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NEGATIVE EVALUATION OF THE GROUP INCREASES COLLECTIVE NARCISSISM  
AND INTERGROUP HOSTILITY UNDER INTERGROUP THREAT

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## **Abstract**

Results of 3 experimental studies in two countries indicate that collective narcissism can be experimentally manipulated. Collective narcissism is an emotional investment in a belief in exaggerated greatness of an in-group (Golec de Zavala et al. 2009). It increases when people face negative evaluation of the in-group (e.g. national group or university peers). This effect is independent of initial identification with the group. Momentary increase in collective narcissism results in retaliatory out-group negativity under intergroup threat. Thus, the present results replicate and extend the previous findings that individual levels of narcissistic identification with an in-group increase sensitivity to and hostile responses to intergroup threat. Unlike collective self-esteem that does not change in response to in-group evaluations, collective narcissism is unstable and defensive positive regard for the in-group. Study 2 indicates that it increases *because* the negative evaluation of the in-group is perceived as offence. Study 2 also shows that pairing negative evaluation with positive assessment of the in-group on a different dimension prevents the increase in collective narcissism. Therefore, it reduces a chance of escalation of intergroup hostility.

Key words: negative vs positive evaluation of the in-group, collective narcissism, intergroup hostility

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In his Letter to the American People, Osama Bin Laden calls for moral betterment of Western civilization under the guidance of fundamentalist Islam and warns:

*“If the Americans refuse to listen to our advice and the goodness, guidance and righteousness that we call them to, then be aware that you will lose this Crusade Bush began (...).”*

The letter expresses Bin Laden’s belief in moral superiority of the social group he represents that entitles this group not only to guide and dominate other groups but also to punish those who do not recognize its extraordinary characteristics. From this perspective, acts of political violence can be seen as retaliation in response to humiliating lack of regard for the superior group.

Inflated beliefs in one’s own superiority and entitlement contingent on continuous external validation are characteristic of narcissism (e.g. Crocker & Park, 2004; Emmons, 1987; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Narcissism is a reliable predictor of aggressiveness in interpersonal relations, interpersonal anger and an inability to forgive accompanied by a tendency to seek vengeance (e.g. Brown, 2004; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell & Finkel, 2004; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995; Ruiz, Smith & Rhodewalt, 2001). Just as people are narcissistic about their individual selves, they can be narcissistic about their collective selves. They can form narcissistic attachment to important social groups. Thus, collective narcissism can be defined as an emotional investment in an unrealistic belief in the exaggerated greatness of an in-group (Golec de Zavala, Cichocka, Eidelson & Jayawickreme, 2009; see also Adorno, 1954; Emmons, 1987).

Narcissistic idealization of an in-group, just like the narcissistic idealization of self, is contingent on external recognition and involves being hypersensitive to threats to the in-group’s exaggerated image. Collective narcissists react to such threats with increased intergroup hostility. Studies indicate that collective narcissism reliably predicts prejudiced

Running head: Experimentally increased collective narcissism increases intergroup hostility and hostility in various intergroup settings over and above such other robust predictors as social dominance orientation (e.g. Pratto et al, 1994), right wing authoritarianism (e.g. Altemeyer, 1998) or different forms of ‘destructive’ positive regard for an in-group such as nationalism (e.g. Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989) or blind patriotism (e.g. Schatz & Staub, 1997). Especially, collective narcissism is related to exaggerated, negative and hostile reactions to group directed criticism and anything that seems to undermine the idealized image of an in-group (Golec de Zavala & Cichocka, 2010). Collective narcissism is related to increased sensitivity to signs of threat to the in-group’s image. Thus, collective narcissism is an important predecessor of intergroup hostility as the perception of intergroup threat is linked to intergroup aggression and out-group hostility (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; for review see Riek et al., 2006). Thus, in order to better understand the dynamics of intergroup hostility, it is important to examine situations that give rise to narcissistic group identification and stir collective narcissistic sentiments.

Studies of individual narcissism suggest that narcissistic self-esteem is an insecure assertion of privileged status that requires constant external recognition (e.g. Locke, 2009). Narcissism is treated as a defensive form of very high self-esteem. Most researchers agree that the inflated narcissistic ego is constantly threatened by more or less acknowledged self-doubts (e.g. Jordan, Spencer, & Zanna, 2005) and narcissistic exaggerated self-esteem is unstable (e.g. Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1989; cf Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro & Rusbult, 2004; for review and discussion of existing controversies, see Bosson et al., 2008). Narcissism and stable high self-esteem make opposite predictions regarding a tendency to engage in delinquent and aggressive interpersonal behaviours: stable self esteem predicts avoidance of such behaviours whereas narcissism predicts interpersonal aggressiveness and delinquent behaviour (e.g. Locke, 2009; Paulus et al., 2009).

The narcissistic, exaggerated in-group's image seems to be inherently fragile, shadowed by internal doubts and particularly difficult to protect. Studies indicate that when the overlap between narcissistic and non-narcissistic forms of positive group regard is controlled, narcissistic and 'genuine' positive group regard have opposite relationships with prejudice. Collective narcissism predicts greater intergroup hostility, whereas 'genuine' positive group regard predicts intergroup tolerance and openness (Golec de Zavala, Cichocka & Bilewicz, 2010). The main function of collective narcissistic hostility seems to be protecting the idealized in-group's image. Collective narcissism is related to increased tendency to perceive threat to the in-group's image and that it exaggerates hostility in response to such threats. However, no studies have ever empirically tested what kind of intergroup situations can inspire narcissistic in-group identification.

Studies presented in this paper aimed at filling this important gap. They test the propositions that the very threat to the in-group's image may increase collective narcissism of the group members and intergroup hostility when intergroup threat is present. These suggestions are present in theoretical writings of several authors. For example, Theodore Adorno (1954) analyzing the rise of Nazism in Germany proposes that collective narcissism of German people was mobilized and channelled towards aggression by promotion of the interpretation of the Treaty of Versailles as national humiliation and offence to the national group.

The hypothesis that when group members face negative evaluation of their group their collective narcissism increases was tested in two experimental studies. The studies were conducted in two different countries and using two different group contexts (national in-group and in-group of students of the same university). The genuine collective self-esteem, stable and positive regard for the in-group that is not contingent on external validation. Therefore, it was also expected that the level of collective self-esteem will remain unaffected

Running head: Experimentally increased collective narcissism increases intergroup hostility by negative evaluation of the in-group. The expectation that collective narcissism increases in response to negative evaluation of an in-group was tested against the proposition that the increase will take place in a situation in which negative evaluation is preceded by the positive information. Such situation may create narcissistic feeling that the great in-group is insufficiently recognized by others. The studies followed a 2x2 design with two manipulated factors: positive evaluation of the in-group (vs lack of thereof) vs negative evaluation of the in-group (vs lack of thereof). Studies on collective narcissism reveal that this variable increases likelihood of intergroup hostility in face of intergroup threat. Thus, in Study 3 we also tested a hypothesis that the conditions that inspire collective narcissism will be also increase intergroup hostility when the intergroup threat is present. In this study retaliatory intergroup hostility was a dependent variable. Manipulated collective narcissism and intergroup threat were two experimental factors creating the 2 x 2 design of the Study 3.

### **Study 1**

In Study 1 we looked at the effects of negative evaluation of the in-group on the levels of collective narcissism with reference to this group. We compare the effects of negative evaluation on narcissistic and ‘genuine’ collective self-esteem. We examine the effect of negative information when positive information is also provided vs control condition. The negative evaluation pertains to the interpretation of first, positive evaluation (acknowledgment of the in-group vs control) in a narcissistic way: as an insufficient recognition of the in-group.

### **Method**

#### **Participants and procedure**

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The study was conducted among 89 undergraduate students in Poland. The age of participants ranged from 19 to 24 years old ( $M = 20.17$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ). There were 21 male and 65 female participants. All participants were Polish.

Participants were asked to respond to demographic questions and then they were randomly allocated to two research conditions: positive evaluation ( $N = 51$ ) vs control conditions ( $N = 38$ ). This manipulation was crossed with a manipulation of negative evaluation ( $N = 40$ ) vs neutral ( $N = 49$ ) condition. Experimental manipulations were presented as an alleged news release about the report on the quality of higher education in the European Union. The report either acknowledged (positive evaluation) or not (*control condition*) Polish contribution to European education. The fragment read “*One of the factors contributing to improving the level of higher education in Europe is a great number of European exchange students educated in countries like Czech Republic, Hungary (and Poland)*” .

Negative evaluation manipulation was presented as interpretation of the report. In the negative evaluation condition the fact of Poland was not mentioned (when paired with the control condition) or mentioned last (when paired with the experimental condition of positive evaluation) was interpreted as lack of appreciation. The corresponding fragment for negative evaluation following the control condition on positive evaluation manipulation read: “*it seems to be an understatement to not mention Poland. The report mentions Czech Republic and Hungary although Poland sends and receives double the amount of international students than these two countries. But the true importance of the Polish contribution is hardly ever appreciated by other countries*” .

The negative evaluation following the positive evaluation condition read: “*Although we can certainly be proud that Polish contribution was mentioned, it seems to be an understatement to mention the Poland last. The report mentions Czech Republic and*

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*Hungary in the first place although Poland sends and receives double the amount of international students than this two countries. But the true importance of the Polish contribution is hardly ever appreciated by other countries.”*

After reading the passage participants were asked a manipulation check question. Finally, participants were asked to fill out the Collective Narcissism Scale (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009) and the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

### **Measures**

***Perceived opinion about in-group*** ( $M = 5.60, SD = 2.35$ ) was measured by asking participants to what extent they thought European Union 's opinion about Polish contribution to European education was 1 = “very negative” to 9 = “very positive”.

***In-group identification*** ( $M = 5.57, SD = 1.47$ ) was assessed by the method proposed by Tropp & Wright (2001). Participants were asked to indicate the degree of their identification with their national group represented by the relationship between two overlapping circles: one representing the self and the other representing the national group. The circles formed a 8-point scale from a set of separate two circles (1 = “no identification at all”) through degrees of overlap to full overlap (8 = “total identification”).

***Collective narcissism*** ( $\alpha = .73, M = 4.59, SD = .84$ ) was measured by the 9-item Collective Narcissism Scale (Golec de Zavala et al., 2008). The scale contains items reflecting the belief in the in-group's greatness (e.g. “*If my group had a major say in the world, the world would be a much better place.*”) and lack of its proper recognition (e.g. “*I wish other groups would more quickly recognize authority of my group.*”). Participants were asked to indicate how much they agree with the statements in relation to their national group. Scores range from 1 = “*I strongly disagree*” to 7 = “*I strongly agree*”.



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**Collective self-esteem** ( $\alpha = .70$ ,  $M = 5.84$ ,  $SD = .94$ ) was assessed was measured by the Collective Self-Esteem Scale assessing how well participants thought about their in-group (Private CSE subscale; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Scores range from 1 = “*I strongly disagree*” to 7 = “*I strongly agree*”.

## Results

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to assess whether the perception of the valence of European opinion differed according to experimental condition. Results revealed a significant main effect of positive evaluation manipulation indicating a that participants in the positive evaluation condition perceived the opinion as more positive ( $M = 6.06$ ,  $SD = 2.14$ ) than participants in the control condition ( $M = 4.97$ ,  $SD = 2.51$ ),  $F(1,85) = 4.32$ ,  $p = .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ . There was also a significant main effect of negative evaluation indicating more negative perceptions of the opinion in the experimental condition ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = 2.43$ ) than in the control condition ( $M = 6.78$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ),  $F(1,85) = 37.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .31$ . The interaction effect of experimental condition on manipulation check question was not significant,  $F(1,85) = .08$ ,  $p = .78$ ,  $\eta^2 = .001$ . The results indicate that the experimental manipulation was effective.

Collective narcissism was significantly positively related to both identification ( $r(87) = .41$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and private collective self-esteem ( $r(87) = .37$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Identification and private collective self-esteem were also significantly positively correlated, ( $r(87) = .39$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

To examine the effects of experimental manipulation a 2 x 2 between-subjects multivariate analysis of variance was performed on the two types of collective esteem: collective narcissism and private collective self-esteem. Independent variables were positive

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With the use of Wilks' criterion, the combined dependent variables were marginally affected by negative evaluation manipulation,  $F(2,82) = 2.96, p = .06, \eta^2 = .07$ . There was no main effect of positive evaluation manipulation ( $F(2,82) = 1.71, p = .19, \eta^2 = .04$ ) and no interaction effect ( $F(2,82) = .44, p = .65, \eta^2 = .01$ ).

To examine the effects of experimental manipulations two sets of 2 x 2 ANOVAs were conducted to check whether the levels collective narcissism was influence by the experimental conditions. These analyses included in-group identification and age of participants as covariates as these variables were related to collective narcissism and collective self-esteem.

Results of the two-way ANOVA using collective narcissism as dependent variable revealed a significant main effect of negative evaluation. Participants in negative information conditions showed higher levels of collective narcissism ( $M = 4.74, SD = .82$ ) than participants in conditions where no negative information was given ( $M = 4.44, SD = .84$ ),  $F(1,83) = 4.10, p = .05, \eta^2 = .05$ . The main effect of positive evaluation manipulation ( $F(1,83) = 2.93, p = .10$ ) and the interaction effect of experimental manipulations on collective narcissism were not significant ( $F(1,83) = .03, p = .87, \eta^2 = .001$ , the whole model,  $F(5,83) = 5.15, p < .001, \eta^2 = .24$ ).

The ANOVA including private collective self-esteem as a dependent variable showed no significant effects. Neither the main effects of the two experimental manipulations ( $F(1,83) = .64, p = .43, \eta^2 = .01$  for the negative information manipulation,  $F(1,83) = .07, p = .80, \eta^2 = .001$  for the boost manipulation), nor the interaction effect were significant ( $F(1,83) = .89, p = .35, \eta^2 = .01$ , the whole model,  $F(5,83) = 4.13, p = .002, \eta^2 = .20$ ).

## **Discussion of Study 1**

Results of Study 1 revealed that negative evaluation of the in-group increased collective narcissism but not collective self-esteem. Both variables were related to strength of in-group identification but only collective narcissism increased as a consequence of the interpretation of the external information about the in-group (either positive or neutral) as lack of proper appreciation of the in-group by other groups. The collective narcissism and collective self-esteem were positively correlated.

In Study 1 participants were presented with positive (vs neutral) and negative (vs neutral) opinion about their national group. In both cases the evaluation came from other groups (although not clearly identified). In Study 2 we examined whether the negative evaluation of the in-group will increase narcissistic feelings about usually less important to self and more mundane social group such as university peers. We conducted Study 2 in another country to assure that the examined effect can be generalized to different socio-cultural contexts.

## **Study 2**

In Study 2 we examined the effects of positive vs negative evaluation of the in-group on collective narcissism and collective self-esteem. We used a group defined as college peers as the in-group with reference to which we measured both forms of positive group regard. In Study 2 we also looked at positive evaluation that concerned different aspect of in-group's actions and characteristics than the negative evaluation.

## **Method**

### **Participants and procedure**

The study was conducted among 241 students of Middlesex University. Their age ranged from 18 to 54 years old ( $M = 23.05$ ,  $SD = 5.62$ ). There were 55 male and 185 female

Running head: Experimentally increased collective narcissism increases intergroup hostility participants. Around 43% percent of participants were White, 24% were Black. Five percent indicated mixed ethnicity and 28% - other. Students participated in the research in exchange for the research participation credit. They were also encouraged to participate in the study by a prize draw that took part after the data were collected.

Participants were first asked to respond to demographic questions. Then, they were randomly allocated to one of four experimental conditions. In positive evaluation conditions ( $N = 124$ ) participants read alleged news release comparing psychology departments in London. The news reported that students at Middlesex University are among the most satisfied and successful in comparison to other universities in the area according to the National Students Survey. In the control condition ( $N = 117$ ) participants read comparisons of number of students enrolled at universities in the area. In the negative evaluation condition ( $N = 131$ ) participants read the information that their University did rather poorly in the league tables in comparison to other universities in the area. In control condition ( $N = 110$ ) participants read comparisons of number of students enrolled at universities in the area. After experimental manipulations participants responded to a manipulation check question regarding perceived opinion about their University. Participants were asked whether they thought the evaluation of their university was offensive. Finally, they were asked to fill out the Collective Narcissism Scale (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009) and the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) thinking of their University and their peers as the in-group while responding to the items of both scales.

### ***Measures***

***Perceived opinion about the University*** ( $M = 5.20$ ,  $SD = 2.26$ ) was measured by asking to what extent the opinion(s) they read about their University was negative/positive. Answers could range from 1 = “very negative” to 9 = “very positive”.

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***In-group Identification*** ( $M = 5.45, SD = 1.79$ ) was measured by asking participants “Do you identify with Middlesex University?”. Scores range from 1 = “*not at all*” to 9 = “*very much so*”.

***Collective narcissism*** ( $\alpha = .82, M = 3.33, SD = 1.16$ ) was measured as in Study 1 but participants were instructed to think about their University peers as the in-group.

***Collective self-esteem*** ( $\alpha = .54, M = 5.10, SD = 1.23$ ) was measured as in Study 1 with reference to the University peers as the in-group.

***Perception of the evaluation as offensive*** ( $M = 3.63, SD = 2.39$ ) was measured by asking participants to what extent they agree that “This evaluation is offensive to Middlesex students”. Scores could range from 1 = “*I strongly disagree*” to 9 = “*I strongly agree*”.

## Results

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to assess whether the perception of the valence of presented opinions differed according to experimental conditions. Results revealed a significant main effect of positive evaluation manipulation indicating that participants who received positive information about their University perceived the opinion as more positive ( $M = 5.27, SD = .16$ ) than participants who did not receive such opinion ( $M = 4.78, SD = .16$ ),  $F(1,227) = 4.58, p = .03, \eta^2 = .04$ . There was also a significant main effect of negative evaluation indicating more negative perceptions of the opinion about the University in the experimental vs ( $M = 3.57, SD = .17$ ) the control conditions ( $M = 6.48, SD = .15$ ),  $F(1,227) = 162.64, p < .001, \eta^2 = .42$ . Finally, there was a marginally significant interaction effect,  $F(1,227) = 3.87, p = .05, \eta^2 = .02$ . Planned pair-wise comparisons revealed that participants perceived the external opinion about their University as more positive after the positive evaluation when it was not followed by the negative evaluation of the University,  $F(1,128)$

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= 12.45,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .09$ . When the negative evaluation was also presented there was no significant difference between positive evaluation vs control conditions,  $F(1,101) = .01$ ,  $p = .92$ ,  $\eta^2 = .00$ . These results indicate that the experimental manipulations were effective and the perception of the opinion about the University changed according to the research conditions.

Collective narcissism and collective self-esteem were positively correlated,  $r(238) = .12$ ;  $p = .10$ . This relationship was marginally significant. Collective self-esteem was correlated with in-group identification, ( $r(239) = .38$ ;  $p = .001$ ). Collective narcissism was also positively related to in-group identification, ( $r(239) = .13$ ;  $p = .04$ ).

A 2 x 2 between-subjects multivariate analysis of variance was performed on the two types of collective esteem: collective narcissism and private collective self-esteem. Independent variables were the positive and negative evaluations of the University. We included in-group identification and years spent at the university as covariates. Age and gender of participants was not related to dependent variables. With the use of Wilks' criterion, the combined dependent variables were affected by an interaction of positive and negative evaluations,  $F(2,229) = 3.18$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ . There were no main effects of positive evaluation ( $F(2,229) = 1.72$ ,  $p = .18$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ) or negative evaluation ( $F(2,229) = .71$ ,  $p = .49$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ).

Next, we analyzed the effects of experimental manipulation of the dependent variables separately. First a two-way ANOVA was performed using two experimental factors as independent variables, participant's age and in-group identification as covariates and collective self esteem as dependent variable. The analysis revealed a significant main effect of positive evaluation manipulation. Collective self-esteem was lower in experimental than in

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control conditions ( $M = 4.93$ ;  $SD = 1.22$  vs  $M = 5.31$ ;  $SD = 1.22$ , respectively,  $F(1,238) = 5.69$ ;  $p = .02$ ;  $\eta^2 = .02$ ).

Next, the same two-way ANOVA was conducted using collective narcissism as dependent variable. The analysis revealed a significant interaction effect,  $F(1,238) = 2.36$ ;  $p = .04$ ;  $\eta^2 = .02$  (the whole model,  $F(4,234) = 2.50$ ;  $p = .04$ ;  $\eta^2 = .04$ ). The planned pair-wise comparisons indicated that when no negative evaluation was presented, participants who read the positive evaluation of their university scored higher on collective narcissism ( $M = 3.51$ ;  $SD = 1.24$ ) than when positive evaluation was not presented ( $M = 3.11$ ;  $SD = 1.11$ ;  $F(1,129) = 3.91$ ;  $p = .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .03$ ). When the negative evaluation was presented the difference between positive evaluation vs control conditions was not significant ( $M = 3.52$ ;  $SD = 1.23$ , experimental condition vs  $M = 3.31$ ;  $SD = 1.10$  in control conditions,  $F(1,106) = 1.00$ ;  $p = .35$ ;  $\eta^2 = .008$ ). When positive evaluation was not present, the presentation of negative evaluation vs no negative evaluation significantly increased collective narcissism,  $F(1,114) = 5.00$ ;  $p = .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .03$ ). However, when positive evaluation was provided there was no significant difference after presentation of the negative evaluation vs control conditions,  $F(1,121) = .88$ ;  $p = .35$ ;  $\eta^2 = .007$ ).

--- INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE ---

In the final step of the analysis, we probed the significance of conditional indirect effects of negative evaluation on collective narcissism via perception of this evaluation as offensive depending on the boost manipulation. We followed the bootstrapping procedure proposed by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007) to test for moderated mediation. For each level of the moderator, we requested 5,000 bootstrap samples. The indirect negative feedback on collective narcissism via the perceived offensiveness of the negative opinion about the in-group was positive and significantly different from zero only in the no boost condition. The

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indirect effect had a bootstrap 95% bias corrected confidence interval of .02 to .23. The indirect effect in the boost condition had a bootstrap 95% bias corrected confidence interval of -.04 to .15. Since zero falls into its interval, the total indirect effect of the mediator in boost condition was not significant.

--- INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE ---

## **Discussion of Study 2**

The results of Study 2 confirm and go beyond the findings of Study 1. These results indicate that negative evaluation increases collective narcissism but not collective self-esteem even if such a mundane social in-group as university peers is considered. This effect was found both in Poland and UK suggesting that it can be generalized to different socio-cultural conditions and different social in-groups. In addition, we found that when positive evaluation of an in-group is also provided and this evaluation considers a different dimension of the in-group's actions and features than the negative one, the effect of negative evaluation on collective narcissism disappears. Meditational analyses in Study 2 indicated that in the conditions in which only negative evaluation was presented the increase in collective narcissism followed the increase in perception of the negative evaluation of the in-group as offensive to the in-group's image. In other words, these results suggest collective narcissism increased after reading only the negative opinion about the university because this opinion was perceived as offensive.

In Studies 1 and 2 we identified situations that increase collective narcissism. In Study 3 we examined whether experimentally manipulated collective narcissism will have the same role as collective narcissism measured as an individual difference variable. In other words, we tested the hypothesis that when collective narcissism is high (experimentally increased) and group's image is threatened by an out-group negative feelings towards this out-group



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### Study 3

In Study 3 we examined the effects of experimentally increased national narcissism on attitudes towards national out-group that threatened (vs not) the aspect of the in-group's image related to its clarity and distinctiveness. Previous studies indicated that such situation is experienced as intergroup threat (Crisp et al, 2006).

#### Method

**Participants.** The study 2 was conducted in Great Britain using 91 undergraduate students. Data from 10 participants who identified their nationality as other than British were excluded from the analysis. Remaining 81 participants identified themselves as British and 52 as English. Data from English students only is presented. The findings obtained in this sample were not replicated in the sample of remaining 29 participants who identified themselves as British and identified themselves were mostly Black and Indian. This sample was too small to perform similar analyses as in the English sample. All 52 English students were White. Twelve participants were male and 39 were female. Their age ranged from 18 to 39 ( $M = 22.22$ ;  $SD = 4.69$ ).

**Procedure.** Participants were first asked to respond to demographic questions. Next, they were randomly assigned to one of the research conditions. The study had a 2x2 design. First, collective narcissism was manipulated by asking participants to contemplate an interpretation of an alleged news release about the report issued in Brussels in which the contribution of the UK to quality of higher education in the EU is mentioned: "*One of the factors contributing to improving the level of higher education in Europe is a great number*

Running head: Experimentally increased collective narcissism increases intergroup hostility of European exchange students educated in countries like France, Spain or the UK". The fact that the UK is mentioned last was interpreted as lack of appreciation in collective narcissism conditions (experimental condition;  $N = 22$ ) vs not (control condition;  $N = 29$ ). The interpretation in the collective narcissism read: *"Although we can certainly be proud that British contribution was mentioned, it seems to be an understatement to mention the UK, receiving about 100, 000 international students a year, in last place after France and Spain. But the true importance of the British contribution is hardly ever appreciated by other countries."* A corresponding fragment in the control condition read: *"We can certainly be proud that the British contribution to the improvement of European higher education was mentioned."* After reading the passage participants were asked a manipulation check question: *"Do European countries tend to appreciate the British contribution to improving European higher education?"*.

The collective narcissism manipulation was followed by threat manipulation. In the experimental condition ( $N = 27$ ) participants learned about an alleged regulation introduced in Brussels that citizens of the European Union should no longer be identified by nationality and, as a consequence, national passports would be replaced by European passports. The note further read: *"New European Union Passports will look similar to those all British people have now but the label "Nationality" will state "European Union Citizen" instead of "British"."* In the control condition ( $N = 24$ ) participants read a neutral passage on the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights. Afterwards, participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with the manipulation check item *"The European Union threatens my sense of being British."*

Finally, participants were asked to indicate their feelings towards different national groups with the use of a 'feelings thermometer'. We looked at the intensity of negative feelings towards Belgians as the dependent variable. We also examined attitudes towards

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two other European nationals: French and German people. Previous studies indicated that collective narcissistic negativity is retaliatory and not displaced. Therefore we expected that when provided with narcissistic interpretation of the opinion of others about their nation, the participants' attitude towards nationals of the country issuing the opinion will become more negative, especially when their national identity is threatened.

## Measures

**Collective narcissism manipulation check** ( $M = 5.43$ ,  $SD = 2.09$ ). Effectiveness of collective narcissism manipulation was measured by a question: “*Does Europe sufficiently appreciate the British unique contribution to improving European higher education?*”. This question was constructed like items of the Collective Narcissism Scale. It pertains to assumed uniqueness and entitlement of a national group and perceived lack of its appreciation by others. Answers could range from 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*very much so*).

**Threat manipulation check** ( $M = 4.88$ ,  $SD = 2.41$ ). Effectiveness of the identity threat manipulation was assessed with a question: “The European Union threatens my sense of being British”. Answers could range from 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*very much so*).

**Feelings towards out-groups**. Participants were asked to indicate their feelings towards other groups with the use of a ‘feelings thermometer’. The scale ranged from 0 (indicating 0° - *extremely unfavorable*) to 10 (indicating 100° - *extremely favorable*). Feelings towards Belgians ( $M = 6.75$ ,  $SD = 2.35$ ), French ( $M = 6.92$ ,  $SD = 2.45$ ) and German ( $M = 6.27$ ,  $SD = 2.56$ ) people were assessed.

## Results

Inspection of mean responses to the question about the degree to which Europe appreciates the British contribution to European higher education revealed that when

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narcissistic interpretation of the alleged press release was provided participants perceived less ( $M = 4.09$ ;  $SD = 1.69$ ) appreciation of their national group than in the control conditions ( $M = 6.45$ ;  $SD = 1.78$ ). This difference was significant and in expected direction  $F(1,49) = 22.86$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\eta^2 = .32$ . The mean responses to this question did not differ significantly across the threat vs control conditions  $F(1,49) = 1.05$ ;  $p = .31$ ;  $\eta^2 = .02$ . The interaction effect of both manipulated factors on the manipulation check question was not significant  $F(1,49) = .65$ ;  $p = .43$ ;  $\eta^2 = .01$ . These results indicate that experimental manipulation of collective narcissism was effective.

In the next step, the effectiveness of threat manipulation was tested. The analysis revealed a significant difference between the two conditions on perceiving the threat to British identity from European union,  $F(1,49) = 6.06$ ;  $p < .02$ ;  $\eta^2 = .11$ . The inspection of mean scores indicated that participants in the threat condition perceived the European Union as more threatening ( $M = 5.63$ ;  $SD = 2.13$ ) than those in control condition ( $M = 4.04$ ;  $SD = 2.48$ ). The experimental manipulation of collective narcissism did not affect the answers on this manipulation check question  $F(1,49) = .01$ ;  $p = .95$ ;  $\eta^2 = .001$ . A two-way ANOVA revealed that there was no significant interaction between experimental manipulation of threat and collective narcissism on perceived threat to British identity  $F(1,49) = .31$ ;  $p = .58$ ;  $\eta^2 = .007$ .

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to test the effect of both collective narcissism and identity threat manipulation on attitudes towards national out-groups. First we examined attitudes towards Belgians as a dependent variable. Participants' age was entered as covariate because it correlated with the whole model was significant,  $F(4,46) = 5.99$ ;  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .34$ ). The analysis revealed that participants in the identity threat condition had more negative feelings towards Belgians than those in control condition. Participants who read collective narcissistic interpretation of the alleged higher education report had more negative feelings

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Planned pair-wise comparisons revealed that when collective narcissism was empirically manipulated ( $M = 4.58; SD = 1.51$ ) Belgians were disliked in identity threat condition more than when no threat was present ( $M = 7.60; SD = 2.07; F(1,20) = 15.68; p = .001, \eta^2 = .44$ ). When no narcissistic interpretation was presented, Belgians were still more disliked in identity threat condition ( $M = 6.87; SD = 2.03$ ) than in control condition,  $F(1,27) = 1.46; p = .24, \eta^2 = .05$ . This difference was, however, not statistically significant.

When no intergroup threat was present the attitudes towards Belgians were above the scale mean and did not differ significantly between collective narcissism vs no narcissism conditions (no narcissism,  $M = 7.86; SD = 2.38; F(1,22) = .08; p = .77, \eta^2 = .003$ ). However, in threat conditions the difference between the attitudes reported in collective narcissism vs control conditions was significant and in expected direction,  $F(1,25) = 10.51; p = .003, \eta^2 = .30$ .

--- INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE ---

A two-way ANOVA was also conducted for the attitudes towards French people as the dependent variable. It revealed a significant main effect of identity threat manipulation. Participants in threat condition ( $M = 6.11; SD = 2.52$ ) liked French nationals significantly less than in no-threat conditions ( $M = 7.83; SD = 2.06; F(1,49) = 7.74; p = .01, \eta^2 = .14$ ; whole model  $F(4,46) = 2.86; p = .03, \eta^2 = .20$ ). No other effect was significant. A similar pattern of results was found for German nationals who were more disliked in identity threat vs control conditions ( $M = 5.33; SD = 2.45$  vs  $M = 7.33; SD = 2.35$  respectively  $F(1,49) = 9.53; p = .003, \eta^2 = .17$ ; whole model  $F(4,46) = 3.04; p = .03, \eta^2 = .21$ ).

### **Discussion of Study 3.**

The results of Study 3 revealed that when collective narcissism was experimentally manipulated, participants who experienced intergroup threat expressed more negative feelings towards the out-group that could be identified as a source of the threat (Belgium, whose capital Brussels is considered as *de facto* capital of the European Union) rather than other similar out-groups. The results of Study 3 replicate the previous findings that indicated that collective narcissism measured as individual difference variable increases retaliatory intergroup hostility in response to intergroup threat (Golec de Zavala, et al., 2009; Golec de Zavala & Cichocka, 2010). However, the previous results go beyond the previous findings revealing that also situationally increased collective narcissism has similar moderating effects on intergroup negativity.

### **General Discussion**

The results of present studies converge to indicate that negative evaluation of the in-group increases member's collective narcissism – their investment in the belief greatness of their in-group that is contingent on external recognition and validation (Golec de Zavala, et al., 2009). Thus, situations of group directed criticism in which the lack of recognition of the in-group is particularly salient increase collective narcissistic sentiments. This effect is found regardless of whether participants initially report high identification with their in-group. Collective narcissism is the only form of positive group regard that increases after negative evaluation of the in-group is presented. Collective narcissism has been conceptualized as individual difference variable. The present results indicate that, as other variables that reflect people's chronic feelings and beliefs about their in-groups, it can be affected by temporary characteristics of intergroup situations. However, positive collective self-esteem – a high

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opinion about the in-group as valuable and positive (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1992) - does not increase as a result of negative or positive evaluation of the in-group.

Results of Study 1 and 2 revealed that the temporary increase in collective narcissism after negative in-group's evaluation generalizes to different group memberships. In our studies we looked at increase of national narcissism as well as collective narcissism with reference to quite an ordinary social group such as college peers. The fact that the effect of negative evaluation of in-group on collective narcissism was observed with reference to a relatively mundane social group provides quite a strong support for reliability of this effect. Moreover, similar momentary increase in collective narcissism after presentation of the negative evaluation of the in-group was observed in studies conducted in Poland and UK.

Results of Study 2 indicate that collective narcissism rises because the negative evaluation is perceived as offence to the in-group. These results are in line with the interpretation of narcissistic self-esteem as insecure, unstable and defensive form of positive group regard. This is the form of positive group regard that is malleable and responsive to changing external conditions and rises as the defense against perceived offence to the in-group's image. In contrast, collective self-esteem changed to lesser extent. Paradoxically it decreased in response to presentation of positive evaluation of the in-group in Study 2.

Results of Study 3 indicate that experimentally manipulated collective narcissism has similar intergroup effects as collective narcissism measured as individual difference variable. The attitude towards an out-group that threatens the in-group's image becomes more negative when collective narcissism is experimentally increased. Study 3 showed that participants who felt their group was unappreciated by European Union report and felt threatened by European Union policies reported most negative feelings towards Belgians, but not towards French people or Germans. All three out-groups elicited quite positive feelings (above the scale

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mean) in neutral conditions. French and German people were more disliked when participants felt the distinctiveness of their national identity was threatened. However, only Belgians evoked negative emotions when both, the intergroup threat and collective narcissism were manipulated. This pattern of results replicates the relationship between measured collective narcissism and hostility towards the out-group whose members criticized the in-group (Golec de Zavala & Cichocka, 2010). Belgians can be perceived as prototypical Europeans as Belgium hosts The European Union institutions and Brussels is considered *de facto* capital of European Union. Our manipulation of intergroup threat suggested that it came from Brussels, therefore Belgians could be the ones most blamed for it. Therefore, Belgians could have been perceived as the out-group issuing the negative evaluation of the in-group and threat to national identity.

The findings of Study 3 are in line with previous results that indicate that collective narcissism does not predispose people to generalized negativity against out-groups. Instead, it increases the likelihood of hostile reaction to perceived threat to positivity or clarity of in-groups image. It also predisposes people to see the intergroup threat in ambiguous intergroup situations (Golec de Zavala, et al, 2009; Golec de Zavala & Cichocka, 2010).

Study 2 revealed that the only situation in which the effect of negative evaluation of the in-group on collective narcissism was not observed was when the positive evaluation of the in-group was also provided. Importantly, the positive evaluation of the in-group considered different dimension of the group's performance than the negative evaluation. In other words, the presentation of the positive evaluation in different domain of group's performance prevented the increase of collective narcissism after negative evaluation. This result is important and can be used as foundation for practical recommendations for sensitive situations of group directed criticism. Negative feedback about in-group's characteristics and performance can lead to increase in defensive and potentially destructive identification with



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the in-group. Combining negative feedback with positive evaluation of the in-group in different domain can prevent the increase in collective narcissism. However, further results should replicate the present result in order to reliably confirm that combining the positive with negative evaluation of the in-group prevents the increase in collective narcissism after in-group criticism.

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Figure captions

*Figure 1.* The effects of manipulation of positive and negative evaluations on collective narcissism (Study 2;  $N = 241$ ).

*Figure 2.* Mediation effects of negative evaluation on collective narcissism via perception of offensiveness in the neutral condition (no positive evaluation, Study 2;  $N = 241$ ).

*Figure 3.* The effects of manipulation of collective narcissism and intergroup threat on attitudes towards Belgians (Study 3;  $N = 52$ ).

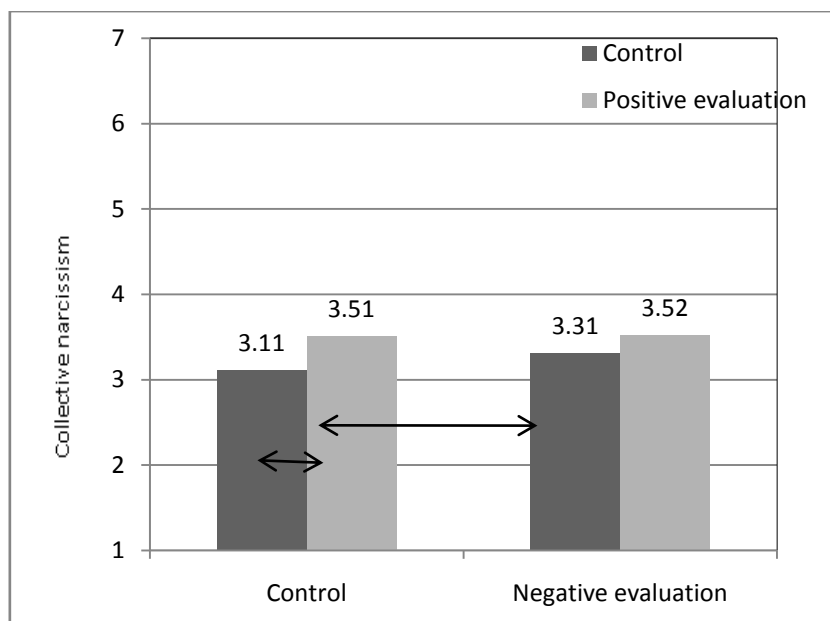


Figure 1.



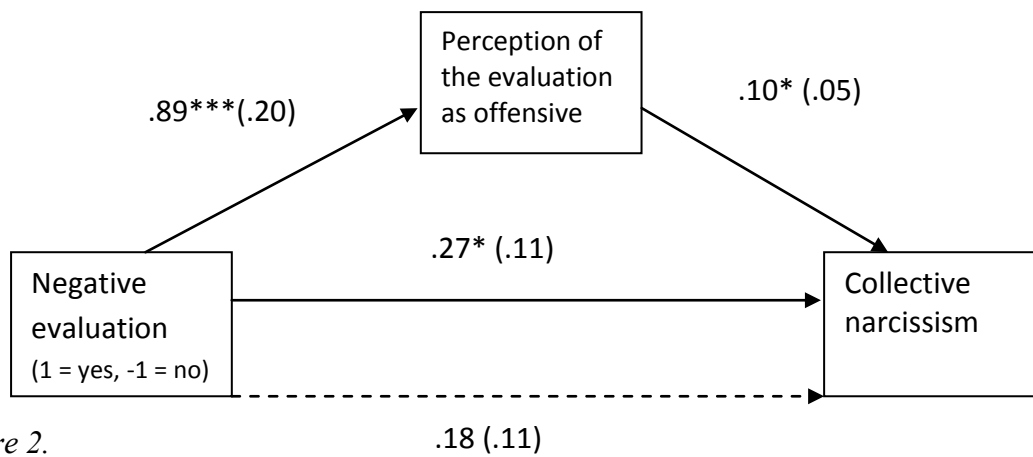


Figure 2.

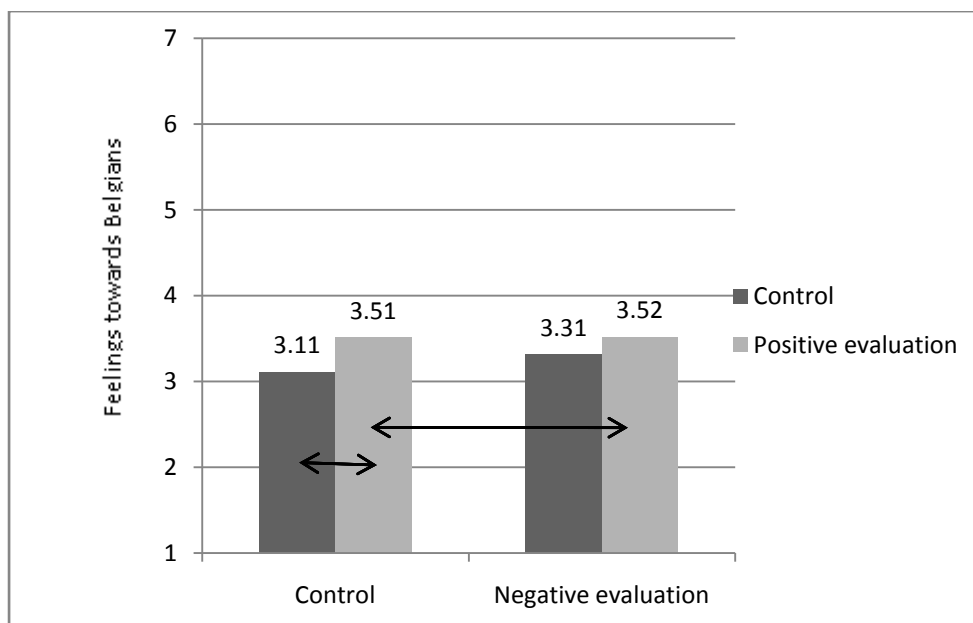


Figure 3.