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**If the Past Weighs on the Present, then
the present also weighs on the past:
Collective Remembering as an Open
System for studying the making and
breaking of Political Culture**

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Mainstream Western Psychological Science is Nomothetic (or Universal)

- The top journals in Psychology and in Science privilege a universal science of human functioning. Findings from America are treated as representative of the world.
- This ignores the fact that history is idiographic, and that different people have lived through the same period of time, interacted with one another, but had completely different experiences. This leads to different lessons from History.

The Powerful Tell “the” Story of History: This can be frustrating for Others



History will be kind to me for I
intend to write it.

— *Winston Churchill* —

AZ QUOTES

János László's “Science of stories”

- Stories themselves are not scientific, they are outputs of the human imagination
- But the human capacity for making stories and constructing narratives can be studied scientifically (Open System of Roy Bhaskar- Critical Realism)
- Group and intergroup psychology can construct scientific narratives built on idiographic results from one people nestled within comparisons with others

Russian Contributions to WWII

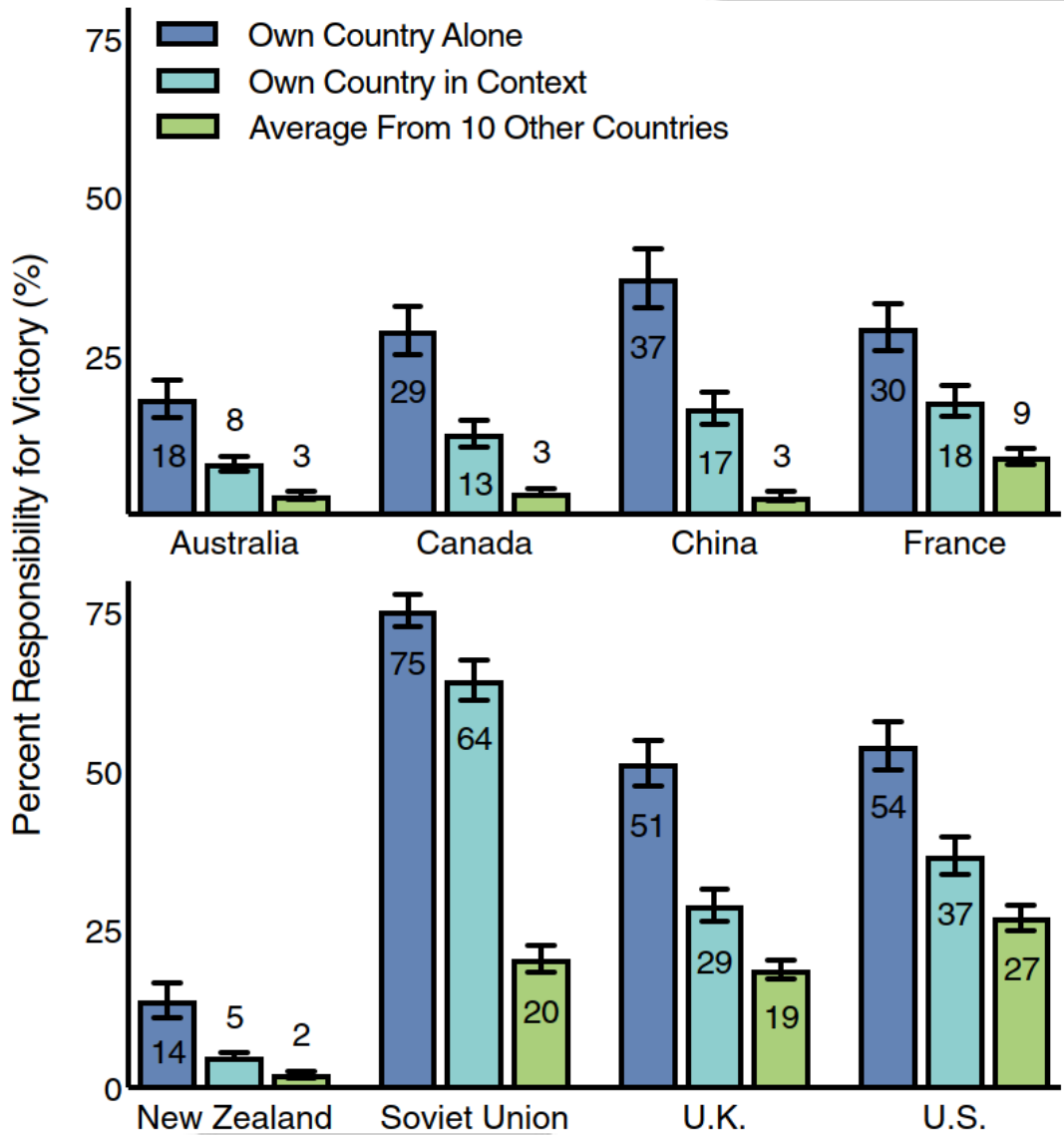
Some numbers:

- Suffered the most casualties
- Inflicted the most casualties on Germany

But also:

- Invaded Poland together with Germany
- Invaded Hungary in 1956 during Cold War

Allied Contributions to war efforts in WWII: (a) Own Country Alone, (b) in the context of 7 other allies, (c) Average from Other Countries (Roediger et al., 2019)



Russian (Soviet Union) Roles in WWII according to different nations

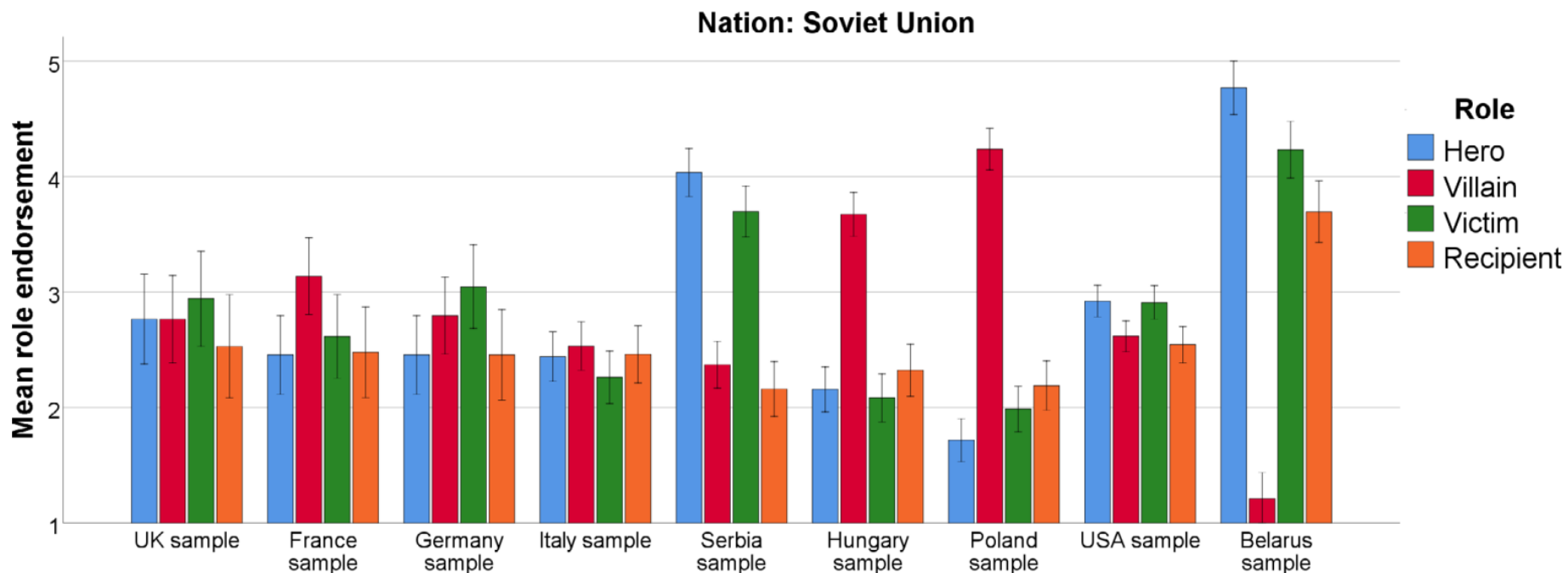


Figure 4 Mean scaled evaluations of the Soviet Union in World War 2, by sample nationality (x-axis groupings) and role (colour-coded bars). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

USA in WWII according to different nations (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2020)

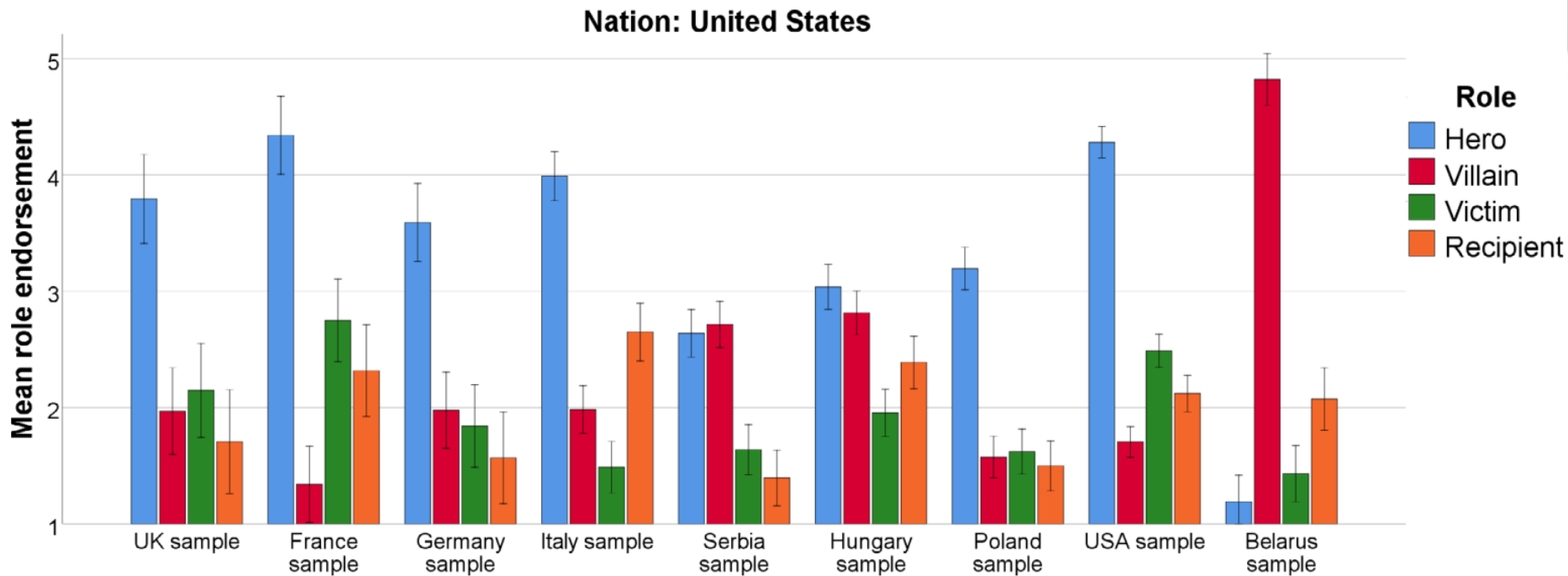


Figure 2 Mean scaled evaluations of the United States in World War 2, by sample nationality (x-axis groupings) and role (colour-coded bars). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

History Provides Symbolic Resources for Identity Entrepreneurs: Mobilizing Historical Grievances on an Agenda of Ancient Oneness



What is it that States want their citizens to Collectively Remember?

- For Social representations of the most important events in National and World History, and for Living Historical Memories, the answer is simple:
 - People around the world see Politics and War as the most important events in history; economics, scientific discoveries, and pandemics are incidental
 - History is *manufactured* as a Story of the Making of In-groups versus Out-groups.

With the collapse of Empires, people around the world see the Nation as a central group identity: this is Manufactured



Collective Memory of WWI versus the 1918 Flu Pandemic



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The COVID-19 Pandemic was an Opportunity for Global Cooperation, but rather affirmed the National System as dominant over the Global System



McFarland & colleagues show that National and Local Identities are stronger than Identification with All Humanity



German Roles in WWII according to different nations (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2020)

Second World War moral roles

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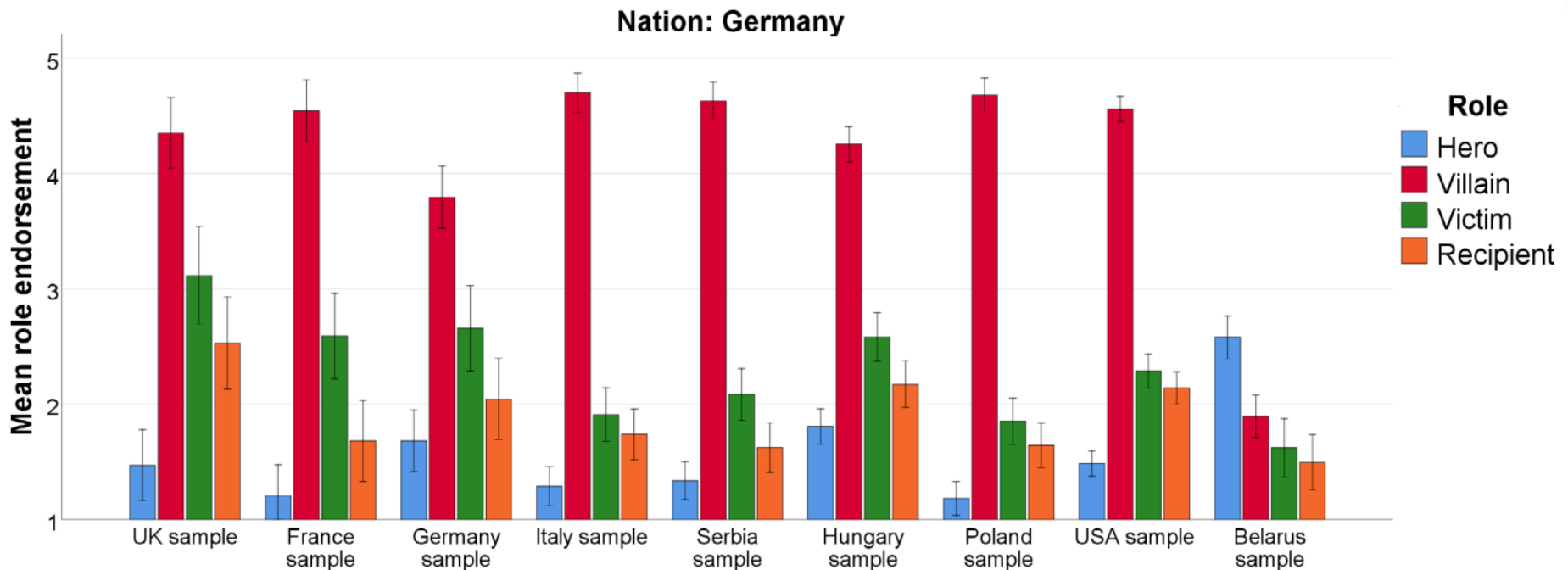


Figure 3 Mean scaled evaluations of Germany in World War 2, by sample nationality (x-axis groupings) and role (colour-coded bars). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Rise of the European Union: is Cooperation hard to Narrate?

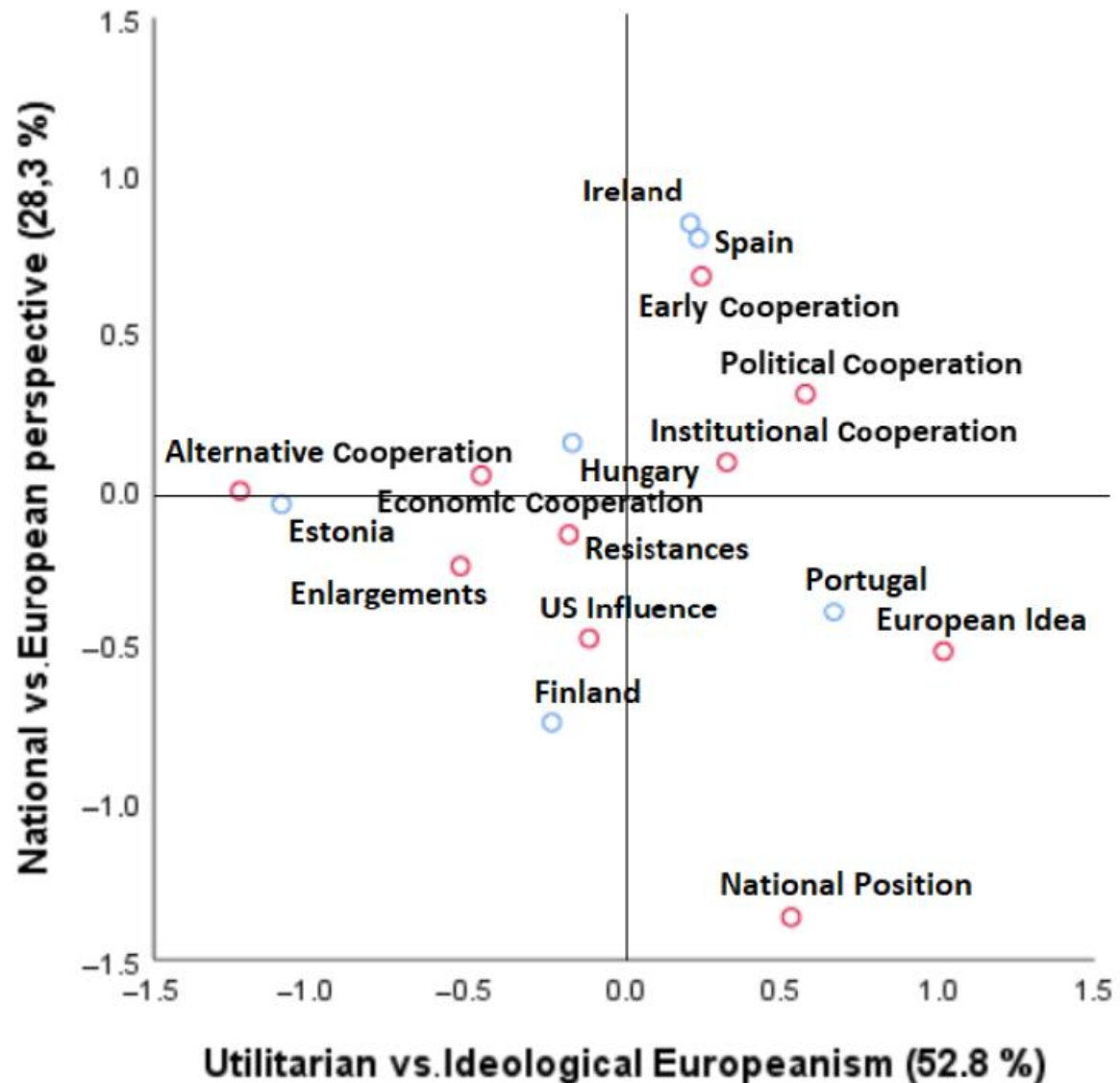
- Sakki et al. (2021) analyzed 86 high school history texts across 6 decades in 6 non-foundational EU countries and found great heterogeneity in accounts of European Integration, despite EU efforts to act as an institutional memory agent.
- Does a story of treaties and cooperative ties lack the power to mobilize identity?

European Union in History Textbooks (Sakki et al., 2020)

Table 1
Incidences of themes (as percentages) in

	Early EU cooperation	Alternative cooperation
Portugal	15.6	3.1
Ireland	28.7	13.9
Hungary	12.1	17.6
Finland	12.1	20.2
Spain	33.0	9.1
Estonia	12.6	35.8
Total	18.9	16.7
Mean		

Note. Themes above 10 percent are in boldface

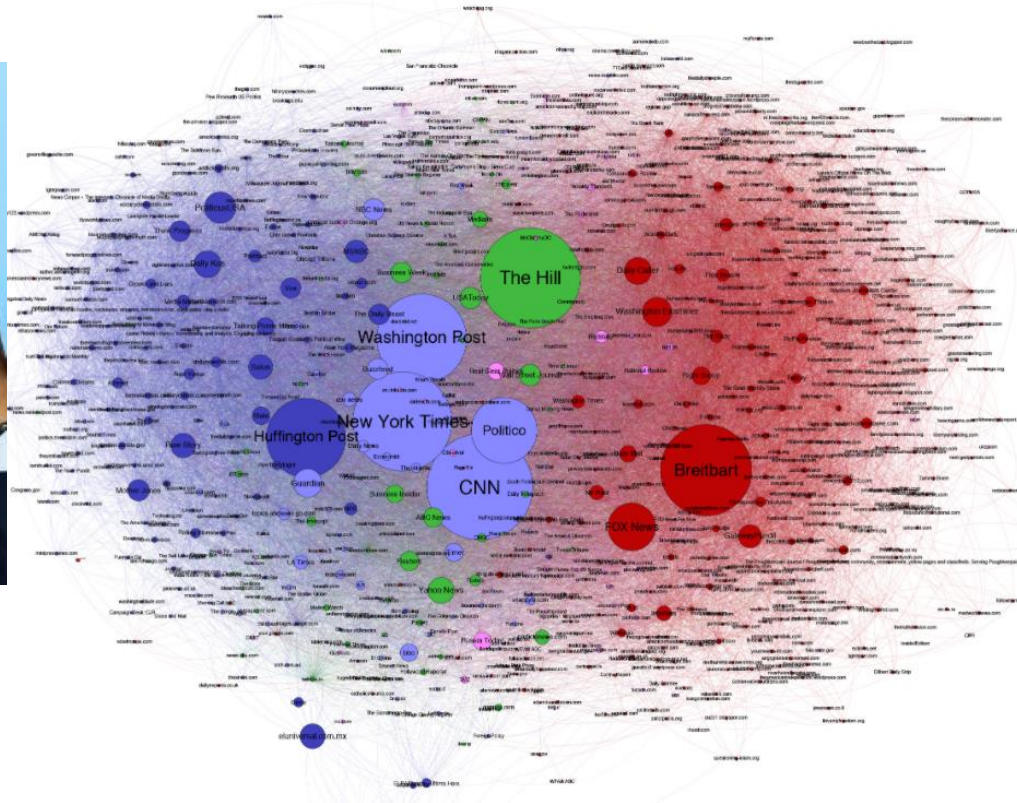


Theme	National position
Portugal	15.6
Ireland	1.0
Hungary	3.3
Finland	21.2
Spain	1.1
Estonia	3.2
Total	7.7

An Historical Trajectory

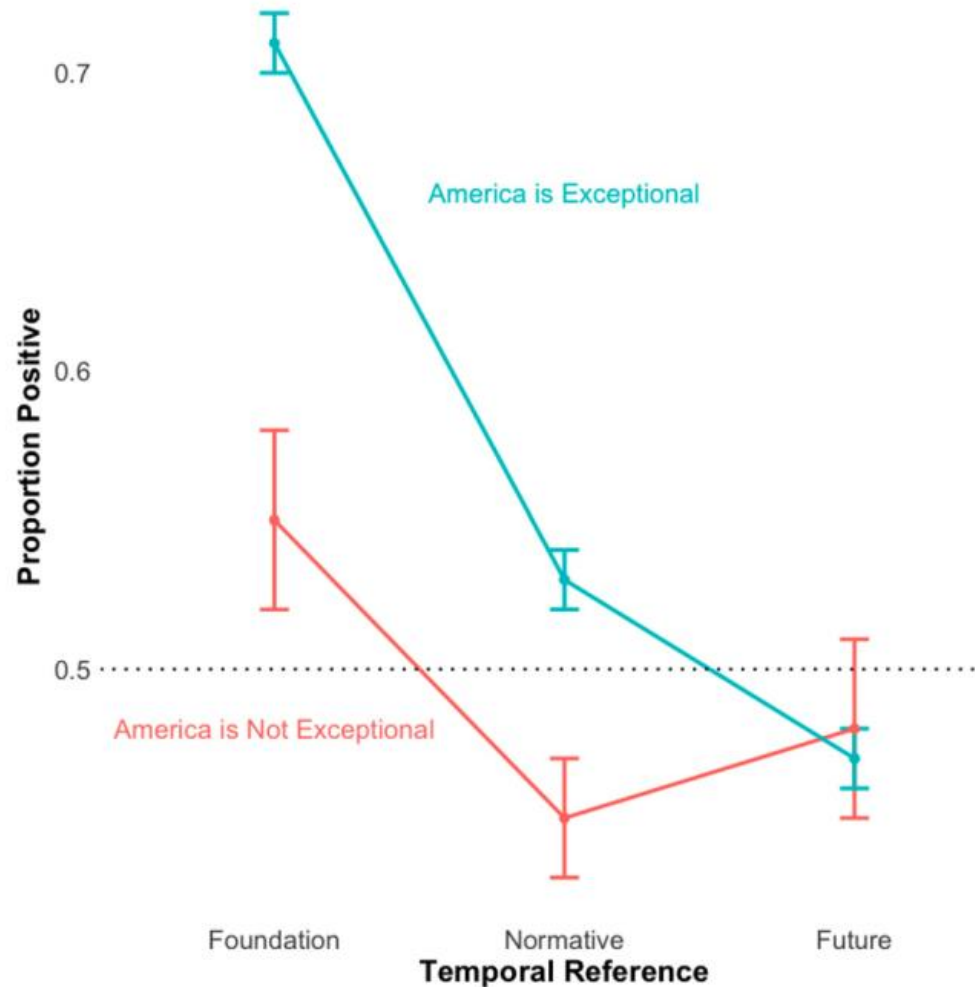
- Collective memories of a people's past coupled with public emotion about the direction of recent change in society.
- An indicator of the collective emotional climate of a society
- Challenging for national identity if CM becomes negative

Mass Media-made Echo Chambers in the Attention Economy accelerate Populism & Polarization



Americans feel like their nation is on an historical trajectory of decline (In Memory, 2019)

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American Narratives of History are Pluralistic, and two of them are polemical

- List up to 4 historical events that all Americans should remember, and briefly explain why Americans should remember those events. Thinking about the 4 events that you nominated, do you think they go together? If yes, could you briefly describe this narrative, and what it means to you?

	Overall % (N = 399)	Relative % (N = 278)	Valence of Events (M)
Progress over time	16.5	23.7	4.38
; Critical	14	20.1	2.39
; Glorifying	13	18.7	4.6
! Decline over time	5.3	7.6	2.87
↓ Critical Progress	4.5	6.5	3.9
} Unity	3.3	4.7	3.94
}			

Frequencies of Coherent Narratives and Mean Valence of their Associated Events

Note. Relative refers to only those participants who agreed that their list of events formed a coherent narrative.

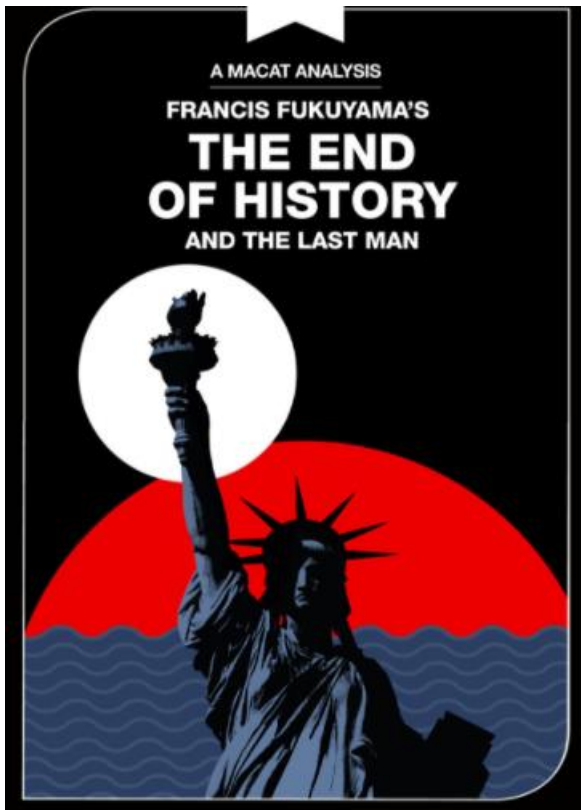
9-11 is by far the most important event in Collective Remembering of Americans today; critical narrative involves reinterpretation & questioning of foundational events e.g. “The United States of America is a country founded by white property-owning men who put the interests of white property-owning men first”; “We are founded on racism, colonialism, and the pursuit of happiness at others’ expense”; We have racism ingrained into our society, we were built and founded on it”

Frequencies and Mean Valence of the Top Events Nominated Across Narratives

Progress				Glorifying				Critical			
Event	Year	Freq	Valence (M)	Event	Year	Freq	Valence (M)	Event	Year	Freq	Valence (M)
9-11	2001	249	1.8	9-11	2001	156	2.0	9-11	2001	46	1.3
Civil War	1865	109	4.5	Independence	1776	81	6.8	Civil War	1865	49	4.2
Independence	1776	101	6.6	Civil War	1865	65	5	Vietnam War	1975	33	1.2
Revolution	1775	104	6.4	Revolution	1775	58	6.3	Trail of Tears	1850	33	1.3
WWII	1945	129	4.7					Capitol Riots	2021	27	1.1

“End of History and the Last Man” Francis Fukuyama (1991)

- Linear Model: Liberal Democracy as the Best system of governance for all people for all time



LIVING HISTORICAL MEMORY



- Cultural memories:
Memory that is “disembodied, exteriorized, objectified and embedded in cultural institutions” (Assmann, 2011, p. 16)
- Communicative memories:
Memory that lives in **everyday interaction and communication.**
- Living Historical Memories:
Representations of public/historical events that have occurred *within the lifetimes* of people living, or still personally remembered today
- LHM includes historical memories that *live* in public discourse through social sharing, both spontaneous/informal and sometimes officially commemorated as well (e.g., WWII).

Most positive Historical Trajectories of LHM are for Developing Countries in Majority World

FIGURE 3. AVERAGED EVALUATIONS OF SALIENT LHM NOMINATIONS ACROSS 39 COUNTRIES (CHOI ET AL., 2021)

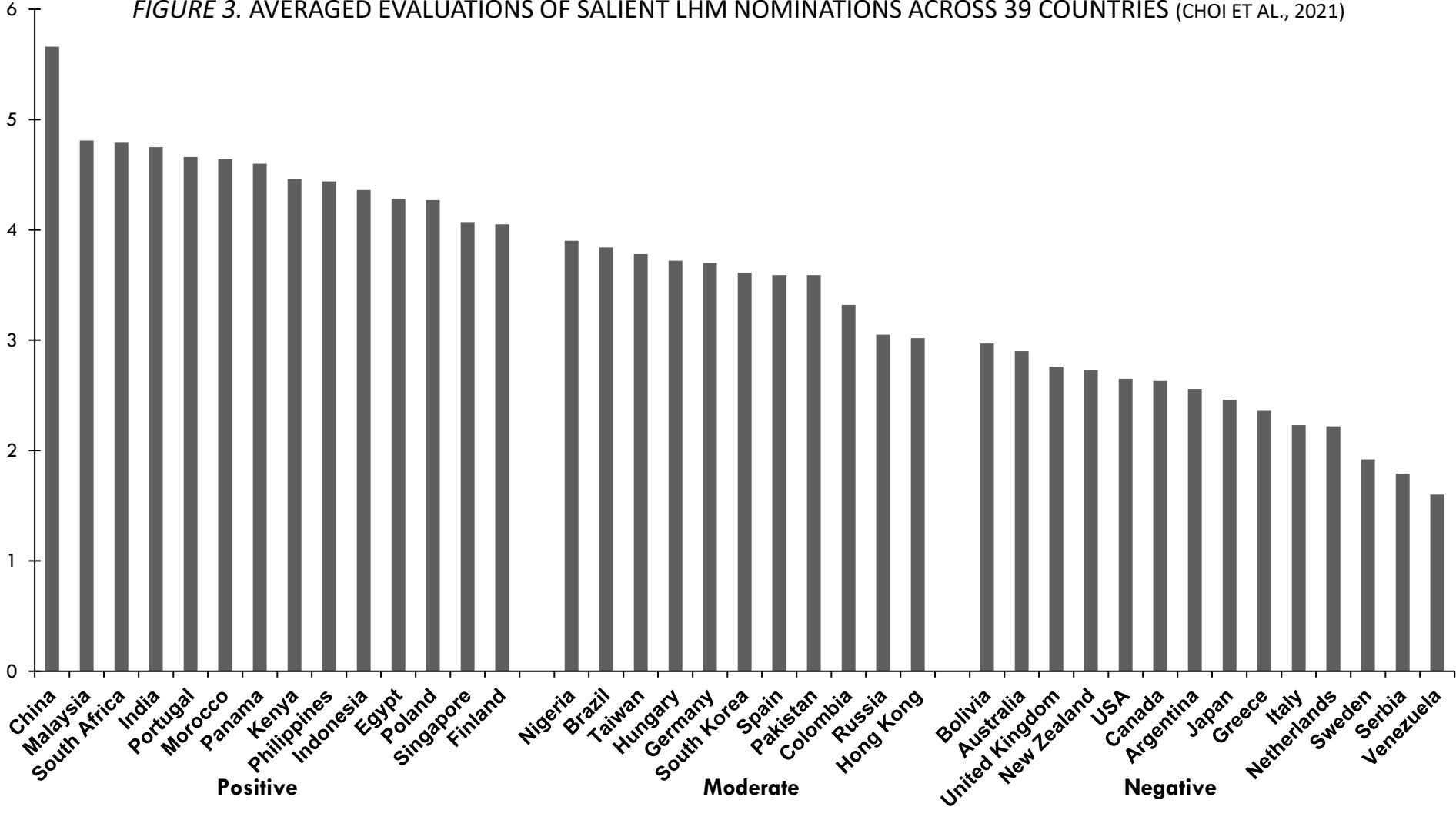
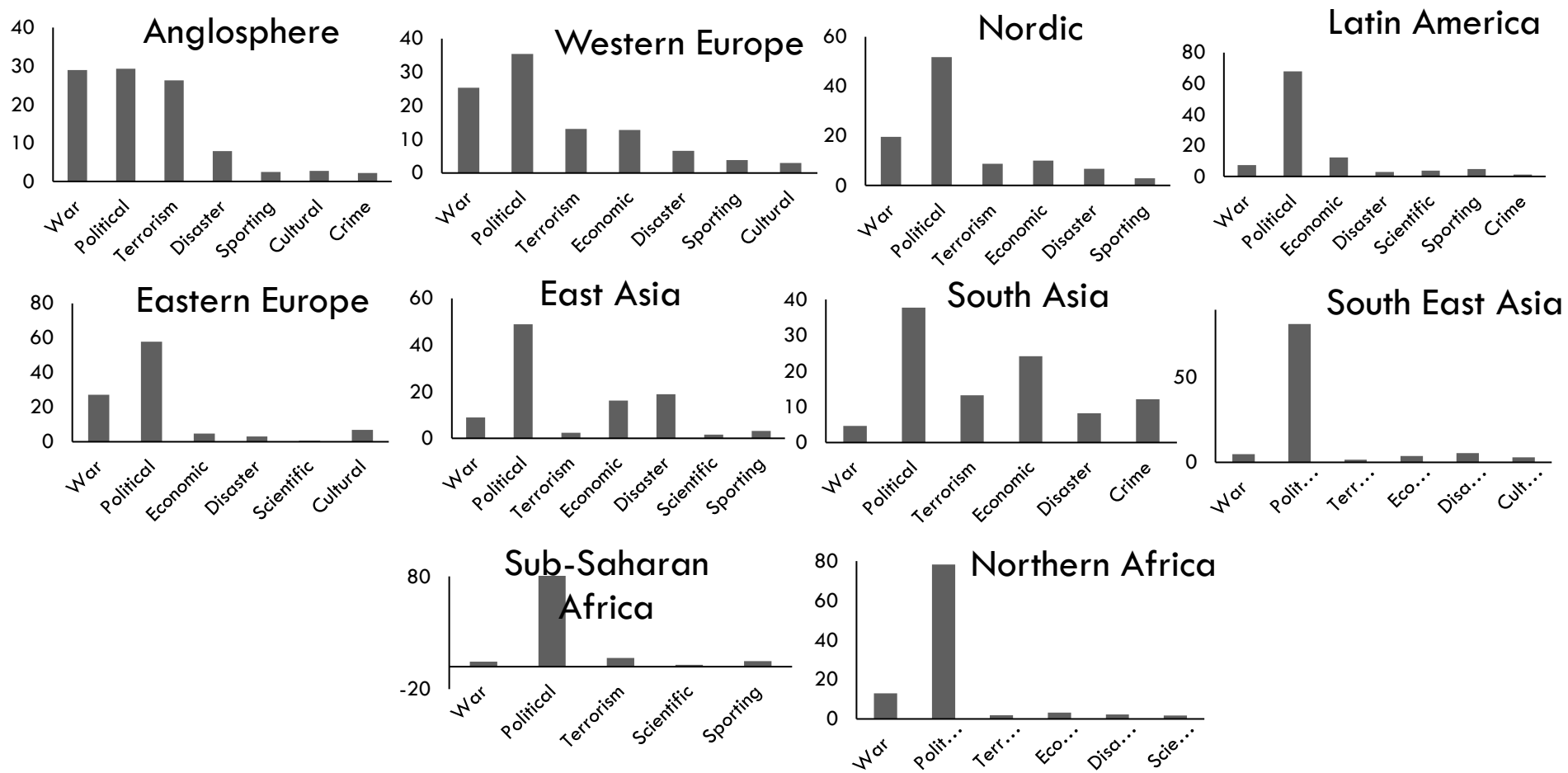


FIGURE 4. PERCENTAGES OF CONTENT CATEGORIES ACROSS REGIONS



Living Historical Memory (LHM) for Serbia

Serbia					
Event	% (out of N = 463)	Event Type	Emotional Valence (M)	SD	Date of Event
NATO bombing of Yugoslavia	54.2	War	1.19	0.72	1999
The Yugoslav Wars	25.7	War	1.17	0.55	1991
WW2	23.3	War	1.6	1.28	1939
The break up of Yugoslavia	15.3	Political	1.5	1.14	1989
Revolution to overthrow Slobodan Milosevic	14.6	Political	4.31	2.02	2000
Hyperinflation and sanctions in Yugoslavia	10.6	Economic	1.34	1.18	1993
Serbian Progressive Party	9.7	Political	2.19	1.85	2017
Assassination of Zoran Dindic (PM)	10.2	Political	1.79	1.73	2003
Kosovo (Declaration of Independence)	8.4	Political	1.46	1.3	2008
WW1	6	War	2.15	2.13	1914
Josip Broz Tito (former President)	5.8	Political	5.48	2.12	1953
Slobodan Milošević	5.8	Political	1.62	1.2	1997



Cultural Memories of Ancient Glories and Heroic Martyrdom vs Highly Contested LHM? (Ivanovic, unpublished)

	Stefan Nemanja Father of the Nation St. Simeon	Lazar Hrebeljanović (knez Lazar) Martyred Prince St Lazar	Đorđe Petrović (Karađorđe) Leader of First Anti-Ottoman Uprising	Dragoljub (Draža) Mihailović Leader of Chetniks in WWII	Josip Broz (Tito) Communist Leader of Yugoslavia	Slobodan Milošević Nationalist Leader of Serbia during Balkan Wars	Zoran Đinđić
N	225	225	225	225	225	225	225
Mean	9.78	9.32	9.57	7.58	4.59	4.42	6.4
SD	1.80	1.77	1.55	2.67	3.13	2.65	2.76

Competitive Victimhood as a Basis for National Identity? Kuljić (2017)

- Discrediting of Marxism leaves a Collective Memory (CM) of Martyred Ancients plus an LHM of massive suffering. The erasure of Tito and Communist Yugoslavia as the most peaceful era of the recent past leaves a vacuum in CM.
- Difficult search for national heroes & positive events. The story may be one of national survival against all odds. High sensitivity to external threats.

Obradovic & Howarth (2017) Heroic Martyrdom

‘Our generation is a generation that has a huge responsibility. Of course, with this responsibility comes great honor. We are chosen. We have a mission. That mission will not bring us any honor, nor will it bring us prosperity, because the time of our generation is a time of asceticism and renunciation. Only those who are willing to give up their personal well-being, can say, ‘we belong to that generation in Serbia that saved Serbia, we are the people of the new politics’ ’ —Speech 3, Đinđić (1995).

Strong form of Historical Consciousness in Serbia? (Past weighs on the Present)

- It seems quite strong in the speeches by important Serbian politicians from 1992 to 2012 as analyzed by Obradovic & Howarth (2017)
- It is not the banal nationalism of Billig but something that is explicitly worked up by political leaders

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Collective Remembering and the Making of Political Culture

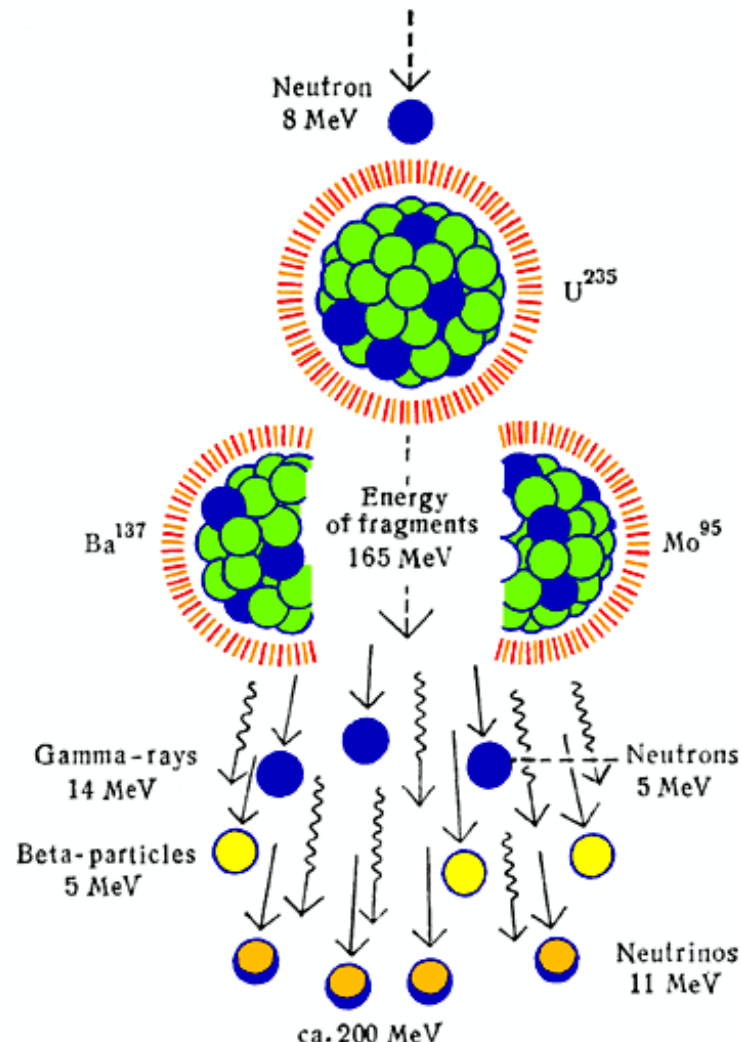
James H. Liu



Wicked Problem: What to do when “Liberal” democracies are moving towards oligarchy, & authoritarianism is on the rise?

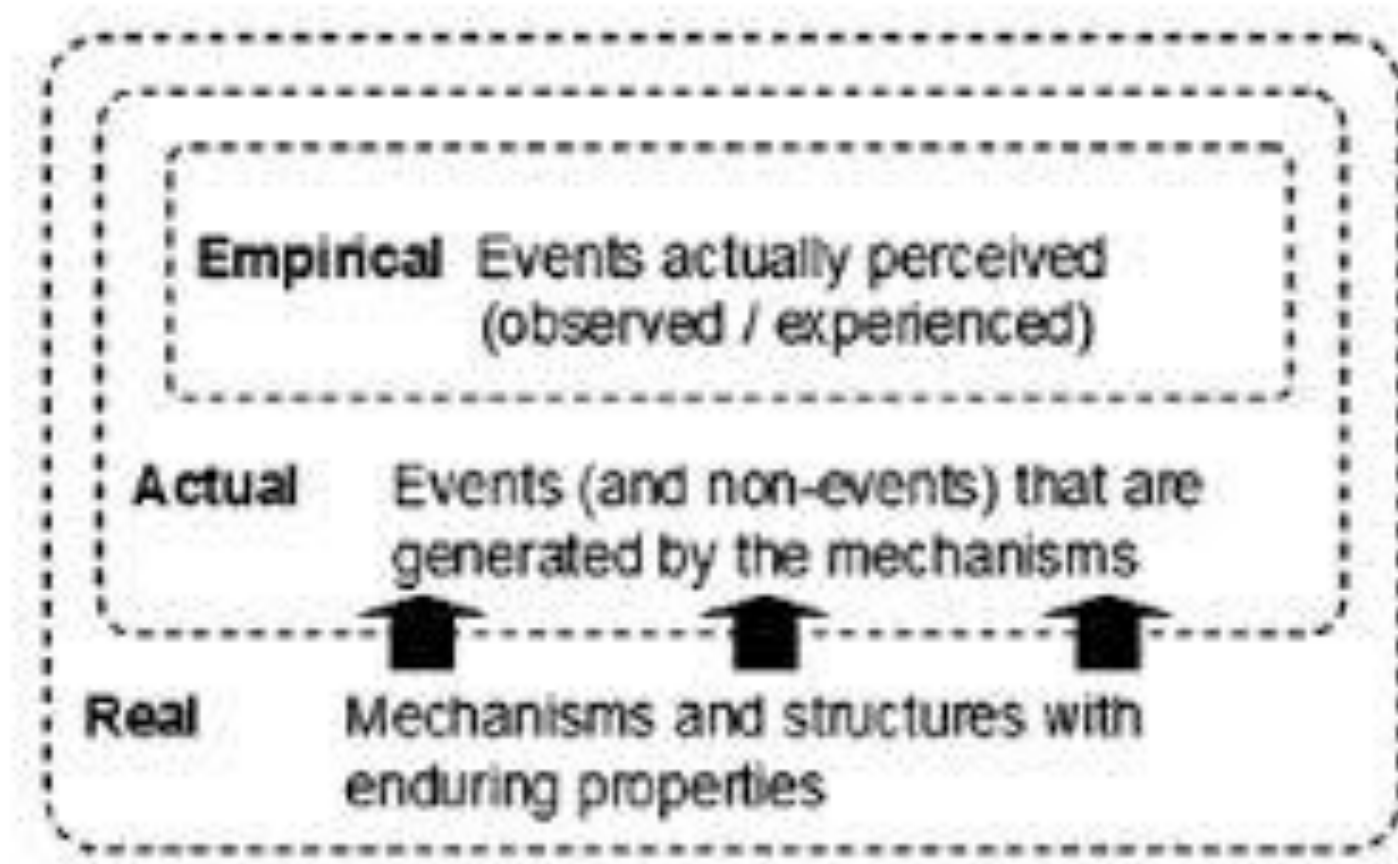
- Move towards understanding Human Science as an Open System, with new concepts and new institutions coming into being, others going out of fashion, and this “layer of the actual” (Bhaskar, 1975-critical realism) mediates and moderates the observation of empirical phenomena.
- A dynamic, and institutionally-layered view, instead of a biologically-determined view.

Is it possible that any social science theory would ever come close to discovering a natural law of the regularity of the causal chain following the splitting an atom and consequent release of nuclear energy?



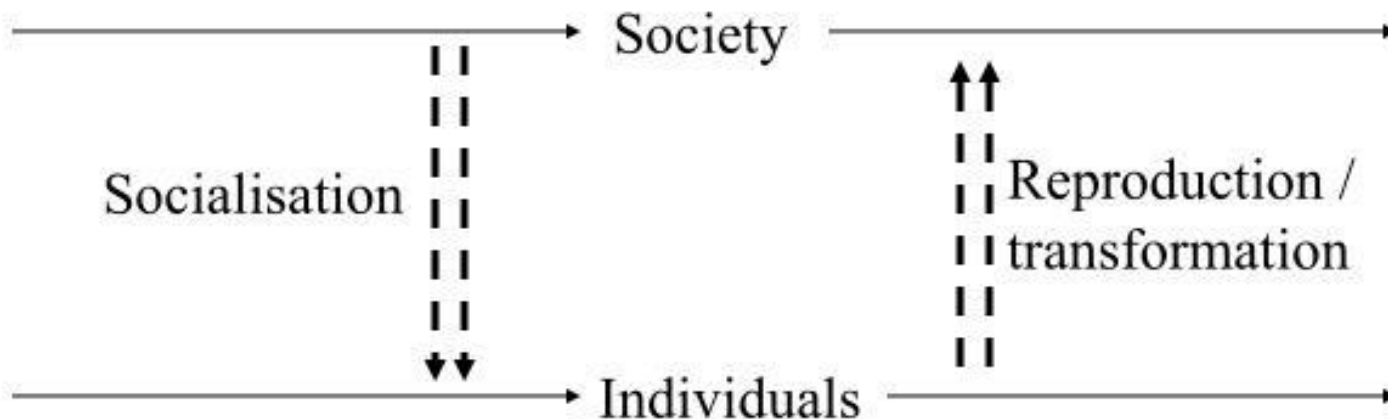
Bhaskar, Archer's Philosophy of Critical Realism- allows for **Generative Mechanisms** AND **Human Agency**

- Three layers of reality, not one or two

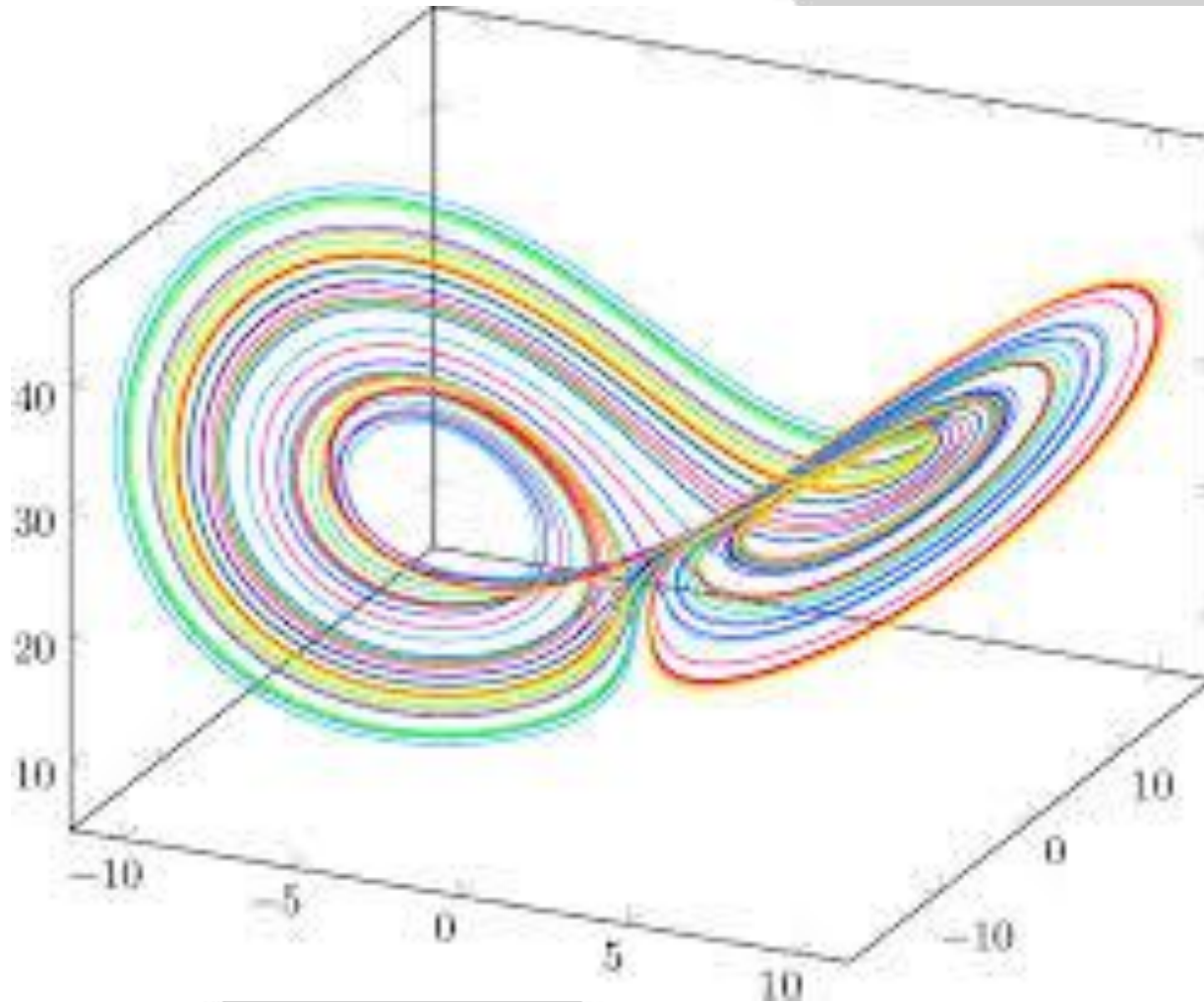


Critical realism (Bhaskar)

- Society socialises individuals who reproduce or transform social reality through social action
- Social systems are real, with real causes and constraints that are external to the individual
- They are created by people, unlike natural systems, but can be investigated, like natural systems
- Role of agency - intentions as causes of actions



Think of the Layer of the Actual as including cultural norms and institutions



A generative vision of causation

- Agents create change or maintain *status quo* through their actions, reactions and behaviours.
- All actions, behaviours, interventions, or changes take place at a certain time, in a certain context.
- There is no permanent laws, nor systematic pattern of outcomes.
- There are regular occurrences of an outcome in a specific context through the firing of a mechanism.
- Generative mechanisms = « *causal powers of things* » (Bhaskar, 1998)

