

### Moral Emotions in Political Decision Making

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### Summary and Keywords

Moral emotions such as guilt, shame, and pride play a central role in motivating and regulating many of people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. When moral emotions are experienced on behalf of one's group, they can have a deep impact on intergroup relations as well, particularly in situations of intergroup conflict. If society members feel that they, due to their association with the group, are responsible for the disproportional and illegitimate suffering of outgroup members, they may experience moral emotions like guilt and shame. These emotional responses can potentially motivate society members to enact a range of political response tendencies, varying from pure defensiveness, resulting in opposition to any relevant compromise, to sincere willingness to offer an apology or to compensate the outgroup.

Of these group-based emotions, guilt has the greatest potential to contribute to the amelioration of intergroup relations in violent, protracted conflicts. Group-based guilt requires the fulfillment of several conditions, including perceived responsibility for the offense; a specific composition or level of identification with the transgressing group; and appraisal of the guilt-inducing action as unjust, immoral or unfair. Group-based guilt is not a prevalent emotion, and various defense mechanisms are frequently employed to curb it. However, when it does arise the experience of guilt in the name of the group can be an important factor in motivating individuals to support policies aimed at compensating victimized groups and their society, either through material reparations or more symbolic gestures such as formal apologies for the harm incurred. Guilt-driven ameliorative actions such as formal apologies or monetary compensation are an important step towards conflict resolution and reconciliation. While up-regulation of group-based guilt is a challenging process, several research directions demonstrate that this emotion can be induced and harnessed to promote conflict resolution and more harmonious intergroup relations.

Keywords: guilt, shame, group-based emotions, intergroup relations, intractable conflicts, emotion regulation, political decision making

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### Introduction

In late 2016, the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Hobart, Tasmania, unveiled a concept plan for a \$2 billion waterfront development at Macquarie Point, which would include a Truth and Reconciliation Art Park. The park was planned to serve as an acknowledgement of the frontier wars, which were so bloody in Tasmania that some historians consider them to be one of the earliest recorded modern genocides (Tatz, 2003). In response to these plans, Hobart Lord Mayor Sue Hickey said in interview: “I think it very much has to be something that the Aboriginals are on board with, but also that it’s done tastefully and it’s not a guilt-ridden place...Whatever happened 200 years ago is really, really sad, but lots of atrocities have happened.” Lord Mayor Hickey added that people today should not be blamed for the atrocities of the past: “I didn’t kill the Aborigines, and nor would I; it was a different era.” Hickey’s statements were met with chagrined responses from opposition members and Aboriginal community members. Tasmanian Aboriginal leader Michael Mansell condemned Hickey’s comments and said: “People can share personal guilt for failing to remedy the effects of injustices, or they can take pride in the fact they took on the responsibility of making their society a better place to live in” (Shine & Aird, 2016).

This story demonstrates many facets of group-based moral emotions: their importance, their social functions, and the strong defense mechanisms that make their expression relatively rare. Moral emotions such as guilt, shame, and pride often act as guides in our personal lives, serving as a compass which indicates how close our actions—past, present, and future—are to the ideals and norms by which we live our lives. Moral emotions also play a significant role in intra- and intergroup relations, particularly in the context of conflicts. These affective experiences are one way in which advantaged group members are driven to oppose inequality, sometimes at great personal risk and despite the fact that they benefit from such systems of inequality (Iyer, Leach, & Pedersen, 2004). For example, group-based guilt over inequality was found to be associated with support for ameliorative policies and involvement in collective action in various contexts, including gender relations (e.g., Boeckmann & Feather, 2007); White privilege from Australia through the United States to Nepal (e.g., Greenaway, Fisk, & Branscombe, 2017; Iyer et al., 2004; Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006); and relations between straight individuals and members of the LGBTQ community (Calcagno, 2016). The focus of the present article, however, will be on aspects of group-based moral emotions and guilt in particular in the context of intergroup conflicts that are long-term, pervasive, and violent.

Much of our knowledge about the mechanisms underlying group-based moral emotions is derived from responses to historical wrongdoings, such as atrocities during colonial occupation (e.g., Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Leach, Zeineddine, & Čehajić-Clancy, 2013). But contemporary, ongoing intergroup conflicts also tend to provide a rich field for morally questionable actions, and the potential for guilt, shame, and anger over such deeds. This is particularly true in the case of intractable conflicts, which are violent, protracted, perceived as irresolvable, and demand extensive investment by the parties engaged (Kriesberg, 1993). Such conflicts are particularly rife with repeated, mutual

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transgressions that are perceived by the victimized groups as immoral and unjust. Perceived injustices and transgression range from relatively “mild” discrimination and unfair treatment of rival groups to extreme and horrendous actions of mass killing of innocent civilians, genocide and ethnic cleansing (Staub, 2011).

The article begins with a brief discussion of central aspects of emotions at the individual and group level, focusing on moral emotions (particularly group-based guilt, shame, and anger at one’s own group). Then the nature and characteristics of guilt on the group level will be presented, focusing mainly on the unique characteristics which distinguish it from other moral emotions presented earlier. The third part of the article is devoted to psychological processes that stimulate group-based guilt on the one hand, and the mechanisms that enable society members to avoid feeling guilty on the other. The next section reviews studies examining the implications of group-based guilt on intergroup conflicts, both constructive and destructive. Finally, some thoughts and findings regarding the up-regulation of group-based guilt as an avenue to conflict resolution are presented.

## On Emotions and Moral Emotions at the Individual Level

Emotional experiences are some of the most pivotal and common psychological experiences, infusing all mental states, thoughts, and perceptions. Emotions can be defined as functional states (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000; Frijda, 1986; Mesquita & Albert, 2007; Oatley, 1992) or as flexible response sequences (Frijda, 1986; Scherer, 1984) that are called forth whenever an individual evaluates a situation as offering important challenges or opportunities (Tooby & Cosmides, 2006). In other words, emotions transform a substantive event into a motivation to respond to it in a particular manner (Zajonc, 1998). One way to explain how this transformation occurs is through the *Component Process Model*, which defines an emotion as an episode of interrelated, synchronized changes in the states of all or most of the five organismic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event as relevant to major concerns of the organism (Scherer, 1987, 2001). Accordingly, emotions consist of five key components: recognition of the existence of the stimulus (change), an appraisal of its potential effect, subjective feelings we have in regard to the stimulus, motor expression component (facial and vocal expression) and motivational component which includes emotional goals and action tendencies in response to the meaningful event. The present article focuses on two components—cognitive appraisals and response tendencies—which are central to the understanding of emotions, particularly moral emotions, in the public sphere and their role the role of emotions in intergroup relations. But first let us define moral emotions and describe some of their underlying mechanisms and functions in social dynamics.

Moral emotions influence the link between moral standards and moral behavior, driving people to behave in moral, socially appropriate ways in their social interactions and intimate relationships (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Leith & Baumeister, 1998; Retzinger, 1987). Moral emotions such as embarrassment, guilt, pride, and shame arise

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when evaluating and reflecting on one's self and evaluating that self in reference to values and standards (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). Representing an individual's knowledge and internalization of moral norms and conventions, moral standards are multifaceted and diverse constructs which are dictated in part by universal moral laws and in part by culturally specific proscriptions. The definition of "right" and "wrong" is not universally consistent across groups varying by culture, age, status, and other factors. While some facets of morality—particularly prohibitions against harming others—are universal, aspects relating to shared social conventions and concepts of divinity and purity are more likely to show variability across culture (Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997; Tangney et al., 2007; for further debate on different approaches to morality and moral standards, see Haidt & Kesebir, 2010; Leach, Bilali, & Pagliaro, 2013; Monin & Jordan, 2009; Pagliaro, 2012).

According to June Tangney and her colleagues (Tangney et al., 2007), as the self reflects upon the self, the emotions that are evoked by the reflection provide immediate punishment (or reinforcement) of behavior. The valence and intensity of this self-imposed affective consequence is based both on an evaluation of the ethics of the behavior (e.g., its propriety, its effect on others) and on an assessment of what that behavior reveals about the self (e.g., our character, our talent, our worth). In effect, shame, guilt, embarrassment, and pride function as an emotional moral barometer, providing immediate and salient feedback on our social and moral acceptability. As such, moral emotions are a significant force in regulating interpersonal and intergroup behavior.

In the context of intergroup relations and intergroup conflict, shame and guilt are arguably the most relevant moral emotions. However, empirical research suggests that they are not equally "moral" (Tangney et al., 2007; but see also Leach & Cidam, 2015). On balance, guilt appears to be the more adaptive emotion, benefiting individuals and their relationships in a variety of ways (Baumeister et al., 1994; Tangney, 1991). Most scholars agree that shame is linked to what is perceived as a failure of the self, whereas guilt is more often restricted to a failure of one's behavior (Tangney et al., 2007). Lewis' (1971) argued that while both emotions are self-conscious and negative, their focus is different: feeling guilty for one's wrongdoing is associated with a focus on specific behaviors and their consequences for the other ("I did this bad thing and now the other is suffering as a result"), whereas feelings of shame involve a greater emphasis on the implications of the wrongdoing for the self ("I did this bad thing and therefore I am a bad person"). This can be thought of in terms of distinguished attributions associated with each of these emotions, namely, whereas guilt is associated with attributions that are constrained to specific, controllable aspects of behavior, shame is associated with attributing some wrongdoing to internal, global, and stable aspects of the self (Tracy & Robins, 2006).

These different appraisals or attributions of guilt and shame naturally lead to fundamental differences in their associated motivations or actions tendencies (e.g., Tangney & Fischer, 1995). Attributions to internal or innate characteristics of the self (i.e., shame) lead to motivation to avoid, disengage or withdraw, external attributions, focusing on specific wronged behavior, lead to motivation to retribute the victim (e.g. apology, reparations)

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(Lewis, 1971; Tangney & Fischer, 1995). More broadly, Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman (2010) characterize this distinction as the extent to which each emotion is linked to self and moral regulatory systems that focus either on approach or avoidance motivations. In their view, shame is felt when we fail to do something we ought to have done, whereas guilt is felt when we fail to do something people are expected to do.

Before turning our attention to moral emotions at the group level, focusing mostly on guilt, it is important to mention that the debate regarding the exact nature and implications of shame is rapidly developing these days (e.g., Giner-Sorolla, 2012; Gausel, Leach, Vignoles, & Brown, 2012). While some scholars still focus on the fact that shame results from some perceived flaw in one's essential character (Tangney, 1991; Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996), others suggest that it is distress caused by public exposure of the wrongdoing that best captures shame (Smith, Webster, Parrot, & Eyre, 2002). While the first approach focuses on the way an individual sees herself when acknowledging her involvement in an immoral behavior, the second approach highlights the damaged reputation or loss of respect and honor in the eyes of others (Crozier, 1998; Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002; Smith et al., 2002). However, these two conceptions are not mutually exclusive and in some cases one can even feed into and enhance the other. For example, repeated damage to one's dignity and reputation can very easily "convince" a person that her actions are driven by innate, immoral characteristics.

Although both these processes may induce the same motivational implications—willingness to run away, hide and avoid any relevant social interaction—recent research indicates that this is not always the case. Colin Leach and Atilla Cidam (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of 90 samples to explore the link between shame and the constructive approach orientation of cooperation with others, prosocial motivation and behavior, and self-improvement motivation and behavior. They found that shame had a positive link to constructive approach orientation in response to failure when failure or social image were more reparable. In contrast, shame was negatively associated with constructive approach when failure was difficult to rectify. The results of this meta-analysis imply that under some circumstances shame, like guilt can be ameliorative to relationships harmed by moral transgressions. However, events that evoke group-based moral emotions tend to be more severe are less easily repaired. While discussion of group-based shame is offered as well, most of the rest of the article will focus on guilt.

## Group-Based Moral Emotions

In general, emotions are not solely a highly personal experience with individuals' hearts and minds, but are also an important part of most societal processes. Emotions are driven by both intra- and intergroup dynamics; they are frequently expressed within social contexts; and they influence the nature of intra- and intergroup relations. When emotions are experienced within the destructive context of intractable conflicts, their implications are further amplified. And moral emotions—which function as an emotional barometer, providing immediate and salient feedback on our social and moral acceptability (Tangney et

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al., 2007)—are pivotal in conflictual intergroup dynamics, which are rife with opportunities for transgression and wrongdoings.

All group-based emotions—which individuals experience in the name of their group members, even if they themselves have not directly experienced the emotion eliciting event—are influenced by a combination of two factors: level of identification with the group, and unique appraisals of the event (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Smith, 1993). The appraisals and meanings surrounding the significant, emotion-inducing event are determined both by the group member's personality, values and interests as well as by the type of the event (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Smith, 1993). If society members feel that they, by dint of their association with the ingroup, are responsible for the (sometimes unnecessary) suffering of outgroup members, they may experience moral emotions like guilt, shame and anger at one's own group (for discussion of sub-groups of moral emotions and anger within this taxonomy, see Haidt, 2003). Such emotions on behalf of the group have the potential to drive society members to act in various ways: from defensiveness responses such as completely denying the harm incurred by the outgroup to sincere acknowledgement and willingness to make reparations.

The two most frequently studied moral emotions in the context of intergroup relations, and particularly violent intergroup conflicts, are group-based shame and guilt. *Group-based guilt* is associated with appraised responsibility of one's ingroup for moral violations (Branscombe, 2004). Guilt is centered around the harmful acts and can motivate group members to rectify the wrongdoing and make reparations to the victims (Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi, & Čehajić, 2008; Čehajić, Effron, Halperin, Liberman, & Ross, 2011; Doosje et al., 1998; Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Pagano & Huo, 2007; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006; Zebel, Zimmermann, Viki, & Doosje, 2008 but see Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007). *Group-based shame*, on the other hand, is associated with appraisals implying that a wrongdoing reflects fundamental characteristics of the perpetrator (Lickel, Schmader, & Barquissau, 2004; Tangney, 1991) and tarnishes the moral image of the group (Lickel, Steele, & Schmader, 2011). In the intergroup context, shame leads to a desire to distance the ingroup from the shame-invoking situation (Iyer et al., 2007; Lickel et al., 2004), yet there are inconsistent findings regarding the role of shame in expressing contrition over wrongdoings and promoting support for compensating the outgroup (Allpress, Barlow, Brown, & Louis, 2010; Brown & Čehajić, 2008; Brown et al., 2008; Gausel et al., 2012; Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarnier, & Ames, 2005; Schmader & Lickel, 2006). In addition, there is some evidence indicating that group-based shame is associated with pro-social motivations (Berndsen & Gausel, 2015) and support for collective action (Shepherd, Spears, & Manstead, 2013A), and can lead to inhibition of ingroup favoritism (Shepherd, Spears, & Manstead, 2013B). However, as guilt is still seen to be the more resolution-oriented of the two, the article proceeds to discuss its characteristics and its implications in greater depth.

# Guilt in the Name of One's Group

Nearly twenty years ago, Doosje and colleagues (1998) introduced the notion that individuals are capable of experiencing guilt for perceived immoral actions or wrongdoings committed by their group members, even if they were not personally involved in that action. Since then, a theoretically and empirically rich literature has developed, further exploring the psychological processes behind that non-intuitive phenomenon (e.g., Brown et al., 2008; Čehajić et al., 2011; Wohl et al., 2006). This concept of group-based guilt is extremely relevant to the understanding of intergroup relations and intergroup conflicts for three main reasons: first, because most people in societies involved in violent conflicts are not directly involved in most immoral actions committed by their group in the course of the conflict; second, because *expecting* group-based guilt may reduce society members' support for policies that would result in disproportional, extreme harm to rival outgroups; and third, because of the repairing motivation embedded within guilt, which can potentially turn it into a pivotal affective player in conflict resolution and reconciliation processes.

But what kinds of situations hold the potential of eliciting group-based guilt? The simplest answer to that question is that people may feel guilty for actions they see as immoral that were carried out by their group as a whole, or by official or symbolic representatives of the group in the name of that group. For example, one may experience guilt over immoral military operations conducted by one's country's army (e.g., carpet-bombing a densely populated enemy city that results in multiple civilian casualties). Or the country's prime minister may issue a statement that one sees as offensive and discriminatory, which would induce guilt over the PM's message. In these cases, group-based guilt responses seem almost automatic because the group as an entity or formal representatives of the group, who symbolize the group as a whole, are responsible in what is seen by the individual as an immoral occurrence.

More surprisingly, people can also feel guilt in response to specific actions of a particular fellow-group member (e.g., racist slurs uttered by a neighbor), even if that person does not represent the ingroup in any formal or even symbolic way. Furthermore, people sometimes feel group-based guilt about their group's past history of behavior toward an outgroup (such as the policies seen as unfairly discriminating against a minority group; see Iyer & Leach, 2008). This means that people sometimes feel guilt in the name of their group, although clearly they do not bear responsibility for their group's past behavior, nor could they have changed it, because they were not born when the historical actions or policies perceived as immoral took place. This raises questions regarding the antecedents of guilt on the group level, and maybe even more importantly, regarding the boundaries of such feelings of guilt. In other words, it is interesting to explore what would lead people to experience guilt on behalf of their group, but also what would aid people to avoid such an experience, which is typically encountered as aversive and potentially involving material or symbolic threats and costs.

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The literature on group-based guilt has generally examined three main antecedents of guilt—acceptance of responsibility, identification with the group and harm illegitimacy (see Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014). Yet, given the complexity of group-based guilt as a psychological phenomenon, each of these antecedents also includes some prominent boundary conditions. These complexities further amplify in intractable conflicts because of the unique physical and psychological nature of these conflicts, as will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

First, group-based guilt requires an appraisal that one's ingroup is responsible for actions that violate norms or values to which the group and the individual are committed (Branscombe, 2004; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006). But as in most cases the individual who experiences the feelings of group-based guilt was not directly or personally involved in the wrongdoing, the question of the appraised responsibility for the transgressions is more complex. Sabina Čehajić-Clancy (2012) has raised this question by asking whether all members of a group should be held accountable for atrocities committed in their name, even if they themselves were in no way involved with the immoral actions and crimes. Should individuals who were not actively engaged in the transgressions, who have not supported or tolerated them, feel responsible—and consequently, experience guilt on behalf of their group?

On the one hand, the concept of collective responsibility can be argued to make no sense if "responsibility" refers only to specific individual conduct. According to this approach, it would be inappropriate to expect people to accept the blame for something they neither did nor intended to do (Lewis, 1948). The issue becomes even more complicated when we consider the fact that people oppose and publicly protest against immoral actions conducted by their group members (see, e.g., Goldenberg, Saguy, & Halperin, 2014). Therefore, expecting them to assume responsibility for these actions might be unrealistic and even unfair.

On the other hand, some scholars have regarded collective responsibility as a moral duty to respond to crimes committed in one's name and as a practical category which is a prerequisite for lasting reconciliation (Dimitrijevic, 2006). Čehajić-Clancy (2012) proposed a more nuanced approach, according to which the scope of expected responsibility depends primarily on the nature of the immoral actions committed and on the character of group identity. According to her approach, it is important to differentiate responsibility acceptance for collective immoral actions from individually committed wrongs, even if the latter were meant to be done in the name of the group. In Čehajić-Clancy's view (2012), collective immoral actions or crimes are actions which have been committed by a significantly large number of people against other social groups and in the name of one's own group. These actions imply collective intent to commit specific acts, collective awareness of the nature of the intended actions, an organized effort to realize the intentions, and collective awareness of the consequences of the atrocities (Radzik, 2001). Čehajić-Clancy (2012) suggests that when all these criteria are met, acceptance of collective responsibility becomes more plausible, logical and even expected.

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This approach is congruent with the work of most scholars who have studied group-based guilt, focusing mainly on people's appraised responsibility for situations in which their group historically victimized outgroup members—events such as slavery, discrimination, and genocide (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998; Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006; Zebel et al., 2008), or have benefitted from current discrimination of the outgroup in the present (e.g., Leach, Spears, Branscombe, & Doosje, 2003; Powell, Branscombe, & Schmitt, 2005). In these cases one can argue that a shared intent to carry out specific policies or acts was present, combined with collective awareness of the nature of the actions. Moreover, in all of these cases, one could observe well-organized efforts aiming to realize the intention, and at least some collective awareness of its inherent and unavoidable immoral consequences.

A meaningful affiliation with the group is another necessary condition for the experience of guilt over a collective transgression. An individual has to feel part of the group and to identify with it at least to some extent, in order to feel guilt in its name (Doosje et al., 1998). This is of course true for all group-based emotions (Mackie et al., 2000), but it is much more complicated in the case of group-based guilt, mainly because of the aversive nature of guilt and the way such an experience reflects on one's relationships with the group. People generally try to avoid feeling guilt in various ways, and one of the mechanisms is trying to minimize their affiliation or identification with groups that are engaged in guilt eliciting behavior.

Furthermore, as suggested by Goldenberg et al. (2014), feeling group-based guilt often implies feeling guilt in the name of a group in which most group members do not share the same emotion. In that sense, group-based guilt differs substantially from other types of group-based emotions (e.g., anger or hatred) in which large number of group members simultaneously experience identical emotions. Accordingly, while other group-based emotions usually further connect people to their ingroup (i.e., I feel anger together with everyone else, so I feel more attached to them), the experience of group-based guilt often distances individuals from their ingroup, who see them (the individuals) as deviants or even traitors.

This complex process provides the basis for what can be described as the paradox of identity in group-based guilt (see Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014). On the one hand, group-based guilt can be experienced only by those who consider themselves a part of the group, and the group to be a meaningful part of their identity. According to *Intergroup Emotion Theory*, the more people identify with a certain group the more they feel emotions in the name of that group, especially when it comes to events or actions they were not personally engaged in (Mackie et al., 2000). On the other hand, people who strongly identify with their group are the ones who are most susceptible to blindness in the face of problematic or immoral group actions. Naturally, given that for these people the identification with the group plays a pivotal role in their self-image and identity, they may be most likely to be threatened by these negative characterizations of their social identity. As

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such, this identification can motivate people to find ways of exonerating their group—and by extension, themselves—from wrongdoing.

The first study to empirically examine this paradox was conducted by Doosje et al. (1998). They found that high identifiers who were presented with an ambiguous history of their country experienced less group-based guilt compared to low identifiers, presumably the result of selectively focusing on the positive outcomes as a means of justifying the more negative aspects of their country's past (see also Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006; Johns, Schmader, & Lickel, 2005; Myers, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2009). Although interesting, this pattern of results does not present the full picture, because, as already mentioned, a degree of group-identification is necessary to enable group-based guilt. Indeed, other studies have revealed positive association between levels of identification and group-based guilt (e.g., Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 2006), while some other studies have found no relations whatsoever between these variables (see McGarty et al., 2005).

One way to resolve this paradox was suggested and empirically supported by Klein and colleagues (Klein, Licata, & Pierucci, 2011), who found a curvilinear effect of identification on group-based guilt. These authors studied group-based guilt in the context of the Belgian colonization of Congo and found that group-based guilt about colonialism was affected non-linearly by group identification, with higher guilt for mid-identifiers compared to low and high identifiers. These results suggest that while low identifiers have no real reason to experience guilt, because they do not see themselves as an inherent part of the group, high identifiers, who probably feel high threat to their image, display defensive reactions that help them avoid potential feelings of guilt.

Another way to address the paradox of the identification-guilt relationships was offered and tested by Roccas, Klar, and Liviatan (2006). They studied Israeli feelings of guilt for historical events in which Israelis had committed harm against Palestinians. According to their view, two different aspects of group identification exist—glorification and attachment, and each of them is associated with guilt experience in a different way—attachment to the ingroup had a positive relationship to guilt and glorification, a negative relationship to guilt. Roccas and colleagues also found that defensive mechanisms in the form of exonerating cognitions mediated much of the relationships between the measures of identification and guilt. Interestingly, while Klein et al. (2011) focus on the magnitude of identification with the group to explain the non-linear identity-guilt association, Roccas and colleagues (2006; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Halevy, & Eidelson, 2008) highlight qualitative differences between identification types as a potential moderator of these relationships (see also the work of Golec de Zavala and colleagues, 2009, 2013 on collective narcissism).

Finally, the third necessary appraisal for group-based guilt is the illegitimacy of harm. People have to appraise their group's behavior as illegitimate, unjust, immoral or unfair in order to experience group-based guilt. This is a tremendously high bar in terms of cognitive appraisals because groups, for various reasons, are motivated not to experience guilt (Leach et al., 2013; Sharvit & Valetzky, 2018), and therefore, seek to justify and le-

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gitimize their group's behavior towards rival outgroups. This is especially true in situations of ongoing (as opposed to past) conflicts, in which groups develop an ethos of conflict and a biased collective memory of the conflict, that help them in justifying their ongoing actions (Bar-Tal, 2013). Considering the importance of ingroup cohesion and mobilization during intergroup conflict, the potential impact of guilt on society members' identification and dedication to the collective ethos can provide another reason as to why this emotion is considered undesirable and, to a large extent, discouraged by the group's formal institutions and agents.

This third criterion is even more challenging in asymmetrical conflicts, in which dominant or advantaged groups often harm the subordinate groups and behave in ways that defy accepted norms and values in order to maintain their domination (Rosler, Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Halperin, & Raviv, 2009; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In such cases of prolonged domination, reducing experiences of guilt by making reparations or formal apologies (Maitner, Mackie, & Smith, 2006) is mostly an irrelevant option. These responses are largely inapplicable because group members wish to maintain their domination and are wary of the consequences of acknowledging the wrongdoing by word or deed. Hence, in these cases highly powerful societal and psychological mechanisms operate among advantaged group members in order to legitimize and justify the dominant group's behavior.

Indeed, a history of harm and oppression directed at the currently transgressing party provides fertile ground for effective exonerating cognitions. Such a historical narrative enables group members to frame any current offenses in ways that are protective of the group identity. In fact, reminding people of their group's own victimization was repeatedly demonstrated to reduce feelings of guilt for intergroup conflict. For example, Wohl and Branscombe (2008) found that when Americans were reminded of their own victimization on September 11 and the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, they reported a reduced sense of guilt for America's involvement in Iraq. Other studies have also demonstrated how high perceived threat (e.g., Zagefka, Pehrson, Mole, & Chan, 2010; Zebel et al., 2008) and perceived ingroup victimization (e.g., Myers et al., 2009) reduce the tendency to experience group-based guilt. Turning the ingroup into the victim, rather than the perpetrator, provides justification for the group's harmful actions and thus absolves its members of guilt.

In that sense, concepts such as competitive victimhood (Noor, Schnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012) and exclusive victimhood (Vollhardt, 2012) are highly relevant, because feeling as the unique and ultimate victimized group in a certain situation helps group members to re-legitimize the previously non-legitimate acts of their ingroup. When the perception of shared victimhood is abstract rather than specific to a situation, groups characterized by such beliefs about themselves and their relations with the world reason that, in order to prevent a trauma from ever happening again, the ingroup is allowed to do everything within its power to prevent it (Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gundar, 2009; Schori-Eyal, Klar, Roccas, & McNeill, 2017). Accordingly, any act that under other circumstances could potentially elicit guilt, is considered permissible and legitimate in these cases. When most situations of intergroup conflict evoke the status of the eternal victim, cognitive distortions and exonerating beliefs combine to provide a powerful shield

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against group-based guilt before it is even intimated (Schori-Eyal et al., 2017; Schori-Eyal, Klar, & Raz, 2017).

Finally, in addition to justifying the immoral actions and portraying them as legitimate, group members often implement a denial mechanism that enables them to protect their positive self-image. People are able to find creative ways to deny the meaning of what they or members of their group have done (Cohen, 2001). Literature on moral disengagement has identified a variety of mechanisms through which individuals can avoid negative self-sanctions while engaging in morally reprehensible behavior (Bandura, 1990, 1999). The most common mechanism in conflict situations is probably the delegitimization (Bar-Tal, 2013) or dehumanization (Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006) of the outgroup. When outgroup members are not considered to be human beings, they are morally excluded and denied many basic rights (Opatow, 1990). The most fundamental values that usually apply to other human beings become irrelevant, and therefore, even highly questionable actions, in terms of moral or ethical conduct, are perceived acceptable when it comes to these dehumanized groups. The combination of delegitimization and collective victimhood can sometimes be interpreted as license to commit immoral and illegitimate acts (called moral entitlement), which in turn serve as a barrier to guilt inducing information (see Staub, 2003).

## Group-Based Guilt's Implications on Inter-group Conflicts

In the previous section, the processes that lead people to experience guilt in the name of their group have been reviewed, but more importantly, it has become clear that many barriers obstruct their implementation. Group-based guilt is therefore rather an uncommon feeling, and it is usually experienced by a small minority in a certain society and only for a limited period of time. At the same time, group-based guilt's associated appraisals and emotional goals create high expectations that those who experience it will actually try to act personally and politically to repair what they have perceived as illegitimate wrongdoings conducted by their own group.

Indeed, most studies yield findings along those lines. On a very basic level, numerous studies show that experience of group-based guilt is associated (or sometimes even causally predicts) more positive attitudes towards victimized group members (e.g., Pedersen, Beven, Walker, & Griffiths, 2004; Powell et al., 2005; Stewart, Latu, Branscombe, & Denney, 2010). For example, Brown and Čehajić (2008) found that higher levels of guilt on the group level for Serbians' treatment of Muslims during the Bosnian War, were associated with higher levels of empathy for Bosnian Muslims. But more importantly, an extensive line of studies shows that feelings of guilt on behalf of one's group (i.e., group-based guilt) are associated with motivations to repair and compensate the victimized group. According to Čehajić-Clancy (2012), where personal or family resources and capacities are sufficient, these motivations lead some individuals who feel group-based guilt to endorse reparations on a personal level, namely, they are willing to personally con-

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tribute in order to repair the perceived wrongdoings. Yet, in most cases, these motivations are translated into collective reparations in the form of support for policies like, for example (but not limited to), monetary or symbolic compensations, apologies and even support for further compromises during negotiations (e.g., Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Brown et al., 2008; Čehajić et al., 2011; Doosje et al., 1998; Iyer et al., 2003; McGarty et al., 2005; Swim & Miller, 1999; Pagano & Huo, 2007; Wohl et al., 2006; Zebel et al., 2008).

Interestingly, evidence for the association between group-based guilt and support for reparative policies exists in different contexts and in different stages of conflicts. For example, McGarty et al. (2005) found that group-based guilt felt by non-indigenous Australians was associated with support for official government policies to the indigenous community; Brown and Čehajić (2008) and also Čehajić et al. (2011, study 3) found that guilt felt by Serbian adolescents predicted endorsement for reparation policies to be offered to Bosnian Muslims; Iyer and colleagues (2003) found that collective guilt among white Americans was associated with increased support for affirmative action for African Americans; Wohl et al. (Wohl, Matheson, Branscombe, & Anisman, 2013) found that greater collective guilt among European Canadians heightened the relations between perceived sincerity and positive expectations, whereas collective guilt assignment by Chinese Canadians heightened the relations between sincerity and forgiveness, and Doosje et al. (1998) found that guilt elicited by a text dealing with Dutch colonialism in Indonesia was related to support for providing financial compensation to the victimized group.

Thus, there is extensive empirical evidence suggesting that group-based guilt can be an important factor motivating individuals to support policies aimed at compensating victimized groups and their society. Importantly, though, most of these studies were not conducted in contexts of violent, intractable conflicts, and among the few that were actually conducted in such contexts, most of them examined people's feelings and policy support in a post-conflict rather than in an ongoing conflict era (e.g., Brown & Čehajić, 2008; Čehajić et al., 2011, study 3; Myers et al., 2009). This is an important distinction, because expressions of guilt and its potential outcomes can be much more consequential in ongoing violent conflicts. For example, Sharvit et al. (2008) found that guilt was highly associated with Israeli support for compensating Palestinians for Israeli actions in the occupied territories, and Čehajić et al. (2011) found group-based guilt felt by Israelis in response to the killing of innocent Palestinians during a war in Gaza to be related to support for reparations offered to the families of these Palestinians and also to the Palestinian people more generally. Recently, Goldenberg et al. (2014) replicated these results after another round of extreme violence between Israelis and Palestinians.

As demonstrated by these findings, even when collective guilt researchers have studied ongoing conflicts, they have focused on support for reparations for past wrongdoings as their ultimate outcome variable. What is still left un-researched is the potential effect of group-based guilt on processes of ongoing negotiations and its predictive power of support for future compromises rather than reparations for past actions. This is congruent with emerging themes in the study of collective guilt which focus on responsibility for future—rather than for historical—victimization (e.g., Ferguson & Branscombe, 2010; Caou-

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ette, Wohl, & Peetz, 2012), and with anticipatory or predicted guilt and shame: for example, anticipating shame over a proposed ingroup transgression increased protesting against the immoral actions, and anticipating group-based guilt predicted reparations (Shepherd et al., 2013A).

While most research reviewed above offers an encouraging view regarding the potential positive impact of group-based guilt on intractable conflicts, several recent lines of research present a more nuanced view regarding the utility of group-based guilt in such contexts. According to this more skeptical approach, even in the rare cases that individuals experience and express group-based guilt, such feelings are not necessarily translated into reparative or constructive action. This is mainly because guilt is an aversive state that focuses attention on a person's own or a group's responsibility for wrongdoing and, as such, its motivation is targeted more at ameliorating the group's image than actually empathizing with or improving the outgroup's conditions. For example, Iyer et al. (2003) compared the effects of a sympathy inducing manipulation (i.e., outgroup focus) to a guilt inducing manipulation (i.e., ingroup focus) and found that the sympathy framing was more effective in promoting support for non-compensatory efforts at promoting equality for African Americans, such as affirmative action programs. Lee Shepherd and his colleagues (Shepherd et al., 2013A) also found that anticipating group-based guilt did not promote egalitarian intergroup behavior; interestingly, shame was more effective in increasing support for such behaviors.

Even more dramatically, studies by Colin Leach and colleagues (Leach et al., 2006) show that although guilt is associated with the abstract goal of systemic compensation, it does not increase people's motivation to take part in collective action, meant to promote such compensation. Such motivation is driven primarily by anger at one's own group. In a way, Leach et al.'s (2006) findings suggest that although group-based guilt orients people towards support for reparative policies, it lacks the fuel needed to mobilize people into real action. A possible interpretation of these findings is that the abstract support for reparations already achieves the goal of positive self- and group- moral image (self-focused need), rendering the actual action irrelevant.

## Some Thoughts on Guilt Regulation

As was described in previous sections of the article, group-based guilt is not a perfect precursor of conflict resolution and reconciliation. Yet, in the context of long-term, violent conflicts, it still should be seen as one of the most powerful and most effective emotional engines for peace, and especially for reconciliation. Therefore, upregulation of group-based guilt in order to promote its implicated attitudinal, motivational and behavioral changes is an important aspect of constructively promoting such processes. For all the reasons mentioned above, up-regulation of group-based guilt is probably one of the most challenging tasks of those trying to promote conflict resolution and reconciliation. Individuals and societies involved in long term conflicts have strong motivational reasons to reject any attempt to attribute guilt to their group and society, and motivated group mem-

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bers can spontaneously down-regulate potential guilt quite effectively (e.g., Sharvit, Brambilla, Babush, & Colucci, 2015). These motivational reasons encapsulate an ensemble of identity based (i.e., the group's image) and more instrumental (i.e., the practical "costs" of guilt) considerations of both individuals and groups.

Consequently, attempts to up-regulate group-based guilt may face societal and institutional obstacles. For example, societies involved in long term conflicts tend to reject any information that might potentially challenge group members' view of their group as moral and just (Bar-Tal, 2013). Accordingly, attempts to introduce such guilt-eliciting information can backfire, because they often lead group members to hold more tightly to their initial (one-sided and biased) narrative, and to come up with new rationalizations and justifications for their group's actions. Indeed, several studies demonstrate that directly confronting group members with facts about ingroup transgressions is ineffective, particularly among those group members who are relatively prone to guilt due to their mode of identification (e.g., Leidner, Castano, Zaiser, & Giner-Sorolla, 2010; Roccas et al., 2006).

Consequently, in order for group-based guilt to be up-regulated, one should be exposed to information regarding illegitimate wrongdoing conducted by her own group, but also be offered the necessary guarantees that such information will not reflect on the fundamental, moral characteristics of the individual and the group. In other words, in order to experience group-based guilt individuals should believe that their group is fundamentally good and moral, but also that the group itself or some representatives of it have caused unjust harm to members of the outgroup. This complex message can potentially lead group members to support constructive means like apology, reparations and compensation.

Although most research on group-based guilt deals with its antecedents and consequences rather than with ways to amplify it, several recent attempts have taken up that important challenge. In an attempt to convey the complex message required to up-regulate group-based guilt, Čehajić et al. (2011) turned to self-affirmation theory (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1988), which stipulates that people can tolerate a threat to a specific aspect of their identity if they are able to secure or affirm other aspects of their positive self-image. Such self-affirmation can be accomplished by focusing on an important source of pride (Mcqueen & Klein, 2006). Prior research on self-affirmation suggests that it can be efficacious in reducing ingroup bias (Sherman, Kinias, Major, Kim, & Prenovost, 2007) and can lead groups to admit negative ingroup traits like racism (Adams, Tormala, & O'Brien, 2006). In some cases, guilt can allow criticism against the ingroup (Cohen, Sherman, Batardi, Hsu, McGoey, & Ross, 2007).

Using these findings as a background, Čehajić et al. (2011) hypothesized that affirming a positive aspect of the self, would in fact enable people to accept responsibility and experience guilt while maintaining their (and their group's) positive identity. In order to examine this idea and its applicability to the context of violent intergroup conflicts, a self-affirmation manipulation was applied within the realm of two violent conflicts. In the first two studies Jewish Israeli students were presented with a simple self-affirmation manipulation

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and were prompted to describe a personal success, how it made them feel and its reflection upon them (vs. a control group who wrote about what they planned to pack for a long trip). Following this manipulation, all participants read an article which described a highly infamous event that occurred during the war in Gaza between Israel and the Palestinian movement of Hamas during 2008. The event involved the three daughters and niece of a Palestinian physician, who were killed in his home by the Israeli army. An internal investigation conducted by the Israeli army confirmed that there had been no military justification for targeting his house. Results showed that participants in the self-affirmation condition experienced more guilt compared to those in the control condition. Furthermore, those in the self-affirmation group were more willing to make reparations to the Palestinians, compared to those in the control condition, and group-based guilt partially mediated the effect of the self-affirmation manipulation on support for reparation policies. Importantly, a third study yielded very similar patterns of results among Serbian participants within the context of the Srebrenica genocide that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995.

Outside the context of intractable conflicts, Miron, Branscombe, and Biernat (2010) demonstrated that enabling individuals to affirm the positive image of their group (rather than of themselves) can have very similar effects. These authors demonstrated that when white American participants affirmed their American identity (vs. a control), they set lower evidential standards for ingroup immorality and felt greater collective guilt for racial inequality. In 2011, Gunn and Wilson revealed very similar patterns when studying Canadians' guilt feelings over the mistreatment of Aboriginals, and men's guilt feelings about gender inequalities.

Taking a slightly different approach, Schori-Eyal, Reifen Tagar, Saguy, & Halperin (2015) more recently attempted to up-regulate guilt by up-regulating pride. Targeting those group members who are resistant to guilt because of their glorification of the ingroup, they induced pride specifically in the context of conflict (rather than in other domains in which the group is successful). In two studies that were conducted during the escalation in the Israeli Palestinian conflict that occurred in the summer of 2014, they evoked pride in Israel's conduct during the fighting. They found that those group members who tend to view their ingroup as superior to others—i.e., group glorifiers—did indeed experience more guilt after pride in the ingroup's actions during the escalation was induced. This may be because this form of pride fulfils a specific need or soothes collective insecurities among high glorifiers. These findings also provide further evidence of the complex web of interrelations between various moral emotions experienced on behalf of the ingroup.

Two additional approaches have proposed ways to up-regulate collective guilt by overcoming its previously described obstacles. The first was offered by Peetz and colleagues (Peetz, Gunn, & Wilson, 2010, see also; Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014), who found that reducing temporal distance increases collective guilt, especially for those more likely to accept inclusive categorization with the victimized group. This intervention is useful in up-regulating group-based guilt, particularly for past (Peetz et al., 2010) or for future (Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014) transgressions, but appears less relevant when it comes

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to wrongdoings done in the present. For example, in Peetz et al.'s (2010) study, non-defensive Germans induced to view the Holocaust as more proximal reported more collective guilt and willingness to compensate.

Finally, Goldenberg et al. (2014) have recently managed to up-regulate feelings of group-based guilt among Jews in Israel, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, by providing Jewish-Israelis with information regarding the low levels of guilt experienced by other group members facing a situation in which feelings of guilt seemed normative and even required. Participants who perceived the collective as experiencing less guilt than it should have felt (according to their standards and expectations), expressed a greater need to experience group-based guilt in order to advance action relative to those who perceived the collective as experiencing a proper level of guilt. Thus, according to that view, when the collective fails to experience the emotions that are appropriate for the event (in this case guilt), individuals apparently attempt to compensate for their group's lacunae by taking on the burden of feeling that very emotion. This offers a new way to regulate group-based emotions in general and guilt in particular by manipulating or highlighting the emotion felt by other group members.

In conclusion, this article demonstrated the importance of group-based moral emotions in intergroup relations and specifically in intractable conflicts. A number of strong defense mechanisms tend to curb the experience and expression of such emotions, particularly guilt. Despite this, empirical evidence shows that group-based guilt is beneficial in promoting reconciliation and more harmonious relations by increasing support for actions such as apologies and reparations over past transgressions, and by promoting collective action against- and reducing support for future harmful actions. Albeit an unpleasant affective experience, group-based guilt is repeatedly found to be an important part in group members' motivation to pursue more peaceful avenues for conflict resolution.

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