

Introduction: Overcoming historical conflicts and coping with collective violence

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Abstract

Psychological science has the potential to contribute to reconciliation processes in conflict areas throughout the world. In such way it has the possibility to help reconstruct the social fabric of a community and help heal individual and collective mistreatments. In this introduction a general overview of the importance of reconciliation and apologies in situations of collective and political violence will be presented. The importance of understanding how our recall of historical acts allows us to interpret not only the past but also present day situations will also be mentioned. Finally, overviews of the articles included in the Special Issue of the Revista de Psicología Social are also given.

Keywords: Historical conflicts, collective violence, apologies, collective memory.

Introducción: Superando los conflictos históricos y afrontando la violencia colectiva

Resumen

La psicología tiene el potencial de contribuir a los procesos de reconciliación derivados de los diferentes conflictos que se producen en el mundo. De esta manera, cuenta con la posibilidad de ayudar en la reconstrucción del tejido social de una comunidad y paliar y curar en cierta medida las situaciones de desigualdad e injusticia individual y colectiva que se produce en nuestras sociedades. Se presentan una visión general acerca de la importancia de los procesos de reconciliación y petición de perdón en situaciones de violencia colectiva y política. También se hará referencia a la importancia de entender cómo el recuerdo de hechos históricos nos ayuda a interpretar no sólo nuestro pasado sino también el presente. Por último se realizará una presentación de los artículos del presente número especial de la Revista de Psicología Social.

Palabras clave: Conflictos históricos, violencia colectiva, petición de perdón, memoria colectiva.

The past and the way it is recalled is not just important as a philosophical dilemma or a common literary starting point, it is also a place in which, in a real or metaphorical sense, we have lived and wandered, and which may have consequences in our current life. It is relevant for what we are and hope to be in the future, in the ways we analyze what has happened and how we want to get on with our individual or collective lives. This is why it is important to study the effects past deeds, cognitions and actions may have not only on present and future life, but on how we re-interpret these same past actions. Although these issues have always been relevant questions in different societies, in these first years of the XXIst century in which a more global and interwoven world draws attention to our similarities, and differences, and on how culture and its representations are forging many of our social, ethnic and national identities and conflicts, it is imperative that we analyze the effect of these factors on our personal and social relationships.

In this sense we must ask ourselves what effect past collective violence has on the collective memory or social representations of the past. What are the psychological and social effects of collective violence and of individual and collective forms of coping with suffering, anger and distress? What effects, if any, do political apologies have on helping to cope with past collective violence? These questions are precisely the main topics which will be addressed in this monograph by researchers from 9 different countries and 4 continents.

This whole special issue of the *Revista de Psicología Social* stresses both the theoretical and applied perspective of the phenomena it is addressing. Not only does it present theories aimed at explaining what has happened, and may occur in the future, but also their more practical implications. And what is even more important, it presents objective data analyzing different forms of re-addressing and mitigating not only individual but collective level distress. It will present research and examples from different settings aimed towards reconciliation processes in violence ridden and war torn countries in which the social fabric has been deeply affected, if not destroyed for decades. It is important to remember that victims are individually and socially downgraded and humiliated, in many cases both physically and psychologically by perpetrators of the crimes and that retaliatory actions might be taken by victims sparking the emergence of a new conflict which could lead to an endless flow of actions and consequent reactions which will eventually hinder all possibilities of transforming and creating a new social fabric of coexistence and social power sharing.

This monograph includes people working on the direct improvement of human rights: for instance Martín Beristain and other authors have collaborated with Truth Commissions in Guatemala, Ecuador and Paraguay. Kayangara, Mukashema or Mullet are also directly working with victims of African collective violence.

Should we remember what has happened to a community or should we silence it and get on with our life? Does talking really help people, or is it more a social cohesive mechanism which fosters intergroup alliances but not individual well-being? Does apologizing have any effect on those communities and individuals who do so? Will apologies and Truth Commissions have the same effect in different cultural settings? All these are important theoretical and practical questions which form the backbone of the present monograph. The works presented in this issue of the *Revista de Psicología Social* will allow us to address the importance and understand the possible future value of certain recent events related to these themes.

One such event took place on June 4th 2009, when US president Barack Obama made a speech at the University of Cairo in which he addressed the need to start a new relationship between Islam and the Western World based on mutual respect. This of course is not a new idea and has been stated before, but some aspects of this discourse were novel. First of all it came from a US president (a leader) with an Islamic heritage and addressing thousands of people in a relevant Islamic country with an important

anti-Western stance in large sectors of the population (i.e., Muslim Brotherhood and *Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiya*). It is important to understand that Barack Obama did not directly apologize for past wrongdoings, although he did acknowledge the United States' past mistakes and set an agenda for future collaboration. He directly stressed the historical tolerance of *Al-Andalus* and cities such as Cordoba in comparison to the Spanish Inquisition (although these "idealized and simplified memories" have been hotly contested by certain historians and journalists). He also used quotes from the "Sacred Qur'an", addressing the worldwide public with a tone and vocabulary which intended to sound balanced and not patronizing. His first words in front of this auditorium, and the millions of people who were watching his speech live on television all over the world, were that it was not possible to eradicate years of mistrust with just a speech or words, but that specific actions should be taken.

Although this speech is clearly not an apology for past actions and injustices (among other reasons because it hardly refers to any of the conditions mentioned by Blatz, Schumann & Ross, 2009 regarding the 10 elements which must be included in historical and political apologies), it was the closest the most important political and economic leader in the Western World has got to this in the past decades regarding Palestine suffering and actions perpetrated by the Israeli government. Nevertheless (and bearing in mind that words without actions will only foster more discontent), we should ask ourselves if this speech, interpreted as a pre-act of apology, may have any impact on intergroup and interfaith relationships. A number of articles in this issue will address exactly this question. For instance, Páez will mention those situations in which apologies work, and the need to understand these actions in relation to one's culture (more collectivistic or individualistic) or religion (those who value public repentance and forgiveness versus those who perform more intimate rituals), and how some groups and collectivities will value more positively the overt expression of apologies whilst others tend to de-emphasize this expression as culturally and personally less relevant, and as more of an intimate and personal response.

Another issue that arises from president Obama's discourse is the difference between personal and collective apologies. As Páez or Lastrego & Licata will state, personal apologies are not necessarily projected towards intergroup relations, and there is the need for a leader of the perpetrator group to acknowledge that victims have suffered and continue to do so. In this sense, possibly the apologies given on June 2001 by Australian Prime Minister John Howard stating that he was personally sorry for the mistreatment of Aborigines, but at the same time opposing a formal national apology because it could lead to future claims for compensation, was not the best way to offer a show of sincere group remorse. Other situations such as when in 1993 South African President F. W. de Klerk apologized for Apartheid (although in 1996 he apologized for the suffering inflicted by apartheid, but not for torture or any other human rights abuses that occurred under the segregated system), and a few days later Nelson Mandela publicly apologized for possible crimes committed by the African National Congress against suspected enemies of the ANC are, in spite of other aspects, better examples of how to start a reconciliation process. Victims must be respected and their memory should not be misused by one party, group or collective. There should be a moral equivalence regarding all victims of crimes, although this does not imply that all actions are of the same nature and that there should be equivalence in the way we interpret how all parties acted. Victimization processes are obviously different, although moral suffering is present in all victims. These are a plural group, an issue that should not be forgotten in reconciliation processes.

As Páez mentions, these public apologies may also allow a reconstruction not only of social ties but also of a country's history, shifting power relations and allowing the victims to obtain a renewed self-esteem and control of the situation. In this sense an example of how a dominant group allows a discriminated group to re-establish their

own personal and collective identity occurred when in December 2002, the Norwegian Parliament decided to compensate the children born of German soldiers during the country's occupation by the Nazis during the Second World War for the discrimination they had suffered whilst growing up, for instance receiving names such as *naziynge* (Nazi spawn), and their mothers *tyskertøser* (whores of Germans). Reparation should not only compensate debts (financially or symbolically) but also re-address social inequalities (David & Choi, 2009). There is an important need for real power and status shifts in reconciliation processes.

For a comprehensive list of political apologies and reparations one can visit <http://political-apologies.wlu.ca>.

Did President Obama, and his advisers, fully understand, within the constraints of International Politics and Power Games, the significance of some type of group apology and its ulterior consequences? Studies presented in this volume attest to what may happen if we do not bear in mind the intersection of the individual and collective functions of apologies.

In relation to these issues, we must start by asking ourselves how individuals and groups construct their identities and their group's past. How do they recall what has happened to themselves and their groups? Two studies included in this monograph will help us better understand these questions.

The first study (Techio et al.) analyzes how people perceive world history, particularly past collective violence, in different continents. The shared social representations of history show a clear Euro/North American-centric bias, a long-term positive evaluation, coupled with a persistent recency, and socio-centric bias experience, although cultural differences are also present in the recall. These results can be interpreted in the light of Valencia et al's work in this volume, which shows how memory is a way of both constructing a historical meaning to certain events, and of setting the boundaries which account for groups and collectives, and consequently those who are part of the ingroup and share our "history" and those who do not. Our recall of past historical events has an effect on how we interpret current affairs which seemingly may have nothing to do with the past event but which through our current narratives may be linked together as an explanation for present day situations. Valencia et al. mention how in the representation of a certain social object there are both central and peripheral elements. The former are those which are difficult to change and core of the object, whilst peripheral elements may change more rapidly. In situations of intergroup violence and post-conflict reconciliation it would be important to analyze which are these core elements since they may be an important reason for maintaining conflicting narratives. Bar-Tal, Raviv, Raviv, & Dgani-Hirsch (2009) call these factors *ideological supporting beliefs* that provide group members with a stable and persistent conceptual framework with which to interpret the world and the relationships in which they are engaged.

Hilton & Liu (2008) refer to a similar concept when they mention the study of charters which define key elements of a group's history, presenting both attitudes and behaviors that define that group's identity whilst also stressing certain roles that confer legitimacy to this group's narratives. These elements may enhance a strong ingroup identification which may question the need to apologize and show remorse to "very dissimilar" outgroups. The study of these core and peripheral aspects of a group's legitimizing narratives and beliefs could allow us to better understand how to mobilize discourses that foster intergroup reconciliation and individual and collective healing processes.

This last aspect is a relevant issue in another series of contributions to this volume. We may ask ourselves what happens at the individual level to those who have been victims of collective violence and mistreatment. How do we combine the collective and social cohesion aspects of reconciliation with its individual cost? Mukashema &

Mullet's article is focused on the actual impact of collective violence on mental health. They show that the level of mental health among victims was lower than that observed in those not directly exposed to violence. What is interesting to observe in this study is that higher levels of mental health were associated with pro-reconciliation attitudes, suggesting that low levels of suffering facilitate reconciliation, or that in fact forgiveness helps to overcome suffering.

Martín Beristain et al. will examine the general effects of transitional justice rituals, such as Rwanda's *Gacaca* or popular trials, and the impact of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. The evidence from Africa suggests that participation in trials increases negative emotions and symptoms, whilst also enhancing negative emotional climate. It has a cost for both individuals and society. But participating in such rituals has positive individual effects, such as empowerment in participants from South Africa, post-traumatic growth in Guatemala and decreasing shame (an emotion known to reflect a negative perception of oneself) in victims in Rwanda. Moreover, rituals, trials and successful Truth Commissions may not only provoke positive in-group effects, but also improve intergroup relationships (reinforcing the respect for Human Rights), and decrease negative stereotypes confirming the micro-social positive outcomes of rituals of transitional justice.

Nevertheless, Gasparre et al.'s study also presents the possible individual problems stemming from participating in rituals in the form of an increase in intrusive thoughts and trauma reminiscence, while at the same time attesting to the fact that it is participating in general social movements and mobilizations, and not necessarily more specific type rituals, what is important. A relevant addition to previous studies conducted in this vein is that the authors show how the effects of rituals on post-traumatic growth and social integration were mediated by engagement in communal coping, and thus that cultural differences must be included in the analyses regarding the impact of collective rituals.

These three studies testify to the importance of carrying out such social rituals, but also to the fact that specifically individual-level psychological interventions and counseling must be conducted in order to help reduce the costs of testifying or recalling what has happened. All interventions must take into account the culture, values, religion, etc. of the communities in which we implement the interventions. In accordance with these studies, there must be both individual and collective level actions to help foster a process of general well-being. It is difficult to assume that if victims are allowed the opportunity to recall their stories in front of a Truth Commission, or any other type of reconciliation forum, this will automatically provide them with healing and a sense of well-being (Hayner, 2001; Martín Beristain, Páez & González, 2000). In fact retelling these experiences can lead to re-traumatization, although there may be social and collective long term positive effects.

The articles presented until now have been basically field-work oriented; nevertheless this volume also has a series of experimental studies which delve into these same issues in a more "controlled" fashion, analyzing the effects and mediational processes involved in processes of reparatory laws and political apologies with regard to past collective violence.

One such article is presented by Lastrego & Licata, in which attitudes towards the outgroup (Congolese) were more positive, the representations of the ingroup's past behaviors were more negative, and reparation was more positively viewed when official apologies and reminding the ingroup of the outgroup's current suffering were made salient. As we can see, presenting a certain representation of the past has a direct influence in the way the present is perceived, both morally and behaviorally. In order to foster certain outgroup empathy it is important to make leaders of the ingroup act (official apologies), and show the results in the present of what has been done in the past. These interventions will help assist in reconciliation processes.

Valencia et al. analyze how the salience of a Law aimed towards recovering the Memory, mainly of those forgotten by the victors of the Spanish Civil War, has an impact on collective memory, Truth Commissions, emotional climate, collective guilt, shame and possible reparatory behaviours. Although this impact is mediated by political positions, the salience of the Law does not alter certain notions regarding the Spanish Civil War, stressing that some central aspects of the social representations of a country's negative past are widely shared and consensual, and could be either the basis of future positive interventions or the issues which should be modified by these same educational, psychological and social interventions in order to allow true reconciliation.

Finally Bobowik et al. will contrast the effect of apologies given by the Basque Government and Parliament for being somewhat lukewarm in the past and not having publicly given sufficient support to the victims of collective violence perpetrated by ETA. When participants were presented with a scenario in which official apologies and past collective violence were made salient, participants reported higher shame and agreed more with giving reparations in comparison to a control condition in which people were only reminded of past collective violence. Nevertheless, and stressing the "real" nature and world in which intergroup violence and conflicts take place, ingroup/outgroup identification was an important mediator variable in enhancing social cohesion. This result attests to the importance of analyzing how identities are a prism through which history, actions and reconciliation may be interpreted.

Taken all together, the contributions presented in this monograph may help us be more pragmatic and understand the power and need for secular rituals and apologies in re-adapting both individually and collectively from a context of collective violence and hate to a more normalized social milieu. They allow us to envisage the individual costs of recalling, but also its need in order to enhance social cohesion and a future more positive emotional climate. In this sense, policy makers from all over the World should pay attention to the conclusions put forward by these authors, and in future interventions or discourses bear in mind the effects of what they say and do without relying on over-simplistic explanations and naïve expectations jumping to false conclusions regarding the value and positive impact of what they say and do.

This monograph is also a more scholarly complement to a recently published book (Páez, Martín-Beristain, González & de Rivera, 2010), which couples in a friendly manner a series of texts written by psychologists who deal with issues of overcoming conflicts and constructing a culture of peace (such as Daniel Bar-Tal, or Joseph deRivera) and Spanish ready-to-use versions of scales and practical orientations aimed towards analyzing and intervening in situations of collective violence.

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Current mental health and reconciliation sentiment of victims of the genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda

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Abstract

Two hundred and seven victims of the genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda were presented with the Rwandan version of the General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ), and with reconciliation sentiment items. Using confirmatory factor analysis, the factor structure of the GHQ was examined. The three-factor structure suggested by some authors reasonably fitted the data but two factors – Anxiety and depression, and Loss of confidence – were extremely correlated. As a result, a reduced two-factor model was tested, and the fit of this model was found to be reasonable. As regards the anxiety, depression and loss of confidence factor, the level of mental health observed among victims was lower than the level of mental health observed among Europeans who were never directly exposed to violence. As regards the social dysfunction factor, however, no difference was evidenced. A positive association between mental health and reconciliation sentiment was observed.

Keywords: Mental health, reconciliation sentiment, General Health Questionnaire, Rwanda.

Estado actual de salud mental y sentimiento de reconciliación en las víctimas del genocidio Tutsi en Ruanda

Resumen

Doscientos siete víctimas del genocidio Tutsi, en Ruanda, completaron la versión ruandesa del Cuestionario de Salud General (General Health Questionnaire-12, GHQ) y una serie de ítems sobre sentimientos de reconciliación. Se utilizó el Análisis Factorial Confirmatorio para examinar la estructura factorial del GHQ. La estructura de tres factores sugerida por algunos autores se ajustó a los datos pero dos de los factores –Ansiedad y depresión y Pérdida de confianza– estaban extremadamente correlacionados. Como consecuencia, se probó un modelo reducido de dos factores, cuyo ajuste fue razonable. Los resultados indican que cuando se considera la ansiedad-depresión y la pérdida de confianza, el nivel de salud mental observado entre las víctimas fue inferior al de los europeos que no fueron expuestos a la violencia. Sin embargo, cuando se tiene en cuenta el factor disfunción, no se evidenciaron diferencias. Se observó, finalmente, una asociación positiva entre la salud mental y el sentimiento de reconciliación.

Palabras clave: Salud mental, sentimiento de reconciliación, General Health Questionnaire, Ruanda.

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The present study was aimed at (a) examining the factor structure of the Rwandan version of the General Health Questionnaire-12, (b) measuring the mental health of victims of the genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda, using this questionnaire, (c) comparing the values observed with the ones recently reported by Mäkikangas et al. (2006), who conducted a survey on a large European sample, and (d) studying the relationship between mental health and the level of reconciliation sentiment.

The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ, Goldberg & Hillier, 1979) is a measure of psychological morbidity that has been used in a variety of settings. The initial scale was developed in the 1970s, and was comprised of 60 items. Since then, shorter versions of this questionnaire have been devised, notably the frequently used 12-item version (Goldberg, 1989). This shortened version has been extensively used as a screening instrument in large samples (e.g., Leon et al., 1996). Recent studies using confirmatory factor analysis have supported a three-factor structure: Social dysfunction, Anxiety and depression, and Loss of confidence.

Examining the level of mental health of large groups of persons who have suffered from severe collective offenses is important for several individual, communal, and national reasons (see, Toussaint & Webb, 2005). The negative feelings that are associated with enduring resentment (e.g., guilt, shame, remorse, impotence) are factors that tend to decrease mental health. Diminished mental health, above all when it concerns a whole group, may have, directly and vicariously, costly implications for society. These costs relate to the association between diminished mental health and diminished physical health. More dramatically, diminished mental health, and associated diminished quality of life of all group members can make it more likely that at least some members of the group become, in turn, perpetrators of violence in the future (Staub & Pearlman, 2001).

Good mental health and the associated positive relationships between people generate the atmosphere within which the economy of a country can develop and prosperity be attained, while bad mental health and the associated obstructed relations will certainly undermine even the best productive system (Bloomfield, 2005). Without a minimal level of mental health, and without a minimal level of healthy communication between people, communities cannot develop the complex and always changing networks of voluntary cooperation that are indispensable to participatory, economically productive societies. Finally, mental health and reconciliation are circularly interrelated. As mental healing progresses, reconciliation becomes more possible, and as reconciliation progresses, mental health increases (Staub & Pearlman, 2001).

Resentment After Severe Offenses and Mental Health

Several studies, usually using correlational designs, have examined the relationship between resentment after severe offenses and mental health. Most of them have illustrated a positive link between enduring resentment and depression (e.g., Brown, 2003; Kendler et al., 2003) or anxiety (Seybold, Hill, Neumann & Chi, 2001), as well as a negative link between enduring resentment and life satisfaction (Toussaint, Williams, Musick & Everson, 2001). Some of them illustrated a link with psychopathic tendencies (Muñoz Sastre, Vinsonneau, Chabrol & Mullet, 2005). In some cases, the associations that were reported were strong. For instance, Berry and Worthington (2001) reported a correlation as high as -.52 between unforgiveness and global mental health.

Enduring resentment may also be associated with elevated values of physiological parameters. Witvliet, Ludwig and van der Laan (2001) examined the implications of harboring grudges on physiology and health. Associations were

examined through the use of electromyography techniques. Witvliet et al. (2001) showed that unforgiving thoughts elicited after rehearsed hurtful memories prompted more aversive emotion, and higher brow electromyogram, skin conductance, heart rate, and blood pressure changes from baseline. These authors concluded that enduring resentment may erode health through physiological reactions. In the study by Lawler et al. (2003), participants were interviewed twice about instances of interpersonal betrayal. The relationship between dispositional forgiveness, present state forgiveness, stress, hostility, empathy, and self-reported illness symptoms were assessed. Current resentment was shown to be associated with higher blood pressure levels, heart rate, and pressure products. Lawler et al. (2003) concluded that enduring resentment may produce detrimental effects directly by increasing allostatic load associated with offences, and indirectly through augmentation in perceived stress.

Resentment may also be associated with physical pain. Carson et al. (2005) showed that, in patients with chronic back ache, there is a positive relationship between current resentment and pain, anger and psychological distress. Resentful patients might be experiencing higher physical and psychological distress than non resentful patients.

There has been very little research, however, examining the relationship between enduring resentment and mental health in the context of traumatic experiences. Witvliet, Phipps, Feldman and Beckman (2004) showed that, among 213 veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorders, resentment was positively correlated to depression and symptom severity. Also, Feeny, Zoellner and Foa (2000) showed that, among combat veterans and assault victims, feelings of revenge (and state anger) were positively associated with severity of post-traumatic stress symptoms.

Finally, the only study to date that is specifically about the relationship between reconciliation and mental health among Rwandese is the one that was conducted by Longman, Pham and Weinstein (2004). They correlated measurements of reconciliation with measures of post-traumatic stress disorders (Forbes, Creamer & Biddle, 2001). They showed a negative association between trauma level and PTSD severity, and reconciliation. The more the participants showed trauma symptoms the less they agreed with the content of the reconciliation as interdependence items, the reconciliation as community items, and the reconciliation as absence of violence items.

Hypotheses

Our first hypothesis was that the three-factor structure (Social dysfunction, Anxiety and depression, and Loss of confidence) that has been found in most studies using the GHQ-12 should also be found in the present study.

Our second hypothesis, based on the many studies reported above, which show a negative link between enduring resentment following a severe offense and mental health, was that the level of mental health observed among victims of the genocide against Tutsi should be lower than the level of mental health observed among European people who have not been directly exposed to violence. Our third hypothesis, based on the study by Longman et al. (2004), was that of a positive relationship between reconciliation sentiment and mental health.

Method

Participants

The sample was composed of 139 females and 68 males from two administrative areas in the Southern Province of Rwanda: Huye and Gisagara. Their ages ranged from

18 to 69 and the mean age was 30 ($SD = 11.77$). One hundred and ninety five participants declared they had directly suffered from the genocide (primary victims). The remaining participants were secondary victims. Overall, the participation rate was 59%. Sixty one participants had received primary education, 64 participants secondary education and 82 had received university education.

All participants were unpaid. Contact with the participants were approved and facilitated by the local authorities of the Southern Province. These authorities also helped in finding the rooms in which the participants were invited to complete the questionnaire. Special efforts were made to contact people from different villages, boroughs, and towns, and from different educational levels in order to maximize, as much as possible, the representativeness of the sample. However, evidently, the samples were only composed of people who were literate. The European sample was a representative sample of the Finnish population aged 25-59 (more details in Mäkikangas et al., 2006).

Material and Procedure

The material consisted of the General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg & Williams, 1988), which is aimed at measuring changes in such things as sleeping problems, anxiety, and perceptions of personal difficulties. The 12-item version of this questionnaire was retained. The questionnaire was translated into Kinyarwanda (see Table I). The material also consisted in five additional items related to reconciliation and reconciliation sentiment (see Table IV).

The data were gathered in December 2007. Each participant responded individually. The researchers asked participants to read the questionnaire's items – sentences expressing levels of daily life trouble – and rate his/her degree of agreement with each statement.

TABLE I
The Rwandan version of the General Health Questionnaire

Able to concentrate	Ese vuba aha washoboye kwita ku buryo bukwiye ku byo wakoraga?
Play useful part in things	Ese vuba aha wumvise ufatiye runini (ufitiye akamaro kanini) abo muri kumwe?
Capable of making decisions	Ese vuba aha wumvise bigushobokeye gufata ibyemezo?
Enjoy day-to-day activities	Ese vuba aha wumvise ushoboye kwishimira imirimo yawe ya buri muni?
Face up to problems	Ese vuba aha wumvise ushoboye guhangana n'ibibazo (n'ingorane) bya we?
Reasonably happy	Ese vuba aha wumvise koko unezerewe, ugaragara neza?
Lost sleep over worry	Ese vuba aha wabuze ibitotsi bitewe n'ibyari biguhangayikishije?
Constantly under strain	Ese vuba aha wumvise uri ku nkeke, ku rutoto (gutota)
Could not overcome difficulties	Ese vuba aha wabonaga usa nk'udashobora gusohoka mu ngorane zawe?
Unhappy or depressed	Ese vuba aha wumvise usa n'ufite ibyago, intimba n'agahinda byinshi?
Loss of confidence in self	Ese vuba aha wumvise usa n'utakiyizereye (n'utakifitiye icyizere)?
Thinking of self as worthless	Ese vuba aha witekereje nk'umuntu udafite agaciro?

Note. The levels of the responses scales were the ones that are classically used in Goldberg's scale: Better than usual, Same as usual, Worse than usual, Much worse than usual, e.g., item 1 (Birenze ubusanzwe, Nk'ubusanzwe, Muni y'ubusanzwe, Muni cyane y'ubusanzwe, e.g., item 1), or Not at all, No more than usual, Rather more than usual, Much more than usual, e.g., item 2 (Oya rwose, Ntibirusha ubusanzwe, Kurusha ubusanzwe, Kurusha cyane ubusanzwe, e.g., item 2).

Results

The means and standard deviations observed for each item are shown in table II. The overall mean was close to 2; that is, on the average, the level of mental health of the victims of the genocide was not dramatically bad. The level of mental health was, however, not so good as the one observed among the Europeans, and the difference, although small ($2.08 - 1.98 = .10$), was significant, $p < .05$ (one-tailed t -test). The standard deviations were systematically higher among the victims of the genocide than among the Europeans. As shown in columns 6 and 7, the percentage of victims who score higher than 2 on each item was higher than the percentage of Europeans who score higher than 2.

TABLE II
Mean and Standard Deviations Observed in the Rwandan Sample (RW) and in the Finnish Sample (FIN).
Percentage of Participants With scores Higher than 2 on Each Item

Item	M		SD		High Scores	
	RW	FIN	RW	FIN	RW	FIN
Able to concentrate	2.04	2.07	0.85	0.54	25	19
Play useful part in things	1.86	2.00	0.80	0.50	17	9
Capable of making decisions	1.96	2.09	0.85	0.49	23	13
Enjoy day-to-day activities	2.05	2.08	0.92	0.56	28	15
Face up to problems	2.08	2.12	0.90	0.52	27	15
Reasonably happy	2.15	2.08	0.88	0.58	28	15
Lost sleep over worry	2.31	1.97	1.08	0.82	43	24
Constantly under strain	2.13	2.15	1.03	0.83	38	30
Could not overcome difficulties	2.22	1.84	0.99	0.75	40	15
Unhappy or depressed	2.51	1.97	0.99	0.84	51	23
Loss of confidence in self	1.98	1.70	1.04	0.75	29	12
Thinking of self as worthless	1.64	1.69	0.94	0.80	20	14
<i>M</i>	2.08	1.98	.94	.67	31	17
<i>N</i>	207	640	207	640	207	640

Confirmatory Factor Analyses

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the raw data. The correlated three-factor model tested was the one suggested by Mäkikangas et al. (2006). The model fitted the data reasonably well, $\chi^2_{(51, 207)} = 69.90$, $p < .05$ (RMSEA = .04, CFI = .97). Inspection of the path coefficients, however, showed that two factors – Anxiety and depression, and Loss of confidence – were too strongly correlated (.84) for being considered, on practical grounds, as separate factors.

As a result, a second confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the raw data. The correlated two-factor model tested was one that was also suggested by Mäkikangas et al. (2006) under the name of Model 2. This model is shown in table III. It also fitted the data reasonably well, $\chi^2_{(53, 207)} = 86.65$, $p > .01$ (RMSEA = .05 [.03-.07], CFI = .95).

Comparisons with European Data and Relationships with Reconciliation

Two scores were computed, a social dysfunction score ($M = 2.02$), and an anxiety, depression and loss of confidence score ($M = 2.13$). These scores were compared with the corresponding ones computed from the European data. (The study by Mäkikangas et al., 2006, was used for comparison purposes because it offered very detailed results to which it was easy to compare our findings.) As shown in table II, the victims'

TABLE III
Results of the Second Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Mean Responses and Alpha values for Each Factor.

Item	Factors		
	SD	ADL	<i>t</i>
Able to concentrate	.32		4.55
Play useful part in things	.60		11.06
Capable of making decisions	.63		12.04
Enjoy day-to-day activities	.71		15.36
Face up to problems	.70		14.95
Reasonably happy	.61		11.57
Lost sleep over worry		.65	13.44
Constantly under strain		.54	9.50
Could not overcome difficulties		.67	14.22
Unhappy or depressed		.75	18.75
Loss of confidence in self		.93	25.66
Thinking of self as worthless		.69	15.45
<i>Social dysfunction (SD)</i>	1.00	.57	9.28
<i>Anxiety, depression, loss (ADL)</i>	.57	1.00	9.28
Alpha	.77	.83	
Inter-item correlation	.36	.45	
<i>M (Rwanda)</i>	2.02	2.13	
<i>M (Finland)</i>	2.07	1.89	
<i>p</i>	<i>ns</i>	.001	

anxiety, depression and loss of confidence score was significantly higher than the Europeans' one.

Finally, these two scores were correlated with the items expressing reconciliation and reconciliation sentiment. The results are shown in table IV. For four of these items the correlation with mental health was significant.

TABLE IV
Correlations Between the Reconciliation Items and the GHQ Sub-scales

Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	GHQ	
			SD	ADL
I feel I can now discuss about serious issues with the people who harmed me.	5.81	4.06	-.12	-.25*
I feel I can now trust the people who harmed me.	3.14	3.70	-.17*	-.19*
I think that the people who harmed me have now accepted our personal views about what happened in 1994.	3.43	3.70	-.12	-.20*
I feel I am now on good terms with the people who harmed me.	4.04	3.70	-.24*	-.29*
I feel I have been able to forgive the people who harmed me.	6.95	3.65	.04	-.02

Discussion

The study examined the factor structure of the Rwandan version of the General Health Questionnaire-12. The hypothesis was that the three-factor structure suggested by Mäkikangas et al. (2006) should also be found in the present study. In fact, although the fit indices for the three-factor model were good, two of the factors found by

Mäkikangas et al. (2006) – Anxiety and depression, and Loss of confidence – were too correlated for their separation is considered as really grounded. As a result, a reduced correlated two-factor model was tested, and the fit of this model was found to be reasonable. Although these two factors were also correlated, the magnitude of their correlation was of the same order than the one found in Mäkikangas et al. (2006, [.33-.58]).

The study also measured the mental health of victims of the genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda, and compared the values observed in this sample with the values observed in a large European sample, which were reported by Mäkikangas et al. (2006). The second hypothesis was that the level of mental health observed among victims should be lower than the level of mental health observed among Europeans. As regards the anxiety, depression and loss of confidence factor, the results supported the hypothesis. As regards the social dysfunction factor, however, no difference was evidenced.

This pattern of similarity-difference is interesting in itself. This pattern shows that the difference in anxiety, depression and loss of confidence observed between the Rwandan victims and the European participants is certainly not attributable to differences in style of responding to questionnaires (e.g., acquiescence effects). Close examination of the standard deviations and of the item scores showed that the overall difference between the victims and the Europeans was attributable to a few number of victims who scored very high on every item loading the anxiety factor. In other words, even if the anxiety scores of the victims of the genocide were not extremely different from the anxiety scores of people who had never directly experienced such a level of violence, a sub-sample of Rwandan victims was still suffering from psychological troubles.

These values are in contrast to the findings by Carney (1994), who, in a study carried out a few months after the events, showed that 90% of all survivors of the genocide showed clinical signs of psychological trauma. In addition, they have to be contrasted with findings by Páez, Asum and González (1994) showing that many years after the fall of a dictatorial regime, many people may still be traumatized. These values are in line with recent observations reported by Kanyangara, Rimé, Philippot and Yzerbyt (2007, p. 388): “Emotional harms in the Rwandese society are still far from being repaired. A complex emotional climate prevails involving at one and the same time feelings of anger, resentment, shame, sadness, and distrust”.

The study, finally, assessed the relationship between reconciliation sentiment and mental health. The relationship was found to be significant, although the size of the correlation coefficients was relatively modest. This finding is consistent with the findings by Longman et al. (2004). Interestingly, although the highest agreement score was the one found regarding the forgiveness item, there was no relationship between forgiveness and mental health. This result supports the view that it was essentially renewed interaction in daily life that mattered when considering mental health status.

These findings led us to think that policies of reconciliation may be politically and economically worthwhile. Reconciliation of the type that has been found to impact on mental health, which involves the rebuilding of trust between citizens, is indispensable to the development of orderly, healthy, and prosperous societies.

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Cognitive and social consequences of participation in social rites: Collective coping, social support, and post-traumatic growth in the victims of Guatemala genocide

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Abstract

The collective emotion experienced by those who lived the same experience or meet in a rite to celebrate and remember it, produces effects on both the individual and the community. Our study explored the psychosocial effects, particularly those related to post-traumatic growth, that participating in different rituals had on the reactions of the victims of Guatemala Genocide; it also aimed at investigating the differentiated effects of participation in demonstrations on individual and interpersonal coping reactions. Fifty nine genocide survivors were enrolled from different Guatemala areas and administered measures of: participation in religious and commemoration rituals and in human rights movement, social sharing, intensity of basic emotions, impact of the event, coping, perceived benefits of sharing, and post-traumatic growth. Results revealed that participation in rituals was associated with: higher social support and sharing regarding traumatic events, coping through social support, altruistic behaviour, communal coping or engagement in political action and human rights social movements, whereas, at the same time, with less avoidant thoughts and reactions related to the traumatic event, supporting Durkheim's contention. Participation in rituals was also associated with post-traumatic growth, confirming that rituals reinforce positive beliefs about oneself, others and society. Finally, mediation analysis suggested that the effects of participating on post-traumatic growth and socio-emotional support were mediated by communal coping or engagement in social movements. .

Keywords: Genocide, rituals, post traumatic growth, coping.

Consecuencias cognitivas y sociales de la participación en ritos sociales: afrontamiento colectivo, apoyo social y crecimiento post-traumático en las víctimas del genocidio de Guatemala

Resumen

La emoción colectiva vivenciada por las personas que viven la misma experiencia o que se reúnen para celebrar y recordar esa experiencia produce efectos en la comunidad y el individuo. Nuestro estudio explora los efectos psicosociales, particularmente de crecimiento post-traumático, que la participación en diferentes rituales tiene en las víctimas del genocidio de Guatemala; este estudio también se orienta a investigar los efectos diferenciales de la participación en manifestaciones en las reacciones de afrontamiento persona e interpersonal. 59 sobrevivientes del genocidio fueron reclutadas en diferentes áreas de Guatemala y respondieron a medidas de: participación en rituales de conmemoración y religiosos y en movimientos por los derechos humanos, frecuencia de compartir sobre las emociones, intensidad de las emociones básicas, impacto del hecho, afrontamiento, beneficios del compartir emocional y crecimiento post-traumático. Los resultados revelan que la participación en rituales se asocia con: mayor apoyo social y hablar o compartir sobre los hechos traumáticos, afrontamiento mediante el apoyo social, conductas altruistas, afrontamiento comunitario o compromiso en acciones políticas y movimiento en defensa de los derechos humanos, así como con menor pensamientos y reacciones de evitación vinculadas al trauma, confirmando las ideas de Durkheim sobre los efectos psicosociales positivos de los rituales. La participación en los rituales se asoció también con el crecimiento post-traumático, confirmando que los rituales refuerzan las creencias positivas sobre el yo, los otros y la sociedad. Finalmente, análisis mediacionales sugieren que los efectos de la participación en los rituales sobre el crecimiento post-traumático y el apoyo socio-emocional es mediado o explicado por la implicación en movimientos sociales o afrontamiento comunitario.

Palabras clave: Genocidio, rituales, crecimiento post traumático, afrontamiento.

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Guatemala has survived four decades (1960s-1996) of internal armed conflict and massive political repression, the structural causes of which are rooted in extreme inequality, State-organized policies of exclusion, the accumulation of property in the hands of a few, and marginalization of the majority (Taracena Arriola, 2004). Guerrilla forces formed in Guatemala in the 1960s after the revolt of a group of young military officers, a rebellion provoked at least in part by a CIA-supported overthrow of Guatemala's democratic government. Nearly 12,000 persons were assassinated between 1966 and 1970. Altogether, between 100,000 and 200,000 people (women, children, and the elderly, the majority of whom were civilians) were violently killed during the nearly 40 years of conflict, and approximately 83% of them were Maya. More than half of those killed were assassinated in group massacres aimed at destroying community (CEH, 1999).

Specifically, during the 1970s and 1980s, the Guatemalan army developed a "scorched earth" policy and burned to the ground over 400 villages of the Highland indigenous population. Many of those who participated in those massacres had been forced into military service. During that time, the authority of the local leadership, including mayors, local community development groups, and civil authorities, was subordinated to that of the military commissioners and the local paramilitary forces (PAC). Consequences of this State-sponsored violence included the displacement of hundreds of thousands of peasants and the militarization of the countryside (ODHAG, 1998). According to the Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH, 1999), one million persons—approximately 25% of the population of the Guatemalan Highlands—were displaced between 1981 and 1983. Fifty thousand of the more than 400,000 persons who sought refuge in México, Belize, and the United States subsequently spent 15 to 20 years living in refugee camps (Fariás, 1994). Despite the signing of the Peace Agreements on December 29, 1996, the publication of a Catholic Church-sponsored investigation of human rights violations, *Guatemala: Never Again* (ODHAG, 1998), and an official report of the United Nations-sponsored Commission for Historical Clarification, *Guatemala: Memory of Silence* (CEH, 1999), it has been challenging to institutionalize reforms and to implement the agreements. One of the most significant dimensions of this effort continues to be ongoing fear and the struggle against impunity.

Studies documenting human rights violations in Guatemala, such as *Guatemala: Never Again* (ODHAG, 1998) and *Guatemala: Memory of Silence* (CEH, 1999), confirm the extent of the violence in Guatemala during that period, as well as the continuing climate of fear that persists in the country years after the official cessation of the conflict. *Guatemala: Never Again* was based on more than 5,000 testimonies of victims and witnesses of political violence and analyzed the collective impact of these years of horror on the emotional climate and the perception of cohesion in the community.

This article presents a community study that sought to understand better these responses with a particular focus on participation in rituals and other forms of communal coping, and their effects on Maya survivors and communities. Durkheim's (1912) classic theory of social rituals (Martín Beristain, Páez, & González, 2000; Páez, Rimé, & Basabe, 2005) proposes that, in social rituals (commemorations, celebrations, religious ceremonies, demonstrations, and the like), individuals' consciousness echoes one another in a reciprocal stimulation of emotion. This contributes to the development of a state of emotional communion. Participants' salience of their self is lowered, their collective identity is enhanced, and they experience unity and similarity. Beliefs and representations shared in the community are set at the foreground of their preoccupations, consolidating by this way people's faith in their cultural beliefs and their confidence in collective action. Thus, Durkheim considered social rituals to be particularly effective in enhancing participants' feelings of group belonging and social integration (Rimé, 2007). From a functionalist psychological perspective (Freud, 1921,

Schachter, 1959; Wheeler and Reis, 1991), social support and rituals help to reduce uncertainty, to explain and control, as well as to alleviate anxiety and risk perception (Howard, 1989; Malinowski, 1948). However, Pargament's (1997) review found that participating in religious rituals was unrelated in five, or positively related in six out of twelve correlational studies to negative affect – only in one study was participation negatively related to anxiety. In two longitudinal studies, participation in ceremonies of leave taking was unrelated to grief and psychological symptoms 12 months later (Weiss & Richard, 1997), and 24 months later (Lasker et al., 1989, quoted in Pargament, 1997). These results prove that participation in rituals increases or, at least, does not decrease negative affect.

Amongst the Mayan population in Guatemala participating in mourning rituals whilst coping with the collective violence enhanced current sadness, and did not protect against negative emotions and grief (Martín Beristain et al., 2000). Congruent with Durkheim's perspective, this study shows that Mayan participating in funerary rituals has positive psychosocial effects: participants report lower disengagement, higher altruistic coping and reconstruction of social support. Participating in demonstrations is associated with the reinforcement of positive beliefs about the social world or social representations (Rimé, 2005), improving collective and personal self-esteem and efficacy, as well as fulfilling needs of control and enhancement. Rituals are fundamental catalysers of commitment with values and beliefs: participants in demonstrations and in social movements report higher stability and agreement with ideological beliefs even after 20 years (Páez et al. 2005). A traumatic event like the Guatemala genocide calls into question the cultural world view and basic beliefs about the benevolence, meaningfulness and controllability of the social world, which has to be restored, largely through symbolic forms of coping such as ceremonies (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Traumatized persons, particularly suffering from strong stress reactions, report more negative beliefs about the self and the social world (Foa et al., 1999). Traumatized people also describe positive life changes after a traumatic event: growth or improvement as a person, interpersonal benefits (receiving social support and reinforcing empathy and pro-social behaviour), and social benefits (such as reinforcing the cohesion of the community). Stressing the positive aspects of the response to traumatic events predicts a better adjustment to them in the long term (Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 2005; Tennen & Affleck, 2005). Initial emotional upset and social support are preconditions of post-traumatic growth – people whose social beliefs have not been shattered, or have not been distressed by events are not motivated towards constructing and perceiving positive changes, and community support mobilisation is necessary to reconstruct a benevolent view of the social world (Armeli, Gunthert & Cohen, 2001; Janoff-Bulman, 2004).

The main objective of the present work is to explore the psychosocial effects, particularly with respect to post-traumatic growth, that participating in different types of rituals had on the reactions of people directly affected by the events of Guatemala Genocide. Second, this study aims at differentiating between the effects of the participation in demonstrations as a communal form of coping and more individual and interpersonal coping reactions such as seeking social support and altruistic behaviour.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of fifty-nine persons (41 women) ranging in age from 29 to 90 ($M = 49.0$; $SD = 15.4$). Of these, 63% were in full-time employment, 29% were housewives, and 3.4% were retired. Data referring to culture identification revealed that in 93% of the cases people declared to identify themselves mostly with *Maya*

culture ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.6$), while the identification with *half-caste* ($M = 2.0$; $SD = 1.2$) and with *ladino* culture ($M = 2.0$; $SD = 1.2$) was lower; that is, it reached 36% and 29 %, respectively.

Procedure

All participants were directly affected by the Guatemalan Genocide and were recruited from different regions of Guatemala either individually or through various local humanitarian associations, such as ODHAG, ECAP and FAMDEGUA. First, the researcher contacted them to ask if they were willing to participate. During this first stage all participants were informed of the study procedures. Participants were told that we were conducting "a research project to investigate the emotions experienced by people who survived the genocide in Guatemala over 40 years". The study was not presented as a treatment and people were also told that participation was for research purposes only. When participants declared they were ready, they were given a questionnaire. The interviewer was a psychology undergraduate student trained in interviewing procedure who was instructed to read the questions and introduce the various options of answer. This form was favored over individual administration, after having ascertained the low socio-educational status of participants. They had to identify just one of the sixteen negative events related to the genocide they had experienced or witnessed. The interview involved measures of social sharing, emotional and cognitive arousal related to events, the Differential Emotions Scale (DES), the Impact of Event Scale (IES), Coping (Brief Cope) and the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI). The open interview took about one hour, and took place in a reserved space. Thanks to the collaboration of local humanitarian associations, it has been possible to meet two Maya communities, the *Lacama II* and *Santa Lucía*. Within these communities, part of the persons interviewed spoke a Maya idiom (dissimilar to official Spanish), and so the questions and related answers were translated. The data were collected in 2008, 24 years after the climax of collective violence in Guatemala.

Measures

Demographic Measures. Participants were asked to answer a number of socio-demographic questions (sex, age, etc.). They were then invited to select one from a list of sixteen negative events related to the genocide the person had experienced or witnessed (e.g. Harassment, Mass murdered people, Forced disappearances). Questions regarding the ethnic identification followed.

Culture Identification Measure. This measure consists of six items. Participants were asked to assess, on a five-point scale (0, *not at all* / 4, *extremely*), the extent to which they identified themselves with any of six types of cultures: Maya, Half-Caste, Ladinos, South-American, North-American, and European.

Emotional Upset. A measure of the intensity of emotional upset felt at the time of the event, assessed on an eleven-point scale (0, *not at all upset* / 10, *extremely upset*).

Frequency of social sharing of emotions. Participants rated the frequency of sharing since the event happened on a five-point scale (0 = *never*, 1 = *once*, 2 = *two-three times*, 3 = *four-five times*, 4 = *more than six times*) and the number of partners of sharing on a seven-point scale (0 = *none*, 1 = *one partner*, 2 = *two partners*, 3 = *three-four partners*, 4 = *five-six partners*, 5 = *more than six partners*). The two social-sharing items showed a high correlation ($r_{(59)} = .68$).

Izard's Differential Emotions Scale – DES – (Izard, 1997). The DES assesses the intensity with which the subject experiences his/her emotional responses to a stimulus. Participants rated, along seven-point scales (0, *not at all* / 6, *completely*), how intensely

the recall of the genocide event evoked the following primary emotions: Attention, Happiness, Surprise, Sadness, Anger, Disgust, Fear, Shame, Guilt, Joyfulness, Anxiety, and Resentment. A factor analysis yielded three factors, the first combining the negative emotions, the second combining shame and guilt, and the third combining attention, joyfulness, and happiness. The first factor of the scale reached a Cronbach's α of .91. We used the total of this factor as an indicator of the intensity of emotional arousal. The second factor obtained a Cronbach's α of .88, and the third factor had a Cronbach's α of .41. The emotions experienced most intensely were: sadness, anger, fear, attention, surprise, and resentment – all with means over 2.

Impact of Event Scale (IES; Horowitz, Wilner, & Alvarez, 1979). We used the IES to assess a cognitive activation of the stressful event. It is a 15-item index of the impact of the event comprising two scales: Avoidance (e.g., "I avoided letting myself get upset when I thought about it or was reminded of it", etc.) and Intrusions (e.g., "I had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep because of pictures or thoughts about it that came into my mind", etc.). Participants were asked to assess, on a four-point scale (0, *never* / 3, *very often*), how frequently each response had been experienced after the event. Intrusion and Avoidance scores are the means of the relevant item subsets. The scales had an adequate reliability: Cronbach's α for Intrusions was .90 and Cronbach's α for Avoidance was .86.

Dimensions of Coping by means of searching social support. The Way of Coping scale (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; Penley, Tomaka & Wiebe, 2002) was adapted to Guatemalan experience by using 19 items measuring different coping styles: a) seeking *social support, emotional discharge* and *positive reappraisal* (e.g., "Seeking emotional support, accepted sympathy and understanding from someone", "Express and discharge emotions", "Changed or grew as a person in a good way"), b) *avoidance* and *distancing coping* (e.g., "withdrawal from the situation" "coping by drinking alcohol"), and c) *coping by means of altruistic behaviour* ($\alpha = .79$).

To assess *communal coping* we asked the respondents to answer four items as to the degree in which they participated in *demonstrations* and *social movements for human rights*, and engaged in *political* and *military activity* (e.g., the Army and Civil Patrol; PAC) ($\alpha = .63$). Responses were given on a four-point Likert-type response scale, ranging from *never* (0), to *always* (3). One potential problem was the overlapping between this index and questions on participation in rituals. The overlapping was only partial because here we asked about participation in demonstrations and in the items referring to rituals we asked about participation in commemorations. In any case, to avoid semantic overlapping between communal coping and secular rituals we also performed analysis excluding *demonstrations* of the communal coping index ($\alpha = .65$). Another problematic issue was the item related to military activity, which implies usually participating in the so called PAC or anti guerrilla communal patrols monitored by the army. Some members of these patrols were involved in crimes of war and we wonder if participation in PAC really is an index of participation in social movements (at least in pro human rights movements). Besides, participation in these patrols was mandatory and probably did not imply a voluntary involvement in human rights violations. Empirically, military activity highly correlates with political activity ($r_{(59)} = .68$) and social movements for human rights ($r_{(59)} = .25$) and does not correlate with demonstrations. Deleting military activity the alpha decreases from .63 to .46, so we also considered military activity in performing the communal coping index excluding demonstrations.

Post-traumatic Growth Inventory (PTG) (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). PTGI is an instrument for assessing positive outcomes reported by persons who have experienced a traumatic event. This 21-item scale includes factors of *New Possibilities, Relating to Others, Personal Strength, Spiritual Change, and Appreciation of Life*. The PTGI appears to have utility in determining how successful individuals, coping with the aftermath of

trauma, are in reconstructing or strengthening their perceptions of self, others, and the meaning of events. Participants were asked to assess the extent to which they had perceived each change after the event on a scale from 0 = *I did not experience this change as a result of my crisis*, to 5 = *I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my crisis*. Cronbach' alpha has been reported to range from .89 to .69.

Social Support. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988) was used. The MSPSS is a 12-item index of perceived support. It comprised three scales assessing the perception of support from "family", "friends" and the "others significant". The content of items refers to the global perceived support and emotional perceived support. Participants were asked to assess, on a six-point scale (0, *completely disagree* / 5, *completely agree*), the extent to which they agreed with each statement of the scale. Cronbach' alpha has been reported to range from .89 to .93.

Participation in rituals. Participants were asked by means of three items to assess on a four-point scale (0, *never* to 3, *often*) how often they participated in commemorations (e.g., celebrations designed to honour the memory of the event), as well as in truth and reparation commissions (Rehmi project), and how often they participated in funerary and commemorative religious rituals.

Results

Descriptive results

All the participants had been exposed to extreme collective violence. The events most frequently selected by them were "armed break-in" (11 %), "the death of the family members (parents, brothers etc.)" (10%), "forced disappearances" (10%), "the depredation and destruction of the home" (9%), "people struck to death" (9%), "homicides with machetes" (8%), "people killed in mass (massacres in the churches)" (8%), and "massive and indiscriminate attacks" (7%), while the other events were selected with a frequency lower than 3.

Descriptive analysis conducted on post-traumatic growth measure revealed that the PTG domain in which victims reported growth to the highest extent was Spiritual Change ($M = 4.3$; $SD = 1.10$), followed by Appreciation of Life Change ($M = 4.0$; $SD = .89$), Personal Strength ($M = 3.9$; $SD = .93$), Relating to Others ($M = 3.9$; $SD = .86$), and New Possibilities ($M = 3.7$; $SD = 1.0$). Paired sample t-tests indicated that Spiritual Change and Appreciation of Life Change were significantly higher than the other domains of PTG [$3.5 < t_{(38)} < 4.1$, $p < .001$; $2.1 < t_{(38)} < 3.5$; $0.05 < p < .001$]. No significant differences emerged among the PTG domains of Personal Strength, Relating to Others, and New Possibilities ($p > .05$).

Emotional upsetting and social sharing

The mean intensity of experienced emotion when the event happened was quite high ($M = 7.1$; $SD = 2.1$). The emotions most intensely experienced were resentment, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, anxiety – all with means over 2. Descriptive analysis conducted on social sharing measures revealed that the emotional episode was shared more than five times in 95% of cases ($M = 3.71$; $SD = 1.10$) and with more than 4 people in 90% of cases ($M = 4.40$; $SD = 1.21$). Respondents declared to have participated in rites to a high extent. The mean ratings of participation in secular commemorations, in truth and reparation commissions (Rehmi project) and in funerary and commemorative religious rituals were respectively 2.25 ($SD = .90$), 2.12 ($SD = 1.1$) and 2.30 ($SD = 1.0$). All of these means were similar among themselves and significantly higher than the intermediate score of 1.50, and all the paired t values (58) are above 4, $0.05 < p < .001$.

Correlation of Maya identification with the IES, DES, MSPSS, PTGI, Coping strategies, and participation in rituals

Maya identification was associated with positive emotion of DES ($r_{(59)} = .37, p < .001$) and participation in rituals ($r_{(59)} = .22, p < .05$). No significant associations were found with the scores in the other scales ($p > .05$).

Correlation of participation in rituals with the IES, DES, MSPSS, PTGI, and Coping strategies

Rites were associated with higher social support, higher social sharing about the past traumatic event, coping through social support, altruistic behaviour, and communal coping or engagement in political action and human rights social movements, as well as with less avoidant thoughts and reactions related to the traumatic event, confirming Durkheim's contention. Moreover, participation in rituals was associated with post-traumatic growth, confirming that rituals reinforce positive beliefs about self, others, and the society (see Table I).

TABLE I
Correlations of participation in rituals with the IES, DES, MSPSS, PTGI, and Coping strategies

Variables	Participation in Rituals			
	Truth and reparation commissions	Secular commemorations	Funerary Rituals	Index of Participation
Avoidance - IES	-.24*	-.20	-.14	-.23*
Intrusion - IES	.16	.28*	.30*	.29*
Negative Emotion - DES	.19	-.02	.19	.13
Positive Emotion - DES	-.08	-.19	.02	-.10
Social Support - MSPSS	.26*	.26*	.26*	.30*
PTGI	.38**	.22*	.39**	.37**
Altruistic Coping	.26*	.13	.21*	.22*
Avoidant Coping	-.16	-.19	.08	-.11
Communal Coping with demonstration	.39**	.37**	.41**	.45**
Communal Coping excluding demonstration	.36**	.30*	.27*	.36**
Social Support Coping	.26*	.19	.31**	.29*
Frequency of Sharing	.32**	.22*	.41**	.36**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (one-tailed)

Participation in rituals and post-traumatic growth

The average level of participation in rituals was found to be associated with all domains of PTG, except for Spiritual Change ($p > .05$). The highest correlation was with Personal Strength ($r_{(59)} = .44, p < .00$), followed by Appreciation of Life Change ($r_{(59)} = .35, p < .01$), New Possibilities ($r_{(59)} = .44, p < .01$), and Relating to Others ($r_{(59)} = .44, p < .05$).

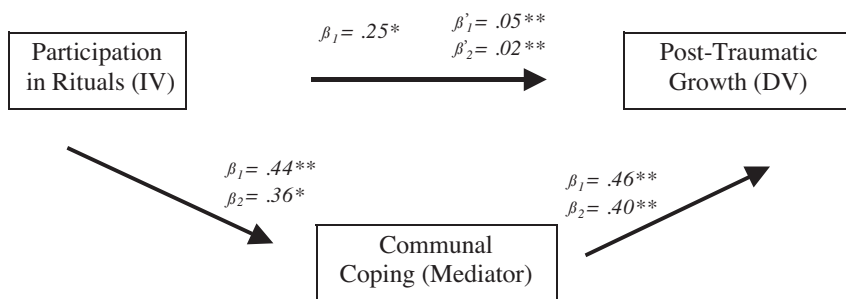
Communal Coping as a Mediating Variable of the effect of Participation in rituals on Post-Traumatic Growth

In order to test the hypothesis that the effect of participation in rituals on post-traumatic growth was mediated by communal coping (Hypothesis 1), we followed the guidelines for mediation analysis suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). Analysis was

performed for the index of communal coping with and without the demonstration item. For the presence of a significant mediating pathway, several conditions must be met. There must be significant relations between: (a) the independent variable (participation in rituals) and the dependent variable (post-traumatic growth); (b) the independent variable (participation in rituals) and the potential mediators (communal coping); and (c) the potential mediators and the dependent variables. Support for our hypothesis would be found if the effect of participation in rituals (the independent variable) on post-traumatic growth (the dependent variable) was to disappear or be significantly reduced by introducing the communal coping variable (see Baron & Kenny, 1986). To further evaluate the mediation effect of the communal coping index, a Sobel test was performed (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Regression analyses including the demonstration item of the communal coping index revealed that post-traumatic growth was predicted by participation in rituals [$R^2 = .05$, $F_{(1, 58)} = 4.1$; $p < 0.05$, $\beta = 0.25$, $t = 2.0$, $p < .05$] (Figure 1). Participation in rituals also explained the communal coping measure [$R^2 = .18$, $F_{(1, 58)} = 14.2$, $p < .01$, $\beta = .44$, $t = 3.7$, $p < .01$]. And communal coping predicted post-traumatic growth [$R^2 = .21$, $F_{(2, 58)} = 8.8$, $p < .01$, $\beta = .46$, $t = 3.58$, $p < .01$]. When the effect of communal coping on the outcome was controlled, the effect of participation in rituals was not significant [$\beta = .05$, $t = 0.38$, $p > .05$]. A Sobel test ($Z = 1.81$, $p < .05$) confirmed that the effect of participation in rituals on post-traumatic growth was mediated by communal coping. Analysis excluding the demonstration item of the communal coping index, to avoid overlapping between variables, again shows that communal coping was predicted by participation in rituals [$R^2 = .12$, $F_{(1, 58)} = 8.5$, $p < .01$, $\beta = .36$, $t = 2.9$, $p < .05$], and communal coping predicted post-traumatic growth [$R^2 = .25$, $F_{(2, 58)} = 10.8$, $p < .00$, $\beta = .40$, $t = 3.29$, $p < .05$]. When the effect of communal coping on the outcome was controlled, the effect of participation in rituals was not significant [$\beta = .22$, $t = 0.18$, $p > .05$]. A Sobel test ($Z = 2.73$, $p < .00$) confirmed that the effect of participation in rituals on post-traumatic growth was mediated by communal coping.

FIGURE 1

Testing Hypothesis 1: Communal coping mediates the effect of participation in rituals on post-traumatic growth



Note

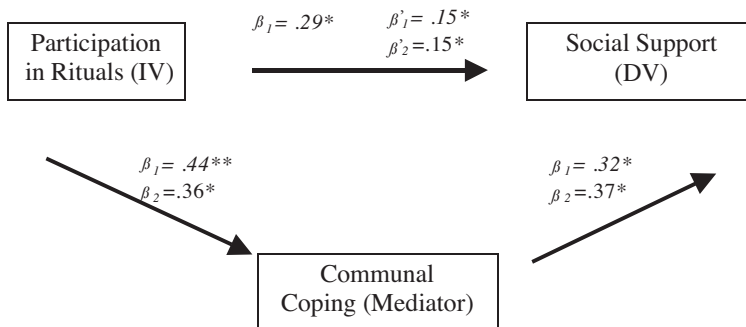
- β_1 Regression coefficient of analysis including the demonstration item of the communal coping index
 β_2 Regression coefficient of analysis excluding demonstrations of the communal coping index

Communal coping as a Mediating Variable of the effect of participation in rituals on Socio-emotional support

We next tested whether changes in communal coping strategy moderated or mediated the effects of participation on socio-emotional support (Hypothesis 2). Again, the guidelines for mediation analysis suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) are met.

Regression analyses revealed that socio-emotional support was predicted by participation in rituals [$R^2 = .71$, $F_{(1, 58)} = 5.44$; $p < .05$, $\beta = .29$, $t = 2.33$, $p < .05$] (Figure 2). Participation in rituals also explained the communal coping measure (Figure 2, path a). [$R^2 = .18$, $F_{(1, 58)} = 14.22$; $p < .01$, $\beta = .44$, $t = 3.77$; $p > .01$]. Communal coping predicted socio-emotional support [$R^2 = .14$, $F_{(2, 58)} = 5.69$, $p < .05$], [$\beta = .32$, $t = 2.34$, $p < .05$]. Even in this case, when the effect of communal coping on the outcome was controlled, the effect of the participation in rituals was not significant [$\beta = .15$, $t = 1.11$, $p > .05$]. A Sobel test ($Z = 2.0$, $p < .05$) confirmed that the effect of participation on socio-emotional support was mediated by communal coping. Analysis excluding the item on demonstrations of the communal coping index, to avoid overlapping between variables, shows that participation in rituals again explained the communal coping measure [$R^2 = .12$, $F_{(1, 58)} = 8.5$, $p < .01$, $\beta = .36$, $t = 2.9$, $p < .01$]. Communal coping predicted socio-emotional support [$R^2 = .18$, $F_{(2, 58)} = 7.5$, $p < .05$, $\beta = .37$, $t = 2.97$, $p < .05$]. Even in this case, when the effect of communal coping on the outcome was controlled, the effect of participation in rituals was not significant [$\beta = .15$, $t = 1.24$, $p > 0.05$]. A Sobel test ($Z = 2.0$, $p < .05$) confirmed that the effect of participation on socio-emotional support was mediated by communal coping.

FIGURE 2
Testing Hypothesis 2: Communal coping mediates the effect of participation in rituals on social support



Note

β_1 Regression coefficient of analysis with the demonstrations item of the communal coping index
 β_2 Regression coefficient of analysis excluding demonstrations of the communal coping index

General Discussion

First of all, our survey describes an important level of participation in rituals – half of the respondents reported participation in the Rehmi project. This could be an over-reporting of social desirable responses, even if the current Guatemalan reality is not so friendly with this type of social activities. Another possibility is that we contacted a sample of particularly active persons; in fact, we contacted people by means of social organizations. This explanation is most likely to be the actual one. However, even if our sample is a “self-selected” sample, we found some variability and, what is more important, that the level of participation in rituals was related to a lot of congruent positive outcomes.

Our results support Durkheim’s position: commemoration rites about past traumatic events, funerary rituals, and participation in transitional justice rites, like the Rehmi project, elicit social cohesion and solidarity. Rites were associated with higher social support and sharing about traumatic events, coping through social support, altruistic behaviour, communal coping or engagement in political action and human

rights social movements, and, on the other hand, with less avoidant thoughts and reactions related to the traumatic event, supporting Durkheim's contention. Moreover, participation in rituals was associated with post-traumatic growth, confirming that rituals reinforce positive beliefs about self, others, and the society. Ninety five per cent of participants reported some level of post-traumatic change: a higher level of spiritual growth and appreciation of life (over the theoretical mean of the scale), and to a lower extent discovering personal strength, improving interpersonal relations, and least frequently new possibilities in life.

Collective commemorations, mourning rituals and participation in rituals of transitional justice have a social function: activities of collective remembering insert individuals in the entire society, reaffirming the continuity of society, reinforcing social support and positive social representations. These functions of rituals are more salient in a national context dominated by impunity such as in Guatemala, where justice and punishment of perpetrators and reparation do not exist.

For Durkheim, collective commemorations and mourning rituals reinforce emotional reactions of grief, sadness, and anger. Rituals put pressure on people to place their emotional behaviour and feelings in conjunction with bereaved relatives. By means of ritual practices intense emotional reaction is induced in a structured manner. Sharing the same emotional climate is associated with a positive statement of their commitment, not only to the suffering group members, but also with social values. For Durkheim, the amplification of negative emotions by means of rituals is an important step in order to strengthen social cohesion and mobilization (Durkheim 1912/1963; Kemper, 1991). These effects of rituals on in-group cohesion and reframing of past suffering are particularly important in a context unfriendly towards victims of collective violence because of the scarce official acknowledgement of human rights violation. Our results did not support the Durkheimian position with respect to the intensification of emotions: funerary rituals were neither associated to negative emotional reactions nor to positive emotions. However, rituals reinforced intrusive thought or reminiscences of trauma, which are usually related to anxiety.

Regarding types of rituals, future-oriented ones, such as participation in the Rehmi project, which allow people to express their suffering and ask for reparation, at least at a symbolic level, show stronger association with positive outcomes (7 associations with positive outcomes). On the other hand, secular commemorations, past-oriented rituals, show less association (only one was related with a negative outcome - intrusive thoughts). Moreover, both types of commemorations were associated with rumination, while the participation in the Rehmi project was not associated with it and participants in this project reported the strongest negative association with avoidant reactions. Probably, people collaborating with this human rights project are more empowered people, using less avoidance as a coping reaction. However, even if this interpretation is correct, the general results suggest that the oriented rituals approach, aimed at the future, seems more adaptive.

Mediational analysis suggests that participation in commemorations and transitional justice rituals reinforces social integration and positive social representations, mainly increasing or reinforcing more concrete communal forms of coping. These results come from the strong identification of our sample with the collectivist Maya culture, in which speaking and helping each other are the fundament of the community. Indeed, the more participants declare to identify themselves with Maya culture, the more they experience positive emotions and participate in rituals.

Of course, it is also possible that the engagement in social movements explains higher participation in rituals, higher agreement with positive beliefs (i.e., post-traumatic growth), and higher social support. In other words, engagement in sociopolitical movements implies participation in demonstrations and rituals, as well as sharing positive social representations. Mediational analysis suggests that

participation in social movements is more important than in specific rituals or that participation in rituals is embedded in social movements. The study confirms, in agreement with the literature (Martín Berinstain et al., 2000; Pargament, 1997; Weiss and Richards, 1997), that participation in rituals leads to a strengthening of perceived social support and to post-traumatic growth. This suggests that collective positive emotions, such as the solidarity within rites, foster the reconstruction of interpersonal and social resources in a manner similar to personal positive emotions (Fredrickson Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003).

The adoption of collective coping strategies was crucial to encourage a greater perception of social support and determination of post-traumatic growth. Within the collectivist culture of Guatemalan Maya, community problems can be faced adopting common strategies of coping focused on improving the condition of the community itself. It is this collectivist spirit which accounts for the improvements that are produced by the participation of genocide victims in rituals. In situations of sharing of emotions and experiences, victims can elaborate their own painful history, feel supported by the community and enhanced as persons. These results lead us to conclude that, through rituals and forms of collective sharing of emotions, the emotional climate of some communities is really improving, and they also lead us to hope that in some regions of Guatemala they are finally coming to build the foundations for a revival of the society from the ruins of its internal war. However, in order to reconstruct the Guatemalan society, probably large scale, more ambitious and explicit forms of acknowledgement of past misdeeds and forms of reparation are necessary. Currently, these initiatives are limited and wait to be instantiated.

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Psychosocial effects of participation in rituals of transitional justice: A collective-level analysis and review of the literature of the effects of TRCs and trials on human rights violations in Latin America

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Abstract

This article examines the effects of participation in transitional justice rituals, including, for example, trials and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. These mechanisms have been designed to confront massive violations of human rights in the context of post-conflict situations and dictatorships. Truth Commissions and trials have instrumental goals of distributive justice, and serve as rituals given their marked symbolic character, helping to achieve reconciliation and the reconstruction of social norms. Evidence from South Africa and Rwanda suggests that participation in trials increases negative emotions and symptoms, and, thus, may not help to heal individual suffering. Moreover, the data from Rwanda and South Africa demonstrates that rituals also increase negative emotional climate, being costly for the society. In contrast, participants in such rituals have evidenced increased empowerment in Guatemala and South Africa, despite conditions of limited justice and reparation. Moreover, the evidence from Rwanda confirms there are some positive consequences: participation in community-based or traditional trials, known locally as Gacaca, improves intergroup relationships, decreases shame in victims, and decreases negative stereotypes and individualization of out-groups. Finally, a collective analysis of 16 Latin America nations found that trials and a successful Truth Commission provoked macrosocial benefits, reinforcing respect for human rights.

Keywords: Rituals, emotional healing, catharsis; emotional climate, macro and micro social effects.

Los efectos psicosociales de los rituales de justicia transicional: un análisis colectivo y una revisión de los estudios sobre los efectos de las Comisiones de Verdad y de los juicios sobre violaciones de los derechos humanos en América Latina

Resumen

Este artículo examina los efectos de la participación en rituales de justicia transicional, como los juicios sobre violaciones de derechos humanos y las Comisiones de Verdad. Estos mecanismos se han desarrollado para afrontar las violaciones masivas de derechos humanos en contextos de superación de conflictos y dictaduras. Los juicios sobre violaciones de derechos humanos y las Comisiones de Verdad tienen objetivos instrumentales de justicia distributiva, aunque dado su fuerte carácter simbólico actúan como rituales, ayudando a lograr la reconciliación y la reconstrucción de las normas sociales. Estudios empíricos de África del Sur y Ruanda sugieren que la participación en juicios aumenta las emociones negativas y síntomas, y por ende no ayudan a sanar el sufrimiento individual. Aun más, los resultados de Ruanda y África del Sur muestran que los rituales de justicia transicional también refuerzan un clima emocional negativo, implicando un coste social. En contraste, los participantes en estos rituales aumentan su sensación de control y poder social en Guatemala y África del Sur, pese a que los juicios se dan en condiciones de fuertes limitaciones respecto a la reparación y justicia que se pueden alcanzar. Finalmente, el estudio de Ruanda confirma que estos rituales tienen consecuencias psicosociales positivas: la participación en juicios populares, denominados Gacaca, mejoran las relaciones inter-grupo, disminuyen la vergüenza entre las víctimas, debilitan los estereotipos negativos y aumentan una percepción individualizada de los exo-grupos. Finalmente, un análisis colectivo de países de América Latina demuestra que los juicios y las Comisiones de Verdad exitosas provocan beneficios macrosociales, reforzando el respeto en la sociedad de los derechos humanos.

Palabras clave: Rituales, cura emocional, catarsis, clima emocional, efectos macro y microsociales.

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Remembering and dealing with past collective crimes is a frequent problem in societies emerging from war or state-sponsored violence. Since 1980, the use of so-called transitional justice rituals (TRCs), including truth commissions, trials, public apologies, and reparations to address past collective violence and trauma, have significantly increased. The mechanisms applied to address human rights abuses when dictatorships evolve towards democracy are referred to as transitional justice processes. The most prominent transitional justice mechanisms are truth commissions and trials. Although these processes are frequently adopted for their instrumental goals, they have important symbolic effects, inducing intense emotional and moral reactions among participants as well as in the broader society. From a Durkheimian perspective (1912), these processes are important for the collectivity, helping to consolidate norms and reinforce social cohesion. In other terms, they have more important social than psychological functions (Martín Beristain, Páez, & González, 2000; Páez, Basabe, Ubillos, & González, 2007).

During the past 30 years, entire countries have been grappling with the difficult job of generating knowledge about as well as the acknowledgment of gross violations of human rights committed by previous regimes. In an attempt to confront these human rights violations, countries have chosen frequently to assemble Truth, Justice and Reparation Commissions, such as the South-African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As of 2008 there have been more than 35 official truth commissions (TC) established around the world since the 1970s (Hayner, 2001). In recent years others have been convened. As a part of the transitional justice ritual process, many survivors have provided testimony in either private statements or at public hearings. Although the TRC and trials on human rights violations are primarily socio-political processes, some claims have been made about the therapeutic or psychological healing effects of these rituals. Truth commissions are established to obtain an accurate account of events without punishment for the perpetrators, although in recent years some of them (e.g., Peru, Paraguay and Ecuador) have included in their mandates processes which facilitate subsequent litigation of some of the cases investigated by the commissions. In most truth commissions victims testify but perpetrators are not necessarily brought to justice nor do they receive punishment, despite having been called to testify publicly.

Cathartic effects of rituals of transitional justice

Testimony in front of TRCs facilitates victims' expression of feelings and grievances, as these venues afford an official space where the truth is recognized and previous and ongoing suffering validated. There has been an assumption that testifying in TRCs is a healing experience for survivors, and healing has been a central concept in the literature on reconciliation and in political rhetoric around truth commissions. The assumption is that TRCs can provoke catharsis and psychological healing: the process of giving testimony serves a therapeutic function. Much of what has been published on these processes highlights cases of victims who have forgiven their perpetrators (Hamber & Wilson, 2003). This effect has been linked to the recognition of the victims' dignity, providing a social framework for individual experiences, and facilitating spaces for the expression of emotions and empathy.

The experience with Truth Commissions and tribunals in various countries, and in South Africa in particular, revealed that participation in such tribunals can have both positive and negative emotional consequences for the individuals involved (see Hayner, 2001). On the one hand, the survivors experience social recognition, pride, relief, and a feeling of completion from having had the opportunity to express their feelings publicly, under oath, in a solemn setting. Overall, these testimonies take the form of private statements. In other contexts, victims and their relatives can participate as the testimonies take place in public settings. Only in a very few cases, such as the South

African TRC, have declarations taken place in the presence of the perpetrators responsible for acts which they themselves or their relatives had suffered (Kanyangara, Rimé, Philippot, & Yzerbit 2007). Although there have been a small number of “miracles of reconciliation” reported by participating victims and perpetrators, some aspects of the national reconciliation process, including, for example, “sunset clauses” which protect police and military officers’ jobs, have fuelled, not healed, the victims’ trauma (Hamber, 2007). Moreover, emotional re-evocation of past dramatic events has frequently elicited among victims unexpected intense emotional reactivation of painful past feelings and, over time, unleashed a state of retraumatization (Kanyangara et al., 2007). The conditions in which testimonies are being given and victims’ expectations of the processes have important effects. First, in truth commissions people should testify with no clear expectation that perpetrators will be brought to justice. Furthermore, the testimony and interview process could have negative effects on the survivors of collective violence and torture because it “re-traumatizes” them when conditions of respect, contention, social support and adjusted expectations are not assured (Martín Beristain, 2008).

A quantitative cross-sectional study on the South African TRC (Kaminer, Stein, Mbang, & Zungu-dirway, 2001) suggests that participation in the TRC had no significant impact on decreasing symptoms of victims that participated in trials. This study compared three conditions: public testimony, private testimony, and no testimony. The sample included 134 participants, of whom 15.7% gave public testimony, 52.2% gave a statement to a statement-taker, and 32.1% gave neither a statement nor public testimony. The public testimony and statement groups in this sample represent 5% of all statements (public and closed) given to the TRC in the Western Cape. No association was found between TRC exposure and depression or TRC exposure and anxiety disorders amongst the entire sample. The public group seemed to have a substantially lower rate of post-traumatic stress disorder than the other two groups, which were very similar to each other along this dimension. The study’s main conclusion is that there were no significant differences in the rates of depression, PTSD or other anxiety disorders between participants who gave a public testimony, a closed statement, or no testimony at all. Although some individuals may have experienced testifying as either generating or relieving stress, it would appear that, for this sample as a whole, testifying or not testifying to the truth commission did not have a significant effect on psychological health (it had neither a notable therapeutic effect nor a notable counter-therapeutic effect). It is important to note that this study used a non-random sample, is retrospective, not longitudinal, and therefore is limited with respect to both the internal validity and generalizability of the findings.

Another important transitional justice related issue is the invocation of traditional justice practices, such as the Rwandan experience of local community-based trials or Gacaca. Gacaca are the village tribunals initiated in 2004 to enhance reconciliation after the 1994 genocide. It is estimated that, in Rwanda, between April and July 1994 around 1,000,000 Tutsis were killed. Additionally, tens of thousands Hutus were killed during the same period for being too moderate and too sympathetic to Tutsis, too wealthy, or political dissidents. A decade later, the state and the economy have been to a large extent rebuilt. In this context, achieving justice and reconciliation represents a particularly critical challenge. Around 130,000 persons accused of participation in the genocide are currently imprisoned and each year more die in prisons than are judged through any judicial processes. To deal with this challenge, a traditional Rwandan community-based conflict resolution system called *Gacaca* was transformed and adapted for judging most of those accused of participation in the genocide. This “modernized” *Gacaca* constitutes an unprecedented legal-social experiment in both its size and its scope. Throughout the country, Gacaca tribunals have been composed of persons of integrity elected by the inhabitants of cells, sectors, districts, and provinces.

Prisoners are brought before the tribunal in the community where they allegedly committed a crime. In their presence, survivors and the entire community discuss the alleged acts, providing testimony and counter-testimony. Prisoners who confess before the proceedings and ask for forgiveness can receive important reductions in penalties (Kanyangara et al., 2007).

One qualitative study of the Gacaca included 16 in-depth interviews with women in Rwanda who have testified in the Gacaca. The interviews were designed to learn more about the way testifying in such a public event affects participants' psychological health. The interviewed women described the experience as more re-traumatizing than healing. Traumatization, ill-health, isolation, and insecurity dominated their lives after their participation in the process. They were being threatened and harassed before, during, and after giving testimony in Gacaca. A large epidemiological study confirmed the negative effects of participation in local tribunals given the fact that the Gacaca participants reported higher traumatic and depression symptoms in comparison with the control group (Bronéus, 2008). The first of several longitudinal studies compared the effects of participation in Gacaca trials (Kanyangara et al., 2007). Fifty survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and 50 prisoners accused of being responsible of genocidal acts completed four scales 45 days before and 45 days after their participation in the Gacaca trial. The scales assessed negative emotions presently felt with regard to the genocide, perceived emotional climate, negative stereotypes of the out-group, and perceived similarity among out-group members. Participation in Gacaca provoked a reactivation of negative emotions in both groups and also impacted negatively on the perceived emotional climate. The social ritual of Gacaca elicited an emotional communion amongst participants and fostered intense emotional manifestations and re-evocations of the genocide. What is more, emotions of sadness, fear, disgust, and anxiety increased after the Gacaca, especially among survivors. Guilt increased among the prisoners but not among the survivors. In sum, all emotions that were congruent with the group experience – for example, fear is more central to the re-evoked experience of the survivors, and guilt to that of the prisoners – were enhanced by participation in the Gacaca. This is corroborated by the fact that, overall, survivors experienced more fear and anger, while prisoners more guilt.

A second large quasi-experimental study compared Gacaca participants with people who did not participate in the trials. The previously described measures of emotion were administered to victims ($N = 200$) of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and prisoners ($N = 184$) accused of genocidal acts before and after their participation in Truth and Reconciliation *Gacaca* trials. Control groups of victims ($N = 195$) and prisoners ($N = 176$) completed the same measures before and after. The perpetrators and the victims who participated in Gacaca manifested an increase of the negative emotions of fear, sadness, and anxiety. Thus, participation in trials took an affective toll on the people involved. Participation in popular trials or Gacaca increased negative emotions, while no changes were observed for non-participants (Kanyangara, 2008). In conclusion, participation in a transitional justice ritual such as Gacaca clearly has a marked affective cost for both victims and perpetrators. Such findings are entirely in line with the follow-up data collected by Bronéus (2008) on witnesses who participated in Gacaca, and are also consistent with clinical observations which have found that participation in a truth and reconciliation process involves a risk of retraumatization (Hamber, 2007; Hayner, 2001). However, rather than increasing disgust, perpetrators' self-reports after Gacaca reflected a significant decrease, and anger failed to show an increase after participation. These two emotions belong to what Izard (1972) labeled the "hostile triad" (i.e., anger, disgust, and contempt). These results suggest that Gacaca participation did not enhance and may even have reduced perpetrators' aggressive feelings, while increasing guilt and shame. Finally, there was a significant increase in feelings of shame among perpetrators (Kanyangara, 2008). The emotion of shame plays

an important role with regard to social control and one of the functions of trials is to strengthen shamefulness in the accused individuals in order to favor the internalization of social norms among them (Scheff & Retzinger, 1991).

Results also fully support Durkheim's (1912) view that the emotional reactivation resulting from participants' reciprocal stimulation can be seen as the core of social rituals. The fact that perpetrators and victims largely experienced similar emotions suggests that the process of mutual emotional stimulation described by Durkheim actually occurred in the Gacacas. However, next to the amplification of negative emotions, there were also less spectacular albeit significant effects which suggest that a social ritual such as the Gacaca also entails constructive emotional consequences. As for perpetrators, the ritual resulted in an increase of guilt and shame and a reduction of disgust, both consequences which should favor the internalization of social control among perpetrators.

The increase in negative emotions among participants of transitional justice rituals confirms that some measures are needed to prevent retraumatization. Staub, Pearlman & Miller (2003) have suggested that, in addition to the need to clarify and adjust expectations, participants need to be prepared for the testimony in the Gacaca to reduce surprise, and also witnesses need to be encouraged to bring someone with them as social support, and to share with others what they have heard and seen. Finally, a fair procedural context that respects victims, recognizes their claims and their dignity, acknowledges truth, and, at least symbolically, affords them reparations can help in avoiding excessively long processes, extensive confrontation with perpetrators, repetitive witnessing, and retraumatization (Martín Beristain, 2008).

Positive empowerment effects of transitional rituals

It may be also argued that the perceived absence of justice (i.e., punishment of perpetrators) and reparation (lack of compensation for survivors) in the South African TRC and Gacaca processes, which brought about protests from many survivors, may have been a barrier to emotional recovery. More importantly, the lack of change in the socio-economic situation of the survivors may create anger and scepticism that are displaced onto the TRC and Gacaca. However, partial evidence suggests that participation in trials that implies limited justice and reparation empowers some survivors, a finding that was confirmed in a study of Mayan direct and indirect victims of a massacre in Xaman in Guatemala (Lykes, Cabrera, & Martín Beristain, 2007). Active participation in trials and rituals of transitional justice can enhance perceived control and self-esteem. The testimony and interview process can have positive effects of empowerment on survivors. The Lykes et al. (2007) study focused on the case of a Maya community that had suffered a massacre at the hands of the army and wanted to obtain justice for the violations of their human rights. However, this proved to be difficult because of the policy of impunity that was maintained during the post-conflict transition by the Guatemalan government and military. Participant observation revealed how the massacre had created an emotional climate of fear and sadness, how people coped with it, and how it evolved over time. The emotional climate of fear and the symptoms of post traumatic stress appeared to have been most intense immediately after the massacre because of the shock and the emergency situation that was created. This reaction took a toll on both individuals and the community but was gradually reduced over the first year. During the trial (three years after the massacre), government lawyers and judges sought to hold the victims responsible for the massacre, blaming them for their vindictive attitude. Some direct and indirect victims participated as witnesses in a trial against members of the Guatemalan army that killed 11 members of Xaman community after the end of civil war.

The participation of victims and affected community members in the trial was evaluated by means of structured interviews. The interviews included measures of coping, of emotional reactions, and of basic social beliefs such as a sense of justice, control, and meaningfulness. The negative experience of participation in the trial was associated with re-experiencing fear, anxiety, stress, and depression. However, active coping and social sharing in order to understand the events that had occurred were found to be helpful in constructing a positive interpretation of the events and in stressing the community's struggle against impunity in Guatemala. The trial participants reported less fear of army retaliation, higher expectations of justice, more positive appraisal of social mobilization and higher perception of injustice, more agreement with the positive effects of social sharing, and higher social cohesion (that is, they agreed more with the statement "Community was united, supported trial") in comparison with non-participants. Participation in the trials, even in the negative context of perpetrator impunity, still reinforced victims' group cohesion and social identity as Maya Indians. Participants reported higher levels of adaptive coping and higher support of collective mobilization than non-participant survivors (Lykes et al., 2007). In the same vein, participant victims in the South African TRC reported higher levels of political trust and efficacy than non-participant victims (Gibson, 2004). Comparing responses of the general South African population and the participant and non-participant victims, Backer (2005) concludes:

Another pattern that is evident in these comparisons is that the victims who participated in the TRC process tend to exhibit a greater level of political trust than does the general public. The differences are generally modest... this finding offers suggestive evidence that the TRC process may have contributed to the development of support for and faith in important aspects of the political system. Most notably, confidence among participating victims in the Constitutional Court is quite high. At the very least, the data do not indicate that their level of political trust is lower than it might have been in the absence of the TRC, using the general public as a benchmark of expectations. The same cannot necessarily be said about non-participating victims, who generally exhibit attitudes that are both distrusting and lower than either of the other samples." (Backer, 2005, pp. 39)

We can conclude that participation in transitional justice rituals has positive effects on self-efficacy and esteem. However, these studies show limitations because of their cross-sectional design. As Backer posits: "Again, what remains unclear is whether these patterns are a direct by-product of the TRC, or instead the manifestation of a pre-existing disengagement or cynicism that could also explain why certain victims opted not to participate in this process" (Backer, 2005, pp. 39). Nevertheless, the longitudinal study by Kanyangara et al. (2008) also supports the positive causal effects of rituals on self-esteem. This study showed that shame decreases among victims after Gacaca, while no change is observed among control victims (Kanyangara, 2008). Shame decline among victims suggests that, in spite of an increase in fear and sadness, participation in rituals helps victims to restore their dignity. Clearly, in spite of the limitations of this procedure, this longitudinal evidence on the decrease of shame supports the idea that transitional justice rituals contribute to improving the image and restoring some dignity among victims.

Positive micro-social effects of transitional rituals

According to Durkheim's hypothesis and empirical research, participation in rituals after a collective trauma should also increase positive emotional climate and social cohesion. As regards the negative emotional climate, it may well prevail, given the reactivation of the negative memories of extreme intergroup conflicts entailed by transitional justice rituals like Gacaca (Martín Beristain et al., 2000). Kanyangara et al. (2007) found that both the victims and the perpetrators perceived the social climate as more negative after than before Gacaca, but significantly so only for victims.

As a positive emotional climate involves the members' perception of such feelings as hope, solidarity, confidence, trust and like, it was expected that the climate would be perceived as more positive after the Gacaca than before, following a Durkheimian approach to rituals. Kanyangara et al.'s (2007) results were more nuanced in this regard. Among participating victims, positive climate was rated as higher than among their controls before Gacaca. This effect very probably resulted from the hopes and positive expectations which characterized participating victims in the period immediately preceding the trial. Their positive perception of the climate decreased after the trial but, nevertheless, remained higher than among victims in the control group. Thus, anticipating a popular trial was associated to a positive social climate in victims and their positive expectation exceeded what the experience actually provided (Staub et al., 2003). Yet, the fact that, after the trial, victims who participated continued to have a more positive perception of the social climate than those in the control group suggests that their hopes did not entirely vanish with the trial.

Among perpetrators, an effect in the opposite direction occurred as they perceived the climate as less positive than their controls before Gacaca. It makes sense that, from their perspective, anticipating the trial entailed effects opposite to those manifested among the victims. After the Gacaca, the perception of positive emotions in the social climate was markedly increased among perpetrators who participated whereas no effect was found for them in regard to negative climate (Kanyangara et al., 2007).

Participation in the trials reinforced the negative emotional climate among victims, probably because confrontation with the perpetrators very likely triggered past traumas and provoked an increase in negative socio-emotional experiences among them. In contrast, no effect emerged for the perception of negative climate in the case of perpetrators. As we have reported above, after the Gacaca the perception of positive emotions in the social climate increased markedly among perpetrators who participated. Thus, the fact that the positive climate was initially perceived as lower among perpetrators who took part in the trials than among their control group suggests that those trials entailed a collective emotional cost. However, by the end of the trial, the cost seemed to be much lighter for the perpetrators than for the victims. This is consistent with other studies which found that active perpetrators evidenced a more positive attitude toward transitional rituals and intergroup forgiving, especially when they did not receive hard punishment – as was the case in Gacaca trials (Kanyangara et al., 2007; Staub et al., 2003). As we saw above, participation in the trials reinforced the negative emotional climate among the victims. Such findings fit those provided by surveys which showed that other instances of transitional justice such as South African TRC generally reinforced respondents' perception of negative emotional climate. To illustrate, two thirds of respondents in a national South African poll considered that the revelations of TRC had made people angrier and had rendered intergroup relationships more complex than they were beforehand (Gibson, 2004).

What is more, these results also suggest that transitional justice rituals *per se* have limited effects on the emotional side of reconciliation. Teaching individuals involved in the genocide about its causes and characteristics to help foster understanding, explaining modal traumatic symptoms in order to normalize them, instructing the population about psychological healing and fulfilling needs or about sharing emotions in an empathic context appear to be necessary conditions to overcome the personal and collective emotional effects of gross violations of human rights and to support reconciliation – as has been confirmed by the educational and experiential interventions in Rwanda carried out by Staub, Pearlman, Gubin, and Haggengimana (2005). After participation in a three-week focused intervention of six sessions, the treatment group showed a decline in trauma symptoms and exhibited a more positive orientation toward the other group two months after the treatment, while those in a traditional support group and a control group reported increased symptoms. Re-exposure to past

events and social support did not help to overcome emotional distress suggesting that a more psycho-educational and empathic intervention is needed. However, there is evidence that transitional justice rituals had positive intergroup effects, as we will discuss. Kanyangara's longitudinal and quasi-experimental studies showed that while participation in Gacaca trials increased negative climate perception in victims, it had positive effects on social cohesion. To the extent that prisoners were pleading guilty, thereby recognizing the status of their victims, and because many feelings were publicly expressed, thereby rendering out-group members more human, Gacaca rituals enhanced social cohesion. Positive climate increased among perpetrators, while social identification with the in-group, negative stereotypes and perceived out-group homogeneity decreased in both victims and perpetrators (Kanyangara et al., 2007). In other words, participation in Gacaca trials had positive consequences for intergroup perception, that is, provoked reductions of stereotypical perceptions of survivors and prisoners toward each other.

Globally, evidence supports the positive micro-social effects of this type of transitional justice mechanisms in which confrontation with perpetrators takes place in a communitarian setting and in a cultural context in which the transitional justice mechanisms and traditional leaders play an important role. Participation in this kind of ritual empowers survivors, who report higher self-efficacy. In the same vein, participation in Gacaca reinforces positive intergroup perceptions. We can conclude that transitional rituals, which are supposed to involve victim-perpetrator confrontation in a reconciliation scenario, have positive micro-social effects. We will turn now to macro-social effects of TRCs and trials.

Positive macro-social effects: A collective level study

Truth commissions are temporary organisms set up to investigate a past history of violations of human rights in a country including violations by the army, government forces, or armed opposition forces (Hayner, 2001). Their common aims are: identification of previous abuses, public acknowledgment of the existence and characteristics of abuses, and perpetrators' accountability without criminal punishment. Truth commissions may serve long-term societal goals such as prevention of cycles of revenge and prevention of new crimes of war and collective violence. In some cases, trials on violation of human rights have pursued those responsible for past collective violence. Trials of human rights abuses, like the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals, or trials against officials responsible for mass disappearances in Latin America, are other forms of transitional justice that are used to overcome negative past events. Trials are supposed to reinforce the rule of law, including the accountability of holders of government, army, police and armed political factions, and the respect of political rights. By this token, trials could contribute to reduce future human rights violations (Sikkink & Booth-Walling, 2007).

Several authors have argued that the benefits of the TRC have been immense and that because of the TRCs "there is no turning back" (Hamber, 2007; Hayner, 2001). Studies based on university students that evaluate the TRC process, show that these rituals are perceived to have more positive effects at the macro-social or national level, reinforcing cohesion and reconciliation, than at the interpersonal or personal level (Lillie & Janoff-Bulman, 2007). In this study Lillie and Janoff-Bulman describe the experience of the South African TRC to university students of human rights. They ask them to evaluate the perceived effects of this transitional justice experience. They frame the question in three different conditions: a) a micro-social condition: "From the perspective of the victims and families the TRC has had negative or positive effects"; b) a macro-social condition: "From the perspective of the South African society TRC has had negative or positive effects"; and, c) a control condition with no clear frame:

“How negative/positive was the TRC?”. Results show that the TRC was perceived as having more macro-social than micro-social effects. These results provide some limited support for the hypothesis that TRCs have made a larger contribution to reconciliation and healing at the macro level than at the interpersonal level. In contrast, some authors have argued that the positive macro-social effects of transitional justice rituals have been overestimated and that these mechanisms do not have broader social effects. Moreover, some authors argue that human rights trials can exacerbate conflict and can undermine efforts to consolidate and develop democracy (Brahm, 2004; Sikkink & Booth-Walling, 2006). In the empirical study reported below we will examine the actual, not only the perceived, positive macro-social effects of TRC and trials.

Overview

To test the hypothesis that truth commissions and trials have a positive macro-social impact, including, for example, the prevention of collective violence, and reinforce norms of justice and human rights values, we conducted a collective level analysis of the effects of the TRC and the trials on the decrease of human rights violation in Latin America, combining the data from Sikkink & Booth-Walling's (2006) and Brahm's (2004) studies using the nation as the unit of analysis. We compared national mean level measures of respect for human rights before and after trials and TRCs.

Method

Sample

The sample included 16 Latin American countries that adopted truth commission and trial procedures and experienced a transition from a dictatorship towards democracy in the 1980s and 1990s (see Table I for the list of nations). We performed a secondary data analysis based on public available measures of human rights, trials, and TRCs.

Variables and measures

Measure of respect for Human rights: The main “dependent” measure was a Political Terror Measure (PTS) score, based on Amnesty International and other reports. The PTS is a quantitative measure from 1 to 5, with a higher score meaning more violations, and a score of 5 indicating extreme human rights violations, including summary executions, disappearances, torture and political imprisonment. Change was the difference between the average of PTS five years and 10 years after the first trials or before and after the transition. Usually pre-trials or pre-transition scores are based on the years 1980-1985. It was not possible to use an average of the PTS for ten years before the trials because the PTS measure is only available from 1980. Post-trials or post-transition scores are usually based on the years 1986-96 or 1990-2000. In the majority of cases the first trial on human rights was performed after or close to the transition from dictatorship to democracy. In all cases baseline scores reflect the situation during the dictatorship, civil war, or intense conflict (Sikkink & Booth-Walling, 2006).

Measure of trials. The number of years during which the trials on human rights endured was used as an index of the intensity of transitional justice. It is important to be aware that years of trial is a limited index of the intensity of struggle for human rights. For example, impunity is greater in Guatemala and Paraguay than in Chile and Argentina, but these nations have similar scores on this index. In the case of El Salvador, only one trial has occurred, with negative results, yet the index of 4 years of trial is a very limited reflection of this reality (Brahm, 2004; Sikkink-Booth & Walling, 2006).

Measure of performance and existence of TRC. Good performance by a TRC means that the commission was successful (not disbanded), afforded private or public hearings that allowed victims to express grievances, and was able to edit a report, recognizing the truth of human rights violations and validating victim's suffering. Quality of performance of TRC was measured using an ordinal scale: 1 = *No TRC*, 2 = *limited TRC, disbanded*; 3 = *TRC, not disbanded and edited report* (Brahm, 2004; Sikkink & Booth-Walling, 2006).

Data for Grenada and Uruguay were not available. Sikkink & Booth-Walling (2006) did not include Colombia in his data. Colombia shows a higher level of human right violations, suffering from decades of political violence, but is a formal parliamentary democracy.

Results

Table I includes each nation's descriptive data related to TRC participation and system transition, average scores comparing four types of situations: nations with trials and relatively successful Truth Commissions (mean improvement in human rights 1.13), nations with trials and unsuccessful Truth Commissions (mean improvement in human rights 0.37), nations with trials but without Truth Commissions (mean improvement in human rights 0.08), and nations with no trials nor Truth Commissions (mean improvement -0.40).

Every nation that adopted a truth commission also applied trials, but two nations used only trials and not TRC – Brazil and Guyana (see Table I). Non-parametric Rho correlations were performed between years of trial duration, quality and existence of TRC and improvement in human rights. There is a strong correlation between the difference of pre- or baseline minus actual score of PTS and the number of the nations' trial years. Years of trial duration show a $r_{bo(16)} = .51, p < .03$, with change score or improvement in human rights. Quality of performance of TRC (1 = *No TRC*, 2 = *limited TRC, disbanded*; 3 = *TRC, not disbanded and edited report*) correlated positively with improvement in human rights ($r_{bo(16)} = .54, p < .02$), and accompanied an increase of more than 1 point on the 5-point PTS scale (see Table I).

Discussion

In comparing human rights situations before and after trials, or before and after transitions to democracy, also taking into account the quality of truth commissions, we found that years of trial and truth commission performance were associated in 16 Latin American countries to significant improvements in the political situation (Sikkink & Booth-Walling, 2007). As the previously cited authors argue, it is very likely that much of the improvement in human rights is due to the transition to democracy rather than to the effect of trials and truth commissions. This is difficult to test because only one country did not suffer dictatorship (Venezuela) and only two transitional nations, Brazil and Guyana, did not carry out trials. All of the 14 nations that held trials went through the processes of democratization. However, transitional nations that held more trials had a higher average improvement in human rights than nations that had fewer or no trials at all. The nations that held more years of trials were also more likely to have a TRC than the countries which held no or fewer trials. The nations which had both truth commissions and trials had a better score than those which only conducted trials. These results, together with the case of Brazil, suggest that the level and the quality of transitional justice rituals have some independent positive macro-social effect, separate from the transition to democracy. In fact, Brazil, the most important transitional country without trials and a TRC in Latin America, experienced a greater decline in human rights than any other transitional nation in the region. Guyana shows a flat line: no important change before and after transition to democracy – Guyana had

TABLE I
Continued

Nations With Truth but No Truth Commis.	11.- Honduras	1982	No		9	3.2	(1992)	2.7	0.5
	12.- Mexico	Fall of PRI monopoly of government 1995	No		5	3.2	(1992)	3.24	-0.2
	13.- Nicaragua	1990	No		5	3	(1992)	2.7	0.3
	14.- Venezuela	No dictatorship	No		5	3.2	(1991)	3.5	-0.3
	Average Change								0.075
Nations With No Truth and Truth Commis.	15.-Brazil	1985 1985	No	1964	0	3.2*		4.1	-0.9
	16.-Guyana		No		0	2.0*		1.9	0.1
	Average Change								-0.4

* In these cases pre PTS are based on years before Transition years and post PTS are based on years after Transition

**Data based on Bharam (2004) and Sikkink & Boot Walling (2006)

a stable and strong human rights record. The case of Brazil suggests that the transition to democracy does not guarantee an improvement in human rights.

Overall, it should be taken into account that a lot of the above mentioned experiences took place in the context of impunity and political struggles for the recognition of human rights violations, with different political and historical factors affecting results. In Argentina the TRC report had a significant impact and was a bestseller at a national level, whereas in other cases, such as El Salvador, the report was not even published and its impact was scarce due to the amnesty which was conceded five days after its publication.

Of course, it is plausible that there is a distal factor affecting the improvements in human rights reported here rather than trials or truth commissions. These might include the existence of a strong political movement or a willingness in the political elite to hold perpetrators accountable for past human rights violations. It is not clear how to separate out the political will to hold trials and TRCs from the effects of rituals themselves. However, the political context and will for accountability were very variable among nations and even between historical periods. TRCs were performed with strong political opposition in some cases and with some consensus in others – but in all cases there was a strong political conflict between perpetrators and victims. We can conclude that a part of the human rights improvement comes from TRCs and trials, regardless of the level of political will for accountability, and this positive macro-social effect is not explained only by the transition to democracy – at least in the case of Latin America (see also Sikkink & Booth-Walling, 2007, for a similar conclusion).

General Conclusions

With respect to the question of the effects of rituals of transitional justice, we can conclude that participation in trials and TRCs increases negative emotions and symptoms, and, thus, we cannot confirm that giving testimony helps in healing individual suffering. This means that rituals are costly for the individual and should be prepared carefully clarifying and adjusting expectations and goals, preparing participants for their testimonies, and providing social support and recognition. However, even in limited conditions, participation in transitional justice rituals has been found to have the positive effects of empowering people and restoring dignity. These rituals also increase negative emotional climate, and, through this, can fuel conflict more than support harmony. This means that rituals are also costly for participating societies and should be prepared carefully, even when they have positive consequences. As regards these positive outcomes, social cohesion is perceived to be reinforced and participation in rituals such as the popular trials or Gacaca in Rwanda improve intergroup relationships, decrease negative stereotypes and the individualization of the out-group. Finally, at least in the case of Latin America, in which the majority of truth commissions to date have taken place, trials and a successful truth commission reinforce respect for human rights. These results suggest that perceived macro-social benefits of transitional justice rituals are real.

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“Should a country’s leaders apologize for its past misdeeds?” An analysis of the effects of both public apologies from a Belgian official and perception of Congolese victims’ continued suffering on Belgians’ representations of colonial action, support for reparation, and attitudes towards the Congolese

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Abstract

This study sought to identify the conditions facilitating the recognition of a social group’s past misdeeds among its members. Such recognition entails a threat to group members’ social identity, potentially triggering defensive strategies, such as denying these misdeeds, not experiencing collective guilt and shame, opposing reparative actions, and derogating the victim group’s members. As collective rituals, public apologies performed by an official representative should allow group members to acknowledge the harm done while maintaining a positive social identity, therefore alleviating the need for such defensive strategies. We carried out an experimental study based on a 2 (Apologies vs. No apologies) × 2 (Continued suffering vs. No continued suffering) + 1 (Control) design, with Belgian participants (N = 164). In all conditions, participants were reminded of the atrocities committed during the first years of the Belgian colonization of Congo. This description was followed by a short statement about the suffering that Congolese people still endured (Continued suffering condition) or none (No continued suffering), then by a transcript of public apologies pronounced by Belgium’s Foreign Affairs Minister in the Apologies condition, or none (No apologies). Results revealed that Belgian participants’ attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the Congolese were the most positive when both apologies and the victims’ continued suffering were reunited. A mediation analysis further demonstrated that differences in levels of racism and in support for reparation were mediated by representations of the ingroup’s past.

Keywords: Public apologies, social representations, social identity, Belgium, Congo.

¿Debe un país pedir perdón por sus errores pasados? Un análisis de los efectos conjuntos de las disculpas públicas de un representante político belga y de la percepción del sufrimiento continuo de las víctimas congoleñas en las representaciones de los belgas sobre el pasado colonial, apoyo a reparaciones y actitudes ante los congoleños

Resumen

Se analizarán las condiciones que facilitan que un grupo reconozca los “delitos” llevados a cabo por este mismo grupo en el pasado. Este reconocimiento puede suponer una amenaza para la identidad social de los miembros que puede provocar estrategias defensivas. La petición pública de perdón por parte de un representante oficial del endogrupo podría permitir a los miembros del grupo asumir el daño causado manteniendo a su vez una identidad social positiva. Se llevó a cabo un estudio experimental con un diseño 2 (perdón/no perdón) × 2 (sufrimiento continuado/no sufrimiento) + 1 (control) con participantes belgas (n = 164). En todas las condiciones se recordó a los participantes las atrocidades cometidas durante los primeros años de la colonización belga del Congo. Los resultados muestran que las actitudes e intenciones conductuales de los participantes hacia las personas del Congo eran más positivas en la condición en la que se ofrecía perdón y el sufrimiento continuaba presente. Un análisis mediacional mostró que las diferencias en los niveles de racismo y apoyo a la reparación se encontraban mediadas por las representaciones del pasado del endogrupo.

Palabras clave: Perdón público, representaciones sociales, identidad social, Bélgica, Congo.

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How fundamental is it to look back at our past and question it? Historians would certainly argue that the way in which we look back at our actions influences our present behaviour. But what do psychologists have to say about it? Recently Páez et al. (2008) have shown that winning a war has an impact on how people legitimate violence, even after various generations. In contrast, this phenomenon cannot be found among the defeated. This idea strengthens Licata and Klein's (2005) suggestion that a shared representation of the past among ingroup members brings them closer to each other. However, is it possible to modify this representation without diminishing their social bonding? As suggested by Páez et al. (2008), it seems that winners have to make a greater effort than the defeated in order to maintain a peaceful vision of relationships. On the basis of Durkheim's conception of rituals, we suggested a solution to this problem by proposing the idea that public excuses could bring awareness of the group's negative past, while avoiding threatening people's social identity. In fact, by offering the group's excuses, the group's representative (be it the Prime Minister, the President, or the Minister of foreign affairs) indicates to the nation what attitude has to be adopted with regards to the victims, which should allow them to experience collective guilt and consider reparative behaviour, whilst it also strengthens the group's identity.

In this article, we focus on the effects of public excuses on the collective emotions of the 'guilty' group's members, intergroup attitudes, and degree of support for reparative actions. We present a study carried out in Belgium. Belgium's past has recently been criticized for the violence of its colonial action in the Congo, during the reign of King Leopold II (Hochschild, 1998). But, since Congo's independence in 1960, no public excuse was ever uttered by Belgian official representatives to the Congolese people. On the contrary, negative depictions of the country's colonial enterprise generally trigger acerbic criticism from some parts of Belgium's public opinion. And this negative side of Belgium's history remains largely unknown.

The Congo Free State was established in 1885 at Berlin's international conference. From 1885 to 1908, Congo belonged to the Belgian King Leopold II. During that period Congolese people suffered of various ill-treatments, including the famous amputation of the hand. Severing hands has been described as a recurrent form of punishment used to force the population to meet the rubber quotas requested (Haim, 1995). These mistreatments were denounced through an international humanitarian campaign at the beginning of the twentieth century (Morel, 1906); as a result, Leopold II legated the colony to the Belgian government. Congo then became a proper Belgian colony, until 1960 when it conquered its independence.

However, historians are still currently debating over the exact extent of the damage done to the Congolese people during the different phases of Belgian colonization (versus its benefits), the intentionality behind these sufferings, or the degree to which colonization is responsible for the country's present situation (Ndaywel è Nziem, 2005; Vellut, 2005). It is not our intention to take part in this debate. But, as a historical period strongly associated with Belgian identity, colonization appears as a good example of a problematic past that can bear on the present. In addition, the Democratic Republic of Congo currently experiences a difficult situation, with one of the highest rates of poverty in the world (Mutamba Lukusa, 1999) and recurring civil wars, which seems to highlight the colonizers' responsibility for that present suffering. Finally, a growing number of Congolese people now live in Belgium, so that Belgian people have concrete opportunities to get into contact with Congolese people.

The ingroup's past and its link to social identity

According to Baumeister & Hastings (1997), ingroup members try to maintain a positive image of their group by avoiding facts that could represent the ingroup as amoral and sometimes even by distorting the reality. This allows them to consider their

group as fair and to free themselves from questioning their group's morality and from experiencing negative emotions. Furthermore, Roccas, Klar & Liviatan (2004, p. 131) argued that "confronting information that indicates one's ingroup has committed acts that are incompatible with one's moral standards is an unpleasant psychological experience for most if not all group members". Moreover, Reicher & Haslam (2006) showed that the loss of positive social identity can have important consequences on self-esteem. Indeed, recognizing the ingroup's faults generates negative emotions such as collective guilt (Branscombe & Doosje, 2004). According to Branscombe, Doosje & McGarty (2002), collective guilt represents the distress experienced by group members when they accept the fact that their ingroup is responsible for physical or moral infractions towards an outgroup. Two conditions are necessary in order to feel guilty for actions committed by the ingroup: (1) to consider oneself as belonging to the ingroup and (2) to consider the ingroup as guilty (Branscombe et al., 2002). Furthermore, the same authors discovered two other conditions that can increase collective guilt, once the two first conditions are satisfied: (1) the ingroup must recognize the fact that the victims are still in a lower position and (2) a critical questioning must arouse in the ingroup, allowing the questioning of the group's morality.

According to Branscombe & Doosje (2004), recognition of the ingroup's faults seems to play an important role in the process of reconciliation; however, this first step faces an important obstacle: the necessity to maintain a positive image of the ingroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Indeed, Brown, Gonzalez, Zagefka, Manzi & Cehajic (2008) and Roccas et al. (2004) have shown that people who highly identify with their group have a greater resistance to accept facts implying an acknowledgment of the misdeeds.

Brown (1998) suggests that leaders are the only ones who can freely express a critique over their own group. Critiques are generally not well accepted by ingroup members, who tend to consider the critics as deviants. In contrast, when the same negative point of view is expressed by a leader, it is regarded as denoting a wish to improve the group, therefore eliciting more positive reactions. Hence, Páez (2010) suggests that only leaders, through official excuses, could induce a change of representation of the past among members of the faulty group. This idea is based upon Durkheim's (1912) vision of rituals as reinforcing group members' social bonding. Consequently, Páez (2010) suggested that public excuses are a form of ritual which allows, on the one hand, recognizing the misdeeds of the past and, on the other hand, to reinforce the ingroup's social identity. During the leader's speech, members could perceive a recognition of the past faults and collective guilt as norms worth adopting. Accordingly, Rimé (2005) noticed that rituals allow the sharing of emotions, even if they are negative, therefore strengthening social bonding among members. In the case of an apology, the expression of collective guilt expressed by the leader could allow ingroup members to feel this emotion as well, which will reinforce their bonding. Moreover, these public apologies should also allow people to modify the social representation of the past events at stake, towards a greater recognition of its negative sides. Consequently, the apologies pronounced by the leader should lead group members to express more critical representations of the group's past, while reinforcing their social bonding among each other.

Public excuses as a tool for avoiding cognitive dissonance

As explained previously, individuals tend to maintain a positive image of their group, because doubting it would lower their self-esteem (Reicher & Haslam, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Having to face facts that might weaken the group's image is so threatening that particular cognitive processes might take place in order to avoid such an unpleasant situation. Thus, we suggest that the will to maintain a desirable perception of the group, combined to the recalling of past misdeeds of the ingroup,

constitutes a situation of cognitive dissonance. As Festinger (1957) described, cognitive dissonance is a state of mind in which two cognitions are contradictory. To avoid it, individuals generally adjust one of the cognitions, in order to overcome the contradiction. People desiring to maintain a positive image of themselves and their group might therefore adapt their representations of the past, either by denying the facts themselves, by considering the behaviours at stake as moral, or by diminishing the consequences of their group's misdeeds (Augustinos & LeCouteur, 2004).

In our view, the public expression of apologies by a legitimate representative of the group could alleviate this cognitive dissonance: by recognizing the reality and immorality of the group's past behaviour, and by expressing his/her feelings, the leader gives a formal permission to the members of the group to think and feel likewise. Hence, public excuses allow subordinates to recognize the facts while maintaining a positive image of the ingroup. Conversely, in the absence of public excuses, reminding group members of their group's past transgression of moral norms constitutes a situation of cognitive dissonance, as this reminiscence would be in conflict with the need for a positive social identity.

According to Lickel, Schmader & Barquissau (2004), the first step towards a feeling of collective guilt is to recognize the ingroup's misdeeds. We argue that this first step cannot be achieved without the leader's support since individuals will seek to avoid cognitive dissonance. Public excuses can therefore be a powerful means to recall the misdeeds committed in the name of the group without threatening its members' social identity. Moreover, based upon Durkheim's (1912) conception of rituals, we suggest that public excuses can reinforce social identity. In the absence of public excuses pronounced by a legitimate representative of the group, people should adopt strategies to lower this cognitive dissonance. One such strategy, as stated above, is to simply deny the veracity of these facts, which should lead to the expression of positive representations of the group's past (Baumeister & Hastings, 1997). Hence, we suggest that the first important step in reconciliation processes is not to experience collective guilt but to change the representations of the past.

Public apologies, victims' suffering and compensation

According to Branscombe, Slugoski & Kappen (2004), recognition of the ingroup's misdeeds denotes a desire to repair these, since this opportunity allows for re-establishing a sense of morality among its members. Indeed, Lickel et al. (2004) observed that this recognition predicted the motivation to repair. This can be explained by the fact that those who feel guilty wish to obtain the victims' forgiveness (Mallett & Swim, 2004). However, people are generally very reluctant to grant compensations, since they are generally very expensive. Therefore, only specific perceptions of the situation elicit support for reparative actions. Schmitt, Branscombe & Brehm (2004) noticed an interesting phenomenon: the greater the victims' suffering, the greater the motivation to repair. Consequently, the victims' suffering must be perceived as very important in order to accept to compensate them (Starzyk & Ross, 2008). Furthermore, this suffering must be continued: members of the victim group must still experience it, being in a lower position (Branscombe et al., 2002; Starzyk & Ross, 2008). We therefore suggest that, in order to be motivated to offer compensations, individuals must: (1) perceive that the suffering is both important and current, and (2) accept to consider the ingroup as responsible for the other group's suffering. Again, public apologies can contribute to the recognition of the continued suffering the group is responsible for, and to envision solutions to end it. As a consequence, public apologies should facilitate the ingroup members' support for reparation, particularly when the out-group's suffering is depicted as continued.

Overview and hypotheses

Public excuses should allow subordinates to face distressful facts concerning their ingroup. In fact, by publicly expressing collective guilt, the leader shows that it is necessary for group members to recognize the harm done to the outgroup members in the past, to experience the corresponding emotions, and to engage in the corresponding reparative behaviour. In doing so, the leader also reinforces the social bonding between members, and bolsters their common identity. Consequently, we suggest the following hypotheses:

1. To the extent that public apologies offer a solution for alleviating the experienced cognitive dissonance, participants exposed to Public Apologies should recognize the ingroup's past faults (hence a negative perception of the Belgian colonization) more than participants who are not.
2. They should also express a more favourable perception of the Congolese people (hence a lower score on the racist scale compared to the other conditions), and express a stronger motivation to undertake a relationship with the Congolese community than participants who are not.
3. Moreover, they should also be significantly more motivated to support a reparations' offer towards Congolese people.
4. And they should experience an important level of collective guilt, associated with the recognition of the faults and their belonging to the guilty group.
5. A behavioural change should also be observed across our four conditions. Participants assigned to a Suffering condition should be significantly more motivated to support an offer of reparations towards Congolese people.
6. Moreover, we suggest that participants exposed to the Combined condition should report higher scores of recognition of the group's misdeeds, of positive perception of Congolese people, of desire to undertake a relationship with the Congolese, a higher motivation to finance compensations, and a stronger feeling of collective guilt.
7. Finally, we expect that Public Apologies and perception of Continued Suffering influence intergroup attitudes and support for reparation to the extent that they have an impact on people's representations of the colonial past. We therefore expect that representations of the past will mediate the effects of Public Apologies and perception of Continued Suffering on these variables.

Method

Participants

Ninety psychology undergraduate students received extra course credit for participation in what we presented as a study on the memory of the Belgian Congo. However, only 47 of the participants were Belgians, therefore we recruited the rest of the sample by allowing any volunteer to participate. In the end, our sample was composed of 164 Belgian participants. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four online questionnaires. The average age was 33 ($SD = 18.22$; min. = 17, max. = 78). The majority of the participants were women ($N = 111$); 87 were students.

Procedure

Participants had to request the questionnaire. In return, they received an e-mail with a link towards one of four versions of the online questionnaire. Participants were randomly assigned to the experimental conditions. They had to write down their consent, which allowed them to get hold of the questionnaire. After the completion of the questionnaire, participants received a written debriefing explaining the aim of the study.

Materials and Design

Participants were first asked to fill in a national identification scale. Then they were asked to read a short introductory text that emphasized the misdeeds committed by Belgians against the Congolese during the colonial period. It explained that colonization allowed Belgium to develop a very lucrative traffic by using: the control of the indigenous populations; their deportation; forced labour implying using women and children as hostages to oblige men to work at the gathering of latex; the destruction of whole villages; and tortures and mutilations against recalcitrant Congolese. It also emphasised the idea that the only public indignations came from two Anglo-Saxons, while Belgians remained very silent on the issue. Finally, it underlined that, since decolonization in 1960, Belgium has never faced its horrific past¹.

Participants in all conditions had to read this text. The experimental manipulation took place after this recalling of past misdeeds. A 2 (Continued Suffering vs. No Continued Suffering) x 2 (Public Apologies vs. No Public Apologies) design was used. The Continued suffering conditions specified, at the end of the introductory text, that the Congolese people continued to suffer from Belgium's colonial actions in the present; whereas it was stated that they did not suffer anymore from this action in the No Continued Suffering conditions. In the Public Apologies conditions a short text was presented as a transcript of a discourse pronounced by Belgium's Foreign Affairs Minister, through which he publicly apologized for the harm done to the Congolese people during colonization.

"Today the report of the CEGES (Centre d'Études et de Documentation Guerre et Société contemporaine) was published. This report shows the lengths of indifference of Belgium and its Government towards the suffering of the Congolese people. Now it is time to put an end to this indifference by presenting our apologies for the atrocities we forced upon the Congolese people. It is also time to recognize our atrocities such as: slavery, deportations, wars, massacres, captures, imprisonment and torture. These acts represent a shameful page of our history, which we want to turn at last. Today, we want to publicly recognise the responsibility of the authorities of that time for the suffering of the Congolese people and to say: in the name of tolerance we will not tolerate intolerance ever again".

This text was not presented in the No Public apologies conditions. Table I summarises the manipulations performed in each condition.

TABLE I
Description of experimental conditions

Condition	Introductory text	1: Excuses	2: Suffering
1 : Control	Present	Absent	Absent
2 : Suffering	Present	Absent	Present
3 : Public Apologies	Present	Present	Absent
4 : Combined	Present	Present	Present

The questionnaires were identical apart for the manipulation of the independent variables. Unless otherwise indicated, all self-report measures were answered on 7-point Likert scales, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Identification with the group (Roccas et al., 2004) measured the participants' identification with the Belgian nation (6 items, $\alpha = .79$). A sample item of the identification scale is, "I feel close to other Belgians".

Following the identification scale participants had to read the introductory text and (according to the condition) the Public Apologies text and/or the description of the Continued Suffering. These were then followed by a wide range of *emotion* terms (pride, guilt, astonishment, sadness, shame, anger, happiness and satisfaction) in order to understand what kind of emotion could be provoked by the experimental manipulations.

Collective Guilt (Brown et al., 2008) was measured with 9 items ($\alpha = .84$). This scale was used in order to measure the guilt experienced by the participants after reading the introductory text. A sample item is, "I sometimes feel guilty for what the Belgians have done to the Congolese during the colonization".

Perception of Congolese was measured with the *Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale* (Henry & Sears, 2002). This scale was composed of 5 items ($\alpha = .71$). A sample item of this scale is, "Irish, Italian, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Congolese should do the same".

Support for reparation (Brown et al., 2008) measured the intention to support and/or finance compensations for the past misdeeds (8 items, $\alpha = .86$) and a sample item of this scale is, "Finance an association in Congo whose aim would be to help develop the wellbeing of the Congolese population".

Desire to establish relationships with the Congolese community living in Belgium was measured with 5 items ($\alpha = .62$) measuring the likelihood to develop relationships with the Congolese community, and a sample item of the scale is, "I wouldn't disapprove if one of my children wanted to marry a Congolese".

Representations of colonization was measured with 6 items ($\alpha = .86$), including 3 positive and 3 negative considerations on the Belgian colonization of Congo. A sample item is, "During the colonization, Belgians have often made the Congolese suffer".

Results

According to our overall hypotheses, we expected to observe more positive attitudes towards Congolese people and a more negative perception of colonization in the Public Apologies conditions, while the Continued Suffering conditions should elicit a stronger motivation to repair the ingroup's faults. Moreover, our last hypothesis suggested that the condition where we combined Public Apologies and Continued Suffering should report higher scores compared to the other conditions. Hence, if this was verified, we should obtain a linear progression from the Control to the Combined condition, with the other two conditions occupying intermediate positions. The first contrast (see Table II) should then be significant. Secondly, we introduced a quadratic contrast which translates our least expected results (a similarity among the control condition and the condition where we combined our two manipulations). Finally, the cubic contrast tests the idea that the Continued Suffering condition might induce similar effects as the Combined condition (see Table II for contrasts).

TABLE II
Coefficients for each contrast

	Conditions			
	Control	Suffering	Public Apologies	Combined
Linear	-3	-1	1	3
Quadratic	1	-1	-1	1
Cubic	-1	3	-3	1

In our first hypothesis, we suggested that Public Apologies should induce recognition of the ingroup's misdeeds and a lower score on the racism scale. As predicted, we observed significant differences among the conditions with regards to the perception of Belgian colonization: $F_{(3, 160)} = 4.193, p < .05$. The analyses revealed a significant linear contrast: $F_{(1, 160)} = 8.213, p < .05$, and a marginally significant cubic contrast: $F_{(1, 160)} = 3.461, p < .10$. The first contrast indicates that Belgian colonization is perceived as most negative in the Combined condition, whereas it is least negatively

perceived in the Control condition. However, the cubic contrast indicates that the linear relationship among the conditions is not perfect, as even though the highest score is observed in the Combined condition it is followed by the Continued Suffering condition rather than the Public Apologies condition. Means and standard deviations for each dependent variable are presented in table III.

TABLE III
Descriptive statistics for each dependent variable measured

	Condition			
	Control	Suffering	Public Apologies	Combined
<i>Dependent variables</i>	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Emotion (astonishment)	4.11 (2.25)	3.87 (1.92)	4.23 (2.01)	2.93 (1.96)
Racism	4.45 (1.30)	3.99 (1.11)	4.41 (0.96)	3.55 (1.01)
Support for reparations	4.92 (1.48)	5.21 (1.32)	5.04 (.93)	5.63 (1.07)
Desire to establish relationship	5.39 (1.49)	6.13 (1.09)	5.53 (1.59)	6.50 (0.81)
Negative representation of colonization	4.32 (1.51)	4.90 (1.07)	4.65 (0.92)	5.14 (0.98)

A similar pattern of results was observed for the racism scale: $F_{(3, 160)} = 6.750$, $p < .001$, with the linear contrast ($F_{(1, 160)} = 9.244$, $p < .05$) as well as the cubic one ($F_{(1, 160)} = 6.939$, $p < .05$) being significant. Thus, the lowest score of racism is observed in the Combined condition while the highest is in the Control condition. However, the cubic model shows that the linear model is not perfect, as the mere Public Apologies condition yields a racism score as high as the Control condition. These results also allow verifying the fourth hypothesis, suggesting that the combination of the two manipulations would report the highest scores for each dependent variable.

Our second hypothesis predicted that Public Apologies would induce a greater desire to establish a relationship with the Congolese community. Once again, our results indicate that there are differences between the conditions for this variable: $F_{(3, 160)} = 8.048$, $p < .000$, with the linear ($F_{(1, 160)} = 11.017$, $p < .001$) and cubic contrasts yielding significant results ($F_{(1, 160)} = 10.148$, $p < .05$). This indicates that the highest score of desire for intergroup contact is observed in the Combined condition, a very high score since we used a 7-point scale. The lowest score is observed in the Control condition. However, the cubic contrast shows that the linear prediction is not perfect, as the Continued Suffering condition presents a relatively high score. Once again, our fourth hypothesis is verified since the highest score belongs to the condition where the two independent variables were combined.

Finally, our third hypothesis predicted that participants should be more motivated to support reparations in conditions where Congolese people still suffered. As predicted, there were differences among the conditions: $F_{(3, 160)} = 3.140$, $p < .05$, and only the linear contrast was significant: $F_{(1, 160)} = 5.625$, $p < .05$, with the highest score attained in the Combined condition and a similarly high score in the Continued Suffering condition. Once again our fourth hypothesis is verified since the highest score is observed when the independent variables are combined.

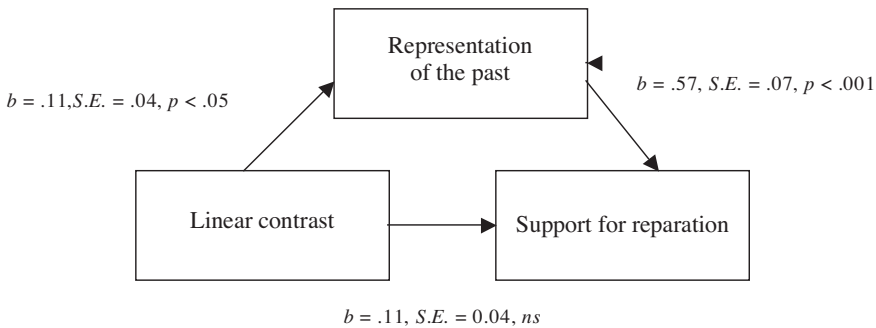
A wide range of emotions were also measured after reading the introductory text. Through a univariate analysis of variance, it was possible to observe differences among conditions for the emotion of astonishment: $F_{(3, 160)} = 4.070, p < .05$. It is interesting to notice that astonishment varies significantly between the Control condition and the Combined condition as indicated by the Bonferroni post hoc ($p < .05$). Astonishment could be experienced in order to defend oneself. Indeed, if individuals are astonished it can free them from having to face the facts.

Collective guilt was also analyzed, however no significant differences could be observed among the various conditions. This might be caused by the severity of our items.

After these first results we decided to test the fifth hypothesis which suggests that a change of representation of the past (perception of colonization) might mediate the link between our linear contrasts and (1) a desire to support reparations, (2) a decrease of racism and (3) a desire to establish a relationship with the Congolese community. In order to test this last hypothesis, bootstrapping analyses were conducted using methods described by Preacher & Hayes (2004) for estimating direct and indirect effects with the suggested mediator. Hence, each of these dependent variables were regressed with our linear contrast as the predictor variable, while perception of colonization was entered as a proposed mediator.

The first model examined the indirect effect of the linear contrast on the desire to support reparations, through the representation of the past (Figure 1). Consistent with expectations, the indirect path was statistically significant, $M = 0.06, S.E. = 0.02, 95\% CI [.02; .12]$.

FIGURE 1
Indirect effect of the linear contrast on desire to support reparations through representation of the past



The second model examined the indirect effect of the linear contrast on the decrease of racism, through the representation of the past (Figure 2). Consistent with expectations, the indirect path was statistically significant, $M = -0.06, S.E. = .02, 95\% CI [-.12; -.02]$.

Finally, the third model examined the indirect effect of the linear contrast on the desire to establish a relationship with the Congolese people, through the representation of the past (Figure 3). Consistent with expectations, the indirect path was statistically significant, $M = 0.02, S.E. = 0.01, 95\% CI [.01; .05]$.

Discussion

The analysis shows that our experimental conditions had an important impact on the participants' attitudes and intended behaviour. Through our results we have shown that public apologies facilitate recognition of past misdeeds. This observation completes Nadler & Liviatan's (2004) study, which documented positive effects of

FIGURE 2
Indirect effect of the linear contrast on decrease of racism through representation of the past

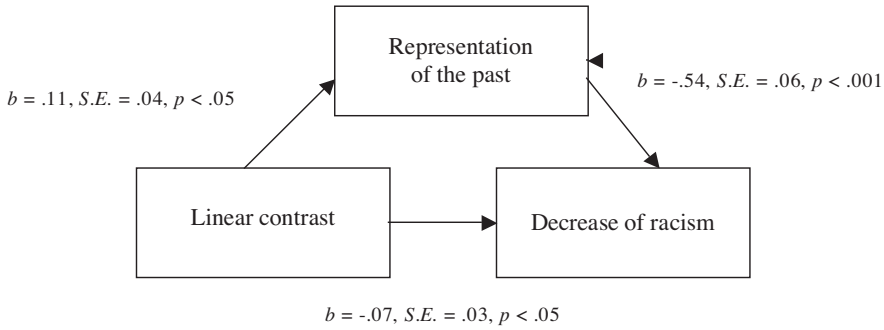
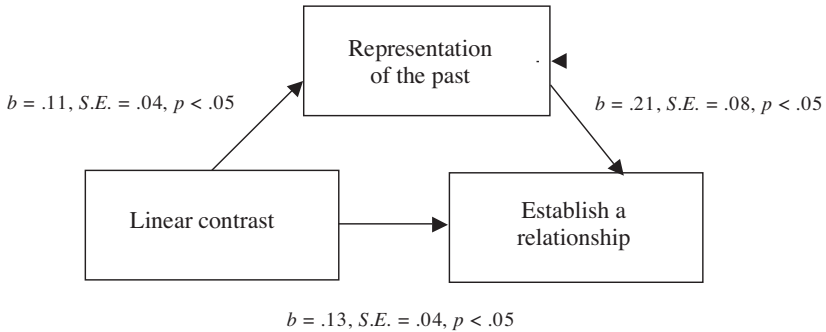


FIGURE 3
Indirect effect of the linear contrast on desire to establish relationships with the Congolese people through representation of the past



public apologies among the victim group's members. The combination of public apologies and recall of victims' continued suffering seems to greatly influence ingroup members towards a better recognition of their group's past misdeeds, since public apologies reassure the members of their group's morality even if the victims are still suffering. This suggests that public apologies are efficient in alleviating cognitive dissonance among ingroup members, since it renders recognition of the group's past faults normative. Simultaneously, they indicate group members that the group is morally improving since it recognizes its faults and apologizes for them, also reassuring their social identity.

Our hypotheses concerning the effects of victims' continued suffering on the intention to finance compensations have also been verified. Perception of continued suffering strongly influenced the intention to finance compensations to repair the ingroup's past faults. Furthermore, the combination of public apologies and the recall of continued suffering increased this intention. In fact, drawing from Branscombe et al.'s (2004) and Lickel et al.'s (2004) suggestions, we expected that recognition of the past, caused by the combination of the introductory text and the expression of apologies, would increase the desire to repair the group's faults. Starzyk & Ross (2008) had already observed the importance of victim's continued suffering in the intention to repair. Our results reproduce these observations but also indicate the importance of the combination of the suffering with the apologies in order to obtain a greater level of intention.

With regards to racism towards Congolese people, we have observed that the combination of the two factors brought a greater decrease of racism compared to the

other experimental conditions. However, it is interesting to notice that racism decreased in the Combined condition but also in the Continued Suffering condition, whereas the level is relatively high in the Control condition and in the mere Public Apologies condition. This result is interesting, since we did not expect it, as we underestimated the effect of victim's continued suffering on racism. Thus, suffering seems to be an important element in the attitude of the dominants towards the defeated.

As suggested, negative perception of colonization increased when manipulations were combined. Hence, the same past is perceived differently according to the behaviour of the leader when victims are still suffering. Leaders' speeches seem to induce a desire to adopt the norm expressed in the speeches. This reminds the observation expressed by Páez et al. (2008) concerning the vision of the past: leaders' speeches appear to influence the perception of the past, our behaviour, and our attitudes towards outgroups. This could be further explained by a decrease of cognitive dissonance due to the leader's behaviour. However, it is important to notice that our study does not directly measure cognitive dissonance; hence this last observation must be further investigated.

Finally, our last results indicate that the relationship between the manipulations and the intention to support reparations and the decrease of racism is due to a change in the perception of the past. This reinforces Licata, Klein & Gurrieri's (2008) study which, by comparing representations of the past among different generations of Belgians, illustrated that change in the representation of the past is a core element when considering the Belgians' attitudes towards Congolese people.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we suggest that public apologies allow a broader vision of the past and that the victims' suffering plays an important role in the Belgians' perception of their colonization in the Congo. As Depuisset & Butera (2005) observed, patriotism in itself is not negative, but it has to be constructive rather than glorifying. The aim of the present study was to further understand the possible changes and processes involved in the attempt to recognize shameful acts committed by the ingroup in the past without producing a social identity threat. According to our results, it seems important to combine public apologies and descriptions of the continued suffering in order to obtain an important change in the perception of the past. Our results indicate that the greatest changes in attitudes and behaviour are achieved when we combine the two experimental manipulations. This puts forward that recall of continued suffering with no public apologies expressed by the leader is insufficient. Consequently, we would like to conclude by emphasizing the role of the leader in order to achieve a constructive patriotism. However, Opatow (2001) argued that reconciliation requires the cooperation between the defeated and the dominant group. Therefore, we suggest that future research should focus on the attitudes of victims towards public apologies of the dominant group.

Notes

¹ This description was made extremely negative on purpose. Although these facts have been described as true, this is admittedly a very partial description that certainly does not apply to the whole Belgian action in the Congo.

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Social Representations and Memory: The Psychosocial impact of the Spanish “Law of Memory”, related to the Spanish Civil War

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Abstract

Based on the interrelationship between Social Representations Theory (SRT) and Collective Memory Studies, this work analyzes the effects of the salience of the Spanish Law of Historical Memory on beliefs about the Spanish Civil War (SCW), functions and expectancies of remembering, and reparatory behaviours, guilt and shame – collective and personal – as well as their anchoring in ideological positioning. Results confirm the positive psychosocial role of making salient the Law of Memory: it reinforces the agreement with the preventive functions of collective memory, truth commissions, and positive emotional climate, collective guilt, shame and reparatory behaviours – mainly among those on the left. Also, collective guilt and shame play a mediating role between the salience of the Law and reparatory actions. Finally, knowledge about the SCW is not influenced by salience of the law, suggesting that some central aspects of social representations of a negative past are widely shared and consensual.

Keywords: Collective guilt, social representations, reparatory behaviours, ideology.

Representaciones sociales y memoria: el impacto psicosocial de la la “Ley de la Memoria” española sobre la Guerra Civil Española

Resumen

Basado en la interrelación entre la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales y los Estudios de Memoria Colectiva, este trabajo analiza los efectos de la saliencia de la Ley de Memoria Histórica Española en las creencias sobre la Guerra Civil Española, las funciones y expectativas del recuerdo y los comportamientos reparatorios, culpa y vergüenza –colectiva y personal–, así como su anclaje en posicionamientos ideológicos. Los resultados confirman el rol psicosocial positivo de la saliencia de la Ley de Memoria: refuerza el acuerdo con las funciones preventivas de la memoria colectiva, comisiones de verdad, clima emocional positivo, culpa colectiva, vergüenza y comportamientos reparatorios –especialmente entre los de izquierda–. Igualmente, la culpa colectiva y vergüenza juegan un rol mediador entre la saliencia de la ley y los comportamientos reparatorios. Finalmente, el conocimiento sobre la GCE no se encuentra influido por la saliencia de la ley, sugiriendo que los aspectos centrales de la representación social de un pasado negativo son ampliamente compartidos y consensuales.

Palabras clave: Culpa colectiva, representaciones sociales, comportamientos reparatorios, ideología.

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This work focuses on the relationship between social representations (SR) and collective memory (CM). Memory has long been considered a psychological function of the individual. In the past 25 years, however, notions of collective, public, or cultural memory have emerged as a useful means of understanding the complex ways in which personal memories are immersed in larger social patterns that inform the ways in which we engage different genealogies of belonging. This study examines the contested role of memory in constructing historical meaning and imagining the cultural boundaries of communities and groups – for the role of rituals and collective emotions of guilt, see other papers in this monograph. Interest in the relationship between time and memory, however, has a long history – from classical Greece to the social thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries. Some of the latter posited a negative view of the role of memory – such as Marx (“a nightmare that it is necessary to forget”, 1962, p. 15) or Nietzsche (“we need to forget if we do not want the memory to become the gravedigger of the present”, 2005, p. 13). More common, however, has been the positive view of the role of memory, such as the contributions of the Chicago School (Cooley and Mead) regarding the social context of remembering, the works of Bartlett on the importance of social dynamics – the process of conventionalisation – on individual remembering; or the works of Vygotsky about remembering as a narrative and his emphasis on the use of “social tools of thinking” and on social processes. Nevertheless it would not be until the decade of the 80s that the rediscovery of Halbwachs’ works would spark the creation of studies of social and collective memory. The constructivist dimension of current studies of CM (Zelizer, 1995) shares some premises with the Theory of Social Representations (Haas and Jodelet, 2000; Valencia and Elejabarrieta, 2007).

The Study of Social Representations

The historical process of the constitution of studies of CM is similar to the vicissitudes that have taken place in the field of social psychology with the challenge proposed by the SRT. The challenge of this theory has been to claim that psychosocial phenomena and processes can only be understood properly if they are inserted into historical, cultural and macro-social conditions (Moscovici, 1973) – that is to say, through a dynamic focus (Lewin, 1931). At a meta-theoretical level, the individualist model in vogue in social psychology proposes a static approach and a split between the individual and society, whose origins we might attribute to the Cartesian split between mind and body (Giddens, 1967; Markova, 1982). Moscovici’s response (1984) to the static epistemologies, either individual – the dualism between the knower and the object of knowing – or collective – Durkheimian collectivism – is that social knowledge is co-constructed by the knower (I) and the Other (the other person: group, society, culture). Based on this idea Moscovici proposes his triadic model of relation Ego-Alter-Object (or symbol, representation) as the essence of his theory of social knowledge.

Premises of current studies of Collective Memory

Recent studies of CM have followed routes similar to the critiques that SRT has brought to bear upon the mainstream vision in social psychology. Nowadays it is assumed that the study of CM 1) is *dynamic – processual* (rather than static and directed by the “datum”), 2) is *irrational and complex*, rather than rational and linear, 3) takes into account the *dynamics of groups in conflict*, and 4) is *functional* for groups and communities.

I) Dynamic. Unlike the work of the psychological model in individual memory –either Freud’s clinical model or Ebbinghaus’s experimental model – which is seen as an act constituted in a point of time and space, the collective model of memory is an action in process by means of which people constantly transform the memories they produce. In this sense, remembering links two distinct activities (Wagner-Pacifi and Schwartz 1991): recollection and commemoration. A) Recollection is the act of establishing a

relationship with some event, issue or entity of the past. B) Commemoration reproduces the past for present-day aims, bringing the original narrative of the community to the consciousness. Thus, through commemoration, society renews the sense which it has of both itself and its unity (Durkheim, 1912/1982), and it serves the need of a community to resist change in its self-conceptions (Hutton, 1993). Apologies can be understood as a part of those commemoration rituals which reinforce the importance of a conflictive past and give room to deal with it (see this monograph). It is argued that institutional initiatives of remembering and reparation, like the “Law of Memory” can be conceived as rituals helping to construct and modify a social representation of the past, fulfilling psychosocial functions. Furthermore, unlike the psychological memory model, where remembering seems to equate “more” memory with “better” memory, the CM model values the negative act of forgetting: 1) Forgetting is the substitution of one memory for another (Davis and Starn, 1989). It is not an activity of “deficit” but a valued activity that is as strategic and practical as remembering (e.g., the role of “conflict between memories” and of “memory of repression” found by Jodelet, 1998). 2) Forgetting is at the same time a “given of domination” and the collective response to it (Boyarin, 1992): forgetting of WWII in some parts of Europe was desired and strategic for some identities (e.g., the case of the role of the *División Azul* in Spain). 3) Sometimes attempts at forgetting happen without synchrony with the consensus of the majority, thus implying conflict more than consensus (i.e., when Pío Moa re-describes the cause of Franco’s military putsch as just).

II) Irrational and complex. For example the Post-Vichy remembering in France has been directed more towards restoring national dignity than remembering the French experience in WWII, or the Spanish Transition remembering of Franco’s dictatorship was directed more towards confirming Spanish democracy than remembering what really happened. Thus, collective remembering allows the group to use time in a successful manner and similarly allows time to act in function of the group’s benefits. Moreover, studies of collective remembering have found several mechanisms through which the temporality of memory is organized in order to fit the needs of groups and communities. One is retrospective nominalization, which consists in the renaming of early events, issues or places in accordance with other events or issues that have occurred in later years. For example, the Holocaust has been known as such from the 70s, or the Great War turns into World War I after the Second World War. This supposes that at the same time as the past assures and solidifies the new, the new helps to assign and reassign meaning to the past (Zelizer, 1995). Another mechanism is the collapse of commemoration or commemorative dates that are used to remember more than one event at the same time (for example on the 9th of the month of Av, Jews celebrate hundreds of years simultaneously: the destruction of the first temple, of the second one, the fall of the Jewish kingdom of Palestine and the Bar Kochba revolt); or the celebrations of the Unknown Soldier, or other cyclical commemorations such as the Christian Holy Week.

III) Inserted into group dynamics and conflicts. More than a *tabula rasa*, memories are articulated like a mosaic: The CM is considered as a set of partial memories articulated in a mosaic. 1) The partiality of memory is related to group belongings (e.g., the case of the 5th Centenary of the discovery of America with different meanings for different groups (Valencia, 1999) or the 18 de Julio (18th July) in Spain (Day of extra wages for workers and day of the National “Alzamiento” (Uprising) for pro-Franco followers). 2) Often the partiality of one recollection is complemented by that of other memories and meanings. For example, the memorial of the Vietnam Veterans reflected two different discourses: to commemorate the dead, on the one hand, and patriotism on the other. 3) Sometimes past and present memories coexist. Memories acquire higher relevance when they are articulated beyond the different groups that constructed them (Miller, 1990).

The problem of the marginalization of memory and its recuperation is relevant here. The so-called “national memories” were actually invented to construct one specific version of nationhood – the fruit of aristocracy, monarchy, Church, intelligentsia and high classes. For example, Smith (1986) has highlighted the importance of foundational myths in the creation and maintenance of national identities. In this respect the French Revolution has shown that new traditions and rituals helped to create new political realities, as in case of the storming of the Bastille (Schama, 1989), which was “created” by political activists; or the case of G. Washington, whose “democratization” has emphasized that in the formation of the present, the recollections of the past provide “a stable image onto which new elements are superimposed” (Schwartz, 1991, p. 234).

IV) Functional for groups and communities: social, political and cultural functions (Wagner-Pacifi and Schwartz, 1991). The social function refers mainly to the study of how social groups constitute and reconstruct the topics of memory. In this way, the act of remembering leads us to take into account the use of remembering to shape the group belonging and exclusion, the social order and the community. Remembering turns into a social marker that indicates those who belong to us or those who do not: it categorizes us and them. In relation to the social order, the remembering, for example, of wars and economic crises of the past reinforces support for the social order. Political function refers to the activities that influence politics, both at a broad and at a day-to-day level, including identity, continuity and stability of the system, repression and political power. For example, the constitution and maintenance of political identity is usually validated across a stable past: reconstruction of the past so that it fits in with the present [in Spain, the 70's saw the beginnings of a new questioning of the official interpretation of the SCW: the war as rebellion against the legitimate democratic regime (Gibson, 2005)]. Salazar (1998) had posited that the establishing and maintenance of political identity is constituted across a vision of a stable past which essentializes the group. Thus, the foundational myths, symbols, images and remembering, taken as a whole, constitute the identity of a group or community and provide them with orientation in time and space (Smith, 1986). Nevertheless, the relation between memory and identity often disrupts the group goals of cohesion such as continuity or stability. For example, in times of political repression, remembering silences the voices of people who try to interpret the past in a contradictory form. Dominated groups (minority groups, stateless nations, women, etc) usually have the version of CM created by dominating groups, which is assumed to be either beyond question, or in a form of counter-memory (Foucault, 1977). In this sense the importance of memory was underlined by Le Goff (1992) when he argued that “to make themselves the masters of memory and forgetfulness is one of the great preoccupations of the classes, groups and individuals who have dominated and continue to dominate historical societies” (p. 54).

In sum, the updating of studies on CM with the characteristics of dynamic, complex, inserted in group dynamics and functional, turns them into an “object” of study with similar characteristics to those that the SRT raises (Haas and Jodelet, 2000). Paraphrasing Moscovici, studies of CM address themselves to those systems of belief, ideas and social practices where time plays a double function: first, to establish an order that makes it possible for individuals to orient themselves and to control the social world in which they live, and secondly, to facilitate communication between the members of a community by providing them with a code to name and to classify the several aspects of their world and their individual and group history. Finally, this relation between the works of social memory and SR may contribute to the processes, to use the terminology of Moscovici (1988), of polemic and emancipated representations – the object of desire of H. Mead, on the one hand – as well as of hegemonic representations taking time as a social representation. Only in this sense will we be able to cope with what the sociologist

Jedlowsky defined as these “series of SR relative to the past that every group produces, institutionalizes and transmits through the interaction among their members” (2001, p. 33). Institutional support plays an important role as social affordance that reinforces the importance of conflictive past and facilitates a way of dealing with it. This is why the effects of the salience of a legislative initiative related to the SCW on beliefs and attitudes are analyzed here. Like other articles in this monograph, institutional initiatives of remembering and reparation, such as the “Law of Memory”, can be conceived as rituals helping to construct and modify a social representation of the past, thus fulfilling psychosocial functions.

Overview of the study and hypotheses

Based on Doise’s Three-Phase model, and understanding by social representations “a general theory about a metasystem of social regulations intervening in the system of cognitive functioning” (Doise, Clemence and Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1993, p. 56), three main steps to the analysis of SR can be proposed: 1) there are shared memories or common points of reference, 2) this does not imply consensual agreement: there are different social positions anchored in shared knowledge and values of different groups (political left vs. right), and 3) differences in psycho-social processes (remembering, evaluation of events, emotions) are guided by those normative regulations of social positions.

In previous research we had found that making salient the SCW (Valencia and Paez, 1999) differences appeared in remembering and psychosocial processes (sharing, forgetting, etc.). Moreover (Páez, Valencia, Marques and Vincze, 2004), those psychosocial processes were anchored in different social positions (ideological and generational). Furthermore, studies of collective guilt had underlined the role that emotional psychosocial processes like guilt (Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi, and Cehajic, 2008; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears and Manstead, 1998; Iyer, Leach, and Crosby, 2003; Maitner, Mackie, and Smith, 2006) play in the relationship between apologies and reparation.

In the interlink between SRT and CM, this study aims to analyze the impact of making salient the Spanish Law of Memory on beliefs about the SCW and functions and expectancies of remembering, as well as on psychosocial variables such as emotional climate and collective guilt, shame and sorrow, and reparatory behaviours.

First, as a social tool reinforcing the importance and assumption of a negative past, it is argued that the positive psychosocial role of making salient the Law of Memory (the Law approved by the Spanish Government in 2006) will improve agreement with beliefs about the SCW, functions and expectancies of remembering as well as social cohesion, leading to a more positive social climate. Moreover, as an external ritual facilitating the emergence of collective emotions and related behaviours, the salience of the Law will reinforce collective guilt, shame and sorrow, and agreement with reparatory actions. Secondly, these processes will be both anchored in ideological positions (left and right) and more positive for the vicarious victim groups (left). Thirdly, because of the supposed central role of collective and personal self-conscious emotions, it is argued that the relationship between the apology ritual – salience of the Law – and reparatory behaviours will be mediated by self-centred emotions of collective guilt and shame and sorrow.

Method

Participants

133 subjects (57.7% female), students of the University of the Basque Country, took part in the experiment. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions: experimental and control.

Design, Procedure and Measures

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. In the first part of the experiment, participants were asked to read an informative text about the consequences of the SCW – killings and victims of reprisals. The text was as follows: “Later on, part of a report written by leading historians is presented. First, read it carefully in order to form the most accurate impression possible of it. Afterwards you will be asked to answer some questions. Take as long as you like to read the report”.

“During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) between 150,000 and 200,000 civilians and military personnel were killed as a result of the fighting. According to some historians, it is estimated that 75,000 Republican soldiers and 66,000 Nationals died. The Republicans and Nationals mobilized up to 750,000 soldiers each, which suggests a mobilization of 6% of the population (one and a half million out of 25 million people), and 10% of mortal casualties among the military men. However the casualties including injured men were higher, up to 60% of the Republicans and 40% of the Nationals in the battle of Jarama.”

The report included information about political repression on the Republican and National sides (massive summary executions of priests and political activists, the bombings of Gernika and Durango, the repression of Franco’s post-war rule, etc. (García de Cortázar 2006, in *elmundo.es*, 28th March; Bennassar, 2005; Barusso, 2005; Beevor, 2005; Juliá, 1999).

In the case of the experimental group, the above information was followed by additional information about the Law of Memory being approved by the Spanish Parliament and intended to honour the victims of the SCW and Franco’s reprisals in the Basque Country and Spain. The information (taken from Cué, 2008) was as follows:

“More than a million victims of reprisal will be able to be honoured officially: the Executive initiates the development of the Law of Memory, approved in January. The Government, three weeks after the judge Baltasar Garzón rekindled the controversy, decided to send to the Council of State four royal decrees that develop the norm (there were 210,000 killed, 400,000 imprisoned and 650,000 exiled; another decree refers to those who died for democracy between 1968 and 1977)”.

The report offered the characteristics of the four Royal Decrees:

a) *Official Declaration* (Cué, 2008, p 2): “Repair and personal recognition of the persons who suffered pursuit or violence, for political or ideological reasons or for religious belief, during the Civil War and the dictatorship can be requested through the spouse, his/her ascendancies, his/her descendants and his/her collateral ones up to the second degree”

b) *Indemnifications to those murdered between 1968 and 1977* (Cué, 2008, p 2). To persons who died in defence of democracy or who suffered injuries during the Transition (from January 1, 1968 to October 6, 1977), 135,000 Euros to the deceased.

c) *Nationality*. To the members of the International Brigade who were forced to resign to theirs in their countries.

d) *Private documents*. “Documents and other effects of a private nature stored away in the General Archive of the Spanish Civil War will be returned to their rightful owners”.

The second part of the questionnaire included the following measures to evaluate the meaning and emotions that the Law of Memory raised:

Beliefs and information about the SCW and functions and expectancies about remembering the past. Several items of information about the remembering of the SCW and the law of memory were taken from available surveys: Instituto OPINA (July 2006) and CIS (2005) (see Table I for items); items about the importance and functions of remembering as well as about the expectancies of a truth commission (McGovern and

Lundy, 2001). Finally, some items were taken from earlier research (see Table II for items).

Emotional Climate Scale (Páez, Ruiz, Gailly, Kornblit and Wiesenfeld, 1997). This study used the 7 items of this scale to assess the perception of a positive climate (e.g., the social environment or climate is one of hope). Participants were asked to assess the current state of their country, indicating their degree of agreement with a series of statements by means of a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very strongly* ($\alpha = .79$).

Collective Guilt Scale (Branscombe, Slugoski, and Kappen, 2004). This scale consists of 10 items which form two dimensions of collective guilt acceptance (e.g., I regret some of the things that my group has done to others in the past) and collective responsibility (e.g., a group should feel responsible for the actions of its members), each subscale including 5 items. Respondents were asked to express their degree of agreement on a 7-point scale (7 = *strongly agree*, 1 = *strongly disagree*) ($\alpha = .80$).

Shame and Sorrow. Two ad-hoc created items were applied to measure the personal experience of shame (When I think how we treated the victims of collective violence over the years, I feel ashamed) and sorrow (I feel sorrow for and regret the damage that has been done to the victims of collective violence over the years) ($\alpha = .72$).

Reparation (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 2006). This measure consisted of two items addressing willingness to endorse compensations, whether material (The Government should provide more money to the victims for what they suffered during the past years) or symbolic (The Government should perform more declarations of repentance and moral reparation to the victims for what they suffered in the past) ($\alpha = .75$).

Evaluation of the source. From 1 (*not at all positive*) to 7 (*very positive*).

Political Ideology. A measure of political orientation was used ranging from 1 (*extreme right-wing*) to 10 (*extreme left-wing*) ($M = 6.5$, $SD = 1.51$). A dummy variable was composed dividing the sample by the midpoint (5) into right-wing (43.8%) and left-wing (56.2%).

Results

Manipulation check

T-Test analysis revealed that the information provided by the message was perceived as negative ($M = 3.5$; $SD = 1.88$), deviating significantly from the scale midpoint 4 ($t_{(131)} = 21.43$, $p < .000$). ANOVA analysis with manipulation and ideology as independent variables, and evaluation of the source as a dependent variable, show significant effects of salience versus control groups ($F_{(1, 120)} = 7.59$, $p < .000$, $MSE = 2.21$): the salience of the Law of Memory led to a better evaluation of the message ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.70$) than the control condition ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.97$). Neither main effects nor interaction effects were found with respect to ideology ($p > .005$).

Effects of salience of the law on beliefs about the SCW and functions and expectancies about remembering the past

First, comparisons of surveys and our research show that the items related to knowledge about the war received similar ratings (high scores in knowing what happened, in speaking about it in the family and in victims in the family). However, the items related to the Law of Memory showed a higher agreement in our study than in the surveys with the Law, and with investigating mass graves, a lower agreement with not speaking about or looking into the SCW and a higher agreement with adopting a sign of recognition. Moreover, both in surveys and in our study, the left scored higher in knowing what happened, speaking in the family and victims in the family, as well as in

the items related to the Law of Memory: higher agreement with the Law and with investigating mass graves, a lower agreement with not speaking about or looking into the SCW and a higher agreement with adopting a sign of recognition.

Second, χ^2 analysis of the relationship between manipulation and the answer to each of the items of our study showed no significant differences in the items related to knowledge about the war, but it did in the items related to the Law of Memory. The salience of the Law of Memory, when compared to the control condition, led to a higher agreement with the suitability of the law (59.5% vs. 40.5%), with investigating mass graves (56% vs. 44%), and also a higher agreement with not investigating anything (57% vs. 43%). No differences appeared with respect to the item about adopting a sign of recognition.

Moreover, χ^2 tests on the relationship between ideological positioning and the answer to the items showed that the left scored higher in speaking about it in the family ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 4.91, p < .02$) and victims in the family ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 3.01; p < .05$), and agreed more with the suitability of the Law ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 10.60, p < .00$), and with adopting a sign of recognition ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 6.67, p < .03$).

TABLE I
Percentages of knowledge and agreement on the items of information and beliefs about SCW and the Law: comparing surveys, present study and left and right

Item	Total Survey	Right	Left	Total Study	Right	Left
^a Do you know what happened the 18 th July of 1936 in Spain?	74.40	78.00	82.20	74.20	72.60	75.70
^a Does your family speak about the 18 th July of 1936 or the SCW?	48.80	40.40	59.20	42.70	34.40	50.70*
^a Do you have in your family any victim of the SCW?	43.30	40.00	45.55	46.60	42.60	57.40
^a The Government prepares a Law of Historic Memory. Do you think it is convenient?	54.90	30.40	75.25	62.90	48.40	75.70*
^a Are you in favour of investigating all that relative to the Civil War and mass graves, and of rehabilitating all the affected?	64.50	44.80	78.50	78.60	72.60	84.10*
^a Do you agree or disagree with the following: the best one can do about the 18 th of July of 1936 and the Civil War is not to speak nor to investigate it.	28.30	47.40	19.20	11.40	5.70	17.70*
^b Do you agree with adopting any initiative as a sign of recognition to the victims?	54.10	42.90	71.45	72.70	62.90	81.40*

^a Items from Opina Survey, 2006

^b Item from CIS (Center of Sociological Research), 2005

* $p < .05$

In relation to remembering the past and functions and expectancies about it, again, χ^2 tests were performed to analyse the relationship between salience of the law versus control, and the answers to each of the items (see Table II). The salience of the Law led to a higher agreement with the functions of CM preventing it from happening again

($\chi^2_{(1)} = 4.23, p < .03$) and punishing the culprits ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 7.80, p < .00$). Moreover, in relation to the commission of truth and expectancies about it, results showed that the salience of the Law led to a higher acceptance of helping to improve the social environment ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 5.99, p < .05$), knowing the truth of the facts ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 8.77, p < .01$) and helping society to be less divided ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 6.56, p < .03$). Interestingly, no differences were found as to the importance of remembering and the functions of knowing the history and honouring the victims, or as to the importance or the expectancy of a truth commission for a new beginning in local politics.

TABLE II
Percentages of agreement on the items of Remembering of the past, functions and expectancies: present study, control, manipulation and left and right

Item ^a	Total Study	Control	Exp.	Right	Left
Do you think that it is important in the country to remember what happened? (Yes)	78.4	43.9	56.1	38.7	68.3*
Do you... In order for it not to happen again?	74.6	41.5	58.5*	43	58
Do you... to know the history?	65.9	44.6	55.4	41.6	58.4
Do you... to punish the culprits?	16.7	19	81**	43	56*
Do you...to honour the victims?	44.4	42.9	57.1	36.2	64.8*
To have a truth commission (TC) is important.	42.1	41.7	58.3	38.9	68.1*
A TC should help to improve the social environment.	22.5	25.9	74.1*	36.7	63.3*
A TC should be achieved to know the truth of the facts.	21.2	20	80**	33.3	66.7
A TC should be a new start for the local politics.	17.8	28.6	71.4	28	72*
A TC should help society to be less divided.	16.9	20	80**	50	50

^aItems from previous research (Bowoknik et al., 2010) and McGovern et al. (2001)

* $p \leq .05$

** $p \leq .01$

The effects of ideology with respect to remembering, functions and expectancies about the future were again analysed by χ^2 tests. The results indicated that the left, when compared to the right, showed a higher acceptance of the importance of remembering ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 4.32, p < .03$) as well as the functions of punishing the culprits ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 3.89, p < .05$) and honouring the victims ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 3.05, p < .05$), showed a higher agreement with the importance of the commission of truth ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 10.87, p < .00$) and a higher expectancy of improving the social environment ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 3.32, p < .05$) and its providing a new beginning for local politics ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 3.39, p < .04$).

The role of salience of the Law and of ideology on emotional climate, collective guilt, shame and reparatory behaviours

Anovas were performed in order to analyse the role of salience of the Law of Memory and of ideological position on climate, guilt, shame and reparatory actions. The results

TABLE III
Emotional climate, Collective Guilt, Personal Shame and Sorrow and Reparation by control versus salience of Law and ideology

	Control		Experimental	
	Right	Left	Right	Left
Emotional climate*	2.60	2.37	2.61	2.85
Collective Guilt**	3.85	3.97	4.40	4.28
Personal shame and sorrow**	2.73	3.10	3.08	3.56
Reparation**	3.69	3.79	4.05	4.25

* *emotional Climate: a 5 point scale ranking from 1 = not at all to 5 = very strongly.*

** *Collective Guilt, Personal Shame and Reparation: a 7 –point scale ranking from 7 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree.*

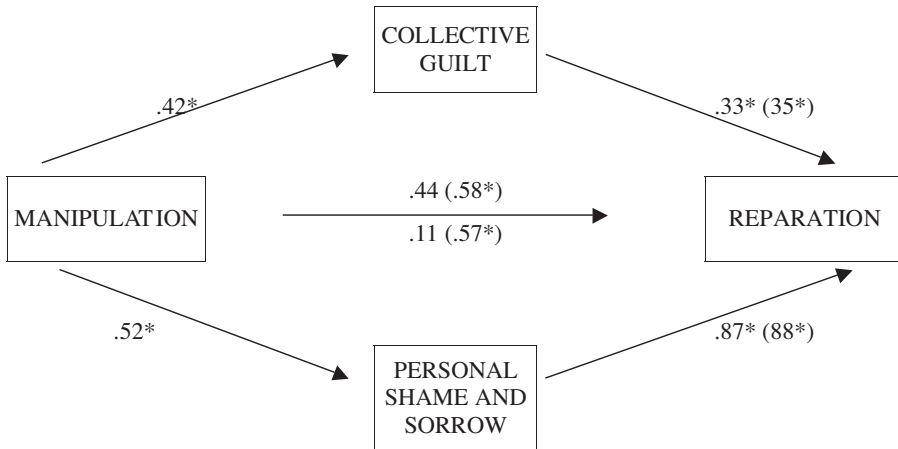
showed a significant univariate effect of manipulation $F_{(1, 119)} = 3.01, p < .05, MSE = 0.93$, as well as an interaction effect $F_{(1, 119)} = 3.11, p < .05, MSE = 0.84$ for emotional climate. Salience of the Law led to a more positive climate than the control condition ($M = 2.76, SD = 0.86$ vs. $M = 2.49, SD = 0.76$). Moreover, while the right-wing did not change with manipulation, it was the left-wing who changed: a more positive climate was perceived by the left in the experimental condition than in the control condition. Regarding collective guilt, the analysis yielded a significant effect of manipulation $F_{(1, 119)} = 5.51, p < .01, MSE = 0.93$. The experimental condition produced –both for left and right – a higher level of guilt than the control condition ($M = 3.91, SD = 0.97$ vs. $M = 4.34, SD = 0.94$). In relation to shame, the analysis showed a significant effect for manipulation $F_{(1, 119)} = 4.63, p < .03, MSE = 1.29$ ($M = 2.09, SD = 1.10$ vs. $M = 3.42, SD = 1.17$) and for ideological position $F_{(1, 119)} = 4.37, p < .03, MSE = 1.32$ (right $M = 2.92, SD = 1.13$ vs. left $M = 3.36, SD = 1.16$). No interaction effects were found ($p > .05$). Finally, in relation to reparatory actions the analysis yielded a significant effect of manipulation $F_{(1, 119)} = 3.56, p < .05, MSE = 0.91$ (control $M = 3.75, SD = 1.67$ vs. salience of the Law $M = 4.32, SD = 1.57$).

With regard to the hypothesis proposing the association of salience of the Law with guilt and shame, and the mediating role of emotions with respect to reparations, first, correlations were performed. The analysis showed that reparation only had significant relations with shame and sorrow ($r_{(112)} = .62, p < .001$), collective guilt ($r_{(112)} = .21, p < .02$) and manipulation – 2 experimental conditions or salience and 1 control condition ($r_{(112)} = .17, p < .05$). Manipulation had stronger relationships with shame ($r_{(112)} = .21, p < .001$) and collective guilt ($r_{(112)} = .23, p < .001$) than with reparation. Moreover, ideology only had significant relationships with shame ($r_{(112)} = .25, p < .00$) and manipulation ($r_{(112)} = .19, p < .02$). Thus, the analysis showed that manipulation had a stronger relationship with shame and collective guilt than with reparation, and there was no mediation of ideology. Secondly, in order to analyze the mediating role of collective guilt on the relationship between manipulation and reparation, the procedure advocated by Baron and Kenny (1986) was used.

Figure 1 displays the results in relation to the mediating role of collective guilt. The results showed that manipulation scores had a significant effect on collective guilt, and that collective guilt was in turn predictive of reparation. This evidence means that collective guilt fulfils the two initial requirements of a mediating variable. The final and most basic requirement specified by Baron and Kenny is that a mediating variable should predict the dependent variable (reparation) even when the independent variable (manipulation) is statistically controlled, while the effect of the independent variable on the dependent measure should be substantially reduced when the mediating

FIGURE 1

Collective Guilt and Personal Shame and Sorrow as mediators of the effect of Manipulation on Reparation. Path weights are unstandardized. The path weights in parentheses do not control for the effect of the mediator



* $p < .05$

variable is statistically controlled. Figure 1 indicates that these requirements are fulfilled in the present case. The effect of manipulation on reparation becomes lowered when collective guilt is statistically controlled, and the effect of collective guilt on reparation remains similar when manipulation is statistically controlled. To test whether this pattern of results reflects a significant reduction in the variance accounted for by manipulation, a z -score test was performed (Sobel, 1988). The analysis produced a significant change ($z = 1.56, p < .05$) from .58 to .44. This means that the direct effect of manipulation on reparation is .44 while the indirect effect through collective guilt is .14. In sum, the fact that we found a significant correlation means that mediation has occurred, showing that the effect of manipulation on reparation is mediated by collective guilt.

With respect to the mediating role of shame, the manipulation scores had a significant effect on shame and this, in turn, was predictive of reparation. Figure 1 also indicates that the effect of manipulation on reparation becomes lowered when shame is statistically controlled, and the effect of shame on reparation remains similar when manipulation is statistically controlled. Similarly the Sobel Test produced a significant change ($z = 2.26, p < .01$) from .57 to .11. This means that the direct effect of manipulation on reparation is .11 while the indirect effect through shame is .46. In summary, the fact that we found a significant correlation means that mediation has occurred, showing that the effect of manipulation on reparation is mediated by shame. The analysis also showed that the individual measure of shame was more sensitive to manipulation (indirect effect of .46) than the collective guilt measure (indirect effect of .14).

Discussion

The results confirm the positive psychosocial role of making salient the Law of Memory. This institutional action or ritual of recalling negative past misdeeds reinforces agreement with particular aspects of the Law (the desirability of the Law, the investigation of graves, and not forgetting), with the functions of remembering (preventing it from happening again and punishing the culprits) and expectations about the future, as well as a better climate, reparation and personal and group

emotions. From this point of view, the study confirms the hypothesis about the positive impact of rituals also found in other studies (see Bobowik, Bilbao, and Momoitio, 2010, and Páez, 2010, this issue). However, the analysis of the effect of the salience of the Law on beliefs and information about the SCW has shown that there are elements that are not sensitive to manipulation, i.e. elements that pertain to the core of SR. These elements are assumed by the participants without being put into question and they consist of basic information about the SCW, the importance of remembering for society and the importance of the commission of truth, as well as the functions of honouring the victims and knowing the history. In other words, nowadays –comparing, for example, with the 60s – everybody knows what happened on the 18th July, speaks about it and agrees with adopting initiatives of recognition of the victims. There are, however, items that were more “sensitive” to manipulation, i.e. elements belonging to the peripheral aspects of the SR about the past. These elements refer to agreement with aspects of the Law of Memory, to the functions of preventing it from happening again and punishing the culprits as well as to the expectancies of improving the social environment, knowing the truth of the facts and helping society to be less divided. In other words, there are elements of the representation of the past which are not consensually assumed, and they are reinforced when the institutional act of reparation is made salient: the desirability of the Law of Memory, investigation of mass graves, refusal to speak about it or disapproval of investigating anything, the functions of remembering or punishing the culprits and in particular the expectancies about the future: improving the social environment, knowing the truth of the facts and helping society to be less divided (For instance, the current discussion in the Spanish media about the case of Judge Garzón and Manos Limpias).

Moreover, in relation to the psychosocial effects of institutional acts of commemoration and reparation, making salient the Law of Memory induces a more positive climate – especially among those on the left – higher collective guilt, shame as well as reparatory behaviours.

Regarding the hypothesis of anchoring in ideological position, the results have also shown interesting findings. On the one hand the left scored higher than the right in the items related to knowledge of the War: knowing what happened, speaking about it in family and victims in family. The left showed a higher agreement with the desirability of the Law of Memory, with investigating graves, a higher disagreement with not investigating anything and a higher agreement with adopting a sign of recognition. Furthermore, the left, when compared to the right, showed a higher acceptance of the importance of remembering as well as of the functions of punishing the culprits and honouring the victims, a higher agreement with the importance of the commission of truth and a higher expectancy of improving the social environment and offering a new beginning for local politics. Altogether the left, compared to the right, was more pro-remembering, launching the Law and its functions, and attached greater importance to remembering the past and to expectancies about the future. Also, ideological positioning interacted with the experimental manipulation with respect to emotional climate – the left showed a more positive climate in the manipulation condition while the right showed no change – and in the individual aspect of self-centred emotion, the left showed more shame than the right. However, left and right were similar in the collective aspect of self-conscious emotion and reparation, i.e. no differences were found between left and right in collective guilt and reparation.

In relation to the last hypothesis, the results showed the importance of the mediation of collective and individual self-conscious emotions. Making the Law salient reinforces agreement with new reparatory behaviours. However, the collective and individual aspects of self-centred emotions play a mediating role. Collective guilt and shame mediated the relation in different ways: the measure of shame was more sensitive to manipulation than the collective guilt measure. This finding is in line with

Moscovici's claim for the role of guilt in our societies where the ethos of guilt allows us to feel shame for the victims at an individual level but not guilt at the collective level, which means the impossibility of changing the "questio facti" to the "questio juris" (2005, p. 4).

Finally, this study suggests that there are some central elements of CM that are consensually agreed, like information about the SCW, the importance for society to remember and the importance of a commission of truth, as well as the functions of honouring the victims and knowing the history. Other elements, however, are controversial and there is considerable disagreement: some aspects of the Law of Memory, the preventive functions of CM, in order for it not to happen again and punishing the culprits, as well as the expectancies of improving the social environment, knowing the truth of the facts and helping society to be less divided. These results confirm the differential role played by the central and peripheral aspects of representations, also shown in other political contexts (see Wagner, Elejabarrieta, and Valencia, 1994 for the case of war and peace.) – in other words, the role played by both, conflict between memories and memory of repression, found by Jodelet (1998).

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Psychosocial effects of forgiveness petition and “self-criticism” by the Basque Government and Parliament directed to the victims of collective violence

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Abstract

This experimental study analyses the psychosocial effects of apologies directed to the victims of collective violence by the Basque Government and Parliament on Basque participants. It was expected that institutional apology would lead to an increase in collective guilt, shame and sorrow, while at the same time it would induce a more positive perception of emotional climate, as well as increasing positive beliefs and support for reparative actions towards the victims. As expected, when reminded of apology and past collective violence, participants reported higher shame and sorrow and agreed more with new reparations in comparison with the control condition, in which people were only reminded of past collective violence. Low identifiers exhibited a more positive perception of the social climate in the apology condition than in the control group, whereas high identifiers displayed the opposite pattern. In addition, high identifiers agreed more with defensive opinions related to past collective violence and reported lower agreement with reparations, although they did not express less collective guilt, or shame and sorrow.

Keywords: Ritual, apology, forgiveness petition, collective violence, emotional climate, collective shame and guilt, world assumptions.

Los efectos psicosociales de la petición de perdón y la “autocrítica” realizada por el Parlamento y Gobierno Vasco ante las víctimas de la violencia colectiva

Resumen

Este estudio experimental analiza el efecto de la petición de perdón presentado por el Gobierno y Parlamento Vasco a las víctimas de violencia colectiva relacionada con terrorismo en los participantes del País Vasco. Se planteaba que esta petición de perdón institucional aumentaría la culpa y la vergüenza colectiva, pero también reforzaría una percepción más positiva del clima emocional, las creencias positivas y el apoyo de las reparaciones para las víctimas. Como se esperaba, cuando se hacía saliente la violencia colectiva del pasado junto con la petición de perdón, los participantes experimentaban más pesar y vergüenza, como también estaban más de acuerdo con nuevas reparaciones en comparación con el grupo de control, en el cual se destacaba o hacía saliente únicamente la violencia colectiva del pasado. Los participantes con baja identificación con los vascos percibía el clima emocional como más positivo en cuando se hacían salientes la violencia colectiva del pasado y la petición de perdón, mientras los altamente identificados demostraban el patrón de respuesta opuesto. Además, las personas con alta identificación “vasquista” estaban más de acuerdo con las opiniones defensivas relacionadas con la violencia colectiva del pasado y menos de acuerdo con las reparaciones, aunque no presentaban niveles más bajos de culpa colectiva ni del pesar y vergüenza.

Palabras clave: Ritual, perdón, petición de perdón, violencia colectiva, clima emocional, vergüenza y culpa colectiva, creencias básicas.

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The Basque Parliament manifests its solidarity, affection, respect and its complete consideration for all the victims of terrorism and wants to ask them publicly and solemnly to forgive the abandonment and oblivion they have suffered for too many years.

(The Basque Parliament, Resolution Nr 1, October 5th, 2007)

It might seem that, in the face of collective violence and injustice that took place in the past, there is not much to be done as no one can turn back the time and bring back to life those who died or suffered. However, both victim and perpetrator groups have to cope somehow with the past. This study focuses on the impact of a public apology ritual that took place in the Basque conflict context on social beliefs, perceived emotional climate, collective guilt, as well as shame and sorrow.

Collective Violence in the Basque Country

The Basque conflict is the longest enduring political conflict in Western Europe. Through centuries the Basque Country has maintained its self-governance under different Spanish political frameworks. After the Spanish Civil War, which was also a fuel for the conflict, came General Franco's dictatorship, during which Basque culture and self-governance was completely suppressed and prohibited. After the dictator's death and the establishment of the Spanish Constitution, the Basque Country regained its autonomy, although never to an extent that would satisfy the Basque nationalists. Since then, the conflict has persisted and caused the death of hundreds of people and suffering of many more (Espiau, US Institute of Peace, 2006).

On October 5th 2007, the Basque Parliament officially asked victims of the conflict in the Basque Country for forgiveness for "the abandonment and oblivion they have suffered for too many years." (The Basque Parliament, Resolution Nr 1, October 5th, 2007). Twenty resolutions concerning reparation for victims of terrorism were adopted. After so many years, authorities expressed their repentance for the suffering which victims of political violence in the Basque Country had to experience. Has the apology act of the Basque Parliament changed anything?

Apology as a ritual

Tavuchis (1991) argued that offenders, or representatives of the offenders' group, intend, by means of apology, to restore what has been lost: peace, democracy, trust. Although Tavuchis wrote "no matter how", apology actually needs to be perceived as sincere and as motivated by a will to reveal the truth. Amstutz (2005) argues that offenders should "disclose and acknowledge the truth about wrongdoing, admit their own culpability, express remorse and offer reparations." (p. 12). Collective healing can be achieved with the contribution of such concepts as confession and repentance, which – provided that culpability is admitted – can lead to forgiveness and reconciliation. When a group is dealing with a collective harm or political violence, the concept of negotiated forgiveness (Andrews, 2000) should encompass both the victims' and the offenders' involvement. This perspective is concordant with Amstutz's contention (2005) that forgiveness demands disclosure and acknowledgment of the truth and moral accountability for the wrongdoings.

Conversely, all the actions aiming at revealing and admitting the truth take the form of collective ritual, building a positive emotional atmosphere that can be a ground for social cohesion. "Genuine apologies (...) may be taken as the symbolic foci of secular remedial rituals that serve to recall and reaffirm allegiance to codes of behaviour and belief whose integrity has been tested and challenged by transgression (...). An apology, thus, refers to an act that cannot be undone but cannot go unnoticed (...)" (Tavuchis, 1991, p. 13). In line with this view, according to Durkheim (1912), collective rituals reinforce the emotional sharing and bring people together in their

feeling of solidarity, thus strengthening social cohesion. The ritual can heal the social pain (Cole, 2004). A study on psychosocial effects of participation in popular trials Gacaca in Rwanda, in which the perpetrators confronted the victims and were supposed to tell the truth and apologize, showed that both the victims and the perpetrators increased their perception of heterogeneity, as well as positive stereotypes of the outgroup (Kanyangara, Rimé, Philippot, & Yzerbit, 2007). In consequence, it can be assumed that an apology ritual is beneficial to social healing by reinforcing intergroup reconciliation, positive emotional climate, and social cohesion.

Apology as a collective ritual could also help to reinforce beliefs in the benevolence of the people and of the world. Apology rituals can be considered as a process that implies a conviction that a situation defined as unjust is not unchangeable and that action is being taken to compensate the wrongdoings. In the same vein, as an act of restorative justice, apology can produce a reinforcement of positive beliefs not only regarding the benevolence of the world, but also of humanity (as able to apologize and to compensate for the wrongdoings). In fact, Kanyangara et al.'s (2007) study on popular Gacaca trials found that participants of this restorative justice ritual increased their beliefs about benevolent world after their experience, even if the increase was higher in the case of perpetrators.

Apology and Collective Guilt and Shame

Nonetheless, apology and rituals including apologies have both benefits and emotional cost because the acceptance of past collective misdeeds usually increases negative emotions, such as collective guilt and sadness, shame and remorse. An increase in negative collective and personal emotions can be perceived as being at odds with simultaneously increasing social cohesion and positive emotional climate (i.e., hope and solidarity). However, Durkheim argues that an augment in negative emotions helps to reinforce social identification – “we feel guilt and sadness” (Durkheim, 1912). Positive and negative affect are relatively independent at an individual (Watson, 2000) as well as at a collective level (de Rivera & Páez, 2007), and can co-exist; for instance, when high levels of sadness and anger related to a terrorist attack co-exist with a high level of solidarity and hope (de Rivera & Páez, 2007). In fact, restorative justice rituals that involve apologies, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and the Gacaca tribunals in Rwanda, increase both personal and collective negative emotions - usually by reactivation of memories of past misdeeds (Gibson, 2004; Kanyangara et al., 2007). Victims are usually disappointed by apologies (i.e. they were perceived as insincere by survivors of the Rwandan genocide), and by the information that perpetrators provide (Kanyangara, 2008; Kanyangara et al., 2007). Moreover, rituals help to accept past misdeeds, and by this token legitimize the feeling of collective and personal emotions such as collective guilt (see Lastrego et al. in this monograph). Related to past misdeeds assumed in the apology, guilt can be experienced collectively, by whole groups, or by single persons who were not involved in the harm-doing personally. It does not have to imply feelings of personal guilt (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998), as collective guilt could be felt not as a consequence of personal actions but as a consequence of one's membership in social groups involved in collective violence. Collective guilt appears when people: a) categorize themselves as members of a group; b) accept that their ingroup is responsible for past or current misdeeds, c) recognize that their ingroup's behaviour is unjustified and / or harmful, d) appraise that it is possible to correct the wrongdoing and that the cost of reparations is moderate (Wohl, Branscombe & Klar, 2006). Of course, when confronted with atrocities committed by one's own group, people intend to deny collective responsibility, particularly these with strong social identification (Branscombe & Miron, 2004). High identifiers usually glorify their group and are inclined to compare the ingroup favourably with actions of others, to reduce the group's

responsibility and to legitimize the harm (Marques, Páez, Valencia, & Vincze, 2006). On the other hand, low-identified group members are more willing to accept the negative past and, hence, feel more collective guilt in comparison with high identifiers, as group-image-threatening emotion of guilt can only be experienced when the accountability for past wrongdoings is given (Doosje et al., 1998).

In any case, the strategies people apply sometimes fail and collective guilt is inevitable. In a study on collective violence in Australia (McGarty et al., 2005), group-based guilt was found to predict support for a government apology for the sufferings experienced by Indigenous Australians. Collective guilt was also found to predict reparation attitudes (Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi, & Cehajic, 2008; Zebel, Zimmermann, Tendayi, & Doosje, 2008). The element that binds both concepts: collective guilt and reparation, is apology and repentance. "In forgiveness, offenders express contrition for the suffering they have inflicted, authenticating their repentance through acts of reparation and the promise not to repeat unjust and harmful behaviors" (Amstutz, 2005, p. 11).

Finally, although Doosje et al. (1998) argued that collective guilt should not necessarily imply negative personal feelings, we believe that in case of the Basque conflict and apology for wrongdoings related to it, Basques would also experience a feeling of shame and sorrow for what was done. Two arguments support the importance of shame. First, psychological difference between guilt and shame is vague. Following the theory of emotions, in guilt the attention is focused on the collective behaviour: "We (German people) did *this awful thing* (Holocaust)". Guilt's main adaptive social function is to prevent interpersonal and inter-group exploitation. In shame, attention is focused on the collective identity: *We* (German people) did this awful thing (Holocaust). The main social function of shame is to restore collective positive identity (Branscombe, Slugosky & Kappen, 2004). However, at the group level little difference is perceived between characterological ("*We* German people...") and behavioural ("...German people *did*...") attribution of negative collective events. Moreover, Wallbott & Scherer (1995) found that in Western individualistic nations shame more typically resembles guilt. Second, in face of negative in-group past collective events, people perceive lower level of control, which is subsequently associated with shame, while high control is related to guilt (Branscombe et al., 2004). This is why a negative past experience usually elicits more shame than guilt: for instance, university students belonging to the third German generation after World War II, report, first, feelings of shame (65%) and, second, feelings of guilt (41%) when thinking about the Holocaust (Marques et al., 2006). In sum, it is probable that Basques, when reminded of apology for the collective violence in the Basque Country, would feel not only collective guilt, but also shame for the atrocities which were being committed by ingroup members.

In brief, we expect that reminding people of a public apology together with facts about past collective violence committed by radical nationalists will reinforce a positive perception of emotional climate and positive social beliefs, although it would also augment negative emotional climate, given the fact that rituals permit assuming past misdeeds, increasing negative emotions related to past traumatic events. This increase in collective guilt and shame should reinforce agreement with reparative actions. Nonetheless, high identifiers will probably display more defensive reactions and will show less sensitivity to apologies.

Hypotheses

Considering the positive psychosocial role of such rituals, it is hypothesized that the rituals of forgiveness and reparation (the apologies of the Basque Government and Parliament to the victims of terrorism of the late XX century) should: 1) induce a more positive social climate and reinforce positive beliefs about people and the world, 2) but,

at the same time, augment negative emotional climate related to past negative behaviors, 3) and increase collective guilt, shame, and agreement with material and symbolic reparation actions. Finally, 4) identification with Basques should act as a buffer in relation to the effects of apology. Given the fact that high identifiers usually discount past misdeeds or justify them, we expect that they will report lower levels of collective guilt and shame, and display higher levels of mechanism of identity defence, such as explanation by the context, minimization of the severity of harm or blaming the victims. On the other hand, low identifiers would be more prone to admit past collective atrocities committed by their own ingroup.

Method

Participants

A total of 108 students and students' acquaintances from the Basque Country (60% female) participated in the experiment, voluntarily and anonymously. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the two versions of the questionnaire: 1) only information on collective violence and 2) information on collective violence and regarding the official apology, with 48 and 60 persons in each condition, respectively. All participants signed the informed consent agreement prior to participation in the study. The mean age was 31.44 ($SD = 13.24$). Results of this random form survey were compared also with a similar sample of Basque students and their relatives ($N = 164$, 72% female, mean age: $M = 29.8$), who responded to the same measures in a study carried out two years ago, which neither included information about nor made salient past collective violence (Jiménez, Páez, & Javaloy, 2005).

Design, Procedure and Measures

The study took the form of a two-group post-manipulation only randomized experiment, using two versions of questionnaire as described above. The first part of the questionnaire included a measure of social identification as Basque:

Identification with Basques Scale. Ten post-manipulation items were used to measure the level of identification with Basques (for example: *I am sure about my Basque identity, To be Basque is a part of my self-image, To what extent is it important for you to be Basque?*), on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *totally yes*. Items reproduce partially Crocker et al.'s collective self-esteem scale (see Branscombe et al., 2004). The scale reached good reliability ($\alpha = .93$).

In the second part, participants had to read an informative text which came from a TV documentary about the consequences of collective violence in the Basque Country, that is, about the political conflict that emerged following the Spanish Civil War (Martín Beristain, & Páez, 2000). The text was as follows:

"One of the effects of political conflict in the recent history of the Basque Country has been the political violence and its consequences. In particular, the political conflict in the Basque Country after the Civil War is linked to the following characteristics: duration of about 40 years (1968-2007), 1.100 people killed, 6.000 people injured, and 6.000 subjected to abuse or torture by the police. A recent research has found that 1.5% of the Basque population is affected by the deaths or injuries caused by political violence. Seven percent claimed to be a victim of blackmail, attacks, social isolation and ostracism for political reasons –it is estimated that 25.000 people (1% of the population) are involved in arrests and trials related to the radical left.

The numbers of political violence could be summarized as follows: 836 deaths caused by ETA and similar groups mainly in the 80's; 76 militants of ETA killed in action; 34 protesters killed by police; 42 people killed during police controls mainly before 1982; 42 people killed by vigilante groups and counterterrorism apparatus of the State between 1975-1982 and 28 killed between 1983-1987"

In the case of the experimental group, the information on collective violence-related statistics was followed by additional information on the forgiveness petition by the

Basque Parliament and Government directed to the victims of collective violence in the Basque Country (EITB, 2007), which was applied as an experimental manipulation. The information was as follows:

“Moreover, recently the Basque Parliament, in a monographic plenary session, has achieved a broad consensus and made an act of asking the victims of the conflict for forgiveness. It urges the Basque Government to fulfill the agreements on victims. Basque parliamentary parties agreed on twenty resolutions concerning reparations for victims of terrorism, in which, first, the parliamentarians “solemnly and publicly asked the victims to forgive the neglect and abandonment they have felt and suffered for too many years”. The following recommendation is of special importance: “It is recommended that the Basque institutions, in an appropriate extent corresponding to each of them, and the society in general promote and actively participate in the initiatives of the tribute and moral, social and political appreciation directed to the victims of terrorism.”

In addition, the editorial of a Basque representative newspaper commented this law as follows: “Basque society will have the opportunity to show their solidarity and closeness to the victims of terrorism through an act of justice that seeks to repair the moral debt that the Basque society and institutions have with the victims.

We are witnessing an act of homage and recognition, but it is much more than that. It is a demonstration of forgiveness. Forgiveness for not being close to the victims of ETA, for not supporting them, for forgetting or avoiding, for not giving them the recognition they deserve, or at least, for not knowing how to express it.

The confrontation and the conflict continue to prevent unanimity in a case in which what should take precedence over all is recognition of the pain of someone else.”

The third and final part of the questionnaire comprised the following scales to measure the dependent variables included in the study:

Emotional Climate Scale (Páez, Ruiz, Gailly, Kornblit, & Wiesenfeld, 1997). This scale uses 10 items to assess the perception of positive (e.g., The social environment or climate is one of hope) and negative (e.g. The social environment or climate is one of fear and anxiety) emotional climate, consisting of 7 and 3 items, respectively¹. Participants were asked to assess the current state of their country, indicating their degree of agreement with a series of statements by means of a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very strongly*. Positive and negative climate subscales achieved satisfactory reliability indices ($\alpha = .88$ and $\alpha = .85$, respectively).

Benevolence of the People and Benevolence of the World subscales of the World Assumptions Scale (WAS) (Janoff-Bulman, 1989). Both subscales were adapted by the authors for the purposes of the study, following Kanyangara's (2008) methodology for the study of Gacaca trials, that is, 2 items of the first subscale and 4 of the second one were selected to measure benevolence of the people (e.g., Human nature is basically good) and the world (e.g., There is more good than evil in the world). Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the statements on a scale ranging from 1 = *totally agree* to 7 = *totally disagree*. Both subscales demonstrated high Cronbach's alpha: .85 (people) and .82 (world).

Beliefs about collective violence. An ad-hoc prepared scale was applied in which people were asked to evaluate five common statements about authors and victims of the collective violence, dominant in the defensive discourse of perpetrators, such as: *Perpetrators act under constraint or by compliance*, *The authors of crimes did not behave worse than perpetrators in other countries and during wars*, *People who suffered or victims should forgive people who belong to the group which harmed them*, *I believe others would have behaved the same in similar situations*, *Victims and their relatives should forgive the perpetrators* or *It is normal that victims and their relatives still feel resentment by crimes suffered by them*. These statements were analysed as separate items.

Collective Guilt Acceptance and Whole Group Accountability Scale (Branscombe et al., 2004). This scale consists of 10 items which form two dimensions of collective guilt acceptance (e.g., *I feel guilty for negative actions done by ancestors to other groups*) and collective responsibility (e.g., *A group should feel responsible for the actions of its members*), each subscale including 5 items. Respondents are asked to express their degree of

agreement on a 7-points scale (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*). Both subscales showed high reliability ($\alpha = .80$ each).

Shame and Sorrow. Two ad-hoc created items were applied to measure the experience of shame (*When I think how we treated the victims of collective violence for years, I feel ashamed*) and sorrow (*I feel sorrow for and regret the damage that has been done to the victims of collective violence for years*). A varimax factor analysis including collective guilt, shame and sorrow items found three dimensions, the two Branscombe's collective guilt dimensions of acceptance and responsibility, and another dimension composed by shame and sorrow items, confirming that this is a different dimension.

Reparation. This two-item measure addressed the willingness to endorse material (*The Basque Government should provide more money to the victims of collective violence for what they suffered during the past years*) and symbolic (*The Basque Government should perform more declarations of repentance and moral reparation to the victims of collective violence for what they suffered during the past years*) compensations. Respondents are asked to express their degree of agreement on a 7-points scale (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*).

Additionally, a series of control variables was measured, including: sex, age, social identity (Basque, Spanish, European, 1 = *not at all*, 10 = *totally yes*), political orientation (1 = *extreme left*, 10 = *extreme right*), emotional arousal (Izard's Differential Emotions Scale - DES, adapted by Echebarría & Páez (1989), measuring negative emotions: e.g. sadness and anger; and positive emotions: e.g. joy and pride, evaluated on a scale from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *a lot*), source evaluation (reliability, neutrality, credibility, authenticity, importance, worrying vs. not worrying, positive vs. negative), and evaluation of the Basque Parliament's resolutions (resolutions as: sincere, opportunist, causing people to agree, reinforcing the feeling of belonging to humanity, and reinforcing respect for human rights). Source and Parliament's resolutions evaluation items were answered on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *totally yes*).

Results

Preliminary analyses

Prior to hypotheses verification, a set of control variables was analysed, in order to confirm that randomization created comparable groups. To control for identification with Basques and compare high and low identifiers, the post-manipulation social identification scale was dichotomized by the median and introduced as an additional factor in the model. When the analyses were replicated using Basque identification as a continuous variable the results were similar to those obtained using high and low identifiers groups as a dichotomic variable (not included in this paper).

The one-way ANOVA results (Table I) showed that there were almost no significant differences between the experimental versus control group regarding control variables such as age, social identities (moderately intensive), ideology (moderate), positive (interest, joy, surprise) and negative (anger, disgust, fear, sadness etc.) emotions elicited by the information (low intensity), the story evaluation (rather positive), or parliamentary resolutions evaluation (in general slightly negative). Story evaluations by the experimental group were in general slightly less positive, although on the whole means were above the theoretical mean, indicating that participants evaluated the information provided as reliable, neutral, credible, authentic, important, not worrying and positive. However, the only significant difference in story evaluation was regarding its neutrality: the experimental group viewed the story as less neutral. Similarly, for the parliamentary resolutions evaluation, this group considered them more opportunist (not natural) in comparison with control group. Finally, when low and high identifiers were compared, the results showed no significant differences. Parliamentary resolutions were slightly more positively evaluated among low identifiers.

TABLE I
 Descriptive variables. Means and Standard Deviations in experimental versus control group and low and high identifiers

	Experimental Group M (SD)	Control Group M (SD)	F	df	Error MS	Low Identifiers M (SD)	High Identifiers M (SD)	F	df	Error MS
<i>Demographic Characteristics</i>										
Age	32.21 (13.57)	30.81 (13.06)	0.29	105	18544.87	32.55 (12.62)	30.27 (13.90)	0.79	105	18457.87
Basque Identity	6.69 (2.84)	5.92 (3.32)	1.64	106	1026.90	—	—	—	106	575.83
Spanish Identity	5.44 (3.21)	5.33 (2.78)	0.03	106	941.146	—	—	—	106	816.28
European Identity	5.96 (2.52)	6.65 (2.54)	2.99	106	677.57	—	—	—	106	689.06
Identity	6.25 (1.97)	6.17 (1.78)	0.05	106	369.33	—	—	—	106	331.09
<i>Emotions Elicited by the Story</i>										
Positive Emotions	3.29 (1.16)	3.35 (1.08)	0.07	105	131.57	3.18 (1.06)	3.47 (1.16)	1.86	105	129.37
Negative Emotions	3.65 (1.38)	3.65 (1.31)	0.00	106	190.92	3.73 (1.27)	3.57 (1.41)	0.37	106	190.26
<i>Story Evaluation</i>										
Of Reliable Source	4.58 (1.58)	4.63 (1.71)	0.02	106	291.60	4.35 (1.58)	4.89 (1.69)	2.95*	106	283.76
Neutral	3.63 (1.63)	4.58 (2.28)	6.01*	106	431.83	4.00 (1.91)	4.32 (2.22)	0.65	106	453.55
Credible	4.65 (1.62)	5.18 (1.94)	2.36	106	345.96	4.84 (1.71)	5.06 (1.94)	0.39	106	352.36
Describing Facts	4.92 (1.60)	5.03 (2.09)	0.10	106	377.60	4.89 (1.92)	5.08 (1.85)	0.26	106	377.04
Important	5.40 (1.50)	5.57 (1.67)	0.30	106	270.21	5.38 (1.54)	5.60 (1.64)	0.52	106	269.66
Not Worrying	5.21 (1.27)	5.70 (1.59)	3.04*	106	224.52	5.45 (1.38)	5.51 (1.56)	0.04	106	230.88
Unusual	4.17 (1.31)	4.58 (2.00)	1.54	106	317.25	4.16 (1.66)	4.64 (1.79)	2.07	106	315.72
Positive	4.13 (1.59)	3.67 (2.24)	1.42	106	416.58	3.75 (1.92)	4.00 (2.05)	0.44	106	420.44
<i>Basque Parliament Resolutions Evaluation</i>										
Sincere, real	3.15 (1.37)	3.38 (1.55)	0.69	106	230.91	3.36 (1.42)	3.19 (1.53)	0.38	106	230.84
Opportunist, not natural	4.42 (1.43)	3.74 (1.86)	4.28*	106	300.91	4.22 (1.67)	3.86 (1.74)	1.20	106	309.57
People agree with them	3.77 (1.24)	3.82 (1.66)	0.02	106	235.46	3.82 (1.47)	3.77 (1.51)	0.02	106	235.46
Reinforcing the Feeling of Belonging to Humanity	3.63 (1.47)	3.35 (1.85)	0.70	106	302.90	3.65 (1.77)	3.28 (1.59)	1.31	106	301.19
Reinforcing Respect for Human Rights	3.77 (1.59)	3.45 (1.66)	1.03	106	281.33	3.71 (1.65)	3.47 (1.61)	0.57	106	282.55
Total Evaluation	3.58 (1.01)	3.65 (1.06)	0.13	106	115.31	3.66 (1.03)	3.57 (1.05)	0.22	106	115.21

* $p \leq .05$, * $p \leq .10$.

We also verified if sex distribution was adequate for an experimental design with chi-square test. There were no significant differences among groups either in the case of manipulation-related factor or regarding identification with Basques factor.

Primary analyses

Further data analyses, aiming at verifying the hypotheses, were based on 2x2 ANOVAs (control versus experimental by low versus high Basque identification) with the above listed dependent variables.

Emotional climate. As shown in table II, results did not support the first hypothesis on the positive role of forgiveness petition ritual, because no significant differences were found either in positive or in negative emotional climate perception (means are presented in Table III).

TABLE II
Emotional Climate. Basic World Assumptions and Beliefs on Collective Violence, Reparation, Collective Guilt and Personal Shame and Sorrow

	Manipulation effect (F)	Identification effect (F)	Interaction effect (F)	df	Error MS
<i>Emotional Climate</i>					
Positive Emotional Climate	0.65	2.58	3.11*	104	1.11
Negative Emotional Climate	0.02	1.99	1.99	104	1.37
Emotional Climate Balance	0.66	7.36**	0.03	104	1.52
<i>Basic World Assumptions</i>					
Basic Assumptions (Overall)	3.28*	0.01	0.60	104	6.61
Assumptions about the World	4.22*	0.03	0.55	104	24.44
Assumptions about People	0.73	0.02	0.39	104	1.29
<i>Reparation, Collective Guilt, Personal Shame and Sorrow</i>					
Reparation	4.11*	4.20*	1.26	104	11.00
Whole Group Accountability	0.46	0.01	0.30	104	2.38
Collective Guilt Acceptance	2.27	0.36	0.10	104	2.52
Personal Shame and Sorrow	4.51*	0.56	1.57	104	2.18
<i>Beliefs on Collective Violence</i>					
The authors did not behave worse than in other countries	0.48	7.40**	0.24	104	2.73
Victims should forgive	0.01	9.32***	0.01	104	3.36

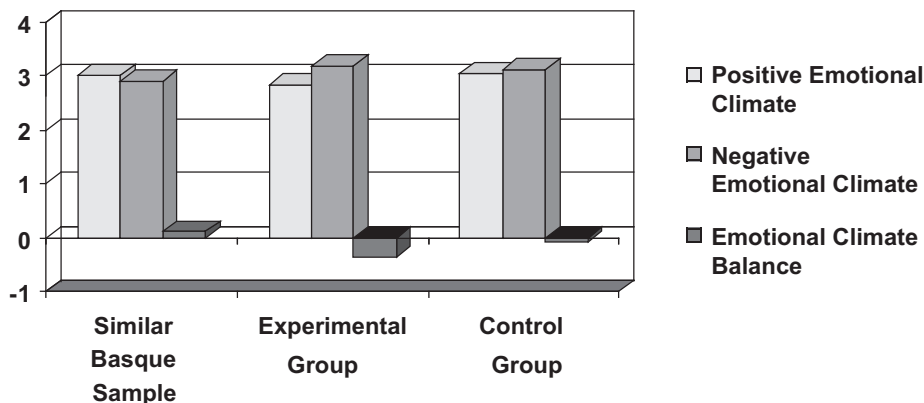
*** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$, $^{\circ}$ $p \leq .10$.

We contrasted the emotional climate means in both the experimental and the control group with means in a similar sample from the Basque Country using the Student's t -test. The results proved that there was a statistically significant difference regarding the emotional climate balance ($t_{(47)} = 2.67$, $p < .01$), being lower in the experimental group than in the similar Basque sample ($M = 0.11$ vs. $M = -0.35$). Such results indicate that the mere act of recall of past collective violence has a negative impact on perceived emotional climate. What is more, when positive and negative climate components were analyzed, it was found that mostly the negative was marginally higher ($t_{(47)} = -1.73$, $p < .10$) in the experimental group than in a similar Basque sample (see Figure 1).

Finally, a significant effect was found for a low versus high Basque identification factor regarding the emotional climate balance: the balance is better among high identifiers than among low identifiers (Table II).

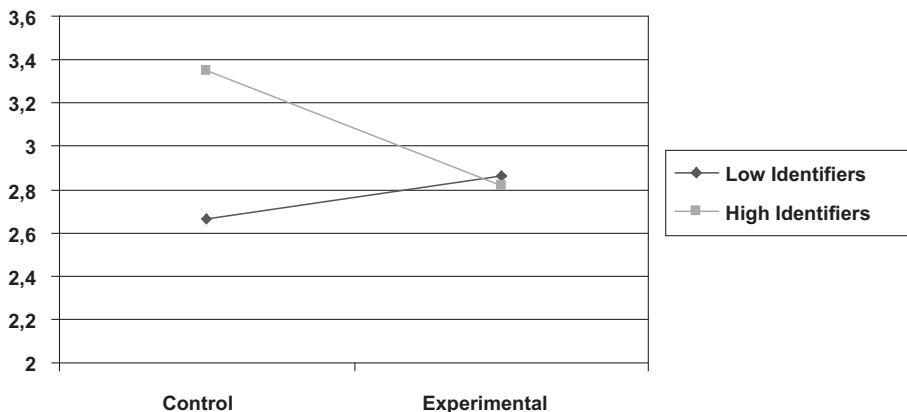
Moreover, for positive climate there was a marginal significant interaction effect between the manipulation and the identification factor. The mean of positive climate was higher for high identifiers ($M = 3.35$) and lower among low identifiers ($M = 2.66$)

FIGURE 1
Emotional Climate Mean in Experimental Group, Control Group, and a Similar Basque Sample



in the control condition, while the mean increased in the apology condition for low identifiers ($M = 2.86$) and simultaneously decreased for high identifiers ($M = 2.82$) (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2
Positive Emotional Climate Means in Experimental and Control Group



Basic assumptions about people and the world. With regard to basic assumptions, no manipulation, identification, or interaction effects were found: beliefs were not more positive in the experimental group. In the case of assumptions about the world, results demonstrated they were significantly less positive in the experimental group, although those about the humanity did not differ between the two groups.

Collective guilt and reparation actions. The second hypothesis was partially confirmed as, on the one hand, agreement with reparation actions was significantly higher in the experimental group and among low identifiers, while there were no significant differences as regards the collective guilt level, considering both acceptance and responsibility dimensions (Table II). What is more, there were no significant interaction effects regarding both reparation and collective guilt.

TABLE III
Emotional Climate. Basic World Assumptions and Beliefs on Collective Violence, Reparation, Collective Guilt, Shame and Sorrow - Means and Standard Deviations

	Experimental Group <i>M (SD)</i>	Control Group <i>M (SD)</i>	Low Identifiers <i>M (SD)</i>	High Identifiers <i>M (SD)</i>
Positive Emotional Climate	2.84 (.15)	3.01 (.14)	2.76 (.14)	3.09 (.15)
Negative Emotional Climate	3.14 (.17)	3.11 (.15)	3.29 (.16)	2.96 (.16)
Emotional Climate Balance	-.30 (.18)	-.10 (.16)	-.53 (.17)	-.12 (.17)
Basic Assumptions (Overall)	3.83 (.16)	4.24 (.15)	4.03 (.15)	4.04 (.16)
Assumptions about the World	3.75 (.18)	4.25 (.16)	3.98 (.17)	4.03 (.17)
Assumptions about People	3.99 (.19)	4.21 (.17)	4.12 (.17)	4.09 (.18)
Reparation	3.91 (.24)	3.25 (.21)	3.92 (.22)	3.25 (.23)
Whole Group Accountability	3.64 (.23)	3.44 (.20)	3.53 (.21)	3.55 (.22)
Collective Guilt Acceptance	4.56 (.23)	4.09 (.21)	4.23 (.21)	4.42 (.22)
Personal Shame and Sorrow	3.89 (.22)	3.28 (.19)	3.69 (.20)	3.47 (.21)
The authors did not behave worse	4.04 (.24)	3.81 (.21)	3.49 (.22)	4.37 (.23)
Victims should forgive	3.27 (.27)	3.31 (.24)	2.74 (.25)	3.84 (.26)

Shame and sorrow. Finally, the data sustained the hypothesis concerning shame and sorrow. In the experimental condition, participants expressed significantly more personal shame and sorrow (Table III for means). Moreover, there was a statistically significant and strong correlation between the personal shame and sorrow indicator and reparation ($r_{(108)} = .58, p < .001$). However, there was neither significant Basque identification nor interaction effect. The effect size was rather small (Table II).

Beliefs about collective violence. Moreover, as expected in relation to our fourth hypothesis, a main effect was found for high Basque identifiers on two items regarding beliefs about collective violence. High identifiers agreed more with the statement justifying perpetrators on the ground that they did not behave worse than those in other nations and wars ($M = 4.37$ versus low $M = 3.49$) and with the idea that victims and their relatives should forgive perpetrators ($M = 3.84$ versus low $M = 2.74$). There was neither significant MANOVA main effect of the manipulation nor interaction effect, meaning that high identifiers in apology condition agreed strongly with justification and forgiveness.

Discussion

This study attempted to understand in which way apology rituals carried out at the collective level can impact the members of the group involved in the political conflict. We have focused our attention on one of the most enduring conflict in Western Europe, which brought about many deaths, harm, and painful memories. The study, through its experimental design, analyzed how an apology for such wrongdoings could elicit specific emotive and cognitive responses (changes in beliefs), while taking into account the level of identification with Basques.

In general, the emotions elicited by the story about the collective violence outcomes in the Basque Country (and by the parliamentary apologies) were characterized by low intensity. Furthermore, while the information itself was generally evaluated as reliable, neutral (although it was seen as more neutral by those who were not reminded of apologies), credible, authentic, important, not worrying and positive, the parliamentary resolutions were evaluated rather negatively (although seen as more opportunist when the apology was reminded). These results shed specific light on the results and conclusions further presented, as they suggest that participants of the study assumed the information on collective violence to be relevant and true, while they were

neither necessarily impacted positively nor convinced with the information on the actions of the Basque Parliament and Government.

Regarding the mere experimental manipulation impact, results obtained confirm that public apologies and recalling past misdeeds reinforce agreement with reparation and increase personal social emotions related to social control, such as shame and sorrow. From this point of view, the study confirms the moderate positive impact of apologies as an instance of restorative justice (estimation of effect size by mean of correlation was of $r(108) = .22$, explaining 4% of variance). However, we did not find an increase in positive or negative emotional climate, or in positive social representations about the world. Such findings are at odds with Kanyangara et al.'s (2007) results. Nevertheless, we should take into consideration an important difference between these two studies: in this study, an experimental design by means of two types of questionnaires with limited personal implication and actual experience was used, while the Kanyangara et al.'s study analyzed the impact of long-term rituals of restorative justice on actual victims and perpetrators. Another explanation is that the emotional climate scale and the collective guilt scale are general and not sensitive to such light experimental manipulations. It cannot be denied, however, that in other studies similar to the present one these scales demonstrated their sensitivity to experimental manipulations (see Lastrego et al. in this monograph). Finally, as we will describe below, the apology reinforces positive emotional climate for low identifiers and decreases it for high identifiers, showing that apologies have a positive effect for people who do not feel symbolically related to or identified with perpetrators. On the other hand, the apology has an emotional cost for Basque nationalists, congruently with the emotional cost that apologies had for people belonging to the perpetrator ingroup in Kanyangara et al.'s study (2007).

What is more, when the results of this experiment are compared with the means in a similar sample of the Basque Country, some interesting conclusions might be drawn. It seems not only that being reminded of apologies expressed by the Basque Government and Parliament had its impact on the study participants, but also that the mere fact of being reminded of past misdeeds related to one's own in-group can change people's perception of emotional climate. In our study, in both groups, the emotional climate balance was negative, which is a very infrequent finding. What is more, it resulted that when people are reminded of the past negative events and apologies made by the authorities, they indeed perceive the emotional climate as worse in comparison to a similar Basque sample. This comparable sample answered the Emotional Climate Scale some years ago and it is possible that differences in the social and political evolution can explain why our sample showed a worse climate. This study was performed beyond the current recession and with no important political changes during the application, while the previous sample answered the scale two months after the March Eleven terrorist attack (Jiménez et al., 2005). These findings suggest that apology ritual combined with recall of past collective violence reinforces the perception of negative emotional climate in the society.

With regard to the identification with Basques, we found a slight expected positive effect in the case of emotional climate. First, among low identifiers perceived emotional climate balance was worse than among high identifiers. What is more, when they were not reminded of apology but of past collective violence, low identifiers perceived the emotional climate as less positive than when the apology was included. This interaction effect suggests that apologies had partial positive effects, but only among participants weakly involved with the ingroup's legacy. On the other hand, high identifiers demonstrated a defensive response when facing rather unpleasant information on the collective violence linked to their in-group. People who identify themselves strongly as Basques prefer to see the emotional climate within their in-group as positive. They indeed perceive it as more positive when only facing the drastic data related to

collective violence than when also reminded of apology for the atrocities committed. In sum, these findings bring support to the idea that high identification with one's in-group plays a defensive role in perception and evaluation of one's group actions.

However, Basque identification was not associated with lower guilt nor interacted with the manipulation in general – with the exception of the effect on positive emotional climate described above. Moreover, correlations between Basque identification as a continuous variable and collective guilt, shame and sorrow were not significant (data not shown in this paper). Nevertheless, as expected, people with high identification displayed in general more defensive responses, not only in relation to perception of the emotional climate but also as regards their beliefs about collective violence in the Basque Country and their agreement with reparations. They agreed more with the statement that justifies collective violence of their in-group, expected more spontaneous forgiveness, and agreed less with reparations. Finally, agreement with reparations was strongly correlated with personal shame and sorrow, confirming that these social emotions reinforce reparative behavioural tendencies.

We can conclude that the apology-oriented initiative of the Basque Parliament and Government was able to produce an impact of shame and sorrow reinforcement, and also respect of the agreement with reparative actions, while, on the other hand, no effects were found as regards emotional climate and social representations about the world and humanity. This can be due to a limitation of the experimental design, which elicited low involvement – although other similar studies presented in this monograph prove that apology ritual can have an impact on these psychosocial variables. Most arguably, the apologies of the Basque Parliament do not have actual psychosocial impact because of their weakness, being too general, with a lot of limitations, and a lack of concrete effects or implications for the daily life of the common people. In spite of these limitations, a positive effect was found for participants with relative low identification with the Basque Country, showing that this apology has had some positive psychosocial consequences mainly for low identifiers. On the other hand, identification with Basques appears as a partial obstacle for the acceptance of past collective misdeeds, because it was associated with partial justifications of collective violence, claims for forgiveness and low agreement with reparations, while it was not related to collective guilt, although it did not impede feelings of shame and sorrow. Thus, as stated by Hamber (2007), it is important to continue addressing relationships between individuals and groups in and after conflict, although it might be difficult to find the best ways to deal with the collective violence issues and, subsequently, with apologies and forgiveness related to them. Studies such as the above described can provide useful indications on how to make the apology and forgiveness true and functioning as a “healing balm” for the societies involved in political conflicts such as the one in the Basque Country.

Notes

¹ For the purpose of this study an item regarding the economic situation was excluded from the positive climate dimension.

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Official or political apologies and improvement of intergroup relations: A neo-Durkheimian approach to official apologies as rituals

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Abstract

This article argues that institutional apologies are rituals that can be conceived from a neo-Durkheimian viewpoint as external social tools of collective emotion, which allow people to assume collective guilt and shame, increase agreement with reparatory behaviors, and reinforce social cohesion. The review of studies presented in this monograph shows that an apology reactivates and intensifies collective emotions, mainly of shame and guilt, above and beyond merely reminding people of past misdeeds, and increases support for reparation. Shame and sorrow fuel and support reparative tendencies. Finally, salience of past collective violence together with an apology improves social climate to some extent, enhances intergroup reconciliation by decreasing prejudice and improving intergroup contact, and helps to reconstruct in-group collective memory in a more critical way. Changes in collective emotions and representations of the past mediate the positive effects of apologies on reparation and social cohesion.

Keywords: Public apologies, forgiveness, intergroup relations, rituals, Durkheim.

Peticiones de perdón públicas o disculpas políticas y mejora de relaciones intergrupo: un marco de análisis neo-Durkheimiano a las disculpas oficiales en tanto rituales

Resumen

Este artículo argumenta que las disculpas o peticiones de perdón institucionales son rituales que se pueden conceptualizar desde un marco teórico neo-durkheimiano como instrumentos sociales externos de emociones colectivas, que le sirven de andamiaje o infraestructura a las personas para asumir la vergüenza y culpa colectiva, incrementan el acuerdo con conductas de reparación y refuerzan la cohesión social. La revisión de los estudios de este monográfico muestran que las disculpas institucionales reactivan e intensifican las emociones colectivas, principalmente de vergüenza y culpa, teniendo un efecto superior al recuerdo simple de los errores del pasado, y ayudan además a apoyar medidas de reparación. La vergüenza y culpa motivan y sirven de apoyo a las tendencias a la reparación. Finalmente, hace saliente o recordar las violencias colectivas pasadas, junto con las disculpas institucionales, mejoran en cierto grado el clima social y refuerzan la reconciliación intergrupala, disminuyendo el prejuicio y mejorando el contacto inter grupo, y ayudan a reconstruir de manera más autocrítica la memoria colectiva del endo grupo. Los cambios en las emociones colectivas y las representaciones del pasado median y explican los efectos positivos de las disculpas públicas en la cohesión social y las tendencias de reparación.

Palabras clave: Disculpas publicas, perdón, relaciones intergrupo, rituales, Durkheim.

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With the aim of reinforcing peace processes and reconciliation, coping with negative collective past events and constructing an integrative collective memory, it is important to understand how apology can function at an intergroup level. Thus, the main objective of this paper is to study the apology process at such a level. Official or intergroup apology goes beyond the recognition of responsibility and the adhesion to moral norms as individual phenomena. Morality, responsibility, guilt and shame become collective in character. We will try to analyze these collective processes.

Apology as self-critical remembering as opposed to dominant positivistic collective memory

Recently, nations and institutions, reversing the classical self-enhancement tendency to “never apologize, never explain”, have offered many official apologies (Marrus, 2006). However “never apologize, never explain” is a preferred response when confronting an ugly past, at least among the dominant elites. Examples are numerous; for instance, the Russians refuse to acknowledge and apologize for the Katyn massacre and Red Army crimes of war, etc. (Baumesteir & Hastings, 1997; Nytagodien & Neal, 2004). Following Lind (2008), States and nations usually *glorify* past collective violence: they might admit that violent acts occurred in the past, but at the same time they might actually praise them as a just and necessary war, a cause for pride, like the US and British admission of casualties and lack of apology for the atrocities of bombings in Germany and Japan. They may also *justify* acts of collective violence, accepting that atrocities occurred but were necessary in the context – even if not glorious, as in the case of Japanese minimization of the brutality of the Imperial Army. Moreover, States and nations may *deny* that collective violence took place or that the State committed crimes, as in the case of the Turkish denial of the Armenian Genocide. They may also not deny but simply “*forget*” the past, with history books glossing over past crimes and commemorating neither victims nor perpetrators, as in the case of the French “amnesia” of massacres and tortures in Vietnam and Algeria. Admission of past collective violence may also be a cold neutral *acknowledgement* with no moral judgment: an example of neutral accounts are historical textbooks describing the atomic bombing of Japan and presenting a balanced vision of justification (bombing was necessary to end the war) and criticism (it was unnecessary, Japan was defeated and the bombing was merely an expression of military force to act as a warning to Stalin) (Lind, 2008; Páez & Liu, in press). Finally, admission of past violence by States and nations may be a form of admitting past misdeeds and communicating a self-critical negative moral judgment, which can be labelled *apology or self-critical remembering*. Forms of remembering are important because social representations of the past or ways of remembering it have consequences for the definition of heroes and villains or good and bad behaviors, and delineate acceptable policies and chart the future of nations, influencing the way they relate to other nations. Denial and glorification of past collective violence defines national collective behavior, usually reinforcing proactive attitudes in the case of high status and “winning” nations (Páez et al., 2008), but also inhibiting international reconciliation and fueling collective fear, anger and distrust (Lind, 2008). Even if apologies are not a necessary condition for reconciliation, as show the examples of the UK and USA that established friendly relations with Japan and Germany, and Germany with France, without apologizing for bombings and past violence, in some circumstances apologies appear to be a way of improving intergroup relationships.

The Age of Apology

Currently we are living the so-called Age of Apology. Numerous groups admit and show remorse for past misdeeds, violence and negative collective behaviors. The use of

apology in response to past atrocities and violation of moral standards has become a universal norm. The politics of memory has changed from a collective memory of pride, based on past heroic golden ages, to a politics of the memory of regret. Due to the more critical view of the future and the erosion of past heroic narratives, the past that weighs the heaviest in many nations today is more the negative past, a self-reflexive collective memory that is focused more on learning a moral lesson from a shameful, undesired and regretted past (Olick and Robbins, 1998). Even if it is not a universal norm, Judt (2005) proposed that an apologetic view of the negative past is a norm in Europe: to become a member of the current European cultural region, a nation should apologize for its role in the Holocaust and past collective violence. For instance, several European countries have called for a Turkish acknowledgment of and apology for the Armenian genocide as a prerequisite for Turkey's membership of the EU.

As another example of a classical dogmatic institution that is reversing the "never explain, never apologize" doctrine, the Catholic Church is developing a theology of apology. During John Paul II's papacy, he apologized 94 times until 1997 for the past actions of Church authorities, the Inquisition, wars of religion, and wrongdoings to indigenous peoples, Muslims, Africans and the Jewish community (Accatoli, 1997, quoted in Marrus, 2006, p. 6).

Official apologies between nations have become important. Japan has regularly issued apologies since the nineties – to be precise, 36 since 1973, including admissions of misdeeds and remorse. For instance, Prime Minister Koizumo stated: "In the past, Japan, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to people of many countries, particularly those of Asian nations. Japan squarely faces these facts of history with humility and feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology always engraved in the mind." (Marrus, 2006, p. 6). Other apologies include remorse and reparatory measures, like Murayama's 1995 apology to the sex slaves of the Imperial Army, accompanied by material compensation and the establishment of an educational foundation (Lind, 2008). In Europe, the French government has apologized for the role of Vichy in the Holocaust, and Belgium for their role in the Lumumba killing and for limitations in their intervention in Rwanda.

Apologies are also relevant within nations. The Nigerian and Chilean governments apologize to former political prisoners and victims. Apologies are sometimes included in restorative or transitional judicial processes (Collins, 2004). For instance, in 1991, Aylwin, the Chilean President, presented to the nation the Rettig or Truth Commission Report acknowledging 3000 persons "missing" or killed by the Chilean army and police, in a televised broadcast from the presidential palace in Santiago. Being the first democratic elected president after Pinochet's dictatorship, he insisted that the Chilean State should be responsible for the crimes of the past:

The agents of the State caused so much suffering and the responsible bodies of the State could not or did not know how to preclude or punish it, while the society failed to react properly. The State and society as a whole are responsible for action or omission... This is why I dare, in my position as President of the Republic, to assume the representation of the nation and, in its name, to beg forgiveness from the relatives of the victims. This is why I also solemnly ask the army and security forces who participated in the excesses committed to make gestures of acknowledgment of the pain they caused with the aim of contributing to the lessening of that pain. (Marrus, 2006, p. 14).

The Irish IRA and the Argentinian Montoneros, as well as some Argentinian and Chilean army generals, have apologized to their former targets and reject past violent actions against civilians as indefensible. Only in limited cases are apologies rejected, as was the case, for instance, of a local leader who did not accept Giscard's apology for French repression in 1947 in Madagascar. Usually, they are welcome, though they may also be criticized as limited (too few), delayed (too late), or insincere (Cairns, Tam, Hewstone and Niens, 2005; Staub, 2005). Apologies are also being included in

restorative justice programs and transitional justice procedures or peace processes (Collins, 2004). In all these cases, official apologies are conceived as a prerequisite to improve intergroup relationships, promote forgiveness and restore social cohesion. As Judt (2005) suggests, one objection is that it may only be a cultural belief that “apology is a necessary aspect of healing”, unrelated to reality and only shared in some cultures.

Apology and cultural beliefs

At the interpersonal level, an apology is an integrative device for maintaining in-group cohesion. Apologies in general try to restore the relationship with the offended party, to ask forgiveness and to maintain harmony and social cohesion. An apology offers the hope that social harmony can be restored and the deviant or perpetrator may regain a place in the society (Tavuchis, 1991). Certain differences related to culture and values have been pointed out, suggesting that apology is embedded in Christian and Western values but fits worse in the case of other traditions, like the Islamic and Asian cultures. However, studies in different parts of the world have discovered among lay people a similar script that includes apology as a phenomenon conducive to forgiveness (Azar & Mullet, 2001; 2002; Sandage & Williamson, 2005). Other differences refer to frequency: in cultures such as the hierarchical collectivist China, which emphasizes saving face or maintaining one’s reputation, apologies are weighty acts that are rarely offered and accepted, because they erode social harmony. Cultures that differentiate strongly between the in- and out-group are reluctant to apologize to out-group members because the latter are considered unworthy of receiving an apology. The explanation for the reluctance of the Japanese to give complete apologies for war crimes in World War II is also a matter of cultural background (Stamato, 2008). However, a study in Lebanon, a supposed collectivist culture emphasizing in-group versus out-group behavioral differences, did not find that the effects of apology were different when coming from in-group or out-group offenders – at least not with a hypothetical scenario opposing Muslim and Druze, Catholic and Meronite Christians (Sandage & Williamson, 2005).

Finally, people strongly identified with the in-group, who hold strong hierarchical-collectivist, traditional and nationalist values, usually question apologies, regarding them as a sign of weakness and a lack of collective self-esteem; they refuse to apologize, emphasizing the glorification of the in-group past and present behaviors. There have been complaints in European, American and Asian countries coming from social and political groups objecting to proposed or realized apologies for their countries’ past transgressions. Members of institutional or political in-groups who are strongly identified with the country and nationalist ideas tend to oppose apologies, because they deny the extent of crimes and wrongdoings, and consider that apologies for past wartime or political conflict would be a betrayal to in-group members that fought and died for “the good of the nation” (Cunningham, 2004). One study found that, when facing an apology for past collective violence associated with the in-group (i.e., facts about radical nationalist ETA’s victims), those who highly identified themselves with the ethnic in-group (Bobowik, Bilbao & Momoitio, 2010, this issue) agreed more with defensive opinions related to past collective violence and reported lower agreement with reparations, although they did not show lower collective guilt or personal shame and sorrow, in comparison to low identifiers.

General characteristics of apologies

Even though social identification level, culture type and values may influence the frequency, form, predisposition and some contents of apologies, when looking across different cultural contexts, apologies can be conceived as rituals of reconciliation (Marrus, 2006), which, by means of expiation, help to restore social relationships. With

minor variations, scholarly work on interpersonal (Regher & Gutheil, 2002), intergroup (Staub, 2005) and political (James, 2007; Marrus, 2006; Stamato, 2008) apologies as rituals of reconciliation include the following four features:

a) An acknowledgement that an injury or misdeed has occurred, clearly naming harm, wrongs and damage that were done, bringing issues into the open and promoting discussion of a taboo topic. What is important is the acknowledgement not only of the facts and suffering of the victims but also that the suffering was wrong, as in the case of the US President's official apology to Japanese Americans and Canadians for their internment during World War II and admitting no military necessity for such actions and that the internment was not a protective measure (Marrus, 2006). Apologies including recognition of wrongdoings have more positive effects than simply justifications ("It was a war") (Staub, 2005). There is some evidence that people have a better perception of the transgressor who apologizes (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006) and that the perpetrators' apology promotes the victims' forgiveness at the interpersonal level (Rusbult, Hannon, Stocker, & Finkel, 2005).

b) An acceptance of responsibility for the mistake or wrong committed and a clear explanation of the role one or the in-group has played. For instance, when President Bush said he "was sorry for the humiliation suffered by Iraqi prisoners and by their families", for internments and torture in the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, his acceptance of responsibility lack of implies a false apology (Marrus, 2006). However, Nadler & Liviatan (2006) found that acceptance of responsibility reinforces *the conciliatory effects of an apology* less than expressions of empathy for suffering. Probably, as they argue, the acceptance of responsibility may be more important for victims from low status and power groups (e.g. Palestinians) than for high status and power group (e.g. Israelis).

c) An expression of remorse, regret and humility, by verbal and non-verbal means, for the harm and for having committed the wrong. For instance, Chancellor Willy Brandt, kneeling in front of the monument to the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943, expressed remorse and humility by means of non-verbal behavior (Brandt did not issue verbal statements). The expression of remorse at an interpersonal level (Staub, 2005) and empathy between groups, reinforce the reconciliatory effects of an apology (see above, Nadler & Liviatan, 2006). Expressing empathy (*Our (in)group do not have the monopoly of suffering...the other (out)group also experiences a lot of suffering*), recognizing the suffering of the other person or out-group, and overcoming a cold description of facts, facilitates the positive effect of an apology (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006).

d) A credible promise of non-repetition or commitment that the act will not occur again, and to change current negative behavior. Two studies at the interpersonal level confirm that perpetrators who are willing to "cancel" the negative consequences of their actions and communicate in a positive manner, make forgiveness more probable (Rusbult et al., 2005).

Current evidence suggests that perceived sincerity and the absence of justifications of misbehavior are factors related to a successful apology. Firstly, to be successful, an apology should be perceived as sincere, spontaneous, not coerced and not explicable in terms of such things as avoidance of punishment, social desirability, saving face, or because the apologizers might be rewarded (Philpot & Hornsey, 2008). Two studies found correlations between the sincerity of apologies and the perceived positive effects on reconciliation, which were an increase in perceived intergroup trust and social cohesion (Bobowik et al., 2010; Etxeberria, Páez, Valencia, Bilbao & Zubieta, in press). Secondly, a successful apology is not hypocritical, does not minimize the misdeeds, and does not try to excuse, justify, or glorify the negative behavior. However, studies show that excuses have an effect similar to apologies. Survivors of repressions in South Africa were exposed to different accounts of wrongdoings which were given by perpetrators: justifications (*We were at war*), excuses (*I had to follow orders*), and apologies (*I am sorry*). These explanations

were presented by perpetrators who testified in front of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However, they were not in a real confrontation nor had the perpetrators direct responsibility for the survivors' suffering. Apologies had slightly higher effects than excuses, and both reduced anger and reinforced forgiveness more than justifications. Moreover, most survivors refused to forgive (Staub, 2005), congruently with other studies showing lower acceptance of apologies and high reluctance to forgive (Cairns et al., 2005).

Two other factors proposed - based more on argumentation than on evidence - as reinforcing the functional effect of apologies are concrete reparative actions and the implied absence of imposition to forgive (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006). When apology includes the offer of some form of concrete or symbolic restitution and reparation, it is shown that issues are being discussed and solutions sought in a long-term process, and the apology is not imposed as a one-off and final action. An apology can only be a starting point because there is no easy way to redress the wrongs of the past and it requires a long-term process of dialogue and the construction of a future. The mere verbal reaffirmation of norms is not enough; actions and concrete behaviors are also needed to realize and implement these norms. In the case of transitional justice, for instance, institutional reforms, procedures of punitive justice, such as trials, and concrete reparative actions are required. In the case of Chile, Aylwin's apology included - in the mid-term - sanitary and educational support to victims, as well as monetary restitution, and - in the long term - the trial of perpetrators (Martín Beristain, Páez, Rimé & Kanyangara, 2010, this issue).

A "good" apology asks implicitly for forgiveness but does not demand nor impose it openly, and puts the decision of forgiving freely in the hands of the other person or the out-group. An effective apology puts the offender in a position of vulnerability, and redresses partially the usually asymmetrical relationship in terms of power, status and resources between the perpetrator and victim groups. If the dominant and perpetrator group imposes forgiveness and definition of what is good and adaptive upon the offended group, then the apology fails because the asymmetrical and subordinate position of the offended group is maintained. The offender group should give the power to forgive or not to forgive to the offended group. This change in status and power relation is an important explanation of how some apologies help to restore dignity and self-respect (Lazare, 2004). In other words, the dynamics of apology help to reconstruct positive emotions and social beliefs in a just and benevolent social world, and potentially offer the victims a moral recognition of their personal worth and dignity.

Differences between Interpersonal and Intergroup Apologies

Previous features characterize intergroup as well as interpersonal apologies. In the case of political, official or institutional apologies, usually representatives of wrongdoers and victims ("Many to Many") meet and exchange apologies and gestures, involving public ceremonies, documented declarations and sometimes laws and agreements (Tavuchis, 1991). These apologies for past injustice committed by the group's officials or members are given by a representative of a State or other organized group to the victims, or descendants of victims.

It is important to be aware that processes focusing on interpersonal apology, forgiveness and reconciliation, are different from intergroup and between-nation processes. Sometimes interpersonal apologies are embedded in transitional justice procedures, like the South African TRC, and are taken to be instances of intergroup apology. Apologies from specific perpetrators to specific victims in TRC audiences were supposed to be generalized and to promote intergroup reconciliation (Marrus, 2006). Some evidence and historical analysis suggests that the former is easier to obtain than the latter, and that the positive effects of personal apologies are not projected towards

intergroup relationships (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006). Limited evidence suggests that group apologies are less effective than apologies performed by a single person. Individualized apologies (from a Japanese soldier offender to a sample of Australian students, supposed to be secondary victims of the Japanese Army's crimes of war in World War II), in contrast to group apologies, reinforce forgiveness for this target. Moreover, individual apologies are not translated into forgiveness for the wider offending group (Philpot & Hornsey, 2008). Research in social psychology has found a qualitative difference between interpersonal and intergroup relations: usually conflict is more extreme at an intergroup than at an interpersonal level. This principle of qualitative differences between interpersonal and intergroup processes is reproduced in the domain of apologies: in comparison with interpersonal apologies, intergroup or collective apologies are perceived as suspicious and insincere (Bobowik et al., 2010, this issue; Valencia, Momoiito & Idoyaga, 2010, this issue) and implying low remorse (Philpot & Hornsey, 2008).

Specific characteristics of Official Apologies

Four main characteristics differentiate official apologies from interpersonal ones: 1) official apologies are a performance carried out in a formal and stylized manner, 2) they constitute a public performance largely relayed by the mass media, 3) respected high-status representatives are involved in such an apology, and 4) they embody a process that requires some consensual support of the in-group population, as well as an absence of defensive reactions, questioning apology, denying or glorifying accounts of the past negative events (Tavuchis, 1991). These four characteristics will be detailed below.

Thus, the first important aspect of official genuine apologies is the fact that the State or a representative undertakes a public ceremony and the apology is performed in a scenario with high symbolic value, in an official form, recorded in written documents, in front of representatives of the harmed out-group, and directed towards a large audience. For the apology to work, it must be performed symbolically given the fact that it is an expiation ritual. As in the case of all rituals, formality and stylized activities should be included. Apologies should also use a special space and time, distinct and special personal texts, specific codes of communication to heighten the formality of the act, verbal and non verbal expression that evokes the goals of the speech act and refers to norms or moral standards (Bell, 1997). Who, how and under what conditions the apology is to be presented should be negotiated between representatives of perpetrators and victims. For example, the President Clinton's apology for the USA's and the UN's failures to intervene in the Rwandan genocide was an instance of failed apology because of the absence of ritual forms: he spoke during a quick visit to Kigali, spent less than two hours there, never left the airport, and the engines of the President's airplane were never turned off. This informal, quick and too-casual apology didn't work (Stamato, 2008). A study done in Africa and Asia on the expectations of people who underwent severe past experiences of collective violence and are involved in current processes of peace confirms that people agree on the importance of asking for forgiveness in public and by means of ritual forms. Apology and the process of asking for intergroup forgiveness was conceived in essence as a public process. Participants agreed that the process should take place inside places which are symbolic for the group that is requested to forgive (ideally, the governmental palace) or for the group that request forgiveness (e.g., a sacred place), as well as that the language used should be a language with a broad international diffusion instead of the language of the group which is requested to forgive (Mullet, Pinto, Nann, Kandiangu & Neto, 2009). As the authors conclude, these shared beliefs are consistent with Tavuchis' conception of intergroup apologies. They must be "quintessentially public" and not the private opinions of the deputies; they are a matter for public record. Intergroup apologies

should be “addressed to a wider audience as much as to the offended party” so that the forgiveness process also “speaks to interested third parties.” (Tavuchis, 1991, p. 101).

Secondly, a “genuine” official apology as a public ceremony involves not only the direct audience but is usually communicated to the population by mass media such as radio, TV and the press. In modern societies mediated participation in rituals via the mass media seems to be the most important way to evoke a specific emotional climate and build collective memory. Mass media exposure was found to be the main process reinforcing emotions and cognitions induced by ceremonies and rituals in three studies (Páez, Bellelli, & Rimé, 2009). This is why wide coverage by the mass media and display of the apology in printed form is another important aspect of a successful apology. For instance, 0.7% of a representative South African sample participated by giving testimony to the TRC, 13% have attended a TRC event, while it was seen on television or heard on the radio by around 40% of the population. Even if apologies were limited in quantity and quality in the TRC (Staub, 2005), they formed a part of this process. Confirming that exposure to rituals reinforces emotions and intergroup reconciliation, media exposure to the TRC predicts in a regression higher emotional activation (higher distress but not anger) and higher agreement with forgiveness (Stein et al., 2008).

What is more, an official apology should be expressed by respected and representative figures, in front of or directed towards a similar representation of the out-group. Formal apologies recognize that the authority of the State and institutions was used inappropriately and that institutional violence was used against a minority, a political faction or another national group (see Aylwin’s declaration). For instance, Mandela used his high status as a black leader to acknowledge and apologize for atrocities allegedly committed by the African National Congress against suspected enemies (Gibson, 2004). Brandt’s apology was successful because he was German Chancellor and at the same time an old social-democrat leftist, with a background of active anti-Nazi militancy, including illegal and exiled activities against the German regime. At the opposite extreme, an instance of failed apology is Clinton’s expression of his personal regret for the role that the USA played in slavery because the expression of regret did not include the official role. The President’s clear avoidance of official apology and the fact that the audience was a gathering of school children in Uganda explains the limited reception of this apology (Nytagoden & Neal, 2004).

Finally, an official apology should be carried out by a respected and representative figure with public support of at least an important proportion of the in-group. A “genuine” official apology should be the result of a general process that ensures that not only the authorities, but also the population, support the apology and there is not a considerable proportion promoting the denial or glorification of past wrongdoings. Studies on lay expectations in different countries confirm that people expect that apologies and asking intergroup forgiveness should be a democratic process in which the support of the group can be assumed (Mullet et al., 2009). Two studies found that perceived support of the Catholic Church and the Basque Parliament reinforces slightly the positive impact of apologies. However, sincerity was a more important correlate of the apology’s effectiveness (Bobowik et al., 2010, this issue; Valencia et al., 2010, this issue).

An unsuccessful apology can produce a backlash of in-group criticism which can erode the positive impact of official acknowledgement and promote not intergroup trust but rather distrust. An example illustrating the fact that apologies are likely to provoke counter-reactions are Japanese apologies which have been undermined because sections of the government – right-wing and conservative factions - did not accept the Prime Minister or Parliament’s statements of regret (Lind, 2008). Contemporary conservative efforts to glorify Imperial Japan’s wartime record are marginal but have an important negative impact on intergroup reconciliation with China and Korea. Strong

debates about the apology, minimization of culpability in the case of sex slaves, as well as statements of denial, are major factors fuelling Koreans' distrust regarding official Japanese apologies (Lu, 2008).

Explanatory processes of apologies

Different explanatory processes have been applied to the positive effects of apologies. First, some authors propose restoration of face as an explanation of apology (Philpot & Hornsey, 2008). Apology helps to restore both victim's and perpetrator's self-esteem by complementary but different factors: on receiving an apology and having the possibility of accepting or rejecting it, the victim experiences an increased perception of control, efficacy and self-esteem. Showing a pro-social attitude and behavior, the perpetrators accept and cancel negative past facets of the self, and also increase their own self-esteem (Nadler & Leviatian, 2006). Apology, the simultaneous humility of the perpetrator and the victim's improvement in status, as well as the "gift" of remorse, excuses and regrets from offender to offended, restore equity in victim-offender relationships (Philpot & Hornsey, 2008).

Another explanation proposes that apology promotes empathy for the offender (Philpot & Hornsey, 2008). In the case of intergroup apologies, usually both sides are in part victims and in part offenders. Some data supports the view that intergroup apologies promote mutual empathy. Expression of remorse and validation of the victim's suffering facilitate intergroup empathy that is positively related to forgiveness and reconciliation. Expression of remorse and validation of out-group suffering also helps groups in conflict to avoid focusing on in-group suffering and to overcome selective victimization, competitive victimhood, or the subjective sense of having suffered more than the out-group, which are all obstacles to reconciliation and forgiveness (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi & Lewis, 2008). Competitive victimhood, the usual effect of intense and violent long-term conflicts, was associated negatively with forgiveness, and with reconciliation, in Chile and Northern Ireland (Noor et al., 2008). However, the positive perception of the Spanish Catholic Church's apology correlates only slightly negatively with perception of competitive victimhood, and the latter was not associated with increased intergroup empathy, agreement with reparation, inter-group trust, forgiveness and reconciliation (Etxeberria et al., in press).

Changing attributions of the offender's behavior is another explanation of the positive effects of apologies. By explaining past misdeed as a limited and regretted behavior, apologies alter attributions. Acceptance of apologies leads to the perception of past offenses as having been caused by external and unstable factors, more than resulting from any essential "national character" of the offender group. Apology also reduces perception of the likelihood of future offenses, and globally this changes stereotypes and the perception of offenders (Philpot & Hornsey, 2008). At the intergroup level, the expression of remorse, commitment to change aggressive behaviors, concrete reparations and potential positive exchange (e.g., acceptance of excuses and regrets) can change intergroup perceptions, reinforcing intergroup trust, which is positively related to forgiveness and is an important factor in reconciliation (Noor, et al., 2008). In other words, actual and symbolic changes implicitly present in apologies help to modify negative intergroup stereotypes and increase basic intergroup trust. Increasing intergroup trust, usually by stopping collective violence and sending positive signals, is a first stage previous to successful apologies in the case of protracted conflicts, because only people with some level of intergroup trust react positively to apologies (Nadler & Liviatián, 2006). Confirming that perceptions of these constructs are associated, the positive perception of the Spanish Catholic Church's apology correlates with a perception of increased intergroup empathy, agreement with reparation, inter-group trust, forgiveness, and reconciliation (Etxeberria et al., in press).

It has also been suggested that apology helps to overcome cognitive dissonance, the tendency to defend collective self-esteem, and the tendency to perceive the world as just (Lastrego, 2009). When exposed to past collective group misdeeds, and when nothing can be done to repair what has happened, people probably tend to believe that the victims deserved their fate, to devalue them and to justify in-group actions. Similarly, being aware of the association between a good object (the in-group) and a bad action related to the in-group induces a dissonance if no reason explains past predatory in-group behavior. To reduce the dissonance (because the past cannot be modified), subjects will probably minimize violence, ignore and rationalize it. The same tendencies are expected as mechanisms of defense of collective self-esteem. In fact, when reminded of or exposed to past in-group misdeeds, instead of feeling collective guilt, highly-identified members justify, minimize or glorify past collective violence behaviors (Yzerbit & Demoulin, in press). In contrast, an apology shows that at least some symbolic action can be done and helps people to overcome a tendency to believe in a just world. Apologies also add a congruent positive element, helping to decrease dissonance. Finally, apology can be a source of collective pride, of “moral excellence”, that helps even highly identified subjects to admit past misdeeds, overcoming the need to reject or rationalize them to maintain collective self-esteem. All these explanations are partially correct, but are essentially intrapersonal explanations. We will propose a socio-cultural or a collective-level explanation of the positive effects of apology anchored in Durkheim’s classic approach to rituals. An important point which brings this approach into relief is that official apologies do not usually have an effect on direct victims and perpetrators. On the one hand, victims refuse to accept apologies considered to be limited and insincere, or to forgive perpetrators because it means betraying victims and in-group values; on the other, perpetrators deny the necessity to apologize, as well as justifying and glorifying past violence. For instance, while exposure to the South African TRC increases forgiveness, direct participation decreases it (Stein et al., 2008). As Durkheim suggests, expiation rituals such as apologies have important social effects, but not necessarily positive direct effects for involved participants. This means that group and intergroup antecedents and effects are fundamental in explaining how official apologies function.

Official Apology as a moral ritual

Tavuchis (1991) conceives apology as a secular form of an expiation ritual, which includes the roles of representatives of wrongdoers and representatives of the victims or their descendants, a framework, and an authoritative audience. This author posits that official or political apology is an intergroup form of ritual whose function is to reintegrate a norm-violating social, ethnic, national or political group into the international society whose norms have been violated. The goal of the apology is for the group, institution or nation to regain membership of the national or international community by admitting that its past behavior cannot be glorified, justified, or ignored and is indefensible and may deserve social exclusion. The group that apologizes is one that admits to having violated a norm which it itself acknowledges (Tavuchis, 1991). In a clear statement of this neo-Durkheimian conception of apologies as rituals that reaffirm norms and values, Tavuchis (1991) writes:

Genuine apologies... may be taken as the symbolic foci of secular remedial rituals that serve to recall and reaffirm allegiance to codes of behavior and belief whose integrity has been tested and challenged by transgression... An apology thus speaks to an act that cannot be undone but cannot go unnoticed without compromising the current and future relationships of the parties, the legitimacy of the violated rule, and the wider social web in which the participants are enmeshed (p. 13).

Of course, apologies have limitations and in some cases they are just “cheap talk” or an easy way for dominant and perpetrator groups to present themselves

positively and to do nothing to redress past misdeeds and current asymmetrical and exploitative relationships (Barkan, 2000). “Phoney” apologies, with no actual effects, may be positive only for perpetrators. One survivor of collective violence expressed this idea by saying that apologies were invented by perpetrators to make them feel better, save face and avoid accountability and reparative actions (Rehger & Gutheil, 2002). However, even if all criticism is partially real, and if instrumental goals are achieved to a limited extent, official rituals of apology can have positive symbolic effects. Of course, rituals of expiation can fail just like others and, instead of inducing the expected emotions and changes in social beliefs, may provoke reactance and opposite reactions – anger instead of shame, resentment instead of forgiveness, and so on (Collins, 2004).

Like all rituals, an apology is an external cultural device or tool that allows persons and groups involved to focus on common topics and feel shared emotions, that increases social sharing and bonding, and that reinforces symbols and social representations, facilitating the change and improvement of affects and cognitions. A ritual is a transformer of collective emotions and beliefs, which can turn negative emotions and beliefs into positive ones (Collins, 2004; Páez, Rimé & Basabe, 2004). A successful apology ritual enables people involved to acknowledge negative emotions and behaviors, to overcome them by simultaneously feeling positive emotions and provoking positive social representations, reinforcing shared norms and increasing social cohesion or improving intergroup relations. Some authors (Tavuchis, 1991), and limited evidence (Philpot & Horsney, 2008), suggest that emotions are not relevant in official or intergroup apologies. However, a neo-Durkheimian approach emphasizes the role of personal and collective emotions. Confirming this idea, a large study on African and Asian subjects living through a transitional justice process after recent events of extreme collective violence (e.g., East Timor) found that asking for intergroup forgiveness was conceived of as implying the expression of emotions from the people who ask for forgiveness (e.g., contrition, remorse, and repentance). It was also conceived as implying concrete behaviors attesting to the sincerity of the demand (e.g., a gift of money, punishment of the persons responsible for the atrocities). The importance of emotions is consistent with what has been observed in successful and prototypical official apologies, such as Chancellor Brandt kneeling before the city’s memorial to the Warsaw ghetto uprising of 1943; he behaviorally, if not verbally, expressed deep emotions (Mullet et al., in press) and observers also reported experiencing feelings of shame and pride (Marrus, 2006).

Apologies could be conceived of as a symbolic meeting and confrontation of criminals and victims – more exactly of secondary or vicarious perpetrators and affected persons. Both groups focus their attention on past crimes, the perpetrators’ wrongdoings and the victims’ injuries and suffering. An apology as a ritual reactivates negative emotions of shame, anger, and sadness for secondary victims, along with emotions of shame, embarrassment, guilt and distress for secondary perpetrators. Apologies usually provoke strong emotions because they are related to conflictive issues, to “battles over memory and history” (Cunningham, 2004). Stories of triumphs and defeats that involve crimes of war, or a large number of injured and dead, as well as exploitation and injustice, provoke powerful emotions of humiliation, shame, guilt, anger and sadness, repentance and remorse (Lu, 2008). Salience of past collective violence and of an official apology induces increased perception of a collective negative emotion in comparison to a control group in which people are only reminded of the facts of collective violence (Bobowik et al., 2010, this issue; Lastrego, 2009), as well as increased reports of collective guilt in one case (Valencia et al., 2010, this issue).

By means of the perpetrator’s expression of regret and commitment to reparation and the victim’s expression of some level of forgiveness and reconciliation, the feelings

of shame, anger and sadness are shared and transformed. Apologies involve an exchange of emotions and changes in power, status and relationships. As Lazare points out:

...what makes an apology work is the exchange of shame and power between the offender and the offended. By apologizing, you take the shame of your offense and redirect it to yourself. You admit to hurting or diminishing someone, and in effect say that you are the one who is diminished – I'm the one who was wrong...In acknowledging your shame you give the offended the power to forgive" (Lazare, 2004, p. 52).

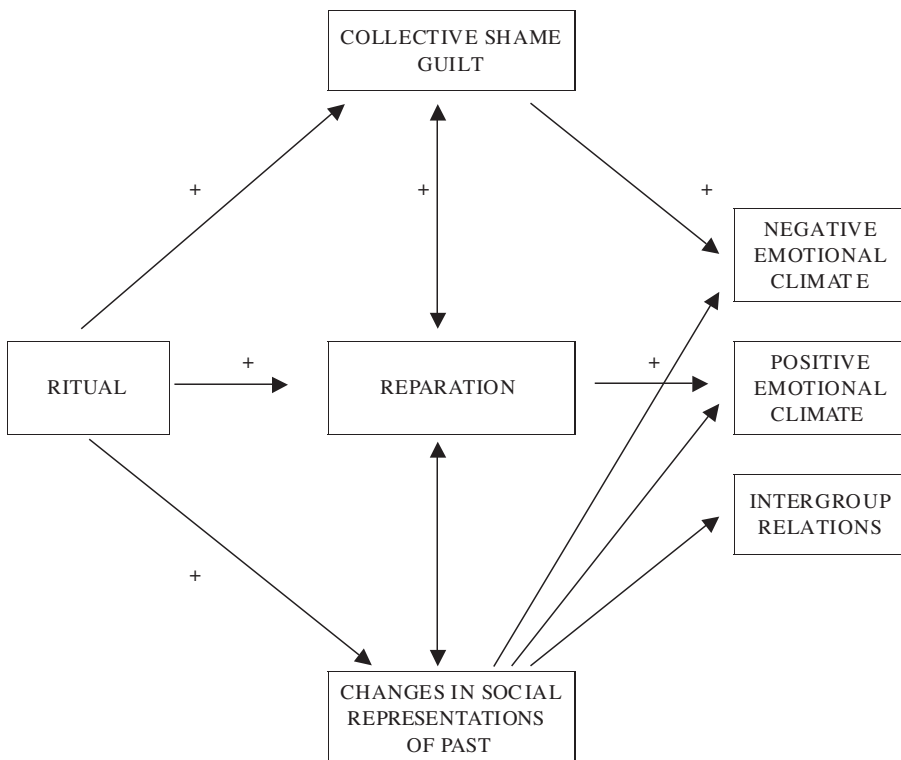
The offender group is ashamed and symbolically punished, the victim group is revalorized and symbolically rewarded, and both groups can feel pride and a positive emotional climate. Apologies validate the claims of victims, who feel that suffering long ignored or denied has at last been recognized. Apologies allow the perpetrators to save face and thus permit the acknowledgment of wrongdoings that might otherwise be glorified, ignored or justified, facilitating the integration of negative aspects. For instance, Germans belonging to the post-war generation refer to Brandt's apology as one of the few times they were proud of German representatives, and – by extension – to overcoming the shame of being German and feeling themselves proud to be German (Marrus, 2006). The salience of past collective violence and of an official apology induces increased shame and sorrow in comparison to a control group in which people are (*see above*) only reminded of the facts of collective violence (Bobowik et al., 2010, this issue; Lastrego, 2009). These results confirm that apology, as an external affordance, reinforces negative moral emotions – more than merely serving as a reminder of past collective misdeeds.

A successful apology reinforces the attachment to a shared basic norm (not to kill others, to repair wrongs) and symbolically reintegrates both groups in a community (Collins, 2004). In one of the most successful apologies, the one expressed by Chancellor Brandt, the apology for German war crimes was not only a gesture to improve relations with Poland, but also a reconfirmation of Germans' collective engagement to norms of respect for human rights that were violated in the Hitler period. In the abovementioned experimental study (Lastrego, 2009), it was additionally found that the apology-and-salience-of-suffering-condition group also reported higher agreement with reparations in comparison to the control group. Salience of past collective violence (ETA's murders) and of an official apology (the Basque Parliament and Government official apology to victims for lack of solidarity, which includes a law of reparatory actions) improves agreement with material and symbolic reparation to victims when contrasted with the control group in which people are reminded of facts of collective violence. Additionally, the feeling of shame and sorrow correlates with and plays a mediating role with respect to reparation, confirming that emotions fuel restorative behavior (Bobowik et al., 2010, this issue; Valencia et al., 2010, this issue).

What is more, and confirming that an official apology reinforces social cohesion, Valencia et al. (this issue) found that perception of a positive emotional climate, including the perception of solidarity and social trust, was higher in the condition including the Law of Memory and remembering collective violence related to the Spanish Civil War. Similarly, Bobowik et al. (2010, this issue) found that in the "Basque Government and Parliament apology" condition, perception of a positive climate was better for participants with low identification with Basques than among low identifiers in the control condition, while the opposite was true for high identifiers, suggesting that apologies had a cost mainly for perpetrators. Lastrego (2009) found that an official apology (Belgium's Prime Minister apologizing for past colonial misdeeds in the former Belgian Congo), together with the salience of out-group suffering (i.e., Congolese people's current suffering), increases the perception of a positive emotional climate, which was higher in the "salience of suffering and apology"

condition ($M = 3.17$) than in the control condition (only remembering past misdeeds $M = 2.79$), confirming that apologies have positive effects on perceived social cohesion. However, two experimental studies did not confirm that the salience of apology reinforces a positive emotional climate or positive social beliefs, and in one study it even caused a decrease in beliefs in a benevolent world (Bobowik et al., 2010, this issue). It is probable that one-off, limited experimental manipulation of salience of an apology did not have enough power to restore general social belief. Lastrego and Licata's (2010, this issue) data also support positive effects of apology on intergroup perception and intention of behavior, at least among vicarious perpetrators. Salience of an official apology for past colonial misdeeds decreased Belgian participants' prejudice towards "the Congolese", whereas it increased the tendency towards intergroup contact. This study also suggests that out-group current suffering is enough to improve intergroup perception and a tendency towards intergroup contact. Lastrego & Licata (2010, this issue) confirm that an apology involves constructing a social representation of the past with which both victims and perpetrators can agree, because Belgians who were exposed to the apology, in contrast to a control group, reported a less positivistic view of the colonial past. Agreement with a less positivistic view of the past mediates the effect of apology on agreement with reparation and positive intergroup attitudes. This result suggests that apologies help to construct a more integrative and self-critical social representation of the past, a narrative in which victims' experience matters, their accounts, feelings and suffering are respected, and in which they are entitled to dignity – a common narrative of what has happened, a narrative that both parties can live with (Páez & Liu, in press). Figure 1 represents the model of apologies as a moral ritual in a graphic form:

FIGURE 1
Theoretical Relations between apology rituals, emotions, reparation and social representations of past



Conclusions

Concluding, apology has a positive but limited effect, and an absence of self-justification improves its impact on perception and forgiveness. Acceptance of responsibility improves the slightly positive impact of apology. The acceptance of responsibility is probably more relevant for low status and “weaker” groups of victims than for high status and power victims. Expressing remorse and emotional empathy improve the positive impact of apology. Offers of specific reparations also reinforce the impact of apologies, as well as perception of sincerity, probably associated with former behaviors. Finally, mere verbal reaffirmation of norms is not enough, and actions and concrete behaviors are needed to realize and implement these norms.

Apology should not impose forgiveness, because the free will of the victims is an important aspect, facilitating improvements in self-esteem and perceived control.

What is more, interpersonal apology does not generalize to intergroup forgiveness and reconciliation. Individualized apology could have more positive impact than group apologies, but did not generalize to the wider group of the apologizer. Limited evidence suggests that official apologies are perceived negatively with low sincerity and higher limitations. An official successful apology probably needs to be performed “ritually”, not casually, in a formal and stylized manner, respecting the values and norms of groups. This ritual public performance needs to be largely relayed by mass media. Some data confirm that exposure to transitional justice rituals, which include partial perpetrators’ apologies and respected authorities’ validation of victims’ suffering, reinforces reconciliation. Respected representatives with high status should be involved in the apology.

Absence or control of defensive reactions which call the apology into question, are a necessary condition for a successful apology, as historical evidence suggests. The perceived perpetrator group’s support for apology reinforces positive effects on reconciliation and social cohesion – but support has lower relevance than sincerity, probably because victims accept apologies performed by a fraction of the out-group.

Some data partially confirm that apologies act as rituals of moral repentance, including focus on a negative event, reactivation of negative emotions related to past events and activation of emotions of shame, sorrow and guilt by current expression of regret. This sharing of emotions helps to improve positive emotions and social representations. An apology reactivates and intensifies personal and collective emotions, mainly of shame, sorrow and guilt – it has an emotional cost – above and beyond merely reminding people of past misdeeds. However, at the same time, an official apology increases support for the norm of reparation or agreement with material and symbolic reparation. Shame and sorrow fuels and supports reparative tendencies. Finally, salience of past collective violence and misdeeds together with an apology probably improves the social climate to some extent, enhances intergroup reconciliation by decreasing prejudice and improving intergroup contact, and helps to reconstruct in-group collective memory in a more critical view – which can support a more integrative narrative.

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