Identity Protection and Collective (Non-)Remembrance

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„Die Zukunft der Vergangenheit hat begonnen, und sie wird eine Gegenwart sein, in der uns nicht mehr die Überlebenden zu unserem Geschichtsbewusstsein verhelfen. Wir werden uns selber helfen müssen.“

Norbert Frei

Acknowledgements

[…]

Overview of Manuscripts

Chapter 2 includes the following published article:

Kazarovytska, F. & Imhoff, R. (2024). Three fish at one hook? Future-oriented, reconciliatory, and defensive claims for historical closure as expressions of the same defensive desire. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 50*(3), 351–370. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672221124674

Chapter 3 includes the following published article:

Kazarovytska, F., Imhoff, R., & Hirschberger, G. (2024). Beyond victimhood and perpetration: Reconstruction of the ingroup's historical role in eight Eastern and Western European countries under Nazi occupation. *Political Psychology.* http://doi.org/10.1111/pops.13037

Chapter 4 includes the following published article:

Kazarovytska, F. & Imhoff, R. (2023). No differences in memory performance for instances of historical victimization and historical perpetration: Evidence from five large-scale experiments. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 105, 104440.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2022.104440

Chapter 5 includes the following article submitted for publication:

Kazarovytska, F., Árnadóttir, K., D'Ottone, S., Halabi, S., Clarke, E., Sharma, S., Heidrich, V., & Imhoff, R. (2024). *The past we choose to not forget: Characteristics of historical events considered important to remember* [Manuscript submitted for publication].

Fiona Kazarovytska, Mainz, 11. November 2024

Contents

Summary

To understand who we are, we must look at our past. To understand who we would like to be, we must look at how we *remember* our past. A long-standing assumption in collective memory literature is that identity interests guide selective (non-)remembrance among social group members. Through four empirical projects, this dissertation critically addresses that assumption, examining how identity protection plays out in four key processes relevant to understanding collective remembrance: communicating about how to deal with the past, representing past ingroup roles, processing information about the past, and the willingness to remember the past. Chapter 2 shows that group members can convey identity-protective desires for closing discussion of their perpetrator past in seemingly victim-oriented, reconciliatory ways, while – ironically – devaluing the victims (communication). Chapter 3 elaborates on identity-protective intergroup responses, demonstrating that acknowledging the ingroup's negative historical role, rather than emphasizing positive roles, can come along with increased negativity toward the victim group (role representation). This finding challenges some prominent theoretical accounts. Also contrary to prevailing assumptions, Chapter 4 reveals that individuals' short-term recall and recognition performance shows no identity-protective bias that disfavors threatening information about ingroup perpetration (information processing). Finally, Chapter 5 fully reopens the question of whether the identity-protective potential of historical events is linked to group members' readiness to remember them. The results partly support the relevance of identity concerns for collective remembrance desires, but also reveal substantial contextual variations in and notable deviations from an identity-protective pattern (willingness to remember). In an integrative discussion, I reflect on how these findings show that identity-protective interests play an important role in collective remembrance, but that this role is more complex than previous literature suggests. Against this background, I outline directions for further developing the field of collective memory.

Keywords: collective memory, identity, historical defensiveness, intergroup violence

CHAPTER 1

General Introduction

History provides us with fundamental knowledge about who we are, who our friends and enemies are, and how we should face current political challenges (Liu & Hilton, 2005). Striking examples of how history is used to speak to these three core issues can be observed in relation to a recent event that shattered the political world as we have known it for decades: The Russian escalation of the war in Ukraine. In his speech on the victory day in 2022, current Russian president Vladimir Putin (2022) portrayed the Russians as historical protectors of the world from Nazism, who must fight their enemies in Ukraine in order to prevent a renewed outbreak of Nazi ideology in the present:

> The memory of the war [WWII] will not fade. … We are proud of this unbroken, valiant generation of victors, that we are their heirs, and it is our duty to preserve the memory of those who destroyed Nazism … Respected comrades, today the militia in the Donbas, together with the forces of the Russian army, … are fighting for our homeland, for its future, so that no one can forget the lessons of the second world war. So there is no room in the world for Nazis. (para. 2, para. 8, para. 9)

In marked contrast, in her speech to the United Nations General Assembly, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (2022) emphasized Germany's historical responsibility from its Nazi past to support Ukraine's fight against the Russian aggressor to restore peace in Europe:

> We have decided to support Ukraine militarily – to defend itself against the aggressor, in line with Article 51 of our Charter. Germany is deeply aware of its historic responsibility. That's why we are and will always be committed to diplomacy and seeking out peaceful solutions. But when our peaceful order comes under attack, we must face up to that new reality. We must act responsibly. That's why we must unite for peace today! (para. 8)

As these examples show, historical narratives are used to guide the interpretation of collective identity, intergroup relations, and groups' political roles today. However, what these examples also demonstrate is that present-day identities guide the interpretation of history: In both cases, the definition of the ingroup's current position within the global social system (Turner,

1975) shapes which aspects of history are emphasized and how they are reconstructed to resonate with the group's present-day values and identity goals. This markedly highlights that to understand collective remembrance, we need to understand group-based identity needs.

The aim of this dissertation is to examine how identity-protective interests play out in central processes of collective remembrance. Even though the theoretical foundation for understanding historical memories as products of present-day interests and group-based needs was laid almost a century ago (Halbwachs, 1925/1992), psychological research critically examining this notion is limited. In fact, Yamashiro and Roedinger (2019) highlight that "the psychology of collective remembering is a relatively new and generative field of research" (p. 1158). Licata and Mercy (2015) further note that contributions to the understanding of collective remembrance in social psychology appeared relatively late and still form only a small part of our knowledge. Particularly cross-national research that is able to generalize across historical realities in different countries is scarce (for notable exceptions in the area of social representations of history, see Choi et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2009). The present dissertation aims to address this gap.

The dissertation consists of six chapters: In Chapter 1, I[1] place the present work into the larger context of collective memory research, outline the dissertation's theoretical foundation in identity-protective motives, and explain how identity protection is expected to play out in each of the examined processes. I further elaborate on the specific contributions of each empirical project to the existing literature, followed by an overview of the methodological approaches used in each project. Chapters 2 – 5 then present four projects that form the core of this dissertation. The chapters deal with identity protection in expressing the demand for historical closure (Chapter 2), the representation of historical ingroup roles (Chapter 3), the recall and recognition of information about the past (Chapter 4), and the (un-)willingness to

[1] Throughout this dissertation, I write "we" when referring to the articles to acknowledge the work conducted together with my co-authors, and "I" when referring to my individual work.

collectively remember the past (Chapter 5). In Chapter 6, I present an integrative discussion of the theoretical implications arising from the findings of the four empirical projects. I end with an outlook on avenues for future research.

Collective Remembrance

There is no general definition of what 'collective memory' means (Hirst et al., 2018; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008). Rather, since the groundbreaking work of Maurice Halbwachs (1925/1992), who postulated a *functional role* of memories of the past for today, many different disciplines, using various conceptualizations, have contributed to understanding how historical memory interplays with the present. These contributions span, among others, research on how commemoration rituals relate to current national self-conceptions (Assmann, 2008; cultural studies), whether history lessons can contribute to developing democracy (Köster, 2021; history), or how history is negotiated in contemporary movies (Ebbrecht-Hartmann, 2022; film and media studies). What characterizes large parts of this literature is the understanding of collective memory not just as a content (i.e., body of knowledge), but as a dynamic process of selecting, (re)inventing, and (re)constructing the past. In fact, in their work on the conceptual foundations of collective memory, Wertsch and Roediger (2008) argue for the "need to focus on process and debate rather than static shared knowledge" (p. 320). Thus, the authors emphasize the centrality of collective memory processes, what they refer to as "collective remembering" (p. 320), as key to understanding collective memory.

Recognizing this broad research tradition while adopting a psychological perspective that centers on processes *within individuals* – those entities, "who do the actual remembering" (Manier & Hirst, 2008, p. 254) – in this dissertation, I focus on collective memory processes, or *collective remembrance*. I employ collective remembrance as an umbrella term for the creation, shaping, and upholding of group members' reconstructions, recollections, and interpretations of collective historical events. Hence, I understand collective remembrance as

a *process* (rather than a mere content), situated within *individual group members* (rather than entire groups or cultural products; Bartlett, 1932; Nora, 1996).

The overarching process of collective remembrance is formed by more specific processes. Hirst and colleagues (2018) emphasize the role of *communicative* processes in shaping collective remembrance and setting a normative framework for how to deal with the past in the present. Similarly, Klein's (2013) lay historical model underscores the role of communication. Specifically, the model suggests that the elaboration of a representation – a narrative that tells a story about the past and the role of different groups in it – is one of the three main activities through which individuals engage with history. Although some literature proposes collective memory and social representations of the past to be interchangeable constructs (e.g., Kansteiner, 2002), I follow Klein's (2013) theorizing, seeing the act of *representing* the past and the groups' role in it as one of several processes relevant to understanding collective remembrance (see also Hirst et al., 2018). Along with the representational stage, Klein's model further highlights the relevance of causal attributions for past ingroup behavior (explanatory stage, which overlaps with the representational stage) and individual *information processing* (archival stage) in collective remembrance. Lastly, crucial to all of these processes is the *willingness* to collectively remember history. If group members are willing to remember the past, they will call for engaging with the past, attend to information about the past, and represent the past. Conversely, if group members do *not* want to remember, they will call for closing the discussion of history, process information on the past in an inattentive or biased way or distort its representation.

The present dissertation uses these four key processes crucial to the psychological understanding of collective remembrance – communication, role representation, information processing, and willingness to remember – as a conceptual framework guiding the following examinations. Drawing on a functional approach to collective memory (Halbwachs, 1925/

1992) which holds that collective remembering serves a purpose in the present, I further argue that there is one factor interplaying with each of these processes: collective identity interests.

Identity and Collective Remembrance

One notion on collective remembrance that received marked attention in sociological (Halbwachs, 1925/1992; Olick & Robbins, 1998), cultural (Assmann, 1997), historical (Kansteiner, 2002), and psychological literature (Manier & Hirst, 2008; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008) is that collective remembrance is crucially related to the present-day identity of a group. This relation can be broadly categorized into two different, but not mutually exclusive, manners (Klein et al., 2011; Licata, 2022). One way is that collective memories are weighing on the present (Liu & Hilton, 2005). In this view, the past influences group members' current self-definitions, their relations to other groups, and the course of their behavior. Taking up the speeches on the war in Ukraine, this can be seen in Baerbock's support for a certain political course that she derives from Germany's perpetrator past.

However, there is a second way, which is argued to be "less obvious" (Licata, 2022, p. 5.4), namely that present-day identity interests shape the reception of the past. Wertsch and Roediger (2008) argue that history aims for understanding, whereas collective remembrance serves identity goals. The authors suggest that in the process of collective remembering, people are "willing to change information (even facts)" (p. 324) to remain loyal to current identity interests. Similarly, Bar-Tal (2014) argues that collective remembrance is "biased, selective and distorted in ways that meets [*sic*] present societal needs" (p. 5.3). Likewise, Assmann (1997) points out that "the past is modeled, invented, reinvented, and reconstructed by the present" (p. 9). Returning to the quotes above, in her speech, Baerbock recreates Germany's violent history in a manner that reinforces the country's current identity as a responsible ally (for similar social creativity approaches, see Lienen & Cohrs, 2021). Putin, in turn, uses Russia's WWII victory to uphold the identity of a virtuous nation. In both cases, albeit to differing extents, history is reconstructed to conform with the groups' self-perceived

present-day identity. What these examples further highlight is that collective remembrance is not used to uphold *any* collective identity. Instead, it serves the purpose of building up a specific identity: a positive, moral and righteous one.

Identity Protection and Collective (Non-)Remembrance

Since the introduction of social identity[2] theory by Tajfel and Turner (1986), a wealth of literature has underscored that individuals strive to see the groups they consider themselves as belonging to in a positive light (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Brewer, 1991; Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). However, the historical records of groups do not always allow to uphold a positive collective identity. Particularly instances of historical intergroup crimes committed, such as the perpetration of colonial crimes, war crimes or genocide, can pose a massive threat to the moral identity of a group (Branscombe et al., 2004; Doosje et al., 1998; Hirschberger, 2018; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008;). This raises the question: How can group members fulfill their need for a favorable ingroup identity in the face of such a threat?

When dealing with their harmful past, group members can adopt mainly two different approaches. One option would be to take the path of apologetic responses. This involves acknowledging the crimes committed, asking for forgiveness and providing restitution (Brown et al., 2008; Wenzel et al., 2021; Wohl et al., 2012). However, group members are often reluctant to shoulder responsibility for their wrongdoing (Leach et al., 2013). Instead, they often choose a different approach to deal with the threatening past: protecting their positive collective identity by selectively disengaging from the past and not remembering it. As outlined already in social identity theory (Jackson et al., 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), members of negatively distinctive groups use ingroup-protective strategies such as redefining situations (social creativity) and distancing from the threatened identity (social mobility) in order to maintain a positive collective self-image. While grounded in the theoretical tradition

[2] Please note that this dissertation relies on literature on social *and* collective identity, and uses both terms interchangeably. Following Simon and Klandermans' (2001) integrative conceptualization, when using both terms, I refer to the identity of a person as a group member that they share with other people.

of self-regulation, moral disengagement theory (Bandura et al., 1996) describes a closely related set of tactics aimed at "construc[cting] a version of reality" (Leidner et al., 2010, p. 1116) in which the ingroup is disconnected from its immoral actions. Also, the theory of symbolic self-completion (Gollwitzer & Brunstein, 1996), which stems from goal achievement literature, predicts that people engage in self-protecting actions, like distancing from failure, to restore a threatened identity. A strand of literature that draws on these identity-protective accounts and bridges them with the reconstructive character of collective remembrance is research on *historical defensiveness* (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019; Bilewicz, 2016). Models of historical defensiveness (e.g., Bilewicz, 2016) underscore the idea that group members seek to distance the ingroup from threats, and suggest that they do so by modifying, denying, or forgetting uncomfortable elements of their collective history. By selectively deconstructing and non-remembering threatening aspects of the past, group members can push identity-threatening aspects of their past into the background, while more favorable aspects of the group's history can come to the fore. Selective (non-)remembrance thus becomes a powerful shield, crucial for the preservation of a positive group identity. Understanding these tendencies to secure the positive identity of the ingroup in key collective remembrance processes is the central focus of this dissertation.

Despite a solid base of knowledge on historical defensiveness, our empirical understanding of how identity-protective interests play out in different collective remembrance processes is limited. With regard to *communication* about how to deal with the past, research in political science and pragmatics has already contributed valuable insights into rhetorical expressions of identity-protective motives, whereas psychological literature is just evolving. With regard to *representations* of historical roles, existing literature allows for contradictory predictions about the relation between representations of the ingroup's roles and identity-protective intergroup responses. Lastly, some long-standing theoretical assumptions about how identity-protective motives affect individual *information processing*, or what

motives other than identity protection are related to the *desire to remember* have hardly been critically empirically tested. The present dissertation aims to address these gaps, thereby systematically expanding the existing body of knowledge on identity protection in collective remembrance. We begin our analyses with the investigation of socially negotiated communication processes, then move on to representation processes and arrive at the more intraindividual process of information processing. Lastly, we turn to the willingness to collectively remember, which is relevant to all three of the other processes.

Communicating about Dealing with the Past

Communication about the past can decisively shape collective remembrance. Through conversations, people transmit their historical memories from one to another (Svob et al., 2016; Vollhardt et al., 2024), collaboratively (re-)construct their shared historical experiences (Hirst & Coman, 2018; Hirst & Echterhoff, 2012), and debate the meaning of the past for the present (Assmann, 2008). Besides communicating about the past *itself*, group members also negotiate how to *deal* with this past as a society (e.g., Rothberg, 2022). The societal strategies for how to address the past can change over time. Particularly in the last three decades, there has been an increasing shift toward the recognition and remembrance of historical crimes in many countries (Brooks, 1999; Zoodsma & Schaafsmaa, 2022). While this trend suggests a growing norm of engaging with past transgressions (though often limited to issuing apologies without actually confronting the past; Twali et al., 2020), identity-protective motives drive the opposite response: seeking to close discussion on the ingroup's past wrongdoing (Bilewicz, 2016; Imhoff, 2010b). Taking as an example German discourse about the Nazi past, the concept of 'never forget' is highly prominent and constitutes the prevailing remembrance norm (Baer & Sznaider, 2016). However, despite the official norm to remember, a large portion of Germans prefer to 'draw a line under the past' (*Schlussstrich*, also known as the demand for historical closure) and suppress discussions about the Nazi crimes (Hagemann & Nathanson, 2015). This divergence between public norms and private sentiments can create a

situation where group members may hesitate to directly express their desire for closure. Rather, to communicate their identity-protective needs without violating prevailing norms or resorting to right-wing narratives (Parak & Wunnicke, 2019), group members may find alternative ways to express their interest in closing the discussion of history.

The present dissertation raises the novel and paradoxical question of whether identity-protective interests can be communicated in seemingly victim-oriented, reconciliatory manners. One area in which research has already identified indications of such ostensibly prosocial rhetoric is the *public non-apology* – an appeal for forgiveness, which blends elements of apology with typical elements of identity protection, such as deflecting responsibility and downplaying harm. Specifically, the literature in political science and pragmatics has revealed the use of syntactic, lexical, and rhetorical tactics that manipulate the structure of the apologetic expressions to shield the offender's positive image (see Hansson, 2018; Kampf, 2009; Page, 2014; for a rare example of psychological research, see Schumann & Dragotta, 2020). Expanding on this research, Chapter 2 examines whether demands for historical closure can also be expressed in seemingly prosocial rhetoric, such as calls to end discussions about the past to promote *reconciliation* with the victims or to allocate more resources to *current and future issues*. While such reconciliatory or future-oriented rhetoric is evident in public discourse (e.g., Hagemann & Nathanson, 2015; Imhoff, 2010b), empirical research investigating it is scarce. Hence, we have limited insight into whether these different rhetorical approaches actually reflect distinct attitudes or merely represent different ways of expressing the same identity-protective stance. By examining both the attitudes of the sender and the perceptions of the audience of these rhetorics, this dissertation makes an important contribution toward understanding the role of identity-protective motives in communication about how to deal with the past, speaking to the key research question (RQ):

RQ 1: Communication: In what rhetorical forms do we express the identity-protective desire to close discussions of the past?

Representing the Ingroup's Historical Roles

Communicating about the past is not only a relevant process in itself, but also of central importance in forming social representations of the past. Social representations are mental entities situated between concepts and perceptions, whose function is to provide meaning (Moscovici, 1988). These representations are reconstructive. This means that their content changes dynamically, for example through communication, or when other representations change. Rooted in Moscovici's (1988) theory, research on social representations of history has proposed that group members organize their historical representations in narrative forms or "stories" (Liu & László, 2007, p. 87) that provide a sense of collective purpose and meaning to groups in the present (Hilton & Liu, 2017). In providing meaning, representations not only relate and explain past events, but also facilitate the assignment of historical roles (e.g., victims or perpetrators) to one's own and other groups (László, 2008). Given that role representations provide ample room for creating a positive ingroup image, it seems highly plausible that identity-protective motives come into play when forming these representations. However, existing literature allows us to derive opposing predictions about the nature of this interplay. Specifically, literature allows to predict both: that the endorsement of *morally favorable* ingroup roles is part of an ingroup-protective reaction, which comes along with negative responses toward the victim group, *and* conversely, that the very endorsement of *harmful* roles lays the foundation for identity-protective victim group negativity.

Chapter 3 explores the theoretically ambiguous question of which representations of ingroup roles are related to identity-protective intergroup responses: those that are morally favorable (e.g., heroes) or those that are morally unfavorable (e.g., intentional villains). While several previous studies have explored the relationship between role representations and identity-protective negative intergroup responses, such as victim devaluation (Bilewicz et al., 2017; Hirschberger et al., 2016; Imhoff et al., 2017), these studies have rarely brought together the divergent theoretical perspectives that exist on this link. In view of the existing

contradictory accounts, Chapter 3 provides an integrative theoretical overview of these different perspectives and tests two opposing predictions. As such, Chapter 3 sheds new light on a theoretically equivocal question and contributes to reconciling seemingly contradictory findings, such as that the representation of intentional wrongdoing (i.e., evil essence) is related to both the acceptance of guilt (Hirschberger et al., 2022) *and* the identity-protective claim for historical closure (Imhoff et al., 2017).

RQ 2: Role representation: How do we represent the ingroup's role in the past, and how do different role representations relate to identity-protective intergroup responses?

Processing Information about the Past

Moscovici contrasted social representations – which are often the result of complex interactions between other representations, narratives and conversations – from basic information processing (McKinlay & Potter, 1987). For understanding collective remembrance, however, not only group members' representations but also the processing of information about the past can play a critical role (Klein, 2013). Extensive literature indicates that individuals engage in selective information processing that aligns with their preexisting schemas and beliefs (Oeberst & Imhoff, 2023). This tendency is also evident in individuals' short-term recall and recognition performance. For example, people often misremember their selfish decisions in ways that align more closely with their prosocial self-concept (Carlson et al., 2020; Sedikides et al., 2016). Similarly, at the group level, individuals can show impaired recall performance for information that threatens an important ingroup identity (Zengel et al., 2021). This suggests that individual recollection of historical information can provide fertile ground for identity-protective biases to come into play.

Chapter 4 investigates the empirically underexplored question of whether information on historical ingroup perpetration is recalled and recognized less accurate than morally more favorable information on victimization or outgroup perpetration. While the assumption of a memory bias at the expense of identity-threatening historical information appears theoretically

compelling (e.g., Baumeister & Hastings, 1997; Frijda, 1997) and intuitively highly plausible, it has rarely been experimentally tested (for an exception, see Rotella & Richeson, 2013). Providing systematic evidence for or against the hypothesis of an identity-serving memory bias thus makes an important contribution to the field: If the assumption is supported, this work helps to close an existing empirical gap. Conversely, if it is not supported, our results underscore the need to critically revisit a long-standing theoretical idea that has often been treated as established knowledge.

RQ 3: Information processing: Does our individual recall and recognition of information about the past show an identity-protective bias?

Willingness to Collectively Remember the Past (*or: The Devil's Advocate*)

Chapters 2 – 4 are rooted in the assumption that collective remembrance is guided by the willingness to preserve particularly those parts of history that glorify the ingroup. Chapter 2 assumes that group members can be unwilling to collectively remember ingroup-threatening perpetrator history and examines the different communicative expressions of this reluctance. Chapter 3 expects that the unwillingness to confront harmful ingroup behavior can bias group members' representations of their ingroup's historical roles and/or comes along with justification and exoneration of these roles. Chapter 4 then tests whether group members' reduced willingness to remember perpetrator history affects short-term recall and recognition performance. But what if groups are not more willing to remember those historical events that are favorable to the ingroup? What if the main motive guiding group members' willingness to collectively (non-)remember the past is not preserving a positive identity?

The final project reopens the fundamental question of whether group members indeed prefer to collectively preserve those events that emphasize the ingroup's positive identity. While this idea belongs to the most prominent assumption in research on collective remembrance (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2014; Baumeister & Hastings, 1997; Klar & Bilewicz, 2017; Paez & Liu, 2011), this dissertation is among the first to empirically revisit it. Strikingly,

inspecting the broad (collective) memory literature reveals several other motives that may guide collective remembrance desires, beyond that of maintaining a positive collective identity. For example, research on collective victimhood indicates that while the memory of ingroup victimization can be beneficial to identity by highlighting ingroup morality – an aspect crucial for positive ingroup evaluations (Brambilla et al., 2013) – it also poses significant identity threats, including threats to agency, ingroup values, and overall existence (Hirschberger, 2018; Shabel & Nadler, 2008). As such, the tendency to preserve experiences of group-based victimhood suggests that the desire to maintain a primarily positive identity may not be the decisive factor for the willingness to collectively remember history.

Even more noteworthy is the literature suggesting that the past is in principle not remembered for the sake of fulfilling identity interests, but rather to regulate mood (e.g., Josephson et al., 1996) or out of a strong epistemic interest in understanding what essentially happened (e.g., Licata & Mercy, 2015; Schwartz, 2015). However, the question of what then characterizes the historical events that group members want to preserve collectively, and whether these are the identity-relevant characteristics of these events, is empirically unresolved. Filling this gap has the potential to make a generative contribution to the literature (Gergen, 1978) by testing the empirical substance of a highly prominent assumption and, potentially, shifting focus to factors beyond identity positivity. Playing devil's advocate to one of the basic assumptions of this dissertation, Chapter 5 thus moves beyond the lens of only identity protection in collective remembrance and (re-)opens the fundamental question:

RQ 4: Willingness to remember: Do we prefer to collectively remember ingroup-positive history?

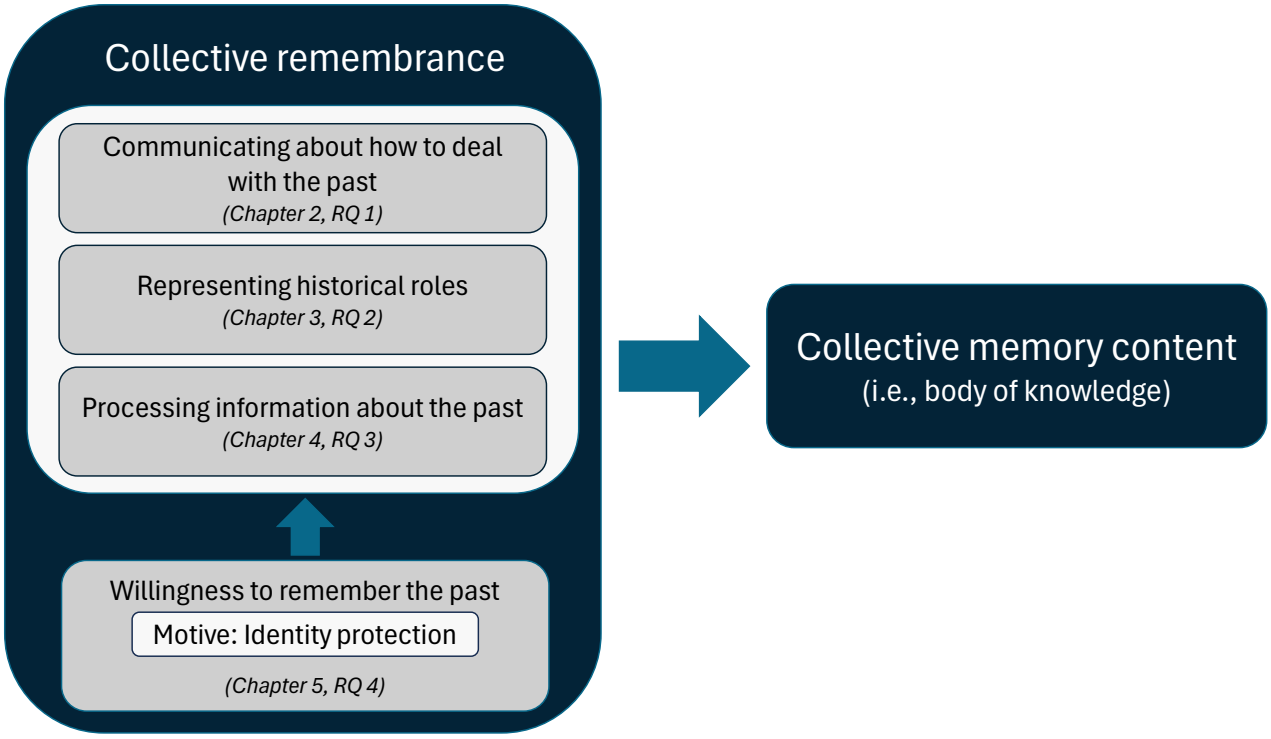
Summary and Methodological Overview of the Chapters

Figure 1 summarizes the key research questions and situates them within the conceptual framework guiding this dissertation. Please note that Figure 1 illustrates an overarching conceptual map rather than a model whose dynamics have been fully tested. Specifically, this

dissertation assumes that collective remembering is guided by the willingness to collectively preserve history. The willingness to remember is directed by the motive of protecting collective identity, which may reinforce the interest in remembering certain aspects of history and forgetting others. As such, the willingness to remember can influence information processing, the representation of historical roles and communication about how to deal with the past. Together, these collective remembrance processes are expected to consolidate in reconstructions, recollections, and interpretations of history that form collective memory content. This content can exist both in the minds of individuals and in a material (e.g., monuments) or symbolic (e.g., rituals) body of knowledge outside of individuals.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework Guiding this Dissertation



Chapter 2 examines the thus far unexplored question of whether identity-protective motives to close the discussion of the ingroup's perpetrator past can be expressed and effectively communicated in demands for non-remembrance that at first glance appear

reconciliatory (‘turning a new page in intergroup relations’) or future-oriented (‘devoting more attention to the present’). Nine studies with a total sample of N = 3,405 test this question. Across five studies we develop and validate a three-factor scale assessing identity-protective (i.e., defensive), reconciliatory and future-oriented demands for historical closure, employing various test-theoretic approaches and nomological network analyses (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). We then present a high-powered experiment on audience effects, testing whether other ingroup members perceive the three demands as expressing similar attitudes. The last three studies return to the sender’s perspective and measure how each demand relates to costly real-choice behavior aimed at avoiding confrontation with the past, using a self-developed documentary task. To increase the generalizability of our findings, the studies span the contexts of three historical crimes (i.e., genocide of Indigenous Americans, persecution of Jews in WWII, Stolen Generations) and four samples (i.e., Germany, Italy, Australia, U.S.).

Chapter 3 provides an integrative theoretical overview of thus far sparsely integrated literature and tests two contrasting predictions about which representations of historical ingroup roles are related to ingroup-protective intergroup responses: those accepting responsibility for harm, or those neglecting it. Unlike Chapter 2, Chapter 3 does not focus on primary perpetrator groups (i.e., originators of crimes), but on historical roles that emerged in the context of Nazi occupation during WWII (i.e., willing collaborators, forced collaborators and victim-heroes). Using individual analyses per sample and multilevel analyses across national samples, we examine the nomological networks of these three roles across a total of N = 5,474 participants. To account for historical realities in different countries, our study spans samples from four Eastern (i.e., Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine) and four Western European countries (i.e., Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands).

Chapter 4 turns to the role of identity-protective information processing in collective remembrance, and examines the theoretically often raised but empirically rarely tested assumption that individuals’ short-term memory performance is diminished for information

on ingroup perpetration. We examine this hypothesis through five high-powered experiments, involving a total of N = 3,424 participants, using between- and within-subjects designs, and assessing both recall and recognition performance. Recognition performance is further decomposed into measures of sensitivity and bias based on signal detection theory (Stanislaw & Todorov, 1999). To increase ecological validity on the one hand and ensure experimental control on the other, all studies use parallelized descriptions of real historical events as stimuli, with two studies randomly sampling these stimuli from sets of 5 and 12 different event descriptions per condition. Analytic approaches include analysis of variance, multilevel modeling, and equivalence testing (Lakens, 2017). Striving to enhance the generalizability of our results, we conduct the studies in the context of both WWII and the Vietnam War, and across three national samples (i.e., Germany, UK, U.S.).

Finally, *Chapter 5*, takes on the role of the devil's advocate to the previous studies, systematically revisiting and challenging the argument that identity-protective motives guide our willingness to collectively remember the past. To that end, we employ a two-step procedure. First, we ask participants from each country studied to name events they consider relevant for national and world history. Striving to enhance the variance of the stimulus materials and approaching a representative design (Brunswik, 1955), in a second step, we present the most frequently named 40 national and 40 world history events to another sample of participants from each country (total of N = 360 unique events across countries). Participants from the second sample then rate a randomly drawn subsample of five of these events (stimuli-within-block design; Westfall et al., 2014) according to a range of relevant characteristics (e.g., valence, ingroup morality in the event). These N = 7,665 ratings are entered as predictors of willingness to remember these events in multilevel models. To allow for examining the robustness of findings across different national contexts, our studies include samples from seven countries (i.e., Australia, Chile, Germany, Iceland, India, Kenya, U.S.), some of which are underrepresented in current research on collective remembrance.

Open Science Statement

This dissertation emphasizes adherence to open science standards. In each chapter, we report all studies conducted as part of the respective project. For studies that we chose not to include in the main manuscript (if any), we provide a file drawer statement in the manuscript and present the corresponding analyses in the supplementary online materials available on the respective Open Science Framework (OSF) project page. Preregistrations – including hypotheses, design, dependent variables, planned analyses, the sampling goal, and exclusion criteria – are available in Chapter 2 (seven of nine studies preregistered), Chapter 4 (all five studies preregistered), and Chapter 5 (all seven studies preregistered). If the project is exploratory and not preregistered (i.e., Chapter 3), we indicate this in the manuscript. Any deviations from the preregistrations are clearly noted. We provide a priori power analyses to determine the sample sizes whenever possible (see power considerations in Chapters 2, 4, and 5). Open materials, data, and reproducible analysis codes in *R* (R Core Team, 2023) are available for all chapters on their respective OSF project pages.

CHAPTER 2

Project 1

Three Fish at One Hook? Future-Oriented, Reconciliatory, and Defensive Claims for Historical Closure as Expressions of the Same Defensive Desire

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Preregistrations, open materials, data, and analysis codes: https://osf.io/vhcrd/

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Authors' Contributions

In accordance with the recommendations of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020), we indicate the individual contributions of the authors to this project using the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CASRAI, 2022). The authors' contributions are as follows:

Fiona Kazarovytska: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing.

Roland Imhoff: Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Supervision, Writing – review and editing.

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Abstract

Historical perpetrator groups seek to shield themselves from image threat by advocating for closing the discussion of their crimes. However, from a broader theoretical perspective, such demand for historical closure (HC) may also reflect willingness to reconcile with the victim group or to focus on the future rather than the past. In nine studies across four different contexts (Germany, United States, Italy, and Australia; N = 3,405), we analyzed whether these three facets of HC (defensive, reconciliatory, and future-oriented) indeed substantially differ. Contrary to expectations, nomological network analyses suggested that all three facets reflect the same defensive desire (Studies 1a-2c) and are perceived as overall similar from a third-party perspective (Study 3). Finally, all three HC facets showed a positive trend toward costly avoidance of confrontation with the ingroup's perpetrator past (Studies 4a-4c). We discuss implications for (and against) a more nuanced understanding of the demand for HC.

Keywords: historical closure, historical defensiveness, intergroup reconciliation, collective guilt, time orientation

Introduction

A notion as old as history itself is that to understand the present, we must look at the past. Socially shared representations of history provide us with fundamental knowledge about why we stand where we stand and crucially affect the contemporary behavior of social groups. They help define core aspects of the group's identity, create frameworks for relations to other groups, and ascertain options for facing political challenges (Liu & Hilton, 2005).

Despite these essential functions, group members are not always motivated to remember their ingroup's history. Instead, calls for closure on certain periods of history, especially those associated with ingroup perpetration, are prevalent (e.g., Adi, 2012; Hagemann & Nathanson, 2015; Jeong & Vollhardt, 2021; Jung, 2009; Khazanov & Payne, 2008). In the present research, we argue that such advocacy for historical closure (HC) among perpetrator groups can comprise three different aspects: a defensive desire to avoid confrontation with ingroup-threatening crimes, a desire for reconciliation with the victim group, or a desire to devote more attention to present and future issues. We present nine studies across four perpetrator contexts (German Nazi crimes, crimes against Indigenous Americans, persecution of Italian Jews, and Australia's Stolen Generations) conceptualizing these three facets of HC, testing their nomological networks, examining the third-party perspective on them, and analyzing their associations with costly avoidance behavior.

The Demand for HC Among Perpetrator Groups

Group members can vary markedly in the degree to which they attach importance to the past. The *demand for HC* explicates such perceived historical relevance. Specifically, demand for HC captures the attitude that the past is no longer relevant to present and future intra- or intergroup dynamics (Hanke et al., 2013). As such, calls for HC do not deny the respective history, but by claiming that the past is outdated, they remove the basis for ongoing engagement with it.

Previous literature (Adorno, 1955; Bilewicz, 2016; Kazarovytska & Imhoff, 2022; Rensmann, 2017) has predominantly conceptualized demand for HC as an expression of *defensiveness* against aversive feelings of collective guilt and identity threats posed by historical perpetration. Although this seems reasonable and is empirically justified, understanding demand for HC solely as a defensive strategy seems to reflect only one side of the coin. Incorporating literature on intergroup reconciliation and zero-sum beliefs, we propose at least three different facets of demand for HC among perpetrator groups, each mirroring a distinct motivation for achieving HC: *defensive, reconciliatory, and future-oriented HC*.

Defensive Demand for HC

An instance of historical harm committed by members of the in group can pose a major threat to a group's identity (Branscombe et al., 2004). Denying that the past has ongoing relevance to the present may serve as an especially powerful protective strategy against this threat. By denying there are ongoing consequences it becomes easier to morally disengage (Jeong & Vollhardt, 2021) and to temporally distance from the past (Peetz et al., 2010). In contrast, highlighting that the perpetrator past has ongoing consequences for the victims can substantially increase collective guilt (Imhoff et al., 2013). As such, perceiving the past as irrelevant to the present constitutes an effective shield against the aversive feeling of guilt (Kazarovytska & Imhoff, 2022). In terms of psychological functions, demand for HC can thus be understood as an *emotion-regulation strategy* (Bilewicz, 2016). Closely related is the conceptualization of demand for HC as a core aspect of *secondary antisemitism* – the devaluation of Jews that is motivated by the German's desire to split off the Holocaust from collective memory (Adorno, 1955; Rensmann, 2017). Also from this perspective, the psychological functions ascribed to the demand for HC ultimately culminate in reducing the severity of the crime, the associated guilt, and the inherent identity threat.

Indeed, arguably defensive claims for HC have regularly been identified. For instance, Jung (2009) argued that one of the main drivers of the Canadian government's use of transitional justice measures is the desire to draw a line under the past and thus remove any accountability for past violations against Indigenous peoples. Also in Japan, efforts to conclude the discussion of Imperial Japan's war crimes (even without reparation, Jeong & Vollhardt, 2021) can be observed repeatedly. Other examples of attempts to "move away from 'post-colonial guilt'" (Adi, 2012, p. 1) by achieving closure were identified with regard to colonial crimes in Britain or to crimes committed during the Soviet regime (Khazanov & Payne, 2008). We refer to this demand for HC based on the desire to preserve a favorable ingroup image and avoid collective guilt as *defensive HC*.

Reconciliatory Demand for HC

In marked contrast to the reasoning on demand for HC as a defensive strategy among perpetrator groups, demand for HC among victims has been characterized as reconciliatory. Across six formerly victimized societies, victim group members' support for HC was related to intergroup forgiveness (Hanke et al., 2013). Likewise, Israelis who supported HC had more positive attitudes toward Germany (Imhoff et al., 2017). In a similar vein, Hewstone and colleagues' (2004) scale on intergroup forgiveness in Northern Ireland captured willingness to "draw a line under the past" (item 10, p. 203), implying that such sentiments reflect readiness to forgive among victimized groups.

From a theoretical perspective, it now seems feasible that also perpetrator groups, who want to establish positive relations with the former victim group, are motivated to do so by leaving the burden of the past behind. Nadler and Saguy (2004) propose two interrelated routes to intergroup reconciliation, both including the idea of closing the chapter on historical transgressions. The socio-emotional route suggests an apology-forgiveness cycle in which the perpetrator group provides apology and reparation, while the victim group forgives, leading to both groups leaving the past behind. The trust-building route suggests immediately 'letting

bygones be bygones' and beginning to cooperate to (re-)build mutual trust. Hence, in both routes, achieving HC is an important step to promote healing and trust of victims toward perpetrators but also of perpetrators toward victims.

Also, from the perspective of the *Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation* (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), HC might be associated with an enhanced willingness of perpetrator groups to reconcile. Following this model, reconciliation requires social exchange processes that restore the conflict parties' threatened needs for power (among victims) and morality (among perpetrators). Mutual agreement to draw a line under the past could represent such an exchange process. The common decision to leave the past behind can mark the victim group's willingness to psychologically depart from the painful history (Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003). This, in turn, may allow the perpetrator group – similar to the victim group's acceptance of an apology (Barlow et al., 2015), but potentially even more explicitly – to depart from the role as immoral villain. In this way, jointly agreeing on HC can institutionalize the end of a hostile period. Indeed, during the Polish Round Table negotiations in 1989, the joint decision to sever past historical conflicts with a gruba kreska ("thick line") allowed the Polish United Workers' Party and the trade union Solidarność to detach from their previous historical roles and cooperatively address current problems (Bilewicz, 2019). We refer to the demand for HC based on the desire to reconcile with the victim group as *reconciliatory HC*.

Future-Oriented Demand for HC

Finally, demand for HC may also capture the perception that more attention should be devoted to current issues, reflecting a zero-sum idea of capacities to deal with various problems. As with other valuable goods (e.g., Johnson et al., 2022), the resources available to address political challenges may be perceived as finite. In this sense, focusing too much on the past can be perceived as limiting the resources available to address present and future issues.

Examples for this idea can be found in several existing HC scales, such as those by Imhoff (2010b; "We should focus on present problems rather than events that happened more than 60 years ago") or Hagemann and Nathanson (2015; "We should let history rest and address present or future problems"). Importantly, in Hagemann and Nathanson's (2015) survey on dealing with the Nazi past in a population-representative German sample, support for the aforementioned zero-sum item was considerably higher (77%) than for an item that explicitly phrased to "no longer talk so much about the persecution of Jews" (55%; p. 24). On the one hand, this discrepancy may result from differences in social desirability between these two formulations of HC. On the other hand, it may also reflect a genuine difference between advocating for closure to the threatening past and advocating for a greater focus on current problems, thereby relegating past events to the background. We refer to the demand for HC stemming from the desire to allocate more resources on current and future issues as *future-oriented HC*.

Present Research

Nine studies (seven of them preregistered) examined whether the three proposed forms of HC actually reflect three distinct, distinguishable facets of advocacy for closing the door on the ingroup's perpetrator past. If this is the case, they should substantially differ in their nomological network. Specifically, for defensive HC, we should find a pattern that is typical for defensive reactions. Such a pattern should be characterized, for instance, by reduced collective guilt, attempts to downgrade the severity of the crimes committed, and avoidance of confrontation with the past (Bilewicz, 2016; Branscombe et al., 2004; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). By contrast, reconciliatory HC should show a reversed, prosocial (e.g., Čehajić et al., 2008) pattern. If reconciliatory HC indeed mirrors an authentic motivation to restore positive relations with the victim group – in this case by leaving the past behind – then perpetrator group members who agree with reconciliatory HC should be generally rather positive toward the victim group, inclined to make amends, and take a more critical stance toward the

perpetrator ingroup. Finally, future-oriented HC may not be associated with certain attitudes toward the victim or perpetrator groups at all because it just includes the perception that we should focus on present problems (e.g., climate change), which might not be associated with the crimes in question. However, future-oriented HC might correlate with a preference for engaging with the present and the future.

In Studies 1a-b, we developed a scale addressing the three proposed HC facets and validated it in a German and a U.S. sample. Studies 2a-2c analyzed the convergent and divergent validities of the three HC facets across a German, Italian, and Australian sample. As we did not find substantial differences in the nomological networks of the HC facets, Study 3 used an experimental approach to examine in a German sample whether they are perceived as expressions of the same attitude from a third-party perspective. Finally, Studies 4a-4c analyzed the associations of the three HC facets with costly avoidance of confrontation with the ingroup's perpetrator past in a German, Australian, and U.S. sample.

Data and supplemental online materials (SOM) are available on our OSF project site (https://osf.io/vhcrd/). Preregistrations are available for Studies 1b (https://osf.io/zfrxd/), 2b (https://osf.io/8hn3c/), 2c (https://osf.io/zbdh3/), 3 (https://osf.io/rgdtx/), 4a (https://osf.io/nt5x3/), 4b (https://osf.io/yv78f/), and 4c (https://osf.io/zqwju/). All preregistrations include the study design, planned sample size, exclusion criteria, and planned primary analyses. We confirm that sample sizes for all studies were determined before conducting any data analysis. We report all measures, manipulations, exclusions, and preregistered analyses in the article or in the SOM and mark any deviations from preregistered analyses in the paper. In Study 3, as preregistered, we collected additional data that are not relevant to the present project and are therefore not reported in this article.

Studies 1a-1b

We developed an HC scale designed to assess future-oriented, reconciliatory, and defensive HC. We examined its factorial structure using an exploratory approach in a German

sample (Study 1a), complemented by a confirmatory approach in a U.S. sample (Study 1b). Based on our theoretical reasoning, we expected a three-factorial structure, with the three subscales differing in their divergent and convergent validities. A detailed overview of the expected diverging correlational patterns is given in Table 1.

While in the German context the HC scale referred to the Nazi crimes against Jews, the HC scale in the United States focused on the crimes of white Americans against Indigenous Americans. These two historical crimes differ markedly not only in their socio-historical conditions but also in their contemporary social representations (e.g., Davis-Delano et al., 2021; Rensmann, 2017). While in the German context Nazi crimes are quite present in public discourse and are associated with strong norms of memory, crimes against Indigenous Americans are less present and less normatively anchored in U.S. discourse. Including these two samples thus helps to establish the generalizability of the HC scale across different perpetrator contexts.

Study 1a

Method

Participants. Following MacCallum et al. (1999), factor analyses with few factors and high numbers of indicators (> 7) can achieve good recovery of population factors with samples of 100 to 200 participants, even when communalities are low. As we did not know whether the assumed three-factorial structure would correspond to the data and what communalities to expect, we recruited 306 non-Jewish participants with German nationality for an online survey on societal issues via social media and websites for unpaid online surveys. Among all participants, four gift vouchers (1x €20, 3x €10) for an online store were raffled. Participants who indicated to have *clicked randomly* and outliers of *extremely fast termination* with a relative speed index (RSI) > 2.0 (Leiner, 2019) were excluded from analyses. This resulted in a final sample of 293 participants (74% identified as women, 1% as gender diverse) with a mean age of M = 38.08 years (SD = 14.59).

Item Generation. Drawing on the literature, we generated an initial set of 52 items to assess the three components of HC. The 15 *future-oriented HC* items were based on zero-sum items of previous HC measures (Hagemann & Nathanson, 2015; Imhoff, 2010b; Imhoff et al., 2017), as well as adaptions of the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999), and the Temporal Focus Scale (Shipp et al., 2009) to the group context (e.g., "My mind is on the here and now" by Shipp et al., 2009 was transferred to "As a society, we should leave the past behind us and focus on the here and now"). The 17 *reconciliatory HC* items were adapted and expanded from various measures on intergroup reconciliation (Brewer & Hayes, 2015; Čehajić et al., 2008; Hanke et al., 2013; Hewstone et al., 2004; e.g., "It is better not to open old wounds by talking about what happened in the past" by Brewer & Hayes, 2015 was transferred to "Collectively drawing a line under the period of national socialism can help to heal old wounds"). Finally, 15 items on *defensive HC* were taken from previous scales assessing the desire to close discussion on history (e.g., Allpress et al., 2014; Hagemann & Nathanson, 2015; Hanke et al., 2013; Imhoff et al., 2017; Sahdra & Ross, 2007; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). Moreover, we added the 5-item HC scale by Imhoff (2010b). The full item set is provided in SOM-A.

Procedure and Measures. Participants were informed that the survey consists of three parts. The first part was introduced as a survey on time-orientation and contained the future-oriented HC scale. The second part was described as focusing on social emotions and assessed *empathy with victims, collective guilt, reparation intentions*, as well as reconciliatory HC. The third part was introduced as a survey on general attitudes toward social issues and contained measures of *Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA), Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), political orientation, collective narcissism, ingroup forgiveness, perceived pervasiveness of genocide, secondary antisemitism, motivation to unprejudiced behavior*, and defensive HC. An overview of all scales used in this and the other studies is given in Table 1.

Results

Item Descriptives, Item-Total-Correlations and Exploratory Factor Analysis. In the first step, we calculated item descriptives as well as item-total correlations per subscale and excluded all items with difficulties below .29 or above .71, standard deviations below 1, and item-total correlations below .50. In a second step, we conducted exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) separately for each HC subscale and kept only those items which clearly loaded (> .70) on one factor. Finally, we conducted an EFA and a principal component analysis (promax rotation) including all remaining items. The parallel analysis indicated a three-factor solution. By excluding items with cross-loadings (< .50 difference between loadings) and keeping items with highest loadings on their factor (> .65) and good communalities (> .50), we reduced the itemset to 7 items per subscale (Table 2).

Reliabilities and Construct Validity. Descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and correlations are given in Table 3. The reliabilities of all three HC subscales were excellent. An inspection of the nomological networks revealed that, contrary to our expectations, the correlational pattern was almost identical and clearly defensive for the three subscales. The only difference between subscales occurred with regard to SDO, which was positively associated only with future-oriented and defensive HC.

Study 1b

Method

Participants. Following Wolf et al. (2013), confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) with three factors and 6 to 8 indicators per factor estimated to load between .50-.65 require sample sizes of about 125 to 180 participants. Using ‘Prolific,’ we recruited 175 white U.S. American participants. As preregistered, we excluded participants who indicated to have *clicked randomly*, finished the study *extremely fast* (RSI > 2.0), or failed to *answer correctly two or more attention checks* (i.e., at least two of three attention checks had to be answered correctly

to be included).[3] The final sample included 171 participants (50% identified as women, 3% as gender diverse, M_{age} = 43.55, *SD* = 14.39).

Procedure and Measures. The study began with an article describing various crimes committed by white Americans against Indigenous Americans (including Mankato Executions, Wounded Knee, and Trail of Tears). Afterward, the HC scale (items of the three subscales in randomized-fixed order) was presented. For that purpose, the scale was adapted to the present study context and translated and back-translated by two independent, hypothesis-blind translators. Subsequently, the same nomological network variables as in Study 1a were assessed, just referring to crimes against Indigenous Americans. Moreover, we measured *subjective temporal closeness* to crimes committed (see Table 1).

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis. A CFA conducted by means of the R package "lavaan" (Version 0.6.9; Rosseel, 2012) indicated that a three-factor solution (correlated factors) with the full item set did not fit the data well. Specifically, the 3 items of the reconciliatory HC subscale containing the expression "drawing a line under the past" had very low and reversed factor loadings. Open-ended comments of participants revealed that many participants did not know what the phrase meant. Importantly, they did not know whether it meant "drawing a line in the sands" (i.e., erasing) or "underlining" (i.e., highlighting) past transgressions. In view of this misleading item wording, it seemed reasonable to exclude these items from analyses.

A closer inspection via EFAs furthermore revealed that the three non-reversed items of the defensive HC subscale had clear cross-loadings (≤ .30 difference between loadings). Eliminating these 6 items substantially improved the fit of the three-factor solution with fit indices exceeding conventional levels of good data fit (Comparative Fit Index [CFI] and

[3] In the preregistrations, these attention checks were imprecisely labelled as *manipulation checks*.

Tucker-Lewis Index [TLI] > .95; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation [RMSEA] and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual [SRMR] < .08; Table 2). Thus, we conducted all further analyses with the reduced item set.[4] Neither one-factor nor two-factor solutions resulted in a satisfactory data fit.

Reliabilities and Construct Validity. The reduced HC subscales had excellent reliabilities. Theoretically unexpected, but consistent with Study 1a, the pattern of significant correlations did not differ between the three subscales (Table 3). Noticeably, the pattern was almost identical to the one found in Study 1a, thus representing a typical pattern of defensive reactions. The only differences to the German sample were that SDO correlated significantly with all three subscales, whereas perceived pervasiveness of genocide – the perception that the committed crime is not unique but represents a pervasive phenomenon within human history (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005) – did not correlate with any of them. However, the overall correlation pattern of perceived pervasiveness also differed between samples (see SOM-B for a full overview of correlations), suggesting a context-specific variation in the meaning of that construct.

Discussion

Future-oriented, reconciliatory and defensive HC appeared to constitute distinct factors of the developed HC. However, contrary to expectations, these three HC subscales did not substantially differ in their nomological networks. Instead, all three were highly intercorrelated and followed a correlational pattern which can be considered prototypical for defensive reactions (compare Bilewicz, 2016). Despite considerable differences in the historical crimes the HC scales referred to, the nomological network patterns in Germany and the U.S. were virtually identical with only minor variations.

[4] In Studies 2b–2c, we preregistered to measure the HC subscales with seven items each. However, the pattern was always the same, with cross-loadings for the reversed-formulated defensive items (German, Italian, and Australian samples), and comparatively low factor loadings for the three reconciliatory "drawing a line"-items (Italian and Australian sample). Excluding these six items considerably increased the data fit in all samples (Table 2). Accordingly, we proceeded with the reduced subscales.

Table 1

Items, Corresponding Factor Loadings in CFAS (Three-Factor Solutions with Correlated Factors), and Fit Indices for Different Factor Solutions per Study

Construct	Measures	Studies	Example Item	Expected Correlations		
				Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive
Empathy with Victims	Three items on empathy by Čehajić et al. (2008)	Studies 1a-2c	"I try to see things that happened during [historical crime] from the point of [victim group]."	Not corr.	Positive	Negative
Collective Guilt	Two items adapted from the Collective Guilt Acceptance Scale by Branscombe et al. (2004) as used by Authors	Study 1a	"I feel guilty about the negative things [perpetrator group] did to [victim group] in the past."	Not corr.	Positive	Negative
	Three items adapted from the Collective Guilt Acceptance Scale by Branscombe et al. (2004)	Studies 1b, 2c				
	Five items adapted from the Collective Guilt Acceptance Scale by Branscombe et al. (2004) as used by Ravenna & Roncarati (2009)	Study 2b				
Reparation Intentions	Five items on reparation intentions as used by Imhoff (2010b), partly adapted from the Collective Guilt Acceptance Scale by Branscombe et al. (2004)	Study 1a	"I belief that I should repair the damage caused to [victim group] by [perpetrator group]."	Not corr.	Positive	Negative
	Four items on reparation intentions, partly adapted from the Collective Guilt Acceptance Scale by Branscombe et al. (2004)	Studies 1b, 2b, 2c				
	Three items on attitudes toward/support of actual reparation measures (i.e., the installation of more *Stolpersteine*, renaming of streets, attitudes toward the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin)	Study 2a	"We should have more *Stolpersteine* (stumbling blocks) on German streets."			
Ingroup Forgiveness	Four items on willingness to forgive contemporary Germans for the Holocaust by Wohl and Branscombe (2005), adapted to respective contexts	Studies 1a-2c	"Today's [perpetrator group members] should be forgiven for what their ancestors did to [victim group] during [historical crime]."	Not corr.	Negative	Positive
Perceived Pervasiveness	Three items on perceived pervasiveness of genocide by Wohl and Branscombe (2005)	Studies 1a-2c	"Harmful actions such as those during [historical crime] have happened throughout human history"	Not corr.	Negative	Positive
RWA	Three items from the KSA-3 Scale to measure authoritarian attitudes by Beierlein et al. (2014)	Studies 1a, 2a	"Our country needs a powerful leader, in order to destroy the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today."	Not corr.	Negative	Positive
	15-item short version of the Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) Scale by Zakrisson (2005)	Study 1b				
	12-item Italian version of the RWA^{3}D Scale by Roccato et al. (2009)	Study 2b				

Construct	Measures	Studies	Example Item	Expected Correlations		
				Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive
	Six-item Very Short Authoritarianism Scale by Bizumic and Duckitt (2018)	Study 2c				
SDO	Four-item Short Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SSDO) by Pratto et al. (2013)	Study 1a	"Superior groups should dominate inferior groups."	Not corr.	Negative	Positive
	Eight-item SDO_7 Scale by Ho et al. (2015)	Studies 1b, 2c				
	Six-item German SDO scale (subdimension on dominance) by Six et al. (2001)	Study 2a				
	14-item Italian SDO scale by Mammini (2015)	Study 2b				
Political Orientation	Left-right spectrum (one item)	Studies 1a-2c		Not corr.	Negative	Positive
Collective Narcissism	Five items of the German version (Imhoff, 2010a) of the Collective Narcissism Scale by Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	Study 1a	"[Group members] deserve special treatment."	Not corr.	Negative	Positive
	Five items of the Collective Narcissism Scale by Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	Study 1b				
	Six items of the German version (Imhoff, 2010a) of the Collective Narcissism Scale by Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	Study 2a				
	Nine-item Collective Narcissism Scale by Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	Studies 2b, 2c				
Prejudices Toward Victim Group	Ten items of the German Secondary Antisemitism Scale by Imhoff (2010b); subscales on generalization of victims, instrumentalization of remembrance and victim-perpetrator reversal	Studies 1a, 2b	"The Jews exploit the memory of the Holocaust for their own benefit."	Not corr.	Negative	Positive
	Ten-item short version by Cross' (2018) scale on attitudes toward Native Americans	Study 1b	"It is likely that Native Americans will bring violence to neighborhoods when they move in."			
	11-item Italian Antisemitism scale by Vercelli et al. (2014)	Study 2b	"Jews prefer to associate with members of their own group to the exclusion of others."			
	15 items of the Attitudes Toward Indigenous Australians Scale (ATIA) by Pedersen et al. (2004)	Study 2c	"Land rights for Indigenous people are just a way of them getting more than they deserve."			
Motivation Unprejudiced Behavior	Six items of the German Motivation to Unprejudiced Behavior Scale (MVV-16) by Banse and Gawronski (2003)	Studies 1a, 2b	"I think that it is important to speak one's mind rather than to worry about offending someone."	Not corr.	Positive	Negative
	Six items of the Motivation to Control Prejudiced Reactions Scale by Dunton and Fazio (1997)	Studies 1b, 2b, 2c				
Subjective Closeness	One-item subjective temporal distance measure by Peetz et al. (2010)	Studies 1a-2c	"Time can be experienced in different ways. Sometimes a point in the past can feel very far away, and other times an identical point in the past can be experienced as almost like yesterday. Please indicate on the slider below how far back in your perception the crimes committed by	Negative	Positive	Negative

Construct	Measures	Studies	Example Item	Expected Correlations		
				Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive
			[perpetrator groups] toward [victim group] appear to you. Please indicate your own personal perception."			
Willingness to Reconcile	Eight items on willingness to reconcile with the victim group adapted from Shnabel & Nadler (2008)	Studies 2a-2c	"In my wishful thinking, [victim group] and [perpetrator group] live together harmoniously."	Not corr.	Positive	Negative
Internal Attribution	Three items of Hirschberger and colleagues' (2022) Evil Essence subscale of the Attributions for the Holocaust Scale (AHS)	Study 2a	"I think that [perpetrator group] acted in that way because they were arrogant racists."	Not corr.	Positive	Negative
	Two items of Hirschberger and colleagues' (2022) Evil Essence subscale of the Attributions for the Holocaust Scale (AHS) and the dispositional attribution measures by Bilewicz et al. (2017), adapted to respective contexts	Studies 2b, 2c				
External Attribution	Three items of Hirschberger and colleagues' (2022) Nazi Coercion subscale of the Attributions for the Holocaust Scale (AHS) and the dispositional attribution measures by Bilewicz et al. (2017)	Study 2a	"When judging the [perpetrator groups'] behavior one needs to consider the historical context and the contemporary circumstances."	Not corr.	Positive	Positive
	Two-items measure of situational attributions by Bilewicz et al. (2017)	Studies 2b, 2c				
Museum Ingroup Perpetration	Participants were presented with a short description of an actual exhibition about Holocaust victims that could be seen in Germany (exhibition: "Survivors - Faces of Life after the Holocaust"). They were then asked to indicate whether they would like to visit the exhibition, donate money to support the exhibition, consider the exhibition important and would like to see more exhibitions of this kind in the future	Study 2a	"I would like to visit the exhibition about the [historical crime]."	Negative	Positive	Negative
	Participants were presented with a short description of an actual exhibition about the persecution of Jews in Italy that could be seen in Italy (exhibition: "1938–1945. La persecuzione degli ebrei in Italia. Documenti per una storia"). They were then asked to answer the above-mentioned four questions.	Study 2b				
	Participants were presented with a short description of an actual exhibition about the Stolen Generations that could be seen in Australia (exhibition: "Indigenous Australians: Australia's First Peoples exhibition 1996–2015"). They were then asked to answer the above-mentioned four questions.	Study 2c				
Muesum Ingroup Victimhood	Participants were presented with a short description of an actual exhibition about the suffering of German people during the Weimarer Republic and the economic crisis in the 1920's that could be seen in Germany (exhibition: "Weimarer Republik" - Deutsches Historisches Museum). They were then asked to answer the above-mentioned four questions.	Study 2a	"I would like to visit the exhibition about the [historical event]."	Negative	Not corr.	Positive
	Participants were presented with a short description of an actual exhibition about the suffering of Italian people during World War I (WWI) that could be seen in Italy (exhibition: "Tra il vento e la neve. Prigionieri italiani nella grande Guerra"). They were then asked to answer the above-mentioned four questions.	Study 2b				

Construct	Measures	Studies	Example Item	Expected Correlations		
				Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive
	Participants were presented with a short description taken from the Australian War Memorial about the suffering of Australian people during World War I (WW I; description: "Causalities of war"). They were then asked to answer the above-mentioned four questions.	Study 2c				
Past Time Orientation	Four-item past focus subscale of the Temporal Focus Scale (TFS) by Shipp et al. (2009)	Studies 2a, 2c	"I think about things from my past."	Negative	Not corr.	Not corr.
	Four-item past focus subscale of Diotaiuti and colleagues' (2021) Italian version of the Temporal Focus Scale (TFS) by Shipp et al. (2009)	Study 2b				
Present Time Orientation	Four-item current focus subscale of the Temporal Focus Scale (TFS) by Shipp et al. (2009)	Studies 2a, 2c	"I focus on what is currently happening in my life."	Positive	Not corr.	Not corr.
	Three-item current focus subscale of Diotaiuti and colleagues' (2021) Italian version of the Temporal Focus Scale (TFS) by Shipp et al. (2009)	Study 2b				
Future Time Orientation	Four-item future focus subscale of the Temporal Focus Scale (TFS) by Shipp et al. (2009)	Studies 2a, 2c	"I think about what my future has in store."	Positive	Not corr.	Not corr.
	Three-item future focus subscale of Diotaiuti and colleagues' (2021) Italian version of the Temporal Focus Scale (TFS) by Shipp et al. (2009)	Study 2b				
24. General Empathy	Four-item short version of Paulus' (2009) German version (Saarbrücker Persönlichkeitsfragebogen zur Messung von Empathie; SPF) of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)	Study 2a	"When I'm upset with someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while."	Not corr.	Positive	Not corr.
	Four-item short version of Albiero and colleagues' (2006) Italian version of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)	Study 1b				
	Four-item short version of the Brief Form of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (B-IRI) developed by Ingoglia and colleagues (2016)	Study 2c				
25. PIVO	12-item Perpetual Ingroup Victimhood Orientation scale (PIVO) by Schori-Eyal et al. (2017)	Studies 2a-2c	"The suffering we have been through cannot be compared to that of any other group."	Not corr.	Not corr.	Positive

Note. Except for political orientation, which ranged from 1 (*extreme left*) to 100 (*extreme right*) in Study 2a and from 1 (*extreme left*) to 10 (*extreme right*) in the other studies, subjective temporal closeness, which ranged from 1 (*past*) to 100 (*present*), and reparation attitudes in Study 2a, which were assessed using seven-point and five-point scale and thus were z-standardized for following calculations, all items ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). CFA = confirmatory factor analyses; RWA = Right-Wing Authoritarianism; KSA-3 = Kurzskala Autoritarismus; SDO = Social Dominance Orientation; SSDO = Short Social Dominance Orientation Scale; ATIA = Attitudes Toward Indigenous Australians Scale; MVV-16 = German Motivation to Unprejudiced Behavior Scale; AHS = Attributions for the Holocaust Scale; TFS = Temporal Focus Scale; SPF = Saarbrücker Persönlichkeitsfragebogen zur Messung von Empathie; IRI = Interpersonal Reactivity Index; B-IRI = Brief Form of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index; PIVO = Perpetual Ingroup Victimhood Orientation.

Table 2

Items, Factor Loadings in CFAS (Three-Factor Solutions with Correlated Factors and Cross-Loadings Fixed to Zero), and Fit Indices for Different Factor Solutions per Study

	Study 1b (U.S.)[a]			Study 2a (Germany)[a]			Study 2b (Italy)[a]			Study 2c (Australia)[a]		
Item	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Future-Oriented HC												
1. We should rather address current problems than deal with occurrences that happened decades ago.	**.77**	0	0	**.82**	0	0	**.71**	0	0	**.81**	0	0
2. As a society, we should leave the past behind us and focus on the here and now.	**.92**	0	0	**.80**	0	0	**.81**	0	0	**.87**	0	0
3. It is better to talk about present happenings than about happenings from the past.	**.83**	0	0	**.85**	0	0	**.86**	0	0	**.83**	0	0
4. We should deal with those problems that exist today and not with happenings from the past.	**.89**	0	0	**.88**	0	0	**.83**	0	0	**.89**	0	0
5. It is worthwhile as a society to focus primarily on the present.	**.92**	0	0	**.84**	0	0	**.83**	0	0	**.84**	0	0
6. For us as a society, the present is what counts, not the past.	**.89**	0	0	**.88**	0	0	**.87**	0	0	**.85**	0	0
7. As one cannot change the past, we as a society should focus on the future.	**.87**	0	0	**.83**	0	0	**.76**	0	0	**.87**	0	0
Reconciliatory HC												
1. Only if [victim group] and [perpetrator group] can leave the past behind will they experience true reconciliation.	0	**.83** [.84]	0	0	**.85** [.85]	0	0	**.75** [.76]	0	0	**.86** [.86]	0
2. Leaving the past behind can serve as a symbol for forgiveness and peaceful relations between [victim group] and [perpetrator group].	0	**.87** [.87]	0	0	**.87** [.87]	0	0	**.78** [.78]	0	0	**.85** [.86]	0
3. The common decision to leave the past behind is the best strategy for a peaceful relationship between [victim group] and [perpetrator group].	0	**.96** [.96]	0	0	**.91** [.90]	0	0	**.88** [.88]	0	0	**.92** [.91]	0
4. True reconciliation between [victim group] and [perpetrator group] means to collectively leave the past behind and concentrate on the future.	0	**.96** [.95]	0	0	**.86** [.84]	0	0	**.79** [.79]	0	0	**.91** [.91]	0
5. Collectively drawing a line under the historical transgressions committed by [perpetrator group] against [victim group] can help to heal old wounds.	0	[-.26]	0	0	[.78]	0	0	[.10]	0	0	[.37]	0
6. Collectively drawing a line under the historical transgressions committed by [perpetrator group] against [victim group] can make an important contribution to the reconciliation between [victim group] and [perpetrator group].	0	[-.29]	0	0	[.87]	0	0	[.13]	0	0	[.30]	0
7. Drawing a line under the historical crimes committed by [perpetrator group] against [victim group] can help so that [victim group] and [perpetrator group] encounter each other more peacefully and benevolent in the future.	0	[-.16]	0	0	[.89]	0	0	[.32]	0	0	[.53]	0

Item	Study 1b (U.S.)[a]			Study 2a (Germany)[a]			Study 2b (Italy)[a]			Study 2c (Australia)[a]		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Defensive HC[b]												
1. It is important to preserve the memory of the historical crimes committed by [perpetrator group] against [victim group]. (R)	0	0	**.76** [.72]	0	0	**.81** [.71]	0	0	**.78** [.67]	0	0	**.73** [.61]
2. It is the obligation of us [perpetrator group] to make sure that the historical crimes committed against [victim group] will not be forgotten. (R)	0	0	**.80** [.75]	0	0	**.75** [.70]	0	0	**.25** [.18]	0	0	**.82** [.69]
3. Only if every generation is willing to deal with the historical crimes committed by [perpetrator group] against [victim group], every generation can learn from those crimes. (R)	0	0	**.83** [.75]	0	0	**.80** [.71]	0	0	**.58** [.45]	0	0	**.77** [.70]
4. Continued engagement with the crimes committed by [perpetrator group] against [victim group] is necessary to ensure that the injustice does not continue from the victim's perspective. (R)	0	0	**.90** [.83]	0	0	**.72** [.66]	0	0	**.62** [.55]	0	0	**.78** [.72]
5. The [victim group] should stop constantly complaining about what [perpetrator group] did to them in earlier times.	0	0	[.90]	0	0	[.69]	0	0	[.86]	0	0	[.92]
6. [Perpetrator group] should not have to deal so much with the historical crimes committed against [victim group] anymore.	0	0	[.84]	0	0	[.85]	0	0	[.67]	0	0	[.81]
7. I am tired of repeatedly listening to the historical crimes committed by [perpetrator group] against [victim group].	0	0	[.89]	0	0	[.80]	0	0	[.86]	0	0	[.90]
Fit Indices Three-Factor Solution (Correlated Factors)												
CFI	**.96** [.85]			**.97** [.93]			**.94** [.84]			**.97** [.87]		
TFI	**.96** [.83]			**.96** [.92]			**.93** [.82]			**.97** [.86]		
RMSEA	**.08** [.14]			**.06** [.08]			**.08** [.10]			**.07** [.11]		
SRMR	**.04** [.10]			**.04** [.06]			**.05** [.09]			**.03** [.08]		
AIC	**7669.62**[11218.48]			**15419.75** [21492.36]			**12699.24** [17785.79]			**12974.09** [18791.97]		
BIC	**7820.42** [11425.83]			**15604.93** [21746.98]			**12873.37** [18024.50]			**13149.91** [19033.73]		
$\chi^2(df)$	**190.91**(87)*** [782.33 (186)]***			**213.43**(87)*** [643.54(186)]***			**232.85**(87)*** [742.79(186)]***			**191.63**(87)*** [868.19(186)]***		
Fit Indices Two-Factor Solutions[c] (Correlated Factors)												
CFI	**.90 - .92** [.79 - .82]			**.87 - .89** [.80 - .87]			**86 - .91** [.76 - .78]			**.91 - .92** [.81 - .83]		
TFI	**.88 - .91** [.77 - .79]			**.85 - .86** [.82 - .85]			**83 - .89** [.73 - .75]			**.89 - .91** [.79 - .81]		
RMSEA	**.12 - .14** [.15 - .16]			**.12 - .14** [.11 - .13]			**.10 - .12** [.12 - .13]			**.11 - .12** [.13 - .14]		
SRMR	**.04 - .06** [.10 - .11]			**.05 - .08** [.07 - .08]			**.06 - .07** [.09 - .10]			**.04 - .07** [.08 - .09]		
AIC	**7787.74 - 7843.65** [11333.10 - 11417.84]			**14789.19 - 15780.40** [.22071.38 - 21883.52]			**12630.48 - 12750.64** [18001.94 - 18049.72]			**13159.99 - 13231.09** [19020.74 - 19127.65]		

	Study 1b (U.S.)[a]	Study 2a (Germany)[a]	Study 2b (Italy)[a]	Study 2c (Australia)[a]
BIC	**7932.26 - 7988.17** [11534.17 - 11618.90]	**14955.08 - 15957.87** [22318.29 - 22130.43]	**12796.85 - 12917.01** [18233.42 - 18281.20]	**13328.49 - 13399.58** [19304.15 - 19362.07]
$\chi^2(df)$	**313.04 - 368.95**(89)*** [900.95 - 985.69(188)] ***	**298.60 - 350.32**(89)*** [848.97 - 929.27(188)] ***	**319.09 - 439.25**(89)*** [962.94 - 1010.73(188)] ***	**381.54 - 452.63**(89)*** [1100.96 - 1149.94(188)] ***
Fit Indices One-Factor Solution				
CFI	**.86** [.77]	**.80** [.78]	**.82** [.71]	**.86** [.78]
TFI	**.84** [.75]	**.77** [.76]	**.79** [.67]	**.84** [.75]
RMSEA	**.16** [.17]	**.16** [.15]	**.13** [.14]	**.14** [.15]
SRMR	**.07** [.10]	**.09** [.08]	**.08** [.10]	**.07** [.00]
AIC	**7955.00** [11511.09]	**16137.44** [22425.80]	**12840.45** [18247.57]	**13392.96** [19311.11]
BIC	**8096.37** [11709.01]	**16311.04** [22668.85]	**13003.21** [18475.43]	**13557.80** [19541.88]
$\chi^2(df)$	**482.30** (90)*** [1080.94 (189)***]	**457.56**(90)*** [1023.07(189)***]	**531.06**(90)*** [1210.58(189)***]	**616.51**(90)*** [1393.32(189)***]

Note. As no cross-loadings were allowed, the factor loadings of the respective non-focal factors were fixed to zero. CFI = Comparative Fit Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, AIC = Akaike Information Criterion, BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion.

[a] Results for reduced subscales as used for analyses in Studies 1b-2c are marked bold; results for full scales are given in brackets for comparison.

[b] In the German context, items 1-4 and 6 used the wording "Holocaust", "(German) Nazi past/crimes/era" or "history of National Socialism" instead of "(historical) crimes committed (by [Germans]) against [Jews]" (compare SOM-A) as this can be considered equivalent in the German discourse.

[c] Fit indices range from the smallest to the highest values found for the three two-factor solutions (i.e., future-oriented and defensive vs reconciliatory, future-oriented and reconciliatory vs. defensive, reconciliatory and defensive vs. future-oriented).

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities of the Three HC Facets and Correlations with Nomological Network Variables in Studies 1a-2c

	Study 1a[a]			Study 1b[b]			Study 2a[b]			Study 2b[b]			Study 2c[b]		
	Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive	Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive	Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive	Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive	Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive
Reconciliatory HC	.60***	-	-	.86***	-	-	.75***	-	-	.67***	-	-	.83***	-	-
Defensive HC	.60***	.57***	-	.69***	.68***	-	.53***	.50***	-	.43***	.37***	-	.64***	.60***	-
Empathy with Victims	-.38***	-.25***	-.55***	-.57***	-.52***	-.63***	-.34***	-.28***	-.41***	-.43***	-.35***	-.40***	-.60***	-.59***	-.63***
Collective Guilt	-.40***	-.36***	-.55***	-.59***	-.52***	-.62***	-	-	-	-.35***	-.34***	-.39***	-.63***	-.56***	-.64***
Reparation Intentions[c]	-.58***	-.52***	-.74***	-.74***	-.70***	-.76***	-.49***	-.43***	-.65***	-.40***	-.36***	-.41***	-.76***	-.72***	-.75***
Ingroup Forgiveness	.53***	.60***	.57***	.69***	.68***	.56***	.50***	.49***	.23**	.40***	.44***	.20	.69***	.70***	.49***
Perceived Pervasiveness	.26***	.41***	.28***	-.07	-.13	-.13	.38***	.39***	.21*	-.15	-.19	-.31***	-.13	-.15	-.28***
RWA	.37***	.22**	.40***	.57***	.61***	.61***	.44***	.49***	.25***	.37***	.40***	.33***	.48***	.50***	.44***
SDO	.19*	-.01	.24***	.49***	.46***	.59***	.43***	.42***	.32***	.42***	.44***	.42***	.54***	.52***	.64***
Political Orientation[d]	.29***	.18*	.42***	.53***	.58***	.58***	.38***	.41***	.28***	.37***	.38***	.30***	.45***	.50***	.50***
Collective Narcissism	.31***	.23**	.50***	.42***	.48***	.29**	.44***	.44***	.29***	.30***	.35***	.14	.43***	.48***	.35***
Prejudices Toward Victim Group	.51***	.55***	.73***	.41***	.43***	.60***	.56***	.62***	.46***	.38***	.43***	.36***	.73***	.72***	.75***
Motivation Unprejudiced Behavior	-.35***	-.22**	-.48***	-.34***	-.34***	-.49***	-.31***	-.33***	-.31***	-.19	-.22*	-.24**	-.37***	-.38***	-.48***
Subjective Closeness	-	-	-	-.44***	-.40***	-.43***	-.46***	-.37***	-.35***	-.32***	-.35***	-.24**	-.51***	-.52***	-.46***
Willingness to Reconcile							-.06	-.05	-.32***	-.27**	-.28***	-.40***	-.33***	-.28***	-.52***
Internal Attribution							-.08	-.04	-.23***	-.15	-.20	-.26**	-.38***	-.37***	-.52***
External Attribution							.23***	.24***	.00	.14	.16	.09	.45***	.47***	.36***
Museum Ingroup Perpetration							-.44***	-.33***	-.60***	-.35***	-.25**	-.41***	-.53***	-.49***	-.69***
Museum Ingroup Victimhood							-.38***	-.28***	-.27***	-.25**	-.11	-.22*	.09	.15	.03
Past Time Orientation							-.01	.02	-.01	-.10	-.11	-.11	-.01	-.03	-.02
Present Time Orientation							.19*	.17	.01	.06	.13	-.06	.18	.24**	.11
Future Time Orientation							.01	.03	-.10	-.08	-.04	-.12	-.02	-.03	-.11
General Empathy							-.14	-.13	-.15	-.23*	-.19	-.27**	-.33***	-.28***	-.40***
PIVO							.45***	.49***	.30***	.23*	.25**	.21	.28***	.31***	.24**

	Study 1a[a]			Study 1b[b]			Study 2a[b]			Study 2b[b]			Study 2c[b]		
	Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive	Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive	Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive	Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive	Future-oriented	Recon-ciliatory	Defensive
M (SD)	4.68 (1.12)	4.72 (1.52)	3.01 (1.43)	4.22 (1.70)	3.72 (1.75)	2.61 (1.37)	3.41 (1.39)	3.04 (1.55)	1.99 (1.08)	3.94 (1.33)	3.65 (1.32)	2.59 (0.81)	4.15 (1.52)	3.85 (1.62)	2.62 (1.22)
α	.90	.96	.93	.96	.95	.90	.94	.93	.85	.93	.88	.60	.95	.93	.86

Note. P-values were adjusted for multiple comparisons using Holm's method. According to Holm's method, in Study 1a (German sample, $N = 293$), correlations higher than $|r = .16|$ were significant. In Study 1b (U.S. sample, $N = 171$), correlations higher than $|r = .24|$ were significant. In Study 2a (German sample, $N = 350$), correlations higher than $|r = .18|$ were significant. In Study 2b (Italian sample, $N = 275$), correlations higher than $|r = .21|$ were significant. In Study 2c (Australian sample, $N = 288$), correlations higher than $|r = .20|$ were significant. Support for future-oriented and reconciliatory HC was significantly higher than for defensive HC in all studies, Study 1a, $F(2, 563) = 350.30$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_G = .25$, 95% CI_{η^2G} [.20, .31], Study 1b, $F(2, 292) = 170.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_G = .15$, 95% CI_{η^2G} [.08, .22], Study 2a, $F(2, 653) = 247.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_G = .17$, 95% CI_{η^2G} [.12, .21], Study 2b, $F(2, 528) = 195.92$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_G = .20$, 95% CI_{η^2G} [.14, .25], and Study 2c, $F(2, 500) = 280.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_G = .17$, 95% CI_{η^2G} [.12, .22], as indicated by within-subjects ANOVAS with Greenhouse-Geisser sphericity correction and Bonferroni-Holm corrected post-hoc tests (all *ps* < .001). HC = historical closure; RWA = Right-Wing Authoritarianism; SDO = Social Dominance Orientation; PIVO = Perpetual Ingroup Victimhood Orientation; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; ANOVA = analysis of variance.

[a] Calculations in Study 1a were based on the full HC subscales (seven items per HC subscale).

[b] Calculations in Study 1b-2c were based on the reduced HC subscales (seven items of the future-oriented, four items each of the reconciliatory and defensive HC subscales).

[c] Items on reparation attitudes in Study 2a were measured using a seven-point and a five-point scale and thus were z-standardized before combining them to one score for calculations.

[d] Political orientation ranged from 1 (*extreme left*) to 100 (*extreme right*) in Study 2a and from 1 (*extreme left*) to 10 (*extreme right*) in the other studies.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$

Studies 2a-2c

To substantiate our results and further generalize them across perpetrator contexts, we expanded the nomological network analyses and incorporated two further instances of historical perpetration: the persecution of Italian Jews during World War II and the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families in Australia, also referred to as Stolen Generations. Like in Studies 1a-1b, we expected a three-factorial structure of the HC scale. Moreover, although not supported in Studies 1a-1b, but in line with our theoretical reasoning, we expected differences in the nomological networks of the three subscales, reflecting a defensive, prosocial, or future-oriented pattern.

Method

Participants

Following Schönbrodt and Perugini (2013), stable estimates for correlations require at least 250 participants. To rebalance for dropouts, we recruited 361 non-Jewish participants with German nationality via social media and a university mailing list for Study 2a. For Studies 2b-2c, we recruited 318 non-Jewish participants with Italian nationality and 309 non-Indigenous participants with Australian nationality via 'Prolific.' As preregistered, we excluded participants who indicated to have *clicked randomly*, finished the study *extremely fast* (RSI > 2.0) or failed to *answer correctly two attention checks* (i.e., two correct answers required to be included; attention checks were used only in Studies 2b and 2c). This resulted in 350 participants in Study 2a (77% identified as women, 1% as gender diverse, M_{age} = 28.09, *SD* = 10.13), 275 participants in Study 2b (51% identified as women, 2% as gender diverse, M_{age} = 26.18, *SD* = 7.32), and 288 participants in Study 2c (51% identified as women, 1% as gender diverse, M_{age} = 34.67, *SD* = 11.86).

Procedures and Measures

Adding on Studies 1a-b, we incorporated measures on the *willingness to reconcile with the victims, internal and external attribution of crimes, willingness to visit exhibitions on*

ingroup perpetration or victimization, past-, present-, and future-time orientation, general empathy and perpetual ingroup victimhood orientation (PIVO; see Table 1 for details).[5] The items of the HC scale were presented in randomized-fixed order, which was kept constant across the study contexts. For the Italian version, the HC scale was translated and back translated by two independent, hypothesis-blind translators.

Results

Measurement Invariance

Separate CFAs per sample supported that three-factorial models with correlated factors fit the data acceptable (Italy) to very well (Germany, Australia; Table 2). As metric measurement invariance implying equal factor loadings across samples is an important pre-requisite for cross-group comparisons of correlational patterns (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002), we conducted a multigroup CFA (Table 4). This CFA confirmed a good fit of the three-factorial structure in all samples, supporting multigroup configural measurement invariance. We then specified a second model constrained to have equal factor loadings across samples. Although the χ^2-difference test indicated that this model was statistically different from the less constrained first model, this was not surprising considering the sensitivity of the χ^2-statistic for larger sample sizes (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). More importantly, a wide range of fit indices supported that both models fit the data very well, with the difference in fit between the models (ΔCFI = .004, ΔRMSEA = .001) not exceeding the cutoffs proposed to prohibit the assumption of the next higher invariance level in larger samples (ΔCFI < .01 as proposed by Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; ΔCFI < .005 and ΔRMSEA < .01 as proposed by Chen, 2007). Thus, the scales could be considered as metric invariant across samples.

[5] We measured exploratively several additional constructs (e.g., ingroup continuity) for which we had no hypotheses. Respective correlational results are given in SOM-C.

Table 4

Test of Measurement Invariance in Multigroup CFAs (Three-Factor Solution with Correlated Factors) Across Studies 2a-2c

Fit Indices	Configural Invariance	Metric (Weak) Invariance	Scalar (Strong) Invariance
CFI	.965	.961	.942
TFI	.958	.957	.941
RMSEA	.068	.069	.080
SRMR	.037	.057	.065
AIC	40931.96	40953.13	41123.29
BIC	41625.57	41531.14	41585.69
$\chi^2(df)$	627.79 (261)***	696.96 (285)***	915.12 (309)***
$\chi^2 diff$		69.17 (24)***	218.16 (24)***

Note. CFI = Comparative Fit Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, AIC = Akaike Information Criterion, BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Reliabilities and Construct Validity

The HC subscales had acceptable (defensive HC in Italy) to good and excellent reliabilities (other subscales in Italy, all subscales in Germany and Australia).[6] Replicating Studies 1a-1b, but deviating from our theoretical expectations, the differences in the nomological networks of the three HC subscales were marginal (Table 3). Nuanced differences were found in the Italian sample for ingroup forgiveness, collective narcissism, motivation to behave without prejudice, and PIVO. For each of these variables, one HC facet did not reach significance although showing the same tendency as the other two facets (correlation coefficients were |.14| for collective narcissism and |.19| to |.21| for the other variables, but only coefficients exceeding |.21| were significant).

[6] It is important to note that all items of the Italian defensive HC scale referred to Italian Jews, except for Item 2, which referred to Jews in general. It is possible that even participants who scored low on the other defensive HC items did not consider it their duty to preserve the memory of crimes against Jews in general (this could be considered, for instance, a German duty), but mainly against Italian Jews. This may have caused the comparatively low loading of this item and affected the reliability (excluding Item 2 raised α to .70).

For some other variables (i.e., external and internal attributions, present-time orientation, and willingness to reconcile with the victims), we found more substantial differences between the three HC facets in certain samples. For instance, in the German sample, external attribution for crimes was positively correlated only with future-oriented and reconciliatory HC. Importantly, however, these differences between HC facets did not show stability across all samples but were specific to a certain context. Moreover, the differences found still did not support a prosocial or future-oriented pattern but just revealed a slightly nuanced defensive pattern. Finally, for some nomological network variables (i.e., perceived pervasiveness, willingness to visit a museum on ingroup victimhood, general empathy), we found contextual variations in the way that per context the same tendency showed for all three HC facets, but the direction of this tendency differed between contexts. For instance, replicating Studies 1a-1b, perceived pervasiveness correlated positively with all HC facets only among German participants, whereas we found a negative tendency for all three HC facets in the Italian and Australian samples.

However, regarding the other 11 nomological network variables, we found the same defensive correlational pattern for all three HC facets in all samples. This was also mirrored in high similarity between the correlational matrices of the three samples. Respective *RV*-coefficients ranged between .80 and .94 (RV_{adj} and $RV2$ between .79 and .94; Robert & Escoufier, 1976). A full overview of correlations is given in SOM-D. Finally, given slight differences in the overlap of the three HC facets between samples (descriptively higher correlation between the HC facets in Studies 2a and 2c than in 2b) we tested whether sample differences in age or political orientation moderate the magnitude of this overlap. We found some moderation effects, which, however, did not show consistently in all samples (SOM-E).

Discussion

Using a multigroup confirmatory approach, we found support for a three-factorial structure of the HC scale across perpetrator contexts. Future-oriented, reconciliatory and

defensive HC thus constituted distinct facets of HC. However, although they appeared to represent distinguishable utterances, they seemed to tap into the same desire, which can be characterized as image-protective, guilt-reducing, and victim-group devaluing – respectively defensive (Bilewicz, 2016).

We found some nuanced differences between contexts in their nomological network pattern. A statistical explanation for these differences could be that the means and standard deviations of the HC subscales differed between samples (i.e., descriptively lowest means in Germany, lowest variance in Italy), which might have affected the correlation coefficients. On the methodological level, slight variations in the measures of the nomological network variables and their reliabilities might have caused differences in correlations. For instance, attributions for crimes were measured differently in German than in the other two samples (Table 1). Finally, on the sociohistorical level, contextual differences related to the crimes and their representations (Liu & Hilton, 2005) might have caused variations between samples. For instance, visiting a museum on Australian victimhood in World War I might not have represented a reminder of the ingroup's perpetration. On the contrary, visiting a museum on German suffering during the financial crisis in the 1920s (which was one of the drivers of National Socialistic success) might have constituted a reminder of the ingroup's crimes that HC supporters want to avoid. We can only speculate post hoc about further context-specific factors that might have caused some of the differences. Ultimately, however, the differences between the three HC facets between and within samples were quite small. The overall big picture of correlations in all samples appeared to be – unexpectedly – defensive.

Study 3

Given the noticeable nomological similarity between the three HC facets, the next study aimed at moving one step further. Using an experimental approach, we tested whether the three HC facets were also perceived as expressing a similar attitude. Since they appeared

to be semantically but not substantively distinct, we hypothesized that agreement with the three HC subscales would be estimated to be congruent from a third-party perspective.

Method

Participants

We recruited $N = 1211$ non-Jewish participants with German nationality who did not indicate to have *clicked at random* via the paid panel service 'Respondi.'[7] The sample was stratified for the German population regarding age ($M = 46.01$, $SD = 15.36$) and gender (50% identified as women, 1% as gender diverse).

Procedures and Measures

We implemented a 3x3 between-subjects design. Participants were randomly presented with the responses of fictitious person A who scored either *low, medium or high* on one of the three HC subscales, *future-oriented, reconciliatory* or *defensive* (7 items each, compare Table 2). The participants were then asked to guess how person A scored on the other two HC subscales and to answer them as they thought person A had answered them on a 7-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Results

Using the "lme4" package in R (Version 1.1.27.1; Bates et al., 2015), we conducted a linear mixed model treating the responses per questionnaire (i.e., the suspected answers of person A) as a dependent variable. As predictors, we entered the dummy-coded response pattern of person A (low, medium, or high scores; medium as reference category), the HC subscale which was rated by person A (future-oriented, reconciliatory, or defensive; defensive as reference category), and the HC subscale which was completed by the participant (future-oriented, reconciliatory, or defensive; defensive as reference category). We allowed random intercepts per participant. Results are displayed in Table 5 and Figure 1.

[7] As preregistered, we collected additional data for another project in Study 3. The power analysis was oriented at that project.

In support of our hypothesis, the response pattern of person A (low, medium, or high) had a significant main effect on the answers of participants (see Table 5 and linear trends in Plots 1-3 in Figure 1). In other words, if person A scored high on one of the three HC subscales, the participants estimated that person A also scored high on the other two; likewise for low and medium scores. Moreover, the future-oriented scale answered by person A had a main effect. This suggests that the scores on the other two HC scales were rated higher when being presented with person A's answers on the future-oriented scale compared with the defensive scale (compare Plot 1 vs. Plot 3). The scale completed by participants also had the main effect, with generally higher estimates of person A's scores on future-oriented and reconciliatory (Plot 1-2) than on defensive HC (Plot 3).

We preregistered a model additionally including two- and three-way interactions of predictor variables to allow the detection of more specific patterns. The inclusion of interaction terms led to an increase in R^2_{marginal} from .33 to .37. Although several interaction effects were significant, these only concerned the magnitude (somewhat weaker effect of reconciliatory on the defensive facet and vice versa, see differences at high response pattern [person A] in Plots 2-3) but not the direction of relations, which remained robustly positively. For reasons of parsimony, we report this model in SOM-F.

Discussion

As expected, the response pattern of fictitious person A on one of the three HC subscales led participants to expect that the respective response pattern would also manifest on the other two subscales. The correspondence was not perfect, especially with regard to the high response pattern on the defensive and reconciliatory subscales, suggesting a slight deviation in the perception of these two HC facets. Moreover, the participants generally estimated person A's agreement to be lowest on the defensive HC subscale (compare the main effect of the scale completed by participants). In fact, this corresponds accurately to the real pattern found in Studies 1a-2c with defensive HC having the significantly lowest mean

values. Potentially, defensively framed HC appeared as less socially acceptable and most conflicting with the moral norm of recognizing the ingroup's crimes (e.g., Hirschberger et al., 2021). Thus, it might have been perceived as least supported by others and actually received the least support. Nevertheless, perceivers inferred a sufficiently substantial semantic or ideological overlap between the three HC scales to expect largely similar responses.

Table 5

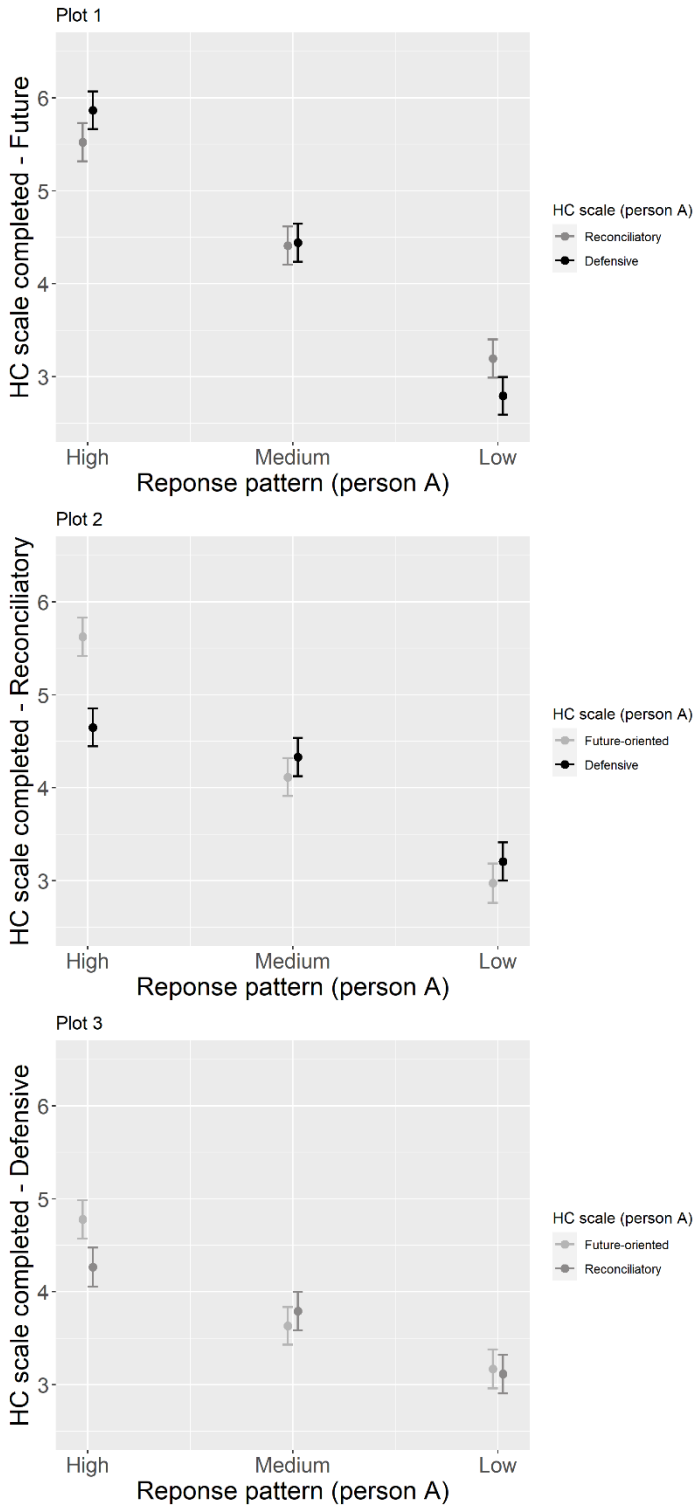
Fixed and Random Effects in the Linear Mixed Model in Study 3

Variable (Parameter)	Fixed Effects				
	B	95% CI		*SE*	*p*
		LL	*UL*		
Intercept	3.71	3.55	3.87	0.08	< .001
Response pattern (person A) High	1.00	0.86	1.15	0.08	< .001
Response pattern (person A) Low	-1.05	-1.19	-0.9	0.08	< .001
HC scale (person A) Future	0.17	0.01	0.32	0.08	.037
HC scale (person A) Reconciliatory	0.02	-0.13	0.18	0.08	.770
HC scale completed Future	0.67	0.56	0.77	0.05	< .001
HC scale completed Reconciliatory	0.37	0.27	0.48	0.05	< .001
	Random Effects				
Intercept (τ_{00})	0.69				
ICC	0.44				

Note. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit, ICC = intraclass correlation.

Figure 1

Dot Whisker Plots of Fixed Effects in the Linear Mixed Model in Study 3



Note. Marginal effects for mean values per HC scales (person A) as well as one standard deviation below and above mean values are presented as dots and their 95% confidence intervals as whiskers. HC = historical closure.

Studies 4a-4c

Finally, we wanted to know whether the three HC subscales were associated with costly avoidance of confrontation with the ingroup's perpetrator past. Given their defensive structure, we expected all three subscales to be positively related to the costly rejection of engagement with the ingroup's historical crimes.

Method

Participants

Following Schönbrodt and Perugini's (2013) recommendations, we collected data of 289 non-Jewish participants with German nationality via 'Respondi' for Study 4a, 299 non-Indigenous participants with Australian nationality via 'Prolific' for Study 4b, and 288 white U.S. Americans via 'MTurk' for Study 4c. Excluding participants who indicated to have *clicked randomly* or failed to *answer correctly two attention checks* (i.e., two correct answers required to be included), Study 4a included 268 participants (51% identified as women, M_{age} = 47.37, *SD* = 15.80), Study 4b 280 participants (50% identified as women, 1% as gender diverse, M_{age} = 36.90, *SD* = 13.52), and Study 4c 275 participants (50% identified as women, 1% as gender diverse, M_{age} = 44.38, *SD* = 13.14).

Procedures and Measures

To measure costly avoidance behavior, we implemented a documentary task. Participants were informed that in addition to the usual payment, they could receive a bonus payment of up to €1 (Study 4a)/ AUD$1 (Study 4b)/US$1 (Study 4c). They were then informed that during the study, they would randomly be assigned to one of two documentaries of which they have to watch a sequence and answer questions about it. One of the documentaries (see SOM-G for details), addressed the respective perpetrator's past (persecution of Jews, Stolen Generations, or crimes against Indigenous Americans). The other one focused on another aspect of national history (the German March Revolution 1848, the Australian Commonwealth, or the American Revolutionary War). Participants were informed

that the chances of being assigned to either documentary are equal. However, if they had strong preferences for one topic, they could change the odds by 10%-50% in either direction by paying 10 to 50 cents from their bonus (each 10%-step costs 10 cents). The respective preference should be indicated on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*50 cents, 100% chance to see [perpetration documentary])* over 6 (*no costs, 50% change to see either of the documentaries*) to 11 (*50 cents, 100% chance to see [non-perpetration documentary]*). Afterwards, participants received a failure message that the video could not be played and they should continue the study, receiving their full bonus.

To cover the purpose of the studies, we mixed the variables of interest with several filler items on visions of the future and satisfaction with democracy. The three HC subscales (same as in Studies 2a-2c) were presented in a fixed order, which was kept constant across studies (first future-oriented, second reconciliatory, and third defensive HC). In Studies 4a and 4c, we presented first the HC items and afterward the documentary task, separated by filler items. In Study 4b, the order was reversed.[8]

Results

Descriptive statistics and reliabilities are given in Table 6. In all samples, we found a positive trend in the expected direction: Descriptively with increasing support for any of the three HC subscales, participants were willing to pay more money to see the non-perpetration documentary, thus avoiding confrontation with the perpetrator's past (Figure 2). In the Australian sample, this trend was significant for all three subscales. In the German sample, the trend for defensive HC (r = .12, p = .083) was barely not significant, just as the trend for future-oriented HC in the U.S. sample (r = .11, p = .065). The overall smallest trend was found for reconciliatory HC in Germany (r = .07, p = .277). However, the confidence intervals of these and the significant correlation coefficients were highly overlapping

[8] Since in Germany the norm to deal with past crimes is very strong, we explored whether it functions as a moderator. Indeed, this assumption was supported for future-oriented HC (SOM-H).

(compare Figure 2). To further substantiate whether the correlational pattern was overall robust across samples, we conducted a fixed-effects meta-analysis. Indeed, all three HC facets were significantly related to costly avoidance behavior with almost identical fixed-effects coefficients (see Figure 3).

Discussion

Across three samples, we found a positive trend in the expected direction for all three HC facets with six of nine correlations reaching significance. In fact, the high overlap in confidence intervals did not speak to substantial differences but rather to nuances in the magnitude of correlation coefficients. Finally, integrating meta-analytically across samples, we found significant associations with costly avoidance for all three HC facets.

Table 6

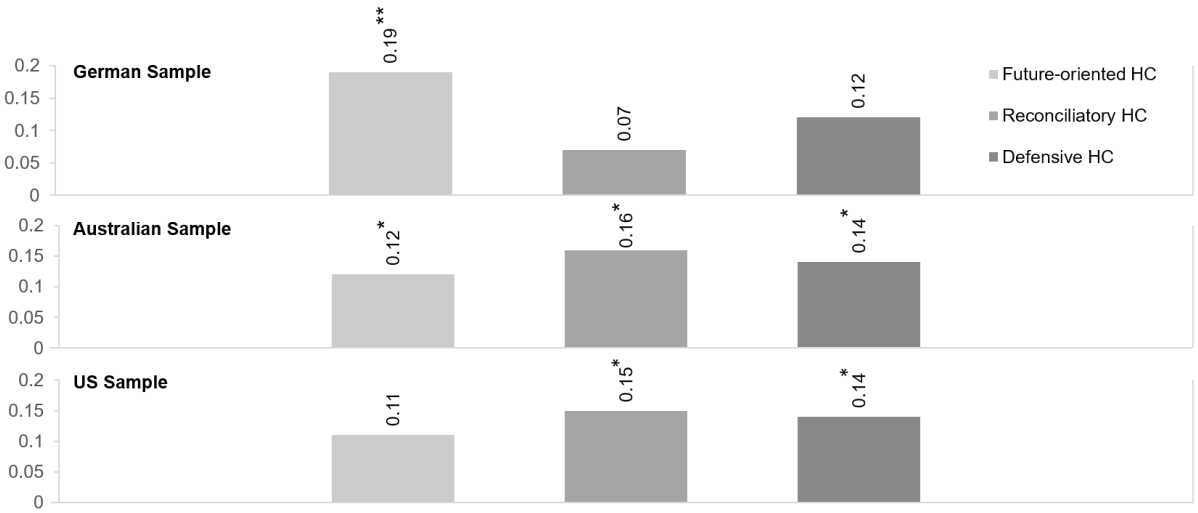
Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities in Studies 4a-4c

Variables	Study	*M (SD)*	α
Future-oriented HC	Study 4a	4.88 (1.52)	.95
	Study 4b	3.51 (1.54)	.96
	Study 4c	4.55 (1.63)	.96
Reconciliatory HC	Study 4a	5.01 (1.50)	.95
	Study 4b	3.39 (1.78)	.96
	Study 4c	4.18 (1.89)	.95
Defensive HC	Study 4a	2.82 (1.51)	.92
	Study 4b	2.37 (1.24)	.90
	Study 4c	2.77 (1.44)	.91
Costly Avoidance Behavior	Study 4a	5.99 (2.43)	-
	Study 4b	5.83 (1.46)	-
	Study 4c	6.07 (1.67)	-

Note. Support for future-oriented and reconciliatory HC was significantly higher than for defensive HC in Study 4a, $F(2, 486) = 373.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_G = .31$, 95% $CI_{\eta^2 G}$ [.25, .37], Study 4b, $F(2, 514) = 146.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_G = .10$, 95% $CI_{\eta^2 G}$ [.06, .15], and Study 4c, $F(2, 494) = 253.64$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_G = .18$, 95% $CI_{\eta^2 G}$ [.12, .23], as indicated by within-subjects ANOVAS with Greenhouse-Geisser sphericity correction and Bonferroni-Holm corrected post-hoc tests (all *ps* < .001). ANOVA = analysis of variance; HC = historical closure.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Figure 2

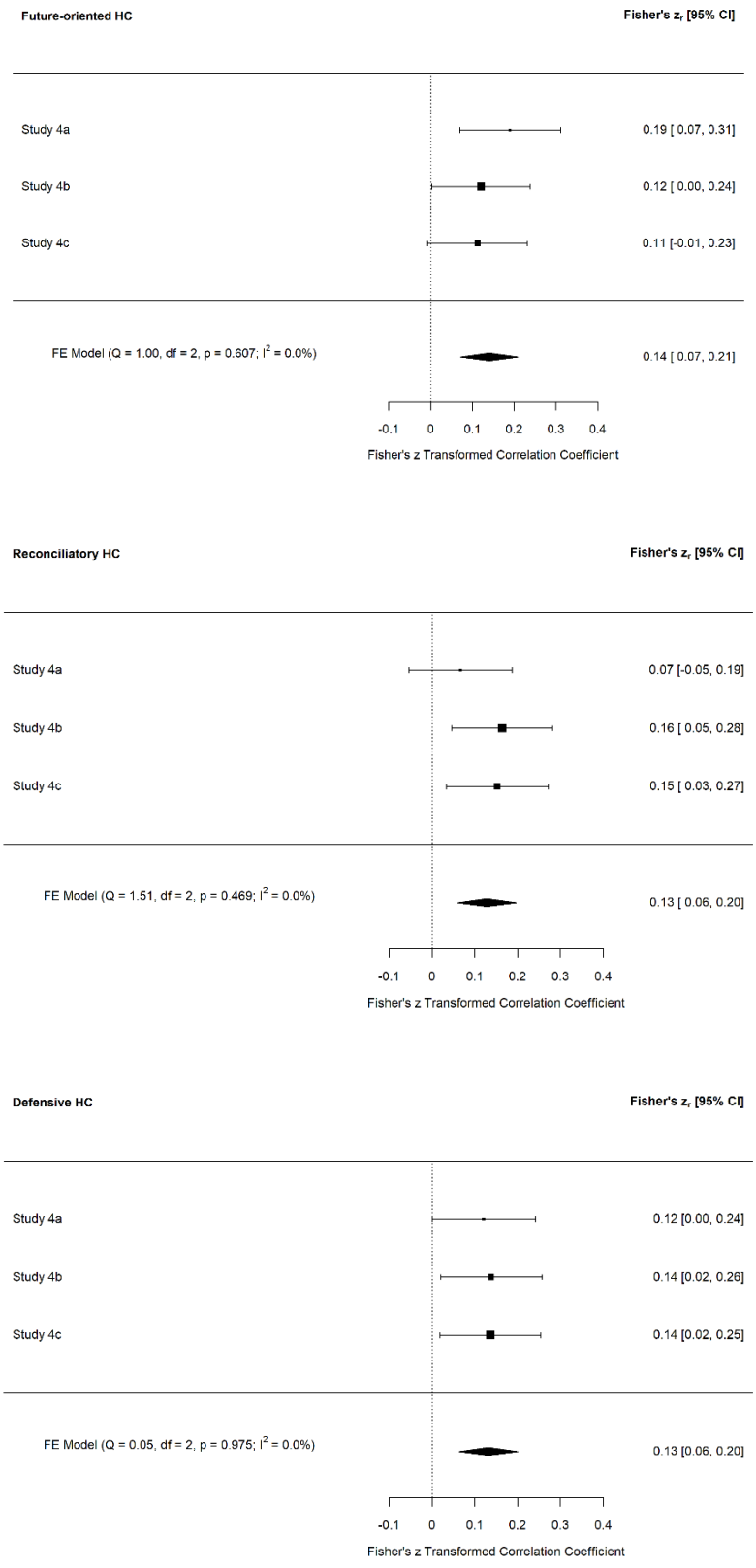
Correlation Coefficients of the Three HC Facets with Costly Avoidance Behavior in Studies 4a-4c



Note. *P*-values were adjusted for multiple comparisons using Holm's method. In Study 4a (German sample), 95% confidence intervals were r = .19, 95% CI [.07, .30], r = .07, 95% CI [-.05, .18], r = .12, 95% CI [.00, .24]. In Study 4b (Australian sample), 95% confidence intervals were r = .12, 95% CI [.01, .24], r = .16, 95% CI [.04, .27], r = .14, 95% CI [.02, .25], In Study 4c (U.S. sample), 95% confidence intervals were r = .11, 95% CI [-.01, .23], r = .15, 95% CI [.03, .26], r = .14, 95% CI [.02, .25]. HC = historical closure; CI = confidence interval.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Figure 3

Forrest Plots on the Correlations of HC Facets and Costly Avoidance Behavior in Studies 4a-4c



General Discussion

Historical perpetration can cast a dark shadow on a group. Group members may thus want to leave this part of history behind. The present research is among the first to shed light on the nomological structure of such demand for HC across a range of four different perpetrator contexts, thereby seeking to distinguish differently motivated facets of HC. Although we introduced a three-factorial scale comprising expressions of defensive HC directed at evading confrontation with the perpetrator's past, reconciliatory HC directed at restoring positive intergroup relations, and future-oriented HC directed at enhancing attention to the present, these three HC facets appeared to differ only at the semantic level. The convergent and divergent drew the nearly same defensive pattern for the three HC facets (Studies 1a-2c). In fact, also from a third-party perspective, they were perceived as quite similar (Study 3), with all three facets showing a positive tendency toward costly avoidance of confrontation with the ingroup's perpetrator history (Studies 4a-4c). Taken together, the present results thus suggest that all three HC facets, although rhetorically wrapped in different ways, seem to reflect the same defensive desire.

The present results clearly call into question that demand for HC can reflect nondefensive willingness to focus on present problems or reconciliation with the victims. The first finding aligns with Bilewicz's (2016) model of Historical Defensiveness, which conceptualizes a strong focus on the presence and future as an identity-motivated defensive strategy. The latter finding reveals a notable asymmetry between perpetrator and victim groups: Whereas among victim groups, demand for HC was associated with more forgiveness and positive attitudes toward the perpetrator group (Hanke et al., 2013), in the present research on perpetrator groups, demanding HC was robustly related to more victim-directed prejudices (Studies 1a-2c) and reduced willingness to reconcile (Studies 2b-2c), even when participants claimed that HC was endorsed for the purpose of reconciliation. Potentially, for victim groups demand for HC reflects an authentic perception that past harms are behind them

and are no longer central to today's intergroup relationships. In contrast, perpetrator groups seem to demand HC precisely when they do not perceive the past as closed but as still threatening their ingroup (on the paradox that support for HC is expressed precisely by those perpetrator group members who feel particularly influenced by the past see also the research on secondary antisemitism; e.g., Adorno, 1955; Rensmann, 2017).

Importantly, the described defensive pattern showed quite consistent across the analyzed contexts with an only minor context-specific variation. This is particularly noteworthy considering the marked differences in the socio-historical conditions of the crimes and their present-day representations (Liu & Hilton, 2005). Demand for HC thus seems to be a relatively robust phenomenon that might not strongly depend on the specific perpetrator context.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The present research provides a framework for understanding a key factor that can impede a successful apology process. Following Wohl and colleagues' (2011) *Staircase Model*, the perpetrator group must accept collective guilt (ground floor) and achieve consensus on historical happenings (second floor) and reparation (third floor) in discussion with the victims before offering the actual apology (fourth floor), in order for the apology to contribute to reconciliation. The present findings indicate that demand for HC, regardless of its specific rhetoric manifestation, can hinder each of these steps: It comes along with reduced acceptance of guilt and reparation intentions (ground and third floor) as well as less empathy with the victim's perspective (Čehajić et al., 2008) and defensive perceptions, such as insistence on the perpetrator ingroup's perpetual victimhood (Schori-Eyal et al., 2017), which complicate the establishment of a consensual historical narrative (second floor).

Furthermore, offering an apology itself can support HC, as perpetrators tend to expect the apology to close this chapter of history (Wohl et al., 2011; see also Kazarovytska et al., 2022). The understanding of apology as an indication for closure may be particularly

pronounced among those who already have a strong desire for HC and whose perceptions may therefore be biased toward interpretations favoring HC (on the conceptualization of HC as a motivated cognition see Imhoff, 2010a). In consequence, this can ultimately hinder post-apology engagement (fifth floor), resulting in a further divide between perpetrator and victim groups.

The present findings also complement Saguy and colleagues' (2009) work on the *Irony of Harmony*, which suggests that commonality- or harmony-focused intergroup contact can raise expectations among the victim group of prosocial behavior on the part of the perpetrator group that is not fulfilled. Likewise, particularly reconciliatory HC may signal a seemingly well-intentioned pursuit of intergroup harmony. However, as the present analyses show, this may not reflect the actual intention of the perpetrator group, which appeared to be clearly defensive rather than prosocial. Considering moreover, that harmony may inhibit the victim group's engagement in social change (Saguy et al., 2009), reconciliatory HC may ironically even benefit closure by impeding the victim group's striving for the recognition of their perspective and experiences.

Eventually, the present research has important practical applications. By revealing highly similar correlational profiles of the different HC facets, our research provides initial evidence for a *jangle fallacy*: the false assumption that two differently labeled measures assess two different constructs (Gonzalez et al., 2021; here: differently named HC scales actually assess the same construct). Thus, our findings may help to better situate public calls within historical perpetrator groups to 'move on and focus on the future,' as found on social media or in various political speeches (see e.g., Adi, 2012). Finally, our findings suggest that reconciliatory and future-oriented HC scales could be utilized in future research as less obtrusive measures of historical defensiveness – seemingly neutral or well-intentioned utterances that, as present results show, actually constitute proxies for defensiveness and victim-directed negativity.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The present research is limited in that we focused on only one perpetrator episode per context. Obviously, the analyzed samples are marked by multiple instances of historical perpetration (e.g., slavery in the United States, the genocide of Herero and Nama by Germans). An interesting avenue for future research would thus be to analyze which perpetration events *within* certain contexts have the potential to cause demand for HC. For instance, while HC on the Nazi past has been a topic of heated public debate in Germany (Rensmann, 2017), demand for closure on the German colonial past – a much less salient crime – is comparably rare. This suggests that certain characteristics of events, such as social salience, have a particularly distinctive potential to prompt demand for HC.

Another intriguing avenue for future research could be to illuminate the mechanisms that can increase or reduce demand for HC. In this vein, future research might take a closer look at the effects of victim group reactions. Considering that demand for HC seems driven by an ingroup-protective desire, increasing victim support for HC (signaling relief of the perpetrator group from its immoral role) might decrease perpetrator support for HC. Conversely, demand for HC among perpetrator groups might offend the victim groups (Hirschberger et al., 2021), thus reducing their support for HC. This suggests that HC among victim and perpetrator groups might function as a counter-rotating seesaw – when support for HC on the one side rises, it sinks on the other side.

Finally, future research might strive to understand whether uninvolved third-party groups, who have no crime-related defensive desire, exhibit more genuine motivational variation when thinking about another group's HC. For instance, third-party groups that have experienced victimization themselves might show solidarity (Ball & Branscombe, 2019) and thus resist HC. In contrast, third-party groups involved in perpetration may be motivated to prevent HC in another group to keep those crimes present as a benchmark against which

crimes committed by one's own group appear less serious (on the comparison to other crimes as a defensive strategy see Adorno, 1955).

Conclusion

The present research indicates that advocating to draw a line under past crimes to avoid confrontation with the ingroup's perpetrator past *or* to reconcile with the victims *or* because the present is more important seems to reflect the same defensive desire. Nevertheless, we caution against the characterization of HC as inevitably harmful for reconciliation. Following Staub and Bar-Tal (2003), a shared understanding of the past can promote dialogue and decisively contribute to reconciliation. If, as a result of an in-depth dialogue, the groups agree to understand parts of the past as closed (for instance, leaving behind the old roles but not the responsibility), such commonly established closure could perhaps foster intergroup relations. However, a one-sided demand for HC that – even if rationalized as the wish to reconcile with the victim group or focus on contemporary problems – mirrors a perpetrator group's resistance to facing past crimes seems incapable of promoting dialogue and forgiveness.

File Drawer Statement

We conducted another study (Study S1) in a German sample following the same procedure as Study 4a. However, as preregistered (https://osf.io/r94pg/) we collected the data between January 20 and 21, with January 20, 2022, representing the 80th anniversary of the so-called Wannsee Conference, where numerous political speeches addressed the relevance of remembering the Nazi crimes. In this study, none of the HC facets was associated with costly avoidance behavior. Given the public attention to perpetration and its remembrance, it seems not surprising that Germans were not inclined to engage in norm-defying, costly behavior that avoids the omnipresent past for a brief moment. Still, when meta-analytically integrating Studies 4a-4c and S1, all three HC facets were significantly correlated with costly avoidance behavior (SOM-I).

CHAPTER 3

Project 2

Beyond Victimhood and Perpetration: Reconstruction of the Ingroup's Historical Role in Eight Eastern and Western European Countries Under Nazi Occupation

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Chapter 3 includes the following <u>published</u> article:

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https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.13037

Open materials, data, and analysis codes: https://osf.io/ebv2c/

Authors' Contributions

In accordance with the recommendations of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020), we indicate the individual contributions of the authors to this project using the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CASRAI, 2022). The authors' contributions are as follows:

Fiona Kazarovytska: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Methodology, Project administration, Software, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing.

Roland Imhoff: Methodology, Supervision, Writing – review and editing.

Gilad Hirschberger: Conceptualization, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Writing – review and editing.

Abstract

The Nazi regime's aggressive expansion across Europe during WWII created a landscape of suffering, resistance, and collaboration. How do lay Europeans today reconstruct their ingroup's roles during Nazi occupation, and how do different role representations relate to defensive responses aimed at protecting the ingroup from threat? We tested two theoretical predictions: Following the identity threat prediction, we expected that denying culpability but endorsing morally favorable group representations (e.g., victim-heroism) would represent an ingroup-defensive strategy, correlating with other defensive responses, such as victim-directed negativity or victim-blaming. Following the identity management prediction, we expected that precisely accepting culpability and acknowledging threatening representations (e.g., willing collaboration with Germans) would form the basis for a defensive stance and thus correlate with defensive intergroup reactions. Analyzing data from nine European samples spanning eight countries ($N = 5{,}474$), we found support for the identity management prediction in six contexts: Lay representations as willing collaborators were associated with negative collective emotions and correlated with victim-directed negativity, whereas victim-hero representations showed no such connections. The remaining three countries revealed a mixture of the two identity accounts. We discuss implications for understanding historical representations and identity protection in groups that were both victims and perpetrators of massive intergroup atrocities.

Keywords: social representations of history, identity threat, historical defensiveness, collaboration, victim-heroism, intergroup attitudes

Introduction

In his seminal work, chemist, writer and Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi (1988) coined the term *gray zone* to describe the morally ambiguous space between oppressors and oppressed. In this zone, victims can act as perpetrators and perpetrators as victims. Research on social representations of history (Liu & Hilton, 2005) reinforces the notion that victimhood and perpetration are not mutually exclusive. Rather, groups can experience both roles, even within the same conflict (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019). The involvement in multiple roles may be particularly pronounced in groups occupied by a foreign power, such as countries occupied by Nazi Germany during WWII. Though not responsible for initiating the Holocaust, some governments and parts of the population committed considerable atrocities as collaborators of the occupiers. Others resisted the German regime and were victimized themselves (Stauber, 2011). This ambiguity regarding the ingroup's role provides ample room for reconstructing the convoluted history – and creating representations that are favorable to the group.

The present research examines how lay people today reconstruct their nation's historical roles in the face of such ambiguity. Recognizing that sociopolitical realities under Nazi occupation could take very different forms, we investigate ingroup representations in four Eastern European (Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine) and four Western European countries (Austria, $\text{Belgium}_{\text{Flanders}}$, $\text{Belgium}_{\text{Wallonia}}$, France, the Netherlands). With the aim of examining competing theoretical predictions regarding the defensive potential of these representations, we analyze their nomological networks (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955), encompassing collective emotions and defensive intergroup responses.

European Countries Under Nazi Occupation

Until this day, the Holocaust has far-reaching implications for national identities and political charters in many countries (Li et al., 2023). For some countries, their roles as victims or perpetrators are well established (e.g., Germany). Most European countries, however, do not clearly belong to one of these categories (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2021). Particularly

countries that fell under German occupation may have been entangled in various capacities, intertwining both roles.

Being under Nazi occupation was not a uniform phenomenon. Austria was annexed and incorporated into the German Reich (*the Anschluss*), Vichy France became a collaborationist regime, whereas Hungary joined the Axis Powers as an ally and was occupied only in 1944 (Bitunjac & Schoeps, 2021). Locally, the collaboration also markedly differed. While some people risked their lives to rescue persecuted groups, others supported the persecution (Stauber, 2011). In countries like France, Belgium, or the Netherlands, this support often concerned the bureaucratic implementation of mass murder by providing addresses of persecuted individuals or enacting anti-Jewish decrees. In several Eastern European countries, collaborators also actively contributed to destroying Jewish communities or participated in liquidation operations, as seen in the actions of the Lithuanian Security Police or Ukrainian collaborators in Babyn Yar (Bitunjac & Schoeps, 2021).

Despite these differences between (and within) countries, post-war discourses share some noteworthy similarities. Across both Eastern and Western European countries, prevailing narratives emphasized the groups' resistance, viewing collaboration as a marginal phenomenon (Bitunjac & Schoeps, 2021; Stauber, 2011). Only from the 1970s/80s, and even later in some Eastern European countries, these narratives have faced increasing challenges, leading to ongoing contestation of the national historical lore (e.g., Grabowski, 2016; Szabó, 2020). But how are the vast geopolitical differences, alongside the identified commonalities in public discourse, reflected in today's representations of the national ingroup's historical roles?

Social Representations of the National Ingroup's Role Under Nazi Occupation

Social representations of history are not merely portrayals of the past. Rather, they are reconstructive, creating meaning for the identity of a group today (Liu & Hilton, 2005). As such, the same historical events can be construed in very different ways, giving rise to differing narratives about *who* a nation is. Informed by literature on representations of

collective violence (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019; Bilewicz et al., 2017; Giner-Sorolla et al., 2021; Hirschberger et al., 2016, 2022; Imhoff et al., 2017; Licata & Klein, 2010), we examine three types of ingroup representations that appear particularly relevant to the context of occupation: Willing collaborators, forced collaborators, and victim-heroes.

Willing Collaborators

Individuals from occupied countries may adopt a representation of their national ingroup as collaborators assisting the occupiers in enforcing their goals (e.g., exterminating persecuted groups). A decisive characteristic of such collaboration is the degree of intentionality. Intentionality plays an essential role in both moral evaluation and legal classification of crimes (Cushman, 2008; Lewy, 2007). Unlike the primary perpetrators, occupied groups do not bear initial responsibility for atrocities but are subjected to another group's ideology. However, the internal alignment with this ideology and willingness to participate in destruction can vary. Therefore, within the constrained environment of occupation, precisely the intention to collaborate can become pivotal in determining the extent to which the occupied side with the offenders. Indeed, Ehrenreich and Cole (2005) posit that the very deliberate decision to participate in genocide turns bystanders into perpetrators. This perspective also aligns with the needs-based model of reconciliation (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), characterizing perpetration by lowered morality (i.e., endorsing an inhumane ideology) but heightened agency (i.e., intentional acting in accordance with this ideology).

Forced Collaborators

Yet, the involvement in harmdoing is not always based on a voluntary decision. Historical (Bitunjac & Schoeps, 2021), political science (Kalyvas, 2008), and psychological literature (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019) distinguishes willing collaboration from collaboration resulting from threat or the need to survive. Coercion to collaborate places the occupied population in the complex position of having to balance the protection of their own group against the protection of others, thereby navigating the moral compromises associated with

collaboration (Stauber, 2011). As such, forced collaboration does not completely abrogate the ingroup's perpetrator role, but reduces the group's responsibility and moral accountability for the violence committed. Thus, despite acts of perpetration, the diminished agency resulting from a lack of self-determined action, and the reduced moral threat resulting from inflicting harm without initial intention to do so, lean toward the characterization of victimhood (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008).

Victim-Heroes

Eventually, members of formerly occupied countries may represent their ancestors as victims of foreign military, economic, and political control. Being under occupation implies being in a highly asymmetric conflict, facing dominant opponents, and fearing the loss of political autonomy, territorial integrity, and cultural identity (Bleibleh & Awad, 2020). Further, the complex stance of groups under occupation between victims and perpetrators (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019) can make their victimization experiences appear less visible to outside observers, leading to the feeling of being forgotten (Szabó, 2020).

A notable characteristic of victimhood experiences under occupation is their intertwining with acts of heroism. At first glance, this may seem contradictory: Heroism is characterized by strong agency, whereas victimhood connotates a lack of agency (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). However, national narratives on ingroup suffering under oppression often do not align with portrayals of weak or passive victims (Khlevnyuk, 2023). Instead, victimhood often entails the narrative of courage of the oppressed. In these narrations, group members become victimized precisely *due to* their heroic resistance against oppression. Indeed, findings by Giner-Sorolla et al. (2021) empirically support the link between perceived ingroup victimhood and heroism in WWII across a range of nations. Furthermore, particularly representations of victim-heroism were predominant in public discourse in many Eastern and Western European countries in the first four to five decades after WWII (Stauber, 2011).

The Defensive Potential of Different Ingroup Representations

In the context of Nazi occupation, all three of these representations can occur, varying in their degree of moral identity threat to the group. Particularly the representation of willing collaboration – mirroring intentional co-perpetration – is arguably more threatening than forced collaboration or victim-heroism. As such, the three representations may also differ in how much identity-protective *historical defensiveness* they entail. Yet, divergent theoretical perspectives give rise to at least two distinct predictions regarding the defensive potential of the three representations: the identity threat and the identity management prediction.

Identity Threat Prediction

The ingroup's involvement in historical wrongdoing can evoke substantial social identity threat (Branscombe et al., 2004; Doosje et al., 1998). To mitigate this threat, group members may engage in a range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses aimed at protecting the ingroup from threat, known as historical defensiveness (Bilewicz, 2016; Li et al., 2023). These responses can concern at least three broad areas: the acceptance of transgression-based emotions, intergroup attitudes, and ingroup representations.

Being part of a group involved in historical intergroup crimes can lead to negative emotions, such as collective shame, guilt, or moral fear (Branscombe et al., 2004; Gausel et al., 2012). However, as part of a defensive reaction, group members may resist accepting or admitting such "group-image-threatening emotions" (Doosje et al., 1998, p. 879). In doing so, they can avoid affirming the ingroup's responsibility for committing wrongs and confronting the threatening past. Group members may also engage in defensive intergroup negativity. In order to downplay, justify, or moralize the ingroup's transgressions, thus reducing social identity threat, they can claim that the victim group itself behaves immorally toward the perpetrator ingroup (i.e., reverse discrimination), played an active role in the crimes committed (i.e., victim-blaming), or generally hold negative attitudes toward the former victim group (e.g., antisemitism; Bilewicz, 2016; Li et al., 2023; Kazarovytska & Imhoff,

2024). Eventually, group members can distance the ingroup from crimes by displaying a response closely related to both resisting guilt (i.e., emotional responses) and modulating the conflict parties' behavior (i.e., intergroup responses): they portray the ingroup as forced to commit these crimes or not committing them at all, but acting as a victim-hero (Bilewicz et al., 2017; Hirschberger et al., 2016, 2022; Imhoff et al., 2017). In this way, the construal of the ingroup's role itself becomes part of a defensive response.

The causal order of these emotional, intergroup- and ingroup-directed responses is debated in the literature. Some authors argue that representations of the ingroup's historical role trigger defensive intergroup responses, which then help to downregulate aversive collective emotions (Bilewicz, 2016; Doosje et al., 1998; Kazarovytska & Imhoff, 2022). Other authors suggest that emotions such as collective guilt or certain facets of shame can reduce intergroup defensiveness and initiate reparation (Brown et al., 2008; Gausel et al., 2012). Notably, no matter whether defensive intergroup responses downregulate aversive emotions or emotions reduce intergroup defensiveness, both lines of research ultimately converge on positing a *negative relationship* between aversive emotions and intergroup defensiveness.

Summing up, a basic assumption in the reviewed literature is that representations of the ingroup's role are susceptible to identity-protective motives (Bilewicz et al., 2017; Hirschberger et al., 2016, 2022; Imhoff et al., 2017). Accordingly, the endorsement of morally favorable portrayals, such as those as forced collaborators (i.e., attributing responsibility externally) or victim-heroes (i.e., viewing the ingroup as agents of good), can itself indicate a defensive response within a broader framework of defensive reactions. Following this rationale, we can derive a predicted pattern we refer to as the *identity threat prediction*: Representations of forced collaboration and victim-heroism – manifestations of defensiveness in the face of identity threat – should be positively associated with other defensive responses, such as negativity toward the former victim group, but be incompatible with accepting shame,

guilt, or fear of moral condemnation and victimization. Conversely, openly admitting responsibility as willing collaborators may constitute a non-defensive response negatively linked to intergroup defensiveness but positively related to accepting shame, guilt, and moral fear.

Identity Management Prediction

However, other literature gives reason to question that group members will defensively modify their reconstructions of the ingroup's role. Psaltis et al. (2017) argue that post-conflict representations can be belief- or knowledge-based. Whereas belief-based representations are rooted in affect and appear resistant to opposing information, knowledge-based representations are more pragmatic and receptive to change through contradictory evidence. This perspective parallels work on motivated reasoning (Kunda, 1990): While individuals may be motivated to confirm those beliefs that lead to a desired conclusion (e.g., the innocence of the ingroup), they also seek accuracy (e.g., accept the ingroup's wrongdoings in the face of respective historical proof). Indeed, Doosje et al. (1998) suggest that when confronted with information about the ingroup's historical crimes, the "motivation to be accurate" may be even stronger than "the motivation to favor one's own group" (p. 883).

Particularly ongoing public discourse and education about the nation's harmful past, present in many countries occupied by Nazi Germany (Bitunjac & Schoeps, 2021; Stauber, 2011), may therefore complicate turning a blind eye on the ingroup's harmdoing. However, it may be precisely the recognition of the ingroup's harmful behavior that motivates group members to justify, rationalize, or moralize it through various means helping to protect the ingroup from threat, such as negativity against the former victim group. Thus, while accuracy motivations do not enable full denial of the ingroup's harmful role but require some acknowledgment, this burdensome acknowledgment can be associated with motivation to devaluate and blame the victim group. As Bilali and Vollhardt (2019, p. 93) argue: "In face of credible and unequivocal information, distorting the events and denying ingroup

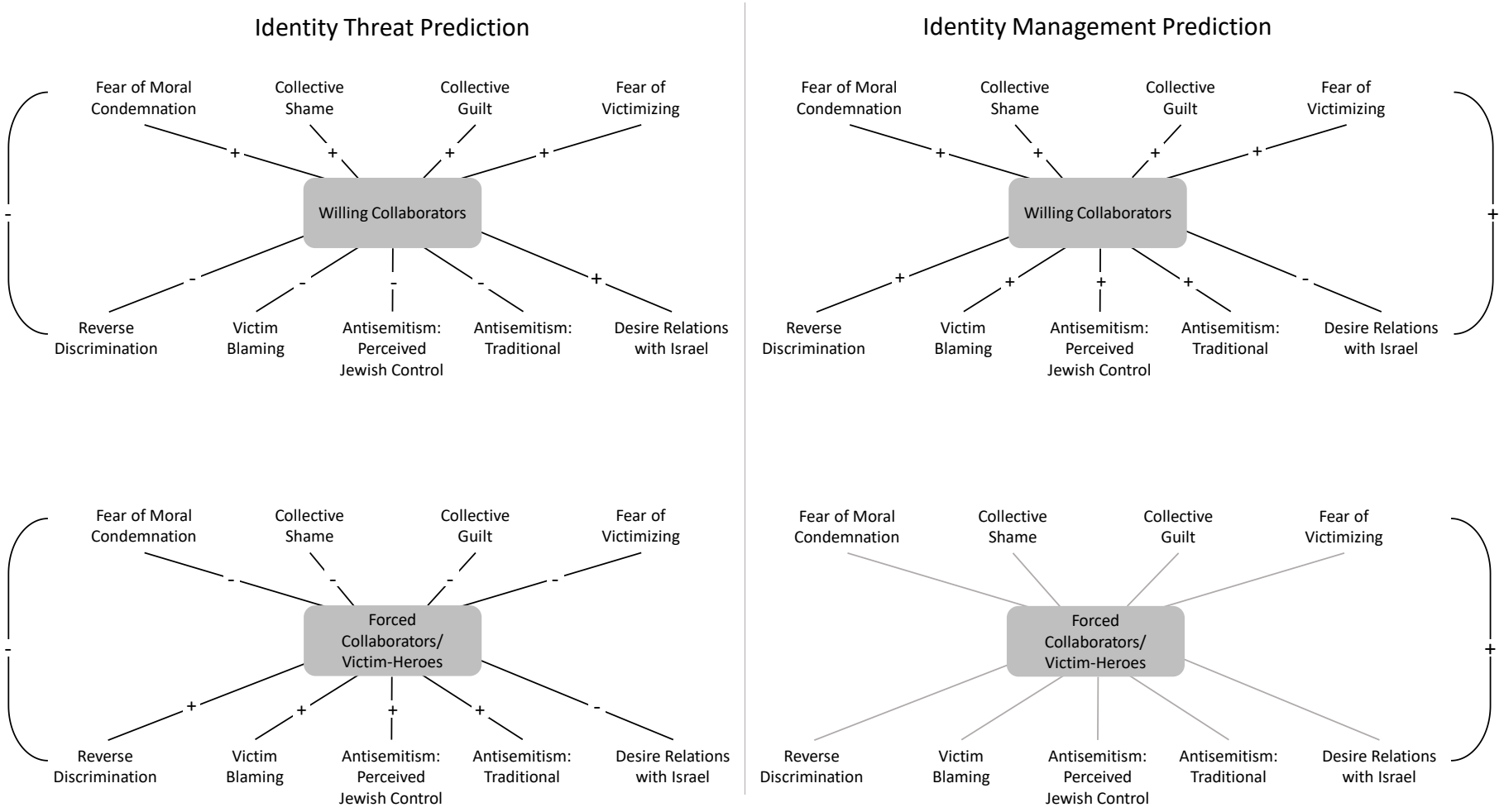
responsibility might be difficult. In such cases, group members need other coping strategies to deal with the moral threat of ingroup wrongdoing."

Following this theorizing, we can predict a different pattern of interrelations, we refer to as the *identity management prediction*: Considering that group members may not completely deny their group's historical responsibility, but at least to some extent, acknowledge willing collaboration, they may also admit associated shame, guilt, and moral fear. However, precisely, this acknowledgment of wrongdoing can be linked to defensive intergroup responses aimed at managing and alleviating threats to the group's image. Forced collaboration, in turn, placing responsibility for harm on another group's shoulders, may be less burdensome, and thus entail fewer negative emotions and less defensiveness. Finally, morally favorable victim-hero representations may not be related to negative emotions or intergroup defensiveness at all, lacking an ingroup-threatening basis.

Essentially, according to the identity management prediction, group members may not deny their ingroup's culpability but attempt to justify it by devaluing or blaming the victims. This differs from the identity threat prediction, where group members may deny culpability as part of their defensive reaction against social identity threat. Thus, in both identity predictions, we expect defensive intergroup responses (e.g., victim-blaming) in an attempt to preserve a favorable ingroup image, but only in identity management do we expect these responses to go together with responses that reflect an acknowledgment of culpability (e.g., collective shame and guilt). Figure 1 contrasts the two patterns of associations predicted by identity threat vs. identity management accounts. In view of the conflicting literature on the causality of emotions and defensive intergroup responses, we provide an overview of possible causal orders leading to these patterns in our supplemental online materials (SOM-A) available on our Open Science Framework (OSF) project page.

Figure 1

Predicted Patterns Compatible with the Identity Threat Prediction (Left) and the Identity Management Prediction (Right)



Note. (+) indicates a positive relationship, (-) indicates a negative relationship. Non-significant correlations are shaded

Methodological Approach: Nomological Network Analyses

The current work presents two possible theoretical frameworks on the representations of the ingroup's historical roles. One conceptualizes morally favorable ingroup representations as manifestations of defensive reactions against history-based identity threats (i.e., identity threat prediction). The other one considers the acceptance of threatening roles as the basis for engaging in defensive identity management (i.e., identity management prediction). To empirically address these two theoretical predictions, we apply a nomological network approach (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Formally, conceptualizing a construct within a framework of other constructs corresponds to specifying its nomological network. Following Cronbach and Meehl (1955), "a construct is defined implicitly by a network of associations or propositions in which it occurs" (p. 200). Thus, by elaborating and testing what other variables a construct should (not) relate to, we can define more precisely what the construct entails (i.e., construct validity).

A nomological network approach cannot provide a decisive answer as to which processes *cause* the patterns obtained. However, nomological network analyses can provide insights into which patterns seem *compatible* with certain theoretical predictions. If we theoretically expect a causal relation (e.g., representations of a harmful ingroup role lead to defensiveness), but don't find a corresponding correlational association (i.e., harmful ingroup representations correlate positively with defensiveness), this does not exclude the existence of a causal process. However, it suggests that the process is more complex than initially expected (e.g., entails additional suppression effects). Thus, nomological network analyses can help narrow down what theoretical processes seem (*in*-)*compatible* with the present data.

Present Research

We examine social representations of the national ingroup's historical roles in eight Eastern and Western European countries that were occupied by Nazi Germany in WWII. Several of them have already received attention in the literature on historical representations

(e.g., France, Hungary, Poland; Bilewicz et al., 2017; Giner-Sorolla et al., 2021; Hirschberger et al., 2016), but we know less about these representations in others (e.g., Lithuania, Ukraine). We also cannot tell from the extant literature whether historical representations are uniform across affected countries or whether they differ based on geography or sociopolitical conditions (e.g., official collaboration vs. invasion). Drawing on different theoretical perspectives, we test competing predictions regarding the defensive potential of representations as willing collaborators, forced collaborators, and victim-heroes. Given the theoretical similarities between construals as forced collaborators and victim-heroes, we expect their nomological networks to share similarities, but will examine them separately to detect more nuanced differences.

Method

Sample

Samples representative in age and gender were recruited through the Qualtrics Survey Platform. All participants were born in the respective countries and indicated to be native speakers of the country's language. Jewish participants were excluded from analyses, resulting in the following samples from Hungary (n = 648; 334 women, 313 men, one gender diverse respondent; aged 18 to 80 years, M = 44.73, SD = 15.52), Lithuania (n = 608; 323 women, 283 men, two gender diverse respondents; aged 18 to 69 years, M = 42.99, SD = 13.45), Poland (n = 519; 284 women, 235 men, age measured on a scale ranged from 1 = *18-30 years* to 6 = *older than 70 years, M* = 3.43, SD = 1.96), Ukraine (n = 605; 332 women, 273 men; aged 18 to 71 years, M = 44.54, SD = 13.46), Austria (n = 627; 315 women, 309 men, three gender diverse respondents; aged 18 to 83 years, M = 44.22, SD = 15.08), $\text{Belgium}_{\text{Flanders}}$ (n = 604; 299 women, 299 men, six gender diverse respondents; aged 18 to 83 years, M = 46.28, SD = 15.73), $\text{Belgium}_{\text{Wallonia}}$ (n = 605; 329 women, 273 men, three gender diverse respondents; aged 18 to 81 years, M = 44.47, SD = 15.35), France (n = 657; 338 women, 316 men, three gender diverse respondents; aged 18 to 80 years, M = 44.76, SD = 15.29), and the

Netherlands (n = 601; 305 women, 391 men, five gender diverse respondents; aged 18 to 82 years, M = 45.75, SD = 15.80). The final data set thus included N = 5,474 respondents.

Measures

The following scales were part of a larger research project on historical representations, Holocaust attributions, and intergroup attitudes, including attitudes toward immigrants. We present only results relevant to the current research question. Unless indicated otherwise, the scales were anchored from 1 = *completely disagree* to 7 = *completely agree* and presented in randomized order.

Representations of Historical Roles

We measured *representations of the national ingroup's historical roles* using nine items from the defensive representations questionnaire by Hirschberger et al. (2016). Table 1 provides an overview of the items.

Table 1

Representations of the National Ingroup's Historical Roles

Willing Collaborators (α = .80)
1. Most [ingroup members] disliked Jews and wanted to help the Nazis.
2. The Nazi ideology appealed to most [ingroup members].
3. Most [ingroup members] people willingly collaborated with the Nazis.
Forced Collaborators (α = .77)
1. Some [ingroup members] did terrible things, but only because they were forced to.
2. The [ingroup members] mistreated the Jews because they faced death if they refused.
3. The [ingroup members] participated in the killing of Jews because they had no choice.
Victim-Heroes (α = .77)
1. The [ingroup members] were the victims of the Nazis during WWII.
2. Most of the [ingroup members] actively fought against the Nazis.
3. Most [ingroup members] tried to save the Jews from Nazi persecution.

Note. Items were presented in fixed-randomized order. We report Cronbach's α calculated across contexts, but report it separately for all contexts in SOM-B on OSF.

Emotions

We further measured emotions associated with historical harmdoing. Two items by Gausel et al. (2012) captured *fear of moral condemnation* (e.g., "I think we, the [ingroup], could be isolated from the 'good company' of moral nations if our actions during the Holocaust are exposed"). Another item by Gausel et al. (2012) assessed *collective shame* ("As a [ingroup member], I feel disgraced when I think about what we have done to the Jews"). One further item from the collective guilt acceptance scale (Branscombe et al., 2004) captured group-based *guilt* ("I feel guilty about the negative things the [ingroup] did to the Jews in the past"). Finally, we assessed the *fear of victimizing (FOV)* other groups (e.g., "As we were harmed in the past, so we might harm others") using five items by Schori-Eyal et al. (2017).

Intergroup Defensiveness

A set of scales addressed participants' intergroup defensiveness. This included two items on *reverse discrimination* (e.g., "Jews are prejudiced against the [ingroup]"), two items on *victim blaming* (e.g., "Jews don't like to admit their own role in the Holocaust of their people"), three items on antisemitism in the form of *perceived Jewish control* adapted from Bilewicz and Krzeminski (2010; e.g., "Do you think the Jews control the media in [country]?"; anchored from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *definitely yes*), two items on *traditional antisemitism* adapted from Bilewicz et al. (2013; e.g., "Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus Christ"), and two items on the *desire for future intergroup relations with Israel* (e.g., "I oppose relations between [country] and Israel", reversed-coded).[9]

[9] Exploratory factor analyses with Kaiser-criterion (eigenvalues >1), and principal component analyses identified a common factor for all emotions except FOV. Reverse discrimination, victim blaming, and traditional antisemitism also formed one factor, while perceived Jewish control and the desire for relations with Israel formed two additional distinct factors. It is important to note that people's desire for future intergroup relations with Israel may not necessarily reflect historical defensiveness. Reluctance toward relations with Israel could be a stance toward current actions and policies of the Israeli government rather than an expression of identity-protective tendencies or antisemitism. The lower alpha value for this scale (Table 2) might reflect this differentiation between a desire to pursue positive relations with Israeli people and attitudes toward the policies of the Israeli government. Nevertheless, we observed largely similar patterns for this variable as for the other measures of intergroup defensiveness, as detailed below.

Demographics

Demographics included age, gender, religion, religiosity (one item ranging from 1 = *not religious at all* to 7 = *very religious*), and political self-placement (one item ranging from 1 = *extremely liberal* to 7 = *extremely conservative*). The Polish survey was conducted prior to all other surveys and misses some scales that were later included in the other surveys (i.e., FOV, perceived Jewish control).

Results

Measurement Invariance

To determine how well the theory-driven three-factor model of the defensive representations questionnaire fits the data, we conducted a multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using the R package "lavaan" (Rosseel, 2012). A three-factor model with theory-compliant factor specifications achieved appropriate fit according to both incremental and absolute fit indices, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .953, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .076.

Subsequently, we tested for metric measurement invariance, which represents a central requirement for meaningful cross-group comparisons of correlational patterns. Echoing recent recommendations for larger samples, we compared fit indices of increasingly restrictive models (equivalent factor structure; equivalent factor structure and loadings; equivalent structure, loadings, and intercepts) to test for configural, metric, and scalar invariance (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Supporting metric invariance, the difference in fit between the model with constrained factor structure and the model with constrained factor structure and loadings (ΔCFI = .004, ΔRMSEA = −.005) did not exceed the cutoffs proposed to prohibit the assumption of the next higher invariance level (ΔCFI < .01; Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; ΔCFI < .005 and ΔRMSEA < .01; Chen, 2007). However, strong invariance was only supported when comparing absolute (ΔRMSEA = .005), but not incremental fit indices (ΔCFI = .025).

Accordingly, intercepts seemed to vary across contexts, suggesting that mean differences between contexts have to be interpreted with caution.

Main Analyses

While we refrained from comparing mean differences between contexts, we compared agreement with each of the three ingroup representations (willing collaborators, forced collaborators and victim-heroes) within contexts. To that end, we conducted a linear mixed model (LMM) using the R package "lme4" (Bates et al., 2015). The model specified the type of representation as the predictor (dummy-coded with forced collaborators as the reference category) and participants' agreement with these representations as the outcome variable. To account for variance between contexts, we allowed for random intercepts and slopes per context. Results revealed that representations as willing collaborators received significantly less agreement, than representations as forced collaborators, Estimate = 3.47, SE = .08, $p < .001$, and victim-hero representations were substantially more supported than those as forced collaborators, Estimate = 2.14, SE = .08, $p < .001$. The total explained variance by the model was $R^2_{\text{conditional}} = .24$. Most of the explained variance could be ascribed to fixed effects, resulting from the representations, $R^2_{\text{marginal}} = .23$, whereas context differences hardly contributed to the total explained variance. This suggests that the differences found between representations were robust across contexts.

To examine the nomological networks of the three ingroup representations, we first conducted LMMs with representations (grand-mean centered) as predictors, and nomological network variables as criteria, separately for each ingroup representation. We further included random intercepts and slopes per context, allowing the relationships between representations and criteria to vary across contexts (Table 2). Compatible with the identity management prediction, results indicated that representations as willing collaborators were associated with both aversive emotions and defensive responses, just as representations of forced collaboration. However, more in line with the identity threat prediction, victim-heroism was

negatively related to aversive emotions, yet significantly linked to several defensive responses. Thus, LMM analyses provided inconclusive results.

These inconclusive findings may stem from the summative analysis collapsing all contexts, potentially capitalizing on effects present only in certain contexts (see also marginal and conditional R^2s in Table 2, indicating that comparably large parts of variance could not be ascribed to the fixed effects but stem from random effects, i.e., contextual differences). Further exploration substantiated that context significantly moderated the relationship between ingroup representations and network variables (SOM-C on OSF). Thus, we proceeded to examine nomological networks separately for each context (Table 3). Additionally, we explored the interrelations between emotions and intergroup responses, expecting differences in line with the identity threat and identity management patterns (for reasons of parsimony, we describe them briefly in the results section, but report them in full in SOM-B on OSF).

In line with the identity management prediction, *willing collaboration* consistently correlated positively with transgression-based emotions and intergroup negativity across all contexts. Further compatible with identity management, emotions and defensive intergroup responses overall correlated positively in all contexts,[10] except Hungary, Poland, and Austria. In these contexts, we observed both positive correlations of emotions with certain defensive responses (e.g., with FOV in Hungary, $r = .19$ to $.24$, $p < .001$, or with FOV and fear of moral condemnation in Austria, $r = .14$ to $.23$, $p = .032$ to $< .001$) and negative correlations (e.g., with shame or guilt in Hungary and Austria, $r = -.24$ to $-.15$, $p = .032$ to $< .001$,[11] or with all three measured emotions, moral fear, shame, and guilt, in Poland, $r = -.17$ to $-.38$, $p = .002$ to $< .001$), with emotions partly suppressing each other (see SOM-D on OSF). With respect to the two identity predictions, the nomological network pattern of willing collaboration thus

[10] Some correlations were non-significant; however, none of them were significantly negative.
[11] For the reversed-coded variable *desire for relations with Israel*, correlation coefficients were inverted.

supported the identity management prediction in six of the nine samples but revealed a mixture of both identity accounts in Hungary, Poland, and Austria.

Representations of *forced collaboration* correlated positively with aversive emotions in Ukraine, $\text{Belgium}_{\text{Flanders}}$, $\text{Belgium}_{\text{Wallonia}}$, France and the Netherlands. Deviating from our initial expectations, forced collaboration thus did not alleviate the burden of shame, guilt, and moral fear. Instead, it parallelled the pattern observed for willing collaboration, correlating with both aversive emotions and intergroup defensiveness. Notably, in Lithuania, forced collaboration did not correlate with any of the network variables, aligning with our initially expected identity management pattern for this representation. Coupled with the nonsignificant correlation found between forced and willing collaboration in Lithuania, these results suggest that forced collaboration in Lithuania might indeed have been perceived as a non-threatening role, entailing no defensiveness. Our findings thus appear consistent with an identity management pattern for threatening ingroup representations in five contexts and non-threatening representations in one context. In contrast, the patterns in Hungary, Poland, and Austria deviated from these findings, aligning instead with the identity threat prediction (i.e., no correlations with emotions, positive correlations with intergroup defensiveness).

Further corroborating the identity management prediction in Lithuania, Ukraine, $\text{Belgium}_{\text{Flanders}}$, $\text{Belgium}_{\text{Wallonia}}$, France, and the Netherlands, *victim-heroism* representations in these contexts were not or even negatively related to aversive emotions, and were mostly unrelated to defensive victim-group negativity. Conversely, findings in Hungary, Poland, and Austria were again more consistent with the identity threat prediction, as indicated by negative correlations between victim-heroism representations and emotions but positive correlations with intergroup defensiveness. Summing up, we found consistent support for an identity management pattern in the majority of contexts. In contrast, findings in Hungary, Poland, and Austria were partially compatible with both identity threat and identity management accounts.

Table 2

Fixed Effects in LMMs of Ingroup Representations on Variables from the Nomological Network

Variables	α	Model: Willing Collaborators				Model: Forced Collaborators				Model: Victim-Heroes			
		Estimate	*SE*	R^2 marginal	R^2 conditional	*Estimate*	*SE*	R^2 marginal	R^2 conditional	*Estimate*	*SE*	R^2 marginal	R^2 conditional
Fear of Moral Condemnation	.79	0.32***	0.01	.19	.22	0.11*	0.02	.02	.07	-0.08*	0.02	.01	.05
Collective Shame	-	0.12***	0.01	.08	.13	0.05*	0.01	.01	.06	-0.03*	0.01	.00	.05
Collective Guilt	-	0.12***	0.01	.06	.09	0.05*	0.01	.01	.04	-0.01	0.01	.00	.03
FOV	.85	0.72***	0.04	.19	.25	0.29**	0.06	.03	.12	-0.15	0.04	.01	.07
Reverse Discrimination	.82	0.23***	0.04	.09	.18	0.19***	0.02	.06	.12	0.07	0.03	.13	.20
Victim Blaming	.80	0.18***	0.04	.06	.17	0.19***	0.02	.06	.14	0.12*	0.04	.03	.09
Antisemitism: Jewish Control	.94	0.21***	0.04	.06	.13	0.15**	0.03	.03	.09	0.06	0.04	.00	.06
Antisemitism: Traditional	.69	0.23***	0.03	.09	.15	0.15**	0.02	.04	.08	0.05	0.03	.00	.04
Desire Relations with Israel	.64	-0.21***	0.02	.09	.17	-0.04*	0.02	.00	.09	0.13**	0.03	.03	.10
Political Orientation	-	0.01	0.00	.01	.03	0.01	0.01	.00	.02	0.03	0.01	.01	.03
Religiosity	-	0.04*	0.02	.02	.06	0.04*	0.01	.01	.04	0.04**	0.01	.01	.03
Age	-	-0.64***	0.12	.02	.49	-0.47**	0.12	.01	.49	0.61***	0.09	.02	.50

Note. We calculated Cronbach's α across contexts, but report it separately for all contexts in SOM-B on OSF.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities (Cronbach's α) and Nomological Networks of the Three Representations, Separately for All Contexts

Variables	Hungary	Lithuania	Poland	Ukraine	Austria	Belgium Flanders	Belgium Wallonia	France	Nether-lands
Willing Collaborators									
Forced Collaborators	.02	.03	.25***	.18***	-.07	.25***	.41***	.32***	.35***
Victim-Heroes	-.30***	-.27***	-.40***	-.40***	-.11	-.15*	-.15*	-.11	-.08
Fear of Moral Condemnation	.41***	.46***	.47***	.38***	.31***	.51***	.53***	.41***	.47***
Collective Shame	.09	.22***	.26***	.26***	.28***	.41***	.43***	.29***	.34***
Collective Guilt	.20***	.16**	.29***	.13	.21***	.30***	.42***	.30***	.26***
FOV	.38***	.45***	–	.49***	.30***	.49***	.47***	.46***	.46***
Reverse Discrimination	.17**	.30***	-.01	.24***	.20***	.38***	.52***	.44***	.53***
Victim Blaming	.10	.19***	-.09	.21***	.16**	.32***	.42***	.43***	.44***
Antisemitism: Jewish Control	.10	.26***	–	.09	.09	.35***	.45***	.35***	.41***
Antisemitism: Traditional	.17**	.31***	.15*	.29***	.17**	.39***	.44***	.47***	.40***
Desire Relations with Israel	-.20***	-.38***	-.31***	-.31***	-.15*	-.32***	-.39***	-.38***	-.37***
Political Orientation	-.06	.01	-.05	.08	.01	.05	.06	.03	.06
Religiosity	-.06	.10	.03	.01	-.02	.26***	.15*	.17**	.21***
Age	-.11	-.15*	-.11	-.19***	-.09	-.22***	-.27***	-.25***	-.29***
M (*SD*)	3.11 (1.38)	2.88 (1.35)	2.75 (1.34)	2.37 (1.34)	3.50 (1.33)	3.03 (1.36)	2.62 (1.40)	3.00 (1.43)	2.89 (1.41)
Forced Collaborators									
Victim-Heroes	.50***	.43***	.21***	.11	.66***	.34***	.29***	.43***	.38***
Fear of Moral Condemnation	.06	.06	.10	.08	.00	.19***	.34***	.25***	.25***
Collective Shame	.10	-.03	.09	.14*	-.04	.16**	.25***	.14*	.16**
Collective Guilt	.06	.04	.12	.15*	-.09	.18***	.19***	.12	.17**
FOV	.07	.09	–	.15*	.06	.26***	.32***	.21***	.29***

Variables	Hungary	Lithuania	Poland	Ukraine	Austria	Belgium Flanders	Belgium Wallonia	France	Nether-lands
Reverse Discrimination	.27***	.09	.16**	.18***	.28***	.27***	.28***	.33***	.34***
Victim Blaming	.29***	.11	.16**	.21***	.31***	.28***	.32***	.34***	.30***
Antisemitism: Jewish Control	.22***	.06	–	.04	.29***	.19***	.24***	.21***	.21***
Antisemitism: Traditional	.23***	.07	.13	.06	.20***	.23***	.26***	.30***	.26***
Desire Relations with Israel	-.03	.10	-.08	-.03	-.05	-.06	-.09	-.11	-.14*
Political Orientation	.04	-.04	-.01	-.16**	.20***	.13	.03	.15*	.07
Religiosity	.04	.10	.08	.00	.09	.17***	.12	.16**	.05
Age	-.15*	-.21***	-.16**	-.25***	.05	-.11	-.26***	-.07	-.17**
M (*SD*)	4.11 (1.39)	4.41 (1.41)	4.37 (1.18)	3.84 (1.47)	4.24 (1.46)	4.05 (1.28)	3.81 (1.42)	3.93 (1.41)	3.90 (1.30)
Victim-Heroes									
Fear of Moral Condemnation	-.08	-.16**	-.30***	-.23***	.05	-.04	-.05	.02	-.09
Collective Shame	.03	-.07	-.25***	-.15*	.00	-.12	-.05	.00	-.04
Collective Guilt	-.06	-.03	-.15***	.04	-.08	-.01	-.06	.05	.08
FOV	-.16**	-.10	–	-.36***	.15*	-.07	-.02	-.10	.01
Reverse Discrimination	.19***	-.03	.24***	-.10	.34***	.05	-.05	.03	.09
Victim Blaming	.21***	.05	.31***	-.03	.46***	.14*	.00	.08	.15*
Antisemitism: Jewish Control	.16**	-.04	–	.04	.33***	.01	.00	.02	-.01
Antisemitism: Traditional	.20***	-.05	.12	-.10	.24***	.06	-.02	-.02	.07
Desire Relations with Israel	.04	.24***	.24***	.31***	-.11	.18***	.24***	.27***	.17**
Political Orientation	.14*	.05	.11	-.15*	.22***	.11	.01	.17**	.05
Religiosity	.18***	.11	.11	.06	.15*	.02	.02	.01	.02
Age	.14*	.14*	.12	.23***	.08	.18***	.20***	.23***	.18***
M (*SD*)	4.23 (1.34)	4.92 (1.17)	5.69 (1.08)	5.74 (1.20)	3.80 (1.32)	4.58 (1.22)	4.78 (1.34)	4.82 (1.35)	4.59 (1.28)

Note. We report Pearson's *r*, except for correlations with age in Poland (ordinal scale) for which we report Spearman's ρ. *p*-values were adjusted for multiple comparisons according to Holm's method.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Robustness Analyses and Further Explorations

Given that participants could hold several ingroup representations simultaneously, we conducted additional linear (mixed) models including all three representations as predictors, thus examining their incremental effects. When controlling for the other two representations, forced collaboration was less consistently associated with defensive reactions in certain contexts (Poland, Austria). However, the overall pattern of results led to similar conclusions regarding the two identity predictions as the analyses reported above (SOM-E on OSF). Furthermore, we tested for interactions between representations but did not detect any effects (SOM-F on OSF).

In contrast to the other items, one item on forced collaboration specified that only "some" (instead of "most") ingroup members were involved in the respective role (Table 1). Given the specificity of this item in the degree of normative language, we conducted robustness analyses excluding this item (SOM-G on OSF). Results remained virtually identical, except in Poland, where we observed a shift from a pattern typical of *non-threatening* representations *within the identity threat prediction* (i.e., reduced aversive emotions and enhanced intergroup defensiveness) toward a pattern more typical of *threatening* representations *within the identity threat prediction* (i.e., enhanced emotions and reduced defensiveness).

Finally, ingroup identification can moderate the relationship of historical roles and acceptance of negative emotions as well as defensiveness (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998). While our goal was to test for an associative pattern rather than for moderations, we still conducted respective analyses to provide more nuanced insights into the data. Results revealed that ingroup glorification intensified defensive responses while attachment reduced them (SOM-H on OSF).

Discussion

Across eight countries that were occupied by, annexed to, and/or collaborated with Nazi Germany in WWII, lay Europeans today endorsed historical representations of the ingroup as victim-heroes significantly more than those of forced or willing collaborators. Is this endorsement of morally favorable ingroup roles a defensive maneuver aimed to protect the group from threat (identity threat prediction), or is it precisely the threatening admission of willing collaboration that is related to defensive identity management (identity management prediction)? To gain a more nuanced understanding of the different ingroup representations, we put competing predictions regarding their defensive potential to the empirical test. Results revealed that in the majority of contexts, representations as willing and forced accomplices were linked to aversive emotions and negative reactions toward the Jewish victim group, whereas victim-heroism was not associated with any of those responses. Thus, in most contexts, we found support for an identity management approach. However, in Hungary, Poland, and Austria, we observed an identity management pattern only for representations as willing collaborators but an identity threat pattern for the other two representations.

Contributions to Research on Social Representations of History

The present findings contribute to the literature on social representations of history and their relevance for present-day national identities (Liu & Hilton, 2005). Considering that groups strive to maintain a positive collective identity, recollections of their ingroup's historical roles tend to be construed in a manner that aligns with this purpose (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019). Congruent with this rationale, our findings reveal that morally favorable victim-hero representations were endorsed significantly more than portrayals as willing or forced collaborators. Notably, despite large historical differences between countries (Bitunjac & Schoeps, 2021; Kalyvas, 2008; Stauber, 2011), we found virtually no context-specific variation in this pattern. This underscores the reconstructive character of historical

representations (Liu & Hilton, 2005): Representations of the past are not necessarily depicting what has happened; instead, they can selectively make use of the past to create narratives that serve to build a positive national identity in the present. The finding that nine European contexts showed similar patterns further underlines that even in the ambiguous gray zone of occupation (Levi, 1988), there are typical tendencies to reconstruct the historical role of the ingroup in a favorable manner – despite the many differences between the studied contexts.

Looking at interrelations between ingroup roles, construals as *willing collaborators and victim-heroes* were mostly negatively correlated. This supports the notion of national-level moral typecasting (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2021). Here, the historical roles of (co-) perpetrators and heroes are contrasted against each other and appear incompatible.

The role as *forced collaborators*, however, appeared to be more complex than suggested by previous literature. Hirschberger et al. (2016) combined accounts of forced collaborators and victim-heroes into one factor distinct from willing collaboration which – as compared with the other two – acknowledges the ingroup's responsibility for harm. This differentiation mirrors the difference between internal (i.e., willingness) and external (i.e., force) attributions for ingroup transgressions (Bilewicz et al., 2017). Yet, our results challenge the assumption that this distinction is sufficient to create a clear contrast between collaborator roles. Specifically, while representations as forced collaborators and victim-heroes were indeed positively related, construals as forced and willing collaborators were also positively correlated in six out of nine samples. Accordingly, for many present-day Europeans, heroism and forced collaboration may not be contrasting representations. Instead, forced collaboration seems to share similarities with victim-heroism (e.g., the presence of oppression) and intentional complicity.

Such similarities with intentional collaboration may result from at least two reasons. First, harmful consequences for the persecuted groups may occur, irrespective of whether they were intended. Indeed, Cushman's (2008) two-process model proposes that judgments of

immorality are based on evaluating not only intentions, but also the *consequences* of actions. These can be detrimental, even without the explicit ethical decision to cause destruction (Lewy, 2007). Second, entry into the immoral domain may result not only from the commission of evil, but also from omission to help (Carnes & Janoff-Bulman, 2012); not only by acting upon one's own harmful intentions, but also by failing to resist the harmful intentions of others. Thus, even though collaboration was forced, it may still have been perceived to share similarities with willing collaboration in terms of its moral meaning.

Notably, age correlated negatively with representations as willing or forced collaborators, but positively with victim-heroism in most contexts. This aligns with research by Licata and Klein (2010) on Belgian memory of colonial crimes in Congo, indicating that older generations adopt a more favorable ingroup's role. The authors suggest that these age effects may result from different socializations about the crimes, which also seems plausible in our data: Critical public discourse on ingroup collaboration emerged only decades after the end of the war (Stauber, 2011), making older generations growing up in an environment characterized by narratives about the ingroup's suffering or resistance. Alternatively, older generations are less distant from the historical crimes (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019), which may reinforce the need for positive ingroup representations.

Contributions to Research on Historical Defensiveness

Lithuania, Ukraine, Belgium, France and the Netherlands

Our research contributes to the literature on historical defensiveness (e.g., Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019; Bilewicz, 2016; Kazarovytska & Imhoff, 2024). In six out of nine contexts, our data resonated with an identity management pattern: Participants who acknowledged their group's intentional or forced complicity with the German mostly also admitted to experiencing negative emotions, such as collective shame, guilt, or moral fear, while engaging in defensive intergroup responses aimed at warding off identity threat (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019; Bilewicz, 2016; Branscombe et al., 2004). In contrast, representations as victim-heroes

mostly did not (or even negatively) correlate with aversive emotions or defensive intergroup responses. Thus, the acknowledgment of deliberate co-perpetration (but not victim-heroism) came along with engagement in ingroup-protective reactions. The notable finding that six contexts revealed a comparable pattern underscores the similarity of psychological responses to historical trauma that goes beyond the specific history, geographic location or politics of each country.

Our results contrast with Brown et al.'s (2008) findings, highlighting the prosocial (i.e., non-defensive) potential of ingroup perpetration. Moreover, while consistent with Hirschberger et al.'s (2022) finding that the ingroup's intentional engagement in genocide can enhance collective guilt, they are inconsistent with the finding that this sentiment is associated with the support of the victim group. However, the observed identity management pattern resonates with Bilali and Vollhardt's (2019) argument that acknowledging ingroup responsibility for harmdoing – often considered a constructive approach to deal with the past – may backfire, as group members then apply other defensive strategies to manage identity threat. In fact, confronting white Americans with their group's responsibility for the Native American genocide led to increased dehumanization of victims (Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006). Similarly, revealing to Chilean participants that their group caused harm to indigenous people increased both ingroup responsibility *and* derogation of victims (Čehajić et al., 2009). Thus, while recognizing ingroup harmdoing *can* have positive intergroup effects, it may also come along with defensive backlash, entailing negativity toward the former victim group (see also Gausel et al., 2012).

In this sense, our results resonate with the *moral exemplars* approach (Čehajić-Clancy & Bilewicz, 2020). Recognizing that information about the ingroup's past moral deeds can act as a buffer to a threatened social identity, the authors propose that learning about ingroup moral exemplars can reduce defensive reactions, thereby promoting intergroup reconciliation. Although perceived ingroup morality has also been found to *fuel* historically defensive

reactions (Kazarovytska et al., 2022), the present findings do not reconcile with such a moral licensing pattern. Instead, they suggest that morally commendable victim-hero depictions of the ingroup are associated with constrained historical defensiveness and a greater inclination to establish positive intergroup relations in most examined contexts.

Hungary, Poland, and Austria

However, the above reasoning does not hold in three of the nine studied samples. While the pattern for willing collaboration in these samples mirrored the identity management pattern found in the other contexts, several other results were inconsistent with this approach: Transgression-based emotions partly correlated negatively with defensiveness, forced collaboration was linked to defensive responses but not negative emotions, and victim-heroism was also related to intergroup negativity. All of these findings resonate with an identity threat approach.

Speculating on why these three contexts differed, one possible explanation revolves around the "official roles" of these groups during WWII. Despite the fact that groups often carry multiple roles in intergroup conflicts, some countries faced Nazi occupation against their will, whereas others were led by governments collaborating with Germany. Within our sample, Hungary and Austria fall into the latter category (Bitunjac & Schoeps, 2021). This known complicity with Nazi Germany can pose obstacles to the adoption of victim-hero representations, requiring greater denial and defensive modulation in advocating these narratives than in countries less known for collaborating with the Nazi regime. In contrast, Poland experienced considerable victimization during WWII (Stauber, 2011). However, Polish victimhood narratives are challenged by the critical discourse on the country's co-perpetration (Grabowski, 2016), potentially giving rise to a sense of competition over recognition of the group's victimhood (Szabó, 2020). Such competitive victimhood, in turn, can lead to the devaluation of the Jewish victim group.

The divergence of these three contexts could also result from the present-day ideological climates in these countries that can shape historical representations (Licata & Klein, 2010). Pető (2022) argues that Hungary's right-wing government initiated a paradigm shift in memory politics, downplaying collaboration with Germany and emphasizing the ingroup's victimhood. Similarly, memory politics in Poland shifted in recent years back toward narratives of innocence and victimization (Grabowski, 2016), a trend also observed in Austrian WWII narratives (Caramani & Manucci, 2021). The identity management prediction, however, is rooted in a pragmatic integration of critical narratives into ingroup representations. Environments that do not encourage critical discourse may therefore prevent a pragmatic assessment of the ingroup's historical roles. Ironically, though seemingly protective, silencing critical discourse may then hinder a non-defensive evaluation of the ingroup's historical victimization.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Our work is limited in that we measured participants' agreement with predefined historical roles that most likely simplify participants' actual constructions of history. For example, when endorsing a narrative of *forced* collaboration, participants may differ in whether they construe forced collaboration as life-threatening coercion (as phrased in some of our items) or rather as a decision to obey in order to not lose privileges. To avoid such ambiguity and expand our existing knowledge of social representations of the past, future studies could openly ask participants to describe their nation's historical role and examine them against theoretical representations (for an example, see Hirschberger et al., 2022). Such a bottom-up approach seems particularly valuable when history is ambivalent and contested, as in the case of the Nazi occupation (Grabowski, 2016; Szabó, 2020).

Due to its cross-sectional design, our research cannot answer which causal processes underlie the observed patterns. Future research could put emphasis on testing the potential mechanisms experimentally by manipulating historical ingroup representations (for such

manipulation in the context of Holocaust representations in Hungary, see, Hirschberger et al., 2016) and examining their influence on collective emotions and (defensive) intergroup attitudes.

Future research could also explore representations of ingroup roles under occupation, beyond the context of Nazi occupation. Our research covers a range of eight different nations that faced various forms of occupation, including annexation, military occupation, or puppet state occupation and constitutes one of the most comprehensive cross-contextual examinations of social representations of Nazi occupation to date. However, occupation can come in various forms, such as colonial occupation (i.e., often characterized by the exploitation of resources), international administration (i.e., the occupation of a territory with the aim of post-conflict stabilization, such as after the Kosovo War), or de facto occupation (i.e., such as in Nagorno-Karabakh; Garagozov, 2016). These forms of occupation differ markedly from German occupations in WWII not only in their geopolitical and sociopolitical conditions but also in their absence of local support in industrialized genocide across borders. Thus, they may raise completely different identity questions than the one of moral culpability examined in the present research. For example, Garagozov's (2016) work on collective memories in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict examined the narrative of common cultural traits between Azerbaijanis (the occupied) and Armenians (the occupiers) – a representation that was not part of the present research. Considering that psychological processes are substantially shaped by the political realities in which they unfold (e.g., Licata & Klein, 2010), analyzing the interplay of different types of occupation and their reflection in individuals' representations of them, deserves future study.

Conclusion

Research on social representations of history among groups that struggle to find clarity in Primo Levi's gray zone can inform our understanding of present intergroup attitudes. In the context of the complicated stance of being occupied by Nazi Germany in WWII, portrayals of

the ingroup as collaborators of the Germans came along with attempts to downplay the harmdoing of the ingroup and devalue its victims, whereas morally favorable victim-hero portrayals did not show such defensive tendencies. However, our results need to be considered in their dynamic character. For example, the present data were collected before Russia expanded its war of aggression against Ukraine in 2022. Considering that Ukrainians now fight against invasion of their territory, heroic narratives – which can be a valuable resource for dealing with war – might increase (on the adaptiveness of collective representations in times of peace vs. war, see Bilewicz & Liu, 2020). Insights into social representations of the past are important for understanding what happens in the present. Yet, these insights must be continually reexamined to account for the history that happens today.

Transparency and Data Accessibility Statement

This research was not preregistered and examines competing theoretical predictions in an exploratory manner. Data used for the present analyses, the analysis script, study materials, and supplemental online materials (SOM) are available on our Open Science Framework (OSF) project page, accessible at https://osf.io/ebv2c/.

CHAPTER 4

Project 3

No Differences in Memory Performance for Instances of Historical Victimization and Historical Perpetration: Evidence From Five Large-Scale Experiments

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Chapter 4 includes the following published article:

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Preregistrations, open materials, data, and analysis codes: https://osf.io/rkhj9/

Ethical approval: 2021-JGU-psychEK-006 (obtained by Fiona Kazarovytska from the ethics committee of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)

Authors' Contributions

In accordance with the recommendations of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020), we indicate the individual contributions of the authors to this project using the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CASRAI, 2022). The authors' contributions are as follows:

Fiona Kazarovytska: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing.

Roland Imhoff: Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Supervision, Writing – review and editing.

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Abstract

In their pursuit of a moral ingroup identity, groups tend to flatter and deceive themselves, leading to predictable biases in their collective memory. Specifically, such memory biases are expected in the form of worse memory for morally problematic acts of historical perpetration. In five high-powered recall and recognition experiments (N = 3,424) using between- (Studies 1-4) and within-subjects designs (Study 5) as well as historically accurate (all studies), randomly sampled (Studies 3-4) stimulus material in three contexts (Germany, the UK, the U.S.), we tested whether individual memories of collective events can be distorted not only in a way that attenuates ingroup-threatening perpetration information but also in a way that highlights morally affirming victimhood information. Deviating from expectations, none of our studies revealed significant differences in memory performance depending on the ingroup's role as victim or perpetrator. Instead, equivalence testing (Studies 4-5) even rejected the presence of the minimal effect size we defined to support the proposed memory bias. We discuss the implications of this absence of individual memory distortions for the formation of social representations of history.

Keywords: historical memory, collective perpetration, collective victimhood, ingroup morality

'The horror of that moment,' the King went on, 'I shall never forget!' 'You will, though,' the Queen said, 'if you don't make a memorandum of it.'

(Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland)

Introduction

In recent years, increasing public attention has been given to the relevance of remembering historical atrocities. The European Commission in its resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism in 2009, the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution establishing the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime in 2015, or U.S. President Joe Biden in his proclamation on the Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2021 have strongly recommended keeping alive the memory of past intergroup transgressions and using it as a moral compass for the future. Individuals' actual historical memory, however, may not follow these political recommendations. Based on the findings that memory distortions can help to maintain a favorable ingroup image (Rotella & Richeson, 2013; Zengel et al., 2021), and that victimhood connotes moral superiority, while perpetration is associated with moral threat (Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), we argue that individual memory performance should be better for content describing historical ingroup victimhood than for ingroup perpetration. We further reason that this memory bias should be particularly pronounced among individuals with a defensive ingroup identification (i.e., collective narcissists; Golec de Zavala et al., 2009). We test these contentions in the context of German and British memory of WWII as well as the U.S. memory of the Vietnam War in five preregistered experiments.

Historical Remembering as an Identity-Motivated Process

Historical events and the way they are *remembered* by individuals within a social group can have a considerable impact on the social identity of the group (Baumeister & Hastings, 1997; Halbwachs, 1992; Hirschberger, 2018; Klein, 2013; Manier & Hirst, 2008). With his groundbreaking work on the interplay of collective memory and identity, Maurice

Halbwachs (1992) laid the foundation for understanding historical memories not as mere portrayals of the past, but to analyze them in light of their function for social identity purposes and group-based needs. Although historical memories can also be carried within memorials or cultural products, psychologists have emphasized the relevance of understanding the memories carried in the minds of individuals – those entities, "who do the actual remembering" (Manier & Hirst, 2008, p. 254). In this sense, we understand collective memories as "representations of the past in the minds of members of a community that contribute to the community's sense of identity" (Manier & Hirst, 2008, p. 253).

According to the *Lay Historian Model* by Klein (2013), one of the major processes that shapes individual memory of historical events is *distorted* or *selective* remembering. Considering that group members have a desire to preserve a positive, moral image of their ingroup (Leach et al., 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and that this desire can decisively bias information processing (e.g., Abrams & Hogg, 1999), it seems plausible to assume that these memory distortions are not accidental. Instead, they are likely directed at creating a favorable social identity.

Memory Disparity of Collective Historical Perpetration and Victimization

Especially historical events in which the ingroup was involved as a perpetrator can pose a major threat to the group's moral image and evoke aversive feelings of collective guilt (Branscombe et al., 1999; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). As such, it seems unsurprising that historical memories laden with guilt can fade into the background, while memories that help maintain a positive image of the ingroup come to the fore. Specifically, individuals seem to have "blind spots" (Frijda, 1997, p. 109) for past harms committed by their ingroup member. In this vein, Zengel et al. (2021) found that identity-threatening immoral behaviors were remembered poorer when committed by ingroup members than by outgroup members. With respect to historical intergroup transgressions, Rotella and Richeson (2013) further demonstrated that the recall and recognition performance for previously read sequences about

historical crimes against Indigenous peoples was better when the perpetrators were portrayed as outgroup members (Europeans) instead of ingroup members (Americans).

But what about memories of collective victimhood? In contrast to memories of collective perpetration (which may be susceptible to modification or forgetting), group members may be particularly motivated to remember episodes of ingroup victimhood. The valorization of victimhood is a relatively recent phenomenon, occurring increasingly since WWII (Barkan, 2001). Whereas belonging to a perpetrator group is associated with a moral threat, victim status connotes moral superiority (Bar-Tal et al., 2009). Hence, the need for moral high ground may motivate social groups – especially those accused of perpetration – to seek recognition of their suffering (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Furthermore, collective tragedies can decisively contribute to the construction of meaning as a unique or honorable group, and enhance ingroup solidarity (Hirschberger, 2018).

Although victim status also poses threats to the group, particularly to the dimension of power or agency (Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), prior research has demonstrated that it is morality which is the most important dimension for positive ingroup evaluations (Leach et al., 2007). Group members experienced more image threat when morality was violated than when competence (i.e., an agency-related dimension) was violated (Brambilla et al., 2013; see also Brambilla & Leach, 2014 on the primacy of morality in formation of group-based impressions). Accordingly, group members may be particularly concerned with maintaining a moral image of their ingroup, thereby giving preference to representations of ingroup victimhood over those of perpetration.

Against this backdrop, we argue that individual memory of collective events can be shaped in a way that highlights episodes of historical victimhood relative to episodes of perpetration. While decreased memory of perpetration might reduce threat to ingroup morality and the positive meaning of the group, increased memory of victimhood may have the counterpart mechanism of enhancing ingroup morality and reinforcing a positive collective

meaning. Decreased perpetrator and increased victim memories could thus serve the same function of preserving a positive, moral view of the ingroup.

Prior research seems to be in line with this assumption. In a free recall study with Hindu and Sikh participants, Sahdra and Ross (2007) found that incidents of ingroup violence were recalled significantly less frequently than incidents of ingroup suffering. Noticeably, such patterns occur even for historical episodes where there is an almost universal consensus on the status of the ingroup as perpetrators, such as Germany. Bar-On and Gaon (1991) found that German individuals who were children during WWII remembered their families' suffering emotionally and detailed, while detailed descriptions of the suffering *caused* by the Germans (sometimes their own parents) were avoided. In 142 individual and 40 family interviews with German participants on the Nazi era, Welzer and colleagues (2002) further found that two thirds of all events remembered focused on experiences of heroism or victimhood, such as bombings or poverty. This salience of victimhood is also reflected in a recent population-representative survey, in which 54.4% of German respondents described their ancestors as victims of WWII and only 17.6% as perpetrators (Rees et al., 2018).

Although these results are *compatible* with the idea of a memory bias in favor of victim memory, they do not provide *evidence* for a bias. Specifically, the existence of a *bias* implies that objectively identical information is processed differently depending on whether it is perceived in the context of ingroup victimhood or perpetration. However, in the studies described above, it can hardly be assumed that participants were confronted with identical information on victim and perpetrator events. Accordingly, these findings might not reflect a memory bias, but rather represent accurate memories of an information ecology that includes more or qualitatively different information about ingroup victimhood than about perpetration. Controlled experimental research with identical input stimuli would therefore be required to investigate the existence of memory biases.

To date, however, there has been little if any experimental research examining the assumption of a memory bias toward ingroup victimhood. This lack of systematic research on individual historical memory distortions seems surprising considering the wealth of literature on the role of memory for social identity and morality purposes on the one hand (Baumeister & Hastings, 1997; Manier & Hirst, 2008; Rotella & Richeson, 2013; Sahdra & Ross, 2007), and on the role of victimhood narratives for that purpose on the other (Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). The present research seeks to address this gap by combining these two lines of research.

Collective Narcissism as a Potential Moderator of Memory Effects

The motivation to maintain a positive, moral ingroup image, which we expect to be one of the major drivers of the assumed memory bias, can differ across group members. Especially highly identified group members, and among them particularly individuals with a positive but fragile ingroup identification (i.e., collective narcissists; Golec de Zavala et al., 2009), tend to protect their ingroup image. Thus, these individuals may be particularly inclined to remember predominantly the morally connotated ingroup victim role, at the expense of immoral ingroup perpetration. Indeed, some studies suggest that high ingroup identification further reduces memory for ingroup perpetration (Sahdra & Ross, 2007). Yet, other studies found no moderating effect of ingroup identification (Rotella & Richeson, 2013). However, these studies focused on genuine ingroup identification. Different from genuine (or secure) ingroup identification, collective narcissism is connected to high sensitivity for social identity threats (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009) and a pronounced defensive motivation (Kazarovytska & Imhoff, 2022). Thus, particularly collective narcissism may be related to defensive memory.

Present Research

Across five preregistered, high-powered experiments using between- (Studies 1-4) and within-subjects designs (Study 5), we tested whether free recall (Study 1) and recognition

performance (Studies 2-5) was enhanced for previously read content describing the ingroup as a historical victim group compared to content describing the ingroup as a perpetrator group or portraying two outgroups as victim and perpetrator groups (control condition). The recognition studies were subjected to Signal Detection Theory (SDT; Stanislaw & Todorov, 1999) analyses. To increase ecological validity on the one hand, and ensure experimental control on the other hand, all studies used almost identical descriptions of real historical events as stimulus material across conditions. In Studies 3-4, these were sampled randomly from a set of 5 and 12 different texts per condition in order to enhance generalizability of results to a larger population of historical events (Brunswik, 1955). To increase representativeness not only at the level of stimuli but also at the level of participants, we used samples from three different contexts (Germany, the UK, and the U.S.). Since Studies 1-3 did not reveal significant memory effects, Studies 4-5 additionally incorporated equivalence tests with preregistered thresholds (Cohen's *d* and *d*z) to statistically support the absence of meaningful memory differences (Lakens, 2017).[12]

In the present research, we used linear mixed models (LMMs) whenever there was non-independence in the data arising from within-subjects measurements (i.e., within-subjects measurement of β to neutral and painful stimuli in Studies 2-4, within-subjects design in Study 5) or a multilevel structure resulting from the random sampling of stimulus material (i.e., in Studies 3-5; on the relevance of treating stimuli as random factors see Judd et al., 2012). LMMs were calculated by means of the "lme4" package in R (Bates et al., 2015). Following the recommendations of Luke (2017), we determined significance of fixed-effects

[12] For exploratory purposes, we repeatedly measured emotions evoked by reading the stimulus material and perceived memorability. Results are reported in the OSM. Ingroup victimhood consistently elicited more positive emotions than ingroup perpetration in the German samples, while we found the reversed effect in the U.S. sample and no significant difference in the British one. Willingness and perceived difficulty to remember the text read did not differ across conditions in any of the samples. Moreover, we explored potential moderating effects of age, political orientation, genuine ingroup identification, and the defensive strategies of demand for historical closure and competition over victimhood recognition. Significant moderation effects were found only for age in Study 1 as well as for RWA and ingroup identification in Study 5 (OSM.0.1). Finally, we conducted robustness analyses using nonparametric *A'* instead of *d'* as a recognition measure, which led to the same statistical interferences (OSM.0.2).

parameters using Satterthwaite's method by means of the R package "lmerTest" (Kuznetsova et al., 2017). This approach can sometimes lead to different conclusions regarding significance than other methods (e.g., significance testing of fixed-effects parameters using Wald's confidence intervals). In the present paper, such deviations showed only in one exploratory analysis in Study 5, in which we ultimately relied on Satterthwaite's *t*-tests.

Open Practices

Preregistrations, data, analyses scripts, stimulus materials and online supplemental materials (OSM) for all studies are available on the Open Science Framework (OSF; https://osf.io/rkhj9/). We confirm that sample sizes for all studies were determined before conducting any data analyses. We report all measures, manipulations, exclusions, and preregistered analyses in the paper or in the OSM and mark any deviations from preregistered analyses in the paper. In Studies 4-5, as preregistered, we collected additional data that are not relevant to the present project and are therefore not reported in this paper.

A Note on Memory Effects

The proposed bias in memory accuracy may result from various mechanisms surrounding the actual retrieval phase (i.e., the act of recalling, recognizing, or other operations of retrieving the information that has previously been encoded and stored; Tulving & Thomson, 1973). Selective attention may help individuals avoid confrontation with identity-threatening historical information. Encoding suppression, selective rehearsal, or reduced cognitive effort in rehearsal may limit encoding of this information (Anderson, 2020; Anderson & Hanslmayr, 2014; Sedikides et al., 2016). Finally, individuals can also refuse to communicate the threatening information (Cooper & Stone, 2004).

A particular challenge in examining differences in memory accuracy is thus to distinguish actual memory or retrieval accuracy from these upstream and downstream processes, especially inaccurate encoding at onset (Sedikides et al., 2016), and refusal to communicate the unpleasant content afterwards (Cooper & Stone, 2004). We aimed at

addressing this challenge in two ways. First, in order to demarcate the memory accuracy effect from a pure encoding effect (i.e., participants neglect to encode the ingroup threatening content and therefore show a lower memory performance) we included three to four attention check questions in each study, that asked for details about the content of the stimulus text. Participants who did not process the stimulus text carefully enough to answer at least two (three) of these three (four) multiple-choice questions correctly, were excluded from analyses. Second, we asked participants about their willingness to engage in interpersonal communication about the text read or see it discussed in the media and at school. If it is not a memory accuracy effect but primarily a refusal to report existing memories, it seems reasonable to assume that participants also indicate that they do not want to talk about these memories or see them discussed publicly (on the close link between intentions and actual behavior see Kim & Hunter, 1993; but see also Bechler et al., 2021).

Study 1

We hypothesized that memory performance would be better for historical content describing the ingroup as a victim group than for content portraying the ingroup as a perpetrator group or involving groups other than the ingroup as victims and perpetrators. Furthermore, we predicted that these memory differences would be more pronounced among individuals high in collective narcissism (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009), who are particularly interested in warding off ingroup threats, such as those that may emanate from historical perpetration (Branscombe et al., 1999). We tested these two hypotheses in a free recall task.

Method

Participants

Via the panel service 'Respondi,' we recruited $N = 524$ participants ($n_{\text{victimhood(v)}} = 167$, $n_{\text{perpetration(p)}} = 170$, $n_{\text{control(c)}} = 187$). All participants were German native speakers, not Jewish, answered at least two attention check questions correctly, and did not indicate to have clicked randomly (see preregistered exclusion criteria). The sample was representative of the German

population older than 18 and younger than 70 years in terms of age (M = 44.65, SD = 14.18) and gender (49.23% female, 0.19% gender diverse participants). According to a post-hoc sensitivity analysis in G*Power (Faul et al., 2007; reported in this and the following studies) we had 80% power ($\alpha = 0.05$) to detect a mean difference of Cohen's $d = 0.31$ between victimhood and perpetration condition in a two-tailed t-test.

Manipulation

Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (ingroup victimhood, ingroup perpetration, or control). In each condition, they read an almost identical one-page text passage that they were later asked to recall unexpectedly. Only location, time and involved groups differed between stimulus texts. All other content was the same, thereby referring to real historical events. It is particularly important to note that the sociohistorical conditions and ideological underpinnings of these events or atrocities differ markedly and cannot be paralleled. However, some aspects of *individual* painful experiences may have similarities (e.g., lack of food and hygiene in concentration camps, war captivity, or forced labor camps). Participants in the *victimhood condition* were thus confronted with a text about German war prisoners in Soviet camps during WWII. The *perpetration condition* described the suffering of Jewish inmates of concentration camps. In the *control condition*, Germans were not involved but participants were presented with a text about Korean forced laborers in Japan between 1939 and 1945. In this and all following studies, the texts were based on existing newspaper articles or publicly available accounts from contemporary witnesses (see OSF for full stimulus materials).

Procedure

After assessing collective narcissism, participants were randomly assigned to one experimental condition. Before reading the stimulus text, they were informed that the text may contain distressing descriptions and that a termination of the study is possible at any time. After reading the text, participants answered three attention check questions that asked

for details from the text. Subsequently, they finished a short arithmetic distraction task (3 min.) to ensure that the previously read text passage was no longer present in short-term memory (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1971). They were then unexpectedly asked to recall the text freely as accurately as possible within 2-15 min. Finally, participants' willingness to communicate about the text and to see its content covered in the media or at school was measured.

Measures

Free Recall Performance. The original text was divided in its 23 separate core passages and two independent and hypotheses-blind raters coded for each passage whether the respective content occurred in the recalled text (1) or not (0). In this way, each participant received a score between 0 and 23 indicating how much of the original content was correctly recalled. Before coding the data, the raters were trained with a data set of 20 participants from a pilot study.[13]

Collective Narcissism. The potential moderator was assessed using a six-item short version of the Collective Narcissism Scale (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009; e.g., "Germans deserve special treatment"). Items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*).

Communication Willingness. Two items each concerned the willingness to communicate about the text read with other individuals ("Would you like to tell people in your circle of acquaintances about the events described in the article?", "If you meet someone you know today, how likely is it that you will tell them about the events described in the article?"), and to see its content covered in the media or at school ("Would you like the events

[13] The coding training, which was conducted in parallel to data collection, revealed that the text could be divided more sensibly into 23 instead of 25 core passages to be rated. Thus, deviating from the preregistration, only 23 text passages were coded by the raters (see open data set on OSF for the coded passages). The raters also coded further linguistic features of the recalled texts. Significant group differences were detected in the number of mentions of the perpetrator and victim groups and in positive emotions related to victim experiences (OSM.1.1).

described in the article to be covered in the media or newspapers?", "Would you like the events described in the article to be covered in school lessons?"). Scale anchors ranged from 1 (*not [likely] at all*) to 7 (*very [much/ likely]*).

Results

Confirmatory Main Effects Analysis on Free Recall Performance

The average intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) between both raters was 0.954, 95% CI [0.945, 0.961]. Descriptive statistics and correlations are given in Table 1. Variability in responses to the dependent measures is given in histograms in OSM.1.2. Against expectations, there were no significant differences in free recall performance between groups, $F(2, 521) = 1.42$, $p = .243$, $\eta 2 = 0.01$. In terms of effect sizes, memory performance between victimhood and perpetration condition differed with a Cohen's *d* of 0.10 (albeit in the opposite direction to hypotheses), victimhood and control condition with a *d* of 0.07, and perpetration and control condition with a *d* of 0.18.

Confirmatory Moderation Analysis on Free Recall Performance

To test our second hypothesis, we conducted a multiple linear regression including the main effects of dummy-coded condition (with victimhood as reference category), collective narcissism (centered prior to analyses) and their interaction on recall performance. In this and the following studies, we chose victimhood as reference category to test the cogency of our argument that morally affirming victimhood leads to better memory performance than neutral (i.e., morally unaffecting) and perpetration (i.e., morally threatening) information. Inconsistent with the hypothesis, collective narcissism did not interact with the perpetration, $b_{(cn*p)} = 0.00$, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI [-0.22, 0.23], $p = .966$, or the control condition, $b_{(cn*c)} = 0.13$, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI [-0.07, 0.34], $p = .205$. Yet, collective narcissism was overall negatively related to memory performance, $b_{(cn)} = -0.33$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [-0.49, -0.17], $p < .001$, $F(5, 518) = 8.69$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 0.07$. This negative relation was also found in a model without interaction terms.

Table 1

Overview of Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations in Study 1

Variable	Victimhood		Perpetration		Control					
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	α	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Free Recall[a]	11.46	9.20	12.38	9.09	10.78	8.77	-	-	-	-
(2) Collective Narcissism	2.93	1.40	2.96	1.41	3.28	1.57	.93	**-.27**	-	-
(3) Willingness-Interpersonal Communication	3.68	1.80	3.70	1.98	3.75	1.89	.85	**.18**	**.02**	-
(4) Willingness-Media and School	5.33	1.67	5.77	1.97	5.56	1.81	.79	**.24**	**-.24**	**.49**

Note. Significant correlations are marked bold. Correlations larger than |.17| were significant at $p < .001$, using *p*-values adjusted for multiple comparisons according to Holm's method.
[a] Number of text passages recalled out of a total of 23 rated text passages.

Exploratory Analyses of Communication Willingness and Dropouts

Willingness to communicate with others about the text read and to see its content covered in the media and at school was positively related to memory performance (Table 1). However, neither interpersonal, $F(2, 521) = 0.08$, $p = .924$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$, nor media- and school-related communication willingness, $F(2, 521) = 2.48$, $p = .085$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$, differed significantly between groups.

In all conditions, several participants dropped out during reading the text ($n_{(v)} = 28$, $n_{(p)} = 26$, $n_{(c)} = 18$). Significant group differences in these dropout rates could indicate a systematic refusal to be confronted with a specific content. Furthermore, several participants were removed during data collection since they were unable to correctly answer at least two attention checks ($n_{(v)} = 42$, $n_{(p)} = 45$, $n_{(c)} = 30$). Systematic differences in failing the attention checks could mark differences in encoding accuracy depending on the ingroup role. Yet, chi-squared tests with Yate's continuity correction did not indicate significant group differences in dropping out during reading (all χ^2s < 1.75, *ps* > .186) or due to failing attention checks (χ^2s < 3.26, *ps* > .071).

Discussion

Inconsistent with our hypotheses, memory performance did not differ as a function of ingroup role, even among collective narcissists. Explorations of the dropout rates moreover indicated that the proportion of people who refused to read the text or could not correctly answer attention check questions about the text did not differ between groups. This suggests that there were no systematic group differences in encoding accuracy that might have altered the memory effects from the outset. The absence of differences in willingness to communicate about the text further suggests that the ingroup's historical perpetrator role did not lead to a systematic refusal to report the historical content in question. To gain more nuanced insights into memory-related processes, we replicated the present study, this time using a recognition task subjected to SDT analyses.

Study 2

In a recognition paradigm, participants are asked to classify whether a stimulus was part of the original stimulus material (i.e., actual signal) or is new (i.e., distractor). However, focusing only on the number of correct classifications (i.e., hits or true positives) confounds two independent mechanisms: First, participants may correctly classify stimuli as part of the original stimulus material because they can actually distinguish previously presented signals from distractors. The classification in this case would result from *accurate memory performance* (Macmillan & Creelman, 2004; Stanislaw & Todorov, 1999). Second, however, participants may correctly classify a stimulus because they have a general tendency to respond that certain stimuli were part of the original stimulus material, regardless of whether they were presented or not. In this case, the hit rate would not mirror actually good memory performance but rather a tendency to classify stimuli as part of the material, even though there is no corresponding memory (Stanislaw & Todorov, 1999).

In the present study, the latter tendency may be particularly high for painful stimuli that appear in the context of ingroup victimhood. Group members tend to construe their

ingroup in a positive and moral light (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). These construals can be sustained by information on painful victimhood *experienced* by the ingroup but shaken by information on painful victimhood *caused* by the ingroup. Thus, painful information could be seen as more credible in the context of ingroup victimhood and therefore cause hits, rather than the victim role actually increasing memory performance.

Estimating SDT parameters (Stanislaw & Todorov, 1999) offers the possibility to distinguish whether victimhood actually increases memory performance or rather affects the general tendency to perceive painful information as valid in the context of ingroup victimhood. The first mechanism is quantified by *sensitivity d'*, which reflects the ability to discriminate between actual signals and distractors or noise (i.e., memory performance). The latter mechanism is quantified by the *response bias* β, which reflects the general tendency to respond *yes* (i.e., tendency to answer that stimulus was part of the original material) compared to *no* (i.e., tendency to answer that stimulus represents a distractor). Importantly, while both parameters, *d'* and β, may reflect defensiveness, they are based on distinct underlying processes, with only *d'* reflecting an actual difference in memory performance.

Similar to Study 1, we hypothesized that memory performance (i.e., *d'*) would be better in the victimhood condition than in the other two conditions, with the effect being more pronounced among collective narcissists. Since collective narcissists may be particularly eager to downplay the ingroup's historical crimes, we additionally hypothesized that collective narcissists would have a higher β toward the *no*-response (i.e., lower tendency toward the *yes*-response) for *painful* but not for *neutral* statements in the perpetration (vs. victimhood) condition. Like in Study 1, we exploratively measured willingness to communicate about the text and to see its content covered in the media and at school.

Method

Participants

We recruited $N = 539$ participants ($n_{(v)} = 193$, $n_{(p)} = 174$, $n_{(c)} = 172$) via 'Respondi,' who met the same preregistered inclusion criteria as in Study 1. Similar to Study 1, the sample was representative for the German population older than 18 and younger than 70 years in terms of age and gender. We had 80% power ($\alpha = 0.05$) to detect a mean difference of Cohen's $d = 0.29$ between victimhood and perpetration condition in a two-tailed *t*-test.

Manipulation, Procedure and Measures

Manipulation, procedure and measures were identical to those in Study 1, except for the measurement of memory performance. Building on the recognition study of Rotella and Richeson (2013), participants were presented with 24 statements, 12 of which represented signals that actually appeared in the text and 12 of which were contextually appropriate distractors. These distractors differed in their valence and their reference to intergroup behavior: Half of them were related to *painful victim experiences* (i.e., in this and the following studies, painful stimuli concerned the suffering of the victim group in the context of intergroup behavior, e.g., "Those who got injured or could not keep up the strenuous work and collapsed from exhaustion were beaten by the guards"). The other six distractors were rather *neutral* (i.e., neutral stimuli referred to rather non-emotional situational aspects, which may also include aspects unrelated to intergroup behavior, e.g., "In the morning, the prisoners were given tea and coffee or an infusion of herbs and substitute coffee"). Signals and distractors were presented in the same fixed-randomized order in all conditions. Participants responded to each statement by indicating whether "yes, the sentence appeared in the text" (*yes*-response) or "no, the sentence did not appear in the text" (*no*-response).

Results

Confirmatory Main Effects and Moderation Analyses on d'

A *yes*-response to actual signals was classified as a *hit* (true positive), and to distractors as a *false alarm* (false positive). Conversely, a *no*- response to actual signals was classified as a *miss* (false negative), but to distractors as a *correct rejection* (true negative; see

OSM.2.1 for an overview). Based on these indices, sensitivity *d'* as well as response biases β to neutral and painful stimuli were calculated using the "psycho" package in R (Makowski, 2018).[14] *d*' reflects the distance between the distribution of signals (technically signal+noise as the distributions overlap) and the distribution of noise (distractors only) along the relevant dimension of familiarity. It is calculated by subtracting the *z*-value of the false-alarm rate from the *z*-value of the hit rate. There are multiple ways to calculate the response bias (for an overview see Macmillan & Creelman, 2004). In the present research, we used β, which the ratio of the probability density function of the signal (signal+noise) distribution to that of the noise distribution at the location of the criterion (this measure assumes that participants set a criterion value for the relevant dimension and respond *yes* when the internal response a stimulus generated exceeds this criterion and *no* otherwise).

Inconsistent with our hypotheses, *d'* did not differ between groups, F (2, 536) = 1.03, p = .359, η^2 = 0.00 (see Table 2 for descriptive statistics and correlations; see OSM.2.3 for histograms on *d'*). The effect sizes in *d'* were small with a difference of Cohen's d = 0.06 between victimhood and perpetration condition (albeit in the opposite direction to what we expected), d = 0.10 between victimhood and control condition, and d = 0.15 between perpetration and control condition. Also deviating from our second hypothesis, a multiple regression analysis did not indicate a significant interaction of centered collective narcissism and perpetration, $b_{(cn*p)}$ = 0.01, SE = 0.01, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.03], p = .226, or control condition on *d'*, $b_{(cn*c)}$ = -0.01, SE = 0.01, 95% CI [-0.03, 0.01], p = .476. Replicating the findings from Study 1, collective narcissism was negatively associated with *d'*, $b_{(cn)}$ = -0.02, SE = 0.01, 95% CI [-0.04, -0.01], p < .001, F(5, 533) = 6.90, p < .001, R^2 = 0.05 (stable negative association also in a model without interaction terms).

[14] To avoid numerical imbalance, we additionally calculated β's to neutral and painful distractors based on hit and miss rates for six randomly chosen signals (instead of 12). Results did not differ in statistical interferences from the present results (OSM.2.2).

Table 2

Overview of Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations in Study 2

Variable	Victimhood		Perpetration		Control							
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	α	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) *d'*[a]	1.37	0.79	1.42	0.93	1.29	0.89	-	-	-	-	-	-
(2) β Neutral[b]	1.61	0.77	1.46	0.75	1.52	0.77	-	**.13**	-	-	-	-
(3) β Painful[b]	1.01	0.55	1.01	0.63	0.95	0.48	-	**-.15**	**.38**	-	-	-
(4) Collective Narcissism	3.23	1.47	2.95	1.41	3.32	1.55	.93	**-.23**	**-.17**	.06	-	-
(5) Willingness-Interpersonal Communication	3.66	1.89	3.75	1.99	3.79	1.86	.85	-.05	**-.13**	-.09	.08	-
(6) Willingness-Media and School	5.46	1.74	5.94	1.69	5.71	1.68	.79	.12	.02	-.07	**-.15**	**.51**

Note. Significant correlations are marked bold. Correlations larger than |.16| were significant at $p < .001$. Correlations larger than |.12| were significant at $p < .05$, using *p*-values adjusted for multiple comparisons according to Holm's method.
[a] Higher *d'*-values indicate a more accurate recognition performance.
[b] β-values < 1 indicate a tendency toward the *yes*-response whereas values > 1 indicate a tendency toward the *no*-response.

Confirmatory Moderation Analysis on β

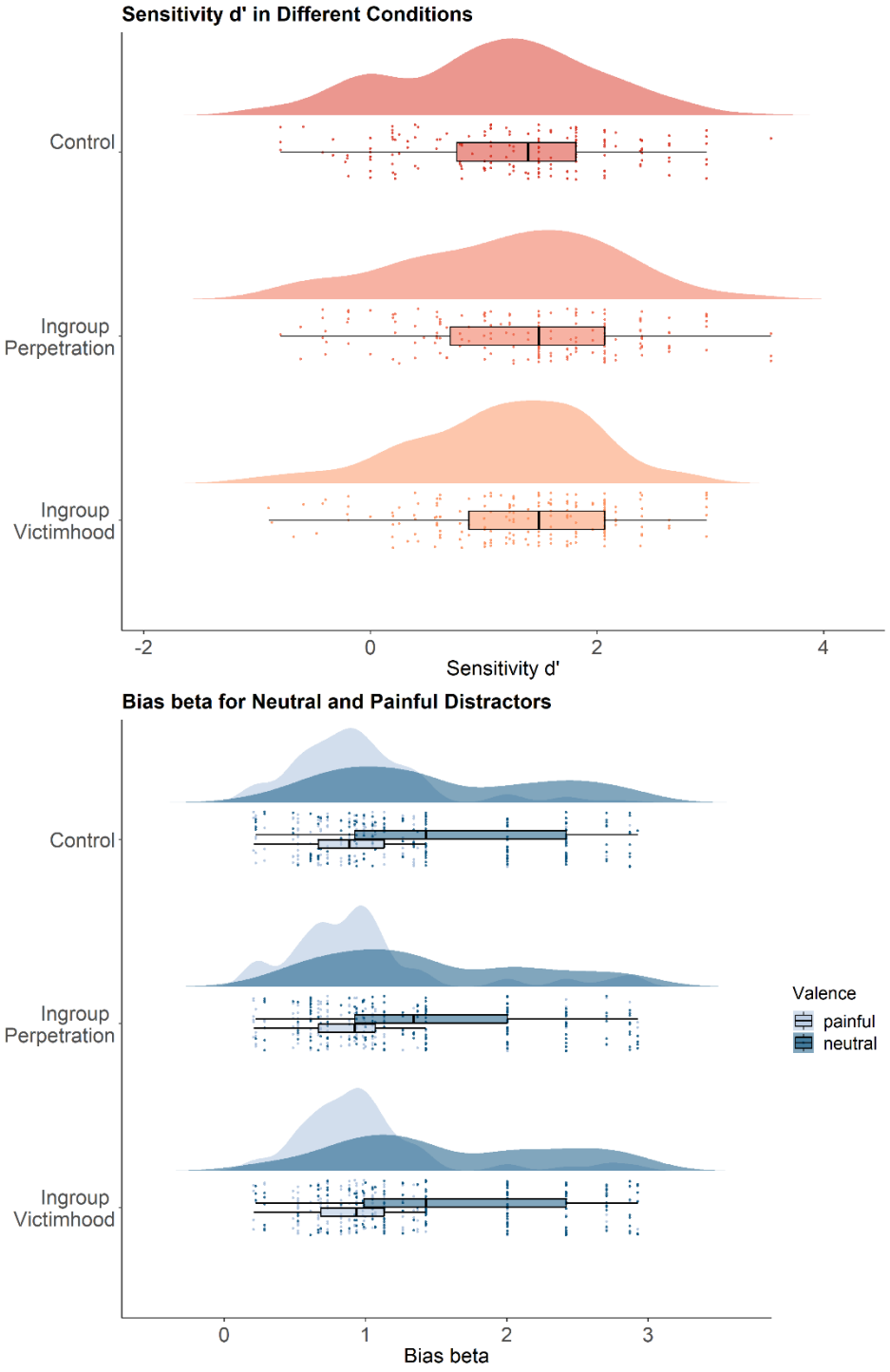
We first explored in a LMM whether β to neutral and painful stimuli differed significantly between groups. The model included a random intercept for participants (intercepts-only model) as well as the main effects of condition, stimuli valence (neutral vs. painful; painful was used as reference category in this and the following studies), and their interaction as fixed-effects parameters. The variance between participants in their intercept was $\tau_{00} = 0.16$. Satterthwaite's *t*-tests revealed that neutral distractors were associated with a higher β-value (i.e., a higher tendency toward the *no*-response) than painful distractors, $b_{(n)} = 0.60$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [0.50, 0.71], $p < .001$. This effect remained significant also in a model without interaction terms. Yet, there were no significant interaction effects, neither of valence and perpetration, $b_{(n*p)} = -0.15$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [-0.31, 0.00], $p = .058$, nor of valence and control condition, $b_{(n*c)} = -0.04$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [-0.19, 0.12], $p = .683$. This suggests that neither the β to neutral nor to painful stimuli differed between conditions (see Figure 1).

To examine the hypothesized moderation effect of collective narcissism, we added the three-way interactions of centered collective narcissism, condition and stimuli valence to the above LMM on β.[15] Deviating from our hypothesis, there was neither an interaction with the perpetration, $b_{(cn*n*p)} = 0.05$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.09, 0.12], $p = .768$, nor the control condition, $b_{(cn*n*c)} = -0.03$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.13, .07], $p = .616$, $\sigma^2_{Residual} = 0.29$, $\tau 00 = 0.16$. Thus, collective narcissists did not show a higher tendency toward the yes-response for painful victimhood stimuli.

[15] We preregistered to analyze the third hypothesis separately for neutral and painful statements using a repeated-measures ANCOVA (with perpetration as reference category). However, this description was not accurate considering that separate analyses for neutral and painful statements exclude the within-subjects component (stimuli valence). We therefore addressed the third hypothesis in a LMM (with victimhood as reference category, for reasons of consistency) but report the results of ANCOVAs on neutral and painful stimuli, which do not differ in statistical interferences from the present results, in OSM.2.4.

Figure 1

Sensitivity d' and Response Bias β to Neutral or Painful Distractors per Condition in Study 2



Note. Density curves, raw data, boxplots marking the median and interquartile range, and whiskers extending to largest and smallest value within 1.5 times the interquartile range are displayed. Higher *d'*-values indicate a more accurate recognition performance. β-values < 1 indicate a tendency toward the *yes*-response whereas values > 1 indicate a tendency toward the *no*-response.

Exploratory Analyses of Communication Willingness and Dropouts

Interpersonal communication willingness did not differ between groups, $F(2, 536) = 0.21$, $p = .810$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$. Yet, media- and school-related communication willingness was lower in the victimhood than in the perpetration condition, as indicated by an ANOVA, $F(2, 536) = 3.54$, $p = .030$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$, and Bonferroni-Holm corrected *t*-tests, $t(362) = 2.64$, $p = .025$, $d = 0.28$. Additional chi-squared tests with Yate's continuity correction did not indicate systematic differences in dropout during reading the texts ($n_{(v)} = 21$, $n_{(p)} = 31$, $n_{(c)} = 24$; χ^2s < 1.75, *ps* > .186) or due to failing attention checks ($n_{(v)} = 23$, $n_{(p)} = 34$, $n_{(c)} = 24$; χ^2s < 2.59, *ps* > .108).

Discussion

Inconsistent with our hypotheses, the groups did not differ in recognition performance. Also deviating from our hypotheses, collective narcissism was not related to enhanced victimhood memory or response bias to painful stimuli in the victimhood condition. Replicating Study 1, there was no evidence of systematic differences in encoding of the text or willingness to communicate about the text. Yet, the willingness to be confronted with its content at school or in the media was higher in the perpetration condition.

One explanation for the lack of significant results could be the study context. In Germany, the ingroup's historical transgressions represent a relevant part of the nation's self-perception (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2021) whose commemoration is a sociopolitical norm (Assmann, 2006). Indeed, the willingness to learn about the historical content at school or in the media was higher for ingroup perpetration than for victimhood in the present study. Some authors argue that it is the very public presence of German perpetration that motivates exonerating victimhood narratives (e.g., Rensmann, 2004). Such victimhood narratives can frequently be observed in both private and public discourse (Assmann, 2006; Bar-On & Gaon, 1991; Rees et al., 2018). Research on social norms, however, suggests the opposite. Salient prosocial norms can motivate prosocial behavior (Nook et al., 2016), and even shape

individual memory (Goyal et al., 2020). As such, the German norm of remembering the suffering inflicted on other groups can lead to particularly undisguised perpetrator memory, opposing the defensive desire to remember victimhood. To increase representativeness beyond the German memory culture, the next study thus aimed at replicating the present findings in another context.

Additionally, Study 2 revealed a systematically higher *no*-response to neutral distractors across all conditions. One likely reason for this unexpected finding could be that the texts actually contained barely any neutral information, so it was indeed more plausible to assume that they have not been presented. Finally, our hypothesis regarding β was based on the assumption that victimhood content was more likely to match participants' positive schema about the ingroup, i.e., to be perceived as more credible. However, we did not test this assumption by measuring the perceived historical accuracy of the stimulus material. These concerns were also addressed in the third study.

Study 3

Study 3 was conducted in the context of British memory of WWII. In marked contrast to Germany, the UK sees itself primarily as a hero of WWII, with strong secondary roles as victim and recipient of help (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2021). To enhance representativeness not only at the level of context but also at the level of historical events (Brunswik, 1955), the stimulus text this time was sampled from a pool of five different texts per condition. To counteract the higher tendency for the *no*-response to neutral stimuli as found in Study 2, signals and distractors in Study 3 were designed to reflect the actual ratio of painful to neutral information in the stimulus texts. Hypotheses were identical to those in Study 2.

Besides dropout rates and communication willingness, Study 3 additionally explored the perceived historical credibility of the stimulus texts. Prior research indicated that perceived credibility – or in other words, consistency with one's own schema – can influence individual memory (Roediger et al., 2001). Furthermore, it can generate a shift in β in favor of

the *yes*-response (Dube et al., 2010). Testing group differences in perceived credibility might thus help to understand the presence or absence of memory effects.

Method

Participants

Via 'Prolific,' we recruited $N = 716$ participants ($n_{(v)} = 244$, $n_{(p)} = 240$, $n_{(c)} = 232$) who hold a UK nationality, identified as British, did not indicate to have clicked at random, and answered at least two attention check questions correctly (see preregistered exclusion criteria). Age ranged from 18 to 82 years ($M = 42.02$, $SD = 13.59$, 49.72% female, 0.84% gender diverse participants). We had 80% power ($\alpha = 0.05$) to detect a mean difference of Cohen's $d = 0.26$ between victimhood and perpetration condition in a two-tailed *t*-test.

Manipulation, Procedure and Measures

Procedure and measures were identical to those in Study 2, with three exceptions: First, the stimulus text was sampled randomly from five different texts per condition. These texts focused on different aspects of war-related collective suffering between 1937 and 1946, including imprisonment in camps (one text), bombing (two texts), suffering of children (one text), and attacks on hospital ships (one text). As in the previous studies, the texts were almost identical across the three experimental conditions (victimhood vs. perpetration vs. control), with variations only regarding the role of the ingroup as well as location, time, and minor details to ensure cultural appropriateness of content (e. g., names of people involved). Second, the number of signals and distractors reflected the actual ratio of painful to neutral information in the texts, namely about 75% painful to 25% neutral information (i.e., three of 12 signals and three of 12 distractors were neutral). This ratio was chosen to keep the main focus of the text on victimhood [perpetration] while still allowing for some neutral information. Third, at the end of the study, participants were asked to indicate on two items how historically credible they considered the stimulus text to be ("I think the article correctly

portrayed the events of the time", "I think the article did not portray the past as it really was"; ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

Results

Confirmatory Main Effects and Moderation Analyses on d'

Similar to Study 2, we calculated *d'* and β to neutral and painful stimuli based on hits, false alarms, misses, and correct rejections (see OSM.3.1 for these indices).[16] Descriptive statistics and correlations are displayed in Table 3 (for histograms on *d'* see OSM.3.2). To address our main hypothesis, we conducted a LMM on *d',* treating condition as fixed factor and allowing the effects to vary randomly (Judd et al., 2012) in terms of their intercepts and slopes for individual stimulus texts (random-intercepts-random-slopes model; see Model 1 in Table 4). Against expectations, the groups did not differ significantly in their recognition performance *d'*. The overall effect size between victimhood and perpetration condition was Cohen's $d = 0.19$ (in the expected direction). The effect size between victimhood and control condition was $d = 0.15$, and between perpetration and control condition $d = 0.05$. Also deviating from our second hypothesis, collective narcissism did not interact with condition on *d'* (Model 2 in Table 4).

Confirmatory Moderation Analysis on β

First, we explored whether β to neutral or painful stimuli differed between conditions. Therefore, we conducted a LMM on β including the main and interaction effects of condition and stimuli valence as fixed-effects parameters, while treating stimulus text as random factor (random-intercepts-random-slopes model). Respective Satterthwaite's *t*- tests revealed no significant differences in β to neutral or painful stimuli between conditions, $b_{(n*p)} = 0.06$, $SE = 0.10$, 95% CI [-0.14, 0.25], $p = .563$; $b_{(n*c)} = -0.06$, $SE = 0.10$, 95% CI [-0.26, 0.14], $p = .562$ (Figure 2). Results only indicated that neutral stimuli were associated with a lower β-value

[16] To calculate β to neutral (painful) stimuli, only the neutral (painful) signals and distractors were used to determine hits, misses, false alarms and correct rejections.

(i.e., a lower tendency toward the *no*-response) across all conditions, $b_{(n)} = -0.27$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI [-0.41, 0.13], $p < .001$, $\sigma^2_{Residual} = 0.61$, $\tau_{00} = 0.01$, $\tau_{11(p)} = 0.00$, $\tau_{12(c)} = 0.00$ (also significant in a model without interaction terms). To test our third hypothesis, we added centered collective narcissism as a further moderator. Deviating from expectations, there were no significant three-way interactions with the perpetration, $b_{(cn*n*p)} = -0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [-0.03, 0.02], $p = .679$, or control condition, $b_{(cn*n*c)} = -0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [-0.04, 0.01], $p = .229$, $\sigma^2_{Residual} = 0.61$, $\tau_{00} = 0.01$, $\tau_{11(p)} = 0.00$, $\tau_{12(c)} = 0.00$.

Table 3

Overview of Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations in Study 3

Variable	Victimhood		Perpetration		Control								
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	α	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(1) *d'*[a]	2.25	0.84	2.08	0.90	2.12	0.85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(2) β Neutral[b]	1.32	0.46	1.33	0.47	1.30	0.48	-	**-.13**	-	-	-	-	-
(3) β Painful[b]	1.59	0.99	1.55	1.00	1.63	1.05	-	**.12**	.07	-	-	-	-
(4) Collective Narcissism	2.59	1.16	2.67	1.24	2.55	1.23	.91	-.05	.01	-.03	-	-	-
(5) Willingness-Interpersonal Communication	2.71	1.40	2.93	1.57	2.73	1.53	.83	-.01	-.03	-.06	.04	-	-
(6) Willingness-Media and School	4.61	1.34	4.63	1.54	4.75	1.46	.76	**.12**	.00	-.04	**-.16**	**.44**	-
(7) Historical Accuracy	5.52	1.03	5.07	1.19	5.42	1.07	.87	.09	-.04	-.04	-.05	**.12**	**.28**

Note. Significant correlations are marked bold. Correlations larger than |.15| were significant at $p < .001$. Correlations larger than |.11| were significant at $p < .05$, using *p*-values adjusted for multiple comparisons according to Holm's method.

[a] Higher *d'*-values indicate a more accurate recognition performance.

[b] β-values < 1 indicate a tendency toward the *yes*-response whereas values > 1 indicate a tendency toward the *no*-response.

Table 4

Fixed and Random Effects in Confirmatory LMMs on d' in Study 3

Variable (Parameter)	Model 1					Model 2				
	Fixed Effects									
	B	95% CI		*SE*	*p*	*B*	95% CI		*SE*	*p*
		LL	*UL*				*LL*	*UL*		
Intercept[a]	2.25	2.14	2.36	0.06	< .001	2.25	2.14	2.36	0.06	< .001
Perpetration	-0.16	-0.36	0.04	0.10	.167	-0.16	-0.35	0.04	0.10	.169
Control	-0.12	-0.30	0.05	0.09	.193	-0.12	-0.30	0.05	0.09	.201
Collective Narcissism[b]						-0.00	-0.02	0.01	0.01	.677
Collective Narcissism x Perpetration						-0.01	-0.03	0.01	0.01	.338
Collective Narcissism x Control						0.00	-0.02	0.02	0.01	.763
	Random Effects									
$\sigma^2_{Residual}$			0.73					0.73		
Intercept (τ_{00})			0.00					0.00		
Perpetration (τ_{11})			0.02					0.02		
Control (τ_{12})			0.01					0.01		

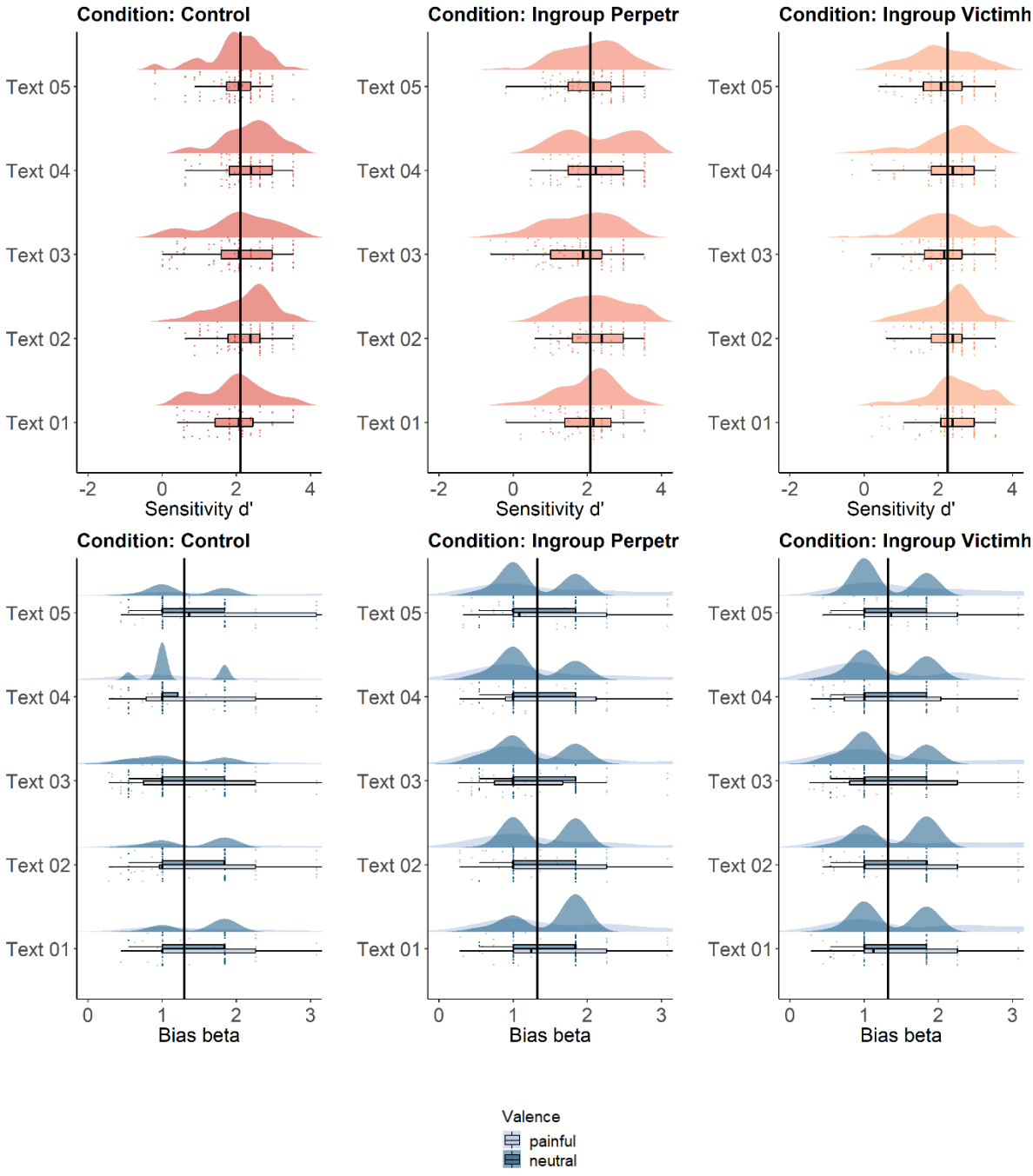
Note. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

[a] Ingroup victimhood represents the reference category.

[b] Collective narcissism was centered prior to analysis.

Figure 2

Sensitivity d' and Response Bias β to Neutral or Painful Distractors per Condition in Study 3



Note. Density curves, raw data, boxplots marking the median and interquartile range, and whiskers extending to largest and smallest value within 1.5 times the interquartile range are displayed. The vertical black lines represent the grand mean *d'*-values (upper plot) and β-values (lower plot) per group over all stimulus texts. Higher *d'*-values indicate a more accurate recognition performance. β-values < 1 indicate a tendency toward the *yes*-response whereas values > 1 indicate a tendency toward the *no*-response.

Exploratory Robustness Analyses and Dropouts

Since in this and the following studies the number of higher-level variables was relatively small (e.g., only five different stimulus texts in the present study), we conducted exploratory robustness analyses in simplified models without random effects per text. For reasons of parsimony, we report them in OSM.3.3 and report them in the paper only in case of deviations from the confirmatory analyses regarding statistical interferences (no deviation in the present study).

During reading, only seven participants dropped out. Due to failure to correctly answer at least two of three attention check questions further $n = 66$ participants dropped out ($n_{(v)} = 20$, $n_{(p)} = 22$, $n_{(c)} = 24$; no significant difference between groups with all χ^2s < 0.270, *ps* > .603). When including these participants, still, none of the hypotheses were confirmed; the effect sizes for memory performance just slightly decreased ($d = 0.14$ between victimhood and perpetration condition, $d = 0.09$ between victimhood and control condition, $d = 0.05$ between perpetration and control condition).

Exploratory Analyses of Communication Willingness and Perceived Historical Accuracy

Satterthwaite's *t*-tests in exploratory LMMs (random-intercepts-random-slopes models) did not reveal significant differences in interpersonal, $b_{(p)} = 0.23$, $SE = 0.14$, 95% CI [-0.05, 0.51], $p = .126$, $b_{(c)} = 0.02$, $SE = 0.15$, 95% CI [-0.27, 0.30], $p = .905$, $\sigma^2_{Residual} = 2.25$, $\tau_{00} = 0.00$, $\tau_{11(p)} = 0.01$, $\tau_{12(c)} = 0.01$, or media- and school-related communication willingness, $b_{(p)} = 0.02$, $SE = 0.18$, 95% CI [-0.28, 0.32], $p = .882$, $b_{(c)} = 0.11$, $SE = 0.26$, 95% CI [-0.39, 0.62], $p = .679$, $\sigma^2_{Residual} = 2.03$, $\tau_{00} = 0.01$, $\tau_{11(p)} = 0.03$, $\tau_{12(c)} = 0.24$. Perceived historical accuracy also did not differ between groups, $b_{(p)} = -0.47$, $SE = 0.28$, 95% CI [-1.02, 0.07], $p = .164$, $b_{(c)} = -0.11$, $SE = 0.24$, 95% CI [-0.58, 0.35], $p = .657$, $\sigma^2_{Residual} = 1.06$, $\tau_{00} = 0.01$, $\tau_{11(p)} = 0.34$, $\tau_{12(c)} = 0.24$.

Likewise, in simple ANOVAs, interpersonal and media- or school-related communication willingness did not differ between groups (OSM.3.3). Yet, an ANOVA

followed by Bonferroni-Holm corrected post-hoc tests, indicated that perceived historical accuracy was significantly lower in the perpetration condition than in the victimhood, $t(470) = 4.48$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.41$, and control condition, $t(468) = 3.35$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.31$, $F(2, 713) = 11.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$.

Discussion

Even in the British context, where hero and victim roles are fundamental parts of the collective memory of WWII (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2021), participants did not recognize information on ingroup victimhood better than information on ingroup perpetration or outgroup victimhood/perpetration. Despite some variation from the German samples in terms of effect sizes, there was no significant memory effect. This suggests that bias at the level of individual memory might not to be expected, even in contexts which are not marked by a distinct norm of representing the ingroup's historical perpetration.

Collective narcissism had no moderating influence on either memory performance or response bias. Yet, β toward the *no*-response was significantly lower for neutral stimuli across conditions, suggesting that neutral information was overall perceived as more plausible to have been presented. Since neutral stimuli also contained information that did not relate to intergroup behavior, they may have been perceived as less relevant and therefore read less thoroughly, making any neutral information appear to be a plausible part of the stimulus text. Importantly, however, there were no differences between conditions in β that could have indicated an ingroup-defensive mechanism.

Noticeably, an additional ANOVA on perceived historical accuracy provided suggestive evidence that the perpetration condition was perceived to be least reflective of reality. This may be due to the low salience of WWII perpetration in the British population (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2021). Alternatively, the result could mirror a bias against morally incriminating ingroup perpetration. Yet, although perceived credibility of stimulus material can influence memory performance and response bias (Dube et al., 2010; Roediger et al.,

2001), the significant difference in historical accuracy did not transfer into a significant memory or response bias. The next study aimed to further increase power to allow for the detection of even smaller effects, thereby also enabling testing of the absence of substantial group differences.

Study 4

In Study 4, we returned to the German context. Since in Studies 1-2 we used the same stimulus material focusing on imprisonment in camps (with concentration camps representing a particularly incisive part of German perpetrator history), it may not have been the ingroup role that had no memory effect, but the inability of the stimulus material to bring this effect to light. Thus, in Study 4, the stimulus text was sampled randomly from a set of 12 different texts per condition covering various aspects of war-related events between 1937 and 1946.

Additionally, we intended to reach sufficient power to detect even smaller effects as well as to test the statistical equivalence of memory performance between groups using the TOST (Two One-Sided Tests) procedure (Lakens, 2017). Unlike conventional null hypothesis testing, which is incapable of supporting the absence of an effect, equivalence testing allows to examine whether an effect is smaller than a Smallest Effect Size of Interest (SESOI). Since equivalence testing procedures are not yet available for mixed models, we tested equivalence for the mean between-groups difference in memory performance. As SESOI, we used the standardized effect size of *significant differences* in memory performance between ingroup and outgroup perpetration as obtained in a previous experimental study (d = 0.22 in Study 1 by Rotella & Richeson, 2013). This SESOI definition is based on the following reasoning: Since we hypothesize that morally affirming victimhood is remembered better than morally unaffecting neutral (i.e., outgroup victimhood/perpetration) information, with neutral information already being better remembered than morally threatening perpetration information (Rotella & Richeson, 2013), the effect size between victimhood and perpetration memory should be at least as large as that between neutral and perpetration memory. The only

preregistered hypothesis in Study 4 was that memory performance would be better for ingroup victimhood information than for ingroup perpetration or outgroup victimhood/perpetration information.

Method

Participants

A power analysis for TOST in independent *t*-tests using the "power- TOSTtwo" R function provided by Lakens (2017) indicated that 400 participants per group allowed us to test for equivalence bounds of Cohen's d = -0.21 to 0.21 (i.e., even slightly smaller than our SESOI) with a statistical power of 80% ($\alpha = 0.05$). Based on these considerations, we recruited N = 1,211 participants via 'Respondi' ($n_{(v)}$ = 403, $n_{(p)}$ = 422, $n_{(c)}$ = 386; same preregistered inclusion criteria as in Studies 1-2), stratified for the German population aged between 18 and 74 years regarding age and gender. This sample furthermore allowed us to detect effects of Cohen's d = 0.195 between victimhood and perpetration condition with a power of 80% ($\alpha = 0.05$) in an independent *t*-test. Thus, we were able to test for both, the presence and absence of effects at least as large as those found in previous significant memory experiments (Rotella & Richeson, 2013).

Manipulation, Procedure and Measures

Procedure and measures were the same as in Study 3, except that this time the stimulus text was sampled randomly from a set of 12 different texts per condition. These texts covered aspects of imprisonment in camps (three texts), bombing (two texts), suffering of children (one text), rape (two texts), plundering (two texts), expulsion (one text), and starvation (one text). We further pretested that the painful stimuli evoked significantly stronger negative emotions than the neutral ones (Cohen's d = 3.31, see OSM.4.0 for details).

Results

Confirmatory Main Effects Analysis on d'

Descriptive statistics and correlations are reported in Table 5 (see also OSM.4.1 for histograms on *d'*). An overview of hits, false alarms, misses, and correct rejections is given in OSM.4.2. Inconsistent with our hypothesis, a LMM treating condition as fixed and stimulus text as random factor (random-intercepts-random-slopes model) did not reveal any significant group differences in *d'* (Model 1 in Table 6; Figure 3). Speaking to overall effect sizes, the mean difference in *d'* between victimhood and perpetration condition was very small (Cohen's $d = 0.05$ in the expected direction), just as the differences between victimhood and control ($d = 0.00$), as well as perpetration and control condition ($d = 0.05$).

Equivalence Testing

To test whether memory performance could be considered statistically equivalent between groups, we applied the TOST procedure (SESOI $d = 0.22$) using the R package "Toster" (Lakens, 2017). The 90% CI around the observed standardized mean difference between victimhood and perpetration condition ($d = 0.05$) was [-0.07; 0.17]. Since this CI fell completely inside the upper ($\Delta_U = 0.22$) and lower equivalence bounds ($\Delta_L = -0.22$), as also affirmed by significant equivalence test results, $t(820) = -2.47$, $p = .007$, we could reject the null hypothesis that the difference in *d'* between the victimhood and perpetration condition was at least as large as the SESOI. The victimhood and control condition, $d = 0.00$, 90% CI [-0.12; 0.12], $t(785) = -3.09$, $p = .001$, as well as the perpetration and control conditions could also be considered statistically equivalent, $d = 0.05$, 90% CI [-0.07; 0.17], $t(798) = 2.44$, $p = .008$.

Table 5

Overview of Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations in Study 4

Variable	Victimhood		Perpetration		Control								
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	α	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(1) *d'*[a]	1.68	1.04	1.63	1.03	1.68	1.04	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(2) β Neutral[b]	1.11	0.44	1.14	0.45	1.12	0.45	-	.03	-	-	-	-	-
(3) β Painful[b]	1.32	0.90	1.39	0.94	1.33	0.89	-	**.20**	**.14**	-	-	-	-
(4) Collective Narcissism	2.88	1.58	3.13	1.60	3.05	1.48	.95	**-.25**	-.03	**-.13**	-	-	-
(5) Willingness-Interpersonal Communication	2.89	1.59	3.01	1.62	2.90	1.51	.87	-.06	-.08	.00	**.12**	-	-
(6) Willingness-Media and School	4.53	1.56	4.63	1.65	4.35	1.60	.79	.08	-.06	.01	**-.17**	**.45**	-
(7) Historical Accuracy	5.33	1.24	5.52	1.20	5.18	1.09	.86	**.15**	-.07	.00	**-.15**	**.15**	**.34**

Note. Significant correlations are marked bold. Correlations larger than |.13| were significant at $p < .001$, Correlations larger than |.11| were significant at $p < .05$, using *p*-values adjusted for multiple comparisons according to Holm's method.

[a] Higher *d'*-values indicate a more accurate recognition performance.

[b] β-values < 1 indicate a tendency toward the *yes*-response whereas values > 1 indicate a tendency toward the *no*-response.

Table 6

Fixed and Random Effects in Confirmatory and Exploratory LMMs on d' in Study 4

Variable (Parameter)	Model 1					Model 2				
	Fixed Effects									
	B	95% CI		*SE*	*p*	*B*	95% CI		*SE*	*p*
		LL	*UL*				*LL*	*UL*		
Intercept[a]	1.68	1.50	1.87	0.10	< .001	1.66	1.48	1.84	0.09	< .001
Perpetration	-0.04	-0.20	0.12	0.08	.635	0.00	-0.14	0.15	0.07	.969
Control	0.01	-0.15	0.16	0.08	.935	0.03	-0.11	0.18	0.07	.682
Collective Narcissism[b]						-0.02	-0.03	-0.01	0.01	< .001
Collective Narcissism x Perpetration						-0.01	-0.02	0.01	0.01	.364
Collective Narcissism x Control						0.00	-0.02	0.02	0.01	.844
	Random Effects									
$\sigma^2_{Residual}$			1.01					0.95		
Intercept (τ_{00})			0.08					0.07		
Perpetration (τ_{11})			0.02					0.01		
Control (τ_{12})			0.01					0.01		

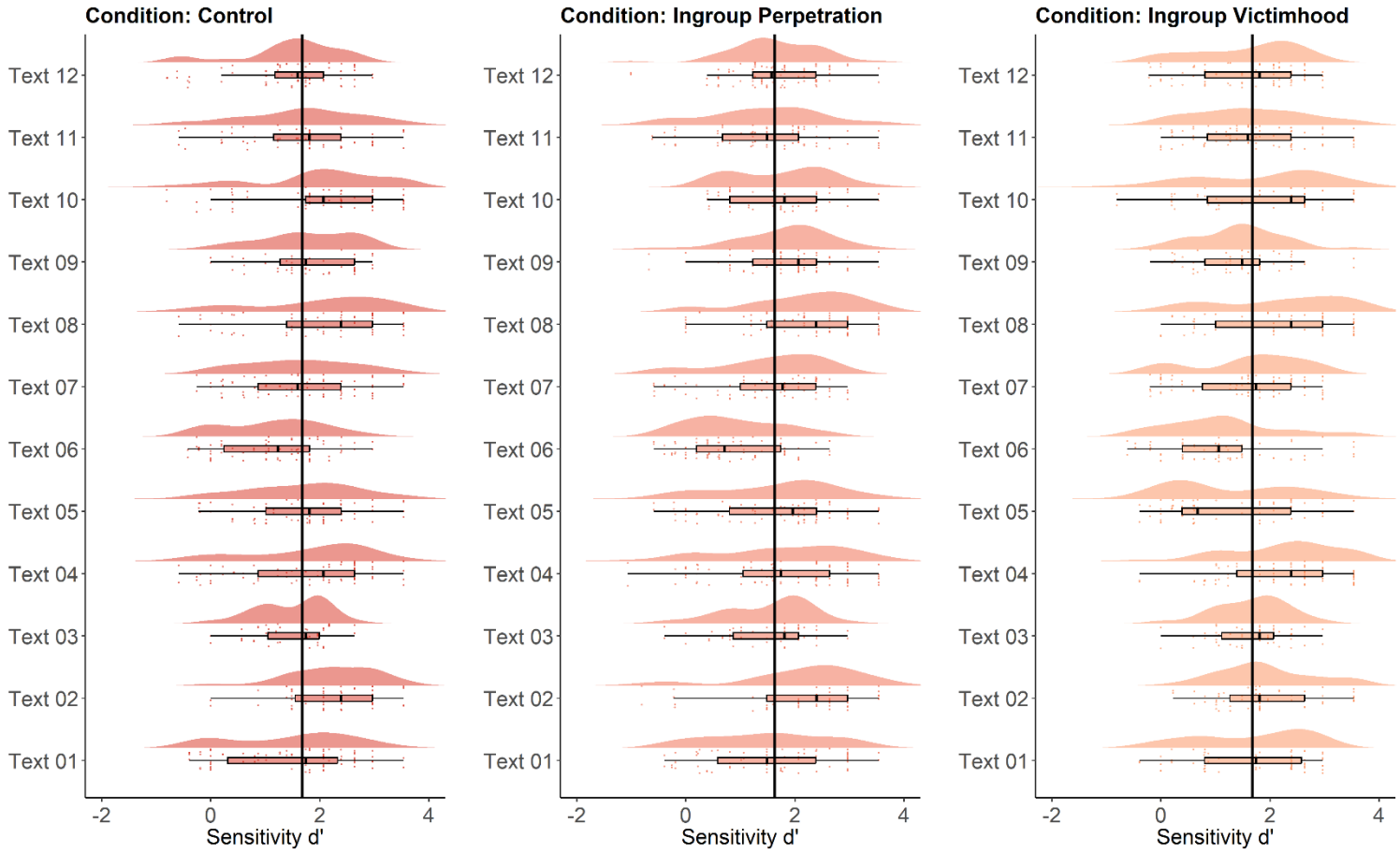
Note. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

[a] Ingroup victimhood represents the reference category.

[b] Collective narcissism was centered prior to analysis.

Figure 3

Sensitivity d' per Text and Condition in Study 4



Note. Density curves, raw data, boxplots marking the median and interquartile range, and whiskers extending to largest and smallest value within 1.5 times the interquartile range are displayed. The vertical black lines represent the grand mean *d'*-values per group over all stimulus texts. Higher *d'*-values indicate a more accurate recognition performance.

Exploratory Moderation Analyses on d' and β

For reasons of consistency, we explored the moderating role of collective narcissism. However, while collective narcissism was negatively related to *d'* across all conditions, this association was not more or less pronounced under certain experimental conditions (Model 2 in Table 6). Further moderation analyses in LMMs on β (random-intercepts-random-slopes models) did not indicate significant interactions between condition and stimuli valence that would have marked group differences in β to neutral and painful stimuli, $b_{(n*p)}$ = -0.04, *SE* = 0.07, 95% CI [-0.18, 0.10], *p* = .564, $b_{(n*c)}$ = 0.00, *SE* = 0.07, 95% CI [-0.14, 0.14], *p* = .985. Replicating the findings of Study 3, however, neutral stimuli were associated with a lower β-value (i.e., lower tendency toward the *no*-response) than painful stimuli across all conditions, $b_{(n)}$ = -0.21, *SE* = 0.05, 95% CI [-0.31, 0.11], *p* < .001, $\sigma^2_{Residual}$ = 0.50, τ_{00} = 0.02, $\tau_{11(p)}$ = 0.00, $\tau_{12(c)}$ = 0.00 (also found in a model without interaction terms). Further entering centered collective narcissism did not lead to significant three-way interactions with condition and stimuli valence, $b_{(cn*n*p)}$ = 0.01, *SE* = 0.01, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.02], *p* = .458, $b_{(cn*n*c)}$ = 0.00, *SE* = 0.01, 95% CI [-0.24, 0.01], *p* = .786, $\sigma^2_{Residual}$ = 0.50, τ_{00} = 0.02, $\tau_{11(p)}$ = 0.00, $\tau_{12(c)}$ = 0.00.

Exploratory Robustness Analyses and Dropouts

Exploratory robustness analyses in simplified models not accounting for random effects per text led to the same statistical interferences as the confirmatory analyses (OSM.3.3). Dropout during reading ($n_{(v)}$ = 61, $n_{(p)}$ = 63, $n_{(c)}$ = 84) was slightly higher in the control condition compared to the victimhood condition, $\chi^2(1) = 3.86$, *p* = .049. Dropout due to failing the attention checks did not differ between groups ($n_{(v)}$ = 89, $n_{(p)}$ = 71, $n_{(c)}$ = 85; χ^2s < 2.59, *ps* > .108).

Exploratory Analyses of Communication Willingness and Perceived Historical Accuracy

Satterthwaite's *t*-tests in exploratory LMMs (random-intercepts-random-slopes models) revealed no significant group difference in interpersonal communication willingness, $b_{(p)}$ = 0.12, *SE* = 0.12, 95% CI [-0.11, 0.35], *p* = .323, $b_{(c)}$ = 0.01, *SE* = 0.12, 95% CI [-0.23,

0.24], p = .954, $\sigma^2_{Residual}$ = 2.44, τ_{00} = 0.05, $\tau_{11(p)}$ = 0.02, $\tau_{12(c)}$ = 0.03, media- and school-related communication willingness, $b_{(p)}$ = 0.09, *SE* = 0.11, 95% CI [-0.12, 0.32], p = .387, $b_{(c)}$ = -0.19, *SE* = 0.14, 95% CI [-0.47, 0.08], p = .166, $\sigma^2_{Residual}$ = 2.55, τ_{00} = 0.00, $\tau_{11(p)}$ = 0.00, $\tau_{12(c)}$ = 0.08, or perceived historical accuracy of the text, $b_{(p)}$ = 0.18, *SE* = 0.13, 95% CI [-0.06, 0.43], p = .172, $b_{(c)}$ = -0.16, *SE* = 0.10, 95% CI [-0.34, 0.03], p = .118, $\sigma^2_{Residual}$ = 1.35, τ_{00} = 0.06, $\tau_{11(p)}$ = 0.11, $\tau_{12(c)}$ = 0.03.

Simple ANOVAs followed by Bonferroni-Holm corrected *t*-tests replicated the above findings on interpersonal communication willingness (OSM.3.3). Yet, according to an ANOVA, media- and school-related communication willingness was significantly lower in the control compared to the perpetration condition, $F(2, 1208) = 3.21$, p = .040, η^2 = .01, $t(803) = 2.47$, p = .037, d = 0.17. Furthermore, the ANOVA indicated that historical accuracy was perceived as significantly lower in the perpetration condition compared to the victimhood, $t(817) = 2.26$, p = .024, d = 0.16, and control condition, $t(806) = 4.18$, $p < .001$, d = 0.29, $F(2, 1208) = 8.29$, $p < .010$, η^2 = .01.

Considering that individuals may more easily recall information that matches their schema, the thus resulting memory advantage of perpetration content may have cancelled out the primacy of victimhood memory. To test this possibility, we controlled for historical accuracy in a LMM and a simple linear model of condition on *d'* and. Condition still did not produce significant memory differences (OSM.4.3).

Discussion

Even with a broader set of historically accurate stimulus material, we did not detect any significant group differences in recognition accuracy. Rather, equivalence testing (Lakens, 2017) indicated that the detected effect size was smaller than the effect size we prespecified to support our theorizing (also true when we meta-analyze across recognition Studies 2-4, see OSM.4.4). Deviating from Study 3, we obtained suggestive evidence for the perpetration condition being perceived as historically more accurate than the other two

conditions. However, even when controlling for the thus potentially resulting memory advantage of perpetration content (Roediger et al., 2001), the groups still did not differ significantly in recognition performance.

One limitation of this and the previous studies is that even though we accounted for different specific events and two different samples, the memory content was still centered only around the historical episode of WWII. This could have affected the presence of memory biases: First, previous research has shown that temporal distance from past intergroup violence plays an important role in intergroup outcomes (Li et al., 2021). This raises the question of whether also memory biases might be induced rather by more recent events. Second, despite the existence of strong German victimhood narratives (Assmann, 2006; Rees et al., 2018), the role of Germans as perpetrators as well as the role of British people primarily as heroes in WWII (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2021) is rather uncontested. This raises the question whether the absence of memory biases can also be observed in historical contexts where the historical roles are more disputed. Finally, the between-subjects design and the explicit instruction to recall or recognize the stimulus information 'as accurately as possible,' as used in Studies 1-4, may also have affected memory performance. In order to account for these issues, we conducted a fifth study using a different design, adapted instructions, and another national context thereby focusing on a more recent and arguably more contested historical episode: the Vietnam War.

Study 5

In her studies on U.S. memory of the Vietnam War, Young (1993) described the interpretation of the Vietnam War as a "battle" (p. 249) not only over the historical event itself but also about the American identity. More than 25 years later, the Vietnam War is still referred to as a "history without consensus" (Chapman, 2020; p. 22). Following Hagopian (2009), narratives of the war span from a 'noble cause' to 'a wrong, immoral and shameful act,' thereby still focusing on America's victims and heroes rather than its crimes.

Considering furthermore the temporal closeness of the Vietnam War relative to WWII, analysis of potential memory biases among U.S. participants in this context may decisively contribute to further generalization of the present results.

While Studies 1-4 used a between-subjects design, Study 5 implemented a recognition task in a within-subjects design confronting participants with ingroup victimhood and perpetration information *within the same text*. This might provide a stronger and more ecologically valid test of memory biases, as people usually have a choice between events they want to remember. Memory bias might then manifest in how they resolve this choice. Moreover, presenting information on ingroup perpetration and victimhood in the same text might evoke threats to both morality and power (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). If restoring ingroup morality is indeed more important than maintaining power (e.g., Brambilla & Leach, 2014), individuals in a situation of mutual threat might be more inclined to selectively remember information on victimhood than on perpetration.

Finally, participants in Studies 1-4 were explicitly instructed to strive for accuracy in their memory performance. This instruction might have provided an additional motivation for precise memory performance, which could have counteracted potential memory biases. Therefore, in Study 5, we deleted this instruction but simply asked the participants to indicate whether the respective sentences appeared in the stimulus text or not. Based on theorizing, we would expect higher recognition performance for episodes presenting the ingroup as a victim compared to episodes presenting the ingroup as a perpetrator group. However, based on the results of Studies 1-4, we would expect that recognition performance is equally high for ingroup victimhood and perpetration episodes presented within the same text.

Method

Participants

If the findings of Rotella and Richeson (2013; used for the SESOI definition in Study 4) were obtained in a within-subjects study and we assumed a correlation between measures

of 0 (the most conservative assumption), Cohen's d_z would correspond to 0.16, as revealed by an analysis in G*Power. Accordingly, $d_z = 0.16$ was taken as the SESOI in our within-subjects study. A power analysis for TOST in dependent *t*- tests using the "powerTOSTpaired" function in R (Lakens, 2017) indicated that testing for equivalence bounds of Cohen's d_z = -0.16 to 0.16 with a statistical power of 80% ($\alpha = 0.05$), requires 335 pairs (i.e., 335 participants). To rebalance for potential dropouts, we preregistered to recruit 450 participants via 'MTurk.'

Due to a technical error for which we do not have an explanation, data collection did not stop at 450 participants but only at 525. We therefore report analyses with a larger sample than preregistered. However, we additionally conducted the reported analyses using only the first 450 participants (see OSM.5.1), which led to identical statistical interferences. In line with our preregistration, we excluded participants who did not hold a U.S. nationality, did not identify as white Americans, failed to answer at least three of four attentions check questions correctly or indicated to have clicked randomly. This resulted in a final sample of $N = 434$ with a mean age of $M = 42.01$ years ($SD = 12.38$, age ranging from 18 to 77; 50.69% female and 1.38% gender diverse participants).

Manipulation, Procedure and Measures

The present study followed a within-subjects design. All participants completed the collective narcissism scale and afterwards read a text containing passages of equal length describing different ingroup victimhood and perpetration episodes during the Vietnam War (with the order of appearance of these episodes in the text being counterbalanced, resulting in four different text versions). Like in Studies 1-4, the participants performed a 3-min arithmetical distraction task after reading the text. Subsequently, the unexpected recognition task was presented (instruction only to indicate for each sentence whether or not it appeared in the text; no additional accuracy instruction). The order of recognition items was fixed-

randomized and identical in content for all four text versions, but with text-congruent victim and perpetrator group naming.

In Studies 2-4, we built on Rotella and Richeson's (2013) recognition study in terms of the number of sentences presented (24 sentences total, 12 signals and 12 distractors). To keep everything as equal as possible to the between-subjects studies, but to also keep the number of sentences related to victimhood and perpetration in the recognition task equally, we presented 26 instead of 24 sentences. These 26 sentences consisted of 13 actual signals and 13 distractors of which ten each referred to painful and three each to neutral aspects (the latter number corresponding to that in Studies 3-4). Out of the ten painful signals and distractors, five each related to ingroup victimhood, while the other five related to ingroup perpetration.

Finally, we measured communication willingness using the same items as in the previous studies, but this time referring separately to episodes of ingroup victimhood and perpetration. Similarly, we measured perceived historical accuracy using the same items as in Studies 3-4, but again separately for ingroup victimhood and perpetration episodes. The order of these items was randomized across participants.

Results

Confirmatory Main Effects Analysis on d'

Descriptive statistics and correlations are displayed in Table 7. Histograms on *d'* are reported in OSM.5.2. An overview of hits, false alarms, misses, and correct rejections is given in OSM.5.3. To test whether recognition performance differed for victimhood and perpetration episodes, we conducted a LMM on *d'* treating the within-subjects condition as fixed and stimulus text as random factor (random intercepts random slopes model). There were no significant differences in *d'* (Model 1 in Table 8; Figure 4).The overall effect size was very small with Cohen's $d_z = 0.02$ in the expected direction.

Equivalence Testing

To test whether *d'* could be considered equally high for ingroup victimhood and ingroup perpetration episodes, we performed equivalence testing by means of the TOST procedure for paired *t*-tests (SESOI of $d_z = 0.16$). The 90% CI around the observed standardized within-subjects difference ($d_z = 0.02$) was [-0.05; 0.09], and thus fell completely inside the equivalence bounds of $\Delta_U = .16$ and $\Delta_L = -.16$. Accompanied by significant equivalence test results, $t(433) = -2.83$, $p = .002$, we could conclude that the observed effect was smaller than our SESOI, indicating statistical equivalence.

Table 7

Overview of Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations in Study 5

Variable	*M*	*SD*	α	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
(1) *d'* Victimhood[a]	1.94	0.82	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(2) *d'* Perpetration[a]	1.92	0.80	-	**.47**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(3) *d'* Neutral[a]	1.90	0.69	-	**.47**	**.53**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(4) β Victimhood (Painful)[b]	1.45	0.68	-	**-.18**	.14	.10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(5) β Perpetration (Painful)[b]	1.51	0.69	-	.13	**-.18**	.05	.09	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(6) β Neutral[b]	1.18	0.38	-	**-.23**	**-.23**	**-.48**	.00	.01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(7) Collective Narcissism	3.34	1.61	.93	-.07	**-.21**	**-.17**	-.13	.04	.11	-	-	-	-	-	-
(8) Willingness-Interpersonal Communication: Victimhood	2.76	1.70	.91	**-.17**	**-.21**	**-.21**	-.10	-.06	.08	**.28**	-	-	-	-	-
(9) Willingness-Interpersonal Communication: Perpetration	2.68	1.65	.80	**-.16**	**-.16**	**-.19**	-.08	-.11	.06	.11	**.81**	-	-	-	-
(10) Willingness-Media and School: Victimhood	4.38	1.64	.91	.08	.04	.04	-.02	-.02	-.06	-.01	**.48**	**.40**	-	-	-
(11) Willingness-Media and School: Perpetration	4.32	1.76	.83	.06	.08	.07	.03	-.03	-.03	**-.23**	**.31**	**.75**	**.49**	-	-
(12) Historical Accuracy: Victimhood	5.50	1.07	.49	.15	**.19**	**.17**	-.03	-.01	-.12	-.07	.04	.15	.02	.06	-
(13) Historical Accuracy: Perpetration	5.30	1.28	.68	**.16**	.14	**.16**	-.03	-.01	-.09	-.12	-.04	.02	.10	.14	**.44**

Note. Significant correlations are marked bold. Correlations larger than |.20| were significant at $p < .001$, Correlations larger than |.15| were significant at $p < .05$, using *p*-values adjusted for multiple comparisons according to Holm's method.
[a] Higher *d'*-values indicate a more accurate recognition performance.
[b] β-values < 1 indicate a tendency toward the *yes*-response whereas values > 1 indicate a tendency toward the *no*-response.

Table 8

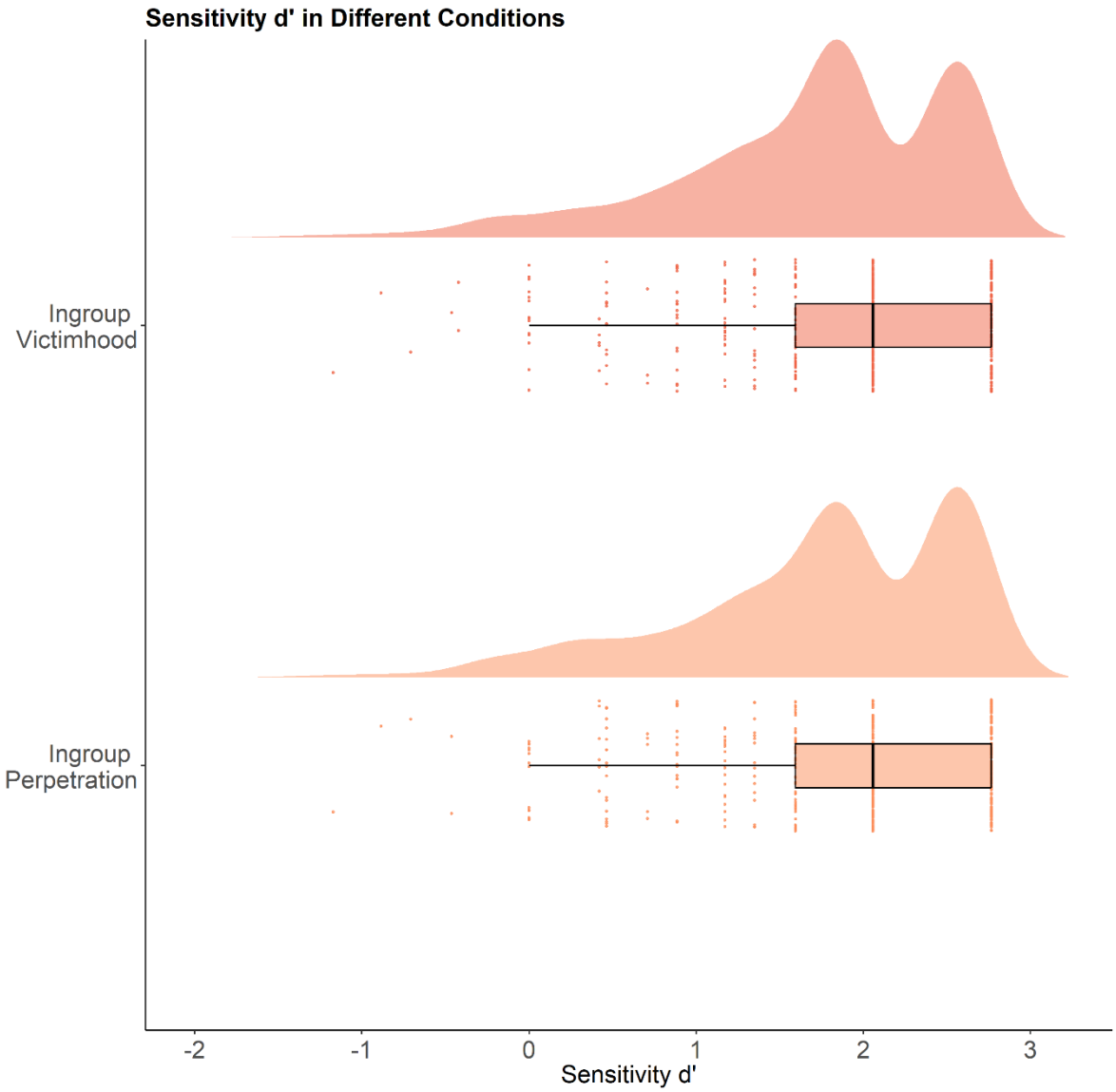
Fixed and Random Effects in Confirmatory and Exploratory LMMs on d' in Study 5

Variable (Parameter)	Model 1					Model 2				
	Fixed Effects									
	B	95% CI		*SE*	*p*	*B*	95% CI		*SE*	*p*
		LL	*UL*				*LL*	*UL*		
Intercept[a]	1.94	1.86	2.03	0.05	< .001	-1.94	1.85	2.04	0.05	< .001
Perpetration	-0.02	-0.20	0.17	0.09	.881	-0.02	-0.18	0.15	0.09	.869
Collective Narcissism[b]						-0.01	-0.02	0.00	000	.097
Collective Narcissism x Perpetration						-0.01	-0.03	0.00	0.01	.066
	Random Effects									
$\sigma^2_{Residual}$			0.65					0.64		
Intercept (τ_{00})			0.00					0.00		
Perpetration (τ_{11})			0.02					0.02		

Note. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.
[a] Ingroup victimhood represents the reference category.
[b] Collective narcissism was centered prior to analysis.

Figure 4

Sensitivity d' per Within-Subjects Condition in Study 5



Note. Density curves, raw data, boxplots marking the median and interquartile range, and whiskers extending to largest and smallest value within 1.5 times the interquartile range are displayed. The vertical black lines represent the grand mean *d*'-values per group over all stimulus texts. Higher *d'*-values indicate a more accurate recognition performance

Exploratory Moderation Analyses on d' and β

Replicating Studies 1-4, collective narcissism did not moderate the effect of victimhood and perpetration episodes on *d'* (Model 2 in Table 8). Further Satterthwaite's *t*-tests in an additional LMM (random-intercepts-random-slopes model) treating β as the dependent variable and stimuli valence as the within-subjects predictor (painful victimhood as

reference category) revealed no significant differences between painful victimhood and painful perpetration information, $b_{(pain\text{-}p)} = 0.04$, $SE = 0.22$, 95% CI [-0.38, 0.47], $p = .858$, or painful victimhood and neutral information in β, $b_{(neutral)} = -0.28$, $SE = 0.13$, 95% CI [-0.54, -0.03], $p = .117$,[17] $\sigma^2_{Residual} = 0.34$, $\tau_{00} = 0.06$, $\tau_{11(pain\text{-}p)} = 0.18$, $\tau_{12(neutral)} = 0.06$. However, entering centered collective narcissism as a moderator led to significant interaction effects, indicating that among individuals high in collective narcissism, the β-value was significantly lower (i.e., lower tendency toward the *no*-response) for painful victimhood information than for painful perpetration, $b_{(pain\text{-}p)} = 0.01$, $SE = 0.00$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.02], $p = .043$, and neutral information, $b_{(neutral)} = 0.01$, $SE = 0.00$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.02], $p = .006$, $\sigma^2_{Residual} = 0.33$, $\tau_{00} = 0.05$, $\tau_{11(pain\text{-}p)} = 0.17$, $\tau_{12(neutral)} = 0.06$. Thus, among collective narcissists, painful victimhood information seemed indeed to be perceived as part of the original text with a higher likelihood than painful perpetration or neutral information.

Exploratory Robustness Analyses and Dropouts

Robustness analyses in LMMs including only a random intercept for participants (intercepts-only models accounting for the within-subjects measure of recognition performance) as well as paired two-samples Wilcoxon signed-rank tests with continuity correction also did not indicate significant differences in *d'* (OSM.3.3). However, collective narcissism significantly interacted with condition in an intercepts-only model, suggesting that individuals high in collective narcissism recognized victimhood information better than perpetration information, $b_{(cn*p)} = -0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.00], $p = .007$, $\sigma^2_{Residual} = 0.34$, $\tau_{00} = 0.30$. Moreover, the interaction of stimuli valence, and centered collective narcissism on β remained significant in a respective intercepts-only model, $b_{(cn*pain\text{-}p)} = 0.01$, $SE = 0.00$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.02], $p = .004$, $b_{(cn*neutral)} = 0.02$, $SE = 0.00$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.03], $p = .001$, $\sigma^2_{Residual} = 0.34$, $\tau_{00} = 0.02$.

[17] In this exploration, confidence interval significance testing and Satterthwaite's *t*-tests led to different conclusions regarding significance. As in all other analyses, we ultimately relied on Satterthwaite's *t*-tests.

A total of n = 59 participants was excluded from analyses since they did not answer correctly at least three attention checks. Including these participants produced results almost identical to the ones reported above, with an overall within-groups difference in *d'* of Cohen's d_z = 0.03.

Exploratory Analyses of Communication Willingness and Perceived Historical Accuracy

Further exploratory LMMs (random-intercepts-random-slopes models) did not indicate significant differences in interpersonal, $b_{(p)}$ = -0.08, SE = 0.13, 95% CI [-0.36, 0.18], p = .560, $\sigma^2_{Residual}$ = 2.78, τ_{00} = 0.03, $\tau_{11(p)}$ = 0.03, or media- and school-related communication willingness, $b_{(p)}$ = -0.06, SE = 0.12, 95% CI [-0.29, 0.16], p = .589, $\sigma^2_{Residual}$ = 2.88, τ_{00} = 0.00, $\tau_{11(p)}$ = 0.00 (same results in simplified intercepts-only models and Wilcoxon tests, OSM.3.3). However, historical accuracy was rated significantly higher for ingroup victimhood episodes than for episodes of ingroup perpetration as indicated by a significant intercepts-only model, $b_{(p)}$ = -0.20, SE = 0.06, 95% CI [-0.32, -0.08], p = .001, $\sigma^2_{Residual}$ = 0.79, τ_{00} = 0.60, and the Wilcoxon test, $V_{Wilcoxon}$ = 7469, p = .001, but not a random-intercepts-random-slopes model, $b_{(p)}$ = -0.19, SE = 0.12, 95% CI [-0.43, 0.04], p = .162, $\sigma^2_{Residual}$ = 1.38, τ_{00} = 0.00, $\tau_{11(p)}$ = 0.03. Yet, given the very low reliability of that measure for victimhood episodes, caution is warranted when interpreting this exploratory finding.

Discussion

Going beyond the previous studies, Study 5 used another national sample, a more recent and arguably, more controversially represented (Chapman, 2020; Young, 1993) historical episode, a within-subjects design, and an instruction that did not explicitly prompt for accurate memory performance. Yet, we still did not find a significant difference in recognition performance. Instead, the difference in recognition performance for ingroup victimhood and perpetration episodes was smaller than our predefined SESOI, supporting the statistical equivalence of memory performance in both conditions (Lakens, 2017).

Deviating from Studies 1-4, the present study provided suggestive evidence for a memory effect in the expected direction in collective narcissists (at least in an intercepts-only model). Moreover, collective narcissists tended to perceive painful victimhood information rather than painful perpetration information as part of the original text. The finding that we obtained these effects only in Study 5 may be the result of all the above changes made in the present study, as well as the interaction of (some of) them. While it would be empirically intriguing to further differentiate which of these adaptations (or combinations of adaptions) teased out effects in *d'* and β among collective narcissists, a main memory effect, as expected in the present research on the basis of the literature, still did not emerge.

General Discussion

Across five large-scale experiments with ecologically valid stimuli, we examined whether individual recall and recognition performance may be better when the ingroup is portrayed as the victim and not the perpetrator group. The ignition spark for this examination laid in the findings that both memory distortions and a focus on group-based victimhood can serve a favorable ingroup image (e.g., Baumeister & Hastings, 1997; Rotella & Richeson, 2013; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). However, the present studies consistently indicated that memory performance did not differ as a function of ingroup role, but could be considered equivalent according to our SESOI based on previous research (Rotella & Richeson, 2013). SDT analyses (Stanislaw & Todorov, 1999) of response bias also did not reflect defensive motivation to downplay the ingroup's historical atrocities by perceiving painful events as less valid in the context of ingroup perpetration. Although some literature highlights that especially high ingroup identifiers, who tend to be eager to maintain a positive ingroup image, are likely to display biased historical memories (Sahdra & Ross, 2007), our research provided suggestive evidence that particularly defensive collective narcissists (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009) were more prone to a memory or response bias only in one of the five studies.

Given these surprising results, the question arises as to why we did not find significant memory effects. One likely reason could be that the threat caused by reminders of the ingroup's historical transgressions was not strong enough to elicit defensive memory biases. Despite the widespread assumption that perpetration is associated with a considerable threat to collective morality (e.g., Branscombe et al., 1999; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), the role that perpetration plays for ingroup morality seems not unambiguous. Accompanied by acts of apology or reparation, demarcation from past perpetration can even serve as an indicator of ethical growth and thus constitute a source of moral superiority (Kazarovytska et al., 2022).

Conversely, it is possible that it was not the ingroup perpetration condition that was insufficiently incriminating, but that ingroup victimhood was insufficiently favorable. Although victim status might be associated with enhanced morality, with morality being particularly important to social groups (Leach et al., 2007), victim status threatens the ingroup's sense of power (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Thus, participants in both experimental conditions, victimhood and perpetration, might have experienced ingroup threat, albeit by violation of different basic needs. In consequence, these different threats may have led to equal memory performance in both conditions.

This explanation is additionally supported by the unexpected finding that collective narcissism, which can trigger strong defensive reactions to ingroup threats (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009; Kazarovytska & Imhoff, 2022), was associated with lower memory performance across all conditions – and not only in the perpetration condition – in four of five studies. Specifically, collective narcissists may have perceived both ingroup conditions as threatening (either to morality or power; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). The control condition without ingroup involvement, in turn, may have been perceived as less relevant to process, resulting in lower memory performance in all conditions. Alternatively, given the functional similarities of individual and collective narcissism (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009), it is also possible that

collective narcissists in general show reduced memory performance, just as individual narcissists (Giacomin et al., 2021).

A third explanation for the lack of significant memory differences could be that even though the perpetration conditions induced moral ingroup threat, this does not automatically prompt a defensive reaction. For instance, although research on secondary antisemitism initially supported the existence of a defensive form of antisemitism mirroring an unwillingness of Germans to be confronted with the Nazi past (Imhoff & Banse, 2009), later failures to replicate this effect shed doubt on the necessary ubiquity of such defensive reaction (see Imhoff & Messer, 2019). Conversely, in some settings, a perceived moral inferiority of the ingroup has even been found to facilitate prosocial intergroup behavior in order to restore the compromised collective morality (e.g., Brown et al., 2008). Hence, instead of defensive memory distortions to the detriment of ingroup perpetration, a particularly empathic memory of the suffering caused by the ingroup may have been evoked in the perpetration conditions.

Finally, it is possible that individual short-term memory distortions do not reflect defensiveness to historically conditioned collective morality concerns. While the present research focused particularly on retrieval accuracy, it is likely that a bias toward victimhood representations is a product of several different mechanisms surrounding memory retrieval. Viewed from this perspective, the present results strongly underscore the relevance of other upstream processes (e.g., selective inattention or encoding) and downstream processes (e.g., attribution and communication; Klein, 2013) to understand the noticeable social salience of historical victimhood perceptions (Bar-On & Gaon, 1991; Rees et al., 2018; Sahdra & Ross, 2007).

Looking at upstream processes, our explorations did not reveal significant differences in inaccurate encoding. However, our attention checks were limited in that the performance on them could also have been influenced by retrieval or communication effects. Furthermore, they only covered a part of the stimulus material so that individuals who actually differed in

encoding accuracy might still have performed equally well in the attention checks. Eventually, our explorations of dropouts were based on cancellation of reading or lack of accuracy in processing the stimulus material, i.e., on reactions occurring after subjects had already been exposed to the relevant content. Obviously, it is possible that group members actively try to avoid confrontation with certain information at an earlier stage (Anderson, 2020), for example, by shunning memorials or films and books about ingroup perpetration.

Looking at downstream processes opens up an even wider field of mechanisms that may contribute to an enhanced salience of historical victimhood, and potentially also amplify long-term memory distortions in favor of group-based victimhood. Building on the *Lay Historian Model* (Klein, 2013), representations of history are importantly shaped not only by memory distortions, but also by attribution (explaining) and communication processes (representation). Attribution and communication processes, in turn, can critically affect long-term memory processes. Attribution processes can direct attention and promote elaboration of attribution-relevant content, which in consequence can enhance memory of this content (Wells, 1982). Considering that group members are inclined to ingroup-protective attribution biases (Bilewicz et al., 2017), it is possible that these protective attributions in a long-term may be reflected in ingroup exonerating memory distortions. With regard to communicative effects, although our research suggests that there are no differences in willingness to communicate about the ingroup's perpetration and victimhood, within families, victimization experiences seem to be selectively represented and discussed more strongly than perpetration aspects (Bar-On & Gaon, 1991; Rees et al., 2018). Bridging these results with the finding that accessibility of information not mentioned in conversations (i.e., in this case, family conversations) selectively decreases (see Hirst & Coman, 2018 on conversational acts of remembering), it seems plausible that in the long run (but perhaps not in the short-term, as measured in the present research) a memory bias in favor of the victim role may emerge.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

More research is needed to understand why the expected memory effect could not be identified and which variables might constitute relevant boundary conditions for the presence or absence of a memory effect. We attempted to account for contexts, stimuli, instructions, differences between and within participants, ingroup identification, encoding, communicative effects and perceived historical credibility (as well as willingness and difficulty to remember, emotions, age, political orientation and defensive strategies, see OSM.0.1). While it is of course conceivable that a memory bias for flattering ingroup episodes is not a sufficiently robust phenomenon to study, much more variables might affect memory performance, constituting potential moderators and mediators which need to be understand in more detail. For instance, Study 5 provided evidence that memory effects can be found, at least in collective narcissists, under specific design and context conditions. Future studies may further narrow down the specific pattern of these boundary conditions under which an effect in certain individuals can be found and reproduced.

Although the present research demonstrates the generalizability of nonsignificant memory effects across three samples, it is limited to intergroup suffering that is neither perpetuated into the present nor completely denied by the perpetrator groups. An intriguing route for future research might be to examine how memory effects operate in intractable conflicts or in contexts where the ingroup's perpetration is not acknowledged. In intractable conflicts, victimhood narratives are of high importance given their functionality against the backdrop of the ongoing conflict (e.g., in providing explanations or coping with stress; Bar-Tal et al., 2009). Accordingly, a sense of victimhood constitutes a fundamental component of collective memory (Bar-Tal et al., 2009), which may also make individual memory biases more plausible. In contexts where perpetration is denied (e.g., Turkish denial of Armenian genocide, Bilali, 2013), perpetration narratives may be in even stronger opposition to the

existing schema or the perceived historical meaning of the ingroup. In consequence, memory biases to the detriment of perpetration may have a higher likelihood of occurring.

Another limitation concerns the memory processes studied. The present research focused on recognition of either negative behavior or experiences and found no support of biased memory. Providing participants with negative actions by their ingroup or an outgroup did not lead to different recognition rates. It is, however, conceivable that more subtle effects emerge when tapping for source memory. As an example, providing participants initially with the same action-actor information, and in the retrieval-phase providing them with the action and asking them who committed this action (rather than recognizing the sentence) might show more evidence for biased memory. Such a Who-did-what paradigm (akin to the seminal Who-said-what paradigm; Taylor et al., 1978) might provide a better understanding of the strategies people use to flatter and deceive themselves, respectively their group.

Finally, future research is needed to delineate to what extent demanding cognitive performance measures, such as memory performance, may in principle reflect defensive reactions in the face of limited cognitive resources. Defensive reactions aimed at protecting the self-image or regulating collective guilt belong to the scope of motivated reasoning (Sharvit et al., 2015). As such, they are susceptible to the depletion of mental resources by cognitive load (Sharvit et al., 2015). In the present study, the arithmetic distraction task as well as the memory task itself may have caused considerable cognitive load, thereby restricting the resources for motivated defensive reasoning. Such competition for available mental resources could have mitigated the magnitude of defensively motivated memory bias.

Implications and Conclusion

The present research is among the first to systematically address the assumption of an individual memory bias in favor of ingroup victimhood, potentially fueled by group-based morality striving. Herein, we found no evidence of a memory bias as a function of ingroup role. Obviously, this does not imply that there can be no defensive use of victimization

narratives (e.g., Rensmann, 2004) or no memory-related processes that lead to a stronger social representation of victimhood (e.g., Sahdra & Ross, 2007). However, the present results call into question whether motivated victimization claims are reflected in individual short-term memory. Instead, the established low prevalence of individual memory distortions argues for the relevance of other mechanisms surrounding memory retrieval, such as selective confrontation with historical information, attribution processes or communicative effects (Hirst & Coman, 2018; Klein, 2013), in gaining a deeper understanding of the salience of collective victimhood narratives, that can be found in many different historical contexts.

CHAPTER 5

Project 4

The Past We Choose to Not Forget: Characteristics of Historical Events Considered Important to Remember

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Authors' Contributions

In accordance with the recommendations of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020), we indicate the individual contributions of the authors to this project using the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CASRAI, 2022). The authors' contributions are as follows:

Fiona Kazarovytska: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing.

Katrín Árnadóttir: Formal analysis, Resources, Investigation, Writing – review and editing.

Silvana D'Ottone: Formal analysis, Resources, Investigation, Writing – review and editing.

Slieman Halabi: Investigation, Resources.

Edward Clarke: Resources, Writing – review and editing.

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Roland Imhoff: Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Supervision, Writing – review and editing.

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Abstract

A key assumption in collective memory research is that group members are particularly inclined to preserve history that reinforces the ingroup's positive identity. Yet, this assumption lacks solid empirical support, as research has rarely measured the identity-protective potential of historical events considered important to remember. Theoretically, however, this support is essential because group members may engage with history for reasons other than benefiting their ingroup, such as satisfying their epistemic need to understand the past. We complement the literature by systematically testing the identity-protective tenet using a bottom-up approach. Following the sampling of a broad set of historical events, we assessed the identity-relevant characteristics attributed to the events and examined how these characteristics relate to group members' willingness to remember them. Across a preregistered study conducted in seven different national contexts and an internal meta-analysis, including N = 2,045 participants and N = 7,665 ratings of more than 350 unique events, we found remarkable consistency in that historical events viewed as involving the ingroup in a moral or agentic manner and not threatening the ingroup were most likely to be considered important to remember in most countries. However, we also observed notable deviations from an identity-protective pattern in the majority of countries, with varying preference for preserving history that favors the ingroup. Together, these findings bridge a crucial empirical gap by demonstrating that although identity protection is a central component of collective remembrance, it is likely only one of several factors at play, with its importance differing across countries.

Keywords: collective memory, social identity, identity protection, morality, agency

Introduction

Humanity often wonders which history will be remembered in the future. Harry S. Truman stated that "the Marshall Plan will go down in history as one of America's greatest contributions to the peace of the world" (Truman, 1965, p. 113). In his landmark "I have a dream" speech, Martin Luther King (1963) said that the March on Washington "will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation" (para. 1). But were they right? The current research aims to understand which historical events group members want to remember collectively. Moving beyond existing studies, we present a bottom-up approach that focuses on the characteristics of events considered important to preserve across seven countries from six continents.

Identity Interests and Collective Remembrance

Members of social groups are not just passive keepers of reproductions of the past. Instead, collective remembrance is an active process of "inventing, reinventing, and reconstructing" the past (p. 320; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008). This process of (re)forming history is not arbitrary and is often guided by a specific interest: developing and defending collective identity. Favorable historical memories provide crucial sources of positive meaning and intergenerational achievements (Paez & Liu, 2011). In their pursuit of a positive self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), group members may therefore use the past to create images that are favorable to the group. Emphasizing this *functional role* of historical memory, many researchers have described collective remembrance as a purposeful process, serving the identity interests of a group (Assmann, 2008; Bar-Tal, 2014; Halbwachs, 1925/1992; Manier & Hirst, 2008; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Paez et al., 1997).

Evidently, some historical events are less suitable for fulfilling identity goals than others. Particularly when the past threatens positive collective identity, group members may employ strategies to reconstruct their history in a favorable manner, such as moralizing, rationalizing, and legitimizing the past (Bilewicz, 2016; Leidner et al., 2010; Wohl et al.,

2006). One of the most widely used strategies, however, is arguably simple: not dealing with the past. By emphasizing certain aspects of history but downplaying others, groups can selectively highlight their accomplishments while silencing 'unwanted histories' (Klar & Bilewicz, 2017). Examples of omitting confrontation with negative pasts include Japan's limited dealing with its war crimes (Liu & Atsumi, 2008), the Netherlands' sparse engagement with its colonial crimes (Bijl, 2018), or the constrained discourse on crimes against Indigenous Americans in the United States (U.S.; Davis-Delano et al., 2021).

Such *unwillingness to remember* often does not come in the form of outright historical denial, which can be met with (international) backlash (Pennebaker et al., 1997; though denial exists; Bilali, 2013), but in the argument that the past is *no longer important to preserve and deal with* in the present. This allows group members to still recognize their historical record while relegating its discussion to the background, thus bringing more favorable aspects of their history to the fore (Bilewicz, 2016; Kazarovytska & Imhoff, 2024). For instance, Japan, the Netherlands, and the U.S. have officially acknowledged and apologized for some of the crimes committed. Yet, they have chosen not to extensively engage in collective remembrance of these events, but to focus on other historical episodes.

The Need to Study Identity Interests and Collective Remembrance

The assumption that group members are unwilling to collectively remember historical events that harm their identity interests belongs to the most prominent notions in collective memory research. Baumeister and Hastings (1997) argued that group members systematically avoid confronting identity-threatening events to "provide a good foundation for a positive collective self-image" (p. 280). Similarly, Bar-Tal (2014) asserted that collective remembrance is "biased, selective and distorted" (p. 5.4) in ways that meet group-based needs, such as those for a "positive identity" (p. 5.14). Also, Klar and Bilewicz (2017) posited that to defend their social identity, group members can become motivated "lay censors" (p. 342), silencing noncompliant historical accounts. However, although it is widely assumed that

group members selectively prefer to preserve history that serves their positive identity, this assumption has rarely been systematically empirically tested. Although seemingly compelling, we argue for the necessity of *examining* this idea across *different contexts*.

First, one line of research calls into question the pursuit of solely positive ingroup memory, revealing that group members often remember highly negative events, particularly collective traumas. Such experiences of victimization pose massive threats to the group's identity, existence, and power (Vollhardt, 2012). Nevertheless, memories of victimization experiences can be adaptive. They help identify danger, promote meaning-making and social change, and provide sources of morality and self-verification – alongside the enormous threats these memories carry (Hirschberger, 2018; Liu et al., 1999). This perspective suggests that motives beyond just constructing a positive identity can guide collective remembrance.

Second, even though less dominant in literature, several perspectives in principle challenge an identity-based view on collective remembrance. Licata and Mercy (2015) emphasized that collective memories fulfill not only identity needs *but also* the epistemic need for understanding of the past. Similarly, Liu (2022) reasoned that collective remembrance functions as an anchoring mechanism, making the world comprehensible. Pennebaker and Banasik (1997) further contend that collective memories help explain social changes relevant to the present. However, understanding the world today (e.g., territorial borders, political systems, national languages) requires confronting both past glories and atrocities. Although an identity-oriented view would predict the silencing of such unpleasant aspects of history, the desire to thoroughly understand the past suggests an alternative pattern: a willingness to address history, even at the expense of positive group identity.

Finally, the role of ingroup positivity in collective remembrance has seldom been systematically studied across multiple countries. However, Hirst and colleagues (2018) argued that both history and groups' approaches to remembering it are deeply socially embedded, with communities employing specific schemas to interpret their past. For instance,

Russia's self-creation as a defender against vicious forces shapes the country's remembrance of the Napoleonic Wars, WWI, and WWII, and will likely also guide what history group members consider important to preserve (Hirst et al., 2018). However, such master narratives governing remembrance (Hammack, 2011) differ from country to country. Therefore, if we want to understand genuine principles of identity management in remembrance, we must test them across different countries with varying historical approaches.

A Bottom-Up Approach

We propose a bottom-up approach that has not yet been used in collective memory research for studying the role of identity-protective interests in collective remembrance. The identity-motivated view allows us to make precise predictions about what history group members may want to preserve in order to maintain a favorable self-perception. However, rather than predicting the *events* group members seek to remember, we use identity-protective theorizing to predict the *characteristics* of events that make them seem worth preserving. Thus, we explicate the fundamental functionalist perspective (Halbwachs, 1925/1992) that collective remembrance is less concerned with historical incidents themselves and more concerned with their *function*.

The first event characteristic we expect to be linked to the willingness for collective remembrance is ingroup *involvement* (see also Liu et al., 2005). Only if the group has a connection to the past – be it as agent or recipient – can it inform the group's present-day self-perceptions. The second basic prediction is that group members prefer to remember ingroup history with positive valence. The identity-motivated account posits that history serves a group's positive self-perception. As such, group members should be inclined to remember *positive* (rather than *negative*) history, especially when the ingroup was involved – a self-serving preference, prevalent also in autobiographical memory (Schacter et al., 2024).

The specific form of this positive involvement entails further characteristics. A key aspect of collective self-definitions is morality. Even more than competence or sociability,

morality drives favorable ingroup perceptions, leading to the hypothesis of a 'primacy of morality' in impression formation (Brambilla et al., 2021; Leach et al., 2007). Consequently, we predicted that group members are particularly motivated to preserve history that depicts them in a *moral* light.

Crucially, a positive collective identity involves not only being part of a moral group, but also a distinctive group that makes a specific contribution to the world (Brewer, 1991; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Hence, group members are likely motivated to remember history that emphasizes their *agency* for the course of events. Indeed, group members tend to overestimate their ingroups' contribution to broader national or world history (Putnam et al., 2018; Roediger et al., 2019; Zaromb et al., 2018). Arguably, such overestimations may reflect not only cognitive biases, but also a desire to see the group have an impact and fulfill a historical mission (Klar & Bilewicz, 2017). However, this desire may be tempered when agency is associated with immoral actions, calling the group's positive meaning into question. Lastly, more *recent* history involving the ingroup may be prioritized, as it is more directly linked to current sociopolitical issues and thus present-day identity aspects (Liu et al., 2009).

In summary, we hypothesized that group members prefer to collectively remember history that *involves their ingroup*, particularly when it is characterized by *high positivity* and *low negativity* (i.e., interaction of involvement and valence). Additionally, we expected that *ingroup morality*, *ingroup agency*, and the display of agency in morally praiseworthy actions (i.e., interaction of morality and agency) would be related to the willingness to remember. Finally, people may be more inclined to remember the *recent* past in which their ingroup was involved (i.e., interaction of involvement and recency). These features can highlight the ingroup's positive historical significance. Accordingly, it may be these characteristics that are crucial for participants' willingness to remember.

By shifting attention to the perceived characteristics of historical events, we adopt a novel approach to study willingness to remember. Previous research has typically measured

group members' willingness to engage with selected events, usually involving intergroup violence (e.g., Allpress et al., 2014; Hanke et al., 2013; Kazarovytska & Imhoff, 2024, Sahdra & Ross, 2007), thus constraining our ability to draw broader conclusions about other events. Other research in specific national contexts (e.g., the U.S.; Schuman & Scott, 1989; Yamashiro & Roediger, 2019), historical contexts (e.g., WWII; Roediger et al., 2019), or across national and historical contexts (Brasil & Cabecinhas, 2017; Liu et al., 2005; Pennebaker et al., 2006) has examined which events group members consider relevant in human history. However, despite covering a wide range of events, these studies allow for only limited empirical conclusions about *the shared characteristics* of the historical events group members *want* to collectively remember.

The question of what group members *want to remember* cannot be readily answered by what is considered relevant in human history, as the latter pertains to knowledge, whereas the former pertains to preference, which can diverge. For example, despite broad consensus on the historical significance of the Nazi past (Papendick et al., 2022), large parts of German society are reluctant to continue engaging with this past (Hagemann & Nathanson, 2015). Similarly, the question of *what characterizes* historical events group members want to preserve cannot be answered by listing events alone, because such listings do not provide an empirical basis for understanding the meaning that group members attribute to the events. Although we can theorize about the meaning of the events, without measuring it among group members, the question of what characterizes historical aspects group members prefer to preserve remains empirically unresolved.

Nonetheless, measuring the characteristics attributed to events seems critical, as group members may assign vastly different meanings to the same event. For instance, some White Americans may view slavery as a wrongful ingroup past, but others may not (Domby, 2020), and Black Americans may see it as a painful legacy of injustice and violence. These different views can result in markedly diverging willingness to remember the same event. Conversely,

similar characteristics, such as positive agency, may be attributed to different events, like promoting minority rights or fighting an oppressive regime abroad, resulting in converging willingness to remember distinct events. At the event level, these patterns may appear as disputes over which history to remember (Roediger, 2021). Potentially, however, they may not reflect controversy over *the type of history* to preserve, but rather differing views on *which history constitutes that type*. Thus, if we want to uncover general identity-motivated patterns, we need to make events comparable in their essential meaning across and within different groups. By focusing on their attributed characteristics, we seek to address this issue.

Present Research

We aimed to systematically test the prominent assumption that the willingness to collectively remember historical events is related to the capacity of the events to highlight a positive group identity. Thus, following Gergen's (1978) call for theory development, we examined the empirical substance of a theoretical idea that is "taken for granted" (p. 1346). As such, our findings can be generative for collective memory research in two ways: If we consistently observe a pattern congruent with identity-motivated reasoning, our results provide empirical support for a well-known, yet rarely tested, theoretical tenet. If, however, our results show limited or cross-contextually inconsistent support for identity protection, they have the potential to critically challenge existing theorizing and advocate for a more nuanced understanding of collective remembrance as an identity-motivated project.

Following identity-motivated theorizing, we derived a set of hypotheses concerning various identity-relevant characteristics (Table 1). We tested these hypotheses across seven national samples, several of which are underrepresented in collective memory research (Study 1), and an internal meta-analysis (Study 2). In Study 1, we used a two-step procedure. First, we asked participants from each country (total N = 1,050) to name events they consider important for their national and world history. Striving for a representative stimulus sample (Brunswik, 1955), in a second step, we presented the 80 most frequently mentioned events

(total N = 360 unique events across countries) to another sample from each country (total N = 2,045). Using a stimuli-within-block design (Westfall et al., 2014), participants then rated a subsample of these events according to the characteristics of interest (total N = 7,665 ratings). These ratings were entered as predictors of the willingness to remember.

Transparency and Openness

We report all studies run within this project, and how we determined our sample size, all data exclusions (if any), all manipulations, and all measures in the studies, and we follow JARS (Appelbaum et al., 2018). Preregistrations for all national contexts, data, analysis codes, research materials, and supplemental online materials (SOM) are available on our Open Science Framework (OSF) project site accessible at https://osf.io/3w6ap/?view_only=03bf8892e91f4dabab219e68e840ecfa.

The project received ethical approval by [University blinded].

Table 1

Summary of Hypotheses[18]

Hypothesis	Prediction
H1	Perceived *ingroup involvement* is positively related to the willingness to collectively remember.
H2	Perceived *positivity* is positively related to the willingness to collectively remember, especially when the ingroup was involved (i.e., *interaction* of positivity and involvement).
H3	Perceived *negativity* is negatively related to the willingness to collectively remember, especially when the ingroup was involved (i.e., *interaction* of negativity and involvement).
H4	Perceived *ingroup morality* is positively related to the willingness to collectively remember.
H5	Perceived *ingroup agency* is positively related to the willingness to collectively remember.
H6	The link of ingroup agency and the willingness to collectively remember is tempered by low ingroup morality (i.e., *interaction* of agency and morality).
H7	*Recency* is positively related to the willingness to collectively remember, especially when the ingroup was involved (i.e., *interaction* of recency and involvement).

[18] Some of these hypotheses deviate in their formulation from the hypotheses that we initially preregistered. First, H2, H3, and H7 were originally formulated as *main effect hypotheses* without explicitly considering the interaction with ingroup involvement. However, in interpreting our results, we recognized that including ingroup involvement provides a more critical test of identity-motivated reasoning than only examining the associations of valence and recency with the willingness to collectively remember. Notably, the current, reformulated hypotheses were *not* consistently empirically supported.

Second, regarding H3, we initially preregistered that negativity would *positively* correlate with the willingness to collectively remember (i.e., the opposite of the current hypothesis). The reasoning behind this hypothesis was that negative events can help groups determine their position in the world (Liu et al., 1999). Yet, in writing this article, we realized that this rationale does not logically align with our identity-protective (i.e., identity-positive) theorizing, but rather with research on collective trauma, suggesting precisely an interest in remembering ingroup threat as an element of collective self-definition (e.g., Hirschberger, 2018). Since our conclusions do not critically rely on the significance of single hypotheses, but rather on a broader pattern of results, we decided to revise this hypothesis to be more consistent with our main theoretical reasoning. However, we return to the point of self-verification and collective trauma in our general discussion. A detailed summary of these deviations from the preregistrations is also provided in SOM-A.

Study 1

The methodological setup was identical in all seven national contexts.

Method: Step 1 – Stimulus Generation (Pre-Study)

In all countries, we first generated a large sample of historical events. To this end, we recruited N = 150 participants from each country (total N = 1,050 across countries) and asked them to name up to 10 events from their country's history and up to 10 events from world history they consider important, with a minimum requirement of five events per category. Consistent with Liu et al. (2009), we chose a time frame of 1,000 years to prevent an overrepresentation of religious figures.[19] The questions read as follows:

> *Please imagine you were going to give a lecture on the history of [country]. Which 5-10 most important events in [country's] history would you choose for it? Please limit yourself to events that do not go back more than 1000 years.*
>
> *Now imagine that you were going to give a lecture on world history. Which 5-10 most important events in world history would you choose for it? Please, again, limit yourself to events that do not go back more than 1000 years.*

Striving for a broad, representative stimulus sample (Brunswik, 1955; Fiedler, 2011), we then selected the 40 most frequently named national events and the 40 most frequently named world events in each country, eliminating any duplicates. The first 10 events in each category are listed in Table 2. A full overview of all events (total N = 360 unique historical events across different countries) is provided on our OSF project page. The final sets of 80 events per country (i.e., 40 events from national history and 40 events from world history) were then used as stimulus materials in the main study.

[19] The only exception to this procedure occurred in Iceland, where we extended the historical period of relevance from 1000 to 1200 years. This extension was made to include some particularly important national events in Iceland, such as the founding of Alþingi, one of the world's oldest surviving parliaments, in 930.

Table 2

Most Frequently Mentioned 10 Events for National and World History per Country

Event	U.S.	Australia	Germany	Iceland	Chile	India	Kenya
National history							
1	American Civil War and Reconstruction Era	First Fleet	WWI	Iceland's Independence Movement	Chile's Independence	India's Independence	Kenya's Independence
2	American Revolution	Federation of Australia	WWII	Settlement of Iceland	Return to Democracy	Kargil War	Kenya Becomes a Republic
3	WWII	Gallipoli Landing	Fall of the Berlin Wall	Icelandic Declaration of Independence (1944)	War of the Pacific	Indian Rebellion 1857	Multiparty Politics in Kenya
4	U.S. Declaration of Independence	Gold Rushes	Weimar Republic	Iceland Becomes Christian	New Constitution Referendum (2022)	Salt Satyagraha	Promulgation of the 2010 Constitution
5	9/11	WWI	German reunification	2008 financial crisis	Colonization	Constitution of India	Mau Mau Rebellion
6	WWI	Cook's Landing	Reformation	Disputes Over Fishing Rights ("Cod Wars")	Mapuche Conflict	Jallianwala Bagh Massacre	2007-2008 Post-Election Violence
7	Colonial Settlement in America	Cathy Freeman Wins Gold	Thirty Years' War	Reformation	Allende's Government	Partition of India	Colonization of Kenya by the British Rule
8	Ratification of the U.S. Constitution	Kevin Rudd Apology	National Socialism	Occupation of Iceland During WWII	Chile Wins the Copa América	British Rule in India	Mashujaa Day
9	American Civil Rights Movement	Stolen Generations	Holocaust	Women's Suffrage in Iceland	Election of Current Government	Indo-China War	Labour Day
10	Vietnam War	WWII	Constitution of St. Paul's Church	First Female President in Iceland	First Peoples	Quit India Movement	Daniel arap Moi Becomes President
World history							
1	Industrial Revolution	9/11	French Revolution	WWII	WWII	Atomic Bombings	WWI
2	Bubonic Plague	Bubonic Plague	Christopher Columbus Reaches America	WWI	WWI	Rise of Adolf Hitler	WWII

Event	U.S.	Australia	Germany	Iceland	Chile	India	Kenya
3	French Revolution	Industrial Revolution	American Revolution	“Discovery” of America by Europeans	Moon Landing	American Revolution	Transatlantic Slave Trade
4	Western Colonialism	Cold War	9/11	French Revolution	Covid-19	French Revolution	Cold War
5	Cold War	Invention of Internet	Western Colonialism and Slavery	Women’s Suffrage	Fall of the Berlin Wall	9/11	Russian Invasion of Ukraine in 2022
6	Great Depression	Atomic Bombings	Crusades	Western Colonialism	9/11	Covid-19	Atomic Bombings
7	Transatlantic Slave Trade	Moon Landing	Moon Landing	Technological Avancement	Russian Invasion of Ukraine in 2022	Cold War	Digital Transformation
8	Atomic Bombings	American Revolution	American Civil War	Cold War	Industrial Revolution	American Civil War	Western Colonialism
9	Renaissance	Christopher Columbus Reaches America	Vietnam War	Fall of Berlin Wall	Christopher Columbus Reaches America	Russian Invasion of Ukraine in 2022	9/11
10	Fall of Berlin Wall	Western Colonialism	Bubonic Plague	Moon Landing	Dictatorship (Chile)	Great Depression	Fall of the Berlin Wall

Note. The full names of all events in their original languages (Icelandic, German, Spanish) are provided on OSF.

Method: Step 2 – Main Study

Power Considerations

In a second step, participants from each country rated five randomly sampled events from the full set of 80 events per country. Thus, we employed a stimuli-within-block design (Westfall et al., 2014) wherein each participant was randomly assigned to a subsample of the full stimulus sample. This approach allowed us to maintain reasonable completion times while still including a large set of individual stimuli. The latter is essential to avoid biased estimates (Fiedler, 2011) and enable robust generalization of results (Brunswik, 1955; for the hazards of ignoring stimulus variation, see also Wells & Windschitl, 1999). The statistical power in a stimuli-within-block design, which is an extension of the stimuli-within-conditions design, depends on both the number of participants and stimuli. Specifically, based on simulations for the stimuli-within-conditions design by Westfall and colleagues (2014), our sample (about 300 participants) and stimuli number (80 stimuli) provided about 80% power to detect small to medium effect sizes of Cohen's d = 0.30 to 0.40, roughly corresponding to standardized regression coefficients of about 0.15 to 0.20 in models with one predictor (Ruscio, 2008). However, since simulations necessarily require making assumptions about variance components, which can be particularly complicated for mixed models (as used in this research, where stimuli are treated as a random factor) due to multiple sources of variance (Kreft & De Leeuw, 1998), our power considerations can only be considered approximate.

Confirmatory Measures

Our main goal was to examine whether identity-favoring characteristics of historical events relate to the willingness to collectively remember these events. For that purpose, participants rated each event in turn according to the following characteristics rooted in identity-protective reasoning. The study materials are given on our OSF project page. The study materials were translated and back-translated from English into German, Icelandic and Spanish for the research conducted in Germany, Iceland, and Chile.

Ingroup Involvement. To evaluate the involvement of the ingroup, participants responded to the item: "In [event], the [members of national ingroup] were, from my perspective...," with the response options 1 (*predominantly originators of the events*), 2 (*predominantly recipients of the events, while the causes lay predominantly with other actors*), 3 (*predominantly uninvolved: neither causing nor affected*). However, many events involve not only different national groups but also distinct social groups within the same nation. For example, the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election represents an event that involved different social groups in the U.S., such as Republicans and Democrats. Therefore, for each event, participants also indicated whether the event primarily involved different social groups within their country (*yes/no*). If so, we asked them to indicate the role that *the group they most identify* with – rather than the national ingroup as a whole – played in the event.

Positivity and Negativity. We measured the perceived positive valence of the historical event in question using two items. The first item evaluated the event itself: "How positive was what happened during [event] from your point of view?" The second item assessed the event's consequences: "The consequences of [event] were mostly…" Responses ranged from 1 (*not positive at all*) to 7 (*very positive*). As preregistered, we analyzed these items separately to capture nuanced differences between the event's genuine valence and its consequences. The rationale for this nuanced measure was that some events can be seen as negative in themselves, while their consequences can be seen as positive. For example, a war of liberation may be regarded as a negative event (i.e., war), while its consequences (i.e., liberation) are considered positive. Negative valence was measured in a similar way, with 'positive' substituted for 'negative.' Again, both items were treated as distinct measures of negativity.

Ingroup Morality. Perceived ingroup morality in the event was assessed with the item: "In [event], [national ingroup members] (or the group I most identify with) behaved, from my perspective..." Scale anchors ranged from 1 (*very immorally*) to 7 (*very morally*). Participants were reminded that, for predominantly domestic events involving various social groups within

their country, they should specify the role of the group with which they most identify. They also had the option to indicate that their national ingroup or the group they most identify with was not involved in the event at all.

Ingroup Agency. Perceived agency of the ingroup was measured using two items. The first item captured the ingroup's power in the event: "In [event], from my point of view, the [members of national ingroup] (or the group I most identify with) had...," with scale anchors ranging from 1 (*no power at all*) to 7 (*very much power*). The second item measured the ingroup's responsibility: "In your opinion, how great was the responsibility of the [members of national ingroup] (or the group I most identify with) for the course of [event]?" with scale anchors ranging from 1 (*not responsible at all*) to 7 (*completely responsible*). Again, participants were instructed to focus on the group they most identify with and could indicate if their ingroup was involved. As preregistered, the two agency items were analyzed separately to provide nuanced insights into their association with the willingness to remember them.

Recency. Two independent coders, blind to the hypotheses, determined the recency of the historical events by specifying their end year, whenever a clear end date could be assigned (an overview of all recency codings is available on our OSF project page).[20]

Willingness to Collectively Remember (Outcome). Our main variable of interest was participants' interest in preserving the event in question within collective memory. We assessed this variable using seven items adapted from Kazarovytska and Imhoff's (2024) validated scale, tapping into the perceived social relevance of remembering, or, the extent to which participants believe in the importance of engaging in remembrance and want to collectively preserve the event. Items included, for example, "We as a society should not have

[20] We preregistered to determine the recency of an event by subtracting the event's end year from the year of data collection. However, this procedure would result in a temporal distance measure, with higher values (e.g., more distant years) indicating greater temporal distance. For the sake of simplicity, we decided to use the actual year the event ended as a measure of recency, with higher values (e.g., more recent years) indicating greater temporal proximity (see SOM-A). The results remain identical regardless of which calculation method is used.

to deal so much with [event] these days" (reverse-coded), and "Society remembers [event] more than I think it should" (reverse-coded). Responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Exploratory Measures

In addition to the main characteristics outlined, a couple other event features may shed additional light on identity-protective interests in collective remembrance. Specifically, we included symbolic and realistic threat as well as subjective temporal recency as supplemental characteristics for exploratory purposes.

Symbolic and Realistic Ingroup Threat. According to the identity-protective perspective, group members may be reluctant to remember history that impairs their positive identity. To substantiate this assumption, we assessed whether the event is perceived as posing a threat to the ingroup's values or identity (symbolic ingroup threat) or to the ingroup's power and wellbeing (realistic ingroup threat; Stephan et al., 1998). Symbolic ingroup threat was measured with two items, including, "The [event] poses a threat to the norms and values of [members of national ingroup] (or the group I most identify with)." Realistic ingroup threat was measured with two further items, for example, "The [event] poses a threat to the political and economic power of [members of national ingroup] (or the group I most identify with)." Scale anchors ranged from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 7 (*strongly disagree*).

Subjective Recency. Events perceived as more recent may be considered more relevant for understanding current ingroup identity, and thus more important to preserve. However, subjective perceptions of recency can differ from objective measures (Wilson & Ross, 2003). In fact, Peetz and colleagues (2010) showed that perceived temporal distance can serve as an identity-protective mechanism, where threatening events are seen as more distant and favorable events are perceived as more recent. To gain a more nuanced understanding of recency effects, we explored whether willingness to collectively remember correlates with subjective recency. We assessed subjective recency with one item adapted from Peetz and

colleagues (2010): "Time can be experienced in different ways. Sometimes a point in the past can feel very far away, and other times an identical point in the past can be experienced as almost like yesterday. Please indicate on the slider attached below how far back in time you perceive [event] to be," anchored from 1 (*feels very recent*) to 100 (*feels very distant*; reversed-coded).

United States (U.S.)

We began our research in the context of the U.S. – a country with a multifaceted history, shaped by colonial settlement and the Declaration of Independence, intergroup crimes like the genocide of Native Americans and the transatlantic slave trade, domestic conflicts including the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, involvement in international conflicts such as WWII and the Vietnam War, and tragic experiences such as 9/11.

Method

The preregistration for the U.S. is available at https://osf.io/nfp86/?view_only=b59205064ca24e2485fd3d2a7df773bb.

Participants

To generate the stimulus materials, we recruited N = 150 U.S. participants through Prolific (M_{age} = 40.28 years, SD_{age} = 12.11, age ranging from 20 to 84; 64% identified as women, 36% as men). Following the stimulus generation (pre-study), in the main study, we asked a new sample of N = 350 U.S. participants recruited through Prolific to rate the events on the specified characteristics. Consistent with the preregistration, we excluded participants who indicated that they clicked at random or who failed one or more of the attention checks, resulting in a final sample of N = 311 participants (M_{age} = 39.95 years, SD_{age} = 12.36, age ranging from 18 to 72; 51% identified as women, 46% as men, 3% as gender diverse or did not indicate their gender). Further, as preregistered, we kept ratings only from participants who had at least a basic knowledge of the event in question in order to avoid random noise. Specifically, if participants indicated that they had never heard of an event, or had heard of an

event but were unsure about what happened during the event, we excluded their responses for that event from analysis. This procedure resulted in a total of N = 1,293 event ratings. The methodological approach followed the procedures outlined in the methodological overview. We obtained good reliabilities for the measures of willingness to collectively remember (α = .84), symbolic ingroup threat (α = .96), and realistic ingroup (α = .95).

Results

We analyzed our data by means of linear mixed models (LMMs) using the R packages "lme4" (Bates et al., 2015) and "lmerTest" (Kuznetsova et al., 2017). We conducted separate models for each (sub-)hypothesis, entering the event characteristics as predictor variables and willingness to collectively remember as the outcome variable. All models treated the events (i.e., stimuli) as a random factor (Judd et al., 2012), specifying random intercepts and random slopes for events. Continuous characteristics were centered around their grand means prior to analysis, and ingroup role was dummy-coded, treating 'uninvolved' as the reference category. For reasons of parsimony, in models that include interaction terms, we present only the results that are critical for testing our hypotheses. The full models are available in SOMs B-H. Given that results on ingroup morality and ingroup agency are not informative if participants do not consider their ingroup involved, we kept only those ratings where the ingroup was considered involved, resulting in a sample of N = 1,094 ratings in these models. Since recency effects can only be sensibly tested for events with a clear end data (75 out of 80 events), the respective analyses involved a sample of N = 1,175 ratings.

Correlations

Descriptive statistics for each event are reported in full in SOM-B. In addition, we inspected the multilevel intercorrelations of the characteristics (Table 3). Event positivity was positively correlated with ingroup morality and agency, but negatively correlated with ingroup threat. Event negativity showed the reverse pattern. Furthermore, recency was negatively associated with positive valence and positively correlated with negative valence,

suggesting that more recent events were generally perceived as less favorable. Subjective recency, in turn, was not correlated with objective recency, but was positively linked to perceived ingroup responsibility as well as symbolic and realistic ingroup threat. This finding deviates from the assumption that threatening events are shifted away in time (cf. Peetz et al., 2010), but aligns with research showing that the present and future are often perceived as more negative or threatening than the past (Mastroianni & Gilbert, 2023; Yamashiro & Roediger, 2019). For the interpretation of our exploratory analyses, these results imply that a preference for remembering subjectively more recent history may not be considered as echoing identity-protective reasoning.

Confirmatory Results

The intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) ranged from 0.15 to 0.22 across models, suggesting that the inclusion of random effects was appropriate. Results for each model are displayed in Table 4. To ease decomposition of explained variance, we report R^2 marginal as a measure of variance explained by fixed effects (i.e., variance explained by characteristics) and R^2 conditional as a measure of variance explained by the full model, including random effects (i.e., variance explained by events) and fixed effects (Nakagawa et al., 2017).

Consistent with identity-motivated reasoning and supporting hypotheses H1, H4, and H5a-H5b, participants endorsed remembering events in which their ingroup was involved, either as the cause or recipient, and those highlighting ingroup morality and agency, whether expressed in power during the event or responsibility for the course of events. However, deviating from H2a-H3b, we found no significant interactions between event valence and ingroup involvement. Specifically, we expected that identity protection might manifest as a tendency to remember particularly positive aspects of ingroup history while avoiding negative aspects caused or experienced by the ingroup. Instead, our results show that participants preferred to remember positive history (but not negative history), regardless of the ingroup's role. These findings suggest a general tendency to engage with positive events that may

extend beyond identity-protective motives. Further deviating from identity-protective expectations and H6a-6b, participants did not prefer to remember the ingroup's agency for moral deeds. On the contrary, the negative interaction term observed in H6a suggests that participants were particularly willing to collectively remember their ingroup's agency (power) for immoral acts (for the interaction plot, see SOM-B). Finally, inconsistent with H7, participants endorsed remembering more recent history, irrespective of whether the ingroup was involved or not. Overall, we observed several significant associations between identity-relevant event characteristics and the willingness to remember these events that are in line with identity-protective theorizing. However, there were several deviations from an identity-protective pattern, particularly in that participants neither preferred to remember the positive history their ingroup was involved in, nor deflected the unethical deeds in which their ingroup had power. Instead, they even endorsed remembering immoral deeds in which their ingroup had power.

Exploratory Results and Robustness Analyses

To further investigate identity-motivated patterns, we explored whether people would be less willing to remember events that threaten their group. Consistent with identity-motivated reasoning, group members were less inclined to remember history that threatened their values and identity (symbolic ingroup threat) or their power and wellbeing (realistic ingroup threat; Table 4). In addition, participants endorsed remembering subjectively recent history. However, as shown by correlational analyses, this cannot be interpreted as an indication of identity protection, since events subjectively perceived as more recent were seen as more threatening, rather than more favorable to the ingroup. Thus, although participants were willing to remember events they perceived as subjectively more recent, they did not view these events as more positive to their group (cf. Peetz et al., 2010). However, we found that subjectively more recent events caused by the ingroup (i.e., interaction between subjective recency and ingroup role) were less likely to be endorsed for collective

remembrance (see SOM-B). This result may tentatively align with identity-protective reasoning. Finally, our sample included five events without clear end dates, such as climate change and the global struggle for women's rights. Since these events may be rated less sensibly on our remembrance scale, we conducted exploratory analyses excluding ratings of these events. Supporting the robustness of our findings, all significant relationships reported in the confirmatory analyses remained significant (see SOM-B).

Table 3

Multilevel Correlations in the U.S.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Positivity event	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Positivity consequences	0.79***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Negativity event	-0.72***	-0.67***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Negativity consequences	-0.61***	-0.69***	0.71***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Ingroup morality	0.39***	0.37***	-0.36***	-0.33***	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Ingroup agency: power	0.16***	0.14***	-0.13**	-0.12**	-0.03	-	-	-	-	-
7. Ingroup agency: responsibility	0.12**	0.12**	-0.12**	-0.10*	-0.10*	0.58***	-	-	-	-
8. Recency	-0.14***	-0.13**	0.13**	0.13**	-0.09	0.01	-0.01	-	-	-
9. Symbolic ingroup threat	-0.24***	-0.26***	0.24***	0.28***	-0.04	-0.07	-0.04	-0.03	-	-
10. Realistic ingroup threat	-0.23***	-0.25***	0.21***	0.26***	-0.02	-0.07	-0.03	-0.01	0.91***	-
11. Subjective recency	-0.08	-0.05	0.07	0.04	-0.04	0.05	0.10*	0.02	0.16***	0.15***

Note. To integrate all continuous variables, correlations were calculated based on ratings involving the ingroup with a specific end date (N = 986 ratings).

Table 4

LMMs of Willingness to Collectively Remember in the U.S.

Hypothesis	Characteristic	Standardized estimate	Standardized 95% CI	*p*	R^2 marginal	R^2 conditional
H1	**Ingroup involvement: cause**	0.38	[0.19, 0.57]	< .001	0.02	0.21
	Ingroup involvement: recipient	0.25	[0.06, 0.45]	.014		
H2a	**Positivity event**	0.24	[0.05, 0.42]	.018	0.08	0.38
	Positivity event*cause	0.09	[-0.09, 0.28]	.335		
	Positivity event*recipient	-0.14	[-0.34, 0.05]	.147		
H2b	**Positivity consequences**[a]	0.25	[0.12, 0.37]	< .001	0.06	0.21
	Positivity consequences*cause	-0.03	[-0.18, 0.12]	.693		
	Positivity consequences*recipient	-0.14	[-0.29, 0.00]	.053		
H3a	Negativity event	-0.15	[-0.35, 0.05]	.433	0.05	0.36
	Negativity event*cause	-0.04	[-0.22, 0.15]	.198		
	Negativity event*recipient	0.07	[-0.12, 0.25]	.611		
H3b	**Negativity consequences**[a]	-0.15	[-0.27, -0.03]	.014	0.04	0.18
	Negativity consequences*cause	0.02	[-0.12, 0.16]	.810		
	Negativity consequences*recipient	0.06	[-0.09, 0.20]	.433		
H4	**Ingroup morality**	0.19	[0.11, 0.27]	< .001	0.04	0.21
H5a	**Ingroup agency: power**	0.10	[0.04, 0.16]	.003	0.01	0.15
H5b	**Ingroup agency: responsibility**	0.13	[0.05, 0.22]	.004	0.02	0.19
H6a	**Ingroup morality*power**	-0.06	[-0.13, -0.01]	.029	0.04	0.25
H6b	Ingroup morality*responsibility	-0.07	[-0.13, 0.00]	.050	0.04	0.25
H7	**Recency**[a]	0.16	[0.04, 0.28]	.011	0.05	0.17
	Recency*cause	-0.04	[-0.19, 0.11]	.614		
	Recency*recipient	-0.02	[-0.15, 0.11]	.780		
Exploratory	**Symbolic ingroup threat**	-0.15	[-0.24, -0.07]	.001	0.02	0.24
Exploratory	**Realistic ingroup threat**	-0.16	[-0.24, -0.07]	.001	0.02	0.24
Exploratory	**Subjective recency**	0.14	[0.07, 0.21]	< .001	0.02	0.24

Note. We report confirmatory (upper) and exploratory results (lower). Significant relationships are presented in bold. The ingroup morality and agency results are based on ratings involving the ingroup (N = 1,094 ratings). The recency results are based on events with a specific end date (74 of 80 events; N = 1,175 ratings).

[a] These models failed to converge. Therefore, as preregistered, we report the results of the intercepts-only models (i.e., only random intercepts for events).

Discussion

Overall, we found support for the relevance of some identity-related characteristics in collective remembrance. However, we also observed some notable deviations, particularly participants' willingness to remember the immoral history their ingroup had power in and an interest in preserving positive history, regardless of the ingroup's role. A limitation of this analysis is its specific national context. As Yamashiro and Roediger (2019) note, U.S. collective memory is influenced by the narrative of exceptionalism – a belief in the U.S.'s unique mission to promote freedom and liberty – which may make willingness to remember prone to identity-favoring characteristics that align with this narrative. To critically test the generalizability of our results, we conducted our next analyses in two contexts known for a more self-critical approach to history: Australia and Germany.

Australia and Germany

Key events in Australia's history are the arrival of British colonists and the establishment of the Commonwealth. The European colonization had detrimental consequences for Indigenous populations, including violence, marginalization, and the forced removal of children, known as the Stolen Generations. Recent history now includes reparative measures, such as land restitution, and official apologies (for criticism, see Barta, 2008). In marked contrast to the U.S. narrative of exceptionalism, Australia's historical approach thus emphasizes multiculturalism and the 'fair go' ethos, integral to its present identity (for criticism, see Cleland et al., 2022). In parallel, Germany's recent past is strongly influenced by WWII, the Holocaust, and the reunification. After prolonged silence, the Nazi crimes today take center stage in German memory politics (Assmann, 2003), with public repentance being a central aspect of national identity (for criticism, see Jikeli, 2020). Could these less glorifying approaches to history change the pattern of characteristics related to people's willingness to remember? We set out to test this.

Australia

Method

Our preregistration for Australia is available at https://osf.io/ru3h2/?view_only=390ee19d5b6c4f4996d81650c2010909. To generate the stimulus materials (pre-study), we recruited N = 150 Australian participants through Prolific (M_{age} = 35.08 years, SD_{age} = 10.53, age ranging from 19 to 64; 47% identified as women, 49% as men, 4% as gender diverse or did not indicate their gender). Based on the same power considerations as in the U.S., we then recruited a new sample of N = 350 Australian participants through Prolific for the main study. Applying the same preregistered exclusion criteria as in the U.S. (i.e., participants who indicated that they clicked at random or who failed one or more of the attention checks were excluded from analyses), our final sample included N = 311 participants (M_{age} = 36.18 years, SD_{age} = 13.26, age ranging from 18 to 86; 49% identified as women, 48% as men, 3% as gender diverse or did not indicate their gender). Keeping again only event ratings from participants who had at least a basic knowledge of the event in question, we analyzed a total of N = 1,221 ratings. The study design was identical to the design for all other countries. We obtained good reliabilities for the measures of willingness to remember (α = .85), symbolic ingroup threat (α = .95), and realistic ingroup threat (α = .93).

Results

Correlations. An overview of descriptive statistics is provided in SOM-C. Multilevel correlations between characteristics are reported in Table 5, showing a pattern partly consistent with the pattern obtained in the U.S. Notable deviations from the results in the U.S. include that agency was not significantly associated with reduced event negativity, and objective recency was not correlated with any of the other variables. Furthermore, subjective recency did not correlate with valence or any of the ingroup measures, except realistic ingroup threat. Specifically, subjectively more recent events were perceived as more threatening to

ingroup power and wellbeing. Resonating with the results from the U.S., these findings suggest that a tendency to remember subjectively recent history is not indicative of identity-protective tendencies.

Confirmatory Results. In the confirmatory LMMs, the ICCs ranged from 0.20 to 0.27 across models, indicating the need to account for random effects. The results are detailed in Table 6. Supporting hypotheses H1 and H5a-H5b, and consistent with the results from the U.S., Australian participants considered history important to remember when their ingroup was involved and had power or responsibility. However, contrary to identity-protective expectations and the findings in the U.S., ingroup morality was not significantly related to the willingness to collectively remember (H4). Further deviating from identity-protective reasoning but consistent with the results in the U.S., participants in Australia neither preferred to remember the positive historical events their ingroup caused or was primarily on the receiving end of, nor deflected the negative history their ingroup was involved in (H2a-H3b). Thus, neither the positive nor negative history attributed to their ingroup – whether caused or experienced – was endorsed for collective remembrance. Instead, contrary to expectations, but partly in line with the results in the U.S., Australian participants favored remembering history where their ingroup engaged in immoral behavior (H6a-6b). Specifically, they were willing to remember their group's power in and responsibility for immoral acts (for interaction plots, see SOM-C). Finally, contrary to H7, but consistent with the findings in the U.S., we observed no significant tendency to remember the recent history the ingroup was involved in. In summary, we found little evidence for an identity-protective account, with a less pronounced identity protective-pattern than in the U.S. This highlights that the relevance of identity-related characteristics to the endorsement of collective remembrance can critically hinge on the specific national context.

Exploratory Results and Robustness Analyses. As in the U.S. sample, we explored whether the willingness to collectively remember might be reduced for ingroup-threatening

history. Inconsistent with identity-motivated assumptions and the findings in the U.S., there was no significant link between identity threat and the willingness to collectively remember (Table 6). Additionally, subjectively recent history was related to the willingness to remember. However, as indicated by the correlation analysis and consistent with the results in the U.S., this association may not reflect identity protection. We found no significant interaction between subjective recency and ingroup role (see SOM-C).

As outlined, the Australian context may be specific in its engagement with Indigenous history and attempts to repair the harm done. Given that the dealing with this hallmark intergroup conflict may be highly normatively prescribed (Barta, 2008), which may drive the present less identity-defensive findings, we examined whether excluding the eight events related to Indigenous history would reveal a more identity-protective pattern. This was not the case (see SOM-C). The results yielded statistical inferences identical to the confirmatory findings, with neither the interactions of valence and ingroup role nor ingroup morality or the interaction of recency and ingroup role showing a significant relationship with the willingness to collectively remember.

Finally, as with the U.S. sample, we conducted exploratory analyses excluding events without clear end dates. All significant relationships from the confirmatory analyses remained significant, supporting the robustness of our findings (see SOM-C).

Table 5

Multilevel Correlations in Australia

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Positivity event	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Positivity consequences	0.75***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Negativity event	-0.75***	-0.68***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Negativity consequences	-0.51***	-0.63***	0.58***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Ingroup morality	0.31***	0.28***	-0.29***	-0.24***	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Ingroup agency: power	0.12*	0.11	-0.08	-0.07	-0.15***	-	-	-	-	-
7. Ingroup agency: responsibility	0.12*	0.12*	-0.07	-0.10	-0.13**	0.64***	-	-	-	-
8. Recency	-0.04	-0.02	0.08	0.07	-0.03	0.01	0.02	-	-	-
9. Symbolic ingroup threat	-0.18***	-0.19***	0.18***	0.14**	-0.12*	-0.06	-0.00	-0.04	-	-
10. Realistic ingroup threat	-0.17***	-0.19***	0.17***	0.15**	-0.10	-0.11	-0.04	-0.04	0.84***	-
11. Subjective recency	-0.01	-0.05	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.02	0.02	0.07	0.11	0.13**

Note. To integrate all continuous variables, correlations were calculated based on ratings involving the ingroup with a specific end date (N = 843 ratings).

Table 6

LMMs of Willingness to Collectively Remember in Australia

Hypothesis	Characteristic	Standardized estimate	Standardized 95% CI	*p*	R^2 marginal	R^2 conditional
H1	**Ingroup involvement: cause**	0.34	[0.16, 0.51]	< .001	0.02	0.25
	Ingroup involvement: recipient	0.20	[0.05, 0.36]	.012		
H2a	Positivity event[a]	0.05	[-0.06, 0.16]	.366	0.02	0.24
	Positivity event*cause	-0.05	[-0.20, 0.10]	.521		
	Positivity event*recipient	-0.03	[-0.16, 0.10]	.623		
H2b	Positivity consequences[a]	0.02	[-0.09, 0.13]	.774	0.02	0.24
	Positivity consequences*cause	-0.07	[-0.22, 0.08]	.352		
	Positivity consequences*recipient	-0.04	[-0.17, 0.10]	.598		
H3a	Negativity event	0.01	[-0.14, 0.17]	.872	0.01	0.39
	Negativity event*cause	0.00	[-0.18, 0.17]	.957		
	Negativity event*recipient	-0.04	[-0.19, 0.12]	.664		
H3b	Negativity consequences	0.01	[-0.13, 0.15]	.889	0.02	0.33
	Negativity consequences*cause	0.05	[-0.14, 0.24]	.580		
	Negativity consequences*recipient	0.03	[-0.13, 0.19]	.725		
H4	Ingroup morality	0.06	[-0.05, 0.17]	.262	0.00	0.35
H5a	**Ingroup agency: power**[a]	0.21	[0.14, 0.28]	< .001	0.04	0.29
H5b	**Ingroup agency: responsibility**	0.13	[0.04, 0.23]	.009	0.02	0.28
H6a	**Ingroup morality*power**[a]	-0.12	[-0.18, -0.06]	< .001	0.06	0.28
H6b	**Ingroup morality*responsibility**[a]	-0.10	[-0.16, -0.04]	.001	0.03	0.26
H7	**Recency**[a]	0.13	[0.01, 0.26]	.034	0.04	0.23
	Recency*cause	-0.05	[-0.28, 0.18]	.683		
	Recency*recipient	0.03	[-0.11, 0.18]	.667		
Exploratory	Symbolic ingroup threat	0.03	[-0.05, 0.11]	.511	0.00	0.24
Exploratory	Realistic ingroup threat	0.03	[-0.05, 0.10]	.525		
Exploratory	**Subjective recency**	0.14	[0.08, 0.21]	< .001		

Note. We report confirmatory (upper) and exploratory results (lower). Significant relationships are presented in bold. The ingroup morality and agency results are based on ratings involving the ingroup (N = 905 ratings). The recency results are based on events with a specific end date (76 of 80 events; N = 1,144 ratings).

[a] These models failed to converge. Therefore, as preregistered, we report the results of the intercepts-only models (i.e., only random intercepts for events).

Germany

Method

The preregistration for Germany is available at https://osf.io/a5cj2/?view_only=29b802dbf4bc40bc9516b76005c28fa9. For the pre-study conducted to generate the stimulus materials, we recruited N = 150 German participants via university mailing lists and social media (M_{age} = 31.10 years, SD_{age} = 14.12, age ranging from 18 to 90; 59% identified as women, 39% as men, 2% as gender diverse or did not indicate their gender). As in the previous national contexts, we then recruited a new sample of N = 350 German participants through Prolific for the main study. Excluding participants who reported that they clicked at random or who failed one or more of the attention checks, as preregistered, the final sample consisted of N = 335 participants (M_{age} = 32.68 years, SD_{age} = 10.64, age ranging from 18 to 73; 45% identified as women, 52% as men, 3% as gender diverse or did not indicate their gender) and included N = 1,435 ratings of events that participants had at least a basic knowledge about. Measures of willingness to collectively remember (α = .83), symbolic ingroup threat (α = .93), and realistic ingroup threat (α = .91) showed good reliabilities.

Results

Correlations. Descriptive statistics are available in SOM-D. Table 7 presents the correlations between characteristics. The results were partly consistent with the patterns observed in the first two national contexts. Among the most notable differences from the U.S. and Australia, ingroup agency in Germany was not related to any of the valence measures. Furthermore, while objectively recent events were perceived as less positive and more negative, as in the U.S., subjective recency was not significantly related to any of the other variables, leaving the meaning of this measure unclear.

Confirmatory Results. The ICCs for the confirmatory LMMs ranged from 0.16 to 0.24 across models, supporting our random-effects analytic approach. Consistent with hypotheses

H1 and H5a-H5b, as well as findings from the U.S. and Australia, participants in Germany preferred to remember the history that the ingroup had caused and in which the ingroup had power or responsibility for the course of events (Table 8). Additionally, partly in line with H2a and H3a-H3b, but inconsistent with the results from the U.S. and Australia, German participants generally showed a greater willingness to remember negative history, but were less inclined to remember negative history in which their ingroup was involved as a recipient. Thus, although participants were generally willing to remember negative history, this tendency was tempered when the ingroup was on the receiving end of the negative events. Remembering the positive history that impacted the ingroup, in turn, was endorsed by participants (see H2a; for interaction plots, see SOM-D). However, contrary to our hypotheses and the findings in the U.S., but replicating the results obtained in Australia, ingroup morality (H4) was not significantly linked to the willingness to collectively remember. Further inconsistent with identity-protective reasoning (H6a-H6b), the tendency to remember ingroup agency was not moderated by whether the ingroup acted immorally. Lastly, as in the U.S. and Australia, recency was associated with the endorsement of collective remembrance, regardless of ingroup involvement (H7). Overall, paralleling some of the Australian findings, the results in Germany indicate, on the one hand, a less identity-protective pattern compared to the U.S., particularly in the lack of preference for remembering history in which the ingroup behaved morally. On the other hand, we observed identity-related tendencies not evident in Australia and the U.S., specifically a greater tendency to endorse remembering positive history and reject remembering negative history in which the ingroup was involved as a recipient. These findings highlight that the expected identity management pattern is contingent on the specific country under consideration.

Exploratory Results and Robustness Analyses. The exploratory findings did not suggest identity-motivated tendencies. Deviating from identity-protective reasoning and findings in the U.S., but consistent with results from Australia, identity threat in Germany was

not related to the willingness to collectively remember (see Table 8). Again, however, participants showed a preference for remembering subjectively more recent history, though – as indicated by the correlational results – this is unlikely to reflect identity-motivated reasoning. There was no significant interaction between subjective recency and ingroup role (see SOM-D).

Conceptually similar to our analyses in Australia, we additionally explored whether excluding national key events of intergroup violence would change the pattern of results. In Australia, we excluded events related to Indigenous history, as their remembrance may be highly normatively prescribed. In the current analysis, we explored whether excluding events related to Nazi history – a history for which ingroup-critical remembrance norms may be particularly strong in Germany – would shift the results to reveal a more identity-protective pattern. This was partly the case. Specifically, the analyses excluding the five events related to the German Nazi past revealed significant interactions between ingroup valence and ingroup involvement, indicating that participants were more inclined to collectively remember positive history in which the ingroup was involved as either the cause or the recipient, and less inclined to remember negative history in which the ingroup played either role. Thus, unlike the results in Australia, the pattern of results shifted in a more identity-protective direction when national hallmark perpetration events, which hold particular salience in German memory politics, were excluded from the analysis. However, similar to the findings in Australia, neither morality nor ingroup threat showed a significant relationship with the willingness to collectively remember. All other results also yielded identical statistical inferences as the confirmatory analyses (SOM-D).

Additionally, as in the U.S. and Australia, we tested whether our results would remain robust when including only events with clearly defined end dates. Again, all significant relationships identified in the confirmatory analyses remained significant (see SOM-D).

Table 7

Multilevel Correlations in Germany

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Positivity event	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Positivity consequences	0.69***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Negativity event	-0.70***	-0.59***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Negativity consequences	-0.47***	-0.61***	0.61***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Ingroup morality	0.32***	0.34***	-0.30***	-0.25***	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Ingroup agency: power	0.09	0.07	-0.07	-0.04	-0.11*	-	-	-	-	-
7. Ingroup agency: responsibility	0.07	0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.11*	0.64***	-	-	-	-
8. Recency	-0.11*	-0.09	0.12**	0.09	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-	-	-
9. Symbolic ingroup threat	-0.22***	-0.24***	0.21***	0.21***	-0.08	-0.06	0.02	0.06	-	-
10. Realistic ingroup threat	-0.18***	-0.21***	0.17***	0.19***	-0.09	-0.06	0.01	0.05	0.84***	-
11. Subjective recency	-0.03	-0.01	0.03	-0.01	-0.03	0.06	0.01	0.04	0.08	0.10

Note. To integrate all continuous variables, correlations were calculated based on ratings involving the ingroup with a specific end date (N = 1,076 ratings).

Table 8

LMMs of Willingness to Collectively Remember in Germany

Hypothesis	Characteristic	Standardized estimate	Standardized 95% CI	*p*	R^2 marginal	R^2 conditional
H1	**Ingroup involvement: cause**	0.33	[0.15, 0.51]	.001	0.02	0.22
	Ingroup involvement: recipient	0.11	[-0.07, 0.28]	.236		
H2a	Positivity event	-0.09	[-0.28, 0.09]	.332	0.03	0.38
	Positivity event*cause	0.16	[-0.02, 0.33]	.081		
	Positivity event*recipient	0.27	[0.10, 0.44]	.003		
H2b	Positivity consequences	-0.10	[-0.27, 0.06]	.213	0.02	0.33
	Positivity consequences*cause	0.14	[-0.02, 0.30]	.098		
	Positivity consequences*recipient	0.16	[0.00, 0.33]	.055		
H3a	**Negativity event**[a]	0.18	[0.07, 0.28]	.001	0.04	0.20
	Negativity event*cause	-0.08	[-0.21, 0.05]	.249		
	Negativity event*recipient	-0.25	[-0.39, -0.11]	.001		
H3b	**Negativity consequences**[a]	0.17	[0.07, 0.26]	.001	0.04	0.20
	Negativity consequences*cause	-0.08	[-0.21, 0.04]	.197		
	Negativity consequences*recipient	-0.23	[-0.37, -0.09]	.001		
H4	Ingroup morality	-0.02	[-0.12, 0.08]	.647	0.00	0.25
H5a	**Ingroup agency: power**	0.20	[0.13, 0.27]	< .001	0.04	0.24
H5b	**Ingroup agency: responsibility**	0.22	[0.15, 0.30]	< .001	0.05	0.23
H6a	Ingroup morality*power[a]	-0.04	[-0.10, 0.01]	.104	0.05	0.22
H6b	Ingroup morality*responsibility[a]	-0.05	[-0.10, 0.01]	.098	0.06	0.22
H7	**Recency**[a]	0.18	[0.05, 0.31]	.007	0.06	0.21
	Recency*cause	0.03	[-0.11, 0.17]	.692		
	Recency*recipient	-0.01	[-0.15, 0.12]	.847		
Exploratory	Symbolic ingroup threat	0.03	[-0.05, 0.11]	.511	0.00	0.24
Exploratory	Realistic ingroup threat	0.03	[-0.05, 0.10]	.525	0.00	0.27
Exploratory	**Subjective recency**	0.14	[0.08, 0.21]	< .001	0.02	0.25

Note. We report confirmatory (upper) and exploratory results (lower). Significant relationships are presented in bold. The ingroup morality and agency results are based on ratings involving the ingroup (N = 1,178 ratings). The recency results are based on events with a specific end date (74 of 80 events; N = 1,322 ratings).

[a] These models failed to converge. Therefore, as preregistered, we report the results of the intercepts-only models (i.e., only random intercepts for events).

Discussion

In contrast to the U.S., we found less support for an identity-protective pattern in Australia and Germany: participants neither preferred to remember moral history, nor did they reject ingroup-threatening history, even when excluding striking perpetration events. However, in Germany, participants endorsed remembering the positive history that involved their ingroup as a recipient and – excluding salient national perpetration history – as a cause. This underscores that the national context matters for the examined pattern (Hirst et al., 2018).

Thus far, we focused on comparably powerful countries with salient transgression histories. But how does identity-protective motivation play out in a smaller country with a history of foreign rule? Our next analysis focused on Iceland – a country whose past is not only vastly different from that of the previous countries, but also largely underrepresented in collective remembrance research.

Iceland

Historical milestones in Iceland include the adoption of Christianity, the development of a fishing-based economy, the 2008 financial crisis, and natural disasters like volcanic eruptions. Politically, Iceland's history is characterized by several periods of foreign rule, mainly by Norway and Denmark, culminating in its independence in 1944. These colonial experiences set conditions for current politics, shape the country's sense of international belonging, and continue to define its national identity as a sovereign country (Bergmann, 2017), making them relevant for collective remembrance.

Method

The preregistration for Iceland is available at https://osf.io/rt5b3/?view_only=e29b8262a1024ba5bb385323a4342c84. We recruited N = 150 Icelandic participants to generate the stimulus materials (pre-study, M_{age} = 48.02 years, SD_{age} = 15.24, age ranging from 18 to 79; 57% identified as women, 43% as men). For the main study, we aimed to recruit N = 350 participants via university mailing lists and social

media. As preregistered, we stopped data collection after the specified time period, reaching a total of N = 284 participants. After excluding those who reported that they clicked at random or who failed one or more of the attention checks, we analyzed data from N = 226 participants (M_{age} = 43.53 years, SD_{age} = 19.87, age ranging from 19 to 78; 63% identified as women, 35% as men, 2% as gender diverse or did not indicate their gender), providing a total of N = 627 ratings of known events. Study procedures in the main study were identical to those in the other national contexts. Measures of willingness to collectively remember (α = .84), symbolic ingroup threat (α = .90), and realistic ingroup threat (α = .91) obtained good reliabilities.

Results

Correlations

We report descriptives in SOM-E and correlations in Table 9. While largely replicating the associations between event valence, ingroup morality, agency, and threat observed in the U.S., subjective recency did not correlate with any of the other variables. Thus, as in all previous national contexts, this measure is unlikely to reflect identity motivation.

Confirmatory Results

The ICCs ranged from 0.20 to 0.23 across models, supporting the use of LMMs with random effects in our analysis. Partially supporting H1, participants in Iceland were inclined to collectively remember events in which their ingroup played the role of recipients and causes laid predominantly with other actors (Table 10). Also consistent with H4, and replicating the results in the U.S., but deviating from the findings in Australia and Germany, Icelandic participants endorsed preserving events in which their ingroup behaved morally. Additionally, consistent with the results in the U.S., but not in Australia and Germany, participants preferred to remember positive history rather than negative history. In line with H2b and H3b, these relationships were qualified by ingroup involvement. Specifically, supporting identity-protective reasoning, participants were more willing to remember history with positive consequences caused by their ingroup, but less willing to remember history with

negative consequences caused by their ingroup. However, unexpectedly and contrary to H2a and H3a, Icelandic participants showed less inclination to remember positive events in which their ingroup was on the receiving end, but more inclination to remember negative events in which their ingroup was on the receiving end. Thus, while participants were generally reluctant to remember negative history and preferred positive history, they still wanted to remember negative events that their ingroup experienced as recipients, but not those that the ingroup caused (for interaction plots, see SOM-E). Further contrary to H5a-H5b and the results obtained in all other countries studied in this research thus far, Icelandic participants were not in favor of remembering history in which their ingroup held power or responsibility. This relationship was not moderated by ingroup morality (H6a-H6b). Finally, deviating from H7, recent history involving the ingroup was not related to the willingness to collectively remember. In sum, these findings partially support an identity-protective account, particularly in the preference for remembering positive but discarding negative history caused by the ingroup and for preserving moral history. However, contrary to our expectations and the findings in the U.S., Australia, and Germany, Icelandic participants especially wanted to confront the negative history that impacted their ingroup and did not place emphasis on ingroup agentic history in collective remembrance.

Exploratory Results and Robustness Analyses

Further in line with identity-protective reasoning and the results in the U.S., ingroup threat was negatively associated with the endorsement of remembrance (Table 10). Additionally, Icelandic participants showed a preference for remembering history they subjectively perceived as recent. However, correlational analyses indicated that subjective recency was neither closely related to objective recency nor an identity-relevant measure, leaving the precise meaning of this finding unclear. We identified no significant interaction between subjective recency and ingroup role (see SOM-E). The confirmatory results remained robust when excluding events with no clear end date (see SOM-E).

Table 9

Multilevel Correlations in Iceland

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Positivity event	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Positivity consequences	0.87***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Negativity event	-0.85***	-0.80***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Negativity consequences	-0.68***	-0.77***	0.73***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Ingroup morality	0.39***	0.39***	-0.37***	-0.27***	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Ingroup agency: power	0.20***	0.18**	-0.20***	-0.16*	0.08	-	-	-	-	-
7. Ingroup agency: responsibility	0.16*	0.15	-0.19**	-0.13	0.02	0.55***	-	-	-	-
8. Recency	-0.12	-0.11	0.11	0.10	0.03	-0.08	-0.08	-	-	-
9. Symbolic ingroup threat	-0.35***	-0.35***	0.32***	0.33***	-0.26***	-0.11	0.02	0.10	-	-
10. Realistic ingroup threat	-0.38***	-0.36***	0.36***	0.34***	-0.27***	-0.13	-0.01	0.09	0.84***	-
11. Subjective recency	-0.01	-0.01	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.07	-0.02	0.08	0.01	0.03

Note. To integrate all continuous variables, correlations were calculated based on ratings involving the ingroup with a specific end date (N = 436 ratings).

Table 10

LMMs of Willingness to Collectively Remember in Iceland

Hypothesis	Characteristic	Standardized estimate	Standardized 95% CI	*p*	R^2 marginal	R^2 conditional
H1	Ingroup involvement: cause[a]	0.23	[-0.05, 0.50]	.103	0.03	0.24
	Ingroup involvement: recipient	0.43	[0.20, 0.66]	< .001		
H2a	**Positivity event[a]**	0.22	[0.03, 0.42]	.026	0.08	0.28
	Positivity event*cause	0.25	[-0.01, 0.51]	.053		
	Positivity event*recipient	-0.22	[-0.43, 0.00]	.045		
H2b	Positivity consequences	0.18	[-0.07, 0.44]	.166	0.13	0.40
	Positivity consequences*cause	0.49	[0.18, 0.80]	.003		
	Positivity consequences*recipient	-0.17	[-0.41, 0.08]	.190		
H3a	**Negativity event**	-0.31	[-0.55, -0.07]	.017	0.09	0.35
	Negativity event*cause	-0.06	[-0.35, 0.24]	.701		
	Negativity event*recipient	0.32	[0.08, 0.56]	.010		
H3b	Negativity consequences	-0.10	[-0.35, 0.15]	.431	0.09	0.34
	Negativity consequences*cause	-0.38	[-0.68, -0.08]	.016		
	Negativity consequences*recipient	0.10	[-0.16, 0.36]	.449		
H4	**Ingroup morality**	0.19	[0.08, 0.30]	< .001	0.04	0.26
H5a	Ingroup agency: power	0.03	[-0.08, 0.14]	.590	0.00	0.21
H5b	Ingroup agency: responsibility	0.05	[-0.06, 0.15]	.395	0.00	0.20
H6a	Ingroup morality*power	0.06	[-0.04, 0.17]	.082	0.04	0.27
H6b	Ingroup morality*responsibility	0.05	[-0.03, 0.14]	.235	0.05	0.25
H7	Recency[a]	0.03	[-0.24, 0.30]	.832	0.03	0.23
	Recency*cause	-0.16	[-0.46, 0.15]	.311		
	Recency*recipient	0.07	[-0.21, 0.34]	.644		
Exploratory	**Symbolic threat**	-0.15	[-0.26, -0.03]	.012	0.02	0.28
Exploratory	**Realistic threat**	-0.15	[-0.27, -0.02]	.023	0.02	0.29
Exploratory	**Subjective recency**	0.73	[0.67, 0.79]	< .001	0.54	0.58

Note. We report confirmatory (upper) and exploratory results (lower). Significant relationships are presented in bold. The ingroup morality and agency results are based on ratings involving the ingroup (N = 511 ratings). The recency results are based on events with a specific end date (70 of 80 events; N = 546 ratings).
[a] These models failed to converge. Therefore, as preregistered, we report the results of the intercepts-only models (i.e., only random intercepts for events).

Discussion

In Iceland, we found indications of identity protection in the preference for remembering moral and positive history caused by the ingroup, but – unlike in the U.S., Australia, and Germany – not agentic history. This may reflect that, in this smaller country, historical agency is less decisive for national self-understanding (Bergmann, 2014). Additionally, participants endorsed remembering the negative historical events that impacted their ingroup. This memory can be crucial for self-verification in groups dominated or harmed by others (Liu et al., 1999).

Although the countries examined thus far clearly differ in their histories and historical approaches, they all belong to the global West. The next analysis expands this focus, turning to a country known for its culturally diverse history: India.

India

Key events in Indian history include the foundation of Hinduism and the caste system, the spread of Buddhism and Jainism, colonial rule, as well as post-independence attempts toward modernization. However, as a country of vast cultural and religious diversity, India has no singular concept of national identity (Ray & Singh, 2015). Instead, national self-understanding is debated through various interpretations of the past, such as the 'unity in diversity,' emphasizing India's history of tolerance and pluralism, or 'majoritarianism along religious lines,' highlighting community conflicts (Balagopalan, 2009; Gottlob, 2007). The presence of such diverging historical reconstructions prompts the question of what remembrance pattern can be observed.

Method

Our preregistration for India is available at https://osf.io/n2wgk/?view_only=e0aabaf3caee48de9ffd9056b49362f0. To generate the stimulus materials (pre-study), we recruited N = 150 Indian participants through Toluna (M_{age} = 40.04 years, SD_{age} = 12.92, age ranging from 18 to 79; 46% identified as women, 51% as

men, 3% as gender diverse or did not indicate their gender). Consistent with the procedure in the other national contexts, for the main study, we recruited a new sample of N = 350 Indian participants representative of the Indian population in age and gender through Toluna. Excluding participants who indicated that they clicked at random or who failed one or more of the attention checks, as preregistered, our final sample included N = 202 participants (M_{age} = 38.46 years, SD_{age} = 13.23, age ranging from 18 to 76; 47% identified as women, 52% as men, 1% as gender diverse or did not indicate their gender), and a total of N = 794 ratings of events participants had at least basic knowledge about. The study setup mirrored that of all other countries, and we obtained good reliabilities for symbolic ingroup threat (α = .93) and realistic ingroup threat (α = .92). However, our main outcome measure, the willingness to collectively remember, showed questionable reliability (α = .52). Accordingly, all following results need to be interpreted with particular caution.

Results

Correlations

A summary of the descriptive statistics is available in SOM-F. Replicating most of our findings from the U.S. and Iceland, event positivity was positively correlated with ingroup morality and agency, but event negativity showed an opposite pattern (Table 11). Furthermore, neither recency nor subjective recency was significantly related to any of the other variables, leaving the interpretation of the latter measure inconclusive.

Confirmatory Results

The ICCs in our models ranged from 0.09 to 0.18, justifying the inclusion of random effects. As displayed in Table 12, we found support for most of our hypotheses. Largely consistent with H1, H3b, H4, and H5a-H5b, and replicating several of the findings from the U.S. and Iceland, though fewer from Australia and Germany, participants in India were more willing to collectively remember history involving the ingroup as well as reflecting the ingroup's morality and agency. In contrast, history with negative consequences caused by the

ingroup was less supported for remembrance. Further supporting H6a, the endorsement of remembering ingroup agentic history was tempered for immoral history (for interaction plots, see SOM-F). Specifically, as expected, Indian participants were less willing to remember instances where their ingroup held power but acted immorally. However, deviating from our expectations (H2a-H3a), but replicating the findings in the U.S., we also observed a preference for remembering positive history, regardless of the ingroup's role. This suggests a general preference for engaging with positive history over negative history, rather than a specifically identity-protective approach. Lastly, the interaction of recency and ingroup role was not linked to the willingness to collectively remember (H7). Overall, these findings suggest a clear identity-protective pattern, consistent with most of our predictions and several key findings from the U.S. and Iceland, particularly the preference for remembering moral and agentic ingroup history, but not historical events with negative consequences caused by the ingroup.

Exploratory Results and Robustness Analyses

The exploratory analyses mirrored the identity-motivated patterns observed in the confirmatory analyses. In particular, replicating the results from the U.S. and Iceland, participants in India were less willing to remember ingroup-threatening history (Table 12). Finally, as in all the other countries examined thus far, Indian participants preferred to remember history perceived as subjectively recent. However, as in most of the other countries, the correlational results suggest that this preference does not reflect an identity-protective tendency. There was no significant interaction between subjective recency and ingroup role (SOM-F). Further paralleling our previous findings, most confirmatory findings remained significant in analyses excluding events without a clear end date, with the exception of ingroup involvement as cause, which became marginally significant. Additionally, the previously non-significant interaction between ingroup morality and responsibility reached significance (SOM-F).

Table 11

Multilevel Correlations in India

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Positivity event	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Positivity consequences	0.79***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Negativity event	-0.56***	-0.47***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Negativity consequences	-0.41***	-0.41***	0.64***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Ingroup morality	0.38***	0.32***	-0.13*	-0.13*	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Ingroup agency: power	0.38***	0.36***	-0.15**	-0.12	0.32***	-	-	-	-	-
7. Ingroup agency: responsibility	0.43***	0.37***	-0.19***	-0.10	0.25***	0.52***	-	-	-	-
8. Recency	-0.09	-0.08	0.12	0.09	0.02	-0.02	0.03	-	-	-
9. Symbolic ingroup threat	0.01	-0.03	0.28***	0.24***	0.07	0.09	0.19***	0.07	-	-
10. Realistic ingroup threat	0.02	-0.02	0.26***	0.23***	0.07	0.13*	0.20***	0.05	0.90***	-
11. Subjective recency	-0.04	0.03	-0.05	-0.08	-0.01	-0.05	-0.07	0.02	-0.03	-0.05

Note. To integrate all continuous variables, correlations were calculated based on ratings involving the ingroup with a specific end date (N = 633 ratings).

Table 12

LMMs of Willingness to Collectively Remember in India

Hypothesis	Characteristic	Standardized estimate	Standardized 95% CI	*p*	R^2 marginal	R^2 conditional
H1	**Ingroup involvement: cause**[a]	0.19	[0.00, 0.37]	.048	0.01	0.11
	Ingroup involvement: recipient	0.19	[0.02, 0.36]	.026		
H2a	**Positivity event**[a]	0.19	[0.05, 0.33]	.008	0.04	0.13
	Positivity event*cause	0.10	[-0.09, 0.29]	.299		
	Positivity event*recipient	-0.12	[-0.29, 0.05]	.172		
H2b	**Positivity consequences**	0.21	[0.04, 0.38]	.020	0.06	0.23
	Positivity consequences*cause	0.12	[-0.08, 0.32]	.230		
	Positivity consequences*recipient	-0.14	[-0.32, 0.04]	.139		
H3a	**Negativity event**	-0.18	[-0.36, -0.01]	.027	0.05	0.22
	Negativity event*cause	-0.07	[-0.28, 0.14]	.601		
	Negativity event*recipient	0.02	[-0.17, 0.22]	.687		
H3b	Negativity consequences[a]	-0.06	[-0.20, 0.08]	.382	0.05	0.14
	Negativity consequences*cause	-0.26	[-0.44, -0.08]	.005		
	Negativity consequences*recipient	-0.02	[-0.19, 0.15]	.841		
H4	**Ingroup morality**	0.22	[0.14, 0.30]	< .001	0.05	0.17
H5a	**Ingroup agency: power**	0.12	[0.04, 0.21]	.008	0.02	0.15
H5b	**Ingroup agency: responsibility**	0.19	[0.09, 0.29]	< .001	0.04	0.20
H6a	**Ingroup morality*power**	0.09	[0.02, 0.16]	.009	0.07	0.22
H6b	Ingroup morality*responsibility[a]	0.05	[-0.02, 0.11]	.139	0.06	0.15
H7	Recency[a]	0.05	[-0.09, 0.20]	.489	0.01	0.11
	Recency*cause	-0.04	[-0.21, 0.13]	.643		
	Recency*recipient	-0.03	[-0.21, 0.15]	.753		
Exploratory	**Symbolic threat**	-0.16	[-0.24, -0.07]	.001	0.03	0.20
Exploratory	**Realistic threat**	-0.16	[-0.24, -0.07]	< .001	0.02	0.21
Exploratory	**Subjective recency**	0.14	[0.07, 0.22]	< .001	0.02	0.14

Note. We report confirmatory (upper) and exploratory results (lower). Significant relationships are presented in bold. The ingroup morality and agency results are based on ratings involving the ingroup (N = 688 ratings). The recency results are based on events with a specific end date (75 of 80 events; N = 735 ratings).

[a] These models failed to converge. Therefore, as preregistered, we report the results of the intercepts-only models (i.e., only random intercepts for events).

Discussion

The results in India painted an identity-motivated picture, with most event characteristics being related to the willingness to collectively remember, as expected. However, due to the low reliability in our main measure, the present results need to be interpreted with caution.

Although all countries examined thus far have undergone major socio-political transformations, one of the most profound is the transition from democracy to dictatorship and back. Our next analysis focused on a country that has recently undergone this historical trajectory.

Chile

Major events in Chile's history include Spanish colonization, independence struggles, and the 1973 coup that led to a military dictatorship marked by widespread human rights abuses. After the return to democracy, Chile underwent substantial economic growth and social changes, with ongoing debates over social justice and historical representations shaping political discourse and national identity (Garretón, 2019). This interplay of past traumas, current social movements, and the related contestation of historical narratives (Badilla & Aguilera, 2021) makes Chile a compelling context for studying collective remembrance.

Method

The preregistration for Chile is available at https://osf.io/ub329/?view_only=0ea518d23eb64ad7a1028cfaeca42acd. For the pre-study, we recruited N = 150 Chilean participants through Netquest (M_{age} = 43.98 years, SD_{age} = 16.77, age ranging from 18 to 85; 46% identified as women, 52% as men, 2% as gender diverse or did not indicate their gender). For the main study, we recruited an additional N = 350 participants representative of the Chilean population in age and gender through Netquest. Applying the same preregistered exclusion criteria as in all other countries (i.e., excluding participants who reported random clicking or who failed one or more of the attention checks)

our final sample consisted of N = 326 participants (M_{age} = 44.15 years, SD_{age} = 16.42, age ranging from 18 to 85; 51% identified as women, 48% as men, 1% as gender diverse or did not indicate their gender), and a total of N = 1,327 ratings of events participants had at least basic knowledge about. We obtained good reliabilities for the measures of willingness to remember (α = .69), symbolic ingroup threat (α = .91), and realistic ingroup threat (α = .88).

Results

Correlations

Descriptive statistics are provided in SOM-G. Replicating the results from the U.S., Iceland, and India, the perceived valence of an event was associated with the extent to which the event was viewed as morally favorable to the ingroup and was linked to perceived ingroup agency (Table 13). Further resonating with the results in Germany, Iceland, and India, subjective recency was unrelated to any of the other variables, leaving the interpretation of this measure inconclusive.

Confirmatory Results

The ICCs in our models ranged from 0.12 to 0.20, endorsing the inclusion of random effects. Table 14 presents the confirmatory results, which partly supported our hypotheses. Consistent with H1, H4, H5a-H5b, and closely replicating findings from the U.S., India, and partly from Iceland, participants in Chile supported the remembrance of historical events characterized by ingroup involvement, ingroup morality, and ingroup agency. Further replicating the results from the U.S., Iceland, and India, Chilean participants showed a general preference for preserving positive history but not negative history. However, deviating from our expectations (H2a-H3b), this tendency was not affected by ingroup involvement. Also deviating from our expectations, the relationship between ingroup agency and willingness to remember was not strengthened by ingroup morality (H6a-H6b). Thus, participants were willing to remember agentic history regardless of its moral implications for the ingroup. Finally, recency was not linked to the willingness to collectively remember, and did not

interact with ingroup role (H7). Taken together, these results portray a partially identity-protective pattern, highlighting the significance of ingroup involvement, ingroup morality and ingroup agency, as also observed in most of the previously discussed countries. However, we also observed several deviations from our hypotheses, as neither the interaction between valence and ingroup involvement, nor the combination of ingroup morality and agency, significantly boosted or diminished the willingness to collectively remember.

Exploratory Results and Robustness Analyses

The exploratory analyses revealed a reluctance among participants to remember history that posed a threat to the ingroup (see Table 14) – an ingroup-defensive tendency also observed in the U.S., Iceland, and India. Deviating from all previous findings, participants did not show a preference for collectively remembering subjectively recent history. Additionally, we did not observe a significant interaction between subjective recency and ingroup role (SOM-G). All confirmatory results remained robust when excluding events without a clear end date (SOM-G).

Table 13

Multilevel Correlations in Chile

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Positivity event	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Positivity consequences	0.77***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Negativity event	-0.57***	-0.53***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Negativity consequences	-0.44***	-0.47***	0.62***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Ingroup morality	0.35***	0.38***	-0.16***	-0.13**	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Ingroup agency: power	0.28***	0.29***	-0.18***	-0.08	0.16***	-	-	-	-	-
7. Ingroup agency: responsibility	0.25***	0.29***	-0.17***	-0.09	0.15***	0.58***	-	-	-	-
8. Recency	-0.06	-0.06	0.08	0.09	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-	-	-
9. Symbolic ingroup threat	-0.28***	-0.31***	0.20***	0.18***	-0.22***	-0.03	-0.02	0.04	-	-
10. Realistic ingroup threat	-0.25***	-0.28***	0.19***	0.16**	-0.17***	-0.05	-0.02	0.03	0.84***	-
11. Subjective recency	-0.03	-0.03	0.02	0.07	-0.03	-0.01	0.03	0.07	0.08	0.06

Note. To integrate all continuous variables, correlations were calculated based on ratings involving the ingroup with a specific end date (N = 938 ratings).

Table 14

LMMs of Willingness to Collectively Remember in Chile

Hypothesis	Characteristic	Standardized estimate	Standardized 95% CI	*p*	R^2 marginal	R^2 conditional
H1	**Ingroup involvement: cause**[a]	0.33	[0.19, 0.48]	< .001	0.02	0.15
	Ingroup involvement: recipient	0.23	[0.11, 0.35]	< .001		
H2a	**Positivity event**	0.26	[0.16, 0.35]	< .001	0.10	0.28
	Positivity event*cause	0.11	[-0.05, 0.27]	.139		
	Positivity event*recipient	-0.01	[-0.14, 0.13]	.964		
H2b	**Positivity consequences**[a]	0.23	[0.12, 0.33]	< .001	0.08	0.20
	Positivity consequences*cause	0.11	[-0.03, 0.24]	.125		
	Positivity consequences*recipient	-0.02	[-0.13, 0.10]	.795		
H3a	**Negativity event**[a]	-0.13	[-0.22, -0.03]	.008	0.04	0.16
	Negativity event*cause	-0.10	[-0.24, 0.04]	.154		
	Negativity event*recipient	0.03	[-0.09, 0.15]	.655		
H3b	**Negativity consequences**[a]	-0.11	[-0.20, -0.02]	.019	0.03	0.15
	Negativity consequences*cause	-0.03	[-0.16, 0.11]	.718		
	Negativity consequences*recipient	0.08	[-0.04, 0.19]	.212		
H4	**Ingroup morality**	0.15	[0.08, 0.21]	< .001	0.02	0.15
H5a	**Ingroup agency: power**[a]	0.08	[0.02, 0.14]	.012	0.01	0.13
H5b	**Ingroup agency: responsibility**	0.15	[0.07, 0.22]	< .001	0.02	0.17
H6a	Ingroup morality*power	-0.01	[-0.07, 0.05]	.634	0.02	0.18
H6b	Ingroup morality*responsibility	-0.04	[-0.09, 0.02]	.211	0.04	0.20
H7	Recency[a]	-0.11	[-0.23, 0.01]	.074	0.03	0.15
	Recency*cause	0.00	[-0.15, 0.15]	.979		
	Recency*recipient	0.06	[-0.07, 0.18]	.391		
Exploratory	**Symbolic threat**	-0.21	[-0.29, -0.12]	< .001	0.04	0.22
Exploratory	**Realistic threat**	-0.17	[-0.25, -0.09]	< .001	0.03	0.19
Exploratory	Subjective recency	0.08	[-0.08, 0.23]	.356	0.09	0.30

Note. We report confirmatory (upper) and exploratory results (lower). Significant relationships are presented in bold. The ingroup morality and agency results are based on ratings involving the ingroup (N = 1,085 ratings). The recency results are based on events with a specific end date (71 of 80 events; N = 1,156 ratings).

[a] These models failed to converge. Therefore, as preregistered, we report the results of the intercepts-only models (i.e., only random intercepts for events).

Discussion

The results in Chile closely replicated several key findings from the U.S. and India, as well as some findings from Iceland, underscoring the importance of ingroup involvement, morality, agency, and threat in collective remembrance. Thus, we found largely consistent support in several countries for the relevance of certain identity-related characteristics in the willingness to remember.

Kenya

Finally, we examined willingness to remember in Kenya: a country that has been described as standing "at a crossroads in the reconstruction of its historical memory" (Coombes et al., 2014; p.1), including colonial history, liberation struggles, and post-election violences. This crossroads involves navigating between calls for collective forgetting of colonial legacies and ethnic conflicts, and efforts to develop inclusive historical narratives. In light of this ongoing contestation, examining whether our theory-driven pattern holds can provide a critical test of this theorizing.

Method

The preregistration for Kenya is available at https://osf.io/x5tjp/?view_only=d832034521434c38b122cf53aa2d8e10. To generate the stimulus events (pre-study), we recruited N = 150 Kenyan participants through Toluna (M_{age} = 35.18 years, SD_{age} = 13.52, age ranging from 18 to 69; 50% identified as women, 50% as men). For the main study, we opened the survey on Toluna to an additional N = 350 participants, representative of the Kenyan population in terms of age and gender. Excluding participants who reported random clicking or who failed one or more of the attention checks, as preregistered, our final sample consisted of N = 344 participants (M_{age} = 31.86 years, SD_{age} = 10.09, age ranging from 18 to 63; 50% identified as women, 50% as men). We analyzed N = 1,004 event ratings, retaining only those for events participants had at least basic knowledge

of. Measures of willingness to collectively remember (α = .71), symbolic ingroup threat (α = .93), and realistic ingroup threat (α = .88) showed good reliabilities.

Results

Correlations

We provide an overview of descriptive statistics in SOM-H. Consistent with findings from the U.S., Iceland, India, and Chile, perceptions of event valence were closely linked to how favorable the event was perceived to be for the ingroup in terms of morality and agency (Table 13). Moreover, as in the U.S., subjective recency was found to be positively correlated with perceptions of ingroup responsibility. This indicates that subjectively perceiving history as temporally close was, to some degree, reflecting an upward trajectory in ingroup responsibility. However, subjective recency was not related to any of the other variables.

Confirmatory Results

The ICCs in our models ranged from 0.12 to 0.20, supporting the relevance of accounting for random effects. As outlined in Table 16, the confirmatory results largely corroborated our hypotheses. Consistent with H1, H4, and H5a-H5b, and echoing findings from the U.S., India, Chile, and some from Iceland, participants in Kenya endorsed the collective remembrance of historical events that involved the ingroup as the cause, reflected ingroup morality, and where their ingroup had power or responsibility. Further underscoring the identity-motivated account for collective remembrance and supporting H2a-H3b, ingroup role interacted with event valence, beyond the general preference for remembering positive history (for interaction plots, see SOM-H). Specifically, consistent with some of the findings from Iceland and India, Kenyan participants were in favor of remembering positively valenced events caused by the ingroup, but not negative events or events with negative consequences caused by the ingroup. Additionally, in line with the findings in Germany, but contrary to the findings in Iceland, participants also endorsed the remembrance of positive history in which the ingroup was on the receiving end, but not the remembrance of negative

history in which the ingroup was on the receiving end. Thus, Kenyan participants were more willing to confront the positive past that affected their ingroup, but less willing to confront the negative past that impacted their ingroup. Contrary to hypotheses (H6a-H6b), yet in agreement with the majority of our previous findings except those from India, ingroup morality did not amplify the relationship between ingroup agency and the willingness to collectively remember. Hence, participants were inclined to remember agentic history regardless of its moral implications. Recency (H7) showed no significant association with the willingness to collectively remember, regardless of ingroup involvement. In sum, these findings closely align with the predicted identity-protective pattern and several key results observed in the U.S., India, Chile, and partially in Germany and Iceland.

Exploratory Results and Robustness Analyses

The exploratory analyses replicated the ingroup-protective tendencies observed in the U.S., Iceland, India, and Chile, revealing a reluctance to remember history that posed a threat to the ingroup. Additionally, participants displayed a preference for remembering history perceived as subjectively recent. Given that events perceived as temporally closer were associated with ingroup responsibility, this trend may provide tentative support for the role of identity-related aspects in collective remembrance. However, we found no interaction between subjective recency and ingroup role (SOM-H). Most of the significant confirmatory results remained stable even when excluding events without a clear end date, except for the findings on power, which became non-significant (SOM-H).

Table 15

Multilevel Correlations in Kenya

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Positivity event	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Positivity consequences	0.74***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Negativity event	-0.71***	-0.61***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Negativity consequences	-0.53***	-0.58***	0.66***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Ingroup morality	0.29***	0.30***	-0.17***	-0.12*	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Ingroup agency: power	0.27***	0.25***	-0.18***	-0.14*	0.06	-	-	-	-	-
7. Ingroup agency: responsibility	0.30***	0.33***	-0.25***	-0.19***	0.17***	0.51***	-	-	-	-
8. Recency	-0.03	-0.01	0.03	0.01	-0.01	0.06	0.08	-	-	-
9. Symbolic ingroup threat	-0.28***	-0.31***	0.28***	0.27***	-0.25***	0.04	-0.02	0.04	-	-
10. Realistic ingroup threat	-0.26***	-0.31***	0.29***	0.27***	-0.25***	0.05	-0.01	0.07	0.84***	-
11. Subjective recency	0.04	-0.01	-0.01	-0.05	0.01	0.11	0.14*	0.04	0.06	0.05

Note. To integrate all continuous variables, correlations were calculated based on ratings involving the ingroup with a specific end date (N = 665 ratings).

Table 16

LMMs of Willingness to Collectively Remember in Kenya

Hypothesis	Characteristic	Standardized estimate	Standardized 95% CI	*p*	R^2 marginal	R^2 conditional
H1	**Ingroup involvement: cause**[a]	0.28	[0.11, 0.46]	.002	0.01	0.18
	Ingroup involvement: recipient	0.13	[-0.02, 0.28]	.080		
H2a	Positivity event	0.13	[-0.02, 0.28]	.103	0.08	0.29
	Positivity event*cause	0.21	[0.01, 0.40]	.040		
	Positivity event*recipient	0.13	[-0.06, 0.31]	.179		
H2b	Positivity consequences	0.03	[-0.10, 0.15]	.705	0.09	0.27
	Positivity consequences*cause	0.31	[0.13, 0.48]	.001		
	Positivity consequences*recipient	0.29	[0.13, 0.44]	<. 001		
H3a	Negativity event	-0.07	[-0.23, 0.10]	.440	0.04	0.24
	Negativity event*cause	-0.22	[-0.42, -0.02]	.020		
	Negativity event*recipient	-0.06	[-0.24, 0.12]	.554		
H3b	Negativity consequences	0.05	[-0.08, 0.19]	.435	0.03	0.22
	Negativity consequences*cause	-0.27	[-0.46, -0.09]	.004		
	Negativity consequences*recipient	-0.17	[-0.32, -0.01]	.034		
H4	**Ingroup morality**	0.21	[0.13, 0.29]	< .001	0.05	0.21
H5a	**Ingroup agency: power**	0.12	[0.05, 0.19]	.001	0.02	0.17
H5b	**Ingroup agency: responsibility**	0.20	[0.13, 0.27]	< .001	0.04	0.18
H6a	Ingroup morality*power[a]	0.04	[-0.02, 0.09]	.212	0.05	0.17
H6b	Ingroup morality*responsibility[a]	0.02	[-0.04, 0.07]	.556	0.07	0.17
H7	Recency[a]	0.00	[-0.16, 0.16]	.975	0.01	0.19
	Recency*cause	0.00	[-0.21, 0.21]	.996		
	Recency*recipient	-0.07	[-0.24, 0.09]	.359		
Exploratory	**Symbolic threat**	-0.17	[-0.26, -0.08]	< .001	0.03	0.25
Exploratory	**Realistic threat**	-0.13	[-0.21, -0.05]	.004	0.02	0.22
Exploratory	**Subjective recency**	0.08	[0.02, 0.15]	.017	0.01	0.20

Note. We report confirmatory (upper) and exploratory results (lower). Significant relationships are presented in bold. The ingroup morality and agency results are based on ratings involving the ingroup (N = 890 ratings). The recency results are based on events with a specific end date (63 of 80 events; N = 762 ratings).
[a] These models failed to converge. Therefore, as preregistered, we report the results of the intercepts-only models (i.e., only random intercepts for events).

Discussion

Consistent with the findings from the U.S., India, Chile, and most of Iceland, we observed that ingroup involvement, morality, agency, and threat associated with historical events correlated with the willingness to remember those events. This underscores the importance of these identity-related attributes across most countries. Further in line with our expectations but only partially consistent with the results in the other countries, among the Kenyan participants, ingroup involvement interacted with valence, while morality and agency did not. This suggests that other components of the ingroup-protective pattern were less consistent across countries.

Study 2: Internal Meta-Analysis

To determine the robustness of our findings, we conducted an internal meta-analysis.

Method and Results

Overall, we found support for some of our hypotheses across most national contexts but mixed evidence for other hypotheses. The key results are summarized in Table 17. To synthesize our findings and identify the most robust patterns, we conducted an internal random-effects (RE) meta-analysis across all seven countries using the R package "metafor" (Viechtbauer, 2010). This analysis integrated the standardized estimates of the associations between identity-relevant characteristics and the willingness to collectively remember. The results are summarized in Figure 1. Overall, we found converging evidence of significant associations between the willingness to collectively remember and multiple characteristics: ingroup involvement, positivity (event and consequences), the interactions between positivity (event and consequences) and ingroup role as cause, the interactions between negativity (event and consequences) and ingroup role as cause – indicating a preference for remembering the positive history that the ingroup caused, but not the negative history that the ingroup caused – ingroup morality, ingroup agency, symbolic ingroup threat, realistic ingroup threat, and subjective recency. Although these findings offer integrative empirical support for

the robustness of several of our results, the observed heterogeneity also underscores the importance of considering cross-contextual differences in these associations.

Table 17

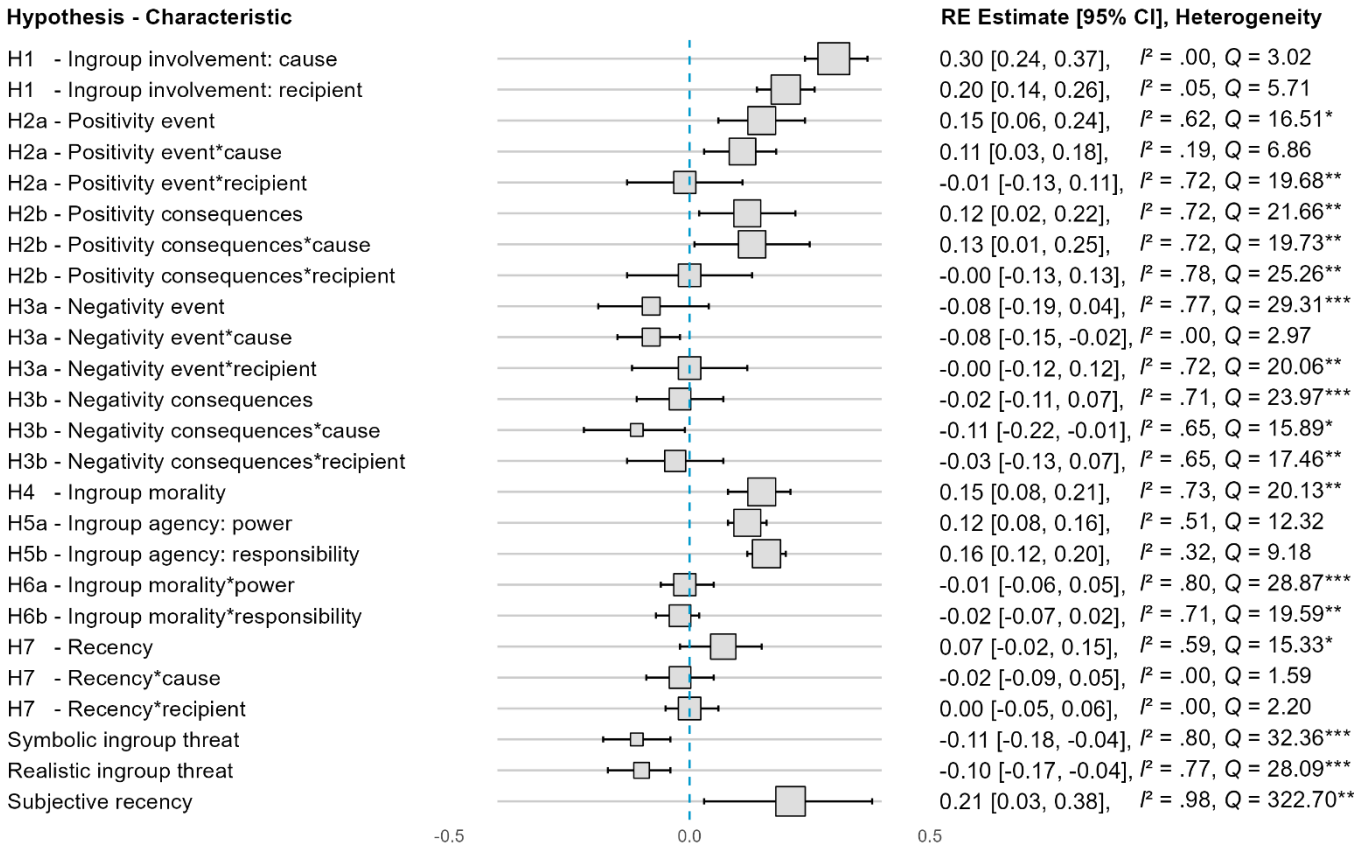
Summary of Hypotheses, Explorations, and Key Findings

Hypothesis	Prediction	Countries in which hypothesis was supported	Countries in which hypothesis was partially supported	Countries in which hypothesis was not supported
H1	Perceived *ingroup involvement* is positively related to the willingness to collectively remember.	U.S., Australia, India, Chile	Germany (only cause), Iceland (only recipient), Kenya (only cause)	-
H2	Perceived *positivity* is positively related to the willingness to collectively remember, especially when the ingroup was involved (i.e., *interaction* of positivity and involvement).	-	Germany (only positivity event and recipient), Iceland (only positivity consequences and cause), Kenya (for positivity consequences fully supported, for positivity event only cause)	U.S., Australia, India, Chile
H3	Perceived *negativity* is negatively related to the willingness to collectively remember, especially when the ingroup was involved (i.e., *interaction* of negativity and involvement).	-	Germany (only recipient), Iceland (only negativity consequences and cause), India (only negativity consequences and cause), Kenya (for negativity consequences fully supported, for negativity event only cause)	U.S., Australia, Chile
H4	Perceived *ingroup morality* is positively related to the willingness to collectively remember.	U.S., Iceland, India, Chile, Kenya	-	Australia, Germany
H5	Perceived *ingroup agency* is positively related to the willingness to collectively remember.	U.S., Australia, Germany, India, Chile, Kenya	-	Iceland
H6	The link of ingroup agency and the willingness to collectively remember is tempered by low ingroup morality (i.e., *interaction* of agency and morality).	-	India (only power)	U.S., Australia, Germany, Iceland, Chile, Kenya
H7	*Recency* is positively related to the willingness to collectively remember, especially when the ingroup was involved (i.e., *interaction* of recency and involvement).	-	-	U.S., Australia, Germany, Iceland, India, 1f Chile, Kenya

	Exploratory predictions	Countries in which exploratory prediction was supported	Countries in which exploratory prediction was partially supported	Countries in which exploratory prediction was not supported
Exploratoy	*Symbolic ingroup threat* is negatively related to the willingness to collectively remember.	U.S., Iceland, India, Chile, Kenya	-	Australia, Germany
Exploratoy	*Realistic ingroup threat* is negatively related to the willingness to collectively remember.	U.S., Iceland, India, Chile, Kenya	-	Australia, Germany
Exploratoy	*Subjective recency* is positively related to the willingness to collectively remember.	U.S., Australia, Germany, Iceland, India, Kenya [however, interpretation unclear]	-	Chile

Figure 1

Overview of Meta-Analytic Results on the Relationships Between Characteristics and the Willingness to Collectively Remember Across Countries



Note. We present meta-analytic random-effects (RE) estimates, 95 % CIs, I^2s of heterogeneity, *Q*-values (*df* = 6) of heterogeneity and their significance for the relationships between confirmatory (upper) and exploratory characteristics (lower) and the willingness to collectively remember across countries. The analysis identified significant relationships between the willingness to collectively remember and multiple characteristics, including ingroup involvement, positivity (event and consequences), the interactions between positivity (event and consequences) and ingroup role as cause, the interactions between negativity (event and consequences) and ingroup role as cause, ingroup morality, ingroup agency, symbolic ingroup threat, realistic ingroup threat, as well as subjective recency.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Results of Additional Explorations and Analyses on Construct Validity

Our reasoning involves the assumption that our main outcome variable, the willingness to collectively remember the past, is conceptually distinct from the historical relevance attributed to this past. To inspect the internal validity of this assumption and gain a deeper understanding of participants' conceptualization of the meaning of our measure, we assessed the perceived importance of events for the course of world history and the personal significance participants place on preserving the memory of those events. If historical importance fully explained the variance in willingness to collectively remember, it would challenge our argument that these two constructs are theoretically distinct. If, however, personal importance accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in willingness to collectively remember, it would suggest that participants' judgment of memory importance is guided by individual considerations that go beyond general historical significance. Indeed, supporting the latter reasoning, when entering both variables as predictors of willingness to collectively remember in exploratory LMMs, historical relevance accounted only for a limited amount of variance (unique semi-partial R^2 ranging from 0.00 to 0.08 across countries; see OSF-I). Personal relevance of remembering, in turn, accounted for a substantial portion (unique semi-partial R^2 ranging from 0.17 to 0.46 across countries) of the total variance explained by both predictors combined (marginal R^2 ranging from 0.32 and 0.54 across countries; the variance explained by both predictors combined was greater than the sum of their unique contributions due to their intercorrelation; Stoffel et al., 2017). This highlights that the willingness to collectively remember is not merely a reflection of perceived historical relevance, but rather constitutes a conceptually distinct construct, warranting study.

Our confirmatory analysis involved separate LMMs for each of the characteristics (or their interactions). To assess the combined cross-sectional explanatory power of all characteristics in the willingness to collectively remember, and to identify which characteristics remained significant when accounting for their intercorrelations, we ran

integrative exploratory models in each country, entering all characteristics simultaneously as predictors. The findings revealed that, in most national contexts, morality and agency remained the most important (i.e., significant) characteristics. Overall, the combined characteristics explained approximately one-third to one-half of the total variance (OSF-J). Thus, identity-relevant characteristics explained substantial variance across countries, but still accounted for only a part of the total variation.

Considerable research emphasizes the role of political and media discourse in shaping remembrance culture and collective memory (Figueiredo et al., 2017; Hirst & Manier, 2008; Kirkwood, 2019; Prager, 2001). Building on this, we explored whether the perceived prominence of events in national politics and media would be linked to the willingness to collectively remember those events. Indeed, we found a positive association in most national contexts (see OSF-K). Although our analyses do not allow for conclusions regarding the causal role of mass media coverage and public discourse in collective remembrance (Paez & Liu, 2010, p. 111; see also Stone et al., 2022), the current findings are at least consistent with the notion that political and media presence is relevant in collective remembrance endeavors.

Finally, some group members may be more motivated than others to distort collective memory in ways that favor the ingroup. In particular, group members who strongly identify with their ingroup, and among them especially those who identify with the group in a defensive manner that is sensitive to ingroup criticism (i.e., individuals high in collective narcissism), may be more prone to identity-protective tendencies (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009; 2013). To further support our identity-motivated reasoning, we thus additionally explored whether individual differences, such as collective narcissism and ingroup identification, would moderate the relationship between ingroup-favorable event characteristics and the willingness to collectively remember. Indeed, we found some significant interactions in several countries, partly suggesting that group members who were

particularly invested in maintaining a favorable ingroup image placed more emphasis on the collective remembrance of historical events serving this goal (OSF-L).

Besides these additional angles and explorations that we were able to conduct with our data, there are several other perspectives that our data cannot readily inform but that warrant consideration in future studies. We turn to these perspectives in our general discussion.

General Discussion

Across seven countries and an internal meta-analysis, we found that several identity concerns matter for the willingness to collectively remember history. However, the way they matter varies across countries: In five countries (U.S., Iceland, India, Chile, Kenya), group members consistently endorsed remembering history in which the ingroup was involved, behaved in a moral or agentic (except Iceland) manner, and that did not threaten the ingroup. In contrast, in two countries known for both their perpetrator histories and their comparably self-critical approaches to these histories (Australia, Germany), we identified no preference for remembering moral, or unthreatening pasts, even when excluding hallmark events of national perpetrator history. For other configurations of event characteristics, however, our findings painted a less consistent picture, with only limited and even partly contradictory results, particularly for the interactions between ingroup role and valence as well as ingroup morality and agency. Thus, although our results provide an empirical foundation for the role of several identity-relevant characteristics in collective remembrance desires, they also reveal meaningful deviations from, and country-specific variation in, the identity-protective pattern.

Theoretical Implications

Substantial research agrees that interest in upholding a positive group identity guides collective remembrance (e.g., Baumeister & Hastings, 1997; Bar-Tal, 2014; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008). Yet, whether the choice of the past that group members want to remember is actually linked to the identity-protecting potential of that past has not been systematically investigated. However, this examination seems critical, as group members may want to

engage with the past not just to benefit their ingroup (Licata & Mery, 2015; Liu, 2022; Pennebaker & Banasik, 1997). Complying with Gergen's (1978) call for generative theory building, we tested the empirical basis of the identity-protective tenet across a broad range of events, which we make comparable by focusing on their attributed characteristics. Conducting our analysis across a variety of countries across continents is advantageous as collective memory research has been criticized for its selective focus on settings where memory distortions are most evident, leading to the concern that it relies "on less evidence than it should" (Schwartz, 2015, p. 19).

Our findings show that the preference for remembering is indeed self-servingly colored in that some identity-favoring characteristics of history are related to the willingness to collectively remember that history in most national contexts. However, our results also reveal a cross-contextual gradient, with some national contexts exhibiting a rather pronounced identity-protective pattern (e.g., India), and others showing minimal indications of such an approach (e.g., Australia). In all countries examined, though, we found only partial support for the proposed identity-defensive pattern. In fact, even in countries where several identity-related factors *are* important for the willingness to remember, such as the U.S., we observed exceptions to the identity-protective pattern, such as the willingness to remember immoral agentic events. These exceptions have relevant implications for collective memory research.

Research indicates that groups can largely differ in what past they favor remembering. A common explanation for such "memory wars" (Roediger, 2021; p. 1398) is that the same event is interpreted differently, for example in terms of how positive it is for the ingroup and thus how appealing it is to remember. Our methodological approach, which operates on the level of event characteristics, reveals that different memory interests go beyond different interpretations of events. Instead, group members from different countries, in fact, fundamentally diverge in their needs for ingroup positive or moral memory. Two potential explanations for these cross-contextual variations are worth considering. First, the more self-

critical public historical schemas (Hirst et al., 2018) present in countries like Australia may shape the willingness to remember, making it less centered on identity motives, even when excluding focal perpetration events. Second, however, even in more self-critical contexts, the willingness to collectively remember may still be tied to identity, but the identity projects differ. Although some research highlights dimensions like morality as genuinely important for positive ingroup evaluations (Brambilla et al., 2021), other studies suggest that different groups have different identity needs, also regarding their morality (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). These different interests may essentially shift priorities regarding the substance of which past to preserve. Additionally, some identity constructions may even benefit from remembering immoral deeds, framing them as sources of responsibility or growth (Kazarovytska et al., 2022; Lienen & Cohrs, 2021). Thus, although the pattern in countries like Australia may appear less identity-motivated, it may still resonate with group members' more complex identity interests.

Another important implication of our results, particularly the consistent lack of a purely identity-protective pattern, is that identity interests in principle seem to represent only one part of the story in understanding collective remembrance desires. In fact, our results point to the role of additional explanations largely independent of identity functions. For instance, in several countries (U.S., Iceland, India, Chile) we observed a general preference for remembering positive history, irrespective of ingroup involvement. Rather than suggesting an ingroup-defensive response, this aligns with mood regulation models, proposing that people are interested in positive memories as part of a mood repair process (Josephson et al., 1996). Our results suggest that even in collective memory, people may be motivated to emphasize positive aspects of human history as a whole, not just their ingroup's past. Notably, the consequences of such positive remembrance interests at a collective level can be manifold, ranging from the promotion of optimism to the perception of negative social trajectories

(Mastroianni & Gilbert, 2023; Yamashiro & Roediger, 2019) or collective nostalgia (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2019).

Our results also appear relevant to the study of collective memories of trauma. Although research suggests that group members are motivated to remember victimhood experiences as part of their self-definition (Hirschberger, 2018; Liu et al., 1999), we observed a reluctance to remember events that threaten the ingroup (except in Australia and Germany) or negative events experienced (except in Iceland). One explanation is that participants may not represent traumatic events as passive threat, but reinterpret them as acts of heroism, emphasizing agency (Meyers, 2011). Alternatively, not all negative experiences may seem relevant to remember – some may be tied to transformative events crucial to the group's self-concepts, but others may threaten the group without offering empowering or politically relevant interpretations and thus be forgotten (Hearty & Hearty, 2024). In both cases, our findings underscore the complexity of remembering traumatic history, indicating that the willingness to remember negative events is not unequivocal.

Limitations, Alternative Explanations, and Directions for Future Research

The scope of the research presented here is limited by the specific identity-relevant characteristics we measured. Although we focused on characteristics arguably relevant in social evaluations (Brewer, 1991; Leach et al., 2007), other characteristics, such as collective pride or dignity (White & Branscombe, 2018), may explain even more variance.

Even more important, we measured only identity-relevant characteristics. A crucial avenue for future research is to incorporating alternative sources of variance allowing for delineation of the role of other motives, such as group members' motivation to grasp how the past actually was (Licata & Mercy, 2015) or regulate their emotions (Josephson et al., 1996). Thus, although we provide an initial empirical foundation that both partially supports but also clearly challenges the predominance of identity characteristics in group-based memory

endeavors, future studies may deepen this understanding by testing alternative characteristics, such as perceptions of how relatable or important the past is to understanding the present.

Third, although we aimed to sample a broad range of historical events (Brunswik, 1955), our research is limited to the space of events present in collective memory, which may already share certain configurations of characteristics. Truly forgotten events, absent from any representation, could not be part of our analysis. To rule out the explanation that this limitation of variance influenced our results, future studies could include constructed events. Specifically, similar to social evaluation studies using fictional alien scenarios to avoid bias from pre-existing knowledge (e.g., Woitzel & Alves, 2024), upcoming research could fabricate artificial events that carry certain characteristics to test whether the present findings hold even outside the scope of participants' historical knowledge.

Finally, future research could go beyond self-report of willingness to remember by having participants invest tokens or money in memory-related projects like memorials or museums (Imhoff et al., 2012).

Conclusion

History cannot be invented completely new (Prager, 2001), but reality sets limits to the reinterpretation of 'unwanted' pasts (Klar & Bilewicz, 2017). Declaring historical episodes that are incompatible with a positive collective identity unimportant to remember can provide a solution to this dilemma. Applying a functionalist bottom-up approach that allowed us to critically revisit identity-protective theorizing in collective remembrance, we found that group members indeed choose to remember history that portrays their ingroup in a positive light. However, identity motives appear to be only one piece of the puzzle, with marked variation across countries – highlighting the social embeddedness of collective memory phenomena.

CHAPTER 6

General Discussion

This dissertation set out to illuminate identity protection in collective (non-) remembrance. Specifically, my goal was to examine how identity-protective tendencies play out in four processes relevant to understanding collective remembrance. Through four empirical projects, based on samples from 17 countries, we found evidence for identity protection being a crucial aspect in several collective remembrance phenomena. However, our results show that we are farther from understanding this aspect than initially assumed. Across projects, we found notable variation between samples and less consistency with existing theories than expected.

Chapter 2 shows that the identity-protective desire to bring closure to the discussion of history can also be framed and effectively communicated as a way to promote reconciliation or address current issues. Similar to identity-protective calls for closure, these expressions are related to negative attitudes toward the victim group and the costly avoidance of information about past misconduct (*RQ 1, communication*). Expanding on identity-protective intergroup responses, Chapter 3 reveals that representing ingroup members as willing collaborators is consistently linked to efforts to rationalize the crimes committed by devaluing the victim group (identity management prediction). These findings challenge existing theoretical accounts which suggest that representing ingroup members as victim-heroes, rather than accepting responsibility as willing co-perpetrators, is part of a defensive maneuver and should therefore be related to victim-oriented negativity (identity threat prediction; *RQ 2, role representation*). Also contrary to prevailing expectations, in Chapter 4 we find no experimental evidence for an identity-protective bias in individual short-term memory and recognition performance. Instead, we even show the equivalence of memory performance for information about ingroup perpetration, ingroup victimization, and outgroup perpetration (*RQ*

3, information processing). In view of these deviations from expected identity-protective accounts, Chapter 5 reopens the fundamental question of what characterizes the historical events that ingroup members want to collectively remember – and whether this choice is related to identity-relevant aspects of these events at all. There, we show that some identity-relevant characteristics (e.g., ingroup involvement, agency, and morality during the event) are significantly linked to the perceived relevance of remembering these events. However, the pattern observed is far from homogeneous, and we detect notable differences across countries in the event characteristics associated with the relevance of remembering these events (*RQ 4, willingness to remember*).

Theoretical Implications

In the four chapters presented, we contribute to the literature in various ways. In this section, I focus on selected overarching contributions. I begin with a synthesis of findings that were largely consistent across different national contexts and resonate with an identity-protective view on collective remembrance.

Implications of Consistent Results: Barriers to Remembrance and Public Memory

By identifying identity-protective tendencies across a range of different processes, this dissertation provides systematic theoretical guidance for detecting obstacles that *hinder remembrance efforts and historical reparation* (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019; Bilewicz, 2016; Psaltis et al., 2017; Wohl et al., 2006). We thereby advance existing theoretical work by testing novel phenomena, providing evidence for theoretically equivocal phenomena, and critically revisiting phenomena for which we have theoretical ideas but lack solid empirical knowledge. Chapter 2 illustrates that identity-protective demands for non-remembrance can find their way into social discourse in subtle, seemingly prosocial ways that propose closure as a means of reconciliation. These demands can place obstacles in the way of arguments advocating for a confrontation with the past. Particularly the prosocial and reconciliatory nature of these demands can make them more persuasive (for a critical discussion, see

O'Keefe, 2018) and harder to challenge, which can complicate efforts for continued engagement with the past. Regardless of the rhetorical shape these demands take, they are linked to identity-protective strategies, particularly the devaluation of the victim group – an identity-protective tendency further elaborated in the third chapter of the dissertation. Specifically, Chapter 3 reveals that group members, to some extent, accept their group's culpability as willing co-perpetrators rather than outright rejecting it. Yet, this acceptance comes with identity management strategies, such as downplaying the harm and demeaning the victims. Thus, while facing up to past transgressions is gaining increased attention (Brooks, 1999), and is crucial for reparations (Wohl et al., 2011), our findings underscore that such recognition can come at the cost of devaluing those who suffered from the transgressions.

A further barrier in the recognition of historical perpetration revealed by this work pertains to the reception of historical information. Although Chapter 4 finds no differences in the primary process studied (i.e., individual recall and recognition), it did reveal rather consistently that information about ingroup perpetration was viewed as less historically accurate. This suggests that historical information that contradicts an ingroup-positive schema can be regarded as less credible from the outset. Additionally, findings from Chapter 5 indicate that, at least in certain countries, group members prefer not to collectively remember negative or immoral aspects of their ingroup's history. As illustrated in Chapter 2, this reluctance to remember can be accompanied by a general unwillingness to engage with history (e.g., not visiting museums) and a costly avoidance of confrontation with ingroup-threatening historical information. Together, these results provide systematic empirical evidence of the obstacles to confronting harmful collective history across a variety of countries and atrocities, including colonial crimes, war crimes, and genocide. Our framework shows that the challenge may lie in overcoming resistance at multiple stages. First, in the initial avoidance of confrontation with historical information. Secondly, once confrontation has occurred, in the devaluation of threatening content as inaccurate and in attempts to

rationalize the past at the expense of the victim group. Lastly, resistance can show in debates that advocate for an end to engaging with the past under the guise of reconciliatory motives.

The current results also offer implications for research on the formation of identity-serving biases in *public collective memory* contents. Such biases are evident in history education (Bilewicz et al., 2017), the construction of historical knowledge in Wikipedia articles (Oeberst et al., 2020), and in political mobilization (Kirkwood, 2019), as mirrored in Vladimir Putin's justification for the war in Ukraine. This dissertation contributes to the fundamental understanding of how individual-level collective remembrance processes are susceptible to identity-protective tendencies. Understanding individual processes seems essential, as they are not just influenced by existing historical contents found "in the world" (Manier & Hirst, 2008, p.184). Rather, they directly shape these contents, given that most collective memory products (e.g., cultural symbols, rituals) are created by human hands. For example, the presence of ingroup biases in Wikipedia articles (Oeberst et al., 2020) raises the intriguing question about the processes on the part of the authors of the articles (or their source articles) that led to such biases. By examining four different processes relevant to understanding group members' collective remembrance, this dissertation sheds light on which mechanisms are likely to contribute to identity-protective biases in public memory products (e.g., avoidance of identity-threatening historical information; Chapter 2), and which are not (e.g., distorted short-term recall of identity-threatening information; Chapter 4).

Implications of Inconsistent Results: Social Identity Constructions and Protection

After reflecting on the results that show some consistency across countries and theoretically built upon identity protection, I will now turn to the implications of deviations from existing theory. Identifying deviations from established theories is critical to generative theory building (Gergen, 1973) and can promote creative scientific growth (Fiedler, 2018). With regard to the current findings, I argue that these deviations can have important implications for our understanding of *social identity constructions and their protection*.

Chapter 4 shows consistently across samples that there is no indication of bias to the detriment of ingroup perpetrator information. This is a clear deviation from theoretical expectations. While one explanation might be that identity-protective tendencies are generally more evident in self-reports than in behavioral measures, Chapter 2 challenges this explanation by showing that identity protection can be reflected in a dual-choice task assessing costly avoidance behavior. A more plausible implication that warrants further research, but fits with existing literature (Lange et al., 2003; Sharvit et al., 2015), is that task complexity influences whether identity-protective tendencies show up. Specifically, as cognitive demands increase, identity-protective tendencies may be overshadowed.

Alternatively, the absence of the motivated memory bias expected in Chapter 4 could be explained by an entirely different idea, namely, that the lack of bias does *not* reflect a motivation-behavior gap (i.e., accurate recall/recognition performance despite unwillingness to remember). In fact, Chapter 5 reveals that participants in the U.S. – a national sample also studied in Chapter 4 – were particularly willing to remember instances in which their ingroup behaved immorally and held power (i.e., conceptually close to perpetration). Similarly, German participants – also examined in Chapter 4 – did not strive to preserve events characterized by ingroup morality (i.e., conceptually relevant for differentiating victimhood from perpetration). Thus, the absence of a memory bias in Chapter 4 may be congruent with the group members' collective remembrance aspirations identified in Chapter 5. This seems all the more intriguing, as it suggests at least two implications: first, that needs other than identity protection are important for understanding collective remembrance (see discussion of future research directions); and second, that group members' identity goals, which we expect to be linked to willingness to remember, may be more complex than assumed.

The notion that group members strive for a positive collective identity belongs to the most fundamental premises in basic social psychology research (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and studies on collective remembrance (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2014; Baumeister & Hastings, 1997; Klar &

Bilewicz, 2017; Paez & Liu, 2011). Based on previous literature, we also have knowledge about key dimensions relevant for positive ingroup perceptions, such as morality (Brambilla et al., 2013; Leach et al., 2007). However, the understanding of *what is considered moral* differs substantially between and within societies (Graham et al., 2016; Taylor, 1989). Ironically, a sense of morality can even be achieved through the loop of immorality. For example, group members can derive distinct identity benefits from confronting their dark past, thereby demonstrating their moral growth (Forchtner, 2014; Kazarovytska et al., 2022; Lienen & Cohrs, 2021). This implies that group members may not necessarily strive to demonstrate moral consistency by proving that they have always acted morally. Instead, they may seek to show moral growth by overcoming an immoral past (Klein & O'Brien, 2017; Roberts & Creary, 2011). The latter perspective aligns with research on the importance of redemption ("bad things turn good") in life narrations (McAdams et al., 2001), and literature on contrast effects, suggesting that a good entity appears even better when referenced against a negative standard (Tversky & Griffin, 1991). The central implication of this reasoning is that to understand identity protection in collective remembrance, we need to sharpen our understanding of what group members regard as the desired 'positive identity.' Do they define a positive identity by never having done wrong or by overcoming their misdeeds and taking responsibility? Depending on the specific configuration of a 'positive identity,' group members will choose to preserve different aspects of the past: either mainly favorable ones or *both* favorable and unfavorable – implying that the pursuit of a positive group identity may not necessarily require engaging in collective non-remembrance.

Links to Further Areas: Third-Party Interventions and Motivational Theories

Finally, I see starting points for more distant lines of research. First, our findings may offer contributions to studies on *third-party interventions* in the aftermath of conflicts, such as the establishment of truth commissions. The objective of truth commissions is to address historical injustices and identify their causes and consequences (e.g., Freeman, 2006). As

outlined in Chapter 4, individuals process (i.e., recall and recognize) information about harm experienced by other groups similar to their own. Nevertheless, our findings also point to tendencies that may complicate the efforts of truth commissions to address negative history. As shown in Chapter 5, people may prioritize engaging with positive aspects of human history over negative ones. This tendency can make it more challenging to recognize the continuities of injustice in the global historical context. In line with the latter reasoning, Bakiner (2015) argues that truth commissions sometimes engage in 'methodological nationalism,' localizing human rights violations at the national level, while overlooking global historical structures that contribute to these injustices. Our results offer starting points for understanding these blind spots, which may inform research on the work of truth commissions.

Second, our results may spark insights for *motivational theories* on dealing with individual failure. For example, Eskreis-Winkler and Fishbach (2022) recently proposed a model that shares several conceptual parallels with the present work. At its core, this model proposes that people tend to look away from their failures in order to protect their ego. While collective models can borrow useful ideas from such individual-focused theories (e.g., Leidner et al., 2010; Wenzel et al., 2023), conversely, our work on collective misdeeds may also inform studies on individual failure. For instance, our research could inspire explorations of how team members respond when colleagues try to cloak ego-protective rhetoric about their failure in a prosocial mantle (Chapter 2), or whether negative feedback about one's past performance (Finkelstein & Fishbach, 2012) may be perceived as less accurate than external accounts of negative experiences one has endured (Chapter 4).

Open Questions and Directions for Future Research on Collective Remembrance

Our findings open up several new avenues for future research. While specific ideas for future studies are discussed in each manuscript, I will now reflect on four broad directions that I consider fruitful for advancing psychological research on collective remembrance.

As a first promising direction for expanding the current work, I suggest investigating identity protection in *collective remembrance processes* beyond those studied in this dissertation. Our findings reveal that identity-protective tendencies in role reconstructions (Chapter 3), memory biases (Chapter 4), and motivational barriers to remembering (Chapter 5) did not manifest consistently as current theory predicts, or differed across national contexts. This suggests that also other remembrance processes considered susceptible to identity protection might show more complex patterns than expected. One important area that I recommend inspecting more closely is communication about the past (not about dealing with the past, Chapter 2). Mnemonic convergence – the alignment of memories among group members after conversation – is a widely studied collective remembrance phenomenon (Coman et al., 2016; Hirst & Echterhoff, 2012). In their research, Coman et al. (2014) found that mnemonic convergence *decreases* when ingroup-positive (i.e., exonerating) information about ingroup atrocities is omitted from conversations. In other words, even when such exonerating information is not discussed in the group, group members tend to retain it in memory. Coman and colleagues theoretically explain this result by suggesting that group members' motivation to recall information that diminishes threat makes this information more resistant to convergence. This implies that mnemonic convergence should increase for ingroup-threatening information. However, our results provide grounds to question this expectation, suggesting that motivated memory biases (Chapter 4) might not play by the expected rules. In fact, convergence might even be greater for (ingroup-)positive information, which tends to be more homogeneous and thus may promote blending of memories (Alves et al., 2017). Another promising but rarely experimentally employed paradigm for studying identity protection in communication about history is serial reproduction (Bartlett, 1932). Building on the language of defense (Schütz & Baumeister, 1999) and the linguistic intergroup bias (Maass, 1989), Kazarovytska, García Alanis, Bertlich, and Imhoff (in preparation) recently conducted a high-powered lab study to test whether or not participants

use more defensive or abstract language when transmitting information on ingroup perpetration (vs. victimization or outgroup perpetration).

The second avenue for future research highlighted by this dissertation is to understand *group-based needs other* than identity protection. As the present results strikingly show, existing theoretical ideas about identity interests and remembrance only partly stand up to empirical findings. This could imply, as discussed, that identity goals are more complex than initially assumed. Additionally, these results suggest that *other* group-related needs seem important in understanding remembrance phenomena. But if it is not only identity needs that are relevant for collective remembrance, what other needs might be at play? Based on the current findings, I recommend that future research directs more attention to accuracy or epistemic needs (as discussed in Chapter 3 and 5; see also Licata & Mercy, 2015). One experimental approach could involve systematically threatening those needs. For instance, studies could highlight the ingroup's moral failure (identity threat; see also self-affirmation literature; Sherman & Cohen, 2002; Wenzel et al., 2021) or our limited knowledge of the past (epistemic threat) and test whether this affects how we reconstruct or remember the past. However, given that (identity) threats can evoke multiple responses, which may suppress each other (Gausel et al., 2012), an alternative approach could be to not manipulate needs but the functionality of history in addressing these needs. For example, the same event can be presented in light of its identity-related function (e.g., highlighting acts of ingroup heroism in combating the Spanish flu) or its epistemic function in understanding the present (e.g., drawing parallels between the Spanish flu and COVID-19). If the very same event (e.g., Spanish flu) is remembered more accurately or considered more important to preserve when presented in terms of its epistemic rather than identity-related function, this would highlight the relevance of epistemic interests in collective remembrance.

Third, I propose to take a closer look at the role of *memory conflicts in shaping intergroup relations*. The current results underscore that differing representations of the past

can come along with different intergroup responses (Chapter 3; see also Chapter 2). These results, at least in part, align with existing literature (e.g., Vollhardt et al., 2021), even though they reveal new nuances. Another question I see arising from this dissertation, and which goes beyond the connection between ingroup roles and intergroup responses, is how intergroup relations are affected when groups have different ideas about what constitutes historical truth (Chapters 3 and 4), or which memories are most important to preserve (Chapters 2 and 5). As the present results show, "memory wars" (Roediger, 2021; p. 1398) about what history to remember occur not only at the level of differing evaluations of the same events, but also at the level of fundamentally different criteria for what makes an event worth remembering (Chapter 5). While, at first glance, it may seem intuitive to expect such conflicting ideas to have a negative impact on intergroup relations, this conclusion is far from straightforward. For example, while Ionescu and Kazarovytska (in press) find that Jewish Germans may experience negative emotions when non-Jewish Germans call for closure on the Holocaust, Hirschberger et al. (2021) show that Israelis may view this German position more positively. Moreover, two studies conducted by Eker, Ozkan, Moon, Yamamoto-Wilson, Kazarovytska, and Imada (in preparation) in Korea and Japan reveal that some victim group members, especially those high in collective narcissism, even endorse drawing a line under the past – challenging the assumption that victim groups seek to preserve the memory of their trauma while perpetrator groups strive to close it (Hirschberger, 2018). Finally, encountering opposing perspectives on historical conflicts can even be conducive to reconciliation (Ben David et al., 2017; Bilali & Vollhardt, 2013). Therefore, identifying the productive potential of memory conflicts, both between and within societies, warrants further investigation.

Lastly, future studies might attempt to empirically disentangle *cross-contextual differences* in collective remembrance – and potentially also in social identity projects, or the configuration of needs guiding remembrance. To understand these differences, and why they show in certain remembrance processes (e.g., Australia vs. U.S. in Chapter 5) but not in others

(e.g., Australia and U.S. in Chapter 2), I argue that we need three strands of research: One that conducts contextualized research, looking closely at the principles of a phenomenon in a particular context. One that integrates different findings in an attempt to test their robustness (contributing to this strand was the aim of this work). And finally, one that attempts to explain differences empirically, once they have been identified. Psychological literature already offers some valuable starting points for the last strand, such as understanding historical schemas, ideological environments, or the role of involvement in recent conflicts (Bar-Tal, 2014; Hirst et al., 2018; Licata & Klein, 2010). Yet, this last stage, which I consider critical for future research, can also benefit from the interdisciplinary tradition of memory studies. As just one example, linguistic research shows that languages differ in their conceptualization of time in that in some languages the present tense can refer to both the present and the future (see also the 'present perfective paradox'; Koss et al., 2022). Bringing this work into the psychological lab, future studies could experimentally test whether exposing participants to an (artificial) language that linguistically links the present and the past can increase the desire to attend to information about the past (but perhaps not recall performance; or vice versa), compared to a language condition that links present and future tenses.

Concluding Remarks

The war in Ukraine will end at some point but resistance to confront the ingroup's harmful deeds can continue to challenge the restoration of justice. In order to provide responses to this challenge, we need to understand the principles of collective (non-) remembrance among social group members. This dissertation extends existing research by contributing to both (1) generating new insights by testing novel ideas and using approaches that have rarely been applied in collective memory research, and (2) systematically challenging existing theories in an effort to move beyond the confines of previous knowledge. In this way, I hope to add a piece to the puzzle of understanding the future of our past (Frei, 2005), which has already begun.

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APPENDIX

Methodological overview of the empirical chapters, including documentation of open science practices and ethical approvals.

Chapter	Publication	Study contexts and sample	Designs	Analytic approaches	Open science practices and ethical approvals
2	Kazarovytska, F. & Imhoff, R. (2024). Three fish at one hook? Future-oriented, reconciliatory, and defensive claims for historical closure as expressions of the same defensive desire. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *50*(3), 351–370. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672221124674	Contexts: persecution of Jews in WWII, Stolen Generations, genocide of Indigenous Americans Samples: total *N* = 3,405 Germany, Italy, Australia, U.S.	8 studies: cross-sectional 1 study: experiment	Test-theoretic approaches: item difficulties, item-total correlations, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, measurement invariance Nomological network analyses Multilevel analyses	Preregistered (7 studies) Open materials, data, code: https://osf.io/vhcrd/ Ethical approval: 2021-JGU-psychEK-S034.
3	Kazarovytska, F., Imhoff, R., & Hirschberger, G. (2024). Beyond victimhood and perpetration: Reconstruction of the ingroup's historical role in eight Eastern and Western European countries under Nazi occupation. *Political Psychology*. http://doi.org/10.1111/pops.13037	Context: Nazi occupation in WWII Samples: total *N* = 5,474 Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, Austria, Belgium, France, Netherlands	1 study: cross-sectional	Measurement invariance Nomological network analyses Multilevel analyses	Open materials, data, code: https://osf.io/ebv2c/ No ethical approval obtained.
4	Kazarovytska, F. & Imhoff, R. (2023). No differences in memory performance for instances of historical victimization and historical perpetration: Evidence from five large-scale experiments. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *105*, 104440. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2022.104440	Contexts: WWII, Vietnam War Samples: total *N* = 3,424 Germany, UK, U.S.	5 studies: experiments between- /within-subjects, randomized stimuli	Coding of free recall responses Signal detection theory Analysis of variance Multilevel analyses Equivalence Testing	Preregistered (all studies) Open materials, data, code: https://osf.io/rkhj9/ Ethical approval: 2021-JGU-psychEK-006.
5	Kazarovytska, F., Árnadóttir, K., D'Ottone, S., Halabi, S., Clarke, E., Sharma, S., Heidrich, V., & Imhoff, R. (2024). *The past we choose to not forget: Characteristics of historical events considered important to remember* [Manuscript submitted for publication].	Contexts: total *N* = 360 unique events Samples: Step 1: total *N* = 1,050 Step 2: total *N* = 2,045, *N* = 7,665 event ratings Australia, Chile, Germany, Iceland, India, Kenya, U.S.	1 study: consisting of seven separate substudies cross-sectional, stimuli-within-block design 1 study: internal meta-analysis	Multilevel analyses	Preregistered (all studies) Open materials, data, code: https://osf.io/3w6ap/?view_only=0023af2802374f40a03118d0bca5fcd0 Ethical approval: 2023-JGU-psychEK-S005.

ERKLÄRUNG

gemäß § 6 Absatz 2 g) und gemäß § 6 Absatz 2 h) der Promotionsordnung der Fachbereiche 02, 05, 06, 07, 09 und 10 vom 04. April 2016

Name (ggf. Geburtsname): **Kazarovytska**

Vorname: **Fiona**

Hiermit erkläre ich, dass ich die eingereichte Dissertation selbständig, ohne fremde Hilfe verfasst und mit keinen anderen als den darin angegebenen Hilfsmitteln angefertigt habe, dass die wörtlichen oder dem Inhalt nach aus fremden Arbeiten entnommenen Stellen, Zeichnungen, Skizzen, bildlichen Darstellungen und dergleichen als solche genau kenntlich gemacht sind.

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