

individuals can detect whether the memories shared by others are context-rich (i.e., episodic), and (2) sharing context-rich (episodic) - as opposed to general (semantic) - memories facilitates the listener's self-projection into the narrator's experience, improving empathy and interpersonal closeness. To test these hypotheses, participants read experimentally created memories where the same core event was narrated including mostly episodic vs. semantic details and judged the degree to which (1) they thought the narrator had a good memory for the event, (2) they empathized with the narrator (Exp. 1), and (3) they felt close to the narrator (Exp. 2). The results showed that participants can distinguish between context-rich/specific (episodic) memories and context-poor/general (semantic) memories shared by others, and attribute better memory abilities to individuals narrating episodic compared to semantic memories. Moreover, participants felt more empathy and feelings of closeness for individuals sharing personal experiences rich in episodic (vs. semantic) detail (Fig. 1). The detection of episodic memory in others predicted empathy and closeness on a trial-by-trial basis. These findings reveal the human ability to appraise others' episodic memories, in addition to recalling their own, and an adaptive function of the episodic memory system: enabling us to share detail-rich personal memories that help forge close relationships.

## References

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## Historical family stories serve individual and collective functions for the following generations

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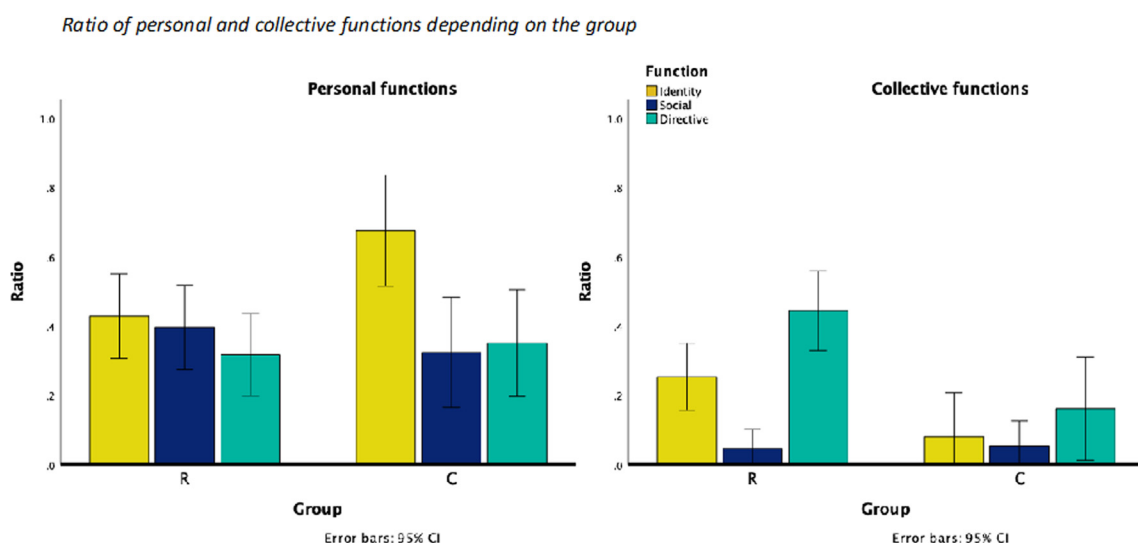
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Our past is made of more than our personal memories. While research has mostly focused on autobiographical thinking, few studies have examined how vicarious memories from close others — particularly family members — can impact us. We create a sense of self by recalling personal events but also by embedding it within family identity, built on stories from our family past. We share personal and family narratives to bond with others and to help us make decisions. Vicarious memories therefore serve similar functions to autobiographical memories (Pillemer et al., 2015). But when these family stories become part of collective narratives, they also impact individuals' social identity, their inter- and intragroup relations, and their interpretation of the world. In other words, individual and collective memory serve parallel self, social and directive functions (Burnell et al., 2022). In our study, we met with families with an ancestor who either resisted during the Second World War or was judged for collaboration after the war. We interviewed participants from three different generations and asked them to evaluate whether it was important for them to know and transmit their family stories and why. Answers were coded as personal or collective functions. Within these two categories, functions were coded as self, social or directive. Results show that these war-related family stories served important functions for the self and for social relationships at the individual level, and more directive functions at the collective level (Fig. 1). Stories of the resistance also had a more collective impact than stories of the collaboration. There are two main take-home messages from our research. First, it shows the need for psychologists to look beyond the individual and examine memory as a continuum from individual to collective in which both forces interact constantly. Second, we show the importance to consider the content of memories.

## References

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*Note.* Participants were either part of the Resistance group (R) or the Collaboration group (C). Qualitative answers were coded as either serving personal or collective functions, and within these categories as serving identity, social or directive functions. If participant gave multiple answers, they were coded within multiple functions. Results are shown as the ratio of participants who described that specific function in their answer.

Fig. 1. Ratio of personal and collective functions depending on the group. *Note.* Participants were either part of the Resistance group (R) or the Collaboration group (C). Qualitative answers were coded as either serving personal or collective functions, and within these categories as serving identity, social or directive functions. If participant gave multiple answers, they were coded within multiple functions. Results are shown as the ratio of participants who described that specific function in their answer.