# Journal of Personality and Social Psychology

## How Group-Based Emotions Are Shaped by Collective Emotions: Evidence for Emotional Transfer and Emotional Burden

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# How Group-Based Emotions Are Shaped by Collective Emotions: Evidence for Emotional Transfer and Emotional Burden

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Extensive research has established the pivotal role that group-based emotions play in shaping intergroup processes. The underlying implicit assumption in previous work has been that these emotions reflect what the rest of the group feels (i.e., collective emotions). However, one can experience an emotion in the name of her or his group, which is inconsistent with what the collective feels. The current research investigated this phenomenon of emotional nonconformity. Particularly, we proposed that when a certain emotional reaction is perceived as appropriate, but the collective is perceived as not experiencing this emotion, people would experience stronger levels of group-based emotion, placing their emotional experience farther away from that of the collective. We provided evidence for this process across 2 different emotions: group-based guilt and group-based anger (Studies 1 and 2) and across different intergroup contexts (Israeli–Palestinian relations in Israel, and Black–White relations in the United States). In Studies 3 and 4, we demonstrate that this process is moderated by the perceived appropriateness of the collective emotional response. Studies 4 and 5 further provided evidence for the mechanisms underlying this effect, pointing to a process of emotional burden (i.e., feeling responsible for carrying the emotion in the name of the group) and of emotional transfer (i.e., transferring negative feelings one has toward the ingroup, toward the event itself). This work brings to light processes that were yet to be studied regarding the relationship between group members, their perception of their group, and the emotional processes that connect them.

Keywords: emotions, group-based emotions, emotion regulation, collective emotions, collective action

The German people slumber on in dull, stupid sleep and encourage the fascist criminals. Each wants to be exonerated of guilt, each one continues on his way with the most placid, calm conscience. But he cannot be exonerated; he is guilty, guilty, guilty!
—2nd leaflet of the White Rose

The above quote was a part of a leaflet, distributed by members of the White Rose, a resistance movement in Nazi Germany. The six most recognized members of the group were arrested by the Gestapo in 1943, and one of them was executed for his participation. The story of the White Rose exemplifies that deviant individuals can exist in almost every society, even in the most strict and ruthless ones such as Nazi Germany. These deviant group members serve as an opposition to the opinions of the majority and can also differ from the majority—as the above leaflet suggests—in their emotional experience. It appears that the actions and expressions of the White Rose movement were driven by group-based emotions such as guilt in the name of the German collective and anger toward the Nazi party. However, these emotions were not shared, at least publicly, by most Germans. The emotional experience of the White Rose members raises the following intriguing question: What is the emotional process of individuals who experience group-based emotions in the name of a collective that does not share their emotions? This question is at the heart of the current work.

Emotions serve an important function in defining the relationship between individuals and their groups (Heerdink, Van Kleef, Homan, & Fischer, 2013; Totterdell, Kellett, Teuchmann, & Briner, 1998; Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004). Although the main focus of this relationship has been on how the individual affects the collective (e.g., how an angry individual influences collective anger levels), more recent work examined the opposite direction of how an individual's emotion might be influenced by the collective's behavior (Heerdink et al., 2013; van Kleef, van Doorn, Heerdink, & Koning, 2011). For example, Heerdink and colleagues (2013) showed that a negative group response to individuals who express a deviant emotion may lead to these deviants' feeling of rejection, which in turn influence their participation in cooperative group tasks. In the current research, we expand this line of work by examining emotional reactions that result from perceiving one's group-based emotional reaction as incongruent (or congruent) with the collective experience of emotion.

## Group-Based Emotions and Collective Emotions

The term *group-based emotions* refers to emotions that are dependent on an individual's membership in a particular social group and occur in response to events that have perceived relevance for the group as a whole. Developed by Mackie and Smith, *intergroup emotions theory* suggests that people are capable of

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experiencing emotions such as (but not limited to) fear, anger, and guilt as a result of exposure to events that have relevance to their group (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Smith, 1993). This approach, which integrates social identity theories (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) with appraisal theories of emotions (e.g., Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 1984; Scherer, 2004), offers a new perspective on people's emotional reactions to events they might experience indirectly via the involvement of another group member (Cialdini et al., 1976; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998). In fact, group-based emotions can be elicited if the emotion-eliciting event involves the group as a whole, its representatives, and even ordinary members of the group (Branscombe, Slugoski, & Kappen, 2004; Lickel, Schmader, & Barquissau, 2004).

Group-based emotions are influenced by a combination of two factors: level of identification with the group and unique appraisals of the event. These appraisals are determined both by the group member's personality, values, and interests and by the type of event (Mackie et al., 2000; Smith, 1993). In the current work, we propose that another element that may shape group-based emotions is one's perceptions regarding the collective's emotional experience, namely, the perception of what the majority of group members feel.

*Collective emotions* describe group-based emotions shared and felt simultaneously by a large number of individuals in a certain society (Niedenthal & Brauer, 2012; Stephan & Stephan, 2000; von Scheve & Ismer, in press; for related concepts, see Bar-Tal, 2001; De Rivera, 1992). An assumption in the collective emotion literature is that accumulation of many group-based emotional responses to a societal event can turn into collective emotion. As such, collective emotions differ from group-based emotions, because group-based emotions consider an individual's emotional experience in response to group-related events, whereas collective emotions refer to the collective as the entity that experiences the emotion. In the current research, focusing on *perceptions* of collective emotion, we consider an individual's perception of what most of the people in a certain society feel and examine how such perceptions affect her or his group-based emotions.

Even though no previous research that we are aware of has empirically tested the effects of collective emotions on group-based emotions, the implicit assumption in work that dealt with the notion of collective emotions (or associated terms; Bar-Tal, 2001; De Rivera, 1992) is that group-based emotions and collective emotions tend to coincide (see Bar-Tal et al., 2007). Namely, when a certain collective emotion (e.g., fear, anger) is strong, or when the emotional climate and orientation are leading a group to share a certain emotion, individuals who see themselves as part of that group would be more likely to personally experience that emotion in a group-based form. Stated differently, the assumed relationship between collective emotions and group-based emotions is that of conformity: Group-based emotions correspond to what is perceived to be the collective emotions or the perceived emotional climate. We offer that these relationships are more complicated than described and, in fact, may be determined by processes other than, or even opposite to, conformity.

## From Emotional Conformity to Nonconformity

Durkheim's (1951) concept of conformity is perceived to be one of the most powerful forces driving human behavior (Asch, 1956; Bassili, 2003; Matz & Wood, 2005; Scheff, 1988). Indeed, also in

the emotional domain, people in many cases conform to what they perceive to be the collective emotion (i.e., what most people feel) (Leonard, Moons, Mackie, & Smith, 2011; Moons, Leonard, Mackie, & Smith, 2009). Nevertheless, although in many cases people tend to emotionally conform to the perceived collective emotions, there are situations in which they do not. In these cases, an individual may feel very differently than the rest of the collective (Griskevicius, Goldstein, Mortensen, Cialdini, & Kenrick, 2006; Hornsey & Jetten, 2004). In the current work, we focus on such cases.

Specifically, we argue that in situations in which it is clear to group members what the appropriate emotional reaction should be, and yet they perceive the collective as not experiencing this reaction, their emotional experience would deviate from that of the collective, resulting in emotional nonconformity. This can be a result of two processes. The first has to do with negative emotions the individual might feel toward ingroup members who failed to experience the proper emotion. Such negative feelings may be transferred into increased emotions toward the event. We define this process as *emotional transfer* (see Freud, 1912/1958; Gill & Hoffman, 1982). Participants who are feeling negative emotions toward their own group for not responding properly to a situation (e.g., for not feeling guilty given a guilt-inducing event) are redirecting their emotions from the ingroup to the event (or toward the outgroup). This idea is consistent with the concept of misattribution (Schwarz & Clore, 1983) according to which individuals are misidentifying an emotional experience derived from one source and attributing it to another. In our case, individuals are experiencing negative emotions toward their own group for not expressing an appropriate emotion in response to a certain event, and when asked about their emotional reaction toward the event, they report the aggregated degree of felt emotion from both of these experiences (i.e., emotions directed toward the event and emotions directed toward the ingroup).

Another process that can account for emotional nonconformity is rooted in an individual's sense of obligation to express a specific emotion in order to advance the action associated with it. We define this process as *emotional burden* to indicate that individuals can experience a sense of obligation (i.e., a burden) to express a certain emotion when the collective as a whole fails to express the proper emotion. In those cases, in which individuals realize that other group members do not experience what they perceive to be an appropriate collective response, they may be motivated to increase their emotional response out of a sense of obligation to "correct" for the collective response. In keeping with this logic, the opposite process can also occur: In cases in which participants realize that the collective *does* express the appropriate emotion, they may feel alleviated from the burden of expressing that emotion themselves. Due to the nature of the experience, we assume that the process of emotional burden is especially salient in (but not limited to) situations that involve moral-related issues such as values and group ideologies, which elicit moral emotions of guilt and anger.

The idea that people may be motivated to change their emotional response as a result of their perception regarding the collective emotion coincides well with literature on emotion regulation. The term *emotion regulation* is commonly used to describe a process by which people adjust their emotional responses to fit a specific goal (Gross, 1998, 2007). In our case, the goal of regu-

lating group-based emotions is bridging the gap between what the individual thinks should be the appropriate (collective) emotional response (and associated actions) and what she or he perceives as the actual response of her or his group. If, however, the collective is expressing the appropriate emotion, the individual's need to experience a certain group-based emotion may be alleviated (Maitner, Mackie, & Smith, 2006), which may lead to a downregulation of emotional response. This idea reflects a kind of diffusion of responsibility (Darley & Latane, 1968), with the individual not feeling it necessary to experience the emotion because others are doing so. In a similar vein, individuals may regulate their emotions (e.g., to feel more guilt) as a function of the assumed emotional experiences of the collective (e.g., which does not experience guilt when guilt is appropriate). The choice of emotions as the mode of communication for the individual's increased desire for action is supported by theories that posit that emotions serve social communication purposes (Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Zaki, 2013) as well as theories of emotion contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993; von Scheve & Ismer, in press).

### The Current Research

We examined the process of emotional nonconformity by exposing participants to emotion-eliciting events that have direct relevance to their ingroup and manipulating (or measuring) their perception of collective emotions. We used two different emotions: group-based guilt (Studies 1 and 3–5) and group-based anger (Study 2). We later tried to identify the conditions under which emotional nonconformity, versus emotional conformity, would occur. This was initially done with a correlational study (Study 3), in which we examined whether the assumed appropriateness of the collective emotion determines whether people respond with conformity or nonconformity. Accordingly, in Study 4, we experimentally induced both perceived collective emotion and appropriateness of the collective emotion. Studies 1–4 were conducted in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which is a protracted, extensive, and violent confrontation that gives rise to a range of moral emotions. In Study 5, in order to strengthen the external validity of the hypothesized process and better understand its underlying mechanisms, we examined the existence of the proposed process in the context of race relations in the United States.

### Study 1

The goal of this study was to examine the effect of perceived collective emotion on people's experience of group-based emotion, while focusing on group-based guilt. Group-based guilt has been found to lead to the motivation to repair the damage caused by the behavior of the ingroup by compensating the outgroup or offering an apology (e.g., Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Brown & Cehajic, 2008; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; McGarty et al., 2005). As such, group-based guilt holds the potential of playing a highly constructive role in conflict resolution processes. However, guilt is a less common emotion in long-term conflicts, and groups often tend to avoid it as well as to prevent group members from experiencing it (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006). We predicted that once faced with a guilt-inducing event, in which it is clear that guilt should be experienced, the perception of low

(vs. high) collective guilt would lead to higher levels of group-based guilt.

### Method

**Participants.** Ninety-seven participants (44 male and 45 female, eight missing; age ranging from 17 to 70, $M = 28.64$, $SD = 12.12$) were approached on the train. Participants were asked to fill out a short questionnaire. They were informed that the questionnaire was anonymous, that the data would be used only for research purposes, and that questions were to be answered in the order of their appearance. We omitted two participants from our analysis due to participants' extreme disbelief in the credibility of the story (marked 1 on a scale of 1–6 regarding their belief in the story's credibility) as well as another two participants who did not correctly answer the reading check. In terms of their political orientation, 39.8% identified themselves Rightists, 19.3% as Centrists, and 25.8% as belonging to the political Left, with 15.1% not responding to the question.

**Procedure.** The main appraisal associated with guilt is the acceptance of responsibility for immoral or unjust acts targeted at the outgroup (Wohl et al., 2006). We therefore tried to maximize the sense of collective responsibility in the story, which we assumed would lead to increased levels of guilt. Participants (Jewish Israelis) read a fictional article— ostensibly from a leading online news source in Israel—regarding an Arab girl born in Haifa (a big city in Israel), who was deported from the country despite her need for immediate surgery. The deportation of the girl was a result of a new immigration law, which prohibits Israeli-born Arabs from remaining in Israel after marrying a Palestinian spouse. According to the article, the girl was the daughter of an Israeli–Arab father and a Palestinian mother from Gaza, who has lived in Israel since the birth of her daughter. Due to the new immigration law, the mother and daughter were forced to leave the country, despite the girl's need of medical supervision and additional surgery, both unavailable in Gaza. After reading the article, participants answered a number of factual questions regarding its content in order to confirm that they had indeed read the article.

*Perceived collective guilt.* To manipulate perceptions of collective guilt (high vs. low), the final paragraph of each article described a survey conducted among Jewish–Israeli readers, which assessed their levels of guilt. In the high-collective guilt condition, participants read that according to the survey, 81% of Jewish–Israeli readers felt a certain degree of guilt after reading the article. In the low-collective guilt condition, participants read that according to the survey, 81% of readers did not feel any guilt after reading the article.

**Measure.** In order to assess the level of *group-based guilt*, we used a six-item scale, adapted from Branscombe et al. (2004), and applied it to the current story ("When I think about the deportation of the girl who needs surgery, I feel guilty regarding the behavior of the country"; "I feel personally responsible for the deportation of the girl"; "I think that Israel should feel responsible for the girl's condition if her health worsens in Gaza"; "I think that people should feel responsible for acts committed by the representatives of their country"; "I see the state of Israel as responsible for acts such as the one described in the article, in which Arab citizens are harmed"; "Generally speaking, I tend to feel guilty for acts done to the Palestinians by Israel"; $\alpha = .86$). Answers ranged

from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much so*), indicating the extent to which people agreed with the items. High scores indicated experience of high group-based guilt, whereas low scores indicated low group-based guilt. *Political stance* was measured using one item ("What is your political stance regarding the conflict and foreign policy?"). Answers ranged from 1 (*extreme right*) to 7 (*extreme left*). Finally, *group attachment* was also measured using one item, which was adopted from Roccas, Klar, and Liviatan's (2006) the social group attachment and glorification scale ("I feel a strong connection to other Jews"). Answers ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much so*), indicating the extent to which people agreed with the items.

## Results

Group-based guilt was positively correlated with political stance ($r = .68$, $p < .001$), meaning that the more people reported a left-wing or dovish stance, the more they experienced group-based guilt as a result of the story. Group-based guilt did not correlate with age ($p = .20$) or gender ($p = .25$). We then conducted an independent sample $t$ test, examining the mean differences between our two conditions. As expected, participants in the low-collective guilt condition expressed significantly higher group-based guilt ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.53$) than those in the high-collective guilt condition ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.48$), $t(92) = -2.40$, $p = .01$, $d = -.50$. There were no significant interactions between the manipulation and political orientation ($\beta = -.02$, $p = .86$) and between the manipulation and ingroup attachment ($\beta = .04$, $p = .79$) on group-based guilt, suggesting that the manipulation influenced participants' level of group-based guilt in a similar way, regardless of their political stance and levels of attachment to the group.

## Discussion

The first study suggests that the perception of collective emotion affects levels of group-based emotion in a way opposite to conformity. After reading a guilt-eliciting article, for which the appropriate emotional reaction was very clear, participants who perceived the collective as feeling low levels of guilt reported higher levels of group-based guilt compared with participants who perceived the collective as feeling high levels of guilt. This effect, which is contradictory to processes of conformity, might reflect a need to regulate group-based emotions in reaction to the perceived collective emotion. This was done either as compensation for the lack of collective emotion or as an alleviation of the emotional response when the appropriate collective emotion was expressed. An interaction with either ideology or identification with the group was not found. This might be due to our choice of the emotion-eliciting stimulus, which was designed to induce strong feelings of guilt that might have overridden preexisting political orientations as well as levels of identification with the group. However, it is important to note than in more ambiguous cases, it is possible that this process would be moderated by ideology or identification with the group.

The goal of the next study was to expand our understanding of emotional nonconformity in the context of group-based anger.

## Study 2

In Study 2, we tested whether the emotional nonconformity effect could be replicated with other emotions, such as those directed at the outgroup rather than the ingroup. To that end, we focused on group-based anger (Lerner, Gonzalez, Small, & Fischhoff, 2003; Mackie et al., 2000; Skitka, Bauman, & Mullen, 2004). In the context of long-term conflicts, anger has been shown to affect various outcomes such as blaming the outgroup (Halperin, 2011) and supporting a militant response (Cheung-Blunden & Juang, 2008; Lerner et al., 2003). As the anger-eliciting event, we adopted a speech by the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, which was given as a result of the Palestinian acceptance to the United Nations as an observer state in November 2012. This speech, we anticipated, would aggravate the Israeli public and make the appropriate emotional experience from the group very clear. Similar to the findings from Study 1, we predicted that once faced with a strong anger-inducing event, the perception of low (vs. high) collective anger would lead to higher levels of group-based anger. Given the findings of Study 1, and due to the attempt to create as much of an anger-inducing manipulation as possible, we reasoned that these effects would occur regardless of participants' political stance or levels of attachment with their group.

## Method

**Participants.** Sixty participants (34 men and 24 women, two missing; age ranging from 18 to 71, $M = 30.09$, $SD = 16.23$) were approached on the train in a similar process to that in the first study. We omitted two participants from our analysis due to their extreme disbelief in the credibility of the story as well as another two participants who did not correctly answer the question that served as a reading check. In terms of their political orientation, 49.1% identified themselves as Rightists, 21.1% as Centrists, and 21.2% as belonging to the political Left, with 8.6% not responding to the question.

**Procedure.** Participants read a speech adapted from the one given by the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas following the United Nations approval of Palestine as an observer state in November 2012. Originally, the speech caused strong displays of anger in the Israeli media, which was clearly voiced by several representatives of the Israeli government. In order to verify that the speech would convey a clear sense of the appropriate emotion (i.e., anger), the aspects of the speech that emphasized a sense of injustice, which is the appraisal most commonly attributed to anger, were accentuated (Mackie et al., 2000; Scherer, 1999). We modified the speech on the basis of the assumption that Israelis perceive the unilateral Palestinian strive for independence, as well as their accusations against the Israeli occupation as illegitimate (Kreshner, 2012; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998; Smooha, 1990). During the speech, Abbas describes 45 years of Israeli occupation and Israel's lack of desire to achieve peace, all of which led to the Palestinian request at the United Nations. In addition, Abbas explains that the Palestinian decision to pick the date of November 29 for the vote was a symbolic gesture, as it is the same date on which the United Nations approved the partition of Palestine in 1947, leading to the establishment of the State of Israel. Abbas concludes his speech by claiming that the Palestinian people are determined to proceed with a one-sided process of establishment

of a Palestinian state, despite pressure by Israel and the United States.

***Perceived collective anger.*** As in Study 1, in order to manipulate perceptions of collective anger, the final paragraph described a survey conducted among readers of the article, which assessed their levels of anger. In the high-collective anger condition, the survey showed that 81% of Jewish–Israeli readers felt a certain degree of anger after reading the article. In the low-collective anger condition, the survey showed that 81% of readers did not feel any anger after reading the article. Following this information, participants answered a number of factual questions regarding the article's content in order to confirm that they had indeed read the article.

**Measures.** In order to assess the level of *group-based anger*, we used a five-item scale that was adapted from Mackie et al. (2000) and applied it to the current story ("Mahmoud Abbas's speech makes me angry"; "I am displeased by the Palestinians' one-sided act"; "I feel furious after reading the article"; "The use of the date of the declaration of Israel by the Palestinians is irritating"; "The Palestinian petition to the United Nations is unfair towards Israel"; $\alpha = .87$). Answers ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much so*), indicating the extent to which people agreed with the items. High scores indicate experience of high group-based anger, whereas low scores indicate low group-based anger. *Group attachment*, as well as *political stance* were measured using the items used in the first study.

## Results

Group-based anger was negatively correlated with political stance ($r = -.71$, $p < .001$), indicating that the more people reported right-wing or hawkish views, the more they reported group-based anger as a result of the story. Group-based anger was not correlated with age ($p = -.15$) or gender ($p = .84$). We conducted an independent sample *t* test, examining the mean differences between our two conditions. As expected, participants in the low-collective anger condition expressed significantly higher group-based anger ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.37$) than those in the high-collective anger condition ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.41$), $t(55) = -2.1$, $p = .04$, $d = -.56$. As in Study 1, there were no significant interactions between the manipulation and political orientation ($\beta = .02$, $p = .91$) and between the manipulation and ingroup attachment ($\beta = .06$, $p = .80$) on group-based anger.

## Discussion

As in Study 1, the second study demonstrated that perception of collective emotion has an effect on the level of group-based emotion. After an anger-eliciting event, participants who were led to perceive the collective as feeling low (vs. high) levels of anger reported higher levels of group-based anger. This effect can be explained by the need to either compensate or alleviate anger in accordance with the need to advance the appropriate emotion.

Nevertheless, given the powerful role of conformity in social interactions (Durkheim, 1951; Scheff, 1988), it is unlikely that any exposure to a group-based emotion-eliciting event, combined with information about the collective emotion, would result in emotional nonconformity. Our goal in Study 3 was to further clarify and refine our understanding of emotional nonconformity by in-

vestigating the conditions under which it is likely to occur, and the conditions under which conformity (i.e., the opposite process) would occur.

## Study 3

We propose that one important variable that may affect the choice between conformity and nonconformity is the perception of what should be the appropriate group-based emotion. The appropriateness of a certain emotion is likely to be determined by the relevant emotional norms (Eid & Diener, 2001; Hochschild, 1983), which are norms that guide how people should feel in specific situations. These norms affect both the desirability and the perceived appropriateness of emotions within a certain social context. An important differentiation should be made here between perceptions of collective emotions and perceived appropriateness of collective emotions. *Perceptions of collective emotion* refer to the individual's assumption about what the collective emotion *is*, and *perceived appropriateness of collective emotions* refers to the individual's assumption of what the collective emotions should be. This distinction is parallel to that of descriptive and injunctive norms (Jacobson, Mortensen, & Cialdini, 2011).

Our assumption is that the need to regulate group-based emotions occurs according to the degree of participants' perception regarding the appropriate collective emotion and its relation with the actual collective emotion. Assuming high appropriateness of a certain emotion, in situations in which the individual's experience is incongruent with the collective, she or he would be motivated to up-regulate her or his emotion in a way that compensates for what she or he thinks should have been the appropriate collective's emotional reaction. In the cases in which the collective is expressing strong emotion congruently with the appropriate one, the individual would have less need to up-regulate the emotion and may alleviate her or his emotion response. If, however, the individual does not assume that a certain collective emotion is appropriate in a given context, she or he will be more likely to use the collective emotion as guidance and conform aligning her or his group-based emotion to that of the group. The idea that emotional conformity occurs in situations of ambiguous appropriateness is consistent with other findings that connect ambiguous situations to conformity (Baron, Vandello, & Brunsman, 1996; Levine, Higgins, & Choi, 2000).

Given this reasoning, in Study 3 we examined whether the degree of appropriateness of a certain collective emotion serves as a moderator of the effects shown in Studies 1 and 2. The combined effect of the appropriateness of collective emotions and perception of collective emotion can provide a more complex and accurate illustration of the phenomenon of emotional nonconformity and the situations in which it occurs (vs. does not). Using a correlational design, we therefore presented participants with a guilt-eliciting event and measured their perception of collective emotion, their assessment regarding the appropriateness of the collective emotion, as well as their actual group-based emotional reaction to a group-based guilt-provoking event. We expected that participants who believe that the appropriate response to the event is guilt (high appropriateness) would wish to compensate for the lack of collective emotion (or alleviate in case they perceive the collective emotions as sufficient). Therefore, when perceiving the collective as experiencing low levels of group-based guilt, these

participants would express higher (vs. lower) levels of group-based guilt compared with a situation in which the collective is perceived as feeling high levels of guilt, reflecting emotional nonconformity. In contrast, participants who experience the emotion-eliciting event as one in which it is less clear whether people should feel guilty (low appropriateness) would react in conformity to their perception of the collective emotion.

## Method

**Participants.**  One hundred three Jewish–Israeli participants (54 men and 45 women, four missing; age ranging from 18 to 70, $M = 26.73$, $SD = 11.56$) were approached on the train. We omitted three participants from our analysis due to participants' disbelief in the credibility of the story. In terms of their political orientation, 48% identified themselves as Rightists, 31% as Centrists, and 17% as Leftists, with 4% not responding to the question.

**Procedure.**  Participants read the same fictional article regarding the deportation of the girl as in Study 1. However, although the story included the components that make the appropriate emotional response, people could still vary in their beliefs about the extent to which others in their group *should* experience guilt. We relied on such variations to measure differences in people's sense of appropriateness of emotional response. Moreover, unlike the first and second studies, no statistical data regarding the level of collective guilt was given to the participants. Instead, participants indicated their perception of the extent to which Israeli society, as a collective, experienced collective guilt resulting from the event (hereafter, *perceived collective guilt*). Participants also indicated the level of collective guilt they believe Israelis should have felt (appropriateness of collective guilt). Levels of group-based guilt were then measured as a dependent variable.

**Measures.**  *Perceived collective guilt* was measured using one item ("Do you think Israeli-Jews feel guilty in response to stories such as the one of the Palestinian mother?"). Answers ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*to a very large extent*). High scores indicated perception of high-collective guilt level, whereas low scores indicated perception of low-collective guilt level. *Appropriateness of collective guilt* was measured using the following item, adapted from Eid and Diener (2001): "Do you think Israelis should feel guilty in response to Palestinian stories such as the one of the Palestinian mother?" Answers ranged from 1 (*not agree at all*) to 6 (*agree to a very large extent*). High scores indicated high clarity of emotional appropriateness for collective guilt, whereas low scores indicate low clarity of emotional appropriateness for collective guilt levels (i.e., participants who marked 1 on this scale did not think that guilt was a clearly appropriate response for this event). In order to assess levels of *group-based guilt*, we used the same six-item scale used in Study 1 ($\alpha = .66$). Finally, *group attachment* and *political stance* were measured by the same one-item scales, which were used in the first and second studies.

## Results

Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations among variables are presented in Table 1. Perceived collective guilt was negatively, yet only moderately, correlated with the level of appropriateness of collective guilt ($r = -.30$, $p < .002$). This means that what people think the collective should feel does not corre-

spond to what they estimate the collective actually feels. In addition, degree of appropriateness of collective guilt was positively correlated with both group-based guilt ($r = .42$, $p < .001$) and political stance ($r = .50$, $p < .001$). Unsurprisingly, group-based guilt was also found to be significantly correlated with (leftist) political stance ($r = .46$, $p < .001$), indicating that the more dovish the participants were, the more guilt they felt in response to the story. Attachment, however, did not yield any significant correlation with group-based guilt ($r = -.09$, $p = .38$).

To examine our predictions regarding the combined effect of perceived collective guilt and the appropriateness of collective guilt on levels of group-based guilt, we used the PROCESS macro for moderation analysis (Hayes, 2012; Model 1). The analysis revealed a significant main effect for the appropriateness of collective guilt ($b^* = .45$, $SE = .10$, $t = 4.49$, $p > .001$[1]) on group-based guilt, but no main effect perceived collective guilt on group-based guilt ($b^* = -.01$, $SE = .10$, $t = -.18$, $p = .85$). The analysis further revealed the predicted Perceived Collective Guilt × Appropriateness of Collective Guilt interaction ($b^* = -.20$, $SE = .09$, $t = -2.11$, $p = .03$). To interpret this interaction, we examined the effect of perceived collective guilt on group-based guilt for low appropriateness of collective guilt (1 *SD* below the mean) and for high appropriateness of collective guilt (1 *SD* above the mean; see Figure 1). Although these simple effects did not reach significance, they were both highly consistent with the predicted pattern: When the collective emotion was perceived as appropriate, individuals' levels of group-based guilt was lower when perceiving most of the collective as experiencing guilt ($b^* = -.22$, $SE = .13$, $t = -1.54$, $p = .12$), indicating emotional nonconformity. However, when the collective emotion was not perceived as appropriate, individuals' levels of group-based guilt was higher in line with participants' perception of the collective emotions ($b^* = .17$, $SE = .13$, $t = 1.33$, $p = .18$), indicating conformity.

## Discussion

Study 3 provided initial indications that levels of group-based guilt are determined not only by the perception of collective guilt but also by its interaction with the perception of the collective guilt as appropriate. Participants who experienced the event as one in which guilt should clearly be felt and behaved more in line with our previous conception of emotional nonconformity—an upregulation of group-based guilt in response to perception of low collective guilt. However, participants who perceived the event as one in which guilt should not necessarily be experienced (low appropriateness) reported levels of group-based guilt that coincided more with their perception of collective guilt.

In addition to these results, Study 3 also provides some evidence of participants' implicit assumptions regarding the perception of collective emotion in this current story. The average levels of perceived collective guilt ($M = 4.07$, $SD = .97$) indicate that participants estimated that the collective does feel guilty. Reiterating this idea, the mean levels of group-based guilt in this study ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.06$) was also very similar to those of the high-perceived collective guilt condition in the first study ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.48$), and much lower than levels of guilt expressed by those in the low-perceived collective guilt condition in the first study ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 1.53$). Although these means are not

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[1] Prior to this analysis, we transformed the data into standardized scores.

comparable, they give us an indication of the baseline and the direction of the process. Specifically, they suggest that participants who read the story in Study 1 expected the collective to feel some degree of guilt. We can therefore suspect that what drove the effect in Study 1 was the condition in which the collective was perceived as not feeling guilt—pointing to an up-regulation (rather than alleviation) of group-based emotions.

These findings help understand the situations in which people would emotionally conform to the collective, but more importantly, the situations in which they do *not* conform. However, the simple effects composing the interaction of perceived collective emotion and appropriateness of collective guilt did not reach significance. A possible explanation for the lack of simple effects is that unlike the first two studies in which perception of collective emotion was manipulated, the current results were based on participants' estimations regarding collective emotion. In Study 4, we therefore examined this interaction by manipulating both perception of collective emotion and the appropriateness of collective guilt.

## Study 4

The goal of Study 4 was to provide an experimental examination of the interactive effect discovered in Study 3. We therefore examined this interaction by manipulating, rather than measuring, both perceived collective guilt and the level of guilt appropriateness. In order to manipulate different levels of guilt appropriateness, we pretested two stories that we thought would lead to different degrees of certainty regarding what the collective should feel. Scholars who studied group-based guilt offer two necessary appraisals underlying this group-based emotional experience (e.g., Whol et al., 2006). The two appraisals are acknowledgment of an inequity and the acceptance of group responsibility for the act. We assumed, therefore, that creating situations in which these two appraisals are manipulated will affect the degree of perceived guilt appropriateness.

In a pilot test, involving 72 Jewish–Israeli government and law students at a private college in Israel (33 men and 39 women; age ranging from 19 to 29, $M = 24.16$, $SD = 1.94$), we tested whether varying appraisals of guilt in the scenario used in the previous studies would indeed create different perceptions of appropriateness of collective guilt. Specifically, we changed the sense of collective responsibility for the harm done. In the high-appropriateness condition, participants read the same article as in Studies 1 and 3. In the low-appropriateness condition, the general story of the article remained, with few changes that were directed at decreasing the sense of certainty regarding what should be felt
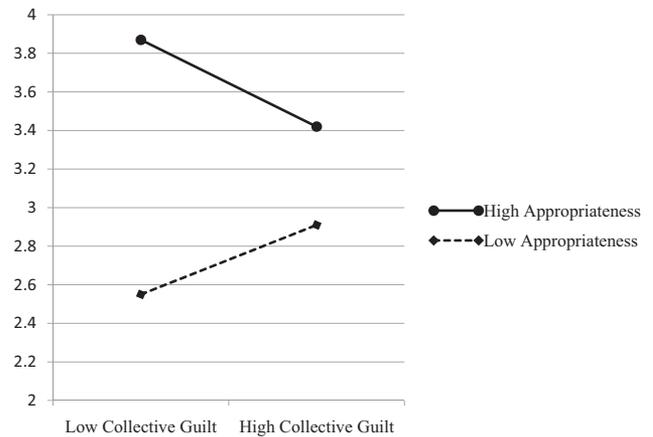


*Figure 1.* Interaction of perceived collective guilt and appropriateness of collective guilt on group-based guilt in Study 3.

by Israeli–Jews. Instead of being described as an Israeli–Arab (i.e., an Israeli citizen), the girl was described as a noncitizen Palestinian from Gaza who received care as a courtesy of the Israeli Government. However, her stay in Israel for the duration of the surgery was allegedly dependent on an official approval by Hamas (The Palestinian organization that has governed Gaza since 2007 and is a highly dominant Palestinian player in the conflict against Israel), who refused to send the request. Participants were randomly assigned to one of these two different stories. After reading the article, we measured the perception of appropriateness of collective guilt as well as group-based guilt with the same measurements as in Study 3. As expected, participants who read the story of the deported Israeli Arab girl perceived collective guilt as significantly more appropriate ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 1.51$) compared with those who read the story of the deported Palestinian girl ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 1.32$), $t(71) = 1.97$, $p = .05$, $d = .46$. We therefore assumed that the two stories could be used as creating two different levels of appropriateness for collective guilt.

In addition to the manipulation of emotional appropriateness, we further manipulated the perceived collective guilt by applying the manipulation that was used in Studies 1 and 2. Our goal was to examine whether participants in the low appropriateness of collective guilt condition would indeed react with conformity, when faced with information about the collective feeling (or lack thereof) of guilt. On the contrary, high appropriateness of collective guilt was expected to lead to results that were similar to what

Table 1
*Correlations Between Group-Based Guilt to Perceived Collective Guilt and Appropriateness of Collective Guilt in Study 3*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Group-based guilt | — | −.13 | .42** | .28** | .13 | −.09 | .46** | 3.25 | 1.06 |
| 2. Perceived collective guilt | −.13 | — | .30** | .00 | −.04 | −.17 | .01 | 4.07 | .97 |
| 3. Appropriateness of collective guilt | .42** | .30** | — | −.17 | −.01 | −.31 | .50** | 3.2 | 1.42 |
| 4. Age | .28** | .00 | .02 | — | .12 | .07 | .17 | 26.73 | 11.56 |
| 5. Gender (+Female) | .13 | −.04 | −.01 | .12 | — | .19 | .12 | 1.44 | .51 |
| 6. Attachment (+high) | −.09 | −.17 | −.31 | .07 | .19 | — | −.30** | 5.08 | 1.79 |
| 7. Political orientation (+Left) | .46** | .01 | .50** | .17 | .12 | −.30** | — | 3.33 | 1.27 |

** $p < .01$.

we defined as emotional nonconformity. These participants, we assumed, would report higher levels of group-based guilt when perceiving the collective as feeling low levels of guilt.

Furthermore, as indicated earlier, we assumed that one potential explanation for the interactive effect between perceived collective emotion and appropriateness of the emotions that was found in Study 3 is the transfer of negative emotions from the ingroup to the event or the outgroup. Therefore, we would expect that a stronger negative emotional response a group member experiences toward her or his own group would result in a stronger group-based emotional response toward the event. We define this process as *emotional transfer*, in which participants transfer their emotion toward their own group to the event or the outgroup (Freud, 1912/1958; Gill & Hoffman, 1982). To better understand this process, we added questions that focused on participants' emotions toward their own group as a result of the exposure to the statistical data of the collective emotion. Finally, in order to understand the downstream effects of the hypothesized process, we further measured participants' support for conciliatory actions such as compensation and apologies of the girl in the story.

## Method

**Participants.**    One hundred eighty-one participants (87 males and 85 females, nine missing; age ranging from 17 to 69, $M = 26.29$, $SD = 9.59$) were included in the study. One hundred sixty-one of them were approached on the train, and the remaining 20 were Interdisciplinary Center government students (Herzliya, Israel). We omitted seven participants from our analysis due to their disbelief in the story's credibility (four participants marked 1 on a 1–7 scale with the question "How much do you believe the story?"), or out-of-range values (over 2.4 $SD$s from the selected dependent variable's mean). Participants' political orientation was as follows: 49.1% identified themselves as Rightists, 22.8% as Centrists, and 21.2% as belonging to the political Left, with 6.9% not responding to the question.

**Procedure.**    Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (perceived levels of collective guilt – high vs. low) × 2 (appropriateness of collective guilt: high vs. low) design and were asked to fill out a short questionnaire. They were given the same instructions as in the previous studies. To manipulate levels of appropriateness of collective guilt, participants read one of the two fictional articles that in the pretest were shown to elicit different levels of guilt appropriateness. In addition, to manipulate perceptions of collective guilt, the final paragraph of each article described two different surveys, which, similarly to Studies 1 and 2, indicated high versus low levels of collective guilt. After reading the article, participants answered a number of factual questions regarding its content in order to confirm that they had indeed read the article.

**Measures.**    To assess levels of *negative emotions toward the ingroup* as a possible mediator, participants were asked to state their emotional response directed at the statistical data of the collective guilt levels ("Reading about the level of guilt that my group expressed according to the survey mentioned in the article makes me feel . . ."). Three negative emotions were measured after this sentence and combined into a negative emotion scale. Guilt ("Stronger guilt in response to my groups emotion"), disappointment ("Disappointed at my group"), and shame ("Ashamed in the

name of my group") ($\alpha = .84$). In addition, in order to assess levels of *group-based guilt* toward the group's actions regarding the girl, we used the same six-item scale used in Study 1 ($\alpha = .83$). To assess participants' *tendency to support conciliatory actions*, we used a four-item scale of questions that were specifically designed to fit the current story: "To what extent would you support a governmental compensation of the mother and her daughter?"; "How much money would you be willing to donate to prevent the girl's deportation?"; "To what extent do you think that Israel should ask the mother for forgiveness for the deportation?"; "The government of Israel should apologize to everyone it is deporting due to the citizenship law"; $\alpha = .79$. All answers ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much so*) except for the question "How much money would you donate?" which ranged from 1 (*0 Israeli Shekels*) to 6 (*50 Israeli Shekels*[2]), indicating to what extent people support conciliatory tendencies.

## Results

**Negative emotions toward the ingroup.**    We first assessed the effect of the Perceived Collective Guilt × Guilt Appropriateness interaction on participants' negative emotions toward the ingroup. The main effect of the guilt appropriateness manipulation on negative emotions toward the ingroup was marginally significant and in the expected direction ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.57$ in the high-guilt appropriateness condition vs. $M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.54$ in the low-guilt appropriateness), $t(168) = 1.84$, $p = .06$, $d = .28$. There was no significant main effects for the perceived collective guilt manipulation on negative emotions toward the ingroup ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 1.42$ in the high collective guilt vs. $M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.68$ in the low-collective guilt condition), $t(168) = -1.18$, $p = .23$.

We then tested the hypothesized Guilt Appropriateness × Perceived Collective Guilt interaction on negative emotions toward the ingroup and found it to be significant, $F(3, 165) = 10.64$, $p = .00$ (see Figure 2). Analyses of the simple effects revealed that when the guilt response was perceived as appropriate, participants experienced more negative emotions toward the ingroup when learning that the collective is feeling low (vs. high) levels of guilt ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.60$ in the low-collective guilt condition; $M = 2.49$, $SD = 1.37$ in the high-collective guilt condition), $t(87) = -3.21$, $p = .00$, $d = -.68$. However, participants in the low-guilt appropriateness condition did not report significant change in their negative emotions toward the ingroup following changes in the perceived collective guilt ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.57$ in the low-collective guilt condition, and $M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.47$ in the high-collective guilt condition), $t(80) = 1.46$, $p = .14$. These results are not surprising, as they demonstrate that negative emotions toward the ingroup are experienced only in situations in which the group is expected to experience high levels of guilt, but the group does not fulfill these expectancies.

**Group-based emotions.**    We then examined the effect of perceived collective emotion and the appropriateness of the emotion on participants' group-based guilt. Analysis of the main effect revealed that participants in the high-guilt appropriateness condition (deportation of Israeli girl) reported higher levels of group-based guilt ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.26$) than those in the low-guilt appropriateness condition ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.27$), $t(173) = 3.54$,
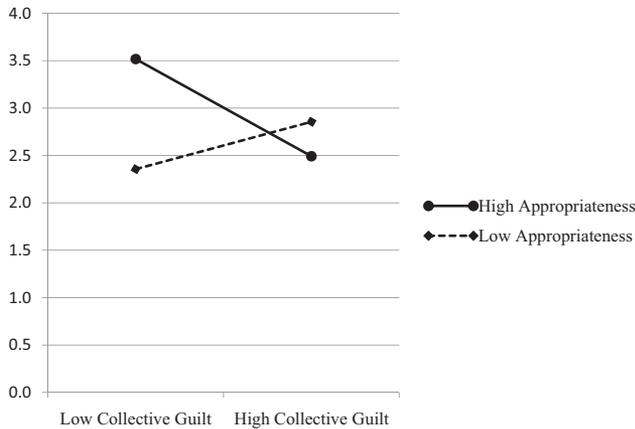
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[2] Equivalent of 13.5$.

*Figure 2.* Interaction of perceived collective guilt and appropriateness of collective guilt on negative emotions toward the ingroup in Study 4.

$p = .00$, $d = .53$. There was no significant main effect for the perceived collective guilt manipulation on group-based guilt ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.34$ in the high-collective guilt vs. $M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.28$ in the low-collective guilt condition), $t(173) = .043$, $p = .96$. These results are a replication of the findings of Study 3, which indicate the perceived collective guilt and appropriateness of guilt are different constructs.

We then tested the hypothesized Guilt Appropriateness × Perceived Collective Guilt interaction on group-based guilt and found it to be significant, $F(3, 170) = 7.19$, $p = .01$ (see Figure 3). Analyses of the simple effects revealed that in the high appropriateness of collective guilt condition (deported Israeli-Arab girl), participants reported higher levels of group-based guilt when perceiving the collective as feeling low (vs. high) levels of guilt ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.11$ in the perceived high-collective guilt condition vs. $M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.38$ in the perceived low-collective guilt condition), $t(89) = -1.80$, $p = .07$, $d = -.38$. This effect, which replicated Studies 1 and 2, indicated the predicted emotional nonconformity response. However, in the low appropriateness of collective guilt condition (Palestinian-deported girl), participants expressed significantly less group-based guilt when learning that the collective felt low (vs. high) levels of guilt (from $M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.31$ in the high-collective guilt condition to $M = 2.49$, $SD = 1.18$ in the low-collective guilt condition), $t(83) = 1.98$, $p = .05$, $d = .43$—this effect exemplifies participants' conformity with their perception of collective guilt levels.

**Support for conciliatory actions.** The main effect of the level of guilt appropriateness manipulation on support for conciliatory actions was significant and in the expected direction ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.34$ in the high-guilt appropriateness condition vs. $M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.37$ in the low-guilt appropriateness condition), $t(167) = 2.84$, $p = .00$, $d = .43$. As expected, there was no significant main effect for the perceived collective guilt manipulation on support for conciliatory actions ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.50$ in the high-collective guilt vs. $M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.27$ in the low-collective guilt condition), $t(167) = .44$, $p = .65$.

We then tested the hypothesized Guilt Appropriateness × Perceived Collective Guilt interaction on support for conciliatory actions and found it to be significant, $F(3, 164) = 9.79$, $p = .00$.

Analyses of the simple effects revealed that in the high-guilt appropriateness condition, participants reported more support for conciliatory actions in the low-perceived collective guilt condition ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.08$) compared with the high-perceived collective guilt condition ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.52$), $t(85) = -1.93$, $p = .05$, $d = -.41$. However, those in the low-guilt appropriateness condition expressed more support for conciliatory actions when learning that the collective is feeling high (vs. low) levels of guilt ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.50$) than in the low-collective guilt condition ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.16$), $t(80) = 2.48$, $p = .02$, $d = .55$.

**Mediation analysis.** In light of these results, we created two mediated models. The first tested whether the interaction effect of Guilt Appropriateness × Perceived Collective Guilt on group-based guilt is mediated by negative emotions toward the ingroup response. We therefore tested the mediated-moderation model, in which negative emotions toward the ingroup mediate the effect of Guilt Appropriateness × Perceived Collective Guilt interaction on group-based guilt. Having already established the interaction effects on both the potential mediator and the outcome variable (group-based guilt), we regressed the latter on the mediating variable (negative emotions to the ingroup), the predictor variables (guilt appropriateness and perceived collective guilt), and their cross-product (the interaction term). To this end, we used Hayes' (2012) PROCESS bootstrapping command with 5,000 iterations (Model 8) to test the indirect effect (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007) of the interaction term on group-based guilt through negative ingroup emotions. The analysis revealed that the interaction term's effect on group-based guilt ($b = -1.01$, $SE = .37$, $t = -2.68$, $p = .00$) was reduced after the negative ingroup emotions scale was considered in the model ($b = -.29$, $SE = .35$, $t = -.84$, $p = .40$) and that the interaction's indirect effect was significant (a × b $= -.60$, $SE = .20$, 95% CI [$-1.05$, $-.24$]). Because zero is not in the 95% confidence interval, the indirect effect is significantly different from zero at $p < .05$, thus establishing mediated moderation.

In the second mediation model, we tested whether the interaction's effect on support for conciliatory actions could be explained by its effect on group-based guilt. Similarly to the first process, we used Hayes' (2012) PROCESS bootstrapping command with
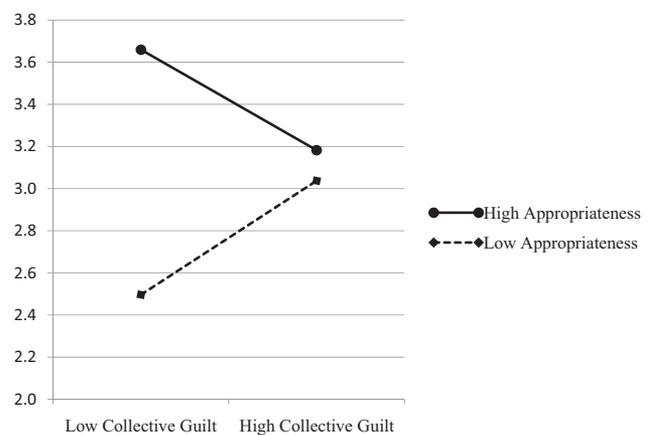


*Figure 3.* Interaction of perceived collective guilt and appropriateness of collective guilt on group-based guilt in Study 4.

5,000 iterations (Model 8) to test the indirect effect (Preacher et al., 2007) of the interaction term on conciliatory actions through group-based guilt in response to the perception of collective guilt levels (controlling for the unique effects of the guilt appropriateness and perceived collective guilt variables). The analysis revealed that the interaction term's effect on support for conciliatory actions ($b = -1.28$, $SE = .41$, $t = -3.12$, $p = .00$) was reduced after group-based guilt was considered in the model ($b = -.65$, $SE = .30$, $t = -2.15$, $p = .03$) and that the interaction's indirect effect was significant (a × b $= -.58$, $SE = .28$, 95% CI [$-1.17$, $-.03$]). Because zero is not in the 95% confidence interval, the indirect effect is significantly different from zero at $p < .05$, thus establishing mediated moderation.

## Discussion

The results of Study 4 suggest that levels of group-based guilt are determined by the interaction of perception of collective guilt and levels of appropriateness of guilt. Participants who read the story of the Israeli-Arab-deported girl (who generated a high sense of guilt appropriateness) reported higher levels of group-based guilt when perceiving the collective as expressing low (vs. high) levels of guilt. This effect is similar to the one found in Study 1, which we defined as emotional nonconformity. However, participants in the group that was led to believe that guilt was not necessarily the appropriate response reported higher levels of group-based guilt when perceiving the collective as feeling high (vs. low) levels of guilt. This exemplifies a conformity effect between participants' group-based emotion and their perception of the collective. It seems that what differentiates between the two processes—conformity and nonconformity—is determined by the level of emotional (in our case guilt) appropriateness. When the emotion-eliciting event does not create a high notion of what is the appropriate emotional response, group members will tend to use the collective emotion as their anchor to what they should feel. If, however, it is clear to participants that a guilt response is appropriate, participants' exposure to low collective guilt would result in higher levels of group-based guilt.

The mediation by negative emotions toward the ingroup, which we term emotional transfer, helps to understand the process that underlies this reaction. When participants expect their collective to react in a certain way and then learned that it did not, they felt negatively toward their group's response. This emotional response mediated the feeling of group-based guilt toward the girl. However, participants in the low-guilt appropriateness condition (Palestinian-deported girl) did not report any change in their level of negative emotions due to exposure to the statistical level of their group and therefore did not experience emotional transfer. Finally, results also show that participants not only changed their emotions regarding the girl, but were also more willing to act as a result of these emotions.

## Study 5

The first goal of Study 5 was to strengthen the external validity of the findings beyond the Israeli–Palestinian context. For that purpose, we examined a similar process within the American society in a context that is not related to a violent political conflict. The second goal was to gain better knowledge on the directionality

of the effects. To that end, we added a control condition that included the emotion-eliciting story but no statistical data regarding the collective emotion. Finally, the third goal of this study was to provide evidence for emotional burden, which is the second process we assumed would underlie emotional nonconformity. Therefore, in addition to examining participants' emotional transfer (mediator of Study 4), we assessed participants' sense of obligation to experience the emotion in order to advance the action that is in line with it. As discussed earlier, when the collective is perceived as not experiencing the appropriate emotion, people may feel obliged to advance the associated actions by expressing stronger emotions. However, this obligation may be alleviated when perceiving the collective as expressing the appropriate emotions.

As in Studies 3 and 4, the emotion on which we decided to focus was group-based guilt and specifically White participants' guilt toward racial inequality. White guilt has been found to serve as a predictor of support for affirmative action programs aimed at promoting African Americans (Iyer et al., 2003; Swim & Miller, 1999). We predicted that once faced with a guilt-inducing event, in which it is clear that group-based guilt should be experienced, the perception of low (vs. high) levels of guilt experienced by other White Americans would lead to higher levels of group-based guilt. We expected this effect to be mediated by what we defined as emotional transfer (negative emotions toward the ingroup that mediate increase in emotions toward the outgroup) and by participants' emotional burden (increased sense of obligation to experience emotions in order to advance action). In addition, and in line with Study 4, we expected group-based guilt to predict support for conciliatory action.

## Method

**Participants.** Ninety American participants (62 men and 28 women, age ranging from 18 to 55, $M = 30.1$, $SD = 9.09$) were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk platform. As part of the description of the study, we requested only White Americans to participate; however, 10 participants (two African Americans, four Latino Americans, and four Asian Americans) marked themselves as non-Whites and were therefore omitted from the analysis. In addition, we omitted one participant who did not correctly answer the reading check, which examined the perception of collective emotion.

**Procedure.** Participants read a *New York Times* article that described the existence of a high school prom that was limited only to White students (Brown, 2013). Some of the details in the original article were changed in order to increase participants' sense of responsibility and group-based guilt. Also, the title of the article was changed from "A Racial Divide Closes as Students Step Up" to "White Prom Still Takes Place in the US." We manipulated perceptions of collective guilt (high vs. low) by adding a similar paragraph at the end of the article as in the previous studies (81% of White participants felt guilt vs. did not feel guilt). In the control condition, participants did not see the final sentence with the statistical data.

**Measure.** To assess levels of *negative emotions towards the ingroup*, we used a similar set of items as in Study 4 ($\alpha = .88$). As these questions measured response to the statistical data, participants in the control condition did not fill these questions. In addition, we added the following item aimed at assessing the

process of emotional burden: "It is important to express emotions in response to articles such as this one in order to advance equality." Answers ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much so*), indicating the extent to which people agreed with the items. In order to assess levels of *group-based guilt*, we used a scale similar to the one used in the previous studies with the addition of one item that directly mentioned guilt: "The behavior of Whites in the article makes me feel guilty" ($\alpha = .91$). Finally, in order to assess participants' *tendency to support conciliatory actions*, we used an adapted version of the four-item scale that was used in Study 4 ($\alpha = .79$). All answers ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much so*) except for the question "How much money would you donate?" which ranged from 1 (*$0*) to 6 (*$10*) using $2 intervals.

## Results

We first examined the effects of the manipulation on the two mediators: negative emotions toward the ingroup and obligation to express emotion to advance equality. As expected, participants in the perceived low-collective guilt condition experienced stronger negative emotions toward the ingroup ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.97$) than those in the high-perceived collective guilt condition ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.61$), $t(53) = -3.85$, $p < .001$, $d = -1.05$. The analysis also revealed an effect of the perceived collective guilt manipulation on participants' sense of obligation to experience guilt, $F(2, 76) = 5.93$, $p < .01$. Pairwise comparisons indicated that participants in the low-perceived collective guilt condition had a stronger sense of obligation to express guilt ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.16$) than participants in the high-perceived collective guilt condition ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.78$, $p = .01$). Comparing the control condition ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.07$) with the two other conditions revealed a significant difference with the high-perceived collective guilt condition ($p < .001$), but not with the low-perceived collective guilt condition ($p = .34$). These findings suggest that participants in the control condition behaved in a similar way to the participants in the low-perceived collective guilt condition.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) on group-based guilt with perceived collective emotion as an independent variable revealed a significant effect, $F(2, 76) = 3.26$, $p = .04$. Replicating the previous studies, pairwise comparisons revealed that participants in the low-perceived collective guilt condition experienced significantly higher levels of group-based guilt ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.58$) than those in the high-perceived collective guilt condition ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.47$, $p = .02$). Comparing the control condition ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.61$) with the two other conditions revealed a significant difference from the high-perceived collective guilt condition ($p = .03$), but not from the low-perceived collective guilt condition ($p = .93$). This suggests that participants' who did not receive an indication regarding collective emotion levels responded in a similar way to those who learned that the collective experienced low levels of guilt.

**Support for conciliatory actions.** An ANOVA on support for conciliatory action with condition as an independent variable revealed a significant effect, $F(2, 76) = 5.49$, $p = .01$. Pairwise comparisons revealed that participants in the low-perceived collective guilt condition reported significantly higher support for conciliatory actions ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.32$) than participants in the high-perceived collective guilt condition ($M = 2.85$, $SD = .99$, $p = .01$). Comparing the control condition ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.48$)

with the two other conditions reveals a significant difference with the high-perceived collective guilt condition ($p = .01$), but not with the low-perceived collective guilt condition ($p = .83$). These findings are consistent with the pattern seen in all of the dependent variables.

**Mediation analysis.** In light of these results, we created a mediation model in which we tested both hypothesized mechanisms—negative emotions toward the ingroup and a sense of obligation to advance equality—as mediators. We used the two experimental conditions (high- vs. low-perceived collective guilt) for the mediation analysis. As indicated earlier, participants in the low-perceived collective guilt condition expressed higher group-based guilt than those in the high-perceived collective guilt condition ($b = .99$, $SE = .42$, $t = 2.36$, $p = .02$), and also more negative feeling toward the ingroup ($b = 1.92$, $SE = .50$, $t = 3.85$, $p < .001$), as well as a stronger sense of obligation to experience guilt ($b = .92$, $SE = .40$, $t = 2.33$, $p = .02$). In addition, negative emotions toward the ingroup was significantly associated with group-based guilt ($b = 1.92$, $SE = .49$, $t = 3.85$, $p < .001$), as was a sense of obligation to advance equality ($b = .94$, $SE = .40$, $t = 2.33$, $p = .02$). Supportive of our mediation hypothesis, the effect of the condition on group-based guilt was reduced after both mediators were entered into the model ($b = -.13$, $SE = .36$, $t = -.37$, $p = .71$). Examining the two indirect effects of the two mediators in the same model revealed that both negative ingroup emotions ($a \times b = .85$, 95% CI [.37, 1.61]) as well as a sense of obligation to experience guilt ($a \times b = .27$, 95% CI [.01, 0.78]) were significant mediators of the effects of collective emotion on group-based guilt.

We next examined whether levels of group-based guilt, mediated by negative emotions and sense of obligation, predicted support for relevant conciliatory actions. To that end, we ran a path analysis that added support for action as the ultimate outcome of the mediation model reported previously (see Figure 4). This path model fitted the data very well ($\chi^2 = 1.90$, $p = .39$, comparative fit index [CFI] = 1.00, root-mean-square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .03). When adding the direct path from condition to group-based guilt, the path itself was nonsignificant ($p = .70$), and the model only slightly changed ($\chi^2 = 1.76$, $p = .19$). An alternative model specifying both group-based guilt and conciliatory actions as two independent ultimate outcomes fit the data poorly ($\chi^2 = 11.40$, CFI = 0.91, RMSEA = .30).
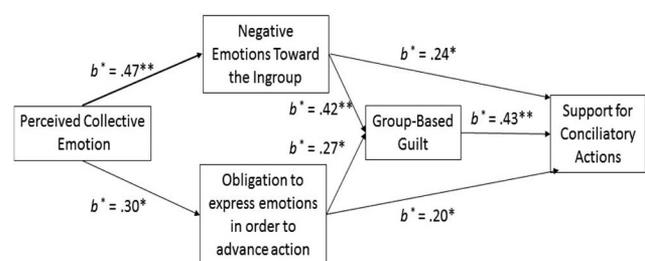


*Figure 4.* Path model linking perceived collective emotions to support for action via group-based guilt, which is mediated by negative emotions and a sense of obligation in Study 5.

## Discussion

In the fifth study, we examined the process of emotional nonconformity among White Americans in the context of racial inequality in the United States. Results were consistent with previous studies. After exposing White American participants to a guilt-inducing article, participants who were led to perceive the collective as feeling low (vs. high) levels of guilt reported higher levels of group-based guilt. An important addition to the current study was an "empty" control condition. In this condition, participants were not given any information regarding the level of collective emotion in response to the article. Results indicate that participants in this condition expressed similar levels of guilt as those in the low-perceived collective guilt condition, suggesting that White participants' implicit assumption of the level of collective emotion was that the majority of White Americans are not feeling high levels of guilt in response to the article.

The response of participants in the control condition can also shed light on the direction of the process. Given that levels of group-based guilt in the control condition were similar to those in the low-collective guilt condition, we can assume that learning that the collective experienced high levels of guilt alleviated participants' motivation to experience group-based guilt (resulting in lower levels of guilt). Stated differently, participants down-regulated their levels of guilt after learning that the collective already feels guilty—a process highly similar to that of diffusion of responsibility (Darley & Latane, 1968). However, this does not necessarily imply that the opposite process is not possible as well. We suggest that in cases in which participants' baseline assumption is that the collective is feeling guilt, contradictory information (i.e., the collective is *not* feeling guilt) should lead to the compensation of group-based emotions. Results from Study 3 support this idea. Participants in Study 3 estimated that the collective emotion is that of guilt (rather than not guilt). This implies that the process in Study 1 was opposite to that of Study 5 and that indeed this is a two-directional process. This idea should be further examined in future studies.

In addition, the current study sheds light on some of the mediating factors that underlie the process of emotional nonconformity. Two distinct variables were found to mediate the change in group-based emotion levels as response to the perception of the collective. The first, as already demonstrated in Study 4, is participants' emotional transfer, which is demonstrated by their experience of negative emotions toward the ingroup. The second mediator is degree of emotional burden in response to the story, demonstrated by participants' sense of obligation to experience guilt in order to advance equality. When conducting a mediation analysis of both mediators on group-based emotions, we found that each of these mediators accounts for unique variance of group-based emotions. Finally, this model was extended to predict support for conciliatory actions.

## General Discussion

In this research, we examined how the perception of collective emotion affects the individual's group-based emotional experience. We did this by eliciting participants' group-based emotions and later measuring or manipulating their perception of collective emotions. The results of these studies indicated two opposite processes: conformity (the tendency to report higher group-based emotions in response to high-perceived collective emotions) and nonconformity (the tendency to report higher group-based emotions in response to low-collective emotions). The feasibility of each of these processes was moderated by participants' degree of appropriateness of the collective emotional response.

Conformity is perceived to be one of the most powerful forces of human behavior (Asch, 1956; Moscovici, 1985; Sherif, 1936). However, conformity is not the only force influencing group members' motivation in relation to their group. We know that in every group, even in the most ruthless and strict of societies, there is a deviant subgroup that holds different thoughts and emotions than the general collective. This subgroup may try to leave or disassociate itself from the group; however, it may also remain a part of it and strive to change some of the group's values, attitudes, or behaviors. We often see that changes within groups are initiated by small, "deviant" subgroups. Therefore, viewing conformity as the only process describing the relationship between group members and their group is an oversimplification of a much more complex social dynamic.

Connecting these ideas to the realm of emotions, it has been previously assumed that group-based emotions (which are experienced at the individual level) will correspond to collective emotions (which are experienced at the group level), reflecting only the process of conformity. According to this assumption, when a collective feels a certain emotion, a group member will be driven to feel the same way. In this article, we argued and empirically demonstrated that this is not always the case. In cases in which an emotional response is perceived appropriate by the individual, but the collective response is incongruent with the individual group-based emotion, we found evidence for the process of *emotional nonconformity*. This process results in a stronger group-based emotion when perceiving the collective as not sharing the expected or appropriate emotions, compared with when the collective is perceived to share the expected or appropriate emotional experience.

We further uncovered the mechanisms that underlie emotional nonconformity. One such mechanism can be described as emotional transfer (Freud, 1912/1958; Gill & Hoffman, 1982). Participants are angry at their own group for not responding properly to a situation (or feeling guilty due to their group's response) and redirect their emotions from the ingroup to the outgroup or the event. This description resonates well with the idea of misattribution in which individuals have difficulty with identifying the source of an experience and misattributing it to another experience (Schwarz & Clore, 1983). In line with this explanation, when asked, participants are actually reporting an aggregated emotional response, which is composed of the emotional reaction to the event itself, coupled with the emotional reaction to the perceived collective response to that event. It is important to note, however, that the opposite direction may also occur, in which participants initially experience anger toward the outgroup and only later intensify their emotions toward their own group for not expressing the appropriate emotion.

The second underlying process that may lead to the regulation of group-based emotions is the change in participants' obligation to express emotions in order to advance a relevant action. We defined this process as emotional burden. Participants' who perceived the collective as experiencing guilt expressed less need to experience emotions in order to advance action relative to those who per-

ceived the collective as not experiencing guilt. Thus, when the collective fails to experience the emotions that are appropriate for the event, individuals seem to take on the burden of feeling that very emotion. This process of emotional burden may provide one explanation for collective action. The intensified emotional experience, which is a result of the low-perceived collective emotion, may lead minorities to increase their emotional response and to act. This idea compliments models in which emotions are considered as a motivational source for collective action (Van Zomeren et al., 2008).

In addition to these two mediators, a few other possible mechanisms should be examined in future research. One such process has to do with people's concern for the group's image. An Israeli reading a guilt-inducing event may be concerned about Israel's image in the international community, and therefore be motivated to express higher levels of group-based guilt in order to maintain an image of a moral country. A second possible explanation is the need to self-justify the emotion evoked at the individual level and the lack of willingness or ability to regulate it accordingly with the group. Here, the motivation is neither to change the group nor concern about its image, but rather the desire (or lack of ability) not to change one's mind (Higgins, 1987; Lecky, 1945). These possible explanations are not necessarily competing with the explanations we investigated in this research, but rather may all serve as possible mechanisms for the phenomenon.

## Implications and Future Directions

Expanding our knowledge on the process of emotional nonconformity is important for understanding the role of emotions in intragroup as well as intergroup processes. Our findings suggest that the motivation to experience group-based emotions depends not only on the response to a specific situation but also on the individual's goals, which stem from her or his relationship with her or his group. Indeed, group members may be willing to experience certain group-based emotions, even if they are unpleasant and even if they are different from what the rest of the group feels, in order to advance emotional-related goals. Such a process can have implications for a variety of intragroup processes, such as distancing oneself from the group, and on intergroup processes, such as those documented in this work (e.g., greater support for action in favor of the outgroup). Although this work sheds some light on situations in which the process occurs, more research is needed in order to understand the use of emotions in intra- and intergroup dynamics.

Related to the concept of group-based emotions as a social reference, the idea of emotional nonconformity can also shed light on the creation and operation of deviances and its effect on social change. Vast research has been done on the response of groups to deviant individuals (Hornsey & Imani, 2004; Hornsey, Trembath, & Gunthorpe, 2004)—but less work has been devoted to understanding the experience of group members while they become deviants. On the one hand, it is often clear to these deviant individuals that the emotions they experience are different from what they perceive to be the collective emotions and that these collective emotions are very hard to influence. On the other hand, these deviant individuals may want to remain a part of their group and even change it to fit their own goals and needs.

The concept of emotional nonconformity can further advance the existing knowledge of how social changes are formed and communicated. We know that collective action is a dual process that involves both cognitions and group-based emotions (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). However, we know less about the generation of the emotional process that leads group members to shift their views to the point of even turning against their own group. Our data suggest that this process is empowered by the combination of perceived emotional appropriateness, on the one hand, and the perception of collective emotions, on the other hand.

Emotional nonconformity may motivate the individual to act; however, its consequences on the individual who deviates from her or his group are still unknown. On the one hand, emotional nonconformity can be experienced by the individual as ego depleting and require large quantities of energy (Baumeister, 2002). This may be especially true for negative emotions like guilt and fear. On the other hand, it can be used as internal motivation for the individual and as an internal source of energy. One such example is activists who spend daily efforts in collective action aimed at advancing their groups. These activists are not discouraged by constant failures but use their perceived minority status as a source of internal motivation and justification. Future work can shed light on the internal process that emotional deviates go through.

Finally, the idea of emotional nonconformity is also relevant to illuminating processes related to interpersonal relations. A specific case in which it may be salient is dyadic interactions. In cases in which both members of the dyad have a mutual goal, but one person expresses an emotion that is perceived by the other as minimizing the chance to achieve a specific goal, we can assume a similar process of emotional nonconformity. For example, parents often experience disagreement in their child's rearing (Block, Block, & Morrison, 1981; Jouriles et al., 1991). This often leads one parent to try and compensate for what is perceived to be an inappropriate response by the other parent. These ideas should also be examined in future work.

## Limitations

The current work is an initial step in understanding the motivations and perceptions that lead individuals to experience emotions that are either congruent or incongruent with the emotions experienced by the rest of their group. Several limitations in the current framework can be further investigated in future studies. Most importantly, different group characteristics can affect the way people respond to collective emotions. For example, aspects such as group size and related power can impact the way people respond to events and to their ingroup. In the current project, all the situations that were presented to participants involved high-powered groups experiencing moral emotions such as guilt and anger. These situations may be particularly influenced by the individual sense of responsibility to express a certain emotion. Hence, it could be argued that in low-power situations or with emotions like hope or fear, the relationship between collective and group-based emotions would be less affected by the willingness to up-regulate emotions that are not experienced by the collective. This moderating element can be productively pursued in future research.

In addition, future studies should consider some additional dispositional variables that may serve as moderating factors. We did not find an interaction with ideology or identification—an interaction that is certainly plausible from a theoretical point of view. We believe that because of the magnitude of the manipulations we used in these studies, which left little room for hesitations regarding the proper emotional response, an interaction with identification or ideology might have been less likely to occur. Moreover, at least with respect to Studies 1–4, which were conducted in a society involved in intractable conflict, levels of cohesiveness within that society are generally high, rendering the probability of getting such interaction rather low. However, there is no reason to assume that this is always the case. For example, it may be possible that in some situations in which the emotional stimuli are less clear, the differentiation between emotional nonconformity and conformity will be moderated by ideological factors. Additionally, various motivations regarding the individual's relationship with the group may affect the nature of the emotional process documented in this work. For example, we can assume that nonconformists who are motivated to not conform to their group may be more susceptible to experience emotional nonconformity than individuals who are highly motivated to conform to their group (Nail, MacDonald, & Levy, 2000). All of these factors can play a part in determining the emotional process group members will experience when exposed to the collective emotion.

In addition to expanding our work to other groups and emotions, the type of exposure to collective emotion may also affect the nature of the investigated process. Participants in our studies learned about the collective emotion through (alleged) data but did not experience the collective emotional response firsthand. Group-based emotion-eliciting events often occur in the presence of other group members, either during the actual event or after it. Therefore, the process of emotional nonconformity can also be examined when participants are exposed to the collective response during the situations itself. This may increase the tendency to conform and in turn decrease the probability for nonconformity to take place.

## Conclusion

Our work demonstrates that group members regulate their group-based emotions as a function of the perceived collective emotion and that this regulation is not always in the direction of conformity. Depending on what people perceive as the appropriate collective emotion, group members may be willing to turn against their group and increase their group-based emotions, when they believe the group should, but does not, feel these same emotions. This process is important in explaining counterconformity phenomena such as social changes and deviance, and also illuminates the special function of group-based emotions, which seem to serve as a reference between the individual and the group.

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