

The development of collective remembering

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This essay outlines a sociocultural, developmental approach to collective memory. This work is grounded in Halbwachs' (1950/1980) theory of collective memory and in recent prospective studies of collective remembering within families from early childhood through adolescence. The claim is that the basic process of collective remembering is present from the earliest conversations about the past between parents and children, but it is not until adolescence that collective memory is informed by family stories and by history. There are both positive and negative consequences of collective remembering as a function of the nature of the collective. In conclusion, researchers are urged to broaden their view of the collective in their studies of autobiographical and collective memory.

After the good times were over, as we grew older, we were to tell each other stories about the past, each adding his or her own fragments of pleasurable detail, until the joint memory became something larger than each single memory, and yet became something that each of us possessed fully, as if it were solely our own.

Wilson (1998, p. 142)

One of the enduring paradoxes of memory is that memories are clearly personal, owned by individuals to be savoured or silenced in the recesses of one's own consciousness, yet at the same time memories are clearly social, shared among friends and family, told and received. In reminiscing with others, we create memories that are simultaneously personal and social, individual and collective. In this essay we take a socio-cultural developmental approach to addressing

this issue. We first discuss theories of individual and collective aspects of memory, with a particular focus on Halbwachs' (1950/1980) developmental account. Then we describe research examining the process of collaborative remembering within families, a process that we argue leads to memories that are both deeply personal and collective.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Maurice Halbwachs' writings on collective memory, first in *The Social Frameworks of Memory* (1925; partially translated in the 1992 collection *On Collective Memory*) and then later in *The Collective Memory* (1950/1980), form the foundation of contemporary theories of collective memory (e.g., Hirst & Manier, 2008 this issue;

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Middleton & Brown, 2005; Middleton & Edwards, 1990; Wertsch, 2002; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008 this issue). Halbwachs spoke of the constant interplay between individual and collective memories: "One may say that the individual remembers by placing himself in the perspective of the group, but one may also affirm that the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories" (1925/1992, p. 40). Halbwachs proposed that individual memories are always dependent on social groups for their existence, and in that sense, all individual memory is collective. "The individual memory, in order to corroborate and make precise and even to cover the gaps in its remembrances, relies upon, relocates itself within, momentarily merges with, the collective memory" (1950/1980, p. 50). Even in the case of solitary reminiscing, Halbwachs argued, one is always recalling an event from a social perspective, and usually for social purposes. Halbwachs (1950/1980) gave the example of a traveller reflecting upon his ongoing experiences through the eyes of an absent loved one. Even when experiencing events for the first time, the traveller has in mind the reactions of others, which colour both his perception of the event and his recollection of it.

We agree with Halbwachs (1950/1980) and Middleton and Brown (2005) that individual and collective memories are radically interactive. In line with Wertsch (2002), we believe that the most useful question to ask is how the individual and the collective are related in memory, not which aspect of a memory is individual and which is collective. As a memory of an experienced event is collaboratively recollected and reconstructed, the memory changes, at times to become increasingly similar across participants (see Harris, Paterson, & Kemp, 2008 this issue), but a memory can also become more contested, as specific aspects of experienced events are negotiated, negated, disputed, or denied, a process we discuss in more detail later (cf. Cuc, Ozuru, Manier, & Hirst, 2006; Wertsch, 2002). Kansteiner (2002) referred to this active process of group reconstruction as *collective remembering*. As memories are shared, different aspects of events are highlighted and incorporated with each telling. Even if a memory product is achieved, it is not a static memory, but is instead subject to later revision. Moreover, these local rememberings are always informed by the larger (socially and culturally collective) myths and stories within which individual lives are embedded (Connerton, 1989; Elder,

1998; Wang, 2008 this issue). Thus, all enduring memories are amalgams of personal experience and integration of collaborative reminiscing with other participants. These local remembering interactions are embedded in socially and culturally mediated knowledge structures that provide a framework for understanding individual lives and families as defined within specific social, cultural, and historical contexts (Berntsen & Rubin, 2004; Bluck & Habermas, 2000; Fivush, 2004a, Fivush & Marin, 2007).

From a psychological perspective, we draw a distinction between representations of events that participants have experienced and representations that are constructed without personal experience. This distinction is similar to Halbwachs' (1950/1980) delineation between autobiographical and historical memory, and Tulving's (1983) between auto-noetic and noetic experiences (although see Wertsch & Roediger, 2008 this issue). The former, collaboratively constructed, representations retain components of the individually experienced event, such as perceptual-sensory details and experienced affect, whereas the latter consist only of received knowledge. Both can clearly be formative and instrumental in individual lives, but only the former are *autobiographical memory* representations. In practice, many memories are collections of both types of information. We argue that received knowledge of one's early life, of family history, and of historical and cultural events serves the important function of contextualising our individual and collective memories of personally experienced events. Moreover, personal events can take on different meanings when they are considered in their familial, historical, and cultural contexts, even long after the event has occurred. For instance, Halbwachs (1950/1980) referred to Stendhal's childhood memory of watching a man die on the street after being bayoneted in the back. Only later did Stendhal know that this event was part of a riot that marked the start of the French Revolution. His memory existed prior to his knowledge of the wider context for the event, but once that knowledge was received, it changed his interpretation of the event.

A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO COLLECTIVE MEMORY

How does a developmental approach clarify the notion of collective memory? Although several

researchers have studied conversational remembering in families (e.g., Hirst & Manier, 1996; Middleton & Edwards, 1990), their focus has been on the way different aspects of the memory are highlighted over time, not on the way individuals grow in their ability to participate in collective remembering over time. To our knowledge, only Halbwachs (1950/1980) has explicitly addressed the development of collective memory from early childhood. Halbwachs used the phenomenon of childhood amnesia as evidence for the impossibility of truly solitary, individual memories, and the cornerstone of his proposal that all memory is essentially social. “We recall nothing of early childhood because our impressions could not fasten onto any support so long as we were not yet a social being” (1950/1980, p. 35).

Yet Halbwachs did not make full use of a developmental argument to support his theory of social frameworks for memory, in part because he didn’t address the process by which collective memories form (Misztal, 2003) or when and why collective remembering becomes possible. Halbwachs’ proposal can now be addressed with contemporary data on children’s development in general and on the development of memory in particular. Halbwachs’ first assumption that can be addressed with developmental data is that memories are not possible in early childhood. We will argue that this is only true when one views memory in retrospect, from the point of view of an adult attempting to recall early experiences, and not from the perspective of a child’s memories during the period of so-called childhood amnesia. The next assumption that we will counter with current developmental evidence is Halbwachs’ (1950/1980, p. 35) claim that young children “are not yet social beings” and become socialised beings only later in development. We believe that prospective developmental evidence, in which we track the development of individual and collective aspects of memory into adolescence, can help clarify theories of individual and collective memory in adulthood.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Memory begins in infancy. As early as 6 months, infants are capable of reproducing actions that they had seen but not performed 24 hours earlier (Collie & Hayne, 1999). By 9–10 months, infants are capable of reproducing ordered sequences

they viewed as much as 1 month earlier (Bauer, 1996). Thus, even infants are capable of representing events in memory, although the ability to retain these events over time increases dramatically with age (Hayne, 2004). Critically, even these early, behaviourally expressed memories are affected by the social context in which infants and toddlers are learning and retrieving events. Bauer and Burch (2004) demonstrated that toddlers whose mothers were more verbally elaborative and affirming during the demonstration phase of an event sequence later produced more target actions from the event. From the earliest years, children are steeped in a social world that dramatically affects their learning, thinking, and remembering (Nelson, 2006).

For a memory to be collective, however, it must first be shareable with others. Whereas Halbwachs’ (1950/1980) view of childhood amnesia is most consonant with Piagetian perspectives of development, with the child portrayed as an unsocialised being who needed to advance cognitively before entering conventional society, Vygotsky (1978) viewed the child as initially and always affected by their social worlds. With a sociocultural view of development, everyday social interactions, especially language interactions, are the force that propels the child to higher levels of cognitive functioning. With regard to collective memory, the predominant way in which memories are shared within contemporary Western families is through parent–child conversations about past experiences (Fivush, Bohanek, Robertson, & Duke, 2004; Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 1996; Hirst & Manier, 1996), although for Halbwachs (1950/1980) memory conversations appeared to occur more often with grandparents or servants. The predominant form of the collective will vary across time and culture (see Wang, 2003, 2008 this issue, for a relevant discussion).

In contemporary Western cultures, parent–child reminiscing begins very early in children’s development, essentially from the time children start to combine words between 1½ and 2 years (Hudson, 1993; Nelson & Ross, 1980; Sachs, 1983). Parents are the driving force in these early conversations about the past, with the child providing a few words or a phrase in response to a parent’s question, or repeating the parent’s responses (Farrant & Reese, 2000). Yet children also initiate memory conversations from this age period (Eisenberg, 1985; Sachs, 1983), first by referring verbally to absent objects (*Choo-choo*, referring to a train from the previous day; Reese,

1999, p. 233), prior actions (*Hayley touched*, referring to ointments on a shelf that the child's sister had touched; Reese, 1999, p. 220), and recently completed events (*Hand-door*, when showing an uncle a finger that had gotten pinched in a door; Reese, 1999, p. 233). Children appear to have a social purpose in sharing these memories, and parents and other adults in a range of cultures treat these early verbal memories as conversational initiatives by responding with questions to draw out more information (Eisenberg, 1985; Farrant & Reese, 2000; Fivush & Fromhoff, 1988).

For children's autobiographical memory development, the parent's (typically the mother's) style of reminiscing in these early memory conversations is critical (see Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 2006 for a review). Highly elaborative mothers who ask many questions containing new information about the past event, particularly if these questions are open-ended (e.g., *What happened when we saw the choo-choo?*) have children who later tell richer narratives about their past to a researcher (Haden, Haine, & Fivush, 1997; Hudson, 1993; Reese, 2002a). Importantly, this is the case both for events that have been discussed with the mother and for events never before discussed. Thus it is not simply that children have learned how to tell specific event narratives in specific ways in earlier mother-child reminiscing. Rather, the claim is that children have internalised their mothers' style of reminiscing by the end of preschool at about age 4-5 (Reese, Haden, & Fivush, 1993), although internalisation of maternal style is already well underway by as early as age 2½ (Farrant & Reese, 2000). Through their questions about the past, mothers appear to teach children what aspects of memories are important to discuss, and how much detail to provide to others about events in their lives. This phenomenon is reminiscent of Halbwachs' (1950/1980) example of a traveller constructing stories in his head for an implied listener; once memories are socially embedded, the very experience of events becomes coloured by the way in which we anticipate sharing these stories with others. During the preschool years, children are learning the forms and functions of remembering; even as events are experienced, parents are helping their children to encode these experiences in terms of how they will later tell these stories to others (Haden, Ornstein, Eckerman, & Didow, 2001; Tessler & Nelson, 1994).

Research is mixed on whether children also incorporate the *content* of adults' reminiscing about specific past events. Clearly children can

be misled by inaccurate post-event information in their subsequent retellings (e.g., Ceci, Leichtman, & White, 1999), but when not misled, children primarily report new, yet still accurate, information that they or their mothers had not mentioned in previous conversations about a particular past event (Cleveland & Reese, 2008; Fivush & Schwarzmüller, 1998). As we stressed previously, collective remembering does not result in a static memory product; rather, with each telling, new aspects of the memory are highlighted by both participants.

Thus, from as early as the second year of life, children are sharing their memories in conversations with others. Yet does this early memory sharing qualify as collective remembering in Halbwachs' (1950/1980) sense? Hudson (1990) found that 2-year-olds were more responsive in a memory conversation with a researcher when discussing past events they had previously discussed with their mothers, but they didn't necessarily recall more information about those events compared to previously undiscussed events. This finding seems congruent with the adult literature in which group remembering can increase confidence in a memory but may not always enhance actual recall (French, Garry, & Mori, 2008 this issue; see Harris et al., 2008 this issue, for a review). We argue that the basic process of collective remembering, which consists of mutual reminding of the past, is already taking place in these early conversations. Although most of the shared remembering consists of the mother reminding the child of different aspects of the event, we have observed instances in which even very young children remind the mother of temporarily forgotten aspects of the event (see Middleton & Brown, 2005, for a discussion of similar metacognitive talk in reminiscing among adults). In this sense, parents and children are already building memories together from their earliest conversations about the past. In the following example,¹ a mother and her 3-year-old daughter jointly reconstruct a treasure hunt at the beach (Cleveland & Reese, 2005, p. 388):

Mother: We went digging in the sand.

Daughter: Umm, and that was when um the yellow spade broke.

Mother: Good girl, I'd forgotten that. Yes, the yellow spade broke, and what happened?

¹ All excerpts are reprinted with permission. Participants' names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

Daughter: Um, we had to um dig with the other end of the yellow bit one.

Mother: That's right. We used the broken bit, didn't we?

One year later, when this child was 4 years old, she and her mother achieved a more sophisticated version of collective remembering, in which the child disputed part of the mother's initial recollection of going to the circus (Reese & Cleveland, 2006, p. 37). The disagreement was eventually resolved in the child's favour, much to her delight:

Mother: What else do you remember about the circus?

Daughter: Um, we had candy floss. [cotton candy]

Mother: Oh, yes, we did, didn't we?

Daughter: Yes. And Zinnia's friend—

Mother: [interrupts] No, actually, no we didn't have candy floss.

Daughter: Yes.

Mother: Not there, that was when we went to the gypsy fair. That was next door to the circus. We had something, we did have something else to eat, though, before we went to the circus. What did Zinnia buy for us? She had money to buy . . . ?

Daughter: Popcorn.

Mother: That's right. But the candy floss we had another day but it was right beside the circus, wasn't it? But it wasn't on the day that we went to the circus.

Daughter: Yes, it was.

Mother: Not the candy floss, dear. No.

Daughter: Yes, but they threw it over. Off the edge.

Mother: Ohhh, so they did.

Daughter: Yeah.

Mother: How did we get the candy floss? You, you're absolutely right. Good girl.

Daughter: Cause they threw it over the fence.

Mother: That's right. [child laughs] I went to hand it back to one of the performers.

This child's persistence in negotiating this memory is probably due in no small part to her mother's earlier collaborative perspective on remembering, accompanied by the mother's acknowledgement that even her own memory is imperfect. Other mothers attempt to silence their children's memory discrepancies, sometimes even of the child's subjective experience, as in the

following example of a mother and 3-year-old son discussing a visit to the dentist (Cleveland & Reese, 2005, p. 380):

Mother: Was it painful?

Son: No.

Mother: It wasn't painful? Why wasn't it painful?

Son: Because it wasn't.

Mother: Okay alright, then was your mouth sore? Your mouth wasn't sore? Not even the next day?

Son: No.

Mother: Okay then that's good, I'm glad you don't remember that.

Mothers who support their children's perspective of an event have children who engage more willingly in reminiscing in the early preschool years with their mothers (Cleveland & Reese, 2005) and with others (Cleveland, Reese, & Grolnick, 2007). Their mothers are implicitly instilling a view of memory as a reconstructive and collaborative process. We speculate that these children will grow up to enjoy reminiscing more, and to engage in it more often, than children whose mothers adopt a more static, reproduction view of memory. Mothers' style of reminiscing during the preschool years may even affect the age of adolescents' earliest memories. Adolescents dated their first memories back to an earlier age if their mothers were relatively more elaborative than repetitive in memory conversations with them during early childhood (Jack, MacDonald, Reese, & Hayne, 2007). We only somewhat facetiously suggest that one reason for the very late age of Halbwachs' earliest memory at 10½ years (1950/1980, p. 36) was that his parents did not engage in a collaborative approach to reminiscing with him during early childhood.

It must be emphasised that even early collective remembering is bidirectional. Parental reminiscing draws children into collective remembering, but children's individual skills play an important role in this developmental process as well. Hirst and Manier (2008 this issue) argued that one must take the individual into account in understanding collective memory, and we add that this is true even when the individual is a young child. Indeed, toddlers with advanced self-awareness show evidence of faster development in their verbal memory abilities (Harley & Reese, 1999). These early verbal memories change dramatically with age, such that by 3 years, children

can tell a relatively understandable story about a past event to a naive listener (Fivush, Haden, & Adam, 1995). Their verbal memory abilities continue to become more sophisticated in the preschool years as they gain clearer insights into their own and others' mental states (Perner & Ruffman, 1995; Welch-Ross, 1997) and as they become better able to link the past to the present (Povinelli, 1995; Welch-Ross, 2001). As children develop increasing awareness of "mind", that they and others have mental states, thoughts, emotions, desires and beliefs, they become increasingly able to engage in more reflective collective reminiscing, especially in terms of interpreting, evaluating and negotiating the past. Collective reminiscing in which different aspects of the past event are highlighted and negotiated, especially the thoughts and emotions of the participants, helps children understand that memory is a constructed representation and not an exact copy of the past event; what I recall may or may not be the same as what you recall (Fivush, 2000; Fivush & Nelson, 2006). In this way, collective reminiscing helps children's memories to become more deeply personal. Through sharing the event with others, and reflecting on one's own and other's mental states, children become increasingly aware that their memory is linked to their own thoughts and emotions about the event which may be different from another's thoughts and emotions. It is through collective reminiscing that children develop the awareness that their memories are their own.

Thus, individual characteristics of the child are important for their development of individual autobiographical memory, and their ability to enter into collective reminiscing. However, all of these initial skills and predilections coalesce through early social interaction and, at the same time, appear to propel mothers into becoming even more elaborative in their reminiscing (Reese, 2002a; Reese & Cleveland, 2006; Reese & Newcombe, 2007; Welch-Ross, 2001). Together these individual and social factors account for the emergence of autobiographical memory, and for the gradual end of childhood amnesia (Fivush & Nelson, 2004; Nelson & Fivush, 2004; Reese, 2002a,b). Thus, on the basis of the developmental evidence, we agree with Halbwachs (1950/1980) that truly solitary remembering is virtually impossible, and that our memories are always coloured by social perceptions and experiences. But unlike Halbwachs, we suggest that social influences permeate memory from the very beginning of

representational memory in the first 2 years of life, and that collective remembering is possible soon after when children engage in conversations about the past with others in their lives.

COLLECTIVE REMEMBERING IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD AND BEYOND

During the preschool period, however, the primary function of reminiscing in Western culture for the child, and perhaps also for the parent, is still to develop the child's individual autobiography and self-knowledge (Bird & Reese, 2006, in press; Reese, Bird, & Tripp, 2007). Changes in the social and cognitive worlds of children as they transition into adolescence dramatically expand the scope of the collective influences on memory, and allow for the development of family and cultural identity (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, in press; Fivush et al., 2004; Hirst & Manier, 1996). Collective remembering with older children expands to include stories told of, about, and by others. Although children are steeped in parental stories about family from the moment of birth (Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, Scwagler, & Rimmer, 1995), it is not until the social and cognitive developments of early adolescence that children are able to participate fully in this kind of remembering. Specifically, in the transition into adolescence, children's social worlds expand to include the lives of friends and peers, and to include larger social institutions, such as school and organised recreational activities, creating a wider circle of interactions. Along with this, cognitive changes that allow for more sophisticated perspective taking and more integrated temporal and causal reasoning allow for memories that are more nuanced by differences in perspective and more organised across disparate events to form overarching life stories (Habermas & Bluck, 2000).

There are multiple aspects to this widening circle of collective memories. First, children begin to integrate stories about their own life that they themselves cannot remember, but that set their individual identity in a larger familial context, such as the story of their own birth or baptism. Second, through sharing family stories, children begin to integrate their own story in a wider circle of individual knowers and on a longer time frame, encompassing their own lives within the lifetimes of their parents and siblings. Third, children begin to place their own lives in the context of past

generations, creating an intergenerational sense of self. Finally, through collective remembering, children begin to place their own individual life events in a larger cultural and historical context, which imbues individual experiences with collective meaning (see Fivush, in press; Fivush et al., in press; Pratt & Fiese, 2004; for further arguments).

This transition has already begun towards the end of early childhood when children eagerly request, and parents are starting to tell, stories of the children's early lives as a means of establishing individual identity within the family context. For instance, some parents repeatedly tell their children the story of their birth, with some emphasis on what the child was like as an individual entity, but with the primary focus on the child as part of an extended family network (Reese, 1996, p. 33):

Mother: Well, what happened then was that Mum and Dad they got on the telephone and they rang up Grandma and Granddad, or first they rang Gran Anna at home. They said, "We've got a little girl!" We were just so happy. Then we rang Grandma and Granddad in Auckland. Then we rang Philippa and Michael in London. Then we rang Peter and Jane and Diana and Tom in Wellington. We rang everyone, and we said, "Tell everybody we've got a girl and she's called Sarah. Yippee!"

Mothers tell these birth stories in much greater detail with school-age children than with preschool children (Reese, Hayne, & MacDonald, 2008), and intriguingly, children begin to adopt these stories as part of their own autobiography even though they obviously cannot remember these events (Linde, 1993). In addition to stories of the child's own earlier life, families also engage in negotiated stories of shared experience that integrate multiple perspectives and timelines, as illustrated in this example from a family of four (mother, father, preadolescent son, and adolescent daughter) discussing when the family pet dog, Max, died (< > indicates overlapping speech) (Fivush et al., in press):

Mother: That's because he was sick. You know and there was that big cancerous spot < there.
 Son (Jack): And I > remember sitting on the couch back there watching you all cry [unintelligible]
 Mother: Yeah. Do you remember how old you were?

Daughter (Jessica): But I remember you didn't cry because you weren't that close to him.

Father: I bet > Jack was in first grade then.

Son: Hmmm.

Mother: Yeah, yeah and then we had ah. Daddy and I brought Max in the car so that the veterinarian could put Max to sleep.

Son: Mmm.

Mother: And I think I took it the hardest because Max was in our lives since Jessica, I was pregnant with Jessica.

Daughter: Before.

Mother: And Max was our first baby, Daddy and I.

Daughter: Because I, I looked in the photo albums and saw a picture of you and Dad both holding Max by the balloons saying that you were going to have a baby, which was me.

Mother: Yeah. And that's why Max was in our life all that time and it was real sad when we had to put him in the car. And Daddy remembers this cuz I don't think, Daddy, Bill, you haven't uh was that the first dog you put to sleep?

Father: Yeah, it was horrible.

In addition to sharing their individual perspectives on this event, creating an interwoven collective story of what occurred, this family is also constructing an explicit collective family timeline. The mother specifically asks the children how old they were at the time of this event, and the father places chronological age in coordination with cultural timelines defined by schooling. Even more interesting, we see the beginning of a timeline that stretches back before the children were born, into a familial past in which the daughter was not yet born, and even back to a time before the parents had met and established a shared history. When the mother states that this was the first dog that the father had to put to sleep, it carries the implication that both the mother and father had experiences independent of each other in the distant past, yet have now constructed a shared history in which they both agree on what occurred. Thus family reminiscing creates collective memories among the family members as well as collective histories that stretch back before individual family members can remember.

Crucially for Halbwachs' (1950/1980) notion of collective memory, in early adolescence we also see the beginning of individual history being integrated with cultural history. Individuals are

understood within the framework of the family history, and the family is understood within the framework of the larger sociocultural history. This understanding can be seen in the following excerpt of family reminiscing. Here, a Mexican-American family is discussing the day at school with their two adolescent sons over the dinner table. They are talking about one son's science project (Son 1) and the other son's history project (Son 2), when the father states (Fivush, in press):

Father: Let's talk a little bit about the Mexican Revolution. You know what's the difference?

Son 2: What?

Father: Now, here in the States, what they call the American Revolution is really ...

Son 1: It's < British.

Father: Is really > the War of Independence. In Mexico, we call that the War of Independence. And what here in the States they call the Civil War, is what we in Mexico call the Revolution.

Mother: < The Revolution. >

Father: The War of Independence in Mexico was in 18 ...

Mother: Even before the um, the Americans did it.

Father: No!

Mother: No?

Father: < Huh uh. The Americans ...

Mother: [Unintelligible]. >

Father: ... The American Independence in 1776 ...

Son 2: Does all this have to do with my brother's report?

Mother: Uh huh.

Father: No, it has to do with your general knowledge.

Mother: Do you all want to have general knowledge?

Son 2: Yeah.

Here, the parents are helping the children to construct a collective representation of cultural history that differs from the history of their adopted country. In this way, the family is creating multiple identities. Note that by using the personal pronoun "we" in relation to Mexican history, the father is explicitly constructing an account of these historical events that relates the individual to the collective. The parents also attempt to coordinate the historical timelines from their two cultures for their children. Thus intergenerational narratives, linking individuals to their familial and historical past, help to create

collective representations within which individual memories are understood and negotiated. Individual identity is understood in terms of familial and cultural collective identity.

CONSEQUENCES OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Critically, collective representations, even when about problematic or traumatic pasts, seem to be beneficial for individuals. Middle-class American adolescents who know a great deal about their family history, and engage in family remembering that is more collaborative and validating, display high levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Bohanek, Marin, Fivush & Duke, 2006; Fivush et al., in press; Marin, Bohanek & Fivush, in press). Even for cultures that have been oppressed and silenced, such as first-nation Canadians, adolescents who are part of cultures that have claimed their history and used this history to empower the present show higher levels of well-being. In contrast, adolescents who are part of cultures that have been silenced and have not been able to reclaim their cultural history show limited abilities to construct coherent narratives of their own experiences, and also show high levels of depression and suicidality (Chandler & Proulx, in press). Thus individual identities are construed within cultural stories that provide a collective interpretive framework. The power of collective memory in providing a framework for individual meaning making is clear.

Equally clear is that there is not a monolithic cultural story or collective memory, which raises the question of perspective or standpoint (Fivush, 2004a; Harding, 1993) in collective memory, and how much of a memory must be shared for it to count as "collective". Indeed, some events are completely denied at the cultural level (e.g., holocaust denial, denial of sexual violence against women and children) and are never spoken of; collective memory of these kinds of events can only exist in a renegade form, as those whose experience has been denied band together to share and validate their memories (Caruth, 1995). Intriguingly, this process can also change the culturally dominant collective memory across historical time (Enns, McNeilly, Corkery, & Gilbert, 1995). At the local level, silencing can also occur within family reminiscing (Fivush, 2000, 2004a). Family members may negate or dispute particular aspects of experience, leading

to a contested or silenced memory. The consequences of this kind of silencing for individual meaning making are severe; silence leads to a fragmented sense of self and, often, post-traumatic stress symptoms (Fivush, 2004b, 2004c; Janoff-Bulman, 1992; see Wessel & Moulds, 2008 this issue, for a discussion of therapeutic remembering with PTSD patients). The fact that silenced and disputed memories continue to be recalled by individuals, and that collective memories change over time, points to the continuing dialectic between individual and collective memory.

CONCLUSIONS

We conclude by offering our thoughts on the future of research on the development of collective memory. First, we need to ascertain the specific skills that enable children to engage in more complex forms of collective remembering. Clearly children's early and later developing representational skills are important, as well as their ability to link past to present and future. Their understanding of the culture's conventions of time, and their ability to use this knowledge as a framework for reconstructing the past, is also critical (see Friedman & Lyon, 2005; Halbwachs, 1980, Chapter 3). Moreover, as this review indicates, there are individual differences in collective memory that need to be explored in more depth. From our research with families it is apparent that some adults adopt a more collaborative approach to memory, whereas other adults view memory as a more insular process. Participation in and acceptance of the collective memory can be beneficial in some situations, but can be detrimental in others. More highly collective memories may help establish shared identities and bring individuals into a sense of shared purpose, and this collaboration seems to be related to a higher sense of well-being. On the other hand, acceptance of the collective memory can lead to distortions that may have negative consequences in forensic contexts (see French et al., 2008 this issue), and may also lead to lower individual well-being if one's own experience is discrepant from and therefore silenced by the collective memory.

Researchers could also expand their scope of the collective. Although to date developmental psychologists have focused almost exclusively on parent-child reminiscing, and especially on mother-child reminiscing, Halbwachs (1950/1980)

reminded us that grandparents may play a unique role in the child's collective remembering. Grandparents are a child's link to the distant past, and it is primarily through grandparents that a child can gain access to lived experiences of what would otherwise be mere history (see Pratt & Feise, 2004, for some research on this). As Assmann (1995) noted, memories of lived experiences typically only last over three generations. Unless they are preserved in written form, either through a diary or in a history text, lived experiences are lost. Perhaps we tend to recount to our children only those memories that were passed down to us as lived experiences: the autobiographical memories of our parents, grandparents, and sometimes our great-grandparents (Reese, 2005). Thus, we may pass down to our children our grandmother's autobiographical memories that she told to us from an autozoetic perspective. But our children may not pass these same memories down to their children because we were only able to tell them from a noetic perspective, which is necessarily less vivid. With passing generations, stories that began as rich in autozoetic detail may become more codified and schematic. These stories may remain critical in family and cultural history as more mythic or cautionary tales but they may not have the emotional force of real lives in real time. From more distant generations all we tend to pass down, at best, are historical memories: names, marriages, births, characteristics. Of course, knowledge is preserved orally in some cultures more successfully than in others (Misztal, 2003). For example, in Māori culture, with its extreme emphasis on oral memory, the *whakapapa* or descent line is passed down orally over many generations (Reese et al., 2008; Te Maire Tau, 2003). Yet the information that is passed down is again primarily genealogical and not based on lived experience. Thus in explicating the idea of collective memory we need to distinguish between collective memories of shared experiences, which emerge very early in individual development, collective memories of family and cultural experiences steeped in rich narratives, which seem to emerge in early adolescence, and collective knowledge of familial and cultural history that informs the richer narratives but may not have the same compelling force as do the narratives of lived experiences.

We began this essay by asking what developmental psychology can bring to the study of collective memory. We conclude that a developmental approach offers a unique perspective on

the individual and social components of collective remembering. What can a collective memory approach add to the study of memory development? A collective memory approach helps us turn our gaze beyond the parent-child dyad and beyond the family to the wider collectives that inform memory. Developmental psychologists may already have been heading in that direction, but Halbwachs' (1950/1980) theory offers us an insightful framework upon which to fasten our investigations.

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