

Moral sentiments:

the old and the new

shame & guilt

International Laboratory of Socio-Cultural Studies, HSE Moscow

June 2013

# Moral sentiments:

the old and the new

# shame & guilt





big questions



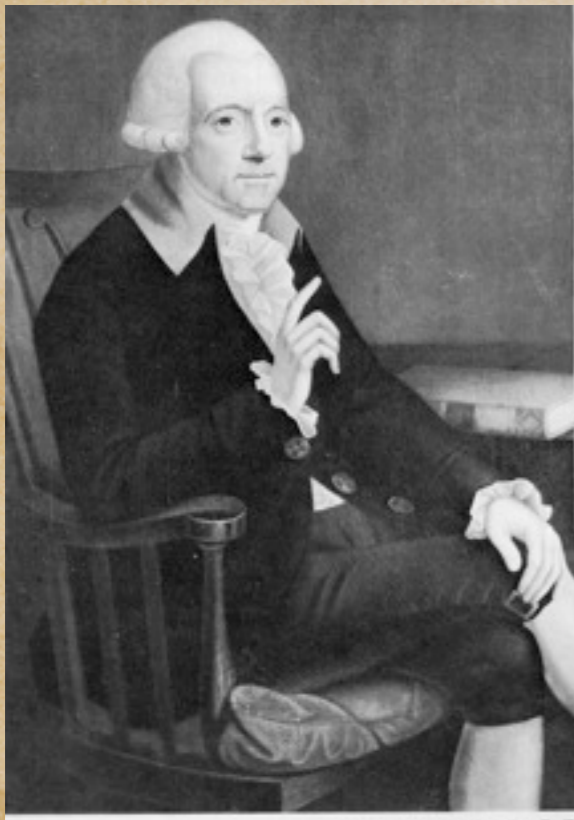
# why do people cooperate?

“Human cooperation is an evolutionary puzzle. Unlike other creatures, people frequently cooperate with genetically unrelated strangers, often in large groups, with people they will never meet again, and when reproductive gains are small or absent. These patterns of cooperation cannot be explained with the evolutionary theory of kin selection and the selfish motive associated with signalling theory or the theory of reciprocal altruism.”

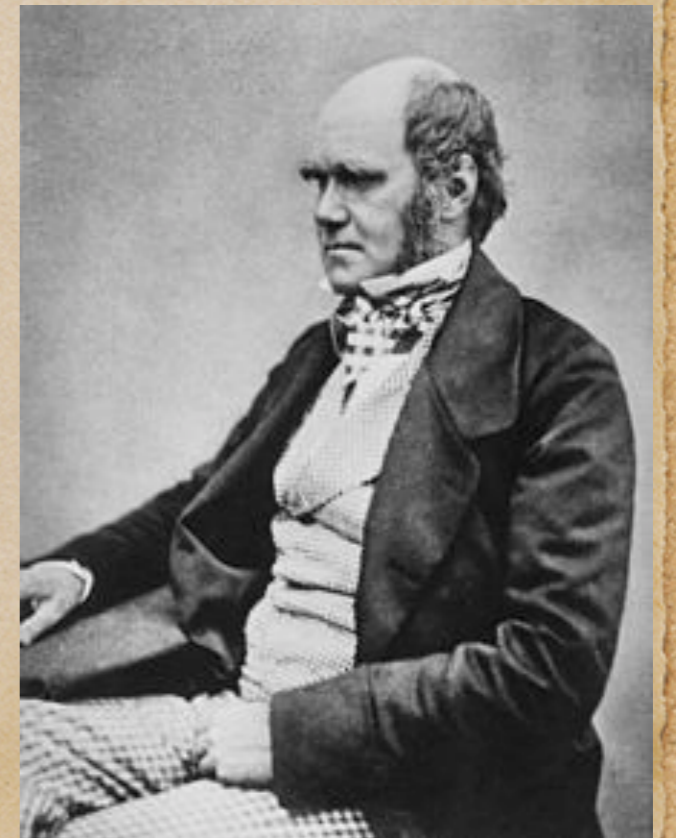
Fehr & Gächter (2002)

why do people cooperate?

Smith



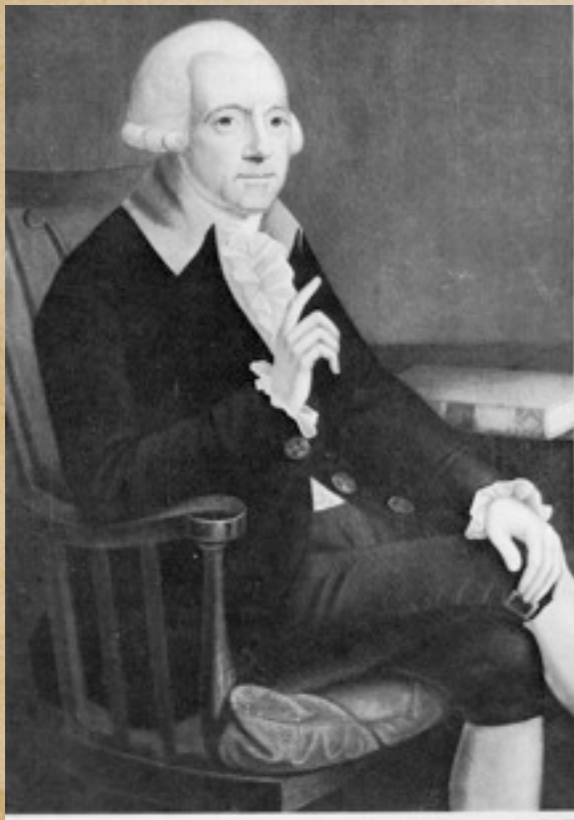
Darwin



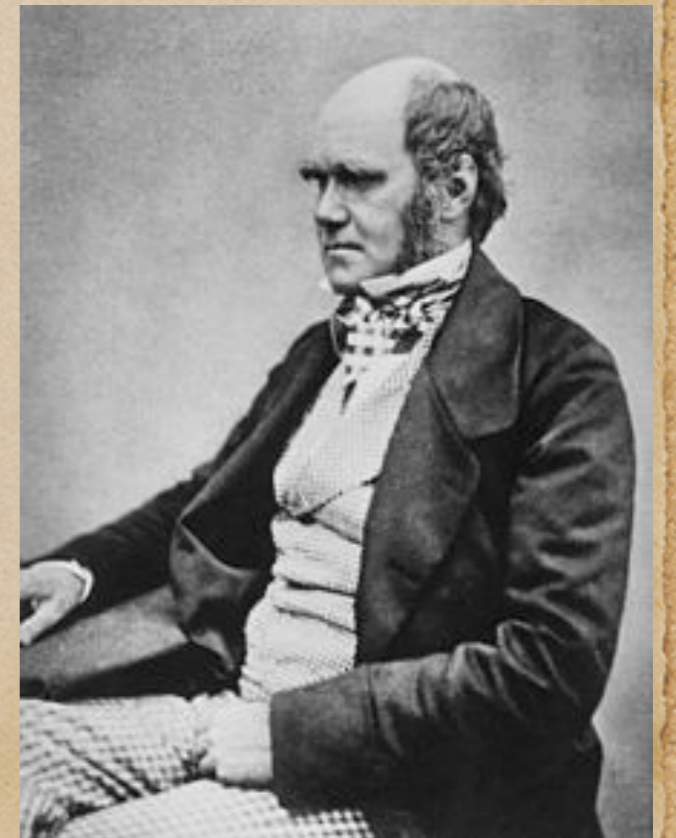
self-interest

# why do people cooperate?

Smith



Darwin



moral  
sentiments

# The function of moral sentiments

moral emotions as commitment devices

people with selfish motives behave in a  
prosocial manner

(shame & guilt)



Frank



Puzzle 1







# Rarámuri (Mexico)





no “guilty”, only “shame”

emotion without a word?

how to study?

quasi-experimental design

rural, no (Western) education

imposition of Western notions

bias

what is an emotion?

# solution

1. international standard
2. a second rural group
3. use of culture-own stimuli
4. multiple indicators of emotion
5. cross-cultural comparison of  
within-culture structures

# 1. international standard

two methods with students from:

- Belgium
- Indonesia
- Mexico
- the Netherlands

## 2. a second rural group

rural Javanese (Indonesian) farmers

a word for shame (isín/lingsem) and

a word for guilt (salah/lepat)

little/no formal education

non-Western

### 3. culture-own stimuli

54 Rarámuri and 63 Javanese  
situations of shame (and guilt)

rated by 80 Dutch and 74 Indonesian  
students on five emotions

selection of 6 shame, 6 guilt, 6 both

# 4. multiple indicators of emotion

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**Guilt**

**component**

**Shame**

---

done damage

**Appraisals**

center of attention

bad person

**Self-Experiences**

weak person

repairing

**Action Tendencies**

hiding

lump in the throat

**Body Sensations**

blushing

guilt

**Emotion Words**

shame

sharing

**Social Sharing**

concealing

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## 5. within -> between

My friend and I had a discussion. Apparently, I said something that upset him very much. It seemed that what I had said was so rude that my friend became very offended. I did not mean to hurt his feelings but I did.

I have done damage to someone

I am at the center of attention

I feel like a bad person

I feel like a weak person

I want to repair the damage done

I want to hide myself

I feel a lump in the throat

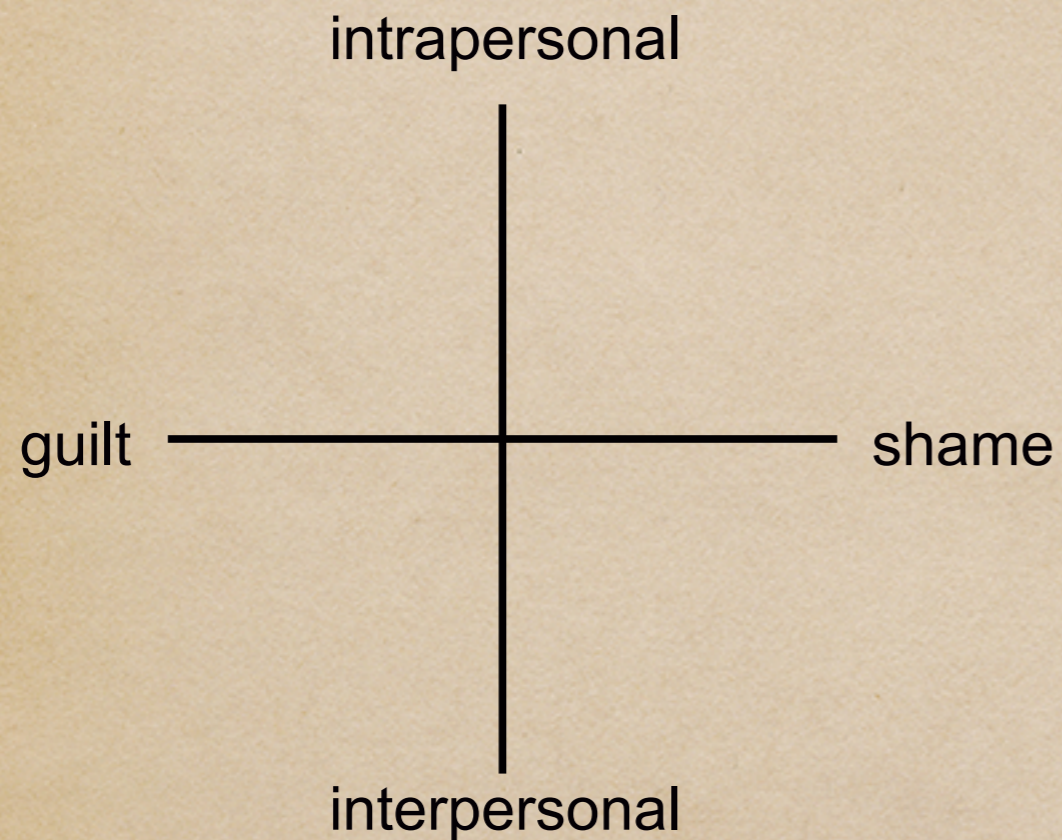
I feel that I am blushing

I feel guilty

I feel ashamed

not at all (0) to very strongly (5)

# multi-dimensional scaling (within)

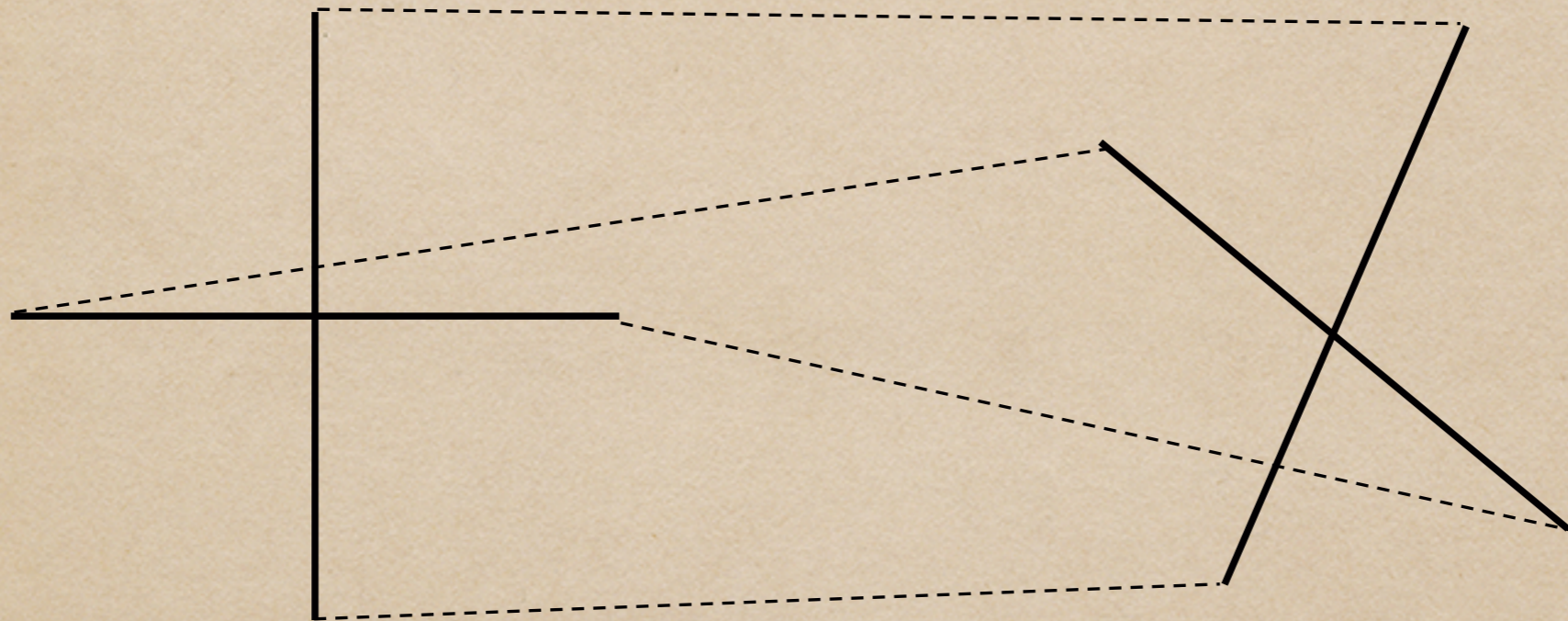


Johnny

# procrustes rotation (between)

Culture 1

Culture 2



# international student sample

Belgium: 115 scenario, 115 recall

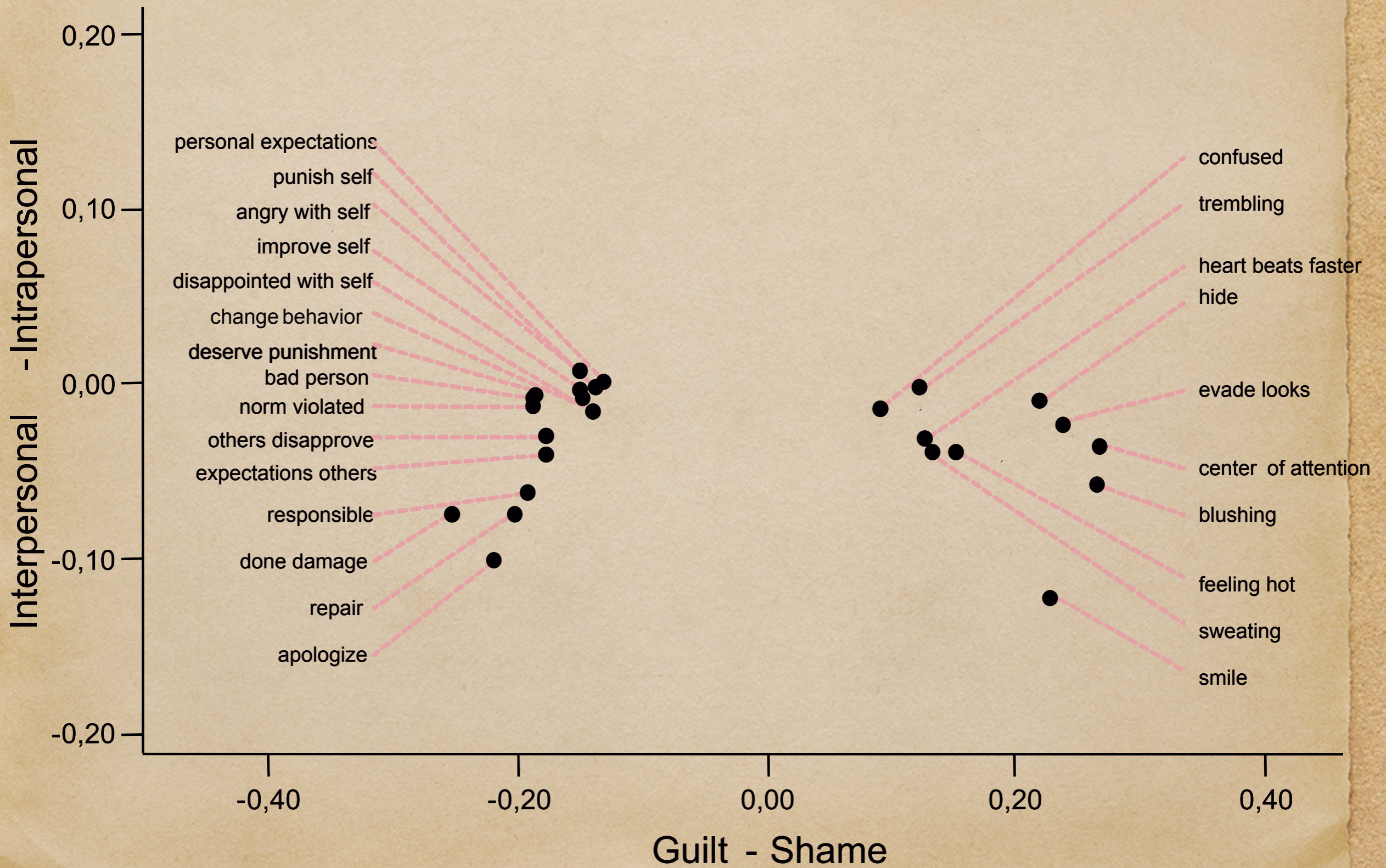
Indonesia: 120 scenario, 115 recall

Mexico: 126 scenario, 126 recall

Netherlands: 120 scenario, 120 recall

within-method -> between method

-> between-country



# international - Javanese

## Method:

213 Javanese (107 female, 106 male)

18 locally collected situations

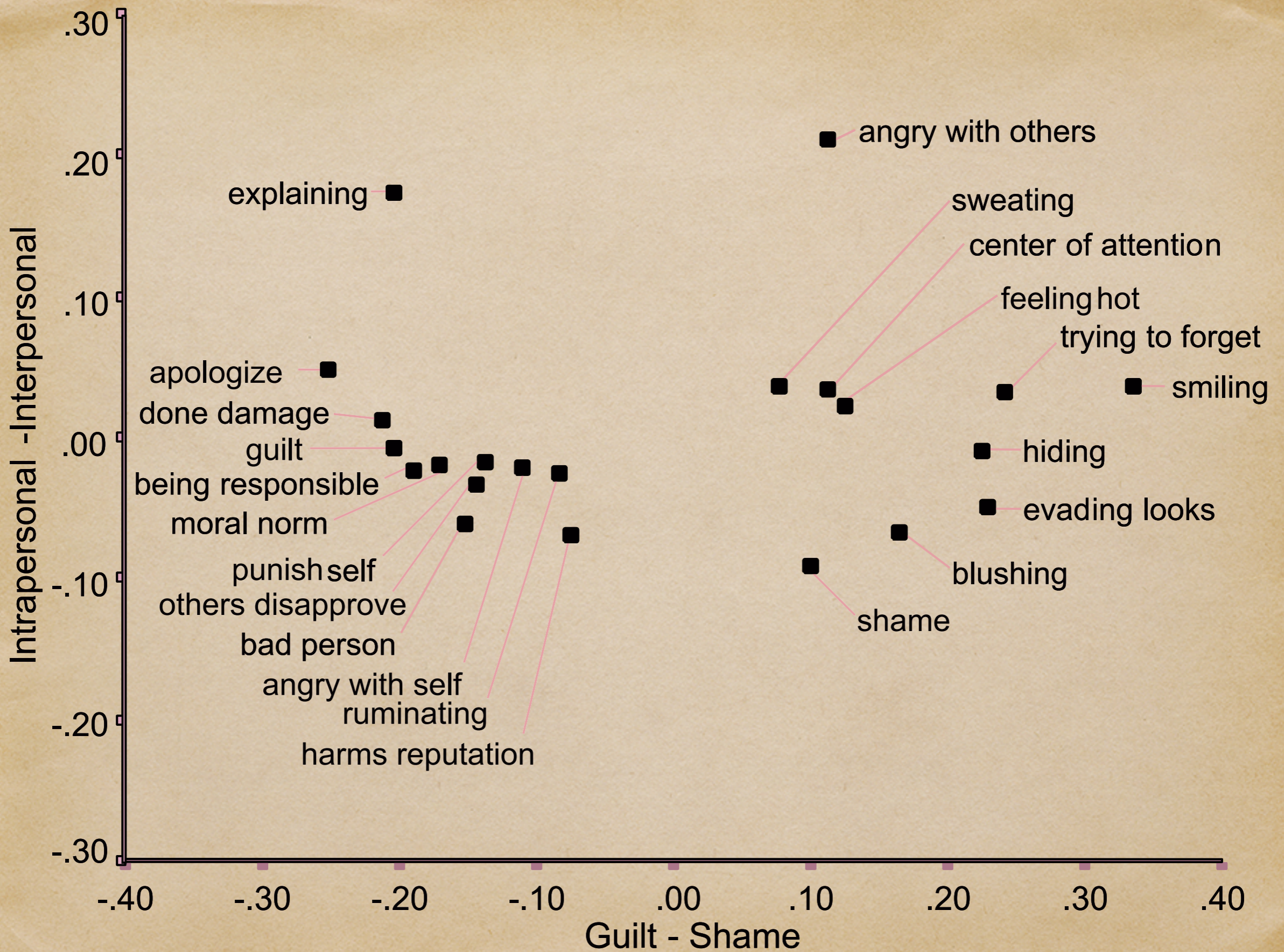
structured interview (six local interviewers)

29 emotion characteristics

## Results:

22 characteristics similar to international students

7 different than students (24%)



# international - Rarámuri

## Method:

229 Rarámuri (121 female, 108 male)

18 locally collected situations

structured interview (seven local interviewers)

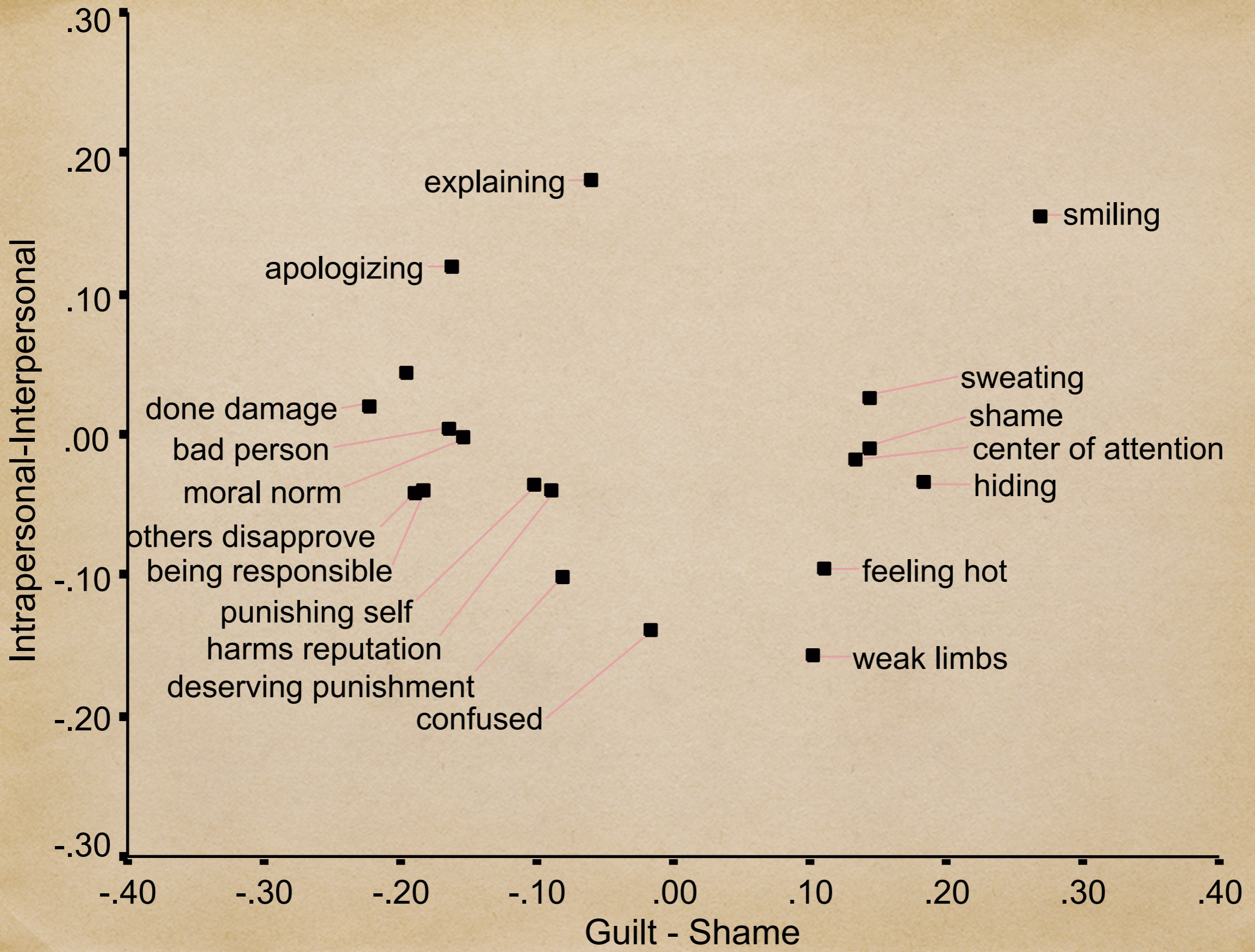
28 emotion characteristics

## Results:

18 characteristics similar to international students

10 different than students (36%)







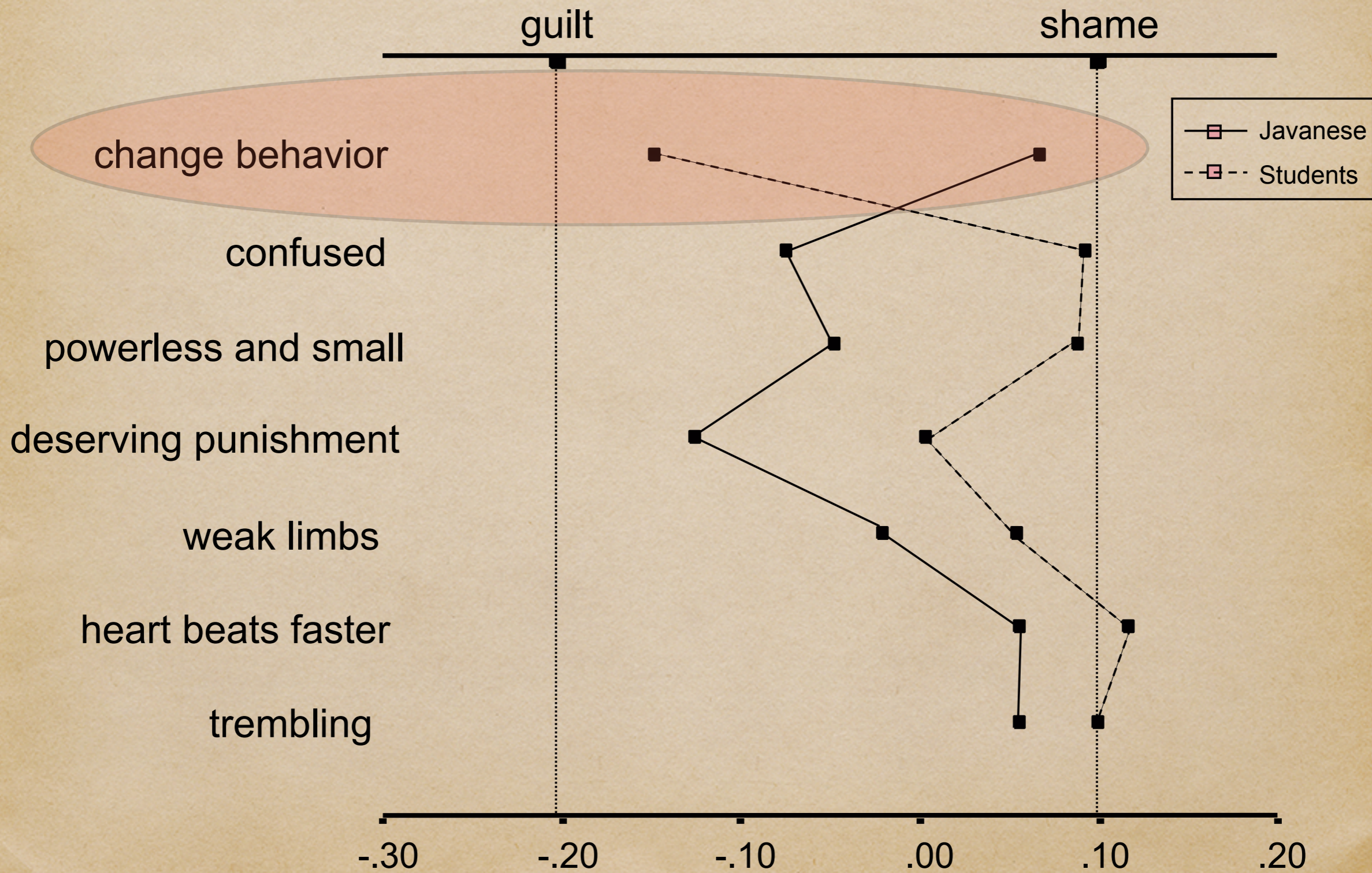
shame & guilt

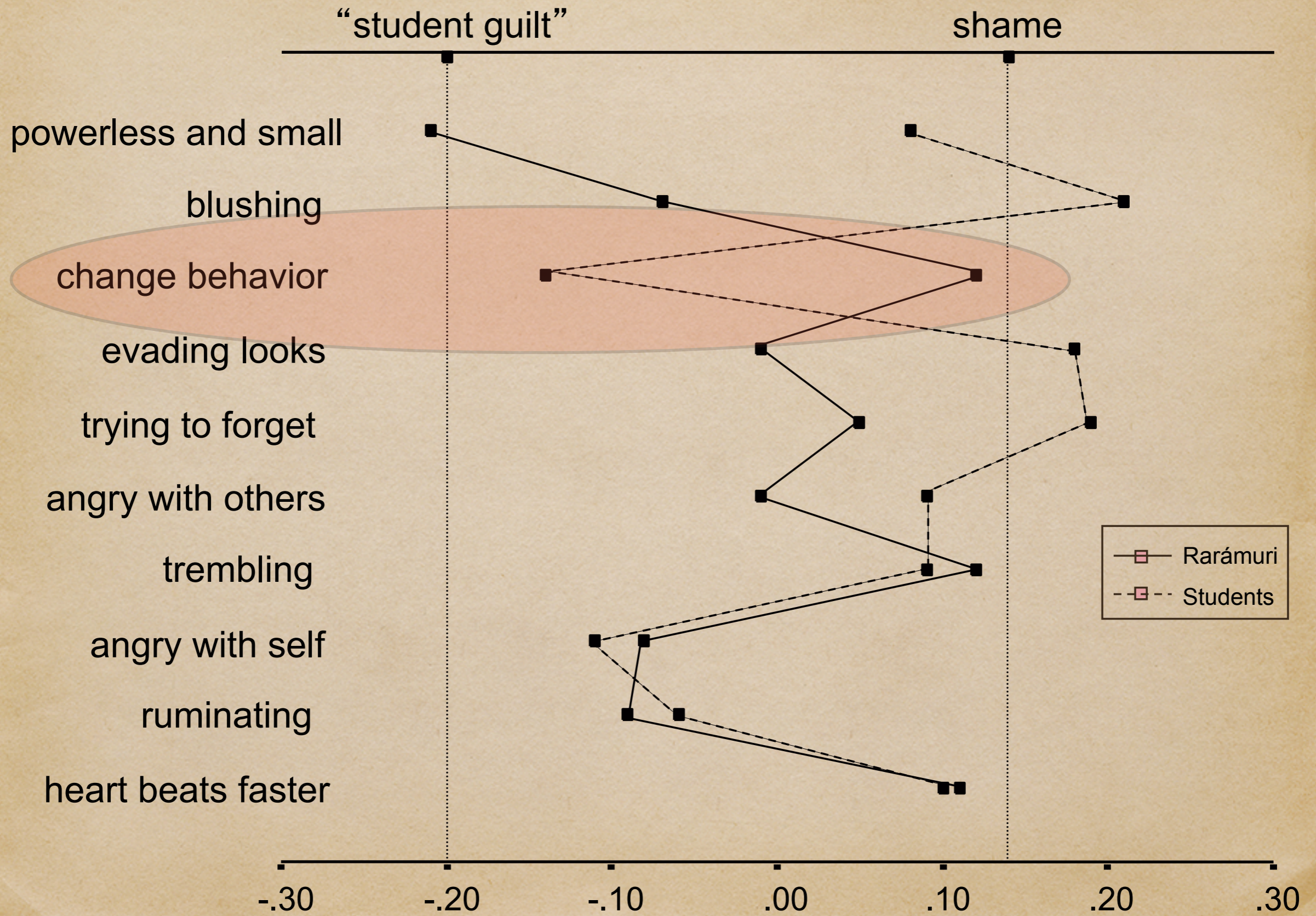




# Puzzle 2







SHAME = Isolation -  
withdrawal - hiding





SHAME = bad for you



“Do moral emotions guide moral behavior? The answer (...) is “Yes”, but it is not simply a case of “more is better”. Guilt about specific behaviors appears to steer people in a moral direction – fostering constructive, responsible behavior in many critical domains. Shame, in contrast, does little to inhibit immoral action. Instead, painful feelings of **shame** seem to promote **self-destructive** behaviors (hard drug use, suicide) that can be viewed as **misguided** attempts to dampen or escape this most **punitive** moral emotion”

**(Tangney & Dearing, 2002, pp. 137-138)**



# Puzzle 2





# etymology

“shame” has a long history  
 (“to cover up”) - **EXPOSURE**



“guilt” has a short history  
 (“to (re)pay”) - **REPAIR**



# Hierarchical view

From **external regulation** of moral  
behavior (shame)

to **internal regulation** of moral  
behavior (guilt)

Guilt is “better” than shame



# The SELF

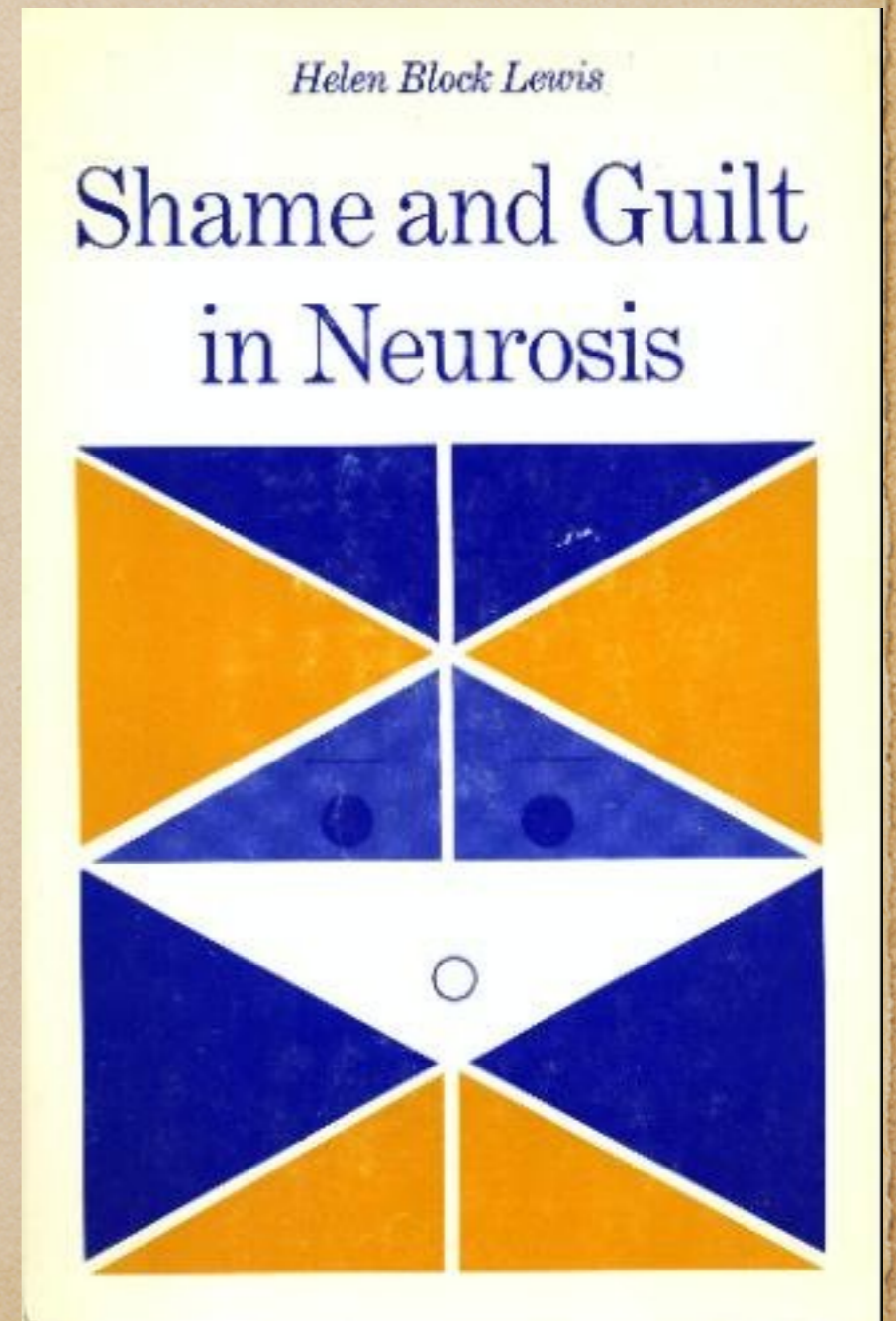
Attribution of failure:

to the whole **self** (shame)

“**I** did that horrible thing”

to specific **behavior** (guilt)

“**I did** that horrible **thing**”





# Extension of Lewis



“Shame is an acutely painful emotion accompanied by a sense of **worthlessness** and powerlessness.”

“Shame often leads to a **desire to escape or hide** - to sink through the floor and **disappear**.”

“Guilt doesn’t affect one’s core identity and self-concept.”

“Guilt presses towards confession, **reparation**, and **apology**.”



# Shame is ugly



“guilt is, on balance, the more adaptive, moral emotion”

“shame can lead us in unhealthy, destructive directions”

# Today's Puzzle

what use is an emotion that is only bad for you?

what could be the function of feeling bad about the self?

# 1. The evidence

Test Of Self-Conscious Affect

shame as a trait

shame measured as self-focus

& withdrawal!

(guilt = focus on deed + repair)

“You break something at work  
and then hide it”

- you'd think: I need to fix it

- you'd think about quitting



# Lab study

## Induction:

1. 4-pp groups
  2. 2 “intelligence” tasks academic ability
  3. Feedback public
  4. Shame: worst of all pp
- Control: normal

# Lab Study

DV: 10-coin give-some dilemma game

- **Exogenous:**

pp other group (don't know intelligence score)

- **Endogenous:**

pp own group (knows score)

Other



10 x €0,50 = €5,00

In Cash: € 5,00

You

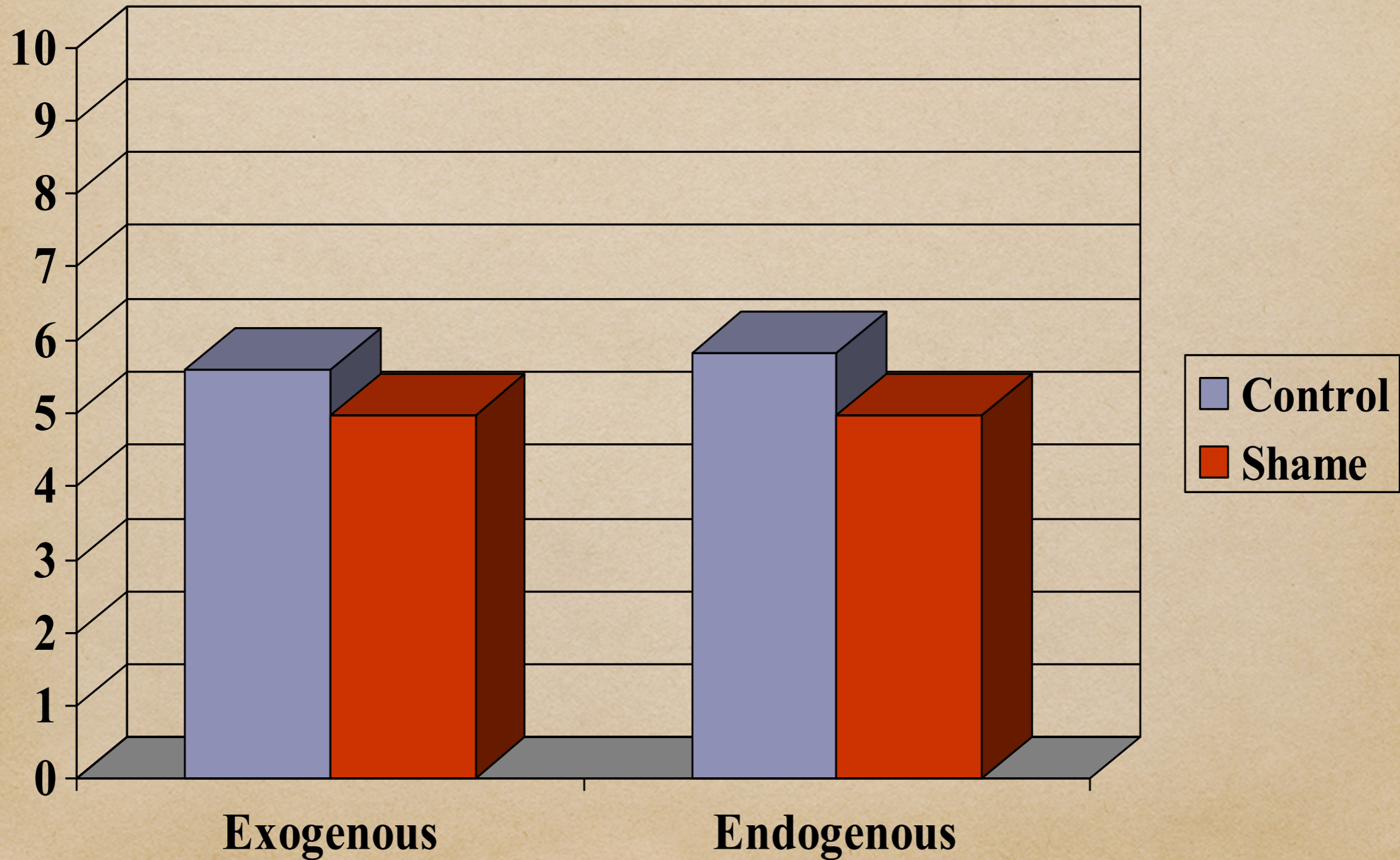


10 x €0,50 = €5,00

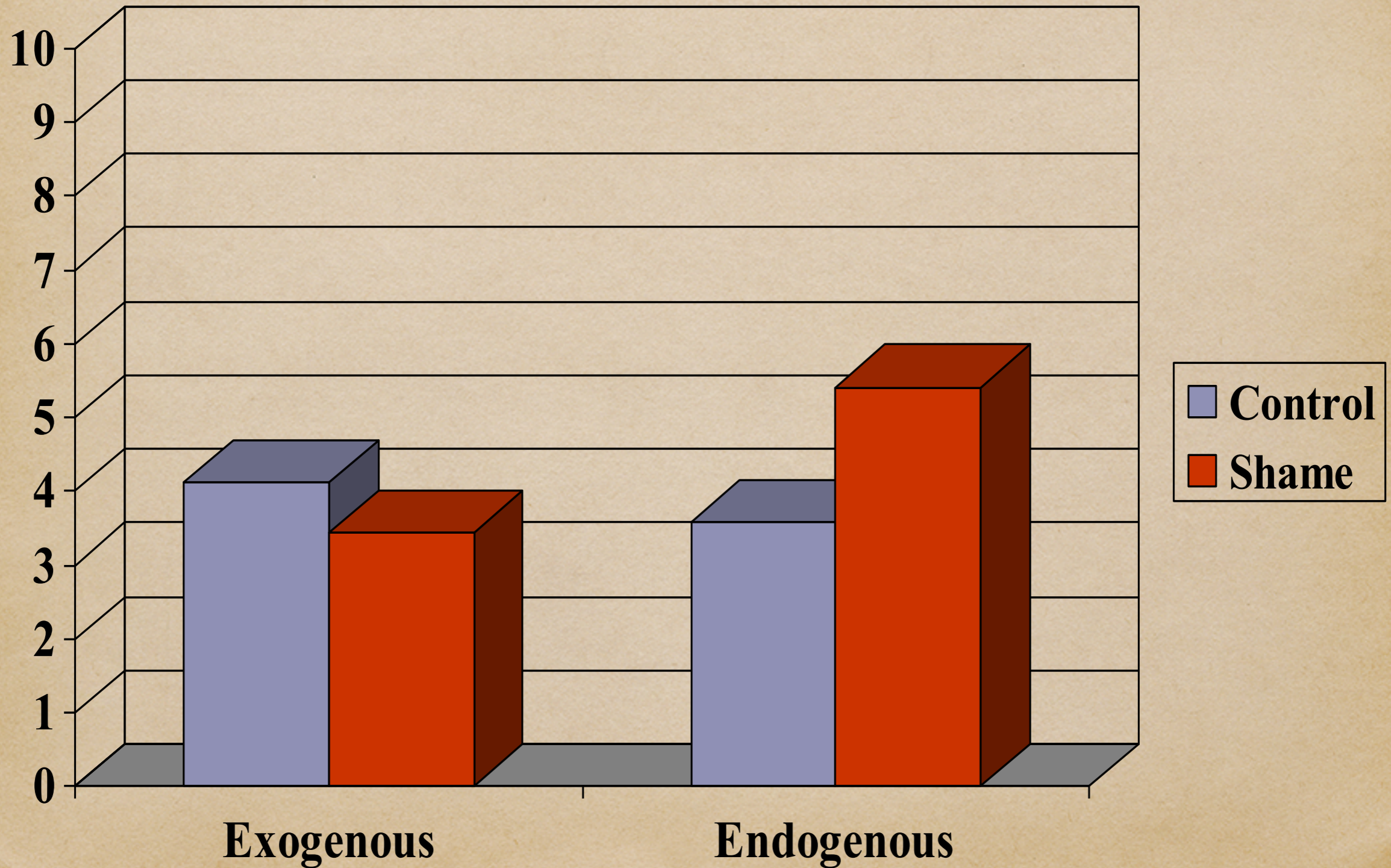
In Cash: € 5,00

# Lab Study – Results

## Prosocials

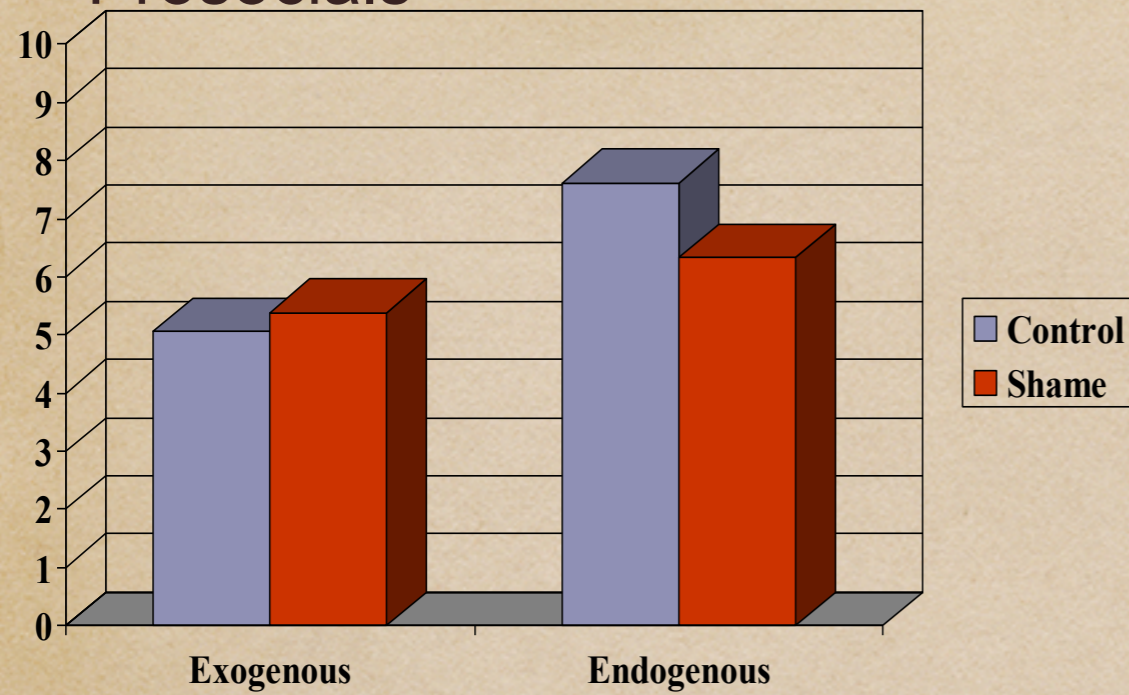


# Lab Study – Results Proselfs

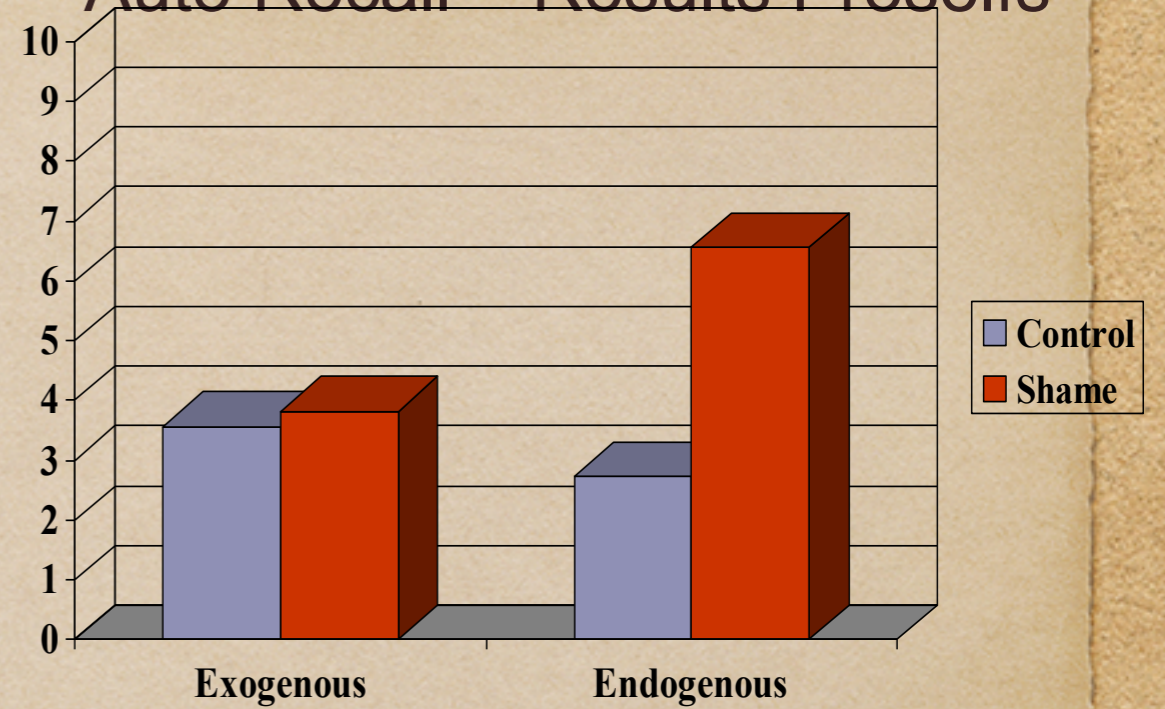


# Auto recall – Results

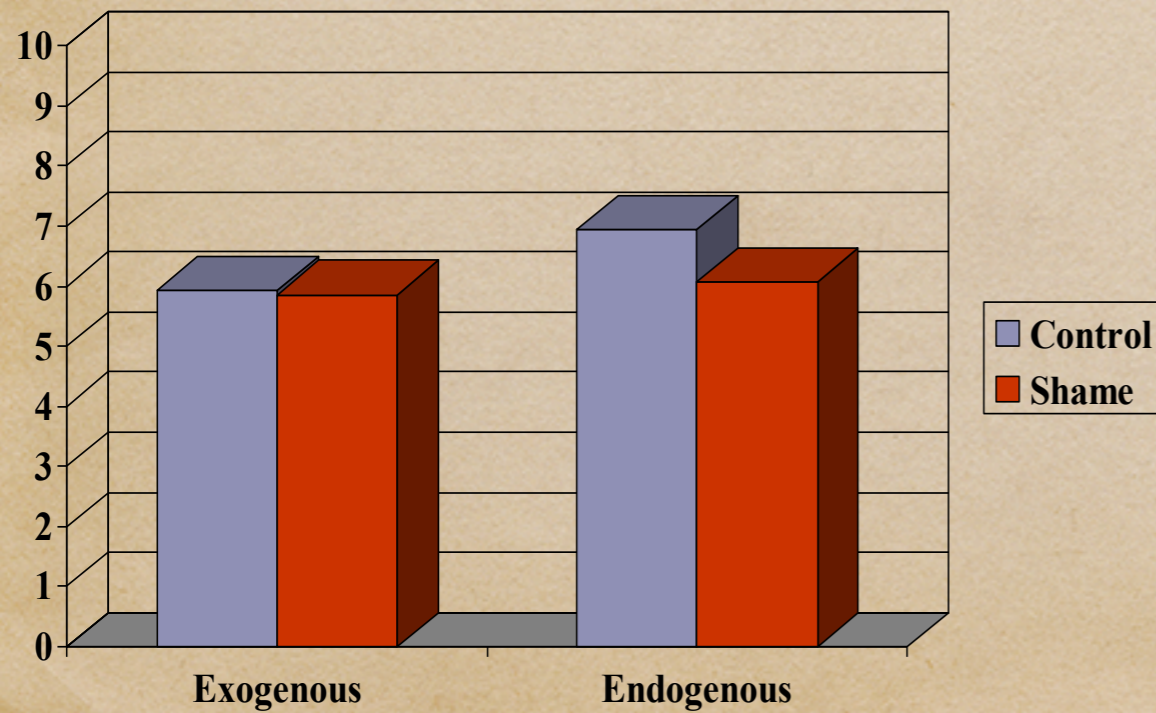
## Prosocials



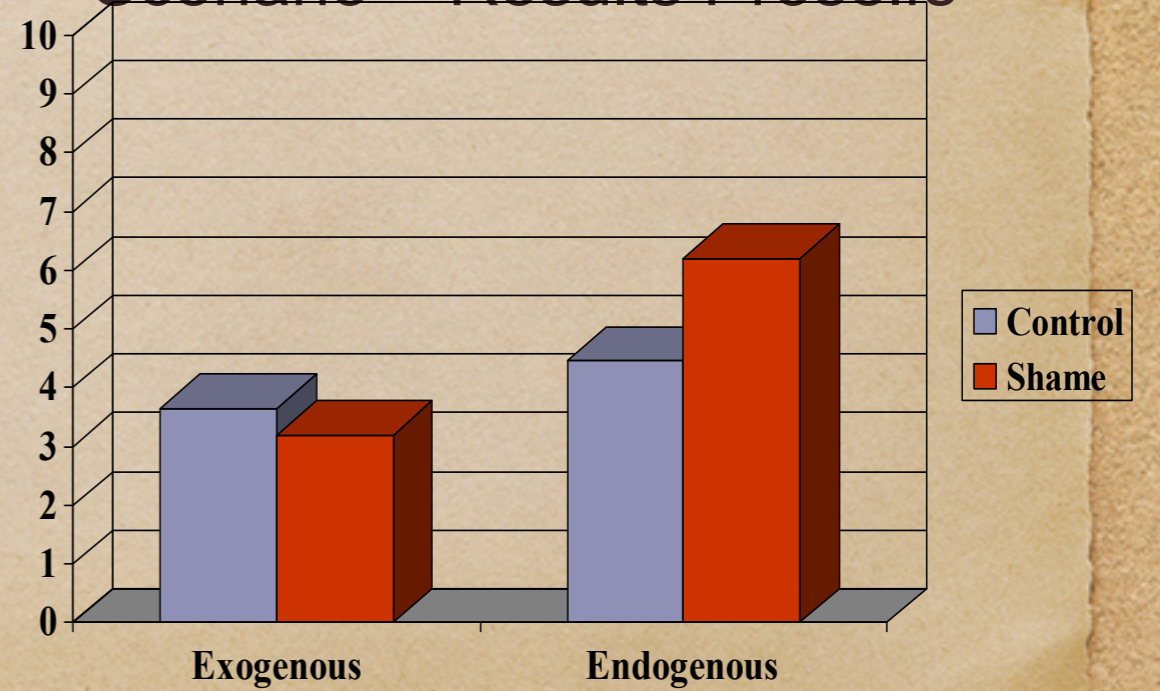
# Auto Recall – Results Proselfs



# Scenario – Results Prosocials



# Scenario – Results Proselfs





social, but approach?



# study 1

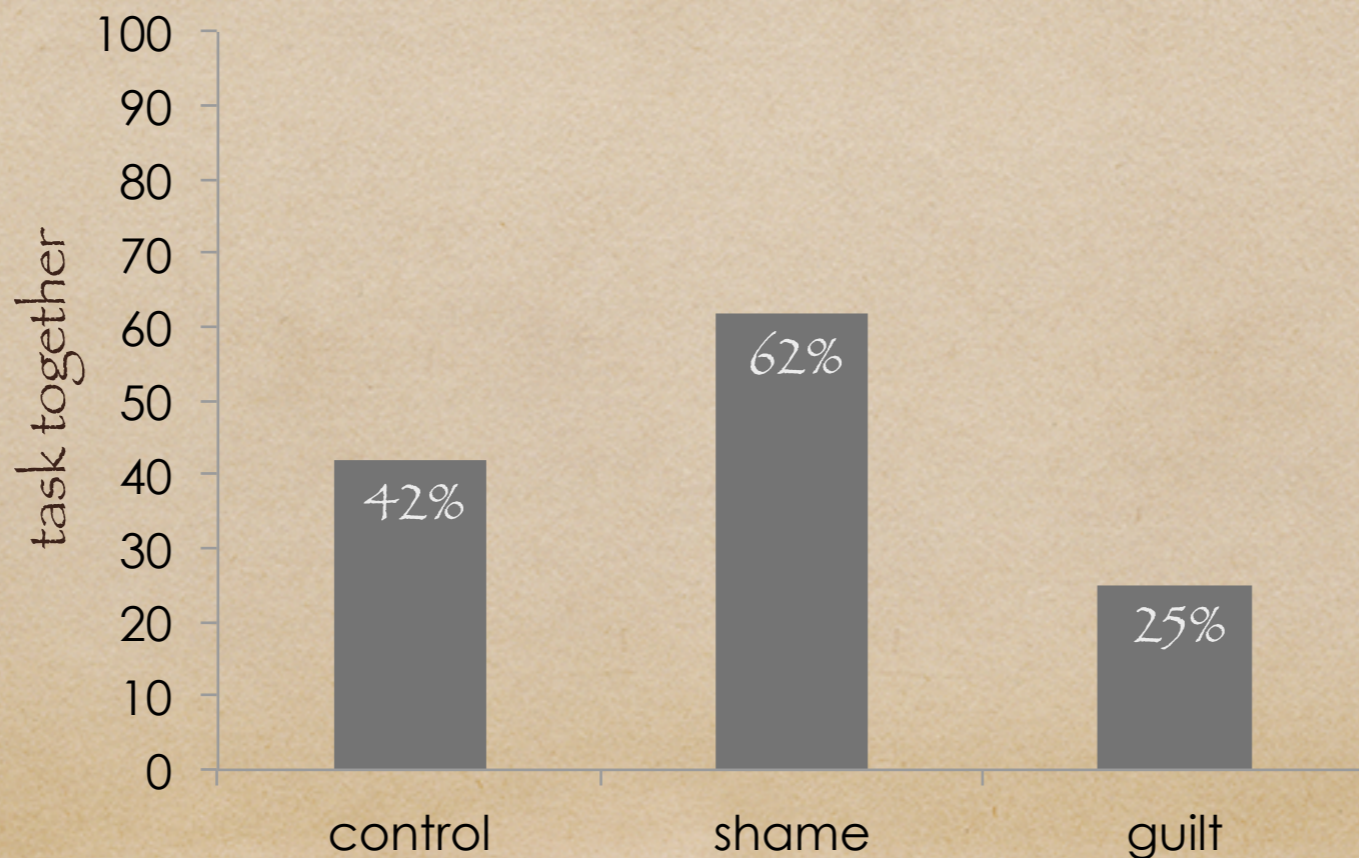
N = 147

3 group bs-design:

autobiographical recall (shame, guilt, control)

**task-choice:** alone (counting black squares)

together (dividing coins)





# replication

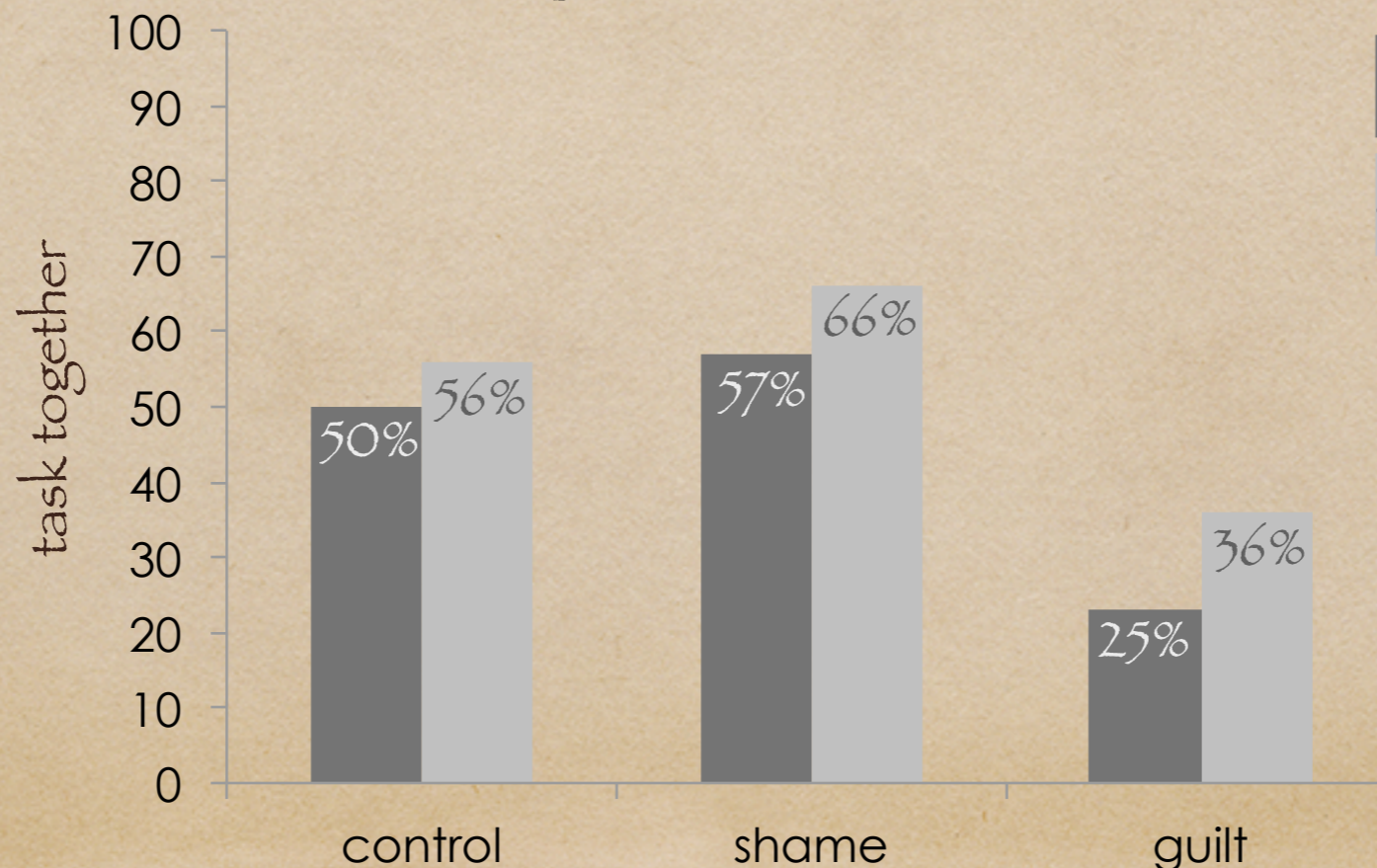
N = 156

3 \* 2 bs-design:

scenario (shame, guilt, control)

task-description (performance, neutral)

**task-choice:** alone, together



together = performance

alone = performance

# lab-induction - shame

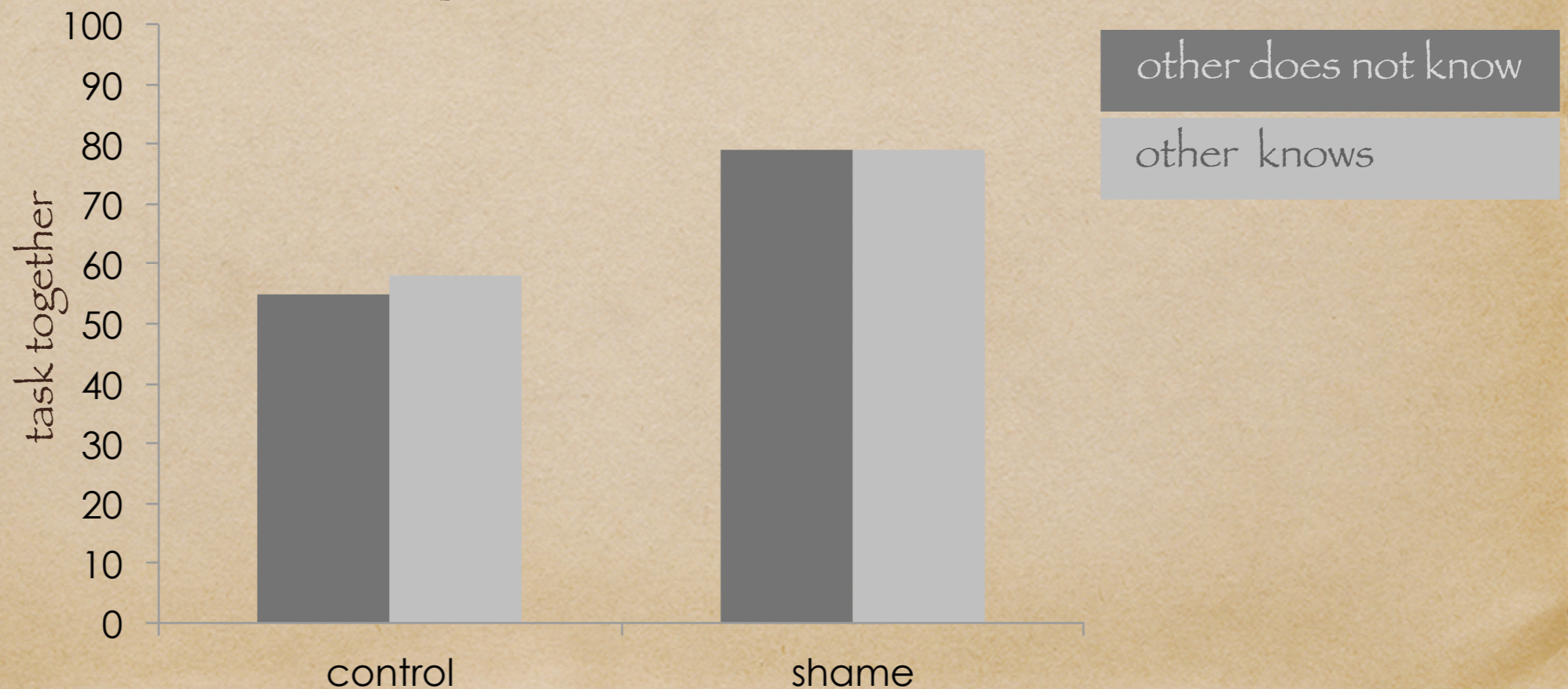
N = 131

2 \* 2 bs-design:

intelligence test, others 19 and 16 points (16 points, 9 points)

partner (knows about score, does not know)

task-choice: alone, together



# lab-induction - guilt

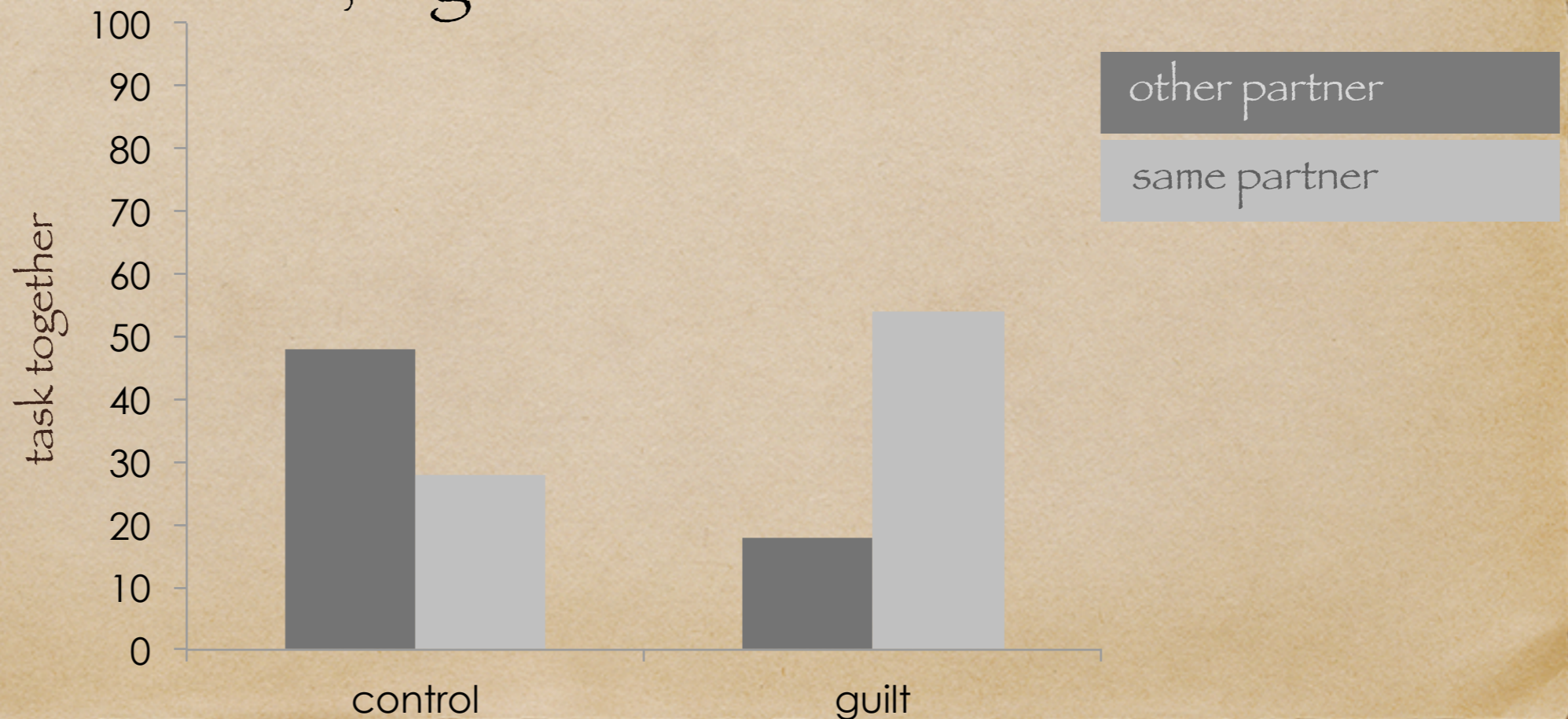
N = 113

2 \* 2 bs-design:

performance task for other (participant succeeds, fails)

partner (same partner, other partner)

**task-choice:** alone, together





social function of  
shame





back to the bigger picture



# Why two emotions?

cooperation through:

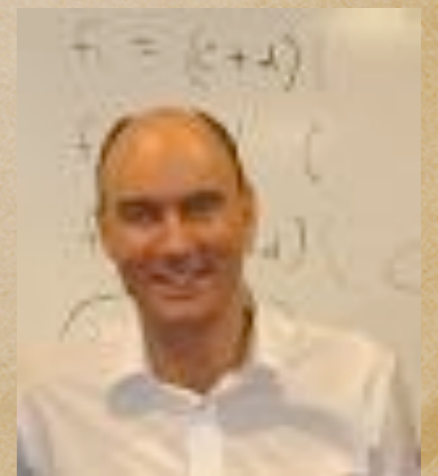
kin selection

direct reciprocity (**guilt**)

indirect reciprocity (**shame**)

network reciprocity

group selection

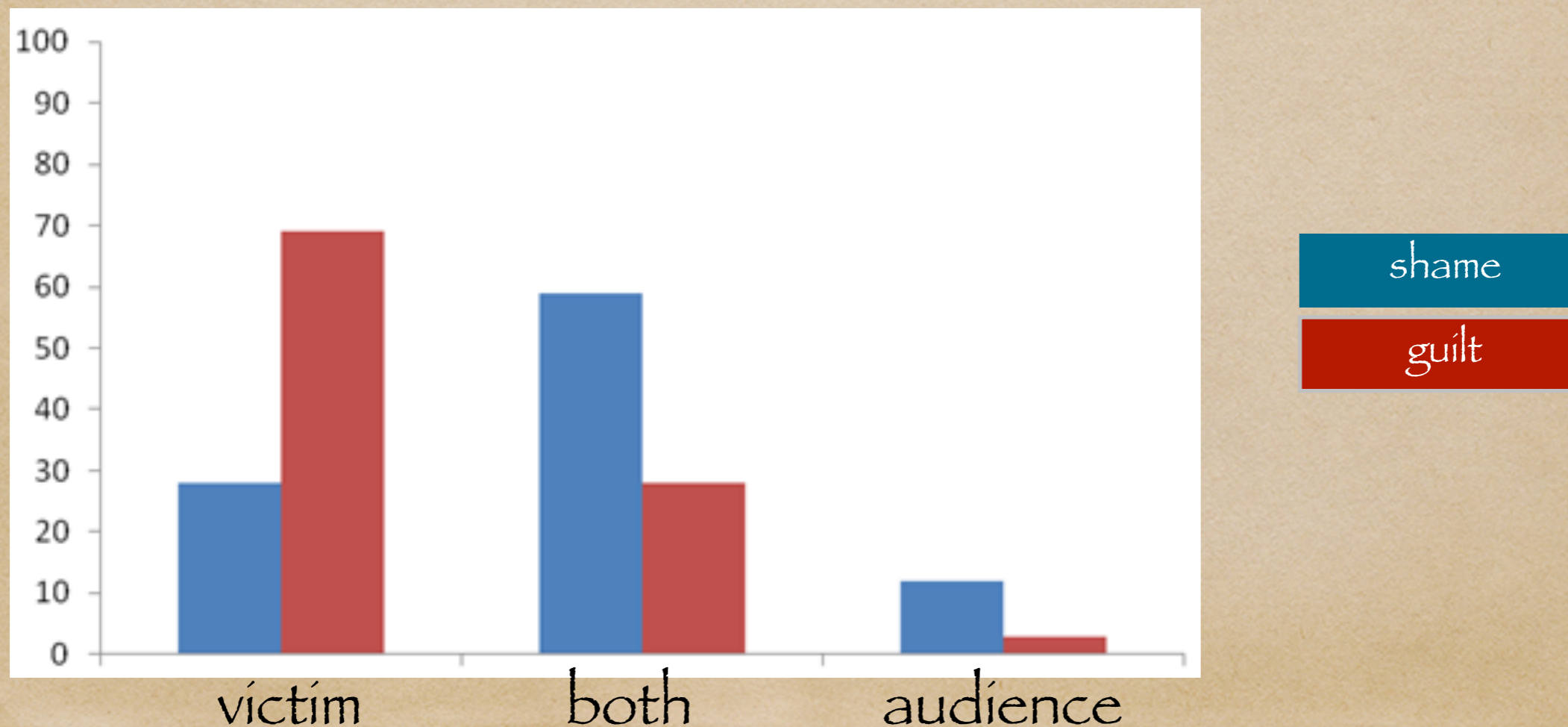


Nowak

# Towards whom?

450 MTurk workers

Towards whom shame, guilt (mainly victim, both, mainly audience)



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