



Understanding Genocide: The Social Psychology of the Holocaust

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CHAPTER

7 Examining the Implications of Cultural Frames on Social Movements and Group Action

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Abstract

What is the connection between individual–democratic and group–ethnic worldviews and the risk of organized bloodshed? This chapter claims that at least part of the answer lies in the ways social movements capitalize on existing cultural frames to create local meanings conducive to organized violence against out–groups. This perspective builds on an emerging cultural focus within social psychology and draws attention to the ways a society's codes and values become part of the very fabric of an individual's perceptual frame. Using this social–psychological approach to understanding genocide focuses attention on the role of cultural frame in shaping meaning — through norms, values, and the sense made of actions — as it relates to intergroup relations.

Keywords: social movements, organized violence, genocide, out-groups, intergroup relations, social psychology, cultural frames

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We are all members of groups, as well as separate individuals. Being a member of a group means sharing something with other members of the group. Durkheim's (1899/1947) classic analysis of societies highlights differences between simple groups, in which everyone does the same thing, and complex groups, in which members take on different roles to sustain the group but share some common beliefs. Modern societies can be thought of as complex groups, yet even in modern societies, Durkheim noted, members must have some "similarities of beliefs" if the group is to function. Another way to describe these 'similarities of beliefs' is to discuss common values or value frames, perspectives, or worldviews. For example, a core value frame for American society is individualism—the pursuit of individual goals, individual advancement, individual happiness, and individual freedom is a core similarity of belief that unites Americans. This core value influences our laws, institutions, and social practices, and explicit rejection of individualism is seen as un-American. By sharing this "similarity of belief" or value frame,

Americans have a common perspective; indeed, following Durkheim, it is reasonable to assume that every group develops some group-specific values, norms, and values. Of greater interest for this chapter are the similarities between groups within a society and systematic differences across societies in the extent that individualism is valued and the extent that groups or collectives are valued. Valuation of individual versus group interests is a key to understanding cultures (Hofstede, 1980).

p. 163 A brief look at recent world history highlights a link between salient cultural worldviews and organized violence against out-groups. During the past century, murders of more than a million civilians were essentially the province of nondemocratic regimes (Fein, 1993). Similarly, in this century, states lacking democratic traditions, such as former colonies and former Soviet states, are the nexus of attempts to ethnically cleanse and eradicate civic and ethnic rivals (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998; Giugni, 1998). This suggests some link between individually based democratic values and reduced risk of in-tergroup violence and between group-based values and worldviews focused on ethnicity and increased risk of such violence. What is the connection between individual-democratic and group-ethnic worldviews and the risk of organized bloodshed? In the current chapter, we propose that at least part of the answer lies in the ways social movements capitalize on existing cultural frames to create local meanings conducive to organized violence against out-groups.

Our perspective builds on an emerging cultural focus within social psychology and draws attention to the ways a society's codes and values become part of the very fabric of an individual's perceptual frame (Kagitcibasi, 1996; Kuehen & Oyserman, 2000). As cultural beings, we see what it makes sense to see in our local worlds; we make sense of things using a culture-specific scaffolding. Using this social-psychological approach to understanding genocide focuses attention on the role of cultural frame in shaping meaning—through norms, values, and the sense made of actions—as it relates to intergroup relations. Without taking into account cultural framing, our attempts to make sense of bloody ethnic rivalries yield little. How could ordinary citizens carry out inhuman slaughter in Rwanda, for example? Yet when we use a cultural frame to make sense of these conflicts, it becomes clear how perception of the out-group can become so fraught with negative emotion and how deeply meaningful, even intrinsic to in-group definition, conflict with the out-group becomes (Oyserman, 1993).

In particular, we propose that bloody ethnic rivalries and organized violence can be understood by taking into account how the out-group is perceived in a collectivistic cultural worldview. In a collectivistic cultural frame, out-groups, groups one does not belong to, are viewed with suspicion, and their members are seen as very different, even alien, from oneself. The out-group is a source of threat, and in-group members believe that only in-group members can be trusted. By taking a “collectivistic” worldview, it becomes clear why group members perceive interethnic conflicts as tenacious and un-solvable, even when overt expression of conflict is submerged (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998; Roberts, Spencer, & Uyangoda, 1998; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998; Smith, 1998).

p. 164 Daniel Goldhagen (1996) takes this perspective in thinking about Nazi Germany. He suggests that the national policy of extermination emerged from deep-seated anti-Semitism that predated Nazism. Germans, socialized to automatically think of Jews as the other, as non-German, as the mortal enemy of the German people, and as not quite human, could easily assent to gradually increasing measures of systematic oppression, control, and finally extermination because the Jews were labeled as apart, different, and clearly outsiders. Thus, to understand why individuals in groups believe in conflict with a particular out-group and believe that this conflict cannot be resolved without killing, displacing, and controlling the out-group, we must understand the local reality within which these groups take on meaning.

We suggest that part of the answer to the question of when social movements become violent lies in cultural framing. In the current chapter, we will distinguish between *collectivistic* and *individualistic* cultural frames and argue that (a) social movements such as Nazism gain and maintain membership by evoking and

sustaining a collective focus; (b) when social movements are able to operate in the absence of countervailing individualistic values, social movements are more likely to sustain member involvement; and (c) when collectivistic values are evoked without countervailing individualistic values, social movements are also more likely to create an atmosphere in which organized violence or even genocide against out-groups is possible. In this way, we will utilize a cultural social-psychological framework to make sense of how people become involved in social movements and the likely course of their involvement in these movements.

Cultural Frames and Social Movements

A critical issue for social movements is how to mobilize and maintain involvement in the movement. We propose a general framework to make sense of involvement in social movement groups, both ones that remain nonviolent and ones that become violent, whether they are public interest lobbies, civil rights movements, Tamil or Irish separatists, even Nazis. All social movement leaders attempt to make individuals feel, first, that group membership is central to personal identity; second, that group goals are indistinguishable from individual goals; and, third, that connections with in-group members are of intrinsic value. To shore up their claim on individual resources, all social movements seek linkages with preexisting belief and value systems, such as the linkage made between Nazism and anti-Semitism. In particular, social movements seek to link beliefs about the nature of the in-group and the existence of out-groups. Thus, Nazi rhetoric depended on Germans' willingness to link Christian anti-Semitism with German mythology about Aryans (Mandel, this volume). It is not that social movement leaders in individualistic societies do not try to evoke these same processes. Rather, social movements within societies with strong individualistic values are less likely to produce violence than are social movements within societies with strong collectivistic values because within individualistic value systems, individuals are more commonly viewed as separate from, rather than a part of, groups.

p. 165 **Cultural Frames**

Cultural Frames Scaffold Common Reality

What is more important—being true to yourself and achieving personal goals or being a good group member and sacrificing for the needs of the group? Cultures provide a frame within which to answer these value priority questions. Cultures provide social representations of value systems, telling us what is good or bad, worth committing time, energy, and resources to. In this way, the lexicon we use to make sense of the world is culture-tied. The lexicon or vocabulary we use is a transparent yet omnipresent structure that shapes meaning (Earley, 1995; Oyserman & Markus, 1993). Cultural frames are at the root of our most basic understanding of what it means to be human, what “counts” or is noteworthy in a particular situation (Oyserman & Markus, 1993; Oyserman, Sakamoto, & Lauffer, 1998). To in-group members sharing a common script of normative guidelines, culture-appropriate responses feel normal, obvious, natural, mature, and that which does not need explanation. To out-group members using a different cultural script, these same responses may appear immature, contrived, disingenuous, or even wrong and dangerous (Fiske, 1994; Triandis, 1995).

Cultural Frames Create Individual Realities

At any point in history, cultures differ in the extent to which values are seen as core versus peripheral (Schwartz, 1994). Core values are the ones seen as always important, always relevant. For Americans, freedom of choice is such a core value. It influences all aspects of everyday life, from advertising (e.g., Apple's "think different" slogan) to schooling to personal relationships; we not only expect to be able to choose, we also expect to be able to change our minds and choose again. Even young children are offered choices, with "free play" being scheduled into preschool curriculums. Core values are likely to be used when attempting to influence others. For example, abortion rights and school vouchers are both framed in the language of choice (a woman's right to choose, schools of choice). Core values are thus more commonly evoked than are less core values (Fiske, 1991). In addition to differences in which values are core versus peripheral, societies also differ in how many situations elicit particular values (Hofstede, 1980). Highly individualistic societies such as America or New Zealand present people with many situations that evoke personal freedom and choice as a value. Western European societies may equally value personal freedom when it is evoked and differ primarily in the number of situations that evoke these individualistic values versus other more collective ones.

p. 166 When a value is rarely evoked, it is less likely to influence behavior than when it is continuously evoked. Thus, one advantage of the increasingly intrusive Nazi laws restricting interactions with Jews was to make more salient to Germans, across more and more everyday situations, the contrasts between being Jewish and being a member of the emerging Aryan German group. By expelling Jews from everyday life and making salient group boundaries by having Jews live separately and wear the distinguishing Star of David, these laws made salient to Germans the value of belonging to a group while simultaneously reducing the salience of individual rights, duties, and responsibilities.

By structuring the public and collective reality, groups thus color one's personal reality as well, differentially highlighting the normative role of individual difference, individual pleasures, and personal achievement versus social embeddedness, care and concern for in-group members, and conformity to group norms (e.g., Hofstede, 1991; Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1994; Triandis, 1989). When the collective reality focuses on the group, social embeddedness, and living up to social norms and roles, individual everyday reality is different than when the collective reality focuses on individual uniqueness, personal happiness, and individual goals and responsibilities (Kitayama & Markus, 1997; Oyserman & Markus, 1993; Shweder & Sullivan, 1990). A common way to assess these differences is through value or attitude checklists such as the one found in the Appendix. To assess cultural frame, researchers ask samples of individuals to rate the extent to which they agree with each statement, with higher collectivistic scores occurring when individuals more strongly agree that family, relationships with in-group members, and common fate with their in-group are meaningful. Similarly, higher individualistic scores mean that individuals agreed more strongly that being unique and different from others, having personal freedoms and the chance to attain personal goals are important to who they are. Reading through the items in the Appendix also makes clear that while people may differ in how much they agree with each statement, answers clearly depend on the situation. In some situations, almost everyone would agree that loyalty to group leaders is important; in other situations, almost everyone will agree that personal choice is important. A key to understanding how some social movements become violent while others do not is to understand cross-cultural differences in how people usually make sense of these value choices.

Cultural Frames Differ in Chronic Focus

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Rather than thinking about societies and the individuals living within them as valuing either individual or group goals, it is more accurate to describe cultures in terms of the relative frequency with which values pertaining to group versus individual good are evoked (e.g., obedience and loyalty vs. personal pleasure and self-direction; Schwartz, 1994). This means that individuals can make sense of the world in terms of both individual and group-focused values and are able to shift between these competing value clusters, depending on what is salient at the moment. A wealth of research on migrants and minorities confirms that individuals can learn new cultures and can switch from one emphasizing groups to one emphasizing personal welfare (e.g., Cameron & Lalonde, 1994; Gurin, Hurtado, & Peng, 1994; Kowalski & Wolfe, 1994; Mays, Bullock, Rosenzweig, & Wessells, 1998; Oyserman, 1993; Oyserman et al., 1998). We are all able to think about what the group needs or how we can be good members of the group when the situation calls for it. One of the important questions raised by the Holocaust asks how it was that so many Germans were focused on the needs of the “Aryan” group and able to stay focused on themselves as simply members of this group rather than as individuals.

Collectivism and Individualism

While there are many possible ways to explore this issue, in this chapter our focus is on the way in which societies can focus members’ attention on group versus individual frames of reference. Current cultural research and theorizing distinguish between cultures and societies that tend to focus more on the individual and those that focus more on the group as the basic social unit of analysis (e.g., Triandis, 1995). These cultural frames are termed *individualistic* and *collectivistic*, respectively (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1990).

Collectivism

Values central to collectivism are obedience, tradition, safety, and order. Given these values, societies develop specific social norms for how to maintain social harmony, fit in, and do the right thing as a group member. Moreover, when these values are salient, groups also tend to think of themselves in territorial terms (e.g., Triandis, 1996). For Germans, this took the form of belief in the sanctity of German soil and belief in a blood-based “Germanity.” In this way, collectivist cultural frames focus attention on the interdependence between individuals, the centrality of family, and the importance of social unity and harmony within in-groups (Chan, 1991; Daniels, 1988; Fugita & O’Brien, 1991; Lee, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Rosenberger, 1992; Takaki, 1994). Within a collectivistic frame, relationships involve obligation and generosity toward the in-group (Leung, 1997), along with conflict and competition with out-groups (Oyserman, 1993; Triandis, 1995). Boundaries of the in-group are not permeable. In-groups may be the family, clan, ethnic group, or nation, but membership is ascribed at birth and is not achievable through common interests or other means (Triandis, 1995). Further, since only groups based in these imagined blood ties have legitimacy, to be legitimate and create a sense of loyalty, all groups must present themselves in terms of these “legitimate” groups—bolstering a sense of common ancestry, roots, and family or clan bonds.

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From a collectivistic perspective, individuals are permanently located in networks of “blood tie” groups—tribal group, ethnic group, kin, and family (Oyserman, 1993; Triandis, 1995). Even nationality is understood as stemming from membership in an imagined primordial community of blood-related others so that true citizenship will be seen as a birthright, not a choice (Calhoun, 1993). German nationality, especially in the period before and during Nazism, provides an example of this perspective. German nationalists emphasized ethnic rather than civic or political criteria for being German and in that way saw “Germanness” as a blood connection, a natural human identity rather than a chosen group membership

(Calhoun, 1993). From a collective perspective, these groups are *entitative*, that is, understood as entities with indivisible meaning as units (Hamilton & Sherman, 1996), whereas individuals are components of groups, in some ways interchangeable (Brewer & Miller, 1996). This belief in the entitativity of groups means that groups are viewed as causing events and as being responsible for the actions of group members (Morris, 1998), while individual actors are less likely to be viewed as causing outcomes (Morris & Peng, 1994).

Thus, within a collectivistic frame, group membership is a central and defining characteristic of the self (e.g., Phinney & Cobb, 1996). Positive self-evaluation and life satisfaction comes from skillfully meeting obligations to one's group members (Ames, Dissanayake, & Kasulis, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman & Markus, 1993; 1998; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). When one thinks about the self and others in terms of groups, the individuality of out-group members, even their humanity, becomes suspect (Triandis, 1995). As a result, in-group members will have strong ties with and trust in only in-group members; out-group members will not be trusted and will be seen as threatening. Violent response to this perceived threat is more likely in societies and cultures that lack democratic roots, since citizens who lack strongly internalized norms and values of democracy are more likely to be intolerant of out-groups seen as behaving in ways antithetical to in-group norms (Sullivan & Transue, 1999).

Take, for example, Germany in 1932. It lacked a strong democratic tradition, and the Nazi Party successfully connected hate and loathing for Jews with a desire to take part in a "regeneration" of Germany. Traditional Christian and nineteenth-century pseudoscientific anti-Semitism were each interwoven with voters' desires to see themselves as part of a superior Aryan group, regenerate the German nation, and return to a mythic past. Nazi anti-Semitism became a corollary of German belief in the superiority of the Aryan race (Bauer, 1982; Friedlander, 1997a, 1997b; Marris, 1987). Anti-Semitism supported the growth of German consciousness through the promotion of fear of the "other."

p. 169 For Germans, the Jew was the eternal other, the stranger, dirty, thieving, morally and physically inferior, not fit to be associated with or to be considered a member of the *Volk* but rather a conniving member of an international conspiracy to harm Germans. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 legally excluded Jews from German society by forbidding marriage and extramarital relationships between Jews and Germans and even the employment of German females under age 45 in Jewish households. Being a Jew, according to these laws, was not a matter of belief, behavior, or self-identification with a group but rather a matter of blood. In 1938 an SS journal further defined Jews as a race of murderers and criminals, mortal enemies of the German people (Bauer, 1982; Friedlander, 1997a, 1997b). Gradually, public descriptions of Jews invoked their common humanity less and less and increasingly used non-human terms such as *fodder* and *excrement*.

Because collectivism provides a ready explanation for intergroup conflict and its consequences, maintaining a collectivist frame provides coherence and reduces stress when organized violence occurs. To the extent that one believes that "blood" groups are important and that individuals are defined by this type of group membership, prejudice, racism, and reduced life chances due to group membership become understandable (Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1998). At the same time, the level of intergroup conflict is perceived as more intense (Oyserman, 1993). In this way, a collectivist focus can reduce negative sequelae of violence. A more recent example of this dynamic comes from our field research with Muslim Bosnian women in the aftermath of dislocation due to Balkan civil wars. Muslim Bosnian women who endorsed more collectivist values and viewed their ethnic and religious identities as defining them more centrally reported less stress, depression, and anxiety overall than did women who endorsed more individualistic values (Mesquita & Oyserman, 1996). Moreover, family members' negative wartime experiences had greater impact on women who endorsed collectivist values. For these women, the correlation between their own symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder and the negative wartime experiences of their families was stronger.

Individualism

While collectivistic cultural frames focus attention on groups, individualistic cultural frames focus attention on the individual. Three core belief systems constitute the value basis of individualism: valuation of personal independence and freedom of choice, personal uniqueness, and personal achievement (Hsu, 1983; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Given these core values, individualism promotes the importance of knowing one's beliefs and values and behaving in accordance with these no matter what the context. Individualism as a worldview suggests that what is permanent and stable is the individual himself or herself, not his or her relationships. Further, given the focus on individual freedom and independence, personal goals and feelings weigh heavily in decision making. Individualists are interested in whether they are happy and feeling good about themselves (Bellah, Sullivan, & Swidler, 1988; Wilkinson, 1992; Markus, Mullally, & Kitayama, 1997).

p. 170 Whereas a collective frame presents groups as organic entities, and individuals as simply parts of groups, an individualistic frame conceives of individuals as organic entities. That is, individuals are meaningful entities in themselves, and will or agency is located within individuals (Shweder, 1991). ↪ By focusing on the individual, this cultural frame highlights the common humanity in all individuals (Hsu, 1983). It sets up a mechanism of basic willingness to be sociable with strangers, who may, after all, be helpful in attaining one's personal goals, since many tasks require cooperative effort. Individualism then puts a premium on a willingness to be flexible and to compromise and negotiate with diverse others in pursuit of one's personal goals (see Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002, for a review).

On the other hand, groups themselves are assumed to be temporary. Individuals join with other individuals who have common interests; as goals and interests change, group membership is also assumed to change (Singelis et al., 1995). Thus, within an individualistic worldview, groups are by nature unstable and continue only as long as they are personally worthwhile; even membership in family groups is considered a choice, since one could always choose not to associate with one's family (Fiske, 1991; Sampson, 1988; Triandis, 1995; for a review see Oyserman et al., 2002).

The "relational schema" (e.g., Baldwin, 1992) or relationship prototype that makes sense within an individualistic frame is the relationship as a personal, temporary collaboration or competition between the self and specific other individuals. Individuals are free to form relationships and alliances with any other individual. If a relationship is not equitable or personally satisfying, it fades away, with new relationships established to take its place. Individuals can choose with whom to associate and can determine the degree of association. Intergroup competition and suspicion are not integral to an individualistic perspective. From an individualistic perspective, one is free to choose whether to have friends or enemies (Adams, 1998). Social obligation is not central to individualism. Instead, individuals are assumed to make temporary connections in service of a personal goal or need. Individualism promotes a focus on equity in relationships and short-term cost-benefit analyses of obligations to others.

Individualism, Collectivism, and the Meaning of Groups

As noted in the previous sections, individualistic and collectivistic frames differ in the centrality of group membership to self-definition, in the permanence assumed with regard to groups, and in whether between-group conflict is assumed to be a permanent or natural state of affairs. In this section, we outline a final and crucial way that individualistic and collectivistic frames differ in their fundamental and basic evaluation of groups. While valued and seen as the basis of being human within a collectivistic worldview, groups are suspect and seen as having the potential to influence or subvert individual judgment, reasoning, and perspective taking from an individualistic worldview (for an overview, see Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 1994).

Within an individualistic frame, one's true opinions and best judgment arise when one thinks for oneself and acts alone. Within a collectivistic frame, obedience to the group, following group norms, and acting to maintain group harmony are valued. These same behaviors—that is, conformity and obedience to the group or social norms—are described as “mindlessness” and “de-personalization” within an individualistic frame and seen as the negative consequences of groups and social situations. In an individualistic frame, groups are detrimental to individual initiative; they are “crowds,” potentially dangerous “masses,” subject to fads, crazes, and hysteria (Lofand, 1992). Thus, while social conformity is normative and appropriate within a collective frame, within an individualistic frame, conformity to group norms is inappropriate and is often considered a failure to act on personal conviction. Consequently, individuals who follow group norms are seen as being mindless, depersonalized, and deindividuated.

Implications of Cultural Frames for Understanding Social Movements

Social Movements

Social movements challenge a society's status quo in the name of a group perceived to be disadvantaged within the society, with the goal of benefiting this subgroup (Giugni, 1998). In order to serve as the impetus for social action, there is no need for the claim of disadvantage to be empirically verifiable, as long as it convinces others to join and mobilize for action. Thus, Hitler described the German people as victimized by world Jewry (see Mandel, this volume). While social scientists have studied the emergence of social movements from a variety of perspectives (e.g., Giugni, 1998; McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1988), the influence of cultural frame and the ways individuals can move between these frames have not received attention. Yet taking into account culture appears necessary if we are to understand the dynamics of movement involvement and participation and the likelihood that social movements will promote organized out-group violence. In particular, we propose that social movements attempt to shift the cultural focus of potential participants toward a collective worldview. We will speculate about likely mechanisms of frame shifting and use examples from the social movement and intergroup conflict literature to support the notion that cultural frames are central to whether a movement focuses on nonviolent change within a society or violent change of the society (e.g., revolutionary movements or genocidal movements).

Social Movements' Chances for Success Depend on Framing

By focusing attention on group needs rather than individual needs, collective cultural frames are advantageous to social movement organizers. If group membership is central to identity and impermeable, acting for the good of the group and following group norms can more easily replace personal goals and more universalistic norms. Conversely, if individual initiative is made central, individuals will be suspicious of groups, seeing them as mindless, irrational, and corrosive of personal responsibility.

Juxtaposing individualistic and collectivistic cultural frames clarifies the process of joining, remaining in, and leaving social movements. When cultures focus on individuals as the central, defining social unit, then groups of choice are the basis of social structures, with individuals viewed as choosing to become citizens and choosing to become members of a variety of other voluntary associations. As a result, in-group members are likely to have weak ties with multiple groups, to have a general sense of trust in their fellow man, and to perceive others not as threats but as future potential interaction partners (see Oyserman et al., 2002). These ideas of fluid group membership and a belief that others share a common humanity with basic rights have also been termed basic values of democracy (Sullivan & Transue, 1999). When a permeable sense of group membership and valuation of the individual is associated with cultural valuation of democratic norms, violent response to threatening out-group members is less likely (for a review, see Calhoun, 1993). This may help to explain what some perceived as a contrast in both rhetoric and behaviors between ordinary

Israelis and Palestinians during the violent confrontations of 2000. The available data suggest that Jewish Israelis are, on average, lower in collectivism than Palestinian Arabs (Oyserman, 1993).

Individualism and Social Movements

By making individuals central, an individualistic cultural frame highlights the ways groups bind, constrain, and limit individual freedom, taking away from the basic requirement of each individual to be responsible for his or her own actions (Zurcher & Snow, 1992). Individualism's negative valuation of groups carries over to a negative valuation of people who join social movements. From this perspective, those who join social movements are deficient in some way, that is, as authoritarian, dependent, in search of personal identity, refusing to take personal responsibility for their actions. Those who act alone are seen as both more independent and more humanistic and caring toward others (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1988; Zurcher & Snow, 1992). This negative perspective on groups combines with the assumption that groups are of value only as long as they are useful to the individual—that is, that they provide relevant resources.

To be successful in recruiting and maintaining members in a social movement framed in terms of individualistic values, a movement must offer members a way to feel free and independent of constraints, attain personal pleasure or happiness, or work toward other personal goals. Group members will ask themselves if they can have their own personal style while being a group member, if being a group member contributes to personal happiness, and so on. Moreover, participants in individualistically focused movements will engage in ongoing cost-benefit analyses of involvement as compared with other self-defining options. Membership has to provide ongoing benefits that outweigh its costs. Members must feel that groups help them to achieve personal goals that would otherwise remain unmet. To elicit involvement, a movement would need to successfully promote membership as an efficient way to feel good about oneself, reduce constraints on personal freedoms, and attain personal growth experiences.

Examples of individualistic framing of group membership come from promotional messages used as part of the U.S. Navy's advertising campaign—videos show young men and women driving sport utility vehicles and enjoying leisure. Naval service is portrayed as a way to better oneself and attain personal goals—learn skills useful in the job market, earn money toward college, and have a better standard of living and more leisure activities. On the clip, young sailors report that joining the navy gives them a financial edge over their peers. Clearly, the focus is on individual, not group-oriented, appeals. Similarly, the U.S. Army advertises enlistment as a way to “be all you can be,” and the U.S. Marines advertise enlistment as a way to attain personal unique-ness—to be one of “the few, the proud, the Marines.” While appropriately targeting the individualistic values of the intended audience, this way of presenting social group involvement means that such involvement is likely to be both *temporary*, with members leaving whenever the cost-benefit ratio shifts, and *contingent*, with members feeling free to choose which group goals and tasks to work on.

Collectivism and Social Movements

Clearly, social movements framed by individualism will have a tough time convincing potential participants to sacrifice for the group. Social movements that successfully frame involvement in terms of collectivism do not need to describe membership as a way to be happy, feel unique, and attain personal goals. As can be seen by referring to the Appendix, collectivist social movements need only remind participants of the importance of collective values, obligation to the in-group, common fate with the in-group, and that the self is defined via the in-group and family ties. Certainly it is easier to keep members involved in social movements when honor, tradition, and social obligation are the primary and salient values than when personal happiness, pleasure, and goal attainment are. To elicit a sense of duty or obligation to the social movement in a collectivistic society, a new movement or group would simply need to be framed in terms of existing “blood tie” in-groups.

Recall that the groups that are important to collectivists are seen as permanent, so linking participation in a movement to such a preexisting group would set up conditions for permanent involvement. Thus, if Nazism were simply presented as an economic plan that Germans could choose to be involved in if they felt it would help them attain personal economic security, it is harder to imagine Germans feeling permanently linked to Nazism. Instead, being a member of the Nazi social movement was framed as part of being a member of the “Aryan race,” a preexisting ascriptive group; in this way, being Nazi and being German were linked, making social movement involvement more permanent.

Clearly, involvement in the Nazi movement was facilitated by linking the movement with preexisting notions about a mythic blood-based “nation” of Aryans. This facilitated the shift to a collective frame in which “German Aryan” in-group needs were made salient. By focusing on the centrality of the group, needed contributions from individual members could be represented as part of being in the group. Therefore, fulfilling these obligations could be linked with collectivist values without the need to resort to individualistic motives to carry them out. Explicit use of Jews as the enemy facilitated a sense of in-group common fate. Because the social movement involvement is linked with membership in other in-groups, involvement is reinforcing to participants as a way of contributing to group goals. In the case of Nazism, the connection was made between being Nazi and being truly German, between being truly German and being a member of the Aryan race, thus turning participants into an imagined community based in blood ties. Together these crystallized attention to the collectivistic values of respect for group leaders and the desire to serve them.

While individualism promotes the idea that one could join with an array of heterogeneous others for some personal purpose or goal, collectivism promotes the idea that it is only the homogeneous in-group to which one is obligated and connected. Whereas group membership is temporary by nature within an individualistic frame, it is permanent within a collectivistic frame. When framed by individualism, a social movement would have temporary, shifting, and evolving memberships. Individuals join to attain a goal or because they need or want something membership provides. Within such a frame, compromise, flexibility, and alternative routes to goal attainment are sensible. Conversely, in contexts where collectivism is chronic, social movement involvement may be seen as a way to express oneself through membership, and social movements could become more all-encompassing, permanent, and demanding of individual time, energy, and investment. Clearly, salient cultural framing matters in how groups are perceived, willingness to become involved, the perceived costs and benefits of involvement, and the potential of these movements to engage in organized violence or even genocidal attacks on out-groups. These differences are summarized in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Implications of Individualism and Collectivism Relevant to Social Movements

INDIVIDUALISM	COLLECTIVISM
The individual is the focus of analysis and basic meaning unit	The social unit is the focus of analysis and the basic meaning unit
Individuals form, join, and dissolve groups; groups exist for the good of individuals and are means for achieving individual ends; individuals do not owe any particular allegiance to the group as an institution	Group membership shapes and completes individuals; it is as members of groups that individuals make sense of themselves and others; groups are fixed, central, and important and lay a claim to one's time and energy
Individuals are motivated to achieve, be happy, and be unique	Individuals are motivated to be competent, appropriate group members
Conflict is interindividual. Individual needs and personal conflicts are the basis for group formation and dissolution	Conflict is intergroup; groups are permanent and have an existence beyond the individual; groups are imagined communities of others with shared blood ties and history
Today's enemy may be tomorrow's ally; compromise and flexibility are hallmarks of intergroup behavior	Today's enemy is tomorrow's enemy; intransience and refusal to compromise are hallmarks of intergroup behavior

Cultural Frame as Impetus for Individual Action

p. 175 Until now we have focused on the ways that cultural frames shift the meaning of group membership and the things social groups must do to have and sustain member involvement. We now turn to the ways by which cultural frames shift the salience of aspects of self-concept, making different answers to the basic "Who am I?" question seem appropriate. As noted previously, individualistic and collectivistic cultural frames make salient personal (idiocentric) and social (allocentric) identity elements of self-concept, respectively (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman, 1993; Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991; Triandis, 1989). Identity includes both personal and social aspects, and both are implicated in basic functions of identity such as maintaining well-being (e.g., Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991; Haslam, Oakes, Turner, & McGarty, 1996) and behavior control (Hughes & Demo, 1989; Haslam et al., 1996; Taylor & Dube, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987).

p. 176 Social identities motivate social action by making group membership norms and obligations salient and personally relevant, encouraging group members to see themselves as prototypical group members, and validating perseverance in working toward group goals. Conversely, personal identities motivate personal action by making personal goals, desires, concerns, and feelings salient; encouraging perception of oneself as unique and valued; and validating the quest for autonomy, independence, and personal happiness.

Shifting Cultural Frames: Implications for Social Movement Involvement

If, in some societies, individualistic frames are almost always used and collectivistic frames rarely used, and, in other societies, the reverse is the case, then these societies should also differ in the nature of the identities that are habitually reinforced. In societies where most contexts make individualism salient, the chronically accessible way of thinking about oneself and others is likely to be in terms of individualism and personal identities. The reverse will be the case in societies where most contexts make collectivism salient, where the chronically accessible way of thinking about oneself and others is likely to be in terms of collectivism and social identities. In individualism-dominant societies, the extent of collective focus should be amenable to contextual manipulation, but the level of individual focus should remain relatively constant; the reverse should be the case for collectivism-dominant cultural contexts. A series of field studies in Northern Ireland and Mexico found some evidence to support this notion of a “cultural working self” (Sanchez-Burks, Oyserman, & Kimmelmeier, 1998). Thus, we were able to prime collectivism in Northern Ireland among college students by making thoughts about friendships salient. This prime did not influence level of individualism, which would likely be chronically salient in this individualistic society (Hofstede, 1980). Similarly, we were able to prime individualism in Mexico among college students by making salient unique characteristics about the self. This prime did not influence level of collectivism, which is likely to be chronically salient in this collectivistic society (Hofstede, 1980).

The working cultural self-concept made salient in a given situation is likely to have consequences for involvement in a social movement. A collective frame may increase perceived salience of social identities, increase obligation to the in-group, highlight boundaries between in-groups and out-groups and personalize conflict between in-groups and out-groups. These aspects of collectivism may be beneficial to increased involvement and to maintenance of membership over time. In addition, the kind of short-term, individually focused cost-benefit analysis of involvement likely in an individualistic frame is unlikely in a collectivist one. A social movement can count on a longer-term and more extensive commitment to the extent that it can align itself with the kind of permanent groups that are part of the collectivistic focus—family or kin groups and “blood ties” with others who share a presumed common ancestry.

p. 177 In Nazi Germany, efforts to link Nazism with being German, and being Jewish with all that was opposed to Germanness were supported by the regime’s propaganda machinery and even by purportedly scientific institutes and universities. Some of the latter focused on Aryan superiority. Others—like the huge library on Jewish affairs at Frankfurt University and the Eisenach Institute—focused on the scientific understanding of Jewish matters or the relationships of Jews to Christians. By turning Jews and the Jewish people into the objects of study, this further supported the process of dehumanization while simultaneously elevating those commissioning and doing the research on Jews.

The reason it was important to keep Germans focused on collective values is that individualistic value frames increase salience of personal identities, highlight boundaries between the self and others, and reduce relevance of issues focused on the group rather than personal goals and desires. When individualistic value frames are chronically accessible, a social movement will need to expend effort to create contexts that cue collectivism and make collectivistic values relevant. Chronic salience of an individualistic lens will mean that involvement must be framed in terms of personal benefits to the individual. Within an individualistic frame, activism makes sense only as a way to attain personal resources and support not otherwise available, or as a way of attaining more abstract personal justice and fairness goals. Once established, these groups are less likely to focus on intergroup conflict and more likely to be pragmatic and focused on compromise. However, if such a group cannot meet members’ individualistic goals, it is likely to quickly lose membership.

Stable and long-term groups, whether revolutionary or religious, require that members define membership as central to, overshadowing, or coloring their sense of self. Within a collectivistic frame, remaining true to

the group's beliefs and values is important. Negotiation, flexibility, and compromise are likely to be viewed as irresponsible to the group, and "collaborators" are likely to be punished (Mays et al., 1998; Roberts, Spencer, & Uyangoda, 1998). Thus, when unrestrained by individualism, collectivism may result in resistance to compromise and more violent interchanges with the out-group, including attempts to wrest all social power from the out-group. This has been true of other twentieth-century genocides, including the Turkish massacres of millions of Armenians, the excesses of the Pol Pot regime during the Vietnam-Cambodian War, Stalin's purges, and the more recent incidents of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans. However, none of these seem to equal the Holocaust for its systematic and widespread cruelty or for its apparent disconnect from territorial and political gain (Wehler, 1998).

Can Priming Collectivism Prime Social Obligation?

p. 178 Until now, we have described the risky potential of collectivism to create conditions conducive to organized intergroup violence. In this last section, we would like to speculate about the possibility that collectivism can also increase social obligation not only to in-group members but also to individuals more generally and in this way reduce the risk of organized intergroup violence. Given that both individual- and collective-focused values are in evidence in all societies (Schwartz, 1990), our interest is in the possibility that by melding individualism and collectivism, individuals may feel obligated not only to their smaller in-group but also to society and to humankind at large. That is, they will both feel connected to others and also value individual differences and endorse flexibility and compromise. In a series of studies with Jewish and Asian American college students, we found evidence for the positive effect of such a melded cultural frame (Oyserman et al., 1998).

Students in these studies were asked to read a series of scenarios in which personal goals and social obligation goals were presented as conflicting. For example, in one scenario, students chose between going out on a beautiful spring day or carrying out a commitment. Commitments were framed as either personal commitments to another student, social commitments to help the in-group, or social commitments to help larger society—for example, canvassing voters or volunteering for Martin Luther King Day events. We proposed that the propensity to simply do one's own thing would be dampened when collectivistic values were made salient. In fact, students who first brought to mind values by filling out attitude scales differed systematically in their responses based on the values they endorsed. Participants who endorsed only individualistic values felt obligated only to individuals. These responses parallel the literature suggesting that individualistic frames make group participation suspect and dampen any sense of obligation to groups. Participants who endorsed only collectivistic values felt obligated to the in-group, not the larger society. These responses parallel the concerns we have raised about the potential of collectivism to carry with it intransigent inter-group conflict. However, another group of respondents endorsed both individualistic and collectivistic values. These participants felt particularly obligated to help groups whose membership was inclusive of all American society and whose goals focused on general social issues. These findings provide empirical support for the claim that collectivism primes social obligation. Unlike previous work, they also suggest that a positive aspect of collectivism can carry over to larger society.

Conclusion

p. 179 We have suggested that a collective cultural focus carries with it the tendency to define the self in terms of social identities, to see others in terms of stable group membership, to perceive out-groups as threats, and to be wary of compromise with out-group members. We have suggested that this stance carries with it heightened risk of intergroup conflict and the possibility of organized violence, ethnic cleansing, and other genocidal acts. Further, we have proposed ↪ that democratic values and individualism reduce the risk that social movements will develop this type of collective identity. Social institutions in all societies must be capable of evoking some collectivism. A society cannot long survive if its members never develop a sense of collective identity and never feel obligated or committed to it. Similarly, if a social movement cannot evoke a sense of social obligation, a sense of self as bound up with the group and connected to the group's fate, the movement is unlikely to survive over time. The implied social contract between individual and group or society is that each benefits from the other, and societies must develop a way of creating and sustaining such a contract (e.g., Etzioni, 1993; Hewitt, 1989; Schwartz, 1996). Yet, as is clear from the sectarian violence in many parts of the world, a sense of social obligation to the in-group may be quite detrimental to the out-group, especially when both live within the same country (e.g., Fiske, 1991).

A collective orientation toward a family or "blood tie" in-group may paradoxically promote extreme self-sacrifice for the benefit of social obligation yet result in ongoing intergroup conflict because any compromise with the out-group would be seen as abandonment of the in-group. Thus, some analyses of the Republican Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland would suggest that members in this social movement cannot accept a political negotiation or compromise solution because for them the identity of being Republican Sinn Fein requires that there be no compromise with the British (cf. White & Frasier, 2000). Collectivism at its core does not promote negotiation and compromise; flexibility is viewed as abandonment of the group's needs or cooperation with the enemy. Perhaps paradoxically, collectivistic tendencies toward social obligation may promote long-standing and violent ethnically focused conflict. In certain circumstances, a collectivist perspective results in a decreased sense of overarching community and focus only on the in-group, as well as loss of focus on individual rights and responsibilities and a shift to focus on group rights (e.g., Ben-Dor, 1988). Some researchers have argued that democracy depends on the existence of a stable overarching identity, such as "we are all Americans," within the context of fluid allegiances to interest groups (e.g., Oyserman, 1992; Sears, 1987). Such a sense of commitment to the larger national societal community has been described as a hallmark of individualism because collectivism requires a sense of "blood ties" or familial relationship to evoke sustained social obligation (e.g., Triandis, 1995; Wilkinson, 1992).

p. 180 Individualism and collectivism provide very different perspectives on the meaning of social movements and the costs and benefits of being a group member. Involvement in a social movement is a way to create a certain self-image (Pinel & Swann, 2000), to band together with others to feel good about oneself (Kaplan & Liu, 2000), and to maintain a positive sense of one's uniqueness while also feeling close and connected to similar others (Brewer & Silver, 2000). Yet, when framed collectively, social movements can readily create ↪ the context for organized violence. It is imperative that we develop ways to harness the positive power of collective impulses in ways that do not set the stage for violence.

Appendix: A Measure of Individualism and Collectivism (From Oyserman ET AL., 2002)

I. Individualism (valuing personal uniqueness, personal achievement, and personal freedom)

Uniqueness

1. It is important to me to develop my own personal style.
2. I may have some things in common with others, but my personal attributes are what make me who I am.
3. I prefer being able to be different from others.
4. I am different from everyone else, unique.
5. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.
6. It is important for me to be myself.

Achievement

1. For me, hard work and personal determination are the keys to success in life.
2. To know who I really am, you must examine my achievements and accomplishments.
3. A person of character focuses on achieving his/her own goals.
4. I enjoy looking back on my personal achievements and setting new goals for myself.
5. My personal achievements and accomplishments are very important to who I am.
6. It is important for me to remember that my personal goals have top priority.

Freedom

1. It is better for me to follow my own ideas than to follow those of anyone else.
2. My personal happiness is more important to me than almost anything else.
3. Individual happiness and the freedom to attain it are central to who I am.
4. If I make my own choices, I will be happier than if I listen to others.
5. I often have personal preferences.

Family

1. I often turn to my family for social and emotional support.
2. Learning about the traditions, customs, values, and beliefs of my family is important to me.
3. My family is central to who I am.
4. I know I can always count on my family to help me.
5. It is important to me to respect decisions made by my family.
6. Family is more important to me than almost anything else.
7. Whenever my family needs something, I try to help.

Relationships With Others

1. If you know what groups I belong to, you know who I am.
2. To know who I really am, you must see me with members of my group.
3. My relationships with others are a very important part of who I am.
4. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me.
5. In some ways, my relationships with others make me who I am.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in.

Common Fate

1. The history and heritage of my religious, national, or ethnic group are a large part of who I am.
2. A person of character helps his/her religious, national, or ethnic group before all else.
3. I have respect for the leaders of my religious, national, or ethnic group.
4. It is important to me to think of myself as a member of my religious, national, or ethnic group.
5. In the end, a person feels closest to members of his/her own religious, national, or ethnic group.
6. When I hear about an event, I automatically wonder whether it will be good or bad for my religious, national, or ethnic group.

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