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Shame expressions reduce the recipient's insult from outgroup reparations ☆

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Abstract

Despite a growing literature on the consequences of group-based guilt and shame, little work has examined how expressions of self-conscious emotions are received by targets of collective wrongdoing. Two experiments tested the hypothesis that when an outgroup member offers apologies accompanied by reparations, the recipients are likely to take insult unless the outgroup member expresses the self-abasing emotion of shame rather than guilt. Experiment 1 showed that when reparations were offered, participants were less insulted by shame than guilt expressed by an outgroup member, rather than an ingroup member. Experiment 2 improved Experiment 1 by manipulating the culprit's action (reparation vs. withdrawal), and this experiment replicated Experiment 1's interaction on a measure of insult, but only when reparations were offered. These interactions on insult were not explained by the emotion's perceived intensity or surprisingness. Our results indicate a possible functional aspect of expressions of shame in an intergroup context. Self-abasement, as opposed to a mere admission of culpability and regret, can reduce the insult taken from an outgroup's reparations.
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Expressions of remorse for official and collective misdeeds have increased in recent years, leading commentators to describe the present day as an ''age of apology'' (Brooks, 2003). Recent examples include the State of Virginia's official apology for the past enslavement of African-Americans, South African ex-minister Adriaan Vlok's public washing of Reverend Frank Chikane's feet in contrition for crimes of the apartheid era, and the apologies offered by News Corporation for its plans to publish the ill-regarded O.J. Simpson book *If I Did It*. Often these apologies are accompanied by emotional expressions of sorrow, regret, guilt or shame, as well as by offers of restitution. This research investigates the hypothesis that shame can be a more effective expression than guilt in reducing insult taken by wronged groups when such an offer of restitution is made.

The emotions that accompany apologies have been the subject of much social psychological research. Some studies have examined how guilt and compensation emerge as individual responses to evidence of being prejudiced (Monteith, 1993; Monteith, Ashburn-Nardo, Voils, & Czopp, 2002). Collective guilt can also be felt in response to injustices carried out by one's own group in the past, and can generate support for group-level compensation (Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998). Additionally, dominant-group guilt (e.g., White guilt) can arise when one's own group privilege is seen as illegitimate (Branscombe, 2002). From this research, it seems that eliciting guilt in the perpetrator may have positive effects on his or her actions, such as increasing willingness to pro-

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vide reparations (but see also Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006 for infrahumanization as a defense against guilt).

Such consequences are consistent with an extensive literature at the interpersonal level, in which guilt has been investigated in tandem with shame (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Research has built on the work of Lewis (1971) to propose a distinction between the two emotions. In this tradition, guilt involves an appraisal of the action's wrongness, and leads to the approach actions of reparation and apology. Shame, in contrast, involves an appraisal that one's core self is bad, and leads to avoidant or angry behavior. Research on individuals has generally shown that proneness to guilt is associated with empathy, whereas proneness to shame involves more painful emotions and accompanies social and personal problems (Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

Studies of vicarious guilt and shame for other group members' acts, too, show that shame hinges on the group's core essence while guilt hinges on personal responsibility (Lickel, Schmader, & Barquissau, 2004), although shame may also be a better motivator toward collective action than guilt (Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007). However, research on how interpersonal apologies are received has not generally observed distinctions among specific self-conscious emotions such as shame and guilt. In one exception, Proeve and Howells (2006) manipulated expressions of "remorse" (in this context, guilt and apology) versus shame attributed to an offender, but found no difference in effects of the two emotions. From the existing literature, then, it is not clear what role shame versus guilt expressions might play in the reception of an intergroup apology.

As mentioned, shame is acknowledged to lead to withdrawal action tendencies, often a less beneficial outcome for the wronged party than guilt's approach and reparative tendencies. However, emotions have multiple functions. Not only do they orient the individual toward action, but they also serve a function of social communication (e.g., Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Parkinson, 1996). With this in mind, guilt has been interpreted as signaling desire to reestablish an existing relationship (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994), whereas shame has been seen as serving a more general appeasement function (Keltner, Young, & Buswell, 1997). Likewise, in some evolutionary views, guilt functions to regulate reciprocal relationships, whereas shame regulates position in the social hierarchy (Gilbert, 2003), a view consistent with psychological views of shame that emphasize social judgment and exposure as elicitors (Smith, Webster, Parrott, & Eyre, 2002). Even though constant proneness to shame may not be functional for an individual, the expression of shame in communication between individuals and groups does have a plausible function. In particular, when the behavioral outcomes of emotions are held constant, the communicative content of emotions should take center stage in explaining reactions to emotional expressions.

In the context of an offer of reparations, we believe that an expression of shame will be especially likely to overcome the wronged party's misgivings about accepting handouts from an outgroup, and to mitigate the insult taken from compensation. It is important, however, to distinguish our prediction from other theoretical perspectives that might offer more general explanations why an outgroup member's shame might be better received than guilt. For example, simple derogation of the outgroup could lead to shame's absolute self-criticism being preferred over the more limited self-criticism in guilt. Likewise, as people generally prefer dispositional explanations for outgroup negative acts, and situational explanations for ingroup negative acts (Pettigrew, 1979), a preference for the "dispositional" shame emotion over the "situational" guilt emotion could be expected.

Our predictions, however, focus on the insult taken, rather than overall satisfaction or attitude, from offers of reparations. Because an offer of assistance from an outgroup implies that the group wants to approach and is in a position to be generous, it can evoke a negative reaction among people who mistrust the group's motives, especially when its status is seen as illegitimate or unstable (see Nadler & Halabi, 2006)—conditions especially likely to apply after a misdeed by the outgroup. Thus, an outgroup perpetrator who shows no remorse, or who expresses guilty feelings that preserve core self-worth and are more appropriate to a reciprocal relationship, risks arousing insult by offering compensation. However, when the emotion of shame is added to an offer of reparations, this negative reaction should be mitigated, because the reparations are accompanied by an assurance that they are given in a spirit of appeasement and self-abasement. While the alternative theories predict a general preference for shame in outgroup expressions that would extend to other measures such as satisfaction, our hypothesis states that, specifically when reparations are offered, an outgroup member's shame apology will lead to significantly less insult than a guilt apology or no apology, rather than greater satisfaction.

Experiment 1

Experiment 1 was an initial test of this hypothesis, manipulating expressions of emotion (guilt vs. shame), orthogonally with the group (ingroup vs. outgroup) of the company responsible, within a scenario of apology and reparation for an ecological disaster. We predicted an Emotion × Group interaction on insult, such that a guilt apology would be more insulting than a shame apology only when coming from an outgroup, but no such interaction on satisfaction.

We also included measures of surprise and suspicion to guard against the possibility that incredulity at an unfamiliar combination of group, emotion, and action could explain any interaction among these factors. Finally, we measured how emotionally affected the perpetrator seemed, to see whether any interaction of group and emotion on insult could be explained by a tendency to see shame as stronger or more sincere than guilt.

Methods

Participants

Seventy-eight participants, 48 female, and 30 male, were recruited among the undergraduate, graduate, and non-degree student population of New School for Social Research, in New York. They were approached through instructors of small classes or individually, and asked whether they would participate in an experiment in exchange for a chocolate bar.

Materials

Participants read a story that described a fictitious company, identified as either American (ingroup) or Russian (outgroup). All participants were asked a manipulation check question about the company's nationality ("To what extent do you think this company can be called American?") and two questions about positive and negative feelings toward the company.

The questionnaire then briefly described a fictitious ecological incident in which the company was responsible for a chemical spill into the Hudson River and the response of the company's director. The emotional response was described first, and varied between participants:

1. "...feels very sorry about what happened and regrets that he had not taken more security measures to prevent it. He feels guilty about the unfortunate accident." (guilt emotion, focused on negative aspects of action).
2. "...feels that he is a complete failure and that he is a person unable to run a company or do anything worthwhile. He feels ashamed about the unfortunate accident." (shame emotion, focused on negative aspects of self).

Participants then indicated on an 11 point scale, "to what degree the director was emotionally affected by the event," and, on a six-point scale, "how much you think the director of the company should be blamed for the incident."

Reparative behavior was then described: "He decides that what is best is to apologize publicly and do everything he can to clean the river and help people affected by the incident." Then, participants answered a series of 11 point scaled items that described their reactions: "I would feel satisfied;" "I would think it's fair;" "I would feel happy;" "I would be surprised;" "I would feel easy;" "I would be hopeful;" "I would feel suspicious;" "I'd feel that the director of the company respected me;" I'd feel that the director of the company insulted me; "I'd feel that the director of the company valued me;" and "I'd feel offended by the director of the company." Scales ranged from "not at all" to "absolutely."

Results

Manipulation checks

A Group × Emotion ANOVA on the company's identity confirmed participants' understanding that the U.S. company was American and the Russian company was not, $F(1,74) = 17.82$, $\text{MSE} = 6.43$, $p < .001$; no other effects were significant. Interestingly, participants did not show significantly more negative feelings about the Russian company ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 2.33$) than the US company ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 2.00$), $t(75) = 0.23$, *ns*; and actually showed a nonsignificant trend toward more positive feelings about the Russian company ($M = 8.61$, $SD = 2.35$) than the US company ($M = 7.72$, $SD = 2.75$), $t(75) = 1.52$, $p = .13$.

A Group × Emotion ANOVA on the extent to which the director was emotionally affected revealed only a significant main effect of emotion, $F(1,62) = 49.03$; shame ($M = 8.87$) was seen as more affecting than guilt ($M = 4.45$). No other effect was significant, $F < 1$. Although 12 participants failed to complete this item, they were equally distributed, six each, in the shame and guilt conditions. The responsibility rating was not significantly affected by the manipulations; in particular, shame and guilt responses yielded near equal judgments of responsibility, $F(1,72) = 0.22$, and this was not moderated by group, $F(1,72) = 0.50$.

Insult, satisfaction, and respect analyses

The "insulted" and "offended" items ($\alpha = .58$) and the "valued" and "respected" items ($\alpha = .76$) were averaged into "insult" and "respect" indices, which were not correlated with each other ($r = .10$). The "satisfied," "fair," "happy," "easy," and "hopeful" items were averaged into a satisfaction index ($\alpha = .83$); respect ($r = .43$, $p < .05$) but not insult ($r = -.16$) was correlated with satisfaction.

An 2 × 2 ANOVA on insult ($\text{MSE} = 2.26$) showed a reliable Emotion × Group interaction, $F(1,74) = 6.98$, $p = .01$, with no main effects, both $p > .40$. In simple effects tests,

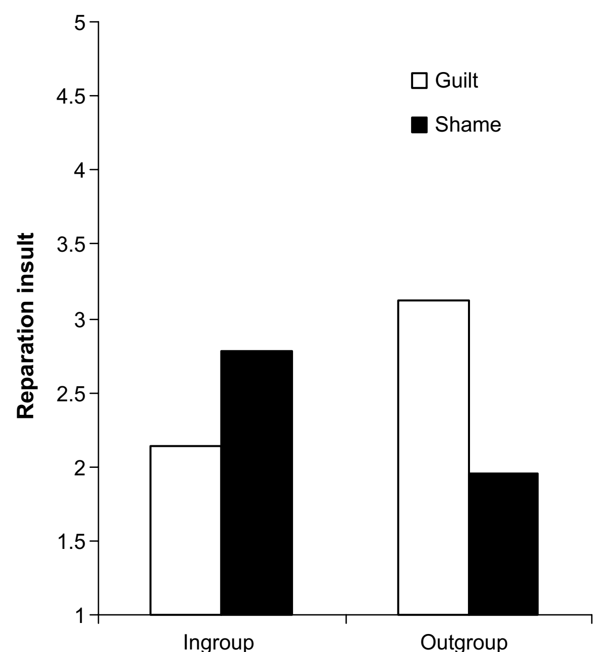

Fig. 1. Mean insult by emotion and group, Experiment 1.

the outgroup's expression of guilt was more insulting than its expression of shame, $F(1,74) = 6.53$, $p < .05$; while the ingroup's guilt tended to be less insulting than its shame, but not significantly so. Means are shown in Fig. 1. When the "emotionally affected" item was included as a covariate, the interaction remained significant, $F(1,61) = 5.78$, $MSE = 2.24$, $p < .05$.

A 2×2 ANOVA on satisfaction ($MSE = 4.37$) found a significant main effect of emotion, $F(1,74) = 5.06$, $p < .05$; shame led to more satisfaction, $M = 7.26$, $SD = 2.03$, than did guilt, $M = 6.23$, $SD = 2.18$. The interaction effect was only marginally significant, $F(1,74) = 2.95$, $p = .09$. The same analysis on respect showed only a main effect of emotion, $F(1,74) = 4.70$, $MSE = 6.51$, $p < .05$. Shame was seen as conveying more respect overall, $M = 5.05$, than guilt, $M = 3.77$.

To test the more specific prediction that an outgroup's shame would mitigate insult compared to the outgroup's guilt or the ingroup's shame, a planned contrast testing the outgroup/shame combination of conditions against outgroup/guilt and ingroup/shame was carried out. The contrast variable, entered after the other two variables in an orthogonal coding scheme, was significant ($\beta = -.25$, $p < .05$) and explained most of the manipulations' effects upon insult (contrast $sr^2 = 6.3\%$ out of a total R^2 of 9%).

All patterns of significance remained when suspicion and surprise were added as covariates.

Discussion

As expected, the critical interaction between target group and emotion emerged principally for insult. Participants considering an outgroup member's apology in the context of reparation took less insult from an expression of shame, as compared to guilt. Group membership did not influence judgments of the respect shown by the apology, which depended wholly on the emotion shown; shame conveyed greater respect than guilt, regardless of which group felt it.

It is noteworthy that the group interaction effects on insult were found in the absence of overt intergroup bias; the Russian company evoked, if anything, slightly more positive feelings than the US company, and no main effects of group on our other variables emerged. This pattern of results might be understandable as an outcome of norms among these university students against expressing an overt intergroup bias. However, it would be desirable to replicate these results in a context where more overt intergroup bias was shown. Finally, the results found on insult were also found in the face of somewhat low reliability of the insult items. Although this speaks to the strength of the result, it also shows that the insult measure could be improved.

Experiment 2

Experiment 2 further tested our predictions by explicitly contrasting a situation of reparations against a no-reparations condition. Because our predictions about insult and shame are specific to situations where an outgroup offers reparations, such a design would crucially test our predictions against other predictions based on general group bias, which would apply regardless of whether or not reparations were offered. Adding a third factor that varied outgroup action (reparations vs. withdrawal), we expected a higher-order moderating effect of this factor in Experiment 2, such that the Group × Emotion interaction found in Experiment 1 would only apply in the reparations condition.

Given that our theoretical account focuses on the ability of shame to mitigate insult from reparations, we also added a condition to the emotion manipulation in which the perpetrator was explicitly described as having no emotional reaction, to see whether shame or guilt was primarily responsible for Study 1's effects. We expected shame expressions to evoke lower insult than either guilt or no emotions in the outgroup reparation condition. We also added more questions measuring insult, to increase the reliability of this key measure. Finally, Experiment 2 was conducted with a Galician Spanish population, taking France as an outgroup, in the hope that their social norms against expressing bias would not be as strong.

Methods

Participants

Two hundred seventy-one participants were recruited for the experiment in the city of La Coruña in Galicia, a part of Spain with a strong regional identity, in exchange for a payment of 3€ (approximately $4 at the time). The questionnaire was given in high school and university classes and at a local community center. Ages ranged from 15 to 47, the mean being 18.85. Sixteen participants indicated that they were either not from Spain or not originally Galician, and were excluded from analyses, because the experiment framed Galicia as the ingroup. This left 255 participants, of whom 120 were male and 135 female.

Materials

We added four main modifications to Experiment 1's design. First, we included an Action factor by adding conditions describing withdrawal rather than reparations, using the sentence "He decides that what is best is to abandon the factory, retire, and never start a business venture again." Second, a no emotion condition was added in the Emotion factor; these scenarios replaced the emotion description with "... does not feel troubled by the accident." This resulted in a 2 (Action: Withdrawal vs. Reparations) × 3 (Emotion: Shame vs. Guilt vs. No Emotion) design. Third, three new questions measuring insult were added: "I would feel angry at the company director," "I would want revenge against the company director," and "I would feel rejection toward the company director." Fourth, the company was described either as Galician from La Coruña (ingroup) or French from Marseille (outgroup),

and the local river Mino was mentioned. The questionnaire was translated into Spanish, back-translated into English, and corrected.

Results

Manipulation checks

Averaging the three relevant scales, participants understood that the Galician company was Galician ($M = 9.30$, $SD = 1.57$) and the French company was not ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 2.06$), $t(252) = 23.88$, $p < .001$. Participants also showed ingroup bias: positive feelings were higher for the Galician company ($M = 9.05$, $SD = 2.14$) than for the French one ($M = 7.38$, $SD = 2.60$), $t(190) = 5.62$, $p < .001$. Negative feelings were lower for the Galician company ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 1.73$) than for the French one ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.98$), $t(190) = -1.96$, $p = .05$.

An 2 (group) × 3 (emotion) ANOVA on how much the director was seen as emotionally affected revealed a main effect of group, $F(2,248) = 11.71$, $p < .01$, MSE = 8.99, and a main effect of emotion, $F(2,248) = 17.66$, $p < .001$, but no significant interaction, $F(2,248) = 0.05$. The ingroup director ($M = 6.99$, $SD = 3.15$) was seen as more affected overall than the outgroup director ($M = 5.70$, $SD = 3.20$). Guilt ($M = 6.06$, $SD = 3.18$) was seen as less affecting than shame ($M = 7.64$, $SD = 2.68$), but both emotions were more affecting than no emotion ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 3.24$). All emotion conditions differed significantly from each other by Tukey post-hoc test.

Judgments of the director's responsibility were only affected by emotion; $F(2,243) = 5.71$, MSE = 1.13, $p < .01$. In Tukey post-hoc tests, the guilt condition had a higher mean responsibility ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.05$) than did shame ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 1.07$) or no emotion ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.08$) which did not differ from each other.

Insult, satisfaction, and respect analyses

The insult scale showed high reliability at $\alpha = .83$, and the satisfaction scale at $\alpha = .90$; the two respect items were correlated at $r = .84$. Insult and satisfaction showed a weak but significant inverse relationship, $r = -.21$, $p = .001$; unlike Study 1, insult and respect were negatively correlated at $r = -.32$, $p < .001$.

In the Group × Emotion × Action ANOVA on insult (MSE = 4.93), there was a main effect of action, $F(1,242) = 9.57$, $p < .001$, such that withdrawal was more insulting than reparation. More importantly, there was a significant three-way interaction, $F(2,242) = 3.69$, $p < .05$. Fig. 2 shows means for this interaction. Simple effects tests showed that within the reparation condition, the Group × Emotion interaction of Experiment 1 was replicated, $F(2,242) = 3.35$, $p < .05$. Building on Experiment 1, and showing the importance of reparations to our effects on insult, the Group × Emotion interaction was not found in the withdrawal condition, $F(2,242) = 0.64$. Simple effects of emotion within each combination of group and action

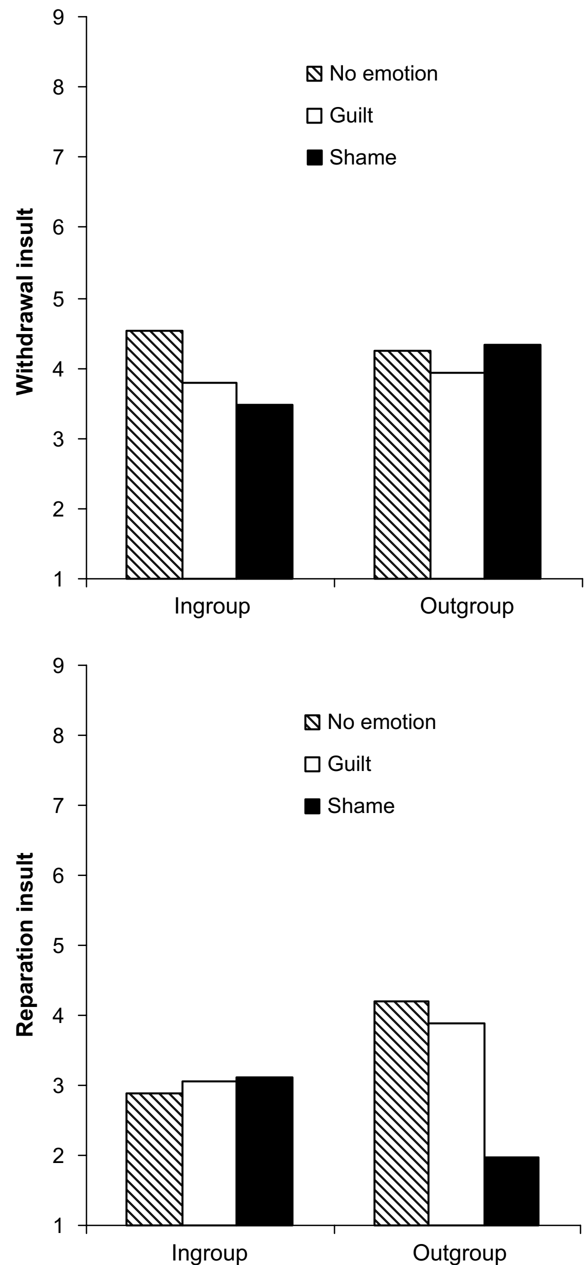

Fig. 2. Mean insult by emotion, group, and action, Experiment 2.

condition showed that only for the outgroup member offering reparation did emotion have an effect, $F(2,242) = 6.42$, $p < .01$; all other $F < 1.04$. Tukey post-hoc comparisons showed that for the outgroup member offering reparation, shame was less insulting than guilt or no emotion, which did not differ from each other. This difference from an emotionless expression establishes the key role of a shame expression in mitigating insult.

Extending the contrast analyses from Experiment 1, planned contrasts comparing outgroup shame against outgroup guilt, outgroup no emotion, and ingroup shame were carried out separately for reparation and withdrawal conditions. In reparation, this contrast representing a reduction in insult from outgroup shame was significant,

$\beta = -.30$, $p < .001$, and explained the majority of model variance, $R^2 = 11$, contrast $sr^2 = .09$. In withdrawal, the contrast was not significant, $\beta = .07$, $p = .77$.

Entering surprise and suspicion as covariates, the three-way interaction on insult remained significant, $F(1, 240) = 4.59$, $p < .05$. Likewise, when judgment of the perpetrator as emotionally affected was entered as a covariate, it remained significant, $F(1, 240) = 3.90$, $p < .05$. The interaction also survived entry of satisfaction as a covariate, $F(1, 240) = 4.01$, $p < .05$.

In the Group × Emotion × Action ANOVA on satisfaction (MSE = 5.61), there were main effects of emotion, $F(2, 242) = 3.45$, $p < .05$, and of action, $F(1, 242) = 73.84$, $p < .001$. Reparation ($M = 7.11$, $SD = 2.27$) was more satisfactory than withdrawal ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 2.53$). Post-hoc Tukey tests on emotion showed only a marginally significant difference, $p = .08$, in which shame ($M = 6.21$, $SD = 2.92$) was more satisfactory than no emotion ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 2.56$); guilt fell in between ($M = 5.60$, $SD = 2.76$). The Group × Emotion interaction was marginally significant, $F(2, 242) = 2.37$, $p = .096$, but no other interactions were significant including the three-way, $F(2, 242) = 0.25$. When insult was added as a covariate, the three-way interaction remained nonsignificant with $F < 1$, and the Group × Emotion interaction was reduced to $F(2, 241) = 1.02$, $p = .36$. Thus, satisfaction did not show the same specific interaction effect that insult did.

Similar analyses with respect as a dependent variable likewise showed no significant effects other than a main effect of action, $F(1, 184) = 28.44$, MSE = 8.63, $p < .001$, such that reparation ($M = 7.79$, $SD = 2.59$) gained more respect overall than withdrawal ($M = 5.54$, $SD = 3.21$).

General discussion

These experiments showed that when an outgroup member provides reparations, an expression of shame mitigates insult better than an expression of guilt. In Experiment 1, whose design always described reparations, and in the reparations conditions of Experiment 2, shame was less insulting than guilt when the transgressor was presented as a member of an outgroup. These effects were not found when the alternative response of withdrawal was presented. Moreover, both experiments found the strongest effects on measures of insult, and found weak or no effects on satisfaction measures. In Experiment 2, the addition of a no emotion condition also established that when an outgroup offered reparations, guilt and an explicitly emotionless response were equally insulting, whereas a shame expression worked to reduce the insult in those conditions.

We believe our insult effect to be more specific than a simple desire for the outgroup to suffer the most painful emotion or to express the most dispositional negative self-assessment. Such prejudicial responses should have shown themselves regardless of the action taken. Instead, in Experiment 2, the key interaction pattern involving guilt/shame and ingroup/outgroup on insult appeared only when reparations were proposed. Merely prejudicial responses would have also extended to lower satisfaction and respect from the outgroup apology as well as higher insult. However, the key interaction pattern on satisfaction was only marginally significant in Experiment 1, was not observed independently of insult in Experiment 2, and was also not moderated by action in Experiment 2, whereas for respect the key pattern was not observed at all.

Nevertheless, both studies found that shame overall, whether expressed by ingroup or outgroup members, tended to lead to more respect and satisfaction than guilt did. This may point to two different underlying processes. Positive reactions to an apology may be dictated by the type of emotion expressed regardless of group membership, possibly due to ingroup bias or the ultimate attribution error. However, as we have shown, negative reactions such as insult are more sensitive to the combination of outgroup membership and an offer of reparations.

We believe that our effects on insult cannot be explained merely by the fact that the shame expression was seen to be more emotionally affecting than the guilt expression. First, judgments of the perpetrator's emotionality did not follow the same interaction patterns that insult did. Second, in both experiments, the key interaction on insult remained significant when controlling for emotionality of the expression. Another alternative explanation is that shame may have produced less insult because it made the perpetrator appear more responsible, but evidence from these experiments also speaks against this. In neither experiment was the director in the shame condition rated as more culpable for the incident than the director in the guilt condition, and participants in Experiment 2 actually rated him as being more culpable for the incident when he expressed guilt, consistent with the definition of guilt emphasizing culpability for one's actions. It thus seems unlikely that the guilt condition could have led to the inference of less responsibility. Finally, it is also not plausible that our key effects were due to surprise or suspicion at the combination of shame and reparation, as they remained significant when controlling for those variables.

Experiment 2 also showed a strong main effect of action such that reparations created more positive responses, and less insult, than withdrawal. This may explain why the outgroup's expression of shame in the reparation condition was less insulting than in the withdrawal condition; overall, reparations tended to increase positive and reduce negative reactions. If the reparations were given with no emotion or the inappropriate emotion of guilt, however, insult was equally high as for withdrawal.

We should also point out some limitations of these experiments. We based our manipulations of shame and guilt conceptually on the work of Lewis and Tangney. It would also be useful to test expressions more directly derived from the alternative concept of shame as external social exposure (Smith et al., 2002), or to include stronger expressions of emotion, such as crying, as part of the guilt expression. Also, the "no emotion" condition in Experiment 2 told

participants the director felt no emotion, which might have been interpreted as an explicitly callous response; indeed, for the key conditions, this control was seen as just as insulting as the "guilt" condition. Although a condition that said nothing about emotions might be a more appropriate control, problems also arise with this approach; participants might infer remorse from the situation, as in Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Forster and Montada (2004), or might do so differentially depending on group membership.

Implications

These results provide an important demonstration of the functional nature of shame in an intergroup context. In offering an apology to accompany reparations, outgroup members might be better off expressing the emotion of shame, which functions to signal lowered status in a social hierarchy (e.g., Gilbert, 2003). Because the emotion of guilt functions to repair social relationships (Baumeister et al., 1994; Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1995), our findings also suggest that someone who enjoys an existing ingroup relationship with the perceiver would not be insulted by a guilt expression, though even then, guilt seems to attract less positive responses than shame does. This parallels criticism of existing theories and measures for ignoring positive aspects of shame and negative aspects of guilt (Luyten, Fontaine, & Corveleyn, 2002). In the light of findings that shame corresponds more to the real or imagined judgments of other people, relative to guilt (Smith et al., 2002), our findings indicate an appeasement function of shame, one that functions most strongly outside reciprocal relationships. Shame, ultimately, may indeed be bad for the self, and for a dyad with expectations of mutual support. However, by showing that people may be insulted by an outgroup expression of guilt, our findings add to previous questions raised about the usefulness of intergroup guilt (e.g., Iyer, Leach, & Pedersen, 2004). At the same time, guilt may promote the more satisfying outcome of reparative action to a degree that counteracts any insult taken. Perhaps the ideal, if unlikely, combination is to feel and act on guilt, but to express shame.

We also believe that our existing findings have implications for the world of politics and public relations. If avoiding insult toward the wronged is a goal, then the correct emotional stance while offering reparation varies depending on whether the wronged belong to the same or a different social group. Anecdotally, this observation is echoed by the skeptical response of the Arab world to U.S. President Bush's 2004 statements on the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, which characterized the abuse as a "mistake" not characteristic of Americans (Office of the Press Secretary, May 5, 2004). Based on our findings, we would argue that Bush's apology might have insulted Arab outgroup members, in part because it used the language of contrition rather than self-abasement. In cases such as this, it is possible that the apologizing person views the apology as constructive because it expressed some kind of moral emotion. Moreover, the apologizing person's ingroup constituency may share this view, and praise their leader for being a moral person. This benefit may sometimes, in pragmatic terms, take precedence over the apology's acceptance by its recipients. But when the feelings of an apology's recipients do matter, our results suggest that it is important to express shame, rather than mere guilt.

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