

The Association of *Victimisation* with *Vengeance Cognitions* and *Fantasies* in Early Adulthood: *A Longitudinal Study*

Andrea Tam

Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge

September 5, 2024



Outline

01

*Introduction and
Background*

02

*Research Question
and Hypothesis*

03

Methods

04

Results

05

*Discussion and
Conclusion*

Introduction

- Growing body of literature on socio-emotional consequences of victimisation
- Need to understand **cognitive aftermath**, especially thoughts of **vengeance** and **retaliatory fantasies**



Victimisation and Vengeance

- Social, emotional, and anxiety-related impacts well-documented (Armitage, 2021; Halliday et al., 2021)
- **Understudied link** between victimisation and vengeance
- Vengeful attitudes correlate with **depression, negative mental health outcomes** (Newman, 2011; Rijavec et al., 2010)
- Implications for **victim-offender overlap, violence and aggression** post-victimisation (Eisner et al., 2021)

Victimisation and Vengeance

- Previous focus on overt, extreme retaliation (Borum et al., 2010; Vossekuil et al., 2004)
- Gap in understanding **more covert forms of revenge**
- Study aims to understand **cognitive dynamics of revenge** and inform support mechanisms



Implications

- Understand changes in **vengeful thinking and fantasies** post-victimisation
- Implications for **aggression and violence** post-victimisation, **victim-offender overlap**
- Guide community efforts to **build resilience and nonviolent conflict resolution**



Research Question

- What is the association of **victimisation** with **vengeance cognitions and fantasies** among early adults?

Hypothesis

- Exposure-response relationship between victimisation and vengeance cognitions and fantasies
- As frequency of **victimisation experiences increase**, corresponding **increase in intensity of vengeance cognitions and fantasies**



Methods

- Longitudinal data from the **Zurich Project on the Social Development from Childhood to Adulthood** (z-proso), (Eisner & Ribeaud, 2007)
- Focus on data collected at **ages 20 and 24**
- Aim to evaluate effect of victimisation experiences on subsequent vengeful thoughts and fantasies

Measures

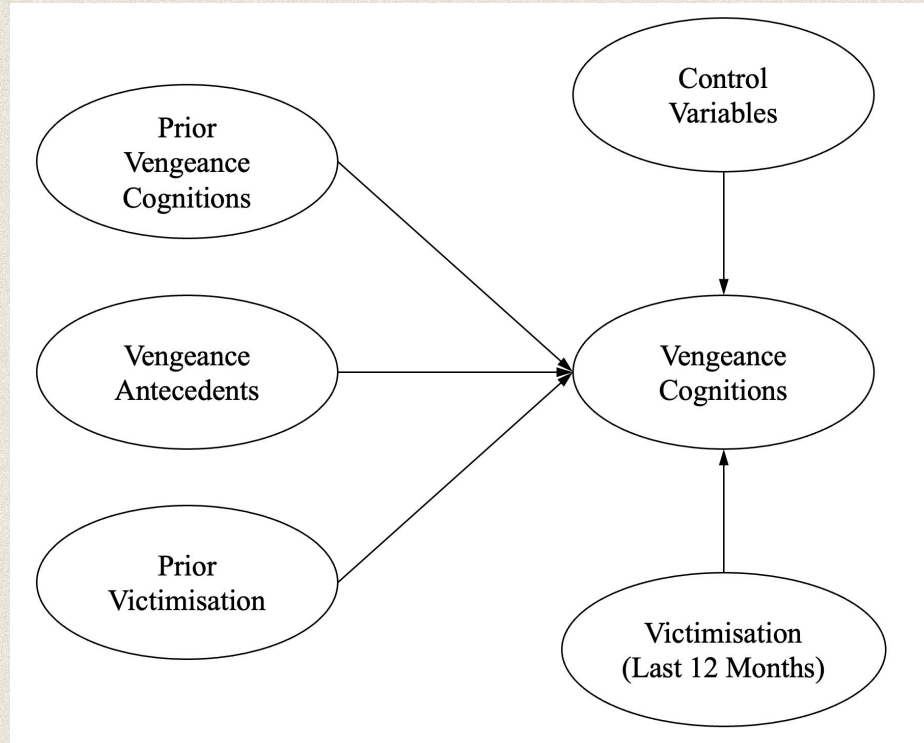
- Forms of victimisation: **bullying, serious violence, dating violence victimisation**
- **Polyvictimisation score**
- Instruments:
 - **Bullying Victimisation Scale** (Murray et al., 2021)
 - **Serious Violent Victimisation Scale** (KFN)
 - **Intimate Partner Violence Victimisation Scale** (Taylor et al., 2011; Zweig et al., 2013)
 - **Vengeance Scale** (Coelho et al., 2018; Stuckless & Goranson; 1992)
 - **Violent Ideations Scale** (Murray et al., 2018)

Data Analysis

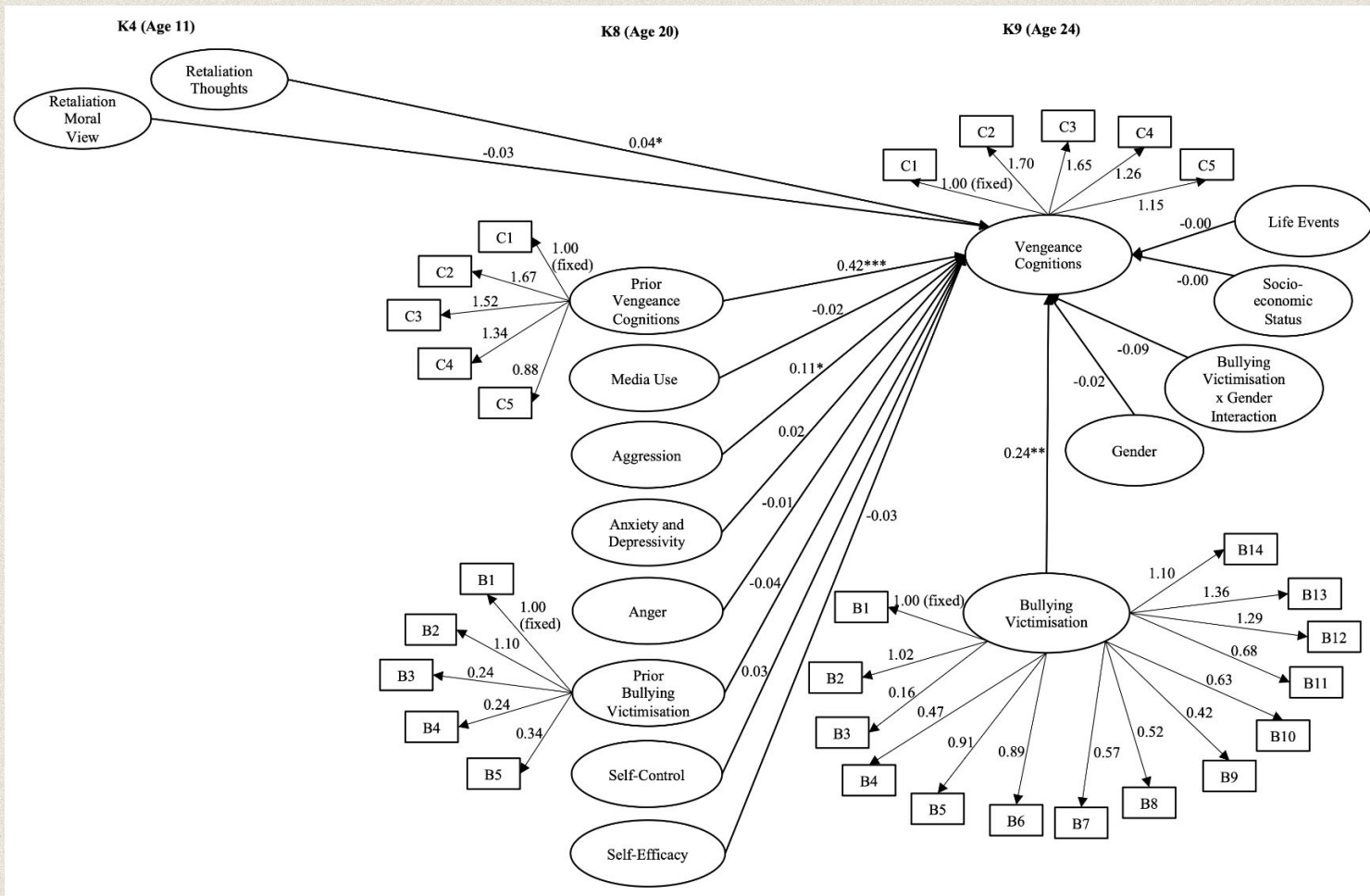
- Descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient for overview and bivariate relationships
- Full-information maximum likelihood structural equation modelling for main analyses

SEM Model

- Relationship Between Victimisation and Vengeance Cognitions



Relationship Between Bullying Victimization and Vengeance Cognitions



Results

- Higher frequencies of bullying, serious violence, and polyvictimisation over the past 12 months were significantly linked to more intense vengeance cognitions and fantasies at age 24
- Men generally exhibit stronger vengeance than women, except in cases of intimate partner violence victimisation

Results

- Sexual intimate partner violence linked to increase in vengeance cognitions and fantasies in women, but not in men
- Physical intimate partner violence is associated with higher vengeance fantasies in both genders, though the effect is slightly weaker in men

Discussion

- **Victimisation experiences** are strong predictors of heightened vengeance cognitions and fantasies
- **Gender differences** in vengeance responses vary by victimisation type
- Possible **emotional and relational complexities** in intimate partner violence may impact vengeance responses



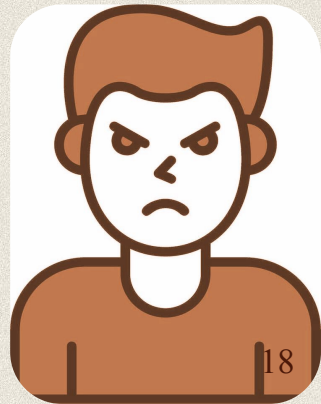
Discussion

- Vengeance cognitions and fantasies may act as coping mechanisms in response to **strain and perceived injustices** (Agnew, 2002; Orth et al., 2006)
- Vengeance can also function as a strategic behavior to **deter future threats and maintain social order** (McCullough et al., 2013)



Conclusion

- Victimization experiences are **significantly positively linked** to vengeance cognitions and fantasies, with gender playing a moderating role
- Highlights the need for interventions tailored to address the **psychological aftermath** of victimisation and **potential vengeance responses**



Conclusion

- Strategies could focus on reducing negative emotional impacts and promoting **constructive responses** to past victimisation beyond revenge
- Encourages further research into the effects of victimisation on vengeance and how this relationship may link to the **victim-offender overlap** across various **situational contexts**



Thank you!

Andrea Tam

ayt23@cam.ac.uk

References

- Agnew, R. (2002). Experienced, vicarious, and anticipated strain: An exploratory study on physical victimisation and delinquency. *Justice Quarterly*, 19, 603–632.
- Armitage, R. (2021). Bullying in children: Impact on child health. *BMJ Paediatrics Open*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjpo-2020-000939>
- Borum, R., Cornell, D. G., Modzeleski, W., & Jimerson, S. R. (2010). What can be done about school shootings? *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 27–37. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x09357620>
- Coelho, G. L. H., Monteiro, R. P., Hanel, P. H. P., Vilar, R., Gouveia, V. V., & Maio, G. R. (2018). Psychometric parameters of an abbreviated vengeance scale across two countries. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 120, 185–192. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.08.042>
- Eisner, M., & Ribeaud, D. (2007). Conducting a criminological survey in a culturally diverse context. *European Journal of Criminology*, 4(3), 271–298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370807077183>
- Eisner, M., Averdijk, M., Kaiser, D., Murray, A. L., Nivette, A., Shanahan, L., van Gelder, J., & Ribeaud, D. (2021). The association of polyvictimization with violent ideations in late adolescence and early adulthood: A longitudinal study. *Aggressive Behavior*, 47(4), 472–482. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21965>
- Goldner, L., Lev-Wiesel, R., & Simon, G. (2019). Revenge Fantasies After Experiencing Traumatic Events: Sex Differences. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 886. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00886>
- Halliday, S., Gregory, T., Taylor, A., Digenis, C., & Turnbull, D. (2021). The impact of bullying victimization in early adolescence on subsequent psychosocial and academic outcomes across the adolescent period: A systematic review. *Journal of School Violence*, 20(3), 351–373. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2021.1913598>
- Jacobs, B. A., & Wright, R. (2006). Gender and Retaliation (with Christopher Mullins). In *Street Justice: Retaliation in the Criminal Underworld* (pp. 75–100). chapter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McCullough, M. E., Kurzban, R., & Tabak, B. A. (2013). Cognitive systems for revenge and forgiveness. *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, 36(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X11002160>
- Murray, A. L., Eisner, M., & Ribeaud, D. (2016). Development and validation of a brief measure of violent thoughts: The violent ideations scale (VIS). *Assessment*, 25(7), 942–955. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191116667213>
- Murray, A. L., Eisner, M., Ribeaud, D., Kaiser, D., McKenzie, K., & Murray, G. (2019). Validation of a brief self-report measure of adolescent bullying perpetration and victimization. *Assessment*, 28(1), 128–140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191119858406>
- Newman, C. F. (2011). When clients' morbid avoidance and chronic anger impede their response to cognitive-behavioral therapy for Depression. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 18(3), 350–361. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpra.2010.07.004>
- Orth, U., Montada, L., & Maercker, A. (2006). Feelings of revenge, retaliation motive, and posttraumatic stress reactions in crime victims. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 21(2), 229–243.
- Pires, A. R., & Almeida, T. C. (2023). Risk factors of poly-victimization and the impact on delinquency in youth: A systematic review. *Crime & Delinquency*, 70(9), 2469–2487. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00111287221148656>
- Rijavec, M., Jurčec, L., & Mijočević, I. (2010). Gender differences in the relationship between forgiveness and depression/happiness. *Psiholojske Teme*, 19(1), 189–202.
- Stuckless, N., & Goranson, R. (1992). The Vengeance Scale: Development of a measure of attitudes toward revenge. *Journal of Social Behavior & Personality*, 7(1), 25–42.
- Taylor, B. G., Stein, N. D., Mumford, E. A., & Woods, D. (2012). Shifting boundaries: An experimental evaluation of a dating violence prevention program in Middle Schools. *Prevention Science*, 14(1), 64–76. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-012-0293-2>
- Vossekuil, B. (2002). *The final report and findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States*. Diane Publishing.
- Zweig, J. M., Dank, M., Yahner, J., & Lachman, P. (2013). The rate of cyber dating abuse among teens and how it relates to other forms of teen dating violence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42(7), 1063–1077. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-013-9922-8>