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The Evocation of Moral Emotions in Intergroup Contexts

The Distinction Between Collective Guilt and Collective Shame

Brian Lickel, Toni Schmader, and Marchelle Barquissau

Conflict, in many cases extending to war, genocide, enslavement, and other forms of violence and domination, is the unfortunate hallmark of much of intergroup relations. Nonetheless, though humans tend to view even the most violent acts of their group against outsiders as morally justified, there are exceptions. Some individuals, in some situations, experience compunction for what people in their group have done to outsiders. Understanding when such reactions are likely to occur, and the consequences of such responses, is a potentially crucial element in attenuating intergroup conflict.

Our interest in understanding collective guilt concerns when individuals will take responsibility for and make reparations for their group’s mistreatment of another group. It is important to recognize that the word “guilt” can be used to refer to both an emotional response ("I feel guilty") and a judgment of responsibility ("I am guilty"). Obviously, the two usages are related, however, our work is derived from a conceptualization of guilt first and foremost as an emotional experience. As such, our approach is grounded in basic research on emotion and strives to describe the interpretative process by which a person proceeds from a simple awareness that a negative intergroup event has taken place to having an emotional reaction and a behavioral response to that event.

Our primary objective in this chapter is to outline some of the main steps in this interpretive process. In doing so, we draw upon and integrate existing theory and research on the nature of moral emotions, including not only guilt but also shame. As we will discuss, feelings of collective shame and collective guilt, though related, are distinct. Not only does each
emotional response have somewhat distinct antecedents, but each emotion also evokes different motivational responses to intergroup events. Thus, distinguishing between shame and guilt is crucial to predicting people’s responses in intergroup situations. Our second objective in this chapter is to discuss the implications of these differences between shame and guilt for the management of intergroup conflict and for efforts to induce members of groups to make reparations for injustices perpetrated by their group.

AN INTERPRETATIVE MODEL OF COLLECTIVE GUILT AND SHAME

The central question that concerns us is how people perceive situations in which a member of their ingroup has committed a potentially blameworthy act against a member of another group. We constrain our analysis to situations in which the individual in question did not play a direct role in causing the transgression. Elsewhere (Lickel et al., 2004), we refer to these situations as vicarious emotion-eliciting events because the person’s emotional reaction is prompted by an event for which he or she was not the direct causal agent. Our overarching goal is to describe the interpretative process by which individual members of a group come to feel ashamed or guilty for negative actions that have been carried out by their fellow ingroup members.1

The full model that we will outline is depicted in Figure 1. This model includes three stages in the affective process. In the first stage, individuals observe events that have taken place and interpret the blameworthiness of their ingroup in relation to these events. Assuming that individuals do perceive their group to be at fault for some wrongful action, the second stage involves people’s interpretations of the implication of the event with respect to themselves. It is this second stage, we argue, that is particularly important in determining the degree to which people experience predominantly collective shame or collective guilt. Finally, the third stage includes the motivational responses that are induced by one’s emotional experience.

1 Our chapter differs from others in this volume in that we place more emphasis on the interpersonal aspects of guilt and shame. Participants in our studies often describe situations in which they experienced vicarious guilt or vicarious shame after observing an ingroup member behave aggressively toward a member of an outgroup and/or in which they personally knew the ingroup perpetrators of the event. These types of experiences could differ from those in which people feel guilt or shame in response to something that members of their group did in the relatively distant past and they personally played no role in (e.g., the Holocaust, colonialism, and slavery).
STAGE 1
Interpreting the Intergroup Event with Respect to the Ingroup

- Group Identification
- Ingroup Caused Event
- Event was Unjustified

STAGE 2
Interpreting the Intergroup Event with Respect to Oneself

- Interdependence of Association
- Blaming the Ingroup
- Perceived Control
- Image Threat
- Essentiality of Association

STAGE 3
Motivation and Behavioral Response

- Collective Guilt
- Motivated to Repair
- Collective Shame
- Motivated to Distance
INTERPRETING THE INTERGROUP EVENT WITH RESPECT TO ONE’S INGROUP

We begin by noting that in order to experience shame or guilt for one’s group, a person must view his or her group as the cause of a blameworthy event. Thus, the first phase involves attributions that determine the perceived blameworthiness of the event and locates the blame on a member or members of one’s ingroup. Thus, this attribution of group blame requires both a judgment of causality and a sense that the event was unjustified (see Branscombe, Doosje, & McGarty, 2002). If people do not perceive that ingroup members caused an event, they are not likely to feel guilt. However, merely acknowledging that a member of one’s ingroup has caused a negative event does not guarantee a collective guilt reaction, because feelings of collective guilt should be unlikely if the actions of one’s ingroup are viewed as justified by the demands of the situation. For example, the internment of Japanese-Americans in the United States during World War II was very likely viewed by many if not most Americans as being justified by a need for national security, a need outweighing the desire to protect the civil rights of an immigrant population. Today, such justifications seem rather weak. However, at the present time, many Americans feel that in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, it is justifiable for the FBI to question people based on their status as citizens of, or immigrants from, Arab nations (Weinstein, Finnegan, & Watanabe, 2001). Over time, as the threat and ambiguity of the situation dissipates, many Americans may come to feel guilt and shame for these policies. But at present, most do not, because they view this type of profiling as justified.

This initial description of people’s interpretation of events might seem to assume that these judgments are made on an objective analysis of the facts of the situation. But as we know, human judgment is seldom so unbiased. The mere fact that one categorizes oneself in one of the two groups is likely to bias people’s judgments of the event. For example, in their classic demonstration, Hastorf and Cantril (1954) showed that students at two different universities perceived the same aggressive football game between the two schools quite differently and in a way that put their own team’s actions in the most favorable light. The interpretative bias that group members show when making attributions for the actions and outcomes of an outgroup has been termed the ultimate attribution error (Pettigrew, 1979). In addition to making negative attributions for outgroup member’s actions, people also show a pervasive tendency to make positive attributions for their ingroup’s actions and outcomes (Rantilla, 2000). Thus, when a negative intergroup event occurs, merely being a member of the perpetrating group biases one to blame external factors rather than to recognize the ingroup’s causal role in the event (Doosje & Branscombe, 2003).
Although these biases work against blaming one’s ingroup for committing transgressions against an outgroup, individual group members are likely to differ in their levels of identification with the group, which might moderate these biased perceptions. The extent to which ingroup identification moderates collective guilt is the focus of discussion in several other chapters in this volume. Thus, we only briefly review the role of group identification in the larger interpretative process we are outlining.

**Group Identification Moderates How the Event is Interpreted**

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) states that individuals derive a sense of self-worth or self-esteem not just from their identity as a unique individual, but also from their memberships in social groups. Just as people are motivated to protect and enhance their personal identity, social identity theory maintains that people are also motivated to protect and enhance their social identities. The degree of value that a person places on a social identity is often termed group identification.

For our purposes, we define group identification as the affective or evaluative attachment one has to one’s ingroup. Thus, it is not merely the strength of the “unit relationship” between self and the group (Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988) or the degree to which the ingroup has become part of the self (Smith & Henry, 1986). This kind of cognitive connection might be one component of group identification, but group identification as typically defined and measured in the social identity literature carries with it an attitudinal component as well—the sense that membership in one’s group is not merely an important aspect of identity but a positive aspect of identity as well. For example, Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk (1999) distinguished between cognitive, evaluative, and affective aspects of social identity. Moreover, they demonstrated that it is the affective aspect, manifested in commitment to the group, which uniquely predicts in-group favoritism.

One’s attitude toward the ingroup as being positive or negative is likely to moderate the extent to which the actions of other members of one’s ingroup are viewed as positive or negative as well (see Branscombe et al., 2002). In other words, those who are highly identified with their ingroup are motivated to engage in group-serving attributions when perceiving behaviors carried out by fellow group members, because group identity is a source of positive self-regard. Research on the attributions people make for the negative actions of their ingroup confirms that those who are highly identified with their ingroup are less likely to make internal attributions and are more likely to make external attributions for the negative actions of their ingroup compared to those who are less identified with their ingroup (see Doosje & Branscombe, 2003).
While much of the literature on group serving attributions examines attributions for group outcomes, other research has examined biased perception of the actions committed by ingroup members against outgroups. Of greatest relevance is the work of Doosje et al. (1998) who investigated Dutch students’ reactions to their country’s past behavior when colonizing Indonesia. Interestingly, when participants were presented with a mixture of positive and negative outcomes resulting from the colonization, Dutch students who were less nationally identified reported more guilt than those students who were more nationally identified. Group identification did not moderate feelings of collective guilt when the information presented was unambiguously positive or negative. Thus, under conditions of ambiguity, those who are highly identified with a group may be motivated to ignore, deny, or downplay the negative actions of their ingroup in favor of more positive behaviors, whereas those who are less identified may be more likely to recognize and accept these same negative behaviors and feel guiltier for them.

In summary, the first step toward feeling collective guilt involves recognizing that one’s ingroup or specific members of one’s ingroup have engaged in behaviors that have had negative and unjustified consequences for members of another group. Recognizing the wrongdoing of one’s ingroup is often inhibited by the general tendency to make group-serving attributions especially if one is highly identified with an ingroup. We turn now to the interpretative process that takes place after recognizing that one’s group is at fault. Admitting that one’s ingroup has engaged in unjustifiably negative actions against an outgroup does not guarantee that people will feel a sense of collective guilt for those actions or be motivated to make reparations for them. Beyond this initial interpretation of the event’s relation to the ingroup, we believe that a further interpretation of the event occurs, an interpretation that defines the degree and quality of self-blame that people feel for the event.

Interpreting the Event with Respect to the Self

We shift our focus here to an in-depth analysis of the factors that influence how a person comes to feel a sense of guilt or shame as a result of the blame-worthy actions of fellow ingroup members. We believe it is important to understand the nature of people’s emotional experiences because these reactions are likely to be a strong predictor of the actions that people take in response to intergroup events. But just how does one go from blaming other members of one’s ingroup for a wrongdoing to feeling personally implicated by their bad behavior? In our attempt to answer this question, we used existing research on the nature of guilt and shame to identify the interpretations or appraisals that lead to feelings of collective guilt and shame.
Distinguishing Guilt from Shame

Among those who have investigated guilt and shame felt for one’s own misdeeds, most agree that these two emotions result from different interpretations of the self-relevance of a blameworthy event (Lewis, 1971; Tangney, 1992; 1995). If an event is seen as implying something negative about controllable aspects of one’s behavior, then guilt is likely to be the dominant emotional response. Conversely, if the event is seen as implying something negative about one’s stable dispositional qualities, shame is likely to be the dominant emotional response. In other words, people feel guilty for what they have done, but feel ashamed for who they are. This distinction is very similar to a distinction made by Janoff-Bulman (1982) between behavioral self-blame and characterological self-blame.

While the distinctions between these emotions might seem subtle, they are supported by several empirical results. For example, when people recall guilt and shame experiences, their feelings of shame are often accompanied by the counterfactual thought, “If only I were a different type of person,” whereas their feelings of guilt are accompanied by the counterfactual thought, “If only I had behaved differently” (Niedenthal, Tangney, & Gavanski, 1994). From an attributional standpoint, people are thought to feel shame when they attribute a negative event to a cause that is internal and uncontrollable, but to feel guilt when they attribute a negative event to a cause that is internal and controllable (Weiner, 1995). For example, individuals recalling shameful experiences perceive that they had less power or control in the situation, whereas guilt is accompanied by feeling that one had control in the situation and should have behaved in a different manner (Wicker, Payne, & Morgan, 1983). Perhaps not surprisingly given the dispositional focus of shame, experiences of this emotion are often characterized by a strong feeling of self-consciousness and a fear that one will be rejected by others (Lewis, 1971; Wicker et al., 1983). Even though shame does not need to occur in a truly public situation, shame does bring with it a feeling of exposure and self-consciousness (Tangney et al., 1996). In other words, people feel ashamed when they perceive that their actions have revealed a flaw in their character.

This research has always assumed that people feel guilty or ashamed only for their own misdeeds. However, we argue that somewhat similar appraisal processes underlie feelings of guilt or shame that people might experience as a result of someone else’s misdeeds. In applying this past work to the development of a model of collective guilt and shame, we propose that when an event is perceived as relevant to one’s ingroup, people are prompted to assess the extent to which it is also relevant to themselves. We predict that appraising an intergroup event in terms of one’s own control over the situation might be an important predictor of collective guilt, whereas appraising an intergroup event in terms of how it
threatens the dispositional image of oneself and one’s group might be an important predictor of collective shame.

**The Role of Behavioral Control in Collective Guilt**
As described, individuals tend to feel guilty for their own wrongdoings when they believe that they should have been able to control their behavior or do something to prevent a negative event from occurring. Given this behavioral focus that is typical of guilt, feelings of collective guilt that people have for the actions of their ingroup should also stem from an interpretation that they had some kind of behavioral control over the blameworthy event – either control over the onset of the original actions that caused the event or control over the continuing repercussions of the event. In the former case, people might feel a sense of collective guilt if they believe that they might have had influence over the behavior of other ingroup members who directly caused the negative event. Furthermore, the nature of this influence could either be that they indirectly encouraged or facilitated the actions of their fellow group members or that they failed to prevent their actions.

But even if individuals recognize that they had no control over the behaviors that actually precipitated a blameworthy event, they might still feel a sense of collective guilt if they feel that the event has continuing negative repercussions that they could control. As illustration, consider that any sense of collective guilt that is experienced by European-Americans in the United States over America’s history of slavery is not likely to stem from feeling that they should have been able to prevent slavery from taking place. However, European-Americans might feel some sense of guilt if they believe that they could influence the ongoing consequences of historical racism on African-Americans today. Thus, individuals are predicted to feel guilty for the wrongful acts carried out by their ingroup to the extent that they think they had some past control over the onset of the event or have some present control over the continuing repercussions of the event.

**The Role of Self-Image Threat in Collective Shame**
Whereas feelings of collective guilt are thought to be associated with interpreting the blameworthy event as somehow under one’s control, this interpretation of control is not expected to predict feelings of collective shame. Instead, feelings of collective shame are predicted from a different interpretation of the event’s relevance to the self. Namely, we hypothesize that people feel a sense of collective shame for the blameworthy actions of their ingroup to the extent that they feel that those actions reflect poorly on the image of their group, and by extension, themselves. In other words, just as self-caused shame is thought to occur when people feel that a flawed aspect of their personal identity has been revealed, collective shame stems
from perceiving that the actions of the ingroup confirm or reveal a flawed aspect of one's social identity.

We acknowledge that it is possible for people to feel both shame and guilt in response to a particular event. We simply point out that the two emotions are likely to stem from very different interpretations of the event and their differing implications for people's self-concepts. In the case of guilt, people feel that wrongs committed by their ingroup implicate something about their own personal behavior (i.e., what they should and shouldn't have done), whereas in the case of shame, they feel that wrongs committed by their ingroup implicate something about the very nature of who they are.

**Empirical Support for the Appraisals That Predict Collective Guilt and Shame**

In several studies (Lickel et al., 2004), we have found consistent links between people's interpretations of the self-relevance of a blameworthy act committed by a fellow group member and the extent to which people felt ashamed or guilty for the group member's act. In these studies, we asked people to recall a time when they felt guilty or ashamed as a result of actions carried out by another person (e.g., family member, friend, ethnic ingroup member, etc.). After recalling their experience, participants completed a series of items assessing the extent of their emotional response to the event, the extent to which they felt they should have been able to prevent the event from occurring (i.e., control over the onset of the event), and the extent to which they felt that the event would be seen as indicating something negative about them as a person (i.e., self-image threat). Keep in mind that because we instructed participants to recall collective shame and guilt experiences, we bypassed the first stage of the interpretative process described in the beginning of this chapter. In other words, the events that participants rated were all perceived to be negative events that they attributed to an ingroup member or the ingroup as a whole.

Although people viewed these events as negative, there was variability in the extent to which people felt guilty or ashamed for their ingroup member's actions. Furthermore, there was only a weak relationship between how guilty people felt for the other's behavior and how ashamed they felt for the same event, which indicated that these two emotional reactions were distinct. Moreover, people's shame and guilt responses were predicted by how they interpreted the event with respect to themselves. People felt guilty for another's actions to the extent that they felt they had some degree of control over the onset of the event, but these feelings of control were not predictive of how ashamed they felt. Instead, people felt ashamed for another's actions to the extent that they viewed the event as threatening their own self-image, and these feelings of threat were not predictive of how guilty they felt.
These results indicate that if one wants to predict the emotional response that people will have to the wrongdoings of their ingroup, it is essential that one consider how they interpret the event with respect to themselves. This consideration is particularly important because, as we discuss at the end of the chapter, shame and guilt might promote very different responses to intergroup events. Because these responses may affect the process by which intergroup conflicts unfold, it is important to understand the factors that evoke collective guilt rather than collective shame through the different appraisal processes just described.

It is likely that a variety of factors influence the appraisal process leading to feelings of guilt and shame, including individual differences in the extent to which a person is shame versus guilt prone (Tangney, 1995) and perhaps features of the victim or event. However, we have focused on how the nature of the association between the wrongdoer and others moderates the degree to which those other people feel shame or guilt for the wrongdoer’s actions. We propose that some types of ingroup associations might be more likely to evoke feelings of collective guilt, whereas other types of ingroup associations might be more likely to evoke feelings of collective shame.

Social Association as Moderators of Guilt and Shame Reactions

Collective shame and guilt responses can occur for many different kinds of social identities, ranging from primary groups such as family and friendship groups to broader identities such as national, ethnic, or religious affiliations. Furthermore, one key element in describing how collective shame and guilt operate across such a broad range of group memberships is understanding how people intuitively conceive of different group memberships. Thus, our work connects with others in social psychology (Hamilton, Sherman, & Castelli, 2002; Wilder & Simon, 1998), developmental psychology (Hirshfeld, 1995), and anthropology (Fiske, 1992; Gil-White, 2001; Barrett, in press) who have begun to explore people’s intuitive conceptions of groups. This work suggests that people have very rich intuitive ideas of the nature of social groups, including a typology of groups that differentiates among different types or dimensions of social association (see Fiske, 1992; Lickel, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2001; Wilder & Simon, 1998; Yzerbyt, Cornille, & Estrada, 2001 for different strands of this research).

We argue that people’s intuitive ideas about how groups are structured are important not only for how people interpret actions of outgroup members, but also for how they interpret events committed by fellow group members. As indicated in the model shown in Figure 1, we believe that people’s perceptions of how they are linked to others through group membership may influence how they appraise the self-relevance of another ingroup member’s actions. Specifically, we hypothesize that the aspects of social association that are related to the perceived immutability or essentiality
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of the group push people to consider how the actions of ingroup members reflect on their own self-image. As we discussed earlier, this appraisal of image threat predicts feelings of collective shame. Other aspects of social association that are related to the interconnections or interdependence of people within a group influence how people appraise the controllability of their fellow group-members’ behavior, which predicts feelings of collective guilt. Later in this chapter we describe these concepts and discuss initial work linking people’s perceptions of essentiality and interdependence in groups to feelings of collective shame and guilt.

Essentiality

The idea that people may think of some groups as defined by a particular internal essence has been noted by many scholars. For example, Rothbart and Taylor (1992) harken back to Allport’s (1954) statement about the origins of prejudice that, “a belief in essence (of racial categories) develops. There is an inherent ‘Jewishness’ in every Jew. The ‘soul of the Oriental,’ ‘Negro blood,’ ‘Hitler’s Aryanism,’ all represent a belief in essence. A mysterious mana (for good or ill) resides in a group, all of its members partaking thereof” (p. 173). Rothbart and Taylor (1992) argued that people treat at least some human groupings as possessing a defining essence. Yzerbyt, Rocher, and Schadron (1997) have examined the effects of perceived essentiality on dispositional judgments related to groups. More recently, Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst (2000) empirically examined the specific qualities of groups that may underlie people’s perceptions of essentiality (see also Lickel et al., 2000).

We use the term essentiality to refer to the degree to which a social association is perceived to reflect a deep and immutable aspect of identity that is often used by social perceivers to make causal inferences about group members’ behavior. Examples of group memberships that perceivers are particularly likely to treat as highly essentialized include gender, ethnicity, nationality, and kinship (Gil-White, 2002; Haslam et al., 2000; Hirschfeld, 1995; Lickel et al., 2000). When people perceive that a member of one of these ingroups has engaged in a blameworthy act, they might be more inclined to consider how that act threatens the image of their group and of themselves. When we perceive our ethnic group as harming another ethnic group or when we see a member of our family engage in what we consider immoral behavior, the sense that we might be “cut from the same cloth” as these others prompts an interpretation of the event as threatening our image of ourselves. As we discussed earlier, these image-threat appraisals are particularly linked to collective shame.

Interdependence

In contrast to the effect of essentiality, event interpretations related to the control people feel they have over events are moderated by the perceived
degree of interpersonal interdependence between them and the group members who committed the wrongdoing. Interpersonal interdependence refers to the degree to which individuals have high levels of social interaction, communication, common goals, and mutual social influence. An important aspect of interdependent associations is that the associated persons have the opportunity for shared communication and influence over one another’s thoughts and behaviors. Our work indicates that people have strong intuitions about how individuals in groups are interdependent with one another and that group members (at least within tightly knit groups) have the ability to influence the actions of others within the group (Lickel et al., 2000; Lickel, Schnader, & Hamilton, 2003).

We hypothesize that people’s perceptions of interdependence among members of their group might influence the extent to which they appraise an event committed by a fellow group member as being self-relevant. However, in contrast to the self-relevance evoked by perceptions of essentiality, we hypothesized that perceptions of interdependence might influence the extent to which people interpreted an event as being controllable. Thus, when a fellow group member commits a wrongdoing, we hypothesize that people (implicitly if not explicitly) ask themselves “did I contribute to this…should I have prevented it…can I do something now to stop this?” and that these appraisals of event control are moderated by the perceived interdependence with the wrongdoer. As discussed earlier, these appraisals of behavioral control should in turn evoke feelings of guilt.

We examined these hypotheses about the relationships of perceived essentiality and interdependence to collective shame and guilt (Lickel et al., 2004). In this study, participants recalled three different instances in which they had felt ashamed or guilty for the actions of another person. Participants were directed to recall one event related to their family, one related to a friendship group, and one related to their ethnic group. On the basis of past empirical work (Haslam et al., 2000; Lickel et al., 2000) we hypothesized that participants would view these three groups as differing with regard to perceived essentiality and interdependence. We believed that people would view their family group as high in both interdependence and essentiality, whereas their friendship group would be viewed as high in interdependence but not essentiality and their ethnic group would be viewed as high in essentiality but not interdependence. This hypothesis was confirmed.

More interesting were the relationships of perceived interdependence and essentiality to other variables. As hypothesized, perceptions of the interdependence and essentiality of these three groups predicted very different constellations of variables. People’s perceptions of essentiality predicted the degree to which they viewed the event as threatening their self-image and the extent to which they felt ashamed of their ingroup member’s wrongdoing. In contrast, perceptions of interdependence
predicted people's appraisal that they could have controlled the event and their feelings of collective guilt.

**Collective Guilt and Shame Predict Different Behavioral Responses**

Thus far we have discussed the differences between guilt and shame both in terms of how the emotion-eliciting event is interpreted and how perceptions of social association might moderate these interpretations. However, the reason we feel it is so critical to make a clear distinction between feeling collective guilt and feeling collective shame is because prior emotion research demonstrates that these two emotions differ in terms of the behavioral responses that they tend to evoke.

Guilt serves an important social function by signaling that a relationship with another individual or group has been damaged and that steps should be taken to repair that relationship (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1995; Branscombe et al., 2002). In line with this reasoning, research finds that guilt is often accompanied by a motivation to repair or apologize for what has occurred (Tangney, 1995). Based on this theory, we predict that in the case of collective guilt, the extent to which people feel guilty for the actions of an ingroup member will predict their motivation to repair the effects of that action toward members of an outgroup who were harmed (see Doosje et al., 1998). Theory and research, however, reveal that a very different response is evoked by shame. Given that shame involves the perception that a flawed self-aspect has been exposed, the motivation elicited by this feeling is not an active drive to make reparations, but rather a more passive desire to hide, disappear, or escape from the emotion-eliciting event (Tangney, 1995; Wicker et al., 1983). When examining shame in the context of intergroup relations, this distancing motivation might manifest itself in several ways. For example, one way to distance oneself from the blameworthy event is to disassociate oneself from the group members who carried out that event. Another distancing strategy might involve reducing one's identification with the tainted social identity. For example, some Caucasian-Americans might be reluctant to view their race as an important and valued aspect of their self-identity. A very different kind of distancing strategy is to steer clear of situations that remind one of the shame-provoking incident. This strategy might even involve an avoidance of intergroup interactions as a means of evading the memory of how one's ingroup has harmed members of the outgroup in the past.

Although research has yet to explore all of the various behaviors that might be prompted by feelings of collective guilt and shame, our research has tested some of the proposed differences. Specifically, in the studies described previously (Lickel et al., 2004), participants made ratings of their behavioral motivations. We assessed the extent to which they felt motivated to make reparations for what had happened and the extent to which they
felt motivated to distance themselves from the event and the wrongdoer. Consistent with our model, feelings of collective guilt and shame predicted very different behavioral responses. Feelings of collective guilt predicted a desire to make reparations for the ingroup member’s bad behavior, and did not predict a distancing response. However, feelings of collective shame strongly predicted a desire to distance oneself from the blameworthy event, but were not at all predictive of a reparative response.

Thus, collective shame and guilt appear to be related to very different responses to blameworthy events caused by the ingroup. These results highlight the importance of the distinction between collective guilt and collective shame. If one is interested in predicting when members of a group not only acknowledge their ingroup's misdeeds against another group, but also are motivated to repair those misdeeds, then one must consider the extent to which the situation actually evokes guilt and not shame.

THE FUNCTIONS OF COLLECTIVE GUILT AND SHAME IN THE MANAGEMENT OF INTERGROUP CONFLICT

Our preceding discussion outlines a model of some of the antecedents and consequences of vicarious shame and guilt. In the remainder of the chapter, we discuss some ways in which these emotional reactions fit into the larger scope of intergroup relations.

Collective Responsibility as a Basis for Intergroup Conflict

We believe that collective shame and guilt experiences have an important role in the processes underlying intergroup conflict. To understand why this is the case, it is important to remember that it is not only that people may blame themselves when a member of a group commits a wrongdoing – others may blame them as well. Thus, it is often the case that outsiders hold members of a group responsible when one member of the group commits a wrongdoing. Members of a group that were harmed by the wrongdoing would be particularly likely to assign collective responsibility to the perpetrator’s group (see Wohl & Branscombe, this volume, Chapter 15). Although conflict can begin for many reasons, one important source and perpetrator of conflict between groups is collective blame. That is, members of groups are blamed for the actions committed by fellow group members and these people are then retaliated against in lieu of the actual perpetrator. This act of vicarious retribution may itself spur an act of counter-retaliation, which creates an escalating spiral of conflict (Lickel et al., 2004).

Anthropological research of indigenous moral systems and intergroup conflict (e.g., Boehm, 1984) points to a strong role for collective
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The event and the wrongdoer, as described in the article, show that guilt and shame predicted a feeling of collective guilt and did not predict members’ behavior, which is in line with the findings of collective shame feelings of the blameworthy event, from the blameworthy person's perspective.

The context of the article is related to very different environments, where the blameworthy event is seen as related to the in-group. These results suggest that collective guilt and shame are related to the in-group, and the blameworthy event is seen as related to the out-group, and the blameworthy event is seen as related to the out-group.

As an example, consider the Columbine High School shootings that occurred in the United States in Littleton, Colorado in April of 1999. In the shooting, two students (Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold) attacked students and teachers in their school, killing thirteen. Harris and Klebold then committed suicide in the school library. One key aspect of the public discussion and debate after the event was assigning blame and responsibility for the shootings. Although the direct cause of the event was not ambiguous—video cameras caught Harris and Klebold’s shooting spree—many were not content to blame only Harris and Klebold but spread blame to many others beyond the killers.

In our analysis of people’s reactions to the event (Lickel et al., 2001; 2003) we found that judgments of collective responsibility for the killings were ordered and predictable. First, when we examined people’s judgments of a wide array of groups (ranging from the parents of the killers to members of the “Goth” music scene with whom the killers were associated) that had been mentioned in media reports or editorials as being somehow to blame for the event, we found that the degree of blame assigned to the group was highly related to people’s perceptions of interdependence between the group and the killers. Thus, it was those groups that interacted and communicated the most with the killers (such as their family and friends) who were blamed most for the killers’ actions. Second, we found that people explained these events with particular sorts of inferences about why the other members of the group should be blamed. These inferences were that members of the group may have encouraged or facilitated the actions of the killers (an inference of commission) or that they failed to prevent the event (an inference of omission). These inferences were strongly predicted by perceptions of interdependence and in turn strongly predicted judgments of collective blame.

These judgments of blame for the Columbine shootings provide an interesting counterpoint to our earlier discussion of shame and guilt. According to the model and empirical evidence that we presented earlier, it seems likely that at least some of the people blamed by others for Harris and Klebold’s actions also blamed themselves for the killings. We argue that...
there is a dynamic interplay between the feelings of guilt and shame that members of the group feel for their group's actions and outsiders' blame of a group. Specifically, we hypothesize that feeling collective shame and guilt may naturally evoke responses from group members that serve to attenuate the extent to which outsiders hold them responsible for acts committed by others in the group. Because of these responses, feelings of collective guilt and shame may prevent the escalation of intergroup conflicts. Thus, just as personal shame and guilt play important roles in regulating interpersonal relations (Baumeister et al., 1995), collective shame and guilt may regulate intergroup relations. In the text that follows, we discuss three possible strategies by which members of groups may reduce the extent to which they are blamed by outsiders and how the spontaneous use of each strategy may be linked to feelings of guilt or shame.

The Functions of Collective Shame and Guilt in Intergroup Conflict Situations

The first strategy that group members may use to attenuate the extent to which they are blamed by outsiders is to repair the damage caused by their fellow group member's actions (e.g., through apology, making amends). Such repair efforts have been shown to be important in cases of individual responsibility (Scher & Darley, 1997), and thus may have an impact on instances of collective responsibility as well. Doosje et al. (1998) found that feelings of guilt for collective wrongdoings were associated with the extent of reparations that members of the group believed should be provided to those harmed by the negative actions of their group. We have also found that guilt is uniquely linked to this response (Lickel et al., 2004). Turning to ethnographic investigations, we see that reparations are a crucial element in determining whether intergroup incidents develop into full-blown conflicts or are quickly resolved. For example, Boelum's (1984) historical ethnography in Montenegro indicated that cycles of blood revenge (i.e., cycles of inter-clan revenge killings) were attenuated when members of the wrongdoer's group accepted blame for the event and made a strong public attempt to atone for the act. The concept of a "blood price" to be paid by members of a killer's group after a killing is a widespread cultural tool by which members of groups avoid being caught in a spiral of revenge killings (Hardy, 1963; Daly & Wilson, 1988).

People who are targets of collective blame may also try to manage blame by publicly punishing the group member who committed the wrongdoing. Such punishment may decrease the extent to which outside observers judge the group to be collectively responsible because it demonstrates that the group did not approve of the member's actions and thus reduces perceptions of the group's commission in the act. In a sense, punishment of the wrongdoer may also be an act of apology to a harmed outgroup, an
apology that has value because it is demonstrably more than mere words. We believe that punishing an ingroup member for his or her actions toward members of an outgroup may be a conflict-avoidance strategy that is particularly likely to be evoked by guilt.

A final strategy for managing collective responsibility for the actions of ingroup members is to distance oneself from the wrongdoer. Distancing, which we have found is particularly linked to shame, may reduce the application of collective sanctions because it signals to a harmed outgroup that the wrongdoer “really isn’t part of us.” This disavowal may reduce the extent to which outsiders see the act as reflecting the real nature of the group (see Biernat, Vescio, & Billings, 1999; Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986; Marques, Robalo, & Rocha, 1992 for related research). In its most extreme form, distancing and punishment may combine in acts of repudiation in which the offending group member is excised from the group through banishment or death. For example, Boehm’s (1984) historical ethnography offers gripping cases in which members of a community were stoned to death or banished because of bringing disrepute to the community or for illegitimately provoking another group.

In summary, feelings of collective guilt and shame are not merely reactions that have private intrapsychic consequences for self-worth. These feelings may also be functionally linked to behavioral motivations that operate to attenuate intergroup conflict by reducing the extent to which a harmed outgroup is motivated to engage in collective retaliation.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The goal of our chapter was to provide a structured framework for understanding the processes that lead to collective guilt and shame and to describe the consequences of these emotional responses in intergroup settings. As we discussed, we believe that collective shame and guilt reactions may have an important role in regulating intergroup conflict. However, we believe that there is much more to be understood about how these emotional reactions operate.

For example, one issue that seems to be of great practical as well as theoretical importance is the degree to which the behavioral reactions evoked by collective guilt and shame differ in ameliorating intergroup conflict. We suggested earlier that some of the responses evoked by both emotions might have a dampening effect on intergroup conflict. Nonetheless, we think that the evocation of guilt may generally have more positive effects than the evocation of shame. In the research on interpersonal relationships, guilt is considered much more adaptive for relationships than shame (Tangney, 1995). A reexamination of the responses promoted by shame and guilt sheds some light on why guilt may be a more productive emotional response in intergroup settings as well.
Consider first the strong sense of public humiliation that is sometimes linked to shame. Given this, it is not surprising that shame is thus often associated with corrosive anger (Tangney, 1995). Within an intergroup setting, this shame-based anger might be directed against the ingroup perpetrator. However, in other cases, anger might sometimes be directed toward outgroup members as well. Consider also that shame promotes a desire to distance oneself from the emotion-eliciting event. In some cases, this may take the form of distancing from the perpetrator. However, it also seems possible that shame may provoke denial of the event and a desire to distance oneself from the entire situation rather than facing it squarely. As we suggested earlier, shame might be reduced by avoiding contact with outgroup members who remind one of the intergroup situation that evokes shame. Conversely, guilt does not have a strong link to anger and humiliation. Instead, guilt is associated with empathy for victims and a desire to make restitution for what one’s group has done.

These considerations are important when evaluating the most effective ways to induce members of groups to make amends for past wrongs that their group has committed or to stop harmful acts that members of their group are engaged in currently. For example, a major focus in the international human rights movement is moral consciousness-raising directed at citizens and leaders of countries to induce those countries to stop human rights violations and to make amends for past transgressions. Interestingly, this process of moral consciousness-raising is often referred to as “shaming” (e.g., Risse, Ropp, & Sikkink, 1999). It may be that the actual process of shaming is designed to elicit guilt, and does so effectively. Nonetheless, it is possible that in at least some instances these efforts do indeed evoke shame rather than guilt. Insofar as shaming promotes anger, humiliation, and denial rather than empathy, guilt, and responsibility, shame may harden rather than resolve the problem of human rights violations. Although more basic research is needed before strong practical conclusions can be reached, we believe that attending to the distinction between shame and guilt is important to consider in efforts to induce people to address human rights violations (and other transgressions) committed by their groups.

As we noted at the outset, the study of intergroup relations often leads to the bleak conclusion that such relations are bound to be marked by conflicts in which each side views even the most egregious acts committed by the ingroup as just and legitimate. While the prevalence of such biases cannot be ignored, people’s capacity to feel collective shame and guilt offers a degree of optimism as well. People clearly are capable of strong feelings of moral compunction, self-blame, and responsibility for the transgressions of their groups. Understanding the origins and the consequences of these feelings promises to yield insights that will increase humankind’s ability to create greater peace and equity in intergroup settings.
The Evocation of Moral Emotions in Intergroup Contexts

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