Peace and Conflict Studies

Articles

Alice Ackermann
The Prevention of Armed Conflicts as an Emerging Norm in International Conflict Management: The OSCE and the UN as Norm Leaders

Andrea Talentino
Rethinking Conflict Resolution: Matching Problems and Solutions

Ariella Vraneski
Reframing Involuntary Population Displacement and Resettlement—The Case of the Palestinian Refugees: Causes, Consequences, and Prospects for an Impoverishment Process Reversal

Dennis Sandole
Virulent Ethnocentrism and Conflict Intractability: Puzzles and Challenges for 3rd Party Intervenors

Thomas Boudreau
Intergroup Conflict Reduction Through Identity Affirmation: Overcoming the Image of the Ethnic or Enemy “Other”

Notes

Armand Abecassis
The Religion of War and Peace: Better Understanding of International Conflict

Florence Ross
Call to Action To Elders Worldwide: The Need to Highlight Their Abilities, Wisdom, and Compassion as Citizen Diplomats, and Leaders for Social Change

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About the Authors

Armand Abecassis, is a Professor of General and Comparative Philosophy at the Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux, France. His areas of specialization are comparative Philosophy of Religion; Symbolic and Imaginary thought of Mediterranean peoples. He has written and published approximately 30 books, and written over 60 articles in specialized journals. In addition Professor Abecassis is fluent in Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, English, Spanish, Greek, Latin and his native French. He has received The Academy of Moral and Political Sciences award and is member of The World Alliance of Religions. He is the founding Member of the Advisory Board: Peace Research Foundation, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Alice Ackermann was born and educated in Germany, and now is a U.S. citizen. She received her Ph.D. in international relations from the University of Maryland, College Park in 1992, and then taught undergraduate and graduate courses in international relations, European studies, conflict analysis/resolution, peace studies, and international security studies at Washington State University, the University of Miami (Florida), and at Lancaster University, The Richardson Institute (UK). Dr. Ackermann’s current research interests focus on conflict prevention, reconciliation, ethnic conflict, and the emergence of new norms in international relations. Dr. Ackermann’s research has been published in the Journal of Conflict Studies, Security Dialogue, Peace and Change, European Security, and The International Spectator. She is the author of Making Peace Prevail: Preventing Violent Conflict in Macedonia (Syracuse University Press, 2000), and the producer of an award-winning documentary on the prevention of violent conflict, From the Shadow of History (Cinema Guild, 1997) which has aired on the History Channel and Public Television in the United States, and has been screened internationally. In 1996, Dr. Ackermann was a Fulbright scholar at the German governmental institute, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. Recently she was awarded another Fulbright scholarship, also to Germany. Dr. Ackermann is the recipient of several grants, including two from the Washington-based United States Institute of Peace, and has worked as a consultant for the United States Agency for International Development. Dr. Ackermann has also been interviewed extensively on the Balkans, including by The BBC, Deutsche Welle, and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Currently, Dr. Ackermann serves as the chair of the International Studies Association (ISA) Peace Studies Section, and also as the ISA annual conference program chair for that Section.

Thomas E. Boudreau is author of Sheathing the Sword: The U.N. Secretary-General and the Prevention of International Conflict and Universitas: The Social Restructuring of American Undergraduate Education. He has taught as a visiting professor at Syracuse University and the University of Pennsylvania. He is currently a visiting assistant professor at American University.
Florence Ross is a Citizen Diplomat from birth, with subsequent experiences as the President of secular, political, and religious organizations, an organizer of Human Relations Workshops for youths and adults, a lobbyist to Congressmen, a cancer researcher and an administrator, all performed in recognition that the world needed repair and transformation. From these attempts to build bridges between people of different ages and cultures, in an atmosphere where peace could grow with moral and spiritual ideas dominating, I learned that actual change comes from grassroots activism, nurtured relationships that become trusted ones and from direct dialogue. As a grandmother and great grandmother with a loving biological and extended family in countries the world over, I have seen the effectiveness of my elder status as a source of security, inspiration and example to emulate. Functioning as a participant in the Peace Summit of 1986, called by President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev, the titles of “Grandmother of the World” and “Best Citizen Diplomat” were conferred upon me for chastizing the alienating policies of both countries. A little old lady taught that Citizen Diplomacy works! Entering Graduate School at age 73 to pursue a Masters Degree and graduating with a Ph.D at age 81, I was able to share intimate knowledge of unique events of the 20th century in which I had been a participant with fellow students and teachers. Of significance was that courageous aging recaptures the life potential of the older adult and challenges the younger person toward multicultural and intergenerational partnerships.

Dennis J.D. Sandole received his Ph.D from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland in 1979. He is Professor of Conflict Resolution and International Relations at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) at George Mason University. A founding member of ICAR, his research and practice in conflict resolution deal with the violent ethnic conflicts of post-Cold War Europe, and the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in dealing with these. His most recent book is Capturing the Complexity of Conflict: Dealing with Violent Ethnic Conflicts of the Post-Cold War Era (1999).

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& Analysis at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Her dissertation (Technion, highest honors, 1994), focused on the transferability and applicability of conflict analysis & resolution concepts and tools within different organizational and cultural settings. Dr. Vraneski, has received many research and teaching awards and fellowships from organizations in Austria, Italy, Israel and the United States. She is the author or co-author of eight books and numerous articles, chapters and reports on topics that combine between conflict transformation, comprehensive planning, social & environmental justice, community participation and sustainable development. Her more recent work aims at a synergistic inclusion of selected regional planning concepts and tools into the conflict resolution curriculum and practice. Dr. Vraneski is currently working on a book aimed to link between creativity, conflict analysis & resolution and peace building. She can be contacted at avranesk@gmu.edu and ariellav@technix.technion.ac.il
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THE PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICTS AS AN EMERGING NORM IN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:
THE OSCE AND THE UN AS NORM LEADERS

Alice Ackerman

Abstract

This article explores the emergence of conflict prevention as an emerging norm in international conflict management. In particular, it examines the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations as primary actors in the construction and promotion of conflict prevention as an international norm. The article describes some of the major instruments that both organizations have already developed to implement the prevention of armed conflict on a more consistent rather than ad hoc basis. The article traces the emergent norm of conflict prevention through three stages—the awareness-raising and advocacy stage; the acceptance and institutionalization stage; and the internationalization stage. Although it is argued that conflict prevention as an emerging norm may eventually become firmly institutionalized and internationalized, at this point in time it remains for the most part in the advocacy stage. Regional organizations, such as the OSCE, have been more successful in moving conflict prevention toward acceptance and institutionalization, albeit on a regional level.

Introduction

Since the early 1990s the international climate has increasingly permitted new thinking and the implementation of concrete actions when it comes to the management of violent conflicts. The reasons for this are not only the need to control the new security environment, but also changing political developments such as the end of the cold war, which allowed for the acceptance of new practices and behaviour. Thus we are witnessing dramatic changes when it comes to new normative thinking regarding intervention for humanitarian purposes, limits to state sovereignty in the face of gross human rights violations, the protection of minorities, post-conflict peace building and reconciliation, and conflict prevention. This is a markedly significant phenomenon—one that goes well beyond those practices that defined the cold war period.

Responding to violent conflicts in their early, non-escalatory stage has become part of what is often referred to as “global governance.” Moreover, within the field of conflict resolution it is increasingly recognized that conflict prevention is a vital component in a broader approach to conflict management—one, that entails not only measures to manage the escalatory or post-violent phases of conflict, but also the pre-violent or low-violent stage where it might be still possible to prevent the outbreak of large-scale hostilities and bloodshed.

Much of this new normative environment has come as the result of concerted advocacy
on the part of norm leaders or norm advocates. These are actors that take a critical role in the emergence of new international norms and practices because they are able to articulate and promote new normative conditions and can mobilize support from other actors, often through the creation of organizational platforms. Such norm leaders or advocates can be single individuals, but also international and regional organizations, non-governmental actors and transnational advocacy movements, and national governments. When it comes to conflict prevention, there have been significant strides in advancing the idea and practice of preventing armed conflicts.

The importance of preventive action as an international policy is now actively supported by a number of international and regional organizations, such as the UN, the World Bank, the European Union and the European Commission, the OSCE, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), but also sub-regional organizations such as the Southern Africa Development Community or the Economic Community of West African States. Moreover, the developmental agencies of several major countries, including the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the British Department for International Development (DFID) as well as non-governmental actors have followed suit in implementing programs to facilitate long-term conflict prevention (Ackermann, 2003; Lund, 2002).

This article will explore in particular the contributions that the UN and the OSCE have made in the articulation and implementation of an idea—namely, that violent conflicts can be prevented in their early stages before they have entered into an escalatory phase. There are numerous norm advocates now on the international stage consistently and actively seeking to establish new international norms in the managing of armed conflicts, particularly when it comes to conflict prevention. However, it is the UN and the OSCE that assumed an early role in the construction and promotion of a global norm of conflict prevention.

Conflict prevention in the context of this study is defined as “any structural or intercessory means to keep intrastate or interstate tensions and disputes from escalating into significant violence and use of armed forces, to strengthen the capabilities of potential parties to violent conflict for resolving such disputes peacefully and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce these issues and disputes” (Lund, 2002, p. 117, ftn. 6). This article also adopts a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, including in the discussion on preventive measures and instruments both the operational (also direct or proximate) and structural dimensions of prevention. Structural prevention, also referred to as “deep prevention,” is long-term in nature and refers to any preventive measures that eliminate the underlying causes of conflict. This would include measures such as the facilitation of good governance, adherence to human rights, and economic, political, and societal stability, and civil society building. Operational prevention is directed toward imminent crises and therefore includes fact-finding and monitoring missions, negotiation, mediation, dialogue among contending groups, preventive deployments, or confidence-building measures (Ackermann, 2000; Annan 1999; Carnegie Commission, 1997; Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, 1999)
The Emergence of International Norms and Conflict Resolution

The evolution of domestic and international norms has been mostly studied in the literature on international relations. This literature focuses on questions on how norms emerge, how they shape the interests and identities of states, and how they become internalized and implemented internationally and domestically (Finnemore, 1996; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Goertz & Diehl, 1992; Katzenstein, 1996; Klotz, 1995; Checkel, 1999; Florini, 1996). Yet there still have been few attempts in that literature to explore the emergence of new norms and practices in international conflict management. There are numerous examples that call for more empirical research on emergent norms in the field of conflict resolution. For one, when we look at the emergence of a conflict prevention norm, we can discern a web of other emergent norms in international conflict management. These include not only conflict prevention but also norms on humanitarian intervention, post-conflict peace building and reconciliation, peace enforcement, and peace maintenance.

In the context of this study, norms are defined as standards of acceptable and appropriate behavior, or shared understandings on standards for behavior. Norms, once internalized by actors in the international community, can also be viewed as established practices and codes of conduct. Norms also entail the belief that there are shared values and principles. While they do not exclusively determine action, norms create the permissive conditions that enable a particular action. It is important to note that newly emergent norms tend to compete with already firmly entrenched norms. This is the case with the norm of sovereignty and non-intervention that directly conflicts with emergent norms of limited sovereignty and humanitarian intervention. Therefore, norms are not equal when it comes to their influence, their salience, and their acceptance by a critical number of international actors (Finnemore, 1996; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Flynn & Farrell, 1999; McCoy & Heckel, 2001; Ingebritsen, 2002).

Norm theory provides a powerful analytical tool for explaining the emergence of new norms and practices in international politics and the normative environment in which such changes occur. New practices and norms have their origins in ideas, defined here as principled beliefs. Such principled beliefs spell out what is right or wrong, just or unjust, and what ought to be (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993). According to Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), studies on norms demonstrate how political reality gets created on the basis of people’s ideas about what ought to be and what is good. Moreover, they contend that significant changes have come about in world politics because of individuals with principled commitments. There are plenty of examples of such changes based on the construction of new norms, such as the abolition of slavery, women’s rights, decolonization, the anti-apartheid movement, humanitarian intervention, humanitarian law, and the protection of minority and group rights.

One of the most potent examples of how principled beliefs underlie the construction of norms is that of human rights. The emergence and subsequent internationalization of
international human rights norms, now widely accepted in the international community, can be traced to the aftermath of World War II. The European experience of genocide, systematic mass killings, torture and arbitrary detentions gave rise to the idea—and eventually a new norm—that there was a responsibility to protect human rights through internationally-agreed upon regulations and policies (Sikkink, 1993; Risse, Ropp, & Sikkink, 1999). The aftermath of World War II also facilitated the emergence of norms that promoted peaceful change in Europe. These were a set of clusters of norms that entailed integration as a means to peace in Europe and reconciliation among former enemies. These norms of peaceful change, if one may call them so, supplanted those norms and behaviors that permitted the use of violence for settling disputes and conflicts of interests. What these examples illustrate is that changes in the behavior of states were driven by normative agendas and concerns.

Empirical research on norms demonstrates that norm advocates or norm leaders consciously construct or build norms. This is done primarily through calling attention to particular problems, often through the construction of cognitive frames—that is, through the use of particular language that enables the naming, interpreting, and dramatizing of such problems or issues. Norm advocates share principled beliefs and commitments as to appropriate or acceptable behavior, and seek to make lasting and radical changes in international behavior. Seen in this context, norms can be understood not merely as constraining behavior, but rather as enabling particular action that may otherwise not occur (Finnemore, 1996, Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Flynn & Farrell, 1999).

There are contending perspectives as to why new norms emerge. Some scholars believe that they are the result of social learning and societal pressures, as was the case with the anti-slavery norm. Others argue that new norms emerge through some cataclysmic event as happened with the human rights norm that emerged gradually after 1945 out of the genocidal experience in Europe (Crawford, 1993). Norms also emerge from already existing webs of international norms; in this case, such emergent norms stand a better chance of being successful in being adopted internationally (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; McCoy & Heckel, 2001). Three casual factors have been associated with the emergence of new norms: changes in the global environment such as major systemic transitions or dramatic events; social processes that have taken place on a global level, such as the increase of social interaction among actors and the diffusion of information; and internal developments within states, particularly when it comes to motivational and cognitive processes of leadership or other changes in the domestic environment (Kowert & Legro, 1996).

The evolution of new norms can be traced through stages. In the first stage of a norm life cycle, norm advocates are actively engaged in building norms. Often this is accomplished through the creation of an organizational platform from which the content of a new norm can be articulated and promoted. This is also referred to as the awareness-raising and advocacy stage. Important in this phase are three processes: the use of cognitive frames by norm advocates to identify and widely publicize a particular international problem that needs to be addressed and changed; increasing levels of activism on the part of norm advocates; and the support of critical states and platform organizations, either in disseminating information, in
providing financial assistance, or in assuming crucial leadership. The objective in this stage is to persuade other states and actors to adopt new norms. Stage 2 entails the acceptance and institutionalization of a norm through the development of policy and legal instruments; in Stage 3, one can witness the internalization of a norm, meaning its widespread adoption and adherence through the creation of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms which are intended to guarantee norm implementation over time (McCoy & Heckel, 2001; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

It is argued in this article that the norm of conflict prevention with regard to its growth process is solidly situated in the first stage. However, it is making its way into the second stage, given that we can already observe the development of policy instruments that allow for some implementation. Even though stage three is not going to be reached any time soon, what is demonstrated in this article is that the OSCE and the UN have been playing a major role as norm leaders when it comes to the construction of a conflict prevention norm. The following analysis highlights the role of these two institutions in the evolution of a conflict prevention norm.

The OSCE: Taking the Lead in Norm-Setting

No other regional organization has carried conflict prevention as an emergent international norm as much forward as the OSCE. There are several reasons why the OSCE has been at the forefront of constructing, advocating, and implementing new international norms, not only in conflict prevention, but also in crisis management, post-conflict peace building, and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. For one, the OSCE is a unique institution with a highly innovative character. It takes a comprehensive approach to security and its mandate is extensive enough for it to function as a cooperative security organization with a broad security agenda. Moreover, the OSCE is a strictly political organization with a small institutional structure, allowing for greater flexibility than some other international organizations. While OSCE decisions are not legally binding, its member states have over time agreed collectively and as a matter of choice on a number of norms through which security can be maintained and conflict can be managed (OSCE, 2000; Zellner, 2002). These rules and standards are politically binding and laid down in a series of documents, even though OSCE participating States may at times disregard their commitments.

According to Gregory Flynn and Henry Farrell (1999), there are “no historical precedents” for the type of “constructive intervention” as practiced by the OSCE, and the normative foundation that was created as early as the 1970s. This normative framework has since then been expanded, and it underlies the “constructive” or “cooperative” intervention that the OSCE is engaged in (Zellner, 2002, p.16). Moreover, the OSCE is perceived as having the necessary legitimacy to manage conflicts—its existing institutional mechanisms for conflict management have been legitimized by its participating States through collective decision-making and consensus (Flynn & Farrell, 1999). It is this high level of legitimacy that enables the OSCE to intervene in the internal affairs of member states (Zellner, 2002, p.16). The OSCE’s experiences with conflict prevention and conflict management can be traced to the
organization’s humble beginnings as an international regime in the early 1970s. Since the OSCE’s history is already well documented (see Bloed, 1993; Heraclides, 1993), it suffices here to only briefly outline the earliest attempts of actively building, advocating, and implementing new international norms.

Founded in the summer of 1975 through what became known as the Helsinki Final Act, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), as the OSCE was named then, was to function as a forum to facilitate East-West dialogue. Its preventive capacity rested on the idea and the necessity to build constructive and cooperative relationships on an interstate level in the Cold War era. It has been documented that this relationship building as a preventive mechanism was successful in the transformation of the East-West conflict (see Thomas, 1999). The Helsinki Final Act, adopted during the Helsinki Summit (30 July to 1 August 1975), constitutes the initial normative framework on which the OSCE still rests. It laid down a number of agreed upon norms such as refraining from the threat or use of force, the inviolability of frontiers, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and respect for human rights. It also introduced confidence-building measures that were to assist in the promotion of peaceful change (OSCE, 2000).

When the Cold War ended, the CSCE was transformed from an international regime to a regional security organization, and became increasingly engaged in the prevention and management of conflicts, albeit now primarily on the intrastate level. The Paris Charter for a New Europe signed on 21 November 1990 during the Paris summit created a number of permanent bodies and institutions, such as the Secretariat, now in Vienna, the Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and the Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna. During the Berlin Council Meeting in June 1991, the CSCE also created a special mechanism for emergency consultations in times of crises. This so-called “Berlin Mechanism” was used for the first time during the Yugoslav crisis. Then in December 1992 the post of the Secretary-General was created and, in 1993, the Permanent Committee (in 1994, renamed “Permanent Council”), all of which were intended to expand the OSCE’s ability to engage in political consultation, dialogue, and decision-making, particularly when it came to conflict and crisis prevention.

One of the most crucial documents for the development and institutionalization of a conflict prevention, early warning, and crisis management capacity was the 1992 Helsinki Document, adopted during the July 1992 Helsinki Summit. In it, two principal instruments of conflict prevention and crisis management are specifically outlined: 1) fact-finding and rapporteur missions; and 2) peacekeeping missions—to be dispatched not in a peace enforcement capacity but more so in a preventive one, and to cover interethnic as well as interstate conflicts. The Helsinki Document also created the position of High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), an office that “provides early warning and ... early action at the earliest possible stage in regard to tensions involving national minority issues which have not yet developed beyond an early warning stage....” (CSCE, 1992, p. 12). Originally a Dutch initiative, the creation of the Office of the HCNM meant yet another preventive mechanism that could be employed in the emerging stages of conflict. Accordingly, “early warning was to
be carried out by collecting information on national minorities, by exploring the role of all contesting parties, and, most important by visiting those states where conflict seemed imminent or where ethnic tensions continued to disrupt the political and social order” (Ackermann, 2000, p. 133). To this day, these visits are a particularly important element in the ability of the HCNM to issue early warnings of potential conflicts to the Chairman-in-Office. Also, one of the most important tools available to the HCNM are his written recommendations, which, although not binding, are crucial for preventive action. Thus the HCNM has been considered “a highly effective and cost-effective institution for conflict prevention” (Zellner, 2002, p.21).

Since the early 1970s, the CSCE/OSCE has not only been able to actively construct and promote a series of new norms. Moreover, it has been successful in the creation of policy instruments to move particular norms into the direction of institutionalization, or Stage 2 of the norm life cycle. This has been the case with the norm of conflict prevention. Since the end of the Cold War, the OSCE has implemented an impressive list of instruments and institutional mechanisms for the prevention of violent conflicts. These include the following: fact-finding and rapporteur missions, field missions, the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Conflict Prevention Centre and its Operation Centre, created at the 1999 Istanbul Summit, the use of a personal representative of the Chairman-in-Office, and ad hoc steering groups. Among the most commonly used instruments for conflict prevention are the field missions and the HCNM. The earliest field missions date back to 1992, including those to Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina, and Macedonia. There have also been missions to the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Baltic States, and Eastern Europe. A high concentration of field missions continues to be in South-Eastern Europe, with the largest at present being the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK).

Not all field missions have come as a result of preventive action. In the case of the more recent missions to Croatia, Kosovo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, their function is primarily within the domain of post-conflict rehabilitation, although one may argue that conflict prevention must also be incorporated into the post-conflict phase. In fact, the major focus of OSCE missions in the Balkans has now shifted to post-conflict rehabilitation. However, a few of the field missions, such as the one to Estonia and to Macedonia, were truly preventive in nature. Moreover, there are OSCE Centres in the five Central Asian republics that for the most part have a preventive core to deal with a variety of potential sources of conflict, including disputes regarding water resources, interethnic rivalries, particularly in the Ferghana Valley, deepening poverty and economic disparities, insurgencies and radical Islamic movements, and trafficking of arms, drugs, and people (European Centre for Conflict Prevention, 2002).

The OSCE Spillover Mission to Skopje is a particular good case in point in demonstrating how a preventive mission has been transformed into a peace implementation mission after violent conflict. But the case of Macedonia also provides an excellent case study for new practices in conflict prevention. It was in Macedonia that the CSCE/OSCE, from 1992 onward employed two preventive mechanisms that reflect the institution’s commitment to conflict prevention—the creation of a field mission and the regular fact-finding and mediation

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2 The CSCE became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on 1 January 1995
visits by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Although there was a short-lived outbreak of violent conflict in 2001, for nearly nine years, OSCE efforts were crucial for the peaceful conduct of majority-minority relations, largely through assisting in addressing ethnic grievances and demands, maintaining a moderating influence on the political elites, and early warning when interethnic tensions threatened to undermine conflict management efforts (Ackermann, 2000).

The United Nations’ Advocacy of Conflict Prevention

Although the idea that armed conflicts should be prevented underlies the Charter of the United Nations, it was not until several decades after the ratification of the Charter that the United Nations actually began to use consistently the terms “preventive diplomacy” and “conflict prevention” in any of its official statements. Moreover, throughout the Cold War, UN interventions were rather reactive than preventive in nature. The first time the term “preventive diplomacy” came into official use was in 1960 when UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld reflected on the limited powers of the United Nations during the Cold War. At the time, Hammarskjöld defined preventive diplomacy as a UN effort to keep “newly arising conflicts outside the sphere of bloc difference,” and to localize any conflicts so as to prevent a wider confrontation between the superpowers (UN, General Assembly, 1960). In this sense, conflict prevention was solely directed at preventing a war between the United States and the Soviet Union, but not at preventing armed conflicts altogether. It was nearly thirty years later that the United Nations initiated a shift toward advocating the prevention of violent conflicts, particularly those on an intra-state level.

One can trace UN advocacy for a global conflict prevention norm to the late 1980s when the General Assembly in its Annex to the 1988 “Declaration on the Prevention and Removal of Disputes and Situations Which May Threaten International Peace and Security,” formally recognized the role of the United Nations in the prevention of international conflicts. Moreover, it impressed upon member states to take direct responsibility for preventing conflicts. Therefore, the Annex spelled out a number of recommendations on how states could prevent disputes, most of which were centered on traditional diplomatic means, such as bilateral and multilateral consultations. It did however also envision a more active role for the Security Council in conflict prevention. It was to “consider, sending at an early stage, fact-finding or good offices missions or establishing appropriate forms of United Nations presence” (UN, General Assembly, 1988). Thus already in 1988 the United Nations captured the important essence of conflict prevention in that preventive measures had to be initiated in the early stages of a conflict. Much of this was reiterated in a follow-on document in 1991, the Annex to the “Declaration on Fact-Finding by the United Nations in the Field of the Maintenance of International Peace and Security.” Again, as in the 1988 document, the 1991 Annex identified fact-finding in the early stages as a major instrument for conflict prevention and vested the Secretary-General with more powers to initiate preventive fact-finding missions.
on his own (UN, General Assembly, 1991; see also Sokalski, 2003).

Awareness-raising and advocacy for preventive action received a critical boost when former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali made preventive diplomacy one of the centerpieces of his 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*. Disseminated widely in the international public domain, *An Agenda for Peace* came as a result of a Security Council request on 31 January 1992 for the Secretary-General to prepare for UN member states by July 1 recommendations for strengthening the UN capacity for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping. It was left to the Secretary-General to define what preventive diplomacy was, and what its parameters ought to be. Boutros–Ghali opted for a rather broad definition of preventive diplomacy, defining it as “action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.” Thus preventive diplomacy was to fulfill three critical objectives: prevention in the early stage of conflict, prevention of escalation, and containment once conflict had broken out (UN, Secretary-General, 1992).

Moreover, the report did not view preventive diplomacy in a vacuum or as an isolated UN activity. In *An Agenda for Peace*, the entire spectrum of a violent conflict cycle was addressed. Not only was the prevention of violent conflict to entail preventive diplomacy, but also post-conflict peace building measures such as peacemaking and peacekeeping. In fact, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping were regarded as “integrally related.” What appeared novel in this document was that it was considered no longer sufficient anymore for the United Nations to put all its energies into peacekeeping but that a wider range of instruments and activities had to be adopted that covered all stages of the conflict cycle. In that sense, the prevention of violent conflicts included both a pre-violent/early conflict phase, an escalation phase, and a post-conflict phase, making preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping part of a wider conflict resolution approach. Moreover, *An Agenda for Peace* suggested wide-ranging preventive practices, including: (1) confidence-building measures; (2) fact-finding missions by senior UN officials or members of regional or non-governmental organizations; (3) the strengthening of early networks, to include political instability indicators; (4) preventive deployment; and (5) the creation of demilitarized zones. While confidence-building measures, fact-finding, and demilitarized zones had already been established UN practices, early warning networks and preventive deployment were novel concepts, of which the latter was initiated for the first time only a few months after *An Agenda for Peace* appeared.

Although preventive diplomacy still remained a vague and mostly rhetorical concept, what was significant was that Boutros-Ghali had revived the notion of preventive diplomacy to make it fit the changed international climate. Moreover, norms advocacy took on a new dimension when in December 1992, the Security Council authorized for the first time in UN history the deployment of a preventive peacekeeping mission. The deployment came much by way of how Boutros-Ghali had envisioned it: a country that “feels threatened and requests the deployment of an appropriate United Nations presence along its side of the border” (UN, Secretary-General, 1992, p. 6). This country was the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,
whose President, Kiro Gligorov, appealed for a UN preventive force at the United Nations Headquarters in November 1992 in light of the potential spillover of violence from the other Yugoslav republics.

On 11 December 1992, Security Council Resolution 795, approved unanimously, authorized the immediate deployment of a preventive mission to Macedonia’s borders with Albania and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The UN mandate was explicitly preventive and justified on two grounds: 1) concerns over “possible developments which could undermine confidence and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or threaten its territory;” and (2) a request by the Macedonian government. In early January 1993, the first UN contingent arrived, later renamed, the UN Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP) mission. UNPREDEP remained in Macedonia for six years, and the mission was terminated on 1 March 1999, but only following China’s veto at the Security Council on 26 February 1999, after Beijing objected to Macedonia’s establishment of diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

However, what the UN preventive mission demonstrates, even though there has never been another incident of preventive deployment, is that the Security Council demonstrated some incentive and willingness to put preventive diplomacy into action when it was in fact urgently needed. That there have been no other such preventive deployment missions does not necessarily prove that the UN failed in its advocacy role. Rather the lack of more preventive action is due mostly to the fact that the newly emerging norm of conflict prevention is directly competing with the norm of sovereignty and non-intervention. We can observe a similar phenomenon when it comes to interventions for humanitarian purposes whereby the emergent norm of humanitarian intervention conflicts with the sovereignty norm.

Although there have not been any other preventive deployment missions, there are other indicators that conflict prevention as a newly emerging norm on the international level is moving slowly toward stage 2. For one, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has been fine-tuning the norms discourse. In fact, Annan has done much to advance the idea and practice of conflict prevention. Since assuming office, his objective has been to move the United Nations from a “culture of reaction” to a “culture of prevention.” Among the most comprehensive assessments on the UN capacity toward conflict prevention has been his 2001 report on the “Prevention of Armed Conflict” (UN, General Assembly, 2001). In the report, Annan calls on other actors—regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, member states, the private sector, and the civil society sector to cooperate with the United Nations when it comes to the implementation of a successful conflict prevention strategy. But he makes it also clear that member states must take responsibility for building a national capacity in conflict prevention, rather than relying solely on the United Nations to be the leading preventive actor. To that end, the United Nations is willing to provide member states with training in conflict prevention. This is merely one way in which Annan thinks that conflict prevention can move from the rhetorical to the practical level, and perhaps eventually become institutionalized.

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For example, the widely-read and prestigious U.S. journal, Foreign Affairs, published an article written by Boutros-Ghali, entitled “An Agenda for Peace.”

I am indebted to Henryk Sokalski, the former UN Assistant Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in Macedonia for this information. For a detailed analysis on the development of conflict prevention within the United Nations, see his forthcoming book, An Ounce of Prevention: Macedonia and the UN Experience in Preventive Diplomacy (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, 2003).
Conclusions

It is clear from the preceding discussion that one can speak of a conflict prevention norm only in the context of one that is newly emerging in the international environment. While the OSCE and the United Nations have indeed acted as norm leaders or norm advocates, participating actively in the constructing of a new conflict prevention norm, this norm, as far as its origins are concerned, remains in stage 1 of the norm life-cycle—the awareness-raising and advocacy stage. However, the OSCE has been more active and effective in pushing conflict prevention as a norm to its next stage. Thus, one can witness some progress toward norm acceptance and institutionalization, primarily because the OSCE has been successful in developing and implementing policy instruments for the operationalization of conflict prevention. Much of the OSCE’s success in that direction can be credited to the fact that it is a smaller institution and that it has already a long history of preventing violent conflicts through cooperative measures and agreements on a set of norms that determined the behavior of states during the Cold War era. Moreover, there are a number of states, including Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands that have taken the lead in norm advocacy when it comes to conflict prevention.

On the other hand, the United Nations, under the leadership of Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan, while influential in actively advocating conflict prevention as a new norm and practice in international conflict management, has met with less success in the actual implementation of conflict prevention policy instruments, largely because of objections of some of its member states who fear that preventive action can turn easily into unauthorized international intervention. It is here that the newly emergent norm of conflict prevention continues to compete with the norm of sovereignty and non-intervention. Moreover, effective prevention requires that preventive action plans and strategies be designed and that these must be institutionalized over time. The United Nations is still far away from this objective, even though Annan’s culture of prevention is envisioning such a course in the future.

Nevertheless, when it comes to the actual implementation of preventive action, it is crucial to also emphasize the complementary roles that the OSCE and UN have played both in norm setting and in practice on the ground. This was particular the case in Macedonia where the OSCE and the UN had similar mandates in terms of its monitoring component, and where both organizations also worked closely together on special projects that were preventive in nature.

As for future prospects, conflict prevention will most likely be successful in becoming fully institutionalized and internalized as a regional norm, since it is on the regional level, that this emergent norm is already becoming firmly entrenched in its second stage, that of a wider acceptance by national governments and other non-state actors. As to conflict prevention as an international norm, this remains a process in the making for some time to come, although it will be highly fascinating to observe and to document the pace in which conflict prevention as
an emerging international norm will move from being an idea to becoming a political reality.

References


RETHINKING CONFLICT RESOLUTION:
MATCHING PROBLEMS AND SOLUTION

Andrea Kathryn Talentino

Abstract

This paper addresses international conflict resolution and the disparity between the number of attempts at resolution and the number of successes. It argues that one flaw in efforts thus far has been a lack of understanding of local actors and motivations, leading to ineffective strategies for resolution. In regions where conflict crosses borders, contributes to the trend of politics, and involves mercenary sub-state actors, traditional methods of resolution may be ineffective. Purveyors of violence have little interest in the power-sharing and consensual politics that international actors often try to promote. They also have significant and negative effects on regional stability. This paper further addresses the need to reconsider approaches to conflict resolution, and the significance of taking better account of local circumstances in an effort to construct strategies to address them.

Introduction

Learning how to pursue conflict resolution more effectively is an important challenge for the international community. Since the end of the Cold War, a variety of international organizations have committed themselves to ending conflict. Unfortunately, it is still easier to produce a list of places where their efforts have failed than where they have succeeded. One problem is that internal conflicts present difficult circumstances. They include but are not limited to groups that view accommodation as a death sentence for their ethnic, tribal, or religious community; grievances rooted in historical claims of prejudice and persecution; leaders who do not feel bound to adhere to treaties or agreements; and often, weak states that cannot provide for their citizens, sparking competition for the most basic resources.

But the larger problem may be that international actors do not yet understand the ramifications of these circumstances. A better understanding of how the conflicts work and what groups want is essential to pursuing effective resolution. Oddly enough, that has not been the priority of international organizations. Instead, they have emphasized standard approaches, such as promoting consensus and power sharing, strategies that do not always fit the parameters of the conflict in question (UN 2001). It is time to reevaluate how international actors approach conflict resolution. If failure results in spite of an intervener’s best efforts, there is little anyone can do. But we need to ensure that the best effort is indeed brought to bear. In some cases strategies may not be well suited to the conflicts they address. The result is wasted time, money, and goodwill, and the persistence of violence that harms both individuals
and states.

The premise of this article is that conflict resolution may be better served by going from the bottom up. That is, we need to look at the conflict first and see what particular challenges and problems it presents. By doing so we may discover that the characteristics of many conflicts are not compatible with our approaches to resolution. Too often external actors have developed strategies in a vacuum, conceiving of an approach without considering how it might work in the local context. That failure stems from a larger theoretical divide. International actors, who are motivated by normative concerns rooted in peace and justice, pursue resolution efforts. Local actors who are motivated by realist concerns rooted in profit and power confront them. The two do not mix well (Buzan 2000; Posen 1993; David 2001). In states where political structures have broken down there are few avenues for citizens to express their preferences. Instead, those willing to use violence control agendas of negotiation. Rebel groups frequently care little for state stability and a great deal for personal enrichment; peace agreements that limit their impunity and enforce consultation do not interest them. Yet the international community bases its legitimacy on seeking reasonably just outcomes and is criticized when it fails. The problem is how to reconcile these two perspectives. Institutions and states pursuing conflict resolution need to be sensitive to local interests and traditions, but they also need to be able to limit the actions of local elites who may want to promote personal and possibly criminal agendas. We need to rethink international efforts, within the context of the conflicts they address, in order to make them more effective. Only then can we tailor our responses accordingly.

One weakness in current approaches to conflict resolution is that international actors often work from a top down perspective. Participants look at the organizations or groups undertaking the effort and try to figure out how they might work better, or in greater coordination. The focus is on the external actors and the attempt to maximize the resources they apply (human, financial, diplomatic, institutional) toward the conflict. The assumption is that if we can only make the organizations work better they will succeed (UN 2000; Brahimi 2000). Failures are ascribed to the inability of organizations to commit enough time and money to create a solution. Such an approach, however, may overlook crucial components of the problem. The obstacles to resolution may come from inside the target country, as well as from outside actors. A large portion of the problem may be not that organizations do not commit enough effort, but that they commit to the wrong things.

A second weakness of current conflict resolution efforts is that they often operate from a state specific perspective. International actors work to reform the institutions of the target state to create greater transparency and consensus among groups. That is a laudable goal, but also an inadequate one. Weak regions present cases where conflict is both internal and cross-border. We rarely see conflicts defined neatly by state boundaries or involving the attack of one government force against another. Instead, conflicts are internal, pitting dissident rebel groups against each other and the government. They are also transnational, with sub-state groups frequently crossing state lines and neighbors easily drawn into violence (Byrne & Irvin, 2000). Economic power may be coveted more highly than territory, with groups willing to
foment violence anywhere rewards are promised.

These realities present a different type of problem than we are accustomed to addressing. Territorially based resolution efforts will not succeed in regions where conflict is transborder, non-territorial and based in economic concerns rather than political ones. Likewise, single state efforts will not succeed because the nature of the conflict facilitates the involvement of neighbors. Conflict is both internal and regional, with resolution of one relying on resolution of the other. We need to change our approach to conflict resolution in order to address these issues. That means adopting different strategies that more closely reflect the peculiar logic of the conflicts we address.

This paper addresses these obstacles and the consequences for third party resolution efforts. It proposes a model of conflict that takes account of regional effects, both from the target to the region and vice versa. The second section analyzes the nexus between state formation and security and the particular problems faced by developing states in regime consolidation. The third section applies these issues to the case of West Africa, focusing on Sierra Leone as the target of stabilization efforts and analyzing the involvement and interests of other regional actors.

Broadening Approaches to Conflict Resolution

As mentioned above, efforts to lessen conflict frequently focus on the problems of one state. International organizations such as the United Nations (UN) identify weaknesses in political and economic structures and seek to develop more transparent and consensual processes of governance. In weak regions, however, such approaches may be of limited utility. They rightly focus on the conflict’s origin but ignore its proliferation. Intrastate conflict has interstate consequences. Even in cases where the most extreme violence occupies a small area or remains in one state, border raids, the availability of unemployed fighters, and the potential sponsorship or indirect involvement of sympathetic governments have broad effects. The problem does not flow in a single direction out from the center but creates consequences, which flow back to affect the initial focus or conflict. A more effective way to conceive of the problem is therefore with a bull’s eye model, with one or perhaps more states at the center and crisis and instability flowing outward and inward.
Simple though the model is, it emphasizes the effect of the target on the region as much as the region on the target. The issue is not simply state security but regional security. Neither can be sustained without the other. Using this perspective captures the spreading quality of conflict and acknowledges that implications exist for the region as a whole. The involvement of a state in the second circle—by hosting insurgents, providing financial assistance to belligerent groups, trafficking in arms, or a number of other activities—might then spark actions in the third circle to support or counteract those in the middle, or simply encourage unrest in third-circle states. That in turn can alter the fortunes and possibilities of the groups that initiated the violence. This is all the more likely in states with strong societal divisions, where domestic factions might seek support from external sources or use other conflicts to encourage instability at home. The spreading circles could, in a worst-case scenario, create new bulls’ eyes, which then overlap with the initial source of conflict.

The proposed model highlights several relevant issues for regional security and potential conflict resolution. First, it illustrates the fact that regional instability most often has one or more specific loci. Though the effects are broad, the sources are often more limited. Second, it captures the radiating nature of spreading instability, with crisis widening as it moves out of the originating state. Third, it highlights the potential role of neighboring states, since their responses to conflict may have a significant effect on either where it begins or how it spreads. Finally, it may help conflict resolution efforts focus on containment as a function of resolution. The broader the conflict becomes the more difficult the solution is likely to be. Limitation and containment are, therefore, an important first step in resolution.

This paper uses West Africa as a case study for analyzing these issues because it highlights both the complicity of neighboring states and the bi-directional effects of instability. The state currently the target of the most intense conflict resolution efforts in West Africa is Sierra Leone. The country has been experiencing civil war since 1991, but conflict resolution efforts did not begin until the democratically elected president was ousted in 1997 and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) installed a peace enforcement operation, now taken over by the UN. The country is characterized by unrest but is in the midst of a tenuous peace agreement. The broader region hosts a wide swath of conflict and is the focus of conflict resolution efforts by both international and regional organizations. Conflict transcends borders, with each setback or advance in one country creating consequences elsewhere. It thus provides a good test case for assessing the connections between state and regional security. This is also a region with very limited absorptive capacity in the sense that its fragility limits its ability to adapt easily to change.

Finally, West Africa is a region that highlights the clash between normative and realist interests. Concern for the region’s stability is widespread, particularly since the relative weakness of states in the region heightens their vulnerability to violence. The local purveyors of conflict are motivated by greed, and use the region’s lucrative resources for personal advantage. They operate “shadow states” by focusing on extracting benefits, developing supporters through a policy of selective reward, and using “security as a more exclusively
private good” (Reno 2000, p.57). This perception is not uniquely Western; citizens in the region also express frustration at the willingness of some leaders to foment violence and hijack state resources. Below those leaders is a vast network of mercenaries and officials who are motivated only by profit. Counteracting that are international and regional efforts to reduce conflict, protect individuals from violence, and build stable and consensual government in the target countries. While the international objective is to enhance stability and peace for the benefit of all, the warlords seek to enhance power and security for their own benefit. The two visions are incompatible and make resolution far more complex.

States and Security

Assessments of state security usually focus on cross-border crises—military threats or attack—as the primary sources of concern for state survival. Security is viewed as an external construct pertaining to threats from other states and the strategies employed to increase military, economic and political power to meet those threats. The security dilemma defines in part the challenges states face, but also the interstate nature of security (Buzan 1983; Graham 1994; Jervis 1996). Likewise, the common understanding of the state itself relates to Western style entities with clear divisions and means of operation. Though wording may differ, all definitions emphasize the state’s institutional character, functions, and ability to monopolize and use force. As Joel Migdal describes it, a state is a set of organizations with the ability to regulate the actions of its citizens and implement its own decisions (Migdal 1994).

These definitions change, however, when we analyze the particular issue of security and states in the developing world. Mohammed Ayoob highlights competing foci of authority as a problem for Third World states, with society weaker than the state in terms of coercive capacity but equal to the state in terms of legitimacy (Ayoob 1992). These competing internal elements pose challenges to the regime’s longevity that may be more salient than external challengers. Realism applies here in the domestic context because leaders are preoccupied with maintaining their power and security vis-a-vis internal challenges. This situation exists because of the broad international consensus on the territorial integrity of states, a concept particularly relevant in Africa. At the time of decolonization African leaders accepted the territorial definitions then existing as the fundamental basis of statehood (Herbst 2000, pp. 103-6). Though there are some examples of actual or attempted border change—Eritrea, the Ethiopian-Somali Ogaden dispute—borders are remarkably stable, particularly considering the weakness of many African states. That means that while the incentives and opportunities for external attack are held in check by international norms, internal strongmen and would-be leaders have few constraints because the state must rely on force rather than legitimacy for its rule. African leaders face the same type of challenges from within that are usually associated with interstate interactions. The primary and continual task is to secure and maintain one’s own position against challengers. Any concept of security applied to the Third World must take account, therefore, as Amitav Acharya points out, of the need for physical protection of the state structure and maintenance of the legitimacy of the regime (Acharya 1992, p. 143). While external security is relevant, real threats come from primarily inside rather than outside the state.
That reality creates what Ayoob calls a “security predicament,” where interstate conflict is “inextricably intertwined with domestic issues of state making, state breaking, and regime legitimacy” (Ayoob 1995, p. 49). Groups competing for recognition and power often have inter-state economic or political connections, helping the salience of domestic issues to flow across borders. And because other states face similar types of internal challenges they may be quite unscrupulous about meddling elsewhere in order to secure their own domestic and regional positions. Neighbors may attempt to steal resources or extend support to a preferred faction or group, offering money, arms, or safe haven to opposition fighters. Nearby states are rarely disinterested observers in the face of power struggles. This is particularly true in West Africa due to the twin concerns of the francophone/anglophone competition and the hegemonic power of Nigeria. Neighbors may not create security crises, but they will exploit and manipulate weakness to improve their own position. Because bystanders so readily become participants, internal changes in states profoundly affect the regional balance by altering how that state participates as well as the encouragement or discouragement it offers to others.

The connection between state legitimacy and area security has particular effect in what Migdal calls cases of dispersed domination. These include places where strong societies with sharp lines of division (religious, ethnic, tribal, etc.) create a situation in which various actors compete with the state for authority in a variety of arenas (Migdal 1994; Job 1992). Michael Bratton describes a similar process through which societal actors either engage or disengage with the state (Bratton 1994). These challenges of state making and the failure to translate juridical statehood into empirical statehood leave a state with what Ayoob describes as two options: to revel in anarchy; or splinter into ethnically defined mini-states. Internal power struggles widen as leaders and challengers attempt to command resources that will allow them to consolidate their hold on power, reaching beyond the state in the process. As the case of West Africa demonstrates, state borders may become increasingly irrelevant in the drive for internal security, although the regional involvement is a by-product of the legitimacy contest.

This problem is exacerbated in Africa by the informalization of politics on the continent. Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz contend that a state develops when politics is emancipated from society and “constituted into increasingly autonomous political institutions” (Chabal and Daloz 1999, p. 5). They go on to argue, however, that this has never happened in Africa, creating a state that is “vacuous and ineffectual,” an empty shell that elites prefer not to institutionalize (Chabal and Daloz 1999, p. 14). Elites resist emancipating the state from society because the non-state is actually profitable, allowing them to control the dispersal of resources and thereby gain prominence and social status. Legitimacy rests on distributive imperatives, or what we might call the provide to survive rule, whereby elites command legitimacy on the basis of the benefits they can disperse to their clients. This principal of clientelistic accountability confers legitimacy on the regime, even though the state itself does not conform to Western expectations.

Chabal and Daloz (1999) also distinguish between two types of armed conflicts in Africa, the political and the criminal. Political conflicts they describe as straightforward
struggles for power, endowed with legitimacy because they are viewed, at least by their supporters, as the last resort for necessary political change. Interests focus on control of the state’s apparatus. Criminal conflicts, on the other hand, are not considered legitimate because the violence is perceived to result from the “private greed of war makers” (Chabal and Daloz 1999, pp. 82-3). This is the realm of the warlords, who can be described as businessmen of war who use violence as an instrument of economic activity and economic activity as an instrument of political control. Here the pursuit of power is purely for personal gain and often degrades the institutions of the state. William Reno (1999) focuses on this second category as a distinctive logic that develops in response to the problem of reform and the difficulty in maintaining authority. He postulates that de-institutionalization makes sense for some weak-state rulers because it allows them to command the biggest source of legitimacy, money, and create unofficial networks that constrain potential challengers (Reno 1999). The distinction is important because the type of conflict that afflicts a state is relevant to determining the effect on the region and appropriate strategies of conflict resolution.

The spreading of insecurity throughout a region holds implications for global security as well because of the humanitarian and aid related issues involved. The institutional emphasis on conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding reflects the rise of normative interests revolving around protection of individuals and responsible governance. It is growing more difficult for third parties not to take action in the face of extreme human suffering and widespread destruction. The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) contends that capable states have a responsibility to end conflict and suffering when it is possible to do so and there are no other options (ICISS 2001). Moreover, the rising emphasis on conflict resolution as an international expectation creates a growing imperative for involvement on at least a diplomatic level (Damrosch 1993; Reed and Kaysen 1993; Otunnu and Doyle 1996; Schnabel and Thakur 2001). This creates a three-layer model of security—domestic, regional, global, where each level has the potential to spill into the next and create the involvement of more states and multilateral organizations. But the trend for normative international involvement clashes with the realist pursuit of local power (Posen 1993; Snyder and Jervis 1999; Buzan 2000). Each side seeks markedly different goals, and views the problem in a fundamentally different way. That, along with the non-territorial nature of conflict, requires external actors to rethink how they approach conflict resolution.

These arguments have considerable significance for West Africa, a region that has experienced over a decade of unrest and been the target of several regional and international conflict resolution efforts. The endemic and spreading problem of instability in the region and the brutal quality of the various conflicts themselves have prompted international attention and slow but increasing commitment to finding solutions. This interest is spurred in part by the rapid spread of instability and normative concerns for human rights and state collapse. In 2001 the UN undertook an Inter-Agency Mission to coordinate its approach to the region’s instability and establish structures for working more closely with ECOWAS. One important element of this initiative has been to recognize the linked nature of many of the conflicts. The recommendations of the Mission, however, do not take into account the particular internal
crises of African states or the transborder challenges posed. It also assumes that local actors want the development of stable states. For example, it targets monopoly power as a problem and recommends more inclusionary politics (UN 2001). In states defined by criminal rather than political conflicts, however, such an approach may be irrelevant. Control of economic power lies at the heart of many conflicts (Reno 2000; Collier, 2000; Duffield 2000). Those pursuing criminal agendas use that control to enhance personal power and erode that of the state. They are unlikely to participate in strategies based on consensus and collective responsibility. Likewise, encouraging greater support for civil society initiatives, another recommendation, might do more harm than good. In countries experiencing tension between societal and regime pursuit of legitimacy it would simply intensify the conflict and encourage the spread of violence.

The consequences of these problems for conflict resolution need more careful analysis. The central claim here is that the transborder nature of conflict and the clash between international and local interests requires new thinking on conflict resolution. The type of conflict we face is more complex than we thought, and less related to state control. These problems need to be more directly addressed. That may help limit the widening of the bull’s eye model and ultimately lead to more durable third party efforts.

Conflict in West Africa

The Bull’s Eye--Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone lies at the center of crisis in West Africa. Although it is the focus of international resolution efforts, the country is only the first step in addressing the region’s violence. The International Crisis Group (ICG) describes Sierra Leone as lying “at the heart of a series of conflicts that risk forming an arc of violence from southern Senegal to the Ivory Coast.” Overall, the ICG considers this “a security nightmare for all West Africa” (ICG April 2001, p. i). These descriptions demonstrate that the problem cannot be solved by attention to a single country. The crises in other countries, including the Mano River Union members and Senegal, have links to factions from the Sierra Leonian war and their economic activities. The line of instability is caused by the problems of state consolidation in the region, criminal conflict, the presence of lucrative resources, and disaffected populations that have little loyalty to the state. Leaders and citizens alike exploit state weakness to gain wealth and the power it conveys. The more closely connected are the two, the greater are the incentives to encourage conflict. Savvy operators profit from the chaos it creates.

Two separate processes of instability afflicted Sierra Leone throughout the 1990s. The first was a civil war that began in 1991 and involved an internal insurgency operating in collusion with neighboring states. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) claimed to operate on an anticorruption platform but its activities soon proved otherwise. It quickly focused on gaining control of the country’s rich diamond mining areas and establishing smuggling operations. It also launched a campaign of brutality against citizens. The second source of instability was a series of coups, which brought periodic military rule. The military operated
with little accountability when it was not in power, and civilian presidents frequently relied on professional security agencies for control. This upheaval seemed to end in 1996 when President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was democratically elected, bringing four years of military rule to an end. His government was extremely weak, however, and relied on a South African firm for security. The military operated autonomously, with untrained and ill-paid soldiers often cooperating with the rebels. One year later the military reclaimed the government and forced Kabbah into exile in Guinea. The coup temporarily ended the civil war by creating an alliance between the military and the rebels. It also motivated intervention by ECOWAS, which inserted a military monitoring group (ECOMOG) the following day.

The ECOMOG troops were dominated by Nigerian forces, subsequently joined by personnel from Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, and Mali. Their stated purpose was to restore the weak but legitimate rule of Kabbah, by force if necessary. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) endorsed this position. While the UN did not officially sanction it, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, among others, admitted that force might be the only solution. ECOMOG troops were welcomed by the citizens and succeeded in toppling the junta in February 1998. Kabbah returned on March 10, at which time ECOMOG’s effort in resolving the crisis was praised and supported by the UN. The problem was far from over, however. RUF rearmed and retrained when it was forced back into the bush. Former soldiers, sometimes in alliance with RUF and sometimes working in independent bands, also fought the government. Fierce violence engulfed Freetown and ECOMOG in early 1999. The regional forces regained control over the capital but the security situation remained unstable. Success against the RUF required sustained offensives that ECOMOG did not have the manpower to mount. The national army was being reorganized and retrained by Great Britain but was still in no position to fight. The UN, ECOWAS, and independent heads of state mediated several peace agreements, all of which were broken by RUF. The most controversial was the Lome accord of 1999, which brought infamous RUF leader Foday Sankoh into government, gave him control over diamond mining, and offered amnesty to RUF fighters.

ECOMOG troops withdrew in late 2000 and were replaced by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), which took over primary responsibility for implementing and enforcing the peace process. Although international efforts were uncoordinated for some time, in early 2001 the UN imposed tougher sanctions on RUF sponsor Liberia, and a British commitment to defending Freetown made clear that military victory would be impossible. In May the RUF finally dropped its demand that the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) disarm and agreed to return to the disarmament process. By the end of 2001, nearly half of the former combatants had been disarmed, the cease-fire was holding, and government authority extended to the majority of the country’s territory. Kabbah was reelected in May 2002.

Sierra Leone is currently an example of success in peacemaking, although the ICG cautions that “the RUF’s commitment to peace is fragile and dependent upon sustained international pressure (ICG October 2001, p. i). Internal security has not yet been consolidated, and the preparation for the elections was rushed (ICG, December 2001). The potential threats
to peace come from both without and within. Inside Sierra Leone there are several groups, notably the Civil Defense Force (CDF) and SLA that could disrupt the process by seeking to gain greater power or position within the country. The CDF is mainly composed of a traditional hunting brotherhood called the Kamajors and was used by Kabbah to protect civilians from the army and the rebels. The CDF distrusts the army and resents the attention it gets from international actors. Its internal structure also appears to be fragmenting. The SLA has ruled the country before, and may have an interest in doing so again. The military has historically been unaccountable to government and has reason to oppose democratization. It also has some interests in common with the RUF. Prior to 1998 military personnel often moonlighted with the rebel force, earning the title of “sobel.” The SLA has colluded with RUF to avoid battle and participated in smuggling activities. Although being retrained and reorganized by the UK, the army inspires little confidence.

Externally the country is faced with the influence of President Charles Taylor of Liberia and tensions with Guinea. Taylor has fomented much of the unrest in Sierra Leone and, as will be described below, is attempting to spread instability. Involvement in the conflict is attractive, for Taylor and others, because of Sierra Leone’s lucrative diamond mines. Taylor, the RUF, the SLA, the government, and various quasi-independent mercenary groups compete for control over the mines. Trafficking in arms is another source of revenue, involving officials from several surrounding countries. Peace is not in the best interest of most of these actors because it would shut down their access to resources and prevent the sale of arms. Odd as it may seem to say, conflict has truly become a business enterprise in West Africa, providing an important revenue base for those who give it support and nurture.

Resolving the conflict in Sierra Leone is neither possible nor effective without addressing this wider network of relationships. Unrest has spread to Guinea and to Liberia, and is affecting Senegal and Guinea-Bissau as well. If we take Sierra Leone as the center of the bull’s eye we can begin to sort out the spreading nature of instability. Liberia helped create unrest in Sierra Leone, which in turn led to unrest in Guinea, which is now affecting Liberia. Guinea also has border problems with Guinea-Bissau and Senegal. The extension of conflict is not osmotic, but often a calculated move by leaders to alter their domestic or regional position. Liberia’s Taylor used the weakness he created in Sierra Leone to foment conflict in Guinea. He uses the RUF as a personal army to spread his influence, as discussed below. Guinea now seeks to settle the score by employing refugees and disgruntled fighters to exploit weakness in Liberia. The movement of former and current combatants throughout the region harms progress toward peace. A pool of mercenaries is in ready supply for anyone with the cash to pay them. Without concerted efforts to these regional problems the current success in Sierra Leone could turn out to be simply the eye in the storm.

The Second Circle--Liberia

Few places demonstrate the link between state consolidation struggles, internal conflict, and interstate conflict as clearly as Liberia. Liberia’s emergence as a regional force began with the election of Charles Taylor in 1997. Taylor’s assumption to the presidency
capped seven years of turmoil, instigated when he began an armed insurgency against President Samuel Doe in late 1989. The war led to widespread dislocation of the population and destruction of the state apparatus. The economy is extremely weak, with 80 percent unemployment and an enormous international debt (CIA 2001). Taylor has weakened rather than strengthened the institutions of the state, first as rebel leader and now as president, because it allows him to control the dispersal of resources and build his own sources of economic activity. Although numerous other factions developed during the war, Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) remained the most significant because of his ability to control economic resources. The NPFL controlled the majority of the country throughout the war, dubbed Taylorland, and used it to initiate illegal economic networks.

These ingredients combined to make the transition from war to peace very precarious and increased Taylor’s ability to shape the state at will. In some ways a true transition never took place because Taylor shifted the networks supporting his de facto regime to serve his official position. The “state” Taylor presides over is essentially a criminal network of organized violence, which “thrives in poor societies where politics is weakly institutionalized, where law and order is fragile and where the parallel economy is strong” (Chabal and Daloz 1999, p. 77). When Taylor ascended to the presidency the hope (albeit scant) of international observers was that democratic reforms would be at least partially consolidated, allowing the gradual strengthening of state institutions. The reality has been almost the reverse.

Taylor has a personal stake in every major business in Liberia, and directs the financial and security services (ICG April 2001). Any hopes that elections would bring further reforms have proven terribly misplaced. Businesses fled during the civil war, making it even easier for Taylor to take control of the economy. Domestic security is still very unsettled, with the government practicing the brutal suppression of its critics, including rape and torture. The hardships of squeezing out a living day by day have been increased by a new civil conflict between the government and Liberians United for Reconstruction and Democracy (LURD) which began in July 2000. The LURD is funded by and based in Guinea, and composed mainly of fighters previously affiliated with the United Liberian Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) faction from Liberia’s civil war. In February 2002 the group launched attacks on Tubmanburg, just 38 miles from the capital of Monrovia, prompting the flight of citizens to Cote d’Ivoire. Both Liberian government forces and LURD forces have committed what Human Rights Watch calls “war crimes and other gross abuses of human rights” (HRW May 2002). The attacks led Taylor to declare a state of emergency and rail against the UN arms embargo, imposed in May 2001, which he claims limits Liberia’s ability to respond. However, many aid workers inside Liberia suspect that Taylor may be using the insurgency to garner international sympathy and increase his power in order to gain a freer hand for the upcoming 2003 elections. While these suspicions are not proven, reports that army elements were rampaging in some of the most conflict-prone counties have added fuel to the fire (Tostevin February 14, 2002).

Liberia is defined by “the warlord pursuit of commerce” (Reno 1999, p. 79), which is detrimental enough within a single state. But the struggle for resources and power reaches
outside Liberia, co-opting cross-border commerce by political elites. Taylor has proven himself a master at using commerce as a means of gaining political resources. He perfected this tactic during the civil conflict and then transferred it to his political agenda when he took control of the state. Taylor has created a wide zone of conflict throughout the region by pursuing the atrophy of the state in favor of personalized control over criminal commercial networks. The networks that he commands, or allows others to command, are by their nature not confined to a single state. Instead they follow the movement of goods and resources and require collusion throughout the region to circumvent official controls. Even his security services are irregular, composed of dissidents from around the region and foreign mercenaries. Taylor promotes a style of power not defined by state boundaries that in many ways directly contradicts the traditional perceptions of sovereignty, authority, and control. He holds power because he commands money and resources and can use the promise of gain to entice others to join his networks. Though he rules a sovereign state and receives international recognition on that basis, Taylor’s legitimacy and authority are not connected to its territorial definition. His power is far more diffuse, extending beyond his borders to encompass a regional and informal style of power. Taylor has “innovated,” in the words of Reno, by moving away from the territorial logic of organization to create a political authority based on the private control of resources (Reno 1999, p. 91).

Taylor’s ambitions appear to extend well beyond Liberia. He uses the RUF of Sierra Leone as a proxy army, supplemented with mercenaries from various states, to pursue regional hegemony. Taylor funded the RUF during Liberia’s civil war and provided them with training camps in Liberia in areas under his control. He has been the primary sponsor of their war against the government of Sierra Leone, and has profited handsomely as a result through the illegal diamond trade. The economic networks he now controls were begun largely through this relationship during Liberia’s civil war. Even before he controlled the state Taylor earned approximately $75 million a year from taxes on the passage of diamonds, timber, rubber, and iron ore (Ellis 1999, p. 90). Although he has been forced to withdraw some sponsorship because of international sanctions, Taylor retains strong influence with the RUF. He is currently using RUF members to fight for him against the LURD, and has warned that he may carry the fight across the Sierra Leone border (ICG December 2001).

Taylor’s stated intent to use the RUF and access through northern Sierra Leone to attack Guinea appears to be part of a larger plan to control the Mano River countries (ICG April 2001). He justifies these actions because of Guinea’s known support and assistance to LURD, but there is also evidence that Taylor encouraged earlier RUF incursions into Guinean territory (UN 2000). Taylor has created a broad network of cronies engaging in illicit economic activity throughout the countries of West Africa. He also recruits criminals from Lebanon, Ukraine, Russia, and South Africa, creating a widespread culture of impunity and corruption and harming the economic development of his neighbors. Taylor’s ambitions are astonishing, particularly within the context of the restrictions of sovereignty recognized as controlling norms within the international community. He is actively exporting the criminalization of state structures, and providing incentives for neighbors and allies to collude
in the degradation of the state and informalization of politics.

Burkina Faso is a close ally, and is known to have personnel active with RUF. Cote d’Ivoire previously shared extensively in the booty to be gained from the smuggling networks, particularly in diamonds and arms, although its current government has distanced itself from Taylor. Niger is also now a key transit point for weapons to the RUF. Although weapons supplied to the RUF are purchased by arms merchants or brokers, most come through countries with governments sympathetic to the rebels. The transit of arms requires numerous cross-border shipments. In countries cooperating with Taylor all controls, legal procedures, and regulations on the export and import of military equipment have broken down. The arms brokers have the cooperation of border and customs inspectors, as well as the government licensing departments, to circumvent UN sanctions and even standard controls (UN, 2000). While such corruption may not be new in West Africa, its level of coordination has reached new heights under the influence of Taylor.

Taylor’s chief mediums for exporting regional insecurity are the timber and shipping industries. These remain his two main sources of revenue since the imposition of UN sanctions on the trade of conflict diamonds. Thus far the UN has resisted similar restrictions on timber exports. Through these structures Taylor is able to fund conflict in Sierra Leone and contribute to its spread throughout the region by distributing arms and increasing criminal activity. The two industries are clearly linked to the regional arms trade and the healthy revenue base of Taylor’s government. In fact, there is evidence that Taylor has increased the illicit timber trade in order to compensate for losses of revenue elsewhere due to the sanctions. The shipping industry is less elastic, but it has been implicated in the regional arms and diamond trades. Both are identified by Global Witness as “pillars” of financial stability to a regime which uses its funds to destabilize its neighbors (Global Witness 2001).

Liberia’s timber industry has expanded enormously during Taylor’s years in power, from annual production of 157,000m³ in 1998 to 934,000m³ in 2000 (Global Witness 2001, p. 3). There are two problems with this. The first is that the rate of production is unsustainable and is stripping the country of an important resource. The second is that while the amount of production in 2000 had a market value of at least $187 million, only $6.7 million was received by the Central Bank of Liberia (Global Witness 2001, p. 5). Most timber is smuggled out through Cote d’Ivoire, allowing the proceeds to go directly to financing arms shipments and other illicit activities. Taylor has even secured statutory backing for his commercial activities, passing a law that gives the president “sole power to execute, negotiate and conclude all commercial contracts or agreements with any foreign or domestic investor for the exploitation of the strategic commodities of the Republic of Liberia” (UN, 2000). He is using that authority to expand his regional smuggling networks and security forces. The UN found that “roads built and maintained for timber extraction are also conveniently used…for the onward shipment of weapons to Sierra Leone,” and that large amounts of the proceeds of the timber industry “are used to pay for extra budgetary activities, including the acquisition of weapons” (UN 2000, pp. 37, 44). Taylor has a total commerce monopoly in Liberia, and is extending that control elsewhere. Many of the logging companies have links to the arms trade either through the
direct supply of arms or assistance in funding and supporting armed militias for Taylor’s use. Several companies maintain their own private militias, which they also make available for “state” purposes.

The other way Taylor makes easy money is by renting his flag to ship owners, making a flag of convenience rather than of nationality. This concept of an “open register” was created in the 1940s, with the assistance of US business, so that US ship-owners could avoid onerous regulations in their home country. Taylor personalized this activity much like everything else, reducing legal controls and increasing his share of the revenues. The requirements for registering a ship in Liberia are extremely loose, and for that privilege owners are willing to pay high fees. As of 2000, Taylor received an estimated $15-20 million per year from the registry (Global Witness 2001, p. 32). The shipping registry is also a critical link in the smuggling of diamonds from Sierra Leone (in contravention of the UN embargo on trading conflict diamonds) and an important transit medium for other illicit diamonds. By using Liberian flagged ships and setting up fake companies in Monrovia, Taylor is able to export smuggled diamonds to Belgium and sell them as Liberian.

Although such networks existed long before Taylor, now they are explicitly used to fund regional conflict. He built and rules through a network of transnational bandits. Diamonds are traded for guns, and often provoke violence themselves in disputes over possession and payment. Many former combatants from the Liberian civil war remain committed to violence because of the limited opportunity for advancement in Liberia. They now roam between Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, engaging in mercenary activities and cutting into diamond smuggling (UN 2001). This is a source from which both Taylor and the LURD can draw. The Gambia, Guinea, and Cote d’Ivoire are closely involved in the illicit diamond trade (UN 2000). Nigerian military personnel serving in UNAMSIL may also be involved.

The effect of Liberia’s behavior on the West African region is quite profound. Taylor is using his position to spread personalized and non-territorial economic activities that encourage corruption in neighboring states and fund conflict. Liberia’s actions also harm the ability of ECOWAS to pursue effective conflict resolution throughout the region. The problem is most evident in Sierra Leone, where Taylor has supported and many argue directed the RUF even while playing a role in peace talks through the UN and ECOWAS. The latter’s ability to successfully resolve the crisis in Sierra Leone and restore regional stability, a purported goal, was undercut by Taylor’s commitment to exporting destabilization in a bid to extend his warlord style control. So too are the organization’s efforts in Guinea-Bissau, another focus of peacekeeping efforts. The peace now holding in Sierra Leone was the product of intense and continuous international effort by the UN, Britain, the US, and regional actors. That “success” has intensified problems elsewhere, however, creating a new pool of unemployed fighters for hire. Taylor is now redirecting the RUF efforts into Guinea, and members of a UN mission who toured the region in 2001 predicted further deterioration (UN 2001). Though ECOWAS member states are continuing their efforts to seek stabilization for the region, they have little chance of success.

Another problem is the effect Taylor has on relationships within the region. This was
Andrea Kathryn Talentino

evident even before he became president, when Taylor allies Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire squared off against Taylor opponents such as Nigeria. Even though his connections to those countries have diminished somewhat, Taylor’s networks have infiltrated many neighboring governments and provided incentives to politicians throughout the region to obstruct democratic reforms at home and limit the activities of ECOWAS in pursuing regional stability. Though ECOWAS is hardly credited with being the most effective organization, its conflict resolution efforts are important. No other organization has the interest or geographical position to address problems in the region. It also recently received increased UN backing. The UN has outlined an internationally supported role for ECOWAS in monitoring arms shipments, ensuring compliance with any UN embargoes, and providing frontline peacekeeping operations. If the membership is fractured between those nations seeking liberalization, or even the status quo, and those seeking greater informalization, its capacity to have any positive effect on the region may be destroyed. As Taylor’s networks expand and provide greater revenues it becomes harder and harder for nearby politicians to promote systems that demand limited rewards and extensive accountability. It is possible; therefore, that Taylor’s influence could gradually informalize the region.

Liberia’s emergence from civil war thus presents unambiguous negatives for the region as a whole. Prior to 1990 the problems of Liberia were mainly internal, with a political elite benefiting disproportionately from the state and repressing opposition. It was a warlord state internally, but that description did not transcend state boundaries. The emergence of the Liberian state under Taylor has produced insecurity region-wide. Not only is Liberia reveling in anarchy, but it appears to be encouraging the same throughout the region. Taylor is exporting the dismantling of state institutions by creating criminal networks that spread beyond Liberia and degrading the potential for positive reforms elsewhere. Sierra Leone and now Guinea are direct targets that he is actively working to destabilize. Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Niger and others are entwined with his networks in illicit trade. Taylor’s desire to build a criminal empire that transcends borders, and his willingness, even eagerness, to destroy existing states by fomenting violence and increasing the informalization of politics throughout the region has wide-reaching effects. The West African criminal cartel he seeks to create presents a tremendous challenge to both ECOWAS and the UN.

The Third Circle

The arc of conflict the ICG describes spreads from Senegal east to Cote d’Ivoire. Separatist rebels in the Casamance region of Senegal have waged a long standing, simmering feud against the government. Although the country remains relatively stable, the opposition is a source of potential exploitation for leaders or individuals looking to increase their own power. It also makes the country vulnerable to the meddling of external actors. Officials in Guinea-Bissau have been accused of supporting the rebels, fueling the conflict in Senegal and creating political crisis at home. Guinea-Bissau experienced civil war from June 1998 until May 1999, sparked by the collusion of government officials with illegal networks. The violence was triggered by an army uprising protesting the president’s dismissal of the Army
Chief of Staff over allegations regarding the smuggling of arms to the rebels in Senegal. That situation was resolved through international mediation and the holding of new elections in early 2000. The internal situation is very fragile, however, due to economic crisis and political weakness. Incidents on the Guinea-Bissau-Senegal border have been quite tense at times. Clashes have also extended to Guinea, leading to the deployment of an ECOWAS force to monitor the situation. Guinea therefore faces violence on two fronts—from the south and west via Liberia and Sierra Leone and from the north and west via Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. Guinea, one of the poorest nations in the world, is struggling even more as a result of hosting thousands of refugees from Sierra Leone. Although some found or built homes, many families are living on the streets of Conakry and other cities, contributing to Guinea’s economic crisis. Alongside the prospect of greater violence, the instability among these countries provides more fertile ground for extending illegal economic networks. The more there are areas where authority is disputed, the easier it becomes to move guns, diamonds, and other resources without controls.

One of the countries most vulnerable to the further spread of violence in the region and important for its control is Côte d’Ivoire. Rebellion broke out in September of 2002 and rebels now control the north of the country. A negotiated peace settlement failed to hold, several new rebel groups have emerged, and violence was continuing through December. Tensions began with the elections in 2000, when the government targeted political opponents of the regime as well as specific ethno-religious groups. Since then officials have actively incited ethnic violence. The introduction of national identity cards helped fan resentments, and the primary architect of that policy was killed in the September violence. The crisis is particularly important because Côte d’Ivoire had been viewed around the region as an exemplar of stability. Although a few officials in neighboring countries feared the potential of conflict, most still considered Côte d’Ivoire the next “big dog” behind Nigeria. Now there is tremendous concern about the effect of its collapse on the region, and fear that the loss of an important stabilizer may encourage the spread of violence.

The potential presence of mercenaries or smuggled arms is a serious problem that could exacerbate existing tensions. In the spring of 2001 Côte d’Ivoire closed its territory to arms transfers from Burkina Faso to Liberia. Now the Ivorian government has accused Burkina Faso and Liberia of aiding the rebels, and UN officials suggest there may be some truth to the charge (Reuters December 2002). There is a strong suspicion that outsiders are encouraging the late-developing rebel groups and perhaps providing fighters and weapons. The emergence of these new factions helped destroy the peace agreement brokered in October. Mediation efforts have been unsuccessful over the last two months, and regional leaders fear the crisis will spark broad destabilization, particularly if bands of fighters roam into neighboring countries. The problem is serious enough that ECOWAS is developing plans for a military intervention.

Burkina Faso is a particular point of concern because it is known to be indirectly supporting Taylor and the RUF by participating in arms smuggling. Benin is probably also
involved. Officials within these countries work with Taylor, either through the collusion of the
government or their ability to behave as independent contractors. They are an important part of
the culture of impunity that exists in the region, and a threat to any leader that hopes to impose
the rule of law. The loss of Cote d’Ivoire as a potential brake on arms smuggling is very
significant because it provides one more link in the regional chain of violence and aids the
spread of illegal activities. In spite of its perceived stability, Cote d’Ivoire proved very
vulnerable; weaker states can thus be expected to have even less resistance. The more
connections Taylor has, the harder it becomes to clamp down on his activities and limit the
spread of conflict. Corruption is enticing because it provides greater and more immediate
payoffs than democratic procedures. All the states in the third circle are therefore linked in
some way, even indirectly, by their connections to the corruption and gun-running that
characterize the region. They threaten to either erupt into greater violence, or to serve as agents
of further corruption.

**Ramifications for Conflict Resolution**

The circumstances of West Africa highlight several important ramifications for conflict
resolution efforts. One lesson is that the erosion of state sovereignty may not come only, or
even primarily, from the MNCs or global organizations usually implicated. Instead, we see the
development of state leaders who have an interest in diminishing rather than strengthening the
state. That development is counterintuitive because we usually think of leaders as those most
adamant about increasing sovereignty. Yet Liberia shows the reverse, the rise of a leader eager
to increase informalization in his own state and others because of the personal benefits of
monopoly control. And though most leaders in West Africa are not like Taylor, his pursuit of
informal political and economic power has harmful consequences for other states in the region,
forcing outside actors to rethink conflict resolution and peace building approaches. The local
commitment to establishing power without relying on the institutions of the state is a logical
response to the challenge of establishing legitimacy, but it conflicts with the international
effort to limit violence by strengthening processes of transparency and consensus. The reality
is that mediation may not work because there are no real enticements it could offer to someone
like Taylor. He has little interest in a stable state and rule of law; indeed, his power is
predicated on the reverse. Even if he agrees to negotiate he is likely to resist attempts to
strengthen state structures and to violate agreements with impunity.

A second lesson relates to the development of the state. Herbst (1999) details the
problems African states have with the extension of state authority and consolidation of power.
He attributes this to the quantifiable problems of large size coupled with small populations in
the pre-colonial period, and the philosophical acceptance of power as a relative concept that
wanes the further one travels from the center of the state (Herbst, 1999). Herbst’s model may
be useful in shaping conflict resolution initiatives where leaders, whether consciously or
unconsciously, construe power in a non-territorial manner and adopt non-traditional means to
extend their control. Conflict resolution must focus not on the state as outsiders wish it exists,
but in the context of the peculiar problems of authority and extension of power that African
states confront. Size is not a significant problem in West Africa, but extending control over distant areas remains difficult because of the weak nature of the state. That creates internal and external consequences. Internally it provides more opportunities to dispute the legitimacy of the state. Externally it allows leaders to extend informal networks and degrade the mechanisms of the state more easily.

This is in part the source of Taylor’s success. He can exert a non-territorial style of informal economic rule because of the diffusion of authority in many neighboring states. Approaches to conflict resolution must, therefore, focus on and accept the degree of informalization that exists, and its corresponding restraints on power. Then they can craft solutions within that context. International actors, no matter how committed, will not be able to create a strong, structured state fitting Migdal’s description. Nor should they try to, because imposing a Western-style state is simply not appropriate in this context. They should instead focus on addressing the problems of legitimacy and authority that lead to conflict. Building up sources of regime legitimacy within a state and decreasing the ability of leaders to reach beyond their borders for authority is an important first step. That will help local leaders build a more stable power base, and is something that citizens and officials actively wish for. Only then will leaders have the flexibility to address some of the competing interests within the state and develop structures incorporating participation and accountability.

Third, state boundaries are not entirely definitive of possibilities. The UN and ECOWAS need to break out of traditional approaches and recognize that initiatives need to address the transnational networks that feed and supply conflict. Trying to improve and rebuild government structures is not enough. This relates directly to the importance of the bull’s eye model proposed here. Focusing on Sierra Leone does not affect the connections between that country, Guinea, and Liberia, or those in the next circle of Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. In fact, in response to the peace process in Sierra Leone, many former combatants have become mercenaries in Liberia for either the LURD or government forces. The LURD in particular has recruited heavily from the CDF and SLA. Likewise, focusing on Taylor does little to limit the criminal timber and diamond networks he runs, allowing him to retain an independent means of support and power. Conflict resolution needs to transcend boundaries in order to be successful, just as criminal activity and violence do, and focus on limiting the ease of such behavior while increasing the penalties.

Fourth, we need to look beyond negotiation for solutions. The style of conflict discussed here employs “warfare as an instrument of enterprise and violence as a mode of accumulation” (Reno 2000, p. 57). Hypothetically assume that the UN and ECOWAS maintain the peace settlement in Sierra Leone—what then? That does not significantly affect the spread of violence or criminal behavior throughout the region. It does not limit the access to arms enjoyed by rogue elements that have participated in war in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, or Senegal. Nor does it restrict the illicit activities that fund pariah states like Liberia and provide strong incentives to leaders elsewhere to behave similarly. Conflict is likely to start anew elsewhere. The difficult answer, if we wish to achieve some measure of stability in the region, may be increased international control of customs regulations and oversight of military,
economic and business practices. Such actions are avoided because they intrude on sovereignty by restricting the right of a leader to direct policy. But failure to control these problems encourages illicit behavior and blurs the boundaries between states. Sovereignty is an important concept. However, it should not be allowed to protect the actions of leaders who pursue criminal conflict. If resolution of West Africa’s instability is a sincere wish, more aggressive and forceful actions must be adopted.

Finally, conflict resolution efforts should take careful consideration of second circle states and how they impact the conflict. Successful strategies need to accommodate that impact. Containment needs to be a central element. Leaders who are willing to abide by the rule of law and work toward regional stability should be rewarded. Those who seek illicit means of control should be sanctioned. One approach might be to establish sources of international development funds to reward countries that participate in resolution efforts. These grants could be used to fund a variety of programs that the government might want to pursue. Another approach could be to support military training and payment programs to prevent the collapse of discipline and morale that proved so dangerous in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Both initiatives could be undertaken through the UN mission in West Africa, with the goal of giving regional actors the capacity to pursue conflict resolution efforts while building stable structures at home. ECOWAS has demonstrated a commitment to conflict resolution, but needs assistance. The problem, of course, is that sufficient financial support is rarely forthcoming, even in the most extreme of circumstances.

Strategies also need to focus on limiting the effects of second circle states. Perhaps the most obvious possibility is to impose UN sanctions on the sale of Liberian timber, either by limiting the amounts it can sell or monitoring the practices of companies engaged in the timber trade. ECOWAS will then need support to monitor and implement the embargo. Unfortunately, the possibility of sanctions has not been debated seriously in the UN because of several nations’ desire to protect their own commercial interests. Another step may be, as noted above, to impose some oversight of customs procedures and practices. A final step could be to expand and aggressively implement disarmament programs throughout the region. All of these possibilities require international oversight and some degree of coercion. The process is proceeding slowly in Sierra Leone, but that could be for naught if the flood of arms and continued procurement strategies by Taylor’s government simply shift the focus of conflict or provide new arms to demobilized RUF personnel. Of course, all these programs are easier said than done, and are open to criticisms that they impinge on state sovereignty. However, more limited and conciliatory approaches do not seem likely to yield results.

Conclusions

International conflict resolution efforts need to be reassessed in order to make them more effective. Approaches to date have often focused on the organizations doing the resolving rather than the circumstances of the conflict in question. As a result, strategies often do not address the more intractable elements of the crisis. The problem of regional conflict in the developing world is closely intertwined with problems of state development and
consolidation. One consequence is that conflict spreads easily and can be significantly affected by internal changes in states throughout the region. A second consequence is that strategies of conflict resolution need to show sensitivity to the intra-interstate aspects of violence in order to craft workable solutions to regional crisis.

Too often, conflict resolution efforts focus on developing an inclusive political structure based on consensus and transparency. From a Western perspective that is an effective reform. But that strategy addresses the wrong type of conflict. In regions where criminal rather than political conflict is the problem, seeking political change will provide no relief. Those pursuing criminal conflict practice warlord politics focused on the control of economic resources. Their efforts will often transcend state borders and widen the culture of corruption to neighbors. Conflict resolution strategies must be prepared to meet those challenges with robust and equally transborder solutions.

Conflict resolution efforts need to be reassessed to take account of these regional problems. They must also reconcile the tension between normative approaches seeking justice and peace versus realist approaches seeking power and security. The incompatibility between the interests of international and local actors is an impediment to developing effective strategies. We need to recognize that mediation and political reform programs may be ineffective. Coercion, oversight, and international enforcement appear to provide the best solutions. That means not simply cracking down on conflict in particular states, but squeezing the networks that support and extend it throughout the region. Transborder problems cannot be solved through single state solutions. Over the last decade conflict resolution efforts have sought to facilitate rather than coerce; particularly in areas like West Africa that may be a waste of time and money. Success depends on transborder, forceful, and sustained efforts. But this raises a conundrum, because it also means that institutions and groups undertaking conflict resolution need to consider their goals carefully. In essence, the international community must pick its poison. Using coercion and force will lead to controversy over whether such methods are appropriate. But not using those methods may mean that conflict resolution always falls short of realization. That would be unfortunate for the conflict’s victims, and difficult for international actors to accept. These are hard choices, but also a problem that requires far greater consideration.

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Rethinking Conflict Resolution

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Endnotes

1 I presented parts of an earlier versions of this paper on September 19, 2002 as a public
lecture in the framework the Broad International Series 2002-2003 at Florida State University,
and twice in October 2002 at George Mason University, VA, in the framework of a seminar
sponsored by the US Department of State for international conflict resolution scholars and
practitioners, and in the framework of the Institute of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR)
Brown Bag Lectures Series. I have included lessons from the stirring and inspiring discussions
that followed these presentations in the actual paper.

2 “Intractable conflicts are conflicts that stubbornly seem to elude resolution, even when the best available techniques are applied”. (Intractable Conflict Knowledge website, 2002).

3 This concept was suggested by Burton (1986) as a way of addressing prevention of conflicts by working with their sources in transformative ways. Destructive conflicts are prevented when their deep and direct causes disappear or are not influential any more.

4 Framing is a psychological trait and a cognitive process that enables us to receive and organize information in patterns, which resemble cognitive maps. New information is sorted and interpreted while using these frames.

5 In this paper I use the phrase reframing in its neutral connotation - a significant change of frames.

6 I adopt Mitchell’s (2002) doubts with regard to a presumed wide gap between the devaluated “conflict resolution” phrase and the more recently introduced “conflict transformation” phrase, as well as his distinction between these: “Conflict transformation clearly assumes that major structural changes will always and inevitably be necessary conditions for any successful effort to deal with the conflict…. Relationships have to be replaced and rebuilt through deliberate and directed efforts, and reconciliation can only take place as a result of these efforts….” (p.24)

7 The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is now in charge with the protection of an estimated 20 million uprooted people. Since its establishment in 1951, this agency has helped an estimated 50 million people. Another UN agency, UNRWA, assists now close to four million Palestinian refugees.

8 Following research on many projects the World Bank was involved in during the last quarter of century, Michael M. Cernea and associates have developed and tested a model of impoverishment risks and reconstruction. This model includes eight interconnected components: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property assets, and community disarticulation. (Cerne and McDowell, 2000).

9 “In the Kossou Resettlement Project in The Cote d’Ivoire, evacuees were informed two years before the lake was impounded. All local chiefs were called to a meeting held in Yamoussoukro by President Houphouet Boigny, who personally led the campaign. The oustees were consulted about where they wished to be resettled, and their demands were taken in account” (Lassailly-Jacob, 2000, p.114).

10 Between 9 and 11 April 1948, over 100 Arab townspeople were massacred by yish paramilitaries in Deir Yassin near Jerusalem in the British Mandate of Palestine. Seems that Deir Yassin massacre was in a way an incident within a former revenge cycle. According to Hogan (2001), during the 1948 conflict, Deir Yassin was studiously honoring a Haganah (the Jewish community's forces which boasted many professionally trained and experienced soldiers) -sponsored agreement to refrain from hostilities with neighboring Jewish areas in exchange for protection from Jewish attack. Nevertheless the village was urged as a target by Yehoshua Goldshmidt the operations chief of the Irgun (Irgun Z’vai Leumi - National Military
Organization one of two small right-wing Jewish forces, which operated as independent guerillas and were referred by the Jewish Agency as "dissidents"). Goldshmidt, raised in Givat Shaul a Jewish Jerusalem's suburb, had been sworn by his father to avenge armed attacks emanating from Deir Yassin against Givat Shaul during Arab-Jewish-British strife of the 1920s and 1930s.


13 “One typical habit in conflict is to give very high priority to defending one’s own interests. If Cain’s interests clash with Abel’s, Cain is inclined to ignore Abel’s interests or actively to damage them… but this is not the only possible response… [The] fifth alternative implies strong assertion of one’s own interest, but equal awareness of the aspirations and needs of the other, generating energy to search for a creative problem solving outcome” (Miall et al, 1999, p. 5).

14 For example, Edward W. Said, Palestinian scholar, criticized the peace process since its first phases. In “The mirage of peace” (1995, p. 413) he wrote: “Those of us who fought for Palestine before Oslo fought for a cause that we believed would spur the emergence of a just order. Never has this ideal been further from realization than today. Arafat is corrupt. Hamas and Islamic Jihad are no alternative. And most Palestinian intellectuals have been too anxious to bolster their own case… I do not pretend to have any quick solutions for the situation now referred to as ‘the peace process’, but I do know that for the vast majority of Palestinian refugees, day laborers, peasants and town and camp dwellers, those who cannot make a quick deal and those whose voices are never heard, for them the process has made matters far worse. Above all, they may have lost hope… “

15 Focusing on the peace leaders' discourse Jamal (2000) claims that changes in the traditional narrative would threaten Israeli society's self-perception, and therefore the old frames sustain. This statement is consistent with the definition and characteristics of intractability this paper elaborates on, but does not exclude reconciliation and transformation. Yet, Jamal (p. 36) reminds us that “Based on the biblical belief that God gave the land of historic Palestine to the Jews, the official Zionist narrative has at its core the divine bond between the Jewish people and the ‘Land of Israel’ and concludes that “This being the case, the existence of other peoples on that land, from the Zionist perspective, must have been temporary”. I would link this statement with the “actual return” query and suggest that the “divine bond” to ALL the “Land of Israel” and the “right of return” be reframed into complementary myths, as opposed to actual desires, claims, aims and plans.

16 Muhi ‘Abd al-Hadi and Jan de Jong (2001) proposed an extension of the Palestinian territories to include the Galilee and some areas of the Negev in order to absorb portions of
refugee populations, without denying the remainder’s ROR. This solution aimed also to resolve the Israeli fear of altering the character of the Jewish state.

17 I adopt the inclusive way Lederach (1997) comprehends “peace-building” as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform a conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships.

18 “The key is understanding that failure is how we improve. You do this not by ignoring the failure, but by recognizing it, examining it thoroughly ... Companies, government agencies and even entire professions can learn from failure in the same way. Civil engineers, for example, have analyzed catastrophes and integrated lessons learned over time into the design and construction of future projects” (Michael D'Antonio, 2000, reporting on an interview with Henry Petroski of Duke University).

19 According to Argyris and. Schon (1978) Double-loop learning occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization’s underlying norms, policies and objectives.

20 Cohen Ben-Ami (2002) relays on some of these experiences and on insights from development induced displacement and resettlement for another Middle Eastern displacement case – Pre-planning an evacuation of the Jewish population of the Golan Heights in the context of the signing of peace treaties with Syria.

21 See also in Arzt (1997) solutions that engage the Arab countries in solving the Palestinian Refugees mega-problem.

22 Arzt (1997) also addressed components of permanent regional absorption of the Palestinian refugees, Palestinian population absorption target for the different areas of the Middle East, as well as compensation concerns and options for international permanent absorption.
Ariella Vraneski

Abstract

The Palestinian refugees issue is at the core of the Arab-Israeli multi-faceted conflict. This paper relies on a study which investigated the multi-level complexity of the Palestinian refugees case to identify the causes and consequences, and some prospects for its resolution. The study analyzed and compared frames and narratives used by the different parties at several stages of the investigated case, and also integrated lessons from two kinds of involuntary migration. During the Israeli/Arab peace process, a transformation from exclusionary narratives and one dimensional “either/or” solutions into a multi-optional synergistic environment was evident. The parties’ frames changed again while this protracted conflict re-escalated. This paper focuses on the Palestinian refugees claim for repatriation, and portrays a process of framing and reframing, of narrative co-creation and re-creation, and to a lesser degree of the creation of alternative options and solutions. The essay links insights from conflict analysis and resolution, and regional planning and development. It introduces an interactive model regarding the interconnections between reframing processes and transformation of intractable conflicts, and concludes with some lessons for this and other population displacement cases with regard to prospects for conflicts mitigation and for voluntary resettlement.

A major obstacle to the translation of knowledge to practice is disciplinary division within academia and fields of knowledge. In translating research insights from one discipline to another, a major barrier is the conceptual and theoretical baggage of each, which undermines the possibility of scientists talking to each other across corridors. But it is within the power of the research communities themselves to either stubbornly maintain or gradually demolish such barriers.

(Voutira and Harrell-Bound, 2000, p. 75)

Palestinians and Jews alike present themselves as victims, with a history of degradation and displacement. Both sides see themselves as endangered, and therefore justified in striking back.

(Blumenfeld, 2002, p.111)
Ariella Vraneski

Introduction

This paper aims to analyze a number of causes and consequences of population displacement, trying to bridge some of the barriers mentioned above. I focus on the population displacement aspects of the Israeli/Palestinian intractable conflict and on some prospects to remedy what many perceive as the core problem of the Arab-Israeli multi-faceted conflict. The paper relies *inter-alia* on issues related to my involvement in the Jewish-Arab reconciliation process, particularly to those linked to land and land-use, environmental management and inter-cultural concerns. Like Voutira and Harrell-Bound (2000), I have found that "unnecessary mental compartmentalization still undercuts conceptualization and research.". I would add that this mental process undercuts also sensitive, sound and effective mutual-gain oriented interventions and conflict prevention.

In this paper I address the mental compartmentalization phrase within the broader phrase 'framing' and also use 'framing' and its complimentary – 'reframing' with regard to different interpretations of the Palestinian refugees problems and optional remedies. I refer to three interconnected types or levels of framing and reframing. The first focuses on narratives. It addresses frames that various sides use to tell, create and recreate their stories/ histories. The second tackles prospects of reframing the nature of the conflict, specifically self and others’ identities. The third addresses prospects of reframing problems in ways synergistic solutions may develop, and specifically the transformation of identity-based intractability into development-based win-win scenarios. This third level relies heavily on regional planning and development studies. I further suggest an interactive model that displays and initially explains the interrelations between the reframing types sequence and conflict reconciliation and transformation processes. This paper focuses on the narrative reframing phase, the first critical stage for further reframing.

The first part of this essay reviews the study’s setting, and the literature relevant to the interconnections between intractable conflicts, reframing types/levels, reconciliation and conflict transformation. It introduces a model aimed to describe and explain these interactive interconnections; and presents lessons from other involuntary population displacement and resettlement settings (following Cernea, 1999; Cernea and McDowell, 2000) that might be useful to the Israel/Palestine case. The second part portrays the origins of the Palestinian conflict-displaced population mega problem, and analyses the dynamic process of conflict framing, reframing and re-reframing that occurred during the last decades. The third part explores prospects of mutual reinforcement of the reframing types/levels, and elaborates on lessons from this study.

**Can an identity-based intractable conflict transform into a synergistic development scenario?**

*The Israeli - Arab Conflict and the Palestinian Refugees*

The Israeli-Arab conflict started as a clash of Jewish and Palestinian national movements. Both claimed the same tiny piece of land in previously Ottoman, and then British-ruled Palestine (see map no. 1 and 2) This conflict became a full blown interstate war between Israel and Arab states in 1948. About 800,000 Palestinians became refugees during that war. This displacement started a long and sad impoverishmensaga, and the Palestinian refugee’s mega-problem in general. The six days war, added in 1967 about 300,000 Palestinian refugees to the 1948 war refugees’ population (see table no. 1).
Palestinian refugees and their descendants number today around eight million, about ten times the number of the originally displaced population. About half of these people are registered refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, receiving education, health, relief and social services from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East – UNRWA (2002). More than half a century after the Palestinian refugees issue emerged on the Middle Eastern national and regional agendas, many still live in dejecting, demoralizing conditions of deprivation in refugee camps. This case seems to be the most intractable population displacement problem in contemporary history.

The Palestinian refugees issue shares similarities with many population displacements worldwide. Both similarities and differences bring forth insights for future research and practice. Furthermore, this protracted case portrays why any effective remedy to population displacement problems should take into consideration both the relevant accumulated multidisciplinary knowledge, and the specific case characteristics. These features relate both to the context (including the issue’s history/histories; international, regional and organizational political background, and their evolution) and to the content (case, and time-specific problems; the views, concerns and needs of all influenced and influential parties). Shortcuts, such as applying a general model, or sporadic transfer of concepts and tools from one cultural and political environment to another, might be hazardous in the long run.

For several decades the Israeli-Palestinian arena has served as a population displacement and replacement “real scale” laboratory. To some extent also it has been a conflict dynamics laboratory. This paper portrays several insights from this arena, enlightening more paths to be explored. It looks at the Palestinian refugees protracted problem and offers some alternative points of view, aiming to add a modest contribution to the search for paths to end the Palestinian – Israeli tragedy.

The Middle East

![Map. No. 1.](image1)

Israel

![Map. No. 2.](image2)
Frames and Framing. Frames are images or internally coherent perspectives that people use to make sense of an aspect of their perceived reality within a perceivable focus. Framing is a sense-making activity. Parties in a dispute develop considerably different frames about what the dispute is about, who should do what about it, why, how and when they should do it (Vraneski and Richter 2002).

While the number of potentially possible interpretations is very large, our world image usually permits us to see only one – and this one therefore appears to be the only possible, reasonable, permitted view. Furthermore, this one interpretation also suggests only one possible, reasonable, permitted solution. (Watzlawick 1978 p. 119 in Moore 1986 p. 175)

Several writers have addressed the gain / lose or positive / negative framing patterns in particular (for example Bazerman and Neale 1992).
Table No. 1 - Territory, Demography and Economy -. Basic Data Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries/territories</th>
<th>Area sq. km</th>
<th>Population in 2001</th>
<th>Population growth rate - % per year</th>
<th>Density people per sq. km. in 2001</th>
<th>UNRWA registered refugees (in 1950); in 2001</th>
<th>Registered. refugees rate in 2001</th>
<th>Unemployment rate est. in (---) %</th>
<th>GDP $ per capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the Middle East</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1,001,000</td>
<td>69,536,000</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(2000). 11.5</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza Strip</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>1,178,000</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>3270</td>
<td>(198,000). 853,000</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>(2000). 40.0</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>92,300</td>
<td>5,153,000</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>(506,000) 1,640,000</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>(1999)**15.0</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>20,770</td>
<td>5,938,000</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(2000)... 9.0</td>
<td>18,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>3,628,000</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>(127,600). 383,000</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>(1997). 18.0</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>1,960,580</td>
<td>22,757,000</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Arab. Rep.</td>
<td>185,180</td>
<td>16,729,000</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>(82,000). 392,000</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>(2000). 20.0</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bank</td>
<td>5,860</td>
<td>2,091,000</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>(*) 607,000</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>(2000). 40.0</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>9,976,140</td>
<td>31,593,000</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(2000)... 6.8</td>
<td>24,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>41,530</td>
<td>15,981,000</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(2000)... 2.6</td>
<td>24,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* administered as part of part of the Jordan field 
** 15% - official, 25-30% - actual
Refocusing and Resolution of Intractable Conflicts. Many processes of conflict resolution include one or more stages during which there is deliberate reconsideration of existing frames. According to Schon and Rein (1994), intractable conflicts by definition refer to disputes in which the opposing parties hold conflicting frames. Several writers view shifts from intractability to tractability as preconditions for resolving an intractable conflict. Reframing and transformation are suggested as means to meet this goal (Schon and Rein, 1994; Kriesberg, 1998). According to Lederach (1997), the transformation of protracted conflicts focuses on processes of reconciliation between adversaries. "...relationship is both the basis of the conflict and of its long term solution..." (p. 26). Mitchell (2002) claims that relationships have to be replaced and rebuilt through deliberate and directed efforts, and reconciliation can only take place as a result of these efforts. According to Folger and Bush (1994), the main goals of transformative conflict resolution are to empower the disputing parties, and to enhance each party's recognition of the other. Intractable conflicts reconciliation and transformation definitely involve reframing of the stakeholders' contrasting frames into mutually accepted ones. Drawing upon the transformative model and the narrative theory, Cobb (1993) redefines empowerment as a set of discursive practices that enhance the participation of disputants in an interactive co-elaboration or co-construction of a conjoint story. I assume that within this process parties address their and others’ identities and might reconsider and re-frame them.

According to human needs theory, developed considerably by Burton (1990b), conflicts stem from the unfulfillment or oppression of several basic ontological needs. Identity, one of these needs is a fundamental essence of a person, a group or nation. As such it is un-negotiable, cannot be compromised or easily changed. Identity related conflicts stem from unrecognition, threats to security and even to survival. Hence these conflicts tend to be deep-rooted, protracted and intractable. Solving problems related to a clash of identities implies mutual recognition and therefore re-framing of self and others’ identities. The identity reframing might be seen as the pivotal stage in the process of transforming an intractable conflict into a tractable one, and a crucial step toward its sustained resolution.

Kriesberg (2002) adopts a broad meaning to reconciliation emphasizing four dimensions pertaining to shared truths, justice, mutual regard and mutual security. Narrative reframing (“sharing truths”), identity reframing (“mutual regard”), and definitely justice and mutual security as well relate to basic human needs. Kriesberg portrays conflict reconciliation and transformation as sustained, prolonged and fragile processes, that may (or may not) conclude in the conflict’s termination.

What does a conflict transformation process transform? According to Mitchell (2002) structural changes and relational change are fundamental conditions for any successful transformation processes regarding intractable conflicts. And what might the conflict be transformed into? Transforming an intractable and destructive conflict into a tractable and constructive one seems to be both a reasonable and attainable goal. Kriesberg (2002) compares destructive and constructive conflicts as they relate to reconciliation conditions. Destructive conflicts are characterized by exclusion of the others’ identity. Each side seeks destruction of the other. Constructive conflicts include the others’ identity, and the other side’s goals are given legitimacy. Accordingly, in the destructive conflict, goals are regarded as in a zero sum conflict, while in constructive conflicts goals are regarded as in a mixed-sum conflict.
How might an intractable conflict be effectively transformed? I assume that reframing identity-based intractability into development-based win-win scenarios might be the response. Referring to interventions in ethno-political conflicts, Byrne and Keashly (2000) argue for multi-modal, multilevel approaches including such activities as structural change, developmental aid and economic investment. These activities may indeed reduce intra-party mistrust, enforce identity reframing process, and promote the reframing of destructive conflicts into constructive conflicts. Moreover, an appropriate reframing process of values-based conflicts into development-based scenarios may sustain reconciliation processes due to the disclosure and promotion of shared interests and of prospects for mutual gains. This process may lead to further recognition of the others’ existence, humanity and goals’ legitimacy. In the following section, I examine this assumption, and point out related options for reframing and transformation.

Kriesberg (2002), argues that some actions of reconciliation occurred during the decade of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, and the conflict had become partially transformed. Yet, “there have been very few significant reconciliation actions by major leaders on each side. Indeed, some important personages in each camp often have denounced reconciliation actions that have been taken.”(p. 564). Further he argues that earlier, the conflict had been transformed significantly to allow the adversaries to begin negotiations and even to reach significant agreements. However the transformation was not sufficient to reach a more stable accommodation. In Kriesberg’s view, a fundamental transformation of the conflict to be less destructive must rest on more substantial changes as referred to the primary reconciliation dimensions.

Following the previous discussion I now propose a tentative model that displays, and initially explains the interrelations between three types / levels of reframing and the reconciliation and transformation of intractable conflicts (see fig. no. 1). Initial narrative changes / truths sharing, might be crucial for mistrust reduction, self / other identity reframing and problem /solutions reframing. It may reduce antagonism and emotional stress, impact self / other identity perceptions, and enable problem reframing and collaborative formation / creation of solutions. However initial successful stages on the problem / solutions arena, would have a positive influence on narrative co-creation and identity re-framing, and may in consequence have a perpetuating positive impact on reframing, conflict de-escalation and conflict transformation. I would emphasize that, as clearly portrayed in the model: the reframing, reconciliation and transformation processes are not linear, irreversible processes. Cycles of re-escalation may persist. These are part and parcel of the essential feature of protracted, intractable conflicts that by definition elude resolution. The re-escalation does not necessarily indicate failure of the whole reconciliation process.
Population Displacement – Resettlers and Refugees

What conditions or interventions might sustain re-framing and reconciliation processes. What measures might facilitate the transformation of identity-based destructive conflicts and the related mutual hatred and fear? The process of self and others’ identity reframing into non-exclusionary frames, allows the sides to search for solutions that meet the needs of all parties, and reframe their problems into implementable and sustainable solutions. This section exemplifies an optional application of lessons from other settings into the Israel / Palestine arena.

To illustrate a promising option regarding the search for appropriate synergistic solutions, I shall introduce further on several insights from a preliminary comparison between two kinds of involuntary population displacement - resettlers and refugees. “Refugees populations” consist a sub-frame in “involuntary displaced populations”, and these belong to the supra-frame “displaced populations”. A wider frame enables a broader view. Situations where there have been problems with regards to "displaced populations" may supply new insights, ideas and options for developing and creating sound and appropriate responses to the refugees complex problem. This reframing level relies heavily on regional planning and development studies. In order to clarify the context, I first elaborate briefly on several complementarities between conflict analysis and resolution and regional planning.

Reconciliation and regional planning. Regional planning and the conflict resolution disciplines portray similarities and overlapping goals, means and interests (Vraneski, 1994). Their connection often results in innovative responses – such as environmentally sound solutions to territorial controversies. In many cases these disciplines may provide complementary means for approaching the problems, to create and evaluate options, and to finally create and sustain appropriate solutions. Both fields are interdisciplinary and relatively new, in process of creating, framing and re-framing their concepts, theories and boundaries. They both rely on the analysis and synthesis of multifaceted knowledge and data toward informed intervention in ongoing and anticipated processes, and with regard to influencing and inducing change.

“Urban and regional planning” is concerned with the human and physical environments, and with the interrelationships between their social, economic and political systems. Continuity, comprehensiveness, and collaboration are the main features of a proper urban and regional planning practice. Planners assemble, analyze and synthesize data from a variety of sources; identify problems, trends, objectives, visions and strengths; generate scenarios; create and evaluate alternative programs, policies and plans for the future. They follow-up, monitor and evaluate the implementation of plans and programs within cycles of revision, updating and re-planning processes. Urban and regional planning links between the past (for reference) the present (for capacities, needs, potentials and problems analysis and assessment) and the future. For planners “future” is much more than mere extrapolation of present trends.
The urban and regional planning discipline aims at effective, efficient and equitable management and/or enforcement of change, and at the prevention or mitigation of anticipated hazards. The planning profession implies creative thinking, and appropriate response to uncertainty and conflict. Some of the strengths of this intervention oriented discipline, such as expertise in synergistic synthesis of alternative scenarios and programs, complement the conflict analysis and resolution discipline, for example with regard to it’s traditional roots in social and political sciences.

Urban and Regional planning has in the last two decades extensively adopted conflict prevention and resolution tools for approaching inter-party controversies and for reaching agreements, and has further developed them in synergistic ways that may serve other disciplines (for example Susskind et al. 1999). Communicative/collaborative planning has lately emerged as a leading planning paradigm (Innes 1996; Healy 1992, 1998; Forester 1999). Conclusions stemming from research in the framing and reframing of protracted environmental disputes inspire conflict resolution scholars and practitioners (Intractable Conflict Knowledge website, 2002). Resettlement of displaced populations is a crucial contemporary issue. It surfaces as a pivotal challenge for regional planning concepts and tools, and conflict resolution and transformation theory, research and practice to further enrich each other.

**Involuntary Population Displacement.** Large groups of displaced populations constitute a problem of worldwide proportions. These groups are: a). *resettlers uprooted by development projects* such as dams and reservoirs; industrial estates; ports, airports and other transportation infrastructures, and. b). *refugees fleeing military conflicts and natural disasters.*

a). *Resettlers.* During the last decade about 100 million people have been forcefully displaced worldwide by the development of hydraulic and transportation programs alone (Cernea and McDowell, 2000) - ten million each year. Local governments, developers and NGOs are typically engaged in resettling these people. Development-oriented agencies usually seek restoration, and if possible improvement of the pre-displacement livelihood, including integration into the host economy as regular citizens.

b). *Refugees.* There are some 30 million refugees and persons in refugee-like situations in the world, typically assisted by international organizations (UNHCR 2002). Although the mandates of these organizations include helping civilians repatriate to their homeland, integrate in countries of asylum, or resettle in third countries, their practice is mostly perceived to be one that seeks the elimination of the refugees’ situation mainly by repatriation (Voutira and Harrell-Bound 2000).

The two groups of displaced populations bear both similar and dissimilar features. Unlike refugees, for development induced resettlers (oustees), returning to their original townships and lands is never an option. Oustees know that, for fairly immutable technological/geo-environmental reasons they can never "go home" (it’s often under 200 feet of water), whereas refugees feel they cannot (for the moment) "go home" but this is because of less immutable politico-strategic reasons that may be open to change. Unlike oustees, refugees are more often than not resettled temporarily outside their homelands. Despite dissimilar causes, the two groups share many similar displacement consequences, including a set of impoverishment risks. Therefore interdisciplinary research that integrates knowledge about these involuntary displacement processes as well as experience learned from voluntary migration (Eriksen, 1999) is most important.
For decades the concepts of ‘human rights,’ ‘social justice,’ and ‘social inclusion’ have not been uttered ever in mainstream development discourse.

(Cernea and McDowell, 2000, p.1)

Several features of the kind of development discourse mentioned by Cernea and McDowell persist:

(a). little attention is paid to the impoverished populations’ risks;
(b). over-reliance of project justification on investment-related cost-benefit analysis;
(c). a typical absence of affected populations’ involvement in development projects.

… The [World] Bank and its partners must begin to ask hard questions about how we can best integrate a concern for conflict prevention into development operations…. We will not have peace without economic hope…

(Wolfensohn, 1998, in Cernea and McDowell 2000, p. 3.)

Wolfensohn, the president of the World Bank, also declared that the Bank prioritizes the inequitable distribution of development’s benefits and losses on its policy, research, development and practice agenda (Cernea and McDowell 2000).

Investigations of refugee resettlement success stories, including cases in Cyprus, Greece, Tibet, Sierra Leone and Guinea (Voutira and Harrell-Bound, 2000; Lassailly-Jacob, 2000) portray several patterns which have much in common with features often found in oustee resettlement success stories. These include:

(a) strong involvement of governmental and refugee organizations, and sophisticated uses of the displaced population issues to serve complex political and economic agenda;
(b). framing of disaster as both a challenge and a development opportunity;
(c). viewing the refugees’/ resettlers’ energy and skills as exceptionally important factors for the host society, and promoting them as instruments to fuel the economies of the receiving states;
(d). social and economic integration of the refugees’/ resettlers’ rather than exclusion and separation;
(e). resettlement success stories are typically linked to ethnic similarity between hosts and new settlers;
(f). using humanitarian assistance to sponsor internal, nationally inclusive social rehabilitation and economical reconstruction processes, in contrast to relying on external, international agencies for relief and social services for the refugees / resettlers population.

The resettlement of 180,000 Greek Cypriot refugees, about a third of the island’s Greek population, after the Turkish invasion of the island in 1974, is an outstanding success story. “The catastrophe of 1974 has turned the government of Cyprus into an engine of economic development and social change” (Kliot and Mansfeld, 1994, p. 354). “Not having a choice” was the common, spontaneous response I received from Greek Cypriot officials and laymen, resettled refugees and hosts alike, when I interviewed them with regard to the economic boom that had started a quarter century before (Wright et al. 1999).
Didn’t they? Why then do most military conflicts induce only. plight, perpetuated suffering, and escalation of already protracted conflicts? An integrative and comparative study of both success and failure stories might provide insights for more appropriate future practice. Cernea’s (2000) impoverishment risks and reconstruction model might be an asset in this regard. This model aims to meet predictive, diagnostic, problem-solving and research functions. It deconstructs impoverishment into eight interconnected components as follows:

(a). landlessness,
(b). joblessness,
(c). homelessness,
(d). marginalization,
(e). food insecurity,
(f). increased morbidity and mortality,
(g). loss of access to common property assets,
(h). community disarticulation.

model has a dual emphasis: risk avoidance and reduction; and planning for risk and damage reversal and for reconstruction strategies. According to Cernea, reconstruction and a reversal of the impoverishment processes can be accomplished along the same variables by “turning the model on its head”, resulting in: “from landlessness to land based resettlement”, “from joblessness to reemployment”, etc. The model has been applied to development-induced population displacement cases, and recently also to conflict-induced population displacement cases.

Several scholars and practitioners have suggested adapting some of the model’s components to meet specific cases’ patterns, e.g. adding components such as. loss of access to public services,. and loss of civil rights (Cernea 2000, p. 53). Considering the model’s potential, I would add one conceptual component: hopelessness, and in the reversed model -. hopefulness. This hope fuels impoverishment reversal, the reconstruction and rehabilitation processes.

Development Induced Resettlement Cases. I now illustrate some of the examples of resettlement experiences, the principles listed above came from. Displacement and resettlement cases’ features and dynamics differ enormously. There is no one agreed set of success criteria, all the more so a universal recipe for successful resettlement. More interdisciplinary integrative research with regard to intervention measures and processes has yet to be done. Nevertheless lessons from projects that attempt prevention, mitigation or reversal of the impoverishment of displaced populations may serve at least as talking points in other settings.

In the People’s Republic of China, massive investments in infrastructure have resulted in extensive resettlement. Homes and jobs have been lost to reservoirs behind 86,000 dams constructed between 1952 and 1990. Over 30 million people have been involuntary resettled due to these reservoirs, 30,000 km. of railroads, 90,000 km. of roads and other projects (Meikle and Youxuan, 2000). Since 1980, responding among others, to increased internal resistance from potential resettlers, China established, in accord with the World Bank, a legal and procedural displacement and resettlement system. The Chinese resettlement policy can be seen now as equitable in ethos and approach. It emphasizes the needs of individuals, and on fair compensation for all aspects of their disruption. However any lessons from this example should take into consideration the operational environment of the Chinese regime which, unlike most other systems, allows accurate identification of affected people, protect rights to employment, and foster the ability to create that employment.
In India, unlike in the Chinese example there is no central policy for resettlement of people affected by development projects, although the problem of population displacement is ever growing there due to accelerated infrastructure development. Involuntary population displacement adds much stress to the existing extremely harsh urban poverty problems in many of India’s regions (Reddy, 2000). The challenges of resettlement in India have to do with high population densities and high land values. Urban displacees are often forcibly relocated to distant sites where conditions deny them appropriate economic opportunities. In recent years, however, state and local governments have developed new approaches that significantly reduce the urban resettlement risks. These include the incorporation of resettlement action plans in the first stages of project design, the allocation of secure funding, alternative employment opportunities, and a greater environmental awareness. Supporting these efforts are measures such as facilities / infrastructure location and planning in ways that minimize the amount of displacees; before and after relocation needs assessment of affected people; consultations over shelter design; the creation of cooperative housing societies; and institutional capacity building.

Lassailly-Jacob (2000) reflects studies related to millions of African rural oustees (in Sudan, Egypt, Ghana Zambia and others countries) and refugees (in Sudan, Zaire, Tanzania, Uganda, Botswana and other countries). She states that both refugees and oustees are traumatized settlers, but for different reasons, and that they have more in common than usually presumed. Lassailly-Jacob argues that political attitudes of governments, and the organizational support given to the inhabitants of settlement schemes, resettlers and refugee alike, are crucial factors behind the success or failure of relocation. Furthermore, she highlights planning processes as a key factor for the establishment of viable new communities, and presents a list of recommendations for good planning practice including: a). allowing adequate timing for departure and collaborative processes. b). Selecting a proper agro-ecological and geographical location for the new sites. c). Controlling the settlements size and of the number of newcomers. d). Restoring productive capacities by allocating new means of production.

In the next sections I discuss several aspects of the Palestinian refugees / displaced population impoverishment and the influence this process has had on the parties and the region. I argue that the Palestinian refugees’ problem may be reframed as “displacement and resettlement” and that the recently accumulated experience of reversing impoverishment processes might bring new, cautious hopes also to antagonist parties in the Middle East and to the Palestinian underprivileged population in particular.

The Palestinian Conflict-Displaced Population Problem: Causes, Consequences, Frames and Narratives

In the following examples I portray some of the frames that have characterized the Arab-Israeli conflict in the past, some changes that occurred during the peace process phases as well as the frame shifts that have accompanied the recent vicious cycles of hostilities and revenge. From these I try to draw insights with regard to links between framing and reframing practices and the reconciliation processes.

Causes and Consequences

There is a proverb in the Middle East: If you want revenge, dig two graves, one for your enemy and one for yourself. (Blumenfeld, 2000, p. 277)
The refugee problem is at the core of the Palestinian problem. In the course of the establishment of Israel, roughly 800,000 Palestinians became refugees and their fate is more or less what the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is about. Two-thirds of Palestinians are refugees, meaning that the fate of the refugees engages the hearts and minds of most of the Palestinian public. Finally, this is the component of the conflict that most involves the Arab states. Large numbers of these refugees have been hosted in refugee camps in neighbouring Arab states, a fact that has created a whole host of ongoing political, social and economic difficulties. (Khatib, 2001).

The Palestinians prefer to start their version of the chain of events with the Israeli War of Independence of 1948, claiming that the refugees were expelled by Israel during this war, and that it is their right, according to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194, to choose between return and compensation. The Israelis, however, describe it differently. According to the Israeli point of view, the Palestinians made a huge mistake when they rejected the UN's Partition Resolution of 1947, according to which two nations would have been located in Palestine. Since the Arabs did not find this satisfactory, preferring to fight with Israel, the situation arose whereby, during the war, some 700,000 Palestinians lost their homes. … UN Resolution 194 was rejected by the Palestinians and by the Arab countries, as was Prime Minister David Ben Gurion's willingness, proposed in Lausanne, to absorb 100,000 refugees. (Beilin, 2001)

Fifty four years have passed since the Palestinian refugees issue emerged on the Middle Eastern national and regional agendas. This multifaceted conflict, child of the 20th century dissolution of European colonialism, and late effects of the World War II threats, still perpetuates. Direct and indirect consequences of the Palestinian population displacement turned into huge frustration, much violence and incredible suffering for millions of Arabs, Jews and many others in the Middle East and worldwide, first and foremost for the refugees themselves. These consequences include four more wars, two sustained popular uprisings, chronic regional instability and endless cycles of revenge for more than five decades. The Arab-Israeli conflict has stimulated enormous amounts of scholarly research and publication. It has gained vast international attention, numerous attempts at intervention, and a much higher amount of media coverage than any other conflict.

The causes of the 1948 Palestinian population displacement are multifarious; yet, one significant horrific incident is often mentioned as a basis of the Israeli-Arab conflict’s escalation. According to Matthew Hogan’s retrospective (2001), the Deir Yassin massacre was pivotal in modern Middle East history as a perpetuator of decades of plight and revenge. This incident greatly stimulated Palestinian refugee flight, and has had a formative influence on the way the Palestinians perceive Israelis. The 1948 war was contemporaneously explained by Arab League chief Azzam Pasha in terms of the Deir Yassin incident:

The massacre of Deir Yassin was to a great extent the cause of the wrath of the Arab nations and the most important factor for sending in the Arab armies. (Sharq al-Adna, 1948).

Could the prevention of one specific wartime incident change the whole region’s history? No one can respond to this kind of query. Nevertheless, lessons that may inhibit incidents that cause conflicts’ escalation, and even induce further conflicts prevention as related to this case and many others might be driven.
As of the summer of 2002, many of the displaced Palestinians and their descendants still live in refugee camps in Arab countries that surround Israel, and in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The population growth rate of this population is among the highest in the world. The Gaza Strip population growth rate in 2001 was 4.01%, and in the West Bank 3.48%, while the US population growth rate was 0.9%, the Canadian 0.99%, and the Israeli 1.58%. (see also maps nos. 1 and 2, and. table no. 1). For those refugees, the impact of displacement impoverishment risks continues, and any hope for a reversal in their impoverishment process is now as remote as ever.

In spite of the existence of a variety of different identities, the shared events of 1948 brought the Palestinians closer together in terms of their collective consciousness; even through physically they were dispersed all over the Middle East and beyond. Palestinian identity in many ways has been constructed out of the experience of dispossession, insecurity and uprootedness (Lindholm, 1993). The Palestinian “right of return” has been a central element of this identity-building process.

The right of return is expressed in terms of both the moral claim to return to homes from which they have been displaced, and by reference to a number of United Nations resolutions. The most important of these is General Assembly Resolution 194 (III) of December 1948. This declared. inter alia that "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date..".

This paper focuses on the right of return, since it constitutes the pivot for both the Palestinian refugees’ problem and resolution. The right of return should be addressed at three complementary levels:

- As the pivotal consequence of the Palestinians’ displacement
  the Palestinian refugees are still waiting for repatriation.
- As the cause of additional local, regional and international acute problems.
  which developed as consequences of the fact that the right of return was not realized.
- As the solution to the Palestinian refugees problem – as soon as the Palestinian refugees realize the right of return, they bring to an end their refugee status, and in consequence –the Palestinian refugees problem.

The Palestinian refugees displacement and the right of return framed the Arab- Israeli relationship as a highly intractable conflict. Intractable conflicts are protracted and violent. They are perceived as irreconcilable, and the parties have an interest in their continuation. “Intractable conflicts are exhausting, demanding, stressful, painful and costly in human as well as material terms” (Bar-Tal, 1998, p. 23). Intractable conflicts are seen as resisting resolution, but are not considered "unresolvable".

As far as the right of return was perceived or framed as the repatriation of all the refugees and their descendants to Israel-Palestine, it implied a clash of basic interests, an extreme either / or existential quest. While all sides praised a utopian peace, the conflict escalated and the Palestinian refugees conditions degraded. According to the Israeli Law of Return, only Jewish immigrants, (including Holocaust refugees, Jewish refugees from Arab countries, and other people of Jewish origin) were assigned the right to join the Israeli population. Although the Palestinian refugees could not return to the pre-1948 conditions due to local and regional conditions and policies, other options have not been seriously considered. The victims of the displacement were continually victimized due to neglect with regard to addressing their basic needs. However, more recently a process of re-framing self and others’ identities from the exclusion of the others into more inclusive perceptions gradually proceeded. Re-framing of clashing “rights” into more appropriate mutual and complementary “needs” and interests was under way.
Since the seventies, the Israeli-Arab intractable conflict began to portray features of tractability. Israel signed two bilateral peace treaties (with Egypt in 1979, and with Jordan in 1994). Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and interim agreements proceeded for about a decade. A historic reconciliation between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East was underway. However, a new wave of hostilities that started in September 2000 brutally interrupted this process. Internal tensions on each side of the divide induced renewed escalation of the conflict. Although the parties in the Israeli – Palestinian peace negotiation were very close to agreements on the disputed issues (statehood for Palestinians and its borders, the status of Jerusalem, the future of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza strip, and the Palestinian refugees fate) the peace process collapsed.

From Coping with Intractable Conflicts to Resolving Them.

To cope successfully with situations of intractable conflict, society members tend to perceive only their own perspective, while disregarding that of the other. Bar-Tal (1998) suggests the formation of the following societal beliefs as particularly functional for coping with intractable conflict:

(a) the justness of one's own goals,
(b) security,
(c) the adversary's delegitimization,
(d) positive self-image,
(e) own victimization,
(f) patriotism,
(g) unity,
(h) one's own wish for peace.

Bar-Tal argues that without these beliefs, a society might have great difficulty to withstand the enemy. These beliefs strengthen the society. Alas, they also constitute a certain psychological investment in the conflict and thus perpetuate its continuation. Bar-Tal has based his argument on his studies of Israeli society, assuming a need to investigate it within other societies as well. All these societal beliefs have behavioural implications. They underlie behaviours reflecting determination, heroism, persistence, sacrifice and many specific acts related to conflict. In addition they have affective implications: they arouse strong feelings and thus become relatively resistant to change. (Bar-Tal, 1998, p.30).

Resistance as well as susceptibility to frequent changes in views and opinions is induced by individual and group specific features. According to Sluzki (1993) ideologically committed people are less susceptible to cognitive shifts than those who are uninvolved, and in turn, those who are confused and search for some kind of guidance or order are the most susceptible. Considering the very nature of intractable conflicts, which by definition elude resolution, and the previously mentioned resistance to change, one could wonder why so many of us have been so deeply stunned by the new wave of harsh hostilities on the Arab-Israeli arena. Perhaps the ray of pure hope blinded our rational frames of thought. Some of the intractability causes and patterns have not changed. The refugee tragedy has not come to an end. Profound psychological investment in the conflict, together with immense frustration, and harsh internal contradictions on each side of the divide, as well as ideological and political interests of some groups and individuals in perpetuating the conflict, have drawn the parties back into additional cycles of hostilities and revenge.
What paths might lead adversaries out of an intractable situation toward sustainable trust and mutual understanding? How can an individual, a group or a nation move from coping with an intractable conflict to resolving it? Reframing conflicts so that creative solutions may be generated, and transforming win-lose confrontations into win-win opportunities, are options promoted by many researchers (including Moore, 1986; Putnam and Holmer, 1992; Deutsch and Coleman, 2000).

Palestinian and Israeli Frames and Narratives

Palestinian and Israeli narratives of the past were mutually exclusive. In fact, what was viewed by one party – the Israeli as a dream fulfillment - their Independent State creation, for the other party – the Palestinians – was the beginning of an awful nightmare – their Nakba, or disaster. Israelis, and in a sense Jewish people worldwide, concluded two millennia of statelessness, while Palestinians were driven into a situation which soon developed into statelessness. In a way the creation of a homeland for Holocaust survivors and other Jewish refugees produced the Palestinian refugee problem. Palestinians and Arabs in general, perceived Israel as responsible for the refugee problem, and responded furiously to denials of this responsibility by the Israeli side. Israelis tended to cast the blame for the creation of the refugee problem on the Arab regimes. At best, the events of 1948 were viewed as natural, or excusable wartime occurrences. Both sides demonized the other in accordance with their perception of this problem. For a long time the conflict seemed totalizing and irreconcilable. It was almost impossible to imagine an alternative to the conflict.

Palestinian-Israeli enmity had been taken for granted as an ongoing fact of life, and violence was the daily fare. (Ashrawi, 1995, p. 9)

Reframing the Causes of Palestinian Displacement. Changes in frames and narratives were well linked with the reconciliation process. When in 1989, post-Zionist historian Benny Morris published his book “The Birth of The Palestinian Refugee Problem” it created an acute outburst of debate in Israel. Until then, it was generally assumed that 700,000 Palestinians left their homes voluntarily during the 1948 War of Independence, following promises by their leaders that they would be able to return and plunder Jewish property when the war was over. According to what Morris wrote, the actions of the leaders of the Yishuv. (the Jewish Zionist community in pre-state Israel), contributed much to the fleeing of the refugees. The Palestinians did not leave and did not run away, these words are too soft. They were also not expelled - that word is too harsh. The Palestinians were, according to Morris, "driven out".

The narrative transformation process which accompanied the reconciliation process is fascinating. A “co-elaboration or co-construction of a conjoint story” (Cobb 1993) process was being created:

Above all, we were very close to an agreement concerning the story of the creation of
the creation of the refugee problem, which described the Israeli approach and the Palestinian approach to the issue, and their common denominator. (Beilin, 2001)

For decades Palestinians were virtually non-existent for most Israelis. They were typically included within a much broader group/ enemy frame - “Arabs”. A long and arduous reframing process followed. For reframing an “enemy” into a “partner”, and shifting the win - lose frame into a mutual gain, one needs a number of significant transformations. Within this process the views taken by different individuals and groups in the Jewish society differed widely.

It is possible to suggest that the Israeli society is in transition. While part of it views the Israeli-Arab conflict as being solvable and moving towards tractable characteristics, another part still perceives it as being intractable. Accordingly, while the former part has modified the societal beliefs of intractable conflict, the latter part still maintains them… Our assumption is that the same conceptual framework could be used in the analysis of Arab societies, as well as in any other societies engaged in intractable conflict.

(Bar-Tal, 1998, p. 44)

There are segments in the Israeli, as well as in Arab societies who continue to view the conflict as intractable and act accordingly. The trust that gradually emerged during the peace process was very delicate, tremendously fragile. Explicitly, many reversed to their previous ways of thinking and easily re-reframed Palestinians or respectively - Israelis as enemies again, as soon as their neighbours were suspected of vicious intentions. As an Israeli Jew I witnessed this process mostly on the Israeli side. On each side of the peace the reframing process is difficult, yet in different ways (Ashrawi 1995).

Reframing and Re-reframing Solutions

Even in principle, a recognition by Israel of a Palestinian right of return is problematic, since it would challenge the Israeli national identity and meta-narrative. (Frideman 2002)

The mutual understanding developed within the negotiations process seemed to modify formerly unfeasible options into realizable ones. The parties developed solutions which in principle met the needs and concerns of all sides, at least for a while transforming the “either-or” frame into a joint “all gain” narrative.

According to Yosi Beilin (2001):

[the] distance under dispute between the parties was narrowed substantially, and the Palestinian side agreed that the number of refugees must be such that it would not damage Israel's character as a Jewish country.

According to Abed Rabbo (2001) there are five complementary ways to resolve the refugee problem:

Returning to Israel, returning to the Palestinian state, settling them in the countries where they now live, moving them to a third country of their choice, and settling them in areas that would be handed over to the Palestinians in the context of a land swap.
The Palestinian Refugee ResearchNet (2002) concludes:

On the Israeli side, there appeared to be recognition that Israel would have to accept some refugee return, admit some responsibility or regret for the refugee issue, and accept primary responsibility for financing refugee compensation. On the Palestinian side, there was recognition that Israel would not permit practical implementation of the right of return to fundamentally change the demographic face of the Jewish state. …… However, these understandings were rendered moot—temporarily, perhaps—by the election of Ariel Sharon as Israeli prime minister in February 2001. The upsurge in violence that began in the fall of 2000 hardened public opinion on both sides.

The transition from an Ethos of Conflict into an Ethos of Peace is not linear. Powerful concerns, fears, beliefs and interests push and pull this process into what can look like random, chaotic directions.

The ‘al-Aqsa intifada’ has added new sources of uncertainty to a political landscape where every shift arouses complex reactions from near and distant actors … Changes occurred in the positions of both parties towards the refugee issue. By far, the more dramatic shift was that in the Palestinian position towards reaffirmation of historic national claims. These were interpreted by some Israeli observers as maneuvering on Arafat's part to strengthen his bargaining position. (Sayigh 2001, p. 95-96)

Sayigh (2001) claims that this change was in fact imposed by popular mobilization on the right of return, with Arafat following refugee and public opinion rather than leading it. In her view, Arafat's turnaround on the refugees also must have been caused by seven years of Palestinian disillusionment because instead of making moves towards a sovereign Palestinian state, Israel continued its occupation and expanded its settlement activities.

Internal frustration within the Palestinian side with regard to the malfunctioning Palestinian Authority renewed previous opposition and criticism.

…Barak's small concession at Camp David II of a "symbolic return" to Israel, involving at most 70,000 refugees over ten years, went beyond Beilin, it did not begin to meet the Palestinian negotiators' revival of historical refugee claims. (Sayigh, 2001)

On the Israeli side, one year after the peace negotiations collapsed, and one dozen years after publishing his landmark book, “The Birth of The Palestinian Refugee Problem”, the post-Zionist historian Benny Morris was cited saying:

If you recognize the responsibility [to the Palestinian displacement], millions will demand their lands in return immediately thereafter. If the notion of the right of return will be recognized, there is also going to be an attempt to utilize that notion, and that will be the end of the State of Israel. [If that happens], there won't be a Jewish State here. (Morris, 2001)
Joel Singer, former chief negotiator of the Oslo Agreements for the Rabin - Peres government, and author of the Israel-PLO Mutual Recognition Agreement, published in 2001 a paper titled, “No Palestinian 'return' to Israel”, concluding that giving 3.5 million Palestinians a right of return to Israel would transform the country into an Arab state. The fears of Israelis with regard to the implementation of the right of return mirrored Ariel Sharon’s words from 1996 which denied not only the right of return to Israel but also to the Palestinian territories:

If these people find themselves resettled once again in miserable refugee camps in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, gazing out from them upon their towns and the remains of their former villages, the tension and anger will be enormous. The Palestinian refugee problem is a tragedy the Palestinians brought upon themselves. But one tragedy must not be replaced by another. (Sharon 1996)

Yet, during the re-escalation, while well known frames of struggle reappeared, new frames appeared as well. Many versions reframed the issues for different purposes and audiences, some for external uses, other for internal uses. Different variants of frames appeared for each kind of media. Nevertheless many frames actually serve as more than just literary weapons. Some play several complementary roles – communicating with and between two or more different groups - opponents and supporters of one’s view on each side of the divide simultaneously.

**How are the Palestinian Right of Return and the actual Return of the Palestinians two different issues?** The re-escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with its extreme tension and distrust, does not help Israelis comprehend how one can separate a Right from its complete implementation. Is it only cultural – linguistic framing dispute or a new tactic in an old battle? Who can ensure Israelis that taking partial responsibility for the creation of the refugee problem--apologizing--will not cause the destruction of Israel and/or the disappearance of the Jewish State?

In the following examples I cite two personal stories which attempt to bridge the right of return duality. Sari Hanafi (2002) narrates:

> Four years ago, I visited my family living in a Palestinian refugee camp in an Arab host country. My father refused to see photos I had taken in Haifa because, in his words, it was not ‘his Haifa.’ Haifa was now an Israeli city, he declared. He was adamant that he could not return as long it remained under Israeli sovereignty. The very next day a Swiss journalist interviewed my father and asked him if he would return to Haifa if it became possible. Suddenly, he waxed ideological and eloquent, announcing that “as a Palestinian, like any other, I long to return no matter what the conditions.

And Yaser Abed Rabbo (2001) clarifies:

> We asked for the principle of the right of return, but the implementation of it, it should be discussed in a very practical and even pragmatic way, without affecting or without - yes, without affecting - the Jewish nature of the state of Israel.
We said it. This was our position. And I'm not saying this today. … You want me, as a Palestinian who was born in Jaffa, to forget my personal thing, my attachment as a person to the place of my birth? I will not do that. But you want me, as a serious politician responsible for the future of my people, and as a person who wants, really, to put an end to these agonies, to take a position which hurts me - I should take it. I will do that. This is the difference.

Abed Rabbo apparently does not comprehend what the problem with this duality could be, and therefore accuses the Israeli political right of brainwashing the world with fantastic stories of a Palestinian plot to destroy the Jewish state by inundating it with a million and a half refugees.

A wave of new ideas

The re-escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict stimulated new ideas and initiatives. Some of these recalled the “one state” solution, in contrast to the two- nation states partition solutions. Others attempted to further separate the two nations. For example, ‘Abd al-Hadi and de Jong (2001) went so far as to say that the Israeli Galilee communities should be annexed to a future Palestinian state, a proposal vehemently opposed by Palestinians inside Israel.

Abufarha’s “Alternative Palestinian Agenda” (2002) has much in common with the one previously mentioned, although framed by its initiator, the anthropologist Nasser Abufarha, as a “one state solution” (see fig. no. 2). I chose to describe this proposal due to the way Abufarha framed it, as an all-gain ‘perfect’ solution. It aims to focus on “substantive issues that address the concerns and aspirations of both Israeli and Palestinian society”.

Abufarha claims that the recent peace process failed because it was not framed accordingly. He identifies concerns and aspirations as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Israeli</th>
<th>Palestinian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security; [regional] Acceptance;</td>
<td>Statehood; Right of return. (represented as the central and most. complex Palestinian concern);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character of the Jewish State; [Israeli] Identity; Peace;</td>
<td>Ending the Occupation; Security and Democratic Rights of ‘Israeli Arabs’;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving the Demographic Crisis in Jerusalem, for the Israeli side.</td>
<td>the Gaza Strip; Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. No. 2 – Israel / Palestine Configurations
Alas, Abufarha’s solution - transferring the regions inhabited by Israeli Palestinians as well as most of the few Israeli non-desert open spaces to the Palestinian side to be settled by repatriating refugees, does not meet Israeli concerns and aspirations, neither does it meet most of the Palestinians’. The proposal also contradicts basic environmental constraints. Abufarha’s proposal is based on the 1947 US partition proposal, a solution the Arab side had rejected before the 1948 war. Unfortunately, it seems that “experts” - affected groups and professionals—were not involved in the Alternative Palestinian Agenda planning process.

**Linking Together: Toward Collaborative Planning for Sustainable Peace and Development**

New ideas, even those that won’t work, can shake loose new possibilities (Abufarha 2002).

Most protracted problems have been addressed with traditional means already, and these have failed. Through innovative ways, we might find new solutions, but also face the same, as well as many unexpected difficulties. Lately, while discussing issues addressed through this paper, I have been asked often, both in Israel and elsewhere, about the viability of the peace process.
Additionally many wondered at my concern with regard to the Palestinian’s fate. Under current conditions, this care, when accredited to a Jewish person is often viewed as strange, exaggerated or even bizarre.

My response to the first query is that the Arab-Israeli reconciliation process will die, if we let it starve— if we lose hope, if we don’t actively invest in building peace, even while hate and fear and revenge are the dish of the day. What scares me is a self fulfilling prophecy: deep frustration enforces both apathy and antagonist activity, which in turn bring more hate and suffering, less chance for the fragile trust and understanding to recover, for the peace process to survive. I am speaking about measures of hope-building as means for trust-building within each side of the divide, and between the sides. In my view, by waiting for the struggle to come to an end before entering a peace-building process, we lose major opportunities for shortening the struggle phase itself, and for mitigating its influences. Regional planning can be shaped and framed as a mutual gain process, and therefore as a trust-building and peace-building measure. It may and should foster the process of reframing identity-based intractability into development-based win-win scenarios.

Responding to the queries regarding my care about the Palestinian refugees’ fate is, in a way more complicated, because these queries are typically rooted in the well-established “either-or”/ or “win – lose” frame, a mindset which differs significantly from the win-win, non zero-sum mindset, the frame my views and activity originate from. I tend to replay that I care because Palestinians are human beings, and because they are my neighbors and also because the Palestinian Tragedy has a complementary, less known side – The Israeli Tragedy. The Palestinian problems are different from the Israeli, but their problems are our problems as well, and vice-versa. In my view, both sides might mutually resolve their pivotal problems, resume their Tragedies, or alternatively, sink deeper into theirs, and continue to escalate this regional intractable conflict. In my view the best insurance program for my children’s fate, for the next Israeli generations’ health, self-esteem, ethics and prosperity involves peacefully resolving the Palestinians’ fate. Helping the Palestinians achieve their legitimate needs, can and should induce the two nations’ rights fulfillment, peaceful coexistence and prosperity in this struggle ridden region.

On a broader scale the Palestinian refugees case offers many prospects for learning. Most lessons this case provides are opportunities for. “learning from failure”. These might be framed to promote reactions to failure which determine future success and destructive conflicts prevention. Moreover, several insights might and should induce double-loop learning, and taking advantage of crisis as an opportunity for change and growth. Mitchell (2002) included structural changes as one of two fundamental conditions for successful conflict transformation. Byrne and Keashly (2000) point on structural changes within several multi-level intervention approaches they recommend within the scope of transforming ethno-political conflicts. Structural changes entail double-loop learning.
On a more pragmatic level. I would note that refugees’ deep frustration and hopelessness under some circumstances may cause an inclination to commit acts of terrorism. In the wake of the September 11 2001 terrorist attack on the US, a war has been declared on terrorism, and much energy has been devoted to combat this kind of threat for both the short and the long run. Obviously, terrorism prevention is included in this realm. Yet mostly direct links such as renewed focus on combating national security have been addressed.

Population displacement proactive prevention; pretreatment of the displacement causes, as well as mitigation of displacement related problems; and appropriate, well-coordinated resettlement initiatives, should be perceived as long term terrorism prevention measures, and as means for intractable conflicts transformation.

Displacement and planning for resettlement. The Palestinian refugees’ saga, bears lessons for other population displacement cases:

- To deal with emerging problems as soon as possible and prevent destructive consequences;
- To involve the displaced population in decision-making processes;
- To combine, apply and modify tools and solutions to fit case-specific cultural, political and environmental characteristics and constrains.

Investigations of refugee resettlement success stories portray patterns that have much in common with those found in development induced resettlement success stories. The current study enforced lessons from previous involuntary population displacement studies (Cernea, 2000; Voutira and Harrell-Bound 2000).

- Need of social and economic integration of the refugees rather than separation.
- Need to use humanitarian assistance for social rehabilitation and economical reconstruction processes, in contrast to relying on relief assistance.
- Need to channel refugees’ energy and motivation to fuel the reversal of their impoverishment processes and for the growth of the hosting societies.
- Need for mutual learning between different kinds of involuntary population displacement
- Need for mutual learning between voluntary and involuntary population displacement and resettlement.

Lessons from uprooting, involuntary displacement, voluntary resettlement and immigration absorption, community rehabilitation and community participation experiences (Vraneski, 2002) might be assets for the resolution of the Palestinian refugees mega-problem. The Palestinian refugees resettlement, might be an excellent opportunity for integrating lessons from conflict-induced and development-induced migration. This case started as a conflict-induced migration, but might end as a development-induced population resettlement, due to the regional development, sustained by the continuation of the peace process. It also might integrate lessons from involuntary and voluntary migration. The original displacement was involuntary but the resettlement should be voluntary through choice from an array of appropriate structural options. The participation of the Palestinian refugees’ representatives and the refugees themselves in the process, and in a collaborative planning (Innes, 1996) for peace process – more generally, should be assets for effective and fair practice toward a better future for Palestinians and Israelis alike.
Taking in consideration the current situation on the Israel-Palestine arena, one might appraise parts of this paper as totally futuristic or simply naive. In my view, although the reconciliation process has collapsed, it can and should be reconstructed while hostilities persist. Plans for reversal of impoverishment and for resettlement, should be done at once, and be ready for implementation as soon as circumstances permit.

**Toward sound intervention in framing and reframing processes.** This study attempted to better understand the multi-level complexity of the Palestinian refugees case by analyzing and comparing frames and narratives used by the different parties at several stages. This is one step toward better understanding of framing and reframing dynamics, and a modest contribution to future appropriate interventions in these dynamics. This brief analysis suggests a need for further comparative and integrative research. Understanding the framing dynamics, utilizing better tools for interpreting the meaning behind the parties’ use of words, phrases and narratives, might be assets for intra- and inter-party mutual understanding and improved communication. These should also be valuable for the conflict resolution research and practice more generally.

**Building bridges and alternatives: talking hope across corridors.** Bar – Tal, a well known Israeli Political Scientist has recently stated: “Almost all my life, I was deeply committed to the cause of peace in the Middle East….. My world collapsed because at present not only do I not see a light at the end of the tunnel, I even do not see the tunnel” (Bar-Tal, 2002). Reframing Bar-Tal’s tunnel metaphor, I would say that sometimes not seeing light at the end of a tunnel, might be perceived as the best news – no train is there to run us over. If there is no tunnel, we still might find a corridor or a bridge. If we do not find any, and we still attempt to reach the other side, then building corridors and bridges might well meet our aim. Indeed finding optimal routes, designing real and metaphoric links, and facilitating achievement of the needs and interests of all parties, are among the primary goals and expertises of planning and conflict resolution theories and practices.

This paper aimed at improving understanding of reframing processes and trends. It introduced an interactive model regarding the interconnections between reframing processes and transformation of intractable conflicts, and initially configured and checked this model within the scope of the studied case. The Palestinian refugees case analysis pointed out the impact of the geo-political processes on frames and narratives, and on mutual influence between the parties’ frames, among others through reading and citing each other’s words. The ever-changing frames have had already a modest impact on geo-political processes. The paper aimed also at introducing several points of thought with regard to the options of integrating regional planning expertise in solving the Palestinian refugees problem. In my view conceptual options as well as comprehensive and site / subject specific plans should be promoted and developed through collaborative processes, which include the parties and experts from a wide range of disciplines. I intend to include further exploration of this issue and of the reframing-transformation model in the scope of a future article. In the meanwhile, I conclude this essay with several real life examples of mutual gain prospects for our region (see maps nos. 1 and 2).
The first is a site specific issue, which does not address directly the refugees problem but several major regional needs: For decades Israel’s plans to enlarge “Ben Gurion” international airport, and to develop a new one, have been opposed and postponed due to internal, mostly environmentally based disagreements. In the meanwhile the Palestinian authority has developed “Dahanyia”, a new, modern international airport within the Gaza Strip. This kind of facility is very expensive both financially and in regard to the amount of land it needs for proper operation, and with its environmental negative impacts. “Ben Gurion” and “Dahanyia” airports might well complement each other in fulfilling regional needs, while fostering more channels of collaboration, mutual trust and understanding. Here both Israel’s need to increase its air-transportation capacity and Palestine’s urge to both factual recognition and an enlargement of economic revenues, can meet. At present this kind of agreement between the two entities, is politically unfeasible. Yet, interventional and institutional mechanisms and tools might be designed to foster this kind of opportunities.

In the following illustrations I portray three out of countless possible thought directions that might be considered in designing comprehensive solutions for the region’s problems:

(a) While my family and I visited recently Aquaba in Jordan, our host, a Jordanian of Palestinian origin insisted he take us to the “new” border with Saudi Arabia. The location of the border between the two countries was moved in order to triple Jordan’s less than 10 km. long seashore, without significant change to the 2,600 km. long Arabian Coast. The value of this very land for each of the two entities differs enormously. Saudi Arabia’s generosity might be motivated by concrete political gains, yet evidently there are no losers in this transition. For me it was an excellent lesson on how non-zero sum agreements between neighbours can be created and sustained.

(b) Forecasting the demographic Crisis in the Gaza Strip (see map no. 1 and table no. 1) an Egyptian colleague suggested many years ago that the area of the Gaza Strip could be increased by adding to it a “piece of cheap desert land from the Sinai peninsula”, in the framework of a regional reconciliation process. (During the recent Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, the sides were close to agreement on expanding the Strip into the Israeli Negev desert). In an “either/or” atmosphere, this kind of suggestion would be totally inappropriate, impossible, even dangerous. When multiple interests and needs are considered, a mutual gain agreement, which includes this kind of boundary redefinition, might be considered, and agreements can be framed to meet all parties’ priorities, needs and concerns.

(c) During the peace negotiations, a mutual understanding has emerged that due to political, demographic and environmental/land-use changes alike, a full return of Palestinian refugees is not more feasible than the development induced displaced populations return to their lands. In many informal discussions (see the Palestinian Refugee ResearchNet for related reviews and documents), an initial range of structural options for the Palestinian refugees’ resettlement and compensation programs to choose from has been developed. These will be useful within further discussions and planning processes. Thinking “out of the box”, brings forth countless possibilities, including many institutional and territorial solutions that might meet the parties aspirations, concerns and fears. A confederation of nation-states based on demographic patterns rather than on geographic boundaries, assigning citizens’ rights in one’s state even if she actually lives in another part of that confederation, might be one parameter for a sustainable solution. Defining mutually accepted connections and participation of Diasporas in local development could be another.
Conclusions

This paper portrayed a process of framing and reframing, of narrative co-creation, self/other identity re-framing and re-reframing, and to a lesser degree of the creation of alternative options. During the peace process, a transformation from exclusionary narratives and one-dimensional “either/or” solutions into a multi-optional synergistic environment was evident. This process should be sustained and enforced with reality based options and solutions. Re-framing the “Palestinian refugees protracted problem” into the “Palestinian displaced population resettlement Challenge” might be one step towards both just and implementable solutions. With regard to this process and outcomes alike I would reframe an old phrase: “sky might be the limit, state borders are not”.

The Palestinian refugees’ case is extremely long lasting and liable to an unpredictable outcome. Yet lessons from previous years can and should serve to improve future function for this and many other cases, for solving the problems, for bringing an end to the Palestinian refugees tragedy, to the intractable Arab-Israeli conflict, and a Happy new Beginning for this struggle-traumatized region.

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Endnotes

1. I presented parts of an earlier versions of this paper on September 19, 2002 as a public lecture in the framework the Broad International Series 2002-2003 at Florida State University, and twice in October 2002 at George Mason University, VA, in the framework of a seminar sponsored by the US Department of State for international conflict resolution scholars and practitioners, and in the framework of the Institute of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) Brown Bag Lectures Series. I have included lessons from the stirring and inspiring discussions that followed these presentations in the actual paper.

2. “Intractable conflicts are conflicts that stubbornly seem to elude resolution, even when the best available techniques are applied”. (Intractable Conflict Knowledge website, 2002).

3. This concept was suggested by Burton (1986) as a way of addressing prevention of conflicts by working with their sources in transformative ways. Destructive conflicts are prevented when their deep and direct causes disappear or are not influential any more.

4. Framing is a psychological trait and a cognitive process that enables us to receive and organize information in patterns, which resemble cognitive maps. New information is sorted and interpreted while using these frames.
5 In this paper I use the phrase reframing in its neutral connotation - a significant change of frames.
6 I adopt Mitchell’s (2002) doubts with regard to a presumed wide gap between the de-valuated “conflict resolution” phrase and the more recently introduced “conflict transformation” phrase, as well as his distinction between these: “Conflict transformation clearly assumes that major structural changes will always and inevitably be necessary conditions for any successful effort to deal with the conflict…. Relationships have to be replaced and rebuilt through deliberate and directed efforts, and reconciliation can only take place as a result of these efforts…. ” (p.24)
7 The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is now in charge with the protection of an estimated 20 million uprooted people. Since its establishment in 1951, this agency has helped an estimated 50 million people. Another UN agency, UNRWA, assists now close to four million Palestinian refugees.
8 Following research on many projects the World Bank was involved in during the last quarter of century, Michael M. Cernea and associates have developed and tested a model of impoverishment risks and reconstruction. This model includes eight interconnected components: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property assets, and community disarticulation. (Cernea and McDowell, 2000).
9 “In the Kossou Resettlement Project in The Cote d’Ivoire, evacuees were informed two years before the lake was impounded. All local chiefs were called to a meeting held in Yamoussoubro by President Houphouet Boigny, who personally led the campaign. The oustees were consulted about where they wished to be resettled, and their demands were taken in account” (Lassailly-Jacob, 2000, p.114).
10 Between 9 and 11 April 1948, over 100 Arab townspeople were massacred by ysh paramilitaries in Deir Yassin near Jerusalem in the British Mandate of Palestine. Seems that Deir Yassin massacre was in a way an incident within a former revenge cycle. According to Hogan (2001), during the 1948 conflict, Deir Yassin was studiously honoring a Haganah (the Jewish community's forces which boasted many professionally trained and experienced soldiers) -sponsored agreement to refrain from hostilities with neighboring Jewish areas in exchange for protection from Jewish attack. Nevertheless the village was urged as a target by Yehoshua Goldshmidt the operations chief of the Irgun (Irgun Z?vai Leumi - National Military Organization one of two small right-wing Jewish forces, which operated as independent guerrillas and were referred. by the Jewish Agency as "dissidents"). Goldshmidt, raised in Givat Shaul a Jewish Jerusalem's suburb, had been sworn by his father to avenge armed attacks emanating from Deir Yassin against Givat Shaul during Arab-Jewish-British strife of the 1920s and 1930s.
13 One typical habit in conflict is to give very high priority to defending one’s own interests. If Cain’s interests clash with Abel’s, Cain is inclined to ignore Abel’s interests or actively to damage them… but this is not the only possible response…. [The] fifth alternative implies strong assertion of one’s own interest, but equal awareness of the aspirations and needs of the other, generating energy to search for a creative problem solving outcome” (Miall et al, 1999,. p. 5).
14 For example, Edward W. Said, Palestinian scholar, critisized the peace process since its first phases. In “The mirage of peace” (1995, p. 413) he wrote: “Those of us who fought for Palestine before Oslo fought for a cause that we believed would spur the emergence of a just order. Never
has this ideal been further from realization than today. Arafat is corrupt. Hamas and Islamic Jihad are no alternative. And most Palestinian intellectuals have been too anxious to bolster their own case… I do not pretend to have any quick solutions for the situation now referred to as ‘the peace process’, but I do know that for the vast majority of Palestinian refugees, day laborers, peasants and town and camp dwellers, those who cannot make a quick deal and those whose voices are never heard, for them the process has made matters far worse. Above all, they may have lost hope… “

15. Focusing on the peace leaders' discourse Jamal (2000) claims that changes in the traditional narrative would threaten Israeli society's self-perception, and therefore the old frames sustain. This statement is consistent with the definition and characteristics of intractability this paper elaborates on, but does not exclude reconciliation and transformation. Yet, Jamal (p. 36) reminds us that “Based on the biblical belief that God gave the land of historic Palestine to the Jews, the official Zionist narrative has at its core the divine bond between the Jewish people and the ‘Land of Israel’ and concludes that “This being the case, the existence of other peoples on that land, from the Zionist perspective, must have been temporary”. I would link this statement with the “actual return” query, and suggest that the “divine bond” to ALL the “Land of Israel” and the “right of return” be reframed into complementary myths, as opposed to actual desires, claims, aims and plans.

16. Muhi ‘Abd al-Hadi and Jan de Jong (2001) proposed an extension of the Palestinian territories to include the Galilee and some areas of the Negev in order to absorb portions of refugee populations, without denying the remainder’s ROR. This solution aimed also to resolve the Israeli fear of altering the character of the Jewish state.

17. I adopt the inclusive way Lederach (1997) comprehends “peace-building” as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform a conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships.

18. “The key is understanding that failure is how we improve. You do this not by ignoring the failure, but by recognizing it, examining it thoroughly … Companies, government agencies and even entire professions can learn from failure in the same way. Civil engineers, for example, have analyzed catastrophes and integrated lessons learned over time into the design and construction of future projects” (Michael D’Antonio, 2000, reporting on an interview with Henry Petroski of Duke University).

19. According to Argyris and. Schon (1978) Double-loop learning occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization’s underlying norms, policies and objectives.

20. Cohen Ben-Ami (2002) relays on some of these experiences and on insights from development induced displacement and resettlement for another Middle Eastern displacement case – Pre-planning an evacuation of the Jewish population of the Golan Heights in the context of the signing of peace treaties with Syria.

21. See also in Arzt (1997) solutions that engage the Arab countries in solving the Palestinian Refugees mega-problem.

22. Arzt (1997) also addressed components of permanent regional absorption of the Palestinian refugees, Palestinian population absorption target for the different areas of the Middle East, as well as compensation concerns and options for international permanent absorption.
References

World Bank.


VIRTULENT ETHNOCENTRISM AND CONFLICT INTRACTABILITY:
PUZZLES AND CHALLENGES FOR 3rd PARTY INTERVENORS

Dennis J.D. Sandole

Abstract

This article addresses complex identity-based conflicts, such as those associated with the ending of the Cold War (e.g., Bosnia). It suggests that in many identity-based conflicts, historical memories of outrage and victimhood ("chosen traumas") have persevered across centuries, thereby keeping the conflicting parties "in history." The paper examines the role of virulent ethnocentrism in such intractable conflicts. It also examines the role of "nature" and "nurture" in embedding the universal tendency for humans to divide their species into "them" and "us" within a highly charged emotional context. The paper argues that the complexity of these conflicts has at least four dimensions which challenge the skills and good intentions of third parties:

1. Under stress parties' affective level (limbic brain) tends to override their cognitive level (neocortical brain), thereby enhancing the likelihood of experiencing "feeling is believing" instead of "seeing is believing." Parties may then not be susceptible to the efforts of third parties which often occur at the cognitive level. Such efforts do not necessarily "trickle down" to the affective level where "chosen traumas" are buried.

2. Third parties may have to first deal with an original, historical conflict (e.g., Turkey-Armenia, 1915) before they can deal with one of its more recent variations (Azerbaijan-Armenia, 1990s).

3. Analytically, third parties should employ comprehensive approaches to "capturing the complexity" of historically/identity-based conflicts. Otherwise their intentions to "do no harm" may not only fail, but may make matters worse.

4. Effective third party intervention may then call for coordination among "multi-track" actors performing different roles at the same or at different points in time; in effect, the collaboration and "co-evolution" of approaches corresponding to otherwise competing paradigms (e.g., Political Realism, Idealism, Marxism, Non-Marxist Radical Thought [NMRT])
I was motivated to do this article by the return of genocide -- or genocidal conflict -- to Europe (i.e., the Balkan wars of the 1990s following the collapse of Yugoslavia in June 1991) and by the subsequent inability of the conflicting parties and the international community to translate negative peace in Bosnia -- the absence of hostilities (achieved by the Dayton Peace Accords of October-December 1995) -- into positive peace: the elimination of the underlying, deep-rooted causes and conditions of those wars.

In this article, I try to expand on what I call virulent ethnocentrism (Sandole, 2002a), which reflects not only the apparently universal tendency for people across historical time and cultural space to divide their fellow humans into "us" and "them," but to emotionally frame the "Other" -- "them" -- in terms of intense negative affect (Sumner, 1906; LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Tajfel, 1978, 1981).

Identity-based Conflicts

This discussion confronts the notorious "nature-nurture debate" (Wrangham & Peterson, 1996; Pinker, 2002), noting that while the universality of ethnocentrism at least hints at a biological basis, the variability of the referent ("target") of ethnocentrism -- which could be based on ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, class, gender, region, or any other point of departure (see Kuhn, 1970) -- strongly tilts in the direction of the socially constructed.

For many of the identity-based conflicts of the post-Cold War era, the social construction of "us" and "them" -- "friend" and "foe" -- has occurred in terms of ethnicity. Hence, in former Yugoslavia, Serbs (Orthodox Christians), Croats (Catholics), Bosniak and Kosovar Albanians (Muslims) were locked in brutal bloodbaths, the genocidal intensity of which had not been seen in Europe since the end of World War II and the Holocaust.

I have mentioned the religious as well as the ethnic identities of the various groups in the Balkans because, with the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, an interesting but earlier contentious concept created by Harvard professor Samuel Huntington (1993, 1996) -- the "Clash of Civilizations" -- has apparently started to come to fruition. Through the "bite-and-counterbite," action-reaction processes generated by the terrorist attacks and the U.S.-led "War on Terror" responses to them, an actual "clash" dynamic seems to have been "self-fulfillingly" launched. As I write this article, there does appear to be a new bipolar international system developing -- a "clash" between Judaic-Christian and Islamic "civilizations" -- replacing the multipolarity that appeared to be emerging out of the ending of the Cold War.

Historical Memory

Ethnic conflicts clearly include dimensions in addition to ethnicity; e.g., "clashes of civilizations cum deeply-rooted, global religious systems." What makes such conflicts so intractable, so impervious to resolution and reconciliation, and likely to degenerate into virulence, including genocide, is an intense collective memory of victimhood. This is often associated with a very clear event or series of events marked by very clear dates on the calendar; for example:
Virulent Ethnocentrism and Conflict Intractability

(1) 28 June 1389 for Serbs: the fall of Serbia's "Jerusalem," Kosovo, to the Turkish Ottoman Empire, ushering in 600 years of Turkish "Muslim" occupation of Europe.

(2) 29 May 1453 for Greeks: the fall of Constantinople to the Turkish Ottoman Empire and its eventual "reinvention" as Istanbul.

(3) 12 July 1690 for Catholics in Ireland: defeat of the Catholic King James at the Battle of the Boyne by Protestant King William of the House of Orange, ushering in the structural/cultural as well as physical violence directed at the Catholics of Northern Ireland for over 300 years (Galtung 1969, 1996; Byrne, 1997).

(4) 24 April 1915 for Armenians: the beginning of genocidal massacres of Armenians by Turkish military forces in Istanbul and spreading throughout Eastern Anatolia, resulting in, by 1921, some 1.5 million deaths of Armenians.

(5) World War 2 for Jews: Nazi Germany's "final solution" of European Jewry, resulting in the Holocaust and the deaths of some 6 million Jews and 6 million others (e.g., the handicapped, communists, socialists, and homosexuals).

This is by no means an exhaustive list of what Vamik Volkan (1997) refers to as "chosen traumas." Among more recent examples, we could certainly add

(6) 11 September 2001 for Americans: when 19 young men with boxcutters -- 15 of them Saudis, but all of them Arab Wahabis -- hijacked four passenger-filled airliners, turning three of them into cruise missiles directed at the World Trade Center in New York City and at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, resulting in some 3,000 fatalities.

The 5 November 2002 midterm Congressional elections in the U.S. resulted in President Bush's Republican Party reclaiming control of the U.S. Senate and holding on to the U.S. House of Representatives, thereby allowing the President to pursue his agenda during the second half of his term with few congressional constraints. This, plus the relatively high level of support among Americans for a war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq, has made it clear that 11 September 2001 has eclipsed 7 December 1941 -- when Japan launched a surprise attack on U.S. forces in Hawaii -- as the dominant "chosen trauma" for Americans.

In effect, the Bush White House has successfully invoked the functionalist dynamic of conflict (see Simmel, 1955; Coser, 1956; Sandole, 1999, p. 22), whipping up support for the use of armed force beyond the original targets of the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Since these dates occur with grim regularity at nonlinear, 12-month intervals as constant reminders of particular "chosen traumas," the sense of historical (or recent) victimhood and of bitter conflict is kept continuously alive for the identity-groups concerned in what Volkan (1997) calls "collapsed time." This tends to keep many Serbs, Greeks, Irish Catholics, Armenians, Jews and Americans in the grip of what Muzafere Sherif (1967) calls the "heavy hand of the past." (Among other examples of "recent memory," a little more than a year after 11 September 2001, on 12 October 2002, a terrorist bombing of a nightclub in Bali, Indonesia, killed 187 people, many of them Australians.)

Few conflicts are more reflective of the operation of chosen trauma, time collapse, and the "heavy hand of the past," than the conflict in Northern Ireland. Every summer during the
notorious "marching season," in excess of 2000 marches, many of them which go up to, around, and into Catholic neighborhoods, celebrate the victory by Protestants over Catholics at the Battle of the Boyne on 12 July 1690, resulting in over 300 years of Catholic humiliation and marginalization -- and eventually, with the advent of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and other (including Protestant/Loyalist) paramilitary groups, terrorism.

Richard Rose (1971, pp. 354-355) eloquently captures the operation of these phenomena in Northern Ireland with the following observation:

Londonderry on August 12, 1969, aptly illustrates how time past and time present can fuse together in an explosive way. Protestants there that day were commemorating the 280th anniversary of the liberation of the besieged Protestant bastion within the old walled city from Catholic hordes surrounding it. As they looked over Derry's walls, the marchers could see that Catholics, as in Jacobite times, were present in great numbers in the Bogside just below their fortifications. Catholics did not have to turn their minds further back than the previous twelve months to anticipate what might happen next. In that period, the Royal Ulster Constabulary several times entered the Bogside in large numbers, assaulting Catholics on the streets and in their homes in ways that official enquiries could later amnesty but not excuse. The Catholics began to build barricades to prevent a recurrence of this. This recalled Protestants from ancient history to the present. The barricades were interpreted as the beginning of yet another Catholic insurrection. The approach of the police to the barricades was seen by the Catholics behind the lines as yet another instance in which Protestants sought, in the words of an eighteenth-century Irish song, to make "Croppies lie down." In such circumstances, *it hardly matters whether an individual interpreted events in seventeenth, eighteenth or twentieth-century terms.* In Northern Ireland, the conclusions drawn -- for or against the regime -- are much the same in one century as in the next (emphasis added).

Given what has become almost a mantra for some in the conflict resolution/peacebuilding field, in such protracted, intractable, often violent conflicts, it is essential for conflict analysts, conflict resolution practitioners, and policymakers to delve beneath observable symptoms and to deal with the underlying relational processes, and the underlying deep-rooted causes and conditions; lest the military and police have a never-ending supply of symptoms to deal with.

The question arises, however: how can concerned others, potential third parties, deal with conflicts whose origins include events that occurred hundreds of years ago, with the original parties long gone? In other words, how can third parties help conflicting parties to these conflicts deal with their historical wounds -- their "chosen traumas"-- and thereby, free themselves from the "heavy hand of the past"?
Prior to attempting to do anything about any complex, *identity*-based conflict, it is essential for potential third-parties to understand the conflict as comprehensively as they can; for example:

(1) The role and strength of "nature" and "nurture" in the formation and maintenance of identity and of *identity groups* and, therefore, in the initiation and escalation of violent conflict processes, including war and terrorism. Put another way, third-parties must know something about the nature of the "mix" between inherited "hard-wired" and "soft-wired" *human nature* and variable *environment"*"socially constructed" *culture* in the etiology of ethnocentric "us"-"them" distinctions and violent conflict. Further, to what extent are *human nature* and that "mix" changeable by the third party and other environmental contingencies? (Sandole, 1999, pp. 180-185; Sandole, 2002b.)

(2) Under both "nature" and "nurture," the role and strength of *gender*. What is it, for example, about *male gender* that makes males so overwhelmingly more prone to violence than females across time and cultural space? (Wrangham & Peterson, 1996; Gilligan, 1996; Garbarino, 2000.)

(3) Under both "nature" and "nurture," the role and strength of *basic human needs* (BHNs), such as those for *identity, recognition, and security*, the frustration of which can lead to violent conflict (Burton, 1997). What is it, for example, about the BHNs-frustration *interaction effect* that makes violent reactions to perceived sources of BHN frustration so compelling?

(4) The likelihood that "chosen traumas" primarily exist at the *affective* level, whereas third party efforts to facilitate resolution and transformation of these conflicts occur at the *cognitive* level (Boulding, 1956). How can a third-party, operating primarily at the "knowing" level, negotiate the divide between "knowing" and "feeling" so that what is in any case interconnected is experienced by conflicting parties as being interconnected? In other words, must third-parties be trained psychotherapists (which presently many are not)?

(5) During times of crisis and stress, the affective (the *limbic brain*) overwhelms and overtakes the cognitive (the *neocortical brain*), producing what Maclean (1975, 1978) calls a *schizophysiology*, where "feeling is believing" instead of "seeing is believing." What can the third-party do upon entering the turbulent "conflict space" of highly charged conflicting parties, with each characterized by *affective override*, to arrest the escalatory cycle and transform the dynamic of a "fight" into a "debate" (Rapoport, 1960)?

(6) Something like a *paradigm* in the same sense used by Kuhn (1970) determines our perceptions, with members of different paradigmatic communities -- including scientific ones -- often "seeing" different things when looking at the "same" thing at the same time. For
example:

An investigator who hoped to learn something about what scientists took the atomic theory to be asked a distinguished physicist and an eminent chemist whether a single atom of helium was or was not a molecule. Both answered without hesitation, but their answers were not the same. For the chemist the atom of helium was a molecule because it behaved like one with respect to the kinetic theory of gases. For the physicist, on the other hand, the helium atom was not a molecule because it displayed no molecular spectrum. *Presumably both men were talking of the same particle*, but they were viewing it through their own research training and practice. Their experience in problem-solving told them what a molecule must be. Undoubtedly their experiences had much in common, *but they did not, in this case, tell the two specialists the same thing* (emphasis added) (Kuhn 1970, pp. 50-51).

...in a famous debate between the French chemists Proust and Berthollet[,] the first claimed that all chemical reactions occurred in fixed proportion, the latter that they did not. *Each collected impressive experimental evidence for his view*. Nevertheless, the two men necessarily talked through each other, and their debate was entirely inconclusive. *Where Berthollet saw a compound that could vary in proportion, Proust saw only a physical mixture. To that issue neither experiment nor a change of definitional convention could be relevant*. The two men were as fundamentally at cross-purposes as Galileo and Aristotle had been (emphasis added) (Kuhn, 1970, p. 132).

(7) One of the apparent paradoxes of perception is that anomalies -- deviations from paradigm-based (embedded) expectations -- that should "prescriptively" call these paradigms into question, "descriptively" are resistant to detection, a phenomenon conducive to maintenance of the stability of the status quo paradigmatic system. In other words, as part of the "socially constructed" part of the "nature-nurture" mix, the paradigms that we learn and internalize over time are usually relevant to our survival. They are not, therefore, easily surrendered in the face of apparent contradictions; hence, the value of being "conservative"!

An additional paradox here, however, is that the anomaly may signal that the old paradigm -- the old SOP (standard operating procedure) -- is no longer relevant to survival; in which case, being conservative may be a suicidal course of action.

(8) The *affective-cognitive override* -- which may encourage conflicting parties to hold on to otherwise outmoded paradigms -- occurs even for relatively minor challenges to existing paradigms, calling into play a variety of *unconscious* defenses of the status quo paradigmatic system. For example:

In a psychological experiment that deserves to be far better known outside the trade, Bruner and Postman [1949] asked experimental subjects to identify on short and controlled exposure a series of playing cards. Many of the cards were
normal, but some were made anomalous, e.g., a red six of spades and a black four of hearts. Each experimental run was constituted by the display of a single card to a single subject in a series of gradually increased exposures. After each exposure the subject was asked what he had seen, and the run was terminated by two successive correct identifications.

Even on the shortest exposures many subjects identified most of the cards, and after a small increase all the subjects identified them all. For the normal cards these identifications were usually correct, but the anomalous cards were almost always identified, without apparent hesitation or puzzlement, as normal. The black four of hearts might, for example, be identified as the four of either spades or hearts. Without any awareness of trouble, it was immediately fitted to one of the conceptual categories prepared by prior experience. One would not even like to say that the subjects had seen something different from what they had identified. With a further increase of exposure to the anomalous cards, subjects did begin to hesitate and to display awareness of anomaly. Exposed, for example to the red six of spades, some would say: That's the six of spades, but there's something wrong with it -- the black has a red border. Further increase of exposure resulted in still more hesitation and confusion until finally, and sometimes quite suddenly, most subjects would produce the correct identification without hesitation. Moreover, after doing this with two or three of the anomalous cards, they would have little further difficulty with the others. A few subjects, however, were never able to make the requisite adjustment of their categories. Even at forty times the average exposure required to recognize normal cards for what they were, more than 10 per cent of the anomalous cards were not correctly identified. And the subjects who then failed often experienced acute personal distress. One of them exclaimed: "I can't make the suit out, whatever it is. It didn't even look like a card that time. I don't know what color it is now or whether it's a spade or a heart. I'm not even sure now what a spade looks like. My God!" (emphasis added) (Kuhn, 1970, pp. 62-64).

Given a conflict characterized by the "affective-cognitive override," the parties may be inhabitants of a turbulent, highly charged "conflict space," where there is a perceptual-emotional as well as cross-cultural gap between conflicting parties and third parties. How does the third party negotiate across these chasms in order to be an effective agent for the parties "letting go of the past"?

(9) In order to help resolve a current version of a conflict characterized by these gaps, a potential third party may have to deal first with a related historical conflict. For example, in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (an Armenian area in Azerbaijan), Armenians tend to "see" Azerbaijanis as "Turks." Consequently, Armenians see that Armenia with a population of 2-3 million (and 3-4 million Armenians in the diaspora), is surrounded by 7 million "Turks" in Azerbaijan, plus 63 million Turks in Turkey, for a total of 70 million
Dennis J.D. Sandole

Turks surrounding 2-3 million Armenians. Against this David and Goliath background, they also see the Azeri "Turks" as trying to "finish off the job they started in 1915!"

In this particular scenario, dealing effectively with the Armenian-Turkish conflict relationship (perhaps the first genocide of the 20th Century) may be a necessary condition for dealing effectively with the subsequent (and current) conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Interestingly, Canadian Armenian film director, Atom Egoyan, in his new film, Ararat, which is about 24 April 1915, seems to convey the need for Turkey to acknowledge what happened to the Armenians 87 years ago. In a sense, "It haunts Egoyan, as well as most other Armenians, that to this day there's been no real coming to account with the Turks [about 1915]" (Hunter, 2002, p. G4; Kennicott, 2002).

Complexity Theory

To deal with complex, identity-based conflicts, complexity theory may be useful. A major tenet of complexity theory is that "everything is connected to everything else." Its primary focus is the "edge of chaos" which represents a complex balance between chaos (disorder and unpredictability) and order (predictability) (see Waldrop, 1992).

Whenever a third party enters into the turbulent, constantly shifting, high energy "conflict space" of the parties, he, she or they are confronted by this complex interplay between chaos and order. Depending upon the paradigmatic base of the third party, they may elect to use force to suppress the violent manifestations -- the symptoms -- of the conflict in order to achieve and maintain negative peace (Realpolitik: "political realism").

Alternatively, third parties may attempt to mediate an end to hostilities and then establish opportunities for the parties to deal with the underlying deep-rooted causes and conditions, by facilitating promises by the originally more powerful and privileged party to permit access to political, social, economic and other resources to which the less powerful and privileged party has previously been denied access in order to achieve and maintain positive peace (e.g., Idealpolitik: "political idealism"; Marxism; non-Marxist radical thought) (Sandole, 1993, 1999 [Ch. 6]).

Another alternative would be for a creative third party to realize that to "capture the complexity of conflict," it is not a simple matter of reflecting, for instance, "either realism or idealism," but a combination of appropriate elements of both -- of otherwise competing paradigms -- to maintain the careful balance at the "edge of chaos" between disorder and order.

For example, in mid-April 1994, after a genocidal bloodbath began in Rwanda, it would have been essential for the international community to respond favorably to Major General Romeo Dallaire's "early warnings" and pleas to reinforce his lightly armed UN contingent to suppress and prevent genocide (Power, 2001, 2002), before introducing less coercive, more conciliatory types of intervention.

When the third party does intervene via the more conciliatory processes, they may, again, have to deal with fairly recent as well as earlier memories and experiences of
victimhood in order to help the parties "let go of [even the recent] past," in order for them to
deal with the present. What "best practices" exist for third parties to employ here (again,
keeping in mind that "best practices" may reflect, even for third parties, dangerously
outmoded, unconsciously defended paradigmatic belief and value systems)? A truth and
reconciliation process like that in South Africa? (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, 2003.) Story
telling? (Senehi, 2000, 2002.) In any case, how do we, as third parties who wish to "do no
harm" and "make a difference," negotiate our way from the cognitive (neocortical) to the
affective (limbic) level of the traumatized, highly charged conflicting parties?

The answer here may be an appropriately complex one, with profound implications for
coordinated, "multi-track" third party interventions (Byrne & Carter, 1996; Diamond &
McDonald, 1996; Byrne & Keashly, 2000; Fisher & Keashly, 1991; Fisher, 1997 [Ch. 8];
Sandole, 1998). In addition to launching "mini-Marshall Plans" to assist in the political and
economic aspects of peacebuilding -- no easy feat; just consider the present situation in
Afghanistan (WP, 2002b; Burnett, 2003) -- third parties may have to have "psychoanalytical
access" to the parties to help them overcome resistances to detecting anomalies. Thus, I have
written previously that (Sandole, 1987, p. 296):

Once individuals in conflict -- whether at the interpersonal, intergroup,
interorganizational, international or any other level -- start to express
themselves through [violence], they may become brutalized, unable to view
their "enemies" as anything but despicable subhumans. Under such
circumstances, which can lead to an extension of the conflict beyond the lives
of its original participants, potential third parties who wish to intervene
effectively must be able to operate at the intrapsychic as well as interparty
levels. Unless the first is dealt with adequately, the second may only worsen.

In this manner, the parties can go through the emotional-psychological aspects of
peacebuilding -- mourning, healing, reconciliation -- and develop what Benjamin Broome
(1993) calls relational empathy: a "third culture" or "meta-paradigm" interconnecting, in
"complex" fashion, their otherwise competing cultures or paradigms.

**Conclusion**

Although this paper has attempted to lay out a creative paradigm for third party
intervenors to assist conflicting parties in mending historical wounds and engage them in
peacebuilding, it is easier said than done. But, to gain some sense of closure here, let's revisit
the Balkan wars, especially in Bosnia, where we began this article:

What does it take for outside powers to rebuild a war-ruined and badly
divided country? Bosnia offers a state-of-the-art -- and sobering -- example.
Seven years after a U.S. intervention helped end its civil war and Western
troops poured in to keep the peace, the Balkan nation of 3.5 million remains far
from able to live on its own. The good news is that the horrific fighting that
killed a quarter of a million people in less than four years has not been renewed, that several hundred thousand refugees and victims of ethnic cleansing have returned to their homes, and that peaceful and free elections were held [last] month [October 2002] for all levels of government -- the sixth elections to be staged in as many years. But the [negative] peace continues to depend on 12,000 foreign troops, including 2,000 Americans; the functioning of government relies in no small part on the interventions of a Western "high representative" with near-dictatorial powers; and, most discouraging of all, the victors in the recent elections were the same nationalist [ethnocentric] parties that tore the country apart a decade ago. Bosnia is not now a failed state, but it is a center for the trafficking of women and narcotics, a hide-out for war criminals and a steady drain on Western aid and defense budgets. It's not likely to collapse soon, but neither will foreign troops and administrators likely be able to safely pull out for many years to come (WP, 2002a).

Just imagine multiple "Bosnias" -- in Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya, Palestine -- with Muslims the major victims, and the costs will likely include other factors besides a drain on defense budgets: a further erosion of the Westphalian state system into the "Coming Anarchy" that Robert D. Kaplan (1994, 2000) so accurately, but depressingly presaged, with wars becoming more "local," more subnational and more like the wars of medieval Europe, where:

any fine distinctions ... between armies on the one hand and peoples on the other [are] bound to break down. Engulfed by war, civilians [will suffer] terrible atrocities (van Creveld, 1991, p. 51).

We have already seen this future: two months after Kaplan's (1994) "The Coming Anarchy" appeared in Atlantic Monthly, in Rwanda in April 1994, approximately half a million people, Tutsis and moderate Hutus, were savagely murdered at a low tech level of "medieval" warfare (Abdulai, 1994, p. 38; Power, 2001, 2002).

A little more than a year later, in July 1995, the event that precipitated NATO taking action to end the war in Bosnia occurred: Bosnian Serb forces entered the UN protected "safe area" of Srebrenica, disarmed the lightly armed Dutch UNPROFOR (United Nations "Protection" Force) contingent, separated the men from the women and massacred between 6,000 to 8,000 Bosniak Muslim males (see Honig and Both, 1996; Rohde, 1997).

Such is the daunting challenge facing third parties committed to positive peace throughout the world: seven years after the horrors of Srebrenica, nationalist parties have been returned to power in Bosnia. What would it take to help them let go of the "heavy hand of the past"?

Sometimes people say that there are some conflicts that just cannot be dealt with, except in Realpolitik, coercive fashion, which, of course, often makes matters worse. That seems to be the case with, among others, the U.S.-Iraq conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Russian-Chechen conflict. So, the question that arises here is: is it the case that some
people are, in the words of Francis Fukuyama (1989, 1992), forever consigned to "being in history"?
As the world moves progressively and perhaps unrelentingly toward further realization of Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations," this is no longer just an academic question: as weapons of mass destruction are amassed against the background of that dangerous simplification, they are more likely to be used in the name of God -- the ultimate terrorism!

Notes

1. This article builds upon Sandole (2002a). Earlier comments by Dr. Sean Byrne and two anonymous reviewers are gratefully acknowledged and appreciated!


3. See Bracken & Petty (1998) on the problems associated with the use of Western approaches to trauma in other parts of the world where violent conflict has occurred.

4. See Hunter (1998) for an examination of "the future state of relations between Islam and the West." Also, see Gopin (2000, 2002) on the relationships between religion, violence, and peacemaking, especially in the Middle East. Finally, see Appleby (2000) for a comprehensive exploration of the factors predisposing "religious militants" toward violent responses to conflict situations versus factors that encourage them to respond nonviolently in a peacebuilding mode.

References


Virulent Ethnocentrism and Conflict Intractability


Dennis J.D. Sandole

Press.


Virulent Ethnocentrism and Conflict Intractability


INTERGROUP CONFLICT REDUCTION THROUGH
IDENTITY AFFIRMATION: OVERCOMING THE IMAGE
OF THE ETHNIC OR ENEMY “OTHER”

Thomas Boudreau

Abstract

This paper first argues that a conflict between groups can be lessened by the explicit affirmation by one group of the other group’s identity, including its past pain, defeats and collective losses, when appropriate. A model of group affirmation is then proposed, consisting of: Leadership, Recognition, Validation and the Transparency of Future Time. The groups involved can be ethnic or national in scope. This model is defined in terms of another possible ARIA model to be added to the one already proposed, though quite different in content, by Jay Rothman (1997). Limitations concerning the use of this model are discussed as well.

In this Age of Ambiguity, individuals and groups often look for a reassuring refuge in a unique and historical group identity. As William Graham Sumner (2001) observes, such group identity both includes and excludes--the ingroup/outgroup phenomenon--which insures self-contained or self-imposed psychocultural and social borders. Georg Simmel argues that such borders or boundaries seem necessary to provide a sense of inclusion within the group which, in turn, provides the individual with a sense of belonging and purpose (Simmel 1964). Following Simmel’s lead, Lewis Coser argues that, in times of uncertainty or perceived threat to the in-group, the group's boundaries become less permeable, and more rigid (Coser 1956). This dynamic may, in part, explain the growing importance, and clash, of ethnic identities in modern times, especially in areas of the world, such as Eastern Europe or the Middle East, that are experiencing profound uncertainty, violence and change.

From the perspective of realistic group conflict theory, groups compete with each other for land, scarce resources and relative, if not absolute, security. Influenced by Simmel and Coser, Levine, and Campbell (1972) state that, from the perspective of the theory, the presence of a perceived threat from the outside consolidates the group’s’ boundaries, solidifies group membership and heightens the costs of a member’s defection. They point out that groups under threat, or with a besieged mentality, often develop a hardened self-image, or so it seems so to outside observers. The resulting image of the group under threat is often one of rigid, almost fossilized, formation with little or no diversity of discourses among elites, or the membership at large, nor any variation in the perception of the hostile or “enemy” other. In many cases of
groups under threat, this image of a fixed and fossilized interior group-life is probably true, especially in dictatorships where the opportunities for dissenting points of view are almost nil even in the best of times.

Yet, such a static conception of group identity, as presented in realistic group conflict theory, overlooks the dynamic and competitive processes of negotiating identities that can potentially operate between groups (Kelman 1997a,b). Expanding upon this idea, we focus on the selective definition of the group’s identity with an emphasis on its interior processes of dynamic self-definition. In doing so, we assume an alternative view of group life, even under a perceived threat, that is much more dynamic, and competitive than realistic group conflict theory presents concerning the dominant discourses among elites and members, which, in turn, allows for the selective redefinition of a group through affirmation by an outgroup.

The main premise of this paper is that the tension and mistrust associated with past conflict between groups, or even between nations-states, can be lessened, and perhaps even healed, by the explicit affirmation of another group’s identity, and especially the deliberate acknowledgement of each group’s past pain, struggles and losses, which Vamik Volkan (1998) defines as its collective loss. This premise is, in turned, based upon two implicit and interrelated axioms, namely that: (1) Group identity is largely a social construction that involves a dynamic process of selective self-definition. (2) The selective self-definition of the group’s histories and psycho-cultural boundaries includes its history of traumatic experiences or, more precisely, the “traumatized self-representation” (Volkan 1998) of the group; it is within this process of group self-definition that one can fully understand and appreciate Volkan’s problematic terms: “chosen traumas” and “chosen glories.”

The deposited traumatized self representation of the group can be addressed and, over a period of time, partially healed by an explicit affirmation of the in-group’s identities, including its selective self-definition of the group’s triumphs and tragedies. The key is to view the act of identity affirmation as an attempt to influence a group’s own interior set of selective and privileged discourses among its elites and members concerning its view of itself as well as out-groups that are potentially or actually a threatening enemy-other. These selective sets of interior dialogues and privileged discourses are occurring simultaneously in each potentially conflicting group. The goal of identity affirmation is to transform the potential or actual conflict by addressing and transforming over time each of these simultaneous, interior discourses. As we shall see, it may be the most difficult task of a leader to transform, not the image of the enemy other help by the out-group, but the image of the enemy other held by one own in-group. This problem as a possibility is not really addressed in realistic group conflict theory.

In the following analysis, we will focus on group identities involved in ethnic or interstate conflict. There are important differences in these different groups, and in the appropriate levels of analysis required by each. Even so, as Timothy Nieguth (1999) argues, there are similarities in the social structures that permit the shared though restricted analysis of both in terms of group identity and its formation and preservation. As Byrne and Carter (1996) point out, group identity often consist of the composite yet shared configuration of interrelated
Thomas Boudreau

factors that they characterize as social cubism; they argue that these factors are found in common across a variety of different ethnonational groups. This requires a multidimensional analysis of a conflict in order to reveal the complex interrelationships involved (Byrne and Carter, 1996). As we shall see, the processes and factors inherent in identity affirmation are multidimensional as well, and are applied to the identity groups’ that are either ethnic or national in scope in the following paper.

**Conflict Transformation**

The idea of conflict reduction through identity affirmation builds upon the theoretical work of previous scholars, especially Charles Osgood (1962), Chadwick Alger (1988), Raimo Vayre (1991), Janice Gross Stein (2001) and, as mentioned, Herb Kelman (1997a,b). For instance, Charles Osgood (1962) proposed the idea of the graduated reciprocation in tension reduction (GRIT) as one means of lessening hostility and mistrust between groups. The idea of GRIT is that one party announces in advance that it is taking a step or a series of steps designed to reduce tension via concrete, verifiable actions. Etzioni (1968) suggests that GRIT influenced President John F. Kennedy’s American University speech, in which he announced the unilateral ending of above ground nuclear testing by the United States and he invited the Soviet Union to do the same (Kennedy 1963). President Kennedy thus initiated a process that resulted in the Partial Test Ban Treaty and the beginnings of detente.

While in some ways similar, the process of identity affirmation is different from GRIT since, in the latter, the focus is on specific initiatives or actions while in the former it is on the unique identity of the respective groups. For instance, as we’ll presently see, President John F. Kennedy, in his American University Speech (1963), also affirmed the identity of the Soviet peoples, and especially emphasized their suffering as a nation during World War II.

The concept of identity affirmation grows directly out of the ongoing research on conflict transformation. For instance, Raimo Vayre (1991) identifies several ways in which conflict transformation takes place. His ideas complement those of Galtung (1984,1996) who emphasizes the analysis of inter-party and intra-party conflicts in their structural, cultural and behavioral contexts. According to Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (1999), one of the key ways of reducing conflict is through personal and group transformation. Citing Galtung and Vayre, they point out that “conflict transformation requires real change in parties’ interests, goals or self-definition. These may be forced or encouraged by the conflict itself, or may come about because of intra-party changes, shifts in the constituencies of the parties or changes in the context in which the conflict is situated” (Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse, 1999, p.158). In conflict reduction through identity affirmation, the purpose is transformation of the group’s interior processes of selective self-definition, which can, in turn, open up new possibilities for inter-group peace.

In her article, “Image, Identity and The Resolution of Violent Conflict,” Janice Gross Stein proposes a process very similar to identity affirmation Stein states that in “both enduring interstate rivalries and bitter ethnic conflict, interests are shaped by images that in turn are
Intergroup Conflict Reduction Through Identity Affirmation

partially shaped by identity” (Stein, 2001, p.189). Like Kelman, she states that “the identities that shape images are not given but are socially reconstructed as interactions develop and contexts evolve over the trajectory of a conflict” (Stein, 2001, p.189). She especially emphasizes the importance of leadership in initiating a series of challenges and changes to the group’s self-image, and its image of the other group.

Stein points out that once “leaders or groups begin to change their image of their adversary and are interested in attempting to resolve their conflict, they must also change the image their adversary has of them if conflict reduction is to make any progress” (Stein, 2001, p.201). Following and developing her argument, we will refine the role of leadership in the process of identity affirmation by specifying the critical **and most dangerous moments** for leaders when trying to change the in-group’s perception of the out-group. As we shall see from the historical record, leaders often try to first change the “image their adversary has of them” without first successfully transforming their group’s image of their adversary. As the tragic examples of Gandhi, Sadat and Rabin illustrate, the failure of transforming one’s own group perception of the other can be catastrophic for the leadership since their assassins came from within the leader’s own group.

**Conflict Reduction Through Identity Affirmation:**

A P r o p o s e d  M o d e l

A dynamic definition of a group’s selective self-definition provides for the distinct possibility of inter-group conflict reduction through identity affirmation that results in the incremental, or even dramatic, changes in the in-group’s internal discourses and perceptions of an out group or groups. In effect, one group is trying to negotiate or renegotiate its identity **first within itself** and secondly, with another group. Kelman points out concerning this secondary process that “how a group defines itself has significant consequences for others…its chosen identity has an impact on the interests, rights and identity of other groups. Such groups do, therefore, have a legitimate concern about and stake in the way in which a given group defines itself. For this reason, national identity, even though it is a psychological fact created by the way a group chooses to define itself, is a legitimate subject for negotiation with other groups …that are affected by this self-definition” (Kelman, 1997b, p.337).

In conflict reduction through identity affirmation, one group is trying to do one or all of the following four changes: (1) change or, in Kelman’s words, “negotiate” the in-group’s identity among its own elites and members, (2) challenge and attempt to negotiate the out-group’s perception of one’s own group, (3) challenge and attempt to negotiate the perception of the out-group concerning its own collective identity and ethos, and (4) change or negotiate simultaneously new perceptions and understanding of one’s own group and its collective mythos concerning the **ethnic or enemy image** of another group—a truly transformative process, and hence a truly courageous step, as we shall see, for leaders or members to take. This is, in effect, trying to engage and partially heal one’s own group’s inner most hurts, fears and traumas and, by doing so, change its image of the out group or enemy other. As we shall see, this latter step is the most dangerous one for leaders to undertake. All of these steps
presuppose that a group’s identity is subject to competing and selective internal discourses concerning its collective mythos.

So the question presents itself: **How** should such affirmations be carried out and completed? Obviously, there is no factual formula that can be universally applied to each and all situations, especially where inter-group or international conflicts are persistent and severe. In short, no set formula is exclusive—each unique situation calls for an identity affirmation process that is tailored to local circumstances and historical circumstances. It may not work in some situations at all.

Given these limitations, it may be useful nevertheless to outline a tentative model for conflict reduction through identity affirmation to be tried and tested in actual and ongoing disputes. In outlining such a model, I shall also call for a greater use of what can be described as multiplex modeling and methodologies in specific case studies in order to gain an understanding of what works, what fails, and why the difference, in the historical record of conflict reduction through identity affirmation (Boudreau, forthcoming).

**The Elements of Identity Affirmation: A Proposed Model**

There are four elements in the proposed model of conflict reduction through identity affirmation: **leadership**, **recognition**, **validation**, and the **transparency of future time**.

These can be reconceptualized using Jay Rothman’s idea (1997) of the ARIA which, first and foremost, keeps the focus on the importance of **identity** in conflict. It also forces us, as Rothman states, to focus and be more precise. Hence, the ARIA form is tried here, with the precautionary caveat that, just as composers write different arias—using the same form as a tool to give structure and sound to their different musical inspirations, so too it will be necessary to compose a different aria than Rothman’s here.

Given this, the model can be described as an Affirmation ARIA, consisting of the following formula: (A) Affirmation in inter-group conflict requires (R) Recognition and reciprocity; (I) Initiatives by in-group leadership or citizens, or both; and (A) Acceptance of the hitherto out-group which consists of (1) validation of the out-group’s past pain and traumas, when appropriate and (2) concrete efforts to insure the transparency of future time between groups.

We will define and discuss each of these terms in the logical sequence in which they should occur. In essence, this model attempts to do on a group or international level what Martin Buber (1974) describes as an essential, if not the essential, transformation of relationships on the individual level—changing an “I-it” relationship into an “I-Thou” relationship. This requires challenging the in-group history of hostility towards an out-group through its own processes of selective self-definition. This is admittedly a daunting task, even in the best of times, but as we shall see, there are historical examples in which people have reached out over the great divide of inter-group conflict and sought conflict reduction, even resolution, through identity affirmation.
The Model

AFFIRMATION of an out-group identity is the summation or result of the following three interrelated though separate elements: Recognition, Initiatives by in-group leaders and Acceptance.

1. Recognition

A critical factor of identity affirmation is recognition. This is, in essence, an initiative by in-group leadership that has legal implications and consequences. Recognition by an in-group of an out-group has, at least, three elements which are: (1) affirming the right of a group to existence, (2) reciprocity, and (3) equality. Recognition by an in-group of a former out-group means, at its extreme, that the we-group recognizes the right of the “others” *simply to exist.* For instance, for many years, the state of Israel’s right to exist was not recognized by any of its Arab neighbors. Then in 1977, President Anwar Sadat made his historic trip to Jerusalem thereby recognizing, in one bold step, the existence of Israel. It took almost a year and half for the governments of Egypt and Israel, after much negotiations and a Camp David Summit involving Presidents Carter, Sadat and Prime Minister Begin to ratify this bold initiative in the form of the Camp David Peace Accords; yet, as Janice Gross Stein notes (2001), the irreversible first step was taken when President Sadat first stepped off the plane onto Israeli soil. In that first symbolic as well as substantive step, he broke with his Arab allies and recognized the state of Israel’s right to coexist in peace with its largest neighbor. In doing so, he initiated a peace process that continued through the 1990s. In a paradox of peace and affirmation, President Sadat simply recognized what the Israeli people already possessed— namely, their right to exist, and to coexist with their neighbors without the constant threat of war.

In short, recognition of the “other” in its most basic form affirms the inherent right of the “other” to exist as part of the human family. As such, it is the basic foundation to identity affirmation. Cast in these terms, recognition fundamentally means that the “we-group” no longer seeks to destroy or annihilate the “out-group.” Recognition also implies, and requires, acceptance of the moral obligation by the in-group that reciprocity, and not oppression, will govern the relationship between the groups in the future. Reciprocity, in turn, means that the in-group will demand no rights for itself that it denies to the out-group. Furthermore, it requires that the in-group will make no demands upon the out-group that it refuses to accept for itself. In essence, reciprocity affirms that the in-group recognizes its moral and legal obligations to treat the out-groups as equals. This requires, first and foremost, changing the in-group’s internal discourses, narratives, tropes and stereotypes of the out-group. One way to do this is to change the narratives and stories told about the enemy other” within the group; by doing so, the “we-group” accepts the responsibility not to demonize, satirize or scapegoat the out group (Senehi 2002). The “we-group” also accepts the obligation not to deny members of the out-group the same access to a cultural identity, resources, education and employment that it demands for itself. To do otherwise is discrimination based upon group membership, and thus is the very antithesis of conflict reduction between groups through identity affirmation.

Recognition is also a legal term under international law and acknowledges that a *de jure*
equality exists between two nation-states (Slomanson, 2003). This recognizes the importance of equality in relations between states or, for that matter, ethnic, religious and racial groups. The concept of equality is inherent in the recognition and identity affirmation of an out-group by an in-group as well. In essence, it acknowledges the sovereignty of one group, and its rights to self-determination, free from external or internal influences instigated by the other group. Equality means, at its most primitive level, that one group or individual does not have the right to prey upon the labor, life or happiness of another group or individual.

Dr. Martin Luther King recognized this reality in his famous “Letter From the Birmingham Jail,” written under the most difficult circumstances in the spring of 1963. At the time, Dr. King was leading a nonviolent civil rights effort to desegregate eating facilities in Birmingham, Alabama. In his letter, which he wrote on scraps of paper that were then passed to associates outside the prison, Dr. King wrestles with the difficult question: What constitutes a just law? His answer is based upon both moral and legal grounds; he states that:

To use the words of Martin Buber, the great Jewish philosopher, segregation substitutes an ‘I-it’ relationship for the ‘I-thou’ relationship, and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. So segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, but it is morally wrong and sinful…Let us turn to a more concrete example of a just and unjust law. An unjust law is a code that a majority inflicts on a minority that is not binding on itself. This is difference made legal. On the other hand a just law is a code that the majority compels a minority to follow that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal….Let me give another explanation. An unjust law is a code inflicted upon the minority which the minority had no part in enacting or creating because they did not have the unhampered right to vote. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up the segregation laws was democratically elected?…there are some counties[in Alabama] without a single negro registered to vote despite the fact that the negro constitutes the majority of the population. Can any law set up in such a state be considered democratically structured? [Emphasis added]

In essence, Dr. King (1963) was arguing for the recognition by American society of Blacks’ right to be treated equally under the law as American citizens. By first making a natural law argument, Dr. King first goes beyond the American context and argues that such equal treatment is a basic right entitled to all humans. He then makes a very compelling constitutional argument as well. As Dr. King knew well, the first step in securing equal treatment, and in gaining the equal protection of the law—whether domestically or internationally—is recognition of the other as a human being. As such, this is a critical preliminary element in identity affirmation.

2. Initiatives By In group Leadership: Track I and Track II Diplomacy

As Janice Gross Stein notes (2001), dynamic leadership is required to initiate the
Intergroup Conflict Reduction Through Identity Affirmation

process of conflict reduction with an out-group. When we think of public leadership, we often think of our political leaders and diplomats. Public leaders in their official capacity are obviously prime candidates for initiating the process of conflict reduction through identity affirmation. This is often referred to as Track I, which usually consists of official diplomacy by governmental officials. A political leader often have the visibility and salience to participate in, and sometimes even challenge, the internal narratives, tropes and discourses that selectively define his or her own “in-group;” he or she is often in a position to influence, sometimes profoundly, the internal discourse and narratives concerning the in-group’s collective mythos.

Yet, this is not to imply, as mentioned earlier, that a specific group’s elites are somehow in total agreement about which discourse, history or trope to privilege; elites may be in bitter competition and conflict concerning which historical and psycho-cultural factors should be ascendant and privileged within a group. For instance, in many Middle Eastern states today, there is a fierce internal debate between those elites that favor a secular state, and those that an Islamic nation and government. This debate mirrors the larger conflict that often exists between traditional societies and modern nation-states (Smith 1995, 1991).

There are many complex reasons for this current historical phenomena; yet, to explore the dynamics of this debate goes far beyond the current scope of this paper. The point is that political leaders can often participate in the simultaneous process of trying to change or renegotiate their own group’s collective mythos and, secondly, also attempting to participate in the reinterpretation and new narrative of the in group’s image of an ethnic or even “enemy” group. This is another way that a leader can attempt to participate in redefining a group’s prevailing and privileged self-image, and selective interpretations of itself and others.

The in-group of the leader initiating the process of identity affirmation may have deeply embedded stereotypes and prejudices concerning injuries or injustices of its own, real or imagined, suffered at the hands of the out group, or “enemy-other.” So, by initiating recognition and identity affirmation of another group, the leader may be arousing deadly ghosts and powerful forces contained within his or her own community’s collective mythos. Hence, an astute leader will prepare his or her in-group for the transformation of the in-group’s collective mythos; simultaneously as he or she seeks to transform the stereotypes, prejudices and even hatreds aimed at the leader’s own people contained in the collective mythos of the out-group.

Changing group perceptions and deeply held self-images can be extremely problematic even in the absence of a well defined or perceived threat from an ethnic or “enemy” other (Jervis, 1976). This, at least partially explains why often the most difficult task of political leadership is to challenge the collective mythos, narratives and tropes of one’s own in-group concerning an enemy or apparently “hostile” out-group. This is one reason why leadership in beginning a process of identity affirmation of another group requires real courage. The resistance of the one’s own group to any change or challenge to
its prevailing and powerful collective mythos makes the task of identity affirmation concerning an enemy, or openly hostile group, the most difficult and dangerous step in the process. One has only to remember that Gandhi was assassinated by a fellow Hindu soon after he announced plans to make a peace mission to Pakistan—thus implicitly, at least, affirming the identity of the Moslem state. Nor, unfortunately, was he alone in this regard.

In the fall of 1977, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt made the short yet historic trip from Cairo to Jerusalem, and thus became the first leader in the Arabic world to recognize the state of Israel. In essence, he stated that "We have all suffered enough; It is time to give peace a chance." He then whispered to the press, stating "I have a secret ally in Israel--the Israeli mother." (Sadat, 2003) His initiative began the public peace process between Israel and its neighbors. Yet, his initiative was not so popular at home; extremists were not prepared for the transformation of Egypt’s collective mythos towards Israel that Sadat’s initiative of recognition and peaceful relations entailed. He was assassinated by his own countrymen in the fall of 1981.

More recently, in 1995, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel was assassinated by a fellow Jew after he publicly recognized the rights of the Palestinians to a homeland or “entity” within the West Bank. His death was a tragic loss and the Middle East peace process now seems moribund as a result.

So, challenging the prevailing stereotypes and the enemy image of the “other” within the in-group requires firmness and resolve. The key is for someone within the in-group or we-group to initiate a deliberate policy and process of conflict reduction through identity affirmation. Accepting the challenge to begin such a process is a critical indicator of true social and political leadership, especially if by doing so, the possibility of armed conflict and war can be lessened or eliminated. However, as the tragic examples of Gandhi, Sadat and Rabin indicate, the process of initiating identity affirmation can be very dangerous as well, until one’s own in-group is prepared to accept the previously perceived enemy out-group as an equal partner in the pursuit of peace.

Track II or Multitrack Leadership: Non-Political Initiatives

Because the risks to political leaders who seek to challenge the collective mythos of their own group is often great, the initiative to affirm the identity of an out-group can fall to leaders and participants of non-political organizations. Ambassador John McDonald, Joseph Montville and others have defined and developed the concept of Track II, or citizen, diplomacy (Volkan, Julius and Montville 1991, Diamond and McDonald 1996; Saunders, 1999)

Track II diplomacy consists of religious, economic or other nonpolitical leaders, or simply private citizens, who engage in citizen diplomacy and constructive engagement with citizens of the out-group or even with the “enemy.” By doing so, such citizen diplomats
implicitly or explicitly affirm the identity of the excluded group while simultaneously
beginning the long process of transforming the image of the “other” within the in-group. This
may make it safer eventually for political leaders to take such initiatives to affirm the out-
group as well.

Examples of successful Track II diplomacy are numerous—and growing. For
instance, during the Cold War, President John F. Kennedy sometimes asked Norman Cousins,
editor of the *Saturday Review* to undertake “unofficial” missions to Moscow to discuss policy
and political possibilities with the Soviet leadership. These efforts helped lead to the Partial
Test Ban Treaty in 1963. More recently, in the 1980s, numerous non-governmental
organizations (NGOs) made repeated trips to the Soviet Union to meet with citizen groups, as
well as the official leadership, in an effort to overcome the enemy image of the Soviet people
held by many Americans. In the late 1970s, Professor Richard “Red” Schwartz (1989) of
Syracuse University started the first American Jewish-Palestinian group dedicated to dialogue
and mutual understanding. Today, there are dozens of such groups, and Professor Schwartz is
tireless in his efforts to bring about an “affirmation” of each group by the other through
private, citizen-to-citizen channels.

As Track II diplomacy illustrates, leadership in affirming the identity of an out-group
need not come simply from *de jure* political or diplomatic leaders. The crucial contribution of
leadership, whether it be by private citizens or by highly visible and powerful public leaders is to begin a process of conflict reduction through identity affirmation.

The ideal outcome is that the initiative of the leader to affirm the “other” will be
accepted by his or her society as a whole, and be eventually embedded in the very social fabric
of the in-group. We will come back to this problem -- the problem of embedding a new
relationship between groups, creating in essence a new collective mythos or, at least,
transforming critical parts of the old one—in the section on “the transparency of future time.”

### 3. Acceptance

Acceptance as a moral and political force has two interrelated components: (a) Validation and
(b) promoting the” Transparency of Future Time” between groups.

**Validation of Pain: Taking Responsibility**

Understanding the collective mythos of another group is most important when trying to
reduce conflict through identity affirmation. This is because *a critical aspect of Identity
Affirmation* is recognition and validation of the out-group’s past experiences of traumas, pain
and defeats, especially if inflicted by the in-group that now seeks to affirm its former
opponents. As stated earlier, fear of the “others,” and recollections of past pain and defeats at
the hands of another, are often a vitally important part of a group's identity, included within its
collective mythos (Volkan 1998). Jay Rothman is right when he states that fear of another out-
group—based upon that group’s past persecution, hatred and hostility of the in-group—is a
contributing factor to continuing inter-group conflict (Rothman 1997).

In particular, the leadership of the group making the affirmation should, when appropriate, openly **acknowledge and mourn** for the affirmed group’s past traumas and prolonged past traumatic experiences, which Volkan calls the “traumatized self-representation” of the group (Volkan 1998). This is what West German Chancellor Billy Brandt apparently tried to do during his official visit to Poland in 1971. During that visit, he spontaneously knelt in front of the monument built to the memory of the millions of Poles who fell victim to the Nazi’s policies of extermination. Admittedly, this was probably not enough, in itself, to challenge the Poles’—or the rest of the watching world—internal group narratives concerning the aggressive policies and practices of Germany or of Germans in the past; but it **was a demonstrable beginning**, and it announced, with a simple yet solemn gesture, a radical departure from the not too distant past, acknowledging the tremendous suffering of the Polish nation who lost over six million people during the war.

Validation is the process of acknowledging the past trauma, pain, suffering of the out-group. In essence, validation is taking responsibility and apologizing for, when applicable, the past pain, trauma, discrimination and stereotypical distortions by the in-group. This is substantiation—first by the leaders and then by the members of the in-group as a whole-- that the collective loss suffered by the out-group was a real and often deeply embittering experience. By doing so, the leadership of the in-group is taking responsibility, when appropriate, for its share for the problems in the past relationship between the groups, especially for any pain that may have resulted from the in-group’s actions.

As such, validation is the “emotional project” of identity affirmation. Validation seeks to acknowledge the group’s past traumas—and the concomitant emotional losses that such past pain cost the group in terms of realizing its full potential. In particular, it seeks to reduce the fear of the hitherto persecuted group by taking deliberate and often unprecedented steps to reassure and add respect and reciprocity to a new relationship between groups. By doing so, it may help to reduce the “traumatized self-representation” of the once excluded group (Volkan, 1998).

The converse of validation, especially the act of taking responsibility for past pain inflicted by the in-group upon the out-group, is to act as though the collective loss of the group did not occur, and was not real. For instance, certain groups, especially in Germany, deny that the Holocaust during World War II occurred. This is a frightening claim that stands at the opposite extreme— in essence, the total negation— of identity affirmation and especially the recognition of all groups in the human family’s right to exist in peace, in pursuit of their “unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Another real danger is that there are times when validation of a group’s past pain can be extremely inappropriate. President Reagan’s trip to Bitburg, Germany to place a wreath at the gravesite of Nazi war dead was, to many Americans, shocking and inappropriate. For instance, in a widely publicized event, Nobel laureate Elie Wiesal, in a face-to-face encounter with President Reagan, pleaded for him not to make the trip. Yet, President Reagan went anyway, “affirming” what wiser men would simply let lie. At least American veterans of
General Patton’s Third Army (who, during World War II, fought at Bitburg) could sardonically joke that the real purpose of the trip was to praise the marksmanship of the U.S. Army infantry.

But this is a sad commentary on the negative effects and narratives that emerge within the in-group when an affirmation and validation of an out-group’s past pain is inappropriate. As such, President Reagan’s trip to Bitburg illustrates how delicate, and even dangerous, inappropriate validation can be to inter-group relations. So validation of past pain must be used as carefully as a surgeon’s scalpel—less old wounds be reopened, and conflict potentially intensified rather than reduced.

In contrast, President John F. Kennedy openly and publicly acknowledged the suffering and losses of the Soviet peoples in his June, 1963 American University speech, stating: “And no nation in the history of battle ever suffered more than the Soviet Union suffered in the course of the Second World War. At least twenty million lost their lives. Countless millions of homes and farms were burned or sacked. A third of the nation’s territory, including two-thirds of its industrial base, was turned into a wasteland—a loss equivalent to the devastation of this country east of Chicago” (Kennedy 1963).

The historical context of Kennedy’s speech should be noted. With the end of World War II and the outbreak of the Cold War, the reality of the Soviet Union losses during World War II was largely lost in the West. Hence the political, not to mention the emotional, impact of Kennedy’s speech in recognizing and validating the still fresh wounds of the Soviet people were great. For instance, President Kennedy’s science advisor, Jerome Wiesner stated that intelligence reports indicated that Chairman Khushchev said it was the best speech ever made by an American president.

In essence, appropriate validation is taking responsibility, when applicable, for the past pain, trauma, discrimination and stereotypical distortions or omissions by the in-group of the out-group. Furthermore, it is recognizing that the most powerful way to do this is through an emotional and often symbolic response, or series of responses, that goes to the core of the excluded group’s collective mythos.

As President Kennedy’s speech illustrates, the simple yet substantive gesture will sometimes do. For instance, if a future foreign leader wants to make peace with, or improve relations concerning, the United States, he or she could first go to place flowers at the eternal peace flame burning on the battlefield of Gettysburg, now a national park and historic site. Such a simple gesture might well arouse the deepest hopes and emotions, in both the north and south of the United States, “to achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, as President Lincoln said in his Second Inaugural speech, “among ourselves and with all nations.” [Emphasis added]

Transparency of Future Time: Forging A New

The border between the United States and Canada is an example of making future time as transparent as possible. That is because neither country has any military forces located near the border with the express mission to defend the border from the other. Both governments
have expressed support of this policy of, in essence, defenseless frontiers. As a result, it is the longest undefended border in the world. By not stationing troops in a position that could harm the other, both governments are, to the best of their abilities, demonstrating that there is no intent, nor capability to invade and harm the other. The verifiable lack of capability is one way to make transparent the relationship of the two governments, at least in regards to this issue in the future. The U.S. and Canada may have deep differences over economic policies, Cuba and pollution, especially in the Great Lakes area, but these differences have not influenced their common commitment to reassure the other that, “in the future, we have no plans or immediate capabilities to hurt i.e. invade you.” The lack of a current capability to inflict harm in the foreseeable future is a key step in making transparent future time.

Transparency of future time means that the in-group will attempt to build a new and safer relationship with the hitherto excluded group by taking concrete steps and immediate behavioral actions—as distinct from mere verbal promises-- to make their future relationship as predictable and transparent as possible. In his book, *Evolution of Cooperation*, Robert Axlerod (1984) discusses extending “the shadow of the future” over current interpersonal interactions as one way to insure continuous cooperation. The idea is that the prospect and promise of having a continuous and mutually beneficial relationship in the future is one way to engender or enhance cooperation in the present. Extending the “shadow of the future” over current interactions and transactions is the first key characteristic of the transparency of future time.

The second is verifiability. With the promise of a new and ongoing relationship, the in-group and hitherto out-group should have verifiable means and mechanisms to insure that the other side does not have the capability to hurt the other. Thus, for instance, in the Cold War, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact eventually had vast early warning and satellite systems to verify in “real time” the changing military capabilities of the other.

This task may become more difficult as the group size becomes relatively smaller. For smaller nations or groups entangled in a regional or even local conflict, such elaborate systems are usually not possible, and may not be necessary. Other means may be used, depending on the scale of the conflict, to enhance confidence in the future. One such mechanism is the exchange of observers, which is our third factor in the transparency of future time. Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), used by the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War in Europe sought to make the future more transparent but through complex mechanisms involving the exchange of information, including the exchange of military observers (mentioned above). In the Cold War CBMs, military observers were often exchanged whenever either side planned military exercises that required the local, and even theater wide, build-up of forces. The exchange of military observers was most often temporary, with the important exceptions of military attaches to either NATO or Warsaw Pact countries and a small group of permanent military observers arranged between the U.S. and Soviet Union.

Another variation of the exchange is to have international observers positioned within
both groups to insure transparency and to verify the lack of capability to inflict harm upon the other. Some authors, including this one, have advocated the use of such international observers even in actual wartime as a way to minimize damage and casualties, as well as build the credibility of the third party that might be useful in the eventual settlement of the conflict. This practice was actually used during the Iran-Iraq War by then Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar with remarkable results in that he, with the very able assistance of Assistant Secretary-General Giandomenico Picco (1999), eventually earned enough trust from both sides to be acceptable mediators who helped to end that tragic war (Boudreau 1991).

Educational exchanges are another way of making transparent future time since they can potentially cast the shadow of future cooperation over the relationship of educational institutions and groups that can ripple out into society. The founder of the first modern exchange program in the United States was the eccentric yet affable genius Donald Watt of Putney, Vermont. Watt (1967) believed in the simple yet unheard of idea (in the 1920s) of learning about other countries by living in them with a native family. His simple idea gave birth to the Experiment in International Living in Brattleboro, Vermont in the 1930s. Now, at latest count, there are over 600 educational exchange programs in the United States, consisting of individual home stays for an individual student in another land to complete college semester abroad programs. Hence, it seems that Watt (1967) had a good, yet elegantly simple, idea—namely, that people learn best about other cultures by living in them and bringing back an enriched understanding of other groups and nations.

A final and very powerful way of making the future transparent is to promote economic cooperation between the former antagonistic groups or nation-states. This is the great hope and idea behind the present formation of the European Union (EU). Inspired by Jean Monnet, the first actual steps, implemented in the 1950s, involved the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community formed by the 1951 Treaty of Paris which integrated the steel industries of Germany and France, thus making it theoretically and practically impossible for each nation to go to war with the other (Slomanson 2003).

So, to summarize, transparency of future time means that the in-group will attempt to build a new and safer relationship with the hitherto excluded group by taking concrete steps to make their joint future relationship as predictable and transparent as possible. For a lasting peace, or even for a reduction of a conflict to occur, any affirmation of a group identity should include, not only the recognition and validation of each others’ past or present triumphs and tragedies, when appropriate, but also include the promise and realistic expectation of a normalized—i.e. non harmful—relationship in the future.

The promise to embed the new relationship within economic structures that can bring prosperity to all is a very powerful way of changing competing discourses and narratives within all the involved groups—especially if they see that cooperation with a former enemy will be secure and profitable in the future. This is what the European Community and now European Union and, in particular, France and Germany have tried to do over the past decades. This is what the transparency of future time seeks to do—to build a future together that is as predictable, safe and productive as possible. In this way, the identity
of all groups, of all nations, is not only affirmed—it is assured and secured in the prospects of a more peaceful posterity.

**Problems and Prospects**

There are, of course, numerous problems with the idea of inter-group conflict reduction through identity affirmation; I will mention only a few possible ones here. First, as Meridith Gould (1999) states in a critique of this paper: "reducing conflicts among groups that have different traditions, norms, values, languages and customs is a very difficult task. The first step is to get the groups to recognize and believe that a ‘relationship’ is needed and desired."

If such a relationship is desired, Gould (1999) points out that there is an important distinction between whether these groups had a relationship in the past or whether they are developing a new one. There may be very different results concerning the impact of identity affirmation if the relationship between the groups is pre-existent, and previously traumatic, or totally new. The model proposed above of identity affirmation, as of yet, does not account for these potential differences.

Secondly, as Ms. Gould points out, the model as currently defined is too generic; it does not adequately discriminate between the very different types of groups that exist; nor does it adequately define the kinds of relationships that these groups hope to foster (Gould 1999). Future research is needed to specify what types of groups are most responsive, (or not responsive at all) and what types of potentially different relationships result from attempted identity affirmation by a group. For instance, would Identity Affirmation be more or less effective if a very large group, say a nation(s)-state, uses identity affirmation that is directed towards a smaller group, or vice versa? Or, does it work best between groups that are relatively “equal” in size and power?

Furthermore, at what level of group analysis is identity affirmation most effective, if at all, in changing the internal stereotypes, privileged discourses and tropes of all the groups involved? In short, is there an optimal level of analysis in terms of the size, composition, education or political orientation of the group attempting an identity affirmation, as well as a group whose identity is being affirmed? Perhaps the latter group might even resent that such an attempt of identity affirmation is being made, thus making the inter-group conflict possibly worse!

The problem of empirical testing, refinement and verification of this proposed model must also be addressed. In a forthcoming paper, I suggest that the field of conflict analysis and resolution must use a multiplex methodology as one approach in order to ascertain and make “knowledge claims” concerning human conflicts, and their aftermaths. A multiplex methodology has at least two critical characteristics that its shares with actual human conflicts. First, these conflicts typically have multiple parties, including allies, and thus require multiple levels of analysis, evaluation and intervention (Byrne and Keashly 2000). A multiplex methodology is systematic inquiry into the multiple, simultaneous and often contradictory knowledge claims made by all significant parties to a violent human conflict; in fact, one of the great prizes of a protracted social conflict (Azar 1990) is the power to characterize a violent
conflict situation. These competing knowledge claims do not lend themselves, at first, to a Hegelian or Gandhian synthesis (Bondurant 1971). Thus they have to be simultaneously examined as they exist in a conflict situation, which is a second characteristic of the multiplex approach. Changing these competing knowledge claims into a shared discourse (Senehi 1996, 2000, 2003) is one of the goals of identity affirmation. The methodological challenge remains of accurately evaluating such attempts at identity affirmation and thus accurately measuring whether change occurs in internal discourses among all significant groups in a violent human conflict (Boudreau, forthcoming).

Finally, does identity affirmation create any value-added (Sebenius 1984) possibilities in the relationship, and potential future negotiations, between the involved groups? If so, is the value-added immediate, short-lived or long term? In other words, are the potential posited changes in the groups’ internal discourses about themselves and each other lasting, or do they fade over time? (“Posited” in the sense that the model does anticipate that such changes will occur in the dynamic and selective self-definition of each group.) If the impact of such affirmations is short-termed, then will additional acts of affirmation and reciprocation, such as the ones recommended by Charles Osgood (1962), will be needed in the future in order to make these posited changes a permanent part of a group’s collective mythos?

There are obviously no immediate answers to these questions; only further empirical and theoretical work can critically review, reject or elaborate and refine the model proposed here of Identity Affirmation.

It needs to be emphasized that conflict reduction through identity affirmation is no panacea for peace; it is doubtful, for instance, that such an initiative will work during a period of violent escalation between groups or nations. As Fisher and Keashly point out (1991), the timing and coordination of efforts to transform a conflict is crucial. So, in view of this, the staging and timing of Identity Affirmation must carefully considered by in-group leaders or members before being attempted. Or, as the example of Bitburg illustrates, it may be simply inappropriate to do at all.

As such, conflict reduction through identity affirmation should be viewed simply as one more tool, one more potential approach, in a spectrum of conflict reduction or resolution techniques, to be used when decision makers think it appropriate. Secondly, the very real risks of failure in an affirmation initiative may enhance stereotypes of each other, and thus increase inter-group or international polarization. Thirdly, despite the very best efforts at identity affirmation by a group or government may simply fail to incrementally change the thinking or soften the hardened hearts of the “enemy.” Intractable antagonisms, conflict or even war may be the inevitable outcome of such a protracted impasse. Even so, this article is suggesting that, if the timing and staging is right, an attempt could be made by an in-group to reduce its conflict with an out-group through identity affirmation, at some point in their troubled relationship, before the final gauntlet is flung.

Conclusion: Weaving a New Beginning
This paper argues that a conflict between groups can be potentially lessened by the explicit affirmation by one group of the other group’s identity, including its past pain, defeats and losses. If pursued in good faith, such affirmations may help reduce inter-group or international conflict. The process of identity affirmation is based upon the premise that the psycho-cultural self-images and historical discourses that help define in-group identity are open to internal challenge and change prompted, if necessary, by an out-group’s “affirmative” efforts and can thus be transformed, even if marginally, as a precursor to establishing better inter-group relations.

This paper first examined and defined group identity in terms of the group’s own dynamic process of selective self-definition. The potential use of identity affirmation to change self-selective internal discourses into a shared common discourse between groups has also been explored. The process of identity affirmation by one group may help create “value added” possibilities, especially for future negotiations between the groups, but more research is needed in this area in the future.

Also, the possibility of using a model of identity affirmation, with appropriate modification from the one presented here, on the interpersonal level to reduce fear and conflict should be considered and explored in the future, especially by specialists in the field, like social psychologists, and mental health professionals. Finally, this study proposes a model through identity affirmation that may work to reduce fear and conflict between very large groups, including nation–states. Yet, more research needs to be completed, and actual case studies contemplated in order to develop, refine and test the model.

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Intergroup Conflict Reduction Through Identity Affirmation


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Cultural issues; trust building; experiential learning; graduate distance education
Notes

THE RELIGION OF WAR AND PEACE:
BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

A Public Lecture on Sunday, January 12, 2003,
sponsored by the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution
at Nova Southeastern University’s Graduate School of Social and Systemic Studies

Armand Abecassis

ABSTRACT

PEACE: Is peace the cessation of war? The Binary Logic, The History: War is organized and collective, War is a balance of strengths. Can politics alone create a foundation of peace? Is peace only security? WAR: Is the difference the cause of violence? War is linked to living together as a social group. War: Is the hidden threat in the differences between the nations? War: "Is the midwife of societies". The problem of terrorism: Is peace the obliteration of the differences? THE MEADING OF CONFLICTS: The conflict is permanent and necessary. Peace is not a cessation of conflict. Peace exists only with, through, and owing to conflicts. PEACE AS A DIALECTIC BETWEEN JUSTICE AND LOVE: The spiritual meaning of love. Humility and responsibility. The relation to the other. THE LESSONS OF THE EIGHT WELLS OF THE BIBLE: From war to love. To give and to receive.

The definition of peace which first comes to mind is a negative one: We view it as an absence of war. But is having peace only a cessation of war? Does peace between states and nations simply mean not destroying one another? Actually, it’s impossible to think and reflect upon peace without talking about war. The two terms are inseparable from a logical point of view: As soon as we think of one, we think of the other. This is why the two notions eventually leap back to one another, forcing you to define one by making reference to the other, otherwise know as a binary logic. It is the same for morality; we can’t define good without referring to what is bad. The same can be said for esthetics, we define beauty by making reference to ugliness. From a scientific point of view, to understand the idea of truth, we must consider the idea of falsehood. In regards to our problem, we must not only look at the logic which forces us to associate one with the other, peace with war, but to also consider the history of the people. Proudhon, a French sociologist, wrote: A war is a vindication of peace. Throughout time and everywhere, in all civilizations, war has been used as a means to establish peace though only a tenuous peace, since it only serves as a
means to prepare for the next war. This is the likely reason that people have always thought of peace as a cessation of war. This is different from the pure animalistic physical violence because it is organized and collective. The military is the driving force and the politicians the deciding factor that also reap the benefits. This is the principle of peace, which perpetuates, thanks to treaties between states. Thus, they are founded on a connection with strength and consider war as a balance of those strengths. Every time a state was disciplined for being stronger than the others, it turned peace into its own profit and controlled the world. It is likely that the Persians, Medes, Greeks, Romans, Caesar, Napoleon and Stalin understood peace. To them it was an absence of war and domination where imperialists or colonials conquered territories, and integrated them into their own vision of society.

Therefore, let us ask the question in a more radical manner: Does peace between states stem from a political nature? Can politics and politics alone, create a foundation to define and perpetuate peace? Politics are certainly inevitable; it is of course necessary for states to protect themselves against outside threats and danger from their enemies. They must reassure their citizens that they are safe, that is to say, that all precautions have been taken to prevent an enemy invasion. Germany had no business being in France or Poland between 1939 and 1945. The Greeks and Romans had no right to occupy the conquered countries around the Mediterranean, and Napoleon should have stayed home rather than wander into Russia and Egypt. However, countries that declare war generally try to justify it by saying that they not only had the right, but it was their duty and justice was on their side. We have never seen a nation go to war without claiming that she felt threatened or attacked, and without claiming that it is to defend her very existence as a state, her security and territory. If Sharon in Israel follows his political views against Arafat, and Arafat does not cease terrorist acts, it will be because each of them feels threatened and attacked by the other. It is the same between Bush and Sadam Hussein, and between Osama Bin Laden and the Western Civilization. Once the circle of violence has begun, it is difficult to know where, when and how to stop it.

Let us take our question a step further. Is peace only security? Security is the principle objective in politics. It is the driving question, which asks: how can we obtain peace? How can we ascertain it? Can we have it indefinitely? Realism opens our eyes to the concrete historical reality of people, of nations, of tribes and of hordes. As far as we can recall in the history of humanity, we can see that the only drive has been to instill a sense of security among them. From the moment when humans organize themselves into a group with leaders responsible for their actions and administration, they have to give the means to obtain peace and end violence. Actually, there are situations, which must be solved by violence against violence. Moses liberated the Hebrews from bondage by using violence; Spartacus attempted to revolt against the injustices of Rome but unfortunately failed. Those who revolted in the ghettos of Varsovie wanted to die standing, but could do so only by being armed, even if they knew of the Nazi’s barbarism. The Americans who landed in Normandy, guns in hand had to pay a high price to rid Europe of Nazi torment. Men have had to learn, despite themselves, how to struggle against the suffering inflicted upon them. They had to struggle against the violence and death by chasing and condemning the guilty ones, on a national and international level.

We can now take our question to a deeper level. Humanity is divided into different
societies, nations, people, and states; as of today we still have not been able to create an effective structure, a code of laws, which would assemble some sort of efficient general society of nations in the image of every organized society. Since cultures are different and each has their own set of values, wanting to realize their own goals, and wanting to use their own means of strength to depend upon themselves and their perpetuation, they are driven to conflicts with others who tend to resolve problems with war rather than diplomacy. This is due to geography, economy, demographics, politics and sometime religion. It leads us to ask the following: Is the dispersion of humanity into different nations finally the real cause of war? There will be war and violence due to differences in cultures, history and geography. The difference will then be the cause of violence. Let us suppose that is the case: The difference is the cause of violence. We would then infer the following consequences.

a. First, war is linked to a social being, to the living together as a social group, to the belonging to a state or to a particular nation. No nation can put itself in the place of another nation nor can they understand the other. The biblical myth of The Tower of Babel depicts this situation. We read that:

At that time all mankind spoke a single language. As the population grew and spread eastward a plain was discovered in the land of Babylon and they settled there. They spoke about building a great city with a temple tower reaching to the sky a proud eternal monument to themselves… (Genesis 11, 1-3)

The Bible teaches us that in this myth, men have decided to annul their differences and unite themselves in speaking the same language and in pronouncing the same words, and speaking the same words. They had decided to build the same civilization, identical for all, to eat, to drink, to play, to dress, to study, and paint the same way, to dwell in the same houses. The Bible is not in accord with this way of uniting people by resemblance, in a uniform manner. A man rose up, his name was Abraham and he wanted to unite people by teaching them to preserve their differences. He believed that unity of humanity does not mean the disappearance of States and Nations. Far from being an obstacle to its unity, the multiplication of irreducible cultures is its condition. Unity does not mean uniformity, massification, and reduction to the anonymous, to the impersonal. We are back to our question: Under these conditions where unity respects diversity and differences, war, is the always present, hidden threat to the creation of each Nation, and of each State.

b. The second consequence is paradoxical: We discover that war has been positive for many people. It is again Proudhon who wrote, “War is the Midwife of Societies.” History itself gives him reason, unfortunately. It is through battles on the battlefield where men defend themselves by killing men, that solidarities, proximities and complicities were reinforced. The patriotic sentiment, the anguish before a native land in danger, and dying for it, contributes very strongly to strengthen the nationalist sentiment. Victory as defeat helped many of the citizens to unite under the same flag or under the same patriotic ideas. The psychological, spiritual, political and economical weaknesses are always exploited by
the people who see to impose their hegemony. We know this psychological law to which one
asserts his personality by opposing himself to the others; the unity of groups is easily
obtained in the rising against a potential common enemy.

c. This leads to a third consequence: Humanity ends up in building blocks, super
powers which threaten each other daily, but who cannot go into action because of the
military power several of them have. They know that the planet could explode and make
them all disappear. Peace is thus obtained due to this world menace. It is founded and based
on the fear of disappearance. Indeed this peace has the merit of existing, but what is a peace
based on the fear of dying? Can we not consider a more exciting peace?
d. The fourth consequence is the one we are going through in our time. World war has
become impossible but it does not prevent particular ones, regional ones. The modality of
war has changed but its logic has remained the same: it is still to neutralize the force of the
one that is considered an enemy, to acquire weapons from the superpowers who manufacture
them, to conspire civil wars and troubles in certain states and especially terrorize their
citizens. Today we see that no one has been able to neither know nor find the riposte to these
weapons of the weak, which is terrorism. Why? Because even the fear of death is not a
deterrent for individuals who are ready to sacrifice their lives by blowing themselves up in
public places to kill a maximum of innocents. They are being brain washed and persuaded
that their absurd death is a religious sacrifice that God rewards. Truly they are being
manipulated and are pushed to their death only for a territory, for a nation, for a national
identity wrongly understood, for a financial interest or even for psycho-pathological reasons.

What have we been able to conclude so far to answer this question? First, that the
threat of war and violence is included in the differences that separate cultures and nations.
Second, that these differences have to be maintained and respected. It is in this sense that
civil peace pertains to interior security, the settlements of conflicts between citizens, the
striving between parties and between the different communities, can be obtained by laws
recognized by all. All this is a reminder to each one: They belong to the same culture, to the
same people, the same history, the same humanity that goes beyond the different ways of
expression.

We can then generalize what we have just demonstrated by another form of a paradox:
Peace is not the disappearance of conflicts and of oppositions. Conflict is essential to the life
of relationships. The differences that exist between the interlocutors, express themselves in
these conflicts. Peace is not absence of conflicts, because it exists only with them, through
them and it owes itself to them.

Heraclite has written: "All that happens is through conflict and by necessity “ and
"Polemos is the father and the king of all:” Nietzsche also thinks that "War is a natural
phenomena between human beings”. Conflict is thus necessary to peace in the sense of a
good human use of it, and to the extent of the openness and the reception of conflict and of
differences. Conflict is permanent; it is the condition to existing, inter subjectively and
brotherly.

Our question therefore goes deeper: How to live together going through conflict,
avoiding that it becomes an army and organizes itself in a war? This is, at last, the true
problem, the true question of war. It is as well interior as exterior to the human being: Inward peace has to be built on a permanent crisis, which inhabits the human being in constant opposition with himself and with the other. The Bible suggests love between human beings and brotherhood. But in what sense is this love of the neighbor to be understood. The prophet Isaiah expresses the ideal of this love:

In that day the wolf and the lamb will lie down together and the leopard and goats will be at peace. Calves and fat cattle will be safe among lions and a little child shall lead them all. The cows will graze among bears, cubs and calves will lie down together, and lions will eat grass like the cows.... Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea so shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Isaiah 11, 6-9

Our question transforms itself again: How does one understand the love of a neighbor in a way that it may not maintain and develop itself but, only by the inevitable conflict between the individuals and collectives differences? If to love is to always love the difference of the other, and not love him for his resemblance he has with us, does that love go beyond feeling and affinity? It is also, and especially, spiritual. What does that mean? It means that love is, before all, humility. I am only a human being, meaning characterized by being finite and limited. I am not God, I do not have the absolute truth, the perfection: My experience, my word, my thought, my feelings, my behavior are always relative to me as a human being and to my individual way of assuming my humanity.

The other has thus also a right to be who he is and to perceive the world and men as he perceives them. It remains to be done that when we meet each other, we have to accept, to submit both to the world of values, what we call individual morality which goes beyond Human Rights and the Rights of Citizens that certain nations do not even respect. In this sense, to love the other is first to respect his difference and to build with him a world where he finds his place too. It is mostly and mainly to feel responsible for his difference, and to defend it everywhere, it may be unknown, threatened and challenged. Moreover, it is to worry for this difference, before worrying for oneself. Violence can disappear by this way only. The conflicts between the differences turn into dialectic, between love and peace. I am convinced in my philosophical and, psychological research that, the main problem of the human being is, the one of brotherhood, the problem of the relation with the other. I am convinced to, that it is the main problem in the Bible.

I have thought about reflecting on these questions of war and peace by centralizing them around the encounters of biblical figures, which took place around the wells and, springs of the villages, and that are written about in the Torah, as well as the Gospels and, the Koran. In these Nomadic times, life in the camps, and the villages, were dependent on the water well to which all would gather around to collect the water for the family, animals and, the livestock. The shepherd was not only at the well to fill her jar, or to water the animals, but also to meet other shepherds, to dialogue with them and share news and
impressions of the time.

Economical and conjugal alliances were contracted. The well was the social location of communication and a place of evaluating the capacity of human beings to open to each other and to listen to each other. And this was especially so for a stranger coming from the desert, famished, thirsty, and tired. We have forgotten this meaning today because water comes to us in our kitchens, bathrooms, and gardens.

The canalization that brings water to us makes communication difficult. I have taken the road that leads to eight biblical wells, and so I became aware that they are the multiple paths that go from war to peace. The first well, takes place in an armed conflict, it contains bitumen and not water. Bitumen was used for construction; it is still called today a well, from which petroleum springs from the raw material of civilization. The wars that this black gold provokes are the bloodiest ever. They are always a threat to enflame the entire planet. But the last well, the eight one, is the one where Jesus met the Samaritan. This well becomes a source of peace as Jesus told the Samaritan:

If you knew what a wonderful gift God has for you and who I am you would ask me for some living water. (John 4, 10)

Between these two wells are six wells that tell us the stories and the adventures that lead from war to peace, internally and externally, going from justice to love. Where are the water diviners and well makers today capable of gathering living water from one source to quench the thirst of man, or at least to match it? Is human thirst only physical, is it only the human body that demands water? Does the psychic need to be quenched too? Beyond the physical and psychological is the whole human being inspiring, hoping, and waiting for thirst, for meaning and value. As thirst is a negative marker of water that the body needs, aspiration and desire are the markers of the spirit to which man is open to the meaning of life, which could fulfill and give interior and exterior peace. The greatness and the limit of man is that he can be deceived by water.

He can also be deceived by the meaning of his life, offered to him to reconcile him with himself and with others. Altered, false and polluted beverages are today offered to him, which poison him and, he is obliged to drink them because, he is thirsty and wants to survive. Religions, ideologies mystics, harass him from everywhere and pretend to answer to his aspiration, to the meaning to joy, and to peace. In reality they confiscate him to himself and to others, setting him against others and exploiting him.

Where to find, and how to drill the true well, connected to the source of living water, capable of answering to the thirst of liberty, justice and peace inscribed profoundly in the human being. Water treatments by men are very revealing on his social projects, on his vision of men and, on his concrete concept of history. Today too, the exploitation of a gold mine or minerals or oil wells by society that owns them, is very revealing on its capacity to incarnate universality, solidarity, and responsibility. The nomad of biblical times were without doubt right to settle far from wells, affirming that this well and water belong to God. That meant, at least, that men and women who would gather around the well, would come there with the awareness that water did not belong to one human being or one people. That is why they were sharing it according to the economy of abundance, and not based
from self-interest but from give and take. Will human beings learn one day to give without expecting something in return, to give, just for giving and, not to give to receive, to receive to give and not to receive to get.

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CALL TO ACTION TO ELDERS WORLDWIDE: TO HIGHLIGHT THEIR ABILITIES, WISDOM, AND COMPASSION AS CITIZEN DIPLOMATS, LEADERS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Florence Ross

Kofi Annan (1999), the Secretary-General of the United Nations, noted that, “A Society for All Ages is one that sees elders as both agents and beneficiaries of development. It honors traditional elders in their leadership and consultative role in communities throughout the world.” Older persons are among the world resources most often unseen and overlooked. It therefore becomes necessary to raise the consciousness of older people to their changing role in American and global societies to ensure fulfillment in their eldering years. Prior prejudice against elders has prevented inclusion of their enormous potential, of their accumulated experience and wisdom. This paper is directed toward determining how best to utilize the talents, wisdom and life’s experience of these elders to add meaning and substance to their lives, while affording them the opportunity to continue to contribute their talents and abilities as political activists and leaders directed toward peacemaking and social change.

Demographic Changes

Demographic changes in life expectancy are startling now exceeding eighty years worldwide. The twentieth century has witnessed greater control of prenatal and infant mortality, a decline in birth rates, improvements in nutrition, basic health care, and the control of many infectious diseases in many regions of the world. This combination of factors has resulted in an increasing number and proportion of persons surviving into the advanced stages of life (Atchley, 1997). In the developed countries, smaller families are due to a growing desire for a healthier life, accumulation of greater resources, and opportunities for leisure.

According to United Nations estimates (1998), in 1950 there were approximately 200 million people 60 years of age and over throughout the world; by 1975, their number had increased to 350 million. By the year 2000, that number had reached 590 million and it is estimated that by 2025, it will be well over 1100 million, which represents an increase of 224 percent since 1975 (Kinsella, 1998). Older persons are an untapped resource in all societies with a wealth of knowledge, skills, diverse cultural heritage and lifelong experiences that need to be utilized if countries are going to be able to accommodate this unprecedented population shift. A steady stream of one million persons a month now crosses the threshold of age sixty. As grandparents begin to outnumber grandchildren, the eldering population, as a majority force, will require full integration into their society, reversing the prior marginalization of this group.

A notable challenge is the emergence of women elders as a majority force. Gorman (1999) sees the older persons’ world as an increasingly female one in the twenty-first
century. Older women are outnumbering older men in significant numbers. With their increasing majority status, women have become active citizens discovering the power of organization and giving leadership on issues of common interest to their societies. Older women are known to experience a “power surge” at a time when the culture puts them out to pasture; many older women possess a menopausal zest to reach out for compassionate solutions to complicated problems (Mead 1978). These activists, or Citizen Diplomats (Montville 1981), are models for the future who will eliminate the structural discrimination against women and elders, pervasive in the past.

The aging boom can serve as a catalyst for change. Every country will be challenged to devise ways for elders to be activated to utilize their abilities. It will be potentially advantageous to all societies to have a highly skilled and knowledgeable work force that only experience can deliver.

A broad range of programs that engage elders as civic citizens can include:
1. The establishment of senior advisory groups to work with local governments on community matters, especially those concerning aging.
2. The development of a senior’s bureau to establish and maintain a directory of seniors according to talent and expertise, along with a parallel directory of paid and unpaid opportunities in community development.
3. Expansion of on the job training and retraining opportunities for new technologies, community service, and income security in old age.
4. Programs to demonstrate the enormous diversity that exists in old age, to educate the public about contributions elders have made to our society based on their lifelong experiences, creativity in a variety of fields, organizational skills, courage, and experience in facing poverty, violence, wars, disease and death. The media can place emphasis on the impact of aging to create better understanding between the generations.
5. The study of gerontology as a core subject for students in the social sciences, journalism, and will help to create greater acceptance of the increasing elder community as it documents changes in biological, social and cultural aspects eventually applicable to most humans.
6. The encouragement of exchanges between retired elders in developed and developing countries will support greater appreciation of each other’s culture, create relationships through sustained dialogue and will reveal similarities and differences that may be dealt with satisfactorily through negotiation and without violent encounters. Information may also emerge that is helpful to governments in the long struggle for a culture of peace.

The aging revolution calls upon us to see that older people as a distinct group require recognition, that they are not redundant, and that we need to remove any barriers that segregate them. Elders inform us that the process of aging is a life-long marathon, requiring preparation and pacing. Characteristics of elders that were valued in the past such as healing, counseling, cultural transmission of traditions and values, volunteerism, leadership, and the strengthening of intergenerational relationships will require us to rethink and redesign old age if we are to retain these valuable attributes (Jones, 2000).
Implications of Longevity

Elders bring a sense of permanence to their environment. They are the strongest exponents of environmental preservation. They plant fruit orchards as a legacy for future generations. Elders give youth a past, a way of modeling themselves for a life of integrity, of taking a broad perspective to events and persons, of courage to overcome adversity and to reach a period of control in their own lives. Carl Jung (1965) described this period as “individuation”, achievable only after age forty, the beginning of a period of self-renewal and self worth. Elders focus on experiences, memories and feelings that make for stability in society. Governments and civil societies will need to call attention to the elderly as agents of social and sustainable development. This is a new age for elders and they need to be convinced that their reinvigoration into a new stage in life is an opportunity to participate fully in society (Zalman, Schacter-Shalomi, 1995).

Rosenbaum and Button (1993) found that intergenerational contact will become mandatory if the perceived attitudes of elders as promoting their selfish interests are to be accurately evaluated. The actual behavior of older people tends to be much less age-centered than their public image gives them credit for. Rosenbaum and Button (1993) and Atchley (1997) argue that the inaccurate stereotype of the self-centered older voter has the potential to fuel intergenerational animosity because it is based on beliefs about older adults’ voting behavior, not their actual behavior. Elders as Citizen Diplomats are urgently needed to counter the current political conservatism. Since politics is the route to political power, elders need to organize and strengthen their power bases and coalitions with other organizations, the private sector, and government agencies (Saunders, 1999).

Elders have a greater capacity than young people to see all of life and how it is connected. If we restore elders to positions of respect within the family, we could profit from their wise council. Bronfenbrenner (1961) informs us that if the institutions of our society continue to remove parents, other adults, and older youth from active participation in the lives of children, and if the resulting vacuum is filled by age segregated peer groups, we can anticipate increased alienation, indifference, antagonisms, and violence on the part of the younger generation.

In societies where close family ties are strong, and cultural traditions cherished, elders’ influences serve as a cohesive leadership force. In the past, these elders were the backbone of their societies. Now they suffer a loss of prestige and influence, particularly when viewed as assets or liabilities to the rest of society. Gerontologists have alerted us to the need to become an experimental society that tests new policies in this age of demographic change (Atchley, 1997).

Significance of the Aging Revolution

The experience factor is not to be minimized in bringing about changes in the political and social life of this country. Aging is not a chronological stipulation (Atchley, 1997). Many elders are only too pleased to begin life anew, becoming mentors, leaders of social change,
following roles that they were unable to pursue in earlier years. While elders are often an overlooked resource (Lederach, 1997; Byrne & Keashly, 2000), they are less defined by biology than many suppose; they seek power with others, and empowerment in their own lives to pursue an existence that has purpose. Elders are ready for honest communication, for the opportunity to discuss their views and place a searchlight on matters in the social system that they question (Ross, 2002). Psychologists and gerontologists have consistently confirmed these goals in that the greatest potential for growth and self-realization exists in the second half of life (Erikson, 1986; Moen, 1996; Stone & Griffith, 1998).

Citizen Diplomacy

Citizen Diplomat is a term coined by Montville (1981) while he worked at the U.S. State Department. These are persons concerned about world and local affairs. They are activists who say, I have one life and another chance to make it count for something. How do I make a difference? How can my special talents and resources be employed? The elder Citizen Diplomat is a person who is still searching for meaning, for sharing accumulated wisdom, seeking to serve as a political agent for social change. Citizen Diplomats are reformers, organizers, advocates, innovators, mediators, members of NGOs, collaborators, empowered grassroots, peace makers, peace managers, and more (Montville 1981).

These are men and women who, as private individuals, have assumed a deliberate responsibility to serve as conduits to improve conditions for peace, non-violence, the environment, and the development of national and international relationships. They also have worked for the pursuit of intergenerational programs, human rights issues, matters of legal aid and political freedom, and for the improvement of educational opportunities for the poor. Further, they were active in the global campaign against apartheid and in defusing the Cold War. They enjoy public deliberation and are willing to assume responsibility for their decisions (Montville, 1991).

Citizen Diplomats represent middle range citizenry, who seek to create and sustain peaceful relationships with neighbors and nations, advocating non-violent solutions to political problems (Lederach, 1995; Byrne & Keashly, 2000). Citizen Diplomats seek to engage in meaningful dialogue in their non-governmental diplomatic deliberations. They understand that negotiating for economic, social and political advance is about more than traditional diplomacy and new markets. In the process of any negotiation, they place emphasis on developing human relationships for trust and mutual benefit (Saunders 1999). Their developed sense of priorities and experience in political matters has given them an ability to build bridges between diverse organizations and individuals. Citizen Diplomats provide lines of communication during dangerous periods when official discourse is close to non-existent. They seek to be alert to the cross-cultural challenges facing all global societies in racial, ethnic, religious, civic, and social matters (Lederach, 1995; Netter & Diamond, 1996).

Elders, as Citizen Diplomats in this era of longevity, are aware that they can lead by their majority voting power to have more attention placed on keeping the peace, building a
culture of peace, developing new ties of friendship with their foreign counterparts and generating creative solutions for economic opportunities instead of spending enormous sums on war (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 1997). Serving as a citizen diplomat is a form of mentoring, being an empowering, non-judgmental participant, of helping people move into the future, into peace, wherever they may find themselves (Rabic, 1994).

As activists in numerous organizations, they are not timid and their need is to keep challenging themselves to explore their capabilities to the maximum as effective social change agents. Elders who were activists in their youth continue to believe in peace as an action verb, that one must do it to be it, that only empowering young and old can preserve our societies (Atchley, 1997). Elders who have a developed sense of responsibility to others are aware that in the process of doing useful work together, they find their greatest satisfactions in a sense of interdependence and community. They have learned that true knowledge is the result of contact with other minds. These elder activists are not easily discouraged, as their life’s experience has taught them that seemingly hopeless situations can become the greatest impetus for change and transformation (Ross & Rothman, 1999).

What are Elder Peacemakers Doing?

Kofi Annan (2003) cited global aging as a potential pool of untapped resources that societies must learn to use in a productive manner. He urged member states of the United Nations to take advantage of elder skills and wisdom while placing these demographic changes high on their national agendas. Even in a nation as ravaged as Afghanistan, for example, he noted that tribal elders have gained respect and recognition for their efforts to promote peaceful solutions to the country’s problems.

Currently, elders are participating worldwide in diverse activities on behalf of peace, justice, the impoverished elderly, care-giving services for and by elders, and inter-generational partnerships for dialogue and mentoring. Elders have recently become aware that many foreign assistance projects have excluded them. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, warns that leaders who ignore the needs of their growing eldering voting population do at their own peril (2003).

In November, 2002, 110 delegates from 47 nations met in India to organize a standing “Peaceforce” (FOR 2002). A trained nonviolent army is being formed to intervene in conflict areas and help create safe space for local groups to struggle non-violently and seek peaceful solutions. Elders were prominent in attendance and leadership.

The United Nations Second World Assembly on Aging (2002), which was held in Madrid, Spain, highlighted the programs of both governmental and non-governmental organizations. Ross (2002) advocated programs that would best utilize the talents, wisdom and life experience of elders to add meaning and substance to their lives, while simultaneously affording them the opportunity to continue to contribute their talents, shared visions of freedom, justice, and peace, and abilities as political activists. Leadership roles assumed by elderly populations in many countries of Africa and Asia on behalf of peace inspired the Assembly delegates to pursue acceleration of their own efforts in their respective countries. In addition, the NGO on Aging at the United Nations conducts active year round programs and interacts with NGOs on Aging worldwide, sharing new ideas that have shown successful application for the elderly. Since elders, like people everywhere,
yearn for a better future but have become aware that the world is not anything it was ex-
pected it to be, an innovative leadership program is has been proposed by the United Na-
tions NGO on Aging that would nurture individuals, groups, and communities to function in independent and interdependent ways (Atlee, 2003).

Recommendations for the Future

Since it will shortly become apparent that the eldering community represents a vi-
tal majority component of the population, the encouragement and development of a pro-
eldering society should be undertaken by government, NGOs, universities, legislators, and all interested community organizations and individuals. The promotion of intergenera-
tional dialogue and joint activities to achieve connections can promote ways to learn re-
spect for each other’s opinions, ideas, culture, and aspirations. Universities will benefit as they encourage the eldering community to partake of such in-
novative courses and projects by promoting:

1. Teaching the development of communities for the future.
2. Leadership training to promote the richness of lifelong activism.
3. Conflict analysis training to elders for community application.
4. Multi-ethnic conciliation programs for long-term cross-cultural relationships and a global perspective, with activities to include peace parades, and United Nations inter-
national food festivals, etc.
5. Retraining courses for elders who seek to complete former careers or who seek to em-
bark upon advanced education or new careers.
6. Human Relations Workshops for young adults and teens with elder trained facilitators.
7. Education of elders and others to engage one another in peace building efforts.
8. Organizing a national service elder corps to provide opportunities for service for those aged persons who can assume active roles in community volunteer efforts.
10. Cooperating with, or sponsoring, the aging-to-saging model in communities to achieve spiritual empowerment on personal and community levels.

Expanding research on variables of religion, ethnic identity, race, and women of color.

Conclusions

As the fields of conflict resolution, peacemaking, diplomacy and gerontology move forward into the twenty-first century, it is clear that older women have, and will continue to have crucial roles to play in the development of a tolerant, peaceful future. In the global arena, programs that encourage older women to mentor and teach younger women in particular, and younger people in general, must be initiated and pursued aggres-
sively. All indigenous elders of first and second world countries have seen the devastation of the past, and can help create a better and lasting vision of the future—a future in which people of all ages are valued and allowed to contribute in productive, and meaningful ways. As NGOs and governments assume responsibility for building a culture of positive aging, then mining the experiences of elders who have been through the cross-cultural challenges that most societies are facing will become essential. In Eastern cultures, elders are venerated and respected because they have much to teach; even if younger people do
not want to emulate their ways, they have valuable lessons to impact about the mistakes of
the past that should not be repeated and transmitted into the future. This is the appropriate
role of the Citizen Diplomat everywhere—to engage, to teach, to advocate, and contribute
their vast wisdom of experience to all those who have the wisdom to listen, to hear, to learn,
and to teach.

References
Henderson, Michael, 1994. All her paths are peace: Women pioneers in Peacemaking. West Hartford, Conn.: Kumarian Press.


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