

Children of 1992-1995 War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: One Generation, Several Subgroups and Different Memories

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Introduction

The wartime experience and its aftermath plays a major role in the formation of personal identity and sense of self of those who were young children at the time.

Aim of this research is to determine factors that influenced formation of self and memories in generation of children war survivors from Bosnia-Herzegovina, and to analyse main problems they have been experiencing in post-war divided society.

The obtained factors will be further discussed in line with three (and more) ethnically different „subgroups“ that currently exist in generation of Bosnian „war children“. Main problems those subgroups have been experiencing will be analysed on following levels: ethnic and religious identity, inter-ethnic relations, position of Others, different memories of war among subgroups, consolidation of traumatic memories and readiness for reconciliation.

Short Theoretical Overview

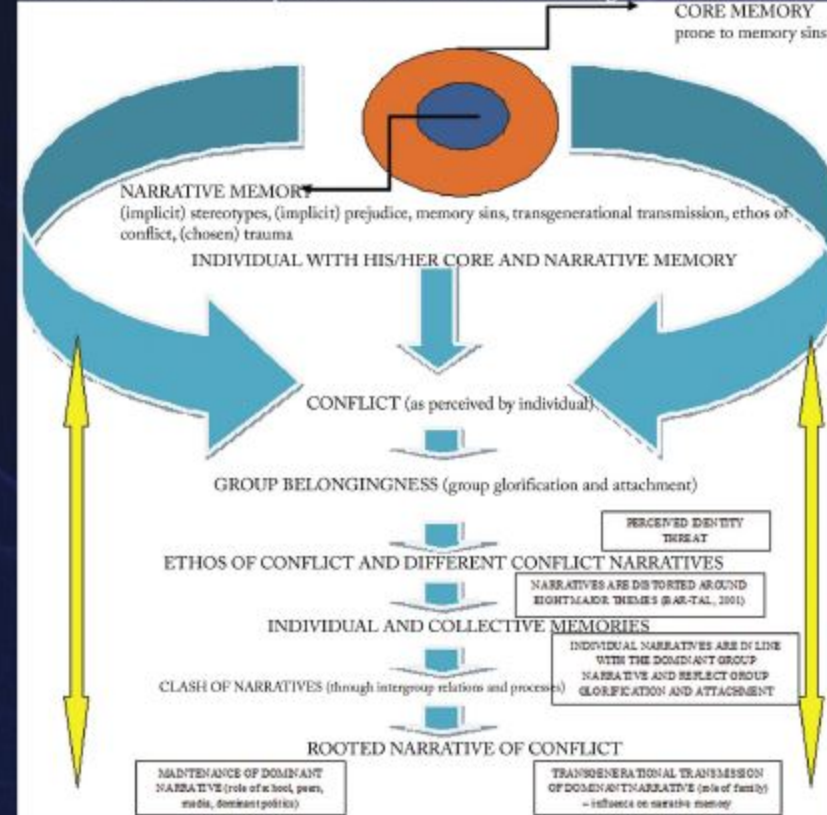
- Haydee Faimberg (1988) - the telescoping generations
- Helen Epstein's (1988) - the role of gendered identities
- Horowitz (2000) - life-stories by the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors
- Volkan (2002) - chosen trauma
- Veena Das (2007) - the political use of memory
- Ayse Gul Atinay (2013) - women are a key actors in the process of transmission
- Kalina Jordanova (2015) - survivor parents resolve the conflict between the need to communicate their past with their children and the necessity to oppose the official discourse
- Jordanova's psychoanalytic account of transgenerational transmission of war memories in Bosnia-Herzegovina can be summarized into five images of the war as imagined by children: a scheme with no people, an attack on the family home, survival at the expense of personal integrity, a dirty job assigned to heroes, faceless horror.

Sources

- Theories:**
- Hirsch's (2012) notion of „postmemory“
 - Mannheim's (1923/1952) definition of generation from a sociological perspective
 - Volkan's (2002) formulation of „chosen“ trauma
 - Kraft's (2004, 2006) model of core memory and narrative memory
 - Bar Tal's eight themes of conflict narrative
 - Memory sins by Schacter
- Research:**
- structured interviews (N=40) conducted with two generational groups of Bosnians currently living in Sarajevo (I generation: age 40-70, N=20; II generation: age 15-19, N=20),
 - social psychological and cognitive perspective was taken into consideration while determining factors that influenced formation of self and differences in memories of children war survivors in Bosnia-Herzegovina
 - content analysis of history textbooks currently used in high-schools in Bosnia-Herzegovina (three different teaching curricula)

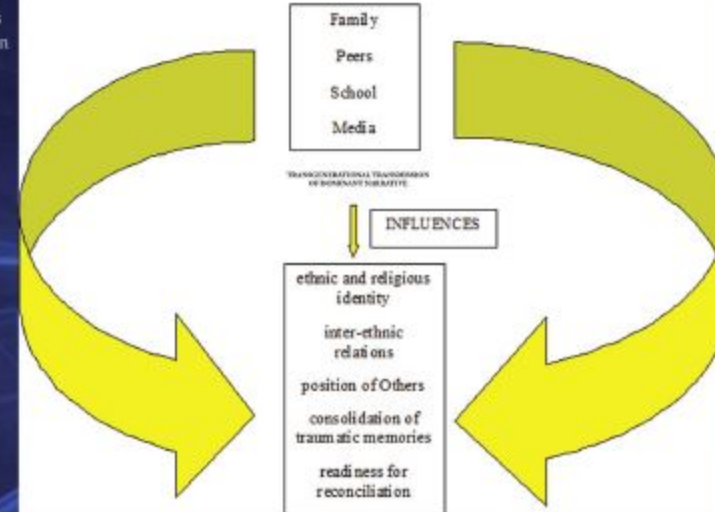
Results :

Schema 1: Phases of development of conflict narrative and its transgenerational transmission



Schema 2:

Sources and Further Implications of Transgenerational Transmission of Difficult Memories



Conclusion

- The formation of difficult narratives of conflict includes several factors:
- core memory which is prone to memory errors;
 - narrative memory which includes (implicit) stereotypes, (implicit) prejudice, memory sins, transgenerational transmission, ethos of conflict, (chosen) trauma;
 - group belongingness (group glorification and attachment).
- Difficult narratives are maintained through the following mechanisms:
- transgenerational transmission in the family;
 - existing zeitgeist which includes school, peers, media, dominant politics.

Implications for future: „REMEMBRANCE FOR PEACE“ Program

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