

# Dealing with Past Colonial Conflicts: How Perceived Characteristics of the Victimized Outgroup Can Influence the Experience of Group-Based Guilt

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# Dealing with Past Colonial Conflicts: How Perceived Characteristics of the Victimized Outgroup Can Influence the Experience of Group-Based Guilt

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An examination of potential outgroup-focused predictors of group-based guilt relating to past colonial conflicts involving Portugal and the Netherlands, specifically, the role of the perceptions of the ingroup towards the victimized outgroup, as well as on outgroup identification and meta-perceptions (i.e. the ingroup's beliefs regarding the outgroup's perceptions of it). Using Structural Equation Modeling in a Portuguese sample ( $N = 178$ ) and a Dutch sample ( $N = 157$ ), we found that the experience of group-based guilt due to colonial conflicts can be positively predicted by outgroup perceptions and outgroup identification (Dutch sample only). Meta-perceptions were a negative predictor of group-based guilt (Dutch sample only). Furthermore, our results show that group-based guilt is positively associated with compensatory behavioral intentions and perceived importance of remembering past colonial conflicts. Results point to the important role of outgroup-focused variables in shaping group-based guilt experiences relating to past conflicts between groups. The findings suggest possible avenues of further research and ways to improve intergroup relations following conflict.

Countries with a colonial past—like those involved in other events, such as wars and genocide, where morality comes into play—have been confronted with a need to readdress the way the colonial period is portrayed. This is also the case for Portugal and the Netherlands, which possessed colonies and were involved in conflicts there.

For example, white Australians officially acknowledged the misdeeds of their ancestors when Prime Minister Kevin Rudd publicly apologized in February 2008:

We apologize especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry. (Johnston 2008)

This need to readdress past misdeeds of the colonial period can influence the experience of group-based guilt. Guilt is a self-conscious emotion, whereby individuals acknowledge they have behaved in a wrongful way towards others and try to correct their misdeeds (Branscombe and Doosje 2004; Iyer, Leach, and Crosby 2003). However, as guilt is not a very pleasant emotion, it is more common that people and nations find excuses for their behavior. In the present paper, we are interested in factors that can help override this inclination to refrain from seriously considering the past actions of the group.

We investigate the Portuguese Colonial War (Study 1) and the Dutch conflict with Indonesia (Study 2) as events with the potential to induce group-based guilt, focusing specifically on outgroup identification, and examining the ingroup's perceptions and meta-perceptions (i.e. the ingroup's beliefs regarding the outgroup's perceptions of it)

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of the outgroup and their relation with group-based guilt. We are also interested in the relationship between group-based guilt and the perceived importance of remembering the negative aspects of the colonial past.

According to Intergroup Emotions Theory (Smith 1993), people do not experience emotions only as individuals; they can feel them as group members too, though not through direct transposition. Thus, it is possible for people to feel guilt as a group member without having committed transgressions themselves, via the association of the individual with the ingroup (Doosje et al. 1998). According to Branscombe, Doosje, and McGarty (2003), there are two necessary conditions for individuals to feel group-based guilt: recognizing their belonging to the group (even if this identification is not strong) and holding the ingroup accountable for a violation.

This guilt by association, which we label group-based guilt, has been widely researched (for an overview see Branscombe and Doosje 2004), linking it with several ingroup-focused constructs, such as ingroup identification (Doosje et al. 1998; Iyer, Leach, and Crosby 2003; Rensmann 2004; Zebel 2005), and exonerating cognitions (Lickel, Schmader, and Barquissau 2004; Roccas, Klar, and Liviatan 2006). This paper add new dimensions to the research on group-based guilt by highlighting *outgroup*-focused variables as potential predictors of group-based guilt.

At the interpersonal level, it has been argued that the experience of guilt may be affected by others. For example, Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton (1994) state that guilt involves a sense of communal bonds with significant others and that the experience of guilt will be stronger when the others are relevant for the self. Baumeister and colleagues (1994) argue that this happens because showing guilt is a manner in which individuals regulate behavior with the purpose of strengthening and preserving social relationships. We apply this line of reasoning to the intergroup level. The main argument we make in this article is that at the group level, perceptions of a communal bond and relatedness between the perpetrator ingroup and the victim outgroup will lead to higher levels of group-based guilt in relation to colonial conflicts.

We hypothesize that if the ingroup does not value the outgroup, low levels of group-based guilt will be experienced. However, if the ingroup values its relations with the outgroup, the sense of a shared relationship is heightened and, therefore, feelings of group-based guilt should arise if there is a transgression of moral standards, as it is the case in the Portuguese and Dutch contexts for the period we are discussing. Thus, if there is a sense of relatedness and a bond linking the ingroup and the outgroup, the door is open for the experience of group-based guilt.

In a limited number of studies, other authors have shown ways in which outgroups can influence the experience of group-based guilt (Iyer, Leach, and Pedersen 2004; Zebel, Doosje, and Spears 2004, 2009a, 2009b). Zebel, Doosje, and Spears (2009b) show that when the source of information about the misdeeds of the ingroup is a victimized outgroup, highly identified individuals feel higher levels of group-based guilt. Taking the perspective of the outgroup has also proved to induce higher levels of group-based guilt among members of the ingroup (Zebel, Doosje, and Spears 2009a).

These findings suggest that outgroup-focused variables can influence the way group-based guilt is experienced. In our studies, we propose new outgroup-focused variables that might affect the way individuals feel guilt about past mistreatment of another group. Specifically, we investigate the role of outgroup identification and the ingroup's perceptions and meta-perceptions of the outgroup as potential predictors of group-based guilt.

In terms of outgroup identification and perceptions of the ingroup, we argue that the more people identify with the outgroup and have a positive view of it, the more they are likely to experience high levels of group-based guilt over past misdeeds of their ingroup towards the outgroup. These two concepts differ in their group/self focus, in the sense that outgroup perceptions are related to group-based beliefs about the outgroup while outgroup identification is a self-focused measure of individual identification with the outgroup. As such, we expect these variables to have slightly different patterns of correlation with the other variables studied, though we expect them both to correlate positively with group-based guilt.

We conceptualize outgroup perceptions and outgroup identification as *bonding variables*, because we believe outgroup perceptions and outgroup identification are two partially independent dimensions of a single higher-order concept, a communal bond with the outgroup. Based on this assumption, we expect these variables to reflect a sense of relatedness and a concern with the victimized group and we propose that they are both linked positively with group-based guilt.

We also argue that these bonding variables go beyond concepts such as taking the outgroup perspective (Zebel, Doosje, and Spears 2009a) or empathy towards the outgroup (Stephan and Finley 1999), because we believe that, though an individual can take the perspective of an outgroup or feel empathy in relation to the suffering of an outgroup, it is not necessarily true that this same individual will identify with the outgroup or have a positive view of it, and therefore, the variables included in the present study (i.e. outgroup perceptions and outgroup identification) may have different outcomes from the other variables mentioned above, regarding group-based guilt and its consequences. Our conceptualization of outgroup perceptions and outgroup identification as two partially independent dimensions of a higher order concept (i.e. bonding variables) will also allow for different patterns of relations between variables, since we expect that some people will not necessarily identify with the outgroup even though have positive perceptions of it.

We expect meta-perceptions to play a role in the experience of group-based guilt. Meta-perceptions refer to the ingroup's beliefs about the way it is perceived by the outgroup (Vorauer, Main, and O'Connell 1998). Meta-perceptions are thus activated through evaluative concerns that appear during intergroup interaction and can change according to the outgroup involved (Bizman and Yinon 2003; Vorauer et al. 2000).

We hypothesize that meta-perceptions are negatively correlated with group-based guilt. This negative association might occur because individuals who think the outgroup has a negative perception of the ingroup relate this to their own moral concerns about the misdeeds of the ingroup. When people believe the outgroup holds a negative view of the ingroup, this could mean that the outgroup holds the ingroup responsible for negative acts during the colonial

conflicts. These concerns with the moral standing of the ingroup in relation to the victimized outgroup are expected to lead to strong feelings of group-based guilt. Therefore, we predict a negative association between meta-perceptions and group-based guilt.

We also investigate the social implications of group-based guilt. Group-based guilt is a powerful emotion with social consequences, such as a desire to repair harm, seek forgiveness, and change future behavior. At the intergroup level, it has been found that group-based guilt is associated with the desire to compensate the victimized outgroup and apologize to it (Barkan 2000; Doosje et al. 1998; Lickel, Schmader, and Barquissau 2004; Mallett and Swim 2004).

Additionally, we explore the link between group-based guilt and perceived importance of remembering the past misdeeds of the ingroup. Are people in favor of remembering the negative aspects of the conflicts of Portuguese and Dutch colonialism as a means of reestablishing balance in relations between the ingroup and the outgroup?

We suggest that individuals who feel higher levels of group-based guilt about the ingroup's misdeeds will have a stronger desire to discuss and receive more negative information about these events, so these individuals are more willing to remember the negative aspects of the colonial period. In this way, they demonstrate that they are prepared to acknowledge the negative actions of the past and to deal with their feelings of group-based guilt. They are in favor of opening the way for an open public discussion and, possibly, the re-construction and improvement of relations between the ingroup and the outgroup.

The main hypotheses of focus in our studies are:

- H1: Outgroup perceptions are related positively with group-based guilt.
- H2: Outgroup identification is related positively with group-based guilt.
- H3: Meta-perceptions are negatively related with group-based guilt.
- H4: Group-based guilt predicts compensatory behavioral intentions and perceived importance of remembering negative information about past events.

We also explored the potential relationships of the three predictors (outgroup perceptions, outgroup identification, meta-perceptions) with compensatory behavioral intentions.

We opted to use two cases of colonization and two samples—Portugal and the Netherlands—because we believe the proposed theoretical model can work in different samples with a past of colonial conflicts. Nevertheless, we expected differences between the samples regarding the strength of the relationships between variables. Specifically, we hypothesized that the associations between the variables would, in general, be stronger in the Dutch sample, because, in general, the Netherlands has more positive group relations with the former colony.

It is worth noting that the Portuguese Colonial War happened approximately thirty-five years ago and the Dutch conflict in Indonesia approximately sixty years ago. That difference might also lead to stronger relationships among variables in the Dutch sample, since it is easier to acknowledge misdeeds that took place longer ago (Barkan 2000).

### 1. Study 1: Portugal

In Study 1 we analyze the levels of group-based guilt felt by Portuguese people about the Portuguese colonial past. From 1961 to 1974 there were wars of independence in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, which had negative consequences for both the former colonies and Portuguese society. This colonial conflict occurred when Portugal was under the New State dictatorship and resulted from the government's unwillingness to grant independence at a time when most European colonizers were recognizing the right of self-determination and the United Nations were condemning colonization worldwide.

Figueiredo, Valentim, and Doosje (forthcoming) report that Portuguese individuals who identify with the outgroup make less use of exonerating cognitions for the misbehavior of the ingroup and are more willing to compensate the outgroup. In this study, we take that result further and analyze how outgroup identification, outgroup perceptions, and meta-perceptions relate to group-based guilt. Links between group-based guilt, compensatory behavioral intentions and

perceived importance of remembering negative aspects of this period are also analyzed.

### 1.1. Method

#### *Participants*

One hundred seventy-eight Portuguese university students participated in this study, without reward or for course credits. Eight respondents were excluded from analysis (six not Portuguese, two due to missing data). Of the remaining 170 participants, 91.8 percent were women (age  $M = 20$  years,  $SD = 4.19$ ; range 18–50).

#### *Design*

The study used a correlational design: predictors and dependent variables regarding the Portuguese colonial period were assessed using a questionnaire.

#### *Procedure*

The questionnaire was administered at the end of a class and participants took about half an hour to complete it. It began by explaining that the study aimed to examine the perceptions people have about the Portuguese colonial period and about the Portuguese Colonial War. Demographic variables such as age, gender, and nationality of the participants and their parents were covered in the questionnaire.

#### *Predictor variables*

*Outgroup perceptions.* We measured Portuguese perceptions of Africans from the former colonies using a bipolar scale with nine items, partially derived from Valentim (2003) and ranging from 1 (*negative attribute*) to 7 (*positive attribute*). Examples of items include: “In general, I think the Portuguese think the Africans are unkind/kind”; “negative/positive”; “narrow-minded/open-minded”; “unfriendly/friendly”. The nine items comprised a very reliable scale ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

*Outgroup identification.* Participants were asked to indicate their level of identification with the outgroup by means of one item (“I identify with Africans from the former colonies”), measured on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much).

*Meta-perceptions.* To measure Portuguese meta-perceptions concerning Africans from the former colonies, the same nine items used for outgroup perceptions were applied, restructured to read: “In general, I think the Africans think the Portuguese are unkind/kind,” etc. ( $\alpha = .86$ ), measured using the same seven-point scale.

*Emotion*

*Group-based guilt.* Feelings of group-based guilt were assessed using the four items of the scale introduced by Doosje et al. (1998), adapted to capture feelings of guilt about the Portuguese Colonial War in Africa ( $\alpha = .88$ ) on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Examples of items used are: “I feel guilty about the negative actions of the Portuguese toward people from the former African colonies during the Colonial War” and “I can easily feel guilty about the negative consequences of Portuguese actions during the Colonial War.”

*Consequences*

*Compensation.* To capture compensatory behavioral intentions, four items derived from Doosje and colleagues (1998) were used ( $\alpha = .83$ ), with a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Examples include: “I think the Portuguese owe something to the people from the former colonies because of the things the Portuguese did” and “I think I should make more effort to improve the position of people from the former colonies because of the things the Portuguese did.”

*Perceived importance of remembering.* Participants were then asked about the importance of remembering the positive and negative aspects of the colonial period in the media and the school curriculum, using four items with a seven-point scale. The negative items were subtracted from the positive items so as to create a composite measure for perceived importance of remembering *negative* aspects of the colonial conflict ( $\alpha = .79$ ), with possible values ranging from -7 to +7. Examples include: “How important do you think it is for the media to give attention to the positive aspects of the Portuguese colonial period?” (reverse coded) and “How important do you think it is for the school curriculum to give attention to the negative aspects of the Portuguese colonial period?”

**1.2. Results**

**1.2.1. Correlations**

The means and standard deviations of the constructs are presented in Table 1, their correlations in Table 2. Table 1 shows that the Portuguese in general, present outgroup perceptions, outgroup identification, and meta-perceptions significantly below the mid-point of the scale, suggesting that they hold less than positive views of Africans from the former colonies. For group-based guilt the Portuguese also present an average score significantly below the mid-point of the scale; this is unsurprising because most research about group-based guilt shows it below the mid-point of the scale (Doosje et al. 2004).

**Table 1: Means, standard deviations, and independent sample t-tests for the Portuguese and Dutch samples**

	Portuguese sample		Dutch sample		F(1, 310)	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Outgroup perceptions	3.72*	.97	4.58*	.74	74.10	.00
Outgroup identification	3.49*	1.19	2.50*	1.24	51.31	.00
Meta-perceptions	3.86*	.87	4.22*	.73	14.99	.00
Group-based guilt	3.44*	1.41	3.64*	1.09	1.94	.17
Compensatory behavioral intentions	4.30*	1.03	2.81*	1.03	162.72	.00
Importance of remembering negative aspects	.41*	1.33	.90*	1.44	9.64	.00

\* Means significantly different from the mid-point of the scale ( $p < .05$ ).

As expected, outgroup perceptions correlate significantly with outgroup identification, meta-perceptions, group-based guilt, and compensatory behavioral intentions (see Table 2). Outgroup identification also correlates significantly and positively with compensatory behavioral intentions, but, unexpectedly it does not correlate significantly with group-based guilt or with meta-perceptions. Perceptions of the outgroup, outgroup identification, and meta-perceptions are not significantly correlated with perceived importance of remembering the negative aspects of the past.

**Table 2: Correlations (r) and p values (between brackets) among the variables in the Portuguese (Port.) and the Dutch samples**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Outgroup perceptions	Dutch Portuguese	.12 (.16)	.64 (.00)*	.07 (.44)	.00 (.96)	.03 (.70)
2. Outgroup identification	.16 (.04)*	–	.17 (.05)*	.23 (.01)*	.24 (.01)*	.05 (.58)
3. Meta-perceptions	.53 (.00)*	.03 (.70)	–	-.16 (.06)	-.22 (.01)*	-.18 (.04)*
4. Group-based guilt	.19 (.01)*	.05 (.52)	.05 (.56)	–	.54 (.00)*	.17 (.05)*
5. Compensation	.18 (.02)*	.18 (.02)*	.04 (.57)	.38 (.00)*	–	.11 (.20)
6. Importance of remembering negative aspects	.14 (.08)	.03 (.68)	.10 (.19)	.18 (.02)*	.19 (.02)*	–

\*p < .05

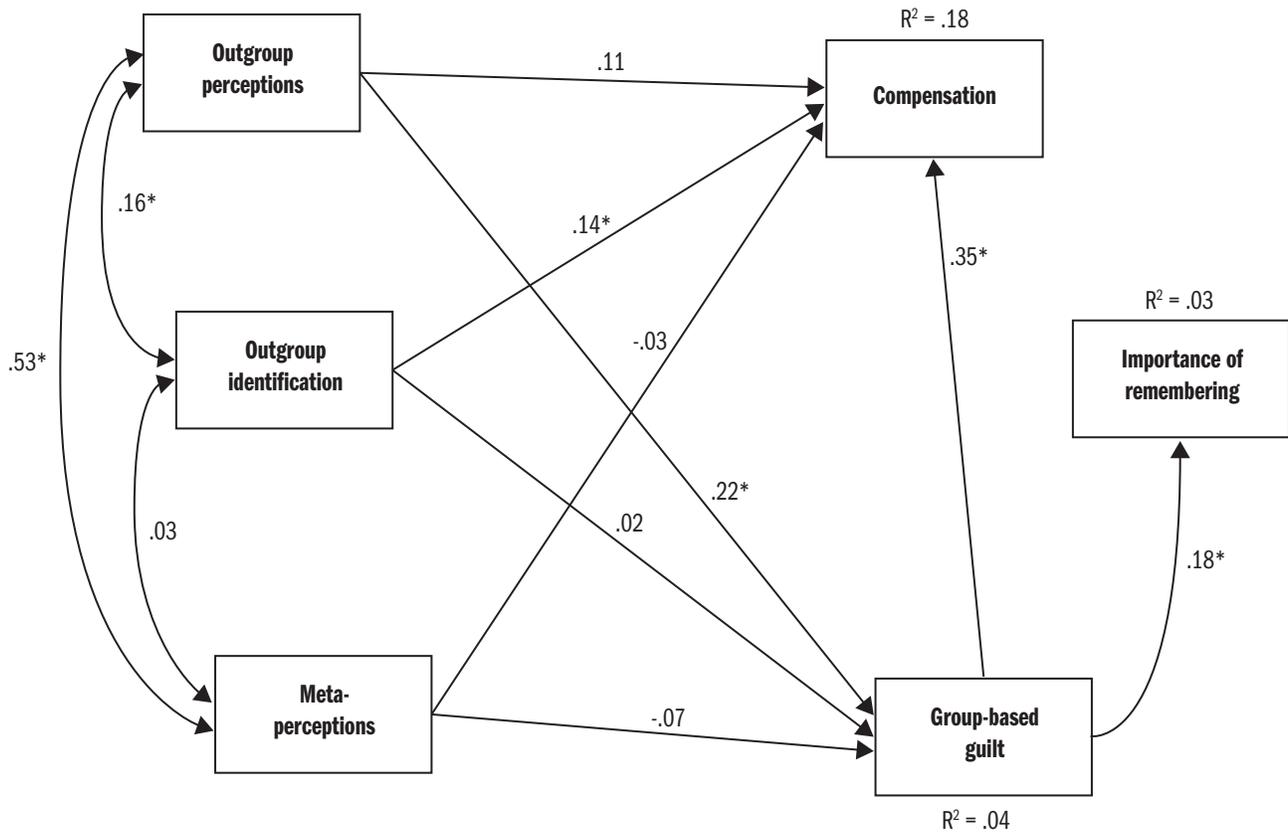
Group-based guilt correlates significantly with compensatory behavioral intentions and is significantly and positively associated with perceived importance of attention to negative events, as we predicted in our hypothesis. Finally, compensatory behavioral intentions correlate positively with perceived importance of attention to negative events.

**1.2.2. Structural Equation Model**

To examine the hypothesized relationships between the variables for the Portuguese sample, we tested a structural equation model using EQS (see Figure 1). The model included hypothesized paths from outgroup identification, Portuguese perceptions of Africans, and Portuguese meta-perceptions of Africans, to the outcome variables,

which include feelings of group-based guilt and compensatory behavioral intentions. Paths from group-based guilt to compensatory behavioral intentions and to perceived importance of attention to negative events were also included. Given the potential relationships between the predictor variables in the model, we allowed for associations between these three predictor variables.

Figure 1: Structural equation model testing outgroup-focused antecedents and consequences of group-based guilt for the Portuguese sample



Note: Standardized parameter estimates; \* $p < .05$ .

The resulting model fits the data well. The  $\chi^2$  value is small and statistically insignificant:  $\chi^2(4, N = 170) = 5.74, p > .10$ . The other fit indices also indicate good fit: Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI) = .93, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .98, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = .98, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = .99, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .04, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .05. Parameter estimates are shown in Figure 1.

The correlation between outgroup perceptions and outgroup identification is statistically significant as is the correlation between outgroup perceptions and meta-perceptions. The correlation between outgroup identification and Portuguese meta-perceptions of Africans is not statistically significant in the present sample.

We found support for Hypothesis 1: Outgroup perceptions were reliably associated with group-based guilt. When people perceive the outgroup in favorable terms, they are more likely to experience guilt. There was no direct significant path from outgroup perceptions to compensatory behavioral intentions.

Unexpectedly, outgroup identification was not related to group-based guilt (Hypothesis 2), but it was significantly associated with compensatory behavioral intentions. The more people identify with the outgroup, the more they are willing to compensate the outgroup. Thus, in this study, there was a significant path from outgroup identification to outgroup compensation, but it was not via group-based guilt.

Our data do not lend support for Hypothesis 3: Portuguese meta-perceptions of to Africans were not significantly related with either group-based guilt or compensatory behavioral intentions.

Finally, confirming Hypothesis 4, group-based guilt was reliably associated with compensatory behavioral intentions. More importantly, group-based guilt was significantly related with a more recent consequence of guilt, namely the perceived importance of remembering the negative aspects of the colonial past in the media and in school.

To further test our hypotheses, we used a model to investigate whether perceived importance of remembering past misdeeds could be conceptualized as a mediator of the relationship between the three predictor variables and group-based guilt. Even though the correlations between the variables do not show direct support for this hypothesized model (see Table 2), we do think it is possible to conceptualize the importance of remembering negative aspects of the Colonial War as a mediator of the relationship between group-based guilt and the three predictors since variable can be expected to be not to be rather a cause rather than a consequence of group-based guilt, in the sense that remembering the negative aspects of the Colonial War might open the way for individuals to experience group-based guilt. Since this a novel variable in the literature, we are interested in discovering how it is related with the experience of group-based guilt and therefore wanted to see how it relates to the other variables under study when included in a different model. In fact, this alternative model fits the data poorly, with a reliable chi-square value:  $\chi^2 (7, N = 170) = 15.61, p < .05$ . The other fit indices also indicated weaker fit in comparison to the main hypothesized model: Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) = .81, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .71, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = .92, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = .97, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .07, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .09. In a word: the results support the first theoretical model, but not the alternative model.

### 1.3. Discussion

As expected, outgroup perceptions were significantly related with group-based guilt, but, contradicting our

hypothesis, outgroup identification and meta-perceptions did not associate significantly with group-based guilt in the Portuguese sample. The lack of significant associations between outgroup identification and group-based guilt and between meta-perceptions and group-based guilt might be because members of the national group consider themselves victims of the Colonial War, as much as the outgroup does. This might be due to the fact that the war is still close in time to the present generations (just thirty-five years ago) and that there are still war veterans and Portuguese civilians who lived in the colonies and who view themselves as victims of the war and who may influence the perceptions of the younger generation. Still, it is important to stress that the present study assesses Portuguese perceptions and meta-perceptions of Africans and, as such, it could be that individuals are showing general perceptions of Africans and not only of Africans from the former Portuguese colonies. We believe this is unlikely, because every other measure used in the study referred specifically to Africans from the former Portuguese colonies, but attention should be paid to this potential limitation when generalizations are drawn.

It is important to stress that—even though there was no direct significant path from outgroup identification to group-based guilt—outgroup identification *did* significantly correlate with compensatory behavioral intentions. Thus, feeling a bond with the outgroup is related to intentions to compensate.

In line with Hypothesis 4, group-based guilt predicts support for compensatory behavioral intentions, confirming previous research in this domain. Furthermore, and importantly, we were able to find support for our more novel consequence of group-based guilt: when people feel more group-based guilt they are more likely to consider it necessary to remember negative information about the colonial past in the media and at schools. We also tested an alternative model in which perceived importance of remembering negative information was specified as a predictor of group-based guilt. This alternative proved to have a weaker fit with the data than the main model, providing further evidence for the robustness of our theoretical model.

## 2. Study 2: The Netherlands

Study 2 examines whether the model established in Study 1 can be confirmed using another sample, this time the Dutch colonial conflict with Indonesia. The war the Netherlands fought between 1945 and 1949 for control of Indonesia had negative consequences for the people of Indonesia and the Netherlands. Since this conflict occurred longer ago (sixty years)—and there is therefore more distance from the negative events—and intergroup relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia are better than between Portugal and its former African colonies, we expected Study 2 to show stronger correlations between the variables than Study 1, though not higher levels of group-based guilt.

The hypotheses are the same as for Study 1:

- H1: Outgroup perceptions are related positively with group-based guilt.
- H2: Outgroup identification is related positively with group-based guilt.
- H3: Meta-perceptions are negatively related with group-based guilt.
- H4: Group-based guilt predicts compensatory behavioral intentions and perceived importance of remembering negative information about past events.

As in Study 1, we examined the possible relationships between the three predictor variables (outgroup identification, outgroup perceptions, meta-perceptions) and compensatory behavioral intentions.

### 2.1. Method

#### *Participants*

One hundred fifty-seven Dutch university students participated in this study, either for course credits or for a €7 payment. Seventeen responses were excluded from analysis (fifteen not Dutch, two due to missing data). Of the remaining 140 participants, 77.9 percent were women (age  $M = 21$  years,  $SD = 4.60$ ; range 17–47).

#### *Design*

As in Study 1, we used a correlational design: predictors and dependent variables regarding the Dutch colonial past were assessed using a questionnaire.

#### *Procedure*

The questionnaire was administered along with four other unrelated questionnaires, with participants taking about

an hour to complete all of them. At the beginning of the questionnaire it was explained that the study aimed to examine the perceptions people have about the Dutch colonial period in Indonesia. Demographic variables such as age, gender, and nationality of the participants and their parents were also covered in the questionnaire.

#### *Predictor variables*

All measures used in Study 2 were the same as used in Study 1.

*Outgroup perceptions.* The nine bipolar items capturing Dutch perceptions of Indonesians comprised a very reliable scale ( $\alpha = .82$ ).

*Outgroup identification.* Identification with the outgroup was measured on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much).

*Meta-perceptions.* The nine-item scale measuring Dutch meta-perceptions of Indonesians was also reliable ( $\alpha = .81$ ).  
*Emotion*

*Group-based guilt.* The scale measuring feelings of group-based guilt comprised four items (Doosje et al. 1998), and had a Cronbach alpha of .71.

#### *Consequences*

*Compensation.* We used the same four items to capture compensatory behavioral intentions ( $\alpha = .76$ ).

*Perceived importance of remembering.* We used the same four-item scale to measure perceived importance of remembering negative aspects of the colonial period ( $\alpha = .79$ ), to construct a composite measure for perceived importance of remembering the negative aspects of the colonial past. The negative items were subtracted from the positive items so as to create a composite measure for perceived importance of remembering *negative* aspects of the colonial conflict, with possible values ranging from -7 to +7.

## 2.2. Results

### 2.2.1. Correlations

The means (and standard deviations) are presented in Table 1, the correlations in Table 2. Table 1 shows that all average scores for the variables are significantly away from the mid-point of the scale, with outgroup perceptions and meta-perceptions the only ones significantly above the mid-point, the rest significantly below it.

In Study 2, unexpectedly, outgroup perceptions are significantly related only with meta-perceptions and with none of the other variables (see Table 2). Outgroup identification correlates significantly with meta-perceptions, group-based guilt, and compensatory behavioral intentions.

Unexpectedly, meta-perceptions are not significantly correlated with group-based guilt, though they are significantly and negatively correlated with compensatory behavioral intentions. Though we did not expect this significant relationship, meta-perceptions are also negatively and significantly associated with perceived importance of remembering the negative aspects of the colonial past.

Group-based guilt is associated significantly with both compensatory behavioral intentions and perceived importance of attention to negative events and these latter two variables are not significantly related with each other, even though we could have expected an association between them (as was the case in Study 1).

### 2.2.2. Structural Equation Model

We used EQS to analyze whether the model established in Study 1 could be replicated in another sample with a history of colonial conflict. The model included the same hypothesized paths from outgroup identification, Dutch perceptions of Indonesians, and Dutch meta-perceptions of Indonesians

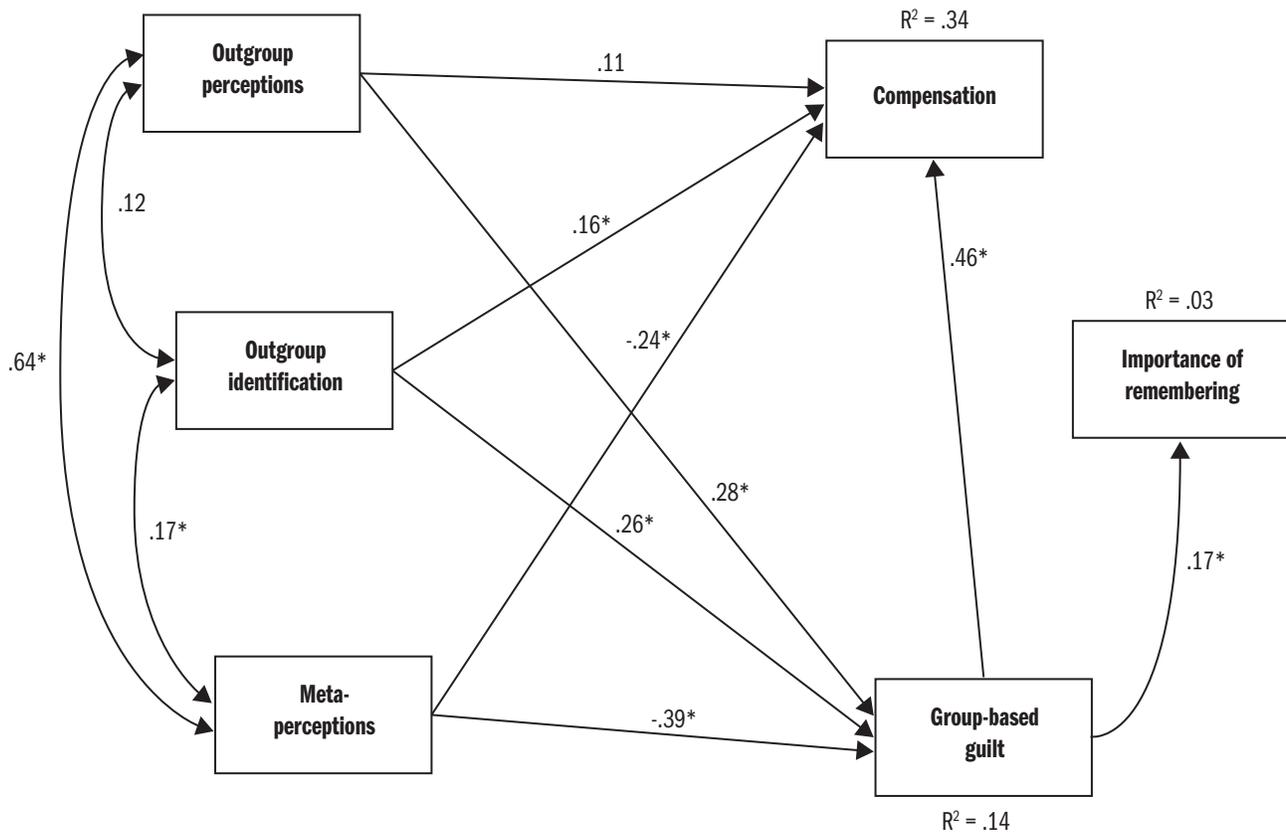
to feelings of group-based guilt and compensatory behavioral intentions. Paths from group-based guilt to compensatory behavioral intentions and to perceived importance of attention to negative events in the colonial past were also included.

To test the hypothesized relations between the predictor variables in the model, we allowed for associations between the three predictor variables in the model. The resulting model fits the data well. The  $\chi^2$  value is small and statistically insignificant:  $\chi^2(4, N = 140) = 4.39, p > .10$ . The other fit indices also indicate good fit: Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) = .99, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 1.00, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 1.00, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = .99, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .03, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .03. Parameter estimates are shown in Figure 2.

The predictor variables present two statistically significant correlations; the only correlation that does not reach statistical significance is the one between outgroup perceptions and outgroup identification.

In line with Hypothesis 1, outgroup perceptions were reliably and positively associated with group-based guilt. There was no reliable path between outgroup perceptions and compensatory behavioral intentions.

Figure 2: Structural equation model testing outgroup-focused antecedents and consequences of group-based guilt for the Dutch sample



Note: Standardized parameter estimates; \* $p < .05$ .

More importantly, and in line with Hypothesis 2, outgroup identification was significantly associated with group-based guilt. In addition, there was a direct positive path from outgroup identification to compensatory behavioral intentions, as was observed in Study 1.

In contrast to Study 1, Dutch meta-perceptions of Indonesians were significantly and negatively associated with both group-based guilt and compensatory behavioral intentions. Thus, Dutch participants who thought that Indonesian participants had a negative view of the Dutch experienced higher levels of group-based guilt. This supports Hypothesis 3.

Confirming Hypothesis 4, group-based guilt was significantly related with compensatory behavioral intentions. In addition, we replicated the positive path from group-based

guilt to perceived importance of remembering the negative aspects of the colonial past.

Following the same rationale as in Study 1, the same alternative model was also tested with the present sample. Again, this resulted in a weaker fit with the data:  $\chi^2 (7, N = 140) = 27.99, p < .01$ . The other fit indices also indicated poorer fit than the main hypothesized model: Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) = .70, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .86, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = .87, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = .94, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .10, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .15.

Given that the present sample showed an unexpected significant correlation between meta-perceptions and perceived importance of remembering the negative aspects of the

past, we conducted another analysis, where this path was included in another structural equation model. This model proved to have a good fit with the data:  $\chi^2(3, N = 140) = 1.13$ ,  $p > .10$ . In general, the other fit indices also indicate good fit: Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) = 1.01, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 1.00, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 1.01, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 1.00, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .02, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .00. Even though this model proves to have a good fit with the data, the path between meta-perceptions and perceived importance of remembering negative information is not statistically significant and, therefore, our main hypothesized theoretical model proves to have a better fit with the data.

### 2.2.3. Differences Between the Portuguese and Dutch Samples

To check for differences between the Portuguese and the Dutch samples regarding the average scores on the variables under analysis, we conducted a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), which showed that there are significant differences between the Portuguese and the Dutch samples: Wilks' Lambda = .02;  $F(6, 303) = 2253.70$ ,  $p < .001$ . As can be seen in Table 1, outgroup perceptions in the Dutch sample are significantly more positive than in the Portuguese sample ( $F(1, 310) = 74.10$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, in the Dutch sample, outgroup perceptions are positive and significantly above the mid-point of the scale ( $t = 9.29$ ,  $p = .00$ ). In contrast, in the Portuguese sample perceptions of Africans from the former colonies are negative and significantly below the mid-point of the scale ( $t = -3.72$ ,  $p = .00$ ). Meta-perceptions of outgroup also show the same pattern: in the Dutch sample these are positive and significantly above the mid-point of the scale ( $t = 3.51$ ,  $p = .00$ ); in the Portuguese sample these are negative and significantly below the mid-point of the scale ( $t = -2.13$ ,  $p = .04$ ). Furthermore, the meta-perceptions in the Dutch sample are more positive than in the Portuguese sample ( $F(1, 310) = 14.99$ ,  $p < .01$ ). However, in contrast to the patterns of outgroup perception and meta-perception, participants identify more strongly with the outgroup in the Portuguese sample than in the Dutch sample ( $F(1, 310) = 51.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

With respect to group-based guilt, the Dutch sample does not differ from the Portuguese sample, ( $F(1, 310) = 1.94$ ,  $p$

$> .15$ ). Both means are significantly below the mid-point of the scale ( $t = -5.17$ ,  $p = .00$  for the Portuguese sample and  $t = -3.86$ ,  $p = .00$  for the Dutch sample).

The Dutch sample shows a higher mean in perceived importance of remembering negative aspects of the past ( $F(1, 310) = 9.64$ ,  $p < .01$ ). As both means are above the mid-point of the scale, we can argue that both the Dutch and the Portuguese participants are willing to remember the negative aspects of the colonial period ( $t = -3.97$ ,  $p = .00$  for the Portuguese sample and  $t = -7.35$ ,  $p = .00$  for the Dutch sample), but the Dutch are more willing to do so.

In contrast to this pattern, the Portuguese have significantly stronger compensatory behavioral intentions than the Dutch ( $F(1, 310) = 162.72$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, the Portuguese participants tend to support such intentions (the mean is above the mid-point of the scale [ $t = 3.84$ ,  $p = .00$ ]), whereas the Dutch participants are generally unsupportive (their mean is below the mid-point of the scale [ $t = -13.78$ ,  $p = .00$ ]).

### 2.3. Discussion

In Study 2 we were again able to obtain evidence for a link between outgroup perceptions and group-based guilt. As expected, outgroup identification was significantly related to group-based guilt. In addition, we replicated the significant positive path between outgroup identification and compensatory behavioral intentions found in Study 1. These results support our concept of *bonding variables*, a cluster of variables which are related to a feeling of sharing a bond with the outgroup and which influence the experience of group-based guilt.

Confirming hypothesis 3, meta-perceptions were significantly and negatively correlated with group-based guilt and compensatory behavioral intentions. Thus, having more positive meta-perceptions leads individuals to show both lower levels of group-based guilt (leading indirectly to lower levels of support for victim compensation) and a decreased desire to compensate the victims of the ingroup's past colonial misdeeds (a direct path from meta-perceptions to outgroup compensation). Confirming our hypotheses regarding the social functions of group-based guilt, we found significant positive relationships between group-based guilt

and both compensatory behavioral intentions and perceived importance of remembering the negative aspects of the colonial past. Once again, the main hypothesized model had a better fit to the data than the alternative model, giving us further evidence for our conceptualization of perceived importance of remembering the negative aspects of the colonial period as a consequence of group-based guilt and not as an antecedent of it.

We were not able to achieve the desirable ratio between the number of participants and the number of model parameters, which, according to Kline (1998) should be 10:1 (in our case it was 8:1). Still, we believe this model to be reliable, because it has very good fit indices and was replicated using two different samples with a past of colonial conflicts.

### 3. General Discussion

Taken together, the results of the two studies show support for our hypotheses concerning the role of different outgroup-focused variables in predicting feelings of group-based guilt about colonial conflicts. .

In both studies we were able to show a positive relationship between outgroup perceptions and group-based guilt. Individuals experience more group-based guilt when they believe their group has a more positive rather than negative view of the outgroup. We also found evidence that outgroup identification has a positive relationship with group-based guilt (Study 2 only), meaning that the more people identify with the outgroup, the more group-based guilt they will experience. It thus seems that feeling a bond with the outgroup leads people to tend to report higher levels of group-based guilt and, thus, be more willing to acknowledge the misdeeds of their national group's colonial past.

These results are in line with the argument of Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton (1994) that when the relationship damaged is with a relevant person or group individuals will feel more guilt than when the other is not relevant to the person who committed the wrongful actions.

Drawing from the differences found between the two samples in relation to the overall averages of outgroup

perceptions (higher in the Dutch sample) and outgroup identification (higher in the Portuguese sample) and taking in consideration the correlation patterns between outgroup perceptions and outgroup identification in both samples (i.e. this correlation only reached statistical significance in the Portuguese sample), it is possible to argue that these two variables are two partially independent dimensions of a higher-order concept, i.e. bonding variables. They do not necessarily need to be strongly related with each other, since we argue that it is possible that some individuals (as is the case for the Dutch) can have positive perceptions of the outgroup without necessarily identifying with them, or vice-versa.

Taking this into consideration, it is still clear that this cluster of results supports our conceptualization of outgroup perceptions and outgroup identification as *bonding* variables, since the existence of a bond connecting the ingroup with the outgroup leads individuals to identify and feel close to members of other groups. In the case of colonization, where there was contact and a feeling of relatedness between the ingroup (the colonizers) and the outgroup (the colonized), an acknowledgment that negative acts were committed against the outgroup during colonial conflicts can lead members of the ingroup to experience higher levels of group-based guilt. Without this sense of relatedness, feelings of group-based guilt would be lower. It is probably this same sense of connectedness that instigates the desire to construct better relations between the groups. Thus, valuing the outgroup and having a positive view of it can have positive consequences for the reconstruction of relations between the groups.

Further research could fruitfully analyze ways to improve the perspective of perpetrator groups toward victimized outgroups, as a means to deal with the past and construct better relations in the future. This relationship-enhancing function of guilt can, therefore, play a fundamental role in opening the way for future positive relations amongst groups involved in colonial conflicts (Barkan 2000).

The lack in both samples of a significant direct path from outgroup perceptions to compensatory behavioral intentions leads us to suggest that having positive outgroup

perceptions does not associate directly with a desire to compensate the victims, but rather that this relationship is mediated by feelings of group-based guilt. We argue that having positive outgroup perceptions does not, *per se*, lead groups to make amends for past misdeeds; this is actually achieved through an acknowledgment of feeling group-based guilt.

In both samples, outgroup identification—unlike outgroup perceptions—is directly related with compensatory behavioral intentions. It thus seems that outgroup identification, as one partially independent dimension of the broader concept of bonding variables is, *per se*, related with the desire to compensate the victims of past misdeeds and can, therefore, serve a relationship-enhancing function by signaling that there is an imbalance in the intergroup relationship, which can be addressed by compensation of the victimized outgroup (Wohl and Branscombe 2004), via a direct link between outgroup identification and compensatory behavioral intentions.

Though the measure used in the present study has been used in previous studies with reliable patterns of results (for an example see Valentim 2003), we must treat this pattern of results with caution because the measure used for outgroup identification has only one item, thus limiting our results and the interpretations drawn from them.

We also found that having positive meta-perceptions predicts lower levels of group-based guilt (statistically significant only in Study 2). We hypothesized positive meta-perceptions to be a predictor of lower levels of group-based guilt, because if the ingroup believes the outgroup has a positive view of the ingroup, then the ingroup believes the misdeeds during the colonial conflict are less salient in the present and that there is already a positive relation between the groups.

Therefore, individuals who believe the outgroup has more positive perceptions of the ingroup will feel less group-based guilt, because they believe the outgroup does not hold them as strongly responsible for the past misdeeds as when there are still negative meta-perceptions. Further research should look into the underlying dynamics by which positive

meta-perceptions are related to lower levels of group-based guilt.

Our results also show that both outgroup perceptions and meta-perceptions score higher in the Dutch sample (although the Portuguese identified somewhat more strongly with the colonial group than the Dutch did), and both relate significantly with group-based guilt in the Dutch sample.

We would argue that meta-perceptions are a stronger predictor in the Dutch sample than the Portuguese because the Dutch seem to have a more positive view of their relations with the Indonesians (higher outgroup perceptions and meta-perceptions) than the Portuguese of their relations with Africans. Perhaps meta-perceptions only significantly influence feelings of group-based guilt when the perpetrator group has quite positive views of the victimized group. This is also consistent with the argument of Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton that guilt is most common in relationships that are positive in nature to begin with (1994).

Following the same reasoning, we think that the stronger, negative influence of meta-perceptions on group-based guilt in the Dutch sample can help to explain why, on average, the Portuguese and Dutch sample do not differ in feelings of group-based guilt about the colonial period. At first, this seemed an odd finding, because the Dutch are significantly more positive about their relations with the Indonesians than the Portuguese about their relations with Africans. However, meta-perceptions inhibit group-based guilt, while outgroup perceptions increase group-based guilt among the Dutch. As a result, the net effect of outgroup perceptions and meta-perceptions seems zero, which can perhaps explain why group-based guilt among the Dutch is not higher than among the Portuguese.

Regarding the differences in the average values of outgroup perceptions and meta-perceptions between the two samples, it is important to keep in mind that in the Portuguese sample these measures were targeted towards Africans in general and not towards Africans from the former Portuguese colonies. This may have weakened the relationship between these variables and group-based guilt, since individuals might have responded thinking of a general African

category, for which their perceptions and meta-perceptions might be more negative than when thinking about Africans from the former Portuguese colonies. Still, the authors believe that, given the nature of the study, participants were already framed to think in terms of Africans from the former colonies. The fact that this measure does not directly state it does not mean individuals were not thinking specifically of Africans from the former colonies.

In view of previous research, it is not surprising that we found a significant path from group-based guilt to outgroup compensation. Less expectedly, we observed a significant path in both samples between group-based guilt and perceived importance of remembering the negative aspects of colonial history in the media and in the school curriculum.

In both studies the alternative model had a weaker fit to the data than our main hypothesized model, supporting our conceptualization of perceived importance of remembering negative aspects of the colonial past as a consequence of group-based guilt and not as an antecedent of the experience of group-based guilt. This suggests that feeling group-based guilt leads to a willingness of the ingroup (perpetrator group) to face its deficits. We believe this is an important step in improving relations between groups involved in an immoral historical episode, such as the colonial conflicts analyzed here.

Regarding the differences between the Portuguese and Dutch samples, we found that compensatory behavioral intentions are higher in the Portuguese sample. We suggest this is because the Portuguese perceive they have not compensated the victims of their past misdeeds as much as the Dutch have and, therefore, feel a stronger need to compensate the outgroup. We also found less willingness to remember the negative aspects of the colonial past on the side of the Portuguese.

Perhaps the time difference between the events makes it easier for the Dutch to look back and be more critical of their historical misdeeds, since the events are longer ago and, thus, do not involve the self so much in the actions taken by the ingroup (e.g., Barkan 2000). In contrast, for the Portuguese sample, the events are more recent and the con-

sequences of the war are still relevant for today's Portuguese society. When an event such as the Colonial War is still too recent, people might refrain from accepting negative aspects of their group's history and therefore deny or fail to acknowledge the need to remember them (Barkan 2000). Further studies should analyze the relationship between time distance of negative intergroup events and the experience of group-based guilt.

Interestingly, even though the Portuguese are less willing to remember the negative aspects of the colonial past, they are more inclined than the Dutch to compensate the outgroup. This might be due to the influence of the timing of events, as explained above. But there is another possible explanation: compensating the victims might be an instrumental way of dealing with the ingroup's past negative actions. From this perspective, compensating an outgroup for the misdeeds of the past is an easier way of acknowledging the past and coming to terms with it than actually discussing the negative aspects of the past relationships between the groups.

It is important to acknowledge that our samples are mostly composed of female participants and that there is some evidence that women are more prone to feelings of guilt than men (Stapley and Havilan 1989). Still, we believe these gender differences do not affect our results or the associations between the variables under study, because we are interested in the associations between the variables under study and not the intensity of the emotion *per se*.

The present research investigated the role of three outgroup-focused variables in the prediction of group-based guilt. We show that outgroup perceptions and outgroup identification can be conceptualized as bonding variables which are related to the experience of group-based guilt. Further research should analyze the possibility of creating ways for individuals to bond with the outgroup and thus create awareness of the negative events of the past as a way to improve intergroup relations. Future avenues of research should also focus on the underlying processes by which outgroup perceptions and meta-perceptions might influence feelings of group-based guilt and the social consequences of this emotion by which intergroup relations can be improved.

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