

ПЪРВОНАЧАЛНИ ДАННИ ЗА АДАПТАЦИЯ НА ВЪПРОСНИК ЗА ПРЕДРАЗПОЛОЖЕНОСТ КЪМ ПРЕЖИВЯВАНЕ НА ВИНА И СРАМ

Георги КАРАСТОЯНОВ¹, Гергана КУЗМОВА²

¹Военна академия „Г. С. Раковски“
БЪЛГАРИЯ, София, 1124, Оборище, бул. Евлоги и Христо Георгиеви, 82

²Нов Български Университет
БЪЛГАРИЯ, София 1618, ж.к. Овча купел 2, ул. „Монтевидео“ 21,

karastoyanov@abv.bg; go_kuzmova@yahoo.com

Резюме. Докладът представя първоначални данни за адаптация на въпросник за изследване на индивидуалните различия при преживяване на вина и срам. Направен е критичен преглед на литературата и са изведени няколко общи характеристики на двата конструкта, както и два основни подхода в тяхното разграничаване – първото акцентиращо на разграничението между личност и поведение (*self-behavior distinction*) (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robin, 2004) и второто фокусиращо се върху разграничението лично публично (*public-private distinction*) (Combs et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2002).

Приехме, че въпросникът за предразположеност към вина и срам (*Guilt and Shame Proneness scale- GASP*, Coehen et al., 2011) е първият, който обединява посочените два емпирично потвърдени подхода: личност – поведение и частно – публично, разграничавайки емоционалните и поведенчески отговори чрез четири подскали: Вина- негативна оценка на поведението (*Guilt-Negative-Behavior-Evaluation, NBE*); Вина – действия за поправяне (*Guilt-Repair*); Срам -тенденция към негативна самооценка (*Shame-NSE*); Срам – действия на оттегляне (*Shame-Withdraw*). Отделните подскали показваха много добра вътрешна консистентност, добра факторна структура, отличаваща по един главен фактор в извадка от 125 студенти от магистърски програми в София. Корелационните зависимости между подскалите потвърждават връзките установени от авторите на въпросника. Конструкт валидността на инструмента е потвърдена чрез установените очаквани наличие или липса на взаимовръзки с конструкти като възприет стрес, потребност от принадлежност, регулаторен фокус, глобална самооценка и страх от негативна оценка.

Ключови думи: адаптация въпросник; вина; срам; личност; поведение.

Статията да се цитира по следния начин:

Karastoyanov, G., Kuzmova, G. (2021). Initial data on the bulagrian version of guilt and shame proneness scale (GASP). *Psychological Research*, Volume 24, Number 3, 347-359. ISSN 1311-4700 (PrintI); ISSN 2367-9174 (Online).

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Приноси на авторите в статията:

Георги Карастоянов – теоретичен обзор, методология, обработка на данните и обсъждане.

Гергана Кузмова – теоретичен обзор, методология, обработка на данните и обсъждане.

Статията е постъпила през януари 2021

Приета за публикуване през юни 2021

Публикувана през декември 2021

Авторите са прочели и одобрили окончателния вариант на ръкописа.

INITIAL DATA ON THE BULAGRIAN VERSION OF GUILT AND SHAME PRONENESS SCALE (GASP)

Georgi KARASTOYANOV¹, Gergana KUZMOVA²

¹*G. Rakovski National Defense College
BULGARIA, Sofia 1124, 82 Evlogi i Hristo Georgievi Blvd., Oborishte*

²*New Bulgarian University
BULGARIA, Sofia 1618, 21 Montevideo Str.*

karastoyanov@abv.bg; go_kuzmova@yahoo.com

Abstract. *The report presents initial data on the adaptation of GASP questionnaire that examines individual differences in experience of guilt and shame. A critical review of the literature is made and several general characteristics of the two constructs are derived, as well as two main approaches in their distinction - the first emphasizing the distinction between personality and behavior (self-behavior distinction) (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robin, 2004) and the second focusing on public-private differentiation (Combs et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2002).*

We found that the Guilt and Shame Proneness scale (GASP, Cohen et al., 2011) was the first to combine these two empirically validated approaches: personality-behavior and public-private, distinguishing emotional and behavioral responses through four subscales: Guilt-Negative-Behavior-Evaluation (NBE); Guilt - Repair (GR); Shame-tendency to negative self-esteem (Shame-NSE); Shame-Withdraw. The translation of the individual subscales indicated a very good internal consistency, a good factor structure, delimiting one main factor in a sample of 125 students from master's programs in Sofia. The correlations between the subscales proved associations suggested by the authors of the questionnaire. Construct validity of the instrument was confirmed with expected presence or absence of relationships with constructs such as perceived stress, need for belonging, regulatory focus, global self-esteem and fear of negative feedback.

Keywords: GASP; shame; guilt; personality; behavior.

The article can be cited as follows:

Karastoyanov, G., Kuzmova, G. (2021). Initial data on the bulagrian version of guilt and shame proneness scale (GASP). *Psychological Research*, Volume 24, Number 3, 347-359. ISSN 1311-4700 (Print); ISSN 2367-9174 (Online).

Contribution:

Georgi Karastoyanov – Theoretical background, Methodology, Data processing and Discussion.

Gergana Kuzmova – Theoretical background, Methodology, Data processing and Discussion.

Submitted – January 2021

Revised – June 2021

Published – December 2021

The authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological studies of shame and guilt can be traced back to Freud's work (Freud, 1895/1999). In his early works, he did not distinguish between shame and guilt; later, he decided to ignore shame concept and focused on the topic of guilt. He defines "guilt" as an emotion resulting from the conflict between morally higher "Superego" and the hedonistic "It". In recent years, researchers have had growing interest in the so-called "moral emotions". Nevertheless, it is still difficult to present generally accepted criteria for their differentiation. Fischer & Manstead (2008) classify guilt (acknowledging that you have hurt someone) and shame (acknowledging mistakes) among the group of negative emotions, along with sadness (seeking help and support from others). Shame predicted what mechanisms individuals use for emotional regulation: whether they would use the "withdraw" mechanism (the stronger the shame, the more the individuals shut down and "withdraw" from an insult situation, (Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002), whether it would be the mechanism of verbal opposition, or that of aggression.

In everyday life, the two emotions are confused with one another. A critical review of the literature in historical terms shows that researchers often use guilt and shame as synonyms. Thus, we have to raise the question whether these are different or distinguishable emotions.

There is a number of common characteristics:

- Both are characterized by affective states with negative valence, associated with experiencing stress provoked by personal transgressions (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney et al., 2007; Wolf et al., 2010);
- Both are self-conscious emotions caused by self-perception, self-reflection and self-evaluations (Tracy & Robins, 2007; Eisenberg, 2000);
- Both instigate self-regulation (Tangney, 2003);
- Both relate to the desire to "undo" actions (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989);

- Both are associated with intrinsic attributions of personal transgression;
- They are often experienced simultaneously (Scott et al., 2010). People who are prone to guilt are often prone to shame and vice versa. Predisposition to guilt and shame are traits that reflect individual differences in cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to personal transgression. Studies by one of the leading researchers in this field, June Tangney and her colleagues, show persistent correlations between predisposition to guilt and shame in the range of 0.40–0.50 (Tangney et al., 1989, Tangney & Dearing, 2002, Tangney et al., 1996).

Regardless of these common characteristics, guilt and shame also have important differences, which are debatable. An attempt at generalization was made by Taya Cohen and colleagues (Cohen et al., 2011) who distinguish two main directions: the first, emphasizing the distinction between personality and behavior (self-behavior distinction) (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robin, 2004), and the second, focusing on public-private dissimilarity (Combs et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2002). The distinction between personality and behavior (self-behavior distinction) suggests that guilt focuses on one's own behavior ("I did something wrong"), while shame focuses on the personal trait ("I am a bad person"). The comparison is rooted on the significant work of Helen Block Louise "Guilt and Shame in Neurosis" (Lewis, 1971), in which she argues that the main difference is whether the negative assessment that follows a moral transgression is attributed to the perpetrator's overall personality ("It was ME who did this horrible thing ") or just his/her specific act (I DID a horrible THING "). It assumes that people who experience shame focus on how they are valued by others, while people who experience guilt focus on how their behavior affects others. She notes that there are individual differences in affective style (predisposition to guilt versus predisposition to shame) in the degree to which people experience guilt and shame in diverse situations, and these

individual variances are detectable in relation to the formation of many psychological symptoms. The author argues that those prone to shame are more vulnerable to affective disorders (especially depression), while those prone to guilt are more vulnerable to disorders related to the cognitive sphere (thinking) such as paranoia and obsessive-compulsive syndromes. Although psychoanalytically oriented, Louise makes an interesting incorporation of psychodynamic and cognitive principles that enables her to propose, “an integrated perspective on human cognitive and affective functioning” stemming from her experimental research (p. 131). She believes that individual differences in cognitive style (context depending versus context-independent) lead to contrasting modes in the functioning of the Superego (predisposition to shame versus predisposition to guilt) and together these cognitive and affective styles presuppose the formation of different symptoms. The more global and less context-independent a person thinks, the more vulnerable to a general and less differentiated experience of shame he/she is, that ultimately leads to an overall experience of depression. Contrary, the more clearly differentiated the self is from the context, the more susceptible he/she is to guilt experience (which involves distinguishing between self and behavior) and, therefore, to obsessive and paranoid symptoms.

PREVIOUS MEASURES FOR GUILT AND SHAME

Recognizing that shame is a neglected topic in psychoanalysis (a Freudian tradition), Lewis points out that “shame” is a specific superego function different from “guilt”: “Identification with threatening parents creates an ‘internalized threat’ that is experienced as guilt. Identification with a beloved and adored ego-ideal evokes pride and a sense of triumph; the failure to live with this internalized adored image produces guilt” (Lewis, 1971, p. 23).

Guilt arises when a person makes internal, unstable, specific attributions / attributions to one’s own *actions* that lead to negative feelings about one’s own specific behaviors. On

the other hand, shame arises when a person makes internal, unstable, specific attributions / attributions about himself/herself that lead to negative feelings towards the *global self*. Researchers working in this tradition most often use the instrument TOSCA-3 (The Test of Self-Conscious Affect-3, Tangney et al., 2000) - a questionnaire that determines individual differences in the experience of the two emotions: the effects related to the experience of guilt are characterized by regret and negative evaluations of the behavior (e.g., “I made a mistake”) and actions that are to correct those tendencies and to reduce negative emotions (e.g., to apologize). Responses related to negative self-evaluations (e.g. thoughts like “I’m a terrible person”) and behavioral tendencies to withdraw (e.g. hiding) can be associated with shame-experience.

The second direction has its roots in anthropology. Ruth Benedict in her book “Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Models of Japanese Culture” (Benedict, 1946) assumes that guilt is related to the personal feeling that a person (the subject of the action) has done something wrong, while shame is a negative feeling that results from his/her misdeeds and imperfections, which are exposed (shown publicly). The misdeeds that are not public are very likely to provoke guilt, while mistakes that are public- shame. (Combs et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2002). *Guilt* is related to “one’s own behavior and the effects of the behavior on others,” while *shame* refers “entirely to the individual and how others might evaluate him” (Tangney et al., 2009, p. 194). From this point of view, guilt is associated with the personal experience when he/she has done something wrong in a way that contradicts his/her own consciousness and morality. Shame is allied with negative feelings upon own mistakes and shortcomings exposed to public display (Cohen et al., 2011).

One of the most commonly used tools by researchers working in this paradigm is The Dimensions of Conscience Questionnaire (DCQ; Johnson et al., 1987) in which the items of guilt indicate how bad people have felt after committing personal transgression (e.g. “I secretly took home materials from the

office for personal use”), and in the items of shame respondents were asked how bad they felt after committing transgression in public (e.g. “to get drunk and get drunk in a public place”).

The GASP integrates the most used, to this moment, scales for measuring predisposition to guilt and shame (e.g. TOSCA). The instrument is the first to combine the two approaches of personality – behavior and private – public transgressions, both approaches have received empirical support. On the other hand, the emotional and behavioral responses to transgressions are conceptually and empirically different, and the scale tries to overcome this problem by distinguishing emotional responses from behavioral tendencies.

BULGARIAN ADAPTATION OF THE GUILT AND SHAME PRONENESS SCALE (GASP)

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The original items were translated and adapted for the Bulgarian population having in mind cultural differences. The scale adaptation process involved conducting exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) to test its factor structure. In addition, as part of the scale development process, we tested the internal reliability and construct validity of the GASP with a wide array of criterion variables.

The American version contains 16 questions with four subscales, each with four items examining the various aspects of guilt and shame. The Guilt and Shame Proneness scale (GASP) measures differences in relation to the individual tendencies to feel guilt and shame when committing transgressions or failures. It contains 4 scales, each with 4 items. There are 2 subscales for guilt examining the negative assessments of behavior and tendencies for actions to correct (compensate) the transgressions, as well as 2 subscales for shame examining the negative self-assessments and tendencies for actions of withdrawal following the offenses that have become public.

The GASP scale measures predisposition to guilt and shame and evaluates emotional traits (i.e., guilt and shame) rather than emotional states (i.e., feelings of guilt and shame

at the moment). Each item is a brief description of an awkward situation in everyday life that a person may find himself/herself in or a transgression that he/she could commit, as well as possible reactions in these situations. In the original GASP, a 7-point Likert scale was used; as for Bulgarian, it was considered that a 5-point Likert scale would be more appropriate, as it gives a sufficiently high level of detail in the analysis of the information without complicating the subjects. The Bulgarian sample was supposed to present themselves in each situation and indicate the probability of reacting as described using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 - very unlikely, to 5 - very likely.

Guilt items of NBE subscale describes how bad a person feels about an act (e.g., “... You would feel that the way you acted is pathetic”). The items descriptions contain situations in which the perpetrator feels unwell because of what he/she has done and includes items such as:

“After realizing you have received too much change at a store, you decide to keep it because the salesclerk doesn’t notice. What is the likelihood that you would feel uncomfortable about keeping the money?”

Guilt-Repair items describetendencies to act (i.e., behavior/behavioral intentions) focused on correcting or compensating for the transgression (e.g., “You would try to be more careful with your friends.”). The scale describes actions or behavioral tendencies focused on correcting or compensating misdeeds and includes items such as:

“You reveal a friend’s secret, though your friend never finds out. What is the likelihood that your failure to keep the secret would lead you to exert extra effort to keep secrets in the future?”

Shame- Negative Self- evaluations` (Shame-NSE) items describe negative feelings about yourself (e.g., “You would feel like a bad person”).

“You give a bad presentation at work. Afterwards your boss tells your coworkers it was your fault that your company lost the con-

tract. What is the likelihood that you would feel incompetent?"

Shame withdrawal items describe trends in actions focused on "hiding" or withdrawing from the audience (e.g., "You would avoid guests until they leave"). The subscale includes items such as:

"Your home is very messy and unexpected guests knock on your door and invite themselves in. What is the likelihood that you would avoid the guests until they leave?"

HYPOTHESES

FACTOR STRUCTURE

As the GASP contains four subscales, we assumed that it will have an oblique four-factor structure (Cohen et al., 2011). We were not concerned with the overall factor structure of the GASP, rather we focused on the internal reliability of the four subscales.

RELIABILITY

Based on the original reliability of the GASP scale, we hypothesized:

Correlations among the four factors in the Bulgarian translation as well. This hypothesis is organized by the following assumptions:

- because both guilt-NBE and guilt-repair subscales measure private transgressions, we expect them to be correlated (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Wolf et al., 2010).
- Similarly, shame-NSE and shame-withdraw are associated with public transgressions; we expect them to be correlated both revealing personal tendencies to shame proneness (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Wolf et al., 2010).
- Additionally, in line with the hypothesis of the authors of the American version of GASP (Cohen et al., 2011), we also expect a correlation between guilt-NBE and shame-NSE because both assessed negative "self-conscious emotions".

For the reason that GASP is built on scripts and four items in each subscale, we set a benchmark of .60 to assess the internal

reliability of the subscales. The setting of a .60 standard is in line with the recommendations proposed by Schmitt (1996) and John and Benet-Martinez (2000) that researchers should determine appropriate alpha levels according to the measurement context.

CONSTRUCT VALIDITY

Previous researches show that though guilt and shame subscales generally correlate with each other (e.g., $r_s = .39$ to $.75$, Cohen et al., 2011) correlated separately with other measures, such as promotion focus, personal distress and self-esteem (e.g., Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Wolf et al., 2010). In line with hypotheses from tests on the original GASP scale and the theoretical background, (e.g., Cohen, 2010; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Wolf et al., 2010), we hypothesized that:

- 1) *Guilt* subscales would be significantly correlated with promotion focus and promotion orientation.
- 2) On the other hand, *shame* subscales would be significantly correlated with personal distress and low self-esteem. If the hypothesized correlations are significant, it will provide evidence of construct validity for the GASP.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS & PROCEDURE

In this exploratory study, 125 undergraduate students (39 male, 84 female) received forms containing several questionnaires that needed to be filled in. First in the list was the Regulatory Focus scale (RFQ, Higgins et al., 2001). Secondly, the participants had to complete the Guilt and Shame questionnaire. For GASP items, participants read a description of a personal transgression and indicated the likelihood that they would respond in the way described (5-point Likert scale from 1 - very unlikely, to 5 - very likely). After the GASP scale, the students filled in several theoretically-related questionnaires, adapted in Bulgarian: Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE-II)- Carleton, Collimore, Asmundson, 2007, 2011, adaptation Karastoyanov, 2018), Need To Belong scale (Leary et al., 2013,

adaptation Karastoyanov, 2018), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983, adaptation Karastoyanov & Hristova, 2000), Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965, adaptation Dilova et al., 2017).

DATA ANALYSIS

Gender and age. The preliminary analyses described tendency for men to be lower on Guilt Negative behavior scale (F=11.368, p=.001) and on Shame Negative Self-Evaluation scale (F=4.112, p=.045). However, the

obvious limitation to that conclusion should be noted: in our sample, we had substantially more women than men (39 vs.84). Regarding the age distribution, we do not establish differences in the experience of guilt and shame.

FACTOR STRUCTURE

Following the procedures used by the authors of the questionnaire, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed separately for each of the four scales to maximize the internal consistency of each of the subscales. In general, the authors do not emphasize the

TABLE 1. GENDER DIFFERENCES REGARDING GASP SCALES

		N	X cp.	F	Sig.
Guilt-Negative Behavior	Man	39	15.1282	11.368	.001
	Woman	84	17.2738		
	Total	123	16.5935		
Guilt-Repair	Man	39	15.6154	1.874	.174
	Woman	84	16.3690		
	Total	123	16.1301		
Shame-Negative Self-Esteem	Man	39	14.7949	4.112	.045
	Woman	84	16.1786		
	Total	123	15.7398		
Shame-Withdraw	Man	39	9.8462	.172	.679
	Woman	84	9.5595		
	Total	123	9.6504		

TABLE 2. FACTOR ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF GASP SUBSCALES

	Guilt-Negative-Behavior-Evaluation	Guilt-Repair	Shame-Negative-Self-Evaluation	Shame-Withdraw
Mean	16.56	16.104	15.696	9.664
Median	18	17	17	10
Mode	20	16	18	12
SD	3.418	2.842	3.557	3.531
Skewness	-.81	-.928	-.834	.385
Std. Error of Skewness	.217	.217	.217	.217
Kurtosis	.628	.746	.083	-.277
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.430	.430	.430	.430
Min	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
Max	20.00	20.00	20.00	18.00
KMO	.799	.659	.694	.640
Bartlett's Test	p = 0.000	p = 0.000	p = 0.000	p = 0.000
% Variance	58%	44%	54%	47%
Eigenvalue	2.362	1.759	2.144	1.885
Cronbach's Alpha	.759	.609	.707	.622

idea of the overall factor structure of the questionnaire as much as they want to create four scales with high internal reliability. In a sense, they treat each scale as independent in the process of creating the tool. It was not necessary to perform a confirmatory factor analysis, as only one factor with a weight greater than 1 was extracted for all four scales. We did not find items weighing less than 0.50; in this case the low weight inside the factor would mean that the item functions differently from the others in the subscale.

RELIABILITY

The internal consistency of the scale, showing the extent to which the items on the scale form a common group, measured by the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, exceeded the accepted confidence threshold (Cronbach’s alpha > 0.60).

1) All three scales Guilt: Negative Behavior, Guilt- Repair and Shame: Negative Self-Evaluation correlated significantly with each other. Guilt Repair did not correlate with Shame- Withdraw. Shame-Withdraw correlated negatively with Guilt: Negative behavior. The correlations between shame-

NSE and the two subscales of Guilt were also significant (with moderately high size effect), indicating that people from the eight alternative models fit, as did the hypothetical four-factor model.

- 2) The two scales of predisposition to guilt correlated significantly ($r(125) = .624^{**}$) verifying that people who tend to make negative behaviors-evaluations after their hidden transgressions also tend to impose “corrective” behaviors after personal guilt.
- 3) Similarly, the two scales of predisposition to shame correlated significantly ($r(125) = .330^{**}$) although moderate in strength, weaker than all other significant correlations between the scales.
- 4) We found the expected significant correlation between guilt-NBE and shame-NSE ($r(125) = .547^{**}$) suggesting that both subscales can assess negative “self-conscious emotions”.

CONSTRUCT VALIDITY

Table 4 presents correlations of the four GASP subscales with other individual difference measures:

TABLE 3. CORRELATION MATRIX SHOWING THE INTERNAL CONSISTENCY OF GASP SUBSCALES

	Guilt-Negative-Behavior-Evaluation	Guilt-Repair	Shame-Negative-Self-Evaluation	Shame-Withdraw
Guilt-Negative-Behavior-Evaluation	1	.624**	.547**	-.158*
Guilt-Repair	.624**	1	.463**	.110
Shame-NegativeSelf-Evaluation	.547**	.463**	1	.330**
Shame-Withdraw	-.158*	.110	.330**	1

Note: 125 participants. * $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$

TABLE 4. CORRELATION MATRIX OF GASP SUBSCALES AND OTHER MEASURES

	Guilt-Negative-Behavior-Evaluation	Guilt-Repair	Shame-Negative-Self-Evaluation	Shame-Withdraw
Perceived Stress	-.081	.027	-.049	.177*
Fear of Negative Evaluation		.154	.237**	.259**
General Self-Esteem	.047	.032	-.107	-.194*
Promotion Regulatory Focus	.245**	.085	.015	-.442**
Prevention Regulatory Focus	.163	.146	.073	-.131
Need To Belong	.071	.181*	.177*	.004

1. As predicted, the Guilt-Negative-Behavior-Evaluation (NBE) positively correlated with promotion focus ($r(124) = .245$, $p = .006$). This was not the case for Guilt-Repair subscale ($< .1$).
2. Shame-Withdraw subscale was significantly correlated with low self-esteem ($r(124) = -.194$, $p = .03$), positively correlated with personal distress ($r(124) = .177$, $p = .05$). That was not the case for Shame-Negative-Self-Evaluation (NSE) subscale that was significantly correlated with other individual measures such as Fear of Negative Evaluation ($r(124) = .237$, $p = .008$) and Need To Belong ($r(124) = .177$, $p = .05$).

DISCUSSION

The pattern of results suggests that the shame-NSE and guilt-NBE subscales are similar in that they both measure negative self-consciousness. On the other hand, there was a different correlation model for the two shame scales in relation to the other factors we had added in the research. The connection with the global self-assessment and the experienced stress is thought-provoking. The study extends prior theories of shame by showing that a maladaptive consequence of low self-esteem is related to the tendency of shame withdrawal. Regarding the Bulgarian sample, the data displays an association between the predisposition to avoidant behavior after transgressions when they are in front of the eyes of others, manifested in lower self-esteem and higher stress, but this tendency is not presented upon private transgressions. On the other side of the coin, as opposed to previous findings (de Hooge et al., 2008), our data suggest that among the Bulgarian population guilt and not shame motivates preference for social approach (promotion focus) over social withdrawal. Promotional orientation was unrelated to shame and the tendency to negative self-esteem. Generally, it is reasonable, as the promotion focus emphasizes hopes, achievements, need for success and development. In the context of guilt and shame theory, it means that the negative assessment of behavior, but not of the self, turns as a strategy

here for seeking profits (presence of positives) and avoiding non-profits (lack of positives). Such behavior implies focus on achieving the goals and not on the means for achieving them, which may be labeled as unmoral in the public common sense. The predisposition to feel guilty, among the Bulgarian sample, was not linked to behavioral tendencies that are focused on correcting or compensating for mistakes.

Potential limitation of such conclusions are that the regulatory focus we measured was based on individual differences (“chronic regulatory focus”) and not involving measures of “current regulatory focus” (that is connected with the situation) (Higgins, 1997, 1998). Other constraint is that as a whole, the extracted analyses are correlational and as always there stays the question whether a survey form can truly predict human behavior. Our future intent is to extend the research with more case and experimental studies. The adapted GASP questionnaire may be helpful in studying not only psychological data, but also it can be used in Political and other group related issues that will help to understand better the cultural and social differences in Bulgaria.

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Prof. Georgi KARASTOYANOV, PhD, DSc

G. Rakovski National Defense College

BULGARIA, Sofia 1124, 82 Evlogi i Hristo Georgievi Blvd., Oborishte

karastoyanov@abv.bg

Gergana KUZMOVA, PhD

New Bulgarian University

BULGARIA, Sofia 1618, 21 Montevideo Str.

go_kuzmova@yahoo.com