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How Does Collective Memory Create a Sense of the Collective?

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Where were you when you first heard about the 9-11 attacks? Do you remember what you were doing at the time? How did you feel when you first heard the news, and how does thinking about this event make you feel now? As of this writing many Americans over the age of 15 most likely find these questions remarkably easy to answer. The fact that a singular event in history could be remembered so well, and by so many people, is relevant to at least two lines of research in the memory literature.

First, the very fact that people *can* answer such questions so easily is relevant to research and theory on "flashbulb memories" (Brown & Kulik, 1977; Kvavilashvili, Mirani, Schlagman, & Kornbrot, 2004; Sharot, Martorella, Delgado, & Phelps, 2006). As originally conceptualized, flashbulb memories were regarded as extraordinarily detailed, long-lasting, and unusually accurate "snapshots" of the specific context in which an unexpected, emotion-laden event occurred (Brown & Kulik, 1977). Over the years, research has qualified some of the early claims regarding such memories. For example, even though people often perceive that such memories are accurate, such recollections can contain the same sorts of distortions one finds with other types of memories (Neisser & Harsch, 1992). Nevertheless, more recent work has found that flashbulb memories can sometimes be extraordinarily accurate and detailed, provided that the event has direct, personal relevance to the perceiver (Bernsten & Thomsen, 2005). As we discuss in more detail ahead, the vividness of these memories is

important because it suggests that such recollections may be especially likely to trigger strong emotions.

Second, the fact that such vivid memories are distributed across literally millions of people has implications for research and theory on collective memory (Halbwachs, 1992). Although there is no single agreed-upon definition of such memories (cf. Wertsch & Roediger, in press), one of the important functions of such memories is that they have a remarkable capacity to create a sense of unity or "oneness" among people who would not otherwise see a meaningful sense of kinship. This certainly seems to be true of the 9-11 attacks in the sense that this event, like other calamitous threats to a nation or its people, creates a "remembering collective that recollects and recounts itself through the unifying memory of catastrophes and suffering….binding its members together by instilling in them a sense of common mission and destiny" (Zertal, 2005, p. 2) In other words, although memories of the 9-11 attacks are certainly important for many people, such memories are particularly important for Americans because they have become an important element of how they define themselves. To paraphrase an analogous point made by Balkin (1999), such memories bind Americans together because these memories are linked to a story that is *their* story.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND EMOTION

In our view, catastrophic events such as the 9-11 attacks are particularly valuable because they highlight the important relation of emotion to understanding collective memory. Although collective memory researchers have hardly ignored emotion (Cohn, Mehl, & Pennebaker, 2004), less is known about this factor than one might think. This is especially true in terms of the different types of consequences that emotion can have in shaping and guiding social attitudes and values.

We discuss these findings in more detail later in this chapter, but our interest in these matters was stimulated by a recent line of research in our laboratory which, over the past few years, has yielded some provocative and highly counterintuitive results (Olson, 2003; Lambert, Nesse, Olson, Andrews, Zisser, & Schott, 2008). In this paradigm, participants are randomly assigned to condition in which they either

were, or were not, reminded of the 9-11 attacks. Perhaps not surprisingly, these reminders triggered a significant increase in negative emotion, including heightened levels of unhappiness, anger, and anxiety. Of greater interest, these emotional experiences led to systematic "shifts" in participants' support for key socio-political issues. For example, the anger elicited by memories of the 9-11 attacks led, in turn, to a general tendency to support "pro-military" positions, which included greater support for Bush's decision to invade Iraq as well as the president's "war on terror". Moreover, the direction and magnitude of this effect was completely unaffected by participants' own political ideology (measured earlier in the experiment). This meant that, even among the most "superliberal", Bush-hating participants in our sample, reminders of the 9-11 attacks led to increased support for the president's policies, as mediated through anger. For us, these and other aspects of our findings to be discussed later serves as a provocative illustration of the power of collective memories, and the important role that emotion might play in this regard.

The rest of this chapter is organized in the following way. We begin with a brief consideration of some basic theoretical issues regarding collective memory. This is not meant to be an exhaustive review of the literature, but is meant to clarify a few key issues that are germane to some key points made in this chapter. We next discuss two different "senses" of emotion as it relates to collective memory, namely, memories *of* emotion as opposed to the effects of memory *on* emotion. Following this, we consider some interesting but understudied implications of emotion as it might apply to the passage of time, and how such passage could ultimately yield striking incongruities between the ways that people felt about an event in the past, as opposed to how they might feel later. In the final section of the chapter, we discuss in more detail the recent findings we have obtained in our own laboratory which, as suggested above, provide specific documentation of the interactive roles of collective memory and emotion in shaping important socio-political attitudes.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Collective memories are often relevant to the citizens of a particular nation, but such memories can also be critical to other types of collectives, such as religious groups (e.g., Jews' memories of the

Holocaust; cf. Novick, 1999). As for the sense of "togetherness" that collective memories might foster, such effects could operate at different levels. For example, such unity could refer to a global sense of identity (e.g. nationalism, patriotism) among members of a group. However, these effects might be more specific, anchored with respect to a specific attitude or decision, such as a decision to go to war. The process by which collections of individuals might vary increase in their "groupiness" is related to Campbell's (1958) concept of *entitativity*, which refers to the degree to which a collection of persons are bonded together in a coherent unit (Lickel et al, 2000). For example, groups high in entitativity tend to maintain greater cohesiveness and "feel" more like a collective compared to groups low in entitativity (McConnell, Sherman, & Hamilton, 1997). Entitativity is somewhat related to the concept of *group homogeneity* (Lambert & Wyer, 1990; Lambert, Barton, Lickel, & Wells, 1998; Tajfel, 1981; Park & Hastie, 1987) although the two terms are not identical (Yzerbyt, Judd, & Corneille, 2003).

One of the long-running debates in the collective memory literature is whether studying the mechanisms underlying *individually*-held memories--the kinds of memories most often studied by experimental psychologists--can lead to a greater understanding of *collective* memories, and vice versa (Vellman, 1997; Wilson, 2005). Although we do not subscribe to a strong "reductionistic" view (i.e. that collective memory can simply be reduced to individual memory processes) many of the findings obtained in the experimental psychological literature on "individual" memories are relevant to collective memories as well. In other words, a focus on the collective does not preclude a focus on the individual, and vice versa.

In this chapter we were particularly interested in those aspects of collective memory that are relevant to emotion. However, this does not imply that that all examples of collective memory must necessarily involve strong affective experience. For example, Americans' memories of the Declaration of Independence, or Britons' memories of the Battle of Hastings, both seem to qualify as excellent examples of collective memory. However, neither of these memories is likely to be associated with particularly strong emotions. Hence, emotion may be only one of several different sorts of factors that have the capacity to bind people

together. In the two examples cited above, for instance, it is the *symbolic meaning* of these events that probably give the memories significance to their respective target populations. The factors that determine the presence/intensity of emotion in collective memory strikes us as an important issue in its own right. As far as we know, little formal work has been done on this topic. It may be useful in future work to delineate factors on the basis of whether they have to do with the nature of the event itself (e.g. how long ago it occurred, its vividness) or the properties of the person remembering it.

Finally, it is important to recognize that collective memories are, by their very nature, embedded in a singular historical/social context. For this reason, it is possible that some of the dynamics surrounding a given collective memory may be specific to that particular memory, and may not generalize to other memories that are relevant to events that occurred in a different context. Although we focus on a number of different collective memories in this chapter, our main attention is on the 9-11 attacks, as a "running theme" to illustrate some of the main points we wish to make here. Nevertheless, we believe that emotion is likely to play an important role in collective memory much of the time, and one of the overarching goals of this chapter is delineate the various ways that this might occur for various types of collective memory, including but not limited to those associated with the 9-11 attacks.

Emotions as Memorial Representations: On the Storage and Retrieval of Affective States

In the collective memory literature, emotion is often framed as something that is *remembered*. For example, the question we posed at the beginning of our chapter—*How did you feel when you first heard the news about the 911 attacks?*—represents a query about a past internal state. This sense of emotion can be understood as a type a memory within the declarative memory system, which "provides a basis for conscious recollection of facts and events" (Squire, 1994, p. 203). Hence, questions about one's past emotional state are, in principle, not appreciably different from asking people to remember other facts about that day (e.g. *do you recall calling your parents?*). Recalling information about a past emotional state may, or may not, correspond to

how you *currently* feel. For example, a person may remember being extremely confused and upset when they first heard the news about the 9/11 attacks. However, this does not necessarily imply that they are feeling that way at the time they are answering the question.

In short, we speak here of memories *about* our emotions. Setting aside the issues surrounding collective memories for the moment, such memories are important for several reasons. For one thing, we have a huge number of them. If you took the time to write about all of the things that have happened to you over the last week, many of these events are likely to be associated with at least *some* kind emotional reaction (e.g. boredom, surprise, pleasure, irritation, happiness, sadness, impatience, etc). There may be some truly mundane events that do not trigger any emotion at all, such as picking up a cup of coffee (unless it happens to be unexpectedly hot). For the most part, however, events of any consequence usually are associated with *some* emotion, even if such emotions are quite fleeting (cf. Zajonc, 1980). Moreover, memories of our own emotions almost certainly play a role in formation and construction of personal identity. In particular, the sense of who we are as a person, and our ability to predict our own future behavior, is likely to be based in part on our memories of our own affective responses to previous events (Stryker, 2004).

Implications for Collective Memory

How might these considerations be relevant to collective memories in particular? In the discussion to follow we first consider two distinct ways that memories for emotion could fostering the "sense of the collective" that is often mentioned by researchers in this area. As we shall show, this sense of collectiveness does not necessarily have to be based on objective reality, insofar as people could potentially overestimate or exaggerate the extent to which others share one's own memories of affective experience. We continue this theme in the next section, exploring the various memory biases that might play a role here and the consequences that such biases might have.

Creation of the Collective through Interaction and Social Inference

Memories are obviously something that people share with one another during one-on-one interactions (Boyer, 1992) and such sharing can often include sharing of memories about emotional experiences (Harber & Cohen, 2005; Laurenceau, Barrett, and Pietromonaco, 1998; Rime, 2007). Such shared memories could focus on events that are specific to the people involved (e.g. "Remember that time when we took that road trip to Boston?") or could extend to a much more widely-experienced event (e.g. "I can't believe it's been forty years since we sat in front of the television and watched the funeral of President Kennedy"). In the latter case, sharing of memories about a widely-experienced event could lead huge groups of people to feel a greater sense of kinship than they otherwise would. Again, we speak here of the sharing of memories about emotions, not the affective experience itself; we consider the latter in more detail presently. However, it would be a mistake to dismiss such memories as trivial or inconsequential. On the contrary, sharing how one "felt at the time" can be psychologically important and useful in its own right, even in the absence of actual emotions during the retelling.

A sense of the collective does not, however, necessarily have to be based on objective reality. In other words, a *perception* that other share one's recollections may be more important than whether that overlap is actually present. For example, many Americans are likely to feel that they have a psychological bond with at least some other Americans in terms of their emotional experiences surrounding several disparate historical events. Depending on their age and other demographic factors, this could include memories of the attack on Pearl Harbor (1941), launching of Sputnik (1957), the assassination of JFK (1963), the resignation of Richard Nixon (1974), the explosion of the Challenger shuttle (1986), or the start of the Persian Gulf War (1990).

In theory, there could be very high overlap across people in the vividness of people's memory of these and other events, along with the emotions associated with them. In practice, however, people may often perceive more consensus than is really the case. Research in the social psychological literature has shown that people tend to assume that others

share their own attitudes and experiences, especially when we are not privy to any specific information about others (Ross, Greene, & House, 1977). In other words, in the absence of any information to the contrary, people often "default" to their own experiences when forming inferences about others. Hence, for example, a fifty-something ex-hippy might tend to overestimate the extent to which people of his generation remembered and experienced Woodstock in the same way he did. Importantly, this could be true even if his experiences are, in fact, fairly idiosyncratic and are not shared by many people at all. In this sense, one could argue that one's subjective perception of the overlap of one's memories/emotions with others can, in certain cases, be most critical, independent of whether those perceptions are actually correct.

On the Role of Selective/Reconstructive Memory

The considerations raised above raise a related issue, namely, the extent to which memories for emotions are guided by selective and/or reconstructive biases. Although memories of events such as the 9-11 attacks might *generally* be accurate, this does not mean that such biases never exist in this domain. Such biases could certainly include memory for one's own previous emotions. In other words, as with other sorts of memories, recollection of one's own internal state could be systematically be distorted by considerations that are present at the time of retrieval.

As for where such biases might come from, it is heuristically useful to consider two general families of causation. On the one hand, such biases could be driven by "internal" factors specific to the person engaging in the recollection. Certainly, there is much evidence in the experimental psychological literature showing that memories for one's own previous emotions can be systematically biased by one's own personality traits (e.g. level of neuroticism) as well as chronically-experienced and/or acute emotional experiences, such as feelings of anxiety (Feldman-Barrett, 1997; Levine, Safer, & Lench, 2006). Such considerations certainly could to collective memories. For example, if you happened to be anxious at the time you thought about the 9-11 attacks and your original reaction to them, this might lead you to selectively focus on, or perhaps even falsely "remember", previous

experiences that were associated with anxious feelings as opposed to experiences associated with other emotions, such as anger (Levine, Whalen, Jamner & Henker, 2005).

Memory for one's previous emotions could also be affected by considerations that are more "external" to the person doing the remembering. Of particular relevance to collective memory is the attempts of politicians to deliberately influence our memories through the use of propaganda, speeches, or other types of "political spin" (Ewen, 1996). It has long been recognized that politicians often have much to gain through manipulating the emotions of the people they seek to govern, and this could certainly include subtle or not-so-subtle attempts to distort memories for what people felt at any particular time. For example, political observers often observed that Hillary Clinton's campaign during the 2008 presidential election cycle relied, in part, on augmenting Americans' nostalgia for Bill Clinton's presidency during the 1990s. To the extent that such efforts were even partially successful, such effects could have been due, in part, to some distortion or exaggeration of people's memories for their positive emotions (e.g. economic well-being) during that period. Of course, politicians often have much to gain by deliberately manipulating and drawing people's *current* emotions, an issue that we consider in more detail ahead.

The upshot of these considerations is that memories of emotions, like other types of memories, can often be *constructed*. To reiterate, this does not necessarily contradict the notion that vivid events can be remembered quite accurately. Some aspects of people's memories may, in fact, be remarkably accurate, especially when they pertain to overt "external" events, such as having a mental snapshot of the flow of events on a particular day. When it comes to our own internal experiences, however, memory biases may be more likely, although the extent to which this is true is likely to depend on the nature of the emotional experience and the extent to which the emotion was behaviorally expressed at the time.

On the Role of Memory in Triggering the Active Experience of Emotion

The previous discussion of the emotion-memory relationship focused on memory for *past* emotions. However, this is just one aspect of the interrelation between memory and emotion. In particular, remembering our past can also give rise to *current* emotional experience. Episodic memory is particularly likely to be involved in these considerations, for reasons that are captured well by Endel Tulving's (2002) famous essay in which he noted the "time capsule" essence of episodic memory:

> With one singular exception, time's arrow is straight. Unidirectionality of time is one of nature's most fundamental laws. It has relentlessly governed all happenings in the universe—cosmic, geological, physical, biological, psychological—as long as the universe has existed. Galaxies and stars are born and they die, living creatures are young before they grow old, causes always precede effects, there is no return to yesterday, and so on and on. Time's flow is irreversible. The singular exception is provided by the human ability to remember past happenings. When one thinks today about what one did yesterday, time's arrow is bent into a loop. The rememberer has mentally traveled back into her past and thus violated the law of the irreversibility of the flow of time. She has not accomplished the feat in physical reality, of course, but rather in the reality of the mind, which, as everyone knows, is at least as important for human beings as is the physical reality (Tulving, 2002, p. x).

Tulving does not specifically consider emotion in his analysis, but this view clearly suggests that episodic memory can play an important role not only in remembering, but also in *re-experiencing*, the emotional content of the initial event. For example, memories of the 9/11 attacks may not simply involve remembering being upset, it may subsequently lead one to *actually be* upset.

Readers familiar with the process-oriented literature on memory may have already noted that the sense of emotion emphasized here might

bear some relevance to non-declarative systems of memory (e.g. automatized, proceduralized processes such as classical conditioning; cf. Squire & Kandel, 1999). However, the problem in this analysis is that there is considerable debate in the literature as to what is the best way to frame the nature of these dual memory systems (e.g. explicit vs. implicit, as opposed to declarative vs. non-declarative). As a related point, non-declarative processes are sometimes assumed to be nonconscious but this assumption may not be applicable when speaking of the active experience of emotion (cf. Clore, 1994). For present purposes, the distinction that is most important is between memories *of* emotion (covered in our earlier section) as opposed to the effects of memories *on* emotion, which is the focus of the current discussion.

Communication of Emotion, Redux

As with other internal non-declarative states, human beings possess the ability to transform emotional experiences into verbal reports. However, some transformations can be more difficult than others. Researchers and poets alike have long known that the process of "putting emotions into words" can be inherently difficult and there can be a large gap between the words that we are using to describe an emotional state and the features of the emotional state itself. Nonetheless, human beings do seem to have a drive to express their current feelings and this fact has some important implications for many aspects of social behavior, including issues relevant to collective memory.

Earlier in this chapter, we had suggested that people might be inclined to share memories about their past emotional experiences, even when the retrieval process does not actually trigger any emotion per se. Such sharing may be even more likely when recollections of past events spontaneously activate strong emotions (Rime & Christophe, 1997). Classic work in the social psychological literature has shown that people often have a drive to affiliate with others when they are experiencing strong emotions (especially, negative emotions arising out of stress) as part of a larger effort to understand their own internal feelings (Schacter, 1959). In addition, the "urge to share" may be also driven by the psychological benefits of expressing one's emotional experiences to

others (Pennebaker, 2004). The process of sharing/communicating such emotions seems likely to represent a specific social psychological mechanism which could contribute to the "sense of the collective" which has been of such strong interest among researchers in the collective memory literature.

What Kinds of Memories are Likely to Trigger Emotions?

Before turning to the next section, it is useful to consider an interesting but understudied issue, namely, what *kinds* of collective memories are likely to involve emotion in either of the senses we have discussed thus far (i.e. emotion as a stored representation, or as an actively-experienced affective state). Thus far, we have focused mostly on episodic memory, which includes "memory for specific events that were personally experienced and remembered" (Balota & Coane, in press). As noted earlier, such memories do not necessarily have to involve the direct experience of emotion. However, when memories *do* involve emotion, it seems intuitively likely that the memory in question is, in fact, an episodic memory. Certainly, our most powerful emotional reactions (e.g. feelings of grief, euphoria, depression, anger, happiness) seem to usually revolve around an event or series of events, that we more or less personally experienced.[1]

By way of contrast, semantic memory pertains to an even broader base of memory, which could loosely be regarded as people's "general world knowledge", which would include, among other things, your understanding of concepts and words (e.g. the meaning of the concept of *mammal*), beliefs about objects in our environment (e.g. knowledge that tomatoes are red, edible, and are smaller than watermelons) as well as knowledge of facts about people and events, including those involving the self. For example, the knowledge that your mother gave birth to you is part of semantic, but not episodic, memory, as humans typically lack reliable episodic memory of events from the first year or so of life (cf. Newcombe, Lloyd, & Ratliff, 2007).

To what extent do emotions play a role in semantic memories? Certainly, we can have positive or negative appraisals of events and objects we have not had any personal experience at all. For example, semantic memory can include knowledge about all sorts of people and

historical events (e.g. Adolph Hitler, Mahatma Gandhi, the crash of the Hindenburg, the coronation of King Louis VIII) about which we may have positive or negative feelings, even in the absence of any personal experience. Moreover, depending on the event in question and the type of knowledge that one has acquired about it, the intensity of such emotions can sometimes rival those associated with episodic memories. For example, few people alive at the current time personally experienced the Holocaust. However, knowledge of the event itself, and the vivid photographs that document its existence, can trigger exceptionally strong reactions in people, even if they were born long after the event took place.

Past-Present Emotional Discordance

The way that people *felt* about an event may not necessarily match their *current* feelings. For example, events that once elicited joy may now make us rather gloomy. Conversely, events that formerly elicited a sense of doom now may be more likely to make us rather cheery. In such cases, remembering the initial event could elicit a sense of conflict (e.g. "torn feelings"), such as a mixed sense of wistfulness, happiness, and anger that someone might feel in the context of bitter divorce, when reminiscing about a joyful marriage ceremony with one's former spouse. In such cases, the conflict may involve a sharp discrepancy between the emotions stored along with the original episodic trace (e.g. "I remember dancing all night with you in the garden") vs. current emotions that are based on more recent events. Such discrepancies could include at least two "types", namely, circumstances in which (a) the original memory is associated with positive emotions but we feel more negative now, or (b) the original memory is associated with negative emotions but we feel more positively now. For example, the former might involve hating something we once loved whereas the latter might involve loving something we once hated.

Setting aside the exact nature of the discordance, research has demonstrated that people have a remarkable tendency to engage in personal "revisionism" in their own personal histories in the service of alleviating or even eliminating such conflict. For example, work by Michael Ross and his colleagues (Ross & Wilson, 2003; Wilson & Ross,

2001) have shown that people often distort memories of their own past. This revisionism often occurs in the service of rendering a more evaluatively consistent balance between how we feel now and how we *remember* feeling then. This sort of process may generally be consistent with principles of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), which suggests that people find evaluative discord unpleasant and will be motivated to resolve the consistency by changing one or more of the elements that are contributing to it. In the case of conflict between present and (memories of) past emotions, one could resolve this dissonance either through modifying one's current feelings (e.g. "Perhaps I really still do love her, after all") or by revising one's sense of what one's original feelings were like (e.g. "Down deep, I guess I did have some serious doubts about the marriage").

Implications for Collective Memory

These considerations have some theoretically and practically important ramifications for collective memory. Take, for example, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. As widely reported by the media, reunification of west and east Germany appeared to result in a general state of euphoria. However, Germans' *current* feelings tell a rather different story. Recent polls from various polling organizations indicate some sharply divided and remarkably disparate feelings among Germans, with a surprisingly high percentage of Germans (approximately 25%, as of 2004) expressing the opinion that Germany was better off with the wall *intact*. This is just one example, but we suspect that the experience is not uncommon. A large group of people might experience (more or less) the same emotional reaction to an event when it initially occurs. However, this in no way implies that the group will always have this kind of emotional consensus. Over time, groups are likely to become more heterogeneous in their emotions depending on the idiosyncratic trajectory of people's own personal lives. For example, Germans whose economic fortunes substantially improved with the fall of the Berlin wall should, for obvious reasons, be more likely to retain their positive feelings regarding reunification compared to those who fared less well after that event.

This issue is important because it means that after-the-fact recollections of a key historical event may, or may not, increase the psychological sense of togetherness among a group of people, even if huge groups of people all felt more or less the same emotion at the time. Time has a tendency to change our views, but the exact track of revisionism may take different paths for different people over time. Memories that create a sense of collectiveness at one point in time may not necessarily have that property indefinitely.

The Power of Collective Betrayal

As noted above, emotional discord in individuals can produce strong emotions in its own right, such as feelings of disappointment or even betrayal. However, the existence of such bitterness in one person is one thing; the presence of such emotions among large groups of people, all at the same time, is quite another. The phenomenon of large groups of people all feeling strong emotions at the same time is relevant to several classic lines of research in the social science. This includes LeBon's (1903) classic work on "mob behavior" as well as numerous other theoretical models concerned with the psychology of crowds (e.g. Reicher, 2004). To be sure, groups do not always act in a coordinated manor, even when its members are feeling much the same emotion. However, there are important cases in which the collective experience of emotion can lead to dramatic and sudden changes. Indeed, history is filled with examples of nations whose citizens have experienced collective euphoria over a change in leadership or political structure, only to feel quite differently a relatively short time later, when optimism about the "new guard" quickly fades into a sense of disappointment, sometimes even betrayal. Again, it seems likely that the strength of these emotions are derived from a sharp discord between past and present, between what people felt at a particular time and how they feel now.

One very recent example of this emerged very recently in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia. In 2003, Mikheil Saakashvili received nearly unanimous support among Georgians as part of the non-violent "Rose Revolution" in which Eduard Shevardnadze--a politician strongly associated with the corruptive practices of the communist party-

-was swept from office. Only four years later, however, Georgians engaged in massive and wide-scale protests demanding Saakashvilli's immediate resignation, fostered (ironically) by the widespread perception that he had engaged in many of the same sorts of corruptive actions that led to his predecessor being removed from office. We are not aware of any data that specifically speaks to this point, but it seems likely that the collective memory of the Rose Revolution—and in particular, the positive feelings and optimism surrounding that event—may, ironically, be one of the important reasons for the widespread existence of anger. Rapid changes in society often involve intense emotions. It seems likely that collective memories may often play a key role in eliciting the widespread activation and expression of these affective states.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND RESEACH ON "RALLY EFFECTS"

Just a few days after the 9-11 attacks, President George W. Bush saw his job approval ratings soar 39 points to 90% in just a few days. This represents the highest approval rating ever recorded for an American president, besting the previous record of 89%, held by Bush's father, just after the commencement of the Gulf War in 1991. These events are familiar to American political theorists, who often use the term "rally effects" (short for "rally 'round the flag effect") to describe these dramatic boosts in approval ratings in response to a singular historical event (Kernell, 1978). [2] We believe that there is a strong connection between rally effects and collective memories, for at least two reasons. First, although political scientists rarely mention memory processes in their discussion of rally effects, such effects are, by definition, shifts in political preferences that occur in "after-the-fact" fashion to historical events and these preference shifts can last for months or even years (Brody & Shapiro, 1989). Hence, rally effects are strongly rooted in collective memory of an historical event. Second, and even more important to our mind, the *consequences* of rally effects are directly relevant to the "sense of the collective" that is so central to the idea of collective memory in the first place. For example, it is difficult

to imagine that George W. Bush could have galvanized support for the subsequent war in Iraq without broad support for his presidency, and the 9-11 attacks certainly provided that support in the form of record-breaking levels of presidential approval.

Political criticisms of Bush aside (e.g. whether he "misused" the 9-11 attacks for his own agenda in Iraq) the fact remains: Rally effects provide presidents with a base of support that can be used to launch enormously important policies and executive decisions which can, in turn, have dramatic implications not only for Americans but for other people around the world as well. We cannot imagine any better illustration of the importance of collective memory and why social scientists should study it. In the remainder of this chapter, we consider in greater detail some relevant data that speak to these issues.

Brief Overview of Theory and Research on Rally Effects

Early models of such effects (Mueller, 1970) suggested that any sudden international crisis could trigger sustained boosts in presidential popularity. However, Baker & O'Neal (2001) have cast some doubt on this assumption, suggesting that rally effects are much rarer than was thought at first. For example, even the most severe financial crises do not reliably lead to significant changes in support for the president. On the basis of their review, Baker and O'Neal (2001) suggest that an emerging military crisis--especially if it is sudden, dramatic, and international in scope--is one of the few factors known to be sufficient, in and of itself, to trigger sustained increases in support for the president. In line with this view, there are only a small handful of well-documented rally effects aside from those following the attacks of 9-11, and all of these fit the criteria laid out by Baker and O'Neal, namely, (a) the attack on Pearl Harbor (1941), (b) the Bay of Pigs crisis (1962), (c) the afore-mentioned entry of the United States into the Gulf War (1991), and (d) the invasion of Iraq (2003).

Although rally effects have been well-documented empirically, the psychological dynamics underlying rally effects are poorly understood. This is due, in part, to the fact that rally effects have been studied almost exclusively through analyses of presidential surveys

(often, telephone polls). Such polls undoubtedly posses many strengths, such as the ability to generate huge, nationally representative samples overnight. However, pollsters have only a limited window of opportunity--often, less than a minute--to pose questions to the respondent. This obviously limits the scope of questions to be posed and, of those that are included, these can sometimes yield ambiguous results. For example, the ubiquitous "job approval ratings" that form the basis for many presidential approval polls are often interpreted as revealing general support for the president, but it also might indicate much more narrow approval of the president's specific role as military commander in chief.

Throughout this chapter we have emphasized why and how emotion might be relevant to collective memory. Here, too, we see emotions playing a large role as well, insofar as emotions have the capacity to exert a strong impact on social attitudes and values. However, the precise nature of this impact should depend on the precise type of emotion that is activated. We probe this issue in more detail below.

The "Functional Approach" to Emotions and Social Judgment

Once a particular emotion is activated, such emotions can powerfully shape our understanding of our environment (Forgas, 2002). This can lead to context-based shifts in our attitudes and values, that is, how we appraise the "goodness" and "badness" of our environment. In other words, social psychological preferences are not fixed; rather, they are often dependent on situational context. This is not a novel idea (Mischel, 1968; Wicker, 1969) in and of itself. However, recent research has only begun to uncover the specific way that emotion plays a role in this regard.

As it turns out, emotions can affect judgment and behavior in several, and not just one, way. For example, emotions can play a role at a relatively "early" stage of processing, such as influencing the kinds of stimuli to which we notice, and influencing how ambiguous stimuli are interpreted. Of particular interest for our concerns, there is a rapidly-growing line of research on the functional approach to emotion, which assumes that affective experience is often connected to one or more

psychological goals or motives (Frijda and Mesquita, 1994; Harmon-Jones, 2004; Keltner & Gross, 1999; Schwarz, 1990). One question to arise from this functional approach is whether the activation of motives precedes the experience of emotions, or whether emotions precede the activation of motives. For example, does the motive of retaliation trigger anger, or does anger activate motives for retaliation? This issue has long been debated among theorists in this area and hence for present purposes it is heuristically useful to regard motives and emotions as psychological clusters or "bundles" in which the activation of goals often leads to activation of emotions and vice versa.

The functional approach to emotions becomes particularly important and interesting in those cases where a singular event can trigger two or more distinct motive/emotion clusters, each of which could exert very different effects on judgment and behavior. Consider the example of threat. On the one hand, many, although perhaps not all, threatening contexts are likely to be associated with motives of retaliation and retribution, which are likely to be associated with anger. On the other hand, threatening contexts may also be associated with motives for protection and security, which are likely to involve anxiety and fear. Hence, although anger and anxiety may often be correlated owing to their shared negative valence (Lerner & Keltner, 2001), they nevertheless have the capacity to affect behaviors and judgments in rather different ways.

An Experimental Study of the Consequences of Collective Memory

Experimental methodologies are not often used in the collective memory literature. However, there is no reason why such an approach could not be used fruitfully to study such memories, particularly with respect to assessing their consequences. This perspective rests on the assumption that the salience of collective memories, like other sorts of memories, can vary in terns of their salience (i.e. their cognitive accessibility). As a number of scholars have noted, anniversaries represent a "natural manipulation" of the salience of collective memories (Pennebaker & Banasik, 1997; Schwalbe, 1996). However, laboratory-based priming procedures afford the opportunity to study the

consequences of such differences in salience under more controlled conditions. In particular, one can randomly assign participants to conditions in which their memories of a particular event either are or are not made more salient. Although rather straightforward, this approach can be extremely valuable insofar as it provides causal evidence regarding the effects of any given memory on judgment and behavior.

This is, in fact, the approach we have used over the last few years in our laboratory, in an attempt to better understand the consequences of people's memories of the 9-11 attacks (Lambert, Nesse, Olson, Andrews, Zisser, & Schott, 2008; Olson, 2002). Across several studies conducted between 2002 and 2007, we employed two different kinds of memory manipulations designed to affect the salience of participants' memories of this event. In some experiments, participants were assigned either to watch an 8-minute clip of the 9-11 attacks (excerpted from a CNN-produced video entitled *America Remembers*) or to solve a series of anagrams. In other studies, participants were asked to write an autobiographical account either of the 9-11 attacks or of the mundane events that occurred during a typical day. Importantly, both types of memory manipulations produced similar effects, showing that our results were not due to the idiosyncratic way that memories were activated.

Immediately after being reminded of the 9-11 attacks, we assessed participants' current emotional experience on the basis of a battery of self-report items adapted from the PANAS (Watson & Tellegen, 1985), perhaps the most-widely used self-report instrument designed to assess emotional experience. Among the large number of studies using the PANAS (or modifications of it), the usual approach is to form two very general indices of affect and, in particular, positive vs. negative affect. Although such broad-band indices can be useful in some contexts, we were interested in the possibility that memories for traumatic events could elicit *different types of negative emotion* which could exert *different types of effects* on judgments and attitudes. To this end, we constructed two multi-item indices, including (a) an anger index (based on an average of *angry, mad,* and *irate* and (b) an anxiety index (based on an average of *anxious, jittery, nervous, worried, relaxed, comfort,* and *calm,* after reverse scoring where necessary). These two indices tended to correlate moderately with another, ranging between .30 and .50, depending on the experiment. Perhaps not surprisingly, participants

reported significantly higher levels of anger and anxiety if they had been induced to think about the 9-11 attacks than if they had not. Nevertheless, despite this overlap in emotion, the now-activated emotions of anger and anxiety led to different sorts of "shifts" with respect to socio-political attitudes, as we note below.

Following assessment of emotion, we typically had our participants complete a large, randomized battery of questions which tapped a number of different socio-political attitudes. This battery included attitude queries about the president and his policies (including but not limited to those pertaining to the Iraq war) as well as more general items relevant to liberalism and conservatism. We then conducted tests of mediation, which allowed us to examine any effects of the experimental manipulation on attitudes and whether such effects were mediated by emotion. By and large, most of our effects were in fact mediated by emotion. That is, the memory manipulation produced strong differences in emotion across condition, and these differences in emotion then produced systematic changes in attitudes and values. Once changes in emotion were statistically controlled for, the effects of the memory manipulation usually but not always disappeared; see Lambert et al. 2008 for further details).

One of the more interesting aspects of our research is that we found evidence of double dissociation in terms of the effects of anger vs. anxiety on attitudes. That is, anger affected attitudes that were unaffected by anxiety, whereas anxiety affected attitudes that were unaffected by anger. As for anger, increased levels of this emotion were associated with a general rise in support for the president (reminiscent of the classic rally effects as conceptualized by political scientists) but this effect occurred in the larger context of a general rise in "militant aggressiveness", including enhanced support for the war in Iraq along with more favorable attitudes towards people, groups and institutions associated with a pro-military position, as well as a general surge in punitiveness, even in domains completely unrelated to the ongoing war in Iraq. Again, all of these effects were mediated by anger. In contrast, anxiety led to more favorable attitudes towards culturally-defined "traditional" institutions and attitude objects associated with security, order and stability, including more positive attitudes towards powerful government and traditional religious values. (For a more thorough

discussion of these results and their relation to other models of social attitudes, see Lambert et al., 2008).

Another interesting aspect of these results is that the effects of making these collective memories salient were essentially identical, and did not depend on individual differences in either (a) political ideology, that is, where participants fell along the *liberal-conservative* dimension or (b) political expertise, conceptualized here as general knowledge about the identity of political figures within and outside the United States. This was true in two important areas of the data. First, the extremity of anger and anxiety as triggered by the memory manipulations was the same regardless of these individual differences e.g. liberals were just as angered by these memories as conservatives, and vice versa). Second, the consequences of the memory on socio-political attitudes, mediated by emotion, were the same regardless of a priori ideology and political expertise. The upshot of these considerations is that increasing the salience of memories of the 9-11 attacks, even years after the fact, had remarkably similar effects, regardless of the kinds of personal attitudes and opinions that participants had when they first walked into our laboratory.

To reiterate a theme running throughout this chapter, these findings are especially important because they shed light on the specific mechanisms by which collective memories about the past can have implications for how people respond to currently-unfolding events in their lives. In short, these findings suggest the implications of collective memories for the "collective present", the latter of which refers to unusual consensus amongst otherwise disparate individuals in terms of their attitudes and opinions about people and events.

BROADER IMPLICATIONS

We began our discussion by specifically focusing on the 9-11 attacks, but we believe that our findings speak more broadly to some larger issues that may transcend that event in particular. It is extremely unusual to see large numbers (i.e. millions) of people all feeling essentially the same emotion at the same time, but memories for historical events can lead to just this sort of scenario.

As we have noted, memories for certain types historical events can trigger strong emotions, regardless of whether the event occurred in the recent or distant past, and regardless of whether the person personally experienced the event or not. Once activated, such emotion can have enormously important implications for social policy which can, in turn, affect large portions of the population.

Quite apart from the circumstances surrounding the 9-11 attacks, a rather different illustration of the interconnected roles of collective memory, emotion, and public policy is afforded by the recently-released tapes of conversations between President Lyndon Johnson and Martin Luther King, just four days after John Kennedy had been assassinated (Beschloss, 1997). One key element of this conversation is Johnson and King's awareness that Americans were essentially in a state of collective mourning. For his part, Johnson clearly believed that this provided a golden opportunity to work for swift passage of civil rights legislation (which Kennedy had obviously played a large part in developing) and history shows that he was essentially correct. Thus, here again we see that collective memory of a singular, powerful event led to important consequences and that these consequences were almost certainly due, in large part, to emotional experience.

In summary, we believe that these considerations nicely highlight the reasons why studying emotion may engender a greater understanding of collective memory, especially in terms of the powerful effects that such memories can have on many elements of behavior and judgment. By the same token, however, studying emotion in the context of collective memory is likely to afford a greater understanding of emotion, which is often studied in relatively controlled, arguably sterile laboratories. There is a long history of research on the connection between emotion and memory but many of the nuances and complexities of this relationship have yet to be fully understood, especially in the collective memory literature. It is our hope that the present chapter highlights the need to further explore this relationship along with the theoretical and practical implications that are relevant to it.

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AUTHOR NOTES

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FOOTNOTES

[1] The issue of what it means to "personally experience" an event is more complex than it might seem. To illustrate, consider three different settings that a person might acquire knowledge about the 9-11 attacks: (a) on the morning of September 11, 2001, a resident of New York City looks up and watches the 2nd plane crash into the South Tower, (b) one hour later, a woman who lives in Seattle watches a rebroadcast of that event, (c) ten years later, a child first learns about the 911 attacks by watching the same video rebroadcast in class. Most people would agree that the person in Seattle has an episodic memory of the attacks, even though she was not personally there and learned about it in after-the-fact fashion. If this is so, however, there seems no reason in principle why the child in the third scenario could not also be said to have an episodic memory of the event itself. These considerations arguably begin to blur the distinction between semantic and episodic memory. However, this complication is not of central concern for present purposes since, as we note below, the distinction between these two types of memory may not necessarily be critical in the context of theory and research on collective memory.