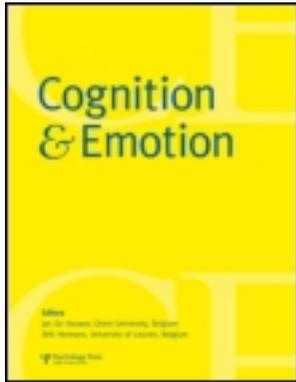


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Me against we: In-group transgression, collective shame, and in-group-directed hostility

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Me against we: In-group transgression, collective shame, and in-group-directed hostility

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People can experience great distress when a group to which they belong (in-group) is perceived to have committed an immoral act. We hypothesised that people would direct hostility toward a transgressing in-group whose actions threaten their self-image and evoke collective shame. Consistent with this theorising, three studies found that reminders of in-group transgression provoked several expressions of in-group-directed hostility, including in-group-directed hostile emotion (Studies 1 and 2), in-group-directed derogation (Study 2), and in-group-directed punishment (Study 3). Across studies, collective shame—but not the related group-based emotion collective guilt—mediated the relationship between in-group transgression and in-group-directed hostility. Implications for group-based emotion, social identity, and group behaviour are discussed.

Keywords: In-group transgression; In-group-directed hostility; Collective shame; Collective guilt.

People can sometimes perceive the accomplishments of their social groups (in-groups) as a positive reflection on themselves (Smith & Mackie, 2006). Yet when these very same groups transgress social and moral boundaries, opposition and outrage toward the in-group can result—for instance, through petition signing and displays of derogatory bumper stickers (Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007; Mascia & Grant, 2009; Urbina, 2009). Acts of opposition toward the in-group can be more extreme, as evidenced by the burning of national flags by citizens condemning their country (Rasmusen, 1998; Welch, 2000).

These observations speak to the central question of the present investigation: Why are people sometimes hostile toward a transgressing in-group? Building on research on the consequences of in-group transgression (e.g., Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Iyer et al., 2007; Johns, Schmader, & Lickel, 2005; Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarnier, & Ames, 2005), the current investigation examined how in-group transgression may provoke hostility directed toward the in-group, and tested whether a specific group-based emotion—collective shame—underlies this response. Whereas prior research has

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documented that shame can provoke hostility in an interpersonal context (e.g., Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992), the current research extends this work by examining how shame and hostility operate in the intergroup context—when individuals are shamed by their in-group's actions.

Consequences of in-group transgression

Because people identify with their groups (Brewer, 2007; Chen, Boucher, & Tapias, 2006; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), they can experience psychological distress when their in-group commits an immoral act (Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi, & Cehajic, 2008; Glasford, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009; Iyer & Leach, 2008; Johns et al., 2005). Even in the absence of direct personal involvement, in-group transgression can implicate people in a wrongdoing and prompt a variety of responses aimed at alleviating the individual's resultant anxiety (e.g., Brown et al., 2008; Doosje et al., 1998; Glasford, Pratto, & Dovidio, 2008; Iyer et al., 2007). The current investigation ascertained whether in-group transgression could cause people to direct hostility—specifically, hostile emotion, derogation, and punishment—toward the in-group as they grapple with its wrongful actions.

Several lines of evidence support the hypothesis that in-group transgression can prompt in-group-directed hostility. Research on the *black sheep effect* finds that individuals will sometimes derogate an in-group member who displays anti-normative or socially undesirable behaviour (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988). This motivation may derive from a desire to protect oneself from threats posed by being associated with unfavourable others (Eidelman & Biernat, 2003; Eidelman, Silvia, & Biernat, 2006). Although the derogation of a deviant in-group member and hostility directed toward an entire group are conceptually distinct, research on the *black sheep effect* indicates that individuals may behave antagonistically toward the in-group when their self-image is threatened by its questionable behaviour.

Recent research on group-based feelings of anger further set the stage for our study of in-

group-directed hostility. For instance, Iyer et al. (2007) found that British citizens exposed to threatening depictions of the in-group reported increased feelings of anger toward both the British people and the British Government. Similarly, Maitner, Mackie, and Smith (2006) found that when the in-group failed to respond appropriately to an insult posed by an out-group, in-group members felt angry toward the in-group. These findings suggest that certain situations may provoke more extreme antagonism toward the in-group, including hostility, which was the focus of the present investigation. We proposed that these hostile reactions may be especially likely when an in-group's immoral actions evoke distressing feelings of collective shame.

Collective shame and in-group-directed hostility

Collective shame is part of a family of related, but distinct, group-critical emotions that also include collective guilt (Lickel, Schmader, & Barquissau, 2004). Collective shame is unique, however, in that it alone is prompted by appraisals that an in-group transgression has threatened one's self-image (Johns et al., 2005; Lickel et al., 2005). Although both shame and guilt can arise in the face of a transgression (Johns et al., 2005; Keltner & Buswell, 1996; Lickel et al., 2004, 2005; Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996), these two emotions involve different patterns of experience and action tendencies.

People feel collective guilt when they perceive they had a degree of control over a specific in-group transgression, and this sense of responsibility may motivate reparations to a harmed out-group (Lickel et al., 2004; Tangney et al., 1996). By contrast, people feel collective shame when they perceive that an in-group transgression reflects negatively on their group identity, and the ensuing sense that "my group is bad" can directly impugn a person's self-image (Johns et al., 2005; Lickel et al., 2005). Collective shame has been linked to a series of distinct motivations, including desires to withdraw from the shame-inducing situation and distancing from the transgressing

in-group (Iyer et al., 2007; Johns et al., 2005; Lickel et al., 2005). This research indicates that collective shame—due to its unique association with self-image threats—prompts desires to distance from the threatening entity, perhaps in an effort to protect the self from further devaluation. However, whether people who feel shamed by their group's actions may, in turn, direct hostility toward the in-group remains untested. We predict that people will feel hostile toward the in-group to the extent that they perceive an in-group transgression as threatening to their self-image and feel collective shame.

Our hypothesis that collective shame is specifically associated with in-group-directed hostility is bolstered by research on interpersonal feelings of shame and hostility. Shame signifies an attack on one's identity (Niedenthal, Tangney, & Gavanski, 1994) and can motivate individuals to be hostile toward others (Bierhoff, 2002; Gilligan, 2003; Paulhus, Robins, Trzesniewski, & Tracy, 2004; Stuewig & Tangney, 2007; Tangney et al., 1992). This dynamic is at the heart of the "shame-rage spirals" theorised by Scheff and Retzinger (1991), in which people who feel shame respond with rage against the source of these painful feelings. Shame, originating from appraisals of self-threat, is uniquely linked to anger and hostility. To the extent that the actions of the in-group can also threaten the self, the resultant feelings of collective shame may similarly prompt hostility toward the threatening in-group.

Our conceptual analysis of in-group transgression and collective shame, and the findings we have reviewed concerning individual shame and hostility, gave rise to the current hypotheses. We propose that when the in-group commits a wrongdoing, its members may themselves feel as if they, too, have been wronged—because their group's immoral actions have tarnished their self-image and provoked collective shame. Being shamed by the in-group may, in turn, motivate people to respond by directing hostility toward the source of these distressing feelings.

Overview of the present research

Three studies investigated whether reminders of in-group transgression can prompt in-group-directed hostility, specifically in-group-directed hostile emotion (Studies 1 and 2), in-group-directed derogation (Study 2), and in-group-directed punishment (Study 3). We examined these reactions in the context of three transgressions committed by America—in Iraq (Study 1), toward foreign nations (Study 2), and in Afghanistan (Study 3). Using diverse methodologies, across university and nationwide samples that represent a range of demographic backgrounds, and while accounting for alternative explanations of our findings, we tested the hypothesised relationships between in-group transgression, self-image threat, collective shame, and in-group-directed hostility.

STUDY 1

Study 1 tested the hypothesis that in-group transgression leads to in-group-directed hostility via collective shame, while also investigating an alternative emotion—collective guilt—that might account for the relationship between in-group transgression and in-group-directed hostility. We examined this issue in the context of American citizens' responses to prison abuse occurring at the hands of the American military in Iraq. Since the start of the Iraq war, the American military's treatment of Iraqi prisoners has been a source of distress among Americans (Sontag, 2004). As a result, American-run prisons in Iraq provide a fertile ground for examining individuals' hostile motivations toward their own country. At the time of the study, abuses in North Korean-run prisons were taking place that were similar to those in American-run prisons (US Department of State, 2008). As such, North Korean-run prisons provided a control condition in which a foreign country was implicated in transgressions similar to those committed by participants' own country.

After reading a vignette describing prison abuses by *either* Americans *or* North Koreans, participants completed measures of *either* collective shame *or* collective guilt, and reported their levels of hostile emotion toward the in-group, which served as our measure of in-group-directed hostility. Assessing both collective guilt and shame allowed us to test the specificity of collective shame in motivating in-group-directed hostility. Toward this aim, we created separate reporting conditions for these two emotions because prior evidence suggests that individuals have difficulty distinguishing between shame and guilt items when presented simultaneously (Williamson, Sandage, & Lee, 2007). To circumvent this issue of potential conflation, we made reports of collective guilt and collective shame a between-subjects factor, yielding a 2 (Group Transgression: in-group/out-group) \times 2 (Reported Collective Emotion: shame/guilt) design.

Method

Participants

American participants ($N = 347$) were recruited from an e-mail list maintained by a private west-coast university. Data were screened for duplicate IP and e-mail addresses to eliminate potential repeat responders (Kraut et al., 2004). Six participants were excluded from the analyses due to aberrant study completion times (at least three *SDs* above the mean). One additional participant was excluded for not identifying his citizenship. Finally, 39 participants were excluded for incorrectly identifying the contents of the passage they had read. Thus, a final total of 301 participants (200 female, three did not state sex) were included in the analyses. The mean age was 31.20 years ($SD = 9.30$), mean years of post-secondary education was 3.74 ($SD = 3.69$), and mean political orientation (1 = *Extremely Liberal*, 7 = *Extremely Conservative*) was 3.58 ($SD = 1.38$). The ethnic composition of the sample was 77.4% White, 15.9% Asian, 3.3% Hispanic/Latino, 2.3% African American, 0.7% Native American, and 0.4% unspecified.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to read one of the two passages: the in-group transgression passage, describing abuses perpetrated by the American military, or the out-group transgression passage, describing similar abuses by the North Korean military. Below is an excerpt of the passage participants read:

The systematic pattern of abuses in American-run (North Korean-run) prisons in Iraq (North Korea) is evidenced by countless eyewitness accounts and harrowing first-hand testimonies. . . . One prisoner described his experience as follows: "I was put in a tiny, filthy cell with a mattress on the floor and nothing humane. Every passing day felt like a year. I was beaten 3 or 4 times daily. A guard caused my hand to bleed by pushing me into a door and a wall while I was handcuffed. . . . The same guard also kicked my leg shackles and pulled me by the hair to force me to face an American (North Korean) flag"

After reading the article, participants completed a questionnaire assessing their levels of *either* collective shame *or* collective guilt, then reported their feelings of hostility toward the in-group. Participants then answered demographic questions and were debriefed before exiting the study.

Measures

Collective shame and collective guilt. To measure collective shame, we used four items adapted from the Collective Guilt Acceptance scale (Branscombe, Slugoski, & Kappen, 2004; Doosje et al., 1998). Items were modified to specify shame as the target emotion and the relevant in-group (Americans). Participants were told, "We are interested in what you are feeling *right now*", and rated each item on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *No shame*, 7 = *Extreme shame*). Sample items included, "I feel shame about Americans' harmful past actions toward other groups" and "I feel shame about the negative things Americans did to other groups", $\alpha = .97$. To assess collective guilt, the original four items were used that specify guilt as the target emotion, $\alpha = .97$.

To test differences across conditions in overall levels of collective emotion, we also created a

composite variable. Here, each participant contributed one score to reflect their feelings of collective guilt or collective shame, depending on the reported collective emotion condition to which they had been assigned.

In-group-directed hostile emotion. Hostile emotion toward the in-group was assessed using the emotion terms “hostile”, “upset”, and the three emotions comprising the hostility triad, “contempt”, “anger”, and “disgust” (Izard, 1971, 1977; Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999). Instructions read, “Indicate to what extent you feel each emotion toward *other Americans* at this moment” (1 = *Very slightly or not at all*, 5 = *Extremely*), $\alpha = .89$.

Given that the dependent variables in the current study consisted of negative emotion items, we verified that collective shame and collective guilt were distinguishable from the measure of in-group-directed hostile emotion. We conducted two separate factor analyses, one for collective shame and in-group-directed hostile emotion and another for collective guilt and in-group-directed hostile emotion. In the first factor analysis, using varimax rotation, we found the anticipated two factors. This solution explained 79.65% of the variance. Factor loadings of the predicted factors exceeded .75 but did not exceed .30 on the opposing factor. A parallel analysis for collective guilt and in-group-directed hostile emotion also yielded the anticipated two-factor structure, explaining 79.32% of the variance. Factor loadings showed a similar pattern. Factor structures were invariant to whether the method of extraction was principal components or principal axis factoring. The results from these factor analyses indicate that our potential mediators (collective shame and collective guilt) were distinct from our outcome variable (in-group-directed hostile emotion).

Results

Neither sex nor political orientation moderated any of the results across the three studies, and thus results are reported collapsed across these independent variables. We first investigated group

differences in overall collective emotion using a 2 (Group Transgression: in-group/out-group) \times 2 (Reported Collective Emotion: shame/guilt) analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was a main effect for Group Transgression condition on overall collective emotion, $F(1, 297) = 18.78$, $p < .001$, and a main effect for type of Reported Collective Emotion, $F(1, 297) = 8.12$, $p < .01$. However, these effects were qualified by a significant Group Transgression \times Reported Collective Emotion interaction, $F(1, 297) = 4.60$, $p < .05$. We performed a series of *t*-tests to further decompose the specific effects that group transgression had on feelings of collective shame and guilt.

Participants who confronted the in-group transgression and reported collective shame exhibited greater levels of shame ($M = 5.43$, $SD = 1.40$) than did participants in the out-group transgression condition/collective shame reporting condition ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.69$), $t(142) = 4.81$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.81$. However, participants in the in-group transgression/collective guilt reporting condition ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.84$) did not express different levels of guilt than participants in the out-group transgression/collective guilt reporting condition ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.71$), $t(155) = 1.5$, *ns*. Furthermore, when emotion reports were compared across in-group transgression conditions, collective shame was significantly greater than collective guilt, $t(144) = 3.53$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.59$.

A 2 (Group Transgression: in-group/out-group) \times 2 (Reported Collective Emotion: shame/guilt) ANOVA indicated that the main effect of Group Transgression on in-group-directed hostile emotion was significant, $F(1, 294) = 7.65$, $p < .01$, but neither the main effect for Reported Collective Emotion nor the Group Transgression \times Reported Collective Emotion interaction was significant ($ps > .10$). As predicted, participants in the in-group transgression condition expressed significantly greater hostile emotion ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 0.99$) than participants in the out-group transgression condition ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 0.85$), $t(296) = 2.76$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.32$.

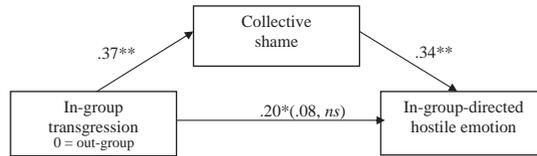


Figure 1. Mediation model of the relationship between in-group transgression and in-group-directed hostile emotion, mediated by reported levels of collective shame in Study 1, Sobel $z = 3.01$, $p < .01$. Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

We next tested whether collective shame or collective guilt mediated the in-group transgression \rightarrow in-group-directed hostile emotion relationship. We split the sample by reported collective emotion (shame/guilt) and conducted separate mediational analyses for each emotion. Guilt could not be a mediator, as it was not related to group transgression condition (Baron & Kenny, 1986). As for collective shame, group transgression condition (out-group transgression = 0, in-group transgression = 1) predicted both in-group-directed hostile emotion ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < .05$) and collective shame ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < .01$). When group transgression condition and collective shame were simultaneously entered into a regression equation to predict hostile emotion, collective shame was a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < .01$), whereas the effect of group transgression condition was reduced to non-significance ($\beta = 0.08$, *ns*), Sobel $z = 3.01$, $p < .01$ (see Figure 1).

Discussion

In Study 1, reminding American citizens of prison abuse committed by their country's military evoked collective shame, but not collective guilt, and prompted increased hostile emotion toward fellow Americans. Further, feelings of collective shame specifically and fully mediated the relationship between in-group transgression and in-group-directed hostile emotion. These findings indicate that collective shame underlies the motivation to express hostility toward a transgressing in-group.

We designed Study 2 to conceptually replicate and extend the current findings. Study 1 suggested that collective shame exclusively explains in-group-directed hostility, but feelings of collective guilt were not induced, perhaps because participants did not feel responsible for the in-

group transgression, which is central to feelings of collective guilt (e.g., Lickel et al., 2004, 2005). However, the possibility remains that either shame or guilt, when evoked, could prompt in-group-directed hostility. In the subsequent study, we aimed to better distinguish collective shame from collective guilt so as to determine each emotion's specific contribution to in-group-directed hostility. We also investigated a possible moderator of the current findings: identification with the in-group. Given that the current investigation was guided by the notion that individuals identify with their groups and are implicated in its actions (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individual differences in levels of group identification might influence the nature of the relationships between in-group transgression, collective shame, and in-group-directed hostility. We examined this possibility in the subsequent study.

STUDY 2

Participants in Study 2 were asked to recall and write about an event that they felt represented a transgression by their own country or a foreign country. This narrative methodology is common in emotion research (Johns et al., 2005; Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009; Tangney et al., 1996). We then assessed collective shame and collective guilt by asking each participant to report on both emotions, thus complementing the between-subjects design of Study 1. Further, we assessed individual differences in pre-existing levels of in-group identification to test whether this variable would moderate any of our effects. As our outcome variables, we assessed both in-group-directed hostile emotion and in-group-directed derogation, thus capturing separate, but

convergent, expressions of in-group-directed hostility. To test the robustness of our effects, in-group-directed hostile emotion was assessed with a new measure adapted from previous research (Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991), and to index in-group-directed derogation, we asked participants to rank the in-group's status relative to other groups. Thus, Study 2 extended our previous study by examining responses to incidents of in-group transgression that participants themselves recalled, by simultaneously measuring collective shame and guilt, by assessing both in-group-directed hostile emotion and derogation as indices of in-group-directed hostility, and by exploring a potential moderator of our effects.

Method

Participants

Undergraduate US citizens ($N=109$) were recruited from a large public university and received course credit for participating. Ten participants with dual citizenship were excluded, and twelve additional participants were excluded for not complying with the experimental instructions (e.g., writing about a topic other than an in-group/out-group transgression). Thus, 87 participants (50 female) were included in the final sample. The mean age was 19.97 years ($SD=1.77$) and mean political orientation (1 = *Extremely Liberal*, 7 = *Extremely Conservative*) was 3.14 ($SD=1.36$). The ethnic composition of the sample was 40.2% White, 41.4% Asian, 11.5% Hispanic/Latino, 4.6% African-American, and 2.2% Other.

Procedure

Participants were seated at a desk in a private booth and given a packet containing all study materials. Participants first completed a measure of group identification followed by some filler questions that assessed their personality traits (Ten Item Personality Inventory; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003). Participants then spent five minutes thinking and writing about a time when they felt America *or* a foreign nation transgressed against another group of people.

Whether participants were instructed to write about an in-group or out-group transgression formed a between-subjects factor. Finally, participants completed measures of collective shame and collective guilt, in-group-directed hostile emotion, and in-group-directed derogation. After completing the packet, participants were debriefed and excused from the study.

Measures

Group identification. Four items (1 = *Disagree strongly*, 7 = *Agree strongly*) assessing pre-existing levels of group identification were adapted from the identity subscale of Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) collective self-esteem scale (e.g., "In general, being American is an important part of my self-image"), $\alpha = .87$.

Collective shame and collective guilt. Collective shame and guilt items were adapted from Brown et al. (2008, Study 3). Five items (1 = *Disagree strongly*, 7 = *Agree strongly*) assessed collective shame (e.g., "I feel shame when I think about America's actions toward other groups"), $\alpha = .89$. Four items measured collective guilt (e.g., "Even if I have done nothing bad, I feel guilty for the behaviour of America toward other groups"), $\alpha = .87$.

In-group-directed hostile emotion. Hostility toward America was assessed using four items adapted from an interpersonal hostility measure (Crocker et al., 1991). Participants rated their agreement (1 = *Disagree strongly*, 7 = *Agree strongly*) with four items: "I feel *angry* toward America", "I feel *cruel* toward America", "I feel *agreeable* toward America" (reverse scored), and "I feel *cooperative* toward America" (reverse scored), $\alpha = .79$.

In-group status. To assess the degree of status attributed to the in-group, participants were given a picture of a ladder with 10 rungs (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000) and asked to place an X on the rung that they felt reflected their view of America's status relative to other nations. In this measure, lower values correspond to reduced

status and thus reflect in-group-directed derogation.

Results

We first tested whether pre-existing levels of group identification moderated any of the dependent variables of interest. We did this by entering the between-subjects factor of group transgression (in-group/out-group) into a multiple regression equation alongside group identification and the interaction of group transgression and group identification (Aiken & West, 1991). Group identification did not moderate the effects of group transgression on collective shame, collective guilt, in-group-directed hostile emotion, or in-group-directed derogation. Across the entire sample, ignoring assignment to group transgression condition, we found that group identification was unrelated to collective shame or collective guilt. However, group identification was associated with reduced in-group-directed hostile emotion ($r = -.42$, $p < .001$) and increased in-group status ($r = .35$, $p < .01$), indicating that pre-existing levels of group identification predicted decreased hostile tendencies toward the in-group. However, as none of the group transgression \times group identification interactions were significant, subsequent results are reported collapsed across group identification.

Comparisons between conditions

Reminders of in-group transgression caused significant increases in shame ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.27$) compared to the out-group transgression condition ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.30$), $t(85) = 2.06$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.45$. In-group transgression also caused significant increases in guilt ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.20$) relative to the out-group transgression condition ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.34$), $t(85) = 2.10$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.46$. Further, in-group transgression provoked marginally significant increases in hostile emotion toward America ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.10$) relative to the out-group transgression condition ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.11$), $t(85) = 1.90$, $p = .06$, $d = 0.41$. Finally, in-group transgression participants attributed decreased status to America ($M = 5.64$, $SD = 2.02$)

relative to the out-group transgression condition ($M = 6.60$, $SD = 1.77$), $t(82) = -2.33$, $p < .05$, $d = -0.51$.

Multiple mediation analyses

To determine whether collective shame specifically mediated the in-group transgression \rightarrow in-group-directed hostility link, we pitted it against collective guilt in separate multiple mediation analyses (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) for each of the dependent variables of interest. We employed bootstrapping (2000 resamples with bias corrected and accelerated confidence intervals) to estimate the indirect effects of collective shame and guilt. This technique is recommended for relatively small sample sizes. Mediation occurs when the 95% confidence interval (CI) of the indirect effect does not contain zero.

In-group-directed hostile emotion. Together, collective shame and guilt mediated the relationship between in-group transgression and in-group-directed hostile emotion (CI = 0.03, 0.64). Importantly, when considering the specific indirect effects of either mediator, collective shame was significant (CI = 0.02, 0.52) but collective guilt was not (CI = -0.03, 0.47). In other words, when the effects of collective shame and guilt were considered simultaneously, shame was the only significant mediator of the in-group transgression \rightarrow in-group-directed hostile emotion relationship.

In-group status. Together, collective shame and guilt did not mediate the effect of in-group transgression on status attributed to the in-group (CI = -0.80, 0.04). However, the specific indirect effect of collective shame was significant (CI = -1.14, -0.01) whereas that of collective guilt was not (CI = -0.31, 0.51). Paralleling the previous analyses, collective shame specifically mediated the in-group transgression \rightarrow in-group status relationship when considered alongside collective guilt. The results of these two multiple mediation analyses are depicted in Figure 2.

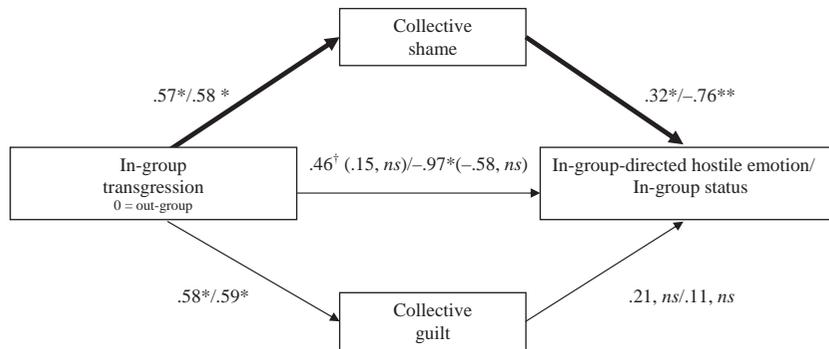


Figure 2. Bootstrapped multiple mediation model simultaneously testing collective shame and collective guilt as mediators of the in-group transgression → in-group-directed hostility link. Collective shame, but not collective guilt, mediates the in-group transgression → in-group-directed hostile emotion link ($N = 87$) as well as the in-group transgression → in-group status link ($N = 84$) in Study 2. Note: † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. Unstandardised regression coefficients are displayed.

Discussion

The current findings converge with those of the previous study. Reminders of in-group transgression provoked two forms of in-group-directed hostility. Specifically, in-group transgression provoked increased hostile emotion toward America in general, although this effect fell just short of conventional significance levels. These findings parallel Study 1, which employed a different measure of hostile emotion to assess hostility toward other Americans, indicating that in-group transgression can prompt hostility toward the in-group (*America*) and in-group members (*Americans*). Moreover, Study 2 found that in-group transgression also caused participants to derogate the in-group by attributing reduced status to it, which extends our earlier findings to a related but distinct form of in-group-directed hostility.

In Study 2, reminders of in-group transgression prompted significant increases in both collective shame and collective guilt. These findings contrast with the first study, which found that in-group transgression provoked only collective shame. Whereas Study 1 examined reactions to a particular in-group transgression (American prison abuse), Study 2 employed a free-recall method in which participants were asked to generate their own example of an in-group transgression. The subjective and vivid nature of these recollections may explain why both collective shame and guilt

arose. Importantly, although both emotions were evoked, it was specifically collective shame that explained individuals' hostile motivations toward a transgressing in-group. These findings bolster our hypothesis that collective shame underlies the relationship between in-group transgression and in-group-directed hostility.

We did not find a moderating effect of pre-existing group identification on any of the outcome variables. Nevertheless, independent of group transgression condition, group identification was associated with significant decreases in in-group-directed hostile emotion and increased attributions of in-group status. The absence of any group transgression by group identification moderations, however, coheres with prior work documenting the inconsistent, and sometimes nonexistent, relationships between group identification and collective emotion (see Iyer & Leach, 2008).

STUDY 3

The previous two studies established that reminders of in-group transgression prompt in-group-directed hostility via feelings of collective shame, but not collective guilt. Given the specific and consistent association between collective shame and in-group-directed hostility, in the current study we sought to further probe this relationship

by examining the role of self-image threat, which we hypothesised was implicated in in-group-directed hostile motivations. Assessing self-image threat thus enabled a direct test of our full theoretical model: In-group transgression motivates in-group-directed hostility to the extent that it activates appraisals of self-image threat and, in turn, evokes collective shame.

Study 3 focused on the present-day harmful actions of the American military in the war in Afghanistan, a timely political issue during data collection (Filkins, 2009). American participants listened to an audio recording of a fictional news report describing civilian casualties caused by the American military or the military of a foreign NATO country, Belgium, also involved in the Afghanistan war. Following the manipulation, we measured self-image threat—the extent to which participants viewed the transgression as threatening to their views of themselves—as well as collective shame. We then measured participants' support for American troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, as withdrawal tendencies are associated with collective shame (Iyer et al., 2007), as well as in-group-directed hostility, assessed here in terms of action tendencies aimed at directly punishing America. Assessing desires to punish the in-group alongside another behavioural tendency—withdrawal—allowed us to investigate whether collective shame can simultaneously activate multiple action tendencies.

Method

Participants

Undergraduate students ($N=166$) at a large public university received course credit in exchange for completing the study. Twenty-one participants were excluded for having dual citizenship or identifying themselves as non-US citizens. Five participants were excluded for incorrectly identifying the perpetrators of the actions described in the news report. Thus, a final total of 140 US citizens (71 female) were included in the analyses. The mean age was 19.81 years ($SD=1.86$) and mean political orientation ($1 = Extremely Liberal, 7 = Extremely Conserva-$

tive) was 2.81 ($SD=1.18$). The ethnic composition of the sample was 55.7% White, 28.6% Asian, 5.7% Hispanic/Latino, 2.8% African American, and 7.1% Other.

Procedure

Participants sat in front of a computer in a private sound-attenuated cubicle and received a packet containing the instructions and measures for the experiment. The cover page of the packet informed participants that they would listen to a news report before completing the remainder of the questionnaire. These news reports consisted of either the in-group (American army) or out-group (Belgian army) transgression. Assignment to in-group/out-group transgression condition was random. Participants in the in-group transgression condition listened to a narrator describe the deaths of thousands of innocent Afghani civilians at the hands of the American military. Participants in the out-group transgression condition listened to a similar report that implicated the Belgian army in the atrocities committed in Afghanistan. Following the news report, participants completed the questionnaire containing the dependent variables of interest and demographics. When finished, participants were debriefed and excused from the study.

Measures

Self-image threat. Two items assessed the degree to which participants perceived the events as threatening to their individual identities ($1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree$): “I feel as if the events described in the broadcast reflect negatively on how I see myself as a person” and “The events described in the broadcast reflect negatively on my identity”, $\alpha = .81$.

Collective shame. Three items measured collective shame ($1 = No shame, 7 = Extreme shame$): “I feel shame about Americans' actions abroad”, “I feel shame for the damage done to other groups by Americans”, and “Being associated with Americans makes me feel shame”, $\alpha = .82$.

Withdrawal from Afghanistan. A single item measured support for American troop withdrawal from Afghanistan (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*), “American troops should withdraw from Afghanistan”.

In-group-directed punishment. Three items assessed motivations to punish the in-group (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*): “America should be punished for events in Afghanistan”, “NATO should levy a severe fine on America for its military’s actions in Afghanistan”, and “I would volunteer time to work for an anti-American student organisation”, $\alpha = .73$.

Results

Comparisons between conditions

As expected, participants appraised the in-group transgression as more threatening to their self-image ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.55$) relative to the out-group transgression ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 1.30$), $t(138) = 3.62$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.62$. In-group transgression participants also reported significantly greater levels of collective shame ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.27$) than did out-group transgression participants ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.37$), $t(138) = 2.88$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.49$. Support for American troop withdrawal from Afghanistan was marginally greater in the in-group transgression condition ($M = 5.15$, $SD = 1.72$) than in the out-group transgression condition ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 1.91$), $t(138) = 1.78$, $p = .08$, $d = 0.30$. Finally, participants in the in-group transgression condition reported greater desires to punish America ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.07$) than did out-group transgression participants ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 1.11$), $t(137) = 2.00$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.34$.

Structural model

Figure 3 presents the structural model (and standardised path coefficients) that represents the hypothesis that in-group transgression activates self-image threat, leading to collective shame, which in turn motivates support for withdrawal and in-group-directed punishment. Group transgression condition was the exogenous variable (out-group transgression = 0, in-group transgression = 1), and residuals for the final outcome variables were allowed to correlate. The model showed good fit for the data across a variety of indices (Kline, 2005): $\chi^2(5 \text{ df}, N = 140) = 4.84$, $p > .40$, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 1.00, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ($RMSEA$) = 0.00 (90% confidence interval: 0.00–0.12), Standardised Root Mean Square Residual ($SRMR$) = .04.

Alternative models

We tested two alternative models to eliminate competing accounts of our findings. Guided by precedent in relevant research (e.g., Iyer et al., 2007), we tested an alternative model that reversed the positions of emotion and action intentions. A poor fit was found for a group transgression condition \rightarrow self-image threat \rightarrow withdrawal/in-group-directed punishment \rightarrow collective shame model: $\chi^2(4 \text{ df}, N = 140) = 28.34$, $p < .001$, $CFI = 0.82$, $RMSEA = 0.21$ (90% confidence interval: 0.14–0.28), $SRMR = .09$. These results rule out the possibility that participants inferred their emotional reactions from their action intentions.

We next tested an alternative model that reversed the positions of appraisal and emotion. A poor fit was also found for a group transgression

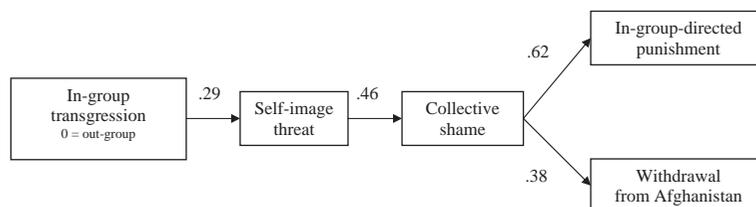


Figure 3. Structural model from Study 3. All standardised path coefficients are significant at $p < .001$.

condition → collective shame → self-image threat → withdrawal/in-group-directed punishment model: $\chi^2(5 \text{ df}, N = 140) = 75.16, p < .001$, $CFI = 0.47$, $RMSEA = 0.32$ (90% confidence interval: 0.26–0.38), $SRMR = .15$. These analyses provide compelling evidence that collective shame is driven by appraisals of self-image threat, and not the reverse. In sum, as neither of the alternative models met standards for good fit, we retained our hypothesised structural model.

Discussion

Study 3 replicated and extended the previous two studies, which found that in-group transgression prompts in-group-directed hostility via collective shame. In the current study, Americans reminded of an in-group transgression sought to punish America through the levying of severe fines and anti-American collective action, and were marginally more likely to endorse American withdrawal from Afghanistan. Although the direction of the withdrawal effect is consistent with prior work (Iyer et al., 2007), we note that the lack of statistical significance in the current results may be due to our use of a single item to assess this construct.

The current study also yielded strong support for the hypothesised model in which in-group transgression evokes appraisals of self-image threat, giving rise to collective shame, which in turn motivates in-group-directed hostility. Two alternative models—one that reversed the positions of emotion and action intentions, and another that reversed the positions of appraisal and emotion—did not meet the standards for good model fit. Together, then, these findings indicate that it is the self-image threat posed by belonging to an in-group that has acted unfavourably that prompts feelings of shame and subsequent hostility toward the in-group. Furthermore, the results suggest that collective shame may motivate concurrent action tendencies, including responses directed toward the scene of the transgression (withdrawal) as well as toward the perpetrators of it (punishment).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The current investigation examined whether people react with hostility toward in-groups that have acted immorally. People derive their self-concepts in part from their social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). When these groups transgress, the individual's self-image can be threatened, giving rise to collective shame (Johns et al., 2005; Lickel et al., 2005). We theorised that when people are shamed by their in-group, they may respond antagonistically toward the source of the shame—the transgressing in-group. Three studies tested this hypothesis and yielded converging evidence that in-group transgression can prompt numerous forms of in-group-directed hostility: in-group-directed hostile emotion (Studies 1 and 2), in-group-directed derogation (Study 2), and in-group-directed punishment (Study 3).

Guided by studies of emotion, in-group transgression, and action intentions (e.g., Iyer et al., 2007; Leach, Iyer, & Pederson, 2006), we hypothesised that collective shame would be the mechanism underlying these forms of in-group-directed hostility. Across studies, we found that hostility toward a transgressing in-group was indeed mediated by collective shame, not collective guilt. Furthermore, self-image threat evoked by in-group transgression prompted collective shame and consequent in-group-directed hostility. These findings were observed across several kinds of manipulations incorporating vignette, narrative, and audio methodologies, and held in a national online sample as well as in the laboratory setting using student samples. Moreover, collective shame consistently mediated the in-group-directed hostility effect—independent of whether it was measured alongside collective guilt or on its own—and did not depend on the specific items employed.

Extending the literatures on in-group transgression and collective emotion

Given certain conditions, people can be prompted to punish a deviant in-group member (Marques, Abrams, & Serodio, 2001; Marques & Yzerbyt,

1988). The present studies document an important extension to these findings, in that entire groups can be the target of hostility and antagonism when they pose a threat to the self-image. As social identities are critical to self-identities (Chen et al., 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), people can direct hostility toward the in-group should it jeopardise, it would seem, their own sense of self.

Our group-based findings concerning collective shame and hostility extend studies relating individual shame to interpersonal rage and aggression (Gilligan, 2003; Paulhus et al., 2004; Scheff & Retzinger, 1991; Stuewig & Tangney, 2007; Tangney et al., 1992). Our studies show that many of the appraisal processes and consequences associated with shame on the personal level extend to the level of groups. Specifically, individuals will react antagonistically to an entire social group that has shamed them.

Importantly, the present studies found that collective shame did produce in-group-directed hostility, whereas collective guilt did not. Why did collective shame but not guilt underlie in-group-directed hostility? One answer may be found in turning to analyses of the underlying appraisals of the two emotions. Unlike guilt, people feel shame when an in-group transgression threatens the very core of their character (Lickel et al., 2005). Thus, collective shame involves notions of flawed identity and, as a result, can be particularly damaging to one's sense of self. The current findings indicate that, triggered by appraisals of threat to the self, collective shame motivates a variety of responses directed against the very source of these threats, pitting individuals against their own groups.

Limitations and future directions

The present studies offer some of the most direct evidence to date showing that collective shame can prompt hostile reactions toward a transgressing in-group. At the same time, these findings are qualified by certain limitations in the nature of this evidence. For example, collective shame may be associated with certain prosocial consequences (e.g., Brown et al., 2008), and not merely negative

consequences like withdrawal and hostility. We suspect that shame's unique concern with the self-image can lead to a variety of reactions as in-group members respond to self-image threats, and additional work is needed to delineate the specific contexts that give rise to these different consequences of collective shame.

Perhaps more important is our reliance upon self-report measures of in-group-directed hostility across the three studies. Overt acts of hostility toward an entire group are difficult to observe in the laboratory, and we resorted to measuring proxies of antagonistic behaviour, such as self-reported feelings of hostility toward the in-group. Future investigations should build on the current research by directly measuring behavioural expressions of in-group opposition. For instance, future studies could test whether our findings of in-group-directed hostility extend to the desecration of group-cherished symbols and emblems (e.g., Greenberg, Porteus, Simon, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1995).

Our work examined one possible moderator of the relationship between in-group transgression and in-group-directed hostility—group identification. Additional research is needed to explore other possible boundary conditions to the in-group-directed hostility effect. Although we did not find any moderating effects associated with pre-existing levels of group identification, future research should employ more nuanced measures of group identity (e.g., Leach et al., 2008; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Halevy, & Eidelson, 2008) to ascertain any moderating effects of this construct. We speculate that group identification may moderate in-group-directed hostility particularly in response to ambiguous transgressions, situations wherein individual biases can exert significant influence (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998). Moreover, given the role of blame in feelings of guilt, shame, and hostility (e.g., Tangney et al., 1992), future research would benefit from a consideration of the influence of blame in the context of in-group transgression. For instance, individual differences in appraisals of in-group blame may moderate the intensity of collective shame and in-group-directed hostility. Finally,

additional work is needed to delineate the specific motivations underlying in-group-directed hostility. Specifically, the extent to which such responses reflect hostility directed *outward* (toward the in-group from which one seeks separation) or *inward* (toward the in-group of which one is a member) remains to be elucidated.

Conclusion

When people perceive that their in-group has undermined their views of themselves, they may respond with hostility toward it. Our model stresses the importance of collective shame in motivating these hostile responses, as this group-critical emotion arises when one's group has undermined its esteemed status and threatened one's self-image. Ultimately, in-group-directed hostility may serve as a marker of in-group members' discontent and disapproval with their group, potentially alerting the in-group that it must restore its moral standing and change its course.

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