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Mass political murder: What and where is the hate?

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Abstract

This article explores the meaning and importance of hate in intergroup conflict, especially in conflict that moves to genocide or politicide. Review of controversies in defining hate leads to definition of hate as an extreme form of *negative identification* that includes perception of *bad essence*. *Negative identification* is inverse caring for others, as seen in studies of schadenfreude and gluckschmerz. Studies of dehumanization suggest that two forms of *bad essence* can be distinguished: evil human (entitativity essentializing) and infrahuman animal (natural kind essentializing). Studies also show that those who essentialize more are more ready to punish indiscriminately all members of a rival group; thus essentializing facilitates killing by category. Application of the negative-identification-bad-essence definition of hate in the Nazi, Cambodian, and Rwandan politicides indicates that leaders of political mass murder hate their victims, but that hate is relatively unimportant for those who do the killing. For the mass public that leaders and perpetrators claim to represent, the importance of hate is currently unknown. Implications are considered for measuring hate in texts and polls, and for future directions of research on hate.

Introduction

Hate is often cited in relation to intergroup conflict, especially in relation to protracted conflict, genocide, and politicide. Google hits are over a million for ["Northern Ireland" AND Protestant AND Catholic AND hate], over ten million for [Israel AND Palestine AND hate], and over twenty-three million for [genocide AND hate]. The corresponding hits in Google Scholar are over 20,000, over 60,000, and over 100,000. Google hits are over 40,000 for "hate studies," including several university centers, networks, and a journal.

Despite popular concern for hate as source or multiplier of conflict, there is considerable controversy attached to the concept. Some scholars see hate as an emotion. For Elster (2004, p.

230), "hatred is the emotion that A feels toward B if he believes that B has an evil character. The action-tendency is to cause B to cease to exist or otherwise be rendered harmless, for instance by permanent expulsion." Other scholars have argued that hate is a disposition or sentiment, pointing out that emotions are brief in duration whereas hate can span years and even generations (Shand, 1914; Frijda, Mesquita, Sonnemans, & van Goozen, 1991).

This article reviews controversies in defining hate, stipulates a definition of hate as an extreme form of negative identification that includes perception that the enemy has an evil or animal essence, then pursues the implications of this definition for understanding genocide and politicide.

Four Ways of Defining Hate

Royzman, McCauley, and Rozin (2005) identified four ways of seeking a definition of hate.

Platonic Ideal Definition

This approach assumes that there is an objective right answer to the question "What is hate?' just as there is an objective right answer to the question "What is gold?" If there is one "true," or "real," meaning of hate, then defining requires excavating a Platonic Form only vaguely seen by others; research must get past approximations to uncover the gold-standard definition analogous to Atomic Number 79 as the definition of gold.

A Platonist example is psychiatrist Willard Gaylin: "We are capable of transient extremes of rage that we call hatred, but the true haters live daily with their hatred…They are obsessed with their enemies, attached to them in a paranoid partnership. It is this attachment that defines true hatred" (2003, pp. 4-5). Here Gaylin opposes everyday use of the word hatred with "true" hatred, a relationship marked by paranoid obsession.

Despite linking hate with psychopathology, Gaylin (2005, p. 171) does acknowledge a normal psychology that is the basis of hate: "Hatred is an extreme and perverse distortion of the necessary process of group identification." A version of this idea appears later in a stipulated definition of hate.

Perhaps most people, expert and layperson alike, slip into a Platonist mode in trying to define something, especially when trying to say why one definition is better than another. But the Platonist search for the "true" meaning of hate is better resisted. Arguments over the true meaning of hate do not lead easily to falsifiable predictions about the origins or consequences of hate, or about how to measure it.

Definition by Usage

Examining common usage has been perhaps the most popular way of looking for the meaning of hate. This approach has two variants: usage by experts and usage by everyman. Both assume that a substantive consensus can be identified.

Expert usage

At the beginning of expert opinion, Aristotle famously defined hate and distinguished it from anger (Christiansen, 2016). The distinction is important since many have noticed that there is considerable overlap in the actions associated with hate and anger: both aim to bring harm to their target.

Aristotle says that anger is the reaction to undeserved slight (also rendered as perceived injustice), and that the target of anger is the person perpetrating the slight. Hate is unlike anger, according to Aristotle, because hate is not a reaction to a particular slight but a reaction to bad character revealed in a history of bad behavior. Hate is also unlike anger in its desires. Whereas

hate wishes bad things to happen to the hated, or that they cease to exist, anger wishes revenge--

pain inflicted on the perpetrator of a slight by the one slighted.

Royzman, McCauley, and Rozin (2005) reviewed expert opinions about hate from

Aristotle onward, but found little agreement. Contributors to Sternberg's (2005) edited volume,

The Psychology of Hate, were also far from agreement, as summarized in the next paragraph.

Sternberg (2005) advanced a three-component theory of hate that included disgust,

anger/fear, and contempt. Staub (2005) saw hate as a complex emotion that includes fear and

anger associated with perception of threat from the hated other. Beck and Pretzer did not offer a

definition of hate but described it as a persistent response to persistent perception of being

"wronged, damaged, coerced or corrupted" (2005, p.73). Baumeister and Butz (2005) did not

offer a definition of hate but assumed that factors leading to interpersonal and intergroup

violence (material reward, threatened egotism, idealism, sadism) also lead to hate. Lerner,

Balsano, Banik, and Naudeau (2005) saw hate as an instance of negative prejudice marked by

high emotional arousal and salience. Opotow (2005) described hate as extreme enmity and

pointed to moral exclusion as the key to expressing enmity in violence. Berkowitz (2005)

focused, not on hate, but on haters; he explored what personal and situational factors might

explain how some haters turn to aggression against the hated. Moshman followed Aristotle in

seeing anger as a momentary reaction, whereas hatred is "an enduring attitude directed at

persons" (2005, p.186); Moshman argued that perpetrators of mass killing have many motives

besides hate. Dovidio, Gaertner, and Pearson considered hate as "extreme dislike associated with

prejudice that produces aggressive impulses" (2005, p.212) and focused on when aversive racism

may turn to blatant racism and hatred. Finally, Alford's (2005) chapter pointed to the psychic

rewards of hate, including the fraternity of those who join in hate.

Sternberg provided an update of expert views of hate in a second edited volume, *Perspectives on Hate* (2020). Only a few contributions dealt with defining hate; most contributions examined how hate originates or focused on hate speech and hate crimes. Haslam and Murphy (2020) argued that hate (sometimes reduced to "antipathy") can be distinguished from dehumanization, and that lay usage of the word "hate" has been expanding over recent years. Brudholm (2020) advanced a definition originally offered by Roberts (2003, p. 251): "the defining proposition for hatred is this: X is evil and worthy of damage, suffering and destruction; may X be damaged, hurt, or destroyed."

The diversity of expert opinion is striking. For some, hate is an emotion or combination of emotions. Others see hate as a negative attitude or prejudice. Some relate hate to love; others do not. Some try to consider both interpersonal and intergroup hate; others focus only or mostly on one of these. Some discuss hate as the explanation of mass killing; others recognize that most haters never move to violent action and point to the importance of dehumanization or moral exclusion for understanding mass killing. Some are more concerned with where hate comes from—antecedents of hate such as threat and injury--than what it is.

Lay usage

If experts cannot agree, it can be no surprise that studies of lay usage do not produce consensus either. Royzman, McCauley, and Rozin (2005) reviewed studies of this kind, and what commonality could be found in descriptions elicited from everyman did not agree with expert opinion. Lay usage in describing personal experience of hate seemed to focus on humiliation by a superior against whom revenge or even expression of anger is too dangerous to contemplate. But status asymmetry of haters and hated is not salient in expert discussions of hate.

One study of lay usage stands out for its relevance to the stipulated definition of hate that will be advanced here. Halperin (2008) reminded Israeli participants of Palestinian threats to Israel, then asked about feelings toward Palestinians with ratings of hate, anger, and fear. Hate correlated more than anger and fear with endorsement of removal or destruction of Palestinians, doing evil to Palestinians, political and social exclusion of Palestinians, and physical and violent action against Palestinians. Surveys were conducted in Hebrew or Russian, so the lay understanding of hate depended on either the Hebrew or Russian word for hate. Despite aggregating across languages, the results indicate that hate is particularly associated with intentions toward removing or destroying a threatening group—actions forwarding genocide or politicide. In discussion, Halperin (2008) cited Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst (2000) to suggest that hate may depend on perception of a bad essence that justifies removal or destruction of an entire group. This suggestion is taken up in the section on **Psychological Essentialism)**

Ostensive Definition

A third approach to the meaning of hate is definition by example. This approach is represented in discussions that provide vivid examples of genocide or politicide but no definition of hate. *Genocide* refers to cases where mass killing targets groups by ethnicity, nationality, race, or religion (United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect, no date). *Politicide* includes cases where mass killing targets groups by politics, economics, or culture (Chirot & McCauley, 2006). Hate is assumed to be whatever is common in the motivations of mass killing.

As already noted, some contributors to the *Psychology of Hate* (Sternberg, 2005) did not attempt to define hate; they pointed to hate with examples. Three popular books about hate-- *Modern Hatreds* (Kaufman, 2001), *Fires of Hatred* (Naimark, 2001), and *Mass Hate* (Kressel,

2002)--do not offer any definition of hate or hatred; indeed, *hate* does not appear in the index of

the books by Kaufman and Naimark. Instead, these books describe genocides and politicides in

which hate is presumed to have played a causal role

A weakness of trying to work backwards to hate from instances of mass killing is that

case studies of mass killings may tell us something about the antecedents of hate, but cannot tell

us what hate *is*. Efforts to measure hate can have little support from ostensive definitions of hate.

Stipulated Definition

A stipulated definition of a concept does not depend on finding agreement in use of a common

word for the concept, or on agreement about the commonality in instances said to show the

concept at work. Rather, a stipulated definition is the beginning of an empirical research project.

If we define hate--or love, or anger—in a particular way, then what useful measures and

relationships are we led to?

An early modern definition of hate was stipulated by Shand (1914). As Sternberg (2006)

projected a theory of hate from his theory of love, so Shand analyzed hate as the opposite of

love. Shand saw both love and hate as dispositions or organizations of emotional experience in

relation to the fortunes of those loved or hated.

> The health and prosperity of the loved object is a cause of joy: in hatred, it is a cause of
>
> bitter sorrow. In place of the delight in being again with the one we love, is a peculiar
>
> mixture of repugnance and anger when we find ourselves again in the presence of one we
>
> hate; the one impelling us to avoid the person, the other to attack him. (Shand, 1914, p.
>
> 59).

Although Shand focused on love and hate for individuals, his idea that love and hate are

the occasions of many emotions, depending on what is happening to those loved or hated, can be

applied to groups as well as to individuals. Indeed, Shand refers briefly to "hatred of the capitalist and professional classes by the manual laborers" (1914, p. 58), suggesting that his definition of hate can be applied to groups.

The definition of hate stipulated here is an updated version of Shand's (2014) definition, combined with Gaylin's (2003) idea that hate is a distortion of the normal psychology of group identification. The stipulated definition is that hate is *an extreme form of negative identification that includes perception of a bad essence*.

The idea that hate is not an emotion is sufficiently controversial as to require separate attention in the next section.

Reasons for Doubting that Hate Is an Emotion

Some eminent scholars have seen hate as an emotion or combination of emotions (Elster, 2004; Staub, 2005; Sternberg, 2005). The stipulated definition denies that hate is an emotion. It is important then to review reasons for thinking that hate is not usefully understood as an emotion.

First, many have noted that hate endures over months and years whereas an emotion lasts a few minutes or a few days (Fridja et al, 1991). No researcher tries to measure an emotion or its effects more than a few minutes after eliciting the emotion. Whereas there is something more persistent and even obsessive (Gaylin, 2003, pp. 4-5) about hate. Fischer, Halperin, Canetti, & Jasini (2018, pp. 311-312) provide a review of theoretical struggles to accommodate the brevity of emotional experience with the endurance of hate; they end by suggesting a distinction between *short-term hate* (emotion) and *long-term hate* (sentiment). This suggestion yet leaves a need to define *sentiment* and to distinguish it from *attitude* (Fridja et al, 1991, pp. 211-214)*,* while distinguishing *sentiment* from *emotion* may have its own complexities (Ferran, 2022).

A second reason for doubting that hate is an emotion is that emotions are reactions to the actions of others, whereas hate is reaction to the perceived character or nature of others (Aristotle per Christiansen, 2016; Roberts, 2003; Elster, 2004; Brudholm, 2020).

> While we feel anger because a certain action by a certain person or group is appraised as immoral, unfair, or unjust, if that very same person changed their behavior, the levels of anger would be reduced and the person would be forgiven. However, the entire configuration of hatred appraisals focuses on the innate nature, motives, and characteristics of the target itself and therefore a momentary change in certain behavioral patterns will not necessarily diminish levels of hatred" (Fischer et al, 2018, p.309).

A third reason for doubting that hate is an emotion is the obvious fact, emphasized by Shand (1914), that hate is associated with many different emotions. If the individual or group that we hate is prospering or succeeding, then we feel negative emotions--sadness, fear, guilt, or shame. But if the individual or group we hate is hurt or failing, then we feel joy or pride. This positive response to the misfortune of others is sometimes referred to as *schadenfreude,* as described in the next section.

Thus hate can endure for months and years, is a reaction to the perceived bad character or evil nature of the individual or group hated, and is associated with many different emotions. These are reasons for thinking that hate is not usefully understood as an emotion. Instead the suggestion here is that hate is an extreme form of negative identification. The next section stipulates definitions of positive and negative identification.

Positive and Negative Identification

Identification is caring about what happens to others. Identification is not the same as *empathy* (feeling what others are feeling). We fear for the screen heroine as the monster creeps unseen

behind her; we do not feel what she is feeling (serene). Nor is identification the same as *sympathy* (feeling sad for others' suffering). We do not feel sad for the heroine's suffering; she hasn't suffered yet.

Identification is a human capacity both broad and deep. We identify not just with those close to us (family, friends, neighbors) but with animals (dogs, cats, canaries), celebrity strangers (Elvis, Princess Di), and fictional characters (real tears for Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol*). We identify not only with individuals but with groups (our team or club; our ethnic, national, or religious group).

Indeed we can identify with groups we are not part of. For instance, polls indicate that over half of Americans see support for Ukraine as *not enough* or *about right* (Dunn, 2023). Group identification is therefore broader than *social identity,* which "describes those aspects of a person's self-concept based upon their group memberships…" (Turner & Oakes, 1986, p. 240). It is worth noting that group identification can be more than an attitude, even for groups we are not part of. Bernhardt et al (1998) found that testosterone level increased in the fans of winning teams and decreased in the fans of losing teams.

These are examples of *positive identification*. Sometimes referred to as *compassion*, positive identification is "feeling *for* and not feeling *with* the other" (Singer & Klamecki, 2014, p. R875).

There is also *negative identification*, a kind of inverse caring. Negative identification produces joy and pride when the individual or group is suffering or failing; if the individual or group is prospering and succeeding, we feel sadness, fear, guilt, or shame.

Negative identification targets not just individuals (Hitler, Osama bin Laden) but groups (smokers, racists). Negative identification is observed in sports: some baseball fans want the

Yankees to lose, no matter who wins. Negative identification can be powerful in politics: some 2016 voters were more negative about the opposition candidate than positive about their favored candidate (Page, 2016).

Negative identification's pattern of inverse caring has been recognized in discussions of *Schadenfreude*—feeling pleasure in the misfortune of others—and *Gluckschmerz*—feeling pain in the success of others (Cikara, Bruneau & Saxe, 2011; Smith & van Dijk, 2018). For example, Combs et al (2009) found that degree of identification with either the Democratic or Republican Party predicted greater schadenfreude (feeling *tickled, pleased, secretly happy*) in response to events having unfortunate consequences for the opposing party.

A study by Hoogland et al (2015) found that level of group identification predicted both schadenfreude and gluckschmerz. University students reading about an injury to a member of a rival team experienced schadenfreude (*a little pleased over the injury*); reading about quick recovery from the injury produced gluckschmerz (*a little disappointed over the quick recovery*). Schadenfreude and gluckschmerz were correlated across individuals, and predicted by level of identification with the home team.

Are schadenfreude and gluckschmerz additions to our list of emotions? Hess (2018) does not think so, instead suggesting that schadenfreude and gluckschmerz may be understood as instances, respectively, of familiar emotions happiness and anger. Similarly Roseman and Steele (2018, p.3, p.332) noted that "an argument against considering schadenfreude and gluckschmerz to be discrete emotions focuses on their similarity to joy and distress." It seems that schadenfreude and gluckschmerz are better understood as experience of familiar positive emotions (joy, happiness) and negative emotions (anger, sadness), rather than as discrete emotions.

This section has stipulated definitions of positive and negative identification as broad forms of caring about others. Neither positive identification nor negative identification is an emotion; both can be a source of either positive or negative emotions depending on what happens to those cared about. Research on schadenfreude and gluckschmerz shows the power of negative identification, including positive emotions when the target of negative identification is hurt or failing. It is worth noting that definitions of hate as emotion (Elster, 2004; Staub, 2005; Sternberg, 2005) have not recognized that hate can be associated with positive emotions.

For conceptualizing hate, the importance of negative identification is that it does not suffer the drawbacks noted for defining hate as an emotion. Negative identification with an individual or a group can last for years and can be associated with many emotions, both positive and negative, depending on what is happening to the individual or group. But the stipulated definition of hate goes beyond negative identification: *an extreme form of negative identification that includes perception of a bad essence*. The next section offers a brief introduction to the idea of essence.

Psychological Essentialism

It is important to be clear that psychological essentialism is an observation about human perception, not a claim about the biology of animal groups or the definition of human groups (Haslam & Whelan, 2008).

The idea of essence is a kind of cognitive default for human understanding of living things. I have an essence, the hidden something that makes me the same person I was when I was five—despite big changes in my appearance and behavior. The ugly duckling had a hidden something that made it a swan. A three-legged albino tiger is still a tiger; it still has the essence of tiger.

Adults refer to essence with different words: *nature, character, soul, spirit, substance*. The idea of essence is the cognitive primitive that lies beneath these different words, an intuition about genes before genetics. This intuition is commonplace in perception of individuals. Major religions including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism see each human individual as having an immortal soul (essence) that accrues credit or blame for actions while the soul is joined with the body in life (Almond, 2021).

Ideas of essence are also found in perception of groups, including groups defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, mental disorder, and personality (Haslam & Whelan, 2008). Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst (2000) had participants rate a diverse sample of forty social groups on nine elements of essentialist belief. The ratings indicated a two-dimensional structure of essentialist beliefs: a *natural kind* dimension (groups seen as natural, immutable, invariant through human history, with sharp boundaries and necessary conditions of membership) and an *entitativity* dimension (groups seen as inductively potent, homogeneous, identity-determining, grounded in deep, inherent properties). Highest on the natural dimension were Blacks and Females; highest on the entitativity dimension were Homosexuals and Liberals.

The next section finds evidence that natural-kind and entitativity forms of essentializing are implicated in violence against those essentialized.

Hate as Perception of Bad Essence

Numerous scholars have recognized that hate implies perception of something deeply wrong with the individual or group hated. For Elster (2004), following Aristotle, it is "evil character." For Roberts (2003) and Brudholm (2020) the hated "is evil and worthy of damage, suffering and destruction." For Fischer et al (2018), "hatred appraisals [focus] on the innate nature, motives,

and characteristics of the target itself." The perception of something deeply wrong with those hated is easily understood as perception that those hated have a bad essence.

Consistent with this interpretation, empirical research has found that essentializing a threatening group is linked with hostility toward all members of that group. Denson et al (2006) found that entitativity and natural kinds measures predicted judgments of collective responsibility for a group if one member of the group committed a negative act. Stenstrom et al (2008) showed that both ingroup identification and perceived outgroup entitativity predicted motivation for vicarious retaliation ("wanted to retaliate against all of the people in the other group for what happened"). In a naturalistic study, Vasquez et al (2015) found that gang members who identified more strongly with their gang and perceived a rival group as high on entitativity were more willing to retaliate against all of them.

Perception of group essence is thus linked with readiness to retaliate against all members of a group for bad actions of individual group members. This research makes sense of what Michener (2012) called *third party revenge*, when revenge for an attack is taken against members of the attacking group who had nothing to do with the attack. Gourgen Yanikian, who lost family in the 1915 Armenian genocide, shot and killed two Turkish diplomats in California—58 years after the genocide. His victims were not yet born in 1915.

It is not only groups defined by perceived descent—families, clans, ethnic groups, national groups—that can be perceived as sharing a bad essence. A striking example is the Cambodian politicide, where the predominant target was "Cambodians with Vietnamese minds" (Chirot & McCauley, 2006). These were seen as contaminating the authentic rural Cambodian culture. The perpetrators did not deny that their victims were Cambodian by blood descent but

denied that they were "real" Cambodians. It appears that any group perceived as self-

reproducing can be essentialized, including class and cultural groups.

Essentializing an enemy makes all of them a threat, all of them responsible, all of them

guilty. Essentializing an enemy means that they must be avoided or eliminated. Hate makes

sense of killing by category.

This logic is recognized in efforts to reduce essentializing by emphasizing the

malleability of groups, even enemy groups (Halperin et al, 2011). It is interesting to note,

however, that interventions to increase perception of group malleability are targeting just one of

the nine elements of essentializing identified by Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst (2000)—the

natural kind element of "immutable."

The next section raises the possibility that different forms of bad essence may identify

different forms of hate.

Varieties of Bad Essence

Many scholars have pointed to the importance of *dehumanization* as encouraging or even

necessary for perpetrating genocide and ethnic cleansing. Haslam (2006) reviewed research

offering ideas about dehumanization and integrated these ideas into a dual theory of

dehumanization: *animalistic* dehumanization denies characteristics that separate humans from

animals; *mechanistic* dehumanization denies characteristics associated with human nature,

leaving an individual or group as object or automaton without human feelings. These two kinds

of dehumanization are thus perceptions of two varieties of bad essence.

Haslam (2006) suggested that animalistic dehumanization may occur primarily in

intergroup conflict, whereas mechanistic dehumanization may occur at both individual and group

levels. He also suggested that mechanistic dehumanization is associated with disregard and

indifference, whereas animalistic dehumanization is associated with emotions of disgust and contempt. "Essentialist thinking about groups—seeing them as discrete 'natural kinds'—does appear to be necessary for animalistic dehumanization. Only if groups are believed to have categorically different natures can intergroup differences be seen as species-like" (Haslam, 2006, p. 259).

In a later essay (Haslam & Murphy, 2020), Haslam argued that hate does not dehumanize those hated for moral violation. Punishment for moral violation requires targets human enough to deserve blame for immoral choices.

Adding up these ideas, it seems there may be three types of bad essence attributed to humans: infrahuman animal essence, evil human essence, and inhuman automaton essence. As Haslam (2006) suggests, hate that includes perception of animal essence can be identified as natural kind essentializing. Hate that includes perception of evil human essence may then be identified as entitativity essentializing. The third type, inhuman automaton essence, has not been studied in relation to intergroup conflict.

Animal essence and evil human essence thus distinguish two varieties of hate, which may have different behavioral expressions. Hating an evil human essence may be expressed in painful executions that include torturing, disfiguring, dismembering, and disemboweling the enemy; this kind of execution was seen in the Rwanda politicide (Moshman, 2005, p. 188). Whereas hating an animal essence may be expressed in ethnic cleansing or in efficient "medical," or "slaughterhouse" executions; this kind of execution was seen in the gassing of Jews in the Holocaust (Moshman, 2020, p.191).

In relation to animal essentializing, it is interesting to notice that targets of genocide and ethnic cleansing are often described with a limited number of animal epithets. The enemy is a

parasite, virus, bacillus, or bloodsucker—a disease and contamination threat. They are maggots, cockroaches, rats, vermin, pigs, vultures—disgusting and contaminating in their association with offal, decay, disease, and death. One could imagine animal epithets that are not contaminating or disgusting: the enemy are ladybugs, penguins, or rabbits. These are familiar animals and calling the enemy by these names would name them animals--but not disgusting and contaminating animals. The common epithets convey not just an inferior animal essence, but a contaminating and disgusting essence. The role of disgust in natural kind/animal essentializing, and in hate that includes this kind of essentializing, is drawing increasing attention (Katzir, Hoffmann & Liberman, 2018; Martínez, van Prooijen & Van Lange, 2022)

Hate in Intergroup Conflict

If hate is defined as negative identification that includes perception of a bad essence, what does this stipulation mean for understanding intergroup conflict? Subsections will consider the origins of hate, and shared vs. collective hate.

Does love come before hate?

Intergroup conflicts usually begin in positive group identification. We care about our team, our ethnicity, our religion, our nation. Another group harms or threatens our group, and we develop negative identification with that group. If the threat is protracted or bloody, negative identification may come to include perception of the enemy as evil or infrahuman. In this trajectory, positive identification comes before negative identification: love comes before hate.

Brewer (1999) famously suggested that ingroup love is unrelated to outgroup hate. She did not attempt to define or measure love or hate; rather she pointed to examples where positive attitude toward the ingroup was uncorrelated with negative attitude toward an outgroup. For rival groups, however, Brewer (1999, pp. 435-436) expected and found a strong correlation: "Whether

actual or imagined, the perception that an outgroup represents a threat creates a circumstance in which identification and interdependence with the ingroup is directly associated with fear and hostility toward the threatening outgroup and vice a versa."

Research cited in an earlier section, *Positive and Negative Identification*, found that level of identification with the ingroup predicted schadenfreude and glucksmerz in relation to negative and positive outcomes for a rival outgroup (Combs et al, 2009; Hoogland et al, 2015; Vasquez et al, 2015). These results indicate that positive identification with ingroup is correlated with negative identification with a rival outgroup, as Brewer suggested. But it is possible that negative identification can power positive identification rather than the reverse. Perhaps my aunt hated the Yankees before she learned to be an Orioles fan.

It is an interesting empirical question whether or when negative identification can develop without prior positive identification with a threatened individual or group--whether hate can come before love.

Shared vs. Collective Hate

Negative identification with a perceived bad essence is a stipulation about individual psychology. How does individual experience of hate contribute to intergroup hostilities and intergroup violence?

One individual's opinion—one individual's hate-- is not a political threat. But if hundreds or thousands share an opinion, this opinion can support a movement, a party, or a revolution (Atari et al. 2022). Shared hate for a group can support incarceration, expulsion, and mass murder. Even shared hate is not enough. If I do not see that others share my hate, then my hate is powerless.

The perception of shared opinion can be referred to as *collective opinion.* Polls usually aim to measure shared opinion rather than collective opinion. That the facts of shared opinion can diverge from perceptions of shared opinion is the theme of Timur Kuran's *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification* (1997). The facts and the perceptions of mass opinion are particularly likely to come apart when many fear to express their opinions.

Collective opinion, including collective hate, can be self-reinforcing. Perception of others' opinions can provide a norm that moves individual opinions with both informational and normative influence (Asch, 1956; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). In public opinion research, the effect of perceiving others' opinions has been studied as the *bandwagon effect,* which predicts that the opinion seen to be most popular becomes more popular. Moy and Rinke (2012) reviewed bandwagon studies and noted numerous complexities and inconsistencies of correlational studies, but two experimental studies (Farjam, 2021; Nadeau, Clothier & Guay (1993) showed a significant bandwagon effect. A significant bandwagon effect is assumed by Internet influence operations that use bots, sockpuppets, and paid influencers to try to influence public opinion. (*The Manufacture of Consensus*, Woolley, 2023).

The conclusion here is that individual hate becomes politically powerful only when it is perceived to be shared. The bandwagon effect means that the more hate is perceived to be shared, the more shared it will become. A later section will offer suggestions for measuring collective hate, including collective group identification and collective essentializing of the enemy.

Hate in Mass Political Murder

This section examines the importance of hate in genocide and politicide, looking separately at

perpetrators, leaders, and the mass public they claim to be defending. The three groupings are

based, not so much in psychology (but see Staub, 1989) as in political science.

Political scientist generally see ethnic conflicts as better predicted by strategic

considerations than emotions, except for the emotion of fear. "Together, strategic interactions

between and within groups can produce environments of fear, in which ethnic tensions and

conflicts can grow. …The tendency toward polarization is magnified, in turn, by political

memories, myths, and emotions (Lake & Rothschild, 1996, p. 56). Similarly Downes (2011)

argues that governments move to mass killing of enemy civilians when trying to annex territory

or when desperate to win a war.

Political scientists often distinguish between motives of perpetrators and motives of

leaders (elites).

> A wide range of personal, psychological, or irrational motives explain why individuals
>
> choose to join belligerent groups and participate in the murder of civilians. These
>
> motives, however, offer much less leverage in understanding why these groups were
>
> created, organized, and turned loose in the first place. Rather, these private motives and
>
> emotions tend to be unleashed in the context of larger conflicts between powerful
>
> political and military elites in which violence against civilians is largely shaped by a
>
> strategic logic (Valentino, 2014, p.98).

Valentino quotes Mueller (2004) for the idea that many ethnic conflicts are waged by

small groups of thugs who are "motivated more by the chance for looting than by loyalty to their

country or hatred of their victims. In this view, what elites need from the public is not

cooperation or participation in violence against their neighbors. All they require is that the public

not interfere with the small groups of armed men whose job it is to do the killing" (Valentino, 2014, p. 98). Here Valentino distinguishes mass (public) opinion from perpetrators and leaders, and even suggests that mass opinion is irrelevant to mass political murder, so long as mass opinion does not turn to mass action.

To sum up, political scientists have thought about hate in relation to perpetrators, leaders, and mass publics in cases of mass political murder. They emphasize leaders' self-interests over emotions (except fear) , perpetrators' self-interests over emotions (including hate), and mass publics' self-interest in security over political action or intergroup emotions. The next three sections examine the possible role of hate for perpetrators, leaders, and mass publics in mass political murder.

Do Perpetrators of Genocide and Politicide Hate Their Victims?

Two questions are required in order to consider the motivation of perpetrators of mass murder. First, why do individuals join a militia, a police unit, or a prison guard that is later ordered to conduct mass killing? Second, having joined such a group, why do individuals obey orders to kill?

The first question recognizes that perpetrator groups have a history that typically does not begin in killing, and that recruitment to these groups typically does not select for hate. Consider three examples of groups perpetrating mass political murder.

Members of Reserve Police Battalion 101 were police recruited from Hamburg and given some military training before being sent East to support the Nazi war against "Jewish Bolshevism." In his study of Battalion 101, Browning (2011) distinguished three groups: creative and enthusiastic killers, compliant killers obeying what they saw as legitimate orders, and those evading killing as best they could. The first group likely hated Jews; their positive emotions

about killing show at least negative identification with victims. The compliant killers probably did not hate Jews when they began killing, but may have come to hate their victims as justification for killing them. Those trying to evade killing probably did not hate Jews.

The Khmer Rouge impressed Cambodian village boys, first into work groups, then as guards, torturers, and killers (Panh, 2003). They were not recruited for hatred of Khmer Rouge enemies, though some came to hate their prisoner victims as justification for killing.

The Interahamwe began as a political-party youth movement, became a militia as the Rwandan genocide began, and drew more members as genocide gave opportunities for alcohol, rape, and looting (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Hutu refugees from Tutsi violence in neighboring Burundi were enthusiastic volunteers for the Interahamwe; probably most of them hated Tutsi. For the rest, it is difficult to discern the importance of hate among the many personal and material motivations for joining and killing.

These examples indicate that many individuals join a perpetrator group for reasons that have nothing to do with hate (Moshman, 2005; Chirot & McCauley, 2006; Loyle, 2009; Browning, 2011; Fielding, 2012). Some join out of habitual obedience to authority and fear of punishment if they do not join. Some join for the status and power that come from having a gun in their hands. Some join for salary or loot, for access to alcohol and rape, for comradeship, or to escape problems at home or with the law.

The second question asks, if many individuals join the group for personal reasons rather than hate, why do most obey when the group is ordered to kill? The personal reasons for joining no doubt have continued power to keep individuals in the group, but three additional factors are important: organization, group dynamics, and individual psychology (Chirot & McCauley, 2006).

Organization divides the process of killing into small segments so that there is no one person who can be said to be responsible for the killing. Organization provides rewards for killing and punishments for not killing. Organization routinizes and desensitizes so that, once begun, killing no longer arouses shame or disgust.

Group dynamics makes killing a shared responsibility in which shirking is letting comrades down. Group dynamics makes killing a social norm powered by group cohesion. Group dynamics makes deviation from the group norm unthinkable: deviates will be rejected from the group and endangered.

Individual psychology provides the third impetus to killing. We all need to find reasons for what we do, especially if we do something stupid or sleazy (see Sabini, 1995, on *dissonance theory*). If individuals punish, torture, or kill, they must find reasons for what they do. The more harm done, the more need to see the varieties of bad essence considered above: "they're not like us; they're evil, they're animals."

The role of hate for perpetrators of mass killing can be summed up as follows. Hate has little to do with bringing individuals to join a group later asked to kill, and little to do with following orders to kill. For perpetrators, hate is more effect of killing than a cause; once killing begins, hate provides justification for killing that can reinforce organizational and group dynamics pressures to kill. This is the normal psychology behind "the banality of evil" (Arendt, 2006).

Do Leaders of Genocide and Politicide Hate Their Victims?

Whereas evidence of hate for perpetrators is weak, evidence of hate for leaders of mass killing is strong. The evidence is in the epithets used by elites to talk about their victims, and in the categorical treatment of these victims.

For Hitler, the dominant condemnation of Jews was that they were parasites—bacilli, bloodsuckers, vermin (Bein, 1964). For Pol Pot, the "Cambodians with Vietnamese minds" were bloodsuckers feeding off the authentic Cambodians in their rural villages (Kiernan, 2001). For Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines, controlled by Hutu-power elites, the Tutsi were cockroaches. As noted earlier, these epithets make the enemies animals, in particular disgusting animals associated with garbage, decay, disease, and death.

The epithets used by leaders imply that all of "them" share a bad essence, often an animal essence. This implication is confirmed in action. Leaders of mass political murder determinr who will qualify for removal or destruction. To the extent that the determination is by category, that is, by group identity rather than by individual behavior, leaders testify to their perception that "they" all share a bad essence—that, as Michener (2012) put it, if "one did it/they all did it."

Does Mass Hatred Contribute to Mass Political Murder?

The leaders and perpetrators of politicide claim to represent a mass public threatened by the victim group. Nazi leaders saw themselves as saving the German *volk* from Jewish pollution. The Khmer Rouge saw themselves as saving authentic Cambodians, rural farmers, from domination and pollution by "Cambodians with Vietnamese minds." Extremist Hutu leaders and the Interahamwe saw themselves as saving Hutu from being again enslaved by Tutsi.

What about those who are neither leaders nor perpetrators, the mass public supposedly being saved? Do they support the violence that their leaders organize in the name of group survival? Do they approve of mass murder? Do they hate? How many Germans hated Jews? How many rural Cambodians hated city dwellers? How many Hutu hated Tutsi?

We don't know. It is likely that mass hate varies over time and place, even within the time frame in which mass political murder is being carried out. We know even less about

collective hate. As described earlier, collective hate is the perception that many others hate the enemy. This too will likely vary over time and place, but we may expect that collective hate increases as leaders of a politicide have more media power and more time to trumpet a norm of hatred.

We do know that mass hate does not reach 100 percent. We know this because in every genocide or politicide there are a few heroes among the stronger side who will risk their lives to help one or more of those targeted for destruction. We have no idea how many more would have helped if the risk had been less. In short, we do not know what level of mass or collective hate is required to enable mass political murder.

An important implication here is that the stronger side in a group conflict, like the victim group, are not all alike. The stronger side do not all hate, they are not all killers. It is misleading to say that the Germans committed genocide against the Jews, that the Hutu committed genocide against the Tutsi, that a rural revolution committed genocide against urban Cambodians. Accuracy requires more specificity (Mueller, 2004),

More specifically, Hitler and the Nazi party organized mass murder of Jews, Roma, Slavs, political opponents, and the disabled. The Khmer Rouge, a political party and its army, organized mass murder of minority ethnicities (Chinese, Cham, Vietnamese) and against "Cambodians with Vietnamese minds." A Hutu-power elite organized mass murder of Tutsi and Hutu political opponents.

The point is that whole-group generalizations cannot be correct, there is always variation within a population as large as an ethnic or a national group, or within a political party as large as the Nazis or the Khmer Rouge. To indulge in whole-group attributions is to misunderstand the problem of politicide and to throw away the possibilities for preventing politicide that come with

recognition of divisions within the group in whose name mass murder is committed. Worse yet, whole-group attributions can only encourage the kind of essentialist thinking that makes politicide possible.

Measurement Implications

A stipulated definition is evaluated by its usefulness in empirical research, a requirement that leads directly to issues of measurement. The definition of hate stipulated here requires measuring group identification and group essentializing. This section offers some initial suggestions for measures of positive and negative identification, essentializing, collective identification and collective essentializing. The section begins with an attempt to assess hate without explicit measures of identification or essentializing, from case material drawn from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which will provide a running example for more explicit measures.

Hate in the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

For Ukrainians, the Russian invasion is raising positive identification with Ukraine and negative identification with Russia. In a July 2021 poll (polls cited here excluded occupied Crimea and Donbas), 56 percent of Ukrainians believed that Russians and Ukrainians were not one nation; in April 2022, 91% of Ukrainians believed this (Andreikovets, 2022). An August 2022 poll (Rating Group, 2022) found that the most common (75 percent) emotion felt when thinking about Ukraine was pride. Varenikove (2022) quotes Olha Koba, a psychologist in Kyiv: "When people are happy about the death of Russian soldiers, it is explicable. There is a subconscious understanding that this soldier will no longer be able to kill their loved ones." The quotation expresses schadenfreude for enemy suffering and negative emotions for ingroup suffering.

Essentializing Russians also seems to be increasing. Rating Group (2022) polls have found that Ukrainian attitudes toward Russians as a category have become increasingly negative:

from 41 percent negative in April 2021, to 69 percent negative in April 2022, to 81 percent

negative in August 2022. Monuments and statues of Russian cultural figures are being destroyed

in Ukraine; streets named after Russians are being renamed (Anderson, 2023). This obliteration

by category, by identity, signals an essentialist perception. Epithets provide a similar perception.

Ukrainian intellectuals are discussing "terms such as *neliudy*, 'non-humans,' which some

Ukrainians now use when referring to Russians" (Anderson, 2023).

Ukraine's President Zelensky (2022), however, does not talk about non-humans. "We

will not forgive. We will not forget. We will punish everyone who committed atrocities in this

war. On our land. We will find every bastard. Which shot at our cities, our people. Which

bombed our land. Which launched rockets. Which gave the order and pressed "start". There will

be no quiet place on this earth for you. Except for the grave." This is a call for revenge on

perpetrators, still short of essentializing all Russians as evil or animal.

In sum, positive identification with Ukraine is high, negative identification with Russians

is high, essentializing Russians is growing but probably includes only a minority of Ukrainians

as their government stresses retribution for war criminals but avoids essentializing Russians as a

category.

On the Russian side, rhetoric about Ukraine has raised a target that shows strong parallels

with the Khmer Rouge target of "Cambodians with Vietnamese minds." The Russian target can

be described as "Ukrainians with Western minds." Here are excerpts from a translation of "What

should Russia do with Ukraine?", published in a Russian state-owned news agency known to

represent Kremlin thinking. (The Banderites referred to are Ukrainian nationalists who

sympathized with fascist ideology; their history is the origin of President Putin's characterization

of Ukrainian nationalists as Nazis).

Those Nazis who took up arms must be destroyed on the battlefield, as many of them as possible. … All organizations involved in Nazi actions must be eliminated and prohibited. However, besides the highest ranks, a significant number of common people are also guilty of being passive Nazis and Nazi accomplices. … The further deNazification of this bulk of the population will take the form of re-education through ideological repressions (suppression) of Nazi paradigms and a harsh censorship not only in the political sphere but also in the spheres of culture and education. … The Banderite elites must be eliminated; their re-education is impossible. (Sergeytsev, 2022)

Sergeytsev's target is not an ethnic or national group but a political/cultural group that includes all Ukrainians who support a Ukrainian/Western rather than Russian/Eastern identity. The target is large ("bulk of the population") and categorical ("actively and passively supported"). The evil essence to be destroyed is ideological ("not only in the political sphere but also in the spheres of culture and education"). At least for elites, the evil essence is deep down and ineradicable ("elites must be eliminated; their re-education is impossible").

Sergeytsev describes an enemy with an evil Western essence that threatens the real Russian essence that is the Ukrainian "birthright" as "Little Russians." His rhetoric aims to raise hate against Ukrainians with Western minds. This is a warrant for politicide.

Measuring Positive and Negative Identification

Turning now to more explicit measures, interviews or polls can assess identification with versions of the schadenfreude and gluckschmerz items used by Combs et al (2009 and Hoogland et al (2015). For *positive identification*: "Do you feel glad (pride, happy, excited) when X(individual, group) wins (succeeds, advances, increases)?" "Do you feel sad (shame, anger, fear) when X loses (suffers, fails, is insulted)?" For *negative identification*: "Do you feel glad

(pride, happy, excited) when Y(individual, group) loses (suffers, fails, is insulted)?" Do you feel

sad (shame, anger, fear) when Y wins (succeeds, advances, improves)?"

Measuring Essentializing

Beyond qualitative analysis of categorical epithets or actions (as for the Russian-Ukraine

conflict), quantitative measures of group essentializing are also possible. Rhodes and Gelman

(2009) offer an Adult Essentialism Measure for perceptions of gender and race; their items can

easily be adapted to measure essentializing of a political group. For example, the following

adaptations would measure essentializing Russians. 1. Nationality is a very important part of

what makes Russians who they are. 2. People who are Russian have many things in common. 3.

Knowing someone is Russian tells you a lot about a person. 4. Russian is an all-or-none

category; people are either Russian or not, there is no in between. 5. Russian is a natural

category. 6. Russians share an underlying property that causes them to have many similarities.

This scale is agnostic about whether the national essence depends on biology (genes) or

culture--an advantage for a general measure of essentializing. In a particular conflict, such as the

Russian-Ukrainian conflict, it would be useful to have four measures of essentializing: Ukrainian

essentializing of both Ukrainians and Russians, and Russian essentializing of both Russians and

Ukrainians. These four measures could help to determine the extent to which hating their bad

essence depends on loving our good essence.

Beliefs about group malleability might also be used to measure essentializing. Items used

to measure malleability beliefs of Israeli Jews and Palestinians (Halperin et al, 2011) included

the following: "As much as I hate to admit it, you can't teach an old dog new tricks--groups can't

really change their basic characteristics," "Groups can do things differently, but the important

parts of who they are can't really be changed," "Groups that are characterized by violent

tendencies will never change their ways," and "Every group or nation has basic moral values and beliefs that can't be changed significantly."

Measuring Collective Identification and Essentializing

Collective hate can also be studied in polls, as *meta-opinions* or *meta-perceptions* (Lees and Cikara, 2020). Polls of U.S. Muslims have asked about meta-opinion as follows: "Thinking now, not about yourself but about other U.S. Muslims, how many would you say agree that the War on Terrorism is a war on Islam?" (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2020, p. 16). Similarly for collective essentializing, one might ask: "Thinking now, not about yourself but about other Ukrainians, how many would you say agree that all Russians are responsible for the suffering in Ukraine?"

More generally, collective essentializing might be assessed by asking meta-opinion versions of the Rhodes and Gelman (2009) items. "Thinking now, not about yourself but about other Ukrainians, how many would you say agree that nationality is a very important part of what makes Russians who they are." "Thinking now, not about yourself but about other Ukrainians, how many would you say agree that Russians share an underlying property that causes them to have many similarities."

Collective negative identification can be similarly assessed. For collective identification, one might ask "Thinking now, not about yourself but about other Ukrainians, how many would you say agree that pictures of dead Russian soldiers make them feel glad (pride, happy, ecited)?"

To sum up this section, the case of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict suggests that, even in the absence of explicit measures, an assessment of hate can be approximated from textual materials. But the stipulated definition of hate shows how hate can be tracked with explicit measures of identification and essentializing, including collective versions of these measures that assess their perceived normative power.

Overview and Future Research

The definition of hate stipulated in this article goes beyond negative attitude to require negative identification and perceived bad essence. This definition can encompass both hate for an individual and hate for a group, but the focus here has been on group hate in the context of intergroup conflict.

Hate as an extreme form of negative identification makes sense of the many emotions seen in relation to hate: Negative identification brings positive emotions if a rival group is failing and negative emotions if the rival is succeeding. Negative identification also makes sense of the observation that hate can last years whereas emotions last minutes; negative identification depends on perceived threat that can last for years.

Perception that the hated has a bad essence makes sense of the observation that hate is more about the character or nature of the hated than about their actions. Perception of a bad essence also makes sense of the belief that those hated cannot be educated or redeemed; they can only be avoided or destroyed. Most important, perception that the enemy has a bad essence can make sense of killing by category: When the threat is a bad essence, they are all a threat.

The ideas advanced in this paper suggest several directions for future research. There is much yet to learn about what it means to think and see in terms of group essence (Cimpian & Salomon, 2014; Haslam, 2014; Newman & Knobe, 2019). Tracking hate in surveys and polls can contribute to understanding trajectories of intergroup conflict. Specific research questions include the following. 1. Does negative identification depend on prior positive identification, or can negative identification develop independently? In other words, must ingroup love precede outgroup hate? 2. Is the experience or consequence of hate different when the target is an individual than when the target is a group? 3. Is the experience or consequence of hate different

depending on whether the perceived bad essence is human evil, infrahuman animal, or inhuman

automaton? 4. What circumstances of person and situation encourage perception of bad essence?

5. And the jackpot question for intergroup conflict: what interventions can prevent or reduce

essentializing of rival groups?

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