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The Intergenerational Self:
An Exploration in Theory and Empirical Research

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The Intergenerational Self:
An Exploration in Theory and Empirical Research

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
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Abstract

The Intergenerational Self:
An Exploration in Theory and Empirical Research
By Natalie Merrill

Family stories are shared regularly and provide lessons and insights for younger generations in ways that may contribute to well-being and identity development (Pratt & Fiese, 2004; Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008). Specifically, intergenerational narratives, the stories that parents tell children from their own childhood, provide a special opportunity for parents to impart life lessons and model meaning-making processes for their children as their children are developing their own narrative abilities (Fivush & Merrill, in press). Thus, these stories have the potential to become part of the many narratives that are important to the child's own understanding of self (Bohanek et al., 2009; Fivush, Bohanek, & Marin, 2010). Fivush, Bohanek, and Duke (2008) proposed the idea of the "Intergenerational Self," that is, that developing individuals use family stories to come to understand how the self, and their own personal histories, are situated among a larger familial history. Up to this point, there has been limited empirical work exploring this theoretical construct, and the purpose of this dissertation is to explicate further the idea of the Intergenerational Self both theoretically and empirically in three manuscripts. The first is a theoretical review which details the ways in which intergenerational narratives can influence the psychosocial development of individuals at two key stages in the life course, adolescence and midlife. The second article presents relations between knowledge of family history, identity development, psychological well-being, and parental relationship quality in emerging adults. The third article provides an empirical examination of intergenerational narratives, personal narratives, and narratives about friends in relation to identity and well-being in emerging adulthood. Together, these findings provide support for the link between intergenerational narratives, identity development and psychological well-being, but they reveal a more nuanced picture that these relations depend upon parental relationship quality and gender.

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General Introduction

The sharing of family stories is an everyday occurrence in American households which brings family members together through a common activity and shared history (Pratt & Fiese, 2004; Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008). In particular, intergenerational narratives, the stories that parents tell children from their own childhood, serve a unique role among these family stories in that they are received stories: they represent personal narratives from events parents have experienced but that children have not (Fivush & Merrill, in press). Yet, children readily participate in the telling of these stories, and these stories have the potential to become part of the many narratives that are important to the child's own understanding of self (Bohanek et al., 2009; Fivush, Bohanek, & Marin, 2010). From this observation, Fivush, Bohanek, and Duke (2008) proposed the idea of the "Intergenerational Self," that is, that developing individuals use family stories to come to understand how the self, and their own personal histories, are situated among a larger familial history. This is an intriguing theory which until now has been little studied elsewhere and the main purpose of this dissertation is to explore further the idea of the Intergenerational Self in both theory and empirical study. Thus, I present three manuscripts that explicate the theoretical construct of the Intergenerational Self in different ways. The first is a theoretical review article which details the ways in which intergenerational narratives can influence the psychosocial development of individuals at two key stages in the life course, adolescence and midlife. The second article presents empirically examined relations between knowledge of family history, identity development, psychological well-being, and parental relationship quality in emerging adults. The third article provides an empirical examination of intergenerational narratives,

personal narratives, and narratives about friends in relation to identity and well-being in emerging adulthood.

In this general introduction, I briefly provide an overview of the research motivating the study of intergenerational narratives and the gaps that remain in our understanding of this empirical topic which is only in its infancy. Then, I briefly summarize the three manuscripts which address some of these gaps and provide a significant contribution to our understanding of the Intergenerational Self.

Theoretical Overview

Definition and Frequency of Intergenerational Narratives

Narratives, broadly speaking, are the stories that individuals use in order to create meaning about their past experiences (Bruner, 1990). By looking back on one's past experiences, an individual can come to understand the thoughts, emotions, motivations, and goals behind their action, and they can also draw meaning about the self by reflecting on these details (Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007; McLean & Pratt, 2006; McAdams, 2001). Individuals use narratives from their life experiences not only to learn specific concrete lessons about the self, but also to gain a sense of coherence and continuity of the self across time, by linking events in a life story (McAdams, 2001). By creating links between the past self and the current self, individuals construct a sense of identity which links disjointed pieces of information about the self into a whole that forms the representation of identity. However, this process is not conducted in isolation: individuals are parts of cultures, communities, and families. By understanding the meanings behind shared past experiences, individuals develop a sense of connection to

others which informs identity as well, in a way that has been little studied until recently (Hammack, 2008; Wertsh, 2009; Stone, van der Haegen, Luminet, & Hirst, 2014).

Intergenerational narratives have been defined in various ways in the literature but generally refer to stories that are told from an elder generation to a younger generation (Assman & Czaplicka, 1995; Danieli, 1998; Fivush et al., 2008). Recent work in the Family Narratives Lab (see Fivush et al., 2008; Fivush & Merrill, in press) has operationalized intergenerational narratives as the stories that specifically parents tell their children about when the parents were growing up.[1] Previous research has found that parents report telling stories about their childhood to children beginning as young as their children's infancy (Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, Schwagler, & Rimmer, 1995). Further, Fivush et al. (2008) found that among the various types of family memories described during a tape-recorded family meal, about 49 percent of families talked about events from the family's distant past, and although the majority of those stories revolved around events which the children had experienced, 23 percent of the stories were stories about the parents' childhoods.

Recently, Fivush and Merrill (in press) have delineated the different story types that make up the narrative ecology, that is, the ubiquitous stories in the surrounding environment, such as conversations with others, exposure to stories in the media, the larger family history from grandparents and ancestors, master narratives of the culture, and so on (see Figure 1; see also McLean & Breen, in press). This point emphasizes that intergenerational narratives are one type of story among many in the surrounding environment which may influence the developing child. However, as articulated by Fivush et al. (2008), intergenerational narratives may inform the sense of self in a special

way. Like personal narratives, individuals can use intergenerational narratives to draw lessons and insights about the self. They may do this first by listening to the model that parents provide for their children of what kinds of lessons and insights ought to be learned from the stories (Fung, Miller, & Lin, 2004). But this process may also occur in the child's own retelling of the narrative as they draw links between the parent and their own sense of self (Fivush & Zaman, 2011). In drawing such "intergenerational connections" (for example, "My mom loves to dance… I get my rhythm gene from my mom.") individuals draw links between their own identity and that of their parent. Importantly, like the sense of continuity that individuals gain in telling a coherent life story about their personal experiences, intergenerational narratives link individuals across generations, so that the representation of the self is extended in time not just across autobiographical experience, but also across generations (Fivush et al. 2008). This "Intergenerational Self" may be a component of identity that contributes to a sense of one's place in the world beginning in adolescence and continuing on throughout adulthood. We have proposed that intergenerational narratives are one way that individuals create meaning from their parents' past experiences in order to learn life lessons and draw connections between generations. Evidence for the importance of intergenerational narratives is further provided by the few studies thus far which have examined links between intergenerational narratives and well-being and identity.

Before describing these studies, however, it is important to note the developmental constraints of this phenomenon. Although these stories are often told early in development and across childhood, individuals likely do not form the ability to create personal meaning that reflects on their sense of identity until mid-adolescence (Habermas

& Bluck, 2000). In adolescence and continuing into emerging adulthood, individuals begin to explore possible identities and possible selves (Eriskon, 1968; Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Markus & Nurius, 1986). At some point, they commit to particular values, goals, and beliefs to reach an "achieved" sense of identity (Erikson). This striving toward identity achievement in and of itself may motivate meaning-making processes in narrative as individuals explore the motivations behind their behavior and attempt to understand how their actions influence those around them and the world more generally. Yet, cognitive constraints also are likely responsible for the fact that this meaning-making process is typically not found until adolescence. As reviewed by Habermas and Bluck, in adolescence individuals become more capable of abstract thinking, hypothetical thinking, problem solving, and reasoning: these cognitive tools, usually not fully mature prior to adolescence, provide what Habermas and Bluck term *autobiographical reasoning* abilities to create knowledge about the self, based upon past experiences. This autobiographical reasoning allows for individuals to link events in an understanding of the life story. Very likely, this same process is used to understand intergenerational narratives, and thus the Intergenerational Self likely does not fully emerge until adolescence as well.

Relations to Well-being, Identity, and Gender

The idea that intergenerational narratives may be related to well-being and identity was first suggested by evidence that knowledge of family history more broadly was positively related to adolescents' family functioning, locus of control, and self-esteem, and negatively related to anxiety and internalizing behaviors (Duke, Lazarus, & Fivush, 2008). Yet, little is known about the nuances of these relations. For example, are

there aspects of identity development that are unrelated to knowledge of family history? Do family relationships account for any of these findings? Does it matter whether the stories themselves have certain characteristics or is it the accumulation of this knowledge that is more predictive of well-being and identity? In order to examine this latter question, an examination of the stories themselves was in order.

Examining adolescents' and emerging adults' reports of the intergenerational narratives their parents have told them has yielded intriguing results thus far in relation to well-being. For adolescents, Fivush and Zaman (2011) examined the content of young to mid-age adolescents' retellings of stories about their parents' childhoods in relation to maternal report of the child's internalizing and externalizing behaviors. They coded instances of affect and emotion ("She was very excited."), cognition ("My dad realized that…"), and intergenerational connections ("My dad played soccer when he was young and that got me started in soccer."). They found that for girls' stories about their mothers, affect and emotion was related to decreased externalizing behaviors, and cognition words and intergenerational content were both related to decreased internalizing and externalizing behaviors. However, for boys, there were almost no relations between their parents' narratives and their maternal report of well-being, with the exception that intergenerational connections in stories about their fathers were related to increased externalizing behaviors. These findings were surprisingly inconsistent with the relations for the adolescents' own ratings of their internalizing and externalizing behaviors: Fivush, Bohanek, and Zaman (2011) found that for self-report of well-being, boys who included more emotion, cognition, and intergenerational connections in narratives about their parents had lower levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviors.[2] However,

girls' intergenerational narratives were unrelated to their self-report of internalizing and externalizing behaviors. These findings are, quite frankly, rather convoluted. To summarize, mothers' reports of their daughters' problem behaviors are negatively related to their daughters' intergenerational narrative content; boys' reports of their own problems are negatively related to their intergenerational narrative content. Although one could speculate about reasons why this might be the case, clearly, more research is needed to explicate the nuanced ways in which these intergenerational narratives might be related to well-being as well as the way in which gender may serve as a moderator in this relation.

There are other interesting ways in which gender may be an important variable to consider with respect to characteristics of intergenerational narratives and what this might mean for the Intergenerational Self. Zaman and Fivush (2011) found that adolescents' narratives about their mothers were more emotional, elaborative, and more affiliative than their narratives about their fathers. They posited that this suggests that adolescents rely on gender stereotypes when making meaning from their parents' stories. Interestingly, relations between the way adolescents tell their parents stories and the way they tell their own personal narratives was gendered as well. Girls' personal narratives were similar in content to their mothers' narratives but not their fathers' narratives, and boys' personal narratives were unrelated to either parents' stories. This suggests that girls, more than boys, may use intergenerational narratives as a model for how to understand their own experiences in a gendered way.

Issues that Remain to be Addressed by the Articles

It remains to be seen in what way the Intergenerational Self is represented in the stories that are passed across the generations. In particular, most of the studies thus far that examine intergenerational narratives have focused on adolescents. However, as these stories are part of family ritual, they likely contribute to the identities of various members of the family, but in different ways. Thus, a theoretical and empirical examination of the extended literature on family narratives, when they are told, how they are told, and what are their correlates could consider more thoroughly how the intergenerational self is extended across developmental time. The first manuscript seeks to address these questions based upon the current literature up to this point.

Further, additional study of knowledge of family history is warranted. Although the study by Duke et al. (2008) on knowledge of family history and its links to well-being in adolescence provides an excellent first step, little else is known about how this variable may be related to well-being and identity in emerging adulthood. In emerging adulthood, we can examine more closely how this may be related to the processes of identity development, specifically exploration and commitment. In emerging adulthood, individuals are faced with new responsibilities as they transition into independence (Arnett, 2000). They encounter decisions regarding their career, beliefs, world outlook, etc., and identity development involves the process by which they explore alternative possibilities and commit to particular choices. Family history knowledge may contribute to these processes. Further, up to this point it is unknown whether relationship quality with parents is related to this knowledge. As family reminiscing has been suggested to foster bonds between individual family members, one way in which it may contribute to

well-being is through maintaining close bonds with parents. The second article in the dissertation will examine this more closely.

Finally, the relations between well-being and characteristics of intergenerational narratives (e.g. perspective-taking and self-event connections in these narratives) thus far are in need of replication and extension in order to better understand how this process may contribute to identity development and in what ways it might be a gendered process. The third study will extend the few existing findings to the emerging adulthood population, in order to replicate previous research in a population whereby identity exploration and commitment is most important. Thus, the intergenerational self can be examined more closely with respect to narrative meaning-making about the self.

Summary of Articles

Article #1. In this theoretical review, I outline the theory and review evidence that intergenerational narratives may contribute to psychosocial development in different ways across the life course. I employ Erikson's theory of psychosocial development as a guide from which we identify two particular life stages that characterize psychosocial challenges which may be influenced by intergenerational narratives. In adolescence, these narratives may inform narrative identity during inception of identity exploration and commitment. In mid-life, these narratives may be a way in which adults achieve a sense of generativity, that is, demonstrating care and concern for the future generations and incorporating this value into the self-concept. In this review, I also incorporate findings regarding gender differences, positive (and potentially negative) relations to well-being, and the way in which gender may moderate these effects so far. Finally, as this research

is in its infancy and many of the findings so far are only preliminary, I suggest possible next steps for empirical inquiry to investigate this problem.

Article #2. In this empirical study, I surveyed emerging adults about their knowledge of family history, psychological well-being, identity development processes, and relationship quality with their parents and a close friend. I examine the inter-correlations among the variables in order to replicate findings on the “Do You Know” scale (knowledge of family history) and aspects of well-being. Further, I examine how knowledge of family history is related to the identity processes of exploration and commitment. I indeed found that knowledge of family history was positively related to well-being, replicating findings from Duke et al. (2008). Interestingly, knowledge of family history was also related to identity commitment but not exploration, suggesting that family conversations might reduce the need for identity exploration, either by encouraging commitment to certain identities or by providing vicarious exploration experiences in order to facilitate the identity exploration process earlier on. Finally, I examined how quality of relationships might influence these variables, finding that relationship with parents, but not with a close friend was related to knowledge of family history. The relation between knowledge of family history and well-being and identity was accounted for statistically by measures of relationship quality with parents. This suggests that the parent-child bonds built through family reminiscing are likely a critical function of family history knowledge, and may explain one of the major ways in which it may enhance well-being and identity development.

Article #3. In this empirical study, I collected narratives from emerging adults about a personal self-defining experience, an intergenerational narrative about both of

their parents, and a narrative told to them from both a male and female friend. I also collected psychological well-being and identity measures. The narratives were coded for perspective-taking (i.e. affect and cognition) and self-event connections according to previous research. First, gender differences were examined among the narrative variables. I found that young women provided more information about affect in their personal narratives than young men, and women provided more cognitive processing content across all narratives than men. Next, relations to well-being and identity were examined. Interestingly, I found relations between narratives about fathers and well-being and identity for women only. Importantly, there were no relations between the narratives about friends and identity and well-being, suggesting a special role for intergenerational narratives as part of the narratives which individuals use to understand the self. Surprisingly, however, the fact that fathers' narratives were related to well-being, but not mothers' narratives is inconsistent with previous research. I consider this finding more closely in the discussion.

Article formatting

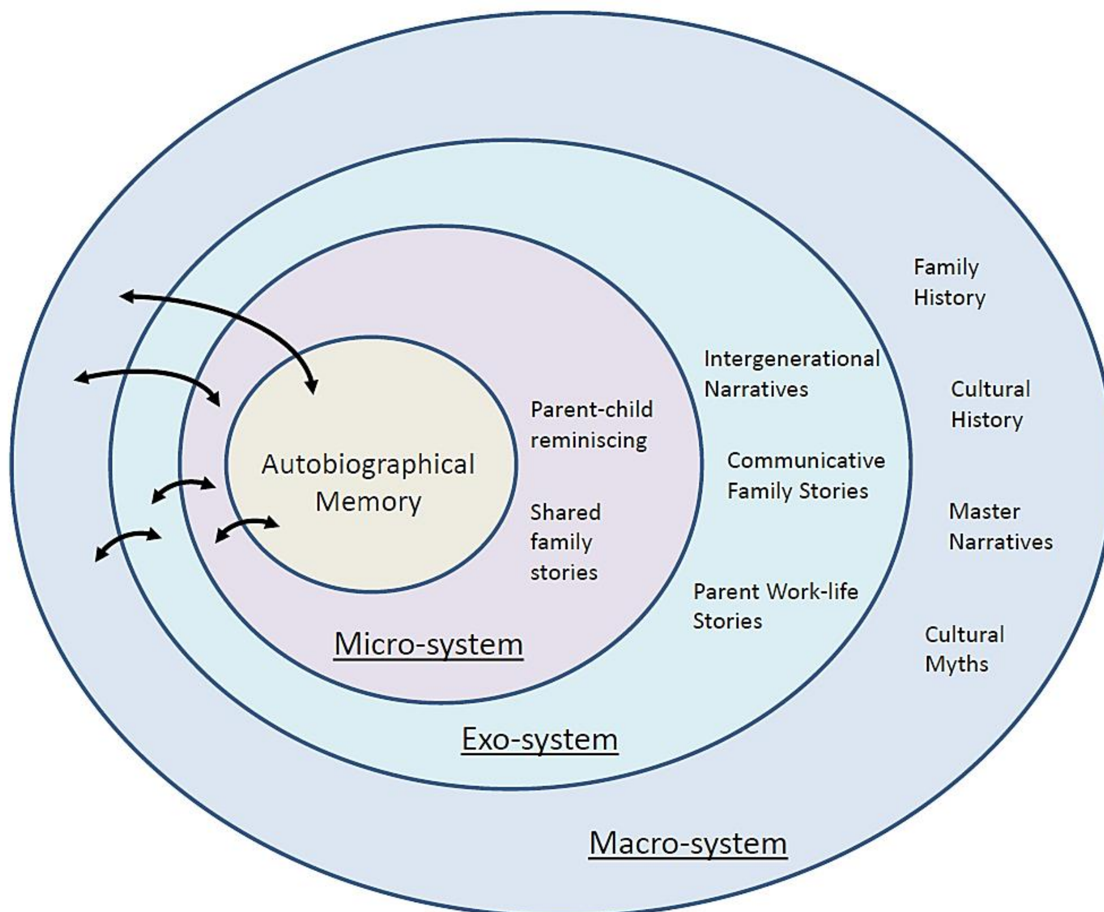
To clarify the different formats of the three articles, a word about each submission follows. The first article is a theoretical manuscript which has been resubmitted to *Developmental Review*. It was first submitted in a previous form which was invited for revision and resubmission by the editor, and there are no page or word length requirements. The second article is a short report which will be submitted to *Emerging Adulthood*, which has a 6000 word length requirement. The third article is a full empirical report for which discussion is underway regarding where to submit.

Footnotes

[1] This definition reflects our focus on families in the United States: the most common family structure in the American family remains the nuclear family unit with two married parents and their children living in a household (64%; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2014). Although this is certainly not the only family structure, this represents the composition of the majority of American households and therefore the most likely conversational environment within which these stories might emerge on a regular basis. A fruitful future direction would be examining the stories that emerge within other typical cross-cultural family structures and nontraditional American family structures.

[2] However, not all of these relations reached statistical significance. See Fivush et al. (2011) for more details.

Figure 1. The Ecological Systems Approach to Autobiographical Memory (from Fivush & Merrill, in press)



Intergenerational Narratives and Identity across Development

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Abstract

Intergenerational narratives are the stories that parents and grandparents share with their children about their own past experiences growing up. We argue from the foundational perspectives of Eriksonsian life-span theory, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, and the sociocultural model of autobiographical memory that intergenerational narratives, although often overlooked by researchers of narrative identity development, play an important role in the family storytelling process that serves many functions for the elder generations who tell them and the younger generations who hear them. We focus on where these narratives fit within the larger body of literature on narrative identity at two developmental periods of interest: midlife and adolescence. We review evidence suggesting that intergenerational narratives influence the psychosocial development of individuals, serving as constructions of identity and a means of achieving a sense of generativity, in ways that may also contribute to family identity and individual well-being.

The Intergenerational Self in Narrative Identity

Storytelling is a universal human activity. Whether stories are told to give instruction on how one ought to live in a society (Thorne, 2004) or to share one's day with family members at the dinner table (Bohanek, et al., 2009), narratives are the way that individuals make sense of their lives (McLean, Pasupathi & Pals, 2007). Broadly speaking, narratives are culturally canonical linguistic forms (Chafe 1990; Labov, 1982) that simultaneously shape how individuals understand their lived experience (Bruner, 1990; 1991; Ricoeur, 1991) and structure the sharing of experiences with, to, and from others (Fivush, Habermas, Zaman & Waters, 2011; Nelson & Fivush, 2004). More narrowly, from McAdams (2001) life narrative model, which we adopt here, personal narratives coalesce the past, present and future into a coherent narrative identity in order to create a sense of unity and purpose across time.

There is substantial evidence that the ways in which individuals express and understand their own personal experiences is related to identity and well-being (Adler, Lodi-Smith, Philippe, & Houle, in press). In this paper, we expand the literature by exploring another critically important type of identity narrative that has received little research attention. Intergenerational narratives are the stories that parents and grandparents pass down about experiences from their youth to their children. Intergenerational narratives sit at the nexus of personal and collective memories, in that they are lived experiences being told by the older generation, and received stories about the familial past to the younger generation (Fivush, Bohanek & Duke, 2008; Fivush & Merrill, in press; Reese & Fivush, 2008). These stories, shared within a variety of contexts, hold a unique position within the larger body of research on narrative

development and have implications for individual identity and well-being, for both the generation telling and the generation hearing these stories.

In this review, we propose that intergenerational narratives contribute to the construction of identity in ways that facilitate psychosocial development at multiple stages of the lifespan. Our objective is to develop an integrative theoretical model of intergenerational narratives, and review preliminary data, in order to facilitate further research. To develop our arguments, we first provide the theoretical foundations, drawing from three developmental theories of interest: Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1968), Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), and Nelson and Fivush's sociocultural model of autobiographical memory (2004). We then very briefly describe extant literature on narrative identity, which focuses on personal narratives. In the third section, we integrate the first two sections, showing how personal and family stories are situated in social cultural contexts. This somewhat extended background is necessary to motivate the fourth section, in which we provide the evidence for the importance of *intergenerational* narratives, both for the older generations who tell these stories and for the younger generation who hears these stories. We draw on literature from multiple perspectives to support our arguments. We emphasize that research on intergenerational narratives is in its infancy. We further note that, because most of the relevant research has been conducted with homogeneous European American families who are fairly well-functioning, interpretations must be made with great caution. Thus, in the final section, in the context of summarizing themes that emerge throughout the review, we further develop diverse directions for future research.

Theoretical Foundations

To lay out the theoretical foundation of the intergenerational self in narrative, we draw from three developmental theories. In the first of these theories, Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, developing individuals are posited to experience normative "crises" at different stages of the lifespan (1963; 1968). These psychosocial challenges must be successfully resolved to achieve a fulfilled sense of self. At each of these points, the individual faces a challenge that needs to be resolved through coordinating the self of the past, present and future in ways that allow for healthy identity and functioning, and this is accomplished, at least partly, through narrative understanding of self through time. There are two stages in particular which may be most relevant for intergenerational narrative, the stages of "Identity vs. Role Confusion" in adolescence, and the stages of "Generativity vs. Stagnation" in middle age. At both developmental time points, relations between autobiographical memory and identity are foregrounded. In adolescence, the ability to reason about the past becomes more fully developed, at the same time that individuals are exploring possible future identities (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007). In midlife, autobiographical memory is used as a tool of reflection, of looking back and constructing a sense of purpose and meaning in life (McAdams, de St. Aubin, & Mansfield, 1993). We will describe how intergenerational narratives may function to inform identity processes in adolescence and to enhance generativity in midlife.

A second theoretical perspective that serves as a foundation which motivates the study of intergenerational narratives is Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems approach (1979) as applied to family narratives (Fivush & Merrill, in press; McLean, in press;

McLean & Breen, in press). According to Bronfenbrenner's perspective, individuals develop within multiple, interacting systems. The level of a child's immediate experiences, or the micro-system, shapes developmental processes. However, the child's experiences are embedded in a series of nested systems, such as the the macro-system and the exo-system, which may indirectly influence the child, for example the child's parents' experiences outside of the home. We and others have suggested that it is through *reminiscing* with others and being exposed to stories from the surrounding macro-system that events that have not been directly experienced may still have an influence on the developing child's narrative identity (Fivush & Merrill, in press; McLean, in press; McLean & Breen, in press). As articulated by McLean and Breen (in press), narrative identity develops in the midst of family stories, cultural stories expressed in media and technology, and larger historical contexts. These "narrative ecologies" surround the child throughout development as the child learns to tell a personal narrative, learning what is valued by significant others and the surrounding culture (Fivush & Merrill, in press; McLean, in press; McLean & Breen, in press). We will describe how intergenerational narratives play an important part in these narrative ecologies, beginning in infancy, in ways that enhance individual identity work.

The third theoretical perspective that informs our view of intergenerational narratives is the sociocultural model of autobiographical memory. Nelson and Fivush (2004) describe the interaction of social, cultural, and cognitive processes across the developmental timeline which give rise to the emergent process of autobiographical memory and narrative. As cognition and brain systems develop, the child's representations of concepts such as self, social others, mental states, and time develop,

which are critical for understanding autobiography. As these concepts are developing, other language users model the narrative expression of memory and the child's developing narrative skills are socialized through participating in adult structured reminiscing about past experiences. Cultural values come into play as adults reinforce certain aspects of children's memory reports and downplay other aspects. There is clear evidence that cultural characteristics have an impact on what is remembered, how it is expressed, and potentially how memories of experiences are encoded initially (Wang, in press), and these cultural differences are echoed in these socialization processes and in autobiographical narratives (see Wang, 2013, for a review). By bringing social processes and cultural considerations to bear on understanding the development of autobiographical memory, researchers may come to understand more fully individual differences in autobiographical memory as well as the identity functions of these memories. We will describe how intergenerational narratives, like personal autobiographical narratives, are told and retold in family interactions, creating and consolidating the forms and functions of talking about the familial past.

Thus, integrating across these theories, we propose that intergenerational narratives are simultaneously personal stories for the tellers and received stories for the listeners in ways that help define identity as an individual within a family and within a culture. These theoretical perspectives support the importance of social interactions between parents (or those of middle age) and children (especially adolescents) as a critical site for the socialization and construction of autobiographical narratives. We draw from all three theoretical perspectives to highlight the importance of storytelling as a culturally mediated linguistic form for weaving together the past, present and future in

ways that create a meaningful identity. We propose that intergenerational narratives play a critical role in the psychosocial development of individuals in ways that vary across the lifespan. Here, we focus specifically on the developmental periods of adolescence and midlife; for adolescents, intergenerational narratives serve as possible models of the construction of narrative identity; in midlife, intergenerational narratives serve as one way to create a sense of generativity. To place our specific arguments about intergenerational narratives in the context of the larger narrative identity literature, we first very briefly review narrative identity.

Narrative Identity

According to McAdams' life story model of identity, individuals use narratives of their personal past experiences in order to construct a sense of who they are as agents in the world by reflecting upon their inner drives, motivations, and goals (McAdams, 2001). Based upon this model, Pasupathi, McLean, and Pals (2007) argued for an examination of single event narratives, which reveal an individual's efforts toward making meaning of life's events as well as changes in individuals' understanding the self in light of such events. One's identity is influenced by the events of the past and the meaning derived from these events shapes how one views the self in the present and looking ahead toward the future. Thus, the self is temporally extended: a person changes over time but is also the same person over time because they are linked through a life narrative that provides a sense of coherence and consistency (Conway, Singer, & Tagini, 2004; Fivush & Nelson, 2006). Developmentally, children begin to create this sense of continuous and coherent narrative self over time through parentally guided reminiscing that focuses on subjective perspective (Fivush, 2012; Fivush & Nelson, 2006). As parents and children reminisce

about the shared past, children begin to understand that they have a unique perspective and interpretation of their experiences, and this perspective is part of creating an identity. We argue similarly for an intergenerational self. Through reminiscing about parents' and grandparents' experiences, children come to understand different perspectives, different ways of being in the world, and, as argued in more detail later, begin to reflect more deeply on values and commitments, in ways that shape their own individual identity. Thus the intergenerational self is the self that is created both as a unique individual within a larger socio-historical timeline, and as part of the larger family group that shares a worldview.

Narrative Identity Formation in Adolescence

Even young children tell narratives of their personal experiences, and use these narratives to understand themselves and regulate their emotions (see Fivush, Haden & Reese, 2006, for a review). However, adolescence in particular is the life period in which individuals begin to face the challenge of constructing identity (Erikson, 1968). Adolescents become highly motivated to "create an identity" as they must begin to consider their lives individualized from their families, moving into their own romantic relationships, occupations, and personal ideologies and values. Individual development and sociocultural pressures converge in adolescence in ways that encourage adolescents to begin to think about their life choices, and to coordinate a coherent sense of self from reflecting on the past, considering the present, and looking ahead into the future (Fivush, Habermas, Waters, & Zaman, 2011; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams & McLean, 2013).

As reviewed in detail in Habermas and Bluck (2000), the ability to tell a life narrative develops in adolescence as multiple cognitive and social skills emerge, such as hypothetical reasoning, social perspective-taking, and temporal sequencing. Adolescents begin to use narratives to reiterate the details of their experiences but also to draw interpretations from these experiences that have implications for their understanding of the self, such as "What does this experience say about *me*?" (McLean, 2008). In constructing these narratives, individuals provide evaluation, interpretation, draw out causes and consequences, as well as make links to the fuller life story.

Generativity and Narrative Identity in Middle Adulthood

Whereas narratives are important for identity throughout the life span, another major developmental stage that narrative identity researchers have focused on is middle adulthood (e.g., McAdams, 2001; McAdams et al., 2004; McAdams, de St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993). In Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, "Generativity vs. stagnation" is a crisis most characteristic of middle adulthood, in which individuals may become increasingly concerned with the impact of their life on others and on the world. In order to lead a fulfilling life, Erikson (1968) proposed that achieving generativity was the normative ideal, that is, leaving a positive legacy in the world by demonstrating care of and promoting the well-being and success of future generations. Accordingly, individuals at this time who do not act in ways to benefit society would be more likely to feel uninvolved and detached from society, called stagnation. Thus, researchers have characterized expressing generativity as the ideal way to develop through midlife. It is worth noting, however, that although generativity has been conceptualized as a

characteristic of individuals in midlife, it may be expressed in various ways as it develops across the lifespan (McAdams, de St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993).

Generativity seems to be connected to particular narrative characteristics. McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin, and Mansfield (1997) found that adults, 25- to 72-years-old who scored highly in generativity were more likely to narrate life stories with content indicative of commitment to personal ideologies and prosocial behaviors for the future of society. Thus, stories may be indicators of an individual's striving toward generativity and the desire to teach and promote the success of future generations. In addition, generativity has been linked to well-being. For example, Ackerman et al (2000) found that generative concern in midlife adults was related to increased positive affectivity, satisfaction with life, and satisfaction with work. Similarly, Grossbaum and Bates (2002) found that generative concern was predictive of subjective sense of self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, and general life satisfaction.

Thus, in both adolescence and middle age, personal narratives are a critical contributor to, and component of healthy identity. We argue that intergenerational narratives may also contribute to the development of identity and generativity in meaningful ways. We propose that in adolescence, these narratives function as part of the surrounding sociocultural environment within which narrative identity is developing. As adolescents are learning how to create meaning in personal narratives, they have been exposed to the stories of elders who are role models to them. In midlife, as individuals are attempting to demonstrate care for future generations, they may use these stories to bond with their children and teach life lessons. Thus, as elders tell these stories they share

their own identity with the next generation, passing down personal values, and as young people hear these stories, they may use them as models for how narratives are told and what they "should" value as well.

Intergenerational Narratives in Sociocultural Context

Intergenerational narratives can encompass several generations and multiple family members, stories about grandparents and great grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. One important type of intergenerational narrative are stories parents tell their children about their own childhood. These stories highlight intergenerational connections between grandparents, parents and children, weaving connections across the generations (Stone, 1988). Although they are not experienced by the children firsthand, children begin to hear these stories even early on in infancy and continue to grow up hearing these stories from family members (Fiese, 1995). Thus, we emphasize that intergenerational narratives are *told* by parents and *received* by children. Interestingly, children often know these stories well enough to participate in the retelling of them (Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008). These stories may be shared in moments when a child seeks parental advice, recalls an event which primes the parent to think about their own personal experiences, or merely at times when these stories are entertaining (Thorne, 2000). Importantly, intergenerational narratives work at the level of the family, but they are not experienced by all in the family and although they are influenced by culture they are not shared by all in the culture. In this way, intergenerational narratives pass down information about what it means to be a member of a family: what parents value, what emotional bond parents share with children in telling these stories, and how the family

identifies itself from other families (Pratt & Fiese, 2004). In this way, intergenerational narratives come to have meaning for behavioral norms, and identity.

Intergenerational narratives may be an especially impactful part of the family narrative ecology because they inform narrative identity for the listener, who receives a story that is potentially meaningful for understanding the world, and for the teller, who shares the self and personal values with a significant person via storytelling. To fully situate intergenerational narratives within the larger context of family narratives, we first turn briefly to the social cultural construction of narratives more broadly.

Personal Narratives in Social Cultural Context

Individuals do not construct narratives in isolation: we constantly share the stories of our lives with others. Although the formation of self-understanding through the life story is undoubtedly influenced by internal dispositions such as personality traits, it is also influenced by the external world and culture in which an individual is situated (McAdams, et al., 2004; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Thorne, 2000; Wang, 2013). By sharing personal narratives with others that have implications for identity, individuals may "test these identities out" by gauging others' reactions (Thorne, 2000). For example, in a study with emerging adults by Thorne, McLean, and Lawrence (2004), the overwhelming majority (88 percent) of self-defining memories that college students reported were shared with another person prior to the study. Numerous studies in cognitive psychology have observed that individuals are influenced through conversation with others to rehearse and remember some details while forgetting other information (for a review, see Hirst & Echterhoff, 2012). Individuals use conversation with others to express their opinions, preferences, and motivations to others. In this way, they

"position" themselves when conversing with others, attempting to convey a particular stance with which to identify themselves (Bamburg, 2004.) Furthermore, feedback that is received in conversation shapes the way they continue to make meaning about that event (Bamberg, 2004; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007).

Thus, the way individuals come to make meaning and the way they come to express these events is a dynamic, interactive process that is shaped by the influence of social others. As developing individuals interact with their environments, they receive feedback that informs their self-view and this information helps them determine how to change to make themselves the people they want to be. This highlights that in these interactions, individuals are both tellers and listeners. The practice of listening to others' stories may be an active process toward adoption of norms, values, cognitive styles, and many more characteristics of the self (Fung, Miller, & Lin, 2004). Especially in narrative identity development, reminiscing with others is critical.

Importantly, narratives are social from the very beginning of development. Families are the very first communities of which children are a part, and thus they serve as both a way for children to explore how to interact with social others and learn norms and values of their society It has been reported that parents tell stories to their preverbal infants, even though these young ones clearly cannot contribute much to the activity (Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, Schwagler, & Rimmer, 1995). Over the course of early childhood, beginning in the preschool years, parents encourage their children to share stories, and individual differences in how they do this has an impact on children's later memory of events (see Fivush, 2014; Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 2006, for reviews). Thus

the development of a narrative identity is a gradual process that begins with the assistance of others quite early in life (Fivush & Zaman, 2014).

Stories of Shared Family Experiences

Narratives are an important part of daily family interactions (Merrill, Gallo & Fivush, 2014). Family storytelling is a frequent activity, occurring approximately every 5 minutes in spontaneous family conversations (Bohanek et al, 2009; Miller, 1994). Not surprisingly, there are substantial individual differences in how families share their past. As mothers in western, industrialized societies remain the primary caregiver of children (Craig & Mullen, 2010), the majority of research on parents' impact on children's memory has focused on mother-child conversations. Mothers who ask their child questions about an event which request higher elaboration on the details and meaning of the event have children with more detailed recall of an event, compared with mothers who do not prompt for high elaboration (see Fivush, 2014, for a review). To the extent that these small exchanges about memories inform a sense of self, even within daily family conversation a child is encouraged to form a narrative identity. Indeed, more highly elaborative mothers have children who develop a more differentiated and coherent sense of self (Bird & Reese, 2006; Wang, Doan & Song, 2010) and better emotion regulation skills (Laible, 2004a, 2004b). Family storytelling continues throughout childhood and adolescence, and individual differences in parental reminiscing endure. Families, and particularly mothers, who are more elaborative when sharing stories with their adolescents have adolescents who show higher self-esteem and higher emotion regulation (Marin, Bohanek & Fivush, 2008; Fivush, Marin, McWilliams & Bohanek, 2009).

As parents actively promote their children's autobiographical memory skills through elaboration in co-constructed narratives, they may be facilitating their child's ability to receive and transmit family identity as well (Fivush & Nelson, 2004; Fivush, 2014). For example, Koenig Kellas (2005) conducted an in-depth analysis of family conversations about a shared past event and found that family members who took each other's perspectives more and identified themselves as a "story-telling family" had the highest levels of family satisfaction. The results of this study suggest that telling stories within the family is an important activity that allows families to reaffirm their identities and strengthen the bonds between individual members.

Intergenerational Narratives

Within the family narrative ecology, intergenerational narratives link the individual to the larger familial and cultural context, bringing the larger world into the narrative micro-system of the individual child (Bronfrenbrenner, 1979; Fivush & Merrill, in press; McLean, in press). Families tell these stories early in a child's development, and these stories are told and retold at family gatherings, during times of family difficulty, or simply over the everyday dinner table. Yet surprisingly little research has examined the process of telling these stories, why and how they are told, and what the younger generation knows about them. Fiese et al. (1995) found that 96% of parents with infants and preschoolers reported telling their children stories about their own childhood at least occasionally. Additionally, these stories are brought up frequently in everyday conversation. Bohanek et al. (2009) found that 12% of the stories that spontaneously emerged in family dinnertime conversations were about family knowledge, stories, and history. Interestingly, parents and children were equally likely to initiate these

conversations, indicating that children are interested and engaged in this kind of family storytelling. These findings, although based on self-report and small samples, provide a hint that intergenerational narratives are a frequent part of family storytelling interactions. Perhaps more to the point, as we detail below, adolescents and emerging adults know these stories, often in great detail, again suggesting that these stories are told and re-told in typical family interactions.

Now that we have established the broad theoretical context, we turn to our specific proposal that intergenerational narratives may provide a model of how to express identity through narrative by which individuals within a family construct a sense of the intergenerational self, which informs family members' identities through common history, vicariously-lived experiences, and shared meaning-making. In line with Erikson's theory, as members of different generations are at different ages, they have their own respective concerns for their personal development. However, these stories may serve to support various functions within family conversations that complement different stages of life and promote the development of individual members. We first discuss the limited data on why older family members tell these kinds of stories to the younger generation, and also explicate the benefits to the tellers of such stories. We then turn to newly emerging research examining exactly what adolescents take from these stories. How and what do adolescents narrate about their parent's experiences growing up, and how and why does this matter for identity and well-being? We reiterate that much of this research is recent and preliminary, and yet we hope that by bridging these pieces together we may point to fruitful new areas for study in narrative identity research.

“Telling” and Expressions of Generativity

Importantly, across development, talking about the past may serve different functions for different family members. These functions may have positive benefits, not only for children, but for parents and grandparents, too. Webster (1995) surveyed individuals ranging in age from adolescence to late adulthood to ask how frequently they reminisced for particular reasons. He found that adolescents and younger adults used reminiscing more for identity and problem solving purposes than their elder counterparts whereas older adults reminisced more for the purposes of teaching and informing others than did the younger participants. The large majority of participants across age groups reported building intimacy with others as another reason for reminiscing, and the frequency of reporting this reason increased with age.

For intergenerational narratives, this suggests that different family members may have different reasons for reminiscing. Older adults may have a main goal when telling these stories to teach lessons and values to the younger generations (Ryan, Pearce, Anas, & Norris, 2004). In turn, younger adults, who use their own stories to inform their sense of identity, may take the values, lessons, and meaning-making within these stories and use them to inform their own self-understanding and knowledge of the world (Pratt, Norris, Hebblethwaite, & Arnold, 2008). Stories may serve to bond family members across different ages together through a common storytelling activity (Norris, Kuiack, & Pratt, 2004). Yet, this activity may serve different developmentally appropriate functions for each family member involved. In particular, intergenerational narratives may serve this function because they specifically pass down these values to one’s own children. As

having children, caring for them, and teaching them are expressions of generativity telling stories may also be a major way to express generativity.

McAdams (2004) interviewed adults between the ages 35 and 65 years about their family stories that had remained important to them over time. These adults formed two groups based upon their scores on a measure of generativity, those who were classified as "highly generative" and those who were relatively "less generative." Both groups were likely to come up with stories and to tell family stories of values, character traits, and life lessons. However, the two groups differed in interesting ways. Firstly, the less generative group was more likely to report that their families tended not to tell stories. Also, the highly generative group was more likely to include themes of suffering, growth, and kindness. Furthermore, participants in the highly generative group were more likely to describe personal growth or positive impact resulting from suffering. This study provides further support that generative individuals may structure their stories in ways that teach values and lessons to younger generations in the family.

Pratt, Norris, Arnold, and Filyer (1999) asked adults age 18- to 75-years-old to tell a story about honesty and an additional story about a personal experience that had significantly impacted their moral development and values. They were asked to tell these stories as they would if they were telling them to an adolescent. An analysis of story themes found that as participant age increased, narratives were more likely to include generative themes, such as creating, sustaining, and giving, for example. Also, women were more likely to include generative themes than men in their narratives. Participants reported the extent to which they had learned lessons from these events, reported the extent to which they invested in value socialization of younger people, and completed a

generativity scale. Results indicated that adults in midlife and women overall had the highest scores in value-socialization. Participants who were older scored higher in generativity and were more likely to have learned lessons from the events. A set of nine naïve adults and adolescents independently rated the quality of the narratives provided on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Interestingly, participants who reported a greater sense of having learned a lesson, investment in value socialization, and themes of generativity, were more likely to receive high ratings of story quality. The findings of this study have implications for both older and younger family members. Older family members who are more generative and more invested in socializing younger individuals in values may be more likely to express these traits in their narratives. In both theme and presentation, parents who are working to achieve generativity may structure their stories in a way that they intend to be useful for younger generations. Furthermore, this study provides some evidence that parents who do this may tell stories that are better received by adolescents and emerging adults. As these studies provide evidence that telling narratives to young people may be a way for adults to work toward the challenge of achieving generativity, a number of studies have examined the goals and ways in which parents tend to tell these stories.

Goals of telling intergenerational narratives. Parents select and tell stories with an aim toward the goals of teaching, bonding, and transmitting values. According to Fivush, Bohanek, and Zaman (2011), intergenerational stories may serve as a type of cultural transmission. Presumably, cultural transmission may promote the survival and strength of the individual members of the family. Given that family members have been observed to tell these stories even when their children are in infancy, family narratives

may be particularly convenient for this purpose because their informal and interactive nature allows for learning to occur before formal schooling (Rogoff & Toma, 1997). The youngest generation may gain from these stories, because by providing the opportunity for vicarious experience of life lessons, these stories may save time, effort, and risk for children as they learn from the successes and failures of the older generations.

Parents are sometimes selective about which stories they choose to tell their children as well as how they choose to tell these stories (Thorne, McLean, & Dasbach, 2004). According to Miller et al., parents' narratives describe both exemplary behaviors, for example, parents demonstrating a concrete example of how to succeed, as well as personal failures in the hopes that their children may learn from past mistakes (Miller, Sandel, Liang, & Fung, 2001). However, the decision of whether to tell children challenging stories such as those of parental transgression may depend upon cultural context (Fung, Miller, & Lin, 2004). Whereas Miller et al. found that in suburban Chicago, it is not uncommon for parents to tell transgression stories to their children, in rural Taiwan, parents' proud moments and moral exemplar narratives were more common.

Parents also consider the developmental appropriateness of the stories that they tell their children. Parents are more likely to tell intergenerational stories reflecting the role of the child as appropriate to the child's age group; they are more likely to tell infants family stories of affiliation and preschoolers stories of achievement (Fiese et al., 1995). This sensitivity to age of the child suggests that parents may be organizing their storytelling of intergenerational narratives in a way that is appropriate for the child's current niche in life. This further suggests that parents, while engaged in family

storytelling, are more likely to tell the stories in ways that make them relevant and useful for their children.

Importantly, gender differences, specifically within intergenerational narrative telling, have been observed as well. Even with young children, fathers are more likely to tell childhood stories of achievement and mothers are more likely to tell stories of affiliation (Buckner & Fivush, 2000; Fiese et al., 1995; Fiese & Skillman, 2000). Fiese and Bickham (2004) found that when telling intergenerational stories, mother-daughter dyads are more likely to talk about affiliation and family routines than father-son dyads, which are more likely to talk about work and success. In Pratt et al. (1999), women scored higher than men on use of generative themes in their moral narratives, self-report of investment in value socialization for young people, and generative concern. Webster (1995) found that women reported reminiscing more frequently than men for a variety of functions, including for identity and problem solving, making conversation, and maintaining intimacy with others. Overall, it seems that gender influences the stories that parents tell and that women in particular may be more likely to share these stories than men.

In summary, parents (and other family members) begin to tell these stories to the younger generation very early in development and they continue to be an important part of daily family interaction. The stories are modulated in the telling based on the developmental stage of the listener and the context in which the story is told, and telling these stories has positive impact on the tellers. Do they also have positive impact on the listeners? What are children hearing of these stories, how are they internalizing them and how might these stories influence their own developing identity and well-being?

Intergenerational narrative identity

There is burgeoning evidence to suggest that intergenerational narratives perform a function in the psychosocial development of adolescents: identity. As described earlier, narrative identity develops in adolescence as individuals become more interested in understanding their roles, values and behaviors in the world. Adolescents use stories about their past experiences to explore these concepts. Intergenerational narratives may influence this process of coming to understand one's identity by making meaning through the past experiences of significant others (Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008; Fivush, Merrill, & Marin, 2014).

Although peers and other individuals in adolescents' lives begin to influence adolescents' identity and understanding of themselves as agents in the world, parents continue to play a role in their children's identity formation throughout adolescence (Grotevant, 1998). Notably, although adolescents tend to differentiate themselves from their parents when it comes to choices of personal style, media use, and taste, they tend to ascribe to the same values and moral ideology as their parents (Laursen & Collins, 2009).

According to Schachter and Ventura (2008), parents serve the role of "identity agents" in the lives of adolescents, meaning that they influence the identity construction of their children by playing an active role in setting goals for their children based upon their personal values and psychological theories. Furthermore, parents reflect upon their experiences as they participate in their children's development, assessing whether things are going as they would hope for their child. This perspective on identity development emphasizes that other people in the life of the developing individual act as co-participants in the process of identity emergence and that the adolescent is not searching for an

identity alone: others put a large amount of effort into helping the adolescent find developmental pathways as well. One way that parents may be involved in this process is through storytelling. Of course, the adolescent is not simply passive in this process. It is up to the adolescent to integrate information from their experiences and from conversations with important people in their lives in order to create meaning that is relevant for their identity development. Schachter (2004) describes how individuals piece together multiple identities into a coherent whole based upon Erikson's construct of "identity configuration." In this way, individuals grapple with multiple, and sometimes contradictory, aspects of the self and they must work to understand the relations between these aspects in order to create one unified identity. For example, Schachter provides examples of Jewish modern orthodox young adults who must use different strategies to resolve the tension between religious identities and secular identities which often emphasize conflicting values and norms.

To illustrate these points so far, consider the following narrative, as told by a 19-year-old male college student.

> My mother all always tells my brother and me, "Do your work now and you can play all you want later," to give us more incentive to finish schoolwork. She would tell us stories of how she used to [have] tons of fun in her youth and never got into trouble because she always finished her work first. I am particularly gifted in math, which she says I must get from my father because [she] was terrible at it in school, but she always stuck to it and made sure it was correct before going out to play.

> My mother loved to double-dutch jump rope when she was a kid. She and the other girls on the block would be at it for hours on end in the summertime. My mother is also always comparing her school age days to mine to my brother's. One of her favorite stories is of how they used to have extra long lunches and after you finished eating, there was another section which had music and dancing, almost like a mid-day party, but it always cost a nickel to get in. She loved to dance, constantly reminding the rest of the family about how she could really bust a move. She always points out that I received my "rhythm" gene from her, because neither my father nor brother have it. My mother loves to have fun and loves to see her kids enjoy themselves too, but she makes sure that our priorities are always in order, with school work coming first.

There are many points illustrated in this narrative. First, the narrator uses the story from his mother's youth to describe qualities which identify how he understands his mother as a person, such as his mother's preferences (e.g. "she loved to dance") and values (e.g. "she always stuck to it and made sure it was correct."). Next, there are multiple instances in this narrative in which the narrator explicitly draws a connection to the self (e.g. "I am particularly gifted in math, which she says I must get from my father" and "I received my 'rhythm' gene from her"). Further, there are moments where the narrator ties the story back to the mother's behavior in the present by reflecting on how the values of the past carry over into the expectations for her sons in the current day (e.g. "but she makes sure that our priorities are always in order."). What is interesting about this is that it demonstrates a particular awareness that often parents tell these stories in order to make a point, such as a value or lesson, by giving a meaningful example. Also, although this

story is focused on the mother, there are connections to other members of the family such as the father and brother, indicating that the stories, often told in the context of family conversations may reflect the interconnectedness of the identities of multiple family members.

In terms of what this means for the intergenerational self, adolescents may use narrative identity processes to incorporate family stories to better understand family members, relations between family members and the self. These pieces of information, representing one aspect of the many relational aspects of the self, may contribute to the overall coherent sense of identity.

Arnold, Pratt, and Hicks (2004) have suggested that children incorporate their parent's "voice" when parents and children reminisce about the child's experiences into their own narrative telling and that doing so may contribute to children's well-being. Evidence for parental "voice" was echoing conversations and negotiations between parents and adolescents that led the adolescent to a new realization or commitment in their own narrative. With exposure to the characteristics of their parents' narrative style, developing individuals are presented with models of storytelling and therefore how to use stories to understand identity. Fivush, Merrill, and Marin (2014) have argued that one way this shared voice emerges is through conversation and the sharing of intergenerational narratives. In particular, Merrill and Fivush (2014) argue that intergenerational narratives about events that challenge a sense of self, such as a transgression, may play a special role in learning values and morals For example, in this excerpt from Fivush, Merrill, and Marin, a 19-year-old college student reports an intergenerational narrative of transgression:

> Once when my mother was twelve years old, she was caught cheating in school. The teacher and principle (or headmaster) came to her house to tell her parents of the incident, as they knew my grandparents quite well. They informed them that she had copied the work of another student during an exam. Upon hearing the story my mother's parents were very upset. My grandfather told her she wasn't allowed out of the house for about 2 months and she was to complete all of the house chores alone for those two months. Though this punishment was very severe, she felt especially bad for disappointing her mother, who was speechless after hearing the incident. She was very disappointed in my mother and just said she expected better from her. My mother still recalls this incident as she promised herself that day, that she never disappoint her mother like that again (2014, p. 209).

In this narrative, the emerging adult provides evaluations of mother's actions as well as the punishment she received. He takes her perspective by reflecting on her feelings, as well as the thoughts and feelings of the grandmother (e.g. "she expected better from her"). Expressing stories in this way by conveying the evaluations and insights of the parent in a moral situation may demonstrate an internalization of the values of the parent. Merrill and Fivush (2014) found that the majority of emerging adults were able to report an intergenerational narrative from a time when their parent transgressed. Through narratives of complicated events such as conflict or transgression, adolescents are able to use their parents' voice to better understand the more challenging aspects of life events, especially those that pose a threat to the ideal identity.

Given broader gender differences in autobiographical narratives (Grysman & Hudson, 2013), and the gender differences already alluded to here, gender is likely a factor in how adolescents come to integrate their parents' narrative style. Zaman and Fivush (2011) found that adolescents' stories of their parents reflect their parents' gender rather than their own gender. They interviewed 13- to 16-year-old adolescents and asked them to narrate personal memories as well as stories that the adolescents knew about their parents' childhood. For personal narratives, boys and girls told stories that were gendered, in that females told more elaborative, and more emotionally expressive narratives than did boys (Fivush, Bohanek, Zaman & Grapin, 2011). But the gender differences for the intergenerational stories related to the parents' gender not the adolescent's gender. When both boys and girls narrated their mothers' stories, they included higher elaboration, affiliation, and emotion words than when the adolescents told their fathers' stories. Narratives about fathers contained more themes of achievement than narratives about mothers. Note that these findings mirror the findings discussed previously that mothers and fathers tell daughters and sons different kinds of stories about their childhoods, and suggest, not surprisingly, that adolescents may be telling intergenerational narratives in the ways that these stories have been told to them. Interestingly, although boys used emotion words in their mothers' narratives, they did not do so to the same extent for their own personal narratives, suggesting conformity to gender norms in the narrative and reflecting the implications that these norms have for identity. Furthermore, girls' personal narratives more closely resembled the stories they told about their mothers than the stories about their fathers. Yet, the characteristics of boys' personal narratives were not related to the stories they told about their mothers or

their fathers. Zaman and Fivush suggest that adolescents retell their parents' stories in ways that are consistent with the parents' gender identity, whereas they tell their own stories in ways that are consistent with their own gender identity. These findings seem to suggest that as identity is enacted in narrative, adolescents tell their own story according to their identity but tell their parents' stories according to their conception of their parent's identity. Also, this suggests that if adolescents are incorporating their parents' voice into their own narrative style, girls may be more likely to do so.

Fivush, Zaman, Merrill, and Waters (2011) examined this same dataset for explicit identity statements adolescents made that link parental identity to the self within the narrative (e.g. "I remember, now that I'm starting to drive a lot, my mom tells me about when she used to drive… She told me that I always had it good because she had to learn how to drive a stick shift in the snow...", or "So [my mom] said, 'I wish that I had… sat down later that night and written my teacher a letter … maybe the teacher would have realized what I had been doing and that it was a good thing and that I was trying to help someone out.' So um I mean I've written teachers letters now and it helps me to actually understand and for the teacher to understand too."). Girls who made these explicit identity connections in the narratives about their parents (both mothers and fathers) had higher ego identity scores, indicating that they were more engaged in exploring and committing to a healthy adult identity. Unexpectedly, boys who made these connections in the stories about their fathers had lower identity scores; connections in boys' stories about their mothers were unrelated to identity. These gender differences also appear in relations to well-being that we discuss below, and we provide some possible interpretations. Although clearly preliminary, this finding points to ways in which

adolescents may use intergenerational narratives to better understand their own experiences, as well as the complexity of such meaning-making for individual identity development. We are currently examining this question in more detail in our lab (Merrill & Fivush, in prep).

In a qualitative analysis, Taylor, Fisackerly, Mauren, and Taylor (2013) analyzed family narratives about "an ancestor (a parent, grandparent, or other family relative)" from students in an undergraduate family communications class. Students were prompted to think about how their own personal values, identity, and behaviors, respectively, had been most affected by these stories. Taylor et al. demonstrated how students used these stories to reflect personal identity and connections between family members. Interestingly, many participants reported drawing connections between their identities and that of same-gender family members, suggesting that gender may be a feature that emerging adults identify with when drawing interpretations from intergenerational narratives. Gender differences also emerged in the themes of the narratives. For example, females were more likely to report stories of love and relationships whereas men were more likely to report stories about overcoming hardships.

As adolescents become increasingly able to use their own personal experiences to construct narrative identity, adolescents may use the narratives of their parents to inform their sense of identity as well. Currently, there are only a few studies examining whether and how adolescents do this and further research needs to examine what adolescents know about their parents and grandparents' stories more closely and systematically. There are certainly individual differences in the extent to which parents tell these stories and the extent to which adolescents may incorporate their parents' voice into their own

narratives. Moreover, there is also preliminary research that individual differences in the structure and content of these narratives are linked to well-being for adolescents and emerging adults.

Intergenerational Narratives and Well-being

Having a coherent, elaborated sense of intergenerational identity may be related to individual well-being. Within the family, children's knowledge of family history has been found to be positively related to their family functioning, children's internal locus of control, and self-esteem, and negatively related to anxiety and internalizing behaviors (Duke, Lazarus, & Fivush, 2008; Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008). Thus, simply knowing family history seems to be a positive indicator for psychological functioning in children. However, as suggested by Duke et al., teaching individuals their family histories would likely not be enough to increase well-being, but rather, knowing family history probably reflects a complex process of communication of important information between family members that leads to individual benefits. Thus it is critical to examine the process of intergenerational storytelling in relation to well-being in more detail. To date, there is very limited research on this important topic.

In one study, Fivush, Bohanek, and Zaman (2011) examined parent and child contributions in family stories that were spontaneously brought up during family dinnertime conversation with pre-adolescent children. Note that they included both the shared family past and intergenerational narratives in their analyses. They found that mothers who were more involved in the discussions of family stories had children with lower internalizing behaviors. This suggests that mothers in particular may play a critical role in this process.

The Zaman and Fivush (2011) study discussed earlier is one of the few studies in the literature to directly examine adolescents' retellings of intergenerational narratives and relations to well-being (see also, Fivush & Zaman, 2011). In addition to the analyses discussed above, they also analyzed the narratives for perspective-taking (e.g., use of cognition words and affect words to describe parents' thoughts and feelings at the time of the event) and links to well-being. Interestingly, although boys and girls did not differ in the amount of perspective-taking content, the relations to well-being differed by adolescent gender. When telling maternal intergenerational stories, girls who took the perspective of their mothers displayed fewer internalizing and externalizing behaviors, as measured by maternal report in the Child Behavior Checklist. There were no relations for boys, or for either girls or boys for paternal intergenerational narratives. The researchers also identified content which drew parallels across generations such as "My dad played soccer when he was young, and that got me started in soccer." Surprisingly, whereas for girls the frequency of these kinds of statements was highly correlated with fewer internalizing and externalizing scores, for boys there were no relations for this content in stories they told about their mothers and a correlation to an increase in externalizing behaviors when they included these statements when telling their fathers' stories. There were no relations to well-being for how girls told their fathers' narratives. This finding suggests that adolescent girls may benefit from this kind of meaning-making but that boys might not. Specifically, we note two possible explanations for these findings. One explanation may be gender differences in the adolescent process of individuation: adolescent boys may strive more for separation from the family than adolescent girls, who in particular seem to benefit from close mother-daughter relationships (Geuzaine,

Debry, & Liesens, 2000). Another possible explanation may be linked to other findings that have suggested that young adolescent boys' attempts at meaning in their personal narratives are linked to negative outcome, but that this effect diminishes with increasing age (McLean, Breen, & Fournier, 2010). Perhaps, the same meaning-making process that applies to personal narratives may apply for intergenerational narratives, and boys may show a developmental lag as compared to girls, a point we elaborate on below.

Another way that intergenerational narratives may be related to well-being is through links to attachment, the emotional bond between parent and child. Zaman and Fivush (2013) examined the relation between intergenerational narratives and attachment , as measured by the attachment script assessment (Waters & Waters, 2006). The intergenerational narratives were coded for coherence, which included context (i.e. setting time and place), chronology (i.e. sequencing events in temporal order), and theme (i.e. maintaining and elaborating upon a topic), and emotional content. The amount of thematic coherence and expressed emotion in intergenerational narratives about mothers was highly correlated with adolescents' secure attachment. However, the characteristics of the stories about fathers were not related to attachment.

While still preliminary, these patterns suggest that gender may play an important role both in telling and hearing intergenerational narratives, and may be differentially related to identity and well-being. Stories that adolescents tell about their mothers seem to be particularly meaningful and these stories may have different relations to well-being than paternal intergenerational narratives, and this may vary by gender and age of child as well. Young adolescents are still learning to make sense of their past experiences and for young males, especially, relations between narrative meaning-making and well-being

are not always positive (McLean, Breen, & Fournier, 2010) However, with older adolescents and heading into adulthood, relations between narrative and well-being seem to become more consistently positive (McLean & Mansfield, 2011). Thus it is important to consider developing relations between narrative and well-being across adolescence and early adulthood.

Merrill, Waters, Zaman, and Fivush (2011) collected intergenerational narratives from emerging adults and analyzed these narratives for the coherence elements of context, chronology, and theme. Individuals who narrated their parents' stories more coherently were more likely to have higher scores on the Ryff Well-being Scale, a scale that measures positive psychosocial development in terms of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Relations were strongest for females in this study in that they showed positive correlations to well-being for intergenerational stories about both their mothers and their fathers. Males showed this pattern when telling stories about their mothers only. Importantly, coherence has not been found to relate consistently to language abilities more generally or fluid or crystalized intelligence (Reese et al., 2011; Habermas & Silveira, 2008). Again, the findings suggest that gender may moderate how these narratives may influence individuals, but in emerging adulthood, family stories may be beneficial for both males and females.

While limited, the patterns thus far are provocative. Adolescents who know more about their family history show higher levels of identity development, higher self-esteem and lower behavioral problems than adolescents who know less of their family history. More specific to the narratives, adolescents who tell more coherent narratives about their

parents' childhoods show higher levels of identity and well-being, and higher quality of relationship as assessed through attachment. Perhaps most intriguing, adolescents who take the perspective of their parent when telling these stories, by narrating their parents' inner thoughts and emotions, show higher levels of identity development and higher levels of well-being than adolescents who do not do this to the same extent. These effects may be stronger for girls than for boys, but this may also be a function of developmental stage. Whereas future research will need to elucidate these patterns, the preliminary work is clear. The ability to tell coherent, perspectival narratives about their parents' childhood experiences may be beneficial for adolescents and emerging adults. One reason this may be the case involves the social processes going on in families who tell stories about family history, which may include everyday rituals and traditions that bind family members together to create a sense of cohesiveness among members (Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke 2008). This sense of cohesiveness may contribute to an individual sense of stability and security as a member of the family, which may enhance self-esteem and agency in the world.

Difficult and/or Traumatic Family Histories

One caveat, of course, involves the possibility that there may also be instances when it is not beneficial to know the details surrounding the experiences of a parent's youth, but rather might even be potentially harmful. This point hints at a potentially problematic assumption about the homogeneity of how these processes play out. Much of the research on family storytelling involves families which consist of two parents of opposite gender, their children, and occasionally grandparents as well. Thus the literature on family reminiscing generally refers to the traditional nuclear family. However,

families are certainly varied, complex, and extended. Further, family environments may not always be situations that are safe and emotionally supportive, and very little is known about how such characteristics may impact the occurrence and quality of family storytelling.

We know that mother-child reminiscing about the shared past is impoverished in families in which mothers suffer from psychopathology, especially depression, and in families that experience domestic abuse, and that this impoverished reminiscing negatively impacts both children's developing autobiographical memory and their emotional regulation skills (see Valentino, Toth & Cichetti, 2009, for a review). Very little research has extended this to intergenerational narratives, stories parents may or may not share in the context of psychopathology or trauma. One example of such research includes studies of the children of Holocaust survivors. Wiseman, Metzl, and Barber (2006) examined the narratives of men and women whose mother had survived a Nazi concentration camp. They observed that the perception of their parent being vulnerable was associated with increased personal guilt. A pattern was identified that for some particular individuals there was “mutual overprotection” in that survivors’ overprotection of their children was reciprocated with a deep sensitivity to and protectiveness of the emotional needs of the parent. This suggests that certain narratives, such as those of extreme trauma or abuse, may be particularly challenging, further suggesting that in those instances it might not serve generativity for the elder generation to tell, and perspective-taking on the part of the child could have different, potentially problematic, effects. Furthermore, as observed by Baker and Gippenreiter (1998) who interviewed the grandchildren of victims of Stalin’s Purge in Russia, there is sometimes

powerful social pressure to hide one's intergenerational history. What may sometimes result is that these kind of difficult intergenerational narratives are known about by the younger generation, but discussed so rarely to the point of outright avoidance. Interestingly, Baker and Gippenreiter found that grandchildren's effort to research their families' experience of the Purge was positively correlated to social functioning. At this point, it remains a future direction to integrate the findings from qualitative studies of intergenerational trauma and memoir (e.g. Danieli, 1998) with that of what we have reviewed in this paper, studies showing positive aspects of telling and retelling intergenerational narratives from relatively benign family histories. To speculate, there may be an optimal amount of conflict in a story that is accessible to a child's understanding, with too little being not compelling and too much being too difficult to grasp. On the other hand, some tragedies are almost exceedingly difficult to redeem and thus the meaning to a young person is unclear or negative. Of course, having gone through a serious traumatic event may have psychological effects on the parent as well, which would need to be empirically disentangled from any effect of the memory contributions to individual family members' well-being.

Future Directions

Narratives, whether told for entertainment or information, provide an opportunity for individuals to reflect on what they have learned from personal life experiences and what this means about their identities and their world-outlook (McLean, 2005; McLean & Pratt, 2006). Parents use family reminiscing in everyday contexts to socialize children and help them understand which behaviors and ideas are valued (Fivush, Bohanek, Robertson, & Duke, 2004; Merrill, Gallo, & Fivush, in press; Sterponi, 2009). Likewise,

intergenerational narratives provide an opportunity for the more experienced generation to impart life lessons to the younger generation (Miller, Sandel, Liang, & Fung, 2001; Thorn, McLean, & Dasbach, 2004). In this way, intergenerational narratives may function as one tool for adults to work toward achieving generativity in midlife. These narratives may also serve as a guide to children and adolescents to learn lessons such as how the world works, what it was like for their parent to grow up, and how they can relate to the childhood experiences of their parents (Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008; Fivush et al., 2014). Throughout development, individuals may use these stories for a variety of functions within the family. Most critically, however, these stories may create shared information among family members about identity. Although we have presented evidence for this theoretical stance, replication and further explication of the studies presented so far are needed. In what follows, we highlight particular areas of interest that are of particular need for further investigation on intergenerational narratives.

Well-being

As we are only beginning to observe when and in what way intergenerational narratives may be beneficial, why stories may be beneficial is just as complicated. Family stories are rituals which are shared and repeated over time. Family rituals, in turn, may be practiced most frequently in emotionally secure, stable family environments (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007). As discussed by Spagnola and Fiese, regular family routines and rituals tend to be correlated with a host of positive child outcomes, and yet, there is ample possibility that the relation is not causal. There may be additional variables that are linked to family rituals and responsible for child outcome such as parental feelings of competence and satisfaction, parental monitoring of child behavior, and positive parent-child interactions

in general (Spagnola & Fiese). Therefore, more systematic assessment of how these variables may be related to one another and to family storytelling is essential. Other questions remain about why family stories may have beneficial effects. Is simply telling a "better" narrative good for individuals in general? Is the ability to take the perspective of others more essential? Do these stories reflect family functioning overall? And, of course, as just discussed, is the issue of when family stories may actually be detrimental. Further investigation is essential to better address these issues, but the preliminary research presented here strongly suggests that this is an important and fruitful inquiry.

Gender

A common thread running throughout the studies described in this paper is a preponderance of findings citing gender differences. Overall, findings are not consistent enough to be conclusive, but it seems that within the cultural context of the studies previously described, family reminiscing in general may be driven more by females than males. As mothers tend to be the primary caregivers (Craig & Mullan, 2010), they may have more opportunities to converse with their children, especially about the past. Previous research has found evidence for this pattern within the context of family dinnertime conversation (Merrill, Gallo, & Fivush, 2014). Thus, mothers' amount of talk with children relative to fathers may be modeling greater elaboration and narrative detail (including emotions) for females. Females tend to have more elaborated and emotionally expressive ways of talking about the personal past (see Grysman and Hudson, 2013, for a review). This may have implications for how family stories are passed down and who is more likely to take on the family role of passing down stories. Of adults interviewed in one study, the most often cited source of family stories was grandmothers (McAdams,

2004). Likewise, according to Monserud (2010), granddaughters may be more interested in and attuned to family relationship processes than grandsons. Thus, women within families may be more likely to take the role of telling family stories as the family "kin-keepers" (Baker & Gippenreiter, 1998; Rosenthal, 1985), although further research is needed to systematically identify to what extent this role is shared.

Culture

It is important to reiterate that family stories of the shared past must be placed within the larger cultural context within which narratives are embedded. Narrative research examining memory at the cultural level have described the phenomenon of collective memory, in that individuals within a particular culture share a common event in their personal past with relevance for the entire community's well-being and identity (Boyer & Wertsch, 2009; Luminet et al., 2012). Collective memory narratives structure how a group of people create meaning from major historical events which shape the idea of what it means to be part of that group (Hirst & Echteroff, 2012; Wertsch, 2009).

Similarly, at the cultural level is the concept of "master narratives," which reinforce particular values from a culture about how a story "ought" to look (Bamberg, 2004; Thorne & McLean, 2003; Thorne, 2004). As a child learns the collective memories and master narratives of their society, they are given a sense of what is normative in memory sharing within that society and where they fit within the cultural identity (Hammack, 2008). Parents echo and reinforce these notions as they guide and help shape children's stories.. Thus, in light of these considerations, we wish to emphasize two additional points. First, we are not arguing that intergenerational narratives are the *only* narratives that individuals use as models of narrative identity, as

other narratives such as master narratives may equally inform identity processes. Rather, we are here shining a spotlight on intergenerational narratives because of their unique position, within the context of the family, as a type of communicative narrative that binds younger and older generations (Assman & Czaplicka, 1995). Second, as the process of sharing intergenerational narratives takes place situated in cultural context, it is imperative to consider culture when interpreting the findings on intergenerational narratives thus far.

The process of family storytelling may differ among cultures. Miller et al. (2001) found that in the American culture it was considered to be more socially acceptable for parents to describe past transgressions to their children, compared to Taiwanese culture, in which it was considered less appropriate to tell children transgressions and better to focus on stories of moral uprightness instead. Similarly, the way that parents engage their children in the family storytelling may vary by culture, with some parents encouraging children to contribute information to the stories, and others encouraging their children to listen attentively (Fung, Miller, Lin, 2004; Reese, Hayne, & MacDonald, 2008).

Narratives are also situated in larger cultural definitions of individuals and families. As discussed by Wang (2013), differences in the way cultures emphasize the individualistic and collectivist ideals for identity may result in differences in how children are brought into conversation and how adolescents form their sense of identity. In more collectivist cultures, the value on the developing self as relational may mean that the narrative processes which are shared and encouraged between family members have a different meaning than they do in more individualist cultures, which emphasize the value of personal agency in the developing self. The very term "identity" calls upon a notion of

the individualized self. However, research on adolescent identity development has stressed that adolescents are involved in both processes of differentiation and integration in adult society (Adams & Marshall, 1996; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985).

As much of the research on identity and well-being has been conducted on samples of Western, educated populations (also known as “WEIRD people” by Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010), research on a variety of populations is critical to our understanding of how these processes unfold. Nevertheless, the broader literature suggests that storytelling is rather ubiquitous in societies around the world (Wertsch & Boyer, 2005). The way that these stories may contribute to adolescent development in a variety of cultures has yet to be seen.

Furthermore, as expressed by McAdams (2001), in modern and postmodern societies, compared to traditional societies, the roles that one has from one generation to another are often unstable. Thus over the course of a human lifetime, the self is ever-changing and it is through stories that individuals are able to provide continuity from one major life change to another. This allows individuals to resolve the conflicting beliefs of ongoing change in one’s identity and the simultaneous notion that one is the same person over time. It may be that by telling these stories, families are able to maintain the identity of individual members as well as the identity of the family in ways that cope with ever-changing roles in society. This is a phenomenon that may depend upon cultural context and societal expectations as well. Of course, there is also wide variability within cultures, as the dynamic differences between families demonstrate.

Developmental stage and family characteristics

Families are developmentally evolving social structures, and the forms and functions of family storytelling will certainly shift as a function of the developmental stage of members of the family. Research shows that adults begin telling family stories even to their young infants, but, as reviewed here, the types of stories told, and how they are heard and internalized differ depending on the age of both the teller and the listener. For example, although we have evidence that children and adolescents participate in the telling of these stories and may benefit from knowing them, it is likely that these stories begin to take a different meaning as one grows older. We know from a plethora of studies reviewed here that into late adolescence, individuals' reasoning about past experiences becomes more complex, and this likely applies to making meaning from intergenerational narratives as well. Entering into new challenges surrounding emerging adulthood, such as parenthood, may bring new experiences that may bring an appreciation for the experiences of one's parents or enhance the perspective-taking when recalling one's parents' stories. Thus, it is vital to consider the question of how do these stories shift as individual family members develop through different life stages? Stories are not static, but living embodiments of individual meaning-making, and created in moments shared among family members to accomplish specific goals (McLean et al, 2007). Some research has begun to address some of these issues theoretically and qualitatively (see Pratt & Fiese, 2004, for an overview), but more research is needed. As of yet, the evidence is limited mainly to examining concurrent relations and narratives from single individuals or families at one point in time. Thus, we can speak very little to the causality of these relations and longitudinal studies are critical.

This also points to another issue that remains in the literature, which is what level of analysis is appropriate when examining these questions. Much of what we have emphasized in this paper is at the level of the individual. However, family interaction is a dynamic process, and the family as a unit, although comprised of individuals, may give rise to emergent properties that may be worth investigating as well. For example, although we have discussed the implications for individual well-being that these stories may have, there may be implications for the well-being of the family as a whole, such as a strengthening of group cohesion and family identity (Koenig Kellas, 2005). Likewise, characteristics of the family may influence the practice of family storytelling in positive and negative ways. For example, we know little about the stories from families that are less functional, but we might expect based upon findings described above, that less functional families may engage in less frequent or less beneficial storytelling practices.

Much of this research on family storytelling focuses on the nuclear family unit with only two generations living in the same household. Although this family structure is the most common in the United States and many other industrialized countries (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2013), this is certainly not the only structure of family life and not the only context in which family storytelling may be observed, in industrialized societies or otherwise. Thus, work that includes more varied family structures (for example, single-parent households, or families with two parents of the same gender) and extended family structures (for example, multiple generations living in a household) are imperative towards our understanding of how family narratives are used to achieve the psychosocial goals of generativity and identity. Future research could expand on these issues by presenting a process oriented approach, examining

longitudinal designs, interactions between family members as these stories are told, and characteristics of the family as a group.

Conclusions

Ecological, psychosocial and sociocultural theories point to the importance of narratives as cultural tools for creating individual meaning and identity. We have provided evidence that intergenerational narratives may play a critical role in this process. The current evidence provides a strong case that family storytelling is positively related to family bonding (e.g. Koenig Kellas, 2005), adult generativity (e.g. Norris, Kuiack, & Pratt, 2004), and adolescent well-being (e.g. Duke, Lazarus, & Fivush, 2005). However, much more research is necessary.

Future research should more closely examine these processes at work across multiple generations. Although a number of studies have documented the reasons that parents and grandparents have for sharing these stories, there is still much to learn about how and why the stories are told and retold within family interactions. Research on a variety of populations as well as research incorporating a variety of perspectives on identity development would provide a richer understanding of what intergenerational narratives mean in individuals' lives. The research thus far suggests that intergenerational narratives function as models of narrative skill and meaning making, serve as one tool to work toward achieving generativity in midlife, and contribute to identity development in adolescence. Narratives both express and construct our identity (McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007). As we have argued throughout this paper, individuals are embedded within complex sociocultural worlds that inform both family and individual identity.

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Knowledge of Family History in Relation to Identity, Psychological Well-being, and Relationship Quality

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Abstract

Knowledge of family history has been found to be related to well-being for children and young adolescents but we know little about whether these relations hold in emerging adulthood. As emerging adulthood is a critical time for identity exploration and commitment, knowledge of family history may inform a sense of self as connected to family members and the shared social past in ways that influence identity formation. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine relations between knowledge of family history, psychological well-being, identity formation, and relationship quality with parents and peers. 100 participants completed computer surveys about their knowledge of events in family history (Do You Know Scale), the Psychological Well-being Scale, the Eriksonian Psychosocial Scale Inventory, the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale, and the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment. Results show that knowledge of family history is related to well-being, particularly positive relations and environmental mastery, and also to identity achievement, particularly to commitment making and identification with commitment. Further, knowledge of family history is related to relationship quality with parents but not with close friends. Regression analyses showed that knowledge of family history was not predictive of well-being and identity over and above parental relationships quality. This suggests family conversations about the intergenerational past are intricately linked to maintaining bonds with family members and contribute to personal identity development and well-being into emerging adulthood.

Knowledge of Family History in Relation to Identity, Psychological Well-being, and Relationship Quality

Family stories are a daily part of interaction over the course of development (Pratt & Fiese, 2004; Merrill, Gallo, & Fivush, 2014). From these stories, individuals gain knowledge of their family history, which may inform a sense of well-being and identity in adolescence (Duke, Lazarus, Fivush, 2008; Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008). Yet, we know little about how knowledge of family history may contribute to a sense of well-being and identity in emerging adulthood, a time of increased identity exploration and commitment-making. Emerging adults, even more so than early- and mid-adolescents, are faced with the developmental task of maintaining an identity that is autonomous from and yet still connected to the family, as they begin to explore new adult responsibilities and challenges (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Schwartz, Zamboanga, Luyckx, Meca & Ritchie, 2013). Moreover, to date no research has examined relations between knowledge of family history and current parent-child relationship quality. This is an important question because quality of parent-child relationship is an important component of identity work and individual well-being. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate whether, and in what ways, knowledge of family history might be related to well-being and identity development in emerging adulthood.

Individuals are surrounded by stories that inform them about the sociocultural environment in which they are embedded (Fivush & Merrill, in press). Indeed, we receive information about our culture by understanding its history, which is told and retold to us in everyday conversation, through media portrayals, and in textbooks, and these stories inform our sense of identity as individual members of our respective cultures (McLean, in

press). Likewise, family history, a specific type of historical knowledge, is shared among members of the family, the first social system of which developing individuals are a part, and family history may come to inform a sense of self as a member of the family (Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008; Fivush & Merrill, in press).

Importantly, knowledge of family history is related to individual well-being, but only one study has examined this directly. Previous research has found that early adolescents' knowledge of family history is related to family functioning, adolescents' internal locus of control, and self-esteem, and negatively related to anxiety and internalizing behaviors (Duke, Lazarus, & Fivush, 2008; Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008). This idea has recently been applied to the practice of narrative therapy, by Kiser, Baumgardener, and Dorado (2010) who posit that structuring family conversation over family histories of trauma that the family has experienced together might help individual members cope from traumatic experiences. Yet, there remains limited research about how the mere accumulation of family history knowledge might be related to individual well-being over the course of development. Thus, we are interested in exploring this question at a later period when the connection between individual identity and family identity is most challenged, during emerging adulthood.

Emerging adulthood remains an interesting time to further examine this question for multiple reasons. In western societies at least, emerging adults face new experiences as they learn to navigate adulthood through circumstances such as leaving the family home, finding a life partner, launching a career, and receiving new responsibilities such as the ability to vote (Arnett, 2000). These new possibilities present emerging adults with a variety of questions about the decisions they want to make, leading to the kind of

person they want to be, and thus this is an interesting time to examine identity processes (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Schwartz et al., 2013). At the same time, emerging adults maintain relationships with family members, and this connection to the family remains a key component of how they understand their identity in the process of individuation (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985). Thus, as emerging adults integrate various important components of their social lives and sense of autonomy, the family, particularly parents, remain important in identity formation (Schacter & Ventura, 2008).

Additionally, the process of identity development is complex and linked to well-being in nuanced ways (Schwartz et al., 2013). Erikson (1950) originally proposed that the search for identity was a psychosocial challenge of adolescence to be worked through in the exploration of individuals' possible selves, goals, values, and beliefs. Achieving a sense of identity involves forming a coherent, stable sense of who one is as a person, whereas identity confusion is characterized as a state of incoherent, inconsistent understanding of self, precluding one's ability to move forward to achieve goals in life. Marcia (1966) operationalized these ideas by defining two processes characteristic of identity formation: exploration and commitment; and most recently Luyckx et al. (2008) have expanded on the concepts of exploration and commitment to refine identity categories further. Luyckx et al. have identified exploration in breadth as exploring possible identity alternatives, goals, beliefs, and values. Commitment making involves committing to these particular identity alternatives. Exploration in depth occurs after commitments have been made, in order to evaluate and further explore those commitments. Identification with commitment involves the process of integrating these commitments into how one views the self, and ruminative exploration involves a

psychological quagmire, whereby an individual hesitates or does not move forward in identity development for a variety of potential reasons. This model demonstrates not only the strengths but also the pitfalls of the process of identity development, which can be linked to both positive and negative outcomes for psychological well-being (see Schwartz et al., 2013 for further review).

Critically, these identity processes may be reflected in personal autobiographical memory. Recent work in narrative identity explores how individuals draw conclusions about the self from narrating their past experiences in ways that contribute to identity development (McAdams & McLean, 2013; Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007). Individuals use stories in order to make sense of what has happened to them, and in doing so they create meaning about the self in the world (McAdams, 2000; McLean & Pratt, 2006). The ability to do this is honed in late adolescence (Habermans & Bluck, 2000) and can manifest in both adaptive and maladaptive identity conclusions (Greenhoot & McLean, 2013).

Research linking family history knowledge to well-being suggests that knowledge of family history may also be important for identity formation (Haydon, 2010). Knowledge of family history reflects shared information about a past which binds members of the family together through a common experience. Like autobiographical memory, family history informs a sense of self because family members are integral agents of socialization in the life of a developing individual (Schacter & Ventura, 2008). For example, Pillemer et al. (2015) found that individuals' stories about parents were more likely to be incorporated into the personal life story than stories about friends. Thus, individuals seem to mark family events, relative to others' events, as important to self.

Further, family expressiveness, defined as self-report responses to survey items about open communication in the family, was linked to identity achievement in a sample of university students (Adams, Berzonsky, & Keating, 2006), suggesting that the family storytelling environment may also promote successful navigation of identity challenges. One caveat, however, is that as family stories may serve as guidance to young people, the lessons gained about the self from these stories may be more directive toward some identities over others, meaning that these stories may guide younger generations toward particular identity commitments but discourage other possible identities, thereby encouraging less identity exploration (Haydon, 2010).

Of course, family relationships may also be intertwined with knowledge of family history, although this has been little explored. Duke et al. found that knowledge of family history was linked to family functioning. Further, Zaman and Fivush (2013) found that adolescents' ability to tell thematically coherent stories from their mothers' childhood was related to the adolescents' attachment status. Family stories are one kind of family ritual which binds members together and knowledge about the intergenerational past may reinforce a common bond among family members across generations (Assman & Czaplicka, 1995; Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008; Koenig Kellas, 2005; Pratt & Fiese, 2004).

Thus, there were three major goals of this study. We first aimed to test the link between knowledge of family history and well-being, extending this examination to emerging adults. We then sought to test the potential link between knowledge of family history and identity development, particularly hypothesizing that knowledge of family history would be positively related to identity achievement, especially to identity

commitment processes, but perhaps less so for exploration processes, especially ruminative exploration, which has been found to be negatively related to well-being. The third goal was to examine the relation between these variables and quality of relationship with parents. Finally, we note that substantial research has established a link between identity formation and well-being, and so we assumed that we would replicate that here as well. However, we were further able to assess the relation between well-being and identity development variables as assessed by the DIDS in order to demonstrate convergent validity of Luckyx and colleagues' findings, in a U.S. sample (Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, & Pollock, 2008; Schwartz et al., 2011).

Hypotheses Summary

1. Knowledge of family history will be related to wellbeing in emerging adulthood
2. Knowledge of family history will be related to identity development, particularly commitment
3. Replicate relations between certain aspects of identity development and well-being
4. Relationship with parent will be related to these variables as well, but knowledge of family history will be related to well-being and identity over and about relationship quality

Method

Participants

As part of a larger study, 100 participants (Mean age = 18.94; 59 females) were recruited on a university campus in the United States through the use of flyers and

psychology course subject pool. Among those who reported demographic information (three opted not to provide information), 13 participants self-identified as Hispanic and 84 as Nonhispanic; 47 identified as Asian in race, 33 as White or Caucasian, nine as Black or African American, six as multiracial, and two selected “other.”[1] Students who participated in response to flyers were compensated 15 dollars for one hour of participation, whereas students who were recruited via the subject pool were compensated with course credit. There were no differences on any of the measures between participants due to recruitment strategy.

Procedure

All materials and procedures were approved by the university Institutional Review Board. Participants signed up to participate at a time of their convenience and multiple participants could sign up for a session with a maximum of 8 participants per session. Participants were seated at computers in a classroom in the psychology department with adequate spacing placed between each participant for privacy. After completing informed consent, students were logged in to their respective computers to complete a computer survey which contained all the materials for the study.

Materials

Knowledge of Family History. The “Do You Know?” Scale (DYK) comprises 20-items which assess knowledge of family history (Duke, Lazarus, & Fivush, 2008). Sample items include, “Do you know how your parents met?” and “Do you know some of the things that happened to your mom or dad when they were in school?” Participants report simply “yes” or “no” in response to items on the scale. Total “yes” responses are

summed to get the final score. Test-retest reliability has been established to be very high and adolescents who reported "yes" in response to these questions have been shown to know the information upon further prompting (Duke et al.).

Relationship Quality with Parents and Peers. The revised version of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) assessed participants' perception of the dimensions of the mutual trust, quality of communication, and extent of anger and alienation with their parents and peers (Armsden & Greenberg, 2009). The IPPA comprised of 25 items for each parent; however, due to experimenter error one question was omitted from the survey for each parent, meaning that there were 24 questions for each parent and 25 questions for the peer portion, for all participants. Participants responded to items using a likert scale of 1 (almost never or never true) to 5 (almost always or always true). Example items include "My mother respects my feelings" and "I feel angry with my mother" (reverse-scored). Reliability has been found to be high in both internal consistency and test-retest reliability; validity has been established with participants age 16 to 20 years of age (Armsden & Greenberg, 2009). In the revised version of this measure, subscales scores for each dimension are totaled to obtain a measure of relationship quality for the mother, father, and close friend.

Well-being. Participants completed the medium-format of the Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). This questionnaire featured six, 9-item scales assessing various aspects of well-being which included Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, and Self-Acceptance. Items from these scales were mixed to create one continuous questionnaire totaling 54 items. Participants responded to items using a six-point format,

with (1) indicating strong disagreement with the item and (6) indicating strong agreement with the item. For example, an item on the Autonomy scale was, "I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people." Ryff & Keyes (1995) indicated high internal consistency on this measure.

Identity Development. The Eriksonian Psychosocial Inventory Scale (EPSI) measures successful or unsuccessful resolution of each of Erikson's psychosocial crises of development (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981). For the purposes of this study, the 12-item subscale related to identity development was used to measure a general sense of identity achievement overall. Participants responded on a likert scale to items such as "I know what kind of person I am" and "I change my opinion of myself a lot" (reverse scored).

The Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) has expanded the measurement of identity development by assessing five identity dimensions: Commitment Making, Identification with Commitment, Exploration in Depth, Exploration in Breadth, and Ruminative Exploration (Luyckx et al., 2008). Participants responded to 25 likert-scale items equally divided among the different identity dimensions. Totals were calculated for each dimension separately.

Results

Descriptive Information

Means and standard deviations of the variables of interest are presented in Table 1. There were no gender differences on any of the measures.

Relations among Family History Knowledge, Well-being, and Identity

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated on the variables of interest and are presented in Table 2. Due to the large number of correlations that were run, an interpretation based on effect sizes, rather than p-values is preferred. Admittedly, this analytic decision is somewhat controversial (see Gliner, Leech, & Morgan, 2002, for a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of conventions in null-hypotheses testing). As noted by Lang, Rothman, & Cann (1998) *p*-values designate the risk of Type 1 error rather than exclusively effect magnitude, and corrections of p-values for multiple comparisons may increase the risk of Type 2 error as well. Thus, we base our interpretation upon results where there are correlations with effect sizes above .30 or higher, a moderate effect according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines, in order to emphasize patterns which exist in these analyses rather than single, small effects (see also, Ziliak & McCloskey, 2009; Kline, 2013)..

As can be seen in Table 2, knowledge of family history (DYK) is positively related to well-being and identity development in nuanced ways. For the subscales of psychological well-being, we see, based upon effect sizes, that the more emerging adults know of their family history, the higher their psychological well-being particularly with respect to positive relations with others and environmental mastery. For identity, we see that knowledge of family history is particularly related to identification with commitments, indicating that those who know more about their family history are more likely to integrate their personal goals, values, and beliefs into their sense of self.

In these analyses, we also have the opportunity to replicate previous findings on relations between identity development and well-being. Overall, relations between identity achievement in the EPSI are strongly correlated with all six subscales of the Psychological Well-being Scale. Likewise, overall patterns suggest that commitment making and identification with commitment are positively related to many of the well-being subscales as well, with moderate effects for autonomy, positive relations, and personal growth, as well as large effects for environmental mastery and purpose in life, suggesting that those who have committed to goals, values, and beliefs and especially those who have integrated them into their sense of self have higher well-being. The relations to exploration are more nuanced. Exploration in breadth is generally unrelated to psychological well-being, whereas exploration in depth is moderately positively related to well-being, specifically to environmental mastery and personal growth. Ruminative exploration, on the other hand, is largely negatively related to positive relations and is moderately negatively related to most other aspects of psychological well-being (with the exception of personal growth), indicating that more worry about the exploration process is linked to decreased well-being.

Relations to Quality of Parent and Peer Relationships

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between the relationships with mothers, fathers, and close friend, with the variables of family history knowledge, identity, and well-being are presented in Table 2. As can be seen, knowledge of family history is moderately related to relationships with mothers and fathers, but not with friends. Further, identity achievement is positively correlated with all relationships but most prominently with that of mothers and fathers. Interestingly, relationships with

parents are more linked to identification with commitment, whereas friend relationships are linked to exploration in depth. For well-being, multiple links to well-being subscores to relationship quality with both mothers, fathers, and friends, suggest that these relations are linked to the perception of having positive relationships with others more generally. Further, quality of relationships with mother and fathers are positively related to environmental mastery, self-acceptance, and purpose in life, whereas friend relationships are related to personal growth and purpose in life.

To test whether family history knowledge was predictive of identity and well-being independently of parental relationship quality regression analyses were conducted, displayed in Table 4. To examine relations to well-being, the total Psychological Well-being score was used as the dependent variable, rather than running separate analyses for each subscale. As can be seen, knowledge of family history did not significantly add unique variance explained over and above parental relationship quality. Further, conducting this same analysis with Identification with Commitment as the dependent variable yielded similar results. Knowledge of family history did not uniquely predict commitment.

Discussion

Our findings support the idea that knowledge of family history is related to well-being and identity, specifically identity commitment, thus confirming and extending the one empirical study in the literature. Whereas Duke et al. found links between knowledge of family history and psychological well-being in adolescence, our study extends these findings to a sample of emerging adults. Even in emerging adulthood,

knowledge of family history may reflect past family practices which are brought to bear on an individuals' sense of relationships with other people. Further, the lessons and insights gained from knowing family stories may contribute to a sense of mastery of one's environment. Further, knowledge of family history is related to identity achievement, particularly commitment, but, interestingly, not to exploration. There are multiple potential ways in which to interpret this finding. In identity commitment, some individuals commit to identities by exploring potential alternatives before committing (what Marcia called "achievement"), whereas others commit to identities without exploring (what Marcia called "foreclosure"; Kroger & Marcia, 2011). It is possible that knowledge of family histories and the family practices for which they are a proxy in some ways encourage commitment to particular identities by guiding the young person into certain paths. This may mean that less exploration occurs as a result. However, we did not find a negative relation between knowledge of family history and exploration, suggesting that these practices do not actively discourage exploration necessarily. Rather, one interesting possibility is that knowledge of family history facilitates exploration by providing a means of engagement in vicarious exploring: by hearing the stories of elder family members along with accompanying lessons and insights about the world, young people may vicariously experience these memories, which they then incorporate into their own knowledge base of lessons and insights. In this way, emerging adults who know more about their family histories may explore less: they may feel more confident about their goals, values, beliefs, and overall sense of self. Granted, this process is likely highly filtered through the values and expectations of parents and grandparents, which could have potential implications for both good (e.g. teaching about survival) and ill (e.g.

reinforcing bigotry). Future research should more closely examine the kinds of stories that individuals know about their family history, and consider whether characteristics of stories themselves, such as meaning making about the self, are related to increased well-being and identity processes.

Our findings further extend those of Duke et al. by examining how family history knowledge may be related to parent relationships. Critically, knowledge of family history is related to relationships with parents, but not with peers. This converges with the idea that families who share stories with each other reinforce family bonds. Further, quality of relationships with parents and peers is related to identity and well-being in some overlapping and some unique ways. Like knowledge of family history, having positive relationships with parents seems to be linked to having increased commitment in identity, and this is likely due to similar reasons as described above. However, having positive relationships with a close friend is positively linked to exploration in depth, but not breadth. This may reflect that close friends are engaged in similar types of activities and have similar values (Brown & Larson, 2009). Thus, close friends may share goals and beliefs and may encourage each other to engage in tasks exploring these commitments together. This may also be reflected in the fact that one aspect of well-being related to relationships with close friends that is not related to parent relationships is personal growth. By exploring commitments in greater depth with friends, emerging adults may gain a sense of having grown from the challenge of new perspective on similar goals. The findings between quality of relationships with parents and multiple aspects of well-being is not surprising, given the vast literature on the links between parental attachment

and developmental outcome (Thompson, 1999), but these findings indicate nuanced ways in which both parent and peer relationships are critical in identity formation.

It is also important to note that knowledge of family history did not predict identity and well-being over and above parental relationship quality. This suggests that, not surprisingly, knowledge of family history is intricately related to family relationships. This is not inconsistent with the conceptualization by Duke et al (2008) that knowledge of family history likely represents a series of family conversational rituals which bond the family together and contribute to a sense of belongingness for the individual. Very likely, families that have highly positive relationship quality engage in more family storytelling, and, in turn, more family storytelling contributes to the high relationship quality. Further, as Duke et al. noted, the Do You Know Scale is a clinically useful tool, easy to administer and largely predictive of psychopathology, and these findings certainly do not detract from that. To summarize, these findings suggest that it might not be family history knowledge alone which increases well-being, but rather family history knowledge may be one way that parents and children build a bond which promotes identity development and well-being.

Finally, our findings bring convergent validity to other studies linking identity processes and psychological well-being (See Schwartz et al., 2013, for a review). We observed that greater commitment making and identification with commitment was linked to higher psychological well-being. Likewise, individuals who score higher in commitment tend to have higher self-esteem and less anxiety (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). It seems that having committed to identity decisions may bring about confidence and an overall sense of self-satisfaction. We also found that exploration in depth was associated

with higher well-being, but not exploration in breadth. Exploration in breadth involves exploring a wide variety of possible identities, whereas exploration in depth involves finding out more about and reevaluating commitments that have already been made. Ruminative exploration was found to be negatively associated with psychological well-being. These findings converge with other studies, suggesting that certain kinds of exploration are healthy whereas others may lead to excessive worry that may be harmful to psychological health.

Limitations must be noted. This study involved a single timepoint of concurrent measures and thus we are unable to make any causal claims about the relations between the variables. Knowledge of family history is likely learned over the course of multiple family conversations distributed across development. Likewise, family relationships are built over many interactions and interpersonal events. Thus, we cannot necessarily say that one leads to another, but we speculate that the effect is likely bi-directional: families who engage in reminiscing reinforce their shared bond and are more likely to enjoy engaging in reminiscing in the future. Longitudinal work investigating these questions are critical.

Further, it must be noted that these data are interpreted with respect to effect-size rather than *p*-values indicative of significance (although these values are reported for full disclosure). As argued by Ziliak & McCloskey (2009), effect size interpretation is critical for assessment of real-world implications over and above the importance of *p*-values. As can be seen, most of the correlations we note are in the moderate range, although a few are in the small and large range according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines. Thus, the current

interpretation of these data generally disregards correlations in the small range for purposes of understanding the practical significance of these data.

Emerging adults are faced with many new challenges and responsibilities as they cultivate their developing sense of identity. Knowledge of family history and the stories that it represents are one way in which parents continue to influence their children, even as they are gaining autonomy away from the family. The sense of connectedness to parents that remains with family history knowledge may contribute to well-being, and the incorporation of the lessons, values, and insights gained from this knowledge may contribute to a sense of identity achievement. Thus, conversations of family history are a tool that elder generations may use to harness wisdom gained from the past in order to promote successful generations in the future.

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Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Questionnaire Responses

Measure	Subscale	Mean	Standard Deviation
Do You Know? Scale		14.70	2.95
Psychological Well-being	Autonomy	38.45	7.27
	Positive Relations	40.76	7.74
	Environmental Mastery	37.34	7.09
	Purpose in Life	41.42	6.75
	Personal Growth	42.84	5.74
	Self-Acceptance	39.17	8.55
Eriksonian Psychosocial Inventory Scale		3.57	0.62
Dimensions of Identity Development	Commitment Making	3.74	0.84
	Identification with Commitment	3.61	0.75
	Exploration in Breadth	4.09	0.63
	Exploration in Depth	3.86	0.47
	Ruminative Exploration	3.37	0.86
Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment	Mother	90.49	18.09
	Father	83.97	17.98
	Friend	103.51	14.49

Table 2. Correlations among Family History Knowledge, Well-being, and Identity.

	Do You Know	Autonomy	Positive Relations	Environmental Mastery	Self-Acceptance	Personal Growth	Purpose in Life
Do You Know	-	.22*	.31**	.32**	.24*	.08	.24*
EPSI	.28**	.46***	.53***	.72**	.75***	.43***	.72***
Commitment Making	.23*	.34**	.22*	.50**	.43**	.23*	.60***
Identification with Commitment	.31**	.36***	.44***	.61**	.54**	.35***	.66***
Exploration Breadth	.01	.01	.00	-.04	.02	.24*	-.09
Exploration Depth	.13	.01	.25*	.32**	.28**	.37***	.29**
Ruminative Exploration	-.18	-.31**	-.62***	-.39***	-.40***	-.17	-.38***

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Do you Know relations are displayed both vertically and horizontally. Well-being variables are arranged along the horizontal axis whereas identity variables are arranged along the vertical axis.

Table 3. Correlations among quality of parent and peer relationships and other survey variables.

Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment	Mother Score	Father Score	Friend Score
Do You Know	.39***	.32**	-.04
EPSI	.43***	.37***	.24*
Commitment Making	.07	.25*	.12
Identification with Commitment	.31**	.39***	.12
Exploration Breadth	-.00	-.01	.06
Exploration Depth	.02	.24*	.31**
Ruminative Exploration	-.25*	-.20*	-.11
Autonomy	.17	.06	.21*
Positive Relations	.50***	.37***	.45***
Environmental Mastery	.32**	.44***	.20*
Self-Acceptance	.33**	.32**	.16
Personal Growth	.15	.14	.33**
Purpose in Life	.31**	.40***	.30**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 4.

Regression analyses examining variance accounted for in total well-being and identification with commitment by Do You Know Scale, before and after accounting for variance explained by parent relationship quality.

A. Total Psychological Well-being Score

			β	R^2	ΔR^2
Model 1	Step 1	DYK	.32*	.10	
Model 2	Step 1	IPPA – Mom IPPA – Dad	.28* .24*	.20	
	Step 2	IPPA – Mom IPPA - Dad DYK	.23* .21* .16	.22	.02

B. Identification with Commitment

			β	R^2	ΔR^2
Model 1	Step 1	DYK	.31*	.09	
Model 2	Step 1	IPPA – Mom IPPA – Dad	.13 .33*	.17***	
	Step 2	IPPA – Mom IPPA - Dad DYK	.08 .30** .17	.19	.02

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Footnote

[1] There were no differences for scores on the DYK scale by race, $F(2, 88) = .51$, $p = .61$.

Perspective-taking and Self-event Connection in Intergenerational Narratives: Relations to Gender, Identity and Well-being

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Abstract

Intergenerational narratives, stories that parents tell their children about their own childhoods, are a frequent part of family conversations which provide opportunities for parents to teach their children and reinforce emotional bonds (Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008). Critically, how adolescents make meaning from these stories has been related to psychological well-being, especially for girls (Fivush & Zaman, 2011), as well as to narrative identity (Pillemer et al., 2015). In emerging adulthood, when identity remains a critical developmental task, these stories may be even more important as individuals are gaining independence from parents while still maintaining relationships with them. We examined perspective-taking and self-event connections in intergenerational narratives, as well as personal narratives and narratives about friends for comparison, collected from 100 racially and ethnically diverse college students (59 female). Young women included more affective content in their personal narratives and more cognition words across all narrative types. Participants overall provided more links to the self in stories about parents than they did in stories about friends. Furthermore, for women, but not for young men, perspective-taking and self-event connections in stories about their fathers were related to increased psychological well-being and identity achievement. This was not found for stories about mothers, contrary to previous research with adolescents, or about friends, suggesting a special importance for fathers' intergenerational narratives at this developmental period. These findings support the theory that intergenerational narratives are particularly important for females, and further sheds light on how both parents may be important for this process across development.

Perspective-taking and Self-event Connection in Intergenerational Narratives: Relations to Gender, Identity and Well-being

Families share stories about personal and family history across generations which serve to bind individuals together in shared experience (Assman & Czaplicka, 1995; Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008). In particular, intergenerational narratives, the stories that parents tell their children about the parent's childhood may promote multiple social and personal functions for both elder and younger generations (Merrill & Fivush, submitted). These stories have been shown to be related to adolescent well-being (Fivush & Zaman, 2011) and recent research suggests they may inform a sense of self as well (Pillemer, Steiner, Kuwabara, Thomsen, & Svob, 2015). Yet, the literature on what younger generations know about stories from their parents' youth is currently in its infancy. The purpose of this study is to examine intergenerational narratives in emerging adulthood, comparing them to personal narratives and other vicarious experience narratives, and to examine relations between characteristics of these narratives to identity and well-being. In this study, we particularly focus on two aspects of meaning-making that may occur in these narratives, perspective-taking and self-event connections, and briefly review the literature on why these particular aspects may be important for understanding intergenerational narratives. Importantly, as gender differences have been found with implications for how intergenerational narratives are told and retold by younger generations, an important component of understanding how these stories function is through an examination of gender. Thus, we also highlight the ways in which gender may be involved in the meaning-making of these stories.

Perspective-taking in Narratives

Narratives are the linguistic structures that individuals use to make sense of their past experiences (Bruner, 1990). In telling the story of a personal experience, individuals convey thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and evaluations about the events that have occurred and their own behavior within those events. In this way, individuals come to understand more than simply the series of actions or facts but they bring to bear their own interpretations in order to better understand the self (Fivush, 2011). Importantly, the way that individuals make meaning from these experiences has implications for the formation of identity and well-being (Merrill, Waters, & Fivush, submitted; McLean & Pratt, 2006). Of course, narratives are not simply recounted to oneself in isolation: they are told to other people and the contexts in which they are told have implications for how the narrator comes to recall and understand the event as well (Pasupathi, Stallworth, & Murdoch, 1998). Interestingly, narratives may also be important for the listener. As articulated by Pillemer et al. (2015), individuals hold representations of vicarious memories, memories that others have experienced which, like personal memories, may also be vividly recalled, emotionally intense, and have implications for the self. In order to form a vicarious memory, an individual must engage in perspective-taking.

Perspective-taking involves complex cognitive mechanisms which allow us to make sense of others' stories by understanding their thoughts, feelings, goals, and intentions. The skill to take another person's perspective continues to be honed in adolescence, becoming more sophisticated and faster in reaction time (Ritter, 1979; Choudhury, Blakemore, & Charman, 2006). Perspective taking is also important in personal life stories, as the ability to understand multiple perspectives on personal

experience is informed by others' perspectives over time. Thus, this skill contributes to adolescents' developing ability to understand events in the life story and what these events mean for the self (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Perspective taking may be even more critical when telling intergenerational narratives. In intergenerational narratives, adolescents who take the perspective of their parent by describing emotions and thoughts of their parent in the story may evidence that they are understanding the parents' experience in a more personal way, which may provide insights about motivations for behavior in the world (Fivush, Bohanek, & Zaman, 2011). By getting into the perspective of the parent at the time of the event, adolescents may use the story as a vicarious experience and take away valuable lessons for the self (Pillemer et al., 2015). Further, adolescents who do this in stories about their parents evidence higher well-being (Fivush et al., 2011).

Notably, gender differences have been observed in personal and intergenerational narrative characteristics. In personal narratives, women tend to be more elaborative and emotionally expressive than men. This may be due to socialization (see Grysman & Hudson, 2013, for a review). When reminiscing about shared experiences with their children, mothers are more elaborative and emotionally expressive than fathers, and more so with daughters than with sons (see Fivush & Zaman, 2013, for a review). If these differences generalize to how parents tell stories about their own childhood, this may mean that younger generations hearing their mothers' stories may be more likely to hear emotionally elaborated content than when listening to fathers' stories. Related to this, there is evidence that the way in which adolescents take the perspective of their parent may depend upon the gender of the parent. Zaman and Fivush (2011) found that for both

girls and boys, stories told about mothers' childhoods contained more affective content than stories told about fathers' childhoods. There were no differences in how the adolescents talked about the thoughts of their parents; however, this suggests that the emotional aspect of perspective-taking may depend upon the gender of the person whose story is being told.

Importantly, perspective-taking in intergenerational narratives may be related to well-being, but the findings thus far differ according to gender. Zaman and Fivush (2009) previously found that for young and mid-adolescents, the extent to which they took their parents' perspectives in intergenerational narratives was related to well-being in gendered ways. When well-being was assessed by maternal report of internalizing and externalizing behaviors, adolescent girls who took their mothers' perspective in intergenerational narratives showed higher well-being whereas this pattern was not found for boys or for narratives about fathers. When well-being was self-reported by the adolescent, boys who took the perspective of their mothers showed higher well-being, but girls' reports were unrelated. These findings are somewhat puzzling and may speak to how gender roles are perceived within the individual versus by socializing agents in the life of the child. However, as this was the first study to examine perspective-taking in intergenerational narratives, clearly more research is needed to explicate these findings. Thus the first major objective of this study is to examine perspective-taking in emerging adults' intergenerational narratives and personal narratives, testing for potential gender differences and relations to well-being. Critically, we also included narratives about friends as a comparison to test whether perspective taking is important in general or is specifically important for intergenerational narratives.

Less is known about the ways in which perspective-taking in intergenerational narratives may be related to identity development, although there is some suggestion that this may be the case. Over the course of adolescence, individuals begin to use their past personal experiences to construct a sense of narrative identity (McAdams & McLean, 2013). As argued by Fivush, Bohanek, and Zaman (2011), taking the perspective of parents in intergenerational narratives may provide a model for how to understand one's own experiences. If this is the case, taking the perspective of a parent in a story may also be related to how one constructs a sense of identity. As emerging adulthood continues to be a time of increased identity exploration and commitment (Arnett, 2000), this is an ideal time to examine whether perspective-taking in intergenerational narratives is related to identity achievement. A limitation in the sparse research that has been conducted is that only personal and intergenerational narratives have been compared. As alluded to above, it is possible that the ability to take the perspective of others, regardless of family connection, is an important skill to have more generally, and thus more sophisticated perspective-taking may be related to both identity and well-being in stories about significant others besides parents. For example, Pillemer et al. (2015) found that vicarious memories about parents and friends were recalled at an equal rate, were equally vivid, similar in valence, equally emotional, able to be imagined and physically reaction-invoking. This suggests that perspective-taking is common among different vicarious memory types, but clearly more research is necessary to examine these processes in relation to identity and well-being, as no study yet has done this. In the current study, we build upon this previous work on intergenerational narratives by examining perspective-taking in narratives about parents, friends, and personal experiences.

Self-event Connections

Individuals use their past experiences to learn life lessons and can especially come to understand the self through reflecting on how events of the past have come to influence current behaviors, values, and outlook on life. Although the life story in its entirety represents an individuals' sense of identity as a continuous person over time, single events in the life story, and how individuals talk about them, reveal the incremental process by which this understanding of self begins to take shape (Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007). For example, an individual may describe a difficult time in life when they overcame an obstacle and learned a lesson such as, "I'm capable of handling more than I thought." Such statements are called "self-event connections," and recent research has begun to examine how these contribute to an understanding of self (McLean & Fournier, 2008; Banks & Salmon, 2013; Merrill, Waters, & Fivush, submitted). Specific to intergenerational narratives, individuals can use memories of their parents' experiences to understand the self as well by drawing connections to the self in intergenerational narratives (Fivush & Zaman, 2011). Thus, it is possible that individuals may use others' experiences to vicariously learn lessons and make connections to the self. Yet, very little research has currently investigated this.

For personal narratives, previous research has demonstrated that the way individuals, particularly emerging adults, include connections to the self is related to identity development and well-being (Bauer & McAdams, 2004; McLean & Pratt, 2006, Banks & Salmon, 2013, Merrill, Waters, & Fivush, submitted). By reflecting on life experiences, young people can form insights about their behavior, how they may have changed as a result of an event, and even their outlook on the world. The way in which

this reflection occurs holds implications for how they come to understand and construct a sense of identity. For example, McLean and Pratt (2006) found that among emerging adults describing their personal narratives, less sophisticated meaning about the self in turning point narratives was related to less advanced identity statuses whereas more sophisticated reasoning about the self was associated with overall identity maturity. For intergenerational narratives, only one study has examined "intergenerational connections" created in narrative between the parent and the self. Fivush & Zaman (2011) found that girls who made more connections to self in their narratives about their mothers had fewer internalizing and externalizing scores; however, boys who made more connections in their narratives about fathers had higher externalizing scores. There may be multiple ways to interpret this finding but as these results are the only study that has looked at this so far, more data are needed to confirm these relations. Thus, the current study builds upon these preliminary findings by examining a larger sample and by examining these phenomena in emerging adults.

Unlike perspective-taking, amount of self-event connections tend to be similar regardless of the gender of the narrator (McLean & Pratt, 2006; Banks & Salmon, 2013; Merrill et al., submitted). It seems that developmental considerations are more predictive of the number and sophistication of the connections individuals make. Autobiographical reasoning, the cognitive skill required to generate these self-event connections in narrative, is not fully mature until mid- to late-adolescence; accordingly, studies tend to find more interpretation and more connections to self later in adolescence (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Pasupathi & Wainryb, 2010; McLean & Pratt, 2006). It is thus likely that given the age of participants in Fivush and Zaman (2011), there were not as many

intergenerational links made as there would likely be with an older sample. Furthermore, as the parent-child relationship later in adolescence and into emerging adulthood is characterized by more sophisticated understanding of parents' identity on the part of the daughter or son, emerging adults may be more likely to think about these connections, and thus are the most appropriate population with which to expand this investigation.

An additional question that ought to be considered is whether individuals use stories about parents to form these connections more so or equally than they might with other individuals' narratives. Pillemer et al. (2015) examined self-reported ratings of self-relevance for vicarious memories. They found that individuals reported being more likely to use stories about parents to understand the self than stories about friends and reported being more likely to incorporate events from the vicarious memory into their own life stories for parents' memories than friends' memories. This suggests that individuals are more likely to use intergenerational narratives than narratives about friends in order to understand the self. The current study will examine this with the use of narrative, rather than survey report, in order to see in what way individuals might spontaneously make these connections when describing others' narratives.

Summary of Hypotheses

In this study, we examine perspective-taking and self-event connection in personal narratives, intergenerational narratives about both mothers and fathers, and friend narratives for both a female and male friend in relation to identity development and well-being. We extend previous research to the emerging adulthood population in two important ways. First, we employ a measurement of psychological well-being which focuses on psychological flourishing, rather than the presence or absence of problematic

psychological symptoms. In this way, we are able to assess more specifically whether perspective-taking in parents' stories might be related to a sense of positive functioning in the world. Second, we additionally collected narratives about other significant individuals in the life of the participant, close friends, in order to assess whether relations between perspective-taking and well-being are found solely with intergenerational narratives or generalize to perspective-taking in others' stories as well. For perspective-taking, we expect to see gender differences in how emerging adults tell these stories. Based upon previous work, we expect that young women will include more affective content in their personal narratives than young men, and that overall participants will include more affective content in stories about mothers and in stories about a female friend than in stories about fathers and male friends. For self-event connections, we do not expect to find gender differences based upon previous findings that males and females tend to draw connections to self equally in their personal narratives. However, we do expect that a specific type of self-event connections, "links" to the main character of the story, will be more predominately found in stories about parents compared to stories about friends, based upon the findings from Pillemer et al. that parents' memories are more likely to be incorporated into the life story than friend memories.

For relations to identity and well-being, based upon previous findings, we expect that participants' perspective-taking and self-event connections in narratives about their mother will be related to well-being and identity more so than in their narratives about fathers, and that narratives about friends will be unrelated to well-being and identity. We expect to find these relations for young women but less so for young men. Further, as described by Schwartz et al. (2013), identity and well-being are linked to one another in

various ways. Thus, although theoretically separate constructs, we employ a global identity achievement scale which, to foreshadow, was related to well-being as well. Thus, we examine relations between narrative characteristics and a composite variable, as described below.

Method

Participants

One hundred university students (59 female, Mean age = 18.94) were recruited using flyers placed on campus and the psychology student course sign-up. Students who were recruited via flyers were compensated $15 and students who were recruited through courses received course credit. There were no differences in the data between participants by method of recruitment. Ninety-seven participants self-reported ethnicity and race with 13 identifying as Hispanic and 84 as Nonhispanic; 47 identified as Asian, 33 as White or Caucasian, nine as Black or African American, six as multiracial, and two selected "other" for race.

Procedure

The university Institutional Review Board approved all materials and procedures. Participants signed up to participate at a time of their convenience and multiple participants could sign up for a session with a maximum of 8 participants per session. They sat at computers in a classroom in the psychology department with spacing between each participant for privacy. After completing informed consent, they logged in to their respective computers to complete a computer survey which contained all the materials for the study.

Narrative Instructions

Participants were asked to report five narratives: one each for their mother, father, same-gender-friend, opposite-gender-friend and self. The order of the narratives was counterbalanced.

The instructions for the mother were as follows:

> I would like for you to think about times when your mother (or relative) may have told you a story about a time when your mother was about your age or younger. In the space below, write one of these stories you think best illustrates who she is as a person. Although you were not present at the time of this experience, do your best to describe the event in as much detail as possible. Try to include what happened, where it happened, who was involved, what your mother did, and what she was thinking and feeling during the event.

The instructions for the **father were identical**, substituting the term “father” and gender pronouns as necessary. For the friend narratives the instructions differed only slightly:

> I would like for you to think about a time when your closest female friend may have told you a story from an experience that you were NOT there to observe. In the space below, write one of these stories you think best illustrates who she is as a person. Although you were not present at the time of this experience, do your best to describe the event in as much detail as possible. Try to include what happened, where it happened, who was involved, what your friend did, and what she was thinking and feeling during the event.

The prompt was modified for the different friend narratives to include gender-consistent pronouns. The instructions for the personal story were based upon Singer and Salovey's (1993) definition of self-defining memories:

> I would like for you to think about an experience you have had that best illustrates who you are as a person. Try to select a specific event in your life that is: at least one year old, has helped you to understand who you are as a person, is associated with strong feelings, and is something that you have thought about many times. In the space below, tell the story about this experience. Do your best to describe the event in as much detail as possible. Try to include what happened, where it happened, who was involved, what you did, and what you were thinking and feeling during the event.

Participants had unlimited time and unlimited amount of space within the survey to write their narratives. Follow-up questions after each narrative prompted for the age of the story protagonist at the time of the event, why the participant thought they were told the story (for vicarious memories) or why they considered the event to be important (for personal memories). Generally the study took between 45 minutes to an hour to complete.

Questionnaire Measures

Well-being. The medium-format of the Psychological Well-being Scale was used to assess self-perceived psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). This 54-item questionnaire included six scales assessing Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, and Self-Acceptance.

Item responses involved a six-point format, with (1) indicating strong disagreement with the item and (6) indicating strong agreement with the item.

Identity Achievement. The 12-item Identity subscale of the Eriksonian Psychosocial Inventory Scale (EPSI) was used to measure a general sense of identity achievement (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981). Participants responded on a likert scale to items such as “I know what kind of person I am” and “I change my opinion of myself a lot” (reverse scored).

Narrative Coding

Perspective-taking. Perspective-taking was conceptualized as reflection on the internal states of the protagonist, adapted from the instance-based coding scheme developed by Zaman and Fivush (2011). Of interest to this study were *affect* and *cognitions*. Affect included any instances where the narrator describes the emotions (e.g. “He was really upset”), and affective statements (e.g. “It just felt really weird that he was gone”). Cognition included any instance in which the narrator described the thoughts of people in the story (e.g. “She knew she had to do something”). These statements, once identified, were further subcoded according to valence (i.e. positive or negative) and according to whom the internal states were attributed (i.e. self, parent, or other). Instances were tallied in order to get a total affect and cognition score for each narrative. Two coders achieved reliability on 10% of the narratives. Cohen’s kappa was .88 for affect and .70 for cognition.

Self-event connections. Self-event connections were coded according to an adaptation of McLean & Fournier (2008), following Banks and Salmon (2013). Self-event connections were identified as statements describing how the events within the

narrative are related to the current sense of self. These statements included Dispositions (e.g. "… because I'm a really introverted person…"), Values (e.g. "I always try to help those in need"), Outlook, (e.g. "You never know what's going to happen, so enjoy life today."), and Personal Growth (e.g. "It definitely made me a stronger person."), and were subcoded according to valence as positive, negative, or neutral/mixed. We further subcoded connections for whether they were about the main character of the story (e.g. "My friend is a really moral person.") or a "link" to the narrator's self (e.g. "I get my rhythm gene from my mom."). Note, Fivush and Zaman (2011) referred to these as "intergenerational content" or "intergenerational connections," but as we have included friend narratives as well, we refer to them as "self-main character links." Connections to other characters in the story besides the protagonist were not coded. Two coders achieved reliability on 15% of the narratives. Cohen's kappa was .71.

Results

Means and standard deviations for the narrative variables are displayed in Table 1. Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were performed to test for differences by gender and narrative type on all of the narrative characteristics, as described below. Only significant main effects and interactions are reported. All follow-up comparisons included Bonferroni corrections to control for multiple tests. Greenhouse-Geisser corrections on degrees of freedom were used to correct for violations of sphericity when necessary.

Preliminary analyses examined differences in narrative length, indicating that personal narratives were significantly longer than all other narratives but that there were no differences between the other narratives and no gender differences in length.[1, 2]

Affect. A five (narrative type) by two (gender) mixed-effect ANOVA on number of affective terms revealed a main effect of narrative type, $F(3.26, 300.41) = 17.90$, $p < .001$, $\hat{h}^2 = .16$, a main effect of gender, $F(1,92) = 5.27$, $p = .02$, $\hat{h}^2 = .05$, and an interaction between narrative type and gender, $F(3.27, 300.41) = 2.95$, $p = .03$, $\hat{h}^2 = .03$. Follow-up *t*-tests showed that the interaction was largely driven by the personal narratives, in which females included more affect than males, $t(98) = 2.69$, $p < .01$, but males and females did not significantly differ in affect for the other narrative types, (*t*'s range from .03 to 1.4, *ns)*.

Cognition. A five (narrative type) by two (gender) mixed-effect ANOVA on number of cognition terms revealed a main effect of narrative type, $F(2.92, 271.23) = 28.81$, $p < .001$, $\hat{h}^2 = .25$, and a main effect of gender, $F(1, 93) = 4.55$, $p = .04$, $\hat{h}^2 = .05$. There were no interactions. Pairwise comparisons showed that personal narratives (*EMM* = 4.29, *SE* = .36) included more information about cognition than all other narratives, which did not differ from each other (*EMM*'s range from 1.53 to 1.85, *SE*'s from .19 to .21). Further, females (*EMM* = 2.54, *SE* = .19) included more cognition in their narratives than males (*EMM* = 1.92, *SE* = .22).

Self-event connections. A five (narrative type) by two (gender) mixed-effect ANOVA on the total number of self-event connections about the main character of the story revealed a main effect of narrative type, $F(3.39, 304.95) = 27.93$, $p < .001$, $\hat{h}^2 = .24$. Personal narratives (*EMM* = 2.44, *SE* = .19) contained more self-event connections than narratives about others (*EMM*'s range from .68 to .98, *SE*'s from .12 to .16).

To compare self-main character links made in stories about parents versus stories about friends, a "parent total" was computed as well as a "friend total" for the subcoded

links aspect of self-event connections. A 2 (narrative type: parent, friend) by 2 (gender) mixed-effect ANOVA showed a main effect of narrative type $F(1,92) = 22.18$, $p < .001$, $\hat{h}^2 = .19$, indicating that stories about parents (*EMM* = .87, *SE* = .13) contained more links than stories about friends (*EMM* = .21, *SE* = .08). (Note, in a 4 (narrative type) x 2 (gender) ANOVA, mothers did not differ from fathers and male friend stories did not differ from female friend stories). These results are displayed in Figure 1.

Relations between Narrative Variables, Well-being, and Identity

Originally, we intended to analyze correlations between well-being and identity to the narrative variables separately. However, due to previous findings on the link between identity and well-being, we ran preliminary analyses to test for the independence of these variables and found a high correlation between the Psychological Well-being Scale and the EPSI, $r = .80$, $p < 001$. We return to the issue of why these two variables may be so highly correlated in the discussion; however, in order to examine relations to the narrative characteristics, we computed a composite variable of identity achievement and well-being. This variable was computed by transforming both totals to z-scores and then summing the z-scores together.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed between the narrative characteristics and the composite score, separately for each gender, and are presented in Table 2. Given the number of tests run, we have chosen to interpret those effects which are higher than .30 (at least “medium” in magnitude according to Cohen’s (1988) guidelines, rather than focusing on *p*-values, which do not provide information about real-world, practical significance (Gliner, Leech, and Morgan, 2002; Kline, 2013; Ziliak, & McCloskey, 2009). For the males, almost all of the narrative variables are

unrelated to identity and well-being, with the exception of affect in the personal narratives, which shows a moderate negative relation. For females' personal narratives, self-event connections are positively related to identity and well-being, with moderate effect sizes. Further, narratives about fathers are related as well in that affect, cognition, and self-event connections are positively related to well-being. This suggests that young women who take the perspective of their fathers in stories about their fathers and create connections to identity in stories about their fathers have higher well-being and identity achievement. The correlation for self-event connections remains significant after controlling for personal narrative characteristics, $r_{\text{partial}} = .38$, $p < .01$. Interestingly, narratives about mothers and about friends are unrelated to identity and well-being for females as well as males.

Discussion

This was the first study with emerging adults to examine intergenerational narrative characteristics in relation to well-being and identity. Many findings were consistent with our hypotheses but not all, as we elaborate in what follows. Overall, we found that when comparing personal narratives to other narratives, there was a higher frequency of perspective-taking and self-event connections for personal narratives. This finding is consistent with Pillemer et al. (2015), and is not surprising, given that the memories which were personally experienced likely have more information stored to access upon recall, relative to those memories which were only experienced vicariously, and also given that narratives which are personally experienced are likely to be more personally meaningful in constructing narrative identity. We first discuss the gender and

narrative differences in perspective taking and self-event connections, and then turn to the relations to identity and well-being.

Consistent with previous research, we found that young women included more affective content and cognition in their narratives than young men (Bauer, Stennes, & Haight, 2003). For affect this was specific to personal narratives, and for cognition this applied across narratives. Differences in affect for personal narratives replicate many previous findings (Grysman & Hudson, 2013). However, unlike the one previous study on intergenerational narratives (Zaman & Fivush, 2011), stories about mothers did not include more affective content than stories about fathers. To speculate on why this may be the case, developmental considerations may account for these disparate findings. Perhaps as emerging adults have a more sophisticated understanding of the identities of their parents than adolescents do (Smollar & Youniss, 1989), they rely less on stereotyped schemas about gender when recalling the details of their parents' stories. It is also possible that parents tell stories differently over the developmental course of childhood. We know that parents tell their children stories that are relevant for the developmental challenges that their children are currently undertaking. For example, in infancy parents tend to tell their children more stories about affiliation and in preschool parents are more likely to tell stories about achievement (Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, Schwagler, & Rimmer, 1995). It may be that as children develop into emerging adulthood, parents begin telling stories about their own childhood that are less gender-typed around emotion, and more focused on the achievement issues (e.g. decision-making around goals) that emerging adults are facing. Our sample, in particular, were students in an elite private liberal arts college, and highly focused on professional

achievement. Thus it may be both how the parent tells the story and how the emerging adults create meaning from the story that leads to these developmental differences. Yet there were consistent gender differences in cognition. This may suggest that females may be doing more perspective taking on the thoughts of others than males.

As expected, there were no gender differences in number of self-event connections made. Males and females both tend to make meaning about the self from previous experiences equally (McLean & Breen, 2009). Interestingly, we did find differences between the different narrative types in terms of the links between the narrator (i.e. the participant) and the protagonist of the story. As predicted, participants made more links to the self when describing their parents' experiences than when describing their friends' experiences. This suggests that emerging adults are using their parents' narratives more to understand their own current dispositions, values, outlook, and sense of personal growth. This evidence converges with findings from Pillemer et al. (2015) that vicarious memories can contribute to understanding of self, but that parents' stories may do so even more than friends' stories. This is one of the first studies to make this specific comparison in narrative, and supports the theory that parents' narratives may be particularly important among the many stories that surround developing individuals in their environment (Fivush & Merrill, in press). Specifically, it suggests that intergenerational narratives, over and above narratives about others, may contribute to narrative identity development.

We also examined relations between the amount of perspective-taking and self-event connections to a composite score of identity and well-being. We note first the extremely high correlation between identity and well-being, which is consistent with

previous research (Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2013). As discussed by Schwartz et al., achieving identity may bring about a sense of confidence and self-assuredness which contributes to feelings of autonomy and self-esteem. In addition, as has been found previously, the patterns of relations between narratives and well-being were different for males and females. For young men, there were almost no relations between narrative content and identity and well-being, with the exception of a negative relation with amount of affect in personal narratives. Although this is only one correlation, this may be due to increased levels of affect being inconsistent with the stereotypical male gender identity. Therefore, more emotional personal memories may reflect unresolved identity for this age group, although it remains to be seen whether this would be the case in older age groups. For young women's personal narratives, there were moderate relations between self-event connections and relations to identity and well-being. This converges with previous findings that self-event connections may contribute to identity and personal growth, although some previous work had found these relations regardless of gender (Merrill, Waters, & Fivush, in press). It is unclear why we might not find it for both genders in the personal narratives in the current study. In the previous study, personal low-point narratives were studied, whereas here, we studied self-defining memories. In some ways, this makes the discrepant findings even more puzzling, suggesting future research should examine relations between self-event connections in relation to well-being and identity as a function of event type. There may also be developmental differences. McLean, Breen and Fournier (2010) found that narrative meaning-making only related positively to well-being later in emerging adulthood and not in adolescence, and the developmental trajectory may be a bit slower

for males than females (McLean, 2008). We studied emerging adults just entering college, at the very beginning of emerging adulthood. Perhaps the males in our study were not yet able to use narrative meaning-making as productively as the females. Further research must take a longitudinal approach to answer these important questions.

For young women's intergenerational narratives, there were relations between narrative content and well-being and identity, but only for fathers' narratives. This finding is very surprising, given previous research linking mothers' and daughters' narrative characteristics (Merrill, Gallo, & Fivush, 2014; Peterson & Roberts, 2003) and relations to well-being specifically for mothers' stories but not fathers' stories (Zaman & Fivush, 2011). However, Zaman and Fivush also found that stories told by adolescent girls about their fathers were more achievement-oriented. As we will elaborate further in what follows, perhaps these relations for the fathers' stories, but not the mothers' stories, reflect the achievement-oriented stage of life that these motivated college women are going through. There were no relations whatsoever for the male or female friend narratives, again suggesting that there may be a special contribution from intergenerational narratives for the development of identity, at least for females.

Looking at the study as a whole, the findings from this study support previous theory and empirical research that in Western societies women tend to be the kin-keepers of the family, the members of the family who spend more time and energy on reinforcing family bonds through communication and reminiscing about the family history (Rosenthal 1985; Taylor, Fisackerly, Mauren, & Taylor, 2013; Merrill, Gallo, & Fivush, 2014). The fact that young women tell stories richer in perspective taking and connections between the generations indicates that these stories are important for young

women, and suggests that they may find it more personally rewarding to take on this role. These stories serve to bond family members together through a shared family history. For women, the kin-keepers, this may be an especially important developmental task. Quite differently from previous findings, however, the intergenerational stories about mothers do not emerge as related to identity, which is contrary to previous findings and to this theory. One potential reason for this discrepancy may be the age of the participants and the fact that these are students of an elite private college. In emerging adulthood, individuals are concerned with taking on adult roles and responsibilities, forming independence from the family, although family relationships remain important (Arnett, 2000). However, Fiese and Skillman (2000) found that in childhood, fathers tend to tell more stories about autonomy, relative to mothers. Thus, the new roles and responsibilities in emerging adulthood may align more with fathers' stories, making stories about fathers more relevant at this time. As previous theory and research suggests that intergenerational narratives may be particularly useful for females, perhaps these young women are drawing important meaning from the stories that are especially useful for their current developmental challenges. Again, a qualitative look at the themes present in the narratives may be warranted, although this is beyond the scope of the current study. Further, it would be interesting to examine what mid-life adults recall of these stories and whether these stories mean something entirely different once the younger generation becomes parents themselves.

Limitations

It is important to note limitations for this study. This method involved a single time point and concurrent relations do not provide enough information to assess cause

and effect. As expressed by Duke, Lazarus, and Fivush, (2008), it is likely not the case that by merely teaching a child a story about their parents that well-being would be enhanced; rather, the ability to tell these stories reflects ongoing dynamic family processes that may independently contribute to healthy identity development and psychological well-being as well. Future research should examine what intergenerational narratives mean to individuals over time and with respect to individuals' family relationships, communication patterns, and individual differences such as cognitive abilities.

Furthermore, we attempted to make the prompts equally similar in order to pull for similar identity themes throughout; however, we do not know whether the events chosen by the narrators are those events which the main characters of the story would have chosen as self-defining. In some ways, this point does not detract from the fact that there has simply been more time to pass in storytelling conversation between parents and children than children and friends, and thus the stories chosen for parents may be more informed, more reflective of their identities and personal histories than stories about friends. This may contribute to why intergenerational narratives are more personally meaningful in that they reflect deeper understanding of the person and are shared across a larger developmental window of time in which autobiographical memory skills are developing. Still, it may be helpful to control for age of the participant when they first heard the memory, number of times they have heard the story, and perceived importance in order to more fully investigate potential mechanisms in action behind these stories.

Finally, we note that we interpreted results based upon effect sizes, rather than strictly on p-values (although these are included for full disclosure). We made this

decision to emphasize the real-world, practical significance of these data (Ziliak & McCloskey, 2009). Thus, small effects are not interpreted in this study.

Conclusion

Intergenerational narratives are readily recalled by the younger generations but this is the first study to examine perspective-taking and self-event connections in the stories that emerging adults tell about their parents. These stories may have implications for identity and well-being, although in emerging adulthood this seems to be particularly true for young women and the stories about their fathers. Gender differences were partially consistent with previous findings in that females told more emotional personal narratives, took the perspective of others more than males, and the more females tended to do this in narratives about fathers, the higher their well-being. Finally, when participants made links to their own sense of self using others' stories, they did so more in stories about their parents than they did in stories about their friends. This suggests that both males and females may use parents' stories to understand identity, which may be particularly important in this developmental time period.

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Footnotes

[1]Results reported do not correct for narrative length. Note that when analyses are recalculated using length as a covariate, gender differences and correlation patterns remain unchanged.

[2] As previous research has suggested that intergenerational narratives may vary by cultural context, particularly between Western industrialized cultures and East Asian cultures, (e.g. Miller, Sandel, Liang, & Fung, 2001), preliminary results also included an examination of self-reported race and language as potential variables of influence on the present findings, given the high number of students who identified as Asian in the demographic questionnaire. Using one-way ANOVA's, we found little support for differences in the means of the narrative variable scores due to self-reported race. Scores of two variables appeared to differ by race, which were Cognition words in Mothers' stories, $F(2, 88) = 3.67$, $p = .03$, and Cognition words in Male Friends' stories, $F(2, 85) = 3.78$, $p = .03$. Follow-up contrasts indicated that Asian participants used fewer cognition words in stories about mothers ($M = 1.15$, $SD = 1.20$) than African Americans ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 4.64$) and Caucasians ($M = 1.79$, $SD = 1.71$), and that Caucasians ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 2.03$) used more cognition words in stories about male friends than African Americans ($M = 1.12$, $SD = 0.99$) and Asians ($M = 1.47$, $SD = 1.49$). The remainder of the narrative variables did not vary by race, with F-values ranging from .31 to 3.01, and p-values ranging from .06 to .73. Comparing native English-speakers to non-native English-speakers, there were no differences for narrative variables; t's ranged from .03 to 1.69, p-values ranged from .10 to .98.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviation for narrative variables, split by gender.

		Males	Females
Affect			
	Mother Story	1.51 (1.78)	1.79 (1.93)
	Father Story	1.46 (1.50)	1.47 (1.89)
	Female Friend	2.15 (1.66)	2.73 (2.22)
	Male Friend	2.17 (2.55)	2.71 (2.57)
	Personal	2.85 (2.57)	4.64 (3.68)
Cognition			
	Mother Story	1.51 (2.40)	1.58 (1.60)
	Father Story	1.34 (1.41)	2.04 (2.20)
	Female Friend	1.55 (1.60)	2.02 (1.91)
	Male Friend	1.54 (1.42)	2.13 (2.05)
	Personal	3.51 (3.17)	4.81 (3.60)
Self-Event Connections (Main Character)			
	Mother Story	1.12 (1.38)	1.39 (1.64)
	Father Story	1.07 (1.23)	1.37 (1.54)
	Female Friend	0.78 (1.72)	1.20 (1.52)
	Male Friend	1.00 (1.26)	1.16 (1.58)
	Personal	2.48 (1.80)	2.59 (1.88)

Note. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

Table 2

Correlations between narrative characteristics and well-being and identity composite score.

	Males			Females		
Narrative Type	Affect	Cognition	Self-event Connection	Affect	Cognition	Self-event Connection
Personal	-.31*	-.18	-.14	-.00	.25+	.37**
Father	.28+	.01	.22	.39**	.33*	.49**
Mother	.05	.08	-.13	.18	-.13	.17
Male Friend	-.20	.11	-.05	.15	-.07	.20
Female Friend	.04	.01	-.25	.05	-.09	.09

Figure 1.

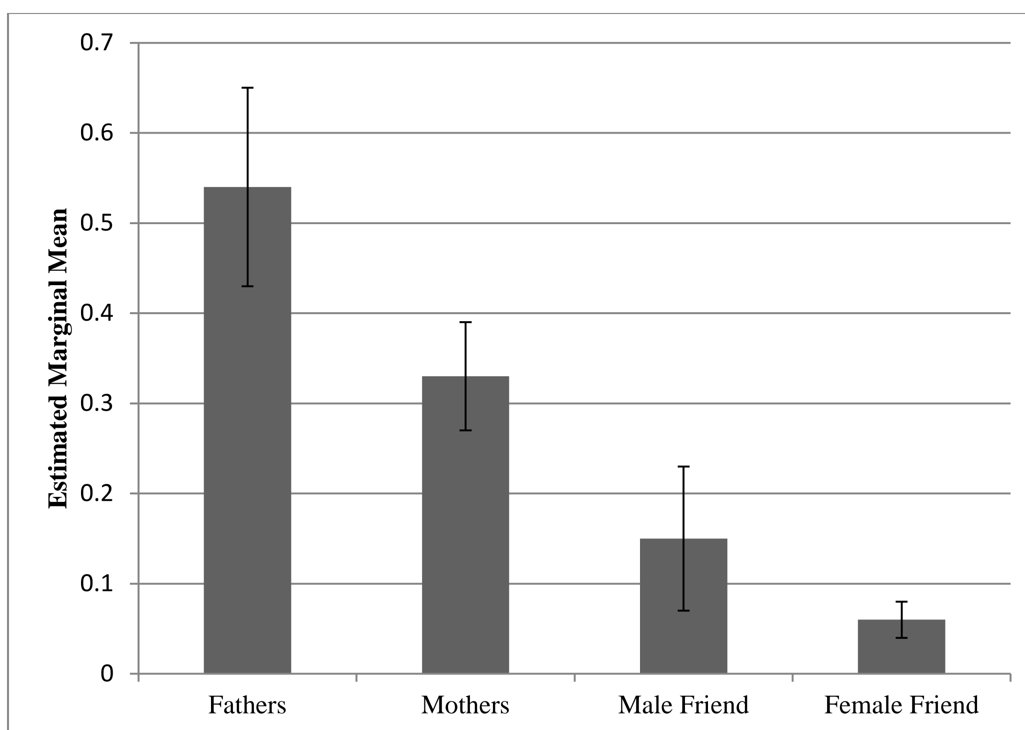

Figure 1. Estimated Marginal Means of Links to Self in Narratives about Others.

Supplemental Materials

Sample Narratives

<u>*Intergenerational Narratives*</u>

Father

ID: 020

I was complaining to my dad about all the homework and schoolwork I had to do and he told me about how when he was still a student in highschool he complained to his dad too. Once he was on the roof of their house studying for finals and so his dad, my grandfather, went up to check on him. When he tried to complain, my grandfather told him to remember that the years he spent as a student would be the easiest and most fun years of his entire life. His only job would be to expand his knowledge and become a better person. My dad said that at the time he did not understand exactly what that meant, but now that he worked full time and had a family to support he wanted to tell me, so that maybe I could understand. (I don't really get it fully, but i think i have an idea of what he means.)

Why do you think you were told you this story?

so that I can appreciate my studies even when they seem awful

Mother

ID: 044

My mother grew up in a very big family. She has many brothers and sisters and she constantly shares her experiences with them to us. She tells us stories about how they fought all the time but at the end of the day, they were always there for each other. For example, she once told us about the times when they used to watch scary movies together even though they all don't like scary movies and get scared by the most minute things. I find this pretty hilarious. She is still close to them right now and I am happy about the fact that I am very close to my mom's side of the family.

Why do you think you were told you this story?

She wants to remind us that family is an important asset and should always be valued

Friend Narratives

Male Friend

ID: 047

It happened when my friend was in kindergarten. He was always picked up by his mother after school, but one day his mother was too busy that she forgot the time to pick him up. He did not cry or panic, he went straight home by himself. I think it is about a 15 minutes walk.

Why do you think you were told you this story?

to show his good sense of direction since childhood

Female Friend

ID: 019

One of my closest female friend's parents just went through a divorce, but the way she relayed the news to me was very nonchalant. When I asked her how she felt about the whole thing, she said that she was never really close to her father anyway so she feels more upset with the knowledge that she will never have that perfect family than with the divorce itself. She also didn't want to be the type to mope and feel sorry for herself.

Why do you think you were told you this story?

She trusts me

Personal Narrative

ID: 082

My experience is quite similar to my friend's experience. About a year ago, my 4 friends and I decided to go on a trip through Europe. Our last stop was Rome, and on the very last day I decided to pull an all nighter in order to sleep on the flight the next morning. I asked my friends if they wanted to do so as well, but they were too tired. I ended up walking through Rome from 12am to 7am alone, listening to music, pondering my past, present and future, and finally coming to terms with the direction my life was going. I began at the colosseum and worked my way around the city, landmark by landmark. Every once in a while I would stop and sit down. I thought about my plans and for the first time I realized I had no idea whether or not I was doing what I wanted, let alone what I wanted. For a bit, this thought distressed me. But eventually it felt much more like a weight off my shoulders. I realized that I was about to get to colleges, where I'd be able to sample all the possibilities of my future. This was extremely powerful for me as I never felt like this before, and felt as though I probably would never feel this way again. As I watched the sunrise over the spanish steps I felt like I had discovered a part of myself I never knew before. The mere fact that there were parts of me that after 18 years I still was unfamiliar with excited me. It made me hopeful. It gave me an emotional drive that I never thought I had. When I got on the plane back home, I felt like a new man. I felt like I had independence like never before. I was now truly an adult, not on paper, but by means of experience.

Why do you consider this to be an important event?

Because it changed the way I saw myself, my goals, and the potency of my future which prior to then I thought was governed by my past.

Coding Manuals

Self-event Connections Coding Scheme

Self-event connections - These are any explicit connections that the individual constructs between their experiences and their current sense of self (beliefs and knowledge about who they are as a person at the time they wrote the narrative). Self-event connections most commonly link past experiences to …

Current DISPOSITIONS	**Traits, characteristics, qualities, roles** - Generalized emotional reactions - Current behaviours with implications for self. (Includes hobbies, activities that are important to the individual).	"… cause I'm like a very introverted person, and where I work, there's so many people, and it's all about teamwork…" "I am the type of person who…" "Any problem within my family structure really upsets me…" "…being in love brings out the best in me." "I love to make everyone happy and solve conflicts"
Current VALUES	**Beliefs about what is right or wrong, beliefs about what *should* happen** -Norms, behaviours with implications for how others ought to behave - Evaluations of changes to self or outlook, specifically evaluation of a phrase that is a self-event connection in another category	"I now realize that kids shouldn't ever assume the role of adults." "I do not and will never boast about this achievement." "…which is good in a lot of ways…" "…which is wrong of me…" "It wasn't fair."
Current OUTLOOK	**Attitudes, perspectives about the world, others, relationships in general, self**	"You never know what's going to happen so enjoy life today ..." "You see the world differently" "It makes the bad times not so tough." "I like who I am now." "I think of how lucky I am." "There is nothing like doing something that makes your parents proud."

PERSONAL GROWTH	Maturing, personal development and change ***Personal growth trumps other categories***	"It definitely gave me more confidence" "It has caused me to mature very quickly." "It has shaped my personality…" "I really learned about love with him."

We are not coding specific emotions (past or present) here. We are in agreement to code only <u>current</u> expressions and not past expressions…

It can be tricky to distinguish whether the person is simply describing what happened or whether what they are saying is an insight into themselves and their life. It may be useful to think about whether the statement reflects what was happening AT THE TIME/or what the person was thinking and feeling AT THE TIME (not a self-event connection) or whether it reflects their CURRENT thinking about who they are NOW (most likely a self-event connection).

Referring to the future does not necessarily get coded… It has to clearly fit one of the categories to count.

Also, favour the explicit – if it "sort of seems like the person might be saying this" – be cautious about coding it. If the person explicitly states "This event made me this kind of awesome" – code it ☺

Self-event connection valence - Whether the information about the self that is highlighted in the self-event connection is positive (i.e. describes a positive feature of the self) or negative. *Importantly – evaluate valence based upon consequences/implications for the self.

Subcoding: Is the self-event connection positive or negative?

This is a categorical system. In our adaptation, we are excluding the "mixed" category.

0	Neutral / Neither positive nor negative (or a connection that could be either positive or negative, but there's not enough information to tell)
	Example: A major low point in my life was watching my grandad die on new years day… This changed the way I greet people
1	Positive evaluation of the self - The person mentions a positive characteristic or trait that they currently hold or they mention a positive outcome for the self that happened because of the event that still has positive implications for them and their lives
	Example: When I was 17 I got very good grades in the end of year exams that I had worked very hard for. It gave me much more confidence for the future and lessened my personal worry that I would struggle at things like university and jobs.
2	Negative evaluation of the self. - The person mentions a negative characteristic or trait that they currently hold or they mention a negative outcome for the self that happened because of the event that still has negative implications for them and their lives

	Example: When I was 19 years old I broke up with my first boyfriend of three years. This event intensified my depression and abandonment issues.

Subcoding: We are additionally going to code for ***whom*** the connection has been made: to the main character of the narrative, or linking between the self and the main character.

0	**Main Character**
	Example: "This demonstrates that my father is resilient."
1	**Self-Main Character Link (or parent-self Link)**
	Example: "I am becoming more like my mothe."

Perspective- taking Coding Scheme

Internal States Coding Procedures

- Code all internal states terms into one of the categories below. All are mutually exclusive with the exception of Affect State.
- Categorized terms in accord with their meaning in the narrative. (i.e., *see* as a cognitive term in example below.)
- Emotion terms and affect terms only are also coded for valence.
- Final scores = Summed across all categories for a total score as well as analyzed by category.

Types of Internal States Language:

I. Emotion States

These words encompass both explicit emotions (sad, happy) and 'tone' of emotions; (i.e., words that imply an emotion rather than directly stating it such as crying, laughing). The table below gives examples of emotion words but is not exhaustive.

	Negative General emotion words	Negative Specific emotion words	Positive General emotion words	Positive Specific emotion words
Explicit emotions	1) Annoyed 2) Apprehensive 3) Awful 4) Bad 5) Bothered/disturbed 6) Concern/Concerned 7) Crabby 8) Didn't like 9) Difficult/tough 10) Freaky 11) Gross 12) Hard 13) Hate 14) Hesitant 15) Horrible 16) Insecure 17) Leery/doubtful 18) Messed up 19) Rage 20) Stress/stressed 21) Temper 22) Uncomfortable 23) Unsettling 24) Regret 25) Abuse (non physical)	1) Afraid 2) Ashamed 3) Embarrassed 4) Fear 5) Frightened 6) Frustrated 7) Furious 8) Guilty 9) Humiliated 10) Jealousy/envy 11) Mad 12) Miserable 13) Nervous 14) Panic/panicky 15) Sad 16) Scared/scary 17) Shocked 18) Sorry 19) Terrified 20) Uncertain 21) Unnerving 22) Upset 23) Worry/Worried	1) Better 2) Calm/calm down 3) Comforted/Comfortable 4) Didn't cry 5) Enjoyed 6) Fun/funny 7) Good 8) Relieved 9) Special 10) Wasn't sad 11) Like 12) Flattered 13) Grateful	1) Excited 2) Glad 3) Happy 4) Hilarious 5) Love 6) Proud
Implied emotions	Complain	1) Cried/crying 2) Freaking out 3) Screamed 4) Yelled		1) Hug 2) Laugh 3) Kiss 4) Smiling

Notes –

* **States not traits!** Words that describe a trait rather than a temporary state do not count. (i.e. "He is a cheerful person to be around," does not count. Other examples: "She was bad." "It was a bad school.")

*When a negative emotion is negated, it is POSITIVE and GENERAL and IMPLIED. (i.e. "wasn't sad")

* When a positive emotion is negated, it is NEGATIVE and GENERAL and IMPLIED (i.e. "wasn't happy")
* Repetitions of emotion words that are not for emphasis, do not count. (i.e. "I was really angry, really angry," does **not** count. "I was angry and I mean really angry," does count.)

*She was bothering her, they made fun of him, He teased her = not emotion words.
***Context matters!** "I took medicine to make my head feel *better*," is **not** emotion. "My mom gave me a hug and then I felt *better*," is emotion.

II. General Affect States

These will be words that describe general affective state. They include emotion words PLUS words that describe a general mood or overall affective description/evaluation.

Valence	**Examples (not exhaustive)**
Positive	"That was *great*!" "It was *nice*." "That was *good*." "I was *fine*." "So, that's *cool*." "I just had to *calm down* and *relax*." "That was my favorite." "coolest thing"
Negative	"That was really *difficult* for us to go through." "It was *hard*." "It was kind of *weird*." "That was so *awkward*." "That was really *gross*." "That got me *negative*." "It was really a *bother*." "Oh my God"
Neutral - (valence must be decided based on situation)	"It was a *big deal*." "It was pretty *crazy*."

Notes-

*Factual statements that include these words but refer to something other than affect, (i.e. "She did *good* on her test,") should NOT be counted in score.

*If something is positive to speaker but negative to others, it is coded as positive.

*Physical pain/sense does not count toward affect score.

III. Cognitive States

These are words that describe cognition in the narrative. See table for examples.

1) Amazed	20) To find out	39) Perceive
2) Anticipated	21) Faked	40) Pretend
3) Bet	22) Guess	41) Pay attention
4) Believe	23) Ignore	42) Puzzled
5) Boredom	24) Interested Idea/Clue	43) Remember
6) Confuse	25) Imagination	44) Reflect
7) Certain	26) Intend	45) Realize
8) Concentrate	27) Imagine	46) Respect
9) Convince	28) Impressed	47) Reason Recall
10) Coping	29) Know	48) See (as in "learn")
11) Discover	30) Learn	49) Suppose
12) Determine	31) Lie	50) Sure/wasn't sure
13) Dream	32) Make sense	51) Sense
14) Doubt	33) Mean	52) Trust
15) Decided	34) Memory	53) Think
16) Experience	35) Missed	54) Thought
17) Expect	36) Noticed	55) Understand
18) Forget	37) Obsessed with	56) Wonder
19) Figure	38) Occurred (i.e. It *occurred* to me.)	

Notes-

*Do not code "fillers" that contain language that could be cognition words in other contexts. (i.e. "I was at the beach, you *know*, with my friend." Here, "know" does not receive a point because it is not actually part of the cognition going on in the narrative.)

*Metacognitive terms are coded if they were part of the narrative itself ("I *think* I was really upset at the time,") but not if they were outside the narrative ("I *thought* about this the other day.")

General Discussion

This dissertation comprised three articles to theoretically explore and empirically explicate the construct of the Intergenerational Self. In the development of narrative identity, family stories are a frequent part of conversation with others which model narrative practices and meaning-making for young people. Further, intergenerational narratives especially impart information about how to draw meaning about the self from past experiences.

Summary of articles

The first article provided an in-depth theoretical discussion of how intergenerational narratives function across generations. The literature on family stories suggests that the sharing of these stories is a frequent activity that family members of different ages engage in together. Our theory proposed that these narratives facilitate family members' efforts to work through the challenges of psychosocial development described by Erikson (1968), identity achievement for adolescence and generativity for midlife adults, in different ways. For adolescents and emerging adults, intergenerational narratives serve as models for creating meaning about the self. Further, by taking the perspective of their parents in narratives, young people can learn lessons and insights about how to be in the world. For adults in midlife, they may demonstrate care of the future generations by using these stories as teaching tools and by using stories to strengthen the relationship with their children. Critically, previous research suggests that there may be links between how these stories are told and psychological well-being and identity, a link which may depend upon gender. The second and third articles examine this.

In the second article, knowledge of family history, identity processes, psychological well-being, and quality of parent and friend relationships was assessed in emerging adults. In replication of previous research (Duke et al., 2008), I found that knowledge of family history was related to psychological well-being. Further, it was related to the identity process of commitment but not exploration. Importantly, the addition of the measure of quality of relationships with parents yielded a nuanced picture of why knowledge of family history may be so important for well-being and identity: it may contribute to the maintenance of important relationships that continue to be critical even in emerging adulthood. Interestingly, gender differences were not found in this study, suggesting that knowledge of family history may be equally important for males and females.

In the third article, intergenerational narratives were examined in relation to psychological well-being and identity achievement in emerging adults. For comparison, personal narratives and narratives about male and female friends were also collected. The narratives were coded for perspective-taking (i.e. affect and cognition) and self-event connections, with a special look at a type of self-event connections – links to the main character of the story. This study replicated gender differences in personal narratives for affect and cognition. However, it did not replicate findings that stories about mothers included more affect than stories about fathers. Overall, narratives about mothers, fathers, and friends had similar levels of perspective-taking. Yet, they differed in self-event connections. Participants were more likely to draw links between themselves and their parents in intergenerational narratives than they were to draw links between self and friend in the friend narratives. This suggests that emerging adults use their parents'

stories to understand their own narrative identity more than they do other vicarious memories such as friends' (Pillemer et al., 2015). The links to well-being in this study were in some ways surprising and in other ways not. What was not surprising was that females' perspective-taking and self-event connections were positively related to well-being and identity whereas males' narrative characteristics were generally unrelated, consistent with previous research (Fivush & Zaman, 2011). What was surprising was that it was narratives about fathers, not mothers, that were related for young women's well-being, which was inconsistent with previous findings (Fivush & Zaman, 2011). It is unclear why this was the case, although I have speculated that it may have to do with these women being highly achievement-oriented, based upon previous findings that fathers tend to include more themes of autonomy in their stories and adolescent girls tend to include achievement themes when telling their fathers' intergenerational narratives (Fiese & Skillman, 2000, Zaman & Fivush, 2011). Future research should examine the themes more closely to examine whether particular story types may contribute most to identity achievement in young women.

Integrating Results across the articles

Overall, I found support for the importance of the Intergenerational Self in emerging adulthood. Across both genders, knowledge of family history was related to well-being and identity commitment. This suggests that, consistent with my theoretical framework and other empirical work, strong family ties may promote identity commitment, whether that be through the young person reaching the "achieved" status or the somewhat less-desirable "foreclosed" status of identity. However, introducing the concept of vicarious memories into our understanding of this provides a somewhat less

disparaging picture of why exploration is not positively related to knowledge of family history. I speculate that by vicariously experiencing parents' stories, young people engage in a vicarious exploration process. An objection that might be raised is that vicarious exploration is less ideal than the opportunity to engage in exploration independently, and to a certain extent, the links between foreclosure and authoritarianism may support that point (see Kroger & Marcia, 2011, for a review). However, it is also worth noting that foreclosure is linked to secure attachment, high self-esteem, and low anxiety (Kroger & Marcia), suggesting that it is not always a sign of psychological difficulty. As has been argued by Côté (1996), identity exploration may be a largely modern, Western phenomenon, which would be less valued in premodern societies. Identity commitment, rather, may be most important in many other societies for healthy integration into the adult world. The findings here suggest that knowledge of family history, and family relationships more broadly, may contribute to this critical process.

Additionally, the link between fathers' intergenerational narratives and identity and well-being for young women suggests that although knowledge of family history is related to these processes for both genders, the impact of the narratives themselves might be a gendered phenomenon. As suggested by Fivush and Zaman (2013), reminiscing is a largely gendered activity in that females tend to engage in it more and over development come to value it more. This is supported by the many findings that women's memories tend to be more elaborated and emotionally expressive than males' (Grysman & Hudson, 2013). My findings that intergenerational narratives are related to well-being for young women, then, is consistent with previous ideas about gender differences in the value of autobiographical memory more broadly. However, the links to fathers' stories run

contrary to these ideas. Considering this finding with that of Fivush and Zaman (2011) that adolescent girls' narratives about mothers were the only ones linked to well-being, an interesting developmental story emerges. Perhaps earlier in development, at least as early as young adolescence, being able to elaborate on mothers' stories is important, whereas later in adolescence and into emerging adulthood, fathers' stories become more important. It remains to be seen how these relations may persist or change into full adulthood.

Overall these findings suggest that the Intergenerational Self plays a role in identity construction for both males and females in different ways: both males and females may benefit from knowing about their family histories but only females derive a sense of well-being and identity from the stories themselves, a process which may manifest differently across development. In both instances, knowledge of the familial past may provide a sense of how the self is extended across generations, contributing to a greater understanding of personal identity.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are limitations of this work to note. As with other studies on intergenerational narratives thus far in the literature, my focus has been on what younger generations know of these stories and how they tell these stories from their own interpretation. Thus, we do not know how these stories were originally told to the participants and so our knowledge of how these stories may serve as models for young people is somewhat incomplete.

Further, as mentioned throughout, the empirical articles involved cross-sectional designs which do not allow for interpretation of cause and effect. Longitudinal work is

needed in order to examine modeling and socialization processes, as well as to examine in what ways these stories are recalled over years and how the meaning behind them may change with time. To speculate, it is likely that the personal meaning that young people derive from these stories changes as they transition into adulthood. Promising work is underway by Hirst and his colleagues (personal communication) to examine how cultural memories shared across generations may be recalled over time with data from the parents' original memory of an event and children's retellings of these stories. More studies such as this, although pragmatically very challenging, are necessary to observe how memory is reconstructed and meaning is made across generations.

There are many different ways in which the study of intergenerational narratives may be extended both theoretically and empirically. The empirical studies described in this thesis focused on emerging adulthood as the developmental time period of interest although our theory suggests that intergenerational narratives may be important for other age groups as well. More empirical work is needed to examine how intergenerational narratives may be used in the service of generativity as suggested by the theoretical review article. Further, although it was beyond the scope of the review, it may also be interesting to extend the theory of the Intergenerational Self to end-of-life research, as the recently burgeoning field of narrative gerontology reveals promising insights regarding how narratives of resilience are linked to wisdom and well-being in older age (Randall, Baldwin, McKenzie-Mohr, McKim, & Furlong, 2015; Westerhof, 2010). Perhaps in gerontology, intergenerational narratives may serve the purpose of helping individuals get through Erikson's proposed stage of *integrity vs. despair*. As proponents of narrative therapy for older adults have argued, narratives can be a primary tool for helping to

maintain the psychological well-being of adults toward the end of life. Perhaps younger family members may facilitate this process by providing an attentive audience.

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