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van Osch, Y.M.J.; Zeelenberg, M.; Breugelmans, S.M.

Published in:
Cognition and Emotion

DOI:
[10.1080/02699931.2017.1290586](https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2017.1290586)

Publication date:
2018

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
van Osch, Y. M. J., Zeelenberg, M., & Breugelmans, S. M. (2018). The self and others in the experience of pride. *Cognition and Emotion*, 32(2), 404-413. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2017.1290586>

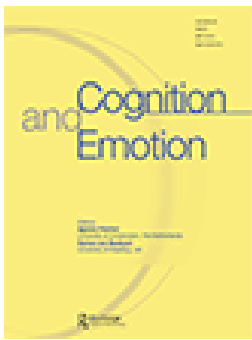
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To cite this article: Yvette van Osch, Marcel Zeelenberg & Seger M. Breugelmans (2017): The self and others in the experience of pride, *Cognition and Emotion*, DOI: [10.1080/02699931.2017.1290586](https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2017.1290586)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2017.1290586>



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Published online: 16 Feb 2017.



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The self and others in the experience of pride

Yvette van Osch, Marcel Zeelenberg and Seger M. Breugelmans

Department of Social Psychology, Tilburg University, Tilburg, Netherlands

ABSTRACT

Pride is seen as both a self-conscious emotion as well as a social emotion. These categories are not mutually exclusive, but have brought forth different ideas about pride as either revolving around the self or as revolving around one's relationship with others. Current measures of pride do not include intrapersonal elements of pride experiences. Social comparisons, which often cause experiences of pride, contain three elements: the self, the relationship between the self and another person, and the other person. From the literature on pride, we distilled three related elements; perceptions and feelings of self-inflation, other-distancing, and other-devaluation. In four studies, we explored whether these elements were present in pride experiences. We did so at an implicit (Experiment 1; $N=218$) and explicit level (Experiment 2; $N=125$), in an academic setting with *in vivo* (Experiment 3; $N=203$) and imagined pride experiences (Experiment 4; $N=126$). The data consistently revealed that the experience of pride is characterised by self-inflation, not by other-distancing nor other-devaluation.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 21 July 2016
Revised 19 January 2017
Accepted 27 January 2017

KEYWORDS

Pride; authentic pride; self-inflation; emotion experience; phenomenology; social comparison

Pride is an interesting emotion because it simultaneously focuses on the self and on others. Consequently, pride can be classified both as a self-conscious emotion revolving around the self (Tangney & Fischer, 1995; Tracy & Robins, 2004) and as a social emotion revolving about one's relationship with others (Van Osch, Breugelmans, Zeelenberg, & Fontaine, 2013; Williams & DeSteno, 2009). These categories are not mutually exclusive, but have brought forth different ideas about pride as either self-inflating (Roseman, Antoniou, & Jose, 1996) or as other-distancing emotion (Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006). Most empirical work on the experience of pride has explored the intrapersonal experience of pride, and relatively little is known about how social or interpersonal aspects are represented in the experience of pride. It is important to know whether such interpersonal elements are part of the pride experience in order to better understand pride's ensuing behaviours as well as its function. This paper presents four experiments exploring whether interpersonal elements are part of the pride experience.

Various studies have addressed the experience of pride, albeit mostly in terms of intrapersonal characteristics. For instance, in a study by Frijda, Kuipers, and Ter Schure, people were asked to recall various emotional experiences and report on appraisal dimensions and modes of action readiness (1989). People recalled pride to be pleasant, that they had felt certain and hyperactivated (i.e. exuberant), and thought they themselves had caused their good outcome (see also Roseman et al., 1996). The well-known studies by Tracy and Robins (2007b) revealed that people who experience authentic pride attribute positive outcomes to their own efforts. Proud people described themselves with positive adjectives, such as accomplished, confident, and fulfilled. In addition, research on the emotional meaning of the word pride across a variety of cultures revealed it to be associated with a positive valence and potency (Van Osch et al., 2013). To our knowledge, studies have not yet explored to what extent such experiences also include representations of the social situation.

CONTACT Yvette van Osch  y.m.j.vanosch@tilburguniversity.edu; y.m.j.vanosch@uvt.nl

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For emotions in general, and pride specifically, the social context is often important for appraisals (e.g. outperforming another), emotion regulation (e.g. the other outperformed person is sad), and emotion expression. As Fischer and Van Kleef state, most studies ignore the social context in which emotional experiences take place (2010). To get a more complete picture of what type of social representations could be included, it is instructive to look at the social situations in which pride is experienced.

Research has suggested that people experience pride when they make social comparisons (Exline & Lobel, 1999; Smith, 2000; Webster, Duvall, Gaines, & Smith, 2003)¹. For example, when people perform better or achieve higher goals than others in their social surrounding. The social comparison in such a situation contains at least three elements: (1) the self, (2) the relationship between the self and another person, and (3) the other person. People who want to feel good can focus on one of these elements to ameliorate their current emotional experience (Wills, 1981), likewise people who already feel good may do so because they focused on one or more elements in the social comparison. Below, we will look at the currently available evidence that points to how these elements are related to pride.

With respect to the *self*, as mentioned before, pride has been associated with self-inflation, or self-directedness (Roseman et al., 1996). “A proud man ... is said to be swollen or puffed” (Darwin, 1889/1998, pp. 262–263). Generating pride-related words initially increases postural height (Oosterwijk, Rotteveel, Fischer, & Hess, 2009). The idea of self-inflation also resonates with findings on semantic and visual representations of pride (Tracy & Matsumoto, 2008; Tracy & Robins, 2007b; Van Osch et al., 2013), and with perceptions of powerful people, who for instance overestimate their own height (Duguid & Goncalo, 2012). Pride has also been related to self-esteem (e.g. Tracy & Robins, 2007a), with pride sometimes being a core aspect of how state self-esteem is measured (Brown, Dutton, & Cook, 2001). It has to be said though that empirical evidence for a direct link between pride and self-esteem is still scarce. High self-esteem, compared to low self-esteem, in turn has been associated with enhanced (e.g. Brown et al., 2001) and larger perceptions of the self. For example, inductions of high self-esteem increase the size of signatures (Zweigenhaft & Marlowe, 1973). The experience of an inflated self – a self that is of increased size – has been suggested to be closely

related to the benefit of pride in gaining and maintaining status (Tracy & Robins, 2007a). If people who experience themselves as larger also display themselves more, this could lead to increased visibility and hence increase perceptions of status (Shariff & Tracy, 2009).

With respect to the *relationship* between the self and others, pride has been associated with increased interpersonal distance. For example, it has been argued that proud individuals distance themselves from others (disengage), explaining why this emotion may be evaluated less positively in cultures where social relations are more tight (e.g. Kitayama et al., 2006), or where norms for acting humbly are present (Bromgard, Trafimow, & Linn, 2014). As another example, proud people (in comparison to compassionate people) tend to perceive themselves as more similar to strong than weak (i.e. outperformed) others, suggesting a distancing from weak others (Oveis, Horberg, & Keltner, 2010). Distancing is another way to increase salience. This notion concurs with mental representations of status that focus on the relative distance between two status positions (Chiao, Bordeaux, & Ambady, 2004) and effects of power which reveal that people in legitimate power prefer a larger social distance between themselves and others (Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2012). Other evidence to the effect that pride may be associated with interpersonal distance comes from research showing that people in advantageous positions are aware that increased distance may lead to negative feelings in others, inducing prosocial behaviour to appease others who are relatively worse off (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, & Pieters, 2010; Zell & Exline, 2010). Such secondary reactions suggest that people are aware of, and experience an increased interpersonal distance implied by pride. Both power and status have been related to pride, albeit to different types or aspects of this emotion (see Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, Kingstone, & Henrich, 2013). Important for the current paper is that both have also been related to interpersonal distancing.

With the respect to representations of the *other*, pride could be associated with experiences of the others to be inferior, worth less, or deserving of less. For example, it has been shown that people in power devalue others in order to justify and prolong their superior position (Kipnis, 1972). Although this is more likely an element of hubristic pride – a form of pride in which positive outcomes are attributed to abilities rather than effort, and characterised by feelings of arrogance and snobbism (Tracy & Robins, 2007b) – the

inferior position of the other could also simply be a consequence of perceiving the self as larger or of perceiving increased interpersonal distance.

To summarise, various lines of research suggest that the interpersonal situation plays a role in the experience of pride, but also that a direct assessment of this experience is lacking. In this article, we aim to contribute to our knowledge of pride by assessing the various elements of the social situation in the phenomenological experience of pride. In four experiments, we explored to what extent the three elements of self-inflation, distancing, and other-devaluation were present in the pride experiences of participants. We experimentally compared pride with related emotions (*schadenfreude*, positive emotion based on downward social comparison; *envy*, self-conscious emotion based on an upward social comparison; *joy*, a positive emotion without a social comparison) and their implicit (Experiment 1) and explicit (Experiment 2) effects on the emotional experiences of participants. We then replicated these effects in a natural academic context (Experiment 3) and an imagined academic context (Experiment 4). In Experiments 1, 2, and 4, we collected data for one week in the lab of the social psychology department at Tilburg University, in Experiment 3, the link to the questionnaire remained open for a 2-month period after publication of the exam grades. We did not exclude any conditions, variables or participants from our analyses, unless explicitly mentioned.

Experiment 1: Implicit self-inflation and distancing

Method

First-year psychology students at Tilburg University ($N = 218$, $n\bar{f} = 167$, 1 missing, $M_{\text{age}} = 20.10$, $SD = 3.29$) were randomly assigned to one of four between subject conditions. They were instructed to recall one of four emotional experiences and subsequently asked to draw the recalled social situation in a box. Participants recalled a situation in which they experienced pride (over an individual achievement)², *schadenfreude*, *envy*, or *joy*. Participants rated the extent to which they had felt pride, *schadenfreude*, *envy*, and *joy*³ ($1 = \text{Not at all}$, $7 = \text{Very much}$). In their drawing, they were asked to represent people as circles with the size of the circles indicating how important that person was. They indicated which circle represented themselves. For all other people

(circles) they could use a letter in the alphabet, with the most important other being "A", the second most important "B", and so forth⁴. We measured the diameters of the circles representing the participant and person "A" and calculated the ratio "me"/"A" by drawing a vertical line in the middle of the circles. In addition, we measured the distance between the "me" and "A" circles in the shortest possible straight line (in centimetres; see Figure 1, top panel). Thirteen participants were excluded from analyses because they did not follow instructions when drawing (drawing no situation, only themselves, or failing to indicate who was who in the situation).

Results and discussion

The results are shown in the upper part of Table 1. Inspection of the autobiographical recalls revealed that seven participants in the joy condition wrote about a personal achievement and literally mentioned that they experienced pride. These participants were re-assigned to the pride condition. None of the measures were normally distributed, so non-parametric Kruskal–Wallis tests were performed which replace each of N observations by ranks. Scores from all participants are ranked in a single series and Kruskal–Wallis tests whether the mean ranks differ between conditions. Please note that parametric tests yielded identical results, even though non-parametric tests are more appropriate.

As can be seen in Table 1, participants reported to experience the target emotion in their respective condition the most. In the pride and joy conditions, the differences between the experienced amount of pride and joy were not significantly different. We will address this issue in the General Discussion.

Let us now turn to the measures of primary interest. The "me"/"A" ratio was larger in the pride condition than in the joy, *envy*, and *schadenfreude* conditions. Pairwise comparisons revealed that the ratio for pride was significantly higher than in all other conditions. The distance between the "me" and "A" circles was larger in the *envy* and *schadenfreude* conditions than in the pride and joy conditions. Pairwise comparisons revealed that the *envy* condition differed from the pride and joy conditions, and that the *schadenfreude* condition differed from the pride and joy conditions.

Compared to other emotions, recalling a pride experience produced larger spatial representations of the self, relative to others in the recalled situation.

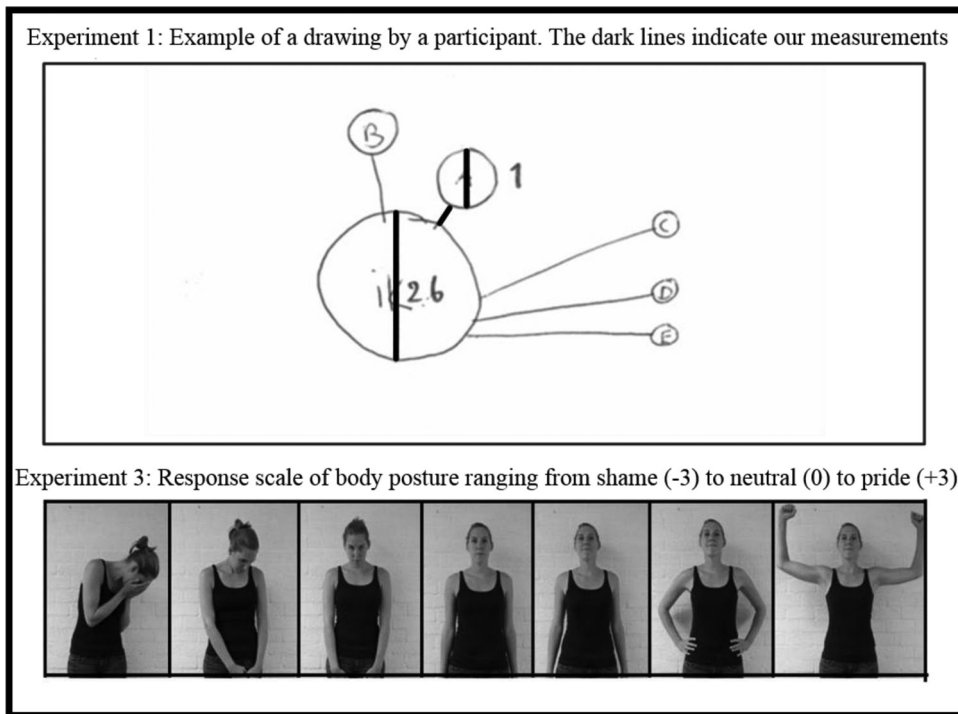


Figure 1. Examples of dependent variables in Experiments 1 and 3. *Source:* Yvette van Osch.

Participants who recalled an envy or schadenfreude experience experienced a greater distance between the self and others in comparison to the positive emotions. Unfortunately, we cannot draw conclusions about the direction of this effect (does pride enhance or do the other emotions decrease representations of the self), due to the lack of a neutral condition. Asking participants to recall a neutral situation and having them draw the social situation would not be feasible, as in our experience recalled neutral situations often do not involve the presence of others, precluding a test of the hypotheses. Therefore, in Experiment 2, people recalled experiences of pride, schadenfreude, envy, joy, or a neutral event and subsequently reported to what extent they had experienced self-inflation, distancing from others, and other-devaluation.

Experiment 2: Explicit self-inflation, distancing, and other-devaluation

Method

First-year psychology students at Tilburg University ($N = 125$, $n_{\text{♀}} = 98$, $M_{\text{age}} = 19.60$, $SD = 2.94$) recalled a situation (cf. Experiment 1) in which they experienced

pride (over an individual achievement), schadenfreude, envy, joy, or an emotionally neutral event (grocery shopping). Participants rated the extent to which they had felt pride, schadenfreude, envy, joy, guilt, and shame. They also rated to what extent they had experienced an inflated self (*I felt large, I felt important, I thought about what I had achieved, I thought about how great I was, I felt grandiose, I felt unique, I was focused on myself*; $\alpha = .87$), distancing from others (*I wanted to separate myself from others, I wanted to place myself on a pedestal, I wanted to distance myself from others, I wanted to increase the distance between myself and others*; $\alpha = .71$), and devaluation of others (*I thought others were less than me, I wanted to hurt the others, I wanted to convince others that others had not performed well, I wanted to cause the other pain, I wanted to devalue others*; $\alpha = .85$), and to what extent they had wanted to share their experience with others (*I wrote about the event on social media, I phoned someone to share the experience, I talked about this event with others*; $\alpha = .74$; all items rated on scales from 1 = *Not at all* to 7 = *Very much*). Factor analyses indicated all scales to be unidimensional, with first factors explaining at least 53% of the variance.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and statistics of all dependent variables in experiments 1–3.

| Experiment 1: Condition | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------|
| DVs | Envy (<i>n</i> = 50) | Schadenfreude (<i>n</i> = 53) | Joy (<i>n</i> = 46) | Pride (<i>n</i> = 56) | χ^2 (3, <i>N</i> = 205–218) | η^2 | |
| | <i>M</i> (SD) | <i>M</i> (SD) | <i>M</i> (SD) | <i>M</i> (SD) | | | |
| Me/A ratio | 0.95 (0.66) _a | 0.96 (1.07) _a | 1.13 (0.93) _a | 1.46 (0.94) _b | 28.94** | .14 | |
| Distance | 2.46 (2.34) _a | 1.82 (2.16) _{ab} | 1.39 (6.01) _c | 0.98 (1.34) _{bc} | 34.98** | .17 | |
| Pride | 2.39 (1.79) _a | 2.91 (1.89) _a | 5.90 (1.61) _b | 6.28 (1.07) _b | 116.87** | .55 | |
| Joy | 1.61 (1.16) _a | 4.79 (1.77) _b | 6.49 (0.62) _c | 6.23 (1.33) _c | 131.36** | .62 | |
| Schadenfreude | 1.73 (1.25) _a | 5.25 (1.14) _b | 1.59 (1.08) _a | 1.92 (1.48) _a | 117.99** | .55 | |
| Envy | 5.81 (0.91) _a | 1.27 (0.65) _b | 1.10 (0.31) _b | 1.23 (0.64) _b | 161.26** | .75 | |
| Experiment 2: Condition | | | | | | | |
| DVs | Envy (<i>n</i> = 25) | Schadenfreude (<i>n</i> = 25) | Neutral (<i>n</i> = 25) | Joy (<i>n</i> = 19) | Pride (<i>n</i> = 31) | <i>F</i> (4, 119) | η^2 |
| | <i>M</i> (SD) | <i>M</i> (SD) | <i>M</i> (SD) | <i>M</i> (SD) | <i>M</i> (SD) | | |
| Self-inflation ($\alpha = .87$) | 2.59 (1.20) _c | 2.31 (1.13) _c | 2.72 (0.97) _c | 4.12 (1.09) _b | 5.02 (0.99) _a | 1185.51** | .52 |
| Distancing ($\alpha = .71$) | 3.10 (1.48) _a | 2.17 (1.26) _{ab} | 1.92 (1.13) _b | 1.75 (0.91) _b | 2.33 (1.21) _{ab} | 13.43* | .11 |
| Devaluation ($\alpha = .85$) | 2.94 (1.81) _a | 1.90 (1.04) _{ab} | 1.26 (0.42) _b | 1.09 (0.18) _{bc} | 1.57 (0.55) _{ab} | 32.58** | .27 |
| Share event ($\alpha = .74$) | 2.21 (1.19) _{ab} | 1.59 (0.72) _{bc} | 1.21 (0.40) _c | 3.81 (1.87) _{ad} | 4.52 (1.50) _d | 68.12** | .55 |
| Pride | 2.00 (1.58) _a | 2.52 (1.78) _a | 3.28 (1.57) _{ab} | 4.79 (2.10) _{bc} | 6.30 (1.21) _c | 54.31** | .54 |
| Joy | 1.64 (1.00) _a | 4.20 (2.00) _b | 4.84 (1.65) _b | 6.47 (0.70) _c | 6.57 (0.97) _c | 77.66** | .63 |
| Schadenfreude | 1.36 (0.86) _a | 5.44 (1.53) _b | 1.76 (1.20) _a | 1.26 (0.56) _a | 1.93 (1.57) _a | 63.35** | .52 |
| Envy | 5.36 (1.47) _a | 2.48 (1.90) _b | 1.68 (1.07) _b | 1.68 (1.06) _b | 1.27 (0.83) _b | 57.19** | .46 |
| Valence (neg–pos) | 2.33 (0.70) _a | 3.79 (1.41) _b | 3.76 (0.97) _b | 4.84 (0.37) _{bc} | 4.79 (0.56) _c | 65.47** | .55 |
| Arousal (calm–excited) | 3.08 (1.06) _a | 3.12 (1.05) _{ab} | 2.44 (0.96) _c | 3.53 (1.39) _{ab} | 4.00 (1.08) _b | 26.19** | .21 |
| Dominance (small–large) | 2.58 (0.88) _a | 2.96 (0.98) _{ab} | 3.04 (0.61) _{ab} | 3.58 (1.21) _b | 3.76 (1.02) _b | 20.90** | .17 |
| Experiment 3: Quintiles | | | | | | | |
| DVs | 0–20% (<i>n</i> = 22) | 21–40% (<i>n</i> = 37) | 41–60% (<i>n</i> = 39) | 61–80% (<i>n</i> = 63) | 81–100% (<i>n</i> = 42) | χ^2 (4, <i>N</i> = 203) | η^2 |
| | <i>M</i> (SD) | <i>M</i> (SD) | <i>M</i> (SD) | <i>M</i> (SD) | <i>M</i> (SD) | | |
| Self-inflation ($\alpha = .83$) | 2.53 (0.75) _{ab} | 3.08 (1.08) _a | 3.71 (1.08) _{bc} | 4.22 (1.08) _c | 4.37 (1.01) _c | 55.34** | .27 |
| Distancing ($\alpha = .69$) | 1.91 (0.96) _a | 1.80 (1.00) _a | 2.08 (1.01) _a | 2.31 (1.20) _a | 2.31 (1.19) _a | 6.64 | .03 |
| Devaluation ($\alpha = .77$) | 1.38 (0.46) _a | 1.49 (0.57) _a | 1.56 (0.68) _a | 1.71 (0.61) _a | 1.65 (0.70) _a | 9.24 | .05 |
| Share event ($\alpha = .43$) | 3.77 (1.88) _a | 3.88 (1.66) _a | 4.19 (1.35) _a | 4.62 (1.32) _a | 4.45 (1.25) _a | 9.52 | .05 |
| Body posture | –2.00 (1.11) _a | –0.03 (1.36) _a | 1.36 (1.18) _b | 1.68 (1.00) _b | 2.38 (0.62) _c | 108.45** | .54 |
| Pride | 1.18 (0.66) _a | 3.08 (1.66) _a | 4.85 (1.55) _b | 5.95 (1.05) _c | 6.50 (0.55) _c | 124.17** | .61 |
| Shame | 5.41 (1.84) _a | 2.65 (1.89) _b | 1.31 (0.83) _c | 1.25 (0.86) _c | 1.10 (0.30) _c | 93.70** | .46 |
| Joy | 1.41 (1.05) _a | 4.14 (2.00) _a | 5.72 (1.26) _b | 6.33 (0.92) _{bc} | 6.76 (0.43) _c | 108.34** | .54 |
| Anger | 4.68 (1.81) _a | 2.43 (1.80) _b | 1.38 (0.96) _c | 1.29 (1.02) _c | 1.02 (0.15) _c | 89.75** | .44 |
| Relief | 1.95 (1.46) _a | 4.30 (2.09) _{bd} | 5.82 (1.25) _c | 5.92 (1.27) _c | 5.52 (1.70) _{cd} | 59.21** | .29 |
| Disappointment | 6.09 (1.38) _a | 3.81 (2.03) _a | 2.23 (1.66) _b | 1.43 (0.91) _{bc} | 1.07 (0.34) _c | 115.72** | .57 |
| Satisfaction | 1.32 (0.57) _a | 3.46 (1.66) _a | 5.31 (1.44) _b | 6.17 (0.94) _b | 6.81 (0.46) _b | 129.59** | .64 |
| Regret | 4.23 (2.14) _a | 3.35 (2.25) _a | 1.82 (1.60) _b | 1.32 (0.80) _b | 1.29 (1.07) _b | 67.67** | .34 |

Notes: Body posture was rated on a scale from –3 to +3, all other items were rated on scales from 1 to 7. Means with different subscripts differed significantly in pairwise comparisons ($\alpha < .05$; we used the adjusted *p*-values for the non-parametric pairwise comparisons).

***p* < .001.

**p* < .01.

We also included the self-assessment manikin, which is a visual representation of the semantic differential scale, assessing valence (negative to positive), arousal (calm to excited), and dominance (dominated to dominant; Bradley & Lang, 1994). We were especially interested in the dominance scale, as the manikin appears from very small (1) to very large (5), as a proxy for perceived self-inflation. Participants selected the manikin that best represented how they had felt in the situation they recalled.

Results and discussion

See the mid-section of Table 1. Inspection of the autobiographical recalls revealed that six participants in the joy condition wrote about a personal achievement and literally mentioned that they experienced pride. These participants were re-assigned to the pride condition. Only self-inflation was normally distributed, all other measures were not, and thus non-parametric Kruskal–Wallis tests were performed.

Pride increased a sense of self-inflation, but not to the distancing from others, nor to the devaluation of others. Envious participants reported to experience more distance between themselves and others and thought of others as less worthy. Proud and happy participants also shared the event more than those in the other conditions. Responses to the self-assessment manikin indicated that pride was seen as more positive than the neutral and negative emotion conditions, and that participants in the pride condition reported to feel larger (dominant) than those in the envious condition. No clear differences were found for the arousal dimension. Overall, the results suggest that pride is characterised by perceptions of an inflated self.

Experiment 3: Pride in an academic setting

Experiments 1 and 2 made use of recalled emotional experiences; in Experiment 3, we used a natural situation in which pride can occur. We assessed explicit experiences of self-inflation, distancing, and other-devaluation directly after students received feedback on their academic performance.

Method

First-year psychology students at Tilburg University ($N = 203$, $n_{\text{♀}} = 175$, $M_{\text{age}} = 19.33$) completed an online questionnaire within three days after their grade, for the very first course taken at university, was posted online. The web link to the questionnaire was included in a message containing the grades in the online learning environment. We asked participants to give their first reactions after seeing their grade. They self-reported their grade and, after seeing the actual distribution of grades presented to them graphically in five equal groups (quintiles running from *Worst 20%* to *Best 20%*), indicated in which group they scored. Score group was used as an independent variable. Participants rated the extent to which they felt pride, shame, joy, anger, relief, disappointment, satisfaction, and regret. They then rated the scales for self-inflation ($\alpha = .83$), distancing ($\alpha = .69$), other-devaluation ($\alpha = .77$), and sharing the event with others ($\alpha = .43$) as in Experiment 2 (all items: 1 = *Not at all* to 7 = *Very much*). Participants also indicated how they *felt* on a visual scale consisting of seven photographs portraying someone who felt very ashamed (-3) to someone who felt very proud (+3; see Figure 1, bottom panel)⁵, we labelled this variable

“body posture”. Finally, they indicated on a 7-point scale to what extent they put effort in studying for the exam, plus several other questions about the exam itself.

Results and discussion

None of the dependent variables were normally distributed, and thus analysed using non-parametric Kruskal–Wallis tests (note that parametric tests yielded identical results). Condition (i.e. quintile) affected all dependent measures, except for distancing and other-devaluation. The results are shown in the lower part of Table 1. Participants in the best-scoring group reported feeling most proud and had an increased sense of an inflated self, compared to those in the bottom three groups. Furthermore, those in the highest group indicated that they felt like the person in the two most right photographs for the body posture measure, whereas participants in the other groups did not. These two pictures represent universally recognised pride expressions (Tracy & Matsumoto, 2008) that communicate high status to others (Shariff & Tracy, 2009). No differences were found for the extent to which the participants wanted to share the event with others. It is, however, difficult to interpret this outcome because the scale in this experiment proved unreliable.

In addition, we correlated effort, as a proxy for authentic pride, with self-inflation, distancing, and other-devaluation. Effort was positively correlated with self-inflation ($r = .29$, $p < .001$), but not with distancing ($r = .06$, $p = .404$) or other-devaluation ($r = .02$, $p = .749$).

Experiment 4: Pride in an academic setting II

Experiment 3 revealed that naturalistic experiences of pride are characterised by an increased sense of self-inflation, but not by distancing nor other-devaluation. In that experiment, we could not control which other person the participant had in mind when answering questions on self-inflation, distancing, and other-devaluation. They could have thought about students who scored in other quintiles, with actual others of their choosing, or with no one in particular. Giving participants no direct social context to respond to might have undermined the detection of effects on distancing and other-depreciation. In order to control for these variations, we conducted Experiment 4 in which we indicated a specific other.

Method

First-year psychology students at Tilburg University ($N = 126$, $n_f = 104$, $M_{\text{age}} = 19.83$) responded to one of two scenarios in the week they received their first grades in University. In both conditions, participants imagined the following:

Lately you have been studying very hard for a certain course. You have been motivated to work for this course this semester and several practice exams went well. You also have a good feeling about how the exam went. Now, together with a friend who also took the exam, you are sitting in front of a computer to check the exam results.

Pride condition: You see that you did really well, you received a 9 out of 10! Your friend just made it with a 6.

No pride condition: You see that you just made it, you received a 6 out of 10. Your friend also made it with a 6.

Subsequently, they rated how much pride, joy, envy, schadenfreude, and shame they would experience, and completed the scales for self-inflation ($\alpha = .85$), distancing ($\alpha = .83$), and other-devaluation ($\alpha = .78$) as in Experiment 2 (all items: 1 = *Not at all* to 7 = *Very much*).

Results and discussion

Only self-inflation was normally distributed, all other measures were not, and thus non-parametric Mann–Whitney tests were performed. In the pride condition, participants reported more pride (Mean Rank = 89.92; $M = 6.05$, $SD = 1.13$), joy (mean rank = 86.52; $M = 5.92$, $SD = 1.18$), and less envy (Mean Rank = 50.45; $M = 1.41$, $SD = 0.85$), than in the no pride condition (Mean Rank = 37.08; $M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.50$; Mean Rank = 40.48; $M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.60$; Mean Rank = 76.55; $M = 2.46$, $SD = 1.61$ respectively; all $U_s < 2806.50$, all $p_s < .001$). There were no differences between the pride and no pride conditions for schadenfreude (Mean Rank = 61.12; $M = 1.38$, $SD = 0.79$; Mean Rank = 65.88; $M = 1.51$, $SD = 0.93$ respectively; $U = 2134.50$, $p = .351$) and shame (Mean Rank = 61.52; $M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.466$; Mean Rank = 65.48; $M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.74$ respectively; $U = 2109.00$, $p = .530$).

Participants in the pride condition reported a greater sense of self-inflation ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.28$) than in the no pride condition ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.77$; $F(1,124) = 12.26$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$). Participants in the pride condition reported less distancing (Mean Rank = 54.38; $M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.17$) than in the no pride condition (Mean Rank = 72.62; $M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.21$; $U =$

2559.00, $p = .005$). Participants in the pride condition reported less other-devaluation (Mean Rank = 57.33; $M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.17$) than in the no pride condition (Mean Rank = 69.67; $M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.21$; $U = 2373.50$, $p = .022$). Those who were induced to experience pride reported greater feelings of self-inflation and less distancing and other-devaluation than those who were induced not to feel pride.

General discussion

We explored whether interpersonal aspects of the situation in which pride is experienced are also represented in the personal experience of this emotion. Four experiments revealed that experiences of (authentic) pride are characterised by an inflated self, but not by distancing from others nor by the devaluation of others. Self-inflated perceptions were found with both implicit and explicit measurements. Thus, even though pride may be triggered by seeing the self as better than another (the relational element of the social comparison), our results suggest that experiences of pride are primarily focused on the self (the self-element of the social comparison). This conclusion raises questions about what previous findings on pride as an emotion that leads to disengagement and other-distancing mean (Kitayama et al., 2006).

Negative interpersonal characteristics of pride might exist more in the eye of the beholder than in the person experiencing pride. In many contexts, pride is thought of as undesirable (e.g. Bromgard et al., 2014; Eid & Diener, 2009; Stipek, 1998). People who express pride of achievements are evaluated less positively than less expressive achievers (Kalokerinos, Greenaway, Pedder, & Margetts, 2014), especially if the achievement domain is important for or desired by the observer (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). Feeling that one is the target of a downward social comparison may increase distance perceptions from the perspective of the observer (Wills, 1981). It could also be the case that the distancing explanation comes from notions on hubristic pride, for which no such sensitivity can be expected. This type of pride is associated with aggrandised self-views and the goal of asserting dominance over others (Tracy & Robins, 2007b), and closely associated with the trait narcissism which itself is associated with chronically inflated self-views (Campbell & Foster, 2007).

To summarise, distancing and other-devaluation could be characteristics of other people's perceptions

of proud people, whereas self-inflation is a characteristic of people's own experiences. Practically, this means that studies of pride perception and experience should not be directly compared, since they assess different things. In addition, it may explain why and how misalignment of emotions occurs (Lange & Crusius, 2015), why people moderate pride expressions (Van Osch, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2016), and why strict cultural rules exist for this positive emotion (Stipek, 1998). The finding that the experience of pride is mostly characterised by intrapersonal aspects does not mean that all social emotions revolve around intrapersonal aspects only. For instance, the experience of shame contains both intra- and interpersonal aspects: feeling worthless about the self but also approach and avoidance tendencies given the specific social context (De Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2010). The present data also corroborate findings on how interpersonal aspects are characteristic of the experience of malicious envy. The data in Experiment 2 indicated that participants who recalled an envy experience reported feeling a greater distance between themselves and perceived others to be worthless more than those recalling an emotionally neutral event. These findings are in line with previous findings that malicious envy is associated with action tendencies of not wanting to be near the other, degrading the other, and trying to hurt the other (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, & Pieters, 2009).

Understanding the phenomenology of pride is also important for understanding pride-induced behaviours (e.g. Zeelenberg, Nelissen, Breugelmans, & Pieters, 2008). Pride is associated with distinct expressions, and these expressions inform others about one's achievements which can lead to status conferral (Shariff & Tracy, 2009). Expressing pride, however, is a double-edged sword. Expressed pride can increase status, but if the expression hurts the observer's feelings, this may backfire. Expressers seem to be sensitive to this (Exline & Lobel, 1999), such that they express less pride when this may harm interpersonal relations (Van Osch et al., 2016). Studying whether interpersonal aspects are part of the experience of pride helps us understand that the de-amplification of pride expressions is a secondary process, much like coping.

The current findings lead to a number of interesting follow-up questions. One is to what extent the findings generalise to instances of pride that do not occur in a social context or instances of pride that occur for group or team performances. We would

expect that self-inflation would also be found in such situations, as people still attribute positive outcomes to their own effort. We could speculate that in experiences of pride of group efforts, individuals also experience more closeness, as opposed to distance, because the pride experience is a shared experience. Also it would be interesting to see whether people experience as much pride and self-inflation when both they themselves and the other, setting the comparison standard, perform well.

Another question is how to relate our findings to previous work showing that proud people perceive themselves to be less similar to weak others, but more similar to strong others (Oveis et al., 2010). Our studies may offer a different interpretation of these findings concerning pride and similarity to others. There is a strong positive relation between physical size and success in life (Judge & Cable, 2004) which could suggest that strong others may also be represented as larger. Increased perceived similarity to these large, strong, and successful others could relate to the experience of self-inflation.

Experiments 1 and 2 did not statistically distinguish between the pride and joy conditions in terms of reported intensity of pride and joy. Other studies have also reported that people who experience pride find it difficult to distinguish between joy and pride in their experience (Pennebaker, 2012). This poses questions about the distinction between the experiences of these two emotions. There is evidence for a distinct expression for pride and for a different emotional meaning. It could be the case that joy is the broader of the two emotions, just like regret seems to be applicable to situations of guilt but not vice versa (Zeelenberg & Breugelmans, 2008).

To summarise, we explored whether aspects of the social situation are represented in the experience of pride. Four experiments revealed that the experience of pride is characterised by perceptions of self-inflation, not by other-distancing nor the devaluation of others.

Notes

1. We do not claim that pride is solely experienced in out-performance situations or by engaging in downward social comparisons, and acknowledge that pride can be experienced due to comparisons to former selves or in line with individual goals (Tracy & Robins, 2007b). However, even if pride is not caused by a social comparison, pride is often communicated to others, which may create new social comparison processes.

2. To ascertain that the obtained effect was due to authentic pride and not a mix between authentic and hubristic pride, two coders (upper level undergraduate students; 100% agreement) coded whether people attributed their pride-eliciting event to stable internal attributes (i.e. ability; Tracy & Robins, 2007b). In both Experiment 1 and Experiment 2, only 2 participants (4–8% of the samples) who recalled a pride-eliciting event made stable internal attributions. Excluding these participants from analyses yielded identical results.
3. They also answered to what extent they had experienced other emotions and thoughts (e.g. surprise, jealousy, whether they wanted to be part of a group). Because these questions were less relevant to our hypotheses they were left out of our analyses.
4. In theory, drawing oneself as larger would limit the space left for drawing the other, and decrease the distance to others. In practice, however, participants always left enough room to draw others as well (i.e. the largest representation of the self-covered 33% of the box's surface).
5. A pretest among 26 participants on MTurk ($\bar{M}_{age} = 33.58$) who rated all 7 pictures in Figure 1 on 11-point scales revealed a significant linear trend for both shame, $F(1, 24) = 1355.61$, $p < .001$, and pride ratings, $F(1, 24) = 1829.40$, $p < .001$. The scale was perceived to run from very ashamed (Picture 1: $M_{shame} = 10.52$, $SD = 0.82$; Picture 7: $M_{shame} = 1.04$, $SD = 0.20$) to very proud (Picture 1: $M_{pride} = 1.04$, $SD = 0.20$; Picture 7: $M_{pride} = 9.76$, $SD = 0.60$).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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