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

# A Cultural Psychological Analysis of Collective Memory as Mediated Action: Constructions of Indian History

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## Abstract

The present research applies a cultural psychological perspective on collective memory as mediated action to examine how constructions of a national past serve as tools that both reflect and shape national identity concerns. We employ a situation-sampling method to investigate collective memory in a series of studies concerning intergroup relations in the Indian context. In Study 1, participants (N = 55) generated three historical events that they considered important/relevant for Indian history. In Study 2, participants (N = 95) rated the importance and relevance of these events in a within-participant design. Illuminating the psychological constitution of cultural reality, frequency of recall (Study 1) and ratings of importance/relevance (Study 2) were greater for nation-glorifying events celebrating ingroup triumph than for typically silenced, critical events acknowledging ingroup wrongdoing. Moreover, these patterns were stronger among participants who scored higher in national identification. In Studies 3 (N = 65) and 4 (N = 160), we exposed participants to different categories of events in a between-participants design. Illuminating the cultural constitution of psychological experience, participants exposed to typically silenced, critical events reported lower national identification and greater perception of injustice against marginalized groups than did participants exposed to nation-glorifying events. Together, results illuminate a conception of collective memory as mediated action. Producers invest memory products with an identity-interested charge that directs subsequent intergroup relations toward identity-consistent ends.

*Keywords:* collective memory, India, intergroup relations, mediated action, national identity, situation sampling method, social representatons of history

## Non-Technical Summary

**Background**
People often come across narratives of national history in many contexts, such as educational settings or museums. These narratives impact how people think about their national identity as well as how they perceive present-day social issues. Research suggests that people may remember their national past selectively and this selective recall may impact how they respond to present day injustices.

**Why was this study done?**
We suggested that people who highly identify with their nation will remember more nation-glorifying historical events, or events that reinforce positive images of the nation, compared to critical events that highlight past injustices committed by the national group against marginalized groups in the nation. We also suggested that exposure of the remembered (i.e., glorifying) and forgotten (i.e., critical) events to a new group of participants will impact how much they identify with their nation, and their perception of current instances of social injustice. In short, we wanted to examine how memories

of a national past get transmitted and the implications of the 'forgotten' histories for understanding present day social issues.

## What did the researchers do and find?

We conducted four studies to examine our questions. In Study 1, we asked 55 Indian college students to list three historical events that they believed all Indians should know about. After coding these events, we found that the majority of our participants listed nation-glorifying events, compared to critical events focusing on historical injustices. We also found that participants who highly identified as Indian (compared to low identifiers) were more likely to list glorifying events, compared to critical events. In Study 2, we conducted an online survey among 95 Indians. We exposed a subset of the events from Study 1, as well as events that were completely absent in Study 1 (i.e., silenced events that exclusively focused on injustices against marginalized group members in India) to the new participants and asked them to indicate how relevant and important they considered each event. We found that participants, especially those who highly identified as Indian, rated the glorifying events as more relevant and important than the critical and silenced events. Results from Studies 1 and 2 support our claim that highly identifying with one's nation is associated with a greater tendency to engage with nation glorifying information and disregard information that highlights historical injustices. In Study 3, we conducted an online experiment with 65 Indians, and either exposed them to glorifying events, critical events, or silenced events. We found that participants who were exposed to glorifying events reported lower levels of national identification and higher perceptions of injustice, compared to those exposed to critical and silenced events. Study 4 was also an online experiment, this time with 160 Indian participants. We exposed participants to either glorifying events that exclusively focused on Hindus, a dominant group in India; glorifying events that focused on how India as a nation achieved independence from the United Kingdom, an outgroup; critical events that focused on historical injustices; or a control condition with no exposure to historical events. We found that exposure to glorifying events that focused on dominant group experiences (i.e., Hindus in India) resulted in the highest national identification, and lowest perception of injustice, compared to exposure to glorifying events focused on independence against British, no exposure (i.e., control condition), and exposure to critical events, respectively. Thus, Studies 3 and 4 support our claim that exposure to events focusing on historical injustices can reduce national identification and promote greater attention to present-day injustices. Alternatively stated, exposure to glorifying events, especially those that celebrate dominant group triumphs, can increase national identification and lower people's perception of present-day injustices.

## What do these findings mean?

Our findings indicate how individual recall of one's national past can impact a novel group's reaction to present day social issues. Moreover, our findings suggest that it is not merely a coincidence that highly identified Indian participants recall and select glorifying narratives of their nation. Indeed, they may remember and prefer these narratives precisely because glorifying narratives reinforce high identification and afford the denial of present day injustices. Such repeated acts of recall and selection can then have implications for the type of cultural products that are reproduced (what gets included in history curricula or in museums for example) and may eventually result in sociocultural worlds that fail to reflect marginalized groups' experiences. Our findings also indicate that recognizing marginalized groups' perspectives and histories can promote perceptions of injustice, which may eventually result in greater engagement in collective action.

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In 2002, the national government of India proposed a new national curriculum for history instruction that, according to some scholars (e.g., Mukherjee & Mukherjee, 2001; Sundar, 2004), appeared to be in accord with Hindu sensibilities. For instance, the proposed curriculum deliberately omitted references to eating beef (forbidden in Hindu practice) and framed the independence or freedom movement as a religious war against Muslims rather than a movement for independence from British colonization. Opponents of the proposal argued that it reflected a biased conception of Indian identity (e.g., being Indian means being Hindu), and they expressed concern that it would promote intergroup conflict (Mukherjee & Mukherjee, 2001; Sundar, 2004; Thapar, 2005; Visweswaran, Witzel, Manjrekar, Bhog, & Chakravarti, 2009). This example illustrates the constructed character of collective memory and its implications for intergroup relations. In the present work, we apply a cultural psychological perspective on collective memory as mediated action to examine how constructions of a national past function as tools that both reflect and shape national identity concerns.

## Memory and Identity

Constructions of a national past that both reflect and promote intergroup conflict illuminate the bidirectional relationship between memory and identity. Research in psychology has long emphasized this relationship at the level of autobiographical memory and personal identity (Bartlett, 1932; Greenwald, 1980; Wilson & Ross, 2003). Social and political psychologists have extended consideration of this relationship to the level of collective memory and national identity (e.g., Licata & Klein, 2010; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Mukherjee, Salter, & Molina, 2015; Páez, Bobowik, De Guissmé, Liu, & Licata, 2016; Pennebaker, Páez, & Rime, 1997; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Wertsch, 2002).

Collective memories fulfill multiple functions, all of which are related to social identity (see Páez et al., 2016). By providing narratives of a national past, collective memories preserve a sense of continuity and define what it means to be a member of the nation (Pennebaker et al., 1997); by representing the continuity of the nation, collective memories also impact how members of a nation identify with their imagined group members across time and space (Anderson, 1994; Liu & Khan, 2014). Collective memories of a national past can also serve as a framework for interpretation of present day events and influence members' present psychological states as well as their motivation to engage in collective action (Branscombe, 2004; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Thus, collective memories both reflect social identities as well as impact identity-relevant outcomes. Below, we provide specific examples of the bi-directional relationship between collective memory and a particular social identity: national identity.

## Memory Influences Identity

In one direction, constructions of the past impact national identity and identity-relevant experiences (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Different constructions of the Indian past can *shape* beliefs about who is 'truly' Indian (e.g., Hindus) and impact relations with people for whom such constructions imply they are 'not Indian'. For example, ommision of practices that are forbidden in Hinduism as well as constructing the independence movement as a war against Muslims (vs. independence from British colonization) may reinforce the sentiment that Muslims are not 'true Indians'. Similarly, exposure to glorifying constructions of history that celebrate national triumphs can enhance national identification (e.g., level of identification with nation as well as feelings of superiority), while exposure to critical constructions of history that acknowledge ingroup wrongdoing can undermine national identification and associated feelings of national superiority (Kurtiş, Adams, & Bird, 2010; Peetz, Gunn, & Wilson, 2010). Beyond the experience of national identification, reminders of historical injustice can also impact identity-relevant perception and action (Rees, Allpress, & Brown, 2013; Salter, Kelley, Molina, & Thai, 2017), including perception of present-day injustice and support or opposition to policies to address historical grievances (Sibley, Liu, Duckitt, & Khan, 2008).

For instance, previous studies (Salter & Adams, 2016) have shown that mainstream commemorations of Black History Month in majority-White schools in the U.S.A. tend to focus on issues of diversity and typically fail to mention details about the racist national past. These cultural practices afford both ignorance about the defining role of racism in U.S. society and opposition to policies that might address this injustice. In contrast, commemorations of Black History Month in majority-Black schools tend to showcase more critical accounts of Black history that draw attention to historical injustices and inequalities. Exposure to these constructions of history afford greater perception of racism in American society and stronger endorsement of anti-racism policies than exposure to mainstream constructions that emphasize celebratory achievements of particular individuals (Salter & Adams, 2016).

## Identity Influences Memory

In the other direction, constructions of the past *reflect* identity-relevant concerns, including intergroup conflict. In the Indian context, mainstream constructions of the national past focus on experiences of dominant and elite group members (e.g., upper caste Hindu men) and tend to ignore or portray Others (especially Muslims) in negative ways (e.g., as destroyers of Hindu temples; Guha, 1982; Sen, 2005; Sundar, 2004). Moreover, mainstream constructions tend to (re)produce silences by omitting past events (destruction of temples by Hindu rulers, for example) and by reconstructing the national past in ways that *reflect* beliefs about who is 'truly' Indian (framing the independence movement as a religious war of Hindus against Muslims versus a movement against British colonization, for example).

More generally, research indicates that people who identify strongly with an ingroup—whether as an individual difference or as a result of experimental manipulation—tend to recall fewer identity-inconsistent instances of atrocious ingroup violence against outgroups, compared to participants who identify less strongly (Sahdra & Ross, 2007). One reason for this tendency to remember the ingroup's past in identity-favorable ways is the motivation to avoid threatening negative feelings (e.g., experience of collective guilt; Branscombe & Miron, 2004; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006) and maintain a positive collective self-esteem (in accordance with social identity theory; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Strong ingroup identification is associated with numerous tendencies which minimize negative consequences of ingroup transgressions by, for example: psychologically distancing oneself from the

ingroup (Pennebaker & Banasik, 1997), denying the negative impact of ingroup transgressions (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998), justifying harmful ingroup behavior to avoid ingroup responsibility (Figueiredo, Doosje, Valentim, & Zebel, 2010), shifting standards of justice so that ingroup wrongdoings no longer elicit negative feelings (e.g., collective guilt; Miron, Branscombe, & Biernat, 2010), or selectively reproducing an alternative set of glorifying narratives that celebrate ingroup accomplishments, while silencing or sanitizing ingroup transgressions (Kurtiş et al., 2010; Salter & Adams, 2016).

An important point for present consideration is the implication of identity-relevant reconstructions for the reproduction of cultural reality. When people remember the ingroup's past in identity-consistent ways, the results often reverberate beyond their individual responses and leave traces in everyday ecology. For example, research suggests that White Americans tend to prefer and recommend racism-silent constructions of Black History Month commemorations more than racism-acknowledging constructions, and this pattern of differential preferences likely explains the differential prominence of these types of artifacts in majority-White and majority-Black schools in the U.S.A., respectively (Salter & Adams, 2016).

## A Cultural Psychological Approach: Collective Memory as Mediated Action

The foundation of the current work lies in a cultural-historical approach to psychology (Cole, 1995) as the study of *mind in context* (Adams, Salter, Pickett, Kurtiş, & Phillips, 2010): the idea that structures of mind in intentional persons exist in a dynamic relationship of mutual constitution with structures of mind in intentional worlds (Shweder, 1995). On one side of this dynamic relationship - the *psychological constitution of cultural worlds* - this approach emphasizes that constructions of the past and other features of everyday ecologies are not "just natural"; instead, they are products of human activity invested with the beliefs, desires, and identity concerns of the people who (re)produce them (Adams & Markus, 2004; Adams et al., 2010). In other words, constructions of the past are *directed*: selected for (re)production to the extent that they resonate with people's interests and sensibilities about what is good or true. On the other side of this dynamic relationship – the *cultural constitution of psychological experience* - this approach emphasizes that the experience of memory and identity (whether at the personal or group level) is not natural or inborn; instead, it requires engagement with cultural affordances that channel identity and memory toward particular forms (Adams & Markus, 2004; Adams et al., 2010). The important implication of this approach is that constructions of the past are *directive*; they bear a psychological charge or investment that influences subsequent activity, usually in the service of identity-consistent interests.

A cultural psychological focus on the intentionality of everyday worlds—specifically, the recognition that constructions of the past are simultaneously directed and directive (Salter & Adams, 2016)—affords an approach to collective remembering as "mediated action" (Bakhtin, 1981; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995; Wertsch, 2002). Applied to the topic of collective memory, this approach emphasizes the extent to which the experience of an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1994), associated with identity and history, requires mediation by cultural tools. People do not have direct access to distant past events, but instead experience these events through engagement with representations that are objectified or real-ized (literally, "made real;" see Moscovici, 1984)[i] in cultural institutions and artifacts, such as textbooks (Lackovic, 2011; Loewen, 2007), museums (Mukherjee et al., 2015; Rowe, Wertsch, & Kosyaeva, 2002; Wertsch, 2007), memorials (Hirst & Manier, 2008), and commemorative practices (Kurtiş et al., 2010). People remember some events and fail to remember others as they continuously engage with received constructions of the past that carry the beliefs, desires, and identity concerns of previous actors (e.g., people who design a museum space). From this perspective, the act of remembering (or forgetting) past events is "collective"

not only if the *content* focuses on a collective-level identity (as in self-categorization theory, Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994), but also because the act of remembering is a collaborative *process* that requires interaction with a history of social influence made material in cultural tools (Hammack, 2008, 2010; Wang & Brockmeier, 2002).

## The Present Research

The purpose of the present research was to investigate a cultural psychological approach to collective memory (i.e., as mediated action) in the Indian context. To do so, we extended a common technique of research on social representations of history (Liu et al., 2005; Páez et al., 2008), by combining it with a situation sampling method that previous researchers developed to study the mutual constitution of psychological tendencies and everyday realities (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002). The first step of our method comes directly from research about social representations of history (e.g., Liu et al., 2005). Participants generated a set of events that they considered to be the most important in Indian history, and we conducted analyses of these responses as a primary outcome of interest. However, rather than end our investigation with the analysis of these responses, the situation sampling technique proposes to use these responses as stimuli for another set of participants (see Kitayama et al., 1997). Accordingly, in the second step of our method, we exposed a new sample of participants to events that the original participants generated in the first step. The overall purpose of (our adaptation of) this method is to investigate the process of mediated action: specifically, whether situations elicit responses among participants during the second step that resonate with the identity concerns of the participants who produced the situations during the first step (Kitayama et al., 1997).

As an overview, the present work adapts the situation sampling technique to consider the mediated and collaborative nature of collective memories. Participants in Study 1 reported what they thought were the most important events in Indian history (i.e., Step 1 of the situation sampling method). From a cultural psychology perspective, these responses are not simply expressions of individual preferences, but simultaneously constitute (re)productions of cultural reality. As such, they provide an opportunity to test the *psychological constitution hypothesis*: the idea that people reproduce worlds that reflect their beliefs and desires. To test this hypothesis, in Studies 1 and 2, we investigated how recall of and engagement with these representations of the past are associated with national identification. Studies 3 and 4 considered the *cultural constitution hypothesis*: the idea that dominant representations of national history that emerged from participants' responses in Study 1 will tend to promote national identification and identity-consistent responses among new samples of participants.

# Study 1

As the first step of the situation sampling method, the primary purpose of Study 1 was to elicit historical events that participants considered relevant and important to the study of Indian history. However, we also took the opportunity to conduct analyses of these responses as data in their own right, as in previous research on social representations of history (Liu, Wilson, McClure, & Higgins, 1999; Liu et al., 2005; Liu et al., 2012). The psychological constitution hypothesis (H1A) suggests that participants will generate glorifying events that recall collective achievements with greater frequency than they generate critical events that recall collective wrongdoings by their national group. A more specific *identity-relevance* version of the psychological constitution hypothesis (H1B)

suggests that tendencies to recall glorifying (versus critical) events will be more evident among participants who score higher on national identification.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 55 undergraduate students (40 female, 5 unknown; age range: 18-22 years, $M_{age}$ = 19.34, $SD$ = 0.90) from a college in Pune, Maharashtra, participated in Study 1. Many participants did not respond to some demographic measures, particularly on religion and caste identification ($n$ = 28). Of the remaining participants who did report their religion and caste identification, 1 identified as Muslim, 1 identified as Sikh, 1 identified as Jain, 9 identified as Hindu and did not indicate their caste identification, 14 identified as Hindu and belonging to the upper castes (i.e., Brahmin and Kshatriya), 1 identified as an 'OBC' referring to membership in other, backward castes which include categories such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. While some participants did not indicate their income level ($n$ = 7), the average income range reported was between Rs 1,000,000 and Rs. 2,000,000 which corresponds to the upper middle class and upper class segments (Shukla, 2010). Thus, on average, participants had a an upper middle class or upper class background, indicated Hindu religious identity, and claimed an upper caste (Brahmin or Kshatriya) identity.[ii] Thus, our participants were predominantly members of dominant groups in India.

### Procedure and Measures

Participants completed a paper-and-pencil questionnaire.[iii] They first responded to the following prompt (with boldface and capitalization as they appeared in the original text):

> Imagine that you were writing the contents of a history textbook for students. Think about the **THREE** most **important and relevant historical events** that took place in India. These are the three events that **you think all students SHOULD know about**.

After listing the historical events, participants completed a measure of national identification and several demographic items.

**Coding of historical events —** Two coders, who were unaware of the research hypotheses, used binary coding (i.e., *yes* or *no*) to classify each historical event into one of three categories. *Critical* events (e.g., riots between Hindus and Muslims) were those that were likely to make people feel ashamed or sad about being Indian. *Glorifying* events were those that focused on national achievements (e.g., related to the independence movement), and were likely to make people feel proud or happy about being Indian. *Ambiguous* responses (e.g., Second World War) were those for which coders had insufficient information to make judgments about likely psychological consequences. *Inclusive glorifying* events were those that referred to inclusive collective triumphs (e.g., the independence movement) while *exclusive glorifying* events were those that referred to more exclusive collective triumphs particularly focusing on those pertaining to Hindus (e.g., revival of Hinduism; see the Appendix for an expanded discussion of the coding scheme). There was perfect consensus between raters in the coding of each event. A list of events and their frequencies appears in Table 1.

Table 1

*Frequency of Events Generated in Study 1*

| Historical Events | Frequency |
|---|---|
| **Glorifying Events** | **Total *f* = 92** |
| ***Inclusive Glorifying Events*** | |
| Freedom Struggle/Movement | 31 |
| First war of Independence: War of 1857 | 12 |
| Dandi March | 11 |
| Development of Indian Constitution | 7 |
| Civil Disobedience Movement | 5 |
| Gandhi's movement | 2 |
| Non-Cooperation Movement | 2 |
| Buddha gaining enlightenment | 1 |
| Kargil War | 1 |
| Indo-Pak War | 1 |
| Revolution | 1 |
| India's ancient and current contributions to the field of knowledge | 1 |
| Formation of states by Vallabhai Patel | 1 |
| Abolishment of child marriage and sati | 1 |
| Women education | 1 |
| White Revolution/Green Revolution- 1990 new economic policy | 1 |
| Reform of Indian economy | 1 |
| ***Exclusive Glorifying Events*** | |
| Maratha Rule | 6 |
| Indus Valley Civilization | 2 |
| Gupta Period | 2 |
| Bhakti Movement | 1 |
| Savarkar's history | 1 |
| **Critical Events** | **Total *f* = 11** |
| Mahatma Gandhi Assassination | 3 |
| Demolition of Babri Masjid | 2 |
| Godhra Riots | 1 |
| Indira Gandhi Assassination | 1 |
| Rajiv Gandhi Assassination | 1 |
| Death of Sir Henry Lawrence | 1 |
| Invasion of Delhi by foreigners | 1 |
| Take over by British | 1 |
| **Ambiguous Events** | **Total *f* = 54** |
| Mughal Empire | 18 |
| Partition | 12 |
| Jallianwala Bagh Incident | 5 |
| Establishment of Railways by British | 3 |
| First and Second World Wars | 3 |
| Congress Rule | 3 |
| Paniput Battles | 2 |
| East India Company and Trading | 2 |
| Aryan Debate | 1 |
| Anti-Corruption | 1 |
| British rule in India - Mahatma Gandhi | 1 |
| India's economic and political history since independence | 1 |
| Mumbai bomb blasts | 1 |
| Alexander's time | 1 |
| Hemu's downfall | 1 |
| Mughals and Marathas rule | 1 |
| Pre-colonization by the British - Mughal | 1 |

Beyond binary coding, we also used a continuous scale ranging from -2 (very critical) to +2 (very glorifying) to assign each response a *glorification score*.[iv] Responses that referred to collective wrongdoing (e.g., violence

against religious minority groups) received a score of -2. Responses that referred to collective loss (e.g., assassination of national leaders) received a score of -1. Responses that referred to inclusive collective triumphs (e.g., the freedom movement) received a score of +1. Responses that referred to more exclusive collective triumphs (e.g., the revival of Hinduism after the Islamic empire) received a score of +2.

**National identification —** We adapted four items from a measure of group identification to provide the measure of national identification: *I feel committed to Indians*, *I feel a bond with Indians*, *I am glad to be Indian*, and *I think Indians have a lot to be proud of* (Leach et al., 2008). Participants responded using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). We averaged the items to form an index of national identification (α = .72; *M* = 5.02, *SD* = 1.09).

## Results

Consistent with the psychological constitution hypothesis (H1A), coders' ratings of participants' responses confirmed a nation-glorifying bias in recalling the collective past. Participants recalled a significantly greater number of glorifying events (*M* = 1.70, *SD* = .88) than critical events (*M* = 0.17, *SD* = .51; $F(1, 53) = 87.32$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .62$).[v] Whereas 87.3% of participants recalled at least one nation-glorifying event, only 12.7% of participants recalled at least one critical event.

### Glorifying Events

The most frequent category of responses was what coders categorized as glorifying (*f* = 92). A majority of these events referred to the *freedom movement* that resulted in Indian independence from British colonization. Some instances simply referred to the "Freedom Movement" (*f* = 31). Other instances referred to more specific events such as the Dandi March of 1930 (*f* = 11), which was an action of tax resistance and nonviolent protest against the British salt monopoly in colonial India. We consider these to be *inclusive* glorifying events because they imply a broad construction of Indian national identity regardless of subgroup identity.

Besides events of the independence struggle, a few participants referred to glorifying events that occurred prior to colonization. One example was a reference to early Indus Valley settlements (*f* = 2). Other examples included references to the "golden age" of Hindu cultural production (the Gupta period; *f* = 2) or the revival of Hinduism after the Mughal (predominantly Islamic) period (e.g., Maratha Empire, *f* = 6). We consider these to be *exclusive* glorifying events because they refer more narrowly to the dominant Hindu subgroup within Indian national identity.

### Critical Events

Coders categorized only a few (*f* = 11) responses as critical. These events mostly focused on *assassination of leaders*, including former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, killed in 1984 by two Sikh bodyguards; former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, killed in 1991 by operatives of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Aelam (a Sri Lankan separationist organization); and Mahatma Gandhi, killed in 1948 by a member of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS; a Hindu nationalist group). Although raters coded these as critical events, the responses did not explicitly mention incidents of collective wrongdoing. Participants who mentioned the assassination of Indira Gandhi did not mention the preceding assault by the Indian army on the Golden Temple in Amritsar (a Sikh holy site); participants who mentioned the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi did not mention India's involvement in the Sri Lankan civil war; and participants who mentioned the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi did not highlight the involvement of Nathuram Godse in the assassination. Godse was affiliated with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist

group. Such groups have been involved in ongoing acts of collective wrongdoing as the destruction of the Babri Masjid Mosque (a Muslim holy site), riots against Muslims and Christians, or persecution of religious minority groups. These omissions suggest that participants may have constructed the assassinations as forms of collective victimization (see Vollhardt, 2012), that is, instances in which others harmed the collective rather than instances in which the collective harmed others.

Participants recalled few instances of collective wrongdoing (*f* = 3), all of which referred to cases of *communal (religious) riots* between Hindus and Muslims. Two participants recalled the demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992, which groups of Hindu militants (including the RSS) destroyed to reclaim a Hindu holy site. Another participant recalled the Godhra Riots that occurred in 2002: a three-day period of intergroup violence, primarily targeted against Muslims, that some scholars have referred to as forms of "ethnic cleansing" (McLane, 2010). These events constitute instances of collective wrongdoing to the extent that they involved violence against religious minorities. However, even in these instances, participants mentioned the general incident without elaboration of the collective wrongdoing.

### Ambiguous Events

Responses in the ambiguous category mostly referred to either the partition of India and Pakistan (*f* = 12) or the Mughal Dynasty (the predominantly Islamic period predating the arrival of the British; *f* = 18). One might consider the partition as glorification because it was an outcome of the freedom movement, or one might categorize it as wrongdoing because it produced intergroup violence and forced displacement of Muslims fleeing from India to Pakistan. Likewise, one might categorize the Mughal Dynasty as glorification because of its association with important national symbols (e.g., the construction of the Taj Mahal), or one might categorize it as collective loss (from the perspective of the Hindu majority) because it is a period of Islamic domination. None of the participants elaborated enough to disambiguate their responses.

### Absent Events

A central interest of the present work was not only events that participants mentioned, but also important events in Indian history that participants could mention, but did not. With respect to nation-glorifying events, participants failed to mention achievements of presently subordinated minority groups (e.g., the construction of the Taj Mahal during a period of Islamic rule). With respect to critical events, participants generally omitted references to collective wrongdoing. It remains unclear whether participants failed to mention incidents of wrongdoing because they were relatively unaware of them (e.g., perhaps because such incidents are not widely publicized or perhaps even unavailable) or because they suppressed mention of them (e.g., because they considered the events irrelevant or because they know the events reflect negatively on their social identities).

### Association with National Identity

We conducted a series of regression analyses with national identification as the predictor and glorification score as the outcome. We first analyzed glorification scores of each response separately according to serial position. Consistent with the identity-relevance version of the psychological constitution hypothesis (H1B), analysis of participants' first responses revealed an association of national identification with glorification scores, β = .27, *p* = .046. National identification was unrelated to glorification scores of participants' second and third responses, *p*s > .19. Next, we computed a mean glorification score across all three responses to create a composite glorifi-

cation score for each participant. Results revealed no association between national identification and this composite score, *p* = .23.

## Discussion

As the first step of the situation sampling method, the primary purpose of Study 1 was to prompt participants to generate important historical events for use in subsequent studies. Consistent with predictions from the psychological constitution hypothesis, participants recalled glorifying events associated with collective success or triumph far more frequently than they recalled critical events associated with collective loss or wrongdoing. Moreover, the tendency to recall glorifying events was greater among participants who scored high on national identification. However, this pattern was evident only for the first item that participants recalled. It did not extend to the second or third item.

A substantial proportion of responses fell into the category of ambiguous events. Perhaps because we did not provide specific instructions to do so or due to space limitations on the survey sheet, many participants did not elaborate enough to disambiguate their responses as glorifying or critical. This reduced the number of responses to inform our analysis, which detracted from our ability to draw conclusions. Despite this limitation, we nevertheless observed modest evidence for the hypothesized relationship between national identification and recall of glorifying events.

We observed only three instances in which participants reported incidents of collective wrongdoing. One reason for this low frequency may be that our sample consisted primarily of people from dominant groups in Indian society, who may be less likely than people from historically oppressed, marginalized groups to spontaneously report or have knowledge of wrongdoing by the Hindu majority. Another reason for this low frequency may be our instructions, which directed participants to list events that they believed all students *should* know. To the extent that these instructions orient participants to formal education sources, they are likely to afford (glorifying) responses that reflect the perspective and interests of people in dominant groups who have power to determine official representations of national history (see Sibley, Wilson, & Robertson, 2007; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). It is also possible that the historical narratives most prominent in the immediate contexts (e.g., media, schools) reflect the interests of dominant groups and subsequently present sanitized versions of, or perhaps completely omit, historical representations that reflect marginialized group interests.

Although this pattern of low frequency for recalling wrongdoings is consistent with our hypotheses, it illustrates an important limitation of the situation sampling method. Specifically, although the method directly illuminates collective memory, it does not directly illuminate collective forgetting or silencing of events. Instead, one can only infer collective forgetting or silencing indirectly via absence of events that participants could have mentioned, but did not. We addressed this issue in Study 2 by eliciting reactions not only to events that participants mentioned in Study 1, but also to events of collective wrongdoing that participants did not mention in Study 1.

## Study 2

Study 2 involved a within-subjects design in which we exposed participants to different categories of historical events. These included glorifying and critical events that participants generated in Study 1, and incidents of col-

lective wrongdoing that were *absent* in Study 1. We investigated the relationship between national identification and participants' ratings of these different categories of events.

## Method

### Participants

Participants included 95 adult users (34 women) of Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk program, who participated in exchange for $1.00 credit to their Amazon account. All participants were born and currently lived in India. They ranged in age from 21 years to 66 years ($M_{age}$ = 33.18, $SD$ = 10.69). As in Study 1, many participants did not report religion and caste identification ($n$ = 28). Of the remaining participants who did report their religion and caste identification, 5 identified as Muslim, 2 identified as Sikh, 1 identified as Jain, 3 identified as Christian, 25 identified as Hindu and did not indicate their caste identification, 28 identified as Hindu and belonging to the upper castes (i.e., Brahmin and Kshatriya), 3 identified as an 'OBC' referring to membership in other, backward castes which include categories such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. One participant did not indicate their income level. The average income range reported was between Rs. 400,000 and Rs. 500,000 which corresponds to the middle class (Shukla, 2010). Thus, on average, participants had a middle class, indicated Hindu religious identity, and claimed an upper caste (Brahmin or Kshatriya) identity. Analyses that included income, caste, religious identification, and gender as covariates did not change results and we report analyses without inclusion of covariates.

### Procedure

After providing informed consent, participants read a series of historical events ($n$ = 19) that we presented in random order: We first numerically ordered all the events (e.g., labeled them 1, 2, 3, and so forth) and then used an algorithm to present a randomized order of these numbers. Fifteen items were two-sentence elaborations of events that participants had recalled in Study 1. Ten of these events constituted the *glorifying* category and focused on the freedom movement and pre-colonial periods of Hindu dominance. Five of these events constituted the *critical* category and focused on assassination of national leaders or incidents of collective wrongdoing. We supplemented these with a third category of relevant items that were absent from the events that participants recalled in Study 1. This *silenced* category consisted of four items that emphasized collective wrongdoing against marginalized communities. Two of these items concerned actions by British and post-independence Indian governments to revoke land ownership rights of Dalits (lower caste group) and tribal groups in Northeastern India. The remaining two items concerned use of military force by the Indian national government to repress social justice movements (see the Appendix for further details).

### Measures

In response to each item, participants used a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) to rate the event on dimensions of relevance ("I think this event is very relevant to the study of Indian History") and importance ("I think this event is very important to the study of Indian History"). We computed the mean of these ratings within each event category to create a composite index of relevance/importance for each event type ($\alpha_{glorifying}$ = .95; $\alpha_{critical}$ = .89; $\alpha_{silenced}$ = .86). After reading and rating all events, participants completed the same four-item measure of national identification ($\alpha$ = .88, $M$ = 6.11, $SD$ = 0.97) and demographic items as in Study 1.

## Results

We conducted a repeated-measures ANOVA to examine whether importance/relevance ratings differed as a function of event type (glorifying, critical, and silenced). The omnibus test was significant, $F(2, 93) = 41.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .31$.

For a more focused test of the psychological constitution hypothesis, we conducted orthogonal planned contrasts. The first contrast assessed the tendency for participants to consider nation-glorifying events (focused on collective achievement) more important/relevant than critical and silenced events (focused on collective loss or wrongdoing). This contrast was significant, $F(1, 93) = 70.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .43$. Consistent with the psychological constitution hypothesis, participants rated the glorifying events as more important/relevant ($M = 5.88$, $SD = .87$) than they did critical ($M = 5.37$, $SD = .93$) or silenced events ($M = 5.00$, $SD = .93$). The second contrast assessed whether participants rated events in the critical category more important/relevant than those in the silenced category. This contrast was also significant, $F(1, 93) = 14.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. Participants considered the critical events more relevant/important than silenced events.

*Moderating implications of national identification.* Besides identity-relevant variation in relevance/important of different event categories, we also tested the *identity-relevance* version of the psychological constitution hypothesis (H1B). This hypothesis implies that the identity-serving effects described in the preceding paragraph—particularly, the tendency to rate glorifying events as most relevant/important for the study of Indian history compared to critical and silenced events—are larger among participants who score higher on national identification. To test this hypothesis, we conducted mixed-model repeated measures analyses with national identification as the moderator of within-subject variation in judgments of relevance/importance for each contrast.

With respect to the first contrast, we first combined the mean relevance/importance ratings for critical and silenced events into a single index. We then included national identification as a continuous moderator in a repeated-measures model of the difference between relevance/importance ratings for glorifying items and this index of critical and silenced items. Results indicated a significant interaction, $F(2, 92) = 15.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .14$. Simple slope analysis indicated that the relationship between national identification and relevance/important judgments was stronger for nation-glorifying events, $b = .59$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .43$, than for critical and silenced events, $b = .28$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$ (see Figure 1). Consistent with the identity-relevance version of the psychological constitution hypothesis (H1B), higher national identification was associated with greater preference for glorifying versus critical and silenced events.
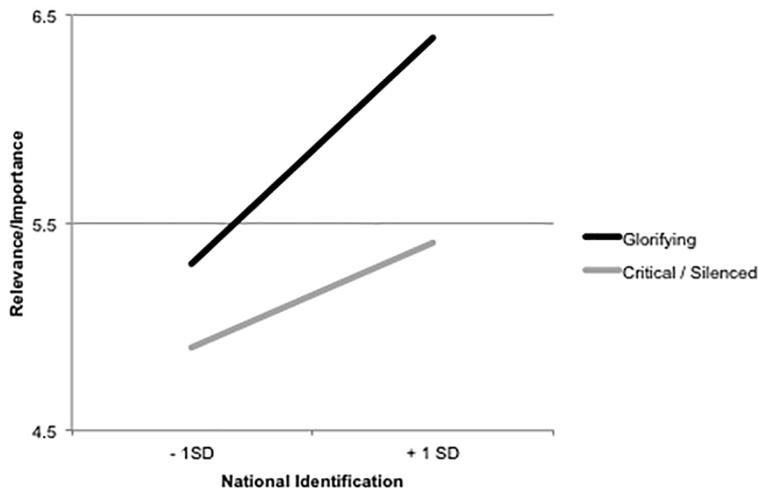
*Figure 1.* The moderating effect of national identification on Contrast 1 (Glorifying vs. Critical and Silenced)

For the second contrast, we included national identification as a continuous moderator in a repeated measures model of the difference in relevance/importance ratings for critical and silenced events. Results revealed the previously noted main effect of event type, $F(1, 92) = 14.02$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. National identification did not moderate the difference in judgments about the relevance and importance of critical and silenced events, $F(1, 92) = 1.26$, $p = .26$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$.

## Discussion

Results of Study 2 extend results of Study 1 and provide additional evidence consistent with the psychological constitution hypothesis. The differential frequency with which participants generated categories of events in Study 1 corresponded to differences in ratings of relevance and importance by participants in Study 2. Participants in Study 1 recalled glorifying events more frequently than other categories, and participants in Study 2 rated these events as relatively more relevant and important for the study of Indian history. Participants in Study 1 recalled fewer instances of wrongdoing against marginalized groups, and participants in Study 2 rated such events as relatively less relevant/important for the study of Indian history. Moreover, participants rated the absent events from Study 1, which explicitly focused on institutionalized forms of wrongdoing against marginalized groups, as least relevant and important for the study of Indian history.[vi]

Results of Study 2 likewise provide additional evidence consistent with the identity-relevance version of the psychological constitution hypothesis. Specifically, we observed a moderating effect of national identification on the pattern of differential ratings, such that the tendency to rate glorifying events as more important/relevant than other events was greater among participants who scored higher on national identification.

Taken together, results of Studies 1 and 2 provide evidence for *the psychological constitution of cultural reality* and the *directed* character of intentional worlds. When participants nominate events that they believe to be relevant or important for the study of Indian history, they are not simply expressing individual preferences. More profoundly, they are reproducing cultural realities that they invest with the psychological charge of their identity concerns. However, this point may be easy to overlook if readers interpret individual acts of selection as the endpoint in an action sequence or the dependent variable in a study of identity influences on choice. The situation sampling

method makes this point more explicit by treating participant-nominated events not simply as "products of action," but also as "conditioning elements of further action" (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 357; see Adams & Markus, 2004, p. 341).

# Study 3

In Studies 3 and 4, we use the second step of the situation sampling method to investigate the other direction of the mutual constitution model: *the cultural constitution of psychological experience*. This direction emphasizes that representations of history are not inert; instead, they direct subsequent identification and action towards particular ends. In particular, we test the extent to which collective representations of the past influence people's national identification and perceptions of present-day injustices. In studies 3 and 4, we used a between-subjects experimental design to investigate whether the different categories of historical representations that we used in Study 2 differentially afford national identification and denial (versus acknowledgement) of injustice in present-day Indian society.

## Method

### Participants

Participants included 65 adult users (25 women) of Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk program. They participated in exchange for $1.00 credit to their Amazon account. All participants were born and currently lived in India. They ranged in age from 21 years to 54 years ($M_{age}$ = 30.66, $SD$ = 7.24). As in previous studies, many participants did not report religion and caste identification ($n$ = 13). Of the remaining participants who did report their religion and caste identification, 3 identified as Muslim, 2 identified as Jain, 3 identified as Christian, 21 identified as Hindu and did not indicate their caste identification, 17 identified as Hindu and belonging to the upper castes (i.e., Brahmin and Kshatriya), 6 identified as an 'OBC' referring to membership in other, backward castes which include categories such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The average income range reported was between Rs 400,000 and Rs. 500,000 which corresponds to the middle class (Shukla, 2010). Thus, on average, participants had a middle class, indicated Hindu religious identity, and claimed an upper caste (Brahmin or Kshatriya) identity. Analyses that included income, caste, religious identification, and gender as covariates did not change results and we report analyses without inclusion of covariates.

### Procedure

We randomly assigned participants to read short descriptions of historical events from Study 2 in one of three conditions. The *glorifying* condition described four instances of collective achievements (e.g., freedom movement, development of the constitution). The *critical* condition described four instances of collective loss (e.g., assassinations) or wrongdoing (e.g., demolition of Babri mosque). The *silenced* condition described the four incidents of wrongdoing against marginalized groups that we added in Study 2.

Participants read and rated each event on its relevance and importance for Indian history. They then completed measures of national identification, perceptions of injustice, and demographic information. Participants used 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) to respond to all items unless otherwise stated.

## Measures

Participants rated the relevance and importance of each event using the same measure as in Study 2. We computed the mean of the eight relevance and importance ratings across all four events to create a composite index of relevance and importance for each event type (α = .90). Participants responded to the same four-item measure of national identification as in Studies 1 and 2 (α = .89; Leach et al., 2008).

In addition to these measures, participants in Study 3 responded to three items that assessed perceptions of injustice in Indian society (α = .75; based on Adams, Tormala, & O'Brien, 2006). Participants read prompts about disproportionate scrutiny toward residents of historically marginalized regions (northeastern India and Kashmir) regarding requests for identification, suspicion of substance abuse, and concern about militancy (see the Appendix for the exact items). Participants then indicated the extent to which they agreed that each of the three issues reflected discrimination and/or injustice on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree).* We averaged responses across all three items. Higher scores on this measure indicated that participants agreed that the issues reflected discrimination and/or injustice.

## Results

To test for effects of exposure to different events, we conducted a series of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) on outcome measures with event type as the between-subjects variable. As in Study 2, the analytic focus was two contrasts with codes of (1, -.5, -.5) and (0, 1, -1). The first contrast tested the hypothesis that participants in the glorifying condition would report higher national identification and lower perception of injustice than would participants in the critical and silenced conditions. The second contrast tested for differences in mean outcomes between participants in the latter two conditions. Means and standard deviations of outcome measures for each condition appear in Table 2.

Table 2

*Means (and Standard Deviations) of Outcome Variables in Study 3*

| Variable | Glorifying | Critical | Silenced |
|---|---|---|---|
| Relevance/Importance Ratings | 6.01$_a$ (0.86) | 5.41$_b$ (1.29) | 4.72$_c$ (0.84) |
| National Identification | 6.19$_a$ (0.77) | 5.63$_b$ (1.33) | 5.69$_b$ (0.64) |
| Perceptions of Injustice | 4.32$_a$ (1.12) | 4.94$_b$ (1.20) | 5.18$_b$ (0.87) |

*Note.* Standard deviations are in parenthesis. Different letter subscripts within rows indicate statistically significant (*p* < .05) differences.

### Ratings of Historical Events

The omnibus ANOVA for ratings of relevance and importance revealed a significant effect of condition, $F(2, 61)$ = 8.21, *p* = .001, $\eta_p^2$ = .21. More important, the first contrast was significant, $t(62)$ = 3.62, *p* < .001, $\eta_p^2$ = .22. Conceptually replicating the results of Study 2, participants rated events in the glorifying condition more relevant and important (*M* = 6.01, *SD* = .86) to the study of Indian history than participants rated events in the critical (*M* = 5.41, *SD* = 1.29) and silenced conditions (*M* = 4.72, *SD* = .84). The second comparison was also significant, $t(62)$ = 2.20, *p* = .03, $\eta_p^2$ = .08. Participants rated the events in the critical condition as more relevant and important for the study of Indian history than participants rated events in the silenced condition.

### National Identification

The omnibus ANOVA testing the effect of condition on national identification was non-significant, $F(2, 62) = 2.30$, $p = .11$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. More importantly, the first contrast was significant, $t(62) = 2.13$, $p = .037$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Consistent with the cultural constitution hypothesis, national identification scores were higher among participants in the glorifying condition ($M = 6.19$, $SD = .77$) than in the critical ($M = 5.63$, $SD = 1.33$) and silenced conditions ($M = 5.69$, $SD = .64$). The second contrast was not significant, $t(62) = -.18$, $p = .86$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$. We observed no evidence of differences in national identification scores between participants in the critical and silenced conditions.

### Perceptions of Injustice

The omnibus ANOVA testing the effect of condition was marginally significant, $F(2, 62) = 2.69$, $p = .076$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. The first contrast was significant, $t(62) = -2.25$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. Consistent with the cultural constitution hypothesis, participants perceived less injustice in the glorifying condition ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.12$), than in the critical ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.20$), and silenced conditions ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 0.87$). Alternatively stated, participants perceived more present-day issues of injustice in Indian society when exposed to critical and silenced events compared to the glorifying events. The second contrast was not significant, $t(62) = -.71$, $p = .48$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$. There was no difference in the perceptions of injustice between participants in the critical and silenced conditions.

## Discussion

Consistent with the results of Study 2, participants rated events to be more relevant and important to the study of Indian history when they read statements about collective achievements in the glorifying condition than when they read more critical statements about collective loss or wrongdoing in the critical and silenced conditions. More importantly, results provided support for the cultural constitution hypothesis. Exposure to descriptions about collective achievements in the glorifying condition afforded higher national identification and lower perceptions of current injustice than did exposure to descriptions about collective loss or wrongdoings in the critical and silenced conditions.

One shortcoming of Study 3 is that it did not include a control condition. It remains unclear whether one should interpret results of Study 3 as an effect whereby the glorifying condition *increased* national identification and *decreased* perceptions of injustice or as an effect whereby the critical and silenced conditions *decreased* national identification and *increased* perceptions of injustice. The pattern of results for Study 2 is relevant to this issue. In particular, the observation that national identification scores were more strongly related to ratings of relevance and importance for glorifying events than for critical and silenced events suggests that exposure to glorifying information about collective achievements may have a particularly potent effect on outcomes.

## Study 4

The purpose of Study 4 was to replicate the effects of Study 3 in a design that included a control condition. The design of Study 4 also allowed us to explore the effects of presenting different kinds of glorifying representations on our variables of interest. Recall that participants in Study 1 generated high frequencies of glorifying events that we classified into two categories of collective achievements: the freedom struggle at the end of British colonialism and the pre-colonial golden era of Hindu society. These categories differ in the particular collectives to which they refer. Whereas events of the freedom movement implicate the diffuse set of identities that constitute the secular Indian state (i.e., more inclusive national identity), events of the Hindu golden era concentrate more narrowly on

achievements associated with Hindu identity (i.e., more exclusive national identity). This distinction suggests a test of what we refer to as an *identity concentration hypothesis*: namely, that exposure to Hindu-focused glorifying events should lead to greater national identification and lower perceptions of injustice, compared to exposure to glorifying events focused on the freedom movement, especially given the predominantly Hindu sample of participants. Finally, we also removed the silenced events condition from Study 3 as exposure to these events did not significantly influence our outcome variables compared to glorifying and critical events.

## Method

Participants included 160 adult users (58 women, 4 unknown) of Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk program, who participated in exchange for $1.00 credit to their Amazon account. All participants were born and currently lived in India. They ranged in age from 20 years to 62 years ($M_{age}$ = 30.62, *SD* = 7.99). As in previous studies, many participants did not report religion and caste identification (*n* = 34). Of the remaining participants who did report their religion and caste identification, 10 identified as Muslim, 4 identified as Jain, 12 identified as Christian, 64 identified as Hindu but did not indicate their caste identification, 27 identified as Hindu and belonging to the upper castes (i.e., Brahmin and Kshatriya), 9 identified as an 'OBC' referring to membership in other, backward castes which include categories such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The average income range reported was between Rs 400,000 and Rs. 500,000 which corresponds to the middle class (Shukla, 2010). Thus, on average, participants had a middle class, indicated Hindu religious identity, and claimed an upper caste (Brahmin or Kshatriya) identity. Analyses that included income, caste, religious identification, and gender as covariates did not change results and we report analyses without inclusion of covariates.

### Procedure

We randomly assigned participants to one of four conditions. Participants in the three treatment conditions read short descriptions of four historical events; rated each event on relevance and importance for Indian history; and completed measures of national identification, perceptions of injustice, and demographic information as in Study 3. Events in the *critical* condition were the same as in Study 3. The *independence-focused glorification* condition described four instances of collective achievements related to the struggle for independence from British colonial rule. The *Hindu-focused glorification* condition described four instances of collective achievements related to a golden era of Hindu society. Participants in the control condition completed only outcome measures. Participants used 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) to respond to all items.

### Measures

Participants in the treatment conditions rated the relevance and importance of each event using the same measure as in Studies 2 and 3. We computed the mean of the eight relevance and importance ratings across all four events for each event type to create a composite of overall evaluation of the historical events (α = .89). Participants also completed the same four-item measure of national identification (α = .85), three-item measure of perceptions of injustice (α = .76), and demographic items as in Study 3.

## Results

As in Study 3, we conducted a series of one-way ANOVAs on outcome measures with history event type as the between-subjects variable. In this case, the analytic focus was a polynomial contrast to assess a linear trend whereby national identification scores are increasingly large—but perceptions of injustice increasingly small—across

the critical, control, independence-focused glorification, and Hindu-focused glorification, respectively. Means and standard deviations of outcome variables appear in Table 3.

Table 3

*Means (and Standard Deviations) of Outcome Measures in Study 4*

| Variable | Control | Critical | Glorifying - Independence | Glorifying - Hindu |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relevance/Importance Ratings | n/a | 5.40$_a$ (1.01) | 5.90$_b$ (0.86) | 6.06$_b$ (0.90) |
| National Identification | 6.27$_a$ (0.76) | 5.96$_b$$^+$ (0.86) | 6.27$_a$ (0.79) | 6.43$_a$ (0.66) |
| Perceptions of Injustice | 5.08 (1.35) | 5.27$_a$* (0.97) | 4.83$_b$ (1.21) | 4.76$_b$ (1.42) |

*Note*. Standard deviations are in parenthesis. Different letter subscripts within rows indicate statistically significant ($p$ < .05) differences.

$^+$The difference between critical and control on national identification was marginally significant, $p$ = .071.

*Critical condition differed from both glorifying conditions on perceptions of injustice. There was no other significant difference for this outcome.

### Ratings of Historical Events

The omnibus ANOVA for ratings of relevance/importance revealed a significant effect of condition, $F(2, 118)$ = 5.6, $p$ = .005, $\eta_p^2$ = .09. Participants rated events as less relevant and important in the critical condition ($M$ = 5.4, $SD$ = 1.01) than in the independence-focused glorification ($M$ = 5.90, $SD$ = 0.86) and Hindu-focused glorification ($M$ = 6.06, $SD$ = 0.90) conditions, $d$ = -.58, $p$ = .002. Ratings did not differ between the two glorification conditions, $d$ = -.15, $p$ = .46.

### National Identification

The omnibus ANOVA revealed a significant effect of condition, $F(3, 156)$ = 2.68, $p$ = .049, $\eta_p^2$ = .05. The polynomial contrast to assess the linear trend was statistically significant, $F(1, 156)$ = 5.61, $p$ = .019. National identification was highest in the Hindu-focused glorification condition ($M$ = 6.43, $SD$ = .66), followed by independence-focused glorification ($M$ = 6.27, $SD$ = .79), control ($M$ = 6.27, $SD$ = .76), and critical ($M$ = 5.96, $SD$ = .86) conditions, respectively.

### Perceptions of Injustice

The omnibus ANOVA testing the effect of condition was not significant, $F(3, 156)$ = 1.42, $p$ = .24. $\eta_p^2$ = .02. The polynomial contrast to assess the linear trend was statistically significant, $F(1, 156)$ = 3.95, $p$ = .048. Perceptions of injustice were greater in the critical condition ($M$ = 5.27, $SD$ = .97), followed by the control condition ($M$ = 5.08, $SD$ = 1.37), and the two glorification conditions: independence-focused ($M$ = 4.83, $SD$ = 1.21), and Hindu-focused glorification ($M$ = 4.76, $SD$ = 1.42) conditions.

# Discussion

Results of Study 4 replicated results of Studies 2 and 3 concerning ratings of relevance and importance. Consistent with the psychological constitution hypothesis, participants rated events as more relevant and important to the study of Indian history when the events described glorifying themes of collective achievement than when they described critical themes about collective loss or wrongdoing.

More important to the overall project, results of Study 4 extended results of Study 3 and provided additional evidence in support of the cultural constitution hypothesis. Exposure to critical themes about collective wrongdoing produced lower national identification and greater perceptions of current injustice, but exposure to glorifying themes about collective achievements produced higher national identification and lower perceptions of current injustice.[vii] Also extending previous studies, the results suggested that different categories of glorifying events varied in their potency for impacting national identification and perceptions of injustice. The augmenting effects on national identification were greater for descriptions about achievements associated with a concentrated or specific Hindu identity than for achievements associated with a more diffuse or general Indian identity. A caveat to note is that these augmentic effects produced only a statistically significant linear trend, such that national identification increased across glorifying-Hindu, glorifying-independence, control, and critical conditions respectively. There was no statistically significant difference between the glorifying-Hindu and glorifying-independence conditions. Similarly, there was no statistically significant difference between the control and critical conditions, and control and glorifying conditions.

Taken together, results of Studies 3 and 4 provide evidence for the *cultural constitution of psychological experience* and the *directive* character of intentional worlds. Descriptions of historical events are not inert end-products of behavior. Instead, they are cultural-psychological affordances that impact people's identification with their nation as well as impact their perceptions of injustices in present-day society. The situation sampling method makes this point explicit by following the life of cultural products across subsequent contexts. People in one moment create descriptions of the past that they invest with their identity interests. When these descriptions of the past appear in a new setting, they carry their identity-invested charge from the context of production to the context of re-presentation. These descriptions have their own directive force that act in ways that are consistent with the initial identity investments imparted during their (re)production.

# General Discussion

The present work articulates a cultural psychological approach to collective memory and intergroup relations. This approach draws upon previous work investigating both (a) the impact of identification on recall of the collective past (e.g., Sahdra & Ross, 2007) and (b) the impact of different constructions of the past on identity-relevant experience and action (e.g., Peetz et al., 2010; Sibley et al., 2008). Rather than consider (a) and (b) separately, the key contribution of a cultural psychology perspective is to link them via the concept of mediated action. That is, it treats individual recall of the collective past not simply as the end-product of action, but also as an influence on further action (Adams & Markus, 2004). From this perspective, individual recall products become cultural memory tools that mediate identity-relevant experiences beyond the situation of original production to influence responses in new action settings.

To investigate this conception of collective memory as mediated action, we used a situation-sampling paradigm. Consistent with the psychological constitution hypothesis, in Study 1, participants generated nation-glorifying incidents about collective achievement with greater frequency than they generated critical events about collective loss or wrongdoing, and, in Study 2, participants rated glorifying events about collective achievement more relevant/important to the study of Indian history than they rated critical or silenced events about collective loss or wrongdoing. In both studies, evidence suggested these tendencies were stronger among participants who scored higher in national identification. That is, the more participants identified with India, the more they were likely to

produce and reproduce (via judgments of relevance/importance) nation-glorifying memory products. Both studies illuminate the psychological constitution of cultural reality: the idea that cultural realities are not natural or neutral, but instead are identity-charged products that bear the beliefs and desires of their producers.

Consistent with the cultural constitution hypothesis, in Study 3, participants who were exposed to glorifying events about collective achievements reported higher national identification and less perceptions of current-day injustice than participants who were exposed to events about collective wrongdoing. Results of Study 4 suggested that this pattern may have emerged because exposure to events focused on collective wrongdoing and collective achievements promoted divergent effects relative to a baseline control condition: while exposure to critical events tended to reduce national identification and increase perceptions of injustice relative to a baseline, exposure to glorifying events tended to increase national identification and decrease perceptions of injustice relative to a baseline. Both studies illuminate the cultural constitution of psychological experience: the idea that cultural realities are not neutral or inert, but instead direct subsequent encounters toward identity-serving ends.

Together, these results suggest a conception of collective memory as mediated action. It is not merely a coincidence that highly identified Indian participants recall and select glorifying constructions of the collective past (Studies 1 and 2). Indeed, they may remember and prefer these representations precisely because glorifying representations reinforce high identification and afford the denial of present day injustices.

## Limitations and Future Directions

A noteworthy limitation of this project is the relative absence of participants belonging to subordinate groups (e.g., Muslims, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe). Across all four studies, the majority of our participants reported a Hindu religious identity and upper caste identity, and belonged to the middle class (with the exception of Study 1 participants who were college students and on average belonged to the upper middle class and upper class). Although our focus on responses from middle class, educated Indians reflects our interest in examining how mainstream historical narratives promote dominant interests (e.g., denial of injustice targeting marginalized groups), this focus silences the voices of people from marginalized groups, who may have better knowledge about blameworthy incidents of violence by the dominant Hindu majority. Indeed, this may explain the low frequency of such events in spontaneous recall of participants in Study 1. An important direction for future work—whether in research or education about the Indian past—is to counteract tendencies of collective forgetting about intergroup violence by including voices of people from marginalized groups, people belonging to lower castes for example. (see Jaffrelot, 2013; Martín-Baró, 1994; Pai, 2013). In spite of how caste is perceived as antithetical to values of civility in urban regions in India (Jogdand, Khan, & Mishra, 2016), there has been a steady increase in incidents of caste-based injustices both in rural and urban regions (Teltumbde, 2011). Thus, participants belonging to lower castes may be especially likely to note caste-based injustices in spontaneous recall of events.

Another reason to include a more diverse group of participants concerns the consequences of engagement with representations focused on historical injustices. The present work indicates that exposure to critical narratives about (the ingroup's) history promotes higher perceptions of injustice, and we present this outcome in a positive light (since perceptions of injustice may motivate people to engage in action; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2015). However, previous research also indicates that historical injustices can be traumatic and have negative mental health outcomes for those with marginalized identities (e.g., Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Mohatt, Thompson, Thai, & Tebes, 2014). An inclusion of participants with marginalized identities can allow

the investigation of the efficacy of particular historical representations in promoting more positive intergroup relations as well as positive health outcomes.

A second limitation concerns our measure of recall. The instructions of the free-recall task required participants to list events that they believed all students should know about. Considering the student sample, these instructions could have reminded participants about their formal history education, and subsequently consider the events that were most prevalent in history curricula and critical for success in history examinations. This could have then restricted the range or type of events considered. If it is the case that the current set of instructions primed the students to recall official narratives of history, then it becomes important to consider the role of power and privilege in what constitutes as official or "relevant" forms of historical knowledge. Official historical narratives are often more prevalent in the environment and can play a crucial role in what are considered "objective" accounts of the past. When members of historically oppressed groups offer alternative accounts of the past (i.e., ones that reflect wrongdoing or social injustices), their accounts may be silenced or forgotten as they are seen as irrelevant forms of objective reality or historical "truth". Dominant group members—who are likely to benefit from their higher social status—can silence alternative accounts that undermine the legitimacy of current inequalities and hierarchies or reconstruct them in ways that justify past and current inequalities. For example, prior research has indicated that majority group members in New Zealand, who also have higher scores on a social dominance measure (see Sidanius & Pratto, 2001), are more likely to negate their in-group's responsibility for historical wrongdoings against indigenous groups (i.e., subordinate groups). By not acknowledging their role in past injustices, majority group members can justify the social inequalities between them and indigenous group members (Sibley et al., 2007). Thus, the silencing (e.g., through acts of omission) of past accounts of injustice and wrongdoing can lay the foundation for identity-protective perception (e.g., denial of current issues of injustice) and contribute towards maintaining systems of inequality in a given society.

## Conclusion: On the Collective Character of Psychological Experience

Without downplaying limitations of our research, the contribution of the present work is to articulate a cultural psychological approach to the study of collective memory and intergroup relations. The key to this approach is an emphasis on the intentionality of everyday worlds and a corresponding understanding of collective memory as mediated action. When people in dominant groups reproduce constructions of the past and give them material form, they invest them with the psychological charge of their particular beliefs and desires (e.g., national glorification). This psychological charge influences the perceptions and actions of people who subsequently encounter these cultural products—for example, it can lead them to deny injustice and to oppose policies to remedy it—and this process of mediated action can operate without their awareness or personal intention.

With respect to practical concerns for intergroup relations, the contribution of the present work is to illuminate directions for action toward improvement of intergroup relations by recognizing marginalized groups' perspectives and histories. In particular, results suggest the importance of incorporating silenced knowledge and experiences from marginalized groups into official constructions of history. This "recovery of historical memory" (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 31) can afford constructions of the past that not only reflect more inclusive modes of national identification, but also promote perceptions of injustice and support for action to remedy it (Hammack, 2008; Reicher, 2004; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008).

## Notes

i) Although our approach to collective memory has its foundation in perspectives of cultural psychology, we do not claim that it is the unique source of relevant points. For example, as our reference here to Moscovici (1984) suggests, many articulations of social representations theory resonate with a cultural psychology account, especially to the extent that they emphasize the realization of beliefs and desires in everyday ecology and the capacity of those ecological representations to influence subsequent activity—in other words, the intentionality of everyday worlds.

ii) Across all four studies, analyses that included income, caste, religious identification, and gender as covariates did not change results. Accordingly, we report analyses without inclusion of these variables as covariates.

iii) In this and all other studies, we presented materials in English, and participants completed all research materials in English language. Undergraduate student participants came from institutions with English as the medium of instruction.

iv) In this case, the first and second authors scored the events based on the initial categorization from the undergraduate coders. We scored these events independently and then consulted with each other on discrepancies. The resultant kappa score for this process was .88 and indicates a very high level of agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

v) Participants generated more glorifying events ($M = 1.70$, $SD = .88$) compared to ambiguous events ($M = 0.22$, $SD = .42$), $F(1, 53) = 102.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .66$. There was no significant difference between the number of critical events ($M = 0.17$, $SD = .51$) and ambiguous events generated, $F(1, 53) = .39$, $p = .54$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$.

vi) Interestingly, the mean scores were above 5 for all categories of events, indicating that participants did not consider the silenced or critical events as irrelevant per se. Instead, participants rated all events as relevant—since average scores are all above the mid point of the scale—and glorifying events as particularly more relevant.

vii) It is important to note that mean scores for national identification and perceptions of injustices were above the mid-point in all conditions. Thus, exposure to critical narratives does not promote *dis*-identification with the nation per se. It reduces high levels of national identification, relative to glorifying narratives. Similarly, exposure to glorifying narratives does not, at least in our data set, lead to *denial* of injustice. However, it does lead to lower perceptions of injustice, relative to exposure to critical narratives.

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# Appendix

## I. Manipulation Check of Coding Scheme in Study 2

To check whether the coding schemes were consistent with participants' evaluations of these categories of events, we included a manipulation check in Study 2. As outlined in the procedure section, participants read ten glorifying events, five critical events and four silenced events (that we added and that were not generated by Study 1 participants). However, as a manipulation check, we also included two additional events: the ambiguous 'partition' and 'Mughal Empire'. As part of our manipulation check, after reading each historical event, participants indicated the extent to which each event made them feel proud of being Indian, and the extent to which each event made them feel ashamed of being Indian on a 1 (*not at all proud/not at all ashamed*) to 7 (*very proud/very ashamed*) scale. We computed the averaged index of pride and shame for glorifying, critical, and silenced events, and our single item measures of pride and shame for both events. Next, we conducted a repeated measures analysis of pride for the five categories of events: glorifying, critical, silenced, Mughal Empire, and partition. Results indicated that participants were most proud of glorifying events, followed by the partition and Mughal empire, followed by critical events, and finally least proud of silenced events, $F(4, 93) = 41.20$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p}^{2} = .31$ (see Table A.1 below).

Table A.1

*Means (and Standard Deviations) of Pride and Shame Measures in Study 2*

|  | Glorifying | Partition | Mughal | Critical | Silenced |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Pride* | 5.61$_a$ (0.83) | 4.66$_b$ (1.68) | 4.68$_b$ (1.54) | 3.46$_c$ (1.51) | 4.19$_d$ (1.23) |
| *Shame* | 2.92$_a$ (1.47) | 3.59$_b$ (1.95) | 3.53$_b$ (1.84) | 4.72$_c$ (1.12) | 4.06$_d$ (1.08) |

*Note*. Standard deviations are in parenthesis. Different letter subscripts within rows indicate statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences.

Similarly, we conducted a repeated measures analysis of the shame variable for the five categories of historical events. Results indicated that participants were most ashamed of the critical events, followed by the silenced events, followed by Mughal empire and partition, and finally least ashamed of glorifying events, $F(4, 93) = 24.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$.

The manipulation check corresponds with the coders assessment of the events in Study 1. Moreover, given the fact that events related to the partition and the Mughal empire were rated in between the glorifying and critical events, further reinforces the ambiguity point: it is possible that participants may consider these events as pride inducing or shame inducing depending on the specific framing of these events and this remains an interesting point for future research.

## II. Silenced Events Used in Studies 2 and 3

1. *Assassination of Hirdai Nath Wanchoo in 1992:* Hirdai Nath Wanchoo, Kashmir's human rights activist was assassinated on 5th December 1992. The Indian Government was allegedly responsible for this as Wanchoo had opposed the Indian government's policies in Kashmir.

2. *Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) of 1958:* The Parliament of India passed this Act on September 11th 1958. It grants special powers to the armed forces in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. The Act grants extraordinary powers to the military, including the power to detain persons, use lethal force, and enter and search premises without warrant.

3. *Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1901:* Up until 1952, this act prevented members of Dalit community to own land even if they had the means to purchase land.

4. *Government intervention in Bastar:* In 1949, the Indian government demarcated 27.5% of the total forest area of Bastar, Chhattisgarh as under cultivation and 57.25% as state-owned forests. This reduced legal access to land for subsistence agriculture and also led to several long cultivators of the land to be labeled as 'encroachers'.

## III. Perceptions of Injustice Items Used in Studies 3 and 4

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you agree that each issue (i.e., each item) reflects discrimination and/or injustice on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

1. Members of the Border Security Force (BSF) often asked Kashmiri Muslims (compared to Kashmiri pundits [Hindus]) if they were militants.

2. The University of Hyderabad chose to launch its 2011 initiative to curb drinking and drug use on campus by particularly working with students from the north-east.

3. The practice of asking North Eastern Indians for their passports as evidence of their Indian citizenship.

*Explanation of items in III.*

The above-mentioned items focused on marginalized groups' experiences in India. Item 1 focuses on policies that expose Muslims from Kashmir (region located in northern India and source of dispute between India and Pakistan) to extra scrutiny than Hindus in Kashmir. Thus, the first item focused on disparate experiences of Muslims and Hindus. Items 2 and 3 focused

on the experiences of individuals who are from the North Eastern regions of India—seven states located in North Eastern India. Individuals from these regions are often subjected to negative stereotypes (i.e., alluding to Item 2) and questioned about their citizenship status (i.e., alluding to Item 3).