ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Group-based guilt and shame in the context of intergroup conflict: The role of beliefs and meta-beliefs about group malleability

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Abstract

Group-based guilt and shame are part of a wide range of moral emotions in intergroup conflicts. These emotions can potentially motivate group members to make compromises in order to promote conflict resolution, and increase support for reparations and apologies following moral transgressions committed by the in-group. Thus, it is important to understand how to induce these emotions and the mechanisms for their effects. In the present paper, we examined the mechanisms underlying group-based guilt and shame in four studies. Across the first three studies, conducted in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we found that group-based guilt was mostly predicted by individuals' implicit theories about groups (ITG). Specifically, we found that the more participants believed that groups are malleable, the more they experienced group-based guilt. Group-based shame, however, was found to be dependent upon individuals' perception of other people's perceptions about the malleability of groups (i.e., meta-ITG), as the perceived damage to one's in-group image is a major component in experiencing shame. In Study 4, conducted in the context of gender relations, we differentiated between the two components of shame, that is, moral and image shame. As predicted, while group-based guilt and moral shame showed similar patterns of results, meta-ITG had a moderating effect on the association between ITG and group-based image shame. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed in relation to promoting intergroup conflict resolution and reconciliation.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Intergroup conflicts have detrimental effects on individuals, collectives, and the international community more broadly. During such conflicts, in-group members of each adversarial group behave destructively against members of the rival out-group, sometimes in ways that would be considered by the in-group as violations of accepted moral values and norms (Halperin, 2016). When this occurs, some members of the groups immersed in conflict may experience moral emotions like group-based guilt and shame (Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Giner-Sorolla, 2013; Lickel, Steele, & Schmader, 2011). These emotions are experienced as a result of the individuals' identification with a group or a social category (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Smith & Mackie, 2008; Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus, & Gordijn, 2003), and have been extensively studied, due to their potentially pivotal role in promoting intergroup conflict resolution and reconciliation. Furthermore, these moral emotions can generate constructive behavioral tendencies oriented toward repairing the damage done to rival group members (Brown & Čehajić, 2008; Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi, & Čehajić, 2008) or supporting conciliatory actions required for intergroup reconciliation (e.g., Wohl & Branscombe, 2008).

When studying conflicts, guilt and shame are often similarly described in the literature (Halperin & Reifen Tagar, 2017). Although they overlap to some extent (Lickel et al., 2011), several important factors distinguish between these two emotions in terms of their core appraisals, emotional goals, and action tendencies (e.g., Brown et al., 2008; Gausel & Leach, 2011; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Group-based guilt and shame are both experienced as a consequence of a wrongdoing committed by a member of one's in-group (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Johns, Schmader, & Lickel, 2005). However, whereas group-based guilt is experienced as a result of an action that is perceived as illegitimate (Branscombe, Doosje, & McGarty, 2002), group-based shame is experienced as a consequence of a wrongdoing that is believed to tarnish the in-group's image (Lickel et al., 2011). In terms of the associated action tendencies, group-based guilt has been found to promote support for reparations toward victimized group members (Čehajić-Clancy, Effron, Halperin, Liberman, & Ross, 2011; Čehajić-Clancy, Goldenberg, Gross, & Halperin, 2016; Lickel et al., 2011), and predict increased support for an apology for moral transgressions (Čehajić-Clancy, 2015; McGarty et al., 2005). Conversely, although in more recent years a more nuanced approach to shame has been presented by several researchers (e.g., Allpress & Brown, 2012; Gausel & Leach, 2011), by and large group-based shame has mostly been found to motivate group members to distance themselves from the shame invoking situation (Allpress, Brown, Giner-Sorolla, Deonna, & Teroni, 2014; Lickel, Schmader, & Barquissau, 2004).[1] Thus, it seems that both emotions potentially play an important (but different) role in conflict resolution and reconciliation, and therefore it is important to understand their underlying mechanisms.

One of the most important predictors of guilt and shame is acknowledgment of in-group responsibility (e.g., Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2011). Nevertheless, group members sometimes deny their responsibility for the wrongdoing, as it may threaten their positive group image (Čehajić-Clancy & Brown, 2008; Doosje et al., 1998). In the present study, we focus on a potentially important way to increase acknowledgment of responsibility, based on the notions of implicit theories and meta-implicit theories (i.e., individuals' perception of other people's implicit theories), to which we will return later in the introduction. Implicit theories are an individuals' beliefs regarding whether given targets, such as individuals (Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997; Dweck, 1996), groups (Rydell, Hugenberg, Ray, & Mackie, 2007), conflicts (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, & Gross, 2014), and the world (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995), are either malleable (i.e., an incremental theory) or fixed (i.e., an entity theory). Specifically, incremental theorists see the possibility that groups develop over time and attribute group behavior to situational factors (e.g., leadership or context), whereas entity theorists see group characteristics as innate and fixed (e.g., Halperin, Russell, Trzesniewski, Gross, & Dweck, 2011; Rydell et al., 2007). Implicit theories are generally stable over time, although there is

a growing body of research that shows that an incremental mindset can be induced with interventions in contexts of intergroup conflicts to promote better intergroup relations through indirectly regulating group-based emotions (e.g., Cohen-Chen et al., 2014; Halperin et al., 2011).

Turning to the interpersonal literature, in a study based on the literature of implicit theories of individuals' personality (e.g., Chiu et al., 1997; Dweck, 1996), Schumann and Dweck (2014) found that incremental theorists see situations as opportunities to learn and grow. Consequently, incremental theorists feel less threatened about accepting responsibility for their actions. Moreover, entity theorists are motivated to avoid assuming responsibility for their offensive or immoral behavior, as they see these situations as more of a threat to their self-concept.

Turning back to the intergroup level, as mentioned, guilt is a consequence of an action (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998) and is based on attributions about specific, controllable aspects of behavior (e.g., Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robins, 2006). As such, the wrongdoing of in-group members does not necessarily reflect on the group's image (Čehajić-Clancy & Brown, 2014). Moreover, guilt stems from appraisals of in-group responsibility for illegitimate harm to the out-group (Doosje et al., 1998; Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002). According to these characteristics of guilt, we argue that individuals who believe that groups are malleable (i.e., incremental theorists), will feel more guilt, compared to those who believe that groups are fixed (i.e., entity theorists), since incremental theorists see the situation as an opportunity for change, and therefore are willing to accept responsibility (Schumann & Dweck, 2014). Moreover, we assume that entity theorists will feel less guilt, since for them, the immoral behavior and the violation of accepted norms would indicate that the group is inherently immoral.

In contrast to group-based guilt that focuses on specific behavior that can be changed (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robins, 2004), we hypothesize that ITG, that is, whether individuals are either incremental or entity theorists, will be weakly (if at all) associated with group-based shame, which is linked to a negative evaluation of the self (Lewis, 1971; Tangney, Stuewig, Mashek, & Hastings, 2011). Attributing a transgression to one's behavior is thought to minimize the threat to the self (Lewis, 1971), whereas attributing a transgression to the self directly threatens its core components (Dean & Fles, 2016). If the transgression is associated with core aspects of the self, assuming responsibility and changing the behavior of the in-group will have a minor, if any, effect on the threatened core aspects of the group, and the damaged group's image. One indication of this argument is the items used to measure shame in previous research (see Allpress et al., 2014). These items (e.g., "I feel disgraced because the behavior of British people toward Iraqi people has created a bad image of Britain in the eyes of the world") do not assess acknowledgment of responsibility, as opposed to items that measured guilt.

However, because shame is associated with the way other people see and perceive us (Allpress et al., 2014), we assume that individuals' perceptions of other people's implicit theories about groups (i.e., meta-ITG) may play an important role in experiencing group-based shame.

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[1] A more nuanced view of shame will be presented in the Introduction to Study 4.

The term "meta-perceptions" describes the set of beliefs individuals have about the beliefs of others (Frey & Tropp, 2006; Yzerbyt, Judd, & Muller, 2009). In the present study, we focus on meta-ITG. In contrast to the more traditional concept and measure of ITG, meta-ITG is the belief individuals hold about others' implicit beliefs, which is reflected in the question: "What do I believe others believe about the capability of groups to change?" As Gausel and Leach (2011) discussed in their review, a social image carries a risk, associated with the individual's psychological experience: Individuals are concerned about how others view their group in terms of morality. Hence, we think that the association between meta-ITG and shame is likely to be explained by the image component (which has been widely emphasized as a crucial aspect of shame; see Smith, Webster, Parrott, & Eyre, 2002), leading individuals to worry about being isolated, losing respect, and being rejected by others (Gausel, Vignoles, & Leach, 2016).

We argue that the relationship between ITG and shame will be dependent upon individuals' meta-ITG. Specifically, a moral transgression committed by the in-group is pivotal in how a group and its social image is perceived by out-group members (Gausel & Leach, 2011). When the transgression is coupled with a meta-entity belief, that is, the perception that others think that a group's behavior is fixed and innate, it may lead the individual to perceive that the in-group's image is damaged, and that the group is perceived as innately immoral. This will render any attempts to assume responsibility and correct the wrongdoing futile. In this case, we hypothesize that people will experience heightened levels of group-based shame, unrelated to their ITG. Conversely, when the transgression is coupled with a meta-incremental belief, that is, the perception that others think that a group's behavior is malleable, we hypothesize that the association between ITG and shame will be the same as the association between ITG and guilt. Specifically, since the transgression is not detrimental to the group's image, and the group is not perceived as innately immoral, incremental theorists, that is, individuals who believe that group characteristics are malleable will see the transgression as an opportunity for improvement, and thus will feel more shame. To the best of our knowledge, no prior work has examined the effects of ITG and meta-ITG beliefs on guilt and shame in the context of intergroup conflicts.

To examine our hypotheses, we first used data from an existing nationwide survey that was conducted in the context of a violent conflict-related event, namely, the 2014 Gaza War between Israelis and Palestinians. In this first study, we used data that were collected from Jewish-Israeli adults in order to identify first indications of the relationships between guilt, shame and ITG. Then, in Study 2 (a correlational study), we examined the moderating effect of meta-ITG on the relationship between ITG and group-based guilt and shame in the same context of the intergroup conflict that was presented in the first study. To that end, at the beginning of the study, Jewish-Israeli participants completed the ITG and the meta-ITG measures. They were subsequently asked to read an article about a moral transgression that was committed by the Israeli army during the 2014 Gaza War. At the end of the survey, all participants completed questionnaires in which we embedded measures assessing group-based guilt and shame. In Study 3 (an

experimental study), we sought to replicate the findings found in Study 2 and to establish causality. At first, as part of a background questionnaire, participants completed the ITG measure. Then, after a week, we randomly assigned participants to either the meta-entity condition or the meta-incremental condition, which was followed by measures of group-based guilt and shame. Finally, in Study 4, conducted in a new context, that is, gender relations, we reversed our design as, at first, participants completed the meta-ITG measure, and a week later we manipulated their ITG beliefs. Similar to Studies 2 and 3, this was followed by the group-based guilt and shame measures. In this study, we have also distinguished among two types of shame, that is, moral and image shame.

2 | STUDY 1

To provide some preliminary indications for the associations between group-based guilt, shame and ITG, we referred to data from an existing nationwide survey, previously conducted by the third author. The survey was conducted between September 2014 and November 2014 in two waves of measurement.[2] We examined the data to find first indications of whether ITG would be associated with feelings of guilt and shame after people were exposed to an event that presented the group in a negative way and challenged the group's positive self-image.

2.1 | Method

2.1.1 | Participants

The sample included 210 Jewish-Israelis (M_{age} = 38.24, SD_{age} = 12.25, 116 men) contacted through the survey company Midgam Project (MP) to participate in an online study in exchange for monetary compensation. This was a subsample of the 984 participants that took part in this nationally representative study, that were exposed to materials that were relevant to the purposes of the present study. In terms of political orientation, 50.4% of the participants defined themselves as rightist, 30.5% as centrist, and 19.1% as leftist. In this study, the data were based on a representative sample that matched the Jewish-Israeli society in terms of age, socioeconomic status, religiosity, and political orientation (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

2.1.2 | Procedure and measures

In the first wave of this survey, participants' ITG was assessed using a 4-item scale (Halperin et al., 2011) asking participants to indicate their agreement (on a scale ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 6 = *very much*)

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[2]Data were collected as part of a larger study, conducted by the third author of the current manuscript, that included an additional wave of measurement and several dozens of measures, which focused on emotions in conflicts, and their underlying motivations. For complete information about the study materials, see the online Appendix.

with four statements (e.g., "Every group or nation has basic moral values and beliefs that can't be significantly changed," "As much as I hate to admit it, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. Groups can't really change their basic characteristics," "Groups can do things differently, but the important parts of who they are can't really be changed," and "Groups that are characterized by violent and extreme tendencies will never change their ways"), assessing the extent to which participants believed that groups have a fixed inherent nature (α = .89). In the second wave of measurement, participants were asked to read an article that challenged the group's positive self-image, depicting a real incident in which four Palestinian children (aged 9–12) were killed by an Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) aerial attack during the 2014 operation in the Gaza Strip, Operation Protective Edge. The report also included quotes from eyewitnesses and the bereaved families, as well as a number of images of the incident and a bereaved mother. Participants were then asked to rate their agreement with various items including five items measuring guilt (e.g., "When I think about the four children that were killed, I feel guilty about the IDF actions," "I personally feel responsible for the death of the four children," "I think that Israel should feel responsible for the four children's death," "Israel should feel guilty for the way it attacked the Gaza beach," and "In general, I tend to feel guilty about Israel's actions toward Palestinians"; α = .86) and one item measuring shame (i.e., "I feel shame for Israel's actions toward the Palestinians"). The materials for all the four studies in the current research were approved by The Interdisciplinary Center's Review Board and all participants completed an online consent form. (for complete information about the materials used in all of the studies, see the online Appendix).

2.2 | Results and discussion

In line with our hypotheses, ITG was correlated with guilt (r = −.39, p < .001) and shame (r = −.33, p < .001), such that the more participants believed that groups had a fixed inherent nature (i.e., high entity), the less guilt and shame they felt. The findings provide initial corroboration for a link between ITG and levels of group-based guilt and shame.

3 | STUDY 2

Given that in Study 1 we did not measure meta-ITG, and according to the initial indications from the analysis of these data, in Study 2 we wanted to better understand the underlying process that can explain the correlations found in the first study. Furthermore, we sought to examine the hypothesized moderating effect of meta-ITG on the relationships between ITG and group-based guilt and shame. We predicted that meta-ITG would moderate the relationship between ITG and shame but would not do the same for guilt, which would be predicted solely by ITG, similar to Study 1. Furthermore, we hypothesized that individuals' meta-ITG belief that groups cannot change (i.e., high meta-entity) would be associated with high levels of shame regardless of their ITG beliefs. Whereas, for individuals who hold meta-ITG beliefs

that groups can change (i.e., low meta-entity), levels of shame would be associated with ITG. Specifically, individuals who believe that groups can change (i.e., low entity) will experience more shame compared to individuals who believe that groups cannot change (i.e., high entity). In order to examine these hypotheses, we used a correlational design in which ITG, meta-ITG, group-based guilt and shame were measured in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

3.1 | Method

3.1.1 | Participants

One hundred and ten Jewish-Israeli participants (M_{age} = 43.70, SD_{age} = 14.15, 63 women) were recruited from various cities in Israel and responded to an online questionnaire on a volunteer basis. We used a snowballing technique to sample participants, such that we published an ad for the research on a wide variety of online platforms, and also asked participants to forward the request to participate in the current research to other people. In terms of political orientation, 27.3% of the participants defined themselves as rightist, 31.8% as centrist, and 40.9% as leftist.

3.1.2 | Procedure and measures

Participants were informed that they were participating in a study that ostensibly examined the effects of different means of delivering of news contents on public attitudes regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in general, and, more specifically, about the Israeli Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip. After consenting to participate, participants first completed the ITG measure using the same items as in Study 1 (Goldenberg et al., 2018; Halperin et al., 2011; α = .89), and a 3-item meta-ITG measure, which was developed for the purposes of the current study (i.e., "To what extent would you say that people generally think that groups have stable and fixed features?," "To what extent would you say that people think in general that groups are bad in nature?" and "To what extent would you say that people generally think that when a group hurts another group, it can be attributed to constant features of the group"; α = .59).

Participants were then exposed to the same article as in Study 1, with minor modifications,[3] which was followed by five reading comprehension questions to boost the reliability of the cover story. Participants were then asked to answer the same 5-item guilt measure as in Study 1 (α = .85) and an extended 5-item measure for shame (i.e., "I tend to feel ashamed when I recall specific Israeli actions committed against the Palestinians, that are perceived as immoral," "Given that I did not do anything wrong, I do not feel ashamed for the behavior of

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[3]Since the guilt and shame means were relatively low in the preliminary study, we revised the article by adding an additional paragraph at the end stating that an internal army investigation had found that there were strong indications that the aerial attack had been unlawful.

Jewish-Israelis toward the Palestinians," "I feel bad because of Israel's action during the last operation in Gaza which harmed Israel's reputation in the eyes of the world," "Immoral acts committed in the past against the Palestinians reflect negative aspects about the culture and heritage of the State of Israel" and "When I think about how other people may see or think about my group, I feel ashamed"; α = .72). After participants completed the study, they were thanked and debriefed.

3.2 | Results and discussion

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among research variables are presented in Table 1. As predicted, results revealed an association between ITG and guilt, such that the more participants believed that groups cannot change (i.e., high entity), the less guilt they felt (r = −.29, p = .002). Results also demonstrated that the association between ITG and shame was not significant (r = −.13, p = .161). Furthermore, results revealed an association between ITG and meta-ITG, such that the more participants believed that groups cannot change (i.e., high entity), the more they believed that other people think that groups cannot change as well (i.e., high meta-entity) (r = .21, p = .028). Even though these two variables were related, they were only weakly correlated, which reduces suspicion for multicollinearity. Finally, the association between meta-ITG and guilt (r = .15, p = .110) was not significant, and the association between meta-ITG and shame was marginally significant (r = .18, p = .059), such that the more participants believed that other people think groups cannot change (i.e., high meta-ITG), they tended to feel more shame.

To examine our predictions regarding the interactive effect of ITG and meta-ITG on guilt, we used the PROCESS macro for moderation analysis (Hayes, 2013; Model 1). The analysis revealed a significant main effect of ITG on guilt (b = −.44, SE = .11, $t(109)$ = −3.73, p < .001, 95% confidence interval (CI) = [−.68, −.20]), such that the more participants believed that groups have a fixed inherent nature (i.e., high entity), the less guilt they felt. Furthermore, we found a significant main effect of meta-ITG on guilt (b = .38, SE = .15, $t(109)$ = 2.54, p = .012, 95% CI = [.08, .68]), such that, unexpectedly, the more participants believed that other people think that groups cannot change (i.e., high meta-entity), the more guilt they felt. Finally, the interaction between ITG and meta-ITG on guilt was not significant (b = .07, SE = .10, $t(109)$ = .68, p = .496, 95% CI = [−.13, .27]).

Interestingly, when examining our prediction regarding the interactive effect of ITG and meta-ITG on shame, using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro (Model 1), we found a different pattern of results. The analysis revealed a marginally significant main effect of ITG on shame (b = −.22, SE = .11, $t(109)$ = −1.89, p = .060, 95% CI = [−.45, .01]), such that the more participants believed that groups have a fixed inherent nature (i.e., high entity), the less shame they felt. We also found a significant main effect of meta-ITG on sham (b = .41, SE = .14, $t(109)$ = 2.81, p = .005, 95% CI = [.12, .71]), such that the more participants believed that other people think that groups cannot change (i.e., high meta-entity), the more shame they felt. More importantly, the analysis revealed the predicated ITG × meta-ITG interaction (b = .21, SE = .10, $t(109)$ = 2.05, p = .042, 95% CI = [.00, .41]) (see Figure 1). To interpret this interaction, we used simple slopes analysis (Aiken & West, 1991). Meta-ITG was fixed at + 1 SD, indicating high meta-entity, and −1 SD, indicating low meta-entity. In line with our prediction, when examining the high meta-entitists, this simple slope was not significant (b = −.03, SE = .14, $t(109)$ = −.23, p = .817, 95% CI = [−.33, .26]). Whereas, for the low meta-entitists, ITG was associated with levels of shame, such that the more participants held an entity belief, the less shame they felt (b = −.41, SE = .14, $t(109)$ = −2.77, p = .006, 95% CI = [−.70, −.11]).

The results of the study show that the relationship between ITG and shame is moderated by meta-ITG. In line with our prediction, participants who hold the meta-ITG belief that groups cannot change (i.e., high meta-entitists) experienced high levels of shame, unrelated to their own belief in-groups' ability to change. Whereas, for the low meta-entitists, who tend to believe that groups can change, the level of shame was associated with their ITG belief. In the case of guilt, however, results demonstrated that this emotion was associated almost entirely with the personal belief in-group malleability. Furthermore, we unexpectedly found that the more participants believed that other people think that groups cannot change (i.e., high meta-entity), the more guilt they felt. Perhaps the meta-ITG beliefs that groups cannot change were associated with the belief that group behavior is innate. Because group-based guilt is experienced as a result of an action that is perceived as illegitimate, and there is no threat to the group's social image, this belief in turn was associated with a feeling of guilt. Finally, a main limitation of Study 2 was

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. ITG	3.49	1.07	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
2. Meta-ITG	3.87	.88	.21*	1	–	–	–	–	–
3. Guilt	2.51	1.40	−.30**	.15	1	–	–	–	–
4. Shame	3.39	1.34	−.13	.18	.70**	1	–	–	–
5. Gender	–	–	.03	−.00	.10	.01	1	–	–
6. Age	43.70	14.15	.09	−.15	.13	.16	−.10	1	–
7. Political orientation	4.12	1.21	−.44**	.09	.50**	.50**	.05	.23*	1

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between research variables in Study 2
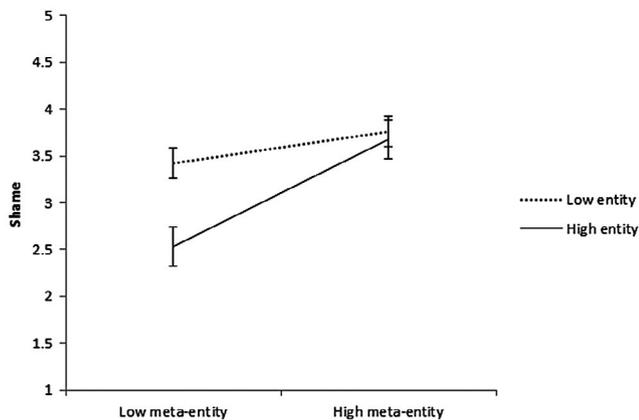
*p < .05; **p < .01.

FIGURE 1 The effect of ITG on shame as a function of meta-ITG in Study 2. Error bars represent SEs

its correlational nature, precluding the ability to establish causality. This led us to conduct a third study in which we aimed to examine the same questions, this time using an experimental design.

4 | STUDY 3

The goal of Study 3 was to replicate the findings of Study 2, to establish causality using an experimental design, and to better distinguish between the conceptually related constructs of ITG and meta-ITG. To do so, we first measured participants' ITG beliefs, and then, three months later, manipulated participants' meta-ITG (i.e., made participants believe that other people think that groups have either a fixed or malleable nature). Finally, we measured group-based guilt and shame, all within a context similar to the ones used in the first two studies.

4.1 | Method

4.1.1 | Participants

One hundred and twenty-three Jewish-Israeli students (M_{age} = 22.36, SD_{age} = 2.37, 100 women)[4] completed a questionnaire in exchange for course credit. In terms of political orientation, 41.1% of the participants defined themselves as rightist, 35.5% as centrist, and 23.4% as leftist.

4.1.2 | Procedure and measures

Three months before the experimental part of the study, participants completed the same four-item ITG measure (α = .87), as part of a general background questionnaire each new psychology student must fill out at the beginning of the academic year. Then, as part of the

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[4]The reason for the difference between the number of men and women in this sample is the skewed gender distribution at the School of Psychology in which the study was conducted.

experimental part of the study, after participants consented to take part in it, they were randomly assigned to either the meta-incremental or the meta-entity conditions, which were followed by all other measures.

At the beginning of the experimental part of the study, participants were told that they would take part in two short and unrelated experiments. In the first part, the cover story was similar to the one we used in Study 2, while the second experiment included an ostensibly unrelated questionnaire assessing participants' attitudes regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Participants were then instructed to read a short text, supposedly depicting a series of studies on social issues, conducted by several researchers from various universities all over the world. In the meta-entity condition, participants read a text indicating that the studies found that people generally believe that groups have a fixed inherent nature. Whereas in the meta-incremental condition, the studies found that people generally believe that group conduct is contextualized and therefore can change over time. All participants then answered two reading comprehension questions to bolster the credibility of the cover story. Next, participants answered the 3-item meta-ITG measure that was used in Study 2, which in the current study served as a manipulation check (α = .84). In the supposed second study, similar to Study 2, participants were then presented with the same article that challenged the in-group's positive self-image, and then proceeded to complete the rest of the measures. We used shortened versions of scales used in Study 2, with a 3-item scale to assess guilt (α = .84), and a 3-item scale to assess shame (α = .67). At the end of the study, participants were thanked and debriefed.

4.2 | Results and discussion

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among research variables are presented in Table 2. Results revealed associations between ITG and guilt (r = −.30, p = .001), and between ITG and shame (r = −.27, p = .002), such that the more the participants believed that groups cannot change (i.e., high entity), the less guilt and shame they felt. In order to confirm random assignment in terms of participants' ITG scores, we conducted an independent sample t-test. Results revealed that there was no difference on ITG levels between the meta-entity (M = 3.79, SD = .98) and the meta-incremental conditions (M = 3.67, SD = 1.16, $t(122)$ = .61, p = .542, Cohen's d = .11). In addition, to examine whether our manipulation was effective, we conducted a second independent sample t-test. The results showed that the manipulation had a significant effect on participants' meta-ITG: Participants in the meta-entity condition, reported higher levels of meta-entitist beliefs (M = 4.26, SD = 1.01) than those in the meta-incremental condition (M = 2.53, SD = 1.00, $t(122)$ = 9.46, p < .001, Cohen's d = 1.72).

We then used the PROCESS macro for moderation analysis (Hayes, 2013; Model 1), to examine our prediction regarding the interactive effect of ITG and the meta-ITG manipulation on levels of guilt. Similar to the results of Study 2, the analysis revealed a significant main

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. ITG	3.73	1.06	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
2. Meta-ITG	3.42	1.32	−.13	1	–	–	–	–	–
3. Guilt	2.56	1.37	−.30**	−.18*	1	–	–	–	–
4. Shame	3.63	1.38	−.27**	.−.12	.76**	1	–	–	–
5. Gender	–	–	.018	.−.03	−.09	.04	1	–	–
6. Age	22.36	2.37	−.11	.06	.15	.10	−.26**	1	–
7. Political orientation	3.66	1.20	−.39**	−.20	.57**	.57**	−.13	.19*	1

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between research variables in Study 3

*p < .05; **p < .01.

effect of ITG on guilt (b = −.38, SE = .11, t(122) = −3.35, p = .001, 95% CI = [−.60, −.15]), such that the more participants believed that groups have a fixed inherent nature (i.e., high entity), the less guilt they felt. However, we did not find a significant main effect for the manipulation on guilt (b = .20, SE = .23, t(122) = .82, p = .412, 95% CI = [−.27, .66]) or a significant interaction between ITG and the meta-ITG manipulation (b = .01, SE = .22, t(122) = .05, p = .955, 95% CI = [−.43, .45]).

More importantly, we also examined our prediction, using Hayes' PROCESS macro, regarding the interactive effect of ITG and the meta-ITG manipulation on shame. The analysis largely replicated our findings from the previous study, such that it yielded a significant main effect of ITG on shame (b = −.39, SE = .11, t(122) = −3.40, p < .001, 95% CI = [−.61, −.16]), meaning the more participants believed that groups have a fixed inherent nature (i.e., high entity), the less shame they felt. However, the effect for the manipulation on shame was nonsignificant (b = .19, SE = .23, t(122) = .79, p = .427, 95% CI = [−.28, .66]). More importantly, we found a marginally significant interaction between ITG and the meta-ITG manipulation (b = .41, SE = .22, t(122) = 1.83, p = .069, 95% CI = [−.03, .86], see Figure 2). In line with our prediction, and corresponding to the findings in Study 2, when participants were led to believe that other people think that groups cannot change (i.e., the meta-entity condition), ITG was not associated with shame (b = −.17, SE = .14, t(122) = −1.16, p = .246, 95% CI = [−.46, .12]). Whereas, when they were made to believe that other people think that groups can change (i.e., the meta-incremental condition), ITG did predict levels of shame, such that the more participants thought that groups cannot change (i.e., high entity), the less shame they felt (b = −.58, SE = .17, t(122) = −3.44, p < .001, 95% CI = [−.92, −.25]).

The results of Study 3 provided additional causal support for the model we presented. Replicating our results from Study 2, we did not find that the manipulation had a moderating effect on the relationship between ITG and guilt. However, we did find a causal, marginally significant, moderating effect of meta-ITG on the relationship between ITG and shame. In order to strengthen our argument and justify ITG and meta-ITG as two distinct constructs, we conducted Study 4 in which we manipulated ITG beliefs and assessed meta-ITG beliefs. Another issue that we aimed to address in Study 4 involves the conceptualization of shame. In the past few years, researchers have begun to argue that shame, as a moral emotion, is composed of two distinct but related factors, that is, moral shame and image shame (e.g., Allpress, Barlow, Brown, & Louis, 2010; Gausel et al., 2016). We assumed that
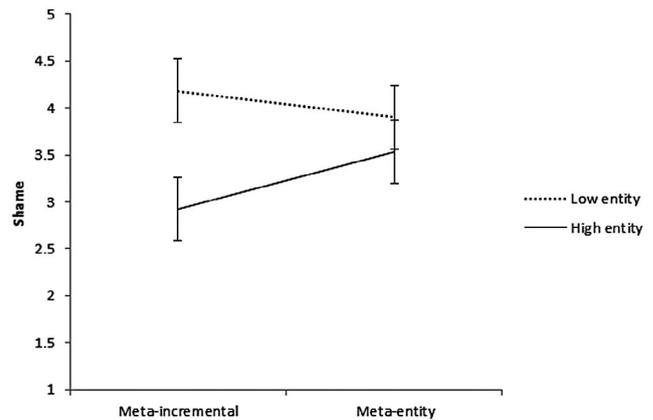

FIGURE 2 The effect of ITG on shame as a function of the manipulation of meta-ITG in Study 3. Error bars represent SEs

this differentiation, as reviewed below, would be relevant to the current research. Indeed, although in Studies 2 and 3, our items measuring shame included both image and moral shame, at least in terms of their face validity, factor analyses we conducted did not show that these two constructs yielded different statistical factors (see the online Appendix). Thus, in the next study, we also wanted to better differentiate between the two types of shame, as we reasoned that this would also enrich our results and theoretical contribution.

5 | STUDY 4

The goal of Study 4 was to replicate the findings of our previous studies, but in a new context, that is, gender relations.[5] The context of gender relations has been receiving increased attention in recent decades, which has accelerated quite dramatically since the start of the #MeToo movement, among other things. Although very different from the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in various aspects, gender

[5]In the context of the original studies, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as the years have passed, the tension has increased, and the Israeli Jewish population has become increasingly hawkish. This is, for example, indicated by the decrease in the support for negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians through the years (The Peace Index, 2018). Since we wanted to increase the statistical power of our study, and in view of the developments taking place in our country since we ran the previous studies that consistently yielded low levels of measured group-based guilt and shame, we decided to focus on a new context.

relations are also characterized by asymmetrical power relations among the involved groups and increased tensions driven by discriminatory and unequal relations (e.g., Anisman-Razin, Kark, & Saguy, 2018; Levin, 2004; Wilson & Liu, 2003). Because of the growing discourse on this topic, we thought it would be important to understand the underlying mechanisms of group-based guilt and shame in this context.

Another goal of this study was to distinguish between the two components of shame as proposed in previous research (e.g., Allpress et al., 2014). This research has demonstrated that there is a component of shame that reflects concern for how the in-group is seen by others (i.e., image shame), and a component of shame that reflects a concern for the immorality of the in-group's action (i.e., moral shame) (e.g., Allpress et al., 2010). In image shame, the concern is solely with the image and reputation of the group, whereas in moral shame the threat is to a moral value that has high self-importance (Allpress et al., 2014). Gausel and Leach (2011), likewise, have argued that the traditional approach to studying shame is limited, as it conceptualizes shame merely as constituting a global sense of failure. Rather, Gausel and Leach (2011) have indeed found that shame also has positive outcomes and is motivated by a specific threat to the moral self-image. Initial evidence for these distinctions was provided by Allpress et al. (2010), who distinguished between moral shame, image shame and guilt. The results of their studies showed that while moral shame and guilt were positively associated with support for compensation, image shame was negatively associated with this pro-social outcome. Similar findings were found by Allpress and Brown (2012), who showed that image shame was associated with negative orientations toward the harmed out-group, whereas moral shame was associated with positive out-group orientations.

According to this theoretical framework, we predicted that the two components of shame would yield different patterns of results also in the context of our hypothesized model. We hypothesized that group-based guilt and moral shame would be predicted by ITG beliefs while, for image shame, meta-ITG would moderate the relations between the manipulation and this component of shame. Finally, our last goal was to examine the moderation effect of meta-ITG, but, in contrast to Study 3, when meta-ITG beliefs were measured before the manipulation. To achieve these goals, we first measured participants' meta-ITG beliefs, and 7 days later, manipulated participants' ITG beliefs (i.e., we made participants believe that groups have either a fixed or malleable nature). Finally, we measured group-based guilt and (image and moral) shame, all within the context of gender relationships.

5.1 | Method

5.1.1 | Participants

A sample of 196 participants was recruited online to take part in the study in exchange for payment from the survey company (MP). Of those recruited, 20 participants did not respond correctly to questions that examined reading comprehension of the manipulation text and therefore were excluded from the study. The final sample included 176 Jewish-Israeli men (M_{age} = 38.10, SD_{age} = 12.15). In terms of political orientation, 22.9% of the participants defined themselves as rightist, 32.5% as centrist, and 44.5% as leftist.

5.1.2 | Procedure and measures

In the first part of the survey, participants were told that they would answer a questionnaire designed to examine general perceptions regarding intergroup relations. Participants then completed an extended meta-ITG measure consisting of seven items, to increase the scale's reliability, as well as to better reflect the theoretical construct of meta-ITG (α = .78). To that end, we included items that measured meta-entity beliefs (i.e., "To what extent would you say that people generally think that when a group hurts another group, it can be attributed to constant features of the group?," "To what extent would you say that people generally think that groups cannot change their beliefs, attitudes, and behavior?," "To what extent would you say that people generally think that a group's behavior pattern is a constant characteristic?," "To what extent would you say that people generally think that groups have stable and fixed features?," "To what extent would you say that people generally think that groups cannot really change characteristics that are deeply rooted in their nature and culture?"), as well as a number of items that measured meta-incremental beliefs that were reverse coded (i.e., "To what extent would you say that people generally think that groups can change (that is, change their attitudes, beliefs, and behavior)?" and "To what extent would you say that people generally think that no matter what type of group (ethnic, political, religious, professional, and gender), groups can always change"?).

Seven days later, participants first consented to take part in the study and then were randomly assigned to either the incremental or the entity conditions. Similar to Study 3, at the beginning of the study, participants were told that they would take part in two short and unrelated experiments. Then, participants' ITG beliefs were manipulated. In the entity condition, participants read an article describing academic studies reporting that groups cannot change, since group behavior is derived from their fixed and deeply rooted character. Participants in the incremental condition read a text describing a study that revealed that groups can change, and that group behaviors should not be associated with fixed characteristics but should rather be explained by culture or social context (see Halperin et al., 2011).

Next, participants answered two reading comprehension questions about the article and completed the manipulation check assessing their implicit beliefs about groups using the same 4-item ITG scale used in previous studies (α = 90). Participants then proceeded to the next part, presented as a separate study, seemingly unrelated to the manipulation they had just read. In this part, participants were presented with an article, ostensibly taken from *ynet*, a leading mainstream online news source in Israel, dealing with sexual harassment of women by men in the workplace. The report also included quotes by women

who had experienced verbal and behavioral sexual harassment. Participants were then asked to rate their agreement with various items including six items measuring guilt (e.g., "As a man, I feel guilty about the sexual harassment and humiliation that women experience at the workplace" and "As a man, I personally feel responsible for the sexual harassment and humiliation women experience at the workplace"; α = .85), three items measuring moral shame (i.e., "I tend to feel ashamed when I think about the sexual harassment and humiliation women experience by men," "Since I've done nothing wrong, I don't feel shame over the sexual harassment and humiliation women experience by men," and "I don't feel shame about being a man when I think of the sexual harassment and humiliation women experience by men"; α = .74), and one item directly measuring image shame[6] (i.e., "Sexual acts of men toward women are indicative of all men as a group"). After completing the survey, participants were thanked and debriefed.

5.2 | Results and discussion

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among research variables are presented in Table 3. First, in order to confirm random assignment in terms of participants' meta-ITG scores, we conducted an independent sample t-test. Results revealed that there was no difference between the incremental condition (M = 4.08, SD = .72) and the entity condition (M = 4.02, SD = .71; $t(174)$ = .50, p = .625, Cohen's d = .08). In addition, to examine whether our manipulation was effective, we conducted a second independent samples t-test. The results showed that the manipulation had a significant effect on participants' ITG beliefs: Participants in the entity condition, reported higher levels of entitist beliefs (M = 3.44, SD = 1.16) than those in the incremental condition (M = 2.78, SD = 1.04; $t(174)$ = 3.92, p < .001, Cohen's d = .60).

We then used the PROCESS macro for moderation analysis (Hayes, 2013; Model 1), to examine our prediction regarding the interactive effect of the ITG manipulation and meta-ITG on levels of guilt. Unlike the results in Studies 2 and 3, we did not find a significant main effect of ITG on guilt (b = −.14, SE = .20, $t(174)$ = −.72, p = .468, 95% CI = [−.53, .24]). However, we did find a significant main effect for meta-ITG on guilt (b = −.34, SE = .13, $t(174)$ = −2.48, p = .014, 95% CI = [−.61, −.07]), such that the more participants believed that other people think that groups cannot change (i.e., high meta-entity), the less guilt they felt. Finally, the interaction between the manipulation and meta-ITG was also not significant (b = −.06, SE = .28, $t(174)$ = −.23, p = .814, 95% CI = [−.61, .48]).

Interestingly, when examining our prediction regarding the different patterns of results between the two components of shame, we found a pattern similar to guilt when analyzing moral shame. Using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro (Model 1), we did not find a significant main effect of ITG on moral shame (b = −.26, SE = .22, $t(174)$ = −1.16, p = .244, 95% CI = [−.70, .17]). However, similar to guilt, we did find a significant main effect of meta-ITG on moral shame (b = −.42, SE = .15, $t(174)$ = −2.79, p = .005, 95% CI = [−.73, −.12]), such that the more participants believed that other people think that groups cannot change (i.e., high meta-entity), the less moral shame they felt. In addition, the interaction between the manipulation and meta-ITG on moral shame was not significant (b = −.25, SE = .30, $t(174)$ = −.82, p = .408, 95% CI = [−.86, .35]).

Finally, we examined our prediction, using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro, regarding the different pattern of results for image shame. We did not find a significant main effect for the manipulation (b = .38, SE = .26, $t(174)$ = 1.42, p = .155, 95% CI = [−.14, .88]) nor a significant main effect for meta-ITG (b = −.14, SE = .18, $t(174)$ = .80, p = .421, 95% CI = [−.50, .21]) on image shame. More importantly, and in line with our prediction, we did find a marginally significant interaction between meta-ITG and the manipulation (b = .64, SE = .36, $t(174)$ = 1.80, p = .074, 95% CI = [−.07, 1.36], see Figure 3). To interpret this interaction, we used simple slopes analysis (Aiken & West, 1991). When participants believed that other people think that groups cannot change (i.e., high meta-entity), ITG predicted levels of image shame, such that in the entity condition participants felt more image shame (b = .83, SE = .37, $t(174)$ = 2.26, p = .025, 95% CI = [.10, 1.56]) compared to the incremental condition. For participants who believed that other people think that groups can change (i.e., low meta-entity), ITG did not significantly predict image shame (b = −.09, SE = .36, $t(174)$ = −.26, p = .791, 95% CI = [−.82, .62]).

The results of Study 4 showed that group-based guilt and moral shame were associated with meta-ITG beliefs. Specifically, participants who believed that other people think that groups cannot change (meta-entitists) experienced high levels of guilt and moral shame. In addition, the results demonstrated that meta-ITG beliefs had a marginally significant moderating effect on the association between the manipulation and image shame. Specifically, when participants believed that other people think that groups cannot change (meta-entitists), ITG predicted levels of image shame, such that in the entity condition participants felt more shame compared to the incremental condition. When participants were meta-incrementalists, and thus were more prone to believe that other people think that groups can change, the ITG manipulation did not significantly affect image shame.

The results of the study clearly show the difference between the two components of shame as would be expected based on the literature (e.g., Allpress et al., 2010, 2014; Gausel & Leach, 2011). In line with our prediction, we found that meta-ITG moderated the relations between ITG and image shame in a new intergroup context. However, in the case of guilt and moral shame we unexpectedly found that these moral emotions were predicted by meta-ITG beliefs rather than by ITG. According to Allpress et al. (2014), unlike in cases of interpersonal transgressions, where an individual has

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[6]In Study 4, to measure image shame we used additional items that we eventually did not use in the final analysis. We realized that in order to threat the image of men as a group, we had to explicitly remind men of their gender-based group membership. Otherwise, men were able to distance themselves from the threat that would likely be evoked by the article they were requested to read on sexual harassment of women by reducing the saliency of their association with the morally questionable in-group (see Knowles, Lowery, Chow, & Unzueta, 2014). This insight led us to drop all items that did not directly refer to that group membership, and this is presumably why, in Studies 2 and 3, our shame items could not be distinguished into two separate factors and loaded to a single factor.

TABLE 3 Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between research variables in Study 4

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. ITG	3.08	1.14	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2. Meta-ITG	4.05	.81	.12	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
3. Guilt	3.14	1.33	.04	−.18*	1	–	–	–	–	–
4. Image shame	3.31	1.72	.11	.06	.27**	1	–	–	–	–
5. Moral shame	4.03	1.48	−.06	−.20**	.58**	.21**	1	–	–	–
6. Gender	–	–	−.07	−.19**	.10	−.01	.08	1	–	–
7. Age	38.10	12.1	.15*	.03	−.06	.10	.02	−.08	1	–
8. Political orientation	4.24	1.21	−.14	.15	.04	−.05	.04	.05	−.05	1

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.
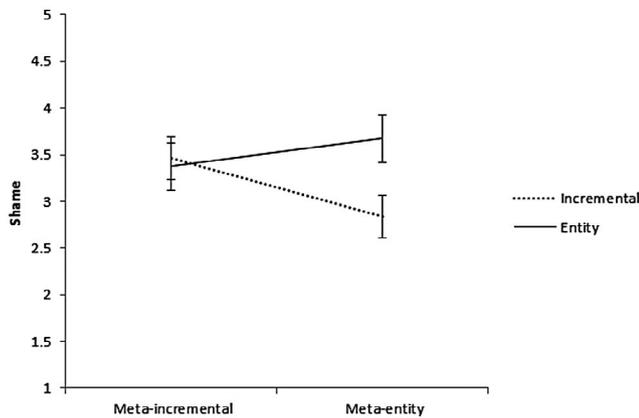
FIGURE 3 The effect of the manipulation of ITG on image shame as a function of meta-ITG in Study 4. Error bars represent SEs

done something that violates accepted moral values and norms, and thus feels guilt and moral shame, an individual is less likely to feel responsible for an offense committed by other members of his/her group. Therefore, the reduced sense of personal responsibility for the misdeed may have weakened the effect of ITG on group-based guilt. Another possible explanation refers to the effect of the manipulation in the current study. In Study 3, the manipulation seemed to have a great effect, at least as indicated by the manipulation check, that is, meta-ITG beliefs (Cohen's $d = 1.72$). However, in Study 4, the effect of the manipulation was only medium in size, as indicated by the manipulation check, that is, ITG beliefs (Cohen's $d = .60$), and consequently less affected our main DVs. In the general discussion, we will discuss the inconsistent findings with regard to the relations between meta-ITG and guilt.

Although the results of this study did not fully replicate our previous studies, they illuminate and enhance our findings, and contribute to the research on the nuanced differentiation between the two forms of shame. Specifically, one reason why in the previous studies we did not find that ITG had an effect on those who were meta-entitists may have stemmed from the fact that our measures of shame were a mixture of items of both moral shame and image shame, as also indicated by the relatively low Cronbach's alpha obtained for the group-based shame measures in Studies 2 and 3. This may have

diluted the link we did find in Study 4 and interfered with the statistical power of these analyses. Finally, it should also be noted that Study 4 was conducted in a new context, which increases the external validity of our theoretical argument.

6 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this research was to expand our understanding of the underlying mechanisms of group-based guilt and shame in the context of intergroup conflict. The four studies presented in the article provide evidence suggesting that guilt, image shame, and moral shame, are distinct group-based emotions within the context of intergroup conflicts. Our findings from the first three studies indicated that guilt was predicted solely by ITG beliefs, whereas levels of shame were predicted by an interaction of ITG beliefs and meta-ITG beliefs. In Study 4, we expanded these results by demonstrating that the two forms of shame could be distinguished, and also have different patterns of relations with ITG and meta-ITG. These findings correspond to Allpress et al. (2010) who argued that there is a component of shame that reflects a concern for how the in-group is seen by others (i.e., image shame), and another component of shame that reflects a concern for the immorality of the in-group's actions (i.e., moral shame). Applying this theoretical framework to our analysis showed that moral shame has a similar pattern of results to guilt in that it was predicted solely by meta-ITG. While image shame was predicted by an interaction of meta-ITG and ITG, similar to Studies 2 and 3.

These findings have important theoretical and practical implications. On the theoretical level, the current research contributes to the implicit theories literature. Specifically, the extant literature on implicit theories on the interpersonal level (Schumann & Dweck, 2014) has examined the relationship between implicit theories and acknowledgment of responsibility, which is a crucial predictor for experiencing guilt and shame (e.g., Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2011; Imhoff, Bilewicz, & Erb, 2012; Mallett & Swim, 2007). The current research is the first to examine relations between implicit theories, guilt, and shame in the context of intergroup conflicts. In other words, the current research has shifted from the cognitive appraisal

of acknowledgment of responsibility to the experience of emotions and has examined the implicit theories literature in the field of group-based emotions. The present research builds on work conducted by Halperin et al. (2011), who introduced the concept of ITG beliefs to the domain of intergroup conflict. In the current research we applied this idea, but this time with regard to the moral emotions of guilt and shame. In addition, Halperin, his colleagues, and the extant literature on group malleability assume, whether explicitly or implicitly, that ITG beliefs are directed at the out-group (see e.g., Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Saguy, & van Zomeren, 2013; Goldenberg et al., 2018). The results of the present study, however, indicate that in some cases ITG and meta-ITG beliefs may be directed at the in-group as well.

Another meaningful theoretical contribution of the current research is the development of a new construct termed meta-ITG, that is, the perception of individuals regarding others' perceptions about the possibility of groups to change. We found meta-ITG to be an important factor in the degree to which individuals experience group-based moral emotions. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time that meta-ITG beliefs have been examined in the context of intergroup conflicts. Our findings also provide a more nuanced understanding of the different predictors of group-based guilt, and the two components of group-based shame. Specifically, there was a moderating effect for meta-ITG beliefs on the association between ITG and image shame, while levels of group-based guilt and moral shame were predicted by either ITG (Studies 2 and 3) or meta-ITG beliefs (Study 4).

This nuanced understanding also has implications for practitioners and researchers who intend to develop interventions to promote better intergroup relations. Previous research (e.g., Goldenberg et al., 2018; Halperin et al., 2011) has shown that beliefs about group malleability can be manipulated, even in contexts of violent, long-term intergroup conflicts. This is, indeed, a promising practical intervention that could be applied in different contexts of intergroup conflicts, which could potentially increase in-group members' willingness to make reparations for past wrongdoings, and support conciliatory actions required for positive intergroup relations. The current results imply that in some cases, rather than just using a group malleability intervention as was done in previous research, a sequence of an intervention targeting meta-ITG beliefs followed by the previously established malleability interventions would be more useful. Specifically, because ITG increases levels of group-based guilt, and to a certain extent, moral shame, as we found in the current research, we suggest that future interventions should focus on fostering an incremental mindset rather than concentrating on individuals' meta-ITG beliefs, in order to improve intergroup relations and conflict resolution. However, the current research also showed that this effect of ITG on guilt and moral shame could be hindered if people have a high level of meta-entity beliefs, which could in turn lead to the arousal of image shame. Thus, to lead to increased levels of guilt and moral shame also among individuals with high meta-entity beliefs, researchers and practitioners might try to target these individuals with messages that induce a meta-incremental belief

prior to the group malleability intervention that was utilized in previous research (Goldenberg et al., 2018; Halperin et al., 2011).

Despite these important implications, the present research is not without limitations. First, the present studies were conducted among members of the more powerful side in two asymmetrical intergroup conflicts. Future research is needed to examine whether similar, or perhaps even a more pronounced pattern of results can be obtained among low power group members. Based on previous literature on power (see e.g., Rucker, Galinsky, & Magee, 2018), it is reasonable to assume that low (vs. high) power individuals will be more concerned about evaluations of others of the self—in our case, meta-ITG—as they are more dependent on, and need to rely on others to achieve their goals. Second, it is important to note that in Studies 3 and 4, we manipulated only one independent variable while measuring the second independent variable. The reason for not manipulating both ITG and meta-ITG beliefs simultaneously is that sequential manipulations are likely to facilitate hypothesis awareness and thus the possibility of demand characteristics (cf. Wohl et al., 2015). It should also be noted that, while we have done our best to make participants think that our experimental studies were in fact comprised of two separate studies, unfortunately, we have no way of knowing whether the participants believed this or not, as we did not assess it directly.

Furthermore, we measured the ITG and meta-ITG scales in Studies 2 and 3 using items that in fact measure entity and meta-entity beliefs, as we based our items on previous research, conducted in context of intergroup conflicts (e.g., Halperin et al., 2011, 2012). Consequently, one may argue, that low means on the meta-ITG scale only corresponds to a belief that other people think that groups do not have a fixed and inherent nature (i.e., low meta-entity), and that this is irrespective of what other people think regarding the possibility of groups to change (i.e., high meta-incremental). Although this explanation is possible, previous research argues that these two implicit theories are two sides of the same continuum (see Schumann & Dweck, 2014). However, in order to address this potential limitation, in Study 4 we created a more comprehensive meta-ITG scale that included two items that assessed meta-incremental beliefs, rather than solely meta-entity beliefs as in the previous studies. We reverse coded these items to create a single scale that served as our moderator, which, as mentioned, yielded an adequate reliability index.

It should also be noted that we decided to assess people's meta-beliefs in general, rather than meta-beliefs about the malleability of a specific group, as we based our items on previous research that measured ITG using generally phrased items (e.g., Goldenberg et al., 2018; Halperin et al., 2011, 2012). We reasoned that when our participants considered other people's perceptions about the possibility of groups to change, they would tend to assume that these meta-perceptions were directed at their in-group. This was based on the notion that people tend to be profoundly egocentric in social interactions, focusing on themselves and how they are evaluated by others (Gilovich, Medvec, & Savitsky, 2000; Zuckerman, Kernis, Guarnera, Murphy, & Rappoport, 1983). In turn, the desire to manage how others perceive them affects individuals' thoughts, feelings,

and behavior (Baumeister, 1982; Leary & Downs, 1995). We believe that future studies could investigate how these meta-beliefs regarding a specific group influence intergroup processes and, in particular, the arousal of moral emotions.

We hope that the development of the meta-ITG construct will foster further research. For example, future research could test whether meta-ITG is associated with positive group-based emotions, such as pride. Because meta-ITG beliefs are associated with the in-group's image, meta-entity beliefs may possibly be associated with high levels of pride following a positive action carried out by the group. As research has found that inducing pride may increase group-based guilt (Schori-Eyal, Reifen Tagar, Saguy, & Halperin, 2015), this might be an interesting and somewhat counterintuitive avenue for intervention. Moreover, future work could also test the relationship between meta-ITG beliefs and the perception of motivation for change. Cohen-Chen (2016) has shown that it is important to consider perceptions of whether the enemy group is motivated to change in order to induce hope for the peaceful ending of the conflict. One plausible hypothesis would be that if individuals hold meta-entitist beliefs, they will also be more inclined to believe that other groups have low motivation for change.

Another interesting future avenue for research concerns the role of group identification in defensive reactions and attempt to avoid feelings of guilt and shame following a transgression committed by their in-group (Lickel et al., 2011). Potentially, a straightforward hypothesis would be that identification will moderate the effect of ITG on experience of group-based guilt, such that incremental beliefs will lead to experiencing less guilt among individuals who also highly identify with the group. Interestingly, when considering the effects of meta-ITG on experiencing group-based shame, one potential less intuitive hypothesis would be that meta-entity beliefs indeed lead to higher levels of experienced shame, but that this in turn will lead to a decrease in identification (cf. Kessler & Hollbach, 2005). These, and other valuable questions and hypotheses await further examination.

In the current research we obtained inconsistent findings regarding the relations between meta-ITG and guilt. We argue that one potential reason for this stems from the degree of closeness and familiarity our participants experienced toward the out-groups, that are associated with the different contexts in which the studies were conducted. This sense of closeness, in turn, influenced meta-ITG and ITG beliefs, which were associated with group-based guilt. It is likely that because Jewish-Israeli participants do not see Palestinians on a personal and direct level, they felt more guilt when they believed that Palestinians think groups cannot change. However, in Study 4, it is likely that the male participants experienced less guilt when they held meta-entity beliefs, due to the constant interaction they have with women. We had no clear hypothesis about the relations between meta-ITG and guilt and believe that this should be further examined in future research.

It should be noted that in the current research we have highlighted the constructive consequences of guilt as it frequently appears in previous studies (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2011, 2016; Lickel et al., 2011), but this should be treated with caution in light of this emotion's complexity, which involves a potential downside. This potential disadvantage is that, in many cases, the emotional reaction of guilt does not help to improve relationships between groups (e.g., Imhoff et al., 2012). For example, Miron, Branscombe, and Schmitt (2006) have shown that the positive consequences of guilt (e.g., increasing motivation to make amends or to apologize), are in fact driven by the self-focused motivation (i.e., distress reduction) and therefore not motivated by deep empathic concern for the victim group.

In the current work we chose to focus on group-based guilt and shame, because we thought that the belief in group malleability and the potential threat to the group's image would likely be potential antecedents to group-based guilt and shame. In future studies it would be interesting to examine other potential moral emotions that have positive implications for intergroup conflicts. For example, research from the past few years suggests that a more positive view of the out-group and greater openness to future contact are associated with regret (e.g., Imhoff et al., 2012). This emotion resembles empathic concern, that is, the result of taking the other's perspective (Batson, 2009) and does not depend on the degree of responsibility taken, which is a precondition for guilt (Imhoff et al., 2012).

In summary, the belief about malleability of groups has been examined in a vast array of domains, including as a means of intervention in the context of intergroup conflicts (e.g., Cohen-Chen, Crisp, & Halperin, 2015; Halperin et al., 2011; Wohl et al., 2015). However, less attention has been devoted to the relations between implicit theories and moral emotions, such as guilt and shame. We believe that the present research adds an important layer to the existing literature on moral emotions, and specifically guilt and shame, in contexts of intergroup conflicts by offering a better understanding of their underlying mechanisms. Importantly, the current research also points at the critical role of individuals' implicit theories in inducing guilt and moral shame following a transgression. We hope that the current research will serve as a theoretical basis for future interventions aimed at increasing levels of guilt and moral shame and their positive consequences, which may foster better intergroup relations.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship or the publication of this article.

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