

Dissertation Summary

Narrative Procedure of Moral and Political Deliberation

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Introduction

This dissertation examines how moral and political deliberation can address key philosophical tensions, notably those between communitarianism and liberalism, historicism and formal reasoning, and the concepts of *the good* versus *the right*. At its core, it seeks a synthesis by proposing a novel theory: **Narrative**

Constructivism. This theoretical framework incorporates insights from both narrative approaches to identity and deliberation, as well as formal principles derived from constructivist traditions. Narrative Constructivism is designed to navigate the complexities of pluralistic societies, emphasizing the interplay of social and personal narratives in shaping deliberative processes. The work is rooted in philosophical traditions while addressing contemporary ethical challenges.

Methodology

My research is grounded in a multidisciplinary methodology combining philosophical analysis with interpretive and hermeneutic methods. Drawing extensively on the works of Alasdair MacIntyre and Paul Ricoeur, the dissertation adopts a narrative framework that explores how societal and individual narratives interact to form ethical and political reasoning. It extends this

framework using John Rawls's constructivist ideas, particularly his concepts of reason-giving and reasonableness. Primary sources are critically analyzed alongside secondary interpretations, offering a synthesis of theoretical approaches. The methodological emphasis on narrative and constructivism ensures a balance between descriptive and normative elements.

Summary

My main project deals with the question of the constitution of our political and ethical deliberative faculty. When we start exploring this question in further detail, we see two competing theoretical approaches – theory of *the good* vs theory of *the right*. While this discussion has been at the center of the most prominent political and ethical traditions, I have pinpointed two theoretical approaches which I find to be the most persuasive ones. On the one hand, we have communitarian theory – theory of the narrative,

while on the other, we have the Rawlsian approach – constructivism. In this thesis, I want to argue that both of these approaches are needed to establish one coherent theory of moral and political deliberation. I think that the main substance of our deliberation comes from the narrative approach and that the narrative itself is shaped by our reason-giving faculty over time. This reason-giving faculty gives rise to a constructivist procedure which guides our narrativity in a more reasonable direction. Therefore, everything that we have in the beginning is a narrative and, afterwards, this narrative is shaped into another narrative based on constructivist procedure.

I have started by providing an outline of the theory of *the good* which I find in the notion of the narrative, taken from MacIntyre's theoretical opus. However, since the project does not encompass the same goals that MacIntyre has

and it directly disagrees with them, the discussion opens on how to retain the notion of the narrative and make it independent from MacIntyre's teleology. MacIntyre believes that there are three things that are at the core of our social and moral lives – practice, tradition, and narratives. Practice shapes our lives and makes sense (are intelligible) within one tradition. These traditions give us intelligibility in narrative form and are justified by narratives as well. In this project, I am interested in retaining the narrative approach while discarding some of the consequences of MacIntyre's theory. I argue against MacIntyre's critique of liberalism and ethical monism. In order to do that, I'm establishing political pluralism based on the approaches of Richard Rorty and Berlin. By concluding that pluralism is a state of things in our current political and moral realm, we would need to reinterpret MacIntyre's notion of the

narrative. One of the consequences of this view is that there is a plurality of narratives based on the ways of life. Therefore, I'm proposing narrative hermeneutics, a view which states that we derive meaning from our practices and social realm while embracing pluralism. Different practices and different social narratives breed different forms of life.

The second part of my thesis deals with the notion of the narrative self. Political and moral deliberation is done by an agent who can morally and politically deliberate. If this deliberation comes from an agent who is encrypted by data that he/she has received from the social realm, social narrative, we will need to see what is going on in the case of his/her position in the social narrative. I argue that, as an agent sees the world and his/her life as a narrative, he/she also sees

him/herself as a narrative self. When we ask a question *who am I?* the answer that we give is the story that we speak about ourselves. The theoretical approach that I'm taking here is the one proposed by Ricoeur as it is the one that is most compatible with MacIntyre's social narrative theory. Ricoeur sees the self as both objective and subjective and within this framework, we have constant hermeneutics between the social narrative and the narrative of the self. In the final two subchapters, I'm trying to further elaborate on the nature of the narrative self and defend it against the likes of Galen Strawson.

Once we have established the approaches of the social narrative and the narrative of the self, we have a specific framework of how we constitute our moral and political beliefs and how they can be applied in the field. The third chapter is here to show why the narrative approach is limited and

why does it need to be “updated” with something. In order to show that, I propose three sub-chapters – on nostalgia, narrative pluralism (ideology) and moral progress. The first sub-chapter will show the connection between the social narrative and the narrative of the self. That is to say, if the social narrative progresses beyond the narrative embeddedness of the self, we feel like we have an intelligibility crisis. Intelligibility crisis in this context is taken to show that when the narrative evolves and changes, a person needs to reconstruct and re-formalize the narrative in order for it to make sense again. The second sub-chapter deals with the narrative pluralism which is exhibited in the different forms of lives, ways of lives and ideas on life. In the political realm, these ideas become ideologies since they are linked with moral and political deliberation. I am trying to implement a specific normative theory later on how to deal with

narrative pluralism and which are the legit narratives to hold, and which are not? In this sense I propose Rawls's theory of reasonableness and the theory of liberty. By combining these two theoretical approaches, we are providing a framework of normative pluralism which enables the narratives to be equally considered. The last sub-chapter, the one on moral progress, deals with the theory on how narratives and meta-narratives(traditions) change. It is argued that the narratives are not static, but in a state of constant change. By looking at the reasons for the narratives progressing, we need to provide a theory of moral and political progress. I am doing the same procedure I have suggested in the previous sub-chapter, the one on liberty and reasonableness. That is to say, using this model, we can establish the view on why we consider one narrative to be progressive and why we consider some narratives to be regressive. I am

also introducing the notion of the epistemic crisis, the one found in MacIntyre's theory and that suggests that relates to the state of change.

The consequence of this chapter is the following – mere narrative thesis is necessary but not sufficient to explain the whole theory of moral and political deliberation. The first sub-chapter provides evidence that the selves(people) who have intelligibility crisis are connected to the previous narratives, the ones that are not here anymore. By reformulating the relation between the personal and the social narrative, the self is reinterpreted in the social narrative around him/her. Therefore, narrativism is the basis for moral and political deliberation, but something else is at play here. The second sub-chapter shows that if the narrative theory should be a foundational one, it should embrace the fact of pluralism. And it should also show that, within this framework of pluralism, different narratives

influence one another and promote change within the narratives themselves. If the narratives were inherently different and incompatible, the possibility of change and co-living would not be possible. And the last sub-chapter shows that the narratives are progressing, and it shows the ways in which they are doing that.

Therefore, from this chapter, I would like to conclude that, while narrative theory is a foundation for moral and political deliberation, it offers merely the substantive account, but not a formal one. Therefore, a formal account needs to be provided in order to have a full picture.

The fourth chapter provides the formal structure for narrative constructivism by integrating constructivist methodologies with the narrative framework. It delves into the nature of reasons, reason-giving procedures, and the principle of reasonableness. The thesis adopts a contextual

and narrative-sensitive form of constructivism that acknowledges the situatedness of moral reasoning while emphasizing fairness and mutual respect. Reasonableness, as distinct from rationality, is presented as a trans-narrative principle that facilitates moral and political deliberation across diverse contexts. This chapter ties together the substantive insights of narrative theory with the formal rigor of constructivism, creating a unified theoretical framework. The thesis concludes by synthesizing its findings into a cohesive theory of narrative constructivism. This theory aims to enrich moral and political discourse by bridging the narrative depth of communitarianism with the procedural clarity of liberalism, offering a framework that is both descriptive and normative. Narrative constructivism thus provides a robust foundation for understanding and improving the processes of

moral and political deliberation in pluralistic societies.

Key Findings

Social Narrativity Thesis:

This principle underscores the embeddedness of individuals within societal narratives. These narratives shape beliefs, values, and attitudes, providing a communal context for ethical and political reasoning.

Psychological Narrativity Thesis:

Complementing the social narrativity thesis, this concept explores the narrative construction of *the self*. It highlights the dynamic tension between personal stories and societal frameworks, drawing on Ricoeur's notion of the narrative self.

Integration of Narrativity and Constructivism:

By merging narrative frameworks with constructivist reason-giving procedures, the dissertation provides a dual lens for analyzing ethical dilemmas. This integration ensures both depth and formal coherence.

Reasonableness and Narrative Pluralism:

Recognizing the coexistence of multiple and often conflicting societal narratives, the work introduces reasonableness as a normative criterion for evaluating their compatibility and progressiveness. This constructivist approach ensures that deliberation respects diverse ways of life while promoting fairness, inclusiveness, and mutual understanding. By anchoring narrative pluralism in reason-giving procedures, the thesis offers a path for navigating conflicts and fostering moral and political progress in pluralistic societies.

