Critical Narrating by Adolescents Growing Up in War: Case Study Across the Former Yugoslavia

Colette Daiute

> It happened at the crossroads when two drivers got out of their cars and, for some reason, started an argument (probably one of them violated traffic regulations). They stopped the traffic and nearly started to fight physically. The other drivers were yelling and cursing from their cars. A young man interfered and made the two men stop arguing. Personally, I was appalled by the incident and I was particularly irritated because they prevented the others from moving.
>
> (By Rudy, 15, BiH)
>
> The problem emerged when a neighbor appropriated half of the street - remnants of the last century's mentality. The neighbor is an ex-cop who still thinks that he has the power. There has been a lot of argumentation, but the status quo has prevailed.
>
> (By I.S., 17, Serbia)
>
> The conflict was about the Homeland war. My opinion is that we shouldn't forget the past but that we must look forward to the future. The adults find it difficult to forget certain things from the past. This problem can never be solved because it exists subconsciously.
>
> (By Feniks, 20, Croatia)
>
> My mom and uncle had a conflict. My mom was inviting my uncle to move to America but he was torn because he had to leave his elderly parents. He ended up moving anyway but with much difficulty. My uncle felt that he was abandoning his parents and my mom felt guilty for being pushy, but she thought it was too good of an opportunity to miss. He moved here but he still regrets leaving his family, we all do.
>
> (By Krusko, 18, United States)

These narratives, by adolescents living in the aftermath of the 1990 s wars that fractured the former Yugoslavia, express adolescents' focus on issues in their now

C. Daiute (✉)
The Graduate Center, City University of New York, New York, NY, USA
e-mail: cdaiute@gc.cuny.edu

diverse societies. The generation of 12-21-year olds who were babies or young children during acute phases of war is growing up with its consequences. The material and symbolic remnants of war across each context become embedded in adolescents' narratives of their everyday lives and, thus, their development toward adulthood. In his narrative, for example, Rudy in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) focuses on tensions among adults in public life, tensions also noticed by his peers who explain that these tensions result from "problems from the past" and serve as "stress releases." Characteristic of her ex-Yugoslavian country of Serbia, I.S., in contrast, focuses on divisions in her society, in this case between the "last century's mentality" and the implied new one which allows for argumentation. Feniks, like most of his Croatian peers, uses this observation of conflict among adults to mention future possibility, while Krusko, a refugee of mass destruction in Bosnia, turns nostalgically to the past and her family's ongoing difficulties. In this chapter, I present a case study with these and other adolescents positioned differently around a war to explain how they use narrating to mediate development of individuals in society.

A research design and analysis of young peoples' narratives in the context of war and its aftermath adds to our knowledge about the role of narrating in identity development. Examining within as well as between context differences and similarities in narratives of conflict, the study discussed in this chapter offers insights about how adolescents' self-expressions are sensitive to the socio-political contexts where they live. This study is particularly revealing of the interdependent development of individuals and society as countries make uneasy transitions from war to peace and from a socialist dictatorship to capitalist democracies at the same time as the youth generation experiences transitions toward adulthood.

Consistent with the other chapters in this book, I propose that human development is, at least in part, a narrative process and offer an analysis of young people's narratives of conflicts in their everyday lives to consider how they are interacting with different national war stories in their countries and with stories about economic, political, and social challenges they will face as young adults. Building on previous research with children and adolescents (Daiute, 2004; Daiute & Turniski, 2005), I explain that narrating, especially in highly contentious situations, is a critical process in which adolescents use discourse to understand their environments. Situated precariously between childhood and adulthood, adolescents may be especially sensitive to a range of narratives in their environments and judgments made about people sharing various versions of stories about the past, present, and future. Once they have mastered the basics of the narrative genre by around age 11 (Berman & Slobin, 1994), young people take increasing control over social-relational processes linking persons and contexts, that is, control over how one's own stories match up with those one hears and to expectations of actual and imagined audiences. Being able to narrate an issue, like conflict, from diverse stances (self, other, actual, and imaginary) involves youth in social-relations with diverse audiences and offers us information about the role of narrating in development. Rather than being windows into adolescents' minds and hearts, storytelling is, thus, a cultural tool (like

other discourse genres and symbol systems) for managing (mediation) self-society relationships (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 55).

To examine narrating as a mediational process, I present analyses of 250 narratives by 108 adolescents living in 4 countries positioned differently in the aftermath of the war in the former Yugoslavia. This post-war context is appropriate for studying narrative development because young people across the countries resulting from the 1990 s wars in Yugoslavia are interacting with a range of diverse meanings of conflict. While interpersonal conflict may, in some ways, be a universal process, issues of societal conflict become embedded in national and international ideologies expressed as "frozen narratives" and "myths" (MacDonald, 2002). We can learn about the interdependent engagement of personal and societal narratives among adolescents who are especially motivated to understand the societies where they hope to have jobs, influence, and well-being. This research design offers participants opportunities to narrate conflict from diverse perspectives, in this case, generational perspectives, thereby providing a stage for echoing or transforming societal narratives.

If narrators adjust accounts to match their goals to audience expectations, as the data herein illustrate, each narrative is a communication. As communications, narrative accounts are likely to vary and, thus, may seem incoherent, but our recognizing that contexts are embedded in narratives can help us see that the coherence of individual life stories is tied to individuals' relations to their environments. In this way, I propose that adolescents narrate with skills of communicative complexity, achieving situational coherence. I will illustrate how situational coherence emerges as narrators adjust stories of conflicts to audience expectations. The narratives about conflicts among adults at the beginning of this chapter mention problems leftover from the past, which these authors tend not to mention when narrating their own personal conflicts with peers or hypothetical community events. Narrators reveal their sensitivity to self-audience relations when they refer to contentious issues from the past primarily when narrating conflicts by other protagonists but not their own conflicts, which steer clear of "past mentalities." Such differences indicate communicative complexity as our participants use the affordances of the various autobiographical and fictional genres to present themselves in positive ways. Guided by the following questions, this case study examines such communicative complexity: How do adolescents across diverse post-war contexts use systematically varied opportunities to narrate conflict? What do we learn about adolescents' uses of narrating to address their local circumstances? What do these insights suggest about future research and practice with adolescent narrating?

Development in Crisis

Most psychological research with children and youth in post-conflict situations has focused on assessing trauma (such as by using instruments to measure post-traumatic stress disorder) among those directly involved in or exposed to violence

(Apfel & Simon, 1996; Neuffer, 2001). Many scholars and practitioners have argued, however, that the effects of war last long after it has officially ended, for at least 7 years (Collier, 2003) and sometimes for generations (Abraham & Torok, 1994). For this reason, the specific effects of conflict on children and adolescents need to be considered within the context of human development, rather than solely from a disease model. Those working in the psychodynamic tradition have identified trans-generational haunting, the transmission of war-related knowledge and "psychic conflicts, traumas, and secrets across time and context (Abraham & Torok, 1994, p. 166). If trans-generational haunting can occur via social-relations, which use silence to shape discourse as much as they use words, then young people born during or after a war could assimilate a wide range of verbal and non-verbal messages. Given the myriad enduring conflicts at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we should examine psychological effects as developmental processes.

The need to understand cultural-historical processes in adolescence is particularly acute in situations like the post-war Western Balkans, where 12 years after the official end of the war, there is still little agreement about a grand narrative of the war as disagreements persist about causes, effects, perpetrators, and victims (Bajraktari & Serwer, 2006). Such ambivalence about history results in ongoing problems for the post-war generation, who remain curious about events while efforts to create a contemporary history curriculum have ended in stalemates (Freedman & Abazovic, 2006). From a cultural-historical perspective, this research foregrounds the social-relational nature of development, in particular in terms of adolescents' management of diverse communications across narrator, character, and context positions.

Developing Narrative Theory

Researchers have explained that children develop abilities to narrate as others tell stories around them (Nelson, 1996). One explanation relevant to the current inquiry is that children become familiar with cultural scripts (values and ways of knowing) in the context of daily activities like meal time, bathing, and family rituals. As they mature, children focus increasingly on broader social contexts, like school, and transform scripts into stories (Bruner, 1986; Nelson, 1996). Thus, storytelling socializes children via the cultural scripts that parents, teachers, and others repeat and reinforce, and, in turn, adolescents socialize those around them by transforming over-wrought societal scripts to address personally salient motivations. Previously explored in normative contexts, this theory is relevant to development in crisis.

Storytelling shapes public life. It is, for example, through storytelling that leaders justify war and peace by basing political arguments on certain motivations, sequences of causes and effects, and other perceptions of events. As citizens take up these stories, boundaries between national scripts blur as individuals share their

perspectives. Even though they may be persuasive, national stories often suppress power relations and the voices of individuals, especially minorities (Amsterdam & Bruner, 2000; Scott, 1990). Such powerful narratives become "frozen" because "Language and its control are powerful and recurring themes within this socio-political stage where one very quickly learns what can and what cannot be publicly discussed..." (Berman, 1999, p. 139). Adolescents' perspectives are rarely included in public life or in research, in part because they are defined as in crisis themselves (Erikson, 1968), because they are interested in more socio-sexual matters (Freud, 1909), because they are considered at risk (Turiel, 2002), because they lack knowledge, or because they seem to be focused on interpersonal rather than political issues. A cultural-historical view, in contrast, is that adolescents participate in the development of the society, at least in part through their transformation of historical narratives. In order to do so, they use storytelling, and other symbol systems, to interact with contexts rather than to merely report on personal experience.

Researchers have recently begun to offer systematic studies to examine how narrating interacts with the development of identity. Narrative psychologists have, for example, explored literary features such as "chapters" (McAdams, 1993), "turning points" (McLean & Pratt, 2006), and "coherence" (Baerger & McAdams, 1999; Pasupathi & McLean, this volume), in particular for their impact on narrators' self-perceptions, health, and socio-cognitive development. Linguistic and literary analysts have also distinguished between structural and semantic aspects of narratives, with concepts like "landscape of action" to denote time-ordered events and "landscape of consciousness" to denote the significance of those events to narrators (Bruner, 1986), which correspond to referential meaning and evaluative meaning (Labov & Waletzky, 1997). These concepts of landscapes of action and consciousness, referential, and evaluative meanings provide tools for studying narrating as a social-relational process.

According to discourse theory, identity and knowledge are created in the context of culturally meaningful activities in verbal and non-verbal practices (Bakhtin, 1986; Leont'ev, 1978), as each linguistic utterance is a response "in the chain of communication" with proximal and distal interlocutors in society relevant to the narrator. This view is aptly described in the statement "no utterance is the first to break the silence of the universe" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 69) and the related statement that "...when the listener perceives and understands the meaning (language meaning) of speech, he [she] simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it. He [she] either agrees or disagrees with it (completely or partially)" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 68). On this view, narrators work not only with the structure of event representation but also with affordances of the narrating context, such as expectations of present and imagined audiences, power relations among the narrator and diverse audiences, features of the physical setting, and, of course, literary features. We, thus, become aware that discourse is performance.

Recent psycholinguistic analyses implore us to consider narrative diversity in terms of narrator stance (first versus third person focus), audience, narrating context, cultural organizations of meaning (scripts), and significance (evaluative devices).

Narrators use these features, intentionally or spontaneously, as tools for perceiving situations, organizing meaning, and gaining insights from the narrative experience itself. Narratives are, thus, a collection of affordances that can be combined in flexible ways. If we ask adolescents to narrate from diverse character perspectives, they might consider, for example, how people they do not empathize with spontaneously (such as parents, teachers, and national leaders) are coping with challenges in their lives. Such flexible narrating activities extend interpersonal perspective-taking processes to interactions with social institutions, thereby potentially increasing communicative complexity.

Several previous studies have shown how children and adolescents use narrative activities to express a range of knowledge and self-presentations. Adolescents in Croatia, for example, expressed diverse knowledge about the past, present, and future when they had the opportunity to narrate conflict from varied generational perspectives (Daiute & Turniski, 2005). When narrating conflict among adults (the generation directly involved in the 1990 s wars), adolescents portrayed characters as irrational and incompetent, echoing youth skepticism about the need for war after many years of a relatively peaceful Yugoslavia, while younger protagonists (the post-war peer generation) were portrayed as resourceful problem-solvers. This finding about the distributed nature of narrating is consistent with results of a study of younger children's strategic uses of narrating in the context of a school-based violence prevention program in a large American city (Daiute, 2006). Analyses of the curriculum, classroom interactions, and hundreds of autobiographical and fictional narratives indicated that the 7-10-year olds in the study increasingly shaped narratives about their personal experiences of conflict to conform to the values promoted in the curriculum, such as using words instead of fists to resolve interpersonal problems. In a parallel series of narratives about conflicts involving fictional characters, these same children increasingly expressed counter-curriculum values, such as fighting and intense emotions (Daiute, 2004; Daiute, Stern, & Lelutiu-Weinberger, 2003). Such flexibility indicated the social-relational nature of different narrating activities, in particular to mediate the narrators' presentations of self in relation to audience values and expectations.

As a social-relational practice, narrating is, thus, a psychosocial mediator or "conductor of human influence on the object of activity ... externally oriented ... aimed at mastering and triumphing over nature... and ... a means of internal activity aimed at mastering oneself" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 55). This use of narrating as a meditational tool operates on a large scale, such as in Croatia's explaining the need to clear the homeland of non-Croats and Serbia's complaint about hundreds of years of aggression by outsiders (Gagnon, 2004). At the same time as such narratives circulate in public discourse and around family dinner tables, alternatives are created by those devoted to post-war development, including many non-government organizations, educators, and young people motivated to create a peaceful and productive future. I propose that narrating from diverse perspectives, especially in highly contentious socio-political contexts, engages a broader range of adolescents' knowledge than any single narrative telling or writing and that such diverse narratives are identity in action.

Integrating Cultural-Historical Narratives of Post-war Contexts

Since the argument in this paper is that individual and societal narratives interact in an interdependent developmental process, I offer a relevant, albeit necessarily brief history of the transition from the Yugoslavian state to the resulting countries of BiH, Croatia, Serbia, and a community of refugees to the United States. Following this summary is an analysis of the prospects for young people across those contexts.

For 40 years, individuals of myriad different ethnic groups had lived together peacefully in across the six federated republics of Yugoslavia (some say in a forced peace), yet the 1990's wars involved creating separate ethnic states. The 1990 s breakup of the former Yugoslavia and the resulting political transitions create the context for human development at the transition of the twenty-first century. Tensions in Yugoslavia mounting since the death of the long-time dictator Joesp Broz Tito in 1980 were exacerbated with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. Responding to the resulting political-economic shifts in the region, Slovenia and Croatia, the two Yugoslavian republics with relatively good potential independent resources, such as proximity to Western Europe in the case of Slovenia and geographic position on the Adriatic coast in the case of Croatia, declared independence in 1991. These moves were followed by Serbia's response, declaring an independent Serbian state in an area of Croatia heavily populated by Serbs. Following this were violent conflicts from 1992 to 1995 and attacks on Bosnian territory with the siege of Sarajevo in 1994, an attempt to stave off independence movements in that area. Violence accompanied such political changes in the form of bombings, armed conflict, mass executions, rapes, seizures of property, and massive displacement within and outside the region. Reports of deaths range from 200,000 to 400,000 depending on the source, and up to 3 million displacements. In addition to deaths, displacement, and injury, there was massive destruction to the built environment, the political-economic infrastructure, and civil society (Johnstone, 2002; MacDonald, 2002).

Although armed conflict officially ended in 1999, eruptions of violence and displacements continue. While popular accounts explain that the violent process referred to as "ethnic cleansing" was caused by long-standing hatreds among ethnic groups, many political scientists focus on political leaders' manipulations of resources like the military, police, and supplies to exacerbate tensions (Gagnon, 2004). Independent measures of wartime violence, political stability, economic, and cultural circumstances during the post-war transition offer information for a general description of the circumstances facing the post-war generation. Table 11.1 lists features indicating national circumstances that create prospects for youth - society development in the aftermath of war. Drawn from research by political scientists, historians, and other social scientists, these indicators include commonly noted political, economic, and cultural factors. These factors include nature of war violence (deaths, missing persons, discoveries of new mass graves); expulsions (["ethnic cleansing"], bombings); political instability/stability, as measured by previous and ongoing displacements of refugees and returnees affecting sending and receiving contexts; political stability as measured by constitutional reform, rule of

Table 11.1 Relevant national prospects in 2007 transitions from 1990 s wars

	BiH	Croatia	Serbia	United States
Prospects given war violence to overcome deaths	−	+	+	−
Missing and new graves	−	+	+	+
Human expulsions	−	+	−	−
Bombings	−	−	−	−
Political (In)stability				
Democ score change	+	−	+	na
Population stability				
Refugees				
Outgoing	−	+	+	+
Incoming	+	−	−	−
Returnees				
Outgoing	−	+	+	+
Incoming	+	−	−	na
Economic level (GNI)	Lowest	Middle	Middle	Highest
EU candidacy status	−	+	−	na
Culture				
Media indep score				
International image	+	+	−	+/−

+ = indicator suggests positive prospects. − = indicator suggests negative prospects. na = not available

law, media independence, etc. (Goehring, 2007)[1]; economic level (GNI)[2]; status of EU candidacy[3]; culture, in particular independence of the national media (Goehring, 2007), and international image (MacDonald, 2002).

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[2]Political scientists have offered measures of political stability in terms of progress toward democracy of 22 former Soviet states, including the Western Balkan countries (Goehring, 2007). Democracy scores from 1 to 7 with 1-2 indicating consolidated democracy, which embodies "the best policies and practices of liberal democracy" (p. 19), and 6-7 indicating a consolidated authoritarian regime, which characterizes "closed societies in which dictators prevent political competition and pluralism are responsible for wide-spread violations of basic political, civil, and human rights" (p. 23). Factors considered include national democratic governance, electoral process, civil society, independent media, local democratic governance, judicial framework and independence, and corruption (Goehring, 2007, p. 10). Summary scores cover the period from 2006 to 2007, the data collection period for this study. Lower scores indicate better match with democratic practices. Western Balkan states involved in the study discussed indicate slight improvements in BiH (4.07-4.04) and Serbia (3.71 to 3.68) and decreases in Croatia (3.71-3.75). Serbia's score improved primarily because of improvements to its constitution and electoral process; BiH's score improved for advances in police reform, civil society initiatives, and constitutional reform; Croatia's democracy score because of a weakening of freedom of the press. Although changes may seem slight, the rigorous nature of the Freedom House process and the small range of scores 1-6 assure the meaningful nature of these changes.

[3]Having passed all but the final step in the "stabilization and association agreement" process, Croatia has the status of candidate member to the EU with expected entry in 2010 or 2011. In

Table 11.1 notes a + or − in relation to each indicator for each participating country. Plus (+) means the indicator bodes well for youth development, while negative (−) indicates ongoing challenges. BiH, for example, experienced relatively extreme human and environmental destruction during the war, which continues to be a negative factor for youth who lost parents, witnessed physical violence, or were babies or children in the midst of extended bombings. In contrast, the + for BiH next to "incoming refugees" indicates that they must cope with relatively fewer returnees than young people in Croatia or Serbia. These indicators offer a broad relative picture of the political-economic context of the post-war generation.

Counting the relative number of pluses and minuses per country offers a summary of the contemporary circumstances and prospects for development. With seven positive indicators, participants in Croatia appear to have relatively good prospects, in spite of ongoing challenges to democracy (indicated in the rating decrease) and the strain of accommodating well to returning Serbs and Bosnian Croat refugees. Ironically, while the United States has the most established democracy and much better economic prospects than these other countries, the situation for Bosnian refugee families continues to be fraught with issues of displacement and exclusion as many of them are Muslims suffering post-9/11 discrimination. With different combinations of positive and negative indicators, Serbia and BiH appear to have more compromised situations. During the year of the study, Serbia was suffering from an extremely challenged economic situation and an ongoing negative image for having failed to turn over three accused war criminals wanted by the International Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).[4] BiH suffers from effects of violence, ongoing tensions in a government system organized around ethnicity, lack of investments, and outmigration by Bosnian families in need of economic opportunities.

Although also controversial for the Balkan countries, the country status in the European Union (EU) association process is a major summary indicator of good prospects. Prospective EU membership signals international approval of democratic and economic advances in these post-war countries, ongoing prospects for economic growth, and inclusion in international politics. With the EU association process taking a decade if not more, Croatia is in the best situation as a candidate nation with expected membership by 2011. In contrast, the process had not begun for BiH or Serbia in 2007.

This summary is consistent with dominant narratives that have emerged from scholarly sources, media, political decisions, and local responses to those dominant narratives. Such characterizations tend to depict Serbia as a primary aggressor, BiH

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spite of not having met some requirements of the post-war period, in particular turning over war criminals wanted by the International Tribunal, Serbia has recently been offered to begin the "stabilization and association agreement" process, with an expected entry into the EU by 2013. Because of economic and political issues like those described above and below, Bosnia is not yet in line to begin a process for entry in the EU.

[4] Six months after data collection, the situation in Serbia changed considerably with international recognition for their stemming violent responses to Kosovo's independence and for arresting war criminals.

as victim, Croatia as politically ambivalent about the past, while relatively poised to progress to a bright economic future, and refugees in the United States as the lucky ones. The picture emerging from youth themselves as reported below offers some challenges to these images, as well as some support. Adolescents in politically and culturally heterogeneous contexts, especially those emerging from wars fought, at least in part, around issues of ethnicity, are likely to be particularly sensitive to conflicting values in their environments as they share and reflect on their experience. We considered such developmental challenges when designing an inquiry in which: (1) narrating is a social-relational process comprised of interactions among narrator and context and (2) adolescents in socio-politically tense contexts would exercise communicative flexibility to manage self-society relations. Consistent with analyses of youth prospects, we posit that while ethnicity was salient during the 1990 s, other factors are more salient for this post-war generation facing challenges of the global market, among other issues.

Methodological Approach for Narrating Development

Building on the goals of community centers in the region, our research with war-affected adolescents occurred within a workshop designed to elicit youth perspectives on history, society, and the future (Daiute, 2007). In addition to this motivational and practical purpose, workshop activities were designed to engage within, as well as across participant diversity, in particular about issues of conflict in the post-war period. To allow for such complexity, the affordances of narrative activities were varied systematically as in the following prompts.[5]

Peer Conflict Narrative: Write about a time when you or someone you know had a conflict or disagreement with someone your age. Tell me what happened... Who was involved? What happened? Where was it? When was it? How did those involved think and feel about the conflict? How did you handle it? How did it all turn out?

Adult Conflict Narrative: Write about a time when adults you know (or the "community") had a conflict or disagreement. Tell me what happened... Who was involved?

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[5]The heart of the research was a 5-hour workshop as part of a curricular or extra-curricular social studies, language, social service, or computer program. Workshop activities were designed to engage high school and college students in a variety of communication and inquiry skills related to post-war development, migration history, social inclusion, and the collective development of individuals and society. The three narrative conflict writing activities are embedded in activity 1. Completion of "Youth Perspectives on Society" Survey – *What are we experiencing?* This survey includes 22 open-ended and likert scale prompts for demographic information, including selection of a pseudonym to be used on all written materials, place of residence, age, etc.; requests for participants' involvement in extra-curricular activities, such as community centers, sports and arts activities, social service, etc.; requests for stories about conflicts in daily life; participants' assessments of the problems in the society, the positive aspects of the society; and a letter, written to an official about how adults in their society can help youth prepare for a positive future. Subsequent activities in the workshop (reported elsewhere) involved discussing results of the survey (#1) completed by other youth, discussion of a public story about youth response to a recent conflict event, creating, and responding to an original youth survey.

What happened? Where was it? When was it? How did those involved think and feel about the conflict? How did they (you?) handle it? How did it all turn out?

Hypothetical Community Narrative: Using the following story starter, complete your own version of the story.
"___and ___ (from two groups) met a ground-breaking of the new town center building. Everyone at the event had the opportunity to break the earth for the foundation and to place a brick for the building. It was an exciting community event and everyone was pleased that the new building would mark a new future. As they were working to begin the foundation, ___ and ___ had a conversation about how they would like to make a difference in their town so their children could live happily together. All of a sudden, someone came with news that changed everything! What was the news? How did everyone involved think and feel? How did it all turn out?"

These activities systematically vary affordances of narrator stance by shifting the character perspective from the social world of peers to that of adults and to the community, thereby changing the explicit exposure of the narrator self to actual and potential audiences. The young authors are most personally exposed in the peer-focused narratives, while exposed to a lesser extent in the adult-focused narratives where they can assume the stance of observers. The hypothetical community narrative activity offered an opportunity to express contentious issues as expressed through fictional characters. In this way, adolescents are invited to tell others' stories as well as their own. These are all identity expressions.

While a first person stance opens a wide range of possible stories, it also exposes narrators to judgment by the immediate audience (researchers, community center directors, peers) and distal audiences (reflections on the family, society, etc.). While a first person narrative may be easier, more interesting, more self-focused, heart-felt, or authentic, it also requires special consideration about how one will be perceived. In this post-war context, for example, all youth exposed to the media, attending public school, and engaging in public life know that the Balkan countries are being judged for their war-related past and activities like "ethnic cleansing." Youth in Serbia, moreover, know that their former President Slobodan Milosevic and their society by extension is often characterized as the major aggressor, while youth in Bosnia know that their society is perceived as the major victim of ethnic cleansing. Young people's awareness of such distal audiences, along with their awareness of the more immediate ones, could censor war-talk or elicit idealistic narratives.

In contrast, narrating conflict about adults invites adolescents to step back and focus on the generation that experienced the war and to express information they might normally silence if they were to reflect only from first person perspectives. When narrating adult conflict, they may feel freer to express, for example, bitterness of those who experienced the war, without feeling that they might be perceived as personally expressing a "mentality of the past" which many youth indicated they are against. The hypothetical community narrative shifts narrator stance again with an invitation to introduce two characters "from different groups," thereby leaving open a range of possible intergroup conflicts (open for gender, ethnicity, age group, etc.) and by introducing the turning point "someone came with the news that changed everything." This activity offers a unique opportunity which adolescents may or

may not use to complete the story about conflict and to express relations that may be taboo in more autobiographical contexts.

Since adolescents across a wide range of linguistic cultures have developed abilities to use the basic structural conventions and evaluative devices of narrating (Berman & Slobin, 1994), they are likely to become increasingly in control of the social-relational dimensions, such as using fictional narratives to voice their knowledge and experience which audiences may perceive as negative. Such communicative complexity is, I argue, a developmental process that can be exploited with these diverse narrating experiences. These narratives are then data for analyzing adolescents' variations of meaning within and across narratives to mediate experience.

The written narrative mode is relevant for several reasons. Previous research in the United States and internationally indicates that adolescents have the encoding and decoding skills necessary for writing narratives. In addition, the use of computers for many of the workshop activities, including narrative writing, appealed to potential participants and the directors of organizations who recruited them. Finally, writing narratives provides a relatively more comparable context across individuals and sites since this individual activity minimizes explicit interactions.

Narrative Database and Analyses

These 108 youth from BiH (34), Serbia (14), Croatia (37), and the United States (23)[6] wrote 250 narratives in their respective native languages. Participants were, of course, free to respond or not to each activity, with most writing all three narratives, which resulted in 89 narratives of conflicts among peers; 84 narratives of conflicts among adults; and 76 narratives of hypothetical community events.[7] As expected, participants responded to the narrative prompts appropriately with 80% of the narratives structured around social conflicts and from 81% to 36% including character strategies to resolve those conflicts.

Categories to account for diverse conflict and resolution strategies were generated from the data, applied systematically to each narrative, and summed by narrative type and country context. As shown in Table 11.2, conflict issue categories include "social issues and affiliations," "differences of opinion/understanding," "physical issues and aggression," "political-infrastructure issues," "property (including turf and finances)," "character and emotional issues," "fate/no reason/silly things," and statements that the narrator/character does not participate in conflicts. As shown in Table 11.3, the resolution strategies generated from the data

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[6]The international situation made it difficult to involve exactly the same number of participants across sites, as recruitment was dependent on representative connections and contexts in each context.

[7]Participants in other settings have, for example, indicated that they found the activities to be interesting, that they were "surprised to get results from other responders to the same survey," and that creating their own survey to be taken by other youth made them feel "powerful." Those youth also offered suggestions for improving one activity, which we have done.

Table 11.2 % Narratives by plot conflict across genres by youth in different countries

	BiH	Serbia	Croatia	United States
Community narratives	N = 25	N = 8	N = 26	N = 18
Social issues and affiliations	0	25	7	5
Differences of opinion/understanding	4	0	0	0
Physical issues and aggression	0	0	4	5
Political-infrastructure issues	36	50	50	47
Property (turf and finances)	25	12	34	17
Character and emotional issues	0	0	0	0
Silly thing/no reason/fate	8	25	7	17
No conflict	20	0	0	5
Peer conflict narratives	N = 33	N = 14	N = 25	N = 18
Social issues and affiliations	37	35	52	50
Differences of opinion/understanding	6	21	24	5
Physical issues and aggression	15	7	8	11
Political-infrastructure issues	6	14	0	16
Property (turf and finances)	9	0	0	0
Character and emotional issues	3	14	0	0
Silly thing/no reason/fate	3	7	0	5
No conflict	18	0	16	11
Adult conflict narratives	N = 26	N = 11	N = 26	N = 18
Social issues and affiliations	21	63	22	33
Differences of opinion/understanding	7	0	11	11
Physical issues and aggression	28	9	14	5
Political-infrastructure issues	0	0	25	11
Property (turf and finances)	0	27	11	16
Character and emotional issues	17	0	3	0
Silly thing/no reason/fate	7	0	0	22
No conflict	21	0	11	5

include "psychological strategies," "communication strategies," "other intervention strategies," physical strategies," "collective action," and "no strategy stated." These conflict issue and resolution categories occur across the narratives as the beginning of this chapter, with the issue of "physical issues and aggression" in Rudy's narrative, "property" in I.S. narrative, "political-infrastructure" in Feniks' narrative, and "emotion" in Krusko's narrative. Resolution strategies indicating attempts to deal with the conflict issue (not necessarily achieving successful resolution) include "other intervention," "communication," "psychological strategy" (Feniks'explanation of why the issue cannot be resolved), and "no resolution strategy."

A second phase of analysis focused on the significance of participants' stories as indicated by psychological state expressions. Researchers have offered convincing evidence that significance occurs in the evaluative phase of narrative discourse, with linguistic devices such as psychological state verbs among other features. Building on previous studies with narratives of conflict (Bamberg, 2004; Daiute

Table 11.3 % Narratives with different resolution strategies by genre and by country

	BiH	Serbia	Croatia	United States
Community narratives	N = 25	N = 8	N = 26	N = 18
Psychological strategy	4	12	23	11
Communicative strategy	8	12	7	0
Other intervention strategy	12	12	11	17
Physical strategy	0	0	3	11
Collective action	32	18	30	11
Total resolution strategies	56	54	74	50
No strategy stated	32	45	19	47
No conflict stated	16	18	3	11
Peer conflict narratives	N = 33	N = 14	N = 25	N = 18
Psychological strategy	9	64	20	11
Communicative strategy	21	28	12	22
Other intervention strategy	3	7	20	22
Physical strategy	3	0	0	16
Total resolution strategies	36	99	52	71
No strategy stated	44	0	32	44
No conflict stated	18	0	16	11
Adult conflict narratives	N = 26	N = 11	N = 26	N = 18
Psychological strategy	0	27	14	0
Communicative strategy	7	18	25	27
Other intervention strategy	25	9	14	38
Physical strategy	3	18	0	5
One party submits	3	9	0	0
Total resolution strategies	38	81	53	70
No strategy stated	39	27	40	22
No conflict	25	0	7	25

et al., 2001; Labov & Waletzky, 1997; Peterson & McCabe, 1983), the significance analysis coded use of psychological state expressions including (as in the narratives at the beginning of the chapter) "affective states" ("appalled," "irritated," "yelling," "cursing," "was torn," "felt he was abandoning," "subconsciously," etc.); cognitive and socio-cognitive states" ("shouldn't forget," "look forward," "solved," "felt guilty," "mentality," "thinks," etc.), "intentions and anticipations" ("I tried," "was quite determined" etc.); and "reported speech." Computations of average number of psychological state expressions per narrative type and country account for the varied numbers of narratives per context.

Hypothetical Community Narrative Activity Captures International Youth Imagination

Youth across country contexts organized their narratives of a hypothetical community scenario with relatively similar plot structures (conflict issues and resolution strategies) and significances (character psychological states). As shown in Table 11.2, young people across the contexts tended to organize their community

narratives around issues of political-infrastructure and issues of property. The second most frequent conflict issue for all but the Serbian context related to property, with fate as another relatively frequent secondary factor, especially for youth in Serbia and the United States. All but four participants structured their community stories around conflicts such as stopping the building of a community center due to political issues like failure to obtain permits, problems in contracts, corrupt leaders claiming their right to the land or issues of finances such as not having enough money and/or obtaining the necessary funds through gifts.

As the other major element of plot structure, patterns of resolution strategies were also relatively common across the community narratives. At least 50% of the narratives across the contexts included resolution strategies to address the expressed conflicts. In addition, these resolution strategies ranged across categories from a high of collective action, except for the penchant of participants in the United States for the "other intervention" strategy.

The analysis of psychological states also indicates a relatively common use of the hypothetical community narrative activity by youth across the country contexts. The number of psychological state expressions per community narratives by country group falls in a closer range (4.5 for BiH narratives, 6.3 for Serbia, 6.7 for Croatia, 6.0 for United States) compared to those for the narratives of peer conflicts (6.6 for BiH, 14.2 for Serbia, 8.4 for Croatia, 5.8 for United States) or adult conflicts (4.1 for BiH, 5.4 for Serbia, 6.8 for Croatia, 3.0 for United States).

Since the community narrative activity involved building on a story starter, participants had more common features to work with than in the two autobiographical contexts, while having completely open options for completing the story. These stories dealt with context-specific obstacles, such as graves in BiH, corruption in Serbia and Croatia, and issues of tedious bureaucratic procedures like securing permits which are prominent annoyances across the Western Balkans with a broader script revolves around collective orientation, action, or outrage against obstacles with some different conclusions and psychodynamic energies (Daiute & Lucic, 2008). This response to the community narrative shows that youth across the contexts had basic abilities to read the story starter, write coherent narratives, and address a range of institutional factors and psychological states not as prominent in the other narrative contexts.

Analyses of the community narratives revealed, in brief, a relatively universal script of inclusive and collective human action to overcome obstacles, a kind of moral tale about people coming together against great odds. The affordances of this narrative activity appear to have engaged sensibilities, like those identified in research on moral development, in particular to include universal attributions of common good in the fact of obstacles and injustices (Turiel, 2002). In the following story, Rudy shifts away from negative interpersonal conflict to express community goals and positive affect for the first time across narrating contexts

> The news was that the mayor appeared and told the people who were present that the city administration donate a certain amount of money to the Center so it could obtain necessary equipment such as computers, video recorders, and other technical devices. Everybody was extremely excited and happy. Eventually, they threw a big party attended by the mayor himself. (By Rudy, BiH)

I.S. from Serbia identifies an institutional obstacle of high taxes to challenge the standards of the local community and their "wonderful," building, thus expression collective community goals, rather than the divisions in her other narratives.

> Administration and local community...
> The building is wonderful, but taxes are high in this area, i.e. the building has been built in the wrong area - it does not meet the standards of the local community. (By I.S., Serbia)

Feniks introduced the issue of funding, which was common for these narratives across contexts, while diversifying from his more typically generous stance in the other narratives to negative emotions of characters feeling "betrayed" and "frustrated."

> The news was that they lost all their sponsors and all the works were stopped. The participants felt betrayed and were frustrated. They all left the construction site hoping for better future. (By Feniks, Croatia)

Krusko crafted her story around a romantic relationship challenged by migration, the tension between possibility and loss, and an uncharacteristic happy ending.

> Emir and Elvir
> The news was that Emir's long-time girlfriend was in Bosnia and she wanted to marry him now or never. He couldn't stay and take part in the community event, he had to move back. Everyone who was there of Bosnian decent was jealous that Emir was moving back, even his best friend Elvir. Emir moved back, lived a humble yet fulfilling life in Sarajevo. (By Krusko, United States)

With similar approaches, a majority of participants used the relative freedom of fiction to deal with big issues, idealized orientations (such as collective community action and returning to Sarajevo), and emotions they did not express in the autobiographical contexts.

Autobiographical Narrative Activities Engage Diverse Psychosocial Processes

Analyses of the conflicts, resolutions, and psychosocial states in narratives of conflicts with peers reveal more differences than similarities across contexts. Considering scholars' consistent observation about adolescents' focus on peer relationships, it is not surprising that youth across the contexts organized peer conflict narratives around social issues and affiliations, as shown in Table 11.2. Nevertheless, beyond the common focus on social issues and affiliations in peer conflict narratives, important differences emerge, suggesting that adolescents' focus on peers is shaped by local circumstances. After social issues and differences of opinion, youth in Serbia tended to focus on political-infrastructure, character/emotional issues, and physical issues and fate. In contrast, a relatively high percentage of participants in Croatia reported no conflicts as the third most frequent category followed by physical issues, while no youth in Serbia said that they and/or their peers never have conflicts. Like youth in Croatia, a relatively high percentage of youth in BiH and

in the United States also claimed that conflicts among peers do not occur. While youth in the Western Balkan contexts differed in the distribution of conflict types across the other categories, Balkan origin youth in United States tended to focus on a relatively high percentage of conflicts around political-infrastructure and physical issues.

Analyses of resolution strategies in peer conflict narratives also indicate interactions with context. As shown in Table 11.3, peer conflict narratives by youth in Serbia are most notably different from those by youth in the other countries because of their relatively high percentage of resolution strategies per narrative. In addition to this relatively high percentage of total resolution strategies, youth in Serbia tended to resolve narrative conflicts among peers with psychological strategies followed by communicative strategies.

> The conflict occurred during the hectic period before the parliamentary elections. A couple of friends and I were a minority regarding political orientation. Apparently, our problem was that we were "too open minded" and "insufficiently conservative". We were challenged with no argumentative support, while we supported our responses with arguments. However, the major issue was the mentality which we have not been able to change so far. (By I.S., Serbia)

Youth in the United States also demonstrated a penchant for narrating resolutions to peer conflicts, with, however, a broader range of strategies than youth in Serbia. More similar to the approach of youth in Croatia, those in the United States resolved peer conflicts with psychological strategies, communicative strategies, other intervention strategies, and physical strategies.

> I had a disagreement with my roommate who was on AIM while I was trying to sleep. She got into a tiny conflict which was shortly resolved because we live together, we cannot be angry at each other. I would have been more upset had I not thought about her point of view. The way I was (taught) is that, respect would be a fundamental value and she seemed to be lacking. I couldn't understand that because my whole life I've lived with Bosnian people who were just like me. I had to change my expectations, lower them in this case. We (my roommate and I) are rooming again, we're worked past it. I've learned not to do certain things which are normal in Bosnia (i.e. ask who she just spoke to on the phone) and she no longer disturbs me when I'm trying to sleep. (By Krusko, 19, United States)

Accentuating the difference between these percentages and those of youth in Serbia, however, is the fact that relatively high percentages of peer conflict narratives by youth in the other contexts did not state conflicts, as illustrated in the following narrative by a youth in BiH.

> During the break at school, while I was waiting in line for sandwiches, a boy from another class put a firecracker in my rucksack which was on my back. I didn't even notice that until other students started to laugh and move away from me. Then I realized that my books were burning, so I threw the rucksack on the ground and ran away because I was scared. I was very angry and scared because I didn't find it to be funny, but rather dangerous. The worst thing was that the other students either ran away of laughed; none of them defended me, nobody said anything to that boy. (By Rudy, 15, BiH).

Analyses of psychosocial states in the peer conflict narratives also revealed major uniqueness by the group in Serbia who included almost twice as many psychological states per narrative than those by youth in the other contexts. In spite of the relatively high frequency of psychological state expressions in peer narratives by youth in Serbia, they included a similar range of types as those in youth in the other contexts. Interestingly, however, the US group is notably different from the other groups in their attribution of psychological states to first versus third person characters in narratives of peer conflicts, with more cognitive/socio-cognitive and reported speech expressions for third person characters than for first person characters, differing from the relatively higher frequencies, especially on cognitive/socio-cognitive expressions.

We can attribute the fact that the most common conflict issue in narratives about conflicts with peers is social to an adolescent concern with such matters, as has been stated in much previous research. As indicated in the analysis of resolution strategies and psychological state expressions, however, issues in social relationships with peers are developed differently across the contexts, with conflicts evolving most prominently into psychological interactions (by youth in Serbia), communication sequences (by youth in the United States and in BiH), and interactions of bystander characters (by youth in the United States and Croatia). Differences in the pattern of peer conflict issues emerging within and across contexts are, in contrast, likely to occur because of the autobiographical nature of this genre, which involves settings and, thus, an anchoring in the circumstances of daily life. Differences across country in the second most-frequent conflict issue, for example, link to the specific contexts where these youth are enacting their relationships. The Serbian and Croatian engagement with opinion and understanding reflects different challenges and goals of post-war recovery, which appears to require, in the case of Serbia, intense reflection, and, in the case of Croatia, a forward-looking attitude. The engagement of youth conflict with political issues in Serbia and the United States is consistent with the relatively isolated positions of youth in those contexts.

Explanations of the major differences in resolution strategies across peer conflict narratives also turn on the position of the society in the world. Symbolic circumstances in Serbia with the burden of being depicted as the major aggressor are consistent with the psychological orientation to conflict, compared to the relative lack of that strategy in the other contexts. The relatively high emphasis on other intervention strategy in the United States is consistent with the position of Bosnian immigrants as "wandering souls" (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). This phenomenon tends to occur among second-generation migrants to the United States where those with diverse family culture and language are isolated, motivating a focus on those individuals and practices in the mainstream, perhaps to learn about them or to explore possibilities for assistance in facing the discrimination young people obviously perceive. These specific explanations may not account for all possibilities, but the emergence of differences in what is salient to peer relationships is an important finding worth ongoing inquiry.

Narratives of conflicts among adults differed dramatically in the nature of conflicts, resolution strategies, and psychosocial states across the countries. As shown in

Table 11.3, Serbian youth's adult conflict narratives concentrated on conflict around social issues and affiliations, while the remaining three groups had more distributed conflict issues across various types. As shown in Table 11.3, most of the narratives included resolution strategies, with typically higher percentages than for no stated strategy. One of the most striking patterns was the relatively high percentage of narratives with psychological resolution strategies by adolescents in Serbia. There was, moreover, a relatively low percentage of collective action strategies in community narratives by the US authors. Interventions by others emerged as prevalent for adolescents in BiH and in the United States in adult conflict narratives. The range in psychological state expressions is less in the adult narratives than in the peer narratives but more than in the community narratives. These patterns of differences in structure and significance across context are evident in the examples at the beginning of this chapter. As characteristic of a majority of narratives by participants in Serbia, the narrative by I.S. revolves around issues of property, "a neighbor appropriate half the street." Damage to homes, cars, and misuses of public space, like parking in someone else's parking space, were common in this context. Also a favorite approach by young authors in Serbia was the psychological strategy presented here as "I think all the neighbors in the building were thinking how bored they were," although this strategy was not as prevalent in the adult narratives as they had been in the peer narratives. Issues in relationships and over property in the Serbian adult conflict narratives were also resolved with physical strategies, sometimes damage to antagonists' property, and communication to work out differences. Different is the pattern in narratives by youth in BiH, as are their circumstances. In contrast to the intense psychosocial state expressions in peer conflict narratives by youth in Serbia, they tended much less to represent adults' consciousness, and thus the significance of events for them or for the narrator him or herself. As in the story by Vahmati, many psychosocial expressions were cognitive/socio-cognitive: "last century mentality," "still thinks he has the power."

As in the characteristic narrative by Rudy, youth in BiH narrated conflicts among adults most prominently physical issues and aggression, "nearly started to fight physically...drivers were yelling and cursing...they prevented the others from moving." Numerous more explicitly violent examples mentioned "guns," "knives," "the impatient driver took a brick, threw it at my neighbor, and hit him." As in the example by Rudy, the preferred resolution strategy was intervention by others: "A younger man interfered and made the two men stop arguing."

As in the opening narrative by Feniks, participants in Croatia focused on issues of politics and the faltering re-building of the infrastructure required for the country's economic and social development. More apt to write explicitly about "war" than Serbian youth, Croatian Feniks situated the war as a conflict among adults, with the attendant blame for failing to make the war worthwhile because of "bad privatization, corrupted politicians, low life standards, etc." Remarkably different from their approach in the peer conflict narratives, participants in Croatia focused on the escalation and explanation of conflicts among adults, leaving some 40% without a resolution strategy. Although not resolving all conflicts, Feniks and his peers tended to emphasize cognitive/socio-cognitive states among adults, as with "forget," "look

forward," "solved," followed by feeling states and to lesser extents intentions and reported speech.

In her narrative at the beginning of this chapter, Krusko, whose immediate family fled BiH when she was child, poignantly depicts a conflict in a family relationship. As with others living in a similar setting, the social issue is not a fight but a caring disagreement, in this case with a resolution strategy that is merely physical, "He moved here," and a characteristic melancholy concluding the story. The story by Krusko is intense in psychosocial state expression, including cognitive/socio-cognitive states, "was torn," "being pushy," and affective states, "felt guilty," "still feels bad," "we all do."

These relatively major differences in adult narratives by youth across positions of the Yugoslavian wars are consistent with my proposal that youth can use the affordances of narratives to interact with their environments. These young people used the adult conflict narratives to focus on the past, mostly as lived by adults in the present. Since both past and present differ in important ways, those details came to life in this narrative context. I.S. distances herself from the last century mentality and Feniks distances from those who obsess about the past at the expense of the future. With their emphasis on physical altercations, youth in BiH focus on tensions in their public spaces, while youth in the United States use this context to shift their gaze to nostalgia or the mainstream United States from which they feel alienated.

Diverse Orientations Across Contexts

Participants in this study expressed different knowledge about conflict and orientations to conflict across three narrative tasks from the perspective of their peer group, the adult generation, and the broader community in a hypothetical, realistic scenario. In addition to this within-group diversity, common and diverse patterns emerged in narratives by youth across the positions across the former Yugoslavia. Patterns of results indicated, moreover, that while the hypothetical community narrative elicited a relatively common narrative script of perseverance-against-all-odds, the autobiographical narratives differed in what emerged as salient types of conflict, resolution, and psychosocial orientations. Given these within and across context differences, we can point to adolescents' uses of narrating to mediate self-society factors.

To describe these orientations by country, I compiled results of the preferred narrative structure (conflict issues and resolution strategies) and psychological state expression categories. In keeping with this qualitative approach, I use relative criteria, the most frequent two categories by each group. Narratives by adolescents in Serbia emerge as the most unique. The compilation of narrative action and consciousness categories reveals an orientation of hyper reflectivity, indicated by the combination of focus on conflicts related to social issues, differences of opinion/understanding, focus on political-infrastructure, relatively extensive portrayal of resolution strategies and psychological states.

In terms of the prospects analysis presented in Table 11.1, reflectivity is an appropriate developmental reaction for a generation that has myriad reasons to take stock

of the actions of a position in the war considered notorious, as well as to distance from this past. In addition, youth living in a nation that was bombed by US-led NATO forces 8 years ago would also be reasonably attentive to causes and effects of violence, which affected their lives. While accounts by international and regional organizations maintain reminders of Serbia's role in genocide in BiH, failure to turn in all war criminals, and other negative factors, the country is receiving high marks for constitutional reform, although economic prospects were not good at all during the time of the study. These conflicting indicators may stimulate intense perspective-taking and second-guessing by youth who while loyal to their country in many ways want regional or international recognition. The period since the late 1990 s in Serbian cities has, moreover, been characterized by critique if not distancing of the post-war generation to their elders, especially when they perceived failure to follow through on new methods of government and education (Lazic, 1999). Expressed as "last century mentality" and other metaphors, social relations in narratives by Serbian youth are also self-critical of their own and others' interactions.

Describing the characteristic orientations of the other three groups is more difficult because of the relatively nuanced sets of summary results. Nevertheless, several patterns coordinate the summaries. The compilation of major analytic categories in narratives by adolescents in BiH indicates an orientation of disengagement from conflict. Although the most frequent conflict type in peer narratives by youth in BiH is social issues, as in the other groups, the relative lack of conflict in the plot is the second frequent category in peer and adult narratives. Another notable feature suggesting relative disengagement from conflict in these narratives by youth in BiH is the lack of resolution strategies as the most common quality across peer, adults, and community narratives. Also consistent with the disengagement are the relatively low ratios of psychological state representations per narrative genre.

As indicated by the second most common resolution strategy, the communication strategy, it is not that narratives by BiH youth do not center on social relations but that they do not elaborate actions or reflections on conflict as much as youth in the other areas. The conflicts tend to revolve around physical violence, which may be an ongoing effect of having suffered major attacks to their land by neighboring Serbia and Croatia. In addition, as reflected in the ongoing focus on ethnicity in this heterogeneous country, reified by the Dayton Agreement which organizes government by ethnic groups in order to avoid conflicts, these results may echo not only the position of the country as having experienced more violence locally over an extended period of time. This discourse of disengagement is evident even in the community narratives, which, while most similar to those by youth in the other groups, differs in the relatively large percentage of denials of conflict. A psychosocial response to distance from conflict may be protective in a situation with ongoing threats to stability and progress, because of ambivalence about moving beyond the status of victim, fear of obstacles, or some other impetus to disengage from directly addressing conflict.

The Croatian orientation can be characterized as engaged primarily because of the relatively high percentage of resolution strategies, especially in the community narrative context. That total is comprised of relatively high collective action and communication strategies. Although narratives by youth in Serbia are higher overall,

the engagement with the community narrative context by adolescents in Croatia could, perhaps, reflect the relatively large participation of these youth in community organizations. Interestingly, the patterns of psychological state expression in peer narratives by the youth living in Croatia are skewed toward the "I" perspective, while those by the immigrants to the United States are skewed toward the "other" perspective, as illustrated in the peer narratives from those contexts.

Like youth in Serbia, adolescents in the United States context use narratives in several strikingly unique ways compared to the other groups. One relatively unique characteristic of the US adolescents' narratives is their emphasis on other/bystander psychological states. Several characteristics of narratives by the US youth suggest an other-orientation. Narratives by adolescents in the United States also tended to focus on discrimination, which is captured in the relatively frequent conflicts around political-infrastructure. Also consistent with this other-orientation is the relatively unique penchant among the US participants to resolve conflicts across narrative genres via the intervention of secondary characters. The US narratives also have a nostalgic quality, with many expressing a preference for "Bosnian people" and returning to Bosnia. While probably spared some physical violence of those who remained in Bosnia, the US group experienced the violence of displacement and the attendant exclusion of immigrants.

Communicative Complexity Is a Narrative Development Process

Zooming out from the picture of cross-country difference, noting the differences across narrative genres is important to theory and research on narrative at issue in this book. As discussed above, participants approached the community narrative in similar way, offering us insights about the productive nature of projective activities. At the same time, participants used the other narrating activities in more context-sensitive ways. This shift underscores the argument that narrating is a social discourse and that these youth, like those younger ones in previous research, can use storytelling to mediate self-society relations. Most provocatively for our ongoing theory and research in narrative and developmental psychology is the fact that we observe more universal orientation in the hypothetical activity and more interactive orientations in autobiographical activities, one trained on the past (adult conflict narratives) and the other trained on the present and future (the peer conflict narratives).

This distributed nature of self-expression informs narrative and adolescent theories, in particular about the varied range of information adolescents can bring to bear on a seemingly narrow domain-like conflict and the varied nature of their priorities beyond social relational ones. Consistent with previous research, we find that affordances of narrative genres govern the content of narratives, as evidenced in the different kinds of conflicts and resolution strategies that emerge across the narrative tasks. Differences in how youth across contexts use these affordances to reflect

on experience suggest a mediating role of narrative as a tool for understanding and performing self-society relations. Adolescents living in different cultural-historical positions around a conflict apply those affordances to do psychosocial work relevant to circumstances where they live. Results indicate, in brief, that the relationship between narrator and text is complex rather than unitary and straightforward. The study, thus, offers insights about loosening definitions that equate narrator and narrative toward definitions, research designs, and practices that support adolescents' uses of narrating as a tool for developing critical expression and reflection.

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