

Beat Them or Ban Them: The Characteristics and Social Functions of Anger and Contempt

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This article reports 3 studies in which the authors examined (a) the distinctive characteristics of anger and contempt responses and (b) the interpersonal causes and effects of both emotions. In the 1st study, the authors examined the distinction between the 2 emotions; in the 2nd study, the authors tested whether contempt could be predicted from previous anger incidents with the same person; and in the 3rd study, the authors examined the effects of type of relationship on anger and contempt reactions. The results of the 3 studies show that anger and contempt often occur together but that there are clear distinctions between the 2 emotions: Anger is characterized more by short-term attack responses but long-term reconciliation, whereas contempt is characterized by rejection and social exclusion of the other person, both in the short-term and in the long-term. The authors also found that contempt may develop out of previously experienced anger and that a lack of intimacy with and perceived control over the behavior of the other person, as well as negative dispositional attributions about the other person, predicted the emergence of contempt.

Keywords: anger, contempt, attack, exclusion, social functions

Unfortunately, hostility between individuals or groups is of all times and all cultures. Various negative emotions may lie at the heart of hostile reactions, and in this article, we argue that the nature of these emotions influences the intensity and the duration of interpersonal hostility and its effect on the interpersonal relationship between the parties involved in the hostility. We focus on two emotions, anger and contempt, because they commonly occur in negative social interactions, and they both imply a negative appraisal of the intentions of the other person (e.g., Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989; Kuppens, Van Mechelen, Smits, & De Boeck, 2003; Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988; Roseman & Smith, 2001). In addition to these similarities, we also think that anger and contempt show important differences, especially with regard to their distinct roles in constituting, enhancing, or breaking off social relationships (see also Fitness & Fletcher, 1993). Our first aim in this article is to distinguish between the social functions of anger and contempt, as inferred from their motivational, behavioral, and relational characteristics.

The focus of previous studies that compared anger and contempt has been on the types of antecedents of both emotions. According to the contempt, anger, and disgust hypothesis proposed by Rozin,

Lowery, Imada, & Haidt (1999), for example, anger, contempt, and disgust provide an emotional basis for morality, and they can be distinguished because they are elicited in response to infringements in three different ethical domains: anger in reaction to the violation of autonomy (individual freedom, rights), contempt in reaction to the violation of the ethics of the community (respect, duty, hierarchical relations), and disgust in reaction to the violation of the ethics of divinity (purity, beauty). In line with this hypothesis, Rozin et al. (1999) showed that respondents are able to assign the appropriate emotion labels (anger, contempt, and disgust) and the appropriate facial expressions to the specific types of violations posited for anger, contempt, and disgust.

Although in the present article we aim to examine the distinction between anger and contempt, our focus is not so much on the different moral antecedents but rather on the relational antecedents and effects and on the motivational and behavioral components of anger and contempt. Our first aim is to distinguish the distinctive characteristics of anger and contempt reactions. We argue that anger can be seen as belonging to the attack-emotion family, aimed at attacking the other person in order to gain a better outcome, whereas contempt belongs to the exclusion-emotion family, aimed at excluding the other person from one's social network (Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994; Roseman, Copeland, & Fischer, 2003).

Our second aim in this article is to investigate whether contempt and anger develop differently over time, partly on the basis of different perceptions of the relationship with the other person. Whereas anger might usually be characterized as an intense but short-term emotion in which one seeks a less negative outcome by coercing change in another person's behavior, contempt may typically be a less intense but longer-lasting emotion, implying more negative and permanent changes in beliefs about another person (see also Frijda & Mesquita, 1994) and in the treatment of that person (social exclusion or distancing). Thus, if one is angry at

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someone, a relationship with that person is still viable, and it may be worth engaging in an attempt to change the person's behavior, as may be inferred from studies on marital conflicts (see e.g., Gottman & Levenson, 2002). However, if one feels contempt toward someone, the relationship is at risk because one has started to appraise the other person as unworthy or inferior and may therefore stop trying to change the person's behavior or arrive at some reconciliation. Because contempt implies a more extreme negative view of the other person than is generally the case with anger, we argue that contempt tends not to be elicited suddenly but may often result from previous angry interactions with the same person that went unresolved. In sum, contempt may have a different social function than anger.

The Social Functions of Anger and Contempt

Several authors have argued that emotions have a variety of social functions (e.g., Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Fischer & Manstead, *in press*; Fridlund, 1994; Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Parrott, 2001), but only a few previous studies have directly compared emotions with regard to their social functions. As a result, social functions have generally been theoretically derived. Social functions are not equivalent to the social effects of an emotion (Fischer & Manstead, *in press*) but should be derived from the social relational goals and the prototypical appraisals and actions that characterize a specific emotion. We argue that the social function of anger can be conceptualized as attaining a better outcome by forcing a change in another person's behavior. This function can be served by hostile or antagonistic behaviors, that is, by seeking confrontation or by attacking someone, for example, by criticizing, name-calling, or slapping someone. Various studies have demonstrated that the hostile action tendency is indeed one of the core characteristics of anger (de Rivera & Grinkis, 1986; Frijda et al., 1989; Kuppens et al., 2003; Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994), though it need not be present in all instances of anger.

Given this antagonistic motive and the other-blame appraisal typical of anger (e.g., Roseman, Antoniou, & Jose, 1996; Smith & Lazarus, 1993), it is not surprising that much research to date has focused on the negative consequences of anger displays for the object of one's anger, as is the case with physical, verbal, or social forms of aggression (e.g., Archer, 2000; Archer & Coyne, 2005; Berkowitz, 1993; Bushman, 2002). Although aggression may intimidate others and may therefore produce change in the other person's behavior, aggression is considered maladaptive insofar as it can injure the object and can also lead to retaliation against the aggressive person (e.g., Berkowitz, 1993; Martin et al., 1999). However, various studies have also shown that the social functions of anger can be served when anger is expressed or regulated in a variety of less destructive and more strategic ways, for example, by just telling someone you are angry, by expressing criticism verbally, by temporarily ignoring someone, or by merely venting your anger against inanimate objects (e.g., Archer & Coyne, 2005; Averill, 1982; Kuppens et al., 2004; Leary, Twenge, & Quinlivan, 2006; Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Spielberger et al., 1985; Wolf & Foshee, 2003).

In other words, in line with the proposed social function of anger, the effects of anger need not be negative, especially not in the long-term and especially not from the perspective of the angry

person (see also Averill, 1982; Demoulin et al., 2004; Green & Murray, 1975; Mallick & McCandless, 1966; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004). Averill (1982), for example, found that people recalling experiences in which they got angry evaluated a majority of the overall effects of anger episodes as beneficial because they got the object of their anger to change his or her attitude or behavior or because it helped them realize their own strengths or faults. For example, behaving angrily may be a signal to your boss that you feel you are being treated unfairly, or it may enhance your self-esteem because you have finally told your friend the truth about an irritating habit. Research by Kuppens et al. (2004), which showed that angry individuals tend to avoid high status persons (when angry at them) and tend to express their anger to low status persons, also suggested that people tend to express their anger when they think they can correct the behavior of the other person. In the same line, Mackie, Devos, and Smith (2000) found that the perceived strength of an ingroup resulted in an increase of anger and offensive action tendencies against the outgroup (see also van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004). Moreover, in comparing the effects of anger and contempt, Mackie et al. (2000) found that only anger, and not contempt, was a significant predictor of moving against the outgroup.

In other words, insofar as anger is elicited by an undesirable outcome caused by another person or group, anger can be seen as a means of trying to get something done by forcing a change in the target's behavior, especially when one feels that one has power or control over the target. Thus, although the implications of anger expression may initially be considered negative, especially by the anger object, they may be positive for the angry person; if the longer-term effect of anger is to alter an unsatisfactory interaction pattern or relationship between two people, it may be followed by a reconciliation in which a more mutually satisfactory pattern or relationship is established.

The social function of contempt, in contrast, is not to change another person's actions but to exclude the other person from one's social network, perhaps because the one who is feeling contempt perceives no way to influence or change the other person or does not wish to change him or her. If changing another person's behavior is impossible or not worth the effort, then ignoring or belittling the person and excluding him or her from one's social environment may be a more viable way to reduce that person's negative impact on one's outcomes.

Whereas a great deal of attention has been paid to anger, anger behavior, and aggression (see, e.g., Averill, 1982; Geen & Donnerstein, 1998; Lemerise & Dodge, 2000), there is much less research on contempt, with the exception of research on the facial expression of it (see, e.g., Ekman & Friesen, 1986; Ekman & Heider, 1988; Galen & Underwood, 1997; Izard & Haynes, 1988; Russell, 1991a). However, there is a rapidly expanding literature on social exclusion and ostracism (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003; Horn, 2003; Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001; Underwood, 2004; Twenge, Catanese, & Baumeister, 2002, 2003; Williams, 2001; Williams, Forgas, & von Hippel, 2005; Xie et al., 2002), which we contend are behaviors typically associated with contempt. Social exclusion can be accomplished in different ways, one way being ostracism, as in giving the silent treatment. According to Williams (2001), ostracism is "playing out a role, a pretending that the target does not exist" (p. 71). Behaviors that have been reported as reflecting

the silent treatment are not making eye contact, not talking, not responding to any questions or comments, making a definite effort to ignore, and trying to avoid all contact. Social exclusion may, however, also be manifested in other ways: for example, by gossiping and by trying to actively belittle and derogate another person, often behind his or her back.

In developmental research, social exclusion has been conceptualized as a form of social aggression (e.g., Archer & Coyne, 2005; Underwood, 2003, 2004; Xie, Cairns, & Cairns, 2002). Comparing social and physical aggression among boys and girls from elementary schools, Xie et al. (2002) found that social aggression was more often used by children and adolescents who were central in their peer social networks than by those who had a more marginal social position. Moreover, social exclusion is a form of social aggression mainly used by girls and women (see also Underwood, 2004), first, because they tend to have larger social networks and second, because they may not have other means to change another person (see also Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Evers, Fischer, Rodriguez Mosquera, & Manstead, 2005; Timmers, Fischer, & Manstead, 1998).

We argue that social exclusion typically involves the same goal as is pursued in the emotion of contempt, namely, to ban another person from one's life. Its deleterious consequences have been demonstrated by various studies that showed that social exclusion has profound negative effects on the self-esteem, the mood, the behavior, and the cognitive processing of the excluded person. For example, it has been shown that socially excluded people demonstrate lethargy, feelings of meaninglessness, self-defeating behavior, an avoidance of aversive self-awareness (Twenge, Catanese, & Baumeister, 2002, 2003), and aggressive retaliation against the person who excluded them (Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001).

In sum, the first hypothesis that was examined in our studies was whether the distinction between the characteristics of anger as an attack emotion and contempt as an exclusion emotion receives empirical support. The second hypothesis concerned the different relational frameworks in which anger and contempt may develop. We hypothesized that the relational antecedents and consequences of anger and contempt are different. Anger more often arises in intimate settings, where a certain amount of control over the other person is expected, which could result in a change of the other person's behavior. Contempt, on the other hand, would be more likely to occur in less intimate settings where less control is expected and where one has a more negative view about the other person. In addition, anger is often beneficial for the relationship in the long-term, as it implies the expectancy to reconcile and to thereby improve the relationship, whereas contempt is detrimental for the relationship. Our third hypothesis concerned the relation between anger and contempt: We assumed that contempt may occur especially if one is still angry; in these cases, the anger is unresolved and no reconciliation with the other person appears possible. Contempt, therefore, may often develop on top of one's anger.

In order to test these hypotheses, we conducted three studies. In Study 1, we examined the participants' ratings of the autobiographical experiences of anger and contempt, to see whether there was support for the hypothesized distinction between the two emotions. In Study 2, we explored the relation between anger and contempt by testing whether previous anger experiences result in

contempt. In Study 3, we manipulated the intimacy of the relationship between the emotional person and the target of the emotion in order to test whether less intimacy and less control results in more contempt than anger. In Studies 2 and 3, we used different methods in order to overcome some possible limitations of the autobiographical method used in the first study.

Study 1

We hypothesized that the core social function of anger is forcing change in an undesired outcome brought about by another person (coercion); therefore, anger is typically characterized by other-blame and short-term antagonistic responses (defined as seeking confrontation). In the long-term, however, if the undesired outcome has been altered, one's anger may diminish, and one may reconcile with the other person. The social function of contempt, on the other hand, is moving undesirable persons (and their undesirable characteristics and outcomes) away from the self (exclusion) rather than trying to change them, as in anger. This is often done by treating the other person as inferior, as someone who is unworthy of respect or even attention, for example, by derogating, rejecting, or ignoring him or her, both in the short-term and in the long-term. Thus, in addition to appraisals of other-blame, contempt would also include a more permanent negative appraisal of the other person, for example, as having a bad character. In the long-term, therefore, contempt seems likely to result in longer-lasting ruptures in social bonds.

In order to be able to optimally distinguish between the two emotions, we aimed at collecting autobiographical narratives that were exclusively related to either anger or contempt. To achieve this goal, we gave the respondents detailed instructions asking them to differentiate between contempt and anger. We told the participants the following:

This is a study about the similarities and differences between anger and contempt. These emotions often, but not always, occur simultaneously. We would like to know in which situations individuals experience either contempt or anger and what the characteristics of these emotions are. The first question is whether you can recollect an event in which you felt a fair amount of anger [contempt] toward a person, but hardly any contempt [anger].

The respondents received one of two versions of the questionnaire (either contempt or anger).

Method

Participants and procedure. Participants were 94 students (30 men and 64 women, $M_{\text{age}} = 21.00$, $SD = 3.23$) from the University of Amsterdam who participated in this study in exchange for credit points. Of the participants, 3 were excluded because they had recalled an event in which they were hardly angry or contemptuous. The questionnaire was administered individually in our lab. The participants were assigned at random to recall either an anger event (15 men, 31 women) or a contempt event (15 men, 33 women).

Questionnaire. The questionnaire started with an open-ended question asking participants to describe a situation in which they felt either anger but not contempt or contempt but not anger (toward a person in each case). We then presented a series of

questions about this event, to be rated on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *not applicable*; 7 = *very applicable*). We first asked participants to indicate the intensity of their anger and contempt immediately after the event and after a few days. Next, we asked about appraisals of the event. We examined whether there would be more blaming of the other person in the contempt condition (other-blame, "It was the fault of the other person," versus no-blame, "No one was to blame for this event"). We also asked about a dispositional appraisal of the other person as having a negative character ("I thought the other person was bad"), the participant's felt control over the object ("To what extent could you influence the other person?"; "To what extent did you feel in control of the situation?"; $r = .51$), and the degree of intimacy with the other person ("How well do you know this person?"; "How intimate are you with this person?"; $r = .91$). We also asked whether the object was a man or a woman.

Next, we asked about participants' first or immediate response to the event, measuring two types of immediate responses: verbal attack ("I criticized the other person," "I confronted the other person with my negative feelings about him or her," "I used tough language," "I made unfriendly remarks," $\alpha = .78$) and derogation ("walking away," "ignoring the other," "showing no respect," "showing disgust," $\alpha = .63$). We then measured long-term reactions, that is, one's reaction to the other person after a few days, tapping reconciliation ("making up," "talking it over," "solving the problem," $\alpha = .87$) and rejection ("ignoring," "banning from one's social network," $r = .67$).

We also asked about participants' *emotivational goals* (Roseman et al., 1994), namely, the goals they may have wanted to pursue as part of the emotion they felt (anger or contempt). Two scales were constructed: coercion, which was hypothesized to be more typical of anger ("I wanted the other to apologize," "I wanted the other not to do this again," "I wanted the other to realize that he/she has gone too far," and "I wanted to get even with this person," $\alpha = .72$), and social exclusion, hypothesized to be more typical of contempt ("I wanted to break the relationship," "I wanted to have nothing to do with this other person anymore," "I did not want to be associated with this person," $\alpha = .92$). In order to examine the relational consequences of anger versus contempt, we measured negative relational implications ("our relation will not improve," "our relation will deteriorate," and "contact with this person has diminished," $\alpha = .75$).

Results

All multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) reported below were conducted with type of emotional event (anger, contempt) and sex of respondent as factors. Because this article does not focus on the sex differences, the simple main effects of the sex of respondents are reported in footnotes, and only the interaction effects with the main variables of interest are described in the text.

Intensity of emotions. A repeated measures MANOVA, with intensity of anger and contempt at the beginning of the event, intensity of anger and contempt after a few days, and time (difference between emotions at the two different points in time) as within-subjects factors, revealed a significant multivariate main effect of the emotional event condition, $F(2, 89) = 125.16, p < .0001$, a marginally significant main effect of (the within-subjects factor) time, $F(2, 89) = 2.70, p < .08$, and a significant interaction

effect, $F(2, 89) = 3.17, p < .05$. No effects of sex of respondent were found. Emotional event type was significant for both anger, $F(1, 93) = 44.90, p < .0001$, and contempt, $F(1, 93) = 170.78, p < .0001$. Simple t tests showed that participants reported more initial anger during the anger event than during the contempt event, $t(92) = 5.67, p < .0001$, and more initial contempt during the contempt event than during the anger event, $t(92) = -9.57, p < .0001$. Further, simple t tests of anger and contempt a few days after the event also showed more intensity of anger after the anger event, $t(92) = 4.69, p < .0001$, and more intensity of contempt after the contempt event, $t(92) = -13.41, p < .0001$ (see Table 1, for the means). Thus, our attempt to collect experiences in which participants reported contempt without much anger and anger without much contempt was successful. Further, the time factor was only significant for contempt, $F(1, 93) = 10.14, p < .01$, as was the case for the interaction between time and emotional condition, $F(1, 93) = 6.00, p < .05$. Contempt increased significantly over time (and only for the contempt event), whereas the intensity of anger remained similar over time.

Appraisals. We conducted a MANOVA with other-blame, no-blame, negative character, and control over object as dependent measures. We found a significant main effect of emotional event, $F(4, 86) = 3.34, p < .01$. No effects of sex of respondent were found. Univariate analyses showed that the emotional event main effect was not significant for other-blame and no-blame. However, we found significant univariate effects for the other appraisals: having control, $F(1, 93) = 9.89, p < .01$, and seeing the other person as having a bad character, $F(1, 93) = 10.83, p < .001$. The

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations (in Parentheses) for All Characteristics of the Emotional Responses in the Anger and Contempt Conditions (Study 1)

Characteristic of emotion	Type of emotional event	
	Anger event	Contempt event
Intensity		
Anger at beginning	5.63 (1.37) _a	3.63 (2.00) _b
Contempt at beginning	2.35 (1.40) _a	5.42 (1.68) _b
Anger after some days	5.42 (1.52) _a	3.88 (1.88) _b
Contempt after some days	2.46 (1.59) _a	6.25 (1.10) _b
Appraisals		
Other-blame	4.98 (1.72) _a	5.29 (1.89) _a
No-blame	2.70 (1.81) _a	2.38 (1.94) _a
Control	3.96 (1.59) _a	2.91 (1.56) _b
Negative character	3.65 (1.96) _a	4.94 (1.84) _b
Intimacy	5.70 (1.32) _a	3.45 (1.59) _b
Immediate		
Verbal attack	4.64 (1.39) _a	3.26 (1.33) _b
Derogation	2.57 (1.33) _a	3.34 (1.24) _b
Long-term		
Reconciliation	3.37 (1.96) _a	1.71 (1.66) _b
Rejection	2.62 (1.99) _a	3.02 (2.10) _a
Goals		
Coercion	4.50 (1.35) _a	3.77 (1.50) _b
Social exclusion	1.82 (1.46) _a	3.27 (1.96) _b
Implications		
Deterioration	2.83 (1.63) _a	4.09 (1.65) _b

Note. Means in one row with different subscripts differ at least at $p < .05$.

Table 2
Correlations for All Anger and Contempt Characteristics (Study 1)

Characteristic	Anger	Anger after days	Verbal attack	Reconciliation	Coercion	Contempt	Contempt after days	Derogation	Rejection	Social exclusion
Anger	—									
Anger after days	.36**	—								
Verbal attack	.38**	.33**	—							
Reconciliation	.26*	.07	.38**	—						
Coercion	.32**	.47**	.55**	.22*	—					
Contempt	-.25*	-.08	-.25*	-.35**	-.04	—				
Contempt after days	-.41**	-.20*	-.33*	-.44*	-.04	.79**	—			
Derogation	.02	.10	.21*	-.29**	.37**	.37**	.46**	—		
Rejection	-.07	.21*	-.03	-.34**	.22*	.26*	.38**	.51**	—	
Social exclusion	-.22*	.07	-.21*	-.45**	.04	.39**	.46**	.48**	.55**	—
Relational deterioration	.18	.05	-.197	-.55**	.05	.27**	.40**	.46**	.59**	.82**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

means in Table 1 show that in the contempt condition, participants saw the object as having a worse character and reported less control over the object, compared with the anger condition. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) with intimacy as a dependent measure showed a significant main effect of emotional condition, $F(1, 93) = 55.66, p < .0001$. The means show that participants in the anger condition reported more intimacy with the object than did participants in the contempt condition.

Behavioral reactions. We next conducted a MANOVA with the four immediate and long-term responses as dependent measures and found a multivariate main effect of emotional condition, $F(4, 86) = 11.82, p < .0001$. This was univariately significant for three of the four response scales: verbal attack, $F(1, 93) = 22.01, p < .0001$; derogation, $F(1, 93) = 4.73, p < .05$; and reconciliation, $F(1, 93) = 18.13, p < .0001$. In line with predictions, the means in Table 1 show that derogation was more characteristic for the contempt pattern, whereas immediate verbal attack and reconciliation were reported more during anger incidents.

We also found a multivariate main effect of sex of respondent, $F(4, 86) = 3.52, p < .01$, which was qualified by a significant interaction, $F(4, 86) = 3.08, p < .05$.¹ The interaction effect is significant for rejection, $F(1, 93) = 6.68, p < .05$, and reconciliation, $F(1, 93) = 5.44, p < .05$. Women's greater tendency to reconcile only occurred in the anger events (in the contempt events, both sexes reported hardly any reconciliation). In addition, women reported rejecting the other person more than men did in the contempt condition, whereas men reported rejecting more than women did in the anger condition.

Emotivational goals. A MANOVA with the two emotivational goals revealed significant main effects of emotional condition, $F(2, 89) = 10.71, p < .0001$, and sex of respondent, $F(2, 89) = 3.69, p < .05$.² No interaction effect between emotional condition and sex of respondent was found. The main effect of condition was significant for social exclusion, $F(1, 93) = 9.95, p < .01$, and for coercion, $F(1, 93) = 7.75, p < .01$. The coercion goal was more often reported in the anger condition, whereas the goal to socially exclude someone was more frequently reported in the contempt condition.

Relational implications. An ANOVA on negative relational implications also revealed a significant main effect of emotional

condition, $F(1, 92) = 13.42, p < .0001$. Less deterioration was noted in the anger condition than in the contempt condition. We also found an interaction with sex of respondent, $F(2, 89) = 6.52, p < .05$. Women reported more relationship deterioration ($M_w = 5.35, SD = 1.35$) than did men ($M_m = 4.15, SD = 1.55$), but only in the anger condition, whereas in the contempt condition, no sex difference was found.

Correlations. The results from the MANOVAs show that the different instructions indeed elicited different patterns of reactions that can be characterized as prototypical anger and contempt responses. In order to test whether the prototypical anger reactions and implications are associated with the intensity of one's anger and whether the prototypical contempt reactions and implications are associated with the intensity of one's contempt, we computed correlations for all anger and contempt characteristics (see Table 2). As shown in the first column of Table 2, the intensity of anger is significantly and positively associated with verbal attack, reconciliation, and the coercion goal and negatively associated with contempt, contempt after some days, and the social exclusion goal. Contempt and contempt after some days, on the other hand, are positively associated with derogation, rejection, and the social exclusion goal, as well as with relationship deterioration, and negatively related to verbal attack and reconciliation. These correlations support the hypothesized pattern of prototypical anger and contempt responses and goals. First of all, anger and contempt, both at the beginning of the event and after a few days, are not correlated, which is the obvious result of our manipulation. However, whereas anger after some days is significantly related to attack and coercion, it is not related to reconciliation, which

¹ Univariate analyses showed that the main effect of sex is marginally significant for verbal aggression, $F(1, 93) = 3.71, p < .06$, and highly significant for reconciliation, $F(1, 93) = 12.59, p < .001$. Women were more likely to report that they verbally aggressed ($M_w = 4.13, SD = 1.47$; $M_m = 3.52, SD = 1.97$), but they also tended to reconcile more than did men ($M_w = 2.88, SD = 1.89$; $M_m = 1.75, SD = 1.31$).

² The sex effect was only significant for coercion, $F(1, 92) = 5.14, p < .05$. Inspection of the means shows that women ($M = 4.35, SD = 1.39$) report more coercion goals than do men ($M = 3.63, SD = 1.53$).

suggests that the longer one remains angry, the less likely it is that one reconciles with the other person. Finally, reconciliation is positively associated with coercion but negatively associated with all contempt characteristics and with relationship deterioration.

Discussion

In Study 1, we tried to isolate emotional events that had elicited mainly contempt from events that had elicited mainly anger, in order to disentangle the distinctive features of contempt versus anger. We may conclude that our instruction was successful, given the findings that less anger was reported in the contempt condition, less contempt was reported in the anger condition, and no correlations between the reports of the two emotions were found.

The results support our hypotheses concerning the prototypical pattern of contempt, which consists of short-term derogation, long-term social exclusion, a lack of reconciliation, and the absence of relational improvement. Indeed, the correlations also show that derogation, rejection, and contempt are associated with relationship deterioration. This is consistent with our argument that the social function of contempt is to socially exclude the other person. The results also show that anger is indeed characterized more by short-term verbal attack, is followed by some reparation of the harm that has been done (reconciliation), and is ultimately associated with less deterioration of the relationship than is the case for contempt. Our assumption that contempt and anger arise from different relational perspectives was also supported: Participants in the contempt condition perceived the relationship with the other person as less intimate; they more often blamed the other person, perceived the other person as having a negative disposition, and reported less control over the other person. Moreover, we found preliminary evidence for a differential development of the two emotions over time: Whereas the intensity of anger did not change over time, the intensity of contempt increased (during the contempt events), suggesting that contempt may develop on top of one's anger.

Finally, we also found a few differences between men and women, especially with regard to their emotional behaviors: Women reported more attempts to try to change the other person (coercion goals), more reconciliation, and more relationship deterioration in the anger incidents, whereas in the contempt events, no sex differences were found. These differences may be due to the stronger relational orientation of women, and the fact that they were mainly found in the anger condition supports our contention that the viability of the relationship is an important concern when one is angry but not when one feels contempt.

Study 2

The first study showed that it is possible to disentangle anger and contempt reactions in order to examine their independent implications. However, by using an explicit instruction to state that the study is about the differences between anger and contempt, it is possible that we activated more general anger and contempt knowledge rather than memories of the specific events (see also Robinson & Clore, 2002). In other words, we may have measured respondents' anger and contempt concepts rather than the details of the events and the memory of their actual reactions to these events. The results of this study would be more convincing if we

could show that prototypical anger and contempt reactions are indeed associated with anger and contempt, without using these emotion labels in the instructions. In the following two studies we tried to do just that.

In Study 2, we tested whether manipulating the hypothesized motivational goal and associated reactions of anger and contempt would indeed lead respondents to recall feelings of anger or contempt. We instructed respondents to "think of an incident in which another person has done something, after which you wanted to confront and criticize this person" (attack condition) or to "ignore this person and keep distant for the time being" (exclusion condition). We hypothesized that in the attack condition one would rate oneself as more angry, whereas in the exclusion condition one would rate oneself as more contemptuous.

In addition, we investigated whether there might be a progression from anger to contempt by testing whether the frequency of one's past anger relates to a judgment of bad character, which might in turn result in the development of contempt toward a person. We reasoned that frequent past anger toward a person may lead one to believe that this person is not likely to change his or her behavior, and thus, one might start to explain the person's transgressions in terms of a negative disposition (bad character). This would, in turn, predict the development of contempt toward this person. Because judging the other person as bad implies both a negative character and a dispositional judgment, we decided to create two variables in order to disentangle these aspects. We especially expected that dispositional attribution would be associated with contempt.

Method

Participants and procedure. The participants were 63 students from the University of Amsterdam (27 men and 36 women) who received either credit points or €2 for their participation. Data were collected individually, either in the lab or in other places in the university building.³ We made sure that none of the participants had been involved in the earlier studies on anger and contempt.

Design and materials. The study had one independent variable (motivational goal) with two levels (coercion and exclusion). The participants were randomly assigned: 36 to the coercion condition (16 men, 20 women), and 27 to the exclusion condition (11 men, 16 women). The questionnaire was labeled Negative Behavior in Social Situations. We initially asked participants to describe the incident and then asked them to indicate which emotions they had felt (intensity of anger, intensity of contempt) and for how long (duration of anger, duration of contempt). We then asked how frequently they had felt anger toward the object (past anger frequency). We also asked them to evaluate the other person's character at the time of the incident (negative character: egoistic, asocial, immoral, and unfriendly; $\alpha = .62$), how much the transgression was explained in terms of dispositions ("This is how he/she is"; "This is due to his/her personality"; $r = .80$), and how intimate was the relationship with the other person (at the time of the incident). Finally, we measured to what extent the relationship had deteriorated since the incident (negative relational implications, 5 items, $\alpha = .81$).

³ We thank Alexis Salin for the data collection and the data entry for Studies 2 and 3.

Results

Intensity and duration of emotion. A MANOVA with sex of respondent and emotivational goal (attack vs. exclusion) as factors and intensity of anger and contempt as dependent variables revealed a significant multivariate main effect of emotivational goal, $F(2, 58) = 5.46, p < .01$. No significant effects of sex or interaction effects were found. Univariate tests showed that emotivational goal had a significant effect only on contempt, $F(1, 62) = 10.49, p < .01$. In line with our manipulation, the means (Table 3) show that participants reported more contempt when they had a social exclusion goal. The means for anger are in the predicted direction across conditions but are far from significant.

Another MANOVA with the duration of anger and contempt as dependent variables again revealed a significant multivariate main effect of emotivational goal, $F(2, 58) = 5.32, p < .01$, and a marginally significant main effect of sex, $F(2, 57) = 3.09, p < .06$.⁴ No interaction effects were found. Emotivational goal was significant for the duration of contempt, $F(1, 61) = 6.17, p < .05$, and marginally significant for the duration of anger, $F(1, 61) = 3.02, p < .09$. An inspection of the means (Table 3) shows that participants reported longer contempt, though also marginally longer anger, in the social exclusion condition compared with the attack condition. In addition, a correlational analysis showed that anger and contempt were not correlated in the beginning of the incident ($r = .02, ns$) but were highly correlated some time after the transgression ($r = .43, p < .001$).

A MANOVA with negative character, dispositional attribution, and intimacy as dependent variables showed a multivariate main effect of emotivational goal, $F(3, 58) = 4.17, p < .01$, which was univariately significant for negative character, $F(1, 61) = 8.13, p < .01$, but not for intimacy and dispositional attributions (although the means of the latter variable were in the predicted

direction). Respondents evaluated the other person as having a more negative character. An additional ANOVA showed that past anger at the same person tended to be marginally more frequent in the exclusion condition than in the attack condition, $F(1, 62) = 3.79, p < .06$.

Relational implications. An ANOVA with negative implications showed a significant effect, $F(1, 62) = 6.50, p < .02$. The means show greater deterioration of the relationship between subject and object since the recalled incident in the exclusion condition than in the attack condition (see Table 3).

Regression analyses. In order to test the hypothesis that contempt, and not anger, predicts relationship deterioration, we conducted a series of regression analyses. The first step confirmed that relational deterioration was significantly predicted by emotivational goal (dummy coded: 0 = attack, and 1 = exclusion), $\beta = .31, p < .02$. Second, the emotivational goal (exclusion) predicted the intensity of contempt ($\beta = .37, p = .002$) but did not predict the intensity of anger ($\beta = .05, ns$). Third, adding contempt while controlling for emotivational goal showed that contempt was a marginally significant predictor of relational deterioration ($\beta = .23, p < .08$), whereas the effect of emotivational goal was reduced to marginal significance ($\beta = .22, p < .09$). The Sobel test showed that the beta was significantly reduced ($S = 1.75, p < .08$). Thus, we may conclude that contempt partly mediates the relation between emotivational goal and relational implications, whereas anger does not.

We also examined whether the intensity of one's contempt rather than the intensity of one's anger can be predicted from a dispositional account of the other's negative behavior. We conducted two regression analyses with the intensity of contempt and the intensity of anger as dependent variables and the dispositional attributions as the predictor. The results showed that, as hypothesized, dispositional attribution significantly predicts contempt ($\beta = .65, p < .0001$) and does not predict anger ($\beta = .17, ns$).

Finally, we tested whether one's contempt could be predicted by one's past and current anger. Both one's past anger ($\beta = .37, p < .01$) and, marginally, one's current anger ($\beta = .20, p < .10$) were predictors of one's current contempt. In contrast, when testing whether current anger was predicted by current contempt and the duration of one's contempt, no significant predictors were observed.

Discussion

The results of Study 2 confirm the idea that contempt is associated with social exclusion, as the intensity and duration of contempt is larger in the social exclusion condition. Moreover, the social exclusion condition has elicited stronger reports of relationship deterioration and a more negative evaluation of the other person as bad, replicating the results of Study 1. Because the use of an alternative instruction avoiding the words *anger* and *contempt* has provided the same pattern of results, this suggests that the methods used in Study 1 have not merely tapped respondents' anger and contempt knowledge but have provided reports that seem to reflect their actual reactions during those incidents.

This study also shows interesting results with regard to the relation between the two emotions. Anger was not uniquely related

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations (in Parentheses) for All Characteristics of the Emotional Responses in the Attack and Exclusion Conditions (Study 2)

Characteristic of emotion	Emotivational goal	
	Attack	Exclusion
Emotions		
Anger	5.92 (1.16) _a	5.78 (1.40) _a
Contempt	3.25 (2.10) _a	4.89 (1.91) _b
Duration of anger	3.44 (1.83) _a	4.30 (1.71) _{ab}
Duration of contempt	2.47 (1.93) _a	3.69 (2.24) _b
Frequency of past anger	3.53 (1.56) _a	4.33 (1.71) _{ab}
Relational implications		
Deterioration	4.31 (1.35) _a	5.24 (1.54) _b
Appraisals		
Negative character	4.44 (1.31) _a	5.36 (1.19) _b
Dispositional attribution	4.97 (1.44) _a	5.44 (1.91) _a
Intimacy	4.28 (1.88) _a	4.52 (1.78) _a

Note. Means in one row with different subscripts differ at least at $p < .05$ (ab indicates differences at $p < .10$).

⁴ No significant univariate sex effects were found.

to the coercion goal but was also reported in relation to the exclusion goal. In other words, the instruction to think of a situation in which one wanted to ignore and keep distant from another person has resulted in anger-plus-contempt experiences rather than contempt-only experiences. In Study 1, we also found somewhat more anger in contempt experiences than contempt in anger experiences, which fits with the idea that contempt is more often accompanied by anger than the other way around. These results are consistent with the idea that contempt may often occur on top of one's anger. The correlations between anger and contempt over time also fit this pattern. Anger and contempt were uncorrelated immediately after the incident but were significantly correlated some days later, which suggests that social transgressions may often start with a mere anger reaction, but this anger may lead to contempt, especially if one has had frequent prior incidents of anger in reaction to the same person. This is supported by the regression analyses showing that contempt toward a person is significantly predicted from past anger at the same person.

We also replicated the finding that contempt rather than anger is evoked when one perceives the other person as intrinsically bad. However, in contrast with the first study, we did not find differences in intimacy between the two conditions. A close inspection of the reported incidents in the exclusion condition shows that our participants mentioned family members, ex-partners, or friends, whom they all consider relatively, though not extremely, intimate. This focus on more intimate persons may have been prompted by the instructions. In the exclusion condition we told respondents to think of an incident with another person "whom they wanted to ignore and keep distant from *for the time being* [italics added]." This last part of the instruction may have led participants to focus on relatively intimate persons, with whom they ultimately wanted to preserve some relationship. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the incidents concerned intimates, we found that in the exclusion condition, the relationships deteriorated more than in the attack condition.

Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 showed support for our hypotheses concerning the different characteristics of anger and contempt. Study 3 focused more directly on the relational basis of anger and contempt. In Study 1, we found that participants in the anger condition reported more intimacy and more control over the other person than did participants in the contempt condition. This is in line with our hypothesis that anger is more socially functional in intimate relationships, whereas contempt is more socially functional in relationships that are not characterized by mutual commitment or care. The results of Study 2, however, did not show a difference in intimacy in the anger and contempt incidents, which might be explained in terms of the instructions. The aim in Study 3 was to resolve this seeming inconsistency and to see whether the negative behavior of intimates is more likely to elicit a prototypical anger pattern, whereas negative behavior of nonintimates is more likely to elicit a prototypical contempt pattern. That is, does intimacy increase the probability of reacting with anger and trying to correct the problem caused by the other person and does it decrease the probability of responding with contempt and its associated pattern of social exclusion?

To test this hypothesis, we used a vignette in which we systematically varied the type of relationship with the transgressor in a story (being either a friend or a stranger) while holding the type of transgression constant. The use of a vignette method also makes up for one of the limitations of collecting autobiographical stories because the only aspect of the event that is varied is the intimacy with the provoker.

Method

Participants and procedure. Participants were 78 students from the University of Amsterdam (41 men and 37 women) who received either credit points or €2 for their participation. Data were collected individually, either in the lab or in other places in the University buildings.

Design and materials. The study had one independent variable (type of relationship) with two levels (friend and stranger). The participants were randomly assigned to the conditions: 39 to the friend condition (20 men, 19 women) and 39 to the stranger condition (21 men, 18 women). The questionnaire was labeled Rule Transgression in Social Situations and described a situation in which they had to imagine themselves sitting in a train late in the evening with either a friend or a stranger who is drunk and who starts scolding the conductor in an aggressive tone for no good reason. A series of questions about their own reactions followed. The questions were highly similar to the ones used in Studies 1 and 2, with a few minor adaptations. Initially, we asked them to indicate the intensity of their emotions (anger and contempt) at that moment and their immediate response to the event: verbal attack (3 items, $\alpha = .85$) and derogation (3 items, $\alpha = .82$). The next set of questions reflected different motivational goals, namely coercion (4 items, $\alpha = .83$) and social exclusion (5 items, $\alpha = .88$). Then, we asked whether they would feel and act in the same way a couple of days later: rejection of the person (3 items, $\alpha = .92$) and reconciliation with the person (3 items, $\alpha = .92$). We then included an assessment of the dispositional attribution of the provoker's act ("This is how he is"; "This reaction is due to his personality"; $r = .43$). We also asked how much control participants perceived over the other person (control: "I think he will change because of my behavior"; "I think my behavior influences him"; "I think I cannot influence him (reverse coded)"; $\alpha = .66$). Finally, we measured negative relational implications (using the same items as in Study 2).

Results

Intensity of emotions. A repeated measures MANOVA with sex of respondent and relationship with the provoker as independent factors, time as a within-subject factor, and immediate and longer-term anger and contempt as dependent variables revealed a significant multivariate main effect of type of relationship, $F(2, 74) = 6.52, p < .01$. Simple t tests showed that participants reported more initial anger in the intimate condition than in the stranger condition, $t(77) = 2.04, p < .05$, but there was no difference for initial contempt; with respect to anger and contempt after a few days, simple t tests showed a significant effect for contempt only, which was reported as being more intense than anger, $t(77) = -2.24, p < .05$ (see Table 4 for the means). Further, a significant effect of the within-subject factor time, $F(2, 74) =$

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations (in Parentheses) for All Characteristics of the Emotional Responses in the Anger and Contempt Conditions (Study 3)

Characteristic of emotion	Type of relationship	
	Friend	Stranger
Emotion		
Anger	4.89 (1.67) _a	4.10 (1.81) _b
Contempt	4.08 (1.55) _a	4.70 (1.96) _a
Anger after some days	3.18 (1.86) _a	2.95 (1.82) _a
Contempt after some days	3.33 (2.12) _a	4.35 (1.94) _b
Immediate responses		
Verbal attack	5.04 (1.15) _a	2.81 (1.32) _b
Derogation	2.02 (1.11) _a	4.23 (1.57) _b
Long-term responses		
Reconciliation	4.73 (1.58) _a	1.91 (1.26) _b
Rejection	1.97 (1.28) _a	4.96 (1.67) _b
Emotivational goals		
Coercion	5.50 (0.97) _a	3.64 (1.60) _b
Social exclusion	2.25 (1.40) _a	4.80 (1.40) _b
Relational implications		
Deterioration	3.49 (1.68) _a	4.55 (2.30) _b
Appraisals		
Negative character	5.20 (1.29) _a	5.25 (1.92) _a
Dispositional attribution	4.27 (1.00) _a	4.81 (1.02) _b
Control	4.54 (1.11) _a	2.47 (1.20) _b

Note. Means in one row with different subscripts differ at least at $p < .05$.

20.95, $p < .0001$, and a significant main effect of sex, $F(2, 74) = 4.66, p < .05$, were found. No interaction effects were found. The effect of time was significant for both anger, $F(1, 78) = 41.23, p < .0001$, and contempt, $F(1, 78) = 6.51, p < .03$, showing a decrease of both emotions over time. As in Study 2, correlations showed that later anger and contempt were correlated somewhat higher ($r = .51, p < .0001$) than were initial anger and contempt ($r = .39, p < .0001$), and no significant correlation between initial anger and later contempt ($r = .11, ns$) was found.

The main effect of sex of respondent was significant for anger, $F(1, 78) = 9.13, p < .01$, and marginally significant for contempt, $F(1, 78) = 3.63, p < .07$, with women reporting more intense anger and contempt.⁵

Behavioral reactions. We also conducted a MANOVA with the two immediate and the two long-term responses as dependent measures and found a multivariate main effect of type of relationship, $F(4, 71) = 45.61, p < .0001$. This was univariately significant for all reactions: verbal attack, $F(1, 77) = 65.04, p < .0001$, derogation, $F(1, 77) = 57.55, p < .05$, rejection, $F(1, 77) = 83.42, p < .0001$, and reconciliation, $F(1, 77) = 72.67, p < .0001$. The means (Table 4) show that derogation and rejection are character-

istic more for the interaction with the stranger, whereas verbal attack and reconciliation were reported more during the interaction with the friend. We also found a main effect of sex of respondent, $F(4, 71) = 3.15, p < .02$, but no interactions.⁶

Emotivational goals. A MANOVA with the two emotivational goals revealed a significant main effect of type of relationship, $F(2, 74) = 70.75, p < .0001$. No sex or interaction effects were found. The main effect of relationship was significant for both social exclusion, $F(1, 78) = 91.36, p < .0001$, and for coercion, $F(1, 78) = 37.64, p < .0001$. The coercion goal was reported more often in the more intimate relationship, whereas the goal to socially exclude someone was reported more frequently in the stranger condition.

Appraisals. We conducted a MANOVA with dispositional attribution and control over the object as dependent measures. We found a main effect of type of relationship, $F(2, 73) = 3.78, p < .05$, as well as a marginal main effect of sex, $F(2, 73) = 2.63, p < .06$. The univariate tests showed that type of relationship had significant effects on dispositional attributions, $F(1, 74) = 6.46, p < .02$, and appraisals of control, $F(1, 74) = 66.05, p < .0001$. The means show that participants more often explained the transgression in terms of dispositions in the case of a stranger and perceived more control over an intimate provoker than over a stranger (see Table 4 for the means).⁷

Relational implications. An ANOVA with the negative relational implications also revealed a significant main effect of condition, $F(1, 78) = 5.67, p < .03$. Consistent with the patterns observed for anger versus contempt events in Studies 1 and 2, less deterioration was noted after being angry than after feeling contemptuous. No sex of respondent effects were found.

Correlation and regression analyses. MANOVAs have shown that social transgressions of intimates are characterized more by a prototypical anger pattern, whereas the same transgressions by a stranger more resemble a prototypical contempt pattern. This is in line with our expectation that intimacy would restrain contempt reactions, even though there was no significant effect of relationship type on the intensity of initial contempt. In addition, correlations between the intensity of anger and contempt and the various characteristics again show a significant relation between anger and verbal attack ($r = .44, p < .01$) and coercion ($r = .34, p < .01$), although not with reconciliation ($r = .09, ns$). As predicted, no significant correlations among contempt, verbal attack, coercion,

⁵ Simple t tests for both initial anger and contempt and later anger and contempt show that women reported more intense initial anger ($M_w = 4.89, SD = 1.43$) than did men ($M_m = 4.12, SD = 1.99$) and that they remained angry ($M_w = 3.68, SD = 1.88$) and contemptuous ($M_w = 4.29, SD = 2.15$) longer than did men ($M_m = 2.48, SD = 1.51$, for anger; $M_m = 3.44, SD = 1.95$, for contempt).

⁶ Univariate analyses showed that the sex main effect was significant for derogation, $F(1, 78) = 10.19, p < .01$, and rejection, $F(1, 77) = 4.95, p < .05$. The means show that women were more likely to report that they derogated ($M_w = 3.62, SD = 1.88; M_m = 2.69, SD = 1.50$) and that they also tended to reject more than did men ($M_w = 3.85, SD = 2.19; M_m = 3.14, SD = 2.00$).

⁷ Univariately, the main effect of sex was significant for perceived control, $F(1, 74) = 4.46, p < .05$. The means indicate that men ($M_m = 3.74, SD = 1.54$) reported feeling more control over the other person than did women ($M_w = 3.19, SD = 1.54$).

or reconciliation were found, whereas contempt was significantly correlated with derogation ($r = .22, p < .05$), rejection ($r = .34, p < .01$), and social exclusion ($r = .31, p < .01$).

We further thought that the intimacy effects on anger and contempt reactions might be mediated by the perception of control over the other person because more intimacy might allow a greater sense of control. Through a series of regression analyses, we tested whether the perception of control over the other person would mediate the effects of intimacy, assuming that the lack of control would lead to an increase of contempt and that this would be the case especially with persons with whom one is less intimate. The effects of intimacy (dummy coded: 0 = stranger, 1 = intimate) on anger (a summed score of anger intensity, verbal aggression, and coercion) first of all showed that there was a positive relation ($\beta = .61, p < .0001$). A similar regression was calculated with a summed score of contempt (intensity of contempt, derogation, and exclusion) and showed a negative relation ($\beta = -.73, p < .0001$). Second, intimacy was a positive predictor of control ($\beta = .67, p < .0001$), suggesting that the more intimate one is with another person, the more control one expects to have. Third, adding control as a predictor of anger while controlling for intimacy showed that control was not a significant predictor of anger ($\beta = .03, ns$), but it was a significant negative predictor of contempt ($\beta = -.38, p < .0001$), reducing the effect of intimacy to $\beta = .01$. A Sobel test confirmed that the effect of intimacy was significantly reduced ($S = 3.49, p < .0001$).

Finally, we examined whether dispositional attributions would mediate the effects of intimacy on contempt but would not mediate the effects on anger. We found that intimacy was a negative predictor of dispositional attributions ($\beta = -.27, p < .02$). Adding dispositional attributions to the contempt equation showed that it was a significant predictor of contempt ($\beta = .23, p < .02$) but that the effect of intimacy was significantly reduced ($S = -1.89, p < .06$). The effect of intimacy was still highly significant ($\beta = -.66, p < .0001$), however. When adding dispositional attributions to the anger equation, the results showed that this was not a significant predictor of anger ($\beta = .10, ns$). In sum, control and, to a lesser extent, dispositional attributions partially mediate the effects of intimacy on contempt but do not mediate the effects of intimacy on anger.

Discussion

Results of the manipulation of intimacy indicate that the nature of the relationship influences the balance between anger and contempt responses after a social transgression. Participants in the intimate condition reported that they would verbally aggress more, that they would impose more change on the other (coercion goal), and that they would finally reconcile more with their friend. In the case of strangers, they reported derogating and rejecting more, with the aim of socially excluding the other person. We may conclude, therefore, that attack was more likely in intimate relationships and social exclusion was more likely in reaction to nonintimates. Especially in nonintimate relationships, perceiving a lack of control and blaming the person (negative dispositional attributions) seem to be fertile soil for the development of contempt. On the other hand, social transgressions in intimate relationships may give rise to anger more than to contempt, presumably because intimate relationships are characterized by a

relational concern and the willingness to adjust to each other in order to improve the quality of one's relationship (see e.g., Clark, Fitness, & Brissette, 2004). Furthermore, intimacy inhibits the development of contempt partly because it suggests more control and because it prevents negative dispositional attributions.

General Discussion

The results of all three studies provide evidence for our first hypothesis that anger and contempt can be characterized by distinct response patterns. A prototypical anger reaction starts with short-term attacks (mostly verbal aggression) but also often results in reconciliation and relationship improvement after some time. The typical anger goal is coercion. The social function of anger is thus to try to alter an undesired outcome by changing the other person's behavior through attacking, which in the end may have positive effects on one's relationship with the other person. Contempt, on the other hand, is characterized by short-term derogation and is more likely to develop into long-term rejection, with the goal of socially excluding this other person. The social function of contempt is to move this person away from oneself and to ban him or her from one's social environment, which typically results in relationship deterioration.

This distinction is based on the different behavioral reactions, emotivational goals, and relational implications that respondents reported in three different studies with different methods. In the first study, we collected autobiographical reports of events in which respondents had experienced anger or contempt; in the second study, we asked them for incidents in which they had either attacked or excluded another person; and in the third study, we presented respondents with a vignette of a transgression by another person, in which we manipulated the relationship with the provoker. Despite the fact that participants reported a wide variety of events, we found distinct patterns of anger and contempt that were highly consistent across the studies.

In our view, these distinctive features can be seen as prototypical (see Russell, 1991b; Russell & Barrett, 1999; Russell & Fehr, 1994), meaning that not all instances of anger and contempt necessarily fit these particular response patterns. For example, there are examples of anger in which individuals are angry at themselves, and there may be instances of what one could call contempt that are characterized by attacking or doing nothing. Moreover, the patterns of contempt and anger that we have distinguished also may occur together and blend. The point of the present article, however, is that typical instances of what we call anger and contempt in common language can be characterized by different prototypical features that correspond with their main social functions.

We also found support for our second hypothesis that anger and contempt are associated with specific characteristics of the relationship with the other person and with one's beliefs about the other person. First of all, Studies 1 and 3 showed that anger more often occurs in reaction to intimates than in reaction to strangers. In addition, one's perception of the other person or the relationship with the other person is an important factor in whether anger or contempt is evoked. When one starts changing one's beliefs about the other person in a more permanent and negative direction—developing the impression that the other person is intrinsically bad and that there is no way to make the other person change—the best

option may be to exclude this person from one's social life. In Study 1, we found that anger is more often reported when one perceives control over an intimate's behavior, whereas contempt is reported when one explains the transgression in terms of a negative disposition (blaming the person). In Study 2, we found further evidence that blaming the person predicted contempt and not anger. Moreover, Study 3 also showed that such negative dispositional attributions mediated the effects of intimacy on contempt. Contempt thus seems to be more than anger characterized by the development of permanent negative belief changes about another person (see also Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Roseman, 2001). In addition, the amount of control perceived over the behavior of another person was another important mediator of the effects of intimacy on contempt but was not an important mediator of the effects of intimacy on anger. We may thus conclude that the transformation of anger into contempt is inhibited by intimacy but that the perception of lack of control, in addition to the idea that the other person really has a bad character, is fertile soil for the development of contempt. The idea that one cannot change or correct the other's behavior seems an important reason why individuals start socially excluding the other person, as this may be an alternative—and more permanent—way to change or reduce the negative impact of an undesired outcome caused (perhaps repeatedly) by another person's character or traits.

The third hypothesis was that contempt and anger develop differently over time and that contempt often occurs on top of one's anger. The studies indeed suggest that whereas anger may occur without contempt, contempt more often co-occurs with anger. In Study 1, for example, we found that there was more anger in the contempt incidents than contempt in the anger incidents; in Study 2, we also found that in the exclusion condition, the amount of anger was similar to the amount of contempt, whereas in the attack condition there is significantly more anger than contempt. In other words, contempt is more often elicited when one is already angry. The possibility that contempt often develops on top of one's anger is also suggested by the correlation patterns of anger and contempt in Studies 2 and 3 (in Study 1, no correlations were found because of the instructions). These show that anger and contempt are fairly highly correlated some time after the incident has taken place, whereas initial anger and contempt are less highly (or not at all) correlated. Moreover, the findings from Study 2 show that repeated experiences of anger (either currently or in the past) increase the likelihood that one develops contempt toward someone rather than just becoming angry at this same person again. This transformation of part of one's anger into contempt may be dangerous insofar as it implies that the inclination to attack co-occurs with the inclination to derogate and exclude a person who is seen as inferior or bad, which may result in hostile acts that are not held in check by affection or social relationships. This mixture of the two emotions may thus explain why in some of the ostracism studies by Williams (2001), a relation between ostracism and aggression was found.

The results of the present studies also lead us to wonder whether anger and contempt are necessarily evoked in response to transgressions in different ethical domains, as has been proposed in the contempt, anger, and disgust hypothesis (Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999). Although transgressions from different ethical domains may be differentially frequent in anger incidents as opposed to contempt incidents, the present studies also provide evidence

that the same transgression (for example, speaking rudely to a train conductor) could elicit either anger and/or contempt, depending on how the behavior and the person is appraised. For example, the other's behavior may be interpreted as involving either blockage of a practical or moral goal (e.g., avoiding hurting the conductor's feelings, or preserving order on the train) or as an intrinsic defect in the object of the emotion (such as insensitivity or impudence; see, e.g., Roseman, 2001). These appraisals depend, among other things, on the history of one's relationship with the other person or on the specific social context (see also Manstead & Fischer, 2001; Parkinson, 2001; Parkinson, Fischer, & Manstead, 2005), in addition to the ethical domain to which the behavior belongs.

We did not find many sex differences in contempt and anger responses. Although there are reasons to expect sex differences, with women reporting more anger in intimate relationships (see e.g., Fischer, Rodriguez Mosquera, van Vianen, & Manstead, 2004; Kring, 2000) but also more social exclusion behavior (e.g., Underwood, 2004), we think that sex differences in anger and contempt may be very context-sensitive and, perhaps, therefore did not appear in the present studies. When investigating sex differences in contempt and anger in future studies, context variation should either be restricted or systematically studied.

Finally, a few more words need to be said about our methodology. We are well aware of the fact that self-report measures have often been criticized because they can be biased by impression management and social desirability tendencies. It could also be argued that the great variety of experiences that have been sampled is a limitation because the emotion process is strongly influenced not only by the nature of the event but also by the context in which it emerges and develops (see also Parkinson, 2001) and by the reactions of other people in this context (Fischer, Manstead, & Zaalberg, 2003; Manstead & Fischer, 2001). Although no single method may capture the impact of the contextual and situational features in all its facets, we have included measures of potential contextual determinants, such as intimacy and control, in order to examine their effects. Moreover, in Study 3, we used a vignette method in order to examine the distinct patterns of anger and contempt in reaction to a standardized event and found the same pattern of results. Yet, we acknowledge that it is possible that the autobiographical stories vary in some more ways than we have foreseen and analyzed.

In conclusion, these three studies provide support for the idea that anger and contempt have different characteristics and social functions, with contempt having the more destructive implications for one's relationships with other people. Whereas anger leaves open the possibility to repair the relationship, this option seems further away in the case of contempt. We think it is important to further investigate conditions under which one's anger transforms into contempt and long-term negative emotions like feelings of hatred or revenge (e.g., Baumeister & Butz, 2005; Elster, 1999; Sternberg, 2005). We have shown that a lack of intimacy, a lack of control, and a dispositional attribution of negative behavior make the experience of contempt on top of one's anger more likely. Lack of control, however, does not mean that one feels inferior to the other person. On the contrary, contempt suggests that the other may be seen as inferior to oneself, though at the same time one is not able or does not wish to change the other person (perhaps because the person is seen as not worthy of the needed investment of effort). We may suggest that the feeling of superiority over

another person often present in contempt can be a mental means of gaining control that one does not otherwise have. This is in line with research showing that individuals high in self-esteem are more likely than those low in self-esteem to use ostracism insofar as ostracism indicates the presence of contempt (Sommer, Williams, Ciarocco, & Baumeister, 2001).

Our findings relating contempt to lack of intimacy, lack of control, and dispositional attributions also lead to the suggestion that contempt would be more readily experienced in reaction to outgroup members. For example, studies have shown that infrahumanization (Leyens et al., 2000, 2001), which can be interpreted as a clear indication of contempt, is a more likely response to outgroup members than to ingroup members. We suggest that contempt would be especially felt for those groups who are considered inferior in status or position and who are also difficult to control, like people who are mentally retarded, who are drug addicts, or who are homeless. It is clear, however, that we cannot draw firm conclusions concerning the effects of status, group membership, control, or dispositional appraisal on the basis of the present data. The relations among these variables would be an interesting subject for future studies.

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