Peace and Conflict Studies

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Johannes (Jannie) Botes

Abstract

This paper examines the strategies, tactics and tasks of a media moderator during television debates regarding deep-rooted conflicts, as well as the overall intended and unintended roles and effects of these broadcasts. Two case studies—the Nightline (ABC-TV) broadcasts from South Africa (1985) and Israel (1988)—are examined by comparing the actions of a public affairs television moderator to conventional third party intervenors, as defined in conflict resolution literature. In the process the paper presents research regarding the manifest tactics and latent roles demonstrated by a television moderator and the manner in which these activities can be compared to the tasks of conventional third parties such as mediators. The paper finally also reflects on how television debates can become problem-solving dialogues that assist in transforming deep-rooted conflicts.

Introduction

Despite all the support for the proposition that the news media do not and cannot operate as effective third parties, I would argue that they can and do (Arno, 1984, p. 233).

This article will focus specifically on television public affairs news programming: news anchors and moderators who, similar to conventional mediators, purposefully bring parties in conflict together, either physically in a television studio, or ‘unite’ them electronically for discussion and debate. The research is based on the ABC-TV program, Nightline, which brought conflicting parties within Israel and South Africa together on television for the first time, in South Africa in 1985 and in Israel in 1988. Nightline’s regular interviewing format as well as the program’s larger ‘town meeting’ design for discussion, which includes audiences, formed the basis of a comparative case analysis comparing the roles, actions, and interventions of television anchors and producers, to that of the roles and functions of conflict intervenors as described in conflict resolution literature. The notion that media forums do more than just establish contact between opposing parties, but that they apparently have a third-party role in creating conditions for the resolution of conflict, raises the question of how and where to test such a hypothesis. Arno (1984) proposes a form of media analysis that is parallel to methods of analysis in third-party intervention. This, of course, inherently assumes a comparison between media and conventional third party intervention roles that is at the heart of this paper.

Media Roles in Conflict and Conflict Resolution
Is one of the roles of the news media, and especially of television, to become public forums where disputants of all kinds can discuss or “negotiate” their differences? Both Loshitzky (1991) and O’Heffernan (1991) have identified "on-air negotiations" on public affairs television formats such as Nightline, as a role for the media. Loshitzky notes that television, and especially the town meeting format "serves as an implicit, yet reflexive comment about the presumably superior skills of television over reality to solve conflicts and to engage adversaries in a productive process of negotiation" (1991, p. 564).

In general, however, there is lack of consensus about what exactly media roles are or ought to be, let alone how they pertain to social conflict and its resolution in particular. This problem has led media theorists such as Merrill (1990) to exclaim that nobody, not even journalists, seem to know what media roles are supposed to be (see also Katz, 1989). In spite of this there is a recurring theme in the discussion about media roles: the choice between neutral and observer roles versus active and participant roles (McQuail, 1990). To define themselves as simply being observers, chroniclers, and interpreters of events (Lichter and Noyes, 1996), is still media-role-doctrine in most journalistic circles. The idea that journalists are simply neutral channels of information has, however, been challenged by the notion of journalists as active participants in nearly all forms of social interaction (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991). Furthermore, this activist perspective on a problem-solving role for the media in society brings us to the media's potential as platforms for negotiation, mediation and conciliation.

In her seminal study of news media roles, Douglas (1992) notes that media roles rarely indicate passivity, such as simply being interested bystanders or simply conduits of information. Her delineation of media roles define mostly active media roles, such as:

- [being] party to the conflict, advocate, legitimator, mediator, arbitrator, agent, truth-seeker, agenda-setter, revolutionary, watchdog and guard dog. Some imply bias or interest in a particular direction—namely party to the conflict, advocate, legitimator, agent, agenda-setter, revolutionary, watchdog and guard dog. Others indicate some version of neutrality—for instance, interested bystander, mediator, arbitrator, truth-seeker (1992, p. 267).

More importantly, at least two of these roles—that of the media becoming mediators or arbitrators—implies that the media provide (or become) forums for the opposing parties to explain or discuss their positions. This, in turn, indicates how just about every form of journalism, but especially radio and television debates, become forums where some or other form of negotiation occurs. Wolfsfeld (1997) echoes this idea by suggesting that the news media have become the central arena in which major conflicts are played out. This notion presupposes some kind of competition for a space in the media forum (or arena) and a competitive debate via the news media over contradicting positions.

This phenomenon is visible in the way that parties in conflict or opponents on a range of societal matters, are increasingly using public affairs media platforms to “air” their differences, and in a sense to directly and publicly negotiate with each other. Having established such a form of communication, media moderators such as Nightline’s Ted Koppel has, by putting the parties in direct contact, provided them with a form of, what Burton (1969, p. 61) terms, "controlled communication." Moreover, Kelman’s description of the complementary role that interactive problem solving can play during all stages of a negotiation process, also fits the role that public affairs programs such as Nightline can play, albeit in a public, and not a behind-the-scenes manner: “In the prenegotiation phase, they can help create a political atmosphere conducive to movement to the table; in the active negotiation phase, …and in the postnegotiation phase, they...
can contribute to implementation of the negotiated agreement and to long-term peacebuilding (Kelman, 1996, p. 502). Like problem solving workshops, and other forms of interactive conflict resolution (see Fisher, 1997; Rothman, 1997), it is the non-binding nature of media debates that allow for their potential unique contribution to the larger negotiation process. Unlike most interactive conflict resolution models, however, media debates are public, and therefore, the participants always run the risk of seeing the conflict becoming more polarized due to highly adversarial statements made not only in public, but also to a large viewing audience.

Public affairs programs with debate formats, such as *Nightline*, provide an appropriate example of unofficial media intervention in inter-group conflict, and to an extent even a form of mediation between the groups in conflict. The source of this phenomenon, as Merrill (1989, pp. 10-11) contends, is the basic journalistic process of reporting on both sides of an issue, or interviewing both sides of a conflict, together or apart, that results in "a reconciliation, a hybridization, a mediation--a dialectical synthesis…"

As such, our understanding of the media, and especially television’s role as a forum for negotiation has evolved over the past 25 years. In 1974, Davison gave this description of the mass media's roles in international conflict resolution:

The media could increase the quantity and quality of the information that leaders and publics in each nation have about other nations; they could provide early warning of dangerous situations and could point out opportunities for strengthening international understanding; they could encourage the use of negotiation, mediation, and other mechanisms for conflict resolution, and facilitate the work of negotiators and mediators; they could help to bring about states of mind in which peaceful solutions would be more readily sought and accepted; and they could play a part in the mobilization and encouragement of individuals and organizations seeking to strengthen international understanding (pp. 6-7).

According to this demarcation, the media are merely responsible for drawing attention to the role of negotiators and mediators, and not so much being third parties themselves or for directly contributing to the resolution of conflict by providing a public forum. Other than stimulating the use of mechanisms for conflict resolution, such as negotiation, mediation, and arbitration, the major task this pioneer of the role of the mass media in conflict resolution attributed to journalists was to "mobilize, or help establish contacts among those who are interested in finding peaceful solutions, and to help build public opinion favoring such solutions" (p. 26). Today, however, there is clearly a larger recognition that the media, and maybe especially electronic media such as radio and television, often provide public spaces where parties in conflict participate in a form of negotiation that may or may not contribute to a resolution of their differences.
Background to the Research

This research followed Arno's (1984) suggestion that there is a need for a form of media analysis that is parallel to methods of analysis in third-party intervention. It attempted to operationalize Arno's basic assumption that the most satisfactory answers concerning the media's role in conflict resolution will probably be found through exploring the nature of the news media's third-party intervention role.

Television public affairs programs such as *Nightline*, have in the past been highly effective at bringing parties in conflict together, at times being even more successful than formal national or international third parties or intervenors in this endeavor. *Nightline* has therefore become particularly significant as research material to examine media third-party roles in conflict resolution. As a television innovation, its public affairs format has become an acceptable forum for national and international parties in conflict to face each other, while anchorman Ted Koppel performs a role seemingly comparable to that of the ‘neutral’ third-party facilitator or mediator. The program, therefore offers social scientists a laboratory for research on ‘media diplomacy’, ‘media mediation,’ media tasks and roles, and even intervention ethics. In comparing and contrasting the media's third-party intervention with more conventional third parties (Botes, 1997), the main questions for research in this area became:

1) To what extent do television public affairs moderators perform third-party roles in bringing conflicting parties together on television?
2) How do television third-party roles differ from those of conventional third-party intervenors?

To start addressing these primary research questions, data were gathered mainly through a content analysis of *Nightline* broadcasts from South Africa and Israel, in 1985 (from March 18-22) and 1988 (from April 25-29), respectively. The programs aired nightly in the U.S. for approximately one week each. (Edited versions of these broadcasts appeared a day or two later in South Africa, and, in part, more than a week later in Israel.) This provided 10 broadcasts in total from Israel and South Africa. Two different formats were used in Israel: the anchor interviewing the opposing parties in person or by satellite, and the more elaborate town meeting format which involved numerous disputants on either side of a conflict, as well as an audience of supporters for both sides. In South Africa only the interview format was utilized—Koppel with one or both of the opposing sides.

There are various reasons why *Nightline* became an obvious and appropriate choice for this research. Ted Koppel’s widely acclaimed interviewing skills, as well as *Nightline*’s reputation as the most innovative of public affairs television programs, provided the justification for using these series of programs for research on aspects of the relationship between conflict and the media. There are also obvious comparisons to be made between the two cases. The two series of programs were both initiated during heightened periods of conflict. In 1985, South Africa experienced civil unrest following the formation of the tri-cameral parliament that excluded blacks from political power. Similarly, in December 1987, the Israeli-occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank orchestrated the “intifada,” a stone-throwing uprising of the Palestinian youth, has also been noted before. In preparing for the *Nightlines* from Israel “Koppel and Kaplan realized they had found ‘South Africa II’” (Koppel and Gibson 1996: 98). Because they contained similar (but also ways also different) interview settings, the two program series form a unit on the one hand, and on the other, provide a cross-case analysis.
During the broadcasts from South Africa in 1985 the African National Congress (ANC) as the out-party, or out of power party (see Laue 1987), was mainly represented by Bishop Desmond Tutu as the unofficial spokesperson for black South Africans in the absence of the then still jailed Nelson Mandela. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), as the out-party during the town hall broadcasts from Israel in 1988, was represented by a number of prominent Palestinians with the blessing of PLO leader Yasser Arafat. They were Hanan Ashrawi, a university professor and spokesperson for the Palestinian people and leadership in the Occupied Territories (Ashrawi, 1995), Saeb Erakat, a then journalist and university professor, and Haider Abdul Shafi, a physician and founding father of the PLO (Koppel and Gibson, 1996). A fourth Palestinian panelist, the physician Mamdou al-Akhar, withdrew, seemingly because he deemed the political risks in participating too high.

The in-parties were essentially the governments in each case, the Likud government in Israel under Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and the white government of South Africa led by President P.W. Botha. However, the town hall programs in Israel featured a range of political perspectives in Israel: the Labor party member of the Knesset, Haim Ramon; Ehud Olmert, and Eliahu Ben-Elissar, senior members of the Likud party; and Dedi Zucker, a Knesset member for Citizens Rights who was also a founding member of the Peace Now movement. Because the program format in the South Africa broadcasts did not include a town hall meeting, the main feature of the program in South Africa under discussion here is the Tutu/Botha debate where the South African government was represented by Foreign Minister Pik Botha. In the course of the two week long broadcasts from each country a number of other prominent members of both societies were interviewed.

**Research Methodology**

To be able to compare the behavior of media moderators with institutional (formal) third parties such as mediators, one first needs to address another issue: What are the strategies, tactics, and techniques (or overall roles) of third-party intervenors? The literature in this regard offers no easy answers. The approaches to documenting and describing mediator behavior have ranged from taxonomies of general mediator strategies to more focused listings of isolated behavior (Jones, 1989). Most of these classifications (see Jones, 1989; Kochan and Jick, 1978; Kressel and Deutsch, 1977) appear to be variations on Simkin's (1971) outline of mediator strategies: *communication tactics*, *substantive tactics* and *procedural tactics*. Communication tactics are process oriented, and assist the parties with mutual information gathering and clarifying each other's views. Substantive tactics relate more to the issues in dispute such as cost-benefit analysis, "reality checks," and making suggestions about possible solutions. Thirdly, procedural tactics are purely process-oriented such as laying the ground rules for the format, the sequencing of meetings and developing an agenda.

Jones' (1989) three third-party strategies—communication-facilitation, substantive-directive, and procedural—outline categories were more relevant to be utilized for a media comparison. For example, communication-facilitation strategies, comprising of tactics such as search for information (i.e., defining the dispute, clarifying, paraphrasing and summarizing), supportive communication (i.e., explaining impartially and expressing empathy) and instruction (i.e., explaining ground rules), seem comparable to the actions of media moderators. These conflict analysis skills are clearly also the tools of the media intervenor’s trade, and hence, begs a comparison.
Substantive-directive strategies and its four tactics—discussing solutions, pressuring, power balancing and formalizing agreement—bring us into the realm of actual conflict resolution activities. Most journalists, including television moderators, would argue fervently that they are not part of the decision making process of any dispute or its resolution. However, the premise of this research is that many forms of journalism are involved in this process, not so much by design, but by default. Merely by exposing outside parties such as the African National Congress and the Palestinian Liberation Organization as full, and therefore equal, participants on Nightline, the power balance between them and their interlocutors, the South African and Israeli governments respectively, might be swayed. Nearly all forms of journalism about social conflict, from daily print stories to radio and television interviews with one or more sides of the conflict, inquire about possible solutions and the formalizing of agreements, whereby, like mediators, they potentially influence the process of change. Challenging people's positions on an array of issues, is therefore a fairly acceptable journalistic practice. And finally, most of the formal mediator's procedural strategies, such as agenda setting, the use of caucuses (or interviewing parties separately), as well as generally controlling the environment are also normal activities for television moderators.

For the purpose of the content analysis, Wall's (1981) and Wall and Lynn's (1993) approximately 100 mediator techniques, most of which are applied to the inter-negotiator relationship, were used as the basis of the coding scheme. Among many other elements this includes setting up the negotiations, establishing a protocol for negotiation, and controlling the inter-negotiator relationship (i.e., regulating the communication, clarifying perceptions, striking a balance between power positions and offering proposals).

Moderator Ted Koppel's actions—statements, questions, and expressions—were the units of analysis. For example, questions and statements that served to draw out information (who, what, when, where, why, how) and viewpoints from the participants in a non-threatening, non-critical manner, were deemed clarifying questions and labeled as manifest/overt/explicit moderator tactics. In other words, Koppel's statements (or actions) were coded as tactics or roles (such as being a clarifying question), with respect to the effects they have or the functions they serve. From this analysis emerged a taxonomy of Koppel’s tactics and strategies that blended some journalistic techniques with some third party (that is conflict resolution) type strategies.

To illustrate, let us examine two questions asked by Koppel, one from each series of programs—one in South Africa and one in Israel. First, the reference notation system for excerpts should be explained. The reference begins with either "SA" for South Africa or "IS" for Israel; followed by a number indicating the date; and finally a page number from the transcript for that date. For example, the first question below comes from the week of broadcasts in South Africa, specifically April 18, and page 11 of the transcript. The notation is therefore SA-18-11.

An example of the methodology is as follows:

(1) One first locates a sample of Koppel's interactions with the parties, such as, "When you speak of that goal, Bishop... are you talking about one man, one vote...? (SA-18-11) or, to take an example from the Israel broadcasts, "You, I take it, would consider that a fairly reasonable, representative report, or in fact have we not shown all that there is to show?" (IS-26-4).

(2) Each of these can then be described as simply a clarifying question.

(3) Because the tactic is quite clear from the words spoken, it can be labeled as manifest/overt/explicit (as opposed to implicit or latent).
(4) After completing steps one through three for the whole program, one looks for tactics that seem to cluster naturally with this, such as asking for information and explanation, and paraphrasing and summarizing the issues.

(5) This cluster of tactics seems to serve the broader strategy of eliciting information and communication from the participants.

(6) This tactic is common to both third parties and media moderators.

Here is another example of this analytical process:

(1) Koppel asks, "Mr. Krause, is the policy of apartheid justifiable on moral and religious grounds, do you think?" (SA-21-5), or, for a similar example from the Israel broadcasts, "Mr. Olmert, it's one thing to talk about the military buying time for the political leaders. You're one of the political leaders. What are they buying time for? What are you fellows doing?" (IS-26-7).

(2) In contrast to the earlier examples, these serve not just to elicit information but to confront or challenge. Therefore, they can be described as challenging questions.

(3) Again, the tactic can be linked to actual words spoken (text on the transcript), so it is labeled as manifest/overt/explicit.

(4) Again, this tactic clusters well with others, in this case, making challenging statements and playing parties off against each other.

(5) This cluster seems to serve the strategy of pressuring or pushing the participants forward.

(6) This tactic is very conventional to media moderators. It is also used by many third-party intervenors, depending on style and personal approach.

Table 1, The Television Moderator's Manifest Tactics and Their Frequency, lists all the manifest tactics identified in the two week long series of Nightline broadcasts—the moderator’s statements and actions. The numerical columns indicate frequency of use, first in the South Africa series, then in the Israel series. These manifest tactics are organized in descending order of overall frequency of use.

A few initial caveats must also be issued concerning the data and how they should be interpreted. First, in Table 1, every tactic is assigned two numbers indicating how often Koppel used it: first in the South Africa series, then in the Israel series. There is some inherent subjectivity in determining what exact statements and questions of the moderator fit those tactics. For example, the interpretive lines between clarifying questions, challenging questions, and reality checking were, inevitably at times, fairly indistinct. This kind of content analysis of text is not an exact science. In spite of this fact, the numerical counts do give some sense of the frequency with which a particular tactic was used, but not necessarily an exact or indisputable one. This method fits what Robson (1993, p. 402) calls "quasi-statistics," which is the result of having "data which, while in principle numerical, cannot be precisely quantified." However, the actual numbers from the content analysis do provide specific markers and behavioral indicators. At the same time, the presence or absence of a particular tactic is as important as how frequently it was used.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TABLE 1:</strong> The Television Moderator’s Manifest Tactics and their Frequency</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask challenging question</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask clarifying question</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control turn-taking/air time</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce &amp; describe participants</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make challenging statement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke the participant</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orient parties toward future</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validate a party's point of view (including via background pieces)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elicit viewpoint/position</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play parties off against each other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for information &amp; explanation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat challenging question</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality-check</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warn &quot;in-party&quot; of consequences of their behavior</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use hypothetical &quot;what if&quot; questions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase/summarize the issue</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use humor to reduce tension</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express optimism about future cooperation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe &amp; explain the process</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point out shared position</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express intent to be neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide face-saving</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimize venting, history telling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine/establish &quot;real&quot; stake-holders</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize parties' opposing positions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contradict/debate participants</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for background/explanation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present party with mirror image of itself</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept blame for procedural problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow participants to set substantive agenda</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempt to extract a concession</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain terminology to viewers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage nonviolent negotiation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathize with emotion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat statements from previous show for continuity and entertainment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 1:
The Television Moderator’s Manifest Tactics and their Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathize with suffering on both sides</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquire about outside pressures</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine alliances among out-parties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elicit options for change</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote use of other third parties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek areas of agreement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask participants to stay focused on the issue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal for civility</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain program's journalistic role</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal for real dialogue</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point out benefits of participating in media process</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verify accuracy of background piece</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to the examples of the media moderator’s manifest third party tactics in Table 1 (tactics that were deduced directly from Koppel’s spoken words), a different set of third party roles that are inherent to all third parties were inferred or implicitly deduced from the context. The following lengthy excerpt from the South Africa programs embodies several of these latent roles: *bestowing credibility* to participants, *empowering/equalizing parties* by bringing them together, *providing direct communication*, and *legitimizing the participants* at the (electronic) 'table':

...In a moment, Bishop Tutu will be joining us from the office of his other church here in Johannesburg. And we will also be joined by South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha, who is in Cape Town. But first, a brief look at both these men.

[voice-over] Last year, Bishop Desmond Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in leading the nonviolent campaign against apartheid. But this first black Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg seems a most unlikely leader of a moral crusade. There is about Bishop Tutu so much bubbling enthusiasm, such a buoyant optimism, that it's easy to forget that this man is walking a political tightrope from which he could tumble at any moment. Bishop Tutu, for example, is widely thought to support the policy of disinvestment, which is, encouraging mostly American businesses to pull out of South Africa as a moral gesture against apartheid. But were he to openly support disinvestment, Bishop Tutu would face up to five years in prison. The Bishop joins us from the study of his church in Johannesburg.

The foreign minister of South Africa is almost universally known in this country as Pik Botha. The “Pik” is an abbreviation of the Afrikaans word for penguin. But as his adversaries have discovered, this is no man to be taken lightly. He is one of the most popular politicians in South Africa. A former
ambassador to the United Nations, he has always been an eloquent spokesman for his government, charming, a brilliant debater, and some say an excellent actor when necessary. Pik Botha is also said to have an explosive temper. Since 1980 he has been both minister of foreign affairs and information, sort of a combination between George Shultz and Larry Speakes. Foreign Minister Botha joins us from Cape Town, South Africa.

[on camera] Gentlemen, I'm very much appreciative that both of you could join us this evening. Mr. Foreign Minister, it makes sense, since you are a senior member of this government, that we would invite you. Let me explain to you why we have invited Bishop Tutu. As you well know, in the eyes of many people outside South Africa, Bishop Tutu is perhaps the best-known spokesman for the disenfranchised in this country.... (SA-18-5)

In terms of manifest (overt) tactics, Koppel is simply introducing and describing the participants. However, he is implicitly doing much more. From an earlier part of the transcript, we know that these two men had never debated each other directly on television or in person. Given that the overwhelming political power in South Africa at the time of the broadcast was in the hands of the white apartheid government, out-party representatives were generally not given this level of exposure on television, and the negotiating process itself did not start until much later. By presenting the prominent anti-apartheid bishop and the government minister in an equal manner, and by describing the bishop in favorable terms, Koppel and Nightline are clearly, intentionally or unintentionally, empowering the out-party.

These latent—or deduced—roles address questions regarding the effect that media third party intervention has on the parties or the negotiation process and that is not the focus of this paper. Here we are mainly concerned with the moderator’s third party tactics and the extent to which they conform to conventional third parties such as mediators. In analyzing the data from Table 1, the notations in the discussion below, as before, refer to South Africa (SA) or Israel (IS) followed by numbers that denote the date of the broadcast and the page number of the transcript respectively.

The Media Moderator and Third Party Tactics: A Discussion

In analyzing the manifest tactics of television moderators there was a constant danger of reading too much into the text—making assumptions about the moderator's intent, rather than just evaluating the manifest or spoken words. The speaker or media moderator's intent, however, can often also be deduced not only from the spoken words but also from the person's body language and voice inflection. This was an important reason why the analysis of these transcripts was done while simultaneously looking at the videotapes. Two instances of interactions that Ted Koppel had with the participants during the town meeting in Israel illustrate the problem:

...Mr. Olmert, it's one thing to talk about the military buying time for the political leaders. You're one of the political leaders. What are you buying time for? What are you fellows doing? [IS-26-7]

and,

But just based on the reality of where we are now, I'm not sure that the Arab world will be enthralled by King Hussein entering into these negotiations, and King
Hussein made it clear as recently as this past Sunday that he's not prepared to represent the Palestinians. So what is that about? [IS-26-18]

While the context of this interaction as well as the speaker's inflection and body language all assist in the interpretation of the tactic, it does not provide a clear picture of the speaker's intent. Koppel's questions in the first example ["What are you buying time for? What are you fellows doing?"] can be interpreted as merely asking for information or, within the context of the sentence, can also be seen as being more than that, namely a challenging question. Similarly, did he mean the question in the second example, "So what is that about?," to be simply clarifying of the situation, or was he indeed challenging the previous speaker's (Mr. Olmert's) argument that it is not possible to negotiate with the Palestinians without the presence of Jordan? Depending on the tactic-evaluator's reading of the emotive nature of the situation, this question could be deemed either as clarifying, challenging, or even reality checking. That there is a distinction to be made between clarifying and challenging questions, however troublesome this might prove to be because of different interpretations of context and intent, becomes very important in comparing Koppel's third-party style in the South Africa programs versus the programs in Israel/Palestine.

Another media moderator tactic that stands out is the use of face-saving. Face-saving is clearly not a conventional journalistic role but it becomes conventional in the way Koppel uses it. Although this tactic is only used four times throughout the ten programs and all four times in the town meeting show in Israel, it plays out in a variety of ways. The fence between the Israelis and Palestinians allowed both groups to pretend that they are separated from each other, saving face with their constituents. This face-saving device also allowed them to pretend they are communicating directly, and only with the moderator, while ultimately they would respond to each other's arguments and points of view. At the same time, however, it provided the conservative Israeli politicians on the program, specifically Ehud Olmert and Ben-Elissar, tools to heckle the Palestinians with. The Palestinians managed to ignore these mocking statements because Koppel assisted them in saving face by responding on their behalf:

[Ben-Elissar:] First of all, why don't you remove this fence? We don't need this fence! Who needs this fence?
[Koppel:] The Palestinians need this fence.
[Ben-Elissar:] They need it. I know that maybe they need it. We don't need it. I don't need it. The Israelis don't need this fence. If there is one thing that is sure that is definitive, it is that in this country Arabs and Jews will have to live together. Precisely as they will have to live forever--together in the Middle East. There is no other choice. So we don't need this fence.
[Koppel:] They are here at our invitation. [IS-26-5]

Other than this conventional form of face-saving, a program such as Nightline can also provide electronic face-saving. When parties are legally banned from meeting together, as has been the case at times in both South Africa and Israel, or when or when one or the other refuse to appear in the same room, satellite technology can bring them into the same 'electronic room' or onto the same screen. This allows them to communicate via the moderator, or directly with the moderator, while saving face by not being in the same location.

These examples of face-saving, though few in number, took various forms and their presence were very important in comparing moderator and mediator third-party roles. Face-
saving is a highly sophisticated mediator technique and its presence as a media moderator tactic, is therefore significant in comparing the behavior of these two professional types. Koppel did more face-saving for the Palestinians when he explained that one of their panelists, Dr. Mamdou al-Akhar, "has the flu" [IS-26-4], when in all probability he had political "stage fright" and decided he did not want to participate in this forum (Koppel and Gibson, 1986, p. 108).

This particular example of face-saving also underscores the fact that the television moderator has similar getting-to-the-table difficulties as conventional third parties do. Both participants and disputants who have agreed to join some kind of problem solving forum may for a variety of reasons, decide to withdraw at the last minute. In both South Africa and in Israel the producers had enormous problems in putting together panels of participants for their electronic table. Even before getting to that point, they had to negotiate with the two governments in question about entering into the major social conflict of each of these countries, as well as negotiate the cooperation of the out-party leadership, the ANC, and the PLO.

In South Africa, the ABC producers made the naive assumption that often gets inexperienced third parties into trouble, namely that at least the out-party would welcome their presence. As producer Tara Sonenshine later noted: "We got caught in what was then still a lot of division in the ANC between the far left and the middle. We went through elaborate negotiations to try to get the ANC on board this thing (Koppel and Gibson, 1996, p. 72). Nightline's producers had similar problems in Israel. PLO chairman Arafat accepted Koppel's written explanation that "we [Nightline] were hoping for the first time to present the Palestinian point of view, without editing, and to present it on equal footing with the Israelis" (Koppel and Gibson, 1996, pp. 100-101). However, putting together credible representative panels became a nearly insurmountable problem (much of which was finally only managed because the producers agreed to the studio "wall" that symbolically separated the parties).

In both South Africa and Israel the out-party organizations (the ANC and the PLO) were banned, and their leaders jailed or in exile. Moreover, in Israel, because of the election in that year, Israeli politicians feared that participation in "any kind of dialogue might result in retribution at the polls" (Koppel and Gibson, 1996, p. 102). While Palestinian leaders such as Haider Abdul-Shafi and Hanan Ashrawi shared the conviction "that it was time to challenge the Israeli government in a public forum" (Koppel and Gibson, p. 1996: 103), they had historical, political and personal reasons for not wanting to be seen with certain Israelis. They therefore wanted to have some control over who were going to represent their side.

Koppel also realized in South Africa that their intervention might have unintended consequences: "He worried over the show's possible political impact. Might it make a bad situation worse?" (Koppel and Gibson, 1996, p. 73). In Israel, after Koppel and ABC News president Roone Arledge had breakfast with the then Israeli defense Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, Arledge still feared on the morning of the broadcast that Rabin's conclusion that they were "nuts" to attempt this television forum would come true:

...not only could there be violence, and there could be people killed, maybe, but on top of that we would be the cause of it all. If something bad happened, it would not only be a terrible event, but it would be indefensible that we went ahead, particularly if people found out that Rabin told us that we were crazy (Koppel and Gibson, 1996, p. 96).

The town meeting in the Jerusalem Theater finally went peacefully ahead after various panels of participants were rejected by both sides. However, this history of events not only illustrates how getting-to-the-table issues are shared by television moderators and conventional
third parties, but it also points to the physical and other dangers these professionals share during their different forms of intervening in national or international conflict.

From the initial manifest set of moderator tactics (Table 1), it is also interesting to note that Koppel performed other roles that are not conventional for journalists such as encouraging peacemaking (or non-violent negotiation). In general, the format of interviewing two or more sides of a conflict simultaneously seems to produce a wider range of journalistic tactics and roles than does the ordinary journalistic format of interviewing just one party at a time. This format leads to a wide range of moderator tasks that are normally not enacted such as introducing and describing participants, describing and explaining the process, and verifying the accuracy of the (journalistic) background pieces.

Some Core Findings on the Media Moderator Strategies and Tactics

Beyond clarifying and challenging questions, the television moderator’s most commonly used tactics seemingly are procedural in nature. In an effort to be fair and neutral to all the participants, Koppel controlled who spoke when and about what topic. This type of third-party control seems to be much more rigid than the initially fairly unrestricted approach of conventional mediators. This is especially true in the town meeting [IS-26] where Koppel did not only control which side spoke to a particular point but, even which specific individual would address it. So while both conventional and television third parties utilize this tactic, they seem to operationalize it very differently. In contrast to this, a further procedural tactic, minimizing venting and history telling is used fairly similarly. Both types of third parties seem to want to keep it to a minimum in the interest of time and in trying to get the parties to focus on the future and not the past.

What is clear from Table 1 is that gaining information in various forms and facilitating the communication between the parties are the main tactics of the television moderator, albeit sometimes in a fairly challenging manner. This is vividly illustrated by the high frequency of tactics that elicit communication such as asking clarifying questions, eliciting viewpoints/positions, and asking for information and explanation. In addition, the pressurizing tactic that is highest in number, asking a challenging question, while different in nature, can also be viewed as a form of eliciting information. What is also notable from the frequency count is that the television moderator makes use of a number of other important conventional mediator tactics, although they are far fewer in number. Among them are orienting the parties towards the future, stroking the participants, validating the parties’ point of view, using humor to reduce tension, and expressing the intent to be neutral.

The internal logic of these findings in Table 1, especially in the tactics that appeared with the highest frequency, is related to the way in which the media moderator (Koppel) performed roles that are very similar to that of a traditional mediator, yet with a distinctly journalistic flavor. Like a traditional mediator he started out with ground rules, he then proceeded with a number of clarifying questions within which the parties stated their positions and interests while he found ways to control their turn-taking and air time in an ongoing fashion. However, Koppel’s most often used manifest tactic was to ask challenging questions, a technique he used very early on in the process of moderating these normally 90 minute long Nightline programs. This is somewhat different from a traditional mediator who would normally resort to the use of such a tactic much later in an intervention process. The journalistic nature of the media moderator is also evidenced by the relatively high amount of times that Koppel played the parties off against each other, and made challenging statements. In each of the program series
he even contradicted and to a degree debated the participants on some points, which traditional mediators would rarely do. While traditional mediators do reality testing with the parties it is normally done in a more indirect and less confrontation manner.

In essence, however, the three most manifest tactics of the media moderator—to ask challenging questions, and to ask clarifying questions mediator while keeping control of turn taking and air-time—coincide with most frequently utilized techniques of a traditional mediator. In an effort to be fair and neutral to all the participants, and obviously to make maximum use of the program’s limited airtime, Koppel controlled who spoke when about what topic. This type of third-party control seems to be much more rigid than the initial fairly unrestricted approach of conventional mediators. This is especially true in the town meeting [IS-26] where Koppel did not only control which side spoke to a particular point but also which specific individual would address it. So while both conventional and television third parties utilize this tactic, they seem to operationalize it very differently. In contrast to this, a further procedural tactic, minimizing venting and history telling is used fairly similarly. Both types of third parties seem to want to keep it to a minimum in the interest of time and in trying to get the parties to focus on the future and not the past.

During these broadcasts, Koppel exhibited many of the strategies and skills that third parties use, and did so quite adeptly. He stroked the participants when needed, provided face-saving when needed, used hypothetical what-if questions, oriented the parties’ towards the future, and even expressed optimism about their future cooperation. His skill as a moderator was clearly in evidence when he made challenging statements. He often prefaced a confrontational question or statement with a softener, such as "I must tell you..." (IS-29-3) or a flattering comment, referring to participants as "intelligent," "sophisticated," or "experienced" (IS-28-4). In one instance during the town meeting in Israel, he adroitly reframed the main conflict issue in such a way that it could be seen as a mutual issue, one that both parties could say was their own:

This business of recognition, it is mutual, it has become the Gordian knot of Israeli-Palestinian relations. They [the Palestinians] say to you [the Israelis], recognize our leadership, recognize our right to sovereignty. You say to them, recognize our right to exist, recognize that we have a right to secure borders....
(IS-26-9).

This example of the television moderator’s facilitation skills, raises the question of whether such third-party techniques, while performed in a journalistic setting, will also have other mediatory effects. These techniques and tactics of the television moderator are in nature so similar to that of a conventional third-party that even if neither of the parties (participants) saw their appearance on television as a problem solving exercise, it is quite feasible that it can have such an outcome. The opposite is also quite possible: if parties use this forum to publicly display their mutual dislike and distrust of each other, the result might be a deepening of the conflict, especially if the moderator is not adept at facilitating highly adversarial debates. The third-party skills of the moderator therefore becomes crucial to whatever consequences television debates might have, other than educating the public and each other on their positions and views. One way in which Koppel’s media moderating role contributed to the larger negotiation processes in both cases was in the fact that he promoted the use of third parties during the South Africa programs, and appealed for a real dialogue during the Israel programs. Moreover, in spite of Koppel’s protestations to the contrary during these programs, based on this list of his mediatory tactics he appears to be facilitating a negotiation between the parties on his programs.
The list of manifest tactics in Tables 1 illustrate the extent to which television public affairs moderators perform third-party strategies and tactics in bringing conflicting parties together on television and also how these moderators perform in ways that are different compared to conventional third-party intervenors. The data indicate that Koppel clearly performed traditional third party roles as a part of a media debate format that has a strong resemblance to the structure of mediatory intervention processes. Although he enacted these third roles in many ways similar to that of the traditional mediator, they differ in nature as well as in style.

These differences in the tactics of the media moderator pertain mostly to the fact that his is a mainly journalistic task. What is therefore clear from Table 1 is that gaining information in various forms and facilitating the communication between the parties are the main tactics of the television moderator. This is vividly illustrated by the high frequency of tactics that elicit communication such as asking clarifying questions, eliciting viewpoints/positions, and asking for information and explanation. In addition, the pressurizing tactic that is highest in number, asking a challenging question, while different in nature, can also be viewed as a form of eliciting information. What is also notable from the frequency count is that the television moderator makes use of a number of other important conventional mediator tactics, although they are far fewer in number. Among them are orienting the parties towards the future, stroking the participants, validating the parties' point of view, using humor to reduce tension, and expressing the intent to be neutral.

Journalism mythology, or how journalists view their role in society, also is a factor in the interpretation of some other unintended television moderator strategies, namely those that relate to putting pressure on the parties, balancing power and empowering the parties. While journalists on the whole declare these roles as beyond their scope of operation, these phenomena are unintended or spin-off effects of the journalistic task.

Media Debates as Potential Problem Solving Dialogues: A Conclusion

The contribution that television debates can make to resolving conflict is related directly to the degree to which the media third parties, or moderators, of such programs, transform adversarial debates on television into problem solving dialogues. While dialogues are supposed to “enhance safety and promote respectful exchange,” debates are often characterized by attacks and interruptions (Becker, et al., 1995, p.150). The Nightline case studies under discussion fell squarely into the debate category. They occurred in a competitive atmosphere in which the parties wanted to improve their positions at the expense of the other, rather than using the programs cooperatively, “as a device for promoting problem-solving toward mutually acceptable agreements” (Hopmann and Druckman, 1991, p. 282). Pre-meeting contacts between the parties who appeared on these programs in both Israel and South Africa were not possible because of the years of distrust and tension between them. In both cases, there was no guarantee that the parties would even address each other, in fact, in a number of cases, the participants insisted that they would only be on Nightline if they could speak to moderator Ted Koppel directly. While Koppel attempted to move the discussions (especially the town meeting in Israel) into a dialogue where parties attempt to analyze and problem solve, the participants inevitably reverted back to confrontational tactics.

According to Burton, third parties acting as catalysts and facilitators are responsible for transforming confrontational processes into problem solving exercises (Bercovitch, 1984).
However, while journalists, and especially media moderators, perform such roles in dealing with two sides of a conflict, they perform them relatively unconsciously and invariably without taking any responsibility for bringing the parties closer to any form of resolution. Because producers of public affairs programs do not always succeed in finding program participants who directly represent decision-makers, they often find, as Slim and Saunders (1995: 2) suggest for their sustained dialogues, “respected participants who reflect key viewpoints in their communities...” The problem, however, is that media dialogues, unlike interactive conflict resolution models (see Fisher, 1997; Rothman, 1992), are hardly ever sustained over months, and therefore become a form of media voyeurism that does not take any responsibility for its social intervention. If done correctly, and in more than just one week long program series, as was the case with Nightline’s interventions in both South Africa and Israel, media dialogues do have the potential to have many of the same roles as sustained dialogues: mapping the relationships, finding common ground, building future scenarios, and generating a will to change, which in this case, is also the public’s will to change.

Another reason why media dialogues tend not to have social impact is that they approach conflict in the same way that most problem solving approaches do, by not challenging power relations and institutions and thereby becoming agents of the status quo. However, as can be illustrated from the case studies, media dialogues can in several ways be compared to other forms of conflict resolution in terms of their conflict transformation potential. Using Väyrynen’s (1991, pp. 4-6) terminology in this regard, Nightline’s involvement in South Africa clearly assisted with “actor transformation,” by allowing for the emergence and legitimization of black activists against apartheid on South African and international television. In both Israel and South Africa, the out-parties argued that their participation on the Nightline programs made a qualitative difference in how they were perceived after that, and in the recognition that it gave them as spokespeople for a specific point of view. In that sense, because these programs treated all its participants as equals, they matched Väyrynen’s definition of “structural transformation” by altering the distribution of power between the actors and by bringing about a qualitative change in their relationship. Just as many of the transformational outcomes of dialogue processes are unintended, most of the changes that occur in conflicts due to the interventions of the media were not intended by the media actors. However, most journalists and definitely media moderators understand that parties in conflict use them for their own interests in return for participating in such programs.

As Väyrynen points out, there were similarities between the Israeli-Palestinian and the South African conflicts of the mid to late ‘80s. Just as the United States and Israel refused to deal with the PLO and attempted to negotiate with the Arab states about the conflict, the South African government refused to negotiate with the ANC and instead attempted to circumvent the situation by dealing with the various ethnic homeland leaders. In both the Nightline series in Israel and in South Africa, while not being able to necessarily bring the leaders of the out-parties to the table, the programs showcased their internal representatives such as Hanan Ashrawi and Desmond Tutu respectively, and thereby legitimated them as the true out-parties to the conflict. By empowering the out-parties in this way in South Africa, and in Israel by giving the Palestinian side a hearing during the height of the intifada, Nightline “unintendedly,” to use Väyrynen’s terminology, portrayed the ANC and the PLO on equal footing with the South African and Israeli governments, and thus became part of the conflict’s transformation. The impact of the media in empowering out-parties, and thereby playing a transformational role, will
unquestionably be greater under circumstances of impoverished communication between the parties, as was evident in both case studies.

More importantly, the findings of this research pertaining to the number of similar media roles between media moderators and conventional mediators lend further credence to Arno’s conceptualization of media actors as third parties in conflict. It has therefore, as Arno (1984, p. 238) contends, become essential for conflict analysts, as well as media researchers to “look at the media themselves as important actors in conflict situations at both the national and the international levels.”

Endnotes

1 This research was conducted with the assistance of a doctoral research grant from the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) at George Mason University.

2 The transcripts of these programs were ordered from Journal Graphics, 1535 Grant Street, Denver, Colorado, 80203-1843.

References


POLICY-MAKING AND CONNECTIONS TO VIOLENCE:  
A CASE STUDY OF INDIA*

Marie Olson Lounsbery and Frederic S. Pearson

Abstract

This paper explores the role of identity-based, or discriminatory, policy in facilitating the outbreak of ethnopolitical violence in India. A discriminatory policy is the merging of communal group identity with the state apparatus. It is argued that as the Indian government enacts policies beneficial or discriminatory to particular identity groups within the country, other groups feel threatened. Groups who feel disadvantaged by the policy may begin to fear for their own security and political interests motivating them to rebel. When focusing on Indian policy and ethnopolitical violence during the period 1945 to 2000, the authors find that, although there are many cases of seemingly spontaneous episodes of violence, when identity-based policies do occur, they are often followed by violence and/or protest.

Introduction

With the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, the international system seemed ready to experience a new era of peace. However, the “New World Order” predicted by then US President George H. W. Bush turned out to be something quite different. Although the occurrence of interstate war diminished substantially after 1989, internal conflicts continued to rage at an alarming rate throughout the world (Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 1999), and to put pressure on outside powers considering possible intervention. Scholars who once focused their attention on superpower rivalry now turned to internal war, and more specifically, “ethnic conflict.” An explosion of efforts ensued to find out what causes these highly destructive and often intractable conflicts, how they can be managed or resolved, and ideally how to detect the conditions necessary or sufficient for ethnopolitical violence before it breaks out, i.e., “early warning.”

As researchers attempt to grapple with the complexity of intrastate warfare, we seek to contribute to our understanding of what conditions trigger violent ethnopolitical outbreaks. We propose to test, at least in one very large and diverse state, the general hypothesis that ethnopolitical conflict is often a reaction to governmental policy initiatives or changes. One key aspect of policy change entails what might be described as inherent discrimination, i.e., moves designed or structured to benefit one identity group in society at the expense of others. Such a policy can be viewed as incorporating group identity into state policy. It establishes one group as higher in status than others, and as a result, creates a need for disadvantaged groups to defend their status.

Clearly, all government policies are designed to provide something for someone or some group. It is proposed here though that policy providing systematic advantage to certain communities, or disadvantage to others, can be viewed as a catalyst for violence. We use the
term “catalyst” advisedly, since we suppose that other factors fully account for the violence, and indeed we examine a few of these in relation to policy change.

In constructing policy changes it has been argued that leaders might blunder in trying to alleviate social conflict through policy reform without fully considering such factors as economic inequalities, territorial dissatisfaction, the number, relation, size, and location of ethnic communities, international involvement or support, and the legacies of colonial and political history. It also has been observed that aggressive and opportunistic leaders take advantage of such conditions and the bitterness they engender to incite violence for their own political purposes (Rupesinghe, 1988; Kaufman, 1996; Williams, 1994). One expression of efforts at policy reform or of opportunism is the enactment of discriminatory measures, regulations, and legislation.

We seek to determine if, when, and by what sequences such discriminatory policy leads toward or away from violence, allowing for the fact that “discrimination” can be a subjective concept, and indeed might even have positive effects if it empowers or “liberates” previously oppressed groups (often argued in the context of American affirmative action legislation). If a consistent pattern of outcomes emerges for certain types of policies, such policy initiatives could be clear signs or signals for those interested in preventing or ameliorating social violence. However, it is not yet clear what types of policies have predictable effects and under what circumstances.

Although some studies have hinted at the idea of policy change leading to violent civil conflict (Gurr, 1996; Stavenhagen, 1996), the violence is often referred to as the by-product of other factors. Clearly conditions of domestic disruption can condition the ways policies are perceived. For example, during the American civil war in the 1860s, the effort, however reluctant, to emancipate slaves, led to reported ethnic backlash among groups recruited or conscripted to fight in the war; the war’s economic and social dislocations, the high attrition rate and forced nature of the draft, may have exacerbated this pattern of ethnic and class tension, leading for example to anti-war riots among the lower classes in ethnically diverse New York City.

Ideally one would want to conduct a study of discriminatory policy over many nations and time-periods. However, the necessity of mapping a large body of policy change events and effects across time dictates a more focused initial approach to one country. India presents an excellent case for study because of its extensive ethnic diversity, encompassing different and overlapping tribal, linguistic, religious, and cultural (including caste) identities spread across a wide and varied geography, with a long history of periodic ethnic uprisings and communal violence alongside efforts at reform, collaboration and regional or national cohesion. The origin of much of this communalism in the contemporary context has been traced to forms of indirect colonial rule, pitting identity groups against each other and utilizing local traditional rulers, combined with the development of modern nationalism (Pandy, 1990; Barnett, 1976). If we can better understand the patterns by which these processes subsequently have unfolded in this large and pivotal democratic state, we can formulate propositions about ethnic violence for further testing abroad.
Identity Based Violence

Factors that contribute to interstate war have been documented and tested by many scholars in the fields of conflict studies and international relations (see Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1990; Cashman, 1993; Midlarsky, 1989). Unfortunately, quantitative or behavioral methodologists relatively neglected analysis of civil or internal wars during the Cold War period, except perhaps for the links between civil and interstate war (Maoz, 1989; Haas, 1968; Rummel, 1968; Tanter, 1966; Zinnes and Wilkenfeld, 1971; Wilkenfeld, 1972). Although this linkage research continues and has been increasingly helpful to the field in general, it does not reveal why some countries experience domestic unrest, rebellion, or uprisings and others do not.

Those scholars who focused specifically on intrastate or civil war often dealt with how these conflicts end and the success or failure of negotiated settlements (Licklider, 1993 and 1995). At a less intense level than civil wars, scholars also have looked at internal conditions of communal conflict and anti-government rebellion. Perhaps the most extensive work in this area is that of Ted Robert Gurr (1970; 1993), who argues that rebellion stems from politicized discontent, a condition he believes arises from relative deprivation. Ethnopolitical conflict, therefore, is motivated by perceived discrimination, and discontent can be exacerbated by economic or social conditions and mobilized by political entrepreneurs in order for internal unrest to occur.

Gurr (1996) has taken his *Minorities at Risk* project further to develop a model for early warning of identity-based violence that he illustrates using data from 56 Asian minorities. He has identified what he believes to be risk factors for groups already engaged in serious forms of rebellion. The factors that would lead to armed violence include: collective incentives, the capacity for joint action, and external opportunities. In addition to relative deprivation, other incentives for communal uprising include a loss of collective autonomy and previous experience of repression by dominant groups, all factors that can relate to or be expressed in governmental policy. The conditions that Gurr identifies as shaping regime responses to collective action are a history of elite reliance on coercion, duration and strength of the democratic experience, and the regime’s domestic power and resources. These risk factors, as Gurr (1996) explains, are not to be used as predictors of violent conflict, but rather can be coded in order to provide a country with a risk score, similar to our notion of looking at policy change as a catalyst.

Beyond the important concept of relative deprivation itself, the next question is what causes sufficient discontent or insecurity that individuals would be willing to politicize, mobilize, and possibly fight to the death? Gurr’s risk factor model is based on discontent forming from economic, political, and cultural discrimination, as well as a history of state repression or lost political autonomy. All of these factors can be viewed as some sort of group discrimination. Although Gurr acknowledges that a major change in the structure of a political regime may be a factor in violent civil conflict, his model posits that this change provides a window of opportunity for identity groups that are already experiencing discrimination.

Elaborating on the window of opportunity thesis, we speculate that governmental policy rather than or in conjunction with institutional change also might spark group discontent/fear and lead to violence. In a presidential address to the International Studies Association, Gurr (1994), analyzing conflicts during the 1993-94 period, developed the importance of political changes within governments as a condition present prior to war. He found that half of the conflicts occurred after “power transitions” which compromised any one of three different events: a national upheaval (as defined by Harff, 1986), revolutionary changes in power, or transitions to
democracy. In addition, these conflicts are more intense than conflicts that do not follow power transitions. Upheavals, revolutionary power shifts, and democratic transitions all may entail or relate to specific policy moves, though such moves, of course, can occur without these major institutional changes. In the Indian context the 1977 parliamentary election, ousting the Congress Party after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s authoritarian and ethnically manipulative policies, is often seen as a key turning point in the sustenance of Indian democracy (Weiner, 1978). Thus it may not be so much the revolutionary changes in power or institutions per se as the policies and measures officially adopted before or after the political transition that makes the situation volatile.

This study, therefore, is designed to determine which of these various types of factors has the greatest impact on subsequent identity based violence. It seems clear from Gurr’s research that internal power dynamics are a significant factor, but it is not clear whether they always are a precondition of violence. Using a case study format on information provided by area specialists, Stavenhagen (1996) argues that violence may be inherent in the process of state-formation and nation building. In order to understand the roots of the conflict one has to look at how the modern state was originally established. A modern state relates to the different ethno-cultural groups within its borders through constitutional provisions, electoral systems, legislation or political culture and practice. The nation-state thus often has a dominant identity group (or related groups) and one or more subordinate identity groups. This creates a struggle by the lower status group(s) for recognition. Stavenhagen also argues that these conflicts include two competing notions of the term ‘nation.’ The modern state system requires that nations show a united front, yet identity groups, when asked to conform or assimilate, often feel stronger loyalty to their “identity nation.” This can present grave challenges to a large union such as that of the Indian subcontinent.4

Although Stavenhagen does not present an early warning system as Gurr does, he argues that in order to overcome the inherently conflictive nature of the nation-state system, states must abandon their emphasis on assimilation. He further proposes that democratic states are better able to prevent these types of conflicts because they tend to de-emphasize assimilation and ethnic politics. However, as India clearly shows, democracy itself might be caught up in the turmoil of defining group rights and responsibilities and might or might not be able to quell the tendencies toward violence in specific instances. Thus, Sisk (1996) argues that despite the attractiveness of democracy as a form of government, it might not always be more peaceful, particularly in multicultural societies. Democracy, according to Sisk, will create a security threat when a win at the polls means a physical threat to the minority; this has been seen in recent years, for example, in fears of an emerging democratically elected Islamic state in Algeria. In countries where hostilities between competing identity groups are high, the will of the majority may mean policies of assimilation or extinction. As a result, he discusses the benefits of consociational approaches (i.e. power sharing) to identity-based conflicts at the national level.

States such as India have experimented with these approaches, in the form of office-holding and educational quotas, with varied and not always peaceful outcomes. Such quotas, reserved places, and related set-aside policies themselves can become causes of contention, conflict, or riotous violence. India’s long struggle with policies toward the “scheduled” classes—“Untouchable” castes—illustrates these outcomes, with other castes periodically refusing to cooperate in the system (Joshi, 1982). In addition, India has evolved complex and subtle norms related to assimilation, reflecting a tension between those who went through the independence struggle for the united homeland and those in regional areas who were then
expected to submerge their local identities to the national myth. One expression of this tension is in the area of language law, where a system evolved to recognize Hindi as the nominal national language, but to allow local languages to flourish and to revert to English at times as a *lingua franca*. One student of Indian democracy has noted that ethnic separatist movements, as seen among the Tamils, Sikhs, and Muslims across the years, are to be expected as expressions of self-determination in multicultural democracies, and that they can be accommodated depending upon how well the central authority is institutionalized and upon the willingness of leaders, central authorities, and ruling groups to share power and resources with the mobilized protesters (Kohli, 1997). Thus a combination of institutional capability and policy reform is seen as the key to stability.

As with assimilation, resource distribution can become a crucial bone of contention in post-colonial societies, but how governmental leaders legislate that distribution, again the expression of or reaction to inequality *via policy*, is crucial to understanding the causes of violent civil conflict. Either mass-led or elite-led policy demands can lead to violence despite their vastly different motivations.

In sum, those who have examined the history of ethnic relations in India have noted many accommodations and norms aimed at managing tensions even apart from governmental policy, often quite successfully. Manor (1996, pp.461-462) shows how four different strands of ethnic identity—religious, language, tribal/caste, and regional tribal—cross-cut in the Indian context and how Indians tend to give priority to different levels of identity as circumstances change, thus blurring or diminishing permanent conflict fault lines. The Japanese also have displayed the ability to combine ethno-cultural traits, for example adopting multiple religious practices.

Because Indian society is so heterogeneous, and because the country and its population are so large, people...have a wide array of identities available to them. These include at least three different kinds of caste identities...religious identities...and identifications with clans and lineages—as well as linguistic, class, party, urban/rural, national, regional, subregional and local identities, and sometimes varying types of ‘tribal’ identities too. The crucial point is that Indians tend not to fix on any one of these identities fiercely and permanently, as groups in places like Sri Lanka have done. (p. 463)

**Discriminatory Policy Change**

While cross-cutting identities are reassuring for Indian democratic stability, periodic scenes of frenzied communal killing, raids, and counter raids still leave us with the question of when the pattern of live and let live breaks down, when the cross-cutting buffers lose their cushion, and when polarization becomes more acute. One suspects again that policy moves have something to do with this timing, along with exogenous or systemic pressures such as economic change or institutional breakdown. Of course as Manor (1996, p. 465) notes, because of the diversity of ethnic cues, such as Hinduism’s multiple gods and texts, even when politicians try to enforce disruptive or polarizing policy changes, as in the efforts by the Hindu right to make the god Ram the pre-eminent deity across all India, there is considerable natural resistance.

Those who have studied Indian ethnic and particularly religious violence present a pattern of episodic ups and downs (Manor, 1996, pp. 467-468). “These marked fluctuations in levels of religious violence are intimately connected to the fluidity with which people in India...
shift their preoccupations from one identity to another (p. 467).” But they also at times are related to policy irritants such as Indira Gandhi’s machinations to weaken ethnic opponents by dividing them and pitting potential opponents against each other in an overall pattern of power centralization (Manor, 1996, pp. 471-472).9

Generally, then, this view opens the whole question of the state’s role in fomenting or diminishing inter-group tensions and violence. This is illustrated in the history of Indian language policy. As with Manor’s contention about crosscutting identities, it has been argued that language diversity both within and between Indian states precludes a forced homogenization and reinforces pluralism. Fearing the possible breakup of the state in the 1950s, Jawaharlal Nehru resisted Congress pressures to redraw state boundary lines to conform to language differences; he hoped to avoid secessionist movements by intermixing language groups throughout. Thus in a sense non-policy change represented a forceful policy to preserve the newly independent Indian Union. Still, boundaries were occasionally redrawn along linguistic lines, though according to Manor (1996, p. 466), the other dividing traits among common language speakers held sway and prevented any single Indian state from moving forcefully for separation. Group based secessionist movements have formed in the Northeast, Punjab during the 1980s, and Kashmir, and the state authorities have alternated between sometimes clumsy repression and halting efforts at reform, sometimes compounding problems as in recent ideas about enforcing a national identity card system to stifle cross-border tribal infiltration, without definitively resolving the discontent.

After reviewing the literature, it seems reasonable that certain types of policy change may in fact be a key to understanding violent civil conflict. Olzak and Tsutsui (1998) link non-violent protest and violent uprisings to three sets of variables reflecting: world system influences, national civil rights policies, and the state’s international networks. They predict for example that declining levels of internal inequality might intensify ethnic mobilization and strife as threatened groups or classes dig in their heels (they predict this to be the case more in states of the economic “core” of world politics than in the disadvantaged “periphery”), and that countries granting more civil liberties might suffer higher levels of ethno political violence, though perhaps lower levels of non-violent protest, because of the loosening of restraints and repression (up to a point of satisfaction with greatly expanded rights). Inequality and human rights, of course, are both subject to policy reforms and allocations. Findings from this multi-national study (pp. 706-712), though, cast doubt on the hypothesized relationships about effects of inequality and freedom in the world’s core and periphery, although violence levels in the core were higher than often predicted by those who merely assume that poverty breeds protest and rebellion.

This evidence leads us to hypothesize that shifts in governmental policy that either benefit or threaten a dominant group in a society solidify group reaction; dominant groups fearing lost ground or subordinate groups fearing extinction and suppression are motivated to acquire countervailing power, territory, security, etc. (Horowitz, 1985).

Polarization through state policy making can occur in two ways, as we have seen in the literature: (1) by pretending that group differences do not exist or are unimportant, thereby seeking to homogenize the society; or (2) by first recognizing different identity groups but then incorporating those differences into policy in a way which systematically discriminates against certain groups. In either case, intra-group bonds are strengthened and inter-group bonds are weakened. The group, or groups, that expect or experience policy discrimination begin to distance themselves from the dominant group that is seen as benefiting unduly. With distance,
there tends to be a lack of communication; therefore, barriers are created that make resolving tensions difficult (Lake and Rothchild, 1996). In societal polarization, groups do not maintain the crosscutting ties or allegiances that limit conflict potential (Ross, 1993) and have been shown to be so important for India.

Depending upon circumstances, the supposed advantages provided the dominant group might cause a fear of extinction or a fear of assimilation in the others. In an analysis of Bolivia, Albó (1994) argues that society was organized as if everyone belonged to the dominant group; this created the potential for violent Bolivian conflict by denying the relevance of those who did not belong to the Hispanic culture. This again is a pattern reminiscent of feared ethnocide and is a stronger form of fear than that perhaps picked up by Olzak and Tsutsui’s measures. Some countries, such as Turkey, do not readily recognize the multi-cultural characteristic of their nation; therefore, policies designed to homogenize the state create fear of fatal assimilation, as among Kurds and Armenians. Other states’ policies, as in Rwanda and Burundi, are designed specifically to rid the country, or parts thereof, of one or more identity groups. This obviously generates a fear of extinction. The two types of fear are not mutually exclusive. Forced assimilation can also be viewed as a form of extinction. The “bottom line” is that such policies generate fear that certain identity groups will not be able to survive or thrive within their homeland (Rothman, 1997).

It is interesting to note that although inter-group violence is still prevalent in India—indeed in incidents such as the widespread Hindu attacks on Muslims in Gujarat state in the summer of 2002 as a response to perceived Muslim terror on railroads and in Kashmir and New Delhi—the general trend appears to have been toward expression of such fears and resentments mainly in violence directed at the state.

“Diverse groups do not simply vent their anger at the state but often also hold it responsible for the injustices they seek to address. Hindu nationalists allege that the central government appeases the Muslim minority; the upper-caste youths who immolated themselves in 1990 accused the government of discriminating against the so-called forward castes. . .; and regional movements demanding greater rights to self-determination have accused the national government of discriminatory allocation of resources and undue political interference at the state level.” (Basu and Kohli, 1997, p. 321).

Thus, the central government has come to be seen, accurately or not, increasingly as the repository of policymaking (either direct or indirect) that for better or worse, can affect the balance among ethnic communities. In the case of rioting against caste emancipation policy, for example:

“. . .all of these seemingly diverse examples of conflict—over urban jobs and education, land, and the ritual purity of the village well—do indeed prove to have much in common. Each in its own way is a dispute over the Indian “social contract” and the state’s role in enforcing that contract. The issue in these cases is not so much ‘law and order’ as ‘whose law, whose order.’ (Joshi, 1982, p. 682). In India as well, the situation is complicated in that, Many ‘communal’ riots have indeed been precipitated by discord between provincial and central governments and between local and national administrators. In other instances. . .community leaders and state representatives
have worked together to prevent or contain violence. (Basu and Kohli, 1997, p. 322).¹¹

Discriminatory policies might consist of one specific measure or a series or repetition of enforcement actions, decisions, laws, rules or regulations. Of course as noted, the mere proposal of such policies might also have its effects. Discussion or adoption of the discriminatory policy is volatile because of what it symbolizes to the potentially disadvantaged group or groups; therefore the actual number of policies adopted is not necessarily a factor in predicting violence, but their sequence and timing might be.

Relative deprivation, economic disparities and hardships, rising expectations and discontent play a role in magnifying the effects of discriminatory policy change. The key question is whether the proposed or enacted policy keeps certain members of a society from obtaining their “rightful” capabilities and aspirations. It is not even necessary that policy reflects the intent of discrimination for violence to follow; if the policy symbolizes discrimination for the dominant or subordinate, the group may respond based on threat perception alone. Groups which are being discriminated against in reference to others or which have been advantaged in the past but now find their status threatened by social trends or more pointedly by governmental reforms are more likely to rebel violently than groups that previously had not hoped for or experienced advancement.

General discontent results from all of these processes particularly when newly discriminating measures are adopted.¹² Such changes will tend to shake up the status quo, affording or seeming to afford new and special status to some groups; others will experience threats (physical or existential) and hostility.¹³ Indian policies aimed at emancipating the “Untouchables” for example are seen by many traditional elites as threatening the underpinnings of the entire social system and therefore are strongly resisted even as they are passed into law by a concerned national parliament and a party system that might depend on a massive vote among the poor (Joshi, 1982, p.682). Thus, policies that threaten the status quo might be the most likely to breed not just protest but outright violence, and reactions to such “threatening” policies can breed strange alliances, as between richer and poorer higher caste Indians.

Obviously, not all ethnically related policy decisions will result in civil violence. Certain variables would seem to be crucial, especially when incorporated into official policy. As noted, discriminatory policy changes are those that could systematically advantage one group within a society and disadvantage another. The key policies likely to have this effect are related to language, religion, educational, economic (e.g., job access), and political status (such as land holding and citizenship rights). These variables are not mutually exclusive; a group might feel that language policy would also disadvantage them politically and economically, for example. Clearly, policies can involve more than one type of reform at once and do not happen in a vacuum. Numerous factors might contribute to the adoption of a discriminatory policy or deter such a policy from adoption. Other factors could either dampen or magnify a policy’s likelihood of provoking violence. For purposes of comparison, in this analysis we also record non-discriminatory or non-identity policy changes, both proposed and enacted.

In our analysis we also allow for the possibility that various types of identity-based policy can have either destructive or constructive effects, and that they can be seen subjectively as either harmful or beneficial. Therefore, we introduce the concept of “positive discriminatory policy,” which is taken to mean a tendency to benefit or protect the minority or traditionally disadvantaged against the majority or traditionally advantaged population in a given
circumstance. “Negative discriminatory policy” would have the converse effect of protecting or benefitting the majority or advantaged. We wish to see whether it matters if discrimination is positive or negative in predicting the probability of violent or non-violent reaction.

Some studies have shown that moves in certain policy domains might breed more tendencies to violent reaction. Among these, for example, language policy has been cited as potentially volatile in a state like India. Below we review expectations regarding some of these domains.

- **Language.** Often states do not recognize the importance of linguistic differences in maintaining domestic peace. For example, in countries such as Latvia and Moldova after the cold war ended, state language reform disadvantaged those, such as Russians, that did not speak the primary national language or did not consider it their first language. In a multiethnic society such as India’s with several prevalent languages, national or regional language legislation and policy carries great portent. Horowitz (1985, p. 219) argues that when a particular language is provided an exclusive official status it becomes a symbol of domination and thus presumably a great cause of bitterness and resentment of the type that can spur violence. Cultural fear of domination may, in fact, play a large role in contributing to group level rebellion, since group members feel they might lose control of their way of life (Donnelly, 1996). In a study of India and Northern Ireland, Bostock (1997) identified “language grief” (the anticipation of or reaction to language loss or extinction) as a major contributor to conflict. On the other hand, Laitin (1993) finds the potential for fighting over language, especially in India and he would argue, controversially, Sri Lanka, to be muted because this issue almost automatically leads to a bargained outcome. It is hypothesized here, for purposes of study, that because of India’s linguistic diversity and the dampening of linguistic polarization across Indian states, language policy reform will be less volatile than other forms of perceived policy discrimination.

- **Religion.** The processes involving religion and violent civil conflict are similar to those of language. The same sense of domination and discrimination occurs. With the end of the Cold War, and the increased interdependent nature of the international system, it seemed likely that economic concerns would take priority over religious differences. However, some scholars argue that the societal importance of religion is growing despite increased global economic interdependence (Bangura, 1994; Haynes, 1995). Reinforcing the salience of religion in conflict, Reynal-Querol (2002) tested the notion that religiously diverse multicultural states will be more violence prone than linguistically diverse states, with findings that religious polarization and anamist diversity (number of followers of anamist culture) do in fact explain incidence of civil war better than linguistic polarization. It follows from her work (2001) that consociational policies protecting minorities work better than majoritarian democracy to keep ethnic cleavages at bay.

Both the aforementioned caste controversy and the Sikh and Kashmir disputes in India show how aspects of religion and religious practice, as in the controversy and violence surrounding the sanctity of the Golden Temple of Amritsar, become politicized as forms of nationalism leading to violence. It is often difficult to determine exactly when a religious movement becomes a political movement. One must look for various forms of organized resistance, campaigns or uprisings, the use of sanctuaries, and note the counter tendencies of government to enforce policies on religious groups. Thus it is hypothesized here that religious policy, because of its increasing politicization, will be the area of Indian political life most subject to violent ethnic outbreaks.
• **Economic and Political Status.** Gurr (1994) has measured economic and political discrimination as variables that he considers important in studying disadvantaged minorities. Groups unable to satisfy their needs within the system will seek satisfaction in some other way. When governmental policy is seen as the source of discrimination, or is blamed for failing to solve economic ills in a context where scapegoating of other ethnicities is possible, the result can be inter-ethnic or anti-government violence. Economic and political policies would include regulations and legislation dictating land and resource rights, employment and educational opportunities, as well as affecting citizenship or denying autonomy rights.

Various significant political events were included in the study for exploratory purposes. Because of the economic stresses in a country of India’s size and the still unresolved rights of minorities in some regions (such as the Northeast), it is hypothesized that economic and political reforms will follow religion as India’s next most destabilizing policy domain.

It is argued here that discriminatory policies are neither necessary nor sufficient “causes” of ethno political violence. When seeking to explain such a complex phenomenon, it is important to recognize that no one factor alone could claim responsibility. Certainly the policy environment is important to keep in mind when assessing actual policy impact. As a result, the current study incorporates two policy environmental factors as contextual variables: executive party shift and economic fluctuation.

Several studies have identified the importance of regime change as a precipitant of civil violence. As noted earlier, Gurr (1994) included “power transitions” as a strong predictor of such violence. It seems feasible that such situations might open the door to possible identity-based policy changes as indicated earlier. Similarly, other scholars have focused specifically on democratization, finding positive correlation between semi-democratic regimes and violence (Hegre, et al., 2001; Henderson and Singer, 2000; Ellingsen, 2000). India, however, has remained strongly democratic, for the most part, according to Gurr (1997) and the Polity IV democracy project. On the other hand, party shifts have occurred. As a result, the policy-to-violence linkage will be explored in relation to executive leadership changes.

In addition, several scholars have identified economic factors, and particularly downturns as important in explaining the incidence of civil violence. Stringent economic conditions exacerbate inter-group tensions and governmental resentments over scarce employment opportunities. Indeed, Kaufman (1996) has argued that one cannot motivate economically satisfied people to rebel. Logically, as state resources become scarce, the threat of ethno political violence is more probable. Further, we might expect governments to enact more discriminatory policies during economic down cycles as individuals within government seek to secure constricting resources for their own identity group. As a result, the policy-to-violence linkage will also be analyzed in relation to India’s economic fluctuations.
Research Methodology

Ethno political violence among groups and by and against the government constitutes the dependent variable in this study. Incidents of civil violence as well as various discriminatory policy changes in India were culled from US State Department country reports, as well as from the *Political Handbook of the World*, and *Keesing’s Contemporary Archives Online*. We chose to combine sources in order to reduce single source bias in scholarship and media reports and to maximize reported events through triangulation. However, we recognize that these all three are Western sources and as such potentially might miss or distort the extent or subtext of Asian events. However, *Keesing’s*, the source that produced the largest number of accounts, has through the years tended to specialize in Afro-Asian politics, and presents unusually detailed and thorough reports.14

Our data collection approach involved searching sources for any incident of ethnically related economic, social or political policy change and/or incidents of political violence within the state; thus the units of analysis for this study entail event sequences. Once identified, the sequence of events surrounding the episode of violence or policy change (or both if they occurred as predicted) was coded. For comparative purposes, we also coded sequence of events surrounding mass-based political protest. For example, if a report in *Keesing’s* relayed the information that violent riots had occurred as a result of protests showing opposition to a recently enacted language law, the sequence coded would be a discriminatory policy change followed by protest and ethno political violence. As one can imagine, there are many event sequence possibilities in such a project. These possibilities include cases where a discriminatory policy change did not involve violence, where ethno political violence occurred without policy change, as well as cases where the two occurred in sequence.15

Reports surrounding such events for three months time were then coded to reveal sequences whereby policy initiatives, protests, and violence either did or did not follow each other.16 Thus it was possible to specify policies that were preceded or followed by protest or rebellion or state repression and those that were not. Likewise we identified acts of protest or violence (e.g., assassinations or hate crimes) that were or were not related to ethnic policy moves. If ethno-cultural violence or protest were not preceded by a detectable policy move, the case would be coded as ‘no political event’ followed by identity-based violence in the form of riot, etc. Thus we were able to specify violence that did not appear to stem from governmental policy moves as well as that which did. The goal of such coding methods is to eliminate spurious coding association. Admittedly, the sequence determinations are based upon second hand reports typically from journalists in the field. Such reports may be subject to bias or misinformation. It can be argued, however, that the benefit of the closer association coding mechanisms employed here outweigh the threat of bias or misinformation.

Record was made of all reported mass-based acts of civil violence, identity-based policy changes, and political protests, organized strikes, or demonstrations between the period 1947 and 2000. We also recorded major economic crises or downturns as a contextual variable when noted in the sources identified above. In dealing with violence, we were not concerned with any particular casualty threshold, but rather with violent reaction or outbursts that could entail riots, bombings, armed attacks, acts of terrorism, etc.

The label “discriminatory” is used if a policy, regulation, or official governmental act affects ethno-cultural status, as in language, religion, culture and culturally-based political rights, economic and resource allocations. Thus measures regarding the status of language, religion,
citizenship, employment, political participation and cultural/regional autonomy can be considered as positively or negatively discriminating. As noted we coded for proposed as well as implemented policies. For heuristic purposes, then, a national policy that declared Hindi the state language would be coded negatively (i.e. from the viewpoint of the minority). On the other hand, a policy that provided autonomy for a certain minority group, or which allowed for multiple language use would, in most circumstances, be coded positively. Both, however, are examples of discriminatory policy changes and could result in violence, either by the disadvantaged minority or by the embittered or insecure majority or by the government. Therefore, we will analyze cases where either negative or positive policy changes, or both, might have set off violence.¹⁷

Coding episodes of violence in India over more than 50 years is challenging. For example, violence of a certain type can recur several times. Certain regions of the country, such as Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast, also can be viewed as having episodes of violence repeatedly and nearly continuously for years at a time. In such cases, the outbreak of violence or a renewed outbreak after a lull was considered a new event to be coded. On the other hand, ongoing or repeated battles in these areas were not coded as separate new events.¹⁸ Finally, as noted, we recorded cases with non-violent outcomes if we found a prior ethno-political policy or protest. We assume that any other non-violence outcome, say following no policy moves, is not pertinent to this study.

Contextual variables included in the study are executive leadership change and economic fluctuation. Executive leadership change is considered to have occurred when there was a change in the position of prime minister. This information is available through the Indian Embassy at www.indiaembassy.org. In order to assess the proposed policy-to-violence relationship and leadership change, a series of figures are utilized identifying when discriminatory policies occurred in relation to leadership change. In order to identify a possible connection between party shift and the policy-to-violence linkage, the figures included below also make the distinction between a party shift versus a prime minister shift when they are different.

Economic fluctuation is analyzed in a similar fashion. In order to effectively identify the ups and downs of India’s economy, we measure percent change in gross domestic product from previous year. These figures are derived from *International Financial Statistics.*¹⁹ This variable is analyzed with the more reliable policy change data for the years 1960-2000.

**Findings**

Project data collection resulted in 200 cases of significant political events (or related events in a series) or episodes of violence.²⁰ During the 1947-2000 period, we found 79 instances (outbreaks or renewals) of ethno political violence in India, where violence came either as the first incident or as a direct result (specified or indicated in the accounts) of a policy or a single precipitating event. We found an additional 25 cases where violence came as the end result of a long chain of events, including ethnic policies or protests, constituting what we called “subsequent violence.” Twenty of these latter cases were identity-based violence, and five were non-identity based.

Contrary to the study’s basic hypothesis of a firm link between discriminatory policy moves and violence, of the 79 original violent incidents, 48 (61%) were preceded by ‘no event,’ meaning they could be associated directly with no particular policy change or political
event, ethnic or not. Many of these seemingly spontaneous incidents appeared to be related to general patterns of violence within the country. For example, there were several entries related to Hindu-Muslim fighting that might have originated because of friction in the streets or over issues such as disrespect of religious holy places (especially mosques). Another source of such episodes dealt with violence against lower social group or caste members, particularly the Harijans or Untouchables.

In some instances such vengeful fighting or communal attacks could have related to prior objectionable policies. Some disputes regarding the use or building of religious institutions, for example, could relate to older prevailing governmental policies and regulations or to the lack of policy reform, regulation, or enforcement to protect the religious community’s interests. However, if we could not identify a specific proximate policy initiative, we did not code for the relevance of such older policies and practices or for policy failures or omissions.

Of the 31 initial identity-based violent incidents preceded by detectable policy moves, only eight (26%) were preceded by discriminatory policy changes, either positive or negative. An additional three events of ethno political violence were preceded by proposed discriminatory policies that were not yet adopted. Thus, in all less than 40% of original violent mass based incidents had discriminatory policy antecedents. Interestingly, nine (29%) of the identity-based violence episodes were first protests or demonstrations that then became violent, so that protests seemed about as likely as policy changes to lead to or warn of violence. Obviously, factors such as police responses to such demonstrations can affect the turn to violence. Various other events, such as a reported arrest, death or assassination, as well as migration patterns preceded the remainder of initial violent incidents.

Looking at the 25 cases of “subsequent violence,” i.e., violence coming after a longer sequence of events, we found that eight (32%) were preceded by some form of identity policy initiative (whether positive, negative, or “neutral”). Nine resulted from prior governmental repression, while 11 (44%) were preceded by some form of identity protest. Of course since these are sequences, a given act of violence could have been related to a combination of the above factors. The most common such sequence (four cases) was for discriminatory policy to lead to subsequent protest and then to violent outbreaks.

Thus, on the whole and looked at from the standpoint of violence, discriminatory policy changes preceded the outbreaks in only about one third to two-fifths of the cases. Looked at from the standpoint of discriminatory policy, however, there was a higher frequency of subsequent violence. In all there were 40 cases of discriminatory policy in the data, both negative and positive (one case neutral) in India during the years under study. Interestingly and perhaps indicating India’s democratic tendencies, the majority of those cases were of the positive variety (28 cases or 70%). It seems apparent that the Indian national or state governments have repeatedly attempted to alleviate identity-based tension via various sorts of positive discriminatory policies or reforms. For example, there were many examples of devolution, such as providing full statehood for Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya in 1970, as well as examples of policy designed to recognize languages other than Hindi at the state level.

Recall our assumption that positive discrimination will have more salutary effects on violence than negative discrimination. Of the 28 cases of positive discriminatory policy, the majority (17 or 61%) was not followed by violence or protest. Positive discrimination led to identity-based protest in eight cases (29%) and to identity violence in only three instances (11%). In three more cases a sequence beginning with positive discrimination led through
several subsequent events to violence. However, as seen in Table 1, the fact then that some 40% of the time angry mass response appears likely even after “positive” policy reforms should give decision-makers pause.

**Table 1**  
**Positive Discriminatory Policy Change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>28 of 40 (70%) discriminatory policy changes were positive in nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 of 28 (29%) positive policies were followed by identity-based protest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of 28 (11%) positive policies were followed by ethno political violence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative policy discrimination had somewhat more destabilizing effects. Twelve of the discriminatory policies were coded as negative, and unlike positive discrimination nearly two-thirds of these instances were followed either by ethno political violence or political protest. Indeed violence occurred in five instances (42%) with protest coming in three more (25%) cases. Thus violence was a relatively more frequent outcome for negative than for positive discrimination. While a variety of factors might contribute to ethno political violence, it seems clear (Table 2) that when negative policy discrimination does occur, it tends to be followed rather predictably (two-thirds of the Indian cases) by violence and/or protest. Indeed the violent effects were rather immediate in the case of negative discrimination, not going through long sequences or chains of events.

**Table 2**  
**Negative Discriminatory Policy Change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12 of 40 (30%) discriminatory policies were negative in nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 of 12 (25%) of negative policies were followed by identity-based protest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 of 12 (42%) of negative policies were followed by ethno political violence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several conflicts theorists (Sisk, 1996; Horowitz, 1985) have discussed the possibility of devolution and federalism as a means of effectively dealing with such heterogeneous societies as India. The fact that India has made serious efforts to localize government for that reason, and yet still experienced high levels of identity-based violence raises questions about the assumed benefits of devolution, or about whether the correct policies were engaged. Devolution generally would be considered positive in our categorization, and as such perhaps did not often lead directly to violence, but it also did not preclude violence arising from negative policies in the realm. Even when the national government provided local control and went through the pains of creating separate linguistic states, such as those in the Punjab Reorganization Bill of 1966, violence continued to be seen (e.g., in Punjab and New Delhi). It seems that devolutionary policies can have the effect of creating “minorities within minorities” or even generating majorities who perhaps do not see the need to accommodate yet another linguistic community. Yet in other circumstances, the subdivision of states into still smaller autonomous units might well relieve some of these tensions.

Further research is, therefore, needed focusing specifically on the benefits and drawbacks of devolution, decentralization, of power sharing in diverse populations. Although positive
discriminatory policies did in some cases lead to violence, they appeared to do so less frequently than their negative counterparts. There were eight cases of proposed discriminatory policies, with seven of them of the ‘positive’ variety. Five of the eight (63%) resulted in eventual violence and an additional two in identity-based protest. Proposed events thus appear to be even more volatile than their enacted counterparts, perhaps because groups become alarmed and take the occasion to campaign against adoption through violent means.

On four occasions discriminatory policy actually followed rather than preceded violence or protest. For example, in Assam, 1960 linguistic riots led to a decision to make Assamese the official language of the state. In two other instances previously objectionable policy was reversed after protests. This type of sequence, however, was less prevalent than one might have assumed, and therefore indicates that the relationship between policy and violence tends to be uni-directional, i.e., to lead from policy to violence or protest. Indian authorities may have proven less responsive in policy terms to popular outcry or uprising than democratic theory might predict. Over time and given repeated incidents of communal violence, local or national governments might revert to old “learned” responses, might become less open to reform, or might adopt new approaches to policing or enforcement.

We must note that “governmental policy” in India implies either national or regional (state) policies. We might wonder whether one or the other is more prone to produce violent reaction or opposition, especially in light of the devolution hypothesis. Therefore, we separated out our discriminatory policies according to their regional content, listing regionally based policies, national policies with regional content, and national policies. In Table 3 we show quite clearly that regionally oriented identity policies, whether passed by states or national authorities, are more likely to generate violence than are national policies. It could be that such regional policies are meant to deal with more intractable difficulties and more entrenched violence to begin with, and therefore are more violence prone, or that they are in and of themselves more controversial and threatening to minorities. Further study of this question will be required.

### Table 3

**Sources and Focus of Discriminatory Policies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Led to Violence</th>
<th>Led to Protest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Policies</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Policies with Regional Content</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Policies</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 15.50, significant < .01

During the data collection and analysis it became apparent that language policy has been a volatile issue in Indian history, but our hypothesis was that it would not be the most volatile of the policy domains. There were 27 event sequences having to do with language issues, including 12 linguistic discriminatory policy changes and five proposed discriminatory policy changes. Of those policies enacted (Table 4), 10 were positive in nature with seven of those followed by ethno political violence and an additional three by identity-based protest. This illustrates the
numerous governmental attempts in India to give representation to the many linguistic groups within the country, and the fact that positive policy changes produced markedly less linguistic violence than proposed or negative changes. In fact, there were only two cases of negative linguistic policy with both experiencing ethno political violence in their aftermath. Further, there were five proposed linguistic policies with three followed by violence.

By comparison, there were seven cases of religious discriminatory policy changes (three negative and four positive in nature). Only two cases (one negative) were followed by ethno political violence, and another two (one negative) by protest. Surprisingly not only are religious policies apparently less frequent in India, but they are also seemingly less volatile than their linguistic counterparts.

The majority of the identity-based policies identified in the study were considered economic and/or political in nature (although there was some overlap where a particular policy might be considered both economic/political and either linguistic or religious if the policy legislated several benefits). There were a total of 30 economic/political discriminatory policies. Of those, 22 were positive in nature. These policies were the least volatile (Table 5), with only three leading to ethno political violence and five leading to protest. On the other hand, four of seven negative economic/political policies were followed by ethno political violence. An additional negative economic/political policy was followed by protest.

### Table 4
Linguistic Discriminatory Policy Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Followed by ethno political violence</th>
<th>Positive Linguistic DPC</th>
<th>Negative Linguistic DPC</th>
<th>Proposed Linguistic DPC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total DPC</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5
Economic/Political Discriminatory Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Followed by ethno political violence</th>
<th>Positive Economic/Political DPC</th>
<th>Negative Economic/Political DPC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (13.6%)</td>
<td>4 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Followed by protest</td>
<td>5 (22.7%)</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total DPC</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All discriminatory policy types, and particularly the “negative” ones, have been shown to result in ethno political violence at least some of the time. On the other hand, despite our initial expectations for India, linguistic policies appear more volatile than their religious or economic/political counterparts.

It has been hypothesized that resource disparities play a significant role in accelerating ethno political conflict. When focusing on discriminatory policy changes, this variable seems theoretically relevant. When resources are scarce, identity groups may feel the need to secure them for their group more so than when the economy is prosperous and healthy. Data collection indicates 12 cases of events considered to entail economic downturns as reported by project sources. Four (33%) of those were related to non-identity protest—for example, the left-wing trade union strike in 1967 protesting rising prices and unemployment—and three (25%) were related to non-identity violence (i.e. food riots). Some cases of ethno political violence occurred during the same year as these economic declines, however we were unable to establish direct relations between the two event types.23 These findings do not, however, provide a systematic analysis of the relationship between economic fluctuation and the policy change-to-violence linkage as proposed earlier.

In order to better make this assessment, Figure 1 is presented for the years after 1960, and identifies policy changes that were and were not followed by ethno political violence. These changes were graphed in relation to percent change in GDP from previous year (the first year had no reference point). In addition, the graph also indicates these changes and economic cycles in relation to party and prime minister shifts.

**Figure 1**

*Leadership Change, Economic Fluctuation, and Discriminatory Policies*

Intriguingly, incidents of discriminatory policy change (DPC) which were followed by violence seemed to come at relatively extreme points of economic change, i.e., either upward
economic shifts of over four percent, or downward shifts. However, contrary to expectations, the upward shifts appeared more subject to such policy linkage to violent outbreaks than the downward shifts were (note that violence occurred in India nearly every year, so that the indicators are for the policy-violence sequence, and not for all occurrences of violence). All instances of policy change NOT followed by violence during this period also occurred in the better economic times, with some of the non-violent outcomes coming coincidentally in the same year as the violent ones. Overall, then, one is hard pressed to conclude that economics made much difference. Bad economic times did seem, however, to correspond to the possibility of violence following discriminatory moves, and not to the policy-non-violent outcomes.

As for political changes, the first two prime ministerial changes and the first party shift were followed rather closely by ethno political policies and subsequent violence. However, this pattern was not as clear for later governmental shifts, either of party or leadership, and it could have been that in the early years the nation’s first ethno political policies were being enunciated and coincidentally that prime ministers finally changed (after the long Nehru reign). During the more conservative shift of the 1980s and 1990s, there may indeed have been a great deal of “ethnic politics” going in, especially with Hindu nationalist revival. Yet these evidently did not necessarily translate predictably into policy moves followed by near term violence. Fears of ethnic repression or intimidation, however, might have led to an atmosphere leading to communal fighting, whether associated with specific policies or not.

**Implications**

It seems clear that discriminatory policy changes in India are not the only source or trigger of ethno political violence. In fact, the majority of such violent acts seem to occur rather spontaneously as the result of a street-level disagreement in a pattern of continuing conflict and vengeance. Future research is required to shed light on these episodes to assist in reducing the tension and atmosphere that makes spontaneous violence possible. We also have not distinguished between ethnic violence directed at other groups and at the state, so that we would want to know more about what triggers one form versus the other.

It is also clear, however, that discriminatory policies, when they do occur, often lead to violence or identity-based protest, with negative discriminatory and proposed policies proving considerably more volatile than the positive variety, although opposition to positive policies, particularly from groups which stand to lose some of their previous advantages or status, can become violent as well. The potential of violent outbreaks as a result of discriminatory policy seems to be related to the focus and location of that policy. India’s attempts to strike a balance with some devolved ethno-related powers and a still strong central government seem to have created a system in which regional discriminatory policies are more likely to lead to violence than those adopted at the national level.

Future research comparing Indian policy with other more or less centralized countries might provide useful insight into this issue and the adequacy of the balance. We have only been able to highlight what appears to be an interesting difference in central and regional policy effects. Indian democracy has generated a distinctive and somewhat successful pattern of positive policy initiatives to deal with the challenges of heterogeneity. Indeed Das Gupta (1988, p.165) argues cogently from the Assamese example that ethnic struggles are frequently over who will control the country’s resources and that given enlightened policies at the center “ethnic regionalism and secular nationalism are not necessarily competing values.”
Project results illustrate the problematic nature of dealing with a diverse linguistic population via linguistic policy, especially in comparison to religious discrimination per se. Such policies and demands often are associated with violence, indicating the sensitive nature of language and the importance of language recognition. Again, cross-country comparative analyses are necessary to explore methods of appeasing several linguistic groups without the problem of creating a “within minority.”

If discriminatory policy is a catalyst of violence, it is evidently not as intertwined with other factors as one might have assumed. For example, one factor commonly linked to ethnic violence, economic downturns, seemed at least as likely to be related to non-identity based policies, demonstrations, and violence. The sequences whereby discriminatory policy led to violence, at least in our data, generally were not very long, with the most common sequence being policy leading to protest leading to violence. However, negative policy per se seemed quite capable of directly generating violent uprisings. Therefore, such policy, whether proposed or implemented, bears watching by those interested in early warning or amelioration of ethnic violence. Again, one would want to see the patterns in other states, but India affords an important initial validation, especially as regards the incendiary potential of linguistic policies.

Endnotes

* We would like to thank Emily Kanaga, Sonja Mann, Bappaditya Mukherjee, and Mayuko Shimakage for their excellent research assistance, and Dr. Kousar Azam for her encouragement, advice, and support. We would also like to thank Steven Cohen for his comments on an earlier version. The authors remain solely responsible for the content.

1 We use the term “ethnic” or “ethnopolitical” conflict and violence in this paper to denote fighting over issues related to cultural identity. This can encompass disputes regarding group identity, nationalism, language, religion, citizenship and other aspects of culture such as myths, traditions, and norms. It overlaps with but is treated as distinct from disputes over other issues such as ideology, territorial control and power that might not have an ethnicity component.

2 The idea of relative deprivation, translated from the individual to the group level, is seen as a discrepancy between a group’s value expectations and what the group is actually able to achieve.

3 Factors in a group’s capacity for sustained collective action are the strength of the group’s identity and group mobilization. Factors affording a group the opportunity to initiate ethnopolitical rebellion include recent major changes in the structure of the political regime and support from kindred groups in neighboring countries. Where Gurr focuses on the interaction of many structural and institutional factors in assessing risk of internal civil conflict and Stavenhagen looks at the nation-state system, Stuart J. Kaufman (1996) argues that hostile masses, belligerent leaders, and inter-ethnic security dilemmas drive internal ethnic warfare. “They reinforce each other in a spiral of increasing conflict: belligerent leaders stoke mass hostility; hostile masses support belligerent leaders; and both together threaten other groups, creating a security dilemma which in turn encourages even more mass hostility and leadership belligerence” (Kaufman, 1996: 109). Kaufman also makes a distinction between wars initiated by dominant groups, which he terms ‘popular chauvinism’ (mass-led) and ‘government jingoism’ (elite-led), and those initiated by subordinate groups, or ‘mass insurgencies’ (mass-led) and ‘elite conspiracy’ (elite-led).
While they may pose challenges for multi-ethnic states, Barnett and other scholars of India note that separatist movements need not be incompatible with national integration, providing that integration is not seen as synonymous with homogenization and that cultural pluralism is genuinely accepted (Brass, 1981, p. 452).

One area of inter-ethnic coexistence in the religious domain is the general Indian pattern of tolerance in return for acceding to the basically Hindu social order. Hindus have come to expect this in relation to the ancient absorption of Buddhism, and it created difficulties relative to the Sikhs in the 1980s (Mahmood, 1989).

Horowitz (1985) and Kaufman (1996) join scholars such as Merton (1957) and Gagnon (1995) in enunciating what has been termed the “instrumentalist” view of civil violence, in which national elites are seen to exploit group antagonisms for concrete political or territorial gains. An alternative conception is the so called “primordialist” view that most ethnopolitical conflicts are rooted either in human nature as deep-seated tribal hatreds (Huntington, 1996) or long evolving cultural suspicions and rivalries. For example, Barber (1995) argues that “tribes” who are at war with each other are trying to redraw boundaries in order to further divide the international system. Despite assumptions about tribal hatreds, however, ethnic differences appear to play a relatively small role in the onset and resolution of violent international disputes (Huth, 1995). Singer (1993) has begun to explore the validity of the primordialist view on intrastate conflict, and finds that “cultural difference does not necessitate conflict; rather, it only makes it easier for elites to move their societies closer to hostility and rivalry” (Henderson, 1997). Singer (1996) also argues that to dismiss these intrastate conflicts as tribal hatreds is dangerous if not patronizing, and prematurely assumes that we already know what the conflicts are about. Such conflicts are complex processes about real issues that need further analysis, as seen in Subrate K. Mitra’s (1995) critique of Asghar Engineer’s (1994) thesis that “ethnicity derives its strength from primordial identity,” while in India Muslims have made relatively successful political alliances with former Hindu untouchables. By contrast, Dutt’s (1976) instrumentalist and pro-Congress analysis of the Indian constitutional crisis blamed political and opposition agitators for combining anti-democratic themes with ethnic hatred to gain power for themselves and bring down both the government and democratic structures.

The added dimension of economic dislocation and modernization as well as class-based politics inevitably comes into discussions of ethnic or identity conflict. Based on case studies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, Horowitz (1985) generates a theory of group entitlement and inter-group comparison, arguing that differential modernization based on ethnicity is an important factor for understanding the collective psychology of identity conflicts. He argues that the “modernization gap” and elite ambitions taking advantage of accompanying psychological tensions have resulted in post-colonial states where elites have the ability to turn group fears and resentment into mass antagonism and war. Modernization theory entails the belief that ethnic groups modernize at differential rates, and as a result, there is inter-group competition for benefits. The uneven distribution of economic and educational resources, according to Horowitz, is an important source of group tensions. One might also speculate that economic hardships, and their differential effects on various dominant or subordinate groups, can hasten the resort to force.

Indeed one type of institutional arrangement militating against inter-ethnic violence might be the form of “civic engagement” in crosscutting associations and groups that tend to break down
polarization. This has been seen among Hindu’s and Muslims in cities where violence has been minimized or abated (Varshney, 2001, noting that most Indian civil violence takes place in cities rather than in India’s myriad of villages). However, there are conditions where these consultative networks and associations might not suffice, as in the former Yugoslavia, either because the associations are not prominent, large, and well enough organized or because they are overtaken by events.

9 Citing a study by Oldenburg (1993) Manor notes that Indian communal (religious) incidents peaked in the mid 1960s, and despite a general rise in the 1980s did not approach those levels again up to 1990. Others have noted a marked increase again in the 1990s, however.

10 Indeed Basu and Kohli note the irony that this trend has coincided with the “deinstitutionalization” of the Indian state, i.e., the fall of previous pillars such as secularism, socialism, and Congress Party democracy and the deterioration of civil and political bureaucracies. The electorate has multiplied and competition over resources distributed by the state has intensified along with inter-party competition and grassroots democracy. They further note that state policy can be either direct and intended or indirect and unintended in its impact on subsequent protest and violence. Indeed state inaction in key situations can also be a form of policy by default.

11 These authors also note (pp. 323-324) that ethno cultural identities themselves change and transform over time, especially as transformed into political movements that wax and wane. Again the role of the state and political leaders is considered crucial in negotiating such changes.

12 We presume that although mere proposals for adoption might also spark violence, crowds and groups react more vehemently to actual regulations in place than to plans and proposals, since discussion of various approaches is always taking place and policy does not become really “serious” until it is approved and on the way to implementation.

13 In cases where there is a complete state breakdown, where no policies could be made, presumably the discriminatory policy change could have occurred prior to the breakdown and may have served as a catalyst to that fact.

14 Since Keesings Contemporary Archives Online was only available from 1960-2000, for the earlier years we supplemented the data with the Political Handbook of the World (1998). However, since the latter is not as comprehensive as Keesings, the findings before 1960 must be treated as reliable but less authoritative than for the 1960-2000 period. Separate analyses were completed for the latter period for comparison with the entire period, 1947-2000, but the findings did not change substantially.

15 While one would also want to account for the outcome “no policy reform-no violence” the event data approach we utilize at present does not afford that as a practical measurement since those are essentially “non-events.” One could alternatively deal with “country or event years” and code zeros for years with no such activity, but the effort here was to go to the event level itself in order to see sequences by which action and reaction in the policy-violence nexus actually occur. At the initial stage of investigation it is important to look closely at these sequences in order to induce theoretical propositions for further systematic testing.

16 If outcomes and effects were noted beyond three months, and were clearly related in the account to policy initiatives, they were coded as well.

17 Obviously groups can interpret a policy in widely contrasting ways, and a certain subjectivity is inherent in such coding. Language laws may validate one community and invalidate its
neighbors; U.S. affirmative action is seen as just in some quarters and discriminatory in others. However we treated such policies as negative if their effects were highly unbalanced or unfavorable to minorities.

The reasoning for such a decision is two-fold: first, reports of specific violent regional episodes tend to be sporadic and rarely detailed (for example, a report of ‘continued violence in Kashmir’ provides very little insight into the level of violence or its circumstances), and secondly, the project is concerned with identifying potential causes of violent outbreaks (hence its potential usefulness in “early warning”) as opposed to continuous episodes. As a result, initial and renewed (after a distinct lull of at least a year in reports) instances of violence were the focus of data collection. There is one particular exception. Hindu/Muslim communal violence is a recurring Indian problem, and can take a number of forms. The difficulty in identifying this violence as ‘continual’ is that it rarely occurs only in a specific region, so that one does not know whether reports of violence in various regions is part of a single conflict or indicative of several conflicts. Therefore, if we did not know enough about the particular circumstances to say it was or was not a continuation of prior local fighting, this type of violence was coded as a new event whenever it was reported.

Volume 2001 was used to identify percent change in GDP from previous year for the years 1971-2000. Volume 1971 was used for the years 1960-1970.

Data analyzed in the study are available by contacting the authors.

An example of such a policy was the 1965 Official Language Bill, replacing English as the official language in India with Hindi. Although the bill also required regulation to ensure that the change would not cause any hardship to those who did not speak Hindi, the action nonetheless sparked a series of riots in several Indian states by those opposed to the bill who viewed it as a threat, as well as those who supported the bill and viewed its opponents as a threat.

Due to the nature of the reports used for coding, it was not always possible to determine whether a policy was passed by the state or national government, but it was possible to determine whether it applied locally or nationally. We assume that many of the local policy moves were passed by state authorities, and we were further able to distinguish clear national policies that affected only a state (such as the Bombay reorganization bill of 1960 which created two separate states). Thus, our analysis distinguishes local from national policy.

A second analysis was completed using Gross National Product (GNP) as the economic indicator for the years 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, and 1995. These were compared to the outbreak of violence grouped in

References


Assessment and Crisis Early Warning Systems, 14 November-16 November, CIDCM, University of Maryland.


THE PROSPECT OF MULTI-LEVEL VOTING IN POST-PEACE ACCORD NORTHERN IRELAND

Roger Mac Ginty

Abstract

This article reviews the possibility of multi-level voting in Northern Ireland in the wake of the 1998 peace accord. Post-peace accord elections can act as powerful indicators of the fate of a peace. Using Reif and Schmitt’s framework of second-order elections, it finds some evidence of varying electoral behaviour according to the electoral arena. The article also uses original data from a major opinion survey to assess public attitudes towards the suite of governing institutions with powers in or over a devolved Northern Ireland. The evidence of multi-level voting is limited and does not extend to electors abandoning ethnic voting patterns in the new political dispensation. In fact, it is argued that the very nature of the peace process has encouraged a re-entrenchment of exclusive nationalism and unionism.

Introduction

Northern Ireland’s 1998 Belfast Agreement saw the introduction of a new set of governing institutions, including an elected powersharing assembly. The new political configuration offered the possibility of changes in voting behaviour in a society characterized by profound ethnonational fissures and entrenched ethnic voting patterns. This article assesses if there has been any evidence of multi-level voting in Northern Ireland in the wake of devolution from the United Kingdom. Multi-level voting, as identified by Reif and Schmitt (1980), notes variations in electoral behaviour according to electoral arena. In other words, the article considers if has devolution and the context of a peace accord has caused significant changes in voting patterns in Northern Ireland.

Following a brief contextual overview of Northern Ireland’s peace process and accord, the article considers the implications of elections in the aftermath of peace accords in cases of ethnonational conflicts. Then, using Reif and Schmitt’s second-order election model, the article examines trends in post-accord elections in Northern Ireland, with particular reference to levels of participation and the development of new and small political parties. A discussion of Northern Ireland’s voting patterns, as measured against the second-order election model, then follows and is aided by material from the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey of political attitudes. This material reinforces the argument that Northern Ireland’s electors view the Northern Ireland Assembly (a ‘second-order’ institution) as first order. The wider question of the implications of elections in post-accord peacebuilding is also revisited in the discussion section.
The Northern Ireland peace process and accord

Briefly, the Northern Ireland conflict is between two sets of nationalism, broadly fitting into the Protestant-unionist-loyalist bloc who favour continued maintenance of the Union with the United Kingdom, and the pro-united Ireland Catholic-nationalist-republican bloc (Whyte, 1991; O’Leary & McGarry, 1993). Both groups share the same territory, and although the Northern Ireland state (founded in 1921) has always had a Protestant majority, the Catholic minority has been of sufficient size to maintain Protestant anxiety. The macro problems of the contested legitimacy of the state were reflected at the issue level where policing, employment and social provision by the state had a distinctly sectarian flavour. From the late 1960s onwards, nationalist discontent developed into disorder and, eventually, political violence. A low level triangular insurgency between the British state, loyalist and republican insurgents cost over 3,000 lives in the 1968-94 period (Fay, Morrissey & Smyth: 1999).

The peace process of the 1990s emerged from a classic ‘mutually hurting stalemate’ (Zartman, 1989) in which the antagonists realised that unilateral action, by themselves or others actors, would not be enough to bring major qualitative change to an entrenched conflict. Of mutual interest was a lowering of the costs of the conflict. The sovereign power in Northern Ireland, the British government, recognised from the mid-1980s onwards that the Irish government (as proxy guardians of Northern Ireland’s nationalist minority) should be involved in any concerted attempt to manage the conflict. There followed the development of a remarkable British-Irish intergovernmental relationship (Arthur, 2000). The two governments adopted the principle of inclusion through which (violent) veto-holders with the potential to destabilise any agreement from without were consciously included in peace talks. With the two governments acting as custodians of a developing peace process, loyalist and republican militants felt confident enough to call ceasefires and allow Northern Ireland’s political parties to investigate proposals for the governance of Northern Ireland that would offer guarantees to the two main communities. Intensive multi-party talks held in 1997-98 were not without drama and interruption but an agreement was reached in April 1998 (Mac Ginty & Darby, 2002).

At 10,000 words, the Belfast Agreement was a complex document that confirmed Northern Ireland’s constitutional status within the United Kingdom (Wilford, 2001; Bell, 2001; Horowitz, 2002). Northern Ireland’s constitutional status would be linked to popular support, with both governments pledged to facilitate Irish unification if this was the popular will. Three new institutions were established to deal with the complex set of relationships that defined the Northern Ireland conflict. An Assembly with a powersharing Executive would serve relationships in Northern Ireland. A North-South Ministerial Council would allow for functional cooperation between the Irish government and the Northern Ireland Executive on selected matters. A British-Irish Council would provide a forum for cooperation between representatives from elected institutions across the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Alongside the new institutional architecture, the Agreement made provision for the early release of prisoners from militant groups, reform of the police force and criminal justice system, and the establishment of bodies with oversight on equality and human rights (Bell, 2001). In short, the Agreement ushered in an advanced form of consociational government that aimed to defer constitutional issues
and allow the development of cooperative relationships on the day-to-day governance of Northern Ireland.

Post-peace accord elections

Elections in the aftermath of a peace accord have the capacity to act as powerful indicators of the 'state of the peace' (Reilly, 2001; Reilly & Reynolds, 1999; Sisk & Reynolds, 1998). This can operate in a direct sense through an election (often a referendum) on a peace agreement. Similarly, support for moderate or extremist candidates or parties standing in local, regional or national elections may be gauged as a reinforcement or threat to post-accord peacebuilding. But elections can also act as indirect indicators, pointing to more subjective, and highly political concepts of moderation, respect for constitutional due process, and acceptance of diversity.

Electoral processes can have incredible importance in awarding or stripping peace accords and political dispensations established under them with popular legitimacy. The very staging of an election, the manner in which the election is run, the nature of the political parties and candidates, the issues that dominate the campaign, and the size and variety of parties can all have profound implications for the post-accord transition. To go through these in more detail, the holding of an election suggests capability and administrative competence, proficiencies not guaranteed in post-accord polities in which census data, if in existence, may be unreliable due to selective counting or enforced population shifts. Moreover, the holding of an election – by definition a major public event – may provide an opportunity to draw a line in the sand or to publicly mark the transition from conflict to ‘peace’. The manner in which the election is run may also be indicative of the post-accord peacebuilding phase of a peace process. Whether the campaign is marked by violence or intimidation, or the need for external guarantors in the form of peacekeepers or election monitors, may reflect the extent to which key principles underlying a peace accord have been internalised. Respect for the outcome of the election, particularly among majorities and powerholders, will be a crucial portent for the post-accord period.

The nature and composition of political parties is also important, with a number of post-accord locations witnessing the almost overnight metamorphosis of militant groups into political parties. The development of political parties along this model may be a sign that politics will retrench rather than break from ethnic fissures. The issues that dominate post-accord election campaigns can be important in signalling the ‘health’ of the transition. This is particularly the case with regard to elections after the initial peace accord period. The extent to which the issue agenda has remained focused on ethnic and conflict related issues, as opposed to more functional public policy issues, may indicate the degree to which a conflict is still alive and resistant to peacebuilding initiatives (Reilly, 2003).

The variety of political parties able to contest the post-accord elections may also inform observers about the nature of the post-accord political environment. A wide range of parties may not necessarily indicate political pluralism or tolerance from centres of authority. Instead, it may be a function of the type of electoral system, the fragmentation of ethno-political blocs, and political geography.
The timing of post-accord elections has attracted due attention, with critics pointing to the dangers of premature elections and how they are often held at the behest of the international community and are staged before the development of a broad-based ‘democratic infrastructure’. Of equal importance in terms of timing, is the staging of elections subsequent to the initial post-accord election. In a number of post-accord societies parliamentary or presidential elections have been deferred or replaced by ‘back me or sack me’ referendums staged by the incumbent. A peaceful transition from the first post-accord leadership to its successor leadership can be taken as a sign of the institutionalisation of the post-accord political dispensation.

The fundamental issue is whether post-accord elections are short-term events or part of long-term processes. Elections have the capacity to have ‘an ambiguous relationship’ to democracy, inflaming the conflict and retarding long-term democratisation (Lyon, 2002: 217). International ‘best practice’ during the 1990s saw an emphasis on the quantification of democracy through electoral processes. The symbolic content of post-accord elections is high (Mac Ginty, 2001: 1-21), but the ability of a democratic political cultural to become embedded in the society and polity is more significant.

Northern Ireland, as part of an established democratic state, was without many of the basic post-accord electoral problems found in many other societies. There was a long tradition of elections, established sophisticated political parties and – despite persistent claims of electoral fraud - accurate electoral registers. Notwithstanding this history of electoral competition, Northern Ireland’s post accord elections are of enormous importance in providing evidence of the outworking of its peace accord. In the three years following the Belfast Agreement five elections were held: a referendum on the Agreement (May 1998) and elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly (June 1998), European Parliament (June 1999), Local Government (June 2001), and Westminster (June 2001).

The high number of electoral contests in a relatively short space of time meant that Northern Ireland was in an almost permanent electoral cycle. While the Assembly gave Northern Ireland’s four main parties the opportunity to govern for the first time in many years, the switch from election campaigning to sharing power with electoral competitors proved difficult to manage in the delicate infant years of the Assembly. The Ulster Unionist Party, the Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Féin, and the Social Democratic and Labour Party cooperated as part of the permanent powersharing government, yet they were competitors in elections to other chambers. Reif and Schmitt’s second-order election model can help offer insights into the post-Belfast Agreement elections, particularly on issues of participation and the role of small parties.

**Second-order elections**

Reif and Schmitt’s seminal work identified national elections as first-order elections, with other elections designated as second-order. Their interest was in the connection between both sets of elections. The first direct elections to the European Parliament, held across the nine member states in 1979, provided them with an opportunity to compare voting behaviour in a single second-order political arena with nine national, or first-order, arenas. Their framework for the analysis of second-order
elections develops a series of hypotheses on the likely relationship between first and second-order elections (Marsh, 1998). The three main hypotheses are:

1. That second-order elections will witness lower levels of participation.
2. That second-order elections will facilitate the development and growth of new and small political parties.
3. That national government parties will lose popularity in second-order contests.

Reif and Schmitt highlight a number of contextual factors and conditions that should be taken into account when considering the hypotheses, such as possible differences in electoral systems and rules between first and second-order contests, the timing of the second-order election in the national election cycle, and the media attention devoted to the different contests. Essentially though, they highlight the precedence of national political cleavages over factors pertaining to the supra-national institution. In other words, national politics are a key determinant in second-order elections.

Reif and Schmitt’s model has subsequently been refined—and largely validated—by others. Norris (1997, 109-114) refers to it as ‘strikingly prescient and immensely influential.’ Marsh (1998) tests it against four European elections in the 1979-97 period and finds it largely robust. Others have investigated the first and second-order election model in relation to national and sub-national elections. McAllister (2000, 211-222), writing on the 1999 elections to the Welsh National Assembly, identifies a low turnout and ‘a much more deliberate, sophisticated series of choices’ by voters as validating the notion of elections other than to the national tier as being ‘second-order’.

Our task is to ascertain if Reif and Schmitt’s propositions hold true to Northern Ireland in the wake of the devolution of power from London. A validation or rejection of the second-order model may give an indication of the existence and extent of multi-level voting in post-accord Northern Ireland. It may also point towards the electorate’s acceptance of the devolved institutions in their own right or the extent to which the devolved exercises have been overshadowed by wider, national political dynamics. The three core propositions for second-order elections (lower participation; growth for small and new parties; and a contraction for government parties) are reviewed in the light of Northern Ireland’s first and second-order elections in the 1996-2001 period. On the basis of the evidence presented below, it is possible to construct a prima facie case in support of the first two propositions, although the third proposition has little relevance for Northern Ireland.

An analysis section considers possible reasons for the variations in turnout and small party fortunes in first and second-order contests and highlights the importance of factors specific to Northern Ireland and its peace process. Indeed, the strength of these local factors challenges one of Reif and Schmitt’s key propositions: that national politics will be a major determinant on the outcome of second-order contests. While the British government plays a major role at the macro level, for example by setting election dates, Northern Ireland’s elections are decided by Northern Ireland-specific factors. In other words, the ‘national’ in Northern Ireland is Northern Ireland itself, rather than the UK. Added to this is the problem that the ‘nation’ is deeply divided.
Lower participation?

According to Reif and Schmitt, second-order elections can be characterised by lower participation than in first-order elections. In fact it was a second-order election, the 1998 Northern Ireland Assembly election that recorded the highest turnout in the 1996-2001 period. The 69.9% turnout on that occasion however, was only slightly ahead of Northern Ireland’s turnout at the 1997 and 2001 British general elections (67.3% and 68.04% respectively).iii In the case of the Assembly election at least, it can be argued that Northern Ireland’s electors attached marginally more significance to a second-order rather than first-order contest. The Assembly elections apart, however, turnout for the general elections exceeded that for the other elections in the time-period and does allow a partial validation of Reif and Schmitt’s thesis of the precedence of the national political arena.iv (See Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>1996 Forum %</th>
<th>1997 General Govt. %</th>
<th>1997 Local Assembl %</th>
<th>1998 Assembly Govt. %</th>
<th>1999 European Parliament %</th>
<th>2001 Local Govt. %</th>
<th>2001 General Election %</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turnout</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>57.04</td>
<td>66.02</td>
<td>68.04</td>
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Table 1: Turnout in Northern Ireland elections, 1996-2001.

Brighter prospects for small and new parties?

Reif and Schmitt assert that second-order elections will offer brighter prospects for small and new parties. This is potentially significant for a post-accord society since the growth of small and new parties may signal a fragmentation of established ethnic bloc politics. In absolute terms, Northern Ireland has seen a relative proliferation of parties or independent candidates in its second-order contests. Twenty-four separate parties or independents contested the 1996 Forum elections and 33 parties or independents contested the 1998 Assembly election, as against 18 and 16 in the 1997 and 2001 general elections respectively. Indeed, the Forum and Assembly elections witnessed the first electoral outing for a number of new or re-invigorated political parties. The Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition was formed in advance of the 1996 election, while the Progressive Unionist Party and Ulster Democratic Party, although already in existence, re-entered the electoral process for these elections.

But the figures showing the relative proliferation of parties in second-order contests as opposed to first-order contests are less impressive if the larger number of seats available in the second-order contests is taken into account. In the 1996 Forum election an average of 3.6 candidates stood for each directly elected seat,⁵ while an average of 2.7 candidates contested each seat in the 1998 Assembly election. These figures are lower than the average of 6.94 and 5.55 candidates who contested each of Northern Ireland’s eighteen seats in the 1997 and 2001 general elections. In the 1999 European election eight parties contested Northern Ireland’s three Euro seats, or 2.6 per seat.

Regardless of the actual contestation of elections, Reif and Schmitt’s main point was that small and new parties would perform relatively better in second-order than
first-order contests. A constant feature of Northern Ireland’s political landscape has been the dominance of four political parties: Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and Sinn Féin. In the period under consideration, they have between them secured an average of 85.16% of votes cast in each election, pointing to significant electoral oligarchy. The highest combined vote for ‘the Big Four’ (91.89%) occurred in a first-order election (2001 general election) but this was only marginally ahead of the combined 91.36% secured in the 1999 European Parliament elections – a second-order contest. Nevertheless, smaller parties secured 21.05% of the vote in the 1998 Assembly election, with this figure dropping to 8.11% in the 2001 general election, pointing to a validation of Reif and Schmitt’s thesis. (See Table 2).

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of votes cast for the ‘Big Four’</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>78.95</td>
<td>91.36</td>
<td>84.48</td>
<td>91.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Combined percentage of the vote for the UUP, DUP, SDLP and SF in 1996-2001 elections

**Government parties will lose popularity?**

Reif and Schmitt’s proposition that government parties will lose popularity in second-order elections is difficult to apply to Northern Ireland given that until the creation of the Assembly none of the parties had been members of a government for some time. If the proposition is modified to say that the dominant (rather than governing) political parties will lose popularity, then, as Table 2 shows, the ‘Big Four’ did experience some electoral slippage in second-order contests. But to argue this is to stretch Reif and Schmitt beyond their original meaning. Indeed, it is only through the second-order elections to the Assembly that Northern Ireland’s parties have experienced government, and as will be argued later, the attitudes to the devolved institutions (rather than performance in them) were key factors in the 2001 general election.

**Discussion**

On this evidence, it is possible to identify differences between the results in first and second-order elections in Northern Ireland and extend partial validation to the second-order election model. Local factors are worth stressing though. Many of the differences between first and second-order elections are specific to Northern Ireland and its peace process and may resist generalisation to other cases.
Turnout is highest in the 1998 Assembly election, but is generally higher in first-order elections.

It is unsurprising that turnout in the 1998 election to the devolved Assembly surpassed that for other elections. This was not a simple case of a re-arrangement of the locus of power from the centre to the periphery. Instead, the creation of the Assembly marked the institutional culmination of a complex and long-running peace process. Public interest was immense, as evidenced by the 81% turnout in the May 1998 referendum on the Belfast Agreement. The establishment of an Assembly per se met with relatively little opposition in the multi-party talks leading to the Belfast Agreement. Virtually everything else connected with the Assembly was contested though. The new institution’s name, location, size, method of election, number and competence of departments, and linkages with other bodies created under the Belfast Agreement, were all the subject of argument.

There was much at stake for both communities. The 1998 referendum is thought to have produced a fairly even split between pro and anti-Agreement unionists (although both sides claimed to represent a majority of unionists) (Mitchell, 2001: 30-31). Most opposition came from the DUP, although substantial numbers of UUP supporters, including senior party figures, were opposed to the Agreement. Points of opposition were numerous, including the early release programme for paramilitary prisoners, the failure of paramilitary organisations to disarm and the prospect of major police reform. Perhaps the key sticking point for unionists was the prospect of the inclusion of Sinn Féin, whom they regarded as unreconstructed terrorists, in the new powersharing coalition Executive.

Rather than boycotting the elections, anti-Agreement unionists were determined that ‘No’ voters should be represented in the Assembly. The Democratic Unionists, who had been absent from the political negotiations leading to the Belfast Agreement and who were bitterly opposed to the Agreement, nonetheless promised electors that they would ‘be hard at work in the new Assembly representing your interests’ (emphasis added. DUP, 1998). Other anti-Agreement unionists, in the form of the United Kingdom Unionist Party, termed the election as ‘one FINAL CHANCE’ to counter a range of perceived threats, including ‘a return to full scale violence’ and ‘armed terrorists governing you’ (UKUP, 1998).

The official message from the Ulster Unionist Party accentuated the positive. UUP leader David Trimble noted that, ‘We have the chance to move into a new era for the sake of our children and to seize the enormous economic benefits that will flow from the Agreement. For this we need to elect members dedicated to progress, not those there to wreck this chance or merely to oppose and complain about everything (UUP, 1998).’ The result was an emotive and bitter election campaign within unionism.

Nationalists and republicans needed no encouragement to contest this election. Their traditional suspicions of Northern Ireland assemblies as ‘internal settlements’ had been assuaged by a number of guarantees linked to the establishment of the Assembly, particularly the ‘all-Ireland’ dimension afforded by the North-South Ministerial Council. For the two main nationalist parties, the SDLP and Sinn Féin, the Assembly represented an opportunity wrest power from Westminster. For republicans, it was another step in the broader nationalist project of moving towards a united Ireland, with Sinn Féin terming the election ‘a watershed moment in our history which must be seized’ (Sinn Féin, 1998a). The election also represented an opportunity to resume battle for supremacy within the nationalist community.
Most Northern Ireland elections are keenly contested, with the unionist-nationalist constitutional cleavage also containing bitter intra-community competitions. But the 1998 Assembly election had an additional novelty and seriousness. There was a public understanding that this was a defining moment in the peace process, and would shape the new political dispensation. The Assembly may have been a subordinate institution, but for the main ethnic parties, it was essential that they secure maximum ownership of that institution and effect maximum denial to their political opponents. As a Sinn Féin election leaflet put it: ‘Your vote can maximise nationalist strength, deliver real change and advance Irish unity’ (Sinn Féin, 1998b).

The 1998 Assembly election aside, turnout has been highest in first-order contests. It is difficult to argue that this was for anything other than local reasons. With the exception of a Conservative fragment (securing 0.3% of the vote in Northern Ireland in June 2001), the British parties do not stand for election in Northern Ireland. Nor has there been a recent need for Northern Ireland’s parties to contribute to Westminster coalition governments. The trends and issues affecting the outcome of the general election in England, Scotland and Wales have little bearing in Northern Ireland. Commenting in the Guardian during the 2001 general election campaign, Matthew Engel described Northern Ireland’s electoral exceptionalism in somewhat graphic terms:

Elections in Britain are essentially homogenous: about the same arguments with local variations. But out here [Northern Ireland] the dispute between Blair and Hague and is barely even reported; Northern Ireland, as ever, disappeared up its own backside. It’s as though the PM’s [Prime Minister’s] decision to call an election also triggered a vote in Albania or Alpha Centauri (Guardian, 2001).

Health, education, immigration, Europe, welfare spending and Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott’s pugilism, the issues that dominated the 2001 general election in England, Scotland and Wales, may as well have been issues from another planet. Northern Ireland’s general election was about Northern Ireland itself. But the 2001 general election saw an interesting twist. While the national issue (Northern Ireland’s constitutional status) continued to dominate, attitudes to the Assembly gave entrenched disputes a new spin. In something of a reversal of the Reif and Schmitt thesis, issues germane to a second-order political arena dominated a first-order contest.

Ever since April 1998, the Agreement (and by extension the Assembly) had dominated political debate in Northern Ireland. The traditional unionist-nationalist cleavage remained largely intact, but the Agreement gave it a new focal point and arenas of contestation. Post-Agreement politics revolved around rejection or acceptance of, deviation from, breaches of, implementation of, reviews of, and interpretations of the Agreement. As a result, the Agreement and its implications were the key issues in the June 1999 European and June 2001 Westminster elections, particularly within unionism.

In fact, the DUP (1999) attempted to recast the European elections into a re-run of the referendum on the Agreement, describing it as electors’ ‘only chance to reverse the treachery of the past year’ and urging voters to give their leader Ian Paisley his highest ever vote. The Assembly was at the centre of the UUP general election
campaign. Their election literature told voters: ‘The choice couldn’t be clearer. The DUP want to destroy the Agreement, bringing down our Stormont Assembly. [UUP leader] David Trimble…needs every vote in order to stop them’ (UUP, 2001). David Trimble even made his pledge to resign as Assembly First Minister if the IRA refused to move on arms decommissioning a centre-piece of his Westminster campaign. In a sense, the first-order contest focused almost exclusively on issues relevant to the second-order arena.

Second-order elections offer opportunities for new and small parties. Northern Ireland’s second-order elections, particularly the 1996 Forum and 1998 Assembly elections, have seen a proliferation of small and new parties. The peculiar circumstances of the peace process go a long way in explaining this phenomenon. A key factor has been the fragmentation of the unionist vote. Peace processes place political and military actors under enormous pressures, confronting them with new experiences, discourses, propositions and compromises (Darby & Mac Ginty 2003). While some political actors may be tempted to investigate compromise and pragmatism, others may take a more principled or resolute stand. The Northern Ireland peace process posed unionists, and the UUP in particular, with a series of difficult choices. The essential issue was one of whether they should engage with a peace process based on the idea of including those linked with militant organisations. For many within the UUP, and unionism in general, this meant compromising basic democratic principles. Once involved in the peace process, the dilemma became the extent of the involvement. Ultimately, with the Belfast Agreement, the issue became whether or not the UUP should enter into a powersharing government with Sinn Féin. Each hurdle, and attendant issues involving prisoners, policing and disarmament, placed unionism under immense pressure. Given such a context, it was unsurprising that a mixture of new and longstanding political rivals should attempt to exploit the apparent divisions within unionism when the electoral cycle presented them with the opportunity to do so.

Added to this was the widespread unionist perception of the peace process in terms of concessions and loss. Many unionists regarded the peace process as a nationalist project in origin and design and one that would inevitably result in the erosion of the unionist position. In such circumstances, unionists were able to accuse each other of ‘selling out’, so producing a fertile ground for intra-unionist fissures. While nationalists and republicans, in the form of the SDLP and Sinn Féin, may have disagreed over the pace and extent of the peace process, they were largely in favour of the process. As a result, there was little evidence of a shredding of the nationalist vote during the peace process. Electoral competition between the SDLP and Sinn Féin was intense, and while Sinn Féin’s vote rose from 1996 onwards, the SDLP’s vote did not substantially decline (mainly as a result of a growing Catholic population). No serious electoral competitor emerged from within nationalism to threaten the SDLP or Sinn Féin. While Sinn Féin’s militant wing suffered desertions and discontent, this was not evident on the electoral front.

The electoral systems chosen for the second-order contests may have also encouraged smaller parties to contest the elections. Certainly this was a conscious aim of those who designed the electoral systems. The principle of inclusion was a cornerstone of the peace process, and in the case of the 1996 Forum election in particular, the electoral system was designed to enhance the chances of the inclusion of
the small loyalist parties in future political negotiations. If anything, the ‘top-up’ system chosen was too successful with the tiny Northern Ireland Labour Party securing two ‘top-up’ seats with 0.85% of the vote.

While we can use peace process-specific factors to explain the relative proliferation and prosperity of new and small parties in second-order elections, it must be noted that many of these factors also pertain to first-order contests in which the ‘Big Four’ dominate.

**Perceptions of the Assembly as a first order chamber**

Thus far there is evidence that Northern Ireland’s electors regard elections to the devolved second order Assembly as a first order contest. As argued, this is largely a function of factors pertaining to the ethno-national conflict, a conflict that has been - in certain respects - politically radicalised by the peace process. Data from the *Northern Ireland Life and Times* survey of political attitudes reinforces the view that Northern Ireland’s electors are willing to regard the Assembly as a first order institution. The survey sample was 1800 adults (67 per cent response rate) and was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The fieldwork was conducted in October-December 2001. It is worth noting that the period preceding the fieldwork, and the fieldwork period itself, witnessed considerable political instability.

Asked first of all to identify the institution that has most say on how Northern Ireland is run, 51 per cent of respondents identify the UK government at Westminster as the institution wielding most power. (See Table 3). Twenty-eight per cent of respondents said that the Northern Ireland Assembly had most influence. This in itself is a significant figure given the Assembly’s uncertain beginnings. Other options, such as local government in Northern Ireland or the European Union attracted little support and it is worth noting that there was little divergence in Catholic and Protestant opinion with regard to where power lies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Protestant %</th>
<th>Catholic %</th>
<th>All %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Northern Ireland Assembly</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The UK government at Westminster</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Councils in Northern Ireland</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The European Union</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Which of the following has most influence over the way Northern Ireland is run?

On the question of which institution *should* hold most influence on the way that Northern Ireland is run, a strong majority (65 per cent) opt for the Assembly. This comprises of majorities of both Catholics and Protestants, with the former more wholehearted in their support for the devolved institution. Seventeen per cent say that the UK government in Westminster should have most power, comprised of just under a quarter of Protestants and only 7 per cent of Catholics. Almost four times as many
people were prepared to award primacy in government to the Stormont Assembly that to the ‘mother of all parliaments’. The results indicate that people would like to see more power devolved to Northern Ireland.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Northern Ireland Assembly</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The UK government at Westminster</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Councils in Northern Ireland</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The European Union</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Which of the following ought to have most influence over the way Northern Ireland is run?

Given devolution’s inauspicious start in Northern Ireland, these figures are remarkable. The summer and autumn of 2001 saw David Trimble’s resignation as First Minister in an attempt to force the IRA to begin decommissioning its arms. The period saw intensive political talks convened by the British and Irish governments, two 24 hour ‘technical’ suspensions of the devolution, an attempt by the UUP and DUP to have Sinn Féin excluded from the Executive, and the resignation of the three UUP ministers from the Executive. The period also saw the ‘brawl in the hall’ when Members of the Legislative Assembly from a number of parties scuffled in the foyer of the Assembly in front of television cameras, as well as considerable sectarian violence on the streets. In October 2001 the IRA began actual decommissioning, enabling a modicum of political stability to return.

Yet despite this unpromising context, the survey indicates that public faith in the devolved institution remains strong. Other survey results, for example on public perceptions of the Assembly’s handling of key policy areas such as health, education and the economy, are less flattering and suggest that public faith in the Assembly is just that: a faith that has yet to be realised. Nevertheless, the survey results reinforce the notion that many people in Northern Ireland regard the Assembly as a first order institution.

A question remains though: do people in Northern Ireland regard the Northern Ireland Assembly as a first order institution as the most appropriate body within which to pursue constitutional issues? Or, do they regard it as an institution in which to prioritise day-to-day issues? The answer to the question is likely to have profound implications for the possibility of multi-level voting in future years.

There are good reasons why electors might be tempted to view the Assembly as yet another, and perhaps as the most appropriate, arena for nationalist-unionist constitutional competition. The Assembly is more immediate and novel than other institutions. It is dedicated to Northern Ireland issues, attracts considerable local media attention, and provides a forum for face-to-face confrontation between nationalists, republicans, unionists and loyalists. If Northern Ireland’s electors regard the Assembly as an arena primarily to pursue constitutional claims, then the prospects of multi-level voting will be slim. Assembly elections will merely be an avenue for electoral warfare by other means.
On the other hand, people may regard the Assembly as a first order institution because of its capacity to deal with day-to-day issues. Under this scenario, there may even be scope for multi-level voting, with electors making decisions based on the actual performance of parties and politicians in the Assembly. Future Assembly elections will offer voters a chance to demonstrate multi-level voting, but given the Assembly’s rocky start, there can be few illusions.

Conclusions

A partial validation of the second-order election framework aside, there seems to be little evidence of multi-level voting in the sense of ethnic cleavages eroding. Thus far, devolution has not encouraged movement towards the political centre-ground, nor the prospect of voters crossing communal boundaries. The electoral fortunes of the cross community Alliance Party of Northern Ireland suffered disastrously during the peace process. Similarly, the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition, which deliberately eschewed taking positions on constitutional issues, failed to secure significant electoral success, (regardless of its other successes in facilitating talks between other parties). If anything, the nature of the peace process has encouraged a re-entrenchment of two sets of nationalism: a northern Irish nationalism and an Ulster British nationalism.

The peace process and subsequent Agreement have emphasised the need to accommodate both sets of nationalism within a single political dispensation. Both were deemed legitimate. They would co-exist and their interaction would be managed through new consociational institutions. Nationalists would remain nationalist, and unionists would remain unionist. Moreover, following ceasefires, legitimacy and inclusion were extended to the more extreme versions of these nationalisms: republicanism and loyalism. The new political dispensation has many merits, and encouraging signs of ‘normality’ in government are emerging. Yet many of the underlying causes of the conflict remain un-addressed. In many respects, the peace accord represented an ‘agreement’ rather than a ‘settlement’. Reaching such an agreement was no small feat. The basic parameters of the conflict remain however, albeit moderated through a sophisticated array of institutions. In such circumstances, expectations of multi-level voting may be optimistic.

Also apparent are the sensitivities associated with post-accord elections. Rather than marking the symbolic endpoint to a conflict, post-accord elections have the capacity to radicalise and re-entrench the conflict. This raises profound questions for the norms of liberalism and democracy that underpinned many of the international interventions into ethnonational conflicts from the 1990s and beyond. It seems clear that early elections have been counterproductive in a number of locations and have not engendered deep-rooted processes of democratization. This raises awkward questions of alternatives and seeming double standards in which democracy is promoted in one area (Bosnia-Herzegovina) but delayed and hollowed-out in another (Afghanistan).

In many ways Northern Ireland’s problems were of a different magnitude to those in other post-accord zones. But Northern Ireland’s post-accord elections can offer a number of lessons to other societies embarking on the transition from violent conflict to ‘peace’. First, the case illustrates that sophisticated electoral processes designed to maximize inclusivity in deeply divided societies offer few guarantees of an erosion of ethnic cleavages. In simple terms, there are limits to electoral engineering if the bases of
the conflict remain intact. Second, the Northern Ireland case illustrates that although the symbolic value of post-accord elections is high, this is fleeting and less significant than substantial issues such as the outcome of the election. Third, and somewhat counter-intuitively, electoral processes in the midst of on-going or unresolved conflicts can hamper democratisation. Tension from election campaigns to other chambers have disrupted the bedding down of Northern Ireland’s Assembly. Ideas of graduated democratisation in which there is an inter-regnum to allow for the development of a democratic culture are worth consideration.

Fourth, concentration on inter-group competition in deeply divided societies often means that intra-group competition receives relatively scant attention. Yet, for many people in post-accord societies, competition within ethnic blocs will be their primary political experience. As a result, civil society initiatives designed to contribute to processes of democratisation may find it necessary to engage in single-identity work as well as cross-community activity. A final lesson from Northern Ireland may be more positive: that post-accord elections do have the capacity to change the boundaries of the conflict and offer opportunities for the emergence of new issues, personnel and political arenas. With time it will become clear if these new issues, personnel and political arenas can outweigh the inheritance of ‘old-style’ constitutional politics.

Endnotes

1 The Democratic Unionist Party, although taking their positions as Ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive, did not attend ministerial meetings in protest at the presence of Sinn Féin in government. They did participate in committee meetings that involved Sinn Féin though.

2 Election figures are based on post-election results in the Irish Times and from the CAIN website: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/

The June 1998 referendum on the Belfast Agreement is not considered here because it was not an election to a specific chamber.

3 Turnout in the May 1998 referendum on the Agreement was 80.98%. It is also worth noting that turnout was ahead of that in the 1999 elections to the Welsh National Assembly (46.4%) and Scottish Parliament (58.8%).

4 It may be worth noting that the relatively high turnout recorded for the 2001 local government election may have been because the election was held on the same day as the general election.

5 The Forum for Political Dialogue had 100 seats, of which 90 were directly elected and the ten parties polling the highest number of votes were awarded two ‘top-up’ seats each.

6 The DUP Assembly election manifesto listed the following concerns on the back cover: Unreconstructed terrorists in government; the retention of illegal weapons by terrorists; the plans for the destruction of the RUC; All-Ireland bodies with executive powers; the mass release of terrorists; British sovereignty being eroded.

7 With dwindling support from his own backbenches, John Major relied on the support of Ulster Unionist MPs to pass the 1993 Maastricht Bill. This did not lead to a formal coalition though. See Major (2000) 378-81.

8 For an explanation of the electoral system, see ‘How delegates were elected’, Irish Times (1 June 1996).
The *Northern Ireland Life and Times* survey is continuous survey of social attitudes based at the University of Ulster and the Queen’s University of Belfast. The survey was conducted via face-to-face interviews with an achieved sample of 1800 adults across Northern Ireland. A Postcode Address File (PAF) sampling frame was used, with one adult from the household selected for interview using a Kish grid method. As is common in Northern Ireland, a simple random sample was drawn and stratified across three regions, but without any clustering. The face-to-face interviews were conducted using a computer-assisted technique. A self-completion supplement was given to each respondent at the end of the interview for the field workers to collect at a later date.

References


THE ROLE OF ARTISTIC PROCESSES IN PEACEBUILDING IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Craig Zelizer

Abstract

Throughout the world, community arts-based processes have become an essential component of peacebuilding work in societies experiencing severe conflicts. Both during a conflict and in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, community based arts processes can be an especially effective tool to bring together identity groups through sharing common cultural experiences, raising awareness about past suffering, and engaging communities in creative projects. In this research project, the author spent fourteen months in Bosnia-Herzegovina researching the use of community arts-based peacebuilding efforts both during the war and in the post-conflict stage. This paper provides an overview of the research and offers several conclusions on the role of arts in peacebuilding within Bosnia-Herzegovina with the hope that these findings have relevance for other regions and the field in general.

Introduction

During the past decade throughout Southeastern Europe violent conflicts have erupted resulting in significant destruction in both social and economic terms. The causes of each conflict involves a complex series of interconnected factors including the severe economic crises affecting the entire region, lack of moderate political leadership, and the increasing emphasis on ethnicity as a central component of identity (see Byrne and Carter, 1996). Prior to the outbreak of conflict in each location, an increasingly nationalist discourse developed which has defined “other” ethnic groups as the enemy who threaten the existence of one’s own group.

In contrast to the extreme nationalist discourse that has helped fuel the recent conflicts in the Balkans, the region also has a long tradition of co-existence, with different ethnic and religious groups living together in relative peace for decades. Both during and after the most recent wars, civil society initiatives have played an essential role in speaking out against war, helping to foster reconciliation between parties, building community across ethnic lines and encouraging the peaceful resolution of conflicts. One area within civil society based peacebuilding efforts, which has not received a significant amount of scholarly focus is the role of arts-based activities in peacebuilding efforts. In particular, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, international and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and artists are well known for their efforts during the war, in which they protested against the violence, conducted creative therapy projects and organized hundreds of theater and music performances, both at the elite and grassroots levels. Moreover since the end of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina these efforts have continued with numerous international and local NGOs and artists using community based arts activities to help facilitate reconciliation between ethnic groups.
Despite the widespread use of arts-based processes in peacebuilding work in the conflict resolution field, to date there has only been minimal research on arts and peacebuilding. Given this lack of research, relevant theory, and descriptive writings about the use of the arts in conflict situations, I believe this is a significant gap in the field. In order to begin addressing this gap, I spent fourteen months, from September 2000 to December 2001 living in Bosnia-Herzegovina researching the use of community based performing arts in post-war peacebuilding efforts and an exploration of the intersection of arts and peacebuilding during the war. This paper will provide an overview of the framework that guided my research, a brief summary of methodology and offer several conclusions on the role of arts in peacebuilding within Bosnia-Herzegovina with the hopes that these findings have relevance for other regions and the field in general.

Goals of Research

There are several reasons for conducting research on the nexus of arts and conflict resolution. First, I believe the arts hold significant potential for improving relations between identity groups in conflict and are an area that has received scant attention within the conflict resolution and peacebuilding fields. Despite conflict resolution’s innovative approach to mitigating conflicts at different levels, there is a strong emphasis on more cognitive and traditional types of problem solving often at the exclusion of more creative and affective approaches (Cohen, 1997; Lumsden, 1999; Senehi, 2002; Zelizer, 1997). Many traditional conflict resolution processes are centered on more linear, rational forms of communication that often do not allow space for more creative or alternative ways of interacting, or expressing emotions and thoughts (Senehi, 2000, 2002; Zelizer, 1997). Because of the arts extensive use of non-linear and creative methods of expression, I believe they can often provide an avenue for facilitating increased understanding and positive interaction between groups in conflict in appropriate settings.

In contrast to the underlying motivations for the research outlined above, by no means do I want to give the impression that the arts are inherently orientated toward generating peace. Throughout history and more recently in Southeastern Europe many artists and arts based processes have also served to reinforce nationalist ideologies, foster divisions and provide justification for barbarous acts (Wilmer, 2002; Kelly, 2000). Thus, this research endeavor acknowledges that the arts can be used in a variety of capacities, but focuses on those processes that are orientated to building peace and reconciliation.

General Theoretical Background

Given the limited writing on the topic, this research design and inquiry are exploratory in nature. However, in an effort to locate the research within existing scholarship in the conflict resolution field, several fields of literature were reviewed which are described below.

Civil Society and Peacebuilding

Arts-based peacebuilding efforts can be situated within the larger framework of civil society based initiatives for peacebuilding. Such activities might range from joint economic projects, to grassroots mediation and dialogue programs. Several analytical frameworks have been developed to elucidate the theory and practice of civil society based peacebuilding
processes. One of the most helpful models that several scholars have developed is the distinction between peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding (Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Diamond and McDonald, 1996; Galtung, 1995; Lederach, 1997; Sandole, 1998). According to this model, there are different processes and approaches that can be used for conflict resolution work, which depend on the particular stage of the conflict.

Within the two categories of peacemaking (addressing a specific conflict) and peacebuilding (transforming relationships and institutions), significant emphasis has been placed on the importance of civil society based initiatives (Diamond and McDonald, 1996; Fisher, 1993, 1997; Lederach, 1997). Several scholars and practitioners have researched the nature of activities, which can be conducted at the community level during the peacemaking and peacebuilding stages (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 1997). These activities can be divided into two main types: those that focus on the structural issues of a conflict, such as governmental and economic policy, and reforming institutions; and those that are concerned with improving relations between groups. The majority of activities within the relational approach focus on dialogue approaches to increase understanding and trust between groups in conflict, and to facilitate interaction through community projects.

The underlying basis for this approach is that an essential component of reconciliation and trust building involves the reconstruction or reconfiguration of relationships between parties in conflict (Broome, 1993; Kelman, 1997; Rothman, 1997; Sandole, 1998). In addition to peacebuilding, education and economic development projects, several scholars (Epskamp, 1999; Galtung, 1995; Lederach, 1997; Liebmann, 1996; Lumsden, 1999; Senehi, 2002) list the arts as a potential process to foster peacebuilding efforts at the community level in conflict-ridden societies however most do not explore this in much depth.

Lumsden's (1999) three zones of social reconstruction is another model that is helpful in exploring the role of arts. He outlines three areas, which need to be addressed in post-conflict reconstruction, including the outer social world; the inner psychological world and a transitional zone between the two (Lumsden, 1999). The arts have an important role to play in this transitional area, as Lumsden indicates they can help with healing, exploring ideas and helping to integrate the inner and outer worlds.

Overall the importance of civil society based activities in helping to prevent and also help parties reconcile from conflict is essential. The arts are one additional process that can support peacebuilding work. Moreover, given the overly rational focus of many Western forms of peacebuilding, and the irrational nature of most conflicts, arts-based approaches to peacebuilding offer an important avenue to assist with peacebuilding efforts.

Arts/Peacebuilding

To date several initial works have appeared linking conflict resolution and art. The most significant work to address the connection is the book, *Arts Approaches to Conflict*, edited by Marian Liebmann (1996), which consists of essays by art therapists using arts techniques with a variety of populations. Although the work presents a number of interesting cases, there is little development of theory or of the application of the arts-based approaches beyond the interpersonal level. Another collection of essays on the arts and conflict are in the book *People Building Peace 35 Inspiring Stories from Around the World*, in particular writings by Kees Epskamp (1999) who has conducted extensive research on the role of arts in development.
Lumsden (1999) suggests that the arts and artists have a critical role to play in post-conflict reconstruction in that they can help foster a creative process for rebuilding social relationships. Within Bosnia-Herzegovina, some examples of arts-based peacebuilding that have been used to rebuild social relationships include: the Pavarotti Music center in the divided city of Mostar, which facilitates interaction between Croats and Muslims through musical exchanges; and the work of the Open Society Institute, which supports a network of Balkan artists across geographical space to explore issues of reconciliation.

Apart from efforts in the Balkans, in conflict regions throughout the world, the arts have often had a significant impact on bringing together divided communities. Examples include community theater productions and mural projects in Northern Ireland, Africa, and the Middle East; peace concerts on the dividing line in Cyprus and Angola; and bi-communal orchestras and poetry groups in the Middle East. Local community groups, artists, and NGOs conducting peacebuilding work have organized the majority of these efforts.

In conflicts on the verge of violence, the arts can also help raise awareness of the dangers of impending conflict and speak out in favor of peace. Throughout the world, arts-based forms of expressions have been an essential component of anti-war demonstrations and protests for social justice and equality. Moreover, theater and other arts based activities have long been used as a tool for educating and uniting communities to work towards collective action or to facilitate community problem solving within the field of development (Mada, 1993). Moreover during the war in Bosnia the arts also played a vital role in the struggle of the citizens of Sarajevo to survive the years of siege. Through underground concerts, plays, and performances, the city was able to keep hope alive, provide entertainment to people, and keep the creative spirit alive (Sarajevski, 1996).

There are several possible approaches for community-based arts peacebuilding work. First, arts-based peacebuilding activities can be carried out for the community as a form of performance enacted by professionals in a traditional scripted drama or a concert. In this case, the audience interprets the medium being presented by the performers which may have an impact on the community or audience consciousness. Another approach to arts-based activities is when the activity emerges from the community itself (more process orientated) such as participatory theater, community arts festival or other forums. In this case the impact of the art may be on several levels. First, the participants in the project will come together to create a product and through this process of creation and interaction their attitudes and behavior can be affected. Second, given the public performance of a product, this can also have an impact on the community or audience witnessing the performance directly (McConachie, 1998).

One of the central questions regarding the role of arts in conflict resolution is to what purpose is the activity being carried out? Is the work being done by artists for the purposes of artistic expression or is it being conducted as a more explicit conflict resolution or peacebuilding process? The distinction between these two approaches may be somewhat artificial, but serves as a useful analytical tool to distinguish between art activities that are primarily focused on the product and those that are focused more on the process (Epskamp, 1999).

There are several inherent challenges in addressing the connection between arts and peacebuilding. First, the arts are only one of a number of peacebuilding processes that can have an impact on both the conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. A second challenge, is distinguishing the purpose of art and its possible impact. Not all art is geared towards positive or destructive purpose; a great deal of art is created simply for expressive purposes without a
larger goal of promoting any specific outcome. However in order to narrow down the research I do focus on processes that have an implicit or explicit connection to peacebuilding (Senehi, 2002, Epskamp, 1999). Finally, in this research project, I focused primarily on community based interactive arts processes in the performing arts, as I believe they have a greater potential to affect change than the visual arts due to their more participatory and interactive nature.

**The Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina**

Much has been written about the course of events that led to the tragedy of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Over the course of the almost five year war, over 200,000 individuals (mostly civilians) were killed, nearly 2 million people became displaced and hundreds of thousands of people were wounded (Glenny, 1994; Sudetic, 1998). One of the central arenas of the war was the siege of Sarajevo, which was the longest siege in modern history, lasting over 1000 days. Bosnian Serb forces encircled the city, with constant shelling, sometimes thousands per day, cutting off electricity, gas, phone lines and access to the outside world. Despite the harsh conditions inside of Sarajevo a unique cultural life sprang up during the war, with hundreds of theater performances, concerts, exhibitions and even film festivals and cultural events. In addition to the work of artists, the small civil society sector composed of locals and internationals conducted numerous creative therapy and arts and peacebuilding projects.

During the war the overwhelming focus of the arts life in Bosnia was based in Sarajevo, in one theater alone, the Kamerni Theater, there were over 800 performances of theater, music, prayers for peace and more (FAMA, 2000). In addition, there were countless performances among in orphanages and shelters throughout the city, exhibitions of artwork composed of material from the war, several concerts with leading international composers, and visits from international artists (Sarajevski, 1996). In addition to Sarajevo, several other regions of Bosnia-Herzegovina also had an active arts life under the extreme circumstances, especially in the cities of Mostar and Tuzla.

After the war the cultural life in Sarajevo and the rest of Bosnia-Herzegovina continued to operate under very difficult conditions consisting of the lack of funding and personnel, a destroyed infrastructure and constant economic and political instability. Despite these challenges, a number of artists and peacebuilders developed arts-based projects to help bridge the severe divide in Bosnian society. Such projects ranged from an inter-faith choir, community based drama work, drumming for peace circles, and art therapy projects.

Based on the analysis of my research it is clear that the role of arts based activities had different functions during the war and in the post-war setting. Prior to the field research a preliminary framework for categorizing the types of arts-based approaches (specific to Bosnia-Herzegovina) was developed.
### Types of Arts-Based Approaches to Peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training Tool</strong></td>
<td>As a training tool in conflict resolution. Arts can help participants develop skills, experientially explore conflicts, increase creativity and increase trust between participants <em>(Pipkin &amp; Dimenna, 1989; Yaffe, 1990)</em></td>
<td>Education and Youth Peacebuilding Project in Bosnia; local trainings that incorporate theater based techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product Based</strong></td>
<td>When the product itself is the primary goal. The art may have an impact on the community or a conflict, but the process of creating the product is not emphasized <em>(Epskamp, 1999)</em></td>
<td>Plays produced in Sarajevo during the war. Much of contemporary, traditional art in Bosnia-Herzegovina.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process Based</strong></td>
<td>As a process-orientated approach where identity groups in conflict come together and work on reconciliation issues through creating shared work, which may also have an impact on larger the community. The process of creating the product is one of the main foci of the work <em>(Epskamp, 1999)</em></td>
<td>An example in Bosnia is, an interreligious, inter-ethnic choir in Sarajevo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Protest</strong></td>
<td>As a form of speaking out against conflict, protesting against injustice and raising awareness. This can take place at various stages of a conflict, but often occurs at highly escalated stages or when there is a significant power imbalance <em>(Bartelt, 1997, Freire, 1997, Lederach, 1995)</em>.</td>
<td>Examples include the famous violin concert by Vedran Smaljovic in Sarajevo during the war and the production of musical Hair during the war.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These arts-based approaches are by no means exclusionary and in many ways overlap. Arts processes that fit within the social protest framework may also be somewhat product or process focused.

**The Research Process**

Based on the review literature in several fields, and the specific situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, several guiding propositions helped frame the study which include:

1) *There is a significant degree of overlap between the work of artists and peacebuilding and this link needs to be explored to further expand the knowledge of relevant theory and practice in the conflict resolution field.*

2) *Arts-based activities can be an effective tool to help improve the relational component of identity conflicts.*
3) Conflicts can often be highly irrational and their consequences, thus processes that work with the non-rational aspects of people are an important component of peacebuilding.

Given the very limited literature and research on the intersection of arts and peacebuilding in general and specific to Bosnia-Herzegovina I choose to conduct a single exploratory case study based on qualitative methods of data collection (Robson, 1993). The research is based on an inductive grounded theory approach to data analysis and theory building, using qualitative methods of analysis (Brause, 2000; Straus & Corbin, 1990).

The primary source of data for the research is based on primary interviews with 64 individuals working with arts and peacebuilding in the field. Gathering evaluation reports, project proposals, and other forms of documentation concerning arts-based conflict resolution projects supplemented the interviews. Additional data was gathered through a systematic review of two weekly magazines and a daily newspaper, for relevant articles on peacebuilding and arts. A fourth area of data method consisted of informal participant observation of a small number of activities.

The interviews have been transcribed in their entirety and coding and analysis was conducted using an inductive approach in which the codes and categories emerge from the data under study (Brause, 2000). The other sources of data are being used as supplementary material and select portions are being translated and analyzed. In order to do more rapid and effective coding, the qualitative analysis program Atlas.ti was used to assist in coding and pattern searching.

Findings

The findings to date can be divided into two main areas; the first is the role of arts based processes during the war, while the second is arts-based processes and peacebuilding in the post-war phase.

Art and Social Resistance, War-time Sarajevo

During the war in Bosnia, the site of cultural resistance in Bosnia was focused in the capital of Sarajevo. After the initial shock of the onset and brutality of war, artists from all ethnic groups who remained in Sarajevo began a series of cultural actions that would continue throughout the war. A significant number of people in Sarajevo risked their lives by attending and organizing these events. Many interviewees explained that these activities gave people a chance to escape the harsh reality, if only for a few hours, and be safe (even if shelling continued). As Safet Plakalo, the writer of one of the first plays performed during the explains,

As the creators of this play, we were presented with an ethical dilemma that we had to solve: is it ethically appropriate, and if so, to what degree is it appropriate to do theater in moments when all around us people are suffering and dying. Of course this dilemma lasted only a short time. Until we realized that show, as well as the enormous theater production that was initiated by that show, did an exceptional amount of good for Sarajevans, both as some sort of therapy, and as an affirmation of our struggle and resistance in Sarajevo (cited in FAMA, 2000, p.236).
One of the most famous war-time arts-based activities was the International Theater and Film Festival in 1993. During the 10 day festival, over 140 movies were with about 20,000 visitors (Sarajevski, 1996). To many in the outside world, the idea of organizing a film festival in the middle of a war, might appear absurd, given the extreme conditions that the populace of Sarajevo was facing. But as Haris Pasovic (2001), one of the main organizers of the festival explained, "there are many things you can live without, food, etc, but you need film or arts for the magic. In the war it was particularly powerful to be watching films and be able to be transported to another world and also release emotions through the film (as many kept them bottled up during the war)."

There are many other actions that took place in Sarajevo during the war within the cultural sphere. These range from the famous Witness of Existence series of exhibitions in which several famous artists created temporary exhibits out of material from the war, to youth centered creative therapy projects to help young people cope, to Rock Under Siege, a live concert to celebrate music during the war.

Based on an analysis of the data, several main reasons lie behind the flowering of cultural life during the siege of Sarajevo. The first is that the war was so barbaric and uncultured that responding with culture was a way to resist and affirm the multi-ethnic nature of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Moreover a significant aspect of the war consisted of the destruction of the culture of the opposing sides, and in Sarajevo many people choose culture as a means of opposing this. As one of the leading cultural figures in Sarajevo said, “I mean every field, I mean from theater to visual arts, that was kind of response to kind of, kind of civil resistance to what happened with them here.” An equally important reason cited by many interviewees, was the need to do something, instead of sitting idly by and witnessing the destruction take place. Within the larger concept of peacebuilding and civil society, my findings indicate that the significant amount of activity in Sarajevo and to some degree in smaller cities, had more to do with a means of surviving, of resisting the war, of trying to function with some degree of normalcy within an insane environment, than with a conscious choice of peacebuilding, although there were also some activities orientated to peace building such as the weekly prayer for peace at the Kamerni Theater that was held throughout the war.

Given the highly escalated nature of the conflict with severe violence and force dominating the conflict, it is unlikely that other forms of more direct peacebuilding based in the arts or other forms of civil society could have taken place; as according to Fisher and Keashley’s (1991) contingency model the conflict was at the most destructive phase. However, based on events in Sarajevo, it is clear that arts-based approaches can play an essential role in social protest, helping the citizens survive and maintain their humanity, and raising the awareness of the wider world community. Moreover, arts-based activities during the war can be considered precursors of the peacebuilding and art events that took place in the aftermath of the conflict.

Post-War

With the end of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the signing of the Dayton accords in 1995, life returned to some degree of normality. However, the social fabric, political life and economy were highly divided, along with a great deal of trauma and suffering amongst the populace. Within the sphere of arts and peacebuilding activities that took place in the post-war setting, there are several main areas. The first is the proliferation of youth and arts based programs throughout the country.
Most of these programs are based at the many local and international sponsored youth centers located in the country and in most cases the arts would not be classified as a peacebuilding process and instead more as a creative activity to entertain and help youth. However, in several instances the focus of these activities is not only on teaching youth a specific arts process but using the process to bring together youth in highly divided regions. In these cases, whether it is a drumming circle with youth from divided sides of Mostar or a theater group with youth from different regions of Bosnia, through arts-based processes the youth have been able to interact with one another and positively affect their community.

A second significant activity that developed in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war and especially in the post-war period is the use of creative arts therapies. The majority of these activities have focused on young people and children with the primary goal of helping them cope with traumatic situations and heal emotionally and mentally. Although these programs are not directly focused on peacebuilding, they have resulted in a positive change for the youth who participated, with a reduction in levels of trauma, feelings of anxiety and increased ability of youth to interact socially in society and thus has some relevance for peacebuilding work.

A third type of activity in the post-war situation, are arts-based activities that have a high component of peacebuilding. Such processes include a multi-ethnic, inter-faith choir based in Sarajevo, which has performed over 100 concerts within the country and abroad. A second is a theater and drama in education program that works with teachers and students throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina to use theater as a tool for peacebuilding. Each of these programs is an example of the potential of arts-based processes to bring people together and positively impact the larger community. Many of the interviewees indicated arts based processes are especially useful because they help create a safe space to bring people together and explore emotions, ideas and work on cooperative projects. As one member of the choir explained about the having music as the focus in their work,

In the times that were really difficult and challenging, we had to focus on the music. So that sort of as our superordinate goal, was perfect. That’s why it works, that’s why this whole thing functions. If it were just some group of people getting together to talk about their experiences, it would have folded three years ago. But the fact that we do have the music to focus on and we all agree on that. What I think is amazing about the choir is that we learn to sing each other’s songs.

Finally there are also a number of higher profile one time, more elite events, that took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina where the primary focus was on the particular performance, but which did have a peacebuilding component. One example is the U2 concert in Sarajevo in 1997, which brought together over 45,000 people from throughout the region to attend the concert, including over 1,000 from Republika Srbska (Sacirbegovic, 1997). While the concert was only for one night, Bono (the lead singer of U2) stated that they made particular effort to get tickets to people in all different parts of the country and the neighboring states (cited in Sacirbegovic, 1997).

The chart below offers an outline of the types of arts based activities in post-war Bosnia.
Types of Arts-Based Peacebuilding Activities in Post-War Bosnia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Level of Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Youth Programs</td>
<td>Throughout Bosnia, many youth programs and youth houses use the creative performing arts as part of their activities. Often these are not so much peacebuilding activities, more entertainment for youth, however some programs are designed more as peacebuilding processes to bring groups together.</td>
<td>Individual/Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Art and creative therapy programs</td>
<td>Several programs were setup at the end of war to use arts-based and creative therapies as tools to work with more traumatized populations, primarily with refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples.</td>
<td>Mostly Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Arts for Peacebuilding</td>
<td>Several projects were established in post-war period. Balance between product and process of bringing people together.</td>
<td>Individual/Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Training Tool within conflict resolution</td>
<td>Many training programs and workshops use arts based component as a tool or component of process.</td>
<td>Individual/Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Short-term program</td>
<td>Bring together people from around the country to attend arts activity.</td>
<td>Community/Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Elite Arts</td>
<td>In more traditional arts some plays, music, movies dealt with the war from various perspectives. Also many continued to feature actors from diverse backgrounds, particularly in Sarajevo.</td>
<td>Individual/Community/Society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

As with any exploratory research endeavor, the ability to generalize from the research findings is a difficult task. The goal of this research is to begin to document the connection between arts and peacebuilding in one particular case, to develop a theoretical framework that could then be used and tested in other situations. One of the primary challenges that the researcher experienced in this process is that the intended focus of the research, when arts are used to specifically intervene and help resolve conflict, was not the dominant form of arts based processes in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Instead the majority of cases under study were more focused on training processes and fostering improved relations between groups, in which the arts were used to help develop understanding and products rather than intervene in a particular conflict. What is clear, in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the arts are a powerful process for bringing groups together through a creative process, to help rebuild social relationships and at times engaging the community.
Several conclusions can be made at this point related to Bosnia-Herzegovina that has implications for the field in general. First, in conflicts on the verge of violence, the arts can also help raise awareness of the dangers of impending conflict and speak out in favor of peace. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, arts-based processes assisted people within the country keep their humanity, and also helped keep the war on the world’s conscience.

Moreover, arts-based peacebuilding processes can play an important role in helping to foster interaction in divided societies and help facilitate reconciliation.

While the arts may not have been used to intervene in specific community conflicts at least in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the international community should further examine and help support arts-based processes as a process for peacebuilding. In many regions of the world, international and local NGOs and artists are conducting arts-based peacebuilding processes, whether it is organizing community theater in war-torn regions of Africa, an inter-ethnic Mid-East Symphony, or the grassroots work of Augusto Boal (1985) type of theater in local communities worldwide. While more research is needed to further refine the concepts explored in this research, a central argument that needs to be emphasized is in post-conflict reconstruction efforts that more creative artistic processes need to be included. Through support of such activities this can assist individuals and groups in healing from the horrors of war and serve as a bridge to facilitating increased intergroup-interaction and healing.

A third area that needs further examination is the difficulty of drawing generalizable conclusions from a single case study. The findings from this exploratory case study from Bosnia need to be compared with other regions of the world where arts-based activities are playing a role in peacebuilding work, including the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Burundi and Cyprus among others.

**Endnotes**

1. This article is based on a paper presented at a panel on “the International Politics of Art: The Role of Arts in Conflict Management and Post Conflict Peacebuilding at the 44 International Study Association Conference, Portland, Oregon, February 28, 1993. My field research in Bosnia-Herzegovina was funded through a National Security Education Program Graduate Fellowship.
6. The concept of level of focus of artistic processes was adapted in part from Episcamp (1999).
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EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS: PEACEMAKING AMONG HELPING PARTIES

Honggang Yang

I would like to take this opportunity to initiate a dialogue over some issues of conflict management among ourselves as third parties or helping professionals. The challenges of managing interpersonal conflicts or performing internal peacemaking are as real and relevant as the challenges of our professional undertaking in handling “outside” disputes. While recognizing there are no ready formulae to address these challenges, I invite you to join in the open-minded dialogues to examine expectations and premises often assumed among helping professionals in the fields.

Bowling and Hoffman (2000) have made a keen observation that “as mediators… when we are feeling at peace with ourselves and the world around us, we are better able to bring peace into the room.” Since conflicts are complex and ubiquitous, it takes a whole field of conflict resolution with generations of practitioners and researchers working together to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. We, as groups of mediators, facilitators, and peacemakers, need to search for internal harmony and peace among ourselves in order to work well with one another in tackling daunting human problems and social issues.

There are conflicts and struggles that are constructive and instrumental to introduce helpful changes, as we know. There is really no exception to this within the conflict resolution fields where various healthy debates, professional contests, and skill-enhancing competitions do exist. What has become puzzling is the seemingly widespread difficulty of addressing the disharmonies and conflicts within the fields, which we as helping parties seem to handle more effectively outside the fields.

In discussing issues of conflict resolution in organizations of goodwill, Kriesberg (1994) recognizes that within such organizations conflicts are often not accepted as inevitable. Members often feel that since they are of such goodwill, they will not “fight” with one another (Kriesberg, 1994). This situation may lead to conflict avoidance or problem denial in such goodwill organizations as not-for-profit conflict resolution services, volunteer-based reconciliation programs, dedicated social justice groups, and devoted peace research associations. We know well the consequences of avoidance or denial in workplaces and real life situations.

Second, Kriesberg (1994) notes that members often feel safe in working with people with whom they share ideals of peace, harmony, and equity. This higher expectation may result in righteous indignation when colleagues do or say things they regard as hurtful. Third, he observes that some members feel that they are working so hard and are so devoted to a good cause, they have little patience for those who are not helping them in their passionate efforts (Kriesberg, 1994).

Lastly, members of such organizations may often react strongly to any actual or perceived authoritarian tendencies. In light of their promoting alternative, peaceful, equalitarian approaches in a larger social context (Kriesberg, 1994), they can hardly accept anything seemingly arbitrary.

As colleagues working in the field, we have probably been involved in these types of challenges in one way or another. I realize that our experience as peacemakers may not be so different from those of other helping professions. Actually we may not differ that much at all from the rest of society. For example, in a significant number of human service and welfare agencies, helpers and providers who are supposed to serve and assist the disadvantaged, sometimes mistreat or alienate them instead.
The distance between the individuals’ expertise and their respective practicing realities, including their intentions and consequences, can be vast from time to time. For example, some medical doctors often have poor health routines or physical exercise records for themselves, or as the saying goes “attorneys who represent themselves have a fool for a client.”

Smoker (1996) shared with his students some interesting findings from the annual conferences he attended, where some professors of communications programs made incommunicative presentations on the communication subjects. In China, it was reported in the 1980s that a large number of model teachers often had “problem” children without realizing the need (or perhaps without capability) to use their professional skills to communicate with their own kids at home. Marriage therapists seem to divorce frequently in droves, and business professors often have bankrupted businesses.

There are influential factors and constraints such as stressful environments in which third parties often work, divergent commitments, market economy influences, third party’s own livelihood, and need for enlightened self-reflection. While acknowledging that we as helpers may also need help, let’s explore creative approaches to addressing the perplexing challenges of mediating the mediators, facilitating the facilitators, keeping peace among peacemakers, and solving our own problems in a walking-the-talk fashion.

Since the decade of 1990s, I have heard lots of stories and experienced some fascinating episodes in person. I would like to share with readers some reflections on the prevalent phenomena of internal strife in the fields of peacemaking and conflict resolution, to invite more explorations and dialogs:

**Reflection of Fatigue**

Conflict resolvers and peacemakers often work in a demanding, stressful environment such as divorce mediation room, public policy facilitation forum, labor-management bargaining session, or international negotiation table. We give so much to others—primary parties or disputants that we may not rejuvenate ourselves or regroup sufficiently. As helping professionals we definitely need to be able to take care of ourselves, instead of being burned out.

**Reflection of Self-Escape**

This is another major story! Knowing oneself well is often difficult in general. Yet, mediators, facilitators, or peacemakers almost have to be self-aware in order to be effective and proactive in problem solving work. However, some of us as practitioners or researchers came to the fields, as a way to avoid dealing with our own issues, issues of the same kind that the profession addresses. It may make us feel better when we are busily helping others with alleviating the same kind of headaches that we avoid addressing ourselves.

**Reflection of Common Sense**

Conflict resolvers are special and specialized, but at the same time we are fellow human beings who are not really different from the rest of the folks in society, in terms of egos, self-interests, personalities, habits of the heart, emotions, livelihood, face-honoring or face-losing, and so forth. Our own difficulties bear incredible commonalities and similarities with those in other walks of life, perhaps with the exception of our deeper, heartfelt frustrations when we realize we are the very specialists who should be most capable of taking the time applying our skills to address these problems with our own colleagues.
Reflection of Market Economy

This is inherently related to the above reflexivity. We need to make a living like anyone else outside the field. Conflict resolvers and peacemakers happen to operate in the same competitive market economy environments. In any given practicing arenas or regions, helping parties may compete with one another over consulting opportunities, training offerings, and other related businesses.

Reflection of Divergent Commitments

We have many commitments in different arenas of life and career such as the personal, the professional, the social, the political, the cultural, and the philosophical. These commitments may be compatible or incompatible within ourselves and/or among ourselves. It is similar to role conflicts in social life. For those academic organizations and civic groups where we support their survival and success, resources and means are always limited, which may lead to competitions.

Reflection of Interdisciplinary Incongruence

Conflict resolution has been evolving on the bases of multidisciplinary inquiries, multi-professional practices, and multicultural communities. Given this diversity, we should check out our own assumptions that we think and act alike. Each of us from different backgrounds may not appreciate the same techniques aiming at achieving the shared ideals of amicable, equitable, and sustainable solutions to an issue.

Furthermore, while there are patterns or regularities of how to handle conflicts that we try to summarize, translate, or generalize for the practice and research, we cannot overestimate the increasing complexities and multidimensionality of human affairs in the contemporary world. Actually, we can never cross the same river twice, as the Chinese folk saying goes.

These reflections may appear somewhat confusing, illogical, and even paradoxical. In contrast to other helping professions, for example, dentists may not be able to treat their family members’ dental problems, while pediatricians may not be able to diagnose their own kids, though they suffer from the illnesses that they were professionally trained to cure. We are not really alone in this context. The fields of peacemaking and conflict resolution will continue to progress, if we can share our stories and learn from other professions and disciplines.

Each of the above reflections is also a research postulate, which I would like to invite our colleagues and students to explore and investigate. There are certainly other pieces that we have not touched upon, and other angles that we have not taken. There is so much we do not know yet. One central theme of this brief examination is around the issues of self-awareness, self-interest, self-modeling, and self-reflection, instead of putting blame on the outside world (Yang, 1996, 2001). This theme, similar to other topics in the arts and sciences, is culturally defined and often shaped in special reference to individualism that is a core cultural value in the U.S. In plain language, individualism looks at the individual as a primary order while everything else is secondary. The starting point and ending destination are within the individuality itself.

One particular approach to address these challenging issues is of self-reflection. I made a presentation on this topic in 1996, maintaining that self-reflection is not self-blaming. Self-reflection has an explicit future orientation of how we can do things differently and better next time from a variety of lenses (Yang, 1996). In certain cultures, e.g. some East Asian societies, the ability and skills of conducting self-reflections are often perceived as being responsible,
responsible, constructive, confident, and competent. Self-reflection pinpoints that helping parties need help and assistance in taking care of ourselves.

In other words, there is no shortcut in taking care of ourselves or internal strife in the fields. We as practitioners and researchers need to make persistent, conscious, thoughtful efforts in applying the same level of patience, empathy, sophistication, and technique to the internal peacemaking processes as we do in our work with others. For example, the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) offered tips in caring for the caretakers after September 11.

While there are no ready formulae or easy solutions, we certainly have a useful box of tools and instruments that can be adapted and employed to peacemaking among helping parties. This is a necessary advantage, though insufficient. The sufficient conditions exist in our own realization and reflection that we are not really immune from or floating above disharmonies or disputes. One particularly promising but tough approach is through self-modeling, walking the talk or leading by example. In sum, I have raised more questions than answers, as I sincerely invite you to join in this journey toward harmony of life and productivity of careers in peace building and conflict resolution that people are calling the new millennium field.

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