Narrative as a Root Metaphor for Political Psychology

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The idea of narrative has become increasingly appropriated in empirical research in both psychology and politics, yet there is a notable absence of integrative frameworks that specify a conceptual and methodological approach to narrative research in political psychology. An integrative conceptual framework is proposed and anchored in four principles of a narrative approach: (1) the mutual constitution of language and thought, (2) the need for personal coherence through narrative identity development, (3) the need for collective solidarity through shared meaning, and (4) the mediational property of narrative in social activity and practice. Theory and empirical research related to these principles are reviewed. We argue that a narrative framework has the potential to enhance the relevance and amplify the voice of political psychology within and beyond the academy and to offer new knowledge on the complex and dynamic relationship between context and mind.

Since its emergence in the 1970s as a scholarly enterprise seeking to link politics, mind, and behavior, political psychology has struggled to find an anchoring paradigm. Horowitz (1979) argued that the sustenance of political psychology, and its ability to unify social science disciplines, would be determined by its ability to offer solutions to real political dilemmas. This sentiment is echoed in Barber's (1990) call for a progressive and relevant political psychology, as well as Winter's (2000) contention that political psychology must address the practical problems of real life. Both Horowitz (1979) and Smith (1979) suggested that the emergence of political psychology was directly connected to historical concerns and processes related to disciplinary structures. And Smith (1979, 1980) cautiously argued that political psychology might provide a multidisciplinary paradigm for the social and behavioral sciences through its commitment to an analysis of the mind in political context.

In some ways, the lack of a coherent unifying paradigm within political psychology is related to the demands of continued disciplinary training for emerging scholars. Hence political psychologists trained primarily in political science might privilege rational choice theory over, say, social identity theory, because that paradigm is considered canonical to their disciplinary practice (e.g., Jervis, 1989). Yet the interdisciplinary nature of political psychology commands the development of conceptual frameworks that can cross borders in fields of knowledge production and, in the process, construct novel ways to approach political problems. In this article, we argue that a paradigm has

begun to emerge which not only transcends disciplinary boundaries within the social sciences but also provides a bridge to the humanities. That paradigm is *narrative*.

Calling upon social psychologist Ted Sarbin's (1986a) classic statement of narrative as a "root metaphor" for psychology, we argue that narrative represents an ideal root metaphor for *political* psychology in its ability to resolve the analytic problem of linking mind and society. We suggest that Sarbin's (1986a) notion of a *narratory principle*—"that human beings think, perceive, imagine, and make moral choices according to narrative structures" (p. 8)—can be applied to an understanding of psychological phenomena of interest to political psychologists, including political cognition, decision making, ideological identification, collective beliefs and emotions, and motivation to engage in various forms of political behavior, including political violence. We do not suggest that narrative fully "explains" all of these phenomena and thus resolves all intellectual conundrums for political psychology. Rather, we claim that a coherent narrative paradigm resolves fundamental dilemmas for the scientific enterprise of political psychology and works against both fragmentation within this "hyphenated" discipline and its root disciplines of psychology and political science.

To develop this argument, we begin with two questions: What is narrative, and who needs it? We thus foreground our argument with a clear sense of how this concept has been used and why it is in fact useful. The bulk of the article then presents four key principles which we suggest ought to guide a narrative approach to research in political psychology. These principles speak to (a) the *social construction* of language, politics, and thought; (b) the need for *personal coherence* and *identity*; (c) the need for *collective solidarity* through shared meaning; and (d) the mediational and motivational role of language in social practice. We review the theoretical basis of each principle, as well as empirical work related to political psychology. In this conceptual integration, we suggest that narrative provides an ideal paradigmatic lens through which to consider thought, feeling, and action in political context.

Narrative: What Is It? Who Needs It?

For Jewish Israelis, 2008 marked the sixtieth anniversary of victory and independence (M. Bar-On, 2006); for Palestinians, 2008 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the *Nakba*, the catastrophic loss of the dream of national fulfillment (Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007). These divergent historical interpretations represent *narratives* that are reproduced through the discourse and cultural products of both societies, including educational materials (e.g., Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005), myth (e.g., Dalsheim, 2007), and commemorative practices (e.g., Zeruvabel, 1995). They are *stories* that frame the collective memory of young Israelis and Palestinians as they navigate the process of identity development in the midst of intractable conflict (Hammack, 2008, 2010b, 2011). How can we begin to understand the psychological consequences of political conflict without an appreciation for the role of such stories in the process of social reproduction?

In its simplest meaning, a narrative is a story—a "spoken or written account of connected events" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010). These accounts may occur in materials such as novels, films, textbooks, or other sites of discourse production (e.g., news media). Or they may occur in the speeches of leaders, the conversation of a community group, or the telling of an individual life story. Hence the idea of narrative transcends disciplinary boundaries in that these storied accounts are located at every level of analysis. They can be identified in the "raw data" of historians, literary critics, anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, and scholars in fields like education and cultural studies. As windows into mind and society, stories know no bounds, and it is precisely this inherent transdisciplinary nature of narrative that makes it an ideal root metaphor for political psychology.

In psychology, the idea of narrative began to captivate scholars in the 1980s with the emergence of several key publications (e.g., Cohler, 1982; Freeman, 1984; Gergen & Gergen, 1983; McAdams, 1988; Polkinghorne, 1988; Sarbin, 1986b). These early perspectives focused primarily on the

structure and function of individual life stories. In several key works, Bruner has argued that the narrative mode of thought is primary and that we interpret the social world through the construction of narratives (e.g., Bruner, 1986, 1990). This process of story-making links the individual mind to a social reality, with its particular cultural and political conditions. Bruner's (1990) notion of *cultural psychology* places the systematic study of cultural meaning-making through narrative as central (see also Hammack, 2008).

Since the 1990s, narrative research has increased exponentially in psychology. Clinical psychologists have used the concept of narrative to explain the therapeutic process (e.g., Hermans, 1999; Howard, 1991). Developmental psychologists have examined the way in which storytelling and autobiographical memory emerge in childhood and beyond (e.g., Fivush & Nelson, 2006; Nelson & Fivush, 2004; Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007), how memory-telling is connected to developmental processes (e.g., McLean, 2005; Thorne, 2000), how young adults experience ethnicity (e.g., Syed & Azmitia, 2008), and how narratives are used as positioning devices in social interaction (e.g., Bamberg, 2004). Social and personality psychologists have emphasized the way in which narrative represents a tool for creating a sense of self and identity (e.g., Freeman, 1997; Hammack, 2008; Josselson, 1996; McAdams, 1996, 2006; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Schiff, 2002), increasingly integrating analysis of cultural and contextual factors in the construction of self (e.g., Freeman, 1993; Freeman & Brockmeier, 2001; Hammack, 2008). In his analysis of narrative and identity, Hammack (2008) argued that narrative provides access to the current *structure* of identity (see also Sarbin, 1986a), revealing the ideological and experiential content of memory, as well as the motivational anchor for a set of social practices.

Just as psychologists have gradually expanded their focus beyond the role of narrative in individual functioning and development to consider the broader context in which stories are encountered and appropriated, so too have fields like political science, sociology, history, and anthropology begun to take a multilevel approach to narrative. For example, in reaction to the essentializing tendencies of "identity politics" around categories like race, sex, and gender, Somers (1994) suggested use of a concept of *narrative identity* to restore a sense of "time, space, and relationality" (p. 606) to considerations of identity. Her conception of narrative identity allows for an examination of structure and agency through an analysis of how social actors are positioned in relation to a "metanarrative" or "master narrative" (see also Fivush, 2010; Hammack, 2008, 2011). Suny (2001) called upon this theoretical approach in his analysis of the construction of "old histories for new nations" (i.e., primordialism). He suggested that while the state and its actors might construct these retrospective myths to legitimize a present national configuration, there is a process of *identification* that relies upon emotional and cognitive responses among subjects.

In this article, we link insights from disciplines like history and political science with the growing movement in psychology on the study of personal narratives (e.g., McLean, 2008). Central to our framework is the idea of *narrative engagement*—that members of a society engage with collective stories of what it means to inhabit a particular political entity, be it a nation-state, a resistance movement, or a political party. In other words, being Israeli or Japanese, a Tamil in Sri Lanka, a Kurd in Turkey, or a Democrat or Republican in the United States brings with it a larger story of the group's history, identity, and ideology. In this frame, identity is considered *dialogical* and rooted in the texts that individuals construct to make sense of their lives, which necessarily entails engagement with the texts of their cultural and political surround (see Bakhtin, 1981, 1984). But the internalization of a master narrative is not *given*, and political psychologists are uniquely positioned to query this process of narrative engagement.

The political psychology of narrative thus addresses two key questions that have captivated social scientists since at least the nineteenth century. First, how does social organization influence thought, feeling, and action? Second, within the constraints of that organization, how do individuals resist and attempt to reinvent the social order? A narrative approach is well-positioned to contribute

to both of these larger questions in its concern with story-making at multiple levels—the superordinate level of units like the nation-state, the level of community, and the level of individual subjectivity. At all of these levels, we gain access to processes that are social, cognitive, and motivational in nature in that the stories that are constructed and/or internalized provide interpretive anchors for individuals as they navigate a given political reality. Their response to this reality brings us directly to the study of mobilization and change (e.g., Meyer, 2006), or reproduction of the status quo. In tackling this ambitious agenda, political psychology elevates the relevance of its voice in and beyond the academy and, in the process, is poised to offer valuable new knowledge about the complex and dynamic relationship between context and mind.

The Politics of Stories: A Review and Conceptual Integration

Our central claim in this article is that narrative represents an ideal root metaphor for political psychology. We argue that the idea of narrative resolves the fundamental interdisciplinary dilemma of political psychology of how to conceptually and methodologically link mind and society (Smith, 1979, 1980). In this section, we sketch a framework that makes a narrative paradigm for political psychology explicit. As we outline this framework, we review the growing body of empirical work of interest to political psychologists that has been conducted through the prism of narrative. Although this work has begun to proliferate in a number of social science disciplines, as well as explicitly within political psychology, few studies cite one another, and they are published in an extremely diverse array of scholarly outlets. This suggests a level of fragmentation which, in our view, is undesirable. In proposing an integrative framework, we advocate that this critical line of work on the relationship between politics and mind be more explicitly anchored in political psychology.

We suggest that narrative can be defined at two levels. At the most proximal level, narrative describes a *cognitive process of meaning-making* (e.g., Bruner, 1990). Representing "an organizing principle for human action" (Sarbin, 1986a, p. 9), narrative describes the mental act of sense-making from the material of the empirical world (e.g., Bruner, 1987; Bruner & Haste, 1987). Story-making, however, occurs not only at the level of *individual* psychology, but also at the level of *social* psychology, which leads us to a multilevel definition of narrative.

The commemorative stories of 2008 for Israelis and Palestinians to which we earlier alluded do not represent *individual* historical interpretations. Rather, they reveal the relevance of narrative at the collective level. As opposed to residing *within* the mind, these narratives exist *in* the material world, such as school textbooks (e.g., Carretero, Jacott, & López-Manjón, 2002), and are embodied in cultural practice, such as commemorative celebrations (e.g., Bekerman, 2002). Individuals *engage* with these collectively constructed stories through their own cultural participation.

A conception of narrative for political psychology necessarily integrates these two levels of analysis by defining narrative as *the sensible organization of thought through language, internalized or externalized, which serves to create a sense of personal coherence and collective solidarity and to legitimize collective beliefs, emotions, and actions.* The content of this cognitive process is key to further elaboration and integration of a narrative approach, and we argue that the key components of it are anchored in beliefs about *social categories, collective memory*, and *social representations of history and collective identity*. Importantly, these beliefs gain motivational force through *affect*. Narrative is thus the underlying process that links individuals to political contexts.

Our conception of narrative is anchored in four principles. In our principle of *language, politics, and thought*, we argue that the mind is subject to a received discourse which brings with it political interests and functions. Rooted in a number of traditions within the social sciences, we suggest that the nature of word meanings and storylines fundamentally affects the way we think about the world, including its ideal norms for governance and intergroup relations (i.e., politics). The second principle we develop is the principal of *personal coherence.* Here we suggest that the mind seeks order in time

and place, hence a sense of continuity that can be provided through story-making. The third principle we suggest is the principal of *meaning in solidarity*. In advocating for the significance of this principle, we reject the notion that individuals represent self-contained psychological entities. Rather, we view the need for continuity not only within the person but also within the community of shared practice, whether that be termed the "culture," the "nation," or some other index of social identity. Finally, we suggest that a narrative approach embraces a principle of *mind in action*, by which we mean that processes of story-making and narrative engagement do not represent passive endeavors. Rather, we engage with a storied social ecology as we engage in social practice, and our relationship to that practice is *mediated by narrative*. In the sections that follow, we elaborate the theoretical and empirical basis of these principles.

Language, Politics, and Thought

At its core, a narrative approach to political psychology privileges the mutually constitutive relationship among language, thought, and social structure. Such an assumption advocates for an underlying theory of the mind as socially constructed and is anchored in the work of thinkers like George Herbert Mead, Lev Vygotsky, and Mikhail Bakhtin. Mead (1934), for example, argued that mind and self are the products of mediated social interaction. He says, "Mind arises through communication by a conversation of gestures in a social process or context of experience—not communication through mind" (p. 50). Such an approach reverses the presumed relationship between mind and society from the notion of a "bottom-up" process by which individual actors shape society through their mental powers to a "top-down" process by which minds themselves are produced through the social act.

Vygotsky's (1934/1962) notion of language as a key tool for human development through mediated social activity closely parallels Mead's ideas. He argued that we engage with "social speech" in the process of development and ultimately come to construct "inner speech" which mediates our practice in the material world. "Thought," Vygotsky (1934/1962) claims, "is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them" (p. 125). In other words, thought is produced through the process of coming to identify word meanings. A narrative approach embraces this idea that the content of consciousness is produced through the process of discerning word meanings.

Of critical import to political psychology is the idea that the meanings of words come to form a sense of *concepts* and *categories* that are understood through narrative. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue, "our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people" (p. 3). In their study of the use of language, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) reveal the way in which we use *metaphor* to make meaning of concepts, thus revealing the critical role of language in guiding thought and action.

Foucault's emphasis on *discourse* is worth some discussion in this regard, because he takes language and difference out of the illusion of power symmetry, revealing the way in which meanings serve particular political interests. His seminal work on the way in which discourse constructs the subject—most notably the "prisoner" (Foucault, 1977), the "insane" (Foucault, 1965), and the "homosexual" (Foucault, 1978)—revealed the way in which discourses of social categories emerge historically and construct the consciousness of subjects. Thus we cannot think of language as neutral vis-à-vis political and historical forces. Rather, it is embedded within a context of power and domination.

The idea of narrative *engagement*, however, suggests that individuals navigate a *polyphonic* context in which multiple storylines circulate and compete for dominance and primacy in individual appropriation (Bakhtin, 1984). Because political psychology inherently prescribes a multilevel approach to the person in context, it is uniquely positioned to interrogate the way in which individuals assume particular *voices* (Bakhtin, 1984) in their personal narratives that link to particu-

lar political interests in a given setting. In other words, political psychologists who assume a narrative approach are concerned with the coconstitutive nature of language, politics, and thought at both cultural and individual levels of analysis.

These theoretical perspectives are foundational to our framework in that they suggest that the form and content of narratives (either at the level of the individual or the collective) do not represent an intrinsic state but rather are "arbitrarily" constructed, in the sense that their meaning is not only relative but constituent of a particular *way of thinking* (see de Saussure, 1916/1972). What is of political significance, then, is the meaning that individuals make of the storied system of signification they have inherited and the extent to which they actively participate in it or challenge it (hence working for social and political change).

In political psychology, this link between politics and language has been most explicitly investigated through the lens of discursive psychology. The discursive approach, situated within the larger social constructionist movement (e.g., Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 1985, 1994, 1999), views conversation as a mechanism through which individuals create reality and legitimize their positions within it (e.g., Edwards, 1997; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). There are at least two distinct lines of empirical research of relevance to political psychology that assume this approach: (1) studies that examine the nature of political discourse and rhetoric, and (2) studies that examine social categories as rhetorically constructed.

Political Discourse Analysis

The first clear line of research that takes a linguistic approach to the relationship between politics and mind examines the content of political rhetoric directly, typically in the form of political speeches (e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 1996) or interviews with political officials (e.g., Weltman & Billig, 2001). The emphasis in this area of research is largely on the way in which leaders use stories to frame particular political issues and to motivate adherence to a particular political agenda.

Three studies illustrate a narrative approach to the analysis of political leaders' speeches. Reicher and Hopkins (1996) analyzed speeches made by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock to their respective parties about the 1984–85 miners' strike. Their analysis revealed that Thatcher depicted the strike as a conflict between the democratic principles underlying "Britishness" and the threat of terrorism posed by the strike's leaders. In contrast, Kinnock's speech depicted the strike as a conflict between a wide spectrum of groups in British society and Thatcher herself. Each leader depicted ingroup party representativeness as being as comprehensive as possible and outgroup representativeness as being as restricted as possible (see also Herrera & Reicher, 1998). Simply put, Thatcher and Kinnock crafted competing narratives in order to gain support for their agendas and relied upon the power of language to construct a particular cognitive and ideological lens for their audience.

Weltman and Billig (2001) analyzed the ideological discourse in interviews with 20 elected political leaders in England. They discovered that leaders constructed a discourse that sought to transcend the ideology of "left" versus "right," even as they maintained distinction through their affiliation with a particular political party. Their analysis of political rhetoric at a time of social change (with the rise of the "Third Way" in England) revealed the way in which political leaders seek to situate themselves within larger discourses by constructing personal narratives of political identity that correspond to these shifting storylines. Leaders constructed stories of their own personal ideological development that corresponded to the perceived popularity of a "postideological" political context. In this way, they used language to position themselves within a place of personal and social coherence oriented toward political advantage.

Leudar, Marsland, and Nekvapil (2004) analyzed speeches of George W. Bush, Tony Blair, and Osama bin Laden following the September 11, 2001 attacks. They argued that each figure distinguished "us" from "them" by constructing distinct narratives of ingroup and outgroup. Whereas Bush

and Blair made category distinctions based on social, political, and moral terms, bin Laden did so in religious terms. 9/11 was rendered an attack on the "civilized world" and "democratic principles" by Bush and Blair and a strike against the "enemies of God" by bin Laden. Leudar and colleagues (2004) argued that such categorizations justify past and future actions. Thus, a military response against bin Laden could be construed as an action in defense of not only the United States, but also the rest of the "civilized world."

Studies of the discourse of political leaders reveal the way in which narratives are constructed and presented to the populace to serve political interests. While this approach has become increasingly popular, an analysis of the way in which narratives of political leaders impact individual subjectivity remains unstudied. There is a need to empirically link these kinds of narrative analyses to the level of the individual mind through interrogating individual *responses* to these narratives. Nonetheless, these studies reveal the way in which political leaders assume a social constructionist position as they craft their own discourse.

Social Categories as Rhetoric

Foucault's historical analysis suggests that social categories not only construct a sense of subjectivity but are also connected to the political and historical conditions of a society (e.g., Foucault, 1978). Although not explicitly linked, this fundamental insight is relevant to social identity theory's emphasis on the relative status and meaning of social categories (e.g., Tajfel, 1981; see also Reicher & Hopkins, 2001a).

Research that applies the notion of discourse to social categorization in political contexts can be linked to these earlier social psychological paradigms. Yet, in many ways, this line of research is a response to the more static approach to social categorization and social identity that emphasizes "automatic" cognitive processes (Billig, 1985, 1987, 2003). These studies focus on social categorization as a *rhetorical* or narrative process and the way in which the social categories we inhabit are discursively constructed.

Potter and Reicher (1987) analyzed rhetorical constructions of the category of "community" in public (e.g., newspaper, radio, and television) and individual accounts of street disturbances involving police and community members in Bristol, England in 1980. They found that interpretations of the disturbances and solutions for prevention of future disturbances depended on whether the police were included within the social category of "community" or constructed as outgroup members. Thus perception of political events is intimately linked to how the boundaries of groups are discursively constructed.

Inspired by Billig's (1987) rhetorical notion of identity construction, Ullah (1990) examined narratives of second-generation Irish youth in England during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. He demonstrated how this unique group of youth negotiated the ideological conflict of their identity status through the appropriation and repudiation of some discourses over others. Youth alternated between identification with their Irish or English sense of social identity depending upon their "argumentative goals in dealing with . . . others" (p. 185). That is, their sense of social identity was dependent upon the context of social interaction, and the youth used language to alternate between identifications.

Herrera and Reicher (1998) extended this rhetorical approach to categorization beyond the level of individual cognition in their study of category constructions among pro- and anti-Gulf War respondents. They found that memorability of war-related images conformed to rhetorical constructions of pro- and antiwar political positions. Prowar participants found images that conformed to the construction of the war as one in which the civilized world confronted the figure of Saddam Hussein (e.g., images of allied soldiers) more memorable. Antiwar participants, by contrast, found images that conformed to the construction of the war as one propagated by special interests against common human interests (e.g., pictures of dead bodies) to be more memorable. This finding illustrates the rhetorical basis of social categories and their influence on perception.

In sum, our conception of narrative is rooted in the notion that the narrative mode of thought is fundamental to human cognition (Bruner, 1990). That is, we make sense of the social world through crafting storied accounts of our participation in it. This cognitive process is key to our ability to understand the past and predict future social events (Costabile & Klein, 2008). At the root of this proposition is a basic assumption about the relationship among language, thought, and social reality—an assumption that the meaning of words is both relative and arbitrary, all the while serving some political interest. The stuff of thought is made through our engagement with the world of meanings—our participation in a particular regime of signification. In short, *how* we think and *what* we think is rooted in the particular set of meaning-saturated signs and symbols we inherit in a given political setting.

The empirical work we reviewed in this section links to this fundamental assumption in the priority it accords the concept of political discourse and discourse about social categories. This work either explicitly or implicitly acknowledges a constructionist approach to language and thought, and the analyses provided in these studies illuminate the way in which political leaders utilize discursive strategies to advance their agendas (e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 1996). Studies that probe the discursive nature of social categories (e.g., Ullah, 1990) begin to take what we consider to be the next step in linking politics and mind—an interrogation of the way in which individuals use narrative to create a sense of personal and social meaning.

Politics and the Personal: Coherence and Identity

One of the most significant debates in the 1990s, with the explosion of the postmodern movement across the social sciences (e.g., Kvale, 1992), centered on the nature of the self and personal identity. Gergen (1991) posited a "saturated self" inherently fragmented in an age of destabilization. While Giddens's (1991) account of the psychological consequences of late modernity similarly emphasized the problem of ontological insecurity and existential uncertainty, he argued that there is a fundamental need to create a sense of meaning and coherence out of the muddle of social complexity. Thus Giddens (1991) seeks to link agency and structure in such a way as to fully consider intersubjectivity—an important theoretical move that challenges the radical perspectivalism of postmodern social theory.

Accepting the foundational argument of both Gergen (1991) and Giddens (1991) on the nature of contemporary social and political life, we believe a narrative approach is sympathetic to Giddens's (1991) interpretation of the individual response to fragmentation, threat, and identity destabilization (see Hammack, 2008; Kinnvall, 2004). Though we emphasize the role of narrative in the provision of coherence, it is important to note that narrative researchers are increasingly exploring issues of incoherence and rupture in the story-making processes (e.g., Hydén & Brockmeier, 2008). The *principle of personal coherence* that underlies our vision of narrative can be linked to William James' (1890) notion of *personal identity*.

James (1890) defined personal identity as "the consciousness of personal sameness" (p. 331). In his account, he assumed that human cognition is fundamentally characterized by the need to create coherence, order, and a sense of continuity. James' assumptions about the way in which personal identity provides an essential psychological sense of continuity in time and space through the mechanism of cognition underlie the narrative approach to identity in personality and social psychology (e.g., Hammack, 2008; McAdams, 1996). In the context of social and political complexity in an age of globalization, this process becomes increasingly intentional but no less pervasive or psychologically essential (Giddens, 1991; Hammack, 2008; McAdams, 1996, 1997).

Long before these debates about postmodernity and identity, though, Erik Erikson adopted this Jamesian view of personal identity and extended it to include a comprehensive analysis of the social and political context. While continuing to emphasize the role of a sense of self-sameness, Erikson

(1959) extended James's definition of identity to importantly include "a maintenance of an inner *solidarity* with a group's ideals and identity" (p. 109, italics in original). Erikson's analysis of the life histories of historically and politically significant figures, such as Martin Luther (Erikson, 1958) and Gandhi (Erikson, 1969), revealed the way in which particular political circumstances collide with individual experience to produce major social change. He illustrated how individuals are motivated to pursue particular paths of political action based on a need for meaning through identity, in terms of both individual and social psychology (i.e., the need for personal coherence and a sense of collective solidarity).

The perspectives of James and Erikson remain alive and well among scholars who study *narrative identity*. A key line of empirical study related to political psychology in which this area of inquiry has flourished has been on the relationship between national identity and personal identity. The emphasis in this work has been on how individuals construct *personal* narratives of identity that closely mirror larger *national* storylines, thus providing a sense of personal coherence and group solidarity.

This line of research on personal and national identity is conceptually similar to work on collective memory. But what is of most interest in this work is how personal discourse (e.g., Hammack, 2011) or discourse in interaction (e.g., Greenwalt, 2009) mirrors national narratives of history and identity to provide a sense of personal coherence. That is, researchers are interested in how elements of the *national* or collective storyline become part of *personal* narratives individuals construct to achieve a sense of self-sameness. This approach contrasts with studies of collective memory, in which a common goal is to probe individual interpretations of historical events and examine those interpretations in relation to the discourse of the state (e.g., Wertsch, 2002, 2008b).

Much of the theoretical emphasis in this work comes from the idea that nations represent "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983) which emerged in the transition from imperialism as the dominant mode of human social and political organization in the late nineteenth century (Hobsbawm, 1990). In order to create a sense of collective purpose and meaning, storylines of national identity were constructed, often anchoring themselves in a much longer historical connection to the distant past (Suny, 2001). Social psychologists have increasingly argued that national identity represents a highly salient index of social categorization (e.g., David & Bar-Tal, 2009; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001b), which brings with it numerous implications for psychological processes.

A recent example of this approach is illustrated in Hammack's (2009, 2010a, 2011) work with Israeli and Palestinian youth. Examining the personal narratives of youth, he revealed the ways in which the form, thematic content, and ideological setting of personal narratives closely mirrors national storylines. For example, his analysis of Jewish Israeli narratives revealed the way in which contemporary youth narrate redemptive life stories that appropriate the collective storyline of national redemption from the tragedy of the Diaspora and the Holocaust (Hammack, 2009). By contrast, Palestinian life stories assume a tragic form that appropriates the national narrative of collective loss and continued failure to achieve independence (Hammack, 2010a; see also Witteborn, 2007). Palestinian citizens of Israel narrate life stories that reveal the complexity of their "hyphenated" identities (Hammack, 2010c). Young Israelis and Palestinians thus call upon national storylines as they construct coherence in the midst of intractable conflict.

Byrne (2007) revealed how narrating what it means to be "English" was employed as a means of narrating the self among middle-class, white women in Great Britain. Constructing English national identity along gendered, racial, and class lines, participants embedded what it meant to be English in forms of living, personal histories, and everyday routines. Through their engagement with what it meant to be "English," the participants were able to construct a coherent collective identity within a multicultural British society.

As Reicher and Hopkins (2001b) argue, nationhood is the predominant form of social organization to the extent that it is viewed as a natural rather than as a social fact. Studies that use narrative

to examine the relationship between national and personal identity illustrate this point by revealing the way in which individuals use language to situate themselves within a larger discursive context. This research suggests that individuals appropriate discourses of the nation-state as they strive to make meaning and coherence out of a complex social and political reality. The empirical work in this area is only beginning to emerge. We suggest that the emergence of this line of research is indicative of the kind of multilevel analysis that a narrative approach can prescribe. In all of these studies, an analysis of discourse at both the individual and the national-cultural level is undertaken.

In sum, we suggest that a key assumption of the narrative approach is that individuals use narrative to create a sense of personal coherence. Through story-making about events either lived or collectively imagined (Anderson, 1983), individuals respond to the threat of identity uncertainty and fragmentation (Giddens, 1991; Hammack, 2008; Kinnvall, 2004). For political psychologists, the emerging empirical work on the relationship between personal and national identity offers an example of the use of a narrative approach in action. Politics is linked to the personal through the process of engagement with narratives about the nation and its imagined past—a process that is revealed in analyses of individual life stories (e.g., Hammack, 2011) and the use of discourse in interaction (e.g., Greenwalt, 2009).

Meaning in Solidarity: Memory and Representation

Research linking the personal and the political through narrative reveals the way in which individuals strive to create coherence out of discursive complexity. This coherence does not occur within a self-contained individual. Rather, the mind is embedded within a social ecology of discourse, and the coherence provided through narrative is one of *social coherence*. In other words, the meaning provided through narrative speaks to a fundamental human need for collective solidarity—a need to not only see oneself as largely "the same" from one day to the next (James, 1890) but also to see oneself as engaged in a cognitive process that is *the same as others* within a particular time and place.

This idea can be linked to Durkheim's (1893/1984) emphasis on "collective consciousness": "The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own. It can be termed the collective or common consciousness" (pp. 38–39). Thus there is a need for continuity of the mind not only within a single individual over time but also *across minds* at a single moment in time and space. We suggest that this principle of *meaning in solidarity* is fundamental to a narrative approach in political psychology.

Collective Memory

A fundamental premise of our approach is that narratives operate not only at the level of individual psychology but also at the collective (Bar-Tal, 2000; Hammack, 2008). Just as the personal narrative of identity provides a sense of continuity, the collective narratives with which we engage provide a sense of group meaning. This meaning derives from a direct engagement with stories that convey *collective memory*—stories about historical moments in a group's existence.

Probably the earliest theoretical statement on collective memory was proposed by Maurice Halbwachs. Strongly influenced by Durkheim's contention that the individual unit of analysis was of less import than the social or collective, Halbwachs (1992) argued that "no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections" (p. 43) and "at the moment of reproducing the past our imagination remains under the influence of the present social milieu" (p. 49). Thus, for Halbwachs, an analysis of the social context of collective memory is essential, including its relevance to the collective needs of the present. At a time when the workings of memory were predominantly interpreted through the lens of individual psychological wishes and drives (e.g., Freud, 1899/1955), Halbwachs radically shifted the lens from the individual to the social basis of memory.

Though Halbwachs provided the initial legitimacy for this line of study, his focus on the group as the unit of analysis inhibits the kind of integrative work on narrative and collective memory of greatest relevance to political psychology. Thus most empirical work in this area recognizes Halbwachs' contribution but calls upon other theoretical frameworks to examine the relationship between individual and social memory (for review, see Hirst & Manier, 2008; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008).

One of the most prolific areas of narrative study linking psychological and political phenomena is concerned with the way in which stories serve to construct collective identity through the transmission of collective memory and the creation of myths that support that memory (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2007; David & Bar-Tal, 2009; Hammack, 2008). In this frame, narratives represent the institution-alization of social memory into a coherent story that either maintains the political status quo or provides legitimacy for resistance (e.g., Fivush, 2010). Thus, for example, the narrative of Jewish victimization in the Holocaust legitimizes the continued military occupation of Palestinian territory (Bar-On & Sarsar, 2004) and influences the beliefs about security considered central to Israeli national psychology (Bar-Tal, 1998b, 2000). At the more material level, Brockmeier's (2002) analysis of the Nazi book-burning memorial in Berlin reveals the way in which a physical site represents a text of social memory. Again, however, a central point of analysis often overlooked by social scientists is the *individual engagement* with these larger stories.

Cole (2003) suggested that what is often missing in such approaches to narrative and memory is a conception of agency or an account of how and why individuals appropriate social memory. In her study of memories of the Malagasy anticolonial rebellion of 1947 in Madagascar, she argues that individuals' appropriation of particular narrative accounts of the collective past can be interpreted according to the social and political needs of the present. But these needs by no means apply to all members of a national entity. Rather, they vary according to the particular "moral projects" (Taylor, 1989) that shape the concerns of cultural participants—"local visions of what makes a good, just community" (p. 99). Thus Cole (2003) found that distinctions of collective memory of the rebellion based on the local context of political concern explain why particular narratives are embraced by some individuals and not others. This local context is defined by both place (e.g., urban versus rural) and time (i.e., generation-cohort). Cole found that the historical, material, and political location of individuals accounted for differences in narrative appropriation.

Wertsch's (2002, 2008a, 2008b) studies of collective memory in post-Soviet Russia examined the relationship between official state narratives and individual accounts. Using Bakhtin's (1984) notion of multiple voices within a narrative, he illustrated how adults who lived in the Soviet regime for most of their lives constructed narratives of World War II that closely appropriated the voice of the state (Wertsch, 2008b). By contrast, the narratives of youth revealed an engagement with these state narratives that is more locally influenced and less infused with the state voice. Nevertheless, Wertsch (2008b) argued that a "schematic narrative template" which positioned the war in terms of the "expulsion of foreign enemies" was common to both generations he interviewed, thus suggesting a common underlying appropriation of a master narrative of the war.

As the work of Cole (2003) and Wertsch (2008a, 2008b) reveals, collective memory is key to the politics of nation-building (see also Muro, 2009). History education plays a major role in the formation of national identity (Korostelina, 2008). Thus, an expanding line of research examines the institutional sites at which individuals engage with specific *texts* of collective memory within the context of the education system, particularly within contexts of conflict (e.g., Bekerman, Zembylas, & McGlynn, 2009). Bar-Tal (1998a) found that Israeli history textbooks focus on Jewish victimiza-tion, unity, and security, while providing a positive depiction of Jewish Israelis and a negative depiction of Arabs. Although strengthening Jewish Israeli identity in the midst of conflict, such narratives may actually help perpetuate conflict (see Podeh, 2002).

Efforts have been made to bridge Jewish Israeli and Palestinian historical narratives of the conflict and to construct a textbook that legitimizes both. Adwan and Bar-On (2004) described

efforts by Jewish Israeli and Palestinian teachers to create a joint history textbook in the midst of the second Intifada. This textbook incorporated Jewish Israeli and Palestinian narratives of the Balfour Declaration, 1948, and the first Palestinian Intifada. The development of the textbook reflects an understanding of the role of *texts* of memory in conflict settings, as well as their potential role in conflict amelioration.

Zembylas and Bekerman (2008) integrated an approach to collective memory and the nation-state with an analysis of political challenge in their study of "dangerous memories" in the history curriculum of Cyprus and Israel. They define "dangerous memories" as "those memories that are disruptive to the status quo, that is, the hegemonic culture of strengthening and perpetuating existing group-based identities" (p. 125). They suggest that such memories can provide students the opportunity to critically interrogate assumptions about "fixed" or "essentialized" versions of history and identity. Bekerman and colleagues (2009) suggest that essentialized notions of identity are particularly common across sites of intractable political conflict and particularly problematic for the resolution of conflicts. Through an ethnographic analysis of the integration of dangerous memories in history curricula in Israel and Cyprus, Zembylas and Bekerman (2008) suggested that there are clear openings for the acknowledgment of past collective trauma in ways that still challenge the use of those trauma narratives to maintain hegemonic relations between groups. Thus education provides a site of resistance and reconfiguration of state-sponsored narratives that maintain a status quo through its ability to problematize official versions of memory.

As research on the role of historical narrative in educational materials in Israel suggests, stories of collective memory serve particular political interests for constructing and maintaining identity, as well as establishing clear *differentiations* among social categories (e.g., "Jewish" versus "Arab"; see Bar-Tal, 1996). At least two other empirical efforts to examine this process in other national settings deserve review. First, Carretero and colleagues (2002) compared the narratives of 1492 in Spanish and Mexican textbooks. They found important distinctions between these narratives, centering on whether events were described as "discovery" (in Spanish textbooks) or "encounter" (in Mexican textbooks), and they argued that these official narratives of history link to present-day national identity concerns.

Another important study in this area is Buckley-Zistel's (2009) analysis of history education after the Rwandan genocide. She analyzed the current government discourse about history teaching to argue that the state is seeking to write a new narrative of "ethnic history" to transcend past divisions. A key part of this narrative is the idea that ethnicity only emerged as a salient category in Rwanda with the colonial encounter. Thus there is a present-day attempt to institutionalize collective memory through history education, using narrative to achieve political ends for unification.

Research suggests, however, that students are not merely passive recipients of the official memory conveyed in history textbooks. For example, Goldberg, Porat, and Schwarz (2006) found that student narratives of the "Great Aliyah" (i.e., massive immigration) to Israel in the 1950s diverged considerably from official accounts of the event. Student narratives depicted the assimilationist immigration policy of the time as oppressive and problematic in contrast to the official narrative that portrayed the absorption of immigrants as a redemptive and altruistic act by the Israeli state.

Porat (2004) examined engagement with collective memory through narrative among Jewish Israeli secondary school students. Students provided a narrative account of a 1920 violent event between Jews and Arabs and were subsequently exposed to the official Israeli historical narrative of the event in a textbook. One year later, they provided another narrative account of the event. Narratives of the event were influenced by the particular community within Israel from which the students hailed (i.e., secular vs. religious). That is, the narratives youth provided over time were highly dependent on the particular social memory to which they were exposed in their everyday lives, as well as the current political mood within the country.

Porat's (2004) study illustrates how youth are not passive recipients of collective memory. Rather, their engagement with historical narratives is complex and not uniform. This approach is

particularly suitable for the kind of paradigmatic approach we advocate because it interrogates *both* the institutional context of narrative and the agency individuals exert as they navigate their storied surround. This study, like Cole's (2003) study in Madagascar, does not assume a linear relationship between national identity and the process of narrative engagement. Rather, it reveals the way in which collective memory is always in a fragile place of appropriation and repudiation.

Though the primary focus of work on narrative and collective memory has concerned national identity-making, scholars have begun to focus on the role of narrative in constructing other forms of subjectivity. Rivkin-Fish (2009) examined the role of memory in constructing class subjectivity in Russia. She demonstrated how contemporary middle-class Russians use narratives of the Soviet past to legitimize emerging inequalities in the post-Soviet era, thus illustrating how historical narratives can be linked to economic interests. Kuroiwa and Verkuyten (2008) illustrated how leaders and members of a group fighting for political autonomy on the border of Thailand and Burma use narrative to try to construct a common ethnic identity, thus seeking to frame their political movement in a discourse of ethnonationalism.

In sum, our conception of narrative is anchored in the notion that the process of narration is inherently *social* and speaks to a fundamental need for collective meaning. The most prolific line of research calling upon this principle focuses on the study of collective memory, embodied in narratives generated by individuals about historical events (e.g., Cole, 2003) and in official documents that seek to inculcate a particular historical narrative (e.g., textbooks; Carretero et al., 2002). While studies reveal the way in which individuals are subject to particular narratives that serve political interests, there is an emerging consensus among empirical work in this area on collective memory as a social process. That is, studies that link levels of analysis reveal a process of dynamic engagement with narratives of collective memory, as opposed to a static, linear account of the relationship between social memory and individual subjectivity. Thus political subjects are viewed as active social meaning-makers whose appropriation of particular narratives over others offers insight into the political trajectory of a society.

Social Representations

A second line of theoretical and empirical work that speaks to the role of narrative in the provision of collective meaning focuses on *social representations*. According to Moscovici (1988), social representations ". . . concern the contents of everyday thinking and the stock of ideas that gives coherence to our religious beliefs, political ideas and the connections we create as spontaneously as we breathe" (p. 214). As such, social representations provide individuals with a way of making sense of socially significant phenomenon (Howarth, 2006).

Moreover, social representations involve the elaboration of a social object by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating (Moscovici, 1963) and thus exist both "in the world" and within the individual psyche (Moscovici, 1988). Thus, social representations provide a conceptual framework for understanding the link that exists between the individual and the social (Howarth, 2006; Moscovici, 1989). Like the narrative approach we advocate, social representations theory emphasizes processes of meaning-making and the fundamental link between context and mind.

According to Liu and Hilton (2005), social representations of history serve a crucial role in the development of group identity. At the national level, social representations of history are woven into a temporal form and serve as narratives that inform members about who they are, where they come from, and where they are going. Social representations of history act as a "symbolic reserve" that can be drawn upon depending on their relevance to present needs (Liu & Atsumi, 2008; Liu & Hilton, 2005). Narratives of history can thus be used to strengthen and/or position national and ethnic identities in relation to others.

In terms of strengthening identities, Hong, Wong, and Liu (2001) found that historical narratives of war, regardless of whether they involve one's group, can strengthen ethnic identity. Hong Kong

Chinese undergraduates were presented a slideshow about the Sino-Japanese War or the involvement of New Zealand soldiers in World War II. Accompanying the slideshow were audio-recorded narratives describing each war or, in the control condition, the aesthetics of the images presented. Exposure to war narratives generated significantly more thoughts about ethnic groups and led participants to attribute more importance to their Chinese ethnic identities regardless of whether the images depicted the Sino-Japanese War or the New Zealand soldiers. Historical narratives containing social representations of war thus appear to serve as a means of strengthening ethnic identification in generally (Hong et al., 2001).

In terms of positioning identities, Sibley, Liu, Duckitt, and Khan (2008) explored the role of historical narratives in legitimizing social inequality in New Zealand. Among New Zealanders of European descent, they found that the adoption of narratives negating the relevance and/or legitimacy of historical injustices was correlated with opposition to bicultural social policies for indigenous Maoris. Moreover, after experimentally manipulating exposure to narrative type, they found that presenting an injustice-negating narrative decreased support for resource-specific bicultural policies among liberal-voting participants. Thus, narratives that negate past injustices may serve as a legitimizing myth (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) for status differentials between groups.

Social representations of history can also be used to construct narratives that seem to reconcile past injustices. Tileagă (2009) analyzed a report commissioned by the Romanian government that condemned the country's communist period. He argued that the report's intention to "come to terms" with the past centered on the construction of a particular social representation of Romania's communist period. This representation identified the communist past as a matter of public concern, portrayed communism as a bounded category associated with criminality and violence, and situated communism as something that occurred in the past. Through this representation, the condemnation of Romania's communist history became a feature in the present constitution of Romanian national identity. As Tileagă's (2009) study illustrates, social representations of history play a crucial part in the political projects of nations trying to reconcile their pasts.

In sum, in this section we have suggested that individuals engage with collective forms of meaning through texts of collective memory and social representations of history. We suggest that the concept of narrative importantly links these disparate lines of theoretical and empirical work and provides a conceptual vocabulary that provides greater specificity for empirical research. Many of the studies reviewed in this section embody an important shift in interdisciplinary approaches to narrative. They inherently adopt a multilevel approach in which political discourse is mapped in official texts of memory, such as state historical accounts, and linked to an analysis of individual engagement with those texts (e.g., Cole, 2003; Porat, 2004). Such studies do not assume a linear relationship between master and personal narratives of historical events and, in fact, interrogate the variability in appropriation of master narratives. They seek to transcend the divide between structure and agency by conceiving of individuals as political actors whose motivations to reproduce or repudiate various versions of social memory must be probed. And as many of these studies reveal, such an approach to narrative research moves beyond mere description to provide a window into politically transformative possibilities, such as critical pedagogy around history (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008). In the next section, we examine the explicit connection between narrative and social practice.

From Mind to Action: Social Practice, Emotion, and Narrative

Thus far our integrative account of narrative has emphasized the *what* of narrative—its content and manifestation at both the individual and collective level. This emphasis privileges the primacy of cognition in some ways. But our conception is rooted in a constructionist approach to mind and society. Hence narratives must be viewed not simply as processes or products of cognition but rather simultaneously as the *mediated activity* of social practice itself. This view of narrative in action takes

us from the *what* of narrative to the *how*. Specifically, how does narrative as practice speak to possibilities of political transformation? How do stories motivate particular forms of social practice, and how are stories called upon to legitimize political action?

The fourth key principle we advocate for a narrative approach in political psychology posits that it is through *mediated activity*, or *social practice*, that our mental processes occur. Our engagement with the material world and its received social structure is mediated through the prism of narrative. Here we again link to the pioneering theory of Vygotsky (1978), who argued, after Marx, that consciousness is shaped by the tools we use as we engage with the material world (see also Wertsch, 1991, 1998). Language represents one of these tools, and narrative represents an organization of language to convey a particular meaning (Bruner, 1990). But in extending this view beyond cognition, we suggest that it is in the relationship between *affect* and *cognition* that the motivational basis of stories can be identified. The embodiment of narratives in particular forms of practice is thus saturated with emotion, and we suggest a primary role for emotion in the process of narrative engagement.

In this view of the relationship among thought, feeling, and action, the mind is produced in the social act (Mead, 1934). In other words, *thinking, feeling,* and *doing* are inextricably reciprocal. What concerns us, though, is the way in which particular forms of social activity mandate forms of story-making. To be more concrete, how do particular political processes, like major political events or social change, call upon forms of narrative to create a kind of intelligibility for mediated social practice? How do political ruptures become sensible through attempts at narrative intelligibility, whether among individuals or political leaders? And, in the opposite vein, how might narrative be used for politically transformative ends in settings of an unjust status quo? Finally, what role does emotion assume in these processes?

At least four lines of empirical research on narrative begin to shed light on the mediational properties—and transformative possibilities—of narrative. One line of research reveals narrative as a tool for sense-making in the context of major social and political change. A second line of research focuses on narrative in the political reconciliation process. In the third line of research, the transformative power of narrative is revealed in studies that illustrate the position of subordinate or subaltern individuals and groups. Finally, an emerging emphasis on the role of emotion in political processes reveals a key motivational mechanism in the process of narrative engagement.

Narratives of Political and Social Change

A key window into the mediational nature of narrative exists in studies of how social and political ruptures are storied. One area of study has focused on the use of social memory for protest and resistance within a particular political order (for review, see Meyer, 2006; Polletta, 1998a). Studies in this area have examined how leaders of social movements attempt to construct collective memory through narrative for mobilization. For example, Covin (1997) illustrated how the Black Consciousness Movement in Brazil made use of narrative and social memory to motivate individuals to work against the status quo. Polletta (1998b) revealed how a narrative of student sit-in activities in the 1960s emerged as a force for collective identity and mobilization.

The most significant work on narrative and social/historical change within political psychology has been conducted by Molly Andrews. Her study of British social activists examined their lifelong commitment to political change through an analysis of personal narratives (Andrews, 1991). Critically interrogating Western conceptions of identity, aging, and the life course, she illustrated how social activists maintain a strong sense of purpose through their interpretations of the social and political change they have sought to achieve. She extended this general approach linking personal narrative and political change to an analysis of East Germans after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Andrews, 1997, 1998).

This key line of research on the interrelations of the personal and the political through narrative culminated in Andrews' 2007 book, *Shaping History: Narratives of Political Change,* in which she reviewed the studies in England and East Germany as well as two other key projects: one on narrative

responses to 9/11 in the United States and one on the use of stories in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of post-apartheid South Africa. In all of these studies, Andrews focuses on the way in which political subjects use narrative to create historical interpretations that, consistent with theoretical accounts in social and personality psychology, create a sense of purpose and meaning for individuals (e.g., McAdams, 1997). Yet her analysis goes beyond a focus on personal coherence by illustrating the way in which personal narratives are linked to social practice, revealing the union of thought and action through narrative.

At least three other projects exemplify the use of narrative to study political change. Charlick-Paley and Sylvan (2000) applied Pennington and Hastie's (1986) approach to story construction in decision making to an analysis of former Soviet and French military officers' accounts of the loss of Eastern Europe and Indochina, respectively. Using evidence from the narratives of these officers and corresponding media narratives, they suggested that military personnel formulated new stories to adapt to changing political contexts—stories that justify the change in status. In other words, the military officers came to internalize the state's narrative of the need to abandon these territories for the larger national interest, in spite of the fact that most military officers previously strongly opposed withdrawal from these territories. This study illustrates the way in which agents of state power use narrative to justify their own changes in position vis-à-vis political issues.

Daiute and Turniski's (2005) study of youth narratives in postwar Croatia revealed how individuals engage with stories of political change in ways that serve their momentary social and psychological interest. Unlike the previous generation of Serbs and Croats, the youth in this study narrated intergroup similarity and harmony in direct contrast to the identity polarization of the war. While they recognized the emotional and material legacy of the war among adults, the narratives of these youth suggested a future orientation to intergroup relations that emphasized equality and collective solidarity.

Brockmeier (2008) illustrated the challenge of eye witnesses to the 9/11 tragedy in New York to find words to narrate the meaning of their experience. Their stories revealed the experience of an "exceptional" moment referring to a collective loss of safety and certainty. In other words, their narratives reflected the historical rupture of 9/11—its discontinuity with their political and cultural understandings of present and future. Brockmeier (2008) examined use of linguistic devices such as metaphor to interpret the trauma of 9/11, suggesting that trauma can create a "breakdown of narrativity" (p. 34) through the representational gap between experience and language.

Studies that focus on the narration of social and political change are inherently multilevel in their concern for the way in which political subjects make meaning of change. In some cases, the emphasis of analysis is their own participation in making social change (e.g., Andrews, 1991). In other cases, studies are more concerned with how individuals respond to and reflect shifting storylines about politics and intergroup relations (e.g., Daiute & Turniski, 2005) or politically traumatic events (e.g., Brockmeier, 2008). Two important areas of inquiry take these concerns a step further and explicitly examine the narrative basis of the political reconciliation process and the transformative power of narrative for subordinated groups.

Narratives of Political Reconciliation

Scholars of conflict resolution and peace studies have increasingly argued for the centrality of narrative in reconciliation processes. Based on the idea that conflicts are framed in terms of polarized, negatively interdependent narratives (Bar-Tal, 2007; Hammack, 2008; Kelman, 1999; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998), such scholars suggest that reconciliation and integration of collective narratives is a necessary step on the path to political resolution (Auerbach, 2009; Salomon, 2004). This approach has been advocated in several contexts of political conflict, including between Israelis and Palestinians (e.g., D. Bar-On, 2006), Japanese and Chinese (e.g., Liu & Atsumi, 2008), and groups within South Africa (e.g., Moon, 2006).

In spite of the recent proliferation of perspectives that advance a narrative approach to reconciliation, few empirical studies in this area have been conducted. An early exception is Andrews's (1999) study of the personal narratives of individuals who had been involved in political resistance in East Germany. She conducted interviews with these individuals in the context of the formation of East Germany's "truth commission" following the fall of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Her analysis of the complexities of the forgiveness process highlighted the challenges of mutual recognition of historical events and power asymmetries, and her use of narrative methods to provide a window into this process revealed the meaning individuals made of major political changes.

The work of "truth commissions" largely represents an effort to reconstruct national narrative and collective memory. Andrews (2003) contrasted the nature of this process in East Germany and South Africa, suggesting that the role of the truth commission in each society differed. In East Germany, the truth commission was necessary to forge a new common historical memory, though this process silenced those for whom resistance was not central to their daily lives. In South Africa, the TRC was more closely connected to the nation-building role of narrative. Thus the commission was largely concerned with the construction of a common national identity for a fragmented society.

At the level of individual psychology, a narrative approach to political reconciliation provides critical access to the meaning individuals make of major political transformations, particularly when there is a need to reconceptualize firmly held beliefs about historical events. At the level of social psychology, a narrative approach reveals the way in which societies and political leaders use institutions like "truth commissions" to forge solidarity and to maintain a sense of social coherence in political transitions. At both levels, the implication is that narratives *mediate* the relation between the material reality and forms of action.

At the individual level, the use of storytelling approaches within the context of intergroup contact has been described by Dan Bar-On (2006) and Salomon (2004). In this approach, members of conflicting groups share personal stories, with the ultimate goal to develop a common narrative of the conflict (Albeck, Adwan, & Bar-On, 2002; D. Bar-On, 2006). Within this framework, individual narratives are viewed as situated in the collective narrative of the conflict. Thus, changes in the former are viewed as a means of bringing about changes in the latter (Albeck et al., 2002).

Within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the implementation of the storytelling approach encounters mutually exclusive claims of victimhood (Bar-On & Sarsar, 2004) and strict victim-perpetrator dichotomies (Bargal, 2004). Nevertheless, after applying the storytelling approach within the context of intergroup dialogue, Bar-On and Kassem (2004) found that the sharing of personal and family narratives enabled Jewish Israeli and Palestinian participants to transcend strict "us" versus "them" dichotomies (cf. Hammack, 2006). Specifically, participants were able to incorporate aspects of the other group's narrative into their personal narrative. Therefore, according to the authors, the sharing of personal stories facilitated acknowledgment and legitimization of the other group's narrative.

According to Rouhana (2004), reconciliation at the societal level entails recognition of historical injustices. Exploring this issue within the context of Chinese-Japanese relations, Liu and Atsumi (2008) contended that peace-making among Chinese and Japanese societies is related to psychological issues like social representations of historical conflict, specifically with regard to the Sino-Japanese War and World War II, as well as symbolic processes of apology and forgiveness. They proposed a framework for reconciliation based in the indigenous psychology of East Asia and a symbolic approach to mutual recognition of historical narratives.

As this brief review suggests, there is significant optimism among scholars of conflict resolution and peace studies on the potential role of narrative to contribute to political reconciliation. Unfortunately, though, there is very little empirical work in this area. The conceptual and empirical work that has been done in this area clearly (though often implicitly) calls upon a view of narrative as a mediator between structure and agency, particularly at the level of the individual. That is, just as

storied accounts legitimize a particular social order of war and conflict (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2007; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998), they also can be used to work for a reformulation of thought and action among political subjects (e.g., Salomon, 2004). Hence the reconciliation process necessarily relies upon a reconfiguration of stories at the collective level, while also a space for the dissemination of personal stories that legitimize the need for political change (e.g., Andrews, 2003; D. Bar-On, 2006).

The Transformative Voice of Narrative

As we have suggested, an appeal of the narrative approach is its ability to transcend the simplistic account of structure *versus* agency that plagues the social sciences. Scholars in fields like anthropology and sociology, following theorists like Marx and Durkheim, often privilege the power of structure over agency, while psychologists (outside of social psychology) often rely upon a model of the person as largely self-contained. A narrative paradigm inherently rejects this dichotomy in favor of an analysis of the space *between* these forces—the world of mediated social practice in narrative engagement.

An important line of work highlights narratives as tools for political transformation and speaks to the possibility of narrative to respond to structural inequities. Personal and collective narratives can thus become resources for empowerment and social change (Ledwith, 2005; Rappaport, 1995). Andrews's (1991) study of social activists in England offers a good example. The narratives of her participants provided both legitimacy and a sense of meaning and purpose to the political struggles with which they were intimately engaged, including advocacy for equal rights based on class and gender. Couto's (1993) study of civil rights leaders in the U.S. South also exemplifies research designed to highlight narratives as politically transformative. He interviewed over 50 local civil rights leaders from 1978 to 1988 to illustrate the way in which narratives serve as mobilization devices for political change. Narratives can thus serve as anchors of resistance and provide a sense of collective agency.

The use of narrative to reveal the experience of social injustice and structural inequality, including gender subordination (Andrews, 2002, 2006), is increasingly being undertaken. Two examples of this work include Marakowitz's (1996) study of women's political agency in Finland and Skjelsbæk's (2006) study of rape victims during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Marakowitz (1996) related the limits of political agency experienced by Finnish women to their participation in the construction of the Finnish national narrative. Although active participants in its construction, this narrative stressed gender interdependence and the role of women as nurturers and caregivers. As a result, political participation of women in Finland was legitimized but circumscribed to matters related to domestic issues.

Skjelsbæk (2006) analyzed the personal narratives of rape victims following the Bosnian war, guided by a commitment to providing voice to the trauma of this experience. She argued that the experience of sexual violence revealed a dual-identity assault for these women in its connection to the identity-based conflict that underlied the war. Thus these women were targets in terms of both *ethnicity* and *gender*. In terms of ethnic identity, women largely narrated a "survivor" story, while they narrated a "victim" story in terms of their gender. The postwar context offered a political setting for them to construct narratives that redeemed the assault on their ethnic identity, yet their narratives retained the powerful trauma of the sexual violence. This type of analysis reveals the strategies women use to cope with the sexual violence that often accompanies war, and Skjelsbæk's narrative approach provides a direct window into the complexity of meaning that these women made of their trauma.

Narrative research that explicitly aims to provide transformative voice directly integrates an analysis of power and intergroup relations, based most frequently on gender though increasingly often on other indices of identity, including sexual identity and national identity. Crawley and Broad (2004) examined the transformative role of storytelling among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals (see also Blackburn, 2009; Hammack & Cohler, 2009). Through their

ethnography of LGBT presentation panels in classes and organizations, the authors suggested that LGBT individuals use stories to both refute stereotypes and to construct a coherent social movement for political equality. In this way, their use of narrative is consistent with notions of transformative voice (Sampson, 1993).

Witteborn's (2007) study of Palestinian identity provides an example of the transformative approach on issues related to national or cultural identity. Since the majority of Palestinians remain stateless inhabitants of military occupation (Gordon, 2008), they occupy a unique subaltern identity status (Khalidi, 1997). In Witteborn's (2007) study, Palestinian participants expressed national identity through personal stories that conveyed themes of dislocation, division, and resistance. She illustrated how the narration of Palestinian national identities became a means of appeal for mobilization of the audience for social change.

Narratives not only provide a sense of solidarity within a single national community working for political change but also within transnational social movements. For example, Nepstad (2001) illustrated the use of narrative as a unifying tool in the U.S.-Central America peace movement. She analyzed the deployment of the life story of Salvadoran Archbishop Romero among disparate communities in Central America and the United States to construct a coherent and unified social movement.

In sum, studies that examine the power of narrative to work for political transformation implicitly position the story-making process as a mediator between thought and action and, more important, as a motivational force for social and political change. They recognize the power of language and discourse not just to describe but also to provoke new forms of activity or practice (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). Narrative research in this tradition thus seeks to link forms of subjectivity with transformative action at both the level of the individual and collective. An important question is not addressed in this work, however. Simply put, *why* do narratives motivate particular forms of action? That is, what do stories provoke to motivate individuals to participate in a social or political movement? To address this question, we turn to the increasing line of narrative research on the role of emotion in politics.

Emotion and the Politics of Narrative

The relationship among thought, feeling, and action has been a major focus of study in psychology at least since James's (1890) well-known theory of emotion. He argued that physiological sensations are an essential component of the experience of emotion and are closely connected to our interpretation of events (what he termed "perception"). Scholars of narrative have increasingly suggested that emotions are central to the story-making process (e.g., Singer, 1995). In his claim that the emotional life is storied, Sarbin (1995) argued that individuals develop "patterned rhetorical actions that contribute to one's moral identity" (p. 218). That is, they respond to "the unvoiced question: 'What am I in relation to the Good?'" (p. 219). Affect is thus central to the actions individuals take within the discursive limits of a given surround. The internalization of a particular voice requires an *identification* with and *idealization* of that voice, which can be explained through the concept of emotion. Narratives are thus intrinsically provocative. They evoke sentiments that correspond to the ideals individuals come to hold about a given social reality.

In this frame, narrative engagement is a process of dialogic encounter with some cultural setting—some community of shared practice. But it is not a *neutral* encounter in the sense that it is affectively saturated and oriented toward some collective or personal notion of "morality" (Haste & Abrahams, 2008). The stories individuals develop to fulfill fundamental needs for both personal and social coherence are best understood as morality tales—stories that speak to individual and collective perceptions of an ideal social reality. In this dialogic view, actors are always inhabiting particular *positions* vis-à-vis moral discourses (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991; Haste & Abrahams, 2008). The

task, then, for political psychologists is to map the emotional canvas upon which stories circulate and are appropriated or repudiated.

Few studies have directly examined the relationship among emotion, narrative, and politics. Most have focused on the emotional content of narratives in times of war and conflict. Zarowsky's (2000, 2004) research on Somali returnees in Ethiopia in the mid-1990s revealed the way in which narratives of dispossession were infused with anger toward the actions of local, national, and global institutions. She suggested that a narrative approach to understanding the trauma of these individuals better speaks to their lived experience than the framework of "post-traumatic stress disorder."

Zembylas has written extensively about the politics of affect, particularly in settings of political conflict. Using his studies of educational practice in Cyprus as an example, he argued that the affect intrinsic to narratives in conflict settings—affect closely related to the trauma of conflict and war—can be deployed to work for reconciliation in educational settings (e.g., Zembylas, 2007, 2008). Zembylas and Ferreira (2009) illustrated the use of personal storytelling in the classroom as a means to combat the ethos of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2000). Using ethnographic data from Cyprus and South Africa, they demonstrated the use of storytelling to promote empathy.

In terms of political rhetoric, Loseke (2009) revealed the way in which President Bush used emotion codes to encourage particular affective responses following 9/11. Bush's narrative drew upon the symbolic codes of "victim" and "hero" in its depiction of Americans and "villain" in its depiction of terrorists. The depiction of Americans as victims was meant to invoke feelings of sympathy while the depiction of Americans as heroes was meant to invoke feelings of anger, pride, and patriotism. In contrast, the depiction of those who attacked the United States was meant to invoke feelings of hatred, fear, and nationalism. She argued that narratives that include emotional appeals can be deployed in order to mobilize group members for collective action.

Such a relationship has also been examined with respect to the rise of religious nationalism within Middle East politics (Fattah & Fierke, 2009). Noting the relationship between discourses of humiliation and the rise in recruitment of Islamist fighters, Fattah and Fierke (2009) contend that Islamist narratives of Middle East politics give meaning to the collective humiliation that many feel with respect to the West. These feelings are historically grounded in events such as the Crusades, the colonization of the region following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the West's historic support of repressive, secular governments in the Middle East and the State of Israel. By constructing a narrative emphasizing past and present humiliation, Islamists highlight the failure of secular nationalism to redress the suffering of populations in the Middle East as well as increase their widespread appeal and legitimacy.

Narratives thus involve not only a shared set of *beliefs* but a larger common *repertoire* (see Bar-Tal, 2007) that consolidates memory and affect in such a way as to motivate particular social practices, such as participation in the political violence that maintains conflict. In this way, beliefs and emotions become *shared* and socially distributed across a collective (Bar-Tal, Halperin, & de Rivera, 2007). Emotions like anger and hatred are encoded into the collective storylines that individuals encounter in conflict settings (e.g., Halperin, 2008). And the personal narratives individuals then construct to make meaning of the lived experience of conflict subsume these affective qualities. It is precisely the affective valence of personal narratives that allows us to characterize them as "tragic" (e.g., Hammack, 2010a), "redemptive" (Hammack, 2009), "sad" or "happy" (Witteborn, 2007).

Our point here is that the affective content of narrative is inseparable from its cognitive features. The beliefs that comprise stories do not possess neutrality vis-à-vis larger "moral projects" (Cole, 2003; Taylor, 1989), roles, or aspirations (Haste & Abrahams, 2008; Sarbin, 1995). Rather, narratives command emotional identification. This identification at least in part explains the sustenance or appropriation of some stories over others (Cole, 2003). Emotion is thus key to the mediational properties of narrative.

Inspired by Marx's (1973) notion of the relationship between consciousness and labor, our principle of *mind as action* suggests that the stuff of thought occurs in the context of practical activity. In this frame, narrative operates as an organizing mediational feature of social practice. We suggested that four areas of empirical work on narrative implicitly link narrative to political action—research on personal and collective responses to political events and social change, the role of stories in the political reconciliation process, the transformative power of narrative for subordinate groups, and the role of emotion in narrative engagement. It is important to note that no studies in these areas explicitly draw upon the theoretical basis for an approach to narrative that emphasizes social practice, which we view as somewhat unfortunate, for the linking of these lines of work in their theoretical assumptions would create greater possibilities for collaboration. One of our central aims in this article is, in fact, to bring fragmented lines of empirical work on narrative together to expose their shared underlying theoretical assumptions.

From Metaphor to Paradigm: Toward a Holistic Political Psychology

The idea of narrative has become increasingly applied to issues related to political psychology. In this article, we have suggested that narrative represents a root metaphor for the discipline of political psychology. We have argued that a narrative approach inherently bridges levels of analysis in precisely the manner political psychologists have advocated since the emergence of the field (e.g., Horowitz, 1979; Smith, 1979, 1980). Narrative presents an analytic solution to the problem of mind and society by positing that individuals are embedded within a social context saturated by stories. In this context, they think, feel, and act in ways that are positioned in relation to these stories—accounts of collective memory and social representations of history (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2007; Hammack, 2008; Liu & Hilton, 2005).

Identifying the complex, dynamic relationship between these master narratives and the personal narratives individuals construct to create meaning in a particular political environment represents a key task of political psychology in the twenty-first century. Through this kind of inquiry—inquiry that importantly links an analysis of social structure with individual subjectivity—political psychologists are uniquely positioned to identify processes of social reproduction and change. Understanding when, how, and why individuals blindly appropriate collective narratives reveals important information on the boundary conditions of social reproduction—information that could be used to offer analyses of many societies or social and political phenomena. By contrast, understanding how, when, and why individuals resist or challenge a collective narrative speaks to political psychology's intellectual commitment to the study of social and political change (e.g., Andrews, 2002).

The larger intellectual context in which we propose narrative as a root metaphor for political psychology is one in which the very basis of knowledge (particularly in psychology) has been called into question (see Kressel, 1990). We refer here to the challenge to empirical social science posed by postmodern and poststructural perspectives (see Gergen, 2001). Rosenberg (2003) comprehensively reviews this issue for political psychology and argues that "a truly integrative social or political psychology must take this complex relationship between the individual structuring of meaning and action on the one hand and the collective structuring of meaning and action on the other as its point of departure" (p. 434). In this article, we have proposed that a narrative approach to political psychology responds to Rosenberg's (2003) call and is fundamentally concerned precisely with this reciprocal relationship between individual psychological and collective meaning-making. Thus, a narrative paradigm responds to the challenge of postmodern and poststructural critiques by suggesting that processes of meaning construction and signification represent critical sites for social scientific inquiry, and such a paradigm historicizes the production of knowledge in its assumptions about the relationship among language, politics, and thought (see Gergen, 1973).

A narrative approach also resolves epistemological tensions within political psychology by combining a commitment to empirical inquiry with an emphasis on the elaboration of *voice* (see Sampson, 1993). That is, to the extent that narrative data is collected from subjects, political psychologists engage in an analytic process that is more closely grounded in the lived experience of individuals. This approach speaks to Gergen and Leach's (2001) call for "enriching the domain of methodology" in political psychology by proposing a rigorous alternative to laboratory experimentation and large-scale surveys (though a narrative approach can, of course, be integrated with these methods; e.g., Costabile & Klein, 2008; see also Winter, 2000).

Narrative theory and methods provide for the possibility of political transformation through their attention to individual voice *in relation to* sources of political and cultural authority (e.g., Andrews, 2002, 2006). In this way, a narrative approach addresses critical perspectives within political psychology that call for a greater role of the field in struggles for social justice (e.g., Barber, 1990; Bar-On, 2001; Gergen & Leach, 2001; Marcus, 2008). And, to the extent that attention to the voices of subjects provides the immediate impetus for the research questions we ask, a narrative approach ensures that political psychology remains concerned with the "practical problems of the real world" (Winter, 2000, p. 399), as opposed to becoming consumed with academic abstraction (Barber, 1990). In other words, a direct engagement with the storied basis of lived experience in terms of our questions, methods, and analytic interpretations enhances our relevance to the actual problems of political life. In this way, such an approach provides us with an important voice and makes us explicit *participants* in political discourse. This reorientation fundamentally shifts the place of political psychology from one of supporting a status quo to one of a potential role for social change (Bar-On, 2001).

Political psychology thus benefits from conceptual integration of the idea of narrative not solely for the increased theoretical clarity and cross-disciplinary conversations it affords, but also for the ability of narrative to illustrate a paradigmatic approach that links knowledge to action. That is, a narrative approach speaks to political psychology as both "field of knowledge" and "resource" (Garzón Pérez, 2001) in its provision of key *information* about the reciprocal relationship between discourse and subjectivity *that might be used as a resource for social change.*

For example, Hammack's (2011) analysis of the life-story narratives of Israeli and Palestinian youth provides basic information about how youth in conflict settings engage with competing discourses of secular and religious nationalism as they craft personal narratives of identity. But this information also represents a resource for political psychologists who wish to illustrate the injustice of war and conflict on individual lives, for the life stories of young Israelis and Palestinians are constructed within the continued conflict that obstructs possibilities for youth. As Garzón Pérez (2001) illustrates in her discussion of the development of political psychology in Spain, this role of political psychology as *resource* is linked to a historical analysis of political phenomena—precisely the kind of analysis that a narrative approach assumes. Thus, in the tradition of action research in social psychology (Lewin, 1946), there is a need to produce knowledge that can go beyond mere explanation or interpretation toward practical utility in the interests of social change (see also Marx, 1888/1978).

Finally, the idea of narrative is fundamental to understanding the dynamics of citizenship in the twenty-first century—a topic of significant relevance to political psychology. Haste (2004) argues that contemporary citizenship exists within the larger context of social and historical change, including emergent democracies, societies in transition, and the dissolution of the left-right spectrum in Western societies. She suggests that this changing context for citizenship also accompanies critical epistemological shifts within psychology, with the emergence of fields like critical and cultural psychology. She argues that a narrative approach is fundamental to understanding the dynamics of citizenship in the twenty-first century because it provides a rich epistemological framework for the study of identity and ideology in context (see also Hammack, 2008).

In a similar vein, Moghaddam (2008) argues that narrative research reveals the dynamic interplay between individuals and social context as they negotiate various positions and the politics of identity.

A narrative approach provides access to the way in which "psychological" citizenship is constructed; that is, narratives reveal the process by which cognitive and behavioral characteristics needed for social and political participation become appropriated and rendered "normative" (Moghaddam, 2008; cf. Bar-Tal, 2007). These theoretical perspectives on citizenship highlight the utility of narrative research in political psychology to illuminate larger processes of social reproduction.

The purpose of this article was to review the disparate but increasingly prolific literature on narrative, psychology, and politics and, in the process, to propose an integrative paradigm that anchors these studies in major social science theories. Our view is that such integration might increase not only collaboration across disciplinary boundaries but also the ability of scholars to see the cross-disciplinary links among studies. We argued that narrative represents a root metaphor for political psychology in the sense that our political existence is fundamentally *storied*. By this we mean not only that we *make* stories through basic processes of human cognition (Bruner, 1990), but also that we are saturated in a setting of stories with which we are constantly in dialogue (Haste & Abrahams, 2008; Raggatt, 2002). Individual constructions of identity through the personal narrative represent dialogic attempts to integrate, reconcile, and respond to the discursive basis of society (Hammack, 2008).

This process of *narrative engagement* offers an anchoring principle for political psychology in its ability to resolve epistemological tensions in the field (Rosenberg, 2003) and to link knowledge production to transformative action (Andrews, 2003). Our elaboration of this process is rooted in four key principles that link language, thought, feeling, and action with fundamental needs for personal coherence and meaning in solidarity. In articulating these principles, we sought to excavate the underlying theoretical influences of the empirical work on narrative that has begun to proliferate. In our view, the task of twenty-first century work in this area is one of knowledge integration and application. Through embracing an integrative perspective on narrative, political psychology has the potential to amplify its voice not only across new disciplinary borders but also among a general audience who recognizes the power of story to shape hearts, minds, and collectives.

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