

Shame, Anti-Semitism, and Hitler's Rise to Power in Germany

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Abstract

Because modernity rationalizes the self, emotions have been undeveloped at best and at worst marginalized in mainstream social theory. Moreover, emotions as causes of war in modern societies has not been well received, particularly among historians and political scientists, who approach war primarily from materialist or interpretivist perspectives. This essay outlines a theory of the social-emotional world that draws on developments found in W.E.B. Du Bois' "double consciousness" and C.H. Cooley's "looking-glass self", both of which help elucidate the sociological importance of emotions. This analysis also engages the pivotal role that Thomas Scheff argues shame plays in generating war and violence, found in *Bloody Revenge: Emotions, Nationalism, and War* (1994). Specifically, we provide further analyses of the relationship between shame, anti-Semitism, and Hitler's rise to power in Germany. We examine how Hitler and the Nazi regime attached blame for three key sources of national and personal shame (military losses, cultural decline, and supposed racial defilement) to Jewish people as a means of rigidifying German and Jewish identity categories. Hitler mobilized national shame, therefore, to justify systematic legal exclusion and, ultimately, systematic violence. Thus, we posit a causal relationship between emotions and collective violence and movements.

Keywords: *Shame; Emotions; War; Hitler; Anti-Semitism; Race; Racism; Ethnicity; Nationalism*

Introduction

German historiography following World War II has been deeply concerned with the question of a German developmental *Sonderweg* (special path) that could explain the Holocaust. Popularized in the 1960s by German historians Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Fritz Fischer, *Sonderweg* arguments sought to explain this "vanishing point" of German history by looking not just at Weimar's failure, but also further back to Bismarck, the abortive Revolution of 1848, the Reformation, etc [1-6]. These arguments tended to emphasize: the militaristic development of the German state, an authoritarian tendency dating back to the Reformation, or a deeply conservative model of social development. No matter what specific processes these arguments and their critics offered, the focus remained on material or ideological mechanisms as causes.

This explanatory emphasis on the material and ideological, however, is not isolated to Holocaust studies. Indeed, most studies of war and collective violence offer such causes. Specifically, scholars have tended to assert theft of land or resources as common materialist causes, as in colonial or continental European wars. So, too, are the spread of religion, racial antipathy, or the drive for freedom and self-determination commonly cited as ideological causes. Collective emotions have not been considered by most experts in history and political science as causes of war and collective violence. Moreover, emotions have generally remained underdeveloped by mainstream social theorists [7]. They share this perspective with most of the members of modern societies, for whom the Enlightenment division between reason and emotions is the starting point for theorizing human behavior.

This article extends and further elaborates ideas raised in Thomas Scheff's *Bloody Revenge: Emotions, Nationalism, and War* [8]; in particular, we emphasize the pivotal role of shame and revenge in causing war and collective violence. Moreover, we offer additional analyses of the relevance of shame to racialized violence in Nazi Germany. This essay also outlines a theory of the social-emotional world visible as early as W.E.B. Du Bois's "double consciousness" and Charles H Cooley's "looking-glass self", which suggest the sociological importance of emotions, and particularly shame.

We propose that developing our sociological understanding of shame can help provide additional insight into the historical rigidification of German anti-Semitism and, thus, Hitler's rise to power in Germany. Specifically, we argue that German national shame served an important role in essentializing "German" and "Jewish" as ethno-cultural and later racial identity categories, while also mobilizing Germans towards collective political action. Thus, this article contributes not only to conceptual and empirical conversations about the social nature and role of emotions, but also to understanding national and racial collective identities and actions. As a result, the model outlined here can be particularly useful for understanding other forms of identitarian and xenophobic movements, including contemporary right-wing populist movements in Europe and the United States. Moreover, the present analysis demonstrates the historical utility of this lens in enabling more nuanced understandings of military conflicts, social movements, and political upheavals without reliance on rote materialism or economism.

Our analysis proceeds as follows: first we outline a theory of the role of emotions-and particularly shame-as causes of collective behavior. Beginning with the works of W.E.B. Du Bois and Charles H. Cooley, we illuminate the sociological basis for conceptualizing emotions as deeply *social* motivators of action. From there, we employ the notion of national shame as a collective emotion to analyze how Hitler and the Nazis mobilized the German people towards political and direct action. Namely, we explore how Adolf Hitler's personal shame as a young man in Vienna and in the German army was part of the basis for his shame-oriented mobilization of German anti-Semitism. We explore three purported sources of national shame that were blamed on Jewish people: military shame derived from the Treaty of Versailles and accompanying surrender; cultural shame blamed on alleged cultural infiltration; and racial shame attached to fears of miscegenation rooted in Nazi biological essentialism.

A theory of shame and collective violence

Cooley's examination of the self, posited as the "looking-glass" self, suggests an important relational and emotional component. He describes the composition of the self as having three important aspects: how we imagine others see us, how we imagine they judge us, and some sort of feeling-reaction to that judgement ([9], p. 484). He suggests that pride and shame, important for the present analysis, are the quintessential *social* emotions. These particular emotions develop as reactions to our understanding of how others perceive and evaluate us, regardless of its veracity. Following Cooley, we suggest shame be understood as the internalization of an imagined negative judgement of the self by some Other [10]. And we can see a similar, albeit more specific, framework at play in W.E.B. Du Bois's sociology. A crucial difference, however, is that where Cooley's concept of "another's mind" does not encompass that mind's racism and contempt when the "looking-glass self" is the victim of a racist society [11]. Du Bois attends precisely to this.

In an unpublished manuscript from 1946, W.E.B. Du Bois explored a relationship between emotion and cognition more nuanced than the typical Enlightenment binary. He wrote that "I feel, therefore I am" might better reflect our first-order knowledge of the world than Descartes' "I think, therefore I am". Among even contemporary interpretivists and symbolic interactionists, the value he placed on the internal emotional world of the individual was fairly revolutionary. In fact, Du Bois was one of the few to suggest emotions as a causal and central aspect of human social interaction. This causal assertion was not limited exclusively to the 1946 manuscript, but rather, something that was pervasive throughout his sociology. It can be seen as early as 1903 in *The Souls of Black Folks*, in which he emphasizes emotions as important means of understanding domination [12,13].

In the 1946 manuscript, Du Bois argues that although our emotions produce our only first-order knowledge, we can (re)evaluate, challenge, and/or verify knowledge about the world through cognitive processes. Du Bois' thought here might be considered consistent with the cognitive perspective on emotions. Indeed, Janine Kim suggests we understand Du Bois' narrative of the death of his son in *The Souls of Black Folk* as being in line with this perspective [14]. It is Du Bois' cognitive reflection on his infant son's racial destiny that initially provoked his grief, but also the grief of his infant son's death that motivated a further reflection on his social position and the fate

that anti-blackness bestows. Further developing Kim's insights, we suggest that Du Bois' famous articulation of the double consciousness experienced by black Americans also fits this framework.

Du Bois first describes double consciousness as "this sense of always *looking at one's self through the eyes of others*, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever *feels* his twoness..." as black and American ([12], p. 2, emphasis added). Sociologists have typically approached double consciousness as cognitive--the *knowledge* of domination and white Americans' racial antipathy. But double consciousness is simultaneously the knowledge of exclusion and the *feeling* of it. It is an affect produced by "looking at one's self through the eyes of" white Americans--built through (cognitive) reflection on how an individual and the racial category in which they are placed are perceived by the dominating society. For example, in "On Being Ashamed of Oneself: An Essay on Race Pride", published in *Crisis* in September 1933, Du Bois uses double consciousness to explicate the intergroup implications and grounds of shame [15]. Specifically, he argues black Americans come to feel and know their perceived inferiority through interactions with white Americans, and from this purported inferiority develops a sense of personal shame about being a member of this group [15].

As demonstrated by the looking glass self and double consciousness, cognition about how we are perceived evokes emotions, but emotions also provide a starting point for reasoning courses of action. James Jasper argues that this is essential for thinking about emotions [17]. Rather than conceptualizing emotions as physiological sensations, Jasper characterizes them as "transitory social roles"-actions or states of mind that are constituted by shared social meanings ([17], p. 400). Thus, he emphasizes an intimate, multidirectional connection between emotions and cognition. On the one hand, we can be reasoned out of anger or reflect carefully on recourse; on the other, anger comes from an evaluation of someone's actions against us. Cognitive evaluations generate emotions just as emotions prompt or are mitigated by cognition [7,18].

Thus, emotions are also tools for building, organizing, and mobilizing collective identities [19-21]. For example, Lorraine Bayard de Volo's study of grief among the Madres de Plaza de Mayo finds that emotions generate and are generated by collective action [22]. While shared grief was the basis for a collective identity among the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, the emotional benefits of organizing allowed the group to sustain itself. James Goodman finds similar evidence in his study of shame and outrage as tools for mobilizing refugee solidarity [23]. He argues that the use of emotion as a means of mobilizing action in support of refugees was targeted at eliciting cognitive reflection and action. Furthermore, based on a study of ethnic violence in Eastern Europe, Roger Petersen argues that shared emotions serve to coordinate preferences and action orientations across actors, while they also help rigidify and essentialize identities [24].

Petersen's study of ethnic violence lends insight into the power of nationalism and national identities. Indeed, as Gellner, Elias, Smith, Geertz, and others have argued, emotions are necessary for understanding the rise and continued salience of nations and nationalism [1,25-27]. They argue the movements, passions, and violence engendered by nationalism cannot be understood as solely cognitive phenomena. Although emotional and violent nationalism has been relegated to the past or to something that happens "over there", nationalism and nationalist impulses are everywhere tied to emotions [28]. Individuals feel shame and pride over the accomplishments of their nation, anger over slights to their nation, or love for their fellow nationals [29,30]. Individuals are motivated to action in order to restore their nation's status in the eyes of the community and outsiders.

National shame can be an especially salient motivator in this regard. As discussed above, shame can be understood as the internalized supposition of the Other's negative regard for the Self [31-33]. But shame rarely remains exclusively internalized. Shepherd, *et al.* demonstrate that even *anticipated* shame tied to the actions of an in-group member can be grounds for protest and sanction [21]. Scheff and Retzinger argue that shame, particularly unacknowledged shame, can spiral into anger and, from there, violence [34].

The concept of emotional climates is especially helpful for understanding the proximate sources of national shame. Emotional climates are collective emotions that are experienced as a result of the immediate sociopolitical conditions and are constructed through interaction between members of a given community [35]. Individuals talk about their complaints, grievances, or feelings, and thus influence one another and construct shared emotional patterns and strategies for action. Thus, national shame can be understood to be brought on by local causes, including losing an international sporting match or a war, a leader's gaffe at an important diplomatic meeting, or failing to achieve major geopolitical goals.

This notion of emotional climates as spontaneously emerging at the micro-level is certainly important, but climates can also be evoked, manipulated, or directed by elites. Because much of this appraisal process happens in the public sphere, assessments of the national community can be shaped by public figures, the media, propaganda, etc. Certainly, national shame can emerge out of individual appraisals and can translate into anger and violence through the spontaneous communication of nationals [24]. Yet there are key historical examples of this transformation being shaped by political actors and state propaganda. For example, French politicians and intellectuals deployed shame over the loss of the Franco-Prussian War in order to mobilize the nation to war against Germany in 1914 [8].

But shame does not turn into violence on its own. Indeed, discussing the role of emotion in mobilizing social movements, Jasper emphasizes the role of moral shocks and blame in transitioning from shame to collective action [17]. Moral shocks, often highly politicized and publicized events, produce such strong feelings that they engender a previously absent inclination towards political action. However, moral shocks result in political action only when tied to blame. This blame can be directed at perpetrators or those seen as not having “done enough” to prevent or fix the situation. Whether legitimate or not, blaming a group or individual for feelings of shame-itself a cognitive process spurred on by emotions-produces a human-embodied threat that allows shame to transition to rage, and thus to violence. Consequently, demonization and scapegoating are particularly effective tactics for generating extreme political action, since it produces powerful emotions and clear courses for action.

Hitler's rise to power in Germany

The remainder of this article explores the interlocking and reciprocal relationship between Hitler's and Germany's personal and national shame, respectively, and anti-Semitism, as a study of his rise to power. We begin with a discussion of Hitler's personal experience with shame prior to his political aspirations in Germany. After establishing his personal shame, we discuss Hitler's deployment of national shame stemming from the guilt clause of the Treaty of Versailles, the loss of German land and people, and the *imagined* international Jewish conspiracy supposedly at the root of it all.

Here, we argue that placing blame for alleged sources of German shame on Jewish people essentialized “German” as an identity category through the shared essence of a collectively experienced emotion. Moreover, we argue that the same act paved the way for official/legal and discursive rigidification of the category “Jewish”. Finally, this combination of collective emotion and rigidified identities allowed for systemized and sanctioned collective violence that would allegedly restore German pride and protect against potential future shame. This process relied on the notion of a “redemptive anti-Semitism” ([36], p. 3): an anti-Semitism attached to an “idealistic” goal of a future Germany delivered from Jewish people.

Hitler in Vienna

In *Mein Kampf*, and even earlier in the 1919 “Gemlich Letter” [37], Hitler spelled out his characteristic biologized anti-Semitism and belief in an international Jewish conspiracy that was politically and culturally undermining Germany. But, these ideas began germinating in Hitler's consciousness during his residence in Vienna between 1906 and 1913. While there, Hitler's political ideas were influenced by politicians, journalists, and racist cranks, as well as socioeconomic factors such as inflation, the chronic housing shortage, and the spiraling unemployment rate. Anti-Semitism was the crucial contemporary social and political issue debated at length in Vienna's Parliament, cafés, and numerous daily and weekly newspapers [38,39].

When Hitler arrived in Vienna, the Austrian capital was a magnet for artists, composers, writers, and other “Modernist” intellectuals. It was also where Hitler's childhood ambition of becoming an artist was dashed. He was twice denied admission to the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts because his sketches and paintings were considered “unsatisfactory” ([40], p. 24). Hitler's drawings did not display much interest in or consideration of the human form; rather, he appeared to be far more interested in landscapes and drawings of buildings [41]. And given that Hitler considered himself to be exceptionally talented, rejection by the Academy was a source of considerable shame.

At the same time Modern Art was also on the rise in Vienna. This avant-garde trend of abstract art ran counter to the academy's conventional neo-classical style and genre of representational painting to which Hitler was still wedded [42]. While his aesthetic was being

rejected at the Academy of Fine Arts, it was also being marginalized in the broader aesthetic culture. When he later came to power in Germany, Hitler vehemently condemned Modern Art not only as “degenerate art” but also as part of an alleged Jewish Bolshevik cultural conspiracy [43].

None of the professors who rejected Hitler's application were Jewish and there is no evidence that he suspected they were. Yet there was certainly a connection between this individual-level rejection and the macro-level rejection derived from the rise of Modern Art. Hitler's personal shame—the rejection of his art in favor of this new avant-garde style—became part of the groundwork for his anti-Semitic rhetoric and blame for the shame of Germany's cultural decline. Accordingly, art—and the realm of culture more broadly, including music, film and architecture—represented a bridge between Hitler's personal shame and Germany's national shame. Because Hitler could not attach blame for the continued marginalization of his aesthetic to any particular individuals, he attributed it to a large international Jewish Bolshevik conspiracy. His shame at the continued personal and cultural failure of his aesthetic became another tentpole of his conspiracy theory about Jewish people actively diminishing Germany's status and reputation.

This conspiracy relied on Hitler's assertion of a singular German aesthetic, rooted in both Greek Classicism and German Romanticism, is also illustrative [44,45]. The rejection of his personal aesthetic by professors at the Academy was not, in itself, a sufficient motivation for violence, nor would it have mobilized the German nation. Rather, it was the connection between Hitler's personal rejection and the rise of Modern Art, a style wholly incompatible with Hitler's vision for the “German aesthetic”, which Hitler used to transmute his personal shame from the rejection of his aesthetic into national shame, the alleged Jewish pollution of German culture and the “German aesthetic”. Thus, the purported decline of the German aesthetic in the face of Modernism constituted a deployable moral shock and allowed for the attachment of blame to Jewish people through the assertion of a Bolshevik conspiracy.

World war I and the treaty of Versailles

On June 28, 1919, *Deutsche Zeitung* railed, “Today German honour is dragged to the grave. Never forget it! The German people will advance again to regain their pride. We will have our revenge for the shame of 1919!” ([46], p. 88, emphasis added). This perspective on the Treaty of Versailles was not uncommon. Indeed, the treaty was understood as a tremendous insult to the German nation for its assertion of total German guilt for the start of the war, and its redistribution of German colonies and continental territories. In addition, Germany lost almost two million Germans and its international standing. Not surprisingly, the treaty was regarded by Germans of all political persuasions as a “treaty of shame” ([47], p. 162) or “dictate of shame” ([48], p. 535) during the 1920s. Similarly, in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler stated: “[E]very one of these points [in the Treaty] could have been burned into the brain and feeling of this nation until... in the heads of sixty million men and women the same sense of shame and the same hate would have become a single fiery sea of flames, out of whose glow a steely will would have risen and a cry forced itself: ‘We want arms once more!’” ([49], p. 920, emphasis added).

Hitler arrived on the political scene with a ready-made political platform based on revenge and vindication for Germany's shame: denouncing the Treaty of Versailles, rebuilding German military power, recapturing the lost continental and colonial territories, and most importantly, restoring Germany's sense of pride and national standing. Each of these constituted an already-apprehensible moral shock, and Hitler blamed the shame produced by each on one thing: an international Jewish conspiracy that was, itself, already-apprehensible. Before Hitler came to power, there had been a long history of anti-Semitism in Germany propagated by prominent thinkers, including Adolf Stöcker and Heinrich von Treitschke, and dating further back to Martin Luther and medieval Christianity [50]. Yet the developing paranoid belief in a Jewish conspiracy aimed at global domination was gaining increasing traction. The salience of this anti-Semitic conspiracy theory is attributable in part to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (1905). This document purportedly contained the ideas of a secret society of Jewish elders detailing Jewry's plot to take over the world. Because of the salience of the existing anti-Semitism, *The Protocols* was almost invulnerable to evidence indicating it was a fabrication and forgery [51,52].

This thinking enjoyed a new surge in acceptance in Germany after World War I, due in part to Germany's surrender. Indeed, Hitler and many others did not believe Germany had actually lost the war. Many Germans harbored feelings of shame that were rooted in anger at the so-called “November criminals” ([40], p. 117), who had signed the Armistice in 1918 and were involved in the negotiations over the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. These “criminals” had allegedly betrayed Germany by unjustly abandoning the war effort, a shameful “stab in the back” ([51], p. 90) that was widely believed in right-wing circles to have been engineered by inimical Jewish forces [53]. Hitler

expressed these sentiments in the previously mentioned letter written to Adolf Gemlich in September 1919, in which he argues that the Jewish "race" needed to be "removed" from Germany.

Particularly interesting is that Hitler decries an anti-Semitism based purely on emotion in the Gemlich letter. He suggests that German anti-Semitism should be based in "facts" and "reason", which would facilitate systematic legal action against Jewish people, where emotionally-based anti-Semitism has only produced pogroms. Despite Hitler's advocacy for a more systematic legal outlet for anti-Semitism in 1919, his deliberate silence on the violence of the November 1938 pogrom (*Kristallnacht* [The Night of Broken Glass]) and his later push for the systematic murder of Jewish people throughout Europe suggests that, by his own analysis, German and his own anti-Semitism nonetheless had a strong emotional basis. Both anti-Semitic iterations, emotion-based and reason-based, were already responding to an emotional cause: shame. It was an underlying catalyst, apart from or regardless of the level of violence that may or may not have been involved in terms of how it was felt or expressed. Moreover, Hitler argues in the letter that Jewish people destroy national pride by bringing ridicule. Although he does not name it such, Hitler is here writing about national shame: the self-imagined depreciation of a nation's esteem in the eyes of other nations. Even as early as 1919, Hitler's stated goal was to redeem Germany's national pride through his "redemptive anti-Semitism".

National shame and Hitler's "redemptive anti-semitism"

Hitler left Vienna for Munich in May 1913 just prior to World War I. The legacy of the war helped to cement his anti-Semitism and political opportunism. Moreover, the humiliation felt by Germans as a result of Germany's surrender, the Treaty of Versailles, and the subsequent inflation, depression, and hardships these events imposed on the population created an opportunity for affective mobilizing [54]. And the quickest path to power for Hitler and the Nazis was to take advantage of Germany's already existing anti-Semitic prejudices described above [38,55].

Hitler's early calls for "getting rid of the Jews" meant expelling Jewish people from Germany. The systematic and industrialized murder of Jewish people were not conceived or enacted until the beginning of World War II [56,57]. Some have thus questioned whether Hitler's anti-Semitism stemmed from true conviction, or whether it was primarily a means of stirring up the masses. We do not believe these are mutually exclusive: anti-Semitism was foundational to Hitler's persona, and it was also a powerful tool for rigidifying identity categories. He was able to exploit the extant anti-Jewish climate, belief that some races were superior and others inferior, and the shame of Germany's defeat in World War I together to rally Germans to his cause [8,34,40,58-60]. Hitler's deployment of individual and national shame around Germany's defeat and surrender was buttressed by the contemporary anti-Semitic environment underpinned by the belief in an international Jewish conspiracy.

This shame of defeat was also personal for Hitler. When called for conscription into the Austro-Hungarian army, he was deemed unfit for service. He would later claim that he had not wanted to serve in the Austro-Hungarian army anyway, citing the empires imminent demise due to the "ethnic babel on the streets" and "the foreign mixtures of people which had *begun to corrode this old site of German culture*" ([40], p. 49, emphasis added). Upon returning to Munich, Hitler volunteered for the Bavarian army in spite of his Austrian citizenship. His time in the German army bolstered his nationalistic fervor and his sense of pride: he was multiply awarded for bravery and service. He was also multiply wounded in action--by shrapnel to the leg and partial blindness from mustard gas. Hitler learned of the surrender and the revolution while hospitalized and wrote that "the shame of indignation and disgrace burned [his] brow" (quoted in [40], p. 102). He declared his service to Germany was in vain. In the following days, his feelings of shame and dejection developed into anger and hatred at those he saw as responsible, as well as a commitment to enter politics.

In essence, Hitler deployed the German nation's shame tied to surrender during World War I, along with his own personal shame as a wounded, surrendering, and disgraced German combatant, "as defense against shame" ([61], p. 102) by displacing blame from Germans onto Jewish people. Jewish people were thus a scapegoat for Germany's loss [62]. Germans were receptive to his cause because his "redemptive anti-Semitism" promised to free Germany of the national humiliation incurred from signing the Treaty of Versailles made possible with imagined Jewish collusion.

But German anti-Semitism was entrenched and attributed to more than just the surrender. Many scholars maintain that the high visibility of Jewish Germans in the economy and, indeed, in the culture of Weimar Germany, helped inspire resentment and further nourish theories of a Jewish conspiracy. Although, the number of self-identified Jewish people in Germany totaled less than 1% of the population, they contributed to some aspect of German social life in disproportionate numbers [36,63]. This disproportion became an important aspect of German anti-Semitism, which posited Jewish people as having enough power to fundamentally undermine German society economically, culturally, politically, and biologically. Indeed, it was an important discourse for blaming Jewish people for Germany's various shames in the early 20th century. And Hitler's redemptive anti-Semitism claimed to be freeing the German nation from these shames as well.

The Nuremberg laws

After the Nazis took power in 1933, they increasingly engaged in institutionalizing racial theories through systematically persecuting the Jewish population. These included declaring a national boycott of Jewish businesses, denaturalizing Jewish immigrants, and excluding Jewish people from civil service. Similar restrictions deprived Jewish professionals of their right to practice: Jewish physicians were forbidden to treat Goyim, Jewish people were denied employment by the press and radio, and they were barred from stock exchanges and stock brokerage. Books considered un-German, including many by Jewish authors, were destroyed in a nationwide book burning [36,64].

By 1935, members of the party were advocating more drastic measures against Jewish people. At the annual party rally held in Nuremberg on September 15, 1935, Hitler announced the Nuremberg Laws, which were later passed by a Reichstag composed entirely of Nazi representatives. The Nuremberg Laws rejected the traditional means of identifying Jewish people as members of a religious or ethno-cultural community. Rather, Nazi legislators used birth and "biological" ancestry (blood) as criteria: the Nuremberg Laws defined as legally Jewish anyone who had at least three Jewish grandparents. Individuals were designated Jewish irrespective of whether they identified as such or belonged to the Jewish religious community. Many Germans were suddenly marked as Jewish based on blood quanta [64,65].

United States race legislation was instrumental to the formulation of Nazi regulations. In the late 1920s, Adolf Hitler declared that the United States was the one state making progress toward the creation of a substantive race-based order ([49], p. 658). He was referring to US immigration law's quota system designed to preserve "Nordic" supremacy in the United States [66]. This commitment to placing race at the center of immigration policy extended back to the Naturalization Act of 1790, which gave citizenship to "any alien, being a free white person". Yet immigration was only one aspect that made the U.S. preeminent in racist law. Legislators implemented anti-miscegenation statutes in 30 states, some of which threatened severe criminal punishment for interracial marriage, particularly between black people and white people [67].

US jurisprudence also enforced racial classifications based on the "one-drop rule" that designated as black and members of the sub-dominant group everyone with any African ancestry. This mechanism precluded any choice in self-identification and ensured that all future offspring of any African American ancestry were socially designated as black [67,68]. Its legacy helped maintain white racial privilege by supporting legal and informal barriers to racial equality in most aspects of social life. At the turn of the twentieth century these legal restrictions reached extreme proportions with the institutionalization of Jim Crow segregation. Commonly denied the right to vote through devices like literacy tests, poll taxes, and grandfather clauses, African Americans were de facto second-class citizens.

Whitman maintains German racists followed these practices with keen interest. Indeed, Hitler and the Nazi Party were cautiously optimistic about the United States' future as a white supremacist state. At a 1934 planning meeting for the Nuremberg system, Minister of Justice Franz Gürtner presented a memorandum on US antimiscegenation statutes. Similarly, later president of the Nazi People's Court Roland Freisler declared that US jurisprudence "would suit us perfectly" ([68], p. 160).

Moreover, Hilberg argues Nazi Party activists wanted to adapt the "one-drop" rule for defining Jewishness. They saw "part-Jewish" individuals as being equally significant carriers of "Jewish influence" ([70], p. 66). Civil service bureaucrats and other Nazi observers shuddered at the "human hardness" of the one-drop rule and found it "overly harsh" ([66], p. 4, 127). These bureaucrats wanted to protect what they saw as the "German" part in "part-Jewish" individuals, and thus preferred more porous boundaries for the category. And

although initial legal categorizations allowed for flexible boundaries, eventually legal rights and citizenship were stripped of those with less and less Jewish heritage. Specifically, individuals who had only one or two Jewish grandparents were labeled *Mischlinge*. This “mixed-race” class was not initially stripped of their rights, but their rights were eventually curtailed [69].

Racial ideology and German racialized shame

Thus, the Nuremberg Laws served an important role in further essentializing “German” and “Jewish” identity categories. Tens of thousands of Germans who would not consider themselves Jewish were suddenly without citizenship and, thereby, without political rights [65,70]. These categories were undergirded by notions of defilement, contamination, and impurity and legitimated by racial pseudoscience. Hitler and his cadre used this biologicistic understanding of Jewishness and Germanness, complete with a conception of a miscegenated category, in order to develop a distinctly racialized national shame.

Specifically, Hitler and the Nazis deployed these notions of racial defilement as yet another moral shock to motivate extreme action against Jewish people. Scapegoating Jewish people for feelings of national shame embodied threats to the international status of German nation in a human community, thus producing a blamed target for political action. Accordingly, the demonization and scapegoating of the Jewish population constituted a particularly effective tactic for generating extreme political action. It produced powerful shame about supposed racial impurity—a moral shock—and a clear course of action resulting in policies of extermination. According to the Nazis, this extermination would redeem Germany from the shame of the perceived Jewish “taint” by returning it to its natural state of “purity”.

Nazi Germany's anti-Semitism was a blend of racial ideology and paranoid conspiracy theory, which framed Jewish people as a “racially constituted political subject” ([55], p. 265). Notions of racial defilement, contamination, and impurity combined conspiracy theories of an international Jewry striving for global domination by undermining Germany from within its national borders [51]. Yet Herf maintains the emphasis on biology in analyses of Nazi racism has overshadowed the centrality of imagined Jewish *power* and *influence* in Nazi anti-Semitism.

Nazi anti-Semitism initially involved policies of widespread terrorization culminating in procedures for extermination legitimated by racial pseudoscience and this belief in a Jewish international conspiracy. Jewish people were framed as predatory capitalists and accused of instigating Marxism and other similar ideologies deleterious to the German nation. These conspiracies asserted that Germany was surrounded on all sides by omnipotent Jewish puppeteers who pulled the strings of the “democratic, capitalist West” and the “totalitarian, communist East” [51,52]. Thus, the war against international Jewry and World War II were treated as one and the same: the Jewish populations in Germany and abroad were considered enemy combatants whose objective was to destroy Germany. Nazis argued that Germany had to be proactive and destroy them first [51,55].

The Nazi regime broadcast the threatened extermination of Jewish people to its citizens. Gellately and Herf argue, however, the regime practiced a propaganda of manipulation and deception that was largely successful in suppressing specifics about the final solution and its gruesome empirical details from the German people [54,55]. Indeed, public reaction to the *Kristallnacht* prompted Nazi leadership to conclude, like Hitler in the Gemlich letter, that only moderate and “reasoned”, rather than emotion-based, anti-Semitism would garner popular support. The very secrecy of the Final Solution indicates Nazi leadership's recognition that popular support for persecution through discrimination, as well as elimination through deportation and removal to concentration camps, would not necessarily extend to mass murder.

Yet Reuband's and Johnson's wide-ranging study based on hundreds of interviews and surveys conducted with both Jewish and Christian Germans, concludes millions of Germans knew, or at least heard about, the mass murder of European Jewry, even if many were incredulous, while it was still being carried out [71]. Hitler was able to rally Germans to his cause and take and maintain power through the substantial consent and active participation of large swaths of the population because the emotional appeal of his redemptive anti-Semitism promised to remove the stain from Germany's honor [54]. In so doing, it was vindication for Germany's shame and helped restore the lost national pride Germany incurred from its surrender during the World War I and signing the Treaty of Versailles made possible with Jewish complicity.

Conclusion

We have proposed an approach to understanding collective violence that brings the social-emotional world back into perspective. We began with an overview of the relationship between emotion and cognition, and of the important role emotion plays in consolidating collective identities and motivating collective action. From there, we developed a case for understanding shame, and especially *national* shame, as an important factor for understanding the reasons for collective violence in Nazi Germany. Specifically, we explored Hitler's personal shame, and the various local sources of shame that were blamed on Jewish people, in order to elaborate the degree to which feelings of shame pervaded German anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic violence.

Specifically, there were three primary arenas in which Jewish Germans were scapegoated as the source of German shame. First, Hitler and the Nazis propagated beliefs about the racial degeneration of "German stock" brought about through the intermarriage of Jewish people and Germans. Second, Hitler capitalized on latent beliefs in an infiltration of German culture, politics, and social life by both Jewish elites and common people. Third, and stemming from this purported infiltration, Hitler renewed German antipathy towards Jewish people tied to their alleged role in the "shame of 1919". Although considerable attention has been given to collective guilt or shame originating in Germany's crimes of the Holocaust [29,59], this earlier shame of 1919 was a significant contributing factor to those later crimes in the first place. Certainly, we do not argue that shame alone can explain the course of the Holocaust. Rather, we further nuance the narrative and argue that emotions are inextricably bound with material concerns about territory, resources, and geopolitical power, on the one hand, and ideological concerns about cultural production, on the other.

Therefore, rather than replacing these more standard political and economic arguments, this perspective on the causes of violence further develops the fields of history, political science, sociology, and psychology. If it is true that shame leads to impulses for revenge and, ultimately, to violence at the collective level, then, it is all the more important that we, as social scientists and citizens, try to make the social-emotional world as visible and important as the political-economic one. In doing so, we develop additional avenues for understanding important collective social phenomena without relying solely on individualistic rational economism.

Moreover, the framework developed here can be particularly helpful for understanding other major social movements. Accounting for shame at the individual and national levels helps develop analyses of other contemporary phenomena such as the Vietnam war--another example of war tied to shame and pride--or the Trump election or Brexit. From this perspective, these electoral results, for example, and the substantial mobilization that produced them are more than just the products of individuals making decisions about their own finances or life situations, but also seeking to redeem their nation and their selves by absolving their shame. Thus, emotions combine with cognition to produce motivations and courses of action that are responding to material and ideological circumstances. This more holistic understanding of human decision-making and human social life is key for further developing sociological understandings of collective and individual phenomena.

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