The Role of Moral Emotions in Predicting Support for Political Actions in Post-War Iraq

Sabrina J. Pagano
University of California, Los Angeles

Yuen J. Huo
University of California, Los Angeles

A web-based study of 393 undergraduates at a public university in the United States was conducted to examine the relationship between moral emotions (i.e., emotions that motivate prosocial tendencies) and support for political actions to assist Iraqi citizens after the Second Gulf War (2003–2004). Previous work on emotions and prosocial tendencies has focused on empathy. In the context of post-war Iraq, we found that while empathy predicted support for a number of different political actions that have the potential to advance the welfare of the Iraqi people (humanitarian action in particular), guilt over the U.S. invasion was an important predictor of support for reparative actions (i.e., restoring damage created by the U.S. military), and moral outrage toward Saddam Hussein and his regime was the best predictor of support for political actions to prevent future harm to the Iraqi people and to punish the perpetrators. Our findings demonstrate the utility of an emotion-specific framework for understanding why and what type of political actions individuals will support. And in contrast to the traditional view that emotions are an impediment to rationality, our findings suggest that they can serve as a potentially powerful vehicle for motivating political engagement among the citizenry.

KEY WORDS: moral emotions, political attitudes, Iraq, justice, war

> "On life's vast ocean diversely we sail, Reason the card, but Passion the gale."
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> Pope, *Moral Essays,*

Western political philosophy and the social sciences in general are heavily influenced by the rational choice view of human behavior. That is—political actors

and the general citizenry are expected to behave according to their self-interest and other principles of rationality (Sears, 1991). Within this tradition, emotions have been viewed as a hindrance to political engagement, and more generally, to democratic rule and the establishment of a just regime (see Marcus, 2003, for a discussion). However, recent research suggests that emotional responses can have powerful effects on political attitudes and behaviors (see Glaser & Salovey, 1998, for a review), prompting a systematic exploration of these relationships. For example, affective responses have been linked to evaluations of political candidates (Huddy & Gunnthorsdottir, 2000), ratings of Presidential performance (Conover & Feldman, 1986), support for policy change (Sears & Citrin, 1982), and citizen involvement (Marcus, Neuman, & Mackuen, 2000).

In this paper, we add to and extend the existing work on politics and emotions by focusing on *moral emotions*, which are defined as emotional responses motivating support for actions that benefit the interest and welfare of other individuals or of society as a whole (Haidt, 2003). Our goal is to examine the extent to which moral emotions affect individuals' willingness to assist others in a real political situation and to ask whether and how emotions can play a role in creating a more just society. Rather than viewing emotions dimensionally (e.g., along a positive-negative dimension), we consider the discrete emotions of empathy, guilt, and moral outrage. We in turn examine the distinct role they play in motivating support for specific political actions on behalf of a political entity (the Iraqi people).

Research linking emotions to prosocial tendencies has focused largely on the empathic feeling of warmth and concern for others (see Batson, 1991, for a discussion). In recent years, conceptual frameworks have been proposed that consider the influence of a broader range of discrete emotions on prosocial actions (Haidt, 2003; Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002). An important advantage of this broad-based approach is that it considers the specific emotional bases of distinct types of actions aimed at helping others. In the current research, we examine the utility of such a framework to help us understand how emotions influence support for a number of actions intended to alleviate the suffering of Iraqi citizens in the aftermath of the Second Gulf War (the Iraq War).

A year after the United States-led war on Iraq officially ended in 2003, efforts at reconstruction have met only modest success (Smith & Shah, 2004). In the aftermath of a military invasion and continued occupation, an immediate concern is whether there is adequate humanitarian assistance in the form of provisions for food, water, shelter, and medical care. However, beyond such immediate concerns, the long-term success of reconstruction efforts in Iraq depends on issues such as whether a sustainable infrastructure and important political reforms can be established. Our goal is to examine how emotional responses to the plight of the Iraqi people can motivate Americans' support of recovery efforts. Indeed, emotional responses may be a primary motive underlying action taken to benefit the welfare of others, a view finding support in both psychology (Batson, 1998; Haidt, 2003) and political science (Marcus, 2000).

Although previous work on emotions and prosocial tendencies has been dominated by the emotion of empathy for victims' suffering and the subsequent desire to offer them immediate relief, we suggest that harm inflicted upon others in violation of normative principles (i.e., moral transgressions) can induce distinct emotions, such as guilt and moral outrage, that would lead to support for other forms of actions that also benefit the victims (see also Mikula, Scherer, & Athenstaedt, 1998). In other words, we suggest that support for various forms of action tendencies is emotion specific. That is—some emotions are better at motivating certain actions than others. This premise suggests that in order to maximize support for the full range of actions that can be taken to ensure the success of reconstruction in Iraq, we need to systematically examine the relationship between emotions and their correspondent action tendencies. To evaluate the claim that support for different actions taken to benefit others is emotion specific, we examine the moral emotions of empathy, guilt, and moral outrage and their relationship to four distinct types of action tendencies: (1) provision of immediate relief (humanitarian action); (2) compensation for and/or repairing the damages caused by the U.S.-led invasion (reparative action); (3) reforming the political system in the hopes of reducing risk of future tyranny (preventative action); and (4) bringing to justice those who caused prior harm to the Iraqi people (retributive action).

Empathy, guilt, moral outrage, and other related moral emotions are argued to have distinct psychological bases and action tendencies (Haidt, 2003; Mikula, Scherer, & Athenstaedt, 1998). In order to examine the distinctions among these emotions, they should be considered together within the same situational context. To date, there have been only a limited number of studies in which empathy has been considered in conjunction either with guilt (Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003) or with anger (de Rivera, Gerstmann, & Maisels, 2002; Gault & Sabini, 2000) or both (Montada & Schneider, 1989). The situation in Iraq is uniquely suited to a systematic examination of these three emotions and their associated action tendencies. When Americans consider the situation in Iraq and their role as citizens of an invading nation, they can feel empathy for the suffering of the Iraqi people, guilt for the role the United States played in creating the post-war situation, and moral outrage when considering the role that Saddam Hussein played in victimizing individuals during his regime. Below, we elaborate on each emotion and their psychological bases and associated action tendencies.

Empathy and Humanitarian Actions

Empathy has been conceived of as the ability to experience an emotional response congruent with the perceived welfare of another person (Batson, 1991). Considered in the context of another's suffering, empathy is characterized by feelings of sympathy, compassion, and tenderness for the person in need (Batson, 1991). Empathy has been linked to a wide range of efforts to assist those in need

(see Batson, 1998, for a review). However, there are some hints that the strength of its influence may vary depending on the type of action tendency (see Batson, 1998; Blader & Tyler, 2002, for discussions). In particular, because empathy, elicited on behalf of another person, promotes a desire to comfort and help the victims, it should be especially influential in motivating actions that immediately and effectively relieve the suffering of victims, such as various forms of humanitarian assistance in times of war. In contrast, empathy's influence may be less powerful in motivating actions such as implementing reforms to prevent future harm or bringing to justice those who caused the harm in the first place. Montada and Schneider (1989), for example, found that empathy did not predict willingness to engage in political action to help change the situation of victims of injustice. This pattern of finding was replicated more recently in an experiment that found that empathy did not predict willingness to engage in active political action such as writing a letter to political representatives (de Rivera, Gerstmann, & Maisels, 2002). What these studies suggest is that there may be upper limits to empathy's influence in motivating certain types of action tendencies. Although there is clear evidence that empathy should prompt a desire to offer aid to relieve the immediate suffering of the victims, it is less clear the extent to which it would be effective in motivating other forms of responses that focus not on the victims and their suffering, but on the external forces that may have contributed to their plight (i.e., a perpetrator of harm).

Guilt and Reparative Actions

In contrast to empathy's focus on the suffering of others, the self-focused emotion of guilt is characterized as the inward-directed dysphoria elicited by the belief that one has caused harm, loss, or distress to another (Hoffman, 1982). Like empathy, guilt has been linked with willingness to take action bringing immediate benefit to those who are suffering. This action can come in various forms, such as spending money on behalf of the victims (Montada & Schneider, 1989). However, guilt is rooted not only in acknowledging the suffering of others, but also in the role that one plays in causing that suffering, whether directly or vicariously through the actions of those one associates with (see Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998, for a discussion of guilt by association). Guilt therefore should motivate the desire to engage in action that *specifically* involves compensation for damages incurred or making reparation for transgressions. For example, when Dutch students were reminded of their nation's unfavorable past colonial behavior, they experienced group-based guilt and were more willing to support national compensation for the colonized country (Doosje et al., 1998). Similarly, other experiments demonstrated that when group-based guilt is elicited, white Americans were more willing to support affirmative action programs aimed at compensating African Americans (Iyer et al., 2003; Swim & Miller, 1999). Together, these findings demonstrate that guilt, although a negative emotional state, can motivate

prosocial action, or at least actions that allow for compensation, thereby relieving emotional discomfort over one's transgression or the transgression of a group with which one is associated.

Moral Outrage and Preventative/Retributive Actions

Like guilt, moral outrage focuses not on the victims, but on those who brought harm upon them. In contrast to guilt, however, moral outrage is based on assigning blame for the victims' suffering not to oneself or one's ingroup, but to an external perpetrator. This third party is someone or some agency responsible for the harm, such as a greedy CEO who takes advantage of his or her employees or a tyrant who perpetrates political abuse upon his people. As a form of anger, moral outrage differs from related constructs, such as self-reproachful anger, which is predicated on personal responsibility for injustice. While moral outrage should predict support for preventative or punitive actions directed at a third party, self-reproachful anger may instead prompt support for actions directed toward oneself or a group to which one belongs.

Moral outrage has also been conceptualized as an emotional response to unjustified insult either to oneself or on behalf of others (Haidt, 2003; Vidmar, 2000). The moral affront can be to an individual or to his/her friends or family. The violation can also be an affront to shared community values (Miller, 2001). For example, symbolic gestures such as the Ku Klux Klan's practice of cross burning may generate moral outrage because the act repudiates community support for tolerance. In this way, moral outrage may propel actions aimed at punishing the perpetrator in an effort to right a wrong and to uphold social norms. In addition to retributive action, moral outrage may also be associated with actions aimed at enacting reforms to prevent repeated offenses. For example, moral outrage has been linked to willingness to engage in political action on behalf of the disadvantaged (Montada & Schneider, 1989). Support for preventative action such as political reform can serve multiple purposes. It is a means by which to protect victims from future harm, and in addition, it reinforces the moral values of the community.

We note that when a perpetrator caused harm in violation of moral codes of conduct, direct compensation to the victim is usually considered insufficient to restore injustice and may require additional punishment in order to reestablish shared values and moral codes (Montada & Schneider, 1989; Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997). The focus of moral outrage on the third-party perpetrator of injustice suggests that it should be unrelated to attitudes aimed at helping the victims of injustice through either humanitarian aid or reparative action, given their lack of focus on righting moral wrongs perpetrated by the third party. These actions instead place emphasis on direct assistance to the victims of injustice or righting the moral wrongs committed by the group with which one identifies. Hence, for those experiencing moral outrage, direct assistance to the victims or

group-based reparative action may be unsatisfactory because they do not directly address the third-party source of the injustice—i.e., the third-party perpetrator.

Empathy, Guilt, and Moral Outrage and Their Elicitors

Our primary goal is to examine the hypothesized relationships between moral emotions (empathy, guilt, and moral outrage) and a number of distinct action tendencies (humanitarian, reparative, preventative, and retributive). However, we also are interested in clarifying conceptual distinctions among the emotions. In particular, we suggest that in contrast to empathy, which is an emotional reaction to the suffering of others, guilt and anger are responses to moral transgressions. Thus, feelings of guilt and moral outrage (or anger more generally) should be predicated upon individuals identifying the person(s) who have brought harm to another (i.e., the assignment of blame for the plight of the victims; see Weiner, 1986). In addition, there is some research suggesting that empathy operates independently of attributional processes. For example, when empathy is experimentally induced, it can continue to propel prosocial action even after revealing victim responsibility (Batson et al., 1997). Furthermore, there is evidence that the human capacity to react emotionally to the suffering of others and to make attempts at helping emerges within the first one to two years of life (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, & King, 1979). This developmental sequence further indicates that the experience of empathy may operate independently of attributions, a skill which likely emerges much later in life. Thus, while the relationship between feelings of empathy and prosocial action operates independently of attributional processes, guilt and moral outrage are linked to specific patterns of blame assignment. Specifically, guilt arises out of perceptions that one has caused undue harm to others. Moral outrage, in contrast, arises out of the perception that a third-party perpetrator has brought harm upon the victims.

As a general point of clarification, we note that our conception of empathy, guilt, and moral outrage is focus specific. That is—when exposed to the same stimulus situation, distinct emotional responses can be elicited depending on whether one focuses on the victim, one's ingroup, or a third-party perpetrator. These emotions, in turn, elicit different attitudinal and behavioral tendencies. Focusing on the suffering of the victims should elicit empathy. In contrast, focusing on the role of oneself or one's ingroup in contributing to the victim's plight should elicit guilt. And finally, focusing on the role of a third-party perpetrator should elicit moral outrage. Thus, our conception of emotions is that they are elicited by considering a specific piece of information relevant to the situation. As Marcus et al. (2000) note, these so-called political emotions may change as a function of changes in stimuli. This approach is consistent with the cognition-affect sequence advocated by Weiner's attribution model (Weiner, 1986).

Ideology and Felt Moral Emotions

The literature on moral emotions is based primarily in the field of social psychology. Although social psychologists have examined the relationship between moral emotions within the political context (e.g., affirmative action, restitution), what has been neglected is the role of political ideology. Because the situation in Iraq is a highly political one, it is important to examine the role and reach of ideology, for example, in shaping moral emotions and their consequent action tendencies. Fundamental differences in opinion have, in fact, arisen among liberals and conservatives regarding the United States' handling of the situation in Iraq. At the forefront of these debates were political elites, although these divisions were mirrored in the general public. Among the differences in ideology-driven reactions to the war may be disparities in kind or degree of emotional response. More specifically, we may expect differences to arise in emotions predicated on attributions of responsibility, such as guilt and moral outrage. Given the greater tendency of conservatives to endorse the importance of individualistic causes (Zucker & Weiner, 1993), we would expect them to exhibit greater levels of anger toward perpetrators, such as Hussein and his regime. In contrast, liberal ideology often is linked with feelings of guilt, most frequently in the context of racial relations (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998). Similarly, liberal ideology may be associated with a greater predisposition to feel group-based guilt as opposed to moral outrage in the context of American involvement in Iraq.

Empathy in turn has a more tenuous relationship to ideology. When empathy is associated with ideology, this relationship should be tempered by assessments of responsibility. When victims are seen as being responsible for their plight, conservatives and liberals differ on the degree and extent to which they experience empathy for these targets. For example, conservatives are less likely than liberals to experience feelings of sympathy and pity for targets, particularly for those viewed as personally responsible for their plight (Skitka, McMurray, & Burroughs, 1991; Zucker & Weiner, 1993). In contrast, in other work focusing on need, rather than deservingness (which rests on assessments of responsibility) as a basis for assistance, conservatives demonstrated greater support than liberals for old-age programs such as Social Security and Medicare (Huddy, Jones, & Chard, 2001). In the current conceptualization, the inability of the Iraqi people to control their future outcomes and the external cause of their suffering are likely to mitigate attributions of responsibility to the Iraqi people, and in turn, to reduce ideological differences in felt empathy (Weiner, 1986).

Overview of the Study

The primary goal of our study is to examine the relationship between moral emotions and their associated political actions aimed at improving conditions for the Iraqi people in the aftermath of the Second Gulf War. In order to examine the

hypothesized relationships between emotional experiences and support for political actions, we relied on data from a web-based study of American university students' attitudes about the Second Gulf War. The situation in Iraq provided an ideal context to simultaneously consider empathy felt for the Iraqi people, guilt based on the harm to the Iraqi people caused directly or indirectly by U.S. policies and military action, and the moral outrage felt by Americans over Hussein's abuse of the Iraqi people, and these emotions' hypothesized relationships to four distinct forms of political actions: (1) humanitarian, (2) reparative, (3) preventative, and (4) retributive actions. Specifically, we test the reach of empathy's influence by examining the strength of its relationship to a range of possible actions. We predict that although empathy is likely to be related to each form of political action, the strongest relationship will be to humanitarian action. In addition, we predict that, relative to empathy, guilt may better predict actions intended to repair damages caused by one's ingroup (the United States), and moral outrage toward Saddam Hussein and his regime may better predict support for political actions intended to prevent future harm to the Iraqi people and to punish the third-party perpetrators (Hussein and his regime). Lastly, political ideology should influence support for political action both directly and indirectly through expressed guilt and moral outrage, but not through empathy.

Method

Participants and Design

The study included 413 undergraduates[1] who completed a web-based questionnaire as part of a psychology course requirement at the University of California, Los Angeles. Data collection began late in 2003, approximately eight months after the start of military action in Iraq, and was completed in early spring 2004. Participants ranged from 18 to 41 years of age ($M = 20.08$, $SD = 2.28$) with 38% men and 62% women. Our sample of participants reflected the ethnic diversity of the general student body, with 3% African Americans, 41% Asians, 11% Latinos, 34% whites, and 11% who indicated their ethnicity as "other." The sample, on average, tended to be liberal with a mean of 3.46 ($SD = 1.33$) on a 7-point scale of ideology, with lower scores representing greater liberalism.

Materials

In the questionnaire, participants were asked to report their perceptions of the situation in Iraq, their endorsement of different political actions that could be

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[1] Twenty respondents were eliminated from the data analysis for one of the following reasons: for being under 18 years of age, for submitting two online surveys which had discrepant responses, or for failing to answer a majority of the questions, therefore reducing the sample size submitted to our analysis to 393 from 413.

taken to improve the situation of people in post-war Iraq, and finally their emotional responses to the war in Iraq and its aftermath. Descriptions of measures along with their scale reliabilities are presented below. The complete set of items used to construct the measures is presented in the appendix.

Support for Political Actions. We assessed participants' endorsement of four different categories of political actions that could be undertaken to improve the situation of the Iraqi people. All items were assessed on a 7-point scale ranging from 1(*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Three items assessed humanitarian action aimed at relieving the immediate suffering of the Iraqi people ($\alpha = .90$). A typical item read as follows: "We should pull our resources together to make sure that, at the very least, the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people for food, medical assistance, and shelter are met." Four items assessed reparative action intended to compensate for damages the United States caused in Iraq ($\alpha = .90$). A typical item read as, "As Americans, we owe something to the Iraqi people for the damages we caused in their country." Eight items assessed preventative action taken to reduce the chances of future political abuses against the Iraqi people ($\alpha = .94$). A typical item read as, "The U.S. should help Iraq develop institutional safeguards against future tyrants." Finally, four items assessed retributive action aimed at punishing Saddam Hussein and his regime for past harm inflicted upon the Iraqi people ($\alpha = .92$). A typical item read as, "It is important to establish an effective mechanism for punishing Saddam Hussein and his collaborators for their abuse of the Iraqi people."

Emotional Responses. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they experienced different emotions in response to the situation in Iraq. All items were assessed on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Seven items assessed empathy for the plight of the Iraqi people ($\alpha = .91$). A typical item read as follows: "I feel empathy for the suffering of the individuals in Iraq." Five items assessed guilt over the role the United States played in creating the situation in Iraq ($\alpha = .92$). A typical item read, "I feel guilty when I think about the ways in which our government and military may have mistreated the Iraqi people during the war." Finally, eight items assessed moral outrage over the actions of Hussein's regime ($\alpha = .94$). A typical item read, "I feel angry when I think about the ways in which Saddam Hussein's regime may have mistreated the Iraqi people."

In addition, we included items designed to assess the three emotions by varying their focus (e.g., moral outrage over Hussein's action versus U.S. actions versus actions of the Iraqi people). For each emotion, the focus of attention was first directed toward Hussein and his regime, then toward the U.S. government, and last toward the Iraqi people themselves. Participants then were asked to indicate how much empathy, guilt, or moral outrage they felt toward each of the parties mentioned in the question stem on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*none at all*) to 7 (*a lot*).

Blame. One question assessed attributions of blame for the situation that has developed as a result of the U.S. decision to use military force to remove Saddam

Hussein from power. Participants were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale whom they believed was more responsible for the current problems in Iraq (1 = Hussein, 4 = both equally to blame, and 7 = U.S.).

Political Ideology. Participants were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale about their political ideology (1 = very liberal, 4 = moderate, and 7 = very conservative).

Results

Target of Focus and Emotions

Our conception of emotional responses to the situation in Iraq is that they are prompted by and linked to a specific focus—empathy to the suffering of the victims (the Iraqis), guilt over the actions of one's ingroup (the United States), and moral outrage over the actions of a third-party perpetrator (Saddam Hussein and his regime). To confirm that guilt is indeed a self-focused emotion in contrast to the other suffering emotion of empathy and the other condemning emotion of moral outrage, we examine whether participants' report of each emotion is moderated by the target of focus. What we would expect is that the highest level of each emotion would be elicited by the conceptually appropriate target (e.g., empathy for victims). Participants were asked to report how much empathy they felt for one of three parties: Saddam Hussein and his regime, the U.S. government, and the Iraqi people. They were also asked how much guilt they felt for the role played by each of these parties in contributing to the suffering of the Iraqi people. Lastly, they were asked how much anger they felt toward each of these three parties for the suffering of the Iraqi people. The means and standard deviations for each measure are presented in Table 1.

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted within each set of emotion questions that varied the target of focus. The analysis produced a large and significant effect for focus within each emotion set: empathy, $F(2, 382) = 621.05$, $p < .01$ ($\eta^2 = .62$); guilt, $F(2, 379) = 59.64$, $p < .01$ ($\eta^2 = .14$); and moral outrage, $F(2, 381) = 548.44$, $p < .01$ ($\eta^2 = .59$). All follow-up pair-wise comparisons of the means within each emotion set were statistically reliable ($p < .05$). In support of our conception that emotions are focus specific, participants reported the highest level of empathy for the Iraqi people, greatest level of guilt over the role played by the U.S. government, and the highest level of anger toward Saddam Hussein and his regime, relative to levels of emotions reported in response to the alternate targets of focus. Interestingly, although the mean for target appropriate empathy and target appropriate anger were both over the scale midpoint of 4 (5.11, 5.50, respectively), the mean for target-appropriate guilt was below the midpoint of 4 (3.13). In other words, on average, our participants reported higher levels of empathy and moral outrage, relative to guilt. Given that this preliminary check

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Empathy, Guilt, and Moral Outrage by Focus

Question		
A. *How much* **empathy** *do you feel for each of the following parties?*		
	M	*SD*
Saddam Hussein and his regime	1.46	1.06
The U.S. government	2.95	1.71
The Iraqi people themselves	**5.11**	**1.59**
B. *How much* **guilt** *do you feel for the role played by each of the following parties in causing suffering among the Iraqi people?*		
	M	*SD*
Saddam Hussein and his regime	2.89	2.28
The U.S. government	**3.13**	**1.82**
The Iraqi people themselves	1.96	1.37
C. *How much* **anger** *do you feel toward each of the following parties for the suffering of the Iraqi people?*		
	M	*SD*
Saddam Hussein and his regime	**5.50**	**1.41**
The U.S. government	3.60	1.85
The Iraqi people themselves	1.95	1.16

Note. All pair-wise comparisons within each set of questions are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

supports our conception of empathy, guilt, and moral outrage, we move on to our primary analyses.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Summary statistics and interitem correlations for the study's primary variables are presented in Table 2.[2] To test our primary hypotheses, we used EQS 6.1 (Bentler, 2003) to estimate a structural model with latent variables. However, before testing the structural model, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the latent factor structures of the different emotions and political actions (Jöreskog & Sorbom, 1993). For both CFAs, the factors were allowed to correlate as they were theoretically as well as empirically related. For all analyses,

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[2] One concern readers may have about our methodology is that the key measures were uniformly worded in the direction of the construct of interest (versus reverse worded measures). This raises the potential problem of ceiling effects. An examination of the means of our measures for the emotions and political actions revealed that they typically were just above the scale mid-points (see Table 2 for range of means). These results indicate that there were no notable ceiling effects. Moreover, the subsequent models we present produced significant amounts of explainable variance. If our goal had been to assess mean levels of support, then framing effects (including the one-sided measures used in this study) might create a problem. However, we were primarily interested in testing the relationship between emotions and support for political actions. Moreover, we have no a priori reason to expect the unidirectionality of question wording to account for the hypothesized differences in magnitude of observed relationships. Nonetheless, future studies should ideally utilize more balanced measures to allow for additional assessment of levels of support.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations among Measures of Political Action Support, Empathy, Guilt, Moral Outrage, and Ideology

	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Humanitarian Action	5.32	1.09	1.00									
2. Reparative Action	4.66	1.34	.67**	1.00								
3. Preventative Action	5.11	1.09	.53**	.37**	1.00							
4. Retributive Action	4.79	1.37	.30**	.09+	.60*	1.00						
5. Empathy	4.84	0.91	.53**	.51**	.35**	.23**	1.00					
6. Guilt	4.16	1.44	.29**	.54**	-.01	-.17**	.44**	1.00				
7. Moral outrage	4.98	1.09	.34**	.17**	.48**	.57**	.59**	.11*	1.00			
8. Blame	3.14	1.39	.01	.24**	.34**	.50**	.02	.41**	.38**	1.00		
9. Ideology	3.46	1.33	-.03	-.22**	.11*	.33**	-.02	-.35**	.16**	-.41**	1.00	
10. Gender	–	–	.03	-.01	-.11*	-.09	.09	.05	.14**	.02	-.07	1.00

Note. +*p* < .10. *p* < .05. **p* < .01.

the data appeared to be multivariate nonnormal; therefore, the robust statistics were interpreted and reported.[3] For both CFAs, one path from each factor was fixed to one, for identification purposes. Structural equation modeling was then used to specify and test a model with the hypothesized relationships among latent variables. The objective when performing these analyses is to obtain a nonsignificant chi-square. However, it is well known that the chi-square is sensitive to sample size. Thus, alternate fit indices in addition to the chi-square were considered (Bentler, 2003), including the comparative fit index (CFI: best if larger than .90) and the root mean-squared error of approximation (RMSEA: best if .05 or less). The standardized Root Mean-Square Residual index was also examined (standardized RMR: best if .05 or less).

Factor Model for Emotions. Before testing our hypothesized factor model for emotions, a one-factor model was run to examine model fit. Indications of poor model fit would demonstrate that the specified emotions do not represent simply one underlying construct. Indications of acceptable model fit from results of confirmatory factor analyses testing our hypotheses should in turn provide evidence for a distinction among these emotions. Indeed, the one-factor model for emotions provided a very poor model fit to the data, as indicated by the combined results from the chi-square and the fit indices, χ^2 (170, N = 366) = 1,808.83, $p < .00$, CFI = .47, RMSEA = .16, standardized RMR = .18. We then turned to a test of our own proposed measurement model for emotions.

We hypothesized that the items for empathy, guilt, and moral outrage would reveal an underlying three-factor structure. The items assessing empathy, guilt, and moral outrage were used as indicators of latent variables of the same names. The conceptually related emotion factors were allowed to correlate since, as moral emotions, they share the ultimate goal of helping the victim, and they are empirically related (with zero order correlations ranging from .11 to .59). Although the chi-square value was significant, χ^2 (167, N = 366) = 444.24, $p < .01$, the fit indices suggested an acceptable model fit to the data: CFI = .91, RMSEA = .07, standardized RMR = .06. All path coefficients were significant. The factor loadings ranged from .72 to .83 for empathy, from .77 to .89 for guilt, and from .74 to .85 for moral outrage. The factor correlation between empathy and guilt was estimated at .43, between empathy and moral outrage at .47, and between guilt and moral outrage at .12. Although the three factors were correlated, the results support the division of the items into three theoretically meaningful factors. Subsequent analysis therefore treated these three factors as separate latent variables.

Factor Model for Political Actions. As in the factor model for emotions, we ran first a one-factor model for political actions to examine whether the political actions could be subsumed under one general construct. The one-factor model once again provided a very poor model fit to the data, as indicated by the combined

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[3] An examination of the nonrobust statistics reveals a similar pattern of results. Hence, the final model was not biased based on violations of normality.

results from the chi-square and the fit indices, χ^2 (170, N = 366) = 1,881.75, $p < .00$, CFI = .52, RMSEA = .18, standardized RMR = .16. From these results it is clear that the single factor model does not fit the data. Therefore, we do not consider further this model, but instead turn to a test of our own proposed measurement model for political actions.

We hypothesized that the items for the four political actions (humanitarian, reparative, preventative, and retributive) would reveal an underlying four-factor structure. Items assessing support for humanitarian, reparative, retributive, and reparative actions were used as indicators of their correspondent latent factors. The political action factors were allowed to correlate as they share the ultimate goal of helping the victims, and they are empirically related (zero-order correlations ranging from .09 to .67). Although the chi-square value was significant, χ^2 (183, N = 369) = 331.66, $p < .01$, alternative indices indicated an acceptable model fit, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .06, standardized RMR = .06. Moreover, all path coefficients were significant. For humanitarian action, the factor loadings ranged from .84 to .91, while the factor loadings ranged from .81 to .88 for reparative action. For preventative action, the factor loadings ranged from .73 to .85, while the factor loadings ranged from .78 to .91 for retributive action. The estimated factor correlations were (a) humanitarian action and reparative action—.74; (b) humanitarian action and preventative action—.58; (c) humanitarian action and retributive action—.33; (d) reparative and preventative action—.40; (e) reparative and retributive action—.09; and (f) preventative and retributive action—.65. Once again, although the four factors were correlated, the results support the division of the items into four theoretically meaningful factors. Subsequent analysis therefore treated these four factors as separate latent variables.

Blame, Emotions, and Political Actions

Evaluation of the proposed measurement structures underlying the latent variables of interest produced acceptable indices of fit, thereby providing the foundation for evaluating the more substantively interesting structural relationships. We next estimated a structural model that included the primary variables of interest: blame, empathy, guilt, moral outrage, and support for humanitarian, reparative, preventative, and retributive actions. To simplify the presentation, we first present and evaluate this basic conceptual model. Then, we present and evaluate a more complex model that examines the relationship of political ideology to felt moral emotions and support for political actions.

A partial disaggregation model (Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1994; Bandalos & Finney, 2001) was used to reduce problems introduced by highly complex models (e.g., increased measurement error, inflated standard errors). This kind of model utilizes aggregates of items (i.e., item parceling) to create two or more indicators per latent construct. The model included the following hypothesized paths from each emotion to its correspondent action tendency: empathy to all four types of

political action, guilt to reparative action, and moral outrage to preventative action and retributive action. Finally, blame's direct effects on guilt and moral outrage, as well as reparative, preventative, and retributive political actions, were included, as were the indirect effects of blame on reparative action mediated through guilt and on preventative and retributive action mediated through moral outrage. Because we did not expect guilt or moral outrage to predict support for humanitarian action, these paths were not included in the model. Similarly, because we did not expect moral outrage to predict reparative action or guilt to predict either preventative or retributive actions, these paths were also not included. In addition, because we did not expect blame to predict empathy, this path was not included in the hypothesized model. Correlations among the empathy, guilt, and moral outrage variables or their disturbance terms were allowed. Finally, an association between each of the disturbance terms for the political action latent variables was allowed, as their correlation should be due not only to being influenced by the same set of variables, but also due to common designation as political actions.[4]

The scaled chi-square value indicated that the model did not fit the data, χ^2 (189, N = 372) = 315.53, $p < .00$. However, as large samples often lead to significant chi-square values, alternative fit indices were examined. The fit indices, taken together, suggest a very good fit of the model to the data: CFI = .97, RMSEA = .04, standardized RMR = .05. This model therefore was retained and interpreted. The standardized parameter estimates for the SEM are presented in Figure 1. As shown, all hypothesized paths were significant ($p < .05$). Latent constructs explained a substantial amount of variance in observed variables (R^2 ranged from .52 to .89). As can be seen in Figure 1, empathy was a strong predictor of humanitarian action ($\beta = .58$). Empathy also predicted reparative action ($\beta = .38$), preventative action ($\beta = .15$), and retributive action ($\beta = -.17$). It is interesting to note that empathy was associated with decreased likelihood of advocating retributive action as a form of helping. As hypothesized, in addition to empathy, guilt predicted reparative action ($\beta = .36$), and moral outrage predicted both preventative action ($\beta = .33$) and retributive action ($\beta = .59$). In addition, blame assigned to the actions of the United States (versus blame assigned to the actions of Saddam Hussein and his regime) predicted higher levels of guilt ($\beta = .42$) and lower levels of moral outrage ($\beta = -39$). The direct effect of blame assigned to the United States (versus Saddam Hussein's regime) on reparative, preventative, and retributive action were all significant at the $p < .05$ level (βs = .10, $-.23$, and $-.30$, respectively). All indirect effects of blame also were significant, suggesting

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[4] In this partial disaggregation model, all factors had three indicators. A correlation between the empathy factor and the disturbance terms for guilt and moral outrage was allowed. Correlations among the political action disturbance terms were also allowed. Factor loadings ranged from .72 to .94 for the emotion factors and from .82 to .94 for the policy action factors. Factor correlations and factor-disturbance correlations ranged from .23 to .57. Additional information regarding specific factor loadings, factor correlations, and factor-disturbance correlations can be obtained, upon request, from the authors.
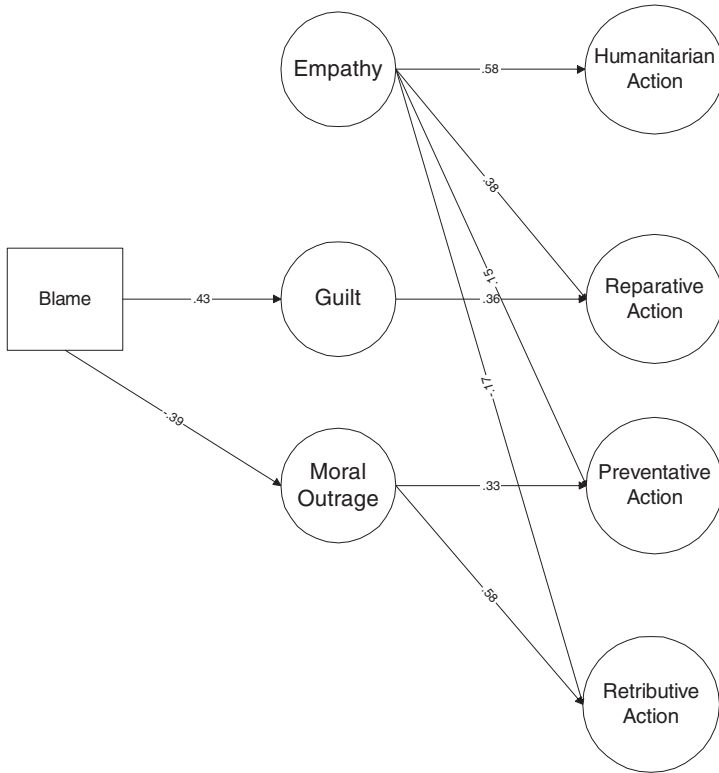
Figure 1. Structural model testing relationship between blame, moral emotions, and support for political actions. For the purpose of clarity in presentation, the direct effects of blame on reparative, preventative, and retributive actions were omitted from the figure.
NOTE: Figure presents paths testing our primary hypotheses. Path coefficients are standardized. For the blame variable, higher scores reflect greater blame of the U.S. (vs. Hussein and his regime).

mediation by guilt on the relationship between blame and reparative action, and mediation by moral outrage on the relationship between blame and both preventative and retributive actions. The model explained 34% of the variance in support for humanitarian actions, 45% of the variance in reparative actions, 31% of the variance in preventative actions, and 48% of the variance in retributive actions.

Our hypotheses suggested that guilt should predict reparative actions and moral outrage should predict both preventative and retributive actions, but neither emotion should predict support for humanitarian actions. An examination of path coefficients in a comparison model including paths from guilt and moral outrage to humanitarian action indicated that these paths were not significant. In addition, a Wald test (for dropping parameters) indicated that these paths could be eliminated without a significant increase in the chi-square statistic. Hypotheses also

indicated that empathy should not be associated with blame. A second comparison model including the path from blame to empathy also indicated that this relationship was not significant, and a Wald test suggested the removal of this parameter. Taken together, these results provide support for our conceptualization of empathy as the sole predictor of humanitarian action, and as a construct conceptually unrelated to blame.

The Relative Effects of Empathy, Guilt, and Moral Outrage

To test the hypotheses that, when compared with empathy, guilt would best predict reparative action, and moral outrage would best predict both preventative and retributive action, we investigated whether these emotions had significantly different effects on support for political actions. To test the relative strength of associations between the emotions and political actions, we used a procedure suggested by Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003, pp. 640–642) that allowed us to test the difference between standardized regression weights. Relying on this procedure, we found that there was no significant difference between empathy and guilt with respect to their ability to predict reparative action ($\beta_{empathy}$ = .38, β_{guilt} = .36, t (372) = −.039, *n. s.*). In contrast, moral outrage was a significantly stronger predictor than empathy, of both preventative action ($\beta_{empathy}$ = .15, $\beta_{moral\ outrage}$ = .33, t (372) = 3.66, $p < .05$) and retributive action ($\beta_{empathy}$ = −.17, $\beta_{moral\ outrage}$ = .58, t (372) = 17.42, $p < .05$).

The Role of Ideology in a Model of Blame, Moral Emotions, and Political Actions

Prior research has shown that ideology is related to attributions of responsibility (Williams, 1984; Zucker & Weiner, 1993). We therefore expected that ideology also would play a role in our model, in particular through its relationship with emotions most closely related to blame—guilt and moral outrage. Specifically, due to their tendency to make different patterns of attribution, conservatives and liberals may be more or less likely to experience different emotions. While conservatives' tendency to focus on responsible agents would lead us to expect that they would demonstrate a greater likelihood to experience moral outrage than guilt, liberals' tendency to focus on situational causes of behavior would lead us to expect that they would have a greater tendency to feel guilt than moral outrage (Zucker & Weiner, 1993). Although ideology also should have some effects on support for political action, we expected that attributions of responsibility and the moral emotions would be more proximal predictors of support for these political actions, thereby mediating the effects of ideology on political support.

An examination of the zero-order correlations between ideology, blame, and the moral emotions provides preliminary evidence that the relationships between these variables are indeed significant (Table 2). As we would expect, the only

exceptions were that ideology was not significantly correlated with either feelings of empathy or with support for humanitarian action, an action tendency driven in the present model by empathic affect. To investigate the possibility that ideology would influence blame and the moral emotions of guilt and moral outrage, a model was run examining the addition of the following paths to our original model: (a) the direct effect of ideology on blame, and (b) the indirect effects of ideology on both guilt and moral outrage. The direct effect between ideology and empathy was not included as ideology, like attributions of responsibility, should be unassociated with the experience of empathy. An examination of the zero-order correlations (see Table 2) again confirms that this is the case. The scaled chi-square value indicated that the model did not fit the data, χ^2 (208, N = 369) = 357.82, $p < .00$. However, an examination of alternative fit indices, as in our original model, suggested a good fit of the model to the data: CFI = .96, RMSEA = .04, standardized RMR = .05.

As expected, the direct effect of ideology on blame was significant ($\beta = -.42$), with the ideology variable explaining 17% of the variance in the blame variable. An examination of the indirect effects revealed that ideology (with higher scores equal to greater conservatism) predicted lower levels of guilt ($\beta = -.20$) but was not a significant predictor of moral outrage ($\beta = .04$), suggesting partial mediation by blame on the relationship between ideology and guilt and full mediation by blame on the relationship between ideology and moral outrage. A Wald test (for dropping parameters) indicated that removal of the path from ideology to moral outrage would improve model fit to the data. A strict comparison between the path coefficients in the original model and the model including ideology cannot be made. However, it is important to note that the general pattern of structural relationships documented in the original model did not change in the second model, despite the addition of the ideology variable.

Finally, in order to examine whether ideology exerted an effect on the political actions above and beyond the effect of each relevant moral emotion, a series of hierarchical regressions were run. First, a model was run with reparative action as the dependent variable, in which ideology was entered in step 1, followed by the addition of guilt in step 2. Results indicated that, while ideology did have a significant effect on reparative action ($\beta = -.22$), this effect was no longer significant after taking into account the effect of guilt ($\beta = .54$). Second, a model with preventative action as the dependent variable was run with ideology entered first, followed by moral outrage in step 2. Once again, results indicated that ideology weakly but significantly predicted preventative action ($\beta = .11$). This effect disappeared, however, after taking into account the effects of moral outrage ($\beta = .47$). Finally, a model with retributive action as the dependent variable was run with ideology entered in step 1 and moral outrage entered in step 2. Interestingly, our pattern of results diverged somewhat here. Ideology was indeed a significant predictor of retributive action ($\beta = .33$) and, while decreasing in magnitude, remained significant after the addition of moral outrage into the model ($\beta = .25$). For all three dependent variables, the increase in variance predicted when the relevant

moral emotion was added to the model was significant ($R^2\Delta$ ranging from .22 to .27, all *significant F-changes* = .00), indicating that the moral emotions play a role in predicting support for political action above and beyond the effects of ideology. Given these findings and the evidence for full mediation of the relationship between ideology and moral outrage by blame and partial mediation of the relationship between ideology and guilt by blame, it appears that the role of ideology in shaping political action is indirect and mediated through blame and felt emotions.[5]

Discussion

Based on theory and research on emotions, we identified three moral emotions—empathy, guilt, and moral outrage—each of which plays a distinct role in motivating action taken on behalf of others. The political context immediately after the end of active combat in the Second Gulf War provided an ideal backdrop against which to systematically examine the relationships among all three moral emotions and their correspondent action tendencies: humanitarian action to provide immediate relief, reparative action to compensate for damages caused by the United States, preventative action to ward off future abuses by Iraq's leaders, and finally retributive action to restore moral order. This approach allowed us to evaluate theoretical distinctions among the three moral emotions of interest while at the same time generating insights about how to motivate support not just for immediate relief to those who are suffering but also for additional political actions necessary to ensure their long-term welfare.

Our study of Americans' views about the U.S.'s role in post-war Iraq produced findings consistent with the hypothesized relationships between moral emotions and support for political actions taken on behalf of the Iraqi people. Self-reported empathy for the suffering of the Iraqi people predicted support for all four types of political actions. In general, higher levels of empathy were associated with greater willingness to support political actions to improve the welfare of the Iraqi people. The one exception was in the case of retributive action taken to punish the former leader of Iraq and his regime. In this case, empathy was negatively associated with support for retributive action. It is important to note that although empathy predicted a number of political actions, its strongest relationship was with support for humanitarian action. In fact, empathy was the only emotion that predicted support for actions intended to offer immediate relief for the Iraqis. In addition, as hypothesized, guilt was a strong predictor of support for reparative

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[5] In addition to ideology, readers may be interested in the role of partisanship in our model. Although we did not measure partisanship, we expect that its relationship to felt emotions and their related policy actions should, if anything, parallel the observed relationship between ideology and these variables. To elaborate, since Democrats were less supportive than Republicans were of the President's decision to go to war, they are likely to feel greater levels of guilt and thus express stronger support for reparative action. In contrast, Republicans, who were more supportive of the decision to go to war, may share the President's expression of moral outrage over Saddam Hussein's actions, and thus express stronger support for preventative and reparative actions.

action taken to compensate for damages caused by the U.S. military, although in this case, empathy was an equally strong predictor. Also in line with our hypotheses, although empathy and moral outrage jointly predicted both preventative actions to ward off future abuses and retributive actions to restore moral order, relative to empathy, moral outrage was a significantly stronger predictor of support for both types of political actions. In support of the notion that guilt and moral outrage, unlike empathy, are responses to moral transgressions, we found that assigned blame for the plight of the Iraqi people predicted guilt and moral outrage, but not empathy. Blame, in turn, has both a direct effect on political actions and indirect effects through guilt and moral outrage. Finally, it is important to note that ideology's role in this model lies primarily in its relationship to guilt and moral outrage, mediated by blame. The addition of ideology as a predictor therefore did not change substantively our interpretation of the relationship between moral emotions and their correspondent action tendencies.

Together, these findings are in line with the theoretical distinctions among empathy, guilt, and moral outrage. Consistent with prior findings on the power and breadth of empathy to move people toward prosocial tendencies (e.g., Batson et al., 1997; Batson, Chang, Orr, & Rowland, 2001), empathy predicted a wide range of political actions intended to improve both the short- and long-term conditions of the Iraqi people. Empathy, quite simply, promotes a desire to help the person or the group for whom one feels this emotion. Nonetheless, the power of empathy appears to be most effectively directed toward actions that are focused on relieving the immediate suffering of the victims caused by the ongoing conflict. This finding is consistent with experimental work demonstrating that the induction of empathy is particularly effective in increasing motivation to help relieve the specific need for which empathy is felt (Dovidio, Allen, & Schroeder, 1990). With other more distal forms of helping, empathy played a smaller role in predicting support for these actions. Of particular interest is the finding that increased empathy was associated with decreased support for retributive action. Prior research suggests that empathy for a person or group increases the desire to help them, and at the same time, decreases willingness to punish them (Miller & Eisenberg, 1988). Our finding suggests that the power of empathy to decrease punitive tendencies extends beyond the target of potential help giving to third parties who have brought harm upon them. Most importantly, relative to empathy, guilt and moral outrage were equal or better predictors of their correspondent action tendencies, which go beyond immediate relief for the victims to restoring damages caused by the ingroup, changing the political structure to prevent future atrocities, and punishing third-party perpetrators to restore moral order.

Theoretical and Political Implications of an Emotion-Specific Framework

One of the main contributions of our work to the already substantial body of research on helping behavior is that we consider the long-term welfare of victims

in addition to their immediate needs. In the context of a nation of people who have suffered not only at the hands of their former leader but also as a result of a foreign military invasion, humanitarian relief is of immediate concern. However, beyond the basic need for food, shelter, and medical care, the future well-being of the Iraqi people depends on efforts to restore their infrastructure, to reform the political system to prevent future tyranny, and to bring Saddam Hussein and members of his regime to justice in order to restore and reaffirm moral order. These additional political actions are necessary to restore and revitalize Iraq as a nation.

A second contribution of our work is to offer empirical evidence in support of theoretical distinction among the three moral emotions of interest. Empathy, guilt, and moral outrage are distinct emotions—each with a unique relationship to different action tendencies. One consequence of the conceptual distinctions made here is that those making political appeals can tailor their approach to the kind of political support they would like to obtain. In line with past work on the power of empathy to promote prosocial actions (Batson, 1998), shifting focus to the suffering of the victims has the potential to elicit support for a wide range of political actions intended to improve their condition. This range of support stops short, however, with aggressive retributive actions, a finding consistent with prior work (see Miller & Eisenberg, 1988, for a review). The victim focus associated with feelings of empathy and its resultant feelings of warmth and compassion appears incompatible with a focus upon and desire to punish the third party perpetrating harm.

In contrast to empathy, guilt may have more limited utility in that it motivates only one type of action—those steps taken to restore damages caused by oneself or a group one is a member of. Moreover, the effect of guilt on even this limited form of action may be short-lived. Guilt is associated with feelings of dysphoria caused by the belief that one has caused harm to another; these feelings are psychologically uncomfortable to experience. While guilt is adaptive in that it promotes action taken to benefit others, a motivation to decrease the feelings of dysphoria is likely to prompt only short-term helping that can be enacted quickly and with ease, such as direct compensatory action. Moreover, a process of cognitive justification can also be used to decrease one's feelings of unease (consistent with low levels of guilt among our participants relative to empathy and moral outrage). Once feelings of dysphoria are relieved, regardless of whether actual action has been taken, the desire to help should also cease.

We also consider the potential of moral outrage as an emotion-based route toward political action. Moral outrage is similar to empathic anger in which the individual feels anger toward the responsible third party by taking on the perspective of the victim (Hoffman, 2000; see also the concept of relative deprivation on behalf of others, Veilleux & Tougas, 1989). Empathic anger, in turn, has been described as "the guardian of justice," prompting the philosopher John Stuart Mill to note that "a moral society needs voices that are empathically angry enough to uphold the cause of justice, that is, to object to people who abuse others and be

ready to punish them" (as cited in Hoffman, 2000, p. 96). Other empirical evidence also provides support for anger or moral outrage as a motivator of social activism (de Rivera et al., 2002; Foster & Rusbult, 1999; Sears & Citrin, 1982). It may be that, in order to prompt support for political change, we need people to feel morally outraged enough to do so (Marcus, 2000). Political change is important if we are to eliminate the very causes of injustice. Various historical and other examples, ranging from the Civil Rights Amendment to feelings of relative deprivation and subsequent collective action, indicate that systemic changes may be necessary for true progress. Thus, moral outrage may be a key emotion through which victims' conditions can be improved in a significant and long lasting way. However, it is important to note that moral outrage, while improving conditions for one group of people, also can bring harm upon another. Recent work by Skitka, Bauman, and Mullen (2004) demonstrates that moral outrage over the 9/11 attack on the United States is associated with greater intolerance for groups of people who are perceived to be similar to the perpetrators of the attack (e.g., Arab Americans, Muslims).

Our findings also shed light on the role of ideology in shaping the relationship between moral emotions and support for political action. In a study by Skitka et al. (1991), attributions of responsibility for the first war in Iraq were a better predictor of support for aid to Iraq than political ideology. In the present study, attributions of responsibility also appeared to be a more proximal determinant of guilt and moral outrage, and in turn for support for their associated political actions. Therefore, while ideology may help explain emotional reactions to the War in Iraq, these relationships are partially or fully mediated by blame. However, ideology was a significant predictor of support for retributive action, even after the addition of moral outrage to the model, with conservatives more likely to be punitive. This finding is consistent with prior research demonstrating liberals' lesser likelihood of taking punitive action toward responsible others (Skitka & Tetlock, 1992). The overall pattern of results suggests that we may gain a better understanding of emotional response and support for political actions from evaluating the relationship between ideology and blame than from political ideology alone.

Study Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are limitations to this work that should be noted. First, the current study focused on self-reported support for political actions. This is an important limitation because attitudes toward the situation in Iraq matter to the extent that they translate into real political changes. Although our analysis does not allow us to directly examine whether and how moral emotions can elicit actual changes in the political system, we can consider possible ways in which this process may occur. One way in which support for action tendencies may matter in the political world is through voting behavior (e.g., support for political candidates who will enact political change). In the aftermath of the 9/11 attack, President Bush successfully

drew upon the outrage felt by Americans to gather support for U.S. military action in the form of preventative (e.g., reforming the Iraqi political system) and retributive actions (e.g., punishing Hussein and members of his regime). One obvious way in which individuals who experienced moral outrage could have continued to support political action to reform the Iraqi political system and to punish Saddam Hussein was to support President Bush's reelection into office in 2004. Drawing from a different example, we consider how the emotion of empathy also can lead to real changes. In September 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast and left a swath of devastation. The suffering of the hurricane's victims was widely documented by the media, leading to an overwhelming public response of empathy and record levels of contributions to funds to aid the victims. Although our data do not allow us to directly address whether emotional responses actually enact political changes, these examples and related research on emotions and political behavior (Aldrich, Sullivan, & Borgida, 1989; Brader, 2005; Page & Shapiro, 1983) suggest that emotions can have very real consequences in the political world and can be a powerful force in engaging citizens in the political process.

A second limitation is that the correlational nature of the data does not allow for causal or temporal inferences. Although we cannot infer with certainty that the moral emotions led to the specific self-reported action tendencies, it seems unlikely that these action tendencies would have led to the emotions. In fact, preferences may need no inferences (Zajonc, 1980). However, concrete evidence of the temporal sequence requires careful experimental tests in the future.

A third potential limitation is that our sample is overrepresented by women (62% of the sample) and nonwhites (66% of the sample including predominantly Asians, some Latinos, and African Americans). Given this unusual sample, one may wonder whether gender and race (white versus nonwhites) may affect the basic relationships demonstrated in our models. In particular, there is some prior work demonstrating an association between gender and support for public policies and suggest that the mechanism underlying the relationship may lie in gender differences in emotional response (Conover & Feldman, 1986; Gault & Sabini, 2000). However, it is important to note that evidence is equivocal at best with other studies exploring gender differences yielding inconclusive results (Ben Zur & Zeidner, 1988; Deffenbacher, Oetting, & Lynch, 1994). To explore the possibility that gender and race may affect the conclusions we draw, we ran additional models that included these demographic controls. Interestingly, neither gender nor race had a direct effect on support for policy action nor did they change any of the hypothesized relationships among the main variables.[6]

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[6] One other possible approach is to test the model within each subsample (e.g., men and women). However, because of the large number of parameters in the model, the reduced size of the subsamples would likely produce unstable models. Future research with larger and more equal subsamples would allow for this type of important analysis.

Finally, the last potential limitation may be the student composition of our sample. For example, when compared with older adults, college students may have less-crystallized attitudes (Sears, 1986). Prior research nonetheless indicates that student samples do not invariably differ from nonstudent samples. For example, a study examining conservatism and perceptions of poverty, including several variables similar to those examined here (viz., blame, anger, support for government assistance judgments), produced similar results in student and nonstudent samples (Zucker & Weiner, 1993). Indeed, there are factors that would likely reduce the discrepancy between students' and nonstudents' responses in the present context. As Marcus et al. (2000) note, war as a political stimulus may be difficult to ignore, with 70 to 90% of Americans experiencing some emotion in response to the first war in Iraq (Kinder & D'Ambrosio, 1996, as cited in Marcus et al., 2000). Given the highly publicized nature of the Iraq War and the generally human experience of emotional reactions to injustice, it seems unlikely that student responses will differ vastly from other samples.

Conclusions

Each study inevitably has its limitations. However, we believe that the strength of the current study lies in its systematic examination of the specific pattern of relationships between each of three moral emotions and support for different political actions in the context of an engaging and important real-life political event. This examination allows us to infer which discrete emotion is most strongly associated with a given form of political support. The differences in the relationships between each of these emotions and their related action tendencies have implications for the type of political appeals that should be made. These political appeals may in turn have consequences for helping behavior and political support. The overall pattern of results from this study therefore provides support for the use of empathy, guilt, and moral outrage in concert with one another in a focused and relatively comprehensive approach to motivate support for distinct political actions.

Appendix

Emotional Reactions Scales

Empathy Items

1. I am moved by the plight of the Iraqi people.
2. Thinking about the hardships the Iraqis have endured makes me feel soft-hearted toward them.
3. Images of the downtrodden among the Iraqi people make me feel tenderness toward them.
4. I feel empathy for the suffering of the individuals in Iraq.

5. I feel compassion for the people of Iraq.
6. I feel sympathy for the Iraqis when I think of their situation.
7. I feel warmth for the Iraqi people.

Guilt Items

1. Although I was not personally responsible, as an American, I can't help but feel guilty when I think about the damages caused in Iraq by our military actions.
2. As an American, it makes me feel guilty when I think about how the Iraqi people may have suffered as a result of the United States's attack on Iraq.
3. I feel guilty when I think about the ways in which our government and military may have mistreated the Iraqi people during the war.
4. Thinking about the injustices that some Iraqis may have suffered during the U.S. invasion of Iraq makes me feel guilty.
5. Thinking about the situation the Iraqi people endured during the war makes me feel guilty because of my association with the United States.

Moral Outrage Items

1. It makes me feel angry when I think about how some Iraqi citizens may have suffered during Hussein's rule.
2. I can't help but feel angry when I think about the damages in Iraq caused by Hussein's rule.
3. I feel angry when I think about the ways in which Saddam Hussein's regime may have mistreated the Iraqi people.
4. Thinking about the injustices that some Iraqis may have suffered under Hussein's rule makes me angry.
5. I feel angry about the privileges Hussein and his allies enjoyed at the expense of many Iraqis.
6. Knowing that the Iraqi people were probably helpless against the abuses of the Hussein regime makes me angry on their behalf.
7. The fact that many Iraqi people had so little, compared to the privileges enjoyed by Hussein and his allies, makes me mad.
8. Thinking about the situation the Iraqi people endured under the former Hussein regime makes me angry on their behalf.

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Support for Political Action Scales

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Support for Humanitarian Action Items

1. The United States should offer humanitarian aid to alleviate the immediate suffering of the Iraqi people.

2. Our government should make sure there are enough medical personnel to assist Iraqis who are injured and/or ill.
3. We should pull our resources together to make sure that, at the very least, the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people for food, medical assistance, and shelter are met.

Support for Reparative Action Items

1. As Americans, we owe something to the Iraqi people for the damages we caused in their country.
2. The United States should make more of an effort to improve the lives of the Iraqi people because of the things we have done.
3. Before pulling out of Iraq, U.S. forces should do as much as they can to restore the infrastructure we destroyed.
4. Even if it means making difficult budget decisions, our government needs to find the funds to repair the damages in Iraq caused by our occupation.

Support for Preventative Action Items

1. We should help the Iraqi people develop programs to promote the free exchange of ideas.
2. The United States should help Iraq develop institutional safeguards against future tyrants.
3. In order to create a more stable nation, it's important that Iraq's current governmental structure be reorganized.
4. Changes must be implemented that would protect individuals in Iraq from future human rights abuses by their leaders.
5. We should support efforts within the new Iraqi government to establish a system of checks and balances that protect against human rights abuses.
6. We should work to provide the Iraqis with the tools to resist future governmental abuses.
7. It's important to help the Iraqi people build a nation free of exploitation by governmental leaders.
8. We should help the Iraqis develop a plan for government in which all voices can be heard.

Support for Retributive Action Items

1. Saddam Hussein and his allies should be punished for the things they have done.
2. The United States and its allies should use whatever resources are available to continue its effort to capture those high up in Hussein's regime.
3. Whatever the cost, we need to make sure that Saddam Hussein and his collaborators are brought to justice.

4. It is important to establish an effective mechanism for punishing Saddam Hussein and his collaborators for their abuse of the Iraqi people.

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