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Empirical article

## National Identity Can be Comprised of More Than Pride: Evidence From Collective Memories of Americans and Germans

Su Young Choi

Department of Psychological Science, Claremont McKenna College, United States

Magdalena Abel

Department of Psychology, University of Regensburg, Germany

Audrey Siqui-Liu

Department of Psychology &amp; Neuroscience, Duke University, United States

Sharda Umanath\*

Department of Psychological Science, Claremont McKenna College, United States

How does being a national of a country, steeped in its cultural context, affect our perception of that country's past? Despite demonstrations of "national narcissism" in prior work on collective memory, the present studies suggest that pride alone does not shape national identity. Considering collective memories for one's own and the other nation, American and German participants agreed more on which events nations should be ashamed of. When asked to generate events that shaped national identity, for both sets of participants, only a few of the most frequently nominated events were categorized as proud events. The rest were mixed or predominantly categorized as ashamed events or as evoking neither pride nor shame. Across studies, similar events were generated from the "self" vs. "other" perspective, indicating that national collective memories can, to an extent, be understood by non-nationals. Variations in specificity, location, and timing of events were also examined.

**Keywords:** Collective memory, National narcissism, Self versus other, National identity, Pride, Shame

### General Audience Summary

People have the tendency to perceive their nation's past in a positive light just as they often perceive themselves. To better understand how we perceive the shared past of one's own and another nation, the current study explored memories of pride and shame generated by American and German participants about one's own and the other nation. Americans, consistent with prior studies on American culture, exhibit egocentrism by generating more events about themselves than did Germans about themselves. However, nationals from both countries show greater agreement on shameful than proud self events. When participants were explicitly asked to generate events that shaped the country's national identity, only few proud events were generated, while the rest of the events were ambiguous or categorized as events the country should be ashamed of or evoking neither pride nor shame. Across both studies, participants generated similar events and showed an understanding of the

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\* Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sharda Umanath, Department of Psychological Science, Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, United States. Contact: [sumanath@cmc.edu](mailto:sumanath@cmc.edu) (S.U.).

emotional tone of these events regardless of an insider or an outsider perspective. We discuss how both pride and shame in collective memories play an important role in forming and shaping a nation's identity and how memories can be held vicariously at the collective level, just as is true for individuals and their autobiographical memories. We suggest that national identities are shaped in similar ways to individual identities and therefore, national identities are not just shaped by pride in past actions.

Psychologists often study remembering as a cognitive capacity experienced and used by individuals. Yet, memories involve representations of the past in social settings. To account for this aspect of remembering, collective memory somewhat recently entered the lexicon of memory researchers from sociological studies (e.g., Halbwachs, 1980; 1992). Collective memories are defined as shared representations of the past and bear on the group's identity (e.g., Hirst & Manier, 2008). Wertsch and Roediger (2008) further noted that though it may be based on memories stored in individuals, it is more than just an aggregate of individual memories. While studies of individual memory focus on an individual's ability to encode, store, and retrieve information, studies of collective memory can attempt to use individual memory to understand the socio-cultural contexts in which the memories were constructed.

Just as autobiographical memory serves to define the individual's self-identity (Baddeley, 1988), collective memory forms and informs a group's identity, providing a sense of continuity and serving as a cohesive glue (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Philips et al., 2004). Studies on the social representation of history suggest that both culture and representations of history aid in defining the essence of a group's identity (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Liu & Sibley, 2009). Importantly, considering groups' representations of their history can help explain how and why reactions to the same events may be similar or different across cultures (see Liu et al., 2005). These influences may also vary by the degree to which an individual integrates their personal with their collective identity (Wang, 2008). Here, we examine the extent to which proud and shameful collective memories influence the national identity of a country and can affect the perception of one's own nation and another nation.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) states that people tend to think positively about the self and the groups to which they belong. National identity is one form of social identity (Schildkraut, 2014). Relatedly, collective narcissism captures the belief that one's group is exceptional but is not sufficiently recognized by others, including both "ingroup love" and "outgroup hate" (A. Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020; A.G. Golec de Zavala, Cichocka, Eidelson, & Jayawickreme, 2009). Moreover, while collective victimization experiences seem to result in mistrust and outgroup hate, the same experiences serve to enhance ingroup's self-image and strengthen solidarity and patriotism (Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gundar, 2009; Bilewicz & Liu, 2020). These frameworks would predict that individuals preserve prideful in-group memories. Empirically, Roediger et al. (2019) compared collective memories of people from 11 nations that participated in World War II. When participants were asked to evaluate what percentage their country contributed to the victory, the total estimated by the eight for-

mer Allied countries well surpassed 100%, totaling to 309%. This overestimation is evidence of what the authors termed "national narcissism" and is also seen when participants judge their nation's contribution to all of world history (Zaromb et al., 2018) and when U.S. citizens evaluate their specific state's contribution to U.S. history (Putnam, Ross, Soter, & Roediger, 2018). This proclivity to positively evaluate one's nation's past and even inflate one's group's contribution to historical events would thus predict that national identity is defined by memories and knowledge of events that its people are *proud* of.

In addition to an increased emphasis on the positive collective past, "collective forgetting" likely also plays a role. Feelings of self-condemnation can result from acts committed by others or one's predecessors. People have emotional and behavioral reactions to negative behaviors of ingroup members (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014). For instance, Klein, Licata, and Pierucci (2011) found that when Belgians are asked about colonial action in Congo, participants categorized as mid-identifiers exhibited higher levels of collective guilt than either low or high identifiers, presumably to protect their group identity from being threatened. Since feelings of shame have been linked to responses aimed at insulating oneself from negative experiences (Tangney, 1995; Wicker, Payne, & Morgan, 1983), feelings of shame may induce people to distance themselves from the wrongdoers to defend their group identity, reappraise the events in a positive light, or simply make the shameful memories less accessible and less specific than prideful ones (Branscombe, Spears, Ellemers, & Doosje, 2002; Dresler-Hawke & Liu, 2006; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013). Indeed, Sibley and colleagues demonstrate that members who strongly identify with the history of their group exhibit limited or biased knowledge of events that reflect badly on the ingroup, essentially reducing accountability of the ingroup for injustices in the past (Sibley, Liu, Duckitt, & Khan, 2008; see also, Yamashiro, Van Engen, & Roediger, 2019). Similarly, Sahdra and Ross (2007) studied Sikhs' and Hindus' inter-group relations and found that those with a high degree of ingroup identification recalled significantly fewer memories of past ingroup violence than those with lower degrees of identification. Furthermore, groups with a history of intergroup conflict tend to espouse stereotyped beliefs and ideologically position the ingroup in historical events, motivated to remove threats to the glorious history of the ingroup (Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020; Noor, Vollhardt, Mari, & Nadler, 2017).

Therefore, whether it is through highlighting and focusing on one's group or nation's positive contributions, actively deemphasizing shameful pasts, or passively leaving out negative historical acts, people seem likely to remember their group's

past positively, and this may be exacerbated by the strength of their group identification. Of note is that prior work in historical negation suggests that ingroup favoritism is not always to be expected (see Liu, Wilson, McClure, & Higgins, 1999).

Since empirical studies on national narcissism focus on recall of memories about one's own nation, little is known about whether collective memories of another nation are easily accessible or even known to outsiders. Pride and shame are self-conscious emotions (Tangney & Fischer, 1995). Narcissistic biases in memory reflect regulation of such self-conscious emotions to maintain a positive self-image, with little or no emphasis on others' perspectives. Empirical evidence indeed suggests that American individuals show greater accessibility of and tendency to focus more on memories from their own perspectives (Wang et al., 2012), consistent with previous findings that Americans are more egocentric than other nationals (Hofstede, 2001; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). This raises an interesting question: How well does a nation project its sense of identity to others?

Previous work on individual's vicarious memories, defined as the recollections that people have of episodes shared by another person, may offer some insight. Vicarious and personal memories share phenomenological and functional qualities (Pillemer, Steiner, Kuwabara, Thomsen, & Svob, 2015). Individuals may not only have vivid memories of their own personal memories, but also of vicarious memories of events that happened to other people. To our knowledge, vicarious memories have not been empirically studied at the collective level. Assuming that collective memory similarly forms and informs a group's identity just as autobiographical memory is tied to an individual's conception of the self (Conway, Singer, & Tagini, 2004), the emotional tone of another country's memory may be vicariously felt by an outsider, too.

### The Current Studies

The current work examined what events participants of different national identities recall for their own nation versus the other nation. In Study 1, American and German participants generated up to 10 events that they are proud of and 10 they are ashamed of from their own history and then, for the other nation's history. The focus was on the number and content of proud/ashamed events participants generated for their own versus another nation. In Study 2, we specifically investigated events crucial to national identities and their emotional tones. First, participants were asked to generate 10 events critical to their own country's national identity and subsequently for the respective other country. Participants then indicated if they felt proud, ashamed, both, or neither about each event for their own country and how they thought citizens of the respective other country should feel about each event for the other country. Additionally, in both studies, the events generated were further analyzed by coding the memories based on their specificity, whether they occurred within the participants' lifetime, and whether they occurred in the relevant country.

### Study 1

#### Method

**Participants.** After receipt of approval from Claremont McKenna's Institutional Review Board, two samples were recruited and collected mainly between March and December 2016; one from the USA, one from Germany. Participants were excluded prior to analysis if they reported that they were not citizens or dual citizens of the respective country, had looked up information while completing the study, or did not complete the full study. For the U.S. sample, 117 participants were recruited from the undergraduate participant pool at the Claremont Colleges. After exclusions, a sample of 94 American participants (43 females) remained. U.S. participants were between 18 and 23 years of age ( $M = 19.95$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ). 90 out of 94 participants' only native language was English, and 86 participants reported that the United States was the country with which they most identified. On a scale from 1 (*very close*) to 4 (*not at all close*), participants, on average, rated feeling equally close to their town/city ( $M = 1.76$ ) and to their country ( $M = 1.94$ ),  $t(93) = -1.75$ ,  $p = .08$ , but less so to their continent ( $M = 2.25$ ),  $t(91) = -4.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $t(91) = -4.10$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively. For the German sample, 144 undergraduate students were recruited as participants at Regensburg University, Germany. After exclusions, a sample of 106 German participants (87 female) remained. German participants were between 18 and 30 years of age ( $M = 20.50$ ,  $SD = 2.68$ ) and thus slightly older than participants from the US sample; the difference in age was not significant, however,  $t(198) = 1.92$ ,  $p = .057$ .<sup>1</sup> 104 out of the 106 German participants' only native language was German, and 93 participants reported that Germany was the country with which they most identified. On a scale from 1 (*very close*) to 4 (*not at all close*), participants, on average, reported feeling closer to their town/city ( $M = 1.82$ ) than to their country ( $M = 2.38$ ),  $t(102) = -7.14$ ,  $p < .001$ , or their continent ( $M = 2.37$ ),  $t(99) = -5.79$ ,  $p < .001$ , and equally so to country and continent ( $t < 1$ ). All participants were offered partial course credit for participating.

**Procedure.** This Qualtrics (Provo, Utah, USA) study was completed in a self-paced manner on either a lab computer or participants' private devices. Participants took about 30 min to complete the study. After providing consent, participants completed demographic questions, including one question regarding how close they felt to their town, to their country, and to their continent (GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, 2013). The main study then consisted of two parts. First, participants were asked about events that made them feel ashamed/proud of their own country: "In the spaces provided below, please recall up to 10 events, deeds, or acts from [United States/German]

<sup>1</sup> To examine whether the slight differences in age may have affected the results, we excluded the six oldest subjects in the German data set (reducing the German sample to 100 subjects with a mean age of 20.04 years) and reran all analyses reported in the main text with this smaller sample. No results were affected by this change, confirming that the slight difference in age observed in the present study had no meaningful impact on the results. We therefore decided to include all German participants for the analyses reported in the main text.

history to present day that make you feel [ashamed/proud] to be from [the United States of America/Germany]. You may list them as they come to mind, in any order. If you are not sure what you are thinking of qualifies, please list it anyway. We are interested in the things that come to mind when thinking of being [ashamed/proud] of your country. When listing the event, you do not need to describe the event in detail. Please just provide the name or a short label that you think would be understandable by another person from [the United States/Germany]." Presentation order for the separate prompts for ashamed and proud events was randomized. Each prompt was presented on a new screen with 10 empty numbered (1 to 10) spaces. Participants could only proceed after entering a minimum of five events. Second, participants were asked to generate events that they thought might make people from the other country ashamed or proud, and they were again presented with two separate prompts. The instructions were largely identical to those for one's own country with only the first sentence being different: "In the spaces provided below, please recall up to 10 events, deeds, or acts from [German/U.S.] history to present day that you think might make [Germans/U.S. Americans] feel [ashamed/proud] to be from [Germany/the United States of America]." The presentation order for the prompts was again randomized, and participants were required to generate at least five events for each. At the end of the study, participants were asked to indicate whether they looked up any information while completing the questionnaire and to rate how difficult they thought it was. Finally, participants were thanked for their participation, debriefed, and compensated.

**Data coding.** All events nominated ( $n = 5556$ ) were coded by two independent coders. Single events were excluded if they were nominated repeatedly by the same participant for the same prompt, too vague to identify, inaccurate and/or did not pertain to the target country, nonsense responses, or personal to the specific individual instead of being a historical or public event. Next, the remaining responses ( $n = 5083$ ) were assigned descriptive event labels. Interrater agreement was 87%, and discrepancies were resolved through discussions. Then, event labels referring to the same event with slightly different wording were consolidated in a final consistency check to ensure the same labels referred to the same events across the whole sample. Finally, the coders identified single narrower events that could be collapsed into larger-grain labels. For instance, mentions of the "Bay of Pigs Mission" and the "Cuban Missile Crisis" were both categorized under "Cold War." Yet, based on the specificity and frequency with which some events were nominated, related events were sometimes also kept separate from one another (e.g., "atomic bombs dropped on Japan" and "WWII"). If collapsing events resulted in duplicated events for a participant's responses, the duplicates were excluded. We report and discuss the large-grain event labels from the last round of coding.

All events were coded by two independent coders for *specificity* (interrater agreement: 77%), *place* (interrater agreement: 91%), and *lifetime* (interrater agreement: 98%). Discrepancies were resolved through discussions. For *specificity*, events were coded as categoric, extended, or specific events (see also Topcu

& Hirst, 2020). Specific events represent a unique occurrence, which happened within a 24-h time frame (e.g., "the Boston marathon bombing"). References to specific legislative acts or legal transactions were interpreted as the actual moment of signing and therefore also coded as specific events (e.g., "The Louisiana Purchase"). Responses referring to a famous moment in history (e.g., "landing on the moon") were also considered specific events because it is likely that participants are imagining the one unique, widely broadcasted moment amidst a series of events. In contrast, an extended event was defined as one that has a clear beginning and end but does not happen within a 24-h time frame. For example, "World War II" occurred in a specific time frame and contains a constellation of many specific events. Finally, at the lowest level of specificity, categoric events are defined as continuous or recurring events that do not have a specific beginning or end (e.g., "sending aid to other countries", "Oktoberfest").

The *place* variable describes whether events occurred in the country for which they were generated, or whether they occurred outside the considered country. Events that occurred in roughly the same geographical location before the formation of the state were also considered to have occurred within the country (e.g., "the fall of Prussia," for Germany). Some extended or categoric memories were more difficult to categorize. For instance, any events that concern the role a country played in its international relationships (e.g., "holding together the EU," Germany) were coded as having occurred outside the respective country.

Regarding *lifetime*, events were coded as "before the participants' lifetime" or as "within the participants' lifetime". We used age as reported by each participant for coding this variable. Extended events that started before but continued within participants' lifetime were coded as "within the participants' lifetime."

## Results & Discussion

**Number of generated events.** A 2 (American, German)  $\times$  2 (self, other)  $\times$  2 (proud, ashamed) ANOVA showed significant differences between the two participant groups,  $F(1, 198) = 16.23, MSE = 9.58, p < .001, \eta^2 = .08$ , as well as between self versus other,  $F(1, 198) = 144.46, MSE = 3.04, p < .001, \eta^2 = .42$ , and ashamed versus proud events,  $F(1, 198) = 6.86, MSE = 1.71, p = .009, \eta^2 = .03$ . These significant main effects were qualified by a significant two-way interaction between self/other and participant group,  $F(1, 198) = 171.30, MSE = 3.04, p < .001, \eta^2 = .46$ , as well as a significant three-way interaction,  $F(1, 198) = 21.49, MSE = 1.69, p < .001, \eta^2 = .10$ . American participants generated more events overall than German participants. This difference was driven by American participants nominating significantly more events about the United States than they were able to generate for Germany,  $t_{\text{S}}(93) \geq 9.62, ps < .001, ds \geq 1.03$ . Interestingly, however, American participants generated a higher number of ashamed ( $M = 8.66, SD = 1.83$ ) than proud events ( $M = 8.09, SD = 1.96$ ) about their own country,  $t(93) = 2.69, p = .008, d = 0.28$ , and a higher number of proud ( $M = 5.48, SD = 2.49$ ) than ashamed events ( $M = 5.06, SD = 2.18$ ) about Germany,  $t(93) = 2.48, p = .015$ ,

$d=0.26$ . In contrast, German participants generated similar numbers of proud ( $M=5.85$ ,  $SD=2.03$ ) and ashamed events ( $M=5.90$ ,  $SD=1.85$ ) about their own country,  $t(105)<1.00$ ,  $p=.802$ ,  $d=0.02$ , but a higher number of ashamed ( $M=6.39$ ,  $SD=1.98$ ) than proud events ( $M=5.62$ ,  $SD=1.64$ ) about the USA,  $t(105)=4.59$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $d=0.45$ . Thus, as expected, egocentrism was observed among American participants. Yet, the egocentrism displayed by American participants was not purely narcissistic in nature. With the caveat that the samples are of college students from particular regions of each country, these results suggest that national identity may be more complex than previously supposed, with collective memories including large numbers of shameful events.

We also examined whether participants' ratings of closeness to their country (scale from 1 = *very close* to 4 = *not at all close*) were associated with the number of events they generated. The closer Americans reported feeling to their country, the more proud events they generated ( $r=-.31$ ,  $p=.003$ ), whereas there was no significant relationship between closeness to their country and the number of ashamed events. In contrast, the less close Germans reported feeling to their country, the more ashamed events they generated ( $r=.26$ ,  $p=.007$ ), whereas there was no significant relationship between closeness to their country and the number of proud events.

**Most frequently nominated events** (see Figures 1 and 2). In addition to examining the sheer number of events that participants were able to generate, we were interested in examining group consensus around particular events in each nation's past. For their own countries, participants showed higher agreement for ashamed versus proud events. For Germany, the top two ashamed events (The Holocaust, Nazism) and proud events (Fall of the Berlin Wall/German Reunification, Admittance and Treatment of Refugees) were core events, defined as generated by more than 50% of the German sample. For many of the remaining events in the top 10 lists, agreement was slightly higher for ashamed versus proud events. For the USA, this pattern was even more extreme in that core events were only observed for ashamed events (Slavery, Trail of Tears/Treatment and Relocation of Native Americans); there were no proud core events. Thus, there was less agreement and more diversity for both countries in what participants believed were events of which to be proud.

Examining the overlap between events generated by self versus other, it seems that participants considered similar events for a country, irrespective of whether they generated the events for their own or the respective other country. This was particularly true for ashamed events. Here, eight of the top 10 events overlapped for self versus other, both for Germany and the USA. For proud events, the overlap was a bit lower, with seven of the top 10 events overlapping for the USA and four overlapping for Germany. Overall, these consistencies in considered events across countries may suggest that a nation's most important events are not only accessible to members of that group. Members of other social groups can, up to a certain degree, adopt an insider's perspective and correctly infer at least some of the events considered as the most important ones. Nevertheless, percentage agreement for events nominated by the "other"

group were almost always lower than those nominated by the "self". The only exception here was ashamed events generated for Germany; this is likely be due to the particular events themselves and Germany in particular rather than any generalizable claims about national identity.

**Event coding: Specificity** (see Table 1). As discussed above, each event was coded as specific, extended, or categoric. We applied Generalized Estimating Equations to compare frequency distributions (GEEs; Liang & Zeger, 1986; see also Pekar & Brabec, 2018). GEEs are precursors to mixed-effect models and slightly easier to use. They generally allow for comparisons across within-subject measurements and here, allowed us to compare frequency distributions for ashamed versus proud events and for self versus other. Note that the interpretation of resulting betas ( $B$ ) is largely the same as in regression models. For event specificity, a GEE model with exchangeable correlation structure showed not only significant negative slopes for ashamed versus proud events,  $B=-.06 (.02)$ ,  $p<.001$ , and self versus other,  $B=-.16 (.02)$ ,  $p<.001$ , but also a significant positive slope for the interaction term,  $B=.08 (.03)$ ,  $p=.003$ , suggesting that differences in specificity for ashamed versus proud events were moderated by self versus other. For events generated about one's own country, ashamed events most frequently referred to extended events, whereas proud events consisted of almost equal parts categoric, extended, and specific events. Especially noteworthy is the increase in specific events for proud relative to ashamed events. For events generated about the respective other country, the pattern for ashamed events looked similar, with the highest proportion referring to extended events. The proud events consisted predominantly of categoric events though. Examining the difference between self versus other, it seems that events generated for the respective other country more frequently referred to categoric events than events generated for the self, and somewhat less frequently to extended and specific events. The increase in specificity for proud events relative to ashamed events generated about the self supports our prediction that shameful memories are less specific than prideful memories. Yet, the fact that this pattern was similarly observed for events generated about the other country is surprising, as it indicates that the events generated from the "other" perspective are not only consistent, but also similar in specificity. Furthermore, our results are broadly consistent with the literature on shame (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Gausel & Brown, 2012; Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarnier, & Ames, 2005) such that the majority of shameful events were extended events, showing the desire to distance oneself from the memory and defend one's (positive) group identity.

**Event coding: Place** (see Table 1). Most generated ashamed and proud events occurred within the considered country. A GEE model with an exchangeable correlation structure showed no significant slopes for ashamed versus proud events and self versus other,  $ps \geq .220$ , but a significant negative slope for the interaction term,  $B=-.08 (.03)$ ,  $p=.002$ . The frequency distributions for ashamed versus proud events did not differ when participants were asked about their own country,  $B=.02 (.02)$ ,  $p=.206$ . There seems to be a tendency to look inward at one's nation's internal affairs when considering pride and shame rather

**a) Germany: Ashamed events**

	Self	Other
Rank 1	The Holocaust (69%)	The Holocaust (81%)
Rank 2	Nazism (58%)	WWII (61%)
Rank 3	WWII (42%)	Adolf Hitler (61%)
Rank 4	WWI (36%)	WWI (45%)
Rank 5	Current rise of far-right movements and parties in Germany (31%)	Nazism (41%)
Rank 6	Adolf Hitler (26%)	Berlin Wall / Postwar division of Germany (37%)
Rank 7	Berlin Wall / Postwar division of Germany (23%)	Racism / Discrimination (15%)
Rank 8	Racism / Discrimination (18%)	Anti-Semitism (10%)
Rank 9	Admittance / Treatment of Refugees (16%)	Economic declines and crises (7%)
Rank 10	The German Democratic Republic (15%)	Current rise of far-right movements and parties in Germany (7%)

**b) Germany: Proud events**

	Self	Other
Rank 1	Fall of the Berlin Wall / German Reunification (76%)	Fall of the Berlin Wall / German Reunification (34%)
Rank 2	Admittance and treatment of refugees (57%)	Germany's automobile industry (34%)
Rank 3	National soccer Performance (29%)	National soccer Performance (30%)
Rank 4	Democracy (25%)	Cuisine (27%)
Rank 5	European Union (23%)	Economic power and growth (20%)
Rank 6	German economic miracle (18%)	Beer (18%)
Rank 7	Technology, innovation, inventions, etc. (15%)	Angela Merkel (17%)
Rank 8	Resistance against Nazis (14%)	Technology, innovation, inventions, etc. (16%)
Rank 9	Angela Merkel (14%)	Learning from the past / Dealing with history (15%)
Rank 10	Constitution (14%)	Recovery after WWII (14%)

**Figure 1.** The top 10 events generated for Germany by participants from Germany (self) and from the USA (other). Panel (a) shows the top 10 ashamed events, panel (b) shows the top 10 proud events. Colored panels indicate events that overlap for self and other. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.).

**a) USA: Ashamed events**

	Self	Other
Rank 1	Slavery (76%)	Donald Trump (50%)
Rank 2	Trail of Tears / Treatment and Relocation of Native Americans (60%)	Trail of Tears / Treatment and Relocation of Native Americans (46%)
Rank 3	Japanese American Internment Camps (43%)	Slavery (43%)
Rank 4	Vietnam War (40%)	Iraq War (39%)
Rank 5	Donald Trump (38%)	Racism / Discrimination (32%)
Rank 6	Atomic bombs dropped on Japan (31%)	Vietnam War (30%)
Rank 7	Racial Segregation / Jim Crow Laws (31%)	Racial Segregation / Jim Crow Laws (27%)
Rank 8	Racism / Discrimination (26%)	Atomic bombs dropped on Japan (27%)
Rank 9	Iraq War (26%)	Gun laws (27%)
Rank 10	Civil War (19%)	Cold War (26%)

**b) USA: Proud events**

	Self	Other
Rank 1	USA's 13 <sup>th</sup> Amendment / Abolishment of Slavery (44%)	Barack Obama (47%)
Rank 2	WWII (43%)	Declaration of Independence (37%)
Rank 3	Space Race / Landing on the moon (42%)	USA's 13 <sup>th</sup> Amendment / Abolishment of Slavery (27%)
Rank 4	Barack Obama (40%)	WWII (26%)
Rank 5	US Civil Rights Act / Movement (39%)	Martin Luther King Jr. (23%)
Rank 6	Legal status of same sex marriage (38%)	USA as world power (21%)
Rank 7	USA's 19 <sup>th</sup> Amendment: Women's Suffrage (36%)	Space Race / Landing on the moon (20%)
Rank 8	Declaration of Independence (36%)	Revolutionary War (17%)
Rank 9	Revolutionary War (32%)	Colonization and Westward Expansion (16%)
Rank 10	Constitution (22%)	US Civil Rights Act / Movement (14%)

**Figure 2.** The top 10 events generated for the USA by participants from the USA (self) and from Germany (other). Panel (a) shows the top 10 ashamed events, panel (b) shows the top 10 proud events. Colored panels indicate events that overlap for self and other. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.).

**Table 1**

*Relative Frequencies for Specificity, Place, and Lifetime of the Ashamed and Proud Events Generated for One's own and the Respective Other Country in Study 1.*

	About self		About other	
	Ashamed ( <i>n</i> = 1439)	Proud ( <i>n</i> = 1380)	Ashamed ( <i>n</i> = 1153)	Proud ( <i>n</i> = 1111)
<b>Specificity</b>				
Categoric events	23.6%	29.6%	33.7%	48.4%
Extended events	64.7%	40.4%	59.5%	32.5%
Specific events	11.7%	30.0%	6.8%	19.1%
<b>Place</b>				
In respective country	82.8%	80.9%	75.9%	80.6%
Not in respective country	17.2%	19.1%	24.1%	19.4%
<b>Lifetime</b>				
Before lifetime	63.7%	55.3%	60.0%	47.9%
Within lifetime	36.3%	44.7%	40.0%	52.1%

than focusing externally on the nation's interactions with international events. When asked about the respective other country, however, a GEE model showed a significant negative slope for ashamed versus proud events,  $B = -.05$  (.02),  $p = .008$ , reflecting that a slightly higher proportion of the ashamed (vs. the proud) events occurred outside the considered country. This pattern likely reflects the possibility that people may know more about shameful international actions of another country than prideful ones.

**Event coding: Lifetime** (see Table 1). Concerning whether the generated events occurred before or within the participants' lifetime, a GEE model with an exchangeable correlation structure showed a significant negative slope for ashamed versus proud events,  $B = -.21$  (.05),  $p < .001$ , and a significant positive slope for self versus other,  $B = .15$  (.05),  $p = .002$ , but no significant slope for the interaction term,  $B = -.06$  (.09),  $p = .466$ . The biggest difference concerned ashamed versus proud events, with higher proportions of ashamed events before the participants' lifetime, and higher proportions of proud events within. This pattern for both the self and other perspective provides further evidence that people are surprisingly adept at taking the outsider's perspective. Own nation events were somewhat more frequently from before participants' lifetime relative to events generated about the respective other country perhaps because participants simply knew more about their own nation.

## Study 2

Study 2 aimed to replicate the findings of Study 1, while also honing in on our primary interest of better understanding the connection between collective memories and national identity. Here, we sought to directly ask about national identity itself and subsequently examine the emotional tone of those key events. Though participants generated many events in response to our prompts in Study 1, we could not know whether these 10 most important [proud/ashamed] events were those that shape people's sense of national identity for their own or another country. In particular, Study 2 followed previous work by Taylor, Burton-Wood and Garry (2017) by directly asking participants to nominate events that had in one way or another shaped the national identity of their own country. The novel contributions here are that participants in Study 2 were asked (1) to complete the same task for

events that shaped their own *and* the respective other country's national identity, and (2) to additionally indicate how they feel about each nominated event (proud, ashamed, both, or neither).

## Method

**Participants.** After receipt of approval from Claremont McKenna's Institutional Review Board, two samples were recruited and collected between November 2017 and November 2018; one from the USA, the other from Germany. Participants were excluded based on the same criteria as in Study 1. For the U.S. sample, 171 participants were recruited from the undergraduate participant pool at the Claremont Colleges. After exclusions, a sample of 125 American participants (75 females) remained. U.S. participants were between 18 and 24 years of age ( $M = 19.32$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ). 119 participants' only native language was English, and 118 of the 125 participants reported that the United States was the country they most identified with. On a scale from 1 (*very close*) to 4 (*not at all close*), participants, on average, rated feeling closer to their town/city ( $M = 1.63$ ) than to their country ( $M = 2.01$ ),  $t(121) = -4.08$ ,  $p < .001$ , and to their country than to their continent ( $M = 2.31$ ),  $t(122) = -5.05$ ,  $p < .001$ . For the German sample, 154 students were recruited as participants at Regensburg University, Germany. After exclusions, a sample of 127 German participants (116 female) remained. German participants were between 18 and 33 years of age ( $M = 19.99$ ,  $SD = 2.21$ ) and thus again slightly older than participants from the US sample; in Study 2, this age difference was statistically significant,  $t(250) = 2.55$ ,  $p = .011$ .<sup>2</sup> All participants reported that their only native language was German, and 115 out of the 127 participants listed Germany as the country they most identified with. On a scale

<sup>2</sup> We conducted additional analyses to examine whether the slight but statistically significant difference in age might have affected the results. We excluded the six oldest German subjects, reducing the German sample to 121 subjects with a mean age of 19.53 years (range: 18-23; age no longer differed from the US sample,  $p = .20$ ), and reran all analyses reported in the main text with this smaller sample. Again, none of the results were affected by this change, including the Lifetime variable, confirming that the slight age difference had no meaningful impact on the results. We therefore again included the full German sample for the analyses reported in the main text.

from 1 (*very close*) to 4 (*not at all close*), participants, on average, reported feeling closer to their town/city ( $M = 1.94$ ) than to their country ( $M = 2.20$ ),  $t(124) = -3.39$ ,  $p < .001$ , or their continent ( $M = 2.26$ ),  $t(120) = -3.91$ ,  $p < .001$ , and equally so to country and continent ( $t < 1$ ).

**Procedure.** The Qualtrics (Provo, Utah, USA) study was again completed in a self-paced manner on either a lab computer or participants' private devices. Participants took about 15 min to complete it. After providing consent and answering the same demographic questions as in Study 1, participants responded to two prompts. The first prompt asked participants about their own country's national identity: "In the spaces provided below, please list the 10 most important events that have occurred at any point in history that, in your opinion, have shaped [the United States'/Germany's] identity. You may list them as they come to mind, in any order. If you are not sure that what you are thinking of qualifies, please list it anyway. We are interested in the things that come to mind when thinking of what, in your opinion, formed [the United States'/Germany's] identity. When listing the event, you do not need to describe the event in detail. Please just provide the name or a short label that you think would be understandable by another person from [the United States/Germany]." These instructions were adapted from Taylor, Burton-Wood, and Garry (2017). Ten empty numbered (1 to 10) spaces were provided. Participants could only proceed after entering a minimum of five events. The second prompt asked participants about the respective other country's national identity. The instructions were identical to the first prompt, and participants were again required to enter a minimum of five events. In the second part of the study, participants were also asked to respond to two prompts. First, they were asked to indicate their feelings about each event that they had entered regarding their own country's identity. The question "How do you feel about [name of the event]?" was presented separately for each event nominated for one's own country in the first part of the survey. Response options were "proud", "ashamed", "both proud and ashamed", and "neither proud nor ashamed". Next, participants were asked to indicate how they thought citizens of the respective other country should feel about the events that they had just nominated as shaping the other country's identity. The question "How do you think [Germans/U.S. Americans] should feel about [name of the event]?" was again presented separately for each event nominated for the other country in the first part of the survey. The four response options were the same. At the end of the study, participants were again asked to indicate whether they looked up any information while completing it and to rate how difficult it was. Finally, participants were thanked for their participation, debriefed, and compensated.

**Data coding.** All events nominated ( $n = 4241$ ) were coded by two independent coders. The same exclusion criteria as in Study 1 (for duplicate, too vague, inaccurate, personal, or non-sense responses) were used. The remaining responses ( $n = 4009$ ) were assigned descriptive event labels in the same manner as in Study 1. Interrater agreement was 95%, and discrepancies were resolved through discussions. All further steps were identical to the coding procedure for Study 1. All events were again coded

for specificity (intercoder agreement: 79%), place (intercoder agreement: 86%), and lifetime (intercoder agreement: 93%).

## Results

**Number of generated events.** A  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA showed significant differences between the two participant groups,  $F(1, 250) = 10.51$ ,  $MSE = 4.41$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$ , as well as between self versus other,  $F(1, 250) = 130.32$ ,  $MSE = 2.04$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .34$ , plus a significant interaction,  $F(1, 250) = 108.67$ ,  $MSE = 2.04$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .30$ . Replicating Study 1, German participants generated similar numbers of events about their own country ( $M = 7.72$ ,  $SD = 1.87$ ) and the US ( $M = 7.59$ ,  $SD = 1.93$ ),  $t(126) < 1.00$ ,  $p = .401$ ,  $d = 0.08$ , whereas U.S. participants generated a higher number of events about their own country ( $M = 9.65$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) than about Germany ( $M = 6.87$ ,  $SD = 2.23$ ),  $t(124) = 13.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.20$ .

We also examined whether participants' ratings of closeness to their country (scale from 1 = *very close* to 4 = *not at all close*) were associated with the number of events they generated that they later labeled as being proud of or ashamed of. For Americans, greater reported closeness to their country was associated with a higher number of national identity events being later categorized as proud of ( $r = -.24$ ,  $p = .007$ ) and a lower number categorized as ashamed of ( $r = .28$ ,  $p = .002$ ) overall. For Germans, greater reported closeness to their country was also associated with a higher number of national identity events being later categorized as proud of ( $r = -.20$ ,  $p = .023$ ), whereas there was no significant relationship between closeness to their country and the number of national identity events later labeled as being ashamed of.

**Most frequently nominated events** (see Figure 3). For Germany, there were three core events (i.e., the fall of the Berlin Wall, WWII, and WWI). For the USA, participants shared four core events (i.e., the Civil War, WWII, 9/11, and the Revolutionary War), consistent with Taylor et al. (2017)'s findings. All core events also made it into the top 10 events when considered from the "other" perspective. Indeed, as in Study 1, most top 10 events overlapped between self and other for both countries (overlap of eight events for Germany, and seven events for the USA).

Participants were also asked to categorize the feelings associated with each nominated event as ashamed, proud, both or neither (see left panels of Figures 4 and 5). For Germany, of the three core events, fall of the Berlin Wall was primarily associated with pride whereas the other two were primarily associated with shame. More broadly, four of the top 10 events were predominantly associated with shame, whereas three were predominantly associated with pride; for the remaining events, feelings were more mixed or even received relatively high categorizations as "neither". For the USA, interestingly, of the four core events, the Civil War and WWII were almost evenly split across emotional tone, September 11 was primarily considered neither, and the Revolutionary War was primarily associated with pride. More broadly, four of the top 10 events were predominantly associated with pride, whereas only one event was clearly associated with shame. Note that these patterns look

a) Germany

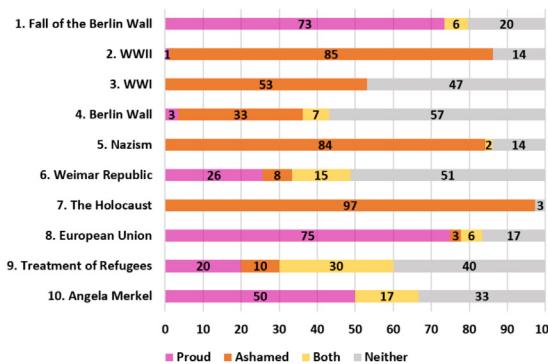
	Self	Other
Rank 1	Fall of the Berlin Wall / German Reunification (77%)	WWII (84%)
Rank 2	WWII (69%)	WWI (68%)
Rank 3	WWI (65%)	The Holocaust (54%)
Rank 4	Berlin Wall / Postwar division of Germany (46%)	Fall of the Berlin Wall / German Reunification (42%)
Rank 5	Nazism (45%)	Adolf Hitler (41%)
Rank 6	Weimar Republic / First parliamentary democracy (31%)	Berlin Wall / Postwar division of Germany (30%)
Rank 7	The Holocaust (30%)	Nazism (26%)
Rank 8	European Union (28%)	Angela Merkel (18%)
Rank 9	Admittance / Treatment of Refugees (24%)	European Union (17%)
Rank 10	Angela Merkel (19%)	Foundation of the German Reich in 1971 (12%)

b) USA

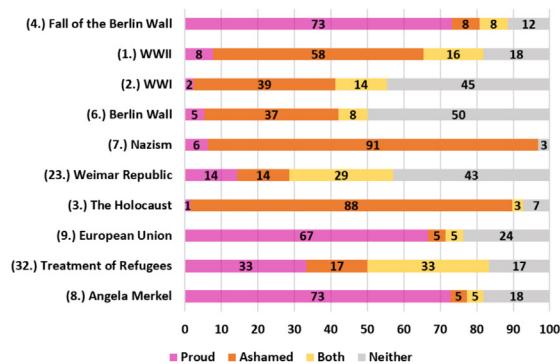
	Self	Other
Rank 1	Civil War (74%)	September 11th (60%)
Rank 2	WWII (65%)	Barack Obama (54%)
Rank 3	September 11th (58%)	Donald Trump (50%)
Rank 4	Revolutionary War (58%)	Declaration of Independence (47%)
Rank 5	Declaration of Independence (44%)	WWII (39%)
Rank 6	WWI (41%)	Cold War (36%)
Rank 7	US Civil Rights Act / Movement (41%)	Revolutionary War (32%)
Rank 8	Constitution (39%)	Early Colonization / Pilgrims etc. (30%)
Rank 9	Donald Trump (33%)	Civil War (29%)
Rank 10	Cold War (32%)	Slavery (28%)

**Figure 3.** The top 10 events generated in Study 2 by participants from the respective country (self) or from the other country. Panel (a) shows the top 10 events generated for Germany, panel (b) shows the top 10 events generated for the USA. Color panels indicate events that overlap for self and other. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.).

a) German subjects about Germany



b) US subjects about Germany

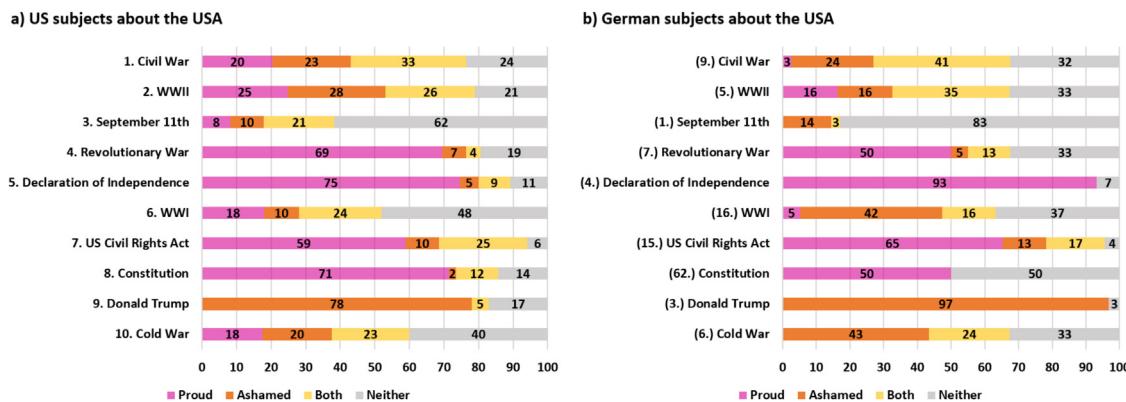


**Figure 4.** Relative frequencies for valence categorizations (proud, ashamed, both, or neither) for the top 10 events generated for Germany. Panel (a) shows the data for German participants generating events about Germany (self); panel (b) shows the data for the same events generated by U.S. participants (other).

a bit different from the data in Study 1, indicating that asking directly about national identity may affect what collective memories came to mind. The remaining events were again more mixed or were categorized as “neither”. Most events were categorized in a strikingly similar manner for self versus other (see right panels of [Figures 4 and 5](#)). Although the match is not perfect, the most frequent categorization for each event was the same for self and other for 14 out of the overall 20 top events. Thus, participants not only considered similar events from an “other” relative to a “self” perspective but were also able to

largely grasp the emotional tone of events central to the other country’s identity.

**Event coding: Specificity** (see [Table 2](#)). Each generated event was again coded as specific, extended, or categoric. A GEE model with an exchangeable correlation structure showed a significant negative slope for self versus other,  $B = -.05$  (.01),  $p < .001$ . As in Study 1, the highest proportion of events consisted of extended events. Events generated for the respective other country more frequently referred to categoric events than events generated for the self. [Table 2](#) shows relative frequencies



**Figure 5.** Relative frequencies for valence categorizations (proud, ashamed, both, or neither) for the top 10 events generated for the USA. Panel (a) shows the data for US participants generating events about the USA (self); panel (b) shows the data for the same events generated by German participants (other).

**Table 2**

*Relative Frequencies for Specificity, Place, and Lifetime of the Events Generated for one's own and the Respective Other Country in Study 2, Additionally Broken Down by Whether Events Were Categorized as Proud, Ashamed, Both, or Neither.*

	About self (n = 2185)				About other (n = 1822)			
	Proud (699)	Ashamed (570)	Both (251)	Neither (665)	Proud (515)	Ashamed (635)	Both (191)	Neither (481)
<b>Specificity</b>								
Categoric events	9.9%	5.1%	6.0%	6.0%	20.4%	12.3%	12.6%	10.8%
Extended events	49.9%	87.0%	75.3%	72.6%	46.0%	79.2%	76.4%	61.3%
Specific events	40.2%	7.9%	18.7%	21.4%	33.6%	8.5%	11.0%	27.9%
<b>Place</b>								
In respective country	84.5%	84.2%	74.9%	84.2%	89.7%	80.5%	68.1%	79.4%
Not in respective country	15.5%	15.8%	25.1%	15.8%	10.3%	19.5%	31.9%	20.6%
<b>Lifetime</b>								
Before lifetime	80.4%	82.3%	78.1%	83.5%	70.5%	76.7%	87.4%	75.5%
Within lifetime	19.6%	17.7%	21.9%	16.5%	29.5%	23.3%	12.6%	24.5%

additionally broken down by whether events were categorized as proud, ashamed, both, or neither. As in Study 1, for events generated about one's own country, ashamed events most frequently referred to extended events, whereas proud events comprised a mix of extended and specific events. Events categorized as proud were again more likely to refer to specific events than events categorized as ashamed. A very similar pattern was found for events generated about the respective other country.

**Event coding: Place** (see Table 2). As in Study 1, most generated events occurred in the considered country. A GEE model with an exchangeable correlation structure showed no significant slope for self versus other,  $B = -.02 (.02)$ ,  $p = .207$ , suggesting that frequency distributions did not differ between events generated for self versus other. Table 2 additionally shows relative frequencies broken down by valence categorizations. There were no major differences for events generated about the self, but when asked about the respective other country, a slightly higher proportion of the generated ashamed (vs. the proud) events occurred outside the considered country. This is largely consistent with the pattern observed in Study 1.

**Event coding: Lifetime** (see Table 2). Concerning whether the generated events occurred before or within the participants' lifetime, a GEE model with an exchangeable correlation structure showed a significant positive slope for self versus other,  $B = .27 (.07)$ ,  $p < .001$ . As in Study 1, events generated about

the self were somewhat more frequently from before participants' lifetime relative to events generated about the respective other country. In Study 1, a higher proportion of the generated ashamed events were before the participants' lifetime, and a higher proportion of the generated proud events were within the participants' lifetime. This pattern was not observed as clearly in Study 2 (see Table 2). There were no corresponding differences for events generated about the self. Similar to the patterns of Study 1, ashamed events generated for the respective other country occurred slightly more often before the participants' lifetime, whereas proud events were slightly more often from within their lifetime.

## General Discussion

The present studies examined important national collective memories from a "self" and "other" perspective in American and German participants. We aimed to understand the extent to which national identity is shaped by pride in one's country's past. Participants showed higher agreement for ashamed events relative to proud events, both when a country's past was considered from an insider and outsider perspective. When directly asked about events that shaped national identity, participants agreed on a few proud events, but the rest of the most frequently nominated events were mixed in valence or predominantly cat-

egorized as “ashamed.” Interestingly, in addition to generating similar events when considering a country from a self versus other perspective, participants also showed insight into the emotional tone of national identity events relevant to the respective other country.

Event coding for specificity, place, and lifetime revealed some consistent patterns across studies. First, participants generated somewhat more categoric events for the other than for their own country, and events categorized as proud tended to be more specific than ashamed events and events more mixed in valence. Second, generated events predominantly occurred domestically, though there was a trend in Study 2 for national identity events categorized as shameful for the other country to have occurred outside that country. Finally, most generated events occurred before the participants’ lifetime. This was especially true for events generated for one’s own country, with events nominated for the other country more frequently occurring within participants’ lifetime.

Previous studies have shown that collective memories are highly biased toward viewing one’s group in a positive light (e.g., Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020; Liu et al., 2009; Zaromb et al., 2018). The present study indicates that such “narcissistic” biases in collective remembering may be more complicated. In contrast to research showing collective forgetting (Sahdra & Ross, 2007; Yamashiro, Van Engen, & Roediger, 2019), both U.S. and German participants generated just as many (if not more) ashamed events as prideful ones about their own country. When directly asked about events that shaped their country’s national identity, among the most frequently nominated events, there was a great variety, with a few events being primarily associated with pride, shame, or neither and with others exhibiting no real consensus on their primary emotional tone. Still, participants’ ratings of closeness to their country influenced the accessibility of events in terms of how many events they nominated outright or later placed in particular emotional tone categories. Thus, it seems that national identity, just like individual identity, does not only comprise the “highs” of a nation’s past, but also its “lows” and many things in between.

The greater agreement about ashamed events, whether it is for the U.S. or Germany, could be due to exposure to negative events in news and historical narratives. Indeed, for the present samples of undergraduates, these may be the very events they learn most about in their formal education. Negative events such as wars, protests, and revolutions often act as turning points in history (see Taylor et al., 2015). Sufferings and tragedies may be perceived as shameful, but preservation of such memories can also function to enhance ingroup solidarity by commemorating a shared history (Bar-Tal, 2003; Brewer, Hong, & Li, 2004; Hamilton, Sherman, & Lickel, 1998; Zarecka, 1994). Additionally, collective guilt over past actions likely plays a role in the greater number of and agreement on shameful national events (e.g., Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014; Klein et al., 2011). The present emotional climate, or predominate collective feelings emerging from ingroup interactions, of these countries may also contribute (see De Rivera & Páez, 2007). In this context, a shortcoming of the present study may be that we did not collect additional statements on *why* a given event was considered

an important part of the nation’s past, shaping national identity. Even shameful events generated by participants might act as a source of pride. Interestingly, for at least some of them, their counterparts were also generated as proud events. For instance, American participants in Study 1 generated slavery as an ashamed event, and the abolition of slavery as a proud event. Similarly, German participants nominated the post-war division of Germany as an ashamed event, and the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification as a proud event. This suggests that, sometimes, there may be pride in the present due to how a shameful situation was overcome by a group in the past (see also Mummendey, Klink, & Brown, 2001, for how temporal comparisons may support a positive view of one’s group).

When people tell their personal life stories, autobiographical pasts are often reconstructed in terms of a redemption sequence by juxtaposing negative events with positive outcomes (McAdams, 2006; McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001). Our studies suggest that this redemption narrative may also be used at the national collective level, consistent with schematic narrative templates (Wertsch, 2002). Individuals considering their personal past and future usually show a positivity bias; when considering the past of their national collective, however, they seem to show a negativity bias instead (Topcu & Hirst, 2020). Such negativity can also be evident in collective future thinking (Shrikanth, Szpunar, & Szpunar, 2018). For example, Yamashiro and Roediger (2019) suggest that a cultural narrative of decline has emerged among Americans whereby participants who were not explicitly asked about their nation’s future implicitly produced a trajectory of American decadence. In contrast, German collective memory seems to show a shift from a culture of exclusively contrition to a new narrative of positive historical consciousness (Wittlinger, 2006; Wittlinger & Boothroyd, 2010). Such narratives likely contribute to the present findings.

Individual memory research demonstrates that people can have vivid memories of events that did not happen to them, but to other people (Pillemer et al., 2015; Svob & Brown, 2012; Thomsen & Pillemer, 2017). Intriguingly, the present research extends the existing literature by indicating that vicarious memories can also exist on a collective level, with people from one social group being able to generate events that were important in another social group’s past and even grasp the emotional tone of another country’s national collective memories from the outside, and, indeed, that these memories can evolve over time. For example, consistent with Langenbacher and Wittlinger (2008)’s observation that Americans have shifted from viewing Germany only through the lens of Nazism, World War II and the Holocaust to a more positive lens, our American participants generated significantly more proud than ashamed events for Germany. Yet, American participants generated more events about the US than about Germany, aligned with the view that Americans may be more egocentric than other nationalities (e.g., Hofstede, 2001; Oyserman et al., 2002; Wang et al., 2012). For both groups, specificity of generated events was lower and recency played a more important role when participants considered the respective other country, indicating that there may be limits to the extent of vicarious national collective memories. However, neither par-

ticipant group seemed to exhibit the outgroup hate that [Golec de Zavala and Lantos \(2020\)](#) include as part of collective narcissism (but we did not directly probe for this). Instead, we suspect that possession of greater knowledge about their own versus the other group's past likely explains these egocentric tendencies, since personally relevant information is more likely to be encoded and remembered ([Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000](#); [Wang et al., 2012](#)). Nevertheless, the present findings relate to the notion of a collective as an "imagined community" ([Anderson, 1991](#)), with group members never having met, but sharing a common past. It may not only be possible to imagine such a community and what drives its identity from the inside, but up to a certain degree, also from the outside.

Importantly, it is not clear how much our data bear on the psychological processes involved among other populations. Our samples of Americans and Germans undergraduates may not be representative of their respective nations. Additionally, the U.S. and Germany are both generally considered western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD, [Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010a](#); [Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010b](#)) countries. These countries share other characteristics and historical touchpoints that may have influenced the degree of overlap in self versus other perspective-based collective memory. And, like all nations, each has unique aspects and singular historical and cultural events.

Therefore, our work illustrates what is *possible* with collective memories beyond prideful ones shaping national identity whereas the empirical work on what is *typical* is yet to be done. The present studies provide suggestive first findings in empirically investigating national identity from within and without. National identity can be shaped by more than memories of pride alone. The surprisingly high agreement for ashamed events generated as collective memories from both inside and outside a national collective suggests that they may be at least as important for national identity. Future work must test the generalizability of our findings in more representative samples within the present countries and across many more national collectives. Others can also extend the present initial support for a more nuanced relationship between national identity and collective memories in hopes of elucidating the specific underlying psychological mechanisms driving these unexpected results.

### Author Contributions

All authors approved the final manuscript. MA and SU conceived of the studies, programmed the studies, and organized data collection. All authors contributed to coding the data to varying degrees. SU cleaned the full datasets, consistency-coded for both studies, and finalized the datasets for analyses. MA conducted the majority of the analyses. Regarding writing, SYC drafted the main introduction, parts of the results and discussion for Study 1, and the introduction to Study 2; MA finalized the methods and results for both studies and drafted the general discussion; ASL drafted the methods for Study 1, and SU compiled all parts and edited and revised the manuscript. SYC, MA, and SU handled the revisions in the review process.

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