This project was undertaken under the auspices of the Conflict Research Consortium’s Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base project, funded by the Hewlett Foundation.

Its purpose has been to identify and explore cutting edge practices in dealing with intractable social conflict in the United States, with a view toward:

- Lifting up generative ways in which groups are working within the United States to overcome/dismantle intractable social conflicts, particularly racism;
- Creating a research agenda for the field which more adequately addresses intractable social conflict within the United States;
- Developing ideas on how conflict resolution efforts and initiatives might better interface with efforts of groups on social issues which do not necessarily see themselves as conflict resolvers or their processes as conflict resolution.

Methodology

We contacted five people associated with NCPCR and asked them to identify organizations which were engaged in innovative efforts to resolve intractable conflicts within the United States. (See Appendix A for questions asked of NCPCR contacts. Unfortunately, one of them was not able to be responsive to our requests. From the other four (Sharon Bailey, Roberto Chene, Paul Warhaftig and Ann Yellott), we were able to assemble a list of approximately thirty recommended organizations.

NCPCR has been organizing biennial conferences on peacemaking and conflict resolution for almost twenty years. For the last several years, it has put increased efforts into attracting individuals and groups, particularly people of color, who are working on overcoming social “isms,” whether or not they define themselves as conflict resolvers. Thereby, NCPCR has developed relationships with a variety of people working on such issues and has more contacts with such groups than other conflict resolution organizations.

The five NCPCR affiliates we contacted were chosen for three reasons:
- as a group, they reflect diversity in terms of age, race, gender, and region of the country;
- among them, they capture almost the entirety of NCPCR’s history;
- each of them has been involved in connecting NCPCR to various individuals and organizations.

We were unable to obtain responses from about two-thirds of the individuals and groups that our NCPCR contacts suggested. This occurred for several reasons:
- the contact information was out-of-date
Despite these disappointments, the seven from whom we were able to obtain full responses to our questions (Appendix B), offered such diversity of role and issue involvement, and richness of experience and perspective, that we judge our results to be an exciting contribution to the field.

Data were collected primarily through telephone interviews, typically extending one hour or longer, and sometimes followed up on with additional shorter phone interviews. Many of the respondents also sent documentation through mail or e-mail and/or directed us to their websites. All interviewees were sent the interview instrument prior to the telephone interview. The interviews therefore could be free flowing conversations; each of us used additional questions to deepen the dialogue on the several issues we raised and to assure that we were fully understanding the information the respondent was offering.

Prior to final production of this report, the respondents will be given this draft and offered the opportunity to correct any misinformation and/or extend the analysis we offer here.

The Respondents

**Baba Bey** is a principal in MA-AT Enterprises in Atlanta, Georgia, which provides training and consulting services and is involved in the National Black Men’s Health Network. He also teaches in primary and middle schools in Atlanta.

**Fred Brown** serves as Research Policy Analyst at the Pittsburgh Transportation Equity Project. PTEP “is a community-based initiative that seeks to create conditions of empowerment for African Americans in and around transportation issues within their community.” PTEP’s primary role is to “educate, support, and coordinate African American communities with regard to transportation equity issues,” and also provides information on other issues that “may inhibit full participation in this endeavor (health care, family support, conflict resolution, youth programming, etc.).”


**Roberto Chene** lives and works in Albuquerque, New Mexico where he does training, teaching and consulting with a focus on inter-cultural leadership and conflict resolution. He directs the Southwest Center for Intercultural Leadership and periodically teaches courses at the University of New Mexico. He has served for several years on the board of NCPCR.

**Claire B. Greensfelder** is Executive Director of The Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center in Oakland, California. The Center is located in the Martin Luther King, Jr.
Regional Shoreline Park (on the edges of San Leandro Bay – an inlet bay of San Francisco Bay). It was established in 2001 by community activists in partnership with four government agencies “to serve as a regional resource for the study and teaching of nonviolence and conflict resolution and to provide at-risk youth with recreational programs, environmental education, and employment opportunities.”

Steven Haberfeld Ph. D. is the Executive Director and serves as the Senior Negotiator/Mediator and Director of Training on the staff of Indian Dispute Resolution Service, Inc. Along with a consortium of five Indian organizations, he is one of the founders of IDRS and the principle designer of its program. The primary purpose of IDRS is to strengthen tribes' and tribal organizations' capacity to govern themselves; resolve internal and external conflict; establish favorable working relationships with outsiders; and control, manage and enhance their own economic destinies.” [http://www.indiandispute.com/about.htm](http://www.indiandispute.com/about.htm)

Shelley Vendiola is the Training and Program Campaign Director for the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN); she also serves on the board of the Indigenous Women’s Network. IEN is “an alliance of grassroots indigenous peoples whose mission is to protect the sacredness of Mother Earth from contamination and exploitation by strengthening, maintaining, and respecting the traditional teachings and the natural laws.” [http://www.ienearth.org/](http://www.ienearth.org/)

Elizabeth Williams is the Director of Programming Strategies for the National Office for the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ). The national office is located in New York City; NCCJ has 57 regional offices located in 32 states across the continental United States. NCCJ was founded in 1927 as the National Conference of Christians and Jews. According to its mission statement, it is “a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism in America. NCCJ promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education.” [http://www.nccj.org/](http://www.nccj.org/). Chrissy Reyes, the Communications and Marketing Director, joined her in the telephone interview.

**Responses**

*Nature of Social Problem(s).* We first asked respondents to identify the social problem(s) on which they and/or their organizations work(s), their focus within it, and what they are seeking.

Indian Dispute Resolution Services works with “Native American Communities,” primarily with tribes, but also, particularly in California, with the urban Indian population. Native American communities face a host of problems, as attested to by both Haberfeld and Vendiola. Haberfeld mentioned health, housing, social and educational services as particular types of problems, but he housed this in a larger context:
There is an awful lot of dysfunction in the tribes because they have been devastated by external conquests and it’s taken an awful long time to recover. Their social systems were destroyed. Their economies were destroyed. Their political systems were replaced with a government, a federally designed template called the IRA (Indian Reorganization Act) constitution…[which] was always seen, and still is, an externally imposed system of government.

IDS’s main focus is “building internal capacity through self-determination and with the ultimate purpose of strengthening them in relationships with their external environment.” This is very much congruent with the Indigenous Environmental Network’s principal “We speak for ourselves.” It is also reflected in Baba Bey’s mentioning of the term “kujichagulia,” the Swahili word he defines as “self-determination and speaking for oneself and using one’s own experiences to define.”) Not only does IDS encourage tribes not to let their attorneys speak for them (although it does suggest that they might be part of a negotiating team), IDS itself avoids speaking for the tribes with which it works, although it may provide someone to serve on the negotiating team. Along with its emphasis on helping tribes to strengthen their relationships with outsiders, IDS helps them improve their internal decision making processes. In this regard, IDS's goal is to train them to create "an atmosphere that is conducive to informed and orderly decision making."

Vendiola, speaking about the work of the Indigenous Environmental Network, also referred to the “myriad” of issues “impacting native people throughout what we call Turtle Island,” an indigenous term for the continent of North America. IEN focuses on problems which are part of “the chain of destruction” threatening native life and culture:

- globalization, … contamination of the air water and land and the exploitation of the resources that are taken from [native] land bases. And also the protection of sacred sites and our culture and traditions are key issues, that have to do primarily with our sovereignty, our inherent sovereign rights to live in a manner in which we can be self-determined and we can self organize. So sovereignty is also a thread that goes through all of the issues we work on.

IEN’s “mission is to protect the sacredness of Mother Earth from contamination and exploitation, and to strengthen and maintain the traditional teachings and the natural law.” Over 230 indigenous communities and tribal organizations are affiliated with IEN. Particular issues may be raised by any of these. The particular issues on which it works are a function of requests from different native communities, as well as consideration by its own governing body. IEN’s “traditional council comes together and basically discusses what are the relevant and important issues that need to be addressed and again upholding the natural law and code of ethics.”

Vendiola points out that the word indigenous means “of a place”; Native Americans are place-based people. Vendiola provides an example from one of her own heritages:
In what we call Salmon Nation or Coast Salish territory…the things of this place are the things that give us strength, that are part of, inherent within our culture and traditions are things like the cedar tree, the cedar, which is very sacred to our people, the salmon, also like the buffalo to the plains Indian. The salmon is our buffalo; … it’s part of our subsistence living, it’s part of our ceremonies and creation stories and so forth, so that’s what I mean when I say place-based people.

The notion of place-based lends insight both into the issues on which IEN chooses to work and the interconnectedness between environmental protection and cultural preservation.

So when we talk about violence on a large scale, almost every issue in Indian country, which we call Turtle Island, is a large scale issue because you know we are place-based people again and in this particular area there’s been massive, massive logging of cedar trees, so our way of life disappears, so we as people become totally assimilated. That’s not right, and that’s why our struggle to preserve our culture, language and identity is very critical to the place in which we live.

Roberto Chene focuses his work “around intercultural leadership and conflict resolution.” His basic concern is “what does it take to understand and eliminate oppression in its various forms?” He believes that “leadership development in a society like ours necessarily requires conflict resolution skills and necessarily requires an ‘inter-difference’ or an intercultural perspective.” He is called in by groups to work with them on various issues, and accepts such invitations if the issue and the way in which he can partner with the host organization furthers the goal of eliminating oppression. In this regard, he is concerned about all forms of oppression, whether they result from racial, gender, cultural or class differences.

The Pittsburgh Transportation Equity Project (PTEP) focuses on the “disproportion process occurring in the African American community [in Pittsburgh] with regards to decision-making and power with regards to transportation equity.” Brown provides the example of “the eastern corridor which we are currently studying constitutes twelve communities --they’re all utilizing (the) diesel fuel buses. So if we do a comparative analysis to another corridor, which is primarily white, they have light rail. Now, previously to this white community getting light rail, the black community was promised light rail and they didn’t get it.” They are researching the higher rates of asthma and cancer and their connection to diesel fuel emissions, and they are also exploring the link between diesel fuel emissions and learning disabilities.

PTEP is a new organization, having recently completed its first year of work. They hope that, within a ten-year timeframe, they will be able “to educate people about their community, have them become active in the process, have them move up and understand
the political process, and have them utilize our process to benefit them[se] selves.”

Recognizing that only about 20% of black residents of Pittsburgh vote\(^i\), PTEP has inaugurated a Youth Policy Institute a 16 week program to train 14-19 year olds in policy and practice.

While it might seem that PTEP’s focus is narrower than those of other organizations included in this study, that may be more apparent than real. Brown says, “I think we’re doing paradigm-shifting work and I think it’s paradigm shifting work that creates change agents that become empowerment.”

Baba Bey also works primarily with African Americans, although he also works with other people of color. He is concerned with a wide variety of problems people of color face as they operate within their families and larger society. These may be problems that individuals confront as, for example, health issues, which is the major focus of the National Black Men’s Health Network. MA-AT Enterprises also focuses on individual issues such as self-esteem. Recognizing that “race relations is nowhere near what it needs to be,” Bey’s work involves enhancing individuals’ capacities to deal with that reality.

Bey himself does not try to resolve the deep social problems which he prepares his participants better to confront. In fact, he considers them benefits, in a certain sense, using thorns on a rosebush as a metaphor:

\[
\text{[P]robably the problems are just as valuable as the thorn on a rose, so that if you don’t know how to pick that rose, you’re going to be stuck. So why should I try to get rid of that? Because in my development and my creativity, I don’t think I would have ever thought of creating a thorn on a rose, so I just leave those things alone. And, I just learn how to, you learn how to pick a rose, and then you learn how to move to the higher frequency.}
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The Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center focuses on violence, civil rights and ecology. Young people are their primary target and concern, and they involve young people on their board and staff.

In terms of violence, they are concerned both about violence in the community and in the world at large. They provide training in nonviolent means of resolving conflict in response, as well as exploring with community members steps to moving toward global peace. Their environmental program provides both training in the development of sustainable lifestyles and hands-on experiences to help young people “develop a sense of stewardship and responsibility for conserving and restoring our natural world. Their civil rights program develops resources in “teaching tolerance, unlearning racism, and inter-ethnic misunderstanding.” They also provide opportunities for teaching and celebrating civil rights history.
Even at its early stage of development, the Freedom Center seeks to engage youth, particularly at-risk youth, in innovative and inspiring programs that will help them develop their unique creative skills as well as leadership skills. They wish to create opportunities for these young people to use the skills they are learning in their neighborhoods and organizations. They also emphasize helping young people find “creative, educational, and challenging employment opportunities,” sometimes with the Center itself.

The National Coalition for Community and Justice has a particularly broad focal area. According to Williams,

NCCJ is focused on working on issues of oppression – oppression based on race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation. We look at appearance, we look at gender issues. That’s the nature of our work; we are looking at how people are being oppressed based on those social identities. And we look at ways in which we can allow people to better understand how these things manifest in day-to-day life, how behaviors and attitudes perpetuate stereotypes, and ways in which we can look at dismantling those forms of oppression.

Their many regional offices retain a high degree of autonomy in determining issues on which to focus and audiences to which they direct their activities. NCCJ’s work, therefore, may vary depending on location. Williams gave the example of the Orlando office, serving an area with one of the largest school districts in the country focusing very heavily on youth. She compares that with “a metropolitan city, like New York, where one would still find youth programs, but there would also be more of a focus on businesses and corporations.

The Work and its Uniqueness

IDRS combines a wide array of roles and processes in its efforts to assist Native American communities to resolve internal conflicts, negotiate with external entities and fashion their own futures. The range includes mediation, training, negotiation, meeting facilitation and organizing, and the roles are often combined in particular disputes.

IDRS’ training emphasizes cross cultural communications, exploring how to deal with differences, whether they be ethnic, religious, gender, generational, geographic, or something else. The next stage of negotiation training is in collaborative decision making and interpersonal negotiation, teaching “processes in working things out and talking things through. They also certify mediators, focusing on the importance of mediating skills “for managers, for supervisors, for the people who sit on boards just to understand how you build agreement, get[ting] people away from the adversarial positional negotiations where differences seem more important than commonalities.

One type of conflict in which it gets involves is between Native Americans and public schools which are not adequately addressing the needs of their children. IDRS begins by
offering a three day training to the parents, but then also offers the same training to a like numbered group from the school (administrators, teachers, school board members, etc.) who will serve as the negotiation team. IDRS then serves as the mediator in the same dispute.

Haberfeld testifies that such a process is beneficial to both the Indian parents and the non-Indian school representatives benefit from the experience: The parents realize that they are not alone in their concerns and that

they can go in a position of strength and confidence and know how to create a safe environment so there can be an open discussion and they can come in realizing they can come from a position of strength and preparedness. They don’t have to be yelling and screaming and complaining. And then the school is much more receptive and the school also has the opportunity to look at the problem much more holistically, more than just a problem of a particular kid. And it’s quite interesting because….the school staff invariably is very apprehensive about being called racist and every time they have their litany of complaints, which it is true that they are just as valid as the tribal parents. And they discover….it’s not the school’s fault exclusively and not the parents fault exclusively, but they share in responsibility of changing things and addressing the needs of the kid and it’s quite exciting.

Vendiola identifies two principles which undergird all of IEN’s work.

We do have a way in which we conduct our work that is very spiritually based and traditionally based. [R]espect and living in balance with Mother Earth and carrying forward the teachings of the creator [is] the basis from which we operate.

A second principle is contained in the phrase “We speak for ourselves”; the importance of which is manifested in that it appears at the top of the IEN website, along with “Protecting Mother Earth.”

IEN, as its name suggests, is a networking organization. A major part of its work is identifying groups who have similar issues and putting them in touch with each other. This can be done informally, but is bolstered by gatherings and summits. IEN organizes multi-focused gathering every two years called “Protecting Mother Earth Biannual Conferences.” The gathering includes at least three dimensions – sharing information, building alliances, and skills training in “the different types of direct action or organizing or coalition building skills.” Operating on the principle of “We speak for ourselves,” information is provided by panels of people from different regions who are directly impacted by the concern, be it toxic waste or oil exploration or industrial farm fishign. Other gatherings and summits are also held around specific issues. One was held in October 2003 in Oklahoma around oil issues; mining was the issue at one held in Wisconsin in 2002. At each gathering, participants “walk what we call the ‘red road’
which is not to drink. So because we look at alcohol as a form of genocide to our people, and that was introduced to us, that wasn’t part of our culture and traditions.”

Chene’s work includes various intervention roles:

Somebody’s in conflict, they’ll call me to help work it out so I’m an interener, a mediator. I’ve had a lot of experience as a counselor, therapist, so sometimes I am a counselor. I try to kind of bring all of whatever I have to offer to bear on the problem. Sometimes I’m just a teacher basically around teaching effective communication or community building in an intercultural, inter-difference world, teaching people given that fact and how do we build relationships and build communities. So sometimes I’m not necessarily intervening, but teaching about that.

Chene’s work is rooted in his conviction that “the conflict between groups is directly related to the individualized internalized oppression.” Sometimes this takes the form of retreats on internalized oppression as the one he was in the midst of with a group of environmental activitists when we set up the interview for this project.

Another way in which this manifests itself is the way in which he deals with the emergence of competing issues within a group. Rather than insisting on sticking to the ‘eliminating racism’ agenda, Chene tends to accord place to these other issues.

In both cases, he puts a great deal of emphasis on the personal work. In the case of internalized oppression,

if you’re not at peace inside, if you’re not centered, if you’re not mindful, that’s going to express itself in many ways. And one of the many ways it expresses itself, particularly for people who have been victims of racism, is to treat each other badly very often or all too often. So that without the personal healing and the personal mindfulness and self-awareness, it’s pretty hard” to grapple with inter-group conflict effectively.

He and his associates use an approach called Mindfulness Meditation. “[T]he idea of ‘mindfulness meditation’ is peace starts with you and what meditation is about is learning how to go in and not let your distresses and your pain drive you but you learn how to manage it and to be mindful and to be in the process of healing and awareness.”

Chene also utilizes personal awareness strategies in working with people of privilege or with groups including both people who’ve been oppressed and people who’ve been privileged. “The bridging work around oppression and around diversity requires that people know how they been oppressed. Every human being has been oppressed, because our society doesn’t know how to validate uniqueness; it tries to stamp it out. So, as people get in touch with how their humanity has been invalidated, that self knowledge,
particularly as they get healed from it, enables them to empathize with people who are
different.” Chene’s regular usage of the word “inter-difference” then not only reflects his
interest in the diversity of ways in which human beings are diverse, but also underscores
the possibility of gaining insight into others by being clearer about oneself.

In intergroup settings, Chene utilizes a concept he calls ‘reciprocal outreach.’

> When I first thought of it, I was first working for an organization that
was trying to get white people more accountable and they were too
scared. I said well it’s called “reciprocal outreach” because what
reciprocal outreach is, it emphasizes mutuality, is that who do you want
to include, and reciprocal outreach is that you join them even as you ask
them to join you.

Research and dissemination are key to PTEP’s work. Their strategy is grounded in their
commitment to empowering their constituency to become change agents:

> [B]asically we’re trying to use a format…of informing the community,
taking a pulse from the community…upon what they’ve been informed
on, and then look at their knowledge base, provide them with what I call
digestible components of the problem…., and then allow them to
become saturated with the information and allow them to become more
active in the advocacy role and the decision making role.

Brown calls his model for decision making, the DMM, standing for Decision Making
Matrix:

> To alleviate the disproportionate decision making process, what I’m
saying should occur,…is that whenever you enter into the region and
decide to do any type of work— social, economic, what have you, you
should invite decision makers at the grassroots level which is what we
call Micro, at the self-help group and community groups level, which we
call Meso, and at the System level, which we call Macro. So we would
create a model that would have that triangulation in that you would
invite statistically per percentage people in the population, in that
population variance to the table….So that [things] would be
proportionate, and in doing so you would invite people that make up the
strata, not just the higher end but, the other end as well, so people at the
grassroots level who can speak intelligibly about the issues so as they
move into making decisions, they are making it from a more informed
decision making process, and hopefully using consensus building as
their apparatus in the decision making process.

PTEP’s research model is Afro-centric, utilizing Brown’s Triangulation Model which
“basically looks at every community as a living entity and within that entity is a ‘Micro-
Meso-Macro operational system.’” As they began their research, they tried to use college
students to gather the data, but “what we learned quickly from them is that they were comfortable with the intellectual aspect of it but they were uncomfortable when they had to hit the street. So then we recruited some people who had more of a street dynamic and were able to do outreach.” The underlying orientation of the research is not merely gaining knowledge, but empowerment, equipping people with the information they need to understand their community more fully, and to be able to engage with decision makers on equal terms. In fact, the information puts them in a power position because the citizens then know more than the Port Authority about the transportation needs of the twelve neighborhoods in which PTEP works.

MA-AT focuses on education and consultation, attempting to build self-esteem among participants. Bey uses yoga in the first step of his process, which he calls “sankofa ashai.” His metaphor is that of a housecleaning or rewiring. He wants the people with whom he works to know that “you’re the one who needs the help and you’re the one with the solution.” Bey leads his participants on an internal journey to uncover solutions to external problems. He stresses that he does not give answers, but assists participants in finding their own. Thus, the approach moves from centering and grounding the participant to empowerment.

While Bey’s approach is not tied to any particular religious tradition, it is God-centered. MA-AT ultimately seeks to raise the consciousness, to let those who want to get out of the muck and mire, to let those who want out of the entrapment, to show that this time is a time that one can invite the light in, invite the higher consciousness in. They can call on God of their choice. They can call on their ancestors.

Bey rests his orientation on the power of love to transform and to heal.

As African Americans, our greatest asset is love. And, we have not brought that love to the level that it can actually transform us. And when I say love, I’m talking [about] Agape type of love;…if it wasn’t for love, if it wasn’t for grace, we would not have survived slavery….Now that those shackles are undone, we need to be able to do bigger and better things than what we are doing with our newfound wealth, our newfound monies, our newfound education.”

Claire Greensfelder identifies five ways in which the Freedom Center’s work is unique:
- its interdisciplinary approach, “often combining different elements from its four themes” She gives several examples: a youth nonviolence program, an environmental justice program, a mediation workshop with people of color, an oral history project, involving young people to produce a documentary about Bay Area residents who participated in the March on Washington in 1963.
- Emphasizing diversity among its staff and volunteers
Recognizing that there are many Bay Area groups working on some of the same issues as the Freedom Center, it is “seeking to find our individual niche that can add to and amplify the work that is already being done, without duplicating effort.

- The unique beauty of their location makes it an ideal site for “quiet retreats, workshops, or youth events,” as well as hands-on environmental education efforts. They have an industrial kitchen which they are planning to develop into a youth-run café.

- Their origins lie in a “unique partnership” among four governmental agencies – the City of Oakland, the East Bay Regional Park District, the California State Coastal Conservancy, and the Port of Oakland – and a grassroots community organization, the Martin Luther Kind, Jr. March and Rally Committee of East Oakland. This creates a base for them to involve resources, “both human and financial,” from a diverse array of existing entities.

NCCJ’s places a heavy emphasis on intergroup dialogue. They have a three step strategy for this. The first step is creating a safe environment in which people can “say things that may be challenging or that they may not ever have the opportunity to say anywhere else or feel embarrassed or ashamed.” Next NCCJ presents pertinent information, which may be historical or may detail the current state of affairs.

And then we look at how, how do you deal with these things once you’ve gotten all this information. It may not be in line what you were taught as a child, it may not be in line with what you learned in school, it may not even be in line with what your parents taught you or even your faith community taught you, so how do you deal with that conflict and how can you create allies to talk about these things and that is the next step. And then we look at what leadership skills are needed. What cultural competencies skills are needed to really be effective? And then being a change agent or continuing to do self-reflection to really make sure you’re not contributing to, or you’re in some way helping to dismantle those forms of oppression.

Success Stories

Aside from the school mediation reported above, Steven Haberfeld shared two IDRS success stories in his interview, one representing their work on internal friction within tribes, the other dealing with the relationship between a tribe and external entities, in this case a number of U.S. governmental agencies.

The first concerns a California tribe that had lost their status as a federally recognized tribe. The tribe was riven into two main factions that had “been at each other’s throats.” They had a chance of being included in a congressional bill which would restore their status if they could reach internal agreement. IDRS approached both groups and got their agreement to a mediation. IDRS spent several consecutive days with them, the first of
which was “exclusively spent on coming up with procedural ground rules that made them all feel safe and secure, that it was going to be a process they could make progress in.” They came up with over 20 ground rules to which they all agreed; according to Haberfeld, the experience of agreement and with witnessing IDRS’ fairness and commitment to meeting all of their needs was important:

The feelings there were very raw. There was a lot of emotion. In fact, there was a point where in the third day, I think that I kinda pushed both sides in open session letting, into letting us know what was really going on, and there was a lot of crying, and a lot was revealed. I mean these people were cousins, that they grew up in one another’s houses, and at some point it all turned and they weren’t welcomed in one another’s houses. And they were misinterpreted, and maligned and things were said and written about one another. There was a lot of stuff! And it was very cathartic once emotions were displayed and people revealed what was going on. And we got an agreement after five days of pretty hard work.

Haberfeld underscored the importance of causus in this session, which was used primarily to encourage each group to make some sort of proposal to which the other could respond. Four years after coming to the agreement, they returned to Haberfeld to ask him if the mediated agreement was still operative. Each of the 14 who had taken part in the initial mediation came.

What was so clear was here they had gone through this grueling process, of coming up with an agreement and it’s really the only thing they have had to keep their community intact, and protected against sorta some challenges from within and their basically feeling if they abandon that agreement they go back to square one.

Haberfeld assured them that the agreement was still valid and continued to work with them.

Haberfeld’s second success story involved the Timbasha Shoshone whose tribal lands had been taken away when the federal government established the death valley National Monument. This was a difficult case, and the initial mediation was a total failure, primarily because the governmental negotiation team was not committed to coming up with a joint agreement, despite their mandate to do so. The agreement that the governmental representatives developed on their own, with no consultation with tribal representatives, included no provision even for the 40 acre reservation that they had originally offered. The tribal representatives refused to sign, walked out of the meeting, and cut off communication for two years,

but luckily that was followed by a successful process where there was really good solid government to government negotiations and ultimately, a signed agreement that became the basis for congressional legislation.
They established under the Timbasha Homeland Act, a reservation of over 10,000 acres for tribe out there, plus an agreement to designate of a million acres of that park which is I guess about 4 million acres, as the Timbasaw Natural and Cultural Resources Preservation area. So now, instead of the tribe having 850,000 acres in trust [their original position], they actually have about a million acres not in trust, but reserved for co-management experience.

What transpired between the failed negotiation and the successful mediation was not further negotiation efforts, but rather a creative array of nonviolent action, political and legal strategies. These included establishing a national alliance of tribes “to protect native rights in national parks.” Haberfeld facilitated the three day organizing meeting, attended by Miccosukey, Navaho, Sioux, Blackfeet, and a number of other tribes. “The strategy was to have press releases and call for a Congressional hearing abou the National Park Service’s policies toward Indians.” Another strategy was picketing at the Death Valley National Monument with materials written in four different languages, resulting in letters being sent to the President from all over the world. The Timbasha Shoshone also filed a lawsuit against the Bureau of Land Management for violating their own procedures.

Haberfeld was then sent to Washington by the tribe to find out if the agencies were interested in talking. In negotiating the process they would use, the tribe insisted that the agencies establish an interagency task force and that someone from the Secretary of Interior’s office be involved; “we didn’t want to go down the line and get agreements at the local level and discover that there had been no communication between the locals and their hierarchy.” The difference was apparent right from the start. At the first meeting, the federal representatives had stared blankly while a tribal elder welcomed them in her native tongue and stressed the fact that the feds, not the Indians, were the guests. At the outset of the second set of meetings, the chief federal negotiator, John Reynolds, then Director of the Pacific Regional Office of the National Park Service, looked at the tribal chair from across the table and said, “It is a real honor for me to sit down with a leader from another nation.”

Currently, one of the IEN campaigns which Vendiola considers very successful is the oil campaign.

They’ve formed a massive network of indigenous fisher people, villages, and tribes in Alaska around the oil issue. The reasoning for that is because of the National Wildlife Refuge threat by the Bush Administration to drill in the National Wildlife Refuge which is the home of the Quechan people who subsist off of the porcupine caribou. Once the porcupine caribou camping grounds, which is the National Wildlife Refuge, is disturbed, the caribou begin to go away and when the caribou go away, the entire population of Quechan go away.
The strength of the network, plus their alliances with non-Indian groups in specific communities, allows the network to get invited to forums sponsored by the EPA and other organizing groups, and to be taken seriously. They can attract media to press conferences, and pressure environmental and other governmental agencies to take their needs into consideration as policies are made.

Another success story that Vendiola discussed was the shutting down of the Pegasus Gold Mining operation. The mining was polluting the water and destroying sacred sites of the Gravant tribes in Montana. IEN held its 1997 Protecting Mother Earth gathering in Montana in coordination with the tribes and highlighted the issue. As a result of the exposure and negative publicity brought about by the gathering, Pegasus shut down operations. IEN is still working on holding the company accountable for cleanup.

IEN is also proud of its success in maintaining its ties with its affiliate groups over a period nearing two decades, since its first informal organizing meeting in 1987.

Chene receives many expressions of gratitude for his work. Accolades range from being able to communicate more effectively to having made a friend for life. Recently, a multicultural group of teachers with whom Chene had worked a few years ago called to ask for another retreat. They had been in the midst of a debilitating conflict, and Chene and his partner had been able to get them “unstuck” and working effectively in implementing their vision.

Chene attempts to “liberate” participants from their assigned roles, stressing that “the way the institutionalized oppression works in our society is we are kind of born into polarization. If you are on the white side or the people of color side or whatever, so that is an assigned role. You don’t have to act that way. If you define what racism, what white racism is about, you don’t have to act like that. It is your choice, you don’t have to have those biases, so then you have to decide if you want to liberate yourself from that, and not be like that.” Many participants are transformed in this process:

And I find people who go through that liberation or get or start to get in on that road, start acting very differently, start advocating, speaking out on things they never thought about before. And kind of their eyes are open to become learners to what is really going on around them, and they begin to ask questions. Say a work place, for example, they begin all of a sudden, they become aware of how this particular policy is actually exclusionary, and how this particular policy that they have been working to implement all this time is actually oppressive, so they say, “Hey, you know what I realized listening to you, that the way we have been doing it is hurtful to people.

PTEP has just completed its first year of operations and already is having an impact on the city of Pittsburgh. In talking about the impact, Brown looks first to
the fact that we’re making other people nervous is a success. We’re on someone’s radar screen. The second is when we go out into community and interface with the community, there is a sense to gauge us on our authenticity. So I think that is a success – that means our public is no longer blindly voting for people; they are asking questions. So we feel like we are pricking peoples’ consciousness in a way that they are saying who are you and what are you about and do different than other people. So one of the things that we feel most proudly about is we haven’t gotten in the bed with anybody who would subjugate our community residents with regards to what we are focused on; so I think people see us as legitimate, they see us as being real and addressing real issues.

In the process of doing their preliminary work, they have already developed a volunteer base of about 360 people, of whom about 50 want to have case studies done on them. “So we are creating a framework for doing serious research as well as educating people on the process and having them being active participants in that process.” They recently held a press conference to present their findings from their first 90 days of data collection, and they are finding that key people are beginning to define them as a resource.

Baba Bey sees success in the people he runs into on a daily basis, people who have been his students or trainees, who recognize him and refer to his work with them. He gives the example of meeting former students five, ten or fifteen years after he taught them. The now adult often refers to his signature song, “Whose Got the Power?”

I remember you and I remember that song. I’m off in college now….I couldn’t read, but now I’m doing this and I’m doing well.

The Freedom Center has inaugurated a number of projects of which it is proud in its short history:

- Co-publishing with the county health department a resource directory listing local organizations “working in the areas of nonviolence, unlearning racism, conflict resolution, mediation, civil and human rights, etc.)
- “Sounds of Freedom,” poetry slam series for young people
- two celebrations of Youth Peacemakers
- a series of projects on the 40th anniversary of the March on Washington, including a youth-led oral history project, a photographic exhibit of interviewees, a public performance with actor Danny Glover, a video that is under development and a companion booklet of key quotations.

NCCJ has a long history of having arranged meetings and brokered agreements between existing authorities and groups struggling to change racist policies. Now that it has turned to advocating for such changes itself, it is also beginning to compile an impressive track record. Williams supplemented her telephone interview with newspaper articles and a NCCJ publication reporting on various NCCP activities around the country:
The St. Louis Regional office created a Dismantling Racism Program to respond to high levels of racial tension in the region. The program has several components, the foundation of which is a six-day residential institute “designed to increase participants’ understanding of racism and its impact on individuals.” (Smith and Ahuja, 1999, p. 24) The institute demands intensive self-reflection both during and after the workshop, and requires follow-up work and community service afterward. 189 people had graduated from the institute as of the writing of the article, 82% of whom remained involved in follow-up work.

NCCJ regional offices host “Anytown” camps for young people in which participants explore their own biases and share ways in which they are discriminated against by others. A former San Jose, California police chief extols the camps for graduating students who “go on to serve as peacemakers at their schools” A participant said that the camp “opened my eyes” and prompted him “to treat women with more respect, leave his gang and return to high school to graduate.” The camps are credited by schools as helping to raise grades and reduce violence. (Wong, 2003) A home-schooled student from the Fort Worth, Texas area reported “I’ve been exposed to all different cultures that I’m usually not around.” An African American boy said “I’ve learned not to make fun of another race.” A counselor says that “the key to the camp’s success is that the youths open up and trust one another.” (Gutierrez-Mier).

NCCJ offers “Youth as Resources” grants to youth projects around the country. In the St. Petersburg, Florida area, the Town “N Country Youth Council hosted a “Teen Extreme” party for about 400 young people ages 12-17, “‘It’s all teen driven,’ said Rob Gamester, co-founder of Town ‘N Country Youth Council. ‘The teens came up with the idea.’” (Ripley, 2003)

The Tampa Bay Region NCCJ sponsors interfaith dialogues to foster better understanding of different religions’ perspectives and traditions. Panelists at a recent symposium included a Jewish rabbi, an Episcopal minister, a Unity minister, a Unitarian Universalist minister, a Bahai, a Catholic priest, and a Muslim. Rabbi Baseman, whose synagogue hosted the even, said “that this should be the beginning of a bridge built within society, all working together to make the world a better place.” (Rubenstein, 2003)

Learning from Failures and Elsewhere

The learnings that Steven Haberfield derives from failure are specific to his work with Native American groups. He does not think that most people in the conflict resolution field realize that mediation and negotiation are “a different proposition when you’re working with communities and people that are effectively disenfranchised.” The initial effort to restore ancestral lands to the Timbasha Shoshone using standard conflict resolution mechanisms was unsuccessful. Describing their preparations for their initial meetings, Haberfeld says “when the tribe prepared for these meetings they were thinking negotiations. The feds actually were thinking, ‘Well, we will listen to what they have to say, let them speak, and we’ll probably go back to our office and do what we want to do
anyway.” Negotiations are unlikely to be successful unless parties take each other seriously. When the stronger party believes it can enforce its will and is not interested in meeting the needs of the disenfranchised or disadvantaged party, that party is not likely to get an agreement with which it is pleased. The negotiations, however, were very successful after the tribe had used a wide variety of pressure tactics which succeeded in getting the federal government to take its needs seriously.

Further, parties must be clear about what they are seeking. Haberfeld at no point suggests that parties cannot include individuals with different perspectives and concerns, but he does talk about the need for a party not to be riven by internal dissension. This point is equally true on both sides of the table. In the case of the terminated California tribe, internal dissension needed to be overcome so that they could be a functioning entity, both in terms of working together and in terms of reclaiming their status as a federally recognized tribe. In the case of the federal agencies negotiating with the Timbasha Shoshone, it was important that their negotiation team included people with authority and that the varying agencies were working together on the government’s position. In both cases, it was up to the tribe to suggest mechanisms for bringing this about.

Haberfeld also points out the value of external incentives. The deeply divided California tribe might never have agreed to do the hard and painful work of overcoming their deep divide and healing their self-inflicted wounds, had it not been for the possibility of regaining their status. Also, in that case, it was IDRS who approached the tribe offering their services.

In responding to learnings from failures or from what did not work well, Vendiola focused on organizational structure. Early on, they had a 14 person national council. They found it unwieldy; it tended to bog down decision making. What they have turned to is a model with a smaller group responsible for infrastructure leadership and decision making, the day to day decisions that must be made to keep IEN moving forward efficiently. They retain the larger national council for discussion on, and decisions about, issues concerns.

Vendiola also shared concerns about the development of alliances between native and non-native groups. Partnerships and deep affiliations need to be reserved for those who accept the underlying principles of IEN: protecting Mother Earth, speaking for oneself, the need to maintain cultural integrity, the connection between environmental stewardship and cultural preservation, and the spiritual rootedness of working on these issues – acting in accord with the natural law.

Many environmental groups have some of the same concerns, but cannot be full partners because of their lack of adherence to one or more of these principles. Vendiola uses the example of the presence or absence of alcohol at meetings and gatherings. From IEN’s viewpoint, alcohol is “a form of genocide to our people,” whereas in the mainstream white environmental movement, it is “a big way to organize.” Many groups are disrespectful of IEN’s stance on the issue, and “if we cannot respect one another in that
way, then, how can we trust one another on the larger scale stuff?” IEN, therefore, takes care in developing relations with different groups. It will act in conjunction with a wide range of groups on a given issue, but will only form ongoing alliances where there is a common value base.

One of the challenges that Chene faces is what he calls “bureaucratic colonization”; he finds that many agencies in New Mexico “hire white people who are culturally incompetent and they set up the conflict that way.” He talks about a recent example of meeting a Chicano who recently had to quit his job in an agency with which Chene had worked. “I found out that some of the things I worked hard to help them understand and practice, it’s hard to tell just from this feedback, but it didn’t seem to have made that much difference…in this particular agency.” Chene deals with such disappointments through a constant reassessment process. He explores both how to make his pre-intervention questions sharper, so that he can make sure ahead of time that the agency with which he is working is committed to making deep changes in the organization and its procedures, to continue to work toward removing mechanisms of oppression. He also calls upon himself to do this work in accord with his “own personal ethic [which] is that, after all is said and done, no matter how tired I am, I’m not going to hedge on some basic truths about oppression, because after all is said and done I’m measured on terms I have to live with myself.” This is a ongoing struggle, a constant balancing act, because participants, “particularly white people, if you hit them with too much reality on this issue, they’re not emotionally mature enough to handle it, so they end up blaming you for their feelings. If you hit them too hard, they shut down; if you don’t hit them hard enough, they stay in denial.”

Brown does not think in terms of failures, but rather of learnings, as, for example, the previously mentioned recognition that college students were not equipped to handle the on-the-street nature of PTEP’s data collection process.

PTEP has had to learn to be firm in its focus on its agenda. In attempting to develop partnerships, they have been disappointed in the actions of other groups in the area who are working on some similar concerns. Such groups, with primarily white members and a dominant-culture approach to choosing and working on issues, tend to assume that they should be able to set the agenda.

So we run into that dynamic where we’re African American-run, African American-focused and African American-driven, that other people from other persuasions feel like when they come to the table, that their methodology and practices supersedes ours.

PTEP has found that it can partner with organizations on narrow components of an agenda, but cannot maintain its commitment to its holistic and empowerment-oriented approach unless it maintains autonomy more generally.

The term failure is not meaningful to Baba Bey. He refers to his work as his calling: “This is what I been put on the planet earth to do. So it’s like a contract. It’s like
something I had already made an agreement in pre-creation, pre-birth, that this is what I will bring about."

The Freedom Center is a new organization and they have not experienced any major failures. But they have had difficulties to overcome. They have not yet had success in constituting their youth advisory board. While they think that may be due to their remote location, they are not merely waiting a year until a new bus stop is situated near the entrance to their parking lot in fall 2004. They are creating off-site programs in schools and within community groups.

For NCCJ, the name change itself was a symbol of a larger challenge. For decades, NCCJ had built a reputation as an “honest broker.” During the Civil Rights era, this was an important niche to fill, as activists needed groups who could help them get access to decision makers who would only meet them on neutral ground. As that era came to a close, NCCJ needed to confront the fact that it was not neutral regarding the issues on which it worked: “our mission statement is value laden. I mean we are against bias and bigotry; we are for promoting advocacy, respect and understanding.”

According to Williams, the shift from an honest broker to an advocacy role began 13-14 years ago. NCCJ could no longer be the honest broker, or the neutral organization. We had to speak out and be more vocal, in a way people understood it, and not look to us as this neutral organization. Because we do not want just to think about those systemic changes. We want to fight oppression. We want to look at these issues in a way that, we wanted to bring about change. And so we just don’t want to talk about it, we want to take action, because we have been, we are so strong, in building strong dialogue, getting people to the table and talk. And we wanted to be more effective in taking action, and so that has been a large learning curve for us as an organization, and just really being able to track the action and kind of develop the process of, once people hear and talk and discuss, what’s next? And so that was a huge learning curve and what you see now is us focusing on as an organization how do we help people prepare for what is next.

The new name, National Conference for Community and Justice, clearly positions NCCJ as an advocacy organization, rather than a neutral group.

**Common Themes**

While our respondents’ organizations represent both geographic and role diversity and the respondents themselves are diverse in terms of cultural background, issue emphasis and approach, we were struck by the common themes emerging from their answers. Another way in which they run the gamut is large national organizations through individual consultants, groups like NCCJ which deal with all “ism” issues to a cross-national organization like IEN which deals with any environmental issue impacting its
constituency to, a small organization approaching a massive problem, racism, through a single targeted issue, public transportation (PTEP).

Self-reflection and “internal” work Of the seven respondents, six made explicit reference to the need for internal self-reflection as part of, and/or prior to their work with participants. For some, such as Chene and Bey, this is at the very core of their work. Further, this focus is not for participants alone; it may be even more important for intervenors and trainers.

Empowerment Each of our respondents puts a strong emphasis on empowering the people with whom it works. This takes many forms, ranging from speaking for oneself to local determination of strategies to educational efforts. Most of the respondents seemed to put a high priority on being sensitive to the participants taking over projects or campaigns once they have mastered the requisite skills. Additionally, the constituency rather than the leadership or the staff in organizations like IEN, make the decisions on the issues on which to focus.

Flexibility and responsiveness Several of our organizations, such as PTEP and the Freedom Center, are brand new. The ones that have been longer established, however, stress the need for flexibility, not only about their specific techniques, but about constantly reviewing their very emphasis. This is most obvious in the case of our oldest organization, NCCJ, where Williams actually attributes their longevity to their capacity to change with the issues and needs and to their non-adherence to any formulistic conceptualizations of how to go about the work. A further aspect of their flexibility and responsiveness is manifest in the high degree of autonomy each of their regional offices has to develop programs responsive to the particular needs of that region.

Discussion

As noted above, almost all of the respondents underscored the importance of self-reflection on the parts of both intervenors and parties in intractable conflict. The field, however, pays little attention to this dimension.

I recall several years ago listening to a well known intervenor discuss the breadth of the field. He was expansive in his presentation, highlighting the field’s involvement in conflict on virtually all human levels – interpersonal, intergroup, international. With some humor, he pointed out that it might be logical to presume that the field could make its coverage complete and deal with the intrapersonal, since most of us are beset by recurrent and interesting internal conflicts. But, he said, the field would leave that level of analysis and intervention to psychiatrists.

The situation has not changed much over the years. A review of the titles of presentations listed in the schedule advertising the 2003 annual conference of the Association for Conflict Resolution reveals not a single session dealing with mediators’ coming to know themselves better. Among “A Mosaic of Possibilities,” only a few titles suggest the possibility of intervenors’ helping parties to be clearer about their attitudes.
and behaviors regarding the “other.” “A Different Kind of Being Smart: Training Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace” and “New Tools to Understand Conflict Styles and Behaviors” probably come closest in this regard. Of course, titles do not necessarily capture all of what is discussed in a session. But the fact that not one title of the more than 100 listed focuses directly on the topic of self-reflection as a conflict resolution tool suggests how little import this is accorded in the field as a whole.

The results call us to question and reflect on how we define some widely accepted assumptions about best practices in conflict resolution. In the case of intractable social conflicts, the notion of neutrality may be out of place. As a member of the society which we are trying to help heal a deep wound, no one is “outside” the conflict; racism, homophobia, classism, sexism impact us all, and all of us will be impacted by changes in how our society deals with differences. To take on a mantle of neutrality conveys disengenuousness and apathy.

Where then, do we look to redefine the role? Two of our respondents used a term which may offer some insight. Both Roberto Chene and Baba Bey referred to themselves as “gentle warriors.” The word “warrior” may make a great many conflict resolvers ill at ease. Nonetheless, it is worth exploring. This is not a common phrase, yet it was used by two of the respondents. It suggests that we are in a struggle, and that we need to recognize our own part in that struggle; the point is not to avoid fighting, but to fight for something, not against someone. To fight, not to beat an enemy, but to enhance the position of all.

The responses of our interviewees go beyond a critique of neutrality in the role of the intervenor, but rather question the appropriate role of outsiders in general. The IEN motto “we speak for ourselves” came up over and over again in different ways in all of the interviews, with the possible exception of NCCJ (and this may be only because we were speaking with someone from the national office, rather than someone from one of their regional office whose own work would have been “on the ground.”).

We in the conflict resolution field tend to think of the parties as having the last word in terms of what an agreement might be, but we consider ourselves experts in the process, and in the dynamics of conflict. Our respondents vested much more expertise in the persons of the grassroots constituents, those directly impacted by the conflict, than we tend to do.

This is perhaps most starkly seen in the case of PTEP, with its emphasis on research. PTEP does its research in conjunction with constituents, and was willing to take on the challenge of working with data collectors who were not familiar with their framework or their paperwork, because they were the people who were able to work “on the street.” This in no way diminishes the importance of Fred Brown’s research skills, but rather lifts up his commitment to empowerment – no one can be empowered by someone else, s/he must empower her/himself. Brown takes his role of what he calls “conduit” very seriously; he offers a model that we think the field should take a serious look at, and adopt and adapt as appropriate.
Future Research

The interviews, while small in number, are rich in implications for future research. They call into question many underlying assumptions of the conflict resolution field as it is currently practiced, and suggest approaches for the appropriate role of conflict resolution practitioners and techniques in dealing with deep conflicts which permeate our society.

To begin exploring this question, we lift up a quotation from one of our interviewees. According to Roberto Chene, “we’re institutionalized into conflict so that if you talk about sexism or racism or classism or whatever, the world itself is defined in an already institutionalized conflict. So to me, leadership development in a society like ours necessarily requires conflict resolution skills and necessarily requires an “inter-difference” or an intercultural perspective.”

Racism. Sexism. Classism. These are serious problems. NCCJ’ recent comprehensive nationwide survey, Taking America's Pulse II: NCCJ's 2000 Survey of Intergroup Relations in the United States, uncovered widespread indicators of conflict and discrimination across lines of difference in terms of race, ethnicity, and religion, indicating degrees of prejudice and oppression which should be of deep concern to all Americans:

- Only 29% of respondents are satisfied with “how well different groups in society get along with each other,” and 79% feel that “racial, religious or ethnic tension” is a very serious or somewhat serious problem.
- Self-reports by respondents indicate that discrimination is a common part of the everyday lives of many Americans.
  § Across six important life domains (education, housing, promotions, access to equal justice, treatment by the police, and fair media attention), opportunity is not seen as equally available to Whites and to other racial and ethnic groups.
  http://65.214.34.23/nccj/nccj.nsf/articleall/4537?opendocument&1#874

The need for further research, leading to ideas that will improve the capacity of the conflict resolution field to be responsive to racism and other intractable conflicts within the United States (and other countries where they’ve received scant attention) is, therefore, significant and urgent. Many research directions are suggested by our research. We do not presume, therefore, that what follows is a complete list.

Continuation of Current Research Our first suggestion is that we broaden and deepen the scope of this research itself. What we obtained indicates the potential fruitfulness of what we can learn from persons and organizations who work on thorny social conflict, but whose work is not connected to the conflict resolution field and tends not to enter our literature or our experience.
The study needs to be more comprehensive and systematic. We suggest utilizing a resource that we discovered during the project. NCCJ has produced an annotated list of programs and organizations working on intergroup relations that lists over 300 national and regional groups and provides contact information on them. The criteria for inclusion were “a conscious focus on improving intergroup relations and some degree of sustainability.” (NCCJ, 1998, p. vii) The list is wide ranging in the types of organizations and the issues on which they work.

The programs fall into many categories: national civil rights organizations, regional non-profits, school-based programs, faith-based programs, dialogue groups, study circles, government human-relations commissions, community-based organizations, intertribal organizations, leadership development programs, anti-hate crimes organizations, prejudice reduction programs, media-related programs, advocacy groups, citywide initiatives, immigrants’ rights organizations, interfaith programs, multiracial coalitions, and white racial-awareness groups. (pp vii-viii)

We will need to revise our questionnaire to take into account learnings from this project and to maximize the utility of the findings. As an example, the word “failure” in the fourth question seemed to shut respondents down. In fact, much of the data collected on this question was not in direct response to it, but contained in stories about how people do their work, or even in success stories. A more elicitive set of questions needs to be developed in light of the results of this survey. Further, we would suggest two general types of questions: those that ask specific questions and would lead to the possibility of statistical analysis and those which ask respondents to tell stories about their work. The stories that some of the participants told were the richest source of information; if we were to ask for such stories explicitly, we would obtain an even richer array of responses.

This survey can be supplemented by efforts to obtain more information regarding collaboration. Two questions are identified:

1. While most conflict resolution groups do not focus on the types of issues we included in our survey, some at least collaborate with social justice organizations in their efforts. What are promising practices in this regard? We would suggest gathering a sampling of community mediation centers which do engage in this work, asking them the general survey questions and also asking them additional questions regarding their collaboration with more advocacy-oriented organizations. Do they serve as a broker as NCCJ did in its early years, or do they take more active roles? If the latter, how does it impact their “neutral” status regarding other disputes?

2. It is clear from this project that some social justice organizations benefit from collaborating with each other. One example is the organization of
tribal groups impacted by National Park Service policies about which Steven Haberfeld spoke. What are the range of ways in which such organizations collaborate with each other and what are the most promising practices in this regard? The resource directory referred to by Claire Greensfelder is an example of the type of resource that might be used to gather information on this question.

**Educating Conflict Resolvers** There are now a host of college level programs which offer some course work in conflict resolution and a number of graduate programs specializing in it. Do the range of considerations identified by our respondents receive consideration in these courses and programs? The purpose of this project would be to review existing courses and programs to find out the extent to which this is occurring. Aside from reporting on such course content, either or both of two products could also be produced by this project: a compendium of syllabi from courses currently offered which include components on dealing with intractable conflicts in the United States and/or the generation of a set of prototype course or course component designs which could be adopted by faculty in such programs.

**Training Conflict Resolvers** This project would seek to discover the extent to which concerns raised by our respondents are covered in existing conflict resolution training designs, particularly as offered by community mediation centers. Once again, the project could not only report on current status, but also develop training designs which would include such considerations.

**Learning from Colleagues in Other Countries** While little attention is paid by U.S. conflict resolvers to intractable conflicts within our borders, the same is not true outside of the United States. Much of conflict resolution within countries such as Northern Ireland, South Africa and Israel is related to intractable domestic conflict. What can we learn from practitioners in countries such as these about appropriate and effective ways for conflict resolvers to intervene in such conflicts in our own backyards?

**Neutrality** Assumptions about the appropriateness of neutrality came into question in one way or another in many of our interviews. How did the notion of neutrality come to be a *sine qua non* of how U.S. conflict resolvers define processes such as mediation? How has neutrality been defined over the course of the development of the field? What are the range of ways in which neutrality is currently interpreted and practiced? Which of these models is appropriate for entering into intractable conflict resolution in one’s own community?

**Intractable Conflict Resolvers from the U.S. and handling the U.S. connection** Many of the countries of the world experiencing intractable conflict are experiencing it in part because of previous U.S. policy toward that country and/or the current trajectory of the conflict is impacted by U.S. policy. In these cases, an intervenor from the U.S., even when not a U.S. government
representative, may not be a true “outsider.” What are the ways in which such conflict resolvers handle these issues? If some responsibility is taken, in the role of U.S. citizen, for impacting U.S. policy, is that done by direct or indirect means? Can best practices in this regard also inform appropriate approaches for conflict resolvers dealing with intractable conflicts in their own communities?

Pre-negotiation Phase The field often subsumes the variety of “getting parties to the table” concerns and issues under the general rubric of the pre-negotiation phase. Our interviewees suggest a range of activities that may need to be undertaken, sometimes by parties themselves, sometimes by intervenors, before moving to this stage, or what Adam Curle calls “concilitation and bargaining.” Both Vendiola and Haberfeld highlight network building, and both Vendiola and Brown point out the need for making sure that allies share the same values; the Timbasha Shoshone case indicated the need for various forms of pressure tactics prior to the successful negotiation; the same case also highlights the importance particular individuals can make to the possibility of successful negotiations – John Reynold’s different approach to the negotiations was a key in obtaining a workable and creative agreements, as well as in forging new relationships; John Reynold’s approach, so different from the culture of his agency, begs the question, how did he develop this orientation; the case also suggests the possible need to influence who will sit at the table; PTEP’s work emphasizes the need for research as a mechanism not only for increased awareness but also for being taken seriously; several respondents, including Chene and Bey, underscore the importance of dealing with internalized racism; Chene and NCCJ, among others, lift up the importance of understanding and communicating benefits of new ways of doing things to the dominant party.

These are only a few examples of the types of pre-negotiation considerations that emerge from this project. A deeper and more careful consideration of these concerns is warranted.

Conclusion

We began this project with a recognition of a gap in the field regarding ways in which conflict resolution can contribute to the resolution of intractable conflicts in the United States. Most of what is written about intractable conflict focuses “over there” on armed conflict. Yet, we in the United States live in a society with deep-rooted conflict at its core, conflict which limits each of us from attaining our full human potential and which leaves some of us severely scarred. It made sense to us to see what we could learn from some who do approach these conflicts, whether they felt connected to the conflict resolution field or not. We have learned much and are very grateful to each of our respondents for the time they spent talking with us, for the materials they sent us, and for their willingness to reflect deeply on their own work and share those reflections with us.

While this report indicates a wonderful richness of ideas and approaches, we have only begun to scratch the surface. We strongly advocate continued and deeper research into these areas.
The conflict resolution field is a new one and has, throughout its short history, engaged in deep reflection itself, along with ongoing commitment to renewal and growth. We believe this project casts light on where some future renewal and growth is appropriate; we hope that our contribution will spur that growth and offer ideas about how to go about it.
APPENDIX A

Questions for contact people:

Joan Walker Scott (or Máire Dugan) and I are working on a project as part of the Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base project of the Conflict Research Consortium at the University of Colorado. The project is funded by the Hewlett Foundation.

The purpose of our project is to uncover and discuss innovative ways of dealing with difficult domestic conflicts. Deep-rooted social problems like racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, or particular issues within them, are examples of the types of things at which we are looking. We’re particularly interested in groups who are doing promising and innovative work which may not have received ample discussion in the conflict resolution field, which tends to focus its discussion of intractable conflict on violent international conflicts, or on domestic conflicts in other nations.

We have four questions which I would like to read to you and then e-mail to you.

Could you give us some names of organizations that are doing such work? We can only interview a limited number so we would like you to identify the ones you think are doing the most promising or innovative work. Three to five names would be great.

Can you tell me a bit about why you’ve suggested each?

How would you rank order the organizations whose names you have given me in terms of the innovation of their approach? In terms of the impact of their efforts?

Could you give me contact information on the names of the person you think would be the best contact person? Is it all right to use your name as a reference with this person?

Would you be able to answer these questions by e-mail in the next few days? [if no, when?] What is your email address?
APPENDIX B

Telephone Interview Instrument

Introduction: We are doing a project with the Conflict Research Consortium to uncover and describe promising ways of dealing with thorny social conflicts and problems. ______________ has given us your name because of your involvement with ______________. We’d like to set up an appointment for a telephone interview or send you an e-mail questionnaire. We estimate that either one will take 45-60 minutes. In the case of a telephone interview, we’d like to tape record it to make sure we get all of the information down correctly. Would you be willing to help us on the project? Would you rather do an interview by phone or a questionnaire by e-mail (with a shorter phone conversation as a follow up)? [if interview: What would be a good time?] [if email: what is your e-mail address?]

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about the nature of the social problem on which [your organization] works(ed). How do you define it? What is [your organization’s] focus within in? What is [your organization] seeking?

2. Tell me about how [your organization] does its work. Particularly, what about your work is unique? What unique processes does [your organization] use which make its work effective?

3. Has [your organization] had any successes/achievements that you are particularly proud of? Could you tell me a bit about them?

4. Has [your organization] had any failures which caused you to change something about the way you do your work? Could you tell me about them and the changes you made?

5. Is there any written information you could email or fax to us on your issue, [your organization], your processes, your achievements or your challenges? E-mail: info@scmediate.org, subject: conflict processes; fax: 803-735-1750.

6. Are there other groups you feel are doing important, effective and innovative work on the same issues that you work on? We would like to put them on a list for follow up on this project. Could you give us a contact name and contact information? When they are contacted, can we use your name as a reference?
Bibliography


Peacemaking Processes: Understanding the Connections

At the Intractable Conflict Knowledge Base (ICKB) project meeting in April 2003, a number of experts converged at the session on Nonviolent Action. There was general agreement that the paradigm offered by Adam Curle in his ground-breaking (but unfortunately long out-of-print) book, Making Peace, still offers the best grounding for understanding the ways in which nonviolent action and conflict resolution processes intersect in the struggle for social justice. There was also general agreement that the Curle’s model needed to be updated and enhanced.

ICKB offers an unusual opportunity for this undertaking. First, the quest to bring together what is known about intractable conflict and its resolution has provided ongoing opportunities for discussions among practitioners and scholars. While these have been primarily focused on what is already in the literature and how to organize it, they have inevitably involved sharing insights that have been below the radar screen of the literature. Some of these insights relate to how different processes have been used together or in combination in peacebuilding efforts. Second, the articles I have written for the project have prompted some wide-ranging reading on my part and have lifted up some conceptual concerns that are not salient in the conflict resolution literature, although they may be elsewhere.

Finally, the project has provided myself and my colleague, Joan Walker Scott, with an opportunity to interview diverse practitioners about cutting edge approaches to deep social conflict in the United States. Such efforts may not have been included in the literature, regardless of how much can be learned from them. This is partially the fault of the literature itself. If we limit our definition of intractable conflict to conflicts that are
plagued by physical violence and take place in or among other nations (which U.S. scholars tend to do), we do not include situations such as domestic racism in our purview. Further, possibly concomitant to this, many practitioners working on issues such as racism, heterosexism, classism and sexism, do not see themselves as conflict resolvers. They neither look to the field for insight, nor report their own insights to it. Scott and I have had a chance to speak with, and learn from, some of these people. While we have merely begun to scratch the surface, their testimony is a crucial addition to my own effort to update Curle’s generative paradigm.

The base of Curle’s paradigm is both its greatest strength and its most obvious limitation. It is based on his peacemaking practice. On the one hand, this means that it is well grounded in practical concerns about social conflict. It is concrete and relatively easy to explain. On the other hand, since it is based almost exclusively on his own practice, it incorporates little of the experience of others, which may be relevant and enriching. Fortunately, Curle’s own practice is much more diverse and inclusive than that of most practitioners, ranging from helping a couple avoid divorce to assisting in obtaining better working conditions for laborers, to being part of circumventing what seemed an inevitable war. It is also geographically diverse. Curle shares stories about his interventions in conflict in his native England, the Indian subcontinent, northern Africa, and beyond. So, while this limitation is not as limiting as it would be in the case of most practitioners, the model can still benefit from incorporating the experience of other practitioners.

Second, Curle limits his concern with peacebuilding strategies to those, which fall under the general paradigms of nonviolent action and conflict resolution. This is understandable because of his base in his own experience in which these were the mechanisms on which his interventions relied. Beyond this, there had been so little exploration of these processes and their relationship at the time he wrote Making Peace that to have gone beyond this may have been imprudent. Nonetheless, he ignores a major category available to justice seekers – legislative approaches and judicial redress. I have made an initial attempt to include such processes, and will expand on it here.

Finally, we simply have over thirty years of additional experience in peacemaking since Making Peace was published. During that time, changes have occurred which may provide new opportunities for seeking social justice. Many conflict resolution processes have been institutionalized in new venues. Nonviolent action has taken advantage of the greater communications possibilities offered by advances in technology. Additional legal precedents have been developed.

The goal of this article, therefore, is to take advantage of the above opportunities to enrich the model originally offered by Curle. As with the original, the goal is not simply to offer a compelling paradigm to promote academic understanding or further research. Rather, my goal, building on practice itself, is to offer those embroiled in efforts to achieve greater social justice, a tool that will help them determine appropriate and effective strategies.
Intractable Conflict in America: Call of Action to the Field
Joan Walker Scott (2003)

Curle’s Model

I first encountered Curle’s model at the outset of my own teaching career. Making Peace was certainly the most important book I had read in either peace studies or conflict resolution. But even by the late 70s and early 80s, it was already out of print. When I was putting together a special issue of Peace and Change on conflict resolution in 1982, I asked Curle to submit an article outlining the model presented in Making Peace. He was gracious in asking me to co-author it with him (Curle and Dugan, 1982). For me, it was, and remains, one of the things I feel most honored by in my career. Later, John Paul Lederach used it, along with my Nested Theory of Conflict, as bases of this theoretical work on how to intervene in conflict at different stages (Lederach, 1997). These publications, however, do not seek to expand on Curle’s model, but to re-present it in the first case, and to build another theory on it in the second.

Curle’s model is concerned with moving unpeaceful relationships to peaceful ones. An unpeaceful relationship is one in which either or both of the parties are damaged, possibly through physical violence, but also in economic or psychological ways. At the very outset, then, Curle is concerned not simply with armed conflict, but with any situation in which people suffer as a result of the nature of the relationship. Thus, “unpeacefulness is a situation in which human beings are impeded from achieving full development either because of their own internal relations or because of the types of relation that exist between themselves.” (p. 1) Curle, then, like Johan Galtung, is concerned with both physical and structural violence.

Peace, on the other hand, is a “condition from which the individuals or groups concerned gain more advantage than disadvantage.” (Ibid.) Ideally, it is more positive than this: the relationship is typified by harmony and collaboration.

In determining how to respond to an unpeaceful situation, two variables must be considered: the degree or awareness of the injustice and the degree of balance between the parties relative to the conflict. Awareness concerns not only whether the parties are aware of the problem, certainly the aggrieved party is aware of its suffering, but also the degree to which the parties are aware of its sources and the possibilities for addressing the situation. While the archetype of the “happy slave” is undoubtedly a myth promulgated by the slave-owning class, the fact that the slave is not happy with her/his lot does not necessarily mean that s/he has a full analysis of the origins of slavery, previous attempts to eliminate it, and the range of possible strategies s/he might use to change her/his status.

Balance is something like the degree of power parties have relative to each other and to the problem area. I say “something like” because Curle seems to studiously avoid using the word “power” to represent the concept he is describing; the word is not even listed in the book’s index. I’ve always presumed that is because power is often equated with might, and Curle is referring to something at the same time larger and smaller than might. Larger, in the sense that he is talking about the full range of capacities parties do or can bring to the relationship whether to maintain it or to change it. Smaller, in the sense that
he is concerned only with the capacities relative to this particular situation. It does not matter if I have influence with, and respect from, a wide range of people, if those capacities are not operative in the matter at hand.

A fully developed relationship is typified by high levels of awareness on the parts of all parties, as well as a modicum of balance between them, such that neither can force her/his will on the other.

Curle’s process for addressing unpeacefulness includes six components

- **Research**, through which the would-be peacemaker acquires enough knowledge of the situation to work effectively.

- **Conciliation**, through which he lays the psychological foundation – the changed perceptions, the heightened awareness, the reduced tension – necessary for rational discussion and negotiation.

- **Bargaining**, in which the two parties to a quarrel try to reach agreement without making excessive concessions.

- **Development**, in which a formerly unpeaceful relationship is restructured along peaceful lines.

- **Education**, through which the weaker party in a low-awareness/unbalanced relationship gains awareness of its situation and so attempts to change it.

- **Confrontation**, through which the weaker party to an unbalanced relationship asserts itself in the hope of gaining a position of parity, and hence the possibility of reaching a settlement that will lead to a restructuring of the relationship. Confrontation may have many forms, ranging from revolution to non-violent protest.

In Curle’s model, the degree of awareness and balance in the relationship determines which component is used, and in what sequence. The model can be presented pictorially.

**Figure 1  Curle’s Original Model for Sequencing Strategies in Social Conflict**
Notes: (a) The peacemaking sequence may, of course, begin at any of the stages of conflict.  
(b) The broken arrow would illustrate for example, that a minority group, having striven for greater  
equality, is satisfied with a measure of self-government short of independence; even so, the relationship  
would clearly be more peaceful than it was previously, with an acceptable degree of imbalance.

Typically, in a situation of social injustice, there is an imbalanced relationship between the parties.  When awareness is also low, education is the appropriate strategy.  Once education has succeeded sufficiently that awareness is sufficiently high to address the issues in contention, confrontation is the appropriate strategy.  After confrontation has changed the balance between the parties and a modicum of parity has been established conciliation and bargaining become the appropriate response.

Curle’s model flies in the face of most of what most conflict resolvers take for granted, that what Curle calls conciliation and bargaining and what most of the field tends to call mediation is always appropriate in dealing with a conflict.  While some more sophisticated programs, such as that developed by the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice, recognize the need for educational activities prior to mediation (they tend to place this under the general rubric of “technical assistance”), few if any include a consideration of confrontation among the methods to employ in a conflict.  Many people, in fact – parties, authorities and interveners alike – are attracted to mediation because it allows avoidance of confrontation.
I am reminded of numerous conversations in the early days of the extension of conflict resolution processes beyond their former confines of labor-management and international diplomacy in which people argued interveners need not worry about possible power imbalances between the parties. The presumption was that the mediation process itself gave parties equal footing, that no one had to sign an agreement with which they were dissatisfied and that mediation, therefore, was an appropriate response at virtually any stage of a conflict. Some fewer discussants would acknowledge some role of confrontation in allowing the weaker party to organize itself, to become clear about its leadership and its agenda. Even here, however, concerns about power were rarely mentioned.

Curle on the other hand, even as he avoids the use of the word “power,” is very concerned about the relationship of the parties and whether they come to the table as relative equals. This is particularly important in intractable conflicts which tend to be of long duration. Many times participants cannot even remember a time when there was a relatively balanced peaceful relationship. It would be too easy for them to begrudgingly accept far less than they need or want, if they do not have equal status and stature at the table.

*Conceptualizing an Enriched Model*

**Low awareness, Low Balance**

The strategy Curle calls for at this stage is *education*. Curle casts a wide net in his consideration of education as the initial stage in the peace making process. He speaks about educating potential protagonists, potential allies and the antagonists themselves. He discusses not only the substance of the concern as an the appropriate subject for teaching, but also the ways in which change can be sought, even that it can be successfully sought. Despite the breadth of Curle’s usage, the concept education is still too narrow to capture the full range of activities, which need to be undertaken when both awareness and balance are low. The model I offer here expands on it in three ways, by

- including research, which Curle identifies as a peacemaking strategy, but does not associate with any particular stage of the struggle;
- broadening the definition of education even further; and
- adding the elements of motivation, organizing, and networking, which will be disused below.

*Research.* Whether we are participants or interveners, we much understand the conflict, its sources, its history, and its nature, before we are likely to develop accurate ideas about how to resolve it. Its not that we stop doing research after awareness has been achieved, but I wish to place it in this sector of the matrix by name to underscore the importance of doing research at the outset.

By research, I do not necessarily mean sophisticated statistical studies or qualitative studies for that matter, although these may provide useful information leading to insight.
What I’m most concerned about is research to empower. Research must be influenced by, and put in the hands of those, who are impacted by oppression, so that they can become effective actors in overcoming it.

The Pittsburgh Transportation Equity Project, one of the interviewees in a study recently completed by Joan Walker and myself, offers a model worth emulating. As reported by Fred Brown, senior research associate on the project, they engage the people with and for whom they are working in developing their research agenda and methodology. Further, they disseminate the research broadly in the neighborhoods in which they work, equipping citizens to be prepared to discuss issues with decision makers. Their knowledge then, gives the lie to the notion that they and people like themselves are not “qualified” to sit on decision making bodies themselves.

Education. Two key elements are added here to education: self-reflection and education of the opponent.

Education, as used here, involves more than merely providing information; it involves equipping people to undertake cogent analyses of the situation in which they find themselves. And they must be able to analyze themselves. An apt metaphor might be a relative of an alcoholic who enables the continuation of the addiction behaviorally while deploiring it verbally. In a similar vein, the oppressed contribute to the continuation of their oppression. In this case, it is called “internalized racism” or “internalized oppression” rather than co-dependency.

The previously mentioned study by Joan Walker Scott and myself explored ways in which people who do not necessarily define themselves as conflict resolvers are working to eliminate deep social conflicts such as racism. In the study, the theme of self-reflection emerged in almost every interview. Roberto Chene points out why this is needed: “the conflict between groups is directly related to the individualized internalized oppression….so if we’re going to reconcile inter-group conflict, [we need to deal with internalized oppression].”

Chene discusses racism producing a lack of peace internal to the person. This has repercussions not only for how a person treats persons on the other side of the conflict line, but also how s/he treats those on her/his own side: “if you’re not centered, if you’re not mindful, that’s going to express itself in many ways. And one of the many ways it expresses itself, particularly for people who have been victims of racism, is to treat each other badly very often.” The question that Chene raises in his internalized oppression work is not merely whether we treat each other badly, but also

   How do we stop it? How do we stop tearing each other apart? How do we stop debilitating our organizations because of it? So it’s a combination of doing personal work and personal growth however one does that, however one feels they need to heal themselves or to be healed, and then translating that new-found self-awareness into
structuring our organizations more effectively so that we don’t dramatize and play out on each other the hurtful effects of racism.

For members of the dominant group, self-reflection is also important. While Curle places increasing the awareness of the dominant group under “confrontation,” he does make reference to the need for greater self-awareness on the part of the topdog: “My view of my enemy is related to my view of myself, therefore I cannot change my attitude to him without a corresponding change of attitude towards myself.” (Curle, p. 211)

Self-reflection may not be the only form of education needed by the dominant group. They may be keenly unaware of the degree to which their behavior causes the problems faced by the disenfranchised. When I was a youngster, I tended to think of the Indians as the bad guys in the cowboy flicks; after all, the white-hatted heroes tended to be the cowboys who were chasing them. And I had the advantage of a grandmother who claimed Lakota heritage, for whom it was always the settlers who were the bad guys. It was only as I read accounts of the ways in which land was seized, treaties broken, and beyond that, genocide sought as a matter of national policy, that I came to a very different understanding of that conflict. Had I not had some very patient native friends and mentors, my level of awareness would be far less than it is. Still, it’s a large leap beyond that understanding of historical events and current conditions, for me to come to terms with the ways in which I benefit from the conflict and perpetuate it, as well as the ways in which I might make some contribution to making things right.

Most of us who are members of dominant groups face this same challenge and need to rely on the mentorship of others, both those who are experiencing the pain of domination, and those dominant group members who are farther along on the journey than we ourselves. We can also learn, as Roberto Chene suggests, by getting in touch with the ways in which we ourselves have been oppressed. He posits that because ours is a culture that does not respect differences, we all have experienced oppression of some part of who we are, and that we can become more sensitive to the situation of those who are members of oppressed groups by recalling what our own experience of oppression did to us.

In the ideal case, the dominant group responds to this educational effort by committing itself to undoing the injustices that exist. As Scott points out, this may have involved some “subtle confrontation.” If a group advocating eliminating racism approaches me and lets me know that I could benefit from the training they are giving, or that I need to get in touch with my white privilege, I may well feel ill at east, and perhaps even cowed. This, however, is much less confrontative than having pickets marching outside my office or residence, having my sins of omission and commission listed at a press conference, or having people organize to boycott the goods or services I offer. A key difference with the sorts of strategies discussed at the high awareness, low balance stage, is that while I may feel confronted by the overture, it is much less, if at all, public.

Motivation. It is not sufficient to inform people of the need for change and the possibility of success in seeking it. One must also be concerned about creating the will to change.
Change tends to be threatening, even to those who benefit least from the status quo. To engage in social change efforts, or to be responsive to the efforts of others, one must be inspired to face the threat that significant change represents. As Barrington Moore puts it, the

[h]uman capacity to ignore and accept suffering is essential to human survival. Therefore any political movement against oppression has to develop a new diagnosis and remedy for existing forms of suffering, a diagnosis and remedy by which this suffering stands morally condemned. These new moral standards of condemnation constitute the core identity of any oppositional movement. (1978, p. 88).

Organizing. Organizing is often associated with confrontation, but in fact, it is also needed to increase awareness. People must be able to be reached in the effort to educate and motivate, and they cannot play a role in undertaking research unless they can be identified. I was keenly aware, as I started work on a racism elimination project in South Carolina, that were it not for the pre-existing network of neighborhood organizations, we would have had to undertake an organizing effort ourselves if there were to be any hope of moving from the level of personal transformation to the level of social change.

Sometimes, the peacemaker is fortunate that there is a pre-existing organization that can be used as a way of getting the word out to people at the grassroots level. It matters little that the organization was not created with that purpose in mind if it is willing to take on the goal of overcoming the unpeaceful situation. A well-known case in point is the role that the black churches of Montgomery, Alabama played in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The churches provided the meeting places and leadership for initial research, education, and motivation efforts. As the movement moved toward the confrontation stage, a new organization, the Montgomery Improvement Association, was created, but the churches continued to provide the meeting places, and the organization continued to be led by people who had honed their leadership skills as pastors and lay church leaders.

Beyond organizing the constituency, it is also important to network with other groups. They may be groups that can provide additional resources and credibility. They may be groups that are experiencing similar problems. In a case in which Indian Dispute Services intervened, the Timbasha Shoshones’ initial negotiation with several federal agencies regarding regaining tribal lands in a national park failed, largely because the agency representatives did not take them seriously. In the two year hiatus between the first and second negotiation, they networked with tribes from around the country who were experiencing similar problems with the national parks. They also created alliances with non-native groups who were appalled by the way in which the tribes were being treated. So strengthened, they were a force to be reckoned with as they entered the confrontation phase of their struggle.
High Awareness, Low Balance

**Confrontation** is probably the most controversial part of Curle’s model, particularly to the typical conflict resolver. Curle recognizes this, even when the confrontation is nonviolent:

> It is an important tool in the peacemaking kit, but a dangerous one, since it may inflame the ruling group, heightening the hostility of the latter and leading to the abandonment of the non-violent approach. (1971, p. 203)

 Nonetheless, except in such (likely rare) cases as education and other strategies identified above are successful in getting each party to the table taking each other seriously and willing to make concessions both in order to resolve the issue(s) and improve the relationship(s), confrontation will be necessary. The imbalance cannot go unaddressed if a truly peaceful relationship and situation is sought. Confrontation is the set of strategies through which “the weaker party to an unbalanced relationship attempts to achieve equality with the stronger so that may both, on this basis, reorder their relationship” (1971, p. 196). (Italics not in original.)

A wide spectrum of political action, from severely violent to avowedly nonviolent, can be included on the confrontation spectrum:

Ghandian non-violence, civil disobedience, protest, sabotage, the various non-violent alternatives to war, and confrontation as practiced by the students of today [late 1960s, early 1970s] and by the black Americans [referring to the Civil Rights Movement] – all are included.

Without resorting to violence, the Timbasha Shoshone used a particularly wide array of nonviolent action techniques, after their first round of talks with federal agencies. They organized a group of other tribes also impacted by National Park Service policy, whose planned strategy included a press conference to lay before the public the myriad of ways in which Native American groups and their ancestral homelands were not even considered in park policy. They picketed the Death Valley National Monument, their ancestral home, and passed out information informing tourists in four languages how they had been removed from their lands and not taken seriously since. They had a national letter writing fax campaign. They filed a lawsuit against the Bureau of Land Management for violating their own policies.

We can note here an expansion on Curle’s list. Confrontation strategies need not be illegal (violence and some forms of nonviolent action) or extralegal (most forms of nonviolent action), they may also include judicial and legislative components. In fact, the Timbasha Shoshone case not only included a lawsuit, the agreement reached was incorporated into federal legislation, thus changing a law rather than merely challenging one.
So how does one choose from the range of strategies? I suggest a few principles:
- Choose the most gentle of the confrontative methods in the early going, only moving to more disruptive and challenging mechanisms if the earlier strategies prove ineffective. This not only minimizes the likelihood of backlash from the opposition, it makes the strategies accessible to a larger number of the constituency, thus serving to broaden and deepen the power base.
- For similar reasons, avoid power if possible.
- Recognize a term that Haberfeld and others used in their interviews with Scott and I: being taken seriously. At the point at which the weaker party succeeds in getting the stronger party to take it and its concerns seriously, the parties are ready to move toward relationship building and negotiation strategies regardless of how much or how little confrontation has occurred.

High Awareness, High Balance

Once a modicum of balance has been achieved, the parties, both relatively aware of the nature of the conflict, its sources and impacts, are now ready to try to work together on a solution. Curle refers to the strategies most appropriately utilized here as conciliation and bargaining. I am going to expand somewhat his definitions of these terms and will offer replacement terms.

Curle’s term “conciliation” might best be replaced by something more inclusive such as “relationship building.” In broad situations, it might be called community building. What is of concern here is not simply that the parties come to see each other in a more realistic light, unencumbered by the common need to paint an enemy as having undesirable if not diabolical qualities, nor even that they reduce or eradicate their negative feelings and attitudes toward each other. Beyond this, it is of concern at this stage, that the parties become able to work together and see each other as neighbors, as fellow members of the same community.

The conflict resolution field tends to use the term “reconciliation,” but this word etymologically presupposes a prior good relationship to which one can return. Aside from the notion that one can never “really go home again,” that too much has changed over time to return to a status quo ante, and that the parties would wish to maintain at least some of the changes that have occurred, the fact of the matter is that there is often no home to which to return in the case of intractable conflicts.

The parties may never have had a good relationship. While there is some evidence that some less racist situation existed between blacks and whites prior to the dawn of black slavery, there were too few blacks in the then-colonies at the time to offer much of a model, and little of black collective memory refers to that past. For all practical purposes black-white relations in the United States, and most of the Western Hemisphere, began
with slavery. There is no positive past relationship on which to draw in developing a balanced relationship.

Much the same is true in Northern Ireland, where Protestantism was introduced with conquest, whether it be the hated “black and tans” who were the agents of subjugation, the Plantationers who took over lands formerly owned by Catholics, or the Anglicans who oversaw the subjugation and land confiscation.

In the case of Moslems and Jews in the Holy Land, a positive relationship is so far distant in the past as to be almost irrelevant. True, there is some recognition that the Arabs and Jews are of the same clan and descend from the same progenitor, Noah’s son Shem, from whom the term Semite is derived. But by the time of Abraham’s fateful decision to confer full inheritance on Isaac, his son by his wife Sarah, and to thereby effectively disown Ishmael, his son by Hamar, the seeds of Moslem-Jewish discord were already sown.

I am replacing the term “bargaining” with negotiation. At least in the United States, bargaining tends to have the connotation of horsetrading, the “art of the deal.” In intractable conflicts, where much more than distinct issues are involved and more than one’s stature at deal making at stake, the word bargaining tends to understate what is needed. However, I am not using the word negotiation in its narrow sense to refer to talks between parties without the assistance of a third party. Defining mediation as facilitated dialogue, it is included as well.

To expand on what I mean by negotiation, I turn to Tom Colosi’s simple but elegant definition. A negotiation is an “exchange of promises.” At this stage, parties need to make commitments to each other about specific items in contention as well as about the future nature of their relationship.

The New Model

Having moved through the various strategic components, I now introduce a new depiction, incorporating the above discussion.

Figure 2  Dugan’s Model for Sequencing Strategies in Social Conflict’

Lower left sector: Strategies for increasing awareness, including research, education, motivation, and organizing
  Lower middle sector. Confrontation leading toward balance using nonviolent action techniques, political campaigns, lawsuits and efforts to change law, avoiding violence if possible
  Upper Middle sector. Relationship Building and Negotiation, dealing with both attitudes and behaviors.
  Upper right sector: Balanced peaceful relationship restructured by action of all parties

Nonlinearity
Curle’s model, even in its expanded version, looks quite linear. The assumption can well be that one addresses the low level of awareness through research, education, motivation, and organizing, that one then moves to confrontation; and then, after negotiation and relationship or community building, one has a developed peaceful relationship. But conflict has an organic rather than mechanistic nature, and things are not likely to proceed in such a lock-step manner, even though this is the general trend.

Naming the additional components helps to explain why this is so. Awareness of one aspect of the issue may have succeeded sufficiently to move to confrontation, but there likely remain many who are not educated, and many topics on which the newly aware are not savvy. New aspects of issues may emerge as previous ones are settled, requiring additional research. Additional parties may need to be confronted, while others are already at a bargaining table.

The model as presented offers the benefit of simplicity. I was once able, on a cocktail napkin, to describe to a teacher why her education association was the target of a high level of animus from the citizenry. She was both confused and hurt; why was it that her neighbors did not understand that she was strongly committed to their children and at the same time felt that she should be being paid the same professional salaries that they earned or sought to earn? The problem, basically, was that the association had not sought to educate the “person in the street” about the injustice of the teachers’ situation; it had not sought to build alliances or engage the teachers in nonviolent action skills building. The association had jumped immediately to rather disruptive forms of confrontation. After a fifteen-minute conversation, my teacher friend not only was no longer confused, she had a reasonable grasp of the sorts of strategies they should be using.

This benefit cannot be understated. In expanding on and enhancing the model, we do not want to lose its power to empower ordinary people to analyze the structurally oppressive situations in which they find themselves. At the same time, living life is not like building a house; it is not only complex, it is dynamic. A river is a better metaphor. There is a flow from point A to point B, but “you can’t step into the same river twice.” So too, in resolving complex and deep-rooted conflicts, there is a general flow, the arrows point that out, but the journey from unpeace to peace is not a straight path. It winds and turns and meanders and we are not all moving at the same rate. We must constantly look at our situation to see where each person and group is on the journey. At times, we might even move back to them to help them navigate the rapids they are facing which we have the benefit of already having hurdled.


The following is an analysis of the appropriateness of different intervention processes at different stages of conflict. To give the reader an idea of the lens through which this analysis has been conceptualized, I offer the following brief disclosure about my own background and how I came to be involved in this project. Over the past 20 or so years as public affairs consultant focusing on equity and social justice issues, I have found that the type of facilitation that is effective in race relations, cultural awareness, personal and social transformation arenas requires skills and techniques much different than those called for in conventional decision making processes. In this work, I contend that there is no such thing as a true "neutral." One’s ability and willingness to "be" and model vulnerability is crucial.

I advocate a process of learning along the lines of mentorship or apprenticeship, but I am also acutely aware of the significance of standardizing and institutionalizing best practices modalities. Optimistic that knowledge gained from the disciplines of human behavior and conflict resolution would be useful in this regard, I resigned my position as Director of the Education Program for Culture Awareness, at the University of California Santa Barbara, where I led the campus-wide discourse in diversity, to return to graduate school. Knowing that the Deep South would provide a contextually rich environment in which to pursue the work I feel compelled to do in race-relations and specifically “undoing” racism, I relocated to South Carolina where currently I am in a graduate
program in human behavior and conflict management. As fate would have it, I met peace researcher and conflict resolution theorist, Máire Dugan, less than two weeks after arriving in South Carolina. As founder and director of a non-profit focusing on race relations, Máire and I immediately recognized that our mutual interest and complementary backgrounds made the prospect of future collaboration nearly inevitable.

The project, of which this analysis is one component of three, is but a single manifestation of our collaborative efforts. The purpose of the overall project is to ensure that practitioners in the field of conflict resolution, especially those tackling the thorny problems often thought of as intractable (i.e. racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc.), are better able to make use of conflict resolution processes which are not given adequate attention in the conflict resolution literature.

Indeed, the field of conflict resolution offers an increasingly rich body of literature in the area of protracted and intractable conflict. However, as is the case of John Paul Lederach’s *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, the focus is almost entirely outside of the United States, and generally limited to armed conflict (Lederach, 2002). Due to of an absence of armed conflict, Lederach and others may fail to recognize the United States as a “deeply divided society.” However, when juxtaposing the U.S. socio-economic and political landscape with Lederach’s model of “deeply divided societies”, a preponderance of salient characteristics is implicated -- for example:

In almost all cases, these conflicts are *intranational* in scope; people seek security by identifying with something close to their experience and over which they have
control (i.e. clan, ethnicity, religion, or geographic / regional affiliation, or a mix of these); fighting is aimed at achieving collective rights; [those engaged in conflicts] live as neighbors and yet are locked into long-standing cycles of hostile interaction; the conflicts are characterized by deep-rooted, intense animosity; fear; and severe stereotyping; and the futures of those fighting are ultimately and intimately linked and interdependent (Lederach, 2002, pp. 11-17).

By limiting the definition of “deeply divided societies” to those engaged in or potentially engaged in armed conflict, Lederach and others, possibly inadvertently, shift the focus to “developing” countries, and away from intractable conflict in the United States.

Adam Curle’s model, in which he identifies six essential components in the sequence of peacemaking, is instructive and is referenced throughout this analysis. The six components, as Curle defines them, are:

_Research_, through which the would-be peacemaker acquires enough knowledge of the situation to work effectively.

_Conciliation_, through which he lays the psychological foundation – the changed perceptions, the heightened awareness, the reduced tension – necessary for rational discussion and negotiation.

_Bargaining_, in which the two parties to a quarrel try to reach agreement without making excessive concessions.

_Development_, in which a formerly unpeaceful relationship is restructured along peaceful lines.

_Education_, through which the weaker party in a low-awareness/unbalanced relationship gains awareness of its situation and so attempts to change it.
Confrontation, through which the weaker party to an unbalanced relationship asserts itself in the hope of gaining a position of parity, and hence the possibility of reaching a settlement that will lead to a restructuring of the relationship. Confrontation may have many forms, ranging from revolution to non-violent protest (Curle, 1971, p. 20).

Curle’s understanding and definition of “unpeaceful” relationships (as opposed to “peaceful” ones), in which he introduces “a controversial issue into the definition of conflict”, is also useful as will become apparent (Curle, 1971, p. 4). Summarily, Curle posits:

…conflict is a question not of perception but of fact. Thus if, in a particular social system, one group gains what another loses, there is – even if the loser does not understand what is happening – a structural conflict, which is what (Johan) Galtung means by his term ‘structural’ violence (Curle, 1971, ibid).

Maire Dugan’s, Nested Theory (Dugan, 1996), which provides a framework for considering multiple dimensions of conflict (consecutively and/or concurrently), is particularly relevant. Dugan’s nested paradigm was revealed to her while thinking about possible intervention strategies to resolve a conflict between two rival groups of high school students - one black, one white. The conflict arose as a result of the black boys’ being offended by the white boys donning Confederate paraphernalia.

In this scenario, Dugan noted, the conflict existed at the issue level, the Confederate clothing; a relationship level, the boys did not like each other; a sub-system level, this conflict unfolded at a southern high school whose former mascot was “Johnnie Reb,” and was located on a street named Rebel Run; and at the system level, this all took place in the context of a racist society. The appropriateness of the intervention strategy,
Dugan noted, would depend upon which level of the conflict one were attempting to resolve. For example, a mediator might attempt to get the boys to agree not to fight. At a relationship level, the boys might even become friends. At a subsystem level, the school might institute race-relations dialogues. Admittedly, a system level solution is less apparent and more complex. I tend to think of these various layers more as dimensions of conflict than levels and will use the terms interchangeably.

Lederach’s pyramid model of orienting actors and approaches to peacebuilding is also instructive (Lederach, 2002). The three-tiered model places grassroots leadership at its base, its largest part, where he situates local leaders, indigenous leaders of non-governmental agencies, community developers, etc. He reserves the middle range, where there is less room than at the bottom and more room than the top, for religious leaders, academicians/intellectuals, and humanitarian non-governmental leaders. Finally, the narrowest point on the pyramid; the top is reserved for military, political and religious leaders with high visibility (Lederach, 2002).”

Data for this analysis were collected primarily through telephone interviews, typically extending one hour or longer, and sometimes followed up on with additional shorter phone interviews. Many of the respondents also sent documentation through mail or e-mail and/or directed researchers to their websites. All interviewees were sent the interview instrument prior to the telephone interview, however each of interviewers used additional questions to deepen the dialogue on several issues.

The combined wisdom of scholars and practitioners central to this analysis suggests an important opportunity and clear need for the field of conflict resolution to pay
greater attention to the implications of engaging a broader diversity of voices in the discourse on intractable conflict. Equal consideration is likewise prudent regarding the implications of continuing not to have various underrepresented cultural perspectives more adequately recognized in the literature and more fully represented at the table.

The size of the sampling for this analysis does not lend itself to quantitative statistical interpretation. However, no less important is the compelling challenge to the field for deep reflection of its own posture regarding inclusiveness, especially after contemplating seemingly inherent advantages of operating, whether as practitioners or scholars, from multicultural vs. monocultural paradigms. Indeed, singularly significant is the culturally rich context from which the stories that provide the data for this analysis emanate.

The Respondents

_Baba Bey_ is a principal in Ma’at Enterprises in Atlanta, Georgia, which provides training and consulting services and is involved in the National Black Men’s Health Network. He also teaches in primary and middle schools in Atlanta.

_Fred Brown_ serves as Research Policy Analyst at the Pittsburgh Transportation Equity Project. PTEP “is a community-based initiative that seeks to create conditions of empowerment for African Americans in and around transportation issues within their community.” PTEP’s primary role is to “educate, support, and coordinate African American communities with regard to transportation equity issues,” and also provides information on other issues that “may inhibit full participation in this endeavor (health care, family support, conflict resolution, youth programming, etc.).”


_Roberto Chene_ lives and works in Albuquerque, New Mexico where he does training, teaching and consulting with a focus on inter-cultural leadership and conflict resolution. He directs the Southwest Center for Intercultural Leadership and periodically
teaches courses at the University of New Mexico. He has served for several years on the board of National CPCR.

_Claire B. Greensfelder_ is Executive Director of The Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center in Oakland, California. The Center is located in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park (on the edges of San Leandro Bay – an inlet bay of San Francisco Bay). It was established in 2001 by community activists in partnership with four government agencies “to serve as a regional resource for the study and teaching of nonviolence and conflict resolution and to provide at-risk youth with recreational programs, environmental education, and employment opportunities.”

_Steven Haberfeld Ph. D._ is the Executive Director and serves as the Senior Negotiator/Mediator and Director of Training on the staff of Indian Dispute Resolution Service, Inc. Along with a consortium of five Indian organizations, he is one of the founders of IDRS and the principle designer of its program. The primary purpose of IDRS is to strengthen tribes' and tribal organizations' capacity to govern themselves; resolve internal and external conflict; establish favorable working relationships with outsiders; and control, manage and enhance their own economic destinies.”

[http://www.indiandispute.com/about.htm](http://www.indiandispute.com/about.htm)

_Shelley Vendiola_ is the Training and Program Campaign Director for the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN); she also serves on the board of the Indigenous Women’s Network. IEN is “an alliance of grassroots indigenous peoples whose mission is to protect the sacredness of Mother Earth from contamination and exploitation by strengthening, maintaining, and respecting the traditional teachings and the natural laws.”


_Elizabeth Williams_ is the Director of Programming Strategies for the National Office for the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ). The national office is located in New York City; NCCJ has 57 regional offices located in 32 states across the continental United States. NCCJ was founded in 1927 as the National Conference of Christians and Jews. According to its mission statement, it is “a human relations
organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism in America. NCCJ promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education.” [http://www.nccj.org/](http://www.nccj.org/). Chrissy Reyes, the Communications and Marketing Director, joined her in the telephone interview.
Issues:

A more detailed report of the case studies, upon which this analysis is based, is presented under separate cover. The micro-focused report reflects surface level dynamics and relational concerns such as those exemplified in PTEP’s efforts to achieve greater equity in transportation for disenfranchised members of the community and those demonstrated by IDRS in its endeavor to assist various tribes reclaim land rights, and gain or regain sovereignty status. This analysis rather is viewed from a broader perspective and focuses on root causes and underlying issues that are pervasive in systemic dynamics.

Though representing and addressing a wide spectrum and complex array of social justice issues, common themes emerged. Significantly, not only were such patterns apparent in the creative responses to the varying states of unpeacefulness confronted by the respondents, but in the consistently dehumanizing, demoralizing, and debilitating nature of the conflict(s) themselves. Though, by definition, structural violence and structural conflict often are relegated by the dominating party to the imagination of the party being dominated, “gentle warriors”, a term both Bey and Chene use to describe themselves, passionately illuminate the elusive, and in so doing, further implicate the appropriateness of employing Curle’s definition of structural conflict and unpeacefulness in which, building upon Gultang’s premise, he maintains:

\[
\text{[V]iolence exist whenever an individual’s potential development, mental or physical, is held back by the condition of a relationship. It may seem peculiar to suggest that emotional, social, or education deprivation, or low level of health, should be regarded as symptoms of ‘unpeace ‘if conditions are otherwise}
\]
‘peaceful’… [E]ven if the domination by one group produces the abject submission of another, the relationship (which is necessarily based on inequality) bears the seeds of rebellion (Curle, 1971, p. 2).

Bey, when painting a profile of clients with whom he works, spoke of “low self esteem, stress, and denial, lack of exercise, improper diet, and very low frequency when it comes to spirituality.” Acknowledging his own struggle with internalized oppression and internalized racism, Chene identifies this self-destructive duo, which manifest in intrapersonal and/or intragroup dynamics, as being directly related to interpersonal and intergroup conflict. Both Bey and Chene are consultants whose clients come to them by word of mouth primarily, thus some degree of “misery loves company” might be an arguable assumption. The description of their client bases and the circumstances in which they work, however, resonate with those of the other respondents as well.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center, for example, serves an economically distressed, underserved population with the plethora of challenges traditionally linked to such communities; high unemployment, violence, limited educational and recreational opportunities for youth not being the least among them. The Indigenous Environmental Network works “to protect the sacredness of Mother Earth, from contamination and exploitation,” which from the perspective of a placed-based people is an assault tantamount to genocide.

Brown and Haberfeld both identify disenfranchisement as a major concern. For example, while describing PTEP’s 10 year plan, Brown recalled:

[A]s a result of our initial analysis we saw that…in the recent election in Pittsburgh, only 20% of the (black) population voted…. So we saw right there,
that there is a disconnect with their understanding of policy and politics, and a lot of that disconnect is connected to residual impacts from recent political decisions that get made in this region. On the heels of that, we also had the dynamic occur with the election with the President.\textsuperscript{vii} So minorities, in particular in this region are, I would say, disenfranchised with the political process and have become apathetic with regard to their roles in making the policies and practices.

Also regarding the complexity of disenfranchisement, Haberfeld asserted:

I think this is an important lesson for mediators and the mainstream mediation communities. I don’t think they realize this is a different proposition when you’re working with communities and people that are effectively disenfranchised because getting to the table and having counterparts on the other side of the table that takes you seriously requires a lot of work…

Both IDRS and IEN serve communities who, as Haberfeld describes:

have been devastated by external conquest and it’s taken a long time to recover. Their social systems were destroyed. Their economies were destroyed. Their political systems were replaced with a government, a federally designed template called Indian Reorganization Act …that was really imposing a democratic representative government but it had its short comings as well, and was always seen and still is, as an externally imposed system of government which supplanted (or replaced) traditional forms…

Reflecting upon Haberfeld’s observation that “in the 1950s and early 1960s a lot of tribes …were actually terminated, and so there wasn’t any tribal government, no tribal community, and many of those were
Intractable Conflict in America: Call of Action to the Field
Joan Walker Scott (2003)

restored and there was an ingathering of people that have for several generations, lived off the reservation, exposed to different cultures, different values, often very low income, and they come together trying to make a tribal community out of the varied assortments of people, and agendas and context…

leads the analyst to conclude that the challenge of trying to reinvent community among people who share a common heritage, but who have been deprived of an ancestral knowledge of their culture, is not exclusive to Native Americans. Indeed, Americans of African descent with whom Bey, Brown, and Greensfelder primarily work, often are paralyzed, psychologically and spiritually, by a related conundrum. A phenomenon defined as *assimilado* in Portuguese producing internal conflict around issues of identity, not considering themselves and/or not being recognized fully American or fully African is often the result (Curle, 1971). Often, this phenomenon manifests in Hispanic and other communities of color as well.

**Role:**

While each of the respondents lauded the value of conflict resolution processes, none of them operate from a neutral paradigm. In fact, regarding the organization’s historic stance on neutrality, Williams of NCCJ revealed:

We had a challenge because we had often taken the place of the honest broker, saying we shouldn’t straddle the fence. At one point, that is how we were known, that NCCJ is a neutral organization, so you can work with them because they are neutral, but our mission statement is value laden. I mean we are against bias and bigotry. We are for promoting advocacy.
In other words, the work of eliminating racism, eradicating social injustice, advocating equity, abolishing oppression, restoring and preserving the environment, indeed, ameliorating the human condition is, admittedly, personal. The practitioners we profiled and the organizations they represent are unapologetically non-neutral in their commitment to resolve various manifestations of protracted and seemingly intractable conflict.

Interestingly, regarding his own involvement as a member of a tribal negotiating team, Haberfeld offered critical insight regarding neutrality:

I asked a mentor of mine, Thomas Colosi, a very prominent, successful mediator in this country…does my sitting on this tribal negotiating team undermine my credibility as a neutral, you know, in the long run. And he said “I think mediators negotiate and negotiators mediate, and I think when I do a mediation, [I] look for someone on each side who is like me, who understands the mediation process because … negotiators who have that kind of orientation understand that it can’t be one sided, that you have to vigorously pursue your own interests, but you also have to spend an equal amount of time to accommodating others to get a good solid agreement.”

The stories, on which this analysis is based, suggest that neutrality and competency need not receive mutually exclusive consideration when designing and implementing appropriate conflict resolution strategies.

**Stages:**

Analysis revealed a strong correlation among underlying issues, subsequent patterns among those issues, and dimensions in which different types of intervention
were implemented. Louis Kriesberg’s observation about the importance of institutionalization with regard to social conflict is instructive and invites a critical consideration:

One of the social patterns that affect the mode used in conflict is the degree to which the system as a whole has cross-cutting ties, a common sense of identity, and institutionalized means of decision making (Kriesberg, 1982, p. 150). Another dimension of the means used to pursue conflicting goals cuts across…three kinds of inducements…: This is the degree to which conflict behavior is regulated and the regulations are institutionalized (ibid, p. 119). If one of the conflict parties claims to be the superordinate and all encompassing entity, but this standing is not recognized by the other party, the institutionalized and regulated means of conflict resolution will be followed under duress of the conflict… (ibid).

Unfortunately, bias and bigotry can be institutionalized as well. Though seemingly invisible, certain dynamics seem to be inherent in all dimensions and stages of conflict in which our respondents work. For example, Chene shared as a framework for his work:

I think another kind of working assumption I have, in terms of the problem, is I think our society doesn’t respect differences. The purpose of our society is to reconcile differences through dominance and I think our society practices what I consider a form of tyranny of conformity.

Brown, who also teaches at one of the local universities, summarized related insights gained in response to his query of students regarding equity issues comparing Afro-centric and Euro-centric paradigms:
It really shows the depth of issues is so far reaching and systemic in nature that the objectification occurs in the dominant culture and the hegemony further perpetuates the illusion of progress, and what we’re trying to do is hold the mirror up and say where is the progress, for real. Where is it at, put the smoke down and let’s look at what’s right here and that’s hard.

The interlocking and overlapping dimensions of the type conflict examined in this analysis were further illuminated by Bey as he spoke of leading clients on an internal journey for solutions to external problems, “…because that’s the root. That’s the cause of everything. It’s like the tip of the iceberg. What we’re identifying is not the problem; it’s just the effect. We want to get to the root…”

Indeed, Haberfeld’s previously referenced assertion, “getting to the table and having counterparts on the other side of the table that take you seriously requires a lot of work…” bears underscoring. The significance of understanding power imbalances with regard to accurate assessment of conflict stages was further clarified when Haberfeld addressed divergent perspectives in an intra-geographical/international conflict in which he was involved,

I was involved with a tribe out in Death Valley, the Timbasha Shoshone, who had been stripped of all land in 1933 when the federal government created the Death Valley National Monument. They just ignored the fact there was a tribe out there… When the tribe prepared for these meetings they were thinking negotiations. The feds actually were thinking “well, we will listen to what they have to say, let them speak, and we’ll probably go back to our office and do what we want to do anyway.”
The severity of power imbalance and divergence of worldviews, apparent in these and similar conflicts, compound the task of accurately accessing the stage of certain conflicts. There is overwhelming evidence, however, that potentially revolutionary and paradigm shifting strategies are being born out of what, borrowing from Central American culture, Lederach refers to as *coyuntura*, “a metaphor for placing oneself in the stream of time and space and determining at any given moment what things mean and therefore what should be done” (Lederach, 2002, p. 96).

Each of the respondents is fully engaged at several stages of conflict concurrently. Further, it would appear that each of them more than values non-linear processes that enable them to engage simultaneously at multiple levels of the conflict(s) in which they are involved as well. The respondents all seem to embrace the concept of conflict as a living, dynamic organism. Hence, multi-threaded, multi-dimensional intervention strategies were not uncommon.

For example, Haberfeld described

[working in] a number of different communities [to] assist tribes to negotiate with their local school district. We approach it by training Indian parents and tribal officials for 3 days in cross cultural communications negotiations and the government-to-government negotiations and then we walk across the street and we give an equal number of people on the school side that same training; teachers, administrators and hopefully some school board members. And then, we ask them to send a team to the table and we mediate their negotiations and come up with a whole series of agreements regarding reforming the schools to better address the educational needs of Indian kids.
In this scenario, while several of the stages described in the Curle model happened consecutively, several appeared to unfold concurrently as well. The first step in the process involved training the tribal parents. Without a doubt, implications of multi-level degrees of intragroup awareness and intergroup awareness and/or acknowledgement of the various conflicts examined in this analysis are explicit. The Curle model defines education as the strategy used in the sequence to peacemaking “through which the weaker party in a low-awareness/unbalanced relationship gains awareness of its situation and so attempts to change it.” Indeed, this seems to be one purpose the training served. It is not that the tribal parents were unaware of their “unpeaceful” status; however they were unaware of the strength they could muster by collaborating with other parents and by increasing their own skills in communication and negotiation.

School district representatives, however, were also trained. While this would not fall within the rubric of education per Curle’s definition, IDRS utilized training (education) to raise the awareness of the school district at multiple levels, the most apparent having to do with what Dugan’s Nested Model would identify as issues and relationship levels of conflict. Parents were dissatisfied with the services their children were receiving. There was a lot of blaming going back and forth.

Because IDRS is admittedly non-neutral, however, even the gesture of approaching the school district to offer training could be considered a subtle form of confrontation, the process Curle contends “through which the weaker party to an unbalanced relationship asserts itself in hope of gaining a position of parity, and hence the possibility of reaching a settlement that will lead to a restructuring of the relationship.” The new sense of strength the parents gained, as a result of their own
training and of forming alliances with other parents could only be bolstered by knowing that the school district was being groomed for a next step toward sustainable peace. In this case, at least two stages, education and confrontation, were unfolding simultaneously. The benefit of not being constricted by strictly sequential linear processes apparently yielded exponential benefits. None of this would have been possible had the intervenor not been able to establish trust with both sides.

Indeed, my own experience weighing neutrality against trust while mediating potentially volatile situations between various factions at the University of California resonates with the experience of these respondents. In many instances my non neutral position was perceived by the conflicting parties as a sign of passion, commitment and/or authentic concern about what Dugan’s Nested Theory refers to as systems a level of the conflict, in which they were engaged at an issue and/or relationship level. In the Haberfeld example, several others shared by the respondents, and my own experiences, the degree to which the parties trusted the intervenor was not contingent upon the intervenors’ professed neutrality.

The Timbasha Shoshone talks, briefly referenced earlier, in which Haberfeld represented IDRS as a member of the tribal negotiating team, provide a good example of how power differentials, conyutura and divergent levels of awareness converged to produce revolutionary, paradigm shifting results. Not insignificantly, the ultimate success of this story is predicated upon the Tribe’s perseverance as well as its attitude about earlier, so called, “failure.” Summarily, a breakdown occurred in a first round of talks between the two governments (Timbasha Shoshone and United States) where the United States not only refused to grant the Tribe’s request for 750,000 acres to be
brought into trust and a parcel of 5,000 acres in the Death Valley to be used as a headquarters in Furnace Creek. Haberfeld recalled that the breaking point occurred after several months of contentious exchange when a representative from US Park Services informed the Tribe,

Oh, by the way, remember when we talked about you getting 40 acres of land for your reservation, well, we’ve taken that off the proposal as well, so that we’re not recommending any land for a reservation here within the park.

Some two years after the Tribe walked out of the talks, with no intergovernmental communication in the interim, Haberfeld boasted (albeit modestly) of the ensuing development:

But luckily that was followed by a successful process where there was really good solid government to government negotiations and ultimately a signed agreement that became the basis for congressional legislation and they established, under the Timbasha Homeland Act, a reservation of over 10,000 acres for tribe out there, plus an agreement to designate a million acres of that park, which is I guess about 4 million acres, as the Timbasha Natural and Cultural Resources Preservation area. So now, instead of the tribe having 850,000 acres in trust, they actually have about a million acres, not in trust, but reserved for co-management experience.

Indeed, the transformative results represented by this story had nothing to do with luck. Further discussion of this inspired and inspiring strategy will launch the next section of this analysis, followed by other examples of what can happen when seemingly intractable conflict is looked at through a lens of righteous resistance. The appropriateness of various
intervention strategies is evaluated by their relative effectiveness in promoting and or achieving systemic sustainable peace.

**Interventions:**

Education and empowerment, a critical intervention not identified specifically in the Curle model, stand out as critical components in each of the stories the respondents shared. Again, Curle describes education as the strategy “through which the weaker party in a low-awareness/unbalanced relationship gains awareness of its situation and so attempts to change it.” The unbalanced nature of the conflicts in which the respondents engage is readily apparent. I extend the definition of low awareness to include the crippling ramifications of internalized racism or the phenomenon Chene has coined “internalized oppression.” I define empowerment as education infused with a spiritual force. For example, further reflecting upon the US/Timbasha Shoshone talks, Haberfeld related a particularly powerful strategy:

> It’s very important when people go to the negotiating table that they are authentic and that they are bringing themselves and their essence to table, that they are not trying to be anyone that they are not, [that] they are not feeling that they have to conform to the white man’s ways of presenting themselves. And so, part of training, when we are preparing people to go to the table, is urging them to be authentic and proud of who they are and to bring that to table…. [when]the tribe went to the table and made their initial presentation, what they wanted to do is ensure [that] the feds, who were coming into the Valley to meet with them…,
understood that they were guests of the tribe and the tribal chief spokesperson, the 
tribal chair, [an] older woman, elder, 76 years old, she spoke for 10 minutes in 
Shoshone and greeted them in their language, and basically they communicated 
that they were happy to host them, but that they had different ways of looking at 
things, a different culture, that they were people who had been a part, an 
integral part, of this land for a long time and that the negotiation consisted of 
teaching the feds about how they lived out there, what the desert means to them, 
about their language, their culture. They had an anthropologist from the 
University of Nevada who actually developed a slide show of traditional resource 
management techniques…

The degree of awareness within the tribe, as well as outside of the group, directly 
impacted the choice of intervention and its subsequent effectiveness. In light of the 
eventual outcome referenced earlier, power imbalance must be re-evaluated. It might be 
argued that right trumps might. After the breakdown following the first round of talks, the 
Tribe re-grouped and networked with other tribes across the continent, distributed their 
message in four languages resulting in support from sympathizers from around the globe 
who put real political pressure on the US government. Ultimately, a new chief negotiator 
for the United States was assigned to restart the talk. Unlike in the first round, where 
mutual respect clearly did not exist, the second round of talks began with the chief 
spokesperson for the United States looking across the table at the Tribal Chief and 
saying, “It is a real honor for me to sit down with a leader from another nation” 
(balance). Several months later, with the assistance of a “third part neutral,” a 
sustainable agreement was reached.
Lederach’s pyramid model of orienting actors and approaches to peacebuilding is instructive for appreciating the intervention strategy of the, relatively new, Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center. Lederach asserts that each of the three levels of the pyramid has a distinctly different function. In his model, the grassroots level emphasizes such tactics as prejudice reduction and psychosocial work. The middle tier convenes problem solving workshops and conducts conflict resolution training type efforts. The upper level focuses on high level negotiations and is led by highly visible single mediators. The King Freedom Center builds on an organizational strategy that brings the energies of all three tiers together. In the words of Executive Director Claire Greensfelder:

We came about due to a unique partnership of four government agencies and a grassroots organization under the leadership of a well-respected local elected official (our Congresswoman Barbara Lee) - so we seek to involve resources – both human and financial – from government agencies, local business, the elected community and the grassroots, community-based organizations. The four agencies that partnered in the Center are: The City of Oakland, the East Bay Regional Park District (the land tenant and our landlord), the California State Coastal Conservancy (a major donor to our work in creating access to shoreline open space and environmental education and our location on the SF Bay Trail) and the Port of Oakland (the land owner). The grassroots initiator of the project is the Martin Luther King, Jr. March and Rally Committee of East Oakland.
One of their first major projects, of which they are particularly proud, is the publication of Keep the Peace 2003: A Nonviolence Resource Directory - a listing of 101 organizations working in the areas of nonviolence, unlearning racism, conflict resolution, mediation, civil and human rights, etc. co-published with the Alameda County Department of Public Health. Again, Louis Kriesberg is instructive, this time as he posits, “the term revolutionary efforts refers to the action of large numbers of people in a society that are directed to transform the social and political order…” (Kriesberg, 1982, p. 54).

Indeed, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center is building a critical mass and, using education and empowerment to position itself to make revolutionary strides toward manifesting sustainable peace.

Bey’s work reflects a similar strategy:

Well the YMCA, I’m working extensively with them and I’d like to do this across the nation. They have here in Atlanta brother to brother, sister to sister, prime time, things of this nature, where these youth are there on an after school program and summer school program, and it’s more on empowerment an level that I work with them on. I try to give them a strong foundation from Ma’at Enterprise’s point of view.

Indian Dispute Resolution Services relies heavily on education and empowerment strategies to achieve its goal of “building internal capacity through self-determination…."

This is very much congruent with a core Indigenous Environmental Network principal embodied the in phrase, “We speak for ourselves”, which appears at the top of their website. Vendiola’s contextualization of the phrase is instructive:
...one of the lessons we have learned over the past 10 years is that you know for the most part the main stream environmental organizations have been organizing around issues of environmental justice, environmental justice meaning that there is a disproportionate amount of contamination going on in communities of color and indigenous communities that while that contamination and destruction is going on, many of the mainstream environmental organization that are pretty much white-led have spoken either on our behalf or have spoken about the issues that are impacting us directly so when we talk about the notion of speaking for ourselves as principal that we uphold that is where that is coming from.

Again, Bey underscored the importance of “self-determination and speaking for oneself and using one’s own experiences” when he talked about “kujichagulia,” one of the principles of ma’at. Parenthetically, ma’at, after which Bey’s organization is named, is a concept which meant truth, justice and balance to the ancient Egyptians (Romey, 2003).

Likewise, PTEP prioritizes education and empowerment strategies and places a premium on teaching its constituents to speak for themselves as indicated in Brown’s assertion:

I think we’re doing paradigm-shifting work and I think its paradigm shifting work that creates change agents that become empowerment. And basically we’re trying to use a format that of informing the community, taking a pulse from the community basically upon what they’ve been informed on, and look at their knowledge base, provide them with what I call digestible components of the problem through the volunteer base, and then allow them to become saturated
with the information and allow them to become more active in the advocacy role and the decision making role.

In keeping with education and empowerment strategies, Chene reflected:

I’m working with a couple of major church groups, the Evangelic Lutheran Church in America and the Mennonite Central Committee, both of which have an institutionally based eliminating racism initiative. So I’m working with them as a trainer and consultant and teacher around racism and conflict resolution and just understanding the whole relationship dynamics of eliminating racism. I recently finished a training, a retreat for people of color who are fighting environmental racism. We used a combination of mindful meditation and facilitative dialogue to look at issues of healing around internalized racism and community building.

NCCJ, the largest and oldest of the organizations to participate in this research project, has a long standing track record of introducing innovative intervention strategies to address issues of the multiple faces of oppression. When ask what makes NCCJ unique, Executive Director Liz Williams reflected:

I think what makes us unique from many other organizations is that we really focus so much on the human relations component of really getting people to see one another, and not for the stereotypes that they have and not for the images that have been placed in the media, but really setting aside those things in order to see a person as a human being, and then as a human being first with all those other things that are attached to it. So we don’t deny people their desire to really hold onto their cultures and be proud of it; we create a place where they can come and bring all of that to the table, in a way that is nurturing; and we consider that an
asset, and not such a liability. Oftentimes people, when you look at diversity, think diversity is divisive because we are so different, but we look at diversity as being so much of an asset and a richness that only enhances the quality of life.

Ironically, a noteworthy and scathing indictment, regarding the status of peacefulness within our society, lies in the fact that it can still be considered unique to “look at diversity as being so much of an asset and a richness that only enhances the quality of life.” Indeed, for NCCJ, as with the other respondents, this is more than politically correct verbiage. For the purposes of this analysis, we examined The Dismantling Racism Institute, NCCJ’s six-day Institute based on a framework that focuses on both white privilege and internalized racism at the personal and institutional level. According to the Institute’s Program Director, Maggie Potapchuk:

During the Institute, people of all different races get attached to each other and form relationships. It’s hard to walk away from the realities of racism when it involves someone you care about. People get angry, conflict happens, and conflict is resolved and sometimes it’s not. People see how messy this work is to dismantle racism and that we can’t just hold hands and make it all better (Smith & Ahuja, 1999, p. 27).

Left we too hastily dismiss the type of grueling and important work NCCJ is doing through The Dismantling Racism Institute as not pertinent to the field of conflict resolution, again I am compelled to revisit Curle’s definition of structural conflict:

…conflict is a question not of perception but of fact. Thus if, in a particular social system, one group gains what another loses, there is – even if the loser does not understand what is happening – a structural conflict…
**Conclusion:**

Profoundly, if not prophetically, psychologist Kenneth B. Clark, whose scientific findings were a major influence on the Supreme Court’s unanimous decision in the, now fifty year old, Brown vs. Board of Education case declaring “separate inherently unequal” and in violation of the Fourteenth amendment, would come to question the wisdom of a focus on the issue—in that case, segregated schools, instead of the underlying problem of racism. A long decade after the Brown decision, Clark wrote to a fellow activist and social psychologist:

I am tired of civil rights. Maybe I should develop some ideas concerning the enormous waste of human intelligence sacrificed to the struggle for racial justice in America at this period of the 20th century. How long can our nation continue the tremendous wastage of human intellectual resources demanded by racism (Pickren & Tomes, 2002)?

Indeed, the essence of an appropriate, if not optimal, intervention may be captured in the words of Miles Irving, an educational psychologist at Georgia State University who epitomizes the optimism and conviction of a burgeoning wave of young scholars, as he avows, “We do not need to focus on teaching our children what to think. More importantly, we should teach our children how to think effectively, having confidence that our children will figure out what to think for themselves (M. Irving, personal communication, November 26, 2003).

Clearly, such a comprehensive intervention strategy is predicated on the belief that the state of unpeacefulness surfaced by this analysis is not confined to the work of
these respondents, but is endemic in the educational, corporate, political, religious, indeed, entire landscape of American society. Again, as defined by Adam Curle:

unpeacefulness is a situation in which human beings are impeded from achieving full development either because of their own internal relations or because of the types of relation that exist between themselves (as individuals or group members) and other persons or groups (Curle, 1971, p. 1).

Curle clearly, concisely, and courageously addresses factors that, though often not confronted in social and political discourse, remain potential triggers of material violence, as opposed to merely structural manifestations of violence:

What I would term a revolution of awareness is occurring in the racial ghettos of North America. It is not that black Americans (and other oppressed peoples) have suddenly become conscious of their miseries and of the injustices of their situation – of these they have always been aware- but they have recognized the futility and fraudulence of their hopes (Curle, 1971, p.144).

For more than forty years considered the preeminent interpreter of the works of Carl Jung, Edward Edinger illuminated a similar concept when he asserted, “With each new increment of consciousness, conflict comes too. That is how a new piece of consciousness announces its presence--by conflict” (Quotations). Edinger was the senior analyst at the C. G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles and a founding member of the C. G. Jung Institute of New York (The C.G. Jung Foundation for Analytical Psychology).
Several of the respondents alluded to the need for an adjustment of the lens through which the intractable conflict of racism is viewed. For example, when referring to how effective PTEP has been in getting its message heard the proponents of the status quo, Brown asserted:

I think they hear us. I think we are very clear and articulate about it. I just think it just scares the crap out of them, because people operate out of a zero sum equation…. they think if I give you some of mine, that (means there) is less that I have for me.

Yet again, Kriesberg and Curle are instructive –Kriesberg, when he asserts:

If two parties are in a struggle, it might seem necessary to them to use coercion. How else could one side induce the other to yield to what it does not wish to do? In a purely zero-sum conflict that may be the case. But, … by extending the time range, widening the number of issues in contention, fractionating the single conflict issue, or otherwise shifting the focal conflict, the zero-sum payoff is transformed into a variable-sum payoff… [E]ven in an intense (and seemingly intractable) conflict there are alternatives…

And Curle, when he notes:

If peace is to be brought to an unpeaceful relationship, (all) participants must see themselves and each other for (who) they are as human beings… The more those involved in an unpeaceful relationship are aware of their own motives and of the effects upon them of the pressures of the situation, and the stronger their sense of their own identity as autonomous human beings…the more likely they are to reach accord (Curle, 1971, pp. 215-216).
And again, when he contends, “Anyone…who tries to influence relationships becomes, in some degree, part of that system. To pretend that he is an impersonal outside observer is dishonest (ibid, p. 19).

The finding of this analysis is that racism is an underlying factor in the work of each of the respondents who have graciously participated in this project. This finding is consistent with the fact that the insidious social construct of racism looms large and is woven throughout the tapestry of America. Further, the finding resonates with an increasingly recognized sentiment that until one thinks of himself as just another victim of the legacies of slavery, genocide and other forms of oppression visited upon Indigenous Americans, Americans of African descent, and other socially, politically and economically oppressed Americans, no citizen of the U.S. is capable of seeing the reality, that his own rights, as a human being, are impaired by the systemic defects in the nation’s present culture (La Rouche, 2001).

The strategies that have been individually and collectively employed by the respondents are appropriate and yield varying degrees of effectiveness. The remarkable results they have achieved, however, pale in comparison to what might be accomplished if the field of conflict resolution will reflect deeply and respond accordingly.
REFERENCES


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i Brown attributes non-involvement in the political process with lack of faith in it. He refers to a recent referendum supported by the Mayor to build two new stadiums; the referendum was voted down, but the city built the stadiums anyway. Another example he uses is the 2000 presidential election.

ii “Sankofa” is a depiction of a bird with its head turned rearward, a West African symbol of the importance of understanding and learning from the past in order to move forward. [http://www.welltempered.net/adinkra/htmls/symbols/sank](http://www.welltempered.net/adinkra/htmls/symbols/sank); [http://www.sankofa.com/about.shtml](http://www.sankofa.com/about.shtml). Bey uses the West African word “ashai” to mean energy, in the same sense that “the Chinese would say ‘chi.’”


iv Four different federal agencies were involved: National Park Service, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

v Technical assistance may, for example, involve providing parties with training on effective communications and or negotiations techniques.

vi Curle incorporates increasing the awareness of the opponent under “confrontation” rather than under “education.” This is understandable; many on the side that is benefiting from the injustice are not willing to listen until the benefit is threatened. This, however, is not always the case, and there will be some among the dominant group who wish to learn how to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

vii Hotly contested presidential election between incumbent Vice President, Al Gore (Democrat) and then Texas Governor, George W. Bush (Republican) was decided in favor of Bush by the U.S. Supreme Court several weeks after the November 7, 2000 election (Gillman, 2001).


ix Ironically, almost a half century after the landmark decision that declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional and “inherently unequal,” a new study from The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University shows that racial segregation in public schools has intensified.(Orfield, Eaton & Jones, 1997)