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Emotional reactions to the French colonization in Algeria: The normative nature of  
collective guilt

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### Abstract

Fifty years after the end of the Algerian war of independence, French colonization in Algeria (1830-1962) is still a very controversial topic when sporadically brought to the forefront of the public sphere. One way to better understand current intergroup relationships between French of French origins and French with Algerian origins is to investigate how the past influences the present. The present study explores French students' emotional reactions towards this historical period, their ideological underpinnings and their relationship with the willingness to compensate for past misdeeds as well as with prejudice. Results show that French students with French ascendants endorse a no-remorse norm when thinking about past colonization of Algeria and express very low levels of collective guilt and moral-outrage related emotions, especially those with a right-wing political orientation and a national identification in form of glorification of the country. These group-based emotions are significantly related to pro-social behavioral intentions (i.e. the willingness to compensate) and to prejudice towards the outgroup.

### Key Words

Collective emotions, emotional norm, French colonization, intergroup relations

*“An African proverb says it well: ‘To know where we go, we have to know where we come from’”*

Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch (2009, p.106)

Social psychology research on colonization has shown that the way the colonial past is collectively remembered and represented affects the current relationships between formerly colonized or immigrants from former colonies and the former colonizers (Volpato & Licata, 2010). Likewise, it has been shown that individuals’ emotional reactions in response to their nation’s past actions during the colonial time (and particularly the harmful, violent actions) influence their attitudes and behavior towards former colonized and their descendants (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Branscombe & Doosje, 2004).

A review of studies on present-day attitudes and feelings about colonialism revealed that with the exception of the French colonization, most of the European colonization in Africa and Asia has been investigated (for reviews see Volpato & Licata, 2010; Leach, Bou Zeineddine & Cehajic-Clancy, 2013) ; i.e., the Dutch colonialism in Indonesia (Doosje et al., 1998; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 2006; Figueredo, Doosje, Valentim, & Zebel, 2010), the Belgium colonialism in the Congo (Licata & Klein, 2010), the Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique and Angola (Figueredo et al., 2010; Cabecinhas & Feijo, 2010), the Italian colonialism in Ethiopia and Libya (Leone & Mastrovito, 2010; Mari et al., 2010) and the British colonialism in Kenya (Allpress, Barlow, Brown, & Louis, 2010; Morton & Postmes, 2010). The French colonial experience has so far been neglected in socio-psychological research and the present study aims at filling this gap and at studying more in detail the ideological factors linked to collective emotions. In particular, we are taking into account, along with political orientation and family implication, two other factors that are strongly dependent on the socio-political context and that have been neglected so far: the

normative nature of collective emotions and the type of national identification (i.e., glorification vs. attachment).

### **French Colonization in Algeria: Historical and Political Context**

French colonization in Algeria, from 1830 to 1962, has been one of the longest colonial periods of European colonization in Africa. It has also been a very specific one, being the only settlement colony organized as a French province (Stora, 2004a, 2004b). The French colonial period has been marked by numerous dramatic events, from the “enfumades” (i.e., smoke-filled caves to asphyxiate rebels) during its conquest to the massive use of torture during the independence war (1954-1962, a war that killed at least 400 000 Algerian and 30 000 French), and several massacres throughout the whole colonial time. During the colonial period, colonized people had been the target of workforce exploitation, massive land expropriations leading to the destruction of rural world (hence dramatically reducing the local political influence of the indigenous), and marginalization in town. It was not until after World War Two that the indigenous colonized inhabitants were finally granted French citizenship although they were still treated differently by being officially called French-Algerian Muslims.

Several historians trace back nowadays discrimination and racism against Maghrebians and black people to the inherited colonial racism (e.g., Bancel, Blanchard & Lemaire, 2005; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2009). According to House (2006) “Only by studying these policies [*conducted after the independence war by former colonial police and welfare officers*] can we understand the origins of the social and ethnic segregation in France's poor outer suburbs (*banlieues*) today.” Thus, to understand the enduring conflictual relationship between French natives and French of Algerian descent and Algerian immigrants, it is important to treat this intergroup relation as historically situated and to examine the extent to

which the historical past, by means of collective emotions, echoes in the present (see Licata, Klein, & Gély, 2007 for a discussion on collective memory). Social psychology research has neglected to take into account the historical roots of intergroup relations between French citizens of different origins (for an exception, see Haas & Vermande, 2010). The aim of the present study is to examine the collective emotions this historical period is triggering in French students and whether they are linked to pro-social action intentions and prejudice. We were also interested in the ideological antecedents of these emotions, and particularly in the role culture-specific emotion norms (i.e., a collective guilt norm) might play in inducing emotional reactions regarding the French colonization in Algeria.

### **Emotions for the Past, Reactions in the Present**

In the last decade, an impressive body of research has been studying collective emotions, and particularly collective guilt individuals may feel for the harm committed by members of their group to some other group. For instance, with regard to past colonization, Doosje et al. (1998) have shown that Dutch students were indeed feeling collective guilt regarding Dutch colonization in Indonesia (see also Zebel et al., 2007). Similar results have been found for (French-speaking) Belgians regarding colonization in Congo (Licata & Klein, 2010), for Italian (Mari et al., 2010) or Portuguese colonialism (Figueiredo, Valentim, & Doosje, 2011).

Collective guilt has been found to increase the willingness to compensate for past harmful actions (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998) and to reduce prejudice against the harmed group (e.g., Powell, Branscombe, & Schmitt, 2005). However, other collective emotions, such as shame (e.g., Brown, Zagefka, González, Manzi, & Čehajić, 2008) or anger towards the ingroup (e.g., Mari et al., 2010) have also been found to be aroused when being reminded of the ingroup's past actions. Moreover, when comparing collective emotions, guilt is not always

the emotion that is the most disposed to promote the willingness to repair for past misdeeds. Other-focused emotions such as moral outrage or sympathy are more likely to arise when confronted with past wrongdoings and are more likely to induce actions intended to redress inequalities than self-focused emotions such as collective guilt which is associated with actions aimed at compensating for the past (e.g., Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006). In the same vein, Mari et al. (2010) showed that collective shame predicted reparation intentions in form of economic compensation while anger predicted intentions to help immigrants from former Italian colonies. Collective guilt, however, did not predict any of these prosocial action strategies. This last result was explained by the absence of a public debate about colonization in Italy that may have prevented the “internalization of constructive collective guilt” (Mari et al., 2010). As in France public debate on colonization is also scarce, we hypothesize collective guilt and negative other-focused emotions such as moral outrage to be linked to greater compensation intentions and less prejudice albeit with different strength, with guilt being less predictive of these outcomes than other-focused emotions.

### **Ideological Factors Linked to Emotional Reactions**

The second aim of the present study was to examine some ideological factors that may promote, or in the contrary, immunize against the feeling or expression of these negative collective emotions. We investigated the role of group identification, of political orientation and of the normative nature of collective guilt. The existence of an emotion norm regarding the appropriateness for a nation to feel and express regret for its colonial past may indeed strongly influence individuals' feelings and behavior. To our knowledge, no study has explored the question of collective emotion norms.

### **National Identification: Glorification vs. Attachment**



Most research on group-based emotions considers a minimal identification with the ingroup necessary for a collective emotion to arise (Wohl, Branscombe & Klar, 2006). However, evidence for the association between ingroup identification and the experience of collective guilt is ambiguous. Some studies have shown that the more people identify with their group, the more they feel collective guilt for the ingroup's past wrongdoing (e.g., Doosje et al., 2006). Others have found that highly identified individuals reported less guilt, supposedly because they were more motivated to protect themselves against the threat to their group identity and to preserve a positive social identity (Doosje et al., 1998). One way of reconciling the conflicting results concerning the identification-emotion link is to consider identification not as an unitary construct but as a twofold concept (Roccas, Klar and Liviatan, 2006).

Roccas et al. (2006) suggested that collective guilt can increase or decrease depending on the type of identification. When individuals identify to the point that the national group is viewed as being superior to other groups, and its behaviors as being unquestionable and incontestable, identification takes the form of glorification of the national group. As high glorifiers are motivated to perceive their group as better and more worthy than other groups, they are more likely to protect their group against any threat to its positive image by minimizing or denying the responsibility for the ingroup's harmful action or by legitimizing it. The second form of identification, referred to as attachment, is characterized by a positive feeling of attachment and a critical loyalty to one's nation allowing for taking a critical stance towards the ingroup's past and current actions.

Consequently, the relationship between identification and collective guilt is supposed to be different depending on the meaning identification has for people (Roccas et al., 2006). Since defensive mechanisms are more likely among those who glorify the nation, greater

glorification should be associated with lower levels of collective guilt and outrage-related emotions. Those high in attachment identification are more likely to feel responsible for the ingroup's moral transgressions; higher levels of genuine attachment to one's national group should therefore increase both types of collective emotions. Few studies have taken into account this two modes of national identification (e.g., Bilali, 2013; Leidner, Castano, Zaiser & Giner-Sorolla, 2010), and only one has examined their link with collective emotions for ingroup wrongdoings (Sullivan, Landau, Branscombe, Rothschild & Cronin, 2013).

### **The Normative Underpinning of Collective Memory and Collective Guilt**

The second ideological factor of interest within this framework is related to the way a nation deals with its history. Work on collective memory has frequently shown that historical events are mobilized in order to cement a sense of positive collective belonging and of national identity, and in this sense have a strong ideological value (see for instance Pennebaker, Paez, & Rimé, 1997; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2009; Sibley & Liu, 2012). In agreement with these premises, France acknowledgement of responsibilities for the injustices and harm done during the colonization of Algeria and offering apologies still generates intense and passionate debates and controversies in contemporary France whenever this period is -sporadically- brought up (e.g., Bancel & Blanchard, 2008). For example, the difficulty to deal with the dark side of colonization became evident when, in 2005, the French right-wing government intended, finally unsuccessfully, to insert in the law a directive for recognizing, in history textbooks, the '*positive* role' of colonialism, especially in North-Africa (Loi du 23 février 2005, article 4). This attempt to idealize the colonial past, as well as the superficial handling of this period in school textbooks and teaching (Corbel & Falaize, 2004), and more generally the lack of public amend regarding this historical period exemplify the amnesia surrounding it.

Only very recently has the new left-wing French president (François Hollande, 2012) expressed recognition (albeit no more) of the bloody repression of a manifestation for Algeria's independency by French security forces in Paris on October, 17<sup>th</sup> 1961, stating that "*The Republic acknowledges with lucidity these facts*". This declaration has prompted virulent reactions from its opponents (e.g., see a compilation of reactions in Le Monde<sup>1</sup>, 2012).

As a result, France seems to oscillate between periods of relative silence and of occasional reminiscence in the time of salient events (i.e., film release, commemorations, law projects...) that gave rise to controversial debates and sometimes even to quite violent reactions (e.g., threats issued during the organization of a "Franco-Algerian history" colloquium; Abecassis & Meynier, 2008, p.17). Considering this context, whether French people feel collective emotions for what happened is an intriguing question.

In an attempt to explain the relatively high levels of collective guilt among Belgian students, Licata and Klein (2010) have discussed the "normative nature of collective guilt". They argued that the high levels of collective guilt related to a country's inglorious past may in part be due to the normative pressure to feel and to report feelings of remorse for what has been done. However, neither Licata and colleagues, nor other researchers tested this assumption. Some national contexts may indeed allow for and even encourage feelings and expressions of negative group-based emotions. Others, on the contrary, may consider feelings of guilt and shame as not necessary, as counterproductive and inappropriate. The political discourse held in July 2007 by the former French president Nicolas Sarkozy at the University of Dakar suggests that the French's current normative context is not conducive to emotions such as collective guilt or more generally negative group-based emotions. Indeed, Bancel and

Blanchard (2008, p. 149) note that in his discourse Nicolas Sarkozy explicitly rejected repentance:

‘No one can ask the current generations to atone for this crime committed by past generations [...]’. The message is clear: there was crime - but the culprit(s) is (are) not clearly specified - but the current generation cannot be held responsible for it, there cannot be any individual or collective ‘recognition’ (of the French State or Republic), there is no obligation for ‘repentance’. It is necessary to move beyond this past, to forget the oblivion and to walk towards the future.

Recently, Sibley (2010) argued that postcolonial nations’ political discourse that permeates society and shape public opinion is based, among others, on the ideology of historical recognition versus negation of the relevance of past injustices committed during the colonial period for the present. The former French president’s political discourse of Dakar, quoted above, can be taken as a good example of historical negation that discharges the current generation from the obligation to address the past injustices (see also Augoustinos & Lecouteur, 2004, on the political discourse in Australia about Aborigines).

In the present study we investigate whether French students endorse this official anti-repentance position. The original contribution of this study is to directly assess participants’ normative beliefs and their role in the expression of collective emotions. We hypothesize that in the context of French colonization in Algeria, a no-remorse norm would prevail preventing them from expressing negative group-based emotions, and particularly collective guilt. Furthermore, in the present study collective guilt was measured in two ways. Besides the classical collective guilt scale which contains a strong normative component we also used a list of more than twenty emotion words that allowed us to assess participants’ different emotional reactions regarding French colonization. Indeed, the classical scale may contribute

to artificially inflate the level of collective emotions reported, especially when it is nearly the only emotion under scrutiny that is available for participants to report. Measuring collective guilt among other group-based emotions may indeed diminish the normative pressure to report guilt.

### **Political Orientation**

A third ideological factor we were interested in was participants' political orientation which is closely intertwined with the normative context and emotion norms. As can be seen from the previous paragraph, there is a political disagreement in how to handle historical issues, right-wing proponents being more in line with an ideology of historical negation (Sibley, 2010) and with being more opposed to expressing regrets for what has been done (Bancel & Blanchard, 2008). Consequently, we considered political orientation as a potential factor related to emotional reactions towards this historical period. Those few studies that measured political orientation (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998; Licata & Klein, 2010) found mixed results. Some found no relationship between political ideology and collective guilt (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998), while others showed right-wing ideology to be associated with less guilt (e.g., Figueiredo et al., 2011; Klandermans, Werner & van Doorn, 2008; Sullivan et al., 2013) especially for older generations (Licata & Klein, 2010).

### **Family Implication**

Finally, we examined the role of family implication in the French colonial past for experiencing collective emotions such as guilt. According to Branscombe et al. (2002) for collective guilt to be felt, individuals must not only self-categorize as ingroup members (i.e., member of the former colonizer group), they also have to impute responsibility for past wrongdoing to the ingroup. However, individuals tend to distance themselves from events that occurred in the distant past. As the French colonial period is situated in the distant past (it

ended fifty years ago), current group members may feel less connected to it and thus feel less responsibility, and in turn experience less guilt or shame for the ingroup's past misdeeds. According to Zebel et al. (2007), family implication in the colonial past is a means through which the present (us) is bounded to the past (our ancestors). Knowing relatives or family members that were directly involved in the colonial past facilitates the feeling of psychological connectedness with and the feeling of responsibility for this past and consequently induces collective guilt.

In the present study, we therefore asked participants whether or not they were, through their family, involved in that historical period. On the one hand, family involvement seems to constitute a link to the past facilitating feeling of responsibility, self-relevance and guilt. On the other hand, family involvement may be a source of social identity threat making defense reactions more likely. According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) people are motivated to establish and maintain a positive social identity which they derive from belonging to a positive group (a nation, a family). When individuals' positive social identity is threatened by the ingroup's past wrongdoing, they tend to protect it by either distancing from the ingroup or denying the ingroup's responsibility or legitimizing the ingroup's harmful actions. To the extent that the identity of participants with family implication in the colonial past is threatened, they may be motivated to legitimize it-(for example by using exonerating cognitions, Licata & Klein, 2010; Roccas et al., 2006), leading them to express less negative group-based emotions such as moral outrage or collective guilt.

As the present study is the first to investigate French students' relationship with their nation's colonial past, we also included several other measures that could influence their emotional reactions, such as their knowledge, beliefs and representations of French colonization in Algeria.

## Method

### Participants

Undergraduates enrolled in the first-year introductory social psychology class were asked to complete a questionnaire during a mass-prescreening session, in autumn 2010. The present study includes only the data of those students who indicated being of French nationality with both parents possessing the French nationality, being under the age of 24, and who either reported that one of their relative was soldier during the Algerian War of Independence; N=92) or students with no family involvement (N=140).

### Procedure

Students completed the questionnaire entitled “Memories of historical events” during their first small group classes of social psychology in groups of 20-40. Demographic variables were addressed at the end of the questionnaire. The completion of the whole questionnaire took about 30 minutes.

### Measures

After a short free association task concerning the word “colonization” (with no mentioning of French colonization in Algeria), students were asked their perception of the French colonization of Algeria, a period which lasted for a little more than a century. Then, measures were taken in the order that follows. When not specified, participants indicated their agreement with each of the items on a 7-point Likert-type scales ranging from (1) do not agree at all to (7) completely agree.

**Self-reported emotions.** Participants’ current emotional reactions regarding French colonization in Algeria were measured using 26 adjectives. Twenty-four adjectives were adapted from Elliot and Devine (1994; translated in French by Gosling, Denizeau, & Oberlé, 2006), and completed with two adjectives (sad and outraged). Participants had to indicate to

what extend each emotional term corresponded to their current feelings with regard to French colonization of Algeria using a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (*does not correspond at all*) to 7 (*correspond very much*). Guilt was assessed among the other emotions.

**Collective guilt.** Collective guilt was measured using five more contextualized items adapted from previous research ( $\alpha = .90$ ). Four items were taken from Mari et al (2010; e.g., *“Even if I have done nothing bad, I feel guilty for the behavior of the French toward Algerians during the colonial period”*); A fifth guilt item was created for this study (*“I feel guilt when I think that so far the French government has so little acknowledged its responsibilities in the colonial period”*).

**Collective guilt norm.** The predominant collective guilt norm was assessed with one item created for this purpose: *“I think that generally French people should feel guilty for French’s actions during the colonial period”*.

**Perceived ingroup threat.** Two items assessed whether French colonization was felt as a threat to the ingroup’s reputation in the world (Mari et al., 2010),  $r(232) = .44, p < .001$ . Threat to values of the national group, threat to one’s own personal values and whether looking back into the past might be a threat for the national unity were measured with one item each.

**Reparation/compensation intentions.** Based on past research (e.g., Brown et al., 2008; Dufoix, 2005), willingness to compensate was assessed using 5 items ( $\alpha = .77$ ) including the presentation of public apologies, the support for financial compensation, for the organization of commemorations, for the diffusion of accurate and complete information concerning the colonial period, and the willingness to acknowledge that institutional discrimination during the colonial period is underlying today’s prejudice towards Algerian immigrants.



**Exonerating cognitions.** Eight items ( $\alpha = .71$ ) adapted from Licata and Klein (2010), assessed the extent to which participants minimize the harmful character of the past in group actions, for instance by morally distancing from the event (e.g., “*One cannot judge colonial actions by today’s values*”).

**Representations of French colonization.** Participants’ representations were measured with 11 items taken from Licata and Klein (2010) and adapted to the French colonization period in Algeria. Seven items assessed negative representations (e.g., exploitation of Algerian people, exploitation of Algerian’s natural resources, massacres, expropriations, forced labor, racial segregation, the abandonment of the Harkis (pro-French Muslims) at the time of independence ;  $\alpha = .79$ ). Four items assessed positive representations related to “civilization” inputs (i.e., building of educational and health facilities, development of economic infrastructure and of transportation facilities;  $\alpha = .70$ ).

**Knowledge transmission via school and media.** Students’ opinions regarding school and media knowledge transmission was measured with items adapted from Licata and Klein (2010). They were asked to indicate 1) whether or not they studied French colonization in school (Yes/No), 2) to what degree this teaching was detailed (from 1 “very superficial” to 7 “very detailed”), 3) whether the image of colonialism conveyed at school was (1) very positive to (7) very negative, 4) to what extent French colonization in Algeria is presented in the media (from 1 “not at all” to 7 “a lot”), 5) whether this media coverage is (1) very positive to (7) very negative, 6) to what extent they have the impression to be informed about colonization in Algeria from (1) not at all to (7) a lot, and 7) finally, whether they wished to be more informed about this period (Yes/No).

**National identification.** Participants’ identification with their national group was assessed with 16 items adapted from Roccas et al. (2006). Eight items measured national

glorification (e.g., “*France is better than other nations in all respects*”,  $\alpha = .80$ ). The other eight measured national attachment (e.g., “*Being French is an important part of my identity*”;  $\alpha = .87$ ).

**Racial Prejudice scale.** Participants’ level of prejudice against foreigners in France, and especially Mahgrebian /Arabs (people from North African countries - Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) was measured using a scale developed by Dambrun and Guimond (2001; 15 items,  $\alpha = .88$ ).

**Knowledge of the Algerian colonization period.** Ten multiple choice questions were created to test participants’ general knowledge of the colonial period (6 questions) as well as of the independence war that ended French colonization in Algeria (4 questions). The number of correct answers indicated their level of knowledge.

**Socio-demographic questions.** At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked to answer various demographic questions, among which sex, age, political orientation, nationality, their country of birth as well as the one of their parents, and family implication.

**Political orientation.** This was measured with one item (Gaffié, 2006) asking participants to place themselves on a 10-point scale, ranging from (1) Extreme left wing to (10) Extreme right wing.

**Family involvement.** Family involvement was assessed by asking participants whether a family member (parents, grandparents...) was personally concerned by the French colonization of Algeria and/or the Algerian War of Independence and to specify his/her exact role (e.g., as colonized Algerian, as French settlers in Algeria -commonly called “pied-noirs”-, or as French soldier during the war).

## Results

### Knowledge and beliefs regarding French colonization in Algeria

**Words spontaneously evoked when thinking about colonization.** Students barely evoke words referring to Algeria (i.e., Algeria, War of Algeria, Front de Libération Nationale -which was one of the main organization fighting for liberation of Algeria, and still the main political party nowadays in this country), and in the same proportion for students with no family implication (WFI, 19.6%) and with soldiers ascendants (SO, 19.47%). Moreover, very few students evoke France (6.4% of WFI group and 3.2% of the SO group).

**Knowledge about Algerian colonization.** Participants were not very successful in answering questions about Algerian colonization and decolonization ( $M=4.00$ ,  $SD=2.03$ ). A 2 (period assessed) x 2 (family implication) ANOVA revealed that participants, independently of their group membership, better achieved questions concerning the Algerian war of independence (53.98% of correct answers) than questions covering the whole colonization period (30.67%),  $F(1,230)=172.82$ ,  $p<.001$ . This result is consistent with the strong emphasis put on the Algerian war in high school history classes. The main effect for family implication and the interaction were not significant (both  $F_s < 1$ ).

**Representation of French colonization in Algeria.** An ANOVA 2 (positive vs. negative representations) x 2 (family implication) revealed that when asked to think about French colonization in Algeria participants mostly thought about the negative aspects of it ( $M=5.24$ ,  $SD=1.01$ ) before the “positive” ones ( $M=3.55$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ),  $F(1,225)=296.44$ ,  $p < .001$ . However, the significant interaction ( $F[1,225]=7.88$ ,  $p=.005$ ) revealed that this difference was less pronounced for SO students ( $M_{diff}=1.42$ ) than for WFI students ( $M_{diff}=1.88$ ), with SO students reporting more positive representations ( $M=3.79$ ) than WFI students ( $M=3.39$ ),  $F(1,225)=7.29$ ,  $p<.01$  (no difference was found for negative representations).

**Knowledge transmission via school and media.** Almost all participants reported having studied French colonization in school (95.3%, no difference between groups,  $\chi^2(1)=2.22, ns$ ). WFI students slightly more than SO students reported school learning having been moderately detailed ( $M_{WFI}=3.89, SD=1.52$  vs  $M_{SO}=4.26, SD=1.55$ ;  $t[227]=1.79, p=.07$ ). Overall, participants considered school as having transmitted a negative, albeit not extremely negative, image of French colonialism ( $M=4.89, SD=1.06$ ). Moreover, students from both groups reported media coverage about colonialism as being quite weak ( $M_{WFI}=2.88, M_{SO}=2.67, t[229]=-1.73, p=.08$ ) and rather negative, albeit not extremely negative ( $M=4.79, SD=1.27$ ). Finally, they did not have the impression to be very informed about colonization in Algeria ( $M=2.97, SD=1.31$ ), and a large majority of the participants expressed the wish to be more informed about this period, WFI students (79.3%) slightly more so than SO students (69.2%,  $\chi^2[1]=3.00, p=.08$ ).

**Exonerating cognitions and threat of the past.** SO students displayed more exonerating cognitions ( $M=3.44, SD=.91$ ) than WFI students ( $M=3.19, SD=.77$ ),  $t(230)=-2.17, p=.03$ . They also thought slightly more that looking back at the colonial past of France might threaten national unity ( $M_{SO}=4.43, SD=2.01$  vs  $M_{WFI}=3.89, SD=2.00$ ),  $t(230)=-2.01, p=.04$ . No other group differences were found. According to students of both groups, colonization of Algeria does not particularly threaten the image of France in the world ( $M=3.75, SD=1.56$ , significantly below neutral value 4:  $t[231]=-2.40, p=.01$ ). However, it seems to threaten national group values ( $M=5.53, SD=1.58, t[232]=14.75, p<.001$ ) as well as personal values ( $M=5.90, SD=1.40, t[231]=20.71, p<.001$ ).

### **Emotional reactions to colonization**

Emotions were aggregated according to the results of a PCA that revealed four factors with eigenvalues superior to 1 (accounting for 58.59% of the total variance;  $KMO = .90$ ,

$\chi^2[325]=2866, p < .001$ ). Only emotions clearly loading on one factor and with a loading criteria superior to .6 were considered in the grouping. The four factors emerging were outrage-related emotions (disappointed, critical, angry, outraged, and disgusted; accounted for 35.14% of the total variance), discomfort-related emotions (embarrassed, uncomfortable, uneasy, bothered; accounted for 12.69% of the total variance), anxiety-related emotions (anxious, frustrated, tense, worried; accounted for 5.69% of the total variance) and positive emotions (e.g., friendly, happy, content, optimistic, good; accounted for an additional 5.07% of the total variance). The first and the second factor are similar to the negself and discomfort indexes, respectively, found by Elliot and Devine (1994).

Guilt did not load clearly on any of the three negative components (loadings falling between .28 and .36) and was therefore treated separately. Based on the PCA results, we computed an outrage-related emotion score ( $\alpha = .87$ ). As can be seen in Table 1, overall participants reported quite low levels of emotions when asked to think about Algerian colonization. In fact, all emotion scores were rated significantly below the midpoint (4) of the scale. The strongest/most expressed emotions and the only for which the two groups differed were outrage-related emotions. SO students reported less collective outrage-related emotions ( $M=3.39, SD = 1.47$ ) than WFI students ( $M=3.80, SD = 1.49$ ),  $t(230)=2.04, p=.04$ . Guilt on the other hand was rated very low ( $M=2.00, SD = 1.35$ ) by both groups (i.e., no between-group difference).

**Collective guilt scale.** When considering the collective guilt scale (see Table 1), the level of self-reported feeling guilty was again very low ( $M_{WFI}=3.08, M_{SO}=3.12; t[230] = .16, ns$ ). Comparing self-reported guilt measured with this contextualized scale to self-reported guilt measured within the list of emotions, an ANOVA 2 (type of measure) x 2 (family implication) with type of measure as a within-subject factor, revealed greater levels of self-

reported guilt with the guilt scale than the single guilt item measure,  $F(1,230)=137.71$ ,  $p<.001$ . Neither group differences ( $F[1,230]=.28$ , *ns*) nor interaction ( $F[1,230]=1.65$ , *ns*) reached significance. Finally, both measures were moderately correlated ( $r[232]=.51$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

### **Ideological factors**

**National identification and political orientation.** Groups did not differ in terms of their political orientation ( $M_{SO}=4.97$  and  $M_{WFI}=4.71$ ),  $t(230)=-1.17$ , *ns*. An ANOVA 2 (identification type) x 2 (family implication), with identification type as a within-subject variable, revealed no interaction but two main effects. Overall, SO students were slightly more identified with the national group ( $M=3.91$ ) than WFI students ( $M=3.66$ ),  $F(1,230)=3.50$ ,  $p=.06$ , and participants reported higher national attachment ( $M=4.32$ ) than glorification ( $M=3.25$ ) regarding France,  $F(1,230)=293.23$ ,  $p<.001$ .

**Collective guilt norm.** Overall, participants did not think their compatriots should feel guilty, indicating the endorsement of a no-remorse norm ( $M=2.77$ ,  $ET=1.67$ ; compared with 4, the middle value of the scale:  $t(231)=-11.21$ ,  $p<.001$ ). There were no significant differences between groups for any of these variables (both  $t_s < 1$ ). It should be noted that the collective guilt norm is more strongly related to collective guilt when measured with the guilt scale ( $r[232]=.53$ ,  $p<.001$ ) than when embedded in the list of emotions ( $r[232]=.27$ ,  $p<.001$ ),  $z=4.53$ ,  $p<.001$ .

### **Associations between emotions regarding French colonization in Algeria, ideological factors, prejudice and compensation.**

Pearsons' correlations were similar in both groups so they will be considered at the level of the entire sample (see Table 2). Higher levels of collective guilt were significantly related to more knowledge about colonization ( $r[232]=.15$ ,  $p=.02$ ), to more negative

representations of colonization ( $r[232]=.35, p<.001$ ), to less exonerating cognitions ( $r[232]=-.25, p<.001$ ), to more willingness to compensate ( $r[232]=.45, p<.001$ ), to less prejudice ( $r[232]=-.35, p<.001$ ), to a less right-wing political orientation ( $r[232]=-.23, p<.001$ ) and to marginally less glorification ( $r[232]=-.12, p=.07$ ). Higher levels of outrage-related emotions were significantly related to more negative representations ( $r[232]=.50, p<.001$ ), to less exonerating cognitions ( $r[232]=-.33, p<.001$ ), to more willingness to compensate ( $r[232]=.54, p<.001$ ), to more prejudice ( $r[232]=-.47, p<.001$ ), to less attachment ( $r[232]=-.15, p=.02$ ) as well as less glorification of the group ( $r[232]=-.33, p<.001$ ), and to less right-wing political orientation ( $r[232]=-.44, p<.001$ ). Note that although the emotion norm item focused on a single emotion (i.e., collective guilt), the no-remorse norm was also associated with less moral outrage-related emotions ( $r[232]=.36, p<.001$ ).

We computed partial correlations in order to assess the unique associations of ideological indicators with both collective emotions. As correlations did not differ between groups, we report the partial correlations based on the entire sample (see Table 3). Results revealed that when controlling for all other ideological factors, the collective guilt norm was still significantly related to collective guilt ( $r[227]=.51, p<.001$ ) and to outrage-related emotions ( $r[227]=.336, p<.001$ ). Furthermore, national attachment was marginally related to collective guilt ( $r[227]=.12, p=.07$ ) but not to outrage-related emotions ( $r[227]=.07, p=.25$ ). On the contrary, national glorification was linked to outrage-related emotions ( $r[227]=-.14, p=.03$ ) but not to collective guilt ( $r[227]=.03, p=.34$ ). Political orientation was found to be significantly associated with both collective guilt ( $r[227]=-.16, p=.01$ ) and outrage-related emotions ( $r[227]=-.30, p<.001$ ).

Finally, we conducted two regression analyses using the two sets of negative emotions we hypothesized to affect attitudes towards reparation and prejudice. Since our correlational

data and past research have shown links between political orientation and prejudice (e.g., Luguri, Napier & Dovidio, 2012) as well as between glorification of the country and prejudice (e.g., Falomir-Pichastor & Frederic, 2013), we included national attachment and glorification, political orientation as well as the collective guilt norm in the analyses. We primarily ran regression analyses including the family implication variable and all interactions with the other predictors (centering the predictors on the mean in the first place). There were neither significant association with family implication nor significant interactions except for a family implication by collective guilt norm interaction on prejudice ( $\beta = .12$ ,  $t[218]=2.13$ ,  $p=.034$ ). This interaction revealed that while the more students with family implication endorsed a no-remorse norm the more they expressed prejudiced attitudes, no such link was found for students with no family implication. As including these interactions did not change the results, we report results of the regression for the entire sample (see Table 4).

First, concerning reparation intentions, the model accounted for 38% of the variance,  $F(6,225)=25.07$ ,  $p<.001$ . As can be seen in Table 3, all variables were significant predictors of compensation will. Secondly, and even more important for our hypotheses, when controlling for these variables, collective guilt ( $\beta=.13$ ,  $t[225]=1.95$ ,  $p=.03$ ) as well as outrage-related emotions ( $\beta = .29$ ,  $t[225]=4.43$ ,  $p<.001$ ) were both significant predictors of the desire to compensate for past wrongdoing.

Finally, our set of predictor variables accounted for 50% of the variance in prejudice ( $F[6,225]=40.39$ ,  $p<.001$ ). National glorification and political orientation were the only two ideological indicators that were significantly related to prejudice. In other words, the more participants glorify the nation and are right-wing oriented, the more prejudiced they are. Furthermore, both collective guilt ( $\beta = -.17$ ,  $t[225]=-2.87$ ,  $p=.005$ ) and outrage-related emotions ( $\beta = -.13$ ,  $t[225]=-2.19$ ,  $p=.03$ ) were found to be significant predictors of prejudice.



### **Discussion**

The present study was designed to investigate how the French's colonial past affects its current relationships with an historical outgroup by taking into account the emotional reactions to the French colonization of Algeria. We hypothesized collective guilt and outrage-related emotions to be linked to the willingness to compensate for past wrongdoing as well as to less prejudiced attitudes towards French of Maghrebian origins. Considering the particularity of the French context relative to these questions, we expected various ideological variables to be related to participants' emotional reactions. In particular we expected French students to endorse a no-remorse norm that prevent them from feeling strong levels of collective guilt for what happened in the past. What can be learned from French students' emotional reactions towards past colonization of Algeria?

### **Family implication**

First of all, family implication with regard to the past does not seem to play a significant role in the present-day context. In fact, we almost never found significant differences between students with soldiers' ascendants and those without family involvement, neither in terms of emotions (except for moral outrage), nor in terms of their relation with ideological variables or attitudes towards the Maghrebian outgroup. Spontaneous evocations, knowledge about and perceptions of knowledge transmission of French colonization in Algeria were also similar in both groups. Groups mainly differed in terms of national identification, representations of colonization and exonerating cognitions: SO students being more identified with the national group, and more prone to rely on positive aspects of colonization and on cognitions lessening collective responsibility. Future research should do well in comparing other sub-samples of participants. For instance, descendants of repatriated

“pied-noirs” deserve greater attention since they might be especially prone to exonerating cognitions and sensitive to the normative context.

### **Expression of collective emotions, prejudice and willingness to compensate**

When taking the entire sample, French students reported reasonably low levels of collective emotions regarding this historical period. Moreover, when students were granted the opportunity to express various emotions, guilt was one of the less intense negative emotion to be reported. Even when guilt was assessed using the collective guilt scale, its level was again quite low. Furthermore, and consistent with past research, the two group-based emotions of interest predicted the willingness to compensate and prejudice towards the outgroup in both samples. The finding that collective outrage-related emotions were stronger related to compensation intentions than collective guilt is also consistent with past research (e.g., Leach et al., 2006). However, contrary to our expectations, the strength of the emotion-prejudice link was similar for collective guilt and outrage-related emotions.

One interesting, and quite unexpected, result is the weak correlation between the level of knowledge about the Algerian colonization and collective guilt on the one hand, and outrage-related emotions on the other hand (the latter did not reach statistical significance). Considering participants’ low scores on the quiz, their poor knowledge of this historical period might prevent them from reacting emotionally to it, which in turn would explain their relatively low levels of reported emotions. This leaves also more room for the normative context to influence participants’ emotional reactions to historical events.

### **Normative context**

Consistent with our main hypothesis we found that a strong no-remorse norm prevails in the French context which contributes to explain the relatively low levels of collective emotions expressed regarding this specific historical period. Thus, contrary to what Licata and

Klein (2010) have suggested in the Belgium context, and contrary to what some writers refer to as the tyranny of guilt (e.g., Bruckner, 2010), the French context does not seem to promote a “culture of guilt” regarding its colonial history. In fact, when asked whether French citizens should feel guilty for past colonialism, French students thought they should not. This no-remorse norm had strong effects on self-reported collective emotions, whether it be collective guilt or outrage-related emotions; it did not only prevent the expression of guilt but more generally the expression of any kind of emotional reactions to past inequalities and violence. The finding that collective guilt is higher when measured with the collective guilt scale than when embedded in a list of various emotions, and the fact that the correlation with the norm is stronger for the latter than for the former, suggest that self-reports of collective emotions are very sensitive to the normative context. This raises the question of the extent to which collective emotions are really experienced and felt or simply expressed or suppressed depending on the prevailing emotion norms.

The issue of the normative nature of collective emotions certainly deserves greater attention in future research. We are currently investigating whether and how different normative contexts promote or discourage the expression of collective emotions regarding various historical events. More generally, the literature on the influence of group norms (e.g., Schultz, Tabanico, Rendon, 2008) is of particular relevance for examining descriptive emotion norms (i.e., the prevalence of a specific collective emotion among people in the country) and injunctive emotion norms (i.e., the emotions considered as appropriate) with regard to specific historical events and out-groups, and their relation to emotions, attitudes (e.g., prejudice) and behaviors (e.g., discrimination). Cultural differences concerning emotion norms for expressing emotions might also be of importance (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994). For example, guilt, contrary to pride, has been found to be less desirable in individualistic than in

collectivist cultures (e.g., Eid & Diener, 2001). Culture may not only affect the display of individual emotions but also the motivation to display certain collective emotions more than others.

### **Ideological treatment of the past**

More generally, our results suggest that participants' collective emotions were strongly influenced by the French ideological climate. Indeed, apart from the no-remorse norm, political orientation was also quite reasonably related to emotional reactions, reflecting the intense political debate surrounding these questions in the French public space (see Bancel et al., 2008). This finding departs from those of other studies (e.g., Licata & Klein, 2010; Doosje et al., 1998) who found no association between political orientation and collective guilt. Interestingly and somewhat unexpected too was the finding that national identification was only modestly and inconsistently linked to collective emotions. Nevertheless, the distinction between two types of national identification (attachment and glorification; Roccas et al., 2006) still appears to be relevant, even in the French context where patriotism is not a particularly popular value, especially among students. Indeed, the two dimensions of national identification were found to be differently related to our measures of collective emotions and attitudes towards the outgroup (e.g., attachment was positively and glorification negatively associated with compensation intentions). However, as the question of French colonization in Algeria is an eminently political one, ideological issues such as the inclination to legitimate existing social systems should be explored in more depth, in addition to group identity protection motivation (Starzyk, Blatz, & Ross, 2009). The ideological treatment of the past might also be rooted in the specific propaganda the French Third Republic has used to legitimize its colonization agenda (e.g., as compared to the English colonialist ideology). The displayed ambition of France was to civilize the indigenous with love, to generously, "*guide*

*'people in the dark' rather than subjugate them*" (Vergès<sup>1</sup>, 2003, p.196), an idea embraced in the expression of "a mission to civilize". The way this ideology concerning the past has spread into French today's ideologies and attitudes is an interesting question that deserves future investigation (for a similar inquiry regarding the influence of Portuguese colonial ideology, see Vala, Lopes & Lima, 2008).

To conclude, Igartua and Paez (1997) reported a study in which students, after watching a dramatic film on Spanish Civil War, expressed negative self-focused emotions such as sadness, guilt and shame, emotions which were in turn linked with consideration of how the past conflict has determined present-day politics, and with the necessity of remembering. These findings point to the importance of linking the socio-psychological analysis of present-day relationships between French with French ascendants and French with Algerian ascendants with an analysis of its historical roots (e.g., Abécassis & Meynier, 2006; Bancel et al., 2005). There is no doubt that inquiring how the past is perceived and felt is useful to better understand how it echoes in people's present psychological functioning.

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Table 1 – Reliabilities, means, standard deviations and t-tests to middle-scale value for each emotional sets, the guilt item (embedded in the list of emotions) and collective guilt scale.

	$\alpha$	$M$	$SD$	T-test to value 4 (df = 231)
Outrage-related emotions	.87	3.64	1.49	-3.68***
Dissonance-related emotions	.87	3.22	1.49	-25.02***
Anxiety-related emotions	.75	2.18	1.10	-7.91***
Positive emotions	.79	1.88	.91	-35.11***
Guilt item		2.00	1.35	-22.33***
Collective Guilt (separate scale)	.90	3.10	1.52	-8.99***

Table 2 – Means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations between variables of the study

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Quiz score (knowledge)	4.00	2.03											
2. Positive representations	3.55	1.12	.09										
3. Negative representations	5.25	1.01	.05	.10									
4. Exonerating cognitions	3.29	.83	.03	.28***	-.35***								
5. Collective Guilt	3.10	1.52	.15*	.06	.32***	-.25***							
6. Outrage-related emotions	3.64	1.50	.10	-.02	.52***	-.33***	.53***						
7. Compensation	4.82	1.16	.04	-.03	.48***	-.37***	.45***	.54***					
8. Prejudice	3.49	1.03	-.17**	.06	-.33***	.35***	-.35***	-.47***	-.55***				
9. Collective Guilt Norm	2.77	1.67	.05	.01	.31***	-.15*	.53***	.36***	.38***	-.17**			
10. Attachment	4.30	1.19	.03	.21**	-.12 <sup>a</sup>	.22**	.03	-.15*	-.06	.31***	.01		
11. Glorification	3.22	.97	-.02	.22***	-.24***	.30***	-.12 <sup>a</sup>	-.33***	-.29***	.51***	-.06	.64***	
12. Political orientation	4.81	1.64	-.10	.14*	-.28***	.29***	-.23***	-.44***	-.41***	.66***	-.14*	.36***	.56***

<sup>a</sup> $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 3 - Partial correlations of collective guilt and outrage-related emotions with ideological indicators.

	Collective Guilt	Outrage-Related Emotions
Collective Guilt Norm	.51***	.33***
National Attachment	.12 <sup>a</sup>	.07
National Glorification	.06	-.14*
Political Orientation	-.16*	-.30***

<sup>a</sup> $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 4 – Standardized regression coefficients in multiple regressions with compensation and prejudice as criteria, and including ideological indicators, collective guilt and outrage-related emotions as predictors

	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
	Willingness to Compensate		Prejudice	
Collective Guilt Norm	.17	2.78**	.04	.84
National attachment	.13	1.99*	.02	.31
National glorification	-.14	-1.83 <sup>a</sup>	.18	2.58**
Political Orientation	-.19	-2.99**	.46	7.80***
Collective Guilt	.13	1.95*	-.17	-2.87**
Outrage-related emotions	.29	4.43***	-.13	-2.19*
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> (%)	38		50	

<sup>a</sup> $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$