The impacts of legitimacy appraisal of defeat on supporters' identity management strategies:
Testing the role of emotions

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Emotion is a central feature of many competitive sports. In this regard, research revealed that defeats have powerful impacts on athletes who can feel deeply distressed or annoyed. Comparatively, relatively few studies have directly addressed the emotional experience of supporters associated with losing teams. This is surprising when taking into account the negative consequences of emotions on intergroup relations (i.e., fans riots). To fill this gap, it is crucial to identify to whom these emotions are addressed. In this study, we proposed that the object of specific emotions would trigger the use of specific identity management strategies depending on the legitimacy appraisal of the defeat. To test this mediational process, supporters of the French national rugby team were asked to read sport news articles (fictional) where the (il)legitimacy of defeats outcomes had been manipulated. The results generally supported our predictions: Anger and respect, when exclusively directed at outgroup, mediated the link between legitimacy and antisocial tendencies. Conversely, pride when exclusively directed at ingroup mediated the link between legitimacy and status display tendencies. Shame did not predict any strategy. We discussed the importance of the athletes as role models to regulate supporters' emotions and their impact on intergroup relations.

KEY WORDS: Object of emotion, Identity threat, Legitimacy appraisal, sport fandom, identity management strategies.

Introduction

Violence in stadiums is an important issue and repression is the dominant response of most national authorities. In 2018, the DNLH (Division Nationale de Lutte contre le Hooliganisme) reported that violence is the second reason for arresting supporters after the use of smoke bombs. Recent work by social psychologists has demonstrated that a supporter can feel various specific emotions following a defeat or a victory of the team supported, ranging from anger, shame and sadness to happiness, pride and respect (Crisp, Heuston, Farr, & Turner, 2007; Kerr, Wilson, Nakamura, & Sudo, 2005). It is important to specify that those emotions can deeply influence inter-group relations (Mackie & Smith, 2018).

Surprisingly, despite significant advances leading to a better understanding of the impact of game outcomes on specific emotions, past research has not raised the question of the object of emotion: To whom are these emotions addressed? Following a defeat, can a supporter feel positive emotions towards his team but also towards an opponent? Can anger (or shame) be felt towards the opposing team simply because it defeated the team I support or towards the team I support because it performed disappointingly? Understanding appraisals of defeat and associated emotions can offer new perspectives to intervene in a complementary way of repression. The aim of the present research is precisely to test for the first time the role played by the object of emotions in the relationship between defeat appraisals and intergroup relationships.

Intergroup Emotions Theory

Based on the theories of cognitive appraisal of emotions (CAE; Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985), the intergroup emotions theory (IET; Mackie, Devos, & Smith 2000) focused on the social identity approach (SIA; Haslam, 2004) to predict intergroup emotions and the behavioral tendencies associated with them. Emotion would be elicited by a set of appraisals that reflect the core meaning of the current situation and self-categorization - as individuals or group members (also called the *subject of emotion*, Iyer & Leach, 2008), would determine how people appraise intergroup context, feel about, and react towards an event (for reviews see Cottrell & Neuberg, 2015; Keltner & Lerner, 2010). More specifically, since emotions are associated with specific behavioral tendencies (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991) and when group membership is salient, people react emotionally to situations affecting the ingroup, even if they do not contribute

personally to them (Iyer & Leach, 2008; Mackie et al., 2000). For example, group-based anger is associated with the appraisal tendency of offense against self (Lazarus, 1991) and to offensive action tendencies (e.g., Devos, 2005) or restoration of justice (Small & Lerner, 2008).

In the sports context, Sloan's initial research (1979) showed in a study involving 46 basket-ball supporters, that they reported increased anger after a loss, but barely did so after a win. By contrast, happiness decreased after a loss and rose following a win. However, in accordance with the IET, some results have revealed that the level of ingroup identification moderated these effects (e.g., Bernache-Assollant, Laurin, Bouchet, Bodet, & Lacassagne, 2010; Wann, Dolan, McGeorge, & Allison, 1994): Highly identified supporters felt more positive emotions following a victory and more negative emotions following a defeat than lowly identified (for a review, see Wann, 2006). Beyond the opposition of emotions in terms of valence, Crisp et al. (2007) identified different negative emotions felt following a defeat in focusing on the level of ingroup identification. The results obtained from 60 male supporters showed that lower identifiers felt sad but not angry, whereas higher identifiers felt angry but not sad. In addition, it has been established that anger played a mediating role in the relationship between ingroup identification and approach tendency, whereas sadness mediates the relationship between ingroup identification and avoidance tendency (Crisp et al., 2007). In sum, intergroup emotions seem to be robust mediators of the effects of context appraisals on behaviors (Mackie et al., 2000), because emotions are directly and more strongly related to behaviors than cognitive appraisals (Frijda, 1986; Roseman, Wiest & Swartz, 1994).

Object Of Emotion And Legitimacy Of The Intergroup Context

To better understand the relationship between group-based emotions and intergroup relations, the *object of the emotion* has been pointed out in an extension of the IET to differentiate between the intergroup emotions (see Iyer and Leach, 2008). Emotions directed at different targets may have different implications for intergroup relations. In fact, emotions can be directed at different objects (ingroup versus outgroup) via the manipulation of the intergroup context, as a source of group threat (Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007).

For instance, Harth, Kessler, & Leach (2008) proposed taking into account the legitimacy of the situation in this process, i.e. the appraisal of whether the intergroup structure is deserved or undeserved. In their study, these authors found that the emotions felt by advantaged ingroup members

vary depending on the legitimacy of a given status. For instance, when inequality is legitimate from an ingroup point of view, the participants mostly experience pride. However, when inequality is illegitimate (and also ingroup focused), the participants mostly experience guilt. Finally, pride led participants to oppose help to a disadvantaged outgroup whereas guilt was a weak predictor of behavioral tendencies. Hence, the appraisal of the circumstances leading to the outcome of the game, such as its (il)legitimacy (i.e., because reached by fair means or not, see Harth et al., 2008) can directly determine the emotion felt and the associated behavior tendencies.

The consideration of the legitimacy of intergroup contexts pointed out the importance of focusing on the object of emotion in interaction with specific appraisals of the situation. Indeed, this line of research can be closely related to the legitimacy dimension defined as the appraisal of whether the (good or bad) outcome is deserved or undeserved (see e.g., Roseman, 1984; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). When transposed to the field of sport fandom, the legitimacy appraisal of the intergroup context raises the question of the dominant perspective which considers that *all victories and defeats may be equally fair*. Indeed, contrasted situations can occur, such as an ingroup defeat or victory that can be appraised as fair and legitimate and, on the contrary, as unfair and illegitimate.

The interest of the relationship between legitimacy appraisal and elicited group-based emotions lies in the potential understanding of the role of the object of emotions in the intergroup context and of the associated identity management strategies. Indeed, according to the IET, self-categorization as ingroup members would determine how supporters react towards an event and others (Mackie et al., 2000). Some approaches emphasize the fairness used to reach a goal besides deservingness (e.g., Harth et al., 2008; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and this can be a crucial determinant in the emotion elicitation and in the likelihood of action tendencies towards specific groups (i.e., identity management strategies).

From an IET perspective (Mackie et al., 2000), we proposed that supporters will appraise defeats differently according to the legitimacy of the intergroup context, which should in turn determine the identity management strategies. Furthermore, the preferential object of group-based emotion that arises in these situations should mediate these relationships.

Legitimacy appraisal, emotion and identity management strategies

SIA research has identified several specific identity management strategies, defined as behavioral or cognitive action tendencies that are used to

protect the personal or social identity of an individual (see Blantz, Mummendey, Mielke, & Klink, 1998; Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995) following an ingroup defeat (Bernache-Assollant, 2010; Wann, 2006). These strategies, divided into three broad categories, namely social competition, social creativity and individual mobility are associated with specific emotions: Anger, respect, pride and shame. We based our propositions on the work of Keltner and Lerner (2010) who offered a taxonomy of positive and negative emotions and their related emotional functions.

Blasting, Anger And Respect

Research on sport fandom suggests that supporters may use competitive strategies to protect a positive social identity following defeats, such as derogating (e.g., fight, insults, etc…) the opponents and the outgroup fans in particular. This strategy, which referred to the social competition option of the SIA, has been labeled *blasting* (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980) and partly explained intergroup riots in the stands. According to the specific appraisals of the defeats, two emotions are directly linked to this strategy.

First, anger is typically directed at an agent appraised to be responsible for the unfairness (Frijda, 1986) or a prejudice (Tapias, Glaser, Keltner, Vasquez & Wickens, 2007). In addition, anger is often associated with the goal of actively challenging unfairness and confronting the agents responsible, particularly at the intergroup levels (Mackie et al., 2000). As a consequence, supporters' anger may be directed preferentially at an outgroup target that is blamed for a transgression (Montada & Schneider, 1989) than at an ingroup member and following an *illegitimate* defeat, and would lead to anti-social tendencies, such as a tendency to move against the outgroup (Mackie et al., 2000). Consequently, we expected that H1) following an *illegitimate* defeat, anger directed at the outgroup (and not at the ingroup) should predict the use of blasting.

Second, respect is partly based on the appraisals of the achievements of another person or group (e.g., Simon, & Grabow, 2014). At the group level, people generally feel some form of respect for another group because their members are good in their field, or because they have trained hard to reach a goal, or because they demonstrated particular moral qualities (see e.g., Laham, Tam, Lalljee, Hewstone, & Voci, 2010). In other words, respect is offered to group members because they deserved what they got, like after a legitimate victory. Thus, outgroup positive behaviors (in terms of quality of play and fair-play) demonstrated following a *legitimate* defeat (or legitimate

victory from an outgroup point of view), should lead to more respect than following an *illegitimate* defeat. No such emotion was anticipated in regard to the ingroup team, because whatever the type of defeat (*legitime* or *illegitime*), the ingroup positive behaviors don't lead to a deserved outcome (i.e, they lose). As for the potential implications for intentions regarding the outgroup, recent evidence has implicated the emotion of respect in the improvement of intergroup relations (e.g., Ellemers, Doosje, & Spears, 2004; Simon, & Grabow, 2014). Consequently, we expected that H2) respect toward the outgroup (and not toward the ingroup) decrease the use of outgroup antisocial tendencies, such as blasting, following a *legitimate* defeat.

Boosting, Ncding And Pride

The supporters may also use social creativity strategies to build a positive social identity, such as *boosting* (Finch & Cialdini, 1989) which consists in accentuating the future success of the team (e.g., positive predictions of ingroup team performance), and creating new comparison dimensions between teams *(NCDing;* Lalonde, Mogaddam, & Taylor, 1987) which consists in maintaining the superiority of the team (or supporters) on the dimensions that seemed to be relatively independent from performance (e.g., songs and encouragements of the ingroup fans, ability of the ingroup players). According to Keltner and Lerner's (2010) taxonomy, those strategies are associated with a sense of pride.

In the main, pride is a positive ingroup-focused emotion that arises from appraised responsibility for a legitimate achievement (Tracy & Robins, 2007) and when the ingroup has a legitimate advantage over outgroups (e.g., Harth et al., 2008) or won a competition (see Leach, Snider & Iyer, 2002). Group-based pride can also arise from considering the ingroup as being moral (and not from the characteristics of competence and sociability; Leach et al., 2007). In our mind, pride has never been studied in defeat situations, but this emotion may have implications for the intentions regarding the ingroup (Harth, Leach, & Kessler, 2013). Pride is of course associated with success in a competition (Leach et al., 2002) but also with self-enhancing biases, such as attributions or social-comparisons that elevate the self over others (Oveis, Horberg & Keltner, 2010) and with the tendency to "pep up" the status of the ingroup (Tracy & Robins, 2007) and to motivate the intentions for the exclusive benefit of the ingroup (Harth et al., 2013). Thus, when transposed to the context of sport fandom, an *illegitimate* defeat should lead to more pride than a *legitimate* defeat, because the ingroup would remain moral (ingroup

team has given its best despite the defeat, Leach et al., 2007). We expected that following an *illegitimate* defeat, pride directed at the ingroup (and not towards the outgroup) would enhance the strategies to protect the team from the damage of the defeat; and thus to mediate status display tendencies, such as boosting (H3a) and NCDing (H3b).

MATing And Shame

Finally, the supporters can hide their support to their team to protect their social identity (e.g., leaving the stadium early, take off their team jersey). This phenomenon, which is similar to the SIA's concept of social mobility, is known as Cutting of Reflected Failure--CORFing (Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986). CORFing is a corollary of the BIRGing phenomenon which consists in accentuating the association to a team after a victory (see Cialdini et al., 1976). The two phenomena have been conceptualized as bipolar end-points along a continuum and the term *MATing* (Moving Away/Toward the Ingroup, Bernache-Assollant, Bodet, Bouchet, & Kada, 2010) has been proposed. The emotion of shame will be directly related to this strategy (Keltner & Lerner, 2010).

More precisely, because the *legitimate* defeat situation represents a threat to the ingroup image (the ingroup team has not been good and fair-play), shame should be the most typical emotion directed at the ingroup. Shame originates from the appraisals of (ingroup) responsibility for a transgression (Johns, Schmader, & Lickel, 2005; Lickel et al., 2005). Generally, people who feel shame in an intergroup context perceive a threat to their image in that the transgression is believed to reflect a flaw in their group's identity (Lickel et al., 2005), and shame leads individuals to hide or withdraw from the shame-generating situation (Johns et al., 2005; Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996). We therefore expected the participants to feel ashamed particularly following a *legitimate* defeat and more particularly towards their ingroup. The hypothesis was that H4) following a *legitimate* defeat, shame directed at the ingroup (and not towards the outgroup) would enhance the strategies to dissociate from the ingroup team, and thus to mediate the MATing strategy.

The present research

We designed this study to ascertain the mediation processes of the object of emotions in the relationship between legitimacy vs. illegitimacy appraisal

of defeat and identity management strategies. The participants were blocked on their social identity as French supporters, and we manipulated the (il)legitimacy appraisal of defeat along the dimensions of *competence* and *morality* (Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007), in a fictional rugby match report to be read by the participants. We expected that different group-based emotions would arise from the legitimacy appraisal manipulation and that the object of these emotions would determine the use of specific identity management strategies (see Figure 1 for a conceptual model).

Method

Participants

Participants of sport psychology classes self-identified as supporters of the French national team were recruited in a French university. Only people who were mildly or highly interested in the French national team were approached to participate in this study. The final sample ($N = 58$) was mainly male (86.21%), young ($M_{age} = 18.80$ years, $SD = .32$) and reasonably highly identified to the ingroup of French supporters ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .30$). Finally, on average, participants were supporters of the French team for 4.72 years ($SD = .76$) and follow it on television frequently ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.32$ on a 7 point Likert scale from 1 "*Never*" to 7 "*Always*").[1]

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions (*legitimacy* versus *illegitimacy* of the defeat, $n = 29$ in each condition). Although the relatively small sample size was not ideal, a sensitivity analysis of the obtained power of the design conducted with G*Power 3 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) indicates that the design is still able to detect a .37 effect size (large effect) with a power of .80 and an α of .05 (or a power of .87 with an α of .10). Thus, the design still had a reasonable chance of detecting some effects.

Despite the absence of legal requirements from an ethics committee for non-interventional research outside of biological and medical development in France, we used the ethical standards set by the Psychology Department that follows the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2017) for the ethical treatment of human participants. The participants to this study gave their informed consent at the beginning of the study.

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[1] Initially, 66 participants were recruited. However, we included two measures to control the level of bias and interpretation differences among them. First, we checked if participants reported the correct game score (i.e., 30 for Wales and 24 for France). We found that it was the case for 95.4% of them and only 3 participants were excluded from the analyses. Nevertheless, after including these participants, we were able to replicate our models. Second, because the experiment was programmed using the E-prime © software, we were able to record the time spent reading the article and then completing the questionnaire. Five participants were excluded from the analyses because their reading and completion time was less than 1mn.
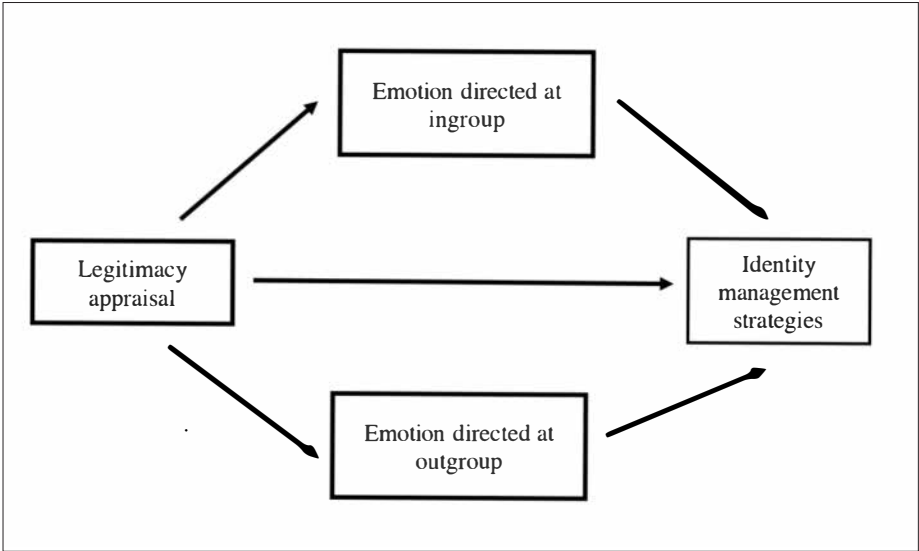
Fig. 1. - Conceptual model of the relation between legitimacy appraisal of team defeat, and identity management strategies (blasting, boosting, NDCing and MATing), mediated by emotions (anger, respect, pride and shame) directed toward ingroup or outgroup.

LEGITIMACY MANIPULATION

The participants were told that they were participating in a experiment at individual workstations in a laboratory setting, with up to two participants per session. All the experiment was programmed using the E-prime © software.

First, the participants were asked to complete demographic items requesting age and gender and two items about the usual national-rugby-team supporter-related behavior (years as a supporter of the national rugby team and average frequency of games watched on TV). To check whether the participants identified with the ingroup, we used the scale of Doosje et al. (1995) (Cronbach's α = .90). A fictive sport news article was then presented to the participants and said to have been written by a "foreigner" journalist (to avoid any particular focus on an ingroup or outgroup belonging) from an expert website on international rugby competitions. This article was about a game between France and Wales that took place during the 2011 Rugby Union World Cup and underlined in both conditions the defeat of the French team (24-30). As mentioned before, we manipulated the legitimacy of the game outcome in the dimensions "competent vs not competent" and "fair-play vs not fair-play". In details, defeat can be considered as legitime or deserved when Wales showed a professional/competent play all along the match with respectful behaviors towards the adversary whereas the French team showed a very incompetent play and was not particularly respectful towards the welsh

players and supporters in the *legitimacy* condition. Conversely, in the *illegitimacy* condition, the French team showed a professional play and respected the Welsh team whereas the Welsh team showed a very incompetent play and was not particularly respectful towards the French players and supporters (see texts in Appendixes 1 and 2). This presentation allows us to directly manipulate the perceived legitimacy of the defeat, while maintaining the conditions, the target outgroup, the game context and the final game score constant.

Measures of legitimacy and pleasantness appraisals. Just after reading the article, participants were asked to report the score of the game. Then, to measure the effect of experimental manipulation, the participants were asked to rate the legitimacy of the defeat they perceived on three related items (Cronbach's α = .89) anchored by a 11-point scale that varied from -5 (*very unfair/illegitimate/undeserved*) to +5 (*very fair/legitimate/deserved*). Then, in order to control the potential impact of perceived legitimacy of the ingroup defeat on the perceived unpleasantness of the defeat, the participants were asked to report on a single item with a 11-point Likert scale in what extent they found the match as being *unpleasant (-5)* to *pleasant (+ 5)*. All these items were adapted from the Dimensional Ratings Questionnaire of Emotions (see Smith & Ellsworth, 1985).

EMOTIONS OBJECT MEASURES

The measure of emotions was intended to access the participants' emotional reactions to the defeat. The participants were asked to rate their emotions on a single item each time (anger, respect, pride and shame adapted from Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007; Harth et al. 2008) directed at two different objects (ingroup vs. outgroup) on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very much so*)[2].

Identity management strategies. The Sport Spectator Identity Management Scale (SSIMS; Bernache-Assollant et al., 2010) was used to measure the main four identity management strategies identified in the literature. The SSIMS comprises 12 items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 - *completely disagree* / 7 - *completely agree*). Three items were averaged to produce a blasting measure (e.g., "If I had to, I would not hesitate to insult the fans of the opposite team"; Cronbach's α = .87). Three items were averaged to produce a boosting measure (e.g., "I think that the French team will win more trophies in the future than it did in the past"; Cronbach's α = .77). Three items were averaged to produce the NDCing measure (e.g., "There's no doubt that the French team has the best fans in the world"; Cronbach's α = .54) and three items were averaged to produce the MATing measure (e.g., "I want to communicate to others my support for the French team"; Cronbach's α = .88).

The order of the objects of emotions and strategies presented was counterbalanced between the participants. Lastly, the participants received 5 euros of financial compensation to buy sports vouchers (approx. $6) and were fully debriefed. The procedure lasted approximately 30 minutes.

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[2] Some additional emotional measures were included for exploratory purposes in this experiment. These are not reported because these are not related to the identity management strategies used in this experiment and we wished to keep the presentation simple and to the point as well.

Results

Preliminary Analyses and Manipulation Check

Regarding identification with the ingroup of French supporters, there was no significant difference between the experimental conditions, $F(1, 56)$ = .28, p = .60 (see means and standard deviations in Table I)[3].

Table I
Descriptive Statistics (Means And Standard Deviations) For Dependent Variables As A Function Of Legitimacy Condition And Object Of Emotions

	Illegitimate Defeat		Legitimate Defeat	
	M (SD)		M (SD)	
Identification levels	4.32 (.30)		4.09 (.30)	
Defeat appraisals				
Legitimacy	- 2.04 (.35)		2.16 (.35)	
Pleasantness	1.10 (.48)		1.28 (.48)	
Strategies[a]				
Blasting	1.63 (1.34)		1.07 (0.21)	
Boosting	4.45 (1.35)		3.61 (1.34)	
NDCing	5.11 (1.18)		4.40 (1.17)	
MATing	3.92 (1.64)		3.83 (1.66)	
Emotions[b]	Ingroup	Outgroup	Ingroup	Outgroup
Anger	1.30 (1.38)	1.22 (1.15)	0.48 (0.71)	0.56 (0.82)
Respect	2.62 (1.08)	1.86 (1.03)	2.69 (0.89)	3.07 (0.65)
Pride	2.32 (1.06)	1.36 (1.28)	1.68 (1.16)	1.38 (1.34)
Shame	0.32 (0.86)	0.46 (0.92)	0.46 (0.92)	0.48 (0.88)

Note. [a] Scores vary between 1 and 7. Blasting (i.e., derogating outgroup), Boosting (i.e., optimistic predictions about future ingroup status or performance), NDCing (i.e., maintaining superiority of ingroup via comparisons on other dimensions than performance), MATing (i.e., moving away/toward the ingroup).[b] Scores vary between 0 and 4.

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[3] Because of the potential effect of identification on emotions (Crisp et al., 2007), we tested whether ingroup identification could differentially influence the mediating effects observed. Regarding this, separate hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted. In the first step, we entered the main threat effects (−1 for illegitimacy and +1 for legitimacy)

As expected, the participants reported that the French defeat was more legitimate in the *legitimacy* condition than in the *illegitimacy* condition, $F(1, 56) = 73.04$, $MSE = 3.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .57$. However, there was no significant difference in the level of pleasantness reported by the participants between the *legitimate* and the *illegitimate* French defeat, $F(1, 56) = .06$, $p = .80$ (see means in table I).

ANALYTIC PLAN

Our goal was to propose that supporters would appraise the defeats differently according to the legitimacy of the intergroup context, which should in turn determine the likelihood of action tendencies towards specific groups (i.e., identity management strategies). Furthermore, the preferential object of group-based emotion that arises in these situations should mediate these relationships. We suggested testing this proposition about the emotions associated with identified core appraisal themes of the situation and specific identity management strategies: Anger, respect, pride and shame.

In order to test this idea, we conducted separate mediational analyses for each identity management strategy, with ingroup versus outgroup directed emotions as potential mediators. For each strategy, we systematically began those analyses with the emotions of greatest interest for our hypotheses (i.e., anger and respect for blasting, pride for boosting and NCDing, shame for MATing).

We first regressed the dependent variable (DV; strategy) on the independent variable (IV; (il)legitimacy of game outcome) to reveal if the strategy proved to be right for the mediational analysis. The same logic was applied to the mediation variable (MV; emotion directed at ingroup and outgroup) which was regressed on the independent variable (IV). Then, the DV was regressed on both IV and MV. Mediation is supported when the IV has no significant effect on DV when the MV is controlled. Finally, we used bootstrapping analyses using the SPSS Process macro (see Hayes, 2013; Model 4). All estimates that follow are based on 5,000 bootstrap samples with bias-corrected confidence intervals. Bootstrapping involves computing a confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effect (i.e., the path through the mediator). If the value of zero lies outside the interval, the indirect effect (i.e., full mediation) is statistically significant at $p < .05$.

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and ingroup identification. In the second step, we added the two-way interactions between ingroup identification (centered) and legitimacy. In line with the model of Iyer and Leach (2008), there was no moderation effect of ingroup identification on the link between game outcome-difference and in/outgroup emotions reported, whatever the emotion (all $ps > .23$).

Blasting. As shown in Figure 2, the analyses indicated that (il)legitimacy appraisal significantly predicted supporters' use of blasting, $t(58) = -2.24$, $p = .029$, $\eta^2 = .08$, as well as anger directed at outgroup and ingroup, $t(58) = -2.37$, $p = .022$, $\eta^2 = .09$; and $t(58) = -2.64$, $p = .011$, $\eta^2 = .11$, respectively. The analyses further indicated that the direct effect of legitimacy on blasting lost significance when the mediators were included in the model, $t(58) = -1.43$, $p = .16$. Anger directed at the outgroup significantly and positively predicted blasting, $t(58) = 2.65$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .11$, contrary to anger directed at the ingroup, $t(58) = -.78$, $p = .44$. Finally, as hypothesized (H1), the bootstrap results revealed support for full mediation by anger directed at the outgroup
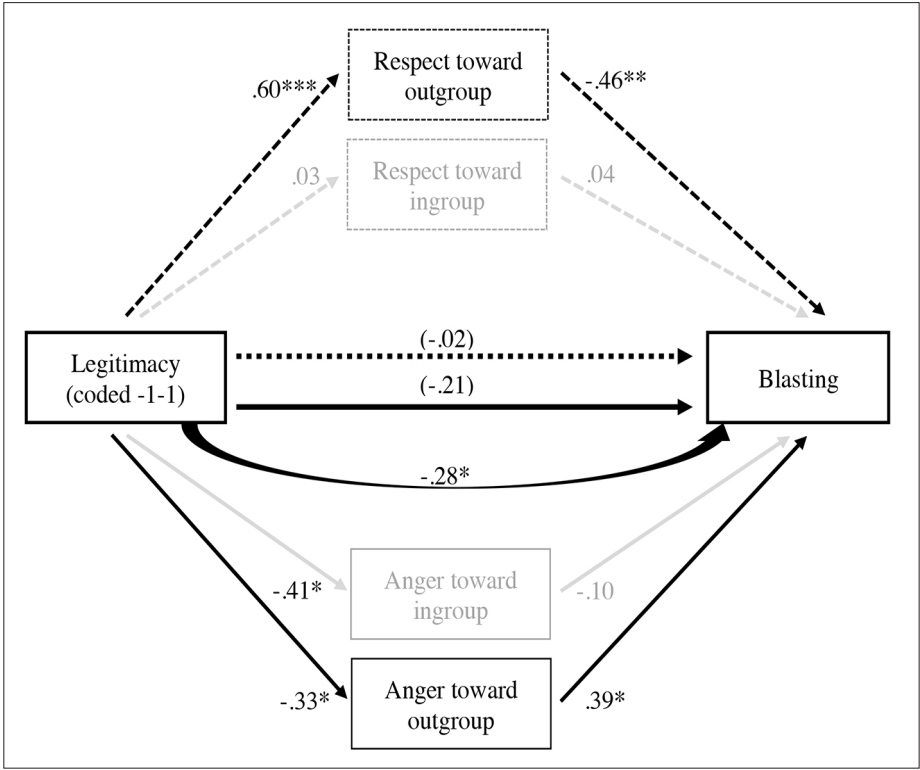

Fig. 2. - Mediational model of the role of anger and respect directed at outgroup versus ingroup in explaining the legitimacy–blasting relationship following a match loss.
Note. Path values represent unstandardized regression coefficients. The values in brackets correspond to the effects of legitimacy when the mediator was included in bootstrapping analyses. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

since all CIs were above zero (indirect effect, CI [-.38, -.01]), but not by anger directed at the ingroup (CI [-.07, .21]).

With regard to respect, the analyses indicated that (il)legitimacy appraisal significantly predicted respect directed at the outgroup, $t(58) = 5.35$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .33$, but not at the ingroup, $t(58) = .26$, $p = .79$. The analyses further indicated that the direct effect of legitimacy on blasting lost significance when the mediators were included in the model, $t(58) = -.02$, $p = .98$. Respect directed at the outgroup significantly and negatively predicted blasting, $t(58) = -3.28$, $p < .002$, $\eta^2 = .16$, contrary to anger directed at the ingroup, $t(58) = -.31$, $p = .76$. Finally, in line with H2, the bootstrap results revealed support for full mediation by respect directed at the outgroup (indirect effect, CI [-.71, -.03]) but not by respect directed at the ingroup (CI [-.05, .02]).

No such indirect effects were found for the other emotions of pride (CI [-.05, .04], & [-.04, .15], for outgroup and ingroup respectively) and shame (CI [-.22, .11], & [-.06, .03], for outgroup and ingroup respectively).

Boosting

As shown in Figure 3, the analyses indicated that (il)legitimacy appraisal significantly predicted the supporters' use of boosting, $t(58) = -2.38$, $p = .021$, $\eta^2 = .09$, as well as pride directed at the ingroup, $t(58) = -2.17$, $p = .034$, $\eta^2 = .08$, but not at the outgroup, $t(58) = .00$, $p = 1$. The analyses further indicated that the direct effect of legitimacy on boosting lost significance when the mediators were included in the model, $t(58) = -1.66$, $p = .10$. Pride directed at the ingroup marginally and positively predicted boosting, $t(58) = 1.91$, $p = .062$, $\eta^2 = .06$, contrary to pride directed at the outgroup, $t(58) = -.24$, $p = .82$. Finally, as hypothesized (H3a), the bootstrap results revealed support for mediation by pride directed at the ingroup (indirect effect, CI [-.32, -.004]), but not by pride directed at the outgroup (CI [-.05, .06]).

Unexpectedly, we also found indirect effects of the emotions of anger and respect (see figure 3), exclusively when those are directed at the outgroup (anger: CI [-.47, -.03], & [-.19, .10], and respect: CI [-.73, -.10], & [-.06, .13], for outgroup and ingroup respectively). Finally, no mediation effects was found for shame (CI [-.07, .07], & [-.17, .03]).

NDCing. The results achieved indicated that (il)legitimacy appraisal significantly predicted the supporters' use of NDCing, $t(58) = -2.31$, $p = .025$, $\eta^2 = .08$ (see Figure 4). The analyses further revealed that the direct effect of legitimacy on NCDing lost significance when the emotions of pride were included in the model, $t(58) = -1.61$, $p = .11$. Pride directed at the ingroup marginally and positively predicted NDCing, $t(58) = 1.85$, $p = .07$, $\eta^2 = .06$,
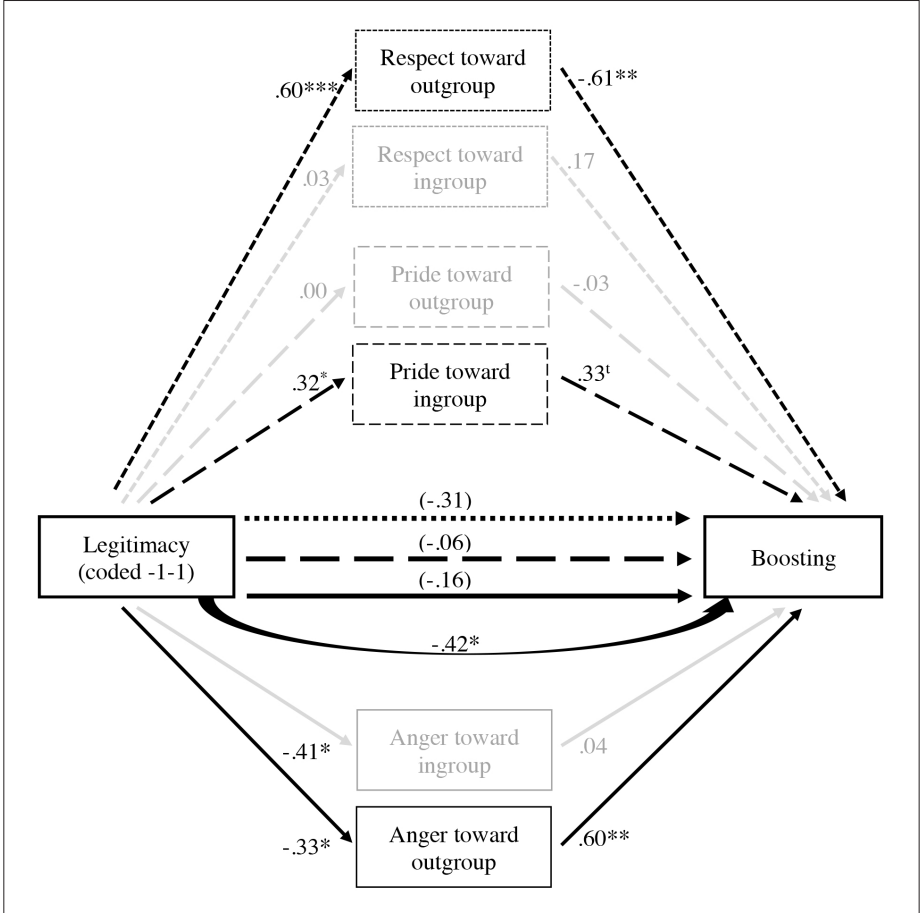
Fig. 3. - Mediational model of the role of pride, anger and respect directed at outgroup versus ingroup in explaining the legitimacy–boosting relationship following a match loss.
Note. Path values represent unstandardized regression coefficients. The values in brackets correspond to the effects of legitimacy when the mediator was included in bootstrapping analyses. $^t p < .07$. $^* p < .05$. $^{**} p < .01$. $^{***} p < .001$.

contrary to pride directed at the outgroup, $t(58) = -.28$, $p = .78$. Finally, as hypothesized in H3b, the bootstrap results revealed support for mediation by pride directed at the ingroup (indirect effect, CI [-.28, -.008]), but not by pride directed at the outgroup (CI [-.05, .05]) (see Figure 4).
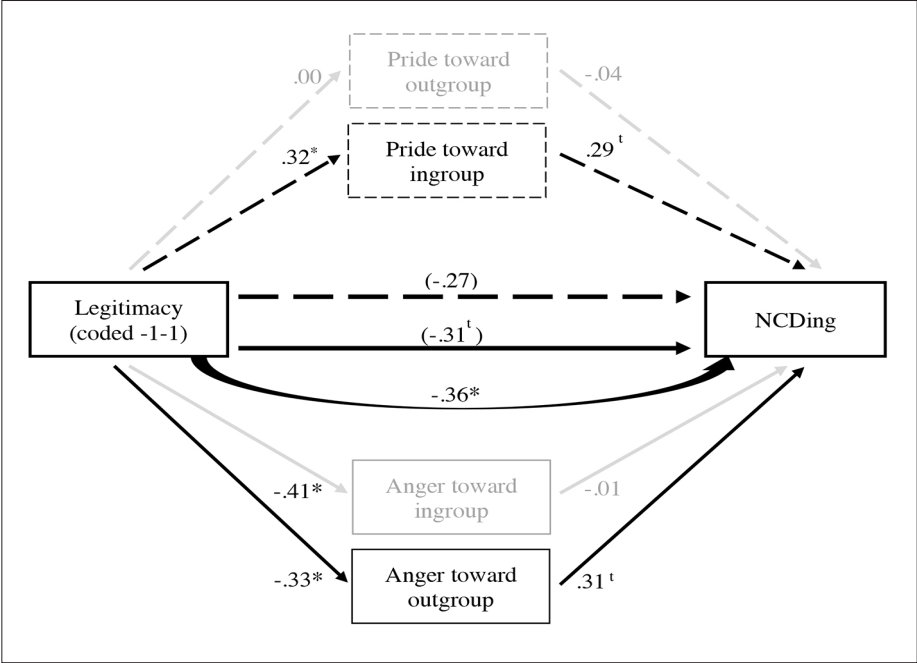
Fig. 4. - Mediational model of the role of pride and anger directed at outgroup versus ingroup in explaining the legitimacy–NCDing relationship following a match loss. *Note*. Path values represent unstandardized regression coefficients. The values in brackets correspond to the effects of legitimacy when the mediator was included in bootstrapping analyses. $^t p < .10$. $^* p < .05$.

As for boosting, we also found indirect effects for anger, exclusively when directed at the outgroup (CI [-.29, -.01], & [-.12, .14], for outgroup and ingroup respectively). Finally, no mediation effects was found for respect (CI [-.38, .14], & [-.04, .07]) and shame (CI [-.11, .10], & [-.15, .01]).

MATing. Regarding the effect of (il)legitimacy appraisal on MATing, the initial regression analysis revealed no significant relationship ($\beta = -.02$; $p = .83$). Since it was not a viable item for testing mediation, we did not consider carrying out further analyses. Consequently, H4 was not supported.

Discussion

In the context of an international rugby competition (i.e., World Cup), we wanted to bring out that a team defeat perceived as *legitimate* versus *ille-*

gitimate can elicit distinct emotions (anger, respect, pride and shame) direct-ed at different targets (French team vs Welsh team) in its supporters which would explain distinct identity management strategies. The results achieved were generally in line with our expectations.

Concerning the interrelationship between legitimacy appraisal, the emo-tions of anger and respect and the strategy of blasting, results are in support of our hypotheses (H1 & H2). We found that supporters who perceived the defeat of their team as being *illegitimate* reported greater anger directed at the outgroup but not at the ingroup (Montada & Schneider, 1989). In sup-port of IET (Mackie et al., 2000), outgroup-directed *anger* leads to the inten-tion to move against the outgroup (i.e., blasting). Conversely, supporters who perceived that the defeat of their team was *legitimate* reported greater *respect* directed at the outgroup but not at the ingroup. This emotional pattern leads to a decrease in the use of the blasting strategy (e.g., Ellemers, Doosje, & Spears, 2004; Simon, & Grabow, 2014). To the best of our knowledge, those results that supported hypotheses 1 and 2 are the first evidence demonstrat-ing that *all defeats are not equal* When a defeat results from negative out-group behaviors (incompetent play and anti-fair-play behaviors) and positive ingroup behaviors (intense involvement on the field and respect towards the outgroup team), the supporters perceived the situation as *illegitimate* and felt negative emotions (anger) exclusively when directed at the ougroup. A defeat resulting from the opposite combination (i.e., outgroup positive and ingroup negative behaviors) is perceived by supporters as being *legitimate* and results in feeling positive emotions (respect) but exclusively when those are directed at the outgroup. Those *qualitatively* different appraisals of a de-feat drive opposite behavioral tendencies: Increasing the probability of con-frontation with opposite supporters vs. decreasing it.

We also tested whether supporters could experience pride following a defeat, and would use more the boosting and NCDing strategies as a re-sult. Our pattern of results first suggest that the traditional pairings of defeat with negative emotions is not always automatic. Indeed, we found that when supporters perceived a defeat as *illegitimate* (partly because their team was good on the ground and fair play with the opponent contrary to the oppo-nent), they feel pride towards their ingroup (Harth et al., 2013). In line with hypotheses 3a and 3b and past research (e.g., Tracy & Robins, 2007), this positive emotion leads to the intention to "pep up" the status of the team (i.e., boosting) and to maintain the superiority of the ingroup on dimensions that are independent from performance (i.e., NCDing). Although the sport fandom literature remains relatively scarce on this issue, prior research on pride can lend some credence to claim that this emotion (and its associate

strategies) could be adaptive to actively challenging injustice. A case in point would be the work of Leach et al. (2007). In particular, they hypothesized and found out (studies 4 and 5), that individuals who belong to an in-group which is high in morality should take more pride in it than individuals who belong to an in-group which is low in morality. No such effects were found regarding the competence and sociability dimensions.

Finally, when we look at the relationship between legitimacy appraisal, shame and the strategy of MATing, we expected that following a *legitimate* defeat, shame directed at the ingroup (and not towards the outgroup) would enhance strategies to dissociate from the ingroup team, and thus to mediate the MATing strategy. Unexpectedly, MATing strategy does not appear to be correlated with the legitimacy appraisal of the defeat. We also observed such an absence of relationship between legitimacy appraisal and shame (Hypothesis 4 not supported). This result seems surprising given that previous studies showed that shame is based on appraisals of ingroup responsibility for a transgression and leads individuals to hide or withdraw from the shame-generating situation (Johns et al., 2005; Lickel et al., 2005). Although these absences of effect cannot be fully explained, it seems to be in line with past research, which suggests that the factor of the "perceived negativity of a defeat" tends to be important in studying the emotion of shame (see Bernache-Assollant, Chantal, Bouchet, & Kada, 2021). In our study, although we manipulated the legitimacy of the game outcome along the dimensions *competence* (good/not good) and *moral value* (fair-play/not fair-play) (Leach et al., 2007), it can be assumed that the degree of intensity of these variables was not sufficient to cause a "strong" ingroup emotion of shame. It would perhaps have been more appropriate to reinforce the incompetence threat with a large score gap (i.e., a traumatic defeat), or to intensify the lack of moral value by presenting a victory achieved through morally inappropriate behaviors (e.g., cheating, simulation of injuries such as diving, physical or verbal violence…). Further research will have to deal with this issue.

Potential implications for sport fandom psychology

We believe that the present findings raise a number of interesting considerations regarding the study of sport fandom and the responsibility of athletes in particular. Indeed, in a review exploring the role of athletes, Lynch, Adair and Jonson (2014, p. 77), stated that "it is widely claimed or assumed that professional athletes are (or should be) role models for sports fans (particularly young people who look up to them). These expectations involve

questions of athlete responsibility that are underpinned by ethical principles and associated with assumptions about conduct of public sporting figures".

Our initial findings, which demonstrate that athletes' behaviors on the ground affect supporters' emotions and strategies, sustain this proposition. They are also in line with pressing calls from sport experts (i.e., journalists, coaches, educators...) who proposed that athletes should have a special obligation to be role models, particularly within the sporting arena. For instance, on November 14th 2020, during the game between the Union Bègles Bordeaux (UBB) and Castres during the French rugby national championship, a young French player of UBB (also an international player) entered the field after a winning touch down from his team and hit the back of an opposing player to mock him. This behavior then resulted in riots between the players (e.g., "after Castres - UBB: an electric end of the match"- www.sudouest.fr, November 14th, 2020). About one week later, this player was selected with the National French team to play an international game against Scotland. Raphaël Ibanez, manager of the XV de France, clearly declared in accordance with the staff and the other players, that this situation was problematic, and that they expected exemplary behavior from this player for the upcoming match.

Limitation And Future Research Avenues

Several limitations of the present study will need to be addressed in future research. First, we focused our attention on the specific situation of the (il)legitimacy of defeats. In other words, we did not manipulate the game outcome. Consequently, future studies should use a full experimental design that would also take into consideration victories and manipulate the legitimacy of these events. A second limitation pertains to the fact that we used an experimental design based on a hypothetical sport news article. More specifically, we did not test our hypotheses during or after live games. Consequently, the external validity of our results is debatable and thus limits their applicability. Third, we can wonder if our results are only applicable to the domain of rugby. Consequently, it should be interesting for future research to test the current model in relation to other collective sports such as soccer for instance but also to individual sports (e.g., tennis, cycling). Fourth, we conceptualized pride in a rather simplistic fashion because we did not differentiate between authentic and hubristic pride, as proposed by Tracy and collaborators (e.g., Steckler & Tracy, 2014; Tracy & Robins, 2007). It will be crucial for future investigations to measure both facets because "authentic pride promotes hard work and achievement motivation and is based on accomplishments and confidence

whereas hubristic pride is based on arrogance and egotism, associated with self-aggrandizement and a sense of superiority" (Steckler & Tracy, 2014, p. 204). Consequently, we can anticipate that hubristic pride (and not authentic pride) would enhance the strategies to diminish the outgroups such as blasting, particularly following defeats perceived as illegitimate. As a final caveat, those replication studies should be conducted using (i) larger samples to enhance their statistical power and (ii) preregistered protocol and hypotheses.

Despite these limitations, this study confirms that group based emotions are robust mediators of the effects of context appraisals on behaviors (Mackie et al., 2000). Furthermore, based on cognitive approaches to emotions (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985), we feel that the present findings illustrate the usefulness of considering the complexity of an intergroup situation. In that sense, our results highlight the need to identify the evaluative dimensions likely to influence the emotional reactions that will trigger specific behaviors. In this specific context, we operationalized legitimacy through the fundamental cognitive dimensions of *competence* and *moral value*. Those dimensions, which were central in the elicitation of emotions, open up prospects for refinement.

Indeed, each of these dimensions can have a different weight in the evaluation of the value of an ingroup (and the value of an outgroup) and therefore one of them may be more threatening than the other for the social identity of an individual (supporter or athlete). For this reason, it would be interesting for future work to control in the population studied the degree of importance accorded to each of them towards its group either by integrating them as continuous variables in the regression models or by handling them independently.

Finally, other dimensions than *competence* and *morality* seem interesting to take into account. The dimension of *situational control* is one of them. Indeed, this dimension is necessary to distinguish unpleasant emotions such as fear, sadness, frustration, contempt, anger and disgust (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). We can therefore consider that the perception of legitimacy associated, for example, with competence will not have the same effects on emotional reactions according to whether the evaluation of this competence is perceived as being effected by his group, the outgroup or an uncontrollable external element (e.g., coach, referee, etc…).

Conclusion

In closing, understanding the conditions that lead supporters to engage in aggressive or antisocial behaviors while watching sport is important to create a "psychologically healthy sport atmosphere", where negative social interac-

tions can be reduced. Defeat or victory can be appraised in various cognitive dimensions and lead to the elicitation of different emotions, each directed at a specific object. Understanding the overall impact of different contexts of performance production on the emotions felt is important for future research.

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