

Story structure and social organization

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Aus den *Dokumenten des Alltags*, die vorgestellt wurden, lässt sich manches über das Bewusstsein vieler Menschen, über ihre alltäglichen Wünsche und Nöte herauslesen.

Story Structure and Social Organization

Marjorie Harness Goodwin / Charles Goodwin (Columbia)

Stories are often treated as artifacts that can be abstracted from their local circumstances, and examined in terms of their internal features. Here instead we want to look at how they are deeply embedded within larger social processes. Our concern is with how children use stories as a constitutive feature of the activities they are engaged in and provide powerful tools that can be used to arrange and rearrange the social organization of a group. In this paper we examine stories within a particular context, the organization of dispute.

Our primary concern is with the participation frameworks that stories provide, allowing children to *construct and reconstruct their social organization on an ongoing basis*. We examine how boys and girls, in their same-sex groups, make use of features of stories to accomplish and restructure social identities within encounters. In order to investigate how stories constitute tools for accomplishing social tasks we will look at how they structure situations within one particular domain, argumentative sequences.

Using the same story and dispute resources boys and girls construct quite different types of events. Boys use stories as a way of continuing an ongoing argument while reshaping the domain in which dispute takes place; by switching from a sequence of counters to a story a speaker may radically reformulate the participation structure of the moment. Girls, by way of contrast, use stories to restructure alignments of participants not only in the current interaction but also at

some future time. Stories can generate in listeners who are offended parties statement of future plans to confront an offending party, which result in confrontations that mobilize the entire neighborhood. We examine how each gender group manages their social organization through storytelling in this paper.

The present study is based on fieldwork among a group of children in a black working class neighborhood of West Philadelphia whom I (Marjorie Harness Goodwin) encountered during a walk around my neighborhood. I observed them for a year and a half (1970-1971) as they played in their neighborhood, focusing on how the children used language within interaction to organize their everyday activities.

The girls' and boys' stories examined here share several features in common: 1) the principal topic is offenses of another and 2) one of the characters in the story is a present participant. In the case of boys' stories, cited offenses deal with wrongdoings of a *present participant*. Among girls, however, offenses concern *reported deeds of absent parties*. Such differences have consequences for the trajectory of dispute in girls' and boys' groups; whereas boys can deal directly with an offender, girls must wait to confront the offending party at a future time.

The portrayal of characters and events within dispute stories has consequences for the form and timing of interaction which ensues. Thus while boys' dispute stories engender disagreement which permits contesting in the *immediate setting*, girls' stories engender alignments of "two against one" against an absent third party who will be confronted *at some future time*. In that the offending party is absent from the instigating event, girls cannot resolve their disagreement in the present interaction. Girls' he-said-she-said disputes, in contrast to those of boys, may be extended over several days.

An the offended party in girls' stories reacts not only by stating that she disapproves of the offending party's actions towards her in the past but that she is prepared to confront her offender. When offended party confronts the plaintiff, she does so with indirect rather than direct speech, in that the offenses at issue have been learned about through a third party. Girls' stories constitute a preliminary stage in a larger process of negatively sanctioning inappropriate behavior. After the instigating session girls replay reactions of offended parties to the stories and rehears future possible scenarios for confrontation with friends. Following the confrontation serious offenders of the girls' moral code may be ostracized; the degradation ceremony of ridicule and teasing which results can extend over several weeks. While boys' stories have little motive power beyond the present situation, girls' instigating stories are embedded within a larger social process, the he-said-she-said - a speech event providing for the involvement of participants in multiple phases of activity.

The present study has relevance not only for theories regarding the relationship of speech activities to larger social processes but also to theories about gender differences in childrens' social organization and culture. While boys' arguments display an orientation towards social differentiation and principles of hierarchy,

within he-said-she-said disputes girls display a form of organization based on what has been called “exclusiveness”, reportedly more characteristic of American girls’ groups than of boys’. Girls affirm the organization of their social group through assessing the behavior of absent parties. The alliances they form in the process of discussing others mark who is included and excluded from the social group of the moment, rather than relative rank.

It is sometimes argued that girls avoid direct competition and are little interested in “negotiation involvements”. Girls’ tendency to be more nurturant than boys is felt to result in relatively less conflict in their same-sex group. Within certain domains girls do select accounts for their actions which more closely reflect what Carol Gilligan has termed an ethic of care (as contrasted with an ethic of justice) and appear more concerned with a self “delineated through connection” rather than a “self defined through separation” or differentiation from others. Such forms of behavior, however, must be interpreted as situated presentations of self, sensitive to the contexts in which they occur. As the data presented here vividly show, within the he-said-she-said storytelling event girls react with righteous indignation when they learn their character has been maligned. They display an intense interest in initiating and elaborating disputes about their legal rights (not to be talked about behind their backs) which differentiate offending and offended parties. Alignments taken up during such disputes clearly demarcate who stands within the bounds of an inner circle of friends as well as who is relegated to that circle’s periphery. Stories thus provide arenas for each gender group to negotiate concerns which are central to each group’s notions of social organization.

Die Politik des Zwischenrufs. Zu einer kleinen parlamentarischen Form

Ronald Hitzler (Köln)

Die sogenannten parlamentarischen Debatten sind u. a. dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass man als Parlamentsmitglied im Plenum nur sprechen darf, wenn man die offizielle Genehmigung dazu hat, und dass *a priori* verbindlich festgelegt wird, wer sich im Rahmen einer thematischen Vorgabe wann und wie lange äussern darf. Eine sogenannte parlamentarische Debatte besteht mithin formell aus Reden, Gegen-Reden und Gegen-Gegen-Reden, aus Erklärungen, Berichten und diversen Frage-Antwort-Ritualen sowie ‘ad-hoc’ beim amtierenden Präsidenten beantragten und vom Redner auf Anfrage des Präsidenten hin gestatteten ‘Zwischenfragen’. Auch im Deutschen Bundestag darf gemäss Paragraph 27, Abs. 1 der Geschäftsordnung ein Abgeordneter “nur sprechen, wenn der Präsident ihm das Wort erteilt hat”. Nun ist aber (bekanntlich?) die sogenannte Plenardebatte weniger eine Debatte zwischen den Parlamentariern, als der rituelle Rahmen für Serien von akklamatorischen Monologen, die vorwiegend eben nicht der demokratischen Meinungs-Findung, sondern vielmehr der *Kundgabe* der politischen Positionen von Regierung und Opposition dienen. D. h. in der sogenannten Plenardebatte geht es darum, den *Eindruck* zu erzeugen, die gewählten Repräsentanten