

PATTERNS IN INDIVIDUAL ENDORSEMENT  
OF SOCIETAL METANARRATIVES

by

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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Culturally shared beliefs about societies and humanity play a prominent part in world events, from beliefs about the histories and destinies of nations to beliefs about the appropriate relationship between humanity and the natural world. Many of these beliefs are “metanarratives,” simplified representations of past and future societal trends, which often have narrative elements, such as goals, dramatic features, a sense of suspense for group members, and affective judgments about the passage of events over time.

In this exploratory study, lifelong residents of the United States ( $N = 299$  undergraduate students and 88 members of a web sample of older adults) indicated their degree of agreement with 73 metanarrative statements. Factor analysis of the students’ personal belief scores for the 73 metanarratives revealed a pattern of clustering into six factors, indicating that people tend to believe in families of metanarratives. The six factors were Traditional Religion, American Secular Values, International Cooperation, Eco-Romanticism, Anti-Government Cynicism, and Rational Progress. The web sample largely replicated this structure, but with only four factors. The factors were highly correlated with political party affiliation and other psychosocial and demographic variables, including religiousness, Saucier “isms” factors, and MFQ moral foundations.

Participants were also asked about the extent to which some of their strongest beliefs were reflected in their personal activities: career choice, leisure time, spending money, voting, joining groups, reading and viewing, and discussion. The 73 metanarratives were coded for several narrative features: evaluative schema (such as Progress or Looming Catastrophe), presence of standard story elements (context, problem, outcome), presence of goals, and presence of references to cognitively exceptional elements (circumstances beyond the ordinary), such as the sacred, transcendental, unique, or extreme. For both samples, metanarratives with an evaluative schema indicating two possible paths were more motivating than those with only one outcome (e.g., stability or a cycle of recurring ups-and-downs). Further, those with goals were more motivating than those without, and for the web sample, those with cognitively exceptional elements were more motivating than those without. Further study of metanarratives should help to better illuminate the factors leading to individuals' decisions to participate in their larger societies.

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“Times are going to change and there’s no stopping it.

That doesn’t mean we can’t make the best of it.

Turn the world upside-down from what it already is.”

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# CHAPTER I

## OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

### Introduction

How do individuals decide when and how to participate in their broader societies? And how do societies decide what to do with their resources – their material goods, money, time, and attention? The “rational actor” model of political and economic behavior proposes that people and societies operate by weighing the costs and benefits of each of their alternative courses of action. Psychologists and other social scientists, however, have shown that even when actors intend to make decisions in this way, their efforts are limited by cognitive resources, such that framing, anchoring, and other cognitive phenomena will influence the results, a model of “bounded rationality.”

Moreover, an abstract model of costs and benefits does not reflect how people typically think about the societies in which they live. Rather, our thoughts about our societies are heavily influenced by the beliefs group members share about their societies, and by narratives, ranging from the “macro” level of historical events to the “micro” level of what we know about our leaders’ previous behavior.

Throughout the twentieth century, identity-based group beliefs played a prominent role in international events, from the relatively benign influences of nationalism to the world-wrenching forces of totalitarian ideologies. The same holds true so far for the twenty-first century. Powerful and less assuming nations alike confront the challenges of economic, social, and environmental stressors, while marginalized groups work to bring their own concerns to the attention of world leaders. In each case, competing groups seek to expand the influence of their own beliefs, the frameworks from which they view the issues they find most important.

Each of these frameworks is accompanied by (often) simple narratives, describing how events came to be, or where we will find ourselves in the future, depending on whether we take one course of action or another. Further, even when we do think about the costs and benefits of alternative courses of action, the way we think about possible consequences also typically takes a narrative form. This means that understanding the

ways in which people interact with societal-level narratives is critical to understanding the relationship between people and their societies, and hence both to understanding how societies function and how people can be mobilized to act in support of various causes.

The Role of Metanarratives. Both agents of change and those who seek to preserve the status quo often call upon simplified representations of past and future societal trends as one of their primary methods for mobilizing group members' behavior. These representations, or "metanarratives," can function both as an expression of group identity and as prescriptions of future activities for group members. Whether metanarratives do lead to action is presumably influenced by their two-fold nature: They are culturally transmitted beliefs, and to some extent they could be said to be narratives, as they share some features with very simple stories. Specifically, many metanarratives have a rudimentary story structure (a context, a problem, and an anticipated resolution); many employ selective focus, as narratives do, to highlight and intensify the situations they describe; and, like narratives, all convey affective judgments about the passage of events over time.

Previous empirical research on metanarratives has been almost exclusively limited to qualitative studies. In this dissertation, I employ correlational analyses to learn more about the relationship between the narrative elements in metanarratives and the actions of those who believe in them. This exploratory study will not include experimental manipulations but should lay the groundwork for such in future research.

### Narratives and Human Thought

Storytelling may be a human cultural universal (Sugiyama, 2001), and it is perhaps inevitable that culturally shared ideas about the groups we live in will include narrative elements. It is my contention that the types of beliefs we share about our societies (metanarratives) often have narrative features, and that the presence and types of these narrative features may influence our personal motivation to act consistently with these beliefs. In this section, I will discuss the features and functions of narratives, before turning to metanarratives more specifically.

Narratives and Non-Narratives. At its most basic, a narrative is a communication about the relationship between events occurring in time. Narratives range from literary

works of art (written stories, films, and oral traditions) to simple communications about events of everyday life. Narrative may be contrasted with two other ways of experiencing the world: through a more “direct,” impressionistic encounter, and through the creation and imposition of a cognitive structure of general laws and roles.

Although the tendency to detect and expect patterns cannot be escaped, much of life is lived in a relatively phenomenologically “present” manner, without attention to systems or narratives. Infants and very young children have not yet learned to use these more complex ways of organizing knowledge, and adults with dementia may lose their capacity for systemic and narrative thinking, such that much of their lives are lived in this mode of relatively direct encounter. Dedicated practitioners of the meditative traditions of both major branches of Buddhism deliberately aspire to this perspective, to experience things directly as they are, without filtering through the interpretive perspective of formal conceptual systems, goals, and self-storylines, striving instead to meet life with a “beginner’s mind” (Suzuki, 1970). Thus, some people may not structure their experiences narratively, although in the case of dementia patients, we consider them impoverished as a consequence.

Another way to organize experience is through the creation and imposition of a cognitive structure of general laws and relationships. This type of universalizing, systemic orientation is typical of positivist science, ideologies, and formal philosophy, where one finds systematic argumentation involving logical links between propositions. Some adherents of systematizing, such as analytic philosophers and positivist scientists, hold that their systems of beliefs are open to revision based on new evidence or better arguments, whereas others, especially proponents of ideologies, tend to believe that their systems are already established as true and correct.

Everyday life can also be experienced with a systematizing orientation, such as through learning the normative expectations associated with various social roles (e.g., Rom Harré’s “role-rule” approach) (1972). Bruner (1986) notes that the “paradigmatic” mode of thought involved in systematizing “employs categorization or conceptualization and the operations by which categories are established, instantiated, idealized, and related one to the other to form a system” (p.12). This mode “seeks to transcend the particular

by higher and higher reaching for abstraction” (Bruner, 1986, p.13).

Bruner (1986) contrasts the systemic, abstract generalizations of paradigmatic thought with the concrete, time-embedded attention to particulars made possible through narrative thought. This mode, he says, “deals in human or human-like intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course. It strives to put its timeless miracles into the particulars of experience, and to locate the experience in time and place” (p.13). Whereas paradigmatic systems are generally accepted as “correct” or “incorrect,” narratives engage the emotions more strongly through identification and other forms of engagement, and through judgments of relevance and meaning.

Accounts of human activities (in biographies, histories, and of course fiction) are typically rendered in narrative forms, and reasoned arguments and descriptions of how things work (from simple tasks through the most esoteric sciences) are normally presented in paradigmatic forms. Narrative is useful, however, in making “paradigmatic information” more accessible. Slovic (2008) has contrasted the motivational power of narrative and other imagery with “facts and figures” about people in need and concluded that the former is far more powerful in eliciting help. When asked how to help skeptical outsiders understand what science is all about, noted physicist Freeman Dyson (2009) suggests, “Just tell a story.” Moreover, in some contexts the application of principles based seemingly in abstract concepts (such as justice) is inextricably tied up with narrative modes of thinking. Johnson (1993) tells us that when we employ principles or make reference to moral frameworks, images, or ideals, “we do so always relative to an implicit, tacit narrative.” He further explains that “...morally adequate descriptions of actions usually involve narrative contexts, ... we cannot assess character independent of narrative setting, and ... we can almost never decide (reflectively) how to act without considering the ways in which we can continue our narrative construction of our situation” (p.156).

In sum, humans are narrative creatures. We tend to find narratives everywhere. On its own, a situation may seem to be static, but as Freyd (1987) has noted, any static representation may have within it an implied dynamic component; “the perceptual system... will seek out implicit evidence of change” (p.427). That is, the mind may infer

or speculate on how the situation came to be as it is, and also anticipate what may happen next. Representations of situations (e.g., paintings) often suggest past events or future consequences and thus can be somewhat (if only vaguely) narrative in nature. As Crite (1975) succinctly puts it, “if an experienced present is not simply a dissociated ‘now’ but contains at least a vestige of memory and a leaning into anticipation, then an incipient narrative form will be implicit in it” (p.32).

Gergen and Gergen (1988) have identified five components that they find particularly important in an “intelligible narrative,” at least in contemporary, Western societies. First, the story must establish a particular outcome as desirable, and they note that this initial rule already introduces an evaluative judgment; interesting stories are never value-neutral. Second, the person presenting the story focuses on selecting events relevant to the desired outcome, which implies that many events both relevant and irrelevant to the outcome may be omitted. Third, the events are presented in a particular order, typically a “linear, temporal sequence,” though of course in literary works there are often flashbacks and other variations. Fourth, causal linkages between events must be established in order for the story to make sense. Finally, there must be “demarcation signs” to indicate when the story begins and ends, and the presence of any important transitional periods. The authors describe a study of real and fake courtroom testimony, which found that participants couldn’t identify which were real, but they were more likely to believe that stories were real “in which events relevant to an end point were dominant and in which causal linkages among elements were more numerous.” In related research, in a series of experimental manipulations, Pennington and Hastie (1992) have established that in jury trials, whether the evidence is presented in the form of a story “mediates jurors’ decisions, confidence in decisions, and the effects of credibility evaluations” (p.195-196), that is, whether witnesses appear credible.

It should be noted that two types of representations of events in time are not narratives at all, although closely related to them. Event schemas (Schank & Abelson, 1977) are mental constructs of how particular types of activities are conventionally expected to occur. For example, a restaurant meal schema for the current-day United States typically involves being seated, reviewing a menu, placing an order, waiting for

the food to arrive in courses, eating, receiving a bill, paying the bill, and leaving a tip. A narrative of a visit to a restaurant, by contrast, will describe a particular episode, and in order to qualify as a good story, it will probably show how something “disrupts the normal expectation of the script and requires attempting to set things right, overcoming obstacles, and in the end evaluating the result” (Nelson, 2004, p.97).

Another type of representation of events is found in annals, a form of historical record typical of medieval Europe, for example. As White (1980) explained, annals are simple lists of what happened, without any interpretive structure, sense of causality, or coherence, and hence, without meaning for the reader. Annals are less engaging and less memorable than histories, which are accounts of events presented in a more narrative fashion. (Chronicles are similar to annals but at least organized around a theme, such as a reign, and have more of a sense of internal coherence.)

Thus, we may note that two essential features of narratives are their focus on specific events rather than abstract norms, and their framing in terms of coherence, causality, and meaning.

Functions of Narrative. Narrative has been credited with many psychosocial functions. Schank and Berman (2002) detail many reasons why people tell stories: to meet our goals, such as “achieving catharsis, getting attention, winning approval, seeking advice, and describing ourselves” and also to have effects on our listeners (e.g., give them information, lead them to feel a certain way) and to satisfy the micro-goals of the conversation we are in (e.g., showing responsiveness to others).

Because narratives often address matters of explanation and causality, they have an important “sense-making” function. They help to “impose order on otherwise disconnected events, and to create continuity between past, present, and imagined worlds” (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p.19). Stories are a method of “demystifying deviations” from the expected (Bruner, 1998; Ochs & Capps, 1996). In the context of religious stories, Burkert (1996) explains that people prefer a “surplus of causality” to give meaning to otherwise possibly random events, because it is easier to accept events that are “understandable” or to have some idea of how to act on one’s behalf to improve the situation. As Wilson and Gilbert (2005) have found, sense-making facilitates emotional

“recovery” from events, whether good or bad.

Narratives are socially shared models of the world (Brockmeier & Harré, 2001). Ochs and colleagues (1992) describe the potential educational role of story “co-narration” during family times such as dinners and car-pooling. As family members jointly recount the day’s events, children learn to propose, challenge, and reconstruct theories of how things work, how people act, and other useful knowledge. Ochs and her colleagues believe that such ordinary discussions may form the foundation for more sophisticated scientific thought.

Narrative also serves important developmental and social functions. Stories may be important in teaching self-other contrast (comparing stories of “me” to stories of others), as well as self-world contrast (stories about the past and the future, and worlds outside of this one), to help develop the “culturally embedded self” (Nelson, 2003a). They may contribute to teaching children theory of mind (Nelson, 2003b), and appear to be one of the most effective ways for adults to understand and experience the perspectives of others (Brockmeier, 2009). Stories are often more effective than facts at swaying public opinion (Westen, 2009), and in works of history, both formal and casual, narratives build associations between events and moral meaning (White, 1978).

Finally, narratives may have been of evolutionary value to our early ancestors. Sugiyama (2001) considers narrative an effective solution to the problem of “the costs involved in firsthand information acquisition” (p.237). As she explains, telling stories requires little physical exertion, compresses time compared with direct experience, spares the audience the physical and social risks of experiencing potentially dangerous situations, and is flexible to meet a variety of local needs. Moreover, it can convey information to many people at once, even while they are engaged in other tasks. The religion scholar Walter Burkert (1996) notes that Vladimir Propp’s classic work on the consistent structure of Russian fairytales (e.g., a heroic quest in which the protagonist travels away from home, struggles, and eventually triumphs) echoes the primordial structure of the hunt for food, including the need to outwit or outfight competitors, as well as the shamanic vision-quest to retrieve the souls of the sick or to otherwise appease gods and spirits. Thus, some of the most popular and basic narrative forms may have

their roots in the patterns of basic human activity, structuring information in terms of actions, consequences, and their associated valuation for the people involved.

Cognitive Foundations of Narrative. Both Johnson (1993) and Winter (2001) discuss the cognitive foundation of narratives that makes them so fundamental to the human organization of information. They refer to the Source-Path-Goal schema that operates in stories, which is one of the most basic elements of thought and understanding. Every human activity, from satisfying hunger and thirst to creating a symphony, can be conceptualized in terms of a point of origin (a bodily sensation, a vision, a desire), an end-point, and a means to attain the end-point. A schema for balance also often features in narratives, whether this means righting a wrong, a quest and return, or some other means of regaining a sense of harmony and equanimity.

Note, though, the key differences between a narrative and an event schema, which may also be represented as a Source-Path-Goal. A schema is a generalized representation of how an activity is expected to take place, whereas a narrative is a communication about a specific instance. Further, a schema assumes a smooth and efficient series of events; although a story could in theory describe an instance of an optimal unfolding of events, it takes a conflict, flaw, or other disruption of expectations to create a story that will sustain interest. In classical Greek drama, this disruption was referred to as an *agon*, or conflict, and the point of the story is then to reach a resolution of the *agon* (or to reach the conclusion that it cannot be resolved).

Experiments with infants have demonstrated that humans attend to this type of cognitive structure from an early age. Gergely and Csibra (2003) habituated 12-month-old infants to an animated event representing goal-directedness, in which a moving ball jumps over an obstacle to join another ball. They then presented the infants with two alternatives, both of which showed the obstacle no longer present. In one, the moving ball retained the same movement as previously (jumping over where the obstacle had been), and in the other, the moving ball simply moves toward the other ball by the most efficient path available. Their research question was whether the children were habituated to the movement of the ball and expected it to continue moving in that way, or whether they had interpreted the scenario as representing goal-directed action and

expected the ball to behave most consistently with that, that is, to attempt to attain the goal in the most efficient manner. Because infants typically gaze for a measurably longer interval at novel or unexpected variants than at variants that are essentially the same as the habituated scenario, research employing this “sustained gaze” paradigm can help to reveal the expectations and assumptions that the infant has developed at a given age. In this study, the researchers did find that the less efficient movement was more interesting to the infants (they were more likely to gaze longer when the ball continued its original path). The researchers later replicated the results with 9-month-old infants but not with 6-month-olds (Csibra et al., 1999), concluding that this ability appears between six and nine months. They then went on to conduct similar tests with 9- and 12-month old infants, this time having the moving ball enter the scene already in motion, such that there were no cues as to whether its motion was self-propelled or whether it had been “thrown.” In both age groups, having the moving ball retain its old path once the obstacle had been removed seemed more novel and interesting to the children than having the moving ball take a more direct route. Although Gergely and Csibra were focusing on questions of goal-directedness and inferred animacy, their findings can also be taken to show that by the age of 9 months, children already have acquired the concept of efficiency, and find deviations from efficiency to be worthy of attention, a source of strangeness and interest. Likewise, we may expect that once a person has acquired a particular event schema, listening to a story in which the schema is violated will be more engaging than listening to one in which things follow as expected. The evolutionary benefits of this phenomenon are clear: Attending to problems should boost survival rates.

In the following sections, I will build on this argument, demonstrating that the human affinity for narrative extends to the ways in which we think about our group identities. Later, in Chapter II, I will present more research on narratives and describe certain narrative features that when found in metanarratives may influence people’s actions in the political domain.

#### Metanarratives: Definitions

A metanarrative is a special kind of authoritative story that exists as a generalization or pattern of how reality is believed to work, that is, how things generally

are, over time, for a group or an individual. Metanarratives are not about one event or series of events, but rather, about a generalized “all” of them in a particular context or domain, an aggregate story about reality in the form of an idealized abstraction, which can be found or attributed to underlie specific events. Unlike regular stories about a group or an individual, which can be long and complex, metanarratives are very succinct and can be conveyed in a very few sentences, which are normally (perhaps always) tied closely to a simple evaluative schema of change, such as progress or decline.

Societal metanarratives involve the defining characteristics of groups (for the group members). Metanarratives are among the cultural information that people learn about their societies and other social groups of which they are members. They are infused with identity and often include a strong prescriptive element, such as a group’s mission, destiny, or fate. Metanarratives are typically implicit knowledge and can sometimes be discerned from narratives (stories), and also from more expository arguments, especially political speech and lay theology. They can also be explicitly phrased as propositions about the group in the world and their patterns and/or directions over time; members of the group will recognize and endorse such propositions as typical beliefs of members of the group.

The term “metanarrative” originated with the philosopher Jean-François Lyotard (1979), who compared a French metanarrative of ever-increasing liberation with a German metanarrative of ever-increasing unity (at least in the domain of knowledge). Lyotard defined post-modernism as an attitude of skepticism toward metanarratives and asserted the desirability of being aware of one’s society’s dominant metanarratives and taking a critical stance toward them. The concept of the metanarrative is valuable beyond Lyotard’s original work and may readily adapted to the individual level, as a person may believe (implicitly or explicitly) that a given narrative theme predominates in his or her own life. An important related concept is “master narrative,” which refers to a metanarrative that claims or exercises authority.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This usage is the most prevalent but differs from the definitions proposed by historian Allan Megill (2007), who describes them thus: “(1) *narrative proper*, (2) *master narrative*, or synthesis, which claims to offer the authoritative account of some particular segment of history; (3) *grand narrative*, which claims to offer the authoritative account of history generally; and (4) *metanarrative* (most commonly, belief in God or in a

(Some societal metanarratives, too, exist at a more individual level, that is, a society has notions of how individuals should function in order to thrive. For example, a defining characteristic of the group may be that its members usually believe that “hard work and Christian virtues lead to financial success.” Such individual-focused metanarratives are of less interest here than those about the group or community, where an individual may try to find or create a role in order to participate as a key member of the group. The main distinction I’m making here is whether the metanarrative is about primarily individual ends and means, or about the group. I’m interested in how we conceive of – and sometimes choose to participate actively in – the larger societies we live in.)

#### Metanarratives: Related Constructs

It may be worthwhile to briefly discuss some equivalent or closely related terms used by others. These include national narrative, cultural script, political myth, group charter, collective memory, and historical framing.

National Narrative. Feldman (2001) refers to “national narratives” and “group narratives” as “group-defining stories” (p.129) that “both constitute the reality of the group, and at the same time constitute a way of thinking for each individual member” (p.132-133). They affect the form of autobiographical memories for group members, and they create an unconscious and automatic cognitive structure for interpreting events that affect the group. National narratives are metanarratives, or more elaborate stories including metanarratives.

Cultural Script. Hammack (2008) describes a “master narrative” as a “cultural script that is readily accessible to members of a particular axis of identity, whether that be a nation (as in the case of Israel and Palestine), an ethnic group, or a gender” (p.235). His foremost concern is understanding the relationship between metanarratives and personal narratives of identity. Again, cultural scripts are or contain metanarratives.

Political Myth. Tismaneanu (1998) tells us that people need political myths, because they provide frames of reference, and “relatively stable images with which to identify, galvanizing figures of a better order, and explanations for perceived or real

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rationality somehow immanent in the world), which serves to justify the grand narrative.” (p.167)

failure” (p.13). Girardet (1986) adds that “each political myth contains within itself a global and structured vision of the collective present and future” (p.180) “a vision of immanent order,” and mobilizing power. As he puts it, “political myth is the instrument of reconquest for a compromised identity” (p.181). Political myths include metanarratives as a key component, because they focus on group identity and direction.

Group Charter. Liu and Hilton (2005) refer to a certain type of historical narrative as a “group charter” (a term from Malinowski, 1926), which is an account of its origin and historical mission, which give the group roles (e.g., “defender of the free world”) and legitimize its actions in terms of historical experience. A group’s “charter” will motivate them to adopt policies and activities consistent with their mission, the group’s *raison d’être*. Group charters are metanarratives focused on the group’s purpose.

Group Belief. For Bar-Tal (1990), group beliefs are “convictions that group members (a) are aware that they share and (b) consider as defining their ‘groupness’” (p.36). Such beliefs, he says, “usually pertain to group identity, myths, goals, values, ideology, norms, tradition, or history” and serve as a bond first for group formation and then to sustain group existence. He notes that group beliefs are usually held with confidence (considered to be facts), are central and readily accessible, and serve to identify in-group and out-group members, among other potential functions. Group beliefs pertaining to the group’s goals and history, in particular, are metanarratives.

Collective Memory. Wertsch (2002) focuses his research on collective memory, which he believes focuses on a stable group essence, with a denial that the past is “past” but rather a belief that it is closely linked with the present, and favors unquestionable heroic narratives. By contrast, he claims, history prefers to distance itself from particular objectives, strives to be critical and reflective, and incorporates change and controversy as part of the interpretive process. To the extent that collective memories include identity-relevant information for group members today, they are also metanarratives.

Historical Framing. Against the value-neutral notion of history espoused by Wertsch, other historians assert that any interpretive account of events – that is, any “history” proper, as opposed to annals or a chronicle – must necessarily have moral implications. As White (1980) explains, “The demand for closure in the historical story is a demand, I suggest, for moral meaning, a demand that sequences of real events be

assessed as to their significance as elements of a *moral* drama” (p.20). He adds, “Where, in any account of reality, narrativity is present, we can be sure that morality or a moralizing impulse is present too” (p.22). This interpretive framework can be summarized in evaluative propositions, as will be demonstrated later when I discuss Cronon’s critique of Dust Bowl histories. The essence of any historical framing is its underlying metanarrative.

### Metanarratives: Criteria

To operationalize the concept of a metanarrative, let us establish that it must include the following features, which are explained in greater detail below: (a) a group or collective that an individual can identify with; (b) identity-focused content; (c) “present tense” temporality featuring an “imperfective aspect” (ongoing); (d) at least a certain degree of generality and abstraction; and (e) a generic evaluative structure, e.g., “matters are improving.” Further, metanarratives may be classified into three types: ontological, teleological, and simply descriptive (explained below).

Optionally, a metanarrative may include a variety of other features, which may influence their effectiveness in motivation action. Features often found in metanarratives include (a) a featured “other,” (b) a reference to causality, (c) specific individuals and events, as long as the events have causal implications for a generalized self, (d) idealized reference points and other designations of unusual or special status, and (e) general prescriptive information for group members. Finally, a metanarrative may fit a narrative structure with three basic components: context, problem, and outcome.

Let us look at each of these features in greater depth.

Necessary Features. All metanarratives must include or imply the existence of

(a) A group or collective that an individual can identify with. This group may be as broad as “humanity” (as it often is for religious or environmental metanarratives), but in the modern political context a metanarrative often focuses on one’s country, nation, or an interest group (e.g., ethnic group). A clan or aristocratic family might also have metanarratives.

(b) Identity-focused content. The information is group-defining and important to group members.

(c) “Present tense” temporality. Metanarratives typically represent current and

ongoing activity, with an “imperfective aspect” to denote ongoing temporal flow. For metanarratives that describe a formative event in the distant past (e.g., “God granted dominion over animals to humans”), there is an implied imperfective statement as well: “And that is why things are now as they are.”

(d) Generality and abstraction. To some degree, the actors, events, and other aspects of metanarratives should be general and abstract; details are not relevant. The past, present, and future conditions as described in the metanarrative are often essentialized or even idealized.

(e) Generic evaluative structure. Because the information is important to the group, group members considering it will experience affect, and because the information relates to events over time, the affect will include an evaluative judgment as to whether the situation has improved, declined, remained about the same, or some combination of these judgments.

Typology. Metanarratives must fit one or more of these types:

(a) Ontological. The metanarrative states “who we are”; it explains or justifies the group’s status. For example: “Our people are poor and powerless because long ago we were conquered by our neighbors.”

(b) Teleological. The metanarrative explains or justifies the group’s activities. Examples of teleological metanarratives are those that reflect a group charter, a divine command, or a recognition that matters would be unquestionably better if only the group could achieve certain ideal ends. For example: “It is the mission of our people to make the world safe for democracy.”

(c) Simply descriptive. The metanarrative, without offering an interpretive structure for a greater sense of meaning, states that “this is what always happens to us” or “this is what we always do.”

Tilley (2012, in progress) describes two philosophical conceptualizations of community: Hegel bases it in a focus on the future, in which the individuals and the society focus on their mutual development towards some state of fulfillment, and Nancy situates it in a common past, with common practices. One could readily imagine that communities thinking of themselves in Hegelian terms would prefer teleological metanarratives, and those in Nancy’s vein would be more likely to have ontological

metanarratives, or those that are simply descriptive.

Optional Features. The presence or absence of different types of optional features may help determine which metanarratives will be the most successful (e.g., popular, enduring, and/or leading to action). Some that are worthy of note include:

(a) An origin point or a turning point. Metanarratives often feature an origin point: a situation that explains why things are as they are now, or circumstances that should be left as far behind as possible, or conversely that should be regained. They also often feature a turning point, typically a historical event that affected the group's power and well-being.

(b) A featured "other". Metanarratives often refer to powerful agents whose actions affect the group, such as God and rival groups.

(c) Reference to causality. Ontological metanarratives explain how the present situation came to be, and teleological metanarratives explain how a particular future may be obtained. Those that "simply describe" the pattern of what happens to the group may not address causes, however.

(d) Specific individuals and events. The events should have causal implications for a generalized self (those who are in the group). For individuals, being featured in a societal metanarrative is likely to be an indicator that the person has legendary or even mythic status within the group.

Because metanarratives are often a sort of aggregate narrative of important themes for the group, there are often many specific individuals and events that group members can think of as illustrative "instances." For example, for the Scientific Progress metanarrative, some will think of Galileo's showdown with the Roman Catholic church, and others will think of Darwin or Einstein. Such instances may, however, be different for other group members and are not integral to the metanarrative itself; they are merely each person's supporting evidence for the belief.

(e) Idealized reference points and other designations of unusual status. Many metanarratives treat the distant past or future in an idealized fashion, indicating that this is how matters should or should not be. Further, by featuring elements that are unique or pure or otherwise special, metanarratives mobilize group members to think and act beyond the ordinary.

(f) Prescriptive information for group members. If the metanarrative tells group members what they “should” be doing, to the extent that they believe it and have the capacity to respond, it should be mobilizing them for action.

(g) Story structure. Finally, many metanarratives fit a rudimentary narrative structure, with these three classic narrative components: the context (typically the past, a baseline condition); the problem (typically the present, a change from the baseline); and the resolution (typically the future, and the problem’s expected or desired outcome). When the metanarrative fits this structure, it can then make use of some of the ways that narratives are compelling, such as allowing participants to experience suspense and the desire for a sense of closure.

In this research study, I will explore the relationship between several of these criteria and the effectiveness of metanarratives (in terms of inspiring action). In particular, this study will focus on generic evaluative structures, the presence of goals, the presence of idealized reference points and other special designations, and the use of a rudimentary narrative structure.

## CHAPTER II

### METANARRATIVES IN ACTION

#### Competition and Evolution

Within any sociocultural context, there will typically be more than one current metanarrative. There may, in fact, be many, with some widely held and highly valued, and others less frequently endorsed or referenced. Each source of power in a society will often have a metanarrative supporting its authority and purpose, which it can use as a tool to frame discussions in its terms and hence in its favor. Mann (1986) asserts that “Societies are constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power” (p.1), which he contends come from four sources: ideological (including religion), economic, military, and political. To the extent that each sees its origins and history as distinct, each would be expected to have its own metanarrative. Although a totalitarian state (or religious organization, or some secular institutions, such as positivist science) will endorse only its own, dominant metanarrative, any society with a plurality of values and multiple potential sources of authority will also potentially support counternarratives, which are important components in movements for social change. That is, a metanarrative pluralism will generally parallel a value pluralism.

In a pluralistic society, we may expect clusters of metanarratives, that is, situations in which several metanarratives are considered complementary by group members and are mutually endorsed. For example, if Mann’s four societal power bases (ideological, economic, military, and political) are allied, then their metanarratives should be mutually compatible, and group members will be likely to endorse each of them. One aspect of this dissertation research involved looking for clustering among current U.S. metanarratives.

As with other elements of culture, metanarratives have a life-cycle. They may be created by an inspired individual, or more likely contemporaneously created by several. These innovators tie together beliefs and arguments that appear to resonate in their social context, into a quasi-narrative format, which then becomes a counternarrative, competing against the dominant metanarratives. For example, Wallace (1956) described revitalization movements, in which there is “a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by

members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture” (p. 265). Metanarratives undergo “natural selection,” with some more suitable for survival than others, due to both inherent properties and the needs of the society, and evolution, as elements are added and removed to meet ongoing social needs. Some metanarratives may be enacted symbolically in rituals. Eventually, a metanarrative may reach a stage where some segment of the society considers it outmoded, and finally, it may become alien and motivationally inert, just a historical or anthropological artifact.

A metanarrative may cycle in and out of popularity. After World War II, many in the United States supported a metanarrative featuring the country as the “defender of the free world,” a role made even more salient during the Cold War. The country’s long and stressful experiences in Vietnam led many to reject this metanarrative, yet it has seen a resurgence since the 9/11 terrorist attacks and will likely remain relevant as China’s world influence rises.

In the marketplace of ideas, the most successful (i.e., widely held and/or enduring) metanarratives will be those that interpret the most phenomena satisfactorily, retelling and reinterpreting the competing metanarratives and counternarratives within its encompassing framework. Marxism was especially strong in this area, as its writers and academics were able to reinterpret the entire course of Western civilization in light of class conflict and oppression. As Dante put it (according to MacIntyre, 1993, p.81), “...that narrative prevails over its rivals which is able to include its rivals within it, not only to retell their stories as episodes within its story, but to tell the story of the telling of their stories as such episodes.”

#### Individual Compliance and Resistance

Although the knowledge of particular metanarratives may be widespread in a society, any given metanarrative is unlikely to be the only possible interpretation of events. Somers (1992) explains that “which kinds of narratives will socially predominate is contested politically and will depend in large part on the actual distribution of power” (p.608). Thus, the degree to which people accept or resist a given metanarrative will be related not only to how well that metanarrative meets their needs but also to their power to adopt or create alternatives. Bamberg (2005) says that “...speakers work up a position as complicit with and/or countering dominant discourses (master narratives)” (p.225).

Further, he notes that people may take one of two orientations: a passive “being positioned” in response to the metanarrative, which has some deterministic force of its own, or actively “positioning oneself,” in which one asserts some degree of individual agency and interacts with the metanarrative.

Ochs and Capps (1996) describe two fundamental narrative tendencies that I believe should apply as well to metanarratives as to accounts of ordinary events. One tendency tries “to cultivate a dialogue between diverse understandings” (p.32), a relativistic approach that “offers a potentially infinite range of interpretive frames for organizing experience and promotes alterity and relative openness to new ideas,” but can also lead to “a paralyzing sense of indeterminacy.” The other tendency is to “lay down one coherent, correct solution to the problem,” a more fundamentalist approach that “lends consistency to otherwise fragmented experiences and allows us to assess what is happening in an expedient manner.” They note that “adherence to a dominant narrative is also community-building in that it presumes that each member ascribes to a common story.” The problems they see with the latter are that “reliance solely on a dominant narrative, however, may lead to oversimplification, stasis, and irreconcilable discrepancies between the story one has inculcated and one’s encounters in the world,” and that anxiety and depression may result from “silencing would-be narratives that deviate from the dominant story by which one lives.”

Ochs and Capps write that “assuming one’s expected place in society entails conforming to and telling stories that reinforce social order. To varying degrees, the silencing of alternative stories is a form of linguistic oppression. Dominating stories that preserve the status quo can estrange and muffle alternative perspectives. In [Toni Morrison’s words, such stories can ‘sanction ignorance and preserve privilege’” (p.33). They add that “Morrison’s point that dominant stories yield a false stability in communities is analogous to the psychodynamics of posttraumatic stress, in which a false sense of psychological stability is attained by muffling inconsistencies. In both cases, the roar of countervailing stories is ever present, on the edge of recognition” (p.33).

Others have further explored the dynamics of privilege and dominance in the maintenance of metanarratives. Jacobs (2002) notes that power is maintained by discourse that is formally open (anyone can participate in creating public narratives) but

informally closed (a tacit scheme sets up definitions of insiders and outsiders). Moreover, groups in power tell narratives that tend to purify themselves and their motives (“We are rational, wise, and straightforward”), while “symbolically polluting” their enemies (“They are foolish, dangerous, irrational, weak, or deceitful”). The target group must then expend energy on defense and resistance in order to continue to participate in the public discourse. Hammack (2008) finds that when a state asserts a singular vision of identity through the narratives it supports, marginal groups become more insecure; the multiple identities of their members are denied.

Feldman (2001) proposes two stances one may take towards public narratives: fusion, in which people accept the story uncritically, or distancing, in which they rebel against it. When these narratives are backed by the power of the state, they tend to have more of a coercive or prescriptive force. As she notes, “The police power of nations, even of weak nations, is still powerful to the individual within them” (p.141). Further, simply by identifying with the nation, belonging to it, the individuals within must either accept or react to the national narratives; they may try to step outside them but they cannot be indifferent to them.

As Keen (1982) notes in his writings on paranoia, if the plot cannot change and the “new” is not allowed for, then there is no room to make a difference. In a society ruled by adherence to a single story, then, the people within it will find no creative solutions. Social change must involve a belief that new stories can be written.

Feldman (2001) conducted an interview study with American undergraduates to learn about their stances towards the American triumphalist narrative that had been prevalent up to that time. By the time of the interviews, the failure of the Vietnam War had called America’s “triumph” into question, and some important public figures, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., rejected its “dialectic of opposites” entirely, promoting instead a vision of tolerance and co-existence. In the interviews, Feldman found that nearly all of their participants “pointed to a gap between how they *should* see things as Americans (triumphally) and how they actually see them. Many reported extreme discomfort with adopting the American triumphalist narrative as their own” (p.138). For most, however, there was no suitable alternative narrative. Feldman explains that some resolved their problem by rejecting the relevance of their American nationality to their identity, while

others seemed to adopt some vague notion that “Americans are people who have a family,” and that they were trapped on the brink of adulthood, facing divergent paths, with one leading to conformity, wealth, and the ability to have a family, and the other path leading to independence and a meaningful life.

Strauss (2005) proposes that people might “cognitively compartmentalize” contradictory ideas, by which she means, “hold them in separate, largely unconnected cognitive schemas” while being “usually unaware of the conflict between them” (p.223). This may happen with metanarratives as well. There may be some contexts in which people accept the dominant metanarratives and others in which they resist them. For example, in the aftermath of 9/11, many who had resisted core elements of what it means to be American were able to reaffirm their solidarity with their nation, whereas during a national election, people may be more likely to be polarized, identifying more strongly with their party’s interests than with the nation overall.

In this study, I intend to identify metanarratives that individuals consider as dominant in their countries (endorsed by most people), and those that they consider counternarratives (endorsed by few). I will also explore the personal characteristics of people who endorse and act on metanarratives subjectively experienced as counternarratives, to see if they differ from those who endorse and act on those they consider dominant metanarratives.

### Narrative Features and Metanarrative Effectiveness

I hypothesize that the affective power of a metanarrative (which includes its ability to inspire endorsement, action, and resistance) derives from multiple sources, some of which are features of the metanarrative, and others which are internal to the person affected by it. Although the specific topic and content of the metanarrative are surely important, I contend that there are also general features of metanarratives that will make some more influential than others, as well as general features of individuals that influence their receptivity.

In the following sections, I will describe the narrative-like features of metanarratives that may influence their effectiveness, and I will also detail the types of relationships that individuals may have with metanarratives, based on the relationships that they have with their conceptualizations of the broader world. The primary focus of

this research project is the influence of the narrative-like features of metanarratives on the behavior of group members, but I also include measures of individual relationships with metanarratives (e.g., age and religious and political affiliations) and individual differences in narrative self-concept.

Metanarratives can be seen as a hybrid of both the narrative and the paradigmatic ways of organizing information. They are generalizations, treating the group and its activities in abstract and very simple terms, although they may focus on a concrete event (e.g., a societal turning point). As Somers (1992) noted, metanarratives: “are built on concepts and explanatory schemes (“social systems,” “social entities,” “social forces”) that are in themselves abstractions” (p.605). Within the context of the society, metanarratives may be treated as “true,” and they may be phrased as propositions.

Yet metanarratives do convey information about events over time, and they also seek to motivate action, and include mechanisms through which they try to engender identification and a sense of relevance, which are all narrative properties. I propose that there are at least three primary ways through which metanarratives may gain motivational power through their use of elements of narrative structure:

(1) By functioning as a rudimentary story, with a point of identification (“society” or “humanity” as a story character), a problem that must be addressed, and a potential outcome, which may be a goal. To the extent that the outcome is not yet determined, the narrative creates a sense of suspense.

(2) By featuring a generic evaluative structure with an affective assessment of how “things” are going over time (e.g., “getting better,” “under threat”), which is also found in conventional stories and is a key determinant of literary genre.

(3) By focusing selectively on the significance of particular events, situations, groups, and past or future states of being, to the exclusion of others, designating the significant events as more important and more relevant.

Each of these may influence the effectiveness of a metanarrative, and I will tentatively test this relationship in the proposed study.

#### Metanarratives as Rudimentary Stories

Many metanarratives can be structured as very simple stories, with three key components: a context that identifies the group involved and the situation in which it

finds itself, a problem that is facing the group, and a potential outcome or resolution for the problem. A classic example is the Militant Islam metanarrative (Smith, 2003): “Our once glorious people have been beaten down by unbelievers, but the tide is finally turning, and soon we can reclaim our proper place through a righteous war.” In this example, the context is the past glory of the group, and the problem is the oppression by unbelievers. The potential outcome is regaining their desired place in the world, through the instrument of a righteous war.

The context-problem-outcome structure is fundamental to narratives, because it creates a causal connection with events over time. Often, context-problem-outcome corresponds to past-present-future. Metanarratives with this structure seem much more storylike than those in which one of the elements is implied or missing altogether. For example, in the metanarrative “It is the mission of our people to make the world safe for democracy,” the outcome (a fully democratic world?) is vague, and the context even more so (How did we acquire this mission? Are we the only democracy? Why?).

The context sets the stage for the problem, usually focusing on a particular character (in this case, the group, which it often defines by giving it a common past). One must identify with this group for the metanarrative to have personal significance. The problem indicates what issue is salient for the group and often poses a threat to the group. As Hammack (2008) contends, the strongest connection between personal and group narratives may arise when the individual is most concerned about threats to the group. The anticipated outcome, then, creates a sense of suspense, which focuses the group’s energy towards (or away from) this end.

Suspense and Closure. One of the most powerful constructs in narrative effectiveness is “suspense,” which in some contexts is also referred to as “dramatic tension” (Tan & Ditlewieg, 1996). Specifically, suspense refers to an anticipatory stress reaction from the uncertainty associated with problems in attaining a desired goal, and it is alleviated by the decisive resolution of the goal-oriented efforts (Tan & Ditlewieg, 1996). De Beaugrande and Colby (1979) refer to this experience of uncertainty as “interestingness,” and it serves to sustain attention to the story until its eventual outcome. Tan and Ditlewieg (1996) note that in the broad sense, suspense is the result of any delay

in closing the overall structure of a narrative text.

Suspense is typically experienced as a mild form of anxiety or pleasant excitement (Zillman, 1996). Two channels for suspense have been hypothesized. First, an *arousal boost* occurs as the reader proceeds through the narrative toward the story climax (Cupchik, 1996), and this mild arousal itself is experienced as pleasurable (Brewer, 1996). Second, an *arousal moderation* (Cupchik, 1996) or *arousal jag* (Brewer, 1996) is experienced as a relief from arousal once the outcome is known, which is also experienced positively (a more homeostatic model, in which a return to baseline is desirable). Brewer (1996) notes that both models are supported empirically: Both of these situations produce affect experienced as suspense.

Closure refers to the resolution of suspense: the attainment of, or determination of failure to attain, the desired end state. Carroll (2007) has explored the phenomenology of closure, which he describes as the satisfactory feeling of finality or completeness one may experience when all of the questions raised in a literary work have been answered (and when the reader realizes this has happened). If the questions aren't answered, the reader may instead experience irritation. I am unaware of work on the psychological aspects of closure in the literary context, but Kruglanski's construct of "need for non-specific cognitive closure" (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996) would certainly be relevant. This construct refers to situations in which a person desires "any answer" to some question, "so long as it is definite" (p. 263). This need "may prompt activities aimed at the attainment of closure, bias the individual's choices and preferences toward closure-bound pursuits, and induce negative affect when closure is threatened or undermined and positive affect when it is facilitated or attained" (p. 264). People tend to need more closure, say Kruglanski and Webster, when they are under stress or tired, and are less motivated to seek closure when the costs of being wrong are high.

Likewise, in political contexts, many citizens are quick to seek closure on issues that others believe deserve a more nuanced approach. The debate over the U.S. invasion of Iraq, for example, becomes more clear when we consider that after the stress of the 9/11 attacks, many Americans were motivated to seek cognitive closure on the threat posed by hypothetical Iraqi weapons, whereas others were more open to verifying the weapons before making a military commitment.

Closely related to suspense is the concept of story coherence. Gergen and Gergen (1986, p.25-26) explain global coherence in this manner:

“To succeed as a narrative the account must first *establish a goal state* or valued endpoint. For example, it must succeed in establishing the value of a protagonist’s well-being, the destruction of an evil condition, the victory of a favored group, the discovery of something precious, or the like. With the creation of a goal condition, the successful narrative must then *select and arrange events in such a way that the goal state is rendered more or less probable*. A description of events unrelated to the goal state detracts or dissolves the sense of narrative. In effect, all events in a successful narrative are related by virtue of their containment within a given evaluative space. Therein lies the coherence of the narrative.”

In the context of metanarratives, the members of the group find themselves living within the story. In their daily lives, the story may not matter, but when they think about their society (or whatever the context of their metanarratives’ stories may be), they will experience suspense and a desire for resolution. This will especially be the case if they are concerned about current political events and believe that their outcome matters to themselves, either personally or as group members. For example, election seasons are a time of narrative suspense for the electorate, and closure is (normally) attained on election night after the results are tallied. Some people may particularly enjoy this form of suspense (and would thus be inclined to political activism), and others may dislike it, especially since political resolutions are seldom as definitive as in fiction.

In this study, I examine two elements of rudimentary story structure in metanarratives: (1) the presence or absence of the context-problem-outcome structure, and (2) the presence or absence of an explicit goal for the group. I hypothesize that metanarratives with the most prototypical story form (e.g., restoration narratives, described below) will have the most motivational effectiveness. I also hypothesize that metanarratives setting forth a goal for the group will have stronger motivational effectiveness than those that do not, as goal-oriented metanarratives will create a sense of narrative suspense for group members, as they await the closure that will come from resolution of the issues raised in the story.

## Metanarratives and Generic Evaluative Schemas

The second feature of narratives that may apply to metanarratives is their generic evaluative schemas, such as Progress and Restoration. Note that because a metanarrative conveys powerful, culturally relevant information very succinctly, it is normally very simple in its structure. The difference between a metanarrative and its underlying simple evaluative schema (e.g., Progress) is that the metanarrative is infused with identity. It is thought of as part of the self, or of an “other,” and its expression includes particulars about the group or the individual.

In this section, I will review research on these simple evaluative schemas, describe the schemas that are most prevalent in Western political discourse, and propose how they may work in terms of approach/avoidance motivations.

## Schematic Representations of Change: States and Processes

If it were even possible to consider “reality” as a whole, there would be far too much information, and a very many evaluative dimensions, sometimes with conflicting valence. Both the limitations of cognitive load and the patience of those with whom we interact require us often to simplify our representations and focus on the gist of matters. The resulting heuristic schemas allow us to consider and discuss the gist of change or difference over time in a compressed, essentialized form.

Two very basic schemas of situations in relation to time are (1) state-focused, a comparison of two or more states on some variable of interest, without explicit information about the process that may connect them, and (2) process-focused, with a sense of the direction of change of some variable(s) of interest over time and the processes connecting the relevant states. In both cases, these very simple representations can produce evaluative affect.

Two-State Comparison Heuristics. When people are asked to evaluate the status of the past, present, or future, they must do so by comparing that time with another time, or with an idealized version, or standard, for that time. Typically, we think in terms of whether the present is better or worse than the past, and whether the future will be better or worse than the present. Our judgments tend to be relative, due to “anchoring” – a phenomenon in which we evaluate by adjusting an initial value (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), which is typically based on our most salient information, in this case, the present.

People also often compare two possible futures, or the present with a counterfactual present (“if things had gone differently”). The comparison is of an explicit or implied measure of value. This is a popular heuristic for rapid, intuitive thinking about change over time.

The two states are normally automatically compared on some relevant dimension(s), which could be relative to a construct of value (such as wealth, power, stability, knowledge, health, or happiness) or to the optimal condition of a relationship with an important other (such as equality or utter domination). One state usually serves as a baseline. It may be that individuals high in idealism would be more likely to use an idealized state as the baseline, and that individuals low in idealism (high in pragmatism) would instead tend to use the present as the baseline. The baseline can be compared with a conceived stable state (an end state) or with a state in flux (a process state). Affect results from these comparisons – simply put, we are happy if things improve, frustrated if they do not, and sad or angry if they decline (Hsee & Abelson, 1991; Hsee, Abelson, & Salovey, 1991; Hsee, Salovey, & Abelson, 1994)

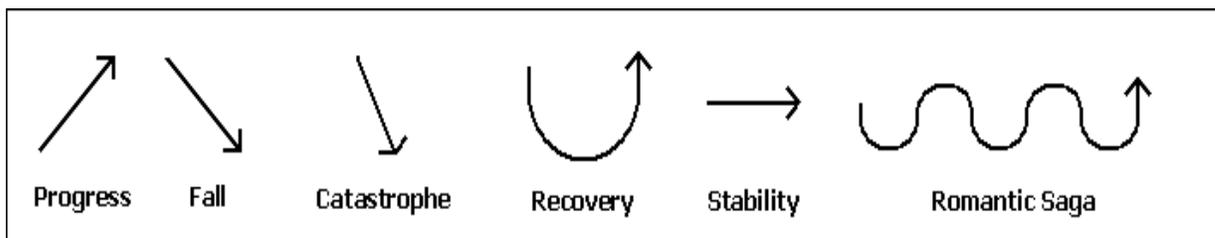
Process Representation Heuristics. Whereas the two-state comparisons indicate how people feel about “now” versus “then,” process-based representations of change focus on how people feel about the *experience* of change and continuity. Each of these generic narrative structures include three basic elements: the concept of time, the concept of change over time, and evaluation (how one feels about the change over time). These are all surely human conceptual universals. The three fundamental evaluations, based in the biology of attraction and avoidance, are improvement, deterioration, and indifference, yielding Gergen and Gergen’s progressive, regressive, and stable representations (1986). Adding a fourth conceptual universal of sequential events allows us to create simple combinations, such as a period of improvement, followed by a period of deterioration. For these schemas, affect results not only from the type of change but from its rate. For example, Carver and Scheier (1998) hypothesize that people use goals and standards as comparators in a feedback loop and seek to reduce discrepancies between actual circumstances and positive goals/standards (and to increase discrepancies between actual circumstances and negative standards). They propose that the rate at which people make progress towards their goals results in positive affect (when faster than expected) or

negative affect (when slower than expected).

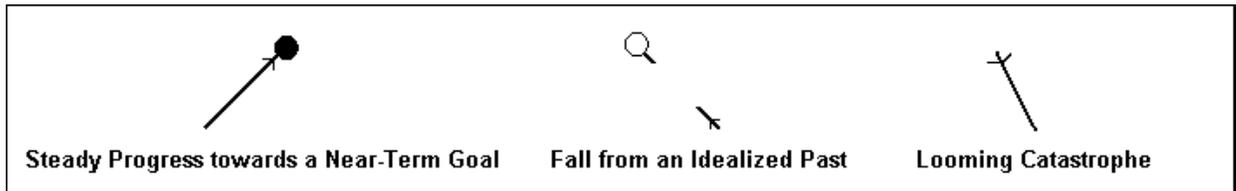
The resulting senses of loss, improvement, and stability are amenable to simple two-dimensional graphs, linear plots of attainment of valued states over time (see Figure 2-1). Gergen and Gergen (1986) use such simple figures in their work. (These representations may not come naturally for everyone, as they use space as a metaphor for time, but they have been used in empirical studies with Western university students who are usually familiar with Cartesian graphing, and I will use them here because they are a handy way to present the information visually.)

In the Figure 2-1 graphs, the x-axis represents the course of time, with later time periods further to the right, and the y-axis represents the evaluation, with low values negative and higher values positive. The graphs also indicate the rate and direction of change (slope of the curves) and transition points (when the curve changes direction). To Gergen and Gergen's graphs, let us also add elements to represent discontinuities (gaps in the curve), the proximity of high and low points to (a) goals and (b) ideals (absolute good and values; filled and empty circles concluding the curve), and the point in time that represents the perspective of the person making the evaluative judgment and the direction toward which that perspective is oriented (arrow tips or angle brackets) (see Figure 2-2). If the narrative represents an achieved recovery, the subject identifies with the successful endpoint. If the narrative references future potential, the subject would be more likely to identify with a mid-point, anticipating the improvement (compare "optimism" – looking up a future progress curve – with "triumphalism" – looking back down it from the end).

**Figure 2-1. Process Heuristics - Simple Evaluative Schemas of Change.** Note the difference between "Fall" and "Catastrophe." The latter is a more extreme event and has a steeper slope.



**Figure 2-2. Further Graphical Elements.** Here, the first drawing shows Progress towards a goal (filled in circle) that has nearly been attained (the perspective marker is near the goal and looking towards it). The second drawing shows a Fall from an idealized past (empty circle), viewed from a distance (the perspective marker is looking back towards the past and far from it); the intervening time is not fully perceived (discontinuity). The third drawing shows a looming Catastrophe (perspective marker looks down on a steep decline from before it has come to pass).



As with the two-state comparisons, these can either be simple comparisons of the self or group in relation to valued ends, or the status of the relationship of the self/group to a noteworthy other. In each case, the entity of interest may be considered as independent (a simple comparison of the self of group in relation to values), or in relation to some noteworthy other.

A caveat: Although these graphs of change could be used to represent historical processes themselves, the usage I am using throughout this paper is a representation of *evaluative* interpretations of events and situations. This common usage doesn't imply that history is a continuum, or that points along the graph necessarily correspond to actual points in time, or even less that the length of intervals along the line correspond to lengths of time.

Rather, the graph represents an evaluative reflection/speculation *from a given time perspective* of what conditions were or will be like, with conditions improving or declining in the depicted manner. Presumably the curve that most accurately represents reality (except in times of utter disaster) would be a moderate series of improvements and declines (which Gergen and Gergen call a "romantic saga"), yet with many threads rather than a single line, indicating that people exist on many evaluative dimensions at the same time; however, in many contexts (such as when they're thinking about the gist of a story), people often consider only one dimension and reduce it to a much more simple representation of progress, decline, stability, or restoration.

These schemas of change are available for use when the sense of being-in-time is

compressed into a single, simple, readily accessible, and emotionally laden unit of mental imagery. For internal representation of extended stories and accounts, however, we should expect individual and situational differences in the use of such schemas – for some, these simple schemas represent how things really are (seeing everything as a gain or a loss), whereas for others, they are more of a culturally endorsed abstraction that can be called upon (like a stereotype of group or personal history), but often remain subsidiary to more complex and nuanced narrative representations. Likewise, some people will favor simple metanarratives when thinking about the history of the groups to which they belong, while others will prefer more detailed and complex accounts.

#### Story Structure Genres and Motivation.

The four simple schemas of change that appear most frequently in motivational discourse, at least in Western cultures, are:

- (1) Prior fall – belief that the current state represents a decline from a superior past; represented by a downward slope, seen from the perspective of the bottom
- (2) Looming catastrophe – anticipated steep decline in the near future; represented by a downward slope, seen from the perspective of the top
- (3) Progress – anticipated improvement compared with the present; represented by an upward slope
- (4) Restoration (recovery, redemption, salvation) – a prior fall, coupled by anticipated progress to ameliorate or correct the fall; represented by a downward slope, followed by an upward slope.

These four forms are very common in popular motivational messages in Western societies. For example, messages promoting scientific or technological advances typically refer to progress, whereas nationalist and environmentalist messages often try to evoke feelings about a lost age of glory or utopian balance. Environmental writers in particular try to inspire action through appeals to potential disaster, and any political reference to fixing problems or correcting the course of a society is at its core a restoration message.

Other forms appear to have less motivational impact. These include an upward slope followed by a downward slope (“tragedy”), flat lines (indicating stability or stagnation), and a repeating curve up and down (“romantic saga,” which is different from

“romance,” a quest-oriented literary genre with a restoration structure). Stability narratives are often desirable in self-presentation (e.g., to a potential mate or employer), and romantic sagas may generally indicate that one is taking a long-term perspective, which may (as in a marriage) indicate a “deep communion” defined as “a movement through highs and lows” together (Gergen & Gergen, 1987, p.284).

In this section, I review the most common simple schemas of change and how they are used in metanarratives to elicit affect.

Fall from grace. Many cultures endorse metanarratives of a fall from an idealized state of well-being (such as a society’s “golden age” or the balance of a primeval ecosystem). Such narratives have been widespread in Western culture, from the Golden Age of Greece and the height of the Roman Empire. Diner (2009) describes this phenomenon in the Muslim world, in which the time of the Prophet is idealized; in their worldview, “All changes and innovations depart from this ideal condition, and therefore carry the stigma or retrogression” (p.161). More recently, we have numerous counter-cultural narratives such as the loss of an hypothesized Bronze Age era of matriarchy or gender equity (Merchant, 2003), and especially, the many explanations offered for Western cultures’ relative alienation from nature. Such narratives have cited as problematic such wide-ranging factors as the dawn of agriculture (Shepard, 1982) the mechanization of time (Thoreau, 1854), and the invention of writing and reading, e.g., Abram’s (1996) proposal that alphabetic writing dismisses the spiritual dimension that he believes was inherent in vowels (“by using visible characters to represent the sounded breath, the Greek scribes effectively *desacralized* the breath and the air” (p.252), and Schlain’s (1998) hypothesis that literacy has rewired the brain to overemphasize patriarchal, misogynist values. Any cultural narrative with a “fall from grace” theme may imply a need for restoration, without necessarily suggesting that such a restoration is possible.

Loss is one of the most primal of human experiences, and it is clear that frustration with losing one’s experience of comfort and pleasure is one of the earliest emotions for infants (Marquis, 1943). Many writers, including Otto Rank (1952), have connected societal nostalgia for a past “Golden Age” with a desire to return to the womb, or at least to the security of earliest infancy.

A fall narrative may be represented as a downward movement over time, whether gradual or precipitous, and for these falls from grace, the perspective for identification with the graph is at or near the bottom of the slope. The associated affect may vary with the circumstances – loss applies generally, and dissatisfaction with the present, but some may feel guilt or shame if their own group somehow caused the decline (e.g., original sin), and others may feel anger if they believe another group was to blame.

Looming catastrophe. Similar to a fall from grace narrative, the looming catastrophe is represented as a downward movement, but as anticipated in the future, and probably precipitous. These narratives do not idealize the present but do consider it relatively adequate compared to the contemplated future (although note that the catastrophe is often represented as punishment or retribution for present-day wickedness or folly). Such narratives are mostly associated with religious apocalyptic messages but are also commonplace in the environmental movement and among anti-modernist movements. Apocalypses are also common in the popular media, e.g., books, films, and television shows about human-made and natural disasters (from asteroid strikes to supervolcanoes).

Two types of looming catastrophes may appear in metanarratives. One is unavoidable, and this type may be best treated as a variant of the Fall metanarrative, extending into the future, but with no possible redemption implied. In the other kind, swift action may avert the catastrophe; for these metanarratives, the implied goal is that instead of the catastrophe, a stable, or rather, sustainable condition may be maintained instead. The affect associated with this metanarrative is the fear or anxiety of a pending threat, and the motivated action is to remove the threat and maintain the status quo.

Progress. Perhaps the most basic and concrete way to think about progress is as movement towards attaining a goal. As described in Chapter I of this dissertation, Gergely and Csibra (2003; Csibra et al., 1999) have demonstrated that by 9 months, infants already understand physical goals and can distinguish between making progress towards them efficiently or inefficiently.

At some point, an evaluative dimension is added to goal-related thinking, and more abstract concepts become valid goals, such that many civilizations have founded their creation mythologies on the importance of the progress from chaos to order. In

Genesis, the earth begins as “without form, and void,” and is brought into progressively greater differentiation, ending with the naming of species and the creation of sexual reproduction. For the Sumerians, the *Enuma Elish* told of how the hero-god Marduk vanquished Tiamat, the sea goddess who embodied primordial chaos, and formed the heavens and earth from her body. Progress is of course frequently evoked in our own cultures, with chaos-to-order still finding a place in the valuation of science, and even though many today reject the notion that technological progress can be relied upon to solve societal problems, the expectation still prevails that ever increasing levels of social justice should be sought, and that advances in some technologies (e.g., medicine) will continue to improve our collective standards of living.

At times, especially in late 20<sup>th</sup> century America, progress has been viewed almost complacently, as something that will happen whether or not much individual effort is made. At other times, such as the Age of Discovery, early eras of scientific advance, and the Civil Rights movement, positive outcomes were by no means certain, and the metanarratives of those times may have reflected this element of suspense and highlighted individual opportunities to contribute.

On a personal level, whether one prefers a narrative or paradigmatic ordering of experience, the idea of progressing from random experiences toward an increasingly coherent and stable sense of self is generally valued. For those whose childhoods are particularly erratic, such as children raised in alcoholic households or in extreme poverty or wartime conditions, the hope of an increasingly meaningful, stable, and to some degree predictable future may often be considered paramount. Progress is also associated with growth and creativity.

One positive alternative to a narrative of progress is the attainment of a steady state, a set of present conditions that can be sustained indefinitely. Societies that have favored maintenance of a status quo, however, sometimes find new ideas threatening, on the grounds that they could lead to social disintegration (for instance, Galileo’s and Darwin’s work). It is as if on a societal level, Piaget’s complementary processes of assimilation and accommodation do not always function optimally. As Piaget (1954, p. 352) puts it, “assimilation and accommodation proceed from a state of chaotic undifferentiation to a state of differentiation with correlative coordination.” In other

words, creating order from chaos is an important developmental stage for children and necessary for creating a conceptual understanding of their universe. If information cannot be assimilated to existing schemas, then expanding the schemas are necessary to accommodate it, but some societies somehow thwart this expansion, perhaps by designating the existing schemas as sacrosanct and sufficient, or the proposed accommodations as too dramatic, unsupported, or premature.

Progress, in its simplest form, can be mentally represented as a constant “upward” or improvement-oriented movement. Another interesting representation is that of an upward spiral, as in recurring cycles, which was developed by Vico in 1725.

The main emotion associated with progress is hope, and in fact, faith in human progress has been found to offer the same kind of buffering against mortality concerns as religious belief (Rutjens et al., 2009). Nell (2002) even hypothesizes that news stories in newspapers and broadcast media are “structured in accordance with the same inexorable emotional laws that determine the structure of myth, folktale, and formulaic fiction” because journalists and readers “equally demand that the news should contribute to the social construction of hope by affirming a metaphoric immortality for the individual, the state, and the world” (p.29). Other emotions associated with progress are pleasurable anticipation (as goals are approached), gratification (as goals are attained), and the intrinsic joy of creativity.

Restoration. Perhaps even more widespread than progress metanarratives are those that combine a narrative of a fall with one of subsequent restoration (or recovery, or redemption, or other form of return). This structure follows the classic narrative pattern of presenting a problem and then showing the process of its resolution.

Restoration narratives are typically of two types: those from the perspective of the recovery, which tend to be relatively realistic, and those from the perspective of the low period between two idealized states. The standard Christian message of how Christ’s sacrifice redeems humanity after the fall from Eden, allowing our reunion with God, is a classic metanarrative of restoration. On the secular level, the campaigns of 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalists tended to glorify their people’s primordial ancestors in the interest of inspiring revolt in the name of restoring the group’s sovereignty.

Girardet (1986) and Tismaneanu (1998) each identified four common themes in

metanarratives, which between them form a classic Restoration narrative: A Golden Age, a fall and an identified enemy, a potential salvation, with heroic actors, and an eventual rise back into a position of high status, involving unity and destiny. Jacobs (2002) notes that these elements are all necessary parts of a successful nationalist movement. The stories that the movement's members must share include "selective appropriation of historical events, romance, heroism, and perhaps even the liberation from oppression and the establishment of a unified community" with a "distinct and ascending destiny" (p.211). Other elements that may appear in such stories are the cultivation of sacred spaces and the use of an exodus narrative.

Elements of Restoration narratives are also prominent in the rhetoric of militant-extremist groups, according to Saucier and colleagues (2009). A composite narrative woven from themes found in the rhetoric of 16 violent extremist groups includes a glorious past, followed by a catastrophic decline into today's degraded condition, opposed by an enemy so evil that it cannot even be considered human, and a call to arms to overthrow this enemy and reclaim the group's rightful place in a utopian future. Savage and Liht (2009) detail the restoration metanarrative at the heart of radical Islamic thought: A golden age of Islam was overcome through Western intervention (colonization, the imposition of secular states, the creation of Israel); the purity of Islam was compromised through Western oppression; the Qur'an declares it is the duty of all Muslims to struggle to reinstate the Caliphate (by fighting both external and internal enemies) and restore the perfect Islamic society. Typically, the details of the catastrophic decline and wrongs done to the people are painted much more vividly than the future utopia, perhaps because they are felt to have even stronger motivational force.

The historian Hayden White (1978) described two restoration narratives encountered in Western societies, each involving the idealization of cultures that appear more wild and free than those of modern times. In archaism, the group's own remote ancestors are portrayed as braver than we are today, heroic, pure, and uncorrupted by base emotions, and they inspire groups toward reform or revival, to reinstate these previous times. By contrast, primitivism glorifies any group not bound by the strictures of civilization ("noble savages"), with "the conviction that men are really the same throughout all time and space but have been made evil in certain times and places by the

imposition of social restraints upon them” (p.171), such that reform is presented as throwing off the burdens of excess, oppressive civilization.

Interestingly, restoration metanarratives for Western liberals and radicals tend to appeal to prior reference points way back in prehistoric time (e.g., hunter-gatherer egalitarianism, environmental balance), whereas restoration metanarratives for conservatives are more likely to focus on historical time. It may be that liberals and conservatives have a fundamentally different relationship with recent history, with liberals focusing more on its negative aspects, in contrast with their favored orientation of progress and improvement, and conservatives valuing and even idealizing the recent past. On the other hand, this may have been more true during eras of greater prosperity, such as the late 20th century; during the recent economic crisis there has been considerable liberal nostalgia for the Roosevelt, Kennedy, and even Clinton eras.

The restoration narrative schema may function by evoking a fundamental “correction” or “justice” schema with innate motivational power. Premack (1990) describes a basic cognitive schema among infants of “base, deflection, recovery (BDR).” Suppose that an infant watches two self-propelled objects, beginning in a “base” condition, and then one object changes its status (e.g., gets stuck in a hole), a change from the base condition (“deflection”). If the other object then touches it and the original status is resumed (“recovery”), Premack and colleagues have shown that the infant perceives this action as intentional, a deliberate action to help the object resume its status, and if that status was desirable (e.g., bouncing around freely and “happily”), the infant reacts positively. In a more general sense, this type of expectation may be the basis of a drive on the neurological level to desire and favor sequences of events in which good things that are displaced become restored. Narratives offer many opportunities for displacement and return patterns: a physical or mental journey (quest), a degeneration into chaos and return to order, a misunderstanding or mistake – essentially any circumstance that creates a temporary imbalance and implies a potential for restoration. Metanarratives with this pattern may be especially effective.

Restoration narratives all direct the group to identify with a point on the ascending curve (when depicted graphically), such that further efforts should allow the group members or their progeny to participate in the ultimate triumph.

## Other Story Structure Genres

Triumphalist Metanarratives. In addition to the four evaluative schemas that are frequently featured in metanarratives, a fifth common evaluative schema is often found in the metanarratives of powerful societies: the self-congratulatory “triumphalist” schema. Feldman (2001) builds on the thought of Tom Engelhardt, who has described the American National metanarrative as “triumphalist,” which fits into the “quest” form of the “romance” genre: “A superior hero is opposed by a much stronger, but morally inferior, antagonist with whom he has a climactic battle in the end after a series of lesser adventures” (p.133). After World War II, the United States is said to have had a triumphalist metanarrative, which was then challenged by the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights movement; the triumphalist metanarrative returned after the end of the Cold War, when America became the “lone superpower,” but has been shaken by 9/11 and other terrorist attacks.

Cronon (1992) notes an earlier triumphalist narrative, one of the “classic imperialist myths of the frontier, wherein a ‘vanishing race’ ‘melts away’ before the advancing forces of ‘civilization’” (p.1366 note). That is, a metanarrative in which the histories of the Native people of the Americas came to an end can be seen either as a triumph (by the victors) or a tragedy (by the victims), but denies any voice or identity at all to the generations of Indians who continue to live after that point.

Triumphalist metanarratives may be represented graphically as a combination of earlier Progress, then the attainment of a goal, followed by a steady state at a high level of satisfaction, with the perspective of looking backwards from the steady state. Triumphalist metanarratives would not motivate action on their behalf, and might even dampen down a desire to act on other metanarratives, if it is believed that the society is already highly successful.

Tragedy. Another form of metanarrative is an inevitable, ongoing decline, experienced as a tragedy. Jensen (2011) describes how some use this metanarrative to justify their own inaction regarding global warming: “it’s too late ... various tipping points have been reached... we’re already doomed, so what’s the point of fighting back?” Hammack (2010) finds tragic metanarratives to be prevalent in a very different context, among Palestinian adolescents. They experience the 1948 creation of Israel as the

Nakhba (catastrophe) and unjust, and see the restoration of their land as unattainable; their ongoing experiences of the Israeli occupation keep the metanarrative salient and make it personal.

Relationship Metanarratives. Although many metanarratives represent their subjects as though they exist in isolation, it is very common for the structural relationships between groups to have a strong influence on one's identity and one's satisfaction with it. Feldman (2001) even claims that "All national narratives are in some way about power, even when as in the case of some small countries (such as Denmark) they are about the absence of power" (p.140).

For example, although the identity of the United States may often refer primarily to itself independently (as in, whether it is fulfilling its destiny), Wertsch (2002) believes that Russian national identity revolves around a "narrative template" that he calls "triumph-over-alien-forces" (p.93). This flexible template accommodates many historical circumstances, from the German invasion in World War II to the potential threat of counterrevolutionaries or other "outsiders" within the state/empire. The plot of this Russian metanarrative has these elements: (1) The Russian people begin the story peacefully, minding their own business, until (2) an alien force or agent initiates aggression or some other form of trouble, leading to (3) a time of crisis and suffering for the Russian people, which is eventually (4) overcome by "the triumph over the alien force by the Russian people, acting heroically and alone." This metanarrative pattern represents a Restoration theme, but if the Russian people instead think of their history as a repeating cycle of such events, it would be better represented as a Romantic Saga.

Another example of a group creating its identity in relation to others is found in Friedman (2009), who has recently asserted that the current Arab/Islamic metanarrative "posits that America has declared war on Islam, as part of a grand 'American-Crusader-Zionist conspiracy' to keep Muslims down." He quoted a Jordanian colleague: "[This narrative says] the West, and right now mostly the U.S. and Israel, is single-handedly and completely responsible for all the grievances of the Arab and the Muslim worlds." This victimization narrative may have considerable motivational power, especially when coupled with a call to holy war to right the perceived imbalance. Of course, other Muslim metanarratives of coexistence and participation in the global economy are also

possible.

Choice of Metanarrative Frame. Historians, politicians, and others interested in interpreting events in the social sphere face the question of which metanarrative frame to choose. The historian William Cronon (1992) offers a concrete example of the framing issue. In the 1930s, the ecology of the Great Plains could not support the agricultural style that had been practiced upon it by settlers, leading to the disaster known as the “Dust Bowl.” Cronon compares two historical accounts of the settlement of the Plains, one a progressive story of improving the land and building communities, “in which the plot line gradually ascends toward an ending that is somehow more positive – happier, richer, freer, better – than the beginning” (p.1352). The other tells of human folly in trying to make an ecosystem conform to practices developed and optimized in very different environments, a “tragic” or “declensionist” story “in which the plot line eventually falls toward an ending that is more negative – sadder, poorer, less free, worse – than the place where the story began” (p.1352). In one account, Cronon concludes:

“The Dust Bowl had occurred because people had been telling themselves the wrong story and had tried to inscribe that story – the frontier – on a landscape incapable of supporting it.” ... “The problem of human settlement in the region was that people insisted on imposing their linear notions of progress on this cyclical pattern” (p.1359).

In this instance, preconceptions rooted in metanarratives blinded the farmers to local conditions, leading to an ecological collapse, economic disruption, and widescale social dislocation.

In his brief review of political ideologies, Freedman (2003) explains that “various conceptions of time animate different ideological tendencies” (p.74). In a reactionary ideology, time is static, with an attempt to maintain a particular point in time. In a revolutionary ideology, activities are focused on an end-state. Classic liberal ideologies see time as incremental, with human will producing small, gradual changes. Fascist ideologies see time as renewable (“a new dawn is breaking”), and utopian worldviews are oriented towards an unattainable or mythical future time.

Motivational Force of a Schema. D’Andrade (1992a) set forth the conditions under which a schema, such as these evaluative structures, will have motivational force.

“If the model is (1) linked by socializing agents to pervasive and affectively laden rewards and punishments, and if (2) these agents link the accomplishment of goals inherent in the model to the self-schema of the individual, and if (3) striving for the model’s goals has some chance of meeting with success, the model is likely to have strong motivational force. A fourth condition ... is that if the condition defined by the schema is firmly believed to be both natural and right, the motivational force of the schema is greatly enhanced” (p.227).

In other words, a schema will motivate behavior if it is associated with approach or avoidance affect, if the goals in the schema coincide with goals relevant to the person’s identity, if the chance of success is good, and if the schema feels “both natural and right.”

In terms of affect (especially approach/avoid behavior), we can note that the motivational purposes of the four types are as follows:

Prior fall = creates a present pain (or at least removes a present pleasure/contentment; inspires a dissatisfaction that may motivate an implied restoration narrative)

Catastrophe = inspires an avoidance of an anticipated future pain; this refers to a catastrophe narrative that does not preclude averting the disaster; those that treat the disaster as inevitable are probably better considered as variants of the prior fall type

Progress = creates an anticipated future pleasure (inspires an approach)

Restoration = removes a present pain by creating a future pleasure (inspires an approach that repairs a failure of avoidance)

Based on this formulation, I hypothesize that restoration metanarratives will generally be more motivationally effective (more likely to inspire action) than progress and catastrophe metanarratives, because the combination of removing pain and anticipating pleasure is likely to be more motivating than anticipating pleasure alone or anticipating the avoidance of future pain. Further, each of those should be more effective than prior fall metanarratives, because those only create dissatisfaction, with no avenue to repair it.

#### Metanarratives and Selective Focus

In addition to their possible storylike features, and their attribution of evaluative

significance to events over time, metanarratives have a third narrative feature: their selective focus on the significance of particular events, situations, groups, and past or future states of being, to the exclusion of others. This focus can happen simply by making these assertions rather than others, but another common technique is to designate the narrative as more special than its alternatives, either by setting up idealized reference points or by making use of elements that I will call “intensifiers.” Both of these techniques automatically create an ethical dimension and thus become both prescriptive and mobilizing for group members.

Idealized Reference Points. If the current rate of progress is impressive enough, or if the restoration has already been to some degree achieved, there may be a self-congratulatory aura around the present. However, for a motivational narrative to be effective, the present would usually be depicted as relatively far from the end state (the greater the discrepancy between actual conditions and the desired standard, the greater will be the drive to reduce the discrepancy, per Carver and Scheier’s (1998) theories). Present time would be represented as ordinary, or even somewhat degraded in comparison with the earlier and future states conceived as the end of each represented process. Hoffer (1951) found this rhetorical approach to be very common in mass movements, claiming that “All mass movements deprecate the present by depicting it as a mean preliminary to a glorious future” (p.69) and further asserting that “there is no more potent dwarfing of the present than by viewing it as a mere link between a glorious past and a glorious future” (p.70). One way to do this is to represent the end states as oversimplified, more pure forms of how things were and will be.

This idealization is consistent with Gilbert and Wilson’s (2007) research on how one represents the future (affective forecasting). When people think about how they’ll feel about the future, they systematically oversimplify and idealize. Gilbert and Wilson list four basic types of errors in anticipating one’s experience of feelings (hedonic experiences) for future events:

(1) The mental simulations by which we consider future events are unrepresentative. People often weight their recall of memories towards unusual and recent events, so these are the most accessible for use during simulations.

(2) Simulations are essentialized. This means omitting many details. As they

explain it, “Most events have a small set of extremely positive or negative essential features that define them, as well as a large set of both mildly positive and mildly negative inessential features that don’t. The event’s net hedonic effect is a weighted average of these. Because simulations omit inessential features, people tend to predict that good events will be better and bad events will be worse than they actually turn out to be.” (p.1353).

(3) Simulations are abbreviated. People usually think about few select moments within an event, typically the early ones, and people underestimate how quickly they will adapt to both positive and negative events.

(4) Simulations are decontextualized. When comparing hedonic states at two times, people don’t think about whether the contexts of the two will be identical. Mental simulations are convincing enough to give us a hedonic reaction, but these “prefeelings” are for these reasons inadequate in letting us forecast how we’ll actually feel in the circumstances.

Gilbert and Wilson’s work is focused on prediction, and they believe that simulations are most relevant for future events, asserting that “The mental representation of a past event is a memory, the mental representation of a present event is a perception, and the mental representation of a future event is a simulation” (p.1352). I think that their work is much more broadly applicable. Schemas frame our mental representations of present and past events, influencing the types of perceptions and memories that we experience, and for mental representations of past events one hasn’t experienced – and of present events that one isn’t experiencing – simulations are also necessary.

Hence, in narratives, sometimes the contrast states representing high and low points in a story are idealized, in both the senses of being essentialized and valued. The idealization of high and low points relative to the present provides two forms of motivation: the positive energy (approach drive) inspired by the hope of attaining ideals, and especially for restoration narratives, the negative drive to avoid the shame of associating oneself with the degraded present and the potential for ultimate, catastrophic failure. As Hayden White (1978 p.175) notes in *Tropics of Discourse*:

“...myths are oriented with respect to the ideal of perfect freedom, or redemption, on the one side, and the possibility of complete oppression, or damnation, on the

other. Since men are indentured to live their lives somewhere *between* perfect order and total disorder, between freedom and necessity, life and death, pleasure and pain, the two extreme situations in which these conditions might be imagined to have triumphed are a source of constant speculation in all cultures, archaic as well as modern: whence the universal fascination of utopian speculations of both the apocalyptic and the demonic sort, the dream of satiated desire on the one side and the nightmare of complete frustration on the other. Myths provide imaginative justifications of our desires and at the same time hold up before us images of the cosmic forces that preclude the possibility of any perfect gratification of them.”

In other words, it is through mythic stories that we experience the interaction of our bodily orientation toward approach/avoidance with our cognitive powers of imaginative abstraction. We imagine pure forms of completion and damnation, and we imagine ourselves in relation with these ideal abstractions in real, lived time.

The contrast between these oversimplified abstractions and mundane reality may be part of what Sorel (1941) called “myths,” idealized imaginary future worlds whose existence depends on our own actions. These “revolutionary myths,” he says, “are not descriptions of things, but expressions of a determination to act,” (p.32), a “body of images capable of evoking instinctively” (p.137) the affect necessary to create a sense of purpose infused with a particular idealistic dynamism. Oettingen and colleagues (2009) specifically studied the role of mental contrasting (comparing the present reality with a desired future) in terms of mustering energy for goal-directed actions. They found that energization mediates the effect of mental contrasting on goal commitment, and that goal commitment and energy level (measured with systolic blood pressure) are highest during mental contrasting if the expectation of success is high.

Stories about our societies, and our potential to effect change in our societies, also appear to become more effective when they treat the desired endpoints as certain, or predestined. Tismaneanu (1998) wrote about the “tyrannies of certitude” associated with Stalinism, Nazism, and other recent ideologies, primarily because of their mythical elements. “Thanks to myth, twentieth-century tyrants could think and act “big” – moral concerns being of course just philistine limits. ... Thanks to eschatological myths

individuals can feel superior and ultimately unaccountable; myth not only explains everything but also excuses the worst abominations” (p.10). For example, “As Leninism became a world system, its denizens were imbued with a political faith that sacralized the future and imposed on individuals complete, heroic dedication to the fulfillment of extraordinary transformational tasks” (p.18). Motivational messages are apparently especially powerful when they appeal to a sense of destiny that “sacralizes” the future. The sacralized future may or may not be inevitable, but participating in its fulfillment would usually be experienced as desirable, giving a sense of importance and meaning to an individual life.

“Intensifier” Elements. Often metanarratives refer to their situations or characters as being better (or worse) than ordinary, by using attention-focusing terms that appear to have special affective power, such as an “only chance,” or “chosen people,” or conversely, “evil” powers. Some examples incorporate terms associated with the sacred, such as “holy” or “righteous” or “demonic,” but secular variants also exist, e.g., those employing terms that Haidt and Graham (2007) cite as the five fundamental bases for morality (care, fairness/justice, group loyalty, respect for tradition, and purity). These techniques for highlighting elements and intensifying their significance also seem to imply an ethical imperative to act accordingly, which makes the metanarrative prescriptive and mobilizing.

In this research study, I hypothesize that metanarratives featuring “intensifier” elements will be more effective at motivating action than those that do not.

### Metanarratives and Individuals

The previous sections focused on structural aspects of metanarratives (evaluative schemas, story elements, etc.) and how they may influence the motivation of the society’s members to participate. These structural aspects are the primary focus of this research study. The following section draws on a different aspect of research on narrative – reader engagement and imaginative participation – and suggests parallels for metanarratives that may lead to individual differences, both in attitudes towards them and in desire to participate in them. Although it is beyond the scope of the study to research these possibilities in depth, I do include some initial, exploratory measures.

Metanarratives are potentially cultural information for everyone in a society, but

individuals will vary both in endorsing a metanarrative (accepting it as true) and being motivated or inspired to action by a metanarrative. That is, having and being motivated by a metanarrative are not uniformly distributed across a society. Hammack (2008) stresses the importance of understanding both individual engagement with metanarratives and individual deviance from them. We should be interested, he says, in “the way in which individuals within a given cultural community engage with in-group stories that prime an expectable cognitive, emotional, and social response” (p.223).

Individual Engagement with Metanarratives. We can think of the process of acquiring metanarratives as a developmental stage involving the imaginative conceptualization of the state, nation, religious context, or other social group as a “secondary world” with a history and with roles for current observation and/or participation.

A secondary world is a conceptual model of a social context and is in contrast to the world of everyday, personal, bodily, lived experience. Any “world” beyond one’s day-to-day existence may be represented mentally as a Secondary World. For example, few of us have everyday experiences of the business of governing our countries, but we do construct mental models of how such governance works. Tolkien (1964) invented the concept, describing the transcendental world of Christian eternity as a Secondary World. When considering our own selves abstractly, too, we can construct models of how we work (a narrative or systemic self-conception). In a sense, such abstract mental models are Secondary Worlds, and to the degree that we invest our imaginations into the projects, these worlds become real to us.

The study of how we interact with Secondary Worlds may be informed by considering how we interact with the “worlds” we encounter in literature. Gerrig (1993) originated the term “narrative transportation” to describe the state of being mentally immersed in a story and its world. When a reader or audience member is transported by a narrative work, she or he loses some awareness of the surrounding “real world” and may also be distanced from previous schemas of how the world works or even her own values. Other terms for transportation include absorption (a concept created by Tellegen and Atkinson [1975] and originally related to a person’s degree of susceptibility to hypnosis), immersion, especially when playing games (Brown & Cairns, 2004; Jennett, et al., 2008),

and enchantment (Tolkien, 1964). Green and Brock (2000, 2002) conducted empirical studies to learn about the relationship between transportation in a non-fictional account and persuasion, that is, conviction that action must be taken to ameliorate the potential for such a story to recur. They found that degree of transportation (as measured by their story-specific Transportation Scale) was related to degree of reporting story-consistent beliefs and liking the story's characters. They also found that labeling a story as fictional or real did not affect transportation. Further studies by Dal Cin and colleagues (2004) proposed that susceptibility to transportability may vary by person, with some much more readily transported than others.

If we go so far as to hypothesize that any mental conceptualization of a "theatre" or "sphere" of action that permits us to become mentally absorbed in it such that we may lose track of other stimuli in our environment, then the list of potential Secondary Worlds is very large. We each, individually and collectively, create a great many mental worlds, conceptualizations that may or may not also be part of the real world. These can include:

- one's own past situations
- one's own speculated future situations
- one's own different social contexts for interaction, when one is not currently engaged in them (work, school, family, etc.)
- others' past, present, or future situations (perspective-taking)
- worlds and action set in fiction – stories, films
- worlds and action from the historical past
- other spheres of functioning, like "our government," "Wall Street," or "Hollywood"
- games and sporting events that we are playing or watching others play
- ecosystems
- mythic worlds
- ideal worlds (e.g., utopias, heaven)
- timeless conversations (e.g., centuries-long debates on metaphysical questions)

We can engage with these Secondary Worlds deliberately, and we also do so inadvertently, with each instance of "mind wandering." Perhaps sometimes this act of imaginatively constructing a Secondary World could be even more powerful than the

more passive act of literary transportation – the work of picturing the actors, inferring their intentions, etc., may bind the person into the mental construction of the world.

In terms of metanarratives, we should note that the greater society in which we live is in a sense “real,” but the way in which we mentally interact with it may be more like fiction than like our daily lives (unless one happens to be the president or other powerful actor). Rather than being qualitatively different from a fictional world, it may be that “society” is thought of much the same, a quasi-fictional world, with its realness more like a piece of data that we have about it. We think about the actors in “society” and their activities in very much the same way as we think about characters in a fictional world; it is typically not part of our daily lives, but rather, a separate sphere of action.

Sometimes we keep our Secondary World experiences mentally “separate” from our “self,” or from our daily lives, and sometimes information flows from our secondary-world interactions to inform our real-world lives. Here again the model from engagement with literature comes into play. In Gholamain’s (1998) study, she collapsed a reader response taxonomy into three mutually exclusive groups: distanced (detached and abstract), kinetic (emotion based, not making a clear distinction between self and story), and autonomous (entailing both cognitive and emotional components, with reflection on story events rather than fusion with the characters). She believes the autonomous approach is more nuanced and can lead to partial changes in self-other representations. Oatley (1999) explains the same concept in terms of a scale of aesthetic distance proposed by Scheff (1979, cited by Oatley). One extreme of the scale is “overdistance,” a spectator stance in which the reader “keeps emotional issues from encroaching on the self” (p.446). The other extreme is “underdistanced,” in which the reader identifies so strongly with the character and situation that he or she experiences the emotions “as happening directly to the self” (p.446), which can be overwhelming if the emotions are intense. An optimal aesthetic distance is in the middle, in which the “reader both experiences emotions, and can reflect upon them, in order to assimilate their meanings” (p.446).

For any Secondary World, then, we can be fully transported or absorbed, with an emotional experience as if we are somehow actually there in the world; or we can be reflectively transported, experiencing story-related emotions but also emotions and

thoughts related to our own lives; or we can be distanced or detached from the world, with feelings of indifference or possibly an ironic perspective. Returning to metanarratives, we may note that an individual may take one of several relational stances towards a metanarrative: uncritical acceptance, critical review and acceptance, uncritical rejection, and critical review and rejection. Those who have rejected their society's dominant metanarratives may be most open to compatible counternarratives. Some may prefer a critical, resistant stance in general, and some groups may encourage such a stance.

Spiro (1987, pp.163-164) offers a model for understanding the differing effects of various kinds of culturally relevant beliefs, with five levels of internalization. At the first level, the person is acquainted with the existence of the cultural proposition. At the second level, the person understands its meaning, and at the third level, accepts it as true. At the fourth level, this truth helps to frame people's perceptions and to guide their actions. At the fifth level, the proposition is not only internalized but also engages emotions and motivates the person to action. D'Andrade (1992a) (p.227-228) speculates that different levels of internalization will be associated with different kinds of psychological effects. At moderate levels of internalization, the models simply indicate what certain kinds of events mean, at deeper levels they provide standards for evaluation, and "At the deepest levels of internalization it would seem likely that cultural models have strong affective and motivational power." These models, however, assert a confound between beliefs and actions, and further, they have no place for reflection. How does reflection interact with internalization? Does a reflective person only believe at the first level because he or she may not assent to the proposition's claims, or can a person internalize a belief and then later learn to reflect upon it?

The preceding review of the literature on individuals' relationships with secondary worlds suggests a two-part model: I hypothesize that individuals will be most likely to change their beliefs (including metanarratives) by taking a critical stance towards metanarratives in general, but they will be most likely to act on metanarratives if they are fully "absorbed" in their conceptualization of their society and not reflective nor critical of its metanarratives. However, this model may be very challenging to test, as one cannot easily conduct experimental manipulations of metanarratives, nor can one

hope to get accurate information about whether people have critically examined their metanarratives by asking them. Longitudinal studies may shed light on this possibility, but that is beyond the scope of this study.

For the purposes of this initial exploration, then, I will ask people for the degree to which they endorse five beliefs that may reflect peoples' general stance towards metanarratives. They are (a) fatalism, a belief that action in the name of metanarratives will be ineffective, (b) domestic focus, a lack of interest in the secondary world of "society" or "humanity," (c) hedonism, a preference for pleasure over responsibility that makes thinking about one's role in the larger world less likely and less relevant to one's behavior, (d) postmodern skepticism (à la Lyotard), an intellectual rejection of metanarratives, and (e) an anti-group-essentialist position that rejects metanarratives in favor of individualism. I will examine whether endorsing any of these beliefs is correlated with not endorsing metanarratives and/or not acting on the basis of metanarratives that are endorsed. Further, I will examine the degree to which individuals reject metanarratives that they perceive as dominant in their society (although it should be noted that this will not always arise from a critical perspective toward metanarratives; a person may grow up as a member of a marginalized group for whom such rejection is normative).

Beyond the question of one's stance towards one's society, many other factors may affect the degree to which a person is influenced by metanarratives. I hypothesize that metanarratives will have a greater affective influence on individuals when the individual identifies (or disidentifies) strongly with the group featured in the metanarrative. This degree of identification is influenced by the degree of perceived threat to the group (which is a belief), the degree one shares the values of the group (elements of belief and preference), and aesthetic response to the group and the situation (another form of preference). (To clarify aesthetic response: A person who loves nature and wilderness will be more responsive to metanarratives related to them; someone might sympathize intellectually with anarchists but wouldn't identify strongly with them if they also believed the anarchists had a distastefully scruffy lifestyle.) Testing these hypotheses is beyond the scope of the present study.

Participation in Metanarratives: Roles and Archetypes. The type of role being

identified with should also influence how a person interacts with a metanarrative. For example, if the group's role is as a victim or underdog (related to perceived threat), the person may respond differently than if the group's role is as the locus of power and agency in the situation. Some metanarratives explicitly prescribe a role for those who identify strongly with them, and participating in this role would thereby connect the self to the society in a readily recognized fashion. Liu and Hilton (2005) explain: "History hence provides the outlines of an open-ended drama, with prescriptive roles connecting the individual to a larger collective that has evolved through time and is aware of itself as a temporal entity" (p.540). The degree of connection between the individual and the group will doubtless influence the degree to which the individual accepts the group's metanarratives and political myths. Further, the degree to which the metanarratives prescribe roles for the individual, and the degree to which the individual accepts the norms of the society, should act together to influence the degree to which the individual steps into the indicated roles.

Roesler (2006) theorizes that events in our lives have no meaning until we impose patterns upon them, and these patterns are taken from cultural prototypes, or archetypes. Per Jung, he conjectures that the influences of archetypes are strongest when a person is in crisis, presumably because it is at such times that the need for meaning is greatest. In his studies, which have primarily focused on interviews, Roesler says that using archetypes to organize life stories

"gives a strong sense of meaning to the lives of the interviewees. It helps them to see their lives as directed by a meaningful motif which they share with many others and which they find among the timeless narratives of their culture. It serves as a frame which creates coherence in all the divergent experiences in their lives" (p.582).

Roesler assumes that coherence is important, and cites Antonovsky (1987) on the importance of the ability to include negative and painful experiences in one's coherent life story, which Antonovsky says is "a major aspect of health" (Roessler, p.582).

Roesler identifies numerous archetypes from his interviews. In the hero archetype, there are certain predictable structural elements: The central topic is the fight against a negative opponent or enemy; the hero is alone and exposed to his fate in the

world; the hero carries a message and must perform a deed that is important for the community; the success is a product of the hero's own effort (personal strength and endurance). One example is the story of David vs. Goliath, a variant of the hero archetype where an underdog triumphs over the adversary through an act of cleverness, witnessed by an audience. Roesler notes that when his interviewees use this pattern, they also gain several implicit associations, that is, the interviewee shares in the moral superiority of David, and he makes the experience a collective one. Another archetype Roesler identifies is that of technical mastery, "the great myth of the unstoppable progress of human science and technology" (p.581), which in this case helps the interviewee overcome a serious illness, although unlike the original myths for this archetype (i.e., Daedalus and Icarus), the counterbalancing theme of punishing the master of technology for "stepping over the threshold between the sphere of humans and that of gods" (p.581) is now often missing. Other archetypal stories Roesler says he has identified in his interviews include religious conversion, miraculous healing, victimization, the tragic life, discrimination or persecution, and "the modern 'myth' of self-realization via psychotherapy" (p.581-582).

Bruner (2004) also argues that we "become variants of the culture's canonical forms" (p.694). He notes that every culture provides a stock of "canonical life narratives (heroes, Marthas, tricksters, etc.)" and a stock of "canonical stances and circumstances" (p.694) from which those participating in the culture can construct their life stories. For those who think of themselves as having life stories, one important element is what McAdams (1993) refers to as the "imago." He defines an imago as "an idealized personification" of the self that functions as a main character in the person's life narrative. He notes that each adult typically features between two and five imagos in their life story. The concept of imago is closely related to possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), which are "individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming, and thus provide a conceptual link between cognition and motivation" (p.954). The imago's "idealized personification of the self" represents what an individual "would like to become." Possible selves motivate behavior both because they are "selves to be approached or avoided" (p.954) and because they provide an evaluative standard against which to

measure the current self, thereby motivating future behavior.

The Role of Hero. The ultimate narrative role for participation in a society is as a hero. In his survey of how the concept of heroism has evolved in Western societies from the ancient Greeks to the present, Kendrick (2010) has compiled a list of properties of the hero that have been common throughout these cultures. Heroes are “not ordinary.” They take on challenges that other people are unwilling or unable to attempt. They dedicate their lives to an abstract ideal (he lists “glory, god, excellence, beauty, the end of history”). They either “defend the status quo or create a new one” (p.185). Their societies grant them special honors and privileges during their lifetime, and also a degree of immortality, via literature, artistic renderings, and even cultic worship. (Note the parallel with the narrative focus section above, and the same use of ideals and exceptional activities to designate that a person, group, or situation is special, with a compelling story.)

Tölölyan (1989) illustrates this process in the recruitment of young Armenians into terrorist groups. Although their proximal motivation for action was the Turkish genocide, the model featured in the political mythos embraced by the militant Armenians was that of the fifth-century hero Vartan and his companions, the 1,036 martyrs. Specifically, tales about the genocide were presented on two levels, that of the nation and the family, and interwoven with tales of Vartan, such that Vartan’s bravery was seen as the prescribed response to the more recent atrocities. Tölölyan writes:

“Of course, this and other songs do not explicitly affirm the legitimacy of terrorism. Their sentimental melodies and depictions of suffering, daring, rare partial success and heroic death perform something other than legitimization: they establish the willingness to act against very high odds, and to accept violent death, as essential elements of the character of those who would honourably live out socially approved projective narratives” (p.109).

In these narratives, events are interpreted not just as “historical facts,” but rather as “moral or immoral acts, vehicles of social values” (p.102). He explains further that in this society,

“terrorism is not the product of a particular individual’s alienation, but the manifestation of a desire to give one’s individual life an iconic centrality in the

eyes of the community, which professes to value certain forms of behavior articulated in narratives.” (p.111)

In other words, finding one’s place in society may in some contexts involve carrying out extreme acts, if those acts are the ones valued in that society’s prescriptive narratives. Adopting the methods and values of past heroes is one method for becoming a hero today, for individuals whose goal is to give their lives “an iconic centrality in the eyes of the community.” Further, although a person may certainly be motivated toward heroism in order to receive adulation and more tangible benefits, the type of society that rewards its heroes with cultural indicators of posthumous glory (like the songs sung centuries later about Vartan and his companions) may be particularly inspiring for self-sacrifice. These societies would be more likely to support participation in metanarratives that require several generations to realize, as opposed to those whose goals can be attained during one’s own lifetime.

Individual Differences in Metanarrative Participation. Variance in the endorsement of and desire to participate in metanarratives is also influenced by individual traits, which would tend to generalize across all metanarratives. One such trait is the desire for agency (power) vs. the desire for communion (relationship), described by McAdams (1993). Imagoes (or archetypes) high in both drives include the teacher, the healer, and the counselor; imagoes high in agency but low in communion include the warrior and the maker; imagoes low in agency but high in communion include the lover and the friend; and imagoes low in both drives include the survivor and the escapist. In the metanarrative context, the hero archetype represents an avenue for participation through agency, but people may also prefer to participate in their group’s metanarratives through communion, with a focus on sharing the events with others. Participating in history by being present among the multitudes in Tienanmen, Bolotnaya, or Tahrir squares is also important and effective.

Other traits affecting individual participation in metanarratives include self-efficacy in the relevant domain, degree of self-narrativity (“my life is like a story”) and group-narrativity (“my people have a story”), and a host of individual difference variables, such as optimism, cognitive complexity (influenced by maturity, sophistication, depression, and a variety of other factors), need for cognition, and need

for affiliation. There may also be variations in personal “need for narrative” as a way to organize information to generate meaning. The “group-narrativity” construct has been addressed in the list of beliefs that may reduce responsiveness to metanarratives. I will also address degree of self-narrativity.

One determinant of whether a person thinks in terms of archetypal roles for metanarrative involvement may be the degree to which one thinks of one’s own life in narrative terms. In a life story, “Rather than seeing one’s life as simply ‘one damned thing after another,’ the individual attempts to understand life events as systematically related” (Gergen & Gergen, 1988, p.19). However, the propensity to see one’s life as a story may not be universal. The philosopher Galen Strawson, reacting to a prevalent moral argument that having a narrative sense of self is necessary for ethical behavior, argues:

“There are deeply non-Narrative people and there are good ways to live that are deeply non-Narrative. I think the [views that one must be narrative to live a good life] hinder human self-understanding, close down important avenues of thought, impoverish our grasp of ethical possibilities, needlessly and wrongly distress those who do not fit their model, and are potentially destructive in psychotherapeutic contexts.” (Strawson, 2004, p.429).

Strawson would not deny that most people can comprehend specific episodes in terms of a storylike sequential structure. Rather, he proposes that individuals may or may not have a form-finding tendency when it comes to thinking about one’s life, and those who do have a form-finding tendency may or not have a story-telling tendency as well. Story-telling (narrative) individuals are a subset of those who think about their life in terms of its forms, patterns, unity, and/or coherence, over time.

I postulate a U-shaped curve in terms of degree of endorsing and wanting to participate in metanarratives: Low-narrative people should be less vulnerable to metanarratives, as should people with more elaborated and nuanced life stories. In a previous study, I developed a 15-item narrative self-concept scale (Akers, 2009), which assesses whether one has a sense of one’s life as storylike. For a sample of undergraduate students (N=158), the scale was normally distributed, with adequate internal reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = .80). I included this scale in the study.

### Model: Beliefs to Actions

When is a belief, such as a metanarrative, “effective”? There are several ways that a belief may be evident in how one relates to the world. Beliefs influence one’s preferences and choices, often without the conscious awareness of the believer. Beliefs also influence one’s perceptual filters, but again, this is not information that a person can readily report. A key premise of the proposed research project is that one measure of the power of a belief is its relationship to action. The degree to which one’s beliefs are influencing one’s actions will also, I hope, be relatively accessible to the person, as compared with other possible forms of influence.

Acting Consistently with Metanarrative Beliefs. As a general measure of the motivational power of metanarratives, participants will be asked the degree to which a specific metanarrative belief that they endorse highly is reflected in a variety of behaviors, e.g., how you vote, how you spend your non-work time, how you spend your money, groups you join. This list was generated by brainstorming and then informally consulting others. Note that my focus is on action given belief, which is why this part of the study will focus only on beliefs the participant endorses highly. Because not all behaviors are equally relevant to each metanarrative, I had intended to create action scores that included only those behaviors that at least some participants said they engaged in; however, the data from both samples contained action data for each of the behaviors for all of the metanarratives.

One limitation of this research, of course, is the social desirability of reporting behaviors consistent with one’s deeply held beliefs. Other limitations include non-motivated reasons for providing inaccurate reports, such as forgetting about one’s past actions, or lack of awareness that one’s actions have reflected one’s beliefs. There will be no opportunity to verify self-reported behaviors with external evidence. Moreover, even strongly held beliefs are not always reflected in behavior. It is interesting to note, for instance, that a study of six American perspectives on global warming found that those who consider themselves “Alarmed” about its seriousness were in fact somewhat less likely to engage in energy conservation behaviors than those who were “Dismissive” of its existence and/or the relationship between human behaviors and the phenomenon (Allen, 2009). (Note that this finding doesn’t undermine my research, for two reasons.

First, I do not claim that beliefs are the only determinants of behavior. Second, although Dismissives may reject global warming metanarratives, they can have other beliefs that lead to the same end, e.g., a metanarrative stressing the importance of frugality as a virtue supporting long-term survival.)

Inhibited Desire to Act. In general, one's actions are held to be broadly consistent with one's beliefs. Failing to act consistently with one's beliefs is, in fact, often held to be a sign of poor character, reflecting weakness, laziness, or hypocrisy. Realistically, though, we also recognize that there are many demands on one's time and energy, and we cannot act consistently with all of our beliefs, all of the time. Research into "barriers" that make it more challenging to act consistently with beliefs has been conducted primarily in two domains, health behaviors (both patient and provider), and environmentally conscientious behaviors. For example, a meta-analysis of 256 studies (Cochrane, et al., 2007) on the gap between clinical practice guidelines and actual clinical practices identified seven categories of barriers: cognitive-behavioral, attitudinal/emotional barriers, professional barriers, barriers related to the guidelines or evidence, barriers related to the patients, support/resource barriers, and office system/institutional barriers. The attitudinal/emotional barriers (e.g., lack of efficacy) and the support/resources barriers (e.g., lack of money and time) appear especially relevant to the more general question of behaviors matching beliefs. In a similar vein, Lorenzoni and colleagues (2007) conducted multiple studies in Britain and Italy to learn about the barriers involved in behaving consistently with climate change information. They found both individual and social barriers. Individual barriers, for those who believed climate change is a threat, included higher priorities, concerns about inconvenience, fatalism, and individual helplessness. Social-level barriers included social norms and expectations, lack of alternatives to and disincentives for current behaviors, and concerns about equity. Although each context has its own typical barriers to behavior change, there are common themes that will apply across many situations.

My research study does not focus on barriers per se, but I had originally intended to include a measure of barriers, because of a theory introduced by the philosopher Josiah Royce. He contended that the "lost cause," a cause for which one cannot effectively act, can become especially potent, creating a "stimulating sense of need" (1908; p.132). He

gave the examples of independence for Poland and Ireland, lost causes in his own time that have since been resolved successfully. Although circumstances may have inhibited action for some time, eventually activity to support these causes did move forth, with considerable emotion. Thus I am also interested in an “inhibited desire to act” as another indicator of a belief’s effectiveness. If one is unable to act for primarily external reasons, such as a lack of opportunity, then the degree one wishes to act should still be a valid indicator of the metanarrative’s motivational power. To this end, I had created a list of barriers to action (by reviewing the literature on barriers, generating my own ideas, and informally asking others for advice). Those who responded to one of the behavior items by saying that they don’t engage in that behavior would have been asked to check all that apply from a list of barriers, which included both external and internal types. They would also have been asked how much they would want to engage in that behavior if they were able to do so. For people choosing external barriers (such as no opportunity, not enough money, against the law), this measure of desire to act would have served as another indicator of the metanarrative’s motivational power. Unfortunately, technological issues made it infeasible to include these measures in the survey instrument, because assessing the list of barriers and the level of desire for each of more than 70 metanarratives required excessive use of the survey software resources.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Objectives

This foundational study focuses on metanarrative beliefs and their relationship with behaviors. Two aspects of beliefs are explored: the participants' beliefs about the prevalence of the metanarratives in their country, and the degree to which the participants themselves endorse the metanarratives. Further, for selected strongly held metanarrative beliefs, the degree to which such beliefs are reflected in action is also explored, and hypotheses relating degree of action to the presence of various narrative structural elements in the metanarratives are tentatively tested.

#### Metanarrative Item Pool

Metanarratives normally function on an implicit level, but because they represent the cumulative gist of a history, they can be phrased as succinct propositions, which people should recognize as corresponding to their (or others') beliefs. In this study, I presented participants with a list of such beliefs and asked them whether they and others endorse them.

To create the list, I began with metanarratives identified in previous reviews of the literature. I then supplemented the list with items to represent other world religions, belief patterns previously studied in the psychological literature (e.g., the "dangerous world" construct), themes promoted in recent political speeches (e.g., the "Tea Party" movement), and countercultural themes prevalent in the alternative media. I also solicited additional items in a pilot study (described below). Each of the items was then coded for the presence of specific structural elements (described below). The item pool is presented in Appendix A, which includes each metanarrative in its propositional form, a short name for the metanarrative, a source, and the coding of its structural elements.

Along with the item pool, I included five items that are expressions of possible reasons that one may not generally engage with metanarratives. These reasons are fatalism (belief in predestination and the pointlessness of action), domestic focus and a corresponding detachment from society, hedonism and a detachment from social responsibility, postmodernism (as in Lyotard's principled skepticism about

metanarratives; 1979), and an individualistic rejection of group essentialism. I examined whether endorsing any of these items strongly was correlated with a lack of activism overall and for particular metanarratives. (I consider the five items as each representing a different potential dimension of anti-metanarrative beliefs; should any prove interesting in this exploratory study, it could be worth evaluating in a multi-item measure to improve its validity.)

### Pilot Study

The first phase of this research project was a small pilot study (N = 164), using the University of Oregon psychology department's "general survey" to collect additional metanarratives using sentence completion prompts. The general survey is a tool allowing department researchers to pool a variety of short measures into a single survey. See Appendix B for the pilot study instrument. Participants were 78.0% female, 75.6% Caucasian, 84% native of the United States, and 91.5% age 18-22. Other ethnic groups represented in the sample were Asian (12.8%), African American (3.0%), American Indian or Alaska Native (1.8%), and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (0.6%). Other countries of origin were China (3), Korea (2), Taiwan (2), England, Germany, Japan, Slovakia, South Africa, and Vietnam. The age range was 18 to 47 (mean = 20.2 years).

Item Collection. First, participants were asked to complete sentences in two contexts, beliefs about "my country" and about humanity in general. (An example: "One of the most important turning points in the history of our country was when..... because it meant that.....") The sentence prompts were limited in scope and would not elicit all of the items in the existing pool.

The sentence completion prompts yielded 2,159 potential metanarrative statements. However, the vast majority were too banal for consideration, e.g., "As humans, our role on this Earth is to live" and "In the distant past, humanity was ancient." Others had a more biological focus ("One of the most important turning points in the history of the world was when the dinosaurs became extinct"), some had no obvious evaluative content ("In the distant past, the people of my country were immigrants"), and some were more oriented towards individuals than society ("As humans, our role on this Earth is to make my own life successful").

Saliency Scoring. I selected the first 30 responses from U.S. residents for coding and combined any similar responses from the same individual into a single statement. From these responses, 80 statements corresponded roughly to 18 metanarratives in the item pool (listed in Appendix C). In some cases, the statements were nearly verbatim, and in others, although the overall sentiment matched, the wording of the metanarrative may have been such that participants would still have rejected it (e.g., attributing the imperative for stewardship of nature to God). Also, it was hard to distinguish between the United Nations Mission and the International Cooperation metanarratives; I decided on the basis of whether the statement referred to people worldwide (the former) or “our country should” (the latter).

I summed the responses for each of the 18 metanarratives to create a saliency score (i.e., how salient it appears given its likelihood of appearing spontaneously in a free response format). I then examined whether the saliency scores were correlated with either belief or action by the main study participants.

Based on the student pool responses, I added 12 additional metanarratives to the item pool. The wordings were adapted liberally, as there were more natural ways to express the ideas than using the formulas provided in the survey.

### Main Study: Overview

The objectives of the main study were to assess the normative beliefs, personal endorsement patterns, and motivational effectiveness of the metanarratives in the item pool. The sample had two components. One was the Psychology Department student subject pool, who were undergraduates in introductory psychology courses, predominantly female, mostly white, mostly ages 18-22. The others were recruited from an at-large web pool of English speakers of all ages, primarily from the United States. The at-large web pool was recruited from a variety of Internet communities (e.g., LiveJournal communities), through social networking, and via the Amazon.com MTurk pool (paid participants). In both cases, analyses focused on lifelong U.S. residents. Results for the two samples are reported separately, in the interest of seeing the extent to which findings are replicated between the samples.

After identifying each participant’s country of residence, the survey asked his or her belief of how prevalent each metanarrative is in that country, and the participant’s

personal degree of belief in each metanarrative. The order of the prevalence and personal belief blocks was random. After randomly choosing four of the person's most highly endorsed metanarratives (or up to four, if fewer than four were rated "5" or "6" on the 6-point scale), the survey then asked the degree to which that belief is reflected in a variety of possible behaviors, to create an "action index." Last, the participant completed a measure of demographic items (all participants) and measures of other predictor variables (student subject pool only, not at-large web participants). See Appendix D for the survey instrument.

### Main Study: Measures

Country of Residence. Main analyses focused only on life-long residents of the United States. Descriptive information is reported for U.S. natives who have lived in other countries, and people not native to the United States.

Prevalence Beliefs. Participants were presented with the metanarratives in the item pool in a random order for each participant) and asked for an assessment of how prevalent each belief is in his or her country, using a 6-point Likert scale anchored by "almost none of the people in my country believe that this is true" and "almost all of the people in my country believe that this is true." If the sample had been random, I could determine the accuracy of these beliefs by comparing the prevalence estimates with the personal belief rates ascertained in the next section, but I do not believe the sample was sufficiently random and representative of U.S. residents. Moreover, examination of the resulting data revealed that this prevalence measure indicated more of a schema of the kind of beliefs associated with "being American" (that is, patriotic themes) than a measure of the breadth of beliefs represented among U.S. residents.

Personal Beliefs. Participants were also presented with the metanarratives in the item pool (in a different random order) and asked the degree to which they personally hold each belief. Response options on a 6-point Likert scale ranged from "I do not believe this at all" to "I very much believe this is true." This allowed me to determine which metanarratives were the most popular among sample members, the degree to which the metanarratives cluster together, and rates of endorsing dominant metanarratives and counternarratives. Note that this is an idiothetic variable (from the individual's subjective perspective); whether an endorsed metanarrative is considered dominant (held

by the majority in the society) or a counternarrative (held by a minority in the society) will differ for each person. This differs from the actual prevalence data collected in the study, which is too non-representative to be used to indicate overall U.S. prevalence.

The prevalence and personal belief tasks were conducted separately, to avoid the burden of asking the participants to switch frequently between the “self” perspective and the “society as a whole” perspective.

Relating Beliefs to Action. For the subset of beliefs that are highly endorsed by a person (“5” or “6” on a 6-point Likert scale), four were randomly chosen, and the person was asked the degree to which this belief is reflected in seven possible actions (e.g., how you spend your money, how you spent your time when you’re not at work, how you vote). Response options on a 6-point Likert scale ranged from “not at all” to “very much.”

Open-Ended Metanarrative Elicitation Prompt. After participants had seen the items in the existing pool, I asked them to supply a comparable statement that they themselves believe, and one that others believe but they do not. These were reviewed by the researcher to see which qualified as metanarratives, and those that were not included in the item pool are reported for potential use in future studies.

Demographics. I asked participants to specify their age, gender, ethnic group, and religious affiliation. Further, I asked if their ethnic group is the majority in their country and if not, whether their group has more, less, or about the same degree of privilege as the dominant group. I had hoped that variable would be interesting in exploratory analyses of dominant metanarratives vs. counternarratives, but the incidence of less-privileged ethnic group members was too low for fruitful analysis.

(a) Residence. I asked for country of birth, country of usual residence in the past five years, and “Have you ever lived in a country other than the one you were born in? yes / no” (using their own judgment for what constituted “living” in another country). Main analyses focus on U.S. natives who have always lived here. Note that this version of the survey was limited to English speakers.

(b) Political preference. Here I simply asked, “Which of these U.S. political parties’ or movements’ candidates or positions are you most comfortable with? Democrats / Republicans / Libertarians / Greens or Radical Left).” I anticipated that

those aligning with Republicans and probably also Democrats would be more interested in the dominant metanarratives, whereas Greens and the Radical Left and to some degree Libertarians would be relatively interested in counternarratives. I deliberately sought to oversample from such groups in order to strengthen the analyses of counternarratives.

(c) Social class. I separately used level of father's and mother's education as proxies for social class. Would those whose parents are relatively educated have a more optimistic (progress, restoration) or pessimistic (prior decline, looming catastrophe) view of society? Would those whose parents are relatively educated be more or less likely to act consistently with metanarrative beliefs?

(d) Religious practices. The Duke Religion Index (Koenig et al., 1997) was included to assess religiousness in daily life. I hoped to see how putting one's religious beliefs into practice correlates with putting one's societal beliefs into practice.

(e) Social attitudes. The Saucier 40-item Survey of Dictionary Isms (SDI-40; Saucier, 2000) was used to validate the item pool by assessing agreement with several broad themes in the various beliefs and value-priorities emphasized in American-English lexicons' "ism" terms. Saucier's factor analyses identified four broad themes, relatively orthogonal in American samples, which are (1) alphaisms: reverence for traditional and religious authority; (2) betaisms, with a polarity between those who advocate hedonism and exploit situations for personal gain and those who take higher values into account; (3) gammaisms, which support Western-style civic/democratic consciousness; and (4) deltaisms, favoring a more subjective, sometimes mystical, individualistic approach towards spirituality. A fifth (epsilon) factor has also been identified (Saucier, 2012), which includes elements of economic conservatism, nationalism, and elitism.

(f) Moral attitudes. The brief version of the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ-20) was administered to assess five dimensions of moral relevance and moral judgment. Haidt and Graham (2007) have shown that two dimensions (harm/care and justice) are commonly endorsed by both liberals and conservatives (but more so by liberals), and three dimensions (respect for tradition, in-group loyalty, and concern for moral purity) are endorsed more by conservatives.

(g) Narrative self-concept. As mentioned above, I administered my 15-item narrative self-concept scale. It may be that people with a moderate narrative self-concept

may be more likely to value participation in metanarratives (through consistent actions). Conversely, some people with a highly elaborate self-narrative may find metanarratives too simplistic. The scale assesses the degree to which one tends to think of one's life as storylike, but does not assess its elaborateness.

(h) Optimism. The six-item Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R; Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994), which focuses on life expectancies, was included to see if it would predict interest in metanarratives with a positive outcome (progress, restoration).

#### Main Study: Analyses

Normative and personal beliefs. See Appendix E for details of the analyses. For this section, my plans were to:

- Report the metanarratives with the highest prevalence ratings, and patterns of how these prevalence ratings differ (using demographics and other predictor variables).
- Report the metanarratives with the highest personal endorsement ratings.
- Report the (subjectively experienced) counternarratives with the highest personal endorsement ratings.
- Look for clustering in the endorsement of metanarratives, that is, which metanarratives appear to “go together”? I used principal axis factoring with varimax rotation to extract a suitable number of correlated factors to identify the clusters. Varimax was chosen because it results in a solution which tends (when the data permit) to associate each original variable with only one factor (Abdi, 2003), which was desirable both in terms of interpreting the factors and creating factor-based scales.
- Use demographic and other predictor variables to report differences in patterns of endorsing metanarratives. Of special interest here are predictors of endorsing metanarratives that one considers a dominant metanarrative or a counternarrative (e.g., those describing themselves as politically conservative are likely to favor metanarratives they consider dominant in their society; counternarratives are more likely to be endorsed by people who consider themselves politically radical or a member of a less privileged ethnic group).

Motivational effectiveness. Here, I

- Report the metanarratives that, given strong belief, most inspire action.

- Look for patterns of individual differences (e.g., for demographics and predictor variables) in the activity scores for each metanarrative.
- Assess whether classification of a metanarrative as dominant or a counternarrative affects action, and whether demographics and other predictor variables are associated with differences in this relationship.

Hypothesis testing. Two important caveats limit the interpretation of the hypothesis tests. First, the content or topic of each metanarrative is likely to contribute at least as much to its endorsement rate as its narrative elements. Hopefully the restriction of the hypothesis testing to only those metanarratives that are strongly endorsed will offset this confound to some degree, although content will still presumably continue to influence action decisions (for example, in some segments of U.S. society, taking action to reduce global warming is likely to be more normative than taking actions consistent with some other strongly held beliefs). This confound issue is closely related to the second caveat, which is that any conclusions drawn here should be considered tentative until confirmed in a study with a proper experimental design and control conditions (with content balanced across narrative elements). However, it would be difficult to create an experiment presenting a metanarrative with different degrees of intensity, because participants would normally already have a stable relationship with the metanarratives of their society.

The hypotheses that were tested all concern narrative elements that occur in more than one of the metanarratives in the item pool. The metanarratives were thus all coded prior to analyses. These narrative elements are:

- Presence of three basic story elements (past context, present problem, future resolution)
- Explicit presence of a future goal
- Type of generic evaluative schema (options will include Prior Fall, Looming Catastrophe, Progress (ongoing), Restoration (fall then a redemptive rise), Triumphalist (prior progress and goal attainment), Romantic Saga (cycles of fall/rise), Stable)
- Presence of intensifiers (e.g., reference to the sacred, or to “secular sacred” concepts like purity, righteousness, absolute, the “only chance” to achieve a goal)

or avert a disaster).

The hypotheses that were tested follow:

- (1) Given belief in a metanarrative, those with a “restoration” schema will inspire greater action than those with “progress” and “avoiding catastrophe” schemas, which in turn will inspire greater action than those with “prior fall” schemas. (I have attempted to ensure that the metanarrative pool contains examples of each of these four schemas at various points in the political spectrum.)
- (2) Given belief in a metanarrative, those that contain all three story elements explicitly (context, problem, solution) will inspire greater action than those that do not. Note that for hypotheses 2, 3, and 4, the results would likely be highly confounded by evaluative schema type (e.g., Prior Fall metanarratives typically contain neither all three story elements nor a future goal). I will thus test them only within the restoration narratives, which have the greatest variation in the presence of these elements, but I will also run “main effects” analyses across the schema types, to explore the idea that it may be these very elements that could give one schema a greater motivational effect than the others.
- (3) Given belief in a metanarrative, those that support explicit future goals will inspire greater action than those that do not. Again, this will be tested only within the restoration metanarratives, but I will run exploratory main effects analyses as well. Because the “looming catastrophe” metanarratives do not explicitly include goals, but inverting any of them strongly implies a goal, I will run main effects analyses both with and without them.
- (4) Given belief in a metanarrative, the presence of intensifiers (e.g., “sacred,” “absolute,” “only chance” etc.) will inspire greater action than those without them. This will also be tested only within the restoration metanarratives.

## CHAPTER IV

### METANARRATIVE ITEM POOL AND CODING

Hypothesis testing required the coding of various structural elements of the 73 metanarratives in the pool. Four individuals independently coded the metanarratives, all of whom were associated with the lead author's advisor's research lab at the University of Oregon. These individuals were: LGA, the lead author of this study; GS, a professor of psychology and her graduate advisor, who was already familiar with each of the concepts; PBM, a second-year doctoral student in psychology; and JC, an undergraduate (senior) in psychology. Each of the individuals is a native of the United States and a native speaker of English except for PBM, who is a native of Lebanon and whose first language is Arabic, although his English is fluent and idiomatically proficient.

Each metanarrative was coded with respect to four categories:

- (1) Type of generic evaluative schema. Options included Prior Fall, Looming Catastrophe, Progress (ongoing), Restoration (fall then a redemptive rise), Triumphalist (prior progress and goal attainment), Romantic Saga (cycles of fall/rise), and Stability (unchanging).
- (2) Presence of three basic story elements (past context, present problem, future resolution).
- (3) Explicit presence of a future goal.
- (4) Presence of intensifiers (e.g., reference to the sacred, or to "secular sacred" concepts like purity, righteousness, absolute, the "only chance" to achieve a goal or avert a disaster). (The instructions listed "sacred, unique, extraordinary, absolute, final, first, only, pure, etc.")

All of the metanarrative coding is summarized in Table 4-1.

To determine whether each coder had sufficiently understood the instructions, kappa statistics were computed pairwise within each of the categories. Agreement was reasonably good for evaluative schema (kappas ranged from .415 to .708) and for presence of a goal (.651 to .834). One rater was weaker on classifying intensifiers (kappas of .452 to .517, whereas the others were .710 to .741). All raters had difficulty

reaching agreement on presence of story elements: kappas ranged from .106 to .588.

Table 4-1. Summary statistics of coding within generic evaluative schema type.

Generic Evaluative Schema	Number Identified	Story Form	Goal Presence	Intensifier Presence
Looming Catastrophe	6	1/3*	3/6	3/5
Prior Fall	13	0/6	0/13	3/13
Progress	10	2/8	8/10	1/9
Restoration	12	9/11	8/9	6/11
Romantic Saga	2	1/1	1/2	0/1
Stability	4	0/4	0/3	0/4
Triumphalist	5	1/1	1/5	2/5

\* The denominators indicate the number of metanarratives for which sufficient coder agreement was achieved for that element. For example, three of the six Looming Catastrophe metanarratives were successfully coded for story form, and of these three, one was coded as being in story form.

With four raters, it was decided that at least three of them should agree on a rating for sufficient reliability (majority rule), as requiring all four would be too stringent, and two alone would be too weak. For the evaluative schemas, 52 metanarratives reached this standard of sufficient rater agreement (with 34 attaining complete agreement). Six were classified as Looming Catastrophe, 13 as Prior Fall, 10 as Progress, 12 as Restoration, 2 as Romantic Saga, 4 as Stability, and 5 as Triumphalist. The researcher was not the outlier in a 3/4 tally on any of these classifications.

For the presence of all three story elements, 20 were coded with complete agreement (8 stories and 12 non-stories). Another 30 were coded with sufficient agreement (13 stories and 17 non-stories; it should be noted that the researcher was the outlier here, considering all but three of those not otherwise agreed upon as stories to be stories).

The coders agreed completely that 30 of the metanarratives contained goals and 26 did not; they sufficiently agreed that 6 more of them contained goals and 6 did not.

Finally, the coders agreed completely that 12 of the metanarratives contained intensifiers and that 39 did not; they also reached sufficient agreement that 11 others contained intensifiers and 7 did not. In total, although the four raters reached complete agreement (no outliers) across each of the coded categories for only five of the

metanarratives, they reached sufficient agreement on all four categories for 28 of them. For each of the hypothesis tests, all metanarratives with sufficient agreement for the relevant categories are included.

As a qualification to the issues of coding the metanarratives, it may be noted that the actual narrativity of metanarratives may vary considerably. Some can readily be cast in a prototypical story form, and for others, the narrative elements may be less central. Some of the belief statements included in the metanarrative measure may not qualify as metanarratives at all, if the reference to a temporal element is only minimal or peripheral.

The Restoration metanarratives – already hypothesized to be the most motivating because of their double approach-avoid features – were also the most likely to be rated as having a story form ( $p < .05$ ), a goal ( $p < .001$ ), and perhaps intensifiers ( $p = .07$ ; ANOVA contrasts between the Restoration schema and the other six). The Progress metanarratives were also rated as very likely to involve a goal ( $p < .01$  for ANOVA contrasts between the Progress schema and the other six); the Prior Fall and Stability metanarratives did not. The Looming Catastrophe metanarratives were generally likely to include intensifiers ( $p < .10$  for ANOVA contrasts with the other six schemas), but the other categories were not.

The issue of whether Prior Fall metanarratives contained the three main elements of a story was the source of one of the main disagreements among raters. Two of the raters never or almost never thought Prior Fall metanarratives had the story elements, whereas the researcher thought that 10 of 14 did, and another rater thought that 7 of 15 did. It may be that the researcher did not sufficiently communicate her intention that completed stories should still qualify as stories, but given that the instructions said “future resolution,” this may not even have been appropriate.

The results of the coding permitted hypothesis testing for the motivational effectiveness of the various narrative structural elements, as detailed in Chapter VII.

## CHAPTER V

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY SAMPLES

Participants for the main study sample were recruited from the University of Oregon Department of Psychology's student pool (undergraduates who participate in studies for research credit). A second sample was recruited from the Web, with the intention of seeing whether the student-pool results would be replicable in a sample representing a more general population. For both samples, analyses focused on lifelong residents of the United States.

#### Recruitment

Student participants were recruited in summer and fall terms of 2011 (July 2 through December 2, with most responding between September 26 and November 30) and received 0.75 units of research credit for participation. In total, 366 students (including 299 lifelong U.S. residents) completed either the prevalence or personal beliefs section (or both). The Occupy movement was especially prominent in both local and national media during this time period, and its concerns may have been salient for the student participants.

Web participants were recruited in two ways, through social media and via the Amazon.com Mechanical Turk (MTurk) program. First, I invited friends on Facebook to take the survey and to share it with their friends; this resulted in 14 responses in July and August, 2011. One friend's post publicizing the survey for me received several comments about the survey's format (complaints about the length) and content (the numerous questions about religious creeds), which made the invitation look less inviting. I then publicized the survey through a variety of LifeJournal blogging communities ("libertarianism," "anarchists," "jesusfreaks," "muslims," "ljchristians," "politics\_forum"), resulting in 37 responses in October 2011. This recruitment method also had problems – several moderators either refused ("ontd-political") or ignored ("talk-politics," "world-politics," "conservacorner," "marxism," "greenparty") my requests to post the survey link to their community, and as with Facebook, the posts I was able to make received many negative comments about the survey and my presumed

competence to run the study that made the invitation look less inviting. Another attempt via Facebook connections yielded 17 more participants in December 2011 (though some of these may have been stragglers from the LiveJournal posts). By this point, it was evident that although I had received responses from Democrats, Libertarians, and various members of the anarchist LiveJournal community, I had few traditional conservative respondents. I e-mailed University of Southern California social psychologist Jesse Graham to ask for advice, and he kindly circulated my request among his colleagues in the Moral Foundations lab, but they were unable to suggest any effective methods for recruiting conservatives or Republicans beyond sheer numbers (if one recruits a large enough sample overall, eventually enough Republicans will be included to test hypotheses). Finally, I attempted to recruit by posting comments including a link to the survey on news stories posted on news websites in late February 2012, including CNN.com, ABC News, Yahoo News, Huffington Post, and others. All of the comments were either deleted or did not pass moderation (except for one article in *The Atlantic* that had only 29 total comments), and naturally this resulted in no new respondents. I then turned to paid recruitment through MTurk (specifying U.S. residence), awarding respondents with \$4 per completed survey. (MTurk is a crowd-sourcing task completion website within Amazon.com.) This quickly yielded another 71 respondents in March 2012. Note that although the Occupy movement would have been salient for the October responses (LiveJournal), most of the other U.S. responses took place against the background of the early stages of the 2012 presidential election campaign, especially the Republican primaries.

All participants completed the survey instrument on the University of Oregon Qualtrics site. Three versions of the instrument were created: one for the student pool sample, one for the social media sample, and one for the MTurk sample. These differed in several ways: each had its own consent form, the student pool sample had additional measures (the predictor variables), and the MTurk sample ended with a randomized completion code to use at the MTurk site to claim payment. In all cases, participants who did not complete at least the page of personal beliefs or the page of prevalence beliefs (or both) were dropped as incomplete and are not counted as part of the samples nor included in the following descriptions and analyses.

## Demographics

Table 5-1 displays the demographic characteristics of the student pool sample, comparing the lifelong U.S. residents (the primary focus of the analyses) with U.S. natives who have lived elsewhere, and persons not native to the United States.

In the religion category, “Christian” is collapsed across response options of Protestant evangelical, “Protestant mainline, e.g., Episcopal, Lutheran-ELA, Presbyterian, United Methodist,” “Protestant historically black, e.g., African Methodist Episcopal),” Catholic, Mormon/LDS, “Orthodox (e.g., Greek, Russian),” and “Christian:other,” and “Non-Christian Religious” is collapsed across response options of Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, “Pagan, Indigenous, or New Age spirituality,” and Unitarian.

I had intended to include a variable to assess whether members of less privileged minorities had different patterns of counternarratives. My approach was to ask, first, for people’s ethnicity (with an open-ended question, as ethnic groups vary in different countries), then whether their ethnicity was a majority or minority group in their country, then if they identified as an ethnic minority group member, whether they considered their group more or less privileged, or with roughly the same degree of privilege, as their country’s majority (e.g., to avoid treating white South Africans the same as U.S. African Americans). However, this turned out to be messy – of the 29 members of the student pool (lifelong U.S. subsample) who considered themselves members of an ethnic minority, several had listed their ethnicity as “white” or “Caucasian.” Only 14 identified as minority members less privileged than the majority. For the web sample, only 6 identified as minority members less privileged than the majority, after the “white” and “Caucasian” people claiming to be minority-group members were omitted. These numbers were too low for useful analyses.

Table 5-2 displays the correlations among demographic variables for the lifelong U.S. resident in the student pool. Younger students had slightly better-educated parents; parents’ education is highly correlated. Male students’ fathers were slightly better educated than the female students’ fathers.

ANOVA was used to investigate whether age, gender, and parents’ education differed among four religious categories for the students (Christian, religious non-

Christian, agnostic, and atheist). No differences were significant, although males appeared somewhat more likely to be atheist than females. For the four political categories (preference among Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, and Greens/Radical Left), no differences in age, gender, and parents' education were significant, although there was a trend towards higher paternal education for the Greens/Radical Left students.

Table 5-1. Demographic characteristics, student sample.

	Lifelong US (N = 299)	US Native – has lived elsewhere (N = 29)	Non-US Native (N = 38)
Mean age	19.9	21.4	21.0
Gender (% female)	73.2%	79.3%	71.1%
Religion			
Christian	44.3%	41.4%	47.4%
Religious Non-Christian	7.0%	3.4%	15.8%
Other	11.4%	17.2%	15.8%
Agnostic	24.8%	24.1%	5.3%
Atheist	12.4.0%	13.8%	15.8%
Political Preference			
Democrats	47.1%	51.7%%	34.2%
Republicans	18.2%	6.9%	7.9%
Libertarians	8.1%	6.9%	2.6%
Greens or Radical Left	2.4%	3.4%	2.6%
Don't Know	24.2%	31.0%	52.6%
Father Education (5-pt scale)	3.7	3.7	3.4
Mother Education (5-pt scale)	3.7	3.7	3.2

Table 5-2. Demographic variables, Pearson correlations, student sample, lifelong U.S. residents.

	Age	Gender	Father Education	Mother Education
Age	1	.07	-.18**	-.20**
Gender		1	.14*	.08
Father Education			1	.49**
Mother Education				1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Tables 5-3 and 5-4 present the demographic information for the social media and M-Turk components of the web sample, respectively.

For the combined web sample, Pearson’s correlations between age, gender, and parents’ education were not significant, except that father’s and mother’s education were highly correlated ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ). The 7 respondents identifying as Greens/Radical Left were significantly younger than the other respondents (26.57 years vs. 31.94 years). The 24 respondents identifying as either Libertarian or Greens/Radical Left also had higher levels of paternal education ( $p < .10$ ) and maternal education ( $p = .012$ ).

Table 5-3. Demographic characteristics, social media sample.

	Lifelong US (N = 36)	US Native – has lived elsewhere (N = 21)	Non-US Native (N = 15)
Mean age	36.0	46.9	30.0
Gender (% female)	58.3%	65.0%	46.7%
Religion			
Christian	36.1%	28.6%	20.0%
Religious Non-Christian	13.9%	33.3%	46.7%
Other	13.9%	9.5%	0%
Agnostic	5.6%	14.3%	20.0%
Atheist	30.6%	14.3%	13.3%
Political Preference			
Democrats	34.3%	52.4%	13.3%
Republicans	8.6%	0%	13.3%
Libertarians	28.6%	28.6%	20.0%
Greens or Radical Left	5.7%	9.5%	20.0%
Don’t Know	22.9%	9.5%	33.3%
Father Education (5-pt scale)	3.9	4.0	3.4
Mother Education (5-pt scale)	3.6	3.8	2.9

Table 5-5 compares the demographic information for the student pool and web samples. In addition to the differences for age and gender noted in the table, members of the web sample were markedly more likely to be atheist (chi-square (1, 347) = 4.67,  $p < .05$ ) or Libertarian (chi-square (1, 384) = 9.27,  $p < .01$ ) than the students.

The non-Christian religious people in the student sample were Jewish (8), Buddhist (5), pagan/New Age (4), Muslim (2), Hindu (1), and Unitarian (1). In the web sample, the non-Christian religious people were pagan/New Age (4), Buddhist (2), Jewish (2), and Unitarian (2). None of the Muslims recruited from LiveJournal were lifelong U.S. residents.

Table 5-4. Demographic characteristics, MTurk sample.

	Lifelong US (N = 52)	US Native – has lived elsewhere (N = 10)	Non-US Native (N = 9)
Mean age	29.9	33.3	26.1
Gender (% female)	27.5%	50.0%	11.1%
Religion			
Christian	50%	50%	44.4%
Religious Non-Christian	9.6%	30.0%	44.4%
Other	0%	10%	0%
Agnostic	23.1%	10%	11.1%
Atheist	17.3%	0%	0%
Political Preference			
Democrats	44.2%	40.0%	55.6%
Republicans	26.9%	20.0%	22.2%
Libertarians	13.5%	30.0%	0%
Greens or Radical Left	9.6%	10.0%	0%
Don't Know	5.8%	0%	22.2%
Father Education (5-pt scale)	3.2	3.7	3.6
Mother Education (5-pt scale)	3.2	3.5	2.9

Table 5-5. Demographic comparison of lifelong U.S. residents, three samples.

	Student Pool (N = 299)	Social Media (N = 36)	MTurk (N = 52)	Combined Web (N = 88)
Mean age	19.9	36.0	29.9	32.3**
Gender (% female)	73.2%	58.3%	27.5%	40.2%**
Religion				
Christian	44.3%	36.1%	50%	44.3%
Religious Non-Christian	7.0%	13.9%	9.6%	11.4%
Other	11.4%	13.9%	0%	5.7%
Agnostic	24.8%	5.6%	23.1%	15.9%
Atheist	12.4.0%	30.6%	17.3%	22.7%
Political Preference				
Democrats	47.1%	34.3%	44.2%	40.2%
Republicans	18.2%	8.6%	26.9%	19.5%
Libertarians	8.1%	28.6%	13.5%	19.5%
Greens or Radical Left	2.4%	5.7%	9.6%	8.0%
Don't Know	24.2%	22.9%	5.8%	12.6%
Father Education (5-pt scale)	3.7	3.9	3.2	3.5
Mother Education (5-pt scale)	3.7	3.6	3.2	3.4*

\*\* p < .001. \* p < .01

Hereafter, the two web samples (social media and MTurk) will be combined into one web sample, used to attempt to replicate the findings of the student pool sample.

Predictor Variables

The student pool included a variety of predictor variables beyond demographics, including the Duke Religion Index of religious practices, the Saucier isms factors, the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ-20), a scale assessing optimism, and a scale assessing narrative self-concept. Table 5-6 displays mean scores for these variables among the lifelong U.S. residents.

Table 5-6. Mean predictor variable scores, student sample.

	N	Mean	s.d.
Duke Religion Index	299	20.22	6.279
Saucier alpha: tradition-oriented religiousness	289	-13.24	8.038
Saucier beta: unmitigated self-interest	286	-16.45	5.715
Saucier gamma: civic ideals	285	2.99	6.000
Saucier delta: subjective spirituality	287	-7.75	7.495
Saucier epsilon	291	-8.68	4.907
MFQ-20 Harm Average	287	16.82	3.496
MFQ-20 Fairness Average	290	17.30	3.469
MFQ-20 Ingroup Average	292	13.64	3.584
MFQ-20 Authority Average	292	13.61	3.494
MFQ-20 Purity Average	290	13.31	3.709
MFQ-20 Progressivism	294	3.49	3.581
Optimism	294	2.41	4.211
Narrative Self-Concept	280	49.68	8.295

Tables 5-7 and 5-8 display the correlations between age, gender, and parents’ education and the predictor variables. Those endorsing Saucier’s alpha (traditional religion) and the MFQ-20 scales assessing concern about harm/care and purity were more likely to be female.

ANOVA contrasts identified differences for the predictor variables among the four political groups. In particular, students identifying as Greens/Radical Left were less likely to engage in religious practices ( $p < .001$ ), less likely to endorse beta (self-interest) beliefs ( $p < .05$ ) and epsilon (group self-interest) beliefs ( $p < .001$ ), less likely to endorse MFQ-20 conservatism items ( $p < .001$  for Ingroup,  $< .01$  for Authority, and  $< .02$  for

purity), and less likely to think of their life as being like a story ( $p < .01$ ) than the other three groups. Other differences among groups were that Republicans scored higher on alpha (traditional religion) than the other groups ( $p < .001$ ), Libertarians scored lower on gamma (civic government) than the other groups ( $p < .001$ ), and Democrats also scored lower on epsilon (group self-interest) than did the Republicans and Libertarians combined ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 5-7. Demographic and predictor variables, Pearson correlations, student sample.

	Age	Gender (F < M)	Father Education	Mother Education
MFQ-20 Harm Average	.02	-.16**	.04	.09
MFQ-20 Fairness Average	.05	-.08	-.001	.04
MFQ-20 Ingroup Average	-.11	-.03	.09	.02
MFQ-20 Authority Average	-.12*	-.13*	.10	-.01
MFQ-20 Purity Average	-.03	-.20**	.08	.02
Optimism	.02	.02	.08	.10
Narrative Self-Concept	-.06	-.02	.06	.05

ANOVA contrasts also identified predictor-variable differences among the religious categories of students. Unsurprisingly, Christian and non-Christian religious practitioners were more likely to engage in religious practices than were agnostics and atheists ( $p < .001$ ). Christians scored higher on alpha (traditional religion) than the other three groups ( $p < .001$ ). Atheists scored lower on delta (subjective spirituality) ( $p < .001$ ) and the three MFQ-20 conservative scales (Ingroup,  $p < .001$ ; Authority,  $p = .002$ ; and Purity,  $p < .05$ ).

Tables 5-8, 5-9, and 5-10 display the correlations between the Saucier isms factors and other demographic and predictor variables for the student pool. Saucier's alpha (traditional religion) was positively correlated with being female, Christian, Republican, religious practice engagement, and the three conservative MFQ-20 scales. Saucier's beta (self-interest) was positively correlated with being younger, and negatively correlated with the two MFQ-20 liberal scales (harm/care and fairness), with optimism, and with narrative self-concept. Saucier's gamma (civic government) was positively correlated with all five MFQ-20 scales, optimism, and narrative self-concept;

Libertarians scored much lower than other political affiliations on this scale. Saucier's delta (subjective spirituality) was positively correlated with the MFQ-20 harm/care scale and with narrative self-concept; atheists scored especially low on this scale. Saucier's epsilon (group self-interest) was positively correlated with the MFQ-20 conservative scales and negatively correlated with the MFQ-20 liberal scales; Greens/Radical Left were most likely to reject this construct.

Table 5-8. Saucier “isms” and demographic correlations, student sample.

	alpha	beta	gamma	delta	epsilon
Age	-.02	-.18**	.05	-.06	-.07
Gender (lower = F)	-.16**	-.09	.05	-.09	-.09
Father Education	-.05	.02	.02	.004	.01
Mother Education	-.11	-.01	.02	.06	-.03
Parents' Mean Education	-.09	.001	.03	.03	-.02

Table 5-9. Saucier “isms” score means by religion and political preference, student sample.

	alpha	beta	gamma	delta	epsilon
Christian (126)	-7.42	-15.72	3.81	-7.66	-7.68
Religious Non- Christian (21)	-13.33	-17.05	4.05	-4.37	-8.80
Agnostic (72)	-18.06	-17.74	2.20	-7.16	-9.21
Atheist (37)	-20.19	-16.24	3.11	-13.30	-10.00
Democrat (134)	-15.13	-16.90	2.85	-7.41	-10.33
Republican (52)	-7.04	-15.44	4.96	-8.71	-4.55
Libertarian (24)	-15.96	-16.17	.87	-9.91	-5.83
Green/ Radical Left (7)	-19.14	-20.57	-1.71	-10.57	-16.00

Table 5-10. Saucier “isms” and other scale correlations, student sample.

	alpha	beta	gamma	delta	epsilon
Duke Religion Index (low score = more religious activities)	-.75**	.15*	-.13*	-.18**	-.10
MFQ Harm	-.08	-.42**	.27**	.20**	-.26**
MFQ Fairness	-.17**	-.45**	.38**	.04	-.23**
MFQ Ingroup	.36**	.08	.37**	.05	.27**
MFQ Authority	.38**	.13*	.32**	.05	.32**
MFQ Purity	.40**	.05	.31**	.10	.24**
MFQ Progressive	-.50**	-.51*	-.01	.06	-.50**
Optimism	-.03	-.21**	.19**	.02	-.07
Narrative Self- Concept	.12	-.15**	.26**	.24**	.01

Overall, the correlations confirmed the face validity of many of the constructs. The various religious constructs were highly correlated, and the various scales assessing politically relevant beliefs were appropriately correlated with each other and with respondent political preferences.

## CHAPTER VI

### PREVALENCE OF METANARRATIVE BELIEFS

This chapter presents the results of analyses of patterns in metanarrative beliefs. It will address

- Relative popularity of specific metanarratives, overall and by group (gender, religious affiliation, political affiliation)
- Beliefs about overall prevalence of metanarrative beliefs (“What Americans believe...”)
- Clustering of metanarratives by broad theme (factor analysis)
- Individual scale scores by broad theme (based on factors)
- Belief in counternarratives and rejection of dominant metanarratives
- Endorsement of “anti-metanarrative” beliefs

As noted previously, respondents who completed neither the prevalence beliefs page nor the personal beliefs pages were dropped. For the lifelong U.S. residents, among the student pool, 16.4% of the 299 student pool respondents, 13.9% of the 36 social media respondents, and 19.2% of the 52 MTurk respondents were missing prevalence beliefs data; 15.1% of the student pool, 2.8% of the social media, and 7.7% of the MTurk respondents were missing personal beliefs data. (Those missing both prevalence and personal beliefs data had already been dropped from the samples.)

#### Metanarratives: Personal Beliefs

Almost all of the participants in each sample agreed with multiple metanarratives. Respondents in the student pool agreed (Likert score of 4, 5, or 6) with 0 to 71 of the 73 metanarratives (mean = 35.85 metanarratives, s.d. = 12.2). Respondents in the web sample agreed (Likert score of 4, 5, or 6) with 11 to 71 of the metanarratives (mean = 35.73 metanarratives, s.d. = 12.0).

Table 6-1 lists the mean scores for the most and least endorsed metanarratives in the student pool. Appendix F lists all metanarrative means and standard deviations.

Table 6-2 lists the metanarratives which were the most highly agreed upon among the student sample, whether that agreement was to accept or reject the metanarrative (i.e., those with the lowest standard deviations).

Table 6-1. Mean scores for the most and least endorsed metanarratives, student sample.

1	International Cooperation	4.872
2	Multiculturalism	4.626
3	Work and Thrift for Survival	4.502
4	Minority Oppression	4.458
5	National Ambition	4.453
6	Anti-Global Corporations	4.446
7	Scientific Enlightenment	4.373
8	Liberal Progress	4.343
9	Our Excessive Interference	4.341
10	Dying Cultures	4.185
	.....	
64	Others' Excessive Interference	2.576
65	Christian Redemption	2.519
66	Chosen People (from Judaism)	2.432
67	Dominion over Nature	2.382
68	Militant Extremist (one variant)	2.322
69	Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	2.182
70	Christian Evangelism	2.169
71	Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	2.155
72	Superior Race	2.152
73	Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place"	1.820

Table 6-2. Most highly agreed upon metanarratives, student sample.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Scientific Enlightenment	295	4.37	1.120
International Cooperation	296	4.87	1.183
Cynicism	296	2.86	1.230
Capitalist Prosperity	296	3.23	1.234
Progressive "Nurturing Family"	296	3.93	1.241
Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place"	295	1.82	1.242
Minority Oppression	295	4.46	1.244
Community Lost	295	2.85	1.246
Alienation from Nature	297	3.82	1.247
Faith in Technology	295	3.10	1.251

Most groups (gender, religion, and political affiliation) agreed with the metanarratives to approximately the same degree, but some groups were distinguished by endorsing or rejecting metanarratives to a greater extent than the full sample. Table 6-3 lists metanarratives for which a group's mean score differed from the full student sample by more than .5 standard deviations.

Table 6-3. Metanarrative beliefs distinguishing groups, student sample.

Group	Metanarratives Endorsed More than Full Sample	Metanarratives Endorsed Less than Full Sample
Females	n/a	n/a
Males	n/a	n/a
Democrats	n/a	n/a
Republicans	Submission to God (Islamic) (.69*) Dominion over Nature (.68) Chosen People (from Judaism) (.63) Strong Defense (.57) Stewardship of Nature (.53) Country as Beacon (.53) Proactive Peacekeeping (.51) Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia) (.50) Lone Superpower (aka "American National") (.50)	n/a
Libertarians	n/a	Progressive "Nurturing Family" (-.65) Conservative "Strict Father" (-.55)
Greens/Radical Left	Progressive "Nurturing Family" (.87) Anti-Global Corporations (.72) Our Excessive Interference (.72)	Strong Leader (-1.41) Strong Defense (-1.24) American Mission (-1.18) American Experiment (-1.10) Proactive Peacekeeping (-1.07) National Ambition (-1.06) Heroic People (-1.00) Country as Beacon (-.97) Capitalist Prosperity (-.88) Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman (-.85) Vanishing Race (-.84) Faith in Technology (-.76) Archaism (-.74) Work and Thrift for Survival (-.74) Inevitable Warfare (-.74) Heroic Example (from Armenia) (-.69) Ancient Egyptian "Divine Life and Afterlife" (-.69)

Table 6-3. Metanarrative beliefs distinguishing groups, student sample. (Cont.)

Group	Metanarratives Endorsed More than Full Sample	Metanarratives Endorsed Less than Full Sample
Greens/Radical Left (cont.)		Community Lost (-.68) Dangerous World Individualism (-.68) Anti-Immigration (-.67) Neo-Liberal Rational Process (-.67) Dying Cultures (-.66) Christian Evangelism (-.63) Primitivism-Restore (-.59) Separatist Preservation (-.59) Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia) (-.58) Stewardship of Nature (-.57) Lost Golden Age (-.57) Constitutionalism (-.56) Social Justice Progress (-.56) Suppression of Islam (-.56) Conservative "Strict Father" (-.55) Lone Superpower (aka "American National") (-.55) Militant Extremist (one variant) (-.55) Chosen People (from Judaism) (-.55) Submission to God (Islamic) (-.54) Superior Race (-.54)
Christians	Submission to God (Islamic) (.64) Chosen People (from Judaism) (.57) Christian Redemption (.54) Dominion over Nature (.53)	n/a
Non-Christian Religious	n/a	n/a
Agnostics	n/a	Christian Redemption (-.55) Submission to God (Islamic) (-.54) Chosen People (from Judaism) (-.52)
Atheists	n/a	Stewardship of Nature (-.74) Submission to God (Islamic) (-.71) Ancient Egyptian "Divine Life and Afterlife" (-.68) Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman (-.67) Dominion over Nature (-.64) Militant Extremist (one variant) (-.56) Chosen People (from Judaism) (-.54) Christian Redemption (-.50)

\* Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations for the group mean above or below the full sample mean.

None of the metanarratives in the sample distinguished males, females, Democrats, or those practicing non-Christian religions from the full student sample.

Republican students were more likely to endorse beliefs about strong government, and Libertarians rejected two rationales for government's role in the lives of citizens (we need government to provide discipline for citizens and to provide a safe and supportive environment). Christians endorsed more religious beliefs than the full sample, and agnostics and especially atheists rejected metanarratives with a religious content. The Greens/Radical Left students endorsed the progressive rationale for government and two beliefs about excessive power held by corporations and the United States government, and they rejected a long list of beliefs about strong government, a capitalist economy, religion, and sentiment about the distant past. This indicates that those subscribing to Green or Radical Left beliefs have a very different "metanarrative hierarchy" than the mainstream, with a much stronger orientation toward rejecting beliefs held by those around them.

Table 6-4 lists the mean scores for the most and least endorsed metanarratives in the web sample. A full list of means and standard deviations for these metanarratives is found in Appendix G. Comparing this table with Table 6-1, we see that nearly all of the top 10 metanarratives were the same for both samples, and there is also considerable overlap among the bottom 10 metanarratives. This indicates that there may be a general American consensus about the metanarratives in which people most strongly believe, and some agreement about those that are commonly rejected.

Table 6-5 lists the metanarratives upon which the web sample agreed most thoroughly (those with the smallest standard deviations).

Table 6-6 lists metanarratives for which a group's mean score differed from the full web sample by more than .5 standard deviations.

Table 6-4. Mean scores for the most and least endorsed metanarratives, web sample.

1.	Anti-Global Corporations	4.90
2.	International Cooperation	4.85
3.	Our Excessive Interference	4.84
4.	Liberal Progress	4.76
5.	Scientific Enlightenment	4.76
6.	Work and Thrift for Survival	4.60
7.	Minority Oppression	4.47
8.	Tea Party Anti-Corruption	4.44
9.	Inevitable Warfare	4.42
10.	Multiculturalism	4.36
	.....	4.34
64.	Christian Redemption	2.40
65.	Submission to God (Islamic)	2.31
66.	Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	2.17
67.	Christian Evangelism	2.15
68.	Chosen People (from Judaism)	2.15
69.	Dominion over Nature	2.11
70.	Militant Extremist (one variant)	2.10
71.	Superior Race	1.94
72.	Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place"	1.73
73.	Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	1.70

Table 6-5. Most highly agreed upon metanarratives, web sample.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work and Thrift for Survival	88	4.60	1.199
International Cooperation	88	4.85	1.218
Liberal Progress	88	4.76	1.241
Our Excessive Interference	88	4.84	1.268
Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	88	1.70	1.288
Alienation from Nature	88	4.26	1.369
Social Contract	88	4.28	1.397
Tea Party Anti-Corruption	88	4.44	1.413
Scientific Enlightenment	87	4.76	1.422
Neo-Liberal Rational Process	88	3.72	1.438

Table 6-6. Metanarrative beliefs distinguishing groups, web sample.

Group	Metanarratives Endorsed More than Full Sample	Metanarratives Endorsed Less than Full Sample
Females	n/a	n/a
Males	n/a	n/a
Democrats	n/a	n/a
Republicans	Heroic People (.96) Stewardship of Nature (.96) Strong Defense (.95) Submission to God (Islamic) (.92) Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm (.76) Christian Redemption (.76) Militant Extremist (one variant) (.67) Anti-Immigration (.65) Strong Leader (.64) Chosen People (from Judaism) (.63) Work and Thrift for Survival (.63) Capitalist Prosperity (.60) Country as Beacon (.59) Christian Evangelism (.59) Heroic Example (from Armenia) (.58) Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia) (.55) Proactive Peacekeeping (.52)	Global Warming (-.78) Minority Oppression (-.64) Anti- Govt. Suppression of Islam (-.52)
Libertarians	Lost Revolutionary Spirit (.78) Forefathers' Lost Vision (.76) Capitalist Prosperity (.67) Dangerous World Individualism (.53)	Progressive "Nurturing Family" (-.65) Conservative "Strict Father" (-.61) Minority Oppression (-.56) International Cooperation (-.50)
Greens/Radical Left	Global Warming (1.05) Alienation from Nature (.96) Anti- Govt. Suppression of Islam (.92) Our Excessive Interference (.80) Minority Oppression (.76) Ecological Last Chance (.67) Expressive Romantic (.62) Social Contract (.61) Ecological Community (.56)	Constitutionalism (-1.26) Lone Superpower (aka "American National") (-1.06) Heroic People (-1.06) Increased Laziness (-.88) Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman (-.84) Archaism (-.79) Capitalist Prosperity (-.79) Strong Defense (-.78) Community Lost (-.77) Country as Beacon (-.75) Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia) (-.73) American Mission (-.73) Past Glory (-.73) Separatist Preservation (-.72) Submission to God (Islamic) (-.71) Vanishing Race (-.70)

Table 6-6. Metanarrative beliefs distinguishing groups, web sample. (Cont.)

Group	Metanarratives Endorsed More than Full Sample	Metanarratives Endorsed Less than Full Sample
Greens/Radical Left (cont.)		Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm (-.68) Dominion over Nature (-.67) Cynicism (-.67) Christian Evangelism (-.66) Stewardship of Nature (-.65) Christian Redemption (-.64) Others' Excessive Interference (-.64) Anti-Immigration (-.63) Chosen People (from Judaism) (-.63) Proactive Peacekeeping (-.61) Buddhist Belief (-.59) Strong Leader (-.58) Conservative "Strict Father" (-.57) Heroic Example (from Armenia) (-.57) American Experiment (-.55) Militant Extremist (one variant) (-.51)
Christians	Submission to God (Islamic) (.81) Christian Redemption (.76) Chosen People (from Judaism) (.73) Stewardship of Nature (.72) Dominion over Nature (.66) Christian Evangelism (.66) Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm (.63) Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place" (.55) Community Lost (.53) Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam) (.53) Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia) (.51) Ancient Egyptian "Divine Life and Afterlife" (.51) Cynicism (.50)	n/a
Non-Christian Religious	Anti-Patriarchy (.56) Ecological Last Chance (.55) American Experiment (.50)	Submission to God (Islamic) (-.60) Tea Party Anti-Corruption (-.53) Christian Redemption (-.51)
Agnostics	Progressive "Nurturing Family" (.60) Expressive Romantic (.57)	Submission to God (Islamic) (-.63) Chosen People (from Judaism) (-.63) Christian Redemption (-.53)

Table 6-6. Metanarrative beliefs distinguishing groups, web sample. (Cont.)

Group	Metanarratives Endorsed More than Full Sample	Metanarratives Endorsed Less than Full Sample
Atheists	Minority Oppression (.54) Expressive Romantic (.53) Our Excessive Interference (.52)	Ancient Egyptian “Divine Life and Afterlife” (-.90) Stewardship of Nature (-.81) Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman (-.73) Submission to God (Islamic) (-.71) Christian Redemption (-.69) Community Lost (-.67) Dominion over Nature (-.66) Christian Evangelism (-.66) Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm (-.65) Chosen People (from Judaism) (-.63) Lost Golden Age (-.60) Heroic Example (from Armenia) (-.60) Archaism (-.57) Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia) (-.56) Strong Leader (-.56) Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam) (-.55) Constitutionalism (-.51) Cynicism (-.51)

\* Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations for the group mean above or below the full sample mean.

As with the students, none of the metanarratives in the sample distinguished males, females, or Democrats from the full web sample. The themes reflected in the more and less endorsed metanarratives for the other groups were generally consistent with the student results, although the web sample appeared to be more heterogenous than the students, with more beliefs that were scored more strongly than the full sample.

The degree to which participants affirmed belief in statements expressing the creeds of religions which they do not themselves practice illustrates the difference between agreeing with a statement that appears consistent with one’s beliefs and actually having the professed belief. For example, 93 (31%) of the students strongly endorsed the “Islamic” statement about the importance of submitting to the authority of God, and only one of these students identified as Muslim. For others, the statement apparently appeared to be a passionate or stringent expression of Christian faith. Further, 133 students (44%) expressed strong agreement with the Hindu belief that “All of reality is moving toward

unity with the cosmic Absolute, but each of us can make mistakes and bad decisions can block our paths to salvation, so we should focus on securing our own destinies through good works, knowledge, and devotion.” One of these students was Hindu; the others were mostly Christian or agnostic. Another 103 students (35%) expressed strong agreement with the ancient Egyptian belief that “All humans have within them the seed of the divine, which can reach its true potential after death and reunite us with our divine origin.” This belief is also reflected in Jewish Kabbalistic thinking, but only one of the students was Jewish; the others were mostly Catholic, non-evangelical Protestant, and agnostic. Perhaps these two statements express generic Western mystical beliefs, or were interpreted as such by the students (assimilated to their own frameworks). Many in the web sample also expressed strong agreement with such beliefs, although at somewhat lower rates: 23% Islamic, 23% Hindu, and 36% ancient Egyptian. The web sample contained no professed followers of Islam nor Hinduism.

Table 6-7 indicates the popularity of metanarratives within each evaluative schema type, for both the students and the web sample.

Mean personal metanarrative belief scores between the two samples were highly correlated ( $r = .94$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Students tended to believe more strongly in Progress metanarratives than the other genres ( $p = .07$ ); the web sample mean for Progress metanarratives was also highest but the difference did not approach significance. Neither presence of the three story elements, nor presence of a goal, was correlated with the mean belief scores, but presence of intensifiers was highly correlated with disbelief in both samples ( $r = -.46$  for the student sample and  $-.47$  for the web sample,  $p < .001$ ). Without disaggregating the religious elements from the other exceptional elements, it is unclear whether this skepticism is simply a rejection of religious beliefs.

Table 6-7. Mean metanarrative scores within evaluative schema (genre).

Schema	Metanarrative	Student Mean	Web Mean
Looming Catastrophe	Dying Cultures	4.18	4.24
	Ecological Last Chance	4.04	4.22
	Global Warming	3.89	3.95
	Capitalist Prosperity	3.23	3.24
	Anti-Immigration	2.75	2.68
	Christian Evangelism	2.17	2.15
Prior Fall	Alienation from Nature	3.82	4.26
	Growing Complexity	3.78	3.66
	Small Town Nostalgia	3.76	3.92
	Increased Laziness	3.71	3.58
	Forefathers' Lost Vision	3.67	4.16
	Suppression of Islam	3.30	3.44
	Lost Revolutionary Spirit	3.24	3.78
	Financial Conspiracy	3.19	3.48
	Anti-Patriarchy	3.17	2.88
	Primitivism - Fall	3.12	2.65
	Lost Golden Age	3.04	2.67
	Community Lost	2.85	2.50
	Past Glory	2.63	2.48
Progress	International Cooperation	4.87	4.85
	National Ambition	4.45	4.08
	Scientific Enlightenment	4.37	4.76
	United Nations Mission	4.09	3.90
	Ecological Community	3.86	3.78
	Social Justice Progress	3.74	3.68
	Neo-Liberal Rational Process	3.61	3.72
	American Experiment	3.55	3.42
	Faith in Technology	3.10	3.39
	Superior Race	2.15	1.94
Restoration	Anti-Global Corporations	4.45	4.90
	Lost Affinity with Nature	3.91	3.64
	Tea Party Anti-Corruption	3.70	4.44
	Progressive Socialist	3.48	3.28
	Archaism	3.13	2.80
	Heroic Example (from Armenia)	3.12	3.00
	Primitivism - Restore	2.91	2.93
	Ancient Egyptian "Divine Life and Afterlife"	2.76	2.76
	Christian Redemption	2.52	2.40

Table 6-7. Mean metanarrative scores within evaluative schema (genre). (Cont.)

Restoration (cont.)	Militant Extremist (one variant)	2.32	2.10
	Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	2.18	2.17
	Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	2.16	1.70
Romantic Saga	Buddhist Belief	3.53	3.62
	Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia)	2.67	2.63
Stability	Our Excessive Interference	4.34	4.84
	Inevitable Warfare	4.11	4.42
	Cynicism	2.86	3.06
	Christian Fundamentalist “Woman’s Place”	1.82	1.73
Triumphalist	Social Contract	4.04	4.28
	Constitutionalism	3.75	4.25
	Vanishing Race	2.91	2.70
	Lone Superpower (aka “American National”)	2.75	2.78
	Chosen People (from Judaism)	2.43	2.15

#### Metanarratives: Normative (Prevalence) Beliefs

In addition to indicating the degree to which respondents personally believed in each of the metanarrative statements, they also indicated how much other people in their country believed in them. These beliefs about prevalence also represent beliefs in social norms – the respondents’ understanding of the cultural mainstream of the countries in which they live. Table 6-8 lists the highest and lowest prevalence beliefs for students who are lifelong U.S. residents (the full list is in Appendix H).

The last two columns in Table 6-8 show the standard deviations for the prevalence and personal beliefs for each of the listed metanarratives. To the extent that the prevalence beliefs exhibit less variance than the personal beliefs, we may conclude that there is better agreement about what others believe (norms) than one’s own beliefs. A paired samples t-test indicates that the hypothesis of less variance is correct: The mean standard deviation for metanarrative prevalence scores is 1.18, which is lower than the 1.36 for the personal belief scores, ( $t(72) = -14.140$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 6-8. Mean scores for the most and least prevalent metanarratives, student sample.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Personal Std. Deviation
1.	National Ambition	294	4.82	1.172	1.370
2.	Constitutionalism	296	4.32	1.206	1.334
3.	Strong Defense	296	4.32	1.210	1.423
4.	Strong Leader	297	4.32	1.200	1.334
5.	American Mission	297	4.28	1.123	1.359
6.	Scientific Enlightenment	298	4.23	1.154	1.120
7.	Liberal Progress	297	4.23	1.129	1.324
8.	Inevitable Warfare	298	4.23	1.164	1.309
9.	Heroic People	297	4.22	1.196	1.397
10.	Country as Beacon	298	4.20	1.259	1.454
	.....				
64.	Anti-Patriarchy	298	3.04	1.321	1.534
65.	Superior Race	297	3.00	1.285	1.343
66.	Christian Evangelism	298	2.97	1.214	1.409
67.	Militant Extremist (one variant)	298	2.97	1.325	1.358
68.	Cynicism	296	2.93	1.178	1.230
69.	Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	297	2.86	1.238	1.303
70.	Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	297	2.79	1.254	1.414
71.	Past Glory	296	2.76	1.204	1.319
72.	Others' Excessive Interference	295	2.57	1.276	1.283
73.	Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place"	296	2.49	1.235	1.242

Table 6-9 shows the highest and lowest prevalence scores for the web sample (see Appendix I for the full list).

Table 6-9. Mean scores for the most and least prevalent metanarratives, web sample.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Personal Std. Deviation
1.	National Ambition	84	4.85	1.331	1.690
2.	Strong Defense	85	4.54	1.171	1.597
3.	Country as Beacon	86	4.53	1.299	1.633
4.	Heroic People	86	4.52	1.437	1.636
5.	Strong Leader	85	4.51	1.065	1.655
6.	Constitutionalism	85	4.51	1.231	1.555
7.	Inevitable Warfare	86	4.42	1.163	1.506
8.	Lone Superpower (aka "American National")	85	4.41	1.266	1.550
9.	American Mission	85	4.34	1.150	1.604
10.	Social Contract	84	4.31	1.212	1.397
	.....				
64.	Primitivism	85	3.05	1.405	1.741
65.	Cynicism	85	3.04	1.340	1.578
66.	Ecological Community	85	2.94	1.331	1.664
67.	Others' Excessive Interference	85	2.93	1.361	1.696
68.	Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	85	2.91	1.477	1.717
69.	Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place"	85	2.91	1.477	1.529
70.	Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	83	2.82	1.539	1.288
71.	Past Glory	84	2.74	1.309	1.446
72.	Primitivism-Fall	85	2.71	1.370	1.539
73.	Anti-Patriarchy	85	2.61	1.254	1.667

Again, there is less variance among prevalence beliefs than among personal beliefs. The mean standard deviation for metanarrative prevalence scores is 1.29, which is lower than the 1.58 for the personal belief scores, ( $t(72) = -15.334, p < .001$ ).

The students and web sample did not fully agree on U.S. beliefs about the metanarrative statements. A paired sample t-test comparing metanarrative prevalence means shows that the two samples differ ( $t(72) = -3.917, p < .001$ ). However, as shown in the tables, 8 of the top 10 prevalence beliefs were the same across samples: American

Mission, Constitutionalism, Country as Beacon, Heroic People, Inevitable Warfare, National Ambition, Strong Leader, and Strong Defense. Yet these beliefs were by no means the highest among personal beliefs in either sample (with exceptions for Republicans). Thus, these beliefs should not be interpreted as an approximation of the actual U.S. prevalence of metanarratives, but rather, as schematic for what people think that Americans believe, the beliefs that define what it is to be American.

### Metanarrative Clustering

Returning to the personal beliefs data: Which metanarratives appear to “go together,” in terms of positive or negative responses? For the student pool, the six-cluster solution (from principal axis factoring with varimax rotation) yielded the most readily interpretable factors. See Appendix J for the full rotated factor matrix. Table 6-10 displays the top loading metanarratives for each of the factors; all high loadings were positive rather than negative.

Factor 1, Traditional Religion, included almost all of the metanarratives associated with belief in traditional religious figures and concepts, whether Christian, Jewish, Islamic, or even Hindu and ancient Egyptian. Factor 2 reflects a secular conservative view of American patriotism. Factor 3 indicates a spirit of international cooperation, a focus on humanity over individual nations, and on mutual problem-solving. Factor 4 focuses both on environmental concerns and on sentimentality over the simpler, more community-oriented lifestyle associated with earlier generations. Factor 5 represents hostility towards modern government and a romanticized view of our revolutionary forefathers. Factor 6 combines a variety of secular progress metanarratives, ranging from technology and science to social justice.

Factor scores were created using the automated feature in SPSS (regression method). Factor 1 is roughly bimodal, reflecting its binary nature (belief or disbelief in statements reflecting traditional religion); the other five factors are generally normally distributed.

Tables 6-11, 6-12, and 6-13 display the correlations among demographics and other predictor variables for endorsement of metanarrative factors among the student sample.

Table 6-10. Top loading metanarratives for each factor, student sample.

Factor	Top Loading Metanarratives (top 5)
1. Traditional Religion	Submission to God (Islamic) Chosen People (from Judaism) Christian Redemption Dominion over Nature Ancient Egyptian “Divine Life and Afterlife”
2. Secular American	Country as Beacon Proactive Peacekeeping Strong Defense American Mission Anti-Immigration
3. International Cooperation	International Cooperation Anti-Global Corporations Multiculturalism Superior Race (reverse) Work and Thrift for Survival
4. Eco-Romanticism	Lost Affinity with Nature Ecological Community Growing Complexity Global Warming Community Lost
5. Anti-Government Cynicism	Tea Party Anti-Corruption Financial Conspiracy Lost Revolutionary Spirit Concern re Govt. Suppression of Islam Cynicism
6. Rational Progress	Faith in Technology American Experiment Neo-Liberal Rational Process Social Justice Progress Scientific Enlightenment

Table 6-11. Metanarrative factors and demographic correlations, student sample.

	Factor 1: Trad. Religion	Factor 2: Secular American	Factor 3: Int'l Cooper- ation	Factor 4: Eco- Romanti- cism	Factor 5: Anti- Gov't Cynicism	Factor 6: Rational Progress
Age	-0.00	-.12*	.10	-.18**	-.04	-.20**
Gender (lower = F)	-.08	.03	-.05	-.16*	.04	.09
Father Education	-0.00	.01	-.07	.07	-.02	.10
Mother Education	-0.00	-.09	-.02	.17**	-.07	.15*
Parents' Mean Education	-.01	-.05	-.05	.13*	-.06	.14*

Table 6-12. Factor score means by religion and political preference, student sample.

	Factor 1: Trad. Religion	Factor 2: Secular American	Factor 3: Int'l Cooper- ation	Factor 4: Eco- Romanti- cism	Factor 5: Anti- Gov't Cynicism	Factor 6: Rational Progress
Christian (109)	<b>.65</b>	.13	-.00	-.14	-.02	-.07
Religious Non-Christian (18)	-.24	-.07	-.18	.04	.00	-.00
Agnostic (64)	<b>-.57</b>	.07	.21	.23	.03	.21
Atheist (33)	<b>-.72</b>	-.10	-.21	-.02	-.02	.03
Democrat (117)	-.19	-.14	.13	.08	.05	.17
Republican (47)	<b>.53</b>	<b>.66</b>	-.17	-.26	-.14	-.24
Libertarian (21)	-.31	-.09	-.15	<b>-.41</b>	.19	-.16
Green/ Radical Left (7)	-.03	-.14	.16	.01	-.18	-.20

The highest mean values are indicated in boldface. The Traditional Religion factor is clearly associated with Christianity, as it is rejected by agnostics and atheists. Republicans favor both Traditional Religion and Secular American values. Note the interesting rejection of Eco-Romanticism by the Libertarians.

Table 6-13. Metanarrative factors and predictor scale correlations, student sample.

	Factor 1: Trad. Religion	Factor 2: Secular American	Factor 3: Int'l Cooper- ation	Factor 4: Eco- Romanti- cism	Factor 5: Anti- Gov't Cynicism	Factor 6: Rational Progress
Duke Religion Index (low score = more religious activities)	-.66**	-.04	-.15*	.08	.02	.15*
Saucier alpha	.80**	.20**	-.08	-.11	-.01	-.13*
Saucier beta	.17**	.14*	-.61**	.02	.02	.16*
Saucier gamma	.00	.43**	.39**	-.25**	-.33**	.15*
Saucier delta	.148*	-.10	.08	.52**	-.03	.03
Saucier epsilon	.25**	.44**	-.38**	-.16**	.02	-.01
MFQ Harm	-.04	.12	.46**	.25**	.007	.09
MFQ Fairness	-.14*	.18**	.57**	.09	-.06	.15*
MFQ Ingroup	.32**	.48**	.04	.02	-.04	.13*
MFQ Authority	.29**	.54**	-.06	.05	-.03	.10
MFQ Purity	.42**	.38**	.07	.01	.01	.06
MFQ Progressive	-.43**	-.33**	.47**	.13*	-.01	.00
Optimism	-.04	.01	.14*	-.03	-.10	.07
Narrative Self-Concept	.10	.30**	.17**	.19**	.09	.31**

The traditional religion factor was, naturally, most strongly endorsed by Christians, also endorsed by non-Christian religious people, rejected by agnostics, and rejected soundly by atheists. It was endorsed by Republicans and rejected by Libertarians (who in this sample appeared to be largely atheist). Those who endorsed this factor were far more likely to engage in religious practices. The factor was, not surprisingly, highly correlated with Saucier's alpha (also measuring traditional religiousness); further, it was correlated with Saucier's beta (self-interest) and epsilon (group self-interest). The factor was also associated with all three of the MFQ conservative factors and appeared to be negatively correlated with MFQ fairness/justice.

The secular American factor was favored by older students and Republicans. It was strongly correlated with Saucier's gamma (civic government) and epsilon (group

self-interest), as well as with alpha and beta to a lesser extent. The factor was correlated with the three MFQ conservative factors and also fairness/justice, and also with narrative self-concept.

International cooperation was somewhat favored by agnostics (but rejected to a similar degree by atheists). Democrats and Greens/Radical Left tended to favor this factor; Republicans and Libertarians tended to reject it. It was strongly correlated with the two MFQ progressive factors (harm/care and fairness/justice) and strongly negatively correlated with Saucier's beta (self-interest). It was favored by those who endorsed Saucier's gamma and rejected by those who endorsed Saucier's epsilon. (Note that gamma thus correlated both with Republican secular Americanism and this international humanistic factor). This factor was also mildly correlated with optimism and narrative self-concept.

The eco-romantic factor was favored by older students, women, those with well-educated mothers, and agnostics, and rejected by Libertarians and Republicans. Surprisingly, those affiliating with Greens/Radical Left were indifferent to this factor. Eco-romanticism was strongly correlated with Saucier's delta (subjective spirituality) and also correlated with MFQ harm/care, while it was negatively correlated with Saucier's gamma (civic government). This finding, coupled with the strong correlation between the Eco-Romanticism and Anti-Government Cynicism scale scores (see Table 6-19), suggests that people tend not to believe in both government and environmentalism. Another explanation may be that the gamma factor is believed to be associated with Enlightenment rationalism (Saucier, 2000), and the Eco-Romanticism factor shares sentiments with the emotivism that characterized the literary Romantic movement, born from a reaction against the Enlightenment. Eco-Romanticism was also somewhat correlated with narrative self-concept.

Anti-government cynicism was, not surprisingly, mostly associated with Libertarians, and rejected by those endorsing Saucier's pro-civic-government gamma.

The rational progress metanarratives were favored by older students, those with more educated mothers, agnostics, and Democrats; Republicans, Greens/ Radical Left, and Libertarians all tended to reject this cluster of metanarratives. Moderate correlations were observed between rational progress and several of the other predictors: Saucier's

beta (self-interest) and gamma (civic government), MFQ fairness/justice and in-group loyalty, Saucier’s alpha (negative), and narrative self-concept.

For the web sample, a four-factor solution yielded the cleanest factors (see Table 6-14). The full rotated factor matrix is in Appendix K.

Table 6-14. Top loading metanarratives by factor, web sample.

Factor	Top Loading Metanarratives (top 5, plus all loading over .650)
1. Militant Religious Entitlement	Militant Religious Resurgence Militant Extremism Chosen People Christian Fundamentalist “Women’s Place” Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm Superior Race Christian Redemption Christian Evangelism Ancient Egyptian “Divine Life and Afterlife” Separatist Preservation Repeated Triumph over Alien Forces Lost Golden Age
2. International Cooperation + Eco-Romanticism	Global Warming Dying Cultures United Nations Mission Ecological Community Lost Affinity with Nature
3. Secular American	American Experiment Liberal Progress Heroic People Faith in Technology Lone Superpower
4. Capitalism +Anti-Government Cynicism	Capitalist Prosperity Work and Thrift for Survival Forefathers’ Lost Vision Tea Party Anti-Corruption Lost Revolutionary Spirit

Compared with the students, the web sample was less likely to distinguish between international cooperation and environmental issues, as separate domains. They also put a stronger economic spin on anti-government cynicism, pairing it closely with capitalism and a work ethic. Tables 6-15 and 6-16 show correlations and mean scores for the factors and demographic variables.

Table 6-15. Correlations for web sample factors and demographics.

	Factor 1: Militant Religious Entitlement	Factor 2: Int'l Cooperation + Eco- Romanticism	Factor 3: Secular American	Factor 4: Capitalism + Anti-Gov't Cynicism
Age	-.18	-.08	-.11	.01
Gender (lower = F)	.25*	-.27*	.19	.04
Father Education	-.15	-.25*	-.07	-.06
Mother Education	-.30**	-.05	-.05	.07

Table 6-16. Correlations for web sample factor score means by religion and political preference.

	Factor 1: Militant Religious Entitlement	Factor 2: Int'l Coop. + Eco- Romanticism	Factor 3: Secular American	Factor 4: Capitalism + Anti-Gov't Cynicism
Christian (34)	<b>.77</b>	-.26	-.04	-.05
Religious Non-Christian (10)	-.18	<b>.41</b>	.20	-.13
Agnostic (14)	-.34	.39	.11	-.03
Atheist (20)	<b>-.82</b>	.21	.10	.14
Democrat (33)	-.12	.21	.16	<b>-.54</b>
Republican (15)	<b>.81</b>	<b>-.41</b>	<b>.41</b>	.32
Libertarian (16)	-.05	-.36	-.05	<b>.92</b>
Green/ Radical Left (7)	<b>-.89</b>	<b>.84</b>	-.39	-.22

As one might expect, the militant religious entitlement factor was correlated highly with Christianity and Republican affinity (although note that the top two metanarratives for this factor were, in fact, from Islamic and Jewish sources; perhaps these themes are common among the Abrahamic religions). These metanarratives were of course soundly rejected by atheists; they were also rejected by the Greens/Radical Left affiliates. They were more likely to be endorsed by males, and mother's education was inversely correlated with their endorsement.

International cooperation and eco-romanticism was most highly correlated with Green/Radical Left affinity, with non-Christian religion and agnosticism, and with being female. It was rejected by Republicans, Libertarians, and those with higher levels of paternal education.

The secular American metanarrative factor was most often endorsed by Republicans and rejected by Greens/Radical Left.

The factor for capitalism and anti-government cynicism was highly associated with Libertarianism, and to a lesser degree with Republican affinity. Democrats tended to reject these metanarratives.

As with the students, a preference for the Republican party is closely associated with metanarrative factors focusing on traditional religion and secular American patriotism; the Libertarians and (for the web sample) the Greens/Radical Left also have clear metanarrative affiliations. The Democrats, however, do not have a clear metanarrative theme of their own, beyond rejecting anti-government sentiments and generally favoring international cooperation and progress. Their favored metanarratives, across samples, were International Cooperation, concern about Minority Oppression and the value of Multiculturalism, a belief in progress in terms of both science and social justice, and wariness about global corporations and U.S. propensity to interfere with other countries.

### Metanarrative Scales

Seven themes emerged in the factor analysis, and by assigning each metanarrative to a scale, metanarrative theme scales were created by summing across items and dividing by the number of items (with accommodation made for two reverse-scored items). In general, the web sample factors appeared to be more or less a subset of the student sample factors. A decision was made to treat the student sample factors as the most overarching set of factors for this study, and to generate scale scores for both samples for each of the student pool factors by assigning each item to the scale corresponding to factor onto which it attained the highest loading in the rotated matrix for the student sample. (All items loaded onto at least one of the factors with a loading of at least .250 except for the Anti-Patriarchy item.) A seventh theme scale, Capitalism, was created by using the two items that loaded most strongly onto the Capitalism + Anti-

Government Cynicism factor in the web sample. The scale scores were then created by summing the items; note that the International Cooperation scale had two reverse-scored items, which were subtracted.

The assignment of items to factor-based scales, displayed in Appendix A and Table 6-17, yielded some interesting findings about the relationships between the factors and the generic evaluative structures. The Traditional Religion factor was associated primarily with Restoration metanarratives. The American Secular factor was associated with Triumphalist metanarratives (Vanishing Race, Lone Superpower, and Constitutionalism) and two Looming Catastrophe metanarratives (concerns about the stifling of capitalism and the influence of immigrants), as well as a Progress metanarrative (National Ambition) and a Stability metanarrative (Inevitable Warfare). The International Cooperation factor was a mixed bag: two for Progress, one for Looming Catastrophe, one for Restoration, and one Triumphalist. The EcoRomanticism factor included numerous Prior Fall metanarratives, several Restoration metanarratives, two of Progress, and two of Looming Catastrophe, as well as the Romantic Saga of Buddhist tenets. The Anti-Government Cynicism factor included many Prior Fall metanarratives, as well as two for Restoration and two for Stability. The Rational Progress factor included only Progress metanarratives.

Looking at it from the other direction, most Looming Catastrophe metanarratives corresponded to EcoRomanticism or American Secular; the Prior Fall metanarratives corresponded to EcoRomanticism or Anti-Government Cynicism; the Progress metanarratives went to Rational Progress but also to EcoRomanticism and International Cooperation, among others; most of the Restoration metanarratives were associated with Traditional Religion, but they were also prominent among EcoRomanticism and found in other factors too; Stability was most commonly found among Anti-Government Cynicism; and Triumphalism was associated most often with the American Secular factor.

Table 6-17. Correspondence between evaluative schemas and factor-based scales.

	IntlCoop	AmerSecular	TradRel	EcoRom	RatlProg	AntiGovC	Capitalism
Catastrophe	x	x	x	xx			x
Prior Fall				xxxxxx		xxxxxx	
Progress	xxx	x		xx	xxxx		
Restoration	x		xxxxxx	xxx		xx	
Romantic Saga			x	x			
Stability		x	x			xx	
Triumphalist	x	xxx	x				

x = count; each assignment corresponds to one x.

Table 6-18 displays the mean scale scores for the two samples.

Table 6-18. Mean factor-based scale scores by sample.

	Student Pool	Web Sample
International Cooperation	4.40	4.53
Capitalism	3.87	3.92
Eco-Romanticism	3.62	3.53
American Secularism	3.54	3.37*
Rational Progress	3.50	3.55
Anti-Government Cynicism	3.36	3.61*
Traditional Religion	2.54	2.36

\*p < .05.

Note the similarity in ranking for the two samples. The web sample scored significantly higher on the Anti-Government Cynicism scale and lower on the American Secularism scale, probably because of the high rate of Libertarianism among this sample.

Table 6-19 displays the correlations among the scales, for the combined student + web sample (N = 387). Most of the scales are significantly correlated. The strongest correlations are a grouping between American Secularism, Rational Progress, Traditional Religion, and Capitalism, and a grouping between Eco-Romanticism and either International Cooperation and Anti-Government Cynicism (but not both). Note that Traditional Religion and International Cooperation are negatively correlated.

Table 6-19. Correlations between factor-based scales, combined sample.

	TradRel	AmerSec	IntlCoop	EcoRom	AntiGov	RatlProg	Capitalism
“TradRel” Scale	1	.53**	-.32**	.20**	.26**	.24**	.22**
“AmerSec” Scale		1	.02	.19**	.17**	.44**	.43**
“IntlCoop” Scale			1	.41**	.09	.15**	.13*
“EcoRom” Scale				1	.47**	.10	.17**
“AntiGov” Scale					1	.07	.31**
“RatlProg” Scale						1	.26**
Capitalism Scale							1

\*\*Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### Counternarratives and Rejected Dominant Metanarratives

Almost all of the students (all but 6 of 299) believed that some of their beliefs were counternarratives. The mean number of counternarratives endorsed was 12.05 (s.d. = 7.87), and the range was 0 to 65. Likewise, for the web sample, nearly all (all but 3 of 88) held that some of their beliefs were counternarratives. Their mean number of counternarratives was 11.91 (s.d. = 6.94), and the range was 0 to 34.

For the student pool, the counternarratives with the greatest number of adherents were Lost Affinity with Nature, Expressive Romantic, United Nations Mission, Dying Cultures, and Ecological Last Chance. For the web sample, the most popular counternarratives were Expressive Romantic, Global Warming, Ecological Community, and Our Excessive Interference.

For the student pool, the (subjectively experienced) dominant metanarratives most often rejected by respondents were Anti-Immigration, Country as Beacon, Lone Superpower, Dominion over Nature, and American Mission. For the web sample, the dominant metanarratives most often rejected were Lone Superpower, Dominion over Nature, Proactive Peacekeeping, Submission to God (Islamic), and American Mission. (It should be noted here that, based on the factor analysis, the Submission to God (Islamic) metanarrative was apparently not perceived as Islamic per se, but rather as a particularly stringent expression of traditional religion, and rejection of it by the web sample may reflect the relatively high prevalence of atheists).

For the student pool, rejecting metanarratives perceived as dominant was correlated with a higher ratio of considering one's beliefs to be counternarratives ( $r = .23$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Neither variable (rejecting dominant metanarratives nor adopting counternarratives) was correlated with age, gender, or parents' education. ANOVA contrasts revealed that Republicans were the least likely to reject dominant metanarratives ( $p < .05$  compared with Democrats). Those identifying with Greens/Radical Left were more likely to reject than retain dominant metanarratives ( $p < .01$ ) and more likely to believe their beliefs were counternarratives than dominant metanarratives ( $p < .001$ ); the other three political groups all preferred dominant metanarratives. Atheists were more likely to reject metanarratives than religious people (Christian or non-Christian;  $p < .01$ ), but that is probably explained simply by the presence of numerous metanarratives with religious content.

For the web sample, as for the student pool, rejecting metanarratives perceived as dominant was correlated with a higher ratio of considering one's beliefs to be counternarratives ( $r = .46$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Neither variable (rejecting dominant metanarratives nor adopting counternarratives) was correlated with age, gender, or parents' education. Among the web sample, it was the Democrats and the agnostics who were the most likely to perceive their metanarratives as dominant rather than counternarratives. As with the students, the Greens/Radical Left considered more of their beliefs to be counternarratives than dominant metanarratives ( $p = .001$ ), and the atheists were most likely to reject dominant metanarratives ( $p < .01$ , perhaps because of the religious content).

These two constructs (adopting counternarratives and rejecting dominant metanarratives) could be said to measure active non-conformity (a preference for counternarratives over dominant metanarratives) and passive non-conformity (rejecting dominant metanarratives without necessarily accepting counternarratives). The Greens/Radical Left respondents presented themselves as active non-conformists, and the atheists appeared to be passive non-conformists. However, there were far more metanarratives in the item pool that reflected religious beliefs than there were for anti-religious beliefs, such that it cannot be fairly said that atheists, for example, do not prefer counternarratives. It may simply be that they were not offered appropriate counternarratives to agree with.

Table 6-20 shows the mean “counternarrativity” scores for the metanarratives within each generic evaluative schema. The score for each metanarrative is the proportion of those endorsing it who consider it a counternarrative.

Table 6-20. Mean counternarrativity for metanarratives by evaluative schema.

	N	Mean	S.D.
Restoration	12	.424	.1170
Prior Fall	13	.417	.0860
Looming Catastrophe	6	.395	.0728
Romantic Saga	2	.390	.0747
Stability	4	.382	.1866
Progress	10	.313	.1175
Triumphalist	5	.309	.1334

Although both the Progress and Triumphalist schemas did include individual metanarratives with relatively high mean counternarrativity scores (e.g., Superior Race, Ecological Community, and Chosen People), in general these schemas had fewer counternarratives than the other schemas ( $t(12.18) = 2.135, p = .054$  assuming unequal variances). This makes intuitive sense, because the popular schema for how America sees itself is in terms of Progress and Triumphalist narratives.

#### Anti-Metanarrative Beliefs

Table 6-21 shows the mean scores for the five anti-narrative belief variables, comparing the two samples. These variables are Fatalism, Domestic Focus, Hedonism, Post-Modernism, and Individualist Anti-Essentialism. The differences in themes and correlations among the variables (shown in tables below) suggest that summary variables would also be useful, so these were created by adding z-scores for each of the constituent variables (weighting the constituent variables the same, such that greater variance in one would not bias the results in favor of that variable). The three variables indicating a belief in not involving oneself in societal-level issues (Societal Apathy) were generally higher for the students than for the web sample; the belief that group identity does not necessarily imply participation in a group-level narrative (Anti-Group Narrative) was significantly higher among the web sample. Before inferring that students are more

politically apathetic than older adults, it should be noted that the web sample was not at all representative of the American public, but rather consisted of those who were sufficiently motivated to complete the survey.

Table 6-21. Mean anti-narrative belief scores, student and web samples.

Belief	Student Mean	Web Mean	T-Test	p Value
Fatalism	2.11	1.84	-1.669	p < .10
Domestic Focus	3.44	3.01	-2.428	p < .05
Hedonism	3.60	3.31	-1.540	p = .126
Z-Score Sum = Societal Apathy	.15	-.54	-2.415	p = .017
Post-Modernism	4.00	4.60	3.605	p < .001
Individualist Anti-Essentialism	4.17	4.65	2.780	p < .01
Z-Score Sum = Anti-Group-Narrative	-.17	.58	3.396	p = .001

Table 6-22 shows correlations for the student sample between the five anti-metanarrative beliefs and the demographic and predictor variables. Fatalism, Domestic Focus, and Hedonism were correlated with each other, as were Post-Modernism and Individualist Anti-Essentialism. Note also a slight negative correlation between the latter two variables and Fatalism – rejecting a group narrative does not imply political disengagement.

Fatalism was positively correlated with Saucier’s alpha (traditional religion) and beta (self-interest), as well as Saucier’s delta (subjective spirituality) and epsilon (group self-interest); it was negatively correlated with Saucier’s gamma (civic government) and the two MFQ progressive foundations (harm/care and fairness/justice). Domestic Focus was correlated primarily with Saucier’s beta (self-interest) and the three MFQ conservative foundations (in-group loyalty, authority, and purity). Hedonism was not surprisingly correlated with Saucier’s beta (self-interest) and epsilon (group self-interest). Post-modernism was positively correlated with progressivism (harm/care and fairness/justice) and negatively correlated with Saucier’s alpha (traditional religion) and beta (self-interest); this pattern also held for Individualist Anti-Essentialism, which was also negatively correlated with MFQ authority and with Saucier’s epsilon (group self-interest), and positively correlated with narrative self-concept (i.e., one should have a life narrative, but it should reflect one’s individuality, not one’s group identity).

Table 6-22. Correlation between anti-metanarrative beliefs and predictor variables, student sample.

	Fatalism	Domestic Focus	Hedonism	Post-Modernism	Individualist Anti-Essentialism
Fatalism	1	.18**	.14*	-.14*	-.14*
Domestic Focus		1	.46**	.07	-.05
Hedonism			1	-.00	.02
Post-Modernism				1	.54**
Individualist Anti-Essentialism					1
Age	-.08	-.09	-.13*	.12*	.03
Gender - two values	-.00	-.07	-.01	.09	-.03
Religion - four values	-.15*	-.11	.03	.21**	.24**
Political Preference	.02	.15*	.01	-.04	-.10
Father Education	.03	.04	.01	.08	.03
Mother Education	-.00	-.06	.02	-.00	.04
Saucier alpha: tradition-oriented religiousness	.25**	.12*	-.07	-.32**	-.29**
Saucier beta: unmitigated self-interest	.35**	.27**	.237**	-.24**	-.31**
Saucier gamma: civic ideals	-.19**	-.00	-.02	.10	.15*
Saucier delta: subjective spirituality	.16**	-.06	-.07	-.08	-.06
Saucier epsilon	.18**	.25**	.16**	-.11	-.19**
MFQ-20 Harm Average	-.20**	.00	.00	.19**	.17**
MFQ-20 Fairness Average	-.24**	.07	.14*	.26**	.28**
MFQ-20 Ingroup Average	.10	.17**	.06	-.10	-.06
MFQ-20 Authority Average	.15*	.29**	.11	-.13*	-.15**
MFQ-20 Purity Average	.13*	.21**	.02	-.13*	-.10
Optimism	-.10	-.11	.01	-.06	.01
Narrative Self-Concept	.05	.09	.07	.15*	.17**
Factor_1 Traditional Religion	.40**	.18**	.02	-.23**	-.20**
Factor_2 Secular American	.02	.32**	.17**	-.01	-.09
Factor_3 Intl Cooperation	-.36**	-.11	-.09	.31**	.38**
Factor_4 Eco-Romanticism	.18**	.03	-.00	.05	.12
Factor_5 AntiGovt Cynicism	.27**	.16*	.14*	.16**	.11
Factor_6 Rational Progress	.15*	.20**	.25**	.20**	.19**

\*\*Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \* is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6-23 displays the correlations for the web sample. Again, the first three anti-narrative beliefs are correlated, as are the other two. Fatalism and Domestic Focus were correlated with religiousness and male gender. Hedonism was correlated with younger age and male gender. Post-modernism and Individualist Anti-Essentialism were positively correlated with non-religiousness and, curiously, with lower levels of paternal education.

Table 6-23. Correlations between anti-metanarrative beliefs and demographics, web sample.

	Fatalism	Domestic Focus	Hedonism	Post-Modernism	Individualist Anti-Essentialism
Fatalism	1	.25*	.18	.02	-.10
Domestic Focus		1	.60**	-.14	-.16
Hedonism			1	.12	.16
Post-Modernism				1	.61**
Individualist Anti-Essentialism					1
Age	-.11	-.17	-.36**	-.03	.06
Gender - two values (low value = female)	.25*	.25*	.21*	.17	.05
Religion - four values (higher values = less religion)	-.26*	-.24*	.12	.40**	.36**
Political Preference	-.16	-.22*	-.01	-.11	.003
Father Education	-.12	.08	.01	-.31**	-.28**
Mother Education	-.01	-.02	.18	.01	-.10

\*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); \*\*Significant at the 0.01 level.

The correlations indicate good face validity for the five anti-metanarrative belief variables (they all make sense), and suggest several paths by which people may not engage either with their societies or with their societies' metanarratives.

## CHAPTER VII

### MOTIVATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF METANARRATIVES

#### Endorsement of Belief-Based Activities

This part of the study focused on the activities associated with believing in a given metanarrative. Table 7-1 displays the relative endorsement rates of the various belief-based activities, across all items, for the student pool. Each participant indicated the rate to which they engage in these seven activities, for each of (up to) four metanarratives. For each participant, the four metanarratives were chosen randomly from all those that they highly endorsed (agreed with at 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale). Activity Ns (the number of participants randomly chosen to respond to the activity questions for a given metanarrative) ranged from 10 participants (Archaism) to 20 participants (Proactive Peacekeeping.)

Among the students, their metanarrative beliefs were most likely to be reflected in their voting, and least likely in their career choice. This makes sense for several reasons. First, metanarratives are prominent in politics and relevant to many political choices. Second, many factors other than beliefs about one's role in society are relevant for career choices, spending money, and allocating one's leisure time.

Table 7-1. Relative endorsement of activities, student sample.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Voting	73	2.50	5.29	4.0151	.71995
Materials Read/Watched	73	2.33	4.47	3.4138	.54157
Talk/Writing Topics	73	2.44	4.57	3.4064	.51773
Joining Groups	73	2.15	5.00	3.3415	.67213
Use of Leisure Time	73	1.85	4.80	3.2332	.71810
Spending Money	73	1.85	4.94	3.0890	.62072
Choice of Career	73	1.71	4.81	2.9877	.69238

Metanarrative beliefs among the web sample were also most likely to be reflected in voting and least likely to be reflected in career choice. Activity Ns ranged from 1 (Heroic Example; Separatist Preservation) to 10 (Constitutionalism).

Table 7-2 displays the same information for the web sample.

Table 7-2. Relative endorsement of activities, web sample.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Voting	73	1.40	6.00	4.3738	.92686
Talk/Writing Topics	73	2.00	6.00	4.0490	.84642
Materials Read/Watched	73	1.00	5.33	3.9299	.81338
Joining Groups	73	2.00	5.50	3.6936	.83095
Spending Money	73	1.00	5.50	3.4811	1.03569
Use of Leisure Time	73	1.33	6.00	3.4581	1.00266
Choice of Career	73	1.33	6.00	3.1711	.99822

### Action Indices

Each metanarrative had activity responses available, and as there were affirmative responses in each category for each metanarrative, all seven activities were retained for each metanarrative. However, as Table 7-3 shows, only six of the activities were highly correlated – voting was not closely related to the other activities. (The relationships were similar but not as pronounced for the web sample.)

Table 7-3. Correlations among activity scores, student sample.

	Vote	Career	Leisure	Spend	Join	ReadWatch	TalkWrite
Vote	1	0.21	-0.08	.25*	-0.06	0.18	.35**
Career		1	.77**	.72**	.57**	.53**	.68**
Leisure			1	.72**	.74**	.68**	.72**
Spend				1	.39**	.58**	.66**
Join					1	.56**	.57**
ReadWatch						1	.76**
TalkWrite							1

\*\*Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \* significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Weighted activity scores were calculated for each metanarrative, using the mean activity values for each of the six correlated metanarrative-activity combinations, standardized and summed across the six activities; voting scores were also standardized but because of their relative independence were not included in the main activity indices.

Table 7-4 shows the metanarratives that students believing in them found the most motivating. The N column shows the number of respondents providing activity data for the metanarrative. Note that “most motivating” is only one interpretation of the action indices. These specific metanarratives may also be the easiest to act upon, or to find connections between the metanarrative and one’s lifestyle choices.

Table 7-4. Which metanarratives motivate their adherents to act? Metanarratives ranked by action index, student sample.

Metanarrative	Evaluative Schema	Action Index	N
(33) Buddhist Belief	Romantic Saga	1.379	15
(53) Dangerous World Individualism	.	1.367	16
(71) Separatist Preservation	.	1.250	14
(38) Expressive Romantic	.	0.984	19
(32) Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman	.	0.974	15
(02) Scientific Enlightenment	Progress	0.878	16
(14) United Nations Mission	Progress	0.874	17
(50) Ecological Community	Progress	0.823	19
(22) Lost Golden Age	Prior Fall	0.820	14
(13) American Experiment	Progress	0.780	12

Clearly the Progress metanarratives dominate the students’ action indices, for those with coded genres.

Table 7-5 shows the same information for the students for their voting behavior.

Table 7-5. Which metanarratives motivate their adherents to vote? Metanarratives ranked by voting index, student sample.

Metanarrative	Evaluative Schema	Voting Index	N
(46) Anti-Immigration	Looming Catastrophe	1.776	16
(21) Tea Party Anti-Corruption	Restoration	1.738	15
(34) Financial Conspiracy	Prior Fall	1.599	12
(52) Strong Leader	.	1.467	14
(18) Progressive “Nurturing Family”	.	1.295	19
(47) Ecological Last Chance	Looming Catastrophe	1.275	15
(19) Neo-Liberal Rational Process	Progress	1.194	16
(14) United Nations Mission	Progress	1.123	17
(12) Global Warming	Looming Catastrophe	1.123	17
(08) Progressive Socialist	Restoration	1.076	19

Here, the Looming Catastrophe metanarratives are the most motivating, and both Restoration and Progress metanarratives are prominent.

Action indices for the web sample are shown in Table 7-6.

Table 7-6. Which metanarratives motivate their adherents to act? Metanarratives ranked by action index, web sample.

Metanarrative	Evaluative Schema	Action Index	N
(71) Separatist Preservation	.	1.350	1
(07) Capitalist Prosperity	Looming Catastrophe	0.844	6
(43) Militant Religious Resurgence	Restoration	0.831	3
(29) Christian Redemption	Restoration	0.824	2
(44) Chosen People	Triumphalist	0.822	4
(50) Ecological Community	Progress	0.805	3
(54) Dangerous World Communitarianism	.	0.796	5
(40) Militant Extremist (one variant)	Restoration	0.786	3
(34) Financial Conspiracy	Prior Fall	0.703	6
(53) Dangerous World Individualism	.	0.670	5

For the web sample, Restoration metanarratives play a prominent role in behavior.

Table 7-7 shows the same information for the web sample for their voting behavior.

Table 7-7. Which metanarratives motivate their adherents to vote? Metanarratives ranked by voting index, web sample.

Metanarrative	Evaluative Schema	Voting Index	N
(71) Separatist Preservation	.	1.754	1
(72) Others' Excessive Interference	.	1.754	4
(34) Financial Conspiracy	Prior Fall	1.571	6
(07) Capitalist Prosperity	Looming Catastrophe	1.398	6
(62) Increased Laziness	Prior Fall	1.291	7
(15) Alienation from Nature	Prior Fall	1.215	4
(23) Minority Oppression	.	1.215	7
(14) United Nations Mission	Progress	1.215	6
(48) Anti-Global Corporations	Restoration	1.150	9
(65) Forefathers' Lost Vision	Prior Fall	1.032	3

For this group, Prior Fall metanarratives are prominent. It appears that for both samples, their long-term lifestyle choices are more influenced by positively framed (gain) metanarratives, whereas their voting choices are more influenced by negatively framed (loss) metanarratives.

Also of interest is whether the patterns of result are the same when dropping the metanarratives with overt religious content, since religious beliefs are more likely to be

adopted without conscious deliberation (i.e., from one's family of origin). Eight metanarratives referencing God, along with two that mentioned "divine" or "cosmic Absolute" (which the atheists had also strongly rejected), were removed from these analyses. The Buddhist item was retained because atheists were relatively neutral about it and because among the native U.S. residents in this study, a belief in Buddhism would be more likely to have been adopted deliberately rather than acquired through upbringing. (The Buddhist respondents in the student sample were four Caucasians and one Japanese-American, and in the web sample, one Caucasian and one of mixed ethnicity.) The ten "religious" metanarratives included three coded as Restoration, one as Looming Catastrophe, one as Stability, and one as Triumphalist. Four were classified as stories, two were not; six had goals, one did not; nine had intensifiers, one did not.

#### Hypothesis Testing for Motivational Effectiveness

(1) Schema hypothesis: "Given belief in a metanarrative, those with a "restoration" schema will inspire greater action than those with "progress" and "avoiding catastrophe" schemas, which in turn will inspire greater action than those with "prior fall" schemas.

Table 7-8 displays the mean action indices for the student sample, by evaluative schema or genre. Note that some are negative, because they are the means of standardized variables (z-scores). Overall, the students found their beliefs in Progress and Restoration metanarratives to be the most reflected in their actions. The hypothesis that Restoration schemas would inspire greater action than Progress or Looming Catastrophe schemas is clearly not borne out; Restoration is not even significantly higher than Looming Catastrophe. The hypothesis that Looming Catastrophe and Progress schemas would be associated with higher action than Prior Fall schemas is also not supported. When the religious metanarratives are dropped, the results are roughly the same.

Table 7-8. Mean action indices by evaluative schema, student sample.

	N	Mean	S.D.
Progress	10	2.4667	4.659
Restoration	12	1.2194	3.704
Romantic Saga	2	.7328	14.567
Looming Catastrophe	6	.6363	1.7289
Prior Fall	13	-.1889	4.122
Triumphalist	5	-3.0943	2.867
Stability	4	-5.3851	2.607

For voting, Table 7-9 shows little difference among the genres. Again, the patterns are very similar when the religious metanarratives are dropped.

Table 7-9. Mean voting indices by evaluative schema, student sample.

	N	Mean	S.D.
Looming Catastrophe	6	0.6543	1.060
Progress	10	0.4826	0.684
Prior Fall	13	-0.1976	0.885
Restoration	12	-0.2654	1.225
Stability	4	-0.3629	1.256
Triumphalist	5	-0.4126	0.731
Romantic Saga	2	-1.1144	1.022

Turning to the web sample, the Prior Fall and Restoration metanarratives here are the most prominent (see Table 7-10). This pattern is still consistent if the religious metanarratives are dropped. The hypothesis that Restoration metanarratives are more motivating than Looming Catastrophe and Progress metanarratives is not supported.

Table 7-10. Mean action indices by evaluative schema, web sample.

	N	Mean	S.D.
Prior Fall	13	1.4734	3.599
Restoration	12	0.8174	4.832
Progress	10	-0.1894	4.525
Romantic Saga	2	-1.3118	6.399
Looming Catastrophe	6	-1.3235	6.749
Stability	4	-2.3255	3.413
Triumphalist	5	-4.1857	6.525

For voting, Table 7-11 shows no clear pattern in which metanarratives are most motivating.

Table 7-11. Mean voting indices by evaluative schema, web sample.

	N	Mean	S.D.
Stability	4	0.231	0.7859
Looming Catastrophe	6	0.136	1.2837
Prior Fall	13	0.091	0.9932
Restoration	12	-0.068	1.0694
Progress	10	-0.178	0.7801
Triumphalist	5	-0.459	1.5861
Romantic Saga	2	-1.736	0.8621

And Table 7-12 shows the pattern if the religious metanarratives are dropped. For this analysis, Looming Catastrophe metanarratives predominate.

Table 7-12. Mean voting indices by evaluative schema, omitting religious metanarratives, web sample.

	N	Mean	S.D.
Looming Catastrophe	5	0.604	0.6444
Prior Fall	13	0.091	0.9932
Stability	3	0.082	0.8913
Restoration	9	-0.136	1.1547
Progress	10	-0.178	0.7801
Triumphalist	4	-0.743	1.6785
Romantic Saga	1	-1.126	--

Although the more specific hypothesis were not supported, it is clear from the four preceding tables that the four evaluative schemas with uncertain future outcomes (Looming Catastrophe, Prior Fall, Restoration, and Progress) generally have more motivational force than the three with stable or neutral futures (Stability, Romantic Saga, and Triumphalist). For the students' action indices,  $t(45) = 2.324$ ,  $p < .05$  and for voting,  $t(45) = 2.230$ ,  $p < .05$ ; for the web action indices,  $t(45) = 1.593$ ,  $p = .12$  and for voting,  $t(45) = 1.683$ ,  $p = .10$ .

(2) Story hypothesis: "Given belief in a metanarrative, those that contain all three story

elements explicitly (context, problem, solution) will inspire greater action than those that do not.”

For the full sample of metanarratives (that is, the 49 for which the coders reached agreement on whether they contained all three story elements or not), the action index for students for those containing the story elements was .48, and for those that did not contain the elements it was -.68. For the web sample, the difference between the means was 1.46 for those containing the story elements and -.81 for those that did not. In both cases, the difference was in the expected direction, but the results were not significant. The differences were inconsequential for voting.

For the subsample of Restoration metanarratives, none of the results for presence of story elements was significant.

(3) Goal presence hypothesis: “Given belief in a metanarrative, those that support explicit future goals will inspire greater action or desire to act than those that do not.”

For the student sample, the mean of the action indices for those metanarratives with an explicit goal was 1.42, compared with -1.88 for those without an explicit goal. The difference was significant,  $t(65.671) = -2.878$ ,  $p < .01$ . For the web sample, the metanarratives with a goal had a mean action index of .79, compared with -1.26 for those without a goal,  $t(65.961) = -1.747$ ,  $p = .085$ . Again, the differences for voting were not meaningful; this was also the case when the Looming Catastrophe metanarratives were all coded to have a goal (of averting the catastrophe).

Only one of the Restoration metanarratives did not have a goal, and the difference between the action indices for that metanarrative and the others was not significant, though in the expected direction for both samples (1.60 vs. -2.36 for the students and .71 vs. -6.4733 for the web).

The goal-presence hypothesis was generally supported.

(4) Intensifiers hypothesis: “Given belief in a metanarrative, the presence of intensifiers (e.g., “sacred,” “absolute,” “only chance” etc.) will inspire greater action than those without them.”

For the full sample of metanarratives (the 68 that were coded for presence of intensifiers), for the students the presence of intensifiers yielded an action index of 1.01, versus -.53 for those without the intensifiers; the difference was not significant ( $p = .21$ ).

For the web sample, the difference (1.82 for those with intensifiers vs. -.77 for those without) was significant,  $t(43.117) = -2.100$ ,  $p < .05$ . It is interesting to note that even without the religious metanarratives (which accounted for many of the intensifiers), the difference for both samples was in the hypothesized direction (although not significant).

For the subsample of Restoration metanarratives, the difference between action indices for those with and without intensifiers was not significant (except for students' voting, but that was in the wrong direction).

The intensifiers hypothesis, overall, had some support.

#### Post-Hoc Exploratory Analyses for Motivational Effectiveness

Saliency Scores. *Objective: Report the correlation between metanarrative saliency scores (from the general survey pilot) and personal belief scores and action indices.*

Because the N for metanarrative saliency scores was so small (18, from the sample of 30 students), it was difficult for correlations to achieve significance. Neither the student belief nor web belief scores were correlated with saliency scores; the student and web prevalence scores did approach significance ( $r = .37$ ,  $p = .13$  for students;  $r = .39$ ,  $p = .11$  for the web). The student action indices were significantly negatively correlated with the saliency scores ( $r = -.54$ ,  $p = .02$ ).

Together, these results suggest that if the saliency scores are interpretable, they are more indicative of the schemas for “what Americans believe” from the prevalence scores than of the participants' own beliefs, which makes sense because in the sentence completion prompts, the students providing the data had been asked not only for their own beliefs but for the beliefs of “a conservative or traditional patriot,” “a liberal or progressive patriot,” etc. Without a stronger theoretical basis for using the saliency scores, I would conclude that this construct is of little interest.

Counternarrativity and Action. *Objective: Report the correlation between the “dominant vs. counternarrativity ratio” for each metanarrative and its action score.*

If you perceive your belief to be a counternarrative, does that in itself create more motivation to act consistently with it?

This analysis and the following (anti-metanarrative section analyses) required the creation of an “individual action” variable summed over each of their four sets of activity

scores. For both the students and the web sample, the Individual Action variable was not correlated with any of the demographic variables. For the students, the variable did show a negative correlation ( $r = -.167$ ,  $p < .01$ ) with Saucier's beta (unmitigated self-interest), which validates the variable as representing a willingness to act on others' behalf (that is, consistently with societal metanarratives). The variable was also positively correlated with the two "liberal" components of the MFQ-20 ( $r = .27$  for Harm and  $r = .26$  for Fairness,  $p < .001$ ).

To determine the relationship between the relative counternarrativity of metanarratives and the action indices, counternarrativity scores were made by averaging the number of students judging a metanarrative they endorse to be a counternarrative (scored as 1) and the number of students judging a metanarrative they endorse to be a dominant metanarrative in their society (scored as 2). Thus, all metanarratives had a counternarrativity score between 1 and 2, with higher scores indicating greater belief that the metanarrative is dominant in the society rather than a counternarrative.

For the students, the correlation between the mean counternarrativity scores for metanarratives and their overall action indices was not significant. The correlation between mean counternarrativity scores and voting behaviors was positive ( $r = .34$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that students were more likely to vote consistently with a metanarrative they endorsed if they believe it is a dominant metanarrative in their society.

For the web sample, the correlation between the mean counternarrativity scores for metanarratives and their overall action indices was negative ( $r = -.38$ ,  $p = .001$ ). This means that the web sample members were more likely to make general lifestyle choices consistent with the metanarratives they endorse if they believe them to be counternarratives. The correlation between counternarrativity scores and voting was not significant for the web sample.

Overall, these results seem inconsistent across samples.

Anti-Metanarratives. *Objective: Report the correlation between each of the five "anti-metanarrative belief" items and (a) each person's mean action score across metanarratives and (b) each person's number of metanarratives endorsed.*

In theory, one would expect that holding beliefs that are inconsistent with metanarratives (whether because one doesn't feel engaged with one's society, or whether

one is consciously opposed to metanarratives in general) would lead to lower rates of endorsing metanarratives and perhaps to acting consistently with the metanarratives that one does endorse.

Curiously, students endorsing the anti-metanarrative beliefs also tended to endorse more metanarratives. All three of the “societal apathy” beliefs were positively correlated with number of metanarratives endorsed (for Fatalism,  $r = .28$ ,  $p < .001$ ; for Domestic Focus,  $r = .29$ ,  $p < .001$ ; for Hedonism,  $r = .15$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This may be evidence of acquiescence – participants may have gotten into a pattern of agreeing with statements. Conversely, some students may have interpreted statements like Fatalism as themselves metanarratives (a higher power is in charge of what happens to us). One would also expect the students who agreed with the “anti-group-narrative” beliefs to show a negative correlation with number of metanarratives endorsed, but there was no effect for the Post-Modernism belief, and for the Individualist Anti-Essentialism belief, the correlation was positive ( $r = .15$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Once a student did agree with a metanarrative, those endorsing the anti-metanarrative beliefs were neither more nor less likely to act consistently with their metanarrative belief (except for a modest positive correlation for Individualist Anti-Essentialism,  $r = .12$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

The web sample participants who endorsed the three “societal apathy” items also tended to endorse more metanarratives. The correlations were .368 for Fatalism ( $p < .01$ ), .437 for Domestic Focus ( $p < .001$ ), and .400 for Hedonism ( $p < .001$ ). The two “anti-group-narrative” items were uncorrelated with endorsement rates. Web sample participants endorsing anti-metanarrative beliefs were neither more nor less likely to act (or claim to act) consistently with their metanarrative-beliefs, except for a negative correlation for Hedonism ( $r = -.24$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

## CHAPTER VIII

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### General Discussion

This modest exploratory study yielded a rich dataset for studying the relationship that lifelong U.S. residents have with their metanarratives. The study supports a pluralistic model of American culture, with participants in both the University of Oregon student sample and the nationwide web sample endorsing a mean of 36 metanarratives (agreement scores of 4-6 on a 6-point scale).

Participants in both samples agreed strongly on numerous metanarratives, such as the value of international cooperation, multiculturalism, work and thrift, science, and social justice and concerns about minority oppression, the role of large global corporations, and excessive U.S. interference in other countries. Both samples generally rejected metanarratives about the traditional “woman’s place” of subservience to men, racial superiority, righteous war, Christian evangelism, millennialism, militant extremism, dominion over nature, divinely chosen people, and Christian redemption. Thus, there were patterns of consensual agreement and disagreement with metanarratives.

Areas of consensus aside, in each sample some groups were more likely to accept or reject metanarratives than others. Republicans were more likely to accept religious and patriotic metanarratives; Libertarians rejected metanarratives about the “proper” role of government; atheists and to a lesser degree agnostics rejected religious metanarratives.

Democrats did not have any distinguishing patterns of metanarrative endorsement in either group. There are several possible reasons for this anomaly. First, Democrats comprised the largest political affiliation in each sample (41% of the students and 34% of the web respondents), and to some extent their beliefs may have dominated the study sample. Second, Democrats represented the political center of the sample, and may represent the political center of contemporary U.S. politics, such that Democratic beliefs are the most mainstream. Third, it may be that uniquely Democratic metanarratives were overlooked in compiling the item pool. Fourth, however, it may be that the Democratic Party currently relies less on metanarratives in its political discourse than do other political groups (Reich, 2005). The metanarratives endorsed most commonly by

Democrats (a desire for international cooperation, scientific progress, social justice, etc.) may not be controversial, nor often expressed as suspenseful narratives.

The intention with the survey section on prevalence beliefs had been twofold: to assess the actual prevalence of various metanarrative beliefs among the nation's population (if the study sample had been truly representative), and to permit the study of how individuals see their personal beliefs in the context of the broader belief system of their national culture. Rather than assessing actual prevalence, however, the responses revealed a normative picture of what "Americans" believe, a rather narrow schema of what it means to be American. The beliefs judged most prevalent for Americans were those considered classically patriotic, focused on national ambition, the value of the Constitution, the need for a strong leader and strong defense, and the country's role in the world as a role model and inspiration for other democracies. Other beliefs considered prevalent among Americans were two mainstream forms of progress: scientific research and social justice.

The contrast between individuals' own beliefs and their sense of America's prevalent beliefs did still yield interesting data on subjectively experienced counternarratives and rejection of dominant metanarratives. Not surprisingly, Republicans were the least likely to reject metanarratives they considered dominant (that is, those that reflected patriotic values), and those identifying as Greens or Radical Left were more likely to reject than accept dominant metanarratives and more likely to hold that their own beliefs were counternarratives. (It would have been worthwhile to distinguish between Greens and Radical Left adherents in the sample.)

The patterns in anti-metanarrative beliefs were also interesting. Two types of anti-metanarrative beliefs were identified: a general societal apathy ("it's pointless or undesirable to participate in society at large"), and a belief that metanarratives should be treated skeptically or should not govern group behavior. However, neither of these beliefs actually inhibited the rate of metanarrative endorsement, nor the rate of acting consistently with one's metanarrative beliefs.

The item pool used in this study was by no means exhaustive. Numerous other metanarratives could be added, both reflecting current American beliefs and beliefs prevalent in other places or at other times. Two metanarratives that I would like to have

included, in retrospect, would have been a positively framed endorsement of atheist beliefs (e.g., a progress metanarrative about “throwing off superstitions and irrational concepts like God”), and a science-fiction-based metanarrative about how humanity’s only long-term hope is to migrate beyond our solar system. It would also be worthwhile to try to identify some Democrat-specific metanarratives, such as concern about maintaining progress towards social justice in the face of economic threats and religious conservatism. Appendix L lists the potential metanarratives suggested by participants in the main study (from all members of both samples, not limited to lifelong U.S. residents).

#### Clustering (via Factor Analysis)

With very few exceptions, all of the metanarratives fit into one or more broad clusters of beliefs, in both samples. That is, belief in one metanarrative was typically associated with believing in a variety of other metanarratives, within a common theme. Six metanarrative clustering themes emerged from the student sample: traditional religion, secular American values, international cooperation, eco-romanticism, anti-government cynicism, and rational progress. Individual preferences among these themes fell largely along political lines, with further nuances revealed through correlations with the various predictor variables, especially the Saucier “isms” factors and the Moral Foundations concepts. The web sample largely replicated the students’ factor structure, with a few key differences. The traditional religion theme had more strident elements (militancy and entitlement); the international cooperation and eco-romanticism factors were merged, the rational progress factor did not appear, and the anti-government cynicism factor was part of a more economically oriented factor dominated by capitalist sentiments. For both of the samples, it remained clear that endorsing or rejecting specific themes distinguished Republicans, Libertarians, and Greens/Radical left from the sample, but none of the themes were specific to Democrats, beyond generally favoring international cooperation, progress, and a positive role for government. Political groups are generally differentiable by their metanarratives.

Although the patterns of metanarrative and metanarrative theme endorsements that arose in this study are interesting and worthy of study, it should be noted that the themes emerging in the factor analyses depended on the underlying item pool. Other themes may have been overlooked, although efforts were made to include metanarratives

representing a broad spectrum of American society. Nor are the factors necessarily stable. New metanarratives emerge all the time, and preferences among them are very much influenced by socio-economic conditions and cultural trends; the results of this study are a product of a particular moment in American history.

The scale scores represented seven interpretable constructs that arose as a result of the factor analysis. These scales may be population-specific. The seventh scale on capitalism deserves further study, as it did not appear among the students, whether associated with anti-government cynicism as in the web sample, or otherwise. The scale scores permit exploration of these constructs across both samples and outside the scope of this study.

### Motivational Effectiveness

One of the primary goals of this study was to examine whether the narrative components of metanarratives have a relationship with individual behaviors, specifically, the degree to which metanarrative structural elements correlate with various types of activity among individuals who believe strongly in the metanarrative. Each of the metanarratives in the item pool did have associated activity data, although sometimes the number of individuals providing that data was very small, especially for the web sample. The data covered seven types of activities, of which six were reasonably well correlated with each other (career choice, spending leisure time, spending money, joining groups, reading/watching materials, talking/writing about the topic). These six generally represented lifestyle choices. The seventh activity, voting, was treated separately and represents more of a short-term behavior contingent upon the current political atmosphere.

The top 10 lists of most motivating metanarratives had very little overlap for the two samples, either for “lifestyle” activities or for voting (Tables 7-4 through 7-7). This may reflect the differences in age and life stage for the two groups, their different political orientations, or simply the small Ns for the web sample. Two patterns did emerge in terms of genre, however. For the lifestyle activities, the students listed several Progress metanarratives among their top 10, and the web sample top 10 featured more Restoration metanarratives than any other genre. Both groups thus preferred to orient their ongoing life activities in a positive, “upward” direction. For voting, however, the

students seemed especially concerned about Looming Catastrophes, whereas the web sample was especially concerned about metanarratives framed in terms of a Prior Fall. Thus, although lifestyle choices had been framed in a positive direction, voting was more oriented towards narratives of threats, declines, and losses – negative experiences.

Genre Hypotheses. I had anticipated that Restoration metanarratives would be more motivating than Progress or Looming Catastrophe metanarratives, which would in turn be more motivating than Prior Falls. These hypotheses were not supported. However, all four of these metanarrative types were more often associated with activities than were the other three (Stability, Romantic Saga, and Triumphalist). This is most likely because the types of affect associated with the first four genres are more active and motivating than the types of affect associated with the other three. Progress is associated with hope and with the intrinsic satisfaction of creativity and growth; Restoration is linked with hope and a sense of “rightness” or justice; Catastrophe is associated with fear and anxiety; Prior Falls engender anger or guilt, and the sense that things are not as they should be. Each of these emotions is probably more motivating than passive satisfaction (from positive Stability), resignation (from negative Stability or the up-down cycles of the Romantic Saga) or pride in past achievements (Triumphalist). The first four genres also inspire more of a desire for resolution, in effect, more narrative suspense – even for Prior Falls, which appear to have already concluded, but which still leave matters unresolved.

Moreover, it is possible that the first four genres are all experienced as a choice and opportunity between two possible paths. For Restoration and Prior Fall scenarios, one can leave matters in the undesirable state they are currently in, or one can try to “fix” them. For Progress scenarios, things might stay as they are and stagnate, or more can be achieved. For Catastrophes, things can stay in the relatively desirable state they are in if we apply ourselves, otherwise disaster may follow. Extremist groups often even take this form further. For example, Looming Catastrophe and Restoration may be combined, if the present is represented as unsustainable, such that either glory or disaster must ensue. Because each of these schemas is potent individually, the combination may be even more so, and history supports this idea. Both militant extremist (e.g., terrorist) and democidal (e.g., genocidal, state terror) mindsets often incorporate this metanarrative. For example,

Nazi propaganda promulgated the belief that the German people were on the verge of either utter annihilation or decisive triumph. It would also be possible to have metanarratives that combine Progress and Catastrophes, such as, “In the long term, humanity must migrate beyond our solar system, before our sun reaches the end of its lifespan.” (Likewise, the other narrative components may be combined, as in the presence of an explicit goal that involves an intensifier, e.g., purifying the nation, achieving a “final solution,” attaining the sacred.)

In a different vein, it is worth noting that in this study, “narrative effectiveness” was equated with “motivating.” This issue is related to the concept of “stance,” as described earlier in the section on narrative transportation and secondary worlds. If one treats the metanarrative as a story, existing outside oneself, one may be quite satisfied with the story on narrative terms without feeling particularly motivated to act. It is only when the person also identifies with the story as real and personally relevant, and perceives a way to participate within the story, that the story can be said to be motivating. Thus it may be that hearing a Restoration or Progress metanarrative might feel quite rewarding and pleasing (certainly a form of narrative effectiveness), but if the story is apparently proceeding nicely without one’s active involvement, then it may never produce any motivational force. That is, a metanarrative could be too “storylike,” such that observers could trust that, like a story, matters will resolve satisfactorily in due course. Further research is needed to identify the specific processes through which one decides to step inside the story, or finds oneself caught up inside it, versus observing it as a spectator. Most of the participants in this study did find themselves acting consistently with metanarratives, at least to some degree, but whether they subjectively experienced this as participating in the stories of their societies is unknown.

Other Narrative Elements. It was difficult to assess the contribution of the other narrative elements (presence of goals, three story elements, and intensifiers) because the number of metanarratives included in the study was not large. For the students, at least, the presence of an explicit goal was associated with greater activity; this was more or less true for the web sample as well. For both samples, the presence of all three story elements tended to be associated with greater activity, though the difference was not significant. For the web sample, the presence of intensifiers was associated with greater

action; the student sample also tended in this direction.

Further research is needed on the intensifiers, which were also associated with strong levels of disbelief (rejection). It may be that intensifiers may create a motivating resonance for some, but a skeptical reactance in others (hyperbole), such that even if one generally agrees with the content, one may feel reservations about its presentation. We would expect this reactivity to be stronger in atheists and other rationalists, who may find such elements distastefully romanticizing. It is likely that this reactivity would be correlated positively with Epstein's rationalist scale and negatively with his experiential scale. A cynical reactance would tend to lead to a more ironic stance, which would in turn reduce the likelihood of immersive participation – that is, either one would accept the intensifier as true, which should lead to greater action due to a greater sense of transcendent mission or urgency, or one would react against it and be even less likely to act than one would without this form of presentation, given general agreement with the content.

In conclusion, the study offered support for the hypothesis that the narrative qualities of metanarratives do influence the degree to which their adherents act consistently with them. The presence of a goal, dramatic elements, and suspense about the possibility of either a positive or negative outcome were all to some extent correlated with the action indices.

### Implications

Although this study was exploratory in nature, and its findings are only tentative, they do suggest some potential lessons for public advocacy, both domestic and international. First, in order to promote lifestyle changes among the general public (e.g., adopting technologies with greater energy efficiency to mitigate global climate change), advocates should consider presenting their case in terms of positively framed metanarratives (Progress or Restoration). People appear to act more consistently with beliefs that they associate with societal movement in a positive direction. This finding contributes to a growing body of research on “gain-framing” and “loss-framing” in terms of motivating behavior (Rothman & Salovey, 1997; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979).

Second, those concerned with international relations should attend carefully to the various metanarratives prevalent in other countries, and to the ways these countries will

feature our government or our people in their metanarratives resulting from our actions. It may be that our own metanarratives blind us to the possibility that others do not share them. For example, American attempts to play the role of hero in liberating other nations from dictatorial rule may not be received positively, if one considers the perspective of a proud nation having to rely on another for its rescue; rather, supporting local initiatives and efforts could be seen as more respectful of others' autonomy. Further, a fruitful direction toward defusing the metanarratives of militant extremists may be to encourage the development of mainstream metanarratives within those countries that locals are satisfied to endorse. If the citizens of more Islamic countries could readily endorse metanarratives of participation in a pluralistic world community, in which their nations were prospering and respected by others, then metanarratives of crisis and defiance would have less appeal. As outsiders, we cannot impose or even introduce such metanarratives into other countries (without paradoxically violating the premise that we respect their autonomy), but we can do our part to treat these peoples with respect in our own metanarratives, as partners, regardless of disparities in wealth and power.

### Study Limitations

The limitations of this exploratory study fall into three general categories: metanarrative item quality, validity of the action indices, and issues with the sample.

Metanarrative Item Quality. Metanarratives may normally be implicit beliefs, and translating them into propositions poses some problems. Some of the metanarratives, as presented, may cause the reader to access a different but similar version that they believe more strongly, which may have different qualities. For example, one's usual mental representation of a blandly worded metanarrative may have intensifiers associated with it (e.g., that this is our only chance to deal with the issue, that people acting on this issue are heroic, etc.). The Prior Fall metanarratives, although they were intended to be worded as though the associated action had already been completed, may have sometimes been interpreted as implying the potential for improvement (e.g., the Patriarchy metanarrative may imply the desirability of feminist action, a form of restorative social justice). By not specifying the ameliorating or restoring part of the story explicitly, it is even possible that even more potential for the individual is implied – an explicit metanarrative may mean that others are already taking care of the situation, that it will be resolved regardless of

one's own behavior.

Other metanarratives, when written as propositions, may not even be recognizable by those who adhere to them. Seeing them stated explicitly may make them seem odd and unfamiliar. For example, George Lakoff (2008) postulated three justifications for government, corresponding to U.S. Republican and Democrat philosophies (Conservative Strict Father for Republicans, and Progressive Nurturing Family and Neo-Liberal Rational Actor for Democrats). However, although Democrats for the combined samples endorsed Progressive Nurturing Family more often than Republicans did (chi-square (1, 243) = 4,571,  $p < .05$ ), there were no significant differences between the two parties in the endorsement of the other two metanarratives, and Republicans actually endorsed Progressive Nurturing Family more often than they endorsed Conservative Strict Father (although the differences were not significant). It is not apparent whether the low endorsement rates and low correlations with their political affiliations are the fault of my own inelegant phrasing, or that people who do in fact hold these beliefs may not recognize them in verbal form, but that doesn't mean that Lakoff's observations were necessarily invalid.

Along the same lines, respondents may be more or less likely to endorse metanarratives about abstractions than they are about specifics. For example, "we are opposed by an enemy so evil..." is so abstract that a person may not readily picture a specific enemy group that they consider evil, or the person may think of themselves as unlikely to use terms like "evil." Yet if the question had been asked about a specific group for which the respondent does have highly negative associations, or if the person had been primed by photographs of loathed individuals or victims of atrocities, the response might be quite different.

Meanwhile, as described previously, many people may agree with belief statements because they like the way they look and feel like the wording is consistent with their own worldview, without necessarily having the belief prior to reading it in the survey. (Perhaps the survey even changed their beliefs?) It is not altogether appropriate to assess how behaviors are consistent with beliefs that the respondent has not actually previously held.

Another issue with the wording of the metanarrative propositions is that because

they were designed to indicate multiple components of a narrative (the past context, the problem, and its implications), they often struck respondents as excessively convoluted. The instructions asked participants to indicate agreement with statements only if they agreed with the entire statement, but comments on LiveJournal and elsewhere show that these instructions were not always followed. In at least one instance, a woman decided to agree with a statement because she strongly agreed with the first part, so felt she should overlook her disagreement with the rest of it, yet that feeling bothered her.

Finally, the metanarratives were intended to be societal-level metanarratives, not personal-level metanarratives, yet they were not consistently written as such. That is, there was marked variation in the degree to which the metanarrative spelled out the suitable role for individuals. Both the Buddhist and Hindu metanarratives focused on individual choices, as did the two Dangerous World metanarratives. They each intended to portray circumstances “as they are” either for humanity at large or for members of a given society, yet because they specified the potential actions for individuals, it may have been much easier to conceive of one’s personal activities associated with that belief than it would be for many of the more society-oriented metanarratives. It would have been better to have included a step of coding the statements to identify and retain only those that met all of the specified criteria for metanarratives.

Action Indices. One very important limitation to the action indices is the social desirability of saying and believing that one is acting in accordance with one’s beliefs. Claims to action need validation in field or laboratory studies. It would have been helpful to have been able to include the “barriers to action” material that had been intended for the survey, because it articulated numerous valid reasons for not acting consistently with beliefs (lack of time, money, etc.; lack of opportunity; social conventions and norms; and the belief that others’ actions are already sufficient to meet the associated societal goal). Seeing this list may have helped participants feel more comfortable with being honest about inconsistency between beliefs and behaviors.

Further, there are simply more opportunities to vote, choose a career, spend money, and engage in each of the other activities for some metanarrative beliefs than there are for others. The action indices as used in this survey were only a very rough indicator of the motivational effectiveness of the metanarratives.

Sample Recruitment and Data Quality. The survey instrument was not optimal. Although self-selection bias for the student sample was minimal, as they did not know the topic or content of the study before signing up for it (Freyd, in press), the web sample was fully self-selected. Many potential web participants found the format tiresome and the survey too lengthy. Some complained about it; others started the survey then quit after seeing either the first or second of the long pages of 73 metanarratives. Those who did make it through the survey may not have provided quality data, especially by the end. Unfortunately, testing the hypotheses did require a large number of metanarratives. In the future, efforts to evaluate the relevance of genre and other aspects of narrative structure should probably be separated from efforts to understand the functioning of counternarratives; without the latter, the survey instrument would have been only half as long.

Further, the student pool sample was drawn from a fairly homogenous group of people at a single university, and the web sample was likewise not fully representative of U.S. adults, nor was it very large. Future studies should attempt to create a more intrinsically motivating survey instrument, or to recruit a larger sample via MTurk or with some other method of including relatively conservative participants.

#### Future Directions

The motivational effects of believing in metanarratives deserve further study. One way to conduct a more accurate and hopefully more definitive test of the relationship between metanarratives' narrative elements and individual motivation and behavior would be to design a survey that would present respondents with several metanarrative variants on the same theme, differing in terms of narrative structure, evaluative schema, and the presence of intensifiers. Respondents could be asked not only how much they agree with each version of the statement but also the degree to which each statement reflects the form in which they usually think about the topic. For example, does global warming feel more like a looming catastrophe complete with intensifiers (our last chance to save the Earth), the same but without intensifiers, a tragedy (it's too late to act, we're already doomed, as documented by Jensen), or a romantic saga (we'll deal with it as we always do, then a new problem will come along)?

Tragedies should be included in further studies. In the general survey pilot study,

roughly one quarter of the students expressed a belief that humanity was doomed in the long term, and occasionally some felt that it is already too late to address current issues, like global warming. Presumably belief in tragedies is associated with very low levels of action to address the issues concerned, as it is thought to be impossible to affect the outcome.

After the methods for studying the relationship between metanarratives and behavior have been refined with lifelong U.S. residents, it would be worthwhile to study other populations, especially other countries (with their own, culture-specific metanarratives as well as the ones in this item pool, and probably also with native coding of the narrative structural elements). Longitudinal studies would also be of considerable interest – in the present study, the younger participants focused more on metanarratives with a purely future scope (Progress and Looming Catastrophe), whereas the older participants tended to resonate more with metanarratives incorporating information about the past as well (Restoration, Prior Fall). Was this a quirk of the present sample, or do the findings indicate an aspect of maturation? The early acquisition of metanarratives in childhood and adolescence would also be worth study.

### Conclusions

Lifelong U.S. residents endorse numerous metanarrative beliefs, which represent an array of distinct themes in U.S. society and politics. They agree on some subset of metanarratives but disagree with respect to many others. The methods presented in this study have revealed that the narrative elements in these metanarrative beliefs do appear to be related to individual behavior. By acting consistently with metanarratives, whether they are the consensual ones or ones that are currently counternarratives, people can participate meaningfully in their broader societies and become characters in the stories we are together writing about our common existence.

## APPENDIX A

### METANARRATIVE ITEM POOL

Metanarrative (Propositional Form*)	Short Name	Source	Coding				Scale
			Eval. Schema	3 Story Elements	Explicit Goal	Intensifiers	
(1) Whenever humanity makes mistakes, we should just be patient and have faith in human intelligence and creativity, because eventually technological answers will be found to all of our problems.	Faith in Technology		Progress	N	Y	N	RatlProg
(2) Human curiosity, along with scientific methods, has led to much progress toward understanding nature's secrets and allowing us to live lives of much greater quality and happiness.	Scientific Enlightenment	Smith (2003)	Progress	N	N	N	IntlCoop
(3) It is the mission of our people to make the world safe for democracy.	American Mission	Woodrow Wilson, 2 April 1917	---	N	Y	N	AmerSecular
(4) This land was once inhabited by primitive people, and our people have spread the blessings of civilization over the land and among their descendants.	Vanishing Race	Cronon (1992)	Triumphalist	---	N	N	AmerSecular
(5) Our nation, with hard work and superior values, has triumphed over its enemies, and is now the world's "lone superpower."	Lone Superpower (aka "American National")	Feldman (2001)	Triumphalist	---	N	Y	AmerSecular
(6) Life was better when people lived in smaller, closer communities among their neighbors and made decisions based on family-oriented values; today's world is too fast-paced and impersonal.	Small Town Nostalgia		Prior Fall	N	N	N	EcoRom

(7) Although economic freedom has improved the standard of living for an increasing number of people, we need to stay watchful, because some people – starry-eyed idealists, government bureaucrats, and freeloaders – keep trying to limit the growth of our economy.	Capitalist Prosperity	Smith (2003)	Looming Catastrophe	Y	Y	N	Capitalism
(8) Humans once lived in conditions of equality, but with the passing of time, those with greater access to resources have increasingly dominated and restricted the lives of those who have to work for a living, such that now workers should unite to achieve their dreams of equality and justice.	Progressive Socialist	Smith (2003)	Restoration	Y	Y	N	EcoRom
(9) One of the great achievements of our civilization is that more and more we have recognized the rights and improved the status of many vulnerable categories of people and creatures (such as women, children, minority group members, the developmentally challenged, animals), that in past times were considered no more than property or a worthless drain on resources.	Liberal Progress	Smith (2003)	---	Y	N	N	IntlCoop
(10) Although in the past, some of our most honored leaders have stressed the importance of respecting other points of view, the fact is that those in power now are so arrogant and closed-minded that they have basically declared war on Islam, in order to keep Muslims down.	Suppression of Islam	Friedman (2009)	Prior Fall	---	N	N	AntiGovCyn
(11) The soulless forces of scientific rationalism have pushed aside the simple, authentic, and more natural lifestyles of our ancestors, leaving only traces of a world we have lost.	Community Lost	Smith (2003)	Prior Fall	N	N	Y	EcoRom

(12) In our ignorance, we developed technologies such as motor vehicles and coal-burning power plants that have become widely used, which in turn has created momentum towards changing the climate of the entire planet, perhaps drastically.	Global Warming		Looming Catastrophe	---	N	Y	EcoRom
(13) We are carving out a new world for freedom, with equality of opportunity, progress, and prosperity for all.	American Experiment	Smith (2003)	Progress	N	Y	N	RatlProg
(14) If all of the nations of the world would come together in good faith, we could avoid war, protect the dignity and worth of each person, and establish conditions for justice and mutual respect for all.	United Nations Mission	United Nations Charter	Progress	---	Y	---	EcoRom
(15) Over the centuries, because of the ways we've organized our economy, our food supply, and our cities, Western societies have become increasingly alienated from the natural world.	Alienation from Nature	Shepard (1982); Merchant (2003)	Prior Fall	---	N	N	EcoRom
(16) Men and women once lived in a state of gender equity and fairness, but for at least two millennia, most societies have imposed restrictions on the lives of women that have oppressed and diminished both genders.	Anti-Patriarchy	Merchant (2003); Gimbutas (1989)	Prior Fall	---	N	N	---
(17) Because many people in our society act irresponsibly, we need our government to act like a father providing discipline for his children, so that we can encourage these people to become upright, self-supporting members of society.	Conservative "Strict Father"	Lakoff (2008)	---	Y	Y	N	AmerSecular

(18) Because many people in our society are willing to take advantage of others, we need our government to act like caring members of an extended family, in order to ensure a safe, supportive environment in which all citizens have a fair chance to thrive.	Progressive “Nurturing Family”	Lakoff (2008)	---	Y	Y	N	IntlCoop
(19) Earlier in our history, a small group of people would decide what was best for everyone else, but we have found that it's better to solve our problems through a rational process of give-and-take between interest groups.	Neo-Liberal Rational Process	Lakoff (2008)	Progress	Y	N	N	RatlProg
(20) Because the world would be much too violent if it were "every man for himself," people realized that it was best for everyone to give up some individual rights and agree to follow general rules.	Social Contract	Hobbes	Triumphalist	Y	N	N	IntlCoop
(21) Those in government are corrupt – they take our money as taxes to fund their own pet projects and luxuries – and we need to take back our country from those in power.	Tea Party Anti- Corruption	Tea Party Speeches	Restoration	Y	Y	N	AntiGovCyn
(22) Long ago, our group lived in much better conditions, and life was more pure and meaningful than it is today, but those times are now gone.	Lost Golden Age	Girardet (1986); Tismanean u (1998)	Prior Fall	---	N	Y	EcoRom
(23) The members of minority ethnic groups may have been given legal rights in our country, but they are still often treated poorly by the dominant ethnic group.	Minority Oppression		---	---	N	N	IntlCoop
(24) God calls us to submit to his authority, and to worship him and follow his commands; those who obey will receive eternal joy in paradise.	Submission to God (Islamic)		---	N	Y	Y	TradRel

(25) Eve was created after Adam, to be his helper, so women should be content with their role, which is to serve the needs of their men.	Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place"		Stability	N	---	N	TradRel
(26) If we don't share the truth with others, their souls will be damned for all eternity.	Christian Evangelism		Looming Catastrophe	N	Y	Y	TradRel
(27) God granted dominion over the animals and plants of the world to Adam and his descendants, and told him to be fruitful and multiply and claim his rightful place over all of nature, and humanity has been following His instructions.	Dominion over Nature	Genesis	---	---	Y	Y	TradRel
(28) God gave Adam and his descendants the responsibility of taking care of all the animals and plants of the world, as his stewards or agents on earth, and we should be doing a better job of protecting endangered species.	Stewardship of Nature	Genesis	---	Y	Y	Y	TradRel
(29) The first humans ruined our chance of living in a paradise, but redemption has become available for humanity through God's sacrifice and human repentance.	Christian Redemption	Smith (2003)	Restoration	Y	---	Y	TradRel
(30) The world is dominated by an evil, nearly demonic power of boundless destructiveness, and over time the sufferings of its victims will become worse and worse, but one day, the hour will suddenly strike when the Saints of God will be able to rise and overthrow this evil.	Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	Cohn (1961)	Restoration	Y	---	Y	TradRel
(31) All humans have within them the seed of the divine, which can reach its true potential after death and reunite us with our divine origin.	Ancient Egyptian "Divine Life and Afterlife"	Smith (2003)	Restoration	---	N	Y	TradRel

(32) All of reality is moving toward unity with the cosmic Absolute, but each of us can make mistakes and bad decisions can block our paths to salvation, so we should focus on securing our own destinies through good works, knowledge, and devotion.	Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman	Smith (2003)	---	Y	Y	Y	TradRel
(33) Because life is ever-changing and uncontrollable, humans continually experience annoyances, worries, and even suffering, unless one follows a path of reflection, detachment, and a suitable lifestyle.	Buddhist Belief	Four Noble Truths	Romantic Saga	---	Y	N	EcoRom
(34) A conspiracy of elite financiers has secretly taken control of important aspects of public life behind the scenes.	Financial Conspiracy	Girardet (1986) - originally Jewish Conspiracy	Prior Fall	---	N	N	AntiGovCyn
(35) There isn't really such a thing as progress, because whenever we make gains in one area, they are almost always balanced out by losses in another.	Cynicism		Stability	N	N	N	AntiGovCyn
(36) Our remote ancestors were braver than we are today, heroic, pure, and uncorrupted by base emotions, and we should be inspired by their lives to try to bring back that kind of spirit into the modern world.	Archaism	White (1978)	Restoration	Y	Y	Y	EcoRom
(37) People were happier before the shackles of civilization began to repress their passions and authenticity.	Primitivism-Fall	White (1978)	Prior Fall	---	N	N	EcoRom
(38) We should cherish the unconventionality of the free thinkers and nonconformists, because in a way, they are society's only hope.	Expressive Romantic	Smith (2003)	---	N	---	Y	EcoRom

(39) Too many rules can make some people evil, so we should throw off any rules that are stifling our natural freedoms.	Primitivism- Restore	White (1978)	Restoration	N	Y	N	AntiGovCyn
(40) We are opposed by an enemy so evil that it cannot even be considered human, and we must rise up and overthrow this enemy so that we can reclaim our rightful place in the world.	Militant Extremist (one variant)	Saucier et al. (2009)	Restoration	Y	Y	Y	TradRel
(41) Our people were once powerful and honored, but we suffered a catastrophic decline, and now our lives are weak and pathetic in comparison.	Past Glory	Saucier et al. (2009)	Prior Fall	---	N	Y	AntiGovCyn
(42) We can best serve our country by following the example of the heroes and martyrs from long ago who sacrificed themselves for our people.	Heroic Example	(adapted from Armenian St. Vartan narrative) Tölölyan (1989)	Restoration	N	---	N	TradRel
(43) Our once glorious people have been beaten down by unbelievers, but the tide is finally turning, and soon we can reclaim our proper place through a righteous war.	Militant Religious Resurgence	(generic, adapted from Islam) Smith (2003)	Restoration	Y	Y	Y	TradRel
(44) God chose our people among all peoples for a special agreement that requires us each to live a holy life and bring the world ever closer to His ideals.	Chosen People	(generic, adapted from Jewish belief) (non- Reconstruct ionist)	Triumphalist	---	Y	Y	TradRel

(45) Again and again throughout our history, it has happened that our people were peacefully minding their own business, until we were attacked or invaded by others, leading to a time of crisis and suffering for our people, until, acting heroically and alone, we eventually triumphed over the invaders.	Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces	(generic, adapted from Russia) Wertsch (2002)	Romantic Saga	Y	N	---	TradRel
(46) If we keep welcoming outsiders to our country who don't share our values, our culture and our economy will surely suffer.	Anti-Immigration	Tea Party Speeches	Looming Catastrophe	N	N	N	AmerSecular
(47) Our relationship with the natural world is at a turning point, and this may be our last chance to change our ways and save our planet from disaster.	Ecological Last Chance		Looming Catastrophe	---	Y	Y	EcoRom
(48) Corporate greed has become a global problem, with big companies taking advantage of loopholes and legal trickery to exploit workers and consumers alike; we need to join together to make these companies act more responsibly.	Anti-Global Corporations		Restoration	Y	Y	N	IntlCoop
(49) Native people who live close to nature often have a spiritual connection with plants and animals that people with urban, modern lifestyles have lost. We should try to regain our access to the wisdom of the natural world.	Lost Affinity with Nature		Restoration	Y	Y	---	EcoRom
(50) Humanity will finally begin reaching maturity as a species when we expand our understanding of "community" beyond humans to include all of nature.	Ecological Community	adapted from Aldo Leopold	Progress	N	Y	N	EcoRom
(51) The defining event in the history of our people is when we adopted our national constitution.	Constitutionalism		Triumphalist	---	N	N	AmerSecular

(52) In today's dangerous world, it is becoming more and more important for us to find and follow a strong leader who can best protect our country's interests.	Strong Leader		---	---	Y	N	AmerSecular
(53) It's a tough world out there, and we each need to look out for our own interests, because nobody else will.	Dangerous World Individualism		---	Y	Y	N	AmerSecular
(54) The best way to cope with the dangerous world we live in is to find trustworthy people who think and feel like we do, and work together to make a safe haven for ourselves and our children.	Dangerous World Communitarianism		---	Y	Y	N	AmerSecular
(55) Out of all the many races of people, some have more innate ability than others, and the most capable races should take charge and lead the world into a brighter future.	Superior Race		Progress	---	Y	N	IntlCoop (reverse)
(56) Our country needs a strong military to defend us against threats to our prosperity and our way of life.	Strong Defense		---	N	Y	N	AmerSecular
(57) Our military should take an active role around the world to make our country stronger while maintaining peace among other nations.	Proactive Peacekeeping		---	N	Y	N	AmerSecular
(58) Although people around the world are becoming more and more alike, we each should take pride in our own culture, as they are all of equal value, and make sure each culture continues to thrive in the future.	Multiculturalism		---	---	Y	N	IntlCoop
(59) As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, many cultures are at risk of dying out, and if this happens, something precious will be lost.	Dying Cultures		Looming Catastrophe	---	N	---	IntlCoop

(60) My country interferes too often in the activities of other countries.	Our Excessive Interference	Student Subject Pool	Stability	N	N	N	AntiGovCyn
(61) Long ago, the people of my country were cruel and barbaric, but we have now learned to be more fair to women and minorities, and some day we may achieve true equality for all.	Social Justice Progress	Student Subject Pool	Progress	Y	Y	Y	RatlProg
(62) The people of my country used to work hard, but now we are often lazy.	Increased Laziness	Student Subject Pool	Prior Fall	N	N	N	AntiGovCyn
(63) My country's role is to be a beacon of light for the rest of the world to follow.	Country as Beacon	Student Subject Pool	---	N	N	Y	AmerSecular
(64) Our country should form lasting relationships with other nations and join together to solve worldwide problems.	International Cooperation	Student Subject Pool	Progress	N	Y	N	IntlCoop
(65) The people of my country have lost sight of our forefathers' intentions.	Forefathers' Lost Vision	Student Subject Pool	Prior Fall	N	N	N	AntiGovCyn
(66) Unfortunately, our people have lost our revolutionary spirit.	Lost Revolutionary Spirit	Student Subject Pool	Prior Fall	N	N	N	AntiGovCyn
(67) My country's goal is to be the best.	National Ambition	Student Subject Pool	Progress	N	Y	N	AmerSecular
(68) Once life was much simpler, but now it is so complex that our problems are getting out of hand.	Growing Complexity	Student Subject Pool	Prior Fall	N	N	N	EcoRom
(69) If there is one constant in human history, it is that wars will always happen.	Inevitable Warfare	Student Subject Pool	Stability	N	N	N	AmerSecular

(70) Hard work and thrift have helped our people to survive difficult times in the past, and we need these good habits to keep us going in the future.	Work and Thrift for Survival		---	---	Y	N	Capitalism
(71) If our people want to maintain what is most special and important about us, we should hold ourselves apart from the rest of the world.	Separatist Preservation		---	N	Y	Y	IntlCoop (reverse)
(72) My country is too often influenced or dominated by other countries.	Others' Excessive Interference	Student Subject Pool	---	N	N	N	TradRel
(73) My people have a heroic role in the history of the world.	Heroic People	Student Subject Pool	---	N	N	Y	AmerSecular
Beliefs Antithetical to Metanarratives							
(A) The fate or destiny of our world has already been decided, and the choices that individuals make really don't matter much.	Fatalism						
(B) My world and my responsibilities focus on my family, friends, and daily life; I'm not very interested in thinking about our nation or our society.	Domestic Focus						
(C) Life is too short for regrets; my real responsibility is to enjoy my own life and let the rest of the world take care of itself.	Hedonism						
(D) We should be skeptical of any kind of story that claims to tell us, as a group, who we are and what we are doing.	Post-Modernism	Lyotard (1979)					
(E) We should be skeptical of any kind of story that claims to tell individuals what they are like on the basis of the group(s) they belong to.	Individualist Anti-Essentialism						

\* All item wordings were created or paraphrased by the researcher.

## APPENDIX B

### PILOT STUDY SURVEY INSTRUMENT

*The order of presentation of the “Humanity” and “My Country” tasks was random, but item order within each task was fixed.*

#### **“Humanity” Sentence Completion**

Please complete these sentences. Your answer may be more than one sentence long, if you prefer.

“As humans, our role on this Earth is to.....”

In the distant past, humanity..... And now, humanity..... Some day, humanity will.....

One of the most important turning points in the history of the world was when.....because it meant that.....

You could say that one goal for humanity is to.....

When thinking about the history of humanity, one thing that always happens is.....

#### **“My Country” Sentence Completion**

When you think of the phrase “my country,” which country do you think of? \_\_\_\_\_

Throughout the rest of this section, whenever you are asked about your country, please refer to the country you just named.

In the distant past, the people of my country were..... And now, we are ..... Some day, we will.....

I believe that my country’s role in the world is to.....; a conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country’s role in the world is to.....; a liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country’s role in the world is to.....; and a cynical citizen would say that our country’s role in the world is to.....

When I think about today’s conditions, and compare them with the past, the changes that are most striking to me are the way that the people of my country have.....

One of the most important turning points in the history of our country was when..... because it meant that.....

Our country’s status in the world today was largely influenced by.....

You could say that one goal for my country is to.....

When thinking about the history of the people of my country, one thing that always happens is.....

## APPENDIX C

### SALIENCE SCORING FOR PILOT STUDY METANARRATIVES

**(2) SCIENTIFIC ENLIGHTENMENT: Human curiosity, along with scientific methods, has led to much progress toward understanding nature's secrets and allowing us to live lives of much greater quality and happiness.**

15 In the distant past, humanity was not as advanced as they are now. Now, humanity is more knowledgeable.

21 In the distant past, humanity was lacking in understanding of the scientific world. Now, humanity has made great progress in understanding science.

**(1) FAITH IN TECHNOLOGY: Whenever humanity makes mistakes, we should just be patient and have faith in human intelligence and creativity, because eventually technological answers will be found to all of our problems.**

26 When thinking about the history of humanity, one thing that always happens is technological progress.

28 You could say that one goal for humanity is to advance in technology.

16 Some day, humanity will further develop in technology.

20 Some day, humanity will learn to cope with the problems it has created for itself.

**(67) NATIONAL AMBITION: My country's goal is to be the best.**

03 A cynical citizen would say that our country's role is to take over everything.

07 You could say that one goal for my country is to be back on top.

11 A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to make sure that we are always the most powerful country and we do whatever it takes to keep that.

15 Some day we will rule the world. | A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to be the most financially powerful country and rule.

17 You could say that one goal for my country is to be the best.

20 You could say that one goal for my country is to be the major power.

22 I believe that my country's role is to dominate. | A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to dominate. | A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to dominate.

21 A cynical citizen would say that our country's role is to rule the world.

23 You could say that one goal for my country is to be the best.

**(3) AMERICAN MISSION: It is the mission of our people to make the world safe for democracy.**

07 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to "SPREAD FREEDOM!!!/DEMOCRACY!!!"

08 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to establish and preserve democracy.

11 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to give rights to the people of the country and help other countries achieve the same. | You could say that one goal for my country is to remain the most powerful country in the world, and also try to help other countries develop a government.

17 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to spread democracy. A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to spread democracy.

20 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to expand and "liberate" the "unfortunate" people of the world. | A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to "liberate" people.

21 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to spread democracy in the world and to be a world power.

26 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to spread freedom.

29 I believe that my country's role is to keep the dream of living free.

**(51) CONSTITUTIONALISM: The defining event in the history of our people is when we adopted our national constitution.**

06 One of the most important turning points in the history of the world was when the United States was founded

14 One of the most important turning points in the history of our country was when we became and independent natin. because it meant that we were an independent nation.

15 One of the most important turning points in the history of our country was when when become independent because it meant that we have freedom

23 One of the most important turning points in the history of the world was when the U.S. was founded.

25 One of the most important turning points in the history of our country was when the revolution occurred. because it meant that We had achieved freedom, an established a new form of government.

**(63) COUNTRY AS BEACON: My country's role is to be a beacon of light for the rest of the world to follow.**

02 I believe that my country's role is to promote peace, toleration, cooperation, and freedom.

21 I believe that my country's role is to Be a good example to the world. | A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to Be a good example to other countries, to help keep world peace.

25 I believe that my country's role is to to lead it, and set an example.

29 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to Lead | A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to Open the worlds eyes to appecptence

**(56) STRONG DEFENSE: Our country needs a strong military to defend us against threats to our prosperity and our way of life.**

30 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to protect itself.

**(46) ANTI-IMMIGRATION: If we keep welcoming outsiders to our country who don't share our values, our culture and our economy will surely suffer.**

29 A cynical citizen would say that our country's role is to keep our country limited to only American Citizens

**(69) INEVITABLE WARFARE: If there is one constant in human history, it is that wars will always happen**

01 When thinking about the history of humanity, one thing that always happens is war.

05 When thinking about the history of the people of my country, one thing that always happens is war. | When thinking about the history of humanity, one thing that always happens is war

07 When thinking about the history of humanity, one thing that always happens is violence against our own kind.

09 When thinking about the history of humanity, one thing that always happens is conflict.

13 When thinking about the history of the people of my country, one thing that always happens is Fighting | When thinking about the history of humanity, one thing that always happens is War and acts of kindness.

15 When thinking about the history of humanity, one thing that always happens is war

16 When thinking about the history of humanity, one thing that always happens is war.

28 One of the most important turning points in the history of our country was when people died for religions because it meant that there would always be war

30 When thinking about the history of humanity, one thing that always happens is war.

**(60) OUR EXCESSIVE INTERFERENCE: My country interferes too often in the activities of other countries.**

07 Some day we will probably piss off too many countries with our "policing" of other countries of the world.

11 I believe that my country's role is to seems to be that we are a source of power, control, and terrible violence against other countries.

12 A cynical citizen would say that our country's role is to ruin other country's

13 Some day we will Learn to not butt into everyone else's business. And not be though of as the "fat" country.

20 A cynical citizen would say that our country's role is to Quit playing "world police" and take care of our problems in America.

24 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to be the world government and help everyone fix their problems | 24 A cynical citizen would say that our country's role is to kill people and destroy other nations for our overall goal of imperialism

25 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to lead, and police other. | 25 A cynical citizen would say that our country's role is to mind our oen buisness.

26 A cynical citizen would say that our country's role is to impose its views on everyone else

27 I believe that my country's role is to be more powerfull than other countries | A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to be more powerfull than other countries | A cynical citizen would say that our country's role is to be more powerfull than other countries | You could say that one goal for my country is to try and take over the world When thinking about the history of the people of my country, one thing that always happens is we take take take

**(14) UNITED NATIONS MISSION: If all of the nations of the world would come together in good faith, we could avoid war, protect the dignity and worth of each person, and establish conditions for justice and mutual respect for all.**

16 You could say that one goal for humanity is to reach world peace.

**(64) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: Our country should form lasting relationships with other nations and join together to solve worldwide problems.**

01 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to maintain peace.

15 A conservative or traditional patriot would say that our country's role is to create peace

19 A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to promote world peace

08 A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to establish and protect human rights.

26 A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to protect civil rights

24 I believe that my country's role is to participate in world organizations and use our wealth to help others.

25 A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to help everyone.

28 A liberal or progressive patriot would say that our country's role is to help everyone else

30 I believe that my country's role is to help other.

**(61) SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRESS: Long ago, the people of my country were cruel and barbaric, but we have now learned to be more fair to women and minorities, and some day we may achieve true equality for all.**

05 In the distant past, humanity has been cruel Now, humanity is still cruel Some day, humanity will be compassionate and willing to help

16 In the distant past, the people of my country were always fighting. And now, we are more refined and have many manners, Some day we will be able to expand our civil ways to the world.

19 In the distant past, the people of my country were assholes And now, we are all very different Some day we will all be accepting of one and other

23 In the distant past, the people of my country were barbaric. And now, we are somewhat civilized.

24 In the distant past, the people of my country were bigots and brutal conquistadors And now, we are better and hiding these qualities Some day we will hopefully reverse and change our ways.

29 In the distant past, the people of my country were Close minded And now, we are gaining some perspective Some day we will Accepting | One of the most important turning points in the history of our country was when We voted in an African American President because it meant that Change and acceptance was slowly coming | In the distant past, humanity was narrow minded Now, humanity is growing Some day, humanity will be full of acceptance One of the most important turning points in the history of the world was when Obama was elected into Office because it meant that We are growing as a society with acceptance You could say that one goal for humanity is to gain perspective and acceptance and tolerance

30 In the distant past, the people of my country were closed minded. . And now, we are working on being less closed minded.

**(48) ANTI-GLOBAL CORPORATIONS: Corporate greed has become a global problem, with big companies taking advantage of loopholes and legal trickery to exploit workers and consumers alike; we need to join together to make these companies act more responsibly.**

20 One of the most important turning points in the history of the world was when the beginnings of capitalism took root. because it meant that maximizing profits at sad costs became officially acceptable.

**(15) ALIENATION FROM NATURE: Over the centuries, because of the ways we've organized our economy, our food supply, and our cities, Western societies have become increasingly alienated from the natural world.**

11 In the distant past, humanity had a much smaller effect on the environment and the world. Now, humanity is ruining the world and using up all the environments' resources. Some day, humanity will destroy the world

24 In the distant past, humanity was more eco-friendly. Now, humanity is abusive of nature

**(28) STEWARDSHIP OF NATURE: God gave Adam and his descendants the responsibility of taking care of all the animals and plants of the world, as his stewards or agents on earth, and we should be doing a better job of protecting endangered species.**

01 As humans, our role on this Earth is to preserve it.

02 As humans, our role on this Earth is to treat our environment and those around us with respect 09 You could say that one goal for humanity is to save the Earth.

18 As humans, our role on this Earth is to keep the earth going

21 As humans, our role on this Earth is to Act as responsible stewards because we have a great effect on our planet.

30 As humans, our role on this Earth is to protect it.

**(50) ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITY: Humanity will finally begin reaching maturity as a species when we expand our understanding of "community" beyond humans to include all of nature.**

24 As humans, our role on this Earth is to actively participate in the web of life. Not as master but as part of the puzzle

**(12) GLOBAL WARMING: In our ignorance, we developed technologies such as motor vehicles and coal-burning power plants that have become widely used, which in turn has created momentum towards changing the climate of the entire planet, perhaps drastically.**

11 When thinking about the history of humanity, one thing that always happens is we get ourselves into bad situations until its too late to fix, such as now with the global warming

## APPENDIX D

### MAIN STUDY SURVEY INSTRUMENT

#### Part One – A

When you think of the phrase “my country,” which country do you think of?

\_\_\_\_\_

Throughout the rest of this questionnaire, whenever you are asked about your country, please refer to this country.

For each of the following statements, please indicate how widespread this belief is among the people of your country.

[metanarratives in propositional form - random order - see item pool list]

[for each:]

[6 point Likert scale anchored by “almost none of the people of my country believe that this is true” and “almost all of the people of my country believe that this is true; make sure none of the response options is neutral]

#### Part One - B

Please indicate how much you, personally, believe in each of the following statements.

[metanarratives in propositional form - random order, different order from Two-A]

[6 point Likert scale anchored by “I do not believe this at all” and “I very much believe this is true”]

#### Part One - C

[for the subset of items to which the respondent answered “5” or “6” (strong belief) in Two-B, randomly choose four metanarratives and ask the following]



If you consider yourself a member of an ethnic minority, do you believe your ethnic group is more or less privileged than the ethnic majority?

- my group is generally more privileged than the majority
- my group is generally less privileged than the majority
- my group is neither more nor less privileged than the majority

What is your religious affiliation?

- Christian: Protestant (evangelical)
- Christian: Protestant (mainline, e.g., Episcopal, Lutheran-ELA, Presbyterian, United Methodist)
- Christian: Protestant (historically black, e.g., African Methodist-Episcopal)
- Christian: Catholic
- Christian: Mormon / LDS
- Christian: Orthodox (e.g., Greek, Russian)
- Christian (other)
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Pagan, Indigenous, or New Age spirituality
- Unitarian
- I am an agnostic
- I am an atheist

In which country were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

In which country have you lived primarily during the last five years? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever lived in a country other than the one you were born in? yes / no

With which of these U.S. political parties' or movements' candidates or positions are you most comfortable? Democrats / Republicans / Libertarians / Greens or Radical Left / I don't know

Please indicate the highest level of education achieved by your father.

- Less than high school graduate
- Completed high school or the equivalent
- Attended a college or university, no degree or diploma
- Completed a college or university degree or diploma
- Completed additional education beyond a college or university degree or diploma

Please indicate the highest level of education achieved by your mother.

- Less than high school graduate
- Completed high school or the equivalent
- Attended a college or university, no degree or diploma
- Completed a college or university degree or diploma
- Completed additional education beyond a college or university degree or diploma

**[The rest of the questions were asked only of the student pool participants.]**

### **Duke Religion Index**

How often do you attend church or other religious or spiritual meetings?

- 6 = more than once a week
- 5 = once a week
- 4 = a few times a month
- 3 = a few times a year
- 2 = once a year or less
- 1 = never

How often do you spent time in private religious or spiritual activities such as prayer, meditation, or the study of religious texts (e.g., Bible, Qur'an, Torah, etc.)?

- 6 = more than once a day
- 5 = daily
- 4 = two more times a week
- 3 = once a week
- 2 = a few times a month
- 1 = rarely or never

For the following three questions, please select the single answer that best characterizes how true each of the statements is for you.

In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine (i.e., God)

- 5 = definitely true
- 4 = true
- 3 = unsure
- 2 = tends NOT to be true
- 1 = definitely NOT true

My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.

- 5 = definitely true
- 4 = true
- 3 = unsure
- 2 = tends NOT to be true
- 1 = definitely NOT true

I try hard to carry my religion over into all other dealings in life.

- 5 = definitely true
- 4 = true
- 3 = unsure
- 2 = tends NOT to be true
- 1 = definitely NOT true

## Saucier “isms” - SDI-40

Here are statements that give various views about personal philosophy, human nature, religion and spirituality, and standards for conduct. How well does each statement provide an accurate description of your opinions and beliefs? Please indicate your degree of agreement with each statement, using the response scale to the right.

0 - Strongly Disagree

1 - Moderately Disagree

2 - Slightly Disagree

3 - Slightly Agree

4 - Moderately Agree

5 - Strongly Agree

1. The judicial system in this country is too soft on criminals.
2. It is impossible to communicate with the dead.
3. The pleasures of the senses are the highest good.
4. Worldly possessions are the greatest good and the highest value in life.
5. Enlightenment can be gained through meditation, self-contemplation, and intuition.
6. Natural objects (and even Nature itself) have conscious life.
7. People ought to be motivated by something beyond their own self-interest.
8. There is no God or gods.
9. We should emphasize economic growth, but also be concerned with social justice.
10. I believe in reincarnation - rebirth of the soul in another body.
11. I believe in the superiority of my own ethnic group.
12. I adhere to an organized religion.
13. I love and am devoted to my country.
14. I believe in biological evolution.
15. I am in favor of a constitutional form of government.
16. I don't believe in a messiah who will come to save the world.
17. I believe in predestination - that all things have been divinely determined beforehand.
18. I believe in government by law with the consent of those people governed.
19. I dislike my country.
20. I believe that reason is not a good guide to knowledge and truth.
21. My own race is not superior to any other race.
22. Religion should play the most important role in civil affairs.
23. Practices like meditation will not lead one to enlightenment.
24. Knowledge is the awareness of individual facts and an understanding of the logical relations among these facts.
25. Animals don't have souls or spirits.
26. There is a higher good than the pleasures of the senses.
27. No objects have magical or spiritual powers.
28. The people running this country don't really care what happens to people like me.
29. People of different races and nationalities should live in different places apart from one another.
30. It is good to defy "traditional family values" as feminists and homosexuals have done.
31. Foreigners and immigrants have a beneficial effect on our society.
32. People who earn wealth should always have the right to keep it.

33. There should be increased social equality.
34. Wealthy people should have a higher tax rate than poor people.
35. We need tough leaders who can silence the troublemakers and restore our traditional values.
36. I am opposed to the death penalty (execution) as a punishment for crimes.
37. I can always trust the government to do what is right.
38. We should end the money system and all buying and selling.
39. There is an ideal spiritual reality that goes beyond sense experience and science and is knowable through intuition.
40. Government-supported social welfare programs should be abolished.

### **Moral Foundations Questionnaire: MFQ-20**

When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking? Please answer on a scale from not At All Relevant (This consideration has nothing to do with my judgments of right and wrong) to Extremely Relevant (This is one of the most important factors when I judge right and wrong).

(options: not at all relevant , not very relevant, slightly relevant, somewhat relevant, very relevant, extremely relevant)

- Whether or not someone suffered emotionally
- Whether or not someone cared for someone weak or vulnerable
- Whether or not some people were treated differently from others
- Whether or not someone acted unfairly
- Whether or not someone's action showed love for his or her country
- Whether or not someone did something to betray his or her group
- Whether or not someone showed a lack of respect for authority
- Whether or not someone conformed to the traditions of society
- Whether or not someone violated standards of purity and decency
- Whether or not someone did something disgusting

Please read the following sentences and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement.

(response options: strongly disagree, moderately disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, moderately agree, strongly agree)

- Compassion for those who are suffering is the most crucial virtue.
- One of the worst things a person could do is hurt a defenseless animal.
- When the government makes laws, the number one principle should be ensuring that everyone is treated fairly.
- Justice is the most important requirement for a society.
- I am proud of my country's history.
- People should be loyal to their family members, even when they have done something wrong.
- Respect for authority is something all children need to learn.
- Men and women each have different roles to play in society.

People should not do things that are disgusting, even if no one is harmed.  
I would call some acts wrong on the grounds that they are unnatural.

**[Revised Life Orientation Test (optimism) - 6 items, Scheier, Carver, & Bridges]**

Please indicate how much you agree with each of these statements.  
strongly disagree / disagree / neutral / agree / strongly agree

- OPT1. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.
- OPT2-r. If something can go wrong for me, it will. (reverse-scored)
- OPT3. I'm always optimistic about my future.
- OPT4-r. I hardly ever expect things to go my way. (reverse-scored)
- OPT5-r. I rarely count on good things happening to me. (reverse-scored)
- OPT6. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

**Narrative Self-Concept Scale (Akers)**

For the following questions, please choose the answer that best applies to you. Please think carefully about your responses rather than choosing the answer that first comes to mind. [Responses: 1= never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = usually, 5 = always]

1. When I reflect on my entire life, I focus on the big picture.
2. When I think about my life, it is important to me that it form a coherent whole.
3. When I think about my life, it is important to me that the main parts of it form coherent units.
4. I think of my life as fitting into one big, unifying pattern.
5. I often notice patterns in my life.
6. When I think back on my life so far, I think of it mostly as a series of events with a main compelling storyline that is important to my sense of personal identity.
7. When I think back on my life so far, I think of it mostly as a series of events with more than one parallel storyline, each of which is relevant to my sense of personal identity.
8. When I think back on specific events in my life, I can readily have a vivid experience of the thoughts that I had during these events themselves.
9. When I think back on specific events in my life, I can readily have a vivid experience of the feelings that I had during these events themselves.
10. When I think about my future, I feel borne along in one particular direction that has already been established from events in my life so far.
11. When I think about specific things that may happen to me in the future, I can readily have a vivid experience of the thoughts that I may have during these events themselves.
12. When I think about specific things that may happen to me in the future, I can readily have a vivid experience of the feelings that I may have during these events themselves.
13. When I work toward complicated goals, I tend to think about completing the tasks like moving forward in a story.
14. When I work toward complicated goals, I mostly rely on my emotions to give me feedback about how well I am doing.
15. When deciding how to spend my time, I tend to weigh my choices in terms of how well they fit into my personal story about who I am.

## APPENDIX E

### ANALYTIC PLAN

#### **Pilot Study: Item Collection**

- For each response, I will code to see which qualify as metanarratives, using the criteria referred to above, in the Definitions section. They must meet all of the “necessary” criteria.
- Some of those elicited in the sentence completion section may match those in the item pool, and if so, I will calculate a salience score (number of different participants’ elicitations) for those items, which I will report; I will also examine in the main study whether pilot study salience predicts action (described below). Further, I will report partial matches without including them in the salience score.

#### **Main Study: Descriptives**

For all participants, descriptives for these variables, separately for the student pool and the web participants, and separately for everyone and for US lifelong residents:

- Country of residence (US lifelong, US immigrant/other, other countries)
- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Majority/minority status; for minorities, degree of relative privilege
- Religious affiliation
- Political preference (US Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, Greens/Radical Left)
- Father’s highest education level / Mother’s highest education level

For the student pool, descriptives for these composite variables, for everyone and for US lifelong residents:

- Duke Religion Index
- Saucier alphaisms, betaisms, gammaisms, deltaisms
- Narrative self-concept
- Revised Life Orientation Test (optimism scale)

For US lifelong residents, separately for the student pool and the web participants:

- Correlations between the above variables. Significant differences among groups will be described with t-statistics, etc.

#### **Main Study: Exploratory Analyses of Normative and Personal Beliefs**

For US lifelong residents, for the student pool and web groups separately:

- Report the metanarratives with the highest prevalence ratings overall, and by group (esp. gender, majority/minority status, political preference, and high/low “isms” factors).

- Report the metanarratives with the highest personal endorsement ratings overall, and by group (esp. gender, majority/minority status, political preference, and high/low “isms” factors).
- Look for clustering in the endorsement of metanarratives, that is, which metanarratives appear to “go together”? Use principal axis factoring with varimax rotation to extract a suitable number of correlated factors to identify the clusters. Create a factor score for each person, for each factor. Look for demographic and other predictor variable differences in metanarrative cluster factor endorsement.
- For each endorsed metanarrative (rated 4-6), code as dominant (prevalence rating 4-6) or counternarrative (prevalence rating 1-3).
- Report the (subjectively experienced) counternarratives with the highest personal endorsement ratings. Create summary scores of the number of dominant metanarratives endorsed and the number of counternarratives endorsed. Create a ratio of the summary scores for endorsed dominant metanarratives and counternarratives, as a measure of dominant vs. counternarrativity.
- Look for correlations between this “dominant vs. counternarrativity ratio” and the various demographic and other predictor variables, as well as the metanarrative cluster factor scores.
- Report the mean scores for the five “anti-metanarrative belief” items. Look for demographic and other predictor variable differences in item endorsement.

### **Main Study: Coding and Descriptives for Motivational Effectiveness**

- Create action indices for each person for each rated metanarrative. Include, for each metanarrative, only those behaviors that occasion some endorsements by some participants, and obtain each metanarrative’s index by dividing the total score by the number of behaviors included for that metanarrative.
- Report the metanarratives with the highest mean action scores.
- Look for patterns of individual differences (e.g., for demographics and predictor variables) in the action scores for each metanarrative.

The metanarratives in the item pool will be coded for the hypothesis testing and exploratory main effects testing. I will code them, and another person familiar with the study will code them (Gerard), and differences will be discussed and resolved. Coding will cover:

- Type of generic evaluative schema (options will include Prior Fall, Looming Catastrophe, Progress (ongoing), Restoration (fall then a redemptive rise), Triumphalist (prior progress and goal attainment), Romantic Saga (cycles of fall/rise), Stable)
- Presence of three basic story elements (past context, present problem, future resolution)
- Explicit presence of a future goal
- Presence of intensifiers (e.g., reference to the sacred, or to “secular sacred” concepts like purity, righteousness, absolute, the “only chance” to achieve a goal or avert a disaster).

I will report the following descriptive data:

- Summary statistics for story elements, goal presence, and intensifier presence within each generic evaluative schema type.
- Data on prevalence rates, personal endorsement rates, and dominant and counternarrative coding of metanarratives within each generic evaluative schema type.
- The distribution of generic evaluative schema types within each of the metanarrative cluster factors (e.g., do some clusters favor one schema type over another, or do they tend to each cover all of the generic schemas with different metanarrative choices?).

### **Main Study: Hypothesis Testing for Motivational Effectiveness**

(1) Schema hypothesis: “Given belief in a metanarrative, those with a “restoration” schema will inspire greater action or desire to act than those with “progress” and “avoiding catastrophe” schemas, which in turn will inspire greater action than those with “prior fall” schemas.” I will compare mean action indices for these four schemas.

(2) Story hypothesis: “Given belief in a metanarrative, those that contain all three story elements explicitly (context, problem, solution) will inspire greater action than those that do not.” I will compare mean action indices for those that contain all three story elements explicitly vs. those that do not, for restoration metanarratives (hypothesis testing) and for all metanarratives (main effects exploration).

(3) Goal presence hypothesis: “Given belief in a metanarrative, those that support explicit future goals will inspire greater action or desire to act than those that do not.” I will compare mean action indices for those that contain goals explicitly vs. those that do not, for restoration metanarratives (hypothesis testing) and for all metanarratives (main effects exploration). Because the “looming catastrophe” metanarratives do not explicitly include goals, but inverting any of them strongly implies a goal, I will run main effects analyses both with and without them.

(4) Intensifiers presence hypothesis: “Given belief in a metanarrative, the presence of intensifiers (e.g., “sacred,” “absolute,” “only chance” etc.) will inspire greater action than those without them.” I will compare mean action indices for those that contain intensifiers vs. those that do not, for restoration metanarratives (hypothesis testing) and for all metanarratives (main effects exploration).

### **Main Study: Post-hoc Exploratory Analyses for Motivational Effectiveness**

- Report the correlation between the “dominant vs. counternarrativity ratio” for each metanarrative and its action score.
- Report the correlation between each metanarrative’s salience score and its action score.
- Report the correlation between each of the five “anti-metanarrative belief” items and each person’s mean action score across metanarratives.

## APPENDIX F

### METANARRATIVE PERSONAL BELIEF SCORES, STUDENT POOL

	Mean	S.D.
International Cooperation	4.87	1.183
Multiculturalism	4.63	1.312
Work and Thrift for Survival	4.50	1.256
Minority Oppression	4.46	1.244
National Ambition	4.45	1.370
Anti-Global Corporations	4.45	1.362
Scientific Enlightenment	4.37	1.120
Liberal Progress	4.34	1.324
Our Excessive Interference	4.34	1.318
Dying Cultures	4.18	1.372
Dangerous World Communitarianism	4.11	1.259
Inevitable Warfare	4.11	1.309
United Nations Mission	4.09	1.415
Social Contract	4.04	1.309
Ecological Last Chance	4.04	1.405
Progressive "Nurturing Family"	3.93	1.241
Lost Affinity with Nature	3.91	1.406
Global Warming	3.89	1.375
Strong Leader	3.88	1.334
Ecological Community	3.86	1.403
Expressive Romantic	3.84	1.294
Alienation from Nature	3.82	1.247
Growing Complexity	3.78	1.393
Small Town Nostalgia	3.76	1.350
Strong Defense	3.76	1.423
Constitutionalism	3.75	1.334
Social Justice Progress	3.74	1.324
Dangerous World Individualism	3.74	1.303
Increased Laziness	3.71	1.369
Tea Party Anti-Corruption	3.70	1.257
Forefathers' Lost Vision	3.67	1.294
Neo-Liberal Rational Process	3.61	1.344
American Mission	3.61	1.359
American Experiment	3.55	1.278

Heroic People	3.54	1.397
Buddhist Belief	3.53	1.268
Progressive Socialist	3.48	1.388
Anti-Govt. Suppression of Islam	3.30	1.316
Conservative "Strict Father"	3.28	1.284
Country as Beacon	3.27	1.454
Stewardship of Nature	3.26	1.712
Proactive Peacekeeping	3.24	1.554
Lost Revolutionary Spirit	3.24	1.274
Capitalist Prosperity	3.23	1.234
Financial Conspiracy	3.19	1.375
Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman	3.17	1.538
Anti-Patriarchy	3.17	1.534
Archaism	3.13	1.327
Heroic Example (from Armenia)	3.12	1.409
Primitivism-Fall	3.12	1.357
Faith in Technology	3.10	1.251
Lost Golden Age	3.04	1.324
Vanishing Race	2.91	1.428
Primitivism-Restore	2.91	1.299
Cynicism	2.86	1.230
Community Lost	2.85	1.246
Ancient Egyptian "Divine Life and Afterlife"	2.76	1.518
Lone Superpower (aka "American National")	2.75	1.355
Anti-Immigration	2.75	1.539
Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia)	2.67	1.393
Submission to God (Islamic)	2.64	1.703
Past Glory	2.63	1.319
Separatist Preservation	2.62	1.306
Others' Excessive Interference	2.58	1.283
Christian Redemption	2.52	1.644
Chosen People (from Judaism)	2.43	1.574
Dominion over Nature	2.38	1.491
Militant Extremist (one variant)	2.32	1.358
Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	2.18	1.414
Christian Evangelism	2.17	1.409
Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	2.16	1.303
Superior Race	2.15	1.343
Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place"	1.82	1.242

## APPENDIX G

### METANARRATIVE PERSONAL BELIEF SCORES, WEB SAMPLE

	Mean	S.D.
Anti-Global Corporations	4.90	1.561
International Cooperation	4.85	1.218
Our Excessive Interference	4.84	1.268
Liberal Progress	4.76	1.241
Scientific Enlightenment	4.76	1.422
Work and Thrift for Survival	4.60	1.199
Minority Oppression	4.47	1.462
Tea Party Anti-Corruption	4.44	1.413
Inevitable Warfare	4.42	1.506
Multiculturalism	4.36	1.548
Expressive Romantic	4.34	1.530
Social Contract	4.28	1.397
Alienation from Nature	4.26	1.369
Constitutionalism	4.25	1.555
Dying Cultures	4.24	1.583
Ecological Last Chance	4.22	1.593
Forefathers' Lost Vision	4.16	1.560
National Ambition	4.08	1.690
Global Warming	3.95	1.681
Small Town Nostalgia	3.92	1.510
United Nations Mission	3.90	1.590
Dangerous World Communitarianism	3.82	1.474
Progressive "Nurturing Family"	3.82	1.623
Ecological Community	3.78	1.664
Lost Revolutionary Spirit	3.78	1.566
Dangerous World Individualism	3.74	1.505
Neo-Liberal Rational Process	3.72	1.438
Social Justice Progress	3.68	1.543
Growing Complexity	3.66	1.515
Lost Affinity with Nature	3.64	1.723
Buddhist Belief	3.62	1.534
Increased Laziness	3.58	1.631
Strong Defense	3.53	1.597
Strong Leader	3.53	1.655

Country as Beacon	3.51	1.633
Financial Conspiracy	3.48	1.633
Suppression of Islam	3.44	1.538
American Experiment	3.42	1.544
Faith in Technology	3.39	1.512
Heroic People	3.30	1.636
Progressive Socialist	3.28	1.748
Capitalist Prosperity	3.24	1.755
Cynicism	3.06	1.578
American Mission	3.02	1.604
Heroic Example (from Armenia)	3.00	1.509
Stewardship of Nature	2.94	1.896
Primitivism-Restore	2.93	1.741
Conservative "Strict Father"	2.91	1.595
Anti-Patriarchy	2.88	1.667
Others' Excessive Interference	2.80	1.696
Archaism	2.80	1.736
Lone Superpower (aka "American National")	2.78	1.550
Ancient Egyptian "Divine Life and Afterlife"	2.76	1.838
Vanishing Race	2.70	1.613
Anti-Immigration	2.68	1.752
Lost Golden Age	2.67	1.783
Primitivism-Fall	2.65	1.539
Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman	2.64	1.778
Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia)	2.63	1.642
Proactive Peacekeeping	2.63	1.503
Separatist Preservation	2.55	1.560
Community Lost	2.50	1.568
Past Glory	2.48	1.446
Christian Redemption	2.40	1.963
Submission to God (Islamic)	2.31	1.847
Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	2.17	1.717
Chosen People (from Judaism)	2.15	1.829
Christian Evangelism	2.15	1.752
Dominion over Nature	2.11	1.450
Militant Extremist (one variant)	2.10	1.598
Superior Race	1.94	1.556
Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place"	1.73	1.529
Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	1.70	1.288

## APPENDIX H

### RANKING OF METANARRATIVE PREVALENCE BELIEFS,

#### STUDENT POOL

	Mean	S.D.
National Ambition	4.82	1.172
Constitutionalism	4.32	1.206
Strong Defense	4.32	1.210
Strong Leader	4.32	1.200
American Mission	4.28	1.123
Scientific Enlightenment	4.23	1.154
Liberal Progress	4.23	1.129
Inevitable Warfare	4.23	1.164
Heroic People	4.22	1.196
Country as Beacon	4.20	1.259
Anti-Global Corps.	4.20	1.166
Dangerous World Communitarianism	4.18	1.081
Work and Thrift for Survival+A3	4.18	1.158
Dangerous World Individualism	4.09	1.148
International Cooperation	4.05	1.144
American Experiment	4.04	1.142
Tea Party Anti-Corruption	4.01	1.166
Multiculturalism	3.98	1.229
Social Contract	3.95	1.213
Our Excessive Interference	3.94	1.188
Anti-Immigration	3.90	1.195
Proactive Peacekeeping	3.86	1.177
Minority Oppression	3.85	1.059
Growing Complexity	3.85	1.112
Lone Superpower (aka "American National")	3.82	1.244
Social Justice Progress	3.81	1.246
Progressive "Nurturing Family"	3.78	1.155
Increased Laziness	3.75	1.241
Conservative "Strict Father"	3.72	1.099
United Nations Mission	3.66	1.243
Neo-Liberal Rational Process	3.63	1.144
Capitalist Prosperity	3.60	1.063
Ecological Last Chance	3.60	1.225

Global Warming	3.58	1.228
Buddhist Belief	3.58	1.155
Forefathers' Lost Vision	3.57	1.096
Dying Cultures	3.55	1.143
Small Town Nostalgia	3.53	1.165
Faith in Technology	3.51	1.154
Vanishing Race	3.50	1.222
Alienation from Nature	3.44	1.117
Heroic Example (from Armenia)	3.43	1.218
Progressive Socialist	3.40	1.159
Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman	3.36	1.192
Ecological Community	3.36	1.207
Archaism	3.34	1.137
Anti-Govt. Suppression of Islam	3.34	1.148
Ancient Egyptian "Divine Life and Afterlife"	3.33	1.216
Separatist Preservation	3.31	1.244
Submission to God (Islamic)	3.29	1.221
Stewardship of Nature	3.29	1.187
Financial Conspiracy	3.26	1.209
Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia)	3.26	1.286
Dominion over Nature	3.22	1.168
Chosen People (from Judaism)	3.21	1.150
Lost Affinity with Nature	3.20	1.207
Lost Revolutionary Spirit	3.19	1.007
Expressive Romantic	3.17	1.188
Christian Redemption	3.09	1.243
Primitivism-Restore	3.09	1.252
Community Lost	3.08	1.061
Primitivism-Fall	3.07	1.181
Lost Golden Age	3.05	1.187
Anti-Patriarchy	3.04	1.321
Superior Race	3.00	1.285
Christian Evangelism	2.97	1.214
Militant Extremist (one variant)	2.97	1.325
Cynicism	2.93	1.178
Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	2.86	1.238
Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	2.79	1.254
Past Glory	2.76	1.204
Others' Excessive Interference	2.57	1.276
Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place"	2.49	1.235

## APPENDIX I

### RANKING OF METANARRATIVE PREVALENCE BELIEFS,

#### WEB SAMPLE

	Mean	S.D.
National Ambition	4.85	1.331
Strong Defense	4.54	1.171
Country as Beacon	4.53	1.299
Heroic People	4.52	1.437
Strong Leader	4.51	1.065
Constitutionalism	4.51	1.231
Inevitable Warfare	4.42	1.163
Lone Superpower (aka "American National")	4.41	1.266
American Mission	4.34	1.150
Social Contract	4.31	1.212
Anti-Global Corporations	4.31	1.134
Tea Party Anti-Corruption	4.31	1.244
Dangerous World Communitarianism	4.30	1.107
Dangerous World Individualism	4.27	1.313
Work and Thrift for Survival	4.26	1.167
International Cooperation	4.15	1.314
Liberal Progress	4.13	1.173
Proactive Peacekeeping	4.12	1.314
Scientific Enlightenment	4.06	1.138
American Experiment	4.04	1.349
Increased Laziness	4.02	1.236
Small Town Nostalgia	3.98	1.185
Progressive "Nurturing Family"	3.96	1.295
Anti-Immigration	3.93	1.261
Multiculturalism	3.91	1.259
Growing Complexity	3.88	1.117
Capitalist Prosperity	3.87	1.176
Social Justice Progress	3.87	1.232
Forefathers' Lost Vision	3.86	1.180
Submission to God (Islamic)	3.82	1.346
Conservative "Strict Father"	3.80	1.235
Our Excessive Interference	3.79	1.189
Minority Oppression	3.75	1.184

Ancient Egyptian “Divine Life and Afterlife”	3.74	1.381
Neo-Liberal Rational Process	3.71	1.233
Dominion over Nature	3.69	1.345
Archaism	3.66	1.368
Vanishing Race	3.66	1.323
Separatist Preservation	3.62	1.279
Alienation from Nature	3.61	1.333
Faith in Technology	3.61	1.283
Lost Revolutionary Spirit	3.61	1.232
Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia)	3.58	1.467
United Nations Mission	3.52	1.477
Dying Cultures	3.48	1.287
Heroic Example (from Armenia)	3.47	1.402
Christian Redemption	3.47	1.385
Ecological Last Chance	3.43	1.242
Lost Golden Age	3.41	1.303
Stewardship of Nature	3.34	1.268
Christian Evangelism	3.34	1.343
Progressive Socialist	3.31	1.291
Expressive Romantic	3.27	1.499
Community Lost	3.25	1.234
Global Warming	3.21	1.213
Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman	3.21	1.382
Chosen People (from Judaism)	3.19	1.393
Buddhist Belief	3.18	1.356
Financial Conspiracy	3.18	1.356
Superior Race	3.16	1.379
Lost Affinity with Nature	3.15	1.393
Anti-Govt. Suppression of Islam	3.13	1.289
Militant Extremist (one variant)	3.10	1.439
Primitivism	3.05	1.405
Cynicism	3.04	1.340
Ecological Community	2.94	1.331
Others’ Excessive Interference	2.93	1.361
Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	2.91	1.477
Christian Fundamentalist “Woman’s Place”	2.91	1.477
Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	2.82	1.539
Past Glory	2.74	1.309
Primitivism-Fall	2.71	1.370
Anti-Patriarchy	2.61	1.254

## APPENDIX J

### PERSONAL BELIEF FACTOR ANALYSIS RESULTS, STUDENT POOL

**Rotated Factor Matrix**

	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Submission to God (Islamic)	.846					
Chosen People (from Judaism)	.805					
Christian Redemption	.731					
Dominion over Nature	.727	.263				
Ancient Egyptian "Divine Life and Afterlife"	.651			.265		
Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	.646		-.270			
Stewardship of Nature	.643					
Christian Evangelism	.628				.294	
Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place"	.531		-.464			
Militant Extremist (one variant)	.510		-.361	.293		
Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	.504		-.461			
Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman	.483			.259		.286
Heroic Example (from Armenia)	.440	.401				
Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia)	.409	.316	-.284			
Others' Excessive Interference	.351					
Country as Beacon	.265	.640				
Proactive Peacekeeping	.268	.615				
Strong Defense		.593				
American Mission		.577				

Anti-Immigration	.303	.497	-.302		
Heroic People	.254	.494			
Strong Leader		.489			
Constitutionalism		.481			
Lone Superpower (aka "American National")	.279	.453	-.335		
Vanishing Race	.304	.452			
Dangerous World Communitarianism		.450			
National Ambition		.420			
Inevitable Warfare		.405		.302	
Conservative "Strict Father"	.272	.356			.342
Capitalist Prosperity		.347		.273	
Dangerous World Individualism		.335			.254
International Cooperation			.670		
Anti-Global Corporations			.635	.261	
Multiculturalism			.541		
Superior Race	.406		-.511		
Work and Thrift for Survival		.395	.470		
Scientific Enlightenment			.468		.378
Minority Oppression			.448		
Liberal Progress		.285	.445		.253
Progressive "Nurturing Family"			.399		.276
Dying Cultures			.396	.275	
Separatist Preservation	.326	.271	-.352		.266
Social Contract		.256	.318		
Lost Affinity with Nature				.649	
Ecological Community			.313	.609	
Growing Complexity				.563	
Global Warming				.550	

Community Lost				.538		
Primitivism - Fall				.537	.269	
Ecological Last Chance			.272	.520		
Lost Golden Age	.256			.520	.256	
Progressive Socialist				.420		
Buddhist Belief				.406		
Small Town Nostalgia			.265	.404		
Archaism				.402		
United Nations Mission			.277	.383		
Alienation from Nature				.375		
Expressive Romantic				.300	.291	
Tea Party Anti-Corruption					.558	
Financial Conspiracy					.457	
Lost Revolutionary Spirit					.447	
Suppression of Islam					.437	
Cynicism					.432	
Past Glory			-.272		.429	
Increased Laziness					.411	
Forefathers' Lost Vision			.294		.358	
Our Excessive Interference			.295		.317	
Primitivism - Restore					.308	.284
Faith in Technology						.517
American Experiment		.449				.467
Neo-Liberal Rational Process						.423
Social Justice Progress						.340
Anti-Patriarchy						

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

APPENDIX K

PERSONAL BELIEF FACTOR ANALYSIS RESULTS: WEB SAMPLE

Rotated Factor Matrix

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Militant Religious Resurgence (from Islam)	.775			
Militant Extremist (one variant)	.734			
Chosen People (from Judaism)	.728			
Christian Fundamentalist "Woman's Place"	.694			
Revolutionary Salvationist Paradigm	.690			
Superior Race	.685			
Christian Redemption	.683	-.308		
Christian Evangelism	.680			
Ancient Egyptian "Divine Life and Afterlife"	.676			
Separatist Preservation	.674		.303	
Repeated Triumph Over Alien Forces (from Russia)	.674		.321	
Lost Golden Age	.655	.321		
Heroic Example (from Armenia)	.649		.371	
Hindu: Destined Unity with Brahman	.644			
Archaism	.642	.340		.357
Anti-Immigration	.636			
Submission to God (Islamic)	.628			
Dominion over Nature	.624		.313	
Conservative "Strict Father"	.615		.301	-.296
Cynicism	.578			
Community Lost	.572			.341
Others' Excessive Interference	.543			.292
Primitivism-Fall	.534		-.265	
Past Glory	.504			.250
Strong Leader	.495	.263	.312	
Increased Laziness	.493			
Vanishing Race	.481		.356	
Stewardship of Nature	.470			
Growing Complexity	.461	.344		
Minority Oppression	-.349	.295		-.344
Global Warming		.682		
Dying Cultures		.638		
United Nations Mission		.635		
Ecological Community		.626		
Lost Affinity with Nature	.276	.617		.318
Progressive Socialist		.604		
Ecological Last Chance		.574		
Suppression of Islam		.565	-.309	
Multiculturalism		.543		
Anti-Global Corporations		.530		
Progressive "Nurturing Family"		.496	.279	

Expressive Romantic	-.286	.483		.338
Alienation from Nature		.480		
Financial Conspiracy		.465		
International Cooperation		.459		
Buddhist Belief	.272	.409	.258	
Anti-Patriarchy		.259		
American Experiment			.687	
Liberal Progress			.566	
Heroic People			.563	
Faith in Technology			.539	
Lone Superpower (aka "American National")	.468		.537	
American Mission	.502		.523	
Proactive Peacekeeping	.456		.512	
Country as Beacon	.377		.485	
Social Justice Progress			.478	
Strong Defense	.450		.472	.391
Scientific Enlightenment	-.279		.471	
Social Contract			.389	
Neo-Liberal Rational Process	.256		.360	
National Ambition	.278		.346	
Constitutionalism			.334	.278
Dangerous World			.312	
Communitarianism				
Capitalist Prosperity	.259	-.289		.631
Work and Thrift for Survival			.285	.623
Forefathers' Lost Vision				.610
Tea Party Anti-Corruption				.547
Lost Revolutionary Spirit				.511
Our Excessive Interference	-.313	.295		.477
Small Town Nostalgia	.395	.270		.441
Primitivism-Restore				.421
Inevitable Warfare				.414
Dangerous World	.259			.306
Individualism				

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

## APPENDIX L

### POTENTIAL METANARRATIVES SUGGESTED BY

#### MAIN STUDY PARTICIPANTS

##### **Students - own belief**

A loving community is necessary for happiness

All people are created equal, not matter what race

All people are innately good.

All people of the world will someday have to unite together to rid our world of dividers such as country borders and prejudice of others based on culture or race to thrive as a population

All people should have the right to marry any person they want, regardless of gender.

always giving the best you can and behave in the most responsible way is the best thing to do both for yourself, the society and the nature

America has a corrupt government

America is losing the American dream because of growing inequalities.

Americans are not open minded enough to other cultures and if they were the country as a whole would be more successful.

As a country, we can combine our believes to make the world and our country a better place

As humans, our brains force us to constantly search for answers and to "progress" instead of simply living life and embracing nature.

As long as there is religion there will be war.

As society progresses, belief in the supernatural will eventually fade away.

As the world expands the beliefs in religion are decreasing

Being open-minded and learning about other's beliefs and values is the best way to attain relative peace

Belief that our countrys goal is to number one

Children in school are often taught biased facts about history which make them unable to form logical conclusions about other countries.

Corporations and the top 1% of the country should be taxed more to provide more funding for social programs such as health care, and increase funding for schools and universities around the country.

Darwin's theory of evolution

Despite it's flaws, America is the best country on Earth.

Do you think that the world will ever reach peace?

Due to the hurried nature of our culture, people have lost happiness and purpose and instead live to make money

Eventually we will become too dependent on technology, if we aren't already.

Every man's actions is in his benefit, only.

Every person in the United States should have health care.

Every vote counts in the decisions affecting our country and people.

Everybody needs to chip in.

everyone is looking for a handout

Everyone must take accountability for their actions, even if it means a greater punishment than what was suffered before.

Everyone was created equally, and therefore needs to be treated as such.

Everything changes

Everything happens for a reason

Everything happens for a reason.

global warming is a serious problem that the ignorant and uneducated are unaware of

God created the world and everything that is in it.

God created us

God doesn't exist.

God is exist.  
 Government is interfering to much with the way people run their lives.  
 government is way too controlling  
 Harmony and peace in the world is all about balance: a balance of political view, of religious views versus science, of technology versus nature, etc.  
 History has a habit of repeating itself.  
 History has taught us what not to do, so we don't make the same mistakes.  
 History is just one thing after another, personal choices do affect the outside world but generally not in the way a person intended.  
 History repeats itself  
 How important is philosophy in ones life  
 how we raise our children, how we treat others  
 How wealth is not equally distributed  
 Human beings are capable of living truly successful and happy lives without the means of riches.  
 Human beings mean well, but often make things worse  
 Human interaction with animals and nature is emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually healthy for someone suffering from depression.  
 Humanity has just left its childhood.  
 Humans care about their own interesrts so that comes usually at the cost of others' rights and lives  
 I believe affirmative action will help get rid of minority's being oppressed in our society.  
 I believe arts in education is losing funding, although it is essential to academic life.  
 I believe everyone has the right to have their own beliefs.  
 I believe humans have the ability to control their emotional responses to a variety of situations, both good and bad.  
 i believe many people decide things based on how others view them  
 I believe our world will become so fast paced that technologies will take over, and our human population will become obese.  
 I believe past generations shape future ones.  
 I believe that everything could happen in this gobal  
 I believe that if we all work together with other people in the world, we can gain progress for peace.  
 I believe that in order for our society to function to its highest capacity, the goverment must be as small and inobtrusive as possible.  
 I believe that medicine needs to be focused on the patient and not just the money they get from sales and procedures  
 I believe that my country should take responsibility for its past mistakes.  
 I believe that others should have equality  
 I believe that our country is too concerned with money.  
 I believe that people spend too much time doing things that don't make them happy  
 I believe that people take for granted people from other culture.  
 I believe that religion is a very misguided coping technique.  
 I believe that scientific understanding can help us to feel more connected to the universe even in the absence of God  
 I believe that things were better when there were less things to worry about and things were at a slower pace.  
 I believe that this country is divided by political parties in a manner that is polarizing and unhelpful.  
 i believe that time goes on  
 I believe that we all need to be treated equally. No matter our size, looks, gender, race, etc. We are all beautiful in our own way.  
 I believe the education system is rigid.  
 I believe we are all gods and we need to graps that idea to find ourselves.  
 I believe we should all look out for each other and take care of our children, living by our founding fathers.  
 I didn't really think of anything that was left out.  
 i don't know  
 I have control over my own life.  
 I think people believe certain things based on where and how they were raised.  
 I think that going to war has caused to many innocent people to suffer. It is for the most part barbaric.

If a person really wants to achieve something they can through hard work, dedication and commitment  
If each of us only consider the benefits of our own self, then more and more people will eventually suffer from such action.  
If humans in general don't start perceiving reality correctly, our world, and our society will be doomed all because what we want to believe will stop us from seeing the truth.  
If I believe, I think a number of people also believe in similar ways, so, happenings in all over the world are similar.  
If my generation remains so careless, the quality of our children's future may be in danger.  
If people in our country had more contact with individuals from other countries we would be less likely to have wars  
If people worked together rather than against each other the world would be a better place.  
If the corruption and corporatism of the government isn't remedied our nation will dramatically decline in global power and quality of living.  
If you do the best you can in life, and take of your children and family you will die happy with no regrets.  
If you work hard you will excel  
In all societies the rich accumulate more wealth.  
Inequality is extremely prevalent in today's society.  
innovation is turning our country fat.  
Intelligence is measured not by what you know, but what you do when you don't know.  
Is terrorism a product of fatalism or socio-economic equality?  
it is currently unknown, which we must accept, and only through science we can we improve our knowledge  
It is important to treat all ethnic groups equal because they are what created our nation as a whole.  
It is possible for my country to be a guiding international force without being domineering.  
It's difficult for one individual to have a significant effect on a government decision.  
It's not about god or religion, but I believe this university is extremely flawed and doesn't teach us how to perform better in a job but just steal our money.  
Long history has influence on today's society  
Many people in positions of power are more interested in money than the well being of our planet.  
Men are in control!  
Money is the root of all problems  
More attention needs to be paid to the allocation of money by the government for educational purposes.  
Most people in my country believe that government has the people's interest in mind.  
Most people just want to live their lives as peacefully and as happily (without conflict) as possible.  
Most societal beliefs are constructs and formed either through manipulative intent or irrelevant traditions.  
Multiculturalism and diversity is important to the strength and success of a society.  
My country focuses too much on foreign affairs.  
My country imposes ideas of christianity on its own citizens, regardless of the separation of church and state.  
My country is a dominant power that sometimes becomes confused with how they should use that power effectively.  
My country occupies other countries in its own self interest.  
My country places high value on sexual appearance  
My country relies too much on technology.  
My Country's leaders are corrupt and leading my country to ruin.  
Nature is under appreciated and should be more valued and saving it should be prioritized.  
No matter what, the world will always be at war.  
None of countries should have nuclear weapons.  
Not all persons in this country can be equally happy with a leader and thus it's their job to fix it, not complain  
Nuclear war is unavoidable and will happen.  
Only half of our country has been able to accept minorities.  
Other countries like China or Japan are more financially stable. I believe that this has something to do with the government system. Another system besides democracy could work better.  
Our country feels it is responsible for the well-being of other nations.  
Our country is split between conservative and liberal outlook, the battle blocks out any compromise.

Our country should work to repair education at the early levels because it is falling apart.  
our current government is making things worse  
Our generation is so consumed in creating new values that we lose sight of old ones.  
Our political and economic system is very corrupt because many of the people that are elected only want to benefit themselves and not the average person.  
Our society strive to be the best, no matter the consequences.  
Over time, people have become too dependent on technology and as a society we would struggle without it.  
People are afraid of stem cell research because they are afraid of advancements from technology.  
People are generally good, it is very rare for a person to want to do bad things.  
People are good  
people are inherently good.  
People are only welcome to those with the same beliefs as them because they are scared of the unknown.  
People are too focused "making money" to truly focus on their passion. This passion for making money instead of finding something that you truly enjoy doing for a living, undermines the true American dream of pursuing and attaining happiness, not just money.  
People are too skeptical of those in power  
people are too worried about things that can't be helped and not worried enough about prominent matters  
People by nature are greedy  
People can govern themselves therefor less government is better.  
People care too much about materialistic objects and don't place enough value on their ties to their family and friends as well as what they spend their time on.  
People create their own destiny but it is created by the people and environment that they surround themselves with,  
People create their own happiness  
People deserve their rights equally, regardless of sex, race, age, sexual orientation, etc.  
People have a responsibility to understand the influence that they have on other and the world around them, and should consciously take steps to keep these influences in a positive, non harmful way.  
People have always been just about as evil and lazy as they are today  
People have become selfish and  
People have gotten to be more concerned with themselves than anything else  
People have lost the work ethic that once existed in my country do to the lavished life styles many americans live.  
People living with various disabilities are often thought of as a minority that is rarely considered or disregarded all together.  
People need to focus less on fitting into their societal rules and more on their inner selves and getting back to nature to improve the entirety of the society.  
people now spend more time on relaxing other than working  
People of minorities are not well respected  
People of my country think of themselves before their country.  
People should work for and have courage to change their problems, not just always cope with them.  
People who believe their race is superior are trying to dominate the world and become the ultimate power  
People who commit evil in the world will be punished through their consciousness and happiness.  
People will do anything to satisfy their own wants and needs and lose focus on the true value of life when the situation involves money. Greed plays a huge role in how we act and think.  
People with extremely radical positions usually control our government, despite what the general populace may really want.  
Pro-choice  
racism still exists even though we have a black president  
Religion has been sneakily entered back into most aspects of public life, the separation of church and state is seemingly no more.  
Religion negatively interferes too much with people's lives  
religion often works to detach people from the realities of our world and to justify other's suffering rather than working to help others  
Religious beliefs influence how people of the world act and how leaders lead their countries.  
Same sex marriage should be legal in this country.  
Scientific advancement is of utmost importance even if that means occasionally discovering something

devastating such as nuclear weapons.

Since life has been made easier due technological advances, their hunger for success has been slightly diminished.

Some people appear friendly even though they dislike the people they are around just to gain approval/personal gain.

Some things are beyond knowing because the more you learn the less you know.

Soon enough, the world will learn how much better we will be if we legalize same sex marriage and the distribution of marijuana. Both for the people and the economy.

Technology has completely taken over the personalities of our culture and our society.

Telling the truth and leading a good life will lead to personal happiness.

That being within a minority, we need to focus on what we are doing wrong within our country and fix that first to better everything else before we worry about what we should be doing in other countries.

That everyone deep down will generally serve their own needs if there is no one watching

That God does exist.

That our greed, not another country, has effected our countries quality.

That people are too afraid to speak up so it is much easier for us to just follow that people live in hope

That the social security system is failing.

That we should pay more attention to the environment and how it will affect our future.

That women are still treated unfairly.

The decline of America will be due in large part to citizens' ability to think nationally and globally; people are obsessed with their own lives and do not think about the collective impact of individual actions (e.g. driving a Hummer, declining to vote).

The generation today should try to preserve the earth for future generations.

The government is corrupt and often stages events in order to instill fear in the population and gain more control

The government is corrupt.

The government is mostly about show. They don't truly see a problem through, just enough to make them look good.

The government no longer has the people of the countries best interest at hand.

The government should increase support to the scientific community because it will lead to breakthroughs advancing civilization

the government should make things equal

The government, while being founded on admirable ideals, has been run affoul by flawed politicians.

The history we are learning in schools could easily be fiction.

The key to global peace is tolerance and a thorough understanding of other cultures, faiths, and traditions.

The media plays a big role in my societies opinions.

The middle class deserves help just as much as those who do not have any money.

The original intentions of our forefathers was not as pure as commonly percieved. We as a community have made our ideals much more suitable to our tastes.

The past wars of our country have a strong influence on the military decisions that we make today.

The people of this country should be more welcome to more ethnic cultures.

The people on this planet on primarily egocentric and care more about themselves and their own personal well-being than those of others. This is more evident in my country than in others.

The punishments associated with the laws of my country can be variable and unfair.

The Republican Party manipulates the poor

The rich keep getting richer and the poor keep getting poorer.

The sinfulness of humanity has lead to our destruction and seperation from God

The social media outbreak is having negative effects on childrens self esteem

The survey covered all the beliefs I was thinking of

The two party system is no longer effective.

The United States priorities have changed in the prosperity of our country.

the value of money instead of trade and how that is affecting everyday life

The way to have eternal life is through Jesus Christ and him alone.

The way we are as humans was caused by the evolutionary trial and error

The wealthy, upper class citizens of this country hold the majority of power causing our economy to falter.  
the world is better off today than it was in the past because of advancements made  
The world is getting weirder because of the progressing of technology.  
The world is goverened by powers greater than us, but we still must maintain a personal responsibility to act morally, and not depend on religion to dicate our actions.  
The world is ran by a secret society  
The world is run by money hungry heroin pushers. And i mean heroin pushers as a metaphor for the purveyors of industry.  
The world, in the end, will be messed up beyond repair due to our mistakes and ignorance's.  
Theories associated with evolution can still be plausible when seeing the history of the world through a biblically influenced perspective.  
There is a lot of corruption in today's politics.  
There is no fate but what you make.  
There is no good or evil.  
There is no such thing as god  
There should be marriage rights for all people including homosexuals.  
There will always be a class system no matter what.  
Things are the way that they are, because a divine ruler has created a specific plan for humanity.  
things people hear on tv and the radio influence people opinions  
This country is running by God  
Thou shall not judge. God is the only one who can judge mankind; I'll leave that to him :)  
Through introspection and reflection we can all learn to become better people  
Through science and technology, the world can become a better place to live.  
To treat everyone equally, you have to treat them differently.  
Too much compromise to "make everyone happy" can actually lessen the affect it has to do good.  
Treat others how you would like to be treated  
Treat others the way you want to be treated.  
Universal peace could solve our problems.  
Until we learn to respect each other, work together, and value human life over money and greed the world will not know peace.  
We all have a responsibility to society and our community (including the plants and animals of this world) to provide support and be productive and helpful members.  
We all work as hard as we can, though it doesn't seem to amount to much.  
We as a society are lazy and are only looking for the easy way out.  
We as humans make our own decisions that affect those around us.  
We as people still can make the choice to be saved and live in ever lasting paradise by accepting jesus christ into our lives.  
We can tell alot about the world not only works, but perhaps will work by studing history, as we still make the same mistakes.  
We do not always learn from our mistakes that happened in the past.  
We do not need the government; they merely inhibit and restrict our freedom while charging us a fee to live on the land we were born in.  
We interfere in countries, where we dont have to interfere.  
We must try to accept everyone and embrace them for who they are.  
We need a strong government to help guide our country  
We need to be ore cautious about the way we treat our environment, without it we are nothing  
We need to do the best we can and in the end things will work out.  
we need to focus more resources on fixing problems in our own country before we spend all our money on army that we send to other countries.  
we need to keep progressing, and not settle for the status-quo as a country  
We need to limit government spending.  
We should consider all cultures equal in this country  
we should embrace our own culture and not think of other's culture as less beautiful than ours just because it is different.  
We should follow the examples of leaders like Gandhi and Jesus in deciding how to treat others.

We should go back to the times where we lived a life of simplicity because complexity brings dishonesty and impurity to our lives.

We should learn from what trends in history have occurred.

We should live life with no regrets, only learning experiences.

We should uphold ourselves to a high benchmark of honesty and integrity.

We won't be able to fix the problems in this country without a complete overhaul of some of the political systems in our Constitution.

Well, I'm not quite understanding what I should write here, but I think that there is still quite a bit of segregation and that minorities are still being excluded.

What we think, we become.

What you believe, is how you act and stand up for yourself.

Whether or not our military should still be in other countries when it is not needed at this time.

While minority groups and women have gained strength in recent years, we have to make a conscious decision to ensure that they have a voice.

Without God, life is meaningless.

Without the intervention of individual people, history will repeat itself.

women are not treated equally when it comes to most stuff but especially job but society continues to let it be that way.

Working together will help to make my country stronger

World created by science

You aren't alone in the world and there are people that could care and help you.

You can only have trust in yourself, family, and close friends. There is not many people to look out for you.

Your country is founded on God and should continue to move with Him playing a key part.

### **Web sample - own belief**

1. Truth is indifferent to majority rule. 2. The statement "Government is a necessary evil." is inaccurate and misleading to the degree that either "evil" or "necessary" are missing or softened.

A majority of the people in my country choose not to gain knowledge in the way things work and allow themselves to be ignorant of reality so that they can just focus on themselves.

Apocalyptic end-times thinking, religious or secular, is pernicious because it distracts from constructive solutions to solvable problems.

big bang theory

Christ died for my sins.

Climate change will affect us more than it will "the planet", and any efforts towards climate change policy should openly recognize this fact.

Corporations have more control over the government than politicians do.

Democracy is a con, believed in only by the naive.

Do what you must, come what may.

Each of us has the power to be a catalyst for change.

Employees should not use company materials or equipment for their own personal purposes and this includes telephones, cell phones, copiers, laptops, PDAs, iPods, and the Internet. However, some employers will make an exception in some cases - for example, printing up few flyers for a charity -- but ask them first in order to preserve ongoing trust. Most employers also permit emergency phone calls from and to family members and allow parents to call to check on their children. Absolutely no employee should use company time, equipment, and materials to operate a personal business on company time, such as an Internet sales page, or a Pampered Chef or Tupperware business, etc.

For all who have money and power the one driving force is maintaining their wealth and their control over others.

God loves us all.

Human nature has been broken since the fall of mankind. Since then, there has been no utopia in history.

Humans can achieve amazing things.

I believe only myself country rating is purely depend on the people work how effectively work for their country

I believe that enforcing religion in this era is dangerous and causes more harm than good.

I believe that only by respecting others can we respect ourselves.

I believe that our country's foundation in Judeo Christian values has made freedom possible. Turning away from that is eroding the blessings we have enjoyed through our history.

I believe that we need to spend more time working with people's or society's strengths, rather than focus on weaknesses.

I believe that, in general, all humans are in an "upward trend". In other words, we are becoming better, more enlightened beings.

I believe this true

I don't know how to word it - but something about the future direction of our children and their education. I think that our nations media (movies, tv, blogs, books etc.) has a profound effect on the rest of the world. If we continue on this path of ecological and financial destruction, the only way to resolve it may be that of violence.

In a world defined by opposites, opposition is not the the most successful position for achieving true growth or progress.

Jesus is the clearest portrayal of what God is like.

Learning to listen to what others we feel to be unlike ourselves has to be a starting point for a healthy world.

Life is about doing what truly makes you happy, but without causing harm to others

Many of the "evils" of the world are enabled by government through lobbying, corruption, and failed intentions.

Most of the people most of the time are kind and good-hearted to others.

Most people are decent human beings, regardless of race or religion.

My Country Actavities , Cultural always Belive True.

My country's government is consistently irresponsible.

No one can determine what is "right" or "wrong" for anyone else, but only assert their personal preferences and attempt to enforce them. There is no universally applicable standard to look to for guidance, not God, the law or community interest, because ech of those things fails to account for the spectrum of human experience in some significant way.

Our people have allowed individual gain to rule over forming communities that serve the greater good.

People are basically good when they are treated with goodness.

People need to look out for each other in order to make our society a better, stronger one for everybody.

People with all forms. of mental illness and disabilities (physical) will never get their needs met unless they are wealthy.

Religion is just a way people cope with things they don't understand.

Researching past will assist a person with becoming well rounded person no matter what part of world that he/she lives in.

Setting aside all discussion of what is "right" or "natural" or whether a "communion with nature" is a desirable goal, our civilization is exhausting nonrenewable resources which are critical for its day to day functioning, and is well into the "overshoot phase that categorizes any population of lifeforms which exhausts the resources of its environment.

Some people in my society are freeloaders who contribute little, if anything, meaningful.

Some people never get ahead, despite working hard and never giving up.

The best government is the one which governs least.

The best thing I can do to improve the world is to be myself.

The culture of my country owes its essential nature to the legacy of a different culture, or several other cultures.

The decisions of the government are largely influenced by special interests groups, such as Big Agro Business influencing Congress' decisions about vegetables in gov. funded school lunches.

The government has grown far beyond the bounds of what was originally intended.

The initiation of force is the cause of most of the world's problems.

The state of the world depends more on what you think than what society in general thinks.

There are multiple acceptable spiritual/religious beliefs, and people need to learn to be more open minded to these.

There has never been equality for all people, but the inequality has grown desperately out of proportion.

We can do so much better than we do now.

There is a logical scientific explanation for all things.

Though my personal faith inspires a life towards social justice and righting the wrongs, serving oppressed

people, etc., it is not a faith that leads to judgement or condemnation .wars, jingoism, or even supporting capitalism. Religion and my life shouldbe dedicated to peacebuilding in my community and the global community.

We are here because of happenstance, but our conciousness gives us the power to one day take control of destiny and be free.

We are often distracted by petty, daily things, and forget about our duty to learn about the world.

We have a responsibility to all others, not just people "like us."  
yourself

### **Students - others' belief one does not share**

A belief in God.

A great political candidate is one who will follow Biblical ideals in politics.

A military is necessary in today's world.

Abortion goes against God's will.

Abortion is not the answer.

Abortion should be used in this country as a legitimate option for birth control.

Adam and Eve were just a story with no morals.

After we die, our spirts can come back in the form of other beings.

All criminals need to recieve punishment equal to their crime, an eye for an eye.

All governments are completely corrupt.

All history, present, and future occurances are based of of destiny.

All humans were born with original sin.

All the world is a stage and all the people in it are merely actors.

America deserves its disproportional wealth

America does not need the help of other countries

America is the best, greatest coutry of all and must be the most powerful.

America is the best.

America is the world's police

America' s success in the world can be directly attributed to God.

As long as you pray to god you will go to heaven

As minority groups expand, people of the majority religion and race are being silenced and discriminated against.

Attempting to live in God's image is the best way to live.

Believe in another universe

But some believers think that some policitians are good for the world, but I really do not believe that they are good at policitcs, but they trace thier hope with greedy mind.

Capitol Punishment is an acceptable form of punishment.

Communism or socialism is the best direction for my country to go.

considering national elections, my single vote does not count.

Creationism should be taught in schools.

Cross-country running is a dying sport.

Destiny predetermined

Diversity is bad.

Diversity is still completely undeveloped in many places

Equality is becoming more of a reality.

Everyone in my country has equal opportunities.

Everyone is born equal

Everyone is predestine and their futures are already chosen for them.

Everyone should recieve help from the government, we must be willing to support the least off in the country.

everything is as it appears

Evolution is a lie, God created everything.

Evolution is scientifically proven and sound.

friends is unconditioned

Global warming is not a major environment problem.

god  
 God created earth, and if we don't follow his guidance we will live an unhappy life.  
 God created humanbeings.  
 God created man.  
 God created man.  
 God created the world  
 God created the world  
 God created the world we live in, and it is the reason for it's splendors.  
 God decides all.  
 God decides our destiny.  
 God does not exist.  
 God exists  
 God has dictated what countries are in control based on what should be religiously spread.  
 God helps those who help themselves  
 God hopes everyone believes himself  
 God is an anthropomorphized man with a beard.  
 God is helping everyone and forgiving them for their sins so that they can go to heaven.  
 God is responsible for many of the privileges we have today.  
 God is the hope for salvation of the human race.  
 God is the reason for everything I do.  
 god made all the universe and earth in 7 days  
 God will always lead the country in the right direction despite the actions of individuals.  
 God will save us after we pass away.  
 God, captial G from the Abramatic faiths, exists.  
 Government has grown so large that it interferes with my daily life and is constantly trying to take away my individual liberties.  
 Having a lot of money can cure all problems.  
 Hlstory is something we should repeat and do what our ancestors did before us.  
 how we fight against other countries  
 I didn't really think of anything that was left out.  
 I do not believe that abortion is a good option.  
 I do not believe that humans have the ability to control their emotional responses to strong stimuli.  
 I don't believe in limiting potentials for a better life for those who work hard and yet get nowhere.  
 I think that many people think that equality has been made, but I think we're far from it.  
 If I just worry about myself and my friends and family, everything will work out fine for us.  
 if the world is accepting with homosexuality  
 If we accept the Savior into our hearts we will be forgiven for everything and still have a chance at paradise after death.  
 If you are a believer, God will save you  
 If you don't believe in God you will burn in hell.  
 If you follow gods words you live happily in eternity.  
 If you look angry, miserable, or sad, that has alot to do with your belief.  
 If you perform any sins listed in the Bible, you will not go to heaven.  
 If you try hard enough, you can achieve anything and/or improve your life.  
 Illegal immigrants are not welcome  
 illegal immigrants should be allowed to come into the country whenever they want.  
 illegal immigrants should share in this equality  
 In my country racism no longer exists.  
 In order to top leaders in our world, war is okay in any form, even when invading other's homes and dishonoring their culture and beliefs.  
 In the long run, Democracy achivied through war will be beneficial to the globe.  
 It is important to maintain a healthy body style in all parts of the world  
 It is not morally justifiable to use violence to revolt against an oppresive power.  
 It is our countries job to force other countries to adapt our beliefs and culture  
 Law enforcement should have further power, in any way necessary, to stop and rid our society of dangerous criminals who threaten our law-abiding citizens' ways of life.

laws are all fair  
Laws should not be passed if the Bible opposes them.  
Men are better than women  
Minorities and under represented groups have burdened this country with unnecessary drama.  
Money can help solve most of the problems in the world  
Money is everything  
Money sometimes is the most important thing in life.  
Most people have similar thoughts and ideas.  
Most people in my country believe that government has the people's interest in mind.  
Most people live their lives without bothering to care for others.  
My country is the strongest and best country because it cares about other countries without having anything in it for them.  
My country is the supreme superpower that will guide the new world.  
My country should be the leading example for all other countries.  
My country should maintain dominance over all others  
One belief is right.  
Only certain types of people should rule our country, who have certain beliefs, and these beliefs are beneficial and have the best interest of our country in mind.  
Other people believe that many of our society's problems can be solved by more government involvement an legislation.  
Others believe that all progress is good progress but progress for the sake of progress should be eliminated.  
Others believe that immigration is a bad thing.  
others do not believe in our saviour, buddha  
Others may believe that happiness can be found through money and success.  
Our country always does what is best  
Our country has too many immigrants and we should not allow them to enter the USA  
our country is a land full of dreams.  
Our country need to become closer to God again if we want to make it through hard times  
Our country needs less government to be more functional  
Our country will become richer if we have more connection with other countries  
Our government should work harder to protect the rights of the working class.  
Our military action has had a positive effect on the countries we have invaded  
Our military is key to being a successful country  
Our people have the right to do what they wish. Our government should not tell us what we can and cannot do.  
Our places in this world are chosen for us.  
Our president should not be African American.  
Our problems will solve themselves  
Past generations do not shape future ones.  
People are honest  
People are working harder  
people believe that the richest people are the happiest  
People have ruined humanity and god is mad  
People stress too much and therefor get nothing productive done.  
People who are different are inferior.  
Pro-life  
Racial minorities do not receive the same treatment that the dominant race gets.  
religion and god is the one truth that will bring salvation to all and should be included in all institutions and governments.  
religion heals all  
Religion is an important part of society.  
Religion is an important part of you everyday life  
Religion plays no part in politics.  
Religion should be a basis for everyday life.  
Religious stuff  
Rich people make too much money. Incomes should be limited to a more just amount so that the wealth

can be spread around.  
Science makes up the world  
Should guns be allowed in every home in the country?  
Social media has enhanced the way we live our lives.  
Socialism is evil.  
Some believe that the government should be more active in other countries.  
Some people believe that if you don't follow every single rule in your religion, you will not live a successful life.  
Some people believe that there is ET in this world  
Some people believe that they can stop war and have world peace.  
Stereotypes can often be a useful tool for making assumptions about general public.  
stereotypes on arab looking people who are terrorist.  
Strong countries should save other countries from their cruel leaders.  
Technological advance is slowly diminishing our society and core values  
Technological advancement cannot happen without destroying nature  
Technological advancement of a society is always beneficial.  
Technology has made the world more complicated.  
Technology is leading us to a new, modern type of lifestyle that is necessary.  
Telling the truth and leading a good life will lead to a good afterlife.  
That complete change is necessary for us to regain status  
That god created the world in 7 days/exists  
That god created us to do great things.  
That god will help you all through out your life  
That God will make everything better.  
That history will predict how our future goes.  
That its best for America to be a dominant country.  
That marriage is between a man and a woman  
That our country is benefiting from all this war thats going on.  
That our country needs to go to war in order to remain respected.  
that people will be recreated  
That radical actions need to be taken in order to make a positive change in society.  
That sin will lead to damnation  
That state and religion can coexist separately in politics.  
that the government is all good  
That the united states shares no inequalities  
That the way we are affecting the world may not be as bad as some people say.  
That there is a god that oversees and interacts with us in our daily lives  
That this country provides equal opportunity for all races/genders/ethnicities.  
That we as a nation are actually free  
That we need war and a military in order to keep this country going. We need to fight and be on the offense at all times because the rest of the world is out to get us.  
That we should get involved with other country's issues  
That we should spread democracy  
The climate crisis is caused by motor technology.  
The country has equal opportunity for minorities and women.  
The country has the best system of government  
The country needs to become isolationist  
The government has only the best interest in mind for the people  
The government always makes decisions in the best interest of the people as a whole.  
The government has the right to delegate who can and cannot get married  
the government is corrupt and is trying to control everyone  
The government is corrupt and out to only help themselves.  
The government is corrupt, and therefore must be eliminated or changed for everyone to be equal.  
the government is responsible for what we do with our lives.  
The government should take care of the citizens.  
The government should take more action to look out for the less fortunate.

The government should tax the rich at a very high level.  
The human race evolved from another type of creature over time.  
The impossible  
The latest developments in technology, while some for good causes, have led to much turmoil and death as seen in cases like anthrax and weapons of war. Life was more manageable before these new advances.  
the media is trying to give us the full story  
The natural order of the world is in play and we have no control or affect on the environment.  
The party to which I do not cast my vote does not understand political events and their beliefs are outlandish and wrong.  
The people are selfless and essentially good.  
The people of the middle east are all bad people  
The people of this country believe that the government should provide more fundings on military power.  
The power must lie with the upper class citizens and tax cuts must be directed toward the middle class and lower.  
The separation of Church and State  
The structure of our government/political system is one that ought to be used throughout the world.  
The top democratic countries must help convert the lower countires, becuae it is their duty.  
The top one percent create jobs.  
The United States is beginning to fall behind other countries and will continue to fall a long ways.  
The united states is slowly going down hill  
The United States often times believes that they can go change another counties culture for the better of the people.  
The wars in Iraq were necessary and successful  
The wealthy people of this country are lazy and corrupt.  
The white man is in control  
The world is a safe place.  
The world is doomed, largely due to modern technology.  
the world is fair and equal  
the world is not a happy place  
The world is run by the wealthy  
The world is slowly becoming more equal and more opportunities are opening for everyone.  
the world might face a climate catastrophe but we dont have to worry about it because we will soon have found technologies to prevent it  
The world was created by the forces of the universe, and there is no supernatural being that rules the universe.  
The world would be a better place if my country didn't get involved in other countries' conflicts.  
There is a conspiracy that the government was behind 9/11  
There is a god who created man  
There is a God who has a path for each person and is the reason for the way things are.  
There is a higher religious power constantly judging us.  
There is an omnipotent force in this universe  
There is no God; science can explain everything.  
There is not some ultimatly 'perfect' place, and thus there is no point in trying to do good deeds in this world  
There is one way of governing that trumps all  
There is only one true path.  
There should be no rules regarding gun control.  
There will always be war for it is the only way for countries to solve problems and make decisions.  
They believe that we are the best country but how are we the best?  
This is the white mans country  
Too much money is put towards feeding children overseas than here in the United States.  
Treating someone equally is equivalent to treating them the same.  
United States needing to be a police force  
Virtual reality is the future of life...like in surrogate.  
War can solve the problem.  
War in other countries is something that we need to be involved in

War is a great way to make a peace  
War is always acceptable when fighting back.  
War is inevitable.  
War is necessary to keep peace in my country and in others.  
War is the answer.  
We are an all powerful country that rules the world and always has the best interests in our people.  
We are going to die in December 2012  
We are put on this earth for the purpose of serving God and will be rewarded with eternal life in heaven  
we can continue living life the way we are and the environment will fix itself.  
We do everything the best, and it works for us most of the time, so others should want to follow our  
example and do exactly what we do.  
We need to be the best no matter what, so we can gain dominance.  
We need to cutback on military spending  
We need to limit the amount of immigrants into this country.  
We need to look out for only ourselves  
We should always solve conflict with violence or war.  
we should only be concerned with our own culture because it is what is relevant to us and we are the most  
important nation.  
We should rely on the government to take care of us.  
When we die, we cease to exist. Therefore we should dedicate our lives simply to "enjoyment" and fun.  
White is the preferred color of god and we should have domain over this world.  
Women are inferior to men  
Women should not have rights.  
women will one day be equal to men  
You don't need school to be a great.  
You must follow religious figures closely if you want to be a good person  
You will lead a good life if you make a lot of money

#### **Web sample - others' belief one does not share**

1. One's intentions are relevant to the consequences of one's actions. 2. It is your/my government and we control/bear-responsibility for what it does.  
A class structure is the natural order of things, and in our country, it's based on merit.  
Broadly speaking, tradition, folk wisdom and individual intuition are as likely to be "correct" in a given situation as the scientific consensus.  
By living a good life, I am assured of a place in Heaven.  
Compromise is a sign of weakness.  
Enforced taxes, regardless of purpose, is the equivalent of a wide-scale mugging.  
Every person has the potential to become rich in American society.  
Everything happens for a reason.  
Freedom of Religion means that no person should be subject to any religious signs or symbols of any type in a public setting.  
Gay marriage is a sign or moral decline.  
god  
God is taking all the 'true believers" to heaven and the rest of us will be in eternal hell upon the rapture.  
Therefore, there's no need for worry about our planet's health.  
God is unhappy with the behavior of individuals in our country and planet, and armageddon is slowly coming upon us.  
Government is always the problem.  
Homosexuality is wrong.  
Humans are basically well-meaning.  
Humans are superior to all other living creatures on this earth.  
I believe in the natural occurring of a spiritual and mental generator of emotions and souls. I believe that all religions worship the same God, while I believe that devotion to a single church and practicing ritualistic devotions is vain, I do not criticize those who do so. I also believe that Jesus Christ was (in a sense) the son of God. I do not worship but I try to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, and I believe, in that, I am a good

person. Yes I do believe in Jesus Christ, my personal savior, and yes, I believe in all the morals that are in the Bible, and yes I am a born-again Christian. But I have to ask, what is your definition of GOD? Is it someone you can only come to when you're in trouble? Someone that you pray to and if you don't have your way, get mad and curse Him? Is it someone you believe because you have to? Well, my definition is God Almighty.

I do not believe in organized religion.

If things are going well for me, this means I'm doing the right things in my life. Others suffer only because of their life choices.

It is important for the rich to pay for the rest of us, as they have the money to spare.

Knowledge is not what we should be pursuing, but faith and conquer.

Many of them point out their failure due to fate and others

Might makes right and the ends justify the means.

Natural selection and survival of the fittest are the driving force in organic evolution and are an appropriate model for social change.

Others seem to believe that free speech has not been stifled in this country... but it has.

People are good when evil is punished.

People in this country believe they are not responsible for the ills brought upon it.

People need a higher being to believe in to live better lives.

People should be allowed to do whatever they want, whenever they want without any thought to the implications and harm done to others and declare it freedom

Personal religious beliefs should limit the social freedoms of others.

Politicians have more control over the government than corporations do.

Same-sex marriage is a threat to heterosexual marriage.

Social policy should be based on the religious mores of the majority of society and should not take into account the desires or rights of the minority.

Socialism and capitalism are opposites and we need to choose one or the other.

Some people are rich and powerful because they are the industrious geniuses who worked hardest and took the bravest risks.

Some people believe that our own human goodness and knowledge is the only thing that can save us. I do not believe that. I believe we need God.

Technology will save us.

The answer to our problems is a strong military and advancement of technology.

The best way to improve our society is to get rid of the government

The world is ending so we might as well get all we can get for ourselves before it ends.

The world is more dangerous now than in the past.

There is a god who takes an active interest in human affairs.

There is a universal standard of morality I can look to in order to know whether my actions are right or wrong and how I should behave in the world, such as God, the law, community interest or some nebulous ideal.

There is no God.

Things were better in so mythical past, and we need to return to that time.

Those who are not natives of my country are somewhat inferior to those who have lived here for generations.

To be happy we must put our faith in God

We can trust our leaders to work out all the problems facing our country without needing any input from us, the citizens.

We have the moral right to dictate what those other than ourselves should think and how they should behave.

We live in a majority-privileged society.

We must lock our borders and shut the rest of the world out.

We need to help each other instead of relying on a corrupt government which only takes our property and liberty.

Weapon handling is always not true

While it may not make itself known, some sort of higher power must be passively watching over individual destinies.

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