

Groups attempt in various ways to minimize the harm they have inflicted on others. For instance, in order to diminish the harm done, institutionally or collectively, groups might not accurately count the war victims who are considered the enemy. Media research has shown that representations of the suffering are highly biased to favor the ingroup, in terms of exclusively focusing on the suffering experienced by the ingroup and downplaying the suffering experienced by the outgroup. In turn, only the selected events and experiences that fit the group's image are presented in the media and thus get incorporated into the collective memory. Whereas the events that do not fit the ingroup's image are either reinterpreted or ignored, thus they are forgotten.

WHERE ARE COLLECTIVE MEMORIES LOCATED?

Collective memories are embedded in societal structures and public symbols. Public expressions include historical accounts, oral histories, and rituals and commemorations that function as enactment of the past, but also in physical sites such as public monuments, museums, medals, photography, and other images. The combination of various forms of remembering makes collective memory resistant to time. The public representations of the past events do not only reflect the past, but they also shape group identities and reproduce the past by adapting it to the present context. For example, rituals, performances, and commemorations evoke intense emotions, enhance group solidarity and cohesion, and affirm a certain version of the truth about the past in relation to conflict. Group members' participation in the events and the emotions evoked establish coherence and continuity between the past and the present.

The public expressions and representations of collective memories of intergroup

conflict are significant only when they are endorsed and accepted by people. Commemorations and rituals are influential when group members participate and engage in these events. As remembering occurs by the individual, collective memories can also be considered as located in the individual mind.

Memories of past and recent collective events can be the result of a combination of personal experiences and societal influences such as media accounts, history books, and other social constructions. One characteristic of the collective memories of intergroup conflict is that they are shared by group members and are treated by them as a truthful history. However, depending on the political and ideological circumstances of the society they are part of, people have some choice over the information to which they attend. Factors such as the freedom of information, the degree of conflict about different interpretations of the past, the number of competing claims upon the past, and the structure of society (liberal versus authoritarian) constitute external constraints that influence individuals' choice of information. Indeed, some research suggests that despite the shared part of collective memory, there is some variation in the degree to which group members endorse the collective memories and in the meaning they make out of the ingroup's past. For example, a study assessing Turks' construals of the events leading to the massacres of Armenians at the beginning of the twentieth century showed that, on average, Turks' construals of these events were in line with the common Turkish government and societal narrative. However, there was also considerable variation in the degree to which individuals endorsed these narratives. This variation was in turn predicted by individual-level factors such as the strength of national identification. Specifically, the more participants identified with the Turkish national group identification, then the more likely they

were to deny the massacres of Armenians by Turks, place the responsibility on the Armenians for the violence toward them, and estimate lower numbers of Armenian victims. Understanding variations across and within each group might be important in order to find ways that might lead to transformation of memories.

CONCLUSION

The past and the present of intergroup conflict often intertwine. On one hand, the past provides the context and the lenses through which the current conflicts are interpreted and understood. On the other hand, the needs and motives in the present conflicts lead to reconstructing and reshaping the meaning of the past. Understanding the complex dynamics between the past and the present in intergroup conflict has the potential to provide tools that might help transform intergroup conflict.

SEE ALSO: Apologies and Forgiveness; Conflict Resolution, Sociopsychological Barriers to; Conflict, Culture of; Conflict, Ethos of; Conflict, Intractable; Delegitimation; Narrative Analysis; Qualitative Methods and Coding; Social Representation Theory; Social Representations of History.

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Collective Narcissism

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A belief that others do not appropriately recognize the superiority and special entitlements of one's own group has inspired atrocities committed against other groups, including acts of terrorism, violent revolutions, aggressive wars, and genocides. For example, Germans under the Nazi regime believed their right to a better living space and their "pure blood" were not properly appreciated by others. These beliefs were used to legitimize aggressive war and the Holocaust. Islamist terrorists believe they fight a defensive Jihad that mandates them to kill those who do not acknowledge the superiority of their values and lifestyle. In the 1970s, members of the American radical leftist group the Weather Underground believed that the exceptional nobility of their cause (ending the war in Vietnam, the advancement of social justice and equality, and opposition to a regime they viewed as corrupt) entitled them to put the lives of other people in danger.

An inflated belief in one's own superiority and the need for its constant recognition and validation by others are characteristic of narcissism. This narcissism is collective rather than individual when the beliefs concern a group. Thus, collective narcissism is defined as an emotional investment in a belief about the unparalleled greatness of one's own group that is contingent on

continuous validation from others (Golec de Zavala, Cichocka, Eidelson, & Jayawickreme, 2009). People can be narcissistic about almost any social group with which they share some – even if limited – common history. Collective narcissism refers to a form of favoritism to one's group that is particularly likely to be accompanied by enmity against other groups and aggression between groups.

The notion of collective narcissism was first introduced (although not analyzed in great detail) in the context of intellectual efforts to understand the rise of Fascism in Germany. It was used to explain a way of thinking and feeling about a national group that was linked to an extreme form of prejudice against minorities within their own society and aggressiveness against other nationalities. Members of the Frankfurt School, most notably sociologist and philosopher Theodore Adorno, proposed that collective narcissism that feeds on socially shared delusions, prejudice, and superstition serves as a means of protecting weak egos from feelings of impotence and self-blame. According to this conceptualization, inspired by Freudian psychoanalysis, a weak ego is dissolved in an idealized, omnipotent group. As group members, people can claim possession of the desirable characteristics they attribute to the group and thus, indirectly, satisfy their own frustrated needs of self-actualization. Modern economic and social conditions, in which people need to constantly assert their status in invisible but strict hierarchies according to unclear and unspoken rules, make them feel uncertain, alienated, and powerless and enhance their narcissistic identification with a group (Adorno, 1951).

Contemporary psychology confirms that the self and its group are closely linked. Thinking about a group activates the same area in the brain as thinking about the self (Volz, Kessler, & von Cramon, 2009). People use self-knowledge in order to ascribe

characteristics to newly constructed groups (Otten, 2002) and those with high personal self-esteem evaluate their groups more positively than those with low self-esteem (Gramzow & Gaertner, 2005). Collective self-esteem that refers to subjective evaluation of one's own group is a better predictor of intergroup attitudes than personal self-esteem (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990).

Psychology has explored the concept of individual narcissism and its interpersonal consequences. Since people can be narcissistic about their personal identities, it is likely that they can be narcissistic about their collective identities. Thus, the concept of collective narcissism extends into the intergroup domain the concept of individual narcissism. What lies in the core of collective narcissism is an inflated image of an ingroup, rather than the self. Studies indicate that individual narcissism is positively associated with collective narcissism and both variables predict anger and aggressiveness, although independently and in different contexts. Individual narcissism is a "risk factor" that contributes to a violent and aggressive response to perceived provocation in interpersonal interactions (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). Collective narcissism predicts prejudice and aggressiveness in intergroup relations. Importantly, collective narcissism predicts intergroup hostility over and above other such robust predictors of prejudice and intergroup aggression as nationalism, blind patriotism, ingroup glorification, authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and superiority beliefs about a group. (See *AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY; PATRIOTISM AND NATIONALISM; SOCIAL DOMINANCE THEORY.*)

COLLECTIVE NARCISSISM AND INTERGROUP HOSTILITY

Collective narcissism predicts intergroup hostility in the context of threat to the

group's image. It is also related to an inability to forgive and forget former threats, aggression, and wrongs done to the group by other groups. Collective narcissism predicts support for coercive military actions in response to a perceived threat from external aggression. It is also related to support for aggressive actions in ambiguous intergroup situations that collective narcissists interpret as insulting to the group and its members (e.g., construction of the wall along the Mexican-American border initiated by the United States was perceived by some Mexicans as an insult towards Mexico and Mexicans). Collective narcissism also predicts aggressive reactions to group-directed criticism, especially when that criticism concerns controversial behaviors that the members of the group perceive differently than those criticizing (e.g., British troops operating in Iraq can be seen as engaged in a "noble act" or alternatively as comprising an illegitimate occupation; Poles can be perceived either as anti-Semitic or heroic when their behaviors towards Polish Jewish people during World War II are considered). Collective narcissists see such criticism as threatening the group's image. They feel angry and use aggression to punish those who undermine the group. Collective narcissists react with increased hostility towards other groups not only when the positivity of the group's image is threatened, but also its clarity. They tend to dislike other groups more intensely when similarities between these groups and their own group (and/or their common membership in a superordinate social group) are emphasized (e.g., among British collective narcissists, negative feelings towards fellow nationals of the European Union increase when they focus on their common European citizenship rather than on their national group membership). To sum up, collective narcissism predicts retaliatory aggressiveness in response to different kinds of intergroup threat.

COLLECTIVE NARCISSISM AND PREJUDICE

Even outside the context of the immediate intergroup threat, collective narcissism is associated with enduring negative stereotyping and prejudice against certain social groups. For example, national collective narcissism is related to anti-Semitism in Poland. This relationship is driven by the perception of the "gentile Pole" group as vulnerable and exposed to external hostility and the stereotypical perception of Jewish people as a particular exemplification of this hostility.

Importantly, collective narcissism is related to negativity towards known outgroups – immediate neighbors or ethnic minorities – but not groups that are geographically or culturally distant and less relevant for the construction of the group's image. Since frequent intergroup relations are hardly ever entirely smooth and peaceful, and collective narcissists are unable to forgive or forget the wrongs done to the group by other groups, they are likely to feel chronically threatened and prejudiced against groups with whom they share a history of perceived grievances. In addition, small, rather than big, differences are threatening to the clarity and maintenance of the positive group's image. Those who are very much like us but at some point chose a different way or belief, bring about a threat that what was chosen by us might have not been the best or the smartest. Thus, collective narcissists are likely to feel threatened by, and prejudiced against, groups with which they can compare because they are physically close to them or because they are, in some important respect, similar to them.

THE NATURE OF NARCISSISTIC GROUP ESTEEM

Why is collective narcissism related to intergroup hostility and prejudice? The answer to

this question is likely to lie in the nature of narcissistic group esteem. For individual narcissists, interpersonal aggression is a means of defending the grandiose self-image. They invest emotionally in their high opinion of themselves, demand that others confirm that opinion, and punish those who seem unlikely to do so. Since they require constant validation of unrealistic greatness of the self, they are likely to continually encounter threats to their self-image and be chronically intolerant of them.

Analogously, collective narcissism is exaggerated, but insecure, *collective* self-esteem. It consists of a very high regard for and glorification of the group. This is accompanied by a conviction that others do not appreciate the group's greatness sufficiently and, consequently, treat it unfairly. Importantly, collective narcissism is related to the self-reported high esteem of the group accompanied by a lack of its positive regard on the implicit level: a level of automatic and uncontrolled evaluations that are not fully accessible to conscious reflection. In other words, collective narcissists, possibly, doubt the greatness of their group quite unconsciously. Even if they are aware of these doubts they do not acknowledge them. Instead, they report high certainty of their positive opinion about their group.

Thus, it is plausible that collective narcissists feel that their group is unfairly treated by others because no treatment or recognition can be good enough for their deserving group. In addition, they are on a constant look out for signs of threat to the exaggerated group's image because, at least partially, willingly or not, and knowingly or not, they question the group's greatness themselves. To some extent, the threat to the highly positive group's image seems to come from within rather than without. Aggressive responses to the perceived threat serve as a means of protecting the group's image and maintaining high group esteem.

High collective self-esteem and collective narcissism are positively related. High regard for the group is likely to be where they overlap. The security and stability is probably where they differ. This difference between secure and narcissistic collective self-esteem has important consequences for intergroup relations. Collective narcissism and positive collective self-esteem function as mutual suppressors reducing the association each has with attitudes towards other groups. When their overlap is controlled, high collective self-esteem, without its narcissistic aspects, is related to positive attitudes towards other groups and trust in others. Collective narcissism, without secure and constructive collective self-esteem, predicts negative attitudes towards other groups and perceived unfair treatment of the group by others. In other words, this aspect of collective narcissism, which does not overlap with positive collective self-esteem, seems to be responsible for the relationship between collective narcissism and intergroup aggressiveness. It is likely to pertain to narcissistic need to ascertain special status and privilege to the group.

SUMMARY

Collective narcissism is a form of high but insecure group regard that needs constant external validation but accepts no validation as sufficient. It is accompanied by unacknowledged doubts about the group's highly positive evaluation. Collective narcissists are sensitive to anything that undermines their group's exaggerated image. The threat to the group's image, at least partially, comes from within, rather than outside. In some situations collective narcissists feel particularly threatened: when expecting hostility from others or when exposed to group-directed criticism, social rejection, or unfavorable intergroup comparisons. Collective narcissists feel chronically threatened by

groups with whom they share a common history or with whom they come in frequent contact. For collective narcissists, the habitual reaction to perceived intergroup threat is a hostile tendency to punish those who undermine the greatness of the group.

Important questions that studies on collective narcissism have raised concern the types of situations that inspire narcissistic beliefs about a group and conditions in which such beliefs become widely accepted, rather than rejected, even by people who are initially not collectively narcissistic. Situations that may increase narcissistic beliefs about a group are likely to pertain to the realization that special achievements, sacrifices, or contributions by a group are not being understood or recognized by others. Furthermore, situations of increased personal uncertainty can bring about narcissistic group sentiments. Recent developments in the psychology of individual narcissism suggest that in certain situations narcissistic aggression can be reduced. If it is possible to reduce or constructively redirect narcissistic anger in interpersonal situations, it may well be possible to constructively channel or reduce intergroup hostility inspired by hurt collective narcissistic pride. Exploration of this possibility can inform and inspire effective interventions aiming at improving intergroup relations.

SEE ALSO: Authoritarian Personality; Patriotism and Nationalism; Social Dominance Theory.

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Collective Remembering

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Memory of collective violence often burdens present conflicts with aggressive forms of ingroup favoritism, a duty of retaliation, and generalized hatred towards past perpetrators, and makes the current situation appear to repeat previous violent conflicts. Emotionally loaded collective memory (CM) of past conflicts, wars in particular, can sow the seeds of fear and distrust and make it virtually impossible to negotiate a compromise solution. In addition to the emotional component, research has examined cognitive and motivational features of CM. (See