Collective Nostalgia and the Desire to Make One's Group Great Again

Michael J. A. Wohl Anna Stefaniak

Department of Psychology

Carleton University

Ottawa, ON, CANADA

Word count: 5,832

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to authorship, and/or publication of this article. Preparation of this article was supported by a research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Grant as well as the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to Wohl. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Michael J. A. Wohl, Department of Psychology, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1S 5B6. Tel: (902) 520-2600 x 2908, E-mail: michael.wohl@carleton.ca

Longing is in the Memory of the Beholder:

Collective Nostalgia Content Determines the Ways People Try to Make the Ingroup Great Again

The human mind is a master time traveler, with the past often being a place of refuge for people who perceive that a cherished group to which they belong (e.g., national, religious, ethnic) is under threat (Smeekes, Verkuyten, & Martinovic, 2015; Wohl, Tabri, & Halperin, in press). This can be accomplished psychologically via collective nostalgic reverie (i.e., sentimental longing or wistful reflection) for the way the group used to be—a time when the ingroup was perceived to be better off than current socio-economic, cultural, and/or political realities suggest. Collective nostalgia sooths because it strengthens a sense of connection to one's group and its longed-for past (Wildschut, Bruder, Robertson, Van Tilburg, & Sedikides, 2014). In other words, it helps members to psychologically reclaim times bygone (i.e., re-establish collective continuity). Moreover, it motivates ingroup members to support ingroup-favoring collective action in the name of recreating the past in the present (e.g., Cheung, Sedikides, Wildschut, Tausch, & Ayanian, 2017; Wohl et al., in press). As such, collective nostalgia is functional group-based emotion.

The applied social psychological significance of collective nostalgia lay in the perceived loss and change endemic in modernity (Boym, 2001; Davis, 1979), which has given rise to populism in Europe as well as North and South America (Mols & Jetten, 2018; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012). Populist political entrepreneurs on the left and right have demonstrated a propensity to use collective nostalgic rhetoric (e.g., "Make America Great Again") as a political tool to galvanize the electorate in their favor (Gaston & Hilhorst, 2018). They do so by painting a

picture of the ingroup's past as having been identity consistent, prosperous, and certain in order to cement (and augment) discontent with the present and anxiety about the future. Critically, however, the picture painted of the ingroup's past may exist only in the minds of those who desire a particular present (i.e., the long-for past may have never been; Cheung et al., 2017; Liu & Khan, 2014). Indeed, collective nostalgic rhetoric is often used to craft a version of the ingroup's (glorious) past as a means to direct support for particular (anti-establishment) socio-economic, cultural, and/or political agenda.

Although collective nostalgia is not an unfamiliar topic in both social and political psychology, both fields have been remarkably silent about the malleability of collective nostalgia for political ends. In contrast to this prevailing approach, we contend that collective nostalgia is more nuanced and complex than the nascent literature would suggest, and as such worthy of further reflection and scholarly discourse (and research). In the current chapter, we provide support for this contention within the context of the pervasive extent to which contemporary politics uses collective nostalgia rhetoric to influence the electorate's attitudes about, among other things, the ingroup's security and status. Specifically, we put forth the supposition that the scant empirical work on collective nostalgia has unduly treated the content of the nostalgic reverie (i.e., what kind of past group members are longing for) as noise. The outcome is a dampening of collective nostalgia's predictive utility, which would be heightened by paying closer attention to the signal provided by the content of both the political rhetoric that uses collective nostalgia rhetoric as well as the collective nostalgia reported by group members. The signal, we argue, can illuminate what paths leaders will advocate and what paths members will support in the hope of reclaiming collective continuity and securing a better future for the ingroup.

Days of Future Past: Social (Mis)representations of Collective Continuity

Group history is the bedrock of social identity. The stories a group tells about its past provide members with a common understanding of current lived experiences (Bar-Tal, 2007). They do so by informing members who they are (i.e., they define the central values, beliefs, and norms of the group), where they came from (i.e., a shared history), and where they are going (i.e., a common fate; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Moscovici, 1988; Paez & Liu, 2011; Wohl, Squires, & Caouette, 2012). They also draw implicit as well as explicit connections between contemporary and future group members with those of the past (Hilton, Erb, McDermott, & Molian, 1996; Liu, Wilson, McClure, & Higgins, 1999). For example, during the Amidah—the central prayer of the Jewish liturgy—Jews read silently as well as sing the phrase l'dor va'dor, which translates to "from generation to generation." The practice of l'dor va'dor is also a central tenet of Jewish education. Jews are instructed to make connections between generations via the adherence to as well as the passing along of Jewish traditions. The outcome is a sense that the group is a collectively continuous and enduring community (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Sani et al., 2007)—that core cultural traits (values, beliefs, and norms) are transmitted over time in a coherent manner with high fidelity.

The narratives that undergird stories about the group's past also tend to be communicated in such a way that members are instilled with a belief in the positive uniqueness of the ingroup relative to "others" (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Sani et al., 2007; Sani, Herrera, & Bowe, 2009), and the conviction that the ingroup holds a special (and exalted) place in the unfolding narrative of humanity (see Bar-Tal, 2007). Importantly, these narratives are weaved together into a representation or specific manifestation that positions the group as a temporally constituted and enduring community that stretches back into the past and forward into the future (Kahn, Klar, &

Roccas, 2017; Sani et al., 2007, 2009). Such a sense of collective continuity affords group members existential security (i.e., "we were, we are, and we always will be"; Jetten & Wohl, 2012; Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991), and in so doing casts the group as a vehicle for symbolic immortality (see Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013). Although one's corporeal form is finite, that part of the self that is derived by one's group membership is (perceived to be) eternal.

Despite the intent of groups' social representation of their past as collectively continuous, the central values, beliefs, and norms of the group are not static. Change can and does occur. For example, the current manifestation of "American values" would behest action to stop and bring to justice those who engage in human trafficking despite the fact that it was once a normative and legal activity in America. Whether by way of economic recession or boom, intergroup cooperation or competition, or cultural shifts, all social groups undergo change. To co-opt an observation Woody Allan made about relationships, a social group is like a shark. It has to continually move forward, or it dies. In other words, groups need to adapt to their current environ, or they run the risk of going the way of the Assyrians, the Vikings, the Whigs and Know-Nothings, as well as the Shakers—groups that now lack a single member.

Despite the ubiquity (and arguably necessity) of change experienced by the ingroup over the course of its existence, its occurrence is frequently appraised to be a threat to collective continuity (Jetten & Hutchison, 2011; Jetten & Wohl, 2012). This is because the group provides the existential ground on which the social self stands, and thus perceived threats to the collective continuity of the ingroup is unsettling to members (Lewin, 1948). Perceived threat also heightens the belief in the need of, and right to redress (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013; Wohl et al., 2012). For example, Jetten and Wohl (2012) presented English participants with narratives about their nation's history as being either connected to the present (collective continuity) or disconnected

(collective discontinuity). Those who read that England is losing connection to its illustrious heritage (i.e., English of today and the English of yesteryear are becoming two very different peoples) expressed greater opposition to immigration than those who read the ingroup's past has strong connections with the present (i.e., English of today have remained true to the English of yesteryear). Importantly, they also found that collective angst mediated the relation between perceived collective discontinuity and anti-immigration sentiments. That is, perceiving the group to be losing ties to its past increased concern for the group's future vitality and action perceived to protect the ingroup's future. These results provide evidence that change is perceived to endanger collective continuity, which is often met with resistance.

When change is detected, the result can lead to group schisms—as was the case with the American Baptist Church, which splintered over its decision to relax its policies on homosexuality in the denomination (Tomlin, 2006). More prevalent, however, is that the occurrence of change is underplayed or resisted to preserve a sense of collective continuity (Boym, 2007; Hamilton, Levine, & Thurston, 2008). One way that groups resist change is via narratives that elicit collective nostalgic reverie (i.e. sentimental longing) for the group's (real or imagined) *past* (Boym, 2001; Davis, 1979; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2015; Wildschut et al., 2014). Specifically, in times of change, group members begin to feel that the past and present are becoming untethered. Collective nostalgia functions to motivate collective action to fortify those tethers and achieve and maintain collective continuity (Cheung et al., 2017).

The Applied Social Psychology of Collective Nostalgia

"One is always at home in one's past…"

- Vladimir Nabokov (1951; Speak, Memory)

Nostalgia, a compound of the Greek *nostos* (return) and *algos* (pain), was coined by Swiss physician Johannes Hofer to describe the homesickness (i.e., longing for home) Swiss mercenaries expressed whilst fighting in foreign countries. Although originally positioned as indicative of the presence of an underlying psychiatric disorder, it is now understood to be a coping mechanism used in times of change or crisis (see Sedikides, Wildschut, Arndt, J., & Routledge, 2008; Sedikides, Wildschut, Routledge, & Arndt, 2015; Sedikides, Wildschut, Routledge, Arndt, Hepper, & Zhou, 2015). For example, Kim and Wohl (2015) found that people who are experiencing negative life events that are associated with problem drinking or disordered gambling report a greater willingness to engage in behavior change when they experience nostalgic (measured or manipulated) reverie for the life they lived before drinking or gambling entered their behavioral repertoire. More recently, in two longitudinal studies, Wohl, Kim, Salmon, Santesso, Wildschut, and Sedikides (2018) showed that nostalgic reverie for the pre-addicted self improved the odds of a self-reported quit attempt among those living with addiction. One reason for nostalgia's behavior change utility is that addiction is often accompanied by a feeling of "identity loss" or "identity spoilage" as a result of the addictive behavior (Best et al., 2016; Dingle, Cruwys, & Frings, 2015; Frings & Albery, 2015; McIntosh & McKeganey, 2000; Waldorf & Biernacki, 1981). Nostalgia helps people re-establish connection to the person they used to be, which heightens a sense of identity continuity (Iyer & Jetten, 2011).

The power of nostalgia also resides in its ability to fortify meaning in life (Routledge, Arndt, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2008; Routledge et al., 2011), which is often at a deficit among those who experience significant life distress (Coleman, Kaplan, & Downing, 1986; Nicholson et al., 1994), including existential anxiety (i.e., concern about one's own mortality; Juhl, Routledge,

Arndt, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2010; Routledge, et al., 2008). Indeed, Routledge and colleagues (2011) showed that nostalgia is a psychological resource that can be harnessed to derive and sustain a sense of meaning in life. There is good reason why nostalgia provides people with meaning. Nostalgic episodes typically reference significant life events, which involve social connectedness and highlight one's values and traditions (see Wildschut, Sedikides, Arndt, & Routledge, 2006). In fact, although nostalgia is a self-relevant emotion, most significant events about which people were nostalgic are social in nature (e.g., a birthday party, trips with friends or family members, rites of passage; Sedikides & Wildschut, 2018).

Given the social aspect of nostalgia, it is only logical that nostalgia can also be experienced for a bygone time that is group-relevant. According to intergroup emotions theory (Mackie & Smith, 1998; Smith & Mackie, 2008, 2015), people experience emotions not only as a result of their personal experiences and thoughts, but also as a consequence of their membership in social groups. Such group-based emotions are experienced as a result of the process of social identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorization as a group member (Turner & Oaks, 1986). Specifically, events that are appraised as being relevant to the ingroup elicit group-based emotions. The type of group-based emotion experiences is dependent on the appraisal process. For example, when people appraise the actions of their ingroup to be discordant with the ingroup's or their personal values, they are apt to feel collective guilt (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998). Crucially, people can feel this group-based emotion even for the misdeeds that were committed long before contemporary members were born (for a review see Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006). Via the same social identification process, people who appraise the ingroup's past in a more positive light than the ingroup's present may feel collective nostalgia (i.e., sentimental longing) for a bygone time in their

ingroup's past (e.g., their nation), even if the past that they long for was not a part of their lived experience (Cheung et al., 2017; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2015; Smeekes et al., 2015; Smeekes et al., 2018; Wildschut et al., 2014).

Importantly, the temporal comparison at the heart of collective nostalgia is often elicited by social change and transition (Boym, 2001; Davis, 1979). Indeed, rapidly occurring social change, such as an influx of refugees in the European Union since 2015 or increased immigration and demographic racial shift in the United States is often construed as a threat to collective continuity (Sedikides, Wildschut, & Baden, 2004), which elicits concern for the future vitality of one's (national) group (see Wohl et al., 2012). As a consequence, group members tend to turn to the past as a way to cope with a potentially unwanted future and, in the process, retain or regain collective continuity (Jetten, & Wohl, 2012; Smeekes et al., 2018). For example, a cross-cultural study involving 27 countries found that perceived threats to the group's future vitality elicited collective nostalgia, which was associated with an increased sense of group belonging and collective continuity (Smeekes et al., 2018). To the point, disruptions (real or perceived) to perceived collective continuity (i.e., collective discontinuity) elicit collective nostalgia, which helps reestablish collective continuity. In this way, collective nostalgia constitutes a coping strategy (see Milligan, 2003; Sedikides, Wildschut, Gaertner, Routledge, Arndt, 2008).

Collective nostalgia also focuses people's attention on the perceived cause of the collective discontinuity, which can have ramifications for intergroup relations. For example, when young people in the Netherlands were manipulated to feel collective discontinuity, the result was increased willingness to restrict religious expression rights of Muslims (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013). Thus, besides the positive, continuity-restoring properties, research on collective nostalgia has also established its negative consequences for intergroup relations.

Nostalgia refocuses people's attention on their group's past and through this it also highlights that those who do not share this past (e.g., immigrants), are not a part of the ingroup. It therefore accentuates the "us" versus "them" distinction which, in line with the self-categorization theory, contributes to more negative attitudes towards outgroups (Mols & Jetten, 2014; Smeekes, 2015; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). In line with this argument, collective nostalgia has been shown to be associated with negative attitudes towards national minorities in the Netherlands (Smeekes, 2015; Smeekes et al., 2015), anger towards mainland China and greater support for in-group benefitting collective action among Hong Kongese (Cheung et al., 2017), negative views of new employees by old-timers following an organizational transition (Milligan, 2003), and hostile attitudes towards newcomers to an urban neighborhood in New York by more established inhabitants (Kasinitz & Hillyard, 1995).

Not all Sentimental Longings are Created Equal

Unfortunately, existing research on the consequences of collective nostalgia may be biased because it has treated the content of collective nostalgic reflection as noise. Doing so hinders the utility of collective nostalgia as a predictor of the ways in which members try to reclaim the ingroup's treasured past. This is because, undeniably, different group members may long for different aspects of the group's past. Although collective memory underscores the group's unique identity that endures through the vicissitudes of time, there is variance in the particular stories that members tell of their group's past (Liu & Hilton, 2005). In some instances, there is high consensus about what constitutes a group's *charter*—the representation of the most important events and figures, critical to group's identity and its perceived mission (Hilton & Liu, 2008). However, even though members may agree on the significance of a given event in their

group's past (e.g., World War II; Liu et al., 2005), social representations of the ingroup may also be polemic (Moscovici, 1984, 1988) and differ from one group member to the next.

The selection of what is remembered about that past may be shaped by the contemporary political agenda of group members (or a subset of group members) as well as group leaders. According to Hilton and Liu (2008):

> "Changes in group agendas may render certain aspects of their history more relevant than others for political purposes. The existence of historical records (books, recordings, memorials) and professional groups dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of historical knowledge (archaeologists, archivists, historians etc.) means that events that have effectively disappeared from public consciousness can be resurrected as part of a historical charter when the need arises." (p. 348)

In line with this supposition, highly identified group members have been shown to recall fewer instances of historical wrongdoings of their groups (Sahdra & Ross, 2007). They also employ a host of strategies (e.g., selective "forgetting" of certain facts, reinterpretation, or blaming others for in-group's wrongdoings) to arrive at an acceptable version of group history (Baumeister & Hastings, 1997), thus maintaining a positive perception of the ingroup. To the point, social representation of the ingroup's past can be highly biased by the group-based goals (Baumeister & Hastings, 1997; Lewicka, 2008; 2011; Sahdra & Ross, 2007).

Representations of the ingroup's past can also be influenced by events that effect an individual group member. Bilewicz, Stefaniak, Barth, Witkowska, and Fritsche (2016), for example, found that people induced to feel they do not have control over their life compensated for this lack of (personal) general agency by expressing interest in aspects of their national history that evidenced moral agency. In a like manner, people may compensate for perceived

personal-level threat by focusing on and longing for a (perceived) period in their group's past when such threats did not exist. For instance, if someone feels their personal safety or economic security is threatened by an immigrant group, they may compensate by focusing on a time when their society was more homogeneous. The net effect should be a desire to reclaim a time when the ingroup was more homogeneous. However, if the content of the collective nostalgia was different (e.g., a time when different groups lived together in a more harmonious manner), the outcome of the collective nostalgic reverie would likely be more pro-social.

To the point, the content of nostalgia matters for intergroup relations. In line with this supposition, Wohl and Smeekes (2019) found that whilst some group members long for a past in which the ingroup was more homogeneous (*tradition-focused collective nostalgia*) other group members long for a past in which the ingroup was more open and tolerant (*tolerance-focused collective nostalgia*). Specifically, they argued that tradition-focused collective nostalgia is triggered among group members who feel (or are manipulated to feel) that they live in a time of rapid social or cultural change. When threats of this ilk are experienced, group members should become motivated to strengthen adherence to in-group's norms and values (see Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Indeed, Wohl and Smeekes (2019) found that people who feel tradition-focused nostalgia (measured or manipulated) are apt to reject out-groups, particularly those seen as different from the in-group in terms of culture and values (e.g., Muslim immigrants in the Western world; see also Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013). They also found that some group members experience tolerance-focused nostalgia. This kind of collective nostalgia is experienced by group members who feel that their contemporaries are losing sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practice that differ from or conflict with the ingroup. Put another way, group members who experience tolerance-focused nostalgia believe that the ingroup is becoming

untethered from its moral core. In response, they are apt to support policies that demonstrate sympathy for outgroup's as well as their beliefs and practices.

To put a dark line under the issue, the content of the collective nostalgia group members report provides a signal for what is ailing a group and its members. That signal can then be used to predict as well as manipulate group members' attitudes and behavior. Group leaders have demonstrated an intuitive understanding of this process by attempting to amplify the experience of a particular collective nostalgia via their rhetoric—rhetoric they think will resonate with ordinary people to serve their political agenda. Indeed, political leaders are well aware of the mobilizing effect of referring to the ingroup's glorious past to gain political support (Hilton & Liu, 2008). For example, former American President Obama used nostalgia to advance the rights of immigrants in the name of "allegiance to our founding principles" (see Obama, 2013). However, collective nostalgia has also been used to galvanize an electorate that has social, cultural, and economic grievances. Indeed, collective nostalgia and the associated promise to make the group great *again* has been argued to be central to the rise of populism in Europe and North America (see Betz & Johnson, 2004; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012).

While the studies of collective nostalgia content conducted to date addressed its tolerance-focused and tradition-focused aspects, the content of collective nostalgia is likely more expansive. This is because collective nostalgia is shaped by the current (perceived) socio-political and cultural needs of the ingroup, and is therefore context-specific. At the personal-level, the frustration of a basic-human need (e.g., autonomy) motivates the desire to fulfil that basic need (Maslow, 1943; Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, & Schaller, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Likewise, at the group-level we expect that frustration of specific group-based needs will motivate group members to seek consolation in their group's past as a mechanism to fill those

needs. Nostalgia for communism in Poland and Russia, for instance, has been shown to be more common among people who did not fare well during political transformation (operationalized by lower income or living standards; Prusik & Lewicka, 2016; White, 2010). Similarly, it can be expected that groups that find themselves facing a financial crisis may nostalgize about former economic stability, those who live in a time of social unrest will likely look back fondly on times of relative tranquility, and inhabitants of former empires that are losing their dominant position may experience nostalgic reverie for the days of greater power.

Collective nostalgia and populism

Various theorists have argued that collective nostalgia is a core feature of populist ideology (e.g., Betz & Johnson, 2004; Taggart, 2004)—an ideology in which the past is portrayed as a closed and conflict-free whole, carried by ordinary people who shared similar beliefs, norms, and traditions (see Duyvendak, 2011). Populists seek to create a deep sense of longing among "ordinary people" for the good ol' days. More specifically, populists strategically appeal to people who believe they are losing out socially, culturally, and/or economically and try to instill such beliefs in others (Gaston & Hilhorst, 2018; Inglehart & Norris, 2016). The populist rhetoric focuses on a need to return to how things used to be, which can only be accomplished with the populist leader at the helm. Indeed, elicitation of collective nostalgia has been a critical tool in the arsenal of populist politicians who employ it to harness support and remove the establishment elites (who have allowed discontinuity to come about; Mols & Jetten, 2014).

Unfortunately, loss and change are endemic in modernity (Boym, 2001; Davis, 1979). According to Boym (2007), collective nostalgia-based rhetoric emerged as a reaction to and a defense against the rapidly changing world and group's inability to stop or slow down these changes. Populist politicians exploit people's need for collective continuity by creating versions

of the ingroup’s past that upregulate collective nostalgia. Importantly, these visions of the past need not have much in common with historical reality. They merely need to create a sense of connection to their version of what the group used to be and promise to bring that version back to the present. In this way, populists tempt their followers to “relinquish critical thinking for emotional bonding” to the glories of what the group used to be and what it could once again become (Boym, 2007, p. 9). Donald Trump’s electoral success constitutes a striking example of the efficacy of using collective nostalgia (i.e., “Make American Great Again”) as a populist tool.

Providing empirical support for the connection between collective nostalgia and populism, Smeekes (in press) found that Dutch people who report feeling collective nostalgia are more apt to support Partij voor de Vrijheid (in translation: Party for Freedom), which is a right-wing populist party. Moreover, this link was mediated by the perception that ‘real’ Dutch people must have Dutch roots (*nativist ideology*). Although collective nostalgia was assessed using general items (e.g., “I long for the Netherlands of the past”) and in light of the fact that nostalgia was associated with nativist ideology, it is very likely that participants were experiencing tradition-focused nostalgia. If so, this would suggest that tradition-focused nostalgia is a predictor of support for right-wing populism. This supposition is based on an understanding of conservatism and right-wing populism as being anchored in the rejection of social change coupled with a focus on established institutions and traditions framed as emanating from generational wisdom (see Eccleshall, 2003). Importantly, those who support traditional values of conformity, and heightened attention to group-based security issues display a general opposition to change (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003).

Unfortunately, the existing nostalgia literature has treated nostalgia as being synonymous with tradition-focused nostalgia. For example, Lammers and Baldwin (2018) argued that not

only are conservatives (i.e., people on the political right) more prone to experience nostalgia compared to liberals, but also that collective nostalgia can be used as a tool to harness support from conservatives. In support of this supposition, they demonstrated that conservatives can be manipulated to support traditional liberal positions (e.g., restricting gun rights, greater leniency with regard to immigration or increasing social diversity) by framing these positions as a means to return the country to its roots. Conservatives' affinity for the past is perhaps why conservative (compared to liberal) news outlets and State of the Union addresses made by conservative (compared to liberal) American Presidents are more apt to use past-tense verbs than future-tense verbs (see Robinson, Cassidy, Boyd, & Fetterman, 2015). Being so anchored in the past plays well with a populist narrative that highlights the presence of unwanted change and the threat of additional unwanted change.

However, it is not only right-wing politicians who employ nostalgic rhetoric to achieve political goals. A broad analysis of collective nostalgia in Great Britain, Germany, and France (Gaston & Hilhorst, 2018) revealed that left wing politicians also use collective nostalgia as a rhetorical tool to appeal to the general societal sense of decline and crisis in social, cultural, and economic domains. For instance, supporters of the "Remain" campaign in the Brexit referendum, evoked images of British soldiers fighting for the unity of Europe in World War II (Johnston, 2016). Moreover, in the United States, Bernie Sanders, the left-wing political candidate for democratic presidential nomination in 2016, frequently appealed to the well-paying working-class jobs of the past in his campaign (Mudde, 2016).

In light of Wohl and Smeekes (2019) distinction between tradition-focused and tolerance-focused collective nostalgia, we argue that conservatives may not be simply more prone to experiencing this collective emotion, but that investigations conducted to date simply focused on

the former type and largely neglected the existence of the latter which will likely be more prevalent among people on the left of the political spectrum. For example, whereas Donald Trump clearly used collective nostalgia in an attempt to cement anti-immigration sentiments, Barack Obama used collective nostalgia to advance the rights of immigrants in the name of "upholding the traditions of this country." In short, how ingroup history is represented conditions how group members relate to members of their own group and other groups (i.e., outgroups) as well as their position on current political issues.

On the importance of studying the contents of social psychological processes

Investigating specific contents of collective nostalgic reverie, as well as their unique antecedents and consequences, fits into a broader trend to contextualize social psychological processes. Indeed, John Turner (1999, p. 34) argued that "process theories such as social identity and self-categorization require the incorporation of specific content into their analyses before they can make predictions either in the laboratory or the field, and are designed to require such an incorporation". Although social psychology as a discipline recognizes the validity of paying closer attention to the contents of identity and group representations and the role that specific content plays in shaping people's thoughts and behavior, it rarely does so in practice (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

A notable exemption is provided by research on modes of ingroup identification, which shows that social identification is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon (e.g., Cameron, 2004; Jackson & Smith, 1999; Leach et al., 2008; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006). One crucial distinction differentiates identification that is associated with pro-group adaptive behavior from identification that is primarily related to derogation and rejection of outgroups in aim to assert ingroup's dominance. These two types have been referred to as

pseudo-patriotism and patriotism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950); insecure and secure social identity (Jackson & Smith, 1999); blind and constructive patriotism (Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999); nationalism and patriotism (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Mummendey, Klink, & Brown, 2001) or glorification and attachment (Roccas et al., 2006).

Recently, Cichocka (2016) proposed to systematize the understanding of these different types of identification under the umbrella terms of *secure* and an *insecure* (narcissistic) *in-group positivity*. The former is an emanation of a stable individual self while the latter stems from unfulfilled individual-level needs that people attempt to satisfy by belonging to a strong group. Recognizing the complexity of identity, allowed researchers to better understand its origins and consequences and to explain research results previously regarded as contradictory. For instance, social identity theory posits that outgroup derogation may be one way to achieve a positive social identity, however, strong social identification does not always correlate with outgroup-directed prejudice (e.g., Amiot & Aubin, 2013; Hopkins & Reicher, 2011; Jackson & Smith, 1999). Although strong insecure ingroup identification is related to greater prejudice (e.g., Cai & Gries, 2013; Golec de Zavala & Cichocka, 2012), secure ingroup positivity, without the narcissistic component, shows a *negative* relation with prejudice—that is, people who strongly identify with their groups in a secure manner are *less* prejudiced toward outgroups (Golec de Zavala, Cichocka, & Bilewicz, 2013).

Contents and meanings that people associate with membership in different social categories depend not only on their individual needs, but are also powerfully shaped by social and historical context. Reicher and Hopkins (2001) point out that the meaning of the ingroup and outgroup categories should not be thought of as stable, but instead as a product of the current comparative context (see also Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). Indeed, ingroup and

outgroup stereotypes change as a function of the context (Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty & Hayes, 1992; Hopkins, Regan, & Abell, 1997; Rabinovich, Morton, Postmes, & Verplanken, 2012). For instance, Scots rated their own group as more aloof and hardworking when compared to Greeks, and as warmer and less aloof when the ratings were made in the context of the English (Hopkins et al., 1997).

Current interest in collective memory and social representations of history (see Assmann, 1995; Hilton & Liu, 2017; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Liu & László, 2007; Olick, 1999; Wertsch, 2002) demonstrates that scholars increasingly engage with the particulars of historical and cultural contexts. This allows them to better understand intergroup relations and explain situations in which groups react differently to ostensibly similar events because of their divergent representations of the past (Hilton & Liu, 2008). For instance, Hanke and colleagues (2013) investigated the role of interpretations of a violent intergroup conflict in shaping group members willingness to forgive a historical perpetrator. In a study carried out in Taiwan, the Philippines, China, France, Poland, and Russia the level of forgiveness for Japanese and German war atrocities was determined by different interpretations of World War II. Even such well-established processes as intergroup contact (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011) have been shown to depend on the social context. Specifically, intergroup contact that occurs during intense conflict (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Paolini, Harwood, & Rubin, 2010) or focuses on troubled intergroup history (Bilewicz, 2007) may lead to reinforcement of intergroup prejudice rather than to its reduction. Focusing on a difficult intergroup history seems to nullify the positive effects of intergroup contacts even among people who were not involved in the traumatic historical events themselves (Bilewicz, 2007).

In a similar vein, we argue that collective nostalgia should not be treated as a unidimensional phenomenon. Unfortunately, the prevailing approach positions nostalgia as a characteristic of conservatives (Lammers & Baldwin, 2018) and right-wing populists, and threats the content of collective nostalgia as noise. One outcome is the overemphasis of the negative impacts of collective nostalgia (e.g., the absolution of guilt and shame of group members who do wrong in the name of bringing back the ingroup's glory days; see Boym, 2007; Kammen, 1991). Likewise, social scientists have almost exclusively focused on the adverse effects of collective nostalgia for intergroup relations (e.g., Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013). Applying a more fine-grained approach to studying collective nostalgia allows, in a way similar to the processes described above, to investigate different forms of nostalgic content and the circumstances under which people are more attracted to one or the other.

Conclusion

Experiencing a sense of discontinuity between a cherished ingroup's past and an unfavorably evaluated present elicits collective nostalgia. Recent electoral victories of populist right-wing politicians in many countries around the world underscore the relevance of collective nostalgia, which is eagerly utilized by populists to garner political support. So much so that arguments were put forward that nostalgia is a predominantly conservative/right-wing emotion (Lammers & Baldwin, 2018). In this chapter we demonstrated that investigating the contents of collective nostalgia (i.e., what exactly group members feel nostalgic about) provides a crucial piece of the puzzle, largely neglected in the extant literature. A greater focus on the content of the collective nostalgia group members are experiencing will only serve to increase the predictive utility of this group-based emotion.

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