

WHAT'S PAST IS PROLOGUE: ASSESSING THE INTERPLAY OF HISTORY, IDENTITY,
AND SOCIOPOLITICAL ATTITUDES IN CANADA

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Abstract

Our social identities are built and maintained through a variety of cultural tools that help us form a sense of belonging, understanding, and cohesion with the groups to which we belong. They are rooted in things such as geography, language, ethnicity, and nationality. Canada consists of group members that are separated by great distances, that speak different languages, and that belong to distinct cultural groups. Despite such differences, something that can tie these individuals together is a shared sense of history. In this dissertation, I consider the important role that social representations of history play in Canadian identity and how identity and history work together to inform contemporary sociopolitical views. Manuscripts 1 and 2 are based on data from a multi-site study that was conducted with students from three Canadian universities: York University in Toronto, St Mary's University in Halifax, and Université Laval in Québec City. Manuscript 1 examines the values and identities of undergraduate students from these three regional-linguistic groups. We found that while participants from the two English-speaking regional groups (Halifax and Toronto) had a strong sense of Canadian identity, the Québec City participants did not, and their Québécois identity reflected their sense of nationality much more strongly. We also found that students from all three groups adhered to the types of progressive values often purported to be essential elements of Canadianism, but that these values were not associated with Canadian identity; in fact, more traditional values were associated with Canadian identity. Manuscript 2 focussed on the content of young Canadians' social representations of history, as well as their historical knowledge and biases. We again found a contrast between our English-speaking regional groups and Québec City, whereby the former seemed to have a less unified set of collective memories that focused on various social and political factors reflective of progressive Canadian values, and the latter held a consistent narrative about Québécois nation-building and cultural conflict with the rest of Canada. We also found that all three groups held a

glorification bias about Canadian history: events that reflected positively on Canada were more likely to be believed compared to negative events. This bias was especially strong for those with a strong sense of Canadian identity, providing evidence for the use of history as a tool of social identity maintenance. Manuscript 3 moved from undergraduate samples to two community samples of Canadians collected from across the country using the crowd-sourcing platform Prolific Academic. We presented participants with biased historical narratives to determine if they had a direct influence on Canadians' current sociopolitical attitudes. Particularly, we tested whether being primed with events that highlight the suffering of historically marginalized groups in Canada would make Canadians more prone to recognize discrimination against such groups in modern-day contexts and be more willing to support these groups through government policies. Although we found no evidence of this effect, we did discover that Canadians believe that historical events related to marginalized groups, such as the residential school system, are much more important than historical events that aren't directly related to such groups, such as the passing of the Canada Health Act. Evidence of a positivity bias was found again, whereby positive events related to historically marginalized groups (e.g., acceptance of Vietnamese refugees after the war) were considered especially important. This bias was enhanced by Canadian identity, such that high identifiers had an even stronger preference for positive events compared with low identifiers. Altogether, this dissertation greatly enhances our understanding of Canadian identity and the contemporary sociopolitical values of Canadians from across the country. It also offers original insights for the social representations of history literature by cataloguing the unique collective memories of a young multicultural country and providing evidence of a robust relationship between history and social identity.

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General Dissertation Introduction

In the short story *The Truth of Fact, The Truth of Feeling*, Ted Chiang explores the idea of memory on both a micro/personal and a macro/societal scale, imagining what our lives would be like if we had perfect recall of our past experiences. He tells the story of a young boy from an oral society who is introduced to the written word by a missionary to illustrate the value of unreliable historical narratives:

The idea that accounts of the past shouldn't change is a product of literate cultures' reverence for the written word. Anthropologists will tell you that oral cultures understand the past differently; for them, their histories don't need to be accurate so much as they need to validate the community's understanding of itself. So it wouldn't be correct to say that their histories are unreliable; their histories do what they need to do. (Chiang, 2019, p. 226)

Research on social representations of history, or the ways in which a community collectively frames and recollects its past, would suggest that "histories do what they need to do" in literate cultures just as much as oral ones.

In the current package of manuscripts, I explore the relationships between historical narratives, social identities, and contemporary sociopolitical perspectives in a Canadian context. My work builds on literature from various fields within psychology and sociology, namely social representations of history, collective memories, social identity theory, national identity, and subgroup asymmetry among others to highlight how history, identity, and modern-day concerns interact with and inform one another. The overarching goal of these studies is to provide a thorough investigation into the nature of Canadian identity as well as national identity more broadly, and to provide evidence for common perceptions of Canadian history and the relation these perceptions have to modern-day political perspectives.

Social Representations of History

In the early 2000s, two multi-national surveys on the collective memories of world history were conducted. These served as foundations for much of the succeeding empirical work on social representations of history. Both studies contained large cross-cultural samples of participants from various countries in Oceania, Europe, Asia, and North America who were asked to list what they considered to be the most important events in world history (Liu et al, 2005; Pennebaker et al., 2006). In both studies, participants from all countries favoured war as most important, particularly the World Wars. Political and massive sociocultural shifts were also common, such as the “discovery of America”, the French Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution. In general, these studies showed that regardless of cultural background, most lay historical knowledge contains a recency bias, whereby events closest to the present are most frequently mentioned, and a Eurocentric bias. These patterns are fairly consistent, though there are examples of certain cultures showing region-specific biases in their recall of world history (e.g., Özer & Ergün, 2013 found a Turk-centric bias of world history among their Turkish participants).

In addition to world history, research in this field has also considered collective memories at the regional or country level. As Liu and colleagues (2009) note, when recalling their own history, many cultures seem to emphasize national projects, such as nation-building and independence. One study assessing social representations of national history among three regional/ethnic groups in Taiwan found that regardless of ethnicity, participants recalled events that focused on nation-building; specifically, they presented a narrative that highlighted the movement from colonization to authoritarian regime to the present democratic system (Huang et al., 2004). Another study assessed social representations of national history among different

ethnic groups within Malaysia and Singapore (Liu et al., 2002). While the events recalled between the two countries differed, themes of war and conflict were prominent in both, as well as a narrative about national development, from colonization to independence. In a similar study by Brasil and Cabecinhas (2017) that surveyed students from Brazil, Mexico, and Chile on their perceptions of Latin American history, they found that the events recalled showed regional distinctions, but were again categorically similar, focusing on independence, dictatorships, conquest, colonization, and revolution. Altogether, these studies indicate that regional histories tend to be tied to similar themes cross-culturally, particularly around nation building, even if the particular events and structure of that national development may differ (e.g., treaties vs. revolution).

While narratives of war, conflict, and nation building seem to be consistent even among distinct countries or ethnic/regional groups that share a superordinate identity, there have also been instances where subgroups hold distinct collective memories. For instance, in one of the early surveys of social representations of history, Liu and colleagues (1999) found that the Maori (Polynesian-descended) and Pakeha (European-descended) people of New Zealand showed some consensus in what they considered to be the most important events in New Zealand's history (e.g., Land Wars, Treaty of Waitangi), but there was more discrepancy than similarity, with the Maori recalling more events specific to their ethnic group and the Pakeha recalling more broadly Western or global events (e.g., women's suffrage). In this case, we see a shared narrative pattern related to nation-building, but also discrete narratives specific to a group's identity.

Altogether, this work on social representations of world, regional, and national history highlight a few notable patterns. War and conflict tend to take centre stage in people's collective memories as do other prominent sociopolitical or economically impactful events. When it comes

to regional or country level events, nation-building seems to form the central narrative, with conflict and politics often being relevant insofar as they help shape that narrative. There tends to be general consistency across various subgroups in terms of the categories and themes different events represent, though there are notable exceptions and discrepancies as well. In the current set of studies, we turn our attention to Canada, a country of numerous nationalities and cultural subgroups to assess where it fits and what it can contribute to the social representations of history literature.

Canadian Identity

The complexities of nationhood that exist within Canada make Canadian identity a difficult thing to pin down. Canada is formally a bilingual country with an official policy of multiculturalism. The multiculturalism within Canada is multifaceted and has been a central component of Canadianism since the country's inception. The current geopolitical state known as Canada was precipitated by French and British colonizers interacting with various First Nations communities, each of which conceived of themselves as distinct nations and continue to do so today. Further, the building of Canada occurred piecemeal, with several provinces joining the confederation years after its initial inception and many of which continue to harbour strong, regionally defined, distinctive identities. Contemporarily, broad immigration patterns over the past century have introduced many more cultural groups into Canada which has further enhanced the spirit of multiculturalism and expanded the diverse array of nationalities that co-exist within the country.

In addition to Canada being a multicultural society, it is also a relatively young country which means it does not have a particularly rich history compared with older nations or ones with more militaristic histories like the U.S. Historical narratives are often an important

component of achieving social identity cohesion (Liu & Hilton, 2005), yet given the diversity of Canada's populace, it is uncertain how Canadian history relates to or informs Canadian identity as it is experienced in the 21st century. Indeed, it is even difficult to specify exactly what the content of Canadian identity might be.

One way to better understand a country's identity, is to consider its social representations of history. This is because a common goal of historical narratives is to shape a country's identity and legitimize the current status quo (Paez et al., 2016; Wertsch, 2002). That is, historical narratives typically serve the identity needs of those in power so that what is remembered and how it is framed often reflects positively on the group and helps inform whatever current day attitudes and values are most desired (Hilton & Liu, 2017). Indeed, the link between positive identity maintenance and historical narratives is both well-theorized (e.g., Haddock, 2008) and empirically supported (Mukherjee et al., 2017; Sahdra & Ross, 2007).

Having a better sense of our historical memories is also important because our knowledge of the past can influence our present-day attitudes. Particularly, it can influence our attitudes towards groups who have been historically harmed and oppressed by the state. Dominant group members of colonial countries who are less aware of their nation's past (Nelson et al., 2013), or those who actively negate its colonial history (Sibley & Liu, 2012; Sibley et al., 2008), are less likely to recognize or support policies (e.g., reparations) that benefit historically marginalized groups. Thus, historic narratives that negate or deny the harm done to subordinated groups not only bolsters the status quo through positive identity maintenance, they can have consequences for the lives of current marginalized groups living in the state.

As alluded to above, Canada is a relatively young country, and its official narratives are often not as stark or dramatic as older or more militaristic nations. Beyond that, the cultural and

national diversity that exists within Canada presumes a diversity of historical narratives. As such, it is not clear what the prominent narratives within Canada are or how they interact with Canadian identity. The current projects will help elucidate some of these narratives and consider their impact on Canadian identity and contemporary sociopolitical perspectives among Canadians.

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation consists of three distinct manuscripts, each of which has been written with the aim of submission to an academic journal for publication. All three manuscripts touch on some aspect of Canadian identity, Canadian history, and/or contemporary sociopolitical perspectives of Canadians. The over-arching goal of this project is to gain a better understanding of how Canadians think of themselves as Canadians and how this identity is informed by their perceptions of their past. The first two manuscripts pull from the same collaborative multi-site project that collected undergraduate participants from universities in three separate provinces: Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Québec.

The first of these manuscripts focuses primarily on identity concerns within and between these three distinct regional-linguistic groups. Using the lens of subgroup asymmetry, we highlight the importance of considering sub-nationalities in research on multicultural societies by showing stark distinctions between how Canadian identity is experienced by our Québécois participants compared with participants from the other two anglophone provincial groups. We also provide some groundwork for the content of Canadian identity by assessing participants attitudes towards various contemporary sociopolitical issues. This manuscript does not incorporate an analysis of history, but it lays a strong groundwork for Canadian identity that is built upon in the following two papers.

The second manuscript focuses on the social representations of history among these three provincial groups. We provide a catalogue of the types of events that form the collective memories of young Canadians, once again highlighting the stark contrast between Québec, where a narrative of nation-building and cultural conflict dominates, and Ontario and Nova Scotia, where the narrative is more diffuse and tends to focus on factors that endorse multiculturalism. We also directly assess historical biases and find evidence for an identity-driven glorification bias of Canadian history.

The final manuscript consists of two studies that build on the identity concerns of the first and the historical content of the second. Unlike the previous manuscript, the data for this paper was collected from community samples of Canadians from across the country. The first study again highlights the biases Canadians have for a more positive historical narrative, but it also indicates their recognition of the importance of increasing awareness of the experiences of historically oppressed and marginalized groups in Canada. The second study consists of an experiment that attempts to find evidence for a causal effect of biased historical narratives on Canadians' contemporary sociopolitical perspectives. The dissertation concludes with a general discussion that ties the findings from all three manuscripts together.

The Nuances of National Identity: A Canadian Perspective

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Abstract

In multicultural societies such as Canada, demarcations and definitions of nationality can be quite variable. Not only can the expression of Canadian identity vary across groups, but the very concept of national identity can differ as well. In the current study, we examine this complexity by focusing on three regional-linguistic groups within Canada: Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Québec. Through the lens of subgroup asymmetry, we show that those in the dominant linguistic group (i.e., Nova Scotians and Ontarians) show a stronger attachment to their Canadian identity than those in the subordinated linguistic group (i.e., Québécois). The dominant groups also show a strong connection between their provincial and Canadian identity that is not felt among the Québec sample. Further, we found that although all three provincial groups showed strong endorsement for progressively aligned sociopolitical issues relevant to Canada, Canadian identity was only consistently associated with more traditionally conservative perspectives. Overall, in-line with the subgroup asymmetry hypothesis, while there was strong alignment between provincial and Canadian identity among our dominant regional-linguistic groups, there was consistent misalignment between these two identities for our subordinated regional-linguistic group, both in terms of straightforward identity comparisons, and in terms of the types of values that were associated with these various identities. These findings have implications for the way in which national identity should be assessed in geopolitical nation states, particularly ones with numerous subnational groups.

Key Terms: National Identity; Canada; Provincial Identity; Subgroup Asymmetry; Sociopolitical Perspectives; Progressivism; Québec Separatism; Traditionalism

The Nuances of National Identity: A Canadian Perspective

As Anderson (1983) famously stated, a nation can be conceived of as something that is imagined or socially constructed. The members of a given nation, despite not knowing one another, can construct a feeling of kinship with their fellow citizens over things such as shared language, history, and culture (Coady, 2006). Yet, in multicultural societies such as Canada, where language, history, and culture may be quite variable among its inhabitants, the factors and qualities that determine the psychosocial characteristics of a nation can be less clear. From a psychological perspective, we often conflate nationality with an individual's identification with a sovereign geopolitical nation state (Smith & Kim, 2006). Although this way of operationalizing and assessing nationality is often appropriate, it can ignore more nuanced understandings of nationhood that exist within these geopolitical borders.

The primary goal of this paper is to examine the complexity of national identity within a single geopolitical nation state. Specifically, we will focus on three regional-linguistic groups within Canada that are demarcated by provincial borders: Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Québec. We hope that highlighting the complexity of nationhood within Canada, particularly the unique relationship residents of Québec have with Canadian and provincial identity, will promote more nuanced approaches to the assessment of national identity in future research within and outside of Canada. To this end, we will also explore some of the content domain that is associated with Canadian identity. Specifically, we will examine the sociopolitical perspectives that Canadians endorse and associate with their provincial and Canadian identities to provide some insight into how Canadian identity is conceptualized and to provide further evidence for the importance of context in assessing national identities generally.

The Diversity of Canadian Nationality

Cohesion within geopolitical nation states is often formed by denying or ignoring the diversity and multiplicity of identities within the state (Hammack, 2008). In Canada, however, diversity of identities is undeniable and is even politically encouraged as a matter of federal policy. In 1971, the Canadian government proposed an official multiculturalism policy which was ratified into law under the 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act (Government of Canada, 1988). Since then, there has been a strong narrative push from the federal government regarding the promotion of multiculturalism, not simply in terms of pluralism, but from the perspective of promoting diversity and equity (Berry, 2013). Indeed, rather than being ignored, the multiplicity of identities is one of the unifying characteristics of the Canadian project. Not only do Canadians differ in ethnic, linguistic, religious, and various other cultural backgrounds, but many Canadian citizens also claim a nationality that is distinct from the federal state, i.e., Canadian, national identity.

Newfoundland, the last province to join Canada in 1949 (on the back of a very narrow referendum), offers a strong example of an alternative nationality within Canada. To this day, a strong sense of Newfoundland nationalism is underscored by passionate discussions about distinct Newfoundland identity, language, and culture (Howells, 2015). Canada also has many distinct Indigenous groups that can be broadly categorized into Métis, Inuit, and First Nations. There are currently 634 First Nation communities in Canada according to the Assembly of First Nations (n.d.), each with their own distinct Indigenous nationality. There are countless other examples of subgroups within Canada that are demarcated by ethnicity, language, culture, and geographic location, many of which consider themselves to have a distinct nationality. As such,

in countries like Canada, where sub-nationalities are prevalent and even preferred by some groups, the notion of a cohesive, unitary national identity is contestable.

A variety of factors contribute to this uncertainty about what constitutes Canadian national identity. Canada's present immigrant-driven multicultural landscape and its historical Indigenous, English, and French roots are primary among these (Cameron & Berry, 2008). While there are many groups within Canada who have a national identity that is more strongly associated with a smaller regional, cultural, or linguistic group, rather than with the superordinate federal group, perhaps the most prominent are the Québécois, French-speaking citizens of Québec. The modern Canadian state is historically influenced by colonization as well as the colonial relations between the French and English. Canada has both an official policy of multiculturalism to accommodate the variety of ethnic and cultural groups within its citizenry and an official policy of bilingualism to accommodate its French and English colonial roots. As the only official francophone province in Canada, Québec has often been distinguished from the rest of Canada by its strong sense of linguistic and cultural identity. Indeed, Québec sovereignty has been a cornerstone mandate of several of Québec's provincial political parties and even one federal party over the last several decades. Therefore, Canadians, and the residents of Québec in particular, provide an excellent source for better understanding the role of complex, nested nationalities in psychological research, particularly from a social identity perspective (Lalonde et al., 2016).

Subgroup Asymmetry

Like Canada, many modern states are becoming more multicultural. Increased global migration means that the issues around ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity are at the forefront of many political agendas. Despite such diversity, however, it is still common for one

subgroup to be dominant and to represent the hegemonic majority in a given state (Horowitz, 2000). This dominant group controls not only the politics but also the values and norms that are most strongly associated with the nation state; therefore, the nation's culture typically corresponds with that of the dominant subgroup (Gellner, 1983). In Canada, issues pertaining to the country's various ethnic or linguistic subgroups have always been central to federal politics with White, English-speaking Canadians comprising the dominant subgroup at the federal level.

Like most modern nation states, Canada is a hierarchically structured society. When nation states are built around one dominant group, the relationship between minority and majority groups within that state is likely asymmetrical (Sidanius et al., 1997). In terms of identity, we would expect there to be a difference in how those in the dominant group and those with minority status relate to their shared superordinate nation state. Indeed, those in the majority group have been shown to feel a stronger connection to the state, showing a stronger sense of identification with it and holding more nationalist attitudes, than minority members (Staerlké et al., 2005; Staerlké et al., 2010). Similarly, majority group members are also more likely to express a stronger relationship between their ethnic and national (i.e., federal) identification than minority group members (Staerlké et al., 2005; Staerlké et al., 2010).

Previous research on subgroup asymmetry has primarily focused on racial/ethnic minorities within various nation states. In the current study, we will be focusing on one of the largest linguistic/cultural minorities within Canada, French-Canadians, specifically those residing in Québec (also referred to as Québécois, though see Lalonde et al., 2016 for a more nuanced discussion on this terminology). To our knowledge, few studies have compared sub-national regional groups in relation to their superordinate national identity. Some preliminary work has been done within Canada, however, that highlights some distinctions between

provincial groups. Berry and Kalin (1995) surveyed Canadians from Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto, assessing among other things their general sense of attachment and commitment to Canada, i.e., their Canadian identity. They found that those outside of Québec and of non-French ethnicity reported a higher sense of Canadianism. More recently, Québec residents have been found to report significantly less Canadian pride and emotional attachment to Canada than those from other regions (Angus Reid Institute, 2016; Cameron & Berry, 2008; Soroka et al., 2007). Although some nested identities can be compatible (e.g., Spanish and European identity; Diez Medrano & Gutierrez, 2001), not all are. In the current study, we will apply the subgroup asymmetry hypothesis to three regional-linguistic groups within Canada. Specifically, we will focus on the compatibility of Québécois identity, as compared with the regional identity of Nova Scotians and Ontarians, with their shared superordinate Canadian identity. Within this context, we will not expect to find much distinction between provincial and Canadian identity for those who are in the linguistically dominant group (i.e., from Ontario or Nova Scotia), but we do expect to see patterns of asymmetry reflected among our Québécois participants.

Contextualizing National Identity

Intertwined with the complexity of nested nationalities is how a superordinate national identity (i.e., Canadian identity) is defined by a diverse citizenry. National identity can be understood in a variety of ways. One popular framing makes a distinction between patriotism, a sense of positive affect towards one's nation, and nationalism, which conveys a sense of comparative superiority over other nations (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). Defined in this way, patriotism is a less ideological approach to national identity and is closer to the classic social identity perspective, which captures one's sense of attachment and belonging to a given group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Indeed, those who are high in national identity typically feel a positive

affect towards their nation (Huddy & Khatlib, 2007). In the current study, we assess national and provincial identity from a social identity perspective and are specifically interested in the types of sociopolitical perspectives Canadians endorse and associate with those identities.

While some research has suggested that national identity tends to be associated with general political conservatism and closely aligned attitudes, such as anti-immigration (Kende et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2021), research conducted in non-North American countries or on cross-cultural samples points to some important contextual distinctions. For instance, while patriotism tends to be positively associated with social dominance orientation in American samples, this relationship is not found among New Zealanders or Japanese populations (Karasawa, 2002; Osborne et al., 2007). Further, xenophobic attitudes tend to be negatively related to patriotism (or more specifically, constructive patriotism, which reflects a critically reflexive attachment) across countries, but this relationship is even stronger in countries that have high levels of globalization (Ariely, 2012). Thus, it seems that while dimensions of national identity can be associated with traditionally conservative values in some contexts (e.g., some American populations), it can be unrelated or even negatively related to such values in other contexts.

This variability of values or attitudes associated with national identity may be related to how people conceive of nationality, mainly whether they have a civic or ethnic sense of nationality as defined by Smith (2001). A civic interpretation views nationality as something determined by citizenship and institutional participation, whereas an ethnic interpretation views nationality as a product of heritage. Pehrson and colleagues (2009a) found that in countries where a civic understanding of national identity is dominant, those high in national identity tended to have less prejudiced attitudes towards immigrants. However, in countries with a more ethnic interpretation of national identity, those high in national identity tended to have more

prejudiced attitudes. A similar pattern was found within-nation as well among British participants who had differing individual interpretations of national identity (Pehrson et al., 2009b). Thus, a civic-minded sense of nationality may be more closely associated with liberal or progressively aligned perspectives while an ethnic-minded nationality may embrace more traditionally conservative positions.

While Canada's vision of multiculturalism embraces ethnic diversity, it is fundamentally aligned with a civic notion of nationality, in that, regardless of heritage, any individual can theoretically become a Canadian. In the current study we include a survey of a variety of contemporary socio-politically relevant topics and issues related to Canada. These are meant to provide an ecologically realistic representation of the types of content that is relevant to Canadian identity. Some of the issues are more reflective of traditional conservative perspectives (e.g., supporting the Canadian armed forces) while others reflect more liberal-minded progressive perspectives (e.g., supporting Aboriginal self-government). Determining the extent to which Canadians endorse these issues, and the degree to which they are related to their sense of national (Canadian or otherwise) identity, can provide some insight into how Canadian national identity is interpreted by its citizenry.

To return briefly to subgroup asymmetry, one of the assumptions of this theory is that the dominant group tends to have control over the status quo. This means that their values tend to be closely aligned with the superordinate group (e.g., the nation state), while the values and norms of minority or subordinated groups are less well represented (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999). In the current study, because English-speaking Canadians are the dominant linguistic group within Canada, we may expect them to not only feel more closely aligned with Canadian identity

compared with minority linguistic groups, such as French-Canadians, but to feel a stronger connection to “Canadian values”, whatever they may be, as well.

The Current Study

The present study takes a cross-regional approach within Canada focusing on three provincial groups: Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Québec, all of which share a superordinate Canadian national identity. These provinces were chosen partially out of convenience (authors of the paper working at universities in these provinces) and to assess national identity among three distinct groups, two of which represent the ethnolinguistic majority within Canada. Within the asymmetry framework, we will use language as the means of categorizing our subgroups, with the dominant groups being those who are officially and primarily Anglophone, i.e., Nova Scotia and Ontario, and the subordinate group being those residing in the only official Francophone province in the country, i.e., Québec. Further, we will draw attention to the distinction between Canadian identity and provincial identity as a means of highlighting the nuance of non-federal nationalities, specifically for Québec. In addition, we will also consider which sociopolitical issues are most strongly endorsed and closely aligned with Canadian identity among our three groups.

Research Question 1: Regional Linguistic Asymmetry. First, we will assess the degree of subgroup asymmetry within a Canadian context as it relates to federal and provincial identity. Following the group dominance perspective proposed by Sidanius and colleagues (1997), if Canada has a regional and linguistic hierarchy, there should be two patterns of asymmetry: (1) the degree of attachment to the nation state should be stronger for dominant group members, and (2) the correlation between attachment to one’s subgroup and attachment to the nation as a whole should be more positive for those in the dominant than those in subordinate groups. The

subgroups here are the three provincial groups and the dominant members within this context are those in primarily English-speaking provinces. Thus, we hypothesized that: (H1) residents of Nova Scotia and Ontario will have a stronger Canadian identity than residents of Québec. Further, given Québec's history and conceptualization as a nation, we expect that Québec participants' relationship to Québec will uniquely mirror that of the dominant provincial group members' relationship to Canada. That is, we hypothesized that: (H2) respondents from Québec will have a stronger provincial identity than those from Nova Scotia and Ontario. Finally, in line with the second part of the asymmetry hypothesis, we expect that: (H3) The relationship between provincial and Canadian identity will be stronger for Nova Scotians and Ontarians than it will be for the Québécois.

Research Question 2: Identity Alignment with Sociopolitical Issues. Next, we will focus on the socio-political factors that Canadians endorse and the extent to which they are associated with Canadian identity. Considering the ambiguity in previous work on the values and attitudes associated with national identity, we tested two competing hypotheses. First, (H4a) we may expect Canadian identity to mirror ethnic or American forms of national identity and be associated with more insular/traditionally conservative perspectives. Alternatively, given Canada's vocal commitment to multiculturalism and a presumed civic interpretation of national identity, (H4b) we might observe that Canadian identity is more associated with progressively aligned issues. In either case, given our expectations laid out in Research Question 1 about Québec's distinct provincial and Canadian identity, and the specific sociopolitical issues reflected, we may expect the pattern to be distinct for Québec compared with the other two provincial groups. As we don't have any specific expectations for the specific pattern of results, we will label this an exploratory hypothesis (eH5).

Research Question 3: Asymmetry with Sociopolitical Issues. Our final research question elaborates on the previous two, using the sociopolitical issues to further assess the regional asymmetry between our groups. Building on the asymmetry hypothesis and our expectation that national and provincial identity should be strongly aligned for the dominant groups, (H6) we expect provincial and Canadian identity to have a similar relationship with sociopolitical perspectives in Nova Scotia and Ontario. Finally, given our expectations that provincial and Canadian identity will be distinct in Québec, (H7) we anticipate that the relationship between support for sociopolitical issues and identity will differ for provincial compared with Canadian identity.

Method

Participants

We recruited undergraduate students from three universities in Canada: York University in Toronto in Fall 2017 (Ontario; $n = 360$), Saint Mary's University in Halifax in Fall 2017 (Nova Scotia; $n = 219$), and Université Laval in Québec City in Fall 2018 (Québec; $n = 214$). We included data only from in-province students who were Canadian citizens or permanent residents, who responded correctly to at least 2 of 4 items on the Conscientious Responders Scale (Marjanovic et al., 2014), and who completed all measures in the survey. After screening for these inclusion criteria, our final samples consisted of $n = 254$ (Toronto), $n = 118$ (Halifax), and $n = 142$ (Québec City).¹

¹ For the Toronto sample, we removed data from 73 participants for incompleteness, 6 international students, 5 out-of-province students, 15 inattentive responders, and 7 duplicate responses. For the Halifax sample, we removed data from 72 participants for incompleteness, 6 international students, 16 out-of-province students, and 7 inattentive responders. For the Québec City sample, we removed data from 67 participants for incompleteness, 3 inattentive responders, and 2 out-of-province students.

The final set of Toronto participants ranged in age from 17 to 40 ($M = 19.94$, $SD = 2.95$; 70% female). Most were Canadian citizens (88%); the rest were permanent residents. Of the 32% who were not born in Canada, their average age of arrival was 9.72 ($SD = 6.65$) years. The Toronto sample was diverse in terms of ethnic and racial identification: South Asian (24.8%), White (23.6%), Black or African Canadian (15.7%), East Asian (4%), Jewish (4%), Latin American (4%), Southeast Asian (4%), Biracial (4%), Aboriginal (0.8%), and Other (4%).

The final set of $n = 118$ Halifax participants ranged in age from 18 to 38 ($M = 20.64$, $SD = 3.38$; 72% female). Two participants indicated that they were permanent residents rather than Canadian citizens. Four indicated that they were not born in Canada, with average age of arrival being 9.25 years ($SD = 2.63$). The large majority identified as White (81.3%). Of the remaining respondents, 8.5% were bi-racial, 3 were Aboriginal, 2 were Black or African Canadian, 1 was South Asian, and 1 was Southeast Asian.

The final set of $n = 142$ Québec City participants ranged in age from 19 to 62 ($M = 24.95$, $SD = 7.99$; 77% female). Two participants indicated that they were permanent residents rather than Canadian citizens. Nine indicated that they were not born in Canada, with average age of arrival being 10.39 ($SD = 9.36$). Although we did not have permission to collect ethnicity information from this sample, only nine participants indicated that they were the children or grandchildren of immigrants or refugees. This suggests that the Québec City sample was similar to the Halifax sample and dissimilar to the Toronto sample in terms of ethnic homogeneity (i.e., predominantly white).

Procedure

All participants completed the survey online. The Halifax and Toronto participants completed the survey in English. Québec City participants completed a version that one of the

authors translated into French. The instructions directed participants to list what they considered to be the three most important events in Canadian history, to write 1-2 sentences describing each event, and to complete a Canadian history quiz.² Participants then completed measures of Canadian and provincial (Ontario, Nova Scotia, or Québec) identity³, and a measure of attitudes towards issues of sociopolitical relevance at the time of data collection (2017-2018). Finally, respondents completed a set of demographic questions.

Measures

National and Regional Identity. We assessed both Canadian and provincial identity using the Cameron (2004) social identification scale. Although the scale assesses three components of identity—ingroup ties (e.g., “I feel strong ties to other *Canadians*”), cognitive centrality (e.g., “In general, being an *Ontarian* is an important part of my self-image”), and affective ties (e.g., “In general, I’m glad to be a *Nova Scotian*”)—we created identification scores for Canadian and provincial identity by calculating the mean across all 12 items associated with each. Participants responded to items using a 7-point Likert scale. Higher mean scores indicate a stronger sense of identity. Internal reliability for each group based on alpha coefficients ranged from .78 - .85 for Canadian identity and from .81 - .87 for provincial identity.

Evaluation of Sociopolitical Issues. To evaluate the content domain that Canadians might associate with their Canadian identity, we generated a list of current (circa 2017) sociopolitical issues, people, and groups relevant to Canada. These targets were selected by the authors to represent both traditional and more progressive values, including prominent political parties in Canada (e.g., the Conservative Party of Canada), controversial political platforms (e.g.,

² We report results from these open-ended items in a separate manuscript.

³ The manuscript will only focus on national and regional identity, but participants also completed a measure of global identity (Rosenman, Reese, & Cameron, 2016).

acceptance of Syrian refugees, one of the most pressing political issues at the time), and general values (e.g., globalization). Participants rated a total of 22 targets using an evaluation thermometer (Haddock & Zanna, 1998), a technique that allows for succinct assessment of an array of attitudes. Participants responded to a target word or phrase by indicating how positively they felt towards it using a thermometer-like scale where 0⁰ represented a very negative feeling, 50⁰ a somewhat neutral feeling and 100⁰ a very positive feeling. Responses were thus calculated based on a 1 – 11 scale.

The original list contained 22 items, so rather than using each individual item as an outcome variable, we clustered them into meaningful dimensions for analysis using exploratory factor analysis. We used the minimum residual (i.e., maximum likelihood) estimation procedure to compare one, two, three, and four factor models for each provincial group. We assessed the factor loadings, communalities, and root mean squares for each model alongside a theoretical rationale to determine which of the factor models best fit the data. Although both the three- and four-factor models showed moderate to strong fits for each group (sRMR's from .04 to .08), the items loading onto the fourth factor for each group were theoretically meaningless. As a result, to create our final variables we selected items from the three-factor model that loaded strongly (.4 or higher) for each group. That is, only items that were well-represented in each provincial group were selected for inclusion in our composite variables. Based on these results, we created three variables representing prominent sociopolitical perspectives in Canada: *Progressivism* (included five items: Aboriginal Self-Government, Multiculturalism, Acceptance of Syrian Refugees, Minority Language Rights, and Human Rights; $\alpha = 0.71$), *Traditionalism* (included four items: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Conservative Party of Canada, the Canadian

Armed Forces, and Protection of Canadian Values; $\alpha = 0.72$); and *Québec Separatism* (included two items: Québec's Separation/ Independence and the Bloc Québécois; $\alpha = 0.67$).

Results

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of our variables for each provincial group. As can be seen, Ontario and Nova Scotia show a higher Canadian identity and a lower provincial identity than Québec. As for the sociopolitical variables, all three groups score highest and well above the midpoint on progressivism. They show more variability and score slightly lower on traditionalism. Finally, all groups score around or below the midpoint on Québec Separatism with Québec scoring higher than the other groups. Tables 2, 3, and 4 provide the correlations between each of our variables for Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Québec respectively which will be discussed in the relevant sections below.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

	Ontario <i>M (SD)</i>	Nova Scotia <i>M (SD)</i>	Québec <i>M (SD)</i>
<i>N</i>	254	118	142
Identity			
Canadian Identity	5.21 (0.89)	5.45 (0.69)	4.55 (1.09)
Provincial Identity	4.74 (0.84)	4.97 (0.95)	5.27 (0.99)
Sociopolitical Issues			
Progressivism	8.76 (1.63)	8.95 (1.33)	8.86 (1.23)
Traditionalism	7.43 (1.69)	8.05 (1.33)	6.45 (1.80)
Québec Separatism	4.65 (2.14)	4.50 (2.10)	5.77 (2.59)

Research Question 1: Regional Linguistic Asymmetry

To test our first two hypotheses, that (H1) participants from Nova Scotia and Ontario will have a stronger Canadian identity than those from Québec and (H2) that Québécois will have a

stronger provincial identity than Nova Scotians and Ontarians, we ran a 3x2 mixed-model ANOVA with provincial group (Ontario, Québec, Nova Scotia) as the between-participants factor, identity type (provincial, federal) as the within-participant factor, and strength of identity as the outcome. The main effect of provincial group ($F(2,499) = 5.599, p = .004, \eta^2 = .022$) and the interaction between provincial group and identity type ($F(2,499) = 66.420, p < .001, \eta^2 = .21$) were significant. In line with both hypotheses, Tukey post-hoc comparisons found that Québec residents were significantly lower than both Ontario and Nova Scotia residents on Canadian identity ($p < .001$ for both) and significantly higher on provincial identity ($p < .001$ for Ontario, $p < .025$ for Nova Scotia). The difference between Nova Scotians and Ontarians, however, was non-significant for both Canadian ($p = .057$) and provincial identity ($p = .054$).

To test the associated asymmetry hypothesis (H3), that the positive relationship between subgroup (i.e., provincial) and superordinate (i.e., Canadian) identity is stronger for Nova Scotians and Ontarians than it is for Québécois, we can simply look at the correlations for the three groups (Tables 2, 3, and 4). Again, we found support for the hypothesis. The relationship between Canadian and provincial identity is very strong for both Ontario and Nova Scotia participants, though it is negative and relatively weak for Québec participants. Further, the difference between the Québec and Ontario correlation is significant ($z = 8.025, p < .001$) as is the difference between the Québec and Nova Scotia correlation ($z = 5.509, p < .001$). The difference between Nova Scotia and Ontario, however, is non-significant ($z = 1.368, p = .086$).

Table 2
Correlations for Ontario sample

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Canadian Identity	-	.64*	.13*	.37*	-.06
2. Provincial Identity		-	.11	.32*	.11
3. Progressivism			-	.06	-.02
4. Traditionalism				-	.20*
5. Québec Separatism					-

*With N = 254, $r = .21$ is significant at $p < .001$, $r = .15$ at $p < .01$, and $r = .12$ at $p < .05$

Table 3
Correlations for Nova Scotia sample

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Canadian Identity	-	.54*	.02	.28*	-.18*
2. Provincial Identity		-	-.04	.21*	-.14
3. Progressivism			-	.06	-.02
4. Traditionalism				-	.20*
5. Québec Separatism					-

*With N = 118, $r = .30$ is significant at $p < .001$, $r = .23$ at $p < .01$, and $r = .18$ at $p < .05$

Table 4
Correlations for Québec sample

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Canadian Identity	-	-.09	-.01	.48*	-.59*
2. Provincial Identity		-	-.03	-.22*	.46*
3. Progressivism			-	-.25*	.06
4. Traditionalism				-	-.46*
5. Québec Separatism					-

*With N = 142, $r = .27$ is significant at $p < .001$, $r = .22$ at $p < .01$, and $r = .17$ at $p < .05$

Research Question 2: Identity Alignment with Sociopolitical Issues

To test our competing hypotheses about whether (H4a) more traditionally aligned perspectives or (H4b) more progressively aligned perspectives are associated with Canadian identity regardless of provincial group, and to assess whether (eH5) Québécois show a distinct pattern between its identities and these perspectives compared with Nova Scotians and Ontarians, we ran three planned contrast hierarchical regression models, one for each of our sociopolitical variables (progressivism, traditionalism, and Québec separatism). In each model there were two contrasts: Contrast 1 was a comparison between Québec and Nova Scotia + Ontario, and Contrast 2 was a follow up comparison between Nova Scotia and Ontario. In each model we input Canadian and Provincial identity and the two contrasts in the first step, followed by four interactions (Canadian identity by each contrast and Provincial identity by each contrast) in the second step. This way we could use a single model to test for the main effects of Canadian identity (H4ab) and assess any interactions between the contrast groups (eH5), particularly Contrast 1 (i.e., Francophone vs Anglophone), with both provincial and Canadian identity. All coefficients reported below are unstandardized.

Model One. Our first model conducted on the progressivism variable was non-significant, $F(8,490) = .736, p = .660, R^2 = .012$. There were no main effects of identity, nor were there any interactions between any of the contrasts and identity, suggesting that across the three provincial groups progressivism was not related to Canadian or provincial identity.

Model Two. Our second model conducted on the traditionalism variable was significant, $F(8,490) = 21.974, p < .001, R^2 = .26$. There was a main effect of Canadian identity ($b = .32, p < .001$) and an interaction between provincial identity and Contrast 1 ($b = .70, p = .003$) but all other effects were non-significant. This suggests that across the groups, Canadian identity is

positively associated with traditionalism, showing support for H4a. A follow-up simple slopes analysis was conducted on the provincial identity x Contrast 1 interactions which found that both Québec ($b = -0.31, t(495) = -2.38, p = .02$) and the combined Nova Scotia/Ontario group ($b = 0.24, t(495) = 2.12, p = .03$) were significantly different from zero in opposite directions. That is, there is a positive relationship between traditionalism and provincial identity for Nova Scotia and Ontario and there is a negative relationship for Québec.

Model Three. Our final model was conducted on the Québec Separatism variable and was also found to be significant, $F(8,490) = 80.566, p < .001, R^2 = .24$. There was a negative main effect of Canadian identity ($b = -.31, p < .001$) and a positive main effect of provincial identity ($b = .21, p < .001$). These main effects, however, were both qualified by interactions. There was a significant interaction between Contrast 1 and Canadian identity ($b = .75, p = .001$), Contrast 1 and provincial identity ($b = -.79, p = .001$), and an interaction between Contrast 2 and provincial identity ($b = -.67, p = .013$). These significant interactions were followed up with simple slope analyses. For Contrast 1 and Canadian identity, both groups were significantly different from zero in the same negative direction, though the slope for Québec ($b = -1.28, t(493) = -7.94, p < .001$) was steeper than the slope for Nova Scotia/Ontario ($b = -0.41, t(493) = -2.57, p = .01$). That is, there is a negative relationship between support for Québec separatism and Canadian identity, and this relationship is stronger for Québécois. For Contrast 1 and regional identity, both slopes were in the same positive direction but only the slope for Québec ($b = 1.04, t(493) = 5.82, p < .001$) was significantly different from zero (Nova Scotia/Ontario: $b = 0.29, t(493) = 1.88, p = .06$). This means there is a positive relationship between Québec separatism and provincial identity for Québec participants only. Finally, for Contrast 2 and provincial identity, the slope for Nova Scotia was negative and not significantly different from zero ($b = -0.14, t(370) =$

-0.58, $p = 0.56$) while the slope for Ontario was positive and significantly different from zero ($b = 0.63$, $t(370) = 3.04$, $p < .001$). Meaning there is a negative relationship between Québec separatism and Nova Scotian identity and a positive relationship between Québec separatism and Ontarian identity.

Research Question 3: Asymmetry with Sociopolitical Issues

To test our final set of hypotheses regarding regional asymmetry as it aligns with sociopolitical perspectives, we can look at the within-sample differences between Canadian and provincial identity in relation to each of the three values. Using an online calculator (Lee & Preacher, 2013) we tested the z -difference scores between two dependent correlations with one variable in common (i.e., comparing the correlations of the two identity types with a single sociopolitical variable).

First, we expected there to be no differences between provincial and Canadian identity for all three sociopolitical variables for both Nova Scotia and Ontario (H6). For Ontarians, there was no difference between the correlations of provincial and Canadian identity with progressivism ($z = 0.377$, $p = .706$) or traditionalism ($z = 1.01$, $p = .314$). There was, however, a significant difference between the provincial and Canadian identity correlations with Québec separatism ($z = -3.19$, $p = .001$), such that provincial identity was more strongly and positively associated with Québec separatism while Canadian identity was slightly negatively associated.

As for Nova Scotians, we also found no difference between provincial and Canadian identity correlations with progressivism ($z = 0.671$, $p = .502$) and traditionalism ($z = 0.814$, $p = .416$). Unlike Ontario, however, we also found no difference between provincial and Canadian identity correlations with Québec Separatism ($z = -0.455$, $p = .649$).

Finally, we ran the same analyses for Québec, expecting them to show a contrast between the two forms of identity for each sociopolitical variable (H7). There was no difference between

provincial and Canadian identity correlations with progressivism ($z = 0.16, p = .873$), as this value did not seem to be aligned with either identity. There was, however, a stark difference between provincial and Canadian identity correlations with traditionalism ($z = 6.112, p < .001$) and Québec separatism ($z = -9.98, p < .001$). As such, we do find evidence for H7, whereby for the two sociopolitical variables that did show relationships with provincial and Canadian identity, these relationships were markedly different for each identity. That is, for Québec participants, Canadian identity and traditionalism have a strong positive relation, but Québec identity and traditionalism have a strong negative relationship. The opposite pattern is found for Québec separatism, which is negatively associated with Canadian identity and positively associated with Québec identity.

Discussion

The goal of our paper was to explore the nuances of national identity in a multicultural society such as Canada, thereby highlighting the importance of contextual information when understanding and studying national identity in any country. To address this goal, we grounded our work in subgroup asymmetry theory (Sidanius et al., 1997), applying it to some of the unique identity structures that exist within Canada. We ran our analyses on samples collected from three distinct regional-linguistic groups in Canada: Québec (primarily French-speaking), Nova Scotia (primarily English-speaking), and Ontario (primarily English-speaking). We compared the relationships between their provincial and federal identities and looked at how these identities aligned with perspectives on relevant sociopolitical issues.

In line with our first research question on regional linguistic asymmetry, we found that our dominant regional-linguistic groups (Ontario and Nova Scotia) had stronger Canadian national identification than our minority regional-linguistic group (Québec), while participants in Québec expressed stronger provincial identity than the other groups. This substantiates the

asymmetry hypothesis that dominant groups are more attached to their superordinate identity than minority groups and provides some evidence for the ways in which these groups self identify (i.e., as part of the dominant culture or as part of a minority culture). Further, for those in Ontario and Nova Scotia, there is a strong alignment between provincial and Canadian nationality, while in Québec, such a relationship does not exist (indeed, it even appears to be slightly negative). These findings express a variegated view of nationality, in that for Québécois, not only is there a distinct line drawn between Canadian and Québécois identity, but in fact their Québécois identity is more reminiscent of a national identity than their Canadian one. Specifically, they show the exact opposite pattern that our two dominant groups show in relating these two identities. This strikingly clear pattern provides important quantitative evidence for the nuance of national identity within a single geopolitical nation state.

For our second research question, we aimed to uncover some of the content domain associated with Canadian identity across our different groups. Surprisingly, we found no evidence of a relationship between support for progressive sociopolitical issues and Canadian identity across all respondents. Although there was a weak correlation between these two variables for Ontarians, it was not strong enough to override the lack of a relationship for the other two samples. However, we did find evidence for a relationship between Canadian identity and support for more traditionalist sociopolitical values. This relationship was also found for our dominant regional-linguistic groups' provincial identities. For Québec participants, although traditionalism was associated with Canadian identity, it was not related to their provincial identity. The results for Québec separatism were perhaps the least surprising, where Québec separatism is at odds with Canadian identity, especially in Québec, but it is aligned with Québec provincial identity. One surprising finding here, however, is that Québec separatism was found to

be somewhat positively related to Ontario provincial identity. This relationship is likely enhanced in our statistical model by its contrast to Nova Scotia, where the relationship is negative.

Altogether, these findings seem to suggest that despite the Canadian government's notable commitment to being viewed as a progressive nation (e.g., Trudeau, 2017ab), Canadian national identity is indiscriminately associated with more conservatively aligned values as expressed by our traditionalism variable. Despite these findings, it is worth noting that all three regional-linguistic groups scored higher on progressivism than traditionalism. Indeed, each group showed strong support for progressive sociopolitical issues, suggesting widespread enthusiasm for them. So why then do we not see any alignment between Canadian identity and these progressive values? Why is Canadian identity only associated with a more traditionally conservative perspective in our samples?

One reason why Canadian identity might be associated with our traditionalism variable may be due to the items that make up this construct: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Conservative Party of Canada, the Canadian Armed Forces, and the protection of Canadian values. Notably, all these things are specifically related to Canada. This may be why Québec presented a strong negative relationship between traditionalism and its provincial identity, seeing these as issues completely irrelevant and even at odds with their political goals and identity. Regardless, support for the items in the traditionalism variable does align with general conservative positions and values across Canada (notably, one of the items in this construct is Canada's federal conservative party). That is, despite Canada's promotion of multiculturalism, messaging of progressivism, and a presumed civic understanding of nationality (Berry & Kalin, 1995), Canadian identity as measured from a social identity perspective, may in

fact be more aligned with traditionally conservative values. Future research that uses different means of assessing such perspectives is required to help solidify and contextualize these findings.

Finally, we found further evidence for the asymmetry hypothesis by considering the degree to which our sociopolitical variables were aligned between provincial and Canadian identity across all three groups. In general, our two dominant regional-linguistic groups show strong alignment, suggesting that for Ontarians and Nova Scotians, provincial and Canadian identity are similarly felt and interpreted. Specifically, both identities are positively associated with a traditionalist sociopolitical perspective, and for Ontario they are also positively associated with a progressive sociopolitical perspective, though to a lesser degree. This distinction between Ontario and Nova Scotia is notable. Throughout this paper, we have lumped these two provinces together as a point of contrast to Québec, yet it is worth noting that despite sharing a status as a dominant linguistic group, these two provinces are distinct. While their views of national identity may be relatively well-aligned, they are not identical, showing that even two similar groups within a single state may introduce nuance to the meaning of national identity.

Further in line with our asymmetry hypothesis is the alignment of the sociopolitical variables with Québec's identities. As expected, the results for Québec are in sharp contrast to our other two groups, showcasing more misalignment between identities than alignment. While progressivism was not considered relevant to Canadian or provincial identity for our Québec sample, traditionalism and Québec separatism saw strong associations, though in opposite directions. Traditionalism was strongly positively associated with Canadian identity while showing a negative relationship with provincial identity, and Canadian identity had a strong negative relationship with Québec separatism while there was a strong positive relationship with

provincial identity. All told, our results provide strong quantitative evidence for the clear distinctions drawn between provincial and Canadian identity in Québec which do not appear for our other two dominant linguistic samples.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the current study provided important insight into the asymmetry that exists in Canadian identity, helping to shine new light on the concept of Canadianism, there are some important limitations that should be addressed. As this was a multi-site study that assessed different cultural linguistic groups using the same measures, the interpretation of the questionnaires by the different samples cannot be guaranteed to be uniform. For example, we don't know if the Conservative Party of Canada is viewed similarly across our three groups, which may influence how they responded to this item. However, our factor analysis did show that the items selected for our three sociopolitical variables did cluster similarly across groups, suggesting some sense of uniformity in interpretation. Another potential concern with these samples is that they are based on undergraduate university students rather than a wider community sample. The values and identities held by this population may not be generalizable to the wider cities (or even provinces) which these participants are intended to represent. Future studies should expand on this preliminary work by collecting data from broader community samples. Finally, Canada is a country with multiple nationalities, yet we only consider two dominant nationalities: Québécois and Canadian. Future work should look to other regional (e.g., Newfoundland) and ethnic (e.g., First Nations) nationalities that exist within Canada to determine additional distinctions and interpretations of Canadian and national identity.

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Social Representations of Canadian History

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Abstract

Social representations of history are the ways in which lay people recall and think about their collective past. Rather than provide us with an objective view of the past, social representations of history provide us with present-day subjective views of the past. Indeed, as current day needs and perspectives change or differ between groups, so too can the types of events that are recalled or the way in which they are framed. The current study assesses the social representations of history from three provincial groups in Canada: Québec, Nova Scotia, and Ontario. We provide a catalogue of the events freely recalled by our participants that speak to the present-day identity concerns of young Canadians. We observe a distinct narrative of Québec nation-building and cultural conflict among our Québécois participants and a narrative built around Canadian progressivism among our Nova Scotian and Ontarian participants. In addition to codifying these narratives, we provide evidence of a historical bias among all our participants, whereby events that frame Canada in a positive progressive light are more likely to be considered true than events that conflict with this narrative. Altogether, our results offer a snapshot of social representations of Canadian history and highlight the ways in which historical narratives interact with contemporary identity concerns.

Key Terms: Social Representations of History; Social Identity; Canada; Historical Narratives; Historical Bias

Social Representations of Canadian History

Assessing social representations of history differs from the study of history itself. While history is the attempt to preserve and interpret historical records as accurately as possible, social representations of history, or collective memories, are less concerned with the truth of the past. Rather, understanding how lay people collectively represent their history tells us much more about present day attitudes and interests than it does about the past itself. Collective memories are widely shared knowledge of past events that don't necessarily have to have been experienced by those who hold them (Paez et al., 2016). Rather, they are created and transmitted through interpersonal and institutional discourse, and they are often adjusted to meet the needs and perspectives of those responsible for crafting them (Liu & Hilton, 2005). As such, they are not just the ways in which groups make sense of their collective past, but they also are often motivated by, and deeply entangled with, contemporary perspectives and identity concerns (Hirst et al., 2018; Wertsch & Rodiger, 2008).

In the current paper we assess the social representations of Canadian history among three regional-linguistic groups within Canada: Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Québec. We add to the growing body of literature on social representations of history by not only providing a catalogue of collective memories from a yet-to-be studied country, but by considering the regional differences in a country that has marked historical and foundational cultural-linguistic lines.

Collective Memories and Identity

Collective memories are often dispersed through cultural tools such as history textbooks, memorials, or political speeches, providing carefully crafted "official" narratives about a group's past (Rosoux, 2001). Care is taken in crafting these historical narratives because they tend to serve societal functions such as defining norms and values or enhancing group cohesion (Paez et

al., 2016). In other words, collective memories are intentional narratives, often developed and distributed by powerful stakeholders, that offer a group a biased account of where they have been and where they should aspire to go.

These historical narratives often reflect social identity concerns, specifically the need to maintain a positive group identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This can be done through two complimentary means: (1) accentuating a glorified past, particularly one that focuses on conflict and highlights either heroism or victimization of the group, and (2) concealing or reframing events that are embarrassing, shameful, or generally paint the group in a negative light (Hilton & Liu, 2017; Klar and Bilewicz, 2017; Rosoux, 2001). Indeed, those who have a stronger national identity are less willing to acknowledge the more nefarious aspects of their country's past (Doosje et al., 2004) and they are more likely to frame events where their group was the aggressor in a positive light (Cabecinhas & Feijó, 2010). Similarly, those with a strong sense of national identity show a tendency to recall more nation-glorifying events and fewer shameful events than those with a weaker sense of national identity (Choi et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Muckherjee et al., 2017). Further, causal links in both directions have also been observed, such that when identity is manipulated, those in a high-identification condition recall fewer incidents of wrong-doing by their group compared to those in a low-identification condition (Sahdra et al., 2007), and individuals who are presented with negative historical events have a more diminished identity with the group compared to those presented with more positive events (Muckherjee et al., 2017). Thus, not only are past positive events privileged over negative ones in collective memories, but they are intertwined with group identity in a way that is consistent with Social Identity Theory's expectations about positive identity maintenance.

What constitutes a positive versus a negative event can differ between countries, especially in terms of evaluating war and conflict, where the same conflict may be considered positive by some and negative by others. In general, however, it seems that events related to progressive policies and politics (e.g., democracy, strong economic systems) or cultural and technological advancement (e.g., the industrial revolution, space exploration) are considered positive, while events that reflect discrimination or extensive harm to a group (e.g., slavery, the Holocaust) are considered negative (Choi et al., 2021). Some events, like war and colonization, however, can be more ambiguous depending on who is recalling it (Cabecinhas and Feijó, 2010; Techio et al., 2010). And while war may generally be considered negative, social representations of conflicts often present images of groups as valiant victors or hapless victims in such conflicts (Abel et al., 2019). That is, an ingroup's actions in a war are often framed as laudable.

Yet just because an event may be considered positive or frame the group in a glorifying way, doesn't mean the event automatically becomes situated in the collective memory cannon. As Paez and colleagues (2016) point out in their review of the social representations of history literature, for an event to be fomented into collective memory, it should be emotionally laden. Collective emotions often arise out of significant or ritualistic events, such as war and conflict. However, even massive sporting events, such as the World Cup or the Olympics, can act as meaningful avenues for inspiring national pride and happiness and can create powerful myths that form important collective memories (Beyer et al., 2014; Kuhn, 2014; Moller, 2014). As such, by cataloguing the collective memories of a group we can learn much about their values and what constitutes their sources of pride, shame, and identity.

As stated previously, the "official memories" (Rosoux, 2001) or "historical charters" (Liu & Hilton, 2005) of a given nation serve as foundational myths that help define the group and

legitimize the current status quo. When threats to a positive social identity are made through confrontation of historical misdeeds, this might be met with disidentification (Murkherjee et al., 2018) or with an attempt to adjust one's perspective of the event through several strategies, such as ignoring, censoring, or reframing such misdeeds to make them more palatable (Doosje et al., 2004; Klar & Bilewicz, 2017; Peetz et al., 2010). Further, if the official narratives that are being spread through cultural tools intentionally obfuscate or misrepresent certain events, then an individual's social identity may inform their historical knowledge (Wertsch, 2002). Indeed, one's ethnic or national context can inform one's level of knowledge around specific historical events. For instance, Russians have been found to hold more accurate recollections of WWII compared to other nations who were also involved in the conflict, such as the USA (Abel et al., 2019) and African Americans have shown better accuracy of Black history in the USA compared with Americans of European heritage (Nelson et al., 2013). Such findings likely reflect the silencing of certain aspects of World and American history in the USA's historical charters. That is, if an event doesn't legitimize the current status quo (e.g., American hegemony) or reflects negatively on the group (e.g., the treatment of African Americans), then it is unlikely to be shared, which means that historical accuracy will be compromised.

In the current study, we are interested in the social representations of history that have been formed by young Canadians. We are also interested in the accuracy of their historical knowledge and any biases they may hold about Canadian history and how such biases are entangled with their Canadian identity. Assessing what young Canadians consider to be important historical events should not only tell us about their formal and informal historical education, but also about the types of events that likely have strong emotional ties in the Canadian consciousness and are important aspects of Canadian identity.

Canadian Memories

When people are asked to recall what they consider to be the most important events in world or their country's history, the events most frequently recalled revolve around war, conflict, and politics (e.g., Huang et al., 2004; Liu et al., 2005; Özer & Ergün, 2013; Pennebaker et al., 2006). Unlike many of the other cultures whose social representations of history have been studied, the historical narrative in Canada tends to not be as dominated by war or conflict. Rather, Canadian history tends to focus primarily on the historical relations between the British, French, and Indigenous people during the period of colonialism and the formal coalition of Canada into a nation state during confederation. Like many other cultures, however, official Canadian memories are often painted with a careful brush that depict a positive image of Canada, and what these memories are and how they are expressed can tell us a lot about current Canadian identity concerns.

Over the past 150 years or so of Canada's history, the places, events, and people that have been deemed worthy of preservation and commemoration have shifted, though by and large, they have tended to favour the elite and powerful, promoting narratives of national progress and uplift (Morgan, 2016). We have ready access to various cultural tools that can highlight Canada's official memories over its relatively short history, and which can give us an idea of the types of events that are considered important and how they are framed. One such tool that spans the past three decades is the Heritage Minutes produced by Historica Canada, a registered charity organization in Canada. These Heritage Minutes are 60-second short films about various moments in Canadian history, which were widely prevalent on Canadian television in the 1990s and early 2000s, and which continue to be developed and shared both on television and online today. These videos not only provide a snapshot of the types of collective memories

Canadians have been presented with, but tracing how the content of these videos has changed also provides an excellent example of how historical narratives and the collective memories they are meant to inspire can shift over time.

The current About page on the Historica Canada's website (Historica Canada, n.d.) highlights how the organization has attempted to shift its approach over more recent years to be more representative of historically oppressed groups and to be more acknowledging of wrongdoing on the part of the state. For instance, early videos, most of which are still available on the website, often paint a rosy image of Canadian settlement and peaceful integration with Indigenous people, with images of White Saviours and the Noble Savage abounding (for example, see the episodes about Sitting Bull, Maple Syrup, and Jacques Cartier), while the first mention of residential schools wasn't depicted until 2016 (i.e., the episode about Chanie Wenjack, a young Ojibwe boy who died of exposure after he ran away from his residential school in attempt to walk the 600 km back to his home). Despite this recent shift in the content and framing of these events, the purpose of the newer videos is often to present stories about heroism and discovery, and while wrongdoing is sometimes acknowledged, a positive message about resilience is often the driving force behind negative events or circumstances.

Textbooks are another essential cultural tool in the transmission of social representations of history, and while presented to students as objective records of the past, are often quite biased depending on the author and intended audience. In a brief history of Canadian textbook content from the mid-19th century to the late 20th century, Morgan (2016) outlines several shifting patterns. For example, she notes the prominence of the "Heroic Period" (1534 – 1663) in early Québec textbooks while early English-language textbooks encouraged loyalty to Britain, and First Nations' students were taught about the superiority of European people, language, and

customs. Indigenous people have either been represented as bloodthirsty savages or docile children for most of Canadian history and representations of women and workers was largely absent until the late 20th century. In a thematic analysis of two more recent history textbooks from Québec, Briscoe (2005) explores discrepancies in how history within a smaller region is depicted, whereby one ignores Indigenous perspectives and instances of resistance to colonial rule and the other offers detailed accounts of diplomatic and other confrontations between the groups. As such, depending on where and when an individual is raised and educated, their access to cultural tools will vary which will subsequently influence their own collective memories. For instance, despite being broadcast across Canada, the Heritage Minutes were only produced in English, limiting their access to French-speaking Canadians.

In this study, we are interested in regional differences of collective memories throughout Canada. Specifically, we assess how the historical narratives of French Canadians from Québec differ from the narratives of those from two English-speaking provinces, Ontario and Nova Scotia. Québec's history is marked by a strong desire for autonomy over their own governance and a fierce protection of Québécois identity, culture, and the French language. According to Winter (2007), The British North America Act of 1867 which Canada dates to its origin as a nation, was interpreted as "provincial pluralism" by English Canadians and "national dualism" by French Canadians. These two camps have largely maintained their perspectives in the ensuing 150 or so years, with pluralism broadening into multiculturalism within English-speaking Canada and bilingualism and biculturalism being the preferred line in Québec (Winter, 2007). We expect that the strength of nationalism in Québec and the cultural tools to enforce this narrative will have a distinct influence on the collective memories held by this group compared with our English-language participants. Further, we expect Ontarians and Nova Scotians to share

similar collective memories, despite being from different provinces, as a result of their cultural tools being bent towards a more similar purpose: the glorification of Canada as a progressive, multicultural nation.

Current Study

This paper builds on the empirical social representations of history literature that largely began with Liu and colleagues in 2005 and Pennebaker and colleagues in 2006, who both conducted large multi-country surveys assessing what individuals from different cultures considered to be the most important events in world history. Rather than assessing representations of world history, however, we will be providing an overview of Canadian historical narratives. The focus of this paper is to outline how young Canadian adults think about Canadian history. We begin by cataloguing which events they consider to be the most important to their nation's history. We categorize these events into broader themes and consider how they differ between three regional-linguistic groups within Canada: French Canadians from Québec and English-speaking Canadians from Nova Scotia and Ontario. It is worth noting here that social identity in Québec is a complex and historically dense issue, but for the purposes of this study, we are broadly interested in people who would consider themselves Québécois, or Francophones in Québec (see Lalonde et al., 2016, for a broader discussion of the intergroup context of Québec and Québécois identity). After cataloguing the types of events our participants freely recall, we then assess some of their knowledge of Canadian history and whether they hold a biased understanding of Canadian history. Finally, we consider whether such potential biases are related to their sense of Canadian identity.

As this is the first study assessing the collective memories of Canadians, we have no hypotheses about the specific events that will be recalled. Following from previous work on

social representations of history, however, it may be expected that events related to politics, war, and nation-building may be prominent. We do expect that there will be some distinctions between Québec and the two English-language provinces in terms of which events are recalled and the frequencies with which they are recalled. Specifically, we expect participants from Québec to recall more Québec-centric events, whereas those from Ontario and Nova Scotia are expected to recall events that represent a broader Canadian narrative.

Based on previous literature (e.g., Choi et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Muckherjee et al., 2017), we do expect Canadians to show a glorification bias for Canadian history, such that they will be more likely to believe an event is true if it reflects positively on Canada and more likely to be false if it reflects negatively. We also expect there to be a relationship between historical bias and Canadian identity, such that those who have a stronger sense of Canadian identity will have an even stronger glorifying bias about Canadian history than low identifiers.

Method

Participants

Undergraduate students were recruited from three universities in Canada: York University in Toronto (Ontario), Saint Mary's University in Halifax (Nova Scotia), and Université Laval in Québec City (Québec). Students from the Toronto and Halifax samples were recruited through undergraduate research participant pools, whereas the Québec City students were recruited from online postings, flyers, and announcements made in classes. To be included in the study, participants had to be Canadian citizens or permanent residents and they had to be in-province students. After removing participants based on this inclusion criteria, sample sizes were as follows: Ontario ($n = 254$), Nova Scotia ($n = 118$), and Québec ($n = 142$).

Ontario participants ranged in age from 17 to 40 ($M = 19.94$, $SD = 2.95$) with 70% identifying as female. Most were Canadian citizens (88%) with the rest being permanent residents. Of the 32% who were not born in Canada, their average age of arrival was 9.72 ($SD = 6.65$) years. The Ontario sample was diverse in terms of ethnic and racial identification: South Asian (24.8%), White (23.6%), Black or African Canadian (15.7%), East Asian (4%), Jewish (4%), Latin American (4%), Southeast Asian (4%), Biracial (4%), Aboriginal (0.8%), and Other (4%).

Nova Scotia participants ranged in age from 18 to 38 ($M = 20.64$, $SD = 3.38$) with 72% identifying as female. Two participants indicated that they were permanent residents rather than Canadian citizens and four indicated that they were not born in Canada with average age of arrival being 9.25 years ($SD = 2.63$). The large majority identified as White (81.3%). Of the remaining respondents, 8.5% were bi-racial, one was South Asian, one identified as Southeast Asian, two were Black or African Canadian, and three were Indigenous.

Québec participants ranged in age from 19 to 62 with a mean age of 24.95 ($SD = 7.99$). The majority identified as female (77%) and only two indicated that they were permanent residents rather than Canadian citizens. Nine indicated that they were not born in Canada with average age of arrival being 10.39 ($SD = 9.36$). Ethnicity was not collected for this sample, but only nine participants indicated that they were the children or grandchildren of immigrants or refugees. Thus, we assume that the Québec sample, like the Nova Scotia sample, was quite ethnically homogeneous.

Procedure

The data for this study were pulled from a large online survey. The Nova Scotia and Ontario participants completed the survey in English whereas Québec participants completed a

translated version that was adapted by one of the authors into French. After consenting to participate in the study, participants were asked to list what they considered to be the three most important events in Canadian history and to write 1-2 sentences describing the event. Next, they completed a Canadian history quiz (details below), followed by a measure of Canadian identity.⁴ Finally, respondents completed a set of demographic questions.

Measures

Canadian Identity. Participants' Canadian identity was assessed using Cameron's (2004) three factor social identification measure. It assesses three components of identity: ingroup ties (e.g., "I feel strong ties to other *Canadians*"), cognitive centrality (e.g., "In general, being a Canadian is an important part of my self-image"), and affective ties (e.g., "In general, I'm glad to be a *Canadian*"). All 12 items were rated using a 7-point Likert scale and a higher mean score indicates a stronger sense of Canadian identity.

Historical Events. Participants in Nova Scotia and Ontario were asked to list and describe three events that they considered to be the most important in Canadian history. During development and pilot testing of the survey in Québec, an important amendment was made to the French instructions. Participants were asked to list what they considered to be the three most important events in Canada's or *Québec's* history (rather than just Canadian history). This amendment to include the province specifically was made when pilot testing indicated confusion among Québec participants as to whether they should include events related to general Canadian history outside of Québec, or if Québec-specific events were also appropriate. Despite this amendment introducing a discrepancy between our Québécois sample and our anglophone

⁴ Participants also completed measures of provincial and global identity, as well as a measure of attitudes towards contemporary sociopolitical events, groups, and people that are not relevant to the current manuscript but are presented in another manuscript.

samples, we felt the added clarity it provided for the Québécois participants was necessary.⁵

However, all results should be interpreted with this discrepancy in mind.

A codebook was developed by the authors to represent common categories that occurred in the open-ended responses with the goal of determining which events in Canadian history were most frequently mentioned. The authors spent time reading through the comments generating lists of topics that appeared frequently and doing rough counts of the events to determine which occurred often enough to merit inclusion in the codebook (see supplementary materials for copies of the codebooks). The English-language data were all coded by the same two research assistants while the French-language data was coded by two different French-speaking research assistants. The codebook for the Ontario and Nova Scotia participants was the same except for the addition of the Halifax Explosion as a category for the Nova Scotians due to the frequency with which it was mentioned. The codebook for the Québec participants differed from the English ones by including the addition of several province-specific event categories.

The coding process was broken up into three sets for each sample group. The research assistants coded the first event written by all participants from a sample, after which inter-rater reliability was assessed using kappa coefficients (see supplementary materials for the kappa coefficients calculated for each category across all provincial groups). Next, the two research assistants met with the first author to discuss discrepancies in the coding and to make any

⁵ Through our piloting we discovered that simply asking for Canadian events would have implied to participants that events related to Québec were specifically not of interest and may have even diminished participation. The addition of the word Québec was expected to foster a more inclusive response from participants to include either Canada-wide or province-specific events, but it is possible that it shifted their focus towards province-specific events in a way that wasn't done for the other groups. As the Québec data was collected after data collection had already been completed for the other provinces, it was too late to add this amendment to the Ontario and Nova Scotia instructions, a strong limitation that should be kept in mind when considering our results. Further, due to a translation error, the Québec participants were simply asked to list (rather than describe) three events, which led to more limited open-ended responses from this group compared to the other two.

necessary adjustments to the codebook to increase its clarity. The research assistants then moved on to the second set of events and the process was repeated until all three events had been coded.

Canadian History Quiz. Participants completed a 16-item True/False quiz on Canadian history that was developed by one of the authors of the paper. Two primary variables were extracted from the quiz data, an accuracy score which represents participant's knowledge of Canadian history as measured by our quiz and a bias score which indicates whether participants showed a bias in their responses towards certain types of items. Building on previous work that has considered the types of events that are positively or negatively evaluated (e.g., Muckherjee et al., 2017), we included items that were glorifying, highlighting the good, progressive things Canada has done in the past, and events that put Canada in a more critical light, representing some form of the country's wrong-doing. Our bias score is derived from how participants respond to these specific glorifying and critical events.

The quiz contained three categories of items: Neutral, Glorifying, and Critical. There were eight neutral items that represented general Canadian history (5 items; 2 true/3 false) or Québec history (3 items; 2 true/1 false). An example of a *true neutral* item was, "Lower Canada is associated with Early French Canada" and an example of a *false neutral* item was "Manitoba was one of the original provinces of Canada at the time of Confederation." Five of the items were framed to present a glorified image of Canada's past (3 true/2 false) and the remaining three items were designed to offer a more negative or critical representation of Canadian history (2 true/1 false). An example of a *true glorifying* item was "Canada was the first country outside of Europe to legally recognize same-sex marriage." A *false glorifying* item was "Canada gave asylum to a shipload of refugees coming from Nazi Germany in 1939." A *true critical* event was "Canada removed people of Japanese heritage from their homes and sent them to internment

camps during the Second World War.” Finally, an example of a *false critical* event was “Following the end of the Vietnam War, Canada turned away thousands of Vietnamese (boat people) refugees.” For a full list of the quiz items, please see our supplementary materials.

To calculate the accuracy score, participant’s scores for each item were simply summed, so that a score of 16 would indicate a perfect score and a very strong knowledge of Canadian history, and a score of 0 would indicate very poor knowledge of Canadian history. The biased score was a composite of the five glorifying and three critical events. For this variable, we were not interested in accuracy, but rather the degree to which participants would consider glorifying events to be true and critical events to be false, regardless of their actual veracity. As such, we added the number of glorifying events marked as true, indicating a willingness to consider positive things about Canada to be true, to the number of critical events marked as false, indicating an unwillingness to believe negative things about Canada. Therefore, a range of scores from 0 – 8 is possible, where 4 is the midpoint, 8 indicates a strong glorification bias, and 0 indicates a strong critical bias.

Results

Historical Event Categories

We originally created 17 categories to represent the events presented in the Ontario data. We used the same categories for Nova Scotia with the addition of one event (The Halifax Explosion) that was particularly frequent in this group. There were 18 categories for the Québec data; six of the categories from the Ontario/Nova Scotia codebook did not occur in Québec and six codes were unique to the Québec data. Specifically, both Nova Scotia and Ontario included comments related to Sports, LGBTQ issues, Internment Camps, Black History, and the War of 1812, which were not mentioned in the Québec data. Alternatively, the Québec codebook

included the following categories which were not included for Ontario or Nova Scotia: Québec Independence, the Parti Québécois, Patriotes, the October Crisis, the Quiet Revolution, and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. Once again, it is important to keep in mind the alternate instructions provided for the Québécois participants, which may partially explain the number of Québec-centric events for this group. After all the data had been coded, some of the categories were further condensed so that there was a final total of 14 categories for Québec and Ontario and 15 for Nova Scotia. For example, the original coding made a distinction between WWI and WWII, but in the final edition we combined these into one code referred to as “World Wars.” A list of the final categories, along with a few examples of the types of comments that would have been coded under that category can be found in Table 1 (a more thorough description of the categories can be found in the codebooks in the supplementary materials).

Table 1

Final List of Historical Events/Topics & Examples of Comments

Events/Topics	Examples of comments categorized under specific events/topics
All Provinces	
Colonization	Discovery of Canada by Europeans, Fur trade
Confederation	Canadian Confederation (1867), Establishment of Nunavut
Major Policies	Canada Health Act, Civil Marriage Act
World Wars	The Battle of Vimy Ridge, D-Day
Famous People	Jacques Cartier, Pierre Trudeau
Social Activism	Suffrage movement, Terry Fox campaign
Women’s Issues	Right to vote, Female politicians
Indigenous Issues	Residential schools, First contact
French Canada	Establishment of first French colony, Expo ‘67
French-English Relations	Québec independence, Deportation of Acadians
Other	Events that don’t fit in any other category

Ontario & Halifax	
Sports	Olympics, hockey
Minority Issues	Internment camps, LGBTQ issues
War of 1812	<i>Comments are specific to single event</i>
Halifax	
Halifax Explosion	<i>Comments are specific to single event</i>
Québec	
Plains of Abraham	<i>Comments are specific to single event</i>
Independence	Referendum, Bloc Québécois
Quiet Revolution	<i>Comments are specific to single event</i>

As can be seen from Table 1, it was possible for events to be coded under multiple categories. For example, the following comment would have been coded under Major Policies, Women's Issues, and Social Activism: "When women won the right to vote: After the efforts of the women involved in the suffrage [sic] movement, parliament decided to take their opinions and demands to mind and agreed to let women vote." Further, all participants provided up to three comments and it was possible for these to be coded with a given topic more than once. For instance, in the Québec data, many of the events participants mentioned were specific to French Canada and as a result, a single person may have been coded for French Canada three times, once for each comment. Given the nature of our data (three comments per individual) and our coding process (the allowance of multiple codes per comment) we decided to present the frequency of events per respondent. That is, we have removed any redundancies, so if a participant mentioned an event related to the World Wars in each of their three comments, we would only count that event once for that person. As such, Figure 1 and Table 2 represent the percentage of participants in a province who mentioned an event or topic at least once (e.g., in Québec, 50% of the participants mentioned an event related to colonization).

Table 2 provides a list of the top 10 most frequently mentioned events by province. There was more uniformity in Québec compared with the other provinces. Almost all the Québec participants mentioned at least one event related to French Canada, the vast majority included an event related to French-English relations, and over half mentioned Québec's Independence. By comparison, in Nova Scotia and Ontario, a few topics came close to 50% but none surpassed that mark. In both Ontario and Nova Scotia, close to half of the participants mentioned confederation and major policies. In Ontario close to half also mentioned famous people in their comments while in Nova Scotia, the Halifax Explosion was mentioned more frequently than famous people. Altogether, the Nova Scotia and Ontario groups show similar patterns, whereas many of the popular events coming from the Québec sample tended to be Québec-specific.

Table 2

Top 10 Most Frequently Mentioned Events per Person per Province

Ontario (N = 254)	Nova Scotia (N = 118)	Québec (N = 142)
Confederation (47%)	Major Policies (49%)	French Canada (96%)
Famous People (46%)	Confederation (46%)	French-English Relations (83%)
Major Policies (44.5%)	Halifax Explosion (42%)	Québec Independence (53%)
World Wars (36%)	Famous People (31%)	Colonization (50%)
Indigenous Issues (21%)	Indigenous Issues (28%)	Confederation (40%)
Social Activism (20.5%)	Social Activism (28%)	Major Policies (38%)
French Canada (20%)	World Wars (27%)	Quiet Revolution (27.5%)
Minority Issues (18%)	Women's Issues (19.5%)	Plains of Abraham (26%)
Colonization (15%)	Sports (17%)	Women's Issues (19%)
Women's Issues (15%)	Minority Issues (15%)	Indigenous Issues (14%)
French-English Relations (15%)		

Between-Province Comparisons of Historical Events

Chi-square analyses were conducted on each event to see if there were any statistical differences between the provinces. As can be seen in Figure 1, there were three events/topics that Québec participants were much more likely to mention than the other provinces. The first is colonization, $\chi^2(2) = 73.679, p < .001 (V = .38)$. Both Ontario and Nova Scotia were similarly likely to indicate colonization as one of the three most important events in Canadian history, at 15% and 12% respectively. Québec, on the other hand, were much more likely to mention it, with half of the participants mentioning it at least once. Unsurprisingly, Québec was also significantly more likely to mention events related to French Canada ($\chi^2(2) = 265.29, p < .001, V = .71$) or French-English relations ($\chi^2(2) = 219.63, p < .001 (V = .65)$). Indeed, 96% of the participants in the Québec sample indicated at least one event related to French Canada was among the most important, compared with 20% in Ontario and 14% in Nova Scotia.

There are several other instances where Nova Scotia and Ontario are much closer to one another than either are to Québec. For mentions of the World Wars, $\chi^2(2) = 35.305, p < .001 (V = .26)$, Ontario had the highest percentage of mentions (36%) followed by Nova Scotia (27%). Comparatively, a much smaller number of participants mentioned either of the World Wars in Québec (8%). A similar pattern was found for how often participants mentioned a famous person in their comments, $\chi^2(2) = 77.167, p < .001 (V = .39)$. Almost half of the Ontario participants and a third of the Nova Scotia participants mentioned a famous person in one of their comments. In Québec, however, a famous person was only mentioned by 4% of the participants.

There were also significant differences in Social Activism, $\chi^2(2) = 27.571, p < .001 (V = .23)$, this time with Nova Scotia having the most instances (28%) followed by Ontario (20.5%) and once again with Québec being much lower than the other two groups (4%). A similar pattern

was found for Indigenous Issues, $\chi^2(2) = 7.605, p = .022$ ($V = .12$), with Nova Scotia again having the highest percentage (28%), followed by Ontario (21%), and finally Québec (14%).

The three groups did not differ in terms of how many participants mentioned confederation ($V = .07$), major policies ($V = .08$) or women's issues ($V = .06$). Likewise, Nova Scotia and Ontario did not differ in any of the three categories unique to them: sports ($V = .04$), minority issues ($V = .04$), and the War of 1812 ($V = .07$).

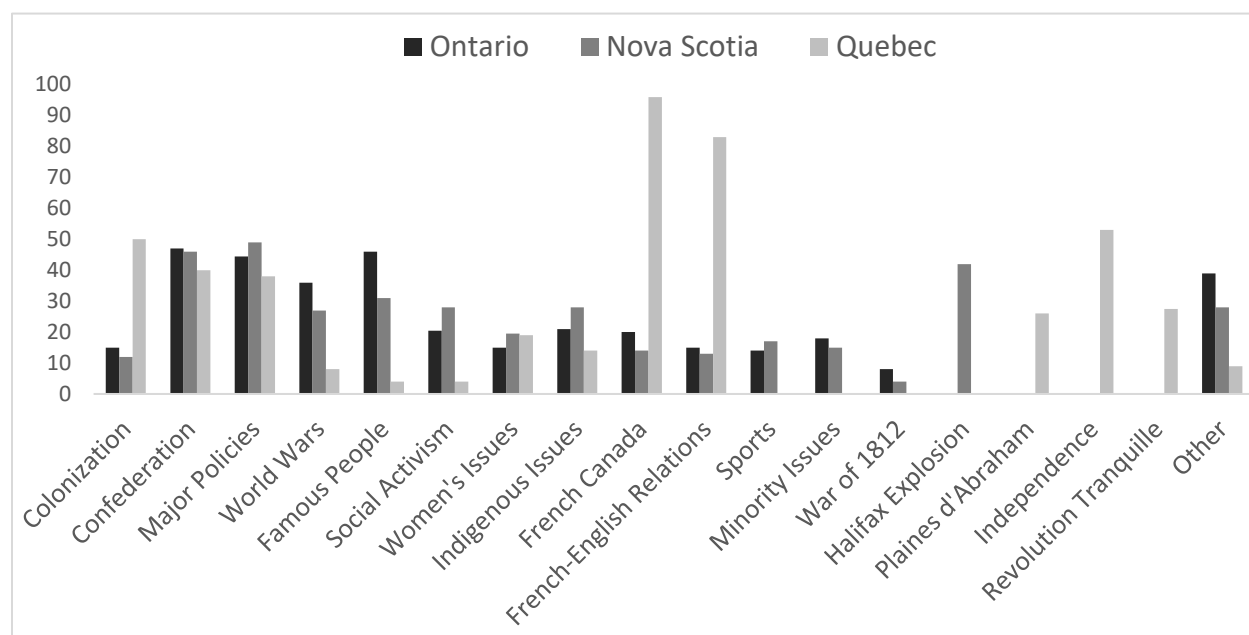


Figure 1. The percentage of participants who mentioned an event at least once, per province.

History Quiz

Means for the accuracy and bias scores can be found in Table 3. Overall, accuracy was quite low for all three groups, all scoring an average of 9/16 (or 56%) correctly. The bias scores were above the midpoint for all three groups, indicating that across the groups, participants tended to have a more biased view of history, wherein they were somewhat more likely to perceive of glorifying events as true and critical events to be false. ANOVAs were run to test for group differences for accuracy and bias, but they were found to be non-significant. We also

looked at the relationship between Canadian identity and accuracy and bias. There was a moderate negative relationship between Canadian identity and accuracy for the Québec ($r = -0.19, p = .03$) and Ontario ($r = -0.13, p = .04$) samples, but no relationship for the sample from Nova Scotia ($r = -.01$). Thus, participants from Québec and Ontario, who have a higher sense of Canadian identity were more likely to have a lower level of accurate knowledge about Canadian history. All three groups did show a positive relationship between Canadian identity and bias: Ontario ($r = 0.16, p = .01$), Québec ($r = 0.10, p = .26$), and Nova Scotia ($r = 0.13, p = .17$), though due to its larger sample size, only the Ontario group's correlation is statistically significant. This suggests there may be a pattern whereby those who have a stronger Canadian identity are more likely to have a more biased view of historical events (i.e., they are more likely to believe that glorifying events are true as compared with critical events).

Table 3

Identity, Accuracy, and Bias Scores

	Ontario	Nova Scotia	Québec
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
<i>N</i>	254	118	142
Canadian Identity	5.21 (0.89)	5.45 (0.69)	4.55 (1.09)
Accuracy	9.10 (1.95)	9.41 (1.77)	9.06 (2.14)
Bias	4.88 (1.48)	4.74 (1.64)	4.60 (1.54)

Note: Canadian identity scored 1 – 7; Accuracy scored out of 16; Bias scored 0 – 8

Discussion

In this study we assessed the social representations of Canadian history among three distinct regional-linguistic groups within Canada: Québec, Ontario, and Nova Scotia. Our samples consisted of undergraduate students most of whom had recently finished their high school education in Canada, giving us insight into the social representations of history that were prominent in their education and the collective memories they developed through general

cultural osmosis. We also considered how these groups' knowledge of Canadian history was intertwined with identity concerns, finding some evidence for a slight glorification bias that might be related to Canadian identity.

Social Representations of Canadian History

Previous research on social representations of history has consistently found themes of war, major political events, and nation building to dominate the narrative. In general, our study suggests that Canadians' views of history also tend to centre political issues and nation building, but war is less frequently mentioned, and events that align with Canada's modern-day progressive narrative are more common. There are, however, notable provincial differences in this pattern. Though when considering these provincial differences, it is important to keep in mind a major difference in the surveys completed by our English-speaking and our Québécois participants, whereby the latter were instructed to consider historical events related to Canada or Québec, while the former were only asked to consider events related to Canadian history. While we will discuss this limitation in more detail later, it is important that our results be interpreted with this in mind.

Confederation, or events related to the state-building project of Canada, were among the most frequently recalled events in Ontario and Nova Scotia. While confederation was fifth on the list for Québec participants, it was mentioned by 40%, indicating its relevance if not its pre-eminence. As an alternative to Canadian confederation, events related to Québec's independence were mentioned by over half of the Québec participants, suggesting that nation-building is important, but insofar as it relates to the Québec, not Canada. If anything, the fact that confederation was not mentioned more frequently is notable. Less than 50% of all participants indicated it as one of the most important events in Canadian history, despite its definite inclusion

in all Canadian curriculums. This finding perhaps speaks to the relevance of other cultural tools, outside of curriculums and textbooks, for fomenting historical narratives. It may also speak to the lack of perceived drama surrounding Canada's confederation which does not make it a particularly emotionally laden event compared with the nation building projects in other cultures, or indeed the nation-building of Québec. This could make it less notable to young Canadians and less likely to maintain a prominent place in the collective consciousness due to its low emotional impact.

Another unique finding among Canadian social representations of history is a lack of focus on war. In Ontario and Nova Scotia, the only prominent mention of wars referenced World Wars I and II, but these mentions were infrequent enough that it made sense to collapse the two wars into a single category. There were also some mentions of the War of 1812 (a war between the USA and British North America), but it constituted less than 10% of participant responses. In Québec, on the other hand, there was even less reference to the World Wars, but the Battle of the Plains of Abraham (also known as the Battle of Québec, a decisive battle that preceded the dominance of the British in Canada) was highlighted with some frequency. This latter battle was never mentioned by the other two groups despite its importance in shaping the future of the country. In spite of the differing focus on wartime events, our participants from all three provinces do not seem to count war as a major factor in Canadian history. Unlike those from the two English-speaking provinces, however, our Québécois participants do show a stronger spirit of revolution and conflict in their collective memories, highlighting events related to colonization and the Quiet Revolution (a transformative period in Québec's social and political organization which largely moved power that had been held by the Catholic church into the hands of the state). This focus on nation-building and conflict within Québec speaks to the

importance of Québec's historical and continuing struggle to protect their culture and language within Canada (see Lalonde et al., 2016).

For Ontario and Nova Scotia, rather than focus on war and nation-building, the recalled events seemed to reflect the progressive nature of Canada's contemporary politics. The most common event in Nova Scotia (third in Ontario, sixth in Québec) was major policies. This category reflected all kinds of policies unrelated to confederation or state-building within Canada, such as the Canada Health Act, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, and the Civil Marriage Act. In general, the narrative message that coheres these acts focuses on the progressive nature of Canada's politics (free healthcare, protection of LGBTQ rights, and promotion of multiculturalism). In Nova Scotia, issues related to Indigenous people and mentions of social activism were more frequently recalled than either world war. It is perhaps not surprising that a country that promotes messaging about multiculturalism and progressivism has established a narrative less focused on war and conflict, and more on progressive policies and movements that have heralded social changes.

Variability and Distinction in Collective Memories

Our findings show that there was a great deal of variety in the events recalled, both within and between provinces. While Ontario and Nova Scotia had a lot of events in common between them, none of the events or topics were recalled by more than 50% of the participants and only seven were recalled by more than 20% of the participants, indicating that in general these participants had a wide range of historical narratives to pull from. It also suggests a lack of consistency in the cultural tools these participants have access to. There was more consistency among our Québec participants, who had four categories that were recalled by more than 50% of the participants. Despite this higher internal consistency, they did not show much commonality

with our two English-speaking samples. While this does align with our prediction that there would be a marked distinction between the events recalled by our Québec participants and those from our Ontario and Nova Scotia participants, we must also consider that this difference may be an artifact of the different survey instructions between our groups. Regardless, it does seem to suggest that there may be more consistency in the Québécois collective memory than there is for Ontarians and Nova Scotians, who may have a more vague and disparate sense of Canadian history. Though, our chi-square comparisons highlight that Ontario and Nova Scotia participants do tend to share similar frequencies of responses for the events they recall, showing that this disparate sense of history is similarly structured for both groups.

For our Québec participants, events related to Québec and French Canada dominate, especially compared to our other groups, who do refer to French Canada, but with much less frequency. Other notable differences include a strong focus on colonization which doesn't get nearly as much focus in the other groups. Further, while all three groups discuss women's and Indigenous issues, our Québécois participants are distinctive in not discussing issues related to other minority groups. This finding was essentially predicted decades ago by Tajfel and Turner in their seminal work on Social Identity Theory (1979) where they used Québec as an example of some of their theoretical principles. Building on work from Berry and colleagues (1976), they argued that as Québec gained a more assertive identity in Canada, the province became less keen on other minority groups within the country as a means of bolstering their own status. In other words, minority groups who share a superordinate identity may compete with one another for status and as a means of positive social identity maintenance. Our findings do seem to provide some support for the notion that people from Québec may be too concerned with their own distinctiveness and footing on the national stage to pay much attention to other minority groups

in Canada (see Lalonde et al, 2016). Those from Ontario and Nova Scotia, on the other hand, don't feel the same threat and so can more readily attend to the narratives of multiple minority groups. This also aligns with Winter's (2007) contention that Québec is focused on biculturalism within Canada, while the rest of Canada is focused on multiculturalism, wherein French Canadians are considered one of several cultural and ethnic groups within Canada that contrasts the majority white Anglophone British-descended Canadians.

Biased Historical Narratives

In addition to this catalogue of collective memories, we have also found interesting patterns related to historical knowledge and bias. In general, our participants did not do well on our Canadian history quiz, with a pass rate not too much higher than chance. This may speak to our participants' lack of knowledge, but it also likely speaks to the design of our quiz, which was not meant to be easy, but rather to test for bias. What is of interest to the present study, is that despite participants generally low accuracy rate on the quiz, we still observed a moderate yet consistent pattern of glorification bias across all three groups. That is, in line with previous findings (e.g., Mukherjee et al., 2018), participants were more likely to believe in a positive version of Canadian history. The items chosen to reflect this bias were similar to the types of events that were freely recalled by our participants (e.g., Indigenous issues, minority issues, progressive policies). That is, our glorification of Canada did not highlight valour during wartime or revolutionary conflict as it might in other nations, but rather Canada's progressivism (e.g., support of same sex marriage, acceptance of refugees, etc.). This suggests that the events that are emotionally laden for Canadians are not war and conflict (Paez et al., 2016), but those that enshrine Canada as a peaceful, progressive, multicultural nation.

We also observed evidence of a relationship between that bias score and Canadian identity. While it is reasonable to conclude that the types of events freely recalled by Canadians has some bearing on their Canadian identity, our study also provides some quantitative evidence of a link between identity and this progressive glorification narrative. As predicted, we found a positive correlation between the bias score and Canadian identity, whereby the higher an individual's Canadian identity, the stronger their glorification bias. This relation was moderate for all three groups and was only statistically significant for our Ontario participants, but it does align with previous findings that have linked high identity with recall of positive or glorifying events (Choi et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Muckherjee et al., 2017), suggesting a robust finding for this effect.

Finally, we also found a negative correlation between our accuracy score and Canadian identity, whereby those who were higher in Canadian identity had a less accurate understanding of Canadian history. This pattern was only found for Québec and Ontario, however, and not for Nova Scotia. While there is evidence to suggest that people's cultural contexts can diminish their accuracy of historical knowledge if that knowledge is at odds their social identity (e.g., Americans not being taught about the Eastern front in WWII; Abel et al., 2019) or undermines a positive group identity (e.g., White Americans not being aware of Black history in the USA; Nelson et al., 2013), it is less clear what a negative relationship between social identity and general historical knowledge about one's country means. Regardless, the consistency of these findings provides a promising bedrock on which future research interrogating the consequences of these biased narratives can be built.

Limitations

The greatest limitation in this study is bourn out of the complexity of making cross-cultural comparisons using blunt quantitative assessments. As discussed in the methods, linguistic and cultural translation issues occurred when transcribing the survey from an Anglophone Canadian context to a Francophone Québec context. One translation issue was an error on behalf of the researchers, where the instructions for Ontario and Nova Scotia participants asked them to describe what they considered to be the most important events while participants from Québec were simply asked to list the most important events. This resulted in events from Ontario and Nova Scotia being more detailed which made them more likely to be placed in multiple categories during the coding process compared with the Québec data. This resulted in a slightly richer dataset for the two English-speaking provinces and a larger sample of codes to draw conclusions from. However, in an attempt to mitigate this issue, we calculated category frequencies based on whether or not an individual made a single reference to a given event, rather than the total number of event references made. In this way, we provide proportions that should be more evenly distributed between groups regardless of quantity of content provided. Still, it is possible that the frequencies of the Québec participants' data would have been different had they been given the instruction to describe rather than simply list their events. For instance, perhaps more opportunities to discuss social activism may have emerged or even entirely new coding categories.

The second major limitation corresponds to a cultural translation issue that resulted in an intentional alteration to the content of the surveys. During piloting of the study in Québec, we discovered that participants were frequently confused about the content they were being requested to provide when asked to list what they considered to be the most important events in

Canadian history. To many, asking about Canadian history meant history *not* related to Québec specifically. In other words, they automatically drew a distinction between Québec and Canadian history which was not drawn among our participants from Ontario and Nova Scotia. In order to ensure a fulsome response from our Québec participants that incorporated history from both Québec and Canada, we made an amendment to their survey instructions which requested them to indicate the events they considered most important to Canada's or Québec's history.

Unfortunately, this amendment could not be made to the Nova Scotia or Ontario surveys, as these had already undergone collection at the time when Québec data collection was underway. Certainly, this difference in survey instruction is a major limitation that may have influenced how Québec participants responded to the prompt compared with Ontario and Nova Scotia participants and may help to account for the large number of Québec-focused events in that group.

We believe, however, that this is not just a limitation of our particular study. Rather, it is a limitation relevant to all cross-cultural research and in itself is a remarkable finding. From the outset, our goal was to assess variations in collective memories among Canadians from distinct regional-linguistic backgrounds. We do not feel that this discrepancy in instructions undermined our findings, but in fact provides evidence for the very phenomenon we wished to capture: the collective memories one possesses rely heavily on the cultural context and cultural tools available to them. That participants from Québec drew a line between Canadian and Québécois history that our English-speaking participants did not, highlights the comparatively prominent Québécois identity and perspective. As such, we believe that even if this amendment had been made to the English-province data (e.g., record the most important events in Canadian or Ontarian/Nova Scotian history), it is unlikely to have influenced the responses as strongly as it

did the Québec participants as these groups do not have as strong a sense of regional identity as the Québécois do for Québec. While perhaps somewhat incomplete, we still believe the responses contained here constitute an important contribution to the understanding of social representations of history.

Conclusion

In this paper we provide the details of a rich dataset that highlights the prominent historical narratives shared by young Canadians from three provincial groups: Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Québec. We found that our Québécois participants tended to consider events centred around Québec to hold particular importance whereby a narrative of Québec nation-building and struggle for the maintenance of Québécois cultural identity and French language emerged. Nova Scotians and Ontarians showed a great deal of parity in their responses, where recall of wartime events or conflict in general was minimal and the types of events that were recalled tended to coincide with the popular current-day narrative that Canada is a progressive, multicultural country. Despite these differences between our Anglophone and Québécois participants, we found that all participants, regardless of provincial group, showed a slight glorifying bias of Canadian history, whereby they prefer historical events that paint Canada in a positive progressive light. Further, this bias showed some association with Canadian identity, whereby a stronger sense of identity was related to a stronger bias. Altogether these results paint a picture of the types of historical charters promulgated throughout Canada and the types of events that hold emotional resonance with young Canadians. It also highlights the role historical narratives play in identity maintenance, reinforcing the need to attend to our social representations of history as a means of understanding our current day perspectives, biases, and identities.

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Supplementary Materials

Codebooks for open-ended responses

Ontario & Halifax Codebook

The following categories use dichotomous codes. Write a 1 if the code is present and leave the space blank if it is not present. The categories are not mutually exclusive, meaning that a given event may have multiple categories coded with a 1.

Colonization: Events related to colonizing Canada, such as exploring/discovering new land, establishing settlements, or the fur trade.

War of 1812: Any events related to this war (i.e. not restricted to battles).

Confederation: Any events related to establishing or building Canada, including events related to independence. Can include 1867, addition of new provinces after 1867, independence from British sovereignty, and adoption of new flag.

WWI: Any events related to World War 1 (1914 – 1918), including events that happened in Canada that were directly related to the war (e.g. conscription, the Halifax explosion).

Halifax Explosion: The explosion that happened between two ships in Halifax during WWI; in Ontario, this event is coded under WWI, in Halifax it is coded separately.

WWII: Any events related to World War 2 (1939 – 1945), including events that happened abroad which may not be specifically related to Canada (e.g. “Hitler came to power”).

Sports: Events related to sports, including intra- and inter-national events.

Famous People: Any mention of a famous person, including politicians, celebrities, athletes, royalty, etc.

Social Activism: Mention of an event (e.g. a protest) or a movement (e.g. “the women’s movement”) that was aimed at social or political change.

Women's Issues: Anything related to women specifically, such as advances in specific forms of health care (e.g. birth control) or legal rights.

LGBTQ Issues: Anything related to the LGBTQ community specifically, such as passing of relevant legislation or social events like Pride.

Indigenous Issues: Any mention of Indigenous people or communities.

Black History: Anything related to Black history specifically, including events that may be related to America, such as slavery and the underground railroad.

French Canada: Any events related to France (e.g. colonization events involving the French specifically), the French language, Québec, or other French-related people and events.

French-English Relations: A sub-category of "French Canada". Includes reference to events or general discussion of relations between French and English Canada.

Major Policies: Any official policies that were passed within Canada, nationally or provincially.

Other: Any events that do not fit into the other categories.

Québec Codebook

The following categories use dichotomous codes. Write a 1 if the code is present and leave the space blank if it is not present. The categories are not mutually exclusive, meaning that a given event may have multiple categories coded with a 1.

Colonization: Events related to colonizing Canada, such as exploring/discovering new land, establishing settlements, or the fur trade. Responses related to *Champlain*, *Colombus*, *Cartier* and *Filles du Roi* will also go under this category.

Confederation: Any events related to establishing or building Canada, including events related to independence. Can include 1867, addition of new provinces after 1867, independence from

British sovereignty, and adoption of new flag. Responses related to *Longs Couteaux* also went into this category.

WWI: Any events related to World War 1 (1914 – 1918), including events that happened in Canada that were directly related to the war (e.g. conscription, the Halifax explosion).

WWII: Any events related to World War 2 (1939 – 1945), including events that happened abroad which may not be specifically related to Canada (e.g. “Hitler came to power”). Responses related to Dieppe go into this category.

Famous People: Any mention of a famous person, including politicians, celebrities, athletes, royalty, etc.

Social Activism: Mention of an event (e.g. a protest) or a movement (e.g. “the women’s movement”) that was aimed at social or political change. Any sort of protest, or form of activism. If the response mentions the word “*fight*”.

Women’s Issues: Anything related to women specifically, such as advances in specific forms of health care (e.g. birth control) or legal rights. Responses related to the *polytechnique* tragedy (i.e., Montreal massacre).

Indigenous Issues: Any mention of Indigenous people or communities.

Black History: Anything related to Black history specifically, including events that may be related to America, such as slavery and the underground railroad.

Major Policies: Any official policies that were passed within Canada, nationally or provincially.

Responses related to health care, charter of rights, abortion, right to vote for women.

Other: Any events that do not fit into the other categories. Items in “other” should NOT be double coded

Categories for Québec data only:

- *Lévesque/Parti Québécois*
- Any items related to *référendum/indépendance* (e.g., Lévesque, Gaulle)
- *Plaines d'Abraham*
- *Révolution tranquille / Grande noirceur / Duplessis*
- *Patriotes*
- *Crise d'Octobre/FLQ*

Kappa Coefficients for Coding Process

Table S1

Kappa Coefficients for Ontario Data

Categories	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3
Colonization	.71	.55	.92
Confederation	.88	.91	.91
War of 1812	.92	1	.83
WWI	.89	.98	.88
WWII	.79	.94	.90
Sports	1	.95	1
Famous People	.86	.86	.92
Social Activism	.92	.66	.81
Women's Issues	1	.96	.88
LGBTQ Issues	1	1	1
Indigenous Issues	.90	.87	.89
Internment	.93	.91	1
Black History	.33	1	.86
Major Policy	.70	.68	.53
French/English Relations	.79	.65	.87
French Canada	.79	.59	.92
Other	.69	.58	.77

Table S2

Kappa Coefficients for Halifax Data

Categories	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3
Colonization	.85	.80	1
Confederation	1	.97	1
War of 1812	1	1	1
WWI	.98	1	1
Halifax Explosion	.98	1	1
WWII	.92	.92	1
Sports	1	1	1
Famous People	.60	.94	.97
Social Activism	1	.80	.92
Women's Issues	.85	.93	.91
LGBTQ Issues	1	1	1
Indigenous Issues	.79	.95	1
Internment	1	1	1
Black History	1	.93	1
Major Policy	.93	.66	.83
French/English Relations	1	.40	1
French Canada	1	.56	.93
Other	.76	.89	.96

Table S3

Kappa Coefficients for Québec City Data

Categories	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3
Colonization	.62	.69	.79
Referendum	.54	.75	.81
Confederation	.66	.64	.83
WWI	1	1	1
WWII	1	1	1
Plaines D'Ab	.97	.92	1
Revolution	1	1	.87
Levesque	1	0	.66
Crise/FLQ	1	.92	1
Famous People	NA	NA	0
Patriotes	1	.79	1
Social Activism	NA	1	.66
Women's Issues	0	1	1
Indigenous	.72	.66	.59
Major Policies	.85	.67	.65
Other	.60	.83	.55

Canadian History Quiz (True/False)

1. Lower Canada is associated with early French Canada. (Neutral True)
2. Canada was one of the last nations to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (Critical True)
3. Halifax was the site of the biggest explosion to take place during the First World War.
(Neutral True)
4. Canada was the first Commonwealth country (e.g., Australia, India, New Zealand, South Africa) to grant its Indigenous population the right to vote in federal elections. (Glorifying False)
5. Canadian Confederation took place in 1867 following Conferences in Charlottetown and Québec City. (Neutral True)
6. Following the end of the Vietnam War, Canada turned away thousands of Vietnamese (boat people) refugees. (Critical False)
7. Canada was the first country outside of Europe to legally recognize same-sex marriage.
(Glorifying True)
8. The Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) were early military allies of the French in Canada. (Neutral False)
9. Canada was the first country to institute an official policy of multiculturalism. (Glorifying True)
10. Manitoba was one of the original provinces of Canada at the time of Confederation. (Neutral False)
11. Canada removed people of Japanese heritage from their homes and sent to internment camps during the Second World War. (Critical True)

12. Canada was among the first countries in the world to grant the right to vote to most of its women. (Glorifying True)
13. Canada was the Commonwealth nation (e.g., Australia, India, New Zealand, South Africa) with the highest military death toll during the Second World War. (Neutral False)
14. Wolfe defeated Montcalm in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in Québec City. (Neutral True)
15. The “Right to Bear Arms” in Canada was removed with the Constitution Act of 1982. (Neutral False)
16. Canada gave asylum to a shipload of Jewish refugees coming from Nazi Germany in 1939. (Glorifying False)

Biased Historical Narratives

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Abstract

Our understanding of history is presented to us through various cultural tools, such as textbooks, museums, and political speeches. Our knowledge of history as mediated by these tools is prone to be incomplete and biased towards narratives that promote positive feelings. The present study assesses the effect of biased historical narratives on present-day sociopolitical attitudes among the general Canadian public. We focus on narratives that highlight the experiences of historically oppressed groups within Canada and whether greater awareness of such events might inform people's attitudes on continuing forms of oppression and discrimination in the present day. This paper consists of two pre-registered studies with all data and analytic scripts made available online through the project's OSF page. In Study 1, we assess Canadians' perspectives on the importance of various historical events. We find that Canadians tend to perceive of events related to historically oppressed groups within Canada as much more important than events that are completely unrelated to such groups. We also find evidence of a positivity bias, whereby positive events are granted particular importance. In Study 2, we conduct an experiment to assess the direct influence of biased historical narratives on people's contemporary attitudes. Although we find no evidence that presenting differing narratives immediately alters relevant perspectives, the data is discussed descriptively, and alternative future directions of study are proposed.

Key Terms: Historical Narratives; Social Identity; Attitudes towards Minorities; Perceptions of discrimination; Canada

Biased Historical Narratives

History is important, not just in what it tells us about the past, but in what it can tell us about the present. Most people have a casual relationship with their country's history. They are made aware of it through their education, through monuments and museums, through dialogues they have with their families and community, and through various forms of media. Engaging with these "cultural tools" results in the development of collective memories, or social representations of history, rather than clear historical knowledge (Wertsch, 2002). That is, the dispersion of historical narratives is not unbiased, as the choice of which historical events to focus on and how to frame them, are often of temporal, political, and situational relevance to those who develop and produce them (Liu & Hilton, 2005). Indeed, such narratives are often biased towards positive events or events that are congruent with a positive group identity (Paez et al., 2016). Such positivity biases in historical narratives have the potential to perpetuate biases that exist in contemporary society by negating or ignoring the more nefarious aspects of our past which may in turn make us less willing to reckon with its consequences in the present.

In the current paper, we seek to examine the effect of biased historical narratives within a Canadian context. In two pre-registered studies, we assess existing biases and attempt to manipulate biases in historical knowledge to see how they influence contemporary sociopolitical perspectives. We are particularly interested in how historical narratives can influence Canadians' attitudes towards historically oppressed groups within Canada. In other words, we are interested in whether making people more aware of their country's wrong-doing, rather than focusing on positive messaging, might make them more willing to recognize present-day discrimination and to be more supportive of groups that have been neglected or harmed in the past. Considering the role such narratives play in political expression and positive identity maintenance, we will also examine the influence of Canadian identity and political orientation on this relationship.

Shifting Historical Narratives

As Liu and Hilton (2005) discuss in their theoretical overview of social representations of history, historical narratives are not constant but shift across context and are subject to the goals of those who craft them. While there is some cross-cultural consensus in what events are considered the most important in world history, quite a bit of variation also exists (Liu et al., 2005; Pennebaker et al., 2006). Likewise, different ethnic groups who share a superordinate identity can hold disparate and similar sets of events as being important to their regional history (Huang et al., 2004; Liu et al., 2002). This variation extends beyond the types of events recalled and includes how these events are evaluated, such as whether they are considered positive or negative, progressive or calamitous (Abel et al., 2019; Cabecinhas & Feijó, 2010; Choi et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2012). While the present paper will assess the consequences of varying narratives, it's worth first considering the context in which these narratives are perpetuated.

One of the primary places where people learn about history is in the classroom. In Canada, curriculum standards and requirements differ by province, but typically students will receive 1-3 years of mandatory education in Canadian history. While there are general guidelines regarding the content that should be taught, there is a lot of freedom in how to teach that history. Content analyses of Canadian history textbooks reveal that the content being taught can differ widely, both within and between provinces (Briscoe, 2005; Morgan, 2016). Beyond the classroom, for most Canadians, their history is likely received through various cultural tools, such as political speeches (e.g., Justin Trudeau providing an apology for residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador; CBC News, 2017) and representations in the media (e.g., Heritage Minutes, short videos of Canadian history broadcast on Canadian television since the early 1990s). This means that the media an individual attends to, and their political leanings, likely

influence the narratives they continue to consume outside the classroom. While we may easily recognize that there is an inconsistency in historical education, the consequence of having incomplete knowledge and biased framing is not well understood empirically.

In recent years, the historical treatment of indigenous peoples in Canada has garnered increased mainstream public and political attention, particularly the existence of residential schools. This attention is largely the result of an almost decade long Truth and Reconciliation Commission that ran from 2008 – 2015, targeting the history and legacy of the residential school system, a network of boarding schools in Canada that removed Indigenous children from their communities with the goal of forcibly assimilating them into Canadian culture. The culmination of this project was a list of 94 calls to action aimed at redressing the harms resulting from these schools, many of which recommended putting resources back into First Nation communities. In 2016, The Environics Institute conducted a survey of Canadians regarding their views of Indigenous peoples. They found that while both knowledge and recognition of the impact of residential schools had notably increased over the previous decade, the majority of Canadians did not fully support the idea of providing government funding for affected communities (The Environics Institute, 2016). A similar survey was conducted in 2021, whereby a greater proportion of Canadians than in the previous survey considered the policies of the Canadian government to be the greatest obstacles facing economic and social inequalities of Indigenous peoples, as opposed to Indigenous peoples themselves being the biggest obstacle (The Environics Institute, 2021). These surveys reflect gradual shifts in public knowledge of the treatment of Indigenous people by the Canadian government as well as shifts in public opinions about present-day responsibilities. Such evidence offers promise for the idea that increasing

historical awareness of past mistreatment can make people more sympathetic to those who continue to be affected.

While the existence and legacy of the residential school system has become more prominent in mainstream Canadian education and discourse over the past decade, First Nations communities are by no means the only groups within Canada who have experienced maltreatment by the Canadian government. The first Black people in Canada were brought in the seventeenth century as slaves, and while slavery was abolished in 1834 in Canada, they continued to face rampant discrimination and segregation. Racist immigration practices also prevented many Black people from America, Africa, and the Caribbean from even entering Canada in the early twentieth century (Yarhi, 2020). Chinese laborers were brought to Canada to build the Canadian Pacific Railway in the late nineteenth century for inadequate pay under dangerous working and living conditions, only to be hit with the Chinese Head Tax once the railway had been completed to discourage them from settling with their families in Canada. In 1939, at the outbreak of World War II, Canada refused entry to passengers on a Jewish refugee ship. The ship was forced to return to Europe where over a quarter of the passengers later died in Nazi concentration camps (BBC, 2018). During the same world war, tens of thousands of Japanese Canadians were forced into internment camps, often in crowded, unsanitary conditions without adequate heat or nutrition. Many of their houses, businesses, and belongings were seized during this time and were then sold by the Canadian government, dispossessing those in the camps of their homes and livelihoods upon their release (Adams & Stanger-Ross, 2016). The list of state-sanctioned injuries and oppression is certainly not limited to the above examples.

In the current research, we aim to make such history explicit and evaluate the effect this may have on Canadians' attitudes towards marginalized groups. Although surveys like those by

The Environics Institute provide valuable ecological information about attitudinal change among the Canadian public, rigorous empirical work is essential to understanding the parameters of such a change. Through this work, we hope to better understand the views Canadians' hold about their own history. Further, by testing the direct influence of biased historical narratives on current-day perspectives, we hope to find evidence of an effect that may occur for citizens of any country that has a history of selective historical oppression.

History's Influence on the Present

According to Social Identity Theory, group members are motivated to maintain a positive group image, and the stronger one's sense of identity, the more importance the maintenance of that positive group image will be (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Indeed, people tend to prefer positive representations of their country's past to events that paint a more critical image, and this effect is stronger for those with a stronger sense of group identity (e.g., Mukherjee et al., 2017; Padgett et al., in preparation; Sahdra & Ross, 2007). But holding a positive narrative can have consequences beyond positive identity maintenance. For instance, preferring representations of positive events is related to a lessened perception of contemporary racism and can even inform other sociopolitical attitudes, such as anti-immigration biases (Mukherjee et al., 2015). It's not just the content of these historical narratives that matters, but framing is also important. For instance, recent studies conducted in Israel have shown that when Jewish citizens adhere strongly to an exceptionalism narrative about Israel or have an especially strong victimhood narrative, they are more likely to hold negative attitudes towards immigrants and asylum seekers in the present day (Ariely, 2021; Feinstein & Bonikowski, 2021). In these examples it is notable that historical narratives can have consequences for those who were not involved in the original stories. That is, historical narratives can inform how people feel about

individuals who have nothing to do with their own history (e.g., modern-day immigrants), indicating the power and wide-reaching consequences of such narratives.

The emotions a person feels about their country's history can also inform their socio-behavioural intentions, particularly towards historically disadvantaged groups (Branscombe & Doosje, 2004). For example, much work has been done exploring the complex feelings of collective guilt or shame in relation to the things one's country or cultural group has done in the past. Some work in this realm has assessed people's attitudes towards responsibilities of the state and its citizens for past misdeeds, whereby experiencing feelings of group-based shame or guilt in relation to one's national history has been associated with more support for and increased prosocial attitudes towards historically oppressed groups (Allpress et al., 2010; Peetz et al., 2010). Not everyone agrees, however, that historical injustices should have any bearing on the present day. Many who live in countries with a colonial history believe that states or their citizens are under no obligation to address harms committed by their ancestors. This form of historical negation has been shown to correlate with and predict opposition to social policies that would improve material resources for Indigenous and other affected minority groups (Sibley et al., 2008; Sibley & Liu, 2012).

It is possible that social identity and political orientation plays some role in this disparity. For instance, those with a strong sense of national identity are less likely to feel a sense of guilt and be less supportive of government interventions and even apologies aimed at historically oppressed groups (Doosje et al., 2004). Similarly, political conservatism is also related, such that those who are more conservative feel less guilt about past misdeeds and are more willing to offer exonerating explanations for any such misdeeds (Roccas et al., 2004). General historical knowledge may also play a role. For instance, there is some evidence to suggest that perceptions

of current-day racism in the US differs by racial groups as a result of their differential knowledge and awareness of racial history (Nelson et al., 2013). Further, there is also evidence that when individuals are presented with negative historical events that highlight the harms that have been done to minority groups in their country, they are more willing to recognize modern-day forms of injustice and discrimination against these groups (Mukherjee et al., 2018). That is, regardless of initial attitudes about reparations and responsibilities of those in the present for actions committed in the past, there is some evidence that simply increasing awareness of historical injustices may also increase recognition of modern-day injustices. This latter effect may be even more impactful for those with a lower sense of group identity and liberal-leaning political perspectives.

Present Research

In the current project, we aim to expand on the social representations of history literature by assessing Canadians' perceptions of historical events. We are particularly interested in the perspectives and consequences of varying narratives, including those that offer a positive compared with more negative view of Canadian history and those that incorporate historically oppressed groups (e.g., Indigenous peoples, Black Canadians, Chinese Canadians, Japanese Canadians, immigrants, etc.) compared with those that ignore these groups. For the sake of convenience in writing and presenting our results, we will refer to those who have been historically oppressed by the Canadian government as "minorities." We recognize the inadequacy and even inaccuracy of this term for describing a massively diverse set of groups as well as the individuals who make them up. However, we are interested in attitudes towards such groups broadly speaking from the perspective of the general Canadian public and believe this term is suitably effective to meet that goal.

This paper consists of two studies. The first assesses general attitudes about the importance of various historical events and the moderating influence of Canadian identity and political orientation on those attitudes. The second is an experimental study that will provide participants with a set of historical events that represent a particular narrative of Canadian history so that we may determine whether differing narratives can causally influence people's current-day sociopolitical attitudes.

Study 1

Overview

The current study was pre-registered (<https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/RKB47>) with the following aim in mind: to assess how Canadians categorize, evaluate, and rate the importance of different historical events. This study had two primary goals. The first was to consider the types of events that Canadians consider to be most important and whether this perspective is moderated by Canadian identity and/or political orientation. The historical events were developed to follow a 2x2 design that depicted the evaluative quality of an event (positive or negative) and the inclusion of minority groups in the event (inclusive or exclusive). Thus, four categories of historical events are presented: (1) positive events related to minority groups in Canada; (2) negative events related to minority groups in Canada; (3) positive events that have no relation to minority groups in Canada; and (4) negative events that have nothing to do with minority groups in Canada. The second goal of this study was to pilot these historical events as primes for Study 2's experimental design. This process will be discussed in the methods section of Study 2. As outlined in our pre-registration, we made two hypotheses regarding the first goal of this study.

Hypothesis 1: We expect that our four categories of events would systematically vary in terms of importance. Building on the positive identity maintenance theory, we predicted that positive events would be considered more important on average than negative events and events relating to minorities would be considered less important on average than events not including minorities as they might be considered outsiders and viewed as not as relevant to the Canadian narrative.

Hypothesis 2: We expect that the relationship between the four event categories and importance will be moderated by political orientation and Canadian identity. We predict that those high in Canadian identity and politically right-leaning will be more likely to view negative events about Canada and events related to minorities as less important than those who are low in Canadian identity or politically left-leaning.

Methods

Participants

Participants were recruited from Academic Prolific, a crowd-sourcing platform that facilitates data collection for a fee. To be included in our study, participants had to be English-speaking Canadians who had completed the majority of their education in Canada. This was to ensure they had been fully ensconced in a Canadian history education and had access to similar cultural tools that would facilitate common historical narratives. Two-hundred eighty-four participants consented to participate in the study. Eight were removed for indicating at the end of the study that their data was invalid or not okay to use. A further 6 were removed for not meeting our inclusion criteria: four were removed for not being primarily educated in Canada and two were removed for not being Canadian citizens. There was no missing data of note as all participants completed 95-100% of the survey. Thus, our final dataset consisted of 270

participants, which met our pre-registered goal of ~250 participants. This sample size was chosen based on Monte-Carlo simulations that suggest correlation results tend to stabilize around sample sizes of 250 (Schönbrodt & Perugini, 2013).

Participants' ages ranged from 18 – 74 with a mean age of 29 ($SD = 9.5$) and a mode of 23 ($n = 21$), indicating a relatively young sample but with a fairly wide spread of ages. The majority of participants identified as women (62%), followed by men (35%), with the remaining 3% identifying as non-binary or “other”. In terms of ethnicity, participants identified as the following: White ($n = 189$), East Asian ($n = 26$), South Asian ($n = 14$), Indigenous ($n = 4$), Black ($n = 2$), Middle Eastern ($n = 3$), Southeast Asian ($n = 1$), Jewish ($n = 1$), and being of mixed ethnic backgrounds ($n = 30$). Participants came from all provinces except for PEI and there were no participants from the territories: Alberta ($n = 30$), British Columbia ($n = 28$), Manitoba ($n = 15$), New Brunswick ($n = 8$), Newfoundland and Labrador ($n = 7$), Nova Scotia ($n = 12$), Ontario ($n = 143$), Québec ($n = 15$), and Saskatchewan ($n = 12$). Altogether, this reflects a well-rounded sample of Canadians based on the actual proportions of these groups in the total population (e.g., majority White, largest proportion living in Ontario).

Procedure

This study received ethics from York University's Office of Research Ethics (Certificate # 2019-307). Participants completed a survey on Qualtrics that took approximately 15 minutes to complete and were compensated with the then average rate suggested by Prolific, pro-rated per hour (e.g., if the average rate was \$10 per hour, participants were paid \$2.50 for completing the study). Participants began by completing a measure of Canadian identity, after which they read through a list of 28 events from Canadian history and were asked to indicate the following for each event: (1) whether they considered it a positive or negative event, (2) how proud they

thought Canadians should be of the event, and (3) how important they thought the event was to Canadian history. After reviewing each event, participants provided some demographic information and were given the opportunity to provide an open-ended response regarding their perspective on historical events and how it might be related to Canadian identity.

Materials

Historical Events. The 28 historical events were written by the first author with the goal of developing four categories: events related to minority groups within Canada that reflect positively on the country; events related to minority groups within Canada that reflect negatively on the country; events that have no relation to minority groups that reflect positively on the country; and events that have no relation to minority groups that reflect negatively on the country. All events were presented in brief paragraphs of 2-3 sentences and were written in as neutral language as possible while still indicating the positive or negative nature of the event in an attempt to not unduly bias participants' responses (a full list of the original events is provided in the supplementary materials). The selection of events was based on personal knowledge, research into Canadian history, and consultation with colleagues. Events were also chosen based on their inclusion in a previous study completed by the authors, whereby undergraduates from Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Québec were asked to freely recall what they considered to be the most important events in Canadian history (Padgett et al., in preparation).

After reading an event, participants would answer the following three questions: Please indicate the degree to which you consider this a positive or negative event in Canadian history (from 1 = very negative to 7 = very positive); Please indicate how important you think it is that this event be taught to Canadian children in school (from 1 = not at all important to 7 =

extremely important), and; Please indicate the extent to which you think Canadians should be proud or ashamed of this event (from 1 = extremely ashamed to 7 = extremely proud).

Canadian Identity. Canadian identity was assessed with Cameron's (2004) three-factor social identification measure which captures three aspects of identity: ingroup ties (e.g., "I feel strong ties to other *Canadians*"), cognitive centrality (e.g., "In general, being a Canadian is an important part of my self-image"), and affective ties (e.g., "In general, I'm glad to be a *Canadian*"). There are 12 items total which were averaged together to create a Canadian identity score ranging from 1 – 7, where a higher score indicates a stronger sense of Canadian identity.

Political Orientation. Political orientation was assessed with a single item that used the following prompt: "Political orientation is often described as a spectrum from left to right. Please use the scale below to indicate where your political orientation falls along this spectrum." The scale ranged from 1 (left-wing) to 11 (right-wing) with a marker on 6 (centre) to help ground the scale.

Results

All data cleaning and analyses were conducted in R. Scripts as well as an anonymized form of the data can be found on the OSF for those who would like to replicate any analyses (<https://osf.io/djtwe/>). The purpose of this analysis was to consider whether Canadians viewed certain categories of events as more important than others and to determine if any such differences were moderated by Canadian identity or political orientation. To prepare our events for analysis, we ran a series of Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFAs) to ensure the set of events represented a simple structure. That is, we wanted to ensure that all events were loading well on their expected factors and that there were no substantial cross-loadings between factors. Doing so would allow us to confidently split our events into discrete categories for the use of within-group

comparisons. The process for ensuring our events were appropriate for a within-subjects analysis was as follows. As we had generated the events to represent four distinct categories, a four-factor EFA was run on the set of 28 events and the most problematic event (e.g., strong cross-loadings across multiple factors) was selected for removal. After removing the problematic item, an EFA would be run again and the next most problematic item would be removed, and so on, until satisfactory simple structure was achieved. In the end, four items were removed: Vietnamese Boat People from minority inclusive positive; The Canadian Health Act and Terry Fox from minority exclusive positive; and the national energy program from minority exclusive negative).

To address Hypothesis 1 and determine whether there were any main effects or interactions of conditions, i.e., evaluation of events (positive or negative) and presence of minority groups in events (inclusive or exclusive), we conducted a 2x2 within-subjects ANOVA. The means and standard deviations for the four event categories can be found in Table 1. Both main effects were found to be significant, with positive events being considered more important, as hypothesized, but with minority events being considered more important than non-minority events, which was the opposite of the hypothesized pattern. Both main effects, however, need to be considered in light of a statistically significant interaction, $F(1, 268) = 13.607, p < .001$. Following the interaction, simple main effects were run as a post-hoc analysis, where the difference in one variable was considered at both levels of the other variable (e.g., the difference in evaluation would be considered for minority exclusive events and minority inclusive events separately). As can be seen from the raw means, regardless of if the events are positive or negative, events related to minorities are considered much more important than events that are not related to minorities. Further, there is a difference in evaluation for the minority inclusive events, $F(1, 268) = 36.7, p < .001, d = 0.33$, but not for the minority exclusive events, $F(1, 269) =$

0.098, $p = 0.754$. Specifically, for the minority inclusive events, positive events are considered slightly more important than negative events.

Table 1

Importance of Historical Events Scores by Condition (Study 1)

		Presence of Minority Group	
		Inclusive	Exclusive
Evaluation of Event	Positive	6.38 (0.50)	4.88 (0.83)
	Negative	6.18 (0.69)	4.86 (0.83)

Items scored on a 7-point scale. All groups had $N=270$, except for the minority inclusive negative condition, which had one outlier removed (see R script for more details).

To address Hypothesis 2 and determine whether Canadian identity or political orientation might moderate people's attitudes towards these events, we conducted a multi-level model (MLM) analysis due to the within-subjects nature of our data and the fact that our moderators are both continuous variables. Within an MLM framework, the participants are considered the Level 2 variables and the repeated observations (i.e., the importance score within each condition) are considered the Level 1 variables. In other words, condition is nested *within* the participant. Two separate moderation models were built, one for each moderator (i.e., Canadian identity and political orientation). Both were random intercept models whereby the two grouping variables (positive/negative events and minority inclusive/exclusive events), the given moderating variable, and all their interactions were regressed onto the outcome variable: perceived importance of the historical event.

Canadian Identity. A significant interaction was found between Canadian identity and evaluation ($b = 0.23$, $p < .001$) and between Canadian identity and minority inclusion ($b = -0.14$, $p = 0.003$). By using graphs to visualize the simple slopes for these moderations, we can see that

those who are high in Canadian identity (+1 *SD* above the mean) view positive events as more important than negative events, whereas those who are low in Canadian identity (-1*SD* below the mean) view negative events as more important (see Figure 1). On the other hand, everyone views minority inclusive events as more important than minority exclusive, but this relationship appears to be slightly stronger for those who are lower in Canadian identity (see Figure 2).

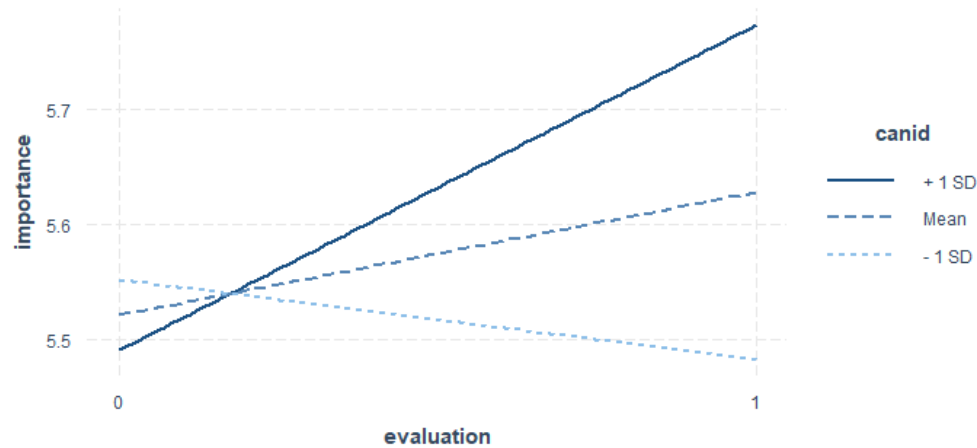


Figure 1. Interaction between Canadian identity and evaluation of event (0 = negative, 1 = positive) on importance.

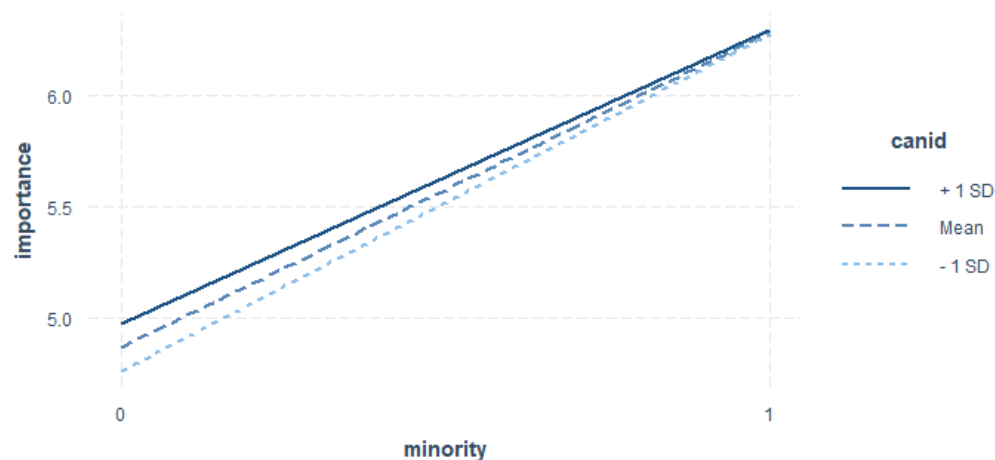


Figure 2. Interaction between Canadian identity and inclusion of minorities (0 = no inclusion, 1 = inclusion) on importance.

Political Orientation. The interaction between political orientation and minority inclusion was significant ($b = -0.12, p < .001$), but the relationship with evaluation only showed a

small effect that just met the significance threshold ($b = 0.03, p = .05$). We can visualize the simple slopes to better understand these relationships. In Figure 3, we see that there is a general trend for preferring positive to negative events, though those who are more right politically (+1 *SD*), seem to have a slightly stronger preference for positive than negative events compared to those who are more neutral (mean) or left (-1 *SD*) politically. By contrast, in Figure 4, we observe that those who are more left politically show a slightly stronger preference for minority inclusive than minority exclusive events, compared to those who are more moderate or right politically.

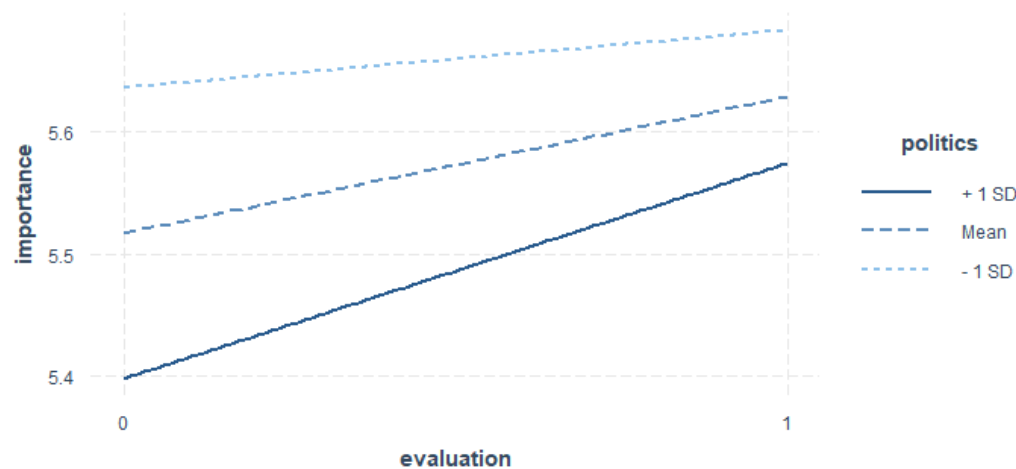


Figure 3. Interaction between political orientation and evaluation of event (0 = negative, 1 = positive) on importance.

Summary

We tested two hypotheses that considered whether some events might be viewed as more important than others and whether these relationships might be moderated by Canadian identity or political orientation. We discovered that minority inclusive events are considered much more important than minority exclusive events, regardless of evaluation (i.e., whether they are viewed as positive or negative). Further, for minority inclusive events, positive events were considered slightly more important than negative events (no difference was found for exclusive events).

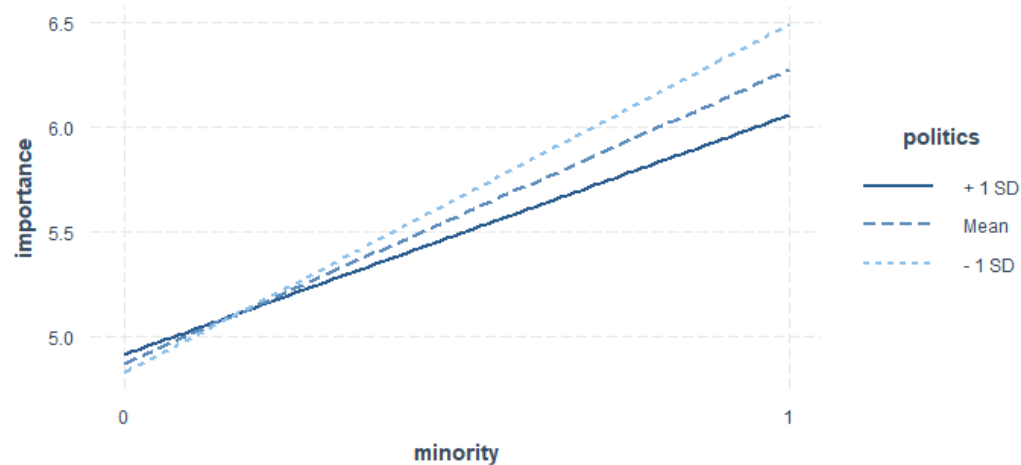


Figure 4. Interaction between political orientation and inclusion of minorities (0 = no inclusion, 1 = inclusion) on importance.

We also found that both Canadian identity and political orientation moderated these relationships. The most notable pattern was observed between Canadian identity and evaluation, whereby those high in Canadian identity considered positive events much more important than negative events while those low in Canadian identity showed the exact opposite pattern. Those who lean more right politically also showed a slight preference for positive events compared to those further to the left. Regarding minority inclusion, everyone rated minority inclusive events as being more important than minority exclusive events, but this preference tended to be slightly stronger for those low in Canadian identity and on the left politically.

Study 2

Overview

Study 2 was pre-registered (<https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/T649Y>) after the analysis of Study 1 had been completed. The goal of this study was to assess whether biased historical narratives could have a direct influence on Canadians' attitudes towards historically oppressed groups. The study consists of a 2 (Event valence) x 2 (Minority relation) between-subjects design

whereby participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups presenting a distinct set of the historical events that were piloted in Study 1. As in Study 1, the groups were: positive events related to minority groups within Canada (e.g., the acceptance of refugees during the Vietnam war), negative events related to minority groups within Canada (e.g., the expulsion of the Acadians), positive events not related to minority groups within Canada (e.g., the passing of the Canada Health Act), and negative events not related to minority groups within Canada (e.g., the Great Depression).

We registered the following hypothesis: It was expected that those who are presented with negative historical events related to minority groups will be more favourable towards minority groups in general (H3a) and will be more agreeable to claims of discrimination against such groups (H3b). We developed two measures to assess attitudes towards historically oppressed groups in Canada which are represented by our two hypotheses (details on these variables provided in the methods).

Methods

Participants

Recruitment methods and inclusion criteria for this study were the same as Study 1, with the additional caveat that those who completed Study 1 could not participate in Study 2. A priori power analysis was conducted using the pwr2 package in R Studio which recommended a sample size of 150 per group to detect a small main effect with a power of 0.96. As such, we aimed to collect 150 participants per condition for a total of 600. Initially, 613 participants consented to participate in our study. Fifteen were removed for not indicating their data was valid and should be included in the study (of these, only one participant completed the study; the others dropped out after the initial consent stage). A further seven were removed for indicating

that the majority of their education was not completed in Canada and four were removed for not being Canadian citizens. As there was no missing data of note, the final data set consisted of 587 participants.

The demographics of Study 2 are similar to those of Study 1. Age ranged from 18 – 76 with a mean age of 32 ($SD = 11.6$) and a mode of 24 ($n = 24$). Gender was more evenly distributed in Study 2, though the majority of participants still identified as women (55%), followed by men (42%), with the remaining 3% identifying as non-binary or “prefer not to answer.” Ethnic composition was also similar: White ($n = 427$), East Asian ($n = 60$), South Asian ($n = 19$), Southeast Asian ($n = 17$), Black ($n = 10$), Jewish ($n = 8$), Indigenous ($n = 7$), Latin American ($n = 6$), Middle Eastern ($n = 2$), bi/multi-racial ($n = 25$), and other ($n = 6$). Participants came from all provinces but again there were no participants from the territories: Alberta ($n = 89$), British Columbia ($n = 80$), Manitoba ($n = 25$), New Brunswick ($n = 11$), Newfoundland and Labrador ($n = 15$), Nova Scotia ($n = 17$), Ontario ($n = 303$), PEI ($n = 1$), Québec ($n = 32$), Saskatchewan ($n = 12$), and N/A ($n = 1$). Once again, this reflects a representative snapshot of English-speaking Canadian citizens whose education took place in Canada.

Procedure

As with Study 1, participants were recruited via Prolific and completed the survey on Qualtrics, which took approximately 15 minutes, and were compensated accordingly. As the purpose of this study was to determine whether priming individuals with biased historical narratives would alter their attitudes towards historically oppressed groups, a minor form of deception was required (ethics provided for Study 2 are the same as Study 1). Participants were told that the purpose of the study was to evaluate their attitudes on a variety of issues related to

public policies within Canada. They were told that they would first be asked to indicate their attitudes towards a list of potential curriculum topics proposed for Canadian high schools and a list of policies that had been proposed to receive funding from the Canadian government. They were also told that they may be asked some other questions regarding their perception of Canadian society.

After consenting to participate in the study, participants were told that they would be provided with a list of events that were currently being considered for inclusion in history classes. They were asked to read each event carefully and answer follow-up questions. They were then presented with five events which differed depending on the condition they were randomly assigned to and asked to indicate how important they thought it was the event be taught in Canadian high schools, the degree to which they considered it a positive a negative event, and whether they were aware of the event prior to taking the survey. After they provided their responses for each event, they were then presented with all five events again on a single page and asked to share their thoughts about them as they pertained to standardized education in Canada. The purpose of this was to reinforce the events, and thus the manipulated condition, in their minds by giving them another opportunity to read and discuss them. Next, they were given the attitudes towards minorities measure, the primary outcome measure of the study. They then completed the beliefs about injustice measure (our second outcome variable), followed by a measure of Canadian identity. Finally, they completed a set of demographic questions and were provided with an opportunity to share any feedback they had about the study. Once they completed the study, they were fully debriefed and informed about the real purpose of the study.

Materials

Historical Events. The historical events used in this study were piloted in Study 1 to ensure they would be effective as primes in a 2x2 experimental design. Seven events for each of the four categories were piloted with the aim of selecting the five best events to be used in each group for Study 2.⁶ To ensure the events would be effective as primes for the experimental design in Study 2, we needed to ensure the degree of evaluation was similar for positive events and negative events, regardless of their inclusion/exclusion of minorities.⁷ For example, we wanted to ensure that positive events about minorities and positive events unrelated to minorities were considered equally positive. While the dimension of minority inclusion/exclusion was controlled for when developing the events (i.e., either the event referenced a minority group in Canada in some way or it did not), how participants would evaluate the events needed to be assessed analytically. After comparing descriptive information (e.g., scale means, item means, item response distributions) between the appropriate categories from our Study 1 sample, two events were removed from each group.

⁶ The original plan to address this goal as outlined in the pre-registration was to conduct a factor analysis on the entire set of items to determine the underlying structure of our selected events. We hypothesized that four factors would emerge that represented our four intended categories of historical events that would be appropriate for use in Study 2. As is discussed in more detail in our supplementary materials, after conducting this analysis, we realized it was inappropriate for the goal at hand. As such, we deviated from the pre-registration to take an alternate approach which is discussed in detail here.

⁷ As stated in the methods, participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they considered an event to be positive or negative and the degree to which they considered it to be worthy of pride or shame. The inclusion of both items was to address a conflation of the terms positive and pride in the literature, and to be accurate in our description of these events for Study 2. The analyses described here were conducted for both the positive/negative items and the pride/shame items, but ultimately the positive/negative items were deemed more cooperative overall. For most events, there was a strong degree of overlap between what is considered positive and what is considered worthy of pride. The only category where there was disagreement between the items was for negative minority exclusive events. In general, participants considered these events to be “neutral” in terms of pride but considered them to be negative in terms of evaluation. Thus, while it may be appropriate to conflate pride and evaluation for some categories, it is not appropriate for all. Further, given that the negative item provided a stronger evaluation for this category than the shame item, we decided to stick with the positive/negative evaluation items for this scale and therefore use the language of positive/negative rather than prideful/shameful when discussing our results.

For the two positive event categories, the original minority inclusive events ($M = 6.35$) were considered more positive than the minority exclusive events ($M = 5.82$). The inclusive items also had a stronger negative skew. We wanted to remove items that would bring these means closer together and make their distributions look more similar. To achieve this, we removed events 1 (civil marriage act) and 2 (women's suffrage) from the minority inclusive category and events 15 (confederation) and 16 (Hudson's Bay Company) from the minority exclusive category which did result in more similar means and distribution structures ($M = 6.27$ & $M = 6.06$ respectively). Ultimately, we felt that these two sets of events were similarly considered very positive (above 6 on a 7-point scale) by Canadians.

For the negative events, once again the minority inclusive events ($M = 1.51$) were given more extreme scores than the minority exclusive events ($M = 2.60$). The minority inclusive events also showed a very strong negative skew with almost all participants selecting either 1 or 2 on a 7-point scale for these items. To bring the scores closer together and make the distributions more similar, we removed the most extreme of the inclusive events and the least extreme of the exclusive events. Events 8 (residential schools) and 9 (Japanese internment) were removed from the minority inclusive category and events 25 (the national energy program) and 27 (Avro Arrow) were removed from the minority exclusive categories. This provided some adjustment to the means (minority inclusive, $M = 1.61$; minority exclusive, $M = 2.33$), but close to a full scale-point difference remained between the groups. Ultimately, we believe this is simply a nature of the event categories themselves, with negative minority exclusive events being considered much closer to neutral events by Canadians than the other categories. As the effect of this particular category was of no specific interest in this project beyond its use as a control, we were satisfied with this final list of events for inclusion as primes in Study 2.

The final set of events used can be found in the supplementary materials. As in Study 1, after participants were presented with an event, they were asked to indicate how important they thought it was that this event be taught in Canadian high schools from 1 (extremely unimportant) to 7 (extremely important) and how positively they viewed the event on a scale from 1 (extremely negative) to 7 (extremely positive). They were also asked to indicate whether they were aware of the event prior to taking the survey by responding with either “Yes, I knew about this event” or “No, this is the first time I’ve heard of it.” The positivity item was used as a manipulation check to ensure the groups were appropriately distinct in terms of evaluation. The other response items were not used in any of the analyses but were included as part of the deception of the study.

Attitudes Towards Minority Groups. This measure was developed by the authors to assess participants’ general attitudes towards historically oppressed groups within Canada. The framing for the measure was borrowed from Haddock and Zanna’s (1998) evaluation thermometer, where participants are asked to rate their feelings of warmth towards a particular group or issue on a scale from 0 to 100. For the current study, we told participants that the Canadian government allots a certain amount of funding to various new initiatives proposed each year and that we were interested in public opinions about where this funding should be allocated. We then presented them with a list of initiatives and asked them how much government funding they thought should be allocated to each from 0 (no funding) to 100 (as much as is required) in increments of 10, providing us with an 11-point scale.

The structure of the items was primarily borrowed from Verkuyten and Yildiz’s (2006) attitudes towards minority rights scales that were developed for Turkish and Dutch participants but rewritten for a Canadian context. The content for the items was based on recommendations

proposed by The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), Black Lives Matter Toronto (Black Lives Matter: Toronto, ND), and other advocate groups within Canada. The items were meant to represent a variety of historically oppressed and politically unrepresented groups within Canada. They were also designed to capture people's general support for these groups by indicating how much actual fiscal support they felt should be provided to them. We developed seven items to be used in the analysis (e.g., "The establishment of an endowment fund that would support Black Canadian business initiatives") as well as four items unrelated to minority groups within Canada (e.g., "Tax credits for companies to reduce their carbon emissions") as a means of hiding the intention of the study (see supplementary materials for full list of items).

As this measure was developed by the authors for this study, an EFA was run on the seven items intended for analysis to ensure they had strong simple structure. Parallel analysis suggested a 1-factor model was appropriate and all items loaded very strongly on a single factor (loadings ranged from 0.71 – 0.88) and fit indices for the model were all excellent (RMSEA = .09, TLI = 0.97, RMSR = 0.03). Internal reliability was also assessed with coefficient alpha which was also extremely strong ($\alpha = 0.92$, 90% CI: 0.91., 0.93).

Perceptions of Discrimination. This measure was developed by the authors to assess participants' perceptions of discrimination and beliefs about injustice aimed at minority groups in particular within Canada. The measure was based on one developed by Mukherjee et al. (2017) but adapted for a Canadian context. Participants were presented with a list of items and asked to indicate the extent to which they felt these issues were the result of discrimination on a 7-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree that this is due to discrimination) to 7 (strongly agree that this is due to discrimination). This measure consisted of four items that reflected facts about a

variety of groups within Canada (e.g., “Indigenous people are overrepresented among incarcerated populations in Canada’s federal prisons”). See supplementary materials for a full list of items and participant instructions.

Once again, as this measure was developed for the first time for this study, an EFA was conducted. Parallel analysis recommended a one-factor model where all items loaded very strongly (all above .70), and model fit was extremely strong (TLI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.06 and RMSR 0.02). Internal reliability was also high ($\alpha = 0.86$, 90% CI: 0.84., 0.88).

Canadian Identity & Political Orientation. The same measures used to assess Canadian identity and political orientation in Study 1 were used in Study 2.

Results

As with Study 1, all data cleaning and analyses were conducted in R. Scripts as well as an anonymized form of the data can be found on the project’s OSF (<https://osf.io/djtwe/>). Prior to analysis, manipulation checks were run on all four groups of historical events to ensure that they were viewed as distinctly positive or negative. Both positive groups viewed their sets of events as similarly positive (minority inclusive: $M = 6.12$, $SD = 0.69$; minority exclusive: $M = 5.95$, $SD = 0.90$) while both negative groups also viewed their events as generally negative (minority inclusive: $M = 1.84$, $SD = 0.90$; minority exclusive: $M = 2.35$, $SD = 0.75$). Although the minority inclusive events appear to be rated with stronger evaluations than the exclusive events, the manipulations appear to have been sufficient in presenting positive compared with negative events.

Table 2*Attitudes towards Minority Groups by Condition (Study 2)*

		Presence of Minority Group	
		Inclusive	Exclusive
Evaluation of	Positive	5.79 (2.68), 149	5.85 (2.74), 148
Event	Negative	5.91 (2.66), 143	5.91 (2.56), 147

Information presented: Mean (*SD*), *N*; items were scored on an 11-point scale.

To assess Hypothesis 3a, that those in the group who were presented with historical narratives that focused on negative events related to minority groups within Canada would have more positive attitudes towards such groups in general, we conducted a 2x2 ANOVA. The means and standard deviations for each group can be found in Table 2. On an 11-point scale, the mid-point is a 6 and all groups scored just below the mid-point, showing moderate support for the initiatives proposed. The results of the ANOVA were statistically non-significant ($F(3, 583) = 0.073, p = 0.974$), showing no main effects or interactions. The same procedure was applied to test Hypothesis 3b (assessing whether there was an effect on perceptions of discrimination; see Table 3 for descriptive information). As this variable was calculated on a 7-point scale, all groups scored above the midpoint of 4, showing in general they are more willing to perceive the items as being due to discrimination than not. Like the previous analysis, the results of the ANOVA were statistically non-significant ($F(3, 583) = 0.529, p = 0.663$), showing no main effects or interactions.

Table 3*Perception of Discrimination by Condition (Study 2)*

		Presence of Minority Group	
		Inclusive	Exclusive
Evaluation of	Positive	5.42 (1.30), 149	5.43 (1.33), 148
Event	Negative	5.57 (1.22), 143	5.55 (1.18), 147

Information presented: Mean (*SD*), N; items were scored on a 7-point scale.

In addition to this primary analysis, three exploratory analyses were also conducted, all of which were also non-significant. First, another 2x2 ANOVA was run using Canadian identity as the outcome variable to assess if differing historical narratives might have a direct influence on identity strength. Next, four ANCOVAs were run using Canadian identity and political orientation as control variables for each of the two outcome variables, but controlling for these variables made no difference to the results. Correlations between our two outcome variables, Canadian ID, and political orientation for our entire sample can be found in Table 4. Our two outcome variables are highly correlated with one another and are negatively related to political orientation, such that those who are more left politically are more supportive of government funding towards the proposed initiatives and are more willing to perceive of discrimination.

Summary

In the current study we tested whether there was a direct and immediate causal effect of reading biased historical narratives on Canadians' attitudes towards historically oppressed groups and perceptions of discrimination. We found that in general, Canadians show moderate support for initiatives aimed at supporting minority groups and tend to recognize the role discrimination plays in various issues facing minority groups in Canada today. However, we did not find any

experimental evidence that being made aware of the negative history relating to minority groups in Canada, as compared to being presenting with positive events or events unrelated to minority groups, has any influence on these attitudes.

Table 4

Correlations with confidence intervals (Study 2)

Variable	Attitudes towards Minorities	Perceptions of Discrimination	Canadian Identity
Perceptions of Discrimination	.61** [.56, .66]		
Canadian Identity	-.09* [-.17, -.01]	-.03 [-.11, .05]	
Political Orientation	-.45** [-.51, -.38]	-.58** [-.63, -.52]	.06 [-.02, .14]

Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation.
* indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Discussion

The current set of studies provide a rigorous empirical assessment of Canadians' perspectives on their own history. First, we discovered that Canadians unequivocally view the events we presented to them that are related to minority groups to be more important than the events that don't make mention of such groups. However, they did show a preference for the positive over the negative events related to minorities, suggesting that while such events are considered important, a little more reverence is given to events that align with a positive narrative. Likewise, in accordance with the positive identity maintenance theory of Social Identity Theory, participants who had a stronger sense of Canadian identity viewed positive

events as more important in general compared with those who had a lower sense of identity. Similarly, those who were more right leaning politically seemed to show a slightly stronger preference for positive over negative events compared with those leaning more towards the left. Finally, we found that everyone rated minority inclusive events as being more important than minority exclusive events, but this preference seemed to be slightly stronger for those low in Canadian identity and more to the left politically. While these findings are promising and align with theoretical expectations, we were unable to find a direct effect of historical narratives on contemporary sociopolitical perspectives via our manipulation of biased historical narratives in Study 2.

Our work is somewhat inconsistent with previous findings. For instance, we did find that people tend to prefer positive to negative representations of their country's history (Paez et al., 2016), but we did not find any evidence of a causal influence of these representations on attitudes or identity (contrary to findings from Mukherjee et al., 2017 and Sahdra & Ross, 2007). There are a few possible explanations for our null findings: the effect does not exist; our methods were incapable of finding the effect; or the effect is very difficult to capture in a short-term priming study of this nature. Given the strong body of literature connecting perceptions of history to modern-day attitudes (e.g., Allpress et al., 2010; Ariely, 2021; Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Feinstein & Bonikowski, 2021; Mukherjee et al., 2015; Peetz et al., 2010; Sibley et al., 2008; Sibley & Liu, 2012), and given the rigorous standards with which we developed our priming and outcome materials, we are inclined to prefer the third option.

Evidence from ecologically valid samples of a longitudinal nature, such as the Environics Institute survey, suggest that as knowledge of historical oppression increase, attitudes shift towards the more prosocial, but this may perhaps be a long-term, rather than a short-term effect.

It is worth noting that in piloting the events for Study 2, we removed the examples related to residential schools and internment camps, as their ratings were so much lower than the other negative events, thereby pulling the average rating well below that of the minority exclusive events. This is perhaps due to the fact that these events are more well-known to Canadians and so the population is already primed to hold certain attitudes about them or have enough knowledge and understanding of them to recognize their severity.

Looking at our correlational results from Study 1 and descriptive information about our data from Study 2, we are still able to glean some meaningful information about Canadians attitudes. In general, Canadians do seem to recognize the importance of increasing awareness about history that pertains to minority groups, whether it be positive or negative. They are also moderately supportive of the government providing financial backing to initiatives that would support these groups and are very willing to recognize instances of structural discrimination in Canada. These views are all especially strong for those who self-identify as politically left leaning. Thus, in general, there does seem to be recognition of the importance of these narratives as well as the existence of discrimination, but perhaps not a strong political will to put financial resources into redressing these issues.

This lack of political will may perhaps be in part explained by Canadian identity. A centrepiece of Canadian identity is multiculturalism (see this speech by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Canadian Multiculturalism Day; Trudeau, 2017), which would help explain why our participants recognized the particular importance of educating young people about events related to minority groups. However, Canadian identity, like all social identities, also seems to play a role in preferring positive to negative narratives, suggesting that while multiculturalism may be considered important, many would prefer to view it with a sense of pride and accomplishment,

rather than as a goal that perhaps still requires effort and economic resources to achieve. The lack of willingness to expend resources for particular disadvantaged groups may also align with increased economic concerns Canadians hold more broadly, as well as uncertainty about how much government intervention would be beneficial and how such resources would best be spent. A massive nation-wide poll conducted in 2016 revealed that Canadians tend to be quite proud of being Canadian and perceive of Canada as having a good international reputation, due in large part to its openness to refugees and international peacekeeping, however, they also believe minorities should be working hard to integrate into mainstream Canadian society over encouraging cultural and linguistic diversity and believe immigration and refugee policies should prioritize Canada's economic needs over people experiencing crises abroad (Angus Reid, 2016). So, while Canadians may be proud of a multicultural reputation, they may be less willing to expend resources to advance it.

Limitations & Future Directions

The largest limitation of this study is the inadequacy of priming effects to capture meaningful patterns of behaviour that may exist in the real world. Providing participants with a set of five brief historical events is a poor simulacrum of the ways in which cultural tools are engaged with regularly in the real world. It is also possible that the way in which we chose to assess attitudes towards minority groups in Canada was inappropriate. In particular, a general lack of support for expending financial resources may have provided lower scores than a general attitudes scale would have. Such a pattern, however, should have been consistent across our groups as participant's were randomly assigned to condition. So even if there is an unwillingness to support government spending in general, we may have still observed a difference between groups. Further, as we found no effect for our secondary outcome variable, it is unlikely that an

effect would have occurred for a softer version of an attitudes measure. It is also possible that the events we selected were incompatible with our goals or their framing was insufficient to produce an effect. Overall, we believe that the effect of historical narratives on present-day sociopolitical concerns is perhaps not one that is not easily captured in an experimental laboratory study.

Rather, it may be better suited to other forms of research, such as longitudinal, correlational, or broad content analyses of cultural tools and public discourse. Although we were unable to find a direct causal effect with our current design, we believe future work should continue to investigate the various roles that political orientation and Canadian identity in particular play in the relationship between perceptions of history and the present.

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Supplementary Materials

Deviations from the Registration

Using the data collected from Study 1, we wanted to evaluate the appropriateness of the historical events for use as manipulations in Study 2. Initially, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis as specified by the pre-registration, but it became clear that this approach was inappropriate for our aims. We needed our historical events to fit into two categories: including or not including minorities and presenting a positive or a negative view of Canadian history. The results of the EFA showed that many items had cross-loadings, but considering our events are meant to exist along two dimensions, cross-loadings aren't necessarily a bad thing for our purposes. That is, we aren't actually expecting four unique structures, we are expecting our groups to overlap (e.g., events in the positive minority inclusive category will have something in common with both the negative minority inclusive category and the positive minority exclusive category). Since we were not assessing the ability of these items to represent 4 distinct subscales but rather to represent extreme ends of two distinct dimensions, factor analysis was not actually appropriate for our intentions. As such, we decided to evaluate the appropriateness of the items on an item-by-item basis using descriptive information (see more details in the methods of Study 2).

List of Historical Events

Below is the full list of historical events that were included in Study 1. The events that are italicized were removed (see methods section of Study 2) and all remaining events were used as primes for the categories that were manipulated in Study 2.

Minority Inclusive Positive Events Condition

1. *In 2005, Canada passed the Civil Marriage Act, which extends the legal capacity for marriage to same-sex couples in order to reflect values of tolerance, respect and equality, consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*
2. *In 1916, women in the three prairie provinces were among the first women in the world granted the right to vote. By 1918, most Canadian women were given the same rights as men to vote in federal elections.*
3. Between 1979 and 80, Canada accepted over 60,000 Vietnamese refugees. These refugees were popularly known as “boat people” because they fled South Vietnam on small boats to escape the regime that had taken over after the war.
4. The Underground Railroad was a network of abolitionists (people who wanted to end slavery) that helped convey approximately 40,000 fugitive slaves to Canada where they were considered free upon arrival.
5. Multiculturalism became an official policy of the Canadian government in 1971. Its aim was to assist the development of all cultural and ethnic groups within Canada and promote cultural exchange. In 1988, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed, making Canada the first country to enshrine multiculturalism into law.
6. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was established in 1982. It protects the equality of all Canadians regardless of personal characteristics such as race, nationality, and ethnicity.
7. In 1773, the Anti-slavery Act was passed in Upper Canada, 40 years before the abolition of slavery became law throughout the British Empire. This helped to make Canada an important base for the abolitionist movement.

Minority Inclusive Negative Events Condition

8. *In 1883, Canada officially authorized the creation of the residential school system, a network of boarding schools that operated in Canada until 1996. This system removed Indigenous children from their families, intentionally depriving them of their ancestral culture and language in an effort to assimilate them into white, Christian society.*
9. *During World War II, the Canadian government forcibly relocated almost the entire Japanese Canadian population into over-crowded and unsanitary internment camps. In order to pay for the costs associated with their detainment, the government sold the homes, businesses, and private property of those interred.*
10. The federal government passed The Indian Act in 1876. Its aim was to assimilate Indigenous people into Euro-Canadian society. The act enabled many human rights violations, and although it has been altered since its inception, it is still used to inform issues, such as healthcare and education, for First Nation communities within Canada.
11. The Expulsion of the Acadians took place from 1755 - 1764 when the British forcibly removed the Acadian people from the present-day Maritime provinces. Also referred to as the Great Upheaval, it resulted in the deaths of thousands of Acadians.
12. Near the end of the 19th century, as the Chinese population in Canada began to grow, the Canadian government established the Chinese Head Tax as a means of discouraging Chinese immigration specifically. The fee was equal to about two years' salary and remained in place for almost 40 years.
13. Africville was a small community of predominantly Black Canadians located in Halifax, Nova Scotia that was perpetually neglected by the local and provincial governments, and

in the 1960s residents were forcibly relocated and many of their homes and community buildings were demolished.

14. During the 1960s, a chemical plant dumped mercury into a river system that was a primary source of food and income for the Grassy Narrows First Nation, leading to widespread mercury poisoning. In 1970, the Ontario government closed their commercial fishery resulting in economic disaster for the community.

Minority Exclusive Positive Events Condition

15. *On July 1, 1867, the British North American colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Province of Canada (subsequently divided into Ontario and Québec) joined in federal union to form the Dominion of Canada.*
16. *In 1670, The Hudson's Bay company was established as a fur trading business in Canada. It is still incorporated today and remains the oldest merchandising company in the English-speaking world.*
17. Terry Fox was a Canadian athlete who, after losing his leg to cancer when he was 19 years old, embarked on a cross-country marathon in order to raise awareness and funds for cancer research. Although Terry was unable to complete his run, it has become a worldwide legacy with millions of people participating in a Terry Fox Run fundraiser each year.
18. The Battle of Vimy Ridge was a decisive victory won by Canadian corps during World War I. The victory is often credited to meticulous planning, advanced artillery tactics, and well-trained specialized infantry.

19. In The Canada Health Act was passed in 1984. It requires provincial/territorial and federal governments to provide publicly funded healthcare, including the universal coverage of medical services, such as physician and hospital services.
20. At the 2010 Winter Olympics, which was hosted in Vancouver, Canada won more gold medals than any other competing nation for the first time, including the men's hockey final where Sidney Crosby scored the golden goal in overtime.
21. Anne of Green Gables, authored Lucy Maud Montgomery, was published in 1908 and has long been considered a classic of children's literature. It has sold over 50 million copies worldwide and has been translated into at least 36 languages.

Minority Exclusive Negative Events Condition

22. Between 1929 and 1933, Canada suffered from the Great Depression, a long period of severe economic decline. In addition to businesses going bankrupt and unemployment surging to close to 30%, a severe drought in the prairies led to massive crop failures.
23. During World War II, over 6,000 Canadian infantry soldiers took part in Operation Jubilee, a failed naval attack on the German-occupied port of Dieppe where over half of the Canadian soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured.
24. The Alaska boundary dispute was a contest between the American and Canadian governments over economically viable land during the Gold Rush period of the late 19th century. The dispute resulted in arbitration between the United States and the United Kingdom with the UK ultimately capitulating to the Americans, damaging Canadian economic interests.
25. *The National Energy Program was a policy proposed by the Canadian government in the early 1980s to ensure Canada could supply its own oil and gas needs. While initially*

popular, it was eventually dismantled due to the strengthening global market which Canada grew to depend on instead.

26. In 1917, a disaster known as the Halifax Explosion occurred when two ships, one carrying explosives bound for the European battlefield, collided in the city's harbor. Approximately 9,000 people were injured and 1,782 were confirmed to have been killed as a result of the explosion.
27. *In the 1950s, the Royal Canadian Airforce commissioned the development of the Avro Arrow, an exceedingly advanced aircraft for its era. The project was plagued by political, economic, and technological difficulties that led to its eventual dismantling in 1959. The Arrow was never completed and over 25,000 jobs were lost as a result.*
28. The Great Ice Storm of 1998 was a natural disaster that affected areas of Ontario, Québec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. It caused massive damage that led to widespread power outages that lasted up to several weeks. A state of emergency was called in many areas and at least 25 people died from hypothermia as a result of the storm.

Attitudes Towards Minorities Measure

Instructions

The federal government allots a certain amount of funding to various new initiatives proposed each year. We are interested in public opinions about where this government funding should be focused.

On the following page, you will be presented with statements that summarize some of these initiatives. Below each item is a scale from 0 to 100 that reflects the amount of money you think should be allocated to the given initiative from 0 (no money should be allocated) to 100 (the full amount, or as much money as requested, should be allocated).

Please keep in mind that all responses are anonymous and there are no right or wrong answers, we are simply interested in your honest opinion.

Items

Please indicate how much government funding should be allocated to the following initiatives from 0 (no money should be allocated) to 100 (the full amount of money requested should be allocated).

Minority-related Items

1. Cultural awareness training for public servants, such as the police, educators, and health care workers.
2. The establishment of an endowment fund to support Black Canadians' business initiatives.
3. Post-secondary education programs that focus on protecting Indigenous languages within Canada.
4. Education programs designed specifically for members of religious, cultural, and/or ethnic minority groups.
5. Specialized job training programs for newly arrived refugees.
6. The provision of meal options in federal prisons that cater to religious dietary restrictions.
7. Tax incentives for companies to employ individuals from underrepresented racial groups.

General Items

1. The establishment of free-to-access mental health and wellness centres across the country.
2. Tax credits for large companies to reduce their carbon emissions.
3. Universal pharmaceutical and dental care benefits for senior citizens.
4. Federally funded childcare centres throughout Canada.

Beliefs about Discrimination Measure

Instructions

The following statements reflect some issues that various minority groups within Canada face today. Please indicate the degree to which you think the issues presented on the following page are **due to discrimination**.

As always, keep in mind that we are interested in your genuine opinion, so please answer honestly.

Items

Please indicate the degree to which you think discrimination plays a role in the following issues where strongly disagree indicates you don't believe that this issue has anything to do with discrimination and strongly agree indicates that you believe discrimination plays a large role in this issue. *Items are responded to on a 7-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree that this is due to discrimination) to 7 (strongly agree that this is due to discrimination).*

1. Indigenous people are overrepresented among incarcerated populations in Canada's federal prisons.
2. In Canada, 1 in 5 racialized families live in poverty compared to 1 in 20 non-racialized families
3. Black Canadians are disproportionately stopped, questioned, and asked for documentation by police without reference to a particular offence.
4. Compared with other groups, refugees often have difficulty entering high skilled labor markets in Canada

General Dissertation Discussion

Taken together, this body of work offers a thorough investigation into Canadian identity and its meaningful connection with perceptions of Canadian history. The first manuscript conducted a deep dive on Canadian identity and the nuances of national identity that can exist within multicultural societies that consist of multiple sub-national groups. Given the cultural diversity and complexity of Canadian society, we sought to (1) use Canada as an example to highlight the nuances of nationality within complex nation-states, and (2) provide some structure to the content that makes up Canadian identity. Our findings provided the first concrete evidence for the subgroup asymmetry hypothesis (Sidanius et al., 1997) being applicable to regional-linguistic, or sub-national groups, within a country. Through this lens, we show the strong distinction of Québécois identity in contrast to Canadian identity, and how for the Québécois, to speak of nationality means to speak of Québec rather than Canada. We also found evidence that Canadian identity appears to be aligned with traditional rather than progressive values among an undergraduate population. Despite strong messaging around multiculturalism and progressivism in Canada (e.g., Trudeau, 2017ab), and despite our participants all showing strong endorsement for the proposed progressive values, however, it would appear that a strong Canadian identity is more tightly aligned with conservative leaning rather than progressive values.

The second manuscript used the same data set that was used for the first manuscript, but with a focus on the content of participants' historical perspectives of Canada. One major outcome of this work was a list of historical events that young Canadians view as important to their national history. As with the previous manuscript, results highlighted a particular Québécois nationalism that differed from the English-speaking groups' broader and less cohesive sense of Canadian history. While events from Québec focused on nation-building and struggle for Québec

identity and sovereignty, events from Nova Scotia and Ontario seemed to express a more vague and progressive notion of general Canadian history. These data provide a rich overview of Canadian collective memories and offer original findings to the social representations of history literature, highlighting important regional distinctions in a single nation state. The data from Nova Scotia and Ontario also show an interesting diversion from the typical war and nation-building narratives of previous studies (Liu et al., 2009), focusing instead on events that coincide with modern-day narratives of Canadian progressivism and multiculturalism. This study also provided robust evidence for a glorification bias, whereby Canadians, regardless of provincial group, were more likely to believe that events presenting Canada in a positive progressive light were true compared with events depicting Canada in a negative light. This bias was especially strong for those with a higher sense of Canadian identity.

The third and final manuscript builds directly on the previous two by assessing the influence of biased historical narratives on contemporary sociopolitical perspectives. In the first of our pre-registered studies, we found that Canadians considered events related to minority groups as vastly more important to Canadian history than events that were not related to such groups, while showing a particular preference for positive as opposed to negative minority-related events. We also found a moderating influence of Canadian identity and political orientation, where high identifiers were more likely to prefer positive events and those who self-identify as being politically left leaning consider events related to minority groups to be especially important. In our second pre-registered study, despite developing strong materials for our primes and outcome variables, we were unable to observe a direct effect of biased historical narratives on relevant sociopolitical attitudes.

These three manuscripts highlight a consistent positivity or glorification bias for Canadian history that is informed by Canadian identity. In Manuscripts 2 and 3 we found evidence that Canadians prefer events that reflect positively on Canada, considering them to be more important and believing them more likely to be true than negative events. This preference was heightened for those with a strong Canadian identity. This evidence is consistent with the positive identity maintenance theory of social identity theory and is aligned with similar findings, showcasing how history can be utilized to bolster a positive sense of cultural identity (Mukherjee et al., 2017; Sahdra et al., 2007). The robustness of this evidence also aligns with theorizing on social representations of history, and how the crafting of collective memories is not about accuracy but is motivated by identity maintenance and encouragement of particular ideals (Hirst et al., 2018; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Wertsch & Rodiger, 2008).

Our studies also provide a consistent narrative about the importance of progressivism to the Canadian psyche. In our first manuscript, participants highly endorsed progressive sociopolitical values and in the second manuscript, several of the categories of freely recalled historical events focused on progressive issues. In the final manuscript, participants expressed a strong belief that events related to historically oppressed groups are much more important than events not related to such groups. Although we were unable to find a direct effect of biased historical narrative on attitudes in our experimental study, our results do show that in general Canadians seem to show moderate support for initiatives aimed at providing resources for minority groups in Canada and are willing to acknowledge the prevalence of institutional discrimination. Altogether this shows a consistency in the types of values that Canadians hold that is well aligned with the messaging proffered by various cultural tools (e.g., political mandates, Historica Canada, textbooks).

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations with this body of studies that should be considered in light of their findings. Although these have been mentioned in the individual manuscripts, they are worth summarizing and repeating here. There are two major limitations that are shared between the first two manuscripts. The first is the population the samples were drawn from. All participants in these studies were undergraduate students living and attending university in the capital cities of their provinces. That is, all were of a particular age, education, and general urban socioeconomic status that does not necessarily reflect Canadians on a broader scale. For instance, data collected from students in other provinces that tend to have a strong sense of provincial identity and pride, such as Newfoundland or Alberta, may have yielded different results. Perhaps we would have observed patterns within such provinces that aligned more with our Québec sample than our two anglophone samples. The second limitation has to do with some methodological errors that occurred in the development and disbursement of our materials, namely some translation inconsistencies that may have influenced how our Québec participants responded, particularly to our open-ended questions about Canadian history. Despite these notable limitations, the work produced from these samples are of great value, offering initial empirical evidence and insight into the nuances of Canadian nationalities and identities. It also provides an excellent foundation for some of the important social representations of Canadian history, even if it is from a segmented section of the population.

While no singular project can be sufficient to address such complex questions, the data that comprises the first two manuscripts provides ample evidence and fodder for future studies. For example, we utilized the historical events that were recalled in Manuscript 2 to build our priming materials in Manuscript 3. But more broadly speaking, we hope our findings regarding

the stark distinction of Québécois nationality will inspire more nuanced and detailed work on sub-nationalities in other countries. A good example of such work was conducted by Carbonell (2019) which offers an in-depth consideration of Catalanian identity and culture in Spain and its relation to multiculturalism in the country more broadly. There are many regions in the world where such analyses would be of great value. Future work could also expand on the content of Canadian and other national identities, a relatively understudied phenomenon. While strength of identity and feelings of nationalism and patriotism are well covered by various disciplines, including psychology, political science, and sociology, the exploration of what comprises those identities is less well understood. That is, we have gained some understanding of what aspects constitute a given identity by correlating it with various attitudes, but that doesn't provide a full picture of what comes to mind when people think of what it means to be Canadian or Québécois or Catalanian. We hope that future work will continue to evaluate and catalogue the content of various national identities to provide a better understanding of what constitutes a given identity. We also believe that researchers should continue to gather collective memories from as many cultures as possible, so that broad cross-cultural patterns can be documented and evaluated. By gathering social representations of Canadian history, we were able to highlight a pattern so far unique to Canada: the focus on events that support a progressive and multicultural narrative. Other countries may contain their own unique patterns that diverge from the typical war and nation-building narratives that have yet to be empirically established.

The primary limitation of our final manuscript was in the attempt to use a brief priming study to capture the effects of a much more complicated phenomenon. Given the rigorous development and evaluation of our materials as well as our strong sample size, we believe that either the effect in question must not exist, or, more likely, the ability to capture this effect in a

laboratory setting may be very difficult to obtain. Due to the strong relationship we have established between history, identity, and modern-day sociopolitical concerns in this body of studies (in addition to similar findings from previous research: Allpress et al., 2010; Ariely, 2021; Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Feinstein & Bonikowski, 2021; Mukherjee et al., 2015; Peetz et al., 2010; Sibley et al., 2008; Sibley & Liu, 2012) we believe in the potential for such an effect to exist in the real world. We believe that future work on this topic would be well suited to longitudinal and more ecologically focused work that looks at the effect of education on a long-term scale. For instance, recent education reforms have been implemented in Ontario with the aim of improving access to education for Indigenous students and increasing awareness of Indigenous history and culture to all students, which includes teaching about the legacy of colonialism and residential schools (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2021). Likewise, a recent exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario displaying art from the Spanish Empire emphasized the legacies of conquest and resource extraction throughout its exhibit, reminding visitors of the long-lasting consequences of colonialism (AGO, n.d.). As education expands and discussions of colonialism and the consequences of historical oppression increase, it will be important to examine the influence this has on Canadian identity and perspectives.

Concluding Remarks

The three manuscripts that make up this dissertation provide valuable, nuanced, and original insight into the Canadian psyche. Through three samples of Canadians, including one large multi-site survey of Canadian undergraduates and two selections of community-sourced participants, we have underscored important aspects of Canadian identity, social representations of Canadian history, and the sociopolitical concerns of contemporary Canadians. Highlights of this work include the careful cataloguing of collective memories, the robust evidence for a

positivity bias towards historical narratives and its clear connection to Canadian identity, and the consistent valuing of progressive ideals across all of our samples. Canadian history and the formation of Canadian identity and values is a nebulous and ongoing project, but the current work has helped to put shape to some of that ineffability and provides a strong grounding from which future work can build.

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