Collective Narcissism and the Motivational Underpinnings of the Populist Backlash

Agnieszka Golec de Zavala

Goldsmiths, University of London and SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities,

Poznań and Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, ISCTE-IUL

&

Dorottya Lantos

Goldsmiths, University of London

&

Oliver Keenan

Goldsmiths, University of London

Abstract

Collective narcissism is a belief that one's own group is exceptional but not sufficiently recognized by others. Endorsement of this belief is associated with support for the populist governments in Poland and Hungary; support for Trump in the US and the Brexit in the UK. We analyse the current research on conditions of populism and on Polish collective narcissism to propose that national collective narcissism is a key feature of the current wave of populism. Polish collective narcissism is associated with perceived relative economic deprivation as well as homophobia and sexism via the belief that non-traditional women and sexual minorities threaten the national identity. Given this evidence, we argue that collective narcissism is used by populist leaders to justify the traditional group-based hierarchies. We analyse research on psychological predictors of collective narcissism to understand the motivational underpinnings of support for populism. Findings indicate that collective narcissism is motivated by frustrated sense of self-importance. Thus, we conclude that despite its overt claims, populism does not express a desire for social justice for the 'forgotten' by globalization. It expresses a desire to feel better than others based on one's in-group' s status and to openly express prejudice towards lower status groups.

Keywords: Collective narcissism, populism, sexism, homophobia

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Populist parties and politicians have become significant political players in many democracies worldwide (Brubaker, 2017). The ultraconservative populist Law and Justice has been in power in Poland since 2015. In Hungary, Viktor Orbán and his Fidesz party have been elected to govern for the third consecutive time in 2018 (see also Forgas & Lantos; and Kreko, this volume). The Alternative for Germany (AfD), the first far-right party in the German Parliament since WWII, has been gaining popularity since its founding in 2013. Donald Trump was elected president of the United States in 2016. The same year the populist referendum brought about the vote to leave the European Union in the United Kingdom.

The defining feature of populism is its anti-elitism that contrasts the 'democratic will of the people' with the 'self-interested will of the elites'. Any ideological content can be used to clarify who the elites are and what makes their will less valuable than that of 'the people'. Thus, populism exists in different elaborated variants integrating different ideological positions and leaderships (Mudde, 2017). The current wave of populism is predominantly inspired by ultra-conservative, right-wing ideology. In addition, despite regional differences the common characteristic of the contemporary populism in Europe and North America is its narrow construal of national identity associated with open rejection of pluralistic democracy, the rule of law, equal rights, diversity and social progress (Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2020; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Müller, 2016). The rhetoric of contemporary populism often evokes the concept of national re-birth ('Make America great again', 'Take back control' in the UK, 'Stand up from one's knees' in Poland); a collective nostalgia for idealized national past (Mols & Jetten, 2017; Wohl & Stefaniak, 2020; see also Bar-Tal & Magal; and Marcus, this volume) to justify the narrow inclusion criteria to the entitled group, 'the people'. Those crtieria are based on the concepts of national purity (Betz, 2018), and

autochthony, being born in and having ancestry within a nation (Dunn, 2015). Current populist rhetoric contrasts such narrowly defined 'true' nationals or 'the people' with liberal, internationally oriented 'elites' motivated by universal and human rather than specific and national values.

In this chapter, we argue that national collective narcissism – a belief that the nation is exceptional but not sufficiently recognized by others (Golec de Zavala, Dyduch-Hazar, & Lantos, 2019; Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020; Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2020) - defines a key feature of the contemporary populist narrative about the national identity. Similarly as populism can adopt any ideology to justify the division between 'the people' and 'the elites' collective narcissism may use any excuse to claim the nation's uniqueness and entitlement to special treatment (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009). As noted, the current populist narrative in many countries uses the exaggerated importance of autochthony and ethnic purity to justify the narcissistic claims of national exceptionality. Such claims provide a clumsy ideological justification for the attempts to sanction people's sexuality and women's reproductive rights characteristic of the contemporary populism (see also Cooper & Avery, this volume)..

Many anecdotal examples point to the associations among populism, sexism and sexual prejudice. In Poland, since the populist government came to power in 2015, women have faced the most restrictive anti-abortion laws in Europe and homosexuality has been construed as 'ideology', 'civilizational invasion' antagonistic to traditional family values rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Supported by the Polish Catholic Church and the Pope's declaration that education on "gender ideology" can be dangerous, the Polish government limits access to sexual education and care, and stigmatizes sexual minorities and feminists, along with men and women who refuse to conform to traditional gender roles (Ayoub, 2014; Korolczuk & Graff, 2018). In 2019, a Polish archbishop publicly labelled the LGBT community a 'rainbow plague' (Reuters, 2019), several Polish cities declared

themselves 'LGBT free zones' (Noack, 2019), and a Polish newspaper announced its intention to distribute 'LGBT free zone' stickers nationwide (Giordano, 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic was used by many populist governments to consolidate their authoritarian power and intensify their attacks on dissenters to traditional sexual norms: non-traditional women and sexual minorities (Golec de Zavala et al., 2020). In Hungary, Viktor Orbán banned gender studies from universities across Hungary (Apperly, 2019) and during the pandemic, he blocked access to legal gender recognition for transgender people (Walker, 2020). Across European countries with highly prevalent populist parties and politicians noted decreases in pro-LGBT legislation but increases in cases of hate speech against women and sexual minorities (ILGA-Europe, 2020). In the USA, mass-shooting was perpetrated by an American 'Incel' (a misogynistic online community of self-proclaimed 'involuntary celibates'), who proclaimed the act as vengeance on behalf of all sexually frustrated men, encouraged by notable public expressions of sexism by populist politicians (Beauchamp, 2019). Several southern states in the USA used the COVID-19 pandemic to ban abortion (Hernandez & Barnes, 2020).

Such examples open the question as to why contemporary populism is so obsessed with sexuality, and what its associations with sexism and sexual prejudice tell us about its psychology. We argue that those associations reveal an important motivation underlying populism: a desire to fortify those group hierarchies which provide traditional criteria for some people to feel superior to others (Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2020; see also Crano & Gaffney; Hogg & Goetsche-Astrup; Kruglanski et al., this volume). These group hierarchies have been increasingly undermined since the war by processes of globalization, and the cultural shift towards post-material values of self-expression, equality, and tolerance (Ingelhart & Norris, 2017). Via propagating collective narcissism as a definition of national identity, right wing populism elevates frustrated expectations regarding self-worth to a

collective level. It makes deservingness and a desire to feel better than others defining features of national identity. Its policies increase existing inequalities, boost the personal entitlement, and undermine solidarity among members of a national community, also in times such as the outbreak of the pandemic that particularly require national solidarity (Federico, Golec de Zavala, & Baran, 2020). It is not a coincidence that the countries with the highest death-counts due to the COVID pandemic are those governed by populist government most notably the USA and the UK.   In order to support our argument that populism is about individual deservingness and protection of traditional hierarchies, below we review psychological research on populism and collective narcissism.

Collective narcissism and support for populism

Supporting our claim that national collective narcissism may link self-centered motivations to support for populism, research links national collective narcissism to the support of populist parties and politicians in various countries around the world. National narcissism is assessed by people's agreement with items of a short Collective Narcissism Scale (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009). Those items pertain to a belief that a national group deserves a special treatment, its true value is not recognized by others and group members need to fight for their group's recognition as the world will be a better place when their group has a more important say in it.

Studies indicate that American collective narcissism was the second strongest predictor after partisanship, of voting for Donald Trump in the 2016 US Presidential election. Its role was greater than other factors, such as, economic dissatisfaction, authoritarianism, sexism, and racial resentment, in explaining support for Trump's candidacy (Federico & Golec de Zavala, 2018). In the UK, two studies found collective narcissism to be associated with a self-reported voting to leave the EU indicated and positive emotions associated with the outcome of the Brexit vote. The rejection of immigrants, perceived as a threat to

economic superiority and the British way of life, lay behind the association between collective narcissism and the Brexit vote (Golec de Zavala, Guerra, & Simao, 2017). In addition, collective narcissism predicted support for the populist government and its policies in Poland (for review, Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2020) and in Hungary (Forgas & Lantos, this volume).

As noted above, the exact reason for the narcissistic claim to the nation's exceptionality and entitlement vary depending on the country and its particular history: power and relative status, the group's morality, cultural sophistication, God's love, even exceptional loss, suffering and martyrdom or the in-group's benevolence, tolerance, or trustworthiness (Golec de Zavala et al., 2019). Whatever the reason to demand privileged status, a collective narcissistic belief expresses the desire for one's own group to be noticeably distinguished from other groups coupled with the concern that fulfilment of this desire is threatened (Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020). Below we discuss how findings regarding conditions of populism comply with recent research on national collective narcissism to suggest that national collective narcissism is used to justify the populist claims. Next, we discuss how our findings regarding motivational undermining of collective narcissism help explain psychological motivations behind support for populism.

Conditions of populism: Collective narcissism and 'losers of globalization'

The structural conditions facilitating support for populism have been grouped into two categories: economic ('losers of globalization', Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018) and cultural ('cultural backlash'). The 'economic anxiety' or 'losers of globalization' thesis argues that increasing economic inequalities push certain social groups to feel betrayed and vulnerable, and susceptible to the populist rhetoric. However, evidence suggests it is not the actual worsening of economic conditions or objective lack of economic means that *crucially* inspires populism. It is the subjective perception of one's own economic situation as

threatened or worsening *relative* to 'the rest of society': the perception of unfair disadvantage in comparison to others (Crano & Gaffney; and Vallacher & Fennell, this volume; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018) as well as 'status anxiety', i.e., fear of losing one's relative standing in a social hierarchy (Jetten, 2019; Nolan & Weisstanner, 2020; Mols & Jetten, 2017) that motivate support for populism.

The interpretation of economic changes as a threat of losing established grounds for favourable comparisons with others is produced by political leaders who create and manage a sense of social identity around it (Crano & Gaffney; Kreko, this volume; Mols & Jetten, 2017; Reicher & Haslam, 2017). Analyses suggest that populist leaders reinterpret even economic prosperity in a way that inspires perception of unfair relative deprivation among the advantaged groups. In populists' speeches in economically prosperous countries, such as Australia or Netherlands, the economic prosperity has been portrayed as not sufficiently benefiting the 'ordinary people' (the in-group defined by populists), instead benefiting the minorities that 'demand more than they deserve', 'corrupt elites', 'fortune seeking' immigrants and liberals who 'betray traditional moral values' (and are excluded from the national in-group defined by populists). Thus, the 'true' in-group members, 'the people' are threatened to become 'second-class citizens in their own country' (Mols & Jetten, 2017).

Such findings comply with results indicating that collective narcissism as a key feature of populism is inspired by *perceived* intergroup threat (Guerra et al., 2020) and our analysis suggesting that collective narcissism is motivated by frustrated self-importance (Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2020). Also in line with those analyses, recent results obtained from a national representative sample in Poland indicate that perceived individual relative deprivation increases collective narcissism. The data were collected in two waves with three weeks in between the waves. The first wave was collected online among on 1060 Polish adults (568 women; 492 women) ranging in age from 18 to 94 years old ($M = 45.09$; $SD =$

16.00). The second wave collected responses from 932 of the same participants (500 women; 432 men) at ranging in age from 18 to 93 years old ($M = 45.62$; $SD = 15.79$). The data collection was supported by the Ariadna Research Panel (ariadna.pl). Relative deprivation was assessed by subtracting participants' responses to a question 'How do you evaluate the economic situation of your family? (responses ranged from '1' very bad; '2' bad'; '3' rather bad; '4' difficult to say, bad and good; '5' rather good' '6' good; '7' very good) from participants' responses to the question 'How do you evaluate the economic situation in the country?' (responses were provided on the same scale; $M_{t1} = -0.56$; $SD_{t1} = 1.55$ and $M_{t2} = -0.52$; $SD_{t2} = 1.54$). National collective narcissism was measured by the Collective Narcissism Scale (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009).

The results presented in Figure 1 come from the cross-lagged panel analysis using the T1 and T2 measures of relative deprivation and collective narcissism (Finkel, 1995). By controlling for lagged values of the outcome variable, this approach provides estimates of the hypothesized predictor that corrects for feedback effects and allows for drawing inferences about the causal order of the variables. We regressed the T2 score of each variable on its own lagged T1 value, as well as the T1 value of the other variable. We allowed the disturbance terms for the T2 measures to inter-correlate, and we did the same for the T1 exogenous measures of the variables. The model is saturated (with zero degrees of freedom). The results indicate that perceiving one's own economic situation as worse than the economic situation in the country predicted an increase in collective narcissism three weeks later. However, higher scores on collective narcissism did not predict an increase in perceived relative deprivation. Thus, perceived economic deprivation with relation to others in the country increases collective narcissism and complies with the findings indicating that not an objective but perceived economic and situation social status inspire support for populism.
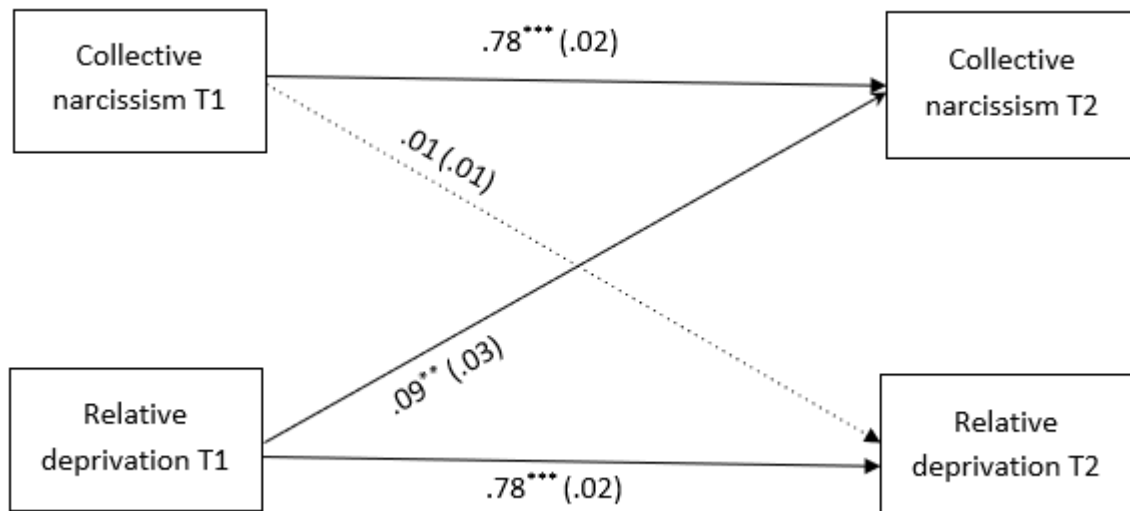
Figure 1. A cross-lagged model of the relationship between perceived relative economic deprivation and collective narcissism in T1 and T2, $N = 932$.

Conditions of populism: Collective narcissism and 'cultural backlash'

The 'cultural backlash' interpretation of the rise of contemporary populism claims that the post-WWII economic prosperity in Western Europe brought about a cultural shift towards post-material values of self-expression, equality, and tolerance. It allowed relative emancipation of previously disadvantaged social groups such as women, ethnic, cultural or sexual minorities, thus undermining the traditional group hierarchies (see also Feldman; Huddie & Del Ponte, this volume). Along the traditional left and right-wing parties concerned with economic redistribution, Green parties started to appear across Western European countries by the 1980s. Such parties were concerned not only with environmental conservation but also with ethnic diversity and gender equality. Post-materialists have supported cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, secularism, LGBT rights, same-sex marriage, greater gender fluidity. They have supported supranational organizations like the UN and the

EU with a view on international cooperation and humanitarianism. They have endorsed movements promoting peace, environmental protection, and human rights (Inglehart & Norris, 2017).

Under this cultural shift, traditional sex roles and marginalization of diverse expressions of sexuality became less stable. Feminist ideologies started to emerge suggesting interchangeable sex roles at home and the workplace and arguing for increases in women's role in politics and wider society. Some opportunities for self-advancement (such as a college education) proliferated, and globalization processes took hold (with concomitant increases in immigration, for instance). Immigrants engaging in higher education had a chance of securing jobs with higher income than less educated citizens. With this, traditionally privileged groups, often from older generations, started to feel betrayed and perceive their positions in society as being threatened. They reacted with anger, political dissatisfaction, and resentment towards those gaining more equal treatment like women and sexual minorities perceiving them as jeopardizing their own previously secure status and cultural predominance. Contemporary populism is a reaction to this shift, a 'revolution in reverse'; a backlash against the changes towards greater equality between social groups (Inglehart & Norris, 2017). Similarly our findings link national collective narcissism as a key feature of the current wave of populism to sexism and homophobia. They align with our proposition that national collective narcissism exemplifies how the definition of national identity is used to support the cultural backlash.

Collective narcissism and homophobia

Collective narcissism is robustly associated with intergroup hostility. It predicted support for terrorist violence in radicalized social networks inspired by Islam (Jaśko et al., 2019) and support for American retaliatory war with Iraq in 2003 (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009). Poles who endorse collective narcissism withdraw help from Syrian refugees because

they perceived Syrian refugees as hostile towards them (Dyduch-Hazar, Mrozinski, & Golec de Zavala, 2019). Collective narcissists exaggerate intergroup threat and believe that their in-group alone faces hostility from others (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009). They retaliate with excessive hostility in situations they perceive as a threat or deliberate provocation (Golec de Zavala, Cichocka, & Iskra-Golec, 2013; Golec de Zavala, Peker, Guerra, & Baran, 2016). Research indicates also that collective narcissism is associated with prejudice towards in-group members. For example, Polish collective narcissism predicts prejudice towards Poles of Jewish ethnic origin (Golec de Zavala & Cichocka, 2012). American collective narcissism predicts prejudice towards American ethnic minorities (Lyons, Kenworthy, & Popan, 2010). Recent evidence indicates also that in Poland, national collective narcissism is associated with prejudice towards women and lesbians and gay men (Mole, Golec de Zavala, & Ardaq, 2020).

Previous reports indicated that national collective narcissism is associated with homophobia (Górska & Mikołajczyk, 2015). More in-depth studies into this association clarify that national collective narcissism is associated with homophobia via the belief that people whose sexuality is not conventional threaten the moral purity of the nation. This belief is derived from traditional gender beliefs grounded in traditional Catholic religious teachings. Those who go beyond the conventional definitions are a threat to religious values and the moral fibre of the national community. In other words, Catholic religious teachings bound to the national identity justify the group-based hierarchy which allocates heterosexuals and men to dominant positions (Mole et al., 2020).

The association between national collective narcissism and homophobia exemplifies the in-group over-exclusion effect derived from social identity theory, a process through which non-prototypical members of the in-group are targeted and rejected. It predicts that group members categorize ambiguous or negatively valued in-group members as an out-

group to protect the in-group (and, thus, their positive social identity) from undesirable outsiders (Leyens & Yzerbyt, 1992). By doing so, they fortify the existing group hierarchies within the in-group. People who reported that their social identity was important to them (Leyens and Yzerbyt, 1992) and people who reported a desire for positive in-group identity (Rubin & Paolini, 2014) were more prone to exclude ambiguous group members. Results of our research indicate that for national collective narcissists lesbians and gay men are easier to categorize as an out-group especially when their non-normative sexuality can be attributed to their immorality (Golec de Zavala, Mole & Lantos, 2020).

Importantly, sexual prejudice serves to justify the group-based hierarchy in which heterosexual people see themselves as more representative of national identity and therefore better than non-heterosexual people. Studies confirm that collective narcissism with reference to heterosexual in-group predicts lack of solidarity with LGBT community's collective actions against sexual prejudice (Górska et al., 2019). Research on the association between collective narcissism and sexism further supports the conclusion that collective narcissism is associated with beliefs that justify traditional group-based hierarchies (Golec de Zavala & Bierwiaczonek, 2020).

Collective narcissism and sexism

In Poland, male, religious (Catholic) and national collective narcissism are associated with sexism, a prejudice towards women (Golec de Zavala & Bierwiaczonek, 2020). Such findings indicate that sexism can be seen both as an intergroup and intragroup problem. Accordingly, in order to maintain their privileged position in the traditional gender hierarchy, men narcissistic about their gender in-group engage in discriminatory treatment of women, who they regard as an out-group. Indeed, male collective narcissism is negatively related to solidarity with women's collective actions against gender inequality. This association is driven by men perceiving women as a threatening out-group (Gorska et al., 2019). In

addition, the association between male collective narcissism and sexism is explained by collective narcissistic men regarding the status of their masculinity as uncertain and attempting to ground it in traditional gender beliefs that promote male dominance over women (Golec de Zavala & Bierwiaczonek, 2020).

However, sexism is not only a problem of collective narcissistic men. Among men and women, Catholic collective narcissism predicts acceptance of domestic violence against women over and above religious fundamentalism (a belief that religious teachings are infallible and the sole repository of fundamental truths that must be obeyed in accordance with tradition; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992) and in contrast to intrinsic religiosity (treating religious faith as an intrinsic end in itself; Batson, Flink, Schoenrade, Fultz, & Pych, 1986). Catholic collective narcissism also predicts a belief that proponents of 'gender ideology' conspire against the traditional family values at the core of the national identity (Marchlewska, Cichocka, Lozowski, Gorska, & Winiewski, 2019). In addition, national collective narcissism in Poland is associated with benevolent sexism more strongly among women than among men (Golec de Zavala & Bierwiaczonek, 2020). As sexism is an important feature of the current wave of right-wing populism, it is important to understand how social sciences understand its forms and its appeal among men and women.

As defined by Glick and Fiske (2001), benevolent sexism encompasses protective paternalism (the belief that women should be protected by men), complementary gender differentiation (the belief that women, rather than men, have empathetic and domestic qualities), and heterosexual intimacy (the belief that women should fulfil men's romantic needs). Although positive in tone, benevolent sexism is positively associated with hostile sexism (overtly derogatory and antagonistic treatment of women, Glick & Fiske, 2001), acceptance of sexual harassment (Fiske & Glick, 1995), negative evaluation of female rape victims (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003), and acceptance of domestic violence

against women (Glick, Sakalli-Ugurlu, Ferreira, & Souza, 2002). Endorsement of the beliefs defined by Glick and Fiske (2001) as benevolent sexism by women is associated with their lower resistance to gender inequality (Jost & Kay, 2005) and their lower aspirations for independence in education and career (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005).This opens a question why do women endorse sexism and support the social hierarchy that disadvantages them?

Like any prejudice, sexism is a function of normative beliefs held in a society (Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002). Thus, men and women are likely to endorse sexism when they perceive it as normative and desirable according to dominant societal norms (Sibley, Overall, & Duckitt, 2007). In Poland, the claim to national uniqueness that inspires the support for the populist government is based on Poland's attachment to traditional Catholicism. As a consequence, the current official narrative about national identity attributes national prototypically to Catholic, heterosexual men (Graff, 2010). This creates a normative climate in which traditional gender hierarchy seems appropriate and sexism (especially benevolent due to it superficial positivity) is used to justify this hierarchy (Jost & Kay, 2005; Sibley, 2007). The more people identify with their nation, the more they are likely to adhere to its norms as expression their national identity (Ellemers, Pagliaro & Barreto, 2013). Positive identification with a superordinate identity is associated with acceptance of intergroup inequality by members of the dominant (Lowery, Unzueta, Knowles, & Goff, 2006) and the disadvantaged groups within the superordinate group (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009).

However, the results from Poland indicate that only national collective narcissism is associated with sexism among women. Polish women, who are satisfied (but not narcissistic about) being Polish reject sexism as ideology justifying gender inequality (Golec de Zavala & Bierwiaczonek, 2020). Indeed, women who sympathize with the Polish populist government actively support its oppressive policies regarding women rights. For example, the women

representing the Life and Family Foundation proposed the 'Stop abortion' bill (Shukla & Klosok, 2020 – the most restrictive abortion law penalizing any case of abortion and publicly undermined proponents of reproductive women's rights as 'fans of killing babies' (Davies, 2016). On the other hand, women activists associated with opposition to the current government self-organize to protect women's rights and act towards gender equality. For example, the famous Black Friday nationwide protests that forced the government to retract the proposed total abortion ban was organized by activists by the Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet (Nationwide Women's Strike). Again, this brings about the question why do some women (and men) endorse national collective narcissism, the key component of populist politics in Poland? The response to this question has implications for our understanding of the motivational underpinnings of national collective narcissism as a key feature of the current wave of populism.

Motivational underpinnings of collective narcissism

The findings we reviewed above, especially those indicating that male collective narcissists endorse sexism because they feel men are threatened by women align with research suggesting that collective narcissistic intergroup hostility is subjectively defensive. It is a response to perceiving the in-group as constantly threatened and most of the out-groups as hostile and threatening (Golec de Zavala, 2011; Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020). Those findings support our understanding of collective narcissism as a compensation for the frustrated sense of self-importance elevated to a collective level (Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2020).

It is not a coincidence that the phenomenon of collective (or group) narcissism was first described by scholars of the Frankfurt School, who analyzed the conditions and beliefs that gave rise to another wave of right-wing populism over 80 years ago. Those authors suggested that changes in economic and social conditions undermined the traditional criteria

according to which people evaluated themselves, resulting in an increase in national collective narcissism, which ultimately gave rise to the Nazi regime in Germany in the 1930s (Adorno, 1997; Fromm, 1973; but see also Vallacher & Fennell; Gelfand & Lorente; Kruglanski et al., this volume). Along with Theodor Adorno's (1997) and Erich Fromm's (1973) claims that collective narcissism is a response to conditions that increase "ego fragility", evidence indicates that collective narcissism is motivated by a combination of low self-worth and narcissistic self-importance (Golec de Zavala et al., 2019; Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2020).

Studies show that low self-esteem reliably predicts collective narcissism. In two longitudinal studies low self-esteem resulted in higher collective narcissism several weeks later but collective narcissism did not improve self-esteem several weeks later. In an experiment, self-esteem was lowered experimentally by asking participants to watch their in-group being excluded from a social interaction. Analyses indicated that the decrease in self-esteem, not any other of the psychological needs threatened by exclusion (personal control, meaningful existence or belonging), was responsible for the increase in collective narcissism following the experimental manipulation of exclusion. Low self-esteem was related to various forms of derogation of out-groups (including social distance, hostile behavioral intentions, and symbolic aggression) via collective narcissism (Golec de Zavala et al., 2020).

The results reported by Golec de Zavala and colleagues (2020) indicated that personal control, the belief in one's ability to influence the course of one's own life, was not uniquely associated with collective narcissism after self-esteem was also taken into account. Further evidence suggests that collective narcissism is associated with support for the use of violence and terrorism as a means to assert personal significance (i.e., the desire to matter, to "be someone," in the eyes of others) elevated to a collective level. The 'quest for significance' can be seen as a form of self-love contingent on social recognition as it is seen as stemming

from a perceived discrepancy between expected and experienced levels of positive self-evaluation (Jasko et al., 2019). This complies with the definition of individual narcissism as exaggerated sense of self-worth contingent on external validation (Crocker & Park, 2004; Morf, & Rhodewalt, 2001). Indeed, further evidence indicates that individual narcissism predicts collective narcissism (Golec de Zavala, 2018; Golec de Zavala et al., 2019; Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2020).

Collective narcissism is associated with both presentation of individual narcissism currently differentiated by personality science: Vulnerable and grandiose. They differ with respect to how narcissistic self-importance, antagonism and entitlement are expressed (Krizan & Herlache, 2018). Vulnerable narcissism is defined by frustration, and passive resentment in face of the lack of confirmation of perceived self-importance (Krizan & Herlache, 2018). Grandiose narcissism is associated with self-enhancement, self-confidence, forceful assertion of self-worth, and exploitation of others. Vulnerable narcissism becomes salient when the grandiose expectations regarding the self are not confirmed by external factors.

The association between vulnerable and collective narcissism is more robust than the association between grandiose narcissism (Golec de Zavala, 2018; Golec de Zavala et al., 2019). Longitudinal and experimental studies clarify that grandiose narcissism predicts collective narcissism but collective narcissism predicts vulnerable narcissism. Instead of fortifying the undermined sense of self-worth, endorsing collective narcissism increases a sense of frustrated individual entitlement. Such findings clarify the misunderstandings surrounding motivational underpinnings of collective narcissism as some authors still seem to claim that collective narcissism is motivated by undermined sense of personal control and autonomy (cf Cichocka & Cislak, 2020). We disagree and argue that it is very important to precisely characterize underpinnings of collective narcissism in order to be able to differentiate the psychological needs and desires that inspire people to act collectively for

greater equality and social justice (like need for autonomy and dignity) from motivations that inspire people to support policies and politicians that are protecting established group hierarchies and existing social inequalities (like self-importance and a need to feel better than others; see also Bar-Tal & Magal, this volume).

Such findings also suggest that investing undermined self-esteem and self-importance in collective narcissism is futile and, indeed, damaging. Instead of providing relief and improvement, it fuels a self-reinforcing mechanism via which deservingness at the individual level of the self becomes implicated in the definition of social identity and thus, in intergroup relations. Addressing expectations regarding self-worth by endorsing collective narcissism perpetuates rather than alleviates the aggravation for frustrated self-importance.

Implications for understanding of the motivational underpinnings of populism

As argued above, there is now a substantial body of evidence indicating that collective narcissism does *not* express a need to regain collective autonomy and control, nor does it express a desire for dignity, social justice and equality; where all individuals have equal chances to exercise their freedom and feel valued. Frustration of those needs could stimulate collective actions of disadvantaged groups for recognition of their identity and equal rights (e.g., Fritsche et al., 2017). Instead, collective narcissism is a belief that expresses a desire for the in-group's dominant position that can be used as basis to feel better than others. We believe findings regarding the conditions of populism and the results regarding motivational underpinnings of collective narcissism similarly indicate that the support for populist parties, politicians and populists, despite often using justice and equality for self-presentation purpose, has been driven in fact driven by a motivation to protect the established group hierarchies.

Despite its overt claims, populism does not express a desire for social justice for those 'forgotten' by globalization and growing prosperity. It rather expresses a demand for

protection or restoration of the traditional group-based hierarchies and a right to openly express prejudice towards lower status groups (see Crano & Gaffney, this volume). The emerging conclusion from our analyses is that support for populism is motivated by a perceived threat to established grounds that bolstered people's sense of importance and entitlement. Populist leaders instigate and take advantage of such threat. They formulate and propagate narcissistic vision of national identity that validates those whose self-worth and sense of self-importance has been threatened by external conditions undergoing (actual or perceived) changes. This new social identity is organized around shared resentment for those changes that question old dimensions on which people could compare themselves to others and feel superior. Populist rhetoric suggests that those who feel wronged and resentful are 'the people'; the 'righteous and true' representatives of the nation. This rhetoric provides a coherent and appealing narrative explaining why their privileged status is being undermined and how it should be restored. Thus, it offers new dimensions for positive comparisons to others and the promise of restoring the sense of self-importance. This promise is likely to produce engaged followership (Reicher & Haslam, 2017).

National collective narcissism provides the essence of the populist definition of national identity. It defines the central feature of the group-based entitlement underlying the current rise of right-wing populism worldwide. It is associated with hostility towards emancipating minorities that threaten the traditional, group-based hierarchies (Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2020). The robust association between collective narcissism and prejudice towards traditionally disadvantaged groups like women and sexual minorities clearly show that populism is about providing new justification for the established group-based hierarchies traditionally providing claims to self-importance. Psychological research indicates that undermined self-esteem and a sense of personal entitlement motivate collective narcissism (encompassing the concepts of 'ego fragility' in the classic work on collective narcissism,

Adorno, 1997; Fromm, 1973 or 'quest for personal significance' in more recent work using the present conceptualization of collective narcissism (Jaśko et al., 2019; Kruglanski et al., this volume). We argue that such findings provide a theoretical framework to explain psychological motivations behind support for populist parties, politicians and policies. This framework examines conditions of populism around the concept of expectations regarding self-importance.

Collective narcissism is associated with escalation of internal tensions, intergroup hostility, and a lack of solidarity with those who are disadvantaged by group-based hierarchies within national identities. Instead of satisfying personal entitlement, endorsing collective narcissism intensifies the sense of its frustration. We argue that collective narcissism is propagated by populist as it justifies why dominant groups in a group-based hierarchy should keep those positions. Those inclined to protect the dominant positions of their groups gravitate towards this definition of national identity as a means to boost their personal sense of self-worth. Thus, the concept of collective narcissism elucidates how psychological processes from individual levels of striving for individual significance (Kruglanski et al., this volume), positive self-esteem (Golec de Zavala et al., 2020), personal entitlement (Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2020) are involved in intergroup processes such as intergroup struggle to protect versus attenuate group-based hierarchies (see also Hogg & Goetsche-Astrup, this volume).

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