Extreme Forms of Ingroup Positivity and their Negative Consequences for Intergroup Relations

Agnieszka Golec de Zavala
and Robert T. Schatz

A quick review of videos posted on YouTube showed us how some young people in London feel compelled to use violence to protect the honour of their ‘endz’ (administrative areas defined by different postcodes e.g. SE1 versus NW1), which can be disrespected by the mere presence of inhabitants of other postcode defined areas (e.g. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjPl7x-FEKw or http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCcVs2KAXKk&feature=related). Also in London, 12-year-old Ben was knifed to death in a fight between two groups of teenagers who identified themselves as ‘Greens’ or ‘Greys’ depending on the colour of the rubbish bins on the council estates where they lived. The fight was arranged to establish the group’s superiority and Ben is remembered by his gang as a ‘fallen soldier’. These examples effectively show how little people need to form an ingroup or ‘social’ identity and become strongly attached to it. Even such arbitrary cues as the colour of rubbish bins in the area can inspire social identity formation. Moreover, this social identity can
generate strong feelings of ingroup loyalty and devotion that are tied to feelings of hostility and aggressiveness towards outgroups. Outgroups are other groups differentiated on the same dimension: a different postcode, colour of rubbish bins, colour of the skin or the colours of a flag. The above examples are not limited to the Greater London area. They illustrate dynamics that on a larger scale can involve ethnic groups or nations. Consider the example of the American Nazi Party (ANP) that preaches pride in American white European heritage and opposes politics securing equal rights of ethnic minorities in the US. In a flyer opposing legalization of Mexican immigrants working in the US the party claims that such immigration (‘unstoppable plague’) ‘destabilizes America’s White/Gringo status as a Euro/Western nation’ (http://anp14.com/support/gifs/mexico2.bmp). The ANP ideological stance emphasizes threat to the desired privileged status of white European-Americans (e.g. see http://whitehonor.com/white-power/what-does-a-national-socialist-believe/). In early decades of the twentieth century the Nazis in Germany believed their group was threatened because their right for better living space and pure blood was not properly appreciated by other nations. This belief legitimized the Second World War aggression and the Holocaust (e.g. Adorno, 1951).

William Sumner, in his seminal book Folkways (1906) observed the commonness of the reciprocal link between love for an ingroup and derogation of outgroups. He wrote ‘[t]he relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards other-groups are correlative to each other’ (p. 12). Sumner coined the term ethnocentrism, which he defined elsewhere as ‘[t]he sentiment of cohesion, internal comradeship and devotion to the in-group, which carries with it a sense of superiority to any out-group and readiness to defend the interests of the in-group against the out-group’ (Sumner, 1911, p. 11). In 1929, commenting on the commonness of human aggressiveness, Sigmund Freud repeated the observation that ingroup love and loyalty are bound to outgroup hostility: ‘It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness’ (Freud, 1961, p. 114).

Empirical studies in social psychology confirm that the conditions that lead people to discriminate in favour of their ingroup and against an outgroup can be quite minimal. The influential social identity theory proposes that ingroup preference is formed very fast, with little external support but with profound consequences for intergroup relations (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The famous minimal group paradigm experiments used most petty and arbitrary reasons to divide people into ingroups and outgroups. Perhaps the most trivial was a flip of the coin (note the arbitrariness and pettiness similar to the colour of rubbish bins or postcodes) (Tajfel, 1970, 1978; Tajfel et al., 1971). Regardless of the importance of the reasons for the
group differentiation, participants generally distributed attractive goods in a way that not only favoured their own (minimal) ingroup but also maximized the positive difference between ingroup and outgroup. This means that people would forego the maximum reward for their ingroup in order to increase the difference between the profits of the ingroup and the outgroup (see also Cohrs & Kessler, this volume).

One of the conclusions derived from social identity theory has been that the strength of positive ingroup feelings should be positively related to outgroup discrimination: the more people love their group, the more they should hate other groups. If ingroup favouritism (and, to some extent, outgroup derogation) can be observed for minimal groups, one would expect that more important and realistic social groups would evoke stronger positive ingroup feelings and elicit negative feelings towards realistic outgroups. However, reviews and meta-analyses of studies investigating the link between positive ingroup identification and outgroup hostility do not support this expectation. The average relationship between the strength of ingroup identification or ingroup positivity and outgroup derogation is close to zero (e.g. Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Jackson, Brown, Brown & Marks, 2001; Pehrsorn, Vignoles, & Brown, 2009; for discussions why see e.g. Brewer, 1999; Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Mummendey et al., 1992). Even before the empirical research shed doubt on the relationship between ingroup positivity and outgroup negativity, some researchers argued that this link does not have to be strong or compulsory (Allport, 1954; Levine & Campbell, 1972). In other words, there seems to be no systematic or necessary link between ingroup love and outgroup hate.

In this chapter we look at literature that differentiates between forms of ingroup love that have more and less destructive consequences for intergroup relations and outgroup attitudes. We review existing research findings inspired by social identity theory and attempt to integrate them with political psychology research that focuses on national identity and feelings. We also discuss the possibility that constructive aspects of ingroup positivity can create bases for positive intergroup relations, which has been largely neglected in psychological research. Our review of the literature highlights the contribution of recent work on ‘collective narcissism’, an extension of the concept of individual narcissism to the intergroup domain.

**When does ingroup love lead to outgroup hate?**

**Conditions of outgroup hate**

Marilynn Brewer (1999) in her review entitled *The Psychology of Prejudice: Ingroup Love or Out-group Hate?* argues that ingroup favouritism
(a tendency to favour ingroup over outgroups) is much more common than outgroup derogation and is not a necessary precursor of outgroup hate. However, she proposes that the conditions that make ingroup loyalty and attachment important to people can also facilitate outgroup hostility. In other words, conditions that increase ingroup love are often the same conditions that inspire and escalate outgroup hate. They include: (1) situations of perceived intergroup threat; (2) competition over vital resources or power; (3) intergroup conflict and distrust; (4) perceived irreconcilable differences in worldviews, values and moral codes (see Stephan, this volume, for more details). Although some of these conditions are clearly situational, others may be a matter of perception and interpretation of social situations. In fact, some researchers have suggested that the way intergroup situations are perceived (as competitive versus cooperative; threatening versus peaceful etc.) and the intensity of perceived intergroup threat may be embedded in the very definition of one's social identity.

**Different types of social identity**

Jackson and Smith (1999) explain the inconsistencies in the literature on the relationship between positive affect towards an ingroup and outgroup hate by emphasizing differences in people's definitions of social identity. Social identity has been defined as: 'the part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that group membership' (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). Jackson and Smith (1999) differentiate between secure and insecure definitions of social identity. The differences between these two types of social identity have important consequences for attitudes towards outgroups.

**Insecure social identity** is a combination of positive ingroup affect, perceived common fate with ingroup members (the perception that the well-being of the self and the social group are bound closely together), depersonalization (the perception of self as an interchangeable member of the social group rather than a unique individual), and perception of a competitive intergroup context. Secure social identity assumes that positive ingroup affect is accompanied by low perceived common fate, low depersonalization and low perceived intergroup competition. Thus, people can feel strong affective ties with their groups but they may understand their place in the group and the place of their group in the intergroup context quite differently. These perceptions are inherent parts of their social identity, tied to feelings of attachment and positive evaluation of an ingroup. They affect the relationship between ingroup positivity and outgroup negativity. When one controls for the fact that these forms of social
While more common are the cases of outgroup derogation, in which intergroup loyalty exceeds ingroup hostility. In both cases, the same social identity is involved: (1) situations in which resources or benefits can be reconciled differentially. In this volume, a cognizant observer situational, group situations, group situations versus contextual situations, can be embedded this section.

This section will examine the literature on (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998), and outgroup derogation, and social identity. Social identity is a self-concept that a member of a social group (or multiple groups) is attached to (Smith, 1999) and serves as a social identity. This section is important because of its possible affect, perceptions, and decisions that the group might make together), and the self-concept of a member of the group (or perception of the group) on aspects that possibly determine fate, low (or high) ingroup favor, and/or people from other groups. Understanding the different aspects of intergroup relations in terms of their interests (or perceptions of an ingroup member who ingroup and outgroup affiliations of social identity overlap (because of ingroup positivity inherent in both), only the insecure social identity is related to outgroup derogation, whereas the secure social identity predicts less intergroup bias and sometimes predicts outgroup positivity. In the next section we discuss how recent research in psychology of intergroup relations has been inspired by findings of individual psychology that differentiate between secure versus insecure self-love or self-esteem.

Collective narcissism

In general, positive self-esteem, a realistic pride people take in their strengths (e.g. Kernis, 2005), is related to psychological well-being and happiness (e.g. DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Diener & Diener, 1995). However, high self-esteem has its ‘dark side’: narcissism, an inflated view of oneself that requires continual external validation (e.g. Baumeister et al., 2003; Crocker & Park, 2004; Emmons, 1987; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Rhodewalt & Sorrow, 2003). Narcissistic self-esteem is unstable and insecure because it is contingent on continuous admiration by others (e.g. Jordan et al., 2003; Kernis, 2005; Kernis & Waschull, 1995). Narcissists protect their self-image by punishing those who question or threaten their high self-opinion. They respond with anger, interpersonal aggression and hostility to what they perceive as ego threats (Baumeister, Bushman & Campbell, 2000; Baumeister, Smart and Boden, 1996; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Raskin, Novacek & Hogan, 1991; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995).

Recent studies indicate that people also can be narcissistic about groups to which they belong (see e.g. Emmons, 1987). Collective narcissism is defined as ‘an in-group identification tied to an emotional investment in an unrealistic belief about the unparalleled greatness of an in-group’ (Golec de Zavalá et al., 2009, p. 1074). Collective narcissism has been examined with reference to various national groups, ethnic groups, a terrorist group (Tamil Tigers), various groups of college peers, and ideological organizations such as political party, feminist movement or religious group (Cichocka & Golec de Zavalá, 2010; Golec de Zavalá, Cichocka & Bilewicz, in press; Golec de Zavalá et al., 2009; Kruglanski, Orehek, Belanger & Sasota, 2010).

Collective narcissism is contingent on external recognition of the ingroup and involves hypersensitivity to threats to the ingroup’s image. It is related to a high regard for an ingroup and a belief that others do not appreciate the ingroup sufficiently. Collective narcissism is also highest among people who explicitly assert high regard for their ingroup but on an implicit level (automatic and most likely beyond cognitive control) they do not prefer this group over other groups. Collective narcissism predisposes
group members towards outgroup negativity, especially towards outgroups perceived as threatening.

Collective narcissism is related to inability to forget or forgive any wrongdoings against the ingroup (Golec de Zavalà, et al., 2009). Collective narcissists exaggerate and remember even minor outgroup transgressions against the ingroup. Thus, they are likely to see outgroups with which they shared a relationship for some time as threatening. Collective narcissists negatively stereotype such outgroups, report negative feelings towards them, and attribute them with hostile intentions towards the ingroup (Golec de Zavala & Cichocka, 2011). Collective narcissism augments intergroup hostility in response to ingroup image threat such as ingroup criticism (Golec de Zavalà & Cichocka, 2012).

Paradoxically, understanding of the mechanism driving the link between narcissistic ingroup love and outgroup hostility sheds new light on the capacity of positive ingroup feelings to inspire positive feelings towards outgroups. Studies show that when the narcissistic aspects of positive ingroup identification are excluded from the analysis, what is left, the non-narcissistic ingroup positivity, predicts less negative attitudes towards outgroups (Golec de Zavala. Cichocka & Bilewicz, in press). Thus, understanding the mechanisms of collective narcissistic hostility can expand our understanding of the conditions under which ingroup positivity may be dissociated from narcissistic pride and potentially related to outgroup positivity.

In particular, recent studies show that applying the concept of collective narcissism to the context of national identification and national feelings helps to understand why some forms of national attachment are associated with various expressions of outgroup negativity. In the next section, we discuss the literature that analyzes different forms of national attachment and how they relate to outgroup hostility. This work was developed within political psychology research but it can be linked to findings of social psychology regarding different forms of ingroup positivity. At the end of this section we attempt to integrate the relevant research findings of these two literatures.

**Forms of national attachment: are all patriots bigots?**

Nations are a potent source of group identity and emotional attachment. Like other groups, nations exist within an intergroup context. As the context in this case is the international world, the relationship between ingroup love and outgroup hostility is of particular concern. Yet as with other forms of social identity, positive national identification does not consist in a simple and automatic production of positive attitudes, but in a complex mechanism of identification that is the result of various factors. Klink & Bischof (2004) provide a useful model for understanding the relationship between nationalism and outgroup hostility, focusing on how national sentiment and patriotism can be expressed in a constructive or destructive way.

The existing literature suggests that modes of attachment to the national entity can vary, and that different aspects of patriotism can lead to positive or negative attitudes. For example, attachment to national symbols or institutions can be positive, whereas attachment to outgroup member's characteristics can be negative (Kostermans, 2004). This variability may be influenced by factors such as cultural and political context, which can shape the ways in which national identity is expressed.

As mentioned earlier, the attachment to the ingroup is a critical factor in understanding national identity. However, the relationship between attachment to the ingroup and outgroup negativity is not always straightforward. Sometimes, attachment to the ingroup can lead to outgroup negativity, as seen in the case of collective narcissism. Conversely, attachment to the ingroup can also lead to positive attitudes towards outgroups, as seen in cases of inclusive patriotism.

In conclusion, understanding the mechanisms of national attachment and national self-esteem is crucial for understanding the dynamics of intergroup relations. Future research should focus on the role of national identity in shaping political attitudes and behaviors, and on the development of strategies for fostering constructive forms of nationalism.
towards outgroups (e.g. Mummendey, Klink & Brown, 2001). Reicher and Hopkins (2001) argue that the link between national ingroup identification and outgroup sentiment depends on how national members construe the nation, its interests and the relevant international context.

The extensive research on national identity points to systematic differences in: a) the extent to which intergroup comparison is embedded in national identity; b) the content of national ingroup representations and c) modes of national ingroup attachment. These different forms of national attachment relate to different attitudes towards foreigners, immigrants and ethnic minorities, and to militaristic attitudes. (We include militaristic attitudes because in an international context outgroup negativity is often expressed as the necessity for one's own nation to attack or otherwise impose its military might over other nations).

**Embedded intergroup comparisons: nationalism versus patriotism**

As mentioned earlier, social identity theory proposes that group members seek to compare their ingroup to others in a way that favours the ingroup (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Further, positive ingroup identification should be more likely to predict outgroup negativity when it is focused on ingroup versus outgroup differentiation that favours the ingroup (Hinkle & Brown, 1990). This idea underlies the distinction made in the national identity literature between patriotism and nationalism.

Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) define patriotism as ‘degree of attachment to the nation’ (p. 261) commonly expressed as sentiments of love, devotion and pride. They distinguish this construct from nationalism, which they define as ‘a perception of national superiority and an orientation towards national dominance’ (p. 261). Patriotism then is a form of ingroup identification that focuses on positive feelings towards one's nation. Nationalism, on the other hand is a form of intergroup discrimination that focuses on the boundaries between ingroup and outgroups and on favourable international comparisons.

Scores on measures of patriotism and nationalism correlate positively, suggesting that the constructs overlap in positive attitude towards one's national group. However, research conducted in a variety of countries finds that nationalism is the stronger or the sole predictor of outgroup negativity. For example, studies in Canada and the United States show that nationalism, but not patriotism, predicts anti-immigrant attitudes (de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Esses et al., 2005). Studies also find that nationalism predicts ethnic prejudice among whites in the US (Sidanius et al., 1997; Sidanius & Petrocik, 2001), whereas patriotism and prejudice are related less strongly
or not at all. An experiment conducted by Mummendy, Klink and Brown (2001) provides direct support for the contention that the intergroup comparison embedded in nationalism elicits negative attitudes towards outgroups. British and German participants generated positive evaluations of their nation either in comparison to other nations or with no comparative reference. They then completed measures of national identification, national evaluation and attitudes towards foreigners. Across four different studies, the national identification and national evaluation scores predicted more negative attitudes towards foreigners for participants primed with the intergroup comparison.

In addition to negative outgroup attitudes, nationalism is linked to an aggressive and controlling international stance. Nationalism predicts support for using military force to implement foreign policy goals (Bliss, Oh & Williams, 2007; McCleary & Willigms, 2009). Such attitudes were expressed, for example, by US support for nuclear arms in the ‘Cold War’ with the Soviet Union (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). Later, after 9/11 when international terrorism became the largest threat, militaristic attitudes were expressed in support for the war in Iraq (Federico, Golec & Dial, 2005; Golec et al., 2004 and military aggression against other countries perceived to support terrorism (Crowson, 2009). Nationalism also predicts higher social dominance orientation scores (Kemmelmeir & Winter, 2008; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanuis et al., 1997), indicating general support for group-based hierarchy and intergroup dominance. Some studies have found that patriotism also predicts militaristic attitudes (Bliss, Oh & Williams, 2007; Golec et al., 2004 Study 2; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989) and social dominance orientation (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanuis et al., 1997), however, the relationships are weaker than those found for nationalism.

These findings clearly suggest that nationalism is the stronger and more reliable predictor of negative and aggressive attitudes towards outgroups. However, it is not entirely clear what the distinction between patriotic and nationalistic ingroup love really means. Nationalism, byits very definition, is a form of ethnocentrism. Although nationalism items are said to measure a form of positive national ingroup identification, they actually seem to tap favourable intergroup comparisons (e.g. ‘Other countries should try to make their governments as much like ours as possible’). Other items on Kosterman and Feshbach’s (1989) nationalism measure, such as ‘In view of [my country’s] moral and material superiority, it is only right that we have the biggest say in deciding United Nations policy’ and ‘The important thing for the [country’s] foreign aid program is to see to it that [the country] gains a political advantage’, also assess support for intergroup dominance. Thus, it is not surprising and not particularly enlightening to
find out that feelings of national ingroup superiority and support for domination of outgroups are associated with outgroup derogation and hostility. Patriotism on the other hand taps the attachment to one's national group without making direct assumptions as to how it relates to attitudes towards other groups (e.g. 'I love my country', 'I feel great pride in the land that is our [country?]') Only when intergroup discrimination is not inherently embedded in the ingroup construct itself can we begin to understand the aspects of national attachment that may inspire outgroup negativity.

Another problem with the patriotism-nationalism distinction is that it can be construed to suggest that only nationalism is potentially destructive (see e.g. Feshbach, 1994; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). Compared with nationalism, patriotism appears relatively innocuous, even benign. Perhaps, then, there is no reason to be concerned about patriotism. However, as Billig (1995) and others have pointed out, this conclusion is misleading. For one thing, patriotism and nationalism correlate positively. For another, when significant relationships between patriotism and outgroup attitudes are found, patriotism, like nationalism, predicts more hostile and aggressive attitudes (albeit less strongly). Empirically then, patriotism and nationalism appear more similar than dissimilar; they differ in degree rather than in kind. It would therefore be a mistake to presume that the relationship between national ingroup attachment and outgroup negativity is unworthy of scrutiny. Rather, we should scrutinize more closely the aspects of national attachment that predict people's attitudes towards outgroups. As we will see below, these aspects are expressed in both the content and the manner of national attachment.

Different content of national identity: ethnic and civic representations

One way of approaching the relationship between national feelings and outgroup attitudes is by looking at the psychological content of national identification. This approach assumes that what people think is most important and defining about their group can determine how they perceive and feel towards outgroups. Research on national identity representations focuses on the distinction between 'ethnic' and 'civic' national identity first introduced by the influential nationalism scholar Anthony Smith (1991). According to Smith, ethnic identity is based in '[g]enealogy and presumed descent ties, popular mobilization, vernacular languages, customs and traditions' (p.12); it emphasizes 'historical and symbolic-cultural attributes… myths of descent and historical memories… [and] cultural differences like religion, customs, language or institutions' (p. 20). Smith characterizes civic identity as based in '[h]istoric territory, legal-political
community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and ideology’ (p. 12). This conception of national identity emphasizes the rights and obligations of citizenship commitment to shared national institutions, and civic participation in the life of a country (e.g. voting).

Research examining the impact of these definitions of national identity on outgroup attitudes reveals that ethnic national identity consistently predicts anti-immigrant attitudes. This relationship has been found in studies conducted in England (Pehrson, Brown \& Zagefka, 2009), Canada (Esses et al., 2005), Australia (Jones, 1997), Belgium (e.g. Meeus et al., 2010), and in several multinational surveys conducted in more than 30 countries (e.g. Ceobanu \& Escandell, 2008; Kunovich, 2009; Pehrson, Vignoles \& Brown, 2009; Sides \& Citrin, 2007; see Hamilton, Mediano, \& Esses, this volume, for more details). Ethnic national identity also has been found to predict prejudice against Aboriginal families living in Australia (Jones, 1997). These relationships were obtained for measures that emphasize different aspects of ethnic national identity, including being born and living most of one’s life in the country (e.g. Hjerm, 1998), common ancestry (e.g. Pehrson, Vignoles, \& Brown, 2009), common language (e.g. Citrin et al., 1994), and more general concern for shared customs and traditions (e.g. Sides \& Citrin, 2007).

Civic national identity scores did not predict negative outgroup attitudes in any of these studies. In fact, two multinational surveys found that civic identity, measured as the importance of national citizenship (Pehrson, Vignoles, \& Brown, 2009) and as pride in the nation’s democratic, economic and social security institutions (Ceobanu \& Escandell, 2008), predicted more positive attitudes towards immigrants. Studies conducted in Germany (Wagner et al., in press) and in Switzerland (Green et al., 2011) also found that pride in national democratic and social welfare systems (labelled as ‘patriotism’) predicted more positive attitudes towards immigrants.

Pehrson, Brown, and Zagefka (2009) claim that ethnic identity, conceived as blood ties and ancestry, is a particular case of essentialism. National essentialism is based on the belief that the nation possesses a distinct and immutable core underlying nature. This definition emphasizes group boundaries and necessarily excludes outgroups that do not share this nature (e.g. are not of the same blood). Moreover, these groups are perceived as threats to the ingroup’s nature. Zagefka et al. (2009) found that Russian and German participants’ beliefs in national essentialism predicted greater perceived threat to national identity and distinctiveness. This threat also mediated the negative effect of essentialism on feelings of collective guilt for national atrocities perpetrated against Latvians during the Soviet occupation and against Jews during the Holocaust. Empirical
support for the link between essentialist representations of national identity and outgroup exclusion comes also from a study conducted by Li and Brewer (2004) that compared the effects of priming US participants’ ‘core essence’ as Americans or ‘common goal’ to fight terrorism and help victims in the wake of 9/11. The ‘core essence’ prime generated a stronger positive correlation between patriotism and nationalism and produced significant negative correlations between patriotism and closeness to blacks and Asians.

Another essentialist aspect of ethnic national identity that helps to explain its relationship with outgroup prejudice is its emphasis on national symbolism. National symbols (such as flags) and symbolic displays of allegiance (such as national anthems) communicate attachment to the nation’s core characteristics, values and principles. They make ingroup membership and us-them boundaries highly salient (Billig, 1995; Verkuyten, 1995). Importantly, symbols are affectively charged. They appeal to emotional bonds with the ingroup and inspire potent displays of common allegiance (e.g. Connor, 1993; Durkheim, 1915/1957; Firth, 1989). Empirical studies show that symbolic representations of national identity are correlated with inflexible group loyalty, support for national dominance and rejection of outgroups. Emotional investment in national symbolism predicts staunch, uncritical allegiance to the nation and militaristic attitudes (DeLamater, Katz & Kelman, 1969; Kelman & Hamilton, 1989; Sullivan, Fried & Dietz, 1992). A multinational survey of 16 European countries showed that support for national currency (a salient symbol of national identity during EU integration) predicted nationalism (Müller-Peters, 1998). A US study also showed that support for national symbols predicted nationalistic attitudes, including the belief that the United States should risk war to maintain world power (Schatz & Lavine, 2007). In addition, an investigation of responses to the 9/11 attacks found that more extensive flag display correlated with negative feelings towards new immigrants and Middle Easterners (Skitka, 2005).

Experimental research also suggests that increased salience of national symbols elicits outgroup hostility (see Becker et al., in press; Butz, Plant & Doerr, 2007 for exceptions). Studies conducted in the US show that exposure to national symbols such as a national flag increased participants’ nationalism and group dominance tendency (Kemmelmeier & Winter, 2008) and support for the Iraq war (Hassin & Ferguson, 2005, as cited in Butz, 2009). Another study found that participants covertly primed with the American flag were significantly more likely to complete word fragments with aggressive words including ‘war’ (Ferguson & Hassin, 2007). A recent German study found that exposure to the national flag increased anti-immigrant prejudice among highly nationalistic participants (Becker
et al., in press). Even exposure to a national flag on a subliminal level (below the level of conscious awareness) increased implicit prejudice towards blacks in the United States and towards Palestinians in Israel (Hassin et al., 2009). These effects suggest that national symbols activate a representation of the national group that excludes minority subgroups within the nation (US blacks and Israeli Palestinians) as well as non-nationals. Devos and Banaji’s (2005) finding that American symbols are associated more quickly with white faces than with black or Asian faces supports this contention.

Why does civic national identity not predict negative attitudes and sometimes predict more positive attitudes towards outgroups? For one, nationality is based on legal citizenship instead of common ancestry and heritage. As the nation is not defined by ethnic homogeneity and distinctiveness, group boundaries are less exclusionary. For another, civic identity representations cast the nation in terms of shared social, political and economic institutions. Because these institutions generate both tangible benefits (e.g. social services, legal rights and protections) and feelings of group pride, national citizens are mutually committed to their well-being. This commitment motivates rational and critical appraisal of the nation’s institutional functionality rather than emotional and chauvinistic endorsement of the nation’s underlying essence (Rothi, Lyons & Chrysssochoou, 2005; Schatz & Lavine, 2007). Civic identity also emphasizes group members’ rights and responsibilities to effect change believed to enhance the efficacy of national institutions. In contrast, ethnic national identity guards against change because unchanging historical continuity provides a firm basis for us—them differentiation (Rothi, Lyons & Chrysssochoou, 2005). Thus, ethnic content emphasizes permanent and distinctive characteristics of a national group such as ancestral heritage. Civic identity focuses more on the present well-being of a national group and therefore favours positive change even if it alters the group’s ethnic composition.

Different ways of being patriotic: blind idealization and critical attachment

Also crucial for our understanding of the destructive aspects of ingroup love is a differentiation between ‘blind’ and ‘constructive’ forms of patriotic attachment (Schatz, Staub & Lavine, 1999; Staub, 1997). As explained above, the concept of patriotism focuses on feelings towards a national group rather than the position of the national group within the context of intergroup comparisons. Schatz, Staub & Lavine (1999) define blind patriotism as ‘a rigid and inflexible attachment to country, characterized

by uniqueness. Yet, perhaps the most apparent fact of the American attachment to ‘the homeland’ is its criticism. Critics, who believe change is necessary, argue that this nation is out of touch. The key, however, is that the inherent nature of the American national identity is that it is a nation of immigrants, and therefore, it has to welcome change.

When groups are in contact with common ingroup members, they often experience an increased feeling of involvement with the ingroup. This can lead to increased patriotism and national pride (Oh et al., 2010). Spry & Mace measured ‘national pride’ as the second-highest correlate of patriotism in their study (Spry & Mace, 2005). In Iraq, McFarland (2006) found that in Iraq the national attachment is stronger than the national identity. The correlation between national identity and national attachment is also very high (Spry & Mace, 2005). Other studies have found that nationalism is a belief system adopted by groups to maintain a belief in their superiority over other groups (e.g. Hogg, 1990).
by unquestioning positive evaluation, staunch allegiance, and intolerance of criticism' (p. 153). In contrast, constructive patriotism refers to 'an attachment to country characterized by 'critical loyalty', questioning and criticism of current group practices that are driven by a desire for positive change' (Schatz, Staub & Lavine, 1999, p. 153). Both forms are patriotic in that they are rooted in positive group identification and affective bonds. The key difference is whether ingroup criticism and dissent are rejected as inherently disloyal or embraced as means of group enhancement. Unlike constructive patriotism, blind patriotism rejects the possibility of change and betterment as it threatens an idealized view of the nation.

Whereas blind and constructive patriotism both correlate positively with conventional measures of patriotism (Schatz, Staub & Lavine, 1999) they are only weakly related with each other and the direction of the relationship varies between studies. Only blind patriotism predicts out-group derogation, including negative evaluations of ethnic, religious and national outgroups (Golec de Zavala, Cichocka & Bilewicz, in press; Parker, 2010) and rejection of immigrants (Schwartz, Caprara & Vecchione, 2010; Spry & Hornsey, 2007). Viki and Caliri (2008) found that scores on a measure composed primarily of blind patriotism items (but referred to as 'nationalism') predicted relatively greater attribution of uniquely human secondary emotions to in-group (British) over out-group (American). Blind patriotism also predicts militaristic attitudes (Mc Cleary & Williams, 2009; Oh et al., 2009; Schatz & Staub, 1997; Schatz, Staub & Lavine, 1999; Schwartz, Caprara & Vecchione, 2010), including US support for the war in Iraq (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009; Mc Cleary, Nulls & William, 2009; McFarland, 2005) and in Afghanistan (Sahar, 2008). McFarland (2005) found that the relationship between blind patriotism and support for the Iraq War was mediated by reduced concern for the human cost of the attack. Schatz & Staub (1997) found that blind patriotism was negatively correlated with inclusiveness, or the belief that basic human values transcend group boundaries, and positively correlated with just-world thinking, a belief system that predicts devaluation and derogation of innocent victims (Lerner, 1980), especially members of outgroups (Opotow, 1990). Other findings link blind patriotism with heightened perceptions of threat to national security from foreign nations (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009; McFarland, 2005; Oh et al., 2009; Sahar, 2008; Schatz, Staub & Lavine, 1999; Williams, Foster & Krohn, 2008). Blind patriotism also predicts heightened perceptions of threat to national culture from immigration and adoption of foreign practices (Schatz & Staub, 1997; Spry & Hornsey, 2007). Spry & Hornsey (2007) found that Australian participants’ cultural threat perceptions were mediated the relationship between blind patriotism and reduced support for immigration.
Approximately half of these studies also included a measure of constructive patriotism. Constructive patriotism did not predict more negative outgroup attitudes in any of these studies. In fact, two studies found that constructive patriotism predicted reduced support for militarism (McCleary, Nails & Williams, 2009; Oh et al., 2009). In addition, a study conducted in Germany found that scores on a measure comprised of constructive patriotism and civic identity items (labelled as ‘patriotism’) predicted more positive attitudes towards foreigners living in Germany and less anti-Semitism (Blank & Schmidt, 2003). Thus, critical loyalty towards one’s national group seems to inhibit outgroup hostility. An experiment conducted by Roccas, Klar & Liviatan (2006) suggests that constructive ingroup criticism can increase feelings of collective guilt for outgroup harm. These researchers compared the effects of priming either actual characteristics of Israel that do generate positive national identification (‘actual ingroup’) or desired characteristics of Israel that would generate positive national identification but presumably are lacking (‘ideal ingroup’). Participants exposed to the ideal ingroup prime, who arguably believed that their ingroup should work harder to achieve desirable standards, expressed significantly greater feelings of guilt for Israeli harm to Palestinians. Perhaps then, constructive recognition of the ingroup’s shortcomings in achieving desirable standards can encourage group members to bring the nation more closely in line with a desired moral image of the ingroup. If this image includes support for basic and universal human values, its realization should promote more positive intergroup relations (Staub, 1997). The fact that constructive patriotism correlates positively with inclusiveness and with internationalism, in this regard a measure of support for goodwill and cooperation between nations (see Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989) offers some hope (Schatz & Staub, 1997).

Sonia Roccas and her colleagues (2006) argue that the attitude towards national criticism that underlies the blind-constructive distinction reflects the extent to which ingroup members idealize or glorify the nation. Roccas, Klar & Liviatan (2006) define ingroup glorification as:

‘viewing the national in-group as superior to other groups and having a feeling of respect for the central symbols of the group such as its flag, rules, and leadership. An individual who is highly identified in this sense believes that the in-group is better and more worthy than other groups and that group members should adhere to all the group’s rules and regulations and feels insulted if others do not show the utmost respect for the group’s symbols’.

(p. 700)
As this definition includes beliefs in national superiority, it shares the problems of nationalism discussed above. However, the ingroup glorification construct also provides insight into how national group blind idealization operates. Roccas and colleagues' (2006) research indicates that national glorification predicts reduced guilt for past ingroup infractions and suppresses the tendency for positive national identification to predict greater guilt. Exonerating cognitions, beliefs that minimize and justify the severity of the ingroup's infractions (e.g. 'the Arabs would have done [worse] to the Israeli side', p. 702) mediated both of these effects. Leidner et al. (2010) also found that national glorification, but not positive national identification, predicted lesser demands for justice regarding mistreatment of Iraqi war prisoners perpetrated by ingroup members. Further, the effect of national glorification was mediated by minimization of the victim families' suffering and by victim dehumanization.

Together, the research on blind and constructive patriotism and national glorification demonstrate how different modes of ingroup attachment – blind idealization on the one hand and critical attachment on the other – impact the relationship between national attachment and outgroup derogation. Blind idealization of the nation predicts negative and hostile attitudes towards outgroups, especially under conditions of threat. Critical attachment does not predict negative outgroup attitudes, and sometimes predicts more positive attitudes. Note that these two modes of national attachment parallel Jackson and Smith's (1999) distinction between insecure and secure social identities. Blind idealization reflects the insecure combination of positive ingroup affect, perceived common fate with ingroup members, depersonalization and perception of a competitive intergroup context. These factors ‘tie personal and group identity close together’ (Jackson & Smith, 1999, p. 123) in a way that promotes uncritical ingroup idealization, high identity threat, and negative outgroup attitudes. Critical attachment, on the other hand, reflects the secure combination of positive ingroup affect but relatively low perceived common fate, depersonalization and perceived ingroup competition. These factors permit, if not encourage, constructive ingroup criticism, reduced perceptions of threat and more favourable outgroup attitudes.

The concept of collective narcissism described in the previous section can be used to advance our understanding of the effect of excessive idealization of the national ingroup on outgroup attitudes and intergroup relations. It offers an explanation of the link between inflated ingroup love and outgroup hate. It also provides insight into the conditions under which positive national feelings may help the development of positive outgroup attitudes and harmonious intergroup relations. Collective narcissism
predicts negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities, immigrants and negative evaluations of foreign countries (Golec de Zavala & Cichocka, 2012; Golec de Zavala, Cichocka & Bilewicz, in press; Golec de Zavala et al., 2009; Lyons, Kenworthy & Popan, 2010). It also mediates the relationship between blind patriotism and outgroup hostility (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009; Study 1). Most importantly, collective narcissism suppresses the negative relationship between constructive patriotism and outgroup hostility (Golec de Zavala, Cichocka & Bilewicz, in press).

Research on national collective narcissism provides compelling evidence linking constructive patriotism to more favourable outgroup attitudes. Whereas some studies of constructive patriotism have pointed to such a relationship (e.g. McCleary, Nalls & Williams, 2009; Oh et al., 2009), others have found no relationship between constructive patriotism and outgroup negativity (e.g. Schatz, Staub & Lavine, 1999; Spry & Hornsey, 2007). Studies of national collective narcissism showed that whereas constructive patriotism and outgroup attitude scores were not significantly correlated, after controlling for the overlap between national collective narcissism and constructive patriotism, constructive patriotism predicted less negative outgroup attitudes (Golec de Zavala, Cichocka & Bilewicz, in press). Similar relationships have been found outside the context of national group. For example, narcissistic identification with one's university predicted degradation of students from other universities. However, when the overlap between collective narcissism and positive university attachment was statistically controlled for, non-narcissistic attachment predicted more positive attitudes towards students from other universities (Golec de Zavala, Cichocka & Bilewicz, in press).

Thus, collective narcissism seems to explain a particularly important aspect of belligerent group attachment. It is the only form of 'destructive' group attachment that, when differentiated and controlled for, uncovers the potential for ‘benevolent’ ingroup love to inspire positive attitudes towards other groups. It seems that positive feelings for one's ingroup may promote positive intergroup relations provided that these feelings are devoid of narcissistic ingroup idealization. This confirms an intuition of romantic poets, writers and philosophers that mature love of one's nation should inspire appreciation for other nations.

**Conclusion**

Positive ingroup feelings inspire outgroup negativity when (and perhaps because) they overlap with insecure, narcissistic idealization of the ingroup. It seems that collective narcissism leads to reduced empathy, injustice, and reduced positive intergroup relations. Initial attraction and acceptance of unattractive people can be written off as a characteristic of the group they belong to.

Collective narcissism, the illusion that the ingroup is superior to the outgroup, leads to increased outgroup negativity when the overlap between narcissistic identification and positive group attachment is controlled for.

Thus, collective narcissism seems to explain a particularly important aspect of belligerent group attachment. It is the only form of 'destructive' group attachment that, when differentiated and controlled for, uncovers the potential for 'benevolent' ingroup love to inspire positive attitudes towards other groups. It seems that positive feelings for one's ingroup may promote positive intergroup relations provided that these feelings are devoid of narcissistic ingroup idealization. This confirms an intuition of romantic poets, writers and philosophers that mature love of one's nation should inspire appreciation for other nations.

**Conclusion**

Positive ingroup feelings inspire outgroup negativity when (and perhaps because) they overlap with insecure, narcissistic idealization of the ingroup. It seems that collective narcissism leads to reduced empathy, injustice, and reduced positive intergroup relations. Initial attraction and acceptance of unattractive people can be written off as a characteristic of the group they belong to.
ingroup. The line between positive attachment, loyalty and responsibility for the ingroup’s well-being, and uncritical idealization of the ingroup, seems to be quite fine. The question of theoretical and applied importance is how to untangle narcissistic from genuine positive group regard in real-life settings. One approach would be to identify situations that increase chances of narcissistic ingroup identification and therefore also increase the overlap between narcissistic and non-narcissistic ingroup positivity. Another approach would be to identify the conditions in which narcissistic rather than non-narcissistic ingroup favouritism is normative. Initial studies indicate that collective narcissism serves a defensive function compensating for loss of control over the ingroup's fate and feelings of uncertainty (Cichocka, Golec de Zavala & Olechowski, 2011). In other words, when people feel personally insignificant, when they feel uncertain as a group member or when they are not sure where their group is heading, they become more narcissistic about their group.

Collective narcissism also increases in response to negative feedback to the ingroup. Such feedback is experienced as personally threatening and leads to an increase in collective narcissism. The only situations in which negative feedback or criticism did not increase collective narcissism was when negative information about the external evaluation of an ingroup was provided together with positive feedback about the ingroup's performance in an unrelated area. For example, university students who read a mock newspaper article presenting their university as having quite a low position in the ranking of universities in the area showed an increase in narcissistic identification with the university. However, narcissistic identification did not increase when the same information was accompanied by another mock article presenting their university as scoring relatively high in the National Student Survey, which indicated that the university is esteemed by its students (Golec de Zavala, 2011). Further studies should examine the social conditions in which narcissistic beliefs about an ingroup become socially acceptable and normative versus conditions in which narcissistic identification with an ingroup is discouraged and marginalized.

Another way of approaching the potentially destructive overlap between narcissistic and non-narcissistic ingroup positivity might be 'neutralization' of collective narcissistic hostility. Studies that examined the link between individual narcissism and aggression offer some suggestions on what kind of interventions may weaken this association. For example, aggressive response to ego-threat characteristic of narcissists was significantly reduced when narcissistic participants were offered an option to self-affirm by ranking values that they treat as guidance in their lives. Reflecting on complexity of self apparently lowers the motivation to defend
the threatened self-image typical for narcissists (Thomaes et al., 2009). Asking people to reflect on their values may also provide a humbling experience because it reminds people that they are not always able to follow the guidance of values they render important. The effects of the humbling realization of one’s shortcomings in an intergroup context speak to the results of the study by Roccas and her colleagues (2006) described above. In this study, reflecting on the ingroup’s imperfections increased participants’ feelings of guilt for harm done to the outgroup and neutralized the negative intergroup consequences of ingroup glorification.

The ability to self-reflect and assess the standing of one’s ingroup in relation to a desired and ideal state is cognitively advanced and taxing. It requires assuming ‘a third person’s’ perspective in self-assessment (Flavell, Miller & Miller, 1993). Such cognitive ability is achieved relatively late in the course of individual cognitive development and, even when achieved, may not be used (e.g. Golec, 2002). Advanced cognitive skills need to be exercised, and their application to understanding of intergroup situations needs to be encouraged. It has been suggested that different forms of national attachment might form a developmental sequence as well (e.g. Reykowski & Golec de Zavala, 2006). Thus, the ability to form a constructive and critical attachment to one’s ingroup can be seen as cognitive developmental achievement.

In fact, all the forms of constructive ingroup attachment that we discussed in this chapter seem to require more cognitive effort than the destructive ones. The destructive forms of ingroup love require little differentiation between self and the ingroup but clear and rather simplistic, black and white differentiation between ingroup and outgroups. The constructive forms of ingroup attachment are based on more complex understanding of the relationship between an individual and an ingroup and between different social groups. They assume critical differentiation of an individual from the group the individual identifies with and cares for. Such differentiation lowers the possibility of using the idealized and inflated group image to protect against individual feelings of insignificance. It also allows for critical assessment of what the group lacks with reference to its standards and encourages betterment typically prevented by blind idealization (e.g. Staub, 1997). It also assumes complex and fluid understanding of group boundaries and foundations.

Thus, factors that promote cognitive development and reinforce cognitive effort are likely to increase the probability that more complex and constructive forms of social identification may develop and be applied in intergroup situations. These factors should thereby reduce the chance that ingroup positivity will be taken to its narcissistic extreme. On the other hand, factors that increase cognitive closure and make cognitive
...able experience to follow the instructions for the imaging reality check, to the results described above. In this study, participants' feelings about the negative ingroup in the virtual environment and the real assessment of ingroup positivity were relatively low. However, even when these cognitive-affective skills were developed, the intergroup discrimination was not that different from the results. In consequence as well, the capability to form an ingroup to be seen as a group was limited.

The data that we discuss here are not more than the evidence and there are little differences in the way simplistic, fragmented ingroups. The situation is much more complex than just perceived an ingroup positivity. Differentiation between a group and cares more about the individualized and the feeling of insignificance. This also lacks with respect. It can be prevented in the complex and fluid society.

Understanding the source cognitive, the cognitive complexity and fluidity can be applied to enhance the chance of ingroup. On the other hand, the cognitive effort difficult are likely to increase the chance that ingroup positivity will be linked to narcissistic, blind idealization of the ingroup. Future studies should advance our understanding of factors affecting the overlap between ingroup positivity and collective narcissism and the link between collective narcissism and outgroup negativity. Such studies would inform interventions aiming at reducing the capacity of ingroup love to inspire outgroup hate. They could also propose how to use the ingroup positivity as a platform for creating positive and tolerant attitudes towards outgroups.

---

**Practical task for readers**

Have a close look at the ‘letter to America’ issued by Osama bin Laden after the terrorist attacks in the US on 11 September 2001. Analyse and describe the narcissistic beliefs about an ingroup that this letter expresses. Pay close attention to how narcissistic rhetoric, and beliefs about the privileged but not recognized status of the ingroup, give justification to intergroup violence.

---

**Suggested readings**

To learn more about the topic read Brewer (2007), de Figueiredo and Elkins (2003), Golec de Zavala (2011), Reicher and Hopkins (2001), and Schatz and colleagues (1999).

---

**References**


