Showing and Telling:
Exploring the influence of media on storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations

Timothy Bidey
PRDU Working Paper Series

Enquiries
All enquiries should be made by email to the Managing Editor, Dr Tom Waldman: tom.waldman@york.ac.uk

Aims and Objectives
This series of independent publications and works-in-progress written by Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU) masters students, scholars, researchers and associates presents diverse perspectives on a broad array of cross-cutting subjects including: post-conflict and post-crisis/disaster reconstruction; state building; fragility; peacebuilding; development; conflict resolution; and humanitarianism. It is targeted at an international readership including academic and research institutions, development and security professionals, and policy-makers.

Views expressed in any paper are not necessarily held by the PRDU; they are intended to promote discussion and allow emerging scholars in the field to share their views and research with a wider audience. The series aims to publish papers that reflect a variety of opinions, are written in accessible and clear English, and that are empirically informed, academically rigorous and based on original research.

Previous Papers in the Series

No.1 ■ January 2012
Use the Head and the Body Will Not Suffer: Dependencies and Adaptations by Households in Liberia’s Informal Economy
Julia Lynn Smith

No.2 ■ March 2012
Growth or Grievance?
How might the recent discovery of offshore oil threaten the future development of Sierra Leone?
John Chan

No.3 ■ May 2012
Changing Seasons
The Arab Spring’s Position Within the Political Evolution of the Yemeni State
Alexandra Lewis

No.4 ■ July 2012
Dividing Water
Localised Water-Related Conflict in Egypt
Sultan Barakat

No.5 ■ September 2012
Representative Governance in a Post-conflict Islamic State
Representative-Constutuent Relationships and Accountability Mechanisms in the Afghanistan Parliament
Mahboobullah Iltaf

No.6 ■ October 2013
Winning the Peace or Playing at Development?
Interrogating the Utility of Sport in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding
John Skelton

No.7 ■ July 2014
Making Live and Letting Die:
Power-knowledge, Biorationality and Jerusalem’s Planning and Building Regime
Bradley Lineker

All Working Papers can be accessed at: www.york.ac.uk/politics/centres/prdu/report- & -publications/working-papers/

Copyright © Timothy Bidey 2015
ISSN 2049-5064 (Online)

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of material published in this Working Paper, the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit and University of York accept no responsibility for the veracity of claims or accuracy of information provided by contributors.

All rights reserved. If you would like to reproduce this working paper or any part thereof requests for permission should be sent to: Working Paper Series Editor, Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit, Derwent College, YO10 5DD, UK.
Showing and Telling: Exploring the influence of media on storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations

Timothy Bidey
Preface
This paper emerges from field research conducted in collaboration with the Post-Conflict Research Center in Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the author’s fulfillment of the MA in Post-war Recovery Studies at the University of York’s Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU).

Acknowledgements
First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those in Bosnia-Herzegovina who participated in this study. Amidst the aftermath of mass protests and in the advent of widespread floods, you still found the passion, patience, and time to share your expertise and experience. Your contribution to this endeavour cannot be overstated: without your efforts, what follows would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank those that helped along the way. My Supervisor Dr. Kenneth Bush for igniting the spark of imagination, both Velma Šarić and Leslie Woodward at the Post-Conflict Research Center for your tireless assistance during the research period, Dr. Sabina Cehajic-Clancy for providing a moment of clarity when I became unstuck and Dr. Tom Waldman for supporting the publication of this paper.

Finally, to those who provided personal support throughout the year. Thank you to my nearest and dearest at the PRDU for brightening those long hours in the library, my family for some words of encouragement when they were much needed, and to the person who gave me the confidence to take my very first step on this journey.

About the Author
Tim Bidey is a Project Developer at the Post-Conflict Research Center in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. An NGO professional with experience of project planning, development and fieldwork, his interests and expertise primarily concern arts-based peacebuilding initiatives, with a specific focus on the use and evaluation of storytelling as a peacebuilding mechanism between divided individuals and groups.
Abstract

The art of storytelling has come to be recognised as a powerful tool of peacebuilding. However, our current understanding of its utility is premised on a limited scope of analysis – little is known about the connections between the individual components of stories and storytelling’s peacebuilding impacts. This paper seeks to expand our current understanding through examining one of these components. It explores the influence of oral and film media on storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations, with a particular focus on the context of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Using a purposive sample of eight peacebuilding organisations, semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine respondents with first-hand experience of oral and film storytelling initiatives. An inductive thematic analysis then examined and compared respondents’ observations and perceptions, identifying five significant themes on which oral and film media have an influence: 1) receptiveness; 2) temporal orientation; 3) emotivity; 4) forms of dialogue; and 5) wider impacts. In connecting these points of significance to the main points of catalysis that underpin storytelling’s transformational effects, the findings from this research suggest that there are multiple links between the properties of each medium and storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations. It concludes that the influence of media is clear but complex, underlining the necessity of further research into other forms of media and other contexts.

Introduction

Storytelling has come to occupy a central position within processes of conflict transformation around the world.¹ Many practitioners regard it as a panacea that is capable of safely navigating the complexity of social conflicts: a view that is premised largely on its flexibility as a methodology and its traditional, universal roots in human culture and society. In particular, the belief that there are specific connections between storytelling and peacebuilding has led to its regular application within intractable and intergroup conflicts;² contexts within which traditional, logical, conflict resolution processes are not always deemed suitable (Thompson 2007: 1). These connections range from the micro- to the macro-level: storytelling is assumed to catalyse processes of healing both within and between individuals and communities as well as reweave ‘the shredded fabric of societies’ following protracted violent conflict (Bush 2010: 1).

Yet, despite the prevalence of peacebuilding initiatives using storytelling, and an awareness that stories can be both constructive and destructive (Senehi 2002), our understanding of how storytelling and storylistening works as a peacebuilding methodology is surprisingly limited (Bush, 2010: 1). One reason
that we do not understand the whole is because, in part, we do not understand the connections between peacebuilding and the individual components of stories. Storytelling is not ‘an autonomous technique’: its various components – of which narrative content and media are just a few examples – are an inherent part of its functionality (Haitch and Miller 2006: 400). At best, this lack of understanding risks wasting the resources committed to these projects. At worst, we are in danger of contradicting one of the main principles of conflict sensitivity – ‘Do No Harm’ (Bush et al. 2011: 11, Anderson 1999).

The purpose of this paper is to take a small step forward by exploring just one of these components: media. To date, the vast majority of research has focused solely on the medium of oral storytelling (Coburn 2011). Although it is recognised that stories can be told through a wide variety of media (HTR 2005), and whilst the significance of this variety has begun to be explored within other fields linked to peacebuilding, the potential influence of different media on storytelling’s transformational effects has yet to be systematically examined. This lack of knowledge is a problem in the present, but is only going to become evermore pressing within the context of technological advance and the increasing digitisation of stories (Gready 2010).

Specifically, this paper will address the following question: how does the use of either the oral or film medium influence storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations, and, if differences exist between the two, what are the implications for existing practice? In essence, are the peacebuilding effects of telling a story face-to-face different to that of showing a story through film? To do so, this paper first reviews the ways in which storytelling is known to transform intergroup conflicts, synthesising literature from the fields of peacebuilding and transmedial narratology to create a framework around which the relationship between storytelling, peacebuilding, and the influence of media can be analysed. Second, brief information is provided regarding the context within which research was conducted and the study’s methodology. Next, the main themes of significance that emerged from the data are presented and their significance discussed in regard to the literature and aforementioned framework. The final section offers conclusions and, in answering the research question, outlines the main implications for the existing practice of organisations and opportunities for future research.

**Storytelling and Transformation in Intergroup Conflict**

Traditionally, storytelling is seen as a process concerned with the creation and management of knowledge (HTR 2005, Senehi 2009). Stories transcend temporality, acting as a conduit through which culture, morals, identities, and traditions are transmitted (Coburn 2011, HTR 2005). Their telling and reception, regardless of the extent to which they are fictional or factual, continually forms, negotiates, and changes our understanding of the surrounding world (Senehi 2009). As such, storytelling is a process intimately connected with notions of power and transformation (Raheja and Gold 1994). Storytelling can be used
to attain results and, as highlighted by a range of studies, its invocation of the past can be used to comment on problems of the present and influence the future (Cosentino 1982, Scheub 1998, Tonkin 1992). Its use to transform inter-group relations can be based on four key points of catalysis: the evocation of the moral imagination; the fostering of connections and a sense of community amongst individuals; the creation and mediation of a collection of narratives; and the creation of social microcosms and networks.

**The moral imagination**

Storytelling’s evocation of the moral imagination is central to understanding how it catalyses constructive transformation. Originally described by Lederach (2005), the moral imagination refers to the capacity of individuals to imagine and bring about constructive responses that transcend the destructive patterns of conflict. Its existence amongst local populations is essential to the success of peacebuilding processes. Practitioners broadly agree that storytelling processes are one of the main ways through which the moral imagination can be fostered, allowing conflicting individuals ‘to step back and objectively consider how they have contributed to hurt the other’ (Kyoung 2009: n.p). Storytelling has the capacity to catalyse a connection between teller and listener (Coburn 2011: 1073). It engages both the mind and heart of the teller and listeners (Senehi 2002) and allows people to see inside the experiences of others (Bar-On, Kutz and Wegner 2000). Listening to a story requires someone to dwell within the space it creates, which in turn fosters greater understanding (Haitch and Miller 2006). As such, stories reduce the dehumanisation of a perceived ‘enemy’, enabling an empathetic response (Coburn 2011).

**Commonality and community**

The process of telling one’s story, and listening to those of others, is an intimate and ‘shared experience’ that, in addition to forming connections, also fosters a sense of community amongst individuals (Senehi 2009: 210). As noted by Harley (1996, cited in Senehi 2009: 206), the simultaneous emotional reactions of individuals – whether laughter or tears – also acts as a reminder of our shared humanity. Luwisch (2001) goes further, proposing that much more than emotion can be shared within a storytelling environment. He argues that the sharing of stories develops a wider ‘resonance’ amongst a group, triggering memories of similar events in individuals’ lives, and leading to the possibility that situations, problems, or even solutions that are rooted in different contexts can become communal in nature (2001: 134). Notably, Bar-On and Kassem have witnessed this exact phenomenon in their work with both German and Jewish individuals (2004) and Jewish and Palestinian students, noting for the latter that ‘though the background was different… the common image of rootlessness elicited feelings of empathy and openness on both sides’ (2004: 298).

**Narrative mediation**

A continued process of storytelling also creates a collection of narratives, negating ‘the danger of a single story’ and providing the opportunity for people
to transform the hardened narratives of intractable conflicts (Adichie 2009, Coburn 2011). Several pieces of research, including that of Bar-On and Kassem (2004), Luwisch (2001) and Conle (1996), have detailed that the experience of telling and listening to divergent stories has enabled individuals to critically reflect on their own stories, relate to the stories of others, and draw threads between differing perspectives. For example, Litvak-Hirsch, Bar-On and Chaitin (2003), cite how two students’ contradictory narrations of a Palestinian ghetto forced them both to re-examine the reasons behind their parents’ construction of perspective. As Coburn argues (2011), storytelling’s production of a collection of narratives thus catalyses a social constructionist process of ‘narrative mediation’ (Winslade and Monk 2008), as the presence of a range of stories within a group simultaneously softens hardened narratives and is a fundamental step towards the creation of shared alternatives and a collective memory (Bar-On and Kassem 2004, Haitch and Miller 2006).

**Social microcosms and networks**

Recent research has also begun to explore the capacity of storytelling to create, or at least foster, the establishment of social networks (Bush et al. 2011, Horsley 2007, Haitch and Miller 2006). In part, this is in response to the growing recognition that whilst coming to ‘know’ and discuss with individuals from the ‘other’ group are essential steps, they are not necessarily enough to enable a sustainable transformation in the long-term (Kyoon 2009, Luwisch 2001). Storytelling initiatives play a specific role in this regard, as by bringing individuals together they create something more substantive – a ‘microcosm, a little social structure’ (Davies in Bush et al. 2011: 57). Furthermore, it has been observed that these structures have continued after the end of the event (Davies in Bush et al. 2011, Haitch and Miller 2006, Horsley 2007). In this respect, the social microcosms that are conceived within storytelling’s transformational space have the capacity to cross its borders, expand, and create further structures distinct from ‘the geography of violence’ (Lederach 2005: 101).

**Storytelling, Media and the Transmission of Narrative**

For all its transformative properties and potential, storytelling’s associations with the creation and management of knowledge have led to widespread recognition that it is a tool that can be used both constructively and destructively (Senehi 2009: 203). Importantly, whilst large sections of contemporary analysis focus on the *purposeful* use of storytelling to manipulate and transform a context, it is an implicit extension that storytelling processes can also have *unintended* consequences. As Bush et al. posit, the implication of this dual-capacity is that a “failed” storytelling project may be much more than [sic] of an initiative with no demonstrable impact; it could have negative impacts’ (2011: 113).

Such an assertion demands the need for greater consideration to be paid to what is a ‘good’ – i.e. constructive – story to tell (Bar-On and Kassem 2004).
Storytelling is itself a highly complicated process, heavily dependent on both the tellers’ and listeners’ subjectivities during their construction, interpretation, negotiation, and utilisation of the narrative (Senehi 2009: 203). Senehi’s analysis draws on Bobo’s (1996) findings that persons respond to narratives differently, linking to Myerhoff’s (1992) and Urban’s (1991, cited by Senehi 2002) conclusions that the same story will not necessarily have equal currency across groups of individuals or communities. However, to date, this focus on content represents the limit of research into the connections between construction/destruction, storytelling and peacebuilding, and is a key gap within the literature. As shall be demonstrated through the following discussion, it is also necessary to consider storytelling’s constructive and destructive properties in regard to the ways in which we tell stories.

The “hollow pipe” versus “the medium is the message”

The influence of media on narrative is a clear point of contention within the field of narratology (Wolf 2011). The debate is dominated by two antithetical positions: the “hollow pipe” versus “the medium is the message” (McLuhan 1964). The former posits that media are little more than neutral conduits through which stories are transmitted, having no affect on how the message is transmitted or received. For example, a painting would produce identical reactions from an audience regardless of whether it was hung in an art gallery or digitised on the internet (Ryan 2012). In contrast, McLuhan (1964) argues that the medium itself is responsible for the creation of meaning, and that the content that it transmits is of little importance. In reference to the previous example, McLuhan would disregard the actual image and focus solely on the social effect of the medium: the art gallery or the internet. Notably, both approaches have been criticised for their extremist nature. The former entirely excludes the relevance of media (Wolf 2011), whilst the latter overemphasises the influence of medium to such an extent that it cannot account for the ‘gist’ of a story remaining intact across radically different media (Herman 2004: 54, Wolf 2011).

Contemporary research has adopted a balance between these two extremes and it is on this position that this paper is based. Wolf argues that it is necessary to shift our lens of analysis from focusing explicitly on media’s capacity to determine meaning, and instead focus on the potential of media to influence the shape of narrative content (2011: 166). In doing so, he identifies two constraints media imposes on stories: firstly, that the medium determines how narratives are transmitted; and secondly, that the medium also restricts how the narrative will be received and experienced by the audience (2011). In terms of the original metaphor, Wolf is proposing that the ‘shape’ of the pipe imposes certain conditions on the material being passed through it, affecting which of its properties are transmitted and received (2011). Ryan adopts a similar approach, arguing that media are not simply hollow conduits, but ‘material supports’ whose form influences the types of meanings it transmits (Ryan 2012, 2004: 1). Based on this position, what are the main influences of oral and film media on narratives?
Oral storytelling
The definition of oral storytelling as a medium generates significant debate as the story is not told through, nor influenced by, an intervening ‘pipeline’ (Ryan 2014). However, this paper adopts Ryan’s position that oral storytelling should be considered as a medium in its own right: it possesses mediality in the sense that the performance of face-to-face interaction makes a difference as to what kind of stories are told, how they are told, and why they are told (Ryan 2014: 28). With this in mind, a review of Ryan’s literature presents two points of concern when considering this medium’s relationship to storytelling’s transformational capacities. Firstly, whilst oral storytelling should be regarded as a medium that primarily concerns the mind rather than the senses (Ryan 2012), it should not be defined solely through what is ‘said’. The physical presence of the teller also makes it corporeal in nature, as the story is also told through gestures, facial expression, and body language (Ryan 2004). Secondly, oral storytelling is a medium that is characterised by immediacy and co-presence, making it inherently intimate and communal in nature (Ryan 2004).

Film and storytelling
Similar to oral storytelling, the narrative power of film is also often based on the presence of a language component (Ryan 2012). In the words of Metz, “[Film] ‘says’ things that could also be conveyed in the language of words, yet it says them differently” (1974: 44). But wherein lies this difference? Schmidt details how film employs a range of narrative devices that influence the viewer’s experience, focusing on how editing is central to the narrative organisation of film (2013). In doing so, he encourages us to look inside a film’s ‘visual track’ (2013: para. 14). The simple ‘cut’ can be used to overemphasise a specific detail, draw parallels between geographical or narrative spaces, and highlight similarities or opposition (Schmidt 2013: para. 24–26). Camera angles can be used to control perspective and sound can be used to ‘orchestrate and manipulate emotions and heighten the suggestive expressivity of the story’ (2013: para. 30).

Media and Peacebuilding
This relationship between the medium and its transmission of content acts as a potential springboard from which to compare and contrast oral and moving-image media’s influence on the transformational capacity of storytelling projects. If, as Ryan argues, media possess different levels of abilities that affect the actualisation of a story’s narrative potential (2005), then it is a logical extension that a story’s ability to catalyse change may also vary across media. To date, there has been no systematic exploration of this issue within the field of peacebuilding. Indeed, this paper is based on three levels of basic awareness. First, that different forms of media do have some kind of an impact on the ‘shape’ of a story (Hogan in Bush et al. 2011: 60). Second, that the transposition of a story from one medium to another can affect its constructive and destructive properties (Bush in Bush et al. 2011). Third, that different media may thus be suited to specific applications (Dudouet, Fischer and Schmelzle 2008: 16).
Having established this potential relationship between storytelling’s transformational properties and the significance of the way in which we tell stories, this paper will now outline the context within which the research was conducted and its underlying methodology, before then examining the specific influences of oral and film media on storytelling’s peacebuilding effects.

Research Context and Methodology

Research was conducted at multiple sites across Bosnia–Herzegovina – a country still divided by intergroup cleavages almost two decades after the cessation of the Bosnian War (1992–1995). Levels of intergroup contact, trust, and belief in forgiveness and reconciliation in this context are extremely low (Cehajic, Brown and Castano 2008). Little progress has been made toward facing and forming a common understanding of the past (Galaty and Robertson 2005) and the fault lines that emerged during the conflict, of which ethnicity is the most salient (Kivimäki, Kramer and Pasch 2012, Galaty and Robertson 2005), continue to be utilised as an instrument of power by elites for political and economic purposes. Within this context, younger generations are reliant on selective accounts of the past and perceptions of the present from their families, communities, and an ethnically-biased media, and are thus bereft of an objective context within which to locate their identity, impressions, and relationships (Burns, Logue and Bush 2010). Consequently, the work of many NGOs continues to place a precedence on increasing understanding of “other” groups through storytelling-based initiatives, making Bosnia a worthy (and until now overlooked) addition to the literature surrounding intergroup relations, peacebuilding, and storytelling.8

The lack of existing studies concerning the relationship between media, storytelling, and storytelling’s peacebuilding effects necessitated an approach exploratory in nature and experiential in its analysis. Data was collected from peacebuilding organisations using purposive and snowball samples between April and June 2015.9 The sample’s criteria drew on elements of a grounded approach, and placed a strong focus on the quality of organisations in an effort to become ‘saturated’ with information concerning the topic (Padgett 1998: 52). The primary data collection methods were semi-structured interviews with project staff and evaluators (when possible), and the collection of key project documents and reports.10 Both the interview transcripts and secondary documentation were then analysed through a data-driven process of thematic analysis using NVivo 10 software (Braun and Clarke 2012, Gibbs 2007), producing a set of themes that form the basis of this paper’s analysis.

Exploring the Influence of Media

The purpose of this paper is to explore whether media influence storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations, and, if so, the implications that this
has for the existing practice of peacebuilding organisations. This section presents, analyses, and discusses the main themes of influence that emerged from the inductive analysis of organisations’ responses and secondary documentation. As shown below, it is structured around five interrelated themes of significance: 1) receptiveness of participants to the project; 2) temporal orientation; 3) emotivity; 4) dialogue, reflection, and mediation; and 5) wider impacts of the project. Throughout each section, respondents’ views are critically analysed and discussed in consideration of storytelling’s four points of catalysis. Specifically, the development of the moral imagination, the nurturing of commonality and community, the process of narrative mediation and the formation of social networks.

**Figure 1: Thematic map.**

**Theme I: Receptiveness**
Half of the respondents had experienced problems with participant engagement during projects. This largely focused around either feelings of embarrassment or shame about the issues raised or, in line with Kyoon’s assertion that individuals within intractable conflicts are unlikely to possess a developed moral imagination (2009), an unwillingness to listen to alternative narratives. Respondents’ exploration of negotiating these challenges presented several ways in which oral and film media were considered to mitigate this problem, supporting the overriding view within the literature that storytelling plays a specific role in softening and transcending the guarded narratives of conflict.

**An objective approach**
Both oral and film media were considered to be tools suited to the objective presentation of stories from all sides of the conflict. In terms of oral storytelling this focused solely on equal representation: ‘when we’re doing speaking events it’s always three people, three different sides – Bosniak, Croat, Serb – telling
their story’ (Respondent 7). Similar sentiments were expressed regarding the production and use of film, with respondents stating how they would always try to incorporate a range of perspectives drawn from across Bosnia’s ethnic divisions. Within contexts such as Republika Srpska, a region deemed particularly sensitive to portrayals of the past and discussion of issues in the present, this capacity of both media to clearly include viewpoints from Serb communities was seen to unburden audiences of the pressure to defend a narrative of Serb victimhood (Respondent 3). In addition, it was reported that such an approach had been found to evoke lower levels of collective guilt amongst young people, making it far easier to engage them in projects.

However, producing a sense of objectivity through equal representation was also seen to have its limitations, and, particularly in regard to working with older generations, was not necessarily enough to increase receptiveness (Respondent 7). In this regard, film’s medium-specific properties were seen to provide greater opportunity to peacebuilders. Respondent 8 highlighted how the ability to edit films – disguising identities and locations – enabled participants to think in new, cross-ethnic terms of perpetrators and victims. Similarly, Respondent 1’s films made significant use of editing in order to intersperse and relate narratives simultaneously, linking identities and allowing connections to be easily drawn between a range of perspectives. This employment of ‘narrative organisation’ (Schidmt 2013: para. 24) – a medium specific property of film – was seen to be far more effective in both reducing the salience of any one story and shifting the focus of storylisteners away from ethnicity and onto other facets of identity.

Sense of connection
Over half of the respondents also linked participants’ levels of receptiveness to the sense of connection that was felt between the storylistener(s) and storyteller. This relationship was predominantly based on the immediacy of the
storyteller. In terms of oral storytelling, respondents felt that the physical presence of the storyteller significantly increased participants’ receptiveness through pressurising them into engagement (Respondent 9). Central to this provocation was the highly personal and corporeal nature of the storyteller’s emotions:

People who are speaking, you can see emotions on their face. It’s easy to link, to understand them. This is what we call the ‘human touch’. It’s a human person across the street telling you a story, and it’s really hard to deny, when you see the person, it’s hard to deny, saying, ‘I can’t, I don’t believe you’ (Respondent 9).

In contrast, respondents readily acknowledged that the medium of film did not offer the same level of immediacy due to the temporal and spatial distance between the storyteller and listener(s). Both sentiments support existing research on how the presence of the storyteller, especially the accompanying access to a corporeal set of actions such as ‘gestures, facial expressions, and intonation’ (Ryan 2004), is a powerful method of providing a narrative that is compelling to both the heart and mind (Chaitin 2004).

Simultaneously, however, this study finds that the absence of the storyteller does not preclude the effective engagement of participants. Respondents’ views did not support the notion that film’s inherent introduction of physical distance between the storyteller and storylistener risks either a loss of authenticity (Seeley Brown et al. 2005) or a depersonalisation of the story (Bush, in Bush et al. 2011). Instead, this study supports Dudouet et al.’s findings that the visual properties of film are also deemed capable of establishing a sense of connection between the storyteller and storylistener (2008). Respondents felt that the visual track of film was an effective means of transmitting the emotions that would be witnessed within an oral environment, whilst film’s provision of ‘the real story’ – giving storylisteners the opportunity to ‘look at the real people’ – also provided a sense of authenticity and connection (Respondents 3 and 9).

**Conclusion**

In sum, this study finds that both oral and film media have an influence on the receptiveness of storylisteners. Both are at least capable of providing an objective presentation, and also catalysing a connection between the storyteller and storylistener that allows the listener to dwell within ‘the space the story circumscribes’ (Haitch and Miller 2006: 396). Such a process is fundamental to the engagement and development of participants’ moral imagination – one of storytelling’s main points of catalysation. Significantly, this study highlights that the specific properties of each medium have a distinct influence on receptiveness. Primarily this concerns the presence and absence of the storyteller. The oral medium’s strength lies in the immediacy and strength of connection that is formed between storyteller and storylistener. In contrast, film forms a comparatively weaker connection, but its properties of narrative organisation may actually make it more suited to contexts profoundly affected...
by entrenched narratives, albeit with a potential cost to the story’s integrity as it is pulled ‘farther and farther from its source… and from its original context’ (Gregory 2010: 28). Thus, it is clear that oral and film media actually have a nuanced effect on the receptiveness of participants, which could be used to determine the suitability of their application when used with a view to transforming intergroup relations.

**Theme II: Temporal orientation**

Respondents’ descriptions of their projects also revealed links between the use of oral and film media and the temporal orientation of a project. In other words, whether a project’s perspective tended to be primarily backwards-facing (dealing exclusively with events of the past and experiences in the present), or forwards facing (linking the events of the present to imaginations of the future).

**Looking backwards**

Oral storytelling’s focus on the relation of personal experience meant that projects employing this medium tended to be concerned with events of the past or experiences in the present. Indeed, the focus of respondents’ projects could be divided into three categories: recounting wartime experiences; stories of upbringing in post-war Bosnia–Herzegovina; or stories of everyday life in the present (Respondents 5, 7 and 9). For survivors of the conflict, projects focused on ‘trying to put them out of this nineties war trauma, trying to help them move forward with their life’ (Respondent 7). For younger generations, having grown up in the immediate aftermath of the war, projects were largely concerned with increasing their understanding ‘about the things that happened to others in the same time’ (Respondent 5). Thus, whilst the oral medium was concerned with changing attitudes and behaviours in the present in order to affect the improvement of relations in the future, its reliance on exploring the past led respondents to consider it inherently backwards-oriented in its perspective.

Interestingly, this finding goes against the grain of existing research, which argues that the imaginative space provided to storylisteners by the oral medium is inherently forward-looking. The medium’s use of language inherently evokes the storylisteners’ imagination (Ryan 2012), inviting them to imagine ‘alternative endings’ to current conflicts (Haitch and Miller 2006: 397). Still, such a process is a necessarily subtle one and it is also the case that backwards-facing storytelling risks leaving societies stuck in the past (Henry in Bush et al. 2011). Whilst initiatives that focus on the transformation of intergroup relationships often necessitate a certain level of engagement with the past in order to address ‘unresolved pain and anger’ (Bar-On and Kassem 2004: 290), there are implicit dangers if this is done to excess. This includes disaffection, re-traumatisation and/or the transmission of intergenerational trauma to younger generations, diminishing their natural open-mindedness and capacity of moral imagination (Henry in Bush et al. 2011).
Looking forwards

Film was also seen to draw on techniques that were inherently backwards-oriented in order to affect attitudes in the present. Respondents’ examples of using victim testimony and documentary footage are clear examples of such an approach (Respondents 6 and 8). However, several respondents underlined that the medium of film was also far more versatile: its capacity to present and propagate alternative visions of existence was seen to make it inherently forward-looking (Respondent 1 and 3). Instead of solely focusing on increasing understanding of events that had since passed, film was also capable of exploring experiences of the present and idealising them as possibilities of the future. This was felt to be particularly effective within the context of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in which the influence of an ethnically-biased media meant that many participants had little experience of such possibilities. The film screenings were their first opportunity for many to see ‘much more beautiful’ examples of ethnic co-operation (Respondent 3). Thus the presentation of such examples was seen to be a simple means of fostering participants’ moral imagination through moving them beyond the boundaries of their everyday existence in the present and shifting their focus towards the future (Respondent 1).

Whilst such an approach is arguably dependent on the content depicted, and is thus one of which multiple media are capable, the visual properties of film were deemed to provide added impetus. Watching a film requires no imagination on the part of the storylistener: ‘through music, film, and multimedia approaches, you can actually show that life is possible together’ (Respondent 3). This approach also chimes with the view that, though constructive storytelling initiatives do not necessarily preclude a backwards looking perspective (Bar-On and Kassem 2004), they do require notions of moving forward to be ‘embedded’ within them (Henry in Bush et al. 2011: 293). Senehi (2009) provides an example of just such an interpretation through her explanation of how storytelling can both invoke the past and comment on

Conclusion
In sum, storytelling’s constructive and destructive properties underline the necessity of considering a project’s temporal orientation in relation to its surrounding context. Whilst the literature argues that both backward and forward-facing perspectives are capable of fostering the moral imagination of the storylisteners (Coburn 2011, Haitch and Miller 2006), it also identifies that storytelling initiatives focused solely on events of the past carry inherent risks and may not always be appropriate in attempting to transform intergroup relations. This study adds to this body of literature by establishing the influence of media in regard to the orientation of a storytelling project, suggesting that it should also be a central point of consideration. Whilst all narratives have the capacity to link the past, present and future (HTR 2005), it is clear that, at the very least, the media through which they are conveyed may be more naturally inclined towards presenting different perspectives.

Theme III: Emotivity
All of the respondents made reference to the emotions that participants experienced during storytelling events, regardless of whether the oral or film medium had been employed. However, beyond this commonality, a number of significant differences emerged between the two media’s inspiration of emotion.

Intensity of experience
The majority of respondents reported oral storytelling projects to have been intimate, intense experiences that triggered a deep emotional response amongst storytellers, listeners, and project staff. In support of other studies, respondents felt that the oral medium was inherently concerned with the purging of storytellers’ emotions (Bar-On and Kassem 2004, Colvin 2000). Such a cathartic process was also considered vulnerable to the expression of trauma and several respondents spoke of the difficulties that oral storytellers experienced when recounting the past:

*Only 60 people were ready, capable, willing, motivated, to do speaking out events, because speaking out — some of them, for example, when they start to speak, they collapse, they crash, they faint, it’s reviving your trauma again; reliving your trauma. So it’s a very traumatic experience (Respondent 7).*

Risks such as this were considered to be commonplace and, as with other documented initiatives, appropriate measures had been put in place to ensure that storytellers were not left retraumatised (CGP 2009: 97). Respondents 5, 7 and 9 spoke at length about the ways in which they had tried to make the ‘space’ in which stories were told as safe as possible for the storyteller. Approaches to this varied amongst the three respondents, but included: training
on speaking in public; group exercises to develop trust; ‘test’ speaking events within home communities before the pressure of crossing an ethnic divide was introduced; and complete freedom for the teller to leave the storytelling space at any point.

Significantly, respondents also felt that listening to another’s story was not necessarily any easier than telling your own – a notion that, up until now, has received relatively little attention within existing literature. Respondents recognised that the immediacy of the storyteller and the highly personal and corporeal nature of their emotions had the capacity to retraumatise vulnerable individuals within audience. As respondent 9 explained, “You’re stuck in the room with the people telling their horrible stories, and you have your reaction… you react really emotionally, and sometimes it brings something that you’re not aware of until that time (Respondent 9).” This concern finds strong, theoretical foundations within existing literature. Whilst Luwisch’s theory of ‘resonance’ states that story sharing can lead to the constructive sharing of situations or problems, storytelling’s capacity to trigger memories of similar events in storylisteners’ lives can also prompt re-traumatisation (2001: 134).

Thus, the process of listening is not likely to ‘be easy for those who have experienced great suffering’ (CGP 2009: 99), and is likely to be harder within the oral medium due to its intimate, corporeal, and immediate nature (Ryan 2004).

As such, this study strongly supports the view of Bush et al. that ‘much more attention must be paid the audience – and the impact of hearing that story on the sense of self, and other’ (2011: 66). Respondents’ concerns highlight that the emotivity of the oral medium must be considered in regard to ‘whether catharsis for oneself is catharsis for another’ (Bush 2010: 3). Whilst the inflammation of storylisteners’ emotions is seen to be of value by some, it is generally perceived as ‘destructive’ due to the risk of re-traumatisation (Senehi 2009: 206). Furthermore, this risk has been found to limit the willingness of storytellers to fully voice their own experiences (Colvin 2000: 30). Thus, it seems imperative that organisations care for both the storyteller and sto-

Figure 4: Storylisteners react to an orally told story.
rylistener’s emotional wellbeing when using the oral medium. Significantly, however, few respondents in this study actually reported any concrete measures designed to the wellbeing of storylisteners.

**Moderation of experience**

Film was also reported as capable of inspiring an emotional response amongst storylisteners.\(^\text{13}\) The majority of respondents had witnessed emotional reactions amongst participants whilst watching films and believed this to be a fundamental part of the medium’s capacity to transform intergroup relationships. One respondent believed this process to be of an intensity strong enough to ‘affect anybody that’s watching it, whether they want that to happen or not’ (Respondent 1), whilst another recounted an experience that caused her to thereafter seek approval from a school psychologist prior to screening (Respondent 3). Notably, however, none of the reactions witnessed by respondents were of a similar intensity to those seen within oral storytelling initiatives.

Most respondents considered film to be far more sporadic in its evocation of emotion:

\[\text{So for me, film can, film was upsetting young people, provoking them, but for some it was okay if they saw the film, and that’s it, for some it was, ‘can I get a film so I can show it to my girlfriend, boyfriend, friends’, whoever, for others it was just another film (Respondent 9).}\]

In part, several respondents suggested that this was due to the nature of the medium. Its comparative lack of immediacy, and thus weakened connection between the storyteller and storylistener, either placed little pressure on the audience to react or lessened the intensity of the emotion felt (Respondent 9).\(^\text{14}\) Whilst the limited amount of literature surrounding its use by practitioners predicates that film has the potential to ‘be incredibly meaningful and moving’ (Dudouet et al. 2008), respondents’ descriptions of films’ effects in this study suggest that its inspiration of emotion is more contained. In essence, the medium itself cares for storylisteners through moderating their experience. Within the literature, Horsley elucidates how the exploration of stories external to a group contains participants’ emotions within a safe place (2007). Participants are able to indirectly explore their own problems through the emotions and plight of the external characters (Horsley 2007).

**Conclusion**

In sum, this study finds that the use of oral or film media has a significant impact on the emotional experience and responses of storytellers and storylisteners. The former is more visceral in its engagement of storylisteners; the latter, though also powerful, is far more restrained and thus safer in its evocation. Such a finding is of significant importance given that the emotional responses of participants underpin most of storytelling’s four points of catalysation. Emotivity is central to storytelling’s capacity to transform inter-
group relations. It is inherent to storytelling’s constructive and destructive properties (Senehi 2009): the sense of connection that underlies the fostering of the moral imagination, and the shared experience of storytelling and/or storylistening that fosters a sense of community amongst individuals. In essence, the choice of medium has the potential to profoundly shape the very foundations of storytelling’s main transformational processes as an occurrence of re-traumatisation risks undermining storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations.

**Theme IV: Dialogue, reflection, and mediation**

Nearly all of the respondents reported that their use of storytelling had catalysed further dialogue between participants either during or immediately after the project. This dialogue was seen as intrinsic to participants coming to reflect on and understand opposing sides’ perspectives, adding weight to the argument that it is only through questioning the story that storytellers and listeners can come to question uncertainties, exceptions, and underlying assumptions (Thompson 2007). However, it was also evident from respondents’ experiences that oral and film media inspired two very different forms of dialogue.

**Compartmentalised versus collective**

Oral storytelling was seen to facilitate a process of dialogue through the opportunities provided by the presence of the storyteller. Specifically, respondents felt that the medium’s provision of a direct channel of communication between the storyteller and storylistener allowed participants to increase their individual levels of awareness, knowledge, and understanding of a divergent perspective (Respondents 5 and 7). As one respondent detailed, “So they told their stories, they had short discussion with young people, there were many questions” (9). Participants were able to ask questions and receive responses, in light of which they could then critically reflect on their own perspectives (Respondents 5, 7 and 9). The one-to-one basis of this interaction meant that, though voiced in a public space, the oral medium was felt to typically catalyse an internal, individual process of critical reflection. Storylisteners measured their own experiences directly against those of the storyteller, though as highlighted by Respondent 5, the very nature of this process meant that it was reliant on a willingness to ‘hear’ the story in the first place. Furthermore, the presence of the storyteller was seen to catalyse this process, motivating people to ‘talk and express themselves more’ (Respondent 9).

In contrast, respondents reported that the medium of film catalysed a more collective form of dialogue. The physical absence of the storyteller eliminated the possibility of a one-to-one channel of communication, so instead the storylisteners’ responses were shared amongst themselves:

> After, we are trying to give them space to give their own opinion about the film, their own opinion about the goal, they can talk about all these things which the film is showing, and they can talk about their own experience and thoughts regarding the war (Respondent 3).
Whilst the story still afforded the listener with an opportunity for an internal, critical reflection, Respondents 1, 3, 4 and 9 all reported that it also acted as a point of departure for an external, broader form of reflection that went beyond increased knowledge and understanding of the other. The medium of film was seen to allow storylisteners to engage in a more discursive form of mediation that moved beyond the boundaries of the story told, allowing participants to also consider their own perspectives and responses against the multitude of responses that surrounded them (Respondent 9). Such a process was also considered to produce a more forward-oriented form of reflection:

… at some point people are really willing to open up and discuss, not so much about what happened to them during their life, but actually how they perceive things today and how they see the future of this country, which is really important as well (Respondent 9).

The film was seen to provide an equal platform around which storylisteners of different ethnic backgrounds could coalesce, and a framework on which they could layer their own experiences. Within the literature, such a process is similar to that of a process of narrative mediation described by Winslade and Monk (2008). As they outline, this typically involves externalising a conflict story to remove individual notions of blame, before constructing a new narrative around which conflicting parties can build their own constructive shared stories (Coburn 2011, Winslade and Monk 2008). In essence, what has been witnessed by respondents of this study is the medium of film adopting the role of the narrative mediator.

Conclusion
In sum, this study finds a link between the medium through which a story is told and received, and the form of dialogue that is subsequently produced. This is inherently linked to storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations, given that the process of dialogue underlies two of the main points of catalysation: narrative mediation and the formation of social networks. Significantly though, little support for this difference can be found in the literature. Indeed, Lederach (2003: n.p.) actually proposes that dialogue in the oral medium is not an individual process and is in fact a shared form of dialogue amongst storylisteners as the interaction itself is also open to interpretation. Still, such an idea does not preclude that the medium of film has the potential to inspire a freer, broader participatory form of dialogue than the oral medium.

Theme V: Wider impacts
The previous four themes have outlined clear differences between oral and film media’s influence on participants’ levels of receptiveness, the temporal orientation of the story told, the emotional reactions evoked within and amongst storytellers and storylisteners, and the forms of dialogue that occur during the project. It follows that the choice of medium is also intricately connected to a project’s wider impacts.
Social networks
In terms of oral storytelling, respondents identified the creation of social networks as the main sustainable impact of the project. The medium’s focus on interaction was seen by all respondents to foster new relationships between participants. Respondents 4, 5 and 7 all reported that their projects had spawned friendships between youth of different backgrounds, supporting Horsley’s (2007) and Senehi’s (2009) position that the shared experience of storytelling acts as a bond amongst participants. Both within this study and the literature, this formation was in reference to the effects of co-presence within the oral medium (Ryan 2004). Interestingly though, Respondent 1 claimed to have also seen film screenings spawn ad hoc social interactions, suggesting that the shared experience of solely storylistening can also provide similar foundations. This echoes Gregory’s assertion that the medium of film always provides an audience with a ‘space for action’ (2010: 194), though little other support could be found in existing literature.

These social networks were often observed to last beyond the end of the project, in support of the broad view within the literature that the social microcosms formed within an event are able to transcend the boundaries of the storytelling space. Notably though, respondents were divided in assessing the exact nature of these microcosms. In line with Davies’ view (in Bush et al. 2011), the majority of respondents believed that such networks indicated a significant degree of open-mindedness amongst members and thus possessed the capacity to incorporate people external to the original storytelling process. However, a minority of respondents felt that the relationships formed inside the event were based solely on the shared experience of storytelling and were thus limited to project participants. Respondent 7 quoted a participant as saying, “Now as Serb, I understand Muslim. I understand you as a Muslim, but I don’t understand other Muslims and don’t accept them’. Thus, this study proposes that whilst storytelling processes undoubtedly catalyse understanding
on an individual level it should not necessarily be assumed that this always extends to a broader acceptance of other individuals.

**An accessible landscape of narratives**

Respondents considered film’s primary sustainable impact to be on a much broader level: transforming the landscape which individuals inhabit through increasing the number of alternative narratives of the Bosnian war in circulation, whilst simultaneously increasing the widespread accessibility of these narratives.

*The media’s just so focused on negative and divisive messages and propaganda that we want to make a situation where it’s more normal to hear about positive stories. And even though there may not be as many as it seems, we want it to seem like that’s the norm (Respondent 1).*

Such a focus is in line with previous findings, supporting the importance of not only negating the dangers of a single story through sharing stories that produce a more complex image (Adichie 2009), but also softening the hardened narratives through the mere propagation of alternatives (Bar-On and Kassem 2004; Conle 1996; Luwisch 2001). As such, respondents were primarily concerned with film’s ability to be easily distributed over a longer period of time in comparison to more ‘traditional ways of expression’ (Respondent 4). Their approaches to evaluation reflected this ethos, focusing almost entirely on the size of the audience reached. Significantly, respondents also reported that these ‘concrete results’ were also the primary interest of donors when monitoring and evaluating projects (Respondent 4), suggesting that the perception of film by this group of respondents is indicative of a wider culture when it comes to using film media as a peacebuilding tool.

However, respondents also highlighted how vulnerable the medium of film is to the actions of external actors within the very landscape that it is seeking to change. The media exerted significant influence over the dissemination of stories. Respondents 1 and 6 underlined how priorities of relevant institutions were a factor in deciding both the type and ultimate reach of a story:

*The media will focus on the stories they feel will garner the most attention among the general population which stories the media chooses can vary. This can be dependent upon the specific media outlet, local sensitivities, and the time available for broadcast. (Respondent 1).*

The use of film as peacebuilding tool has the potential to both influence, and be influenced by social, political, and economic structures: it does not happen in ‘a vacuum’ (Bar-On and Kassem 2004: 299). Thus, though the medium of film provides the potential to infuse the Bosnian landscape with a plethora of alternative narratives, it is a process that is heavily reliant on a wider process of peacebuilding.
Conclusion

In sum, considerable differences existed between respondents’ observations of the wider impacts when using either oral or film media. In line with the literature, the former was again considered to be highly personal, focused on individuals, relationships, and the transformation of local communities. In contrast, the latter was deemed to have a much broader effect, transforming the wider narrative landscape. Significantly, however, this study also finds that these impacts overlap: the social networks fostered through the oral medium were deemed capable of affecting broader change, whilst the fostering of an accessible landscape of narratives provided a firmer basis for individual change. This study finds that, though divergent, the various influences of oral and film media over storytelling’s transformational capacities should not be thought of in isolation. Instead, the use of both media over multiple projects, or even within the same project, should be thought of in an interrelated manner.

The aim of this section was to present the results of the qualitative research of this study, and critically discuss them in regard to the literature. In doing so, five themes of significance were outlined in consideration of media’s influence over storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations: 1) receptiveness of participants to the project; 2) temporal orientation; 3) emotivity; 4) dialogue, reflection, and mediation; and 5) wider impacts of the project. For each of these themes, oral and film media were shown to have specific influences in relation to storytelling’s four points of catalysisation. Sometimes these were shared, albeit by different means; sometimes distinct. The significance of this will now be examined in the final section of this paper.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the foregoing analysis, the following section draws together this study’s findings, outlining their implications for existing practice, and making a number of preliminary recommendations to organisations and researchers engaged in storytelling initiatives.

The influence of oral and film media

In seeking to answer how the use of different media variously influences storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations, this paper’s conclusions are relatively simple: it proposes that the peacebuilding effects of telling a story face-to-face are different to that of showing a story through film. Their use was seen to fundamentally shape participants’ perception, engagement, and experience of the project in question. Oral and film media were found to have explicit and implicit influences on the four points of catalysisation outlined in the literature review. In certain cases media had a direct influence on a point
of catalysation, such as the oral medium’s formation of social networks; in others, media had a more nuanced influence on the processes that underlie the points of catalysation, such as film’s ability to foster a more forward-facing perspective in its attempt to develop the moral imagination of storylisteners. In either case, and in reference to the literature concerning transmedial narratology, such influence was largely connected to each medium’s specific properties.

On another level, such a conclusion belies the complexity of the issues that were uncovered throughout this study. Primarily, this concerns storytelling’s constructive and destructive properties (Senehi 2002). Each medium’s specific properties created both advantages and disadvantages: neither could be considered a panacea of constructive storytelling. For example, the physical presence of the storyteller within the oral medium was suggested to produce a much stronger sense of connection between storyteller and storylistener, and thus it was particularly effective at fostering elements of participants’ moral imagination. However, the presence of the storyteller also increased the risk of re-traumatisation and restricted the forms of dialogue that were produced. Simultaneously, this paper proposes that the medium of film, whilst evidently suited to specific applications concerning the widespread propagation of narratives, can play a specific role in this regard. The medium of film’s capacity to be both more objective and less intensive was found to be particularly suited to broaching sensitive topics with guarded communities. Thus, as demonstrated elsewhere throughout this paper, media’s individual influences on storytelling’s four points of catalysation should not necessarily be thought of as independent, but have considerable potential to interact in their transformation of intergroup relations.

Implications for practice
The conclusion that oral and film media have specific influences over storytelling’s four points of catalysation and capacity to transform intergroup relations has significant consequences for organisations using storytelling as peacebuilding tool. It is evident that the choice and use of a medium must be carefully considered in light of its medium-specific properties, the surrounding context, the background of project participants, and the intended goal, aim, and outputs of the project in question. Two specific implications emerge from such a position in comparison to the existing practice of organisations.

The use of the oral medium should be treated with a greater degree of caution and consideration.
The oral medium should not be viewed as a peacebuilding panacea that can be constructively used within any context. Personal telling is not necessarily ‘better’ telling when considering storytelling’s constructive and destructive properties. Whilst the medium certainly provides specific advantages, it also involves inherent risks that are ill-suited to specific applications, audiences, and arenas. Furthermore, in the assessment of its suitability or its actual implementation, organisations should adopt a more holistic focus than that
which is currently being exercised. The mental health and wellbeing of both the storyteller and storylistener must be taken into account in order to guard against storytelling’s destructive properties.

Where possible, film should be more effectively integrated into organisations’ storytelling initiatives.

Whilst film undoubtedly has a significant role in terms of widespread engagement, promotion and reach, the perception of it as subservient to the oral medium is a missed opportunity. Film has the capacity to play a major role as part of organisations’ broader storytelling strategy, and should be more effectively employed. Firstly, in correlation with the oral medium it can be used to prepare sensitive or vulnerable audiences in advance of experiencing the higher intensity of the oral medium. Secondly, particularly for younger generations whom are disaffected with facing the past or disengaged, it can be used strategically to inspire engagement or forward-facing dialogue.

Future research

This paper marks the first foray into a systematic examination of the relationship between media, storytelling, and peacebuilding, and as such there are significant opportunities for future research. First, a similar exploration of this study’s findings within an alternative context of intergroup divide would be useful in assessing and developing their external validity. Second, it is hoped that by demonstrating the influence of two forms of media on storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations, this paper highlights the need for other forms to be investigated. Peacebuilding organisations make use of a myriad of media, including literary forms, performance art, photography, and new media, all of which may have their own medium-specific influences and need to be individually examined. As demonstrated in this paper’s recommendations, value also lies in investigating the interconnections between these different facets of storytelling. Finally, this research represents a first attempt at exploring this topic and was necessarily broad in its analysis. As such, there is considerable potential for further research to gain in-depth insights concerning some of the recurrent phenomena that were discovered: for example, an explicit examination of the peacebuilding implications of the presence or absence of the storyteller across media. It is hoped that, at the very least, this paper has provided both the inspiration and foundation for such future analysis.
Notes

1 There is no universal definition of storytelling. Drawing on key concepts from across the literature, storytelling is broadly defined as the act of someone telling or recounting a set of events or happenings, whether true or fictitious.

2 For the purposes of this paper, peacebuilding is defined in Bush’s terms as consisting of two inseparable components – the construction of the structures of peace, and deconstruction of the structures of violence – focusing on the creation of space for indigenous actors rather than an external imposition of solutions (2009: 45).

3 The term ‘media’ is used throughout this dissertation as the plural of ‘medium’.

4 Throughout this paper, the term ‘oral medium’ refers to ‘signed’ oral storytelling, which requires the physical presence of tellers and listeners.

5 This issue has begun to be explored within the field of human rights, with Gready (2010) and Gregory (2010) exploring the influence of digital technology on the ethical framework of storytelling.

6 Storytelling projects are defined within this study as those that enable expression, listening, and reflection of personal, communal and institutional stories related to the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, with a specific focus on those with the primary aim of transforming intergroup relations.

7 This focus was chosen in consideration of limited time and resources during the research period, and also in light of the knowledge that these were the two most common media employed by the organisations initially approached.

8 At present research concerning the connections between storytelling and peacebuilding is largely based around three focal points: German-Jewish relations, South Africa, and Israel-Palestine. Of late, Northern Ireland has also started to emerge as a point of study.

9 Respondents represented a total of eight organisations, of which six were classified as non-governmental organisations. The remaining two fell outside of this classification, and are termed simply as ‘peacebuilding’ organisations. These organisations were located at local (3), national (2), and international (3) levels, and, whilst the majority had their main office located in Sarajevo (6), all ran projects in both the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. All of the organisations also placed an explicit focus on working with youth, though this was not necessarily their sole or primary remit.

10 Due to ethical constraints, it was not possible to include project beneficiaries in this study. Instead, this research is premised largely on the perspective of the project practitioner. Whilst this dissertation’s strict application of confidentiality and anonymity mitigates many of the incentives to provide untruthful answers, it is inescapable that the inclusion of multiple perspectives, particularly those of project beneficiaries, would increase both the reliability and richness of this study.
Whilst such a focus is seemingly concerned with storytelling’s therapeutic elements, falling outside of the remit of this dissertation, the consequences of this catharsis are still of concern when considering storytelling’s capacity to transform intergroup relations.

In particular, Luwisch outlines the benefits of persisting in difficult discussion (2001: 138). This is a process that Mindell terms ‘sitting in the fire’ (1995).

Although not explored here, it’s important to note that Respondents 1 and 2 emphasised that storytellers had also been seen to undergo trauma during the filming process.

Respondents 3 and 6 also referenced that, within contexts such as Bosnia-Herzegovina where audiovisual tools are rarely used in education, the novelty of experiencing a film screening could actually distract students from the narrative.

Bibliography


Mission Statement
The PRDU links theory and practice for the enablement and development of war-affected societies.

The Unit’s work focuses on three core areas:

Conceptualisation:
Facilitating the development of a vision for reconstruction with participatory needs assessment, context analysis and strategy development.

Institution Development and Transformation:
Supporting the development of human resources, appropriate administrative systems and institutional responses in the transition from crisis management to long-term development programmes.

Participatory Evaluation:
Promoting people-centred evaluation of progressive goals and strategies and the dissemination of good practice.