

Special Thematic Section "Collective Memories and Present-Day Intergroup Relations: A Social-Psychological Perspective"

Collective Memories and Present-Day Intergroup Relations: Introduction to the Special Thematic Section

Ana Figueiredo^{*a}, Borja Martinovic^b, Jonas Rees^{cd}, Laurent Licata^e

[a] Public Policy Research Center, Universidad Mayor, Santiago de Chile, Chile. [b] Department of Interdisciplinary Social Science / Ercomer, Utrecht University, Utrecht, the Netherlands. [c] Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence, Department of Social Psychology, Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany. [d] Center for Interdisciplinary Research, Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany. [e] Centre for Social and Cultural Psychology (CeSCuP), Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Brussels, Belgium.

Abstract

This special thematic section aims to bring together current research on the connections between collective memories – or representations of history – and present-day intergroup relations. Drawing from a multitude of geographical and historical contexts as well as different methodologies, we bring forth ten articles focusing on distinct aspects of the relations between representations of the past and present day intergroup dynamics. The topics covered in these articles focus on one or more of the four research lines identified within this field: 1) the antecedents of collective memories; 2) the contents and structure of collective memories; 3) the official or institutional transmission of collective memories; and 4) distinct socio-psychological correlates of collective memories in present-day societies. Together, the contributions in this special thematic section showcase current directions of research within the field and highlight the need to consider the role of representations of the past for understanding present day instances of intergroup conflict or harmony. We discuss the need for more interdisciplinary work in this field, as well as more applied research in the future.

Keywords: collective memories, representations of history, intergroup relations, conflict, collective forgetting, group-based emotions

Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 2017, Vol. 5(2), 694–706, doi:10.5964/jspp.v5i2.895

Published (VoR): 2018-02-05.

Handling Editor: Johanna Ray Vollhardt, Department of Psychology, Clark University, Worcester, MA, USA

*Corresponding author at: Public Policy Research Center, Universidad Mayor, Chile, Campus Alonso de Córdova, Avenida Alonso de Córdova 5495 Dept. 1405, Las Condes, Santiago de Chile, Chile. E-mail: figueiredo.anacm@gmail.com



This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

History is regularly mobilized by politicians, activists or the media to justify, contextualize, or legitimize ideological claims, proposals for a course of action, or political and societal standpoints. This mobilization of history is nevertheless selective: depending on their specific aims, people will choose particular historical events, moments or figures to strengthen their arguments or champion their goals. Interestingly, the very same event or “chapter” of the past may be used by different political actors, to achieve quite different aims: Past wrongdoing can be framed as “historical responsibility” that needs to be remembered or as a stain on the country’s image that should be

forgotten. Thus, remembering the past cannot be conceived of as an objective recollection of historical events, without consideration of the affective, cognitive and behavioral aspects that influence such recollection.

According to this constructive and flexible notion of remembrance, collective memories – or representations of history – can be viewed from a social-psychological perspective as “a shared set of representations of the past based on a common identity to a group” (Licata & Klein, 2005, p. 243). This means that whenever a specific social identity is salient, individuals may remember some historical events or periods in a specific way and attach to them specific evaluations and emotions that are shared at least to some extent by other in-group members but may or may not be shared by out-group members. Drawing on this definition, we can derive at least two central roles that collective memories have for present-day intergroup relations: These memories usually serve the purpose of mobilizing or giving direction to social identities (“we need to behave in a certain way because of our past”), while they also serve as content that provides social identities with meaning (“we are who we are because of our past”, e.g., Licata & Mercy, 2015; Liu & Hilton, 2005). In other words, conceptually, there is a bidirectional relation between collective memories and present-day intergroup relations: in one direction, social identities charge historical events with significance and relevance, thus making historical events and the associated collective memories meaningful for group members; in the other direction, collective memories help mobilize social identities to achieve or help fulfill the needs and goals of present-day group members.

Collective Memory: Approaches and Functions

Bartlett (1932) is considered to be the first to introduce the concept of collective memory in psychology. Drawing on the work of Halbwachs (1925/1994), he argued for an understanding of collective memory as a phenomenon that occurs within the context of human interactions, implying that memory is reconstructed according to the present situation (Bartlett, 1932, as cited in Licata & Mercy, 2015). The approach taken by Bartlett closely resembles the distributed approach to collective memory, as proposed by Wertsch (2002) who distinguishes between strong and distributed interpretations of collective memory. While the first would mean that groups have memory or “some sort of collective mind or consciousness” (Wertsch, 2010, p. 123) above and beyond the individual memories of group members, the latter posits that group members may share collective memories without necessarily implying that there is a group memory “just out there in the cultural ether” (idem). Note that Wertsch (2002, 2010) was himself critical of the ‘strong’ conception of memory.

Furthermore, within the distributed account of memory there may be homogenous and complementary approaches (Wertsch, 2002). The first would mean that all group members share similar representations of the past, while the latter assumes that group members need not have similar representations, but rather that there are complementary aspects of collective memories that can co-exist in society. In this introduction to the special thematic section, we use the concept of collective memory in terms of its distributed and complementary approach. As it will also become clear, most of the research presented in this special thematic section involves the same notion of collective memory.

While our conceptualization so far focuses on the organization and structure of collective memories, a slightly different approach to the study of representations of history has been proposed by Liu and Hilton (2005), through the concept of charters. Charters are a group’s “account of origin and historical mission, which will have been amended and negotiated over time to reflect changing circumstances, and frame its [the group’s] response to

new challenges” (p. 2). According to this approach, charters are constitutional, in the sense that they provide the group with a “foundational myth” that allows to define the rights and duties of group members and to legitimize the current state of affairs of the group vis-à-vis other groups. Moreover, charters are comprised of descriptive and normative features that help group members understand who they are and how they should behave. Finally, charters are also constitutive in the sense that they enable group members to understand the group’s status and position and they are prescriptive, helping guide group members’ actions and behavior. For example, according to [Liu and Hilton \(2005\)](#), World War Two functions as a hegemonic representation of world history, given that “the importance of this event and the universally negative evaluation of Hitler has implications as a nascent global charter, wherein civilized nations have a mandate to band together to combat genocide” (p. 8).

Finally, collective memories can also be studied by distinguishing the means through which they are constructed, shared and reproduced. The most immediate way of transmission is through conversations with other group members. A good example of this communicative process relates to the transgenerational transmission of collective memories (e.g., [Marques, Páez, & Serra, 1997](#)). However, collective memories can also be shared through cultural and artistic works, the media, rituals, symbols and other cultural artifacts that allow group members to make sense of their past (e.g., [Kligler-Vilenchik, Tsfati, & Meyers, 2014](#); [Marín Beristain, Páez, & González, 2000](#); [Piçarra, Cabecinhas, & Castro, 2016](#)). And then there are also more formal means of collective memory transmission, such as education in general and history teaching in particular (e.g., [Carretero, Asensio, & Moneo, 2012](#); [Psaltis, Carretero, & Čehajić-Clancy, 2017](#)). All of these transmission modes thus make unavoidable the constant references to the historical past in present-day societies. Be it by exposure to and engagement with different political discourses, by singing the national anthem, or by learning about the victims of a battle in history textbooks, individuals are constantly reminded of the past and asked to draw lessons for their present and future as group members.

Recently, [Páez, Bobowik, De Guissmé, Liu, and Licata \(2016\)](#) proposed a classification of the distinct functions of collective memories by highlighting that they always reflect social identity concerns. Hence, collective memories: 1) help define the group and provide a sense of continuity through time, 2) define the norms and values that group members must adhere to, 3) boost cohesion among group members, 4) define the relative worth of the group vis-à-vis other groups, 5) legitimize the group’s status and actions, 6) mobilize the group, and 7) affect the psychological state of group members. Note how these functions resemble [Liu and Hilton’s \(2005\)](#) charter concept in providing a collective narrative not only of where the group is coming from but also of in which direction it is currently headed and how it should get there.

Intergroup Relations and Collective Memories

As one of the most influential theories in social psychological approaches of intergroup relations, social identity theory ([Tajfel & Turner, 1986](#)) posits that individuals construct their self-image both at the individual (i.e., personal identity) and collective (i.e., social identities) levels. Thus, whenever interactions between individuals are based on their group memberships (“us” and “them”), these individuals act as representatives of their respective groups and *intergroup* as opposed to *interpersonal* relations come to the fore of analysis. Since intergroup relations are embedded within historical and socio-political contexts, the analysis of the connections between representations of history and present-day intergroup relations becomes relevant almost any time we try to understand dynamics

of conflict and cooperation within contemporary societies. In their seminal work in this field, [Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, and Manstead \(1998\)](#) showed that, when Dutch participants were reminded of the misdeeds their national group had committed during the colonization period, they felt “guilty by association”, even though these participants did not have any personal responsibility in the events portrayed. Since then, the proliferation of articles and research projects studying the relationship between collective memories and current intergroup relations attests to the relevance and societal impact that the past can have on the present.

Although it is not within the scope of this introduction to provide a systematic overview of the state of the art on the topic of collective memories and intergroup relations, it may still be worthwhile to highlight some current research directions within this field.

Between 2012 and 2016, the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) framework funded an interdisciplinary research network on the “Social psychological dynamics of historical representations in the enlarged European Union”, COST Action IS1205. The network brought together scholars mostly from Europe but also from different regions of the world with various disciplinary backgrounds, such as social and cognitive psychologists, historians, educators, and political scientists, to collaborate and contribute to our understanding of historical representations in present-day societies ([Azzopardi, Buttigieg, & Licata, 2015](#)). During the collaborative work, four different but interrelated research areas were identified as a means to aggregate the distinct contributions from the research developed in recent years about the connections between collective memories and intergroup relations ([COST, 2012](#)).

The first research area relates to the antecedents of collective memories or representations of history. The type of research conducted within this topic pertains mostly to understanding the mechanisms and processes of social cognition involved in the formation and maintenance of collective memories. For example, within this line, a special issue on *Memory Studies* entitled “Recent advances in historical cognition” (edited by [Hegarty & Klein, 2017](#)) has brought forth a collection of articles on the role of interpersonal interactions in the formation and maintenance of collective memories. A second stream of research relates to the content and structure of collective memories. Such research focuses mostly on understanding the relevant representations that exist in people’s minds when they think about history, be it at the global, regional or local level. Good examples of current research directions in this field include understanding the positive and negative memories of colonialism among former colonized people (e.g., [Figueiredo, Oldenhove, & Licata, 2018](#)) or which events and people are relevant to world history in different countries (e.g., [Hanke et al., 2015](#); [Liu et al., 2005](#)). A third research area currently being developed relates to the analysis of historical narratives that are officially transmitted through education and other institutional means. Here, interest in textbook representations of distinct historical periods has significantly increased in recent decades (e.g., [Psaltis et al., 2017](#)). Finally, the fourth research line covers socio-psychological correlates of collective memories and their associations with attitudes and behavior in the present day, and includes many different topics such as the connections between collective memories and group-based emotions (e.g., [Doosje et al., 1998](#); [Figueiredo, Doosje, & Valentim, 2015](#)), as well as reconciliation dynamics (e.g., [Čehajić-Clancy & Bilewicz, 2017](#); [Licata, Klein, & Gély, 2007](#); [Rimé, Bouchat, Klein, & Licata, 2015](#)).

The Present Special Thematic Section

The contributions that appear in this special thematic section are in many ways diverse: They exemplify a range of research questions, as well as distinct approaches to the study of the interconnections between collective memories and intergroup relations, ranging from textbook analysis to correlational and experimental designs. As such, these contributions resonate well with the abovementioned COST Action and can be grouped under its four research lines (see [Table 1](#) for an overview of the included articles as well as the links with the COST lines). Importantly, the special thematic section also covers a range of geographical and historical contexts that provide a stimulating overview of the state of the art in the field. Below we introduce the collection of studies included in this special thematic section by grouping them into four sets following the same rationale as the research lines defined within the COST Action IS1205. Note that the order of presentation does not necessarily correspond to the order in which the articles appear in the journal.

First, we focus on the article by [Smeekes, McKeown, and Psaltis \(2017, this section\)](#) dealing with distinct *antecedents of collective memories*, namely collective continuity and in-group threat. Previous research (e.g., [Jetten & Wohl, 2012](#); [Sani, 2010](#); [Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014](#)) has shown that a sense of in-group continuity may serve as a buffer or resource to deal with identity threat in intergroup contexts. The idea behind this mechanism is that people derive a sense of positive collective self-esteem from the fact that they share a bond with previous and future group members. Through temporal continuity, the rationale goes, the in-group's norms and values are maintained across time, thus providing an explanation for the group's subsistence in the present. Indeed, different authors have analysed distinct correlates of collective continuity but less attention has been devoted to the antecedents of this concept. In this line, [Smeekes et al.'s paper \(2017, this section\)](#) addresses the antecedents of perceived collective continuity for both majority and minority groups in two post-conflict settings, Northern Ireland and Cyprus. Their results show that, for both majority and minority group members, perceived out-group threat is linked with greater perceived collective continuity of the in-group, via a stronger endorsement of the in-group's respective narrative of how a specific conflict came about. These results indicate that, when group members feel threatened, they resort to the endorsement of in-group narratives as a means to preserve continuity "through time".

The second line of research focuses on the *contents and structure of collective memories*. First, [Brasil and Cabecinhas \(2017, this section\)](#) analyze what young adults from three countries of the region (i.e., Brazil, Chile, and Mexico) consider to be the most relevant events and figures of Latin American history. The prominence of events related to conflicts, revolutions, colonization, and independence underline, as the authors argue, a "narrative of struggle and overcoming" that connects the members of these national groups in a shared reality based on the supranational category of Latin America. Nevertheless, their research also shows how national identities still shape and define many of the salient historical events and figures that live in people's minds: a degree of socio-centrism through references to national history was also found. Taken together, these results highlight how, beyond national identity, people may draw on collective memories that include *Others* to create a sense of community across borders. Understanding how these supranational identities and associated collective memories may help forge better intergroup relations remains a question worth pursuing. Second, following a similar methodology to the one used by Brasil and Cabecinhas, in Study 1 of their article, [Mukherjee, Adams, and Molina \(2017, this section\)](#) show that, when asked to recall important events in Indian history, their participants mention significantly more events glorifying the nation than events that are critical of the nation. In Study 2 they also show that nation-

glorifying events are rated as more important than the critical or silenced events regarding India's history. Furthermore, the authors report that this tendency is stronger for participants who identify strongly with their nation.

The third research line is related with *official representations of history*. Interestingly, the two studies addressing this topic within this special thematic section analyze educational materials. First, Kello (2017, this section) presents a qualitative study focused on understanding the explicit and implicit dimensions of historical representations of the Soviet era in post-Soviet history textbooks in Estonia. This research sheds light onto the role that formal education has in shaping representations of history and collective memories in relation to specific eras of the past that involve different social groups. Kello draws our attention to the canon that textbook development maintains in Estonia and how the existing representations of the Soviet era may lead to intergroup animosity, namely between Estonians and the Russian-speaking community living in the country. Next, another study about the official transmission of collective memories analyses national university admissions exams in Turkey. Through a content analysis of the history sections of the exams, Kurtiş, Soylu Yalçinkaya, and Adams (2017, this section, Study 1) show that there is a strong focus on glorifying (or celebratory) events of Turkish history and that there are almost no references to minority groups in Turkish society and, when these are present, they are mostly negative. This study draws our attention particularly to the process of silencing of cultural memories, resulting in cultural forgetting of those events that damage the reputation of the in-group. Previous research has indeed argued that formal education is a privileged setting through which nations intentionally communicate specific national narratives that serve the needs and aspirations of present-day nation-states (e.g., Adwan, Bar-Tal, & Wexler, 2016; Benavot, Cha, Kamens, Meyer, & Wong, 1991; Carretero, 2007). Interestingly, the articles by Kello and by Kurtiş et al. both show how official historical representations as taught through history textbooks and as tested in university admission exams tend to ignore other groups, especially minority groups that live within the same country.

Finally, the most prolific area within this special thematic section relates to *the socio-psychological correlates of collective memories* and their associations with attitudes and behaviour. Within this line of research, we identified four clusters of studies that relate to similar research aims.

The first cluster of studies includes research on the role of group identities and silenced memories in hindering positive intergroup relations. Study 2 by Kurtiş et al. (2017, this section) sheds some light on the consequences of the lack of representation of minority groups in official educational materials. Through an experimental design, the authors show that different conceptions of national identity are associated with different reactions in terms of denial of silenced events and defense of minority rights and freedom of expression. More concretely, participants who endorsed more strongly an ethno-cultural type of national identity (instead of a more inclusive civic identity) tended to deny events that reflect badly on the national group, such as wrongdoings committed by the national group towards minority groups. These participants were therefore also less willing to support minority rights and freedom of expression. Similarly, Mukherjee, Adams, and Molina (2017, this section) present a set of experimental studies conducted in the Indian context aiming to analyse the dynamic relationship between collective memories and intergroup relations. The authors show that exposing participants to silenced or critical events (in comparison to glorifying events) regarding India's history leads to lower levels of national identification and a greater perception of injustice towards marginalized groups in Indian society (Studies 3 and 4). Taken together, these two contributions pinpoint how specific national narratives that obscure misdeeds of the past or that fail to acknowledge the existence of minority groups within a country may fuel negative intergroup relations, whereas a critical reflection on one's national history can be conducive to greater recognition of present-day inequalities and more support for minority rights. Thus, considering pedagogical strategies and approaches that allow for incorporating minorities' narratives

and experiences within formal education curricula and materials may prove a useful means to prevent intergroup animosity and even conflict (for an overview of current developments in the field of history teaching and intergroup relations see [Psaltis et al., 2017](#)).

The next study, by [Roth, Huber, Juenger, and Liu \(2017, this section\)](#), falls into a second cluster of studies on social psychological consequences of collective memory. This paper goes a step further in understanding the potential role of group continuity for present-day intergroup relations. Through an experimental study with German participants, the authors show that depending on the valence (negative versus positive) of the historical events presented, group continuity had distinct consequences for social identity threat: When a relevant past event was presented to participants as positive, group continuity decreased perceptions of identity threat. However, when participants read about the same event portrayed in negative terms, group continuity increased perceptions of identity threat, especially among participants who strongly identified with the in-group. Thus, it seems that the role of group continuity is dependent on the valence of the events portrayed and how these reflect (positively or negatively) on the group's social image. Putting the earlier discussed contribution by [Smeekes et al. \(2017, this section\)](#) and the contribution by [Roth et al. \(2017, this section\)](#) side by side, it is interesting to see that the former examines threat as an antecedent of perceived group continuity, whereas the latter shows that increased threat can be a result of low perceived group continuity. This calls for more research into the causal relationships between these two constructs.

Moving on, the third set of studies analyses the interconnections between group-based emotions and intergroup relations. Since the seminal paper by [Doosje and colleagues \(1998\)](#) showing how "guilt by association" leads to the desire to compensate out-group members for past misdeeds, much research has been dedicated to understanding the role of 'collective' emotions for intergroup relations. More recently, [Wildschut, Bruder, Robertson, van Tilburg, and Sedikides \(2014\)](#) proposed that nostalgia should be conceptualized as a group-based emotion, in the sense that it encourages and guides relevant group attitudes and behavior. In this line, the paper by [Cheung, Sedikides, Wildschut, Tausch, and Ayanian \(2017, this section\)](#) presents data from a survey study conducted during the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. The study shows that collective nostalgia is associated with in-group-favouring collective action, via feelings of anger directed at the out-group (in this case, China). This research highlights how a democratic social movement may draw resources from positive representations of the past as a means to mobilize group members in the present. In a similar vein, [Martinovic, Jetten, Smeekes, and Verkuyten \(2017, this section\)](#) investigate the interplay of group identification, collective nostalgia, and intergroup contact among diaspora groups from former Yugoslavia living in Australia. More concretely, the authors show that, for these immigrants, identification with the superordinate Yugoslavian category is associated with more contact with people from other ethnic groups from the region and that this link is explained through "Yugonostalgia", a longing for the past Yugoslavian times. Taken together, these two articles highlight how collective nostalgia may have positive consequences for in-group-related outcomes but also for intergroup relations. The latter finding is in apparent contrast with previous research that has shown that being nostalgic about the national past can negatively affect relations with immigrant origin minorities in the country ([Smeekes, Verkuyten, & Martinovic, 2015](#)). The difference, however, is that [Smeekes and colleagues \(2015\)](#) examined nostalgia at the national level and its relation with attitudes towards "outsiders", whereas [Martinovic et al. \(2017, this section\)](#) focused on nostalgia at a superordinate (federal) level as a collective emotion that brings the constituent subgroups closer together.

Table 1
Overview of the Studies¹

Authors (listed in the order of appearance in this introduction)	Regional context	Sample	Theoretical approach	Method of analysis	Explanans	Explanandum	Link to the COST Action IS1205 research lines
Smeekes, McKeown, & Psaltis	Northern Ireland & Cyprus	268 Protestants and Catholics; 413 Greek and Turkish Cypriots	Social identity approach	Quantitative analysis of survey data	Endorsement of ingroup narratives (predictor), group threat (mediator)	Perceived collective continuity	1
Brasilí & Cabecinhas	Latin America	213 students from Brazil, Chile, and Mexico	Social representations of history	Thematic analysis of answers to open-ended survey questions	n/a	Most important events and most important figures in Latin American history	2
Mukherjee, Adams, & Molina	India	55 students (Study 1); 95 (Study 2), 65 (Study 3) and 160 (Study 4) adult Amazon MTurk users	Cultural psychology approach to collective memory	Situation sampling method (Studies 1 & 2); Experiment (Studies 3 & 4)	Recollection (Study 1) and relevance (Study 2) of glorifying, critical, ambiguous and silenced events; National identification and Experimental manipulation of the events (Studies 3 & 4)	National identification (Studies 1 & 2); National identification and perceptions of injustice (Studies 3 & 4)	2 & 4
Kello	Estonia	21 history textbooks published between 1989 and 2016	Social representations of history	Thematic analysis of history textbooks	n/a	Representations of the Soviet era in Estonian Post-Soviet history textbooks	3
Kurtiş, Soyü Yalçınkaya, & Adams	Turkey	112 history items from national university admissions exams (Study 1); 60 adults recruited through social media (Study 2)	Cultural psychology approach to collective memory	Content analyses of history items in the national exams (Study 1); Quantitative analysis of survey data (Study 2)	Ethno-cultural identification (predictor), denial of silenced history (mediator)	Support for minority rights & freedom of expression	3 & 4
Roth, Huber, Juenger, & Liu	Germany	316 German adults recruited through social networks	Social identity approach	Experiment	Historical (dis)continuity of in-group's positive/negative actions (experimental manipulation); national identification (moderator)	Perceived identity threat	4
Cheung, Sedikides, Wildschut, Tausch, & Ayanian	Hong Kong	111 adults recruited via Facebook and Twitter	Social identity approach; intergroup emotions theory	Quantitative analysis of survey data	Collective nostalgia (predictor); out-group directed anger and contempt (mediators)	Ingroup-favoring collective action	4
Martinovic, Jetten, Smeekes, & Verkuyten	Immigrants from former Yugoslavia in Australia	87 participants with Bosniak, Croatian or Serbian origin living in big Australian cities	Social identity approach; intergroup emotions theory	Quantitative analysis of survey data	Ethnic and Yugoslavian identification (predictors); Collective nostalgia and guilt assignment (mediators)	Intergroup contact	4
Hakim & Adams	U.S.A.	182 (Study 1) and 238 (Study 2) Americans recruited online through Amazon MTurk	Cultural psychology approach to collective memory	Experiments involving tasks of actual recollection of one's commemoration activities	Commemoration of 9/11	Vigilance towards and misattribution of responsibility to Iran for the 9/11 attacks	4
Andrighetto, Halabi, & Nadler	Israel	115 Israeli-Jewish students	Chosen trauma	Experiment	Acknowledgment of past ingroup victimization by outgroup leaders	Intergroup trust	4

Note. The four COST research lines include: (1) Antecedents of collective memories/representations of history, (2) content and structure of collective memories, (3) institutionalized transmission of historical narratives, and (4) socio-psychological correlates of collective memories in the present.

A final set of studies addresses the distinct consequences of remembering past events by, first, focusing on commemoration practices (Hakim & Adams, 2017, this section) and, second, on acknowledgment of past suffering (Andrighetto, Halabi, & Nadler, 2017, this section). Hakim and Adams (2017, this section) highlight the role of commemorations of the 9/11 terrorist attack in the U.S.A. for vigilance towards an out-group that was not involved in the attack (Iran) but to whom the attack might be unjustly attributed in the present day. More concretely, the authors show that participants who engaged with commemoration of 9/11 reported significantly more suspicion towards the Iranian nuclear deal in the present day and misattributed responsibility to Iran for this terrorist attack. Importantly, the effects were stronger for participants who engaged in hegemonic commemoration events. The relevance of these results pertains to the fact that commemoration practices for past suffering involving the in-group may lead to undesired and unintended consequences by fostering negative attitudes towards out-groups who are not, in any way, related to these past events. In a different (and more positive) vein, the article by Andrighetto and colleagues shows that when a relevant, rival out-group member (i.e., a Palestinian leader) acknowledges the past suffering (i.e., anti-Semitic persecution of Jewish people in Europe) of the in-group, this acknowledgment can lead to higher levels of trust towards the whole out-group. Moreover, out-group trust is linked with the willingness to reconcile and forgive the out-group for attacks on the in-group. Given that this research was carried out in a context of intractable conflict, the results may offer some hope for future interventions. By focusing on specific historical events or narratives about the past and their compatibility, by framing such narratives in a particular way, and by acknowledging others' narratives, intergroup relations may improve in the present and the future. By emphasizing conflictual and incompatible historical narratives, on the other hand, one may be left wondering if intergroup conflict will ever be reduced at all or if social groups are bound to keep on fighting over interpretations of historical and current events.

What's Next?

The contributions collected in this special thematic section provide an interesting overview of the current research trends in the field of collective memories and intergroup relations from a social and cultural psychological perspective. Nonetheless, further research on such topics would certainly benefit from more multi- and transdisciplinary work allowing a deeper understanding of the connections between history and present-day social interactions as well as the application of such research to the field of history teaching and policy work. Reaching out to educators, historians, sociologists, as well as other professionals is definitely worth the trouble of crossing disciplinary boundaries if one is to better grasp the complex phenomena happening in contemporary societies. In a different but related vein, we also call for more applied research on topics such as how a group's history is embedded into the everyday life of that group's members (i.e., practices of remembrance), how historical representations are passed on from one generation to the next (i.e., transmission of memories) or, quite (seemingly) simply, how collective memories are connected to present-day intergroup relations. Even though research on the interconnections of history, its representations and intergroup relations can always be further investigated, one cannot deny the amount of knowledge that has already been produced in the past decades. Translating such research into applied settings, or even into the development of interventions that aim to improve intergroup relations, should become a priority in the coming years.

The range of geographical settings covered by the contributions within this thematic section is a positive sign of the state of affairs in relation to studying the past and the present. Still, it is noticeable that there were no submis-

sions from African countries. This is not to say that such research does not exist - we are aware of very interesting lines of research within African countries that are currently being developed. For example, in 2014 the *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* had a special thematic section about the Rwandan genocide (McGarty, 2014), and this year the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* has released a special issue on colonialism and intercultural relations (Bobowik, Valentim, & Licata, 2018) and this may be one of the reasons why there were not any manuscripts focusing on collective memories and postcolonial relations in the present thematic section.

Moreover, most of the research presented in this special thematic section (with the exception of the articles by Smeekes et al. and by Martinovic et al.) focuses on the perspectives of dominant majority groups. If one is to understand how representations of history relate to present-day intergroup relations, we should also consider the often forgotten and silenced voices of minority groups across various contexts. Making their voices heard could then also shed light onto non-hegemonic processes and dynamics of construction and maintenance of collective memories and how these may afford different understandings of past and present-day intergroup relations.

As guest editors of this special thematic section, we hope that the selection of contributions acts not only as an overview of the research currently conducted in the field, but maybe even more so as an inspiration and invitation for addressing further research questions through projects that will continue to expand our understanding of present-day social phenomena and their relationships with the past. Put differently, in the words of the writer Eduardo Galeano: "History never really says goodbye. History says 'See you later'" (Younge, 2013, para. 9).

Notes

i) The role of primary handling editor for each of the manuscripts present in this special thematic section was as follows: Ana Figueiredo - Brasil & Cabecinhas (2017), Mukherjee et al. (2017), Kello (2017), Roth et al. (2017) and Cheung et al. (2017). Jonas Rees - Smeekes et al. (2017), Martinovic et al. (2017) and Andrighetto et al. (2017). Borja Martinovic - Kurtiş et al. (2017) and Hakim & Adams (2017).

Funding

This work was conducted within the framework of COST Action IS1205 "Social psychological dynamics of historical representations in the enlarged European Union".

The first author was supported by a postdoctoral grant from the Université libre de Bruxelles and a postdoctoral grant from FONDECYT (CONICYT/FONDECYT/POSDOCTORADO/3160352). The first author also acknowledges the support of two CONICYT grants from the Chilean Ministry of Education (CONICYT/FONDAP/15130009 and CONICYT/FONDAP/ 15110006) during the preparation of this manuscript.

The preparation of this special thematic section was facilitated by a research grant from the foundation 'Remembrance, Responsibility and Future' (EVZ Foundation) awarded to the third author.

Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank all the reviewers of manuscripts and the authors of the contributions that appear in this special thematic section (including those that were not included in the final selection). We also deeply appreciate the support of the editors of the *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, with a special thanks to Johanna Ray Vollhardt for her guidance

throughout this process. Finally, we would like to thank all members of the COST Action IS1205 for inspiring us to start working on this thematic section.

References

- Adwan, S., Bar-Tal, D., & Wexler, B. E. (2016). Portrayal of the other in Palestinian and Israeli schoolbooks: A comparative study. *Political Psychology, 37*(2), 201-217. doi:10.1111/pops.12227
- Andrighetto, L., Halabi, S., & Nadler, A. (2017). Fostering trust and forgiveness through the acknowledgment of others' past victimization. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 5*, 651-664. doi:10.5964/jspp.v5i2.728
- Azzopardi, S., Buttigieg, E., & Licata, L. (2015). Symbiotics of history and social psychology understanding social representations of history in Europe. *Xjenza Online, 3*, 36-40.
- Bartlett, F. C. (1932). *Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Benavot, A., Cha, Y.-K., Kamens, D., Meyer, J. W., & Wong, S.-Y. (1991). Knowledge for the masses: World models and national curricula, 1920-1986. *American Sociological Review, 56*, 85-100. doi:10.2307/2095675
- Bobowik, M., Valentim, J. P., & Licata, L. (2018). Introduction to the Special Issue: Colonial past and intercultural relations. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 62*, 1-12. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2017.10.003
- Brasil, J. A., & Cabecinhas, R. (2017). Social representations of Latin American history and (post)colonial relations in Brazil, Chile and Mexico. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 5*, 537-557. doi:10.5964/jspp.v5i2.701
- Carretero, M. (2007). *Documentos de indentidad: La construcción de la memoria histórica en el mundo global*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Paidós.
- Carretero, M., Asensio, M., & Moneo, M. R. (2012). *History education and the construction of national identities*. Charlotte, NC, USA: Information Age Publishing.
- Čehajić-Clancy, S., & Bilewicz, M. (2017). Fostering reconciliation through historical moral exemplars in a postconflict society. *Peace and Conflict, 23*(3), 288-296. doi:10.1037/pac0000210
- Cheung, W.-Y., Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T., Tausch, N., & Ayanian, A. H. (2017). Collective nostalgia is associated with stronger outgroup-directed anger and participation in ingroup-favoring collective action. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 5*, 301-319. doi:10.5964/jspp.v5i2.697
- COST. European Cooperation in Science and Technology. (2012). *Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as COST Action IS1205: Social psychological dynamics of historical representations in the enlarged European Union*. Retrieved from <http://costis1205.wix.com/home#!about-the-action/cat5>
- Doosje, B., Branscombe, N. R., Spears, R., & Manstead, A. S. R. (1998). Guilty by association: When one's group has a negative history. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*(4), 872-886. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.75.4.872
- Figueiredo, A., Doosje, B., & Valentim, J. P. (2015). Group-based compunction and anger: Their antecedents and consequences in relation to colonial conflicts. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence, 9*(1), 90-105.
- Figueiredo, A., Oldenhove, G., & Licata, L. (2018). Collective memories of colonialism and acculturation dynamics among Congolese immigrants living in Belgium. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 62*, 80-92. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2017.03.004

- Hakim, N. H., & Adams, G. (2017). Collective memory as tool for intergroup conflict: The case of 9/11 commemoration. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 5*, 630-650. doi:10.5964/jspp.v5i2.713
- Halbwachs, M. (1994). *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* [Social frameworks of memory]. Paris, France: Albin Michel. (Original work published 1925)
- Hanke, K., Liu, J. H., Sibley, C. G., Paez, D., Gaines, S. O., Jr., Moloney, G., . . . Cabecinhas, R. (2015). "Heroes" and "villains" of world history across cultures. *PLOS ONE, 10*(2), Article e0115641. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0115641
- Hegarty, P., & Klein, O. (2017). Historical cognition's dilemmas: Introduction to the special issue—Recent advances in historical cognition. *Memory Studies, 10*(3), 243-248. doi:10.1177/1750698017701598
- Jetten, J., & Wohl, M. J. A. (2012). The past as a determinant of the present: Historical continuity, collective angst, and opposition to immigration. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 42*, 442-450. doi:10.1002/ejsp.865
- Kello, K. (2017). Identity and othering in past and present: Representations of the Soviet era in Estonian post-Soviet textbooks. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 5*, 665-693. doi:10.5964/jspp.v5i2.737
- Kligler-Vilenchik, N., Tsfati, Y., & Meyers, O. (2014). Setting the collective memory agenda: Examining mainstream media influence on individuals' perceptions of the past. *Memory Studies, 7*(4), 484-499. doi:10.1177/1750698014523443
- Kurtiş, T., Soylu Yalçınkaya, N., & Adams, G. (2017). Silence in official representations of history: Implications for national identity and intergroup relations. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 5*, 608-629. doi:10.5964/jspp.v5i2.714
- Licata, L., & Klein, O. (2005). Regards croisés sur un passé commun: Anciens colonisés et anciens coloniaux face à l'action belge au Congo [Crossed glances at a common past: Former colonized and colonizer perspectives regarding the Belgian action in the Congo]. In M. Sanchez-Mazas & L. Licata (Eds.), *L'Autre: regards psychosociaux* [The Other: Psychosocial perspectives] (pp. 241-278). Grenoble, France: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble.
- Licata, L., Klein, O., & Gély, R. (2007). Mémoire des conflits, conflits de mémoires: Une approche psychosociale et philosophique du rôle de la mémoire collective dans les processus de réconciliation intergroupe [Memory of conflicts, conflicts of memories: A psychosocial and philosophical approach to the role of collective memory in processes of intergroup reconciliation]. *Social Science Information, 46*(4), 563-589. doi:10.1177/0539018407082593
- Licata, L., & Mercy, A. (2015). Collective memory (social psychology of). In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (2nd ed., pp. 194-199). Oxford, United Kingdom: Elsevier.
- Liu, J. H., Goldstein-Hawes, R., Hilton, D. J., Huang, L.-L., Gastardo-Conaco, C., Dresler-Hawke, E., . . . Hidaka, Y. (2005). Social representations of events and people in world history across twelve cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 36*, 171-191. doi:10.1177/0022022104272900
- Liu, J. H., & Hilton, D. J. (2005). How the past weighs on the present: Social representations of history and their role in identity politics. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 44*, 537-556. doi:10.1348/014466605X27162
- Marín Beristain, C., Páez, D., & González, J. L. (2000). Rituals, social sharing, silence, emotions and collective memory claims in the case of the Guatemalan genocide. *Psicothema, 12*, 117-130.
- Marques, D., Páez, D., & Serra, A. F. (1997). Social sharing, emotional climate, and the transgenerational transmission of memories: The Portuguese colonial war. In J. W. Pennebaker, D. Páez, & B. Rimé (Eds.), *Collective memory of political events: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 253-276). Mahwah, NJ, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Martinovic, B., Jetten, J., Smeekes, A., & Verkuyten, M. (2017). Collective memory of a dissolved country: Group-based nostalgia and guilt assignment as predictors of interethnic relations between diaspora groups from former Yugoslavia. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 5*, 588-607. doi:10.5964/jspp.v5i2.733

- McGarty, C. (2014). Twenty years after genocide: The role of psychology in the reconciliation and reconstruction process in Rwanda. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 2*(1), 377-386. doi:10.5964/jspp.v2i1.449
- Mukherjee, S., Adams, G., & Molina, L. E. (2017). A cultural psychological analysis of collective memory as mediated action: Constructions of Indian history. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 5*, 558-587. doi:10.5964/jspp.v5i2.705
- Páez, D., Bobowik, M., De Guissmé, L., Liu, J. H., & Licata, L. (2016). Mémoire collective et représentation sociales de l'Histoire [Collective memory and social representations of history]. In G. Lo Monaco, S. Delouée, & P. Ratau (Eds.), *Les représentations sociales: Théories, méthodes et applications* [Social representations: Theories, methods and applications] (pp. 539-552). Brussels, Belgium: De Boeck.
- Piçarra, M. C., Cabecinhas, R., & Castro, T. (2016). Imaginários coloniais: Propaganda, militância e “resistência” no cinema [Colonial imaginaries: Propaganda, militancy and “resistance” in cinema]. *Comunicação e Sociedade, 29*, 9-15. doi:10.17231/comsoc.29(2016).2406
- Psaltis, C., Carretero, M., & Čehajić-Clancy, S. (2017). *History education and conflict transformation: Social psychological theories, history teaching and reconciliation*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rimé, B., Bouchat, P., Klein, O., & Licata, L. (2015). When collective memories of victimhood fade: Generational evolution of intergroup attitudes and political aspirations in Belgium. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 45*(4), 515-532. doi:10.1002/ejsp.2104
- Roth, J., Huber, M., Juenger, A., & Liu, J. H. (2017). It's about valence: Historical continuity or historical discontinuity as a threat to social identity. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 5*, 320-341. doi:10.5964/jspp.v5i2.677
- Sani, F. (2010). *Self continuity: Individual and collective perspectives*. New York, NY, USA: Psychology Press.
- Smeeke, A., McKeown, S., & Psaltis, C. (2017). Endorsing narratives under threat: Maintaining perceived collective continuity through the protective power of ingroup narratives in Northern Ireland and Cyprus. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 5*, 282-300. doi:10.5964/jspp.v5i2.682
- Smeeke, A., & Verkuyten, M. (2014). Perceived group continuity, collective self-continuity and in-group identification. *Self and Identity, 13*, 663-680. doi:10.1080/15298868.2014.898685
- Smeeke, A., Verkuyten, M., & Martinovic, B. (2015). Longing for the country's good old days: National nostalgia increases opposition to Muslim immigrants via stronger endorsement of autochthony. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 54*, 561-580. doi:10.1111/bjso.12097
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup conflict. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7-24). Chicago, IL, USA: Nelson-Hall.
- Wertsch, J. V. (2002). *Voices of collective remembering*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Wertsch, J. V. (2010). Text and dialogism in the study of collective memory. *Educação e Pesquisa, 36*, 123-132. doi:10.1590/S1517-97022010000400010
- Wildschut, T., Bruder, M., Robertson, S., van Tilburg, W. A., & Sedikides, C. (2014). Collective nostalgia: A group-level emotion that confers unique benefits on the group. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 107*, 844-863. doi:10.1037/a0037760
- Younge, G. (2013, July 23). Eduardo Galeano: 'My great fear is that we are all suffering from amnesia'. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/jul/23/eduardo-galeano-children-days-interview>