Longing for the good old days of our past
Understanding the triggers, functions and consequences of national nostalgia

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Utrecht University
OUTLOOK / MOOD / LIFE

Now for some more statements. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these?

I would like my country to be the way it used to be

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<td>Total</td>
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<td>India</td>
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<td>U.S.</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<td>China</td>
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Base: 18,180 adults across 23 countries, online, 12th Sep – 11th Oct 2016

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RADICAL RIGHT-WING PARTY DISCOURSE

“Make America great again”

“Giving back the Netherlands to the Dutch”
PREVIOUS WORK IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

“A sentimental longing for a positively remembered past”

Intergroup emotions theory

Personal identity

Personal nostalgia

Individual processes

Social identity

Collective nostalgia

Group processes
NEW CHALLENGES

1. Triggers and functions?

2. Consequences for intragroup and intergroup dynamics?

3. Generalizability across countries?

Focus on national identity
Majority members
TRIGGERS AND FUNCTIONS

Similar mechanism for collective nostalgia?
CONSEQUENCES FOR GROUP DYNAMICS

Intergroup emotions theory

Regulation group attitudes & behavior

Collective nostalgia

Restorative function
- Protect in-group
- Reject out-group
COLLECTIVE NOSTALGIA: THEORETICAL WORK

Restorative function (Boym, 2001; Davis, 1979)

Social change & discontinuity + Collective nostalgia + Identity continuity in-group

Renewed sense of social identity +

Based on past experiences
Collective nostalgia in organizational setting (Milligan, 2003)

- Employees moving to a new site
- Collective nostalgia for old working environment
- New social identity categories
- Identity discontinuity
  - “Old” employee identity ("Us")
  - “New” employee identity ("Them")
Collective nostalgia for old ethnic neighborhood (Kasinitz & Hillyard, 1995)

Non-white residents move in

Identity discontinuity

Collective nostalgia for old ethnic neighborhood

New social identity categories

“Old-timers” (“Us”)

“Newcomers” (“Them”)
COLLECTIVE NOSTALGIA AND SOCIAL CATEGORIZATION

• Collective nostalgia
  • Salience of “old-timer” social identity
  • Restore sense of identity continuity

• Self-categorization theory (SCT): when social identity is salient
  • Depersonalization: Self-perception shifts from “I” to “We”
  • Social categorization: “Us” vs. “Them”

• Activation in-group prototype “Us: old-timers”
  • What defines the group as a whole (e.g., norms, values)
  • Characteristics that define its members
  • Indicates criteria for group membership
General predictions

- Intragroup dynamics
  - Own group

- Intergroup dynamics
  - Other groups

Trigger

Identity discontinuity

Collective nostalgia

Restorative function

In-group prototype
  - Group boundaries

- +
- +
Empirical Part I:

Consequences of national nostalgia among Native Dutch
SPECIFIC PREDICTIONS

National in-group prototypes marking group boundaries

Ethnic national belonging

Autochthony

National identification

In-group protection

Attitudes towards immigrant out-groups

+ +

+ +

+ -

+ -
NATIONAL IN-GROUP PROTOTYPES IN-GROUP PAST

**Autochthony**

*Primo-occupants (‘firstcomers’) are more entitled and own the country more than newcomers*

(Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013)

**Ethnic national belonging**

*One can only be a true national if one is of native descent*
TWO MULTIPLE STUDY PAPERS

National in-group prototypes marking group boundaries

Ethnic national belonging

Autochthony

Intergroup dynamics

Own group

Other groups

+ +

+ +
Longing for the country’s good old days: National nostalgia, autochthony beliefs, and opposition to Muslim expressive rights

Anouk Smeekes*, Maykel Verkuyten and Borja Martinovic
ERCOMER, Utrecht University, the Netherlands
NATIONAL NOSTALGIA & AUTOCHTHONY

Autochthony beliefs

+ [Image of Dutch culture]

+ [Image of Opposition]

18
STUDY 1 – FIRST STEP

National nostalgia

Sentimental longing for positively remembered *national in-group past*

Personal nostalgia

Sentimental longing for positively remembered *personal past*

*Empirically different?*
**Method**

Survey among 112 native Dutch students of Utrecht University

**Personal & national nostalgia (5 pt scale; Never – Very often)**

*How often do you long for the following things from the past:*

1. My family house
2. My childhood toys
3. My school
4. The way Dutch people were
5. The way Dutch society used to be
6. The way the Dutch landscape (i.e., surroundings) looked like

*How often do you bring to mind nostalgic experiences:*

7. Related to your childhood
8. Related to the way the Netherlands was in the past
## EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My family house</td>
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<tr>
<td>My childhood toys</td>
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<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My school</td>
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<td>.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often do you bring to mind nostalgic experiences related to your childhood?</td>
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<td>.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>The way Dutch people were</td>
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<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The way Dutch society was</td>
<td></td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The way the Dutch landscape (i.e., surroundings) looked like</td>
<td></td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you bring to mind nostalgic experiences related to the way the Netherlands was in the past?</td>
<td></td>
<td>.72</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Study 1 – Second Step**

1 item

“The Netherlands belongs more to native Dutch than to immigrant minorities, because native Dutch were here first.”

5 items (α = .75) reverse coded

*To what extent do you believe that Muslims in NL should be allowed to (e.g.):*

1. Show and express their identity in public
2. Build mosques
3. Found Islamic schools
STUDY 2

- Survey among broader sample of native Dutch adults ($N = 162$)

- More general measure national nostalgia (4 item scale, $\alpha = .90$), e.g.:
  
  1. How often do you experience nostalgia when you think about the Netherlands of the past?
  2. How often do you long for the Netherlands of the past?

- More items for autochthony beliefs
  
  - 4 item scale ($\alpha = .93$) developed by Martinovic & Verkuyten (2013) e.g.:
    
    1. The original inhabitants of the country are more entitled than newcomers.
    2. Every country belongs to its original inhabitants.
RESULTS STUDY 2

Controls: age, national identification, political orientation and education
STUDY 3

- Examine causality with experiment
  - Randomly assigned 59 native Dutch students
  - Two conditions: national nostalgia vs. control

**National nostalgia condition**

*Please bring to mind the good and nice things from the Netherlands of the past. Which things from the Dutch past evoke nostalgia in you? Please write down what you miss from the Netherlands of the past and how this makes you feel nostalgic.*

**Control condition**

*Please try to envisage an event that made the news last year and that involved the Netherlands. Try to think about this event as if you were an eye witness. Specifically, try to envisage this event as if you were a historian who wants to know all facts about national history. Please write about this event below as factual, neutral and detailed as possible.*
RESULTS STUDY 3

Manipulation

1 = national nostalgia
-1 = control

Opposition to Muslim expressive rights

Autochthony beliefs

Controls: national identification and political orientation
National nostalgia: A group-based emotion that benefits the in-group but hampers intergroup relations

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NATIONAL NOSTALGIA & ETHNIC BELONGING

Ethnic belonging

Intragroup dynamics
- In-group identification
- In-group protectionism

Intergroup dynamics
- Prejudice towards immigrants
**DATA & PARTICIPANTS**

3 Online survey studies via survey companies

- **Study 1**
  - Broad sample of native Dutch adults ($N = 197$)

- **Studies 2 and 3**
  - Representative samples native Dutch adult population ($N = 928$ and $N = 802$)
METHOD: MEASUREMENTS I

- **Immigrant out-group prejudice**
  - 4 biggest immigrant groups in NL

- **National identification**
  - E.g., “I identify with the Netherlands”

- **In-group protectionism**
  1. “It is important to protect original Dutch norms and values”
  2. “It is important to preserve the original Dutch culture and traditions”
  3. “We should protect the Dutch way of life against groups and developments that undermine this identity”
Measurements II

- **Ethnic belonging**
  1. “A real Dutch person is someone who has Dutch origins”
  2. “A real Dutch person has Dutch ancestors”

- **National & personal nostalgia**
  - *Similar to previous studies*

- **Controls**
  - Education, Age, Gender, Political orientation
RESULTS STUDY 1

National nostalgia

Personal nostalgia

National identification

Immigrant out-group prejudice
RESULTS STUDY 2 & STUDY 3

Study 3
- In-group protectionism

Immigrant out-group prejudice

National nostalgia

Ethnic belonging

+ + +
CONCLUSION EMPIRICAL PART 1

- National nostalgia as a (distinct) collective emotion

- Positive consequences for national in-group
  - Stronger national identification
  - Tendency to protect national identity

- Negative consequences for evaluations immigrant out-groups

- Explanation based on SCT: exclusionary in-group prototypes
  - Autochthony
  - Ethnic national belonging
EMPIRICAL PART II:

TRIGGERS AND CONSEQUENCES OF NATIONAL NOSTALGIA ACROSS CULTURES
Anxious for ‘our future’ and longing for ‘our past’: Collective angst, collective nostalgia and opposition to immigration across countries

[Manuscript under revision]

Next step: Triggers & Generalizability

Collective identity discontinuity → National nostalgia → Prejudice towards immigrants

Collective angst
DATA & MEASURES

Survey: university students in 27 countries \( (N = 5956) \)
Jetten et al. (2015)

National nostalgia \( (\alpha = .86) \)
1. I get nostalgic when I think back of [country] in past times
2. I often think back about the good old days
3. I often long for [country] of the past
4. I experience nostalgic feelings when I hear [country’s] music from the past

Collective angst \( (\alpha = .85) \)
1. I am worried about the future vitality of [country]
2. I feel anxious about the future wealth of [country]
3. I am concerned that the future vitality of [country] is in jeopardy
4. I have the impression that things in [country] are taking a turn for the worse

Prejudice towards immigrants \( (\alpha = .91) \): 6 items
1. Immigrants take resources and employment opportunities away from fellow [countrymen]
2. Immigrants are a threat to the [country’s] identity.
## Countries JETTEN ET AL. (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>Countries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>US, Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>Chile, Brazil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Netherlands, UK, Spain, Germany, France, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Belgium, Portugal, Poland, Hungary, Latvia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>China, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, India, Pakistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>Iran</td>
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<td>Africa</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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FIRST STEP: TESTING MEASUREMENT EQUIVALENCE

Collective angst

National nostalgia

Prejudice towards immigrants

Reliable constructs in each country?

Constructs comparable across countries?

5 countries deleted, 22 left
Path model total sample: 22 countries

- Collective angst
- National nostalgia
- Prejudice towards immigrants

Arrows indicating positive relationships:
Model supported in 15 of the 22 countries
Not supported in 7 countries
## Overview Model in 22 Countries

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<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>Countries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
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CONCLUSION EMPIRICAL PART II

- Measurement national nostalgia cross-culturally valid

- Collective angst as a trigger
  - 18 countries

- Prejudice towards immigrants as an outcome
  - 16 countries

- Full model supported in 15 of the 22 countries
  - Not supported in 7 countries
  - Chile, Finland, Japan, Latvia, Malaysia, Pakistan & Poland
  - Traditionally host low numbers of immigrants
LIMITATIONS EMPIRICAL PART II

- Cross-sectional data: causality?
- Only student samples: generalizability?
- Small indirect effect sizes per country: robust?
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- National nostalgia
  - Thrives across the world
  - Harnessed by radical right
  - Distinct from personal nostalgia
  - Relevant for understanding group dynamics
  - Nationally & cross culturally

- New directions
  - Contents of national nostalgia
  - National nostalgia & homesickness among immigrants


https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anouk_Smeekes

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The Netherlands  
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COUNTRIES ANALYSES

No measurement invariance:
Australia, Hungary, India, Denmark, Germany

Mediation model not supported for:
Chile, Finland, Japan, Latvia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Poland