Influence of collective memory and historical victimhood on ethnic and national identities

Wakil Ajibola Asekun

Abstract.

Collective memory, which is a group's shared representation of its past, has been considered a force that can potentially shape a group's identity. However, previous studies focused more on negative memories of the historical past; this necessitates conducting a study that examines both negative and positive memories of the historical past. The present study, therefore, examined how collective memories (positive and negative) influence ethnic and national identification. It also examined whether victim beliefs can predict collective action intention. The study was conducted among 635 participants who were selected from the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria through an online survey using a snowball sampling technique. Path Model Analysis was adopted to test the stated hypotheses. The result indicates that negative collective memory is related to the construction of both ethnic and national identities. Victim belief was found to be a predictor of collective action intention. The study discussed how identification tendencies impact in-group and out-group relations positively and negatively in a pluralistic society.
Keywords: Collective memories, identity, *victim belief*, groups.

Asekun, W.A., wasekun@unilag.edu.ng, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos

Introduction

Collective memory has been referred to as a group's shared representations of its past, which might shape the group's identity (Lin 2021). Although not all shared memories are collective memories, a memory is only considered collective if it is shared widely, defines a people, and helps bind them together. (Manier, 2002; Manier & Hirst, 2007; Olick, 1999). Every ethnic group in different countries of the world has its unique historical past events, which could be political, social, or economic; these events may be positive or negative (Hilton & Liu, 2017), thus ethnic groups in Nigeria are no exception. Moreover, nations that are made up of diverse ethnic groups are usually challenged by social categorizations that sometimes promote in-group favouritism and out-group prejudice (Asekun, 2022; Tajfel, 1974). This reality becomes even more evident when members of an ethnic group get the control of political power, through unconstitutional means, primarily, coup d'état, (as it was the case in Nigerian recent history) some of the actions of such leaders could be perceived as 'victimizing' to members of other major ethnic out-groups. This phenomenon has been described in literature as *victim belief*, which is a component of collective memory. It is a perception of suffering from injustice of an in-group from another group or race (out-group). Although in literature, this concept is often discussed in the context of a foreign invasion of a people of another geographical location in form of colonization, e.g., Belgium's colonial rule in Congo (see Figueiredo, Oldenhove, & Licata, 2018), or, as it was the case with Korea by Japan (see Kim et al., 2014; Jeong, & Vollhardt. 2021), apartheid rule in South Africa, or the victimization of a people in diaspora e.g., Jews in Germany by Nazis, (e.g., Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992; Schori-Eyal, Kl et al., 2014), Poles (e.g., Jasiñska-Kania, 2007), or as it is presently between Russia and Ukraine.

Nigeria and its ethnic groups: The historical context

Nigeria, as the largest country in West Africa and indeed Africa, has witnessed years of both pleasant and unpleasant socio-political events in its chequered history. The good times could be traced to when she gained independence from colonial rule in 1960, which was celebrated with pomp and pageantry; this was followed (not too long after) by a robust commercial activity in her oil sector, which ushered in an unprecedented economic prosperity. During this period, the value of her currency (naira) was more substantial than the value of a dollar with naira exchanging for 0.78k/1 dollar (less than I unit of the currency) as at 1 March 1980. Older men and women usually narrate the good old days with nostalgia, e.g., how they were served chicken as students in university with highly discounted tickets, how government employed cleaners regularly cleaned their rooms in the hostels; and how there were lots of employment opportunities for young graduates after completion of degrees, etc., besides, Nigeria was organized politically along three major ethnic groups with regional autonomy. The prosperity and healthy rivalry among the regions facilitated fast growth and development (Asekun, 2015) for those with these memories, Nigeria was the dream country with potentials for higher accomplishments, but on the other hand were adverse events of political intrigues and manipulations among the major ethnic groups that precipitated a civil war and other inter-ethnic rivalries, the civil war was fought for three years (1967-1970) and changed the political landscape completely. Ethnic Identity politics has been the bane of Nigerian political, economic, and social trajectories and has therefore led to some unpleasant past events, including military coups, abuses of human rights, corruption, and deterioration of the state's institutions, ethnic violence, among others. Some ethnic groups tend to think of themselves as "victims" in many of these past negative experiences.

Collective memory: A theoretical perspective.

Halbwach (1950) was credited for developing the concept of collective memory; he theorized that memories are not literally preserved, but are reconstructed according to present conditions and the social context. He contended that there could never be an isolated individual memory as earlier postulated by some social scientists. Still, he argued that there is an intersection in the development of the individual's memory and that of the social group. He went further to state that there was an overwhelming influence of the social force in the content of an individual's memories throughout an era and that it was the group's shared beliefs and its collective experiences that shape the meaning of individual memories and not the other way round. Also, Nora (1978) in lending a voice to this theoretical proposition said that collective memory is 'what remains of the past in the group's experiences, or rather what the groups do with the past.

Literature Review.

The collective memory of groups in a nation determines to a large extent how public discourse, activities and political culture is shaped (Zeineddine & Qumseya, (2021), for example in a recent study in Belgium, Congolese Belgian participants' scores on the memory of Congo's colonial past, and perception of history were found to have a significant correlation with identification with Congoles' culture, similarly, in Hungary, participants with positive narratives about the nation expressed stronger national identification than participants with negative narratives of the nation (P´olya 2017). Weigler (2019) also reported that participants in his study deployed their views of historical events to develop their ethno-religious group's present identities. The findings are also consistent with the result of an analysis of textbooks of History/civics in French, which revealed that the narratives of the books accounted for students' identity construction with the French and English (sub-identity) and their formation of identity of the European race (superordinate identity).

Furthermore, some other studies have demonstrated how unpopular governments manipulated collective memories in order to confer legitimacy on their unpopular administration (e.g., Olick et al., 2011; Asekun, 2018), some leaders also seek to erase memories when they consider them as undermining their authorities (Nora, 1996). In some instances, manipulation of collective memories could be a means of control of attitudes toward the government, to maintain the status quo, and prevent agitation for a more democratic process. (Belmonte & Rochlitz, 2017). For example, at some point in Nigeria's political trajectory, history as a subject was removed from the secondary school curriculum until recently, some scholars have contended that the action was aimed at erasing the memory of certain negative past of the Nigerian states that could threaten political interest of specific group(s) in the country.

Role of media in the formation of collective memories.

Studies show that media coverage determines how we remember or erase information about public events (e.g., Wang, 2019; Marsh & Rajaram, 2019; Hirst et al., 2009). Some studies revealed that interpersonal communication and large social networks play essential roles in the processes of transmitting the contents of collective memories (e.g., Coman & Hirst, 2012; Harris et al., 2010; Stone et al., 2020). Studies also suggest that people deliberately choose the information or sources that is congruent with what is of personal interests as well as their political ideologies (Stone & Jay; Wang, 2019; Coman et al., 2014; Posta et al., 2015), this bias reflects in the choice of information to be recalled. This intentional selection of information or source of information helps to bolster the bonding of the group and subsequently facilitates the formation of the group identity.

The link between *collective victim* belief and conflicts.

Collective victim belief has been implicated in the literature of social sciences and humanities as the antecedent of violence, intractable conflicts, and in many cases the instigator of renewed violent conflicts; these findings were reported in psychological literature (e.g., Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992a) and in sociology (e.g., Smelser, 2004), political science (e.g., Macdonald, 2003), philosophy (e.g., Williams, 2008), and History (e.g., Robins & Jones, 2009). In Mamdani's (2001) analysis of the Rwandan genocide, he noted that members of a previously victimized group became perpetrators in subsequent conflict. This change of roles in a conflict is usually justified by the "victimized" group as a natural response of retaliation for revenge. (Lickel et al., 2006; Suedfeld, 1999), or an act of self-defence to prevent renewed victimization (Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992a, 1992b; Pettigrew, 2003). Moreover, Bar-Tal et al. (2009) submitted that collective victim belief facilitates social cohesion and serves as social glue for a group and creates the 'we' against 'them' sentiment (Noor et al., 2012). Again, the collective victim belief not only engenders bonding among kith and kins of a social group but also sustains the sentiments of fellow feelings between current members of the in-group and the older generation who perceived themselves as victims of injustice (Noor et al., 2012).

Victim belief and Collective action.

There is evidence from past studies to show that a relationship exists between victim belief and collective action. However, this study is not aware of any study that has addressed victimisation from own government which is a gap that the present study seeks to fill. According to a psychological model, the group's grievance is usually the launching pad for process action (Van Zomeren et al., 2012). This may consist of experiences such as colonization and other forms of oppression (Albzour et al., 2019). Grievances become worse when people who were victimised perceive that the perpetrator is in denial of the historical victimization. It increases the resentments towards the group considered as the perpetrator (Kanyangara et al., 2007;

Vollhardt et al., 2014). For example, collective action on seeking acknowledgment and reparations was noticed in post-apartheid South Africa (Adonis, 2018), this was also true of Maori communities in New Zealand (Aho, 2014), and the Armenian diaspora (Vollhardt & Nair, 2018).

Statement of the problem.

Ethnic groups are known in literature for their ability to promote a sense of primary community, which is derived from common ancestry, shared cultural values and beliefs, physical appearance, among others. (Marger, 2000). Ethnic identity is understood, experienced, and expressed in different ways by advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Disadvantaged groups are usually characterized by experiences of exclusion, domination, prejudice, economic exploitation, cultural control, and sometimes violent attacks (e.g., Moane & Campling, 1999; Mullaly, 2002; Sidanius, 1993), but advantaged groups, tend to dominate and control other groups for political, economic, or socio-psychological benefits, this is particularly true when they share same geographical and political space, all the ethnic groups who share same geographical and political space are also expected have national identities or superordinate identities for sake of national unity, (Leach et al., 2007; Noor et al., 2012), this is because ethnic identity may spur negative affect towards out-group members and even the national (superordinate) group (see, Organista et al., 2010), although group identities are not only sources of prejudice and conflict, they can also foster inclusion, positive attitudes and behaviours towards out-groups and superordinate groups, if they are re-categorized as groups into a common in-group. (Bilven et al., 2022). Such shared common in-group identity can reduce previous intergroup prejudice and promote intergroup cooperation (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2014).

Present study

The present study examines how collective memory affects the formation of ethnic and national identities positively or negatively by analysing different forms of narratives

that participants received or shared, (i.e., positive or negative narratives of past events) This is against the backdrop that a collective memory may be a reflection of something more abstract than just an individual's episodic representations (Muller et al., 2016; Asekun, 20202; Páez & Liu., 2010). And the submission that the kind of memories shared by a group of its past experiences would determine what the group does with the present (Nora, 1978). The study also examined whether victim belief is a predictor of collective action intention. Previous study, as far as we know, was concerned with victim beliefs due to external forces, and in most cases, the nature of such a relationship was hardly addressed. Based on the foregoing, this study sets the following research questions and hypotheses:

- To what extent do collective memories impact the development of ethnic and national identities when past narratives in a polity are negative or positive?
- Would the perception of victimization predict collective action intention?
- Are collective memories transmitted and shared through traditional media or digital media?
- Is there a relationship between the type of media and the development of collective memories

The hypotheses.

1. Collective memory is negatively associated with national identification (superordinate group
2. Collective memory is positively associated with ethnic identification (subordinate group)
3. Victim belief is a predictor of collective action intention
4. There is a significant relationship between the type of media and the development of collective memories

Method
Participants
Table 1 below shows the demographic characteristics of the sample. They were citizens of Nigeria from the three major ethnic groups in the country (Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo). N=635. The participants' sample was broken down by ethnic group: Hausa (29%), Yoruba (33%), Igbo (31%), and others, which constitute minority ethnic groups (6%).

Data Collection
The questionnaires through which data were collected from participants were administered through links shared by emails and WhatsApp messages to students of a university in southwest Nigeria. Participants were subsequently requested to share the link also with friends and family members who may also be interested in participating in the study. The measure used for the data collection included a collective memories questionnaire, an ethnic identity scale, a national identity scale, and a victim belief scale. They are described below.

Measures

Collective memories questionnaire:

Collective memory was measured with open-ended items that tapped memories that were salient in the country's significant ethnic population. It was an adapted questionnaire originally developed by Liu et al (2020). It has a reliability coefficient of .86. It has been successfully used in previous studies (e.g., Li et al, 2021). Participants were requested to mention three positive and negative historical events that happened during the lifetime of people they have known, which they believe have had the most significant impact on their country. Participants were then asked to write anything they wanted in the three blanks provided (positive or negative). Codes were generated only for the most commonly named historical events.

Identities questionnaire

The identities questionnaire is an adapted measure from the literature which has a total

number of two items (i.e., "I am proud to tell my friends that I am Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa; "Usually, I like to think of myself as a Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, reliability of the measure was .82 (Jasini, et al, 2017). Participants were required to tick the ethnic group that they belonged to from the three options listed in the question items and thereafter to give their response on the questionnaire. Responses ranged from 1 (very much) to 5 (Not very much).

Same measure was used for national identity as thus: ''I am proud to tell anyone that I am a Nigerian'' and 'I Usually like to think of myself as a Nigerian'' responses were also based on a 5-point Likert scale, from which ranged from 1 (very much) to 5(Not very much 1 (very much) to 5 (not very much) A similar 2- item measure has been shown to be sufficiently reliable, valid, and valuable (Eisinga et. al. 2013)

Victim believe

The victim's belief was measured with one item. It is an earlier adapted scale that was used in a previous study (see Jasini et al., 2017). It has a reliability coefficient of 0.80. The item is 'historically, many individuals in my ethnic group and their families suffered from the actions of the government. The questionnaire was on a 5-point Likert format ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). A similar 1-item measure has been reported to have been successful in measuring essential variables of interest (Postmes et al, 2013)

Collective action

Collective action was measured with a 3-item questionnaire adapted from the existing literature(van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2012); it has a reliability coefficient of .91. Sample scales include: "I would like to sign a petition demanding apology," "I would participate in any demonstration that is for demanding justice for my ethnic group," and "I would participate in any demonstration that is for demanding justice for my ethnic group." Responses were in a 4-point Likert format, ranging from (1) strongly agree to (4) strongly disagree.

Media use.

To determine the news sources of participants, the frequency of media use, as well as the preference, we developed two items that categorize participants into either a predominantly traditional media group or a predominantly digital media group. Participants were therefore required to indicate the means by which they became aware of the listed past events of their ethnic group. The options included: (a) Traditional media; e.g., radio, television, newspapers, (b) Digital media; e.g., blog, YouTube.

Procedure

The recruitment for the study was done through the snowball sampling technique using undergraduates of a university in Nigeria, who subsequently shared with friends and family on their phones via WhatsApp messages and email addresses. The first set of students who volunteered as participants and helped shared with other friends and relatives got a sum of 500 Naira as a cost of data upon presenting evidence of sharing. All participants submitted their completed survey through a well-protected system, which the Sosci Survey hosted on the website address: httpp//www.sosci/survey.den/. The data collection process lasted for 6 weeks between January 8th and March 29th, 2021. We generated codes only for historical events and figures that were most commonly mentioned; any item not mentioned by at least five participants was not coded. These codes were further classified into broader domain categories to allow for appropriate statistical analysis. Two independent coders helped classify the original codes into the code groups, and we also coded for whether the events they listed were positive or negative. Positive events were events they thought made them proud of their ethnicity and their country; adverse events were events that made them not be proud of their country. Still, they did not affect their ethnicity because they thought of the events as having happened due to the government's action and inaction. (This was well explained to all participants.)

Data Analysis

The frequency distribution of the sample was computed accordingly. In order to streamline the responses obtained, we considered removing responses that relate to personal life (e.g., "Accident due to bad road" (response for respondent number 68), non-interest (i.e., nil or blank), and wrong responses, e.g., "When I gave birth" as negative collective memory. We then proceeded to import the dataset into RStudio using the 'read Excel' function from the 'readxl' package, explicitly specifying the data type for each of these variables while importing, selecting all variables that are relevant to the hypotheses, and retaining only collective memories that have a significant number of responses. Furthermore, in order to test the four stated hypotheses, Path Analysis (lavaan package in R) was adopted. (Rosseel, 2012). Negative memories, victim belief, and media preferences were entered into the model as independent variables, while ethnic identity, national identity, and collective action intention were entered as dependent variables. After performing the path analysis, posterior power for RMSEA (i.e., measure of the difference between the hypothesized model and a perfect fit model) and estimates of individual pathways within the model were calculated.

Result.

From Table 1 below, the total number of responses retained is 171 (equivalent to 27%) out of the whole administered questionnaire of 635 (100%). Although this number belongs only to respondents who gave their collective memories (negative) correctly. This quota was dominated by people in the age range of 18-25 (44%), followed by people in the age range of 26-33 (27%). The gender of the respondents is in favor of the female population (54%) over the male (46%). The majority of the respondents (61%) have BSC/HND, while only a few (6%) have lower than a National Diploma.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of respondents

Age	Hausa	Igbo	Yoruba	Others	Total	~=%
Personal	0	0	0	0	0	0
18-25	0	13	10	53	76	44
26-33	2	5	4	35	46	27
34-41	0	2	4	9	15	9
42-49	2	3	1	11	17	10
50-57	0	1	0	8	9	5
>57	0	0	1	7	8	5
Gender						
Personal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male	3	10	6	60	79	46
Female	1	14	14	63	92	54
Education						
Personal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sch Cert	0	4	0	7	11	6
National	0	0	3	9	12	7
BSC/HND	2	15	15	72	104	61
MSC	2	5	2	24	33	19
Others	0	0	0	11	11	6

.

Table 2: Showing selected memories given by participants and the variables examined in the   model as they are labeled in the study

Label	Variable name	Label	Variable name
MkD	MKO's death	neg	Negative Collective Memory
J12	Annulment of the June 12 election	EtP	Ethnic Identity
BhG	Buhari's Govt	PrN	National Identity
IkB	Ikeja Bombing	TrM	Traditional Media
SbR	Subsidy Removal	SFA	Victim belief
ChG	Abduction of Chibok Girls	Act	Action against the government
BkH	Emergence of Boko Haram	Gtj	I want to do something together in order to get justice from the Government.
C19	Covid19	SAP	I want to sign a petition demanding an apology and reparation from the government.
CvW	Civil War	GvA	The government must apologize and pay reparations for the past mistreatment of my ethnic group.
ESA	End SARS Massacre	JFE	I would participate in any demonstration that demanded justice for my ethnic group.

As shown in Table 2 above, the data contains 40 variables of different types with a mix of demographic information, relevant for our research. For pre-processing, we started by grouping the collective memory responses that are semantically related into a single response (e.g., *"Abduction of*

R Studio for further analysis.

Chibok school girls", *"The chibok girls' issues"*, and *"inhuman abduction of chibok girls by Boko Haram"* are all recoded as *"Chibok Girls"*) and are stored as NEG1, NEG2, and NEG3 for negative memories respectively. We then proceed to import this dataset into

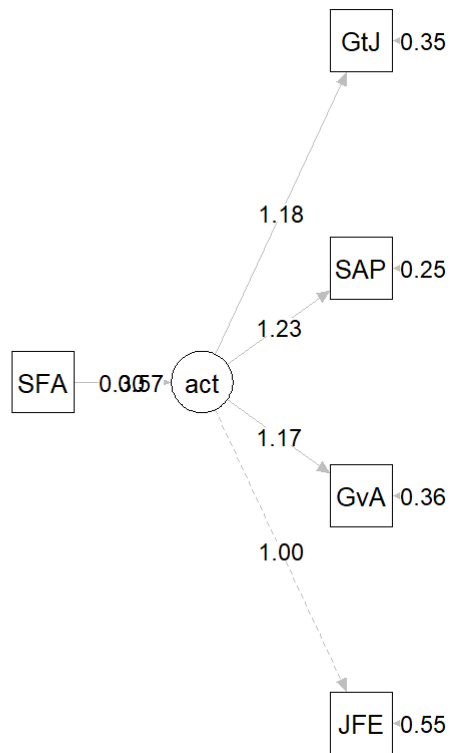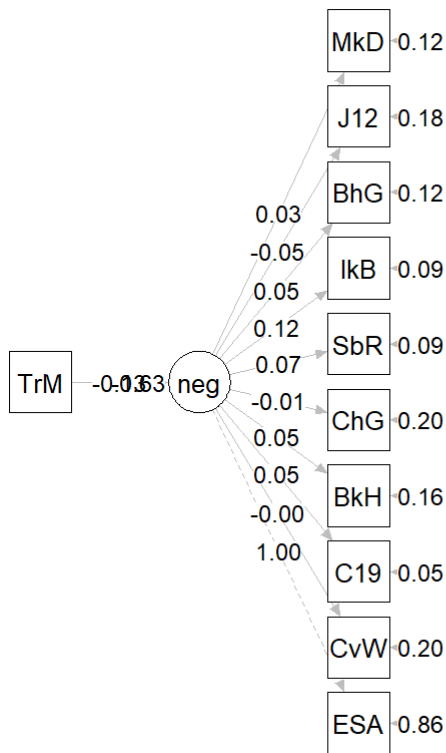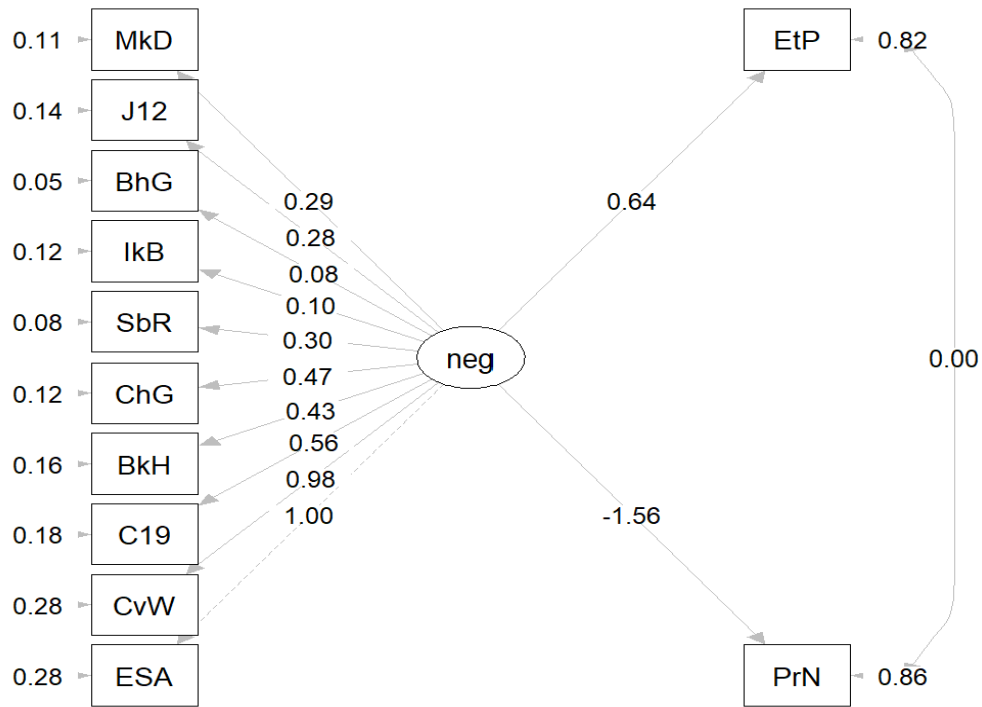**Models   of   Path   Analysis   of   the   Variables**

Table 3: Showing the Coefficients, SEs, z and p Values, and 95% Confidence Intervals of the Path Model Analysis

Variables	EST	SE	Z	P value	CI. Lower	CI. Upper
collective memories ~ with Nat Identity	-1.563	0.855	-1.829	0.067	-3.238	0.112
collective memories ~ ethnic Id	0.644	0.557	1.155	0.248	-0.448	1.735
Victim belief ~ Coll. Action Int.	0.298	0.041	7.189	0	0.217	0.379
Collective memories~ Trad. and Digital Media	-0.129	0.023	-5.652	0.032	-0.369	0.111

The results of the analysis (Table 5) obtained from the path analysis indicate that collective memory is negatively associated with national identity: EST = -1.56, SE = .85, z = -1.83, CE = 0.067, 95% CI [−3.23, 0.11]. The result suggests that negative collective memories statistically increase or decrease identification with the national group.

Similarly, analysis indicated that collective memory is positively associated with ethnic identification, EST = 0.64, SE = .0.56, z = 1.15, CE = 0.257, 95% CI [−0.44, 1.74], which literally indicates that the ethnic identity of citizens is in no way affected by their negative collective memory. As regards the relationship between victim belief and collective action intention, victim belief increases the chances of collective action:

(EST = 0.30, SE = 0.041, z = 7.19, p-value = 0.00, CI [-0.22, 0.38]. This means that a group of people who perceived that they have suffered so much from the actions of the government tend to be more prone to expressing collective action against the government.

Finally, the fourth hypothesis states that media use preference is associated with the formation of collective memories. For traditional media use, EST = -0.13, SE = 0.023, z = -5.65, p 0.03 [-0.37, 0.11]. The result suggests that the relationship is statistically significant. This indicates that people who use traditional media of information have reduced chances of compiling negative collective memories compared to those who use modern media systems.

Table 4: Showing Model Indices

Fit Index	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	GFI	AIC	BIC	CN_05
Model1	1	0.035	0.092	0.91	825.07	878.648	112.261
Model2	1	0.061	0.144	0.8	187.488	209.423	40.481
Model3	0.99	0.121	0.019	0.978	3367.277	3401.972	259.726

The first model demonstrates an almost perfect fit compared to the baseline, as evidenced by the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 1.000. The model strikes a balance between fit and complexity, supported by the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) values of 825.07 and 878.648, respectively. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.035 indicates excellent fit. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) of 0.092 signifies a reasonable average discrepancy in correlations. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) value of 0.91 implies that

this model fits better than a null model. Moreover, the Critical N for the 0.05 Level (CN_05) of 112.261 confirms that the sample size sufficiently supports a well-fitting model.

Model 2 also displays a nearly perfect fit relative to the baseline, supported by a CFI of 1.000. The AIC and BIC values (187.488 and 209.423) indicate a well-balanced trade-off between model fit and complexity. The SRMR of 0.144 signifies a moderate average discrepancy in correlations. Comparatively, the GFI value of 0.8 suggests that this model fits better than a null model, although not as well as Model

1. The CN_05 value of 40.481 indicates that the sample size is adequate to support a well-fitting model.

Model 3 demonstrates a perfect fit compared to the baseline, with a CFI of 0.99. The AIC and BIC values (3367.277 and 3401.972) reflect a balanced consideration of model fit and complexity. The RMSEA value of 0.121 suggests satisfactory fit; a low SRMR of 0.019 indicates minimal average discrepancy in correlations. The GFI value of 0.978 highlights improved fit compared to a null model, though not as high as Models 1 and 2. The CN_05 value of 259.726 signifies a sample size that is ample for supporting a well-fitting model.

Discussion

The result of the study from first hypothesis went as predicted, collective memory is negatively associated with national identity, the result shows that for every unit increase in negative memories of past events, there are increased chances that a citizen becomes less proud to identify with his nation (superordinate group), similarly the result of the second hypothesis also went in the expected direction, collective memory is positively associated with ethnic identity, the result also shows that for every unit increase in negative memories of past events, there is an increased possibility of being proud to identify with ones 's ethnic group (subordinate group). The result supports the notion that past national narratives possess the potency of keeping and maintaining a sense of continuity, and could offer the definition of what it means to be a member of a national group (Pennebaker et al., 1997), thereby guaranteeing the continuity of a nationhood, it also determines how members of a nation identify with their group members across time and space (Liu & Khan, 2014). This result supports the social interaction perspective, which stresses the identity-shaping function of a collective identity (see Coman, 2012). According to social interaction theorists, during conversations, in-group members talk to themselves about historical events of

concern. (Miller 1994; Mehl & Pennebaker 2003), These conversations could form the basis for the transmission of a memory across an ethnic group, or even a national group. (Fentress and Wickham 1992; Wertsch, 2002). The nature of such past events, whether positive or negative, can therefore determine whether the people will identify more with the subgroup, i.e, ethnic group, or the superordinate group, i.e., national group.

The result of the third hypothesis tested shows that victim belief is a predictor of collective action intention. This implies that people who perceived their relatives to have suffered from the government's actions are likely to initiate a collective action against the authorities for justice. This is in agreement with the view that collective memories of a national past can provide the basis for making meanings to present-day events and impact members' perception towards the states as well as their motivation for mass action (Branscombe, 2004; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). There are similar studies that demonstrated that collective victim belief can influence individuals' emotions and beliefs as well as actions, even when the events were not personally experienced, and even when they took place many decades or centuries in the past (Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Volkan, 2001). However, if that set of people has a positive collective memory, their chances of supporting collective action fall. This also confirms what is found in collective action literature, which posits the mobilizing role of victimhood as the initial starting point of collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2012). The result of the fourth hypothesis indicates that the preference for use of media influences the formation of collective memories, with traditional media having a lesser impact compared to digital media. This may be due to the fact that people who rely on traditional media are people with poorer means, older in age, or are less educated (Chan, 2015; Lee & Chan, 2016) than those who use digital media.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Directions

The lack of a clear definition of collective memory in literature makes studying the subject problematic. Besides, collective memory researchers also face challenges such as the difficulty of measuring collective memory and its effects on behavior and attitudes. This was a significant challenge for this present study and various related past studies. This weakness in existing measures in the literature could have accounted for the inability of this study to measure positive memories as effectively as it wanted.

Moreover, in reviewing available findings on victim beliefs, there was no unified terminology in this emerging area of research. Scholars have used different terms such as "siege mentality" (Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992a, 1992b), "dangerous beliefs" (Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003; Maoz & Eidelson, 2007), "competitive victimhood" (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, et al., 2008; Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008), "totalized victimization" (Lifton, 2003), "perpetual ingroup victimhood orientation" (Schori et al., 2009), and "inclusive/ exclusive victim consciousness" (Vollhardt, 2009a, 2010) among others to refer to different (yet somewhat overlapping) aspects of victim beliefs. These various meanings impact the measure and make an objective study problematic. Future studies should therefore consider developing a standardized measure of collective memory that would be more acceptable to all. Moreover, scholars need to build a consensus on what collective belief should mean to reduce the amount of confusion noticeable in the area of study.

Conclusion

People in authority can assuage the negative feelings aroused by negative collective memories by engaging in policies and actions that engender justice and fairness. This will ensure that generations to come have fewer unpleasant memories emanating from the actions of people in government.

References

Adonis, C. (2018). Generational victimhood in post-apartheid South Africa: Perspectives of Descendants of victims of apartheid-era gross human rights violations. International Review of Victimology, 24(1), 47–65. https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758017732175

Aho, K. L.-T. (2014). The healing is in the pain: Revisiting and re-narrating trauma histories as a starting point for healing. *Psychology and Developing Societies, 26*(2), 181–212. https://doi.org/10.1177/ 0971333614549139

Asekun, W.A. (2018). Structure versus Process: Exploring the Link between Distributive and

Procedural Justice Beliefs and National Identification among the Peoples of Southern and Northern Nigeria *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences. 9,* (5) 139-146 Doi: 10.2478/mjss-2018-014

Asekun, W.A. (2020). An examination of the relatedness of acculturation strategies and perceived self-efficacy of immigrants in a multicultural city. Gender & Behaviour18 (2) J 15663 -15669

Asekun, W.A. (2022). Remote acculturation among remotely acculturating non-migrant youths *Discover Psychology 2.* 37 www.lin.springer.co/article/10

Bar-Tal, D., & Antebi, D. (1992b). Siege mentality in Israel. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 16*, 251–275.

Bar-Tal, D., L. Chernyak-Hai, N. Schori, and A. Gundar .(2009). A Sense of Self-Perceived Collective Victimhood in Bar-Tal, Intractable Conflicts. *International Review of the Red Cross 91* (874): 229–258. doi:10.1017/S1816383109990221.

Bar-Tal &D., & Antebi, D. (1992). Beliefs about harmful intentions of the world: A study Of the Israeli siege mentality. *Political Psychology, 13*, 633–645.

Belmonte, A, & Rochlitz, M, (2017). Collective memories, propaganda, and authoritarian Political support. *Economic Systems 44*(3), 100771.

Bilven, B., Nyúl, B., & Kende, A. (2022). Exclusive victimhood, higher ethnic, and lower National identities predict less support for reconciliation among native and Chinese Indonesians through mutual prejudice—International *Journal of Intercultural Relations*.

Branscombe, N. R., & Miron, A. M. (2004). Interpreting the ingroup's negative actions Toward another group: *Emotional reactions to appraised harm*. In L. Z. Tiedens & C. W. Leach (Eds.), The social life of emotions: Studies in emotion and social interaction (pp. 314-335). Cambridge University Press.

Chan, M. (2016). Examining the influences of news use patterns, motivations, and age cohort on mobile news use: The case of Hong Kong. *Mobile Media & Communication, 3*(2), 179–195. doi:10.1177/ 205015791455066

Coman, A., and Hirst, W. (2012). Cognition through a social network: the propagation of Induced forgetting and practice effects. *Journal of Experimental Psychology General.* 141, 321–336.

Coman A, Stone C. B, Castano E. (2014) Justifying atrocities: The effect of moral-Disengagement strategies on socially shared retrieval-induced forgetting. *Psychological Science 25*(6): 1281–1285.

Eisinga, R., Grotenhuis, M., & Pelzer, B. (2013). The reliability of a two-item scale: Pearson, Cronbach, or Spearman-Brown? International Journal of Public Health, 58(4), 637–642. DOI: https://doi. org/10.1007/s00038-012-0416-3

Fentress, J., & Wickham, C. (1992). *Social memory*. Blackwell 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

Hilton, D. J., & Liu, J. H. (2017). History as the narrative of a people: From function to Structure and content. *Memory Studies, 10*(3), 297–309. doi:10.1177/1750698017701612

Hirst, W., & Manier, D. (2008). Towards a psychology of collective Memory. *Memory*, **16**(3), 183– 200. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658210701811912

Hirst W, Phelps E. A, Buckner R. L, Budson AE, Cuc A, Gabrieli JD, . . . Meksin R. (2009). Long-term memory for the terrorist attack of September 11: Flashbulb memories, event memories, and the factors that influence their retention. Journal of *Experimental Psychology: General,138*: 161-176.

Hirst, W., and Echterhoff, G. (2012). Remembering in conversations: the social sharing

And the reshaping of memories. *Annual. Review in Psychology*. 63, 55–79

Hirst, W., & Manier, D. (2002). *The diverse forms of collective memory*. In G. Echterhoff & M. Saar (Eds.), Kontexte und Kulturen des Erinnerns: Maurice Halbwachs und das

Jasini, A. (2017). Collective Victimhood and Ingroup Identity Jointly Shape Intergroup Relations, Even in a Non-violent Conflict: The Case of the Belgians Psychologica Belgica, 57(3), pp. 98–114, DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/pb.334

Jeong, I & Vollhardt, J.R (2021). Different collective memories of Japanese colonization In Korea: Consequences for distinct preferences for strategies to deal with the past. PsychArchives. https://doi.org/10.23668/

Kanyangara, P., Rime, B., Philippot, P., & Yzerbyt, V. (2007). Collective rituals, Emotional climate and intergroup perception: Participation in "Gacaca" tribunals and assimilation of the Rwandan genocide. *Journal of Social Issues, 63*, 387–403. https://doi.org/10. 1111/j.1540-4560.2007. 00515.x

Kim, J., Kang, C., Lee, E., & Friedhoff, K. (2014). Two perspectives towards Japan: Koreans' perception of Japan-Korea relations and its implications. The Asian Institute for Policy Studies.

Lickel, B., Miller, N., Stenstrom, D. M., Denson, T. F., & Schmader, T. (2006). Vicarious Retribution: The role of collective blame in intergroup aggression. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 10,* 372–390

Lifton, R. (2003). Superpower syndrome: America's apocalyptic confrontation with the world. New York: Nation Books

Leach, C. W., Iyer, A., & Pedersen, A. (2007). Angry opposition to government redress: When the structurally advantaged perceive themselves as relatively deprived. British Journal of Social Psychology, 46(1), 191–204. https://doi.org/10.1348/014466606×99360

Lee, F. L. F., & Chan, J. M. (2016). Digital media activities and modes of participation in a Protest campaign: A study of the Umbrella Movement. Information, *Communication & Society, 19*(1), 4–22. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2015.1093530

Li, HL, and Natalia M Maer D. (2021). Relationship of living historical memories and news source with national identity: A latent class analysis. Asian Journal of Social Psychology (2021), 24, 364–377 DOI: 10.1111/ajsp.12441

Liu, J.H. (2022). *Collective remembering and making of the political past*. Cambridge Press

Liu, J. H., Zeineddine, F. B., Choi, S. Y., Zhang, R. J., Vilar, R., & Paez, D. (2020). Living historical memory: Associations with national identity, social dominance orientation, and system justification in 40 countries. *Journal of Research on Memory and Cognition.*

Liu, J. H. (2013). Narratives and social memory from the perspective of social representations of history. In R. Cabecinhas & L. Abadia (Eds.), Narratives and social .0memory: Theoretical and methodological approaches (pp. 11–24). University of Minho

Liu, J. H., & Khan, S. S. (2014). Nation building through historical narratives in pre-independence India: Gandhi, Nehru, Savarkar, and Golwalkar as entrepreneurs of India. In M. Hanne, W. D. Cranno, & J. S. Mio (Eds.), *Warring with words: Narrative and metaphor in domestic and international policies* (pp. 211-237). Psychology Press.

Marger, M., N. (2000). Race and ethnic relations: American and global perspectives. Stamford: Wadsworth Thomson Learning

Mamdani, M. (2001). *When victims become killers. Princeton*, Princeton University Press

Macdonald, D. B. (2003). Balkan Holocausts? Serbian and Croatian victim centered propaganda and the war in Yugoslavia. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

Mehl, M. R., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2003). The social dynamics of a cultural upheaval: Social interactions surrounding September 11, 2001. *Psychological Science, 14*, 579–585.

Miller, P. J. (1994). Narrative practices: Their role in socialization and self-construction. In U. Neisser & R. Fivush (Eds.), The remembering self: Construction and accuracy in the self-narrative (pp. 158–179). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moane, G., & Campling, J. (1999). Gender and colonialism: A psychological analysis of oppression and liberation (p. 47). London: Macmillan

Muller F, Bermejo F and Hirst W (2016) Argentines' collective memories of the military Junta of 1976: Differences and similarities across generations and ideology. *Memory* 24(7): 990–1006. M

Mullaly, R. P. (2002). Challenging oppression: A critical social work approach. Oxford University Press

Noor, M., Brown, R. J., & Prentice, G. (2008). Precursors and mediators of intergroup reconciliation in Northern Ireland: A new model. British Journal of Social Psychology, 47, 481–495

Noor, M., N. Shnabel, S. Halabi, and A. Nadler. (2012). When Suffering Begets Suffering: The Psychology of Competitive Victimhood between Adversarial Groups in Violent Conflicts. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 16 (4): 351–374. doi:10.1177/ 1088868312440048.

Nora, P. (1996). Realms of memory: Volume I. Conflicts and divisions. Columbia University Press.

Nora P (1978) Mémoire collective. In Goff JL, Charlier R and Revel J (eds), La Nouvelle Histoire. Paris: C.E.P.L., 398–401.

Nora P (1984) Les Lieux de Mémoire, I, La République. Paris: Gallimard, XIX

Olick, J. K. (1999). Collective memory: The two cultures. *Sociological Theory*, 7, 333348

Olick, J. K., Vinitzky-Seroussi, V., & Levy, D. (2011). *The collective memory reader*. Oxford University Press

Organista, P. B., Marín, G., & Chun, K. M. (2010). The psychology of ethnic groups in the United States. SAGE Publications, Inc,. https://doi.org/10.4135/ 9781452274645

Postmes, T., Haslam, S. A., & Jans, L. (2013). A single-item measure of social identification: Reliability, validity, and utility. British Journal of Social Psychology, 52, 597–617. doi:10.1111/bjso.12006

Páez D and Liu J (2010) Collective memory of conflicts. In: Bar-Tal D (ed.) *Intergroup conflicts and their resolution: Social psychological perspective.* Psychology Press: Frontiers of Social Psychology Series, pp. 105–124

Pennebaker, J. W., & Banasik, B. L. (1997). On the creation and maintenance of collective memories: History as social psychology. In J. W. Pennebaker, D. Páez, & B. Rime (Eds.), *Collective memory of political events: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 3-19): Lawrence Erlbaum.

Pettigrew, T. F. (2003). Peoples under threat: Americans, Arabs, and Israelis. Peace and Conflict: *Journal of Peace Psychology, 9,* 69–90.

Reicher, S. D., & Hopkins, N. (2001). *Self and nation: Categorization, contestation and mobilization*. Sage.

Robins, N. A. & Jones, A. (Eds.). (2009). *Genocides by the oppressed: Subaltern genocide in theory and practice.* Indiana University Press.

Rosseel, Y. (2012). lavaan: An R package for structural equation modelling. *Journal of Statistical Software, 48*(2), 1–36.

Schonbrodt, F.D., & Perugini, M. (2013). At what sample size do correlations stabilize? *Journal of Research in Personality, 47*(5), 609–612. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2013.05.009

Sidanius, J. (1993). 7. The Psychology of group conflict and the dynamics of oppression: A social

dominance perspective. Explorations in Political Psychology (pp. 183–220). Duke University Press

Smelser, N. (2004). September 11, 2001, as cultural trauma. In J. A. Alexander, R. Eyerman, B. Giesen., N. J. Smelser, & P. Sztompka (Eds.), *Cultural trauma and collective identity (*pp. 264–282). Berkeley: University of California Press

Sperber, D. (1996). *Explaining culture: A naturalistic approach*: Blackwell.

Stone, C. B., Barnier, A. J., & Hirst, W. (2010). Building consensus about the past: schema-consistency and convergence in socially-shard retrieval-induced forgetting. *Memory 18,* 170–184

Stone C.B, Luminet O, Jay AC, et al. (2020) Do public speeches induce "collective" forgetting? The Belgian King's 2012 summer speech as a case study. Memory Studies. Epub ahead of print 23 January 2020. DOI: 10.1177/1750698019900949.

Stone, B.C & Jay, A. C. (2019). From the individual to the collective: The emergence of a psychological approach to collective memory *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 33:504–515.

Stone, C. B., Barnier, A. J., Sutton, J., & Hirst, W. (2010). Building consensus about the past: Schema consistency and convergence in socially shared retrieval-induced forgetting. *Memory*, 18(2), 170– 184. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658210903159003

Suedfeld, P. (1999). Toward a taxonomy of ethnopolitical violence: Is collective killing by any other name still the same? Peace and Conflict: *Journal of Peace Psychology, 5*, 349–355.

Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information*, 13(2), 65–93. doi:10.1177/053901847401 300204

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. In S. Worchel & W. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–48). Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall. doi:10.4135/9781483346274.n163

Van Zomeren, M., Postmes, T., & Spears, R. (2012). On conviction's collective consequences: Integrating moral conviction with the social identity model of collective action. British Journal of Social Psychology, 51(1), 52–71. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.2010.02000.x

van Zomeren, M., Leach, C. W., & Spears, R. (2012). Protesters as "passionate economists": A dynamic dual pathway model of approach coping with collective disadvantage. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 16*(2), 180–199. https://doi.org/10.1177/ 1088868311430835

Vermunt, J. K., & Magidson, J. (2004). Latent class analysis. In M. S. Lewis-Beck A. Bryman & T. F. Liao (Eds.). The Sage encyclopaedia of social sciences research methods (2nd ed., pp. 549–553). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Vollhardt, J. R. (2009a). Th e role of victim beliefs in the IsraeliPalestinian confl ict: Risk or potential for peace? Peace and Confl ict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 15, 135–159.

Vollhardt, J., & Nair, R. (2018). The two- sided nature of individual and intragroup experiences in the aftermath of collective victimization: Findings from four diaspora groups. European Journal of Social Psychology, 48(4), 412–432. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2341

Volkan, V. D. (2001). Transgenerational transmissions and chosen traumas: An aspect of large-group identity. Group Analysis, 34, 79–97

Wang Q (2019) The individual mind in the active construction of its digital niche. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition* 8(1): 25–28

Weigler, E. A. (2019). The lives we tell: Sikh identity and collective memories of the Great War in Britain. (Publication No. Weigler_ucsb_0035D_14521), [Doctoral Dissertation, University of California Santa Barbara]. Brrom Center for Demography. University of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA. https://escholarship.org/uc/ite m/40m2321

Wertsch, J. (2002). Voices of collective remembering. Cambridge University Press.

Williams, G. (2008). Dangerous victims: on some political dangers of vicarious claims to victimhood. Distinktion: Scandinavian *Journal of Social Theory, 17*, 77–95.

Zeineddine & Qumseya (2021), The contents, organisation, and functions of living historical memory in Egypt and Morocco. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* (2021), 24, 378–391