

ARTICLE



The sociality of personal and collective nostalgia

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ABSTRACT

Nostalgia, a sentimental longing for the past, is an ambivalent – albeit more positive than negative – emotion. Nostalgia is infused with sociality, as it refers to important figures from one’s past or to momentous life events that include those figures. Dispositional nostalgia is related to prejudice reduction via increases in a form of sociality, empathy. Experimentally induced nostalgia fosters sociality, operationalised as social connectedness (sense of acceptance). Social connectedness, in turn, has downstream consequences for (1) inspiration and goal-pursuit, (2) self-continuity and wellbeing, as well as (3) inclusion of an outgroup member in the self or outgroup trust and intergroup contact intentions. At the collective level, nostalgia confers sociality benefits to the ingroup (favourable attitudes, support, loyalty, collective action, barrier to collective guilt), but is also associated with negative sides of sociality such as outgroup rejection and exclusion. Collective nostalgia’s sociality is amenable to exploitation and can have controversial ramifications.

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Nostalgia, a “sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past” (The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1998, p. 1266), is commonly regarded as a solipsistic, ossified emotion that represents escapism from an unpleasant social reality, “a regressive manifestation closely related to the issue of loss, grief, incomplete mourning, and, finally, depression” (Castelnuovo-Tedesco, 1980, p. 110). Nostalgia is purported to shield the individual from the social world, and redirect her or him to revisiting past failures and lost potential in an endless ruminative loop. This view originated in the 17th century, first toward the end of the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648), with medical personnel diagnosing despairing soldiers of the Spanish army of Flanders who were drafted forcefully into service as suffering from “the evil of the heart” (*el mal de Corazon*) or “to be broken” (*estar roto*) (Rosen, 1975), and second, and more decisively, with the publication of Johannes Hofer’s (1934) medical dissertation, marking the commencement of

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scholarship on the construct. The view has persisted for 330 years (for reviews, see: Batcho, 2013a; Dodman, 2018; Sedikides, Wildschut, & Baden, 2004), and still echoes in such diverse areas of inquiry as history (Velikonja, 2009), comparative literature (Boym, 2001), media studies (Phillipov, 2016), tourism (George, Mair, & Reid, 2009), city planning (Ellin, 2001), psychoanalysis (Hook, 2012; Peters, 1985), psychiatry (Fuentenebro de Diego & Valiente Ots, 2014), and psychology (Beiser, 2004; Cappeliez, Guindon, & Robitaille, 2008; Henkel, Kris, Birney, & Krauss, 2017; Laubscher, 2012; Zinchenko, 2011).

We argue that this 330-year old conception of nostalgia is largely¹ based on an inferential error. Hofer (1688), a University of Basel student, and his contemporaries, observed that Swiss mercenaries fighting in foreign lands (France and Italy) suffered from nostalgia, an emotionally labile condition characterised by despondency, uncontrollable weeping, anorexia, insomnia, cardiac palpitations, and suicidal ideation (Batcho, 2013a; Sedikides et al., 2004). Military surgeons described nostalgic soldiers fighting in European armies as being inflicted by faculty deterioration, depression, and suicidal ideation (Rosen, 1975). Military physicians and historians portrayed nostalgia among American Civil War armies as involving depression and morbidity (Anderson & Anderson, 1984; Clarke, 2007). Lastly, scholars in history, comparative literature, media studies, tourism, city planning, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, and psychology noted that nostalgia coincides with varieties of psychological discomfort. This line of thinking has assumed – explicitly or implicitly – that nostalgia causes discomfort. Yet, an equally plausible assumption could have been that nostalgia is a coping response to discomfort. This perspective has been garnering empirical support in the last 15 years. Nostalgia is evoked as a coping resource following the onset of varieties of psychological discomfort, such as loneliness, boredom, neuroticism, self-discontinuity, meaninglessness, inauthenticity, threat appraisals, pessimism, death cognitions, physical malcontent, and unsettling weather (Abeyta, Routledge, & Juhl, 2015; Batcho, 2013b; Bialobrzeska, Elliot, Wildschut, & Sedikides, 2019; Lasaleta & Loveland, 2019; Routledge et al., 2011; Sedikides, Wildschut, Routledge, & Arndt, 2015; Sedikides, Wildschut, Routledge, Arndt, & Zhou, 2009; Van Tilburg, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2018; Zhou, Wildschut, Sedikides,

¹We reviewed, and are referring to, the history of the construct “nostalgia.” For a long period, the construct was considered synonymous to “homesickness.” The term nostalgia, coined by Hoffer (1688), is a compound of two Greek words, *nostos* (return) and *algos* (pain), denoting psychological suffering induced by a desire (yearning) to return to one’s homeland. By the end of the 20th century, the constructs “nostalgia” and “homesickness” had gone their separate ways. A catalyst was Davis’s (1979) work, showing that university students associated words such as “warm,” “childhood,” “yearning,” and “old times” more frequently with “nostalgia” than “homesickness.” The homesickness literature is currently concentrating mostly on psychological adjustment problems (e.g., separation anxiety, depressive affect) that accompany the transition of young persons (e.g., boarding school pupils, university students) away from home (Fisher, 1989; Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2010; Thurber & Walton, 2007).

Chen, & Vingerhoets, 2012). By contrast, when experimentally induced, nostalgia does not cause discomfort; if anything, it enriches human functioning (Baldwin, Biernat, & Landau, 2015; Baldwin & Landau, 2014; Ismail, Cheston, Christopher, & Meyrick, 2018; Kersten, Cox, & Van Enkevort, 2016; Sedikides & Wildschut, 2016a; Sedikides, Wildschut, & Stephan, 2018; Wulf, Bowman, Rieger, Velez, & Breuer, 2018; Zauberman, Ratner, & Kim, 2009).

Setting the agenda

How is nostalgia evoked as a coping resource and how does it enrich human functioning? We argue that a key active ingredient in these processes is nostalgia's sociality. We define sociality in six ways, which correspond to the six main sections of this article. *First*, we refer to whether dispositional nostalgia (i.e., nostalgia proneness) is linked more strongly to social functions of memory compared to alternate models of thinking about one's past, such as rumination and counterfactual thinking. *Second*, we refer to whether nostalgia is judged by observers as a social emotion, and we do so by relying on appraisal theory, savouring, and multidimensional scaling techniques. *Third*, we refer to the content of the nostalgic experience: Does it pertain to close others or to events replete with close others? We address this question via prototype theory and content analysis research, as well as via narrative coding following nostalgia induction. *Fourth*, we refer to the capacity of nostalgia to serve as a psychological buffer against adversity. In particular, we ask whether the coping strength of nostalgia stems, to a substantial degree, from reflection into the social well of important others or momentous life events that include those others. *Fifth*, we refer to the consequences of the emotion when experimentally induced (i.e., state nostalgia), or to the downstream correlates of the emotion when assessed (i.e., dispositional nostalgia). Are these consequences or correlates social in nature? Up to that point, we discuss personal nostalgia, that is, sentimental longing for one's personal past. *Sixth*, we capitalise on recent empirical developments to foray into collective or national nostalgia, that is, sentimental longing for the past of one's ingroup or country. Here, we consider sociality, and its implications, at the group or national level.

Many emotions have shades, thinner or thicker, of sociality (Cowen & Keltner, 2017; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Van Tilburg, Wildschut, & Sedikides, 2018). What then makes the argument in favour of nostalgia's sociality so special? It is the contrast to long-held scholarly and popular beliefs, we argue. Nostalgia, as we mentioned above, has been regarded a self-absorbed, rigid, ruminative escapism from a burdensome social reality. We contend, instead, that nostalgia relies on a reservoir of social memories to counter the uneasiness associated with life's predicaments, and that it spawns sociality.

At the outset, we seek to clarify that we do not equate sociality with positivity. We do not regard these terms as synonymous. Sociality can entail many benefits, but can also entail considerable harms, as over a century of social psychological research can testify. And, of course, one would need to specify what “benefits” or “harms” mean, and for whom. Although the bulk of our work on personal nostalgia has addressed generally constructive aspects of sociality for self and others, we call for a broadening of this research agenda (see subsection “Lingering Issues” under the final section “Summary, Limitations, and Lingering Issues”). Also, we, and other investigators, have been turning to the examination of more ominous aftermaths of the nostalgic experience, as our consideration of collective or national nostalgia indicates. Relatedly, we wish to clarify that we do not equate nostalgia with positivity. Nostalgia is a bittersweet emotion (a “wistful pleasure, a joy tinged with sadness;” Werman, 1977, p. 393), albeit more sweet than bitter (Frijda, 2007; Sedikides & Wildschut, 2016b). Yet, when experimentally inducing the emotion, we take care either to measure elicited positive affect or to include a positive-memories control condition in our designs. We habitually covary out positive affect from the reported results, a point that we will not be repeating in this article to simplify exposition. Nevertheless, we will be flagging up the use of a positive-memories control group.

Sociality I: dispositional nostalgia and social functions of memory

A contributor to the above-mentioned 330-year old inferential error (i.e., wrongfully attributing causality to nostalgia) is the co-occurrence of nostalgia not only with psychological discomfort, but also with problematic ways of thinking about one’s past, such as rumination and counterfactual thinking. Rumination, “thoughts and behaviors that focus the individual’s attention on the negative mood, the causes and consequences of this mood, and self-evaluations related to the mood” (Rusting & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998, p. 790), exacerbates negative thinking and depression while obstructing problem solving and goal-directed behaviour (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2008). Crucially, rumination covaries positively with neuroticism (Roberts, Gilboa, & Gotlib, 1998), and neuroticism covaries positively with nostalgia (Seehusen et al., 2013). Counterfactual thinking, thoughts about alternatives to the past that originate in the aftermath of self-relevant negative events (Summerville & Roese, 2008), involves imagining how things could have turned out either better (upward counterfactuals) or worse (downward counterfactuals). Upward counterfactuals covary positively with negative affect and inaction regret (Epstude & Roese, 2008), whereas inaction regret covaries positively with nostalgia

(Gilovich, Medvec, & Kahneman, 1998). So, nostalgia covaries directly or indirectly with rumination and counterfactual thinking. But how are these three modes of thinking about one's past similar or different in terms of their relation with various functions of autobiographical memory (i.e., usages of memory or motives to remember; Harris, Rasmussen, & Berntsen, 2014)?

A correlational study, conducted online, addressed this question (Cheung, Wildschut, & Sedikides, 2018; $N =$, p. 288). Nostalgia proneness was assessed with the 7-item Southampton Nostalgia Scale (Barrett et al., 2010; Routledge, Arndt, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2008), referring to the frequency (e.g., "How often do you experience nostalgia?") and personal relevance (e.g., "How important is it for you to bring to mind nostalgic experiences?) of nostalgic engagement. Rumination was assessed with the 10-item revised version of the Ruminative Responses Scale (Treynor, Gonzalez, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2003). Five items refer to brooding (e.g., "Think 'Why do I have problems other people don't have?") and five to reflection (e.g., "Go someplace alone to think about your feelings"). Counterfactual thinking was assessed with the 16-item Counterfactual Thinking for Negative Events Scale (Rye, Cahoon, Ali, & Daftary, 2008). Participants reflected on a recent negative event that happened to them and reported how frequently they experienced various types of (mostly upward) counterfactual thought, such as self-referent upward (e.g., "I wish I had a time machine so I could just take back something I said or did"), nonreferent upward (e.g., "I think about how much better things could have been"), other-referent upward (e.g., "If another person [or other people] had not been so inconsiderate, things would have been better"), and nonreferent downward (e.g., "I count my blessings when I think how much worse things could have been"). Finally, the functions of autobiographical memory were assessed with the 39-item Modified Reminiscence Functions Scale (Washington, 2009), which comprises seven subscales: intimacy maintenance (attaining symbolic proximity to close but absent others), teach/inform (transmitting insights about oneself or life), self-regard (carrying over effective problem-solving strategies to present action, clarifying one's identity), bitterness revival (rekindling resentment for having been wronged), conversation (enlivening current social exchange), boredom reduction (counteracting tedium), and death preparation (coping with mortality awareness).

Nostalgia proneness, rumination, and counterfactual thinking were positively, albeit moderately, correlated, thus establishing their distinct conceptual status. The seven memory functions were also positively correlated. Further, each of nostalgia proneness, rumination, and counterfactual thinking was positively linked with all seven memory functions. However, more focused statistical analyses (i.e., multiple regressions and canonical

correlations) revealed that nostalgia proneness diverged from these other constructs. In particular, unlike rumination and counterfactual thinking, nostalgia proneness was positively and strongly linked to intimacy maintenance, teach/inform, and self-regard, whereas it was inversely and weakly linked to bitterness revival (which is “negatively related to almost all aspects of mental health that have been studied;” Westerhof, Bohlmeijer, & Webster, 2010, p. 706). In all, nostalgia proneness not only evinced a more functional signature than rumination and counterfactual thinking, but, more importantly, was distinctly related to *social* functions of autobiographical memory, as indexed mostly by intimacy maintenance and teach/inform.

Sociality II: is nostalgia judged as social emotion?

Appraisal theory and savouring

Research from an appraisal theory (Parkinson & Manstead, 1992; Scherer, 1982; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985) perspective has pointed to the sociality of nostalgia. This research, reported by Van Tilburg, Bruder, Wildschut, Sedikides, and Göritz (2019), endeavoured to pinpoint the appraisals that underlie nostalgia and to compare nostalgia’s appraisal profile with that of other emotions. In Study 1 of this article, 1125 German participants from WisoPanel (Göritz, 2014), an open access panel for academic research, described a personally-relevant autobiographical event. They then rated it on 11 appraisals and indicated the extent to which they experienced each of 32 emotions (including nostalgia) in conjunction with the event. Following a factor analysis, the 11 appraisals were reduced to five: pleasantness, ir retrievable loss, temporal distance, uniqueness, and reflection (see Table 1 for a list of appraisals and emotions). The goal of using this methodological approach was to identify which appraisals best characterise events that instigate nostalgia. Such events were pleasant, entailed ir retrievable loss, were experienced as temporally distant, and were deemed unique (see Table 2 for correlations between emotions and appraisal dimensions). In Study 2, 1,261 German WisoPanelists reported the highest levels of nostalgia (compared to 10 comparative emotions) when hypothetical events were (manipulated to be) pleasant, ir retrievably lost, distant, and unique. Finally, in Study 3, 994 German WisoPanelists felt most nostalgic following guided recall of autobiographical events that were manipulated to be high (vs. low) on these four appraisals.

Not only is sociality implicated in appraising nostalgic events, but it also plays a role in creating them. Savouring is the key process in question. Savouring, the deliberate capturing and retaining of an ongoing, desirable, and typically social experience (Bryant, 2003), increases the likelihood that

Table 1. *Appraisals and emotions used in Van Tilburg et al. (2019, study, p. 1).***Appraisals***Pleasantness of the experience*

When I think back about this event, it makes me feel (pleasant/unpleasant).
It is (pleasant/unpleasant) to think back of this event.

Irretrievable loss

I [can/cannot] handle it well that the event has passed.
I find it [easy/hard] to accept that the event has passed.

Temporal distance

The event appears to me as it [appeared to me for the first/time/has long passed].
The event feels temporally [close/distant] to me.

Uniqueness of the event

[The event was unique/Similar events have happened often in my life].
Such an event I will likely [never experience/experience] again.

Reflection

When the memory comes to mind, [I do not/I] again reflect on the feelings that I had.
I [analyze/do not analyze] the thoughts and feelings that I have in relation to this memory.

Emotions

Nostalgia, anger, fear, disgust, joy, guilt, pride, embarrassment, gratitude, contempt, sympathy, self-pity, disappointment, homesickness, relief, contentment, shame, regret, longing, despair, melancholy, grief, loneliness, bitter, enthusiasm, sadness, love, tenderness, empathy, awe, relaxation, beloved.

this experience will be reflected upon nostalgically at a later time (Huang, Huang, Wyer, & Jr, 2016). Indeed, participants ($N = 266$; online sample) who reported having savoured an experience also reported feeling nostalgic for it (Biskas et al., 2018, Study, p. 1). Further, participants (122 undergraduates) who reported savouring their time at university felt more nostalgic at alumni reunions, contexts which cue that time (Biskas et al., Study 2). Critically, savouring experiences at university predicted nostalgia for them four to nine months later (Biskas et al., Study 3; $N = 66$ undergraduates).

Multidimensional scaling

Van Tilburg, Wildschut, and Sedikides (2018, Studies 1–4) compared and contrasted 11 self-relevant or self-conscious emotions, namely nostalgia, embarrassment, gratitude, guilt, hurt feelings, inspiration, passion, pride, shame, and unrequited love. Participants (a total of 169 undergraduate and post-graduate students) rated the extent to which each of 55 emotions pairs (e.g., nostalgia-embarrassment, nostalgia-gratitude, guilt-pride) were similar or different. The ratings culminated in a participant-specific matrix, and these emotion comparison matrices were subjected to multidimensional scaling (Kruskal & Wish, 1978) in order to uncover dimensions of perceived similarity among the emotions. Congruent with prior findings (Stephan et al., 2014; Tullett, Wildschut, Sedikides, & Inzlicht, 2015; Wildschut, Sedikides, Arndt, & Routledge, 2006), nostalgia emerged as an approach-oriented, positive, and low-arousal emotion. Adding to prior

Table 2. Zero-order correlations between emotions and appraisals in Van Tilburg et al. (2019, study, p. 1).

Emotion	Appraisal dimension				
	Pleasantness	Irretrievable loss	Distance	Uniqueness	Reflection
Nostalgia	.36	.09	.06	.12	.03
Anger	-.47	.36	-.03	-.05	.19
Fear	-.37	.44	-.07	-.02	.24
Disgust	-.23	.22	.04	-.09	.13
Joy	.67	-.27	-.11	.08	-.16
Guilt	-.28	.34	-.02	-.04	.20
Pride	.46	-.19	-.15	.11	-.03
Embarrassment	-.26	.16	.04	-.08	.14
Gratitude	.53	-.19	-.08	.16	-.06
Contempt	-.38	.30	.00	-.00	.17
Sympathy	-.31	.27	-.04	-.00	.20
Self-Pity	-.20	.38	.01	-.05	.21
Disappointment	-.40	.44	.00	-.01	.22
Homesickness	.09	.28	.02	.02	.08
Relief	.18	-.23	-.10	.07	.02
Contentment	.56	-.35	-.07	.08	-.15
Shame	-.26	.23	.00	-.04	.18
Regret	-.38	.30	.01	-.02	.16
Longing	.33	.30	-.10	.07	.13
Despair	-.33	.51	-.08	-.00	.20
Melancholy	.08	.36	.01	.07	.18
Grief	-.34	.46	-.01	.09	.23
Loneliness	-.19	.45	.00	-.02	.20
Bitter	-.36	.50	-.07	-.00	.21
Enthusiasm	.67	-.22	-.17	.06	-.08
Sadness	-.39	.52	-.04	.05	.22
Love	.36	.02	-.17	.18	.04
Tenderness	.41	.01	-.15	.19	.06
Empathy	-.15	.16	-.11	.04	.23
Awe	.41	-.09	-.16	.16	.00
Relaxation	.50	-.34	-.02	.04	-.13
Beloved	.41	-.12	-.12	.16	-.01

Note. Correlations in boldface are statistically significant ($p < .05$). Adapted from "An appraisal profile of nostalgia," by W. A. P. van Tilburg, M. Bruder, T. Wildschut, C. Sedikides, and A. S. Göritz, 2019, *Emotion*, 19, p. 26. Copyright 2019 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

findings, nostalgia was perceived as most similar to self-compassion, pride, and gratitude – self-relevant emotions also marked by high degrees of social approach (Figure 1). Nostalgia was perceived as most dissimilar to shame, guilt, and embarrassment – self-relevant emotions marked by social avoidance (although guilt can foster interpersonal approach; Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994).

In a follow-up study (Van Tilburg et al., 2018, Study 5), 52 online participants recalled four personally important events, described them, and rated the extent to which each event led them to experience the 11 emotions. The ratings culminated in four correlation matrices,

corresponding to the four events, and these emotion comparison matrices were then subjected to multidimensional scaling to uncover dimensions of experienced similarity among the emotions. The above-mentioned findings from Studies 1–4 were replicated.

Sociality III: is the content of nostalgia social?

Prototype theory and content analysis

Research adopting a prototype theory (Rosch, 1978) approach established that laypersons, across 18 cultures, think of nostalgia in terms of social constructs. For example, they think that the emotion entails such key (i.e., central) features as meaningful memories of one's childhood, youth, or social relationships, missing or longing for significant others, and a sense

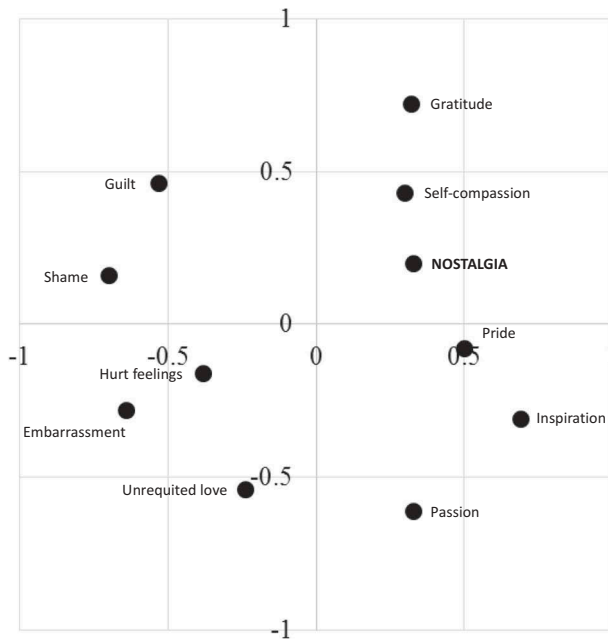


Figure 1. Multidimensional scaling results in Van Tilburg, Wildschut, and Sedikides (2018, Studies 1–4 aggregate), representing the position of nostalgia relative to 11 other self-relevant emotions in two-dimensional space. Van Tilburg et al.'s Study 6 revealed that the horizontal dimension represents valence or approach orientation (higher values indicating more positive valence and stronger approach orientation). The vertical dimension represents arousal (lower values indicating stronger arousal). Adapted from "Nostalgia's place among self-relevant emotions," by W. A. P. van Tilburg, T. Wildschut, and C. Sedikides, 2018, *Cognition and Emotion*, 32, p. 749. Copyright 2018 by Taylor and Francis. Reprinted with permission.

of warmth or comfort (Hepper, Ritchie, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2012; Hepper et al., 2014; see also Neto & Mullet, 2014).

Examples of sociality are additionally found in content-analysed nostalgic episodes or song lyrics. Such instances include close others (e.g., family, friends, partners, co-workers), pivotal events and leisure activities (e.g., holidays, vacations, graduations, birthdays, reunions) where close others are present, life periods (e.g., childhood, adolescence), or tangibles (e.g., books, cars, toys) that are reminiscent of close others (Batcho, DaRin, Nave, & Yaworsky, 2008; Wildschut et al., 2006, Studies 1–2). These instances transcend age boundaries (Madoglou, Gkinopoulos, Xanthopoulos, & Kalamaras, 2017; Wildschut, Sedikides, & Robertson, 2018) and are equally prevalent among persons who score high (vs. low) on narcissism (Hart et al., 2011), a personality trait known for its agentic rather than communal orientation (Sedikides & Campbell, 2017).

Narrative coding based on nostalgia inductions

Other lines of work have moved beyond perceptions of nostalgia by studying experimental inductions of the emotion. Induction is typically achieved via written accounts of nostalgic (vs. ordinary autobiographical) events (the Event Reflection Task; Sedikides et al., 2015). One relevant study content-analysed the ensuing narratives (Abeyta, Routledge, Roynance, Wildschut, & Sedikides, 2015; $N = 101$ undergraduates). The majority of narratives incorporated references to social objects (e.g., relationships, social interactions) or social sentiments (e.g., being loved, being comforted by others). These results were conceptually replicated (Sedikides et al., 2018, Study 1; $N = 60$ undergraduates).

Another study (Wildschut et al., 2018, Experiment 1; $N = 40$ older adult volunteers) analysed the narratives evoked by the Event Reflection Task, by using both a coding manual and a word-level text analysis program, the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC; Pennebaker, Chung, Ireland, Gonzalez, & Booth, 2007). The LIWC, relying on an internal dictionary to classify words into categories, has the potential to detect less observable writing content such as use of first-person singular pronouns (e.g., I, me, my, mine) which denotes increased self-focus and reduced social integration (Rude, Gortner, & Pennebaker, 2004), as well as use of first-person plural pronouns (e.g., we, us, our, ours) which denotes increased social integration, other-focus, and health benefits (Pennebaker & Stone, 2003). Consistent with prior findings (Abeyta et al., 2015; Sedikides et al., 2018, Study 1), manual coding revealed that nostalgic narratives (compared to ordinary autobiographical or control narratives) made more frequent mention of companionship and social interaction, while the LIWC revealed that nostalgic (vs. control) narratives made more frequent mention of social

processes and social content such as family (e.g., husband, daughter) and friends (e.g., buddy, friend). Adding to prior findings, the LIWC revealed that nostalgic (vs. control) narratives featured a lower frequency of first-person singular pronouns, indicating decreased self-focus, and a higher frequency of first-person plural pronouns, indicating a stronger emphasis on social interactions.

Sociality IV: is the nostalgic buffer social?

Research on the link between dispositional nostalgia and social functions of memory, findings on whether nostalgia is judged as a social emotion, and analyses of the nostalgia prototype or the content of the nostalgic experience converge in documenting the social character of the emotion. The results are consistent with early, dissident claims that, during nostalgic engagement, the mind is “peopled” (Hertz, 1990, p. 195), and intimate but bygone figures symbolically partake of one’s present (Davis, 1979).

Nostalgia is a resource that can be activated to cope with psychological malady. This functional property of nostalgia has been illustrated in conjunction with noxious stimuli or aversive psychological/physiological states, such as meaninglessness, boredom, inauthenticity, and physical coldness or bad weather (Lasaleta & Loveland, 2019; Routledge, Wildschut, Sedikides, & Juhl, 2013; Sedikides et al., 2015; Wildschut, Sedikides, & Cordaro, 2011). However, the regulatory capacity of nostalgia is often effected via social connectedness. The coping strength of nostalgia derives, to a great extent, from the social repository of important others or momentous life events that include those others. By relying on cognitive representations of social bonds (rather than the actual presence of these bonds), nostalgia constitutes an indirect strategy (Gardner, Pickett, & Knowles, 2005) for coping with distress and establishing psychological homeostasis. We consider the characteristic cases of social exclusion, loneliness, and organisational hardship.

Social exclusion and nostalgia

Social exclusion, such as exclusion from one’s group, is an unsettling experience (Betts & Hinsz, 2013). A naturalistic case of group (national, to be exact) exclusion is Greece, which, due to the 2008 financial crisis, came close to being excluded from the Eurozone and possibly even from the European Union. In a relevant study (Abakoumkin, Wildschut, Sedikides, & Bakarou, 2017; $N = 87$ Greek undergraduates), half of participants imagined an occasion where they were excluded due to their nationality (i.e., for being a Greek citizen), whereas the other half (control condition) imagined an occasion that implicated their nationality but was ordinary (e.g., ticking “nationality” in an application form). Participants

then reported the extent to which they resorted to nostalgia. In particular, they indicated on the Nostalgia Inventory (Batcho, 1995) whether they felt momentarily nostalgic for 18 predominantly social objects, with three old ones (i.e., “my childhood toys,” “my school,” “TV shows, movies”) being replaced with three new ones (i.e., “the Greek Easter,” “dinner with celebration,” “traditional Greek customs”) to reflect sociality in the context of the Greek culture. Subsequently, participants completed the Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire – Revised (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000).

The researchers hypothesised, based on literature (Juhl, Sand, & Routledge, 2012; Wildschut, Sedikides, Routledge, Arndt, & Cordaro, 2010), that elicited nostalgia (i.e., the putative coping mechanism) in the exclusion condition would not be equally potent among participants. Rather, it would be more potent among those low than high in attachment avoidance. Low avoidants would benefit more from nostalgia, given that they perceive close others as available and responsive, and rely on them for social support or help when distressed (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008). As hypothesised, low avoidants (compared to high avoidants) recruited nostalgia to a greater extent in response to exclusion, $B = -.54$, $SE = .19$, $F(1, 83) = 8.23$, $p = .005$, $\eta^2 = .09$. Low avoidants utilised the social repository of nostalgic memories to deal with the exclusion blow. This negative association between attachment avoidance and nostalgia was not observed in the control condition, $B = .03$, $SE = .15$, $F(1, 83) < 1$.

Loneliness and nostalgia

Loneliness, the sense of fewer-than-desired interpersonal bonds, entails a set of unnerving symptoms, including dejection, self-blame, and pessimism (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2012). Loneliness is associated with pernicious emotional and cognitive effects (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2014a, 2014b). Although its effects are palliated by social support (Asher & Paquette, 2003; Metting, Van der Molen, & Kocks, 2016), soliciting such support often presents a serious challenge due to subjective (e.g., shyness, low social self-esteem) or objective (e.g., relocation, migration) reasons. Zhou, Sedikides, Wildschut, and Gao (2008) proposed that nostalgia may begin to address the problem. Loneliness will be associated with, or engender, lack of perceived social support. However, loneliness will also be associated with, or engender, nostalgia (Wildschut et al., 2006). In turn, nostalgia will counteract perceptions of lack of social support (i.e., a statistical suppression effect; MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002). Zhou et al. provided both correlational and experimental support for their hypothesis.

In Study 1, 759 Chinese migrant children and adolescents (ranging in age from 9–15 years) completed three scales. The first one, assessing loneliness, was the 10-item UCLA Loneliness Scale (Knight, Chisholm, Marsh, & Godfrey, 1998; e.g., “How often do you feel completely alone?”). The second one, assessing nostalgia, was the Southampton Nostalgia Scale (Barrett et al., 2010; Routledge et al., 2008). The third one, assessing social support, was the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988; e.g., “I can count on my friends when things go wrong”). As hypothesised, lonelier children and adolescents perceived less social support, but reported higher nostalgia proneness. Countering the negative influence of loneliness, nostalgia proneness was associated with a stronger sense of social support (Figure 2, top panel).

Study 2, an experiment, tested 84 Chinese undergraduates. The induction of loneliness came first (Wildschut et al., 2006). All participants responded to the 10-item UCLA Loneliness Scale (Knight et al., 1998). In the low loneliness condition, response options were rigged so as to elicit agreement (e.g., “I *sometimes* feel that I am ‘out of tune’ with the people around me”), whereas, in the high loneliness condition, response options were rigged so as to elicit disagreement (e.g., “I *always* feel that I am ‘out of tune’ with the people around me”) (italics added). Next, participants received bogus feedback, indicating that, relative to their peers, they were either low (12th percentile) or high (62nd percentile) on the loneliness distribution. Concluding the loneliness induction, they were requested to explain the reasons for their score. Measures of nostalgia and social support followed. Specifically, participants completed state versions of the Southampton Nostalgia Scale and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (i.e., “right now ...”). In replication of Study 1, lonelier participants reported weaker social support, but also greater nostalgia. Nostalgia, in turn, palliated loneliness by being linked to stronger social support (Figure 2, bottom panel).

Organisational hardship and nostalgia

Organisational hardship, such as insufficient justice, is a relatively common occurrence (Scott, Garza, Conlon, & Kim, 2014), and engenders damaging organizational consequences including employee retaliation, and turnover (Ambrose, Seabright, & Schminke, 2002). These consequences, though, may not necessarily advance employees’ interests: Retaliation may precipitate punishment, and job alternatives may be limited. Coping actively with injustice is arguably a more constructive, short-term response, which at least bides employees time to consider carefully their options. Nostalgia may afford such an opportunity.

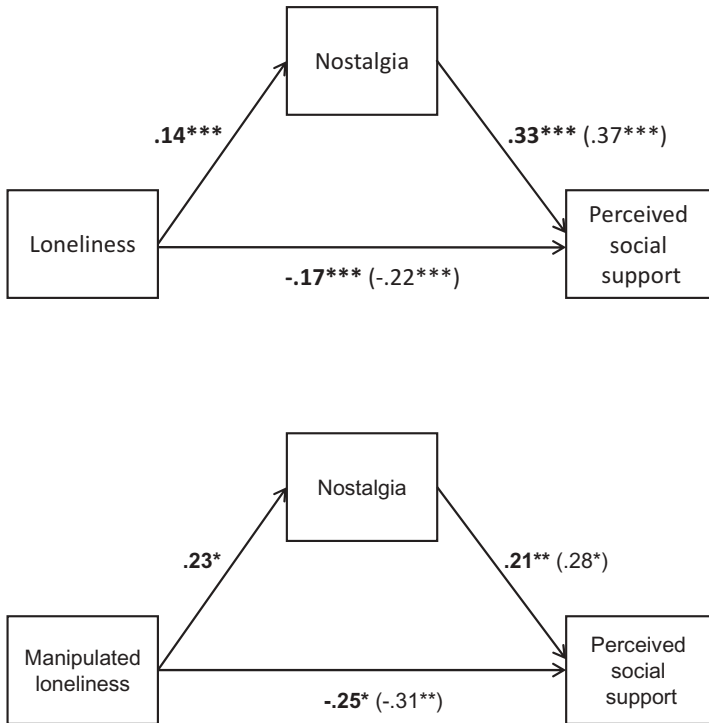


Figure 2. Schematic representation of the intervening-variable model tested in Zhou et al. (2008, Study 1 [top panel] and Study 2 [bottom panel]). Path coefficients in boldface are zero-order correlations. Path coefficients in parentheses are standardized regression coefficients. In both studies, the (positive) indirect effect of loneliness on perceived social support via nostalgia was opposite to the (negative) direct effect of loneliness on perceived social support. Accordingly, the direct effect of loneliness on perceived social support was strengthened (i.e., became more negative) when nostalgia was controlled. This pattern of results is known as a suppressor situation (Paulhus, Robins, Trzesniewski, & Tracy, 2004). Adapted from "Counteracting loneliness: On the restorative function of nostalgia," by X. Zhou, C. Sedikides, T. Wildschut, and D.-G. Gao, 2008, *Psychological Science*, 19, p. 1025. Copyright 2008 by the Association for Psychological Science. Reprinted with permission.

Procedural injustice pertains to the perceived inadequacy of enacting authorities' (e.g., managers') decision making or outcome allocation rules. Procedural injustice can erode organisational belongingness and diminish cooperation with authorities (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005). Nostalgia, via its capacity to invigorate social bonds, may block the path from (low) belongingness to (low) cooperation. That is, by fulfilling the belongingness need, nostalgia may render the link from (reduced) belongingness to (reduced) cooperation redundant. Nostalgia can be a substitute for organisational

belongingness and, in this way, safeguard cooperation in the absence of organisational belongingness.

This hypothesis was tested systematically in a series of studies (Van Dijke, Wildschut, Leunissen, & Sedikides, 2015). Study 1 assessed nostalgia, procedural injustice, and cooperative behaviour. Procedural injustice was measured with a scale developed by Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, and Ng (2001). Participants (130 employees in various organisations, recruited via MTurk) responded to seven questions regarding procedures that their organisation implemented to decide on outcomes they valued, such as salary or promotions (e.g., “Have you been able to express your views and feelings during those procedures?”). Nostalgia was measured with the Southampton Nostalgia Scale (Barrett et al., 2010; Routledge et al., 2008). Lastly, cooperative behaviour was operationalised as organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), which refers to extra-role or discretionary behaviours that enhance organizational functioning, such as speaking up to improve aspects of the work environment or voluntarily helping other members of the organisation (Organ, 1988). This construct was measured with the OCB scale (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990), where participants indicate the extent to which each of 24 behaviours describes them (e.g., “Willingly helps others who have work related problems”). Procedural injustice was linked to reduced OCB among low nostalgics, $\beta = .26$, $t(126) = 2.14$, $p = .04$; this link, however, was absent among high nostalgics, $\beta = -.08$, $t(126) = -0.70$, $p = .47$.

An experiment aimed to extend and replicate these findings. Study 2 ($N = 98$ Dutch undergraduate business students) induced nostalgia with the Event Reflection Task. The manipulation of procedural injustice followed and was delivered by a research assistant (RA), the enacting authority. Half of the participants were allowed voice (i.e., input; Van Den Bos, 1999) in a self-relevant outcome (i.e., leader selection for an upcoming group decision-making study; *procedural justice*), whereas half were not (*procedural injustice*). Participants were also informed that the RA might need their help in the near future. Lastly, cooperative intentions were assessed with a 4-item scale (e.g., “Would you be willing to help out the research assistant on future occasions?”; Van Dijke, De Cremer, Brebels, & Van Quaquebeke, 2015). Replicating conceptually the Study 1 results, procedural injustice decreased cooperative intentions toward the RA among control participants, but not among nostalgia participants (Figure 3). Nostalgia blunted the link between procedural injustice and (lack of) cooperation.

But how does nostalgia buffer the negative influence of procedural injustice on cooperation? Study 3 ($N = 123$ Dutch undergraduate business students) addressed this question, testing specifically the mechanism of social connectedness (i.e., belongingness). Nostalgia was induced with the Event Reflection Task, and procedural injustice was manipulated via voice,

as in Study 2. Social connectedness was assessed next with a 5-item scale (e.g., “To what extent do you feel connected to the research assistant?”; Hoogervorst, De Cremer, Van Dijke, & Mayer, 2012). Finally, cooperation was measured in terms of participants’ support for re-hiring the enacting authority, using three items such as “Would you recommend that we hire this research assistant again in September?”. Procedural injustice decreased cooperation with the RA among control participants, but not among nostalgia participants (as in Study 2). More importantly, nostalgia disrupted the influence of procedural injustice on cooperation by weakening the social connectedness-cooperation link. Hence, whereas procedural injustice reduced cooperation by undermining social connectedness in the control condition (procedural injustice \Rightarrow reduced social connectedness \Rightarrow reduced cooperation; $ab = .32$, 95% CI: [.14, .56]), this indirect effect was blocked in the nostalgia condition (procedural injustice \Rightarrow reduced social connectedness \neq reduced cooperation; $ab = .13$, 95% CI: [-.08, .36]). By virtue of its capacity to foster social connectedness, nostalgia helped employees to cope with the decrease in social connectedness with the enacting authority; in so doing, nostalgia buffered the adverse impact of procedural injustice upon cooperation with the authority. These findings were replicated in Study 4 with nostalgia being measured (i.e., nostalgia proneness; Southampton Nostalgia Scale – Barrett et al., 2010; Routledge et al., 2008) rather than

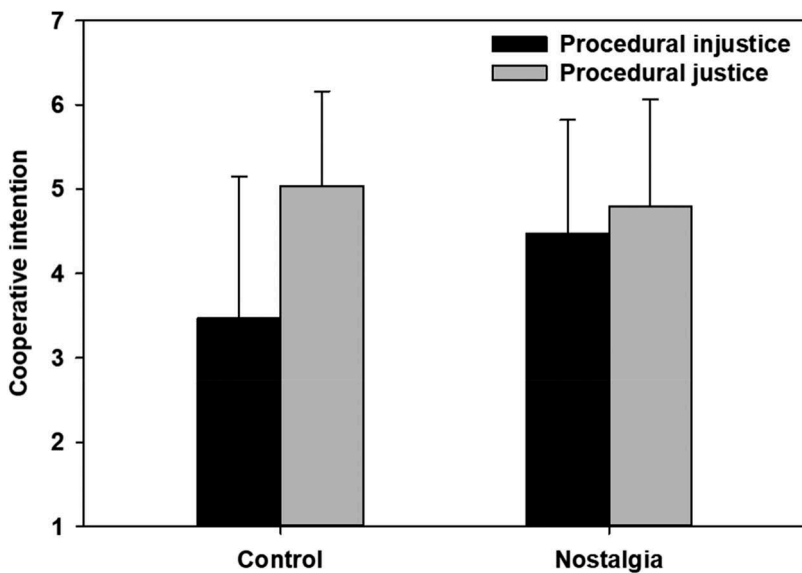


Figure 3. Mean intention to cooperate with the research assistant as a function of procedural injustice and nostalgia in Van Dijke et al. (2015, Study, p. 3). Error bars represent standard deviations.

manipulated, and with a behavioural assessment of cooperation (i.e., number of anagrams that participants solved voluntarily in order to help the RA complete their master's thesis).

Summary

By galvanising social bonds, nostalgia regulates coping with loneliness, social exclusion, and organisational adversity. Upon learning of exclusion attributable to their nationality, Greek participants who were low (than high) in attachment avoidance sought refuge in nostalgia. Lonelier Chinese participants (children, adolescents, and adults) experienced a drop in perceived social support, but also a lift in nostalgia, which in turn compensated to some extent for loss in social support. Finally, faced with procedural injustice, nostalgic (vs. control) employees cooperated more committedly with the enacting authority and exhibited more constructive organisational citizenship.

Sociality V: nostalgia fosters sociality with downstream consequences

Not only is the content of nostalgia mostly social, but nostalgia also breeds sociality. When nostalgising, the individual brings to mind meaningful life occasions, filled with close others and fond social exchanges. Consequently, the nostalgiser feels social connectedness, that is, a sense of belongingness and acceptance. Indeed, empirical evidence points to nostalgia fostering social connectedness, as operationalised by feeling connected to loved ones, protected or supported, securely attached and loved, as well as trusting of others (Wildschut et al., 2006, 2010; see also: Abeyta et al., 2015; Cox, Kersten, Routledge, Brown, & Van Enkevort, 2015). More importantly, nostalgia-induced social connectedness has downstream consequences. We will elaborate on a few, illustrative cases: inspiration, self-continuity, and prejudice reduction.

Inspiration

Nostalgia has been speculatively linked with inspiration: "... nostalgia, because of its prominence and pervasiveness as a distinctive mind-body state, enters inevitably into the language of all the arts ..." (Davis, 1979, p. 85). Inspiration is defined as an experience that transcends ordinary preoccupations and motivates behaviour or goal pursuit (Thrash & Elliot, 2003). Six studies examined systematically the nostalgia-inspiration link (Stephan et al., 2015). Study 1 ($N = 84$ undergraduates) was correlational. Nostalgia proneness was assessed via both the Southampton Nostalgia Scale

(Barrett et al., 2010; Routledge et al., 2008) and the Nostalgia Inventory (Batcho, 1995) where participants rate their nostalgia for 18 aspects of their past (e.g., “my family,” “my friends,” “vacations I went on” “my childhood toys”). Given their high correlation ($r = .64$, $p < .001$), we standardised (z scores) the two scales and averaged them to create a nostalgia composite ($\alpha = .91$). Inspiration was assessed via the 5-item Inspiration Scale (e.g., “I feel inspired,” “I am inspired to do something;” Thrash & Elliot, 2003), with each item being rated for frequency of occurrence and felt intensity. Nostalgia proneness (i.e., the nostalgia composite) was positively related to inspiration frequency ($r = .23$, $p = .034$) and inspiration intensity ($r = .30$, $p = .007$).

The next two studies were experimental. Both of them manipulated nostalgia with the Event Reflection Task. Study 2 ($N = 152$ undergraduates) subsequently assessed general state inspiration with a 3-item scale adapted from Thrash and Elliot (2003; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Nostalgic participants ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.00$) reported higher general state inspiration than controls ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 1.14$), $F(1, 147) = 12.86$, $p < .001$ (data from three participants were missing). Study 3 ($N = 50$ undergraduates) assessed specific state inspiration with a 5-item scale adapted from Green and Campbell (2000; e.g., “Right now, I feel inspired to ...”, “meet new people,” “travel overseas this summer;” 1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). Once again, nostalgic participants ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.79$) reported greater inspiration than controls ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.17$), $F(1, 48) = 5.64$, $p = .022$.

But how does nostalgia increase inspiration? Theorists had identified self-esteem as an antecedent of inspiration (Thrash & Elliot, 2003). As such, self-esteem may be involved in transmitting the effect of nostalgia to inspiration. Still, where does self-esteem come from? Psychological theories (sociometer – Leary, 2005; hierometer – Mahadevan, Gregg, & Sedikides, 2019; attachment – Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008; terror management – Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt, & Schimel, 2004) propose, and evidence indicates, that acceptance or belongingness (i.e., social connectedness) is a potent source of self-esteem. As such, social connectedness may transmit the effect of nostalgia to self-esteem, which would then be associated with greater inspiration (i.e., nostalgia \Rightarrow social connectedness \Rightarrow self-esteem \Rightarrow inspiration). Study 4 ($N = 60$ undergraduates) tested this mediational sequence. The study, conducted over two sessions, capitalised on music’s capacity to elicit nostalgia (Barrett et al., 2010; Barrett & Janata, 2016), which is especially high when targeted to participants’ idiosyncratic preferences (Michels-Ratliff & Ennis, 2016). The procedure was as follows (Cheung et al., 2013; Routledge et al., 2011). In the first session, participants wrote down the titles and performing artists of three songs they deemed nostalgic, and then the corresponding lyrics were retrieved for subsequent

use. In the second session, participants were randomly assigned to two conditions. In the nostalgia condition, participants listened to the lyrics of one of the three songs they had listed as nostalgic (selected at random). Control participants received the same lyrics as a yoked nostalgia participant did, making sure that the song in question had not been listed by the control participant as nostalgic. Afterwards, all participants completed the measures, preceded by the stem “Reading these song lyrics ...”. Social connectedness was assessed with the 4-item social connectedness index (e.g., “makes me feel loved”), self-esteem with the 4-item self-esteem index (e.g., “makes me feel I have many positive qualities”), and inspiration with three items (as in Study 2). The results were consistent with the hypothesised mediational sequence. Nostalgia (relative to control) fostered social connectedness, which was linked to higher self-esteem, which was associated in turn with stronger inspiration (Figure 4). The results were replicated (Study 5; $N = 150$ online participants), using the same measures to assess the relevant constructs. In this replication, nostalgia was induced with the Event Reflection Task, while the control condition involved recollecting a positive (rather than an ordinary) event from one’s life.

As stated above, inspiration is defined as transcendence of ordinary preoccupations and as driving behaviour or goal pursuit (Thrash & Elliot, 2003). Study 6 ($N = 77$ undergraduates) asked whether nostalgia-evoked inspiration, as per the above-mentioned mediational sequence, is also linked to strength of goal pursuit (i.e., nostalgia \Rightarrow social connectedness \Rightarrow self-esteem \Rightarrow inspiration \Rightarrow goal pursuit). Following nostalgia induction (with the Event Reflection Task), this study assessed social connectedness, self-esteem, and inspiration (with the same measures as in Studies 4–5), as well as strength of goal pursuit (after Milyavskaya, Ianakieva, Foxen-Craft, Colantuoni, & Koestner, 2012). Specifically, participants listed their most important goal and subsequently rated the extent to which they were motivated at the moment to pursue it on five items (e.g., “I want to

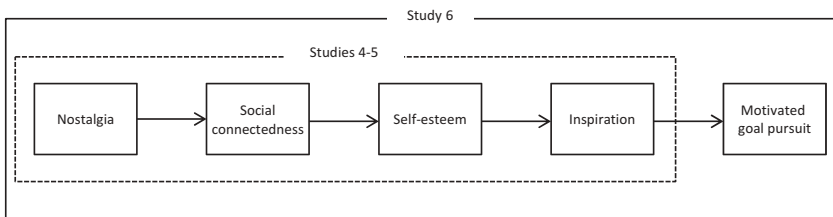


Figure 4. Schematic representation of the serial mediation models tested and supported by Stephan et al. (2015). Studies 4–5 tested the sequence from nostalgia to inspiration, via social connectedness and self-esteem. Study 6 further demonstrated that inspiration, in turn, predicted motivated goal pursuit.

put more time and effort into my goal pursuit,” “I feel excited about pursuing my goal”). The results were consistent with the hypothesised serial mediation. Nostalgia-evoked inspiration culminated in stronger motivation to pursue one’s most important goal, and it did so by fostering social connectedness and self-esteem (Figure 4).

Self-continuity

Self-continuity refers to a sense of connection between one’s past and present (Sedikides et al., 2015; Zou, Wildschut, Cable, & Sedikides, 2018). Nostalgia has been speculatively linked with self-continuity: [it] “marshal[s] our psychological resources for continuity . . . ” (Davis, 1979, p. 34). It has also been empirically linked to self-continuity. For example, when waxing nostalgic (via the Event Reflection Task), participants generate narratives that bind their past (e.g., family photograph) with their present (e.g., I smile) (Stephan, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2012). More to the point, nostalgia (induced by the Event Reflection Task) directly increases self-continuity, measured by the 4-item self-continuity index (i.e., “I feel connected with my past,” “I feel connected with who I was in the past,” “There is continuity in my life,” “Important aspects of my personality remain the same across time”) (Sedikides et al., 2015, Study 3; $N = 127$ undergraduates). Nostalgia also increases self-continuity (i.e., “connected with my past,” “important aspects of my personality remain the same across time”) when induced via scents (Reid, Green, Wildschut, & Sedikides, 2015). In addition, nostalgia increases self-continuity by contagion and intergenerationally. Young adults (370 undergraduates) who read nostalgic recollections of older adults became themselves nostalgic, and, as a result, reported higher self-continuity (Wildschut et al., 2018, Experiment 2).

How does nostalgia increase self-continuity? Social connectedness is a plausible candidate mechanism. In nostalgising, one recounts meaningful events from their personal past, events that often exemplify cultural rituals (Berntsen & Rubin, 2004), such as birthday celebrations, Christmas dinners, or family holidays. Such recollections bridge the gap between the present and the past, and also help to create a narrative thread that elucidates one’s temporal trajectory (e.g., comparing last year’s family holiday to this year’s one). Nostalgic remembrances, then, due to their rich and often temporally linear social narrative, will prompt increases in self-continuity. This mediational model (nostalgia \Rightarrow social connectedness \Rightarrow self-continuity) was tested in an experiment in which nostalgia was induced via song lyrics, as described above (i.e., Stephan et al., 2015, Study, p. 4), social connectedness was assessed with the 4-item social connectedness index (e.g., “connected to loved ones”), and self-continuity was assessed with the self-continuity index (e.g., “There is continuity in my life”). As hypothesised, the effect of

nostalgia on self-continuity was transmitted by social connectedness (Sedikides et al., 2016, Experiment 1; $N = 40$ undergraduates) (Figure 5). The results were replicated when nostalgia was induced via the Event Reflection Task both cross-culturally (in China and the UK; Experiment 2; $N = 70$ Chinese undergraduates) and when the control condition entailed recollection of a positive life event (Experiment 3; $N = 90$ online participants). The results were also replicated in sample of Greek students ($N = 122$), when nostalgia was induced with the Event Reflection Task but the design included two control conditions (ordinary event and everyday ordinary event), and with a sample of UK students ($N = 193$), when nostalgia was induced both with the Event Reflection Task and the prototype-based method (Hepper et al., 2012; see also Turner, Wildschut, & Sedikides, 2018, Experiment 2). With the latter induction method, participants recalled either an autobiographical event characterised by central features of nostalgia (“rose-tinted memories,” “familiar smells,” “keepsakes”) or peripheral features of nostalgia (“wishing,” “daydreaming,” “achievements”) (Abakoumkin, Hepper, Wildschut, & Sedikides, *in press*).

These measurement-of-mediation designs were complemented by an experimental-causal-chain design (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005), which can inform the causal ordering of the variables of interest. Concretely, in Experiment 4 ($N = 93$ undergraduates), Sedikides et al. (2016) manipulated social connectedness (the mediator) and tested its impact on self-continuity (the dependent measure). The manipulation involved creating high levels of social connectedness via low loneliness, and low levels of social

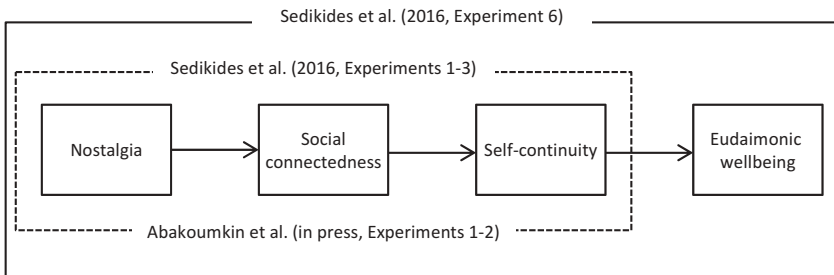


Figure 5. Schematic representation of the serial mediation models tested and supported by Sedikides et al. (2016) and Abakoumkin et al. (*in press*). Experiments 1–3 of Sedikides et al. and Experiments 1–2 of Abakoumkin et al. tested the sequence from nostalgia to self-continuity, via social connectedness. Experiment 6 of Sedikides et al. further demonstrated that self-continuity, in turn, predicted eudaimonic wellbeing. Using an experimental-causal chain approach, Sedikides et al. supported the causal effects of nostalgia on social connectedness (Experiments 1–3, 6), of social connectedness on self-continuity (Experiment 4), and of self-continuity on eudaimonic wellbeing (Experiment 5).

connectedness via high loneliness. This experiment used the same manipulation of loneliness as Zhou et al. (2008, Study 2; see also Wildschut et al., 2006). Finally, participants completed the 4-item social continuity index (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). Participants high on social connectedness (i.e., low on loneliness; $M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.85$) reported augmented self-continuity compared to participants low on social connectedness (i.e., high on loneliness; $M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.06$), $F(1, 91) = 7.58$, $p = .007$. Social connectedness has a causal impact on self-continuity.

Self-continuity is considered a marker of psychological health, and it has been linked with reductions in negative affect and anxiety (Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol, & Hallett, 2003). Psychological health can be conceptualised not only in terms of the presence (or absence) of illness, but also in terms of the presence of wellness (Ryff, 1989). Eudaimonic wellbeing is an instance of the latter, referring to self-realisation and meaning, and describing a fully functioning individual (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Capitalising on an experimental-causal-chain design (Spencer et al., 2005), Experiment 5 ($N = 135$ online participants) manipulated self-continuity and assessed eudaimonic wellbeing. In the self-continuity condition, participants explained in writing how they felt connected with their past and how important aspects of their personality remained the same over time, whereas, in the control condition, participants explained in writing who they were in the past and described important aspects of their personality in the past (for details of this manipulation, see Weinstein, Deci, & Ryan, 2011). Eudaimonic wellbeing was assessed with the 7-item Subjective Vitality Scale (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). Sample items are: (“I have energy and spirit” and “I feel alive and vital;” 1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). Participants in the self-continuity condition ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.10$) reported feeling higher subjective vitality than controls ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.10$), $F(1, 133) = 4.83$, $p < .03$. Self-continuity has a causal impact on eudaimonic wellbeing.

Experiment 6 ($N = 110$ online participants) tested the full mediational model, namely, whether nostalgia confers eudaimonic wellbeing through its effect on social connectedness and, in turn, self-continuity (nostalgia \Rightarrow social connectedness \Rightarrow self-continuity \Rightarrow eudaimonic wellbeing). Nostalgia was induced with the Event Reflection Task. Social connectedness was assessed with the social connectedness index, self-continuity with the self-continuity index, and eudaimonic wellbeing with the Subjective Vitality Scale. The mediational model was supported (Figure 5). Nostalgia-fostered social connectedness was associated with augmented self-continuity and corresponding increases in eudaimonic wellbeing. These results were replicated with a different eudaimonic wellbeing measure, namely meaning in life (i.e., “life is meaningful” and “life has a purpose;” Van Tilburg, Sedikides, Wildschut, & Vingerhoets, 2019).

Prejudice reduction

Nostalgia has also been speculatively linked with prejudice reduction. In the words of none other than Gordon Allport (1954, p. 454), “... nostalgic memories ... lead to a vivid sense of commonality [which] accelerates the process of acquaintance in a community where formerly only barriers may have existed.” Allport, then, proposed that nostalgia reduces prejudice by facilitating intergroup contact. But how might that work?

Nostalgic reminiscences are replete with sociality, as nostalgisers re-familiarise themselves symbolically with significant figures from their past, experiencing tenderness, warmth, and intimacy. Some of these nostalgic experiences will have been shared with a member of the outgroup. The tenderness, warmth, and intimacy induced by this shared nostalgia may generalize to the entire outgroup, provided that the group membership of the specific outgroup member with whom the nostalgic experience was shared is salient (Brown & Hewstone, 2005).

In such a case, the nostalgiser may incorporate the outgroup into her or his self-concept (Tropp & Wright, 2001). Put differently, the outgroup will become part of the nostalgiser’s identity, perspectives, and resources (Aron et al., 2004; Turner, Hewstone, Voci, & Vonofakou, 2008). Consequently, the nostalgiser will embrace the entire outgroup, improving her or his attitudes toward it, becoming less prejudiced against it, and being less likely to avoid contact with it.

These ideas were tested in two experiments among younger participants (i.e., 18- to 19-year-old undergraduates), with the outgroup being older adults (Turner et al., 2018). Prejudice against older people (i.e., ageism) is pervasive. Older adults are seen as incompetent (North & Fiske, 2015), and are discriminated against by employers (McCann & Giles, 2002) and medical professionals (Bowling, 2007) alike. Also, ageism is robust. Interventions to curb it have not been particularly successful (Chonody, 2015), although information exchange with older adults and engagement in high quality contact with them have both shown some promise (Harwood, Hewstone, Paolini, & Voci, 2005; Tam, Hewstone, Harwood, Voci, & Kenworthy, 2006).

In Experiment 1 (Turner et al., 2018; $N = 70$ undergraduates), nostalgia was induced with a modified version of the Event Reflection Task. In the nostalgia condition, participants brought to mind a nostalgic event that involved a social interaction with an older adult, whereas, in the control condition, they brought to mind an ordinary event involving a social interaction with an older adult. Next, they completed an inclusion-of-the-outgroup-in-the-self (IOGS; Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992; Tropp & Wright, 2001) scale. Specifically, they were presented with seven Venn diagrams, each comprising two circles (“I” vs. “Older Adults”). The circles

varied from non-overlapping to almost entirely overlapping. The bigger the overlap, the greater the IOGS, and hence the greater the felt closeness to the outgroup. Finally, participants filled out an outgroup attitudes scale, consisting of four semantic differential items: cold–warm, negative–positive, hostile–friendly, contempt–respect (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). Nostalgia toward an older adult led to stronger inclusion in the self of the outgroup older adults, $\beta = .28$, $t(68) = 2.43$, $p = .018$. When controlling for nostalgia, inclusion of older adults in the self was, in turn, associated with more favourable attitudes toward the group older adults, $\beta = .48$, $t(67) = 4.37$, $p < .001$. The residual effect of nostalgia, after controlling for IOGS, was no longer significant, $\beta = .12$, $t(67) = 1.07$, $p = .290$. Nostalgia improved attitudes toward older adults, and this beneficial effect was mediated by IOGS (nostalgia \Rightarrow IOGS \Rightarrow attitudes toward older adults).

Experiment 1 assumed that the source of greater inclusion of the outgroup in the self was generalised belongingness. Experiment 2 (Turner et al., 2018; $N = 90$ undergraduates) directly tested this assumption by measuring social connectedness. Also, this experiment extended the scope of the investigation by asking whether nostalgia, via social connectedness and IOGS, contributes to reductions in ageism and outgroup avoidance (i.e., nostalgia \Rightarrow social connectedness \Rightarrow IOGS \Rightarrow ageism and outgroup avoidance reduction). The experiment implemented a prototype-based induction of nostalgia via central (vs. peripheral) features (as in Abakoumkin et al., *in press*). Participants listed the name of a familiar adult (e.g., family member, friend, acquaintance) over the age of 65, and were informed that they would soon be asked to recall an interaction with him or her. Next, they read various features purported to describe experiences and memories. These features referred, in actuality, to the nostalgia prototype (Hepper et al., 2012). For half of participants, the (10) features were central to the prototype (e.g., keepsakes, rose-tinted memories, familiar smells, wanting to return to the past, longing), whereas, for the remaining half, the (10) features were peripheral to the prototype (e.g., daydreaming, anxiety/pain, wishing, achievements, regret). Next, participants recalled a social interaction with said older adult and described it in writing with five of the 10 features. This manipulation did not mention the word “nostalgia,” thus practically removing the possibility of demand characteristics. Afterwards, participants filled out measures of the putative mediators: social connectedness and IOGS. Finally, they responded to measures of ageism and outgroup avoidance. The ageism measure was the 8-item Avoidance subscale of the Fraboni Scale of Ageism (Fraboni, Saltstone, & Hughes, 1990; e.g., “I don’t like it when old people try to make conversation with me,” “I personally would not want to spend much time with an old person”). The outgroup avoidance measure (Mackie,

Devos, & Smith, 2000) comprised three items indicating avoidance of older adults (e.g., “I want to have nothing to do with them”) and three items indicating approach to older adults (e.g., “I want to spend time with them” – reverse scored). Turner et al. controlled for the positivity of the recalled encounter with the older adult by using LIWC (Pennebaker et al., 2007) to calculate the percentage of positive emotion words (e.g., happy, joy) per narrative. The mediational model was supported, even when controlling for positive emotionality (Table 3). Nostalgia culminated in reduction of ageism and outgroup avoidance, and it did so by sequentially fostering social connectedness and stronger inclusion of the group older adults in the self.

Similar findings have been reported in conjunction with other outgroups, such as (to use labels) the “overweight” (Turner, Wildschut, & Sedikides, 2012) and the “mentally ill” (Turner, Wildschut, Sedikides, & Gheorghiu, 2013). Similar findings have also been reported with respect to immigrants (Gravani, Soureti, & Stathi, 2018). In the latter experiment, all participants ($N = 99$ Greek undergraduates) brought to mind a familiar Greek émigré, currently residing in another host country. Thereafter, participants in the nostalgia condition were presented with a dictionary definition of nostalgia (i.e., “sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past”), were provided with 10 central features of the nostalgia prototype (e.g., “familiar smells,” “feeling happy,” “longing;” Hepper et al., 2012), and were asked to write about a social interaction with that émigré using at least five of these features. Participants in the control condition were informed that this study was about autobiographical memory, and were requested to reflect upon and write about an ordinary social interaction with that émigré. Participants in the nostalgia (vs. control) condition reported more positive attitudes towards immigrants in general, and this effect was serially mediated by social connectedness, inclusion of the outgroup in the self, and outgroup trust (e.g., “Right now, I am able to trust an immigrant as much as any other person;” 5-item measure adapted from Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2009).

Table 3. Linear regression analyses testing links in the serial multiple mediator model in Turner et al. (2018, experiment 2).

Predictor	Social connectedness		IOGS		Ageism and outgroup avoidance	
	β	p	β	p	β	p
Nostalgia	.26	.011	.13	.203	-.10	.238
Social connectedness			.39	< .001	-.18	.066
IOGS					-.53	< .001
Positive emotionality	.27	.009	-.06	.539	.06	.509

Note. Nostalgia was coded: $-1 = control$, $1 = nostalgia$. β = standardised regression coefficient. Links in the serial multiple mediator model are presented in boldface. $N = 90$.

Dispositional nostalgia has implications for prejudice reduction, as well. This proposition was supported in research focusing on White Americans' attitudes toward African Americans (Cheung, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2017). The authors asked whether nostalgia proneness is associated, via sociality (empathy, to be exact), to concern with acting prejudicially, and subsequently with prejudice reduction. Put otherwise, are high nostalgics more likely to be concerned with acting prejudicially, and less likely to express prejudice, due to their higher empathy (nostalgia proneness \Rightarrow empathy \Rightarrow concern with acting prejudicially \Rightarrow prejudice expression)?

Cheung et al. (2017; Study 3; $N = 192$ online participants) first assessed nostalgia with the Southampton Nostalgia Scale (Barrett et al., 2010; Routledge et al., 2008). Then, they assessed empathy with six items: compassionate, concerned for others, empathetic, sympathetic, tender, soft-hearted (Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987). Afterward, they assessed concern with acting prejudicially (in the eyes of others and oneself) with the relevant 9-item subscale of the Motivation to Control Prejudiced Reactions scale (Dunton & Fazio, 1997; e.g., "I get angry with myself when I have a thought or feeling that might be considered prejudiced"). Finally, they assessed prejudice against African Americans with the 20-item Subtle and Blatant Prejudice Scales (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). The subtle prejudice component consists of 10 items (e.g., "African Americans living here teach their children values and skills different from those required to be successful in America"), and so does the blatant prejudice component (e.g., "African Americans come from less able races and this explains why they are not as well off as most American people"). Cheung et al. averaged the highly correlated ($r = .74, p < .001$) blatant and subtle prejudice components to create an overall prejudice index. The results were consistent with the hypothesised mediational sequence (Table 4). Participants higher on nostalgia proneness were more concerned with acting prejudicially, and less prejudiced, by virtue of their higher empathy. These findings were replicated in a follow-up study (Study 4; $N = 664$ online participants).

Summary

Nostalgia begets sociality. By fostering social connectedness, nostalgia increases inspiration (having raised self-esteem) with positive consequences for goal pursuit, elevates self-continuity with positive consequences for eudaimonic wellbeing, and reduces prejudice (having strengthened inclusion of the outgroup in the self, or outgroup trust). In addition, via its link with empathy, dispositional nostalgia predicts higher concern with acting prejudicially and, in turn, predicts lower prejudice expression.

Table 4. Linear regression analyses testing links in the serial multiple mediator model in Cheung et al. (2017, study, p. 3).

Predictor	Empathy		Concern with acting prejudiced		Overall prejudice	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Nostalgia proneness	.261**	.050	.048	.057	.021	.029
Empathy			.296**	.082	-.042	.043
Concern with acting prejudiced					-.225**	.039

Note. *B* = unstandardised regression coefficient. *SE* = standard error. Links in the serial multiple mediator model are presented in boldface. *N* = 192.

** $p < .001$.

Sociality VI: collective nostalgia and its implications

Nostalgia can be experienced at the collective level. Indeed, groups, organisations, neighbourhoods, cities, and nations are tied together, in part, through shared experiences and memories (Kasinitz & Hillyard, 1995; Middleton & Edwards, 1990; Milligan, 2003), which constitute fodder for collective nostalgia (Leunissen, Sedikides, Wildschut, & Cohen, 2018; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2015; Wildschut, Bruder, Robertson, Van Tilburg, & Sedikides, 2014). Research has recently been making inroads into the psychological and behavioural correlates and outcomes of collective nostalgia.

Collective nostalgia increases ingroup favouritism

Collective nostalgia can refer to events or objects pertinent to a group with which one identifies. For example, in the case of undergraduates, collective nostalgia pertains to meaningful experiences shared with fellow students, such as curricular activities (e.g., preparing for exams), extracurricular activities (e.g., celebrating), or field trips (e.g., international study visits) (Wildschut et al., 2014, Preliminary Investigation). Collective nostalgia strengthens the positivity of ingroup evaluations and an approach orientation, group support, consumer ethnocentrism, and personal sacrifice for the ingroup.

Ingroup evaluations and approach orientation

Collective nostalgia functions, in part, to strengthen the positive evaluations of one's ingroup and to reinforce an approach (rather than an avoidance) action tendency toward the ingroup. A relevant study (Wildschut et al., 2014, Study, p. 1) induced collective nostalgia with a modified version of the Event Reflection Task. Participants ($N = 313$ UK undergraduates) reflected on their student life and recalled a nostalgic event they experienced with their peers. Control participants recalled a collective positive autobiographical event (i.e., a lucky event they experienced with their

peers), a personally nostalgic event (i.e., one they experienced as unique individuals), or no event. Next, all participants responded to an ingroup evaluation measure, rating the degree to which their peers were dependable, humorous, flexible, fun to be with, trustworthy, and warm (after Castano, Yzerbyt, Paladino, & Sacchi, 2002). Finally, all participants responded to an ingroup-oriented action tendency measure (after Turner et al., 2012) consisting of three items measuring approach-orientation toward student peers (“I want to talk to them,” “spend time with them,” “find out more about them”) and three items measuring avoidance-orientation toward student peers (“keep them at a distance,” “avoid them,” “have nothing to do with them”). Participants in the collective nostalgia condition (vs. controls) evaluated the ingroup more positively, $F(1, 308) = 31.84, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$, and expressed stronger intentions to approach (and weaker intentions to avoid) the ingroup, $F(1, 307) = 16.81, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$ (Table 5). In line with these findings, other research has demonstrated that collective nostalgia is positively related to ethnocentrism (Smeekes, Verkuyten, & Martinovic, 2015) or national glorification (i.e., perceiving national superiority and valuing national loyalty; Baldwin, White, & Sullivan, 2018).

Group support

Additionally, collective nostalgia galvanises intentions to support the ingroup, and it does so by virtue of enhancing collective self-esteem. In a relevant study (Wildschut et al., 2014, Study 2; $N = 171$ UK undergraduates), collective (vs. personal) nostalgia was contrasted against collective (vs. personal) ordinary autobiographical events. A collective ordinary event was a common episode that students experienced with their peers, whereas a personal ordinary event was a common episode that students experienced on their own. Following the nostalgia manipulation, participants completed the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker,

Table 5. Means (Standard Deviations) as a function of experimental condition in Wildschut et al. (2014, study, p. 1).

Dependent variable	Collective nostalgia	Collective positive event	Personal nostalgia	No recall
Ingroup evaluation	5.25 (0.83)	4.72 (0.98)	4.59 (0.96)	4.51 (0.90)
Approach orientation	5.74 (0.95)	5.34 (0.82)	5.15 (0.79)	5.39 (0.84)

Note. Wildschut et al. (2014) used 7-point scales to assess ingroup evaluation (e.g., “trustworthy”; 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) and ingroup-oriented approach action tendencies (e.g., “I want to talk to them”; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strong agree*). The index of approach orientation is the average of three items measuring approach orientation and three reverse-scored items measuring avoidance orientation. Adapted from “Collective nostalgia: A group-level emotion that confers unique benefits on the ingroup,” by T. Wildschut, M. Bruder, S. Robertson, W. A. P. van Tilburg, and C. Sedikides, 2014, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 107, p. 847. Copyright 2014 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

1992) consisting of four facets, each measured with four items: identity (i.e., degree to which student membership is important to one's self-concept), private collective self-esteem (i.e., whether the student deems the ingroup worthwhile), public collective self-esteem (i.e., how the students believes outsiders perceive the ingroup), and membership (i.e., degree to which the student feels a valued ingroup member). On the basis of a factor analysis, the scores of the four facets were collapsed into one, which was entered into analyses. Finally, participants completed an ostensibly unrelated ingroup-support measure. They were first informed of an impending campaign aiming to increase membership in the alumni association, and were asked to declare the number of hours (from 0 to 10) they would be willing to spend recruiting other students. Collective (compared with personal) nostalgia increased collective self-esteem ($F[1, 167] = 10.93, p = .001, \eta^2 = .06$) and willingness to volunteer in support of their ingroup ($F[1, 167] = 9.73, p = .002, \eta^2 = .06$; Table 6, under "Nostalgic event"). Furthermore, collective self-esteem mediated the effect of collective (compared with personal) nostalgia on willingness to volunteer for the ingroup. Recalling an ordinary collective (compared with personal) experience did not significantly affect collective self-esteem ($p = .777$) or willingness to support the ingroup ($p = .752$; Table 6, under "Ordinary event").

Consumer ethnocentrism

Does collective nostalgia influence consumer decisions? Dimitriadou, Maciejovsky, Wildschut, and Sedikides (2019) proposed that it does so by buttressing consumer preferences for ingroup (domestic) versus outgroup (foreign) products, a case of consumer ethnocentrism known as domestic country bias (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004). Dimitriadou et al. conducted three experiments in which they tested graduates of three Greek universities on an online platform (Qualtrics). In Experiment 1 ($N = 208$), adopting a converging operations approach (Campbell & Fiske, 1959), the researchers induced collective nostalgia both idiographically (i.e., focusing

Table 6. Means (Standard Deviations) as a function of experimental condition in Wildschut et al. (2014, study, p. 2).

Dependent variable	Nostalgic event		Ordinary event	
	Collective	Personal	Collective	Personal
CSES total score	5.36 (0.67)	4.87 (0.67)	5.11 (0.72)	5.07 (0.57)
Hours volunteered	2.27 (2.63)	0.97 (1.27)	1.37 (1.51)	1.25 (1.73)

Note. CSES = Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). CSES items were rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). Higher numbers indicate more positive collective self-esteem. Hours volunteered indicates the total number of hours (out of 10) that participants were willing to volunteer for a university campaign. Adapted from "Collective nostalgia: A group-level emotion that confers unique benefits on the ingroup," by T. Wildschut, M. Bruder, S. Robertson, W. A. P. van Tilburg, and C. Sedikides, 2014, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 107, p. 847. Copyright 2014 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

on characteristics of the person and her or his autobiography) and nomothetically (i.e., focusing on characteristics shared by a generation, with the person being a member of this generation; Allport, 1937) via a modification of the Event Reflection Task. In the idiographic case, experimental participants reflected on and wrote about a nostalgic event that they had experienced together with other Greeks, whereas control participants reflected on and wrote about an ordinary event that they had experienced together with other Greeks. In the nomothetic case, experimental participants read a nostalgic description of childhood experiences that were common for members of their generation (e.g., types of games children used to play), whereas control participants read a neutral text (i.e., a practical guide to photography). Finally, all participants indicated their preferences for a Greek song or a foreign song. Participants in the two collective nostalgia conditions chose more frequently a domestic song ($M = 72\%$) compared to those in the two control conditions ($M = 34\%$), $\chi^2(1) = 29.63, p < .001$. People experiencing collective nostalgia are more likely to manifest the domestic country bias. Experiment 2 ($N = 121$) replicated this results pattern relying exclusively on the idiographic method, incorporating an additional control condition (i.e., no recall), and using two product categories (i.e., songs, TV clips) to broaden the generalizability of the findings (Figure 6).

As shown by Wildschut et al. (2014, Study, p. 2), collective nostalgia increases collective self-esteem. Other research has indicated that collective self-esteem is associated with group-benefiting outcomes, such as commitment and loyalty (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Sedikides, Hart, & De Cremer, 2008). Also, preliminary findings suggest that collective self-esteem predicts aspects of consumer ethnocentrism, namely the belief in the superiority of domestic over foreign products and in the moral obligation to purchase the former over the latter (Lantz & Loeb, 1998). Based on this literature, Dimitriadou et al. (2019) hypothesised, and tested in Experiment 3 ($N = 90$), that collective nostalgia strengthens the domestic product bias by fostering collective self-esteem. These authors induced collective nostalgia with the idiographic method, dropping the no-recall condition of Experiment 2, and focusing on songs only, as in Experiment 1. Next, they first measured collective self-esteem with the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) and then assessed song preferences. Consistent with the hypothesis, participants in the collective-nostalgic condition ($M = 5.13, SD = 0.87$) reported higher collective self-esteem than control participants ($M = 4.64, SD = 0.63$), $F(1, 88) = 9.45, p = .003, \eta^2 = .10$. Replicating Experiments 1–2, collective nostalgia (compared to control) again increased selection of the domestic product ($M = 75\%$ vs. $M = 52\%$; $\chi^2[1] = 5.05, p = .025$). Importantly, this effect of collective nostalgia on

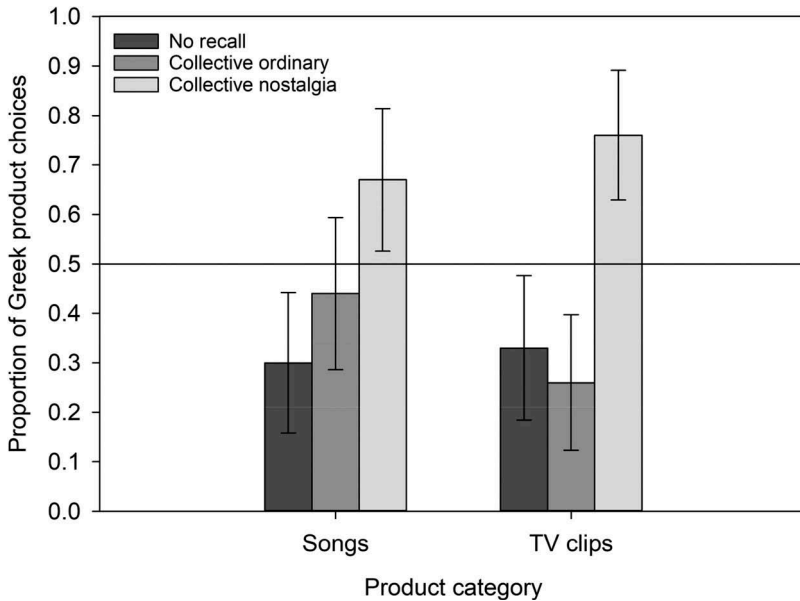


Figure 6. Proportion of Greek product choices as a function of collective nostalgia (vs. collective ordinary vs. no recall) and product category (songs vs. TV clips) in Dimitriadou et al. (2019, Experiment 2). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. From “Collective nostalgia and domestic country bias,” by M. Dimitriadou, B. Maciejovsky, T. Wildschut, and C. Sedikides, 2019, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, Advance online publication, doi:10.1037/xap0000209. Copyright 2019 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

preference for the domestic product was mediated by higher collective self-esteem.

Personal sacrifice for the ingroup

As mentioned above, collective nostalgia may pertain to a national group (i.e., shared and meaningful memories about one’s nation; Kasinitz & Hillyard, 1995; Middleton & Edwards, 1990). This form of nostalgia is fairly common, with 50% of the population in most countries expressing a predilection for the way their country used to be (Mori, 2016). Collective nostalgia pertaining to a national group also predicts, under some conditions, personal sacrifice for the sake of punishing disloyalty to the ingroup. A further study pursued this idea in the context of an Irish ingroup (Wildschut et al., 2014, Study 3; $N = 49$ undergraduates). The study tested the specific hypothesis that participants who nostalgise at the collective level will engage in more monetary sacrifice to punish a transgression committed against an ingroup member, but only when they identify strongly with the ingroup. First, participants completed a 13-item social

identification scale (Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves, 2004) adapted to the group “Irish” (e.g., “I identify with this group,” “I think this group is important”). Next, participants played the third-party punishment game (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004). Assigned to the role of observer, they learned that an allocator had violated fairness norms by keeping most of the tokens for himself and giving only a small amount to an ingroup member. The nationality of the ingroup member (Irish) was made salient in a subtle manner, namely, by having his name spelled as Eoin instead of Owen (cf. Van Tilburg & Igou, 2011). Participants had the opportunity to sacrifice their own tokens in order to punish the transgression. Before they did so, and under a pretext, they were subjected to a nostalgia manipulation (i.e., Event Reflection Task). Half were assigned to the collective nostalgia condition (recalling a nostalgic event they had experienced with fellow Irish) and half to the collective ordinary memory condition (recalling an ordinary event they had experienced with fellow Irish). Participants in the collective nostalgia condition (vs. control) sacrificed more of their money in order to punish the transgressor when they were high in ingroup identification ($\beta = .47$, $t[45] = 2.06$, $p = .046$), but not when they were low in ingroup identification ($\beta = -.22$, $t[45] = -1.11$, $p = .275$).

Collective nostalgia can promote collective action

That collective nostalgia predicts collective action has been demonstrated in a study involving a national group, Hong Kong (Cheung, Sedikides, Wildschut, Tausch, & Ayanian, 2017). A survey ($N = 111$ Hong Kong residents recruited via Facebook) was conducted during the Umbrella Movement, a social protest against mainland China’s proposed electoral reforms in Hong Kong that started on 22 September 2014. Collective nostalgia was assessed with five items adapted either from another scale (Smeekes et al., 2015) or constructed specifically for the purposes of this research. The items were: “When thinking about Hong Kong now, to what extent do you feel ...”: “... nostalgic about the way Hong Kong people were in the past,” “... nostalgic about the values that Hong Kong people had in the past,” “... nostalgic about the way Hong Kong society was in the past,” “... nostalgic about the Hong Kong of old,” and “... nostalgic about the sort of place Hong Kong was before 1997.” Two putative mediators were assessed next, prefaced by the stem “When thinking about the current democracy development in Hong Kong, to what extent do you feel ...”. The mediators were outgroup-directed anger (“anger”) and outgroup-directed contempt (“contempt towards the Chinese government”). Next came an assessment of collective action (i.e., participation in the Umbrella Movement since September, 2014) in the action domains of “occupation,” “hanging slogans,” “any other civil disobedience,” and “being active on

social media to support the movement.” Collective nostalgia predicted more anger ($\beta = .35$, $t[109] = 3.95$, $p < .001$) and contempt ($\beta = .20$, $t[109] = 2.08$, $p = .040$) against the Chinese government. In turn, anger ($\beta = .36$, $t[109] = 3.77$, $p < .001$) and contempt ($\beta = .47$, $t[109] = 5.61$, $p < .001$) toward the Chinese government predicted stronger participation in collective action, above and beyond collective nostalgia. Based on the joint-significance test advocated by Yzerbyt, Muller, Batailler, and Judd (2018), anger and contempt mediated the association between collective nostalgia and participation in collective action (i.e., the individual components of these indirect effects were significant).²

Collective nostalgia can strengthen intergroup contact and act as a buffer

Under certain circumstances, collective nostalgia can improve outgroup attitudes. Superordinate group identification is a case in point. Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs were in conflict in the early 1990s when Yugoslavia was dissolved as a country, and a good number of them settled in Australia. In a relevant study (Martinovic, Jetten, Smeekes, & Verkuyten, 2017), 87 Australian participants from former Yugoslavia completed a 4-item scale (after Verkuyten, 2005) assessing identification with the superordinate group, Yugoslavia (e.g., “I feel Yugoslavian,” “I identify strongly with the Yugoslavian people”). Next, participants filled out a 5-item collective nostalgia scale (after Smeekes et al., 2015) that referred to Yugoslavia (e.g., “I get nostalgic when I think back of Yugoslavia in the past times,” “I experience nostalgic feelings when I hear old Yugoslavian music”). Lastly, participants responded to a measure of behavioural contact with Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats (as well as other ethnic groups served as control). The measure stated: “How often do you hang out with people from the following ethnic groups living in Australia? This can be at your work or study/school, as well as in your neighbourhood and in your free time.” Identification with Yugoslavia predicted more intense nostalgia for Yugoslavia, which in turn predicted more contact with members of the three ethnic groups from former Yugoslavia (but not with member of control ethnic groups).

Collective or national nostalgia can be instigated by discomfoting states. Indeed, dissatisfaction with the current political system (Cernat, 2010; Todorova & Gille, 2010), collective guilt (Baldwin et al., 2018, Pilot Study), or existential worry about the future prospects on one’s ingroup

²Cheung et al. (2017) tested mediation using a single, bootstrapped mediational index (Hayes, 2017). This approach revealed that the indirect effect via anger was significant but the indirect via contempt narrowly failed to reach significance. Thus, the joint-significance test and the single-index test yielded different conclusions with regard to the mediational role of contempt.

or collective angst (Smeekes et al., 2018) trigger or predict collective nostalgia. Similarly, historical reminders (vs. no reminders) of national harm (i.e., the historical harm that the national group “Americans” inflicted upon outgroups such as “Native Americans”) induce collective nostalgia among individuals (Americans) who score highly on national glorification (Baldwin et al., 2018, Study, p. 2). In turn, collective nostalgia can act as a buffer. In particular, collective nostalgia is associated with lower collective guilt following reminders of national harm, compared to lack of such reminders (Baldwin et al., Study 1). Also, experimentally induced collective nostalgia (recalling a nostalgic event from a past generation vs. recalling a positive recent event at the cultural level) buffers against collective guilt following reminders (vs. no reminders) of national harm (Baldwin et al., Study 3), particularly among individuals high in national glorification (Baldwin et al., Study 4). Finally, collective nostalgia, following assessment of collective angst, is related to higher ingroup continuity (i.e., a sense of connection to ingroup identity through a shared past; Sani et al., 2007), and this relation is mediated by stronger ingroup belongingness (i.e., perceived bonds with one’s country and compatriots; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989), as indicated by a large cross-cultural and cross-sectional study (Smeekes et al., 2018).

Collective nostalgia as an instrument of outgroup rejection or exclusion

It should be evident from the above discussion that collective nostalgia can be used as a tool for outgroup rejection and exclusion. The rhetoric of national nostalgia is potentially powerful, as illustrated in analyses of speeches of leaders of populist right-wing parties in various European countries (i.e., Belgium, France, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom; Kenny, 2017; Mols & Jetten, 2014). These leaders attempted to manufacture a sharp discrepancy between an ostensibly sunny past but gloomy present or future, attributed the gloomy present state to low-status outgroups (e.g., immigrants, refugees), and promised to restore the sunny past by enforcing tough measures against the outgroups. Evidence corroborates the notion that collective nostalgia can serve as a prejudicial tool. National nostalgia is positively associated with opposition to immigrants across cultures (Smeekes et al., 2018). Also, national nostalgia is positively linked to autochthony, namely the conviction that the rights and entitlements of one’s national group belong to the first territorial occupants. In turn, autochthony predicts opposition to Muslims’ rights to express their identity publicly (e.g., “Build mosques,” “Found Islamic schools;” Smeekes et al., 2015).

There seem to be differences in the intensity of collective nostalgia as a function of political ideology. In particular, conservatives are drawn to collective nostalgia more than liberals are (Lammers & Baldwin, 2018, Study, p. 1). Yet, political messages that conveyed liberal ideals with a past focus (than a future focus) weaken conservatives' opposition to liberal policies; such messages include criminal justice leniency, gun control, gun rights, refugee migration, social diversity, and social justice (Lammers & Baldwin, Studies 2a-6).

Summary

Collective or national nostalgia confers ingroup benefits, but also has the potential to precipitate outgroup rejection. Specifically, this form of nostalgia increases ingroup favouritism: It lifts the positivity of ingroup evaluations, bolsters intentions to support the ingroup, strengthens consumer ethnocentrism, and leads to personal monetary sacrifice for the sake of punishing transgressions against other ingroup members. Additionally, collective or national nostalgia promotes ingroup-benefitting collective action and can strengthen intergroup contact. Further, this form of nostalgia can be triggered by, and act as a buffer against, discomfiting states. At the same time, collective, and especially national, nostalgia can be manipulated by populist leaders to legitimise hostile policies directed at low-status outgroups and is positively associated with negative attitudes toward such outgroups. One way to counter the attitudinal implications of collective nostalgia among ideologically conservative persons is to frame the communication of liberal ideas with a past (than a future) orientation.

Sociality VII. summary, limitations, and lingering issues

Summary

In its content, nostalgia is a mostly social emotion. It is likewise so in its consequences. At the personal level, nostalgia fosters social connectedness, with such downstream implications as inspiration and goal pursuit, self-continuity and wellbeing, as well as inclusion of the outgroup in the self and intergroup contact. Nostalgia is also associated with prejudice reduction via increased empathy. Moreover, nostalgia, through social connectedness, shields against loneliness or organisational hardship.

At the collective and especially national level, however, nostalgia is a mixed blessing. It can bestow benefits upon the ingroup, such as favouritism (e.g., positive evaluation, support, ethnocentric consumption, monetary sacrifice), collective action, and protection from discomfiting states. Also, under some circumstances, it can galvanise intergroup contact.

However, collective or national nostalgia can also detract from a magnanimous response to the outgroup by precipitating rejection or exclusion. Whether this form of nostalgia will be exclusively ingroup-benefitting or both ingroup- and out-group benefitting may depend, to a substantial degree, on which aspects of the historical past (Hilton & Liu, 2008; Liu & Hilton, 2005) are being activated and used as the fodder of the nostalgic experience. Nostalgising for an ethnocentric historical past will likely be associated, or lead to, ingroup benefitting and outgroup harming judgments or deeds. Nostalgising for a more balanced (if not cosmopolitan) past, however, will likely be associated with, or lead to, more mutually beneficial judgments or deeds for the ingroup and outgroup.

Limitations

One limitation of research on nostalgia (both personal and collective) conducted so far is its over-reliance on the experimental method. When alternative designs have been implemented, these have typically been cross-sectional. Researchers would need to explore in more depth the longitudinal implications of nostalgia. For example, does nostalgia at Time 1 predict various outcomes at Times 2 and 3 (over days or weeks), and does nostalgia predict change over time in these pertinent outcomes? In addition, researchers need to gain a better handle on the relevance and influence of daily nostalgia, through Experience Sampling Methodology (for a shot in that direction, see Van Dijke, Leunissen, Wildschut, & Sedikides, 2019). Does within-person variation in nostalgia predict outcomes over time, and under what circumstances (e.g., interactively with personality or situational factors)?

Another limitation concerns the lack of a systematic focus on moderators of nostalgia's effects. Some research has indicated that nostalgia-induced sociality has more potent outcomes among individuals who are chronically prone to nostalgia (Cheung, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2016; Juhl, Routledge, Arndt, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2010). However, broader moderation questions would need to be addressed. For example, does personal nostalgia have favourable social-connectedness benefits for individuals with depression, as it does for healthy adults (cf. Verplanken, 2012)? Is nostalgia, via social connectedness, more impactful among individuals high in communion as opposed to high in agency (Nam, Lee, Youn, & Kwon, 2016)? Is nostalgia's sociality equally potent in individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Triandis, 1995)? And, critically, are the effects of nostalgia contingent on dispositional self-continuity (Chandler et al., 2003; Sedikides, Wildschut, Gaertner, Routledge, & Arndt, 2008)?

Iyer and Jetten (2011) made a case for the role of self-continuity. These researchers hypothesised that nostalgia is a liability when it underscores

a contrast between a satisfying past and a dissatisfying present. So, although nostalgia is beneficial to those who perceive continuity between their past and present, nostalgia is damaging to those who perceive discontinuity between a fortunate past and an unfortunate present, that is, to individual who have experienced disruption in their lives. Nostalgia for “a life that has been left behind . . . may only amplify a sense of loss” (Iyer & Jetten, p. 96). The researchers tested their hypothesis among British (Study 1) and Australian (Studies 2–3) incoming university students. In Study 1 ($N = 120$), students higher in nostalgia for “life back home” estimated fewer academic obstacles when they were high on self-continuity (i.e., sustained strong bonds with groups with which they identified before entering university) than when they were low on self-continuity (i.e., regarded those bonds as having been broken, thus experiencing life disruption). In Study 2 ($N = 82$), Iyer and Jetten orthogonally manipulated nostalgia and past-present continuity. Participants who reflected on objects they appreciated in their life back home (vs. those who wrote down their hobbies) estimated fewer academic obstacles and expressed greater interest in new opportunities when they were high on self-continuity (i.e., read a report that prior student cohorts had been able to retain links with their home communities) than when they were low on self-continuity (i.e., read a report that previous cohorts had found it difficult to preserve community links). Finally, Study 3 ($N = 120$) conceptually replicated these findings with complementary manipulations of nostalgia and self-continuity, and with additional assessments of psychological functioning.

Wildschut, Sedikides, and Alowidy (2019) provided another test of this hypothesis in a sample of Syrian refugees ($N = 190$) settled in Saudi Arabia. The refugees were forcefully displaced during the Syrian civil war (2011–present). Forced displacement is associated with loss, disruption, mourning (Kinzie, 1988) as well acculturative stress (Berry, 1970) and accompanying loneliness, anxiety, and depression that stem from serious adjustment problems in an unwelcoming environment. These psychological predicaments will intensify the contrast, or discontinuity, between one’s past and present, thus weakening, if not reversing, the putative benefits of nostalgia. More importantly, Wildschut et al. examined the moderating role of resilience, the capacity to withstand adversity and recover from it (Bonanno, 2005) by sustaining positive emotions (Ong, Bergeman, Bisconti, & Wallace, 2006) and harnessing autobiographical memories to kindle positive emotions (Philippe, Lecours, & Beaulieu-Pelletier, 2009).

Wildschut et al. (2019) manipulated nostalgia with the Event Reflection Task, and then measured social connectedness, self-continuity, inspiration, and self-esteem (all with the 4-item indices specified earlier), along with optimism (e.g., “hopeful about my future”) and meaning in life (e.g., “life is meaningful”) also with 4-item indices (Hepper et al., 2012). Lastly, they

assessed resilience with the 26-item Wagnild and Young (1993) Resilience Scale (e.g., “I usually take things in stride,” “When I’m in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out of it”). Most of the documented benefits of nostalgia did accrue to refugees. In particular, nostalgia increased social connectedness, self-continuity, self-esteem, and meaning in life. However, the effects of nostalgia on the future-oriented states of inspiration and optimism diverged from the standard ones: Nostalgia had no effect on inspiration and decreased optimism. These latter findings highlight boundaries of the palliative influence of nostalgia, in alignment with Iyer and Jetten (2011) research. Yet, across the board, the findings were moderated by resilience, which acted as a catalyst of nostalgia’s benefits and an inhibitor of its costs. Specifically, nostalgia (vs. control) increased social connectedness, self-continuity, self-esteem, and meaning in life to a greater extent in participants high (rather than low) on resilience. Also, nostalgia (vs. control) decreased inspiration and optimism among low-resilience participants, but not among high-resilience participants. High-resilience refugees enjoyed most of the benefits of nostalgia and incurred none of its costs.

Lingering issues

The downstream consequences of personal nostalgia-induced sociality are generally beneficial to oneself. They may be similarly beneficial to others, as in the case of being a recipient of altruistic help. Yet, they could also be harmful to others. A hypothetical example concerns nepotism. Reunited friends may nostalgise and, in the process, feel socially connected. Taking advantage of social connectedness, one friend may ask the other for a considerable favour, perhaps kick-starting nepotism (i.e., “an old boys’ network”). This possibility deserves empirical scrutiny. Follow-up research would also do well to extend the study of personal nostalgia into other populations, such as persons with dementia (Ismail et al., 2018). Does nostalgia, through its sociality, temporarily improve the functioning of such persons?

In addition, future empirical efforts may clarify issues surrounding collective or national nostalgia. Is national nostalgia correlated positively with indices of conservative ideology (e.g., right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1996); social dominance orientation (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994))? That is, does national nostalgia reflect an ideology rather than an emotion? Is national (or collective) nostalgia at the trait level linked to different and less benign outcomes than it is at the state (i.e., induced) level? Has national nostalgia been used disproportionately by right-wing populists or is it just as likely to be used by left-wing populists relying on a different interpretation of the past? Under what

circumstances will a right-wing or a left-wing narrative become more effective in mobilising collective action or influence election outcomes? Can personal nostalgia be used as an antidote to national nostalgia, such as when personal nostalgia experiences with an immigrant counteract collective nostalgia-fuelled anti-immigrant attitudes? These and other issues bode well for the future of research on nostalgia.

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