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## My story is not my own: A qualitative analysis of personal continuity and group narrative

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**My story is not my own: A qualitative analysis of personal continuity and group narrative**

By

Kristín Guðbjörg Haraldsson

Accepted in Partial Completion  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science

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**My story is not my own: A qualitative analysis of personal continuity and group narrative**

A Thesis  
Presented to  
The Faculty of  
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science

by  
Kristín Guðbjörg Haraldsson  
August 2019

## **Abstract**

Personal continuity, defined as having a sense of self that persists through time, is central to most theories of identity. People create personal continuity by creating a coherent life story that explains changes and stability in identity over time, commonly referred to as narrative identity. Recent research has begun to broaden the narrative approach to identity to emphasize the role that larger cultural forces play in shaping it. Building on this turn, the current study seeks to address a gap in the literature, exploring the role that social groups and their shared narratives play in personal continuity. This study was qualitative and descriptive, with an aim of theory-building. Thirteen adult children of immigrants, aged 18-52, were interviewed about their personal stories, the stories of their parents, and group narratives. Social constructivist grounded theory was used to analyze the interviews to examine the relationship between personal continuity and group narrative. Results showed that participants can create a sense of personal continuity by seeing themselves as part of a larger, continuously developing group narrative, though there are variations in how that is done, particularly in relation to whether continuity is seen in the past and/or future.

Keywords: identity, personal continuity, group membership, collective continuity, culture, narrative

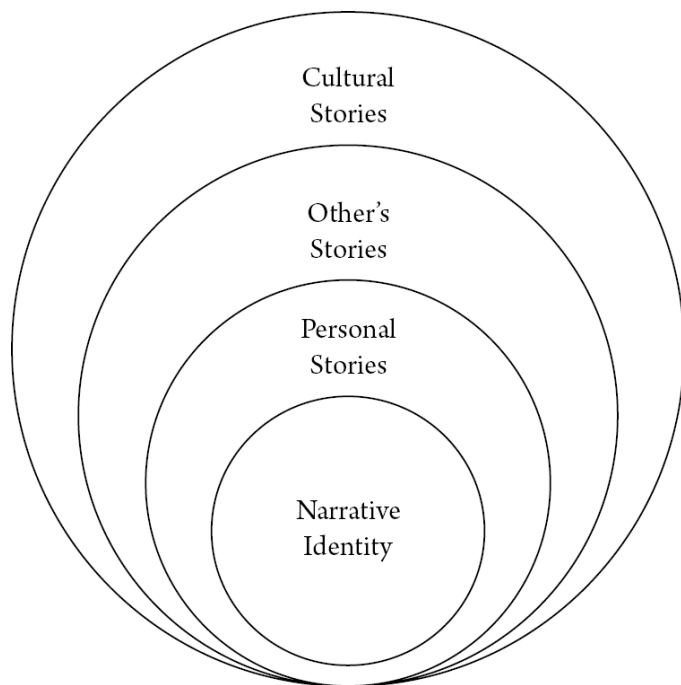
## **Acknowledgements**

First, I want to thank my parents for always believing in me and sacrificing everything for me to be here. I want to thank my husband for his unwavering support. I want to thank my friends for being in my front row and always cheering me on. I want to thank my advisor for pushing me to step into my full potential. I want to thank my thesis committee for their assistance and their support in developing, proposing, and defending this project. I want to thank the Psychology faculty and graduate students at WWU for providing me with a community I could lean on while developed into a young professional. I want to thank the Center for Cross-Cultural Research and the Fund for the Enhancement of Graduate Research for funding this project. Lastly, and most importantly, I want to thank my participants for having the courage and the willingness to tell me their stories, for I will always hold them dear.

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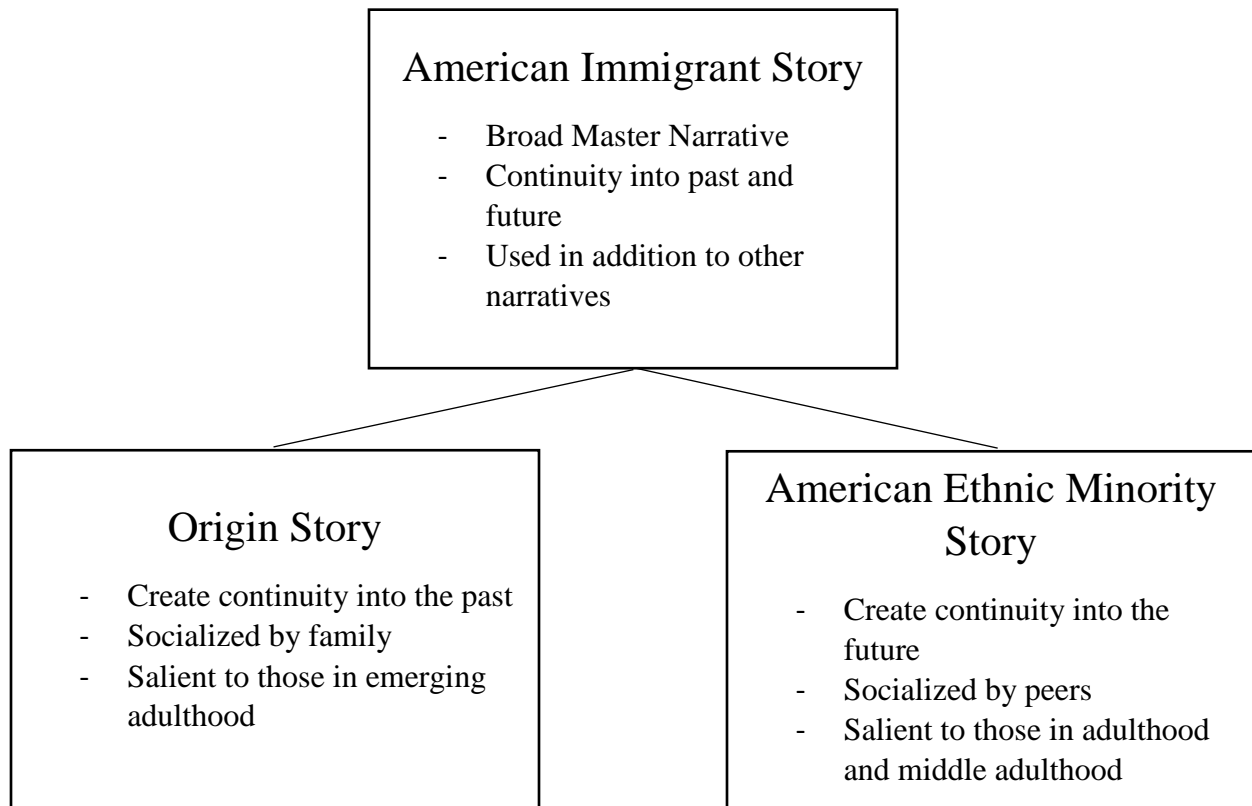
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*Figure 1*

The Narrative Ecology of Self.





*Figure 2.* Proposed developmental model of individual differences in collective continuity.

## PERSONAL CONTINUITY AND GROUP NARRATIVE

My story is not my own: A qualitative, exploratory analysis on personal continuity and group narrative

*...My story is not just my own. For sure, my story is a collective story of like, my mom's story. It ties into my mom's story, it ties into my sister's story, it ties into my dad's, and then from there, it ties into my boyfriend's, it ties into my really close friends, my teachers that I meet. My friends, and uhm, especially just like in a collective view...my story is only a small portion of this bigger story, is what it is. And every voice among the loud, like murmur of everyone is just...uhm, is just all so powerful. Even, like, if we were all just – my story alone, I know is powerful. And somebody else's story is powerful. But like, when we put us all together, we are just a force to be reckoned with. And so, yeah I mean...I don't know how much more there is to say, but just to know that what anybody shares is sharing a portion of somebody else's story, too. - Rosa, age 22*

In the excerpt above, Rosa describes the interdependent nature of her life story; her story is a part of others' stories, and others' stories are also a part of her own. In describing her own story as part of a larger, shared narrative, Rosa is creating a sense of personal continuity that expands beyond her own life story into the lives of her parents, her ancestors, and other members of her group. In this paper, I use reflections such as this to understand how individuals use group narratives to create a sense of personal continuity in their identities.

The mechanisms behind creating an integrated and coherent sense of self that persists over time and across context – *personal* continuity – has been central to many theories of identity development (e.g., Erikson, 1963; Epstude & Peetz, 2012; Locke, 1690/1996; McAdams 1993; Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007). That is, in order for one to feel as if they have any sense of identity, they need to perceive a link between their past, present, and future selves. This sense of continuity has consequence, as there is a well-established link between personal continuity and psychological well-being (see Adler, Lodi-Smith, Philippe, & Houle, 2016; Sani, 2008 for overviews). In the most serious of cases, a lack of personal continuity can result in suicide

(Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol, & Hallett, 2003). Thus, it is important for the individual to feel as if there is a part of themselves that is persistent through time.

I take a narrative approach to personal continuity by grounding it in the life story because this approach has the temporal component of identity at its center (McAdams, 1993). The conceptualization of identity as a life story is referred to as *narrative identity* (McAdams & McLean, 2013; Singer, 2004). In constructing a narrative identity, people create a sense of personal continuity by weaving together a coherent life story to explain changes and stability in the self over time, across context, and between self and culture (Syed & McLean, 2016). More specifically, people use personal stories to make explicit connections between past experiences and the current self (Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007), illustrating that there is some aspect of their personality, values, worldview, or behavior that is consistent between the past and present self.

Building on this theoretical and empirical foundation of identity rooted in a sense of personal, temporal continuity, there has been a recent push to broaden this approach to emphasize the role that other people and their narratives play in shaping personal identity (Hammack, 2006; 2008; McAdams & Pals, 2006; McLean & Syed, 2016). Indeed, researchers have addressed the role that families (e.g., Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008; McLean, 2015), media (e.g., Breen, McLean, Cairney, & McAdams, 2017), and larger, shared cultural narratives (e.g., Hammack, 2006; 2008; McLean & Syed, 2016) play in guiding individuals in developing their narrative identity. However, there is still a gap in the research regarding the social spaces beyond family yet beneath the umbrella of shared cultural narratives: social groups. In the present study I aim to begin to address that gap with a descriptive, qualitative examination of the role that group narratives play in establishing personal continuity.

### **Self and Narrative: The Establishment of Personal Continuity**

Personal temporal continuity, defined as having a stable sense of self through time (Pasupathi et al., 2007), is central to the development of a cohesive *narrative identity* – an internalized, subjective, evolving story of one’s life that is typically referred to as the *life story* (McAdams, 1993). Having a cohesive narrative identity is positively associated with psychological well-being and maturity (see Adler, et al., 2016). The life story is comprised of selected autobiographical memories narrated such that people can explain how they came to be who they are today. This narrative identity can be revised over the lifespan to account for new experiences, as well as changes in the interpretations of those experiences or in one’s understanding of the self (McAdams, 1993; 1996). Thus, it is through this process that individuals can create personal continuity, by making meaning of the past, connecting it to the present, and anticipating a meaningful future.

#### **Traditional and Alternative Approaches to Continuity**

Personal continuity is traditionally theorized to be established through *autobiographical reasoning* (Habermas & Bluck, 2000), a mechanism that people use to construct a coherent and integrated life story. Autobiographical reasoning is a process that connects past experiences and the current self by demonstrating change or stability in the way the narrator sees themselves, others, or the world around them in relation to the narrated past event (Pasupathi et al., 2007). When individuals explain change or a stability in the self over time, they are creating a sense of continuity by either integrating this change into the current understanding of self (e.g., “I realized how capable I was”) or illustrating a temporally stable aspect of the self (e.g., “this shows how strong I am”).

Beyond making connections between the *personal* past and the present, people can establish a sense of continuity by seeing themselves as part of a unified, temporally persistent social group (Chandler et al., 2003; Sani et al., 2007; Sani, 2008). This *collective* persistence through time also has consequential implications for mental health and personal well-being. For example, Chandler et al. (2003) investigated the disproportionately high suicide rates of First Nations youth in Canada – a community that has experienced historical genocide, forced assimilation, and discrimination, and that, as a result, carry generations of trauma (Chandler et al., 2003). However, Chandler et al. (2003) discovered that adolescent suicide rates were significantly lower in First Nations communities where customs, traditions, historical artifacts, and language were preserved (Chandler et al., 2003; Hallett, Chandler, & Lalonde, 2007). One implication of these findings is that adolescents may be able to achieve *personal* continuity by seeing themselves as a part of a group with *collective* continuity, meaning that the defining aspects of the group – culture, customs, tradition, and language – persist through time.

Consistent with Chandler's work, other researchers also consider collective continuity to be critical to psychological functioning, particularly in relation to a sense of group membership. For example, individuals who see their group, as well as its defining aspects (such as traditions, customs, and language), as persistent through time are more likely to perceive themselves as having personal continuity (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014), and also tend to have higher collective self-esteem and social well-being (Sani, Bowe, & Herrera, 2008). This sense of collective continuity can also take the form of perceiving historical events related to the group as interconnected<sup>1</sup> (Sani, 2008; Sani et al., 2007), as well as perceiving a shared future (Ashmore et al., 2004).

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<sup>1</sup> See also Tololyan, 1986 for the role of myth

However, all of this work has been conducted without actually examining personal and collective stories. Given this lack of descriptive work, it is thus unclear if people do actually perceive collective continuity as storied and related to one's own sense of personal continuity and if so, *how* these group narratives are internalized by the individual to shape personal continuity. Therefore, the question of this project is whether collective continuity is storied, and if so, how.

The current study shares common conceptual inquiry with the collective memory literature (Hirst & Manier, 2008; Hirst, Yamashiro, & Coman, 2018), which seeks to address how collective memories for families, groups, and societies are formed and maintained across generations. Collective memories can take the form of family narratives, group narratives, and historical narratives. Although the collective memory literature seeks to understand the relationship between the individual and the collective in the construction and transmission of collective memory, it does not address how collective memory may be internalized into the individual identity. The aim of the current research is to address how these shared experiences are internalized to shape individual identity.

### **Present Study**

To summarize, we know that people create a sense of personal continuity by a) constructing stories about the self, b) internalizing stories about others, such as one's family and larger culture master narratives, and c) identifying with a group that they perceive to be temporally persistent. However, we do not know if collective continuity is actually storied, and if it is, how it is used by the individual to create personal continuity. This is the gap in the literature I aimed to address. I determined that the first step to investigating this proposed phenomenon was to do a qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive study using social constructivist grounded theory

to examine the connection between personal and collective continuity. There are two methodological choices that I made concerning participant age and demographics, as outlined below.

First, I determined that it would be methodologically ideal to work with adult children of parents who have immigrated to the United States (US). I made this decision because children of immigrant parents experience a unique threat to personal and collective continuity as immigration can sever ties between family, social groups, and culture of origin. This threat to continuity may create more urgency for individuals to devote narrative resources to maintaining it, and critically, more *awareness* about group narratives and one's own alignment with those narratives, which makes this population a prime group for this type of descriptive investigation. In other words, to describe the connection between collective continuity and personal continuity, it is ideal to work with participants who are more likely than the rest of the population to be building personal and collective continuity.

Second, I determined that I needed to recruit participants with a range of ages. The purpose of having an age range is due to developmental trajectories within the narrative ecology of the self (see Figure 1). At the center of this ecology is narrative identity, with consequent influential layers of the ecology being personal stories, other's stories, and cultural stories. As adults move through the lifespan, they develop better integrated self-concepts and story-telling ability (Pasupathi & Mansour, 2006; Reese et al., 2011; Singer, 2004), and more narrative accounts are given that center around themes of how the *event* impacted the self, rather than how the self impacted the event (Habermas & Paha, 2001). Thus, as individuals move through the lifespan, they may become more cognitively aware of how they are shaped by their experiences.

The purpose of the age range is not to do an age comparison, but to describe the phenomenon across different developmental stages to guide future research.

### **Method**

Both pilot and main study materials and procedures were approved by the University Institutional Review Board. The current study was preregistered on OSF. I deviated from my preregistration by recruiting two fewer participants than originally intended. I also changed my recruitment method to include online advertising on Craigslist. Lastly, I deviated in my study by deciding to capture socialization processes of collective continuity in addition to a descriptive analysis; this decision arose from the analyses described below.

### **Participants**

Inclusion criteria included being 18 years or older, having at least one parent who immigrated to the US, or if the participants immigrated, they had to have immigrated before the age of three. Twelve participants aged 18 – 50 were recruited for the study, and one participant from piloting was included in the analyses, for a total of 13 participants. The participant from piloting was included because although he was interviewed with a slightly different prompt, he addressed all of the questions that are in the current interview protocol.

In order to keep participant identity confidential, I describe demographic information in broad ranges rather than the specific characteristics of each participant. There were four participants between the ages of 18-29, seven participants between the ages of 30-39, and two participants 40 and older. Seven participants identified as women, five participants identified as men, and one participant declined to answer. Participants had one or more parents who immigrated from the following countries: Cambodia, Greece, India, Korea, Mexico, Puerto Rico,



Samoa, and the Philippines. Sexual orientations included Heterosexual, Mostly Heterosexual, Bisexual, and Pansexual. All but one of the participants' mothers immigrated, and all but five participants' fathers immigrated. Six participants reported having two parents who immigrated, with five participants reporting that both parents immigrated from the same country. Five participants reported that English was the primary language spoken at home, one participant reported that the parents' language of origin was solely spoken at home, and the remaining seven participants reported having multiple languages spoken at home. Participants reported the following a range of educational experience from 'some college' to having gained a master's degree, with 46% of the participants holding a bachelor's degree. Maternal education ranged from high school graduate to master's degree with modes of having a high school diploma or some college credit, and paternal education was reported to range from high school diploma to a doctorate degree with modes of having a high school diploma and bachelor's degree.

## **Materials**

The first challenge to this project was to construct a methodology that would encourage participants to think about collective continuity. I constructed one interview protocol, which was unsuccessful, before developing the interview used in the present study. I describe all of these materials below.

**Pilot Interview.** In the first round of piloting, four emerging adult participants, two with immigrant parents, one with parents who were First Nations, and one without immigrant parents, were recruited from an undergraduate psychology participant pool for piloting. Participants were asked to think of the social groups to which they belonged, pick a group most central to their identity, and then to describe shared narratives for the group in connection with their own narrative. Despite the fact that most participants considered their group membership a central

aspect to their identity, they were unable to provide any accounts of group narratives or to reflect on how larger narratives affected their own narratives. In the second round of piloting, I developed a new interview protocol in which I reversed the order in which I asked participants to engage with the task. I first asked participants to reflect on their own stories, followed by the stories of their parent(s), and then the stories of the groups that they belonged to. The aim here was to provide more effective scaffolding for participants to think about group narratives, such that I asked them to 1) narrate aspects of their own life story, 2) narrate aspects of the stories of their parents and how those stories impacted their life story, and 3) narrate and reflect on how group stories impacted their life story. This protocol was successful, and with minor revisions, it was the protocol used in the current study.

**Interview Protocol.** A semi-structured interview format adapted from McAdams' (1993; 2008) Life Story Interview was used (see Appendix A). Participants were asked to provide chapters of their life story and reflect on a few autobiographical key scenes such as a low point, a turning point, a wisdom event, and then were asked for the next chapter of their story. Participants were then asked the same questions about one of their parents (chapters, key scenes, and next chapter), allowing them to pick the parent they wish to talk about, unless participants had only one immigrant parent. After answering questions about their parent's life story, participants were asked if they thought that their parent's life story had impacted their own life story, and if the next chapter of their parent's story impacted their own. To transition from this portion of the interview into discussing group stories, participants were asked if they think that there are other people or groups of people who have stories similar to their own and their parents. If the participants did not specify their immigrant group, I would ask them about other members of their immigrant group. Participants were then asked if there was a coherent story for that

group, and if so, if there were chapters and key scenes similar to a personal life story. Lastly, participants were asked about the extent to which they see themselves as a part of this story, with additional questions about whether or not they see themselves as impacting the group story, if the group story impacts them, and if they see the next chapter of the group story as impacting the next chapter of their own. The interview time ranged from one hour to three hours. I transcribed all of the interviews verbatim.

**Demographics.** At the end of the interview, participants were asked to complete a demographics form that solicited age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mother/father country of origin, language spoken at home, whether the participant was born in the US, the age they immigrated if they were not born in the US, first language, highest degree earned, highest degree mother/father earned, and participant profession. The demographics form was kept separate from transcriptions to keep identifying information confidential.

### **Procedure**

Participants were recruited in a mid-size northwestern city with flyers that were posted throughout community spaces (e.g., coffee shops), on a university campus, and through Craigslist. Flyers described the study as an interview about identity and immigration. Participants were asked if they preferred to meet on campus or in a private community location; most participants preferred to meet on campus in a private, comfortable room. Before the interview, and to build rapport, I disclosed that I am a child of parents who immigrated to the US. After providing consent we proceeded with the interview. At the end of the interview participants completed the demographics form and were compensated with \$50.00 Amazon e-gift cards for their time.

## **Analytic Approach**

**Grounded theory.** We used social constructivist grounded theory analysis (Wertz et al., 2011), which is an adaptation of classical grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Classical grounded theory has epistemological origins in positivist assumptions such as an objective truth to be uncovered, an authoritative observer, a quest for generalizations, and a relative neglect of how the perspective of both the participant and the researcher shape the data. In contrast, social constructivist grounded theory embraces the existence of multiple realities within the data, the subjectivity of both researcher and participant, and the role that the researcher plays in shaping the data.

Using this approach, the research team (described below) documented overarching themes and patterns that captured the participants' experiences. While working with the data, we documented these themes or patterns, as well as our thoughts and interpretations, commonly referred to as memo-writing.

**Research Team.** The constructivist nature of this qualitative analysis highlights the importance of having a coding team comprised with varied life experiences, in this case, both of people who are children of immigrants and people who are not. Having both types of individuals as a part of the coding team ensures that there are people who can observe the data from both an 'insider' and 'outsider' perspective. Thus, the team consisted of myself and two undergraduate students, one psychology student, and one double major in psychology and sociology. I am a first-generation Icelandic American graduate student with two immigrant parents. One student was Black without immigrant parents, the other student was a mixed student, of Chinese and White ethnic background, with one immigrant parent.

**Analytic Process.** I interviewed participants, and after every interview, I wrote memos about what themes emerged in the interview and documented any ideas about how to proceed in analyzing the interviews. While transcribing the data, I also wrote memos on additional themes that I noticed. Once the interviews were transcribed, I reread the transcriptions with my coding team and wrote memos on any themes that emerged from the discussion. Additionally, the other two members of the coding team wrote their own memos both while reading the interviews and after discussion. These memos were combined with my own.

Before we analyzed the interviews, the team had an initial meeting in which we discussed biases related to the research and took memos of our discussion. In this meeting, we discussed how identities, politics, academic foci, and past experiences could shape our interpretation of the data. Additionally, the other two team members read relevant research articles as well as the introduction and methods of the project proposal to ground them in the theoretical rationale of this project. The team then analyzed the interviews with the guiding question of whether or not collective continuity was storied, and if it was, how the story was internalized by the individual to create personal continuity. The team was instructed to pay special attention to similarities and differences between participants in the presence and construction of continuity but were also encouraged to take memos on anything they found interesting or relevant to the guiding question of the study.

**Reliability.** Since this is a small, purely qualitative dataset, we did not calculate reliability with statistical analyses. Rather, we used peer auditing procedures to ensure rigor in our interpretations of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer auditing is a process in which peers outside of the coding team read the interviews to determine whether their interpretations are consistent with the interpretations of the analytic team. For the present study, four interviews

were given to the second author of this paper to audit (a White female professor of psychology), and two interviews were given to a separate team of research assistants to audit. This team of research assistants consisted of one White male, one White female, one female who was Filipino and White, and one female who was first generation German American with one immigrant parent.

## **Results**

Three group narratives were described in the interviews: The American Immigrant Story, The Origin Story, and the American Ethnic Minority Story (Figure 2). The American Immigrant Story was referenced by all participants in varying levels of detail, suggesting that it served as a broad master narrative (McLean & Syed, 2016). The Origin Story encompassed historical narratives from the participant's parent(s) country of origin. The American Ethnic Minority Story also encompassed historical narratives, but those narratives focused on being an ethnic minority in the US rather than parental country of origin. Each story differs in how they were used to create continuity. First, I will describe the American Immigrant Story, followed by the Origin Story and the American Ethnic Minority Story. After describing each story, I will elaborate on the utility of each group story in creating continuity, as well as the socialization processes associated with each group narrative.

### **The American Immigrant Story: Description**

The American Immigrant Story is a story of leaving behind all that is familiar, coming to the US with nothing, starting “from the bottom” of the socioeconomic ladder, and working up that ladder to achieve the “American Dream.” This trajectory is described as a major sacrifice made by one's parent(s) to attain better economic opportunities for future generations of the

family. Regardless of background and regardless of the utilization of this story in creating continuity, all participants referenced the American Immigrant Story in their interviews.

Theo<sup>2</sup> (age 39), who comes from a large Greek immigrant family, outlines the American Immigrant Story in the excerpt below:

*But yeah, the story is the same. Come with nothing, don't know English, learn English, work some job, like, figure out how to pay rent, you know, have nothing, still have nothing, and then all of a sudden you have a thing, you get some stability, and then, you know, a lot of Greeks start their own businesses[...] This is very common immigrant stuff, "I made it into something, I'm giving it to you to continue to be this great thing." That's what my uncle did for my cousins. He came over here, he drove a cab, Greek immigrant. He drove a cab, which is a very common immigrant job. And then he opened a cab stand in [redacted] and became the biggest cab stand, and cab stand being like a hub, you know, "We lease a hundred Cabs" or whatever. Like, he was holding down [redacted]<sup>3</sup>. I mean this is – he turned being a cab driver into a – not even joking – he was a multimillionaire. Like, very affluent.*

Similarly, Aleki (age 39) described his Samoan mother as living the American Dream:

*So now, you know, she has her house, she's living - she has a great job, uhm, she's living the American dream, you know. She's got three cars and a beautiful house. And she came from the Islands, you know, maybe she may not have done it, you know, the most right way, but she got us - she got us, and she got herself, too, to this dream.*

Both of these excerpts describe the same process: physical immigration to a different country “with nothing,” learning the language, working hard, and attaining wealth.

### **The American Immigrant Story: Continuity**

Some participants were able to find a temporal continuity in the framework of this story. For example, Adriana, who is first generation Mexican American, referenced the American Immigrant Story to provide some scaffolding for her future self:

*...me and my sister and like, my friend, like we're all an integral part of this. Like, a lot of times, we're the reason why this story is happening, you know, like some people – you*

---

<sup>2</sup> All participants were given pseudonyms.

<sup>3</sup> Geographical location redacted.

*know, like you leave for political asylum. But like, or you do like, financial situations. A lot of times, a lot of the stories – it's for the children, for their kids...*

*...I want to play a bigger role, but I'm not really sure how, but I know that just being successful is a big part of the story. As far as like, why my dad, you know, moved here. Why my grandparents moved here. Like, they wanted their future generations to be successful in a way that they didn't get. So, I know that by going, at the bare minimum, by getting an education I am helping in that story to – you know, sort of thing, to move us forward for the betterment of our people, sort of thing.*

However, although some participants, like Adriana, use the story to create continuity, this story was never used *alone*. That is, the Origin Story or the American Ethnic Minority Story were always used with this overarching master narrative, allowing greater specificity to the participants' experiences (described in later sections).

### **The American Immigrant Story: Socialization**

Participants reported that the American Immigrant Story was primarily socialized by family particularly given the emphasis on sacrifice on the part of younger generations, as exemplified in Narin's excerpt:

*And my mom or my dad specifically would always tell me, like, "Use your head", like, "Think about it" you know, "Think about these things." Like, "Think about why I came to this country just because, you know, to get a life better than what I had before. And give you something that I never had growing up.*

However, some participants did mention peer socialization, such as Amara, who describes below how her friends from immigrant families share similar sentiments about the pressure to succeed:

*...and I know that this is like, really true for all of my friends I can really confidently say, that every single one of my friends that comes from an immigrant family, we all share this, like, "Our parents did this for us, and so we've got to make them proud", but more just like, "We gotta make it!" You know? Like, we can't, like, there's not option to not. Because of, like, it's this very, like real, "Look what they've experienced, look what they've gone through", like, "What we experience is like, nothing comparatively. And so, we gotta just buck up, and just do it." You know? And like, I don't know one person*



*that's not from an immigrant – or, I don't have one friend that – all my friends think that is what I'm trying to say.*

### **The American Immigrant Story: Summary**

The American Immigrant Story appears to serve as a broad master narrative, providing a shared narrative structure to make sense of the past and to consider the imagined future.

However, it appeared to lack the necessary specificity to provide enough narrative structure to create continuity on its own, perhaps because of its breadth in encompassing such diverse immigrant experiences. Indeed, participants referenced the American Immigrant Story, but rather than tying their stories to the past and future of all immigrants, they explicitly tied their past and their future to the fate of their own groups, using the the Origin Story and American Ethnic Minority Story.

### **The Origin Story: Description**

The Origin Story embraced the history of one's group, beginning with parental country of origin. Participants who used The Origin Story to make sense of their identity primarily used it to create continuity into the past, seeing themselves as an extension their ancestors, and perceiving historical events that took place before they were born as shaping their own story. Finally, this story appeared to be primarily socialized by family than peers. First, I provide a brief excerpt on a historical narrative being discussed, then I provide excerpts on how this narrative is used to create continuity and how it is socialized.

### **The Origin Story: Description**

In the excerpt below, Narin (age 19) details his perception of Cambodian history:

*Like, the, like a, uhm perspective like – 'cause like, me thinking like, just reading about, like, my history, uh, our country's past, and like how, you know, it was like "Oh man, we used to be a*

*great empire.” You know, there's like Angkor Wat, like, the -- or something called like, the, you know, one of the seven mysteries of the world. Like the temple and stuff. And, like, that empire lasted from, like – here, me, giving a history lesson – lasting for like, uh, from like almost seven hundred years. And just, uhm, seeing that all, like, diminish during 1400's. 'Cause like, from 1400's to the 1800's, from my personal point of view, I'd classify that as like, the Dark Age. Just because it was like, the decline of the Golden Age. And it was just like, uh, from knowing the history, its just like, kings here and there didn't like, get along. They always fought for power. And so, it's just like, that knowledge of, like, “This is what your people went through.”*

In this excerpt, Narin clearly considers the historical past of Cambodia as part of his own personal past, internalizing the history of his people.

### **The Origin Story: Continuity**

Narin, whose parents fled the Cambodian genocide, illustrates his collective continuity with Cambodia below:

*Because each story is important because it, you know, explains what those individuals went through. And just hearing the similarities between my family, my parents, and their experiences. It was just like, “They went through the same thing” you know, only about a hundred thousand survived out of the two and half million people that died. And it's just like, you know, I'm grateful, that I'm here to be able to be – like, I'm the byproduct of that. Like, you know, going against whatever the genocide was about was just, you know, going back to year zero, destroying all pieces of culture, tradition, education, and stuff. And I'm like, me going to college right now, I was just like, “I'm going against what that stood for. So, it's just like, have the shoulders of like, all those people who sacrificed for me to be here. It was just like, uh, something that I always think about.*

Similarly, Amara (age 31) described living in the Cambodian village in which her mother grew up as an adult:

*I loved going back to Cambodia, because, for me, it was literally, like, I can't really explain it, but it's like, it was like coming home to somewhere else that wasn't America but had all the elements of what home was to me. So that meant, like, the food that my mom made, or, like, the language that she used. Or, uhm, I don't even – like, just even like things that are like, what some people would consider kind of silly. Like, the patterns on certain fabrics, like, things that were just so unique to my upbringing in my family and the things that made me feel so isolated...all of a sudden, like, when I went back to Cambodia, it all made so much sense. Like, I was like, “Wait a minute, it's like, a plethora of all of these things.” And for me it was like, a really, like, strange coming home experience because I was able to identify, like, that there was a nation and a people*

*and a community that has quirks and things that I really like to eat, and all these things that make up, like, who I am, explained.*

It is clear that it was important for Amara to visit Cambodia to understand her *past*, but she experienced less collective continuity with Cambodia when thinking about the *future*, characteristic of the use of this narrative:

*It sounds kind of like, morbid to say, but not being surrounded by tons of Cambodian people, and losing touch, and being able to identify with that part of who I am, like, less and less it affects me. It affects me less and less, if that makes sense. And I don't love to say that, but I just think, like, unfortunately, like, living in [redacted] and not being able to like, identify and celebrate and love that side of me, besides, like, what, going to the oriental market? Like, uhm, it just becomes less and less of my identity I feel like, until I go back home, and I'm like, "Oh yeah." You know? Uhm, I definitely think that, yeah – so I just think its relative, and it really just, like, depends. I would love to live somewhere where that was, like, more of a dynamic presence, so that I could tap into that more. But I feel like, the longer I'm away from it, the more it kinda fades. I always love going up to Vancouver, because there's a little Cambodian restaurant that I'm like, obsessed with. And it always just feels like coming home. Also, there's like, way more Asian people in Vancouver, bless! But, it's just...yeah. So – I definitely think that, like, the chapter – I don't like to use the word diminishing, but that's kind of, the best way that I can articulate it. even though it sounds a little bit morbid.*

From these excerpts, we see that in order to create continuity into the past there must be a tie to previous ancestors and to the history of the group.

### **The Origin Story: Socialization**

The Origin Story was primarily socialized by family compared to peers. For example, Adriana (age 21) describes below how her grandfather encouraged her to take pride in her indigenous roots:

*I know as far as like, in Mexico, my dad – my grandfather always said, like, "Take pride from the Aztecs" sort of thing. And, like the Aztec people were travelers. And they always said, like, they...they traveled a really long way, and, like, you can trace back, like, historically that they were – they traveled through, uhm, like, California region and decided to settle in Mexico, in the base of Mexico City. And created the city of Aztlán, is kinda mythical 'cause nobody has been able to actually find the city that people said that like, "Oh this was, like, the holy land", you know, sort of thing. and like, I think that*

*whole, there is a whole, that, there is a whole story that they traveled and like, a lot of people died when they were traveling to try and find this place to settle. And that was supposed to be better, like, that – you can look into it and there's actual events. But like, it's a very mythical sort of, mysticalness to it. Where its like, "Oh, we traveled and traveled, and then, there was, you know, an eagle with a snake in his mouth that landed on a cactus, and this was our symbol. We should land here". And I think a lot of places have that, as far as, like, indigenous peoples who like, traveled. Traveling has always, I feel like, in a lot of different cultures been important.*

It is clear that families pay an important role is passing on group narrative to the younger generations.

### **The Origin Story: Summary**

In summary, the ethnic group of Origin Story was primarily used to create continuity from the past to the present, and was primarily socialized by family. Some participants did use this narrative to create continuity into the future, but this was far more common in the American Ethnic Minority Story, to which we now turn.

### **The American Ethnic Minority Story: Description**

The American Ethnic Minority Story concerns being a member of a racial or ethnic minority group in the US without necessarily referencing immigration or one's parents' country of origin. This story is largely focused on continuity from the present to the future. In fact, there were no instances of participants using this story to create continuity with the past prior to immigration, and it was common to discuss the *absence* of such historical knowledge.

Anthony (age 32), whose parents are both Filipino immigrants, primarily identifies as Asian Pacific Islander (API), and he explains this self-label by his lack of knowledge of the history or language of the Philippines:

*...because I don't have a lot of historical context. And that's the one thing, is like, my parents, they never - when they raised me, it was never, like, based on like, the history of like, Filipino people. Like, they never taught me Tagalog...*

*... I think like, it's sad because then, like, I don't carry the history of the Philippines in me, like, I've never actually been to the Philippines, ever. And as my parents pass away, as my grandmother - my grandmothers are all gone, right. This history will die with them, because they never - And for my parents, they haven't lived in the Philippines since they were like, in their late 20's, 30's, right. And so how much they even know or carry with them. And it's funny that they never even taught me. So, to me like, the Philippines and the history of that, and the way that it's held my family like, really dies with that generation. And then for us like we don't know it.*

Later in the interview, Anthony articulates that he instead uses the historical context of being Asian Pacific Islander in the US as a means of exploring his racial identity:

*...I have the historical context of what it means to be API [Asian Pacific Islander] or Filipino American in the United States. And only in the United States. And that has looked different for me in the way that I built connections with others or others who are different to me than [a] person who has been with the same people, and that culture, who now has to move here.*

*...the extent of historical context of API's in America, the United States, is like, transcontinental railroad, and Chinese immigrants having to build that, right, on the backs of the country. Or yeah, carry that weight on the backs for the country and like, I don't even know. So, when we were like, when the country was segregated between blacks and whites, my understanding was that if you weren't white, you were black. I don't know. That's my assumption. That's what I remember hearing. I don't know if there's truth in that, but like, it's not like, if you were white, or let's say, like, when the schools were segregated, right. Was this in the 50's? Wasn't too long ago. Yeah, it was like the 50s. Yeah, just crazy to think about. Like, if you weren't white, you didn't go to a white school. But that did include like, Asians or Hispanics, like, you were still the other. At least it's my understanding of it. And also, I'm like - I think my frame of history is like, our most recent history. And as I'm trying to like, explore, like, my racial identity here. But like, whitewashing in Hollywood media, right. And like, Matt Damon was in that Great Wall of China movie, I forgot what it was called, but I didn't watch it. But the whitewashing in that, and like, how there is not a prominence of Asians in movies, in general, in Hollywood, or pop media. Also like, the attraction of humans towards like, you know, I think studies have shown that Asian females are more attractive than Asian males are, and I think it dates back and is rooted in history, in like this exoticness of Asian women and being brought over as mail order brides, right. And I think to this day like, that is still carried over. So, like, that's a little bit of what I know.*

In these excerpts, Anthony clearly articulates that because he was raised without knowing the history, culture, or language of his parents' country of origin, he instead uses the historical

context of being an ethnic minority in the US to give meaning to his experiences (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 1993). He also seems to focus more on articulating some of the historical facts and history of racism and oppression against Asian Americans in general, but does not tie this past to his own life. He may also be in the process of working on this, however, as he notes that he is trying to “explore his racial identity.”

### **The American Ethnic Minority Story: Continuity**

Though there was a general lack of rooting this narrative in the past, there was elaboration on continuity as connected to the future. For example, Anthony (age 32) articulates how representation in the media is important for the future of his group, which also impacts his own future:

*So, let's say that I have a white counterpart who doesn't carry an ethnic or immigrant identity, right. And born raised America, American family, that kind of thing, and they are curious to know about my background, or also carry assumptions on my background. And that's fueled by what media portrays, and the stereotypes that, still, media portrays. If we were to be represented in other forms of media, I think it'll help squash those assumptions, and provide a better narrative for other people so that when they do want to come from a curious place and ask these questions, these questions aren't fueled by just stereotypical assumptions. Because that narrative is now shared in other avenues.*

In the excerpt above, Anthony articulates the benefits of seeing members of his group portrayed in non-stereotypical ways, which researchers have also noted as being particularly important to identity development (Way, Hernandez, Rogers, & Hughes, 2013).

Similarly, Ajay (age 40), who has two Indian immigrant parents, discussed the importance of seeing Indian Americans represented in politics:

*... it's exciting to me, like, "Oh someone's made it." Like, "One of us has made it", uhm, in time for my son to see that. My daughter eventually, too. But yeah if it's - if we're more integrated and in like, visible, high profile roles, that's awesome. I think we're slowly getting there but, uhm, it takes time...*

*But what upsets me, is that we are not standing up for what - Indian issue, political issue - that, I'm not a hundred percent sure what Indian political issues are. But like, if I think about the Jewish population, they're much more active, they're much more vocal in politics, and they have much greater influence on culture. I think that happens after like, two, three, generations. And I think we're - the Indian experience is still in the first or second generation. I'm hoping, like, my son's generations, and maybe further on, the Indian will probably get more voice - and I'm already seeing it. Like, even in the last four or five years, you have Kamala Harris you have a lot of people in office. You have Ajit Pai, who I don't like, but at least he's a household name. Uhm, the guy from Louisiana - all these people are getting more and more involved in politics, which is awesome. Uhm, but I think it's going to take maybe a generation or more for us to be more recognized in politics, and hopefully we'll get there.*

Lastly, when Ajay was asked about what the consequences would be for members of his group if there was no representation of Indian Americans in politics or positions of power, he expressed the following:

*It's a good question and, uhm...you can potentially come with a class of people that think, like, they're here to serve the certain - a more submissive, uhm, group of people, rather than being part of the conversation, leading the conversation and being respected. I think part of the idea of being a model minority is like, not rocking the boat like this - "You do your job. You can be a doctor, you can do a computer person, you can do whatever but just do that. Don't mess with my thing." So, I think that's the danger if we continue to just do our good jobs, then we're not really, uhm, - yeah, we're just like this submissive class of people who just like, do what's expected of us.*

It is clear from these excerpts that Ajay considers his future to be intertwined with that of Indian Americans as an ethnic minority group in the US and that he is invested in a future where members of his group are in positions of power and influence.

### **The American Ethnic Minority Story: Socialization**

In contrast to the Origin Story that was primarily socialized by parents, the American Ethnic Minority Story was primarily socialized by peers. Below, Adriana describes her experiences of meeting peers with similar stories in college:

*...as far as like, shared experiences go, I didn't get to learn a lot of it until I was in an environment, I could meet other people. Like I said before, I grew up in a really*

*conservative, mostly white community. Uhm, and so I didn't really know a lot of people of color. And then, I got to go, you know, moving to a city, even if its small city, you know, uhm, you suddenly meet a lot – there's a lot more diversity. Uhm, and so just...the types of classes I took, of course there's gonna be a lot of Latinos, in uh, Latinos/Latinx experience class, sort of thing. Like...people with, like, a narrative similar to mine are gonna be drawn to a lot of similar classes, a lot of similar events, so to say. And that's how I've met a lot of my friends, going to like, clubs and stuff like that. And in those situations, you know, or expect it to be safer to be share, you know, these aspects of yourself. Uhm, 'cause I have some friends who are undocumented as well. And its...once you are in a situation where you're with a lot of other people who you know at least share, like, heritage, like, you can, you know bridge that and be able – you trust somebody with knowing, like, “Hey I'm not here legally. Like, you know I could” – sort of thing – “be in danger”. Uhm, I think it's really just the fact that I got the ability to be in a more diverse environment is what allowed me to find people with similar stories, sort of thing.*

We see in the excerpt above that Adriana was able to conceptualize a group narrative that creates continuity by interacting with peers with life stories similar to her own.

### **Discussion**

I found that that group narrative is important to creating both collective and personal continuity, and that personal continuity can be established by seeing one's own story as part of a larger narrative of one's group. The Immigrant Story operated as a narrative structure for making meaning of immigration to the US broadly, but was always used in concert with one of the other two narratives to create personal continuity. The Origin Story and The American Ethnic Minority Story were both used to establish a sense of personal continuity but differed in their orientation to the past (the former), or orientation to the future (the latter), as well as in socialization processes.

Using the Origin Story to create continuity into the past allowed individuals to see their life stories as part of a larger narrative for their social group. Although previous literature has established that group historical narrative is important for personal continuity (Sani et al, 2007; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014; see Freeman, 2012), the current study adds to this literature to



emphasize that the internalization of these group narratives into the personal life story is what helps the individual create personal continuity through collective continuity.

The American Ethnic Minority Story was used to create continuity into the future. There is little research on the narrative construction of the future (Syed & Mclean, 2016), but the current study lends insight to how shared group narratives can shape the future of the life story. Although The Immigrant Story served as a broad master narrative that allowed participants to imagine a successful future self, The American Ethnic Minority Story allowed participants to conceptualize more concrete strides towards a favorable imagined future of both the self and the group, which included going into politics, striving for media representation, and getting an education for the betterment of your group.

Additionally, the current study shed light on the role that family and peers play in constructing collective continuity. Previous literature has established the role that family plays in constructing continuity beyond the self (Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008; McLean, 2015; McLean & Syed, 2015), however, there is little research that empirically assesses the role that peers play in general narrative identity construction (for exceptions, see McLean & Jennings, 2012; McLean & Pasupathi, 2006; Weeks & Pasupathi, 2011), despite peers being one of the most common audiences for personal stories in adolescence and emerging adulthood (McLean, 2005). Our study asserts that peers play an important role in constructing collective continuity, and therefore, personal continuity as well.

### **Implications and Future Directions**

Part of the goal of the present study was for theory building in the area of personal and collective continuity in narrative identity. Below, I detail one possible area of research focused

on developmental implications, as identity is a developmental task. I also address questions about the degree to which these findings extend beyond this population of immigrant children.

### **Developmental Implications**

There were differences in how collective continuity was constructed with orientation to the past or the future. Emerging adults were more likely to discuss using the Origin Story to create continuity into the past, with participants in young and middle adulthood reporting it as a less salient story than at earlier stages in their lives. This may be due to developmental progression in the construction of collective continuity, such that individuals might first look to the past to understand create and understand continuity, after which they can attend to the future (see Figure 2).

The Origin Story may also be salient at earlier developmental stages because it was primarily socialized by the family. Previous literature has shown that families play an important role in socializing children and adolescents to create a sense of personal continuity that extends beyond the self into the previous generations (Fivush et al., 2008; Reese & Fivush, 2008). It is possible that family sets the developmental stage for creating collective continuity by socializing the individual to see their own continuity as extending beyond their individual life, which allows them to see their life story as extending into the historical past for their group as well.

The salience of the American Ethnic Minority Story in young and middle adulthood may be because once participants create a coherent sense of continuity into the past, they are then able to focus on creating continuity into the imagined future (McAdams, 1993). It is also possible that as people age, generativity motivates them to focus more on the future than the past (Erikson, 1963; McAdams, 2001). For example, Ajay emphasized the importance for his *children* to see

other Indian Americans in politics. It is clear from Ajay's perspective that a favorable future for the group is also a favorable future for the next generation of the group, which includes his children.

### **Immigrant Children or Beyond?**

A question that arose in this project is whether these findings extend beyond a sample of adult children of immigrants. This sample experienced a unique threat to collective continuity – immigration – making it especially salient. Indeed, this was why I chose this group for this initial investigation; attempting to describe the storied nature of collective continuity for those who are not aware of it is not an ideal place to start new lines of inquiry. However, I propose that that use of stories beyond the self to create continuity is not specific to immigrant children. Indeed, others have argued that our identities are tied to our historical past whether we are conscious of it or not (Freeman, 2012; see also McLean & Syed, 2016). Yet the *awareness* of the role of those stories may be heightened in groups that are particularly threatened, such as in the case of immigrants.

Indeed, more resources are devoted to maintaining collective continuity when it is perceived to be threatened (Jetten & Wohl, 2012), so collective continuity may be more important for marginalized groups who have had their history erased and colonized (e.g., Chandler et al., 2003). For example, individuals who are ethnic minorities tend to engage in more identity exploration in adolescence and emerging adulthood than white majority groups (Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004). Additionally, identifying the unfavorable stigmas of one's group as prejudice and erasure helps group members maintain positive self-image (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and doing so involves some kind of reflective work.

Thus, in looking to other groups, some may be more aware of these issues of collective continuity and its tie to personal continuity, and methodologies that can surface such issues will be important to explore. Finally, and related to the developmental implications, it is also possible that developmental concerns may impact the awareness of these group narratives. Indeed, others have argued that the relevance of family stories to identity are not as clear until adolescence and emerging adulthood (Reese & Fivush, 2008), and interest in parental stories may also come later (McLean, 2015). Thus, group narratives may also show a developmental progression in their salience.

### **Conclusion**

Collective continuity is a storied phenomenon that allows participants to create a sense of personal continuity by perceiving their life story as part of a larger group narrative. The historical, familial, and mythical past allows individuals to make sense of how their story is situated in a larger, shared story. The socialization of collective continuity, and therefore, personal continuity, emphasizes the importance of the co-construction of narrative identity (McLean, 2015), with the present results expanding the role of co-constructors outside of the family to larger group and cultural narratives. Indeed, this study emphasizes the interdependent nature of life stories – the notion that our stories are not entirely our own. Although the current literature addresses the role that families (Fivush et al., 2008, McLean, 2015), media (Breen et al., 2017), and cultural narratives (McLean & Syed, 2016) play in helping the individual construct personal continuity, it is now clear from this study that there are numerous authors at work in constructing personal continuity as well.

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## Appendix A

1. Please begin by thinking about your life as if it were a book or novel. Imagine that the book has a table of contents containing the titles of the main chapters in the story. To begin here, please describe very briefly what the main chapters in the book might be. Please give each chapter a title, tell me just a little bit about what each chapter is about, and say a word or two about how we get from one chapter to the next. As a storyteller here, what you want to do is to give me an overall plot summary of your story, going chapter by chapter. You may have as many chapters as you want, but I would suggest having between about two and seven of them. We will want to spend no more than about 20 minutes on this first section of the interview, so please keep your descriptions of the chapters relatively brief.
2. Thinking back over your entire life, please identify a scene that stands out as a low point, if not the low point in your life story. Even though this event is unpleasant, I would appreciate your providing as much detail as you can about it. What happened in the event, where and when, who was involved, and what were you thinking and feeling? Also, please say a word or two about why you think this particular moment was so bad and what the scene may say about you or your life.  
[Interviewer note: If the participants balks at doing this, tell him or her that the event does not really have to be the lowest point in the story but merely a very bad experience of some kind.]
3. In looking back over your life, it may be possible to identify certain key moments that stand out as turning points -- episodes that marked an important change in you or your life story. Please identify a particular episode in your life story that you now see as a turning point in your life. If you cannot identify a key turning point that stands out clearly, please describe some event in your life wherein you went through an important change of some kind. Again, for this event please describe what happened, where and when, who was involved, and what you were thinking and feeling. Also, please say a word or two about what you think this event says about you as a person or about your life.
4. Please describe an event in your life in which you displayed wisdom. The episode might be one in which you acted or interacted in an especially wise way or provided wise counsel or advice, made a wise decision, or otherwise behaved in a particularly wise manner. What happened, where and when, who was involved, and what were you thinking and feeling? Also, what does this memory say about you and your life?
5. Your life story includes key chapters and scenes from your past, as you have described them, and it also includes how you see or imagine your future. Please describe what you see to be the next chapter in your life. What is going to come next in your life story? What does this say about who you are as a person?

6. Now I am going to ask you similar questions about one of your parents. Please begin by thinking about this parent's life as if it were a book or novel. Imagine that the book has a table of contents containing the titles of the main chapters in the story. To begin here, please describe very briefly what the main chapters in the book might be. Please give each chapter a title, tell me just a little bit about what each chapter is about, and say a word or two about how we get from one chapter to the next. As a storyteller here, what you want to do is to give me an overall plot summary of their story, going chapter by chapter. You may have as many chapters as you want, but I would suggest having between about two and seven of them. We will want to spend no more than about 20 minutes on this first section of the interview, so please keep your descriptions of the chapters relatively brief.
7. Thinking back over what you know about your parent's life, please identify a scene that might stand out as a low point, if not the low point in their life story. Even though this event is unpleasant, I would appreciate your providing as much detail as you can about it. What happened in the event, where and when, who was involved, and what do you think they were thinking and feeling? Also, please say a word or two about why you think this particular moment was so bad and what the scene may say about your parent or their life. [Interviewer note: If the participants balks at doing this, tell him or her that the event does not really have to be the lowest point in the story but merely a very bad experience of some kind.]
8. Can you identify certain key moments that stand out as turning points -- episodes that marked an important change in your or their life story? Please identify a particular episode in their life story that they might see as a turning point in their life. If you cannot identify a key turning point that stands out clearly, please describe some event in their life where they went through an important change of some kind. Again, for this event please describe what happened, where and when, who was involved, and what you think they were thinking and feeling. Also, please say a word or two about what you think this event says about them as a person or about their life.
9. Please describe an event in your parent's life in which you think they displayed wisdom. The episode might be one in which they acted or interacted in an especially wise way or provided wise counsel or advice, made a wise decision, or otherwise behaved in a particularly wise manner. What happened, where and when, who was involved, and what do you think they were thinking and feeling? Also, what does this event say about them and their life?
10. Your parent's life story includes key chapters and scenes from their past, as you have described them, and it also includes how you see or imagine their future. Please describe what you see to be the next chapter in your parent's life. What is going to come next in their life story?

- a. Do you think the next chapter of your parent's story is going to influence the next chapter of your story?
11. Now that you've told me about your life story, and your parent's life story, do you think there are other people who have a life story similar to yours?
12. Do you consider yourself a part of this group?
13. Do you view this group as having a shared story? For example, a shared story of historical events relevant to the group and its members? An Origin Story? A story that illustrates shared experiences for the individuals of the group?
  - a. If yes, we would like you to describe what that story is to the best of your abilities, in the same fashion that you talked about your story and your parent's story. Begin by thinking about the group story as if it were a book or novel. Imagine that the book has a table of contents containing the titles of the main chapters in the story. Please describe very briefly what the main chapters in the book might be for this group's story. Please give each chapter a title, tell me just a little bit about what each chapter is about, and say a word or two about how we get from one chapter to the next. For example, where did the story begin? What are the important events in the story? As a storyteller here, what you want to do is to give me an overall plot summary of the group story, going chapter by chapter.
14. Besides the chapters, when you think about the group story, do you see a high point, the point in the story best characterized by positive emotion such as joy, excitement, or happiness? If so, please describe story. For example, when did it happen? What happened? What is the significance, or meaning, of the story to this group?
15. In contrast, when you think about the group story do you see a low point, the point that is best characterized by negative emotion such as despair, disillusionment, terror, or guilt? If so, please describe that story. For example, when did it happen? What happened? What is the significance, or meaning, of the story to this group?
16. When you think about the group story do you see any turning points, where the story changed direction or the group itself experienced a substantial change? If so, please describe that story. For example, when did it happen? What happened? What is the significance, or meaning, of the story to the group?
17. When you think about the group story, can you think of a time where the group displayed wisdom? The episode might be one in which they acted or interacted in an especially wise way or provided wise counsel or advice, made a wise decision, or otherwise behaved in a particularly wise manner. What happened, where and when, who was involved, and what do you think they were thinking and feeling? Also, what does this

event say about the group?

18. Lastly, the group story can key chapters and scenes from their past, as you have described them, and it also includes how you see or imagine their future. Please describe what you see to be the next chapter in your group's story. What is going to come next in their story?
19. Do you think the next chapter of your group's story is going to influence the next chapter of your story?
20. Regarding the group stories you just described to me, could you describe how you learned about them? Was it from family, friends, or members of the community? Did you hear about it in the media or in school?
  - a. Are these stories you have heard in multiple places, or from multiple people?
21. When you think about this group story, do you see yourself playing a role in it? Are you a part of the story?
  - a. If yes, what is your role or part in the story?
22. If not, why do you think you don't see yourself as part of the story?