

Collective Guilt and Selective Avoidance

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Abstract

Why are Native Americans frequently omitted from mainstream American consciousness? One possible explanation is that reminders of the ways that non-Native Americans historically harmed Native Americans lead to feelings of collective guilt, thereby causing reduced attention toward stimuli related to Native Americans in an effort to regulate the uncomfortable emotion. To test this hypothesis, participants ($N = 256$) read a passage about early settlers inflicting harm on Native Americans, which varied by whether the harm was intentional or unintentional and whether the settlers were framed as the ingroup (Americans) or an outgroup (Europeans). Participants reported feelings of collective guilt, anger, sadness, and shame, as well as if they agreed that it would be appropriate to teach the information in the passage in various situations. To measure selective avoidance, participants described an image that depicted Native Americans in the periphery, which were coded for if they mentioned the Indigenous figures. Participants completed additional measures of selective avoidance: willingness for intergroup contact and explicit avoidance of information related to Indigenous peoples. Intentional harm led participants to express more anger, shame, and sadness than unintentional harm, though did not impact collective guilt or selective attention. American identity significantly moderated some of the relationships—highly identified participants tended to express increased anger in the unintentional condition and decreased anger in the intentional condition. Also, highly identified participants tended to report higher levels of shame in the intentional conditions and ingroup conditions. Political orientation also emerged as a significant predictor of collective guilt and selective avoidance across a variety of measures. This study adds to the body of literature on collective emotions in response to intergroup harm.

Keywords: collective emotions, social identity, avoidance, attention, colonialism

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Collective Guilt and Selective Avoidance

Native Americans are underrepresented in media in the United States. In all kinds of mediums—including fiction and nonfiction, visual and written—portrayals of Native Americans in the mainstream are rare. Even in circumstances in which it might be natural to include Native Americans, such as celebrations of Thanksgiving, they are excluded: of the 16 Thanksgiving Day presidential proclamations between 1993 and 2008, just six mentioned Native Americans, and none mentioned the violence perpetrated against them (Kurtiş, Adams, & Yellow Bird, 2010). Social psychology in the United States, too, exhibits this pattern of perpetuating the invisibility of Native Americans. Of nearly 40,000 publications returned on a search using keywords related to intergroup relations on PsycINFO, less than 0.5% explicitly mention “Native American,” “American Indian,” or “Alaska Native” (Fryberg & Eason, 2017).

Fryberg and Eason (2017) distinguish between this exclusion of Native Americans, which they term omission bias, and commission bias, which refers to stereotypical portrayals that are easily observable. The effects of omission bias on individuals who identify as Native American are no less pernicious than the effects of commission bias. The lack of representation leads to a feeling of invisibility, which can negatively impact self-esteem and sense of belonging (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015). Omission bias may also seep into social policy (Newton, Sibley, & Osborne, 2018)—any consequences of a policy that may uniquely affect Native Americans may not be considered. Although recounting collective trauma can be painful, Indigenous peoples often champion the importance of accurately representing colonial history (e.g., Neufeld & Schmitt, 2019).

There are likely many factors that cause the omission of Native Americans from the mainstream. Much previous theorizing has focused on the role of institutional factors in

obstructing representations and participation of Native Americans, such as the group being a small proportion of the American population. Yet, group-level psychological processes may play a central role in this erasure. The present study sought to understand if that erasure arises from non-Native Americans directing attention away from Native Americans in an effort to reduce aversive collective emotions, such as collective guilt.

Collective guilt

Collective guilt is a type of collective emotion. The theory of collective, or group-based, emotions stems from Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Self-Categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). The theory contends that individuals experience group-based emotions on behalf of an ingroup, even when the individual did not participate in the behavior leading to the emotion (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Smith, 1993). To experience a collective emotion, the individual must self-categorize at the group level (Branscombe, Slugoski, & Kappen, 2004). When one self-categorizes as a member of a certain group, one feels a relationship and interchangeability with other members of that group (Turner et al., 1987). Group members may see their behavior and subsequent emotions as interchangeable with the behavior and emotions of other ingroup members.

Guilt is one group-level emotion that researchers have studied extensively. Collective guilt is a negative emotion that occurs in response to a violation of the moral standards of an ingroup, such as engagement in harmful behavior that one deems to be illegitimate (Branscombe, 2004; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998). Collective guilt threatens the positive perception of the ingroup, which causes discomfort. It therefore has an unusual relationship with the individual's identification with the ingroup. Typically, individuals experience increased collective emotions as the strength of their identification with the group increases. However,

individuals who highly identify with the ingroup also have high motivation to protect group esteem. This motivation to see the ingroup positively leads high identifiers to experience reduced collective guilt (Doosje et al., 1998). In fact, previous research has found a curvilinear relationship between identification and guilt: those who have a moderate identification with the ingroup tend to express the most collective guilt compared to high and low identifiers, who tend to express less collective guilt (Klein, Licata, & Pierucci, 2011).

Although the strength of identification with the ingroup seems to be uniquely related to collective guilt, like other collective emotions, collective guilt will only be experienced if the individual self-categorizes into the ingroup that perpetrated the harm (Branscombe, 2004). If an individual does not belong to the group that committed harm, then they have no behavior for which to feel guilty. Individuals also tend to evaluate harm committed by an outgroup as less morally justified than harm committed by an ingroup (Tarrant, Branscombe, Warner, & Weston, 2012). It may be especially difficult to categorize present day group members into the same group as historical group members the more distant in the past the events took place. Self-categorization into the historical ingroup may depend on seeing the group's culture and history (Sani et al., 2007), as well as the entitativity of group members (Kahn, Klar, & Roccas, 2017), as connected across time. Individuals who perceive their ingroup as consisting of only the current generation, rather than as consisting of both past and future generations, may be unlikely to experience collective guilt for historical perpetration of the group. The continuity of the outgroup may also impact the experience of collective guilt because the emotion tends to be stronger when participants think that the historical harm has enduring consequences (Imhoff, Wohl, & Erb, 2013).

Although intergroup harm occurs frequently, individuals rarely experience and report feeling collective guilt (Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006). The low occurrence of collective guilt occurs because of the discomfort that the emotion causes—feeling collective guilt results from perceiving the ingroup as morally responsible for committing unjustifiable harm and threatens the motivation to have a positive perception of the ingroup. Due to the discomfort caused by collective guilt, group members will often engage in collective emotional regulation to reduce the experience of guilt (Goldenberg, Halperin, van Zomeren, & Gross, 2016). Such emotional regulation typically involves a reappraisal of the situation that allows for moral disengagement, or persuading oneself of the moral permissibility of the behavior in question (Bandura, 1999).

Methods of reappraising harm include reducing the responsibility of the ingroup for perpetrating the harm and legitimizing the ingroup's actions (Branscombe, 2004). The responsibility of the ingroup can be reduced by perceiving the harm perpetrated by the ingroup as commonplace for many groups, thereby diffusing moral responsibility across multiple groups rather than focusing it on the ingroup. Harm can also be legitimized in a number of ways: minimizing the destructiveness of the harm, comparing the ingroup's harm with an outgroup's more severe harm, derogating the victimized outgroup, highlighting the harms committed by the victimized outgroup, blaming the harm on a few extreme group members, portraying the ingroup as having done positive things for the outgroup, or framing the harm as unintentional (Wohl et al., 2006).

Such reappraisal of harm to reduce collective guilt seems to be an effortful process. Sharvit, Brambilla, Babush, and Colucci (2015) found that high cognitive load attenuated the relationship between strength of identification with the ingroup and collective guilt. American

and Israeli participants with a strong national identity who read a negative news story while simultaneously remembering a string of numbers subsequently reported higher collective guilt than those who read the same news story with low cognitive load. Sharvit and their colleagues additionally found that whether or not participants had easy access to justifications for harm further moderated this relationship. The researchers recruited Italian participants to read about the ways that Italians have treated immigrants. When the researchers provided participants with justifications for the harm, cognitive load no longer increased reports of collective guilt (Sharvit et al., 2015). These findings suggest that the regulation of collective guilt on an individual level requires mental resources and that cultural products that provide justification for harm make this process less effortful.

Individuals have the motivation to reduce collective guilt because moral transgressions threaten the esteem of the ingroup. Affirming the ingroup can buffer such threat, leading to increased collective guilt (Miron, Branscombe, & Biernat, 2010). When groups do not reduce collective guilt via moral disengagement, it often leads to positive outcomes for intergroup relations. For example, group members may change their attitudes in response to the experience of collective guilt, including expressing less prejudice toward outgroup members (Powell, Branscombe, & Schmitt, 2005). Individuals can also reduce collective guilt by engaging in some sort of reparatory action, including apology or redistributing resources to reduce the effects of previous harm (Allpress, Barlow, Brown, & Louis, 2010; McGarty et al., 2005). However, reparations are often costly. When reparations are costly, individuals are more likely to find a way to reduce ingroup responsibility or legitimize the harm cognitively (Branscombe, 2004).

Memory for intergroup harm

Some previous research has investigated the relationship between intergroup harm and collective memory. When an individual identifies strongly with a group, the schema of the group becomes activated, making schema-consistent processes and information more accessible (Sahdra & Ross, 2007). The activation of a schema seems to influence memory; Sahdra and Ross (2007) demonstrated the importance of strength of social identification on memory for historical harm perpetrated by the ingroup. Hindu and Sikh participants who highly identified with their religious ingroup freely recalled fewer events in which the group perpetrated harm compared to low identifiers and events in which the group was victimized. Additionally, priming Canadian undergraduates with high need for assimilation (leading to a strong identification) led them to freely recall more events that shed positive light on Canada than participants in the control condition. Participants primed with high need for differentiation (leading to a weak identification) freely recalled more events that shed negative light on Canada than participants in the high identity condition.

Rotella and Richeson (2013) elaborated on the relationship between social identity and collective memory for intergroup harm by demonstrating the role of collective guilt in the forgetting of threatening historical events. American participants on Amazon Mechanical Turk less accurately recalled information in a passage about the harm perpetrated against a Native American tribe when the passage framed the perpetrators as Americans compared to when the passage framed the perpetrators as Europeans. Of the participants who read the passage about ingroup perpetrators, those who the researchers primed with American identity expressed significantly less collective guilt and demonstrated worse recall and recognition for the passage compared to those not primed with American identity.

Although previous research has established that strategies to legitimize or justify harm require effort, it remains unclear if biased cognition, such as memory and attention, require similar effort. Previous research suggests conflicting hypotheses. Following Sharvit et al.'s (2015) findings, selective attention and motivated forgetting to suppress collective guilt may be effortful and therefore reduced in situations where other stimuli demand cognitive resources. However, other work in social cognition, particularly using the Implicit Association Test, suggest otherwise. Researchers designed the Implicit Association Test to measure unconscious associations held in mental schemas, which form based on cultural context (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). Indeed, studies have found participants must use more effort to complete the test when the stimuli are schema-inconsistent than when they are schema-consistent (e.g., Banse, Seise, & Zerbes, 2001; Kim, 2003). Selective attention and motivated forgetting may be similar to implicit associations in which one must use more effort to process information in a way that differs from their schema. In other words, attending to stimuli that evoke collective guilt may require more effort than avoiding attending to such stimuli because allocating attention to them contradicts the cultural practice. Although not the purpose of the proposed study, future research should investigate how much effort it takes to reduce collective guilt via selective attention.

A cultural psychology perspective

Classic psychology traditions assume that cognitions such as attention, and emotions such as guilt, occur entirely within the minds of individuals. But a cultural psychology perspective uncovers the ways in which such seemingly individualized processes and culture constitute each other (Shweder, 1990). In other words, cultural context comprises cognitive and emotional processing, and individuals' cognitive and emotional processing shapes the world around them.

This mutual constitution seems to exist for collective guilt and attention in the context of colonization of the United States.

Most previous research investigating the ways culture constitutes cognition focuses on cross-cultural variations in self-ways. These studies have primarily compared settings with independent and interdependent self-ways on cognitive processing such as perception, attribution, and attention (Masuda, Russell, Wai Li, & Lee, 2019). For example, Masuda and Nisbett (2001) found that American participants, presumably with independent self-ways, tended to describe central information about a visual scene whereas Japanese participants, presumably with interdependent self-ways, tended to describe both central and peripheral information about the same scene. Their findings suggest that differing cultural values of thinking holistically versus analytically influences how individuals direct their attention.

Similar to how culture constitutes cognition, it seems that culture constitutes emotion. Individuals tend to engage in emotions in a way that reflects cultural values. For example, Grossmann, Ellsworth, and Hong (2012) found that Russian participants spent more time looking at negative stimuli than positive stimuli, whereas American participants spent an equal amount of time looking at the stimuli regardless of valence. Russian participants also noticed negative stimuli more quickly after priming Russian national identity. Grossmann and colleagues suggest that cultural differences in the attention and processing of emotion could result from cultural differences in the speed of noticing or the amount of time spent looking at stimuli.

Mesquita, Boiger, and de Leersnyder (2017) similarly describe emotion as a cultural-bound process of selective attention and meaning making. Mesquita and colleagues additionally explain the importance of considering the social function and context of emotions. Emotions facilitate social processes by creating a shared reality. Individuals typically have a desire to

adhere to that shared reality. In addition to regulating their own emotions, individuals regulate others' emotions to comply with the cultural mandate (Boiger, Mesquita, Uchida, & Feldman Barrett, 2013). For example, individuals have been found to perceive collective pride as a more legitimate motivator of political action than collective guilt because it adheres to the cultural norm of favoring the ingroup over the outgroup (White & Branscombe, 2019). Such attitudes toward others' experience of collective emotion may lead to behavioral responses: people tend to promote emotional expression that aligns with culture and discourage emotional expression that deviates from it. Sociohistorical context also plays a role in the development and experience of emotion. Emotions tend to be specific to the situation, or historical context. We all inhabit worlds that our predecessors set up to achieve certain goals (Shweder, 1990). Emotions help meet such goals, often without individuals realizing it.

Cultural influences on emotion and cognition have shaped non-Native Americans' treatment of Native Americans: tendencies to experience collective guilt and avoid attending to Native Americans may be interconnected cultural processes, both emerging from settler colonialism. When colonizing the land that we currently consider to be the United States, settlers had to push Native Americans off that land in order to claim it as their own. Actively acknowledging Native Americans would have threatened the goal of settlement; and this act of ignoring became a part of the cultural framework. Contemporary individuals learn to ignore Native Americans by seeing how society admonishes those who do draw attention to them. These processes may also be unique to the relationship between Native and non-Native Americans. Although a large number of countries that have a history of colonization, the ways that descendants have dealt with this history differs between them. For example, Canadians—

whose national identity typically values multiculturalism—may be less likely to avoid Indigenous populations compared to Americans.

One way to think about this process is as the collective regulation of collective guilt. However, I use the term “collective” in the prior sentence in two different ways, one of which is associated with cultural psychology traditions and the other of which is associated with Social Identity Theory traditions. The collective in collective regulation refers to a group of individuals. The interpersonal interactions of these individuals work to create group-level, or collective, processes. The collective in collective emotion, conversely, refers to a social group. Such social groups are abstract concepts that base group membership on certain traits. The social identity theory conception of the collective allows for people to consider themselves as sharing group membership with others who they do not know personally. Therefore, we can consider the theory in this paper to be about the collective regulation of collective guilt; or the way that individuals interact in a way that regulates the experience of guilt on behalf of an abstract social group.

Individuals involved in the historical event itself may initiate future group-level processes. The development of these processes may result from factors such as the frequency and content of the memory. For example, Portuguese students reported that most of the veterans of the 1961-1974 Portuguese Colonial War whom they knew did not talk frequently about the war (Marques, Paez, & Serra, 1997). When these veterans did talk about the war, they seemed to have a negative attitude toward it. The veterans’ desires to avoid talking about the war, and the attitudes that emerged when they did, potentially contributed to the lack of conversation about colonization in Portugal.

These group-level processes are then scaffolded by the structure of everyday worlds. Cultural products perpetuate inattention to Native Americans. One important cultural product is

the Native American Reservation. Reservations have physically and psychologically constrained Native Americans to certain small areas of the country. Confining Native Americans to locations where the majority of non-Native Americans do not encounter them in person makes it easy to keep Native Americans out of mind. Other examples of attention-reducing cultural products include the lack of Native American narratives in news reports, textbooks, and traditional American celebrations such as Columbus Day and Thanksgiving. In addition to influencing attention, cultural products can reduce the effort required to regulate collective guilt (Sharvit et al., 2015).

Overview of the present study

Although prior research has investigated the relationship between collective guilt and memory, the field lacks work studying the role of attention in this process. Previous research suggests that there may be a bidirectional relationship between guilt and selective attention, such that guilt reduces the attention spent on relevant stimuli and subsequently spending less attention on relevant stimuli reduces guilt. The present study sought to ascertain if being reminded of an ingroup's past moral transgression increases feelings of collective guilt and reduces attention to stimuli that provide a reminder of the transgression.

To study this relationship, participants completed a survey in which they read a passage about of violence perpetrated against Native Americans that varied by whether or not the perpetrators intentionally caused harm and by the framing of the perpetrators as members of the ingroup or outgroup. Participants reported their collective emotions (i.e., guilt, anger, shame, and sadness) and then completed a number of measures meant to operationalize avoidance of threatening stimuli in a variety of ways. These measures included writing a description of an image that portrayed Native American figures in the periphery, perceived appropriateness of

teaching about a group's transgression in various contexts, desire to avoid intergroup contact, and self-reported avoidance of information related to Native Americans.

Based on the literature outlined above, I predict that participants will report more collective guilt when the passage is framed as intentional harm and when it is framed as committed by the ingroup, compared to when the passage is framed as unintentional harm and when it is framed as committed by the outgroup. Similarly, I predict that participants will exhibit more selective avoidance (e.g., less willingness for intergroup contact) when the passage is framed as intentional harm and when it is framed as committed by the ingroup, compared to when the passage is framed as unintentional harm and when it is framed as committed by the outgroup. I additionally predict that there will be an interaction effect such that participants who read about intentional harm committed by the ingroup will demonstrate the most collective guilt and selective avoidance compared to the other three conditions.

Previous research on collective guilt has established the importance of social identity in collective guilt processes (e.g., Rotella & Richeson, 2013; Sahdra & Ross, 2007). However, the specific relationship between identity and guilt remains unclear (Klein et al., 2011; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006). Thus, I included a measure of social (i.e., national) identity in the study as an exploratory variable. I tried to reduce the effect of the experimental manipulations on national identity by including it in the middle of the demographic questions and instead tested national identity as a moderator.

Although the study focused on collective guilt and selective avoidance, previous research suggests some secondary hypotheses regarding other collective emotions and perceptions of harm. Previous research has shown that harm perpetrated by one outgroup against another outgroup elicits moral outrage (e.g., Montada & Schneider, 1989; Rothschild, Landau, Molina,

Branscombe, & Sullivan, 2013). Individuals also perceive harm committed by an outgroup as worse than the same harm when committed by the ingroup (e.g., Tarrant et al., 2012). Previous research has also shown that participants perceive harm framed as intentional to be worse than the same harm framed as unintentional (e.g., Ames & Fiske, 2013). Therefore, I predict that participants will report greater collective anger and perceive the harm as worse when the passage frames the harm as intentional and as committed by an outgroup, compared to when the passage frames the harm as unintentional harm and as committed by an ingroup. I also predict that there will be an interaction effect such that participants who read about intentional harm committed by an outgroup will demonstrate the most collective anger and perceive the most harm compared to the other three conditions.

Method

Participants

According to a power analysis using G*Power version 3.1.9.3 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2009), given 0.80 power and an alpha-level of .05, 256 participants were needed to detect an effect size of 0.1758 (Rotella & Richeson, 2013). Therefore, 256 participants (female = 123, $M_{age} = 36$) who self-identified as American citizens were recruited from Prolific, a platform for crowdsourcing research. Every person who participated was retained in the analysis. Political orientation among participants was skewed liberal, though this skew was similar across conditions (Figure 1). More demographic information about participants is reported in Table 1. Participants received \$1.75 in exchange for their participation.

Design

The study utilized a 2 (intentional harm vs. unintentional harm) x 2 (ingroup frame vs. outgroup frame) between-subjects design.

Procedure

Participants completed the study procedures online. A description informed participants that they were being asked to participate in a study about how interacting with different forms of historical media influences participants' responses (Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, 2013). However, this description was a cover story; all participants received the manipulation in a written format and viewed the same image as a measure of attention.

Participants began the study by confirming that they were a citizen of the United States, thereby making identity as "American" salient. Then, participants read a passage about how colonial settlers in the United States killed a lot of buffalo, which cut off the food supply for Native Americans (see Appendix A). Participants were randomly assigned to read one of four passages, which varied by whether or not the settlers intentionally cut off the food supply and whether the settlers were framed as the ingroup (i.e., "Americans") or the outgroup (i.e., "Europeans"). The intergroup manipulation was underscored by using specific pronouns: ingroup passages used first person plural pronouns and the outgroup passages used third person plural pronouns when describing the behavior of the settlers (Powell et al., 2005). After reading the passage, participants completed a measure of collective emotions—including collective guilt, anger, shame, and sadness—and a measure of the appropriateness of teaching the information in the passage in a variety of contexts.

Participants next received the following instructions, "On the following page will be an image of a painting depicting a historical event. Take some time to look carefully at the painting. If you move your mouse over the image, a magnifying glass will enable you to see it more closely. Below the painting, we will ask you some questions about the image." The image featured a scene that included figures portrayed as Native Americans at the periphery (see

Appendix A). Participants were asked two open-ended questions about the image. The first asked, “Please write briefly about your reaction to the image.” This question was intended to lead to more relevant responses to the second question. The second question asked, “Please write a short paragraph describing the image, focusing on explaining the scene that is unfolding. Provide any important details, as if you are describing the image to someone who has not seen it.” Participants then completed additional measures to assess willingness for intergroup contact, explicit avoidance of information, perceptions of Americans as a trans-generational entity, extent of harm, a manipulation check on intentionality of the settler actions, and finally demographic information.

Measures

Survey measures included items to assess collective emotions, appropriateness of teaching the information in the passage in various settings, willingness for intergroup contact, explicit avoidance of information, national trans-generational entity, extent of harm, a manipulation check on intentionality, and national identity (see Appendix B for a full list of items). Participants used a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) Likert scale to respond to all items.

Collective emotions. Five items assessed participants’ collective guilt (e.g., “*I feel guilty about the harm [Europeans/Americans] did to Native Americans in the past.*”). This set of questions also included items assessing various other collective emotions, specifically, three items measuring anger, two items measuring shame, and two items measuring sadness (e.g., “*The harm [Europeans/Americans] did to Native Americans in the past makes me feel furious.*”)

Appropriateness. Six items assessed whether or not participants perceived that it would be appropriate to teach the information in the passage in various settings. The settings included:

an elementary school classroom, a middle school classroom, a high school classroom, a college or university classroom, a museum, and as part of a celebration of the United States.

Willingness for intergroup contact. Eight items adapted from Esses and Dovidio (2002) assessed participants' willingness for contact with Native Americans (e.g., "*If given the opportunity, I would like to have a Native American as a neighbor.*")

Explicit avoidance of information. Six items, two of which were adapted from Zimmerman, Abrams, Doosje, and Manstead (2011), assessed participants' explicit avoidance of information about the harm done to Native Americans (e.g., "*I prefer not to think about suffering experienced by Native Americans.*").

Trans-generational entity. Four items adapted from Kahn, Klar, and Roccas (2017) assessed participants' perceptions of the national ingroup as a trans-generational entity (e.g., "*To me, the label "Americans" includes all the generations of group members that ever have lived and ever will live.*").

Extent of harm. Three items assessed participants' evaluations of the extent of harm against Native Americans (e.g., "*The group's behavior against Native Americans was harmful.*").

Intentionality Manipulation check. Three items assessed participants' perceptions that the harm against Native Americans was intentional (e.g., "*The settlers wanted to kill the buffalo to harm Native Americans.*").

National identity. One item, adapted from Postmes, Haslam, and Jan (2013), assessed the strength of participants' national identity (i.e., "*Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: "I identify as American."*"). The item was embedded in the middle

of the demographic questionnaire in an effort to make it less likely that responses would be affected by the manipulation.

Demographics. Participants provided their age, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, level of education, income, political orientation, current place of residence, fluency in English, and the type of device on which they completed the study.

Results

Analyses were conducted in *R* version 3.6.2 (R Core Team, 2019). In the following sections, I describe the process of analyzing the data. I first describe a series of 2 (intentional harm vs. unintentional harm) by 2 (ingroup vs. outgroup) analyses of covariance predicting the survey measures, with national identity as a moderator and demographic variables as covariates. I also describe logistic and Poisson regression analysis of the open-ended description of the image.¹

Unless otherwise specified, the dependent measures analyzed were created using mean scores of the scale items. As shown in Table 2, reliability for all of the scales was good—Cronbach’s alpha ranged from 0.79 to 0.98. Mean levels of collective guilt ($M = 4.02$) and shame ($M = 4.58$) hovered just above the midpoint, whereas mean levels of collective anger ($M = 5.32$) and sadness ($M = 5.89$) were both a full scale-point higher. Mean perceptions of appropriateness for teaching the history in the passage in an elementary school classroom was close to the midpoint ($M = 4.12$), and perceived appropriateness increased with seniority for teaching in a middle school ($M = 5.73$), high school ($M = 6.20$), and college ($M = 6.07$)

¹ Two-way analyses, with only the effects of intentional framing and ingroup framing as predictors, were also conducted. For the analyses, with one exception, none of the ANOVAs showed significant main or interaction effects ($ps > 0.05$). The single significant finding was an effect of intentional framing on the probability of mentioning Native Americans in the description of the image. However, the direction of this effect was opposite to what was hypothesized: the probability of mentioning the Native Americans in the intentional condition (0.953) was higher than the probability of mentioning them in the unintentional conditions (0.853), $B = 1.59$, $SE = 0.667$, $p = 0.017$.

classrooms. Perceived appropriateness was similarly high for teaching the information in a museum ($M = 6.16$) but relatively low for teaching the information during a celebration of the United States ($M = 4.60$). Willingness for intergroup contact was relatively high ($M = 6.10$) and explicit avoidance of information was relatively low ($M = 3.27$). Although national identity was high ($M = 5.91$), perception of Americans as a trans-generational entity was just above the midpoint of the scale ($M = 4.74$).

Bivariate correlations are reported in Table 3. The correlations do not provide much evidence for the hypotheses. For example, the collective emotions are all positively correlated with willingness for intergroup contact, suggesting that those who express higher guilt, anger, shame, and sadness are also more willing to have intergroup contact with Native Americans. Similarly, explicit avoidance of information regarding Native Americans is negatively related to the collective emotions, meaning that those who express increased negative emotion also reported less of a desire to avoid such information. Additionally, the two independent variables, framing the passage as intentional versus unintentional harm and as perpetrated by the ingroup versus the outgroup, are not significantly correlated with many of the other variables. The exceptions are that the intentional harm frame is positively correlated with anger and with whether or not the participant mentioned the Native Americans in the description of the painting, and the ingroup frame is positively correlated with guilt and shame.

Intentionality manipulation check

To determine if the passages successfully manipulated whether or not the harm perpetrated by the colonists was intentional, I conducted a 2 (intentional harm vs. unintentional harm) by 2 (ingroup vs. outgroup) ANOVA. The analysis revealed a significant main effect of the intentional framing of the passage. More specifically, participants in the intentional harm

condition reported perceiving the harm as significantly more intentional ($M = 6.32$, $SD = 1.10$) than participants in the unintentional harm condition ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.77$), $F(1, 253) = 129.67$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.339$. The main effect of group condition, $F(1, 253) = 0.62$, and the interaction between the independent variables, $F(1, 253) = 0.13$, were not significant., ($p > 0.05$).

Collective emotions

CFA. I first conducted a confirmatory factor analysis of the collective emotion items to determine if the measure distinguishes between the emotions as intended, using the *lavaan* package version 0.6-5 in *R* (Rosseel, 2019). The scale was set using the fixed factor method, constraining the latent variances to one and the latent intercepts to zero. Additionally, because the constructs shame and sadness only had two items, the factor loadings were constrained to equality to ensure that the model was locally identified. Although the statistical fit test suggests that the hypothesized and observed variance-covariance matrices are significantly different, $\chi^2(50) = 120.767$, $p < .001$, the other fit statistics suggest acceptable fit. More specifically, the RMSEA of 0.074 (95% CI: 0.057, 0.091) suggests acceptable fit, and the CFI of 0.981 and the TLI of 0.975 both suggest close fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). These fit statistics provide evidence that the hypothesized grouping of items fit the data.

A series of three-way analyses of covariance—with national identity as a moderator and gender, race² and political orientation as covariates—were then conducted with the four different emotions as dependent variables.

² Given the significant effects of race on some of the dependent measures, similar analyses were conducted with only the White participants ($n = 203$). A majority of the analyses showed the same results as reported in the paper. Exceptions to this pattern include: national identity and the intentional by national identity interaction were not significant predictors of anger; national identity, intentional framing, and the national identity by intentional framing interaction emerged as significant predictors of shame; national identity was no longer a predictor of perceiving Americans as a trans-generational entity, but political orientation emerged as significant.

Guilt. This analysis revealed a significant effect of all three demographic variables on collective guilt. Male participants reported significantly less guilt ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.91$) than female participants ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.86$), $F(11, 246) = 5.01$, $p = 0.026$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.026$. White participants reported significantly more guilt ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.89$) than non-White participants ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.78$), $F(11, 246) = 11.60$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.047$. The amount of guilt reported by participants significantly decreased as conservatism increased, $F(11, 246) = 24.60$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.096$. However, no main or interaction effects of condition or national identity emerged as predictors of guilt (Table 4).

Anger. Similar to collective guilt, male participants reported significantly less anger ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 1.60$) than female participants ($M = 5.62$, $SD = 1.35$), $F(11, 246) = 12.10$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.051$. The amount of anger reported by participants significantly decreased as conservatism increased, $F(11, 246) = 54.70$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.181$. Analyses also showed that, as hypothesized, framing the passage as intentional led to significantly more anger ($M = 5.60$, $SD = 1.28$) than framing the passage as unintentional ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.66$), $F(11, 246) = 7.06$, $p = 0.008$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.056$. Also, as strength of national identity increased, reported anger also increased, $F(11, 246) = 8.73$, $p = 0.003$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.007$. The interaction between intentional framing and national identity was significant, $F(11, 246) = 5.84$, $p = 0.016$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.013$ (Figure 2). Simple slopes analysis suggests that in the unintentional framing condition, there was a weak positive relationship between anger and national identity ($b = 0.15$, $SE = 0.105$), whereas in the intentional framing condition, there was a weak negative relationship ($b = -0.066$, $SE = 0.098$), $t(246) = 1.487$, $p = 0.138$. The effect of race, main effect of ingroup framing, ingroup framing by national identity interaction, and three-way interaction were not statistically significant ($ps > 0.10$; Table 5).

Shame. Male participants reported significantly less shame ($M = 4.18, SD = 1.91$) than female participants ($M = 4.98, SD = 1.73$), $F(11, 246) = 13.10, p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.055$ (Table 6). White participants reported significantly more shame ($M = 4.75, SD = 1.84$) than non-White participants ($M = 3.30, SD = 1.78$), $F(11, 246) = 8.12, p = 0.005$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.041$. The amount of shame reported by participants significantly decreased as conservatism increased, $F(11, 246) = 17.18.80, p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.070$. With the demographic variables in the model, the analysis did not reveal any main effects, but the two-way interaction between intentional framing and group framing was significant, $F(11, 246) = 3.96, p = 0.048$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.003$. Simple effects analysis revealed that those in the intentional ingroup condition reported more shame than those in the intentional outgroup condition, $t(246) = -0.823, p = 0.032$, though no other pairwise comparisons were significant. The three-way interaction was also significant, $F(11, 246) = 4.82, p = 0.029$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.019$. Simple slopes analysis revealed that the slope of the relationship between national identity and shame for those in the intentional outgroup condition ($b = -0.224, SE = 0.179$) was significantly smaller than, and in the opposite direction as, the slope for those in the intentional ingroup condition ($b = 0.475, SE = 0.177$), $t(246) = -0.699, p = 0.006$, and marginally smaller than the slope for the unintentional outgroup condition ($b = 0.224, SE = 0.152$), $t(246) = 0.448, p = 0.055$ (Figure 3).

Sadness. Male participants reported significantly less sadness ($M = 5.61, SD = 1.20$) than female participants ($M = 6.18, SD = 1.02$), $F(11, 246) = 16.20, p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.069$. The amount of sadness reported by participants significantly decreased as conservatism increased, $F(11, 246) = 17.10, p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.057$, and significantly increased as strength of national identity increased, $F(11, 246) = 12.90, p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.008$. Additionally, those who read the passage with intentional harm framing reported significantly more sadness ($M =$

5.94, $SD = 1.06$) than those who read the passage with unintentional harm framing ($M = 5.85$, $SD = 1.23$), $F(11, 246) = 10.90$, $p = 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.005$; and, those who read the passage with ingroup framing reported significantly more sadness ($M = 5.92$, $SD = 1.08$) than those who read the passage with outgroup framing ($M = 5.87$, $SD = 1.22$), $F(11, 246) = 4.41$, $p = 0.037$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.001$. Both the intentional condition by national identity interaction, $F(11, 246) = 10.30$, $p = 0.002$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.026$, and the ingroup by national identity interaction, $F(11, 246) = 4.49$, $p = 0.035$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.010$, were also significant. Simple slopes analysis suggests that in the unintentional framing condition, there was a positive relationship between sadness and national identity ($b = 0.166$, $SE = 0.086$), whereas in the intentional framing condition, there was a weak negative relationship ($b = -0.079$, $SE = 0.080$), $t(246) = 0.247$, $p = 0.034$ (Figure 4). Additionally, in the outgroup framing condition, there was a positive relationship between sadness and national identity ($b = 0.109$, $SE = 0.075$) whereas in the ingroup framing condition, there was a weak negative relationship ($b = -0.021$, $SE = 0.090$), $t(246) = 0.130$, $p = 0.260$ (Figure 5). Neither the intentional by ingroup interaction nor the three-way interaction were statistically significant ($ps > 0.05$).

Mixed method ANOVA. To determine if the conditions systematically influenced participants' reported emotions, I conducted a mixed method analysis of variance with two between-subjects factors (i.e., intentionality and ingroup framing) and one within-subjects factor. The three-way interaction was not significant, $F(3, 250) = 0.39$, $p = 0.756$. However, the emotion type by intentionality interaction, $F(3, 250) = 6.61$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.073$, and the emotion type by ingroup interaction, $F(3, 250) = 5.43$, $p = 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.061$, were both statistically significant. Probing the intentionality interaction revealed that the significant effect was driven by guilt and anger. Framing intergroup harm as intentional had a polarizing effect:

guilt decreased in the intentional condition (Intentional: $M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.95$; Unintentional: $M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.86$) whereas anger increased in the intentional condition (Intentional: $M = 5.60$, $SD = 1.28$; Unintentional: $M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.66$), $F(1, 252) = 14.31$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.054$.

Probing the ingroup interaction revealed that both guilt (Ingroup: $M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.79$; Outgroup: $M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.97$) and shame (Ingroup: $M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.72$; Outgroup: $M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.93$) increased in the ingroup condition relative to the outgroup condition, $F(1, 252) = 10.78$, $p = 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.041$.

Other survey measures

A parallel series of three-way analyses of covariance—with intentional framing and ingroup framing as independent variables, national identity as a moderator, and gender, race, and political orientation as covariates—were conducted with the remaining survey measures as dependent variables.³

Perceived appropriateness of teaching history. Political orientation significantly predicted the perceived appropriateness of teaching the history described in the passage in various contexts, such that perceived appropriateness decreased as conservatism increased, $F(11, 246) = 27.80$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.103$. No other effects in the model were statistically significant (Table 8).

Willingness for intergroup contact. Male participants reported significantly less willingness for intergroup contact ($M = 5.89$, $SD = 0.90$) than female participants ($M = 6.32$, $SD = 0.78$), $F(11, 246) = 13.50$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.066$. Participants' willingness for

³ I also tested mediated moderation models with the two condition variables as predictors, national identity as a moderator, guilt and anger as mediators, and the selective avoidance measures as outcome variables. Despite guilt and anger being significant predictors of some of the outcomes, none of the indirect effects were significant.

intergroup contact significantly decreased as conservatism increased, $F(11, 246) = 21.90, p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.083$. No other effects in the model were statistically significant (Table 9).

Explicit avoidance. The amount of explicit avoidance of information regarding Native Americans reported by participants significantly increased as conservatism increased, $F(11, 246) = 56.50, p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.195$. No other effects in the model were statistically significant (Table 10).

Transgenerational entity. The extent to which participants perceived Americans as a transgenerational entity significantly increased as strength of identity increased, $F(11, 246) = 7.08, p = 0.008$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.045$. No other effects in the model were statistically significant (Table 11).

Perceived harm. Perceived harm also significantly decreased as conservatism increased, $F(11, 246) = 8.97, p = 0.003$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.040$. No other effects in the model were statistically significant (Table 12).

Attention

A research assistant coded each participant's open-ended description of the image, noting whether or not the participant mentioned the Indigenous figures, the number of times the participant mentioned the Indigenous figures, and the number of words written prior to the first mention of the Indigenous figures. Words such as, "Native Americans," "Indigenous peoples," "Indians," "Natives," "Chiefs," and "Slaves," were all coded as references to the Indigenous figures. Overall, a majority of participants mentioned the figures at least once and typically mentioned them one or two times (Table 13).

I conducted a logistic regression with gender, race, political orientation, national identity, intentional framing, group framing, and interactions between national identity, intentional

framing and group framing as predictors of mentioning the Native American figures at least once. None of the predictors were statistically significant (Table 14).

I additionally conducted a Poisson regression using the same variables and interactions as predictors of the number of times a participant mentioned the Native American figures, controlling for total word count of the response. None of the predictors were statistically significant (Table 15).

As a final test of attention, I conducted a linear regression predicting the number of seconds participants hovered their mouse over the Native American figures in the image, controlling for the number of seconds the participant hovered their mouse anywhere on the painting (Table 16). Six participants were removed from this analysis: four for completing the survey on a tablet or smartphone, because mouse-tracking is not compatible with devices without a mouse; one because mouse-tracking was not recorded for the participant; and one for spending an extreme proportion of time spent hovering the mouse over the image hovering over the Native American figures (0.959). On average, participants spent 36.98 seconds hovering their mice over the image, and 11.08 seconds hovering their mice over the Native American figures, an average proportion of 0.296. Participants in the intentional ingroup condition spent a smaller mean proportion of time hovering the mouse over the Native American figures ($M = 0.267$, $SD = 0.141$), compared to the other three conditions (Intentional outgroup: $M = 0.310$, $SD = 0.138$; Unintentional ingroup: $M = 0.306$, $SD = 0.120$; Unintentional outgroup: $M = 0.304$, $SD = 0.149$). However, the differences were not statistically significant.

Discussion

The present study investigated one possible explanation of the erasure experienced by Indigenous people in the United States: that the collective guilt evoked by remembering

colonization causes non-Native Americans to direct attention away from stimuli related to Native Americans. To test this hypothesis, participants read a passage about how the actions of early settlers caused the death of many Native Americans, which was meant to elicit differing levels of collective guilt in the different conditions. I predicted that reading about an ingroup committing intentional harm would lead to increased collective guilt, a lower probability that participants would mention peripheral Native American figures when describing an image, perceiving that it would be less appropriate to teach the information from the passage in various contexts, less willingness to have intergroup contact, an increase in self-reported avoidance of information regarding Native Americans, and a decrease in the perception of Americans as a trans-generational entity.

Overall, the data did not provide much support for these hypotheses: neither framing the harm perpetrated against Native Americans as intentional nor as perpetrated by the ingroup increased collective guilt or decreased attention directed toward stimuli related to Native Americans. These findings are curious in light of previous research showing that collective guilt leads to worse memory for historical harm committed by the ingroup (Rotella & Richeson, 2013), as memory and attention are interconnected processes. I had theorized that the mechanism behind the motivated forgetting found by Rotella and Richeson was a lack of attention directed toward the historical events. However, the findings from this study suggest that the process of motivated forgetting may not result from inattention. Instead, it seems that threatening stimuli may be attended to and encoded in memory but then suppressed at recall. Interventions to curb omission bias would therefore need to target cognitive processes at the moment of recall rather than when individuals are exposed to information. Future studies should concurrently investigate

the effect of collective guilt on motivated memory and selective attention, to better understand the potential link.

In addition to finding no condition effects on attention paid toward Native Americans in the image, the study also did not result in condition effects on willingness for intergroup contact and explicit avoidance of information regarding Native Americans. In designing the study, I considered these variables to be operationalizations of selective avoidance. However, participants may have instead interpreted the items as forms of reparation or intergroup reconciliation. If participants did interpret the items this way, then it follows from previous theory that they would indicate higher support for reparations, particularly somewhat trivial reparations, as a result of collective guilt. Research has provided evidence that, when groups do not reduce collective guilt via reappraisal of the harm, individuals may instead reduce guilt by reporting more positive attitudes toward outgroup members (Powell et al., 2005) or by engaging in some sort of reparatory action (Allpress et al., 2010; McGarty et al., 2005). Perhaps the participants in the present study experienced the latter process of guilt reduction.

Instead of observing condition effects, demographic variables emerged as the most consistent predictors of collective emotions and selective avoidance of Native Americans. Political orientation in particular arose as driving most of the outcomes. For example, increased conservatism predicted decreased collective guilt and a tendency to mention the Native American figures fewer times in a description of an image.

A couple of possibilities may explain why conservatism exerted such influence in the study. First of all, liberals and conservatives may inhabit different cultural worlds within the United States. It has previously been established that liberals tend to live in more multicultural, urban areas whereas conservatives tend to live in more homogenous, rural areas (Fischer, 1982).

It follows that these cultural worlds would foster different schematic representations of Native Americans. Conservative schemas may match the schema predicted for all participants, though liberal schemas may instead seek to recognize past harm and bolster Native American representation as a component of social justice. The findings of the study would be in line with this explanation, as conservatives tended to express less collective guilt and more selective avoidance compared to liberals.

In addition to divergence in cultural background, differences in the content of conservatives' and liberals' national identity might also have caused the observed differences. Conservatives are more likely than liberals to have a conventional attachment to the nation, or to endorse blind patriotism (Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999). Liberal ideology, conversely, tends to match critical attachment. Prior research has shown that the type of attachment one has to the nation influences the experience of collective guilt: those who glorify the ingroup are less likely to experience guilt than those who appraise the ingroup as flawed (Roccas et al., 2006). Glorifying the ingroup increases motivation to see the ingroup positively, which decreases the experience of collective guilt; seeing the ingroup as imperfect and having room for growth makes knowledge of harm less threatening and increases the experience of collective guilt. Thus, future studies should investigate the role of different forms of national identity as moderators of collective guilt and selective avoidance.

Although the framing of the passages did not cause any differences in reports of guilt, framing did influence the other collective emotions measured. As hypothesized, intentional harm caused participants to report more anger than unintentional harm. This finding echoes previous research on perceptions of intergroup harm (e.g., Ames & Fiske, 2013). Although anger increased overall in the intentional harm conditions, participants' strength of national identity

impacted their emotional reactions. When the passage framed the harm as unintentional, high identifiers tended to express more anger than low identifiers, whereas when the passage framed harm as intentional, high identifiers tended to express less anger. It seems that harm is more threatening when perceived as intentional, and therefore, those who strongly identify with the perpetrator group can afford to express more anger in response to unintentional harm. This difference likely results from the fact that, to experience collective anger, individuals do not need to self-categorize as a prototypical member of the ingroup (Hakim, Schoemann, & Branscombe, 2020). Group members can instead view a small group of ingroup leaders or an authority figure as the specific perpetrator(s) of harm, thereby alleviating responsibility of the ingroup overall (Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007).

Further, unlike guilt and shame, White participants and participants of other races reported similar levels of anger. White individuals are more likely to categorize themselves into the same group as early settlers, because the early settlers were White as well. Individuals who do not identify as a White, on the other hand, may self-categorize as American, but are less likely feel connected to early settlers; this process should lead non-White individuals to experience more anger than guilt when considering the consequences of colonization. Thus, participants on average seemed to restrict the responsibility of the slaughter of Native Americans to a specific group of ingroup members rather than Americans as a whole. This process of feeling anger toward an ingroup's powerful representative allowed them to support the outgroup victims while recognizing the responsibility of the ingroup (Subašić, Reynolds, & Turner, 2008).

Participants expressed collective shame in a pattern similar to that predicted for collective guilt, despite not expressing collective guilt in the predicted pattern. Specifically, when the harm was framed as unintentional, high identifiers expressed less shame than low identifiers when the

passage framed the perpetrators as the ingroup, whereas low identifiers expressed less shame when the passage framed the perpetrators as the outgroup. Additionally, when the passage framed the harm as intentional, high identifiers expressed more shame when the passage framed the perpetrators as the ingroup than when it framed them as the outgroup, whereas low identifiers expressed more shame when the passage framed the perpetrators as the outgroup than when it framed them as the ingroup. This finding suggests that those who self-categorize and highly identify with the ingroup will experience high levels of shame for historical harm, unless said harm can be reappraised as unintentional. It seems that when participants had access to routes for reducing responsibility, they tended to use these routes to assuage feelings of shame.

These findings for shame are consistent with prior literature (e.g., Branscombe, 2004; Sharvit et al., 2015). However, why this pattern of results occurred with shame but not with guilt remains a question. Guilt and shame are related emotions, in that they are both self-directed, aversive, and occur in response to moral transgressions. However, previous research has drawn some distinctions between the two emotions (Hakim et al., 2020). A couple of the defining characteristics of shame could explain why the experimental conditions influenced shame rather than guilt. First, some have theorized that shame arises out of a concern for how outgroups will judge the ingroup, whereas guilt arises out of an internal recognition of the moral transgression itself (Lickel, Schmader, & Barquissau, 2004). Participants may have more readily expressed feelings of collective shame because acknowledging that outgroups will blame the ingroup for harm does not threaten to social identity as much as blaming the ingroup oneself. If it is easier to express shame than guilt, that is likely why there was more variation on the collective shame measure.

Second, shame has been described as the appraisal of a specific group action as negative, as opposed to having a negative view of the ingroup more generally (Hakim et al., 2020). Indeed, the passages described a specific point in time when the colonialists harmed Native Americans rather than speaking to overall harm committed across time. Negative evaluations of the ingroup overall would certainly cause more threat than acknowledging incident-specific negative behavior. When negative evaluations can be boiled down to a specific incident, individuals can turn to other aspects of the ingroup to bolster esteem. This strategy disappears in global negative appraisals of the ingroup, which are therefore more likely to decrease esteem. In an effort to maintain esteem, individuals may be more likely to experience shame rather than guilt.

The fourth emotion included in the survey was collective sadness. Overall, participants reported more sadness than any of the other emotions. Framing the harm as intentional also led to increased reports of sadness, which follows previous research showing that participants construe intentional harm as worse than unintentional harm (Ames & Fiske, 2013). Framing the harm as perpetrated by the ingroup, too, led to increased reports of sadness. National identity also influenced the condition effects. High identifiers who read about intentional harm tended to report less sadness than low identifiers whereas high identifiers who read about unintentional harm tended to report more sadness than low identifiers. Additionally, high identifiers tended to report less sadness compared to low identifiers when the passage framed the perpetrator as the ingroup, though when the passage framed the perpetrator as the outgroup, high identifiers tended to report more sadness compared to low identifiers. Participants likely reported more collective sadness than other emotions because sadness focuses on the victim experience rather than the perpetrator's wrongdoing. One can feel sadness for harm without assigning responsibility to a social group, such as in the case of natural disasters. Sadness does not denigrate the ingroup;

therefore, it is not as costly as other collective emotions. If individuals feel negative affect in response to an ingroup moral transgression, they may be motivated to interpret the affect as sadness rather than an ingroup-focused emotion such as guilt.

Limitations and future directions

Although it is possible that the theorized effect does not exist, it is also possible that flaws in study design masked true effects. For instance, participants may have all self-categorized as Americans, regardless of condition, leading to a lack of effects. All participants confirmed that they were American immediately before reading the passage, which may have primed national identity salience across conditions and overshadowed the subtle differences in language use. In fact, only 23 participants, or 9% of the sample, indicated mid to low levels of national identity. Unfortunately, the study did not include a manipulation check to determine the effectiveness of the group framing. However, the experimental passages did successfully manipulate perceived intentionality of the harm, as exhibited by the significant effect of intentional framing on the intentionality manipulation check measure, which assessed whether or not participants agreed that the settlers slaughtered the buffalo in an intentional effort to harm the Native American populations.

The specific image used in the study may also have impacted the results, as the image itself is a cultural product imbued with meaning. Participants seemed to interpret the painting as a representation of Thanksgiving—77 participants, or 30% of the sample, explicitly described the painting as depicting the first Thanksgiving. Collective American memory represents the first Thanksgiving as a peaceful gathering between colonists and Native Americans. The activation of the first Thanksgiving schema, therefore, may have justified the information in the passage and led participants to seek out the Native American figures, 90% of whom mentioned the Native

Americans in their descriptions. Future studies should examine selective attention with an image that does not evoke Thanksgiving so strongly. Future studies may also more deeply investigate cultural representations of the first Thanksgiving to determine how they influence processes such as empathizing with Native Americans, perceptions of Native Americans today, and national identification.

Additionally, colonization may only evoke guilt and selective avoidance for White Americans. Americans who do not identify as white may be less likely to identify with the colonists described in the passage. In fact, a handful of participants explained this experience in their comments at the end of the survey. However, parallel analyses with only the White participants did not yield results that supported the hypotheses more so than the results from the whole sample. The lack of results among only White participants may have been due to a lack of power; 203 participants identified as White, though a power analyses suggested that 256 participants were needed for sufficient power. Future studies should recruit a larger sample of White participants.

Conclusions

Overall, political orientation most strongly predicted American participants' responses to harm committed by early settlers against Native Americans. Increased conservatism was associated with increased negative emotions and increased selective avoidance of representations of Native Americans, measured as attitudes toward information regarding Native Americans and willingness for intergroup contact. Although varying the framing of harm as intentional versus unintentional and perpetrated by the ingroup versus the outgroup did not influence collective guilt, these framings did influence group-based anger, shame, and sadness. In line with previous

research, intentional harm led participants to express more anger, shame, and sadness than unintentional harm.

Regardless of which collective emotions influence it, understanding the factors that foster and reinforce omission bias against Native Americans remains an important issue to address. Uncovering the causes of omission bias is the first step to developing interventions to reduce this bias. Reducing said bias may increase representation of Native Americans in the mainstream and increase support of reparations, thereby starting to make the United States a more just place.

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Tables

Table 1. Participant demographics

		Intentional		Unintentional		Total
		Ingroup	Outgroup	Ingroup	Outgroup	
Age	Mean Age	35.94	35.81	38.03	34.54	36.05
Gender	Female	28	26	32	37	123
	Male	36	37	29	28	130
	Other	0	1	1	2	4
Race	White	48	50	54	51	203
	Asian	5	5	3	4	17
	Black	2	4	1	3	10
	Latinx	5	2	2	3	12
	Multiracial	4	3	2	6	15
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	56	53	55	50	214
	Bisexual	6	8	6	11	31
	Homosexual	2	3	0	2	7
	Other	0	0	1	4	5
Religion	Atheist	33	31	31	30	125
	Christian	26	27	26	27	106
	Other	5	6	5	10	26
Education	Median level of education	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree
Income	Median income	\$55,000 - \$65,999	\$50,000 - \$59,999	\$60,000 - \$69,999	\$40,000 - \$49,999	\$50,000 - \$59,999
Current country of residence	United States	60	63	59	66	248
	Other	4	1	3	1	9
Device on which survey was completed	Laptop	38	44	37	46	165
	Desktop	24	20	25	19	88
	Tablet	1	0	0	2	3
	Smartphone	1	0	0	0	1

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

	α	Intentional		Unintentional		Total
		Ingroup	Outgroup	Ingroup	Outgroup	
Guilt	0.98	4.25 (1.83)	3.52 (2.00)	4.39 (1.76)	3.94 (1.93)	4.02 (1.90)
Anger	0.93	5.61 (1.30)	5.59 (1.26)	4.96 (1.78)	5.10 (1.56)	5.32 (1.51)
Shame	0.90	5.04 (1.76)	4.12 (1.85)	4.84 (1.69)	4.34 (2.02)	4.58 (1.86)
Sadness	0.79	5.98 (1.08)	5.90 (1.06)	5.86 (1.09)	5.84 (1.36)	5.89 (1.15)
Appropriateness	0.79	5.31 (1.28)	5.39 (0.94)	5.51 (1.15)	5.70 (0.80)	5.48 (1.06)
Intergroup contact	0.92	5.94 (0.93)	6.14 (0.73)	6.18 (0.84)	6.16 (0.95)	6.10 (0.87)
Avoidance	0.88	3.24 (1.34)	3.30 (1.44)	3.35 (1.25)	3.21 (1.41)	3.27 (1.36)
Trans-generational entity	0.90	4.82 (1.37)	4.86 (1.40)	4.44 (1.24)	4.83 (1.50)	4.74 (1.39)
Perceived harm	0.97	6.12 (1.30)	6.36 (1.15)	6.26 (0.91)	6.27 (1.13)	6.25 (1.13)
Manipulation check	0.98	6.36 (1.06)	6.29 (1.15)	3.54 (1.68)	3.34 (1.86)	4.87 (2.07)
National identity	-	5.95 (1.23)	6.00 (1.20)	6.02 (1.00)	5.69 (1.39)	5.91 (1.22)

Table 3. Bivariate correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1 Male																
2 White	.03															
3 Political Orientation	.07	.09														
4 National ID	-.03	.20**	.22***													
5 Guilt	-.15*	.20**	-.28***	.02												
6 Anger	-.20**	-.06	-.42***	-.02	.42***											
7 Shame	-.21***	.18**	-.24***	.10	.78***	.54***										
8 Sadness	-.25***	.03	-.24***	.05	.44***	.70***	.58***									
9 Appropriateness	-.05	-.01	-.32***	-.06	.13*	.27***	.14*	.26***								
10 Intergroup Contact	-.25***	.00	-.29***	-.03	.27***	.37***	.33***	.41***	.29***							
11 Avoidance	.08	.01	.44***	.10	-.17***	-.36***	-.21***	-.29***	-.38***	-.36***						
12 TGE	-.06	.07	.12	.24***	.08	.12	.15*	.11	-.02	.16**	.05					
13 Perceived Harm	-.06	.05	-.20**	-.07	.13*	.33***	.22***	.27***	.20**	.30***	-.23***	.00				
14 Mention Native Americans	.02	-.04	-.05	.11	.05	.10	.15*	.07	-.01	.18**	-.12	-.02	.11			
15 # Mentions of Native Americans	-.02	-.08	-.20**	.08	.11	.20**	.22***	.14*	.05	.14*	-.19**	-.07	.14*	.56***		
16 Intentional Harm Frame	.13*	-.06	.01	.05	-.07	.19**	.00	.04	-.12	-.07	.00	.07	-.01	.17**	.09	
17 Ingroup Frame	.02	.05	.01	.06	.15*	-.02	.19**	.02	-.06	-.05	.01	-.08	-.05	.09	.06	.02

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Most variables are coded from 1 to 7, with 7 indicated increased levels reported. But Male, White, Mention Native Americans, Intentional Harm Frame, and Ingroup frame are dummy coded so that 1 represents cases for which the label is true and 0 represents labels for which the label is false. Political orientation is coded on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 representing very liberal and 7 representing very conservative. Lastly, Number of Mentions of Native Americans is the count of the number of times participants referenced Native Americans in the image description.

Table 4. Three-way ANCOVA predicting collective guilt

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	49.2	1	16.00	< 0.001
Male	15.4	1	5.01	0.026
White	35.5	1	11.60	< 0.001
Political orientation	75.6	1	24.60	< 0.001
National Identity	2.3	1	0.75	0.387
Intentional	5.01	1	1.63	0.202
Ingroup	1.59	1	0.52	0.472
National ID x Intentional	6.77	1	2.21	0.139
National ID x Ingroup	0.642	1	0.21	0.648
Intentional x Ingroup	6.19	1	2.02	0.157
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	7.27	1	2.37	0.125
Residuals	755	246		

Table 5. Three-way ANCOVA predicting collective anger

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	82.4	1	47.90	< 0.001
Male	20.8	1	12.10	< 0.001
White	0.156	1	0.09	0.763
Political orientation	94	1	54.70	< 0.001
National Identity	12.1	1	7.06	0.008
Intentional	15	1	8.73	0.003
Ingroup	4.2	1	2.45	0.119
National ID x Intentional	10	1	5.84	0.016
National ID x Ingroup	4.61	1	2.69	0.102
Intentional x Ingroup	4.22	1	2.46	0.118
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	4.32	1	2.52	0.114
Residuals	423	246		

Table 6. Three-way ANCOVA predicting collective shame

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	49	1	17.20	< 0.001
Male	37.40	1	13.10	< 0.001
White	23.10	1	8.12	0.005
Political orientation	53.40	1	18.80	< 0.001
National Identity	6.20	1	2.18	0.141
Intentional	9.78	1	3.44	0.065
Ingroup	1.34	1	0.47	0.493
National ID x Intentional	10.60	1	3.72	0.055
National ID x Ingroup	0.43	1	0.15	0.697
Intentional x Ingroup	11.20	1	3.96	0.048
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	13.70	1	4.82	0.029
Residuals	699	246		

Table 7. Three-way ANCOVA predicting collective sadness

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	74.60	1	65.10	< 0.001
Male	18.50	1	16.20	< 0.001
White	0.58	1	0.50	0.479
Political orientation	19.60	1	17.10	< 0.001
National Identity	14.70	1	12.90	< 0.001
Intentional	12.50	1	10.90	0.001
Ingroup	5.05	1	4.41	0.037
National ID x Intentional	11.80	1	10.30	0.002
National ID x Ingroup	5.14	1	4.49	0.035
Intentional x Ingroup	4.12	1	3.60	0.059
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	4.34	1	3.79	0.053
Residuals	282	246		

Table 8. Three-way ANCOVA predicting perceived appropriateness

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	122	1	120	< 0.001
Male	0.00875	1	0.01	0.926
White	0.0491	1	0.05	0.827
Political orientation	28.4	1	27.80	< 0.001
National Identity	0.951	1	0.93	0.336
Intentional	0.123	1	0.12	0.729
Ingroup	0.0781	1	0.08	0.782
National ID x Intentional	0.472	1	0.46	0.498
National ID x Ingroup	0.195	1	0.19	0.663
Intentional x Ingroup	0.00753	1	0.01	0.932
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	0.0115	1	0.01	0.915
Residuals	251	246		

Table 9. Three-way ANCOVA predicting willingness for intergroup contact

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	166	1	249	< 0.001
Male	8.98	1	13.50	< 0.001
White	0.0673	1	0.10	0.751
Political orientation	14.6	1	21.90	< 0.001
National Identity	0.00156	1	0.002	0.961
Intentional	0.0387	1	0.09	0.810
Ingroup	0.017	1	0.03	0.873
National ID x Intentional	0.0884	1	0.13	0.716
National ID x Ingroup	0.00218	1	0.003	0.954
Intentional x Ingroup	0.0674	1	0.10	0.751
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	0.00041	1	0.0006	0.980
Residuals	164	246		

Table 10. Three-way ANCOVA predicting explicit avoidance

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	33.2	1	22.1	< 0.001
Male	1.07	1	0.71	0.400
White	0.876	1	0.58	0.446
Political orientation	84.9	1	56.50	< 0.001
National Identity	2.79	1	1.86	0.174
Intentional	0.67	1	0.45	0.505
Ingroup	2.29	1	1.53	0.218
National ID x Intentional	0.711	1	0.47	0.492
National ID x Ingroup	2.59	1	1.72	0.190
Intentional x Ingroup	0.00419	1	0.003	0.958
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	0.000692	1	0.0005	0.983
Residuals	370	246		

Table 11. Three-way ANCOVA predicting transgenerational entity

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	27.9	1	15.40	< 0.001
Male	2.07	1	1.14	0.286
White	0.473	1	0.26	0.610
Political orientation	3.28	1	1.81	0.180
National Identity	12.8	1	7.08	0.008
Intentional	0.613	1	0.34	0.562
Ingroup	0.806	1	0.44	0.506
National ID x Intentional	0.752	1	0.41	0.520
National ID x Ingroup	2.11	1	1.16	0.282
Intentional x Ingroup	1.21	1	0.67	0.415
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	2.26	1	1.24	0.266
Residuals	447	246		

Table 12. Three-way ANCOVA predicting perceived harm

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	183	1	147	< 0.001
Male	0.917	1	0.73	0.393
White	1.3	1	1.04	0.309
Political orientation	11.2	1	8.97	0.003
National Identity	1.07	1	0.86	0.356
Intentional	0.102	1	0.08	0.776
Ingroup	0.453	1	0.36	0.548
National ID x Intentional	0.0119	1	0.01	0.922
National ID x Ingroup	0.524	1	0.42	0.518
Intentional x Ingroup	0.235	1	0.19	0.665
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	0.0647	1	0.05	0.820
Residuals	308	246		

Table 13. Mentions of Native Americans in open-ended image description

	Intentional		Unintentional		Total	
	M (SD)	Percent	M (SD)	Percent	M (SD)	Percent
Ingroup	1.66 (0.89)	95.31%	1.63 (1.03)	90.32%	1.64 (0.96)	92.86%
Outgroup	1.67 (0.78)	95.31%	1.39 (1.00)	80.60%	1.53 (0.91)	87.79%
Total	1.66 (0.84)	95.31%	1.50 (1.02)	85.27%	1.58 (0.93)	90.27%

Note. Table reports mean and standard deviation of the number of mentions of Native

Americans, as well as the percentage of participants who mentioned Native Americans at least once.

Table 14. Logistic regression predicting whether or not participant mentioned Native Americans in image description

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	1.320	1.250	0.293
Male	0.056	0.449	0.900
White	-0.561	0.615	0.362
Political orientation	-0.174	0.149	0.242
National Identity	0.185	0.217	0.394
Intentional	1.290	2.610	0.621
Ingroup	0.319	2.560	0.901
National ID x Intentional	0.057	0.442	0.898
National ID x Ingroup	0.093	0.431	0.830
Intentional x Ingroup	-2.210	3.890	0.569
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	0.253	0.671	0.706

Table 15. Poisson regression predicting the number of times participants mentioned Native Americans in image description

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	-0.019	0.481	0.968
Word count	0.006	0.001	< 0.001
Male	0.013	0.101	0.898
White	-0.139	0.122	0.257
Political orientation	-0.040	0.035	0.246
National Identity	0.022	0.082	0.787
Intentional	0.487	0.703	0.489
Ingroup	-0.532	0.851	0.532
National ID x Intentional	-0.033	0.117	0.776
National ID x Ingroup	0.135	0.140	0.337
Intentional x Ingroup	0.245	1.142	0.830
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	-0.101	0.188	0.591

Table 16. Linear regression predicting the amount of time participants hovered mouse over Native American figures in image

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	9.29	6.750	0.17
Total time mouse spent on image	0.26	0.016	< 0.001
Male	-2.69	1.600	0.094
White	-0.68	2.00	0.734
Political orientation	-0.88	0.518	0.091
National Identity	-0.202	1.160	0.862
Intentional	-8.73	10.400	0.403
Ingroup	-10.90	12.600	0.385
National ID x Intentional	1.00	1.740	0.564
National ID x Ingroup	1.30	2.090	0.535
Intentional x Ingroup	12.10	16.900	0.476
National ID x Intentional x Ingroup	-1.31	2.800	0.639

Figures

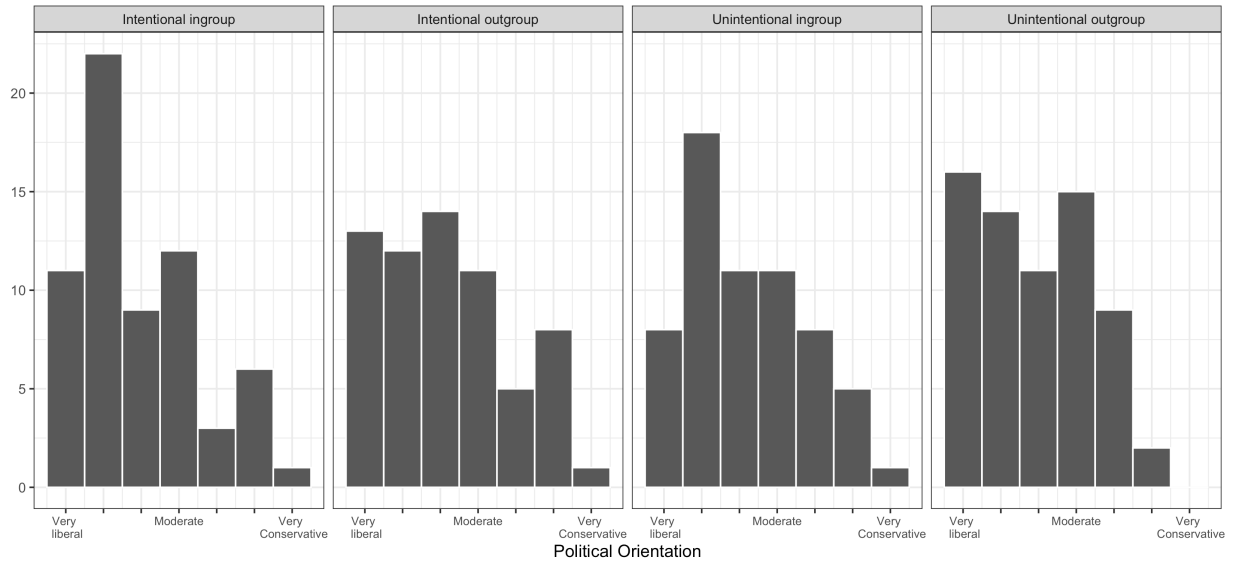


Figure 1. Histogram of political orientation.

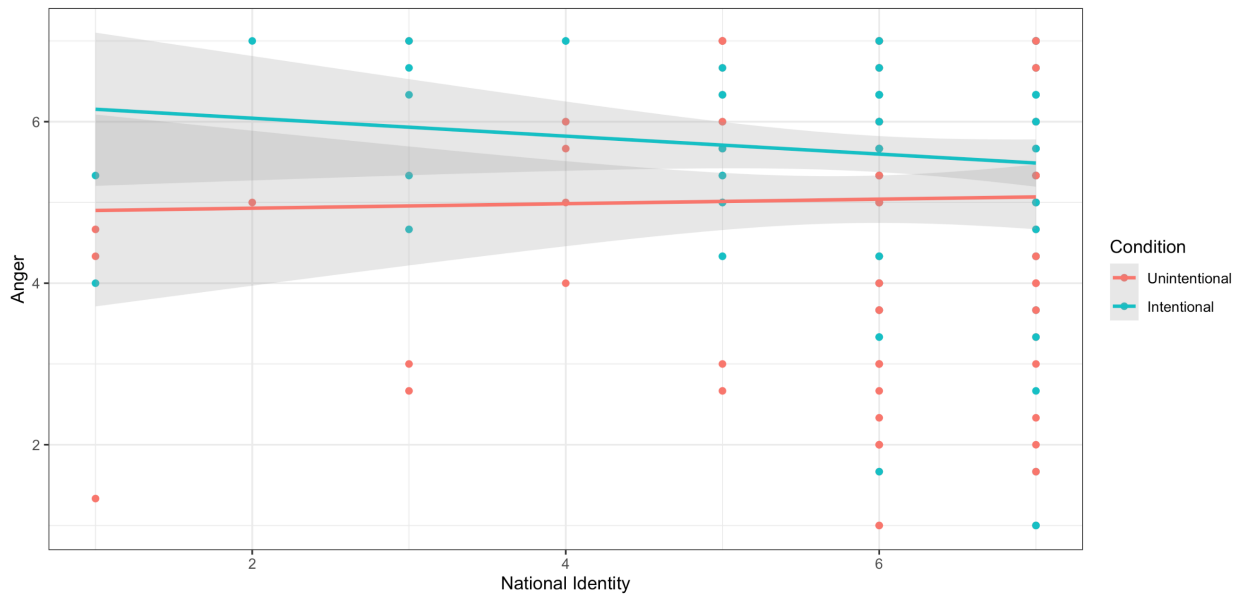


Figure 2. Effect of intentional framing by national identity interaction on collective anger.

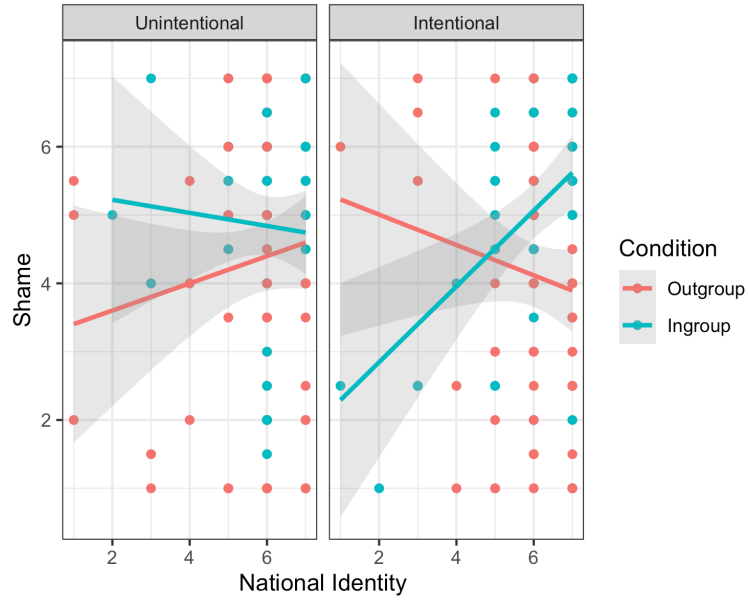


Figure 3. Effect of intentional framing by ingroup by national identity interaction on collective shame

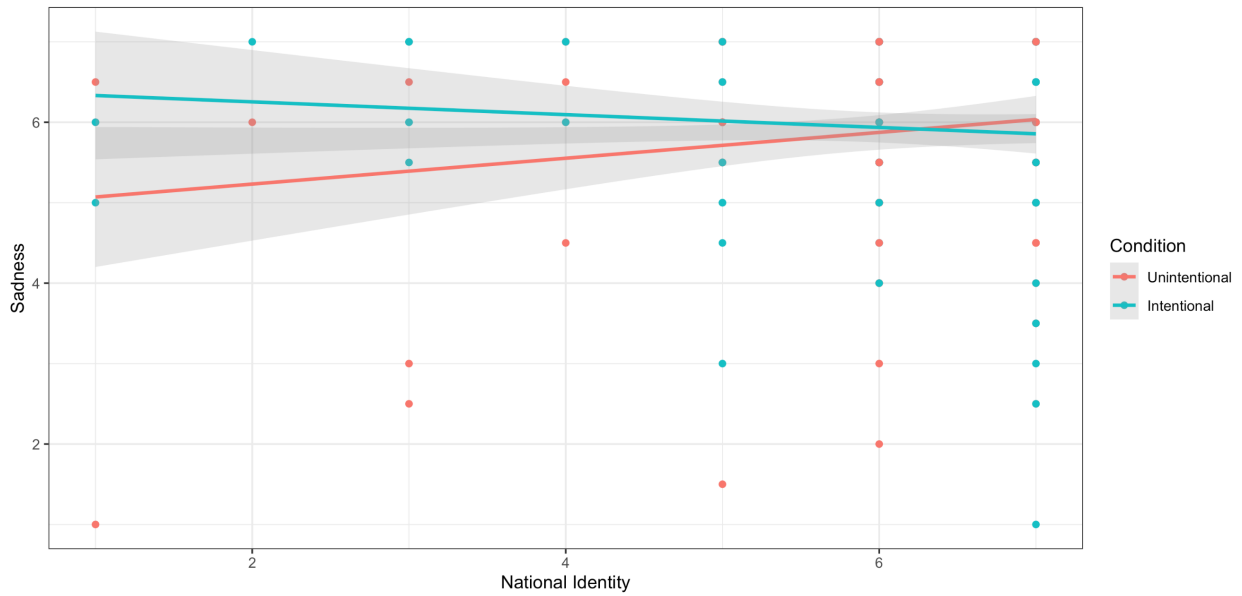


Figure 4. Effect of intentional framing by national identity interaction on collective sadness

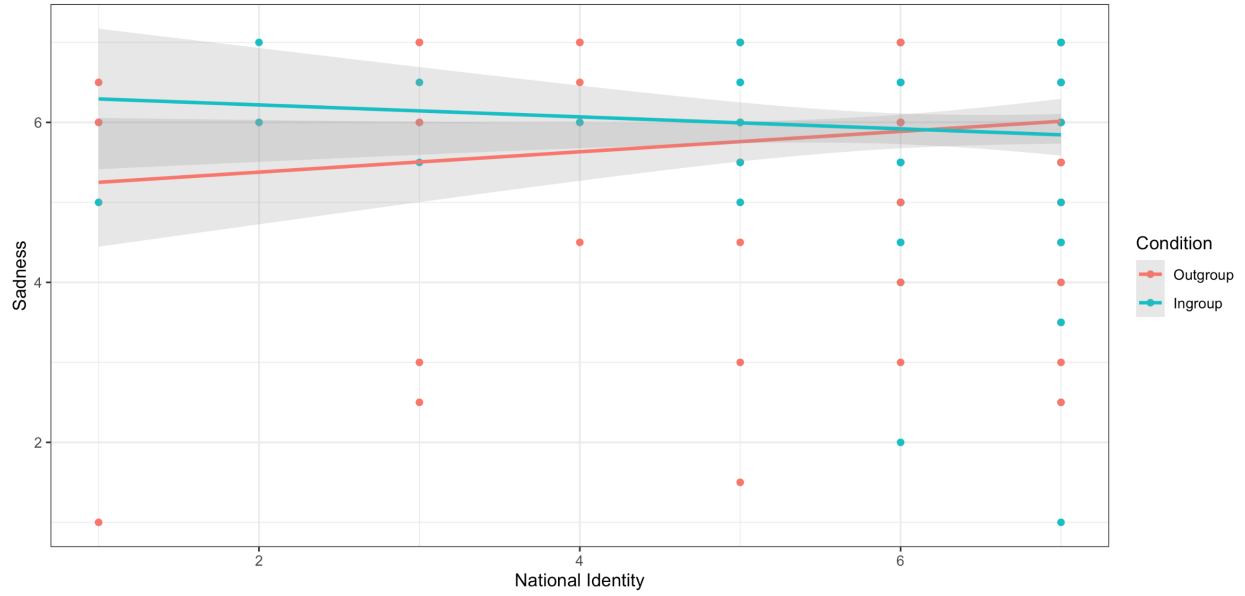


Figure 5. Effect of ingroup framing by national identity interaction on collective sadness

Appendix A – Study Materials

Experimental Passages

Intentional harm, ingroup. When we first settled North America, buffalo roamed the land in vast herds. But by the end of the 19th century, most of the buffalo west of the Mississippi River were gone, due to the force of American hunters. Unfortunately, our slaughter of the buffalo had a tragic effect on the Native Americans—Native American tribes depended on the buffalo’s meat and hides for survival. During the century following our invasion of the land, an estimated 20 million Native Americans, or 95% of the Native population, perished.

We Americans knew that hunting the buffalo would destroy the Native American population. In fact, that was our main purpose for hunting so enthusiastically; many Americans at the time wanted to wipe out the buffalo as a way to take away the livelihood, food supply, and well-being of Native Americans. With westward expansion of the frontier, we realized there would never be enough room for both us and Native Americans. Thus, the American Army enacted a policy of clearing the Plains of both Natives and buffalo. Organized groups of American hunters killed up to 250 buffalo a day; it was rumored that a single man could kill up to 1,000 in a single season. One member of the American Army is even said to have given orders to his troops to, “Kill every buffalo you can! Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone.”

Scholars of American history have long recognized the American Army’s complicity in the near extinction of the Native Americans. We considered the removal of the herds to be a triumph of civilization over savagery because the extermination of the buffalo removed the Native’s primary resource and emptied the Plains for Americans.

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The Americans did not know that hunting the buffalo would destroy the Native American population. Instead, our main purpose for hunting so enthusiastically was for the buffalo meat, a staple food of the frontier. Sadly, feeding ourselves ended up threatening the livelihood, food supply, and well-being of Native Americans. The American Army created a policy of hunting buffalo from the Plains for their meat. Organized groups of American hunters killed up to 250 buffalo a day; it was rumored that a single man could kill up to 1,000 in a single season. One member of the army is even said to have given orders to his troops to, "Kill every buffalo you can! Every buffalo dead is a mouth fed."

Scholars of American history have long recognized the American Army's accidental role in the near extinction of the Native Americans. There is no doubt that that our extermination of the buffalo resulted from demands of hunger and trade. However, an unfortunate consequence of the extermination of the buffalo was the loss of the Native's primary resource.

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Image



Note. The painting used as an assessment of attention was created by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe (1914).

Measures

Collective emotions

Collective guilt

1. I feel **guilty** about the harm [Europeans/Americans] did to Native Americans in the past.
2. Knowing that [Europeans/Americans] did bad things to Native Americans in the past makes me feel **guilty**.
3. I can easily feel **guilty** for the [Europeans/Americans] role in the suffering of Native Americans historically.
4. Thinking about the suffering of Native Americans in the past, as caused by [Europeans/Americans] makes me feel **guilty**.
5. I feel **guilt** for the violence that [Europeans/Americans] inflicted on Native Americans long ago.

Other collective emotions

6. The harm that [Europeans/Americans] did to Native Americans makes me feel **ashamed**.
7. It is easy for me to feel **angry** for [Europeans'/Americans'] historical mistreatment of Native Americans.
8. I feel **sad** thinking about the role that [Europeans/Americans] played in the suffering that Native Americans experienced.
9. The harm [Europeans/Americans] did to Native Americans in the past makes me feel **furious**.
10. I feel **embarrassed** about the damage that [Europeans/Americans] inflicted upon the Native Americans.

11. I think that the harm [Europeans/Americans] inflicted upon the Native Americans is **infuriating**.

12. The damage that [Europeans/Americans] did to Native Americans in the past makes me feel **unhappy**.

Perceived appropriateness

In which settings do you think it would be appropriate to teach the history included in the passage you just read?

1. In an elementary school (i.e., 1st to 5th grade) classroom.
2. In a middle school (i.e., 6th to 8th grade) classroom.
3. In a high school (i.e., 9th to 12th grade) classroom.
4. In a university or college classroom.
5. In a museum display.
6. During occasions that celebrate the United States.

Willingness for intergroup contact

1. If a close family member married a Native American, I would feel supportive.
2. If given the opportunity, I would like to have a Native American as a neighbor.
3. If given the opportunity, I would like to have a Native American as a friend.
4. If given the opportunity, I would like to have a Native American as a work colleague.
5. I would feel comfortable visiting a Native American in their home.
6. I would feel comfortable inviting a Native American into my home.
7. If given the opportunity, I would like to have a Native American as a boss or manager.
8. If given the opportunity, I would like to attend a social event sponsored by a Native American organization.

Explicit avoidance

1. I do not want to discuss the topic of the treatment of Native Americans anymore.
2. I would like to finally close the chapter on the past conflict with Native Americans long ago.
3. I prefer not to think about suffering experienced by Native Americans.
4. I try to avoid reminders of how Native Americans were treated in the past.
5. I would rather not fixate on the negative experiences of Native Americans in the past.

Trans-generational entity

1. To me, the label “Americans” includes all the generations of group members that ever have lived and ever will live.
2. When I think of Americans, I think of all the generations of group members of the past in addition to the current generation.
3. Americans are a cohesive group that includes both past and current generations.
4. Americans in every generation share a common base that unite each other across the generations.
5. I consider myself to be in the same group as both current and previous generations of Americans.

Extent of harm

1. The group’s behavior against Native Americans was harmful.
2. The group’s behavior against Native Americans was damaging.
3. The group’s behavior against Native Americans was destructive.

Manipulation check

1. They intentionally killed as many buffalo as possible in order to reduce the population of Native Americans.
2. They wanted to kill the buffalo to harm Native Americans.
3. The death of Native Americans due to the loss of so many buffalo was purposeful.