

Running head: ELICITING KNOWLEDGE FOR WORK WITH INTRACTABLE  
CONFLICTS

What We Don't Know Can Help Us:

Eliciting Out-of-Discipline Knowledge for Work with Intractable Conflicts

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**What We Don't Know Can Help Us:  
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Executive Summary

The current state of theory, research, and practice on protracted, intractable conflict is robust but limited; although much progress has been made, our understanding is bounded by discipline, culture, role-in-conflict (expert versus disputant), and social class. This pilot project, funded through a mini-grant from the Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base (ICKB), elicited alternative ways-of-knowing and engaging with the phenomenon of intractable social conflict that are typically excluded from the dominant discourse in this area. A professionally and culturally diverse group of scholar-practitioners were identified through the ICKB network as potential participants, and nine (9) pilot interviews were conducted for this study. The findings are summarized, in brief, below.

General Findings

- A common meta-script for intractable conflict: Despite broad diversity in disciplinary backgrounds and nationalities among the interviewees, many of their general perspectives, ideas, and approaches to intractable conflict were strikingly similar to others interviewed, or to others currently working in the field. While this lends support to current work in the field, it also raises questions about the methodological approach of this pilot study. This is addressed below.
- Salient and formative meta-cases: In separate interviews, all of our experts relied upon the same salient examples of intractable international conflicts, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to illustrate their points. This speaks to the powers of contemporary world events and the media in shaping meaning-making with regards to abstract phenomena.
- Diverse targets-of-change: Despite these high-level commonalities, the interviewees identified a large array of different targets, strategies, and activities for fostering constructive change, from changing individuals to changing paradigms and the world order.
- The paradox of change and stability: A common theme running through many of our interviews was the problem of adapting to change while protecting the stability and integrity of the status quo. This was discussed in a variety of ways, including psychologically, socially, technologically, and in relation to scientific inquiry, group history, dominance, globalization, and religion.

### Report Highlights

Our findings are presented in the report by interview, and organized under the categories of *metaphors*, *sources of conflict*, *approaches to addressing conflict*, *resources*, and *methodological learnings* from the study. A few highlights are summarized below:

- Metaphors: Metaphor provides an entry into a way of thinking and seeing with regard to abstract phenomena. Our participants employed a variety of distinct metaphors when discussing intractable conflict, including organismic (unilateralism is a cancer on the earth), religious (the story of Abraham is an agent for relational transformation), story-script-role (narrative analysis), power (the role of hegemony), internal process (confronting one's shadow side), change (individual and societal transformation), and leadership (police versus parent) metaphors. Each of these metaphors orients the intervener to a specific aspect of the complex world of intractable conflict, and suggests methods for their amelioration. For example, Fisher spoke of using a metaphor of "spirits" to identify a pattern that is occurring in a group, organization, or community which is problematic. Using such a metaphor can help acknowledge the presence of a problematic dynamic without holding any one person or group responsible for its presence. It can also enable a group to see the "spirit" or "pattern" as something that exists outside of the community, towards which they can direct their energy to dissolve or dissipate.
- Sources of intractable conflict: Typically, the interviewees described sources of intractability that were consistent with their primary metaphorical perspective. These included:
  - *An empire mentality: The United State's quest for hegemonic control*: Rubenstein suggests that America's "Empire mentality" is a major source of intractable conflict around the globe. Since a main goal of the empire is to maintain itself over long periods of time, much of its energy must be directed towards maintaining its power. While empires traditionally have sought to both build a power base and help resolve conflict among "client" states, these two activities are often inherently incompatible, and contribute to the empire's ineffectiveness in helping others. Rubenstein suggests that the U.S., a nation that has significant interests in the outcomes of conflicts around the globe, should not be serving as a mediator in the disputes of other nations. He argues that as a result of its interest in maintaining global power, the U.S. promotes its own interests in conflict regions, thus causing conflict rather than resolving it. He also warns that the growing field of conflict resolution needs to be careful not to become an "adjunct" to the American imperialist approach to conflict resolution.
  - *Trends and tensions between globalization and conservatism*. While globalization has many benefits (such as the possibility of creating a "community of humanity"), it also produces unintended negative consequences. As travel and communication among the populations of the world gets easier, groups of people who were at one time geographically,

politically, or otherwise isolated or separated now have much greater accessibility to one another (geographically and technologically). The new proximity of formerly isolated groups may inherently create conflict. It can inflame identity and worldview clashes, as groups who once were sheltered by geographical distances must deal with one another's ethnic, racial, and religious differences. The new proximity of formerly isolated groups can also raise groups' sense of relative resource deprivation, which often leads to an increase in competition for those resources. Dr. Kremenyuk suggests that regardless of whether those resources are actually limited or not, once the sense of relative deprivation arises in a population, if individuals are socialized to believe that material wealth is zero-sum (i.e., in order for one group to gain in wealth, another must lose), intractable conflicts arise.

Other sources included:

- *Archaic and limited paradigms for theory and intervention.*
  - *The social construction of histories, outgroups, and enemies.*
  - *Internal struggles (within the self, groups, and nations).*
  - *Scarce resources.*
  - *Moralism (condemning others) and a lack of individual/community will.*
  - *A predominance of low-levels of consciousness.*
- Approaches and practices for intervention: The highest level of innovation and therefore the most unique contributions to work with intractable conflict emerged in this more specific category of action: strategies, practices, and activities. These included:
    - *A New World Order: Independent, International Regional Organizations / Facilitation Corps*: Rubenstein suggests that a new world order is necessary to enable nations in conflict to deal productively with their situations. He proposes that the main problem with the way current conflicts are dealt with is that when the U.S., the U.N., or other entities get involved in trying to mediate other countries' conflicts, they inevitably end up imposing solutions on the parties (and oftentimes, these solutions are based on the self-interest of the intervener), rather than enabling the parties themselves to develop their own solutions. As a viable alternative, Rubenstein suggests that independent facilitators (i.e., facilitators who would not represent any particular national interests of their own) should serve as regionally-based neutral facilitators. The facilitators would be conflict resolution scholars and practitioners whose purpose would be to enable the parties to develop their own approaches and solutions.
    - *Working "Cold Cases"*: Dr. Jamieson described a practice in which he and some colleagues engaged a joint working group comprised of business people and environmentalists to dialogue about environmental/development cases that had already been decided at some point in the past. The group referred to these cases as "cold cases" since they had already been decided, and thus did not hold the same potential for heated or "hot" problematic debate as some similar yet more current cases

did. Through talking about such past “cold” cases, the participants were given the opportunity to discuss the issues that were important to them, without being distracted by the intensity of emotions and provocative discourse that would otherwise have been present in the dialogue. This process enabled group members from both sides to experience the other side’s basic humanity (regardless of whether they agreed on the issues). In some instances, the participants were even able to see the issues from the other side’s point of view. This type of exercise can help group members to build the skills, level of understanding, and relationships necessary to talk and work together on more current and potentially “heated” cases in the future.

- *Narratological analysis, metaphorical analysis, and re-positioning stories*: The idea of using narrative, or stories, as a way to get people “unstuck” from conflict situations runs through many of the interviews. From an environmental philosopher to a psycho-dramatist, many interviewees used the idea of sharing stories as a way to move people from places of conflict to places of understanding. They recommend using stories *not* to resolve conflicts directly (as opposed to a “problem-solving” approach), but rather to enable disputants to understand each other, as a first step, perhaps, towards resolving their conflicts. When working with individuals and groups in intractable conflict situations, Rothbart suggests helping them notice how the stories they tell about the conflict situation reflect, and influence, their view of the world and their understanding of the conflict situation. The main goal of this practice is to eventually enable the parties to re-define their stories in a way that allows for a more complex, nuanced understanding of the conflict situation. The facilitator’s job is to validate the stories and to help the individuals “build layers of context” and “hold all the different poles” of the story, in order to experience the accumulation of different stories and perspectives as part of one total conflict story.
- *Fostering strength and interdependence through communal “webs”*: If the individual’s failure of will is a primary source of intractable conflict, the task in approaching this type of conflict would be to devise ways to strengthen the will of the individual. According to Dr. Jamieson, Aristotle prescribed community involvement in a conflict between two or more members of that community in order to help strengthen the will of the individuals involved. Similarly, Reb Zalman describes a new ritual that occurs immediately prior to the wedding ceremony between a bride and groom where he acknowledges the power that the families have to help the bride and groom begin their new life together and prevent deep divisions from occurring. In addition, Dr. Jamieson proposes that another way to strengthen the individual will is to practice virtuous habits through simple repetition. The idea is that practicing right actions makes those actions easier to call upon when they’re needed.
- *“Social software”*: To help “soften up” potentially tough situations or encounters, Reb Zalman uses what he calls “social software” to help

enable people to enter into an “I-Thou” relationship, in which each person is able to experience the other’s basic humanity. One example exercise is: one person begins a sentence but does not finish it. The other person finishes the sentence, and then begins a new sentence, but does not finish it. The first person finishes that sentence, and begins a new one, but does not finish it, and so on. After Zalman and the interviewer did a few rounds of the exercise, he said: *Now take a look. Right now in this thing, I have such a joy doing this with you, it feels like we are hugging, you know. This is one of the things that I do with people. A lot of dyadic stuff so that they can get into the ‘I-Thou’ function.*

- *Knowing Oneself -- Working With the “Shadow Side”*: Rosa Maria suggests that in order to successfully negotiate with other parties, individuals must first gain a deeper understanding of themselves and an ability to be self-reflective. This can enable them to act in ways that are more congruent with their desired actions, and prevent them from acting in ways that provoke and escalate conflict situations. Reb Zalman frames this idea in terms of Jung’s “shadow side.” The shadow side can be described as the part of oneself about which one is not necessarily aware, or proud. Reb Zalman describes the shadow side as a natural part of life—individuals, groups, organizations, governments and other institutions all have shadow sides. When people deny the existence of their own shadow side, (oftentimes, unconsciously) they project it onto the Other. The consequence of this behavior is that no true understanding between people can occur. In order to deal more effectively with this, Reb Zalman advises first recognizing one’s own shadow side—acknowledging its presence as a natural and legitimate part of oneself. He suggests that this recognition and acknowledgement of one’s own shadow side should be done in a safe place, within the scope of one’s own community (i.e., prior to meeting with the other side). The next step is to share one’s own shadow side with the other party, and ask the other party to share their shadow side. This could take the form of being truly honest about how one feels or what one hopes for in a situation (even if one is not proud of those feelings or desires), and asking the other party to share their true feelings and wishes as well.

Psychodrama can help individuals to distinguish between another person’s story and their own projections onto the other’s story. Acting out the stories and seeing them played out can be a powerful way for individuals to understand the role that their own projections and biases play in creating conflict. J. Atieno Fisher described how using psychodrama can help participants see the role that their own “shadow side” plays in conflict situations: *It’s about two stories coming together and kind of hooking up. And [psychodrama helps] you distinguish the two and have people take responsibility for their own projections. How are my complaints about the other person really just--I’m bringing those. Those are my issues and I need to take responsibility for my issues.*

- Methodological reflections: Several methodological learnings were gained from this pilot, including:
  - *Use Highly Elicitive Questions*: While our interview guide was designed to elicit the interviewees' ideas about intractable conflict, our decision to use the words "intractable conflict" in our interviews with the participants may have led them to make assumptions about the types of situations we're interested in studying (which could possibly be responsible for their overwhelming use of the same examples of protracted international conflicts). While not intending to, the data we have collected leads us to question whether we asked the interviewees to shed light on our ideas, rather than to tell us about the "unsolvable problems" present in their work.
  - *Be More Specific About the Ideal Interviewee Profile*: In the next phase of this or a similar project, we would create a more specific profile of the ideal interviewee. We would be clearer about seeking to talk with individuals whose work involves "unsolvable problems" in a variety of distinct disciplines, as opposed to those whose work focuses on unsolvable problems in the realm of social conflict. We might seek specifically to interview experts in fields that deal with a diversity of unsolvable problems in the basic sciences such as physics or biology, or in the realms of medicine, engineering, architecture or the visual arts.



## **What We Don't Know Can Help Us: Eliciting Out-of-Discipline Knowledge for Work with Intractable Conflicts**

### Introduction

The current state of theory, research, and practice on protracted, intractable conflict is robust but limited; although much progress has been made, our understanding is bounded by discipline, culture, role-in-conflict (expert), and social class. The main purpose of this report is to describe the results of our inquiry about alternative ways-of-knowing and engaging with the phenomenon of intractable social conflict. This project can be considered an initial foray into domains of knowledge and experience which are typically excluded from the dominant discourse on conflict in this area. In our view, this pilot project has begun a qualitative investigation of several alternative disciplinary perspectives on the issues, methods, and practices relevant to work with intractable conflicts. Our hope is that this process will continue in the form of a more elaborate research project, or through a conference or a series of conferences that explore multiple perspectives of the domain.<sup>1</sup>

### Method

A total of nine (9) interviewees participated in this study. Each interview was conducted by telephone and digitally recorded. Five of the interviews were conducted with American participants (J. Atieno Fisher; Dr. Dale Jamieson; Dr. Daniel Rothbart; Richard Rubenstein; and Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi). Four interviews were conducted with international participants: one from Germany (Dr. Rudolph Avenhaus), one from Russia (Dr. Victor Kremenyuk), one from the Dominican Republic (Rosa A. Maria) and one from Ecuador (who wished to remain anonymous in this report).

The interviewees represent a diversity of expertise. Dr. Rudolph Avenhaus is a mathematician and game theorist; J. Atieno Fisher is a psychodramatist; Dr. Dale Jamieson is an environmental ethicist; Dr. Victor Kremenyuk is a historian; Rosa A. Maria is an architect; Dr. Daniel Rothbart is a philosopher; Richard Rubenstein is a lawyer and professor of conflict analysis and resolution; Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi is a spiritual leader; and an anonymous participant is an economist.

We recruited participants through referrals by members of the Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base Project's (ICKB) community of scholar-practitioners. We emailed a recruiting letter to the ICKB members requesting their help in identifying participants for the study (see Appendix A). The letter outlined a profile of the ideal interviewee, which stated that we were seeking: a) experts in fields such as economics, the arts, chemistry, theology, history, medicine, media studies, anthropology, mathematics, etc.; b) innovative scholars and/or practitioners working at the "cutting edge" of their respective

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<sup>1</sup> *This study was conducted during the summer of 2003 at Columbia University through a Mini-Grant from the Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base Project of the Conflict Research Consortium at the University of Colorado at Boulder and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.*

fields; c) individuals who can articulately describe their work and bridge knowledge from their own fields to the arena of intractable social conflict; and d) individuals who are involved in work that relates to intractable conflict in some way, even though they do not consider themselves to be conflict professionals.

Approximately 14 ICKB members replied to our email, referring 43 experts in total. By matching the descriptions of the referrals with a list of preferred disciplines, we identified 25 potential interviewees that would be ideal for this phase of the project, and contacted them by email to inquire about their interest in participating (see Appendix B). We received approximately 13 responses and scheduled phone appointments with 10 experts. One scheduled interview, with a priest from Israel, did not materialize.

Prior to conducting the interviews, we developed an interview guide (see Appendix C) and conducted two pilot interviews with colleagues which resulted in adjustments to the framing of some questions. Also prior to the interviews, we emailed participants a memo reminding them of the purpose of the interviews (i.e., to learn about alternative perspectives, new paradigms, and “frame breaking” insights) and asking them to read two brief articles on intractable conflict (see Appendix D). While conducting the interviews, we placed an emphasis on maintaining an elicitive stance (as opposed to a more directive one), which involved asking a series of open-ended questions, listening and responding to the topics the interviewees found important and wanted to talk about. After the conclusion of each interview, we emailed participants asking them to supply us with a list of references which they had mentioned in the interview (see Appendix E). All participants were highly responsive in email correspondence.

As we conducted the interviews, we kept a log of interesting insights, themes emerging across the interviews, and methodological challenges to conducting this type of research. All interviews were transcribed, and were coded using semi-structured interviewing and qualitative analysis methods (Smith, 1995). The data was analyzed with a focus on distilling new insights, ideas, paradigms, models, and materials for work with intractable conflicts.

## Findings

This section provides an overview of findings, listed by interviewee. Each interviewee section contains a brief biography of the interviewee; the primary metaphors through which the interviewee understands intractable conflict; sources of intractable conflict cited by the interviewee; and potential approaches and practical techniques for dealing with intractable conflicts. Each interviewee section ends with a listing of references cited by the interviewee. Where possible, the references are listed in APA format with web links.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Most interviewee sections follow the outline described above. However, because of the elicitive nature of this study, depending on the background and interests of the interviewee, some interviewee sections may focus strongly on some areas and not at all on others. For example, some interviewee sections focus primarily on sources and approaches to intractable conflict while focusing less on metaphors or practical techniques.

**Dr. Daniel Rothbart**

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After receiving his Ph. D. in philosophy from Washington University in St. Louis, Dr. Daniel Rothbart was a visiting scholar at Dartmouth College, University of Cambridge, and Linacre College in Oxford. He has published extensively on the philosophical aspects of scientific modeling and on the philosophy of experimentation. He the author of Explaining the Growth of Scientific Knowledge: Metaphors, Models, and Meanings, as well as editor of Science, Reason and Reality and Modeling: Gateway to the Unknown by Rom Harré. In a record of scholarship that includes more than thirty-five publications, his book chapters appear in Analogical Reasoning, PSA: 1994, Volume One, Chemistry and Philosophy, Of Minds and Molecules, and a forthcoming volume of Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science. His articles appear in the journals *Dialectica*, *Journal of Bioethics*, *Erkenntnis*, *Foundations of Chemistry*, *Philosophy of Science*, and *Teché*. His manuscript Philosophical Instruments: Minds and Tools at Work is currently under review. He received an Excellence in Teaching Award from the Office of the Provost, GMU, 2000.

MetaphorsThe Abraham metaphor

*[Marc Gopin's] argument is that there are certain moral categories and values that are established in this narrative in the Biblical story which can be exploited, as it were, for transforming the way in which the participants relate to each other. Instead of hatred it would be harmonious interaction. To overcome the hatred by looking for, as it were, the values that are portrayed in these stories. So he's suggesting, in this particular case--and again, I'm only talking about that particular conflict—he's suggesting that the moral categories that are portrayed in these stories could have a value, as it were, kind of strategic value and could be exploited for a new way in which the protagonist of the conflicting agents talk to each other. (Rothbart, p. 10)*

*[Abraham is] a metaphor and that metaphor is an entry to, obviously, a kind of religious reality about what is sacred and what is profane, what is a moral order, and how does one group deal with another group. You know, how does one treat one's enemies, as it were, or overcome a conflict. And [Marc Gopin] is exploring, in great detail, how within that story there are elements for overcoming...I mean, for example, both Arabs and Jews are seeking to secure a home, to avoid conflict, to recognize the sacred land. They need security; they need safety. I mean, there are shared needs here. They need dignity, honor, compassion, and he's saying that certain elements in the story, basically, suggests a kind of recognition of the other. (Rothbart, p. 11)*

SourcesRational problem solving approach does not adequately address social identity issues

Under certain conditions, specific attempts to manage or deal with intractable conflict situations can actually cause further conflict (Coleman, 2000). Rothbart suggests that the “problem-solving” approach falls into this category with respect to intractable conflict situations. He suggests that social identity is a core source of intractable conflict, and as such, the problem-solving approach (which tends to focus on developing solutions to tangible problems, rather than identity issues per se) can be irrelevant and even destructive in certain conflict situations. He suggests that using a problem solving approach in identity-based conflict situations may lead parties to set an unrealistic goal of reaching a “solution”, when in fact, a more appropriate and useful goal may be to reach a mutual understanding and acceptance of the other side.

*The early days of conflict theory, which focused on rational problem-solving methods, I think is totally useless for dealing with social identity...Once you talk about the relationship that's problematic or that they have a problem between one group and another group, it suggests that there must be a solution; there must be problem-solving strategies; there must be, as it were, compromise; there might even be a zero-sum situation. All of that language is destructive and unhelpful for these kinds of protracted social conflicts...It cuts off the real fundamental, as it were, source of the conflict. It's superficial, it's misleading...Because the obvious commonality among all protracted social conflict is this identification with the other. The conflict in many cases is basically about group identity...in so many cases...in Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe, Israel and others. And the rational problem-solving method, basically, is impoverished in that regard by not being able to tap into those, that source.*

The power of narrative to determine a social order

The words that leaders and community members use to describe the conflict have a significant impact on how the situation is perceived by the parties involved. While the specific words chosen may not, in and of themselves, seem threatening, they have the power to define the conflict and in many cases, to determine a “moral order” in a society.

*George Bush about talking about the enemy in the Iraq war. And these metaphors are very powerful about his conception of...not only what should be done against Sadaam Hussein but also his sense of identifying...what America is and what the American identity is in relationship to the evils of Iraq...There's been lots of documentation and speeches, and I have a number of speeches here that I went through...where the enemy is demonized. Obviously, we have here good versus evil. And he uses these terms often times. The civilized world as opposed to uncivilized--obviously a sense of crusader. The crusade against forces of evil, darkness, lightness and so on--all bringing to mind a kind of Messianic calling that he, Bush, perceives is part of the American... it's not just a mission and it's not just, as it were, dealing with the immediacy of Sadaam Hussein, it is a sense of group identity...And what's fascinating about some of...the narratological analysis of conversation and speeches is that these words kind of sneak in and they seem*

*rather innocent and, in some cases, rather innocuous. But really they project a moral order.*

#### The power of narrative to influence what happens in the future

What happens in the future is not only affected by the events that precede it, but also by the way in which we *talk* about those events (e.g., the words we use to describe them). In this way, narrative can be thought of as an “agent” for making sense of the future. In situations where an individual is the recipient of a shocking statement or story, the words can have even more power. In this type of situation, the narrative not only serves as an agent for making sense of the future, but as an agent for producing change.

*If I convey a story about something that happened, it's not only a representation of the past, but it's a projection for what should happen, what I expect to happen in the future. And this is really brought out clearly...when someone faces a kind of shocking episode... For example, you go to work and someone says, “You're fired.” ...And the listener hears that and is stunned by this and, therefore, is forced to reconfigure his or her relationship to that workplace. It's not just a depiction of a lost paycheck, but it's a projection about a different kind of social relationship. Or if someone encounters their family member and suddenly they say, “I hate you!”, that then is a projection about what might happen in the future... What I'm suggesting here is that the narrative that represents or gives sense to each episode has a certain power...It's an agent; it's an agent for making sense of the future. And in some cases, you know, if it's a story about something extraordinary or shocking, or really stunning, the narrative itself is an agent for change.*

#### Approaches

##### Narratological analysis

Conducting a “discourse analysis”, whereby a researcher records, transcribes and codes conversations between individuals or groups, or public speeches made by leaders, to understand how the words the individuals use reflect an implicit social order. This type of analysis enables researchers to use language as a source for uncovering existing assumptions about relationships between people and groups that may otherwise be hidden, or less obvious.

*The challenge here, in a narratological analysis, is to look at the way in which words are used, how the words, basically, assume certain moral standing, you know, within a group and between one group and another group, and...how those categories of identity basically project a whole order, whose set of moral prescriptions about how we should live our lives....obligations and rights and all of that. That's not an easy task to do...to go from a discourse analysis of the words...to a whole sense of...broad social order or world order. But it is very do-able at kind of a small scale.*

##### Metaphorical analysis

Like narrative, metaphors hold significant meaning and often reflect the moral or social order of a society. As such, they are a useful tool for understanding the conflict dynamics in a system.

*And so this is the question that I would ask: Which metaphors are particularly valuable and truthful and insightful for understanding protracted social conflict? I think that's really a crucial and fundamental question for progress in conflict theory. And it's not just the side light; it's not just something that is kind of like expendable. I think the wrong view about metaphor is that it's just didactic kind of window-dress; it's expendable waiting for, as it were, the real accumulation of data through theory. But the metaphor provides an entry, basically, for a whole way of thinking.*

### Practical Techniques

#### “Re-position” the stories

When working with individuals and groups in intractable conflict situations, Rothbart suggests helping them notice how the stories they tell about the conflict situation reflect, and influence, their view of the world and their understanding of the conflict situation. The main goal of this practice is to eventually enable the parties to re-define their stories in a way that allows for a more complex, nuanced understanding of the conflict situation.

*...first, to show individuals, the participants, that they are living through their own narrative, their own stories. One of the challenges is to say that your social order or the moral order that you're living under is not eternal, fixed and, you know, immutable. This is a very difficult challenge, especially with respect to social conflicts that are grounded in religious commitment. The challenge is to show people that there might be another way in which the conversation could take place and another way in which the moral, social category can be articulated. It's kind of like repositioning.*

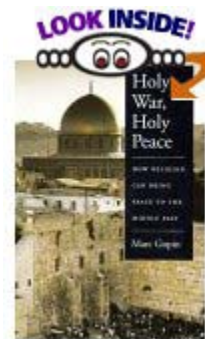
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From Amazon.com:

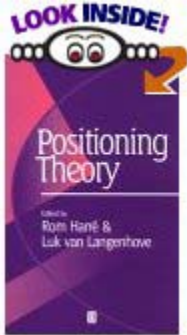
Building on his earlier book, *Between Eden and Armageddon*, Gopin provides a detailed blueprint of how the religious traditions question can become a principal asset in the search for peace and justice. He demonstrates how religious people can be the critical missing link in peacemaking, and how the incorporation of their values and symbols can unleash a new dynamic that directly addresses basic issues of ethics, justice, and peace. Gopin's analysis of the theoretical, theological, and political planes shows us what has been achieved thus far, as well as



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what must be done next in order to ensure effective final settlement negotiations and secure, sovereign, democratic countries for both peoples.

Harre, R., Lagenhove, L.V., & Berman, L. (1992). *Positioning theory: Moral contexts of international action*. Blackwell Publishers.



From Amazon.com:

The word "position" has long been used in the field of social psychology. Now social psychologists are creating new theories on group positioning by studying everyday language and discourse and the application of some of these ideas has revealed the necessity of paying close attention to the local moral order within which both public and private intentional acts are performed. The study of local moral orders as ever-shifting patterns of rights and obligations of speaking and acting has come to be called by a new name - positioning theory - of which Rom Harré is one of the leading exponents. In this book, Rom Harré give a state of the art overview of positioning theory via contributions from some of the world's leading experts in the field.

Dr. Daniel Rothbart's Homepage: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~drothbar>

*This is Dr. Daniel Rothbart's homepage at George Mason University. There are links to the George Mason University Philosophy and Religious Studies Department's homepage and to relevant journal articles.*

**Richard Rubenstein, J.D.**

**Professor of Conflict Resolution and Public Affairs, George Mason University**

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Richard Rubenstein is a Professor of Conflict Resolution and Public Affairs at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. He has been on the faculty since 1987, and served as the Director of the Institute from 1989-1991. Prior to joining the faculty at George Mason, Rubenstein was Academic Dean at Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. from 1980-1982 and Professor of Law from 1979-1987. His newest book, *Aristotle's Children: How Christians, Muslims and Jews Rediscovered Ancient Wisdom and Illuminated the Dark Ages* will be published in October 2003. Professor Rubenstein received his B.A. from Harvard College, his J.D. from Harvard Law School, and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University.

Sources

The "empire mentality" inherently causes conflict

Rubenstein suggests that America's "Empire mentality" is a major source of intractable conflict around the globe. Since a main goal of the empire is to maintain itself over long periods of time, much of its energy must be directed towards maintaining its power. While empires traditionally have sought to both build a power base and help resolve conflict among "client" states, these two activities are often inherently incompatible, and contribute to the empire's ineffectiveness in helping others.

*...This is part of the American exceptionalist thesis...that we were not going to imitate these other old empires...Our relationship to the world was going to be something different, and it was going to be less coercive. It was going to be more idealistic.*

*"Empire" generates intractable conflict...Empire is a long-range, is a long-term entity. Empires try to maintain themselves over a long period of time, and they generate conflicts that last for a long period of time.*

*Since Rome, at least, part of the ideology of empire has been that the empire is a conflict resolver--that the empire is the universalizing force which, you know, resolves conflicts among its clients. Camp David was really classical imperial play, although it wasn't recognized as that at the time--still in many cases isn't. It was the empire, the imperial power, accommodating, arranging things between two client states. Rome was very good at this. And the British weren't bad at it, either. We're [the U.S. is] actually not so good at it. But the underlying question is: should we get better at it or is there some other model of world order that's more consistent with conflict resolution?*

The U.S. is not neutral, and therefore should not serve as mediator in others' conflicts

A basic principle of mediation is that mediators should not agree to intervene in others' disputes if, for any reason, they have a bias or personal interest in the process or the outcome of the dispute (Mediation Works Incorporated, 2000). Rubenstein applies that principle to the international mediator role, and suggests that the U.S., a nation that has



significant interests in the outcomes of conflicts around the globe, should not be serving as a mediator in the disputes of other nations.

*Maybe you don't need to be neutral, as they sometimes say, to resolve conflicts. But you need to have some detachment. I mean, you need to be able to see the conflict. And, you know, to be impartial in that sense. You know, the U.S. isn't impartial in any sense. I don't see them as being a great agent of conflict resolution... I'm in conversations (and other people are too) with people at various multi-national organizations... To tell them, your destiny isn't necessarily to wield power; it's to solve problems that create conflict.*

By promoting its own interests in conflict regions, the US causes conflict rather than resolving it

Rubenstein suggests that as a result of its interest in maintaining global power, the U.S. promotes its own interests in conflict regions, thus causing conflict rather than resolving it. He also notes that the field of conflict resolution needs to be careful not to become an “adjunct” to the American imperialist approach to conflict resolution.

*There's a question for [the conflict resolution] field now as to whether in an era of U.S. attempts to become or maintain economic or political hegemony on a global scale, whether the conflict resolution field is going to become, basically, an adjunct to that effort... We're the soft imperialists. You know, we're the ones who resolve conflicts among the satellite states and go over and help resolve conflicts... Or whether we're going to be looking at global conflict as coming from systemic sources which implicate the United States. So the United States is not a conflict resolver. It may at times function as a conflict resolver; mostly it's a conflict cause.*

The globalization paradox

While globalization has many benefits (such as the possibility of creating a “community of humanity”), it also produces unintended negative consequences. As travel and communication among the populations of the world gets easier, groups of people who were at one time geographically, politically, or otherwise isolated or separated now have much greater accessibility to one another (geographically and technologically). The new proximity of formerly isolated groups inherently creates conflict. It inflames identity and worldview clashes, and increases competition for resources. Some sources of intractable conflict also have great potential for good, and globalization is a chief example of this idea.

*If there's a fundamental cause of intractable, long-term conflict it's the coming together, the being brought together of disparate groups. Groups that are disparate in every way, culturally, power and so forth. The bringing together of formerly isolated groups. When that inter-dependence, what John Burton and his World Society model calls an increase in the sum total of trans-national transactions... When these contacts multiply the way they are multiplying at a radically increased pace now... that's a kind of change which has got to create long-term conflicts--very difficult to resolve.*

*I think they're not just economic, they also have to do with people getting each other's diseases, people marrying each other's sons and daughters, and people impinging on each other more and more. It inflames identity problems. It makes worldview problems which weren't even visible all of the sudden visible. It increases competition for resources, etc., etc.*

*It also produces the basis for a possible, you know, community of man, humanity. So at the same time you get this sort of glowing promise of global solidarity, of global familiarity and so forth. According to a lot of the anthropologists, we seem to have started out as a relatively small population on earth--homosapians, scattered all over the place. Very diverse and everybody doing whatever they wanted to do in terms of their own communities and not having much contact with other communities. And then around the time that written history begins, that changes. Now it's just hurtling ahead towards what I call the real globalism, of which AIDS and all of that is the most dramatic and visible and scary symptom.*

### Approaches

#### Be imaginative, and translate your vision into practice (don't just dialogue)

Rubenstein encourages practitioners to be imaginative and to translate visions of peace-building into reality. He also suggests that while dialogue can be a useful method for dealing with conflict, enabling the conflicting parties to develop creative practices (based on common rituals or other commonalities) can be especially beneficial in protracted conflict situations.

*Mark Gopin is enormously imaginative. And he says as soon as you spot the commonalities, you figure out how to practice them. You know, you don't just dialogue. Here you have three religions—and the funeral celebration in each of the religions and what a funeral is supposed to accomplish have something to do with each other. So there's a basis for understanding there. So why not have Muslims, Mullahs attend the funeral of Jewish people killed in suicide bombings, and why not have Orthodox rabbis attend the funerals of Palestinians killed by the Israeli army? Because both traditions would say that, you know-- that behavior would be supported by both traditions. And by God, he's done that. He's gotten these people to attend each other's funerals. How much good that's gonna do in the long-run and so forth, he doesn't know and I don't know, but it looks like...*

#### A new world order: independent, international regional organizations / facilitation corps

Rubenstein suggests that a new world order is necessary to enable nations in conflict to deal productively with their situations. He proposes that the main problem with the way current conflicts are dealt with is that when the U.S., the U.N., or other entities get involved in trying to mediate other countries' conflicts, they inevitably end up imposing solutions on the parties (and oftentimes, these solutions are based on the self-interest of the intervener), rather than enabling the parties themselves to develop their own solutions. As a viable alternative, Rubenstein suggests that independent facilitators (i.e.,

facilitators who would not represent any particular national interests of their own) should serve as regionally-based neutral facilitators. The facilitators would be conflict resolution scholars and practitioners whose purpose would be to enable the parties to develop their own approaches and solutions.

*It's talking about an international system, which is not based on a hegemonic world government, but which relies on independent international organizations. Its main job is conflict resolution, not wielding power.*

*[There should be] regional organizations, based on the model of the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which is a voluntary organization set up by the European states to do things together and to resolve conflicts. That's been tremendously effective in some ways, and [Marc] Gopin is asking (and I think he's exactly right): why shouldn't the Middle East have the equivalent of an OSCE that would help the Iraqis now, for example, deal with questions like, do they want their oil nationalized or privatized, do they want to have an Islamic state or non-Islamic state or some kind of combination? How should the warring communities in Iraq be able to deal with each other?*

*I mean, these are questions which the Americans are now presuming to answer for everybody. And saying that there's some U.N. committee that should answer them isn't much better. The parties themselves need to answer those questions. And the parties most directly affected are the Iraqis themselves and their neighbors. So Gopin has been screaming now for two or three years about this kind of regional conflict resolution, using independent experts like us, who would be truly independent. That is to say, wouldn't be representing our government or anybody else--we could be facilitators. So we can't make the decisions for the folks; we can be facilitators.*

*I'm not talking now so much about a system. I mean, I can fantasize about a better system. I'm talking now more about process and I'm talking about a negative. And the negative is: the American empire doesn't decide these issues. Also, the American empire allied with the old European empire doesn't decide these issues. The people in the areas most directly affected with whatever facilitation they need and want decide these issues... You know the Americans still have the fantasy that they can succeed in Iraq where the British couldn't; the Turks couldn't; basically, nobody could. I don't think it's going to take too long before they realize that it's a losing proposition and they can't do it that way. But I think it should be the job of our field to help to help develop those alternatives.*

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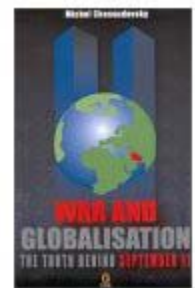
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According to Chossudovsky, the so-called "war on terrorism" is a complete fabrication based on the illusion that one man, Osama bin Laden, outwitted the \$30 billion-a-year American intelligence apparatus. The "war on terrorism" is a war of conquest. Globalization is the final march to the "New World Order", dominated by Wall Street and the U.S. military-industrial complex.

September 11, 2001 was the moment the Bush Administration had been waiting for: the so-called "useful crisis" which provided a pretext for waging a war without borders. The hidden agenda consists in extending the frontiers of the American Empire right around the world to facilitate complete U.S. corporate control outside the U.S. and a police state on the inside.



Chossudovsky peels back the layers of rhetoric to reveal a huge hoax — a complex web of deceit aimed at tricking the American people and the rest of the world into accepting a military solution which threatens the future of humanity.

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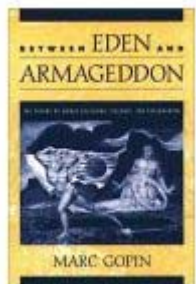
Johan Galtung, one of the founders of modern peace studies, describes his reason for writing this book as a 'systematic effort to give a theoretical foundation for peace research, peace education and peace action'. As such, it provides a wide-ranging panorama of the ideas, theories and assumptions on which the study of peace is based.

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In this groundbreaking book, Marc Gopin integrates the study of religion with the study of conflict resolution. He argues that religion can play a critical role in constructing a global community of shared moral commitments and vision--a community that can limit conflict to its nonviolent, constructive variety. If we examine religious myths and moral traditions, Gopin argues, we can understand why and when religious people come to violence, and why and when they become staunch peacemakers. He shows that it is the conservative expression of most religious traditions that presents the largest challenge in

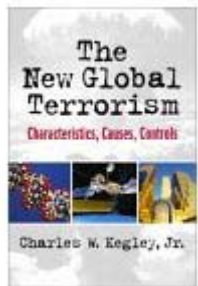


terms of peace and conflict. Gopin considers ways to construct traditional paradigms that are committed to peacemaking on a deep level and offers such a paradigm for the case of Judaism. Throughout, Gopin emphasizes that developing the potential of the world's religions for coping with conflict demands a conscious process on the part of peacemakers and theologians. His innovative and carefully argued study also offers a broad set of recommendations for policy planners both inside and outside of government.

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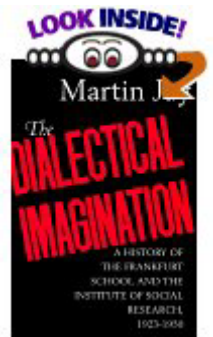
This book comprehensively covers the debatable issues regarding the post-September 11th wave of terrorism, the multiple roots of this deadly new form of international violence, and the leading ideas being considered as means for the “war on global terrorism” to be won. Informed and informative interpretations, written by the world's most authoritative scholars especially for this book, present a balanced and accessible set of essays and chapters describing the new international terrain that has emerged in the wake of 9-11. A three-part organization breaks the subject of global terrorism into three categories of analysis, and demonstrates to readers that how terrorism is defined will shape the conclusions that are reached about its causes and remedies. For analyzing present and future acts of terrorism, creating awareness of the obstacles to accurately understanding it, and consideration of the strategies for containing the destructiveness of this deadly phenomena.



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"Marcuse shows himself to be one of the most radical and forceful thinkers of this time."  
—The Nation

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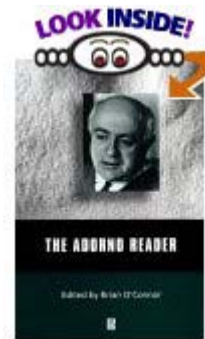
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the

In addition to a general introduction, the editor has provided individual introductions to all of the material in the book. By explicating some of the more obscure terminology and arguments these introductions clearly situate each piece within the larger context of Adorno's writings and his philosophical tradition.

Website of Jurgen Habermas's Bibliography, noting recent publications:

<http://www.helsinki.fi/~amkauppi/habbib.htm>

*This is an extensive list of Habermas's publications from 1992 to present.*

Website of Habermas links: <http://www.helsinki.fi/~amkauppi/hablinks.html>

## J. Atieno Fisher

### Usoni Method Coach for Groups and Individuals

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With a diverse background in conflict transformation (MA), creative arts group therapy (CP) and education, Atieno Fisher is an outstanding coach and skilled group facilitator. Atieno has lived and worked in the United States, Africa, Europe and the Middle East and is a Certified Practitioner of Psychodrama--the leading progenitor of the Usoni method. With work experience ranging from a psychiatric hospital to The World Bank, Ms. Fisher has helped a wide variety of people succeed and thrive.

#### Metaphors

##### The spirits metaphor

Fisher suggests using the “spirits” metaphor to identify and bring to the participants’ attention a pattern that is occurring in their group, organization, or community. Using the spirits metaphor can help people acknowledge a problematic dynamic that is present in their interactions, without threatening their sense of identity, or putting anyone needlessly on the defensive.

*...in a lot of cultures it really makes sense. People know exactly what you're talking about when you mention spirits...I remember doing psychodrama with this Native American woman and she was talking about the Gods. When I had her concretize them, they were her ancestors...That conversation that she was having with them was really the context for her whole story...*

*When you're in a group and you recognize that there is a spirit here of fear, or of scarcity...One thing that is really great about it is that it depersonalizes it. So instead of this very narrow psychological focus on, “people need to be less selfish, they need to get over their fears,” and it's all about people...I don't need to tell you it's very threatening when it's like, “Oh, my identity is under attack?”...Whereas the spirit-- it's inhabiting a group process. It's much less threatening... a group can unite around – ok, let's not embody that spirit. Let's send that spirit. Let's embody this spirit that we want as opposed to...So the way of talking about it just takes it out of – I'm beautiful, or I'm selfish, whatever it is...*

*“There's a spirit and it's evident in the upper levels of this institution. It's evident in how we're interacting in the business spirit of this institution, and it's in the larger spirit of this [place]...” And again, it's a metaphor. It's not like there's really something with horns that's in the room. It's just a way of saying, “there's a pattern here; we can embody it, or we can embody a different one.” If you can work with that in a way that doesn't shame anybody, then you actually can transform something where you're not making people defensive. I really like the word pattern as well. It's like a pattern, an idea of patterns having kind of a life of their own.*



SourcesThe globalization paradox

Fisher suggests that as a species, we are still operating as if we're living in prehistoric times. Given the reality of globalization and the over-populated world in which we live, she suggests that operating at this level is anachronistic, unhelpful for dealing with current conflicts, and has the potential to produce large-scale destruction. She proposes that tribalism and the empire mentality need to give way to a global leadership.

*As we were able to grow more food our population grew, put pressure on the surrounding populations...Beaurocracy, fighting and mass invasion became normal; and that's kind of where we're still playing out now with increased population, and increased specialization, and war technology. So we're still kind of operating [like humans] that grow up in bands of a hundred... but we're now a global system. [We're] humans equipped for something other than what we're dealing with now in terms of global systems and we've got to figure out social technologies to short-circuit some of this insanity that's going on in terms of tribalism. We really need global leadership, and what we have right now is highly... You know, we have empires.*

The role of scripts / stories

Individuals view events that happen in their lives through the lens of stories, or scripts, that they tell themselves (or that they are told by the larger society). Oftentimes, people confuse the events that took place with their interpretation of those events. Once events get plugged into existing story lines, it can be quite difficult for people to understand what happened from a different perspective. Fisher proposes that scripts exist at the individual level as well as the communal and societal levels.

*And we have all this emotional stuff around the facts that this, and this, and this happened. Really all that happened is you know, X, and then Y, and then Z. but we've got this whole thing about it: "It's terrible, it's bad, it's wrong."*

*And when people get into a pattern of this is how the world is, this is how that other group is, you know, they're deep in the reality of their own story. They're just doomed to play it back over, and over, and over. I mean, I think about the scripts that are operating right now. The apocalyptic scripts or the story of good and evil is older than the Judeo-Christian tradition. There's like this huge metascript that we're all in, and then there are the personal scripts that we live, grow-up, whatever.*

The victim mentality

In many protracted conflict situations, individuals on both sides of the conflict think of themselves as the victims. Fisher proposes that this is because there are "payoffs" involved, such as the ability to be "right" and to feel justified in dominating the other. There are also negative consequences involved in identifying as the victim. Identifying as a victim makes it difficult to hear the other side's story, and leaves one with a sense of one's own victimization and helplessness.

*It's like you're in the victim role and it's not bad, it's not wrong. You know, like this, this and this happened to you; and now you have these, these and these feelings. And that's just exactly right...you know, that's how we're made to react...The payoff of being a victim is sometimes so sweet. [The payoffs of being a victim are]: you're right, they're wrong. I mean, being right is very sweet...but it's about how can I live my life most powerfully? ...Calling on my victim identity to dominate other people is not powerful. It doesn't bring any internal peace, and it doesn't leave any room for the other person's story.*

### Approaches

#### Complexity in narrative

One approach to working with conflict is to ask individuals to tell their personal stories. One benefit of telling and listening to personal stories is that it is difficult to deny an individual's personal experience. The facilitator's job is to validate the stories and to help the individuals "build layers of context" and "hold all the different poles" of the story, in order to experience the accumulation of different stories and perspectives as part of one total conflict story.

*That's what I meant by point counterpoint. It's like a conversation of, "This is what it's like for me." "Oh, this is what it's like for me." And the nice thing about this is it's not about, "Well, your story isn't valid because my story proves it wrong." No story is wrong...You just keep building layers, and layers, and layers of context which help people hold all the different poles of the story; of the total conflict story. So people are telling the story and you can see how destruction and violence has imposed something on their lives.*

#### Separate "what happened" from the interpretation of what happened

An important part of transforming narrative is to make an effort to separate "what happened", or the facts about an event, from the interpretation of the event. This helps individuals notice the ways in which their interpretations and stories about what happens influences the meaning that the events take on in their lives.

*There's a lot of value in looking at things strictly as events and not having this high level of abstraction about them. Like, "This happened, and then this happened, and then this happened; and our story about it is that violence has occurred."*

#### Choosing to tell a different narrative/ story

*It takes a lot of awareness once you start thinking about them as scripts. I think that's the first step. That gives you the freedom to say, "Well, which script am I going to choose?" And as soon as...you get that breathing space around something, and you have the support for your creativity... you can invent a new script. Then anything is possible.*

Practical Techniques

Psychodrama / sociodrama—seeing the story

*So, in conflicts, I think if you can create the space where there is a listening for people to see each other's stories, and not just hear them, but I think there's something very powerful about seeing them. There's something powerful about drama. That's why psychodrama is my home professionally, because I really believe it offers something powerful.*

*...in psychodrama the classical format is-- you have a group. The idea is that everybody in the group is a therapist, and you're supporting the protagonist, the person whose story you're actually looking at. So, you start out with some sharing and people checking in. The director would choose a protagonist, other people would play roles in the protagonist's story, and then you close with the sharing where people can talk about how what happened links in with their own work.*

*What happens during the action in the middle of the phase is that the director basically asks the protagonist, "Show me this." ...It's all about trying... to expand role repertoire...It's sort of like a laboratory for real life. So whatever role you want in your life that you're blocked from having-- this is sort of like a laboratory where you can look at what are the blocks, where am I blocking myself, where do I need to take responsibility.*

*The protagonist and everyone really enters very much into the story being enacted as if it really is happening. So it's very different from talk therapy. So that's the therapeutic version. The way that I use it is more of sociodrama-- allowing people to project onto a theme and allowing people to play in a theme without there being one protagonist, but having a more generic story...that hooks into everyone's protagonist. And I also use isolated techniques from psychodrama like role reversal. When I mediate conflicts between two parties I have them – I use the encounter format so that they're actually standing behind one another and speaking as if they're the other person.*

Use of role reversal, encounter format, doubling, mirroring, playback theatre

*Playback Theater is essentially taking...techniques of psychodrama and extending it into a theater form. So, you have an audience, you have a conductor, you have maybe five actors, a musician, and people from the audience come and take the chair beside the conductor and tell their story. With the conductor's help, they put people/actors in the roles of their story...It's almost like if you've ever done anything with Jungian or Gestalt, where you have pieces of a dream speak. Like each symbol in the dream has a voice...You cast different components of the story, watch the actors improvise it, play it back. That's why it's called Playback. And, everyone watches the story. The teller sees the story...It's all about honoring the story teller's story. And, one story begins the next story...It's very community building, and I would say it's sort of sacred.*

An example of using psychodrama to help explore identity / trauma in an intractable conflict situation

*I asked Forsan\*, "Do you ever remember a time where something was serious but you were laughing?" He said, "No, not really." And then...he came back fairly quickly and said, "Actually no, you know what, I do remember a time." And so we set out that time; and...he was with his family in Nablus, I believe, and...there was bombing going on right by his house, and he had been very frightened, and his family was very frightened. His little sister was screaming, his father was trying to be brave, his mother was huddled in a corner. And he was acting like – hey, I wanna see the helicopters. He was trying to blow it off like this is no big deal. And so we saw that.*

*We had people playing members of his family, people from the group. And then I asked to sculpt how he would want it, because he had picked two people to play him. There was a sort of care-free, inauthentic Forsan, and the Forsan inside who was actually quite frightened and concerned about his mother and little sister. I had him do most of it from outside rather than being in the scene again, because it was pretty traumatic. So he was watching this. And I had him sort of resculpt how he would have wanted the moment to be, and what he did was, he put his family together instead of being in different parts of the room...He had them all touching. He had them lined up kind of like in a family portrait where they were all together. And Rina, who had initially had the complaint...it helped. It put a completely different context around [Forsan's] behavior. And then, you know, their conflict was completely transformed into another level. [Rina] no longer had that complaint about [Forsan]. She understood where it was coming from, and she was very gratified about his story.*

\*all names and places in this story have been changed

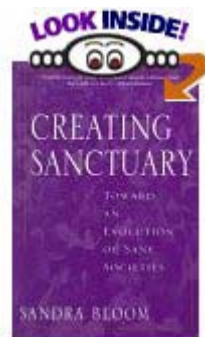
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*Creating Sanctuary* makes some broadly challenging statements about human nature and social organization. Dr. Sandra Bloom interweaves the individual and the social, the personal and the political, with the story of how she and a group of friends and colleagues created a traditional psychiatric milieu based on social psychiatry principles. Bloom and her colleagues have come to believe that unresolved, multi-generational, often forgotten trauma leads to a compulsion to repeat that is a powerful force in individual and social



history. Because of this unresolved legacy of trauma, all of our social systems are "trauma-organized," producing institutions which are unresponsive to and often directly counter to human needs.

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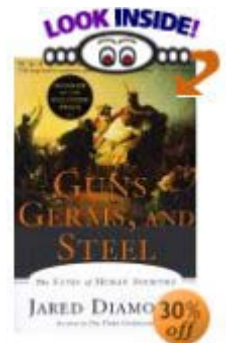
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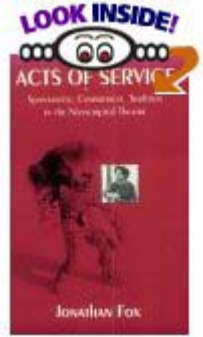
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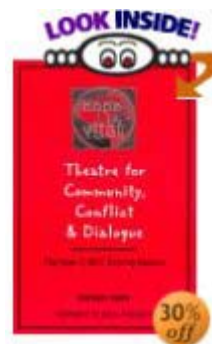
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*This is a website about Dr. Irvin Yalom that includes his books, videotapes, curriculum vitae, biography, interviews, lectures and contact information.*

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*This website is a resource for those who use theatre techniques for other or more than arts or entertainment purposes, and for those whose theatre styles incorporate other than traditional presentation styles. The site includes applied and interactive techniques such as: Boal techniques, drama therapy, Hacktivism, radical theatre, sociodrama, playback theatre, and psychodrama. Links are also available to topics such as: the history of theatre, theatre in education, training and development.*

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Website about Barry Oshry and his company, Power and Systems, Inc.:

<http://www.powerandsystems.com/#>

*This website includes information about Barry Oshry's ideas on power and systems, as well as provides programs and presentations information, and a listing of books and publications written by Oshry.*



**Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi**  
**Spiritual Leader, Jewish Renewal Movement**

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Zalman Schachter-Shalomi is widely recognized as perhaps the most important Jewish spiritual teacher of the second half of the twentieth century. A rabbi, he is also professor emeritus at Temple University, Professor of Religious Studies and former World Wisdom Chair at Naropa University, and is the elder of the Jewish Renewal movement. His belief in the universality of spiritual truth has led him to study with Sufi masters, Buddhist teachers, Native American elders, Catholic monks, and humanistic and transpersonal psychologists. He is the founder of the Spiritual Eldering Institute in Boulder, Colorado, which sponsors nondenominational workshops to help people grow into elderhood. He is also the author of From Age-ing to Sage-ing and Wrapped in a Holy Flame.

Metaphors

The following four metaphors remind us that even when individuals, groups or nations have differing interests, they usually have some common interests as well. These metaphors draw upon images of the survival of the planet as an overarching interest that all of humanity has in common.

The cancer cell metaphor

*...people who are saying on the other side that, I don't want to be an integral part of the planet. I want my people and my turf to eat everything else up. What you get is, that's how a cancer cell behaves. It has thrown off the discipline of being part of a whole organism.*

The living cell of the global organism metaphor

This metaphor suggests that we should be living and working for the good of the entire planet, not just for our own slice of land or identity.

*There is a situation where I'm very clear that I'm not acting for myself. And when I realize that, that I am a cell, a living cell of the global organism... If I see myself as a living cell of a living planet, that creates a whole different set of ethical norms...*

Being a "matriot" rather than a "patriot"

*One of my friends, Susan Sachs, coined the term "matriots," and she said instead of being patriots we have to be matriots....Meaning caring for the planet, rather than caring for the country...Every religion is a vital organ of the planet, and we need them to be in the best of health.*

"What would the earth want?"

*If you see this from what does the Earth want, the Earth would not want olive groves to be destroyed. The Earth would not want water resources to be abused. The Earth would not want sewage to go into the Mediterranean. For instance, the whole Middle East is now like a human being who's dehydrated. And when I get dehydrated I get very angry.*

*You know, I'm burning. And that's what's happening there...And here in the United States the clear-cutting and so on gets us into a place where Earth has emphysema. This is why I feel it's so important for people to really understand the biological, the organismic model of things.*

### Sources

#### Irrelevant, anachronistic paradigms

When a great deal of change or anarchy takes place in a system, conflict is likely to occur (Coleman, 2003). However, the opposite is also true: When systems remain constant (or get stuck in old paradigms) even in the face of change taking place in the outside world, change that naturally should occur is stymied. Reb Zalman suggests that resistance to naturally occurring growth and change can be a source of protracted conflict.

*And every once in a while a paradigm has to collapse in order that the new paradigm can arise. I'll give you an example. In Islam, it's still about the year six hundred and something, you know? And as long as they're going to stay in that paradigm alone, it's going to be very hard to talk to people who are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It's a strange thing when I say it this way, you know. Another such situation is that when the founding fathers of this country were setting up the Constitution and the government, they were doing what I would say is the latest paradigm shift stuff available to them in their day. They were also people who had a very high degree of consciousness, as you can see from the Masonic symbol still on the dollar bill. They were all master masons. So as they raised themselves to this high place, working with the reality maps of that time, they came out with that cosmology with a wonderful government. That cosmology has become obsolete at this point and we are still trying to run institutions as though the cosmology has not changed... We see that the institution of presidency as it is right now does not work. We see that the institution of Congress as it is right now does not work, that the electoral college is horse and buggy stuff from a long, long time ago, when you couldn't get from Boston to Philadelphia on the same day.*

#### Not living in the present

Reb Zalman suggests that individuals have trouble budging from their original positions because they're not living in the present while they negotiate. One reason that parties are distracted from living in the present is because they serve their "internalized board of directors" rather than staying present in the moment. Instead of trusting and following what their own hearts, minds and souls tell them to do, they listen to the internalized voices of others, who may hold more skeptical views. Not living in the present while negotiating can often lead parties to miss opportunities for true connection and confidence-building with the other side.

*Because the people bring with themselves into the negotiation what I would call an internalized board of directors and an internalized inner audience. So, for instance, if Abu Mazen has to speak, he realizes that inside of him sits Arafat, and behind him sit the*

*Hamas people, and so on and so forth, so that he never is completely in the present because he's simultaneously talking to the gallery.*

### Approaches & Practical Techniques

#### Recognize the shadow side

In order for negotiations to be effective, people first need to recognize and come to terms with their own “shadow side.” The shadow side can be thought of as the part of oneself that one is not necessarily aware, or proud of, having. Reb Zalman describes the shadow side as a natural part of life—individuals, groups, organizations, governments and many other institutions have shadow sides. When people deny the existence of their own shadow side, they (oftentimes, unconsciously) project it onto the Other. The consequence of this behavior is that no true understanding between people can occur.

In order to deal more effectively with this, Reb Zalman advises first recognizing one's own shadow side—acknowledging its presence as a natural and legitimate part of oneself. He suggests that this recognition and acknowledgement of one's own shadow side should be done in a safe place, within the scope of one's own community (i.e., prior to meeting with the other side). The next step is to share one's own shadow side with the other party, and ask the other party to share their shadow side. This could take the form of being truly honest about how one feels or what one hopes for in a situation (even if one is not proud of those feelings or desires), and asking the other party to share their true feelings and wishes as well.

*There are shadow costs in running governments. There are shadow costs in interpersonal relationships, and as long as the shadow side is projected on the other and not seen as one's own shadow, I don't think that there's going to be a way of dealing with conflict in a better way. So therefore I envision in the future a situation where when people come to the table to resolve conflict, they will bring their shadow side along as well as their good side.*

*I'll give you an example: Enron and all these people who were taking debits and fixing them as if they were credits. So they gave themselves a very fine face, as it were, you know. And I see in the government today the same situation is true, that the things that are debits on the part of the government are being presented as if they were positive virtues. So we'll never get to be able to deal with things until we look at the shadow side of that.*

*And here's where we have to go to Jung and where we have to go to the shamanic people to be able to manifest the shadow to us so that we can see them. In the past we called them devils, you know, but they're not other people's devils. When you say devil you always project it on somebody else. In our situation we have to be able to say, “This is my shadow. I'll show you mine, you show me yours.” And I think that's what's happening in negotiations at this point--that nobody wants to show their shadow. They*

*show themselves only in the light part, and whatever is their shadow they project on the other.*

*Well, I think you cannot get to know your shadow in the presence of your enemy. You really will have to be in a safe space with your own people... You have to rise to a higher level of consciousness so that you don't reside in the consciousness of where I am in the light and everything else is in the dark and I don't want to know about it. In Sanskrit there's a term called Avidya. It means not wanting to know, not knowing, and that sense of, "I don't want to know what my dark side is, and I know that you have a dark side because I can see it."*

#### Speak "the dream" out loud

Usually, an individual's or group's dreams are only verbalized within—they are not shared with the other side. This leads people to continue moving towards the realization of their dreams, sometimes using any means necessary to achieve them. One method for intervening in this type of situation is to ask parties to make their dreams explicit. Once this has been accomplished, the facilitator's role is to work with the parties to "reality test" their dreams. This involves asking them to think and talk about the potential physical, emotional, financial and other costs associated with achieving their dream. Making the dream explicit and reality testing it can often help soften the parties' original positions in the conflict.

*Can people give up dreams that they hold? I don't think that they are able to do this immediately without making them explicit. Could you imagine if some Palestinians would say, "My present situation is that I will not want to see Israel as a viable state; in fact, I want to drive them all out." And that gets put on the table, against which you can do some reality testing: "What would it cost you in your sacrifices, in your children who would be blowing themselves up? What would it cost you in your infrastructure, in the pain and the problems that you would have over it in the future?" So the reality testing against that dream sometimes, I'm not saying always, shatters the dream.*

*When I hatch this as a dream inside myself and only with my close people who are also dreaming the same dream, then we go into a shared trance about it, and the trance creates action directives that are not going to be helpful. But if I wake people up to the point where I say, "Would you make explicit what you're dreaming about?" First they're ashamed to say it, you know. But after a while something comes out, and when they hear with their ears what their mouths are saying, there tends to be an amelioration of the position, a softening of the position.*

#### Honor the web of relationships

Reb Zalman describes a new ritual that occurs immediately prior to the wedding ceremony between a bride and groom. Traditionally, this ceremony, called the "badekken" in Yiddish, consists of the groom putting the veil on the bride. While bride and groom are usually surrounded by friends and family as this ritual takes place, it is primarily a dyadic interaction. In Reb Zalman's new ritual, both families are involved in

the interaction. He acknowledges the power that the families have to help the bride and groom begin their new life together.

*At a Jewish wedding you have such a thing that's called veiling the bride, called "badekken" in Yiddish. At the badekken, usually it's being done in public and the bridegroom comes and they all sing and he puts the veil over the bride and so on. The last 20 years I've been calling the blood relatives, the immediate blood relatives-- parents, children in the time of a second marriage, and siblings of both sides into a room together with the bride and the groom. And I say to them, "Look, these people, this is the beginning of their life. Could we make it easier for them by removing heavy karma from them? I will ask them to forgive you, because you can't grow up in a family without having unforgiven stuff against your parents and siblings, and I'm going to ask you to forgive them." And you go and meet them one on one, and it's so amazing what happens in that room. The change from social civility to heartfulness becomes very great... Then when we go to the marriage ceremony, to the canopy, what a difference has happened to the family.*

#### Establish an "I-Thou" relationship with the Other

Reb Zalman emphasizes the importance of establishing an "I-Thou" relationship between parties in conflict, by which each party is able to connect to the "basic humanity" of the other, instead of objectifying the other. The goal is to look into the Other's face and see their humanness. The "I-Thou" relationship, a term coined by well-known philosopher Martin Buber's famous book of the same name, can be described as the opposite of dehumanization. The goal is to provide safety, love, understanding, and vulnerability in connection/dialogue with the other.

*But it always means that you look the other person in the face and you see their basic humanity.*

#### "Social software"

To help "soften up" potentially tough situations or encounters, Reb Zalman uses what he calls "social software" to help enable people enter into an "I-Thou" relationship, in which each person is able to experience the other's basic humanity. One example of a social software exercise is: one person begins a sentence but does not finish it. The other person finishes the sentence, and then begins a new sentence, but does not finish it. The first person finishes that sentence, and begins a new one, but does not finish it, and so on. After Zalman and I did a few rounds of the exercise, he said: *Now take a look. Right now in this thing, I have such a joy doing this with you, it feels like we are hugging, you know. This is one of the things that I do with people. A lot of dyadic stuff so that they can get into the 'I-Thou' function.*

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Film: *Mindwalk*

**Dr. Dale Jamieson**  
**Henry R. Luce Professor in Human Dimensions of Global Change**  
**Carleton College**

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Dale Jamieson is Henry R. Luce Professor in Human Dimensions of Global Change at Carleton College, Adjunct Scientist in the Environmental and Societal Impacts Group at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, and Adjunct Professor at the University of the Sunshine Coast in Maroochydore, Australia. He has been a visiting professor in Program on Science and Technology Studies at Stanford University, in the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, the Department of Science and Technology Studies and the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell University, and the Faculty of Philosophy at Monash University in Australia. He has also been a visiting fellow of New College, Magdalen College, and St. Anne's College of Oxford University. For nearly twenty years he taught at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where he was the only faculty member to have won both the Dean's award for research in the social sciences and the Chancellor's award for research in the humanities. He regularly teaches courses in ethics, environmental philosophy, environmental justice, philosophy of biology and mind, and global change.

Dr. Jamieson's most recent book is *Morality's Progress: Essays on Humans, Other Animals, and the Rest of Nature*. He is also the editor or co-editor of seven books, most recently *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy* (Blackwell, 2001), and *Singer and his Critics* (Blackwell, 1999), named by Choice as one of the outstanding academic books of 1999. He has published more than sixty articles and book chapters. His work has been translated into Polish, Italian, German, Dutch, Japanese, and Spanish. He is Associate Editor of *Science, Technology and Human Values*, and on the editorial advisory boards of several journals. His research has been funded by the Ethics and Values Studies Program of the National Science Foundation, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Office of Global Programs in the National Atmospheric and Aeronautics Administration.

Sources

Failure of will

Dr. Jamieson talked primarily about the sources and possible approaches to intractable conflict situations. He spoke about the importance of the process in understanding and dealing with intractable conflict situations. He suggested that individuals' inability to engage in "right action" and moral behavior are primary factors responsible for the existence of intractable conflicts. For example, Dr. Jamieson's sense is that intractable conflicts often occur as a result of a "weakness of will" on the part of the players in the conflict situation.

*Aristotle thought that when people behave wrongly...that it's through weakness of will. He was impressed by these kinds of cases where we know what the right thing to do is, we know what the means are for producing the right thing, but somehow we just can't bring ourselves to do it. So for him, in some ways, the paradigm of this kind of wrong action is*

*really like case of the guy going off his diet. I know that the chocolate cake is going to blow my diet, I want to stay on the diet, and I find myself eating chocolate cake anyway.*

### Moralism

Dr. Jamieson distinguishes between morality and “moralism.” He describes moralism as individuals’ inappropriate use of moral codes to support their own point of view. He suggests that a main feature of true morality is impartiality. By this definition, arguments that draw on “morality” but are partial to one group’s point of view (to the exclusion of another group’s point of view), can be considered to be grounded in moralism rather than morality. Dr. Jamieson suggests that moralism is itself a source of intractable conflict situations.

*...For example, when a Jewish settler says this land is only big enough for one of us and it’s going to be us, or a Palestinian says this land is only big enough for one of us and it’s going to be us, that is exactly the opposite of moral thinking. Whatever people might say about “we were here first,” or “the Bible gave the land to us” and so on and so forth, there’s no real moral thinking that’s going on in this case because there is a complete failure of impartiality...that’s what makes [morality] different from moralism. Moralism can be dressing up my own interests of preferences in the language of objective right or truth. And there certainly is a lot of moralism in these conflicts, but that’s not the same [as morality].*

### Approaches

#### Strengthen the individual and collective will: involve the community

If the individual’s failure of will is a primary source of intractable conflict, the task in approaching this type of conflict would be to devise ways to strengthen the will of the individual. According to Dr. Jamieson, Aristotle prescribed community involvement in a conflict between two or more members of that community in order to help strengthen the will of the individuals involved.

*So the question is what is it that strengthens the will? For Aristotle, a big piece of it...well, there were two big pieces, I guess. One is the support of a community in the inculcation in a community of right action...*

#### Strengthen the individual and collective will: repetition of “right action”

According to Dr. Jamieson, Aristotle proposed that another way to strengthen the individual will is to practice virtuous habits through simple repetition. The idea is that practicing right actions makes those actions easier to call upon when they’re needed.

*A second piece [of Aristotle’s thinking] had to do with repetition, with the formation of habits and virtue. And so the idea is that you declare yourself this diet, and the first time you’re offered this chocolate cake it’s really really hard to resist. But having resisted one time, three times, nine times, it gets progressively easier.*



### The value of morality and impartiality

Dr. Jamieson defined a central feature of morality as the ability to be impartial in a situation. An example he used to understand impartiality is that if you are asked to choose a policy from among a number of choices, without knowing how it would affect you, you would be said to be being impartial in your choice.

*...morality, at least as it's understood by moral philosophers, is closely connected to ideas of impartiality, for example. In some sense putting oneself in the place others. What kind of principles would I accept if I didn't actually know what would benefit me and what would harm me?*

*...This test that I gave you, of what policies would I choose if I didn't know how they would affect me, would be one way of understanding impartiality. Another way of understanding impartiality would be to say impartiality means that we do what brings about the best overall results, regardless of the distribution of those results.*

### Practical Techniques

#### Use "cold cases"

Dr. Jamieson brought together business people and environmentalists to engage in conversations about "closed" environmental cases (cases that had already been decided at some point in the past). Through talking about past cases, the participants were able to experience the others' basic humanity (regardless of whether they agreed on the issues) and in some instances, the participants were even able to see the issues from the other side's point of view.

*But we got these sort of intractable business types together with these intractable environmentalists, who basically were the people who would be wringing each other's necks and suing each other. And what we did is we took some old conflicts, what we called cold cases, rather than hot cases, and we essentially got them to work over cold cases together.*

*And I thought that that was potentially a very powerful way of getting people to think then about hot cases. Because it seems to me that one of the things you want to do with hot cases isn't so much to expect people to agree. That, I think, is too much to ask for. But part of what you want to do is you want to drain these conflicts of the desire that people have to kill each other.*

*It enabled them to see that the cases tended to be very complicated and have all sorts of unpredictable aspects...by working through these cold cases with the enemy, it also gave them some trust that the enemy wasn't just an ideological monster, but was someone who was actually sensitive to a variety of values and nuances.*

*...the biggest lesson substantively about these cases was that there was really no single right answer, and how complex the cases were, and how having a kind of knee-jerk*

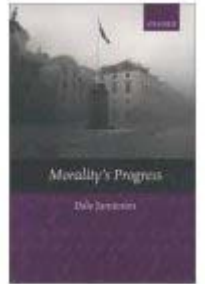
*reaction to the cases was very likely to lead you to surprising and unwanted places...What happened between people and process was enormously important, and the other thing that was so important was the kind of humility that it engendered. And that was more important than sort of overt side-switching, if you will.*

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Dr. Jamieson's homepage: [http://www.esig.ucar.edu/HP\\_dale.html](http://www.esig.ucar.edu/HP_dale.html)

*This website includes biographical information about Dr. Jamieson, contact information, and a partial listing of publications.*

**Dr. Victor Kremenyuk**  
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Victor Kremenyuk is deputy director of the Institute for USA and Canada Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow. His areas of interest are international conflict resolution, crisis management, foreign policy, and the negotiation process. Dr. Kremenyuk is a member of IIASA: International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis: Processes of International Negotiation (PIN) Project. He has published more than 100 works in Russian and other languages and edited the first volume published by the PIN Program, *International Negotiation: Analysis, Approaches, Issues*.

Metaphors

The US as policeman metaphor

The US could serve as a supportive “parent” to the world, but instead it acts like a policeman to the world’s nations, rewarding and punishing them as it sees fit. Dr. Kremenyuk suggests that this role may seem appropriate to the US in the short-term, but in the long-term will lead to feelings of animosity towards the US by the people of the nations of the world.

*...at least two years ago [the U.S.] had a choice to become either the world's leader, a good father creating something like paternalistic relations between the U.S. and the nations which need mostly the U.S. generosity. And the alternative was to become a policeman, a tough policeman and to hunt for the criminals. And the choice was made by the American administration to become a policeman, which maybe attracts some more support on the part of the American public, but which was very short-sighted because inevitably it will put on the U.S, with all its undeniable achievements into the position of defending country...you know...the country fortress because it will be hated...because it will be regarded as a hostile force by the billions of people in the world...*

Sources

Stuck in an old conflict paradigm

Dr. Kremenyuk suggests that as a species, humans are evolutionarily stuck in “conflict-mode” and need a new paradigm to get ourselves “unstuck”. The world is in a process of evolution: we began with warring tribes, and, if we do things right, we can help move ourselves toward a more peaceful, globalized society.

*Well, I think, you know, that there is a certain unexpected development in this area because when the Cold War ended, there was a feeling...rather wide-spread, both in this country and in the international community that that opened a possibility to put an end to almost all the conflicts, including the intractable conflicts. There was such an enthusiasm shared by many people in the United Nations, in separate nations that we can move on and work out solutions of almost all of the conflict which existed. And, of*

*course, that was supported somehow by the developments in South Africa, in Afghanistan, even in the Middle East where the possibility of some direct Arab-Israel talks was hoped. I think that now, of course, those days are behind, and now we are facing the situation that not all the conflicts were solved and not all the conflicts can be solved. Still, you know, we have the very significant or very important situation when the conflict continues, not only because of some civilizational things...not only because of the gap between the rich and the poor, but simply because the human society has not yet grown up to the level when it can really put an end to the conflict. The human society still needs some conflicts to go ahead, to develop. And this concerns not only the group of the backward, which are simply in the situation when they cannot live without conflicts--the group of nations labeled the "axis of evil" or the "rogue states", but also more developed nations. They're still mostly...in the stage when they need to preserve the conflictual development rather than non-conflictual development.*

### Globalization

Globalization brings together formerly isolated groups, which often leads to groups with fewer resources realizing their relative material deprivation. Such groups experience an unequal distribution of resources, and in some cases are socialized or taught to believe that wealth is "zero-sum"—in order for them to gain some of the wealth, they must attack those who have it. Dr. Kremenyuk suggests that this phenomenon is a source of intractable conflicts around the globe.

*You know, it maybe was much easier to live, say, a hundred years ago when millions of people somewhere in Egypt or in some other... They never knew anything about America...about the high standards of living in the more developed nations. They lived a traditional life. But due to the globalization, this isolation was broken. And now millions of people in India or Bangladesh or in any other...poor country, they know that there are nations which live much better...*

*So the problem is now what to do with their desire to live better. Then it'd be framed as a constructive force which will make the people become more active for reforms, for changing their lives, or it may be used to frame a hostility towards the richer country...to say that you are poor because they are rich...If you want to become richer, they should be robbed. So this is the only possibility for you to become rich. Then, of course, that will be framed as an ideological conflict. In that case, the communistic ideology will come back and the millions of people will believe again that to make their lives better, they should attack and destroy the bastions of capitalism or, if to speak about the Islamic war, so...those people...also the millions of those people they want to make their lives better....they have to attack or fight against the infidel and to take part of their wealth and to share it.*

### Unequal distribution of resources

Many conflicts that are referred to as ideological or religious are, at core, actually caused by unequal distribution of resources. Dr. Kremenyuk suggests that lack of resources is a primary factor that leads people to commit terrorist acts, not their religious ideology. He

points to the case that the Islamic countries are, for the most part, comprised of many poor people who rise up as a result of not having their basic needs met.

*Because, of course, may be labeled as the religion, which some say is tightly connected to fanaticism or which can produce conflicts very often. But the problem is mainly: the Islamic people live in a poor country. There are among them rich countries like Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, but they are not very numerous. The rest of Muslim world, which is almost a billion people, are poor...illiterate. They suffer; they are under-nourished. No one cares, even their own rulers. But at the same time, of course...[these conflicts] are framed as ideological conflict with the infidel West. And many researchers even...say the Islam...there's so much unrest, there's so much aggression. It's not aggression; it reflects the feelings of the desperate people.*

### Approaches

#### Identify potential conflict situations before they erupt

In order to try to prevent future conflicts from occurring, it can be helpful to create an inventory of “hot spots” around the globe, with the purpose of creating strategies to prevent those conflicts from occurring in the first place. Dr. Kremenjuk identified some types of conflict on the horizon: environmental, resource-based (primarily as a result of unequal distribution and access to resources), and population wars—the inability of people to simply survive.

*So, first of all, I think that a large effort should be taken to try to identify where can we expect the conflicts....why they should come. And then on the basis of this inventory, just to try to work out sensible strategies...How can all these expected conflicts be treated? What should be done for this purpose; what resources we need; what strategies should be worked out; and what purposes should be set. How can we avoid all these population wars, resources wars, environmental wars and so on.*

### References

Kremenjuk, V.A. (2002). *International negotiation: Analysis, approaches, issues*.  
Second edition. Jossey-Bass.

Developed under the direction of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, this important resource contains contributions from some of the world's leading experts in international negotiation, representing a wide range of nations and disciplines. They offer a synthesis of contemporary negotiation theory, perspectives for understanding negotiation dynamics, and strategies for producing mutually satisfactory and enduring agreements that is particularly relevant in these times.

Kremenjuk, V.A. (2000). *International economic negotiations: Models versus reality*.  
Edward Elgar Publications

Kremenyuk, V.A.(1994). *Conflicts in and around Russia: Nation-building in difficult times*. Greenwood Press.

**IIASA: International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis: Processes of International Negotiation (PIN) Project**

Located online at: [www.iiasa.ac.at](http://www.iiasa.ac.at)

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*The Processes of International Negotiation (PIN) Program conducts and organizes research on a broad spectrum of topics related to the processes of international negotiation. Its objectives include disseminating new knowledge about negotiation as widely as possible, developing networks of scholars and practitioners interested in the subject, and generally furthering the improved study and practice of negotiation internationally.*

**Architect Rosa A. Maria**  
**Municipal and Urban Projects Manager**  
**Centro de Estudios Urbanos y Regionales**  
**Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra**

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Rosa Arlene María graduated as an Architect at Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) in Santiago, Dominican Republic, in 1994. She received a degree in Conflict Prevention and Resolution and a Masters degree in Environmental Management, both in 2000. She specializes in municipal and urban development issues. For the last seven years, Architect María has worked as Municipal and Urban Project Manager at Centro de Estudios Urbanos y Regionales, an academic unit of Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra; and has taught at the Architecture Department of the same University.

Architect María is a consultant in municipal development issues for Interamerican Development Banc (IDB) and Union Europea, working in local government strengthening projects. She also works to define community development methodologies in the Community Development Program, a project that helps urban poor people strengthen their organizations in order to improve their quality of life.

Sources

Intra-personal conflict

Intra-personal conflict can be considered a source of inter-personal conflict. Maria notes that it can be quite difficult to understand the other without first learning to understand ourselves and our own needs.

*But I think that we have conflict inside of us first. When we live in a community, we are trying to understand each other. When we get married, we try to understand with our couple. But the truth is, we don't understand ourselves...Every time that I'm trying to fulfill something that I need inside of me, but I am waiting for[someone else] to fulfill it...I want to be a better person. I want to be in a better situation. I want to have a place in social relationships...all the time I think it's related with our needs inside.*

Approaches

Attempt to understand one's own needs and actions

Maria suggests that in order to successfully negotiate with another party, individuals must first gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and an ability to be self-reflective. This will enable us to act in ways that are more congruent with our desired actions, and prevent us from acting in ways that provoke and escalate conflict situations.

*...I think the work has to be done through the inside of a person...They have to observe, to watch how are they acting. Because sometimes we do things and we think that "It wasn't me. It was so terrible what I said that it was kind of another person". But the*

*truth is it's really me, but it's a part of me that I am denying because I don't know myself.  
When you can get inside and be more profound in...the knowledge of yourself, you can  
have more comprehension of what is happening outside of you...*



### Methodological Learnings / Recommendations

In this section, we outline six “learnings” from conducting this study. Each of the learnings below describes challenges we faced and/or recommendations we would make when conducting a similar study in the future.

In the planning phases of this project, we discussed the tension between our desire to stay elicitive in our approach while also ensuring that our interviews would stay focused on the specific topics we were interested in learning about. We struggled with methodological questions such as: How can we design our interview questions to be as elicitive as possible while also providing the interviewees with some direction about what we’re interested in learning? What is the best way to identify and recruit interviewees who will know enough about the topic of intractable conflict to be able to speak about how it pertains to their work, and also who are far enough removed from the field of intractable conflict that they will be able to provide us with new and “frame-breaking” insights? Should we send the interviewees background materials about how we currently view intractable conflict? Our sense was that sending materials in advance could help the participants “place” their thoughts in a broader context of existing ideas, but that it might also lead the interviewees to tell us more of what we already know (rather than providing us with radically different insights). As a result of the decisions we made on each of these dimensions (which are described in the Methods section of this report) we have identified some methodological learnings which are described in the following sections.

#### Learning #1: Use Highly Elicitive Questions

We discovered that our best interview question was the first one, which asked the interviewees to tell us about their background and the work in which they were currently involved. This question enabled us to begin the conversation with an inquiry into the interviewee’s world, which then led to a discussion of how the interviewee viewed intractable conflict vis a vis her or his own work.

If we or others were to conduct a further study in this area, we would recommend modeling a greater number of the interview questions on the one described above. While our interview guide was designed to elicit the interviewees’ ideas about intractable conflict, our decision to use the words “intractable conflict” in our interviews with the participants may have led them to make assumptions about the types of situations we’re interested in studying (which could possibly be responsible for their overwhelming use of examples of protracted international conflicts). While not intending to, the data we have collected leads us to question whether we asked the interviewees to shed light on our ideas, rather than to tell us about the “unsolvable problems” present in their work.

#### Learning #2: Be More Specific About the Ideal Interviewee Profile

In addition to changes to the interview guide, we would also make a number of other methodological changes. First, we would create a more specific profile of the ideal interviewee. We would be clearer about seeking to talk with individuals whose work involves “unsolvable problems” in a variety of distinct disciplines, as opposed to those whose work focuses on unsolvable problems in the realm of social conflict. We might

seek specifically to interview experts in fields that deal with a diversity of unsolvable problems in the basic sciences such as physics or biology, or in the realms of medicine, engineering, architecture or the visual arts.

### Learning #3: Collect (and Do Not Disseminate) Information Prior to the Interviews

Next, we would likely choose not to send interviewees materials regarding our understanding of intractable conflict. We would see it as our job to make the connections between what they tell us and our current understanding of intractable conflict, rather than the other way around (i.e., we would not ask the interviewees to make this connection). To that end, we would ask interviewees to send us brief references or information on their background (articles, website information, etc.) prior to conducting the interviews. Gaining some familiarity with the interviewees' professional backgrounds would enable us to enter the interviews with a basic understanding of the interviewees' fields, and thus to focus more directly on the "unsolvable problems" in each interviewee's content area of expertise.

### Learning #4: Improve Ability to Recruit Ideal Interviewees

When seeking interviewee referrals, we asked the Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base Project (ICKBP) network members for referrals. This process provided some benefits and also some challenges. The benefits were that members of the ICKB network generally had a good understanding of, and connections to, the types of people we were seeking to interview. This may have been the case for two main reasons: 1) many of the ICKB members had been part of the initial conversations at the ICKB conference that had encouraged a broader understanding of intractable conflict issues, and 2) we emailed the ICKB members a letter with an explanation of the project as well as a detailed profile of the types of individuals we were seeking to interview. While this process was beneficial in many ways, it also brought its share of challenges, some of which are listed below.

#### Some challenges:

1. We were not clear enough about whether we were seeking interviewees who spend their time primarily *thinking* about intractable conflict issues, *dealing* with such issues, or some combination of both. Interviewees who were scholars or scholar-practitioners, or who had otherwise spent time analyzing conflict dynamics tended to be able to provide more helpful insights than those who primarily worked in conflict situations but who were not used to thinking analytically about them.
2. ICKB contacts recommended some potential interviewees who deal with conflict in their work, but who don't deal with intractable conflict issues (such as media producers). As a result, we spent some time communicating up front to make sure that interviewees had appropriate experience with intractable conflicts. However, some interviewees still had trouble connecting to the theme of seemingly unsolvable issues (as opposed to more tractable ones).
3. When ICKB members recommended interviewees with whom they did not have a personal connection, there was a relatively low response rate from those potential interviewees.

Some approaches for dealing with these issues:

1. We would recommend gaining more clarity about the kind of people it will be most helpful to interview. Are we most interested in interviewing scholars, practitioners, scholar-practitioners, or some combination of these? If our answer is some combination, then we would consider the idea of writing two different interview guides, one for each population. The questions in our interview guide in this study were much more theoretically (rather than practically) oriented, and as a result were at times relatively difficult for the practically-oriented interviewees to answer.
2. Based on the above analysis, we would recommend being more explicit in the interviewee recruiting letters (addressed to both the referees as well as the potential interviewees) that:
  - a. We're seeking interviewees who deal with intractable conflict issues that persist over time (as opposed to more tractable conflicts)
  - b. We're seeking interviewees who can bridge the worlds of theory and practice (or who can speak at a theoretical level).
  - c. (In the letter to the referees :) We're seeking interviewees whom the referees know personally, as this often yields the highest interviewee response rate.
3. Particularly if an interviewee draws primarily upon practical examples rather than theoretical analysis, consider using grounded theory or another coding method to understand the assumptions embedded in the interviewee's answers.

Learning #5: Maintain a Truly Diverse Set of Interviewees

Next time, we would pay closer attention to balancing interviewees not only across a diversity of disciplines, but other attributes as well. For example, we would pay more attention to gender and nationality. While this study drew upon a diversity of disciplines, only 3 of the 9 interviewees were women, and the majority of the interviewees were from the US. One way to maintain more control over this factor could be to use a matrix including discipline, nationality, and gender, with discipline being the most important row to keep diverse. The researchers could decide what disciplines, nationalities, and gender split would be ideal and/or acceptable to have, and could then seek appropriate interviewees.

Learning #6: Plan in Advance When Interviewing International Participants

While there are clearly benefits to eliciting international perspectives, there are also challenges related to interviewing international participants. Some of the challenges we experienced in this study, along with possible ways to deal with them, are listed below.

Some challenges:

1. Transcribing interviews can be more difficult/time-consuming when interviewees' native language is not English.
2. The ability for the interviewer and interviewee to connect and understand one another at a useful level depends on both parties' level of fluency. Because all pre-interview communication in this study occurred by brief email exchanges and

we did not directly address the question of a language barrier, it was difficult to establish the level of fluency necessary for a useful interview to take place.

Some approaches for dealing with these challenges:

1. Allow extra time for transcribing interviews with international participants.
2. Send international interviewees a copy of the interview questions ahead of time, so they can prepare their answers prior to the interview.
3. Think ahead about what level of fluency the interviewer will require of the interviewees (or whether the interviewer can conduct the interview in the interviewees' native language), and be explicit about the level of fluency required when choosing interviewees.

References

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- Coleman, P. T. (2000). Intractable Conflict. In Deutsch, M. & Coleman, Peter T. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
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- (2000). *Basic Mediation Training Manual*. Boston: Mediation Works Incorporated.

Appendix A

June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Dear ICKB colleagues,

We are writing to request your help in identifying and contacting leading experts from under-represented fields who we might wish to invite to participate in an interview study we are conducting on intractable conflict.

We are currently conducting Phase I of a research project funded through a mini-grant from the Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base Project (and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation) aimed at eliciting new paradigms, ideas, procedures, and resource materials for addressing intractable conflicts. In order to achieve this objective, we will be engaging experts from fields that are typically excluded from the dominant discourse on intractable social conflict, such as economics, the arts, chemistry, theology, history, medicine, media studies, anthropology, mathematics, etc.

We're seeking your help in identifying and contacting individuals who may be willing to read some introductory information and participate in a 1-hour interview in which we will seek to elicit new knowledge, perspectives, and procedures that can be applied to the domain of intractable conflict. Interviewees will be offered a token of \$100 for their participation.

The profile of an ideal interviewee includes the following:

- a. Expert in fields such as economics, the arts, chemistry, theology, history, medicine, media studies, anthropology, mathematics, etc.
- b. Innovative scholar and/or practitioner working at the “cutting edge” of her/his respective field.
- c. Able to articulately describe her/his work, and bridge knowledge from her/his own field to the arena of intractable social conflict
- d. Involved in work that relates to intractable conflict in some way, even though they do not consider themselves to be conflict professionals.

Please forward suggestions of names and contact information to Jennifer Goldman by email at [jsg2019@columbia.edu](mailto:jsg2019@columbia.edu) or by phone at 212-932-1262. We are under a tight deadline to identify expert participants and conduct the study, so **please contact us as soon as possible, ideally before Tuesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>**. We are happy to talk with you further about our criteria for selecting interviewee candidates-- please let us know if you'd like more information.

We look forward to hearing from you and partnering with you to further the mission of the Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base Project.

All the best,

Peter T. Coleman and Jennifer S. Goldman

Appendix B

June 25, 2003

Dear [interviewee],

We are writing at the suggestion of [ICKB contact] to request your brief participation in a research project funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base Project of the University of Colorado at Boulder, aimed at eliciting new paradigms and procedures for addressing the causes, characteristics, and consequences of enduring social conflicts. At a time when conflict around the world continues to devastate communities and societies, work to better understand and address enduring social conflict is urgently needed.

In order to enhance our current understanding of enduring social conflict, we will be engaging experts from fields that are typically excluded from the dominant discourse on social conflict. You have been identified as a leading expert in your field and as someone who might be able to bridge knowledge in your field with the existing knowledge base on enduring social conflict.

We are writing to see if you would be interested in participating in a one-hour interview, which would include reading some introductory background material on intractable conflict (which we will provide) prior to the interview. This entire commitment should take no more than two hours of your time. We will be conducting preliminary interviews over the next few weeks, and then possibly a second round of interviews (with other participants) at a later point. Our research funding enables us to offer an honorarium of \$100 as a token of our appreciation for your involvement.

The interview will take approximately one hour and would be scheduled and conducted at a time that is convenient for you. *Please contact Jennifer Goldman, Principal Researcher, at [jsg2019@columbia.edu](mailto:jsg2019@columbia.edu) or (212) 932-1262 or simply reply to this email to let us know about your interest and availability in participating or if you have any questions.* Please also feel free to contact Peter T. Coleman at [pc84@columbia.edu](mailto:pc84@columbia.edu) or (212) 678-3112 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Peter T. Coleman, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Psychology and Education  
Director  
International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution  
Columbia University

Jennifer S. Goldman  
Principal Researcher / Ph.D. Candidate  
International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution  
Columbia University

## Appendix C

**ICKB INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Introducing the interview:

- Process:
  - Thank you very much for participating in this research project. I really appreciate the time you've made to participate and help us further expand our understanding of social conflict.
  - This call should last for about 1 hour. Is this still an ok time for you to talk?
  - I will tell you a bit about our research project, see if you have any questions, and then spend the rest of the call asking questions to gain a better understanding of your work and how you think about intractable conflict
- Background on ICKB and Hewlett, and purposes of this project.
- I may ask you what seem like very basic questions-- please act as if I am someone who is kind of a foreigner to your field-- we are trying to get an overall sense of your work and how you think about conflict, and the more detail you can share with me the better
- You have a choice of two possible conditions of anonymity for this study. The first is the option to participate under conditions of complete anonymity (where your name is never associated with anything you have said). However, if you so desire, you have the option of being acknowledged in the write-up of the research for your participation. Do you have a sense of which you'd prefer? If not, you can decide at the end of the interview or at a later point.
- In addition, we are digitally recording this interview in order to be able to put segments of it on the Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base website. As a rule, we would not do this without your permission, and you would have the opportunity to listen to any segments before we use them. Is this ok with you?
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

*Note: After asking each question, the interviewer will wait for a few moments for the interviewee to respond. The prompts will only be used if a participant asks for clarification of a question, or clearly has trouble answering the question.*

- (From the materials you've sent me/Given what I know from [your recommender],) I have a general sense of the field you're in and the work you're involved in. But before we officially begin the interview, I'd like to gain a better understanding of your background. What do you think would be particularly helpful for me to know before we begin?
- How do you understand, or think about, enduring conflict situations? Can you give me an example?
  - (If they need a prompt: How you think about the causes, characteristics, or approaches to dealing with these situations?)

- I'm interested in hearing your initial response to my definition of intractable conflict / the articles we sent you, and how it compares or contrasts to the ways you think about these (enduring conflict) situations.
  - (If they need a prompt: We're interested in learning about how your ideas may differ from, or even radically challenge our current understanding of enduring conflict situations.)
- If you were asked to help in such situations, how would you approach them / what would you do?
- What informs your approach / the actions you take?
  - (If they need a prompt: Is there a framework, methodology, or set of principles that you use to inform what you do?)
- In an ideal world, what do you believe needs to happen to deal with this / these types of situations?
- If you could use a metaphor or an image to describe the types of situations we're talking about, what metaphor (or metaphors / images) would you use, and why?
  - (If they need a prompt: For example, conflict situations are sometimes described conceptually by comparing them metaphorically to games, swamps, or dynamic complex systems.)
- What might be some references (books, articles, teaching materials, websites, audio- or video-tapes, people, or other resources) that I could get my hands on to dig deeper into these issues?
  - (If they need a prompt: How would you suggest getting a hold of them?)

*(If needed: Before closing, I'd like to loop back to the confidentiality question. Do you have a sense of which option you'd prefer?)*

As you know, you'll be paid an Honorarium of \$100 for your participation in this project. In order to do this, I will email you a template invoice (along with an email with a list of references you've mentioned). If you can fill out the invoice with your mailing address and email it back to me, I will then process the invoice and send you a check.

Thank you again for your participation.



Appendix D

Dear [participant],

I look forward to speaking with you during our interview. Prior to your interview, please review the following memo and the materials enclosed in this email:

- Burgess, Heidi, & Burgess, Guy. Intractability and the Frontier of the Field. Conflict Research Consortium, [IntractableConflict.org](http://IntractableConflict.org) website.
- Excerpt from: Coleman, Peter T. (2000). Intractable Conflict. In Deutsch, M. & Coleman, Peter T. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

These materials should help give you a sense of how we, as social psychologists, understand the phenomenon of intractable social conflict. To this point, our understanding of this problem has been informed primarily by the fields of psychology, sociology, and political science.

We are conducting this research project in an effort to expand and diversify our understanding of intractable conflict. We are particularly interested in learning about alternative perspectives, new paradigms, and “frame breaking” insights that will radically challenge and expand the ways we currently think about and approach the problem of enduring conflict.

Prior to the interview, please take a few moments to consider the kind of questions we could ask you that would best elicit your insights and point of view. If it helps you to frame your thoughts in the context of, or in contrast to, the materials we have sent you, please feel free to do so; or if you'd prefer to help us understand how you see these situations using your own perspective as a starting point, please feel free to start there as well.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach Jennifer Goldman at [jsg2019@columbia.edu](mailto:jsg2019@columbia.edu) or + 212-932-1262. We look forward to gaining a better understanding of how you think about and deal with these issues.

All the best,

Peter T. Coleman and Jennifer S. Goldman

Appendix E

Dear [participant],

Thank you very much for participating in this research project. I enjoyed our conversation and am sure that the ideas you've put forth will be quite valuable as we move forward.

As you know, one of our goals for this project is to collect a list of references (books, articles, teaching materials, websites, audio- or video-tapes, people, and other resources) based on the information we gather from our interviewees. Below, I've listed some people and literature you referenced during the interview. If you can email me specific references connected to these that you think we should know about, that'd be great.

[References]

I've also attached the template invoice-- if you fill it out and email it back, we can process it and send you the \$100 Honorarium for your participation in this project.

It was great to talk with you, and I look forward to being in touch.