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## Peace and Conflict Studies

- Confucian Humanism as a Spiritual Resource for Global Ethics

**Tu Weiming**

- The Promise of Spirituality in Mediation: The Significance of Spiritual-Based and Faith-Based Approaches in Mediation

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- Psychological Correlates of Public Support for Reconciliation: The Israeli-Jordanian Case

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PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

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**CONFUCIAN HUMANISM AS A SPIRITUAL RESOURCE  
FOR GLOBAL ETHICS**

**Tu Weiming**

*The Tasan Lectures, Korea, November 2001*

Humanity and the Earth face seriously deteriorating conditions. While specialists in many areas have identified crises in their particular fields – ecological degradation, economic disequilibria, political instability, and social disintegration – an overall assessment of the human condition requires cross-cultural as well as interdisciplinary approaches. Viewed from multiple perspectives, the human condition presents vastly different challenges. Furthermore, no consensus exists regarding how serious and deteriorating the situation really is, let alone on the proper response or course of action.

As we begin to move beyond the most devastatingly violent century in recorded history, we have witnessed enough man-made disasters to acknowledge that the continued viability of the human species is problematical and the end of humankind is not merely an imagined possibility but could be an imminent danger. While the need for action on many fronts seems obvious, strongly-held traditional and modern beliefs have variously advocated that there is no need to worry about matters of such a magnitude, that no matter how hard we try little difference can be made, that our survivability is beyond our control, that the evolutionary process will proceed anyway, or that we are doomed to failure.

Yet, we are acutely aware that the whole world as it exists is interconnected, that our planet is a part of an immense whole and that a small change in the balance of cosmic forces could destroy all life on earth. The astronauts who traveled into outer space perceived the earth not merely as clouds, oceans and continents but as an integrated, organic whole – the stunningly beautiful blue planet, shining against the black background of the vast universe. For the first time in history, we truly saw the earth as a single globe. This image vividly symbolizes the emergence of global consciousness as a lived reality rather than merely an imagined possibility. Since the 1960s, the idea that we on earth occupy a common lifeboat, implying that we are all stakeholders of the planet earth, has been floating around various intellectual circles.

However, while the sense that we are in this together has been greatly intensified throughout the world, the principle of interconnectedness underlying the whole ecological system from macrocosm to microcosm has been, and is still being, seriously violated by the overall developmental process of the human community. The relationship between the human species and nature is disharmonious and the situation is unsustainable. The technological power in the hands of profit-driven entrepreneurs motivated solely by self-interest is rapidly disrupting the delicate balance between Man and his environment.

Since the Stockholm Conference on the environment in 1972, ecological concerns have become a defining characteristic of global consciousness. The major international effort to formulate the Earth Charter as the result of the United Nations' Rio conference in

1992 clearly indicates that global warming, pollution, deforestation, soil loss, and the depletion of natural resources at an alarming rate is threatening our life-support system in a way that may well be irreversible. Traditional and modern belief that it is neither necessary nor possible for us to change our human condition fail to recognize that the environmental catastrophe is man-made and that only through human effort can it be avoided.

The choice is clear and the stakes are high: the very survival of life on our planet depends on the outcome of this issue. Confronting this unprecedented challenge, all spiritual traditions are undergoing the most fundamental and far-reaching transformation. The acknowledgement that the earth is the proper home for our body, heart-mind, soul, and spirit prompts world religions to shape their life-orientations according to a new global vision. Engagement in, rather than departure from, the world has become a basic desideratum of ethico-religious thinking. The sanctity of the earth is taken for granted as a basic value even in otherworldly spiritual traditions. The upsurge of concerned Christianity and engaged Buddhism is a case in point. Theologically, the argument that we need not care for our home on earth because the Kingdom of God is yet to come is unpersuasive. Similarly, it is difficult to justify contempt for the “red dust,” even though release from samsara is the path to salvation.

In the Confucian perspective, whether or not we are committed to reaching the deepest possible understanding of the human condition as a point of departure for confronting the fundamental crisis of humanity, we should have faith in the malleability, transformability, improvability and perfectibility of the human condition through individual and communal self-effort. Even if we are not motivated by sympathy, empathy and compassion, the Confucian ethic of responsibility dictates that we challenge the assertion that what we think and do on this earth here and now is superfluous to the inevitable trajectory of the state of the world.

As we begin to explore the environmental catastrophe, we realize that the Enlightenment mentality that has seriously threatened the viability of the human species has also undermined the social fabric of venerable institutions in the global community – family, village, church, synagogue, mosque, temple, school, nation and world organizations. Increasing human injustice has brought a large segment of the world’s population to starvation and abject poverty. Not only have we failed to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapon technologies, we allow violent conflicts to be engineered over ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural differences.

In a deeper sense, we have lost our awareness of the organic link between past and future. We deliberately limit ourselves to the immediate and superficial present at the expense of a richly-textured sense of time and space. The homogenization of our experience dictated by the market-oriented mass media has substantially reduced the cross-generation channels of transmitting values. Peer group pressure and profit-making advertisements have rendered the traditional educational institutions – family, church and school – inoperative. Television broadcasters often present programs simply to attract the youth audience in order to sell some commercial product. As this situation continues unabated, the decline of moral and cultural values is inevitable.

Nowadays, a commonly-felt anxiety throughout the world is the loss of wholeness. The emerging global community, far from being an integrated, organic whole, is characterized by difference, differentiation and discrimination. The divided self and the

fragmented community are not congenial to human flourishing. A clear indication of this loss of a sense of wholeness is the separation of means from ends, a separation that encourages the rise of unprincipled politics driven primarily by wealth and power. Political leadership defined exclusively in terms of calculative gains breeds mistrust and outright cynicism. As a result, all patterns of authority that maintain social solidarity have lost their legitimacy. Across the world today many societies face a decline in moral and spiritual values.

Although the founding father of economics, Adam Smith, was profoundly concerned about moral sentiments, modern economics has ostracized and excluded ethics from its orbit of concerns. The market and money have so dominantly shaped contemporary societies that morality and moral concerns have been relegated to the background. The media's celebration of materialism with little reference to moral concerns dominates the global consciousness of the young, and has rendered as secondary or irrelevant values absolutely necessary for the quality of life such as sympathy, empathy and compassion.

The contemporary world tends to give special weight to the measurable and quantifiable. Cumulative wisdom built around moral and spiritual values is undermined by knowledge designed by instrumental rationality. Character-building that emphasizes truth, courage, integrity, dignity, loyalty and selflessness no longer forms the core curriculum of education. Similarly, the development of imagination in the creation and appreciation of beauty is also undermined. A widespread marginalization of the humanities by liberal arts colleges emphasizes the overwhelming influence of the market on institutes of higher learning. As science is divorced from ethics, the value-neutral stance of the scientific community allows technology to succumb to commercialism at the expense of the environment and human dignity.

The great paradox of the twenty-first century is the built-in destructive potential of so-called empowering global trends. Increasing democratization notwithstanding, most people feel powerless against the unleashed mega forces of market, money, machines, and media. And virtually everyone is vulnerable. While economic maximization and market efficiency are supposed to benefit the human community as a whole, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening and more wealth is concentrated among the few. Medical research will cure disease and prolong life but methods of genetic engineering detrimental to the integrity of human beings and other life forms are being developed by technicians without adequate attention given to ethical considerations. Faster and easier mechanisms of communication actually undermine the art of listening and face-to-face communication as individuals and families become more isolated. Surely, the current information explosion does not necessarily enhance knowledge. An increasing number of students may suffer from educated incapacity precisely because their constant exposure to raw data has made them insensitive to learning. Moreover, unless we equate literacy with cultural sophistication, we may discover that an increase in literacy is proportionate only to a decrease in the oral transmission of cultural values. It is more than that, because literacy must bring with it the desire to live at a richer cultural and intellectual level.

Global consciousness can be characterized as a paradox: a process of convergence that intensifies divergence. Globalization so conceived is not simply homogenization, for it actually enhances local identities. We must transcend a simple dichotomous mode of thinking in order to fully appreciate the complexity of the "glocal" (global and local)

process. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's technical expressions such as "complexity-consciousness" and "union differentiates" are highly suggestive: "In any domain, whether it be the cells of a body, the members of a society or the elements of a spiritual synthesis – union differentiates." Furthermore, his claim, as interpreted by Ewert Cousins, that "the forces of divergence have been superseded by those of convergence" and that "[t]his shift to convergence is drawing the various cultures into a single planetized community" is prophetic.

"The forces of planetization," or global trends, "are bringing about an unprecedented complexification of consciousness through the convergence of cultures and religions." Against the backdrop of Karl Jaspers' thesis of the "Axial Period" (during the first millennium B. C. E., between 800-200 B. C. E.) in which major spiritual traditions emerged in South Asia, China, the Middle East, and Greece, the advent of global consciousness toward the end of the twentieth century can well be designated as the "Second Axial Period."

The First Axial Period, Cousins observes, "ushered in a radically new form of consciousness":

Whereas primal consciousness was tribal, Axial consciousness was individual. "Know thyself" became the watchword of Greece; the Upanishads identified the atman, the transcendent center of the self. The Buddha charted the way of individual enlightenment; the Jewish prophets awakened individual moral responsibility. This sense of individual identity, as distinct from the tribe and from nature, is the most characteristic mark of Axial consciousness. From this flow other characteristics: consciousness that is self-reflective, analytic, and that can be applied to nature in the form of scientific theories, to society in the form of social critique, to knowledge in the form of philosophy, to religion in the form of mapping an individual spiritual journey. This self-reflective, analytic, critical consciousness stood in sharp contrast to primal mythic and ritualistic consciousness. When self-reflective logos emerged in the Axial Period, it tended to oppose the traditional mythos. Of course, mythic and ritualistic forms of consciousness survive in the post-Axial Period even to this day, but they are often submerged, surfacing chiefly in dreams, literature and art.

By contrast, in the Second Axial Period, "the forces of divergence have shifted to convergence, the religions must meet each other in the center to center unions, discovering what is most authentic in each other, releasing creative energy toward a more complexified form of religious consciousness." In the First Axial Age, even though there was a common transformation of consciousness, "it occurred in diverse geographical regions within already differentiated cultures." Since in each case – Confucian, Judaic, Greek philosophy, or Hindu – the tradition was shaped by a unique constellation of forces in its origin and developed along divergent lines, "a remarkable richness of spiritual wisdom, of spiritual energies and of religious-cultural forms to express, preserve, and transmit this heritage" was produced. The creative encounter of cultures and religions in the Second Axial Period, exemplified by an increasing dialogue among civilizations, is a great promise, if not the only hope, for the cultivation of a culture of peace for the human community.

Guided by the ecumenical spirit of pluralism, the dialogic rather than dialectic, dialogue is predicated on mutual understanding, mutual learning and genuine interchange. This celebration of diversity is neither exclusive nor inclusive but is a creative synthesis,

“the new complexified global consciousness.” Unfortunately, at the very moment when authentic dialogue among civilizations has become a realizable aspiration, our life on earth is being seriously threatened. The very tools that have enabled a true meeting of religions and cultures – industrialization and technology – are undercutting the life-support system upon which our existence depends. The project of the “dialogical dialogue” of the Second Axial Period necessitates the rediscovery of the spirituality of the primal peoples of the pre-Axial Period: a collective and cosmic consciousness rooted in earth and life cycles.

The challenge, as Cousins envisions it, is twofold:

Having developed self-reflective, analytic, critical consciousness in the First Axial Period, we must now, while retaining these values, reappropriate and integrate into that consciousness the collective and cosmic dimensions of the pre-Axial consciousness. We must recapture the unity of tribal consciousness by seeing humanity as a single tribe. And we must see this single tribe related organically to the total cosmos. This means that the consciousness of the twenty-first century will be global from two perspectives: (1) from a horizontal perspective, cultures and religions must meet to enter into creative encounters that will produce a complexified collective consciousness, [and] (2) from a vertical perspective, they must plunge their roots deep into the earth to provide a stable and secure base for future development. This new global consciousness must be organically ecological, supported by structures that will insure justice and peace. The voices of the oppressed must be heard and heeded: the poor, women, and racial and ethnic minorities. These groups, along with the earth itself, can be looked upon as the prophets and teachers of the Second Axial Period. This emerging twofold consciousness is not only a creative possibility to enhance the twenty-first century; it is an absolute necessity if we are to survive.

This master narrative of the human condition, far from being a romantic assertion about the unity and harmony, is a realist appraisal of the gravest danger and the greatest promise to which the global community is challenged to respond. The implications are far-reaching. All religions are confronted with a dual task: to actively enter into a dialogue among peoples of different civilizations and to channel their energies into solving the human problems endangering our life on earth. They need to move beyond aggressive fundamentalism and abstract universalism. They need to reverse their “turning toward the spiritual ascent away from the material.” To “rediscover the material dimension of existence and its spiritual significance.” They must cherish and programmatically cultivate human values such as peace and justice without losing sight of their spiritual quests. “[T]heir unique contribution is to tap their reservoirs of spiritual energy and channel this into developing secular enterprises that are genuinely human.”

In light of Ewert Cousins’ formulation of a global ethic from the perspective of the Second Axial Period for the world religions, Confucian humanism assumes a new significance as a spiritual resource for global ethics. Among the First Axial Period civilizations, Confucianism has often been characterized as lacking several salient features shared by other religions. For instance, Cousins has singled out monasticism as “[o]ne of the most distinctive forms of spirituality that became available in the Axial Period.” Yet, the Confucian commitment to earth, body, family, and community is diametrically opposed to the monastic life. Similarly, the other spiritual traditions thrust in the direction of the

transcendent away from the earth, life cycles and harmony with nature seemed not present in the Confucian tradition. The Confucians have viewed the secular world as the moral, sacred domain for self-realization. The “radical split between the phenomenal world and true reality, between matter and spirit, between earth and heaven” is also alien to the Confucian emphasis on interaction, mutuality and harmony.

On the surface, among the Axial Period traditions, Confucianism seems to have maintained the strongest ties to pre-Axial consciousness: an intimate sense of the cosmos, harmony with nature and the web of interrelationships within the human community. While a “sense of individual identity, as distinct from the tribe and from nature, is the most characteristic mark of Axial consciousness,” the Confucian idea of self, the person as a center of relationships, is not a self that is alienated from either the human or the natural environment. Furthermore, the Confucian life-orientation cannot subscribe to the view that “(the) self-reflective, analytic, critical consciousness stood in sharp contrast to primal mythic and ritualistic consciousness.” In short, logos and mythos are not necessarily in conflict in Confucian humanism.

Does this mean, from a comparative civilizational perspective that Confucianism’s failure to break with primal consciousness means it was only a weak form of Axial consciousness? If the rise of Western science in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment can be characterized as the paradigmatic exemplification of Axial consciousness, Confucian humanism does seem woefully inadequate in developing the self-reflective, analytic and critical consciousness characteristic of the Age of Reason.

However, Confucian humanism, as an Axial Period consciousness, was instrumental in shaping East Asian life for centuries prior to the coming of the Western imperialist powers. Even after Confucianism was thoroughly critiqued by some of the most articulate East Asian minds (under the spell of the Enlightenment mentality), it continued to exert a profound influence in both industrial and socialist East Asia, as the habits of the heart, on the economic culture, on political ideology and the social ethos, and as a civil religion. The revitalization of Confucian humanism as a creative philosophy has been underway for at least three generations since the 1919 May Fourth Movement. The modern transformation of the Confucian tradition is too complex and too controversial a subject for our purposes here. Suffice it to note that whether or not we believe that the Confucian heritage is compatible with a market economy, a democratic polity, a civil society, or the dignity of the individual, the Confucian presence in and relevance to East Asian forms of modernity is undeniable. Therefore, it is vitally important to understand and appreciate the role and function of the Confucian traditions in the modernizing processes of mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Chinese Diaspora, the two Koreas, Vietnam, Japan, and Singapore.

As I have explored in my article “Implications of ‘Confucian’ East Asian Modernity,” the time is also ripe for us to formulate a reflection on and critique of the Enlightenment mentality as a way of recognizing a possible Confucian contribution to the on-going conversation on global ethics. From the outset, I wish to mention that although the current discussion is closely intertwined with the “Asian values” debate, the purpose is not to underscore the uniqueness of Asian (Confucian) values. Rather, my goal is to identify those features in Confucian local knowledge that are potentially globally significant. In so doing, I wish to disassociate myself from the claim by some authoritarian regimes that an Asian

model of development, supposedly based on Confucianism, is fundamentally different from a Western model identified with liberal democracy, human rights and individualism. I also wish to acknowledge that Wm. Theodore de Bary's "Confucian communitarian perspective" in the book *Asian Values and Human Rights* is a source of inspiration for my thinking on such matters. However, my primary concern here is not to specify the Confucian ideas and programs that have the potential of nurturing liberal democracy in China, but to suggest why, in the perspective of globalization and the human condition, Confucian humanism still has an important message to deliver.

First, the Second Axial Period requires a holistic humanist vision that integrates all four dimensions of human existence: self, community, nature, and Heaven. The Enlightenment mentality focusing on the axis of self and community at the expense of nature and Heaven is too restrictive and too limiting to provide a proper compass for human flourishing. Modernity, rising out of the Enlightenment legacy, is de-natured and de-spirited. For example, even the most sophisticated conception of the Enlightenment project, as envisioned by Jürgen Habermas, still fails to take religion and ecology seriously. As a result, it suffers from an anthropocentrism that substantially undermines its effectiveness in dealing with ecological and religious issues.

Confucian humanism, on the other hand, seeks harmony with nature and mutuality with Heaven. It is neither secular nor anthropocentric. It regards the secular as sacred by infusing spiritual values to earth, body, family, and community; it urges humans to realize and rediscover the ultimate meaning and the deepest source of life in the Heaven-endowed nature. The highest human aspiration is the unity of Heaven and Humanity. Human beings are not merely creatures but partners of the cosmic process. Through active participation in the "great transformation," we are co-creators and thus responsible for the well-being of not only the human community but of "Heaven, Earth and the myriad things" (tianti wanwu). This anthropocosmic insight can serve as a corrective to the secular humanism informed by the Enlightenment mentality.

Second, the convergence of cultures and religions requires a dialogical wisdom that recognizes the interplay between a sense of rootedness and a need for self-transcendence. The Enlightenment demands for certainty are often in conflict with the patience required to deal with the complexities and ambiguities found in inter-civilizational dialogue. The dichotomous method of thinking by assigning complex phenomena to neatly conceived categories is incompatible with an openness to radically different ways of perceiving the same reality. What Teilhard calls "center to center unions" suggests that individual elements unite "[b]y touching each other at the creative core of their being, they release new energy which leads to more complex units." Indeed, "[g]reater complexity leads to greater interiority which, in turn, leads to more creative unions. Throughout the process, the individual elements do not lose their identity, but rather deepen and fulfill it through union." This approach is quite different from that of the Enlightenment thinkers.

The Confucian belief that takes self-cultivation as the root for regulating the family, governance of the state, and peace under Heaven is not based on deductive logic. It is based on the assumption that, through dialogue, individuals participate in an ever-expanding network of relationships, not by losing their personal identities but by developing an increasingly complex consciousness that actually enhances the interiority of each individual. Like digging a well, as we sink into our own concrete existence, we reach the

## Confucian Humanism

common spring of humanity, allowing genuine communication with others. The Confucian idea of “harmony without uniformity” aptly captures the fruitful interplay between communion and diversity. Confucian humanism, taking the concrete living person as the focus of its attention, incorporates other units by realizing the self through communion. Self-transcendence, paradoxically, enhances our sense of rootedness in earth, body, family and community.

Third, the Enlightenment emphasis on rationality, especially instrumental rationality, is detrimental to communal solidarity. Surely, communicative rationality is a significant improvement in promoting reasonable dialogue, but the convergence of cultures and religions compels us to deal with radical otherness in a comparative civilizational perspective. The certainty in sharing the same linguistic universe, in which the rules of the game are given, is no longer there. Yet, the courage and wisdom to enter into others’ consciousness, allowing ourselves to experience the other’s values from his/her own perspective is enormously enriching. The discovery of values of another tradition that are rejected, submerged, marginalized or only inchoate in our own can be truly liberating. It is unlikely that those with a rationalist mindset can really take advantage of such a cross-cultural enterprise; the Enlightenment mentality is too Euro-centric to appreciate the heuristic value of alternatives to Western modernism.

By underscoring the importance of sympathy, empathy and compassion, Confucian humanism can help to alleviate the difficulties the “dialectic dialogue” has engendered in cross-cultural communication. Attempts to refute the claims of the other by appealing foremost to reason easily degenerate into hostile argumentation. “Dialogical dialogue” requires great concentration and careful listening. The purpose of such dialogue is neither to persuade nor to convert, but to gain experiential understanding. If our hearts and minds are receptive, united and tranquil, the meaning of others’ communication can enter unimpeded. In the Confucian tradition, the auditory perception of the ear, rather than the visual perception of the eye, is most attuned to the virtues of sympathy, empathy and compassion. A good listener attends fully to the message and allows it to be completely delivered before any judgment is made.

Understandably, the Confucian sage is an accomplished oral transmitter who, through his ears and mouth, makes the subtle meaning of the human world and the cosmic order audible. The classical Chinese word for sage (sheng) consists of both ear and mouth radicals, indicating that wisdom is nurtured by the art of listening and expressed through verbal communication. This emphasis on temporality rather than spatiality implies the need for patient watchfulness in interfaith or cross-cultural understanding. If a clash among civilizations is perceived as a real danger, the need for a dialogue among civilizations becomes particularly urgent.

Confucian humanism, by focusing on harmonious relationships at the personal, communal, national, regional, and global levels, offers a philosophy of life and a worldview that celebrates diversity without falling into the pitfall of pernicious relativism. It emphasizes group solidarity but doesn’t falsely regard egalitarianism as monolithic conformity. Furthermore, by integrating ecological and religious dimensions into human self-understanding, Confucian humanism, unlike secular anthropocentrism, provides a broad ethical basis in the quest for human flourishing.

**THE PROMISE OF SPIRITUALITY IN MEDIATION: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF  
SPIRITUAL-BASED AND FAITH-BASED APPROACHES IN MEDIATION**

**Debra Jones and Alexia Georgakopoulos**

**Abstract**

*This article advocates greater exploration and incorporation of spirituality or religion in the mediation process. As religious or spiritual values constitute an element of one's culture, which inevitably forms a lens through which one interprets the world, the authors suggest a greater acceptance of exploring and acknowledging the power of addressing one's own religious or spiritual makeup. The authors present an agenda for mediation research and practice for the twenty-first century and consider several examples to encourage model development. In particular, the following discussion presents potentially valuable elements for an alternative approach to mediation which incorporates either religion or spirituality.*

**Introduction**

The more vantage points we use to understand conflict, the more complete our understanding will be about its complex nature. Conflict resolution professionals are faced with the incredible challenge of assisting people from diverse populations and types of conflict. With the complexity of conflict comes our task, as conflict resolution specialists, to determine what types of approach best meet people's needs during conflict. No single model is sufficient or superior in conflict resolution. Today, alternative conflict resolution specialists are delivering their services in a consumer society where a variety of options are necessary in order to meet people's needs. Therefore, an important task for conflict resolution specialists is to discover what types of approach can enhance the practitioner's ability to successfully work with her/his unique clients; the goal should be to enhance the practitioner's toolbox. Contemporary scholars in the field should strive to find the most appropriate match between the conflict, the resolution approach, and the people involved. If an approach has utility, it will have an audience and it will promote positive change. The "audience" refers to individuals who are interested in learning and using the approach, and "positive change" refers to the positive outcomes that ensue as a result of the approach.

*Attention to Religion and Spirituality in Conflict Resolution*

Expectations are essential, normative requirements in social interaction (Burgoon, 1993). Given that people rely on expectations when they communicate with others, it seems intuitive that religious and spiritual expectations can influence how people cope with conflict. Clearly, religion and spirituality can be important components of culture. Thomas

(2005, p. 27) argued that “religion is as much a part of human life as any other aspect of society or culture”. Furthermore, Bellah (1965, p. 173) defined religion “as a cultural gyroscope ... [that provides] a stable set of definitions of the world [and] of the self”. According to Malraux (2003, p. 12), religion “is used as the legitimation for all aspects of life”, therefore, “it is often necessary to address a conflict’s religious aspects in order to move toward a just and peaceful settlement consistent with each side’s religious imperatives.” While religion and spirituality are to some extent related, there are differences, which we will discuss below. We include both in this paper because they are frequently used as interchangeable terms – a significant limitation in past research, as is the fact that neither is formally included in existing mediation models.

A common dimension of religion and spirituality is that they can guide human conduct, especially during challenging times such as conflict. In most societies, religion and religious behaviors have been observed. Thomas (2005) suggested that 77% of the world’s population follow a primary world religion. On the domestic front, recent polls in the U.S. indicated that approximately 90% of Americans claim to believe in God and pray at least once a week (Heclo, 2003). A poll released by *Newsweek* (2005) revealed 79% describe themselves as spiritual, 64% as religious, almost two-thirds pray every day, and almost one-third meditate.

Religion and spirituality appear to be integral to human existence and welfare universally. Narayanasamy (1999, p. 279) presents studies indicating that spirituality is natural to humans and has evolved “because it has biological survival value.” As individuals surviving today, we are products of our ancestors who have been successful in the past. The widespread expression of religion and spirituality may be an indication of the survival value these elements have had for humans.

### **Growth of Spirituality or Religion in Mediation**

The mind and spirit in Western Society have been largely perceived as separate entities from matter from the seventeenth century onward, whereby spiritual and religious concepts were placed in an inferior position to science since it was impossible to test the intangible (Fisher, 1994). Beliefs, along with the spirit, were not scientifically verifiable, thus, they were not honored. Rather, faith was placed with science and scientific inquiry. Clearly, the scientific paradigm has been a dominant tradition in Western Society, which has prevented religious and spiritual concepts from being fused with science. Yet in current times a *shift* towards religion and spirituality has emerged, even to a certain extent in the scientific community (Fisher, 1994; Thomas, 2005). By way of explanation, Fisher (1994, p. 12) suggested that: “all religions help to uncover meaningfulness in the midst of the mundane. They do so by exploring the transpersonal dimension of life—the eternal and infinite, beyond limited personal or communal concerns”. It is clear that science does not fulfill many of our human needs. This can be evidenced when religious attitudes and behaviors heighten during times of crisis such as war, natural disaster, and tragedy. Thomas (2005, p. 26) refers to heightened religious attitudes as:

the global resurgence of religion ... The growing saliency and persuasiveness of religion, i.e. the increasing importance of religious beliefs, practices, and discourses

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in personal and public life, and the growing role of religious or religiously-related individuals, non-state groups, political parties, and communities, and organizations in domestic politics, and this is occurring in ways that have significant implications for international politics.

The global resurgence of religion provides evidence against the long-held social science argument that with modernity there would be little need for “a gradual, persistent, unbroken erosion of religious influence” (Shupe, 1990, p. 19). If we consider that conflict can be a crisis, religion and spirituality may be beneficial to those who need comfort and assistance during such times.

Another important reason for the lack of religion or spirituality in U.S. mediation is that the practice of mediation in the U.S. has to a great extent been connected with the legal system (Lovenheim, 2002). Therefore, in accordance with the separation of church and state, there is little consideration of incorporating religion and spirituality in mediation or other types of conflict resolution approaches. Nevertheless, when humans engage in conflict, they largely draw upon their culture which may include religion or spirituality. Religion and spirituality may inform individuals as to what behaviors are appropriate during conflict. These behaviors are referred to as “display rules”. A read of most religious and spiritual texts clearly specify what display rules are encouraged and prized during conflict and what behaviors are discouraged during conflict. For example, do people operate on an “eye for an eye” basis or do they “turn the other cheek” during times of conflict? Religious-oriented approaches for conflict resolution encourage religious dialogue and interaction between parties. Despite the potential utility of integrating religion or spirituality in mediation, most mediation models found in the West do not directly include religion and spirituality in their framework. This is despite the fact that, as Thomas (2005, p. 27) reported, religion is “now a more observable part of people’s private and public lives, and so scholars, if often reluctantly, now acknowledge religion to be a global aspect of politics in the late twentieth century”.

Uncovering the value of a faith-based or spiritual-based mediation approach is a challenge that we attempt to address in this paper. Given the importance of religion and spirituality in conflict interaction, it is somewhat surprising that the majority of conflict resolution specialists do not incorporate faith-based or spiritual-based mediation in their approaches to conflicting parties. In addressing this challenge, we first begin by defining religion and spirituality and then we provide a rationale for the importance of religion and spirituality in mediation. We present an agenda for mediation research that underscores the value of faith-based or spiritual-based mediation for today’s complex conflicts in the domestic or international arenas. Throughout this paper, we present a case for the types of behaviors and interactions that could potentially be important to the success of a faith-based or spiritual-based approach in order to encourage more formal model development. As a point of comparison, we address the usefulness of incorporating religion and spirituality by reviewing a number of situations in which conflict resolution specialists have incorporated religion and spirituality.

In our discussion of incorporating religion or spirituality within the conflict resolution process, we do not advocate one belief system over another. What we do advocate is that one’s belief system, whatever that may be, serves as a guide in navigating the resolution or transformation of conflict. As careful exploration of religions will reveal,

there are more similarities than differences. It is within beliefs and values, which may be expressed in various ways under the guidance of a skilled or artful mediator, that shared meaning will be revealed.

### **Defining Religion and Spirituality**

Religion and spirituality are often used interchangeably. For the purposes of this paper, we recognize that religion and spirituality may indeed be one and the same for some individuals but quite different concepts according to others. We argue for the inclusion of whichever concept is important to the parties in conflict. For purposes of this paper, religion is defined as a formal structure aligned with one's adherence to beliefs and practices of a religious institution's theology and rituals (Zinnbauer *et al.*, 1997). It may further be defined as "a system of beliefs and practices that are relative to superhuman beings" (Smith and Green, 1995, p. 893).

Spirituality may be considered a broader concept which goes beyond the practice of a specific doctrine or faith. It may transcend one's involvement in organized religion, and focuses on personal experiences and one's connectedness to self, others, nature, the universe or a higher power. It is the awareness and sense of the interconnectedness of all things and can be experienced both within and/or outside of formal religious institutions (Goldberg, 1998; Krishnakumar and Neck, 2002; Mitroff and Denton, 1999; Vassallo, 2001; Walsh and Pryce, 2003; Zinnbauer *et al.*, 1997). We find the definition proposed by Elkins *et al.* (1988, p. 10) encompasses concepts of spirituality as suggested in conflict resolution literature. Elkins *et al.* suggest that spirituality is a human phenomenon, "a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers the Ultimate".

Emile Durkheim posited that every society is religious to some extent, and the U.S. is no exception. Leege (1993) goes so far as to say that religious beliefs and worldviews are the foundation of culture, with the consequential group socialization and ritual providing a foundation for individual and community action. He suggests that religious ritual allows one to interact with the sacred, which he believes to be at the center of community. Religion, whatever meaning it has for each individual, meets the function of culture through forming identity, behavioral norms, and the distinction of the other (Leege, 1993). Religious and spiritual teachings may facilitate a better understanding of how people might effectively approach the other during conflict – especially since these teachings are most often accompanied by written works.

Individuals may find a spiritual center within the doctrines of a specific religion or they may seek their own variety of spirituality in a blending of religious and non-religious beliefs and practices. Jung viewed religion not as belief in specific concepts or doctrines, but a *capacity to believe*, to find a spiritual element in life experiences which connects individuals to the larger collective (Christopher and Solomon, 2000). James (1902) seems to bridge institutional and personal concepts of religion. He suggests that personal religion comes from within and may not be expressed through adherence to institutional doctrine or

ritual. He defines as “religious”: “feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine” (James, 1902, p. 32). We understand James to say that when the subconscious taps into the awareness of a higher power, the ultimate or the divine, one brings into consciousness, or physical reality of daily life, that which is experienced or felt during this communion. James (1902, p. 515) further states that “we can experience union with something larger than ourselves and in that union find our greatest peace”. Ochs (1983, pp. 8-9) further delineates this in her statement that, “religion in its true sense emphasizes the insight into our experiences and the consciousness that insists upon learning something from them”. She suggests that one’s work should be a way to give this insight to others as they develop their own relationship with life experiences. She discusses spirituality in terms of being able to forget oneself and to become caught up in other people’s stories, to respond from one’s heart, with compassion and understanding. This resonates with the role of the mediator.

### **Justification for Religion and Spirituality in Mediation**

The fact that there are a number of established conflict approaches and strategies does not make dealing with conflict a simple task. Rather, the key to conflict resolution is the suitability or match of the process/approach to the conflict and people involved. For people who are religious or spiritual, it would not be unexpected to find that Western conflict resolution strategies may have proven to be consistently ineffective. The assumption from the onset of this paper is that a suitable *fit* between people, the conflict, and the conflict resolution approach is necessary. While many religious or spiritual individuals may feel uncertainty regarding how to resolve or deal with conflict, they may have more confidence when they are guided by religious or spiritual principles since these concepts may be an integral product of years of socialization and learning.

Moules (2000) argues that our sense of faith in the sacred has been diminished and devalued, and the incorporation of sacred traditions of wisdom, compassion and kindness need to become integral parts of community. By giving parties the freedom to express spiritual or religious values, the path to uncovering the underlying issue(s) of conflict may be found. This view is shared by Gopin (2000) who contends that religious actors have a productive role in conflict resolution. The challenge, Gopin suggests, is to translate the insights of particular religious traditions for secular interpretation. We suggest that acknowledging one’s religious or spiritual foundation may provide insights as to how one views conflict. Building on Thomas’ (2005) view that religion is a critical part of human existence, akin to culture, we can deepen our comprehension of the pervasiveness of religion through the definition of culture presented by Triandis (1989, pp. 511-12):

culture is to society what memory is to the person. It specifies designs for living that have proven effective in the past, ways of dealing with social situations, and ways to think about the self and social behaviors that have been reinforced in the past ... When a person is socialized in a given culture, the person can use customs as a substitute for thought.

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The same assumptions about socialization can apply to the experience of religious practice. Since religion is a pervasive and salient component of culture, the utilization of religion in mediation can enlist communication strategies that can be more effective than several types of biological responses to conflict, such as aggression. Because humans are biological animals, they can not escape experiencing biological reactions that are innately programmed, but they can modify the expressions directed toward the target of anger at the experiential level (Georgakopoulos, 2004). In fact, it is at the experiential level that people can be cognizant of what communication strategies may be most appropriate (Georgakopoulos, 2004). Thus, in faith-based or spiritual-based mediation, the primary goal is promoting positive interaction and communication by using religious or spiritual principles. The faith-based or spiritual-based approach allows for greater deliberation since each party examines not only what is important to her or him but embeds religious or spiritual principles in the discussion.

### *Agenda for Mediation Research and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

We present herein a review of mediation models which incorporate spirituality or religion in the hope of providing ideas to enhance current Western models. Western mediation models and definitions should be critically examined and different models developed to better assist individuals, groups, communities, and nations in conflict. In particular, indigenous mediation models that infuse religion and spirituality should be examined and considered for particular conflicts. Every mediation framework has an underlying ideology that is based on the individual(s) who developed it. Given this fact, people may benefit from mediators who anchor themselves according to particular religious or spiritual ideologies. We call for religious and spiritual mediation specialists for family, marriage, community, and international conflicts. The landscape of conflict is complex, therefore conflict and topic specialists are not only needed but required.

In the twenty-first century, particularly after September 11 2001, there has been increased attention on finding inner peace, meaning within one's life, and connection with others. Exploring and practicing one's spirituality or religion helps one to cope. With the changing acceptance of spiritual and religious beliefs among society, it has become more appropriate to embrace the influence of core spiritual and religious beliefs. Even in the political arena, citizens are more accepting of the idea that religion or spirituality be acknowledged and considered in public policy (Hecl, 2003).

Carl Jung (1933, pp. 240-1) suggests that man has always been in need of spiritual guidance, and created "religious or magical practices" to cope with changes in the world:

religions are the systems of healing for psychic illness ... Man is never helped in his suffering by what he thinks for himself, but only by revelations of a wisdom greater than his own. It is this which lifts him out of distress.

Jung further suggests that conflict is a pathway for transformation into a spiritual being – a being who reaches a higher potential to move beyond the conflict. This is further elucidated in the context of mediation; conflict can become spiritual when individuals experience a *shift* from positions of self towards cooperation and harmony (Phillips, 2001; Sidy, 1996; Zumeta, 1993). Spirituality, religion, energy, the divine, whatever one may call it, provides

an element that removes barriers and connects people to one another as they tell their stories and together co-create a new story which satisfies everyone's needs (Zumeta, 1993).

Lapin (1993) contends that human conflict is invariably rooted in the soul; that all humans carry within them "a spark of the Divine." He suggests that in the Western mode of conflict resolution, physical tools are being used to solve a spiritual challenge. Lapin posits that spiritually sensitive mediation is a far better tool in dealing with human spiritual needs than conventional litigation. He argues that attention to the symbolic and subjective aspects of one's spiritual belief system are crucial as they influence interpretations of lives and experiences. Sidy (1996) suggests that by recognizing the spiritual dimension of conflict resolution parties are better able to identify and address underlying causes of the conflict. He states, "conflict becomes spiritual when it motivates people to change mechanical and selfish patterns of behavior for behavior which manifests more harmony, cooperation, inner growth, and human dignity" (Sidy, 1996, p. 18).

Heron (2007, p. 10) suggests spiritual inquiry is one in which individuals interact with others in the present moment with the recognition of a "transcendent consciousness embracing our everyday awareness". Opening up to spiritual inquiry allows one to tap into an innate ability to feel and sense the world around us, through the presence felt by others, places and the environment; it is the ability that allows one to feel the interconnectedness of all things. In the context of conflict resolution, the mediator who practices spiritual inquiry can empower parties to be fully present and actively engaged with one another in exploring the conflict and possible resolutions.

Spiritual inquiry is defined by de Wit (1999, p. 3) as a moment when something breaks through in a crisis situation, when an individual clearly sees the situation as more than what it means to him or her personally, a moment when one sees with compassion and "spiritual humanism ... a moment of liberation that reveals new possibilities". He further suggests that a spiritual approach to life, which can be found within or outside of a specific religious tradition takes one from being *egocentric to egoless*. He likens this to going from the profane to the sacred, much as Durkheim described it, wherein one finds a spiritual aspect to everyday reality (see Ritzer, 2000). These moments are created, not when we attempt to create them, but only when our minds are free of thoughts and we become open to possibilities (Chupp, 1993; Cloke, 2006; de Wit, 1999; Ochs, 1983; Zumeta, 1993).

Zohar and Marshall's (2000) description of spiritual intelligence provides a context within which conflict resolution or transformation may occur. They suggest that spiritual intelligence "facilitates dialogue between reason and emotion opening the path for transformation (p. 7). They describe rational intelligence, as measured in IQ tests, as a linear progression of thought, and emotional intelligence (EQ) as adding a layer of association between thoughts and what emotions are associated with them. There is then a third layer of spiritual intelligence (SQ) which unifies or underlies them all, providing a context of meaning-making. They suggest that spiritual intelligence has transformative power in that it provides an avenue in which one is able to reframe or recontextualize a situation. It enables one to be creative, visionary and flexible in order to move beyond past habits and emotions towards recognizing and understanding a new reality. As they suggest, spiritual intelligence can take one "to the heart of things, to the unity behind difference, to the potential behind any actual expression" (Zohar and Marshall, 2000, p. 14)

*Indigenous Models – Grounded in Spirituality*

Practitioners suggest that, although spirituality is addressed in conflict resolution literature, it is often viewed as an optional approach rather than an integral part of the process, as it is with most indigenous resolution approaches (Cloke, 2006; LeResche, 1993; Walker, 1999). Umbreit (1995) views mediation as a *journey of the heart* and embraces elements of the Navajo tradition in his work with restorative justice. Mediation is a traditional form of conflict management for the Navajos and one in which attention is given to spiritual aspects of those in conflict in recognition of the relationship between the community and the spiritual realm (Pinto, 2000). Navajo mediation uses storytelling and a basic problem solving process similar to Western models, with an added component of beginning and ending with a ritual prayer and a focus on solutions “grounded in Navajo philosophy” (Pinto, p. 279).

LeResche (1993) suggests that there are 517 conflict transformation processes of American Indians in the U.S. alone. She refers to *sacred justice* which goes beyond a standard formula of conflict resolution to *going to the heart* of the conflict in which emotional expression is encouraged, and each individuals’ spiritual power is recognized. LeResche indicates that many indigenous cultures believe in a spiritual dimension of life and do not separate spirituality from the physical aspects of daily life; therefore, spirituality inherently becomes an aspect of conflict transformation. LeResche (1993, p. 321) states that, “[a]t its core, American Indian peacemaking is inherently spiritual; it speaks to the connectedness of all things; it focuses on unity, on harmony, on balancing the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical dimensions of a community of people”. She further illustrates the perspective of indigenous researchers that Western conflict resolution models lack a spiritual component; they do not recognize the natural and supernatural worlds within the process.

Walker (2004) discusses the need to acknowledge and integrate non-western worldviews in conflict transformation approaches in order to include a healing dimension and strive for a more holistic process. Holistic approaches, which include healing relationships and restoring harmony, are integral to many indigenous conflict resolution processes. Walker highlights four indigenous approaches: the Cherokee Talking Circle; the Hawaiian Ho’oponopono; the Iroquois Great Law of Peace, and the Navajo Justice and Harmony Ceremony. Each of these includes an integral spiritual component of interconnectedness of body, mind and spirit. Opening and closing rituals are used to establish connection and to help parties and the mediator search deep within for guidance and answers. The use of silence is viewed as an opportunity to lessen conflict. The use of a talking stick or other inanimate object helps participants reflect on what is being said by others and allows time for reflection and introspection on one’s own feelings. It is suggested that this time of silent reflection aids in conflict transformation and healing.

Huber (1993) sought to develop a mediation process based on Aboriginal models which would be applicable to Canadian Aboriginal people living in urban settings. She presented a mediation model based on Aboriginal spirituality, as she suggested that a cooperative focus of mediation has been practiced in various forms for centuries. Her research indicated that an appropriate model would contain the value elements of spiritual

## The Promise of Spirituality

connectedness and the ability to heal through understanding. Based on Aboriginal values and beliefs, she designed a model around the medicine wheel, an ancient and valued symbol used for seeking inner wisdom. The four components of the wheel represent parts of the whole being grounded in the four directions: spiritual in the east, emotional in the south, physical in the west, and intellectual in the north.

Within the spiritual lies the opening rituals and setting of the sacred space for transformation to occur. Huber (1993) suggests that the mediator and the parties are able to connect spiritually with one another as the mediator establishes a presence with the parties and allows them to express emotions in a safe place. The emotional aspect is the place of the heart, where emotions are encouraged to be expressed and stories can be told without hurting one another. The physical dimension of the Western orientation is grounded in reaching and listening to the wisdom of one's inner resources through reflection and introspection. The north delineates the intellectual aspect of synthesizing what has occurred and the ability to detach oneself from emotions and strongly held beliefs to find resolution with others. Huber suggests that once parties reach the north or intellectual phase of the process, the mediator should symbolically move parties to the center of the wheel to illustrate a holistic approach. A closing circle of ritual or prayer completes the process. Huber pointed out the model's emphasis on feelings rather than cognitive thinking. The use of a circle orientation assists in face-to-face discussion (see below), and symbolizes that everyone present is necessary to resolve the conflict.

### *Western Models – Integrating Spirituality*

There is growing interest of the inherent spiritual aspects of the mediation process. Similar to LeResche's (1993) view of American Indian peacemaking, Zumeta (1993) states that, "mediation at its core is inherently spiritual" (p. 29), and speaks of spirituality as "the connectedness of all things" (p. 25). Her premise is that a spiritual mediator may bring about a sense of calm and connectedness, and such an atmosphere is a powerful aspect of the process. She suggests that the moment during mediation when a door opens for transformation is described through *spirituality and consciousness*. During those moments, she senses what she describes as a spiritual connection between her and the parties. She avers that it is the element of spirituality that removes barriers, and connects parties and the mediator, thus opening the path to reach into the heart or underlying compassion of everyone in the room. Phillips (2001) discusses spirituality through the concept of *flow* – as it opens the door for empowerment and recognition to occur in mediation. She speaks of *moments when something happens*: moments when we may not know exactly what happened, but we simply honor them and allow them to move the mediation process in the direction the parties need it to go.

Lois Gold (1993), a former chair of the Academy of Family Mediators, further advocates a more holistic approach to mediation within a paradigm of healing, as is consistent with many indigenous cultures. A healing aspect suggests that the mediator draws from his or her *spiritual center* in developing a positive relationship with the parties, and uses messages and ways of being with the parties that suggest and encourage a healing aspect of the relationship. Cloke (2000, p. 15) suggests that conflict is a spiritual

experience, an interconnectedness of all things with “constantly moving questions, options and possibilities”. Cloke further suggests that spirit happens unexpectedly when individuals come together and collaborate and views resolution as a movement of positive energy within and between parties as they reach the core or spirit of conflict. While spirit may be at the core of conflict, he regrets that Western mediation models, unlike indigenous models, do not address spirituality. Cloke does not advocate imposing spiritual practice on others, but rather encouraging parties in conflict to be aware of one another and of each other’s feelings, emotions and needs, and to be open to creative ways of finding meaning and resolution.

Bowling and Hoffman (2000) suggest that a mediator’s interventions are based on his or her ability to be with the parties, to be open to their perspectives, and to recognize and relinquish his or her view of what should happen in favor of developing a relationship with the parties. There are no outside assumptions or rote processes imposed upon the parties. Through reflective thought, the answers to the parties’ conflict lies within themselves. Watts, Miller and Kloepfer (1999) advocate a similar approach involving the use of questions for participants to seek answers to the conflict within themselves. They suggest developing collective consciousness through transcendent self-presence, a facilitative approach helping participants connect with their inner spiritual nature. The premise of the approach is to use questions which enable self-reflection and an increased awareness of collective group consciousness allowing “the group to become conscious of what it knows” (Watts *et al.*, 1999, p. 24).

One such questioning model is the Quaker Clearness Committee. Burson (2002) describes this model as one in which one or more people are assisted by a group to successfully move through conflict through intense conversation. This process is accomplished by allowing the group to step back into a state of shared silence that generates critical questions which ultimately serve to provide needed insight. This model stresses that the most important thing is not to have the right answers but to generate the right questions. The person or group requesting the session states the issue about which they are seeking clarity. The group cannot advise, evaluate or criticize. Their sole mission is to craft respectful and supportive questions that help the person or group find their own *heart-centered* answers. The most important task of the Clearness Committee is to ask open-ended questions designed to respectfully and artfully put someone in touch with their highest and best internal resources. Artful and intentional questioning is an element found among those practicing spiritual mediation.

Tom Porter (2004), a trial lawyer, mediator, and minister, acknowledges that mediation is about relationships, and that relationships involve spirit, or what he refers to as the energy that connects us all. Porter found the circle process to be the most applicable to the work of healing relationships through mediation. Peace Circles, which have been used for centuries in indigenous cultures, are used extensively in community restorative dialogue programs and more recently being explored with resolution of commercial disputes. Circles use a questioning approach in exploring the roots of one’s values and assumptions as parties within the circle work through a conflict situation. Getting to a precise answer may be secondary to learning to peacefully explore differences (Pranis, Stuart and Wedge, 2003).

Lederach (1995) applies a questioning approach in mediation training with groups comprised of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Rather than to assume that a standard mediation model is applicable for all groups, Lederach has each training group develop its own framework for working with others in resolving conflict. He begins the session by asking everyone to remember a time when they were having problems with another person, and asks them to carefully ponder the following question: "If things got difficult and you felt you needed help with this problem, who would you go to for help?" (Lederach, 1995, p. 86). As the group visualizes this image in their minds, he asks them to share with group members why they chose this particular person, what characteristics this person has, and what is expected from this person. As group members search for answers to the questions posed, they tap into their inner knowledge. The ability to recognize and acknowledge this inner guidance comes as parties become aware of the feeling of safety within this space created for resolution of the conflict.

Umbreit (2005) and Gold (1993) emphasize recognition of the emotional context of conflict, effective use of silence, creating a safe and *sacred space* for the mediation process to unfold, and helping parties listen to their *inner wisdom*. Umbreit (2005) is recognized for his humanist model of mediation in his work with restorative justice. His model is based upon the premise that the act of helping others in conflict is not that the third party has all the answers or specific technical expertise, but rather focuses upon the acts of *compassionate listening* and *speaking from the heart*. Key values of Umbreit's (1997, 2005) humanistic model include incorporating a belief in the *connectedness of all things*, in particular the mediator's presence and connection with the parties concerned. Umbreit speaks of the healing power of stories and the impact upon parties of knowing that the mediator is listening and acknowledging their emotions. He posits that allowing others to tell a story in a safe space, uninterrupted and without judgment or problem-solving, is at the *core of healing*. He suggests that discussing parties' positions may keep them in the *head*, whereas relating stories among the parties affects their *hearts*. The setting of a safe place in which to open one's heart comes not just from implementing active and reflective listening and reframing, but also from the mediator's genuine connectedness and presence; that is: *being with* parties, giving them full attention and allowing them to work through the challenges of the conflict with him/herself and with the other parties. In this process, Umbreit (2005, p. 26) relies upon non-verbal communication, which he refers to as *the energy of the conflict*: "I work with the energy of conflict, my own and others. The powerful non-verbal language of our bodies and spirit are far more potent in both understanding conflict and allowing the path toward healing to be engaged."

According to Chupp (1993), conflict transformation is a deeply spiritual process, going beyond settlement towards a shift in perceptions that transforms the conflict and the parties involved. He suggests that mediators are generally unaware of the spiritual aspect of conflict resolution, namely those moments when something profound occurs and one is not able to specifically describe what happened. Chupp claims that it is the guidance of opening parties to meaningful dialogue that brings about this shift; focusing strictly on procedure and technique actually hinders the potential of spiritual transformation. A mediator who is centered, fully present and open to guidance from inner resources is able to create a safe space for transformation to occur. The concept of providing a safe or sacred space for parties to process their conflict, a space in which they may have their feelings validated and

be comfortable in expressing a range of emotions, is well documented (Cloke, 2000; Gold, 1993; Umbreit, 1997; Zumeta, 1993). This safe space may be offered through recognition and acknowledgment of one's religious or spiritual world view.

### **Incorporating Spirituality and Religion in Mediation**

We advocate further exploration of the incorporation of spirituality and religion in the conflict resolution process. Roof (1999) posited that Americans are searching for deeper meaning in what they do and who they are. Many are searching for answers through affiliation with a specific religious belief system or from a blending of beliefs that help each individual make sense of the world. These beliefs become an element of culture and identity and are an integral part of how individuals live their lives and how they view others. The time is ripe for greater acceptance of exploring and acknowledging the power of addressing one's religious or spiritual makeup. The days of never mentioning religion or spirituality outside the setting of organized religion are over.

Research in the areas of therapy and health care indicates a link between religion or spirituality and positive reframing (Stefanek, McDonald and Hess, 2005; Wendel, 2003). If one's religion or spirituality helps one to find meaning within the context of health-related events, we argue that the same meaning making occurs in navigating other types of conflict. Spirituality and religion can guide individuals through conflict situations and should therefore be acknowledged by a third-party intervener. An article in the *Washington Post* cited by Buckholtz (2005) noted the increasing numbers of individuals seeking help through pastoral counseling. As one woman explained, her religion "guides the choices I make and how I make sense of the world. I didn't think a psychologist or psychiatrist would be sensitive to that." In response to this trend, the number of nationally-recognized academic programs offering pastoral counseling has doubled in the last five years, with most students seeking to help others in private practice rather than through a specific ministry (Buckholtz, 2005).

Honeyman, Goh and Kelly (2004) suggest that parties are moving from traditional methods of mediation towards seeking mediators who can provide a sense of *connectedness* and *authority*. They refer to "connectedness" as a sense that the mediator is a part of the process and not a detached neutral; similarly, "authority" is not the mediator's ability to make decisions but rather to his/her experience and serious approach to the role. Cobb (2001) discusses a shift in mediation from what she refers to as a first generation practice in which practitioners were held to a strict method or formula for resolving conflict. She discusses moments when *something happens* during mediation, and suggests that conflict may be a vehicle for a sacred experience to take place – something she describes as far more important than reaching settlement. She advocates that mediators move to a second generation practice wherein they modify basic assumptions of traditional methods and allow the process to flow in line with what the parties are experiencing. She encourages the opening of *sacred space*, in which emotions and feelings may be acknowledged. This movement beyond traditional methods is becoming more evident and accepted within the conflict resolution field.

*Four Elements of Peacebuilding*

Lederach (2004) offers an exploration of the art of mediation wherein individuals seek connection with one another and recognition of each person's real or authentic self. In this connection, individuals respect and tolerate or accept one another regarding who they are and where they are within the conflict. This connection provides a safe place for people to have those deeper conversations that need to occur in order to resolve the conflict. Lederach provides a summary of the above discussion within his description of four elements of peacebuilding.

The first element of this art of mediation – the capacity to imagine a web of relationships even with one's enemies – may be interpreted as the ability to recognize one's real or authentic self and to acknowledge it in other people. Most importantly from a mediator's standpoint, it is to help those in conflict to reach and to experience their authentic selves. This may be done through providing a safe or sacred space of non-judgment and allowing parties to explore, through thoughtful questioning and reflection, what it is that is important to them and why it is important.

The second element he describes is a discipline to sustain curiosity. A mediator who provides careful questioning and reflection invites parties to explore the meaning of everyday activities, thoughts and feelings. This exploration may not only help to illuminate the meaning of an action or phrase to the other party/parties but it also provides further understanding of the experience to the person sharing the information. Thoughtful questioning and reflection guide parties towards uncovering essential meaning thus leading to greater understanding. Within the third element – a belief in creativity and imagination – mediators are open to new ideas and new interpretations. Most importantly, they are not hindered by adherence to a specific model, techniques or line of inquiry; as artists, they are creative and imaginative in sensing the connection with and between others and are open to allowing this creativity to guide the mediation process where it needs to go.

The fourth element Lederach describes is a willingness to take a risk by stepping into the unknown. Those who practice the art of mediation from a spiritual perspective are open to the connections with and between others and are willing to allow the process to flow in order to guide parties towards resolution or transformation. Lederach concludes that the moral imagination (of peacebuilding) about which he speaks is not an answer but a journey. Attention to spirituality in the mediation process opens parties and the mediator to a journey in which parties find their authentic selves, are able to have conversations they were not able to have on their own, and which then opens them up to possibilities for resolution.

### **Conclusion**

Spirituality may be found wherever one finds its essence, which could be in the act of washing dishes, watching the sunset, walking in nature, or the words of religious text or the community of congregations. As Cloke (2005, p. 18) argues, “[b]y recognizing spirit we allow people to liberate themselves from confused ways of thinking and inauthentic ways

of being that got them stuck in the first place. For these reasons, every conflict contains a spiritual path leading to higher levels of resolution.”

There is growing thought that, although practitioners advocate going beyond theories and process and to become comfortable relying upon intuitive and creative abilities, formal education may be displacing intuition and instinct in the mediator (Benjamin, 2002; Phillips, 2001). In response, Bowling and Hoffman (2005) remind that: “[i]mproving our skills and knowledge about conflict resolution is important, yet as mediators we must not forget that who are matters as much or more than what we know or what we do” (p. 12)

Harvard Law School introduced the Harvard Negotiation Insight Initiative (HNII) in 2003, which has since become the Global Insight Initiative. Under the direction of Founder and Director, Erica Fox, first year law students and conflict resolution practitioners are taught to look beyond the physical, rational, and emotional components of decision making, to a fourth, spiritual component. As one participant in the inaugural HNII event stated, “HNII wants to get spirituality and conflict management talking” (Cohen, 2003). Many experienced mediators and negotiators in the program explained that although they could not describe exactly what they do, they base much of their work on *just knowing*, instinct, and intuition (Fox and Gafni, 2005).

We argue that understanding alternative mediation models can be valuable when assisting parties in conflict because conflict by nature is complex. In order to understand conflict, mediators need to extract important themes from parties – a process which can be guided by religion or spirituality. When individuals make a claim to be religious or spiritual, they should be motivated to follow religious or spiritual principles, thus valid judgment may best be derived when a mediator taps into one’s religious or spiritual frame of reference. That is, a place where knowledge is stored about *what should be, what is right, and what is best*. We argue that no single mediation approach will be useful for all types of conflicts but, in cases where when parties want religion or spirituality to direct them during conflict, a faith-based or spiritual-based approach can be crucial in mediation.

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR  
RECONCILIATION: THE ISRAELI-JORDANIAN CASE**

**Ifat Maoz, Jacob Shamir, Gadi Wolfsfeld and Shira Dvir**

**Abstract**

*This study examines psychological correlates of Jewish-Israeli support for post-conflict political reconciliation with Jordan. An analysis of data from a public opinion survey conducted with a representative sample of Israeli-Jews (n=1000) indicated that appraisal of outgroup collective threat, as well as hatred and (lack of) sympathy towards Jordanians, predicted Jewish-Israeli decreased support for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan. Our findings point to the crucial role of threat perceptions in hindering post-conflict reconciliation and to the importance of sympathy towards the other side in increasing support for such reconciliation.*

**Introduction**

Recent work acknowledges the importance of public support for the ability of leaders to implement steps of post-conflict reconciliation (Bar-Tal, 2000). However, scarce attention is paid to systematic empirical investigation of the psychological bases of such support. This study redresses this omission by examining psychological factors that predict Jewish-Israeli public support for reconciliation with Jordan following the signing of a peace treaty between the two countries. Post-conflict situations are often characterized by the persistence of deeply-set attitudes of animosity towards the other side that can block support for peaceful reconciliation. In this study we focus on three indicators of such animosity. One is the extent to which citizens perceive their country/entity as being threatened by the other side; this will be referred to herein as appraisal of outgroup collective threat. The two other components relate to peoples' intergroup emotions, including the extent of hatred and of sympathy citizens feel towards the other side. In this study, based on analysis of data collected in a survey of Jewish-Israeli public opinion (n=1000), we examine whether attitudes of animosity still persist in the post-conflict situation between Israelis and Jordanians and the extent to which these attitudes function as psychological barriers to public support for peaceful reconciliation between the two countries.

**Scientific Background**

Resolving protracted conflicts is a complex, time-consuming challenge. Even when mutual agreements are signed, the resulting post-conflict situations still require a long and gradual reconciliation process in which the parties build cooperative relations and a stable

peace between them (Bar-On, 2008; Bar-Tal, 2001; Kelman, 1999; Lederach, 1998). The examples of peace making in Northern Ireland (Arthur, 1999) and the South African Truth and reconciliation process (Hamber, 1998) demonstrate that signing official agreements between leaders is not enough. These have to be accompanied by dynamics of social, psychological and structural change at the both at the level of policy-makers and the public on both sides so that stable peace can be reached (Bar-On, 1997; Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004). Unless the general public in each country support reconciliation, peace remains tentative and unstable (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004).

Lederach (1998) has noted that the reconciliation process requires implementation of formal policies that forge relations between former rivals, create cooperative links and stabilize peaceful relationships. These steps towards political reconciliation include developing joint institutions and organizations, free and open trade, joint economic ventures, and free and open tourism, as well as exchanging cultural products and information in various areas. However, such policies often seem difficult to achieve in the aftermath of protracted ethnic conflict. The difficulties are not only related to the lack of agreement or cooperation between policymakers, but are also to the lack of public support on each side for embarking on a route of cooperation with the other side.

Threat appraisal has been identified as an important factor determining policy preferences in situations of conflict or increased intergroup tension and violence. Societies involved in intractable conflicts are dominated by an orientation towards threat (Bar-Tal, 2001). Whilst an orientation of threat may be functional for coping with the stressful, highly uncertain and demanding situation of warfare, when it is maintained in post-conflict situations, it serves as a barrier to progress in the peace process via reconciliation and cooperation with the other side (Kelman, 1999).

As in similar intractable conflicts to the ongoing Israeli-Arab conflict, orientations of outgroup threat are a dominant force in maintaining and escalating the conflict. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, Jewish-Israeli outgroup threat perception was found to be associated with less conciliatory and less compromising positions towards Palestinians (Bar-Tal, 2001). Nevertheless, intergroup emotions of hatred and sympathy have also been found to contribute (to a smaller but still independent degree) to the willingness of citizens to make compromises (Maoz and McCauley, 2005).

There are other studies that also emphasize the importance of dealing with emotions in attempts at conflict resolution. This literature describes how negative and widely shared emotions towards the other side that are usually dominant in societies involved in conflict (such as anger, fear and hatred) can also remain dominant in post-conflict situations and thus become a barrier to reconciliation and cooperation (Bar-On, 1997, 2008; Bar-Tal, 2001, 2007; Staub, 1990). On the other hand, equally crucial is the development of positive emotions in post-conflict situations, such as hope (Bar-Tal, 2001), caring, sensitivity and empathy to the members of the other group (Bar-On, 2008; Kelman, 1999). Positive emotional orientations towards the other side are described as necessary for achieving and maintaining reconciliation and cooperation between former enemies (Kelman, 1999).

In this study we intend to expand this line of research and look at how well these psychological variables empirically explain public attitudes towards reconciliation during the more advanced stages of a peace process. Understanding the psychological underpinnings of support for reconciliation may be even more important after a formal

agreement has been signed (Kelman, 1999). Once some of the more objective reasons for hostility have been removed, leaders need to place a greater emphasis on attitudinal barriers.

### *Jordan and Israel*

The signing of the Israel-Jordan peace accord in 1994 represented a significant breakthrough in the ongoing Middle East conflict. Israelis have traditionally harbored considerably less hostility towards Jordan than towards the Palestinians. King Hussein was considered a relatively moderate Arab leader by most Israelis and the two countries often carried out clandestine forms of cooperation long before they were engaged in a formal peace process. Jordan's willingness to come to a formal agreement with Israel was directly related to the early stages of the Oslo peace process when it seemed that peace might also be achieved with the Palestinians.

There was a great deal of optimism in the air when the treaty itself was signed at a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Rabin, King Hussein, and President Clinton. It is interesting that the wording of the treaty refers specifically to the need to address the subjective sources of hostility among the two publics: "Bearing in mind the importance of maintaining and strengthening peace based on freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights, thereby overcoming psychological barriers and promoting human dignity"; "Desiring to develop friendly relations and co-operation between them in accordance with the principles of international law governing international relations in time of peace" (Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, October 26, 1994).

Unfortunately, the Oslo peace process ended in failure and this had a major impact on the relations between the two countries (Scham and Lucas, 1998; Wolfsfeld, 2002). After the eruption of the second Intifada, Jordan recalled its ambassador for several years and relations remain strained. Nevertheless, the leaders of both countries have since continued to attempt to maintain and even advance the peace and peace building practices between the sides.

### **Dynamics of Asymmetric Threat**

Several studies have examined Jordanian attitudes towards Israel and towards normalization and reconciliation with it and have found, in most cases, that these attitudes are quite negative (Kornbluth, 2002; Scham and Lucas, 1998). It is important to point out, however, that the level of hostility in Israel towards Jordan was not perceived to be as acute as the degree of animosity felt in Jordan towards Israel. The Israeli elites and general publics have, some argue, been generally more supportive of "normalizing" relations between the two countries than their Jordanian counterparts (Scham and Lucas, 1998; Wolfsfeld, Alimi and Kaliani, 2008). A major reason for this difference is the asymmetrical strategic balance between the two countries: Jordan does not represent a serious security threat to Israel, but many (if not most) Jordanians consider Israel a serious threat to the

region. Once the peace treaty was signed and the Israeli need for recognition and security were addressed, Jordan was not considered a threat by most Israelis. This is not the case for Jordan, which has experienced severe economic and security issues since the signing of the peace treaty in 1994, especially following the collapse of the Oslo process and the reemergence of Israeli-Palestinian violence in September 2000 (Wolfsfeld *et al.*, 2008).

Little research attention has been dedicated, however, to studying, in this context of asymmetrical strategic relations, the attitudes of Israeli-Jews towards Jordan. The aim of our study is to fill this gap and to investigate Jewish-Israeli attitudes towards Jordanians and examine the effect of these attitudes on Jewish-Israeli support for post-conflict reconciliation with Jordan.

### *Intergroup Attitudes: Threat Appraisal and Emotions*

The research will focus on two types of intergroup attitudes that are expected to predict a willingness for peaceful reconciliation, i.e. appraisal of outgroup collective threat and intergroup emotions. This distinction is important because the appraisal of outgroup collective threat can be seen, to some extent, as a more cognitive or analytical type of construct. It is a more “macro” construct that mostly refers to peoples’ assessments of how much their country/entity is under threat from the outgroup, both in terms of the outgroup’s perceived destructive intentions towards one’s own group and in terms of the outgroup’s perceived ability to cause serious damage. Intergroup emotions, on the other hand, focus more at the level of how people feel towards the outgroup, including both negative emotions (such as hate and anger) and positive ones (such as sympathy).

We are not suggesting, of course, that it is possible to completely separate an individual’s appraisal of collective outgroup threat from his/her personal feelings. Indeed, the level of hatred one feels towards the outgroup is very likely to be related to one’s appraisal of collective threat from the outgroup. It is nevertheless worthwhile to make this distinction because negative emotions towards a former enemy are likely to continue long after any serious outgroup threat has been removed. In addition, the path for reducing a sense of collective threat from the outgroup may run in a very different direction from the path towards reducing negative emotions (or increasing positive emotions) towards the other side.

We adopt in this research a relatively broad approach to the notion of appraisal of outgroup collective threat that relates specifically to Jordanian threat but also to the more general Israeli perception of threat from all Arab countries and entities. Our assumption was that, in addition to the appraisal of specific collective threat from Jordan, the general appraisal of Arab collective threat to Israel was likely to affect respondents’ overall willingness to support reconciliation with Jordan. Hence, we used in this study two measures of Jewish-Israeli appraisal of outgroup collective threat: (1) appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat – relating to specific threat from Jordan, and (2) appraisal of Arab Collective Threat (relating to the more general perception of Arab countries and entities posing a threat to Israel and including items such as: “I am concerned that in the coming years, Arab terror against Israel will only further increase”).

## Psychological Correlates of Public Support

This study also focuses on two categories of intergroup emotions: hatred and sympathy. Feeling of hatred towards former enemies is probably the easiest emotion to understand in a conflict context, not least because it is so basic and personal. The notion of sympathy, on the other hand, is somewhat more complex, for it refers to one's ability to understand the other side while being positively oriented towards it. This variable might be especially important to examine when looking at an asymmetrical set of relations such as those that exist between Israel and Jordan. In this context of post-conflict relations, it is important to determine the extent to which Israeli-Jews feel sympathy towards Jordanians.

### *Jewish-Israeli Post-Conflict Animosity toward Jordan*

Appraisal of outgroup collective threat, hatred towards the outgroup and sympathy toward it all relate to the level of animosity people hold towards the other side. Appraisal of high collective threat from the outgroup, together with high hatred and low sympathy towards the outgroup, indicate a high level of animosity towards this outgroup. Appraisal of low collective threat from the outgroup, together with low hatred and high sympathy towards this outgroup, indicate a low level of animosity towards the outgroup. Between these two extremes there are several combinations that indicate intermediate animosity. While high animosity towards the outgroup clearly exists in conflict situations and has been shown to predict (decreased) readiness for conflict resolution, the extent and effect of animosity in post-conflict situations are less clear. Post-conflict situations often signify a change on the political and formal level, but not necessarily a transformation in the deeper societal-psychological level of deeply-set negative beliefs and emotions towards the other side (Kelman, 1999). The other side tends to still be seen as threatening to some extent, and is hated and not sympathized with, even after peace agreements have been reached. This may constitute a major barrier to people's readiness for reconciliation.

Given the history of the conflict between Israel and the Arab world and the past rivalry with Jordan we assumed that Israeli-Jews would still hold, to some extent, attitudes of animosity towards Jordan and expected that these attitudes would influence the readiness of Israeli-Jews for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan.

### *Predicting Support for Peaceful Reconciliation*

Support for peaceful reconciliation requires a deep and significant actual psychological and societal change that includes not only normalization in different domains (such as economics, security, etc.), but also a deeper transformation of the former relations of conflict, hatred and distrust to becoming relations of cooperation and trust (Lederach, 1998). Support for such change may be strongly hindered by perceptions and feelings of animosity towards the other side that often still powerfully persist even after the phase of acute conflict has formally ended (Bar-Tal, 2001). Thus, it can be expected that the three components of animosity will each significantly contribute to explaining decreased Jewish-Israeli support for peaceful reconciliation in the post-conflict situation with Jordan.

### Overview of Study

The aim of our study was to explore psychological correlates of public support for reconciliation focusing on Jewish-Israeli public opinion regarding Israeli-Jordanian relations. Thus the criterion measures for our study assessed Jewish-Israeli support for a number of specific policies of Israeli-Jordanian reconciliation. These included items about open borders between Israel and Jordan, the creation of joint economic institutions, and anti-incitement policies. As predictors of support for political reconciliation we included three measures of the extent of Jewish-Israeli attitudes of animosity towards Jordan: a measure of appraisal of Arab collective threat, a measure of appraisal of Jordanian collective threat, and measures of Jewish-Israeli hatred and sympathy towards Jordanians. We also included demographic measures.

### *Method*

Telephone interviews ( $n = 1000$ ) were conducted by the Machshov Research Institute with a representative sample of adult Israeli-Jews in May 2004. The survey included one set of items measuring the respondents' attitudes toward various reconciliation policies in Israeli-Jordanian relations and another set of items that assessed the respondents' feelings toward and beliefs about Jordanians and about Arabs. In addition, demographic information was obtained. The questionnaire was administered in Hebrew. The items analyzed in this study are described in more detail below.

### *Support for Reconciliation*

Support for political reconciliation with Jordan was measured by a "Support for Reconciliation Scale". This scale was adapted to the Israeli-Jordanian context from a similar scale constructed by Shamir and Shikaki (2002) in the context of Israeli-Palestinian relations. Items in this scale describe a range of steps, often mentioned in reconciliation literature as prerequisites for successful reconciliation following protracted conflicts (Lederach, 1998). The steps include normalization measures such as open borders, economic cooperation, and political cooperation, and transformative steps intended to change the national ethos, such as fundamental modifications in the school curriculum (Shamir and Shikaki, 2002). The Reconciliation Scale used in our study concentrates on the policy level and thus includes an adaptation of the four items that measure attitudes towards formal policies of reconciliation from the Shamir and Shikaki (2002) scale. Specifically, the scale used in our study included the five following reconciliation measures items: "Open Borders between Israel and Jordan so there will be a free passage of people and merchandise", "Create joint economic institutions and joint economic ventures", "Create joint political institutions", "Introduce into the school curriculum the notion of giving up the aspirations to appropriate parts of the 'homeland' that are under Palestinian control", and "Take legal measures against those expressing incitement towards Jordan".

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Respondents were asked to rate support of each item on a 4-point bipolar scale ranging from “strongly object” (1) to “strongly support” (4).

### *Psychological Predictors: Intergroup Attitudes of Animosity*

Our indicators of the level of animosity towards Jordan included two measures of appraisal of out group collective threat (“Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat Scale” and “Appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat Scale”) and two measures of emotions towards Jordanians (“Hatred towards Jordanians Scale” and “Sympathy towards Jordanians Scale”) that were derived from Maoz and McCauley (2005), and adapted to the Jordanian post-conflict context. Each of these measures was comprised of several items that were rated on a 5-point bi-polar scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). However, different labels appeared in the second item in the Appraisal of Jordanian Threat Scale (see below). Responses to these items were averaged for each respondent to form the scales, where higher scores mean higher agreement with the designated intergroup attitude. Below we describe the different measures in more detail.

### *Appraisal of Outgroup Collective Threat*

Appraisal of outgroup collective threat appraisal was assessed by two measures: (1) the “Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat Scale” that included the items: “I am concerned that in the coming years, Arab terror against Israel will only further increase” “Arabs understand only the language of power” “Peace is important to Arabs as it is to Jews” (reversed); “and “Arabs hate Jews”. (2) The “Appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat Scale” that included the items: “If a war will break out between Israel and the Arab states, Jordan will also join the war”; “To which direction, in your opinion, will Israeli-Jordanian relations proceed in the coming years?” (1= get much better, 2= get better, 3= stay as they are, 4= get worse, 5= get much worse).

### *Emotions towards Jordanians*

Emotions towards Jordanians were assessed by two scales. The “Hatred Scale” (1) included the items: “I feel hate towards Jordanians” and “I feel anger toward Jordanians”. The “Sympathy Scale” (2) included the items: “I feel liking toward Jordanians”, and “I feel understanding toward Jordanians”. Table 2 (at end of article) presents the Cronbach alphas, means and standard deviations of each of the above scales as well as their inter-correlations.

### *Demographic Questions*

In addition, respondents were also presented with demographic questions. These included questions about gender and age of the respondent, degree of religiosity, number of years of education and economic status (level of family monthly expenditures).

### Results

Our results section includes three parts. First, we present the descriptive data regarding Jewish-Israeli support for reconciliation with Jordan. Second, we describe our findings regarding the extent of Jewish-Israeli post-conflict attitudes of animosity towards Jordan. Finally, we present the regression model predicting Jewish-Israeli support for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan.

#### *Support for the Different Reconciliation Policies*

Means and standard deviations of support for the reconciliation items appear in Table 1 (at end of article). The item that Israeli-Jews view as the most acceptable is “Joint Economic Institutions” ( $M = 2.98$  and percentage of support: 77.4 %). The least acceptable items are “Joint Political Institutions” and “Curriculum Change” ( $M$ 's = 2.54 and 2.33 respectively, percentages of support: 54.4% and 44% respectively). In between these two poles we find the “Open Borders” and “Legal Measures against Incitement” items ( $M$ 's: 2.65 and 2.68 respectively, percentage of support: 61% and 60% respectively). It is interesting though not surprising to see that the two items that meet the highest resistance are the ones that require the most meaningful change. Joint political institutions require political cooperation that is probably considered as involving a more significant structural change than economic cooperation. Curriculum change requires a deep transformation of attitudes and aspirations that are a focal part of the Jewish-Israeli national ethos (Bar-Tal, 2000), regarding the right of Jews to the “Greater land of Israel” (Eretz Israel Hashlema).

#### *The Support for Reconciliation Scale*

A scale was created of these five items ( $M = 2.64$ ;  $SD = .68$ ,  $Alpha\ Cronbach = .78$ ). The inter-correlations of these items ranged from .25 to .57 the median inter-item correlation being .43. Responses to these items were averaged for each respondent to form the Support for Reconciliation Scale, in which higher scores mean higher support for reconciliation (see Table 1, end of article).

#### *Post-conflict Attitudes of Animosity*

Means and standard deviations of ratings of animosity attitudes appear in Table 2. These data indicate that in the post-conflict situation Israeli-Jews hold mostly low attitudes of animosity towards Jordanians and thus appraise Jordanian collective threat as low ( $M = 2.65$ ) and express very low hatred towards Jordanians ( $M = 1.67$ ). However, Israeli-Jews

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also indicated low sympathy towards Jordanians ( $M = 2.38$ ). Jewish-Israeli general appraisal of “Arab threat” was found to be higher than their appraisal of Jordanian threat, but was still quite low ( $M = 3.59$ ). How do these Jewish-Israeli attitudes of low appraisal of outgroup collective threat, low hatred but also low sympathy towards Jordanians influence support for political reconciliation with Jordan? The next section presents our findings regarding this question (see Table 2, end of article).

### *Predicting Support for Reconciliation*

The regression model using the psychological measures of animosity attitudes to predict the Support for Reconciliation Scale produced a statistically significant  $R^2 = .27$ ,  $F(4, 995) = 92.9$ ,  $p < .001$ . Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat was the strongest predictor of Support for Reconciliation ( $\beta = -.30$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Thus, respondents with lower scores on this measure, showed a significantly increased support for reconciliation,  $R^2 = .18$ ,  $F(1, 998) = 218.9$ ,  $p < .001$ . The measures of feelings towards Jordanians each made an independent, added, lower but significant contribution to predicting support for reconciliation. Thus, respondents with lower scores on the Hatred Scale ( $\beta = -.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and higher scores on the Sympathy Scale ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $p < .001$ ) showed increased support for reconciliation with a significant  $R^2$  change for the addition of the Hatred scale predictor over appraisal of Arab Collective Threat,  $R^2$  change = .04,  $F(1, 997) = 52.9$ ,  $p < .001$ , and a significant  $R^2$  change for the addition of the Sympathy Scale over the Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat Scale and the Hatred Scale,  $R^2$  change = .04,  $F(1, 996) = 52.7$ ,  $p < .001$ . The weakest (but still significant) predictor was Appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat. Respondents with lower scores on this measure, ( $\beta = -.11$ ,  $p < .001$ ) showed increased support for political reconciliation with a significant  $R^2$  change for its addition over the three other measures,  $R^2$  change = .01,  $F(1, 995) = 15.9$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Thus, in line with our hypothesis the results indicate that attitudes of animosity towards the Jordanians: Appraisal of outgroup collective threat, hatred and (low) sympathy towards Jordanians significantly predict decreased Jewish-Israeli support for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan, with each of these measures providing an independent significant contribution to the prediction. Interestingly, the appraisal of specific threat from Jordan itself produced the lowest contribution to the prediction. Possible explanations for this finding will be presented in the discussion section.

### *Demographic Measures and Support for Political Reconciliation*

The addition of demographic variables to our prediction model indicated that most of these measures (i.e. religiosity, ethnicity, gender and level of education), did not have any significant contribution to our prediction of support for peaceful reconciliation. The only significant demographic predictors found were age ( $\beta = .09$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and level of expenses ( $\beta = .06$ ,  $p = .03$ ) with higher figure on each associated with higher support for reconciliation.

## Discussion

Recent research and theorizing in the domain of conflict and conflict resolution emphasizes that formal peace agreements between societies in protracted conflict are not enough for establishing stable and lasting peace (Lederach, 1998).

Formal conflict resolution sometimes involves only the leaders who negotiated the agreement or narrow strata around them. In these cases, the majority of society members may not accept the negotiated compromises, or even if they do, may still hold world views that have fueled the conflict. As a result, formal resolutions of conflicts may be unstable. They may collapse as in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or turn into cold peace as in the case of Israeli-Jordanian relations. In these cases past conflictive relations have not turned into peaceful relations of reconciliation and cooperation that involve, and are supported by, wide sectors of publics on both sides (Bar-Tal, 2000).

Though public support is recognized as crucial in reaching peaceful reconciliation, very few studies have tried to directly and systematically examine factors that influence such support. One such study done by Shamir and Shikaki (2002) focused on the role of expectations for lasting peace and democracy in Israeli and Palestinian public opinion in support of reconciliation and compromise. Another study by Maoz and McCauley (2005) examined psychological bases of Jewish-Israeli public opinion support for compromise with Palestinians. Here, we expand upon these studies by examining psychological predictors of post-conflict support for reconciliation. Specifically, we attempt to learn more about the extent to which intergroup attitudes of animosity (such as appraisal of outgroup collective threat as well as hatred and [low] sympathy towards the outgroup) predict decreased Jewish-Israeli support toward reconciliation and cooperation policies in Israeli-Jordanian post-conflict relations. But before discussing our prediction model and its findings, we will discuss two other essential questions that this study dealt with. One is the extent of Jewish-Israeli post-conflict public support for political reconciliation with Jordan and the other is the extent to which Jewish-Israeli attitudes of animosity towards Jordan still persist, even after the signing of the peace treaty between the two countries.

### *Jewish-Israeli Support for Reconciliation with Jordan*

Our findings indicate that the majority of the Jewish-Israeli public support the implementation of reconciliation policy measures with Jordan (around 60% support for most of the measures examined). This is consistent with the results of public opinion surveys conducted on the Jewish-Israeli population directly after the signing of the peace accords on November and December 1994 (Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, 1994). These surveys also found high support for Israeli-Jordanian peace. Together these results may indicate that Israeli public attitudes towards peace with Jordan are stable and relatively positive. This contrasts with Jordanian attitudes towards peace and normalization with Israel, which some have found to be consistently more negative since the signing of the peace treaty (Kornbluth, 2002; Scham and Lucas, 1998).

*Israeli Post-conflict Attitudes towards Jordan*

Deeply-set hostile perceptions and emotions towards the other side have been described as persisting in post-conflict situations and as hindering the attainment of full and stable peace (Bar-On, 1997, 2008). Our study empirically demonstrates the sustenance of such attitudes among the Israeli-Jewish population in the post-conflict relations with Jordan. Though the specific appraisal of collective threat from Jordan was found as low, another important component of appraisal of outgroup collective threat – the appraisal of the more general Arab collective threat – remained higher (notably the change in the relations with Jordan did not include a change in the broader context of the Israeli-Arab conflict). As could be expected in the current phase of formal peace between the two countries, Jewish-Israeli hatred towards Jordanians was found to be very low. However, Israeli-Jordanian peace might be described as an extremely “cold” (almost frozen) peace, as the extent of Israeli sympathy towards Jordanians was found to be low despite the lack of perceived threat. Together, these findings paint a picture of slightly negative-leaning Israeli indifference towards Jordanians. Thus, Israeli Jews do not perceive Jordanians as highly threatening, nor are do they feel high hatred towards Jordanians, but neither do they feel much sympathy towards them.

This makeup of attitudes can be understood as characterizing the asymmetrical post-conflict relations of the stronger Israel with its past enemy Jordan, which holds a very low strategic threat potential. The low perceived specific threat from Jordan itself to Israel gives little reason to hate or feel anger towards Jordanians. However, as Jordanians are former enemies and also part of the Arab world (and thus also part of the still active Israeli-Arab conflict) positive attitudes towards them remain underdeveloped and generally weak.

How do these Jewish-Israeli attitudes of appraisal of low collective threat and low hatred but also low sympathy towards Jordan influence Jewish-Israeli willingness for transforming the relations between the two countries towards policies of normalization and reconciliation? Our findings in regard to this issue are discussed in the next section.

*Appraisal of Outgroup Collective Threat, Hatred and Sympathy as Predictors of Support for Reconciliation*

In line with our expectations, we found that attitudes of animosity towards Jordan – appraisal of outgroup collective, hatred and (low) sympathy – significantly predict decreased readiness for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan, with each measure having an independent contribution to this prediction. Appraisal of outgroup (Arab) collective threat was the strongest single predictor of for the extent of support for reconciliation, with the hatred and sympathy scales each adding a smaller significant contribution. Interestingly, our findings indicate that appraisal of Jordanian collective threat made the smallest (but still significant) contribution to the prediction of Jewish-Israeli attitudes towards reconciliation with Jordan. Demographic variables of age and level of expenses added a small contribution to this prediction.

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Taken together, our findings emphasize the importance of psychological attitudes, and specifically the role of cognitive threat appraisal together with intergroup emotion variables, as major factors in explaining support for reconciliation. Importantly, our study demonstrates that feelings such as sympathy towards the other side have a significant role in predicting increased support for peaceful reconciliation in situations of post-conflict. Nevertheless, although feelings towards Jordanians do contribute to predicting support for reconciliation with Jordan, appraisal of outgroup collective threat (and in our case appraisal of Arab collective threat) was still found to be the strongest single predictor of the extent of such support.

### *Threat Appraisal and Support for Reconciliation*

Post-conflict situations have been described as characterized by “a carry over” of perceptions of threat that were relevant during the conflict but nevertheless continue to have a decisive impact on public attitudes after peace agreements have been signed (Bar-Tal, 2000; Bar-On, 1997, 2008). Our study empirically demonstrates this “carry over” effect in which appraisal of collective threat from the outgroup – and more specifically, appraisal of Arab collective threat – continues to be a dominant factor in the post-conflict situation of Israeli-Jordanian relations, and importantly determines public support for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan.

Israeli-Jewish threat orientation towards Arabs has persisted for generations and plays a major role in policy preferences in conflict and peace processes. Teichman and Bar-Tal (2005) conducted an extensive analysis of Arabs’ representation in Israeli political, social, educational, cultural and media channels through 100 years of conflict. These authors found that portrayals of Arabs as threatening have become part of the Jewish-Israeli ethos of conflict and this leads to a continued threat orientation of the Israeli public. Wolfsfeld (2002, 2004) demonstrates, via the most extensive and systematic studies done on the Israeli news media in conflict and peace, how these media provide an ethnocentric presentation of the Israeli–Arab conflict in which Arab and Palestinian destructive intentions and threat towards Israel are highly emphasized.

Thus, it may be in the context of the asymmetric post-conflict relations between Israel and Jordan that, as Jordan is not perceived by Israelis as specifically or realistically threatening (Appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat  $M = 2.65$ ), Jordanian threat makes only a small contribution to predicting support for reconciliation with Jordan. However, Israeli-Jews perceive a much higher threat from Arabs (Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat  $M = 3.59$ ). This appraisal of Arab collective threat is significantly associated with respondents’ lower support for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan (see also Wolfsfeld *et al.*, 2002 for similar observations about Israeli perception of low Jordanian threat in contrast to perception of higher threat from other Arab entities). Our findings may indicate that, despite the post-conflict situation, Jordan is still to an extent perceived by the Israeli public to be part of the hostile and threatening Arab world, and thus appraisal of Arab collective threat constitutes a major barrier to reconciliation with *Jordan*.

### Conclusion

Our study empirically examined the psychological correlates of Jewish-Israeli attitudes toward peaceful reconciliation in the post-conflict Israeli-Jordanian relations. Public support for formal reconciliation policies with Jordan was found to be significantly predicted by our psychological measures of animosity towards Jordanians and negatively correlated with appraisal of outgroup collective threat, hatred and (low) sympathy towards Jordanians.

Generally, our findings indicate that appraisal of outgroup collective threat constitutes a major barrier to conflict resolution and peaceful reconciliation. This is consistent with findings of previous studies (Bar-On, 2008; Bar-Tal, 2001). However, the fact that appraisal of collective *Arab* threat (and not the appraisal of *Jordanian* collective threat) was found in our study to be a major barrier to reconciliation with Jordan clearly shows that the asymmetric post-conflict dynamics between Israel and Jordan cannot be detached from the wider context of the Israeli-Arab conflict (in which this asymmetry disappears or is even reversed). The more general appraisal of Arab collective threat to Israel still powerfully hinders Israeli readiness for peaceful reconciliation even in cases, such as with Jordan, where formal peace agreements have been reached.

Another interesting finding of this study concerns the role of sympathy in Israeli-Jordanian post-conflict relations. As perhaps could be expected, Israeli-Jews still feel some (but very low) hatred towards Jordanians and this constitutes a significant barrier to their support for reconciliation with this country. However, less expected in this context of formal peace is the low sympathy Israeli-Jews feel towards Jordanians. The importance of this result is even further emphasized when we consider that this feeling of low sympathy towards Jordanians is a barrier to Jewish-Israeli reconciliation support ( $\beta = .15$ ) that is as strong as the feeling of hatred towards Jordanians ( $\beta = -.15$ ). While sympathy towards others is usually seen as a “soft” variable, i.e. linked to dialogues and interpersonal emotions, our findings indicate that this variable also has an important role at the policy level as it significantly and independently predicts support for reconciliation.

The moral exclusion model, developed by the social psychologist Susan Opatow, describes a process in which people are placed “outside the boundary in which moral values, rules and considerations of fairness apply” (1990, p. 1). Causing or allowing harm to those outside of one’s moral community is justified and rationalized on the premise that they are expendable, undeserving, exploitable, and irrelevant (Opatow, 1990). Especially in asymmetric conflict, moral exclusion may lead to the use of aggression towards the weaker, morally excluded group (Staub, 1990). In the context of the asymmetric, post-conflict relations between Israel and Jordan, the Jewish-Israeli lack of sympathy towards Jordanians may reflect a deeper, underlying process of moral exclusion that constitutes a barrier to the willingness to reconcile with Jordan and may even facilitate, in certain cases, intergroup aggression.

Given the important moral and political implications of intergroup sympathy, it would be interesting to examine in further research the factors that influence the level of sympathy towards the other side in conflict and post-conflict situations.

In the specific context of Israeli-Jordanian relations, it seems that the cold peace between the two countries has turned into “frozen peace” that may also freeze advances

towards more meaningful measures of political reconciliation between the two countries. Thus, practical ways to cope with this very low sympathy and “warm up” the peace should be considered. One prevalent device for improving relations and increasing sympathy between groups is structured contacts and encounters (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998).

Contact interventions have been shown as effective in creating more positive mutual relations also in the specific context of Jewish-Arab relations (Salomon, 2006). In line with this, since the signing of the Oslo peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians, several dozen interventions of organized contacts between members of these two groups are conducted each year, and are still being conducted now even after the breakup of the peace process and through different phases of increased violence between the sides. These include encounters, dialogues and cooperative projects between school and university students, teachers, university professors, religious leaders, medical doctors, journalists etc. (Maoz, 2004). Moreover, problem-solving workshops between Israelis and Palestinians have been conducted since the 1970s by Herbert Kelman and his colleagues and have shown to increase understanding and readiness for reconciliation in both sides (Kelman, 1999).

However, the signing of peace treaty between Israel and Jordan was not followed by such initiatives. As a result, there exist very few to nearly no organized contacts between Israelis and Jordanians (one rare exception is the “Crossing Borders” project that includes Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian youth). Consistently with this, our survey data indicates that only a small percentage (23%) of Israeli-Jews has ever met a Jordanian, while the majority of respondents (77%) reported that they have never met one). This variable of “meeting a Jordanian” was also found to be significantly and positively correlated with the extent of sympathy towards Jordanians ( $r = .23, p < .001$ ). Thus, it may be that the strategy of grassroots contacts and encounters, that is widely used in the context of the conflictual relations between Israeli-Jews and Palestinians should be also more extensively employed in the case of post-conflict relations between Israel and Jordan. Since contacts do have a role in creating sympathy (Bar-On, 2008), they may be even more required in such phases of “freezing peace” in order to enable further transition into political reconciliation. Given the fact that Israel has a much greater level of military and economic power, higher Israeli sympathy towards Jordanians can be a crucial factor in increasing support for further reconciliation between the two countries.

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Table 1. *Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations and Percentage of Support for Reconciliation Policy Items*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean	SD	Support Percentage
1. Open Borders	1						2.65	.98	61.0%
2. Joint Economic Institutions	.53	1					2.98	.88	77.4%
3. Joint Political Institutions	.43	.54	1				2.54	.96	54.4%
4. Curriculum Change	.45	.42	.46	1			2.33	.99	44.0%
5. Legal Measures against Incitement	.27	.32	.23	.32	1		2.68	.92	60.0%
6. Support for Political Reconciliation Scale	.76	.77	.74	.74	.59	1	2.64	.68	58.2%

*Note.* N = 823- 935 for all statistics. All correlations are significant ( $p < .01$  two-tailed) . Support percentage is percentage of those rated 3 or 4 (“Support” or “Strongly support”) on a bi-directional 1 to 4 scale ranging from “Strongly object” to “Strongly support”.

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Table 2. Means (Standard Deviations) of Scales of Animosity towards Jordanians

	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
1. Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat (4)	<i>.63</i>					3.59 (.82)
2. Appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat (2)	<i>.23***</i>	<i>.33</i>				2.65 (.81)
3. Hatred (2)	<i>.27***</i>	<i>.24***</i>	<i>.78</i>			1.67 (.98)
4. Sympathy (2)	<i>-.25***</i>	<i>-.22***</i>	<i>-.08**</i>	<i>.68</i>		2.39 (1.03)
5. Support for Political Reconciliation (5)	<i>-.43***</i>	<i>-.27***</i>	<i>-.31***</i>	<i>.31***</i>	<i>.78</i>	2.64 (.68)

Note. N = 979-1000. Number of scale items appears in parenthesis near scale title. . Correlations in italics on diagonal are Cronbach Alphas of the corresponding scales.

\* $p \leq 0.05$  \*\* $p \leq 0.01$  \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$

**THE IFI AND EU PEACE II FUND: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FUNDED PROJECT SUCCESS IN PROMOTING PEACEBUILDING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Sean Byrne, Chuck Thiessen, Eyob Fissuh, and Cynthia Irvin**

**Abstract**

*This article examines the views of ninety-eight study participants on community development and peacebuilding supported by the European Union (EU) Peace II Fund and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI). We elaborate the perceptions of community group leaders, funding agency civil servants and development officers regarding the role of both funds in Northern Ireland. Their experiences of the EU Peace II Fund and the IFI are discussed in the wider context of peacebuilding and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties. Furthermore, this article explores the importance of community development and cross-community contact through joint economic and social development projects.*

**Introduction**

The international community has adopted a wide range of strategies in attempts to de-escalate and settle a number of ethnic conflicts (Pearson, 2001; Sandole, 2007). Humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping forces, and economic aid have been employed to build the peace in societies after violent conflict (Jeong, 2005). For example, international non-governmental organizations may work to empower former child soldiers in the transition back to their communities, while international funding agencies tackle social exclusion and economic deprivation (Byrne, Irvin, Fissuh and Cunningham, 2006; Senehi and Byrne, 2006). Multilateral institutions have provided over \$109 billion to states transitioning out of protracted violence (OECD, 1999). International donor agencies seek to remedy economic policies which have exacerbated political, psycho-cultural, historical, and socioeconomic cleavages that are the root cause of violent ethnic conflict (Byrne and Irvin, 2002). In this study we outline how the recipients of international economic assistance themselves (this case in Northern Ireland) perceive how that aid sustains and promotes development and peacebuilding.

Our study describes relationships, people, processes and setting in order to understand the complexity of this case study. The stories of the respondents reflect how they perceive the economic assistance to be working in Northern Ireland. In the summer of 2006, when the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) had been functioning for twenty-one years and the European Union's (EU) Special Support Program for Peace and Reconciliation (or "Peace Fund") for nine years, the first author interviewed ninety-eight interviewees in Belfast, Derry, Dublin and counties Cavan, Donegal, Fermanagh, Leitrim,

Monaghan, and Tyrone in the Border region. Over a nine-week period he interviewed senior civil servants who administer both funds, funding agency development officers who oversee both programs and community group leaders who have received economic aid from one or both funders.

We begin with a review of the role of economic assistance in the peacebuilding process after ethnic conflict, and in the Northern Ireland conflict. Next, we explore respondents' perceptions of the role of economic assistance in the Northern Ireland peacebuilding process. To conclude we explore the findings as they relate to the role of economic assistance in building the peace dividend in Northern Ireland.

### *Economic Aid, Development, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*

In the aftermath of protracted ethnic conflict, the international community uses foreign aid as a peacebuilding mechanism on the assumption that the root causes of ethnic conflict are thus being addressed (Carmert and James, 1997; Kaufman, 2000). Economic intervention seeks to target socially excluded communities closely aligned with spoiler groups that can use violence to destabilize and destroy nascent peace processes (Darby and MacGinty, 2000). Properly targeted foreign aid given toward the end of a protracted ethnic conflict could be an integral component of a post-conflict peacebuilding process (Irvin and Byrne, 2000). Research into the need to consolidate peace processes by economic means is relatively recent (Anderson, 1999; Brynen, 2000; Jeong, 2005). The economic situation sustaining an escalation of ethnic violence, the links between economic aid and peacebuilding, and the role of economic aid in maintaining peace have been comparatively neglected (Reychler and Paffenholz, 2001; Väyrynen, 1997). Findings as to whether economic assistance can contribute to sustainable economic development, community empowerment, and reconciliation remain mixed (Byrne and Ayulo, 1998; Byrne and Irvin, 2001, 2002).

External foreign aid on its own is not a panacea for transforming relationships into a culture of peace; it may in fact be detrimental as group egotism shapes and reinforces rather than diminishes difference (Ryan, 2007). Economic aid as a part of a track in a multi-model and multi-level contingency intervention model that involves a multiplicity of actors in a coordinated peace system is more effective in transforming conflict and building trust (Byrne and Keashly, 2000). Such an organic intervention process builds new cooperative relationships through joint-venture economic projects that promote contact at the local level and which tackle structural inequalities. This process may often be coupled with problem-solving groups and storytelling interaction to co-create new relationships and assist societies to recover from trauma (Senehi, 2000, 2002)

Lederach (1997) provides an analytical framework that taps into the indigenous culture's approach to creating and sustaining transformation and which moves people toward restructuring relationships. Middle-tier elites play an important role in forging and sustaining the transformational peace system over time as they have significant connections both to the upper tier elites and to the grassroots (Byrne, 2001; Lederach, 1997).

The integrated framework suggests that we are not merely interested in ending something that is not desired. We are oriented toward the building of relationships that in

their totality form new patterns, processes and structures. Peacebuilding through the constructive transformation of conflicts is simultaneously a visionary and a context-responsive approach (Lederach, 1997, p. 85).

The deep-seated hostility present in the “national question” in Northern Ireland is manifested by symbolic factors (such as flags, anthems and emblems, and marching) as well as contentious issues such as police reform, punishment beatings, and the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons (McGarry and O’Leary, 2007). Many members of both communities live socially-distanced in segregated areas (in some cases enclaves) and attend different schools and churches. The economic marginalization of the Nationalist working class has played an important part in Catholic opposition to British policy in Northern Ireland (Byrne and Ayulo, 1998). Uneven development in the case of Northern Ireland was, Hechter (1975) postulated, exacerbated by “internal colonialism”, resulting in stratification between a dominant group and a subordinate ethnic group in an economically disadvantaged peripheral population. Between 1920 and 1972, Unionist populist economic policies discriminated against Nationalists, thus exacerbating alienation, mistrust and unemployment, contributing to segregation and sustaining sectarian politics (Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1995). Discriminatory policies and practices ensured there were few opportunities for nationalists who were less educated and 2.5 times likely to be unemployed (Irvin, 1999). Discrimination in job opportunities, employment and housing was one of the key factors in 1968 in mobilizing the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) (Maney *et al.*, 2006).

The 1970s saw the decline of staple industries such as agriculture, linen manufacturing and shipbuilding that witnessed a recession in a sluggish global economy that aggravated Northern Ireland’s declining economy (Dixon, 2000, 2007). However, British government economic policy dealt with the symptoms and not the underlying structural roots further escalating marginalization and economic deprivation within working class Republican and Loyalist communities that resulted in a dependency on public sector income (Bew and Patterson, 1985). A robust and large security force was also needed to manage paramilitary violence so that the war economy that emerged out of the Troubles necessitated major British government economic subvention (Tomlinson, 1995, p. 73). Economic deprivation was a critical component in sustaining the community support for rival paramilitaries (Byrne, 1995).

The British and Irish governments signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 to promote cross-border security and economic and political cooperation to the benefit of disadvantaged areas around the border (Byrne, 2001). Article 10(a) of the Agreement stated that:

The two governments shall cooperate to promote the economic and social development of those areas of both parts of Ireland, which have suffered most severely from the consequences of the instability of recent years, and shall consider the possibility of securing international support for this work.

The United States (U.S.) Congress also agreed to support both governments’ efforts through the creation of the International Fund for Ireland to promote cross-community cooperation, economic activity and reconciliation. This act highlighted its belief in the

connection between economic development and peace, as enshrined in the law authorizing U.S contributions to this Fund:

The purpose of this act is to provide for the United States contributions in support of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, such contributions to consist of economic support fund assistance for payment to the International Fund ... as well as other assistance to serve as an incentive for economic development and reconciliation in Ireland and Northern Ireland ... in which all may live in peace, free from discrimination, terrorism, and intolerance and with the opportunity for both communities to participate fully in the structures and processes of government. (quoted in Byrne and Irvin, 2001)

The idea that the IFI would assist in forging jobs and economic opportunities in Republican and Loyalist working class communities, suffering economic deprivation and the highest levels of unemployment, resonated with the U.S. view that economic development was a key peacebuilding mechanism to transform the Northern Ireland conflict (Cox, Guelke and Stephen, 2000).

In addition, the 1993 Downing Street Declaration, the 1995 Joint Declaration for Peace, and the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA) facilitated cooperation on agriculture, trade, and industrial development through executive action between the British and Irish governments (Arthur, 2000). The GFA was institutionalized by simultaneous referenda in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. Its impact was assisted by President Clinton's support of U.S. business to encourage economic prosperity and a sustainable peace in Northern Ireland (White House, 1995, p. 2).

Shortly after these political initiatives and the reciprocal Loyalist and Republican paramilitary ceasefires, the European Union (EU) created a special task force to formulate an economic assistance package to provide economic resources to encourage cross-community ties and to bolster political agreements on the ground (Cochrane, 2000). Thus, the first EU Special Support Program for Peace and Reconciliation (Peace I) involved the community and voluntary sectors in meeting the needs of groups in those deprived areas hardest hit by unemployment and violence. Peace I's strategic aim was to "reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation by increasing economic development and employment, promoting urban and rural regeneration, developing cross-border cooperation and extending social inclusion" (EU Special Support Program, 1995, p. 2).

Peace I was criticized for being passed and implemented too rapidly, which resulted in a lack of focus and clarity in objectives and problems with indicators and measures used to evaluate the Program's peacebuilding effectiveness (Harvey, 1997, p. 3). In addition, the EU Court of Auditors found that the evaluation of project applications and the post-grant monitoring of projects in Peace I did not "ensure sound financial management in all cases," while its selection and appraisal procedures "lacked common criteria and an effective methodology" for targeting social groups and community-based projects (EU Court of Auditors, 2000). Moreover, research on Peace I is mixed. The most positive analyses confirmed that properly-administered economic assistance can build sustainable development and the self-esteem of local communities, with funding agency development officers acting as a strategic lynchpin between the grassroots and the civil servants

managing both funds (Byrne and Ayulo, 1998). Working class Nationalists supported the activities of the IFI and EU Peace I in promoting economic prosperity and peace (Irvin and Byrne, 2000). On the other hand, other study participants felt the tug of bureaucratic control over their entrepreneurial efforts and believed that economic assistance had built single-identity groups rather than cross-community contact (let alone reconciliation) and that it had actually excluded the socially marginalized from real economic development (Byrne and Irvin, 2001, 2002). These findings indicate the need for greater understanding of the impact of economic aid in building a participatory democratic peacebuilding system.

Peace II (1999-2006) was designed to address some of the concerns about its forerunner. It took a bottom-up approach to facilitate Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in implementing the program to foster sustainable economic development, and cross-community reconciliation. The Peace II program “carries forward the distinctive aspects of the EU Special Support Program for Peace and Reconciliation (1995-1999) ... with a new economic focus” to reinforce progress towards promoting reconciliation and building a stable society (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2003).

### **People’s Perceptions of Peacebuilding and Community Development**

A definite trend since the early 1990s has been the burgeoning increase in the number of community groups interested in addressing conflict related tensions in Northern Ireland (Fitzduff, 2002). Economic aid from the IFI or EU Peace I and II programs have supported many of these newly established community groups. The economic aid givers’ intent is to facilitate the empowerment of local community groups in initiating project work focused on grassroots-level community issues. The perceptions of our ninety-eight respondents regarding the project work’s success in achieving peacebuilding and community development goals are the focus of this study.

Analysis of the interview narratives revealed three broad themes. First, participants discussed the suitability of international economic aid for development and peacebuilding tasks in Northern Ireland. Second, community group leaders described the role of such aid in realizing their organization’s potential for engaging with local communities in sustainable development and authentic peacebuilding. Third, community group leaders and civil servants who manage both funds provided numerous descriptive stories illustrating the funded project work’s success in development and peacebuilding. Weaving through the interview narratives were both positive and critical descriptions of international economic aid’s efficacy in promoting community development and supporting peacebuilding ventures.

### **Perceptions of the Role of Economic Aid in Northern Ireland**

#### *The Constructive Role of Economic Aid*

Community group leaders attempted to elucidate economic aid's constructive role in Northern Ireland on five fronts. First, community group leaders revealed that international funding allowed for increased risk-taking by permitting project work not necessarily supported by statutory institutions. A Belfast community group leader explained this point as follows:

[the government is] not great at risk-taking. But, with the European monies we have been able to have new concepts and try them out. And what we've been fairly successful at doing over the past ten to fifteen year or so is bringing that into the core of what we do as well.

Governmental institutions are, by nature, conservative and outside funding was perceived as allowing riskier leading-edge project work.

Second, international funding has served to reshape local politics. A Co. Monaghan community leader believed funding had initiated increased democratic practice amongst local political institutions.

Things now have changed radically to my mind. There is a new County management in place and they have got more money from somewhere and they have published their development plan. They had an all-day session here ... where people ... are able to meet the officials who are writing these plans. It's revolutionary in the island - being invited in. For instance, I heard they are being quite frank with people, you know, about their plans. People could look at how is this going to affect my house and so on. And ... the County Council set up community forums that people are elected onto from the community sector. So that is all great stuff. But I would put that part of it probably down to the European Fund and to the IFI - those kinds of fundings.

Third, recognizing that many community organizations are staffed by people lacking experience and familiarity regarding strategy in the development and peacebuilding fields, economic aid has also facilitated the creation of extensive support structures to work with community organizations. Essential to this has been the provision of development officers able to help navigate community organizations through funding application requirements and assist in project design. A Belfast community organization director explained this situation in the following way:

A lot of the local community groups were getting help from these development officers. It is very, very important because some of these community group people are doing it on a voluntary basis and are giving up a lot of time and will not have the expertise or the confidence to write what is expected in the application forms. So yes, those development officers we've talked about are the types of people that have been important to especially smaller local community groups.

Other positive comments were made about the Intermediary funding bodies responsible for implementing parts of the funding program and are responsible for processing applications and selecting projects. A Derry community group leader perceived the intermediary funding bodies as flexible and supportive in her organization's project work with local women. This is what she had to say on the issue:

One of the good things about the program was the requirement of asking for targets. Then these targets, if after a year they needed changing there was always a listening

ear. The intermediary funding bodies were always very good at listening to you if the targets had to be changed.

Fourth, numerous participants clearly identified economic aid as instigating elevated levels of community development work. A Derry city civil servant described how the aid promotes community development:

The IFI money has created community owned infrastructure, which just has been an amazing platform to do economic regeneration on.

This has also been the experience of some community centers across the border. Community centers serve an important social and peacebuilding role in communities by providing space for public celebrations, meetings, and dialogue. For example, a Co. Cavan community development worker notes that funding has allowed community centers to be financially sustainable:

Traditionally the community centre would have been seen as a social outlet but now there are a lot of places trying to turn them into enterprise businesses that can stand alone to cut out the fund raising and the burn out. Having said that, they are in the very early stages of enterprise development and it is all very new. But definitely there has been a huge drive to try and make community centers and community facilities more sustainable.

Fifth, economic aid has supported a wide variety of peacebuilding activities between Unionists and Nationalists in Northern Ireland. Participants perceived that with each successive funding program peacebuilding criteria have become increasingly demanding. A Derry community development worker shares his perceptions of funding application criteria as follows:

I was at a presentation and the leader said in relation to, I'm not sure if it was Peace II or the imminent Peace III, he said if you are not about peacebuilding, don't apply. Don't use it as a leg up for a project that could otherwise be funded from some other funding measure that supports capacity building. So if what you are about is capacity building or some kind of community project that is good, but if it's not about peacebuilding, apply to someone who will fund that.

A Co. Monaghan community leader described a further criteria requirement of economic aid – inclusiveness:

I think one of the overarching objectives of the funding from the very beginning was that it had to be inclusive. The activities of the project being proposed and funded had to have inclusive elements in it and I think it focused groups to think more inclusively and more openly about their activities and the way to do business.

Inclusion of those naturally avoided because of conflict-induced mental prejudices may require incentives like those offered up by international economic aid.

### *The Struggle to Meet the Goals of Economic Aid*

Other participants, however, expressed concern regarding the role of funding monies in the development and peacebuilding processes in Northern Ireland. Community group leaders and civil servants with funding responsibilities voiced several sharp criticisms

regarding the ability of economic aid to meet its stated goals. Details of four concerns arising from the interviews are outlined below.

First, several participants believed a reconciliation process reliant on economic aid to be inherently flawed. A Derry community group leader believed the best peacebuilding work to be unpaid and not contingent on funding programs.

So what we are doing nobody is paying us to do - there is no money in it. But it is day-to-day work where two communities can work together. And I think you can't force two communities to work together. You end up simply saying, we came together for this application, we'll get the money and then we'll go back to our own sort of separate things, and you get a false thing that has actually happened.

He sensed that cross-community criteria requirements are forcing reconciliation processes that need to happen naturally. Another project director from Co. Monaghan believed that authentic healing processes couldn't be dictated by funded project work.

I'm not very clear like most people about the peacebuilding side of it. I have a favorite phrase about peace, "Reconciliation of conflict happens by stealth. It doesn't happen by targeted programs or anything else."

As to how this type of philosophy can translate into effective community group work, a Derry participant believed his success was easily explained – "simply by being on the ground talking to people". In the mess of everyday life opportunities arise to break down barriers to healing.

Second, participants perceived excessive controls and inefficiencies within funding bureaucratic structures. A Co. Fermanagh academic pointed out a lack of communication within the bureaucracy as a hindrance to development.

At a practical level the biggest frustrations I have had is the resistance and the inability of getting through to these multiple bureaucracies who are all funded individually and don't talk to each other... In a small place like Northern Ireland, why don't the different departments co-ordinate their programming and talk to each other?

A Co. Monaghan religious leader took a slightly different angle. He lamented that inappropriate bureaucratic requirements inside funding application procedures had caused significant suffering amongst community group leaders.

At the end of it there are at least six of us almost totally burned out. Now, a number of us have managed to reinvent ourselves and tried to get our energy and resources back again, but the cost to us personally has been enormous.

Other participants lamented the massive waste of funding monies on excessive and flawed evaluation procedures. For example, another Co. Monaghan community leader gave details of dissonance between people in upper-level funding policy-making positions and community workers on the ground.

there are people controlling the funds in Belfast who never come out to the Border areas, who have no idea of what it is like out here. So therefore they are sitting in offices in Belfast not having studied the areas or not even having listened properly to their own people on the ground telling them when something is good or when something is not good.

Understandably, those closest to the action believe they have valuable input for funding distribution decisions.

Third, a couple of community group leaders reflected on how the local community's view of organizations doing volunteer work is altered once they receive funding and have salaried staff. A Derry community worker described the process as follows:

There are other organizations where considerable funding has come in, you will see completely revamped offices, and great computers and great infrastructure but it then radically and negatively changes their relationship to the community that they are in, because I then hear people saying to us, "oh you see that there they are well paid they are on a very high wage," and they begin to treat maybe organizations that were in the voluntary sector as service organizations whose job it is to provide services to them.

Further, the same Derry participant expressed concern regarding widespread dependency on outside funding and worried about the community's reaction to the community organizations once funding is eventually cut off.

Fourth, and on a related point, some community workers perceived external economic aid as a means of political control over their peacebuilding and development ventures. A Derry community group administrator sensed a "very subtle type of political control" exerted over his agency in that they were excluded from key regional conferences because they were based within the Nationalist community. Another Derry participant described his perceived benefits of being denied project funding in the following manner:

we had asked those funders for money about six years ago and were turned down. And we said, "Look we don't define our work, the conflict defines our work." If it's not overtly cross community and fitting into a certain comfortable slot that they have decided upon then you are outside the pale. Now one consequence of all of that is that it is a very positive thing that we are outside of that funding cycle, we are free of that. We are usually close to broke but we are free.

Being outside the constraints imposed by receiving international economic aid, he felt free to assume control over community work and adjust his work according to personal preferences.

### **Potential of Project Work in Peacebuilding and Development**

The creation of a wide variety of community organizations has been stimulated by international economic aid. Participants commented extensively on possible roles for funded community group work in both the development and peacebuilding fields. The community group leaders described the potential of funded project work and discussed any perceived connections or relationships between development and peacebuilding project work.

#### *Community Organizations and Development Work*

Community group leaders described development project work as having varied focuses and goals, and as incorporating a wide range of strategies. Several participants involved in economic development work believed economic growth to be a prerequisite to

peacebuilding progress. The participants' interview narratives revealed four broad categories of developmental potential.

First, the most prevalent description of project potential involved a community organization's capability to provide training and services leading to employment. A Co. Monaghan community development worker described his guidance work in preparing the unemployed for possible employment.

I would deal an awful lot with social welfare payments, employment rights, tax, all that kind of stuff, training courses for people, trying to move people on, progress them from maybe being unemployed into training courses and then into full-time work. So a lot of work on that. Our services completely free and confidential, a drop in service, and we have a neutral environment so people are always comfortable to come in.

Several other community leaders suggested training programs were valuable for Northern Ireland's employment woes.

Second, several participants believed project work concerned with personal development to be instrumental in motivating people to engage in economic activities as well as preparing for possible peacebuilding initiatives. For example, a Belfast youth worker noted the potential of development projects to build interpersonal skills and prepare youth for economic engagement – even across the sectarian divide.

An organization into community development prepares young people to be fit for the world of work and how to relate to their neighbor and how to work together within communities. But I think giving young people interpersonal skills for building relationships with their neighbor and all of that obviously goes towards economic engagement.

In a similar vein, a Co. Leitrim development worker argued that project work can address self-esteem issues and empower people:

We started a pilot project, a cross-border social group and it was to get people together on the cross-border, cross-community basis again ... These people, they weren't good enough, you know. In their view they weren't good enough to walk in the door of this office ... And it was all basically to build up their social skills. Everything you do builds up people's social skills, builds up the capacity within the people and the groups in the area.

Third, community group leaders believed their organizations were suited to assist local businesses in progressing towards profitability and sustainability. A Co. Cavan participant described the situation as she saw it:

Then this new phenomena of the enterprise type projects, whereas when IFI and the Peace funds came on board the first few years it would be getting a capital project in place – developing that. Now they are at the stage of developing their business. So I would see that as a growth area and there has to be a lot more of that activity to develop the businesses here.

Fourth, development project work was believed to be crucial in community capacity building – empowering residents to work cooperatively in bettering their community. A Co. Leitrim project worker described development project potential as follows:

you merge people within the area to come together to work on a common goal, it might be to get a playground in the area, it might be to get broadband in the area.

They are working on a common aim for themselves and for the betterment of their area and for themselves and for their children and their generations to come. Such cooperative initiatives instigated by community groups may result in the formation of healthy community decision-making processes.

### *Community Organizations and Peacebuilding Work*

Most community group leaders and funding civil servants argued that aid-assisted community project work had an attractive peacebuilding potential. Since securing funds is ever more dependent on meeting “cross-community” criteria, community leaders are increasingly grappling with peacebuilding strategy and project design. This section includes a discussion on project work’s peacebuilding potential, perceptions of the required timeframe for peacebuilding work, and the prevalent debate over “single identity” project work.

Participants believed peacebuilding project work to empower communities in four broad areas. First, by far the most commonly highlighted strength exhibited by peacebuilding project work involved facilitating cross-community contact and dialogue. A Co. Fermanagh community group leader’s description of his project work is representative of many other peacebuilding projects:

Fundamentally our project is a very pure community relations project. It is in a society where people, when they do meet from two divided communities, don’t talk about difficult issues. Our program is clearly geared towards that leadership potential to open up those dialogues and debates that lead to a pluralistic and shared future. We can’t ignore the problems.

The role of community organizations in peacebuilding processes varies widely. While some organizations simply provide a “space” for people to engage with ‘the other’, other organizations dive into the emotional turmoil of healing. A Derry community organization’s administrator reflected on the complexity of the work her organization undertakes.

The project that I set up was set up in order to allow all of the different voices to be heard and what had happened to the people in order to re-humanize and also to hear the human and emotional detail of what took place and what happened to them. It was about validation and recognizing, and also allowing people to hear voices that they wouldn’t otherwise hear, also opportunity to confront the enemy and also to get rid of their own hurt.

As people on both sides of the sectarian divide engage with each other, the slow process of rebuilding trust and expelling fear begins.

Second, several community group leaders believed community organizations to be a natural conduit for the provision of conflict resolution/mediation services and training. A participant leading an organization providing conflict resolution strategy training described his work in the interface areas of Derry.

I have become involved in the whole mediation process behind the scenes working on the Parades issues, working on the flags and emblems issues. I have created my own monster in the sense that I have been involved in a lot of work particularly in our

local community here at interface level. But I am also working in rural areas working with the different groups there trying to keep the community in dialogue with each other. That is a lot of work that doesn't go public because of the very nature of it - sensitive, critical.

Sectarian parading has continued to create serious tensions as traditional marching routes often lead through territory whose residents predominantly adhere to the 'opposing' ethno-political group (Fitzduff, 2002). Mediation work has succeeded in altering marching routes or eliminating the playing of sectarian songs on sensitive segments of the route.

Third, several community organizations perceived the need to model representative democratic practice by recruiting board members and staff from both sides of the sectarian divide. A Co. Fermanagh community organization leader argued for strategic recruiting and hiring practices:

Yes, we make no bones about it. If a Protestant person resigns from the board we will recruit someone from the Protestant community back onto that board. Well some people would say well that is not democracy but then, you know ... to us it is because that part of the community must be represented on our board. For a sub-committee on our farming project, we told the sub-committee that if there was a vacancy on the board and we said ok we need two directors nominated onto the board. We need one Catholic please and one Protestant. So it was up to that section, those farmers seventy, eighty farmers in the room, to pick one from each community to come to represent, and you know it works, for us it works.

Fourth, several participants described the potential of community organizations to work towards healing and ideological transformation amongst youth. Community organizations have been given permission to enter the school system to conduct anti-sectarian work while others have used extra-curricular activities such as music and sports therapy to address the transgenerational effect of trauma on children in areas experiencing ongoing community conflict.

Resulting from decades of violent conflict, the study participants suggested that individuals who work to promote healing and reconciliation need to think in generational timeframes. A comment by a Belfast community leader is representative of many participants:

A lot of the good work is done in the communities – and it's important. A lot of people have given a lot of their time to help to heal, and to bring people together in their local communities. It's important, and it will probably take a generation to do that, those things are not done in two or three years, it takes time.

Working with the realization of how long healing will take can be exasperating. A Derry community group leader exposed his frustrations in the following segment:

at times you do feel as if you are hitting your head against a brick wall. Sometimes you feel as if you are fire fighting. If you do work at the interface and then it happens again, and again, you are wondering, "Well what was all that?" you know, you have to keep reinvesting.

However, viewing flare-ups in conflict and tension through a long-term lens (Lederach, 1997) may lessen discouragement for community workers as they imagine a desired future (Boulding, 1990) for Northern Ireland.

The interview narratives also revealed an ongoing debate over the efficacy of “single-identity” work – work focused within one particular group with few or any cross-community components. On the positive side, a Belfast community leader argued that single identity work was necessary in “hard core Republican areas or hard core Loyalists areas.” On the critical side, a Co. Monaghan community worker illustrated her beliefs regarding peacebuilding work:

There are two ways of approaching it. My take on single identity work is like teaching a guy to swim at the edge of the pool. He is lying on the concrete and you are telling him move your arms this way, move your legs that way. At what point is he ready to go into the water? This is the argument, “Oh no he needs a lot more work, and he is not ready.” The only way you are going to find out is by throwing him into the water and give him a hand then to swim.

She used the illustration to justify her expectations of having tight-knit, closed-off and homogeneous groups meeting even minimal cross-community criteria.

### *Relationships and Connections between Development and Peacebuilding Project Work*

A dominant perception voiced by participants in this study is that development work is a prerequisite to peacebuilding work and that peacebuilding will naturally take place within or stem out of development project work. A Derry community group leader attempted an explanation: “I would see peacebuilding as being a natural fruit pit of genuine community development.” A Co. Fermanagh academic argued that directing Northern Irish residents down the path towards “peace and prosperity” requires the establishment of employment opportunities. He believed pure peacebuilding initiatives to be non-sustainable once international economic aid is terminated. He justified his position with the following comment:

In the darkest days of the violence in Northern Ireland it was the employment that kept people from being recruited into paramilitary violence. I would argue equally that in a place like Palestine or the Lebanon that an economic vision in the future will be a very central part of bringing sustainable peace and this has to start at the community level but it has to show a relationship with our increasingly globalized economy.

Several participants suggested that incentives were needed to draw Northern Irish residents out of their mental enclaves and into open engagement with “the other”. A Co. Cavan development worker explained how this might work:

Projects really have to have a carrot for people. You are not going to get two people who hate each other coming together unless there is really something of mutual benefit for both of them.

To this end, participants provided examples of how training sessions allowed friendships to develop between people of differing ethnopolitical backgrounds, how inclusive health resource centers encouraged relationship building, and how infrastructure development had facilitated networking between individuals and groups traditionally kept separate.

## **Stories of Project Success in Peacebuilding and Development**

Community group leaders and funding administrators reflected extensively on perceptions of project success in both development and peacebuilding project work. The descriptive stories provided by participants provide clear insight into economic aid's perceived ability to build peace in Northern Ireland. It is, however, important to provide a glimpse of the evaluation processes guiding the interviewed participants in their judgments of project success.

### *Project Evaluation*

Community leaders described project evaluation processes as a struggle and revealed the inherent complexity of gauging success in both community development and peacebuilding. Participants gave details of both internal and external evaluation procedures.

Regarding internal evaluation processes, participants noted difficulties in moving beyond quantitative evaluation procedures and into qualitative procedures examining attitudinal, ideological, and behavioral change. Quantitatively, most community project workers tracked the number of people attending or involved in project initiatives. A Derry community leader had this to say:

I can only go by the number of people who have taken part in programs and do the quantitative type of analysis in the sense that more and more people are becoming involved in the types of work that we are engaged in - our training programs.

Though valuable in and of itself, the participant interviews revealed a longing for tangible evidence of the transformative power of their efforts. A Belfast community worker asked important questions regarding measuring change:

Here are very difficult notions about evidence of change. For instance, how do you quantify attitude change? How do you take people that have been nurtured in a sectarianism mentality all their lives, bring them through a sectarian awareness course, and then quantify at the other end of that six week course that all bigotry, sectarian views and discrimination have been removed from their hearts? Indeed, how do you, in any way, evaluate a journey for not just individuals but for people?

Furthermore, another Belfast community worker believed "changing a society is a complex thing - it has so many influences."

Some participants revealed a reliance on anecdotal evidence in measuring project success. A Co. Monaghan community leader stated, "We see small things and we hear word of mouth stories that would indicate that we are being successful." Other participants, however, identified intentional efforts to initiate authentic research procedures purposed with exploring change. A Belfast participant working with young children and their families gave details of his evaluative goals:

A lot of our feeling about this up until recently was fairly anecdotal. But we have begun to research the changes in attitudes and behavior of young children, of their family, of local communities, and we are beginning to see significant impact.

Another participant also desired to conduct qualitative research investigating the change occurring in his local community but conceded that “[i]t is a wee bit beyond me at the minute but I think there is huge potential.”

Regarding external evaluation procedures, community group leaders expressed concern over deficient levels of authenticity. A Co. Cavan community leader described deficiencies in the external evaluation practices of the funding agencies:

I felt that some of the evaluators weren't, to our knowledge, clued in enough. They seemed to making the evaluation to what the Peace program wanted rather than evaluating the project as it stood. They seemed to have a sheet that they squeezed everything into.

Other participants also viewed external evaluations as lacking substance and argued for revamped procedures allowing a true expression of their perceived successes and struggles.

### *Stories of Success in Development*

Community group leaders perceived high levels of success in their funded community development project work. The study's participants noted a wide variety of significant advances in community development in five ways.

First, community group leaders believed one of the external funding's chief developmental success to be improvements to Northern Ireland's physical infrastructure. For example, a Co. Monaghan development project attempted to include hesitant Protestants in the funded development and peacebuilding programs by providing monies to renovate community halls.

We did the halls project with eleven halls in total and the maximum a hall could get was twenty-nine thousand euros. We viewed from the start that what the Protestant community needed was capacity-building but you couldn't get them to engage in capacity-building unless they had a project that would animate them and get them motivated. So the Protestant halls are small, the work that needs to be done to them in a lot of cases is small, so a small amount of money will do that. But it gives you the opening to go in. We were only giving them the money to do the halls provided they attended the compulsory training elements which were capacity-building, committee skills, how to run and manage a hall, and diversity awareness training – which meant learning about all other religions.

Other projects described by participants focused on developing roads and paths, building gyms to be staffed by ex-paramilitary personnel, and the construction of cultural centers focused on attracting tourists.

Second, community group leaders identified training project work as having significant impact on their respective communities. For example, one Derry community group has been successful in providing training for ex-paramilitary personnel leading to the attainment of heavy vehicle driver licensing. Several trainees are presently working as large bus drivers. Another project in Co. Cavan was successful in re-training residents of rural communities with farming backgrounds in the information technology sector.

Third, community group leaders viewed business development project work as supportive of new ventures in a challenging business atmosphere. A Derry community

development worker described a business venture in a “socially deprived” area of Derry lacking amenities and employment:

So because we had a number of people expressing an interest in the health and fitness area and going through the course and because there was a lack of facilities in the area there was not a bad culture in this city for sport and for health and fitness. We embarked on a wee business venture of setting up a health and fitness suite. We actually asked for some sort of grant money, we actually asked a loan from a bank, and we actually set-up our own wee social economy business which is offering a fitness suite, which allowed us to employ four people, where three of them were ex prisoners. In terms of business projects that were developed under the Peace money its one of the few right across Ireland that has sustained itself.

Fourth, funded community development efforts were seen as providing the disempowered and voiceless with the self-confidence necessary for engagement in development and peacebuilding processes. A Co. Fermanagh development worker explained as follows:

I think the work we have done in terms of community development has given people a mechanism, a voice. The empowerment work we have done has been very positive. Moreover, groups who have traditionally not engaged in political processes were empowered to voice their concerns. For example, a Belfast development worker described how his project work empowered a group of Belfast residents deafened by explosions in the Troubles to voice their concerns with politicians.

The project that we are doing at the moment on democracy ensuring that deaf people can participate in the political process I think has been very, very interesting. Its still in early days but its enabling us to bring deaf people to train them but also to give them the opportunities to meet with their politicians, be it local councilors, members of the assembly, Westminster, or Europe. They now have a voice; it's not the organization that's speaking for them. We are providing an opportunity for panels of politicians locally and they come to meetings and deaf people now are having an opportunity to ask them questions directly, and they are seeing the results of that, when questions are then asked in the parliament.

Fifth, community development work was perceived as successful in providing essential supports and services in local communities. For example a Co. Cavan organization focuses on providing information to local residents:

We are based here in a development office, as we call it. We provide, number one, information for the community. Information is a tool for living, and if people are to get places they need information. Now that information can go into the social needs and for those who are socially in need we will give them supports to get whatever supports for them are out there - what they want. For example people leaving school and maybe looking for jobs, we will support them with their CV.

Other funded project work provided daycare service for working parents, health services for women in disadvantaged areas focusing on nutrition, sexual health, and alcohol awareness. Another Belfast project provided local transportation services for women who had not overcome the ingrained fears of traveling in the city.

*Stories of Success in Peacebuilding*

Participants shared numerous stories highlighting perceived peacebuilding successes. The interview narratives revealed a diverse range of target groups as well as extensive creativity in project approach and delivery. Stories told by participants tended to fall under one of five categories: paramilitary reform, training in conflict resolution practices, facilitating cross-community contact, dealing with conflict related emotional trauma, and working towards understanding through education and dialogue.

Several community groups described opportunities for transformation amongst former paramilitary personnel. One Belfast community group leader described how IFI funding had allowed his project work to focus on Loyalist paramilitary groups.

The current funding that we have now from IFI is to help me work with Protestant paramilitaries and Loyalist communities in general, that involves aspects of helping to empower them to participate in the civic and political realities of the Good Friday Agreement, which involves a realization that nobody actually won the actual war itself but that Republicanism is winning the propaganda war and cultural war. So there is a demoralization believe it or not and there is a sense which part of the security of peace and the consolidation of the peace and organization of the future is to have the whole community participating in the rebuilding of an inclusive society is to work alongside paramilitaries leaders in particular Loyalists communities in general to help them to with confidence, develop leadership skills, to encourage a different kind of vision rather than dealing with marginalization and loss.

Perhaps counter-intuitively, he believes the cessation of all paramilitary activities will be brought about with positive and supportive engagement. The same community group leader believed successful ex-paramilitary work to be dependent on project work aimed at cultural transformation. He argued that paramilitary recruitment thrives in demoralized communities.

It's hard unless people come and see it visually, it is hard to describe the demoralization in many of these communities and the level of social deprivation. Added to that is what I would call the atmospheric problems - that is the culture of violence, anger and aggression that can be seen in the loss of civic pride where the streets are just littered with rubbish and there's no sense of organized community, right through to bored young men who have maybe a computer in their bedroom, or a satellite dish, but who have a profound poverty of aspiration in their lives. So my work is to do what I have described, we have begun that. I already had two reports in to IFI this year that shows we have in five or six key areas where actually we've been able to use that money to build significant relationships with key paramilitary units who are now giving us permission to begin to work with the rank and file paramilitary members and to be able to identify the best among them who want to actually train, and initiatives in community development and community relations.

A couple of community group leaders gave details of innovative work in the field of conflict resolution. A Belfast community group leader conducting training work described an innovative program in which participants received free facilitation and health care training with the expectation that the participants would provide their services to their local

communities. The community group leader described the content of the facilitation course in the following snippet:

The facilitation training is a whole new course, they get an NVQ [National Vocational Qualification] level 3 qualification from it, so it's well accredited, well structured. They would spend from October to March here two mornings a week. It is very much peer learning in terms of facilitation, how to develop consensus, how to deal with conflict, how to work with the group and then they go out. The deal is this is free, but then they have to give back to the community. So they have to do a number of hours, and they have to go and choose their own community that they want to deliver programs to and then they are assessed on that. They have to put forward a portfolio etc. of their work. But on top of that they then get trained in these concrete health programs, so that they have that as a very specific subject area as well.

Providing project participants with a range of skills ensures relevancy and credibility in addressing needs in their local communities.

Reflecting international economic aid's stated goal of requiring a cross-community element to its funded project work, many community group leaders provided examples of increased contact between traditionally separated groups. A Derry community group leader describes a particularly interesting project reaching local youth:

The other project that we applied for funding for and were successful was with the Galway Hooker program. We bought a Galway Hooker sailing boat in Galway, refurbished it and brought it to Derry, and created a course for young Catholics and young Protestants to come and learn sailing and sea ferrying techniques. So using a very neutral interesting activity to kind of bring people together and there was an element of Irish language learning. There was a whole lot of stuff about learning about sea food and Irish language, folklore, about the sea and about metrology and about fishing, and sea based communities. That was an excellent success, a huge success, and was popular with the young Catholic Irish speakers as it was with the young Protestants who were experiencing Irish for the first time. So that was a success.

Having similar goals, a project in Co. Cavan perceived cross-community relationships being established through simple infrastructure projects like building a stonewall. Another Co. Cavan project leader noted similar outcomes in his training courses:

Bring in people of all religions to come down there and sit for twenty-six weeks next to your neighbor who is a Protestant who you have never sat beside before - by the end of it they are good buddies.

In some cases, community groups are taking the lead in modeling healthy cross-community activities and attitudes. For example a Belfast community leader revealed that some Nationalist community workers experienced in conflict transformation processes within their own community had ventured out and were attempting to lend their skills to those within the Unionist community. Another community group from Co. Fermanagh had a policy of retaining a 50/50 split of Unionists and Nationalists on all of its committees.

Community group leaders believed project work focused on healing for the victims of violence and conflict to be central to healing in Northern Ireland. Examples gleaned from the interviews reveal several approaches. One Belfast community group believed in the power of storytelling to transform relationships and had ventured to record some victim's

stories on videotape. Another Belfast community group leader believed that listening to victim's stories could identify required structural change.

The important thing is that we actually listen to them, hear what they have to say and start to address those outstanding issues. That affects policing, criminal justice, the judiciary and affects absolutely every strand of change that must be made to make sure that conflict does not happen again. Unless victim's experiences are recorded and understood then what do we know? We don't want a repeat of it.

Following a slightly different path of victim-focused project work, a Derry community group had received funding for a rehab center supportive of those struggling mentally or with alcohol addiction as a result of the Troubles.

Moreover, several community group leaders highlighted educational and dialogue-focused activities interested in increasing understanding between Protestant and Catholic communities. Representing the beliefs of several participants was a statement by a Derry community organization leader:

I do think that it has an effect in that through the resources that the Peace program [has] funded we have been able to raise issues repeatedly with people, particularly young people, that just aren't raised otherwise. They are brushed under the carpet and not talked about and we are able to raise them in a way that engages them, at least to an extent, and in a language that they understand and in a way that is visually attractive and appealing to them.

To this end, a couple of community groups ran successful media projects aiming to increase understanding on both sides of the community divide. For example, a Derry community organization produces videos with the goal of "confronting controversial issues" and portraying key divisive historical issues in an educative manner leading to deeper understanding. In a similar vein, a Belfast civil servant funding director described the innovative use of media in incorporating peacebuilding activities into literacy classes.

One of the groups were using - again being literacy - bringing in local newspapers. But what they did was brought in all of the local newspapers. They had the Irish News, the Newsletter. This was a wholly Protestant community. Nobody had ever read the Irish News before. So what they were able to do was to look at the same story from two different angles. They were then able to develop literacy skills through reading stories and understanding and how to pick out: What's this story about? What's the angle on this story? Is there a different angle or is it the same story?

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

Hopes are riding on community group project work's success in laying a foundation for lasting peace in Northern Ireland. Through a combination of development and peacebuilding initiatives, the IFI and EU Peace II programs are perceived as facilitating the empowerment of local community groups in breaking down conflict-induced barriers between Unionists and Nationalists (Byrne and Irvin, 2001). This study considers the perceptions of success amongst community group leaders regarding project work in promoting peacebuilding and community development.

Four main conclusions flow from the above analysis of the participant responses. First, evaluating success is perceived as difficult and a struggle for most participants – particularly in regards to peacebuilding initiatives. The transformation of beliefs, ideologies, and attitudes inherently resist quantification. However, community group leaders are nevertheless expected to account for their expenditure of aid monies through internal and external evaluative procedures. Participants revealed that anecdotal evidence and counting “bums on seats” is often the extent of internal reviews. External reviews were often perceived as non-relevant and unauthentic.

Northern Ireland’s community groups are definitely not alone in this struggle. George Downs and Stephen John Stedman (2002, p. 43) generalize about post civil war contexts: “it is difficult to think of an environment that is less conducive to the conduct of evaluative research.”. However, evaluation must not be ignored. Community organization staffs need evaluative feedback in order to fine-tune their programming. Further, funding agencies require stringent evaluation procedures to avoid waste, mismanagement, and corruption.

Community organization leaders hinted at possible improvements to evaluation procedures. Regarding internal evaluation, one community leader expressed the need for increased training and exposure to qualitative research methods suitable for organizational leaders. Qualitative methodology can be especially suitable for investigating complex phenomena (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007) such as personal or cultural transformation in the context of local community project work. Regarding external evaluation procedures, participants voiced a desire to have a voice in the creation of relevant and important evaluation questions.

Second, community group leaders perceived their organizational structure and mandate as appropriate for funded community development and peacebuilding work in Northern Ireland and the Border Area. International funding bodies such as the EU have intentionally bypassed central statutory institutions in hopes of sidestepping excessive governmental controls and increasing local control over aid expenditures. By choosing to endow the grassroots level of society with increased control, local community organizations are granted authority in determining much-needed development and peacebuilding ventures.

Furthermore, local control increases the probability of addressing localized nuances to needed development and peacebuilding as opposed to centrally-planned blanket programming. For example, employment training addressing local employment variables will be especially valuable. Personal development activities will be increasingly effective at building self-esteem and confidence when local cultural concerns are considered. Programming intended to facilitate increased contact between Unionist and Nationalist populations will more likely flourish when designed by leaders understanding the unique shading of local conflict dynamics.

Third, many community group leaders struggle to reconcile the traditionally tense relationship between the community development and peacebuilding fields. The tension perhaps stems from NGO activity in several African countries during the 1990s (Anderson, 1999). Countries such as Sudan and Sierra Leone, among others, have noticeably digressed since becoming independent and emerged from the 1990s in shambles despite large international investments of development money and energy (Junne and Verkoren, 2005; Schloms, 2003).

Peacebuilding organizations will sometimes argue that their work alone will ensure the suppression of a future need for renewed violent conflict (Junne and Verkoren, 2005). Conversely, aid/development organizations will sometimes argue that the injection of economic aid will naturally smother simmering tensions. Several community group leaders interviewed for this study, however, seemed to recognize that successful interventions by their organization will require an incorporation of effective community development and peacebuilding work.

Fourth, the majority of community organizations interviewed provided evidence of significant successes in their community development and peacebuilding project work. Community group leaders described a diverse set of target groups ranging from pre-schoolers to active paramilitary members who were involved in community development and peacebuilding projects. Wide-ranging strategies were perceived as effective in meeting project goals.

Most community organizations highlighted successes in facilitating communication and relationship-building across the bicomunal divide reflecting positively on increasingly demanding “cross-community” funding criteria requirements. Noting the inherent temptation to avoid messy cross-community work, many community leaders reflected positively on funding criteria. What remains to be seen, however, is whether project work can facilitate healthy confrontation, conflict resolution, and sustainable reconciliation between Northern Ireland’s Unionists and Nationalists.

Funding agencies need to also consider arguments for the allowance of funded “single-identity” work. Despite convincing arguments against it, single-identity work may succeed in bringing residents of select tightly closed communities into peacebuilding processes that would normally remain sidelined.

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## DAOIST HARMONY AS A CHINESE PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Yueh-Ting Lee, Honggang Yang and Min Wang

### Abstract

*Based on Lee's prior research on Daoism (Lee, 2003; Lee, 2004; Lee, Han, Byron and Fan, 2008; Lee and Hu, 1993; Lee, Norasakkunkit, Liu, Zhang and Zhou, 2008), this article first introduces Laozi, Dao, De and Daoism in relation to harmony. Then, Daoist harmony is elaborated in the following areas: (1) the yin-yang oneness, (2) the way it is (natural), (3) wei-wu-wei (or nonintervention), (4) water-like characteristics, (5) love for peace, and (6) tolerance and appreciation of differences. The article concludes with a suggestion for harmony with the external world as well as with fellow human beings.*

### Introduction

The Dao produced the One,  
The One produced the Two;  
The Two produced the Three;  
The Three produced All Things.  
All Things carry Yin and hold to Yang;  
Their blended influence brings Harmony. (Laozi, Chapter 42)

These are some of the well-known Daoist quotations. However, what are “the One,” “the Two,” and “the Three” in this context? This is an easy and difficult question at the same time. It is easy because almost everyone understands “one,” “two” and “three” numerically. It is difficult because “the One,” “the Two” and “the Three” have different connotations in various contexts. According to Laozi, “The One” which is produced by Dao (or the natural course) means the entire universe. “The Two” means the yin-yang, and “The Three” means heaven, earth, and human which produce “All Things.” “All Things” also have Yin and Yang whose influence brings “Harmony” (Fei, 1984; Lee, Han, Byron and Fan, 2008). Life, or universe, is full of harmony produced by Yin and Yang that are in balance.

This article attempts to address harmony from a Daoist perspective in three parts. First, it introduces Laozi and his philosophical and psychological ideas of Daoism. Second, the authors focus on these ideas regarding harmony in connection to the yin-yang oneness in Laozi's framework of reference. Simply speaking, what is the Yin and Yang oneness? What do Dao (or Tao) and De (or Te) have to do with human beings internally or externally? Is controlling, competition or fighting an answer to human existence in the world? What can human beings learn from water? Can Daoism help us become more tolerant of each other and appreciative of human differences? This discussion leads to a plain conclusion that addresses several harmony-related challenges, such as minimizing human conflict and respecting the natural world.

## Laozi, Daoism and Harmony

### *Clarifications and Specifications*

Several clarifications and specifications are in order. First, the name of Laozi is spelled in various ways in English in the West, such as Lao Tsu, Lao Tzu and/or other ways. In this article, the authors use the standard Chinese, i.e. pin yin (Lee, 2003; Lee, Han, Byron and Fan, 2008). Similarly, Laozi's classic book *Dao De Jing*, and two key terms 'Dao' (i.e. harmony with the natural world or the external universe) and 'De' (harmony with fellow human beings), and Daoist/Daoism (instead of Taoist/Taoism) are also spelled in pin yin.

Second, readers may run into various English versions of Laozi's book *Dao De Jing* (or *Tao Te Ching*) by Blakney (1955) or Lao Tzu (1993) for example, which may be different from each other in their translations due to philosophical and linguistic complexities of the book. For the purpose of understanding Laozi's ideas accurately, this article has quoted Laozi's *Dao De Jing* based on the translations by Wing (1986) and Shi (1988) who provided readers with both English and Chinese versions. But the authors also modified and adjusted their translations when examining other original versions of Laozi's *Dao De Jing* in either modern or classic Chinese (Fei, 1984; Laozi, 1961).

Third, the article primarily focuses only on Laozi's Daoism in his *Dao De Jing* due to the scope and nature of our exploration. However, his student, Zhuangzi (or Chuangzhi or Chuangzhou) is referred to when diversity and tolerance are discussed.

Fourth, Daoism is secular, different from the Daoist religion in China. According to Laozi's *Dao De Jing*, life followed by death is nature's course and humans should follow this course calmly. The Daoist religion (or 'Dao Jiao' in Chinese) was developed much later, contemplating how to avoid death, which is against nature and Laozi's philosophy. Thus, the article focuses only on Daoism ('Dao Jia') as a philosophy or as the way of harmonious life or harmonious universe (Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008).

Finally, and most importantly, the conception of "harmony" is "hexie" (pronounced as "ho shie") in Chinese consisting of two characters that could be translated directly into English – peaceful coordination and interaction in divergent settings. "Harmony" needs to be understood in a Daoist context; otherwise it may be either misleading or inaccurate. For example, harmony is meaningful in relation to Dao (i.e. harmony with the external universe) and De (i.e. harmony with fellow human beings) as discussed below.

### *Who is Laozi? What are Dao and De in Relation to Harmony?*

According to classic and recent research (Lee, 1991; Lee, 2000; Lee, 2003; Sima, 1994; Yan, 1999), Laozi was born in the central part of China near the Yangtze River over 2500 years ago and his real name was Li Er. Laozi, who used to work as an official

historian for the Zhou Dynasty, was regarded an originator of Daoism full of dialectic philosophical perspectives.

It is important to understand a pair of key concepts: Dao and De. Generally speaking, Dao means harmony with the external world. More specifically, according to Lee (2003), Dao may mean a road, a path, the way it is, the way of nature, the Way of Ultimate Reality, and the Rules/Laws of Nature. According to Blakney (1955), in the eyes of Chinese, Dao does not only refer to the way the whole world of nature operates but also signifies the original undifferentiated Reality from which the universe is evolved. In another translation (by Addiss and Lombardo, 1993), Dao means a “way” in both literal “road” and metaphysical “spiritual path.” It can also, more rarely, mean “to say,” “to express” or “to tell.” According to Burton Watson (in the introduction to Addiss and Lombardo’s 1993 translation), Dao literally means a “way” or “path” and is used by other schools of Chinese philosophies to refer to a particular calling or mode of mindset and conduct. But in Daoist writing, it has a far more comprehensive meaning, referring rather to a metaphysical first principle that embraces and underlies all beings – a vast Oneness that precedes and in some mysterious manner generates the endlessly diverse forms of the world. Thus Dao often lies beyond the power of language to describe (Lee, 2003; Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008).

What is De? Generally, it means harmony with fellow human beings. More specifically, De means humanistic behaviors, virtues, characters, influences or moral forces. The Chinese character De consists of three parts: (1) an ideograph meaning “to go”, (2) another, meaning “straight”, and (3) a pictograph, meaning “the heart.” Put together, these imply motivation by inward rectitude (Blakney, 1955; Lee, 2003). Burton Watson (introduction to Addiss and Lombardo translation, 1993) defined De as a moral virtue or power that one acquires through being in accord with the Dao, i.e. what one gets from Dao (Lee, 2003; Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008).

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#### *Daoist Harmony is Based on the Yin-Yang “Oneness”*

To understand Laozi’s Daoist harmony, it is necessary to expound on the Chinese yin-yang theory on which Daoism is largely based. According to Chinese philosophy, everything in the world consists of the paired yin-yang opposites. Yin and Yang stand for paired opposites of any sort: heaven/earth, hot/cold, light/dark, up/down, wet/dry, male/female, internal/external (Black, 1992; Lee and Hu, 1993). Below (Figure 1) is a visual illustration of the typical Chinese yin and yang symbol.

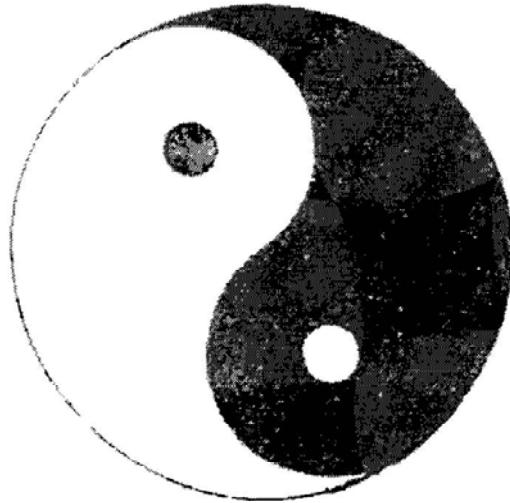


Figure 1. *The symbol of Chinese yin and yang* (Source: Lee and Hu, 1993).

In this figure, there are two parts: the dark as yin and light as yang. These two parts are pictured as two fish chasing each other constantly, symbolizing that human life or the universe continuously goes on. There is a small dark spot in the light area whereas there is a small light spot in the dark area. This means that yin always includes yang. Meanwhile, yang always contains yin. They cannot be separated from one another. The “S”-shape line marking a distinction between yin (dark) and yang (light) stands for a harmonious state or balance. They work together, which creates the balance or the harmonious oneness as a whole (Lee and Hu, 1993).

For example, an individual’s mental or physical health can be strengthened and life could be prolonged if one’s yin and yang are in a harmonious state. Diseases occur if one’s yin and yang are out of balance. Similarly, natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes, volcanoes, tornados or hurricanes) occur if the natural world is not in harmony (one force is more powerful than the other). Based on yin and yang, oneness (yi in Chinese) is harmonious. Laozi stated in his Chapter 39 as follows:

Heaven in harmony with the One becomes clear,  
Earth in harmony with the One becomes stable,  
Spirit (inclusive of God/Goddess) in harmony with the One becomes inspiring,  
Valleys in harmony with the One become full,  
All Things in harmony with the One become creative (Laozi, Chapter 39).

Therefore, the yin-yang oneness is the foundation of Daoist harmony. In other words, harmony is based on the ancient Chinese yin-yang oneness.

*Harmony is the Way it is (Natural)*

Humans are modeled on earth,  
Earth is modeled on heaven,  
Heaven is modeled on the Dao (the Way it is),

And the Dao is modeled on nature (the way on that which is naturally so).  
(Laozi, Chapter 25)

According to Laozi there is an order among human being (ren), earth (di), heaven (tian), nature (zi ran), and the Dao (Lee, 2003; Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008). Conceptually, according to Shamanism (Lee, 2001; Lee and Wang, 2003; Wang, 2000; Xu, 1991; Yuan, 1988), human being (ren) means person; earth (di) means land, Mother Nature, or yin which is parallel to heaven (tian); heaven (tian) means sky, father nature, or yang which is parallel to earth (di). Another meaning of tian is the natural world outside human beings (ren). Nature (zi ran) means the objective principle of universe or the way of life (i.e. anything external to human beings). Being complicated, Dao is part of nature, follows nature, and produces almost everything in the universe, as can be seen through Chapter 25.

From Laozi's perspective (as described in Chapter 25 of *Dao De Jing*), first we human beings should follow or be consistent with the way Earth works (ren fa di). Second, the way Earth works follows or is consistent with the way Heaven works (di fa tian). Third, the way Heaven works follows or is consistent with the way Dao works (tian fa dao). Finally, the way Dao works follows or is consistent with the way Nature or Universe works (dao fa zi ran) (Lee, 2003; Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008).

In this regard, Daoism differs from the Western cultural beliefs and spiritual practices. For example, lots of Western churches are often built in the center of cities or at a busy public place, and the top of their architectural structures is often sharp, standing out. Chinese temples (miao) are typically located in the middle of big mountains where there are trees and water. In this way it is close and harmonious with the external world. Daoists do not think that humans are the center of the universe above all things or that they can conquer almost anything (Fung, 1948; Johnson, 1985). Daoism and other Chinese philosophies hold that human beings are just a small part of the natural world or universe.

However, Laozi's philosophy focuses on being in harmony with nature, the universe or the Dao. People should follow the principles of nature, striving to conduct themselves in such ways that their behaviors are in harmony with the Dao. The Chinese people call this an optimal state: "Tian Ren He Yi" which means the human world and the external universe are united into one (Lee, 2003; Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008). In different ways to the Western version, Daoist harmony focuses on harmony with fellow humans and with the natural universe.

#### *Harmony Means wei wu-wei (non-intervention)*

Wei wu-wei means "going with the grain, rolling with the punch, swimming with the current, trimming the sails to the wind, taking the tide at its flood, and stooping to conquer" (Watts, 1975, p. 75). It is the flow or well-being that allows one to be in harmony with all (Lee, 2003). Literally, "Wei [follow or do] Wu-Wei [without doing or without acting; wu = not]" implies "noninterference" or "non-action" and allows things to be or to act within the true nature of things:

The Dao never acts,  
And yet is never inactive. (Laozi, Chapter 37)

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To pursue artificial discovering (to learn), add to it daily,  
To pursue the Dao, subtract (interfere less) from it daily  
Subtract and subtract again,  
To arrive at non-action,  
Through non-action nothing is left undone. (Laozi, Chapter 48)

Act without action; work without effort.  
Taste without savoring.  
Magnify the small; increase the few.  
Repay ill-will with kindness.  
Plan the difficult when it is easy;  
Handle the big where it is small.  
The world's hardest work begins when it is easy;  
The world's largest effort begins where it is small.  
Evolved/Wise Individuals (or Sages/Saints), finally take no great action,  
And in that way the great is achieved. (Laozi, Chapter 63)

As can be seen above, wei wu-wei does not mean inertia, indifference, laziness, status quo, laissez-faire, pessimism or passivity. On the other hand, being too concerned about the outside means too much subjective intervention, unilateral control, or propensity to overdo. The more we control, the less we can control.

Those who would take hold of the world and act on it,  
Never, I notice, succeed.  
The world is a mysterious instrument,  
Not made to be controlled (or handled)  
Those who act on it spoil it,  
Those who seize it lose it. (Laozi, Chapter 29)

Too much action or too much intervention may produce opposite outcomes. Daoism holds a belief that there exists an indigenous way in things themselves and there is an internal strength in people facing hardships. There is no need for imposing solutions from outside. Human beings follow Earth which follows Heaven; Heaven follows Dao which follows the Nature or Universe. All this means we should be natural, avoiding intervening too much: wei wu-wei (Lee, 2003). As Laozi stated in Chapter 32, "Heaven and Earth would unite to generate timely rain or dew, and people would naturally cooperate without command."

### *Harmony Means Water-like Characters (Daoist Big Five)*

The most effective way to comprehend Daoism is to focus on a metaphor that links Daoism with water (i.e. water-like characters). To Laozi, the best quality or value is like water. In his writings, Laozi used water as a metaphor many times to explain a leadership style of the Sage. More specifically: water is altruistic and always serves others; water is also modest, flexible, clear, soft, yet powerful (or perseverant) philosophically and psychologically (Lee, 2003; Lee, 2004; Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008). These characteristics are essential to all. This is what we call the Daoist model of "water-like" or "wateristic" characters (Lee, 2003; Lee, 2004; Lee, Norasakkunkit *et al.*, 2008; Watts, 1961; Watts,

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1975) which includes five essential components: (1) altruism, (2) modesty/humility, (3) flexibility, (4) transparency and honesty, and (5) gentleness with perseverance. These five characters (Daoist Big Five) are generated from Laozi's Dao (i.e. harmony with the universe) and De (i.e. harmony with others) (see Lee, Han *et al.* 2008). This model is summarized in Figure 2 (below).

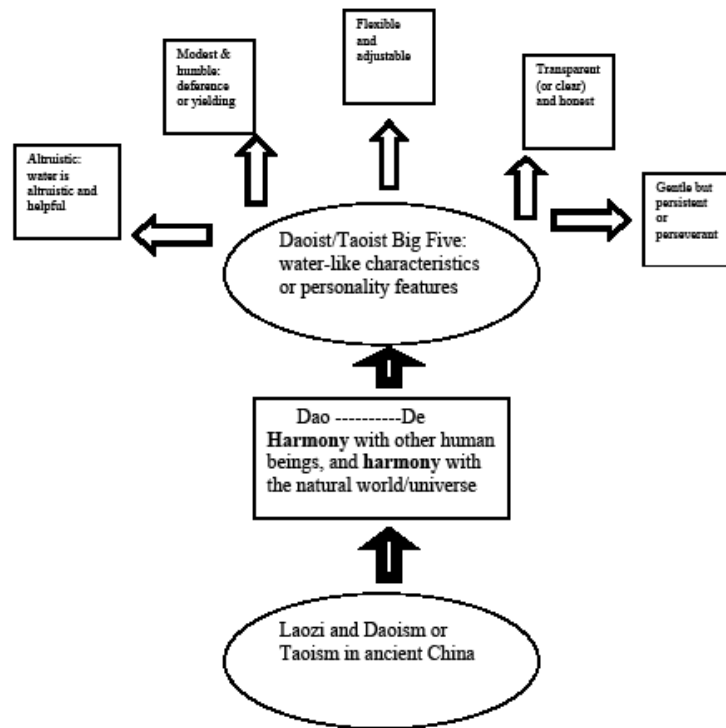


Figure 2. *The Daoist/Taoist model of wateristic personality (Taoist Big-Five)* (Source: Lee, Han, Byron and Fan, 2008)

First, water is *altruistic*. All species and organisms depend on water. Without water, none of them can survive. What does water get from us? It gets almost nothing. A true Daoist should be as altruistic as water. For example, Laozi advocated for a “water-like character.” We, as human beings, should learn from water that always remains in the lowest position, never competing with others (Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008), and is helpful and beneficial to all.

The highest value (or the best) is like water,  
The value in water benefits All Things  
And yet it does not contend,  
It stays in places that others despise,  
And therefore is close to Dao (Laozi, Chapter 8).

Daoism recognizes that the ultimate goal of humans is to serve their people without the desire to gain for personal benefit. Laozi stated in his book, “The best are like water, good at benefiting all things without competing for gaining” (Laozi, Chapter 8).

Second, water is *modest and humble*. In his time, Laozi observed that human conflict and suffering (e.g. fighting, killing, violence, war) were most likely to occur if everyone wanted to compete and go after his or her own self-interest (e.g. fighting for more materials, bigger fame or higher rank). Thus, if we are humble as well as altruistic, like water, human conflicts might be reduced. As we can see from the above quotation (i.e. Laozi, Chapter 8), although water benefits all things, it always stays in the lowest places that others despise. Being humble is necessary to appreciate and understand the Dao of things and to always be ready to learn and be alert to overconfidence in the self (Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008). While many non-daoists often value and enjoy a sense of authority, assertiveness, aggressiveness or competitiveness, Laozi encouraged people to develop a water-like characteristic – that is, to maintain a low profile and to be modest, especially in the face of the Dao or nature, and to be helpful or beneficial to others:

The rivers and seas lead the hundred streams,  
Because they are skillful at staying low,

Thus they are able to lead the hundred streams (Laozi, Chapter 66).

In Laozi's opinion, those who are humble and modest not only exist in harmony with others, but they are effective leaders, just like the rivers and seas. The sea, for instance, can govern a hundred rivers because it has mastered being lower. Being humble is important for leaders in that it enables them to accept people's goals as their own and to attract and unite people together. Just as the sea accepts and embraces all rivers joining – muddy or clear, large or small – leaders who humble themselves before people draw people towards them and gain people's trust (Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008). That is why Laozi said "S/he who knows how to motivate people acts humble. This is the virtue of no rival and uses the strength of others" (Laozi, Chapter 68).

Third, *water is adaptable and flexible*. It can stay in a container of any shape. This flexibility or fluidity lends a great deal of wisdom to our success. People may be more effective if they can adjust themselves to any environment and situation just as water does in a container (Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008). Lu Jin Chuan, a contemporary Daoist philosopher, once said that water has no shape of its own but that of the container (Lu, 2001). Maintaining flexibility and adapting to the dynamics of change, like water following its natural path, are probably the best options for human beings.

Fourth, water is *transparent and clear*. As human beings, we should be honest and transparent to each other. The most honorable individuals are usually honest and transparent like water. Though Machiavellian approaches might work temporarily, being honest and transparent is one of the significant ethical concerns in modern society (Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008). Water itself is clear and transparent if no one makes it muddy. In Chapter 15, Laozi stated, "Who can (make) the muddy water clear? Let it be still, and it will gradually become clear." Metaphorically, human beings by nature are innocent and honest. Social environment and competition (like muddiness) make them unclear. Water's clarity, transparency, and honesty are most appreciated by Laozi.

Finally, water is *soft and gentle*, but also persistent and powerful. If drops of water keep pounding at a rock for years, even the hardest rock will yield to water. Over time water can cut through the hardest rock, forming valleys and canyons. The style of individuals should be similarly gentle and soft, but perseverant and powerful. Here is an example of what we could learn from water:

Nothing in the world  
Is as yielding and receptive as water;  
Yet in attacking the firm and inflexible,  
Nothing triumphs so well (Laozi, Chapter 78).

Since there is nothing softer than water, yet nothing better for attacking hard and strong things, there is no substitute for it. Its softness enables it to tolerate all kinds of environments, gathering strength without wearing it out at an early stage. And the resolute perseverance of water helps it to cut its path through hard rocks and wear away mountains. It is important for a leader to know the dialectical relationship as such and to acquire the persevering characteristics of water (Lee, Han *et al.*, 2008). So-called “soft power” discussed in the Western political science (Nye, 1990) entails the ability to obtain what you want through attraction, in contrast to coercive-based “hard power.” However, Laozi’s approach went well beyond, recognizing other parties’ needs and embracing the natural world, instead of staying self centered to try to get what “I” want. Daoist soft power is in harmony with others like water in light of natural interconnections between oceans and rivers.

A cautionary note is in order here. Though we should learn from water because of the Daoist Big Five as described as above, what about negative aspects of water such as floods or storms? When Mother Nature is not in a balance (i.e. yin and yang), floods or storms occur with external forces. Water cannot lead to a flood or storm by itself without external forces. Floods or other water-related disasters take place when yin and yang are out of the balance as described in the section of the yin-yang oneness. Similarly, water is usually clear and transparent, except (notably) when it is polluted.

### *Harmony Means Opposition to Violence and Coercion*

Laozi lived in the Spring-Autumn times of ancient China when people and states waged wars with one another after the Zhou Dynasty. He was unhappy with widespread violence. Thus Laozi decided to live in a mountain as a hermit. He resigned from his official position as a historian in the Chinese Imperial Capital in Luoyang near the Yellow River in central China and traveled west with his ox through the Han Ku Pass (Lee, 2003; Sima, 1994). There is no doubt that he was a strong advocate for peace in opposition to war and violence.

Let the people value their lives  
and yet not move far away.  
Even though there are boats and carriages,  
There is no occasion to use them.  
Even though there are armor and weapons,  
There is no occasion to display them. (Laozi, Chapter 80)

When all the people in the world follow the Dao, they are no longer busy preparing for wars but focused on their farming or livelihood.

When the world possesses the Dao,  
Even the fast horses are used for their dung  
When the world is without the Dao,

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War horses are raised in the suburbs. (Laozi, Chapter 46)

When armies are positioned

Thorny brambles are produced.

A great military always brings years of hunger. (Laozi, Chapter 30)

The finest weapons can be the instruments of misfortune,  
and thus contrary to natural law. (Laozi, Chapter 31)

From this ideal depiction at the time, we can understand that harmony fosters peaceful life for human beings without violence of any kinds. In a sense, human history, unfortunately, is full of killing, oppression, and violence. War is an extreme example of destruction of human life and civilization, which is diametrically against Dao.

### *Harmony Means Tolerance and Appreciation of Differences*

According to Laozi, the natural world is so complex and human beings are so diverse that we must be open to, and tolerant of, difference. Being open and tolerant is a crucial aspect of Daoism (Lee, 2001; Lee, 2003). Laozi wrote:

The one with great De (or humanistic virtue)

Tends to be tolerant and open to everything

Because the one must follow the Dao. (Laozi, Chapter 21)

In other words, openness and tolerance are the essential ways (Dao) for human beings. Without openness and tolerance, it is difficult for human beings to be in harmony with nature and with each other.

The cycle of destiny is called the Absolute:

To know the Absolute is called insight;

To know the Absolute is to be tolerant;

What is tolerant is fair (or impartial);

What is fair (or impartial) is powerful;

What is powerful becomes natural;

What is natural becomes Dao. (Laozi, Chapter 16)

Our real power is to follow the natural Dao, which must be based on insight, tolerance, and fairness. Thus, open-mindedness, tolerance, and fairness are important both for harmonious individual interactions and for harmonious group interrelationships.

One of the Laozi's followers, Chuang Tzu (or Zhuangzi, 369-286 B.C.) lived in the Warring Period in China as a leading thinker whose ideas were also central to the Daoist School. Enriched by brilliant imagery, making sportive use of both mythological and historical personages (e.g. Confucius), Zhuangzi's major writings include seven "inner chapters" and fifteen "outer chapters." All his writings stress Dao (the way of Nature or the way it is).

Following Laozi's ideas in *Dao De Jing*, Zhuangzi valued people's inner virtues (i.e. De) more than their physical appearance. In Chapter 5, "The sign of virtue complete", of his "Inner Chapters" Zhuangzi (Chuang Tzu, 1964) regarded the physically "abnormal" people as the figures greater than sages. For example, Wang Dai, whose foot was cut off,

had more students or followers than Confucius had. Confucius spoke highly of Wang Dai at that time because Mr. Wang, the crippled person, had great virtues. Also, Mr. Lame-Hunchback-No-Lips talked to Duke Ling of Wei. Duke Ling was so pleased with him that when he looked at “normal” people he thought their necks looked so lean and skinny. Therefore, “if virtue is preeminent, the body is forgotten. But when human beings do not forget what can be forgotten, but forget what cannot be forgotten – that may be called true forgetting” (Chuang Tzu, 1964, p. 71).

Also, in Chapter 1, entitled “Free and Easy Wandering”, Zhuangzi (Chuang Tzu, 1964) linked differences between animals to those between humans. Big birds (like Kun or Peng in ancient China) or little birds (like cicada or dove) are naturally different birds and each has its own functions and uniqueness. They should not laugh at or look down upon each other. What do these two (big and little) creatures understand?

Little understanding cannot come up to great understanding; the short-lived cannot come up to the long-lived. How do I know this is so? The morning mushroom knows nothing of twilight and dawn; the summer cicada knows nothing of spring and autumn. They are the short-lived. In the South of the Chu Kingdom, there is a Ling Gui (i.e. a special turtle) that counts five hundred years as one spring and five hundred years as one autumn. Long ago there was a great rose of Sharon that counted eight thousand years as one spring and eight thousand years as one autumn. They are the long-lived. Yet Peng Zu, the person who lived a long time (about five hundred years as per Chinese legend) is famous today for having lived a long time and everybody tries to admire or ape him. Isn't it pitiful! (Chuang Tzu, 1964).

Why is it pitiful? First, it is against Dao. Everyone is different. If one person looks one way, it does not mean everyone else in the world should become that way. If the other person is tall, it does not mean everyone else should become tall. It is unnatural and it is against Dao. Second, Peng Zu lived a long life, but whether his life was ultimately long or short is relative, depending on the comparison with other different species. Thus harmony implies tolerance of human differences and also means understanding and appreciating human differences.

## Conclusion

This article attempts to address harmony from a Daoist, relational, humanistic, and naturalistic perspective. The Dao and De mean harmony with the external world and harmony with fellow human beings. As Laozi opposed wars, harmony embraces peace that is much broader than the ordinary concept based on recent research (Han, 2008; Jia, 2008).

What is Daoist harmony? Simply put, Daoist harmony is: (1) based on the yin-yang oneness, (2) the way it is (natural), (3) wei-wu-wei (or nonintervention), (4) water-like characters, (5) love for peace, and (6) tolerance and appreciation of differences. When we say Daoism, it means harmony and it means inclusion.

Daoism as an enlightening perspective is going to become increasingly understandable and appreciable in a global village. Today we, as global citizens, are facing tough human issues (e.g. intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup/cultural relationships, ethnic conflict or cleansing, genocides, hate crimes, discrimination against women or

minorities, domestic violence, inequality and oppression) as well as ecological challenges (e.g. pollution, destruction of the natural environment, etc.). If we follow Dao and De, it will help us tackle the human challenges and environmental issues. We acknowledge that practicing Daoism is not easy; indeed, it is particularly challenging in the socio-economic contexts where individualism is a core cultural value.

Yet when human beings arrive at mutual appreciation, we are in harmony with each other in the world. When human beings treasure the natural environment just as their own, we will be in harmony with a universe that will survive and sustain. Let us conclude with a lasting quote from Laozi:

Those who esteem the world as self  
Will be committed to the world;  
Those who love the world as self  
Will be entrusted with the world! (Laozi, Chapter 13)

### *Acknowledgements*

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