upon detecting a norm-violating negative event, the perceiver considers information on the aforementioned variables and

attributes blame to an agent accordingly (see Table 1 for explanation of what each of these criterions mean).

For example, if a perceiver observes a child crying due to an injury caused by being hit by a cricket ball, the perceiver will try to ascertain what happened. If the perceiver realises that the ball was thrown at the child by their neighbour (agent causality), that the neighbour wanted to hurt the child, and believed throwing the ball at the child will cause the injury (intention and mental states), the perceiver might be highly inclined to blame the neighbour. However, alternatively, the perceiver might realise that although the neighbour did throw the cricket ball (causality), they were actually aiming it at the wickets (lack of intention to harm), and the child had unexpectedly stumbled on the playing field, thus getting hit accidentally. In such a case, the perceiver might not attribute blame to the neighbour. If the perceiver discovers that the child had been left unsupervised by their parents, the perceiver might instead attribute blame for the harm to the child's parents, whom they assess to have had an obligation and capacity to prevent the harm from happening.

Table 1. Inputs evaluated as part of blame systems for individuals

Inputs	**Meaning**
Causality	If an agent is causally linked to the negative event
Intentionality	Volitional behaviour control
Mental States	Agent has a mind capable of forming reasons, desires and beliefs
Capacity	If the agent had foresight of the consequences and the physical capacity to prevent it
Obligation	If the agent had a duty to prevent the negative event owing to their role, relationship or context

Note: Inputs and meanings are from (Malle et al., 2014; Alicke, 2000; Cushman, 2008)

Group Blame

Psychological theories of blame aim to understand how people blame individuals. To extend such a model of individual blame to groups or collectives, we need to make additional considerations. Specifically, we need to consider how attributes like causality, intentions, and responsibility, amongst others can be attributed to an entity like a group.

Philosophically, critics of collective responsibility and blame have argued that associating causal responsibility and blameworthiness with groups does not make sense for primarily two reasons. The first being that since groups consist of distinct individual members, attributing responsibility to persons who themselves have caused no harm is troublesome for normative reasons. One should only carry the moral burden of their own actions and voluntarily chosen obligations. Secondly, they argue that unlike individuals, groups cannot form intentions. Given that bad intentions are at the root of moral blameworthiness, collective blame is, therefore, a problematic moral construct (Smiley, 2017).

However, despite these normative objections, extensive evidence in the psychological literature suggests that people do in fact perceive groups to have minds (Waytz & Young, 2012) and intentions (O'Laughlin & Malle, 2002, Malle, 2010). By extension, and perhaps due to these perceptions, people have no problem attributing blame and responsibility to whole groups for the actions of few (Lickel et al., 2003; Denson et al., 2006). However, people do not attribute intentions and responsibility to all groups, suggesting that not all groups will be blamed. Entitativity is a characteristic of groups that is known to affect when people attribute intentions and responsibility to groups.

Entitativity

An important attribute of groups that is closely tied to group blame is the extent to which

people perceive a group as a single, unified agent instead of an aggregate of discrete individuals. Highly entitative groups (Campbell, 1958; Hamilton & Sherman, 1996) are judged to have a high degree of interaction, behavioural influence, interpersonal bonds, shared knowledge, norms, and common goals (Denson et al., 2006; Waytz & Young, 2012). This lends them the character of a coherent unit, much like a person, capable of intentions and mental states. For example: A high entitative group, like a sports team, is perceived to be a tight-knit unit which has mental states like "wanting" to win, rooted in common intentions, goals and interdependence. However, a low entitative group, like people standing in a checkout que at a store, are not perceived to be a coherent unit characterised by any interdependence or collective mental states. They are seen as discrete individuals. Thus, high entitative groups, rather than low entitative groups, have been found to be objects of collective blame wherein blame and responsibility are attributed to whole groups for the actions of few. This is because entitative groups may be attributed indirect causality for the wrongdoing by virtue of them having encouraged or desired (Denson et al.,2006; Lickel, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2001; Lickel, Schmader, & Hamilton, 2003), or having failed in their obligation or capacity to prevent the harmful acts (Lickel et al., 2003; Malle, 2010).

For example, if some members of a sports team are caught indulging in match-fixing, one might be inclined to blame the whole team, as one might think that the other members either were in cahoots with the wrongdoers, or had a duty as a member of the same unit to be aware of such behaviour and to take steps to prevent something like that from happening. Such collective accountability is, however, lacking in a low-entitative groups like people standing in a checkout line. If a person in the que starts abusing the cashier, the other people in the que will not be perceived to be blameworthy for the inappropriate behaviour of the person abusing, because no

interdependence or commonalities are assumed to exist between these separate individuals. Thus, groups characterised by members sharing strong bonds and common goals are judged to have common intentions which leads to them to be judged as one single agent, sharing in the causality, and thereby deserving blame.

Theoretical Gap: Historical Dimension

Theories examining people's blame judgements of groups, however, do not consider the historical dimension. Although they can help explain when and why people blame a sports team for something the team did recently, they have difficulty explaining if or why people blame a sports team for something that happened in the distant past. That is, prior work considered cases where the perpetrator and their group-members were contemporaries (e.g., in Lickel et al., 2003, parents and peers of Columbine School shooters were held responsible). Blame in this case is comparatively straightforward once entitativity is factored in, as it helps reconcile collective blame with the theories of individual blame. That is, since people perceive entitative groups as a unified agent with common intentions and mental states, they attribute causality to other members even if these members were not involved in the wrongdoing directly. This is because they judge such tight-knit groups to have facilitated or failed to prevent the act (Lickel, 2003; Malle, 2010). However, when it comes to non-contemporaries, it is not so straightforward because current group members could not have prevented nor facilitated these actions. For example, present-day White Americans could not have prevented American slavery, or members of a sports team in the present could not be in cahoots with the members of their sports team involved in match-fixing 50 years ago. Hence, the existing inputs in the current models of group blame fail to explain how and why people attribute blame to members of the current group for the actions of their predecessors.

Group Blame for Past Wrongs

In my project, I explored four factors that might psychologically link current group members to the actions of their group in the past. These factors may facilitate blame judgments of current group members for the past actions of their group.

Connectedness of perpetrator group

One factor that might facilitate blame for current group members is the perceived connection between the current group and the group in the past. Psychological connectedness is relevant for understanding moral and legal responsibility of individuals (Parfit,1984; Shoemaker, 2019). For example, for person X at time 2 to be held morally responsible for an action the person did at time 1, the person should be sufficiently connected to their past self. These connections could be memories, intentions, beliefs/goals/desires, and similarity of character (Parfit, 1984). The idea is that with the passage of time these connections might weaken leading people to deserve less blame and punishment at a later time point. This type of thinking may undergird statutes of limitations. Mott (2018) tested this idea in a series of studies and found that people hold an intuitive statute of limitations, which is rooted in judgments about changes in psychological connectedness over time. People were less likely to think that an individual who did something wrong (e.g., drunk driving) deserved to be legally punished or morally criticized at a much later time-point, as the wrong doer was perceived to be less psychologically connected to their past self (the person they were when they drunk drove long ago.)

Extending this idea to groups, one might expect that people think blame to the current group is justified in cases when they perceive sufficient continuity between the perpetrator group in the past and the present. The importance of perception of continuity in the context of groups has been found in Licata et al.'s (2011) work on intergroup reconciliation — the authors found

that post-war, perceiving the outgroup as discontinuous from the previous generation was an important facilitator of positive intergroup attitudes. Additionally, Goto el al.'s experimental work (2015) found that manipulating an outgroup's cultural continuity increased ascriptions of intergenerational guilt. Thus, historical continuity or connectedness of groups might play an important role in the attribution of blame for events that occurred in the past. The idea of historical psychological continuity is also related to the concept of essentialism (Haslam et al., 2000), as both perceptions are about the unchanging and time-invariant characteristics of group members. Essentialism has been associated with dispositional judgments about groups (Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001; Yzerbyt, Rocher, & Schadron, 1997), prejudice (Allport, 1954; Haslam et al., 2002), and collective responsibility (Denson et al., 2006), suggesting that it may also be relevant for blaming current groups as well. Thus, I explored if perceiving present-day perpetrator groups as being historically continuous or connected with the historical perpetrator group is linked to them being blamed more for the past actions of their group.

Obligations of perpetrator groups

Once a wrongdoing has occurred, people might be expected to act in ways that ameliorates the negative situation and brings about a better state of affairs. For example, if a natural disaster strikes, one might be expected to help those in need, and failing to do so might make them subject to blame. Such a notion of obligation is not rooted in whether the person caused the bad event (people did not cause a natural disaster), but rather their reparative duties after a bad event has happened. Perception of a failure to satisfy such obligations might be associated with blame.

In philosophy, this is termed as forward-looking responsibility which focuses on an entity's obligations to remedy the harm (Marion, 2017). This is different from the

obligations/capacity which existing models of blame use as criteria of judgement. They employ a backward-looking notion of responsibility (Gilbert, 2006) which bases moral blameworthiness on whether a particular collective agent caused harm (or failed to prevent it from happening). That is, when a bad event happens, people look to determine who caused the event to determine blame. Thus, it is rooted in the traditional criterion of causality. Blame to present day members for past wrongs doesn't make sense from this backward-looking approach. In contrast, forward looking responsibility is rooted in what an agent should be morally doing about the harm that has taken place (not necessarily by the agent). For example, Warner and Branscombe (2011) found that people perceived Israelis, by virtue of their historical victimhood, as obligated to help Sudanese genocide victims and as guiltworthy for not helping. This is an example of forward-looking responsibility — the Israelis weren't causally responsible for the Sudanese genocide. Yet, people judged them to have obligations and blamed them for not fulfilling these obligations. Similarly, people might perceive descendants of historical perpetrator groups to have obligations to do something about the historical wrong even if they weren't causally to blame for the original wrong. Not doing something about it might make people perceive them as blameworthy.

Psychologists and philosophers (Darby & Branscombe, 2006; Marsoobian, 2009) have made a case for forward-looking claims of moral responsibility for historical wrongs. Additionally, studies on intergroup forgiveness (Tongeren et al., 2014) have found a positive relationship between amends made by perpetrator groups, and intergroup forgiveness. Thus, I explored if this notion of forward-looking responsibility (in the context of present-day perpetrator groups) plays out psychologically in people's blame judgements for past actions. Specifically, I investigated if present-day perpetrator groups are blamed for their past actions

because people think perpetrator group's descendants have failed in their obligations to remedy the historical wrong.

Continued benefit/privilege of perpetrator group

The perception of continued illegitimate gains over time might incline people to blame perpetrator groups for past wrongs. Halev (2013) argues that enduring injustice forms the basis for claims to restitution. One aspect of enduring injustice is continued privileges that perpetrator groups might reap as a result of the historical wrong.

There is some indirect evidence that the continued benefits of the perpetrator group may be related to collective blame. For example, members of a privileged group (e.g., White Americans or Australians) who felt guilty and angry about their group's advantages stemming from injustice were more likely to support efforts towards restitution (e.g., affirmative action programs; Iyer et al., 2003; Leach et al., 2006; Brown et al. 2008.) Iyer and colleagues (2003) found that White Americans who believed that their group experienced illegitimate White privilege were more likely to endorse affirmative action for Black Americans. Thus, I explored if the current perpetrator group is more likely to be blamed for their past wrongs if people perceive them to be beneficiaries of the historical wrong committed by their predecessors.

Continued harm of victim group

While we have focused on perceptions of the perpetrator group, perceptions of enduring attributes of the victim group may also lead to blaming present-day perpetrator groups for past actions. That is, if victim groups are perceived to have not fully recovered after the past wrong, present-day perpetrator groups may be blamed for their group's past actions.

The perception of a link between past injustice and current suffering of a group might be an important factor contributing to blame. Attribution theory (Heider, 1958) suggests that people,

in their endeavor to explain outcomes, tend to ascribe the cause of an outcome to either a person's internal or dispositional characteristics (e.g., character, work ethic) or to external or situational factors outside of one's control (e.g., historical injustice). Perceiving current victim group to be harmed due to past maltreatment might motivate people to blame someone (Gray, Waytz, & Young, 2012). Therefore, perception of a causal link between present disadvantaged conditions of victim group and historical events might turn blame towards the current perpetrator group.

The idea that the current victim group can be said to be still suffering from the harm inflicted by the original wrong plays a significant role in philosophical and legal discourse on reparations and justice as well. For example, when discussing intergenerational justice (Meyer, 2020), one idea is that if a currently living person (or group) is falling below a normative threshold of standard of living or well-being due to the way their ancestors were treated in the past, they can be said to be harmed due to the treatment of their ancestors. This idea establishes a causal link between the past injustices and their current state of well-being, which in turn invokes a responsibility on the part of others to remedy the harm. Similarly, in legal discussions, legal scholars invoke the concept of privity in the context of reparations (Matsuda, 1987; Starzyk & Ross, 2008), wherein claims for redress involves establishing privity or a causal connection between past harm or maltreatment and current suffering of the victim group. In line with this, I explored if perceiving the current victim to be still enduring harm due to the historical wrong perpetrated against their group will lead to attributions of blame to the current members of the perpetrator group**.**

THE CURRENT STUDY

In the current study I tested how people assign group blame for past wrongs. Past work on intergroup reconciliation or reparations have typically focused on only one or two events (e.g., Wohl & Branscombe, 2005; Schmitt et al., 2008). To generalize further, participants in my study responded to a subset of 25 historical events characterised by one group (perpetrator group) committing a wrong against another group (victim group). For each event, participants rated how connected they perceived the present perpetrator group to be to their group in the past (when the event happened), if they perceived the current victim to be still suffering due to the historical event, if they perceived the perpetrator group to be still benefiting from the historical wrong, and if they believed the perpetrator group has fulfilled its obligations to ameliorate the wrongs of the past event. They also rated if they think the current perpetrator group deserves blame for the actions of their predecessors. I predicted that i) when groups are perceived to be continuous with their predecessors, they will be associated with greater judgements of blame. Additionally, ii) when victim group are perceived to be currently suffering from the harms inflicted on them as part of the historical wrong, iii) when perpetrator group are perceived to be still reaping benefits because of the historical wrong, iv) and the perpetrator groups are perceived to have had failed in their obligations to repair the wrongs would lead to current groups being attributed blame for past actions of their groups.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were recruited on Prolific, an online service that facilitates the crowdsourcing of research participants. These participants are more diverse than the average college sample and naive than other crowdsourcing platforms like MTurk (Palan & Schitter, 2018). Additionally, they offer quality-controlled data (Peer et al., 2017), while still keeping the costs low. They also have a system to weed out bots, dishonest users, low effort responders, and repeat participants (Bradley, 2018; Byrd, 2021).

The preregistered aim was to recruit five hundred American participants in total, evenly from the White American, Black American, Asian American, and the Native American population on Prolific, using Prolific's prescreening tools. The rationale for even recruitment from each category was to ensure that i) the blame judgements do not reflect only (or primarily) the blame judgements of White Americans ii) and we have enough participants who might belong to one of the victim groups to be able to say something about how group membership is associated with blame judgements. People were not recruited from the Hispanic American group (although they have historically been part of victim groups in various historical wrongs in US American history) because we did not have any event in our list that had them as victims. The preregistration can be found at: https://osf.io/twm6j/?view_only=4c600a97a54f49b4a4e96941abbe8a38. However, because we couldn't recruit 125 participants from the Native American group due to relatively few participants from the group, we opened the survey to all potential participants to reach the total sample of 500. The final sample included 518 participants (M age = 33.8, Range [18, 68]; 53.8% Male). Ethnicity was 36.2% White Americans, 25.8 % African American, 24.3% Asian

American, 8% Native American, and 5.7% other races/ethnicities or multiple races/ethnicities. Modal education level was a bachelor's degree (30.3%), and more than half (56.7%) the sample had either bachelor's or master's education. The study took participants approximately 15 minutes. Participants were paid $2.42 (approximately $9.65/hour, the Michigan minimum wage). The rationale behind choosing N = 500 were two-fold. First, Schönbrodt and Perugini (2013) determined that at a sample size of 250, the magnitude of a correlation can be expected to be stable i.e the sample correlations fluctuate minimally around the true value. Second, the funding for the project allowed for a collection of a sample size of 500. Thus, my decision to go with this sample size was based on the expectation that it will practically facilitate a stable estimate of effect size in my study.

Materials and procedure

Participants were instructed that they will be completing a survey of their evaluation of historical events. For a series of historical events, participants were asked to rate how much current members of a group deserve blame for a historical wrong. Then, participants assessed the connectedness, and the fulfilled obligations of members of perpetrator groups for righting the wrong. Participants also rated their perceptions of the continued suffering of the victim group and perception of continued privilege of the perpetrator group. Additionally, participants were asked to rate the perceived severity of the historical wrong, their perceptions of how far into the past the event occurred, how entitative they perceived the perpetrator group to be, and how familiar they were with the event which were used as statistical controls. Each participant did this for a random selection of 10 events (out of 25 possible events). Finally, they were asked for their socio-demographic information (race, sex) which were used to control for group-

membership. Table 2 gives an example of one event and how the corresponding outcome variables, predictors variables, and control variables appeared to the participant.

Table 2. Example of one of the 25 events, and the corresponding outcomes, predictors, and covariates for the one example event

Stimuli	Please answer the following questions about this historical event: Africans and African Americans were enslaved by White Americans through the 17th to 19th centuries.
Blame Judgement	White people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on Black people as part of slavery. (1= Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)
Connectedness of perpetrator group	How much connectedness or similarity is there between White Americans when slavery happened and White Americans today? (1 = completely disconnected, 7 = completed connected; see Figure 1)
Persisting harm of victim group	Black Americans are still suffering harm today (for example, physical, psychological, or financial harms) as a result of the slavery. (1= Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)
Persisting privilege of perpetrator group	White Americans are still benefiting today (for example, physical, psychological, or financial benefits) as a result of the slavery. (1= Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)
Obligations of perpetrator group	Descendants of White Americans have fulfilled their obligations to remedy the wrongs of slavery. (1= Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)
Entitativity of perpetrator group	To what degree can the behaviour of White Americans be controlled or influenced by other White Americans? (1 = not at all, 7 = a lot) To what extent do White Americans have common goals with each other? (1 = not at all, 7 = a lot) To what degree do White Americans share knowledge and information with each other? (1 = not at all, 7 = a lot)
Severity of the event	How harmful was slavery? (1= not harmful at all, 7 = extremely harmful)
Historical distance of the event	How long ago do you feel slavery took place? (1 = feels very distant ago, 7 = feels very recent)
Familiarity with the event	How familiar are you with American slavery? (1=not familiar at all, 7 = extremely familiar)

Stimuli: Historical Wrongs

Participants responded to 10 randomly selected historical events from a list of 25 events (full list is attached in Appendix). The typical structure of the event involved one group (perpetrator group) committing a wrong against another group (victim group). For example, "Africans and African Americans were enslaved by White Americans through the 17th to 19th centuries." The list, consisting of 25 events, was formed by going through the previous psychological, philosophical, and political literature on historical wrongs, collective responsibility, reparations, intergroup conflict, and intergroup reconciliation, or through news articles and opinion pieces on such topics. Examples which were used in these literatures were collected and used to create stimuli for the study. Participants only completed measures for 10 of the events to prevent participant fatigue.

Outcome Variable: Blame judgement

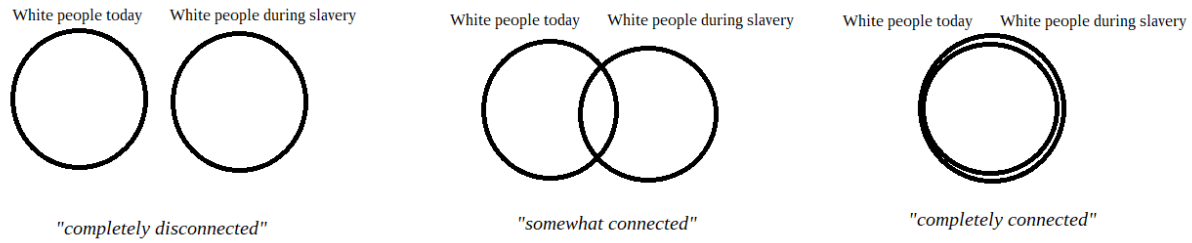
For each of the 10 randomly selected historical wrongs, participants were asked to rate their agreement on whether current members of the perpetrator group deserve blame for the wrongs their group committed in the past. Agreement was measured on a 7-point scale: Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Somewhat Disagree (3); Neutral (4); Somewhat Agree (5); Agree (6); Strongly Agree (7).

Predictor Variables

Connectedness. Participants were asked to indicate their opinion about the degree of connectedness they perceived between the perpetrator group X at the time when the historical wrong happened and that current group now. Responses were given on a seven-point scale from "completely disconnected" to "completely connected" where no overlap meant ''completely disconnected'' and complete overlap means ''completely connected'' (adapted from Bartels et

al., 2013; Mott, 2018). Participants were provided with an image (see Figure 1) to illustrate the connectedness between the groups.

Figure 1. Connectedness between past and present group



Please indicate your opinion about the degree of connectedness or sameness between the White Americans when slavery happened and White Americans today by selecting an option below, where no overlap means "completely disconnected" and complete overlap means "completely connected."

Obligations. Obligation to remedy the harm was assessed by asking participants if perpetrator group have fulfilled obligations to right the historical wrong. Participants rated their agreement on a 7-point scale. For e.g., for the following item, "Descendants of White Americans have fulfilled their obligations to remedy the wrongs of slavery.", agreement was measured on a 7-point scale: Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Somewhat Disagree (3); Neutral (4); Somewhat Agree (5); Agree (6); Strongly Agree (7).

Continuing privilege of perpetrator group. Participants rated their agreement on an item indicating that the current perpetrator group continues to benefit as a result of the harm inflicted on the group as part of the historical wrong (adapted from Banfield et al., 2014). For example: "White Americans are still benefiting today (for example, physical, psychological, or financial benefits) as a result of slavery." Agreement was measured on a 7-point scale: Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Somewhat Disagree (3); Neutral (4); Somewhat Agree (5); Agree (6); Strongly

Agree (7).

Continuing harm of victim group. Participants rated their agreement on an item indicating that the current victim group continues to suffer as a result of the harm inflicted on the group as part of the historical wrong (adapted from Banfield et al., 2014). For example: "Black Americans are still suffering harm (for example, physical, psychological, or financial harms) as a result of slavery." Agreement was measured on a 7-point scale: Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Somewhat Disagree (3); Neutral (4); Somewhat Agree (5); Agree (6); Strongly Agree (7).

Covariates

Five covariates were included: the perceived severity of the historical wrong, perceptions of historical distance of the event, perceived entitativity of the perpetrator group, familiarity with the event, and whether the participant is a member of group associated with either the victim group or the perpetrator group. Perceived severity of the event was assessed by asking participants to rate on a 7-point scale how harmful they think the historical event was. For example, "How harmful was slavery" (1= not harmful at all, 7 = extremely harmful). Perception of historical distance was measured by asking participants to indicate on a 7-point scale how far into the past the event occurred (adapted from Peetz et al., 2010). For example, "How long ago do you feel slavery took place" (1 = feels very distant, 7 = feels very recent). Entitativity of perpetrator group was assessed with three items rated on 7-point scales (Denson et al., 2006). The ratings on each of these 3 items was averaged into a composite rating of entitativity. See Table 2 for the items. Familiarity with the event was evaluated by asking participants "How familiar are you with American slavery?" (1= not familiar at all, 7= extremely familiar). Finally, as part of a section assessing demographic information, participants were asked to indicate their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and sex/gender, which were used to control for group

membership. I created two variables: Perpetrator Group and Victim Group and used effect coding where perpetrator group was coded (perpetrator group = 1, victim group = 0, neither = -1) and victim groups was coded (perpetrator group = 0, victim group = 1, neither = -1) Thus, for example, for American slavery event, the Perpetrator Group variable assigned a 1 to White American participants, 0 to Black American participants and -1 to other American ethnicities. Similarly for the same event, the Victim Group variable assigned a 1 to Black Americans, 0 to White Americans and a -1 to other ethnicities. I used these to create interaction terms with the four main predictors to test if group membership (whether the participant belongs to the victim group or perpetrator group or neither) affected the relationship between the predictors and blame judgements.

Event Location

The participants were American, and the events were both American and non-American. It was thus possible that the relationship between the predictors and blame judgements for the American events is different from the relationship between the predictors and blame judgements for non-American events. Hence, in order to examine the interaction between each of the predictor variables and whether the event is an American or non-American event, the American events were coded as 1 and the non-American events were coded as -1. For example, the event was coded 1 for American slavery historical event, but a -1 for the Holocaust historical event.

RESULTS

I used multilevel models, with historical events nested in persons. I included a random intercept for both the historical events and the persons (Judd et al., 2012). All of the predictor variables were be mean-centered within-persons (Enders & Tofighi, 2007). I regressed blame judgments on the four primary variables of interest: perceived continuity of perpetrator group, impression of current suffering of victim group, impression of continued privilege of perpetrator group, and perceived obligations of the perpetrator group. Additional models were used to assess the association between the four primary variables and blame individually, and then with covariates and moderators to assess their impact. I first ran these models on all events (outlined in Table 3), and then separately ran all these models using only the American events (Table 4). The multilevel models allowed me to estimate the effects of the key variables across range of situations.

Table 3. Description of the models that were estimated for all events

Predictors	**Models**											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Continuity	x				x	x	x				x	x
Victim group harm		x			x	x		x			x	x
Perpetrator group benefit			x		x	x			x		x	x
Obligations				x	x	x				x	x	x
Continuity*Event Type							x				x	x
Victim group harm*Event Type								x			x	x
Perpetrator group benefit*Event Type									x		x	x
Obligations*Event Type										x	x	x
Controls	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Note: Cross mark means that predictor will be included in the model

Controls include group membership, entitativity of perpetrator group severity of event, historical distance of the event, familiarity with the event

Table 4. Description of the models that were estimated for American events only

Predictors	**Models**											
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Continuity	x				x	x	x				x	x
Victim group harm		x			x	x		x			x	x
Perpetrator group benefit			x		x	x			x		x	x
Obligations				x	x	x				x	x	x
Continuity*Group Membership							x				x	x
Victim group harm*Group Membership								x			x	x
Perpetrator group benefit*Group Membership									x		x	x
Obligations*Group Membership										x	x	x
Controls	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Note: Cross mark means that predictor will be included in the model

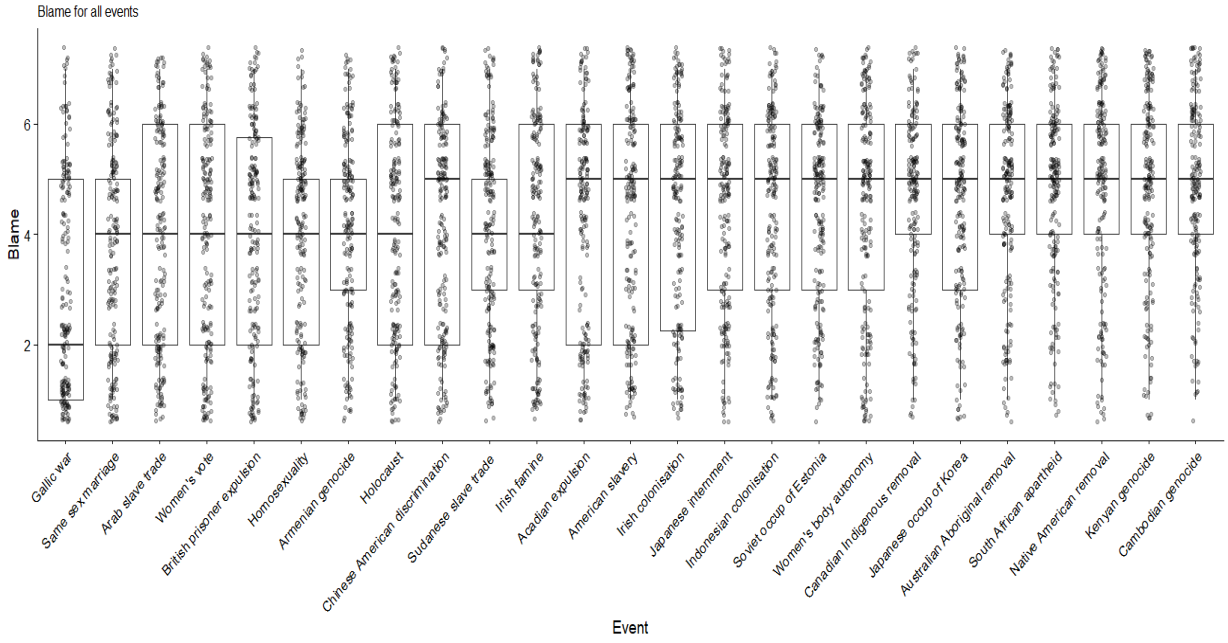
Controls include group membership, entitativity of perpetrator group severity of event, historical distance of the event, familiarity with the event

First, I provide a descriptive picture of blame judgements and find that at least some people blame current groups for the past actions of that group. Then, I proceed with the main analyses. In the first set of analyses, I ran models 1-6 from Table 3 to estimate the relationship between the main predictors and blame (both individually and together). I ran these models using all events. In the next step, the aim was to see if the relationship between the predictors and blame was moderated by the location of events (American or non-American event). I ran models 7-12 from Table 3 which includes interactions of the predictors with event location. Finally, I wanted to see if the relationship between the main predictors and blame was moderated by group membership (whether participant belonged to victim group or perpetrator group or neither). For this purpose, I ran models 19-24 from Table 4 which includes interactions of the predictors with group type. I ran this on American events only because the sample was American — thus allowing for categorization of participants into perpetrator or victim group (which would not be possible for non-American events where all participants are neither perpetrators nor victims). I also ran models 13-18 from Table 4 to see if the relationship between the main predictors and blame (both individually and together) holds from the first set of analyses (when run only with American events). Running models 13-18 from Table 4 for American events only also allows for the comparison of the relationship between the predictors and blame when judging events that are part of participants' national history vs a mixed set of events.

Do people blame current groups for past actions?

Figure 2 show that people not only blame current groups for their past actions, but responses are spread across the range of the scale. This suggests that at least some people blame current groups for their past actions. I proceeded to test factors that predict variation in these blame judgments.

Figure 2. Blame for all events (order from lowest to highest in mean blame)



Relationship between main predictors and blame

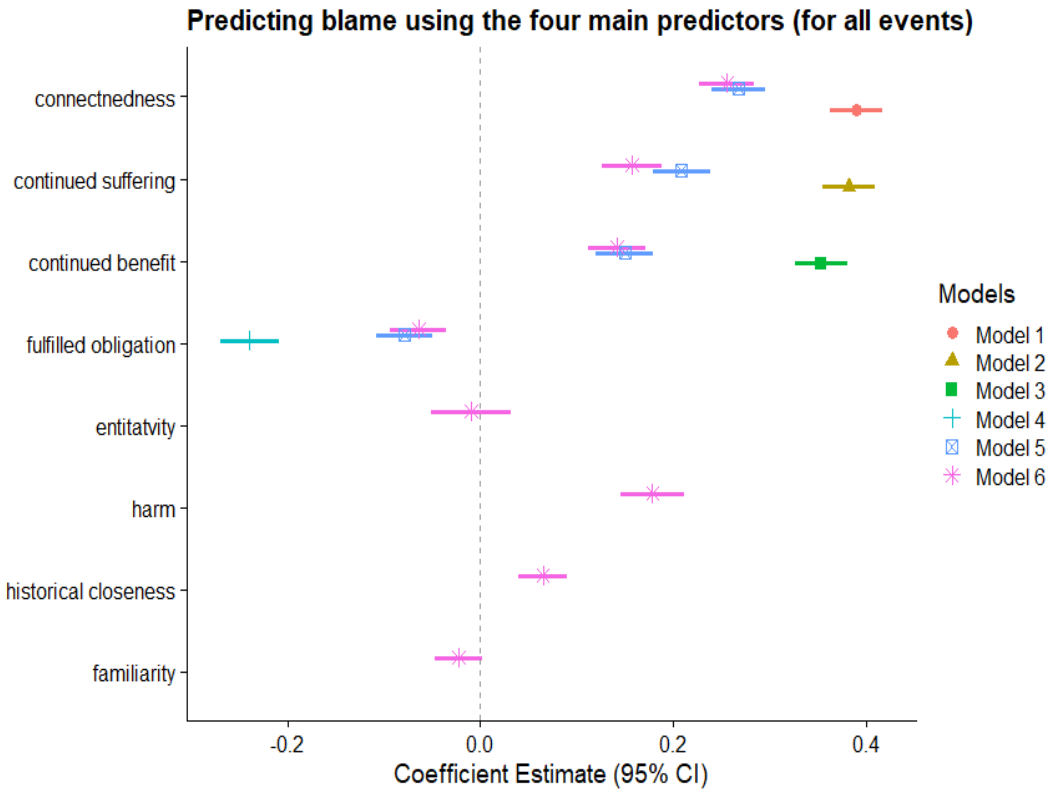
All events

I predicted that higher levels of perceived connectedness of the perpetrator group over time, perceived continued suffering of the victim group, and perceived continued benefit of the perpetrator group would be associated with more blame, whereas higher levels of perceived fulfilled obligations by perpetrator group would be associated with less blame. To test these hypotheses, blame judgments were regressed on the four primary variables of interest: perceived continuity of perpetrator group, impression of current suffering of victim group, impression of continued privilege of perpetrator group, and perceived fulfilled obligations of the perpetrator group. This was done individually for each of the predictors, and also with all of them together in the same model. Results are presented in Figure 3.

Consistent with these hypotheses, Figure 3 shows that for all events, all of the four main predictors are significant and in the expected direction (predictors included in each model are

specified in Table 3). This was the case for when each predictor is the only predictor in the model (Models 1-4) and when other possible predictors and controls are included (Models 5-6). Thus, i) perception of greater continuity between past perpetrator group and present group ii) greater perception of continued suffering of victim groups iii) greater perception of continued benefit for perpetrator groups and iv) perception of failure to fulfil obligations predict higher blame judgements for present-day perpetrator group.

Figure 3. Estimates of the relationship between the main predictors and blame (for all events).



Relationship between predictors and blame for American and non-American events

Next, I tested if the relationship between the main predictors and blame was moderated by the location of event (American = 1 vs non-American = -1). This shows whether or not the relationships identified above hold across events from both contexts. I re-ran all of the models above, but also included the interactions between the main predictors and event location (Models 7-12 in Table 1). Results for the models with interactions are in Table 5.

The main effects of the predictors tell us whether the predictors significantly predicted blame across the whole sample (averaged over the two groups). As evident from the table, the four main predictors significantly predicted blame in the hypothesized direction over and above the effects of other control variables and interaction effects.

A simple slope analysis for model 12 (which included all the predictors, controls and interactions) was conducted to estimate the effect of the four main predictors for each event location separately. The results are summarised in Table 6. The first two columns give the slope estimates of the four main predictors for each event location and tell us if the relationship is significant. The last column tells us if the slopes of the American events significantly differ from the slopes of non-American events.

Event location did not moderate the relationship between blame and connectedness, continued suffering, or continued benefit. The simple slopes for obligation significantly differed between the event locations. The results show that for both American and non-American events, lower levels of perceived fulfilled obligations was associated with more blame; however, this effect was stronger for non-American events and was weaker and non-significant for American events. The relationships between connectedness and blame, continued suffering and blame, and continued benefits and blame did not reliably differ depending on event location.

Table 5. Estimates of the relationship between the main predictors and their interaction with event location, and blame (for all events)

	Models					
Predictors	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
connectedness	0.319** (0.015)				0.262** (0.015)	0.250** (0.015)
continued suffering		0.283** (0.016)			0.204** (0.016)	0.149** (0.017)
continued benefit			0.278** (0.015)		0.158** (0.016)	0.150** (0.016)
fulfilled obligation				-0.160** (0.016)	-0.071** (0.015)	-0.057** (0.015)
event location	-0.106* (0.054)	-0.096 (0.055)	-0.101* (0.049)	-0.089 (0.059)	-0.128** (0.045)	-0.114* (0.045)
entitativity	0.021 (0.022)	0.051* (0.022)	0.025 (0.022)	0.078** (0.023)		-0.011 (0.021)
harm	0.254** (0.017)	0.174** (0.018)	0.215** (0.017)	0.251** (0.018)		0.176** (0.017)
historical closeness	0.118** (0.013)	0.133** (0.013)	0.151** (0.013)	0.176** (0.013)		0.066** (0.013)
knowledge	-0.008 (0.013)	0.002 (0.013)	0.008 (0.013)	0.011 (0.014)		-0.017 (0.013)
connectendess* event location	-0.044** (0.015)				-0.034* (0.015)	-0.028 (0.015)
continued suffering* event location		-0.026 (0.015)			-0.012 (0.017)	-0.022 (0.017)
continued benefit* event location			-0.006 (0.015)		0.028 (0.017)	0.026 (0.017)
fulfilled obligation* event location				0.046** (0.017)	0.034* (0.016)	0.032* (0.016)
Constant	4.239** (0.081)	4.236** (0.082)	4.233** (0.078)	4.235** (0.085)	4.227** (0.076)	4.232** (0.075)
Observations	4,848	4,826	4,837	4,832	4,802	4,754
Log Likelihood	-8,043.76	-8,068.63	-8,079.21	-8,199.39	-7,842.72	-7,724.37
AIC	16,109.54	16,159.28	16,180.43	16,420.78	15,711.45	15,482.75
BIC	16,180.89	16,230.58	16,251.75	16,492.09	15,795.65	15,592.68

Note: Model numbers correspond to model numbers in Table 3. *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 6. Simple slope results for predicting blame separately for each event location and comparison between event location slopes

	Simple Slopes		Slope Comparisons
	American	Non-American	American v. non-American
connectedness	0.223**	0.278**	-0.055
	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.031)
continued suffering	0.128**	0.171**	-0.043
	(0.027)	(0.020)	(0.034)
continued benefit	0.177**	0.124**	0.053
	(0.027)	(0.019)	(0.034)
fulfilled obligation	-0.025	-0.089**	0.064*
	(0.025)	(0.020)	(0.033)

Note: *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$

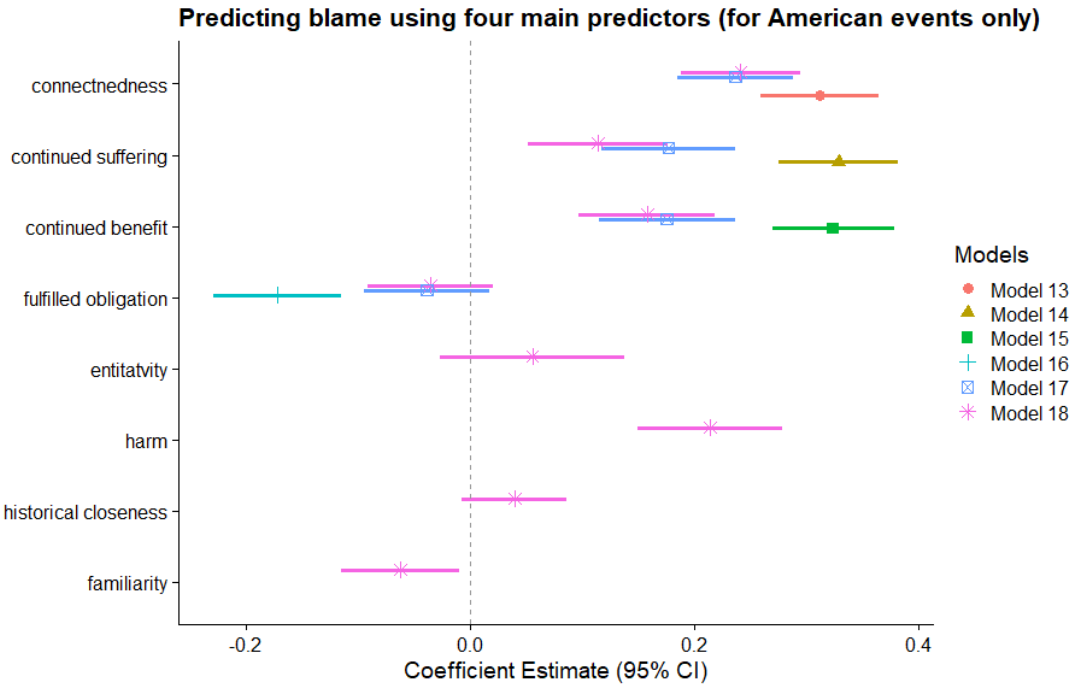
Relationship between predictors and blame for victim and perpetrator group

Next, I tested if group membership (whether the participant belongs to the victim group or perpetrator group or neither) affects the relationship between the predictors and blame judgements. The same models were used for this purpose as for all of the events, but data was restricted to only the US American events. Because the sample was US American, I could categorise participants as members of the perpetrator group, victim group, and neither for each event. The non-American events would have participants belonging to neither the perpetrator nor the victim groups. Group membership was effects-coded. Two variables (Perpetrator group and Victim Group) were created to capture if perpetrator group differed from the grand mean (perpetrator group = 1, victim group = 0, neither = -1) and if victim groups differ from the grand mean (perpetrator group = 0, victim group = 1, neither = -1). The four main predictors were mean centred within-person and interaction terms between the main predictors and the group membership effect codes were used to predict blame.

First, I ran models without the interaction terms to see how the predictors faired by

themselves in the smaller subset of American events. Consistent with the first set of analyses that included all events, all of the four main predictors are significant and in the expected direction when they are the only predictor in the regression model (models 13-16 in Table 4). The one difference is that when other predictors and controls are included (models 17-18 in Table 4), failure to fulfil obligations was no longer significantly associated with blame in those cases (although it was in the expected direction) suggesting that the relationship between fulfilled obligations and blame is less robust. Results are shown in Figure 4. Predictors included in each model are specified in Table 4

Figure 4. Estimates of the relationship between the main predictors and blame (for American events only)



For testing for the moderating effects of group membership, I added the interaction terms (models 19-24 from Table 4). The results from all models are presented in Table 7.

A simple slope analysis for model 24 (which included all the predictors, controls and interactions) was conducted to estimate the effect of the four main predictors for each group. The results are summarised in Table 8. The first three columns give the slope estimates of the four main predictors for each group and tell us if the effect is significant. The last three columns compare the slopes of the group pairwise and tell us if they are significantly different.

Group membership did significantly moderate the relationship between perceived connectedness and blame. Simple slopes analyses showed that the slope was strongest for non-perpetrator groups (victim groups and neither victim and perpetrator groups) and weakest for the perpetrator group (the slope significantly differed from the other two groups). These results suggest that the positive relationship between perceiving connectedness in perpetrator group and blame is stronger when non-perpetrator groups (victim groups and others) make this evaluation as evidenced by stronger coefficients for victim group and neither perpetrator or victim group.

The simple slopes analyses also showed that the relationship between the predictor continued suffering and blame is significantly different from zero only for the perpetrator group. Similarly, the relationship between the predictor continued benefit and blame was significant only for non-victim groups. These suggest that the effect of the main predictor on blame differs based on the group membership of the blamer.

Table 7. Estimates of the relationship between the main predictors and their interaction with group type, and blame (for American events only)

	Models					
Predictors	Model 19	Model 20	Model 21	Model 22	Model 23	Model 24
connectedness	0.337** (0.035)				0.301** (0.036)	0.305** (0.036)
continued suffering		0.229** (0.040)			0.130** (0.043)	0.067 (0.044)
continued benefit			0.236** (0.037)		0.168** (0.041)	0.161** (0.041)
fulfilled obligation				-0.133* (0.036)	-0.042 (0.038)	-0.034 (0.037)
perpetrator group	-0.010 (0.062)	-0.051 (0.065)	-0.038 (0.063)	-0.075 (0.062)	0.029 (0.065)	0.022 (0.065)
victim group	0.076 (0.072)	0.081 (0.076)	0.063 (0.076)	0.092 (0.074)	0.028 (0.078)	0.026 (0.077)
entitativity	0.109 (0.043)	0.124** (0.043)	0.10* (0.044)	0.157** (0.044)		0.055 (0.042)
harm	0.288** (0.032)	0.200** (0.034)	0.224* (0.033)	0.283** (0.033)		0.212** (0.033)
historical closeness	0.077** (0.024)	0.086** (0.025)	0.101** (0.024)	0.102** (0.025)		0.038 (0.024)
knowledge	-0.056* (0.028)	-0.045 (0.028)	-0.043 (0.028)	-0.038 (0.029)		-0.060* (0.028)
connectedness* perpetrator group	-0.115** (0.040)				-0.124** (0.041)	-0.120* (0.041)
connectedness* victim group	0.080 (0.049)				0.073 (0.050)	0.058 (0.050)
continued suffering* perpetrator group		0.006 (0.042)			0.066 (0.048)	0.067 (0.048)
continued suffering* victim group		0.077 (0.052)			0.020 (0.063)	0.033 (0.062)
continued benefit* perpetrator group			0.018 (0.041)		0.017 (0.046)	0.001 (0.046)
continued benefit* victim group			0.033 (0.051)		-0.034 (0.060)	-0.025 (0.060)
fulfilled obligation * perpetrator group				0.032 (0.041)	0.014 (0.044)	0.006 (0.043)
fulfilled obligation * victim group				-0.054 (0.055)	-0.017 (0.058)	0.002 (0.057)
Constant	4.196** (0.112)	4.242** (0.114)	4.235** (0.099)	4.267** (0.103)	4.077** (0.117)	4.159** (0.108)
Observations	1,555	1,545	1,554	1,552	1,544	1,530
Log Likelihood	-2,842.590	-2,846.003	-2,856.989	-2,878.952	-2,808.366	-2,776.606
AIC	5,711.181	5,718.007	5,739.979	5,783.903	5,652.732	5,597.212
BIC	5,780.721	5,787.463	5,809.510	5,853.418	5,748.891	5,714.538

Note: Model numbers correspond to model numbers in Table 4. *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 8. Simple slope results for predicting blame separately for each group, and comparison between group slopes

	Simple Slopes			Slope Comparisons		
	Neither perpetrator nor victim	Perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator Vs Victim	Perpetrator Vs Neither	Victim Vs Neither
connectedness	0.367**	0.185**	0.363**	-0.178*	-0.182*	-0.004
	(0.080)	(0.033)	(0.063)	(0.071)	(0.087)	(0.101)
continued suffering	-0.032	0.134**	0.100	0.034	0.167	0.133
	(0.098)	(0.037)	(0.078)	(0.085)	(0.103)	(0.125)
continued benefit	0.185*	0.162**	0.136	0.026	-0.023	-0.049
	(0.088)	(0.037)	(0.077)	(0.085)	(0.096)	(0.117)
fulfilled obligation	-0.042	-0.028	-0.032	0.004	0.013	0.010
	(0.081)	(0.035)	(0.073)	(0.081)	(0.089)	(0.110)

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01

DISCUSSION

Explaining blame towards current groups for the wrongs committed by their group members in the past involves filling gaps in current theories of blame. Existing theories of blame attempt to explain blame towards individuals or groups for their actions in the present (Malle et al., 2014; Alicke, 2000; Denson et al.,2006; Lickel, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2001; Lickel, Schmader, & Hamilton, 2003). In these theories, it is assumed that the blameworthy actions and their perpetrator group/individual co-occur at the same time, and hence these are insufficient to explain blame towards group members displaced in time from when the historical wrong took place. The current research aimed to fill this gap. In a survey study involving judgements of real historical events, I found that perceiving higher (a) connectedness between past and present perpetrator groups, (b) unfulfilled obligations of perpetrator groups, (c) continued privilege of perpetrator groups, and (d) continued harm of victim groups facilitates higher blame judgements against current groups for the past. Thus, I found that factors that link the present group to the past explain why groups are blamed for their past actions.

The standard set of criteria (e.g., causation, intent, foresight, foreseeability, preventability) that form the basis of evaluations in current theories of blame (Malle et al., 2014; Alicke, 2000) do not help explain the type of blame I have highlighted in my study. Matters of causality, intent, foreseeability, or preventability do not apply in such a case. Theories of blame claim that the blame process begins with the detection of harm which leads people to collect information on the criterion mentioned before making a blame judgement. My research suggests that while the blame process is engendered by registering a harmful event, people collect a different sort of information than the information highlighted by current theories of blame. What implication does it then have for the current theories of blame?

For starters, my research brings to light criteria that likely play a role in judgements of blame, but have been overlooked. I used the idea of forward responsibility, which is responsibility for remedying or repairing a harm after the event has happened (Marion, 2017), and tested for its effects on blame. The current theories of blame which use criterion like preventability and capacity work with a backward-looking idea of responsibility where responsibility is attributed based on recognizing whether the target could have prevented the harmful event from happening in the first place (Gilbert, 2006). Thus, the theories focus on factors that occur *before* the harmful event happened. My research suggests that theories of blame should also consider other additional criterion like forward responsibility where blame is based on factors that occur *after* the harmful event as these likely affect judgments of blame. The target might not have intended for the harm to happen, nor have caused it or were in a place to prevent it from happening, but they might be subject to blame because they failed to do anything afterwards to address the harm. Similarly, the results for continued benefit suggest that blame theories place undue focus on factors occurring prior to harm and not factors that occur afterwards. Again, the target might not have intended for the harm to happen, nor have caused it or were in a place to prevent it from happening, but they might be subject to blame because they derived benefits from that harmful event.

Second, I highlight that the current theories of blame rest on the assumptions of events and perpetrators existing in the same time. However, this study brings to light, a type of blame (for past events) which violate these assumptions. Thereby, they bring forth criterion of blame judgements relatively unexplored in the literature like the connectedness of perpetrator over time or the continued harm of victims and continued benefit of perpetrators as important dimensions on which people base their judgements on. It is possible that the way people experience blame

for current events is experienced psychologically different from blame for past events, which would explain the different antecedents to blame. This is not addressed in the current study and requires investigation in further studies.

Because the study included an American sample evaluating events that were both American (events pertaining to their own history and national groups), and non-American (events not pertaining to their own history and national groups), I suspected that their evaluations of the predictor and outcome variables might differ by the location of the historical event. This might occur because of differences in levels of personal relevance or knowledge of the event. Thus, I tested if the location of the event moderated the relationship between the predictors and blame judgements. I found the relationship between all four main predictors and blame to be in the hypothesized direction for both American and non-American events, but there was one difference. Specifically, the strength of the relationship between the perceiving unfulfilled obligations of perpetrator group and blame towards perpetrator group. The effects were stronger when non-American events and groups were being judged than when American events and groups were being judged.

I did not have precise predictions about the role of event location in moderating the relationship between our predictors and blame and therefore these interactions deserve further investigation in future studies. Having said that, the stronger and significant relationship for non-American events seems to suggest that similar information (like perceiving unfulfilled obligations) does not play an equal role in ascribing blame in all cases. When the events and groups are not personal to the blamer (non-American events), blame is stronger despite similar conditions. Thus, personal relevance attenuates blame. This is not unexpected as previous research suggests that people don't use the same criterion for everyone when it comes to moral

judgements (Knobe & Doris, 2010; Earp et al., 2021; Hester & Gray, 2020) — both the identity of the target and observer and the relationship between them plays a role. Thus, people might not apply the same weight to evidence in all cases (Alicke, 2000), thereby affecting the relationship between the predictors and judgements of blame.

Finally, while I did not have clear predictions for the moderating role of group membership, I tested if the relationship between the predictors and blame holds similarly when victim groups vs perpetrator group made these judgements. I found the relationship between all four main predictors and blame to be in the hypothesized direction for both victim groups and perpetrator groups, consistent with predictions. However, some of the relationships were not significant. The relationship between perceiving connectedness of perpetrator group and blame towards perpetrator group was stronger when non-perpetrator groups (victim groups and others) make this evaluation. The relationship between perceived continued suffering and blame was significant only for perpetrator group, and the relationship between perceived continued benefit and blame was significant only for non-victim groups.

These results suggest that factors are weighted or taken into account differently when different groups are making blame judgements for past actions. As with the event location analyses, this suggests that the identity of the observer and target plays a role in blame judgements for past actions. Although identity does not play a role for all factors, it deserves further scrutiny. It may be that identifying as a perpetrator group member heightens the perception of factors that would potentially further undermine their group image and reputation (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008) which perpetrator groups are motivated to correct following intergroup conflict. If they do not recognize the damage inflicted by actions of perpetrator group or the benefits reaped from an atrocity, it would cost them their public moral image. Thus, this

might result in the significant relationship observed between perceiving continued suffering of current victim group or continued benefit of perpetrator group and blame for perpetrator groups. However, one caveat is that my study was not designed to specifically study these questions (whether event location or group membership has differential effects on the relationship between the predictors and blame), and hence deserve more detailed investigation in further studies.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

By studying blame judgements for past actions of groups, it allows us to extend the literature on blame — it informs us of the criteria involved in the blame process when it concerns groups and events in the past. Blame towards groups for past involves different psychological criterion than blame for individuals and blame towards groups in the present. Additionally, the study design, by using a host of real historical events from all around the world, allows us to generalise the relationship observed between our predictors and blame across situations of the basic makeup — i.e., where one group (perpetrator group) has committed a wrong against another group (victim group) in the past. Typically studies of the same ilk that study intergroup forgiveness, apologies, or reparations (Starzyk & Ross, 2008; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005; Schmitt et al., 2008; Brown et al; 2008), pick a few groups or events to study the psychological underpinnings of the phenomenon of interest. One issue with such studies is that the specificity of the group or event used restricts the findings from being applied across a range of situations. Similarly, studies about moral judgements predominantly involves studying the phenomenon in hypothetical situation with “raceless, genderless strangers”, and deprived of real-world context (Hester & Gray, 2020; Schein, 2020). Thus, by using real world events, and by using a host of them from all over the world, allows me to circumvent the limitations of past studies in the moral judgements and group processes literature.

Despite these strengths, there were some limitations. The study design doesn't manipulate any of the predictor variables and thus doesn't allow us to speak of causality. We do not know from this study whether the four predictor variables cause judgements of blame or vice versa. This is important to determine for both theoretical and practical reasons. Some theories of blame claim that blame is an outcome (Malle et al., 2014) of processing information on various criterion whereas other theories (Alicke, 2000; Ditto et al.,2009) claim that blame occurs much earlier as an automatic reaction to some harmful event, and factors like motivation to blame, outcome bias, and affective reactions, amongst others then determine how evidence on various criteria is evaluated. Future studies can test for causality by manipulating the predictor variables for real or hypothetical historical wrongs and groups and test how that affects judgements of blame.

Second, I suspected that the blame process might differ for victim groups and perpetrator groups, and for American and non-American events and hence tested for the moderating role of group membership and event location separately. Although I do find some significant interactions for some predictors, our study was not designed to probe these questions and may be underpowered. For example, I only had 286 victim group member observations compared to 1075 observations from perpetrator group members which most likely affects the significance test of the relationship between our predictors of interest and blame for different groups. Future studies could thus explore in bigger samples or in different research designs if victim groups and perpetrator groups involved in a historical wrong differ in their blame processes. Understanding if the blame processes differ for perpetrator and victim groups would help shed light on whether other criterion (eg., motivations, emotions, or knowledge) factor in the blame process based on a person's identity. This would shed light on broader questions about nature of moral judgements

in both psychological and philosophical literature regarding the extent to which such whether moral rules are universal or sensitive to context (Knobe & Doris, 2010).

Addressing some of these questions would also be an important step in connecting this research to its implications for policy or intergroup relations. Understanding the causal connection would provide insight into factors that can cause people to blame or not blame the perpetrator group for the past. This would give insight into what would need to change (e.g., things perpetrator groups can do) for people to stop blaming groups or intergroup relations to improve; for example, perhaps perpetrator groups need to show evidence that they have sufficiently changed in values and norms and are disconnected from their past members. Further, studies could explore if such interventions, in addition to decreasing blame, leads to forgiveness and positive evaluation of perpetrator groups.

Different psychological and philosophical theories of blame emphasize various aspects of blame — cognitive, affective, motivational (Malle, 2014, Alicke, 2000, Tognazzini & Coates, 2021) suggesting that blame has different dimensions. This would mean that reducing blame on one dimension (e.g., cognitively) might not necessitate reduction in experiencing blame on another (e.g., emotionally), which might be important in forgiveness and reconciliation. For example, one might cognitively realize that perpetrator groups have changed over time and hence do not deserve blame, but still feel resentment and anger towards them. On the policy front, future studies can examine the relationship between the psychological antecedents of blame and support for policies that involve apologies, reparations, or educational policies that emphasize historical wrongs. This would help identify potential points of intervention. For example, if one finds that perpetrator groups deny blame to themselves based on the perception of perpetrator group's lack of continued benefit, which then further motivates their opposition to educational

curriculum highlighting the role of the historical wrong in current inequality, then educating them on their continued benefits might make them more open to perceive injustice and act on it.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, thus work shows that a) people experience blame towards current groups for their past actions b) identifies four predictors of blame for past actions of groups. In doing so, c) it highlights the ways in which blame process for this case differs from the blame process described by standard theories of blame in its assumptions and use of criteria. Additionally, it provides some insight into how groups might differ in their blame process and provides multiple avenues for future research.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Table of Descriptives

Table 9. Descriptives for the outcome variable, predictor variables, and covariates

Variable	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
Blame	4.267995	1.866763	5	1	7
Connectedness	3.76413	1.709358	4	1	7
Continued suffering	4.791923	1.624841	5	1	7
Continued Benefit	4.34956	1.681565	4	1	7
Fulfilled Obligations	3.756807	1.551141	4	1	7
Entitativity	4.826282	1.204859	5	1	7
Harm	5.714607	1.332096	6	1	7
Historical Closeness	3.894243	1.883975	4	1	7
Knowledge	3.874057	1.911632	4	1	7
Event Location	-0.35909	0.933398	-1	-1	1
Perpetrator Group	-0.50468	0.829028	-1	-1	1
Victim Group	-0.66511	0.582337	-1	-1	1

APPENDIX B

List of Historical Wrongs (Stimuli)

1. Africans and African Americans were enslaved by White Americans through the 17th to 19th centuries.
White people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on Black people as part of slavery.

2. The genocide of the European Jews was carried out by Germany in the 1930s and 1940s
German people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on Jewish people as part of the Holocaust.

3. The Armenian genocide was carried out by Ottoman Turks (current day Turkey) during World War One
Turkish people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on Armenians as part of the Armenian Genocide.

4. The internment (forced relocation and incarceration in concentration camps) of Japanese Americans in the United States was carried out during World War II by the United States government.
Americans today deserves blame for the harm inflicted on Japanese Americans as part of their internment during World War II.

5. Japanese war crimes, including forced mass prostitution of females, was carried out from 1910 to 1945 during the Japanese occupation of Korean peninsula.
Japanese today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on Koreans during the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula.

6. Racial segregationist policies against non-white citizens of South Africa were enforced during Apartheid from the 1940s to the 1990s by the all-white government.
White South Africans today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on non-white people as part of Apartheid.

7. 1.5 million Kenyans were locked up and tortured in concentration camps and prison facilities during Mau Mau uprising, by the British in the 1950s.
British people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on Kenyans during the Mau Mau Uprising in the 1950s.

8. Australian Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families as part of policies of forced assimilation into the white Australian community from the 1900s to 1970s.
White Australians today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on the Aboriginal people with the policies of forced assimilation.

9. Canadian Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families as part of Residential Schools policies of forced assimilation into Euro-Canadian culture from 1831 to 1996.
Canadians today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on the indigenous groups as part of the cultural assimilation programmes and residential school system.

10. Chinese Americans were subject to laws that discriminated against Chinese people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (for example, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882).
Americans today deserve blame for harm their group inflicted through laws that discriminated against Chinese Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

11. Africans were captured and sold by Arab Muslims in North and East Africa for hundreds of years (approximately 7th-18th centuries)
Arab Muslims today deserve blame for harm their group inflicted on Africans as part of the Arab slave trade.

12. Sudan was the most active slave-trading zone in Africa in 19th century, with slaves transported from southern to northern Africa, Egypt, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean.
Sudanese today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on Africans as part of the slave trade.

13. Homosexuality was criminalized in at least 13 U.S. states until 2003.
Straight people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on LGBT groups as part of their historic criminalization.

14. Same-sex marriage was not legal in all of the United States until 2015.
Straight people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on same-sex couples by denying them the right to marry.

15. From the founding of the United States until 1920, men denied women the right to vote.
Men today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted by denying women the right to vote.

16. Women were denied bodily autonomy for many centuries.
Men today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted by denying women bodily autonomy.

17. White Americans forced Native Americans to leave their ancestral land and move west from the 17th to the mid-20th century as part of the Indian Removal policies.
White American today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on Native Americans as part of Indian Removal policies.

18. The Roman Empire massacred and enslaved hundreds of thousands of people of Gaul (present day France and Belgium) from 58–50 BC
Italians today deserve blame for the harm the Roman empire inflicted on French and Belgian people in the Gallic Wars.

19. Between 1845 to 1851, British policies and practices caused the death of about 1 million Irish people due to famine.
British people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on the Irish due to the famine.

20. Starting in 1606, the British took a half a million acres of land from the Irish and gave it to British colonizers who tried to displace the native Irish population.

British people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on the Irish due to the colonization of Ireland.

21. During World War II, the Soviet Union occupied Estonia causing a permanent loss of at least 20% of its population to repression, exodus, and war.
Russian people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on Estonia during the occupation.

22. The Cambodian Communist party (the Khmer Rouge) killed over 1 million Cambodians between 1975 to 1979 as part of the Cambodian genocide.
Communists today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on Cambodians during the Cambodian genocide.

23. Between 1755 and 1764 the British expelled Acadians from their homes in Canada, forcing them to migrate to new countries, and killing thousands of others.
British people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on the Acadians during the Acadian expulsion.

24. The British transported prisoners, separating families from one another, to penal colonies in Australia between 1788 and 1868.
British people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on the prisoners.

25. From 1800 to 1949, the Dutch colonized Indonesia and inflicted excessive violence and committed war crimes on the indigenous population.
Dutch people today deserve blame for the harm their group inflicted on the Indonesians.

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