Negative associations: the role of identification in group-based guilt
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NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS:

THE ROLE OF IDENTIFICATION
IN GROUP-BASED GUILT

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. mr. P.F. van der Heijden
ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties ingestelde
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door
Sven Zebel
geboren te Schiedam
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Amsterdam, 2005
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CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on how people deal with their group’s past involvement in inter-group conflict and hostility. Conflict and hostility have been present in human society since the dawn of days, and continue in the present (e.g., the Israel-Palestinian conflict, America’s war against terrorism, African wars in Sudan and Rwanda). Not surprisingly therefore, the origin and development of inter-group conflict have been central themes in social psychology. From this work, it becomes clear that humans often readily perceive, evaluate, feel and behave in ways that favor those with whom they share a group membership, and sometimes discriminate against others who do not. As a consequence, social psychologists have suggested strategies to circumvent this human negative tendency toward outsiders (e.g., Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989; Pettigrew, 1998).

In addition to the derogation of out-groups, inter-group conflict and hostility are in part also driven by the human tendency to view in a positive light the characteristics and acts of the in-group. Indeed, the denial or justification of crimes and atrocities that groups commit against other groups is more widespread than the acknowledgment of and attempts to repair such wrongdoing (Barkan, 2000; Cohen, 2001). However, far less attention has been devoted in social psychology to strategies that may alter such in-group-serving tendencies as a means of reducing intergroup conflict.

From the interpersonal literature we know that individuals who acknowledge their wrongdoing toward others are likely to feel strong feelings of guilt, which subsequently motivate them to make amends or ask for forgiveness (e.g., Hoffman, 2000; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). In fact, some researchers consider the emotion of guilt in particular to strengthen social bonds and attachments in interpersonal relationships (e.g., Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). Drawing on this literature, feelings of guilt at the level of groups may similarly indicate an acknowledgment of wrongdoing and motivate group members to seek reconciliation with disadvantaged groups. The present dissertation is concerned with such feelings of group-based guilt as an indicator of acknowledgment of wrong-doing at the group level. A range of determinants derived from social psychological theory is examined to shed further light on the nature and antecedents of this emotion. Of central interest is people’s subjective identification with their perpetrator group as a critical antecedent of group-based guilt. In addition, the impact of this emotion on opinions towards the reparation of wrongs is also investigated.
In the following, we first discuss the applied and theoretical importance of examining the antecedents and consequences of group-based guilt. Subsequently, psychological theories of emotion and intergroup relations are introduced to outline a theoretical prism through which to view group-based guilt. As a starting point, we consider interpersonal appraisal theories of emotion and influential theories of intergroup relations. We then move on to explain how Intergroup Emotion Theory (Devos, Silver, Mackie, & Smith, 2002; Mackie & Smith, 1998; Smith, 1993; 1999) was developed on the basis of these former theories. Following this elaboration of theories, we define group-based guilt and how it is distinct from interpersonal guilt in terms of appraisals, phenomenology and behavioral tendencies. Central to this dissertation, group identification is then presented as a critical moderator of group-based guilt, and the central hypotheses concerning this influence are discussed. Finally, we outline the issues that are dealt with in the ensuing empirical chapters and in the concluding chapter.

**Applied and Theoretical Relevance of Studying Group-Based Guilt**

Examples from real life in which certain groups inflict severe harm upon other groups are alas numerous (see Barkan, 2000). To name a few: colonization (e.g., England in India, Belgium in the Congo, Netherlands in Indonesia, France and Brazil in West-Africa, Portugal in Mozambique, Spain in South-America), other hostile forms of occupation (e.g., Israel-Palestinian conflict), (civil) wars (e.g., Bosnia, World War II), genocide (e.g., Rwanda), and blatant and subtle forms of discrimination (e.g., discrimination against African Americans, Apartheid in South-Africa).

In each of these cases, feelings of group-based guilt and its associated motivation to make reparations can arise when people come to perceive their group as an illegitimate perpetrator responsible for victimizing another group. For example, S. Steele (1990) proposed that ‘White guilt’ applies to White Americans who “know that their historical advantage comes from the subjugation of an entire people” (p. 81). In Hoffman’s (2000) discussion of group-based guilt (i.e., guilt by association), he describes how some of the 1960s civil rights activists in the United States perceived the social class they belonged to as ‘culpable’, as they “felt that their parents, some of whom were bankers or executives, exploited others on their behalf” (p. 186). Most importantly, Hoffman suggested that these types of guilt have particularly strong motivational power, because the human suffering implicated in these feelings cannot easily be repaired through a single act. As yet another illustration, certain non-indigenous Australians have been observed to apologize personally by means of signing Sorry Books on National Sorry Day (which may indicate feelings of guilt) for the misdeeds committed by other non-indigenous Australians in the past toward indigenous Australians (McGarty et al., in press).
These examples highlight how group-based guilt may contribute to change the nature of many inter-group relations from hostility and conflict to attempts at reconciliation, because the experience of this emotion can affect people’s attitudes and behaviors to make reparations toward disadvantaged groups. Therefore, a systematic, empirical examination of the antecedents and consequences of group-based guilt may help to explain when and why people come to experience such feelings. In doing so, this examination may thus also offer recommendations to stimulate reconciliation and reparation with respect to these atrocities and inequalities between existing groups in society (see also Minow, 1998).

In addition to this applied relevance, an investigation of group-based guilt is also of considerable theoretical importance. Until recently, the psychological study of the emotions people experience and their relation to behavior was based almost exclusively on social situations in which people are implicated as unique individuals. However, as people can also conceive of themselves as members of distinct groups and social categories, social situations may affect them also on the basis of these aspects of their identity. Accordingly, people can also become emotionally involved when a given situation does not apply to them personally, but implicates (other members of) their group or category. Smith elaborated this idea in Intergroup Emotion Theory (IET; Mackie & Smith, 2002; Smith, 1993). Opening up a whole new area of interest in social psychology, the study of intergroup emotions may advance our understanding not only of the emotional functions of our identity at the group-level, but also help to predict better certain emotion-specific, inter-group behaviors.

Group-based guilt is particularly interesting in this respect, given that people do not easily seem to acknowledge their personal wrong-doing and ascribe blame to themselves (e.g., Cohen, 2001; McGraw, 1987). If so, they may be even less likely to acknowledge and accept the responsibility for the wrong-doing of others from their group. Investigating the type of group members and the situations in which they are most likely to feel guilty about the wrongs of other group members thus offer new theoretical insights into the processes that underlie the relation between group identity and aversive, painful emotions such as group-based guilt.

From Interpersonal to Intergroup Emotions

Appraisal Theories of Emotion

What are emotions? When can people be considered to experience and act upon emotions? In answering these questions, most emotion researchers consider emotions as involving a stimulus, appraisals of that stimulus, phenomenology (feelings), and action tendencies. Appraisal theories of emotion postulate that specific constellations of appraisals instigate different emotional responses, which (among other aspects) consist of subjective experiences (i.e., phenomenology or
feeling states) and specific action tendencies (see Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001, for an overview). In these theories, appraisals are conceived of as the evaluations individuals make about certain events or situations that relate to their personal goals, needs or concerns (e.g., Roseman & Smith, 2001). Thus, a sadness response may be elicited when an individual appraises a certain event to involve a loss of something valued, as uncontrollable (nothing can be done about it) and stable (the valued loss will not change in the near future; e.g., Roseman, Wiest, & Schwartz, 1994). Importantly, the appraisal process is considered to be adaptive in nature, eliciting emotional responses that help individuals to protect and obtain their goals and needs. Thus, when individuals experience sadness about the irrevocable break-up of a close relationship, they may refrain from investing energy and resources in order to repair this bond. Rather than pursuing a relationship that cannot be restored, the response of sadness helps the individual (in time) to be open and ready for a new close relationship.

The subjective experience is considered to be a central and important aspect of the emotional response. For instance, Roseman (2001) considers phenomenology (i.e., thoughts and feeling qualities) as one of five interrelated aspects of an emotional response, which together form a distinctive coping strategy. Similarly, Smith and Kirby (2001) argue that subjectively experienced affect is one of the components of the emotional response, which in turn can lead to a change in the appraisals of the emotion-eliciting situation. Frijda (1986) postulates that emotional experience is not only the output of different phases in the emotion process, but also an essential ingredient of it. He considers feelings as mechanisms that make people aware of relevant interactions between the situation and their goals, needs or concerns. Most importantly, the (interrelated) multi-component nature of the emotional response postulated in these appraisal theories implies that subjective experience is not just related to action tendencies, but may also contribute to or even determine them (e.g., Frijda, 1986).

When appraisals that have been made about a certain event or situation fit a profile associated with an emotion, a change may also occur in the readiness of individuals to pursue a specific kind of action (Frijda, 1986). In addition to specific subjective experiences, emotions also involve specific “action tendencies” to pursue certain goals, needs or concerns. Anger, for example, is associated with a negative, outward directed tendency whereas sadness is associated with a decline in action (e.g., Frijda, Kuipers, & Ter Schure, 1989). These action tendencies may lead to certain changes in physiological arousal and generate specific (overt or cognitive) actions; whether these actions will actually be pursued depends on aspects of the situation and the individual’s regulation (Frijda, 1986).

Theories of Intergroup Relations

Most of the above appraisal theories of emotion focus on how certain events may violate or facilitate the personal goals, needs or concerns of people, and how
this can trigger emotional processes that thus relate to personal agendas. However, theories of intergroup relations hold that people not only define and perceive themselves in terms of personal characteristics that make them unique, but also in terms of the characteristics they share with others who belong to the same social groups and categories as themselves (in-groups). Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) first proposed these different levels of self-definition. They conceived of social behavior as a continuum, which ranges from strictly interpersonal interactions (i.e., determined solely by interpersonal relationships and individual characteristics) to intergroup interactions (i.e., determined solely by the different group memberships of those involved). Based on this continuum, they postulated that people should accordingly have a conception of who they are in interpersonal terms (in terms of their individual characteristics), but also derive part of their self-image from the social groups and categories they belong to and identify with (i.e., their social identity).

Most central to this theory is that just as people strive to uphold and boost their positive personal self-image, they will also strive to maintain and reinforce a positive (and distinctive) social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Such a positive image of the groups and categories people belong to is achieved when in-groups compare favorably and are positively distinct from relevant out-groups. Whenever such comparisons put a specific in-group in a negative light, Social Identity Theory predicts that people will either leave or disassociate themselves from this particular in-group (i.e., individual mobility), work to redefine or change (aspects of) the social comparisons in favor of the in-group (i.e., social creativity), or actually challenge and compete with relevant out-groups to turn social comparisons to their in-group’s advantage (i.e., social competition).

Whereas SIT dealt primarily with the motivational features of social identity, Self-Categorization Theory (SCT; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) went on to elaborate the perceptual and cognitive underpinnings of social identity processes, and made explicit the role of people’s personal identity. This theory assumes that different levels of representations of the self (or self-categorizations) may operate depending on the interplay between aspects of the individual and the specific situation. At one of the most superordinate levels of self-categorization, individuals may identify themselves as humans, perceiving themselves to be similar to other humans but dissimilar to those who are not human (e.g., animals). At the most subordinate level of self-categorization, people perceive themselves as unique individuals with specific characteristics that make them different from other individuals (within their in-group). Most relevant to the present dissertation is the intermediate level of self-categorization, where people define themselves in terms of in-group and out-group members. On the basis of the similarities they share with certain individuals and the differences that distinguish them from other individuals, they come to categorize themselves and others as an in-group and out-group respectively (Turner, 1987).
SCT proposes that there is functional antagonism between these levels of self-categorization, implying for example that the salience of the intermediate level of self-categorization and its associated perceived differences and similarities work to decrease the salience of the more superordinate and subordinate levels of self-categorization. Flowing from this proposition is the process of depersonalization: When people categorize themselves and others in terms of in-groups and out-groups, they no longer perceive themselves as unique individuals but rather as the ‘interchangeable exemplars’ of a social group or category. This process of depersonalization is considered as the mechanism through which people in specific situations come to perceive and behave in terms of their in-group identity, even when this goes against their interests as unique individuals (Turner, 1987; 1999). As will become clear next, this process is considered also to underlie the experience of specific emotions on behalf of a group membership (even when the emotion-eliciting stimulus does not involve people directly).

Emotion-Elicitation on the Basis of Social Identity: Intergroup Emotion Theory

The first statement of Intergroup Emotion Theory was designed to develop a more differentiated explanation of discrimination against out-groups than then available (Smith, 1993). Until then, Smith argued, discrimination was thought to originate from a relatively constant prejudiced attitude against a specific out-group, which should lead individuals to discriminate against this out-group in many situations and circumstances. However, discriminatory acts against members of out-groups often convey differentiated feelings (e.g., anger, disgust, or fear) and seem to rely heavily on the specific situation or context. As more general beliefs cannot easily account for this differentiated and situation-specific nature of discrimination, Smith (1993) opted for a model that specified how cognitive representations of persons interact with situational and contextual variables to elicit different discriminatory behaviors.

Based on the appraisal theories of emotion discussed above (see Scherer et al., 2001) and SCT (Turner, 1987), Smith (1993) proposed a model in which specific appraisals elicited distinct prejudiced emotional responses toward out-groups, which should result in differentiated discriminatory action tendencies. More generally, it was postulated that self-categorization in terms of in- and out-groups is central to the experience of such group-based emotions (see also Mackie et al., 2000). When this level of categorization is salient, specific configurations of appraisals related to people’s social identity elicit distinct emotional responses and action tendencies, similar to (inter)personal forms of emotion (Devs et al., 2002). Thus, people may experience fear when they appraise certain out-group members as a threat to the in-group and consider the in-group to be weak (even when they are not personally threatened by these out-group members). Accordingly, intentions to avoid contact with these out-group members may be activated (Smith, 1993). Most importantly, this theory of intergroup emotions provides a suitable explanation for the differentiated responses and behaviors.
that occur toward out-group members, taking into account how a specific situation or stimulus relates to the in-group member’s goals, needs and concerns (Mackie & Smith, 1998, 2002; Smith, 1993).

We now proceed to define group-based guilt in particular and how this emotion is related to but distinctly different from interpersonal guilt. A discussion of the appraisals, phenomenology, and action tendencies of interpersonal guilt is used as a starting point from which group-based guilt is conceptualized.

From Interpersonal to Intergroup Guilt

A necessary condition for interpersonal guilt to occur is that a subordinate self-categorization (the self as uniquely distinct from other individuals; Turner et al., 1987) is salient in a given situation, which can also be conceived of as a primary appraisal in the emotion process. Given this self-categorization, a guilt response is elicited when people appraise themselves as responsible for a specific action, inaction, intention or other behavior that they evaluate as objectionable or wrongful (e.g., Frijda et al., 1989; Roseman et al., 1994; Tracy & Robins, 2004). Often the specific action or inaction that is appraised in this manner has real or imagined negative consequences for the well-being of another individual (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1994; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Not surprisingly therefore, other (perhaps more secondary) appraisals that accompany the guilt response involve a concern for the interests of the harmed other (e.g., Frijda et al., 1989; Hoffman, 2000).

Group-based guilt is elicited through similar appraisals at a group level of self-categorization (Turner et al., 1987). Thus, when people perceive themselves as interchangeable members of an in-group and certain others as belonging to out-groups (i.e., when their social identity is salient), further appraisals may elicit a group-based guilt response. These further appraisals need to communicate that (a) the in-group is responsible for harmful actions (e.g., exploitation, discrimination, genocide) directed at (members of) out-groups, and (b) that these actions are illegitimate and unjustified (Branscombe, Doosje, & McGarty, 2002). The fact that harmful actions in particular elicit group-based guilt indicates how an assessment of the degree of harm experienced among out-group members is also part of the appraisal process (e.g., Pedersen, Beven, Walker, & Griffiths, 2004; Zebel, Doosje, & Spears, 2004). Most importantly, such actions may have taken place in the distant past or relatively recently; group-based guilt can be triggered without the necessity of personal responsibility (see also below; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998).

The subjective experience or phenomenology associated with interpersonal guilt is characterized as an unpleasant, ‘aroused form of emotional distress’ (Baumeister et al., 1994; p. 245); Hoffman (2000) argues that guilt is elicited when
people have empathic feeling for the distress of another person and they are aware that they are the causal agent of this distress. Such painful feelings involved in guilt may be experienced as tension, remorse and regret over one’s actions or inactions toward the other (Roseman et al., 1994; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robins, 2004). Similarly, group-based guilt is also experienced as an unpleasant or aversive feeling state, directing negative attention to the actions of the in-group (Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003). Feelings of remorse and regret for the harmful actions of the in-group against an out-group are therefore also at the core of the subjective experience of group-based guilt (Branscombe, Slugoski, & Kappen, 2004; Doosje et al., 1998).

Once the emotional response of interpersonal guilt is triggered (as opposed to no guilt), a central component involves a change in people’s desire to undo their objectionable behavior and its consequences (Frijda et al., 1989). That is, people may intend to confess their wrongs to others (e.g., Tangney & Dearing, 2002), may want to apologize to the harmed other, or wish to be forgiven by the victim (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1994; Roseman et al., 1994; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robins, 2004). With respect to the emotional response of group-based guilt, this change in reparation tendency may manifest itself also in different ways, depending on the situational demands and the nature of the intergroup relationship (see Branscombe & Doosje, 2004). For instance, Swim and Miller (1999) demonstrated how feelings of guilt among White Americans led to stronger support for affirmative action policies. In addition, Schmitt, Branscombe, and Brehm (2004) demonstrated how the motivational strength of men’s collective guilt about gender inequality depended on the perceived difficulty of reducing such inequality. Moreover, Hewstone et al. (2004) showed how feelings of collective guilt among Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland predicted positively their preference for forgiveness between both sides.

A Crucial Difference between Interpersonal and Group-Based Guilt

Despite the apparent similarities, group-based guilt has an inherent appraisal quality that distinguishes it from interpersonal guilt. Whereas interpersonal guilt implicates the individual self as agent or harm doer, group-based guilt involves an ascription of blame to the social self. This latter, more inclusive part of the self leaves open the possibility of a discrepancy between the role of the individual self and the social self. That is, group-based guilt may be elicited even when the individual itself is not implicated as (one of) the agents of negative behavior toward the out-group (Doosje et al., 1998). Taking this one step further, even those who personally have treated out-group members fairly may come to feel guilty when they appraise themselves as (interchangeable) members of a perpetrator in-group. This possibility of a discrepancy between actions of the personal and social self in group-based guilt differentiates it from interpersonal guilt, which is based exclusively on a negative evaluation of the individual self.
A study by Doosje et al. (1998; Study 1) offered the first empirical evidence for this differentiation between group-based guilt and interpersonal guilt. Assigning people to a new and previously unknown in-group (i.e., inductive thinkers), they manipulated the level of personal bias against members of a non-existing out-group (i.e., deductive thinkers), as well as the level of in-group bias against this out-group. Their findings indicated that even when participants personally treated the out-group fairly, they reported stronger feelings of group-based guilt when their in-group had systematically devalued this out-group rather than treated it fairly also. This study thus demonstrated that the experience of group-based guilt depends primarily on appraisals of how the in-group rather than the personal self has acted against out-group members. Participants’ support for compensation toward the out-group corresponded with their subjective experience of group-based guilt.

As a consequence of this difference in dependency on blame to the individual self, the emotional response of group-based guilt may often be less intense than the response of interpersonal guilt (but not always – see below). That is, to the extent that the emotion potential of a stimulus depends on the relevance for the self, a situation that elicits interpersonal guilt may intuitively implicate the self as perpetrator to a greater extent than does a situation that elicits group-based guilt. In line with this, Silver et al. (reported in Devos et al., 2002) observed that people reported more readily and more intense experiences of guilt for situations in which they, rather than an in-group, were personally responsible. Moreover, Baumeister et al. (1994) recognized also the possibility of guilt feelings on behalf of a collective group membership, but argued from an interpersonal approach that feelings of guilt are more intense in close relationships than in weak or distant ones.

However, people differ considerably in the extent to which a particular in-group implicates their (social) self (see Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). That is, some people may identify so strongly with a particular in-group that actions of this group have the potential to implicate them, emotionally at least, to a stronger degree than actions on behalf of their individual self. It is thus necessary to take into account the importance people attach to a particular group membership if one wishes to examine and adequately predict the appraisals and intensity of group-based guilt. We now introduce the role of people’s subjective identification with a group as a critical moderator of group-based guilt, which plays a central role in this dissertation.

The Moderating Role of Group Identification: Definition and Predictions

In general, people are inclined to maintain a positive image of the group to which they belong, because membership in that group relates to their social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Therefore, when the value of this group is
threatened by harmful actions toward other groups, people are likely to respond. The nature of such responses depends on people’s subjective identification with the in-group, which entails the importance and relevance people attach to defining themselves in terms of that particular group membership (see Ellemers, et al., 1999 for an overview). More specifically, in-group identification can be defined by Tajfel’s (1978) original definition of social identity as: “… that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his [sic] knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.” (p. 63)

Social or in-group identification was accorded a central role in SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which postulated that internalization of group membership (i.e., subjectively identifying with) is a pre-condition for people’s motivation to differentiate their group positively from other groups. In addition, SCT (Oakes, 1987; Turner et al., 1987) has argued that the salience of an in-group/out-group categorization depends both on the accessibility of such a categorization to the perceiver and it’s fit to the stimulus input. Accessibility (i.e., readiness to use a specific categorization for an appropriate stimulus) is assumed to depend, inter alia, on people’s degree of identification with a specific in-group membership. In other words, when identification with a particular ingroup membership increases, the more people will perceive their social world in terms of this group membership (Turner et al., 1987).

As an illustration of this role of subjective identification, Spears, Doosje, and Ellemers (1997) showed how degree of identification moderated participants’ perceptual responses to a threat to their group. Participants who identified weakly with their group tried to distance themselves from the group under conditions of threat, which resulted in perceiving themselves as less prototypical group members. In contrast, higher identifiers continued to be oriented toward the ingroup and perceived themselves more as a prototypical group member. From a self-categorization perspective, it can be argued that such differences in self-definition when one’s group is threatened determine how other perceptual, emotional and behavioral responses take shape. We argue that when the moral value of the ingroup is threatened (e.g., through harmful actions toward out-groups), higher identifiers will also perceive themselves more as members of the ingroup than will lower identifiers. This will have implications for other responses, including the emotional response of group-based guilt.

How do lower versus higher identifiers respond then when their group has harmed another group in terms of group-based guilt? Doosje et al. (1998; Study 2) first addressed this question. They first measured Dutch participants’ level of identification with being Dutch and then confronted them with their nation’s colonial history in Indonesia, manipulating its content as either negative (e.g., the Dutch killed Indonesians), positive (e.g., the Dutch introduced a solid legal system) or neutral (containing both positive and negative statements). As
hypothesized, lower identified Dutch participants felt more guilty than higher identified Dutch participants in the neutral condition. Doosje et al. explained these findings in terms of the defensive behavior of higher identifiers, which manifested itself in appraisals of greater variability among the Dutch people during the colonial period than lower identifiers in the neutral condition (e.g., “Besides negative things, the Dutch also did some good things for Indonesia during colonization.”). These findings support the notion that higher identifiers are inclined to appraise the negative actions of the in-group in a manner that protects the positive value of their in-group, whereas lower identifiers accept more easily such negative actions. In turn, these differences in appraisals will affect the (intensity) of the group-based guilt response among lower and higher identifiers.

When people appraise information about the misdeeds of their in-group against other groups as self-relevant, this necessarily implies an in-group/out-group type of self-categorization. Based on SIT and SCT, such a self-categorization is strongly associated with people’s degree of subjective identification with the in-group. Therefore, we postulate that degree of in-group identification as a factor of influence is central in shaping and determining the intensity of appraisals that elicit group-based guilt. In addition, in-group identification may also have an impact on other aspects of the emotion process. Thus, aside from appraisals, it can also influence the guilt response more directly, for instance by making salient the (in-group’s) doubts to the individual about feelings of guilt on behalf of others, which accordingly tempers the intensity of the experience of group-based guilt (McGarty et al., in press). Finally, group identification may determine when and how certain action tendencies that characterize group-based guilt result in actual behavior. The present dissertation examines how in-group identification determines the appraisals or interpretation of negative information about the in-group, and how this in turn affects the intensity of group-based guilt.

Defending the In-Group: In-Group Serving Versus Out-Group Derogation Tendencies

From the literature, it is apparent that strong in-group identification is associated with a stronger motivation to uphold a positive image of the in-group than a weak identification (e.g., Doosje, Ellemers, Spears, 1995; Ellemers et al., 1999). However, the interest in how this motivation for a positive identity affects individuals’ guilt reactions to the misdeeds of their in-group against other groups is relatively recent (see Branscombe & Doosje, 2004 for an overview). Building on Doosje et al.’s findings (1998), we propose two directions through which highly identified group members may especially come to defend the positivity of their in-group when they confront their group’s misdeeds. On the one hand, their focus may be on the actions of their in-group, and their appraisals may lead them to evaluate and infer motives for the agents of these actions in a somewhat positive manner (Hewstone, 1990; Pettigrew, 1979). On the other hand, without
changing anything about their interpretation of the in-group’s misdeeds itself, higher identifiers may come to derogate the harmed out-group in terms of evaluations and attributions (e.g., dehumanization, ascribing blame; see also Iyer, Leach, & Pedersen, 2004). Such a change in the appraisals of the out-group may serve to justify or downplay the negative consequences of the actions undertaken by the in-group.

Which of these two directions is taken in our view depends heavily on the content of the information higher identifiers are confronted with, and the perspective they take toward this information. For example, negative information may emphasize especially how in-group members behaved, or focus on the (harmful) consequences for out-group members, or both. In addition, group members may adopt either the perspective of fellow in-group members to focus on their behavior, or adopt the perspective of victimized out-group members (Zebel et al., 2004).

When higher identifiers are directed to the actions of their in-group, the evaluative or attributional appraisals about these actions relate essentially to the perceived responsibility of the in-group for negative behavior (Iyer et al., 2003). To the extent that specific actions toward out-groups are appraised in a more positive manner or are attributed less strongly to the in-group, the perceived responsibility of the in-group for negative, harmful actions will decrease. As perceived (group) responsibility is one of the pillars of group-based guilt (Branscombe et al., 2002), the intensity of group-based guilt will accordingly be reduced. However, given that higher identifiers confront the actions of their in-group, when and how will they adopt such identity-serving appraisals?

In our view, the use of in-group serving appraisals for actions of the in-group by higher identifiers depends on (a) opportunity (e.g., Ellemers, Van Rijswijk, Roefs, & Simons, 1997) and (b) how others portray and evaluate these actions. Doosje et al.’s findings (1998) illustrate the role of opportunity: Only when higher identifiers confronted both positive and negative aspects of the colonial past of their group did they stress greater variability in their in-group’s behavior and felt less guilty accordingly than did lower identifiers. This demonstrates how higher identifiers push for a more positive evaluation of a threatening in-group past than lower identifiers when possible. No such difference was obtained between higher and lower identifiers when they faced negative or positive aspects only, and thus no opportunity was provided for variability in perceptions.

In addition, perpetrator group members may learn about the actions of their in-group through the information and evaluations of others. In general, fellow in-group members more readily influence people than out-group members. That is, it has been demonstrated that people pay more attention to, more readily agree with and have a higher regard for information from a source they share group membership with compared to when they do not (e.g., Budesheim, DePaola, & Houston, 1996; Hornsey, Trembath, & Gunthorpe, 2004; Mackie, Worth,
Thus, when a fellow in-group member or the in-group as a whole communicates certain information or evaluations about the actions of the in-group, especially higher identifiers may attune their appraisals to this information or evaluations, irrespective of whether these are positive, negative or neutral in nature (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 2005; see Chapters 2 and 3).

However, when such information or evaluations about the actions of the in-group come from an out-group, people may reject this information more readily. Indeed, Hornsey and colleagues have demonstrated how criticism from an out-group member about the in-group is perceived as illegitimate, destructive and exaggerated (Hornsey & Imani, 2004; Hornsey, Oppes, & Svensson, 1999). In fact, even a positive evaluation from the out-group about the in-group can be undesirable under some circumstances (Ellemers, Doosje, & Spears, 2004). Therefore, we predict that higher identifiers will not easily change their in-group serving evaluations or attributions about the actions of their in-group when confronted with (evaluative) information from out-group members (see Chapters 2 and 3).

As mentioned earlier, higher identifiers may also seek to defend their group identity through the appraisals they make about the out-group. That is, when the in-group is perceived as responsible for negative actions against a specific out-group (Branscombe et al., 2002), higher identifiers may wish to derogate that out-group in terms of evaluations and attributions. Such out-group related appraisals become especially important when higher identifiers (are forced to) confront the out-group’s plight, for instance when asked to take their perspective (see Chapter 4). Derogation of the out-group may involve a change to a more negative attitude against this out-group, or blaming the out-group itself for the harm done to them (similar to blaming the victim; Lerner and Miller, 1978; see also Hafer & Bègue, 2005). Essentially, these appraisals may serve to justify the misdeeds committed by the in-group against this out-group and reduce the intensity of feelings of group-based guilt accordingly among higher identifiers. Whether or not higher identifiers will invariably derogate the out-group upon confrontation with their position may also depend on opportunities to do so and on how others portray and evaluate their position. For instance, when information states how the in-group as well as the out-group have undertaken negative actions toward each other, higher identifiers may use this opportunity to appraise the out-group as more blameworthy than will lower identifiers (see Chapter 2).

Thus, we postulate that higher identifiers’ strong motivation to protect their group’s positive identity may lead them to avoid feelings of group-based guilt through (a) evaluative and attributional appraisals that ameliorate the actions of the in-group, or (b) evaluative and attributional appraisals that derogate the position of the out-group. Which of these two routes is taken may be determined by the content of the available information, or the perspective taken to such
information. In addition, the actual use of such appraisals is predicted to depend on opportunity in the available information as well as on how others portray and evaluate this information. However, so far, we have discussed how in-group defensive mechanisms may operate to reduce feelings of group-based guilt among higher identifiers, but what about lower identifiers? How do lower identifiers deal with such information, and how does this influence their subjective experience of group-based guilt?

A Tendency to Accept the Group’s Misdeeds Among Lower Identifiers?

As mentioned earlier, those who identify weakly with the in-group are less likely to perceive themselves as prototypical group members, especially when the group’s identity is threatened (e.g., Spears et al., 1997; Wann & Branscombe, 1990). Thus, although lower identifiers may categorize themselves in terms of that in-group membership, they do not perceive this group to be very important for their self-definition. Doosje et al. (1998) have demonstrated how those who do not have a strong bond with their in-group, paradoxically perhaps, come to accept more readily the misdeeds that have been perpetrated by other in-group members in the past. Attributing such past misdeeds to the in-group as a whole, lower identifiers accordingly reported more group-based guilt than did higher identifiers. Thus, in the absence of a strong motivation to protect the positivity of their in-group membership, lower identifiers are predicted to admit more easily the wrongs other members from their in-group have committed against out-groups.

This tendency among lower identifiers to appraise negative actions by the in-group more easily as wrongful may imply also that they are more susceptible to the induction of feelings of group-based guilt, and its associated intentions to repair. Thus, whereas higher identifiers are eager to use in-group protective appraisals when there is opportunity to do so or when out-group members evaluate the actions of their in-group negatively, lower identifiers may respond to such influences with appraisals critical of the in-group and an associated increase in the intensity of group-based guilt (see Chapters 2 and 3).

However, we propose one very important condition to the proposition that lower identifiers are more inclined than higher identifiers to accept the misdeeds of their in-group. In most of the research done to date, feelings of group-based guilt among current group members were based on past wrongs of the perpetrator group (see Branscombe & Doosje, 2004 for an overview). This approach thus investigates whether group-based guilt is truly group-based, that is whether it occurs despite the fact that the individual is not directly involved in these past misdeeds. Interestingly, there are some indications in the literature that people more readily report feelings of group-based guilt when they have or are able to hold on to a positive conception of their personal self (e.g., Harvey & Oswald, 2000; Rensmann, 2004). We argue that lower identifiers may accept the group’s past misdeeds more readily than higher identifiers because they are not
directly involved in these misdeeds (and are thus able to uphold their positive personal self). However, if they are involved more directly in the group’s misdeeds, such acceptance may threaten their identity more strongly and they may resemble higher identifiers in terms of their appraisals (see Chapter 5).

The predictions regarding the differences in appraisals and intensities of group-based guilt between lower and higher identifiers discussed above form the central thread of this dissertation. In the following overview, we outline the predictions that are investigated in each empirical chapter.

Overview of the Current Dissertation

In Chapter 2, a study is presented in which Dutch participants are confronted with information about their in-group’s involvement in the victimization of an out-group, in which negative actions of the in-group as well as of the victimized out-group itself are mentioned. We examined whether higher identifiers try to ameliorate the actions of the in-group as well as derogate the actions of the out-group when they are asked to write down the wrongs of both groups. In addition, we also examined to what extent these defensive tendencies among higher identifiers depend on whether the information comes from an out-group or in-group member. Furthermore, we investigated under what circumstances lower identifiers displayed greater acceptance and stronger feelings of group-based guilt than higher identifiers. Finally, this study was set up also to test the alternative explanation that not identity concerns, but normative (or social desirability) concerns explain why lower identifiers report stronger feelings of guilt than higher identifiers.

Building on Chapter 2, Chapter 3 focuses more closely on how lower and higher identifiers appraise and experience feelings of group-based guilt, when the negative actions of the in-group are criticized or seen as understandable by members of the in-group or an out-group. Two studies are discussed in which participants receive information about both positive and negative actions of the in-group directed against an out-group. Study 3.1 examines how lower and higher identifiers respond when a majority of either in-group members, members of the victimized out-group or a majority of members of an unrelated out-group disapprove of the actions of the in-group. As we argue in Chapter 3, lower and higher identifiers can be expected to respond quite differently to these different types of groups. In Study 3.2, an attempt was made to replicate and generalize the results of Study 3.1 to a different intergroup context in which a perpetrator out-group (instead of an unrelated out-group) indicates its disapproval. In addition, Study 3.2 also examined the responses of lower and higher identifiers to expressions of understanding for the actions of the in-group. We hypothesized that such expressions do not always serve the positive value of the in-group and may even be threatening when this comes from a disliked out-group.
In Chapter 4 we move the focus from strategies to deal with the actions of the in-group among lower and higher identifiers to the ways in which they cope with the consequences of such actions for the victimized out-group. The central aim of this chapter is to examine how lower and higher identifiers appraise and report feelings of group-based guilt when they adopt the perspective of victimized out-group members. Our first objective in Study 4.1 was to assess whether lower and higher identifiers display differences in their spontaneous tendency to adopt the perspective of the in-group or the out-group across multiple situations in which the in-group was depicted as victimizing different types of out-groups. In addition, the consequences of taking these perspectives for the experience of group-based guilt were examined. Study 4.2 examines more closely how lower and higher identifiers respond when forced to adopt the perspective of harmed out-group members. Manipulating this perspective enabled us to examine more directly how higher identifiers may appraise the out-group in a derogatory manner to avoid feelings of group-based guilt. It also enabled us to examine how this perspective may intensify group-based guilt among lower identifiers.

In addition to the out-group’s perspective in Chapter 4, perpetrator group members can also turn to the perspective of fellow group members who were implicated in the harm doing. Chapter 5 deals with such perspective-taking, which should focus group members more strongly on the negative actions of their in-group. Accordingly, higher identifiers may display an appraisal strategy that enhances the positivity of these actions (or downplays the negativity), whereas lower identifiers may adopt a more acceptance-oriented approach. Most importantly, we examined also in Chapter 5 whether such acceptance among lower identifiers becomes more difficult when they are (versus are not) involved directly in the harm doing of their group. In Study 5.1, we manipulated the perspective-taking of a morally tainted in-group member during World War II (which did not involve participants directly) and examined the guilt responses among lower and higher identifiers. In Study 5.2, we again manipulated the perspective-taking of morally tainted in-group members in a different context. In addition, we also manipulated whether participants were more implicated by the negative actions of their in-group, to examine how especially lower identifiers respond when they are involved directly in the harm doing.

Chapter 6 first offers a summary of the main empirical findings and conclusions that can be drawn from the studies presented in this dissertation. Based on these conclusions, several theoretical as well as applied implications are considered in terms of intergroup conflict resolution. For instance, from the present research recommendations may tentatively be made about how perpetrator groups can be persuaded to admit the wrongs they have committed toward other groups. We then discuss some important limitations of this research. Finally, possible future directions that might address these limitations
are then considered, as well as other lines of research that have built on the present findings.  

1 Please note that in order to optimize the “stand-alone” clarity and comprehension of each empirical chapter in this dissertation, these chapters were set up independently of each other. As a consequence, some overlap exists in terms of introductions and discussions between the chapters.
During the ethnic conflicts in Bosnia in 1995, the violent take-over of the Muslim ‘safe-haven’ Srebrenica by the Serbs led to the deportation and killing of approximately 7,400 Muslim men. This event became especially notorious in the Netherlands, because Dutch UN-soldiers at that time were assigned to protect the Muslims in Srebrenica. Some Dutch people argued afterwards that the Dutch should still do something for the Muslim people in Srebrenica, which may imply that these people experienced feelings of guilt about the involvement of the Dutch soldiers.

Recent research has demonstrated that the intensity with which people express such guilt feelings depends to an important degree on their degree of identification with that group (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; 2005; Zebel, Doosje, & Spears, 2004). Paradoxically, those who identify weakly with their group often report stronger feelings of group-based guilt than higher identifiers, presumably because they are least concerned with defending a negative portrayal of the in-group. Although not tested directly, the assumption in the research is that social identity concerns lead lower and higher identifiers unintentionally to appraise differently these wrongs, rather than that more controlled and intentional concerns explain these differences. In the present chapter, we examine this assumption in more detail by using subtle and uncontrollable differences in the abstractness of the language that participants generate to describe their group’s wrongs as an implicit measure that reflects how they explain the threatening misbehavior of their group (see also Franco & Maass, 1996; 1999; Von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, & Vargas, 1997).

Group-Based Guilt and Group Identification

The concept of differentiated emotions experienced (solely) on behalf of a group membership is receiving more and more attention in research (e.g., Smith, 1993; Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Leach, Iyer & Snider, 2002). Group-based guilt also fits in this line of research. Such guilt can be experienced when members of the social group one belongs to (in-group) have harmed members of another group (out-group), even if one is not directly involved in this behavior. Implicit in this definition is that for this emotion to occur, individuals should categorize themselves as members of a social group that was or still is in an

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*This chapter is identical to Zebel, Stoffers, Doosje, and Spears (2005).*
The Role of Identification in Group-Based Guilt

advantaged position compared to an out-group (Branscombe, Doosje, & McGarty, 2002; Leach et al., 2002). In addition, members should attribute responsibility to their in-group for this advantage; the in-group is perceived to have illegitimately caused or contributed to the disadvantaged group’s position through exploitation, discrimination and/or mistreatment (Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Swim & Miller, 1999). Similar to feelings of guilt due to personal responsibility, we argue that the phenomenological experience of group-based guilt is characterized by tension, remorse and regret over the in-group’s treatment of the out-group (e.g., Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robins, 2004; Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994). Finally, those who feel group-based guilt should be motivated also to repair the harm done by their in-group (Doosje et al., 1998; Swim & Miller, 1999).

Perpetrator group identification is an important moderator of the impact of other psychological variables on the experience of group-based guilt. Group members’ identification with their group relates importantly to the experience of emotions on behalf of that group membership (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998; Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus, & Gordijn, 2003). This is because group identification conveys the importance and relevance group members attach to defining themselves in terms of that particular group membership (e.g., Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002). When a group membership is highly important for an individual’s self-definition, he or she may have more difficulty to accept negative information about this highly valued group than an individual who identifies weakly with this group. In line with this, Doosje et al. (1998; Study 2) demonstrated that highly identified Dutch participants reported weaker group-based guilt than lower identifiers after being confronted with ambiguous information (i.e., implicating both positive and negative aspects) about their nation’s colonial history in Indonesia. Doosje et al. argued that when there is opportunity to do so, higher identifiers resist negative information about their group’s history more strongly than lower identifiers.

Although this explanation is straightforward, an alternative explanation for these findings may be that group identity concerns do not explain these differences, but that other variables associated with explicit measurement are responsible for this. For example, a critic might argue that lower identifiers act in a more socially desirable fashion than higher identifiers when they self-report strong guilt feelings, because they think it is appropriate to do so when confronted with the in-group’s atrocities toward others. That is, it seems implausible that they experience genuine feelings of guilt about a group they are not strongly attached to. In contrast to this argument, we believe that membership in a perpetrator group in conjunction with a weak group identification (characterized by weak in-group protective mechanisms; e.g., Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995; Ellemers, Van Rijswijk, Roefs, & Simons, 1997) can be precursors for strong, genuine feelings of guilt about the misbehavior of
this group (but see Zebel, Doosje, Spears, & Vliek, 2005 [Chapter 5] for boundaries to this proposition).

Appraisal theories of emotion argue that emotion-eliciting appraisals are often automatic in nature, operating outside the individual’s awareness (e.g., Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 2001; Scherer, 2001). Therefore, we expect that the self-reported differences between lower and higher identifiers in terms of group-based guilt are associated with different implicit judgments or evaluations of the negative in-group threatening information (i.e., appraisals). If such uncontrolled appraisals predict the explicit measurement of group-based guilt, it may strengthen our assumption that the differences in self-reports as a function of group identification reflect genuine emotional experiences, and not just controlled desirable responses. In addition, we will then also be able to demonstrate that the strong tendency among higher identifiers to protect the value of their group is not only expressed at an explicit level, but also leads them to perceive and interpret the negative information about their group differently than lower identifiers at an implicit level.

Such an implicit measure is the abstractness of the verbs and adjectives (i.e., language abstraction) that group members use to describe the wrongs that have occurred. Based on the linguistic category model (LCM; Semin & Fiedler, 1988; 1991; 1992) the language used to describe persons and their behavior toward others can be divided into four categories which vary from very concrete to abstract. As the most concrete set of verbs, descriptive action verbs (DAVs) refer to a specific behavior or situation, which cannot be understood without taking into account the context (e.g., She hits him). Interpretive action verbs (IAVs) are somewhat less concrete because they need the context for interpretation (e.g., She hurts him). State verbs (SVs) reflect the subject’s state, which do not refer to a specific context but instead to a specific object (e.g., She hates him). Adjectives form the most abstract category, reflecting descriptions of persons without referring to specific contexts or objects (e.g., She is aggressive). According to the LCM, each of these categories can be used to describe the same event or situation; which of these an individual uses depends on the individual’s appraisals and interpretation of the event.

A great deal of research has focused on how these four different levels of abstractness are employed to describe intergroup behavior, depending on the group membership of the perceiver and the target. Maass, Salvi, Arcuri, and Semin (1989) proposed that group members display a linguistic intergroup bias (LIB) to maintain the positive value of their in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In their research, desirable in-group behavior and undesirable out-group behavior was described with more abstract verbs, whereas undesirable in-group behavior and desirable out-group behavior was worded in more concrete terms (i.e., the LIB). It is now well established that more abstract descriptions are generated when group members ascribe the behavior of the in- or out-group with greater
certainty to the actors involved. In contrast, more concrete descriptions convey that perceivers consider situational factors most explanatory (e.g., Arcuri, Maass, Portelli, 1993; Maass, 1999; Maass, Ceccarelli, & Rudin, 1996; Rubini & Semin, 1994; Semin & Fiedler, 1989; Werkman, Wigboldus, & Semin, 1999; Wigboldus, Spears, & Semin, 2000). In addition, perceivers use abstract language when they have difficulties to imagine disconfirming instances of the behavior they describe (Maass, Montalcini, Bicotti, 1998; Maass, 1999; Semin & Fiedler, 1988).

To the extent that feelings of (group-based) guilt are elicited through the ascription of negative, harmful behavior to the self (e.g., Branscombe et al., 2002; Iyer et al., 2003; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robins, 2004), more abstract language about the wrongs of the in-group toward the out-group reflects an in-group responsibility appraisal that should positively predict group-based guilt and associated intentions to repair. That is, when group members ascribe such wrongs exclusively and with certainty to the in-group actors involved (rather than that situational factors are emphasized through concrete language), this should put the blame more strongly on the in-group and therefore elicit strong feelings of group-based guilt. In contrast, exclusively blaming the out-group for their negative behavior toward the in-group (i.e., abstract language for their behavior) should offer a justification for the actions of in-group members (‘they deserved it’) and thus weaken group-based guilt. In line with this latter proposition, Pedersen, Beven, Walker, and Griffiths (2004) demonstrated that the endorsement of negative stereotypic beliefs about indigenous Australians was negatively related to group-based guilt about past and present wrongs committed by non-indigenous Australians.

Although people may exert control over whether they use positive or negative terms to describe a given group, they are usually unaware of the subtle differences in language abstraction they select and use for such descriptions (e.g., Douglas & Sutton, 2003; Maass, 1999; Schnake & Ruscher, 1998; Von Hippel et al., 1995; 1997). As a most relevant example here, Franco and Maass (1999) demonstrated how the LIB as an implicit measure of prejudice was positively related to explicit measures of prejudice when norms against expressing prejudice were absent. In contrast, when such norms were present, participants still displayed prejudice on the LIB, but not on the explicit measures. In fact, the LIB now correlated weakly negatively with these explicit measures (see also Franco & Maass, 1996). Such findings show that language abstraction as reflected in the LIB is a good indicator of genuine out-group derogation tendencies when people act in socially desirable ways and actively try to suppress such tendencies (Von Hippel, et al., 1997; Maass, 1999). Therefore, we use language abstraction as a measure that reflects how group members ascribe and explain the negative behavior of the in- and out-group on an implicit level.

Differences between lower and higher identifiers in terms of group-based guilt and opinions toward reparation are observed most strongly in conjunction
with other psychological variables that impose a strong threat to group identity and offer opportunities to downplay the in-group’s atrocities (e.g., Ellemers et al., 2002; Zebel et al., 2004). In the present research, we therefore consider also the impact of the source of negative information about the in-group on group-based guilt: Whether the information comes from the victimized out-group or the in-group itself. As will be argued below, lower and higher identifiers can be expected to react differently to these different sources of information. In addition, if differences between lower and higher identifiers in terms of guilt can be explained by social desirability concerns, such concerns may be especially triggered when (lower identified) perpetrator group members respond to information from members of the victimized out-group. In our view, examining the impact of source of information is therefore especially suitable for the present research.

The Impact of Source of Information

From a social identity perspective (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, Turner, 1999), people strive for a positive image of the (high valued) social groups to which they belong; they therefore can be expected to defend their group’s positive value when it is put in a negative light by harmful behavior of fellow in-group members (e.g., Ellemers et al., 2002). In addition, Social Identity Theory postulates that people derive an important part of their identity from the social groups to which they belong and thus also from the characteristics they share with other in-group members but not with out-group members. As a consequence, people are more likely to agree with, pay more attention to and have a higher regard for information that stems from the in-group compared to similar information from an out-group (e.g., Turner, 1982; Mackie, Asuncion, & Worth, 1990; Budesheim, DePaola, & Houston, 1996). For these reasons, the strength of group members’ defensive tendencies in reaction to negative information about their group can be expected to vary depending on whether they share or do not share group membership with the source of this information. In line with this, Hornsey and colleagues (Hornsey, Oppes, & Svensson, 2002; Hornsey & Imani, 2003) have demonstrated that group members evaluate negative information about the in-group that is provided by an out-group member as more illegitimate and destructive than the same information given by a member of the in-group. It should be noted that to our knowledge these lines of research have not considered the role of in-group identification as a moderator of this ‘source effect’.

In the present research, a member of the victimized out-group or in-group was considered as source of negative information. The negative information concerned the fall of Srebrenica mentioned in the introduction, in which both the Dutch and the Muslims misbehaved toward each other. According to some, this
may have contributed to the Dutch abandonment of the Muslims after which the Serbs started the genocide (Westerman & Rijls, 1997). The misdeeds of both the Dutch and Muslims were mentioned in this information, in order to make the in-group’s wrongs more susceptible to different interpretations. Doosje et al. (1998) have demonstrated that when such ambiguity is present, lower and higher identifiers are likely to differ in how guilty they feel.

Building on the literature (e.g., Hornsey and Imani, 2002, Doosje et al., 1998; Mackie et al., 1990), we expected higher identifiers to attach most value to the above information when this came from a member of the in-group rather than a member of the victimized out-group. Higher identifiers’ strong motivation to protect the positive image of their in-group should lead them to perceive the out-group source as less trustworthy than the in-group source (see also Doosje et al., 2005). In addition, accepting the information about misdeeds of the in-group to a higher degree from the in-group source, higher identifiers can be expected to consider the consequences of the in-group’s actions for the out-group to a greater extent compared to when the source is the out-group. Thus, we hypothesized that higher identifiers would report stronger group-based guilt and support reparation more when the source is the in-group rather than the victimized out-group.

However, when a strong in-group protective motivation is absent as among lower identifiers (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1997; Zebel et al., 2004) the victimized out-group source may be accorded higher status in this context than the source from their weakly valued in-group (see Ellemers, Van Knippenberg, de Vries, & Wilke, 1989 for comparable tendencies among lower identifiers). Lower identifiers may consider this out-group source to be creditable and credible for admitting the own group’s wrongs, instead of mentioning only the misdeeds of the in-group leading to their victimization. As a consequence, the victimized source may elicit self-criticism among lower identifiers with respect to their in-group (see Miceli, 1992 for similar ways in which victims might induce guilt in perpetrators). As a result, lower identifiers may be motivated to acknowledge the in-group’s misdeeds and report stronger group-based guilt and reparation intentions in response the out-group source compared to the in-group source. In line with this, feelings of interpersonal guilt are most intense when perpetrators have a high esteem for their victims (see Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994 for a review). Finally, the out-group source will be considered to understand best the consequences of the perpetrator group’s actions, leading to a greater consideration of the out-group’s plight among lower identifiers than when the same information comes from the in-group.

We hypothesized a convergence between self-reported feelings of group-based guilt and the implicit use of language abstraction. In line with the stronger expressions of group-based guilt among lower identifiers in response to the victimized out-group source than to in-group source, they were expected to
describe the negative actions of their in-group more abstractly (ascribing blame exclusively to the in-group actors) and the negative actions of the out-group more concretely (emphasizing situational factors as explanations for their behavior) when confronted with the victimized out-group source. In contrast, weaker feelings of guilt among higher identifiers in response to the victimized out-group source should be reflected in the use of more concrete terms for the misdeeds of the in-group and more abstract terms for the misdeeds of the out-group than in response to the in-group source.

Method

Participants

Sixty-three Dutch participants were approached in different (public) areas in the Netherlands (e.g., trains) and asked to take part in this study on a voluntary basis. Three participants were omitted due to missing data. Thirty-three men and 27 women remained, varying in age from 19 to 78 years ($M = 36.88$).

Design

A 1 (National identification: continuous independent variable) x 2 (Source of information: In-group versus Out-group) design was set up for this study, in which the last variable varied between subjects.

Participants were told that this research concerned the ‘Netherlands and Dutch people in the news’. The questionnaire consisted of two parts.

Procedure: Part One of the Questionnaire

National identification. Participants were first asked to indicate their identification with being Dutch, using eight items from Doosje et al. (1998). These items measured cognitive (e.g., “Being Dutch is an important part of how I see myself”), affective (e.g., “I feel a bond with Dutch people”) and evaluative (e.g., “I am happy to be Dutch”) aspects of national identification (see Appendix A for an overview of all items). All items were answered on scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) and together indicated good reliability ($\alpha = .88$).

Source of information. Participants then received a text titled “The fall of Srebrenica”. To manipulate the source of information, the name of the person who had supposedly written this text was stated, followed by a sentence indicating his affiliation. In the in-group condition, the person’s name indicated a typical Dutch name (‘Maarten van Dijk’), followed by a sentence that stated that this person was a Dutch journalist who wrote this article for a Dutch newspaper (i.e., ‘De Volkskrant’). In the out-group condition, this article was supposedly a translation from an article written by a Bosnian person (‘Nebojsa Djuranovic’), followed by information that this person was a Muslim journalist who wrote this article for a Muslim newspaper (i.e., ‘Glas Javnosti’).

Content of the text. In the introduction of the text, it was explained how in 1995 460 Dutch UN-soldiers were sent to former Yugoslavia to protect Bosnian Muslims in the enclave Srebrenica from the Serbs. It was also stated how in the same year this enclave was violently taken over by the Serbs, after which they are
assumed to have murdered approximately 7,400 Muslim men from Srebrenica. After this, one paragraph described the wrongs of the Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica, who were said to have played an important role in the escalation of the conflict between the Serbs and the Muslims there. For instance, it was mentioned how Muslim-soldiers killed a Dutch UN-soldier with a grenade in an attempt to prevent the Dutch from retreating from the Serbs. The final paragraph dealt with the wrongs of the Dutch soldiers that were said to have caused at least in part the death of 7,400 Muslims. For instance, it was mentioned that the Dutch cooperated with the Serbs to evacuate thousands of Muslims; this in fact meant helping with ethnic cleansing.

Language abstraction of the paragraphs. The two paragraphs dealing with the wrongs of the Muslims and of the Dutch UN-soldiers were created to be equal in terms of the abstraction of the verbs used. To establish this, the verbs and adjectives used in these paragraphs were coded as suggested in the LCM by Semin and Fiedler (1991). That is, the most concrete DAVs verbs were coded as 1, IAVs as 2, SVs as 3, and Adjs as 4 representing the most abstract adjectives. The language abstraction score of the paragraphs could thus vary from 1 (very concrete) to 4 (very abstract). Two independent raters familiar with this coding system performed these codings. One of these raters was one of the co-authors, while the other was a psychologist who was blind to our hypotheses. With respect to the Muslim paragraph, the raters’ mean abstraction scores were 1.6 and 1.8. Both raters coded 16 verbs and adjectives in this paragraph, 81% of which received the same coding by both raters. With respect to the Dutch paragraph, the mean abstraction scores were 1.8 and 1.7. Here, both raters agreed on 79% of 14 verbs and adjectives coded. These codings demonstrated that both paragraphs did not differ much in terms of language abstraction; they also indicated that both paragraphs were moderately abstract overall.

Valence of the paragraphs. Both raters evaluated each sentence in both paragraphs on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (extremely negative) to 7 (extremely positive). With respect to the Muslim paragraph, the raters’ mean evaluations were 3.4 and 3.1. In case of the Dutch paragraph, these means were 3.6 and 3.2. These evaluations indicated that the paragraphs did not differ much in terms of valence.

Manipulation check. To check whether participants were aware of the source of information of the text, they were asked after reading the text to indicate from which population the author came. Participants could answer this question by circling one of four responses: Americans, Dutch, Muslims or another group.

After finishing the text and the manipulation check participants alerted the experimenter, who collected part one of the questionnaire and provided them with the second part.
Procedure: Part Two of the Questionnaire

Participants’ written descriptions of in- and out-group wrongs. Participants were
asked to write a short story in their own words, which dealt with the faults the
Muslims had made and the faults the Dutch had made, as well as who to their
opinion was most blameworthy for the fall of Srebrenica. For these stories, 10
lines were left open in the questionnaire.

The first rater coded these written stories for language abstraction using the
coding system as suggested in the LCM (DAVs=1, IAVs=2, SVs=3, Adjectives=4;
Semin & Fiedler, 1991). Sentences were coded which referred to actions of the
Muslims in relation to another group, or to actions of the Dutch in relation to
another group. In this way, a mean abstraction score for the Muslims was
obtained, as well as a mean abstraction score for the Dutch (both scores could
range from 1 [very concrete] to 4 [very abstract]). The second rater who was blind
to our hypotheses coded one third of the written stories. With respect to the
sentences relating to the Muslims, both raters agreed on 88 % of the verbs and
adjectives they both coded. With respect to the sentences relating to the Dutch,
this agreement constituted 89 % of the verbs and adjectives coded by both.
Differences in coding by the raters were resolved through discussion. Given these
high agreement percentages, participants’ mean abstraction scores as obtained by
the first rater were used for further analyses.

It is important to note that participants were instructed to write stories about
the faults of the Muslims and Dutch, which is clearly negative. In line with this,
both raters indicated that they did not encounter any sentences that included
positive verbs or adjectives.

Group-based guilt. Next, participants were asked to indicate feelings of group-
based guilt as a result of the Dutch behavior in Srebrenica for which six items
were used (adapted from Branscombe, Slugoski, & Kappen, 2004; Doosje et al.,
1998). An example of an item is; “I feel guilty about the negative things the Dutch
have done toward the Muslims in Srebrenica’ (see Appendix B for an overview of
all items). Together these items proved to be a reliable scale (α = .83).

Reparation opinions. To measure participants’ support for making reparations
toward the disadvantaged group, participants were asked to indicate whether (a)
the Dutch government should financially support humanitarian help for the
Muslims, (b) they felt it was a good thing that the Dutch prime-minister did not
offer an apology when he visited the victims in Srebrenica (reverse coded), (c) the
Dutch government should still offer an apology to the Muslims in Srebrenica, and
(d) more attention should be devoted to the wrongs of the Dutch in missions like
Srebrenica (α = .66).

Perceived trustworthiness of the source. To assess this construct, participants
indicated whether to their opinion, (a) the Muslim (or Dutch) journalist was well
informed about the events in Srebrenica and (b) whether the text from the Muslim
(Dutch) journalist was reliable. These items correlated positively, $r = .44$, $p < .001$ and were therefore combined to form a scale.

Consideration of the out-group’s plight. To measure this, participants were asked whether (a) they could imagine well what the Muslims had gone through, and (b) they sympathized with the Muslims in Srebrenica. These items correlated positively also, $r = .43$, $p = .001$, and thus combined in a scale. All items intended to measure these last four constructs were answered on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

After participants finished part two of the questionnaire, they were fully debriefed and thanked for their participation.

Results

All analyses of variance were performed using GLM procedures in SPSS, with national identification as a continuous linear independent variable and source of information (In-Group vs. Out-Group) as a between subjects variable. In addition to these independent variables, we included also the curvilinear component of national identification as a separate continuous independent variable in the analyses reported below. As will become clear, differentiating between a linear and curvilinear component of national identification appeared to clarify the pattern of results considerably in this study.

Manipulation check. Six participants did not circle the correct population from which the author came, indicating that our manipulation failed to make salient the author’s group membership as we intended among these participants. They were therefore excluded from further analyses.

Group-based guilt. As hypothesized, a significant interaction effect emerged between (the linear component of) national identification and source of information, $F (1, 48) = 5.31$, $p = .026$. In addition to this interaction, the interaction between the curvilinear component of identification and source of information was not reliable, $F (1, 48) = 2.31$, $p = .13$.

![Figure 1](image-url)  
*Figure 1.* The effect of source of information on group-based guilt among participants as a function of national identification.
Simple slope analyses revealed that national identification did not predict group-based guilt in the Dutch journalist condition, \( B = .05, SE = .25, F(1, 48) < 1 \), whereas national identification did predict group-based guilt negatively in the Muslim journalist condition, \( B = -.97, SE = .37, F(1, 48) = 6.99, p = .011 \) (see Figure 1). In line with expectations, lower identified participants reported stronger group-based guilt in the Muslim journalist condition than in the Dutch journalist condition. In contrast, higher identifiers reported stronger group-based guilt in the Dutch journalist condition than in the Muslim journalist condition.

Participants’ written descriptions of in- and out-group wrongs. Unfortunately, 13 of the 54 participants did not write anything about the faults of the Muslims, about the faults of the Dutch or both. The remaining 41 participants were equally divided across conditions (22 in the Dutch journalist condition; 19 in the Muslim journalist condition). In addition to the above-mentioned independent variables, participants’ mean abstraction scores of the Muslims as well as of the Dutch were included as a within subjects variable in the analysis.

The within subjects effect of the abstraction scores was significant, \( F(1, 35) = 5.26, p = .028 \), indicating that participants used more abstract verbs for the faults of the Dutch (\( M = 1.68 \)) than for the faults of the Muslims (\( M = 1.59 \)). However, this effect was qualified by a significant interaction between source of information and the abstraction scores variable, \( F(1, 35) = 20.39, p < .001 \). Participants displayed a pattern in line with the LIB in the Dutch journalist condition, using somewhat more concrete terms to describe the faults of the Dutch (\( M = 1.62 \)) than the faults of the Muslims (\( M = 1.91 \), although this difference within this condition failed to reach significance, \( F(1, 35) = 2.12, p = .15 \). In contrast, when the source of information was a Muslim journalist, participants exhibited a strong out-group bias, using significantly more abstract terms to describe the faults of the Dutch (\( M = 2.26 \)) than the faults of the Muslims (\( M = 1.26 \), \( F(1, 35) = 23.98, p < .001 \). In addition, significantly more abstract terms were used for the faults of the Dutch in the Muslim journalist condition than in the Dutch journalist condition, \( B = .64, SE = .28, p = .03 \). With respect to the faults of Muslims, significantly more concrete terms were used in the Muslim journalist condition than in the Dutch journalist condition, \( B = -.65, SE = .23, p = .008 \).

It was predicted that this effect would be moderated by participants’ degree of national identification. However, national identification did not moderate the interaction effect between source of information and abstraction scores in a linear manner, \( F(1, 35) = 1.31, p = ns \), but instead in a curvilinear manner, \( F(1, 35) = 8.76, p = .005 \). Examining this three-way interaction effect in more detail, the simple interaction effect between the curvilinear component of national identification and the abstraction scores was significant in the Muslim journalist condition, \( F(1, 35) = 8.95, p = .005 \), but not in the Dutch journalist condition, \( F(1, 35) < 1 \).

In the Muslim journalist condition, we expected especially lower identifiers to display a strong out-group bias in their abstraction scores, but not among higher
identifiers. Although not in a linear manner, inspection of the curvilinear component of national identification as predictor indicated this pattern of results. The curvilinear component of national identification predicted significantly participants’ abstraction scores in relation to the Dutch, $B = -.50$, $SE = .22$, $p = .029$, reflecting an inverted U-shape function (see Aiken & West, 1991; p. 66). The curvilinear component of national identification predicted participants’ abstraction scores in relation to the Muslims in the opposite direction but not significantly, $B = .17$, $SE = .18$, $p = ns$. In the Dutch journalist condition, the curvilinear component of identification did not predict significantly the abstraction scores in relation to the Dutch or Muslims, both $B$s $< -.19$, $ps > .08$.

These patterns may be most clearly clarified by examining an abstraction difference score, which is calculated by subtracting participants’ mean abstraction scores for the Dutch from their mean abstraction scores of the Muslims. In Figure 2, this difference is displayed as identification increases from 1 SD below the mean to 1 SD above the mean, as a function of the source of information. In the Dutch journalist condition, the difference between the abstraction scores did not differ as a function of identification; overall, participants in this condition used somewhat more concrete terms for the Dutch than for the Muslims ($M_{diff} = .29$). In the Muslim journalist condition, lower identifiers (participants at 1 SD below the mean) used less abstract terms for the Muslims’ faults than for the faults of the Dutch ($M_{diff} = -0.71$), indicating a strong out-group bias. Participants at the mean of identification displayed this out-group bias also ($M_{diff} = -1.00$). However, at 1 SD above the mean this difference in the use of abstract terms for the Muslims and Dutch decreases ($M_{diff} = -.22$), indicating that these highly identified participants displayed less out-group bias (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2](image)

*Figure 2.* The effect of source of information on participants’ abstraction difference scores as a function of national identification. A Difference score of zero indicates no difference in the abstraction scores for Muslims and the Dutch. Above zero, increasing difference scores indicate a stronger LIB-pattern. Below zero, decreasing difference scores indicate a stronger out-group bias.
Consistent with our expectations, lower identifiers thus displayed a stronger out-group-bias in their abstraction scores in the Muslim journalist condition compared to the Dutch journalist condition. As expected, this difference between the Muslim and Dutch journalist condition in their abstraction scores was strongly attenuated among higher identifiers. However, higher identifiers did not display the expected reversal: a stronger out-group bias in their abstraction scores in the Dutch compared to the Muslim journalist condition.

The relation between language abstraction and group-based guilt. In addition to comparing interaction effects on language abstraction and group-based guilt, we wished to establish a direct relation between abstraction and guilt as further evidence of the convergence between these constructs. Therefore, we included the abstraction scores for the Dutch and the Muslims as two covariates in the above reported analyses of group-based guilt. As expected, the abstraction scores for the Dutch proved to be a positive predictor, \[ B = .71, SE = .33, F (1, 33) = 4.48, p = .042. \] The abstraction scores for the Muslims predicted group-based guilt in the expected negative direction but not significantly, \[ B = -.54, SE = .40, F (1, 33) = 1.84, p = .18. \]

Reparation opinion. Analyses of the reparation opinion measure indicated that in addition to the expected interaction between the linear component of identification and source of information, \[ F (1, 48) = 5.45, p = .024, \] a marginally significant interaction emerged between the curvilinear component of identification and source of information, \[ F (1, 48) = 3.92, p = .053. \] These interactions indicated that in the Dutch journalist condition, the linear component of identification did not predict reparation, \[ B = .15, SE = .25, F (1, 48) < 1, \] whereas the curvilinear component constituted a marginally significant predictor of reparation, \[ B = .33, SE = .18, F (1, 48) = 3.28, p = .076. \] Together these components described a positive upward curve (see Figure 3). In the Muslim journalist condition, the linear component of identification predicted reparation significantly and negatively, \[ B = -.88, SE = .37, F (1, 48) = 5.79, p = .020, \] whereas the curvilinear component did not, \[ B = -.45, SE = .35, F (1, 48) = 1.66, p = ns. \] Together these components describe a negative downward curve (see Figure 3). Inspection of the Figure reveals that similar to the pattern on group-based guilt, the lower identified Dutch participants favor reparation more strongly in the Muslim journalist condition than in the Dutch journalist condition, whereas the reverse is true for higher identifiers.

\[ ^1 \text{For the sake of comparison, the interaction effect between source and identification on group-based guilt remained marginally significant without the participants that were omitted also in the analyses of the language abstraction scores, } F (1, 35) = 3.38, p = .074. \]
Figure 3. The effect of source of information on participants’ reparation opinion as a function of national identification.

Perceived trustworthiness of the source. No interaction emerged between the linear component of identification and the source of information, $F(1, 47) < 1$. The curvilinear component of identification did predict perceived trustworthiness significantly, $B = -.36, SE = .18, F(1, 47) = 4.21, p = .046$, and this effect was qualified by a significant interaction between the curvilinear component of identification and source of information, $F(1, 47) = 8.66, p = .005$. This interaction indicated that the curvilinear component of identification did not predict perceived trustworthiness in the Dutch journalist condition, $B = .15, SE = .17, F(1, 47) < 1$, but did predict trustworthiness significantly in the Muslim journalist condition, $B = -.91, SE = .32, F(1, 47) = 8.19, p = .006$. Inspection of these results in Figure 4 indicates that lower identifiers perceived the Dutch journalist as trustworthy as the Muslim journalist. Interestingly, participants at the mean of identification perceived the Muslim journalist as trustworthier than the Dutch journalist. Finally, higher identifiers displayed the expected reversed pattern of results: they indicated the Dutch journalist to be trustworthier than the Muslim journalist.

Similar to the results on language abstraction, these results indicate that national identification influenced participants’ perceptions of the source’s trustworthiness especially in the victimized out-group source condition. In this respect it is important to note that the perceived trustworthiness of the source was positively related to language abstraction for in-group actions when the victimized out-group member was the source of information ($r(25) = .48, p = .016$), but not when the in-group member was the source ($r(24) = .04, p = .ns$).
Consideration of the out-group’s plight. The effect of source of information was significant, \( F(1, 48) = 4.51, p = .039 \), indicating that participants displayed a stronger consideration of the out-group’s plight in the Muslim journalist condition \( (M = 4.72) \) than in the Dutch journalist condition \( (M = 3.74) \). However, this main effect was qualified by a significant interaction between the linear component of national identification and source of information, \( F(1, 48) = 6.80, p = .012 \), as well as by an interaction between the curvilinear component of identification and source of information, \( F(1, 48) = 4.89, p = .032 \). Inspection of these interactions indicated that in the Dutch journalist condition, both the linear and curvilinear component of identification predicted participants’ consideration of the out-group’s plight significantly, \( B = .83, SE = .28, F(1, 48) = 9.11, p = .004 \) and \( B = .43, SE = .20, F(1, 48) = 4.63, p = .036 \) respectively. Together these components described a positive upward curve (see Figure 5). In the Muslim journalist condition, the linear and curvilinear component of identification did not emerge as significant predictors, \( B = -.45, SE = .41, F(1, 48) = 1.21, p = .28 \) and \( B = -.53, SE = .38, F(1, 48) = 1.89, p = .18 \) respectively.

These results fit our expectations quite well. That is, lower identifiers displayed a stronger consideration of the out-group’s plight in the Muslim journalist condition than in the Dutch journalist condition, whereas the reverse pattern emerged among higher identifiers (see Figure 5).
Discussion

This study had two objectives. First, we aimed to observe differences in self-reported group-based guilt and associated reparation intentions among lower and higher identifiers as a function of whether the in-group itself or the victimized out-group provides information about in-group atrocities. That is, lower identifiers were expected to report the strongest guilt and favor reparation most strongly in response to the victimized out-group source, whereas the reverse was expected for higher identifiers. Second, we aimed to demonstrate that these differences between lower and higher identifiers were also reflected on an implicit measure (i.e., language abstraction), which would rule out alternative explanations associated with explicit measurements for these differences (i.e., responding in a socially desirable fashion).

Fulfilling our first objective, higher identifiers reported the strongest guilt and reparation in response to the in-group source, whereas lower identifiers did so in response to the victimized out-group source. In this research, we reasoned that the content of the information (i.e., mentioning the misdeeds of both parties involved) in conjunction with the victimized status position of the out-group source would lead lower identifiers to perceive this source to be more credible and creditable for admitting their own wrongs than the perpetrator in-group source. Although lower identifiers perceived both sources to be equally trustworthy, their responses with respect to their consideration of the out-group’s plight were in line with this. These findings underline how a victimized out-group member can persuade perpetrator group members to judge negatively and feel more guilty about the negative actions of in-group members (similar to feelings of interpersonal guilt – see Baumeister et al., 1994; Miceli, 1992).
Although not tested directly, we think that lower identifiers would not have reported such high guilt levels if the victimized out-group source had mentioned only the perpetrator group’s atrocities; mentioning the misdeeds also of the victimized out-group itself made lower identifiers view the negative in-group actions differently.

In contrast, higher identifiers indicated a weaker consideration of the out-group’s plight and lower levels of perceived trustworthiness when confronted with the victimized out-group source compared to the in-group source (see also Doosje et al., 2005). Accordingly, higher identifiers reported the strongest feelings of guilt and associated reparation intentions in reaction to information from the in-group source. These results among higher identifiers support the arguments made from a social identity perspective, which postulate that people are most affected by and will be less defensive to information that comes from the in-group rather than an out-group (Hornsey et al., 2002; Hornsey & Imani, 2003; Mackie et al., 1990; Turner, 1982).

With respect to our second objective, we demonstrated a similar pattern of results on participants’ language abstraction as on group-based guilt. That is, lower identifiers as expected demonstrated a clear and strong out-group bias in their language use when confronted with the victimized out-group as source of information, whereas this bias was virtually absent among higher identifiers. Although we expected higher identifiers to display an out-group bias in response to the in-group source (which they did not), these findings do demonstrate that group identification influences language abstraction and guilt in a similar fashion.

Taking into consideration that participants are unaware of the language abstraction they use (e.g., Franco & Maass, 1996; 1999; Maass, 1999; Von Hippel et al., 1995; 1997), these results clearly demonstrate that lower and higher identifiers have interpreted the information differently when a member of the victimized out-group was the source. Whereas lower identifiers ascribed blame more exclusively to the in-group actors involved than to the out-group members involved (i.e., used more abstract language for actions of the in-group than for the out-group), higher identifiers did not show this implicit attributional bias in this context.

In addition to this convergence between the explicit measure of group-based guilt (and reparation) and the implicit measure of language abstraction, we demonstrated that degree of language abstraction can predict group-based guilt. More specifically, more abstract language use for the faults of in-group members predicted group-based guilt in a positive manner. In contrast, more abstract language use for the faults of out-group members emerged as a weak negative predictor of guilt, but was not significant. This seems consistent with the fact that feelings of (group-based) guilt are associated with an increased awareness of wrong committed by the self (e.g., Iyer et al., 2003; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robins, 2004). Most importantly, these results demonstrate an important
relation between an implicit measure of the appraisals group members make and their self-reported feelings of group-based guilt. Consistent with our arguments, these findings show that differences in explicit feelings of group-based guilt between lower and higher identifiers are not simply a result of social desirability concerns, but rather reflect a genuine emotional experience which is meaningfully linked with the kind of implicit attributions group members make about the harmful behavior of in-group members.

In this study, national identification not only moderated the effect of source of information on some dependent variables in the expected linear manner, but also in a curvilinear manner on other dependent variables, or both in a linear and curvilinear fashion. Although speculative, it might have been the case that some of our participants were not from Dutch origin and therefore identified weakly with this group membership. As we have observed elsewhere (Zebel, Doosje, Spears, & Vliek, 2005; Chapter 5), a weak identification often leads to a strong acknowledgement of wrongs and other increases in pro-out-group responses especially among native Dutch participants, but less so among Dutch people who are not from Dutch origin. Native Dutch lower identifiers cannot easily escape from or avoid their national group membership, and they may therefore cope with the threat of the negative behavior of this national in-group head-on through an acknowledgement of wrongs. In contrast, non-native Dutch lower identifiers can distance themselves somewhat from such wrongdoing by accentuating their origin abroad, which deflects the negative consequences of their membership in this national group. As a consequence, they do not feel as strong of a need to put on a hair shirt for this group as native Dutch lower identifiers do.

If some non-native Dutch people were among the lower identifiers in our sample (but not among the moderate identifiers), it might explain why (at least some) effects at the lowest levels of identification were somewhat attenuated and smaller than at moderate levels of identification, resulting in a curvilinear pattern (e.g., see effects on language abstraction and perceived trustworthiness of the source). However, it should be noted that we did not have any indication (through self-reports) that non-native Dutch lower identifiers were part of our sample. Nonetheless, this does not disqualify this explanation completely.

Despite these different forms of moderation by national identification, we hope to have demonstrated that the pattern of results among lower and higher identifiers consistently point in the same direction. Consistent with our expectations, the pattern of results among lower identifiers indicated that they had feelings and cognitions that were more negative about the in-group when a member of the victimized out-group was the source of information, compared to an in-group member as source. Importantly, this pattern of results among lower identifiers was independent of the type of moderation by national identification. This is also true for the opposite pattern of results among higher identifiers: They indicated more negative feelings and cognitions about the in-group when an in-
group member was the source of information than when a member of the victimized out-group was the source of information. Thus, we do think that the different types of moderation by national identification in this study have resulted in patterns that are quite consistent with our expectations.

**Conclusions and Implications**

To sum up, our findings imply that: (a) lower identifiers’ increase in guilt to the victimized out-group source is not simply a controlled, normative response in this context but reflects how they process the information from this source in a more negative manner with respect to their in-group; and (b) the strong threat to the identity of higher identifiers leads them to process negative in-group information from an out-group source not only in a self-serving manner explicitly but also at an implicit level.

In our view, these results relate to a number of strategies (highly identified members of) perpetrator groups may adopt to deal with the crimes and atrocities they have committed toward other groups in order to maintain the positive value of their group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Such strategies may range from very explicit and controlled ways to downplay committed misdeeds to very subtle and implicit strategies perpetrator group members themselves may be unaware of. As one of the most explicit strategies, perpetrator group members may simply deny that their group committed crimes or have anything to do with the out-group’s victimization, despite objective evidence that proves otherwise. For instance, neo-Nazi extremists have been observed to doubt the well-known fact that six million Jews were murdered during World War II (Anti-Defamation League, 2001). This strategy also relates to the selective omission of negative events from collective memory Baumeister and Hastings (1997) discuss as a way in which groups can uphold a positive image of their group.

As an example of somewhat less explicit strategies, perpetrator group members may acknowledge that negative things happened to the out-group, but reject that the actual perpetrators who committed the crimes belong to their in-group or distance themselves otherwise from these perpetrators. In a sense, this may implicate also trying to avoid the responsibility that is associated with sharing group membership with perpetrators. For instance, in 2004 the television program 60 Minutes in the United States of America reported that U.S. soldiers had mistreated and tortured prisoners in the Abu Ghraib-prison in Bagdad, Irac (Van Hoogstraten, 2004a). In reaction to this scandal, the minister of Defense Donald Rumsfeld termed these mistreatments as not American, and argued that this should be perceived of as an incident (Tromp, 2004). This behavior seemed clearly aimed at portraying these soldiers as distinct, atypical members of the U.S. army, which seems to reflect the ‘sub typing’ of in-group members (Richards & Hewstone, 2001). A few days later, Rumsfeld acknowledged full responsibility for these mistreatments under pressure of other members of the Congress (Van Hoogstraten, 2004b).
One way in which members of perpetrator groups may use strategies of which they are unaware to uphold a positive group image is through the abstraction of language they use about it. As illustrated in the research presented here, perpetrator group members may readily perceive situational circumstances as viable explanations of harmful behavior of fellow group members; accordingly, they may use concrete terms when communicating about these actions to others (see also Wigboldus et al., 2000). Given that people are unaware of the abstraction they use in their language (Franco & Maass, 1996; 1999; Von Hippel et al., 1997; Maass, 1999), this process may constitute a very subtle way in which misdeeds are downplayed among perpetrator group members. Whereas explicit and controlled strategies to put a gloss on misdeeds can be detected by others and consequently perhaps be corrected (see the example of Rumsfeld above), strategies that are subtle and implicit such as through the abstraction of language used may go largely unnoticed. As a consequence, implicit strategies employed by perpetrator groups to deflect their crimes may be particularly pervasive in maintaining a status quo between perpetrator and victim groups in societies, instead of moving toward a shared resolution of past atrocities between these groups.
At the UN conference against racism in Durban in 2001, former colonial countries agreed to apologize for past slavery as a ‘crime against humanity’ (‘Mixed emotions’, 2001). In light of this clear disapproval of past wrongs, the Dutch minister of Cities and Integration policies expressed ‘deep remorse’ for Dutch slavery, and said that structural measures were necessary for the descendants of slaves (‘Nederland’, 2001). This statement can be interpreted as an expression of guilt feelings on behalf of one’s nation, which motivate intentions to make reparations. In this chapter, we examine how others’ evaluations of the wrongs of one’s group have a strong influence on such feelings of group-based guilt. In addition to the strong impact of the disapproval of fellow in-group members on guilt among perpetrator groups, we propose that the evaluations from two distinct types of out-groups can also increase guilt: When the victimized group indicates its disapproval, or when a morally tainted out-group expresses some understanding for the wrongs in question. From a social identity perspective, in-group identification is expected to moderate these patterns in a meaningful manner.

Group-Based Guilt: It Depends on the Source

To the extent that membership in social groups is an important part of people’s identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), events that harm or favor the social group people belong to vis-à-vis relevant out-groups thus relate to the self and therefore acquire emotional meaning (e.g., Smith, 1993, Mackie & Smith, 2002). Thus, when people learn that (members of) their group have illegitimately put an out-group in a disadvantaged position (e.g., through mistreatment, discrimination or exploitation), such an appraisal may elicit feelings of group-based guilt on behalf of their group membership (Branscombe, Doosje, & McGarty, 2002; Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003). Experiencing such feelings, people become motivated to repair the harm their group has inflicted (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Zebel, Doosje, & Spears, 2004). However, strong feelings of group-based guilt may not be very common, because (a) feelings of (group-based) guilt are aversive due to their focus of

* This chapter is identical to Zebel, Doosje, Spears, and Rem (2005).
attention on the self (Iyer et al., 2003), and (b) the negative evaluation of the in-group’s behavior intrinsic to group-based guilt contradicts people’s motivation to perceive their group in a positive light (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). From this it follows that how people come to acquire and accept negative information about their in-group is crucial to predict when people do experience group-based guilt. From a social identity perspective (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1999), people are likely to attach most value to information that derives from significant others from their in-group, because such information is most relevant to their identity. In line with this, the literature clearly demonstrates that people are more likely to agree with, pay more attention to and have a higher regard for information that stems from the in-group compared to similar information from an out-group (e.g., Budesheim, Houston & DePaola, 1996; Hornsey & Imani, 2004; Mackie, Worth, & Asuncion, 1990; Turner, 1982). Therefore, the acceptance of negative information about the in-group (and thus of group-based guilt) seems most likely when such information comes from the in-group itself, rather than from an out-group.

Degrees of Acceptance as a Function of Group Identification

Group members’ willingness to acknowledge and accept negative information about the in-group depends heavily on their subjective identification with this group, which is defined as the relevance and importance group members attach to membership in a particular group (see Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999 for an overview). In general, highly identified group members are motivated most strongly to defend against such negative information, in order to maintain the positive value of their high valued in-group (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998; Ellemers, Van Rijswijk, Roefs, & Simons, 1997). Given their positive inclination toward their in-group, higher identifiers may therefore resist most forcefully negative information from an out-group source, but agree more with such information when this comes from their esteemed in-group (see also Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 2005).

In contrast, lower identifiers may try to dissociate themselves from negative information about the in-group to affirm their positive self-image; this often leads them to accept and acknowledge such information more easily than higher identifiers (e.g., Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997; Zebel, Doosje, Spears, & Vliek, 2005 [see Chapter 5]). In addition, given that lower identifiers consider this particular in-group relatively unimportant for their self-definition (especially in this negative perpetrator context), they may be concerned that others perceive them as (typical) representatives of this group (see also Ellemers, Barreto, & Spears, 1999). Consistent with this, Bizman, Yinon, and Krotman (2001) found that weakly identified native Israelis worried more about what other groups would think of them to the extent that they perceived their in-group not to live up to the attributes they ought to have. Therefore, lower identifiers may be especially
prone to experience feelings of discomfort and guilt when an out-group makes salient the wrongs of their in-group.

From Information to Opinion

A description of in-group wrongs may thus be differently evaluated among group members as a function of the source of this description, and accordingly elicit different levels of group-based guilt. However, as the example in the introduction demonstrates, most people do not just try to describe the negative actions of others when communicating them, but also often state their opinion or attitude about these actions. When people talk about the misdeeds that a specific group has committed in the past, they may express either their explicit disapproval of such misdeeds or indicate that they have some understanding of why this group acted in this manner. Such explicit evaluations by others may have a strong impact on how people evaluate their in-group’s wrongs (and thus also on feelings of group-based guilt), because people in general often rely on the opinions of others to validate their own opinions (e.g., Asch, 1956; Festinger, 1954).

How would people deal with others’ disapproval of (the behavior of) their in-group? From a social identity perspective we may expect that people are most willing to accept such disapproval of fellow in-group members, but not from out-group members. In line with this, Hornsey, Oppes, and Svensson (2002) have demonstrated that people reject more strongly and disagree more with in-group directed criticism (i.e., a disapproval) from out-group members compared to fellow in-group members (i.e., the intergroup sensitivity effect). Most importantly, Hornsey and Imani (2004) demonstrated that identity concerns underlie this effect: People attribute more constructive motives to criticism from in-group members than from out-group members; out-group criticism is more readily discarded (e.g., perceived as illegitimate and exaggerated). Although not yet demonstrated, such intergroup sensitivity differences may be especially expected among those who identify most strongly with the in-group.

Such findings suggest to us that (highly identified) group members may evaluate the misdeeds of their in-group most negatively and accordingly experience stronger group-based guilt when fellow in-group members express their disapproval, rather than when out-group members do so (see also Ellemers, Doosje, & Spears, 2004). How the rejection of the out-group’s disapproval comes to temper group-based guilt should be reflected in group members’ appraisals of this evaluation as strongly exaggerated we argue. We investigated this in Study 1 and also examined the role of group identification as a moderator.

Instead of expressing disapproval, others may also communicate that they have some understanding of why this group has acted in a negative manner given the context. That is, through such “understanding” others may indicate
their appreciation of the difficulty and complexity of the situation during which the wrongs took place, taking into account the power of the circumstances. At the interpersonal level, significant others who express such understanding can come to weaken personal feelings of guilt (e.g., Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). However at the group level, the impact of such expressions on group-based guilt remains to be explicated. At first glance, others who have some understanding for the wrongs of one’s in-group may fit people’s desire for a positive image of their in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). However, we argue that such sympathetic expressions will be appraised differently depending on whether people share group membership with the source. When in-group members express such understanding, especially higher identifiers make take over this evaluation and appraise the wrongs of their group less negatively.

Yet, different appraisals may occur when members of out-groups indicate their understanding. From a social identity perspective, these expressions from out-group members may have a similar but weaker impact than from in-group members. However, as Ellemers et al. (2004) have demonstrated, sympathetic expressions from an out-group can also constitute a threat (and induce strong negative affect) when they do not fit the perspective of the in-group on this issue. We argue that strong feelings of guilt can also serve to accentuate how the in-group is different from a morally tainted out-group, when this out-group expresses its understanding. In Study 2, we examine also the impact of expressions of understanding on group-based guilt.

**A Special Case: The Victimized Out-Group as Source**

In terms of intergroup relations, a particularly important issue is how members of perpetrator groups react to the attitudes that members of the disadvantaged group in question express about past wrongs. To our knowledge, the impact of such attitudes on self-focused emotions like group-based guilt has not yet been empirically examined. We argue that the evaluations of victimized out-group members itself are more difficult to discard than similar evaluations by other, unrelated out-groups, because the victimized out-group can be considered to be most knowledgeable about and most relevant to the wrongs in question. Therefore, when they indicate their explicit disapproval of the wrongs of the in-group directed at them, this should result in stronger feelings of group-based guilt among perpetrator groups compared to the disapproval of non-victimized out-groups.

**Study 1**

In Study 1, we hypothesized that knowledge about the disapproval of past wrongs of the in-group among a majority of current in-group members would
persuade especially higher identifiers to appraise negatively these wrongs (see also Doosje et al., 2005). Accordingly, they experience stronger feelings of group-based guilt than when a majority of out-group members disapprove; this pattern among higher identifiers should be reflected in their interpretation that the in-group’s wrongs are exaggerated most when the out-group disapproves (indicating intergroup sensitivity [Hornsey et al., 2002; 2004] among especially higher identifiers). In contrast, the disapproval of fellow in-group members may be less persuasive for lower identifiers who do not attach great value to this group membership. In contrast, as argued above, lower identifiers should be concerned more with the disapproval of out-group members (e.g., Bizman et al., 2001). Such a disapproval may accentuate especially their membership in this negatively valued perpetrator group (Branscombe et al., 2002). To cope with this threat, lower identifiers may acknowledge the group’s wrongdoing and accordingly report strong feelings of group-based guilt (see also Zebel, Doosje, Spears, & Vliek, 2005, Chapter 5).

In addition, we examined the impact of the explicit disapproval of a majority from the victimized out-group itself. We expected that these members would be perceived as most knowledgeable and as the most legitimate evaluators of the past wrongs of the in-group, which would make it more difficult for higher identifiers to discard this negative feedback. Thus, although higher identifiers’ motivation to protect their in-group may lead them to perceive these members to exaggerate somewhat the wrongs, the special status position of this group should induce relatively strong feelings of group-based guilt among higher and lower identifiers. Finally, we intended also to examine whether any induced differences in group-based guilt would lead to converging differences in people’s attitude toward reparation of the wrongs on behalf of their group (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998; Swim & Miller, 1999).

Method

Participants

One hundred and five Dutch students at a high school in the Netherlands agreed to participate in this study. An important condition for group-based guilt is that people categorize themselves in terms of the perpetrator group (Branscombe et al., 2002). Given that we used the Dutch as perpetrator group in this study, we excluded six participants from the analyses who indicated that they were not from Dutch origin. The remaining 99 participants ranged in age from 15 to 19 years (M = 16.7); 59 % of this sample was female.

Design and Procedure

The design consisted of national identification as a continuous independent variable and source of disapproval (Victimized Out-Group, Unrelated Out-Group, or In-Group) as a between subjects independent variable.

National identification. Participants were first asked to indicate their identification with being Dutch, for which we used the identification measure of
Doosje et al. (1998; see Appendix A for an overview of all items). This measure comprised eight items that captured cognitive (e.g., “Being Dutch is an important part of how I see myself”), affective (e.g., “I feel a bond with Dutch people”) and evaluative (e.g., “I am happy to be Dutch”) aspects of Dutch group identification ($\alpha = .90$). These items were answered on scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). On average, participants identified fairly strongly with being Dutch ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.10$, range 2 to 7).

**Dutch colonial past in Indonesia.** Participants then received information about the Dutch colonial occupation of Indonesia, which was similar to the ambiguous/neutral condition of Doosje et al.’s research (1998; Study 2). The Dutch were said to have exhausted the raw materials of Indonesia, as a result of which Indonesia is still relatively poor today. In addition, the Dutch were said to have abused Indonesian farmers for their own profit. As positive aspects, it was mentioned how the Dutch had introduced jurisdiction and education in Indonesia, and how they had improved Indonesian infrastructure. Pilot testing (n = 8) revealed that this information was perceived to be weakly negative ($M = -0.75$ on a scale ranging from –3 [very negative] to 3 [very positive]). We chose this multi-dimensional description of the colonial past to allow for some discrepancy with the upcoming strong disapproval for participants. We reasoned that the influence of the type of source that disapproves of this past would particularly be evident under these circumstances.

**Manipulation of source of disapproval.** Participants read that the University of Amsterdam had investigated how people currently perceived these events. In the victimized out-group condition, it was said that a representative sample from the Indonesian population indicated that 92% of the Indonesians strongly disapproved of the behavior of the Dutch during the colonization. It was said that in their opinion, the Dutch had exploited Indonesia. The same information was presented in the unrelated out-group and in-group condition with reference to the American and Dutch population, respectively.

**Manipulation check.** Participants were asked to indicate which population strongly disapproved of the behavior of the Dutch during the colonization. They could indicate their answers by circling one of four responses: Indonesian, American, Dutch or another population.

**Group-based guilt.** Participants were then asked to indicate their feelings of group-based guilt for which we adapted four items used in previous research (Branscombe, Slugoski, & Kappen, 2004; Doosje et al., 1998) complemented with two extra items (e.g., “I feel guilty about the negative things the Dutch have done toward Indonesians during the colonization”, and “The behavior of the Dutch toward the Indonesians makes me easily feel guilty”; see Appendix B for an overview of all items). Together these items proved to be a reliable scale ($\alpha = .88$).

**Appraisals of the source of disapproval.** To examine how participants appraised the source of disapproval, three questions were asked. As a measure of perceived
expertise, participants were asked to indicate whether the source population knew well what had happened during the Dutch colonization of Indonesia. To measure the illegitimacy of the source’s evaluation, participants expressed whether the source population had no right to judge about the colonial past of the Dutch. Finally, participants indicated whether the source population exaggerated the negative things that had happened during the Dutch colonization of Indonesia (perceived exaggeration).

Reparation. To examine whether feelings of group-based guilt motivated participants to favor reparations of the in-group’s wrongs, they indicated whether (a) the Dutch government should offer its apologies to Indonesia for the colonial past, and (b) the Dutch government should support Indonesia financially for the colonial past ($r = .67$, $p < .001$). The items assessing group-based guilt, the appraisals of the source and reparation were answered on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Results

All analyses of variance were performed using GLM procedures in SPSS, with national identification as a continuous independent variable and source of disapproval (Victimized Out-Group [Indonesians], Unrelated Out-Group [Americans], or In-Group [Dutch]) as a between subjects variable.

Manipulation check. One participant did not answer the manipulation check correctly. However, exclusion of this participant did not change the pattern of results; most probably because most items in the questionnaire referred to the Dutch colonization of Indonesia and/or to which population disapproved of the Dutch behavior. We therefore decided to include this participant in further analyses.

Group-based guilt. The predicted interaction effect between national identification and source of disapproval was significant, $F (2, 93) = 3.97$, $p = .022$. This interaction effect indicated that national identification as a negative predictor in the unrelated out-group condition, $B = -.57$, $SE = .18$, $M = 3.45$, differed significantly from the slopes of identification in the in-group condition, $B = .14$, $SE = .20$, $M = 3.21$, and in the victimized out-group condition, $B = -.03$, $SE = .18$, $M = 3.59$, both $ps < .03$. The latter two slopes did not differ significantly. Plotting these simple slopes in Figure 6 reveals that national identification clearly moderates the effect of source of disapproval. To demonstrate this moderation more precisely, we examined the effect of source of disapproval on group-based guilt at low and high levels of identification using a conditional value procedure as outlined by Aiken and West (1991).
The Role of Identification in Group-Based Guilt

At the lowest value of identification (2), the effect of source of disapproval was significant, $F(2, 93) = 4.02, p = .021$. As expected, participants at this level of identification felt significantly more guilty when the unrelated out-group disapproved ($M = 5.14$) than when the in-group disapproved ($M = 2.78$). Unexpectedly however, these lower identifiers reported an intermediate level of group-based guilt ($M = 3.60$) when the victimized out-group disapproved (whereas the highest levels were expected). At the highest value of identification (7), the effect of source of disapproval showed a trend, $F(2, 93) = 2.51, p = .087$, but showing a clearly different pattern. As expected, highly identified participants felt (marginally) significantly more guilty when the in-group ($M = 3.50$) or victimized out-group ($M = 3.58$) disapproved than when the unrelated out-group disapproved ($M = 2.30$) (see Figure 6).

Appraisals of the source of disapproval. With respect to perceived expertise, the main effect of source of disapproval was significant, $F(2, 99) = 13.04, p < .001$. Consistent with our expectations, participants perceived the current victimized out-group to know better what had happened during the Dutch colonization of Indonesia ($M = 4.57$) than the current in-group ($M = 3.09$), $p < .001$, or unrelated out-group ($M = 3.07$), $p < .001$. No other effects emerged, both $Fs < 1$.

In addition, the main effect of source of disapproval was also significant on the perceived illegitimacy of the source’s evaluation, $F(2, 99) = 9.67, p < .001$. As expected, participants judged the evaluation of the victimized out-group as most legitimate ($M = 2.00$), followed by the evaluation of the in-group ($M = 2.89$), whereas the evaluation of the unrelated out-group was seen as least legitimate ($M
All these conditions differed significantly from each other, all ps < .04. No other effects emerged however, both Fs < 1.

In the case of perceived exaggeration, the main effect of source of disapproval was also significant, $F(2, 99) = 10.21, p < .001$, but this effect was qualified by a marginal significant interaction effect, $F(2, 99) = 2.83, p = .064$. This interaction indicated how national identification as a weakly negative predictor of perceived exaggeration in the in-group condition, $B = -.21, SE = .21, M = 3.62$, differed significantly from identification as a positive predictor in the unrelated out-group condition, $B = .40, SE = .19, M = 4.40$, and in the victimized out-group condition, $B = .36, SE = .19, M = 2.37$, both ps < .05. The latter two slopes did not differ significantly (see Figure 7).

Examining in more detail how identification moderated the effect of source of disapproval, it became clear that the effect of source of disapproval was not significant at the lowest level of identification (2), $F(2, 99) = 1.01, p = .37$. This indicates that at this level of identification, the in-group ($M = 3.62$), the unrelated out-group ($M = 3.22$) and the victimized out-group ($M = 2.37$) were seen as equally exaggerating. However, at the highest level of identification (7), the effect of source of disapproval was strongly significant, $F(2, 99) = 8.74, p < .001$. At this level of identification, the disapproving unrelated out-group ($M = 5.21$) was perceived to exaggerate most, but not significantly more than the disapproving victimized out-group ($M = 4.18$). In contrast, the in-group was seen to exaggerate significantly less than the other two populations ($M = 2.57$) (see Figure 7).

![Figure 7](image-url)

**Figure 7.** The effect of source of disapproval (Indonesians, Dutch or Americans) on perceived exaggeration of the source as a function of national identification, Study 1. Predicted values in a vertical order which do not share the same subscript differ significantly, $p < .05$. 
Reparation opinion. The interaction effect between national identification and source of disapproval was also significant on the reparation opinion measure, $F(2, 93) = 3.40, p = .037$. Similar to group-based guilt, this interaction effect indicated that national identification was a negative predictor in the unrelated out-group condition, $B = -.48, SE = .23, M = 4.68$, but (unlike guilt) also in the victimized out-group condition, $B = -.43, SE = .23, M = 5.04$. These two slopes differed significantly from identification as a positive predictor in the in-group condition (which is again similar to guilt), $B = .31, SE = .25, M = 4.15$, both $p s < .03$. No other differences emerged between slopes (see Figure 8).

Further examination of this interaction demonstrated that at a low level of identification (2), the effect of source of disapproval was significant, $F(2, 93) = 4.80, p = .01$. Similar to guilt, reparation was favored most strongly in the unrelated out-group condition ($M = 6.11$), but also (in contrast to guilt) in the victimized out-group condition ($M = 6.31$) at this value of identification (see Figure 8). In line with guilt, reparation was favored significantly less strongly when the in-group disapproved ($M = 3.23$). At a high level of in-group identification (7), the effect of source of disapproval was not significant, $F(2, 93) = 1.00, p = .37$. Although highly identified participants as expected favored reparation most strongly in the in-group disapproval condition ($M = 4.79$) followed by the victimized out-group ($M = 4.17$) and unrelated out-group condition ($M = 3.70$), these values did not differ significantly (see Figure 8).

![Figure 8](image-url)
Group-based guilt as a mediator of reparation opinion. Given these similarities in results between group-based guilt and reparation, we investigated also whether group-based guilt mediated participants’ reparation opinions. We included the group-based guilt scores as a covariate in the full model analysis of reparation and examined the adjusted simple slopes of identification in each source of disapproval condition. Firstly, the covariate was highly significant, $F(1, 93) = 30.20, p < .001, B = .62, SE = .11$, indicating that group-based guilt positively influenced participants’ reparation opinions. With this covariate in the model, the interaction effect between identification and source of disapproval was no longer significant: from $F(2, 93) = 3.40, p = .037$ to $F(2, 92) = 2.47, p = .09$.

Examination of the simple slopes revealed that with the covariate in the model, the effect of identification on reparation remained virtually unchanged in the victimized out-group condition, from $B = -.43, SE = .23, M = 5.04$ to $B_{adj} = -.43, SE = .20, M = 2.82$, and was weakly reduced in the in-group condition, from $B = -.31, SE = .25, M = 4.15$ to $B_{adj} = -.22, SE = .22, M = 2.17$. The Sobel’s test (1982) indicated that this last reduction was not significant, $z = .73, p = ns$. However in the unrelated out-group condition, the negative effect of identification on reparation was strongly reduced, from $B = -.48, SE = .23, M = 4.68$ to $B_{adj} = -.13, SE = .21, M = 2.54$. This reduction proved to be strongly significant, $z = -2.80, p = .005$.

As a consequence of these reductions by the group-based guilt scores, the effect of source of disapproval at a low level of identification (2) was reduced but remained significant, from $F(2, 93) = 4.80, p = .01$ to $F(2, 92) = 3.62, p = .031$. The effect of source of disapproval at a high level of identification (7) remained non-significant, from $F(2, 93) = 1.00, p = .37$ to $F(2, 92) < 1$. Thus, group-based guilt partially mediated the interaction effect of identification and source of disapproval on participants’ opinions toward reparation, through its impact in the unrelated out-group condition.

Discussion

The current data support our argument that higher identifiers will experience stronger group-based guilt when a majority of members of their in-group rather than members of an unrelated out-group disapprove of past in-group wrongs. In sharp contrast, the in-group’s disapproval is least compelling for lower identifiers, whose experience of group-based guilt is increased most by the disapproval of an unrelated out-group (see also Doosje et al., 2005). These findings demonstrate how previously observed intergroup sensitivity differences (Hornsey and colleagues, 2002; 2004) can be moderated by the strength of in-group identification. That is, higher identifiers stronger acceptance of the in-group’s disapproval in terms of group-based guilt was also reflected in their perceptions of exaggeration: They perceived the unrelated out-group to exaggerate more strongly the in-group’s atrocities than the in-group itself (thus indicating greater sensitivity to the unrelated out-group’s disapproval).
Furthermore, the impact of a majority of members of the victimized out-group who expressed their disapproval was also examined. Consistent with our reasoning, perpetrator group members perceived this out-group as most knowledgeable about the in-group’s wrongs, as well as the most legitimate group to judge these wrongs. Thus, whereas previous research has shown how an in-group source is often accorded higher status than an out-group source (e.g., Hornsey, Trembath, & Gunthorpe, 2004; Mackie, Worth, & Asuncion, 1990; Turner, 1982), the present data indicate how in a perpetrator-victim group context it can be the victimized out-group that is ascribed most status in terms of expertise and legitimacy of evaluations. Such perceived characteristics of the victimized out-group arguably make it difficult to reject and defend against their explicit disapproval of wrongs. As a consequence, higher identifiers in this research indicated similar levels of group-based guilt as in response to the disapproval of fellow in-group members, although they perceived the victimized out-group to exaggerate somewhat the misdeeds. These findings give clear indications as to how members of victimized groups may influence members of perpetrator groups to appraise more negatively the harm their group has inflicted.

Unexpectedly, lower identifiers did not report the highest levels of guilt in response to the victimized out-group in this study, but rather did so in response to the unrelated out-group. Although difficult to explain, it may have been the case that the disapproval of the current victimized out-group intensified the association between past perpetrators and current in-group members for lower identifiers. As Zebel, Doosje, Spears, and Vliek (2005; see Chapter 5) have demonstrated, lower identifiers are most likely to experience strong feelings of group-based guilt when they are not involved directly in their group’s wrongs (making it easier to acknowledge these wrongs). However, when they are addressed more directly by their group’s misdeeds, they are likely to defend their group’s actions, which weaken feelings of group-based guilt (similar to higher identifiers).

With respect to participants’ opinions toward reparation, we demonstrated a strong positive relation with feelings of group-based guilt (see also Doosje et al., 1998). Lower identifiers favored reparation more strongly in reaction to the unrelated out-group than to the in-group, similar to their feelings of group-based guilt (but not so for the victimized out-group – see above). In contrast, higher identifiers favored reparation strongly in response to a disapproving in-group, but least strongly when confronted with the disapproval of the unrelated out-group. However, although similar to their feelings of group-based guilt, these differences in their opinions toward reparation were not significant among higher identifiers. Most importantly, our analyses indicated that feelings of group-based guilt partially mediated participants’ opinions toward reparation through its impact when the unrelated out-group disapproved.
Chapter 3 / Ways in Which Out-Groups Can Induce Guilt

Study 2

Our objectives in Study 2 were to (a) replicate and generalize the effects of disapproval on group-based guilt from Study 1 to two different types of out-groups in a different context, and (b) examine how expressions of understanding for past wrongs coming from these groups affect group-based guilt. With respect to the different context used in Study 2, Dutch participants read how many non-Jewish Dutch people had betrayed Jewish people to the Nazis during World War II, despite the good things that non-Jewish Dutch people had done for Jewish people. Rather than using an unrelated out-group to evaluate this behavior, this context allowed us to examine the impact of a related, historical perpetrator out-group: The current German population. We expected that especially higher identifiers would interpret the evaluations of this out-group as a threat to the moral value of their group (see also Ellemers et al., 2004). They should perceive the in-group as distinct from this morally tainted out-group in this context; this should motivate them to display contrast effects to these evaluations. Thus, similar to Study 1, higher identifiers should feel least guilty in response to the disapproval of this historical perpetrator out-group.

In addition, this context made it possible also to investigate whether the evaluations of a victimized out-group affect group-based guilt similarly as in Study 1 when this out-group is part of the national in-group. Thus, rather than a distinct victimized national out-group in Study 1, we examined the impact of the disapproval from current Jewish Dutch people on feelings of group-based guilt among non-Jewish Dutch people. Based on the Common In-group Identity Model (Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989; Gaertner et al., 2000) the inclusion of the perpetrator in-group (non-Jewish people) and the victimized out-group (Jewish people) in an inclusive super ordinate category (Dutch) should lower bias and resistance to the victimized out-group even more than without such a super ordinate category as in Study 1 (see also Hornsey, Trembath et al., 2004: Experiment 2). These considerations led us to hypothesize a similar impact of the disapproval of the victimized out-group in this context as the disapproval of the in-group.

With respect to our second objective concerning expressions of understanding, we argue that higher identifiers will be persuaded most by an in-group message; fellow in-group members who show their understanding may convince them therefore especially not to think negatively of past wrongs. Accordingly, they may experience weaker feelings of group-based guilt than when in-group members disapprove. Lower identifiers are influenced least by evaluations of in-group members (Doosje et al., 2005; see also Study 1 above); thus, expressions of disapproval or understanding from the in-group should not elicit a strong difference in group-based guilt among them.
Similarly, when the victimized out-group shows some understanding, we expect especially higher identifiers to take advantage of this opportunity to defend their social self and report weaker feelings of group-based guilt than in response to their disapproval. Based on Study 1, we may expect a different pattern among lower identifiers. The disapproval of the victimized out-group did not lead to an increase in feelings of guilt among them; our post-hoc explanation for this was that lower identifiers felt involved too strongly in their group’s wrongs by this disapproval and therefore became defensive (similar to Zebel, Doosje, Spears, & Vliek, 2005; see Chapter 5). However, when the victimized out-group expresses its understanding, the threat that they are associated in a negative manner with past perpetrators should be perceived as much weaker. Without such a strong categorization threat, lower identifiers may more readily report feelings of guilt than in response to this source’s threatening disapproval. This prediction also fits findings in the interpersonal domain where feelings of guilt are strongest in relations that are characterized by feelings of concern and sympathy for each other (see Baumeister et al., 1994 for a review). In addition, if we were to find this pattern, it also indicates how group-based guilt among the weakly identified is forthcoming especially when the in-group deeds don’t come too close to home (Zebel, Doosje, Spears, & Vliek, 2005; see Chapter 5). In a sense, this underlines the point made by Iyer et al. (2003) that guilt has a limited potential to improve existing intergroup inequality.

In response to evaluations from members of the historical perpetrator out-group, lower identifiers may be less concerned with being involved directly in their in-group’s wrongs, because this out-group is itself tainted with blame in this context. In addition, because lower identifiers are not as strongly motivated to protect the moral value of their in-group as higher identifiers, they will be more susceptible to take over the evaluations of this out-group. Accordingly, lower identifiers are hypothesized to experience stronger group-based guilt in response to their disapproval than to their displays of understanding.

Most importantly, expressions of understanding from this historical perpetrator out-group may constitute a strong threat to the in-group’s moral value for higher identifiers (see also Ellemers et al., 2004). Paradoxically, higher identifiers may report especially strong feelings of group-based guilt in response to signs of understanding from this morally tainted out-group to indicate that they think differently about their group’s actions (and thus that they are different from this out-group). Thus, higher identifiers are hypothesized to experience stronger feelings of group-based guilt in response to expressions of understanding from this historical perpetrator out-group than in response to their disapproval (i.e., the reversed effect of the in-group’s evaluations). This reasoning also fits Barkan’s observation that expressions of guilt can serve to enhance the moral status of groups (Barkan, 2000).
Finally, we again predicted that participants’ opinions toward reparation would follow the above predicted differences in group-based guilt (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998; Swim & Miller, 1999).

Method

Participants

One hundred eighty-five students at the University of Amsterdam participated in this study, in exchange for course credits. Eighteen participants in this sample indicated that they were not from Dutch origin; they were therefore excluded from further analyses. In addition, 22 students were excluded because they failed to indicate the correct source on the manipulation check (n = 17), because of missing data (n = 3) or because they indicated that they were Jewish (i.e., the victimized out-group in this context; n = 2). Seventy-five percent of the remaining 145 participants were female; their ages ranged from 18 to 44 years (M = 19.9).

Design and Procedure

The design consisted of national identification as a continuous independent variable and type of source (in-group versus victimized out-group versus perpetrator out-group) and type of evaluation (disapproval versus some sympathy) as two between subjects independent variables.

National identification. Participants were first asked to indicate their identification with being Dutch, using the same items and response scales as in Study 1 (α = .94; see Appendix A). On average, participants again identified fairly strongly with being Dutch (M = 5.14, SD = 1.08, range 2 to 7).

Persecution of Jewish people in the Netherlands during World War II. A text then described how the Nazi’s deported and murdered a very high percentage of Jewish people (73 %) in the Netherlands during World War II in comparison to other European countries such as Belgium (40%) and France (25 %) (Moore, 1998). As two factors that contributed to this high percentage in the Netherlands, it was mentioned that (a) at the beginning of the war when the intentions of the Nazi’s were not quite clear, many non-Jewish Dutch citizens reported to the Nazi’s which Jewish people they knew, which facilitated the Nazi’s persecution of Jewish Dutch citizens; and that (b) many Jewish people could easily be traced due to the fact that 80 % of the Jewish population lived in the seven largest Dutch cities, despite the many hiding places that were offered by non-Jewish people later in the war. We chose to include both negative and positive aspects of the actions of non-Jewish Dutch people such that the upcoming disapproval or sympathy expressions could both be applied to this information.

Manipulation of source. Similar to Study 1, participants were then told that the University of Amsterdam had recently investigated how these events are viewed upon. In the in-group condition, it was stated that this research was done among a representative sample from the Dutch population. In the victimized out-group and perpetrator out-group condition, the italicized word in the last sentence was
changed to the Jewish population in the Netherlands and German population, respectively.

**Manipulation of evaluation.** In the disapproval condition, participants were then told that it was investigated to what degree this specific population felt that Dutch people during World War II misbehaved (or ‘behaved properly’ in the some sympathy condition). Accordingly, participants then read that 92% of the population under investigation indicated that they strongly disapproved of the behavior of the Dutch (or ‘felt that the behavior of the Dutch was good enough’ in the some sympathy condition). It was stated that in their view, the Dutch had not done enough (or ‘done enough’ in the the some sympathy condition) to help Jewish Dutch people during the war.

**Manipulation check.** As a check on the source manipulation, participants were asked to indicate which population had indicated that the Dutch had not done enough (or ‘done enough’ in the some sympathy condition) to help Jewish people during the war: the French, correct population, Belgian or other population. The italicized words were tailored to fit the appropriate conditions.

**Group-based guilt.** The same six items as in Study 1 were used, tailored to capture feelings of guilt as a result of the Dutch treatment of Jewish people during World War II (α = .94; see Appendix B).

**Appraisals of the source.** We used the same items to measure the perceived expertise and the perceived illegitimacy of the source’s evaluation as in Study 1. To measure the perceived exaggeration of the source, we formulated two items in this study to differentiate between exaggeration of the negative actions of the Dutch (the same item as in Study 1) and exaggeration of the positive actions of the Dutch (e.g., ‘To what extent did the source (e.g., German) population exaggerate the positive actions of the Dutch?’). Both these items were administered to participants in order to fit both the disapproval as well as the some sympathy conditions.

**Apologies and financial support.** The same two items as in Study 1 were used to measure participants’ opinion toward reparation of the things the Dutch had done to Jewish people during the war. In contrast to Study 1 however, we decided to analyze separately the apology item and the financial support item due to their weak correlation (r = .34, p < .001). Apparently, participants differentiated clearly in their opinion about reparation in the form of an apology or financial support by the Dutch government. All items intended to measure guilt, the appraisals of the source, apologies and financial support were answered on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

**Results**

Similar GLM univariate procedures in SPSS were used as in Study 1 to analyze the effects of national identification as a continuous independent variable and source (in-group, victimized out-group or perpetrator out-group) and evaluation (disapproval versus some sympathy) as between subjects variables.
Group-based guilt. The predicted three-way interaction effect between national identification, source, and evaluation was significant, $F(2, 133) = 4.05, p = .02$. Firstly, this interaction indicated that the simple interaction between identification and source was marginally significant in the disapproval condition, $F(2, 133) = 2.51, p = .085$. Inspection of this simple interaction effect clearly indicated that we replicated the interaction found in Study 1. The effect of source was again significant at the lowest level of identification (2), $F(2, 133) = 3.21, p = .043$, indicating that these lower identifiers felt significantly more guilty when the perpetrator out-group ($M = 5.61$) rather than the victimized out-group ($M = 2.35$), $p = .015$, with the in-group ($M = 3.52$) in an intermediate position that did not differ significantly from the other two. The effect of source in the disapproval condition was also (marginally) significant at the highest level of identification (7), $F(2, 133) = 2.63, p = .076$, but for different reasons. Similar to Study 1, these higher identifiers again felt significantly more guilty in response to the in-group’s disapproval ($M = 4.56$) than to the perpetrator out-group ($M = 2.40$), $p = .021$. As expected, the victimized out-group’s disapproval condition ($M = 3.97$) was equally strong as the in-group condition (ns), but somewhat stronger compared to the perpetrator out-group disapproval condition, $p = .091$. These analyses demonstrate the replication of our findings in Study 1.

Secondly, to further test our hypotheses concerning the different effects of disapproval versus sympathy expressions on guilt as a function of identification and type of source, we examined the effects of type of evaluation at low (2) and high (7) levels of identification within each source condition.

![Figure 9a](image-url) No effects of disapproval or sympathy expressions from an in-group source (Dutch) on feelings of group-based guilt as a function of national identification, Study 2.

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1 In this results section, we do not report about the simple interaction between identification and source in the sympathy condition (when the overall three-way interaction is significant), because (a) our hypotheses dealt with differences between disapproval and sympathy expressions in each source condition and (b) space considerations.
In the in-group source condition, no effects emerged of type of evaluation among lower identifiers (i.e., at the lowest values of identification), and, unexpectedly, among higher identifiers (i.e., the highest values of identification), both $F$s $(1, 133) < 1.53, p_s = ns$ (see Figure 9a).

However, in the victimized out-group source condition (see Figure 9b), the effect of evaluation was significant among lower identifiers, $F (1,133) = 6.77, p = .01$, indicating that lower identifiers as expected felt significantly more guilty when this source expressed its sympathy rather than its disapproval. Unexpectedly, no differences emerged among higher identifiers, $F (1, 133) < 1$ (similarly as in the in-group source condition).

As expected, in the perpetrator out-group source condition (see Figure 9c), a significant effect emerged of evaluation among lower identifiers, $F (1,133) = 4.22, p = .042$, indicating that they felt more guilty in response to this source’s disapproval expressions than to their sympathy expressions. The effect of evaluation was marginally significant among higher identifiers in this source condition, $F (1,133) = 3.28, p = .072$. Consistent with our arguments, their self-reports indicated that they felt more guilty when this source showed its sympathy rather than its disapproval.

Appraisals of the source. The effect of source was significant on the perceived expertise item, $F (2, 133) = 7.44, p = .001$, indicating that participants in the victimized out-group condition ($M = 4.93$) perceived their source population to know better what had happened during World War II in the Netherlands than participants in the in-group ($M = 4.06$) or perpetrator out-group condition ($M = 4.14$), both $p_s < .01$. No other differences emerged.
Figure 9c. The effect of disapproval or sympathy expressions from a perpetrator out-group source (Germans) on feelings of group-based guilt as a function of national identification, Study 2.

With respect to the perceived illegitimacy of the source’s evaluation, a main effect emerged of source, $F(2, 133) = 11.82, p < .001$, indicating that the evaluation of the victimized out-group population ($M = 3.22$) was perceived as less illegitimate than the evaluation of the in-group ($M = 4.38$) and perpetrator out-group population ($M = 4.57$), both $ps < .001$. No other differences emerged.

In the case of perceived exaggeration, we performed a repeated measures analysis with the same independent variables and a within subjects variable that consisted of the two items about exaggeration of the negative and positive actions of the Dutch. First of all, a main effect emerged of evaluation, $F(1, 133) = 4.26, p = .041$, as well as a main effect of source, $F(2, 133) = 6.87, p = .001$, when the average of the two exaggeration items were analyzed. Regardless of the type of exaggeration, participants perceived the source population to exaggerate more in the disapproval condition ($M = 3.76$) than in the some sympathy condition ($M = 3.47$). In addition, participants perceived the in-group ($M = 3.93$) to exaggerate (marginally) significantly more than the perpetrator out-group ($M = 3.59$) and victimized out-group ($M = 3.31$), $p = .058$ and $p < .001$, respectively. Other differences were not significant.

Secondly, several significant two-way and three-way interaction effects emerged. Most importantly, the highest order four-way interaction effect between the within subjects variable, source, evaluation and identification was significant, $F(2, 133) = 3.24, p = .042$. To simplify this complex interaction for interpretation, a difference score was computed by subtracting the scores on the positive from the negative exaggeration item. Higher positive scores on this variable thus indicate that participants perceived their source population to exaggerate the negative actions of the Dutch more than the positive actions. Note that treatment of the
within subjects variable as a difference score produces identical results in terms of F- and p-values.

We first examined whether identification moderated the effect of source in the disapproval condition similarly as in Study 1. The effect of source was not significant at low levels of identification in the disapproval condition, $F(2, 133) < 1$, indicating that lower identifiers were predicted to perceive the in-group ($M = .81$), victimized out-group ($M = .92$) and perpetrator out-group ($M = .07$) to exaggerate their group’s actions to the same extent. However, the effect of source in the disapproval condition was significant at high levels of identification, $F(2, 133) = 6.19$, $p = .003$. As expected, higher identified participants perceived the perpetrator out-group to exaggerate most the negative actions over the positive actions ($M = 3.93$), followed by the victimized out-group ($M = 1.37$) and in-group ($M = -.91$) source condition. All means differed significantly, $ps < .02$, except for the difference between the perpetrator and victimized out-group condition, $p = .081$. These differences clearly replicate our findings in Study 1.

![Figure 10a](image)

*Figure 10a.* The effect of disapproval or sympathy expressions from an in-group source (Dutch) on the perceived exaggeration difference score (source’s exaggeration of negative minus positive actions) as a function of national identification, Study 2.

Second, we examined the perceived differences in exaggeration between expressions of disapproval and sympathy within each source condition, at low (2) and high (7) levels of identification. In the in-group source condition, the effect of evaluation showed a trend among lower identifiers, $F(1, 133) = 2.94$, $p = .089$, indicating that they perceived the in-group to exaggerate most the positive actions in the sympathy condition (compared to the negative actions), but less so in the disapproval condition (see Figure 10a). In addition, a marginally significant effect of evaluation emerged among higher identifiers, $F(1, 133) = 3.57$, $p = .061$, indicating that they perceived their in-group to exaggerate least the negative
actions when a disapproval was expressed, whereas the positive actions were exaggerated least when sympathy was expressed.

In the victimized source condition (see Figure 10b), the effect of evaluation was strongly significant only among higher identifiers, $F(1,133) = 14.32, p < .001$, indicating that they perceived this source to exaggerate most the negative actions in the disapproval condition, whereas the positive actions were exaggerated most in the sympathy condition.

![Figure 10b. The effect of disapproval or sympathy expressions from a victimized out-group source (Jewish-Dutch) on the perceived exaggeration difference score (source’s exaggeration of negative minus positive actions) as a function of national identification, Study 2.](image)

Finally, in the perpetrator out-group condition (see Figure 10c), a strongly significant effect of evaluation was again present only among higher identifiers, $F(1,133) = 7.25, p = .008$. As expected, higher identifiers perceived this source to exaggerate strongly the negative actions (over the positive actions) in the disapproval condition, but perceived the positive actions to be exaggerated to an equal extent as the negative actions when sympathy was expressed.

Apologies and financial support. Both the apologies and financial support item correlated positively with group-based guilt, $r = .24, p = .003$ and $r = .31, p < .001$, respectively. However, no effects emerged on both these measures, all $Fs < 2.25$, all $ps > .10$. 
Figure 10c. The effect of disapproval or sympathy expressions from a perpetrator out-group source (Germans) on the perceived exaggeration difference score (source’s exaggeration of negative minus positive actions) as a function of national identification, Study 2.

Discussion

The findings in this second study clearly fulfilled our first objective: To replicate and generalize how weakly and highly identified perpetrator group members differ in their experience of group-based guilt when different sources disapprove of their group’s wrongs. Similar to Study 1, a disapproval of fellow in-group members was least persuasive among lower identifiers, eliciting weak feelings of group-based guilt. In addition, Study 2 again showed that lower identifiers rejected the disapproval of victimized out-group members, presumably because this disapproval threatens to associate them too strongly with the past perpetrators we argue (see also Zebel, Doosje, Spears, & Vliek, 2005; Chapter 5). Importantly, this pattern occurred despite the fact that lower identifiers share a (super ordinate) national identity with this victimized out-group. However, when the disapproval stemmed from a historical perpetrator out-group who is itself tainted with blame, this was argued not to constitute a strong association threat for lower identifiers. In the absence of a strong in-group protective motivation, lower identifiers followed this evaluation and accordingly reported the strongest feelings of guilt (see also Branscombe et al., 2002; Doosje et al., 2005).

In contrast, higher identifiers again felt significantly more guilty in response to disapproving in-group members than to disapproving members from a perpetrator out-group (see also Doosje et al., 2005). The persuasive influence of intra-group evaluations was further demonstrated through higher identifiers’ exaggeration responses: Disapproving in-group members were perceived to exaggerate least the negative actions of the in-group compared to the other sources. Finally, we again demonstrated that the victimized out-group is perceived as most knowledgeable and as the most legitimate evaluator among
perpetrator ingroup members. Accordingly, their disapproval was more difficult to discard than the disapproval of the perpetrator out-group for higher identifiers, resulting in similar levels of group-based guilt as in response to the ingroup’s disapproval.

Our second objective was to contrast expressions of disapproval to those of sympathy and examine how they affect group-based guilt. This study clearly demonstrated that such expressions may not always contribute to a positive social self, and may even be threatening depending on where this sympathy comes from (Ellemers et al., 2004). With respect to evaluations coming from fellow in-group or victimized out-group members, the observed differences among higher identifiers showed the highest levels of guilt after disapproval rather than sympathy, but these differences failed to reach significance. In contrast, we hypothesized the opposite pattern among higher identifiers when these evaluations came from a threatening historical perpetrator out-group in the context of World War II (i.e., Germans). To disassociate themselves from this morally tainted out-group in this context, higher identifiers paradoxically reported stronger feelings of group-based guilt in response to their sympathy than to their disapproval.

Consistent with our argument that evaluations from the in-group persuade lower identifiers least, no differences in group-based guilt emerged among them as a function of type of evaluation. However, we expected a different pattern in response to evaluations from victimized out-group members. In line with our hypothesis that lower identifiers feel less of an ‘association’ threat with past perpetrators by expressions of sympathy than by disapproval from this source, they felt most guilty after a sympathetic evaluation. These findings indicate that lower identifiers may be most willing to judge the past wrongs of their group in a negative manner (and feel guilty about it) when they have the impression that current members of the victimized group perceive them as different from past perpetrators. Finally, we argued that evaluations from the historical perpetrator out-group would not threaten to associate lower identifiers with past perpetrators. In addition, lacking the motivation to defend the in-group’s image, lower identifiers were persuaded by this out-group to feel more guilty after their disapproval than after their sympathy.

Unexpectedly, no converging pattern was found on participants’ opinions toward reparation as in Study 1. Recent political developments may offer a possible explanation for this. Participants may have been aware of the fact that the Dutch government has apologized toward the Jewish community in the Netherlands for the cold and formal treatment of Jewish survivors after World War II. In addition, this government also offered a financial compensation to current Jewish survivors or relatives of deceased Jewish people for the theft of Jewish properties during the War (“Kok”, 2000; Hagers, 2001). To our knowledge, no such forms of reparation have been offered to Indonesian people for the
negative consequences of the Dutch colonization of Indonesia. This divergence in actual reparations may not only help to understand why there is a stronger relation between guilt and reparation in Study 1 than in Study 2, it may also explain why no similar differences were found on participants’ opinions toward reparation as on group-based guilt in Study 2. In addition, participants may have perceived it as more difficult to make reparations for the indirect consequences of the Dutch behavior in World War II (i.e., genocide) than for the abuse of Indonesian labor and depletion of soil materials in Indonesia during the colonization.

General Discussion

The present research demonstrates not only how people vary in their sensitivity (i.e., perceived exaggeration) to evaluations of their in-group depending on the group membership of the source, but also how such evaluations can elicit negative self-focused emotions such as group-based guilt. When negative in nature (i.e., criticism), evaluations from an in-group source are met with the least defensiveness and elicit the highest guilt levels among higher identifiers. These findings relate to the intergroup sensitivity effect (Hornsey and colleagues, 2002; 2004) and point to (a) group identification as possible moderator of this effect and (b) the discrete emotional consequences of different sensitivity levels (see also Doosje et al., 2005).

However, the present studies also indicate how the experience of group-based guilt can diverge from appraisals of sensitivity. Although negative evaluations from the victimized out-group were met with more sensitivity among higher identifiers than similar evaluations from the in-group, their experience of group-based guilt was similar across these two different sources in both studies. Consistent with our expectations, the victimized out-group was considered as a special case: Participants perceived this source as most knowledgeable and the most legitimate evaluator of the wrongs that the in-group committed. Evaluations from this type of source are therefore difficult to discard, explaining why higher identifiers felt relatively strong feelings of guilt. These findings show how other appraisals than sensitivity (e.g., perceived expertise) related to the source of evaluation may affect group-based guilt.

Intuitively, people should come to appraise less negatively the actions of the in-group when others evaluate such actions in a (somewhat) positive manner. However, we argue that circumstances exist in which such expressions of sympathy will elicit stronger feelings of group-based guilt among group members (instead of weaker feelings). For example, we argued that lower identifiers would resist the threat of being categorized as similar to past in-group perpetrators when the current victimized out-group expressed its disapproval of these perpetrators (see also Zebel, Doosje, Spears, & Vliek, 2005; Chapter 5), but
less so in response to its sympathy expression. Accordingly, lower identifiers felt more guilty about their in-group’s wrongful actions after expressions of sympathy from this source than after expressions of disapproval in Study 2.

Most importantly, as Ellemers et al. (2004) have also argued, sympathetic expressions from members of an out-group can also constitute a strong threat to the (meaning of the) social self when these expressions contradict with the perceptions of the in-group. We hypothesized that especially higher identifiers would contrast expressions of sympathy (i.e., indicate stronger group-based guilt) from an out-group who can be considered as the instigating perpetrator of past atrocities in which the in-group was involved. Whereas higher identifiers strongly rejected the disapproval of this perpetrator out-group and felt weak feelings of group-based guilt as a consequence, they also opposed expressions of sympathy from this source and thus indicated stronger feelings of group-based guilt. These latter responses of higher identifiers clearly demonstrate how expressions of sympathy do not always fit a positive valued social self and can even motivate people to appraise the actions of their group more negatively.

These findings among higher identifiers illustrate how their strong motivation to uphold the positive value of their in-group can affect the experience of group-based guilt quite differently, depending on their strategies to maintain such a positive social identity. In most research to date (Doosje et al., 1998; 2005; Zebel, Doosje, & Spears, 2005 [Chapter 4]; Zebel, Stoffers, et al., 2005 [Chapter 2]), higher identifiers displayed defensive tendencies to downplay the negativity of the actions of their in-group or to reduce the perceived harm these actions inflicted among out-group members. As a consequence, higher identifiers experienced weaker feelings of group-based guilt than lower identifiers, who lack such a strong in-group protective motivation. The present data indicate a different outcome in terms of group-based guilt when higher identifiers wish to disassociate their in-group from a historically morally tainted out-group. When this threatening out-group expressed its sympathy, higher identifiers may have opposed this evaluation through more negative appraisals of the in-group’s wrongs. Accordingly, such appraisals elicited stronger (rather than weaker) feelings of group-based guilt among higher identifiers.

The observation in the present research that lower identifiers can experience strong feelings of group-based guilt on behalf of a group that is not crucial for their identity remains intriguing (see also Doosje et al., 1998; 2005; Zebel, Doosje, & Spears, 2005 [Chapter 4]; Zebel, Stoffers, et al., 2005 [Chapter 2]). We think that the ascribed and relatively inescapable nature of the group membership for lower identifiers (i.e., Dutch national membership) is an important condition for this observation (see also Ellemers, 1993). Lacking a strong in-group protective motivation, lower identifiers are ‘bound’ to feel some association with past perpetrators on the basis of an inescapable group membership that they share with these perpetrators. Thus, when an unrelated or perpetrator out-group
indicates its disapproval of past wrongs in the present studies, lower identifiers are made aware of this unavoidable group membership and accordingly feel guilty.

However, why do lower identifiers do not report such strong feelings of guilt then in response to the disapproval of members of a distinct victimized out-group in the present research? As argued before, we think lower identifiers experience a threat to be categorized as a perpetrator themselves in response to this particular disapproval. Thus, rather than instigating group-level strategies to maintain a positive in-group image as higher identifiers do (lower identifiers lack this motivation for this particular in-group), we argue that lower identifiers defend against a too strong (personal) association with past perpetrators within this ascribed and difficult to escape group (see also Zebel, Doosje, Spears, & Vliek, 2005 [Chapter 5]). These findings point to important boundary conditions that refrain lower identifiers from experiencing strong feelings of group-based guilt. Future research that elaborates on such boundary conditions may help to explain when and why group identification does and does not moderate group-based guilt (e.g., McGarty, et al., in press; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2004).

**Implications**

Understanding how perpetrator groups can be persuaded to acknowledge and feel guilty about that atrocities they have committed against other groups is important, because when such feelings are socially shared within these groups they can come to produce initiatives for reparation and compensation toward the victimized. The present findings indicate that a strong disapproval from within the perpetrator group itself can have such persuasive power. Given that perpetrator groups do not easily come to disapprove of their own atrocities (e.g., Cohen, 2001), other lines of research could investigate when and how a majority in a perpetrator group actually will reject and disapprove the wrongs of its members.

In this respect the ways outlined in the present research in which specific out-groups can persuade members of perpetrator groups to accept feelings of group-based guilt are perhaps even more important. Although members of the victimized out-group may perhaps be perceived as exaggeration somewhat when evaluating the perpetrator group, our findings demonstrate that their disapproval is capable of eliciting relatively strong feelings of guilt among highly identified perpetrator group members. Thus, our data indicate that those who concern it most (the victimized) may have a persuasive influence on the cognitions and feelings of members of the perpetrator group, and perhaps thus also on their behavior. This is most intriguing because this influence concerns those perpetrator group members who in general are least likely to admit negative aspects of their group: higher identifiers.

Finally, the present research also points to the dual impact that expressions of support or sympathy from other groups can have among perpetrator groups
(such expressions of support occur quite frequently in the international community we argue). On the one hand, sympathy from high valued or respected out-groups may reassure perpetrator groups that they need not to feel blameworthy for and guilty about the harm that has occurred. On the other hand, as this research shows, sympathy from out-groups that are met with skepticism or even distrust may motivate perpetrator groups to affirm their high moral status through the expressions of feelings of group-based guilt. Paradoxically then, groups may be persuaded to put on a hair shirt when they are confronted with ‘threatening’ support and accept more readily their role as perpetrators.
The Role of Identification in Group-Based Guilt
Certain negative historical episodes in which one's group has mistreated another group with detrimental consequences are difficult to ignore. The Dutch, for example, have been struggling with their nation's involvement in the extraordinary high percentage of their Jewish inhabitants who were deported and murdered during the Second World War (Moore, 1998). After the War, Van der Elsken (1988) photographed houses of deported Jewish people in Amsterdam that had fallen into disrepair and noticed written cries on a wall where a Jew hid from the Nazis. He indicated how the Jewish quarter in Amsterdam was now without any Jews, how it had passed away very slowly. He wrote, “‘Keep your dirty hands off our dirty Jews!’ we said to the Nazi’s during the war. We didn’t say it clearly enough, we didn’t bother enough to protect these people” (Van der Elsken, 1988). This illustrates how feelings of group-based guilt can arise when group members reflect on the suffering of others in which their group is causally implicated. We argue that taking the perspective of victims of past in-group mistreatments may lead to strong feelings of group-based guilt. However, it is proposed that group members' identification with their group may work against this relationship, in the sense that those who identify most strongly with their group are least likely to accept a negative portrayal of their group when taking this perspective. To test this, two studies examine how out-group perspective-taking affects group-based guilt, and how in-group identification influences this relationship.

Research into the experience of differentiated emotions based on one's group membership is relatively recent (Smith, 1993). Traditionally, individuals experience emotions when they appraise an event as harmful or favorable to the individual self. However, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Self-Categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) establish that people also derive part of their identity from membership in social groups. This social self extends beyond the individual’s personal characteristics and encompasses others who belong to the same social groups (in-groups); it dissociates the individual from those who belong to other social groups (out-groups). On the basis of this approach, events that place (members of) the in-group in a favorable or unfavorable light relative to out-groups thus relate to the
social self, and therefore also can give rise to distinct emotions with associated behavioral tendencies (e.g., Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000).

**Group-Based Guilt**

To characterize group-based guilt, the antecedents, experience, and behavioral consequences should be considered. What are the necessary conditions for this emotion? A first condition is self-categorization as a member of a social group that was or still is in an advantaged position compared to another social group (Branscombe, Doosje, & McGarty, 2002; Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002). In fact, Branscombe et al. (2002) argue that group-based guilt will be augmented to the extent that the advantaged group position in the past continues to endure in the present. Second, members should appraise their group to be responsible for this advantage; the in-group is perceived to have illegitimately caused the disadvantaged group’s position through exploitation, discrimination and/or mistreatment (Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Swim & Miller, 1999).

What can be said about the experience of group-based guilt? Similar to feelings of guilt due to personal responsibility, we argue that the phenomenological experience of group-based guilt is characterized by tension, remorse and regret over the in-group’s treatment of the out-group (Tangney & Fisher, 1995; Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994). Those who feel guilty should be painfully aware of what their in-group has done to wrong an out-group. Consistent with this self-awareness, Iyer et al. (2003) demonstrated that European Americans felt especially guilty when focused on their in-group’s responsibility for racial discrimination. In contrast, a focus on the discrimination that African Americans face without mentioning European Americans’ responsibility increased sympathy for African Americans.

The literature on personal bases of guilt suggests also that its experience is clearly relational in nature, that is, also affected by the individual’s concern for the harmed other (see Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994 for a review). In line with this, we argue that the experience of group-based guilt cannot be characterized without taking into account the targets of the in-group’s mistreatment. Thus, in addition to the necessity of salient harmful in-group behavior, those who feel guilty are also concerned with the impact of their in-group’s behavior on out-group members (Tangney, 1995). As we argue shortly, this concern lies at the basis for a relation between out-group perspective-taking and the experience of group-based guilt, a relation we focus on in the present studies.

Turning to the behavioral consequences, research so far has clearly demonstrated that group-based guilt can motivate group members to wish to repair the harm done by their in-group (Doosje et al., 1998; Swim & Miller, 1999).
Such reparation may help people come to terms with past injustices between two social groups (but see Iyer et al., 2003).

Out-Group Perspective-Taking and Group-Based Guilt

In our view, group-based guilt arises especially when the in-group’s advantaged position or negative behavior at the expense of the harmed out-group is made salient. This suggests that those who feel group-based guilt will take into account what consequences the in-group’s actions have had for the well-being of the out-group. At the interpersonal level, feelings of guilt are also characterized by a concern for the impact of one’s objectionable behavior on the harmed other (Baumeister et al., 1994; Tangney, 1995). In fact, it is argued that feelings of interpersonal guilt result when one empathizes with the harmed other and one is causally implicated in this harm (Hoffman, 1976; 2000; Tangney, 1995). As Baumeister et al. (1994) stated: ‘the affective roots of guilt lie in human relatedness, that is, in the human capacity to feel the suffering and distress of others...’ (p. 246). Not surprisingly therefore, interpersonal guilt is positively associated with taking the perspective of the harmed other (Hoffman, 1976; 2000; Leith & Baumeister, 1998; Konstam, Chernoff, & Deveney, 2001).

Recent research into the effects of taking the perspective of out-group members has illustrated the positive consequences this perspective-taking can have for the concern and valuing of the out-group as a whole (Batson et al., 1997; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Vescio, Sechrist, & Paolucci, 2003). However, the relation between taking the perspective of out-group members and group-based guilt has not yet been investigated to our knowledge. Based on the present findings and arguments, we argue that when people are confronted with illegitimate actions of their in-group that have caused harm to out-group members, taking the perspective of an out-group member should increase group-based guilt. This perspective-taking should make the observer feel what the out-group member has endured and suffered, and thus portray the consequences of the in-group behavior for the out-group more vividly and severely. Thus, under conditions in which group members are aware that their in-group is responsible for the mistreatment of an out-group, those who imagine the suffering of an out-group member may experience strong group-based guilt.

However, the literature on helping and prosocial behavior underlines that people frequently do not empathize and help others in distress or need (Batson, 1998). Therefore, one can reasonably expect differences in the extent to which group members are willing to confront the harm that their in-group has caused among out-group members.
The Role of Identification

The extent to which people experience emotions on behalf of a group membership may depend on their subjective level of identification with that group, which conveys the importance and relevance group members attach to defining themselves in terms of that particular group membership (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1999). Doosje et al. (1998; Study 2) demonstrated how national group identification affected group-based guilt among the Dutch when they were confronted with a description of their nation’s colonial history in Indonesia. When this description was unambiguously negative in nature, no relation emerged between national identification and group-based guilt. However, when the description contained both positive and negative aspects and thus provided the opportunity for different interpretations, national group identification was negatively related to group-based guilt and the associated tendency to make reparations toward the Indonesians. These results clearly demonstrate that when there is an opportunity to do so, those who identify more strongly with being Dutch (higher identifiers) will be most defensive about their in-group’s history and experience weak feelings of group-based guilt.

The in-group’s illegitimate mistreatment of an out-group can be argued to constitute a threat to the group’s moral value, whereby group identification determines the coping response (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002). Given such a moral threat, lower identifiers will more easily accept and try to repair the in-group’s wrongs, whereas higher identifiers will be motivated to defend their in-group’s behavior if possible. In addition, Spears, Doosje, and Ellemers (1997) have demonstrated that lower identifiers defined themselves less as prototypical group members when their in-group was threatened (indicating distancing), whereas the opposite pattern was obtained among higher identifiers. Given these different coping responses, group identification may influence also the proposed positive relation between out-group perspective-taking and group-based guilt.

Being aware of the in-group’s mistreatment of out-group members may reflect negatively on one’s social self, especially as group identification increases. Shaw, Batson and Todd (1994) argued that people avoid feeling empathy with a person in need when they are aware that helping this person involves high costs for themselves. Similarly, higher identifiers may anticipate that taking the perspective of harmed out-group members who are mistreated by their in-group is costly for their group’s image. When faced with this threatening perspective, higher identifiers may be especially motivated to come up with strategies that defend their in-group’s behavior.

In contrast, lower identifiers may be less concerned with the in-group’s image and are motivated to undo their in-group’s behavior (Branscombe et al., 1999). Aware of what their in-group has done, they may take the perspective of out-
group members more readily to consider the consequences. Related to this, Stephenson and Wicklund (1983) demonstrated that participants were less able to take the other’s perspective when they were preoccupied with a potentially negative aspect of the self compared to when they were made self-aware in a more neutral manner. Similarly, higher identifiers may have more difficulty taking the perspective of harmed out-group members than lower identifiers because they may be most self-aware in a negative manner when faced with the mistreatment by their in-group.

Based on these findings and arguments, we propose two ways in which group identification may influence the positive relation between taking the perspective of out-group members and group-based guilt. First, we expect group identification to predict differences in group members’ spontaneous tendency to take the perspective of out-group members as well as their spontaneous tendency to defend their in-group’s behavior (Study 1). That is, especially when the in-group’s behavior can be interpreted in different ways (Doosje et al., 1998), we hypothesize that group identification predicts negatively group members’ out-group perspective-taking tendency and positively group members’ tendency to defend and justify their in-group’s behavior. In turn, out-group perspective-taking should predict group-based guilt positively, whereas defensiveness about the in-group’s behavior should predict guilt negatively (Study 1). Second, when group members are forced to take the perspective of out-group members (Study 2), we expect higher identifiers to come up with defensive strategies to resist the negative portrayal of their group as illegitimately causing harm to the out-group. Thus, instructing group members to take the perspective of victimized out-group members should increase group-based guilt among lower identifiers, but not so among higher identifiers due to their defensive reactions.

Study 1

To examine our hypotheses concerning group members’ spontaneous tendencies in Study 1, participants first indicated their national group identification and were then instructed to read multiple real-life scenarios in which the Dutch committed harmful behavior toward a specific out-group. These scenario’s covered very different intergroup situations, varying in terms of time period (in the distant past versus more recently), intentionality, intergroup relationship (enemies in war or perpetrator-victim), etc. We reasoned that these differences would allow for different interpretations about the Dutch behavior to be made and thus would strengthen differences in group members’ spontaneous tendencies as a function of group identification (see also Doosje et al., 1998). After each scenario, group-based guilt was measured as well as the proposed predictor variables. Thus, participants’ spontaneous tendency to take the perspective of
out-group members was assessed, as well as participants’ spontaneous tendency to defend their in-group’s behavior.

Two additional variables were included as exploratory predictors. Participants’ perceived personal control in the in-group’s behavior was measured, because some intergroup situations took place very recently or were ongoing. Greater perceived personal control was hypothesized to implicate greater personal responsibility for the in-group’s behavior, and thus result in stronger group-based guilt. Furthermore, we argued that the degree to which the intergroup behavior in the scenarios was perceived to be stereotypical for the Dutch as well as for the out-groups would vary. To the extent that each scenario described the Dutch as inflicting harm upon an out-group, greater overall perceived stereotypicality of the intergroup behavior was expected to lead participants to blame the in-group more strongly for what had happened and thus lead them to feel more guilty.

Method

Participants

Seventy-two Dutch university students (45 women and 27 men) participated in this study. Participants’ ages ranged from 18 to 39 ($M = 21.03$). Participants received either course credit or Fl. 15 (€ 6.79) for their participation in this and two other unrelated studies. We excluded one outlier from the data whose extreme response on the in-group defensiveness measure (more than 3 SDs above the mean) seriously altered the pattern of results. In addition, we excluded the data from 2 additional non-Dutch participants, as well as from one other participant who indicated not to have taken part seriously.

Design and Procedure

Scenarios. To examine whether the proposed predictor variables were generally predictive of group-based guilt among Dutch people, we constructed 14 different scenarios. Five of these scenarios involved the in-group exploitation of another group in the past, describing how the Dutch had: treated slaves during the Dutch slave trade (3 different scenarios); colonized Indonesia (1 scenario); and how the Boers (descendants of Dutch people) had suppressed and dominated the indigenous people of South-America (1 scenario). Five other scenarios described how the Dutch failed to help or neglected another group in need: how Dutch people as part of a NATO intervention force failed to protect Muslims from Serbian persecution in Bosnia in 1995 (3 different scenarios); and how Dutch people neglected the Jewish people who returned after World War II in the Netherlands (2 different scenarios). Furthermore, two scenarios involved the treatment of another group by Dutch people (or their descendants) during wartime, describing how the Boers had murdered thousands of English people in the Boer War (1899-1902) (1 scenario); and how Dutch people betrayed Jewish people to the Nazis during World War II (1 scenario). Finally, two different scenarios described how the Dutch celebrate the Feast of St Nicholas and his
black servant every year, which has been argued to create a negative perception of people from African origin in Dutch children.

We intended to present several of the above scenarios to each participant. For this purpose, the 14 above scenarios were divided into two groups of 5 and one group of 4 scenarios. Within a group, each scenario described the harmful treatment of a different social group by the Dutch, ensuring that no overlap existed between scenarios within one group. Each participant randomly received one of the three groups of scenarios. Following this procedure, 23 to 25 participants read each of the 14 above scenarios.

**Measurement of predictor and dependent variables.** First we measured participants’ national identification with being Dutch, using the eight items from Doosje et al. (1998). These items measured cognitive (e.g., “Being Dutch is an important part of how I see myself”), affective (e.g., “I feel a bond with Dutch people”) and evaluative (e.g., “I am happy to be Dutch”) aspects of national identification (α = .90; see Appendix A for an overview of all items). Agreement with these items was answered on scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). Participants indicated a fairly strong identification with being Dutch (M = 5.00, SD = .98; only 13% indicated that their identification was equal to or below the midpoint of the scale). Participants then randomly received one of the three groups of scenarios. After each scenario, group-based guilt was measured consisting of four items from Branscombe, Slugoski, and Kappen (2004) and Doosje et al. (1998; see Appendix B for an overview of all items), which were tailored to fit each scenario (α = .78). An example of an item is “I can easily feel guilty about the bad outcomes received by the out-group (e.g., Jews) that were brought about by Dutch people”.

After each guilt measure, the remaining predictor variables followed. Perspective-taking of the out-group consisted of two items: (a) “I find it easy to take the perspective of the out-group (e.g., Muslims) in this scenario” and (b) “I see similarities between myself and the out-group in this scenario” (i.e., self-out-group overlap; see Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). These items were positively related, r (72) = .52, p < .001. To measure in-group defensiveness, participants were asked to indicate whether (a) the behavior of the Dutch was justified and whether (b) the out-group was clearly harmed by the in-group’s behavior (reverse coded), r (72) = .59, p < .001. A one item-measure of perceived personal control assessed whether participants felt that they could influence the behavior of the Dutch. Finally, to measure the perceived stereotypicality of the behavior, participants indicated whether the information about the (a) Dutch or (b) out-group in the scenario was stereotypical for (a) Dutch people or (b) out-group (r (72) = .73, p < .001). All these items (except for the items assessing national identification) were answered on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).
Results

To assess whether the hypothesized variables predicted feelings of group-based guilt across different scenarios, we averaged participants’ scores across scenarios.

Principal component analysis and correlations. The items that were used to construct scales for national identification, perspective-taking, in-group defensiveness and perceived stereotypicality were intended to define empirically distinguishable constructs. A principal components analysis with varimax rotation revealed a four-component solution, accounting for 71% of the variance. This analysis indicated that the above four predictors could be distinguished empirically. Furthermore, the proposed predictors in this study (including the one-item measure of perceived personal control) did not strongly correlate with each other (largest r(72) = .31). These results indicate that the proposed predictors were fairly independent from each other.

National identification as a predictor. As expected, national identification emerged as a positive predictor of in-group defensiveness, $B = .15, SE = .074, F(1, 70) = 4.40, p = .040$, indicating that higher identifiers displayed greater defensiveness about their in-group’s behavior in the scenarios. Unexpectedly, national identification did not significantly predict perspective-taking of the out-group, $B = .07, SE = .13, F(1, 70) < 1$, nor did it predict any of the other variables directly (including group-based guilt), $Bs < -.09, all Fs < 1$.

Group-based guilt. In addition to national identification as a predictor of group-based guilt, we included the four hypothesized predictors in a multiple regression analysis to test their unique contributions to the prediction of group-based guilt. Entering the five linear predictors simultaneously resulted in a model that predicted group-based guilt significantly, $F(4, 67) = 4.88, p = .001$, Adjusted $R^2 = .22$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>$B$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out-group perspective-taking</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.27*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-group defensiveness</td>
<td>-.38</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.23†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived stereotypicality of behavior</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.20†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived personal control</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National identification</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adjusted $R^2 = .22$  † $p < .07$  * $p < .05$.

As can be seen in Table 1, national identification remained nonsignificant as a direct predictor of group-based guilt with the other predictors in the model. As
expected, out-group perspective-taking proved to be a positive predictor of group-based guilt, whereas in-group defensiveness constituted a marginally significant negative predictor. In addition, the exploratory predictors perceived personal control and the perceived stereotypicality of the described behavior in the scenarios predicted group-based guilt positively, in line with our expectations.

Discussion

In this study, participants were repeatedly confronted with their ingroup’s negative treatment of outgroups. These treatments varied on different dimensions (e.g., intergroup relationship) allowing for different interpretations to be made concerning the described behavior of the Dutch. Consistent with Doosje et al.’s (1998) finding in the ambiguity condition, we hypothesized that especially under these circumstances higher identifiers would employ strategies to downplay their ingroup’s negative behavior. Although national identification did not predict group-based guilt directly, we did find that higher identifiers spontaneously focused more strongly on defending their ingroup’s negative behavior than lower identifiers. This ingroup defensiveness in turn predicted group-based guilt negatively.

Although we also measured taking the outgroup’s perspective as a spontaneous strategy that higher identifiers might avoid to downplay their ingroup’s negative behavior, this tendency was not significantly predicted by national identification. That is, higher identifiers did not focus less on taking the outgroup’s perspective than lower identifiers. The fact that national identification was most strongly related to spontaneous ingroup defensiveness (and not outgroup perspective-taking) underlines the in-group focus highly identified group members adopt when faced with a threat to their group (Branscombe et al., 1999; Spears et al., 1997).

Consistent with our conception of group-based guilt as a relational emotion, we did find that out-group perspective-taking positively predicted group-based guilt. That is, across a broad range of intergroup events in which the Dutch treated out-groups in a negative manner, those who were more inclined to take the out group’s perspective felt more guilty. This constitutes a first indication that when group members are confronted with their in-group’s mistreatment of an out-group, imagining the plight of out-group members has the potential to increase group-based guilt. However, these data are correlational. In study 2, we therefore manipulated out-group perspective-taking to examine whether it can really induce an increase in group-based guilt. In addition, this first study has indicated that no differences exist in lower and higher identifiers’ spontaneous tendency to take the out-group’s perspective. Therefore, national identification was also assessed as an independent variable in study 2, to examine whether a manipulation of out-group perspective-taking interacts with national identification to influence group-based guilt.
Study 2

In the second study, two descriptions of clearly negative historical episodes of the Dutch were used to confront participants with their in-group’s mistreatment of an out-group. We hypothesized that when participants were asked to imagine themselves in the position of an out-group member during either one of these episodes, group-based guilt would be increased especially among lower identifiers. In contrast, we expected such an out-group perspective instruction to be threatening for higher identifiers, because considering the harmful consequences of the mistreatment by their in-group among out-group members opposes the positive image they hold about their in-group. We therefore reasoned that this out-group perspective instruction might motivate higher identifiers even more strongly to defend and justify their in-group’s behavior. This defensive behavior should manifest itself in stronger attributions of the intergroup history to the out-group and less to the in-group as identification increases, especially when asked to take the out-group’s perspective (see also Doosje & Branscombe, 2003). Finally, we also aimed to validate that group-based guilt can mediate participants’ motivation to repair their in-group’s behavior in this study.

Method

Participants

One hundred and fifty-three Dutch students at different high schools in the Netherlands voluntarily participated in this study; 55% of this sample was female. Participants’ ages ranged from 13 to 19 (M = 15.91). Because our hypotheses concerned feelings of group-based guilt due to being Dutch, we excluded 6 participants who indicated that they were not Dutch.

Design and Procedure

A 2 (Harmed out-group: African Slaves versus Dutch Jews) x 2 (Perspective-taking of the out-group: no versus yes) between subjects design was set up for this study, with national identification as a continuous independent variable.

National identification. Participants were approached in class and explained that this study concerned Dutch people and their behavior. Participants then received a questionnaire and were asked to indicate their national identification with being Dutch, using the same eight items and response scales as in Study 1 (α = .91; see Appendix A). As expected, participants in our sample identified strongly with being Dutch (M = 5.15, SD = 1.20; only 16% indicated that their national identification was below the midpoint of the scale).

Manipulation of harmed out-group. Participants then received a scenario of approximately 200 words describing how the Dutch had harmed either the African Slaves or the Dutch Jews (these scenarios were adopted from two scenarios used in study 1). In the African Slaves condition, the scenario explained how Dutch slave ships traded African Slaves with plantation-owners in the Caribbean and described the harsh and often mortal treatment of African Slaves...
aboard the ships. In the Dutch Jews condition, the scenario dealt with the Dutch betrayal of Jewish people to the Nazis and how this in part explained the very high proportion of Jews in the Netherlands who were persecuted and murdered during World War II.

**Manipulation of perspective taking of the outgroup.** Participants in the perspective-taking condition were instructed to imagine themselves as a Slave (Jew) during the Dutch slave trade (World War II) before reading the scenario. They were asked to imagine how they as a Slave (Jew) perceived the way in which the Dutch treated them during the Dutch slave trade (World War II). To strengthen the perspective-taking manipulation, participants in the perspective-taking condition were instructed to write down a short essay about a day in the life of the Slave (Jew), for which 11 lines were left open in the questionnaire. Participants in the no perspective-taking condition did not receive these instructions.

**Dependent Measures**

**Group-based guilt.** To measure feelings of group-based guilt, participants indicated their agreement with the four items from Branscombe et al. (2004) and Doosje et al. (1998), complemented with two more items (α = .87; see Appendix B). An example of one of the complemented items is “I feel guilty when I am confronted with the bad things the Dutch have done toward the Slaves (Jews) during the Dutch slave trade (Second World War)“.

**Out-group and in-group attribution.** To measure out-group attribution, participants indicated their agreement with the statement “I think the treatment of the Slaves (Jews) during the Dutch slave trade (World War II) can be attributed to the Slaves (Jews) themselves”. Participants received the same statement with “the Dutch” instead of “the Slaves (Jews) themselves” to measure in-group attribution.

**Reparation opinion.** We used three items to measure whether participants would support in-group reparation of the harmful behavior toward the out-group. Participants were asked to indicate whether the Dutch government should (a) offer its apologies and (b) make more money available to the harmed group for the things their in-group has done, and (c) whether the negative behavior of the Dutch toward the harmed group should receive more attention on national television (α = .80). All items comprising the dependent measures were answered on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

After this, participants were asked to indicate their age, gender and nationality of themselves and their parents. Finally, participants were fully debriefed and thanked for their participation.

**Results**

Using GLM univariate procedures in SPSS, we analyzed the effects of a full model with the continuous variable national identification and the between
subjects variables harmed out-group (African Slaves versus Dutch Jews) and perspective taking of the out-group (no versus yes) on the dependent variables.

Group-based guilt. No main effects emerged on group-based guilt. However, the predicted interaction-effect between national identification and perspective taking of the out-group was significant, \( F(1, 145) = 6.46, p = .012 \). This interaction indicated that national identification predicted group-based guilt negatively in the perspective-taking condition, \( B = -.32, SE = .13, F(1, 145) = 6.06, p = .015 \), whereas national identification did not predict guilt in the no perspective-taking condition, \( B = .14, SE = .13, F(1, 145) = 1.24, p = ns \) (see Figure 11). As hypothesized, these results clearly indicate that for those lower in identification, perspective taking of the disadvantaged group has a positive effect on group-based guilt, whereas it decreases group-based guilt among higher identifiers. 

![Figure 11. The effect of out-group perspective-taking on group-based guilt as a function of national identification, Study 2.](image)

Out-group and in-group attribution. Overall, participants attributed the treatment of the out-group in the scenarios more internally to the Dutch (\( M = 4.43 \)) than to the out-group itself (\( M = 1.51 \)), \( t(151) = -15.52, p < .001 \), consistent with the focus on the negative actions of the Dutch in the scenarios.

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1 Independently of this interaction effect, a theoretically less relevant interaction effect emerged between national identification and harmed out-group, \( B = -.20, F(1, 145) = 4.77, p = .031 \). This interaction indicated that in the African Slaves condition, national identification negatively predicted group-based guilt, \( B = -.29, SE = .12, F(1, 145) = 5.89, p = .016 \), whereas no prediction emerged when the harmed out-group concerned the Dutch Jews, \( B = .11, SE = .14, F(1, 145) < 1, p = ns \). These results seem to indicate that lower identifiers felt more guilty when confronted with the in-group’s immoral actions toward the African Slaves than toward the Dutch Jews, whereas the opposite pattern was obtained among higher identifiers.
With respect to the out-group attribution measure, national identification emerged as a positive predictor, $B = .19$, $SE = .07$, $F (1, 144) = 7.72$, $p = .006$, indicating that higher identifiers attributed the treatment of the out-group more to the out-group itself than lower identifiers. However, this effect was qualified by a significant interaction effect between perspective taking of the out-group and national identification, $F (1, 144) = 3.98$, $p = .048$. As expected, national identification emerged as a stronger positive predictor of out-group attribution in the perspective condition, $B = .32$, $SE = .10$, $F (1, 144) = 11.07$, $p = .001$, than in the no perspective condition, $B = .05$, $SE = .09$, $F (1, 144) < 1$ (see Figure 12). This pattern indicates that higher identifiers when asked to take the out-group’s perspective made stronger out-group attributions compared to when not asked to take this perspective. No such difference emerged among lower identifiers as a result of perspective taking.

![Figure 12](image-url)

*Figure 12.* The effect of out-group perspective-taking on out-group attribution as a function of national identification, Study 2.

With respect to the in-group attribution measure, an effect emerged of harmed out-group, $F (1, 145) = 45.39$, $p < .001$, indicating that participants attributed the treatment of the African Slaves more internally to the Dutch ($M = 5.36$) than the treatment of the Dutch Jews ($M = 3.51$). However, the expected interaction effect between perspective-taking of the out-group and national identification was not significant, $F (1, 145) < 1$.

**Out-group attribution as a mediator of group-based guilt.** To examine whether participants’ tendency to make out-group attributions mediated the relation between identification and guilt in the out-group perspective condition, we performed a moderated mediation analysis using the full model. That is, we examined whether the positive relation between national identification and out-group attributions in the out-group perspective condition mediated the negative
relation between identification and guilt in this condition. No mediation was expected in the control condition, where identification did not relate to group-based guilt and out-group attributions.

Following Baron and Kenny’s approach (1986), we have established that national identification predicted group-based guilt negatively and significantly in the out-group perspective condition \( (B = -0.32, SE = 0.13, F(1, 145) = 6.06, p = .015) \), constituting step 1. In addition, we have also shown step 2: national identification is positively and significantly related to the mediator out-group attributions, \( B = 0.32, SE = 0.10, F(1, 144) = 11.07, p = .001 \). To establish step 3, we included the out-group attributions as a covariate in the analyses with group-based guilt as a dependent variable. This covariate was significant, \( F(1, 143) = 10.27, p = .002 \), indicating that out-group attributions affected group-based guilt negatively, \( B = -0.36, SE = 0.11 \). With this covariate in the analysis, national identification no longer predicted group-based guilt significantly in the out-group perspective condition, \( B_{adj} = -0.21, SE = 0.13, F(1, 143) = 2.53, p = .11 \). Using the Sobel’s test (1982), this reduction in the effect of national identification on group-based guilt proved to be significant, \( z = -2.31, p = .02 \).

In the control condition, national identification as a predictor of group-based guilt did not change much with out-group attributions as a covariate in the model, \( B = 0.14, SE = 0.13, F(1, 145) = 1.24, p = ns \), to \( B_{adj} = 0.16, SE = 0.13, F(1, 143) = 1.67, p = ns \). Together, these analyses indicate that participants’ tendency to make out-group attributions mediated the negative effect of national identification on guilt in the out-group perspective condition, but not in the control condition.

Reparation opinion. Overall, feelings of group-based guilt were significantly correlated with the reparation opinion measure, \( r = 0.56, p < .001 \).

The analysis indicated that national identification predicted participants’ opinion towards reparation in a negative manner, \( B = -0.28, SE = 0.10, F(1, 145) = 8.47, p = .004 \). As expected, this finding was qualified by a significant interaction effect between national identification and out-group perspective taking, \( F(1, 145) = 4.99, p = .027 \). National identification emerged as a significant negative predictor in the perspective condition, \( B = -0.49, SE = 0.14, F(1, 145) = 12.87, p < .001 \), whereas national identification did not predict participants’ opinion towards reparation in the no perspective-taking condition, \( B = -0.06, SE = 0.13, F(1, 145) < 1 \) (see Figure 13).
Thus, when asked to take the out-group’s perspective lower identifiers were more in favor of in-group reparation toward the out-group than when not asked to take this perspective. In contrast, higher identifiers were less in favor of in-group reparation after perspective taking.

Group-based guilt as a mediator of reparation opinion. To examine whether feelings of group-based guilt would mediate the negative effect of national identification on the reparation measure in the out-group perspective condition, we again performed a moderated mediation analysis using the full model (no mediation was expected in the control condition).

National identification predicted reparation opinion negatively and significantly in the out-group perspective condition, $B = -.49$, $SE = .14$, $F(1, 145) = 12.87$, $p < .001$ (step 1). National identification also predicted group-based guilt negatively in the out-group perspective condition, $B = -.32$, $SE = .13$, $F(1, 145) = 6.06$, $p = .015$ (step 2). In the third step, we included the group-based guilt scores as a covariate in the analysis with the reparation measure as a dependent variable. The covariate was highly significant in this analysis, $F(1, 144) = 51.15$, $p < .001$, indicating that group-based guilt positively affected participants’ opinion towards reparation, $B = .53$, $SE = .074$. With the group-based guilt scores in the analysis, national identification predicted participants’ opinion towards reparation less negatively, $B_{adj} = -.32$, $SE = .12$, but still significantly, $F(1, 144) = 7.00$, $p = .009$. The Sobel’s test (1982) indicated that this reduction in the effect of national identification on the reparation measure was significant, $z = -2.33$, $p = .02$.

In the control condition, the group-based guilt scores did not change much in the influence of national identification on the reparation measure. With the guilt scores as covariate in the analyses, national identification remained a nonsignificant predictor of reparation opinion (from $B = -.06$, $SE = .13$, $F(1, 145) <$
The Role of Identification in Group-Based Guilt

1, to $B_{adj} = -.14, SE = .12, F (1, 144) = 1.49, p = ns). In sum, it can be said that feelings of group-based guilt partially mediated the negative effect of national identification on the reparation opinion measure in the out-group perspective condition. No mediation occurred in the control condition.

Discussion

These results demonstrate that when confronted with the in-group’s mistreatment of an out-group in the past, asking perpetrator group members to take the perspective of an out-group member can intensify feelings of group-based guilt among them. However, our findings point also to the important role of group identification in this process. As expected, the perspective-taking instructions only increased group-based guilt among those who were weakly identified with their group. Consistent with other research that demonstrated defensiveness among higher identifiers when confronted with a threat to their group (Doosje et al., 1998; Doosje & Branscombe, 2003), higher identifiers reacted defensively when asked to focus on the plight of out-group members that were harmed by in-group members. They attributed the treatment of out-group members more strongly to the out-group itself than lower identifiers when asked to take this perspective. The mediation analyses indicated that this defensive reaction explained why higher identifiers did not show an increase in group-based guilt after perspective taking. In contrast, lower identifiers did not display any defensiveness when asked to take perspective: imagining how an out-group member was harmed by in-group members made them feel more guilty about the actions of their in-group.

Unexpectedly, higher identifiers did not display any defensiveness on our measure of in-group attributions in this study (i.e., weaker in-group attributions compared to lower identifiers). Although such defensiveness would have been in accordance with the in-group focus that higher identifiers are likely to adopt in the face of a threat to their group (Branscombe et al., 1999; Spears et al., 1997), we can think of two reasons why this did not occur. First, the explicit perspective-taking instructions may have shifted this focus to defensiveness about the out-group’s harm. That is, the focus on the plight of out-group members may have forced higher identifiers’ to downplay the negative consequences of their group’s actions by making stronger out-group attributions instead of weaker in-group attributions. To a certain degree, this can be seen also as a means of justifying the actions of the in-group (i.e., stronger out-group attributions may imply that participants blamed out-group members also to some extent for what their in-group has done). Second and related to this, higher identifiers may not wish to question the agency of the in-group in the past, to uphold the image of their in-group as a powerful nation. Instead, they may seek other strategies to put a gloss on the actions of their in-group.

Another point of interest in this study is the two specific intergroup situations that were used. The purpose of these very different intergroup situations (in
terms of harmed out-group, time period, etc.) was to investigate whether our hypotheses could be generalized across them, similar to Study 1. And indeed, the above results with respect to perspective taking did not differ as a function of these scenarios. On the other hand, one may also wonder whether the above results are limited to these intergroup situations, and would not have been obtained when other intergroup situations were used. We do not think this is the case however, for two reasons. First, the results of Study 1 have demonstrated that perpetrator group members can take the perspective of out-group members across a broad range of intergroup situations, indicating that the possibility of perspective-taking might not be limited to some specific situations. Second, we would argue that whenever perpetrator group members are asked to take the perspective of victims of in-group behavior, this will constitute a threat to the group’s value, especially for higher identifiers. As a result higher identifiers are very likely to come up with strategies to defend their group; making strong out-group attributions is an example of such a strategy. Such defensive behavior among higher identifiers explains why they are not likely to feel more guilty when asked to take the out-group’s perspective (as opposed to lower identifiers).

Together, these findings provide support for our contention that the experience of group-based guilt is linked with a concern for the impact of the in-group’s actions among out-group members. Especially among lower identifiers who are less focused on defending their in-group actions than higher identifiers (Branscombe et al., 1999), perspective-taking instructions intensified group-based guilt. In contrast, higher identifiers’ defensive reaction to the out-group’s suffering decreased their guilt experience when they were asked to take the out-group’s perspective. In addition, in the presence of perspective-taking instructions national identification predicted negatively also support for reparation of the in-group’s wrongdoings toward the out-group. As expected, feelings of group-based guilt partially mediated this pattern. This latter finding is in line with other research that has demonstrated that group-based guilt can lead people to favor reparation of the harm their in-group has caused (Doosje et al., 1998; Iyer et al., 2003; McGarty et al., in press; Swim & Miller, 1999).

General Discussion

In the present paper, we have argued that the experience of group-based guilt can be characterized by a concern for the consequences of negative in-group behavior among out-group members. Building on other research that has illustrated an increased concern for and valuing of the out-group after out-group perspective-taking (e.g., Batson et al., 1997; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000), the present studies demonstrated that taking the perspective of out-group members can increase group-based guilt among perpetrator group members. However, the present research also has demonstrated two important aspects of this
relationship. First, the in-group’s mistreatment of the out-group needs to be salient for perpetrator group members (Iyer et al., 2003), accentuating the in-group’s role in the out-group’s suffering. Second, although we did not find any differences in perpetrator group members’ spontaneous tendency to take the perspective of out-group members, group members do differ in their tendency to defend against the negative portrayal of their group as perpetrator depending on their degree of group identification (see also Doosje et al., 1998). When explicitly asked to take the perspective of an out-group member, this defensive tendency among the highly identified works against the positive implications of perspective taking on group-based guilt.

The Role of Group Identification

Consistent with Branscombe et al.’s argument (1999) that lower identified group members more easily accept their in-group’s wrongs in the past than higher identifiers, higher identifiers clearly displayed the tendency to perceive their in-group’s negative behavior in a more favorable way than lower identifiers in this research. That is, higher identifiers perceived actions of the in-group to be more justified and less harmful than lower identifiers in Study 1, although national identification did not directly affect participants’ spontaneous tendency to take the perspective of out-group members in this study. This demonstrates that in addition to the positive relation we found between out-group perspective-taking and group-based guilt, higher identifiers at the same time are inclined to defend against a negative portrayal of their in-group where possible (Doosje et al., 1998), which is associated with weaker feelings of guilt.

In Study 2, we were able to demonstrate that this defensive inclination among higher identifiers affects the consequences of out-group perspective-taking for group-based guilt more directly when perpetrator group members are explicitly asked to take this perspective. That is, when higher identifiers are forced to take this perspective, they may engage in strategies to downplay the negative portrayal of their in-group by attributing the mistreatment more strongly to the out-group itself, as a result of which they indicate weaker feelings of guilt than lower identifiers. In turn, these differences in group-based guilt in part also explain why higher identifiers are less inclined to support reparation toward the out-group than lower identifiers after perspective taking. Thus, in addition to the positive implications of out-group perspective-taking for group-based guilt that we were able to demonstrate (especially among lower identifiers), we also obtained evidence for our argument that higher identifiers can be expected to engage in strategies that defend against an image of their group as an illegitimate perpetrator (consistent with Branscombe et al., 1999). Such strategies can undermine seriously the positive implications for group-based guilt and reparation out-group perspective-taking can have.
The Pros and Cons of Measuring Group Identification

Our approach to measure rather than manipulate group identification in the two studies may pose a limitation to our findings. It raises the question of other variables that may covary with group identification. However, we consider it unlikely that such variables constitute alternative explanations for our results. For instance, although political orientation correlated weakly with Dutch national identification in Doosje et al.’s research (1998), it did not explain their results. Another variable may be that lower identifiers respond in a more socially desirable fashion than higher identifiers and therefore display increases in group-based guilt after perspective-taking. However, other research has demonstrated that group identification similarly affected an implicit measure of attributions group members made about their in-group’s negative actions toward an out-group, which in turn was related to the explicit measurement of group-based guilt (Zebel, Stoffers, et al., 2005; see Chapter 2). Such responses on an implicit measure are unlikely to be influenced by social desirability. Finally, our predictions regarding lower and higher identifiers’ responses to threatening information about their group are derived from research that has both measured and manipulated group identification (e.g., Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995).

Measuring group identification when investigating group-based emotions such as guilt also has some clear advantages. First, it made it possible to examine our predictions with regard to group-based guilt in relation to real-life examples in which the in-group where participants belonged to had mistreated different types of out-groups, providing external validity for our findings. Second, we examined the impact of this measured independent variable in relation to perspective-taking as an independent variable, which was manipulated experimentally in Study 2. In addition to providing external validity for our findings, this design also has the advantage of being able to demonstrate that perspective-taking as an independent variable can actually cause an increase in group-based guilt (i.e., internal validity), especially among lower identifiers. Finally, measuring group identification and relating this to group-based guilt concerning real-life mistreatments offers the opportunity to investigate also whether guilt motivates intentions to repair the harm done to real out-groups.

Implications and Future Directions

The present studies extend theory and research on the relation between perspective-taking and interpersonal guilt (Hoffman, 1976; 2000; Leith & Baumeister, 1998). It is argued that interpersonal guilt can arise when one empathizes (through perspective-taking) with a harmed other in which one is causally implicated (Hoffman, 1976; 2000; Tangney, 1995). The present research indicates that even when one is not personally implicated (but one’s in-group is), taking the perspective of out-group members also has the potential to induce feelings of group-based guilt. In addition, we were able to demonstrate that this relationship depends on group members’ willingness to acknowledge their in-
group’s wrongs. Similarly, the relation between perspective-taking and interpersonal guilt may also be moderated by the individual’s defensiveness about his or her negative actions toward others (see also McGraw, 1987).

Consistent with other research that underlines the prosocial consequences of perspective-taking (e.g., Batson, 1998), perspective-taking can be argued to have prosocial consequences also in the context of a perpetrator-victim group relationship. That is, our research illustrates that lower identified perpetrator group members may express feelings of group-based guilt more strongly after perspective-taking, and as a consequence they may favor reparation of the harm done to the victimized group. For members of victimized groups, expression of such feelings of guilt as well as an expressed apology may communicate acknowledgment of the wrongs that have been committed to their group and of their suffering (Barkan, 2000). This may create a shared basis to discuss the negative history and may therefore help to improve the relation between the perpetrator and victim group.

However, our research also illustrates how a high degree of identification with the perpetrator group can prevent the possible positive consequences of perspective-taking for the perpetrator-victim group relationship. Not only do higher identifiers blame out-group members more strongly for what has happened when asked to take the perspective of out-group members, but they are also less inclined to favor reparation of their in-group’s wrongs toward the out-group after perspective-taking. This suggests that explicit attempts to motivate perpetrator group members to acknowledge and favor reparation of their in-group’s wrongs through perspective-taking may not have the intended effect among higher identifiers. Thus, it can be questioned whether public campaigns and commercials in the media which display the suffering of out-group members will motivate highly identified perpetrator group members to support financial aid for example when their own group in some way is implicated in the out-group’s harm. Although these campaigns and commercials may certainly motivate lower identified perpetrator group members, the higher identified may resist strongly such attempts.

An interesting question that remains then is what factors can increase feelings of guilt and support for restitution among highly identified perpetrator group members. In another line of research, Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, and Manstead (2005) have demonstrated that higher identifiers are likely to feel more guilty than lower identifiers when the information about their in-group’s wrongs is explicitly given by an in-group source. They argue that especially higher identifiers will perceive this information as a confession by the in-group, and therefore experience stronger feelings of guilt than lower identifiers. Such findings are interesting because they offer insights into how higher identifiers might be refrained from their strong tendency to put a gloss on negative actions committed by their in-group in the past.
When members of social groups or nations are confronted with the misdeeds their group has committed toward other groups, how do they deal with this? Such misdeeds can be argued to pose a threat to the value of the group people belong to, and this may evoke a response directed at preserving the positive value of the (social) self (e.g., Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002). Depending on their subjective identification with their group people may respond differently to this threat. Lower identified members seem to deal with this threat through acknowledgment and acceptance of the group’s wrongs, whereas higher identifiers are eager to defend the misdeeds of their group where possible (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998). As a consequence, lower identifiers report stronger feelings of group-based guilt and associated reparation intentions than higher identifiers. Although convincing, it remains intriguing that those who report the strongest negative affect on behalf of their group are also those who identify most weakly with this group. In this chapter, we argue that lower identifiers report such strong guilt feelings especially when they are not involved in the group’s misdeeds themselves, enabling them to distance themselves from the perpetrators within their group. If however they are involved in such misdeeds, the acceptance and acknowledgment of the group’s wrongs may become too costly even for lower identifiers.

The Counterintuitive Relation Between Group-Based Guilt and Identification

Just as events that favor or harm the personal self can give rise to emotions, so can events that implicate the in-group in relation to specific out-groups trigger emotions with associated behavioral intentions (Smith, 1993; Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002; Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000). Thus, harmful behavior of one’s in-group toward members of an out-group may elicit feelings of group-based guilt, even when one did not act in this harmful manner oneself. Such guilt feelings may motivate group members to favor reparation of the harm their group has inflicted, for instance by supporting an apology or financial compensation (e.g., McGarty et al., in press).

* This chapter is based on Zebel, Doosje, Spears and Vliek (2005).
However, perpetrator group members may vary greatly in how guilty they will feel at the group-level. From a social identity perspective, how people deal with negative information about their group (e.g., harmful actions toward others) can be expected to depend on their level of identification with this group (e.g., Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). A strong in-group identification implies that membership in this group is highly important and relevant for people’s identity, and they will therefore be motivated to uphold a positive image of this group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Thus when other in-group members commit harmful behavior, highly identified group members will feel that their identity is more strongly implicated than lower identifiers, and therefore more readily adopt strategies to defend their group’s positive value (e.g., Ellemers et al., 2002; Branscombe, Doosje, & McGarty, 2002).

Doosje and colleagues (1998) elaborated on this difference between higher and lower identifiers and demonstrated how it relates to differences in the experience of group-based guilt. Confronting Dutch participants with their nation’s positive and negative actions toward Indonesians during the Dutch colonization of Indonesia, Doosje et al. showed that higher identifiers focused more strongly on the positive rather than negative sides of this history than lower identifiers. In line with this, higher identifiers reported weaker feelings of group-based guilt and associated reparation intentions than lower identifiers. Zebel, Doosje, and Spears (2005; see Chapter 4) investigated how lower and higher identifiers’ differences in dealing with negative in-group related information are expressed when perpetrator group members are asked to take the perspective of the disadvantaged. This perspective-taking increased group-based guilt among lower identifiers, but decreased the guilt experience of higher identifiers. Whereas lower identifiers acknowledged the negative consequences of this out-group perspective, higher identifiers blamed the victims more strongly when instructed to take this perspective; this mediated their lowered guilt experience. These studies underline that a weak in-group identification leads perpetrator group members to accept more easily and accordingly feel more guilty about harmful actions of their in-group than a strong in-group identification does (see also Branscombe et al., 2002; Zebel, Stoffers, et al., 2005 [Chapter 2]).

Higher identifiers’ defensive inclinations toward the wrongs of their group follow logically from their strong commitment. However, the fact that those group members who identify weakly indicate the strongest feelings of group-based guilt about their group’s atrocities remains intriguing. An examination of the studies in which lower identifiers reported stronger feelings of group-based guilt than higher identifiers reveals that these studies concern wrongs that do not involve lower identifiers directly (Doosje et al., 1998; Zebel, Doosje, & Spears, 2005 [Chapter 4]; Zebel, Stoffers, et al., 2005 [Chapter 2]). We think this is a crucial characteristic. When the group membership is inescapable, lower
identifiers will feel that their social self is portrayed as perpetrator in these
wrongs. However, their low identification with the group and the fact that they
did not take part in these misdeeds provides them with an opportunity to cope
with this threat in a direct (or primary) manner. Through acknowledgment of the
group’s wrongs, they not only experience relatively strong feelings of guilt on
behalf of their group membership but also disapprove of the actions of their
group. In this way, they are able to distance themselves from the perpetrators
within their group (‘I am different from them’) and affirm their positive self-
image. In contrast, the atrocities threaten the social self of higher identifiers to a
much larger degree, which predisposes them to stick to their group (e.g.,
Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997). As a consequence,
acknowledgment may be too costly and they may adopt other strategies to
downplay the severity or illegitimacy of the wrongs committed.

This rationale has important implications. When group members are not
involved directly in the misdeeds committed by their group (e.g., when these
crimes occurred in the distant past), lower identifiers may experience stronger
group-based guilt than higher identifiers. If lower identifiers’ acknowledgment
of the group’s wrongs serves to distance themselves from the perpetrators within
their group (but not from their group membership), then we argue that this
should be especially evident when their association with these perpetrators is
accentuated through a perspective-taking manipulation (Study 1). Taking the
perspective of perpetrators in the past should lead lower identifiers to
acknowledge the group’s wrongs while still allowing them to affirm their
distance and distinctness from these perpetrators. In contrast, it should reinforce
the group directed defensive tendencies of higher identifiers who should feel
even more associated with the group to which they are already highly
committed, and thus to the acts it has perpetrated.

If however group members are involved more directly in the wrongs of their
group (when the misdeeds endure in the present), it becomes more difficult for
lower identifiers to distance themselves from these misdeeds (Study 2). Given
that they are now involved more strongly, their responses can be expected to
become more defensive and group-directed similar to higher identifiers. Again, a
perspective-taking manipulation should reinforce such responses among lower
and higher identifiers. In the following, we will elaborate in more detail on how
perspective-taking affects group-based guilt as a function of group identification.

Past Wrongs: Consequences of Perspective-Taking for Group-Based Guilt

Taking the perspective of past perpetrator group members may evoke
multiple emotional and cognitive responses in lower and higher identifiers (e.g.,
Batson, 1998; Davis, Conklin, Smith & Luce, 1996). However, we focus here on
how this perspective-taking influences the different causal attributions lower and
higher identifiers make about the past atrocities of their group, and how these attributions in turn affect group-based guilt. This focus combines insights from the literature on the attributional consequences of perspective-taking (e.g., Galper, 1976; Regan & Totten, 1975) and how people’s causal attributions can give rise to distinct emotions such as guilt (e.g., Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Weiner, 1985; Weiner, Graham, & Chandler, 1982).

Higher identifiers will be motivated to defend or downplay the past wrongs of their group, in order to protect their in-group’s value (Doosje & Branscombe, 2003; Ellemers et al., 1999). Taking the perspective of past perpetrator group members may therefore serve to strengthen this tendency through the attributions higher identifiers make (see also Hewstone, 1990). Pettigrew (1979) proposed that people would display a pervasive tendency to attribute negative acts to situational variables when performed by in-group members, but to dispositional factors when performed by out-group members. In contrast, people would display the reverse pattern for positive acts (i.e., the ultimate attribution error). Consistent with research that demonstrates that perspective-taking makes situational causes more salient to observers of other’s behavior (e.g., Regan & Totten, 1975; Vescio, Sechrist, & Paolucci, 2003), taking the perspective of past wrongful in-group members may serve to enhance higher identifiers’ tendency to make external attributions (rather than internal attributions) for their behavior.

A different response may occur among lower identifiers who do categorize themselves as a member of the perpetrator group, but try to cope with the threat to their social self through acknowledgment (and distancing) of the past wrongs (Ellemers et al., 2002; Doosje et al., 1998). In our view, taking the perspective of morally tainted group members from the past may serve to accentuate lower identifiers’ shared membership with these perpetrators, and therefore force them to acknowledge their wrongs, and thus motivate them to distance themselves if possible. This is made possible we argue, by the distance of time with implications for culpability (they were not present then) together with the weak commitment to the identity. Paradoxically these less threatening conditions should make it easier to admit group-based guilt.

This acknowledgment should be reflected in the attributions lower identifiers make. That is, lower identifiers may make fewer group-serving situational attributions and more dispositional attributions about the behavior of in-group members when asked to take their perspective compared to no perspective-taking (see also Doosje & Branscombe, 2003). In a similar vein, Pettigrew (1979) expected the ultimate attribution error (and thus in-group protective motives) to be weakest among lower prejudiced individuals, which is supported by several studies (e.g., Greenberg & Rosenfield, 1979; Vescio & Biernat, 1999; Wittenbrink, Gist, & Hilton, 1997).

These proposed differences in lower and higher identifiers causal attributions due to perspective-taking should accordingly influence group-based
guilt. Similar to feelings of interpersonal guilt (e.g., Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994; Tangney & Dearing, 2002), group-based guilt can be experienced when group members attribute the disadvantaged group’s position and/or suffering internally to the misdeeds (of members) of their group (Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Swim & Miller, 1999). Thus, the extent to which group members perceive the inflicted harm upon an out-group to be caused by actions of in-group members rather than by external factors should elicit group-based guilt.

On the basis of these arguments, we hypothesized that perspective-taking would motivate lower identifiers to distance themselves from their group’s tainted behavior in the past, resulting in stronger internal and weaker external attributions about this behavior compared to no perspective-taking. As a consequence, lower identifiers will feel or report more guilt when asked to take this perspective compared to no perspective-taking. In contrast, higher identifiers are expected to try and explain away (Pettigrew, 1979) the behavior of past in-group members in their attributions when adopting their perspective, resulting in weaker feelings of guilt. These differences in group-based guilt should also be reflected in group members’ tendency to repair the harmful behavior of their in-group. We investigated these hypotheses in Study 1. In Study 2, we focus on the consequences of in-group perspective-taking when the in-group’s wrongs are said to have ended in the past (similar to Study 1) or are said to endure in the present (and thus encompass present group members). We argue that such a distinction can have a major impact on how especially lower identifiers deal with their group’s association with past wrongs.

Study 1

To examine our hypotheses in the first study, we confronted non-Jewish Dutch participants with information about the misdeeds of their in-group during World War II, and manipulated the perspective-taking of in-group members during that period.

Method

Participants

Ninety-two Dutch students participated in this study, in exchange for course credit or money (€11.30). The study was part of a larger session in which other unrelated studies were also administered. The data of fifteen participants were not analyzed because they indicated that they were not Dutch (13 participants) or indicated in the questionnaire that they had not read the text properly (2 participants). The remaining 77 participants (45 women and 32 men) varied in age from 17 to 36 years (M = 21.9).

Design and procedure

The experimental design consisted of a continuous independent variable (in-group identification) and a between subjects variable (perspective-taking of in-
group members: perspective versus no perspective). Participants received a questionnaire in which they were first asked to indicate their identification with being Dutch. To measure this, eight items were used from Doosje et al. (1998). These items measured cognitive (e.g., “Being Dutch is an important part of how I see myself”), affective (e.g., “I feel a bond with Dutch people”) and evaluative (e.g., “I am happy to be Dutch”) aspects of national identification. (α = .91; see Appendix A for an overview of all items). These items were answered on scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). On average, participants identified fairly strongly with being Dutch (M = 4.65, SD = 1.21).

After this, participants read a text concerning the high percentage of Jewish people in the Netherlands (73 %) who the Nazi’s deported and murdered during World War II in comparison to the percentage in other countries such as Belgium (40%) and France (25 %) (Moore, 1998). Eight explanations were given for this, which Moore also mentioned. Four of these pointed to the negative role of non-Jewish Dutch people (i.e., Dutch civil servants attached great value to an orderly and straightforward execution of the newly established law of the Nazi’s, without thinking about the consequences for Jewish people); the other four explanations concerned other factors than the behavior of the Dutch (e.g., The well-organized Dutch civil registration system facilitated the Nazi’s in persecuting Jewish people). These explanations alternated in the text and were intended to create information that allowed for different interpretations to be made about the role of the Dutch in this context.

To manipulate perspective-taking of in-group members, half of the participants were asked to imagine that they were one of the Dutch in the text during World War II. They were instructed to imagine how they behaved and which motives they had to do so. To reinforce this manipulation, participants were asked after reading the text to write down at least two thoughts they had when they imagined themselves as one of the Dutch perpetrators. Participants in the no perspective condition did not receive these instructions.

Dependent measures

Group-based guilt was measured with four items from Branscombe, Slugoski, and Kappen (2004) and Doosje et al. (1998), complemented with two more items (see appendix B for an overview of all items). An example of one of the complemented items is: “I feel guilty when I am confronted with the negative things the Dutch have done toward Jewish people during World War II.” (α = .86). To assess participants’ tendency to make internal attributions, they indicated the degree to which (a) the high death percentage of Jewish people in the Netherlands could be ascribed to the behavior of the Dutch, and (b) the Dutch could be blamed for this high percentage (r (77) = .82, p < .001). Participants’ external attributions were measured with two items: whether the high death percentage could be ascribed to (a) circumstances in the Netherlands and (b) the international developments at that time (r (77) = .30, p = .008). A principal
component analysis indicated that the internal attribution items could be
distinguished empirically from the external attribution items (two components
with eigenvalues > 1; all loadings after varimax rotation > .80). To measure
participants’ support for reparation and acknowledgment of the in-group’s
behavior, they were asked to indicate whether the Dutch government should (a)
offer an apology to and (b) make more money available for the Jewish
community in the Netherlands for the things the Dutch have done during World
War II. In addition to this, participants indicated whether they thought more
attention should be given to the negative things their in-group had done toward
Jewish people. Together these three items constituted a scale of acceptable
reliability ($\alpha = .67$). All items comprising the dependent measures were answered
on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

**Results and Discussion**

All ANOVA’s consisted of one continuous independent variable (in-group
identification) and a between subjects variable (perspective-taking of in-group
members: perspective versus no perspective).

**Group-based guilt.** The predicted interaction-effect between in-group
identification and perspective-taking was marginally significant, $F (1, 73) = 3.49, p
= .066$. To examine the predicted consequences of perspective-taking for feelings
of group-based guilt in more detail among lower and higher identifiers, we
performed a conditional value procedure proposed by Aiken and West (1991). At
the lowest predicted value of identification (1), the effect of perspective-taking on
group-based guilt was significant, $F (1, 73) = 4.23, p = .043$, indicating that
participants at this value of identification felt more guilty after perspective-taking
($M = 4.91$) compared to no perspective-taking ($M = 2.95$). However, perspective-
taking did not influence guilt significantly at the highest value of identification
(7), $F (1, 73) = 1.55, p = .22$ (although the pattern is in the expected direction: see
Figure 14).

**Internal, external attributions and reparation opinion.** Group-based guilt
correlated positively with the internal attribution and reparation measure, $r (77) = .25, p = .038$, and $r (77) = .22, p = .052$ respectively; however, guilt did not correlate
significantly with the external attribution measure. Thus, these correlations
indicate that (a) consistent with the literature on interpersonal guilt (e.g.,
Hoffman, 2000; Tangney & Dearing, 2002), stronger internal attributions are
associated with stronger feelings of group-based guilt (see also Iyer et al., 2003;
Swim & Miller, 1999), and (b) that group-based guilt can motivate group
members to support reparation of the in-group’s wrongs.
Despite these (marginally) significant overall correlations with group-based guilt, the predicted interaction effect between identification and perspective-taking was not significant on the attribution and reparation measures, all $F_s < 1$. This indicates that participants’ internal attributions could not explain the different effect of perspective-taking on guilt as a function of group identification.

Although these non-significant interaction effects may be due to a lack of statistical power in this study, there is a shortcoming with respect to the external attribution measure that in our view might account for why we did not find such an effect. The external attribution measure failed to provide participants with situational factors that could account for the actions of the Dutch during World War II. That is, the external attribution measure assessed other factors than the behavior of the Dutch that could have contributed to the high death percentage among Jewish people; not external, situational factors that could have explained why Dutch people acted in the way they did. Were this the case, then participants’ external attributions might have been more strongly related to the experience of group-based guilt. In order to test this, we included such an external attribution measure in Study 2.

**Study 2**

Study 1 offered a first indication that lower identifiers acknowledge more strongly the atrocities of their group in which they did not take part when they are instructed to focus on past perpetrating group members through a
perspective-taking manipulation. Consisting with previous research (Doosje et al., 1998; Zebel, Doosje, & Spears, 2005 [Chapter 4]; Zebel, Stoffers et al., 2005 [Chapter 2]), lower identifiers displayed an increase in feelings of group-based guilt under conditions where they were forced to confront their group’s role, in contrast to higher identifiers. However, in this research we hypothesized that lower identifiers report such strong feelings of guilt because they do not feel as directly associated with their group’s past wrongs as higher identifiers; that is to accentuate their distinctness from these perpetrators and their misdeeds without denying the fact that they share group membership with them. In contrast, higher identifiers are assumed to adopt more group-directed strategies to defend their social self without distancing themselves from these perpetrators within their group.

Although the observed differences in group-based guilt due to identification in Study 1 are likely to be related to different coping strategies, we did not assess these different coping strategies directly. This was our aim in Study 2. On the basis of Self-Categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, 1999), people are argued to perceive and behave in terms of their group membership to the extent that they perceive themselves to be similar to other in-group members and dissimilar to out-group members. This can be applied to the present research context where lower identifiers more than higher identifiers are able to maintain a distance from the past group members’ tainted behavior when taking their perspective, and therefore feel more able to admit the guilt associated with it that would otherwise taint their own self-image. Under these circumstances, lower identifiers should shift to perceive themselves less in terms of these past group differences than higher identifiers: Fewer perceived similarities with past in-group members and more perceived similarities with past out-group members among lower identifiers than higher identifiers. Such a perceptual shift should be associated with an increase in group-based guilt.

In the introduction, we postulated that lower identifiers would adopt this distinctiveness strategy especially when they are not directly involved in the past wrongs. From this it follows that such a coping strategy becomes more difficult when lower identifiers can be argued to take part in their group’s wrongs. In addition to a past wrongs scenario in Study 2 (as in Study 1), we included a scenario in Study 2 in which these past wrongs were argued to have enduring consequences for out-group members in the present: Current perpetrator group members were said to participate in denying these consequences. This scenario should make it difficult for lower identifiers to disassociate themselves from the perpetrators under perspective-taking instructions, because they are now involved more directly. Under these conditions, lower identifiers are expected to adopt a similar in-group-serving strategy as higher identifiers and thus not display an increase in group-based guilt. Such a different (more in-group-serving) coping strategy among lower identifiers should manifest itself in their
perceptions of the self in relation to the in-group and out-group, as well as in the attributions they make (see also Pettigrew, 1979; Hewstone, 1990). 

Although we expected the changes in (especially lower identified) group members’ self-perceptions to be related to their feelings of group-based guilt, we hypothesized a stronger link between group members’ attributions and group-based guilt. In line with the literature that demonstrates strong relations between causal attributions and affect (e.g., Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Weiner, 1985; Weiner et al., 1982), we consider participants’ internal versus external attributions about the in-group’s misdeeds as the strongest mediators of their guilt feelings.

To sum up, we hypothesized that under perspective-taking instructions, lower identifiers would accentuate their distance and disassociation in terms of their self-perceptions and attributions from past perpetrator group members whose wrongs do not involve them directly. In contrast, higher identifiers are expected to downplay these wrongs through stronger external and weaker internal attributions under perspective-taking instructions. These attributions should increase guilt among lower identifiers after perspective-taking, but not so among higher identifiers (similar to Study 1). In contrast, when lower identifiers are argued to be part of their group’s wrongs, they should not only perceive themselves more strongly in terms of their in-group after perspective-taking, but also defend the group’s wrongs more strongly through similar in-group serving attributions as higher identifiers. Most importantly, these attributions should explain why lower identifiers do not display an increase in feelings of group-based guilt when taking the perspective of group members whose wrongs involve them more directly.

These hypotheses were investigated again among Dutch participants. We confronted them with a text about their in-group’s history as slave traders, and manipulated whether participants were not involved in this history (‘it has ended in the distant past’) or were involved directly (‘the slave trade has consequences in the present which are not acknowledged by current Dutch people’). In addition to this, we used a similar manipulation of perspective-taking of in-group members as in Study 1.

**Method**

**Participants**

Two hundred and forty-seven Dutch university students participated in this study in exchange for course credit. The data of 31 participants were not analyzed because they indicated that they were not Dutch (14 participants) or had not participated seriously (17 participants). One hundred seventy women and 46 men remained, varying in age from 17 to 48 years (\(M = 20.8\)).

**Design and procedure**

The experimental design consisted of one continuous independent variable (in-group identification) and three between subjects variables: Perspective-taking of in-group members (perspective versus no perspective), participants’ role in the
in-group’s behavior (involved versus uninvolved) and perspective-taking of out-group members (perspective versus no perspective). Although the last independent between subjects variable was included in the analyses reported here, it will not be considered any further in this study because it is not relevant to the subject under investigation. Importantly, this variable did not moderate the results reported in the present study.

Participants were first asked to indicate their identification with being Dutch, using the same items and response scales as in Study 1 (α = .93; see Appendix A). On average, participants again identified fairly strongly with being Dutch (M = 4.95, SD = 1.11).

After this, participants received a text regarding the Dutch slave trade. To manipulate the role of participants in the in-group’s behavior, the text in the uninvolved condition described how Dutch slave ships transported African slaves to the Caribbean (200,000 of which to the Dutch colony Surinam) until early in the nineteenth century. It was also described how 17% of these slaves died during the passage due to the harsh treatment of the Dutch. In the involved condition, the text also described how Dutch slave ships had transported over 200,000 African slaves to Dutch colonies such as Surinam and the Dutch Antilles. In addition, the text indicated how this slave trade has burdened many current Surinamese and Antillean people with the portrayal of their ancestors as inferior slaves. The text mentioned how the Dutch still to this day never have acknowledged their role as perpetrators in this past, despite the growing demand for this among the current Surinamese and Antillean people. To check whether participants had read these scenarios carefully, they indicated in what time period the behavior of the Dutch took place after reading their text, answered on a scale ranging from 1 (in the past) to 7 (in the present).

To manipulate the perspective-taking of in-group members, participants in the perspective condition were asked to take the viewpoint of the Dutch before reading the text. As a reinforcer of this manipulation, participants were asked to indicate in a few sentences how the Dutch perceived their treatment of the disadvantaged group after reading the text. Participants in the no perspective condition did not receive these instructions.

Dependent measures

The same items as in Study 1 were used to measure group-based guilt (α = .91; see Appendix B). How participants perceived themselves in relation to the groups in the scenarios was measured with two items: (a) ‘I see similarities between myself and the Dutch during the Dutch slave trade (or after the Dutch slave trade in the involved condition),’ and (b) ‘I see similarities between myself and the disadvantaged group during (or after) the Dutch slave trade’. The same two items as in Study 1 assessed participants’ tendency to attribute the in-group’s behavior internally, (r (215) = .56, p < .001). Different from Study 1, participants’ external attributions related to the in-group’s behavior were
measured with two items: (a) whether the circumstances had caused the Dutch to behave in the way they did, and (b) whether the behavior of the Dutch should be viewed upon more in its historical context \((r (216) = .42, p < .001)\). A principal component analysis again indicated that the internal and external attribution items could be distinguished empirically. Finally, to measure participants’ support for reparation, they indicated whether the Dutch government should (a) apologize to and (b) make more money available for Surinam (and the Dutch Antilles) for the things their group had done during (or after) the Dutch slave trade \((r (216) = .58, p < .001)\). All items comprising the dependent measures were answered on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Results and Discussion

All ANOVA’s consisted of one continuous independent variable and three between subjects variables: Perspective-taking of in-group members (perspective versus no perspective), participants’ role in the in-group’s behavior (involved versus uninvolved) and perspective-taking of out-group members (perspective versus no perspective).

Manipulation check. The main effect of participants’ role in the in-group’s behavior was significant, \(F (1, 198) = 297.68, p < .001\), indicating that participants in the uninvolved condition perceived the in-group’s behavior to have occurred long ago \((M = 1.46, SD = .94)\), whereas participants in the involved condition indicated that the in-group’s behavior occurred more in the present \((M = 5.41, SD = 1.75)\). No other effects emerged.

Group-based guilt. Consistent with our expectations, a significant three-way interaction-effect emerged between in-group identification, perspective-taking of in-group members and participants’ role in the in-group’s behavior, \(F (1, 200) = 5.12, p = .025\). This three-way interaction revealed that the simple interaction between in-group identification and the perspective-taking of in-group members was significant when the in-group’s behavior did not involve participants directly, \(F (1, 200) = 4.15, p = .043\). Closer inspection of this simple interaction demonstrated that the effect of perspective-taking was again significant at the lowest value of identification \((1)\), \(F (1, 200) = 6.37, p = .012\), indicating that these lower identifiers felt more guilt after perspective-taking \((M = 5.73)\) compared to no perspective-taking \((M = 2.75)\). In contrast, no effect of perspective-taking occurred at the highest value of identification \((7)\), \(F (1, 200) < 1\). These results replicate the interaction-effect between perspective-taking and in-group identification in Study 1 (see Figure 15a).
However, when the in-group's behavior involved participants more directly, the simple interaction between identification and perspective-taking was not significant, $F(1, 200) = 1.22, p = ns$ (see Figure 15b). Consistent with our arguments, this simple interaction indicated that the effect of perspective-taking was not significant at the lowest identification value (1), $F(1, 200) = 1.07, p = ns$; nor was it significant at the highest value of identification (7), $F(1, 200) = 1.02, p = ns$. These results offer support for our hypothesis that the perspective-taking of perpetrating in-group members increases group-based guilt among lower identifiers when the in-group’s wrongs do not involve them directly (see Figure 15a). In contrast, when such wrongs do involve lower identifiers directly, perspective-taking seems to serve a different function, as it does not increase their guilt (see Figure 15b).
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Participants’ self-perceptions. We calculated a difference score by subtracting participants’ perceived similarities with the disadvantaged group from their perceived similarities with the in-group. As expected, identification positively predicted this difference score, \( B = .24, SE = .10, F (1, 200) = 5.84, p = .017 \), indicating that higher identifiers perceived themselves to be more similar to in-group members in the scenarios and more dissimilar to members of the disadvantaged group than did lower identifiers. In addition, the main effect of participants’ role in the in-group’s behavior showed a trend, \( F (1, 200) = 3.18, p = .076 \), indicating that participants in the involved condition perceived greater similarities with in-group members and more dissimilarities with out-group members \( (M = -.19) \) than in the uninvolved condition \( (M = -.55) \).

However, these effects were qualified by the expected three-way interaction effect between in-group identification, perspective-taking of in-group members and participants’ role in the in-group’s behavior, \( F (1, 200) = 7.16, p = .008 \). Closer inspection of this interaction revealed the expected patterns. The simple interaction between identification and perspective-taking was significant when participants were not involved directly in the in-group’s behavior, \( F (1, 200) = \)

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\[3\] We also conducted a repeated measures analysis of variance, in which the perceived similarities with in-group members and with out-group members were included as a within subjects variable. Significant main and two-way interaction effects of identification and participants’ role in the in-group’s behavior emerged on each similarities measure. However, the predicted interaction effect between identification, participants’ role and perspective-taking reached significance only on the out-group similarities measure. Logically, this repeated measures analysis yielded an identical four-way interaction effect as the three-way interaction effect reported with the difference score.
6.55, p = .011. Consistent with our arguments, this simple interaction indicated that at the lowest value of identification (1), participants perceived themselves less in terms of the in-group and more in terms of the out-group after perspective-taking ($M = -3.33$) compared to no perspective-taking ($M = .04$), $F(1, 200) = 7.32, p = .007$. In contrast, participants at the highest value of identification (7) displayed a marginal significant tendency to perceive themselves more similar to in-group members and more dissimilar to out-group members after perspective-taking ($M = .58$) compared to no perspective-taking ($M = -.60$), $F(1, 200) = 3.43, p = .065$ (see Figure 16a).

![Figure 16a. Participants’ self-perceptions as a function of in-group identification and the perspective-taking of in-group members when participants were not involved in the in-group’s behavior, Study 2.](image)

However, the simple interaction between identification and perspective-taking was not significant when the in-group’s wrongs involved participants more directly, $F(1, 200) = 1.29, p = .26$. As expected, this simple interaction indicated that lower identifiers did not distance themselves from the in-group under perspective instructions. In fact, the influence of perspective-taking went in the opposite direction, although not significantly, $F(1, 200) = 1.73, p = .19$ (see Figure 16b). In addition, perspective-taking did not influence participants’ self-perceptions at the highest value of identification (7), $F(1, 200) < 1$. 
Consistent with our propositions, these patterns indicate that perspective-taking leads lower identifiers to distance themselves in perceptual terms from past perpetrators within their group whose wrongs do not involve them directly. However, no such distancing occurred after perspective-taking when lower identifiers are involved in these wrongs. In fact, lower identifiers perceived themselves as associated with these perpetrators as higher identifiers did under these conditions. Consistent with the literature, these results demonstrate also that higher identifiers more readily than lower identifiers perceive themselves to be similar to (negatively tainted) in-group members, which may explain why perspective-taking had little impact among them (e.g., Ellemers et al., 2002; Spears et al., 1997).

As hypothesized, the self-perception difference scores correlated negatively with feelings of group-based guilt, $r (216) = -.18$, $p = .009$, indicating that the more participants perceived themselves as dissimilar to in-group members in the scenarios and the more similar to out-group members, the more guilty they felt. Together, these findings with respect to participants’ self-perceptions indicate that lower identifiers’ increase in group-based guilt after taking the perspective of perpetrators whose wrongs they are uninvolved in, co-occurred with dissociation from these perpetrators in terms of their self-perceptions. However, no such dissociation was obtained when lower identifiers were involved more directly in their group’s wrongs: Accordingly, they also did not report stronger group-based guilt.
Internal and external attributions. Consistent with our conception of the attribution measures, group-based guilt correlated positively with participants’ internal attributions, \( r (216) = .25, p < .001 \), but negatively with participants’ external attributions, \( r (216) = -.23, p = .001 \).

A main effect emerged of perspective-taking of in-group members on participants’ internal attributions, \( F (1, 200) = 6.89, p = .009 \) (perspective-taking \( M = 5.54 \); no perspective-taking \( M = 5.01 \)), as well as main effect of participants’ role in the in-group’s behavior, \( F (1, 200) = 16.51, p < .001 \) (uninvolved \( M = 5.66 \); involved \( M = 5.01 \)). Most importantly however and similar to Study 1, the predicted three-way interaction effect was not significant, \( F (1, 200) < 1 \).

With respect to external attributions, the effect of in-group identification was significant, \( B = .27, SE = .08, F (1, 200) = 12.16, p = .001 \), as well as the main effect of participants’ role in the in-group’s behavior, \( F (1, 200) = 5.71, p = .018 \) (uninvolved \( M = 4.63 \); involved \( M = 4.25 \)). Most importantly, the predicted three-way interaction effect strongly qualified these effects, \( F (1, 200) = 12.73, p < .001 \). The simple interaction between identification and perspective-taking was again significant when participants were not involved directly, \( F (1, 200) = 5.57, p = .019 \) (see Figure 17a).

![Figure 17a](image_url)

Figure 17a. Participants’ external attributions as a function of in-group identification and the perspective-taking of in-group members when participants were not involved in the in-group’s behavior, Study 2.

As hypothesized, this simple interaction indicated that perspective-taking significantly weakened participants’ external attributions when identification was low (1), \( F (1, 200) = 5.07, p = .025 \) (perspective condition \( M = 2.39 \); no perspective condition \( M = 4.59 \)), but significantly reinforced these attributions
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when identification was high (7), $F(1, 200) = 4.87, p = .028$ (perspective condition $M = 5.78$; no perspective condition $M = 4.68$).

This pattern was reversed when participants were involved more directly, yielding a significant simple interaction between identification and perspective-taking, $F(1, 200) = 7.43, p = .007$. As expected, perspective-taking now significantly reinforced participants’ external attributions when identification was low (1), $F(1, 200) = 9.02, p = .003$ (perspective condition $M = 4.52$; no perspective condition $M = 2.02$). No significant effect of perspective-taking emerged at the highest identification value (7), $F(1, 200) = 2.84, p = .093$, although external attributions at this value of identification were somewhat weaker in the perspective condition ($M = 4.36$) than in the no perspective condition ($M = 5.15$) (see Figure 17b).

Thus, when participants were clearly uninvolved in the in-group’s wrongs, perspective-taking among lower identifiers led to weaker external attributions about this behavior (indirectly indicating acknowledgment of behavior), which is in agreement with their increased feelings of group-based guilt under these circumstances. However, when the wrongs involved lower identifiers more directly, the perspective-taking ‘lifted’ their external attributions to a level comparable with higher identifiers. This pattern underlines the more defensive, group-serving coping strategy lower identifiers adopt when they are asked to take the perspective of perpetrator in-group members whose wrongs involve

![Figure 17b](image-url). Participants' external attributions as a function of in-group identification and the perspective-taking of in-group members when participants were involved more directly in the in-group’s behavior, Study 2.
them also. It is also consistent with the fact that their feelings of group-based guilt do not increase after perspective-taking under these circumstances.

In contrast to lower identifiers, the perspective-taking instructions affected higher identifiers less strongly in terms of self-perceptions, external attributions and group-based guilt. If anything, perspective-taking accentuated in the expected direction higher identifiers’ inclination to stick to and protect the positive value of their group when they were not involved directly in the in-group’s wrongs. In general however, the perspective instructions may have added little to their readiness to perceive and interpret the world through the “eyes of the in-group” (e.g., Spears et al., 1997). The fact that higher identifiers perceived themselves to be associated with in-group members and made external attributions most strongly in this study across conditions can be interpreted as reflecting this intrinsic motivation.

**Self-perceptions and external attributions as mediators of guilt.** To examine whether participants’ self-perceptions and external attributions explained our findings with respect to group-based guilt, we performed mediation analyses using the full model, in which we treated self-perceptions and external attributions as mediators. In agreement with our conception of these mediators as distinct, their intercorrelation was positive but low, $r(216) = .18, p = .01$.

Following Baron and Kenny’s approach (1986), we have established the predicted interaction effect between in-group identification, perspective-taking, and participants’ role in the in-group’s behavior on feelings of group-based guilt, $F(1, 200) = 5.12, p = .025 (B = .21, SE = .09)$, constituting step 1. In addition, we have also shown step 2: A similar significant interaction effect on participants’ self perception difference scores, $F(1, 200) = 7.16, p = .008 (B = -.26, SE = .10)$, as well as on participants’ external attributions, $F(1, 200) = 12.73, p < .001 (B = -.27, SE = .08)$. To establish step 3, we first included participants’ self-perception difference scores as a covariate in the analyses with group-based guilt as a dependent variable. However, although this covariate was significant, $F(1, 199) = 5.01, p = .026 (B = -.15, SE = .07)$, it did not induce a significant drop in the three-way interaction effect on guilt, $z = 1.65, p = .10$ (Sobel’s test, 1982).

In addition, we examined participants’ external attributions as a single covariate in the guilt analyses. This covariate was also significant, $F(1, 199) = 14.35, p < .001$ and a negative predictor of guilt, $B = -.32, SE = .08$. Inclusion of this covariate reduced the three-way interaction effect on guilt to nonsignificance, $F(1, 199) = 1.80, p = .18 (B_{ab} = .13, SE = .09)$, and this drop proved to be significant with the Sobel’s test, $z = 2.43, p = .015$.

To validate the full mediation of guilt through participants’ external attributions, we examined the adjusted effects of perspective-taking at the lowest and highest values of identification with external attributions as a single covariate in the full model analyses of group-based guilt. When participants were not involved directly, the effect of perspective-taking at the lowest value of
identification (1) was considerably reduced and remained just significant: From $F(1, 200) = 6.37, p = .012$ to $F(1, 199) = 3.91, p = .049$, whereas this effect remained non-significant at the highest value of identification (7), both $Fs < 1$. As a consequence of this reduction at the lowest value of identification, the previously significant simple interaction effect between perspective-taking and national identification in the uninvolved condition was reduced to nonsignificance with the covariate included (from $F(1, 200) = 4.15, p = .043$ to $F(1, 199) = 2.11, p = .15$). In addition, when participants were involved more directly in the in-group’s behavior, the effects of perspective-taking at the lowest and highest values of identification remained non-significant, as well as the simple interaction effect, all $Fs < 1.22$, ns.

These analyses demonstrate how participants’ external attributions mediated the three-way interaction effect on group-based guilt especially through the effect of perspective-taking at the lower values of identification in the uninvolved condition. That is, when participants were not involved directly in the in-group’s wrongs, lower identifiers attributed these wrongs less externally after taking the perspective of the perpetrating group members and as a result felt stronger feelings of group-based guilt compared to when not taking this perspective.

Reparation opinion. As in Study 1, group-based guilt correlated positively with the reparation measure, $r(216) = .32, p < .001$.

In-group identification emerged as a general negative predictor of participants’ opinions towards reparation, $B = -.26, SE = .09, F(1, 200) = 7.71, p = .006$. However, this main effect was qualified by the predicted three-way interaction-effect, $F(1, 200) = 9.69, p = .002$. In the uninvolved condition, the simple interaction between identification and perspective-taking went in the expected direction but was not significant, $F(1, 200) = 2.73, p = .10$ (see Figure 18a). Further analyses of this simple interaction indicated that perspective-taking had a marginally significant impact on participants’ support for reparation when identification was low (1), $F(1, 200) = 3.34, p = .069$ (perspective condition $M = 6.67$; no perspective $M = 4.50$). No effect of perspective-taking emerged when identification was high (7), $F(1, 200) = 1.11$, ns.
However, when the in-group’s wrongs did involve participants directly, the simple interaction between identification and perspective-taking was strongly significant, $F(1, 200) = 8.11, p = .005$ (see Figure 18b).

This simple interaction displayed a reversal of the above pattern: Perspective-taking significantly weakened participants’ support for reparation.
when identification was low (1), $F(1, 200) = 6.30, p = .013$ (perspective condition $M = 4.04$; no perspective $M = 6.58$), whereas it significantly reinforced participants' support when identification was high (7), $F(1, 200) = 8.27, p = .004$ (perspective condition $M = 5.06$; no perspective $M = 3.42$; see Figure 18b). Although this latter effect of perspective-taking was unexpected, it may indicate how strategic considerations lead higher identifiers to favor such reparations (i.e., buying off a clean conscience; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 2005), especially when strong feelings of guilt do not underlie such attitudes (see above).

Most importantly, the total pattern of results is consistent with our arguments that the perspective-taking of perpetrator group members affects lower identifiers' support for reparation in a similarly (marginally significant) positive manner as their feelings of group-based guilt when they are uninvolved in their wrongs. In contrast, when they are involved in these wrongs, perspective-taking has negative consequences for their support, similar also to their guilt feelings. To examine whether feelings of group-based guilt mediated participants’ attitudes toward reparation as we expected, mediation analyses were conducted. These analyses indicated partial mediation: Although group-based guilt reduced the predicted three-way interaction effect on reparation significantly, $z = 2.13, p = .03$, it remained significant, from $F(1, 200) = 9.69, p = .002$ to $F(1, 199) = 5.99, p = .015$. Due to space considerations, we do not elaborate on these mediation analyses any further.

**General Discussion**

In this paper we elaborated on the counterintuitive finding that lower identifiers reported stronger group-based guilt and associated reparation intentions about the wrongs of their group than higher identifiers (Doosje et al., 1998; Zebel, Doosje, & Spears, 2005 [Chapter 4]; Zebel, Stoffers, et al., 2005 [Chapter 2]). In these studies, (a) group members were not involved directly in these wrongs of other in-group members and (b) social mobility to other groups than the perpetrator group was difficult (see also Branscombe et al., 2002). Given these conditions, we hypothesized that lower identifiers express such strong guilt feelings because of a degree of distinctiveness from the perpetrators, enabling them to maintain a distance from these threatening events and retain a positive self-image. In contrast, higher identifiers were argued to be too invested in their in-group to adopt such a coping strategy: They should be motivated to downplay their group’s atrocities and feel less guilty as a result. In Study 1 we accentuated shared group membership with past perpetrators through a perspective-taking manipulation, and demonstrated that this manipulation increased feelings of group-based guilt among lower identifiers, but not so among higher identifiers. To the extent that guilt involves a negative evaluation of behavior (e.g., Tangney
& Dearing, 2002), the increased association with perpetrator group members (i.e., perspective-taking) led lower identifiers to judge more negatively the wrongs of their group in which they did not take part.

In Study 2, we assessed more directly how strong feelings of group-based guilt among lower identifiers reflect an expression of distinctiveness from perpetrator group members whose wrongs do not involve them directly. We demonstrated that lower identifiers dissociated themselves in perceptual terms from past perpetrators when asked to take their perspective; as expected, no such perceptual shift occurred among higher identifiers (see also Ellemers et al., 2002; Spears, et al., 1997). This dissociation among lower identifiers was positively related to their increase in group-based guilt. In addition, this accentuation of distinctiveness among lower identifiers was associated also with weaker external attributions about the in-group’s wrongs. In contrast, higher identifiers made stronger external attributions after perspective-taking. Consistent with the literature on the relation between attribution and affect (e.g., Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Weiner, 1985; Weiner et al., 1982), these weaker external attributions accordingly mediated the increase in feelings of group-based guilt among lower identifiers.

Most importantly, we demonstrated in Study 2 how this increase in group-based guilt among lower identifiers disappears when the in-group’s wrongs involve them more directly. In these circumstances, dissociation becomes difficult; even lower identifiers are then motivated to downplay their group’s wrongs in order to deal with this threat to their social self (similar to higher identifiers). This different strategy was demonstrated clearly in lower identifiers’ self-perceptions, attributions and feelings of group-based guilt. Taking the perspective of perpetrator group members whose wrongs implicate them more directly, lower identifiers associated themselves more strongly with these perpetrators, made stronger external attributions and accordingly did not demonstrate an increase in group-based guilt. These patterns resemble the responses of higher identifiers in this study, especially with respect to their self-perceptions and external attributions. Such differences in guilt as a function of group members’ role in the in-group’s behavior can have far-reaching consequences in terms of their motivation for reparation (see also Doosje et al., 1998; Iyer et al., 2003). In line with this, our findings demonstrated that weakened feelings of guilt among lower identifiers due to their increased involvement in the wrongs, weakened accordingly their support for an apology and compensation toward the victimized.

Implications

The findings from this research offer insights into the ways groups can deal with their wrongs toward other groups, depending on the degree to which current in-group members are involved in these atrocities. For example, the Dutch government did offer a formal apology to the Jewish community in the
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Netherlands for the cold and formal treatment of the Jewish survivors who returned in the Netherlands after World War II (“Kok”, 2000), but failed to do this toward the Bosnian Muslims for the role of the Dutch in the Srebrenica massacre in 1995 (Brouwer, 2002). Whereas in the former example the current Dutch government was clearly not involved in this treatment of Jewish survivors, the current government was clearly involved in the latter example. We argue therefore that the degree to which certain wrongs implicate directly current group members is a crucial predictor of the willingness of groups to address their wrongful behavior. More specifically, we argue that acknowledging and apologizing for wrongful in-group behavior becomes more difficult to the extent that present in-group members are addressed directly by this behavior.

This research offers some support for those critical of group-based guilt as a typical ‘white liberal’ response perhaps more concerned with the conscience of the in-group than the plight of the victim group (Steele, 1990; Iyer et al., 2003). If our lower identifiers can be seen as equivalent to these white liberals, it seems they are indeed willing to experience guilt, and take on board its implications, only so far as it does not directly involve them. They retreat into the defensive response of higher identifiers as soon as the guilt gets closer to the self. In these terms hand-wringing may to some extent switch to hand-washing as soon as the reality underlying the guilty gets too close to home.
CHAPTER 6: GENERAL DISCUSSION

In this dissertation, we elaborated the conceptualization of group-based guilt through the examination of different determinants thereof. Group identification was set out as a critical moderator of the appraisals involved in group-based guilt. Depending on these appraisals, different intensities of feelings of group-based guilt and its associated behavioral tendencies are elicited. In general, we expected in-group protective appraisals among highly identified group members, but in-group ‘critical’ appraisals among lower identifiers. Hypotheses regarding the focus and actual use of these different appraisals as a function of group identification were formulated in the introduction.

In the following, we discuss these hypotheses in terms of the main empirical findings, and also the conclusions that can be drawn from them. Some theoretical and applied implications of these findings are then considered that may contribute to intergroup conflict resolution. After this, the limitations of the present research are dealt with, in terms of the internal, construct and external validity of our findings. Finally, we discuss four lines of future research that build or elaborate on the present findings.

Main Findings and Conclusions

With respect to higher identifiers, we proposed that their in-group protective appraisals could have two different foci. Their appraisals may either be directed toward the harmful actions of in-group members (i.e., in-group serving), or focused on the position of the victimized out-group (i.e., out-group derogation). Which of these two foci is in the forefront can be determined by the content of the information higher identifiers are faced with (Chapters 2 and 3), or the perspective they take to such information (Chapter 4 and 5).

In-Group Serving Tendencies Among Higher Identifiers

It was hypothesized that when higher identifiers are focused on the harmful actions of the in-group, they are motivated to put a gloss on these actions in terms of ‘flattering’ evaluations and/or attributions (Hewstone, 1990; Pettigrew, 1979). Decreasing the in-group’s perceived responsibility for the harmful actions, these evaluations and attributions should decrease feelings of group-based guilt accordingly among higher identifiers. In addition, we proposed factors that may potentially inhibit or promote this tendency among higher identifiers. That is, the actual use of such evaluations and attributions was predicted to depend on (a) opportunities present in the information and (b) others’ portrayal and evaluations of this information about the in-group.
Attesting to the role of opportunity in in-group serving tendencies, Study 4.1 demonstrated how higher identifiers spontaneously perceived more justifications for and less harm done by the negative actions of their in-group than lower identifiers when they are focused on several, multi-interpretable examples of such behavior. This in-group serving perspective predicted group-based guilt negatively. In addition, in Chapter 5 higher identifiers were focused on the past wrongs of their group through a perspective-taking manipulation. Both studies in this Chapter outlined how higher identifiers took advantage of mitigating circumstances present in the information to attribute the past wrongs of their group externally. Importantly, Study 5.2 explicitly demonstrated how these external attributions led to weak feelings of group-based guilt among higher identifiers.

Turning to the role of others’ portrayal and evaluations, Chapter 2 dealt with how higher identifiers appraise negative actions of their in-group when a member of either the victimized out-group or the in-group presents these actions. When subsequently instructed to write about these actions, higher identifiers implicitly used language that conveyed stronger situational attributions in response to the victimized out-group source. Accordingly, such implicit language use predicted feelings of group-based guilt negatively. In addition, Study 3.1 and 3.2 made explicit how higher identifiers use less in-group serving appraisals (i.e., agree with criticism more) and thus feel more guilty when their in-group disapproves of past wrongs, compared to when an unrelated (Study 3.1) or historical perpetrator out-group (Study 3.2) does so.

Two additional findings with respect to the role of others’ portrayal and evaluations among higher identifiers are also highly relevant. Firstly, Study 3.2 outlined also how higher identifiers do not attempt to avoid feelings of group-based guilt per se, but rather avoid appraisals that put the in-group in a negative light. Thus, when a historical, perpetrator out-group expressed its understanding for past wrongs of the in-group, higher identifiers rejected this understanding and acknowledged these wrongs presumably to avoid the threat of association with this particular out-group. As a consequence, feelings of guilt were intensified among higher identifiers. One conclusion that can be drawn from such findings is that higher identifiers are ‘predisposed’ to appraise or interpret negative, harmful in-group behavior toward out-groups in a favorable manner for the in-group. Often, this tendency will result in appraisals that diminish the experience of group-based guilt and its associated tendencies to repair. However, when the in-group is distinguished positively by an acknowledgment of in-group wrongs (e.g., because this disassociates the in-group from a disliked out-group), this tendency among higher identifiers will actually strengthen feelings of group-based guilt.

Another important finding concerns the use of weaker in-group serving appraisals in response to the victimized out-group sources in Study 3.1 and 3.2 in
comparison to Study 2. We proposed in Chapter 3 that the special status position (i.e., perceived expertise and legitimacy of evaluation) of the victimized out-group makes it difficult to use in-group serving appraisals in response to their evaluation of past wrongs by the in-group. However, an important difference between Chapter 2 and 3 is that the victimized out-group source in Chapter 2 also acknowledged the misdeeds that they committed themselves (see also Nadler & Livithan, 2004 for a discussion about the significance of the acceptance of responsibility by both groups involved in a conflict). In terms of opportunities, higher identifiers in Chapter 2 most probably perceived this acknowledgment of out-group wrongs as an indication that the in-group is not to be blamed solely for what had happened. With no such acknowledgment by the victimized out-group present in Chapter 3, these findings again underscore the importance of opportunity for the use of in-group serving appraisals among higher identifiers.

Importantly then, whereas most appraisals clearly serve to weaken feelings of group-based guilt, there are at least three factors that guide appraisals that strengthen these feelings among higher identifiers. That is, higher identifiers a) are likely to conform to other in-group members who appraise the in-group’s wrongs negatively, b) acknowledge their in-group’s wrongs when this serves to dissociate the in-group from an understanding perpetrator group, and c) appraise the in-group’s wrongs negatively when the victimized out-group cannot easily be blamed and indicates its explicit disapproval of these wrongs. As outlined below, these factors have important implications, both theoretically and practically.

**Tendencies to Derogate the Victimized Group Among Higher Identifiers**

Another route that higher identifiers may take to protect the positive value of the in-group is through appraisals about the position of the victimized group. We hypothesized that such appraisals with the victimized group as target would indicate derogation in terms of blaming the victimized group itself for the harm done to them, (e.g., Lerner & Miler, 1978; see also Hafer & Begue, 2005) or a change to a more negative attitude against them (i.e., a loss of sympathy for their position). Derogating the victimized group in this manner may offer a justification for the actions of the in-group and thus weaken feelings of group-based guilt. As discussed above, whether higher identifiers take this route to derogate the victimized group depends on the content of the information they confront (Chapter 2) or the perspective they take to this information (Chapter 4).

In Chapter 2, higher identifiers not only received information about the wrongs of their in-group, but also about the wrongs of the victimized out-group itself. Not only did this offer an opportunity for higher identifiers to blame the out-group more strongly for what had happened (which was implicit in their language use), they also showed less consideration of the victimized out-group’s plight. As hypothesized, these responses among higher identifiers were especially present when the source of information was a victimized out-group
member, rather than an in-group member. These findings demonstrate that the use of out-group derogation tendencies among higher identifiers is also influenced by opportunities in the information to do so (see also Doosje et al., 1995; Ellemers et al., 1997), as well as on the source of information.

The use of derogation tendencies was demonstrated forcefully also when higher identifiers turned to the position of the out-group to take their perspective (Chapter 4). Although Study 4.1 did not show that higher identifiers are less inclined to take this perspective by nature than lower identifiers are, Study 4.2 demonstrated how higher identifiers use out-group blame as a strategy to undermine the negative consequences for the image of the in-group when they are explicitly instructed to take the perspective of the victimized. In line with our hypotheses, this out-group blame explained why higher identifiers felt less guilty than lower identifiers after perspective taking.

In conclusion, these findings among higher identifiers demonstrate how they employ an array of in-group protective appraisals to deal with harmful actions of their in-group, as well as its consequences for out-groups. These appraisals range from doubts about a specific source of information or an evaluation about the in-group, through situational attributions about the in-group’s actions to blaming the victimized. In the above summary of empirical findings, we outlined the factors that predict which of these appraisals are most likely given a specific focus and context. Most importantly, the variety in in-group protective appraisals used among higher identifiers underscores the pervasiveness of their motivation to uphold a positive group identity.

In-Group ‘Critical’ Tendencies Among lower Identifiers

Although lower identifiers do categorize themselves as belonging to the in-group, their low identification with this group leads them to take an uninvolved and dispassionate stance toward the group’s wrongs. Thus, we hypothesized that lower identifiers appraise harmful actions of the in-group more readily for what they perhaps objectively are: negative and bad (Doosje et al., 1998). Such appraisals may not only do damage to the image of the in-group but accordingly also elicit strong feelings of group-based guilt and its associated reparation tendencies. Most importantly, we argued this pattern among lower identifiers to be strongest in relation to (historical) wrongs in which lower identifiers are not involved directly (and which thus do not pose a strong threat to their identity).

This dissertation offers ample evidence of lower identifiers’ readiness to use in-group ‘critical’ appraisals and of their susceptibility to the induction of feelings of group-based guilt. That is, lower identifiers made strong dispositional attributions about the in-group’s wrongs when these wrongs were presented by a member of the victimized out-group, which accordingly predicted strong feelings of guilt and associated reparation intentions among them (Chapter 2). The implicit nature of these attributions made it unlikely that their self-reports of group-based guilt were due to normative considerations. In addition, Studies 3.1
and 3.2 corroborated the proposition that lower identifiers are least concerned by the evaluations of fellow in-group members but worry more about what out-group members think of them (Bizman et al., 2001; Ellemers, Barreto et al., 1999). Accordingly, lower identifiers felt more guilty when an unrelated out-group (Study 3.1) or perpetrator out-group (Study 3.2) indicated its disapproval than when the in-group did so. Study 4.2 demonstrated how lower identifiers acknowledge the suffering of victims brought about by the in-group when taking the victims’ perspective; this led them to feel more guilty and to favor reparation more strongly. Finally, Study 5.1 and 5.2 outlined how taking the perspective of past in-group perpetrators intensified their negative behavior among lower identifiers, which made them report strong feelings of guilt and reparation intentions.

When Lower Identifiers Turn Into Higher Identifiers

Clearly, the above increments in group-based guilt occurred especially when lower identifiers were not directly involved in the in-group’s wrongs. Arguably, a low identification and a low involvement in the wrongs pose little threat to people’s identity. In Study 5.2 however, lower identifiers were addressed more directly in relation to the in-group’s wrongs. Consistent with our expectations, lower identifiers now ‘turned’ into higher identifiers when they were instructed to take the perspective of wrongful in-group members. That is, rather than distancing themselves from their in-group in perceptual terms, they accentuated similarities to other in-group members. In addition, they showed in-group protective tendencies in terms of external attributions; this explained why they did not display stronger feelings of group-based guilt under these conditions.

To conclude then, these results offer valuable insights into why and when lower identifiers will and will not be susceptible to feelings of group-based guilt and its associated compensation tendencies. That is, a direct involvement in their in-group’s wrongs makes them resist an acknowledgment of wrongs more strongly than when they are uninvolved in such wrongs.

Implications

Theoretical

The above findings and conclusions in our view offer some important theoretical implications in terms of the role of group identification in intergroup phenomena. That is, the present research helps to advance our knowledge of when and how group members are likely to acknowledge the wrongs of their group (and when they do not), and when they are inclined to make up for these wrongs. Eventually, such insights may contribute significantly to our understanding of intergroup conflict resolution.

Firstly, our studies demonstrate that a strong group identification does not predict weak feelings of group-based guilt per se, but rather the use of appraisals
that protect the value of the in-group when this group has misbehaved toward others. Accordingly, when these appraisals concern a) the in-group’s responsibility for the harmful behavior and b) the legitimacy or justifiability of this behavior, they predict the emotional response of group-based guilt (Branscombe et al., 2002). However, we argue that this pervasive tendency among higher identifiers to interpret objectionable in-group behavior in a favorable manner makes the occurrence of other negative emotions focused on the in-group as a whole unlikely as well (e.g., shame, disappointment, embarrassment). Thus, the use of in-group protective appraisals may inhibit higher identifiers more generally to experience strong negative, in-group focused affect (see also Bizman et al., 2001).

In addition, the conclusion in this dissertation that a weak group identification (and a low involvement) is most readily associated with strong feelings of group-based guilt and reparation tendencies has important implications as well for theories of intergroup relations. That is, from a social identity perspective higher identifiers are predicted to perceive, feel and act more strongly in terms of their group membership than are lower identifiers (e.g., Spears et al., 1999; Turner et al., 1987). However, the present research indicates that intergroup behavior can be more forthcoming among the weakly identified when it concerns the reparation of wrongdoing by the in-group.

That said it is important to note the particular type of group examined in the present research (the Dutch). Being an indigenous member of a national group is an ascribed rather than self-chosen membership that is difficult to escape from (e.g., Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Mlicki & Ellemers, 1996). Thus, although lower identifiers are not strongly committed, to the extent that such groups are used to categorize people in a given context they also impinge on them (e.g., Bizman et al., 2001; Branscombe et al., 1999; Ellemers, Barreto, et al., 1999; Van Rijswijk & Ellemers, 1998). These considerations imply some important theoretical conditions that predict when people can be critical about the actions of their in-group and accordingly assume some level of responsibility (in the sense of feelings of guilt and reparation intentions). First, people need not be too strongly identified with the perpetrator group; second, their individual involvement in the wrongs needs to be low, and third, group membership should be unavoidable in terms of self-categorization. Paradoxically, these conditions may involve the absence of in-group protective mechanisms while at the same time associate the self with the in-group (see also Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004; Smith & Henry, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). People who fulfill these conditions may most readily put on a hair shirt for their group and be inclined accordingly to undo their group’s wrongdoing.

On the basis of our findings, we can also infer some implications for the integration of appraisal theories of emotion and theories of intergroup relations to predict intergroup emotions. As argued in the general introduction, the
research described here demonstrates how appraisals supposed to elicit interpersonal guilt based on appraisal theories of emotion (e.g., self as responsible for harmful behavior; Frijda et al., 1989; Roseman et al., 1994; Tangney & Dearing, 2002) can predict group-based guilt also once the individual self-categorizes as belonging to a specific perpetrator in-group vis-à-vis a victimized out-group (e.g., Turner, 1987). As Smith and colleagues argue, such generalizations based on the emotion process at the interpersonal level may be applicable to a broad range of intergroup emotions (e.g., Smith, 1993; Mackie & Smith, 2002).

However, the present findings also point to other appraisals derived from SIT and SCT that are associated exclusively with intergroup emotions. For example, a significant premise of intergroup processes is that the perceptions and behaviors of individuals become more uniform when they share a specific group membership (e.g., Brown, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). One factor that contributes to this uniformity is that people are inclined to conform to what they appraise as normative or common for their group. In Chapter 3 we have demonstrated that when (highly identified) group members come to appraise how a majority of their in-group disapproves of past wrongs, they ‘conform’ to this evaluation in terms of the emotion they experience (i.e., strong feelings of group-based guilt). These findings imply that when an in-group relevant event occurs, people may not only appraise this particular event as an individual group member, but may also be tuned to the positions or evaluations (or even emotional expressions) of fellow group members in this situation. This particular group-directed appraisal may play an important role in the intensity of intergroup emotions we argue and deserves further attention.

In addition, such appraisals of the position of fellow group members may also determine the degree to which a particular intergroup emotion is socially shared within a group. That is, we have used the term ‘group-based emotion’ and ‘group-based guilt’ throughout this dissertation to stress that intergroup emotions are often experienced to very different degrees among members from the same group (if at all experienced). In contrast, a more ‘collective’ emotion occurs when members of a social group experience the same emotion to the same degree in relation to a particular event. Collective emotions may occur especially when group members are in the presence of each other when they witness an event that relates to their group. In such a context, group members may appraise especially the (emotional) reactions of others to this event, which accordingly comes to influence their own emotional reaction. In this manner, the variation in type and intensity of emotional reactions may become more homogenous in this group to the point where a truly collective emotion is experienced. Such a (hypothetical) appraisal process hints at unique features of intergroup emotions that further differentiate them from interpersonal emotions.
Finally, an important theoretical implication concerns the influences out-groups can have on the (in-group-focused) emotions of people. Typically, it has been found that in-groups are far more persuasive than out-groups in changing people’s opinions, including the acceptance of criticism focused on the in-group (e.g., Hornsey & Imani, 2004; Hornsey, Trembath et al., 2004; Mackie et al., 1990; Turner, 1982). The present research extends these findings to the domain of higher identifiers, who accept the induction of group-based guilt most readily from fellow in-group members.

However, we demonstrated specific situations in which out-groups can induce equally or even stronger guilt than the in-group does. These situations have in common that they weaken or inhibit people’s natural tendency to discard, reject or otherwise downgrade messages more strongly from out-groups than in-groups (see also Hornsey, Trembath et al., 2004). That is, out-groups can be influential in inducing strong negative in-group focused emotions among those members of perpetrator groups whose ‘guard’ against relevant out-groups is weak by nature (i.e., lower identifiers) or brought down through expressions of particular out-groups (i.e., a disapproval from a victimized out-group that cannot easily be blamed for what has happened).

Practical

The practical implications of the present research concern suggestions about how an acknowledgment of (past) wrongdoing (e.g., feelings of guilt, expressions of remorse, apology) develops or can even be brought about among natural groups. It is rarely observed that existing groups openly admit the misdeeds they committed against other groups (e.g., Baumeister & Hastings, 1997; Cohen, 2001). However, if perpetrator groups do acknowledge such wrongdoing and experience guilt, this at the very least may indicate a starting point from which past wrongs can be redefined and/or repaired (Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Minow, 1998). There is however more discussion about whether feelings of group-based guilt are truly constructive in improving intergroup relations (see for divergent perspectives Barkan, 2000; Iyer et al., 2003).

Our findings in this dissertation suggest different strategies as a function of group identification to initiate such acknowledgment and guilt among individual members of perpetrator groups. One type of strategy is the confrontation with the pains, needs and thoughts of (current) members of the victimized group, which may persuade lower identifiers to reject wrongs of their groups in which they are uninvolved. This confrontation may consist of the information gained through books, films and documentaries for example, or through actual interaction about this issue with members of the victimized group. To the extent that such information through ‘the eyes of the victimized’ renders the in-group’s behavior less justified and legitimate than the perspective of the in-group on this issue, it will motivate an acknowledgment of wrongs and expression of guilt among lower identifiers. However, this shift in appraisals operates primarily
when lower identifiers are relatively uninvolved in their group’s behavior, enabling them a critical stance toward their group. Pessimistically, this implies that lower identifiers are less likely to acknowledge the wrongs of their group when their role in or contribution to such wrongs is emphasized.

In contrast to lower identifiers, our research indicates that higher identifiers are less susceptible to the plight of the victimized when their group’s value is at stake. Strategies to persuade higher identifiers to acknowledge and feel guilty about the wrongs of their group should have in common that they do not elicit a strong motivation to defend the value of the group. For example, messages from within the in-group that signal the rejection and the condemnation of (past) wrongs are unlikely to lead to reactance among higher identifiers (see also Hornsey and colleagues, 2002; 2004). Such messages are therefore particularly suitable to initiate a change to a confession of wrongs among those most invested in the group.

These divergent paths to acknowledgment and expression of group-based guilt among lower and higher identifiers imply a hypothetical route through which an acknowledgment of wrongs may come to be socially shared within a perpetrator group (i.e., a collective acknowledgment of wrongs). That is, suppose current members of the victimized group persuade a considerable number of lower identified members of a perpetrator group to change their perspective on past mistreatment and/or exploitation. If these lower identifiers accordingly acknowledge this exploitation and express their feelings of guilt openly, higher identified members may ‘pick up’ this process within their group and perhaps become motivated to conform to this acknowledgment. Paradoxically then, lower identifiers can be the ‘opinion leaders’ through which a change to a more collective acknowledgment in a perpetrator group is initiated. Of course, this hypothetical route assumes that a fair share of group members has a weak identification to the perpetrator in-group.

Interestingly, the above practical implications outline how members of perpetrator groups are most able to admit to the misdeeds their group has committed when such deeds do not burden their identity too much. This converges with Barkan (2000) who illustrates how some distance in terms of time is a prerequisite for groups to openly deal with and repair their wrongs.

**Limitations of the Present Research**

We discuss three possible types of limitations that relate to the internal, construct and external validity of our findings.

*Internal Validity*

In all of the studies reported here, we measured rather than manipulated Dutch group identification. This opens the possibility that our participants do not differ solely in terms of identification, but on other dimensions as well that
correlate with identification. Such parallel dimensions may offer alternative explanations for our findings and thus pose a threat to the internal validity of our results (e.g., Smith & Mackie, 2000). In contrast, the other independent variables were all experimentally manipulated in our studies and participants were randomly assigned to the different experimental conditions of these variables; this serves to strengthen the internal validity.

However, we consider it unlikely that other dimensions that are correlated with identification could explain the results obtained in this dissertation. For instance, although political orientation correlated weakly with Dutch national identification in Doosje et al.’s research (1998), it did not explain their results. In addition, we demonstrated in Chapter 2 that social desirability concerns as an alternative process does not explain why participants report different levels of group-based guilt as a function of identification. Finally, our predictions regarding lower and higher identifiers’ responses to threatening information about their group are derived from research that has both measured and manipulated group identification (e.g., Doosje et al., 1995). Thus, although a manipulation of group identification would have allowed for more causal conclusions (see also ‘recommendations for future research’), we consider other dimensions than identification as unlikely explanations for the present findings.

Construct Validity

Does the measure of group identification used in our studies correspond to the theoretical construct of social identification? We think it does. In the introduction, we outlined social identification as a multi-faceted construct that consists of a cognitive, evaluative and affective experience of membership in a social group (Tajfel, 1978). Consistent with this definition, our measure comprised items that tapped into these three aspects of social identification (see appendix A). In addition, scale analyses indicated repeatedly that these items had in common one latent construct. Finally, this dissertation as well as other research using similar measures of social identification demonstrates how it is related to outcome variables in ways consistent with theoretical predictions (see Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999 for an overview). These considerations underscore the construct validity of our measure of group identification we argue. Of course, other research that differentiates more explicitly between specific components of social identification may further deepen our knowledge of the role of different aspects of identification in predicting intergroup emotions (e.g., Cameron, 2004; Ellemers, Kortekaas et al., 1999; Jackson & Smith, 1999; Leach et al., 2005; McGarty & Bluc, 2004; Roccas et al., 2004; see also section ‘recommendations for future research’).

In contrast to identification, our measurement of group-based guilt has limitations that can pose a threat to its construct validity. On the positive side, we specified theoretical appraisals that should elicit feelings of group-based guilt (e.g., Branscombe et al., 2002; Doosje et al., 1998; Iyer et al., 2004) and
demonstrated how our measurement of this construct is empirically related to such appraisals (e.g., justifications for the in-group’s behavior). On the downside however, we did not measure other viable emotions that can be distinguished theoretically from group-based guilt, something that occurs often in emotion research to clarify the antecedents and consequences of a specific emotion (e.g., Iyer et al., 2003; Kugler & Jones, 1992; Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

Most importantly, a critic may argue that we measured group-based shame instead of group-based guilt. This critique is well taken, because shame and guilt share similar appraisals (i.e., the self is an agent in violating certain values or norms) and have overlapping subjective experiences (i.e., negative affect focused on the self; Lewis, 2000; Roseman et al., 1994). This explains why participants themselves do not differentiate easily between these emotions (e.g., Tangney & Dearing, 2002). However, there is a crucial difference between these emotions in terms of action tendencies. Most researchers agree that guilt motivates an approach tendency to make up for wrongful behavior (e.g., confession, apology to victim) whereas shame should prompt avoidance of wrongful behavior (e.g., withdrawal, hiding, denial; Baumeister et al., 1994; Frijda et al., 1989; Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

Overall, our measure of group-based guilt was correlated in a moderately positive manner with an approach orientation in this dissertation. Thus, although we did not measure group-based shame (or other emotions) and its associated avoidance tendencies, our measurement of group-based guilt did converge with the appropriate behavioral orientation (see also Doosje et al., 1998). Taken together, despite the neglect of other emotions in the present research, we think our measure of group-based guilt has a proper construct validity given it is empirically related to appropriate antecedents and consequences.

A final limitation in terms of construct validity concerns our reparation measure in this dissertation. Rather than assessing participants’ behavioral tendencies to compensate or apologize to the victimized group, this measure tapped into participants’ attitudes toward such forms of group-level reparation. Theoretically, (interpersonal) guilt should be linked especially with action tendencies (e.g., Frijda, 1986; Roseman et al., 1994; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). However, in the attitude literature a change in attitudes is considered to be a precursor for a change in behavioral tendencies (e.g., Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Accordingly, other research has demonstrated how group-based guilt motivates changes in attitudes as well as changes in behavioral intentions with regard to reparation (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998; McGarty et al, in press; Swim & Miller, 1999). To conclude then, although our measure of participants’ attitudes toward reparation may guide their behavioral intentions, we did not assess such intentions directly in the present research.
External Validity

In our view, the findings in this dissertation with respect to national group identification and group-based guilt are generalizable within the Netherlands in relation to different types of victimized groups, across (indigenous) Dutch people with various demographic backgrounds and concerning various illegitimate actions by the Dutch (e.g., colonization, collaboration, military actions, etc.).

Nonetheless, two important limitations with respect to group identification need to be discussed when we consider the generalizability of the present findings. Firstly, the distribution of scores on our identification measure was generally skewed to the right among the Dutch participants. As a result, on average only 15 percent of the participants indicated that their identification with being Dutch was below the midpoint of the scale. These considerations imply that we had a considerably lower number of observations among lower identifiers than among higher identifiers (which is perhaps more common among natural groups). Of course, we enhanced the power of our analyses by using identification as a continuous (rather than dichotomous) variable to predict the responses of lower (and higher) identifiers. Still, the low number of actual lower identifiers in our samples tempers the reliability of our results, and conclusions with respect to the responses of especially lower identifiers should be generalized therefore with caution.

Secondly, the content and nature of national group identification may differ across different countries around the world, which limits the generalizability of the present findings to other nations. For example, McGarty and Bliuc (2004) point out how national identification in Australia is too broad a concept to predict reliably feelings of group-based guilt among (non-indigenous) Australians for the harm inflicted to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. That is, the majority group in Australia consists of people from various ethnic backgrounds, who either emigrated themselves to Australia or are descendants from people who immigrated to Australia since the beginning of the colonization in 1788. For these people, identification with being Australian may have quite diverse meanings and implications. McGarty and Bliuc argue how identification with specific opinion groups (i.e., pro or against an official apology by the Australian government) instead is better predictors of group-based guilt toward indigenous Australians among non-indigenous Australians.

In addition, Roccas et al. (2004) have demonstrated how in Israel, national group identification among Jewish-Israelis can be distinguished explicitly in an attachment component (i.e., cognitive and affective involvement in the group) and a glorification component (i.e., in-group superiority over others groups and idealization of group symbols). Most interestingly, these components have a positive and negative impact, respectively, on feelings of group-based guilt among Jewish-Israelis toward Palestinians (see Roccas et al., 2004). Although Dutch national identification (as we measured it) may have some overlap with
this glorification component (i.e., higher Dutch identifiers may have a strong sense of pride for their national group), it seems dissimilar to the attachment component. That is, our research indicates that cognitive and affective aspects of Dutch national identification go hand-in-hand with a sense of pride in being Dutch (i.e., the evaluative aspect) to predict group-based guilt.

These examples illustrate how the present findings with respect to Dutch national identification cannot be generalized to other nations without a proper consideration of the content and nature of a specific national identity. We do however think that the present findings are representative of the experience of group-based guilt in the Netherlands as a function of national group identification.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

We suggest four lines of future research that flow from the present findings.

*Further Elaboration of the Role of Group Identification*

As discussed above, although often in a meaningful manner in the Netherlands, national group identification does not consistently moderate the appraisals involved in the elicitation of group-based guilt across different nations (see Branscombe & Doosje, 2004). To resolve this ambiguous role of group identification, future research may have two different foci. Firstly, consistent with others (e.g., Leach et al., 2005; Roccas et al., 2004), distinguishing explicitly between different components of identification may further clarify the relation between identification and self-focused emotions such as group-based guilt. For example, Leach et al. propose that mere self-categorization in terms of a perpetrator group predicts group-based guilt positively, whereas a strong self-investment in this group raises defenses against criticism and therefore negatively predicts guilt.

Secondly, researchers may wish to examine more proximate predictors of intergroup emotions that flow from (components of) group identification. For example, group identification may predict people’s interest in, involvement with or opinion about a specific intergroup issue, which accordingly predicts which emotions are experienced (e.g., Leach, Spears, Branscombe, & Doosje, 2003; Pennekamp, Doosje, Zebel, & Fischer, 2004). In addition, (components of) group identification may predict which value or norm is salient among members of a specific group, which in turn predicts people’s readiness to appraise emotional events in a specific manner. Thus, in Roccas et al.’s research (2004), those Jewish-Israelis who were high glorifiers may have subscribed strongly to a conservatism value orientation: this value orientation predicted the use of exonerating beliefs and less group-based guilt in their research.
Contrasting Distinct Emotions at the Group-Level

In the present dissertation, we have gained insights into the nature of group-based guilt through an in-depth examination of this particular emotion. Another fruitful avenue for research is to investigate determinants that differentiate one intergroup emotion from others. For example, Iyer et al. (2003) demonstrated how group focus differentiates group-based guilt from group-based sympathy (see also Powell, Branscombe, & Schmitt, 2005). One particular interesting inquiry would be to establish the factors that determine when people consider others to belong to their in-group, and when they categorize these same others as a subgroup that is distinct from their own. Thus, people can condemn the misdeeds of other members and feel guilty on their behalf, but when do they condemn these actions to feel disgust, anger or outrage directed at these members? Insights from the literature on the phenomena of subtyping, subgrouping and the black sheep effect are likely to be helpful here (e.g., Richards & Hewstone, 2001; Marquez & Paez, 1994). Such inquiries will not only contribute to our understanding of the nature of in-group-focused emotions like group-based guilt, but are likely to predict also when people are motivated predominantly to act on behalf of their group (i.e., make reparations) or to turn against ‘bad’ members of their group (i.e., exclude and/or punish them).

How Do the Victimized Appraise the Emotions Experienced by the Perpetrators?

Undoubtedly, people may wish to avoid painful, negatively in-group-focused emotions like group-based guilt, and more readily experience other emotions that do not paint such a negative picture of their group (e.g., sympathy, anger; e.g., Iyer et al., 2004). However, how do members of the victimized group perceive such emotions experienced by members of the perpetrator group? Do they desire that the perpetrator group expresses sympathy for their position, or do they feel acknowledged more when this group expresses some sense of responsibility through guilt or shame (e.g., Barkan, 2000)? Perhaps the victimized appreciate most a more differentiated response from the perpetrator group that includes aspects of different emotions together (instead of just one). For example, their response may include elements of guilt (communicating acceptance of responsibility), sympathy (communicating that they care) and moral outrage (communicating their moral perspective). Such differentiated responses from perpetrator groups may have most potential to improve intergroup relations.

In addition, it would be interesting to examine how different emotional expressions of the perpetrator group influence the wishes and demands among the victimized group toward these perpetrators. Does guilt evoke strong demands for reparation similar to interpersonal guilt (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1994; van Kleef et al., 2005), and are such demands more forceful than when sympathy is expressed? Such investigations may determine whether the reluctance of perpetrator groups to acknowledge responsibility for harm doing to avoid excessive demands from the victimized is realistic (e.g., McGarty & Bluc,
2004). In addition, when the perpetrator group tries to imagine the perspective of the victimized, how do the victimized respond to such attempts to empathize? Can this reduce their anger and increase their sympathy toward the perpetrator group? And finally: How do the victimized respond to a more combined response (including elements of different emotions) from the perpetrators in terms of wishes and demands?

**Action Tendencies and Actual Behavior**

Finally, future research may elaborate on the factors that influence when action tendencies that stem from group-based emotions direct actual behavior. That is, indicating a general inclination that one’s group should apologize and compensate the victimized group undoubtedly is less of an investment for individual group members than when they are given the opportunity to actually do something for the victimized on behalf of their group. This issue also relates to the scope of group-based guilt for reducing intergroup equality: If guilt only motivates behavior that reduces one’s own negative affect instead of reducing the distress of the victimized group (see Iyer et al., 2003 for this discussion), than it should be difficult to commit individual group members to relatively effortful compensation behaviors (e.g., taking part in a demonstration to the benefit of the victimized).

To the extent that group-based guilt can originate at least in part through a concern for the plight of the victimized group (see Chapter 4 for example), we think this emotion can motivate such effortful reparation behavior under some circumstances. Factors that influence when action tendencies direct actual behavior may differ as a function of group identification. For lower identifiers, actual reparation behavior may be especially forthcoming when guilt is elicited through taking the perspective of the victimized and when they are motivated to disassociate themselves from in-group perpetrators (e.g., show that they are different). In contrast, when higher identifiers are motivated to do something for the benefit of the victimized as a result of group-based guilt, they may do so especially when there is consensus among the in-group that something should be done. Such routes from action tendencies to actual behavior may offer important insights into the scope of consequences of emotions like group-based guilt.

In our view, these suggestions for future research underscore the richness and importance of the present findings in this dissertation. The present research has not only elaborated on the appraisals, experience and consequences of group-based guilt, but has also demonstrated how this intergroup emotion depends crucially on the importance and relevance of a specific group for one’s self-definition. In general, the counterintuitive, often negative impact of group identification on group-based guilt we demonstrated may lie at the heart of the far too often observed tendency of groups to minimize, neglect or even deny the harm they have inflicted upon others. However, as this dissertation also demonstrates, specific circumstances exist that can motivate even the most
committed and invested group members to acknowledge the misdeeds of their well-respected group (e.g., when it serves to dissociate the in-group from a morally tainted perpetrator out-group). It is these circumstances that offer hope for at least some ways to resolve long-lasting, painful conflicts between different types of groups in the world.
Conflict en vijandigheden tussen allerlei groepen in de wereld kenmerken niet alleen het verleden, maar ontstaan en duren ook voort in het heden (denk bijvoorbeeld aan het conflict in Israël, de Amerikaanse oorlog tegen terrorisme, of de Afrikaanse oorlogen in Soedan en Ruanda). Onderzoek in de sociale psychologie heeft laten zien dat dergelijke conflicten deels ontstaan en voortduren doordat mensen een sterke neiging hebben anderen uit hun eigen groep te bevoorraden, terwijl zij soms discrimineren tegen mensen die uit een andere groep komen. Er is dan ook veel aandacht besteed in de sociale psychologie aan hoe deze verschillende behandeling van mensen uit verschillende groepen kan worden verminderd of omzeild (zie bijvoorbeeld Gaertner et al., 1989; Pettigrew, 1998). Echter, er is minder aandacht geweest voor de manieren waarop mensen ertoe bewogen kunnen worden hun ‘liefde’ voor hun eigen groep opzij te zetten en zich kritisch op te stellen naar de (mis)daden van de eigen groep. Een dergelijke kritische houding zou remmend kunnen werken op het ontstaan en voortduren van conflicten en agressie tussen groepen.

In Hoofdstuk 1 wordt op basis van de literatuur over de interacties tussen individuen uiteengezet dat gevoelens van schuld een teken zijn dat een individu het leed dat hij of zij bij anderen heeft aangericht inziet en erkent. Dergelijke gevoelens motiveren mensen ook vaak om excuses aan te bieden en/of om vergeving te vragen bij het slachtoffer (Hoffman, 2000; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Op het nivo van groepen zouden op eenzelfde wijze gevoelens van schuld over de wandaden van de eigen groep (= groepsgebaseerde schuld) een teken kunnen zijn dat mensen het kwalijke karakter van deze daden inzien en erkennen. Het zou hen tevens kunnen motiveren de groep tegemoet te komen die het slachtoffer is geworden van deze daden. Dit proefschrift heeft betrekking op dergelijke gevoelens van groepsgebaseerde schuld als teken van erkenning van wandaden door de eigen groep. In dit proefschrift zijn de aard, antecedenten en consequenties van deze emotie onderzocht. Centraal staat de mate van identificatie die mensen ervaren met hun groep als een belangrijke determinant van groepsgebaseerde schuld.

Hoe ontstaat, voelt en waartoe leidt groepsgebaseerde schuld precies? Een noodzakelijke voorwaarde voor deze emotie is dat mensen zich er bewust van zijn dat zij samen met bepaalde mensen behoren tot een specifieke groep (de ‘in-groep’), terwijl andere mensen tot een andere groep behoren (de ‘out-groep’; Turner et al., 1987). Wanneer mensen vervolgens vernemen dat deze in-groep leed heeft veroorzaakt bij leden van de out-groep waarvoor geen rechtvaardiging valt te geven, dan kan men zich schuldig gaan voelen (Branscombe et al., 2002).
Een belangrijk kenmerk van deze emotie is verder dat diegene die zich schuldig voelt, niet noodzakelijkerwijs persoonlijk heeft deelgenomen aan het veroorzaken van leed. Het ‘voelen’ van groepsgebaseerde schuld kan worden omschreven als een pijnlijk gevoel van onbehagen dat het individu focust op de negatieve daden van de in-groep (Iyer et al., 2003), en dat gepaard gaat met gevoelens van spijt en het betreuren van deze daden (Brancombe et al., 2004; Doosje et al., 1998). Wanneer men dit gevoel ervaart, ontstaat er een motivatie het veroorzaakte leed ongedaan te maken. Dit kan zich uiten in het steunen van een excuus of financiële compensatie namens de in-groep aan de slachtoffers (zie Doosje et al., 1998), of het steunen van beleid dat erop gericht is de positie van de slachtoffers te verbeteren (bijvoorbeeld beleid gericht op positieve discriminatie; Swim & Miller, 1999).

Hoe en waarom is de mate van identificatie met de in-groep belangrijk voor het ervaren van groepsgebaseerde schuld? Wanneer mensen zich sterk identificeren met een bepaalde in-groep (zogenaamde ‘hoge identificeerders’), betekent dit dat deze groep belangrijk en relevant is voor de manier waarop mensen zichzelf definiëren (bijv. ‘Aio-zijn is belangrijk voor de manier waarop ik mijzelf zie.’; Ellemers et al., 1999; Tajfel, 1978). Wanneer nu de (positieve) waarde van de in-groep bedreigd wordt doordat deze groep misdaden heeft begaan, lijkt het logisch dat men deze waarde wil verdedigen als men veel betekenis ontleent aan deze groep. Een aanzienlijk aantal studies heeft dan ook laten zien welke strategieën hoge identificeerders ondernemen om hun groep te verdedigen wanneer deze bedreigd wordt (zie Ellemers et al., 1999 voor een overzicht). Echter, deze motivatie voor het behoud van een positieve identiteit (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) is logischerwijs veel minder sterk aanwezig onder mensen met een zwakke identificatie met de in-groep (= ‘lage identificeerders’). Het feit dat zij tot de in-groep behoren draagt namelijk maar weinig bij aan de manier waarop zij zichzelf zien.

Het onderzoek van Doosje et al. (1998; Studie 2) liet als eerste zien hoe een lage of hoge mate van identificatie tot verschillen in gevoelens van groepsgebaseerde schuld kan leiden. Zij vroegen Nederlandse deelnemers naar hun identificatie met het Nederlander-zijn, gaven deze deelnemers vervolgens een tekst over de kolonisatie van Indonesië door Nederland en vroegen hen daarna naar hun schuldevoel hierover. Wanneer deze kolonisatie als neutraal werd weerspiegeld (zowel positief als negatief), bleek dat hoge identificeerders zich minder schuldig voelden dan lage identificeerders. Doosje en collega’s verklarden deze laatste bevinding door te stellen dat hoge identificeerders de aanwezige positieve informatie aangrepen om hun groep te verdedigen. Zij interpreteerden de kolonisatie dan ook als minder negatief en voelden zich daardoor minder schuldig dan lage identificeerders, die zich relatief meer richtten op de negatieve daden van Nederland in Indonesië. Uit dit onderzoek valt te concluderen dat hoge identificeerders minder geneigd zullen zijn
groepsgebaseerde schuld te ervaren dan lage identificeerders. Echter, dit verschil treedt met name op wanneer de mogelijkheid bestaat voor hoge identificeerders om de wandaden van de in-groep te verdedigen.

Op basis van de literatuur op het gebied van de emoties en de processen die zich tussen groepen afspelen komen we in Hoofdstuk 1 tot een aantal voorspellingen. Deze voorspellingen betreffen het hoe en wanneer lage en hoge identificeerders tot verschillende interpretaties komen van wandaden begaan door de eigen groep. Deze verschillende interpretaties bepalen vervolgens hoe schuldig zij zich zullen voelen. Deze schuldgevoelens kunnen op hun beurt weerintenties veroorzaken onder lage en hoge identificeerders om het aangedane leed ongedaan te maken.

Zoals eerder vermeld wordt er een sterke motivatie verondersteld onder hoge identificeerders om de wandaden begaan door de eigen groep te verdedigen (zie ook Baumeister & Hastings, 1997; Branscombe & Doosje, 2004). Wij voorspelden dat deze sterke motivatie zich enerzijds kan richten op het afzwakken of rechtvaardigen van deze wandaden zelf, of anderzijds gefocust is op het beschuldigen of minderwaardig achten van de slachtoffergroep. Beide processen die hier verondersteld worden zouden ertoe moeten leiden dat de begane wandaden als minder negatief van aard worden beschouwd door hoge identificeerders. Logischerwijs zou dit tot gevolg moeten hebben dat zij zich minder schuldig gaan voelen. Welke van deze richtingen gekozen wordt door hoge identificerders zou enerzijds afhankelijk kunnen zijn van de informatie waarmee zij zich geconfronteerd zien. Dat wil zeggen, wordt er vooral iets gezegd over de acties van de daders of juist over het leed van de slachtoffers (zie Hoofdstuk 2 en 3)? Daarnaast zou de keuze voor een van deze richtingen bepaald kunnen worden door het perspectief dat zij innemen ten opzichte van deze informatie. Dus, proberen mensen zich vooral te verplaatsen in de daders [zie Hoofdstuk 5] of juist in de slachtoffers (zie Hoofdstuk 4)? Of hoge identificeerders daadwerkelijk over gaan tot een van deze defensieve interpretaties is naar onze mening afhankelijk van de mogelijkheden die geboden worden in de informatie (zijn er aanknopingspunten om de wandaden te rechtvaardigen?), en van hoe anderen deze wandaden afschilderen en evalueren (bijvoorbeeld wanneer de slachtoffergroep begrip kan opbrengen voor de wandaden).

Voor lage identificeerders geldt dat hoewel zij zichzelf zien als lid van een bepaalde groep, deze groep niet belangrijk is voor de manier waarop zij zichzelf definiëren (zie bijvoorbeeld Spears et al., 1997; 1999). Als gevolg hiervan ontbreekt het hen aan een sterke motivatie om de wandaden begaan door de ingroep te verdedigen; zij zijn eerder bereid dergelijke negatieve daden te erkennen en dus sterke gevoelens van groepsgebaseerde schuld te ervaren (Doosje et al., 1998). Wij veronderstellen echter een belangrijke uitzondering op deze regel. Studies waarin lage identificeerders zich schuldiger voelden dan hoge identificeerders betroffen vaak wandaden uit het verleden, waarin lage
identificeerders niet direct betrokken konden zijn (zie Branscombe & Doosje, 2004 voor een overzicht). Dergelijke daden van de in-groep uit het verleden belasten het zelfbeeld van lage identificeerders slechts in zeer beperkte mate, en het erkennen van deze wandaden kost lage identificeerders dan ook weinig moeite. Echter, wanneer wandaden uit het verleden voortduren in het heden, worden lage identificeerders automatisch meer betrokken in deze daden. Wij voorspelden dat lage identificeerders dan minder bereid zouden zijn deze wandaden te erkennen en zich daarom ook minder snel schuldig zouden voelen (overeenkomstig hoge identificeerders; zie Hoofdstuk 5).

In Hoofdstuk 2 wordt een studie besproken waarin Nederlandse deelnemers gevraagd werden naar hun identificatie met het Nederlander-zijn (deze identificatie werd in alle studies uit dit proefschrift vooraf gemeten, zie Appendix A). Vervolgens werden zij geconfronteerd met een tekst over de betrokkenheid van Nederlanders in de val van Srebrenica in 1995. Deze tekst betoogde dat zowel negatieve daden van Nederlanders alsmede negatieve daden van Bosnische moslims aldaar hadden bijgedragen aan deze val. Echter, de helft van de deelnemers werd verteld dat een Nederlandse journalist deze tekst had geschreven, aan de andere helft dat een Bosnische journalist met een moslim achtergrond de tekst geschreven had. In overeenstemming met onze verwachtingen vonden wij dat hoge identificeerders zich minder schuldig voelden over en minder geneigd waren tot reparatie van de Nederlandse daden in Srebrenica dan lage identificeerders, maar vooral wanneer de tekst zogenaamd geschreven was door de Bosnische moslim. Deelnemers waren ook gevraagd in hun eigen woorden de fouten van de Nederlanders en Bosnische moslims te beschrijven. Een analyse van deze beschrijvingen wees uit dat hoge identificeerders onbewust de fouten van de Nederlanders probeerden af te zwakken door ze toe te schrijven aan de situatie, terwijl lage identificeerders dit vooral onbewust aan de Nederlanders zelf toeschreven. Dit patroon was wederom vooral aanwezig in relatie tot de tekst van de Bosnische moslim. Aangezien deze onbewuste patronen in de beschrijvingen correspondeerden met het bewust gerapporteerde schuldgevoel kan geconcludeerd worden dat lage identificeerders een oprechte emotionele ervaring rapporteren wanneer zij zeggen zich schuldig te voelen.

Voortbordurend op Hoofdstuk 2 werd in het onderzoek vermeld in Hoofdstuk 3 onderzocht hoe hoge identificeerders het imago van hun groep sterker trachten te beschermen dan lage identificeerders, wanneer begane wandaden werden bekritiseerd of juist goed gepraat door de eigen of een andere groep. In Studie 3.1 lazen Nederlandse deelnemers een tekst over het zowel negatieve als positieve gedrag van Nederlanders tijdens de kolonisatie van Indonesië. Vervolgens werd vermeld dat een meerderheid van of de Nederlandse, of de Amerikaanse, of de Indonesische bevolking dit gedrag sterk afkeurde. In Studie 3.2 lazen Nederlandse deelnemers over het zowel negatieve
als positieve gedrag van Nederlanders tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog, hetgeen werd afgekeurd of juist goed gepraat door of een Nederlandse, of een Duitse, of een joods-Nederlandse meerderheid.

Zoals verwacht voelden hoge identificeerders zich schuldiger wanneer de eigen groep gedrag afkeurde dan wanneer de Amerikaanse of Duitse bevolking dit deed. De verklaring hiervoor was dat hoge identificeerders de mogelijkheid aangrijpen om informatie van vooral een out-groep bron in twijfel te trekken (zie ook Hoofdstuk 2). Lage identificeerders daarentegen vertoonden juist het omgekeerde patroon, hetgeen erop duidt dat zij veel minder sterk gemotiveerd zijn de in-groep te verdedigen. De bijzondere status van de Indonesische en joods-Nederlandse afkeuring (de slachtoffergroepen) leidde tot minder defensiviteit onder hoge identificeerders, en dus tot sterke schuldgevoelens. In strijd met onze verwachtingen vonden wij dit laatste patroon niet onder lage identificeerders. Een mogelijke verklaring hiervoor was dat lage identificeerders zich te sterk in verband gebracht voelden met de daders uit het verleden wanneer de slachtoffergroep het gedrag van hun groep afkeurde (zie ook Hoofdstuk 5).

Een interessant patroon werd aangetoond wanneer de Duitse bevolking het gedrag van de Nederlanders zogenaamd probeerde goed te praten (en dus enige sympathie toont voor dit gedrag). Hoge identificeerders rapporteerden onder deze omstandigheden sterkere gevoelens van schuld dan wanneer de Duitsers dit gedrag afkeurden. Dit patroon bood steun voor het idee dat hoge identificeerders een sterker schuldgevoel uitten om afstand te nemen van deze bedreigende ‘dader’ out-groep die haar sympathie toont voor Nederlandse daden tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Dit resultaat leidde tot de conclusie dat hoge identificeerders in het algemeen niet slechts een sterk schuldgevoel proberen te vermijden, maar vooral een negatief beeld van hun groep. Zo kan een sterker schuldgevoel dus ook dienen om de in-groep positief te onderscheiden van een bedreigende out-groep.

In het onderzoek beschreven in Hoofdstuk 4 werd onderzocht hoe hoge en lage identificeerders omgaan met de consequenties van wandaden begaan door de in-groep wanneer zij het perspectief trachten te nemen van de slachtoffers. In Studie 4.1 werd bekeken of laag en hoog identificerende Nederlanders verschillen in hun spontane neiging om het perspectief van de slachtoffers dan wel de daders te nemen, wanneer zij geconfronteerd worden met meerdere situaties waarin beargumenteerd kan worden dat Nederlanders leed hebben veroorzaakt bij anderen (bijv. Srebrenica, Nederlandse slavernij, Tweede Wereldoorlog). Lage en hoge identificeerders bleken niet te verschillen in hun neiging het perspectief te nemen van de slachtoffers, maar hoge identificeerders waren wel meer geneigd het perspectief van de daders te nemen. Zoals verwacht had het nemen van het daderperspectief een afzwakkend effect of gevoelens van schuld, terwijl het slachtofferperspectief juist een versterkend effect had.
In Studie 4.2 werden deelnemers expliciet gevraagd het perspectief van de slachtoffers tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog of de Nederlandse slavernij te nemen, wiens leed deels veroorzaakt was door Nederlanders. Zoals verwacht voelden hoge identificeerders zich minder schuldig na perspectief nemen, terwijl dit perspectief juist een versterkend effect of schuld had onder lage identificeerders. Bovendien waren hoge identificeerders ook minder bereid tot reparatie van het aangedane leed na perspectief nemen dan lage identificeerders. Het patroon op schuld werd verklaard doordat hoge identificeerders de slachtoffers meer verantwoordelijk hielden voor hun eigen leed dan lage identificeerders wanneer zij zich dienden te verplaatsen in hen. Deze resultaten laten duidelijk zien hoe hoge identificeerders de negativiteit van de wandaden begaan door de eigen groep af kunnen zwakken door de slachtoffers te beschuldigen. Dit kan gevoelens van schuld en reparatieneigingen onder hoge identificeerders verminderen.

In het onderzoek dat in Hoofdstuk 5 gerapporteerd wordt, onderzochten we meer expliciet hoe het perspectief nemen van de daders gevoelens van schuld en reparatieneigingen beïnvloedde. Centraal in dit onderzoek stond of lage identificeerders evengoed bereid waren sterke gevoelens van schuld te rapporteren wanneer zij sterker betrokken werden in de wandaden van de eigen groep (vergeleken met niet betrokken). In Studie 5.1 werden Nederlandse deelnemers gevraagd het perspectief te nemen van Nederlanders tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog die hadden bijgedragen aan de jodenvervolging. De leeftijd van onze deelnemers verzekerden ons dat zij niet betrokken waren bij de daden van Nederlanders tijdens de oorlog. Zoals verwacht leidde dit perspectief nemen tot sterke gevoelens van schuld onder lage identificeerders, terwijl dit niet het geval was onder hoge identificeerders. Wij beredeneerden dat dergelijke versterkte schuldgevoelens aangeven hoe lage identificeerders trachten afstand te nemen van de daders uit hun eigen groep (‘wij keuren dat gedrag af en zijn dus niet zoals zij’).

In Studie 5.2 herhaalden we dit onderzoek, maar nu in relatie tot de Nederlandse slavernij. Om de betrokkenheid van onze Nederlandse deelnemers te manipuleren, ontving de helft van hen een tekst over de Nederlandse slaventransporten en slavernij in een ver verleden. Deelnemers waren niet betrokken in deze wandaden. De andere helft van de deelnemers ontving dezelfde informatie, plus aanvullende informatie over de consequenties van deze slavernij voor huidige Surinamers en Antillianen. Deze tekst zou de deelnemers meer moeten betrekken in de wandaden, hetgeen het nemen van afstand van de daders moest bemoeilijken. We vonden dezelfde resultaten als in Studie 5.1 wanneer de deelnemers niet betrokken waren in de wandaden. Echter, wanneer deze betrokkenheid er wel was, leidde het perspectief nemen niet tot meer schuld onder lage identificeerders, overeenkomstig de reacties van hoge identificeerders. Dit patroon werd ook weerspiegeld in de reparatieneigingen van de deelnemers.
Samenvatting / Summary in Dutch

Voorts bleek dat lage identificeerders het negatieve gedrag van de Nederlanders probeerden af te zwakken (door te wijzen op ‘verzachtende’ omstandigheden) wanneer zij meer betrokken waren. Deze resultaten laten zien dat lage identificeerders bij een kleine psychologische afstand tussen hen en de daders ‘veranderen’ in hoge identificeerders in de zin dat ook zij nu het negatieve gedrag trachten te verdedigen, hetgeen leidt tot een zwak schuldgevoel.

In Hoofdstuk 6 worden de belangrijkste conclusies en implicaties besproken die voortvloeien uit de hierboven beschreven studies, almede haar beperkingen en suggesties voor toekomstig onderzoek. De rode draad van dit proefschrift is dat de mate van identificatie met de eigen groep in belangrijke mate de interpretatie en evaluatie van wandaden beïnvloedt. Dit bepaalt vervolgens hoe schuldig mensen zich voelen over deze wandaden en in hoeverre zij geneigd zijn deze wandaden goed te maken.

Wij veronderstelden een sterke motivatie onder diegenen die zich sterk identificerden om dergelijke wandaden in een positievere daglicht te bezien. Een eerste route die deze motivatie kan nemen is via het afzwakken of rechtvaardigen van de wandaden zelf. Deze route kan gekozen worden wanneer hoge identificeerders nadrukkelijk worden geconfronteerd met dergelijke wandaden van de eigen groep (Hoofdstuk 2 en 3) of wanneer zij zich trachten in te leven in de daders uit hun groep die deze daden pleegden (Hoofdstuk 5). Verschillende studies demonstreerden hoe hoge identificeerders daadwerkelijk overgaan tot het afzwakken van de wandaden wanneer de informatie waarmee zij zich geconfronteerd zien dat toelaat (Studie 4.1, Studie 5.1 en 5.2) of wanneer het een andere groep is die hen confronteert met negatieve uitspraken over de wandaden van de in-groep (Studie 2.1, 3.1 en 3.2).

Een tweede route waar deze motivatie in tot uiting kan komen is via het toeschrijven van verantwoordelijkheid aan de slachtoffers zelf voor het veroorzaken van hun eigen leed, zodat de negatieve rol van de eigen groep afgezwakt wordt. Hoge identificeerders nemen deze route vooral wanneer zij geconfronteerd worden met het leed en het gedrag van de slachtoffers. Voorts demonstreerden wij dat zij daadwerkelijk overgaan tot het toeschrijven van de eigen verantwoordelijkheid aan slachtoffers als de aanwezige informatie of de uitspraken van een andere groep daartoe aanleiding geven (Studie 2.1). Tot slot kiezen hoge identificeerders vooral voor deze route wanneer zij gevraagd worden zich in te leven in de slachtoffers (Studie 4.1).

Hoewel deze beide routes leiden tot minder sterke schuldgevoelens onder hoge identificeerders, vallen er op basis van dit onderzoek ook drie factoren te identificeren die het schuldgevoel versterkt onder hen: a) wanneer de eigen groep begane wandaden afkeurt conformeren hoge identificeerders hieraan; b) wanneer hoge identificeerders zich willen onderscheiden van een bedreigende andere groep die haar sympathie toont voor begane wandaden, of c) wanneer de slachtoffergroep haar afkeuring uit over de wandaden en het moeilijk is om deze
slachtoffergroep zelf verantwoordelijk te houden voor het aangedane leed. Deze bevindingen laten zien dat hoge identificeerders niet zozeer geneigd zijn een schuldgevoel te ontlopen, maar meer bezorgd zijn over het verdedigen van het positieve beeld van hun groep.

Wij veronderstelden een afstandelijke en weinig betrokken houding onder lage identificeerders ten aanzien van hun groep, als gevolg waarvan zij relatief gemakkelijk gevoelens van schuld zouden kunnen rapporteren. Wij vonden vaak bewijs voor deze stelling in dit proefschrift. Lage identificeerders rapporteerden sterkere schuldgevoelens wanneer een slachtoffergroep (Studie 2.1), een ongerelateerde andere groep of een andere dadergroep (Studie 3.1 en 3.2) hen attent maakten op de wandaden van hun eigen groep. Voorts voelden zij zich schuldiger wanneer zij zich inleefden in de slachtoffers (Studie 4.2) of de daders uit het verleden (Studie 5.1 en 5.2). Echter, het ‘gemak’ waarmee zij schuldgevoelens rapporteerden verdween ‘als sneeuw voor de zon’ wanneer zij meer direct werden betrokken in de wandaden van hun groep (Studie 5.2). Deze laatste bevinding toont wederom aan dat schuldgevoelens des te makkelijker ervaren lijken te worden wanneer het zelfbeeld van mensen door de wandaden niet te sterk bedreigd wordt.

Het is belangrijk in ogenschouw te nemen dat het onderzoek beschreven in dit proefschrift alleen gedaan is met Nederlandse deelnemers. Het vertalen van de bevindingen over de rol van identificatie in groepsgebaseerde schuld naar andere landen dient derhalve met voorzichtigheid te gebeuren. Identificatie met een land kan namelijk een hele andere betekenis hebben in andere landen zoals bijvoorbeeld Australië of Israël, en daardoor ook een hele andere relatie hebben met schuldgevoel (zie McGarty & Bluc, 2004; Roccas et al., 2004). Desalniettemin geeft het huidige proefschrift een samenhangend beeld van de rol die identificatie kan spelen in gevoelens van schuld over een breed scala van Nederlandse mensen met verschillende achtergronden en als gevolg van allerlei gebeurtenissen die een schuldgevoel kunnen opwekken. Het feit dat gevoelens van groepsgebaseerde schuld kunnen leiden tot neigingen tot reparatie van aangedaan leed maakt dat het huidige onderzoek dan ook een belangrijke bijdrage kan leveren aan het herstellen en verbeteren van problematische relaties tussen huidige groepen in de samenleving. Met name de factoren die ertoe kunnen leiden dat zelfs de hoogste identificeerders in een bepaalde groep tot inkeer kunnen komen over de wandaden die hun groep hebben begaan (zie boven), bieden aanknopingspunten voor toekomstig onderzoek en hoop op minder conflict tussen groepen.


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APPENDIX A

The following measure of group identification was used in all studies reported in this dissertation. This measure is identical to the measure used in Doosje et al. (1998). Participants were asked to indicate to what extent these items related to them on scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much).

1. Ik zie mijzelf als Nederlander.
   [I see myself as a Dutch person.]
2. Ik voel mij verbonden met Nederlanders.
   [I feel a bond with Dutch people.]
3. Nederlanders vormen een belangrijke groep voor mij.
   [The Dutch are an important group to me.]
4. Ik ben blij dat ik Nederlander ben.
   [I am happy to be Dutch.]
5. Ik identificeer mij met andere Nederlanders.
   [I identify with other Dutch people.]
6. Nederlander-zijn vormt een belangrijk onderdeel van hoe ik mijzelf zie.
   [Being Dutch is an important part of how I see myself.]
7. Ik voel me van nature gewoon Nederlander.
   [Being Dutch just feels natural to me.]
8. Ik vind het aangenaam om Nederlander te zijn.
   [It is pleasant to be Dutch.]
The following measure of group-based guilt was used in all studies reported in this dissertation. Items 1, 2, 5 and 6 are adapted from Branscombe et al. (2004) and Doosje et al. (1998). We complemented these four items with items 3 and 4. In Study 4.1, the latter two items were not yet included. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with these items on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

1. Ik voel me schuldig over de negatieve dingen die de Nederlanders hebben gedaan tegenover...
   [I feel guilty about the negative things Dutch people have done to … .]
2. Ik voel me gemakkelijk schuldig over de slechte uitkomsten voor de … veroorzaakt door de Nederlanders.
   [I can easily feel guilty about the bad outcomes received by … that were brought about by Dutch people]
3. Ik voel me schuldig als ik word geconfronteerd met de slechte dingen die Nederlanders hebben gedaan tegenover …
   [I feel guilty when I am confronted with the negative things the Dutch have done to …]
4. Het gedrag van de Nederlanders tegenover … roept bij mij gemakkelijk gevoelens van schuld op.
   [The behavior of the Dutch toward … makes me easily feel guilty]
5. Ik heb spijt van de dingen die de Nederlanders hebben gedaan tegenover …
   [I feel regret for the things Dutch people have done to… ]
6. Ik betreur de schadelijke handelingen die Nederlanders tegenover … hebben uitgevoerd.
   [I feel regret for the harmful actions of Dutch people toward the …]
Sven Zebel was born in Schiedam, The Netherlands, on October 31, 1975. After receiving his secondary education diploma from the Cals College Atheneum in Nieuwegein in 1994, Sven subscribed for the study of *Maatschappelijk Werk en Dienstverlening* [Social work & service] at the College of Arnhem. When he fulfilled the requirements for the *propadeuse* in 1995, he switched to the study of Psychology at the University of Nijmegen. In April 2000, he received his Master’s Degree in Social Psychology there. From February 2000 to June 2004, he worked part-time at the department of Social Psychology of the University of Amsterdam as a graduate student on his dissertation about the role of identification in group-based guilt. From July 2004 onwards, Sven has been working as a post-doc at the same department of the University of Amsterdam on a grant from the Dutch Organisation of Scientific Research about the role of emotions in perpetrator-victim group relationships.
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